

## Reviews of *The End of Civilization*

“Because Walker takes his characters' secret dreams and private wishes and actualizes them on stage, the highly charged script makes some heavy demands of its actors. As director, Walker maneuvers his cast into a vortex of explosive rage and primal revenge fantasy. . . . Taking us on another intense and often harrowing trip into a dangerous world full of desperate people driven into committing criminal acts, *The End of Civilization* once again proves that Walker is a cutting edge playwright and director that no self-respecting theatre-goer can afford to ignore.” -- Sarah Sked, *Varsity Staff*

“*The End of Civilization* is about the end of civility. Its mere telling leaves you feeling empty, but you saw it coming and watched anyway.” – Richard Cairney, *See Magazine*

## Awards

Walker's work has been performed around the world, and most of his plays have been published. George F. Walker has received many honors in Canada for his work, including Governor General's Literary Awards for *Nothing Sacred* and *Criminals in Love*; Chalmers Canadian Play Awards for *Escape from Happiness*, *Love and Anger*, *Nothing Sacred*, *Criminals in Love*, *Theatre of the Film Noir* and *Zastrozzi*; and DORA Outstanding Play awards for *Escape From Happiness*, *Love and Anger* and *Nothing Sacred*.

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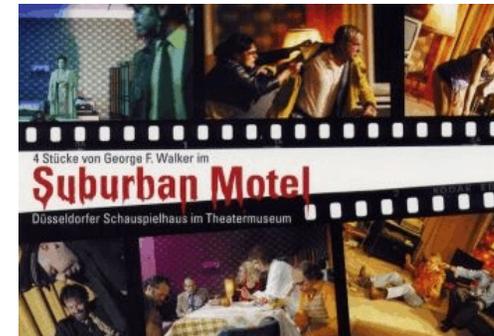
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## A Playgoer's Guide to

# The End of Civilization



### **The *Suburban Motel* series:**

*The End of Civilization* is the fourth in a series of six plays written by Walker which takes place in the same motel room. Each play runs roughly 80 minutes long and often intermingles the same characters.

*Problem Child*

*Criminal Genius*

*Risk Everything*

*The End Of Civilization*

*Adult Entertainment*

*Featuring Loretta*

Walker describes his decision to limit the action of his plays to a one room setting: "When you're not worried about anything except what people are saying to each other, it's a much clearer and stronger road to the emotion . . . There's seediness to this particular motel," he explains. "It's out on the edge of things, but there's also a sense that pretty much anyone could walk through that door."

Walker says that his characters are people "who've fallen through the cracks. And once they've fallen out of the economy, they can never get back in. . . . Essentially, this play shows how everyday people in everyday situations and settings are doing things that aren't so everyday. He reiterates the theory that you just don't know what goes on (behind closed doors), nor do you know just exactly what your seemingly average neighbors are up to."

### Summary

George Walker's *The End of Civilization* fits into Walker's suburban motel cycle of plays in that it is also set in a typical budget motel. This play focuses on a couple that is middle class. Henry and Lily Cape ( Bryan Johnson and Sarah Brockus) are a suburban couple that exiles from a high life until Henry loses his management job. After two years of unsuccessfully looking for employment, Henry reaches a low, emotionally and socially. He is a seething cauldron and Lily is desperate to keep their house from being taken by the bank. She left her two children with her sister to be with him in this motel on the outskirts of her home town during a sort of last-stand to regain their hold on marital and economic security. The people who come through the motel room door include neighbor Sandy, a young prostitute, and Max and Donny, two policemen who first appeared in *Adult Entertainment*. Max and Donny are investigating a series of crimes that begin with vandalism and end with murder. As the play progresses, we not only witness the disintegration of Henry and Lily's marriage, but realize that Henry might be involved in the crimes.

### George F. Walker

Walker is a playwright born in Toronto's East End working class district in Ontario. He was born on August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1947. He now has three children and lives in Toronto with his second wife, actress Susan Purdy, mother of two of his children.

Walker was a taxi driver when he heard that Factory Theatre was looking for new authors. He sent them his first play; *The Prince of Naples* and the company performed it in 1972. He has been linked with the house ever since.

George Walker has spent the past several years writing and consulting for television. There he has been creating a series based on his character Tyrone Power. He has also been a Creative Consultant to CBS's *Due South* and to Ken Finkleman's *Newsroom* for CBC. He is currently adapting his *SUBURBAN MOTEL* plays as a Television series for CINAR/Bernard Zuckerman Productions.

George Walker, according to the *Encyclopedia of Canadian Theatre* is "one of the savviest writers in the land, [who] walks a tightrope between pure artistic achievement and commerciality. He does it very well." He has become, in the process, one of the rare Canadian writers who has had a made-in-Canada commercial production of a work with *Nothing Sacred*. Walker has also directed, including his own six-play cycle, *Suburban Motel*.



After the failure of the commercial run of his hit play *Nothing Sacred* in 1994, George F. Walker told anyone who would listen that he was finished with theatre. And fans all agree that it's a good thing he didn't stick to his word. When questioned about this comment Mr. Walker said: "I meant it, too. If I hadn't believed it, I doubt I would have written again. It was like when I quit smoking. I thought, now I can have a cigarette. Because I wasn't a smoker any more."

### Walker on *The End of Civilization*

Commenting on *The End of Civilization* Walker reflected that he "noticed when it was up here in Canada *The End of Civilization* could reach people. It's about a middle class couple in deep distress. There is a big heart there, in the work, I think, and a lot of concern. It's very much an actor's play. So, there is a lot of room for them to feel things and pass that feeling on."

"Again, I'm considered a working class writer -- blue collar writer -- and there aren't many of us around. Not many people wrote about those characters. I don't write about professionals."