

Output 1: Radio script/production

***“Bell in the Ball” (45 mins)* Making Blindness Visible - experiments in radio scripting, performance and production**

Lloyd Peters was commissioned to write the challenging original drama *Bell in the Ball* (Broadcast BBC Radio 4 July 16th 2010) that dealt with issues concerning the perception of blindness in an aural environment. The writing of the script required nine months rigorous pre-production research and six re-drafts.

Lloyd Peters was directly involved in all parts of the recording process and worked closely with the directors in the control room and on the studio floor providing script amendments and technical suggestions.

The script examines difficult issues (violence; the psychology of coming to terms with disability) but, unusually, these were often presented employing absurdist and surreal comedic techniques. The drama was conceptually inter-related by a shared research driver: to explore how effectively radio narrative can be scripted and produced incorporating “non-naturalistic” elements. This is significant given that much of radio drama is substantially “naturalistic” in form and content.

These elements included the use of displaced perspectives mixed to create “sound-scape” texturing and mood shifts. The drama also utilised subverted linear narrative and fractured, over-lapping dialogue. Flash-backs” and “flash-forwards” were employed to disrupt narrative. Echo, distortion, musical “stings” “Unreliable narrators” directly addressing the audience, were used to break the acoustic “4th wall” and present contradictory plot information. Heightened performance was encouraged to establish a “hyper-real” acting style, and uncharacteristically for radio drama, many scenes were scripted to allow for improvisation.

The techniques employed functioned as a “verbal camera”. (Tim Crook, *British Radio Drama - A Cultural Case History*” 1999 www.irdp.co.uk/britrad4.htm) designed to provoke responses and compel the listener to unravel and reinterpret the aural information presented.

The play forms the basis for Lloyd Peters practice-as- research PhD. Working Title: **“The representation of visual impairment on screen, stage and in radio drama”**.

The starting point for the research is *Bell in the Ball* which presented the dramatic narrative of a cricketer recovering his sense of purpose after going blind. However the radio play had many enforced cuts which dictated the content and style of the piece. Lloyd now wishes to examine how this material can be more faithfully presented free of BBC producer guidelines, editorial protocols and the limitations of a small cast due to budgetary constraints. Most importantly it will provide the opportunity to examine how the experience of visual impairment can be more authentically presented to a wide audience through rewritten scripts for film and stage. To this end Lloyd has begun to seek collaborations with individuals and media/theatre companies working with visually impaired performers, writers and practitioners. Lloyd has already commenced shooting the film.

To hear the radio play, access the link already established on USIR:



Recording *Bell in the Ball* at the BBC.
(L to R: Gary Brown producer, Lloyd Peters author, Jason Done (*Danny*) Victoria Brazier (*Beth*))



On location with the visually impaired cricketers of Old Sharlston Cricket Club, West Yorkshire.