

BUFFALOES

A session in one act

William Mastrosimone

“BUFFALOES”

A ten minute session

William Mastro Simone

"BUFFALOES"

TIME: Now

PLACE: University infirmary.

SET: None. Armchair and fainting couch.

CHARACTERS:

Doctor, a psychiatrist

Jaime Diggs

*Roles can be played by male or female. Make appropriate changes, e.g. boy/girl, Mr./Ms.

"BUFFALOES"

(DOCTOR sits in arm chair angled towards a fainting couch. ENTER DIGGS).

DIGGS

Is this--?

DOCTOR

If you think it is.

DIGGS

Okay.

DOCTOR

You are Mr. Diggs?

DIGGS

If you think I am.

(BEAT. DOCTOR writes in his notebook which will occur throughout at crucial moments).

DIGGS

That was a joke.

DOCTOR

I see.

DIGGS

I was just trying to break the ice.

DOCTOR

I see.

DIGGS

Yes, I am Jamie Diggs.

DOCTOR

Hometown.

DIGGS

Buffalo, New York.

DOCTOR

Did you say Buffalo?

DIGGS

Buffalo, New York.

DOCTOR

Occupation?

DIGGS

Student.

DOCTOR

Sex.

DIGGS

No thank you. I'm sorry. I've been up for three days. I'm just giddy and words just fly out of my mouth.

DOCTOR

Have a seat.

DIGGS

Thanks. My place could use some furniture. It won't happen again. I promise. What are you writing there? I haven't really said anything yet.

DOCTOR

You've spoken volumes, Mr. Diggs.

DIGGS

Really?

DOCTOR

Libraries.

DIGGS

I had no idea.

DOCTOR

And I'll have you know, Mr. Diggs, what you say goes in your permanent dossier.

DIGGS

Oh, wow.

DOCTOR

Have you ever seen a psychiatrist before?

DIGGS

By "seen" you mean--?

DOCTOR

We're off to a bad start, Mr. Diggs.

DIGGS

I was just trying not to make a mistake but there must be some law of the universe that says when you try to hard to do the opposite of what you're trying to do. I can't stop talking. I'm sorry. No, I have not sought the services of a shrink, I mean, psychiatrist before.

DOCTOR

Why now?

DIGGS

Well, I can't turn off my brain. My body is exhausted but in my head I'm like triple espresso awake. And I can't shut up. I think something and then I say it and it's like so embarrassing. I'm afraid to be around people. I can't sleep o' nights. I don't know why I just said o' nights. That's Shakespeare. See what I mean, jelly-bean? Damn! I'm so sorry, "Doctor, Doctor, give me the news, I've got a bad case of loving you." Ahhh! I wish I could just shut up!

DOCTOR

How may I help you, Mr. Diggs?

DIGGS

Tranquilizers. I'd like to get some tranquilizers. The head nurse said I had to see the school psychiatrist. Is this, you know, like just between us?

DOCTOR

What is spoken between these walls, Mr. Diggs, I hold as sacred and confidential by the Oath of Hippocrates.

DIGGS

Good because, you know, I wouldn't want this to count against me for a few measly tranquilizers.

DOCTOR

Do you love your mother?

DIGGS

My mother?

DOCTOR

Your mother. Do you love your mother?

DIGGS

Like anybody else.

DOCTOR

Some people do not love their mothers, Mr. Diggs. Some people have run from their mothers. Some people have done harm to their mothers. Your father will never know. Hippocrates? I sense a profound embarrassment, Mr. Diggs? Is there anything untoward or unnatural that rankles you?

DIGGS

Look, "Hicory dicory Doc, the mouse went up the clock." I'm sorry. There it is again. I am not the least bit embarrassed to say I love my mother.

DOCTOR

So I assume that whatever anxieties or latent desires you harbor, you hold unabashedly.

DIGGS

If that brings us closer to downers er ah, you know, tranquilizers.

DOCTOR

Tell me a dream.

DIGGS

Dream? I can't sleep let alone dream.

DOCTOR

One little dream, Mr. Diggs.

DIGGS

"To dream the impossible dream." I'm sorry. "So sorry, that I was such a fool." I don't know how to stop it. Okay. A dream.

