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spotlight

NATIONAL TOUR OF TWELVE ANGRY MEN COMES TO PLAYHOUSE SQUARE

Considered by many to be the greatest courtroom drama of all time, the classic **TWELVE ANGRY MEN** by Reginald Rose is coming to Playhouse Square in November as part of the 2007-08 KeyBank Broadway Series. This do-not-miss production opens on November 27 and will run through December 9, 2007.

The production visiting Playhouse Square began life with the Roundabout Theatre Company in New York City in the fall of 2004 and marked the first time the show was ever seen on a

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Broadway stage. The response was so strong that it became the longest-running production at their home, extending an unprecedented seven times to run for 32 weeks. Its record-breaking run earned three Tony Award nominations.

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NATIONAL TOUR OF TWELVE ANGRY MEN COMES TO PLAYHOUSE SQUARE



Richard Thomas
Photo by Joan Marcus.

Considered by many to be the greatest courtroom drama of all time, the classic **TWELVE ANGRY MEN** by Reginald Rose is coming to Playhouse Square in November as part of the 2007-08 KeyBank Broadway Series. This do-not-miss production opens on November 27 and will run through December 9, 2007.

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The touring version is built around the performance of **Richard Thomas** (*The Waltons*) in the pivotal role of Juror No. 8, a man who fearlessly stands alone against eleven other jurors played by **Mike Boland, Charles Borland, Todd Cerveris, Jeffrey Hayenga, David Lively, Alan Mandell, Mark Morettini, Julian Gamble, Kevin Dobson, Thomas Gebbia, Tony Ward** and **Mike DiSalvo**.

The critics have been unanimous in their praise for the production across the country. *The Washington Post* called the show "Theatrically irresistible...seductive...sends a chill up the spine!" while *The Boston Globe* enthused "The play grips you from the start and never lets up. It's...a pleasure and a treasure after all these years."

In addition to the critical accolades for the show, **TWELVE ANGRY MEN** has been the recipient of several local awards for excellence including the Independent Reviewers of New England Best Visiting Production—Large Stage Award for the Boston engagement; Cincinnati's Acclaim Award for Best Touring Production; and a Helen Hayes Award nomination for Outstanding Non-resident Production (Washington, D.C.).

"It's highly unusual for a straight play to enjoy such tremendous success with touring audiences, and we are very excited that the demand for the show allows us to tour for a second year," said **Todd Haimes**, Artistic Director of the Roundabout Theatre Company. "Audiences continue to respond to the play's undeniable power – its themes and issues are still relevant a half century after it first appeared."

Synopsis

In **TWELVE ANGRY MEN**, a young delinquent awaits sentencing for the manslaughter of his aggressive father. Twelve jurors are corralled in a room for their deliberations in a murder trial. One juror feels that there is a "reasonable doubt" – to the frustration of his eleven colleagues – thereby preventing a quick verdict. During the heated debate, the hidden preconceptions and assumptions of the jurors are revealed. When faced with playing the hangman, each juror is forced to face himself.



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THE ROUNDABOUT THEATRE COMPANY



Roundabout Theatre Company

Over the last 40 years, The Roundabout Theatre Company has grown from a small, Off-Broadway theater to one of the leading cultural institutions of New York City. Its commitment to teaming great theatrical works with the industry's finest artists to re-energize classic plays and musicals, as well as its mission to develop and produce new works, has led to great success and growth. The non-profit company has attracted such well-known actors as Vincent Price, Stockard Channing, Liam Neeson, Blythe Danner, Jason Robards, Claire Danes and Neil Patrick Harris.

Roundabout has four theaters: the American Airlines Theatre in the heart of Times Square, the home for classic Broadway plays; Studio 54, the former home of the legendary night club which now hosts Roundabout's Broadway musicals and special projects; the Laura Pels Theatre, an off-Broadway location used for new works by established playwrights; and the Roundabout Underground Black Box Theatre, which is used to support the work of emerging writers and directors. The Laura Pels and black box theaters are located in the Harold and Miriam Steinberg Center for Theatre on W. 46th Street.

