

WILDCLAW THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS



KILL ME

by Scott T. Barsotti
directed by Jeff Christian

SYNOPSIS

Upon awakening from a post-traumatic coma, Cam is convinced that she has lost her ability to die. As her reaction to immortality rapidly shifts from invincible wonder to cosmic terror, her sanity begins to break. Fearing life eternal, Cam attempts suicide...again...and again...causing her sister and lover to grapple with nightmares of their own, born in the dream world, and the real one. Are the demons plaguing these women real or imagined...and is there ultimately a difference? Through relentlessly shifting dimensions, soundscapes, and mental worlds, KILL ME creates a lyrical horror story in which unending life proves worse than death.

CHARACTERS

CAM
GRACE
WENDY

MISERY is represented by a movement-based ensemble. They are seen as deformed entities, recognizable as humanoid but clearly of another plain. Dark-shrouded, ashen-skinned, wounded, horror-steampunk industrial features, revealing more as the play progresses. They cannot be seen by the characters until Cam's break, but they can always be felt. Each "Misery" should have a sound that accompanies its presence: a tone, a hum, a drone, a whir, a tearing, a pulse, a scrape. MISERY consists of: MISERY-Paranoia (outward) MISERY-Dread (forward) MISERY-Angst (inward) MISERY-Despair (downward). Together they create PSYCHOSIS.

DEVELOPMENT HISTORY OF KILL ME

Writing began on KILL ME in 2010, as an inversion of typical horror story expectations. Instead of someone fearing or fleeing death, Cam, the central character in KILL ME, is terrified instead by the concept of eternal life, and what it would truly mean to live forever, without the possibility of death. The play began with the three women and their story, and WildClaw did a reading of the play in the spring of 2011. But I became intrigued by the idea of an ensemble horror play, something I hadn't attempted before. The Miseries were the result of that leap, and now I can't imagine the play without them. It would be a very different story without those visual representations of Cam's mental world, as well as the creeping possibility that they may not be entirely imaginary. The play came to its current form through several more developmental readings with the company, and feedback from the cast; the director, Jeff Christian; and WildClaw Artistic Director, Aly Renee Amidei. Special thanks are also owed to Pamela Bell, a Chicago area psychotherapist and LCSW, for her technical consultation and insight during the writing process.

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

Scott T. Barsotti is a playwright, performer, and WildClaw Theatre company member originally from Pittsburgh, PA. Scott's play THE REVENANTS was produced by WildClaw in 2009, and his radio play THE SKINNY MAN was included in *Deathscribe 2009*. Scott's original plays include KILL ME, THE REVENANTS, JET BLACK CHEVROLET, BREWED, McMEEKIN FINDS OUT, and YOUR TEACHER IS OUT TODAY. His adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson's THE BODY SNATCHER will receive its world premiere this fall at Brisbane Arts Theatre in Queensland, Australia; also in 2012, THE REVENANTS will be produced by Happy Medium Theatre in Boston, as well as New World Arts in Goshen, IN; BREWED will receive its first full staging in a co-production by Tympanic Theatre and The Ruckus Theater in Chicago. Scott will also be contributing to Tympanic's *Nebraska Project* this spring. His work has been seen at the New York International Fringe Festival, the Rhinoceros Theater Festival, and Collaboraction's *Sketchbook*, and has been produced and/or developed by WildClaw, Curious Theatre Branch, Chicago Dramatists, The Route 66 Theatre Company, Pittsburgh Playwrights, Roundelay Theatre Company, Theatre Seven of Chicago, American Theatre Company, and The Visceral Company among others. As an actor, Scott has appeared with WildClaw in *Carmilla*, *Legion*, and *Deathscribe* (2010, 2011); elsewhere in Chicago he has performed with such companies as Lifeline Theatre, Curious Theatre Branch, The Mammals, WNEP Theater, Collaboraction, Pavement Group, and Victory Gardens. Scott is a Resident Playwright at Chicago Dramatists

and a graduate of the MFA Writing Program at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. <http://scottbarsotti.wordpress.com>

PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTE FOR KILL ME

KILL ME is ultimately a play about the limitless mystery of the human brain, a machine that is capable of anything. Everything related to the human experience begins in the brain, everything from inspiration to delusion; this play is both love letter and hate mail to that most powerful organ which is both endlessly awe-inspiring and mercilessly treacherous.

To me, the word “imaginary” is a tricky thing. Something may not physically exist, but whether it’s a dream or a hallucination, a ghost or a phantom, a fantasy or simply a passing thought, if it has a real impact then it really isn’t wholly imaginary. The brain is the great intermediary of our existence--at once mind and body.

In most horror stories, the characters fear and flee death. In KILL ME, the central character (Cam) seeks death, fearing instead the incomprehensible unknowns of eternal life. Whether the condition of her immortality is real or a psychological invention doesn’t matter, the consequences of that condition to herself, her lover (Grace), and her sister (Wendy) are horrifyingly real, and a testament to the economical destructive power of mental illness.

Thematically, this play draws partial inspiration from Clive Barker’s *Hellraiser*, Neil Gaiman’s *The Sandman*, and H.P. Lovecraft’s *Cthulhu Mythos*. Structural influences for KILL ME include Samuel Beckett and Sarah Kane, considering their frequent use of non-linear, highly abstract storytelling and ambiguous context.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT/DO/DISCUSS PRIOR TO PERFORMANCE:

- Consider how mental illness or sickness effects not only the person but all of those people around the person.
- Consider how stress affects us. How can it manifest itself in regards to our behavior?
- Why do people self-harm?
- Do you believe in the supernatural?

THINGS TO WATCH FOR IN PERFORMANCE:

- How does the sound, both recorded and live, contribute to the performance? Why do you think the sound designers opt for recorded music in some moments versus the live instrumental music played by the performers?
- How does the costume design help delineate and inform the audience about the characters?
- How is the set design used to support the action of the play?
- How do the lights help set the tone and tell the story?

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT/DISCUSS POST-PERFORMANCE:

- Describe the journey each of the three women take in the course of the play.
- How did Cam’s actions effect those around her?
- How did the use of the “Misery” ensemble help shape the story?

There will be a **pre-show discussion** on Thursday, March 1st @ 6:30pm.

There will be a **post-show discussion** on Sunday, March 11th after the 3pm show.

Additional discussions may be added. Please see our website for updates!

www.wildclawtheatre.com

The running time of the show is approximately 70 minutes. The show will be performed without intermission. Groups of ten or more can receive a ticket price of \$15. Student discount ticket price is \$15 with a valid ID for all performances.

Buy tickets via phone, online, or in person:

[Athenaeum Theatre](#)

2936 N. Southport Ave., Chicago.

Box Office: 773 - 935 - 6860

<http://www.athenaeumtheatre.org/>

Visit WildClaw's website for complete show details at www.wildclawtheatre.com and be sure to visit our blog, <http://wildclawbloodradio.blogspot.com>, for all other things horror.

UPCOMING EVENTS

October 4, 2012, the second show of our 2012 season premieres...

Deathscribe 2012, Monday, December 3rd at the Mayne Stage...

WILDCLAW THEATRE: STORYTELLING IS IN OUR BLOOD