



PLEASE CONTINUE

BY
FRANK BASLOE



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PLEASE CONTINUE received its world premiere at the Ensemble Studio Theatre (William Carden, Artistic Director; Paul Slee, Executive Director) on February 11, 2016. It was directed by William Carden, the set design was by Jason Simms, the costume design was by Suzanne Chesney, the lighting design was by Eric Southern, the sound design was by Shane Rettig, and the production stage manager was Carly Levin. The cast was as follows:

JAMES SANDERS	David Edward Jackson
STANLEY MILGRAM	Haskell King
WILLIAM SLOANE COFFIN, JR.	Tommy Schrider
FRANCIS DUNLEAVY	Jared McGuire
SAUL DASHOFF	Jonathan Randell Silver
MITCHELL HALVERSON III	Dylan Dawson
HAROLD BURDEN	Alex Herrald
MARGARET HOPSON	Molly Carden

PLEASE CONTINUE was commissioned by Center Theatre Group, Los Angeles, California.

PLEASE CONTINUE was developed with support from the Ensemble Studio Theatre/Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Science & Technology Project.

CHARACTERS

JAMES SANDERS, Yale College Class of 1961

STANLEY MILGRAM, Yale University Assistant Professor (27)

WILLIAM SLOANE COFFIN, JR., Yale University Chaplain (36)

FRANCIS DUNLEAVY, Yale College Class of 1961

SAUL DASHOFF, Yale College Class of 1961

MITCHELL HALVERSON III, Yale College Class of 1962

HAROLD BURDEN, Yale College Class of 1962

MARGARET HOPSON, Smith College Class of 1961

Burden and Halverson may double.

SETTING

Various locations in and around Yale University, New Haven,
Connecticut.

The majority of the play takes place fall semester, 1960.

PLEASE CONTINUE

ACT ONE

Prologue—New Haven

Darkness. We hear Burden slowly recite the following:

BURDEN. RED barn.
BRIGHT star.
TALL building.
FAST horse.
WIDE road.

The male voices join in slowly and softly at first and as they build in number and intensity become a chant.

MALE VOICES.

Dunleavy

Dunleavy

Dunleavy

Dunleavy

Dunleavy

Dunleavy

Dunleavy Dunleavy

Dunleavy Dunleavy

Dunleavy Dunleavy

Dunleavy Dunleavy

Dunleavy

BURDEN. HUNGRY cat.

LOUD bird.

HARD hat.

BURDEN.

BIG cake.

SAD girl.

SHINY bike.

SLOW dog.

SWEET plum.

WET towel.

HAPPY boy.

COLD drink.

STRONG breeze.

SOFT pillow.

OLD book.

GREEN plant.

Scene One—New Haven

Milgram and Sanders have just entered Milgram's office.

MILGRAM. I may just have to get a bicycle and pedal myself around town.

That's what it's gotten to quite frankly.

I mean, I've been in New Haven barely two weeks.

Already three tickets.

Three parking tickets sitting on my windshield, informing me that my vehicle is not welcome in this town.

I may instill the young and hungry minds at Yale with knowledge.

But that still does not entitle me to park my car.

Supposedly I've been put on some kind of waiting list.

So, I decided I would go and inquire on the status of my application.

Which took significantly longer than I had anticipated.

A tremendous amount of waiting and standing to find out where I stand on the waiting list.

And thus I am late.

Assuming I am actually late.

Assuming you actually have an appointment with me.

I'm sorry: Who are you?

SANDERS. I'm Sanders sir.

MILGRAM. James Sanders.

SANDERS. That's right.

MILGRAM. You're my thesis advisee.

SANDERS. I go by Jim actually.

MILGRAM. So why don't you tell me about it Sanders.

SANDERS. Tell you about it?

MILGRAM. Your thesis.

SANDERS. My thesis?

MILGRAM. Your thesis project.

SANDERS. Look, I'm sorry to...

MILGRAM. You're sorry to what?

SANDERS. No, it's just I'd sort of been under the impression that you would be...

MILGRAM. That I would be what?

SANDERS. Well, that you would be *assigning* a project.

MILGRAM. *Assigning* a project?

SANDERS. Yes.

MILGRAM. Is that how this works?

I'm supposed to *assign* you a project.

SANDERS. For my junior thesis my advisor assigned a project.

MILGRAM. And how did that go?

SANDERS. You mean the project?

MILGRAM. I mean the project. The thesis. The advisor. Junior year in general.

SANDERS. May I speak candidly sir?

MILGRAM. I would welcome some candor.

SANDERS. The project I worked on was not the most...*interesting* project.

MILGRAM. I see.

SANDERS. It also involved working a good deal with rats. Which is something I would really prefer to avoid if at all possible.

MILGRAM. Of course.

SANDERS. I figured with Psychology you probably don't work with rats very much.

MILGRAM. Is that what you figured?

