



## **CREDENTIALS**

By David Williamson

World Premiere – Tuesday August 1<sup>st</sup> 2017, La Mama  
Courthouse as part of La Mama's 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebrations

## **Writer's Note**

Ideas for plays sometimes come to me via striking images, real or photographed. "Credentials" had its germination when I was walking through Sydney and saw a young woman of about eighteen coming towards me. She was not expensively dressed and not conventionally attractive but she had a determined look on her face that seemed to say that whatever life had done to her up to now, she wasn't going to be pushed around any longer. I had been reading about galloping credentialism, where you seemingly now need a master's degree before you can do anything more complex than wash dishes at a restaurant. I wondered how bright young men and women who leave school early because they can't see any life relevance in what they are being taught, cope with the rest of their lives. Reading the often painful and eloquent blogs of such youngsters quickly showed me that many don't. The painful journey of my character Chrissie is all too common in real life. Chrissie's way of pulling herself out of her downward spiral is illegal, but in these exceptional cases is it justifiable? This is the question that Chrissie's boss Stephen has to answer, his own relationship with his daughter being his reference point.

*David Williamson*

## **Director's Note**

This project for me tells a story of the astonishing richness of Melbourne's independent theatre community, and the central place that La Mama has played in it for 50 years. It has been an honour and a joy to work on this play with such a talented group of people. In particular I would like to thank David whose support for the project went well beyond just writing us a fantastic play.

The play takes place in regional NSW and Sydney, between 2010 and the present.

*Tom Gutteridge*

## **Cast**

Mack Hansen/Gary	<i>Paul Bongiorno</i>
Rosy Shore	<i>Nell Feeney</i>
Lenny	<i>Matt Furlani</i>
Rick Edmonds	<i>Zachary Pidd</i>
Chrissie Marston	<i>Kayla Hamill</i>
Stephen Shore/Bruce Marston	<i>Geoff Paine</i>
Jessica Shore	<i>Yvette Turner</i>

## **Creative Team**

Playwright	<i>David Williamson</i>
Lighting Design	<i>Jason Crick</i>
Sound Design/Composition	<i>Zachary Pidd</i>
Director	<i>Tom Gutteridge</i>
Stage Manager	<i>Matilda Houlihan</i>
Set and Costume Design	<i>Anastassia Poppenberg</i>
Photography	<i>Rachel Edward</i>

## Cast and Creatives- Biographies

### *David Williamson – Playwright*

David Williamson's first full-length play, *The Coming of Stork*, premiered at the La Mama Theatre, Carlton, in 1970 and later became the film *Stork*, directed by Tim Burstall. *The Removalists* and *Don's Party* followed in 1971. *The Removalists* won the Australian Writers' Guild AWGIE Award for best stage play and the best script in any medium and the British production saw Williamson nominated most promising playwright by the London *Evening Standard*, and the play was a co-winner of the coveted George Devine Award, the first time it had been given to a non U.K. writer. He has been writing ever since.

Williamson is widely recognised as Australia's most successful playwright and over the last forty-five years his plays have been performed throughout Australia as well as in Britain, United States,

Canada and many European and Asian countries. He lives on Queensland's Sunshine Coast with his writer wife, Kristin Williamson.

### *Paul Bongiorno – Mack Hansen/Gary*

Paul Bongiorno is a Melbourne based performer currently working in acting, puppetry and facilitation. With a strong background in puppetry and movement he's excited to be playing the roles of Gary and Mack in a text driven play. He really enjoyed his days at Union house theatre and is happy to be working with Tom again and such a great cast. He has worked in film, TV, production and marketing but currently works in construction and occasionally drives a bobcat.

### *Jason Crick – Lighting Designer*

Jason stumbled into theatre while someone was looking for him and isn't leaving until he's sure they're gone. Jason has designed for theatre, dance and musicals, with highlights like *LadyCake* (Three Birds Theatre), *Fallen O'er* (Slow, Smallened and Son) and the Green Room nominated *tick, tick... BOOM!* (Pursued By Bear). He also once piloted an anglerfish, and wants you to ask him about it over drinks. Jason is a graduate of the Victorian College of the Arts, and can usually be found causing mischief in or around Melbourne. He hopes to create art that reaches people emotionally and creatively, but he'll settle for your thunderous applause.

*Nell Feeney - Rosy*

Nell began her theatre career with the Hunter Valley Theatre Company and then went on to train at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts. Best known for her roles in *Winners and Losers*, *Neighbours* and the award winning film *Mallboy*. Integral to the ABC's ground breaking *Phoenix*, she has also appeared in *Dirt Game*, *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries*, *Doctor Blake* to name a few. Nell has also worked with MTC, Playbox and Hit Productions, including another David Williamson play, *When Dad Married Fury*. La Mama's Carlton Courthouse holds fond memories as it is here that she first appeared on stage in Melbourne with *The Egg and Spoon Man*. Nell now also enjoys teaching Screen acting at Federation University.

*Matt Furlani - Lenny*

Matt graduated from the Victorian College of the Arts as an actor in 2009 and with a Post-Grad Diploma in Voice Studies in 2015. He has performed in productions including *sex.violence.blood.gore* (MKA), *If It Bleeds* (The Artisan Collective) and *SubUrbia* (Exhibit A: Theatre), as well as *Manbeth* (Band of Creatures) and *The Boy at the Edge of Everything* (MTC). His film work includes *Jugular* (Best Film - Melbourne Underground Film Festival 2013) and *Can't Win, Do Try*. In 2015 he was a recipient of The Mike Walsh Fellowship, enabling him to work with renowned voice teacher Kristin Linklater. Most recently, Matt appeared in *POINT 8 SIX* at La Mama

*Zachary Giles-Pidd – Rick and Composer/Sound Designer*

Zachary is a Melbourne-based performer and maker. He frequents the stage as actor and musician, preferably at the same time. Recently he worked as musical director/composer for *Vanishing Act* which won Best Cabaret at Melbourne Fringe 2016 and was nominated for four Green Room Awards including Best Musical Direction. Zachary's recent acting credits include *Smithereens* (Melbourne Fringe 2015), Daniel Schlusser's *Schmaltz* (Malthouse) and *(in)tent* by Kat Moritz (Melbourne Fringe 2016). He graduated from the VCA's Bachelor of Fine Arts Theatre Practice course in 2015.

