



SWEAT

BY
LYNN NOTTAGE



DRAMATISTS
PLAY SERVICE
INC.

SWEAT
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SWEAT was co-commissioned by the Oregon Shakespeare Festival's American Revolutions: The United States History Cycle and Arena Stage.

The world premiere of SWEAT was produced by the Oregon Shakespeare Festival (Bill Rauch, Artistic Director; Cynthia Rider, Executive Director) in July 2015. It was directed by Kate Whoriskey, the scenic design was by John Lee Beatty, the costume design was by Jennifer Moeller, the lighting design was by Peter Kaczorowski, the original music and sound design was by Rob Milburn and Michael Bodeen, the video and projection design was by Jeff Sugg, the dramaturg was Julie Felise Dubiner, and the stage manager was Jill Rendall. The cast was as follows:

EVAN	Tyrone Wilson
JASON	Stephen Michael Spencer
CHRIS	Tramell Tillman
STAN	Jack Willis
OSCAR	Carlo Albán
TRACEY	Terri McMahon
CYNTHIA	Kimberly Scott
JESSIE	K. T. Vogt
BRUCIE	Kevin Kenerly

This production of SWEAT was first presented in New York by the Public Theater (Oskar Eustis, Artistic Director; Patrick Willingham, Executive Director) on November 3, 2016. It was directed by Kate Whoriskey, the scenic design was by John Lee Beatty, the costume design was by Jennifer Moeller, the lighting design was by Peter Kaczorowski, the original music and sound design were by Rob Milburn and Michael Bodeen, and the video and projection design was by Jeff Sugg. The cast was as follows:

EVAN Lance Coadie Williams
JASON Will Pullen
CHRIS Khris Davis
STAN James Colby
OSCAR Carlo Albán
TRACEY Johanna Day
CYNTHIA Michelle Wilson
JESSIE Miriam Shor
BRUCIE John Earl Jelks

SWEAT was originally produced on Broadway at Studio 54 by Stuart Thompson and Louise L. Gund, premiering on March 26, 2017. The production team was the same as the Public Theater's, with the following change made to the cast:

JESSIE Alison Wright

CHARACTERS

All of the characters were born in Berks County, Pennsylvania.

EVAN, 40s, African-American

JASON, 21/29, White American of German descent

CHRIS, 21/29, African-American

STAN, 50s, White American of German descent

OSCAR, 22/30, Colombian-American

TRACEY, 45/53, White American of German descent

CYNTHIA, 45/53, African-American

JESSIE, 40s, Italian-American

BRUCIE, 40s, African-American

SETTING

Reading, Pennsylvania

TIME

2000/2008

NOTES

/ represents where overlapping dialogue should begin.

In general the dialogue should have the free-flowing velocity of a bar conversation, where people step on each other's thoughts, but also occasionally find moments of silence and introspection.

SWEAT

ACT ONE

Scene 1 September 29th, 2008

Outside it's 72°F. In the news: The 63rd session of the United Nations General Assembly closes. The Dow Jones Industrial Average falls 777.68 points, marking the largest single-day decline in stock market history. Reading residents sample fresh apple cider at the annual Fall Festival on Old Dry Road Farm.

Music. Lights up.

Parole office. Spare. Institutional.

Jason, White, late 20s. Hair closely shorn. He has a black eye and White supremacist tattoos inked across his face. Evan, Black, late 40s, comfortably puffy.

EVAN. So, you got a job?

JASON. Yeah.

EVAN. I'm not gonna run down everything. You know the drill.

JASON. Yeah.

EVAN. So, you're making pretzels?

JASON. Yeah.

A moment.

EVAN. Soft?

JASON. Yeah.

EVAN. Living at the same address?

JASON. Yeah.

EVAN. The mission?

JASON. Yeah, finally got a bed downstairs.

EVAN. That's real good. I hear that shelter's pretty clean.

JASON. Yeah, but fucking guys steal. Can't have nice stuff. But, um, Father Hunt lets me keep my turtles.

Jason fidgets. Evan assesses.

EVAN. So. You gonna tell me what happened?

JASON. What?

EVAN. I know you don't wanna be here. I don't wanna be here either.

JASON. Yeah, whatever.

EVAN. Don't whatever me. I'm not one of your stupid friends, let's be clear about that.

JASON. Whatever.

EVAN. Try me! I'm not playing fucking games. I'll knock you clear into tomorrow, understood? But, fortunately for you I don't have to, you know why? Because I got this pen, and you know what this pen does?

JASON. Yeah—

EVAN. It writes. And, you know what it's gonna write if you don't give me more than one- or two-syllable answers? It's gonna write that you're belligerent, defiant, reluctant to observe protocol. You understand those words, Jason?

JASON. Yeah.

EVAN. (*Voice slowly crescendoes.*) It's gonna write that you have issues with authority that may prove too challenging. This pen could make things very difficult for you, young man. And you know what happens to young men that don't cooperate? ...Huh? ...Huh?

JASON. You asking me?

EVAN. Whatcha think I'm asking myself? Of course I'm asking you, moron! You want me to ask again?

JASON. No. I don't need you to ask again.

