

**WE'RE
GONNA
BE OKAY**

**BY BASIL
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**DRAMATISTS
PLAY SERVICE
INC.**

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WE'RE GONNA BE OKAY received its world premiere in the 2017 Humana Festival of New American Plays at the Actors Theatre of Louisville (Les Waters, Artistic Director; Kevin E. Moore, Managing Director). It was directed by Lisa Peterson, the scenic design was by Dane Laffrey, the costume design was by Jessica Pabst, the lighting design was by Brian H. Scott, the sound design was by Christian Frederickson, the dramaturg was Jenni Page-White, and the stage manager was Stephen Horton. The cast was as follows:

MAG Annie McNamara
SUL Scott Drummond
DEANNA Anne-Marie Trabolsi
LEENA Kelly McAndrew
EFRAN Sam Breslin Wright
JAKE Andrew Cutler

WE'RE GONNA BE OKAY was developed with support from the Playwrights' Center's Jerome Fellowship Program (Jeremy B. Cohen, Producing Artistic Director; Robert Chelimsky, Managing Director) in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

CHARACTERS

MAG, a working-class woman in her late 30s – early 40s. Mag is also a quiet woman, but she's on the verge of discovering something inside of herself that's louder.

SUL, a working-class guy around the same age as his wife, Mag. Sul's a quiet guy, but an extremely thoughtful one. He sees Efran as the kinda guy he'd like to be, but even when he imitates him, it's never quite right.

DEANNA, Mag and Sul's daughter, she's around 16. She's feminine but a little rock-and-roll masculine. Like a '60s lesbian Joan Jett. Slightly apathetic-appearing, but it's because she sees a lot; she also sees the idiocy of it all.

LEENA, a middle-class woman in her late 30s – early 40s. She's aware of the changes happening in the country and in thought. She's not actually in the thick of it but desires to be.

EFRAN, a middle-class guy around the same age as his wife, Leena. He's a fast talker. The kind of guy who holds everyone hostage with his talk, and is in real need of being "liked" so he overdoes it.

JAKE, Leena and Efran's son, like Deanna he's also around 16. Less mature than Deanna, he's got that all-American boy thing going for him. He's energetic and full of vigor, but he's more than he seems at first.

TIME

1962

During the Cuban Missile Crisis

PLACE

Middle America

NOTE

There are sound transitions that begin each scene. This is just a thought towards the idea that sound could juxtapose and heighten the internal paranoia and conflict happening within the small family units and group dynamics alongside the growing national fear. These Sounds might be from the news or things like “Duck and Cover,” the chaos of the time.

WE'RE GONNA BE OKAY

ACT ONE

(Oct. 15, 1962)

CHAPTER 1: Heyser Turns a “Brass Knob”

Sound transition.

The façade of two shotgun houses. Two neighbors. It's an Indian summer and the grill's smoking. Two grills, two families, one BBQ.

EFRAN. Sul! Waitta ya get a load a these steaks I got.

SUL. Steaks? Efran / that's too expensive

EFRAN. Hey. It's no biggie. I got a deal on em. This salesman, a steak salesman, comes to the door last week. He says, “I was drivin by the neighborhood on my way north.” You know, 'cause *north* that's where people who buy steaks live. “When I saw this porch. Looks like you put some care into this porch.” Why yes I did sir, I say. He says, “I thought there is a man who eats steak. There is a man who enjoys a good piece a beef. There is a man who *deserves* a Grade-A slab a red meat once in a while. Have I got a deal for you.”

I was sold.

Bought a few steaks and Leena froze em. We are about to enjoy the first eating of the salesman steaks.

SUL. Today is one a those days I'm proud to be your friend.

EFRAN. And my neighbor. Don't forget the neighbor part.

SUL. Can't.

EFRAN. Nope. Today, in this country it's a man's neighbors. To neighbors!

SUL. To salesman steak!

EFRAN. Salesman steak! Yes, sir.

Can you believe that? Door-to-door steak sellin'?

SUL. What's the world comin to?

EFRAN. I tell you, Sul. I don't know. I just don't know.

With everything you read—you had a chance to look at all those pamphlets?

SUL. Yeah, yeah. Took a look at em. Me and the wife. Seems awful expensive.

EFRAN. That's why we go into it together.

Make it big enough for both families. You got the know-how. We do it ourselves. Ground up.

I started doin some figurin. The supplies, the supplies aren't what's expensive. Now those pamphlets they're about a pre-fabricated shelter. But you and I, we'd build it ourselves. Save lives.

I mean when I get to thinkin about this world, and with all that's goin on, it ain't a matter of "if" but a matter of "when." So I been thinkin about what comes after the big event. When everything's gone and man has to start over from scratch. So I think on who do I want to be here? It's you. It's you, your family, me, my family.

Don't you think so? Good people.

SUL. Hey, I wanna be here. I do. But it ain't come yet, and we got a mortgage and /

EFRAN. You got the know-how. I got the supplies.

SUL. Wait now, / you

EFRAN. No, no I'm serious.

SUL. I don't know.

EFRAN. Come on, Sul. We're neighbors.

SUL. Yeah, but I can't—well—you know, honestly, I can't put any money towards it.

EFRAN. That's what I mean, we go in on it together. You got the know-how, the fix-it-guy thing. You know how to build things, Sul. And I get the supplies.

SUL. I don't know if I'm comfortable with that.

EFRAN. Are you sayin your work's not worth anything? Geez, Sul. Give yourself more credit than that.

