



KILL FLOOR

BY ABE KOOGLER



DRAMATISTS
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For Polly and Ralph Victor

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

With huge thanks to Sherry Kramer, Steven Wilson, Andrew Hinderaker, Lila Neugebauer, Marin Ireland, and Jon Berry, each of whom made significant dramaturgical contributions to this play, and to the many others who lent their talents to its development.

KILL FLOOR was originally produced by LCT3 (Paige Evans, Artistic Director) at Lincoln Center Theater, New York City, on October 3, 2015. It was directed by Lila Neugebauer, the set designer was Daniel Zimmerman, the costume designer was Jessica Pabst, the lighting designer was Ben Stanton, the sound designer was Brandon Wolcott, and the stage manager was Megan Schwarz Dickert. The cast was as follows:

ANDY Marin Ireland
B Nicholas L. Ashe
RICK Danny McCarthy
SIMON Samuel H. Levine
SARAH Natalie Gold

KILL FLOOR was subsequently produced by American Theater Company (Will Davis, Artistic Director), Chicago, Illinois, opening on March 29, 2016. It was directed by Jonathan Berry, the lighting designer was Rachel K. Levy, the costume designer was Christine Pascual, the sound designer was Matt Chapman, and the stage manager was Katrina Herrmann. The cast was as follows:

ANDY Audrey Francis
B Sol Patches
RICK Eric Slater
SIMON Louie Rinaldi
SARAH Darci Nalepa

CHARACTERS

ANDY, female, 34, white.

B, male, 15, half black and half white. Although it's okay if this role is played by an actor who is black — i.e. not biracial.

RICK, male, 35, white.

SIMON, male, 15, white.

SARAH, female, 30s, white.

PLACE

A small town next to a major highway.

TIME

2003.

NOTES ON DIALOGUE

A word that is in brackets, like this...

ANDY. Really, it's—[great]

... should be left unsaid. It's what the character would have said had they continued speaking. Actors do not need to hold a space for this unsaid dialogue. It's for context only.

A forward slash—like this: /—signifies overlapping dialogue. The next line begins at the slash.

A pause can be any length, from a quick beat to a long silence.

An ellipsis that takes up its own line is a silent beat owned by that character.

When two lines are adjacent like this:

ANDY.

Loved that guy. “Randy.”

Moved somewhere. Long gone.

RICK.

Lisa Harding.

Big, like—[tits]

... the first word of each line is said at the same time. So “Loved” and “Lisa” are said at the same time, then “Moved” and “Big,” etc.

NOTES ON PERFORMANCE

Please keep up the pace and find the humor. These characters are all pursuing very active intentions throughout the play.

Andy and B's fight in Scene 12 acquires a momentum that propels the rest of the play. Every moment that follows, even the pauses, is charged with the energy of that fight.

One of B's primary tactics with his mother is the freezeout. The less he gives her, the more he wins.

KILL FLOOR

Scene 1

Sound of the kill floor. No animal sounds—just metallic clanging, whirring, banging. It gets louder and louder and louder until:

*Lights hard up on a small office.
Rick and Andy, both in cheap business casual.*

RICK. So!

ANDY. Yeah, so uh thanks for—

Rick's cell phone rings.

RICK. Sorry.

ANDY. No, that's—

RICK. *(Answering.)* Hey.

...

Yeah.

...

Yup.

...

I'll pick him up.

...

I said I will pick him up.

...

I said I heard you, and I will fucking do it.

And don't call me at work. Send me a text.

What?

...

That sounds nice.

...

I said *Pasta sounds nice.*

He hangs up.

Sorry.

ANDY. No, that's—

RICK. Love her! The kid too.

But wish I could kill 'em both, sometimes. Like, you know, strangle.

ANDY. Uh-huh.

RICK. My son's four. Got this huge head.

ANDY. A what?

RICK. His head is huge. I don't know. It's funny.

ANDY. That's funny.

So—

RICK. So how've you been?

ANDY. I've been alright.

RICK. Hear from you, it's like—oh yeah! Her! You know.

ANDY. Good to think back, sometimes.

RICK. Fun. Man, we had fun.

High school.

ANDY. Uh-huh.

RICK. You, on the...

ANDY. What?

RICK. Squad, with the—[pom poms]

ANDY. Oh, I wasn't—

RICK. No?

ANDY. No.

Not my style.

RICK. Huh. Guess I must've—

ANDY. It's fine. I wasn't really—

RICK. No, I remember you. Definitely.

Definitely.

Andy...

(Surreptitiously checking the last name on her résumé.) ... Weiser.

ANDY. That's me.

Down by the—

RICK. Yup.

Huh?

ANDY. Oh that's where I used to live. Down by the—

RICK. Down by the old—

ANDY. Yup.

