

# WOLLONGONG WORKSHOP THEATRE



## AUDITION PACK

### About the show

#### *The Lifespan of a Fact*

Written by Jeremy Kareken & David Murrell, and Gordon Farrell, based on the book by John D'Agata and Jim Fingal.

#### **Plot Overview:**

*The Lifespan of a Fact* follows Jim Fingal, an ambitious young fact-checker assigned to verify an essay by celebrated author John D'Agata. Jim soon discovers significant factual inaccuracies, which John defends as necessary for emotional impact. Their editor, Emily Penrose, must mediate between their opposing perspectives under a tight publishing deadline. The play explores the tensions between journalistic integrity and artistic license, unfolding over a single, high-pressure weekend.

#### **Key Themes:**

In today's climate of rapidly questionable information and prominent misinformation, this play raises vital questions: when does bending a fact for emotional impact become dangerous? Where is the line between creative storytelling and manipulation? Are facts negotiable? Is art more accurate at showing the heart of the matter? Can there ever be a justifiable reason to distort reality for the greater good, and *who gets to decide?*

As societal leaders, tech giants, and the media blur the boundaries between fact and fiction, *Lifespan* sparks critical reflection with wit, humour, and emotional intensity.

## Production Team

<b>Director</b>	Stephanie Arezzi (she/her)
<b>Assistant Director</b>	Hayley Craddock (she/her)
<b>Technical/Lighting Director</b>	Zachary Hanlon (they/them)

## Season Dates

**Production Week:** Saturday April 25<sup>th</sup> – Thursday April 30<sup>th</sup>

**Show Dates:** Friday May 1<sup>st</sup> – Saturday May 16<sup>th</sup>

Friday May 1<sup>st</sup> / 8<sup>th</sup> / 15<sup>th</sup> 7:30pm

Saturday May 2<sup>nd</sup> / 9<sup>th</sup> / 16<sup>th</sup> 7:30pm

Sunday May 3<sup>rd</sup> / 10<sup>th</sup> 2:00pm

**\*Please note you MUST be available for all show dates and the whole production week.**

## Rehearsals

Rehearsals are currently set to begin on the week of February 23<sup>rd</sup> with an initial read-through scheduled for Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> February.

Rehearsal days and times will be based on cast/crew availability with two evenings a week and the potential for Sunday rehearsals closer to the season. During your audition slot, The panel will ask you to confirm all your availabilities / unavailability's throughout the rehearsal period.

Rehearsals are held at the Wollongong Workshop Theatre.

## Audition Details

### Dates

**Friday 30<sup>th</sup> January** 7:00pm - 8:30pm

**Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> January** 9:30am – 12:00pm

### Venue

Wollongong Workshop Theatre, 190 Gipps Rd Gwynneville

## Audition Information

Auditions will be held in 15-minute time slots. You are **not** expected to memorise the audition material, but we ask that you prepare the allocated audition pieces, focusing on your interpretation of the character.

Additionally, you may be asked to do a cold read of a scene from the play on the day.

### **Characters:**

**Emily Penrose (Female Presenting)** Playing Age: 30s/40s/50s

Editor-in-Chief for a high-profile Manhattan magazine. She is tough, firm, a master of multi-tasking. She is acutely aware of the weight of her responsibility to balance the need for fact, in a post-truth world, and the need for transcendent story in a world of dying print media.

**Jim Fingal (Male Presenting)** Playing Age: mid-20s

Fact checker. A recent Harvard graduate, he is a confident intern, smart, earnest, well-intentioned and tireless in his pursuits and beliefs. He is driven by facts and sees hard-facts as the only source of truth.

**John D'Agata (Male Presenting)** Playing Age: 30s/40s/50s

An accomplished writer and essayist. Gruff and often frustrated by lack of “vision” in others. Considers his work to be perfection and without need of editorial oversight. He doesn’t suffer fools and values beauty and creativity above all else.

