

# Homo **eRECTUS** : Seminar on a Predatory Species

By Phil Darg

**WHY I LIKE IT:** *Drama Editor JANET EHRLICH COLSON writes... Just in time for the holidays, we bring you another phallus-themed play (see also H. Pees Wells' Cocktopia, in the drama section of Fleas Vol. 10 where we're full up and fed up with cock)! This one, Phil Darg's Homo Erectus: Seminar on a Predatory Species is a smart and topical piece that centers on the proclivities of the "quintessential" human male and his prized anatomical feature (hint: it rhymes with "wenis") as represented by case study HUGO and the colorful pool noodle that he waves between his legs, respectively.*

## **DR. GATES**

This species was originally named after its erect state . . . a reference – not to its rather obvious anatomical feature, but rather to its ability to walk upright...

*HUGO walks around a bit, his pool noodle bobbing up and down.*

## **HUGO**

... I'm erect...

*The seminar is presented by the notable zoology and anthropology professor, Dr. Angela Gates, PhD, who details her research on Homo Erectus as Part Four of the MILF Series (aka "Males I'd Like to Fix"). Dr. Gates challenges some of the myths around homo erectus, while asking us to re-evaluate how we understand our relationship to this all-too familiar species. Although we may laugh at some of the strange habits of this creature, we also, as she points out need to proceed with caution and awareness and address certain patterns of behavior. Fantasy football aside, homo erectus can be dangerous.*

## **DR. GATES**

*(to the audience)*

Although its natural habitat has shrunk somewhat in recent years, *homo erectus* is still a dominant species. Recently, the human community has attempted to restrict its unfettered

practices of sexual harassment and overt gender discrimination, yet, reports of the beast's threats continue unabated . . .

*Five Erect Stars, 'cuz big dicks are cool even if being a dick isn't.*

### **Homo Erectus: Seminar on a Predatory Species**

*The stage is relatively bare and dark. As the lights come up, DR. ANGELA GATES enters. She is dressed in professional attire – possibly even wearing a white lab coat. Her tone and manner suggest a highly intelligent academic. As SHE enters, SHE looks directly out to the audience, and addresses them as if SHE is about to start a lecture, etc.*

#### **DR. GATES**

Thank you all for coming . . . It's good to see so many of you here . . .

*(beat)*

I'm Dr. Angela Gates, PhD, associate professor of zoology and anthropology here at the university.

*(beat)*

Today, we're going to continue our MILF series of seminars – "Males I'd Like to Fix" – with a look at one of the most fascinating – and predatory – species that we know. Its biological origins show a long line of evolutionary progression . . . yet at the same time, it remains mired in many of its more primal characteristics – something that continues to cause serious problems to this day.

*(beat)*

This species is familiar to all of us . . . It has the widest habitat of any species on earth, and has long been dominant in terms of its overall power . . . even so, there are a lot of myths about this species, and I think that it's important for us to dispel these as part of our investigation.

*(beat, speaking to someone unseen offstage)*

You may release the subject now . . .

*(beat, out to the audience)*

You may want to sit back just a little further . . . although this particular subject is relatively tame, its behavior can be unpredictable . . . in the event of a problem, he can be restrained swiftly, but we don't want to take any chances . . .

*(beat)*

I present to you, Hugo – a member of the species *homo erectus* . . .

*HUGO enters. HE is a human male dressed in casual clothing and sporting a pool noodle sticking out forward from between his legs – a ridiculous prop that looks like some sort of large, wavering, colorful penis. Throughout the remainder of the play, HUGO will use this prop penis for a variety of humorous gestures and actions, etc.*

**HUGO**

That's me . . .

*(to DR. GATES)*

Yo . . .

*(out to someone in the audience)*

Hey – how ya doin'?

**DR. GATES**

This species was originally named after its erect state . . . a reference – not to its rather obvious anatomical feature, but rather to its ability to walk upright . . .

*HUGO walks around a bit, his pool noodle bobbing up and down.*

**HUGO**

. . . I'm erect . . .

**DR. GATES**

In recent years however, the nomenclature *homo erectus* has come to entail a greater emphasis on the species' prime . . . organ – which can be clearly seen protruding from its front.

**HUGO**

*(proudly pointing to his pool noodle)*

Yeah . . .

**DR. GATES**

As you can see, even the members . . . of the species itself seem to have a strong appreciation for this organ, and they enjoy displaying it prominently . . .