The record-breaking run of **TWELVE ANGRY MEN** during the company's 2004 season prompted its leadership to consider taking the show on the road for its first touring production. "With such good reaction, a number of

people started tossing around the idea of a touring production,” explained managing director **Harold Wolpert**. “They put out feelers to booking agents, tour presenters, possible venue reps, board members and others, and the consensus was ‘Go for it!’”

Wolpert came on board not long after the Broadway production of TWELVE ANGRY MEN had closed. He brought with him experience from working with national touring companies, experience that most of the Roundabout people did not have. “I was able to help out in little ways that were new to them, and, of course, in bigger ways that were new to me. Some people found it challenging to be rehearsing in New York while not knowing anything about the performance spaces they’d be occupying throughout the country. But a show like this, with its one-room set, actually made it less of a problem for the actors to prepare.”

Wolpert was eager to talk about Roundabout and how the tour affects the public’s perception of it. “Having our work seen throughout the country – and so well-appreciated! – is what brings people to us even more when they come to New York. The Roundabout is recognized as a national leader in audience development, and we want that to grow even more. We stress that we are a not-for-profit theater. Yes, we deal with a lot of money on so many levels, but our purpose is not to make a profit. If it is a particularly good year, the money goes back into the institution, not to investors.”

You can visit Roundabout online at www.roundabouttheatre.org.



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A FEW MINUTES WITH TODD CERVERIS (JUROR #2)



Todd Cerveris (Juror #2)

Todd Cerveris is a hard-working, New York actor whose most recent work – and success – takes him thousands of miles away from New York and thousands of miles around the country well into the spring of 2008. He plays Juror #2, one of the unnamed cast members of Roundabout Theatre Company's touring production of **TWELVE ANGRY MEN**. I caught up with him not too long ago on a Monday, the traditional day off for actors.

"Yes, it's our day off, but I always have plenty to do on Mondays...it's a catch-up day, basically," he explains. I thank him for taking the time to talk to me, and I ask him what he felt about the first year of the tour.

"It was crazy...just so successful!" he quickly responded. "I mean, here is this ingeniously structured play – sometimes thought of as a 'small' play – receiving rave

reviews, thunderous applause, and standing ovations all over the country. And it didn't matter where! We played to all different sizes of houses, but the reactions were the same from place to place!"

He continued, "there were times when we felt almost like rock stars. The applause would go on and on, we'd take another bow, there'd be more applause...it was crazy! Then there'd be all kinds of people at meet-and-greets or the stage door wanting autographs or just to say 'Hello,' and nothing means more to an actor than that kind of reception."

He went on to explain that each city or area stay would produce even more for the smallish cast than just the roaring accolades. "We're basically a group of actors who've been working for a number of years in the major theater or film locales, and sometimes you just need to get out of New York or L.A., get to other parts of the country and see the arts scene as it exists in the rest of the country. And I should tell you: it looks pretty good."

In each city the tour would visit, different cast members would also find personal areas of interest that they wanted to explore. "Guys who are into museums look for museums to visit, others might be looking for an aquarium. Shoppers check out the local retail scene. We all find things to do that pretty much correspond to things we like to do at home." His home, I discover, is "New York City, but there are plenty of places out there to discover so much, including theater, that could rival New York."

I wonder if they all hang out together during the days or on their days off. "Well, yes and no. Like I said, different guys look for different things in each city, but there often are little groups of us that hang out together. I mean, we're basically just a bunch of regular middle-aged guys whose only drug knowledge is Lipitor, or something like that."

Any thoughts about this second season of the tour? "Well, there are three new actors in the group, and it's got to be a little dizzying for them. The rest of us have worked together so well for so long, and we know each other – both on and offstage – so well. But they bring a little bit different dynamic to the play, and that's always a good thing. And [director] Scott [Ellis] is so good at getting actors to do what they do best. Throughout rehearsals he was so good at encouraging experimentation, allowing the new guys – and us – to try things, come up with things, do things that might make a few changes, even from the type of things we did in the first season."

