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*Dramatic Publishing*

# MIND GAMES

By  
PAUL ELLIOTT



**Dramatic Publishing**

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*Mind Games* premiered August 30, 2009, at the Santa Monica Black Box Theatre, Santa Monica, Calif., starring London's West End stars Miles Anderson and Bella Merlin with Broadway's Andrew Boyle, Darice Richman and Ashley Fondrevay. Original music and sound by Edward Auslender.

# MIND GAMES

## CHARACTERS

DR. HARRIMAN (m) . . . . . psychiatrist; 35-45;  
caring, professional and very wealthy

KYLE . . . . . the patient; 24 years old;  
rather unkempt and lost in his own world

BETH . . . . . Dr. Harriman's receptionist; 30s;  
cold, efficient

ELIZABETH. . . . . Dr. Harriman's receptionist; 50s;  
warm, caring and nurturing

MARIAN . . . . . Dr. Harriman's beautiful, loving wife; 30s

When Doctor Harriman, a noted psychiatrist, tries to delve into the mind of one of his more agitated and schizophrenic patients, he uncovers a much more terrifying concept of reality than he ever bargained for.

DR. HARRIMAN. Kyle, I think we need to really slow this thing down and take this one step at a time. I'm sorry. I don't see this as an improvement. I mean, you've been seeing me for... *(He checks his notes.)* ...Six sessions now and during that time, your mood swings have been like—

KYLE. I know. It was crazy.

DR. HARRIMAN. I wasn't going to say crazy, but—

KYLE. But it was crazy.

DR. HARRIMAN. Let's just say it was not within acceptable boundaries of behavior.

KYLE. I was locked up before I came here. That's about as unacceptable as you can get. And that's funny. I mean, it made me question.

DR. HARRIMAN. What?

KYLE. Oh, it...uh... The one question I have...or had was, I mean, once I really understood, the one question was, Why?

DR. HARRIMAN. Well, we all—

KYLE. No. Why? Why would I put myself in that position? Why would I do that to me? What did I get out of it? Then I realized that even asking that question was falling into the same pit I'd been in. I don't need to un-

derstand “why” anything. I just have to stop. *(A beat.)* I just came to tell you I’m not coming back anymore.

DR. HARRIMAN. Look, Kyle, I’m not sure that’s the best solution. We can work this out, I’m sure.

KYLE. No. I think it’s past that. I don’t think you’ll even be here anymore.

DR. HARRIMAN. What do you mean?

KYLE. Okay. Here’s what I learned. And you were the one who said it. Look around this office. Isn’t it amazing?

*(DR. HARRIMAN looks around, not impressed. KYLE jumps up and crosses to the window.)*

KYLE *(cont’d)*. And look out that window.

DR. HARRIMAN. Oh come on, Kyle, I know what’s out that window.

*(KYLE looks out the window as though amazed at what he sees.)*

KYLE. Can you hear the birds? All that traffic.

DR. HARRIMAN. Well, the soundproofing is not what they promised, but...

KYLE *(wheeling back to DR. HARRIMAN)*. Don’t you see? All of that. All of that outside that window and... *(Indicating the office.)* All of this. I created it.

*(DR. HARRIMAN turns slowly back to look at KYLE with real concern.)*

KYLE *(cont’d)*. No, I know it’s hard to believe. But let me show you. You know your receptionist.



DR. HARRIMAN. Beth.

KYLE. Who?

DR. HARRIMAN. Beth, my receptionist.

KYLE. Oh, I guess so. But that's not her name.

DR. HARRIMAN. Of course it's her... Never mind.  
What's your point?

KYLE. Did you know that when I first came here, she scared the hell out of me. I mean, she looked at me like I was something from another planet. Like I was...

DR. HARRIMAN. I'm sure she didn't...

KYLE. No, she did, but it's all right. I realized that I was creating her and her reactions, and once I realized that, this morning when I came in, she was completely different.

DR. HARRIMAN. Beth?

KYLE. Yeah. But that's not her name. It's Elizabeth.

DR. HARRIMAN. Oh, it's Elizabeth now?

KYLE (*surprised DR. HARRIMAN would ask him*). Yeah. I think the name suits her. She always makes me feel so comfortable and taken care of.

DR. HARRIMAN. Well, I'm glad. (*Punching his intercom.*) Beth?

BETH'S VOICE. Yes, Doctor.

DR. HARRIMAN. Can you come in here a moment, please?

KYLE. Elizabeth.

DR. HARRIMAN (*humoring him*). Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH'S VOICE. Yes, Doctor.

*(The office door opens and ELIZABETH, a much more mature, more matronly woman who radiates efficiency and warmth. walks in.)*

ELIZABETH. Yes? (*When nobody speaks.*) Yes?

DR. HARRIMAN. Where's Beth?

ELIZABETH. Excuse me?

DR. HARRIMAN. Beth, my receptionist?

KYLE. There is no Beth.

ELIZABETH. I don't understand what you're asking.

DR. HARRIMAN (*getting up and crossing to look into the reception area*). I'm asking where my receptionist is? Beth? Where is she?

ELIZABETH. Doctor, is there something you need? I can get it...

DR. HARRIMAN. I don't want you doing anything. I need Beth.

ELIZABETH. I don't understand. I don't know any Beth. I mean, I guess Elizabeth could technically be Beth, but you've never called me that ever.

DR. HARRIMAN. And how long has that been?

ELIZABETH (*confused*). Excuse me?

DR. HARRIMAN. I'm asking a simple question. I mean, you say you're my receptionist, so let me get this straight. You've been my receptionist since when?

ELIZABETH. I don't understand. Is this a trick question?

