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SEVEN DAYS FROM A GAZA DIARY
a performance for three voices
adapted by Edward Mast
from the diary of Khulood Ghanem, Gaza, 2008-9

(for audio version go to <http://gazafreedommarch.ca/cms/GazaDiary.aspx>)

VOICE 1:
from Amnesty International, July 2 2009:

On 27 December 2008, without warning, Israeli forces began a devastating bombing campaign on the Gaza Strip codenamed Operation “Cast Lead”. Its stated aim was to end rocket attacks into Israel by armed groups affiliated with Hamas and other Palestinian factions. By 18 January 2009, some 1,400 Palestinians had been killed, including some 300 children and hundreds of other unarmed civilians, and large areas of Gaza had been razed to the ground.

VOICE 2:
from the diary of 27-year-old Khulood Ghanem in Gaza
The 27th of December
First day of the war.

I finished my work in Khan Younis at 10 o'clock, and rode a car to Gaza City. I reached there at 11. I decided to drink some coffee with my friend who was working in a company beside the legislative council and the academy for police. I stayed there till 11:30, I decided to leave, my friend told me to stay, it's early, I stayed for 15 minutes. At 11:45 I was on my way walking in the street. I heard the first rocket, the second and the third, many quick attacks, one after one, at this moment I could see nothing, all I remember was the biggest explosion I have ever seen. I started to run away, but to where? I saw the military planes in the sky at a very low level. I was scared and started to lose consciousness. All I was thinking was how to reach a safe place. The sound of bombs and explosions was horrible, the ground was moving up and down, I said, it is not a joke, it is a real, the war has started.

During this short time all roads have been closed, all streets have been overcrowded by the ambulances and emergency cars. I stopped beside a building looking at the sky, watching the military planes. At that moment I lost my ability to move or even to think. People, girls and children, all were shouting, running every where, it was the time for students to leave their school, I thought that if they started to attack haphazardly they will make a catastrophe. I reached Al Shefa hospital. The roads have been closed to ease the movement of the ambulances. I decided to walk in another direction to reach any station to ride a car to the south. I walked a lot till I felt sick, the attacks increased and all streets started to be empty from people except the

emergency and ambulance cars. I was worried about my family, sisters, brothers, friends, I tried to phone every one I knew to assure that all are safe but the attacks destroyed the telecommunication net.

My journey to Khan Younis took 3 hours. It was more safe to avoid the main street because most of the police stations that have been attacked were located at the main street. Finally I reached home. All my family were sitting glaring at the screen of the TV, shocked, pale, yellow and horrible faces, sitting like idols. I took a place beside them. The first scene was the police academy. The number of martyrs was big, about 180 in one place, the scene was horrible, really can't be described, blood in every place, severed parts, heads, hands, legs and arms, couldn't be described. I spent my whole day sitting on a chair in front of the TV. I did not expect one day that I will face such catastrophe, hour after hour, number of martyrs increased and increased.

At 8:30 this night I had a call from my sister who lived in Gaza city. She was walking beside the fence of that school, she saw the heads of young children, bags colored with their blood. One child with his blue shirt, she taught him once before, he was thrown on the ground, bleeding from all parts with no legs, he was shouting and raising his hands, but no one could help. She started to scream, what should we do? I kept silence and started to cry loudly, the vision was so hard to imagine. She started to lose her breath. I told her that is enough, please stop talking, I can't tolerate. I closed my mobile and took my diary and sat in the living room.

VOICE 3:

from the Report of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict, September 15 2009:

The timing of the first Israeli attack, at 11:30 am on a week day, when children were returning from school and the streets of Gaza were crowded with people going about their daily business, appears to have been calculated to create the greatest disruption and widespread panic among the civilian population. The treatment of many civilians detained or even killed while trying to surrender is one manifestation of the way in which the effective rules of engagement, standard operating procedures and instructions to the troops on the ground appear to have been framed in order to create an environment in which due regard for civilian lives and basic human dignity was replaced with the disregard for basic international humanitarian law and human rights norms.

