

# GREEN MEANS GO

## By Dennis Bush

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# GREEN MEANS GO

## A COLLECTION OF COMEDY AND DRAMA MONOLOGUES IN MOTION

by  
Dennis Bush

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## PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTE

The monologues in this collection may be presented as a complete play or as individual performance pieces. Directors are free to arrange the order of the monologues, as they choose, and may opt to cast one performer per monologue or have fewer actors perform multiple roles. There is also gender flexibility with some of the pieces.

The collection includes 10 female and 6 male monologues excerpted from Dennis Bush's plays, *Drift*, *Nightmare* and *Alone in the Crowd*.

## PRODUCTION HISTORY

The sixteen monologues in this collection are taken from Dennis Bush's plays, *Drift*, *Nightmare* and *Alone in the Crowd*. The plays from which the monologues were taken have all had readings, workshops and full productions, including performances in New York.

# GREEN MEANS GO

## A Collection of Comedy and Drama Monologues in Motion

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### GREEN MEANS GO

*(MIRANDA tries to move forward, after her father's death.)*

Even if people are looking at you, they're not always seeing you. They don't see a person, just an obstacle... an inconvenience. *(Pause)* My dad died two months ago. *(Pause)* A heart attack. *(Pause)* He was walking to his office, downtown, and he had a heart attack in the street. He collapsed in the crosswalk. *(Pause)* When the light changed, people honked their horns. Like him laying dead in the street was an inconvenience for them. *(With an edge)* Green means go. *(Pause)* He was 38. Nobody expects a 38-year-old man to have a heart attack. They just don't. And definitely not in the street. Somebody crossing the street, reached into my dad's pockets and stole his wallet and cellphone. When the paramedics got there, they couldn't find any identification, so they didn't know who to notify. *(SHE begins to cry)* There was a crowd of people around, but he died alone... laying there in the crosswalk. A guy from his office was walking to the Starbucks and he recognized my dad getting put on a stretcher and loaded into an ambulance. So, he ran back to the office and had somebody call my mom. Except the phone number they had for my mom was her old one. *(Quick pause)* She changed her number when my dad and her got divorced. She decided that she didn't want him to have her number until she gave it to him. She wanted him to ask for it, then, she could choose to give it to him. She didn't want him to assume that he would just get it without asking. And he didn't want to ask. So, he didn't. And, because he didn't ask for it, she never gave it to him. So, nobody at his office knew how to reach my mom. It took like five hours for them to finally get ahold of us and let us know what happened. *(With tears)* It was horrible... And nobody cares.... Nobody cares... Green means go.

**END OF PLAY**

## FIGURING IT OUT

*(WES tries to figure out how HE fits in and how HE stands out.)*

I'm figuring it out. *(Quick pause)* I'm trying to figure it out. *(Quick pause)* And by "it," I mean "things." I'm trying to figure things out. *(Quick pause)* My life – not just life in general. I'm trying to figure out my life. I'm trying to figure out how I fit in. *(Quick pause)* And how I stand out. *(Pause)* I don't need a lot of attention. *(Quick pause)* But I need some. *(Quick pause)* A little. *(Quick pause)* Enough that I occasionally feel special. I'd like to feel special *occasionally*. *(Quick pause)* From time to time. More than once in a while but not all the time. If you felt special all the time, you wouldn't know it was special. Something you have every day can't be special. It's everyday and everyday is the opposite of special. So, sometimes, I'd like to fit in and sometimes I'd like to feel special. Fitting in isn't as easy as it sounds. Usually, I feel like I miss out on a lot. Like life happens before I get someplace and after I leave, but not while I'm there. Like there's a rhythm to life – like a syncopated jazz rhythm – and everybody else knows how to play it – and how to improvise. Everybody but me.

**END OF PLAY**

## **IMAGE IS EVERYTHING**

*(SAWYER's a chameleon and HE's got everybody fooled, sometimes even himself.)*

I wasn't sure who I was going to be, today. I adapt to my surroundings. So, who I am is impacted by who *you* are. And *how* you are. Calling me a chameleon doesn't really acknowledge the skill involved. Chameleons change instinctively. *I change by choice.* I make a conscious choice. I blend in, but only to get what I want. And because I look the way I do, people underestimate me. They shouldn't do that. They really shouldn't. *(Smiles)* I've got my eye on a new girl. The acquisition is already in progress. *(Chuckles)* She thinks I'm a gentleman. *(More laughter)* She thinks I'm harmless. *(Pause)* We make a cute couple. She's attractive. And so am I. *(Quick pause)* I know that. You have to know what you have going for you, so you can use it effectively. I posted a picture of us on Facebook and everybody left comments about how good we looked together. We project a wholesome image. I love that. *(Making a statement)* Image is everything. It doesn't have to be true. People just have to believe it.

