

# British Theatre Guide

News, reviews, features and podcast on theatre across the UK

## As We Forgive Them

Richard Vergette

24:7 Theatre Festival

Pure, The Printworks, Manchester

(2009)

Writer Richard Vergette returns to 24:7 after performing his own superb solo piece [An Englishman's Home](#) in 2007, this time sharing the stage in this two-hander that begins just as the US is experiencing major regime change in November 2008 and ends seven years in the future.

John Daniels is a US Congressman known for his support for the underprivileged and his opposition to the death penalty. Lee Fenton is the young man imprisoned for murdering Daniels's daughter. Unable to go back on his principles and plead for Fenton's execution, Daniels instead decides to educate the man who ripped apart his family, even though he can barely read and the only thing he is able to commit to paper is a teenage boy's representation of a penis.

Just as with Vergette's previous 24:7 play, this is an intense, intelligent piece of drama that appears to lead the audience in a familiar direction and then completely flips its perspective to take it somewhere unexpected. In this play there are two twists right near the end: a revelation from Daniels about his scheme to educate Fenton that the prisoner never suspected even in his most cynical moments, followed by a superb come-back revelation from Fenton, which he twists again.

This is an intriguing drama against the backdrop of current American politics that examines the conflict between liberal politics and personal desires in extreme situations. Joe Sims gives an exceptional performance as 'white trash' prisoner Fenton, with excellent support from playwright Vergette as Daniels.

For the most part this play is perfectly-paced, although there is probably a little too much explaining around the twists in the plot later on. However Vergette has created another well-written, compelling piece of drama for 24:7 that demonstrates a maturity and richness lacking from many of the plays in the festival.

**Reviewer:** [David Chadderton](#)