VOICE 1:

That night was the longest I've ever seen, the sound of attacks, rockets from sky, the borders and the sea. That night we decided to sleep in one room, so we chose our room in a far corner in the house. How silly we were, when I remember that I laugh because rockets did not make a choice. So we prepared the place. We were 5: me, my sis, my brother, and my parents, so I arranged the situation to sleep with my mother on my small bed, my father will sleep on another bed, Mona my sis will stay on her bed, and finally my brother took a place on the ground. The first night was dark cause they attacked the electricity station by 4 rockets. And we used to stay in the dark before, so the situation was not new; the new thing was how to close your eyes under the horrible sound of the army planes in the sky, under the bombs every minute and attacks. I started to pray to god. The sound of bombing increased and got nearer and nearer. My father told us that we have one god and it is one death either by rocket, by car, by gun, there is no

difference and you have to die with your dignity and get rid of your fear. The night was so cold, but we opened all doors and windows to avoid damage from them if we were attacked. I slept that night with a coat beside a cold wall, and did not sleep till dawn. I was afraid but not from death. I was afraid to lose all my family and to be saved from death. So I prayed to my god to be the first not the last. In the late night, I felt that I should go to the toilet but I was so afraid to reach the toilet and thought that maybe in the moment I will be there, they will attack the house, so I decided not to go. I suffered a lot in my bed. In addition to my discomfort, I was next to my mother and didn't move left or right cause the space wasn't wide enough for 2 persons. I waited and waited listening to the small radio all that night. The number of deaths was increasing. I called my dad but he was sleepy. I called him again, he answered me: "what is wrong?" I told him "stay awake with me, don't sleep, I can't close my eyes." He told me "don't say that, god is greater and stronger than Israel so you have to sleep and calm down." But I didn't, I waited till I saw the light from the window. I started to feel better cause night is full of fear. At 6 o'clock, I went to the toilet., We prayed our usual prayers, my mother went to her room, left the bed for me. I decided to sleep 2 hours, I was so tired. I slept half hour and then waked up again when I heard a strong attack in Khan Younis. It was the good morning greeting.

VOICE 2:
from Amnesty International:

In many cases, the pattern of destruction suggested that the aim was to cause sufficient damage to put the properties out of use rather than to destroy arms caches, as the kind of damage inflicted would have neither destroyed weapons or rockets - if any had been there - nor impeded their retrieval. What is more, the bodies recovered from under the rubble of these houses were of civilians - not armed fighters.

VOICE 3:
second day

I continued working and cleaning in the house. I turned on the radio cause there was no electricity. I heard about the attack to one of the mosques in Beit Lahia city, 5 were killed in it. I lost my mind, wondered why did they target the mosque, it is a place for worship, what kind of attack is this? I started to worry cause our house is not far from one of the most famous mosques in Khan Younis. The distance is about 30 meters. The bad thoughts filled my mind. I started to draw a picture for the next attack. I started to calculate the distance. How far? How long? Many many thoughts. I went toward the outside door of our house and stayed there for 1 hour, trying to imagine what could happen if the attack was from the left or the right or maybe from the front and finally from the background. I tried to get rid of these thoughts. I talked to my father about that mosque in front of our house. He tried to make me feel better but I did not. I told him that we should leave the house till the end of the war, cause they finished the governmental places and they threatened by targeting the schools and the hospitals. My father told me that there is no reason for targeting the schools and the hospitals, I told him why not? They attacked the mosques so there is no problem to attack every thing. His face was yellow. He ended this conversation with me and left the place. After one hour from our discussion, we heard again about targeting the mosque that was located in front of the Al Shefa hospital. It was ten meters far from it. That means that we are in the waiting list, but when? No one knows. I

ran to my father asking him to leave the house, they are crazy and they will attack everything. He told me leave the house if you want, this is my house and I will die here.

