



Discovering the good man:

Double story development with a survivor of repetitive ongoing trauma in immigration detention

by Janet Pelly



Janet Pelly has been advocating for detainees in Australia's immigration detention centres since late 2016. She collaborates with lawyers, psychiatrists, GPs and other advocates to help people in immigration detention to access basic legal, health and other human rights, and to work towards an end to indefinite detention. She can be contacted by email: janetpelly15@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper explores the possibilities for transforming a trauma narrative while the person remains in a traumatic situation. It focuses on my work with Yasin (not his real name), a stateless Middle Eastern man who sought asylum in Australia in 2013 after a lifetime of persecution for his ethnicity, religion and attempts to seek protection. The paper describes the use of narrative practices, including double-storied testimony, re-authoring conversations and the Team of Life process, to help Yasin manage life in an immigration detention centre, and to reduce the frequency of his flashbacks and nightmares. The paper presents the efforts of one man to re-author elements of his life while trapped in an environment that both replicates past trauma and denies hope for a better future.

Key words: *trauma; immigration detention; refugees; asylum seekers; testimony; re-authoring conversations; Team of Life; narrative practice.*

Introduction

My interest in narrative practice stems from visiting people whose lives have been taken over by Australia's immigration detention system. Ever since mandatory and indefinite detention was enacted in 1992 (Phillips & Spinks, 2013), it has been characterised by removal of identity. Names are replaced with Boat IDs, labels are applied ('illegals', 'criminals', 'queue jumpers') and people become known as one of a category (asylum seeker, refugee, 501, 116, high/low security) rather than as individuals.

This narrative is most strongly applied to people who come by boat, officially referred to as Irregular Maritime Arrivals.

In 2001, the then Prime Minister John Howard and other conservative politicians sought to convince voters in what became known as the Tampa Election (Mares, 2011) that asylum seekers had thrown their children into the sea to force entry into Australia. Although roundly discredited (Marr, 2014), the 'children overboard' claims cast a long shadow.

Today, government narratives of being 'strong on border protection' have created a climate in which harsh measures are passed off as means to protect 'the Australian way of life'. This has given rise to a multibillion-dollar industry managing people portrayed as being 'illegal', of 'bad character' (Migration Act 1958 Section 501) or unable to integrate, and a shift from 'transit accommodation' to high security 'immigration detention centres' that more closely resemble prisons.

In this climate, it is impossible to separate the personal narratives of people seeking asylum in Australia from political narratives defining who should be welcomed and who should not.

Purpose

This paper explores the concept of being a 'bad' person, and whether it is possible to transform a trauma narrative while the person remains in a traumatic situation. It focuses on my work with Yasin (not his real name), a stateless Middle Eastern man who sought asylum in Australia after a lifetime of persecution for his ethnicity, religion and attempts to seek protection. He remains in detention more than 5 years later.

I first met Yasin in mid-2016 when visiting friends at a Melbourne immigration detention centre. He had been

implicated in riots on Christmas Island (an Australian territory off the coast of Indonesia) in November 2015, and was returning to detention after several months in jail, still awaiting judgment on charges of spitting at a guard. To my mind, this punishment was excessive, but not inconsistent with the harsh measures that followed the introduction of the *Australian Border Force Act* (July 2015).

Yasin had been labelled a troublemaker, but I experienced him as polite, engaging and shy. I later found out that he had little contact with visitors, having spent most of the previous three years on Christmas Island.

When we met again six months later, Yasin was in poor physical and mental health due to untreated illnesses and the excessive use of force and heavy restraints during a series of inter-centre transfers, which triggered his Complex PTSD. This, along with the restrictive detention environment and not having a fluent language in common, made communication between us difficult, but we soon adapted and were able to speak more freely as trust developed.

I was curious about how narrative practices might help Yasin manage life in closed detention and reduce the frequency of post-traumatic flashbacks and nightmares. Yasin found any interaction with the detention centre's guards triggering, and was also dealing with the stress of waiting on the outcome of his refugee protection claim. My main concern was not to retraumatise him, especially while he had no relief from an environment that was inherently traumatising. My use of narrative practices raised the question of whether I was adding another 'hat' – that of counsellor – to my existing roles as support person, advocate and friend to Yasin. However, rather than positioning me as a counsellor to Yasin, narrative practice was used to scaffold my existing roles, especially as the scale of his trauma became clear.

