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Care worker denies ill-treating patient she fed with a syringe

Christine Cunningham
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A care worker is alleged to have ill-treated an elderly dementia patient by feeding her with a syringe, causing her to choke, a court heard.

Katherine Latham, 63, who worked at the Amberley Hall Care Home, in King's Lynn, is said to have used a syringe to put pureed food into the mouth of the 93 year-old woman, who had trouble swallowing, Norwich Crown Court heard.

Stephen Spence, prosecuting, said the elderly woman, who had a number of health difficulties, was normally fed with a teaspoon, which could be painstaking for the care workers, but Latham had taken it upon herself to use a syringe to squirt food into her mouth, causing her to choke.

He told the jury that by doing this there was a "significant risk" of the patient choking. He said using a

"I do stress the fact that this elderly lady died is not something that should prejudice you against this defendant"

Stephen Spence

syringe "was inappropriate and amounted to ill-treatment".

Mr Spence said that a concerned member of staff saw what was happening and a manager was alerted, who stopped what was taking place.

Mr Spence said the patient did suffer "ill-effects" from being fed in this manner and had problems breathing.

He said although the patient went to hospital and later died, he said it was not the fault of Latham, or anything she had done.

"If it was, she would be facing very different charges. I do stress the fact that this elderly lady died is not something that should prejudice you against this defendant."

He said when questioned about the matter, Latham said she thought what she was doing was perfectly acceptable and did not amount to ill-treatment.

Latham, of Railway Road,

Downham Market, has denied ill-treatment of a person who lacks mental capacity on October 15, last year.

Care home colleague Michael Nobes, told the jury how he had been shocked when he saw Latham feeding the patient with a syringe.

"She [the patient] was only used to having a teaspoon. I have never fed anyone in that manner."

He added: "If you feed someone too fast they are going to choke, especially when they have swallowing problems."

He claimed that when the resident had trouble swallowing, Latham had used a dessertspoon to try to push the food down her throat.

"I could tell by her eyes she was scared," he said.

He said he had told Latham to stop, but she had replied that she was qualified to do the care work and had her NVQ qualifications.

The trial continues.

Reviews

The Country Wife The Hostry

Restoration Comedy is a somewhat neglected genre, yet its place in the historical journey from Shakespeare to farce is significant.

So this is an inspired choice by the Hostry Festival team, led by Stash Kirkbride and director Peter Beck. Presented by a cast of professionals and amateurs, *The Country Wife* is a rude, lewd and fun piece that was shocking in the 17th century.

The story revolves round lustful Mr Horner (Evan Ryder) pretending he's been made a eunuch in order to reassure husbands he is safe while he seduces their wives and makes cuckolds of them.

The central wife herself (Jo Reil) and Alithea (Rebecca Aldred) are but two happy participants, while the twists and turns of deceit, lies, dissemination poke witty fun at marriage, possessiveness, a form of free love and the constraints of respectable society swirl around. Mr Pinchwife (Peter Barrow) is the miserable, tortured man with the young wife, Robin Watson a would-be lover and Jonathan Massey is a wonderful, exaggerated pop who ends up with nothing. It's an unexpected romp in an usual setting – an ideal festival event.

David Porter



■ Katherine Ryan is smart, funny and worth seeing, says James Goffin.

Katherine Ryan Norwich Playhouse

If only every comedian was as acerbic, smart and downright funny as Katherine Ryan.

The Canadian comic had the first of two sell-out Norwich Playhouse audiences enthralled from start to finish of a breathless, energetic and entertaining set that took in celebrity spats, the class system, terrorism and topless modelling without you ever noticing the join.

Many performers struggle to deliver a coherent set, ending up with either a battery of one

liners or anecdotes joined by weak segues. Not Ryan. She has a chatty conversational style that reels you in, even if it is occasionally punctured by some riotously shouty swearing – but if you don't get angry about Justin Bieber, you're probably missing a pulse.

There is the celebrity froth she's famous for (the perils of touring the same venues as Peter Andre and Twitter tussles with Tulisa fans) but there are also some surprisingly raw and personal moments. These could be uncomfortable, but it is a measure of Ryan's skills as a

performer that these feel naturally shared secrets.

Elsewhere Prince Phillip is cited as a reassuring still point of reliable casual racism in an ever-changing world, and her home country's uniquely innocent response to terrorism (threat level: beige) is celebrated too.

Ryan is a top notch performer: working her routine or off script, dealing with traditional topics or the taboo. Her show is called *Glam Role Model* – other comics should definitely be aspiring to her success.

James Goffin

The Human Voice, The Hostry, Norwich Cathedral

In the late 1920s when it was still frightfully chic to have a phone in your flat, Jean Cocteau had the idea of a play for just one actress, a distraught Parisian lady ringing up her lover and trying to win him back. First she

has trouble with crossed lines at the exchange. Then when she gets through, she finds he won't change his mind.

We never hear him speaking, only her. That leaves room for our imaginations to run riot. She cries, she lies and says she nearly dies. She finds tragedy where the audience sees irony as she goes

about her hopeless task in quite the wrong way. Alone on the stage for nearly an hour in Adrian Drew's Hostry Festival production of this psychologically powered drama, Susan Seddon gives a first-rate performance, gripping and flexible. The second part of the double bill is Francis Poulenc's 1958

musical version of Cocteau's text, with soprano Lisa Cassidy in excellent voice as the discarded lady and William Fergusson as the imperturbable piano accompanist. Comparing opera and play is fascinating, with the more realistic version coming out as winner.

Christopher Smith