**END OF PLAY**

## **A PRECISE ORDER**

*(TRISTAN explains how things have to be.)*

There's an order to things. A specific order. A precise order that needs to be respected. *(Quick pause)* People who tell you there's more than one way to do something are wrong. Life is a series of choices that are black and white. There is no gray area. *(Adamant)* There is no gray area. Gray areas are distractions and distractions are not helpful! Distractions do not move us along. A direct route from point A to point B is the only acceptable option. When I take my vitamins in the morning, if two of them fall out into my hand, I have to take the one that came out first. The second one has to be put back. The salt shaker is on the right and the pepper is on the left. It's ketchup and mustard, not mustard and ketchup. Ketchup comes first because it's red and mustard is yellow. The primary colors are red, yellow and blue, not yellow, red and blue or blue, yellow and red. There is a precise order to everything.

**END OF PLAY**

## **GOING IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS**

*(JOSIE graduates and becomes distant from her friends.)*

I don't want to get too attached. When you're close to people, it hurts more when you grow apart... when you don't see each other as often. A lot of times the people you're closest to are really only friends of convenience. You see each other every day. It's easy to be friends. It's convenient. But when you're not in the same place doing the same things every day, what happens? The physical distance becomes emotional distance and that's the worst kind of distance there is. All you have to talk about is what happened in the past because you're not involved in each other's present. And the idea of that scares me. And makes me sad. It's like with high school. My first day of freshmen year, I knew two people and I wasn't close to either of them. I felt so alone and disconnected. And, then, I made all these great friends – people I've shared so much with... who have seen me at my best and my worst and been there through it all. But at graduation, it was like a window into what happens next. Seating was in alphabetical order and none of my friends were near me. It's like we'd already started going in different directions. And that hurts. I can't imagine them not being in my life. So, I'm not going to get too attached to anybody, from now on. I can't risk it.

**END OF PLAY**

## VALIDATION

*(SHELBY looks at herself clearly for the first time in her life.)*

I'm taking a risk right now. I left my cellphone at home. I've become too dependent on it. *(More insistent)* I was becoming too dependent on my phone, so I left it at home! *(Quick pause; quieter, almost desperate to be convincing)* I did. *(Pause)* It's gotten to the point where, if I don't get a call or a text from somebody I don't feel loved or cared about. And I can't live like that. I have to stop looking for validation from the outside. *(A nearly primal scream of truth)* All right! I didn't leave my phone at home. I lost it. I lost it when I threw it at my ex-boyfriend. My very-recently-ex-boyfriend. I threw it right at his heart. I missed. I never said I had great aim. Anyway, I hit him in the stomach and it made him go, "ow," and that's a pretty good reaction. Throwing the phone at him symbolized his inability to communicate with me. He was unable to tell me, every day, that I was the most important thing in his life. Love must be demonstrated constantly. It has to have an obsessive quality about it or it's not real. One time, I didn't eat for 31 hours just so that every time I felt hungry, I'd think of him. He never did anything like that for me. *(Like a little girl throwing a tantrum)* Never, never, never, never! *(SHE begins to cry; the façade is falling)* If he really knew me, he'd know what he should have been doing. *(Crying; transitional pause)* I have to get to know myself... I have to stop pretending I'm a little girl. I have to stop blaming other people for things that I do, like somehow it was their fault. I have to grow up and take responsibility for the choices I make.

