

# "a legal weapon" by mark wheeller essay sample

[Literature](#), [Drama](#)



## **“ A Legal Weapon” by Mark Wheeler Essay Sample**

This is about a boy called Andy who was speeding in his car and collided with a young girl, Kelly, on her moped and she died. And as a result of this Andy was sent to prison. It also includes the relationship of Jazz and Andy and how their relationship falls apart when Jazz goes to university and meets the young footballer Matt. Suspicion is raised about how close Jazz and Matt actually are.

My first thoughts about this stimulus was that it was very hard to follow as so much is going on at the same time, I found this confusing. But once we got into lesson and discussed the play in more detail it became a lot clearer to me. It also helped that we acted out a few scenes giving me a clear view of some of the characters.

This is what we decided in our class Andy was like as a character, what he thought of himself and what other people thought of him. Andy acts as though he thinks very highly of himself, but I can't help but feel that this is all a cover up and a front as to not let people meet the real Andy. It matters a lot to Andy about what people think of him and how he comes across, he tries too hard to impress a lot of the time. The way he acts and tries to put across this front makes people see him as arrogant and self-centred.

Probably not the image Andy was going for. When Andy was first introduced to the play I thought that he felt that he was the innocent one and victim in everything that happened, an attention seeker. This especially shows when Andy reacts badly to the people that caused his Grandad to have a heart

attack he calls them "murderers" and he feels it is entirely their fault, this makes me a hypocrite later in play.

To bring Andy's character to life we used voice and movement really well. Since we all decided that Andy tried to act like he was "one of the guys" and tried to act very sure of himself he should have a strong walk where he uses his body a lot to show that he was not afraid of anyone and that he was tough. This also came across in his voice- when he was maybe acting up to other people his voice can change to show that this isn't the real him and that he is putting on a front. The only time really you ever get to see the true Andy is when he hears about his Grandad and when he is in prison. This is also the only time that Andy should be shown as having strong feelings and having real emotions, his whole body language and voice totally changes to something much more softer looking. Also when Andy talks a lot of hand movement isn't needed. Men move their hands less than women anyway but also Andy never talks very passionately about anything and it is when you talk about something like that or something very meaningful to you that you use your hands a lot more. So really through out the play there are 2 different characters to show Andy one arrogant one and one shy sensitive one. And if you act these characters both to the extreme you can really emphasise the drastic change in his personality at different times.

We did a prepared improvisation about what was going on in Kelly's head just after she had been hit by Andy's car. I was in a group with Sarah, Nick and Rhian, we showed the happy moments in Kelly's life, and fond memories and we linked them all to her moped. We started with a still image of Kelly's

body sprawled on the floor and people staring down at her lifeless body. We then changed to Kelly being woken up on Christmas day getting a set of keys as her present (these were for her new moped waiting outside). Then we turned it into a scene with 4 children having an argument about who will have the better life when they are older and what each will own, with Kelly announcing proudly that she would have a moped. We linked this scene with one with Kelly celebrating her birthday with some friends and being sick as a result of too much alcohol. The last scene was of Kelly getting on her moped for the first time. And then back to the very first image of people standing around her body. I think that this worked really well and he responded to the task originally and this was really successful. We made the whole thing run really smoothly and this created a dream sort of effect.

We only had seated 2 people through out these sessions. Andy (Stacey) and Jazz (Katie). We asked them questions to do with how they felt about each other now after all that has happened between them. In their relationship and how they are both coping with Andy now in jail. We also asked both of them how they felt about themselves and if they had any regrets and what they would change if they could. Jazz regretted staying with Andy so long and without saying this I got the impression that she felt really stupid since she had stood by Andy so long when he was not what she needed or wanted in her life. Andy's answer was strangely no. He told the group that " he had no regrets" and that he still believed that it was all the " girl on the mopeds" fault and not his own. I personally thought that Andy would have changed a lot since he has been through the trauma of being in prison and being bullied

whilst he was there! But obviously he is way too heartless for any of that and is a truly selfish character through out everything that has happened.

We used all three of the following at the same time: still image narration and marking the moment. We were asked to choose four parts of the play that we felt as a group were really important then to narrate the piece and to do a still image of what we thought illustrated that section the best. I was narrating for this piece. The first bit that decided as a group was most important is a short piece said by Kelly at the start and half way through the play, the line was " I'll be back as soon as I can ... just after 5 I guess." To illustrate this we showed Kelly sprawled on the floor just after being hit by Andy in his car. We decided that this was important because at the start of the play it is a hint at what is going to happen later on.