***\*\*General-American accents are required for all roles\*\****

Ages and gender identities are flexible and actors are encouraged to audition for the role they think suits them most. All ethnicities, background, and identities are encouraged to audition.

### **Please note:**

This script contains some strong adult language, and contains discussions of suicide, which may be triggering for some people.

There is also a minimal amount of fight choreography.

**Audition Scenes can be found below (from page 5).**

**Book your audition slot at <https://www.wollongongworkshoptheatre.com.au/auditions>**

The production team aims to have delivered the outcomes of the auditions within one week of auditions.

**VIDEO SUBMISSIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED UNTIL 5PM FRIDAY 30 JANUARY**

Please email the submission to [stephaniearezzi@gmail.com](mailto:stephaniearezzi@gmail.com)

The self-tape should include the scenes listed below as well as a short introduction. Please include any availabilities/unavailability's in the email.

**Show Requirements**

All cast members are required to become ordinary members of Wollongong Workshop Theatre. Ordinary membership costs \$5 and can be purchased via the WWT website:

<https://www.wollongongworkshoptheatre.com.au/membership>

- All cast members are expected to attend all rehearsals required of them, barring sickness and emergencies. Please let us know at the time of audition if you will be away during the rehearsal period or otherwise unavailable for any planned rehearsals.
- By accepting a role in the show, you agree that your image may be featured in promotional material for the show on the Wollongong Workshop Theatre website and social media channels. If you have any concerns about this, please contact the production team.
- Cast members may be asked to assist with other aspects of the production, including (but not limited to) set construction, publicity, and costume-making.

**AUDITION SCENE – EMILY #1 / JOHN #1**

JOHN. You really need to stop treating me like I'm a journalist, Emily.

I'm not a journalist. I'm an essayist. I'm done.

EMILY. Oh, are you? Because I have all the time in the world to sit here and listen to you list the entire canon of the expository essay. You may or may not be a journalist, but I am and my magazine, like it or not, is going to be judged by journalistic standards. We need to look like we've considered every potential inconsistency. We need to make a good-faith effort.

JOHN. I'm not the one who's lost faith.

EMILY. Let's just get through this meeting.

JOHN. Meeting? With him? Why?

EMILY. Because he's the fact checker.

JOHN. Fire him.

EMILY. Fire him?

JOHN. He's poison to the creative process.

EMILY. If attorneys get involved do you know how that will look?

JOHN. Wait, attorneys?

EMILY. It's one thing for me not to know. But will you look at that fucking paper trail? We have to at least go through the motions—I fire him, he goes public, his attorney, or publicist, his attention-hungry girlfriend, whatever, they draft a narrative. And I—we—are all over social media for the wrong reasons. A narrative of wilful negligence.

JOHN. He scares you that much.

EMILY. Your essay is important. People will care. People will ask questions. You understand what it is to stare into the—

JOHN. The abyss?

EMILY. The barrel of a gun. Don't finish my sentences. If this happens—this is a career ender. For both of us. Listen, I have a duty to my audience, my publisher, my advertisers.

JOHN. This isn't a business to me. It's not a business.

EMILY. It is also a business. The whole industry is falling down around me. Ad sales through the floor, an aging audience—circulation literally dying. We sell high-end ads because of cutting-edge writing, writing shareholders call “monetized content.” But the entire enterprise comes down to—

JOHN. Money?

EMILY. Trust, John. It comes down to trust.

**AUDITION SCENE – JIM #1 / EMILY #2**

EMILY. Jim—

JIM. Though I guess they're not necessarily bars; in fact, it's harder to get a full liquor license if you can see the vaginal area... like I'm guessing you can at this place, Pussy Rockets—

*He looks up at her, alarmed.*

Sorry, can I say...?

EMILY. You may say Pussy Rockets.

JIM. Great—yeah, he says “clubs,” which could indicate any place where people pay women to take off their clothes—but wait, is he including male establishments!?