Cerveris loves the actual play as much as the touring, the directing, the acting. "Reginald Rose expertly structured this interplay of archetypes. They're not stereotypes as much as they are archetypes. Audience members see themselves – or part of themselves – in guys like the bank clerk, the painter, the sports fan, the coach, the bully, and the others."

Since he mentioned his character (the bank clerk), I asked him how he, personally, saw Juror #2. "Oh, he's a quiet guy, a family guy, pretty easy-going. He didn't want to be picked for jury duty in the first place. He is surprised at his own passion rising throughout the course of the play. His sense of decency shows through, especially early in the play when it bothers him that several of the men do not give each other even a chance to speak, although his meekness prevents him from saying too much."

"It's interesting, too," he continues, "that the defendant's ethnicity is never made clear. It's kept vague, so the crime can't be hung on one particular type. People assume it to be something that fits into their own prejudices, but the accused is never actually identified as to race. It boils down to 'prejudice is prejudice,' no matter what color."

Cerveris also explains the significance of the set. "This set can be built on lots of stages since it is one small room and nothing more. The set designer based it on several Center Street courthouse jury rooms, and it feels very much like a summer day in a small, un-air-conditioned hot box. We are seated at one long, rectangular table, with several actors' backs being to the audience at various times during the play. Again, Scott allowed and encouraged much of our blocking to be organic, rising from the nature of the small room, the large table, etc. All actors can be heard, though, since we are all miked. But the claustrophobic nature of the room becomes palpable to the audience, which is something that would have to have an effect on any jury deliberations."

The whole premise becomes a riveting evening of theater. "It does something that you really don't see much any more: one act with no intermission, sustained for a little over 90 minutes on one set, showing one tense conversation, necessarily resolved one way from the input of twelve men. In an age when people's attention spans often don't hold until the first commercial of a sitcom, this is an achievement, and one that audiences are reacting so favorably to."

Cerveris tells me he grew up in Huntington, West Virginia, but left at age 15 to go to school. As he talks, I learn more about his performing arts family. "My mother always said being a lawyer would be a good thing, but really, my parents have no one to blame but themselves that we're all performers!" he laughs. "They were the ones that took us (Cerveris and his older brother and sister) to rehearsals and summer stock theater dressing rooms and recital halls and dance shows. They were the ones who showed us what a fantastic life the performing arts could be."

His parents met while both were attending Juilliard in New York City. His father was studying piano and his mother was studying modern dance at the Graham Studio. Along with piano, his father became a specialist in interdisciplinary arts administration, and was, for a number of years, on the faculty of Mercyhurst College in Erie, PA. He has since retired and is now the director of The Arts Education Collaborative in Pittsburgh. His mother too, is retired, but has not given up dance entirely. She and her husband can be seen teaching and performing country/western 2-step dancing in Tucson, AZ establishments several nights a week.

His sister was a soloist with the New York City Ballet for nine years. She also appeared on Broadway in *The Phantom of the Opera*, and she was in the national tour of *Carousel*. "She's just as excited about her new 'life' as well," Cerveris explains. "She moved from New York to Bethlehem, PA, which is just about a half-hour from the city, where she runs her own dancewear and Pilateswear design and manufacturing company."

His older brother Michael is a well-known performer in New York, having starred in The Who's *Tommy*, *Sweeney Todd*, and *Assassins*, for which he won a Tony Award.

All three remain quite close, and get together as much as possible, generally no less than once a month. But what about when someone is on tour? "You find ways," he tells me. "For example, I found out that when TWELVE ANGRY MEN plays Pittsburgh, not only will I get to see my dad and his wife, but an aunt has already bought 18 tickets and is bringing a group of [extended] family members. Family finds family."

