

The Show

Exchanges 2nd infusion bag, and all the pregnancy tests I've ever taken fall from the bag on me (dozens of used tests). I try to hang up the infusion bags on the now extremely tall pole. I struggle to reach the hook.

The "Blessing of the sun yoga" begins. In the background, we hear a recording of "weight loss meditation". I sprawl over an upside-down chair with my legs spread open. Between my legs appears a projection of a baby being born.

I start to struggle and pop the chocolate milk bags inside my bodysuit.

I collect the props off stage and as I head out with the IV pole, a recording of my real daughter starts playing. She's singing a song she made up to me – "Mommy".

I go back to the test I took at the beginning of the show, I contemplate whether to take a look and at the last second, I decide not to...

On stage: an IV stand, a chair and a podium.

Sharon enters the stage in a full-body leotard (skin-colored)

1. Black. She drinks a small plastic bag of chocolate milk (punctures it and then sucks on it). She walks onto the stage on a line of light (simulating one of the lines on a pregnancy test) with a (moms') bag on her back - she drinks the small plastic bag of chocolate milk – and really working at emptying it.
2. After the plastic bag is empty, she says:

"I have an obsession for pregnancy tests... I take one every day. I take the box and rip it open, then I take the stick out and pee on it for 11 seconds – Pshhhhhh... Then I place it on the brown bathroom counter... vertically!!!

I'm hiding the stick 2.5 centimetre behind the bottle of shampoo, for dry and Damaged hair – so that I won't peek. I'm addicted to that moment, to the waiting period... Those two minutes. Two Adrenalin-filled minutes of uncertainty.

Two minutes – till curtain.

Two minutes – between contractions when I'm 7cm dilated.

Two minutes – an audition monologue.

Two minutes – for the director to decide if they want me for the show or not.

Two minutes – to sew me up after delivery. *"It'll only be two minutes, sweetie."*

Two minutes – to find out if it's one stripe or two on the test stick ... I've made a lot of pregnancy tests:

"Yes or No Professional", "Yes or No Direct", "Senso Test", "Clear Test", "Fast test", "First response" "ClearBlue", "Maccabi care" and "The Golden Stick"...

I use the "Life" test... because it's reliable and it's very simple to perform. You can detect a pregnancy only two days before your period is late.

It also often comes in a dual package, so it cost you just 40 shekels, and also saves you money, especially if you take a test every day.... I'm just talking about it and already feel like taking pregnancy test... Two minutes...

Returns from the bathroom, test in hand and a Go-Pro camera on her head. She catches her breath. A strip of light appears on stage (as a metaphor to the lines on the test)

"I'll take a test pretty much anywhere. I took one in the bathroom of the teachers' lounge at the Democratic School, I was a theater teacher there / behind the scenes in Be'er Sheva, halfway through a road safety children show / on a plane, flight LY0081 to Australia / in the bathroom of Tel Aviv University's "Mexico" building I took 37 tests. I have an MFA / in the bathroom of Tel Aviv University's "Sharet" building – 12 tests – I studied for my teacher's diploma there / at Tel Aviv's Tzavta Theater, two minutes ago."

Sticks the pregnancy test vertically on the balcony between the stage and the audience.

"The first test I ever took was at 7 Hisin street, apartment 6, my home. Two minutes later I got two stripes. The same week I find out I'm pregnant, I also find out I won the Actors' Union raffle to audition for the theater it was my life-long dream to work in. And I'm pregnant.

I wait to get the date of the audition, but nothing. A week goes by, and I'm in week 7, still no audition date. And the fetus is growing a tail. Another week goes by, still no date and the fetus now has a pulse... Week 10, still no audition date! By now, the fetus has arms, legs, a liver, kidneys, a brain and lungs.

Week 16... still no date... I'm having a girl, she's already secreting urine to the bladder every 40 minutes... on her own. And she can also hear my heartbeats. I'm starting to hope that perhaps the audition will delay 4 more months and then my entire life is in order. But then I get an email saying "Thanks for your patience. Your audition is set for May 15th." And I'm five months along.

Takes the bag off the chair and holds it by the handle.

I arrive at the audition, five months pregnant, I go on stage five months pregnant, I performed a comic monologue from Dario Fo's "Bed and Church", the Signora... A virgin. I had a great audition. Only one actress passed. Karin. We're the same type. When I'm not five months pregnant.

