***Sweat***

Character Breakdowns

**Note to Actors: This show contains many racially charged moments and language. The characters of Jason and Tracey in particular use a lot of racially charged language. Jason will have to say n\*\*\*\*, so this role in particular will require an elevated level of maturity. All of these moments and language will be handled with care. There will be many discussions regarding race, xenophobia, and how Lynn Nottage intended for her work to present these themes, amongst others. -Cleopatra**

***“All of the characters were born in Berks County, Pennsylvania” – Lynn Nottage***

**Evan, black American, M/F, 40s**

The parole officer for both Jason and Chris. They essentially play the mediating force between Jason and Chris. Not much is known about Evan or what brought them to this field of work, however, they do care about the well-being of both characters. They believe in tough love and does not back down.

**Jason, white American of German descent, M, 21/29**

The son of Tracey and best friend of Chris. Jason is a young man who is very proud of himself and his family history. He tends to not be aware of how the way he says things affect others, nor does he care until he is forced to reflect on himself towards the end of the play. Though he shows it often in the worst way, Jason cares deeply about his friends and family.

**Chris, black American, M, 21/29**

The son of Cynthia and Brucie, and best friend of Jason. Chris is a young black man trying to navigate his way through a world not built in his favor. He is stuck between staying strong and following in the footsteps of his father as a factory employee, or heeding his mother’s advice and going to school. Chris cares deeply about his family, but he struggles with the fine line of supporting or enabling his father.

**Stan, white American of German descent, M, 50s**

The manager of the bar where everyone hangs out. Stan is the glue which keeps the whole group together. He tends to get flirty with Jessie and Tracey. He is someone who is crafting his own corner of the American dream working at the bar after an injury at Olstead’s left him with a permanent limp. Day in and day out he sees the lives of the people affected by the tumbling economy. Because of this and his own experience, he tries his hardest to help those close to him.

**Oscar, Colombian-American, M, 22/30**

An employee and possible friend of Stan. Oscar is a hardworking young man with aspirations to rise far above his current situation. Though he is under no obligation, he often helps the group, receiving no gratitude (and often plenty of insults) in return. Him and Stan seem to have a cordial relationship, not quite friendship but closer than acquaintances.

**Tracey, white American of German descent, F, 45/53**

The single mother of Jason and best friend of Cynthia and Jessie. Tracey is a strong willed, quick tongued, no nonsense woman who serves to be like the Regina George of the group. She does not care if what she says offends you or hurts your feelings. She is one of the hardest workers at Olstead’s and perhaps the biggest personality in the show.

**Cynthia, black American, F, 45/53**

The mother of Chris and best friend of Tracey and Jessie. Cynthia is a woman who understands the pressure and importance of being a black woman in a white world. She is determined to not only do well for herself, but to also see her son Chris do well. She has a difficult relationship with Brucie, whom she wants to see improve, but is at her wits end with his addiction problems. However, she often finds herself in a place of missing him right when she should push him out. One of the most complex characters in the show, Cynthia is compelling and full of layers.

**Jessie, Italian-American, F, 40s**

The good/best friend of Cynthia and Tracey. Jessie tries her best to remain neutral between Cynthia and Tracey, but later this neutrality is broken. She is often the comic relief with a glass of something always near. However, Jessie is still trying to pick herself up after losing her husband to another woman. She is truly a hopeless romantic who suffers constantly from a broken heart. Through it all, she tries to keep the mood light.

**Brucie, African-American, M, 40s**

The estranged husband of Cynthia and father of Chris. He was once one of the loudest voices on the line, encouraging others to continue fighting until they won. However, a tough life and a losing battle with addiction have changed him. His love for Cynthia and Chris has not changed, but at times this manifests itself as manipulation to get money for drugs.