As for the future, Cerveris and his actress wife are never sure what will come up next, both in and out of New York. Both have been involved in TV work, with Cerveris known as a "repeat offender" on the *Law and Order* franchise.



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EVOLUTION OF TWELVE ANGRY MEN



*Richard Thomas
Photo by Joan Marcus.*

TWELVE ANGRY MEN, by American playwright Reginald Rose, was originally written as a teleplay in 1954 and broadcast live on the CBS drama anthology, *Studio One*. In 1957, Rose wrote the screenplay for a film version, which he co-produced with actor Henry Fonda. The play has subsequently been updated and revived: a 1964 theater version for London's West End; another film version in 1997, directed by William Friedkin for Showtime; and the wildly successful stage version produced by the Roundabout Theatre Company.

The 1954 Teleplay

The play was inspired by Rose's own experience of jury duty on a manslaughter case in New York City. At first, he had been reluctant to serve on a jury but, he wrote, "the moment I walked into the courtroom and found myself facing a strange man whose fate

was suddenly more or less in my hands, my entire attitude changed." He was greatly impressed by the gravity of the situation, the somber activity of the court, and the "absolute finality" of the decision that he and his fellow jurors would have to make.

He also thought that since no one other than the jurors had any idea of what went on in a jury room, "a play taking place entirely within a jury room might be an exciting and possibly moving experience for an audience." ("Author's Commentary" on TWELVE ANGRY MEN in *Six Television Plays*). What TV viewers saw was a gripping drama in which eleven jurors believe the youthful defendant in a capital murder trial is guilty, while one juror stands up courageously for what he believes is justice and tries to persuade the others to his way of thinking. That one juror feels that there is a "reasonable doubt" – to the frustration of his eleven colleagues – thereby preventing a quick verdict. During the heated debate, the hidden preconceptions and assumptions of the jurors are revealed. When faced with playing the hangman, each juror is forced to face himself.

The teleplay has only one setting, the jury room, although both film versions and later stage productions do add a washroom. The room is hot and humid since there is no air conditioning and the fan does not work. The atmosphere is claustrophobic, and the men are understandably short-tempered. The static setting, in which no one comes or goes, is overcome by the characters' dialogue and in the way they move around the stage as the arguments ebb and flow.

The 1957 Film

The success of the TV play (three Emmy Awards) eventually resulted in a film adaptation. Actor Henry Fonda saw the play and immediately tried to interest studios in a film version, but none thought it commercial enough. He then formed a partnership with author Reginald Rose and they produced the film themselves. Sidney Lumet, whose prior directorial credits included dramas for television productions such as *The Alcoa Hour* and *Studio One*, was recruited to direct. TWELVE ANGRY MEN was Lumet's first feature film, and for Fonda and Rose, it was their first and only roles as film producers. Fonda later stated that he would never again produce a film.

The ensemble cast included Fonda, Lee J. Cobb, Ed Begley, John Fiedler, E.G. Marshall, Jack Warden, Ed Binns, Martin Balsam, Jack Klugman, George Voskovec, Robert Webber, and Joseph Sweeney. Lumet rehearsed the cast for two weeks, and with his cameraman Boris Kaufman managed to achieve remarkable pace and rhythm: with the exception of three minutes of screen-time split between the beginning and the end and two short scenes in an adjoining washroom, the entire movie takes place within the claustrophobic set of the jury room.

Film provides opportunities a stage director does not have; in the movie, director Lumet achieved movement and variety by frequently varying the camera angles. The changes in camera angles multiply as the dramatic tension increases. Also, he progressively lowered the level from which the movie was shot. The first third was shot from above eye level, the second third at eye level, and the last third from below eye level. In the last third, the ceiling of the room began to appear, giving a sense that the room was getting smaller. Lumet, who began his career as a director of photography, stated that his "intention in using these techniques with cinematographer Boris Kaufman was to create a nearly palpable claustrophobia."

