

2019-20

MARCH 10 - APRIL 4, 2020



DEFERRED

ADMISSIONS

BY JOSHUA HARMON

PLAY GUIDE

theatre:
CALGARY
Stafford Arima, Artistic Director

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Originally produced by Lincoln Center Theater, New York City, 2018.



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MATURE THEMES

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theatre:
CALGARY

220 9 Ave SE
Calgary, AB T2G 5C4
theatrecalgary.com

THE BASICS

CAST & CREATIVE TEAM

CHARLIE LUTHER MASON

JAKE BUNYAN

BILL MASON

CURT MCKINSTRY

GINNIE PETERS

ANNA CUMMER

ROBERTA

VALERIE ANN PEARSON

SHERI ROSEN MASON

RACHEL JONES

DIRECTOR

JAMIE DUNSDON

LIGHTING DESIGN

SCOTT REID

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

OLIVER ARMSTRONG

SET DESIGN

ANDY MORO

VOICE & DIALECT COACH

JANE MACFARLANE

TC MENTORS PROGRAM -

DIRECTING

DAVID SKLAR

COSTUME DESIGN

VICTORIA KRAWCHUK

STAGE MANAGER

KERRY JOHNSON

HEAD OF LIGHTING

CATHARINE CRUMB

HEAD STAGE CARPENTER

SCOTT MORRIS

HEAD OF SOUND

BRONWYN BOWLBY

HEAD DRESSER

RACHEL MICHELLE SHERIDAN



THE BASICS

SETTING

Hillcrest Prep School, New Hampshire
December 2015 - April 2016

SYNOPSIS

Sherri Rosen-Mason is the progressive dean of admissions at Hillcrest, a boarding school in rural New Hampshire. Sherri and her husband Bill, the school's equally liberal headmaster, have worked tirelessly to diversify the student body. When a draft of the admissions catalogue comes to her desk that does not reflect the work they are doing, Sherri demands changes to reflect visual progress towards a more diverse student body.

Sherri and Bill's son Charlie, a high-achieving senior at Hillcrest, dreams of attending Yale. But when his application is deferred and his best friend Perry—a part African American student with lower grades is accepted, Charlie unloads a tirade of privilege and entitlement, shocking both of his parents.

Over the course of the semester, Charlie reflects on his behaviour, while Sherri is forced to confront the sincerity of her own intent—especially with her assumptions about her child's future at stake.

WHO'S WHO

SHERRI ROSEN-MASON

Early 50's, very liberal secular-Jewish woman. Head of Admissions for Hillcrest.

BILL MASON

Early 50's, very liberal WASP, Sherri's husband, Head of the School at Hillcrest.

CHARLIE LUTHER MASON

17, Bill & Sherri's son, a senior at Hillcrest.

GINNIE PETERS

50's, very liberal WASP, stay-at-home Mom, her son is Charlie's best friend.

ROBERTA

Early 70's, works in development at Hillcrest.

EXPLORATIONS

“IT’S OPENED MY EYES”

JAKE BUNYAN TALKS ABOUT HIS DEBUT ROLE WITH THEATRE CALGARY, AND HOW ADMISSIONS HAS MADE HIM QUESTION PRIVILEGE AND POWER.

Jake Bunyan has taken on a trifecta that most 17 year olds would find daunting; he’s making his debut performance on the Theatre Calgary stage, taken on his first lead role with a professional theatre company, while also balancing the demands of his senior year at Central Memorial High School. But he’s embracing the challenge by focusing on the opportunity and what lies ahead in his budding career.

Jake began acting in junior high drama, and was hooked from that point forward. A student of the Central Memorial Performing & Visual Arts program and a member of Calgary Young People’s Theatre, Jake has now performed in more than 12 productions. These experiences have culminated to a milestone in his career in theatre so far, and a chance to take on a challenging role.

Jake is the same age and the same stage of life as his character, so he’s able to identify with Charlie, drawing on his own experiences as a student and a young person working towards the next chapter of his life.

“We (Charlie and I) are both passionate, have loving families, we’ve been provided a good education, and we’ve both been given opportunities to pursue our interests,” shared Jake. “I’ve been able to take a good look at myself and how I address certain situations and bring that to my role as Charlie.”

