

# SLAP. BANG. KISS.

Dan Giovannoni



**CURRENCY PRESS**  
The performing arts publisher

**NEXTSTAGE**  
Made possible by MTC's Playwrights Giving Circle

**MTC** MELBOURNE  
THEATRE  
COMPANY

## CURRENT THEATRE SERIES

First published in 2022

by Currency Press Pty Ltd,

PO Box 2287, Strawberry Hills, NSW, 2012, Australia

enquiries@currency.com.au

www.currency.com.au

in association with Melbourne Theatre Company.

Copyright: *SLAP. BANG. KISS*. © Dan Giovannoni, 2022.

### COPYING FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES

The Australian *Copyright Act 1968* (Act) allows a maximum of one chapter or 10% of this book, whichever is the greater, to be copied by any educational institution for its educational purposes provided that that educational institution (or the body that administers it) has given a remuneration notice to Copyright Agency (CA) under the Act.

For details of the CA licence for educational institutions contact CA, 11/66 Goulburn Street, Sydney, NSW, 2000; tel: within Australia 1800 066 844 toll free; outside Australia 61 2 9394 7600; fax: 61 2 9394 7601; email: info@copyright.com.au

### COPYING FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Except as permitted under the Act, for example a fair dealing for the purposes of study, research, criticism or review, no part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means without prior written permission. All enquiries should be made to the publisher at the address above.

Any performance or public reading of *SLAP. BANG. KISS*. is forbidden unless a licence has been received from the author or the author's agent. The purchase of this book in no way gives the purchaser the right to perform the play in public, whether by means of a staged production or a reading. All applications for public performance should be addressed to the author c/- Currency Press

Typeset by Brighton Gray for Currency Press.

Printed by Finline Print + Copy Services, Revesby, NSW.

Cover features L-R: Tsungirai Wachenuka, Conor Leach and Sarah Fitzgerald, image by Brett Walker.



A catalogue record for this book is available from the National Library of Australia

## Contents

---

SLAP. BANG. KISS.

1

---



*SLAP. BANG. KISS.* was first produced by Melbourne Theatre Company at the Lawler, Southbank Theatre, Melbourne on 19 April 2022, with the following cast:

SOFIA

Sarah Fitzgerald

DARBY

Conor Leach

IMMI

Tsungirai Wachenuka

Director, Katy Maudlin

Set and Costume Designer, Kate Davis

Lighting Designer, Amelia Lever-Davidson

Composer and Sound Designer, Ian Moorhead

This production of *SLAP. BANG. KISS.* was developed in 2019 and 2020 under the direction of Prue Clark and with the participation of Tahlee Fereday and Artemis Ioannides.

# NEXT STAGE

With a \$4.6 million investment by MTC and MTC's Playwrights Giving Circle, the NEXT STAGE Writers' Program has introduced the most rigorous playwright commissioning and development process ever undertaken by the Company, setting a new benchmark for play development in Australia.

---

Thank you to MTC's Playwrights Giving Circle — its donors, foundations and organisations — for sharing our passion and commitment to Australian stories and Australian writers.

Louise Myer and Martyn Myer AO, Maureen Wheeler AO and Tony Wheeler AO,  
Christine Brown Bequest, Allan Myers AC QC and Maria Myers AC,  
Tony Burgess and Janine Burgess, Dr Andrew McAliece and Dr Richard Simmie,  
Larry Kamener and Petra Kamener



**NAOMI  
MILGROM  
FOUNDATION**





DAN GIOVANNONI's plays for families, young people and adults have been produced across Australia in theatres, school halls, parks, tents and even a barn outside Hobart. Plays include *The Great Un-Wondering of Wilbur Whittaker* (2022), *HOUSE* (2021), *Mad as a Cute Snake* (2019), *Air Race* (2018), *Bambert's Book of Lost Stories* (2016), *Jurassica* (2015), *Cut Snake* (2011) and two adaptations of Christos Tsiolkas' writing, *Merciless Gods* (2018) and *Loaded* (2020). He has won three Green Room Association awards—for *Loaded*, *Merciless Gods* and *Jurassica*—and *Bambert's Book of Lost Stories* won a Helpmann award for Best Presentation for Children, and was nominated for Best New Australian Work. He was an inaugural writer-in-residence at Melbourne Theatre Company as part of the NEXT STAGE writers' program, where he was commissioned to write *The Body* and *SLAP. BANG. KISS*. A graduate of NIDA, Dan lives on Wurundjeri country in Melbourne with his husband, daughter and two dogs.

## **CHARACTERS**

IMMI / JOURNALIST / JASMINE / LOLA / JOJO / CARA / BEAU / SUZ /  
NINA / KATHRYN / VIDA.

SOFIA / DANIEL / MUM / BOYS / AGATHA / CRAIG / PK 1 / DELILAH /  
LEON / FRAN / JOY / PATTY / CLEM.