Filmed in 20 days at a cost of \$340,000, the film still lost money and Fonda never received his deferred salary. He stated later, though, that he did not mind and that he was proud of the film's status as an American classic. When asked which of his many films he held in particular regard, TWELVE ANGRY MEN was always in his top three, admitting that it was because he himself had produced it and was responsible for getting it made despite lack of interest from the major studios.

Upon its 1957 release, TWELVE ANGRY MEN received much critical acclaim, but it was not a popular success. It was nominated for Academy Awards for Best Director, Best Picture and Best Writing (Screenplay Based on Material from Another Medium). Though it failed to win any of these Oscars, it won the Golden Bear Award at the Berlin International Film Festival of 1957.

Today the film is considered a "classic" and is highly regarded from both a critical and popular standpoint. Critic Roger Ebert lists it as one of his

"Great Movies," and the American Film Institute named TWELVE ANGRY MEN the 42nd most inspiring film, and recently, named it the 87th best film of the past hundred years.

Other Adaptations and Remakes

Just as the play script is available for purchase, the screenplay has also been published, and Rose eventually wrote several stage adaptations of the story. One was a proposed Broadway version with Henry Fonda that was never produced, and another, in 1964, had well-known British actor Leo Genn – under the direction of Margaret Webster – appearing in the "legit" theater version premiere in London's West End. In other theatrical adaptations in which female actors are cast, the play is retitled *Twelve Angry Jurors* or *Twelve Angry Women*.

TWELVE ANGRY MEN was remade as a television movie for Showtime in 1997, in response to questions about "reasonable doubt" that were raised during the infamous O.J. Simpson murder trial. Directed by William Friedkin, the remake starred Jack Lemmon, George C. Scott, James Gandolfini, Tony Danza, William Petersen, Ossie Davis, Hume Cronyn, and Courtney B. Vance. In this production, the judge was a woman (Mary McDonnell) and four of the jurors were African-American (Davis, Vance, Mykelti Williamson, Dorian Harewood). Unlike earlier versions, this one featured a black racist (Williamson) instead of a white racist as Juror #10, in order to demonstrate that bigotry is not limited to whites. It also introduced other minority jurors, including Hispanic juror Edward James Olmos. Although striving for diversity, in interviews producers said they decided against putting a woman in the jury because they didn't want to change the title. Although "updated," most of the action and dialogue of the film was identical to the original. Modernizations included a prohibition on smoking in the jury room, the changing of references to income and pop culture figures, more dialogue relating to race, and occasional profanity.

Roundabout Theatre Production

Director Scott Ellis told *The Washington Post* that the Roundabout decided to mount the production after an informal reading during which "something clicked" with the audience. One reason, he opined, might be the timeless appeal of examining the American legal system, a fascination reflected by the abundance of TV shows like *Law and Order*.

The fantastic response to TWELVE ANGRY MEN spawned the first-ever touring production for Roundabout. Richard Thomas continues to headline the production as Juror #8.



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RICHARD THOMAS (JUROR #8) -- BIOGRAPHY

Although undoubtedly linked forever to the role of the somewhat naïve would-be writer John-Boy Walton in the CBS drama series *The Waltons* (and its spin-off TV movies), **Richard Thomas** has had a richly diverse career that has encompassed stage, screen and television.

Born June 13, 1951, Thomas' parents were both dancers with the New York City Ballet and owners of the New York School of Ballet. He began his career as a juvenile performer, making his Broadway debut at age seven as John Roosevelt, one of the children of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, in the award-winning play *Sunrise at Campobello* in 1958.

The wide-eyed, sensitive-looking Thomas soon found himself very much in demand for the ever-growing world of television drama. He was seen in the distinguished company of Julie Harris, Christopher Plummer, and Hume Cronyn in a 1959 television presentation of Ibsen's *A Doll's House*; in late 1959 he appeared in the *Hallmark Hall of Fame* presentation of *A Christmas Tree*. He then moved to work on daytime television, appearing in the ABC soap opera *Flame in the Wind/A Time for Us* and the CBS sudser *As the World Turns*.