Hangs the maternity bag on the IV pole. Takes an infusion bag wrapped in a chocolate milk bag and opens it.

I gave birth to my baby girl in week 41 + 3, after 24 hours in the delivery room and 7 stitches.

My both hands were tied: one was connected to steroid infusion for dealing with eye infection, while the other was holding the catheter bag as I could not pee after delivery.

Attaches the "chocolate milk infusion" bag to the tube and hangs it on the IV pole. Takes out a breast milk pump and places it on the breast.

My nipples were cracked and bruised. It hurt to shower because I couldn't stand the water on my skin. And I had no idea breastfeeding would hurt me more than the actual labor.

The phone call with Benny the producer starts playing. During the call, stands center-stage and presses the breast milk pump. When speaking of the labor, moves over to the IV pole on the side of the stage. That way, running back and forth.

Phone call 1:

Producer: Whaaat?

Sharon: Hey, what's up?

Producer: Cool, honey, how are you feeling?

Sharon: I'm great... awesome... She's a princess...I nailed it...

Producer: Huh... by mistake...

Sharon: She came out so sweet. Yeah, you can realize that – we switched at the hospital...

Producer: (Laughs)

Sharon: Say, I wanted to ask you something.

Producer: What's that, honey?

Sharon: Uhhh... I talked with Yifat, ~~was the State Show PM manager,~~ about the show ~~that you~~ ~~asked me to play in two days~~ and I wanted ~~to check with her in advance~~ some of the dates ~~with her~~ ~~(I mean more dates), but and~~ from what she said I understood that ~~you told her that---~~ Noa ~~was is~~ in first ~~preference-priority, so and that~~ I ~~was~~ supposed to get a third ~~of the shows~~ and she ~~will get-~~ two thirds.

Producer: ~~that's not what I said~~ I definitely didn't

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~~"I definitely didn't succeed with ~~breastfeeding~~ breastfeeding to save my life.~~ I squished my breast so hard with my hands to try and squeeze out a few drops of milk. ~~But~~ my breasts were already so clogged, they were like two rocks. I was in excruciating pain, so I ~~freeze~~~~froze~~~~dried~~ some cabbage leaves to ~~rest~~~~put them~~ on my breasts. ~~And~~~~But~~ I felt so stupid that I definitely didn't ~~that's exactly how I felt~~ ~~(stupid)...~~"

Phone call 2 (interrupts my story):

Producer: I definitely didn't say such a thing... ~~that's not what I said~~. I said ~~you that you two both~~ should share ~~the shows~~... (Sharon: because I know that... that we...) I never said the word preference... God forbid, I don't use that kind of language. Not preference and not ~~schmeference~~.

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Sharon: I'm glad to hear, because it was starting to hurt my feelings... (laughs) ~~that's not what I said~~ ~~that I was calling to talk to you...~~

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Producer: It doesn't even sound like me.

Sharon: Ok, cool... Because I just want ~~to~~~~like~~ to make sure... Because I know she's abroad, but when she gets back we're supposed to share the shows, and I'm supposed to do two thirds and she – a third, right? That's the custom.

Producer: No... Thi{rd}... I mean Fifty-fifty...

Sharon: Why fifty-fifty? If she's my sub?

Producer: She's not the sub in the show. You share the show. The show doesn't have a ~~stand-in~~.

Sharon: ~~"I'm standing naked,~~ changing the cabbage leaves every 20 minutes and the bandage every ~~hour~~50 minutes because of the massive amounts of blood pouring out of my stitches. The stitches make it painful to walk and the hemorrhoids make it impossible to sit. I'm exhausted and..."

Sharon: "... What do you mean? Just like I was Shiri's sub... Just like Shiri subbed the one before her..."

Producer: No... but Shiri left the show... You see... It's super... I prefer it of the actors worked it out between them...I always prefer that...She's a really... (Sharon: I also prefer that) She's a very very busy actress...

Sharon: No... obviously... I know that... On the surface, you know... I don't... But don't... I just want to know that it's worked out with your backup. I'm obviously going to talk to her and we're all human beings...

Producer: (Mumbles something)

Sharon: So...

Producer: I'm here in... I went to see something here... so I'll get back to you in an hour or so, ok?

Sharon: Ok, cool.

Producer: Bye.

The call ends. Stops pumping.