DOCTOR

That's right, Mr. Diggs.

DIGGS

Look, lay some tranquilizers on me and I'll go back to my place and sleep and dream and come back with a bag full of dreams.

DOCTOR

Nice try, Mr. Diggs.

DIGGS

I can't, Doctor. I just can't. I'm rattled. My brain's jumbled like a bucket of tangled Christmas tree lights.

DOCTOR

Doctor helps those who help themselves.

DIGGS

But I'll try.

DOCTOR

Atta [boy].

DIGGS

"If at first you don't succeed, try, try again."

DOCTOR

Trying's half the battle.

DIGGS

I appreciate the supportive atmosphere, Doctor.

DOCTOR

I appreciate your appreciation, Mr. Diggs.

DIGGS

It's not easy.

DOCTOR
Excruciating.

DIGGS
Debilitating.

DOCTOR
Horrendous.

DIGGS
And for what?

DOCTOR
Tranquilizers.

DIGGS
I dreamed...

DOCTOR
Yes?

DIGGS
I dreamed of a headless man staring at me. He wore a tapioca hat and cement overcoat and I sensed he knew the difference between an isosceles triangle and a minibus but he was not a Republican, nor was he vegetarian. But such is logic in dreams.

DOCTOR
Go on.

DIGGS
Suddenly it was the thirty-third of July and the air was filled with the excitement of Christmas. The headless man called my name. But it was not my name. It was my mother's name. Yes, what do you want of me, I said in iambic pentameter. Come to Kansas City, he said. The Gulf Stream is wondrous this time of year.

DOCTOR
Let it flow, Diggsy.

DIGGS
At this time I hopped on his General Electric toaster. We galloped off with the swiftness of a cantalope. Halfway there, in Outer Mongolia, he pulled down his zipper. Two jellyrolls flew out chased by nine bald crows smoking red telephone poles. I shouted, Happy Chestnut! He laughed and I

saw his teeth were numbered, even numbers on the top, uneven on the bottom. A tangerine popped out of his left ear on the right side of his head. I said, Jumpin' Jimminies! How many angels can dance on the head of a pin? He said, What a Vesuvius! Fish can't sing like French bicycles. That's it.

DOCTOR

Did you ever swim in the Gulf Stream outside Kansas City?

DIGGS

I think so. When I awoke, I was wet from the waist down. Is the dream worth a few tranquilizers?

DOCTOR

I see by this dream, Mr. Diggs...you hate buffaloes.

DIGGS

Buffaloes?

DOCTOR

Buffaloes.

DIGGS

Buffaloes?

DOCTOR

Buffaloes.

DIGGS

You mean--?

DOCTOR

Yes.

DIGGS

And--?

DOCTOR

Yes.

DIGGS

With--?

DOCTOR

Yes.

DIGGS

Wait a minute wait a minute wait a minute wait a minute wait a minute. In my whole life I've never even seen a buffalo.

DOCTOR

Your hatred is so intense, Mr. Diggs, you refuse to look at buffaloes.

DIGGS

No, I just never had the opportunity to see a buffalo.

DOCTOR

Or you were avoiding buffaloes knowing you might fly off the handle and vent your anger.

DIGGS

No, Doctor, no.

DOCTOR

I am sorry to hear this, Mr. Diggs, for if you hated a buffalo you saw, that would be hating one. But you hate an abstraction of a buffalo. You hate them all.

DIGGS

No, no, Doctor, sorry for interrupting but there wasn't a single buffalo in the dream.

DOCTOR

But the fact there was no buffalo in the dream, Mr. Diggs, made it's absence conspicuous.

DIGGS

I don't understand.

DOCTOR

Did you expect to find a buffalo in my office?

DIGGS

No.

DOCTOR

You see? You go where you are certain no buffaloes will be.

DIGGS

Wait a minute.

DOCTOR

Did you apply to the University of Buffalo?

DIGGS

No.

DOCTOR

Why, Mr. Diggs? Buffalo's a fine university and closer to home.

DIGGS

I just didn't, okay?

DOCTOR

Running, perhaps, from--Buffalo? Your birthplace? The womb, so to speak? Your mother, perhaps?