Also it shows what happened as a result of Andy speeding. We also chose to show when Andy found out that his Grandad was dead. We chose the lines " your Grandad's in hospital Andy, he's in a bad way." We showed Jazz on the phone to Andy who had buried his face in his hands. This is important because it shows the contradiction in how he felt about the people who robbed his Grandad and how he felt he was the innocent one when he killed Kelly. It's important because it is something that the audience can see but Andy is blind to. For the still image of the quote " 50's not fast, 50's not criminal." Was to have Andy sitting looking very relaxed in his car. Showing how little he obviously cares about safety and what's legal also how his image is a lot more important to him than safety of himself and others. The last one we chose was to have Andy sitting in his cell with the 2 other

prisoners towering over him intimidating him. We used the quote " an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." This was one of the most important ones I felt since it shows how Andy got what he deserved, even though he probably felt the victim still. This line is early on in the book but it is a reflection of what's to come.

In the scene where Andy hits Kelly in his car we used sound to emphasise the strength behind the blow. I think that this worked really well when one group added a loud drum noise when she was hit. I think that this worked really well since it made the audience jump. I think that this was really good since they was also a climax created. And the audience felt more involved with the drama. Also by making the audience jump they do feel a lot more involved with the drama. I thought that this was a really good idea because it helped the groups to develop their ides further and made their dramas a lot more interesting.

Through out the drama session I think that we used space and levels really well. We showed hoe people are bigger than the others, by using height to show how one character towers over the other both visually and in their personalities. I think when this worked really well was the very last scene in the book, where Andy is in prison and 2 of his cellmates bust in on him and start to shout at him and start to beat him up. We showed for the first time in the play how Andy actually felt a lot smaller than some body else. I think that this was really good because it showed a different side to Andy. We acted out this part of the play quite early during our assessment period; I think that this was really helpful because it helped me to understand a lot more about

Andy's character. The way the he was portrayed, was that he was weak and very out of place. He felt uncomfortable and very insignificant. This helped to develop Andy's character later on since we could all refer to that as a contrast. We used space through out all of our dramas. I don't this that we emphasised the important of it so much and we didn't use this to symbolise how any of the characters felt. But we made sure that we weren't always bunched together.

We only used props once in our dramas. And this was to show Kelly's death. I think that this was a good idea because that way we could show pain in a new and different way. My group chose not to use any props for this, as it would make it a bit more complicated. But after watching the other groups dramas I think that we should have. A group that I thought did very well was Claire's group. They used pieces of shredded material on the end of wooden sticks. There was a person either side of Claire pushing her around with these sticks and as she fell to the floor she grabbed them and fell to the floor with them, so they also acted as blood. They also used hacked up pieces of blue material for the boiling water with sugar in the very last scene. I didn't think that this worked as well because I think that the water would have been better mimed as the material showed not enough pain it looked to soft and I don't think that it worked as well in a scene like that one.

We had to mime a lot since a lot of the scenes included a car. It was the first time that our group had had to mime so much but I think that we all did it really well. When I think it was most effective when people acted out being Andy in the car. I think that this worked well because of how people moved

about. Sam Catling was very good at this, he moved about really well he didn't look like he felt stupid, he looked relaxed and the movements he made weren't too unnatural and not too over acted. I think this worked well since everybody took him seriously and we all had a good mental image of him in a car, driving.

We did use both climax and anti climax through out these sessions. I think that this was a lot harder to do since we were working with a script. Whereas usually we get to make up our own climaxes and anti climaxes we had to work out where we should add tension to the script with I think we did do well but this was a lot harder to do. I think the easiest part of the play to build up tension in was just before Andy hit Kelly. When he is driving down a road talking out his speed and how he will take the next corner. You could tell that something was going to happen even though the pace of the drama was slow you could feel that it was all building up to something. Again I think that Sam Catling was really good at this, as he didn't rush what he was saying and kept at a steady pace whilst he was in the car. I was in a group with Rhian, Sarah, Nick and Sam Pigden. I think that we did do quite well but if we had slowed down the pace then we would have made a better climax, I think that ours was too rushed which didn't give the audience much time to take in what was going on.

When I was in a group with Sarah, Nick and Rhian and we showed what was going through Kelly's head just before she died I think that we used rhythm, pace and tempo really well. The idea was to create a sort of dream effect to show that it was memories and not what was going on at that time. I think

that we achieved this; we kept a slow steady pace, making it easy to follow. We made all of the short scenes run into each other, smoothly, making them easy to follow. Although I did feel in a few dramas, that I was in, the pace was too fast at the wrong moment. I think that it is important even when doing a very fast scene to talk steadily to make it easy to follow and understand.

This is what I thought of jazz as a character and what people around her thought of her. By drawing up a corporate character of Jazz it helped me to act her out a lot easier. It helped me to develop her as a character. I think it's always best to do a corporate character of the main characters then that way it's simpler to act them out and you get a better idea of how to make them stand speak walk etc. With jazz I find this helpful since she is a really confusing character. At first you think that she is a tart and very arrogant, but after going through the script you start to sympathise for her a lot more and u start to feel as though she is coping with a lot more than she lets the other characters know. She has to cope with being away from Andy, and you get the feeling that he is making her feel sorry for him to keep them together. You feel that she is also aware that other people may not be so keen on her and she tries not to take it all to heart. But making this corporate character I found it a lot easier to act out Jazz.