VOICE 1:

from Amnesty International:

The patterns and scale of the attacks, statements by Israeli officials before and during the three-week military offensive, and graffiti left by Israeli soldiers on the walls of Palestinian homes which they took over during their incursion into Gaza, indicates that the wholesale destruction was to a large extent deliberate and an integral part of a strategy at different levels of the command chain, from high-ranking officials to soldiers in the field.

VOICE 2:

third day

I waked up feeling so tired, and I remembered that we haven't any gas for the burner and I missed the breakfast meal. You have to eat with all at a specific time, whether you were hungry or not because my brother decided to burn some wood twice daily: the first for breakfast and the second for supper. So I can't miss any one of them. As a result I decided that depending on sandwiches will be better than living under the mercy of my brother's fire, especially for me as I had a different program in my sleeping every night.

I began my day with a cheese sandwich, after a short time I convinced my brother to burn some wood so as to drink something hot, and of course he did. We were afraid to burn wood in the front yard of the house because of the zanana, the exploratory army plane which is overhead 24 hours daily. It takes accurate photos and it has no pilot. The sound of this plane can lead you to insanity, it was so noisy and it was hard to spend all your day and your night listening to such plane, so all of us were praying for god to stop this plane for ten minutes only.

VOICE 3:

from a Human Rights Watch report, June 30 2009

Israeli and Palestinian human rights groups have reported a total of 42 drone attacks that killed civilians, 87 in all. In the six cases documented in the report, Human Rights Watch found no evidence that Palestinian fighters were present in the immediate area of the attack at the time. None of the civilians killed were moving quickly or fleeing the area, so the drone operators would have had time to determine whether they were observing civilians or combatants, and to hold fire if they were unable to tell the difference. In three of the cases, drones fired missiles at children playing on rooftops in residential neighborhoods, far from any ground fighting at the time.

VOICE 1:

. . . I decided to help my mother even though I did not have the mood to do anything, but I preferred leaving my bed instead of surrendering to illness. I went to the kitchen and cleaned the place, washing the dirty dishes, waiting for the electricity. After a long time, they switched on the electricity and we started to bake the bread. I stayed sitting beside the electrical cooker to have some warmth because we can't switch on the radiator with the oven at the same time. We were busy and working hard and suddenly I heard a strong attack, the electricity was turned off and the ground moved under our feet, we heard loud voices and within a few minutes we heard the ambulances. I ran and opened the outside door. The street was full of people, they were running toward the target to save and help if it was needed. My father left the house and walked with the others. I shouted to him to make him come back, I expected another attack because they used to target the same place twice and I was so afraid and shouted a lot but he did not reply. In a few minutes they targeted an empty area not far away from the first target. I stopped for a while. I could hear nothing, I could listen to nothing. I stayed in my place. My mother ran toward me asking me about my father. I lost my ability to answer. She started to cry. I could hardly move my legs and sat on the ground beside the wall. I thought that my father has gone and I will never see him again. For a moment my mind stopped and I felt with many different feelings, the wheel of life stopped and I couldn't move my body. I stayed in my place for half hour. The noise outside the house ended and we no longer heard the sound of the ambulances. Suddenly, I saw my father's shadow. I opened my eyes and lost the ability to speak. He came quickly and helped me to stand up. "What is wrong? Are you ok?" he said. I told him to take me to my bed cause I felt disabled in my legs. He helped me to reach my bed. He put 2 blankets on me. My temperature of my body increased and I was bleeding water from all parts. My father brought medicine for me, I took it and slept 3 hours, did not feel a thing, I couldn't express how much fear I had at that moment and when I remembered what passed in such moment I could hardly believe that I got ok.

