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## Coding for Ethnodramas, Oral Histories, and Other Performances: Find What Matters and Cut the Rest

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Find What Matters and  
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# Data Quality in Performative Interviews

- What they say ([Weiss, 1995](#))
- How they say it ([Grele & Terkel, 1985](#))
- How interpreter(s) see and understand the data ([Eisner, 1995](#); [Kazubowski-Houston, 2010](#); [Locke, Golden-Biddle, & Feldman, 2008](#), [Saldaña, 2012](#), [Siegesmund, 2014](#))

# What they say and how they say it

- Multiple interviews to hear the felt truth
- Multiple interviews to surface words that evoke what mattered
- Multiple interviews to find communicative versions of those memories
- More is more
- More is more work for everyone

# Understanding takes time

- Hearing the data
- Transcribing the data
- Coding the data
- Seeing the data
- Working the data
- Dancing the data
- Expanding the data
- Abducted by the data
- Lost in the data

Many qualitative researchers  
have gone into the field  
and never returned



# Inquiry Theatre Methods

- Spend enormous amounts of time transcribing, responding, coding
- Feel the life
- Sense how the data might perform
- Start at the beginning and move through the end
- Find what matters
- Cut the rest
- Repeat—see Saldaña (2011)
- Repeat—see Saldaña (2011)
- Cut words and sentences to reveal the poetry of the speech act
- Repeat—see Saldaña (2011)
- Repeat—see Saldaña (2011)
- Continue to cut with an awareness of the final form
- Create a frame around these data for audience inquiry and discussion
  - Questions matter more than answers
  - Puzzles reveal more than maps
  - Life is more interesting than theory



# Demonstration

- Brief excerpts from Vanover (2014):  
*What Does it Mean to Work in a System that Fails You and Your Kids?*
- Performer Tiffany Octavia Harris, University of Illinois

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