

Edinburgh Fringe Festival

REVIEW – Bonanza ****

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Berlin, Big In Belgium Season

Main Hall @ Summerhall until 25th August

Bonanza is the smallest town in Colorado, with a population of seven. A former silver mining town which once had thirteen brothels and one church, it is now home to a dysfunctional community and the subject of this documentary theatre piece.

A topographical model of the town spans five video screens which relay the musings of the neighbours. It quickly becomes clear that the tranquillity of the surroundings is at odds with the bickering of the inhabitants, whose mutual distrust is outdone only by their dislike of outsiders. They have lost control of the town council which is now run by occasional residents, but the rot is clearly from within their own community, their moral compass in a tailspin.

The overlapping interviews and the differing recollections of events recall Kurosawa's Rashomon – truth is in the eye of the beholder, We observe them going about their daily lives in solitude but witness little interaction: cameras switched off at the town council meetings may have revealed much about their toxic inter-relationships.

There is considerable craft in this depiction of isolation in a dying town and it is dispiriting that the candour displayed on camera could not be more positively employed in dealing with their neighbours. Perhaps the great outdoors ain't all it's cracked up to be.

Submitted by [Michael Moloney](#)