VOICE 2:

After I woke up I asked my dad about the attack. He told me that they targeted a house of one of Hamas members and destroyed it completely. Two were injured, 3 were killed. After that I moved to the television., The first news I heard was targeting the Islamic university in Gaza. So we can say that they started the second step of war as they said that the first step will target all the government and civil buildings and the second will target the health and educational sector, the third will destroy the infrastructure and target the economic side and finally the assassinations and the wanted people. I heard also that the number of martyrs reached 350 and the number of injured reached 1650. I stayed two hours watching the news from channel to channel. My brother started to burn the wood to prepare some tea. I sat beside him looking to the fire for long time. He prepared sandwiches and we gathered around the fire. We were silent. My sister started to make fun to break the ice between us, she said what if it was the last supper. I replied that she reminded me of the famous portrait and we began to talk and laugh. She asked every one, if it was the last moment for you what would be your wish? I discovered that all of us have no wishes except having the mercy and forgiveness from god. We finished and went to prepare the place to sleep. Each one took his usual place. I asked my mum to sleep beside me and when she got tired she could leave. Then she came and slept beside me. Another night of fear and nightmares. I remember this night was the most violent as they started to attack from the sea. All of us stayed awake till the dawn. We prayed and began a new day.

VOICE 3:

from Amnesty International:

In addition to the damage incidental to the fighting, 94 Israeli soldiers - for no apparent reason - sometimes destroyed and frequently vandalized the houses they took over. They defaced the walls with racist and threatening graffiti, deliberately smashed and soiled furniture and possessions, and often left excrement all over the houses when they left.

In several cases Israeli soldiers also used civilians, including children, as “human shields”, endangering their lives by forcing them to remain in or near houses which they took over and used as military positions. Some were forced to carry out dangerous tasks such as inspecting properties or objects suspected of being booby-trapped. Soldiers also took position and launched attacks from and around inhabited houses, exposing local residents to the danger of attacks or of being caught in the crossfire.

VOICE 1:

The fourth day of the war

A new day has come, the 30th of December. Two days before the beginning of the new year, all the world was preparing to celebrate 2009 but we were distinguished, we have a different celebration. In the early morning I opened my eyes and stared for a long time at the ceiling. I drew a picture in my mind, a bad picture. The situation was so calm, I had many doubts and asked myself, have they finished or not yet? Why didn't I hear the f-16 and the apaches? And where is the zanana? I left my bed and covered my head by a scarf. I opened the door and climbed the stairs to the roof. It was the first time in four days to see the light directly. I could hardly open my eyes. I felt that I spent one year in my room. I looked to the sky and started to search for the army planes but there were no planes. I walked for a while and stayed for half hour on the roof. Suddenly I heard the voice of my father, he was shouting "leave the roof and come quickly." I answered him and ran toward him asking him about his anger and shouting. He blamed me for being on the roof and told me that yesterday they targeted a family that was sitting on their roof. The rocket fell in the middle of them, killed the father, the mother, two girls and a little kid. I thought for a while, is it revenge?? Really is it a revenge? But revenge for what? What did they want to achieve? More killing, more destruction, or more what? My father replied me that they are passing through a critical period "the elections" and they should achieve the victory to gain and win more numbers in their elections. I told him that this means that they will continue till they reach the required number, he said "who knows? God only can know, so take care and don't go to outside, stay in the home."

VOICE 2:

from BTselem - The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories September 9 2009:

The extent of civilian fatalities does not, in itself, prove that Israeli violated the laws of war. However, the figures must be considered within the context of the numerous testimonies given by soldiers and Palestinians during and after the operation, which raise grave

concerns that Israel breached fundamental principles of international humanitarian law and caused excessive harm to civilians. . . . Whole families were killed; parents saw their children shot before their very eyes; relatives watched their loved ones bleed to death; and entire neighborhoods were obliterated.

VOICE 3:

