

Beardy McBeardeRsen o o o

By Jeremy **K**ehoe

WHY I LIKE IT: *Drama Editor JANET EHRLICH COLSON writes...*

*That's right, it's time to check your privilege and check out **BEARDY MCBEARDERSEN**, a play by Jeremy Kehoe with smart comedic writing that is painfully spot on. Be prepared to navigate a tsunami of pop culture as MARY, a restaurant hostess on the outer stratosphere of Gen Y (and middle-aged at 35!) serves as our beleaguered tour guide to this entitled set, which includes PRIVILEGE, a wannabe influencer, and a bunch of dudes with goatees and ironic flannels.*

PRIVILEGE

Have you seen anyone who looks like that?

MARY

You just described every single man in here. Literally. Look around. This place looks like the cast of Spielberg's A.I. swallowed Attack of the Clones and shit out the Hipster Matrix.

The play is hilarious yet horrifying as it hits closer and closer to home. Okay, so we can't ALL be obnoxious bearded hipsters and privileged vloggers, can we? Not if we dare to identify with MARY and embrace our inner conformist. Looks like it's time to wear beige.

MARY (*releases a long moan*)

If anybody needs me I'll be weeping silently for our collective future in the corner.
Thanks for making nihilism great again.

(Spacing and format are playwright's own.)

BEARDY MCBEARDERSEN

By Jeremy Kehoe

(LIGHTS UP on MARY, mid-30s, standing behind a RESTAURANT HOSTESS STAND. PRIVILEGE, mid 20s, ENTERS in mid conversation with her PHONE.)

PRIVILEGE

So, yeah, hi everyone! Li'l Nervy-Wervy here! Surprise! Not. Can you blame me if I was, though? What human wouldn't be? I mean, like, this guy could be completely the one for me. Soul mate! Imagine? Me with my own Netflix account, raising chickens and homeschooling my two-point-two, non-gender, free-range kids on YouTube? Who is this, like, adult who invaded me all of a sudden? Freaky deeky extra squeaky, right? God! I'm turning into my mom. Sick. What is happening? Ew. Gross. TMI. Gag!

(PRIVILEGE purses her lips, and flashes an exaggerated smile.)

Oh, my god. Check it out, everyone! Conformist at twelve o'clock.

(PRIVILEGE points the phone at MARY for a few seconds then turns the PHONE back on herself.)

How do I look? Look at all those hearts! This is going to be amazing! I love you all!

(PRIVILEGE walks up to MARY, her face down in her phone, typing and chuckling.)

MARY

Good morning. Welcome to –

(PRIVILEGE puts her hand up stopping MARY, her face still down.)

PRIVILEGE

Hut, tut, shut. I'm live right now!

(PRIVILEGE finally stops looking at her phone then raises it, and points it at MARY. When she sees MARY through the PHONE, she puts the PHONE down.)

I just totally made you famous. You're welcome. I'm a vlogger. I have three-thousand followers, but they're niche-market followers, so that's, like, three million in people-who-matter followers. And just a suggestion, but you may want to rethink that outfit if you want to trend.

(PRIVELEGE phone dings, and she raises the PHONE back to her eye level.)

MARY

How can I help –

PRIVILEGE

So, hi, how are you, I'm Privilege. Pleasure, pleasure, pleasure! Love, love, love!

MARY

You're here to –

PRIVILEGE

Meet someone. How do I look?

MARY

You look –

PRIVILEGE (*into her PHONE*)

I'm not asking you – so rude – I'm asking my followers. Ooh! Hearts! Hearts! Hearts!

(*PRIVILEGE puts her PHONE down and addresses MARY*)

So, I'm looking for someone. He's an Instagram influencer. He sells sock on Etsy.

MARY

He sells socks?

PRIVILEGE

Not socks. Sock.

(*beat*)

You know – hello? – as in *single* socks. Nobody wears matching socks anymore.

MARY

They don't? I thought the whole point of having socks was having two of them.

PRIVILEGE

Um, gee, let's see, I don't know: maybe because this is the twenty-first century, maybe? I'm, like, literally losing-my-mind going insane right now. Am I being Kutcher-ed right now?

MARY

I have no idea what that means.

PRIVILEGE

Of course, you don't. Is he here?

MARY

What's his name?

PRIVILEGE

His name? I have no idea. His handle's: SoyBoyBathroomBendingNeverTrending.

MARY

That's quite a mouthful.

PRIVILEGE

Oh, I'm sorry. I must've missed the Hashtag Memo. Is there, like, a character limit on handles now all of a sudden? Wait.

(PRIVILEGE turns away, looks into her phone, primps herself, and starts talking)

So, I just legitimately met a total, like, actual triceratops or whatever who thinks that – get this – socks should match and that there should be, like, a law putting character limits on Instagram handles. Crazy! What's next? Plastic straws, y'all? Stay tuned, y'all!

