



# SMALL ENGINE REPAIR

BY JOHN POLLONO



DRAMATISTS  
PLAY SERVICE  
INC.

SMALL ENGINE REPAIR  
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New York Premiere at the MCC Theater November 18, 2013  
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The world premiere of SMALL ENGINE REPAIR was presented by Rogue Machine Theatre (John Perrin Flynn, Artistic Director; Elina de Santos, Co-Artistic Director) in Los Angeles, CA, in 2011. It was directed by Andrew Block; the set and lighting design was by David Mauer; the costume design was by Jennifer Pollono; the sound design was by Tony Lepore; and the stage managers were Brenda Davidson and Daniel Coronel. The cast was as follows:

FRANK.....John Pollono  
PACKIE .....Michael Redfield  
SWAINO..... Jon Bernthal  
CHAD .....Josh Helman

SMALL ENGINE REPAIR was presented by MCC Theater (Robert LuPone, Bernard Telsey, and William Cantler, Artistic Directors; Blake West, Executive Director) at the Lucille Lortel Theater in New York City, opening on November 18, 2013. It was directed by Jo Bonney; the set design was by Richard Hoover; the costume design was by Theresa Squire; the lighting design was by Lap Chi Chu; the sound design was by Jill BC Du Boff; the fight direction was by UnkleDave's Fight-House; the production manager was B. D. White; and the production stage manager was Davin De Santis. The cast was as follows:

FRANK ..... John Pollono  
PACKIE.....James Ransone  
SWAINO..... James Badge Dale  
CHAD ..... Keegan Allen

## **CHARACTERS**

FRANK

PACKIE

SWAINO

CHAD

## **PLACE**

Manchester, New Hampshire.

## **TIME**

August.  
Recently.

Manch-Vegas:

*n.* — *Alternative name for the city of Manchester, New Hampshire, USA. The word was coined by combining the first part of “Manchester” with the second word in “Las Vegas,” juxtaposing Las Vegas’s glitz and glamor with Manchester’s lack of either. Used derisively.*

— Urban Dictionary

# SMALL ENGINE REPAIR

*A small shop. A sign for the place is prominently displayed featuring a cute, smiling six-year-old girl with a bandanna around her hair, grease on her cheeks, holding a crescent wrench, and the words "Frank's Small Engine Repair, Est. 1998" beneath it. There's a counter for customers to place orders for repair, set up landscaping accounts, and a table with chairs for waiting.*

*Posters of various landscaping equipment (John Deere tractors, etc.) decorate the wall. There is a register and some random equipment (lawnmower blades, belts, work gloves, etc.) hanging. Engines scattered about, a riding mower in a state of disrepair. There's a beat-up old refrigerator somewhere, stocked with simple American beer. A door in back for the bathroom and a door in front is the main entrance. Behind the counter, beneath the main sign, is a Foursquare sign.*

*Lights come up on Frank Romanowski, a solid guy in his mid/late thirties, in the process of cleaning the place up: sweeping, organizing, checking his phone and texting, occasionally walking offstage and back on.*

*At one point, he comes back with a duffel bag and tucks it away somewhere. Another point, he brings on a couple paper bags containing booze.*

*He checks his phone and texts and is interrupted by a knock on the door. Frank unlocks the door with a heavy bolt (which he relocks every time after someone enters ... The lock is bulky and temperamental and requires a bit of finesse to open and shut, although Frank does it with ease) and opens it to see Packie Hanrahan, a very small guy of the same age, who is disheveled and dressed in grungy clothes. Packie blows right by him and grabs a beer.*

*Important note: The characters in this play should almost never stop drinking.*

PACKIE. Okay, just ... let it out. Is it in your brain? Your lungs? Your prostate? You look pale, Frank. Maybe you should sit down. Unless it's your prostate. Then you should stand. Holy shit, it's your fucking prostate, isn't it? Oh, man. I had a feeling. Okay. What stage is it? Does it hurt? Does your dick still work?

FRANK. Packie. I don't have cancer.

PACKIE. You don't have cancer?

FRANK. No.

PACKIE. Does anybody in Manchester have cancer?

FRANK. Nobody has cancer.

PACKIE. Nobody has cancer? This is fucking infuriating. You texted me that you have cancer and I dropped everything to meet you during this crisis!

FRANK. You're mad at me for not having cancer?

PACKIE. Well, no ...

FRANK. And what exactly did you drop? The fucking remote control.

PACKIE. I was watching the Sox in HD. I made guacamole. It's gonna spoil.

FRANK. Here's your fucking guacamole. *(Frank tosses a five-dollar bill at him. Packie stares at it. Frank drops another two bucks and Packie takes it.)*

PACKIE. *(Muttering.)* Somebody in Manch-Vegas has to have cancer. Unless they found a cure for cancer. You think I would've heard about it. I watch a lot of news ...

FRANK. Who are you talking to?

PACKIE. Myself. God. I don't know. You lied to me about having cancer.

FRANK. Stop fixating.

PACKIE. Okay. What was so important that you'd betray our friendship?

FRANK. I had to say something to get you over here because ... *(Packie's phone dings.)*

PACKIE. Fuck! Toronto just scored.

FRANK. Can you stop playing with your phone for five fucking seconds? Okay, look. You gotta promise me that you're not gonna freak out.

PACKIE. About what?

FRANK. This is me asking.

PACKIE. I know it's you. You don't gotta tell me who it is. I see you right fucking there.