Beyond the experience of working

with the Theatre Calgary creative team on this award-winning play, he also reflects that the play itself has shifted his perspective, making him more aware of his own privilege and position, and how the themes and situations presented in this play are a reality in today’s society.

“*Admissions* has really opened my eyes. This isn’t an issue that presents itself in my day-to-day life, because I am a white man. But as we’ve worked through this show and really figured our characters out, it’s become apparent that the idea of white privilege really does affect us all whether we know it or not. This show has made me question that privilege and has also made me take a step back and look at how all these situations present themselves in our society.”

With raising the curtain on this provocative and dark comedy, Jake looks forward to the reaction from Calgarians, and the conversations that will ensue.

“For me, this show is really unique. Part of why I love it is the fact that it targets its intended audience. Everyone is going to be able to find something they connect with, and everyone is also going to find something they disagree with. Maybe why it does such a good job is that it makes its audience a little uncomfortable. I hope everyone who sees this show is as affected as I am, and I hope it starts a lot of

conversations. Conversations that I think wouldn’t take place without that level of discomfort.”

“I’VE BEEN ABLE TO TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT MYSELF AND HOW I ADDRESS CERTAIN SITUATIONS AND BRING THAT TO MY ROLE AS CHARLIE.”

After taking a year off between high school and post-secondary, Jake hopes to further pursue his career in the arts, exploring different facets of theatre like production and design, as well as continue gaining experience in T.V. and film. ●



JAKE BUNYAN DURING REHEARSALS FOR ADMISSIONS

EXPLORATIONS

TERMS TO KNOW

ATHEIST

A person who disbelieves or lacks belief in the existence of God or gods.

1 BOARDING SCHOOL

A school which some or all of the pupils live in during the school term.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE

In the United States, community colleges are primarily two-year public institutions providing lower-level tertiary education, also known as continuing education. They grant certificates, diplomas and associate degrees. After graduating from a community college, most students transfer to a four-year liberal arts college or university for two to three years to complete a bachelor's degree.

DEAN

The head of a college or university faculty or department.

DEFERRED

A deferred university application means that the college is postponing its admissions decision and will review the application with regular-decision applicants.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The principal editor of a publication, responsible for managing editorial policies and the production of content.

2 EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

An extracurricular activity is something done outside of class or a paying job like sports, academic competitions, academic clubs or volunteering.

FRESHMAN

A first-year student at a university, college, or high school.

3 IVY LEAGUE SCHOOLS

The Ivy League is an American collegiate athletic conference comprising sports teams from eight private universities in the Northeastern United States. The term Ivy League is typically used to refer to those eight schools as a group of elite colleges beyond the sports context. The eight members are [Brown University](#), [Columbia University](#), [Cornell University](#), [Dartmouth College](#), [Harvard University](#), the [University of Pennsylvania](#), [Princeton University](#) and [Yale University](#). Ivy League has connotations of academic excellence, selectivity in admissions and social elitism.

4 MOBY DICK

Moby-Dick; or, *The Whale* is an 1851 novel by American writer Herman Melville. The book is sailor Ishmael's narrative of the obsessive quest of Ahab, captain of the whaling ship Pequod, for revenge on Moby Dick, the giant white sperm whale that on the ship's previous voyage bit off Ahab's leg at the knee.

5 MYSTIC PIZZA

A 1988 American coming-of-age film starring Annabeth Gish, Julia Roberts and Lili Taylor. Gish plays Kat, a young woman who is studying astronomy, works at the planetarium and has been accepted to Yale University on a partial scholarship. She also works at Mystic Pizza and nannies to earn the rest of the money for school.

REPUBLICAN

One of the two main political parties in the United States. Many Republicans oppose higher tax rates for higher earners, which they believe are unfairly targeted at those who create jobs and wealth. They believe private spending is more efficient than government spending and that individuals should take responsibility for their own circumstances.

WHITE PRIVILEGE

Inherent advantages possessed by a white person on the basis of their race in a society characterized by racial inequality and injustice.

6 YALE

Yale University is a private Ivy League research university in New Haven, Connecticut. Founded in 1701, it is the third-oldest institution of higher education in the United States and one of the nine Colonial Colleges chartered before the American Revolution.