EMILY. Okay, first—

JIM. I mean, ones where guys show their—

EMILY. —first, this is great. You've got the hang of it, you're checking each fact. You're doing the job I instructed, and you're doing it really, really—the spreadsheet was a great start. I clearly picked the right person.

JIM. The spreadsheet was important so you can filter the issues by—

EMILY. And that's your question? The strip clubs?

JIM. Well I have a couple others. One or two or a few more of these little details. There's this chicken—

EMILY. You know what? You should check all this with John.

JIM. You mean, like, talk to him?

EMILY. Email him. Introduce yourself, use my name. He's passionate about his work, but I've known him for a long time, and he always

has time for people who are polite and intelligent. And you're polite and intelligent. Right? Are you?

JIM. Of course!

EMILY. So, I'll send you his contact info. Clear up whatever you have a question about.

JIM. Okay. I think I can do that.

EMILY. But stick to the facts. Don't change anything with regard to the shape and intent of the piece.

JIM. Stick to the facts. Got it. This is going well.

EMILY. Just keep on, and keep it thorough.

JIM. No problem. Yes. Great.

EMILY. Great!

JIM. This is going well.

EMILY. You said that.

JIM. I know, it's just—look, he's kind of a big writer. Don't you think—

EMILY. James, you are a professional. He is a professional.

JIM. Yes, I think I got it.

**AUDITION SCENE – JOHN #2 / JIM #2**

JIM. Hello?

JOHN. Is this Jim Fingal?

JIM. Uh, yes, this is Jim Fingal.

JOHN. Listen Jim Fingal: You're not going to fix anything. Nothing's broken.

JIM. Mr. D'Agata, I think we got off to a bad start. Please, let me clarify—

JOHN. There's nothing to clarify.

JIM. It's policy—

JOHN. “Policy” does not—

JIM. —to fact check all nonfiction pieces. There are a lot of facts in your piece and your claims sometimes get a little inflammatory. So could you help me out with that number?

JOHN. [Pause.] Inflammatory?

JIM. Not—inflammatory—

JOHN. Then what?

JIM. —just—hard-hitting—in an intriguing way. Sorry, wrong choice of words.

JOHN. [Pause.] Why are you doing this?

JIM. Excuse me?

JOHN. Who are you?

JIM. Who am I?

JOHN. Why are YOU doing this?

JIM. Why am I doing this?

JOHN. Who ARE you?

JIM. It's my job.

JOHN. Yes, but why?

JIM. Why is it my job?

JOHN. Yes

JIM. Because Emily Penrose told me to. Look, we got off to a bad—

JOHN. Let me give you some advice—

JIM. I really just want the exact number—

JOHN. Ask yourself why Emily Penrose would trust this essay to someone like you.

JIM. I understand—

JOHN. An intern.

JIM. —your frustration.

JOHN. Seriously, why?

JIM. Talent and dedication?

JOHN. Are you asking me or telling me?

JIM. Telling you?

JOHN. No, I'm telling you. She's giving you busywork. She's getting you out of her hair.

JIM. If you say so, but—

JOHN. You're not Daniel Menaker and this isn't Mr. Shawn's New Yorker. Check a few dates and get it back to her, she'll say "fine" and everyone will be happy.

JIM. But I kind of want to do a good job. This is an opportunity for me.

JOHN. Sure, whatever. Just don't overestimate your importance in the whole process.

JIM. Uh—

JOHN. Open quotes Emily Penrose close quotes knows what kind of writer I am. We've worked together many times. She knows I'm not beholden to every detail.

JIM. She said you take the occasional liberty.

JOHN. I take liberties with things that deepen the central truth of the piece. Don't get bogged down in the details, keep your eye on the big picture. Except don't, because that's my job.

JIM. I understand that. I do. I like the essay. But how many strip clubs, and can you tell me where you got the information?

JOHN. [Pause.] I used Adult Industry News.

JIM. Thanks, that's very helpful. And that's a problem, because the magazine is confusing.

JOHN. Yeah it is. So I picked thirty-four because I like the rhythm.