

# Fingerprint Smile



A ten-minute play by **Eric Samuelsen**



Newport, Maine

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**FINGERPRINT SMILE**

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FINGERPRINT SMILE by Eric Samuelsen received its world premiere January 7, 2012 as part of the fifth annual STUDENT SLAM, a Plan-B Theatre/Theatre Arts Conservatory co-production. The following cast was directed by J.J Peeler, assisted by Claire Cook:

FRANK— **Austin Jones**

EDIE — **Hannah Lobell**

JESSICA — **Laurel Myler**

SARAH — **Amanda Corbett**

AUBREY — **Sarah Keating**

### **CAST OF CHARACTERS ( 4f 1m)**

**FRANK:** Elderly, incarcerated. Also his younger, tougher self.

**EDIE:** His wife, we see her when younger, and also, years later, in prison.

**JESSICA:** A teenager, Frank's grand-daughter. Also plays Parole Board member number One.

**SARAH:** Jessica's younger sister. Also plays Parole Board member Three.

**AUBREY:** Jessica's best friend. Also plays Parole Board member Two.

**FINGERPRINT SMILE** a Ten-minute play by Eric Samuelsen. 5f 1m. Simple setting. Neutral costumes. Murder. Aggravated Robbery. Years spent in the system. The grand-children know little to nothing. His parole is imminent and the grand-daughters are in turmoil. Not accepting. Not forgiving. Shouldn't it be easier to forgive someone you've never met? But nothing in life is easy. It certainly wasn't for Grandpa Frank. Premiered as a Plan-B Theatre/Theatre Arts Conservatory STUDENT SLAM, Salt Lake City, 2012.  
**ORDER#3266**

**Eric Samuelsen** taught at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio before joining the faculty at Brigham Young University in 1992. He became head of the Playwriting program at BYU in 1999. He has also taught as an adjunct faculty member in the Religion department. He retired from BYU in 2012.

As a playwright, Samuelsen has had twenty-seven plays professionally produced in Utah, Indiana, Louisiana, New York, and California. Some of his plays include *Gadianton*, which has seen three professional productions across the country, *A Love Affair with Electrons*, *Family*, *The Plan*, and *The Way We're Wired*. He is resident playwright at Plan-B Theatre Company in Salt Lake City, who designated their 2013-14 season a 'Season of Eric, including productions of six of his plays.

He is a member of the Playwrights' Circle, and the Dramatists Guild. He is three-time winner of the Annual Award in Playwriting offered by the Association for Mormon Letters (AML) and he became president of AML in 2007. In 2013 the organization awarded him the Smith Pettit Award for his lifetime work as a playwright.

He has been a staff writer for the on-line satirical magazine *The Sugarbeet*. He was also featured in the book *Conversations with Mormon Authors*, edited by Chris Bigelow. He is a noted Ibsen translator, and has also published scholarly articles on 19th and 20th century Scandanavian Theatre, and more recently, on LDS drama and film. He blogged at *Mormoniconoclast.com*. Eric died in September of 2019 after a long battle with polymyositis. This has left a huge hole in the Theatre Community within, and outside of, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

## FINGERPRINT SMILE

*(Open stage with a small platform upon which a mic rests on a stand. FRANK is at the mic. Others stand or sit around the room.)*

**PAROLE BOARD ONE:** We are met today to consider the parole application of Mr. Frank Campbell.

**FRANK:** *(Center; by mic.)* I'm, um, not sure I'm ready to...

**PAROLE BOARD TWO:** Mr. Campbell. Looking over your record, I see four incident reports, fighting in the yard.

**PAROLE BOARD THREE:** Another fight in the laundry room...

**FRANK:** Yeah, they was, um...

**PAROLE BOARD TWO:** Possession of a weapon. A homemade shiv, it would appear. Nasty business.

**FRANK:** I didn't make...this guy give it to—

**PAROLE BOARD ONE:** But no real issues for the past eighteen years.

**PAROLE BOARD TWO:** Exemplary record really. Got your GED, course in electronics. Work history.

**PAROLE BOARD THREE:** Do you consider that you have rehabilitated yourself? Do you consider yourself ready to take on the responsibilities of a free society?

**FRANK:** *(Pause.)* I don't know.

**JESSICA:** *(BOARD ONE suddenly becomes JESS.)* This is so unfair!

**AUBREY:** *(BOARD TWO)* What is?

**JESSICA:** I am losing my room! My stupid freakin' Mom just told me. She's taking my room away, I have to move in with Sarah.

