



FULFILLMENT CENTER

BY ABE KOOGLER



DRAMATISTS
PLAY SERVICE
INC.



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For Didi

FULFILLMENT CENTER was commissioned and given its world premiere by the Manhattan Theatre Club (Lynne Meadow, Artistic Director; Barry Grove, Executive Producer) on June 20th, 2017. It was directed by Daniel Aukin, the scenic design was by Andrew Lieberman, the costume design was by Ásta Bennie Hostetter, the lighting design was by Pat Collins, and the sound design was by Ryan Rumery. The cast was as follows:

MADELEINE Eboni Booth
ALEX Bobby Moreno
SUZAN Deirdre O'Connell
JOHN Frederick Weller

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

With special thanks to Lynne Meadow, Elizabeth Rothman, Nicki Hunter, and everyone at MTC for their unwavering support; to Daniel Aukin for doing such a damn good job; and to Pat Collins for her deep insight. Lee Sunday Evans made valuable dramaturgical contributions, as did designer Andrew Lieberman and the many talented actors who participated in the play's development: Eboni Booth, Rob Campbell, Rod Hill, Peter Kim, Michael Laurence, James McMenamain, Nana Mensah, Bobby Moreno, Chris Myers, Didi O'Connell, Natalie Paul, Erin Pettigrew, Alejandro Rodriguez, Fred Weller, Afton Williamson, Gary Wilmes, and Amelia Workman. Finally, big thanks to my agent and friend, Scott Chaloff.

CHARACTERS

MADELEINE, 31, black.

ALEX, 31, latino.

SUZAN, 60s, white.

JOHN, 42, white.

LOCATIONS

An apartment

An alley behind the regional shipping facility (“fulfillment center”) for a large online retailer

A campground

A bar

A sculpture garden

A highway

...all in New Mexico.

A NOTE ABOUT DIALOGUE

A “pause” can be as short as a quick beat, or as long as a full rest. Whatever you find works best.

An ellipsis is a pause owned by that character.

Overlapping lines are indicated in two ways: with a slash (/), or like this:

ALEX. Of course

MADELEINE. And that’s

A NOTE ABOUT DESIGN

In the Manhattan Theatre Club production, we staged the play with a few chairs and a few props. Locations were indicated through light and sound. While future productions are welcome to incorporate more scenic elements, the play *can* be done with almost none. Whatever the design, it must allow one scene to shift to the next immediately, without blackouts or formal transitions. These will interrupt the flow of the play.

FULFILLMENT CENTER

Scene 1

Sound of a buzzer.

Lights up on Suzan and Alex in the alley behind the fulfillment center. Alex is holding a clipboard and an iPhone, which he'll use as a stopwatch.

There are several orange cones set up.

ALEX. Go.

Suzan runs between the cones.

Okay don't run.

SUZAN. What?

ALEX. Don't run.

SUZAN. What?

ALEX. *Don't run.*

SUZAN. I can't / actually hear you.

ALEX. You can't run.

Stopwatch beeps.

SUZAN. How was that?

ALEX. Yeah, you can't run.

SUZAN. What?

ALEX. You actually, *you can't run.*

SUZAN. How did I do though, did I make it?

ALEX. You made it within the time limit, yeah

SUZAN. Great! / God that's great

ALEX. But as I said, you can't actually

SUZAN. What?

ALEX. Run.

SUZAN. I wasn't running.

ALEX. That was a pretty quick walk.

SUZAN. That was a jog I think

ALEX. Uh...

SUZAN. Think that was a jog!

ALEX. You're completely out of breath.

SUZAN. Well *that's* true.

You got me there!

Hang on

Whew

Okay.

Hahaha

ALEX. We just have a policy that you can't actually run.

SUZAN. What about jogging?

ALEX. Or jog, yeah, jogging, yeah

SUZAN.

Well why is that? Hahaha

You said it was a time, uh, time-based sort of

...

ALEX.

Well it's just—

...

System, yeah, so—

So did I make the time?

ALEX. You made it, yeah, but—

SUZAN. Well great! So that's great!

ALEX. The policy is in place because the job is a seven-hour shift.

SUZAN. Uh-huh.

ALEX. It's not, you know, the running thing is in place because you can't actually *run* for seven hours, so we need people who

SUZAN. Right well I'm a little older

ALEX. Uh-huh

SUZAN. So that's, of course there's gotta be a *slightly* different policy for a "woman of a certain age," right?