(turns back to MARY)

PRIVILEGE (CONT'D)

So, is he here?

MARY

There's no Soy Boy, uh – Toilet –

PRIVILEGE

Bathroom Bending Never Trending.

MARY

Right. There isn't one of those on our reservation list.

PRIVILEGE

This is Hashtag No Filter, isn't it? Don't tell me my Uber –

MARY

This is Hashtag No Filter. You're in the right place. There's just no one with that name –

PRIVILEGE

Handle.

MARY

Sorry – *handle* – on our reservation list.

PRIVILEGE

That's not possible. We're supposed to meet here. Here: look. He D-M'ed me.

(PRIVILEGE shows MARY her phone.)

What does that say?

MARY *(reading)*

How about Hashtag No Filter?

PRIVILEGE

That's me.

MARY *(reading)*

Say 10:30? Avoid the brunchers? Just threw up in my mouth a little. L-O-L.

PRIVILEGE

And what did he type back?

MARY

The letter “K”.

PRIVILEGE

That’s a date!

MARY

It’s a letter.

(PRIVILEGE pulls the phone away.)

I don’t know what to tell you. Perhaps you could –

PRIVILEGE

Oh, my god, that food looks uh-mazing.

(PRIVILEGE takes a few quick steps DOWNSTAGE and begins snapping photos into the AUDIENCE with her PHONE.)

MARY

Miss, please don’t bother the –

(PRIVILEGE stops her with her hand.)

PRIVILEGE

Can’t hear you. Slipping into a triple-X food-porn coma. Soooo, dee-lish!

(MARY guides PRIVILEGE, who keeps typing and looking into her PHONE, back UPSTAGE.)

Hearts, hearts, so many hearts! Hi!

MARY

Perhaps if you told me what your friend looks like I can –

PRIVILEGE *(looks up)*

Hmm? Oh. According to his NextDoor profile pic, he’s a bearded, beanie-wearing guy with a man bun he’s had for, like, five years before anybody ever thought M.B’s would be, like, an everywhere-on-everyone thing. But he’s not going to cut his just because it’s trending over-trending all of a sudden, right? I mean, why should he be the victim? How’s that fair? And he’s wearing a flannel.

MARY

A flannel?!

PRIVILEGE

Ironically.

MARY

Of course.

PRIVILEGE

Because –

MARY

Of the irony. Got it.

PRIVILEGE

Oh, and he's starting an arm-sleeve tattoo of random images lacking any theme, context, cultural relevance or personal meaning. But now he's thinking about having them removed because, like, everybody has tattoos now? So, you know, where's the counter-culture in that? I don't have any tattoos. I don't do tattoos, but I'm pierced, like everywhere. Here. Look.

MARY

Please. No.

(PRIVILEGE shows MARY her phone.)

PRIVILEGE

Don't go all Rated-G A-A-R-P on me.

MARY

That's a lot of holes. Does your mother know you're a human voodoo doll?

PRIVILEGE

Are you kidding? She's my number-one Instagram Super Fan. Mom always said, "Privilege, if you think you deserve it, I'll give it to you." I did, and she gave.

MARY

And look at you now.

PRIVILEGE

I know!

(beat)

So?

MARY

So?

PRIVILEGE

Have you seen anyone who looks like that?

MARY

You just described every single man in here. Literally. Look around. This place looks like the cast of Spielberg's A.I. swallowed Attack of the Clones and shit out the Hipster Matrix.

PRIVILEGE

Wow. Somebody's old and bitter.

MARY

More like middle-aged and mindful.

PRIVILEGE

OK, I didn't understand two-thirds of what you just said, but the third I did get totally made no sense.

MARY

Because your eyes are up your ass.

PRIVILEGE

Uh, well, for the record I was literally conceived in the theater during The Matrix, so let's just say I think I know just a little more about it than you do, OK?

(A bearded, beanie-wearing MAN with a man bun wearing a flannel ENTERS.)

Oh, my god! There he is! Hi, hello, hey!

HASHTAG CONFORMITYNONCONFORMITY

'Sup?

(He gives PRIVILEGE a BRO HANDSHAKE and inadvertently pulls her phone from her hand. He stops, realizes it, then hands the phone back to PRIVILEGE.)

Sorry, Bro-Hug reflex.

PRIVILEGE

Oh, that's OK! I don't mind! You're SoyBoyBathroomBendingNeverTrending, right?

HASHTAG CONFORMITYNONCONFORMITY

Nah. I'm Hashtag ConformityNonConformity.

PRIVILEGE

Are you sure?

(PRIVILEGE shows him her phone)

You look just like him.