I think that it really helped me by doing a corporate character of Jazz because it helped me bring her character to life. I decided that she should walk really posh and have good posture to show maybe how she is in fact a very intelligent proper person. I also thought that Jazz should talk really well

and not as common as other characters such as Andy. Also Jazz would use her hands a lot more when she talks as she talks about things close to her and things that she feels really passionate about. There is such a large contrast between Jazz and Andy as characters. Inside they feel the same, but both characters act totally different to how they feel about themselves, this is of course eventually what drives them apart. Neither of them discusses how they truly feel about each other and how they feel inside, they both put on fronts but both are totally different.

The only group that really used symbolism was Claire's group when they showed Kelly's death, (being hit by Andy); they used the colour red to show pain and then to show blood. I thought that this worked really well since every one immediately associates red with danger anyway. So it was clear to the audience what was going on and I see why they used the red. I think that the idea of symbols is really good and I will use them in some dramas in the future as they add to the drama and show pain in a new way without using noise or facial expressions.

I think that the play "legal weapon" is really good. It is a really good stimulus to be given since it is such a complicated play at first but once you start to act it all out and bring it to life it is challenging but fun and it looks really good. When I first read the play I found that it was really confusing. I felt that there was a lot going on at one time in different places to totally different people. I also felt that there were a lot of scenes that would be hard to show and get the audience to gain a full understanding in what is going on. Although this appeared to be a problem it was very easily once we

started to act out the play. I found that both Andy and Jazz's characters would be very hard to act out since they both need to be so strong and both are in fact very complicated people, but this all adds to such memorable characters and such an original exciting play.

I feel that I worked really well through out this period of time. I contributed well in class discussions and asked lots of questions to help me bring the characters to life and gain a full understanding of various scenes. When we went in to smaller groups to act out smaller scenes I felt that I put across a lot of ideas and a lot of these were considered and used in the actual dramas. I think that this is so far the hardest piece of drama work we have ever had to do since we knew exactly what had to be done, by looking at the script, but had to bring everything to life ourselves. It had to look really good and we had to decide how to put across the most important scenes and make sure that the audience gain a full understanding about what is going on. I think that the time when this proved most challenging was showing Kelly being knocked over by Andy in his car. Since this was obviously such a violent scene with such meaning, and it is the most important part of this play. Although this proved really hard I think that it was done really well and each group had such an original idea and everybody's worked really well. In conclusion I would say that everyone worked really hard through out this period of time and this is shown by the quality of our work.

The piece of drama that I felt was most successful was when we were asked to show what went through Kelly's head after being hit by the car. I was in a group with Rhian, Sarah and Nick for this drama. I think that we all worked

well together and the drama that we produced showed this. By using parts of the script we gave Kelly a history. We decided to show some of her happiest memories and some how link them all together. We chose to like them all to her moped since being on that was what killed her. The only person who kept to the same character through out this drama was Sarah who was playing Kelly. We started with Kelly on the floor with people staring down at her dead body.

We then went to Kelly be woken up on Christmas to find that she had a new bike, we then made that drift into a childhood memory of Kelly arguing with her friends about what would be better to own when they are older Kelly saying that she would own a moped. Then to Kelly celebrating her birthday with friends, drinking, and Kelly leaning over to throw up through drinking too much, she then stood up straight and got on her moped. This is when we incorporated the script Kelly yelling to her father, " I'll be back as soon as I can just after 5 I guess." We then ended with Kelly lying on the floor again. Just how we started. I think that this was the most effective because this was when we got to make up what was going on. Since we hadn't been told anything about Kelly about what she liked, whom she lived with, what sort of personality she had he got to use our imaginations a lot more. And I enjoy doing this more than script work since there are not so many boundaries as there was when we worked from a script. The response that we received from this piece was good. If I were to improve it I would have added maybe more memories to show more of a combination.

I think that this was a really good assessment period since there was a lot of good drama's produced. I felt that I have learned a lot through doing these dramas. Since this was only the second time we had worked from a script I felt that it worked really well. We also got to explore different areas of drama. Where as usual we just show what is going on in a scene and do everything very straight forward we got to experiment with different ways of showing an incident, for example Kelly's death, this proved to be a lot more exciting and I thing that it actually made scene look a lot more dramatic and added more tension, it was a lot more interesting to watch also. This play is also really good because there is a really strong message put across about speeding. Something a lot of children and young adults don't always consider when they are driving. This play has shown us what awful consequences can come from speeding. Even if its just 50 miles an hour. And I will think twice before speeding when I drive.