

# Facilitation Guide



# I AM SHAKESPEARE

The Henry Green Story

*A Stephen Dest Film*



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## A Note From the Director

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*When I first met Henry, he was just 10 years old but even at that tender age, I saw a young boy wise beyond his years and hungry for life. I guided him through a number of theatrical productions and helped shape what would've been a rewarding career in the arts.*

*Like so many, I wasn't aware of his "dual identity" and the life that his alter-ego "Renegade," would forge for him. When the news of his shooting hit the media, I was determined to reach out to him and see about his well-being. I did so as a friend and former mentor. At that time, I wasn't thinking about making a film about this journey but the more time Henry and I spent together, the more I realized that the greatest performance and the one that would have the most profound effect on an "audience" was his own story . . . told in his own words. No script, no costume, no fear.*

- Stephen Dest  
Award-winning Filmmaker  
Professor of Film Studies





## Introduction

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*I Am Shakespeare, The Henry Green Story*, is many stories. It is a story about the tension that exists in a community when an impoverished neighborhood dominated by gangs and plagued by gun violence is in the shadow of one of the country's wealthiest universities. It is about the complexity of identity, and the struggle for pride and self-worth. It is about suffering trauma, receiving salvation, and offering forgiveness. It is a story about hope.

In this film, Henry talks about the shame of poverty, his desire for power and its intersection with violence, and his recovery after being shot and receiving an intestinal transplant. Each chapter of his story is defined by a separate identity until, at last, Henry is able to reconcile himself with everyone and everything he has become.

## Acknowledgements

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Project Team:

Connecticut Center for School Change

Writer: Kerry Lord

Layout and Design: Bridget Nahabedian

Editors: Roberta Kurlantzick, Richard Lemons, Ira Morrison

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-Yale Associate Professor of Medicine,

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-ACES Music Department Chair



## Section One

### Facilitation

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This Guide is designed to support your facilitation of meaningful dialogue around specific themes that emerge while viewing the film. The content of the film is likely to evoke varied reactions from audiences, so the following guidelines will help you prepare audiences for the content they are about to view. This Guide strives to surface specific themes within the film as a way of providing a structure for the effective facilitation of intentional and powerful dialogue. It is not intended to limit conversations to the highlighted themes within; rather, it should inspire you to develop provocative questions in addition to the ones offered here and help you to customize the viewing experience to meet the needs of your audience.



## Preparing to Facilitate

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As the facilitator, you should watch the film and read the Guide in full before conducting a group. The film is 90 minutes viewed in one sitting, so it is important to consider the amount of time available not only for viewing the film, but also for engaging the audience in post discussions after. While there are several options for viewing this film, it should ultimately be viewed in its entirety even if that experience occurs over a series of days or weeks.

While the film is a powerful story that could very easily be viewed, enjoyed and discussed without identifying a specific outcome for audiences, it is well-suited to serve as a springboard for targeted conversations about difficult topics such as gun violence, poverty, identity, race, and depression.

In your role as Facilitator, you should determine if there are specific outcomes that you want audiences to meet as a result of viewing and discussing the film. This should help you prepare additional questions for discussion and decide if the audience needs to do anything in particular before they view the film.

The appendices at the end of this Guide contain suggested articles and additional resources to supplement the film.



## The Role of the Facilitator:

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1. Establish a purpose for viewing the film
2. Create a safe and welcoming environment
3. Manage groups effectively



## Establish a Purpose for Viewing the Film

### Exploring topics and themes

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When establishing a purpose for viewing the film, identify specific themes or topics that the audience could discuss. For example:

- Are you facilitating a group of educators discussing the impact of gang and gun violence in a school community?
- Are you facilitating a group of medical practitioners discussing the treatment and care of patients and their families?
- Are you facilitating a group of students about their experiences with poverty?

This is a partial list of topics and themes to explore: *Gun violence, gang/neighborhood violence, poverty/class, identity, self-worth, aspiration, college access, depression, power, pride, dignity, medical care/communication, determination, purpose, redemption, trauma, recovery, hope, forgiveness.*

### Know Your Audience

Knowing your audience will help you determine your purpose for viewing the film. This film is suitable for adults and youth ages 14 and over. While this Guide focuses primarily on audiences in education and health care, it is equally accessible and appropriate for audiences from law enforcement, social services, and the greater community at large.