*Tom Gutteridge – Director*

Tom is a director, actor, dramaturg, deviser, composer and teacher. He was Artistic Director of Black Swan Theatre Company, Perth from

2004 to 2008. Other directing work includes the Australian/NZ production of *Yes, Prime Minister*, the World Premiere of *Birthrights* by David Williamson for Melbourne Theatre Company, *The Sound Garden* for Opera Queensland, and *Charitable Intent* by David Williamson for La Mama/Melbourne Festival 2001 (Green Room Award: Best New Australian Play). His first professional outing as an actor was in *The Peril* at La Mama in 1985. He is currently researching his PhD at the VCA, University of Melbourne.

*Kayla Hamill - Chrissie*

Kayla graduated from the Arts Academy at Federation University Ballarat in 2015. Since then she has been a part of the creation of *The Adventures of Ballarat Bertie* as part of Ballarat Heritage Weekend, *Enunciations* created by Kate Hood, founder of Raspberry Ripple Productions and *NDIS: A Mental Health Perspective*, a musical initiative by VMIAC. In 2016, Kayla returned to study at the John Bolton Theatre School, a 4 month intensive course focusing on physical and comedic theatre. Since the beginning 2017, Kayla has had the utmost pleasure of being offered a job as a Clown Doctor, working in hospitals to ease a child's pain and spread joy in and amongst the hospital setting. She is very excited and humbled to be a part of the premiere of *Credentials*.

*Matilda Houlihan – Stage Manager*

Matilda has worked on over 25 projects in her young career as a freelance creative producer and stage manager. In 2014 she co-founded Tallulah Theatre, a company focused on working with female-identifying artists to create work which reflects the stories that are most important to them. Credits include *A Dog Called Monkey*, Tallulah Theatre, Producer; *Toast*, DVA Theatre, Project Manager; *\_\_\_day Night's Dream*, Melbourne Fringe Festival, Producer; *The Apocalypse Bear Trilogy*, Periscope Productions, Stage Manager; *Old Wives' Tales*, Tallulah Theatre, Producer, *Uncle Vanya*, La Mama Theatre dir. Bagryana Popov, producer.

*Geoff Paine – Stephen/Bruce*

After graduating from the Victorian College of the Arts in 1985, Geoff first appeared in *Neighbours* in 1986, and went on to work in *A Country Practice*, *The Comedy Company*, *Blue Heelers*, *Lano & Woodley*, *The Games*, *Slideshow*, *Pigs Breakfast*, *MAL.COM* and most

recently *Neighbours* (yes, 30 years later). He has appeared on stage in *Hair*, *The Real Life Brady Bunch*, *Jaws! The Musical*, and *The New Rocky Horror Show*, and his film credits include *The Craic*, *The Wogboy* and *The Wedding Party*. Radio comedy includes episodes of 'The X-Fools', a syndicated comedy for Austereo. Geoff was part of Australia's *Spontaneous Broadway* from 2000 through to 2010, and in 2012-15 he toured *Unpack This!*, a play he wrote about attending a real-life anger management class after getting into a dispute with his neighbour. He currently writes for BehaviourWorks (at Monash University), trying to turn the science of behaviour change into something we can all understand.

*Anastassia Poppenberg* – Set and Costume Designer

Anastassia is a designer, maker and drafts-person for live performance. She completed a Bachelor of Creative Industries (Drama) at Queensland University of Technology in 2011 and a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Production) at Victorian College of the Arts in 2015. She thrives within devised, collaborative environments seeking to investigate scenographic methods of community engagement. Credits include set and props design *Ladycake* as part of the Poppy Seed Theatre Festival (2016) and *Sad Digger Mad Mary* as part of the Midsumma Festival (2017), Set realisation and collaborator *Beneath and Beyond* at La Mama (2016), Costume designer/maker *Colonies in Conflict* (Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design 2015), designer *Smithereens* (FRISK Festival, 2015), props design *Cloudstreet* (VCA Contemporary Play Season 2015).

*Yvette Turner* - Jessica

Yvette is a graduate of the VCA. Recent roles include Joan, 'Attempts' (dir. Rei Poh); Maidie, 'Point&Six' (dir. Kirsten von Bibra); MewMew, 'Nxt Lvl Infinity' (Hot Box Theatre) and SSA Cartwright for Underground Cinema's 'FBI'. Her TV credits include 'Offspring'; for short films *Jessica Blake* (dir. Katia Mancuso), *Bed Bugs* (dir. Cindy Rodriguez) and for web series *Hayden & Peter* (dir. Hayden Mustica). VCA roles included Dolly, *Cloudstreet* (dir. Julián Fuentes-Reta); Helen, *Bullets Over Broadway* (dir. Gary Abrahams). She co-devised/performed in *Mission Unsexable* for FRISK Festival, and toured *We Are Not Good People* to regional Victoria. Yvette received the Patricia Kennedy award, VCA, and the Hannah Barry Memorial Award from UHT, University of Melbourne.

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