*HUGO poses several different ways, waving his pool noodle around a bit, etc.*

**HUGO**

You like that? It's all me, baby!

**DR. GATES**

Over thousands of years, this species has spread around the globe.

**HUGO**

Yeah – I'm an *invasive* species . . .

**DR. GATES**

Pursuit of gratification for the creature's organ is its most compelling natural instinct. It will sacrifice almost anything in order to satisfy the needs of this organ – even to the point of self-destruction.

**HUGO**

Hey . . . a man's got needs . . .

**DR. GATES**

It is thus often completely insensitive to the needs of its intended mate, and in some cases, even exerts what may be termed predatory sexual behavior.

**HUGO**

*(growling playfully)*  
. . . rar . . .

**DR. GATES**

The *homo erectus* species has an expected lifespan of about 70-80 years . . .

*(indicating HUGO)*

This particular subject is about 30 years old, and is thus at the height of his mating activity.

**HUGO**

. . . word . . .

**DR. GATES**

Typically, *homo erectus* lives in large social communities . . . where the alpha males struggle with each other for power and status.

**HUGO**

*(grunting/posing like some sort of primal caveman)*  
Huh . . . !

**DR. GATES**

This is a continuous – but often pointless – activity.

**HUGO**

*(to some other imaginary male, derisively)*

You call that a car?

(beat)

You wanna see a real car – look at my Hummer over there . . .

**DR. GATES**

This activity accounts for much of the socializing between the alpha males of the species, and helps to establish territory and dominance within the group.

**HUGO**

Fantasy football season! I've got first draft pick! In your face!

**DR. GATES**

Despite the importance of this social activity – and their almost irresistible need to mate – some individual *homo erecti* will often live lonely lives of quiet desperation . . . without mates or families . . . In fact, this pattern is becoming more pronounced over time – especially once the creatures are past their sexual prime and have failed to successfully bond with a female.

**HUGO**

. . . whatever . . . I can always watch TV . . .

**DR. GATES**

Generally, the species is not life-threatening . . . However, there are numerous reports of *homo erectus* attacking on numerous occasions and in many different ways, especially in the pursuit of its mating needs.

**HUGO**

(standing near DR. GATES, his pool noodle wavering very close to her)

Oh . . . blah, blah, blah! More feminist drivel . . . “Men and their penises” . . . geez . . .

*Beat. DR. GATES takes a step away from HUGO.*

**DR. GATES**

In terms of its diet, the species is omnivorous. It is both a herbivore –

**HUGO**

Yeah, I eat salad sometimes . . . a nice big salad with hunks of meat in it –

**DR. GATES**

And a carnivore . . . although in recent years, the species has largely refrained from hunting its prey in the wild, relying on grocery stores instead.

**HUGO**

You like a guy who hunts? You think that's manly? Hey – I can hunt . . .

**DR. GATES**

(to HUGO, reprimanding him)  
Hugo . . .

*HUGO grabs his pool noodle and “aims” it at some imaginary prey.*

**HUGO**

BLAM! . . . BLAM! . . .

(beat)

Say goodbye to Bambi . . .

(beat, out to the audience, smiling)

Get it? I like to “shoot” things . . .

**DR. GATES**

(to the audience)

Although its natural habitat has shrunk somewhat in recent years, *homo erectus* is still a dominant species. Recently, the human community has attempted to restrict its unfettered practices of sexual harassment and overt gender discrimination, yet, reports of the beast’s threats continue unabated . . .

**HUGO**

(to someone in the audience)

Come Eve, taste my forbidden fruit!

**DR. GATES**

As you can see, physically, *homo erectus* is – generally speaking – relatively large and strong.

*HUGO lifts up both his arms in a “strongman” pose as his pool noodle wavers.*

**HUGO**

Oh yeah . . .

**DR. GATES**

Even so, this does not fully explain why he has become the dominant species.

**HUGO**

(confused)

Huh?

**DR. GATES**

For example, elephants are much larger than us, but they are not dominant. The gorilla and the orangutan are stronger than we are, yet they are restricted to a relatively small tropical habitat.

**HUGO**

(puckish)

Orangutan . . . funny word . . .

**DR. GATES**

We are firmly convinced that the species' dominance has nothing to do with their claims of possessing greater intelligence – a claim that is clearly false . . .

**HUGO**

What does *that* mean?