During one of our first in-depth phone conversations, Yasin said, 'I'm very bad person. In the whole world you'll never find someone bad like me'. This statement has echoed through more than two years of regular phone and face-to-face conversations, and the past 10 months of narrative practice. Through double story development (White, 2004), testimony (Denborough, 2005), the Team of Life process (Ncube, 2006; Denborough, 2008) and rescued words (Newman, 2008), we were able to explore what contributed to Yasin's idea of himself as bad, what other truths were evident, and how he had responded to traumatic events in his life.

Due to his indefinite detention, Yasin's narratives are inextricably linked to the system he exists in: a system that demonises people seeking asylum, particularly those arriving by boat. This has prompted me to consider two dimensions of Yasin's story in this paper:

- The personal – Yasin's double story development and the identification of core values, skills and beliefs that give meaning to his life.
- The political – the way in which Yasin's personal narratives intersect with political realities he has no control over, but which have long controlled every aspect of his life.

Context

When I reconnected with Yasin in late 2016, I was aware that he and his family had been imprisoned by Saddam Hussein's regime when he was an infant, and that his incarceration continued through to adulthood in an Iranian detention centre after they were deported from Iraq. For several months, this was all I knew, partly because we did not have a fluent language in common, partly because cultural beliefs limited what he could tell me, but mainly because he was focused on getting help with his health and legal issues and connecting with someone whose company 'takes me out of this place'.

It's important to state that I formed a deep personal connection with Yasin well before starting to use narrative practices with him (from February 2018). Although this had its challenges, Yasin's natural talent for story and metaphor made narrative therapy a good fit, and I knew I would benefit from some scaffolding for our conversations.

The level of restriction and lack of privacy faced by people in immigration detention in Australia is also directly relevant. Every element of detainees' lives is controlled, from meal times and activities through to CCTV everywhere except their (mostly shared) bedrooms. There are also regular room checks, targeted room searches, and forced transfers between centres that often moved people away from their support networks. Our sessions were conducted by phone because privacy was impossible in a face-to-face situation. During 2018, I visited every two or three months, but the constant observation by guards (in person and via CCTV) made anything but social conversation impossible.

Testimony

When I started my narrative therapy training in February 2017, the impact of Australia's harsh border protection policies was being felt via increasing securitisation of detention centres, the controversial 'fast track' refugee assessment process (Refugee Council of Australia, 2019) and a mental health crisis among people in long-term detention (Public Interest Advocacy Centre, 2018). It was suggested that I look into taking testimony (Denborough, 2005) as a way of responding to requests from Yasin and other detainees for Australians to better understand who they are and why locking them up in detention is wrong. This felt important for several reasons: detainees were being hidden and silenced in locked centres (especially before smartphones were allowed); detainees were required to engage in legal processes that they didn't understand (often with minimal legal support); and detainees were painfully aware of political voices claiming they were 'illegal' and to be feared.

The opportunity to develop this double-storied testimony (White, 2004) came just before the fifth anniversary of Yasin's detention. He had been struggling with immigration appeals and health crises and despaired about ever finding freedom; he was particularly worried that his parents would die before he got out of detention. We had already used first-hand accounts to give the legal and medical professionals representing Yasin a fuller picture of his life, and to illustrate how trauma had informed his actions. Some of these people became outsider witnesses when Yasin was ready to give his testimony.

Writing Yasin's testimony in the first person was an essential response to a detention system designed to demonise, depersonalise and silence people seeking asylum. There are literally thousands of pages detailing Yasin's health and behavioural issues, authored by people who are unaware of, or choose to exclude, contexts such as the triggering effects of detention on him as a survivor of rape and torture at the hands of prison guards. These files affect everything from Yasin's refugee protection claim, to the use of restraints during medical care, yet he has no right of reply to them. Developing a testimony document in his own words felt like a significant act, primarily of agency but also resistance.¹

Structuring safety

Once Yasin agreed to go ahead, the idea of structuring safety (Reynolds, 2010) was not only important but

necessary, given that he remained in an unsafe environment. I explained that the testimony would be his story in his own words, and that he would decide what it would explore, how it would be told, and whether and when to share it.

The process was constrained by our geographical separation: I was in Melbourne and he was detained in regional Western Australia. I could visit him, but the degree of observation (guards, CCTV, and sharing the visiting room with other detainees and their friends and families) would make it difficult to talk freely and show emotion. We talked mostly via voice call as video calls tended to drop out and this risked interrupting the flow.

