

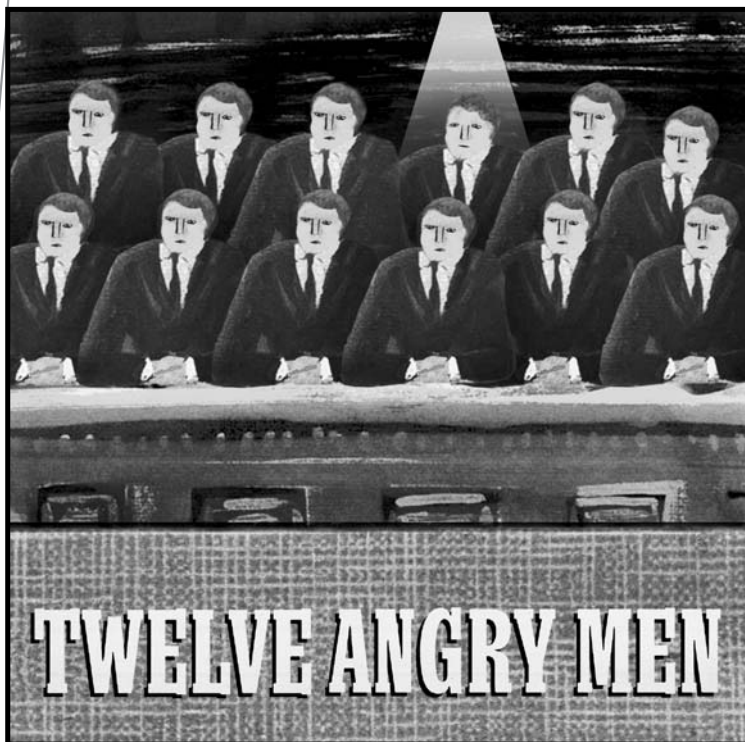
2007—2008 SEASON

# WU?@therep

## TWELVE ANGRY MEN by Reginald Rose Directed by Martin Platt

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# the 11

At The Rep, we know that life moves fast—okay, really fast. But we also know that some

things are worth slowing down for. We believe that live theatre is one of those pit stops worth making and are excited that you are going to stop by for a show. To help you get the most bang for your buck, we have put together **WU? @ THE REP**—an IM guide that will give you everything you need to know to get at the top of your theatergoing game—fast. You'll find character descriptions (**A/S/L**), a plot summary (**F2F**), biographical information on the playwright (**B4U**), historical context (**B4U**), and other bits and pieces (**HTH**). Most importantly, we'll have some ideas about what this all means **IRL**, anyway.

## CU@therep!



### The Teacher's Lounge

In an effort to make our educational materials more accessible to students and easier for educators to incorporate into the classroom, our study guide is written in a student-oriented format. We hope that you will circulate this guide among your students in the weeks preceding your visit to The Rep, encouraging them to browse it before and after class and as time allows, using it as a launch point for both pre- and post-performance discussions. You may also want to visit our website, [www.repstl.org](http://www.repstl.org), for additional information including educational games, activity suggestions and behind-the-scenes information.

Any materials, either from this guide or from our website may be reproduced for use in the classroom. As always, we appreciate your making live theatre a part of your classroom experience and welcome your feedback and questions.

**NEATO!**

Show Me Standards: CA 2, 3, 5, 6, 7; FA 2, 3, 4, 5; SS 2,3, 6 and Illinois Learning Standards: 1, 2, 5, 15, 16, 18, 25, 27.

## MIHYAP: TOP TEN WAYS TO STAY CONNECTED AT THE REP

**10. TBA** Ushers will seat your school or class as a group, so even if you are dying to mingle with the group from the all-girls school that just walked in the door, stick with your friends until you have been shown your section in the theatre.

**9. SITD** The house lights will dim immediately before the performance begins and then go dark. Fight off that oh-so-immature urge to whisper, giggle like a grade schooler or yell at this time and during any other blackouts in the show.

**8. SED** Before the performance begins, turn off all cell phones, pagers, beepers and watch alarms. If you need to text, talk or dial back during intermission, please make sure to click off before the show resumes.