I spent three hours washing the clothes. When I began to finish, my sister came telling me that she saw her friend in the news. She was dead, her sisters and her mom also. All have been killed by a rocket. She started to wail and cry. I asked her Are you sure that this girl is your friend? She said yes of course I'm sure, her face was so clear on the TV screen. I asked her to make sure from her death, so we phoned one of the families that live beside them. They told us the whole story of their death. They told us that the father received a call from the Israeli army ordering him to leave the house within five minutes because they will attack the house. He insisted to stay himself and pushed his wife and his daughters to leave the house, they wore heavy clothes, took some money and ran away from the house, the Apache was waiting for this moment as they changed their mind and targeted the mother and her daughters leaving the house, they fired a rocket, exploded their bodies and made them parts, each part in a place. I waited for the afternoon news to see them. I insisted to see them. I wanted to fill my memory with their bodies, I wanted to live their death moment and to share them, I wanted to tell them that you will stay here, in memories, in minds, and in souls, all of you are alive, we will miss all of you, but you can sleep safely now, you are the strongest. I was so proud of my self that I had the courage to see these people in their ugly death. I was tough, shocked. I was thinking of the mentality of their soldiers. I thought a lot but didn't reach a conclusion. I talked a lot to myself, wondering about the aim of ordering people to leave their houses and instead of targeting the house, they targeted the people. And at the same time, they announced that they didn't target civilians. So what is this kind of strategy? Are they making fun of us, are we that cheap?

VOICE 1:

from the Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz, March 19 2009, quoting an Israeli soldier:

Another commander from the same company told about an incident in which an officer shot and killed an adult Palestinian woman who walked along the road at a distance of 100 meters from a house the platoon captured. He said he was forced to argue with his superior officer about the permissive terms for opening fire which made possible the “cleansing” of the homes with rifle fire, without prior warning to the residents. After the orders were changed, the soldiers under this officer complained about it, reasoning “you had to kill every human being found there. Anyone found there was a terrorist.”

Lives of Palestinians, let's say, are something far, far less important than the lives of our boys. That's how they, from their perspective, justified this.

VOICE 2:

from the UN fact-finding mission:

It is clear from evidence gathered by the Mission that the destruction of food supply

installations, water sanitation systems, concrete factories and residential houses was the result of a deliberate and systematic policy by the Israeli armed forces. It was not carried out because those objects presented a military threat or opportunity but to make the daily process of living, and dignified living, more difficult for the civilian population.

What occurred in just over three weeks at the end of 2008 and the beginning of 2009 was a deliberately disproportionate attack designed to punish, humiliate and terrorize a civilian population, radically diminish its local economic capacity both to work and to provide for itself, and to force upon it an ever increasing sense of dependency and vulnerability.

VOICE 3:

31 December 2008

The 5th day

Another new day, a new day of killing, a new day of torture and pain. Me and my family reached to the silence. We stopped talking or sitting with each others. Every one took a place in the house and started to think about his life from birth till that day. In other words we prepared ourselves for the biggest bomb ever. For me I was expecting that the house will be destroyed in each moment. I heard the F-16 flying and making her lovely sound in the gloomy sky. In this day I was thinking of the new year and the celebration under the missiles. I never celebrate in my life a new year, but I was interested to see the celebrations on TV and trying to enjoy with the others all over the world.

VOICE 1:

from a joint report by the Physicians for Human Rights-Israel and the Palestinian Medical Relief Society, June 4 2009:

Besides the large-scale, largely impersonal destruction that the team witnessed and heard of, it was especially distressing to hear of individual cases in which soldiers had been within seeing, hearing and speaking distance of their victims for significant stretches of time, but despite the opportunity for 'humanisation', had denied wounded people access to lifesaving medical care, or even shot at civilians at short range The underlying meaning of the attack on the Gaza Strip, or at least its final consequence, appears to be one of creating terror without mercy to anyone.

VOICE 2:

day 6

The first of January 2009. Twenty attacks for Khan Younis city. That was the total number of attacks in the first day of the new year. The military planes were in a competition in the wide horizon. Hospitals raised white flags declaring lack of service, lack of medicine and lack of life. I waked up as usual in the early morning after a long night of fear. I looked at my face in the mirror, it was yellow and pale. I stared at my face for long time trying to find any hope of life. I felt that I couldn't smile. I discovered at this moment that I lost also my ability to talk. I started my day by cleaning the house. My brother started to burn some wood to prepare something to drink, I fetched in the kitchen for any thing to eat and I discovered that we have nothing to eat. I