Benny never got back to me, despite his promise to do so. But two days after that call I went to Haifa with the baby carrycot and a three-week-old baby to do the show. (Puts the pump in the bag and braids her hair to two braids). I breastfed her behind the scenes, changed her diaper and put her to sleep before the audience came into the theater. I even pumped 180 ccs before the opening ~~musical~~ song. She ~~didn't wake up slept~~ through an hour and a half of a show filled with ~~musical numbers (songs)~~, ~~not~~ even ~~not~~ for a burp. And in the meantime, I played a 10-year-old girl who's looking for a birthday present for her mother. (Sings) "What shall I bring my mom that would be so lovely? Something so unique ~~that it will~~ make her happy. A gift ~~Something that~~ says "I only love you". I was amazing. In every way. Q – First projected Whatsapp message.

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Benny: What's up, Sharonie? I have to tell you ~~that~~ in the last show, it looked bad ~~all around~~ in every way. Unfortunately, your look is no longer like a 10-year-old girl, I'm afraid the look isn't child like anymore and I'm gonna have to figure out what to do, at this stage we're gonna have to stop and see where we're going to do. We talked about it a lot in the production team and at the moment we don't see there's much choice. TTYL. (Talk to you later)

Sharon: Hi Benny, you ~~never didn't call me back as you promised in the last text message. called to talk, like you texted you would in the last message.~~ From Yifat's schedule and in agreement with Noa I know I'm doing the flowing show dates: ~~6-11~~ November 6th In "Shoham", ~~November 26th In "26-11~~ Givatayim", ~~January 3th-4~~ At "Yahalom", ~~January 13th. At "13-1~~ Hertzlyia". Yifat called me and said that you requested not to assign me anymore shows and that you got a substitute to fill in for me in the next shows, starting with the one ~~on~~ ~~at~~ November 6th ~~6-11~~. I called you twice and you never got back to me. I'd appreciate it if you called me ASAP to explain things.

Benny: I'm in a meeting right now, but to answer your question, I wrote ~~to~~ you that it's not working at the moment. I saw that last show and at this point it's just not good.

Sharon: What's not working at the moment? And when you write "at this point" what do you mean? What about the next shows I'm supposed to do?

Benny: Right now I'm taking a substitute. It doesn't look good on stage.

Sharon: I don't understand. Are you firing me?

Benny: I'm not firing, I'm suspending for now. You were not good ~~in~~at the last show, really. I'm trying to be gentle... It doesn't look like a little girl anymore... Problematic, nothing I can do about it. We'll look into it again in the future.

Sharon: I did the ~~show on November 10th~~10.9 show because you asked me to. It's obvious that three weeks after labor you don't look good. I've been working for you for 6 years and you know what a dedicated, professional employee I am and how much I love being on stage. I've made tremendous efforts to lose the weight to get back to the part.

Sharon: I'd love to get together soon to plan the future. When are you free?

Sharon: When can we meet and discuss the shows?

Benny: Let me get over the "Hanukah" craziness and then I'd love to meet.

Sharon: Great. Thanks!

Sharon: Good morning. I hope "Hanukah" went well 😊 I went back to my previous weight I'm back to my old weight (54) and I'd like and would be happy if you assigned me to the shows according to what I'm entitled to.

Sharon: Correction: 52 😊😊😊👏👏👏

Benny: Let's see... I'll check... there are hardly any shows right now, I'm barely going to run it this season.

Sharon: Do you have a new/different show you can put me in?

Benny: Not at the moment.

Sharon: Hi Benny. I'd like to get back to the shows and share them with the sub.

Sharon: Happy birthday to you, Happy birthday to you, Happy birthday dear Benny, Happy birthday to you!! 🎂🎂🎂 Here's to all the years we've shared together, all the fun we've had, 🎉🎉🎉 you're such a blessing, such joy in my life! 🎁🎁🎁 Happy birthday! Success, joy and fulfilment.

בני נשמה...

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Benny: Thanks :)

*****הוראות במה*****

"Hi, this is Rinat from the meditation library and today I'm happy to invite you to join me on a journey to your subconscious. To the place where you'll be able to change your physical and emotional moulds that led you to be overweight and to make a conscious choice of the optimal weight that's best for you. Take a deep breath into your stomach on the count of 4. 2,3,4 and let it out with a smile on the count of 6. 2,3,4,5,6... now your entire body is rested on the chair or mat, it's elastic and flexible and ready to move forward with the new instructions you'll be giving it..."