**7. TMI** Not to sound like your mom, but "if you need to go now, you needed to go then." Leaving the theatre during the performance is disruptive, so take care of any personal needs before the show starts.

**6. RTM** When you arrive at the theatre, read the production program. It's like a deluxe version of liner notes and a free souvenir, all in one.

**5. P-ZA? NW!** Though your ability to eat ten slices at one sitting may impress your friends, no one wants to listen to you chew, slurp, or smack, so please leave all food, drink and gum outside the theatre.

**4. TLK-2-U-L-8-R** We know that you will be dying to discuss what you see onstage with your friends, but please wait until intermission. Any talking—even whispering—is very distracting for both the actors onstage and the audience seated around you.

**3. LOL** Without you, we really wouldn't have a show. It's your job to laugh when a scene is funny or maybe even shed a tear or two in a tender moment. However, since you are not the audience at *The Jerry Springer Show* please refrain from inappropriate responses such as talking, whistling, making catcalls or singing along with the performers.

**2. SOP** While it's great that you want a celeb picture of your day at The Rep, the theatre is off-limits to the paparazzi. Flash photography interrupts the performance and along with videorecording is prohibited by Actors Equity rules. You can sneak a peek at production photos on our website, [www.repstl.org](http://www.repstl.org).

**1. LLTA** Let the actors know that you respect their work by remaining for the curtain call at the end of the performance. Show your appreciation through applause.

# AS/L

IN *TWELVE ANGRY MEN*, playwright Reginald Rose takes a different approach in characterization than most writers. The primary characters of the play, the JURORS, are never referred to by an actual name—only their number. Therefore, Rose puts before us a room full of men named JUROR ONE, JUROR TWO and so on. With such a naming scheme it's easy to get the jurors confused (try remembering each one's number!). Lucky for us, they don't look alike, and they all seem to have their own views on the evidence of the case. Otherwise, how'd we ever know who's whom?

WHY DIDN'T Reginald Rose name his characters? Was he lazy? Is he just messing with us? Actually, Rose was being true to

how actual jury trials are run, where jurors are indeed referred to by number. As no detail in the construction of a play goes without careful deliberation, Rose may also have been playing with a larger metaphor for one of the central themes of the piece—prejudice.

THE CHARACTERS in the play remain objectified (as numbers) until they each reveal their own individual prejudices to us, thereby jading us to each as the play moves forward. And though we never know any of them as much more than a juror number, we are continually judging each man in the room. From beginning to end, do you ever find yourself prejudiced against any of the characters? For any of the characters?

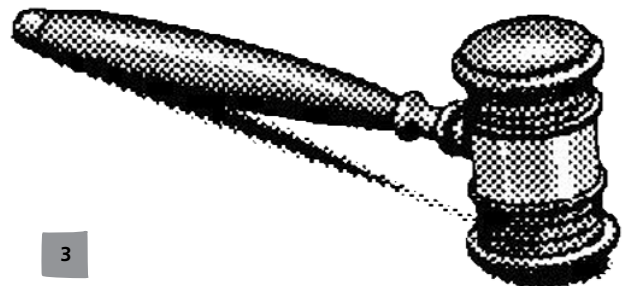
# EY

*TWELVE ANGRY MEN* takes us through the deliberation of a jury after hearing the trial of a young man accused of murdering his father. The setting is the jury room of a New York Court of Law, 1957.

THE PLAY BEGINS as the jurors are instructed as to their duty—to either convict the accused man of murder (thereby sentencing him to death) or to acquit the man (thereby setting him free). As the jurors file into the room, it would seem that they all have their minds made up—that the man is guilty. Leisurely chatter about the trial turns into what the men believe to be the vote.

ALL EXCEPT FOR Juror 8, that is. He votes “not guilty,” standing alone against 11 other men who are convinced the accused is guilty. Many of the jurors react angrily, as they insist that they will not be convinced to change their minds. But Juror 8 says he just wants to talk about the case, and that he doesn't feel comfortable sending a man to his death so quickly. The Foreman of the jury challenges each juror to convince Juror 8 that the man is indeed guilty, and from there the play winds through a debate between the two sides of the issue.

WILL THEY CONVINCEN Juror 8 to vote guilty? Or will he be stubborn and cause the jury to be hung?