I used the questions proposed by Denborough (2005) to focus our conversations. Having this structure kept us focused on completing the testimony, rather than dwelling on particular topics. For Yasin, the questions were helpful but a bit restrictive because he had so much he wanted to talk about, including a lot of related information that was important to him as part of his family unit. He also said he needed time to explore ideas that he could conceptualise clearly in Arabic, but was less familiar with in English.

Before we started, I read Yasin the questions, asked him to take a break whenever he felt like it, and invited him to 'pass' on anything he didn't want to talk about. He asked that I do the same because he was concerned about how his story would affect me. As it turned out, I needed more breaks than he did, and we completed the testimony over five separate sessions.

Co-authoring

I felt an enormous responsibility to Yasin and his family, and wanted to develop his testimony in line with the narrative ethic of collaboration (White, 1997). In Emma Preece Boyd's (2017) excellent account of her testimony work with a Congolese family, I was struck by a quote from Jennifer King: 'the writer faces a unique challenge, as they are tasked with translating what is an embodied, personal experience into static form' (King, 2016, p. 21). This rang true, especially because Yasin would be speaking in his third language to a woman from outside his culture. I wondered whether it would be better to use a translator, but Yasin emphatically refused to involve a third party, especially someone from a Middle Eastern background. His reasons became clear as soon as we started, as did his choice of Australian citizens already familiar with his trauma history as outsider witnesses.

We recorded almost six hours of interviews and I made notes as Yasin spoke, later reading excerpts back to

him. Frequently he whispered 'yes, yes' in response to sections of text. At other times, I would summarise in a way that made sense to me, only to hear, 'I don't understand. Can you say again?' I soon understood this as a signal that I had misinterpreted his meaning and needed to go back to the recordings.

At the outset, we agreed that Yasin would change or delete any content he didn't feel comfortable with. This happened only a couple of times, and tended to be something that he thought his mother wouldn't want known outside the family, or material that he thought would be too upsetting for his witnesses to read. This opened up a long discussion about the importance of documenting his truth, and Yasin gained confidence that the most painful details could be honoured in ways he would not regret.

Once the testimony was drafted in full, I read it to Yasin several times, asking him to suggest anything that would better reflect his intended meaning. He was quite forceful in this phase, suggesting changes or adding thoughts, perhaps sensing that he was close to handing the testimony over to his outsider witnesses.

Taking testimony

When responding to the first question – Why have you decided to give this testimony today? – Yasin set an unexpected agenda:

Because I start to believe when people say don't be shame. It is my life and my parents' life and we still alive. I hope it can help someone in hard times.

We had not talked about shame, and it was surprising to hear him name this as his primary motivation for speaking at this time. It was also surprising to hear him ask that this document could only be seen by a very few trusted supporters, and definitely no Middle Eastern people:

Why? Because when I was younger, I told someone what was happen to me and my family. Oh and unfortunately he go and tell everyone. Too many people. He say, 'you poofta, your mum bitch'. And I was really shame and so angry and sad. Because of what happened, I thinking I'm really bad person.

Yasin said his mother was upset that he had told me about the rapes and other violence they had been subjected to in prison, and had warned him not to do it again as I would think badly of him. He said he had

explained that I, like many Australians, did not share those attitudes and felt only compassion and care for what they had suffered.

I asked him why he wanted to talk about this rather than other aspects of his life, especially ones that would help Australians understand the horrors of immigration detention. He said, 'this my story, too much. This why I leave. I think I come to Australia and throw it in the ocean, but nah. In detention, I feel it every day.'

Regardless of the size of the audience, he said he wanted this content included. I started to realise that this testimony was as much for himself as anyone else.

Gaining insight

Yasin's testimony provided significant insight into his statement about being a 'very bad person'. From a very young age, Yasin was subjected to cultural shame that suggested he was responsible for the sexual violence he experienced in jail ('Because of what happened, I thinking I'm really bad person'). He had not been able to work through this because his carers were subjected to the same shame. Later, when he was free from jail and detention, Yasin saw his actions (especially drug use and homelessness) as a violation of his family values of respect, kindness and helping people:

Many people say don't be shame but my mum, I can't look at her in the eyes, not because she bad but because she angel. I'm shame for what she done for me and for my family and for other people.

I make her cry a lot of times when I get older because I was just thinking about myself and how I can forget the pain and have chance for enjoy life. When because of me she had to lie down with that dog.

At the end of the testimony process, I said to Yasin that it seemed he saw himself as bad when he couldn't live his values or stop bad things happening. 'Yes, this is true', he replied.

