



SUZIE MILLER is a contemporary international playwright, screenwriter and librettist, drawn to complex human stories often exploring injustice. Miller's plays have been produced in over 40 productions around the world and won multiple awards.

Her drama *Prima Facie* premiered at Sydney's Griffin Theatre before touring the nation. *Prima Facie* won the 2018 Griffin Award; the 2020 AWGIE for Drama; the 2020 David Williamson Award for Outstanding Theatre Writing; and the 2020 Major AWGIE. It has been translated into more than 25 languages. In 2022 *Prima Facie* enjoyed extraordinary acclaim in London, marking Miller's West End debut. The Empire Street Productions show, starring Jodie Comer, transfers to Broadway in 2023, and the award-winning NT Live recording continues to be streamed in cinemas around the world. Both the Australian and the West End productions of *Prima Facie* have won and been nominated for multiple prestigious awards.

Two new commissioned plays of Miller's premiered in 2022: *Anna K*, for Malthouse Theatre; and *RBG: Of Many, One* for Sydney Theatre Company. Other recent Australian theatre credits include: *Caress/Ache*; *Sunset Strip*; *Dust*; *The Mathematics Of Longing*, *Medea*; *Driving Into Walls*; *OneFiveZeroSeven* and *SNOW WHITE* (an opera for adults). Other international credits include: for National Theatre of Scotland/The Lemon Tree Theatre/Assembly Rooms Edinburgh: *Velvet Evening Séance*; for Theatre Gargantua (Canada): *The Sacrifice Zone*; for New York Fringe Festival/Assembly Rooms Edinburgh: *Reasonable Doubt*; and for Theatre 503 London: *SOLD*.

Miller is under commission with Sydney Theatre Company, Griffin Theatre, Neal Street Studios and Jonathan Church Productions UK, and London's National Theatre, and is in development with a number of television and film projects working with producers in Australia, USA and the UK.

Suzie Miller

PRIMA FACIE



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Contents

| | |
|--------------------------------------|------------|
| <i>Making law from women's lives</i> | |
| <i>Karen O'Connell</i> | <i>vii</i> |
| <i>Playwright's note</i> | |
| <i>Suzie Miller</i> | <i>xii</i> |
| PRIMA FACIE | |
| Part One | 1 |
| Part Two | 47 |

*This play is for Lee Lewis,
champion of playwrights, talented director
and brave cultural leader.*

Prima Facie was first produced by Griffin Theatre Company at the SBW Stables Theatre, Gadigal country, Sydney, on 17 May 2019, with the following cast:

TESSA

Sheridan Harbridge

Director, Lee Lewis

Designer, Renée Mulder

Lighting Designer, Trent Suidgeest

Composer and Sound Designer, Paul Charlier

Stage Manager, Khym Scott

CHARACTER

TESSA, age 30s

NOTES ON THE TEXT

The paragraphing and line spacing express how the lines can be delivered in timing and tone.

... indicates a trailing thought

/ indicates an interruption

Words in *italics* in the body of the text indicate emphasis.

Words in ***bold italics*** are stage directions.

[Words in brackets, and in italics, can be spoken or acted.]

The phrase *voir dire* is in italics not for emphasis but to indicate its Latin origins.

CONTENT WARNING

Readers are advised that this script contains references to sexual assault. For help and advice in Australia call 1800 RESPECT (1800 737732).

PART ONE

SCENE ONE

Thoroughbreds

NOW

Court

Thoroughbreds.
Every single one

Primed for the race.
Every muscle pumped
trained and ready for the sprint.

Hold it together.
Hold back.
Keep the blood
at just the right temperature.

Just below boil.

Waiting at the starting gates,
then ...
'all stand',
out of the stalls.

Hold back.
Push forward.

Know when to have restraint,
when to find an opening.
Ready to jump when the other side falters.

Poised.
Watching. Waiting.

Nerves taut,
mind operating on ten tracks at once.

Blood pumping.
Muscles
tightly wound,
waiting to spring.

Waiting
it's starting to open up,
wait.
Wait.

Careful.
This is the measure of your skill set,
The calm before.

And,
there it is.
Instinct pushes me forward.

I OBJECT!!!

[Hold everything in one place]

I'm on my feet.
Eyes
zooming in on me.

'Objection sustained'.
Yesss.

My client,
big guy,
looks stunned.
Doesn't quite know I've won a point,
but he feels the shift.
Likes it.

My client hates the witness,
but for me,
The witness is just
'the witness'.

I sit down.
The Crown finishes.
Then it's time.

The judge looks at me:

'It's your witness Ms Ensler.'

Yes.
The witness is mine!
The witness breathes in.
I stand up,
slowly, do up the button on my jacket.
Courtroom silent,
charged,
waiting for me.

The thrill of this.

Keep it cool,
coool.
Voice
measured

And
confident.
Play it.
Play it,
it's yours.
[You're holding it in the palm of your hand]
Play with it.
Stretch it out,
it's yours.

Cross-examination.
It's the best part.
All instinct.

Ask the question.
Repeat the answer;
repeat it again.
Watch his face,
let him think I'm getting mixed up;

that I'm a bit slow in understanding what happened.

Flick through the papers,
let him think I've lost my way.

Hear breathing.
A snicker from the prosecutor.
Good.

Good.
Very good.

Again,
flick through the papers.
My client shifts uncomfortably in the dock.
Good.
Then I repeat the question,
watch the witness relax.
Shoulders move back.
'This one doesn't seem to know what she's doing.'

Judge expressionless.

This judge has seen me before,
seen the likes of me

Question one.
Question two.