decided to collect all dirty clothes and wash them, just to break the long horrible day. I started washing the clothes. I was standing beside the window looking at the sky and following the direction of the F-16. The sky was dirty and grey, gloomy and miserable. I moved toward the washing machine, I looked inside it following the circular motion for the water, I thought for a while that war and killing just like this motion, quick, random and mixture, I felt with many different feelings. While I was staring inside the washing machine I heard my sister shouting on me, running toward me. She pulled me strongly from my hand and shouted, come quickly. I shouted on her face angrily, what is wrong ? We reached the TV and she asked me to look and focus in that face. I sat on the ground in front of the TV. I felt that the screen came into my eyes. She asked me "is she Samia?" I said no, she is not. She asked me again, "is she Samia?" I replied again no she is not. She said I'm sure, I saw her in that photo beside you. I told her again, no she is not. She was so brilliant, so beautiful, I denied her death, and till now I'm denying that. Her face was bright and white. She was laying on a bloody dirty bed in one of the hospitals. I remember that she lost half of her body. She was wearing a nice scarf with small flowers. I noticed her lovely ring in her hand beside her cold body. I said to my sister no she is not Samia again. My sister insisted that she was Samia and asked me to phone her family. I refused and told her to forget about this thing, I walked to the bathroom, closed the door. That was the first time in my life to lose a friend in such ugly way. The shock made me silent and cold. I sat on the ground and remembered that day from 3 years when I met Samia. She was living with her father, her mother died from long time, her brothers are in Saudi Arabia. We spent eight months with each other, she was my colleague in work. We worked together, ate together, walked, laughed and suffered also together. I did not expect that the farewell will be in such way "dead body in the news." I moved toward my bag, opened my wallet and fetched her photo, the last photo. Who could know that this photo will be the last?

VOICE 3:

After short time I heard the sound of rain. It was raining heavily and heavily. I thought that god decided to end this day by the heavy rain. It had not rained for a long time. Of course it was the mercy from god to prevent the military planes from attacking other places and destroying more and more. We took the same places in the room and decided to sleep under the sound of the rain.

VOICE 1:

from Amnesty International:

Israel, as the occupying power, exercises effective control over Gaza's land borders, air space and territorial waters. This is of paramount importance for issues related to evacuation, as residents of Gaza cannot leave Gaza unless Israel allows them to do so.

VOICE 2:

from the UN Fact-Finding Mission:

As the Mission focussed on investigating and analyzing the specific matters within its mandate, Israel's continuing occupation of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank emerged as the fundamental factor underlying violations of international humanitarian and human rights law against the protected population and undermining prospects for development

and peace. Israel's failure to acknowledge and exercise its responsibilities as the Occupying Power further exacerbates the effects of occupation on the Palestinian people. Furthermore, the harsh and unlawful practices of occupation, far from quelling resistance, breed it, including its violent manifestations. The Mission is of the view that ending occupation is a prerequisite for the return of a dignified life for Palestinians, as well as development and a peaceful solution to the conflict.

VOICE 3:

from a report by Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, October 2009:

Over six months [later], the situation in Gaza remains exactly as it was on the day [Israel's] offensive ended. The visible scars of the offensive remain, rubble continues to litter the streets of Gaza, thousands are homeless, families are forced to live in houses with scorched interiors, blood stained floors, and bullet riddled walls. In some instances, victims are forced to look at the discriminatory and offensive graffiti scratched into their walls by Israeli soldiers.

The Israeli imposed closure - an illegal mechanism of collective punishment inflicted on the population of the Gaza Strip - means that recovery and reconstruction are impossible. Until the illegal closure is lifted, Operation Cast Lead will continue to exact its brutal toll.