Reframing

Despite outlining the extensive harm done to him, Yasin's testimony also showed that he had been able to protect himself in meaningful ways, even as a child:

My mum, she have a lot chickens, and I was look after them, play with them. Sometimes, I sit by myself and hug the chicken for hours. I tell them about my pain, tell them about the world, how much the human bad. The chicken was quiet,

just listening. I never give them name but really I feel safe with them, feel nice, more than talk to human ...

All the time I imagine living in the jungle. Just me and animals around me. I make it in my mind and I make it so beautiful. No war, no killing, no rapist, no jail.

When I get older, all the time I dream I am millionaire, go to orphanage and look after the kids. I be their father and they call me daddy. I do for them what my parents do for us. Try to save them. Teach them how be nice, be kind, be respectful.

Recalling these acts of self-protection appeared to 'thicken' Yasin's sense of self, which was significant as people's sense of self is often limited by repetitive trauma (White, 2004). His stories showed that Yasin and his family had again and again taken 'steps to try to protect and to preserve what they give value to' (White, 2004, p. 47): respect, kindness, and helping others, guided by their Muslim faith.

Yasin's testimony enabled him to articulate and acknowledge his own and his family's suffering, and also the kindness, respect and care they showed to so many others in hard times. This deeper knowing of his family's role in surviving trauma and simultaneously helping others to do so was a great source of pride and helped Yasin develop a safe territory of identity (White, 1995).

Outsider witnessing

When Yasin decided to talk about sexual violence, he was adamant that his testimony document should only be shared with people who he could trust not to shame him. He was also aware that his story belonged to his whole family, particularly his mother, and he had to consider what they would want.

Yasin was anxious that the witnesses he chose – a lawyer, a general medical practitioner, a psychiatrist, and a community member who had contributed to his legal fees – would not be made 'too sad' by the details of his trauma. I showed Yasin the letter I planned to send to the potential witnesses, and explained the witnessing process and what I was asking of them. I also explained that – assuming they agreed (which they all did) – it would take them some time to read, consider and respond to the written testimony.

The responses showed how much Yasin's testimony affected his outsider witnesses, and how deeply they had considered what it meant for their own lives.

Excerpt from doctor Sue's response:

It has been such a privilege to see into your heart and into the heart of your dear mother who has shown such courage, selflessness, faith and love in the truest sense, in the face of such an atrocious evil. She is indeed an angel, and I feel that her love continues to cradle as you struggle with the evils of the Australian detention system. Your generous spirit and your amazing ability to look for the good in people in spite of all your sufferings, demonstrates your mother's spirit and strength ...

In reading your testimony, I have asked myself how I would have responded if my own family lived your family's suffering. I hope I would have had the strength to be like your mother, and if my son had suffered as you have, I hope I would have surrounded him with enough love and strength that he could have seen the goodness in the world that you see.

Excerpt from lawyer Mary's response:

I think your testimony is courageous. It tells of the immense adversity you have experienced in your life, but that despite your hardships, you still have hope. I think this is an important message for other people to hear. Especially for people who are struggling to continue.

Your testimony serves as yet another reminder that Australian immigration policy is callous and inhumane. But it has also demonstrated to me the strength of your character. I admire you very much for that.

Your testimony is a reminder to me to never forget the human story in all the work we do at PIAC.

Yasin was moved and gratified by these and other responses, especially the acknowledgments of his mother. However, he was surprised by comments about his strength of character and particularly his witnesses' inference that he still had hope and saw good in the world.

Rescued words

Following the outsider-witness responses, I wanted to further explore the qualities that others saw in Yasin, but he was exhausted by the process and declined my attempts to discuss it with him.

Several weeks later, when I read Yasin a first draft of this paper, we reflected on his earlier statements about being 'very bad' and then the more positive perspectives from his outsider witnesses. He initially questioned the idea of discovering good in himself, saying 'I never told you I'm good man'. I said that others were seeing this and wondered why it made him so uncomfortable. I asked him what would be a more accurate description and he replied, 'I said I'm bad man'.

Rather than argue this further, I asked him to tell me everything he knew about 'bad' as it related to him, then summarised it in his rescued words:

I'm bad in different way to Saddam Hussein.

I feel because I selfish, just want to forget, make my mum cry.

Because me, Maryam die.

Because me, my friends sad.

Because me, my sisters cry when I dive in the drugs.