UC BERKELEY HOUSING, UNIT 1: SLOTTMAN BUILDING DORM ROOM - FLICKR

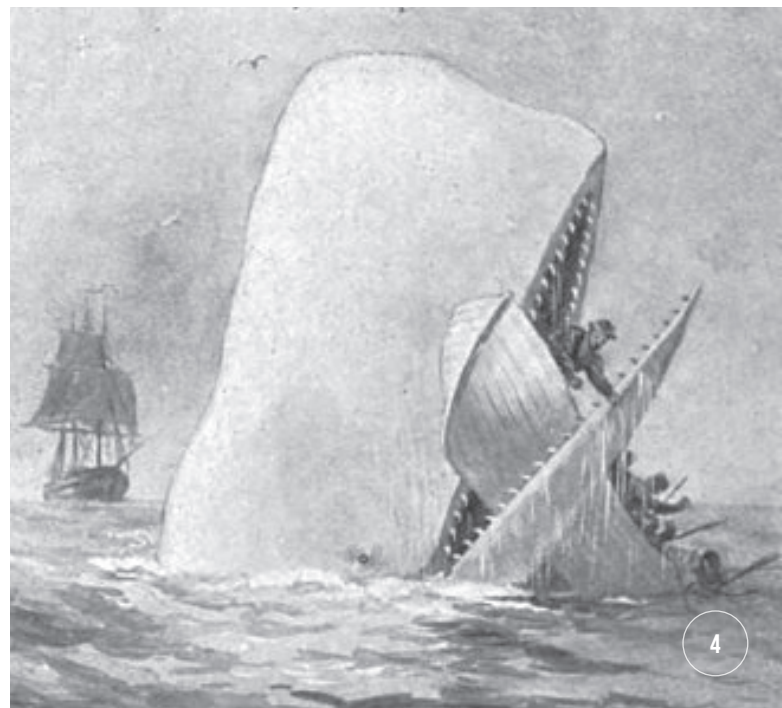
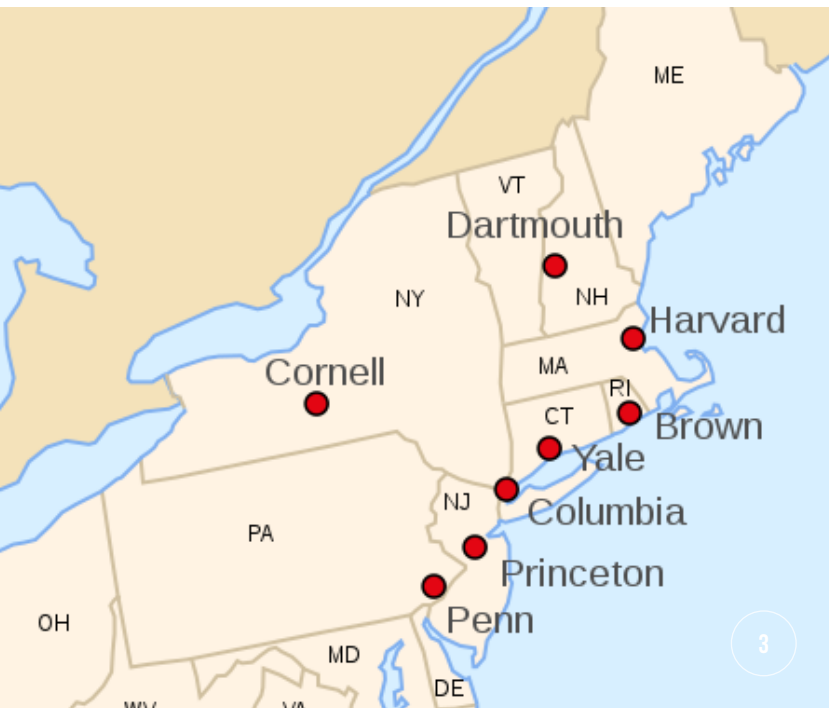
EAGLEBROOK SCHOOL SPRING ATHLETICS - FLICKR

IVY LEAGUE SCHOOL LOCATIONS - WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

ILLUSTRATION FROM AN EARLY EDITION OF MOBY-DICK (1892) - WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

MYSTIC PIZZA SIGN - WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

YALE UNIVERSITY OSBORN MEMORIAL LABORATORIES - PHOTO BY SAGE ROSS, WIKIMEDIA COMMONS



EXPLORATIONS

“I HOPE THEY CAN LAUGH AND LOVE TOGETHER IN THE SAME SPACE, AND THAT IT BRINGS THEM A LITTLE CLOSER TOGETHER IN THESE DEEPLY DIVIDED TIMES.”