EVEN THOUGH *Twelve Angry Men* electrifies the stage with its intensity, its author—Reginald Rose, was not actually a playwright by trade. While he would pen some successful screen and stage plays throughout his illustrious 37-year career, he is best known as a highly influential television writer in the early days of television drama. His work helped shape the course of television writing—an influence we can still see today in the best small-screen dramas.

REGINALD ROSE was born in Manhattan on December 10, 1920. Despite growing up in the Roaring '20s and the Great Depression, Rose had a rather uneventful upbringing. He attended City College (now a part of City University of New York) and enlisted in the United States Army before he would find himself as a writer. At age 30, he sold his first teleplay (script for a television show) to CBS. Four years later he would write the work for which he is best known—*Twelve Angry Men*—for the same network. It was only after the success of the teleplay that Rose would then adapt the work to film and then finally to theatre.

OVER THE COURSE of Rose's career, he would write episodes for 11 television series, two television miniseries, two made-for-television movies, a dozen films and nearly half a dozen plays. His prolific output would be met with a generous shower of awards, including three Emmy Awards and two Writer's Guild Awards, along with several Oscar and Emmy Award nominations. Rose's award-winning style is marked by a highly realistic sense that helped shape the genre of television drama and a fearless drive to take social and political issues head-on.

## PRODUCTION HISTORY

*TWELVE ANGRY MEN* was originally written in 1954 as a teleplay for the CBS series *Studio One*. Three years later Rose would adapt the piece to the big screen, casting star Henry Fonda as Juror 8. The film would be nominated for three Oscars, but would not win. In 1964, ten years after the original teleplay aired, Rose would open his theatre adaptation of *Twelve Angry Men* in the West End of London. While well received and often produced, the next big production of the play would occur in response to the O.J. Simpson trial in 1997, as the case opened up new avenues of exploration of prejudice and "reasonable doubt." Again it would find its place on television, and this time the cast was racially diverse. It wasn't until 50 years after the original script was written (and two years after Rose died) that his play would premiere on Broadway.



## PREJUDICE

Early on in *Twelve Angry Men*, Juror 10 says, "I've lived among 'em all my life. You can't believe a word they say. I mean, they're born liars," as he refers to the young man on trial and all individuals like him. Throughout the play, various jurors present prejudices against not only the accused but also against other jurors. The play calls upon us not simply to judge others by their appearance or other preconceived notions we may hold, but rather to consider everyone equally as human beings.

## TAKING A STAND

As an American citizen, it is your right to a trial by jury, should you ever require one. In the play, 11 of the 12 jurors were ready to send the accused to die without even taking a moment to assess the evidence together or talk with any depth about their impressions of the case. It would have been easy for the jurors to simply convict without truly considering the fact, but because of the courage and tenacity of Juror 8, the

accused got a fair shake in the trial. *Twelve Angry Men* reminds us that it is our responsibility to act to maintain that justice, and not simply to assume it will remain if we do nothing. If we don't stand up for what's right, no one will.

## JUSTICE

As the discussion in the jury room wears on, many of the jurors find themselves confused about their logic for conviction. Many of them are looking for someone to prove the accused is innocent, when in fact it is the responsibility of the prosecutor to prove the accused is guilty. How often in your life do you find yourself assuming the worst of another person or holding someone else responsible for some wrong against you just because they cannot prove their innocence? *Twelve Angry Men* challenges us not to convict those around us before they are proven guilty, but rather to assume innocence until otherwise proven beyond a shadow of a doubt.

**PREMEDITATED HOMICIDE:** murder committed after some consideration, planning, or thoughtfulness before the act

**TESTIMONY:** a formal written or spoken statement given in court

**DELIBERATE:** to consider long and carefully

**HUNG JURY:** A jury that is unable to come to a unanimous decision in a trial

**SLUM:** a squalid heavily populated urban residential area marked by poverty and substandard housing

**CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE:** evidence that provides some allusion to a fact but does not prove it directly

**FABLE:** a made-up story

**PRECEDE:** to come before something else

**MOTIVE:** reason for committing an act

**IGNORANT:** lacking knowledge or awareness in general; uneducated or unsophisticated

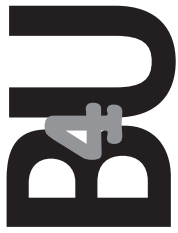
**SANCTIMONIOUS:** making a show of being morally superior to other people