In 1971, Thomas was cast as John-Boy Walton opposite Patricia Neal in the Earl Hamner-scripted TV movie *The Homecoming*. Though there would be a number of cast changes before *The Homecoming* became the weekly series *The Waltons*, Thomas was retained as John-Boy, the oldest child of a rural Virginia family coping with the effects of the Depression. He brought a warm, eager-to-please charm to the role which earned him an Emmy Award in 1973; he remained in the role until only a few months before the series' cancellation in 1981.

Thomas subsequently went on to appear in a variety of TV movies and specials, notably playing the leading character of Paul Baumer in the 1979 remake of *All Quiet on the Western Front*, the title role in *Living Proof: The Hank Williams Jr. Story*, a scheming and sanctimonious evangelist in *Glory!*



Richard Thomas
Photo by Joan Marcus.

Glory! for HBO, the lover of a man who has died from AIDS in *Andre's Mother* on PBS, and a threatening ex-convict in *Down, Out & Dangerous* on USA.

After making his film debut as Joanne Woodward's son in *Winning*, Thomas went on to earn praise for his leading performances as an inexperienced youth in both Frank Perry's *Last Summer* and in *Red Sky at Morning*. His on-screen presence was diverse, from an unpleasant, psychologically disturbed character in *You'll Like My Mother* to a James Dean-obsessed youth mourning his idol's death in *9/30/55* to a space warrior in *Battle Beyond the Stars*, a film exploiting the popularity of *Star Wars*-style movies. But his filmmaking found its deepest roots and fullest expression in the made-for-TV genre: Thomas has starred in more than 40 films for television, on practically every network and premium channel. Working through his own Melpomene Productions, Thomas has continued to seek out creative challenges into the new century.

In 1980, Thomas made his first Broadway appearance in over two decades as the paralyzed protagonist of *Whose Life is It Anyway?*, co-authored by playwright Reginald Rose, of **TWELVE ANGRY MEN** fame. In 1985, he won much praise for his title role in *The Count of Monte Cristo* in Washington, D.C., and in 2000 he appeared on the London stage in a production of *Art*. Before being tapped to star as Juror #8 in the Roundabout Theatre Company's touring production of **TWELVE ANGRY MEN**, he had appeared on Broadway in Michael Frayn's *Democracy* in 2004, followed by *As You Like It* in Central Park in July of 2005, and in 2005 in the Roundabout's Broadway production of Richard Greenberg's *A Naked Girl on the Appian Way*.



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PLAYWRIGHT REGINALD ROSE



Richard Thomas
Photo by Joan Marcus.

Considered a fearless writer of the highest caliber during television's "Golden Age," Reginald Rose's ability to tackle pressing – and often controversial – social issues head-on brought him success and acclaim.

Rose was born on December 10, 1920, and he was educated at City College (now City University of New York). He served in the U.S. Army from 1942 to 1946, and became a television writer for CBS in 1951 when he was hired to work on *Out There*, a live anthology series which bridged the gap between juvenile science fiction shows and adult drama. Using filmed special effects, its episodes were all adapted from stories by prominent science fiction writers. Rose's first original television script was *The Bus to Nowhere*, which appeared on another CBS anthology, *Studio One*, in 1951.

Rose gained a reputation for writing about "touchy" subjects, and his teleplay *Thunder on Sycamore Street*, in which an ex-convict tries to begin a new life in an upper-class neighborhood but is hounded by a mob of protesters, raised some eyebrows at the network. The central character was originally written to be an African-American, but sponsors were afraid of losing audiences in the South, so Rose was forced to change him into an ex-convict instead.

A few years later, Rose would become the head writer for *Studio One* and create the work that would become his masterpiece. The 1954-55 season gave Rose his credentials as a top writer; that year has been referred to as "The Reginald Rose Season" at *Studio One*. Scripts such as *12:32 a.m.*, *An Almanac of Liberty*, and *Crime in the Streets* were highly regarded, but were eclipsed by the now-classic *TWELVE ANGRY MEN*. The teleplay won Emmy Awards for Rose, its director Franklin Schaffner, and its star Robert Cummings.

