

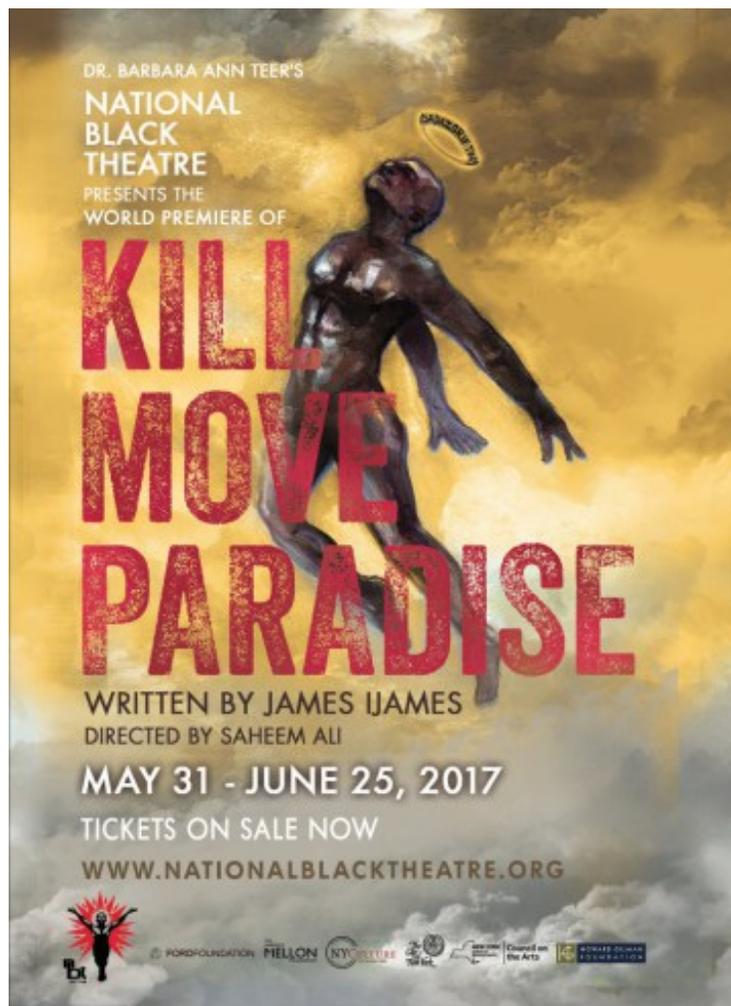
James Ijames Talks “Kill Move Paradise” & How We’re All A Witness To A Brutal Phenomenon

 broadwayblack.com/james-ijames-talks-kill-move-paradise/

Jamara Wakefield

National Black Theatre is now premiering the surrealist drama “*Kill Move Paradise*”, written by [James Ijames](#).

This play imagines the lives of police brutality victims stuck in purgatory. The drama follows **Isa** (Ryan Jamaal Swain), **Daz** (Clinton Lowe), **Grif** (Donnell E. Smith) and **Tiny** (Sidiki Fofana) as they explore their new paradise while they wrestle with memories of the world they violently departed.



According to Ijames the title, “*Kill Move Paradise*”, reflects the quickness of these deaths. He says “their quick succession and the lack of consequences felt like a video game to me. Like these men and women had some how found themselves inside of a game they didn’t agree to play. I wanted the title of the play to bring to mind video game titles.”

The Philadelphia based writer also states that the work is ‘[hyper-theatrical](#)’ yet anchors itself in real events. Ijames wrote “*Kill Move Paradise*” in the emotional weeks after the Charleston church massacre. This event coupled with the murders of Black people nationwide at the hand of state sanctioned violence heavily influenced the work, yet Ijames wants audiences to understand that in 2017 this play still resonates and is responding to the epidemic.

For Ijames, the goal is to leave audiences “reminded that we are witnesses to this phenomenon. I hope they are stirred to action and out of complacency. Saheem Ali, the director of the production, put the audience on both sides of the play and I think that teases out something really true about the play. We can passively watch what’s happening or we can speak back to and interact with what’s happening.”

Saheem Ali aesthetically couples the Elysium of Greek antiquity with Afro Futurism. The work illustrates the

present-day lives of Black people, while interrogating and re-examining the past. The [National Black Theatre](#) describes the play as an “expressionistic buzz saw through the contemporary myth that ‘all lives matter.’ It is a portrait of the slain, not as degenerates who deserve death but as heroes who demand that we see them for the splendid beings they are.”

The “*Kill Move Paradise*” award-winning creative team includes, Maruti Evans (scenic design), Alan Edwards (lighting design), Palmer Hefferan (sound design) and Ntokozo Fuzunina Kunene (costume design). Choreographer Darrell Moultrie serves as the theatrical movement coach. Christina Franklin is the stage manager.

"Kill Move Paradise", runs now through June 25, 2017 at the National Black Theatre in Harlem.