RICK. That's right.

ANDY. Anyway.

Well.

RICK. “Ruff, ruff!” How’d it go?

ANDY. I think that’s it.

RICK. “The bulldog bark.”

Pause.

So I took a look at your résumé...

ANDY. Right, yes. Good.

RICK. And I know you’ve just gotten out of prison—

ANDY. Yeah.

RICK. I appreciate you telling that to me, and it’s—

ANDY. Really trying to—

RICK. Of course.

ANDY. And if you’re worried about anything, I’ve got a woman in the uh training program, the job-training program there, who knows me. You can call her, she likes me, I never had any—

RICK. We don’t have anything, Andy.

ANDY. What’s that?

RICK. Up here in the office, we don’t have anything.

ANDY. Oh. I thought—

RICK. I thought maybe—

But I talked to my supervisor up in HQ, and...

ANDY. Oh.

Sure. No, sure. That’s—

Been looking all over. It’s hard. Nothing out there.

RICK. You tried Dairy Queen?

ANDY. Can’t work fast food.

RICK. No dignity in that.

ANDY. No money in that.

RICK. That’s for sure.

What about up in Aberdeen?

ANDY. Don’t have a car. And they cut those buses.

So.

Well, thanks I guess—

RICK. Wait wait.

We do have—I mean—if you want to work down there.

ANDY. Down there?

RICK. With the—[cows]

ANDY. Oh, the—?

RICK. Yeah.
It's hard work.
ANDY. I've worked hard.
What's the pay?
RICK. Well let's see.
We can start you out at—
I can probably get you around, uh—
Would twelve work?
ANDY. Holy shit.
RICK. I know it's not—
ANDY. No, it's—
Twelve would work fine.
RICK. Great.
Great!
Course there's no benefits. Insurance, all that.
ANDY. Psssh. Benefits. "Healthy as an ox."
RICK. So to speak.
ANDY. Hah!
RICK. Hahaha.
ANDY. That's good. You're good.
Thank you, really.
RICK. It's—[nothing]
ANDY. Really, it's—[great]
RICK. Oh—
How do you feel about Mexicans?
ANDY. I don't know. Good?
RICK. Nice people. Really reliable.
ANDY. Good.
RICK. Hard working.
ANDY. They sound nice.
RICK. Very nice. Calm.
Good.
So I think we're good.
ANDY. That's it?
RICK. Eight A.M. tomorrow!
Or make it seven. Paperwork and stuff.
ANDY. Great.
RICK. Hey.
Sure you wanna do this?
ANDY. Uh—

RICK. I mean—

ANDY. Yes. No, definitely. Things are—[tough]

RICK. Oh yeah. Sure. For a lot of folks.

ANDY. Especially since—

RICK. Sure, sure. Hard transition.

We get a lot of people—[who are just out of prison]

ANDY. Yeah the woman at the, my—I'm living at a halfway kind of—

RICK. People with your background can be, actually, the—[best at this kind of job]

ANDY. I've seen it all.

RICK. Exactly. Cuz it can get a little—

ANDY. Like I said, everything.

RICK. It can get a little—

ANDY. I'll be fine.

RICK. Great.

Let me know, if you start to—

There can be, kind of, an initial—

ANDY. I'll be just fine.

Well how bad is it?

RICK. Not too bad.

ANDY. Okay.

Great.

RICK. So did you get married after high school? Or—

ANDY. Yeah...

RICK. Old ball and chain.

ANDY. Divorced now, though.

RICK. Oh yeah?

Huh.

Huh.

I think you'll do great here.

KILL FLOOR

by Abe Koogler

3M, 2W

In this powerful drama, Andy returns to her hometown after five years in prison and takes a job at the local slaughterhouse, determined to get her life on track. But when her estranged teenaged son objects to her working on the kill floor, their relationship slips even farther from her reach. With her boss demanding more than she can give and her son's struggles mounting, Andy discovers how hard it can be to start over.

"Melancholy and moving... [KILL FLOOR] is a very closely and quite beautifully observed character study focused on the difficulty of pulling yourself up from America's bottom rung, however willing the spirit and able the body."

—Chicago Tribune

"Mr. Koogler observes the nuances of... unequal relationship[s] with delicacy... KILL FLOOR never strikes a false or strained note..."

—The New York Times

"... searingly written... [KILL FLOOR] draws you into the most intimate feelings of its five characters with an intensity that is difficult to shake."

—Chicago Sun-Times

"... a solid gut-punch... a dream come true for actors, featuring meaty conflicts and two-character scenes that are both tender and pungent. ... [A] riveting, edge-of-your seat play by a writer worth keeping an eye on."

—TheaterMania.com

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