



HOMEFREE
BY LISA LOOMER



★
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INC.



HOMEFREE
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HOMEFREE was originally produced by the Road Theatre Company (Taylor Gilbert and Sam Anderson, Co-Artistic Directors; Katie Witkowski, Managing Director), Los Angeles, California, in September 2015. It was directed by Michael Matthews, the scenic design was by J.R. Bruce, the costume design was by Michele Young, the sound design was by David B. Marling, and the lighting design was by Luke Moyer. The cast was as follows:

JJ	Barret Lewis
BREEZY	Gabriela Ortega
FRANKLIN	Lockne O'Brien
AARON	Donald Russell
SHANNON	Chelsea Averill
40s FEMALE	Elizabeth Herron
40s MALE	Steve Apostolina

HOMEFREE was commissioned and developed by Denver Center Theatre Company. It was developed at Hedgebrook.

CHARACTERS

Seven actors play the following roles:

JJ—19, a talker and a dreamer, funny, damaged, a liar, macho with bursts of violence. Alcoholic, but won't say no to drugs either.

BREEZY—16, says she's 18, Mexican. Tough, vulnerable, hopeful, and little surprises her. Breezy has a great spirit and prefers to laugh if possible.

FRANKLIN—17, smart, wry, gay, hiding it well. A good friend.

AARON, mid-20s, educated, concerned, maybe wise, maybe schizophrenic. A bit lacking in affect and might not make much eye contact.

SHANNON, mid-20s, earth mother, warm, optimistic, a traveler.

The actors who play Aaron and Shannon also play...

2 JUGGALOS—late teens or early 20s, in partial clown makeup. Juggalo 1 is male, Juggalo 2 is female, a Jugalette. White wannabe gang kids, violent, nuts.

Two actors in their 40s play...

MEGAN—30s, Breezy's aunt. Meth head with plans.

JEN—40s, a dedicated, obedient Christian but also a loving mom.

VERIN—60s, a veteran of the sixties. Alcoholic.

HOWARD MADLEY—50s. If ever there was a good Christian, it is he.

LOU—JJ's mom. Poor, drunk, and mean.

GLORIA—Breezy's mom. Jehovah's Witness. Frightened child.

STEPDAD—Breezy's. White. Persuasive.

JJ'S DAD—quietly but utterly brutal.

WOMAN—New Age, ethnically dressed.

COP—female.

DETECTIVE—male.

In Terms of Casting...

There are seven actors: Three play teenagers. Two play people in their twenties and the Juggalos. Two actors in their forties play all the other adult roles... Because, though these adults dress differently, have different jobs, hair, drugs, accents, religions...it really doesn't make all that much difference to the kids.

PLACE

Act One takes place in a conservative mid-size city in Oregon. One way to establish locales would be projections—like shots from an iPhone: The flat lawn of a park. A compartment high up under a freeway overpass where the homeless bed down. Tinsel Town, an outdoor mall. Inside a meth house. Outside of Walmart. In other words, America. Act Two takes place in small, liberal town, another America... And way up in the forest where you can still get away.

Thoughts on Production

The play is about people who have their own sense of things like “time” and “place.” They argue a lot, they riff, they get high, there’s not a lot else to do. But, though the kids’ lives *seem* random, the story’s headed someplace dark. And the production needs to tell us that. In Michael Matthews’ production at the Road Theater, this was accomplished in scene changes which were dynamic, driving, and loud. Whether a production uses music or moving set pieces, it helps to have an overlay that drives the story...which is a fucked up urban fairy tale about cast-out kids.

Music

Beat boxing (drum-like or percussive sounds made by mouth by street musicians) should be the transition between scenes. This can be picked up and magnified by the sound system. If JJ can beat box, great.

There’s also a folk-like song composed by JJ which keeps getting longer, if not better. Theaters are encouraged to create their own melody for this song.

The violent, white sub-genre of rap music called horrorcore is also part of this world. Horrorcore’s most-known group is Insane Clown Posse (ICP), a white group whose music is gory, anarchic, and violent. Juggalos are their disciples, suburban wannabe gang kids who wear some degree of clown makeup or clown hair...and carry hatchets.**

In Scene 7, all of Verin’s songs are Bob Dylan songs.**

The music of Above and Beyond is also apt, especially in Act Two.**

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HOMEFREE

ACT ONE

Scene 1

A mid-sized conservative city in Oregon. Night. The stage is dark, we can barely see the two people in sleeping bags. We hear the sound of beat boxing, and then just rain.