**SARAH:** *(BOARD THREE)* Hey, I'm losing my room too.

**AUBREY:** Wait, Jess, come on, what's going on? I mean, why?

**JESSICA:** My stupid old fart of a grandfather, who none of us even knows, is suddenly moving in with us, and he gets my room!

**AUBREY:** You have a grandpa? That's awesome.

**JESSICA:** Seriously. You think this, this, flagrant violation of my basic human rights is awesome!

**AUBREY:** Come on, grandparents! They're old and cuddly and give you sweet stuff for Christmas.

**JESSICA:** Aubrey, you're welcome to ours. Just let us know when, we'll ship him right over.

*(Lights up on FRANK. EDIE emerges.)*

**EDIE:** Look, the boss is watching, I gotta get back, what's goin' on?

**FRANK:** Got fired again.

**EDIE:** Great.

**FRANK:** Punched a guy. A customer.

**EDIE:** You punched a customer.

*(Snickers.)*

The motto, it's 'you can trust your car to the man who wears the star.' Not, 'show us your car, mister, we'll punch you in the kisser.'

**FRANK:** Look. This mook drives up, he wants the works, tires, check the oil, water, windshield. And he's got a cig, and I'm pumpin' his gas, and what's he do? Flicks the butt out the window. Coulda killed us both. So I say something, he said something else...

**EDIE:** He had it coming.

**FRANK:** You shoulda seen him. The things he was callin' me.

**EDIE:** Frank, it's okay. It happened, it's over, get another job, we still got rent due the first.

**FRANK:** Yeah. Okay, yeah.

**EDIE:** I gotta go.

**FRANK:** I hate that, your boss. The way he looks at you.

**EDIE:** Punch him out too, why doncha? That'll make everything copasetic.

*(Exits, laughing.)*

*(Back to girls.)*

**AUBREY:** So, your grandpa, he's in prison. Seriously?

**JESSICA:** Not our favorite topic.

**SARAH:** Sort of a family scandal.

**JESSICA:** There's stuff about him on-line. If you're really curious.

**SARAH:** He's a little bit famous. Google Frank Campbell.

**AUBREY:** Campbell, not Christensen? So he's your Mom's ...

**SARAH:** He's my Dad's dad.

**JESSICA:** It's complicated.

*(Light shift to EDIE and FRANK.)*

**EDIE:** We need to talk.

**FRANK:** I'm workin' on the job thing. Woolworth's is hirin', stock boy. I filled out an app.

**EDIE:** So let's hope you get it.

*(Deep breath.)*

Thing is, turns out I'm late.

**FRANK:** Whaddya mean late?

**EDIE:** I'm late. Over two months, late. I'm pregnant, Frank.

**FRANK:** *(Pause, considers.)* That's great.

**EDIE:** It's not great.

**FRANK:** I think it is. It's a baby, it's us, it's...wonderful.

**EDIE:** It's work, it's trouble.

**FRANK:** We'll deal with it. You gonna quit your job, then, right?

**EDIE:** I can't quit my job, that's stupid, we got bills to pay as it is, plus this.

**FRANK:** On your feet, slingin' hash, can't be good for you. I'm gonna get this Woolworth's—

**EDIE:** Yeah, and then what?

**FRANK:** No more fightin'. No more drinkin'.

**EDIE:** You get another job pays crap. And our tiny apartment and a baby. I'm askin' Frank. What then?  
Whadda we do?

**FRANK:** We do the best we can.

**EDIE:** Yeah.

*(Pause.)*

I know a guy can get us a gun.

*(Long pause.)*

**FRANK:** Yeah?

*(He moves to the mic platform.)*

**PAROLE BOARD ONE:** Personal correspondence between Mr. Frank Campbell, Tipton Correctional Facility, and Ms. Edith Eskridge, Eastern Women's CC.

**EDIE:** Frank, I don't know how much of this is gonna get through. These...

**PAROLE BOARD TWO:** Expression redacted.

**EDIE:** I'm sick of it, the way they...

**PAROLE BOARD THREE:** Expression redacted.

**EDIE:** Anyway, I'll just say it straight, they can't do much with that. She didn't make it.

**FRANK:** *(In agony.)* No!

**EDIE:** I had her. She lived three days. Never did breathe good, and then stopped.

**FRANK:** Three days...

**EDIE:** These doctors, they...

**PAROLE BOARD ONE:** Long characterization of prison medical staff redacted.

**2 MORE PAGES TO THE END**