SUL. Well no, I'm not saying that / exactly.

EFRAN. So what's the problem here? I don't see any problem. A man goes to work, it doesn't matter what he does, the man gets paid for it. Am I right?

SUL. Sure.

EFRAN. Yeah, he gets paid for it. So what's the difference? We live in a free market, Sul. That's the beauty of capitalism. You dig a hole and you damn well can count on getting paid for it, right?

SUL. I hear what you're sayin, Efran.

EFRAN. You hear me?

SUL. Yeah, I do.

EFRAN. So you're in?

SUL. I didn't say that.

EFRAN. Alright, Sul. Level with me here. It's me, Efran, your neighbor, your neighbor. You and I agree that counts for somethin in the world, am I right?

SUL. Sure.

EFRAN. Right. So come at me.

SUL. What?

EFRAN. Level with me here. What's the holdup, what's the bottom line? Lay it out on the table. You and me, right here, right now. Lay the cards on the table. Let's see what we're workin with here.

SUL. Okay, well /

EFRAN. Hit me!

SUL. Well, I hear what you're / sayin

EFRAN. Come at me!

SUL. Okay well yeah so you dig a hole and you get paid for it, but who owns the hole, Efran? The guy who dug it or the guy who paid for it? 'Cause in my experience / it's the guy

EFRAN. Okay, okay. Whatta ya take me for huh? What kinda guy do you take me for. Look, look. The beauty of it is I'm not paying

you. Look, let me throw somethin back at ya.

This is Efran's version of "If a tree falls and no one's there to hear it..."

If a man digs a hole on his own property, but someone pays him to dig it, does he own the hole? Huh?

SUL. I don't know.

EFRAN. This is the thing. We build it right down the middle of the property line. You get building supplies on your side and on my side I get building know-how. Win-win.

SUL. Yeah. I don't know.

EFRAN. I won't take no for an answer, Sul.

SUL. I'm just not comfortable with it.

EFRAN. Ah come on.

SUL. I'm sorry, Efran. I can't go in on it with you.

Leena and Mag carry corn on the cob and potato salad out from the house.

LEENA. Poor Sul.

EFRAN. Poor Sul?

LEENA. Is he on you about the bomb shelter?

SUL. What?

MAG. I think it's a good idea.

LEENA. We're clearly married to the wrong men Mag. We should swap.

MAG. There's so much tension in the world.

LEENA. He's addicted to crisis, this man.

EFRAN. It is my job to protect my family, right Sul?

SUL. Sure.

EFRAN. That's what I'm doin. If that means buildin a bomb shelter, then I build it.

LEENA. Of course you do, honey.

EFRAN. I do.

LEENA. I know, I know.

MAG. I'm all for it. It would make me feel a whole lot better. Lately, I've been waking up with a cold sweat, and panic in my stomach.

LEENA. I'm not convinced, but last night I did have a shelter dream.

EFRAN. You did?

LEENA. Yeah. You two were out there digging and digging, and I was washing the dishes and looking out the window at you. Suddenly this gush of black came rushing out. A geyser in the backyard. You two were covered in black from head to toe, jumping up and down. I raced out to see what you had broken, with the plumber's number in my hand. And lo and behold...it was black gold. A geyser of oil springing out of the lawn!

EFRAN. She fell asleep to *The Beverly Hillbillies*.

LEENA. I did! I did, didn't I? I hadn't even realized that. We have to stop falling asleep to television. It's goin to ruin our brains.

EFRAN. I told you, you don't have to worry about that anymore. We got the color television. See here's my theory. The black and white it numbs the brain. Makes like—colorless world. Now we got the color television. I think it's gonna zap that creativity back in you.

LEENA. That's true. But I haven't felt creativity zap into me. I used to make things.

MAG. I didn't know that about you.

LEENA. It's true.

EFRAN. Yeah. She'd make all kinda things. Little things for—things that would—I mean, unbelievable things—you could /

LEENA. Anything with my hands. Honestly, I have to say there's something revolutionary about making things. You know? Women creating together. There's a whole counterculture. I want to call them something but basically it's just crafts, I suppose.

EFRAN. Hey! There ain't nothin wrong with crafts.

LEENA. I know.

EFRAN. She thinks it's not real art, 'cause it doesn't go in a frame.

SUL. It could.

EFRAN. It could! Sure it could.

Sul, always usin his thinker.

WE'RE GONNA BE OKAY

by Basil Kreimendahl

3 men, 3 women

During the Cuban Missile Crisis, two average American families build a slapdash bomb shelter on their shared property line. With nuclear warfare looming, they wonder: Is it the end? The end of baseball...and table manners...and macramé? But as they fret about the fall of civilization, they start to worry that something more personal is at stake. A slyly hilarious, compassionate look at anxiety in America, WE'RE GONNA BE OKAY is about finding the courage to face who we are—and who we want to be.

"[WE'RE GONNA BE OKAY] finds comedy in [an] age of fear... Kreimendahl's play wrestles with the fears we all have about the larger powers in charge but beyond our control, while offering characters who seek to find the gentle, delightful and dynamic experiences of what makes life momentous and worth living—even amid that fear and loss."

—**Louisville Courier-Journal**

"The script is sharp and funny, playing with 1960s stereotypes while not becoming mired in a Leave It to Beaver satire. ... WE'RE GONNA BE OKAY asks audiences...who we might truly let ourselves be, deep underground."

—**WFPL News (Louisville, KY)**

Also by Basil Kreimendahl
ORANGE JULIUS

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