

Welcome to Dallas, Texas. It's 1993. We are in a trailer park, on the outskirts of town, where the chained-up dogs bark loud and the hot summer thunder booms louder. It's a humid, thick, cigarette smoke filled world. A faint layer of dirt covers everything, literally and figuratively. Welcome to the broken, complicated universe of the Smith Family.

When I first read *Killer Joe*, I was in college. And, I found myself completely and utterly fascinated by the humans that unraveled on the pages before me - the Smith family and Joe - but I didn't understand why they took such hold of me. I then saw the play in my early 20s and was yet again pulled into their world, almost without choosing to be. I was (and am) in a love/hate relationship with these humans and I so badly want to understand why. And, to me, they are full, complete humans - they are not a stereotype, they are complicated and real.

In every theatre class I teach, be it at the University of Denver or in a prison, I ask the question: when do you know a play is successful? I've meditated on this question - alone and with my students - for decades. And, for me, the answer is when I am moved. And, moved can mean a lot of things - it can be "positive" or "negative" but more nuanced than that - to me, it means, that suddenly a new aspect of the human experience has been revealed - and so I am moved.

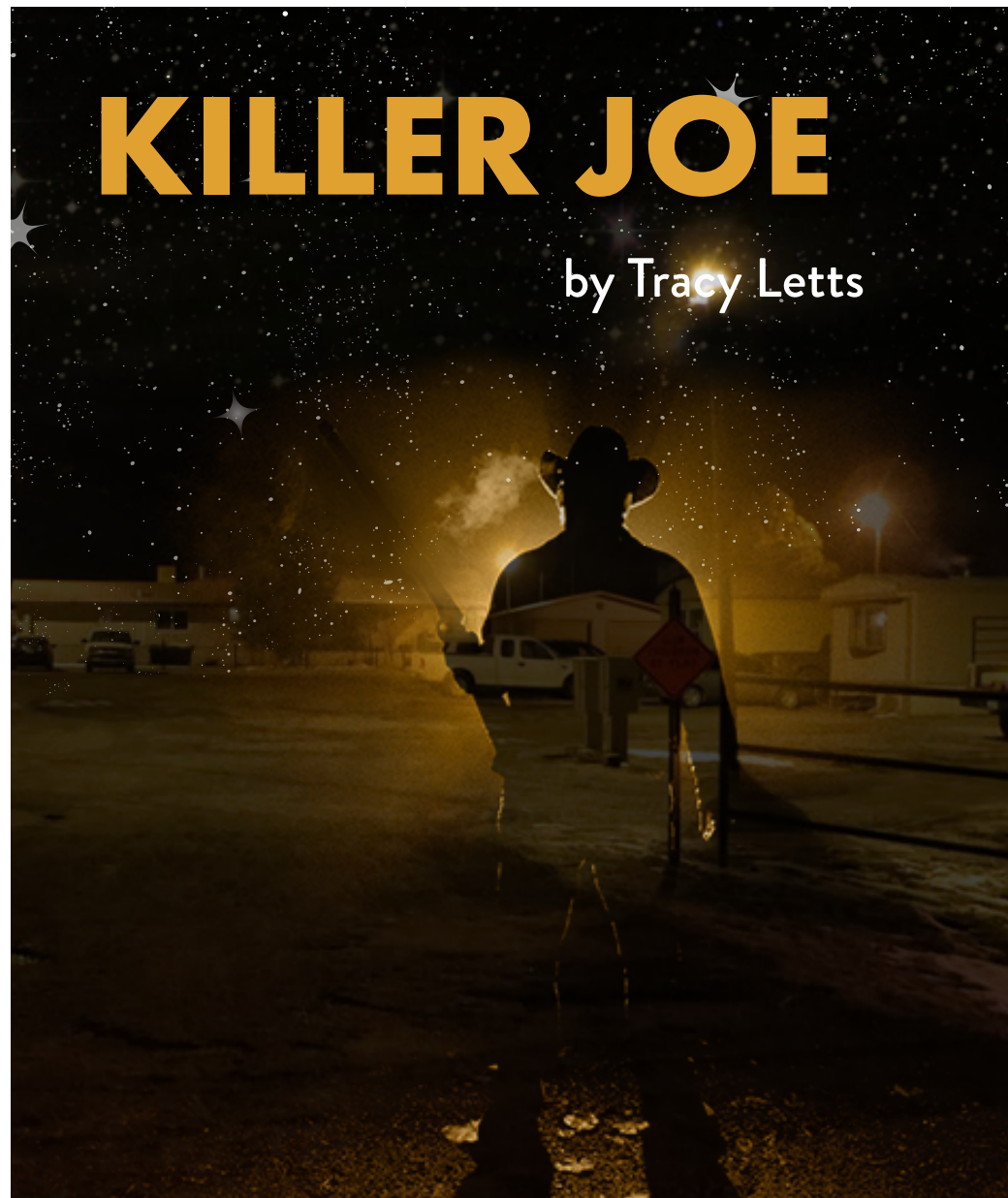
I've taught *Killer Joe* in my theatre classes for years. And, every time I ask students if they think it was successful as a play, 99% of students say "yes" - and they then often follow that up with "I loved it - but I was uncomfortable the whole time." To me, I can't imagine many better reasons to bring a play to life - to explore the discomfort and complexity of this world.