# Create a Safe and Welcoming Environment

Establishing how the group will listen and speak to one another before you view the film sets the 'norm' for group behavior. As the facilitator you can either suggest norms or agreements for behavior for the group, or engage the group in a collaborative norming process. Norms should ensure that everyone's voice is heard, encourage and value different perspectives, and provide the time and opportunity for viewers to negotiate their emotional responses to the film.

Knowing the names of audience members and ensuring that audience members know everyone's name is another way to create a welcoming environment. Use name tags to introduce audience members to one another and encourage familiarity amongst the group.

Once names and norms have been shared, take time to:

- Read the introduction to orient the audience to the film
- Frame the viewing experience by sharing the purpose for viewing the film
- Review any pre-work that was given to the audience, and relate it to the viewing experience
- Inform the audience of their role during viewing (i.e., taking notes)



## Protocols for Norming Groups

Protocols are guidelines to help structure conversations so that all members in a group have equal participation. The School Reform Initiative (SRI) offers a variety of protocols to help you create a safe space and facilitate challenging conversations.

[Click here](#) for a protocol to help you create norms with your audience.



# Managing Groups Effectively

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In addition to being thoughtful about the way you arrange and organize the audience, it's important to be strategic about how you manage their energy. This includes:

- Negotiating and validating emotional responses to the film
- Anticipating opposing points of view; ensuring that they are heard and explained so they can be understood
- Re-focusing the group and managing disruptions
- Keeping the group going; knowing when to stop



## Group Configurations

The way you group audience members for viewing will depend upon the purpose for bringing the group together. You may be attempting to create a shared experience where the whole-group is involved in meaning-making. In another context, it might be more important to convene several small groups so that every individual has a chance to speak.

In addition, the physical space available may influence your grouping strategy. For example, if you are in an auditorium, you may decide to cluster groups to facilitate smaller discussions or put everyone close together for a large group-discussion.

## School Groups

If multiple classes are viewing the film together, it may be beneficial to have students return to their own classrooms for more intimate discussions after the film.

## One Large Group

If you have a large group there will be some audience members who are not comfortable speaking, and others who may dominate the discussion. You may want to provide opportunities for written reflection, or for audience members to turn and talk to one another in response to guiding questions before asking them to share with the whole group.

## Small Groups

You may choose to break larger groups into smaller groups to allow for more in-depth discussions. Small-group discussions will maintain a better focus if someone is available to serve as a group leader.

# Getting Ready to View The Film

## Setting up the Screening

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Before you introduce the film share the Note from the Director and read the introduction to summarize the story. There may be audience members who have experienced trauma from gun violence, hospitalization, poverty or depression; in anticipation of emotional reactions to the film, inform the audience that these topics are covered.

If you have had your audience do any pre-work, take time before you watch the film to discuss and relate it to the film.

You may decide to engage the audience in a brief discussion about their expectations of the film and check-in after the film to see if their experience matched their expectations.

If you are viewing the film in segments, inform the audience about the timing of personal breaks so as not to interrupt the discussions.



## Facilitator's Checklist

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Before you watch the film, be sure that you have set the stage:

1. Norms and name tags
2. Established a purpose for viewing (pre-work completed if required)
3. Groupings determined and group leaders assigned if needed for smaller groups
4. Materials for reflection and evaluation
5. Timing the event for viewing and discussion
6. Timeline for related activities





## Section Two

### Viewing the Film

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The film is divided into four chapters which provide natural points to pause. You may choose to view the film one chapter at a time over several hours, a day, or a series of days depending upon the time you have and the availability of your audience. Watching the film in advance will help you determine the best way to present it to your audience.

This Guide offers a brief summary of each chapter, with discussion questions to get you started. Be sure you allow enough time for discussion whether you are watching it one chapter at a time or in one sitting.

### Chapters:

Chapter 1 (00:00:00-00:10:52)  
Chapter 2 (00:10:53-00:46:27)  
Chapter 3 (00:46:28-1:07:25)  
Chapter 4 (1:07:26-1:17:48)  
After scene (1:18:00-1:20:10)

# Chapter One

Time Stamp: 00:00:00-00:10:52

In Chapter 1, Henry discusses his neighborhood, growing up poor, and a painful memory about school.

In this brief segment, the viewer is given a powerful introduction to the complexity of Henry Green.