**DR. GATES**

The only explanation for the lingering dominance of *homo erectus* is that we have – perhaps in ways we may not even be aware of – *empowered* them to remain in their dominant state over all of us . . .

**HUGO**

Yeah! Men rule!

*(beat, to the audience, suddenly sounding more intellectual)*

Both politically and sociologically . . .

*Beat as DR. GATES and HUGO exchange a glance.*

**DR. GATES**

*Homo erectus* has ruled civilization for almost six thousand years. It is likely that the reign of this species extends even further into the past, although we don't have the data or records to confirm this. This pattern of male dominance is endemic throughout almost all human cultures . . .

**HUGO**

The way nature intended . . .

**DR. GATES**

We term this pattern of male gender dominance *patriarchy* – and it refers to a host of attitudes and behaviors that enforce the male power structure.

**HUGO**

*(mimicking her)*

“Host of attitudes and behaviors that . . .” blah, blah, blah!

**DR. GATES**

This pattern of patriarchy often excludes both females and beta males from the decision-making and power-sharing within society. It's also a major reason for the discrimination against persons of other ethnicities or social groups – whether or not those persons are *homo erecti* themselves . . .

**HUGO**

Whatever . . .

**DR. GATES**

Their larger size and more aggressive nature has served to keep females in check, and has often made us the target of their unwanted sexual advances.

**HUGO**

*(defensively)*

What?

*(beat)*

Oh, not this again . . .

*(HE moves around a bit and his pool noodle wobbles humorously)*

Am I giving off some sort of vibe here . . . ? I mean . . . *come on!*

**DR. GATES**

This raises the question then, of what – we as women, or we as a society – should do to address this inequity.

**HUGO**

Oh, here it comes . . .

**DR. GATES**

The answer is complicated, because males are inherently a part of our culture. They are also an integral part of most of our families. And – if not – they are certainly necessary for biological reproduction.

**HUGO**

. . . *oh, baby* . . .

**DR. GATES**

In addition, not all males are aggressive alpha predators. In fact, most of them aren't.

**HUGO**

Wusses . . .

**DR. GATES**

But even beta males often exhibit at least some characteristics of the alpha *homo erectus*. This issue is, therefore, one that affects us all.

**HUGO**

Maybe we should all gather 'round a campfire and sing "Kum-Ba-Yah . . ."

**DR. GATES**

They do have their strengths –

**HUGO**

Yeah – strengths!

**DR. GATES**

. . . as well as their weaknesses . . .

**HUGO**

Oh . . .

**DR. GATES**

In the light of recent developments and social outcry against male predatory sexual behavior, it's obvious that things must change. The uncontrolled sexual impulses of the *homo erectus* species must be discouraged, confronted, refuted, reported, and ultimately . . . rejected.

*(beat)*

These animal impulses degrade both the women who are its target, and the males who practice this behavior.

*(to HUGO)*

Your time is up . . .

*Beat. Downcast, HUGO attempts to tie his pool noodle into a knot.*

**DR. GATES**

*(to HUGO, indicating for him to stop)*

No . . . that isn't a very practical solution . . . and it's contrary to your nature.

*(beat, somewhat empathetically)*

We're not trying to emasculate you . . . we're just trying to protect and assert ourselves.

*Beat.*

**HUGO**

I don't understand . . .

**DR. GATES**

This is where enhanced listening skills would *really* benefit your species.

*Beat.*

**HUGO**

Huh?

**DR. GATES**

*(to the audience)*

As you can see, learning new patterns of behavior is difficult for *homo erectus*, whose competitive and domineering instincts are encouraged – and manifested – early in life.

**HUGO**

Hey! My pa didn't raise no sissies . . .

**DR. GATES**

In fact, almost all sociological research in child rearing has shown a marked tendency for male infants and female infants to be treated differently, and to have a different set of expectations imposed on them . . . usually by their own parents . . .

**HUGO**

*(doleful)*

My dad *never* hugged me . . .

**DR. GATES**

Men must learn new patterns of interaction with females. They must learn to respect and honestly befriend women instead of continually making sexual advances on them.

*HUGO approaches DR. GATES, his pool noodle wavering in front of her.*

**HUGO**

*(contrite)*

Friends . . . ? Hug . . . ?

*DR. GATES looks at HUGO a bit indignantly, and then takes a step or two away from him.*

**DR. GATES**

However, we females must learn new patterns as well . . .

**HUGO**

I knew it!