DIGGS

I love Buffalo.

DOCTOR

Love it so much, you fled from it, eh, Mr. Diggs?

DIGGS

I didn't flee. I left. That's all. I left.

DOCTOR

Did you ever have a buffalo burger, Mr. Diggs?

DIGGS

No.

DOCTOR

Why, Mr. Diggs? Buffalo has more protein than beef. Why not a buffalo burger, Mr. Diggs? Too much like--cannibalism? Too much like munching on mama, Mr. Diggs?

DIGGS

Oh, why did you have to say it like that? No, no, no.

DOCTOR

Don't you see now? Everyone has a black beast, Mr. Diggs. For you it's the buffalo. Let's move on, Mr. Diggs.

DIGGS

No. No. Let's stay right where we are. I love animals. I think buffaloes are fine animals. Majestic animals. In fact, the more I think about it...I love power and the majesty and the brawn of buffaloes.

DOCTOR

We could discuss that, Mr. Diggs, and the connection to mama in all its lurid detail. Or we could move on towards the remote possibility of tranquilizers.

DIGGS

Why don't we move on.

DOCTOR

Excellent choice, Mr. Diggs.

DIGGS

Thank you, Doctor.

DOCTOR

You're most welcome, Mr. Diggs.

DIGGS

I really appreciate your concern.

DOCTOR

It's my privilege, Mr. Diggs. Now what do you see in this inkblot?

DIGGS

Not a buffalo.

DOCTOR

Are you sure, Mr. Diggs?

DIGGS

No.

DOCTOR

Have another look, Mr. Diggs.

DIGGS

You're holding it upside down.

DOCTOR

Am I?

DIGGS

Yes.

DOCTOR

And what do you see now that the inkblot is right-side up, Mr. Diggs?

DIGGS

I see...

DOCTOR

Yes?

DIGGS

I see...

DOCTOR

Yes, Mr. Diggs?

DIGGS

I see an island.

DOCTOR

An island.

DIGGS

A tropic isle in the middle of a vast ocean where the wind rustles the palm leaves and the sun kisses the flesh like a lover and tropical fruits of all varieties hang low in easy reach, and island people with teeth like seashells polished by the sea smile upon me.

DOCTOR

An island, Mr. Diggs?

DIGGS

An paradise island.

DOCTOR

So tell me what kind of fauna inhabit your paradise island, Mr. Diggs?

DIGGS

Well, there are...Awww, no. Awww no.

DOCTOR

No what, Mr. Diggs? What you you mean by that?

DIGGS

You know what I mean, Doctor. There are no bovine ruminating mammals of the Great Plains on this paradise island, Doctor.

DOCTOR

Is it paradise island because no buffaloes could get to you there, Mr. Diggs?

DIGGS

You brought up the you-know-what, not me! Not me! Not me!

DOCTOR

A paradise island because it is a refuge from buffaloes, eh, Mr. Diggs? Because buffaloes can't swim the ocean, can they,

Mr. Diggs? Yes or no, Mr. Diggs? Can buffaloes swim the ocean?

DIGGS

No. Just an island. That's all.

DOCTOR

Without buffaloes, Mr. Diggs?

DIGGS

Yes! I don't know! I never heard of a buffalo on an island!

DOCTOR

I say there is a buffalo on your island, Mr. Diggs.

DIGGS

No! There are no buffaloes on my island!

DOCTOR

Your island, Mr. Diggs?

DIGGS

My island. It's in my head. Therefore I own it. No buffaloes.

DOCTOR

I say there is a buffalo on your island, Mr. Diggs.

DIGGS

No, I mean, I beg to differ, for if there was a buffalo on my island I'd...

DOCTOR

You'd what, Mr. Diggs?

DIGGS

I wouldn't allow it.

DOCTOR

Are you implying you'd bring harm to it, Mr. Diggs?

DIGGS

I just wouldn't allow it. That's my story and I'm sticking to it.

DOCTOR

I say there is a growing herd of buffaloes on your island, Mr. Diggs.

DIGGS

There ain't one stinkin' buffalo on my island.