ADMISSIONS DIRECTOR JAMIE DUNSDON TELLS US WHY THIS PLAY IS IMPORTANT NOW MORE THAN EVER.

Local *Admissions* director, Jamie Dunsdon, has been in the professional theatre scene for most of her life. Jamie has been making waves in the local arts community since 2009, both as the Founding Artistic Director of Verb Theatre and as the Artistic Producer at Calgary Young People's Theatre. *Admissions* marks her directorial debut on the Theatre Calgary stage, which she feels is a new “high point” in her career this far.

“IF YOU WANT TO TELL PEOPLE THE TRUTH, YOU'D BETTER MAKE THEM LAUGH OR THEY'LL KILL YOU.”

OSCAR WILDE

“I fell into directing because I found I had a knack for big-picture storytelling. When I read a script, I want my hands in all of it, so coming up with a vision comes quite naturally. Ultimately, I like challenging people, making people feel things, and directing is just my vehicle of choice.”

Jamie received the *Admissions* script in the fall of 2018, and that is where her process as director began, which encompasses reading the script repeatedly to immerse herself in the story and characters, and to identify the areas where she needs to do more research.

“In the early days, I'm looking at the experience I want to offer the audience. What story am I telling? Whose story is it? How does the play function? I get to know the script very well, so when I start working with the creative and production teams, I'm well-equipped.” And as far as the story goes, audiences can expect to be confronted and uncomfortable. Jamie says rather than leaving audiences with a moral of the story, the play provokes the audience to question themselves, their thoughts on privilege and power, and what our responsibilities are to continue to foster diversity in our society.

“It's a courageous script. This is a play that's not afraid to have its characters say things that may be deeply offensive, but it does so in an attempt to provoke discussion, thoughts and change.”

While Jamie doesn't want to tell people how they will think or feel when they

see the play, she believes the first half of the play will confront people with some things they may have felt, possibly dark things they may have secretly felt. Or depending on the person, things they still feel, depending on their political standing. She expects that audience members may change their minds multiple times throughout the show about who they sympathize or empathize with.

But at its core, the play is a satire, and regardless of your beliefs or political views, she expects people will laugh and be delighted by this smart, witty and complex story.

“This play has a little bit of laughter and love, and people understand those things regardless of where they see themselves on the political spectrum. “I hope they can laugh and love together in the same space, and that it brings them a little closer together in these deeply divided times.” ●



JAMIE DUNSDON, JAKE BUNYAN & RACHEL JONES DURING REHEARSALS FOR *ADMISSIONS*



JAMIE DUNSDON & JAKE BUNNYAN DURING REHEARSALS FOR ADMISSIONS



CONVERSATIONS

ADMISSIONS MOVIE NIGHT

1 GOOD WILL HUNTING

Will Hunting, a janitor at M.I.T., has a gift for mathematics, but needs help from a psychologist to find direction in his life.

STARRING MATT DAMON, BEN AFFLECK, ROBIN WILLIAMS

1997 | Feature Film | 14A | 2h 6m | Director Gus Van Sant

2 DEAR WHITE PEOPLE

Dear White People focuses on escalating racial tensions at a fictitious, prestigious Ivy League college from the perspective of several black students.

STARRING TYLER JAMES WILLIAMS, TESSA THOMPSON, TEYONAH PARRIS

2014 | Feature Film | 14A | 1h 48m | Director Justin Simien

3 ADMISSION

A Princeton admissions officer who is up for a major promotion takes a professional risk after she meets a college-bound alternative school kid who just might be the son she gave up years ago in a secret adoption.