## Questions for Discussion:

1. How would you characterize Henry Green?
2. Discuss the tension between Henry's possible future and his current reality.
3. In what ways does Henry's environment shape who he is and how he sees his future?
4. How might Henry's story have an impact on the discussion about how schools prepare all students for college or a career?



## Key Themes:

*Gun violence, gang/neighborhood violence, poverty/class, identity, self-worth, family responsibility, aspiration, college access*



# Chapter Two

Time Stamp: 00:10:53-00:46:27

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In Chapter 2, Henry introduces the audience to Renegade, his street persona. The audience hears details about Renegade's exploits as well as Henry's experience on stage as Shakespeare's Tybalt in *Romeo and Juliet*.

In the last 10 minutes of this segment, Henry speaks with great clarity and humility about the final moments before he was shot.

The final four minutes of the chapter begin after the screen fades to black. Henry is now in the hospital, and the audience is transported along with him.

## Questions for Discussion:

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1. What are some of the forces that led Henry to embrace Renegade?
2. Henry talks about power, pride, and dignity; how does his description of these align or differ from your own?
3. Newhallville is a racially and economically segregated neighborhood in New Haven. Henry describes the juxtaposition between the wealth that surrounds the Yale campus and the poverty of his neighborhood. Discuss the implications of segregated neighborhoods and the surrounding communities.



## Key Themes:

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*Identity, depression, power, pride, dignity, neighborhood violence/gangs, self-worth, gun violence, race, poverty/class*

# Chapter Three

Time Stamp: 00:46:28-1:07:25

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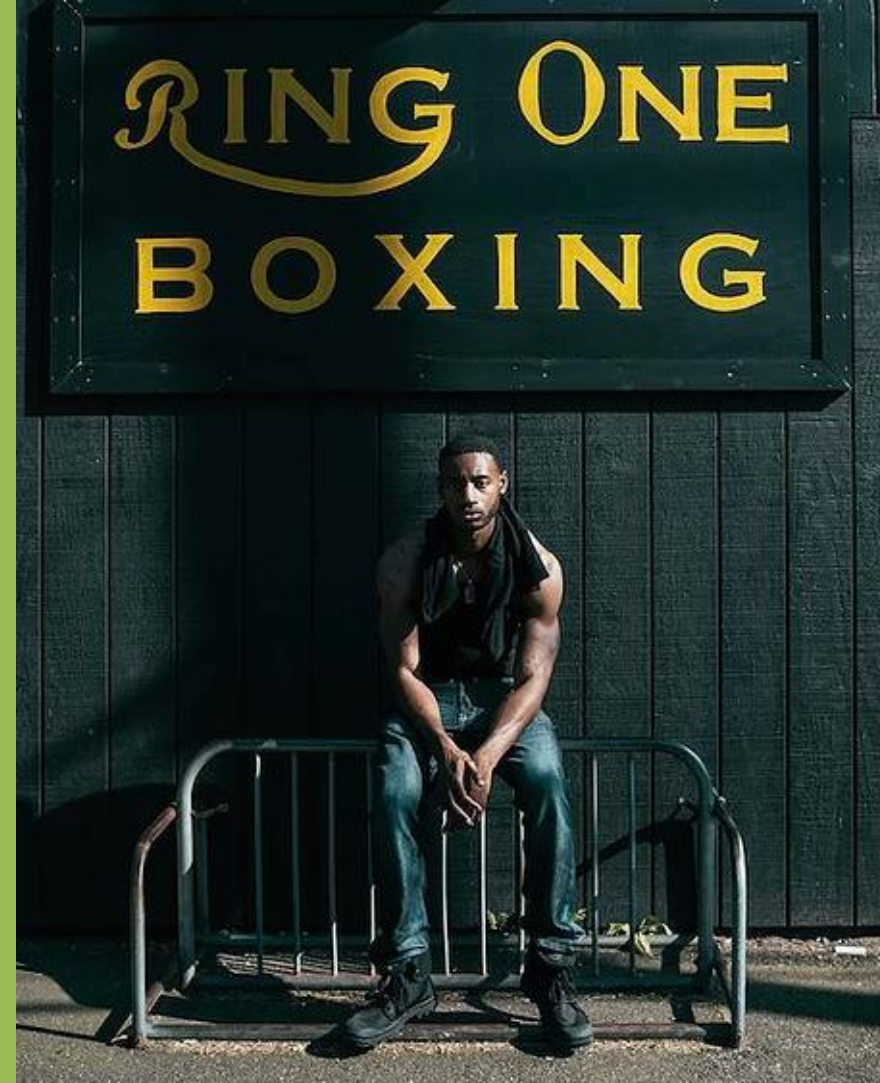
Chapter 3 opens with Henry detailing his experience in the hospital. He reveals his new identity, the conversations overheard during his coma, and the incredible story of his unlikely recovery from being shot three times, including his experience receiving an intestinal transplant.

