

# Joyce's Choices

Joyce Kulhawik on Arts, Entertainment & Life.



Scene from "DEAL ME OUT" at Boston Playwrights' Theatre

Gamers on guard: I just saw the season closer at Boston Playwrights' Theatre which is dedicated to new plays, and this one is terrific and timely: [DEAL ME OUT](#) written by MJ Halberstadt. It takes place in November, 2016 the week after that revelatory presidential election. A group of gaming millennials, friends since high school, have been gathering weekly in one of their basements to play board games. On this night, all six show up, and unbeknownst to one of them—five have a very specific agenda. Though that agenda is divulged in the show's press materials, it's better if you find out by watching. Let it be said that as the evening progresses, according to the agreed upon rules of the group, those "rules," are tested and come up short.

The group is diverse around race, sexual identity, preference, gender, political persuasion, and in this zero-sum game, much like the social and political landscape outside the "safe" zone of the basement, the rules are deeply polarizing and prove inadequate to the task of parsing relationships; something called humanity is lost.

Directed by Shana Gozansky, the play unfolds with increasing dramatic urgency over 90 minutes with no intermission. The dialogue is packed and overlapped with “gaming” references and jargon, actions and reactions processed at the speed of a click. The ensemble is fresh and sharp, with a special shout out to Matthew Bretschneider as Dez whose character lifted the heaviest load, simultaneously the most provocatively irritating and vulnerable of the group. [SEE “DEAL ME OUT” through March 1 at Boston Playwrights’ Theatre!](#)

By [Joyce Kulhawik](#) | February 18th, 2020 | [Theater](#) | [0 Comments](#)

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