ALEX. Actually, no. I'm sorry. Thank you, though, for—

SUZAN. I've just been traveling, was on my way from Tucson up to Maine, but then my car completely conked out on me, just sitting over there at the campground, and I saw the posting for this job, and I thought this will be perfect: short term, pay's pretty good, work through the holiday, get my car fixed, continue on my journey, and I'm in good shape for my age, so

ALEX. I actually have to go back inside now, / it's a busy

SUZAN. Lemme try it one more time, k? Hahaha, one more time, come on, holidays are coming up, I bet you could use the help...

ALEX. Uh...

Alright. / Once more.

SUZAN. Oh thank you

Oh that's nice of you

ALEX. Then I gotta

SUZAN. Sure, great, of course. I understand.

ALEX. You ready?

SUZAN. Hang on, gimme a minute

Haven't done something like this since um

ALEX. Ready?

SUZAN. Yup, alright, sure, so

ALEX. Go.

She goes.

Now you're going too slowly

SUZAN. I'll run

ALEX. You can't run

SUZAN. I'll jog then

ALEX. Jogging is running

SUZAN. Well am I gonna make it how fast am I

ALEX. You have to walk

That's a walk

SUZAN. To me these terms feel

VERY

Slippery

Stopwatch beeps.

She's breathing hard.

How was that?

ALEX. Uh

SUZAN. I made it?

ALEX. Yeah...

SUZAN. Great, oh that's great

Hahahaha / "Trying to murder me?"

ALEX. But it's not, listen, you have to do this—
It's seven straight hours of work.

SUZAN. I know that

ALEX. You have to do that for seven hours.

SUZAN. With breaks.

ALEX. It's eight hours, with an hour of breaks.

SUZAN. Eight hours with an hour of breaks

Well

That's good

That's a lot of breaks

I'll rest up during the breaks!

I promise you

I'll do a good job, I swear.

ALEX. ...

...

Okay.

SUZAN. Yeah? Oh great.

ALEX. Alright, yeah, um

SUZAN. Oh great, that's a relief. God, thank you.

ALEX. It's—

SUZAN. It means a lot to me. Thank you.

ALEX. It's not a favor

SUZAN. No, of course not.

ALEX. It's—we need the help.

ALEX.

Spread out.

SUZAN. Great, of course.

A buzzer sounds inside the fulfillment center.

Feel like I'm late for class

ALEX. Yeah that's to keep us on track, gotta get a certain amount of packages out within each of those time frames, then they shorten or lengthen the time frame depending on how we're doing center-wide

His phone buzzes.

(Looking at the phone.) Ah shit

They need me back inside, so I'll just orient you real quick

SUZAN. Oh, I'm—

ALEX. You wanna start now?

SUZAN. Yeah! I—

ALEX. You brought all your paperwork, all that?

SUZAN. Of course, here...

ALEX. They'll uh—they'll take care of that inside

SUZAN. Okay

Sorry, not the most organized

ALEX.

Lemme just give you the quick overview, then I'll take you inside

SUZAN.

Papers everywhere
Sorry

SUZAN. Okay.

ALEX. My colleague usually does this but we're moving quickly here, welcome to November

SUZAN. Ready to go.

ALEX. *(Reading from a script.)* This is a fulfillment center.

SUZAN. I'm gonna sit down.

ALEX. Don't do that

SUZAN. Oh

ALEX. Just

SUZAN. Sorry

ALEX. Yeah, just stay on your feet for a minute.

SUZAN. Absolutely.

ALEX. *(Back to script.)* This is a fulfillment center, um, so this is

FULFILLMENT CENTER

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2 men, 2 women

In the New Mexico desert, a down-on-her-luck folk singer takes a job at a giant online retailer's shipping center. Her young manager struggles to connect with his girlfriend newly relocated from New York. And a drifter living at a local campground dangerously links them all. A raw, surprising, and funny play about four lonely lives coming together in the search for fulfillment.

"[A] quietly shattering play... though you're likely to feel the pressure of unshed tears when [it] is over, FULFILLMENT CENTER is also an unexpectedly inspiring work. ...The [play] is steeped in a luminous and illuminating empathy that feels both uncommon and essential..."

—The New York Times

"Koogler's wry drama FULFILLMENT CENTER trains a humanist's eye on...moments of real physical contact... Interactions are bittersweet, sometimes even frightening, but we watch hungrily. ...One of the work's keen pleasures is the way it feels like a carefully wrapped package: everything precisely contained, each of its two-person scenes assembled with the least padding possible."

—Time Out New York

"In its quietly distraught manner, FULFILLMENT CENTER makes a true portrait of today's Americans. Though full of good will and eager to connect, none of its characters fully knows how to communicate... That you feel a helpless sense of pitying affection for them all comes...from Koogler's terse, astutely turned dialogue..."

—The Village Voice

Also by Abe Koogler
KILL FLOOR

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