1. The speech is interrupted and I take out a Go-Pro camera, placing it on my head, I take a pregnancy test out of my bag and leave the space to take the test (the audience stays in the theatre and watches the clip of me taking the test).
2. A clip of the pregnancy test I'm taking outside the theatre hall is projected on the wall – I return with the test (turn off the camera on my head), place the test on the podium or give it to someone from the audience to hold in the meantime and keep me from peeking...
3. I stand next to the IV stand, hang a chocolate-milk plastic bag on it and attach it to a tube (throughout the show, the chocolate-milk drips from the "chocolate-milk IV bag" onto the floor – this action will repeat itself twice more). I share my labour experiences and my story keeps getting interrupted by (authentic) phone calls from the producer...
"After the birth I was so full of IV liquids that I couldn't hold it in anymore and just had to pee. But because you're not allowed to get up alone after giving birth I had to stay in bed and insisted that someone brought me a catheter – I filled it up in a second. At about 2am I'm awakened by the phone and told to come to the nursery to breastfeed for the first time. I try to get out of bed... and I can't move my body. The stitches... hurt. The muscles are loose. I'm wounded all over, fractured and full of hematomas. How can anyone get out of bed like that?" (we hear a recording of my phone call with the producer)

Phone call 1:

Producer: Whaaat?

Sharon: Hey, what's up?

Producer: Cool, honey, how are you feeling?

Sharon: I'm great... awesome... She's a princess...I nailed it...

Producer: Huh... by mistake...

Sharon: She came out so sweet. Yeah, you can realize that – we switched at the hospital...

Producer: (Laughs)

Sharon: Say, I wanted to ask you something.

Producer: What's that, honey?

Sharon: Uhhh... I talked with Yifat about the show in two days and I wanted to set some of the dates in advance with her and from what she said I understood that... Noa was in first preference and that I was supposed to get a third and she – two thirds.

Producer: Not at all.

(The rest of my child-birth story, told in a flow) "Not at all... not at all sure how, but I finally managed to get out of bed, holding the catheter in one hand and the IV stand in the other. And they bring me the baby wagon so with my pelvic bones I start pushing it forward. She screams and screams because she's hungry... so I stick the catheter under my armpit and jam my little finger in her mouth... I felt so... Not..."

Phone call 2 (interrupts my story):

Producer: Not at all. I said you two should share... (Sharon: because I know that... that we...) I never said the word preference... God forbid, I don't use that kind of language. Not preference and not schmeference.

Sharon: I'm glad to hear, because it was starting to hurt my feelings... (laughs) I said it was good that I was calling to talk to you...

Producer: It's not even like me to say that.

Sharon: Ok, cool... Because I just want, like... to make sure... Because I know she's abroad, but when she gets back we're supposed to share the shows, and I'm supposed to do two thirds and she – a third, right? That's the custom.

Producer: No... Thi(rd)... Fifty-fifty...

Sharon: Why fifty-fifty? If she's my sub?

Producer: She's not the sub in the show. You share the show. The show doesn't have a stand-in.

(Another part of the birth story) "It was the most difficult moment of my life. I'm standing there in the nursing room, trying to figure out how, with all this medical equipment, I manage to breastfeed or how I even manage to sit down holding my baby. Because after the labour I couldn't sit down for three weeks..."

Phone call 3 (this time I stop telling my story myself and react to the call)

Sharon: "... What do you mean? Just like I was Shiri's sub... Just like Shiri subbed the one before her..."

Producer: No... but Shiri left the show... You see... It's super... I prefer it of the actors worked it out between them...I always prefer that...She's a really... (**Sharon:** I also prefer that) She's a very very busy actress...

Sharon: No... obviously... I know that... On the surface, you know... I don't... But don't... I just want to know that it's worked out with your backup. I'm obviously going to talk to her and we're all human beings...

Producer: (Mumbles something)

Sharon: So...

Producer: I'm here in... I went to see something here... so I'll get back to you in an hour or so, ok?

Sharon: Ok, cool.

Producer: Bye.