*(to the audience, a bit whiny)*

See? This isn't all my fault.

**DR. GATES**

This relates to my earlier observation that women empower patriarchy through our silence – and this silence is taken as approval for sexual harassment . . . but it's not.

**HUGO**

Oh . . . I see . . .

**DR. GATES**

We do *not* approve . . . We do not approve of harassment . . . we do not approve of exclusion, and we certainly do not approve of predatory behavior . . . and we will not be silent anymore.

*(beat, to HUGO)*

You must learn to treat us like *people*, Hugo . . . like you would treat your mother, or your sister, or your daughter. Because . . . all of us are someone's mother, or sister, or

daughter . . . And even if we aren't, we still deserve the respect that all persons should get.

*Pause.*

**HUGO**

Okay . . . I get it . . . there's no reason to be upset . . . I don't want you to hate me . . .

*(beat, HUGO displays a serious look on his face)*

We can get along . . .

*(beat)*

Friends?

*Beat.*

**DR. GATES**

Is that a sincere offer?

*(beat)*

I'm not interested in you as a mate . . . if I were, I would send you the unmistakable signals . . . But we can be friends – if you drop the constant projections of domination, and stop trying to make me some kind of sexual conquest . . .

*Beat. DR GATES looks at HUGO's pool noodle. HUGO looks down at it, slowly removes it from between his legs, and sets it down gently on the stage.*

**HUGO**

Okay . . .

*Beat.*

**DR. GATES**

Thank you, Hugo . . .

*(beat)*

I think that maybe – from now on – you might not make such a good subject for our study.

*(beat)*

At least . . . not any more . . .

*THEY look at each other and smile a bit as the lights go down.*

**END OF PLAY**

**THE PLAYWRIGHT SPEAKS:** This play is a faux academic examination of male sexual tendencies/attitudes – i.e., a humorous juxtaposition of a serious lecture set against a “subject” who displays the objectionable patterns in question. The piece explores the themes of

problematic male “mating” behavior and the underlying issues of (some) men being unable to successfully pursue and/or maintain romantic relationships based on their prevailing sociological and biological characteristics.

-Phil Darg, October 2021

**AUTHOR BIO: Phil Darg** is the author of many plays and musicals, the composer of more than 300 musical works (some broadcast on *MTV* and *The History Channel*), and has performed as a guest artist at **54 Below** in New York City. His dramatic works include: ***Sasquatched! The Musical*** (NYMF 2013 Next Link selection; published by StageRights.com); ***The ABC's of LGBT at the Rainbow Valley B 'n' B*** (winner, 2020 Robert J. Pickering Award for Playwriting Excellence; semi-finalist, International Thomas Wolfe Playwriting Competition); ***Evolution*** (winner, 2018 William Faulkner Literary Competition); ***Hyard Ed*** (finalist, B Street Theatre's 2019 New Comedies Festival; excerpt published in *The Best Men's Monologues of 2019*); ***Thespis*** (Lyndon Institute, VT) first place, Vermont Regional Drama Festival; finalist, 2020 Tennessee Williams One-Act Play Contest; ***Hero*** (Alternative Theater, New York); ***The Pound: A Musical for the Dogs*** (co-authored with Julie Ana Rayne; 2017 Theatre Now New York Sound Bites 4.0 selection); ***Facility*** (2017 William Inge selection; *Twin Cities Arts Reader* "Best in Fringe" 2017); ***'Til Death*** (Darkhorse Dramatists, NY); ***The Interrogation*** (Chagrin Valley Little Theatre, Ohio); ***Critical*** (Carrollwood Players, Tampa); ***We Need To Talk*** (Manhattan Repertory Theatre); ***The Quick Start Guide to Booting Your Man-Bot*** (Old Library Theatre, Fair Lawn, NJ); ***Alexa, Fix My Relationship!*** (M.T. Pockets Theatre, Morgantown, WV); ***Confessions of a Successful Playwright*** (Theatre Three, Port Jefferson, NY); ***Habeas Non Corpus*** (North Hennepin Community College); ***Dido: Queen of Carthage*** (staged reading at the Playwrights' Center, Minneapolis, MN); ***Severance*** (Scripps Ranch Theatre, San Diego, CA); ***#OregonTrail*** (Merely Players, Mankato, MN); and ***A Little Empathy*** (Emerald Theatre Company, Memphis, TN). [www.PhilDarg.com](http://www.PhilDarg.com)