Rose would continue to write for *Studio One* in the following years in addition to penning scripts for *The Twilight Zone* and such features as *Dino* (1956) and *Man of the West* (1958). One of his *Studio One* scripts, *The*

Incredible World of Horace Ford (1955), starred Art Carney as a nostalgic toy designer who returns to the street of his childhood and finds it exactly as it was when he was a child, including the same children. It was later bought by the producers of *The Twilight Zone* and shown in 1963, with Pat Hingle as the hero, but it had a different ending written by Rose at the producers' request. "I wanted to point out that the funny, tender childhood memories we cling to are often distorted and unreal," said Rose. "Horace turns into a kid again and finds it not to be glorious but terrible. They wanted a more upbeat ending for *Twilight Zone*. The work had already been done the way I saw it, and therefore it didn't bother me to change the ending."

One of the teleplays that Rose wrote for *Studio One* was *The Defender* (1957), which starred Ralph Bellamy and William Shatner as father-son lawyers and Steve McQueen as a young defendant accused of murder. He expanded his original idea into the 1961-1965 series *The Defenders*, which starred Edward G. Marshall as the seasoned attorney and Robert Reed as his partner-son, just out of law school. At a time when television series tended to shun controversy, *The Defenders* became notable for addressing such issues as abortion, mercy-killing, and blacklisting. His writing for the series won Rose two more Emmy Awards.

Rose won further Emmy nominations for *The Sacco-Vanzetti Story* (1960), and *Dear Friends* (1967). In 1975 he both created and wrote scripts for the series *The Zoo Gang*. Rose also wrote several screenplays, including Anthony Mann's *Man of the West* (1958) which, although a western, had much of the same claustrophobic tension as that of *TWELVE ANGRY MEN*. Later his writing included the action movie *The Wild Geese* (1978), *The Sea Wolves* (1980), *Whose Life is it Anyway?* (1981), *The Final Option* (1983), and *Wild Geese II* (1985). In 1987 he wrote the award-winning miniseries *Escape from Sobibor*.

In 1997, the repercussions of Rose's most famous work were reinforced when *TWELVE ANGRY MEN* once again went before the cameras, nearly 50 years after it was written. In response to questions about "reasonable doubt" raised during the O.J. Simpson trial, William Freidkin directed the new movie version with a racially diverse cast.

On April 19, 2002, Rose died from complications of heart failure in a Norwalk, CT hospital, leaving behind his second wife and six children. He was 81.



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TELEVISION'S GOLDEN AGE



Playwright Reginald Rose originally wrote **TWELVE ANGRY MEN** as a teleplay for CBS' *Studio One* in 1954. He, along with other well-known authors, directors, producers and actors helped to shape the look and feel of television in its infancy and "Golden Age."

The decade of the 1950s is often referred to as the "Golden Age" of television, largely because thousands of original and classic live dramas were produced and broadcast during America's postwar years. These dramas supplemented the standard television fare of variety shows, game shows, westerns, and soap operas. It was during this period that television replaced radio and film as the chief medium of entertainment for the American family.

The live programs were in the form of drama anthologies, such as NBC's *Kraft Television Theater* and *Goodyear Television Playhouse* and CBS's *Studio One*. Rose explained in an interview the challenging but rewarding nature of television drama in the 1950s: "It was a terrifying experience, but very exhilarating. But there were always mistakes. I don't recall a show I ever did when something didn't go wrong" (quoted in "Reginald Rose: A Biography," in *Readings on Twelve Angry Men*). He recalled cameras breaking down and shows that ran either too long or too short to fill the exact time slot allocated.