**END OF PLAY**

## NOTHING TO NOBODY

*(SUNDAY's life comes unraveled.)*

I couldn't remember the numbers. I couldn't remember the codes. Too many numbers. Too many passwords. Too many codes. I had to show them my driver's license to buy the decongestant. It's over-the-counter allergy medicine but I had to go to the pharmacy window and ask for it and show them my driver's license and sign my name like I was some kind of criminal just because I was buying decongestant allergy medicine. And she kept my driver's license. The pharmacy clerk. I didn't notice at first. I wasn't thinking straight. I was congested. My head felt like it weighed a hundred pounds. All I could think about was how long it would take for the medicine to start working. It was a Sunday night. Late. It was almost midnight till I got home. And I couldn't get in my building. I couldn't remember the security code. We don't have keys. We have security codes and I couldn't remember mine. I rang everybody's bell, but nobody buzzed me in. I've buzzed in other people without even asking who was buzzing but nobody let *me* in. I couldn't remember the code. My cell phone was dead. The charger is in my apartment. I didn't have a spare battery. I couldn't call anybody. And without my phone, I don't even know anybody's phone number. They're all *in* my phone. I don't have them memorized. I don't think anybody memorizes phone numbers any more. But your life is in your phone. You open it up and you see your list of incoming and outgoing calls and text messages. Between your phone and your email, that's your communication. That's your life. *(Pause)* I didn't know what to do or where to go. *(Pause)* Where do you go when you can't get into your building? Where do people who don't have a home go? I should have paid more attention to the news when they did stories about shelters. It was almost 3:00 in the morning and I was walking around like I was lost. I wasn't lost but I didn't know where to go. Can you be lost if you know where you are but don't know where to go? There aren't a lot of people out on the street at that hour on a Sunday night. So much for the "city that never sleeps." And people who are out don't have a sense of humor. I stopped a lady and asked if I could use her phone. She wanted to know who I was going to call. And I said, "I wanna order a pizza." I was joking. But she thought I was a crazy person. I wanted to call information and get the phone number for one of my friends. I just said I wanted to order pizza. I was making a joke. A little conversation. A little humor in an otherwise humorless situation. But no. She kept walking. And so did I. I must have walked seventy blocks. I started out at my apartment and kept heading west. I don't know why. I just kept thinking, "Go west" and... everything will be fine. I ended up on Ninth Avenue and my legs

felt like they had big ankle weights on them. They felt so heavy. And I couldn't walk anymore. I sat down in front of the Amish Market between 49th and 50th. Who knew we had Amish people in Manhattan? And I fell asleep. I woke up with the sun in my eyes and some guy kicking me. He told me to... move along. He had a mohawk. I've never liked people with mohawks. I just don't. I look at them and think, "Your hair is dangerous. You could put somebody's eye out with it." And he was kicking me. He said he would call the cops. While he was kicking me, he said, "I'm gonna call the cops." People with mohawks used to run away from the cops. They were who other people called the cops on. And, now, Mr. Mohawk Man is gonna call the cops on me? The world is upside down. So, I got up and started walking down Ninth Avenue and people were staring at me. You've seen the people on Ninth Avenue. A lot of them are *peculiar*. And *they* were staring at *me*. I didn't appreciate it. I said... "What are you looking at?" *(Pause)* It was a holiday. *(A daydreamy tangent)* So many holidays are on Mondays. *(Back on track)* I went to where I worked and nobody was there. The security guard told me he was a temp. A temporary security guard. *(An announcement)* Security should never be temporary. *(Pause)* He wouldn't let me up to where I work. He wouldn't even let me in the building. He wasn't the slightest bit helpful or hospitable. *(Pause)* I walked back to my apartment building. I still couldn't get anybody to buzz me in. *(Angrily)* Where is the trust, people? Push the buzzer. What's the worst that can happen? *(Quick pause)* Never mind. I know what could happen. *(Quick pause)* But it wouldn't. Not with me. Maybe if you buzzed somebody with a mohawk in. But not with me. I kept trying to remember my security code, but it was like my mind had lost the ability to remember anything. I wasn't even sure I was really at my building. Maybe that was the problem. And I was hungry. I was hungry but I didn't have any cash. So, I went to the ATM down the block. I put my card in but I couldn't remember my PIN number. And, after I tried a few times, the machine sucked my card in and wouldn't spit it out, again. Bye bye ATM card. Somebody has my driver's license. I don't remember who, but somebody has it. It's gone. My driver's license is gone. My ATM card is gone. *(Simply)* My memory is gone. I don't remember any of my numbers. Not my zip code or my birthday or my social security number. If you don't know you're numbers, you're nobody... You're nothing to nobody.

**END OF PLAY**

## LOST AND FOUND

*(PLAYBILL reflects on missed opportunities.)*

I find things on the ground. I don't dig in the trash. I have standards. There is poetry in the things I find on the ground. Stuff that people drop accidentally. I don't want it if you threw it away on purpose. I want what still means something to you. Something you wish you didn't lose. You drop a phone number and the world changes. The person who gave you that number will think you're not interested, because they didn't get a call. Missed opportunities. *(Pause)* The first thing I found was a message written on the back of an understudy notice in a Playbill. "You have long legs." Had to be a man. The way it was written, it had to be a man. I take the poetry I find and I perform it. I call it "Lost and Found Theatre." You lose it, I find it and I tell the world about your missed opportunities and lost dreams.

**END OF PLAY**

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