DARBY / CARL / RUPERT / FINN / OFFICIAL / PK 2 / MARC / AUGIE /  
AIDEN / RAMI / MORRIE / KIT / SASHI / ARCHIE.

## **NOTE ON DOUBLING**

This is a play for three performers, with doubling as above.

## **NOTE ON TEXT**

Lines in italics denote dialogue between characters.

/ marks the point of interruption in a sentence.

## **SETTING**

Here, not far from now.

This play went to press before the end of rehearsals and may differ from the play as performed.

## *PROLOGUE*

IMMI: Slap.

SOFIA: Bang.

DARBY: Kiss.

ALL: I feel the sting

IMMI: As my hand whips his face.

SOFIA: As the bullet slices my arm.

DARBY: As his lips press against mine.

SOFIA: It catches me off balance

DARBY: My knees wobble

IMMI: Fingers tingle

ALL: And my first instinct is to run.

DARBY: But then

IMMI: But then

SOFIA: I don't.

I don't run.

IMMI: I stare at my hand, my hand that just slapped a peacekeeper.

DARBY: I press my lips against Daniel's and I can feel his stubble on my lip and I think: holy crap I'm actually doing it.

SOFIA: Heart pounding fast, pumping blood down my arm.

IMMI: I'm surprised at how much it stings.

SOFIA: So much blood.

DARBY: Rushing to my fingertips, to my cheeks.

IMMI: I thought I was stronger than that.

DARBY: My ... you know.

SOFIA: Breathe.

DARBY: Breathe.

IMMI: Breathe.

SOFIA: You need to hide.

IMMI: Don't look away, look at him.

DARBY: Keep going, dickhead, enjoy it, you're kissing Daniel Koh!

*Silence.*

IMMI: I stare straight into the peacekeeper's eyes.

SOFIA: I look at the bullet wound on my arm.

DARBY: I feel Daniel Koh's stubbly moustache against my top lip and I know.

IMMI: I know, then, that nothing

DARBY: Nothing

SOFIA: Nothing is going to be the same as it was.

*ONE*

IMMI: Five to six and you can feel it, in the air, on your skin. Five to six and it's almost curfew.

Onto the street and bolt for the checkpoint, shortcut through the arcade, and something's up cos there's a crackle in the air. Streets feel angry and I do too, wound up tight, just waiting for the snap. Something's gunna go down tonight. Turn the corner to Checkpoint B: shit. Huge crowd. Friday night panic, people waving papers at the gate, desperate to get home before curfew. Like rats, I think. We're like rats being sent back to our holes for the night.

Three minutes.

Slip down the front, silent; no-one sees me. Dogs in muzzles, drones buzzing, peacekeepers everywhere. It gets like this, sometimes. Flash their dicks around, like to remind us who's in charge. Woman in front of me's piled up with bags and she wants them through, but the peacekeeper shakes his head, keeps shaking and she argues with him. Back and forth and the clock's counting down; come on, let her through, she has her papers and then slap.

Crowd falls silent.

He just fucking slapped her.

She scurries through and I do too. Head down, hand over papers, smile—bag check yes, ID card yes. The PK pats me down and I think:

You should be the one with papers, dick.

Six-oh-one. I'm through.

Head for home and shake it off, SLAP, the drones, the dogs, the crackle in the air and—

*She stops. She looks up.*

Where's the flag?

There, up there on our building roof—there used to be a flag up there. Our flag, flying high, hung by Gran but now: gone, replaced with theirs.

My hand twitches.

Look down along the fence line. Closing us in more 'n' more each day. Checkpoint to the north, to the south, the east, the west. Surrounded. Cameras, watching. PKs on the street. This is what they've done to us. Hunted us into a corner, told us we don't exist.

My hand twitches and I realise, then.

Yeah.

Yeah something is gunna go down tonight.

And I'm gunna be the one to start it.

Look up and spot one, stationed up ahead.

*OI. Yeah you peacekeeper fuck. GET OFF MY STREET.*

Barely turns his head he does and that's enough for me, and then I'm run, run back toward him, fast and faster, getting speed, getting fire:

*I said Get. Off. My. Street.*

Nothing.

*Don't ignore me, pig.*

His head snaps. Ooh. Nibble nibble. My hand twitches again. *When are you gunna take your tanks and fuck OFF, these streets are ours. Ours before you came and ours when we get you gone. So GET OUT. GET OUT GET OUT GET OUT* and as my voice grows loud I start to see:

People, watching.

High up in windows, all around.

See curtains open, phones out filming.

Filming me.

*She looks at her hand.*

My cousin's pain, my hand. My brother's pain my hand. My mother's pain, my grandmother's pain, every one of us that they've forced into this cage, their pain in my hand, their rage in my hand and I know what I have to do:

SLAP.