Most of the scripts in the live television dramas were original teleplays or works adapted from the stage, ranging from Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* and Eugene O'Neill's *The Iceman Cometh* to classic literary adaptations of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and *Othello*, among many others. This wide range of live television dramas, especially when compared with popular Hollywood films, legitimate theater, or commercial radio, presented American audiences with an extraordinary choice of viewing experiences in a solitary entertainment medium, and this was occurring in the comfort of the new mass audiences' brand new suburban living rooms!

While the classics and some contemporary popular writers provided material for the teleplays, they were not enough for the networks' demanding weekly program schedules. The networks began cultivating original scripts from young, sometimes even unknown writers. Eventually, the majority of the dramas on the anthology shows were original works.

The constant demand for new teleplays provided a fruitful creative outlet for actors, writers, and directors in the new medium. Television dramas often offered neophyte actors their first national exposure; additionally, it was the sometimes obscure but professionally trained theater personnel from summer stock and university theater programs who were responsible for the innovative broadcasts.

In 1949, 24-year-old Marlon Brando starred in *I'm No Hero*, produced by the Actors' Studio. Other young actors, such as Susan Strasberg (1953), Paul Newman (1954), and Steve McQueen (1955) made noteworthy appearances on *Goodyear Playhouse*.

Among some of the most prominent writers of "Golden Age" dramas were Rod Serling, Paddy Chayevsky, Gore Vidal, Tad Mosel, and Reginald Rose. Rod Serling stands out for special consideration because in addition to winning the 1955 Emmy for "Best Original Teleplay Writing" (*Patterns on Kraft Television Theater*), Serling also won two teleplay Emmys for *Playhouse 90* (1956 & 1957) and two "Outstanding Writing Achievement in Drama" Emmys for *Twilight Zone* (1959 & 1960) and for *Chrysler Theater* in 1963. Serling's six Emmys for four separate anthology programs over two networks place him firmly in the top ranks of "Golden Age" writers.

Writer Gore Vidal summed up the opportunity that writing for television dramas represented in this way: "One can find better work oftener on the small grey screen than on Broadway." Paddy Chayevsky was even more cheerfully optimistic in his assessment when he said that television presented "the drama of introspection," and that "television, the scorned stepchild of drama, may well be the basic theater of our century."

In addition to actors and writers, some of the most renowned Hollywood directors got their big breaks on television's anthology dramas. John Frankenheimer directed for *Kraft Television Theater*, Robert Altman for *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, Yul Brynner and Sidney Lumet for *Studio One*, Sidney Pollack for *The Chrysler Theater* (1965 Emmy for "Directorial Achievement in Drama") and Delbert Mann for NBC's *Television Playhouse*.

Live drama began to die out in the early 1960s; in present times only the *Hallmark Hall of Fame* survives from the heyday of television's "Golden Age." New technology enabled productions to be filmed, producing higher-quality technical work since mistakes could be edited out and scenes could

be re-shot. The social upheavals of the 1960s, poor ratings, and changing tastes spelled further doom for the drama anthologies, but many of the pioneer actors, writers, and directors bemoaned the loss of the excitement and intimacy of live drama.



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BROADWAY BUZZ EVENTS

Broadway Buzz host **Joe Garry** is eager to welcome you to our free **Pre-Show Talks** before each performance of **TWELVE ANGRY MEN**. Join us in the Idea Center at Playhouse Square to hear Joe discuss the theatrical technique that makes this play a classic.

The Idea Center is located just two doors west of the Allen Theatre at 1375 Euclid Avenue. You can enter the Idea Center quickly from the Playhouse Square parking garage by taking the elevator or stairs to Level 1. Exit through the red doors and cross at the crosswalk which will lead you directly into the rear entrance of the building. You also may enter the Idea Center from Euclid Avenue.



Joe Garry

Catch our **Post-Show Chats** with the Cast following Thursday evening performances (**November 29th** and **December 6th**). The Post-Show Chats for TWELVE ANGRY MEN will feature a special discussion during which legal experts and cast members will explore the contrast between the jury system of the 1950s, as portrayed in the play, and the jury system of today.