HASHTAG CONFORMITYNONCONFORMITY

Well, that's not me. I'm not him.

(beat)

Wait. At least I don't think that's me. I don't think I'm him. Am I?

MARY (*releases a long moan*)

If anybody needs me I'll be weeping silently for our collective future in the corner. Thanks for making nihilism great again.

(PRIVILEGE AND HASHTAG CONFORMITYNONCONFORMITY look at each other, confused, then turn to their phones and begin typing, searching for the definition of nihilism.)

PRIVILEGE

Oh, yeah?! Well, thanks for . . .

PRIVILEGE (CONT'D)

(PRIVILEGE and HASHTAG CONFORMITYNONCONFORMITY begin reading.)
nothing!

HASHTAG CONFORMITYNONCONFORMITY

Yeah, thanks for. . .nothing!

MARY

Exactly!

PRIVILEGE

Go! Bye! See ya! Have fun on Facebook, Mom Jeans!

MARY

Have fun in hell, Sponge-Bob Smug Rats!

(MARY STARTS TO EXIT.)

PRIVILEGE (*yells after her*)

Thanks for the budget deficit!

HASHTAG CONFORMITYNONCONFORMITY

And climate change!

(MARY stops, turns.)

MARY

You know, there are some days you meet people who make you say, "Fuck it, let's accelerate global warming." Thanks for being them. I'm going to go make you a couple of Coal Smoothies. You'll love it. Everybody will. Trust me.

HASHTAG CONFORMITYNONCONFORMITY(*to PRIVILEGE*)

Sounds terrible. Greatest generation, my ass, right?

PRIVILEGE

So right.

MARY (*yells behind her*)

The Greatest Generation fought in World War Two! Read a book written before you were born! Read a book! Hearts, hearts, hearts!

(*MARY EXITS, mumbling/moaning “Hearts, hearts, hearts”.*)

PRIVILEGE

Books.

HASHTAG CONFORMITYNONCONFORMITY

Right? I’m Hashtag ConformityNonConformity.

PRIVILEGE

You so totally are. I’m Privilege.

HASHTAG CONFORMITYNONCONFORMITY

I can tell.

PRIVILEGE

And, like, can I just say: Hello?! My god – your sideburns! Max adorbs!

HASHTAG CONFORMITYNONCONFORMITY

Yeah, I know. Cool, right? Everybody had them, and I was, like, “Nah”, and then nobody had them so I was, like, “Hey! Window!” and decided I was going to be the one to bring them back again. Sweet, right?

PRIVILEGE

Not as sweet as that jacket. It isn’t leather, is it?

HASHTAG CONFORMITYNONCONFORMITY

Vintage. Cow died way before I knew anything about it. But I couldn’t let it go to waste, right? Sustainer’s gotta sustain.

(*PRIVILEGE squeezes her eyes tight.*)

PRIVILEGE

I’m terrifying myself to ask, but. . .are you A-OK with A-O-C?

HASHTAG CONFORMITYNONCONFORMITY

I L-U-V A-O-C. If I could be anyone but me, it’d be she.

PRIVILEGE

Her.

HASHTAG CONFORMITYNONCONFORMITY

Huh?

PRIVILEGE

Nevermind. All I know is f she gets Pelosi-ed again this year, I'm going to cyber protest *so hard*.

HASHTAG CONFORMITYNONCONFORMITY

I'll never vote again.

PRIVILEGE

Ever!

HASHTAG CONFORMITYNONCONFORMITY

Ever!

(The TWO began typing feverishly on their phones, then pause to snap off a series of selfies. They stop and take pictures of each other, then slowly close in on each other, still taking pictures, until they are chest to chest. They intertwine phone arms, taking pictures and begin a slow, erotic social-media dance, twirling and snapping pictures until it crescendos in a climactic, orgasmic dip.)

HASHTAG CONFORMITYNONCONFORMITY

That was –

PRIVILEGE

Amazing.

HASHTAG CONFORMITYNONCONFORMITY

Amazing.

(They pull out MATCHING VAPE PENS, inhale, and sigh in content.)

PRIVILEGE

Look at the love!

HASHTAG CONFORMITYNONCONFORMITY

So much love.

(PRIVILEGE takes a VIDEO SELFIE)

PRIVILEGE

Somebody's in love!

HASHTAG CONFORMITYNONCONFORMITY

So, just so you know – I've recently entered a completely evolved mind space – kinda like a multi-dimensional portal, like – *beyond this banality* – you know? And as totally-up-front member of the progressive male species, I feel obligated to inform you that I've recently developed a severe allergy to adult-onset monogamous relationships. It's just like my body super-dope, one-hundred-percent tapping my mind on the shoulder – hey! Tap-tap! – I'm totally not signed up for any of this at this moment in time, you know? — that my conscious-unconsciousness needs to, like, chill Han Solo for, like, fourteen parsecs in the here and

now — in order for me to optimize my past, present, and future potential. Hope that's not a problem.