EVAN. Very good. A sentence, we're making some progress here. So, what happened?

JASON. I mean...I didn't do shit.

EVAN. So you didn't do shit, but someone did...do shit.

JASON. Psh.

EVAN. And, you gave yourself a black eye and busted lip?

A moment.

What happened?

JASON. I got sucker punched.

EVAN. Cuz—?

JASON. I dunno.

EVAN. Some guy just comes up and hits ya. And you, you didn't do nothing?

JASON. Nah. Not really. I was in the bathroom at Loco's.

EVAN. Loco's?

JASON. Yeah, Loco's.

EVAN. I'm sorry? Loco's?

JASON. I can't go to Loco's?

EVAN. We've talked about Loco's. Go on.

JASON. This big fucking biker dude, I don't know'em, like steps up behind me. He's like you were looking at my girl. I am so, like, dude I don't even know who the fuck your girl is. And he's wearing these huge rings, both fucking hands, like medieval biker knight.

EVAN. Hmm.

JASON. And...then he hits me hard, so hard that I swear to God I see stars. Like Bam! My whole face goes numb. Sparky had to pull'em off of me.

EVAN. Just because you looked at his girl.

JASON. I didn't look at his girl, that's why it's so fucked up.

EVAN. And if I ask you to piss in this cup, what's it gonna tell me?

JASON. You don't gotta believe me, but I'm telling ya the / truth.

EVAN. Okay. There's the cup.

JASON. What?

EVAN. What do you mean, what?

JASON. C'mon.

EVAN. The cup, pick it up.

JASON. I just got a job. What do you want?

EVAN. I don't want anything from you, but the state does and it's my unfortunate job to ensure that you comply.

JASON. Are we gonna do this?

EVAN. Pick it up.

JASON. You are a fucking asshole. Fuck you, nigga!

A moment. Evan, stone, stares long and hard at Jason.

(Less committed.) Fuck you!

EVAN. Pick it up!

JASON. I got a job. I mean, c'mon, give me a fucking break.

EVAN. Pick...it...up!

Jason makes a show of picking up the cup.

Okay. What do you wanna tell me?

A moment.

JASON. I dunno.

EVAN. I dunno, either.

JASON. Look—

EVAN. What?

JASON. I dunno.

EVAN. Yeah, we covered that fertile territory. What's going on Jason?

JASON. Yo, ease up. I'm doing what I am supposed to be doing.

EVAN. You think so? You looking to get back inside?

JASON. ...!

EVAN. Might wanna get rid of those tats. We've talked about it. They're gonna cause you trouble out here. Might make you a tough guy inside, out here... Guess what? Every time I look at them I wanna punch you out. That's me being honest. But, lucky for you I'm here to help.

Jason fidgets.

What's going on Jason? I shouldn't have to track you down.

A moment. Jason roll his eyes.

JASON. Can I go?

EVAN. We don't have to talk. It's no sweat off my back. I'm gonna leave this page blank. How about that? Blank page. You wanna blank page?

JASON. ...

EVAN. You in trouble?

JASON. No.

EVAN. I could fish all day. I am a fisherman.

Jason runs a story through his head, deciding whether to share it.

JASON. I—

EVAN. Yeah—

JASON. Ran into Chris.

Jason is caught off-guard by his own emotions.

EVAN. All right? You okay? We knew this might happen. Yeah?

JASON. Yeah.

EVAN. He's out there. He ain't going nowhere. Whatcha gonna do about it?

JASON. I dunno. I dunno. The whole time inside, I pushed what happened, you know, Chris, all of it, outta my head. Then he was... I dunno, it's all I can think, you know—

Evan turns around, and he's now talking to Chris, African-American, late 20s. He is very neatly dressed, but quite fidgety and anxious.

EVAN. You okay, man? You seem antsy.

CHRIS. Not gonna lie, it's been tough. Not sleeping so good. Still trying to get used to things.

EVAN. Well, you been away a long time. The river keeps flowing.

CHRIS. (*Anxious.*) I guess. People. Psh. People, they're a trip. You know? Before it was...um...it was easy, now every conversation I

SWEAT

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WINNER OF THE 2017 PULITZER PRIZE

6M, 3W

Filled with warm humor and tremendous heart, *SWEAT* tells the story of a group of friends who have spent their lives sharing drinks, secrets, and laughs while working together on the factory floor. But when layoffs and picket lines begin to chip away at their trust, the friends find themselves pitted against each other in a heart-wrenching fight to stay afloat.

“Keenly observed and often surprisingly funny—but ultimately heart-breaking—the work traces the roots of a tragedy with both forensic psychological detail and embracing compassion. Ms. Nottage...is writing at the peak of her powers...”
—**The New York Times**

“...passionate and necessary...a masterful depiction of the forces that divide and conquer us. ...SWEAT communicates its points with minimal fuss and maximum grit. Along with the rage, despair and violence, there’s humor and abundant humanity. ...a cautionary tale of what happens when you don’t know how to resist.”
—**Time Out New York**

“Sharp and threatening as a box cutter blade...ferociously engrossing... SWEAT never feels less than authentic—and crucial.”
—**Deadline.com**

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and others
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