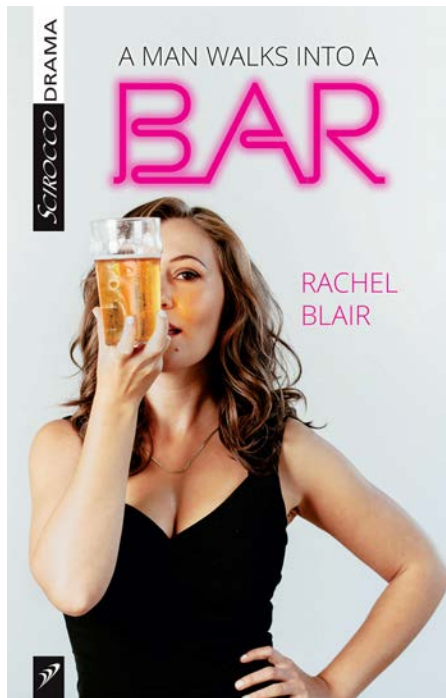




**J. GORDON SHILLINGFORD**  
P U B L I S H I N G I N C

BOOKS THAT ENTERTAIN, EDUCATE, AND INSPIRE

## ESSENTIAL READING



“Blair artfully tantalizes us with what could be a cute romantic scenario, only to starkly expose the misunderstanding—to say nothing of the vicious misogyny—that still blights male-female relationships in the 21st century.”

— *Torontoist*

“There is a punchline to *A Man Walks Into a Bar*. But it’s more like a gut-punch: it hits low, it hits hard, and it hits close to home. And everybody needs to see it.”

— *Mooney on Theatre*

A woman, with the help of a man, nervously sets out to tell us all a joke: A man walks into a bar and meets a waitress.

As the two begin to perform the joke for the audience, however, lines between the performers and characters blur. Ownership of the story becomes a competition as the man and woman unpack every word and movement, catching each other out on their assumptions and contradictions as they inch towards the dark punchline.

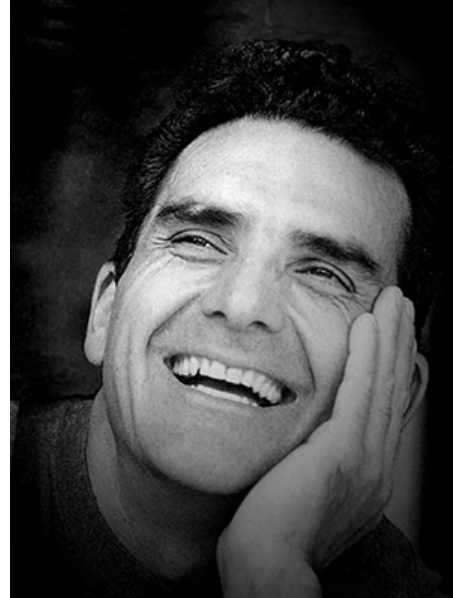
A tense—and funny—drama, [A Man Walks Into a Bar](#) is also a powerful examination of gender politics.

See More

## THE INTERVIEW

[Gary Kirkham](#) is a playwright, actor and filmmaker. His plays include [Falling: A Wake](#), [Pearl Gidley](#), *Queen Milli of Galt*, *Rage Against Violence* (with Dwight Storrington) and *Pocket Rocket* (with Lea Daniel).

Kirkham's plays have been produced by more than fifty theatres across Canada and internationally, and have been translated into French, Italian and Arabic. He is an artistic associate with the MT Space in Waterloo, Ontario.



***A recent project of yours, *Rage Against Violence*, deals with the subject of family violence, and incorporates the verbatim accounts of survivors. Can you tell us more about this project, and about the involvement of international artists in the process?***

Dwight Storrington and I were working on a verbatim play about domestic abuse commissioned by The Women's Crisis Services of Waterloo Region. We had several survivors as well as a social worker, a nurse, and a cop who work with domestic abuse victims. I knew the family of Denise Bordeau, who was one of the MMIWG (Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls). The murder trial was happening while we were working on the script and the family asked me to include Denise's story in our play. We then turned twelve hours of interviews into a one-hour play. The play was supposed to be performed just the one time, but we got requests from other groups. So we reached out to participants and told them we would make the play royalty-free if done as a fundraiser for a women's shelter or an awareness program.

That's when my friend Gisel from Mexico called, wanting to translate a Spanish version of the play. We started working on the translation, but we soon realized she had her own story to tell. When Gisel was 14, her best friend's mother disappeared. Every weekend Gisel and her friend would go to hospitals and the morgue with a photograph of the mother. Ten years later and her friend's mother has still not been found. Her story was very similar to Denise Bordeau's story.

I realized we could take the twenty minutes of the play that was Denise Bordeau's story and merge it with Gisel's story. Another colleague from Turkey also wanted to be involved, so now we are working on a play with three stories in Spanish, Turkish, and English.

***You often work with MT Space, which has a mandate to produce theatre that centralizes marginalized voices, addresses social issues, and promotes intercultural understanding. Tell us a little about your work with MT Space’s Newcomer Theatre.***

The MT Space was commissioned by the local YMCA to create a theatre program for local newcomer youth. The MT Space was defined by the *Globe and Mail* as “an avant-garde theatre company.” So you might think that an avant-garde theatre company might be an odd fit for teaching theatre to newcomer youth. But it turned out our non-traditional theatre form is a perfect fit.