PRIVILEGE

Problem? Yeah! No! Me too. I mean, I'm totally evolved – more like still evolving, you know? Marriage and true love are so Friendster, right? I can't imagine.

HASHTAG CONFORMITYNONCONFORMITY

Cool.

PRIVILEGE

Cool.

(The TWO start scrolling through their PHONES.)

But could you imagine how amazing this wedding dress would look?

(beat)

On my Pinterest board!

(HASHTAG CONFORMITYNONCONFORMITY backs away)

HASHTAG CONFORMITYNONCONFORMITY

Pinterest! Oh. Yeah. Pinterest. I love Pinterest. Pinterest is awesome.

(beat)

Why don't you, uh, text me a link or something?

PRIVILEGE

A text?!

HASHTAG CONFORMITYNONCONFORMITY

I don't really read my texts, though.

PRIVILEGE

Oh, no, I know. Me neither. Nobody does.

(PRIVILEGE and HASHTAG CONFORMITYNONCONFORMITY smile, then PRIVILEGE looks past him.)

Oh, my god! Is that, like, your brother?

HASHTAG CONFORMITYNONCONFORMITY

I . . . don't know.

PRIVILEGE

He's kinda hot. Hotter, maybe?

(PRIVILEGE puts her PHONE up to her eye level)

What do you think?

HASHTAG CONFORMITYNONCONFORMITY

I'm not really –

(PRIVILEGE walks DOWNSTAGE past him, aiming her PHONE at THE AUDIENCE.)

PRIVILEGE

Not you.

(to audience)

You!

HASHTAG CONFORMITYNONCONFORMITY

Wait. I don't even have a brother.

LIGHTS OUT

END PLAY

THE PLAYWRIGHT SPEAKS: *“Beardy McBeardersen” was birthed from an M.I.T. study on hipsters which concluded that hipsters who strive for non-conformity end up “conforming in their non-conformity” — trying to be different they all end up looking the same. The M.I.T. study featured a generic photo of a bearded man in a flannel shirt and a beanie — a stereotypical hipster. The researchers were then sued by a man who accused them of using his picture without his permission. It turns out the photo wasn't of him — it was just a different bearded, beanie-wearing guy who happened to look like him.*

This compelled me to create a story that could comically capture this unique generational moment where culture has fused with technology to reshape our timeless, human desire to define our identity — our collective yearning for individuality, distinction, meaning, and rebellion — onto which has now been added a layer of obsessive need for immediate affirmation — which has yielded the ironic result of landing us staring into cell-phone screens in a collective, homogenous cyber space.

As for literary influences, four writers have had the greatest impact on my writing for different reasons: Kurt Vonnegut, for bearing witness to the horror of war and creating humanity and humor and hope from its ashes; George Orwell, for his prescient commitment to speak truth to power and his “lack of purple prose”; J.D. Salinger, for his ability to capture and convey a cultural and generational malaise; and Charles Bukowski, who was a master of finding beauty and creating poetry from an underbelly of society who had been cast aside and forgotten.

AUTHOR'S BIO: JEREMY KEHOE Jeremy hears voices that call him to create characters and place them on a quest. These characters stress him and possess him until their protests soften from howls to murmurs at the words “End Play”. Audiences have heard Jeremy's voices at such shows as “Well, Well, Well” (Open Fist Theater Company/LA); “Beardy McBeardersen” (FINALIST: Long Island City One Act Flay Festival); “Shamamonica” (Son of Semele/LA); “Movin' On Up” (New York Int'l Fringe Festival, Hollywood Fringe Festival); “A Few Good PB&Js”(New Jersey Repertory Company); “God Help Us”(Monster Box Theater/Mich); “Let's Dance for a Little While” (Emerging Artists Theatre/NYC);

“Existential Magic Eight Ball” (Sky Pilot Theatre Company/LA); “Urban Wash” (Emerging Artists); “Pitch Me”(Emerging Artists) “AMMO”(Hollywood Fringe Festival); “Car Play: She & Him” (Lounge Theatre/LA); and “Killing Russell Crowe”(Group Repertory Theatre/LA). He is a member of the Dramatists Guild and a former newspaper editor and reporter, where he earned awards from the NAACP and the New England Press Association. As a freelance writer he has published articles in newspapers including the Houston Chronicle, Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Philadelphia Inquirer, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette and Sacramento News & Review. Jeremy also strangled himself with a necktie as a PR executive for 10 years until the oxygen nearly drained from his brain.