STARRING TINA FEY, PAUL RUDD, NAT WOLFF

2013 | Feature Film | G | 1h 47m | Director Paul Weitz

4 DEAD POETS SOCIETY

Boarding school English teacher John Keating inspires his students to look at poetry with a different perspective of authentic knowledge and feelings.

STARRING ROBIN WILLIAMS, ROBERT SEAN LEONARD, ETHAN HAWKE

1989 | Feature Film | NR | 2h 8m | Director Peter Weir

5 HIGHER LEARNING

People from all different walks of life, encounter racial tension, sexual assault, responsibility, and the meaning of an education on a university campus.

STARRING OMAR EPPS, MICHAEL RAPAPORT, KRISTY SWANSON

1995 | Feature Film | 18A | 2h 7m | Director John Singleton

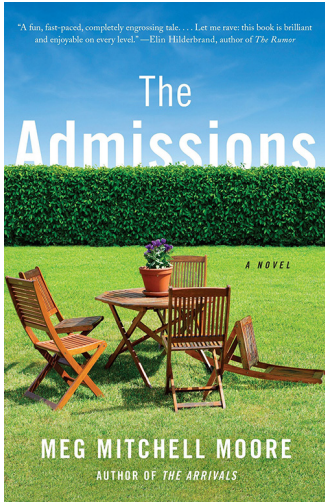
6 THE GREAT DEBATERS

Based on the true story of Melvin B. Tolson, a professor at Wiley College Texas. In 1935, he inspired students to form the school's first debate team, which went on to challenge Harvard in the national championship.

STARRING DENZEL WASHINGTON, FOREST WHITAKER, KIMBERLY ELISE

2007 | Feature Film | PG | 2h 6m | Director Denzel Washington

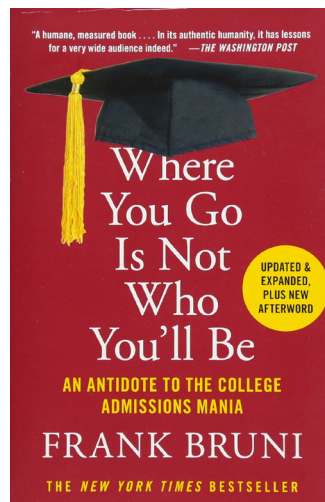
CONVERSATIONS FURTHER READING



THE ADMISSIONS BY MEG MITCHELL MOORE

The Admissions brilliantly captures the frazzled pressure cooker of modern life as a seemingly perfect family comes undone by a few desperate measures, long-buried secret—and college applications!

2015
Fiction

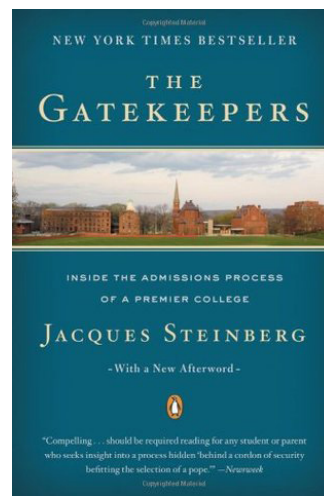


WHERE YOU GO IS NOT WHO YOU'LL BE: AN ANTIDOTE TO THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS MANIA

BY FRANK BRUNI

An inspiring manifesto about everything wrong with today's frenzied college admissions process and how to make the most of your college years.

2015
Non-fiction

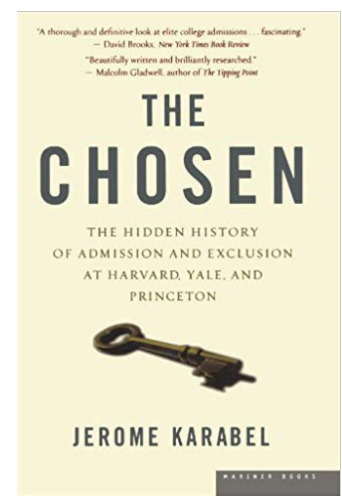


THE GATEKEEPERS: INSIDE THE ADMISSIONS PROCESS OF A PREMIER COLLEGE

BY JACQUES STEINBERG

In the fall of 1999, New York Times education reporter Jacques Steinberg was given an unprecedented opportunity to observe the admissions process at prestigious Wesleyan University. *The Gatekeepers* follows a diverse group of prospective students as they compete for places in the nation's most elite colleges.

