

A Friend's Productions

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**WITNESSING TO A MURDER EXPLORES AFTERMATH OF CRIME**  
Minneapolis resident's autobiographical play wrestles with questions of faith

More than a decade ago, two women met briefly in a hallway. Gunshots killed one of them and sent the other crashing through boundaries that separated her from horror and, she says, from the voice of God. An autobiographical play about the crime and some of its spiritual aftermath will be featured at this year's Spirit in the House, a theater festival that addresses religious, ethical and spiritual issues.

The play, *Witnessing to a Murder*, is written and performed by Minneapolis resident Elizabeth O'Sullivan. On the day of the crime, O'Sullivan was visiting a friend's apartment near the intersection of Snelling and Summit avenues in St. Paul when she heard someone screaming. After following the sound of the screams, O'Sullivan unsuccessfully tried to intervene in an attack and witnessed a man kill his girlfriend.

"It is not like I decided to do something brave," O'Sullivan says. "From the time I heard the screams until I got to safety a few hours later, I was just operating by instinct."

*Witnessing to a Murder* traces of emotional and mystical experiences that enveloped O'Sullivan as she recovered from the trauma. On one level, the play is about a journey through posttraumatic stress disorder, but it is also spiritual journey. A member of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), O'Sullivan integrates Quaker beliefs and practices into the show.

"*Witnessing to a Murder* is a powerful piece of storytelling, and an amazing piece of theater," says Dean Seal, former director of the Minnesota Fringe Festival. "The presence of a spiritual tradition (the Quakers) is both palpable and unobtrusive. Whatever your background, this will show you how a spiritual life can give you the ground under yourself, to recover and return to your life after a painful shock."

O'Sullivan has performed at the Guthrie, the Minnesota Renaissance Festival, and Theater in the Round, MCTC, and Manna Fest. She has written for *Mothering*, *Star Tribune*, *Midwest Home and Garden*, *Mpls. St. Paul* and other publications. She is also the author of two children's books.

*Witnessing to a Murder* runs May 27, 5:30 p.m.; May 29, 7 p.m.; May 30, 7 p.m.; May 31, 2:30 p.m.; and June 1, 4 p.m.; at Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church, 511 Groveland Ave., Minneapolis. Tickets cost \$8-12. [www.elizabethosullivan.com](http://www.elizabethosullivan.com)

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