In this chapter, Henry takes control of his recovery and is determined not to waste this chance to get his life back.

## Questions for Discussion:

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1. Discuss the sources of Henry's strength and the motivation that aided him in his recovery.
2. Discuss some of the medical dilemmas addressed in this chapter: delivering a life-span prediction, communicating with Henry's mother about his condition, keeping a gun-shot victim safe, the financial impact of long-term medical care.
3. What are some of the implications for transplant recipients when 'survivor's guilt' surfaces? How does this factor into short- and long-term care?



## Key Themes:

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*Medical care/communication, determination, purpose, redemption, trauma, recovery*



# Chapter Four

Time Stamp: 01:07:26-1:17:48

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In Chapter 4, we see Henry make peace with himself, and with his shooter. This final segment is a provocative and moving personal narrative that illuminates Henry's new path moving forward, defining his personal mission and his call to action.



## Questions for Discussion:

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1. What does it take to forgive a person who has caused you harm?
2. Henry's story elevated his status from a gun-shot victim to a person. Talk about the ways in which victims and offenders are portrayed in the media and how race and class impact that portrayal.
3. If you had a chance, what questions would you want to ask Henry about his story?
4. Discuss the ways in which your perception of Henry changed throughout his story.

## Key Themes:

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*Hope, forgiveness, redemption, identity/self-perception, cycle of gang violence*



## Section Three

### Spotlight Series

The Spotlight Series is designed to provide viewers with an opportunity to engage in focused conversations about specific issues that arise in the film.

### Spotlights

Currently Featured:

- Spotlight on Gun Violence



# Spotlight: Gun Violence

In the United States, seven children and teens die from gun violence every day, and every day 40 children and teens are shot and survive.<sup>1</sup> Since the devastating shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary in Newtown, Conn., there have been over 400 people shot in over 200 school shootings.<sup>2</sup> As of March 20, 2018, there has been an average of one school shooting each week of 2018.<sup>3</sup> Gun violence has become an inescapable headline.

Talking about gun violence is more than listing statistics; it's talking about the conditions that exist in our society that enable such violence to occur with frightening regularity openly addressing the trauma that plagues the victims, survivors and shooters themselves.

Organizing for change has become one way that today's youth are challenging the status quo of gun laws and changing the conversation. But for some youth, the violence within their communities seems unshakable and inescapable. In this film, Henry Green speaks candidly about his exposure to and experience with gun violence. Use his story to start your own discussion.



## Quotes to Support the Conversation

(00:00:23) "Listen, if you shoot him, put two in his face. This gun is long, but it's not that powerful, so if you shoot him one time it's not going to kill him."

(00:16:17) "The thing that made life unfair was power, power through a gun or power through cash."

(00:31:40) "Every day you hear about someone you know getting shot."

(01:15:16) "Shooting somebody is probably as traumatic as getting shot."

(01:16:39) "The only way it stops (the cycle of violence) is if a person forgives."

(01:17:07) "the bullet saved me, man."

## Discussion Questions to Get You Started

In light of the environmental and societal influences that contributed to the culture of gun violence in Henry's neighborhood, how might a community attempt to shift that culture and its potential outcomes for community residents?

How has gun violence impacted you personally? Your community?



## Section Four

### Appendices

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- Appendix A: Activities to accompany the film
- Appendix B: Additional information about the content of the film
- Appendix C: Teaching Tolerance resources and activities
- Appendix D: Suggested reading
- Appendix E: Evaluation
- Appendix F: Bibliography

## Appendix A: Suggested Activities

### Telling Your Story

Use the power of story to engage viewers before or after viewing the film.

In Chapter 3, Henry reflects upon the second chance at life that he had been given. He declares, “It’s my personal mission to tell my story.” Our stories of ‘self’ are a powerful means to share our humanity, reveal our vulnerabilities, and set a path forward to create change within our communities.