Well, I'd like to suggest you take a good whiff of this place Sanders.

SANDERS. Pardon sir?

MILGRAM. Open your nostrils. And take a good, wholesome whiff. Do you smell that now?

SANDERS. Yes sir.

MILGRAM. Now, what do you suppose that lovely aroma wafting through the corridors here is?

SANDERS. ...Rats perhaps?

MILGRAM. Well, rat *dung*. If we're going to be perfectly precise

about the odor's origin.

The subtlest hint of sawdust as well I think.

Are you certain that you worked with rats before?

SANDERS. Yes sir, I did.

MILGRAM. Perhaps the rats you employed were constipated?

Or maybe just blessed with the ability to defecate odorlessly?

SANDERS. I don't think that was the case.

MILGRAM. Well, fortunately for you, I am faithfully committed to *human* research. So what do you know about mescaline?

SANDERS. Mescaline?

MILGRAM. If that's your response I am going to assume not much. It's a hallucinogen. Comes from a cactus.

SANDERS. Oh.

MILGRAM. I'm interested in testing how mescaline enhances aesthetic sensitivity.

SANDERS. Wow, that sounds quite...

MILGRAM. Oh, it's a good bit more than quite. Believe me. And I say this strictly outside of my capacity as your thesis advisor: Should the opportunity present itself, a mescal dabble is worth considering.

Milgram looks down at the newspaper on his desk.

Have you seen this? In the *Yale Daily News*?

SANDERS. What's that sir?

MILGRAM. On the front page here. "City Court Convicts 20 Students."

SANDERS. I did read that.

MILGRAM. Lot of names listed here.

Do you know any of these fellows?

SANDERS. No sir. Not personally.

MILGRAM. Says it happened over in Calhoun College.

Which of the colleges here are you in?

SANDERS. I'm in Davenport College. There has been quite a lot of chatter about it around campus.

MILGRAM. Twenty boys and one girl? I imagine there would be some talk. You know, *this*, this could actually be your project Sanders.

SANDERS. My project? I'm not sure I understand.

MILGRAM. You must have some sense of what went on there?

SANDERS. I honestly don't know that much sir.

MILGRAM. It is pretty vague here in the paper. No details of the crimes were raised at the trial, it was just presented in writing to the judge. And they were all convicted of "lascivious carriage"—whatever that is.

That being said, I'm sure if you track down some of these fellows, do a little investigating, you could find out what really happened.

It could actually be quite an interesting retrospective study.

The effect group pressure plays in something like this is absolutely fascinating.

SANDERS. That sounds really interesting but I'm not sure I feel particularly comfortable investigating.

MILGRAM. Fair enough.

Where are you from Sanders?

SANDERS. Independence, Kansas.

MILGRAM. South of Kansas City and north of the Oklahoma border.

SANDERS. That's right. Just north of the Oklahoma border.

You know Independence?

MILGRAM. I actually saw it on a map. The name stood out.

Will you be returning to Independence after graduation?

SANDERS. I'm applying to medical school.

MILGRAM. You're going to be a doctor.

SANDERS. Yes. Look, I really do need a thesis project. And though it sounds very interesting, I'm not sure the mescaline one is for me.

MILGRAM. No. I don't think so.

Do me a favor and read this for me.

Milgram hands a paper from his desk to Sanders. Sanders starts to read it silently.

Aloud please.

I'd like to hear it.

SANDERS. "Obedience is as basic an element in the structure of social life as one can point to. We know that given certain general circumstances, such as the situation of an army in war, men can be

PLEASE CONTINUE

by Frank Basloe

7 men, 1 woman

In the fall of 1960, as the Eisenhower era comes to a close, a Yale senior finds himself helping Stanley Milgram pilot his soon-to-be-controversial “obedience experiments.” Milgram gets the data he needs, but the lab assistant who conducts the experiment is left to grapple with his own responsibility. On the same campus, another Yale senior is forced to confront his role in a sexual assault scandal from the recent past. With the help of Yale Chaplain William Sloane Coffin, the student explores his actions and, mirroring the work that his classmate is undertaking for Professor Milgram, comes to understand the ways in which conformity can push us to act against our conscience.

“PLEASE CONTINUE, Frank Basloe’s relentlessly thought-provoking fictionalized study of the people involved with the [Milgram] experiments, is...absolutely gripping.”
—**The New York Times**

“...complex and deeply disturbing... a play that not only starts intermission debates but will also keep them going long after the last fade-out.”
—**The Huffington Post**

“...PLEASE CONTINUE makes clear Basloe’s dramatic and philosophical thoughtfulness, and he asks such thoughtfulness from the viewer as well. Milgram’s experiments have acquired many defenders and detractors over time, and while Basloe doesn’t come down firmly on either side, he artfully uses the theater as a setting to explore this argument in a way that psychology papers never can.”
—**CurtainUp.com**

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