**SADIST:** one who gains pleasure from inflicting pain upon others

**INFALLIBLE:** incapable of making mistakes or being wrong

**PREJUDICE:** preconceived opinion formed without just grounds or before sufficient knowledge; bias

**SIFT:** to examine thoroughly so as to put aside the nonessential and get directly to what's important



THE WORLD OF the play *Twelve Angry Men* is the thriving 1950s, a decade that falls after trying times of the Great Depression and World War II. It was a time when the United States was trying to get back to some semblance of a normal life. During the 1950s, veterans of the war were earning educations with the GI Bill, settling down in cozy suburbs and living the American dream. While recent decades had the nation under economic strain, the 1950s saw a return to the strong consumer society seen in the 1920s (also called the “Roaring ‘20s” for its economic flourish). Times were finally good again, as the 1950s are often known as the decade of the “Affluent Society.”

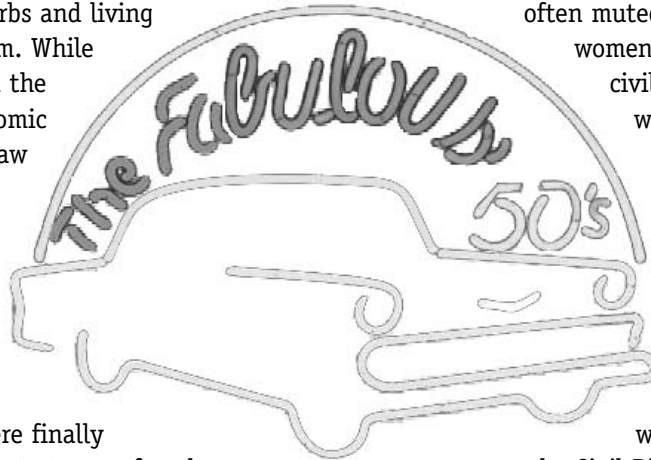
DURING THE 1950s Elvis Presley would lead troves of young hipsters in the rock ‘n’ roll revolution, while other popular music genres such as bebop and jazz would hit their primes. Other noted musical stars of the era would include Chuck Berry and Little Richard. The ‘50s also saw the “Golden Age” of American film, as Hollywood produced such classics as *Sunset Boulevard* and *Ben-Hur*. Alfred Hitchcock would bring thrillers to the forefront of popularity with hits like *North by Northwest* and *Vertigo*, while Disney would release timeless tales like *Cinderella* and *Alice in Wonderland*.

WHILE IT WOULD certainly seem that everything was going well, there was a subtle undercurrent of unrest that would change the world and innovate our ways of thinking. While much of America settled into good fortune economically, in many areas poverty subsisted and even rose.

The call for normalcy and conformity often muted the causes of women’s rights and civil rights. Minorities were continually persecuted despite the national ideals of freedom and pursuit of happiness for all. Racial segregation during the 1950s would give birth to the Civil Rights movement in

the ‘60s, bringing to the forefront new national heroes such as Rosa Parks, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X.

AS YOU MAY have noticed in the title and action of the play, the jury consists of 12 angry *men*. During the 1950s, the jury pool for such a trial would have consisted of white males, leaving no ethnic diversity or females. In fact, it wouldn’t be until 1968 that Congress would pass a law banning discrimination in jury selection based upon religion, sex, national origin and economic status.



# RL



WHILE *TWELVE ANGRY MEN* gives us a glimpse of what goes on in the jury room after a trial, there's much more to the United States legal system than the final jury deliberations. The criminal court system is vast and includes many elements and stages, all intended to maintain a safe and secure society while guaranteeing the accused his or her due rights.

EVERY CRIMINAL TRIAL starts with a crime (whether actually committed or alleged). A crime is simply an offense against your city, state or national government that is punishable by fine, imprisonment or death. There are two primary types of crime—felonies and misdemeanors. A felony is any offense serious enough to be punishable by death or imprisonment, while all other crimes are misdemeanors. Examples of felonies include murder, rape and armed robbery, while typical misdemeanors include traffic offenses and parking violations.