Because my pain make pain for them.

It's no good I in the bad time

not listen to them, hurt them,

make bad time for them.

I make them cry, cry, cry.

My mum, she give everything to save us.

But what I did to her?

Just make her cry.

I don't feel like I'm ever bad in detention

because I know I was helping people.

That time when guards hurt my family, no-one helping us.

Now when I see ERT² punching detainees

I don't want detainee be hurt like me,

have the same feeling I have when hurt me in jail when I kid.

Really very bad feeling.

Some time when I have that dream,

I screaming and I wake.

I don't want anyone have that feeling,
have that pain.
When I fought with the ERT, I not bad.
I know the system.
They don't like it, people helping people.
They don't like people being human,
They want them be like animal.
Something without soul, no feeling, no heart.
This the reality.

They say Yasin bad,
Yasin danger.
But who bad?

This felt like a breakthrough. Although Yasin was carrying enormous guilt about the impact of his pain on loved ones 'in the bad time', he was able to take a more nuanced view of other situations and could see where 'I not bad'. I asked him to tell me more about what that meant:

Every person in the world,
They give you millions of ideas of who good,
who bad.
For me, I'm bad.

Not 100% bad.
I think I'm good more than bad.

Because when I see person in pain,
I feel that pain.

A bad person never feel that pain.

I try hard be positive person, no negative.

If not help, not hurt.

Before I feel guilty 100%
Now I feel guilty 30%

Because now I know more.

This shift from 'you'll never find someone bad like me' to 'now I feel guilty 30%' seemed like a significant shift in Yasin's story. It also pointed to potential for him to more fully understand and forgive himself.

Looking forward: Re-authoring

Events happen in all of our lives that cannot be changed. People experience traumas and losses that cannot be undone. The ways in which these events are understood and interpreted, however, makes a considerable difference to their effects. (Carey & Russell, 2003, p. 60)

Now that Yasin was allowing some light along with the shade in his self-assessment, it felt timely to look at other aspects of his identity and how they might be re-authored.

I was aware that, for as long as he could remember, Yasin had been looking for a 'safe place, quiet place', but he had been repeatedly persecuted, deported, detained, and ostracised. He explained that being 'full life' was his preferred story, but was almost impossible while he was trapped in indefinite detention.

I'm just thinking I'm jail man.

I don't want to be that person.

I'm like water.

When you leave it in the same place for a long time, it get still.

It dirty, smell so bad.

I'm almost like that water.

I want to be like a river, full life, everyone can enjoy.

River move, bring life.

I want to be like river, even small river.

Exploring this preferred story provided Yasin with an opportunity to pursue 'full life' through living his values and in his relationships with family and friends, many of whom he had cut contact with as detention became increasingly unbearable.

Landscape of action questions (White & Epston, 1990) provided an opportunity to explore what he had been able to do to manage and sometimes enjoy life in hard times:

- Can you tell me about a time when you were able to make the hard times a bit easier?
- Where were you?
- What were you doing?
- Who was around you?
- Who was Yasin in this group of people?

- What made it possible to enjoy some good times in hard places?
- Did this happen a lot or was it unusual?

Yasin's answers provided insight into a brotherhood that had surrounded and sustained Yasin since his arrival in Iran as an eight-year-old, and in some cases before. While he spoke, my phone pinged as he sent through photos and told stories of friends whose sense of humour, loyalty and love were remarkable, given they had all been through sickeningly hard times. In this group, he had been the joker, the risk-taker, the beautiful young man attracting attention. The photos put Yasin in context, and he spoke at length about the person he had been, the people he had shared good times with, and his sadness that he had shut them out recently:

Good friends [are] really like good food. How different when you eat fresh food, make you feel healthy. And when eat expired, how you feel?

Landscape of identity questions allowed us to explore what these insights meant for who he is in the world, and what they might say about him:

- Listening to you talk about your strong, supportive and lifelong friendships, what do you think this says about you as a person? In fact, what does it say about all of you?
- Why was it important to laugh, joke and 'talk shit'?
- What do you think this says about your hopes for life? About who you want to be?
- If your friends were talking to me, what would they say about Yasin as a person?

His responses showed Yasin that he was capable of making the best of incredibly difficult situations, and that he belonged in a very profound way because of the way he had lived his values. For Yasin, helping people is as much about making them laugh and supporting each other as it is about helping them when they are hurt, mentally or physically.

Yasin returned to the metaphor of the river, saying he wanted to be 'full life' and knew that this was possible because he had been a river in equally hard times.