DOCTOR

I say there is a herd of stampeding buffaloes on your island, Mr. Diggs.

DIGGS

How do you know that, Doctor? You've never been there. I have.

DOCTOR

You're not cooperating, Mr. Diggs.

DIGGS

No! I was minding my own business, unlike some other people, minding my own business on my island when you decided to invade with a herd of buffaloes! Keep off my island! Go wherever you want in the universe. Insert your buffaloes on the moon. But keep off my island! Now let's move on!

DOCTOR

If you insist.

DIGGS

I insist.

DOCTOR

Then let's move on.

DIGGS

Let's.

DOCTOR

Let's play a little game.

DIGGS

Good. I like games.

DOCTOR

Wonderful.

DIGGS

What kind of game?

DOCTOR

When I say a word or phrase, you will blurt out the first thought that comes to mind.

Shoot.

DIGGS

William F. Cody.

DOCTOR

Oh no.

DIGGS

Say it, Mr. Diggs. William F. Cody.

DOCTOR

Let's play something else.

DIGGS

Say it. No matter how painful. William F. Cody.

DOCTOR

Buffalo Bill.

DIGGS

When school is out, I Jaime Diggs will return to...

DOCTOR

Buffalo.

DIGGS

The principle source of protein of the Plains Indians was...

DOCTOR

Lobster.

DIGGS

No, Diggs.

DOCTOR

Egg foo yung.

DIGGS

You know it, Diggs. The Plains Indians subsisted on...

DOCTOR

Buffalo.

DIGGS

I detect a pattern, Mr. Diggs.
(singing)
"Oh give me a home..."

DIGGS

"That's why the lady is a tramp." I'm really bad at songs.

DOCTOR

How dare you say honest.

DIGGS

I don't like this game.

DOCTOR

Play the game, Mr. Diggs.

(singing)

"Oh give me a home..."

DIGGS

(singing)

"Where the buffalo roam."

DOCTOR

(singing)

"Where the deer and the antelope play."

DIGGS

(singing)

"Where seldom is heard."

DOCTOR

(singing)

"A discouraging word."

BOTH

(singing barber shop style)

"And the skies are not cloudy all day."

DOCTOR

Make a clean breast of it, Diggsy. Disburden yourself. Say it and like magic it will all go away!"

DIGGS

I hate 'em.

DOCTOR

How much do you hate 'em, Mr. Diggs?

(DIGGS goes to his knees, then on his face, then on his back, till he is a lump of whimpering jelly)

DIGGS

Awww, man, do I hate 'em.

DOCTOR

How much?

DIGGS

There are no words that can say it.

DOCTOR

Try, Diggsy.

DIGGS

To me they're like shaggy cockroaches.

DOCTOR

And what does one do with shaggy cockroaches?

DIGGS

They gotta go.

DOCTOR

Go, Diggsy? Go back to the Great Plains?

DIGGS

No, Doctor. I wanna exterminate 'em!

DOCTOR

Let loose, Diggsy.

DIGGS

Snuff 'em out to the last buffalo!

DOCTOR

Open the floodgates, Diggs.

DIGGS

I wanna see 'em fall down and suffer and kick their legs and bellow to the high heavens! Then I want to carve 'em up and barbeque 'em till they're medium rare and chew 'em up with their blood running off my chin. I wanna have all their power and their majesty.

DOCTOR

And then what, Diggs?

DIGGS

What I can't eat, I wanna label 'em DOG FOOD.

DOCTOR

You're home free, Mr. Diggs. Home free.

(DIGGS makes a primal scream that goes on for quite a long time. Then silence).

DOCTOR

Well, Mr. Diggs, after hearing you for this short time, I've come to the conclusion that you are apparently you're upset about something. I suspect an underlying depression that we could treat at some future time but for now I would recommend tranquilizers.

DIGGS

Thank you.

DOCTOR

Here's a prescription. Get some sleep, Mr. Diggs

DIGGS

Thank you, Doctor. Thank you so much.

(DIGGS begins to EXIT)

DOCTOR

Oh, Mr. Diggs. Sweet dreams, Mr. Diggs.

(EXIT DIGGS. DOCTOR writes on the pad. LIGHTS FADE).

END