Marshall Gantz shares helpful tips for telling your own story. Read this article to help you tell yours:

<http://www.mlp.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/MarshallGanz.pdf>

- Read the Marshall Gantz article, *Telling your public story*, to help you write and share your story of self.
- Bring your school, work, or greater community together to share their stories.

In Chapter 4, Henry Green spoke about wanting to meet with his shooter and forgive him, in an effort to halt the cycle of violence in New Haven: “I wish he knew he was forgiven . . . I would love to shine some light on him.”

National Public Radio’s StoryCorps reconnects people who have had a profound impact on one another and gives them an opportunity to tell their stories collaboratively.

- Listen to additional stories on NPR’s StoryCorps: <https://storycorps.org>
- Use the StoryCorps format to tell your story: *Who would you choose to sit across the table from to help you tell a particular story about an unforgettable moment in your life?*

Repairing the harm done between a victim and an offender is one way to shift the culture in a community from a punitive approach focused on the past to a restorative one focused on the future.

- Conduct Research about Restorative Justice/Restorative Practices, and refer to Appendix E for more resources.
- Shift the culture in your school or community by adopting and implementing principles of Restorative Justice.



## **Appendix B: Resources related to features within the film**

For more information about the art featured in the film, link to the artist's statement  
<http://zachary-naylor.squarespace.com/artist-statement/>

For more information about Newhallville in the city of New Haven:  
<https://newhavenurbanism.org/new-haven-history/goatville-or-newhallville/>

## Appendix C: Teaching Tolerance Resources

The Teaching Tolerance website is an excellent resource to help you prepare for facilitating conversations about race, poverty, and discrimination. Check out these resources to support conversations about race and privilege before you view the film, or to keep the conversations going once you've viewed the film:

### **Straight Talk About the N-Word**

This Teaching Tolerance feature story focuses on the complexities of the n-word, how it became offensive, and why and with whom it is still popular today.

<http://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/general/TT%20Difficult%20Conversations%20web.pdf>

### **Reflection Activity: Identity**

Use this guide to engage in reflection about personal identity.

<https://www.tolerance.org/professional-development/reflection-activity-identity>

### **On Racism and White Privilege**

This excerpt from *White Anti-Racist Activism: A Personal Roadmap*, explores issues of race and white privilege.

<https://www.tolerance.org/professional-development/on-racism-and-white-privilege>

Visit Teaching Tolerance at [www.tolerance.org](http://www.tolerance.org)

## Appendix D: Additional Resources

This selection of material is intended to provide additional resources to maintain ongoing dialogue after viewing the film:

This National Public Radio transcript from *On Being* offers a moving reflection on depression:

<https://onbeing.org/programs/the-soul-in-depression-mar2018>

For a closer look at statistics about gun violence, read this article in *The New York Times*:

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/02/15/us/school-shootings-sandy-hook-parkland.html>



## **Appendix E: Evaluation for the Facilitator and Participants**

Please click on the link below to fill out this evaluation form if you used this Guide to assist you with facilitation: <https://goo.gl/forms/5rj6C2lAaXq42BQo2>

Please click on the link below if you watched this film and participated in a facilitated discussion: <https://goo.gl/forms/xd04zAanJljSWu1K2>

## Appendix F: Bibliography

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# I AM SHAKESPEARE

## The Henry Green Story

[www.IAmShakespeareMovie.com](http://www.IAmShakespeareMovie.com)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/iamshakespearemovie](https://www.facebook.com/iamshakespearemovie)

Instagram: [@iamshakespearemovie](https://www.instagram.com/iamshakespearemovie)

For questions about screenings, contact Director Stephen Dest at [hamlet813@att.net](mailto:hamlet813@att.net)

For more information on facilitation  
contact the Connecticut Center for School Change.  
Visit our website for more publications and resources:  
[www.ctschoolchange.org](http://www.ctschoolchange.org)



The Connecticut Center for School Change (the Center) is an educational non-profit organization with a mission to improve teaching and learning, reduce achievement gaps, and promote equity in Connecticut schools. We support comprehensive pre-K-12 educational reform through a system-wide, integrated approach focused on enriching instructional practice and developing leadership at all levels, from parents to Superintendents.



The Pincus Family Foundation was formed in 2005 by Philadelphia philanthropists David and Gerry Pincus who dedicated themselves to learning first-hand about the challenges children face worldwide, then helping to address those challenges. The Pincus Family Foundation supports organizations and programs promoting children's health, education, safety, nutrition, recreation and the arts locally and worldwide.