KYLE. No, he's just asking.

DR. HARRIMAN. Since when?

ELIZABETH. You know as well as I do. Since you opened this office six years ago. Are you okay? Can I get you something?

DR. HARRIMAN. No.

ELIZABETH. How about you, Kyle? Would you like anything?

KYLE. A gin and tonic would be nice.

ELIZABETH (*laughing and playfully touching him*). Oh, you are such a kidder. You better behave now. (*To DR. HARRIMAN.*) You make him behave now. (*She exits.*)

(*DR. HARRIMAN walks back to his desk and leans on it facing KYLE.*)

DR. HARRIMAN. Okay, what is this? One of those television shows where they play somebody for a fool? Well, it won't work. I'm onto you. Who planned this? My wife? Wait'll I get home. Or is she here somewhere? Are those cameras? (*To the hidden people.*) Okay, come on out. It's over. You got your laugh, but... (*Silence...nobody appears.*)

KYLE. It's not a television show. It's just like I said, or like you said, I created all of this.

DR. HARRIMAN. I don't think this is funny. And I don't have time for it.

KYLE. I'm sorry. I guess I didn't really think what it would be like for you.

DR. HARRIMAN. Look, I think we've done about as much as we can accomplish this week. How about I have Beth reschedule you for next week?

KYLE. But there won't be a next week.

DR. HARRIMAN. Well, I'll take my chance.

KYLE. There aren't any chances. That's what I'm talking about.

DR. HARRIMAN. Kyle, stop it. A joke is a joke. But you shouldn't be playing around like this. You're this close to having a psychotic break. That's what you're having. Do you understand that?

KYLE. I guess it's possible, but I don't think so.

DR. HARRIMAN. Well, think so. Listen to yourself.

You're acting like fucking God Almighty. I'm sorry, I didn't mean to swear, but is that who you think you are?

KYLE. I don't know. I never thought of that. But...

DR. HARRIMAN. Well, that's what you're acting like. I created the world. I created this office. Can't you see how crazy all of that is? And if you're God, why are you here?

KYLE. Because I like you.

*(DR. HARRIMAN sinks back down behind his desk.)*

DR. HARRIMAN. Okay, let's try this one more time. You say you created all of this. Be more specific. This desk?

KYLE. Yes.

DR. HARRIMAN. This pencil?

KYLE. Everything.

DR. HARRIMAN. Define "everything."

KYLE. Everything. Everything you see...or rather, I see.

DR. HARRIMAN. So what about me?

KYLE *(a beat)*. Yes, you too.

DR. HARRIMAN. Wow. Talk about a Napoleonic complex.

KYLE. Him too.

DR. HARRIMAN. Excuse me. He's a historical figure. From the past. You weren't even born then.

KYLE. Everything. It's all something I created. Everything I see. Everyone I meet. Everything I've ever read about. The books even. Television. The shows on television. Movie stars. It can blow your mind.

DR. HARRIMAN. Your parents?

KYLE. Yes.

DR. HARRIMAN. The abuse?

KYLE. Yes.

DR. HARRIMAN. Why would you—let's just assume for one moment this is true—why would you create a world in which you were tortured as a child, burned over half your body and...

KYLE. I don't know...but if I can create it, I can change it...

DR. HARRIMAN. You can't change the scars, Kyle. I've seen them.

KYLE. They're not there.

DR. HARRIMAN. Take off your shirt.

KYLE. They're not there I tell you.

DR. HARRIMAN. Take off your shirt and let's face reality for once.

*(KYLE slowly gets up and removes his shirt. He has no scars on his body. In fact, his body is perfect. DR. HARRIMAN turns him around searching.)*

DR. HARRIMAN (*cont'd*). How? How? That's not possible.

KYLE. Like you said.

DR. HARRIMAN (*almost screaming*). Forget what I said!

KYLE. You said I created all of this.

DR. HARRIMAN. I didn't mean all of this. It's just something you say. You create your own problems and it's up to you to work your way out of them, but this world is not...I am not a figment of your imagination.

KYLE. None of it's real. I know it's scary, but...

DR. HARRIMAN. Listen to me: I don't know what you're playing here, but I want you out of this office. I have other patients that have real problems.

KYLE. No, you don't.

DR. HARRIMAN (*laughing as he goes to his desk planner and whips it open*). Then what do you call these? (*He stops and starts flipping through his planner seeing only empty pages.*) How? What did you do to them?

KYLE. They never were there. I just created them so...I don't know why I created them. Maybe so everything would be more real. Like I had a life and everyone else did too.

*(DR. HARRIMAN rushes to the phone and starts dialing.)*

KYLE (*cont'd*). There's no one there.

DR. HARRIMAN. My wife is always there.

KYLE (*a beat*). You don't have a wife.

*(The phone rings and rings and then goes to a dial tone.)*

DR. HARRIMAN. I have a wife. Her name is Marian. We've been married for twelve years...and Jenny and Marie... Where are my little girls?

KYLE. I better be going now.

DR. HARRIMAN. Wait a fucking minute. I want my family.

KYLE. I'm sorry.

DR. HARRIMAN. Wait a minute. Stop! If, and I'm still not buying this delusion, but if...I'm just something you

created for God only knows what reason, and all of this is...in your mind, what happens when you leave?

KYLE. I don't know. Like I don't know what happens to everything when I go to sleep. Like maybe my dreams which are wild and jumbled are just all of it trying to get reassembled before I wake up. Maybe when I walk down the street, there is nothing around the corners unless I turn them. And the people I pass just exist as they cross my vision. I don't know. Or maybe you stay in some limbo world until I think of you again, but I don't think so. I think you disappear.