My intention for you, as an audience, is to be just as drawn into this world as I was and am - to wonder why you care about these people, who on the surface might feel easily stereotyped and caricatured. My intention is for you to lean in and allow a new aspect of the human experience to be revealed to you - a complicated one, at that. And, for you to be thinking about these people for days - wondering why they are the way they are, and if they, too, deserve to be revealed...

**Ashley Lauren Hamilton, PhD**  
**Assistant Professor of Theatre at DU**  
**Director of the DU Prison Arts Initiative (DU PAI)**

# KILLER JOE

by Tracy Letts



UNIVERSITY of  
DENVER

**THEATRE**

**FEB 27 - MAR 8, 2020**

Newman Center for the Performing Arts

# KILLER JOE

by Tracy Letts

Presented by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc., a Concord Theatricals Company.

**Year: 1993**

**Setting: A trailer park on the outskirts of Dallas, TX**

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## Cast

CHRIS	<b>Mikah Conway</b>
SHARLA	<b>Grady Hicks</b>
ANSEL	<b>Jack Trembath</b>
DOTTIE	<b>Gracie Jacobson</b>
JOE	<b>Samuel Sage</b>

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## Artistic Team

Director	Ashley Lauren Hamilton
Scenic Designer	Lauren Mills
Lighting Designer	Erik Frederiksen
Costume Designer	Kelly Gregson
Sound Designer	Jason Ducat
Fight and Intimacy Director	Samantha Egle

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## PLEASE BE ADVISED:

**This play contains nudity, live theatrical gun shots, violence and graphic sexual assault. Please take care of yourselves.**

## Production Team

Technical Director	Steven McDonald
Costume Shop Supervisor	Kelly Gregson
Scene Shop Foreman	Saxon Rhoad
Stage Manager	Sarah Alfrey-Bethke
Assistant Stage Managers	Madalyne Heiken and Ellie Sinclair
Assistant Scenic Designer	Sophie Smrcka
Assistant Costume Designer	Gabby Bohl
Special Effects Makeup	Kelsey Briding
Wig Designer	Richard Krammes
Lighting Advisor	Shannon McKinney
Master Electrician	Jordan Hass
Electrician	Ashley Wagner
Scenic Painter	Emily McCarthy
Shop T.A.s	Mikah Conway, Ellie Evans, Jordan Hass, Alston Phu
Board Operator	Max O'Neill
Wardrobe	Caitlin Gurtner
Run crew	Anne Mashak
House Manager	Tess Winfield
Assistant House Managers	Isabelle Chern, Davin Roark

## Students of Costume and Tech Studio

Sarah Alfrey-Bethke, Lauren Asselin, Gabrielle Bohl, Kelsey Briding, Cameron Chaikin, Isabelle Chern, Caitlin Gurtner, Haley Hartmann, Madalyne Heiken, Grady Hicks, Gracie Leonard, Max O'Neill, Mary Grace Roach, Sophie Smrcka, Ashley Wagner, Emma Walker

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**Eluise Marvin**