

You Heard Me

Luca Rutherford

Recommended age 14+

INTRODUCTION

You Heard Me is a solo show, written and performed by Luca Rutherford. It is autobiographical; it will always be performed by Luca, and is her choice of presentation and retelling of her story.

You Heard Me describes a moment when Luca was attacked while she was on a run. It contains a description of sexual violence. If you would like to read more detail about how sexual violence is presented in the show, please see below for details.

DETAILED CONTENT GUIDANCE

The show is in 5 sections.

A description of each section is detailed below.

Important Plot Point:

Luca escaped the attack and was not raped. The conclusion of the attack is described as a moment when Luca was able to escape and run away.

Section 1: Audience Content Warning

The following text is read out at the start of the show, to give audience members time to leave if they don't feel safe to stay in the space:

"Hi everyone, good evening. Nice to have you here. I'm Luca and this is pre-recorded. I just wanted to say hello, and to say a few things before the show starts. This show comes with content advice: You Heard Me, contains references to sexual violence. I want to give you time to reflect on this and to make sure that you feel safe to be here. In a moment, we'll play some music, to give you some time to figure out if this is okay for you today. If you don't feel safe to watch something that contains references to sexual violence, or for any other reason, you are welcome to leave the space at any point. Please can we respect each other and be kind, and if anyone needs to get out, please make space for them. I also want to let you know that there will be loud sounds and sudden and flashing lights at multiple points throughout the show. I'm going to stop talking now and we'll play some music for you to reflect on this information, and then I'll see you from on stage. Thank you."

Section 2: Opening

Luca enters the space and describes the sound of a scream. It is a description of the feeling of power that came from her scream. There is no detail or context given about the scream.

Section 3: Voiceover

We hear a voiceover of Luca describing the moment when she was attacked. We see Luca sitting on some steps on the stage listening to the recording of her recounting the attack. Nothing is dramatised or acted out on stage.

The attack is described in detail. The following excerpts are the most graphically descriptive sections of text:

“a man appears on the right, something is off, I can see him mouthing something, but I keep my headphones in. I am grabbed from behind, I started screaming, He’s pulled me into a headlock, my glasses are gone, I had this feeling of like “What? This shit doesn’t happen to me. I’m getting mugged”

“I get out of the headlock. I’m not sure what’s happening. Has that been the most violent bit? Stillness. Then the smell of him, a scary, sick smell “do you want my phone?” Nothing happened”

“I want you to come into this building” his hands are on my hips”

“he catches me by my hair . He pulls me to the floor by my hair. He’s punching, I’m punching, really scrappy, really hazy, I start screaming again. His hand over my mouth and nose. I can’t breathe. I can’t get out of this. I don’t know what to do. His hand slipped, his finger is in my mouth. I hope I bit it, but I don’t think I did.”

“Screaming is the only thing I have left. I scream. Even if he puts his hand over my mouth and nose again. Again. Again. It’s making him panic. It’s making everything worse. Maybe it would be better if I do what he says. If I stop screaming, stop fighting, if I go into the building with him I’m really tired”

“Help. I start screaming Help. Over and Over. I’m on my back now, my legs are kicking him in the chest. I’m not getting out of this. This is it. This is the moment before I find myself in the building”

The voiceover ends describing the moment Luca is able to run away. We see Luca get up from listening to the recording.

Section 4: Movement

The central section of the show is predominantly a movement section, with Luca listening to fragments of the voiceover, combined with movement on stage. The fragments of voiceover are extracts from the recording we have already heard, sometimes with distortion and repetition. There is no new content about the attack.

No details of the attack are dramatised, however, tension and threat are present throughout in the theatrical language of movement/sound/lighting.

At one point Luca describes the feeling of wanting to punch someone:

"I've always wanted to punch someone in the face and really hurt them. I know that's not nice. It's the not niceness of it that feels so satisfying. I've never done it. I just have the urge"

After this sentence, there is a moment where Luca is hitting / punching a pink inflatable cushion, which may be potentially triggering as a visualisation of violence/force.

At the end of the movement section there is a blackout.

At one point strong language is used:

"Don't be a fucking lady."

Section 5: Closing Speech

Luca speaks directly to the audience in a static lighting state, about the moment of being attacked:

"People move faster when it's for real. It's scrappier and messier. It's not easy to find someone's balls, or eyes, or Adam's apple. It's hard. It was hard. I knew I was losing. I knew I was going to lose. I had two choices. I could make noise until I was silenced. Or I could be quiet, and do what I was told."

There is then a discussion about rape culture, and the language used around rape and sexual violence.

We hear details of the conviction and the sentence that Luca's attacker received:

"The man who attacked me is in prison with a 17-year sentence; found guilty of assault, crimes of a relevant sexual offence, and attempted kidnap."

THEATRICAL CONTENT WARNING

- Haze is used throughout at a low volume
- A confetti cannon is used at one point, which may be startling
- There are loud noises, some of them sudden
- There are flashing lights, but no strobe
- There is one blackout, towards the end of the movement section

SIGNPOSTING

If you have been affected by the content in the show, or for advice on how to support others who have experienced sexual violence:

Victim Support: 24/7 Supportline 0808 16 89 111

Rape Crisis helpline: 0808 802 9999 open 12:00 - 14:30 and 19:00 - 21:30 every day of the year

www.rainn.org/articles/tips-talking-survivors-sexual-assault

www.rapecrisis.org.uk/get-help/looking-for-information/supporting-a-survivor

www.samaritans.org

www.survivorsuk.org

www.thesurvivorstrust.org

www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support

FURTHER INFORMATION

www.luca-rutherford.co.uk/projects-1/youheardme