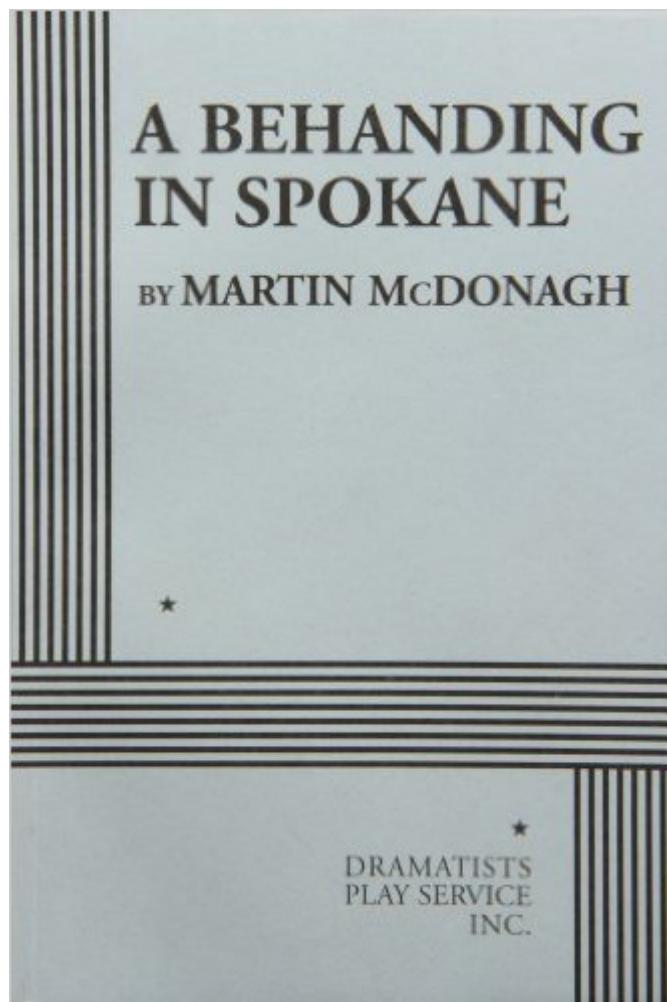


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# A Behanding In Spokane - Acting Edition



## Synopsis

A dingy motel room. Small-town America. Carmichael travels with a suitcase full of hands, but he wants his own back. Toby has a hand that he'd like to sell Carmichael for the right price. Marilyn wishes that Toby had never stolen that hand from the museum. Mervyn thinks Marilyn is pretty hot. He works reception, though he wouldn't call himself a receptionist. Life and death are up for grabs, and fate is governed by imbeciles and madmen in this darkly comic new play from the acclaimed playwright Martin McDonagh. *A Behanding in Spokane* turns over American daily existence, exposing the obsessions, prejudices, madness, horrors, and, above all, absurdities that crawl beneath it.

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## Customer Reviews

If you can tolerate the constant use of the "F" word, as well as some racial slurs, this is a fast moving dark comedy. It may be out of the mainstream for many community theatres but if you can find it, it's a fun ride. I only wish I could have seen Christopher Walken ("more cow bell") in the Broadway production.

Martin McDonagh's works are all humorous, but it must be understood that they are DARK, and VIOLENT. That being said, this play is a modern classic, as all of McDonagh's are. They're better seen onstage, but it helps to read this script BEFORE you see a live performance. Great stuff.

Outrageously funny -- bizarre characters, bizarre circumstances, and very clever dialog. Some of the greatest comic moments come from when high-stakes situations run into very petty roadblocks -- e.g., a potentially gruesome murder gets derailed by a longer-than-expected phone call with Mom. This play had made me burst out laughing just from the words on the page, I can only imagine what it would be like staged. The only concern I have with the script is that the characters tend to repeat themselves a lot, especially to convey information to other characters who were offstage the first time the information came up. In a staged production, it would be important to vary the tone and intent of these re-tellings, so those bits stay interesting and don't just get repetitive. Also, reading about the originating cast, it is hard not to associate the character of Carmichael with Christopher Walken. You can easily imagine Walken's cadence running through every line of that character, and it might be tempting for other actors to just imitate Walken, rather than find the character afresh. I would recommend groups looking to put on this play to think hard about the kind of actor they want to cast in this part and the kind of performance they are seeking from it. All of that said, this play moves very fast, is very funny, and grips you from the opening scene to the end! Five stars.

One of the weirder plays I've read, in which a man searching for his missing hand sets up a deal to buy his missing appendage back from a drug dealer and his girlfriend. Throw in a mentally meandering hotel clerk, and you have an idea of what goes on, even though you kind of don't.

This play has less reveals than most of McDonagh's other works, but it makes up for that with dark humor, interesting banter, and as always - high stakes. I've read all of McDonagh's plays and this one lives up to the rest. It's hard to give anything of his anything less than a 5 out of 5. Instead I am inclined only to give some of them a 6 or seven out of 5. Personally I think that McDonagh has raised the bar for all modern play-writes.

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