VOICE 1:

day 7

We sat together beside the TV moving from one channel to another, watching the same scenes, the same events. I started to practice my eyes to see more and my heart to absorb a lot. I remember that my father told me in that day that I have to focus in watching and to understand the situation well because one day I have to tell my children about this war as he told us about his expulsion from his village in 1948. He was 6 years and he remembered everything although of his young age. His story was so sad and impressive. I told him to tell me his story again although I heard it more than once. He started to tell his story and the scenes started to come in my tired memory. His eyes were full of many different feelings, feelings couldn't be touched, he is the only person who could know how much miserable and painful to leave your house, your memories with only a rusty key. I moved from the 1948 to the other picture of Palestine history album, the same picture today with a different weapon, the same action with the same Palestinians, departure and refugees. In this day the Israeli forces succeeded to reach Tal al Hawa city by their tanks. This means that Gaza completely fell down and the situation is getting more worse and worse. I waited the hourly news to know more about the invasion for the center of Gaza. I heard people in the news are shouting in their houses asking for help because the tanks started to burn and target houses. I will never forget that women who was shouting on al-Jazeera asking for help for her kids and family. She shouted till her voice vanished. The situation was so painful. I noticed that my mother started to cry and to say "Where are the Muslims? Where is the justice? Where are people who are calling for peace and rights? Where are they? Why are they silent? Why didn't we hear about leaders and people around the world?" I interrupted her: stop mum, it is Israel. No one could say no to them. All the world could do nothing to the fourth strongest force in the world. She left us and told me that god is here and there and he is the strongest. I followed all the bad actions and attacks in Gaza in this day. The

most painful scene I have even seen was of a small girl. She was dead and buried under the ruins of her house, only her head and her hand was over the ground. Her hair was full of blood and she was covered by a heavy dust. Her face was so beautiful and her eyes still opened, I imagined that she was looking to people and asking for help in her last moments in life but no one could help. I left the TV and moved to my room. I was thinking to collect all war pictures and keep it for memory. I decided to do such thing after the end of the war if we're still alive. While I was thinking deeply, I heard the sound of zanana again and after few minutes I heard the sound of F-16 and Apache. They started to attack. I brought my memory notes and started to write again. I drew a simple sketch of that girl with the dirty head under the ruins. The rain stopped outside and the attacks started again, attack every short time. We burnt some wood and sat together around the fire. Me and my family started to change our situation by discussing ideas and issues far from the war. We spent the whole night listening to the music in the sky waiting for a new day of war.

end

note on *Seven Days from a Gaza Diary*

This performance piece for three voices is adapted from an actual diary kept during the Israeli assault on Gaza 2008-9. The diary was written in Arabic and the diarist herself, Khulood Ghanem, translated the first seven days into rough but clear English. This adaptation retains many non-grammatical usages common to Palestinians speaking English as a second or third language, though correcting and clarifying when necessary. Somewhat less than half the original diary text for those seven days has been used.

Khulood Ghanem was trained as an architect and now works for a women's program at an international agency in Gaza. In March 2009, Khulood volunteered to help with translation for a CodePink Women for Peace delegation that managed to get into Gaza for International Women's Day. Two of the delegates -- Tacoma WA resident Linda Frank and Canadian-Israeli Sandra Ruch -- learned of the existence of Khulood's diary, and they asked Khulood for permission to read the diary and to make it public. After receiving translated sections, Linda Frank brought playwright Edward Mast into the process to adapt the text for performance.

The performance arrangement shares the segments over three voices -- usually three actresses -- more or less evenly. In performance this proved to expand the reach of the material, allowing the audience to engage more deeply. We did not choose the more obvious arrangement of having a single actress play the diarist, with other voices speaking the chorus/quotes, since we felt that would decrease the intensity and scope.

Even though we have retained some of the Palestinian usage of English, we do not recommend that actresses attempt to reproduce the Palestinian accent.

Nor do we recommend that photos or footage be projected before, during or after. Photos and visuals have their own impact, but our experience is that the imagination will grip the heart more deeply without them.

Please contact us for performance rights. In most cases no royalty payments will be needed. However, if admission or donations are charged, or if money is raised in any way using this piece, we would like you to return 5% of the amount raised to a special fund being set up for Khulood Ghanem. All of that money will go to her. Make checks payable to Linda Frank, with GAZA DIARY in the memo line, and send to:

**GAZA DIARY
PO Box 12149
Olympia WA 98508
USA**

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