We had youths from sixteen different countries speaking twelve different languages. Most of them had been in Canada for only a few months.

The last thing I wanted to do was impose a western idea of what theatre was, so we realized our “avant-garde” theatre style would be a great place to start. I told them, “I’ve been doing theatre for thirty years and I no longer have a definition for what theatre is, so we are going to define what theatre is together.” When we start, we don’t have a script or even an idea of what the play will be. But they have stories and together we figure out what theatre is.

[Read the Full Interview](#)

## CLASS NOTES

*Want to share your story about how you use JGS titles in your classes? Let us know. We’d love to talk to you!*



March is the month we celebrate International Women’s Day, and, in the USA, the UK, Australia and several other countries, March is also designated Women’s History Month. Marking these holidays gives us a time to both reflect on the progress women have made and to examine issues of gender inequality.

In 2016, *American Theatre* looked at gender parity in professional theatres, assessing 1,946 productions from 411 Theatre Communications Group member theaters. Their study found that 63% of professionally produced plays were by men, and 26% by women.

Similarly, a comprehensive 2016 Canadian study revealed that only 18% of mainstage plays staged by Canadian post-secondary drama, theatre, and English programs were written by women—and a staggering 27% of the participating universities and colleges staged *no* plays by women during the three-year period covered by the survey.

It is clear from these studies that there is more work to be done to achieve gender parity in

our theatres and theatre programs.

“The PLEDGE Project,” an acronym for “Production Listing to Enhance Diversity and Gender Equity” was established in response to these findings. The Pledge Project website offers a searchable database of over 400 large-cast plays by women, including adaptations of male-authored “classics.” The aim is to encourage inclusion, diversity, and gender equity at the post-secondary level. You can learn more about the Pledge Project, or find a large-cast play for your students, here: <https://www.pledgeproject.ca>

Many of our authors are available for classroom visits, in person or via Zoom. If there's an author you'd like to invite to your class, [contact us](#) for more information.

## CELEBRATING WOMEN'S HISTORY



[See More](#)

## IN THE NEWS

- [Marcia Johnson](#) is the recipient of the 2022 Equity Showcase Cayle Woman of the Year Award, which honours a female artist's creative, civic, or mentorship contribution to the performing and/or media arts. Part of the citation reads: “Marcia's accomplishments, care and nurturing for the performing arts community through the years deserve acknowledgment. Congratulations, Marcia, and thank you for the grace, love, and joy you bring to the community.”

## COMING ATTRACTIONS

• IN THEATRES •

**Stag and Doe** by Mark Crawford

[Daytrippers Dinner Theatre](#), Bloomington, Minnesota, February 23–June 9, 2022.

**Boom** by Rick Miller

[Capitol Theatre](#), Port Hope, ON, March 10–20, 2022.

**Stag and Doe** by Mark Crawford

[Grande Prairie Live Theatre](#), Grande Prairie, AB, March 10–26, 2022.

**Other People** by Daniel Brooks,

[Canadian Stage](#), March 20–April 3, 2022.

**Orphan Song** by Sean Dixon

[Tarragon Theatre](#), Toronto, ON, March 23–April 24, 2022.

**The Birds and the Bees** by Mark Crawford

[New Wolseley Theatre](#), Ipswich, UK, March 25–April 9, 2022.

**The Runner** by Christopher Morris

[Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre](#), March 30–April 16, 2022.

**The Herd** by Kenneth T. Williams

[Citadel Theatre](#), Edmonton, AB, April 2–April 24, 2022.

**The Birds and the Bees** by Mark Crawford

[Norwich Theatre Playhouse](#), Norwich, UK, April 20–30, 2022.

**The Birds and the Bees** by Mark Crawford

[Theatre Royal](#), Bury St. Edmunds, UK, May 3–7, 2022.

**The Herd** by Kenneth T. Williams

[Tarragon Theatre](#), Toronto, ON, May 11–June 12, 2022.

**The Great Shadow** by Alex Poch-Goldin

[4th Line Theatre](#), Millbrook, ON, June 28–July 23, 2022

**Stag and Doe** by Mark Crawford

[Capitol Theatre](#), Port Hope, ON, July 7–30, 2022.

**The Waltz** by Marie Beath Badian

[Blyth Festival](#), Blyth, ON, August 11–27, 2022.

**The Ex-Boyfriend Yard Sale** by Haley McGee

[Soulpepper Theatre](#), Toronto, ON, October 18–November 6, 2022.

• ONLINE •

**5 Short Films Inspired by the Five Senses**

featuring "Taste" by Mark Crawford

and "Sight" by Marcia Johnson

[Bad Hats Theatre](#), online now.

**Light** by Rosa Laborde

[Tarragon Theatre](#), March 15–27, 2022.

***White Girls in Moccasins*** by Yolanda Bonnell  
[Buddies in Bad Times Theatre](#), online March 26–April 2.

***Deer Woman*** by Tara Beagan  
[Prairie Theatre Exchange](#), Winnipeg, MB, April 20–24, 2022.

• ON SCREEN •

***The Swearing Jar*** by Kate Hewlett  
Starring Adelaide Clemens, Douglas Smith, Patrick J. Adams, and Kathleen Turner, [coming  
Spring 2022](#).

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