2003
Non-fiction

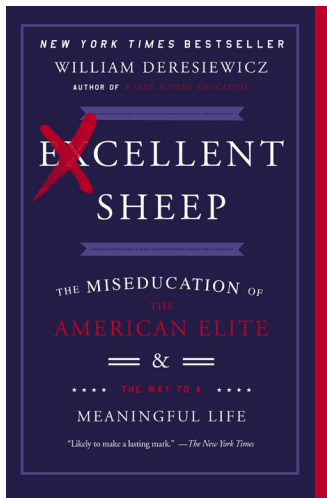


THE CHOSEN: THE HIDDEN HISTORY OF ADMISSION AND EXCLUSION AT HARVARD, YALE, AND PRINCETON

BY JEROME KARABEL

A landmark work of social and cultural history, *The Chosen* vividly reveals the changing dynamics of power and privilege in America over the past century. *The Chosen* shows how the ferocious battles over admissions at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton shaped the American elite and bequeathed to us the peculiar system of college admissions that we have today.

2006
Non-fiction

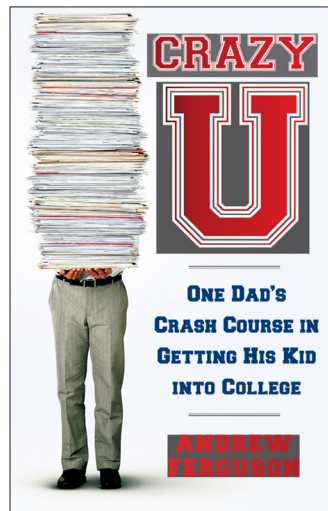


EXCELLENT SHEEP: THE MISEDUCATION OF THE AMERICAN ELITE AND THE WAY TO A MEANINGFUL LIFE

BY **WILLIAM DERESIEWICZ**

A groundbreaking manifesto for people searching for the kind of insight on leading, thinking, and living that elite schools should be—but aren't—providing.

2014
Non-fiction



CRAZY U: ONE DAD'S CRASH COURSE IN GETTING HIS KID INTO COLLEGE

BY **ANDREW FERGUSON**

Pummeled by peers, creeped out by counselors, and addled by advice books, Andrew Ferguson has come to believe that a single misstep could cost his son a shot at a happy and fulfilling future. He feels the pressure to get it right from the moment the first *color* brochures land in his mailbox, sent from colleges soliciting customers as though they were sailors come to port.

2011
Non-fiction

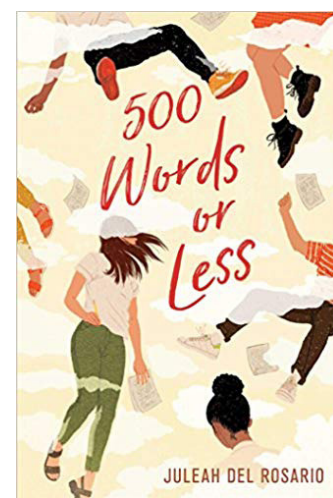


WE REGRET TO INFORM YOU: AN OVERACHIEVER'S GUIDE TO COLLEGE REJECTION

BY **ARIEL KAPLAN**

Mischa Abramavicius is a walking, talking, top-scoring, perfectly well-rounded college application in human form. So when she's rejected not only by the Ivies, but her loathsome safety school, she is shocked and devastated. All the sacrifices her mother made to send her to prep school, the late nights cramming for tests, the blatantly resume-padding extracurriculars (read: Students for Sober Driving) ... all that for nothing.

2018
Fiction



500 WORDS OR LESS

BY **JULEAH DEL ROSARIO**

Nic Chen refuses to spend her senior year branded as the girl who cheated on her charismatic and lovable boyfriend. To redefine her reputation among her Ivy League-obsessed classmates, Nic begins writing their college admissions essays.

But the more essays Nic writes for other people, the less sure she becomes of herself, the kind of person she is, and whether her moral compass even points north anymore.

2018
Fiction