BREEZY. (*Urgently.*) But where the fuck is he?

FRANKLIN. I don't know, Breezy.

BREEZY. Will you stay? Till he comes? He always comes back.

FRANKLIN. Sure.

BREEZY. So... If he doesn't come back the whole night—?

FRANKLIN. I'll stay.

A beat. Sound of rain.

How long have you known him?

BREEZY. (*Thinks.*) I don't know, coupla weeks? Are you sure your flashlight's shot? Can you try it again?

FRANKLIN. It's shot, Breeze. Tomorrow I'll get new batteries.

BREEZY. Okay. Thanks, Franklin. And thanks for staying.

FRANKLIN. No problem.

BREEZY. You want a blow job or something?

FRANKLIN. (*Matter of fact.*) Absolutely not.

BREEZY. Well, thanks.

Scene 2

There's more light now, from a tuna can filled with cardboard and wax. We see that we are in a compartment high up under a freeway overpass. The space is about four feet high, so you have to crouch or kneel. Every once in a while, there's the sound of a car passing right overhead. JJ, 19, is moving around, high, trying to keep warm. He wears filthy clothes and a hoody. A smiley chain (a thick chain with a lock at the end wrapped in duct tape) is worn around his waist, just in case. He takes a hit of a joint and talks fast, seemingly, at first, to the audience.

JJ. Okay. You know that old movie they always show on TV like around Christmastime? You know that movie. 'Bout this dude that worked in a bank? And he got all freaked out 'cause he got in trouble over some bank shit? What is that movie?

(Laughs.) I don't remember 'cause I'm a drug addict... Anyways, this dude is so stressed, he's thinking 'bout jumping off a friggin' bridge... And this angel comes along and shows him what the whole town would be like without him—like if he'd never been born? Like, say you got this family photo and you take a scissors and just...cut yourself out? And the whole town is all emo without the dude. It. Is. So. Sad.

Takes a hit.

So I'm sitting in the trailer with my mom, and it's my eighteenth birthday, and this movie's on, and I start thinking, yo, what would everybody's life be like without *me*? And I started to check out *that* movie in my mind—

(Laughs.) And you know what? Everybody's life is like...great! My mom's got bucks, they got a real nice one-bedroom apartment... And she only got three kids so she got time to watch her shows instead of working two jobs and being a friggin' alcoholic... Everybody got their own room—

(Suddenly remembers.) *It's a Wonderful Life*. That's it. That's the movie.

(Laughs.) Fuck those commercials, "This is your brain on drugs"—

and it's like a friggin' fried egg? My brain is fine, man, my brain is like a...cheese omelette. So I'm watching with my mom, and I tell her about *my* movie, and you know what she said?

His mom, Lou, comes on, upstage of him, in his mind. They say her words together.

LOU and JJ. How's everybody gonna have their own room in a one bedroom apartment? Where I'm gonna sleep? No, you didn't think about that. Selfish piece of shit.

She says the rest on her own.

LOU. Just like your father.

(*Leaving.*) You're eighteen, JJ. You're outta here.

She exits.

JJ. (*Laughs.*) No hug. No hug... So I watched the rest of the movie and I left.

Lights come up now on the rest of the stage to reveal Breezy and Franklin. Franklin is in his sleeping bag reading a book with a flashlight. Breezy's been sitting up listening to JJ, who passes her the joint.

BREEZY. Dude. I wish *we* had a TV.

JJ. (*Laughs.*) Dude. Here?

BREEZY. We *never* had one.

JJ. (*Shocked.*) Dude! Know what I miss?

BREEZY. What?

JJ. Fantasy Factory.

BREEZY. Porn?

JJ. No. It was this reality show with this dude that made billions of dollars skateboarding and selling T-shirts, and now he lives in L.A. in this giant warehouse with a block-long foam pit and an entire indoor skate plaza, and he does crazy shit with his friends like make the world's most expensive grilled cheese sandwich.

FRANKLIN. (*Reading his book.*) Please don't say "grilled cheese."

JJ. That show was dope, bro. Only thing is it's a reality show about this white dude and the dude he hangs out with all the time is black. (*Laughs.*) That ain't reality where I live.

BREEZY. Dude. You live here.

JJ. I mean before. In White City.