Using Team of Life to explore values and beliefs

After a surge of confidence that his still water could become a small river, life in detention derailed some of Yasin's resolve. He was painfully aware of how little he could control, especially the intrusion into every aspect of his and other detainees' lives: constant room checks, arbitrary rule changes, unexplained and sudden transfers, hyper-surveillance during personal visits. Even someone's happiness could attract negative attention.

I suggested we try the Team of Life (Denborough, 2012) as another way of looking at Yasin's situation without having to speak directly about traumatic events. Yasin is a passionate Liverpool Football Club supporter and, despite a knee injury that has stopped him playing football, often says that watching Premier League 'takes me out of this place [detention]'. It is a consistent source of pleasure and remains largely untarnished by the abuses that have affected every other sphere of his life – family, ethnicity, country, community, politics, religion. On many occasions, it has been joyful to hear Yasin talk freely about a topic that has nothing to do with his life in detention, and it is a welcome change for him to be the expert – a small, symbolic shift in the imbalance of power and privilege between us. It's important to state that this imbalance has saturated our every conversation and action, and needs particular attention when balancing advocacy with agency, and friendship with support. The disparity between us in terms of belonging (citizenship, community, parenting), education, wealth, language and agency is vast and is something I try to be conscious of at all times.

Of all the practices, the Team of Life process was the one that Yasin immediately understood. He quickly assigned positions and enthusiastically explained his reasons: 'my mum, she attacking midfielder because always know where the ball going. And she also commentator because she know me the best and always believe in me.'

Apart from his parents, Yasin's team comprised Australian citizens who were supporting his efforts to gain freedom and protection in this country. This seemed to reinforce how heavily his situation was weighing on him, and how powerless he felt within the immigration system. When I asked Yasin to think of who else might be in his Team of Life, he said 'this *is* my life. Nothing else happening till I'm free'.

Significantly, Yasin did not position himself in the playing group because 'I don't want to kick the ball to the wrong place and let down my team'. I asked whether this was connected to his view of himself as a bad person.

For this time, I am not good player. Not about good person or bad person for this time, I just don't know how the Australian law is working. I play before for myself and I get hurt more and more, stay in the lockdown more. Sometimes you need to stand back and let people play for you.

He then nominated himself as coach. When I asked why, he said 'because everyone I put in that team, they play in my life. It's my life so I'm the coach, but I need them to play the game'.

The metaphor of playing a game against a powerful and adversarial 'opponent' led him to reflect further on definitions of good and bad and their consequences for him. His realisation that he could neither fight nor change the system meant that his Team of Life was essential to his survival, and he would need to watch from the sidelines for some time.

Reflection

Meeting Yasin has changed the way I view freedom, human rights and people's struggle to live full lives, regardless of the hard times they face. It has made me reflect more deeply on my own freedom and rights, and how much I have taken for granted advantages as practical as being able to engage in my first language, and as complex as experiencing degrees of freedom, good health and independence that could be permanently elusive for others.

Yasin's desire to be seen as fully human has led to immensely generous sharing that has both educated me and challenged my ideas and interpretations of good and bad. In Yasin's world, good and bad are inextricably linked to personal values, and are measured by his ability to be true to them at all times. What are they for me? And what do I listen for when people tell me their stories?

Although Yasin continues to struggle with seeing good in himself, 30% bad is a whole lot better than 100%, and I am hopeful that we can continue chipping away. We will particularly work towards externalising the actions Yasin considers to be innately bad. To date, he has resisted this, largely because of the hurt his

actions caused to his 'angel' mother who suffered equivalent trauma, albeit as an adult, and stayed true to her values. However, Yasin was very moved by Dr Sue's outsider-witness response, in which she spoke as a loving mother and as a doctor who knows that serious drug use is a common by-product of extreme trauma.

Implicit in this is further work on forgiveness, which Yasin has sought and received from the most important people in his life, but has not given himself. We have explored this through the lens of his faith, and through the extreme injustices and trauma he has had to bear. This will also be a continuing theme in our work.

Acknowledgments

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Notes

1. I had initially envisaged Yasin's testimony as part of a collective narrative, but decided to start with a single account while I was new to narrative practice. My plan is to pursue a collective narrative in my Masters year.
2. ERT stands for emergency response team. These detention centre guards are the equivalent of riot police, but, because they are on site at all times, they are deployed in a wide range of day-to-day situations.

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