

Production Notes

From the Director

Kristin Kundert

There is a little known psychological disorder called Body Integrity Identity Disorder (BIID). It is also referred to as Amputee Identity Disorder and is closely related to Xenomelia, which is an oppressive feeling that one or more limbs do not belong to one's self. Sufferers of BIID feel they would be happier living as an amputee and are obsessed with the desire to amputate one or more of their healthy limbs. Some individuals do indeed succumb to their obsession; there are stories of sufferers placing a leg on a train track to have it run over and removed. The cause of this disorder is unknown. One theory suggests that it is a dysfunction of the right parietal lobe of the brain, which is responsible for body mapping. The brain fails to incorporate the limb into the understanding of the whole body. Additionally some suffers of BIID also have Apotemnophilia, which is sexual arousal based on the image of amputees or even themselves as an amputee.

So is Carmichael a sufferer of BIID or is his myth of the hillbillies really true? The play doesn't answer this question, but Carmichael is clearly obsessed with something he lost. He is not alone in this. All of the men in the play have lost something that they value. They are consciously or unwittingly searching for the item, a lost article that is perhaps only a representation of a better time. They are obsessed with a more innocent state when they felt loved and valued. Paradise lost.

The beauty of this play is that the playwright, Martin McDonagh, investigates this collective human experience in an irreverent and darkly comedic way. Through the characters' follies, we can laugh at ourselves and our own losses, trivial or enormous as

they may be. So don't be afraid to laugh. It lightens the load.

From the Dramaturg

Fran Teague

Martin McDonagh is a playwright whose work shocks audiences with its violence and its humor. McDonagh began his career with a bang in 1996, when his first play *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* won a slew of awards for its London production, including Most Promising New Playwright and the Olivier for Best Play. Other controversial plays soon followed (such as *The Pillowman* and *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*), but then McDonagh shifted to writing and directing films with *In Bruges* (2008) and *Seven Psychopaths* (2012). The 2010 Broadway production of *A Behanding in Spokane*, featuring Christopher Walken, marked his return to the theatre. It has since had success with a number of regional theatre productions. In an interview with London newspaper *The Guardian*, McDonagh said,

I suppose I walk that line between comedy and cruelty because I think one illuminates the other. We're all cruel, aren't we? We are all extreme in one way or another at times and that's what drama, since the Greeks, has dealt with. I hope the overall view isn't just that though, or I've failed in my writing. There have to be moments when you glimpse something decent, something life-affirming even in the most twisted character. That's where the real art lies.

This play is no exception. Something in it will offend you – the profanity, the racial slurs, or the violence – but at the end of the play, you will have seen something in these characters that you will recognize from your own world. Tight, fast, and horribly funny, the action shows us people who want, scheme, and yearn. Wince at the lines because you must, but laugh at them as well.