

Review: 'Windfall' Serves Up Biting Banter and Comedic Might

By Jess Ardrey

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“Oh, I would never...”

There are a billion ways to finish that thought, and some of the most insane ones wind up on the [Arkansas Repertory Theatre](#)'s stage in its latest production, the world premiere of “[Windfall](#).” The show's six characters would agree with you on most of them — that is, until the lottery gets involved.

But we had our fair warning. [When we spoke with the cast and creative team](#), director Jason Alexander told us bluntly, “This situation is extreme and absurd, and the language is extreme and absurd.”

The story is set, however, in the least extreme office you could dream up: a data entry business wedged into a strip mall, complete with swirly screensavers and the kind of semi-motivational posters that are anything but.

The employees all seem like familiar faces. There's the goody two-shoes, the middle-aged partier, the dopey cool guy, the office veteran and the upper crust new girl, who have all found a common enemy in their maniacally demanding boss. When things reach a breaking point, they go all in in hopes of winning the lottery, and that's when hell breaks loose.

The oppressive thumb of leadership sits on the hand of Ray Wills, played by Glenn Brennon. Brennon becomes a character that is hilariously diabolical and nauseatingly smug, firing off insults at break-neck speed and spitting out the word "errors" like it tastes like shoe polish.

Lisa Ann Goldsmith plays Kate Rearden, the Forever 21-wearing manager straddling a quest for youth and a mothering nature with an honest blend of sincerity and abandon. At the adjacent desk sits Nikki Coble as Hannah Holmes, whose 10-year stint in a dead-end job leaves her with a restlessness that makes even the audience itch.

Galvan Kidd, played by Alvin Keith, is the sweater vest-clad office theologian who may or may not have superpowers and whose constant scripture spouting covers up a few fatal cracks in his faith. Cyrus Alexander as Chris Hart is everyone's best friend, but his complacency in life leads to some pretty slimy decisions. As for the unassuming new hire Jacqueline Vanderbilt (played by Kayla Nicole Wikes), it doesn't take long for her kind demeanor to become history and the manicured claws to come out.

The whole show is a tall order to fill. Not only do these characters have intense, dramatic moments, but they also have to execute big, complicated acts of physical comedy, and they do both in stride. (No spoilers, but be prepared to buckle up for the second act.)

Most impressively, however, is the pace. Playwright Scooter Pietsch has created a story that is smart, poignant and lightning fast, where the "extreme and absurd" dialogue has you laughing before you have the chance to wonder if you should.

In hosting the play's world premiere, The Rep gets the honor of being the birthplace of "Windfall" before it sets out on what we can only imagine will be a long and successful run. So on behalf of the theater and this uproariously dark and delicious comedy: You're welcome, planet Earth.

The show runs through June 26. For showtimes and more information, or to purchase tickets online, visit [The Rep's website](#). You can also call (501) 378-0445 or visit the theatre box office downtown at 601 Main St., Little Rock.