*Silence.*

Owww.

I feel the sting and his head turns,  
slowly,  
toward me.

I can't believe I just did that.

Step back, back away from the peacekeeper, away from the bomb I've just dropped, and all I can feel is the sting of slap, slap, slap

SOFIA: Bang

IMMI: Slap

SOFIA: Bang

IMMI: Slap

SOFIA: Bang my foot against the desk.

Two-nineteen.

Reeks in here. Like someone farted, deodorant, nasty socks.

Two-nineteen and we're still on Famous Speeches by Shakespeare, Cassius to Brutus, Hamlet, Richard, Henry, 'Sir, has someone in the English department cross-checked this list for a character without a dick?'

Don't say that, obviously. Don't say anything. Goff's staring at us in silence, waiting for an answer to a question no-one even remembers. *This is shit* Kevin shouts. I feel sorry for Goff but Kevin's right, this is shit.

Two-nineteen.

Phone dings in my pocket, shit: Jye. 'Get out.' Type back: 'I wish bitch I'm in English and I think my brain is leaking out my ears, RIP me.'

And then the fire alarm goes off. Laughing, jeers, Kevin again: *Sir you know the school has to pay for the fire trucks if it's a false alarm.* Press send.

Wait for the alarm to stop.

Except it doesn't. Goff stands, frowns.

Two-twenty.

People say bad shit happens in slow motion. That you tune in to tiny details.

Two-twenty and the door clicks and we all turn, because, duh, we hear the door click, and he's there, and he's holding this gun,

and it sprays into the room, a wave of dull pops, and Rebecca next to me she drops out of the air, and then me too, I'm on the ground. I've been shot. I know that I've been shot and I look at the clock.

Still two-twenty. Lie on the ground and listen as he turns, closes the door, walks away, up the hall, bang, bang, bang

DARBY: *Kiss*

SOFIA: *Bang*

DARBY: *Kiss*

SOFIA: *Bang*

DARBY: *Kiss, Jasmine, I'm going to KISS Daniel Koh.*

JASMINE: *You?*

DARBY: *What does that mean?*

JASMINE: *Well Daniel Koh's, like, a hot rebel with a mullet and a nose ring and you ...*

DARBY: *Yes?*

JASMINE: *You're a weedy gay redhead from a deadshit town in the middle of nowhere.*

DARBY: *Correction, Jasmine: I'm a weedy gay redhead who's about to set a world record.*

There's just the three of us here: me, Jasmine and this student teacher who followed us here and keeps saying what we're doing is 'just so rad'—whatever, I look around for Daniel Koh.

JASMINE: *How long do you have to kiss for?*

DARBY: *Thirty-seven hours. You need to film it, get your phone.*

JASMINE: *Shouldn't we like, do it at your house?*

DARBY: *No, Jasmine, I'm not just going to invite him to make out in my HOUSE, that's weird, it needs to be somewhere, like, special.*

JASMINE: *Reckon he knows you're in love with him?*

DARBY: *I'm not in love with him Jasmine shut up he's here.*

*Hi.*

DANIEL: *Hi.*

DARBY: *Hi.*

DANIEL: *You look cute.*

DARBY: *Oh my god.*

*Thanks. I like your ... shoes.*

DANIEL: *... Thanks. They're just school shoes.*

DARBY: *Good one, Darby.*

*So we just need to pick somewhere to actually. Do it.*

DANIEL: *Why not here?*

DARBY: *Here?*

JASMINE: *In the Woolworths car park?*

DANIEL: *Why not? Make a splash.*

JASMINE: *I—*

DARBY: *Yes. Okay. Great idea. Tweet it Jasmine. We're doing it here.  
Ready?*

DANIEL: *Ready.*

DANIEL *nods.*

JASMINE *holds up her phone and speaks into the camera.*

JASMINE: *Hi. I'm Jasmine. It's four o'clock on Friday the twelfth of April, give or take a few seconds, and as you can see, here we are in the beautiful Woolworths car p—*

DARBY: *Jasmine, just say the thing.*

JASMINE: *Sorry, god, okay. This is the official recording of Darby and Daniel's world record attempt for the longest kiss. I hope I have enough battery. Ready?*

DARBY: Daniel looks at me. I want to spew. I can't believe this is actually happening, like actually really—

JASMINE: *Kiss!*

DARBY: He leans in and he is so hot and Oh god, Darby Kang, you're in trouble now.

JASMINE: *Kiss, kiss.*

DARBY: And we do.

*We ...*

*Kiss.*

SOFIA: *Bang.*

IMMI: *Slap.*

*Silence.*

I stare into the peacekeeper's eyes as I back away from him.

SOFIA: Heart pounding fast, pumping blood down my arm.

DARBY: I feel Daniel Koh's stubbly moustache against my top lip and I know.

SOFIA: I know.