BREEZY. (*Laughs.*) White City? So everybody there is white?

JJ. No. But we're workin' on it.

He takes the joint.

BREEZY. Fuck you, JJ. You ever see *Chopped*?

JJ. *Chopped*?

BREEZY. Okay, these four chefs come on, and they got like twenty minutes to make a meal, and the one that sucks the worst gets chopped.

JJ. They kill him?

BREEZY. No, asshole. He's gotta leave the show.

JJ. Be cool if they killed him. Thought you didn't have TV?

BREEZY. Yeah, well, I saw that show when I was staying with my aunt. Saw lots of stuff. Like that British dude?

(*British accent.*) "You have no talent, you look like a stripper, and you sing out your ass." I love that guy.

JJ. Yeah, I wanna get on that show when I get to L.A.

BREEZY. You're really going to L.A.?

JJ. Hell yeah!

Takes a toke.

But some douchebag stole my guitar. So why'd you leave, Breezy?

BREEZY. (*Laughs.*) Told you, we didn't have TV! My mom's Jehovah's Witness.

Her mom comes on, behind them, crying about what a whore Breezy is and how Jesus is watching.

GLORIA. Así te vistes? Como una puta! Con tus cigarillos y esa boca que tienes? Sabes que Jesucristo te mira en todo lo que haces—?

Breezy cuts her off.

BREEZY. And my stepdad was always making me do chores.

Her mom leaves, muttering a prayer, as her stepdad, American, comes on. He grabs Breezy's long hair from behind. Though he might do it from upstage, far away.

GLORIA. (*Quietly.*) Jehová, nuestra plaza fuerte en el tiempo de angustia, Jehová el ser supremo, y todopoderoso...

STEPPAD. I love you, baby, you know that... With that pretty hair... Pretty, pretty hair—

JJ. Yeah, it's better out here.

BREEZY. Whatever.

She lets go of the memory, and her stepdad releases her hair and leaves. She crawls into her sleeping bag and turns away.

JJ. How 'bout you, Franklin?

Franklin is absorbed in his book.

Yo, Franklin!

FRANKLIN. What?

JJ. Dude, why'd you leave?

FRANKLIN. 'Cause I like to read in peace.

JJ. (*Laughs.*) Man's gotta do what a man's gotta do.

He opens a forty and starts to drink.

BREEZY. What're you reading, Franklin?

FRANKLIN. *The Scarlet Letter.*

JJ. Yeah, I read that.

FRANKLIN. It sucks, right?

JJ shrugs and starts to blow out the light.

BREEZY. Hey, don't blow the light out, okay?

JJ. Okay. But you got to get used to the dark sometime, Breeze...

JJ drinks, as the lights fade and the sound of beat boxing takes us to the next scene.

Scene 3

A men's bathroom in the park, before dawn. Sound of beat boxing continues. Franklin, decently dressed and fairly clean, looks around, then goes into the bathroom. A moment later, a grown man follows him in.

HOMEFREE

by Lisa Loomer

4 men, 3 women

Franklin, Breezy, JJ. Kicked out for being gay, for being pretty, for being nuts. Their journey is crazy, funny, and frightening, beginning in a conservative city in Oregon—where Grandma's house is a meth house, where bed's an underpass, and the safest place you can wander is the mall. When tragedy hits, they travel to another America. An idyllic liberal town, right smack in the forest. But is there shelter here? Or is home each other? And, when push comes to shove, as it always does... is each other enough? *HOMEFREE* is a dark urban fairy tale about three cast-out teens and the flip side of the American dream.

"HOMEFREE is a ravishing, high-velocity play about teens having a seriously bad time... a seamlessly lustrous ride."

—**LA Weekly**

"[A] play about youths slipping through the safety net, explored with considerable street cred through their stories, perspectives and vernacular. ...Loomer's mature talent for exploring social issues through intimate, tightly constructed personal stories is apparent... She doesn't sentimentalize her subjects or whitewash their bad choices; she's more concerned with understanding than judging them."

—**Los Angeles Times**

"Powerful and gritty...HOMEFREE demands attention and never lets go. ...Loomer's uncompromising script reveals the trio's bleak survival through coarse, visceral language, but finds lovely moments of emotional subtlety and sarcastic humor. She reveals how adults, conservative or liberal, discard or ignore struggling young adults when they challenge societal norms."

—**The Toluca Times (Los Angeles)**

Also by Lisa Loomer

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