(It's possible that at this point I'm removing the chocolate-milk bag, that by now has spilled all over the floor, from the IV stand – and hang up a new chocolate-milk bag)

(Labour story continued) "I pressed the emergency buzzer but no one came. I couldn't breastfeed, I barely got up and then saw I had left a pool of blood on the couch."

4. (A message ringtone is heard, accompanying a message that's projected on me) "What's up, Sharonie? the last show, it looked bad all around... the look isn't child-like...We talked about it a lot in the production team and at the moment we don't see there's much choice..." I discover the message on my body and read it aloud. I later examine my body, exploring what it feels like. What's in my stomach... What my breasts are like... I take out a chocolate-milk plastic bag out of the bag hanging on the IV stand and start filling my bra with plastic bags) WhatsApp messages projection (10 minutes): In this part my correspondence with the producer is projected (at first its projected on my body and later, the rest is projected on the wall). While I answer my texts (from the projection on the wall) – I fill my body with Yotveta chocolate-milk plastic bags. As soon as I get a response from the producer – I stop the filling action and run to read his reply.
5. At this stage, I'm filled with chocolate-milk plastic bags (tummy, breasts, ass) and a medley of birthday songs starts playing accompanied by text typed in the projection. It's a text of me congratulating the producer (after he never returned my messages) on his birthday, wishing him fulfillment, accomplishment and self-love. As I do this, I dance (look what I'm willing to do to get back – criticism on the amateurism and sloppiness in Israel) I get into a trance (despite the physical challenge to move with the bags I'm carrying on my body) and am interrupted by the "Thanks" message.
6. A recording from a weight-loss meditation workshop is heard, during which I lay down in a labour position and between my spread-open legs a child-birth video is projected: "Hi, this is Rinat from the meditation library and today I'm happy to invite you to join me on a journey to your subconscious. To the place where you'll be able to change your physical and emotional moulds that led you to be overweight and to make a conscious choice of the optimal weight that's best for you. Take a deep breath into your stomach on the count of 4.

2,3,4 and let it out with a smile on the count of 6. 2,3,4,5,6... now your entire body is rested on the chair or mat, it's elastic and flexible and ready to move forward with the new instructions you'll be giving it..."

7. From the projected video (that's not really realized) I try to touch the baby projected on my body with my fingers, and just then the projection disappears. I search for the baby among the chocolate-milk plastic bags filling my body and start struggling with them. I try to pop the chocolate-milk plastic bags on my body while slamming myself against the walls, jumping up and down sitting on a chair to try to empty the bags on my behind. I try to rip apart the bags in my breasts – as soon as one of them pops – I stop and breastfeed myself the chocolate-milk. And I continue the process. The wish is to extract them from my body, but they're trapped inside me. They can deplete, but never disappear.
8. After the struggle to pop the bags, a real-life recording of my daughter singing "Mommy...Mommy" to herself is heard. With the pride I feel when I hear her as well as the frustration I feel at that moment... I have to make a decision – what's my decision now? Do I find out the result of the pregnancy test I had taken in the beginning of the show or do I skip the test and accept motherhood and the chocolate-milk dripping down my body?

Artistic declaration of intent for the stage realization of the show – Artistic vision:

- Using two central visual images: chocolate milk and two lines.
 - Two lines: one line will be visible on the back wall and the floor throughout the show. The other one will appear and disappear during the show with lighting games. Other than representing the pregnancy test I'm so obsessed with, these two parallel lines represent my two greatest passions – the world of theater and that of motherhood. Two parallel lines could never meet but in my real life these lines clash on a daily basis.
 - The chocolate milk as a central image: for me, it represents the "empty plastic bags" that are my breasts after breastfeeding. In addition, I have an inner wish to sweeten the experience and the memory with the sweet chocolate milk. But a fundamental characteristic of chocolate milk is that it can go sour and it too (much like the human body) expires. I realize that chocolate milk may be interpreted as either a wide or an individualistic image – my hope is that the audience will "find its own personal chocolate milk".
- Exploring boundaries in the encounter between artist and audience:
 - The pregnancy test I take outside the space, leaving the audience by itself for several minutes.
 - The pregnancy test stick left for safe keeping with one of the audience members and engaging in dialogue with it throughout the show.
 - Popping the chocolate milk plastic bags on my body, splashing it all over the place as well as perhaps crossing the audience.
 - Examining the acceptance of autobiographical materials, that are unfortunately familiar and relevant to many men and women alike.