FRANK. Swaino's coming.

PACKIE. Here?

FRANK. No, he's going to the Stop-and-Shop two towns over to buy a fucking sandwich, figured I'd mention it.

PACKIE. I told you I never wanted to see him again.

FRANK. Well never ends tonight.

PACKIE. Jesus, Frank. This is worse than cancer. I don't wanna — *(Frank pulls a bottle of Jameson out of a paper sack and jams it into Packie's hands.)*

FRANK. Pour us a shot of that Jameson, will ya?

PACKIE. I thought you stopped drinking?

FRANK. Just fucking pour.

PACKIE. I cut back too, Frank. For health reasons.

FRANK. Really? Because a month ago I got a call, carried you out of Smudgie's Pub and brought you home, you were so hammered you had shit your pants.

PACKIE. That's why I woke up in the tub. *(Knock at the door.)*

FRANK. If he starts something I'll deal with it, okay?

PACKIE. I don't need you defending me.

FRANK. I'm just saying.

PACKIE. Just get the fucking door. *(Frank opens the door to find a man in his thirties, Terence Swaino. Swaino is dressed in what he perceives to be very trendy clothes.)*

FRANK. Swaino.

SWAINO. Whatsup, guy? *(They hug.)* Damn, you're like a piece of rock. What's got you so tense?

FRANK. Work. How you been?

SWAINO. Got blown an hour ago. *(Swaino takes a few steps inside and pauses as he sees Packie. After a moment, he breaks the tension:)*

When'd you get a Chihuahua?

PACKIE. Hardy har.

SWAINO. I always pegged you as a pit bull man, Frank. I'm surprised you'd spend money on a designer Mexican toy breed.

PACKIE. If I'm a Chihuahua then you're a fucking Corgi.

SWAINO. That's not a burn, Packie. You gotta one-up me with a smaller dog.

PACKIE. Corgi is a smaller dog.



SWAINO. Corgi is practically a regular-sized dog. They just got wicked short legs. You shoulda said Yorkshire terrier.

PACKIE. Well that breed isn't smaller than a Chihuahua. I know, my grammy had one.

SWAINO. That was a Maltese. And it was a mix.

PACKIE. It was not!

SWAINO. It had white fucking fur and — Jesus, Packie. Trading barbs with you is like throwing rocks at a retard.

PACKIE. Hey! You know my Uncle Gary has Down's syndrome!

SWAINO. Sorry. Trading barbs with you is like throwing rocks at Uncle Gary.

FRANK. Knock it off, Swaino. You two even remember what you were fighting about anymore?

PACKIE. Fucking cough drops.

SWAINO. You shouldn't have grabbed those cough drops outta my fucking hand, Packie.

PACKIE. I had a sore throat.

SWAINO. I told you to get your own!

PACKIE. You were talking to some chick and wanted to look cool, as usual, so you insulted me.

SWAINO. I called you a leprechaun! Big fucking deal!

PACKIE. As an Irish American, I find that offensive!

SWAINO. I'm half fucking Irish.

PACKIE. Exactly. You're a traitor.

SWAINO. And you're magically delicious. *(Packie lunges at Swaino. Frank stops him.)*

FRANK. Hey! Knock it off.

SWAINO. What?

FRANK. Packie?

PACKIE. What do you want me to say? *(Frank pours them each a shot as he lets them have it.)*

FRANK. Listen to me. You guys can't let thirty-plus years of history get flushed down the toilet over fucking cough drops. Okay? Now I was there and I was sober and I saw the whole fucking thing. Packie, you were a little out of control that night and you acted like an ass. You fixated on those cough drops —

PACKIE. But, Frank —

FRANK. You fixated on those cough drops like you sometimes fixate on things when you've been drinking and you should have let Swaino talk to that girl.

# SMALL ENGINE REPAIR

by John Pollono

4M

Former high school buddies Frank, Swaino, and Packie — now past their prime — meet off-hours one night in Frank's out-of-the-way repair shop, under cloudy circumstances that only Frank seems to have a handle on. Enter Chad, a plugged-in, preppy college jock, whose arrival ignites a long-simmering resentment that sets this taut, twisty, comic thriller on its breathless course.

*"... raw, funny and well-tooled ... SMALL ENGINE REPAIR zips along with crackling comic dialogue steeped in the tang of male aggression and rivalry ... Mr. Pollono's dialogue has some of the same brazen vulgarity and acrid humor of Mr. Mamet at his best. And when SMALL ENGINE REPAIR takes a sudden turn for the violent, the play gives off a whiff or two of Irish peat, courtesy of Martin McDonagh. But while Mr. Pollono has clearly absorbed influences from his peers and forebears, he folds them into a clever plot that could have been cooked up only in the social networking era, putting a new engine in a classic dramatic plot: a man's hunger for retribution ... written in bold colors and crisply individualized ... a shivery, funny revenge comedy."*

—**The New York Times**

*"... whip-smart and brutally funny. You're likely to experience a whirlwind of emotions in this Rottweiler of a play that refuses to let go of your imagination long after you've left the theater ... A dark thriller that cuts open conventional wisdom surrounding class, sex, and justice and exposes the rot living underneath ... Pollono captures the boiling frustration amid the downwardly mobile and increasingly helpless and scalds you."*

—**TheaterMania.com**

**Also by John Pollono**

LOST GIRLS

ISBN 978-0-8222-3142-4



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