AFTER AN ACCUSED is apprehended for a crime, he or she must appear before a magistrate (a lower-level judicial official). This typically takes place as swiftly as possible, no more than 48 hours after the time of the arrest. The magistrate essentially determines whether or not the accused has been apprehended and held within their rights, and whether or not the accused may be released on bail.

NEXT COMES an appearance before a grand jury or a preliminary trial, depending on the state and recommendations from the magistrate. Both the grand jury and the preliminary trial determine whether or not there is probable cause for a full-fledged trial. A grand jury consists of a minimum of 12 and not more than 23 citizens that hear evidence from the prosecution (the defense is not a part of this stage if the case appears before a grand jury). In a preliminary trial, a

judge hears arguments, and the defense is allowed to cross examine evidence presented by the prosecution.

IF A FULL-FLEDGED trial is called for, the next step for the accused is arraignment. This is the stage in which the accused is allowed to respond to the prosecution's allegations. This is where a defendant typically pleads "guilty" or "not guilty." If the defendant pleads "not guilty," then the judge will assign a date for the trial. A plea of "guilty," however, is in effect the same as if a jury were to find the accused guilty.

PRIOR TO THE TRIAL actually beginning, jurors and alternates must be selected. Both defense and prosecution attorneys have a say in the selection of jurors. Once the trial begins, these jurors are responsible for hearing all the evidence in the case. A trial typically moves through opening statements from both sides, then the prosecution's and the defense's cases, and ends with closing arguments.

IF THE DEFENDANT is found guilty, the next stage is sentencing (or the determination of punishment). In state cases, the accused may be sentenced by the jury or the judge. In federal cases the sentence is always given by the judge. After sentencing, the accused has the right to appeal the decision. Typical success in an appeal isn't the defendant going free—it's the appellate court ordering a new trial so that the case may be heard again.

# SWDY?

*"I've sat on juries, and it always amazes me the way these lawyers can talk, and talk and talk, even when the case is as obvious as this one. I mean, did you ever hear so much talk about nothing?"*

- Juror 3 seems like he was convinced of the outcome of the trial before he even heard any testimony. Do you think he even listened to the lawyers' arguments? What is making his decision for him if not the actual trial? Do you think this often happens in our legal system?

*"It's these people! I'm tellin' you they let the kids run wild up there. Well maybe it serves 'em right."*

- Though we never hear the race or ethnicity of the young man on trial, clearly several of the jurors are

prejudiced against him in some way. How might this affect the outcome of the trial? Do you think this is something that only happened in the '50s, or does it still go on today? Does it extend beyond juries?

*"In discussing such a thing as the murder potential we should remember that many of us are capable of committing murder. But few of us do. We impose controls upon ourselves to prevent it."*

- What do you think of Juror 11's statement? Do you think this is true, that many of us are capable of horrible crimes? What are these controls we place upon ourselves, and where do we get them?



## READ MORE ABOUT IT

We encourage you to explore the following books, dvds and websites for more information.

<http://www.uscourts.gov/jury/welcomejuror.html> Want to know more about juries and what it would be like to serve on one? Check out the US Courts' official page for information and links.

<http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/legalotln> The source for in-depth information on the legal system as a whole, including chapters on the criminal court process, lawyers and more.

**12 Angry Men, 96 minutes, MGM/UA Home Entertainment, 1957, DVD** Now that you've seen the play, check out Reginald Rose's film version of the same story.

**12 Angry Men, 117 minutes, MGM Home Entertainment, 1997, DVD** While the script may be the same, director William Friedkin puts a new spin on the story of the

12 jurors, injecting a racially diverse cast into mix and playing with the dynamics of the play's themes.

**Rose, Reginald, *Twelve Angry Men*. Penguin Classics, 2006.** Was there anything you missed when you saw the play? Never fear—*Twelve Angry Men* was recently re-released in paperback book form, including an introduction by playwright David Mamet.

**Munyan, Russ, *Readings on Twelve Angry Men*. Greenhaven Press, 2000.** Interested in knowing more about the play, the writer, actors in original productions, the legal system and more? Check out this book, which includes selected readings on the play, an interview with Henry Fonda and commentary from Eleanor Roosevelt.