

Hang In There!

SYNOPSIS

TORONTO
FRINGE
FESTIVAL

Written by Michael Madore | Directed by Rachel Abramovich | 45 minutes | Tickets \$15 | Toronto Fringe Festival 2026

Hang In There! follows John "The Hangman" Henry, a retired professional wrestler whose motivational catchphrase has outlived his desire to be a public hero. As the play begins, John has applied to be among the first participants in the state's new self-completion program - a pilot process that allows citizens with no diagnosable illness to elect death by state approval. John insists he is not in crisis, not broke, not pressured, and not confused. To him, the decision is a final act of control.

His choice does not remain private for long. Sam, his agent, arrives trying to protect John's contracts, legacy, and public image, warning him that the media, brands, fans, and internet commentators are already turning his decision into a spectacle. Sharon Black, the state auditor assigned to assess John's eligibility, brings a mix of bureaucratic procedure, grim humour, and personal unease into his home. Her questions force John to defend the difference between choosing, waiting, suffering, and simply being done.

Wanda, John's partner, confronts the emotional cost of being told after the state already knows. Their conversation exposes the wound beneath John's certainty: his fear of continuing, his inability to accept an unplanned future, and the difference between wanting to be understood and allowing himself to be loved. Then Silas, John's stunt double and would-be successor, arrives wearing the mask John created. For Silas, The Hangman is opportunity, identity, and escape; for John, it is proof that even the parts of himself he wants to leave behind can be copied, sold, and taken from him.

Blending dark comedy, absurd bureaucracy, wrestling mythology, and intimate relationship drama, *Hang In There!* asks what a life belongs to: the person living it, the people who love them, or the public story built around them. When violence erupts and Sharon collapses, John instinctively saves her, leaving everyone - including John - suspended between finality and the stubborn interruptions of life.

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