

ABOUT THE PLAY

KILL MOVE PARADISE

by James Ijames | Sept 4 - Sept 23

Kill Move Paradise tells the story of Isa, Daz, Grif and Tiny, four black men who find themselves stuck in a cosmic waiting room in the afterlife. This play, inspired by the ever growing list of slain unarmed black men and women, depicts these men as symbols of life and hope. Gone but never forgotten, *Kill Move Paradise* illustrates the possibilities of collective transformation and radical acts of joy.

01

The play frankly describes and depicts moments of **violence and racism**. The characters use **strong language**.

02

James has said that the play is his attempt to create a **“black cosmology”**—a design of the universe where blackness is centered in the natural and supernatural order, with the space the characters find themselves in having been created by those who have lived through the same experiences as them.

03

The setting of *Kill Move Paradise* has been described by James Ijames as Elysium, Limbo, or the Tibetan concept of the Bardo, all spaces of transition **between life and the afterlife** where the soul reflects on its past in preparation for its future.

04

The characters in *Kill Move Paradise* all share an **awareness of the audience**, referred to by the characters at times as “America,” as a way for them and Ijames to highlight how the silent, passive consumption of the destruction of racism is an integral component of its structure.

REVIEWS

Playwright James Ijames’ script roams... through these young men’s psyches and understandably turbulent emotions. The pace slows, then explodes. Sometimes it’s highly rhythmic, almost a piece of performance poetry. [Ijames is] not interested in linear storytelling. That’s too limiting for what he wants to share with us. Instead, he’s written a script that is more akin to an orchestral tone poem. The best you can do is lean back and allow the impact of it all to wash over you.

– David Lyman for The Cincinnati Enquirer

*As the program notes, the piece is “atmospheric and expressionistic”; those desiring a straightforward narrative about police shootings won’t get that here. But in this, *Kill Move Paradise* is a direct descendant of theatre during the Civil Rights era: the poetry, repetition, and non-naturalism in Ijames’ script is reminiscent of the experimental techniques pioneered by Amiri Barak, Adrienne Kennedy, and other playwrights of the Black Arts Movement, artists who eschewed naturalistic traditions for alternative kinds of storytelling. Indeed, this is yet one more way that *Kill Move Paradise* practices the message it preaches – that we must “remember what happened in order to move on.”*

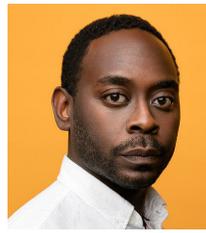
–Dan Deniro for Theater is Easy

THE CAST

Avery Hannon as Tiny
Anthony Martinez-Briggs as Grif
Brandon Pierce as Daz
Lindsay Smiling as Isa

ARTISTIC TEAM

Director: Blanka Zizka
Set Designer: Matt Saunders
Lighting Designer: Thom Weaver
Costume Designer: LeVonne Lindsay
Original Music &
Sound Designer: Justin Ellington
Movement Consultant: Silvana Cardell
Dramaturg: Walter Bilderback
Stage Manager: Patreshettarlina Adams
Production Manager: Clayton Tejada



James Ijames (playwright and HotHouse Associate Artist) is a Philadelphia based performer and playwright. He has appeared regionally in productions at The Arden Theatre Company, The Philadelphia Theatre Company, InterAct Theatre Company, The Wilma Theatre, Baltimore Center Stage, Mauckingbird Theatre Company, and People's Light and Theatre. James' plays have been produced by Flashpoint Theater Company, Orbiter 3, Theatre Horizon, The National Black Theatre (NYC), Ally Theatre (Washington DC) and have received development with PlayPenn New Play Conference, The Lark, Playwright's Horizon, Clubbed Thumb, Villanova Theater, The Gulfshore Playhouse, Wilma Theater, Azuka Theatre and Victory Garden. James is the 2011 F. Otto Haas Award for an Emerging Artist recipient, and he also won two Barrymores for Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Play for *Superior Donuts* and *Angels in America* and one Barrymore for Outstanding Direction of a Play for *The Brothers Size* with Simpatico Theatre Company. James is a 2011 Independence Foundation Fellow, a 2015 Pew Fellow for Playwriting, the 2015 winner of the Terrance McNally New Play Award for *...Miz Martha* and a 2017 recipient of the Whiting Award. James is a founding member of Orbiter 3, Philadelphia's first playwright producing collective and a mentor for The Foundry. He received a B.A. in Drama from Morehouse College in Atlanta, GA and a M.F.A. in Acting from Temple University in Philadelphia, PA. James is Assistant Professor of Theatre at Villanova University and resides in South Philadelphia.

The Wilma creates living, adventurous art. We engage artists and audiences in imaginative reflection on the complexities of contemporary life. We present bold, original, well-crafted productions that represent a range of voices, viewpoints, and styles.

James Ijames started writing his first play in his dressing room while performing in the Wilma's production of *Angels in America*, and has said the Wilma has had a tremendous impact on his writing, encouragingly him to be "wild and precise...The HotHouse approach is playful and exploratory and then it irises down to something quite precise and I believe *Kill Move Paradise* will benefit from this".

The Wilma HotHouse is an incubator for artistic investigation and experimentation, and enables its company of actors to dare and explore under the Wilma's auspices. HotHouse allows the Wilma to develop new works specifically for our company of actors; to conduct readings, intensive workshops, and other experiments with company members and guest artists; and to hone a unique theatrical aesthetic for the Wilma through rigorous actor training.

The Portable Studio shares the Wilma's creative practices through workshops and residencies that are inspired by Wilma productions and takes place in community spaces. We believe that sharing our creative practices with others will more deeply connect the Wilma to Philadelphia and in turn, Philadelphia to the Wilma. The skills and values demonstrated in the Wilma's HotHouse Company act as a focus in the Portable Studio. These include risk-taking, dialogue, reflection, and a commitment to continued learning.



INSPIRATION FOR DESIGN

LeVonne Lindsay, has been using images like this to inspire her costume design for *Kill Move Paradise*.