RACE

By DAVID MAMET
Directed by CHUCK SMITH

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In a moving address that he delivered at the dedication of the new Goodman Theatre complex in the fall of 2000, August Wilson noted that “it is the American theater that has often led us through the social welter of regional, class and racial conflicts, providing fresh insights and fragile but enduring bridges of fruitful dialogue.”

If indeed this is the case – as I wholeheartedly believe it is – then what better place than Goodman to incite a conversation about the two things we seem unable to talk about objectively in this country. With the announcement of David Mamet’s Race’s inclusion in this season, the title alone sparked controversy and concern. And even though the play itself references sexual violence, a heinous criminal act, it still begs the question:

Why can’t we talk about race and class privilege?

Race and class permeate everything that happens in daily life whether you are a person of color or not. Our society privileges being white, male, moneyed, straight and able-bodied over every other existence. My skin color and my gender influence the way I am perceived and the way the world responds to me. And race does not just impact people of color. We all live in a raced world.

It would be some persons’ contention that we talk too much about race, that in this “post-racial” society with an African American First Family in the White House, America has proven its progressiveness. But race and class play out in the coded language of political discourse that equates poor women as welfare queens, in consistently stereotypical media portrayals of Arabs as terrorists, Hispanic women as maids, young men of color as drug dealers and criminals. It shows itself in the pin-drop silence that followed Ron Paul’s GOP debate remarks about the institutional racism inherent in this country’s drug policies that went uncommented on and unresponded to.

But Mamet’s Race addresses more than its omnipresent eponymous issue. It is also a thrilling legal power struggle as three attorneys – two black and one white - scramble to represent a wealthy white man accused of assaulting a black woman. A subject that could have been ripped directly from the headlines, it not only harkens to the Dominique Strauss-Kahn case in New York City but hits much closer to home here in Chicago. How the race and class of both the accused and the accuser compound and complicate the facts echo the horrific sexual assault of a young women in Logan Square on New Year’s Eve.

The simple truth is that the troubles we face as a society – violence, racism, class inequities, poverty – will never be solved by remaining silent or acting as if we have moved beyond them. It is the nature and purpose of art, and in particular theater, to incite and provoke conversation, discourse and discussion. Mamet has given us a slyly complex legal whodunit that is complicated with all the mess of –isms we have constructed to both separate and define us.

So let’s talk about Race.
Why Race?
FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, ROBERT FALLS

It begins as a mystery: A white business leader—wealthy, articulate, powerful—has a sexual encounter with an African American staff member. Although he insists it’s consensual, she charges him with rape. The executive, who is told by every major law firm in town that his case is unwinnable, ends up in a small legal office headed by two lawyers: one black, one white. Although at first they refuse the case they eventually relent, due largely to the actions of their assistant, also a young African American woman. But as they prepare their client’s defense, the lawyers soon face a fundamental issue more incendiary than the simple truth of what happened: in the racially charged, politically “correct” world of America in the twenty-first century, can such a case ever be decided on facts alone?

This is the bare outline of the starkly titled Race, one of the most provocative works of arguably the most provocative playwright now writing for the theater, David Mamet. In true Mamet form, an everyday setting is transformed into the site of an explosive examination of human frailty. Just as a professor’s office provides the backdrop for a searing investigation of sexual politics in Oleanna, or a real estate firm becomes the setting for an indictment of America’s bankrupt ethics in Glengarry Glen Ross, a boutique law firm is transformed in Race into a crucible in which disparate responses to America’s most agonizing social dilemma are mixed and ultimately ignite. Typically, Mamet introduces his central theme within moments of the play’s beginning, as the black attorney asks his white client, “Do you know what you can say? To a black man. On the subject of race?”

Such bald frankness has made David Mamet among the most celebrated writers of his generation, as well as one of the most controversial. Throughout his career Mamet has always eschewed plays which proffered vague optimism in the face of overwhelmingly complex social ills, saying that in his dramatic worlds, “people are confused...trying to do good...but no one knows how.” Such confusion, Mamet suggests, lies at the heart of every social and political debate in America and, despite the plethora of programs and initiatives designed to end racism, continues to plague our thoughts and actions surrounding this most confounding of issues.

Like the rest of Mamet’s work, Race offers its viewers neither consolation nor ready answers. But under the able guidance of Resident Director Chuck Smith, I know that it will engender much discussion, continuing an ongoing dialogue that is essential to us individually and collectively. It is without doubt one of the most galvanizing American plays of this century so far—and I am very proud to present it to our audiences.
Goodman Theatre Resident Director Chuck Smith has made a name for himself as one of Chicago’s preeminent directors in large part by staging plays that offer nuanced portraits of the twentieth-century African American experience (including *Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom, The Amen Corner* and *The Good Negro*). With *Race*, he takes on a different type of drama, as David Mamet’s present-day tale of two lawyers—one black, one white—who find themselves entangled in a high-profile case portrays the contemporary state of racial politics with shocking directness. Just before rehearsals for *Race* began, Mr. Smith sat down with the Goodman’s Lesley Gibson to discuss Mamet, the role of theater in society and America’s final taboo.

Lesley Gibson: What initially drew you to *Race*?

Chuck Smith: The subject matter. The play is about exactly what the title says—it’s about race. To me this is the most in-your-face play that I’ve dealt with on the subject of race in America. And it’s done in such an intriguing way: David Mamet has structured this play beautifully because this law firm consists of a white guy, a black guy and a black woman (who is new to the firm), and they’re struggling to figure out whether or not to take on the case of this white man accused of raping a black woman. The two male lawyers have their own niche. They’re good together, they’ve been together for a while, they know that they’re good at what they do, and the fact that one is black and one is white and they get along so well and talk about race freely with each other—that’s the major thing that drew me to the piece. They’re so open about it and they don’t hold anything back. And David Mamet is incredibly blunt as a writer; he doesn’t hide anything beneath the covers in this play.

LG: What intrigues you about Mamet’s work in general?

CS: David Mamet is one of those writers that has a specific style. His work is about thinking and acting on your feet—sharp, precise, right to the point and moving on to the next beat. That’s David Mamet, and that’s also very much Chicago-style theater. That’s what audiences should expect to see in this production: in-your-face, Chicago-style theater. There are uncomfortable questions raised in this play, but you can’t get around
“To me this is the most in-your-face play that I’ve dealt with on the subject of race in America. And it’s done in such an intriguing way…” Chuck Smith

them, you can’t try to side-track them, they’re right there in your face and you’ve got deal with them right here, right now. No putting it off to tomorrow—what’s the answer right now? I’ve never directed a Mamet play but have always wanted to. For me this particular play, with its racial subject matter, is a dream come true.

LG: Do you think audiences in 2012 will be receptive to a play that deals with the subject of race so bluntly?

CS: I think initially they’ll be drawn to the title, because the word “race” is one of those words like “sex.” You know, imagine a play titled Sex [laughs]. I think people will see the title, Race, and think, “Well, at least I’m going to check it out.” You’re going to look at it—it’s a grabber. Whether or not the audience is going to be pleased with what they see on stage, I think hopefully it will just open their eyes to what might be the next step in furthering the relationships between blacks and whites in American society.

LG: Do you think there is still a need for us to have an honest conversation about race in 2012?

CS: There’s always going to be a need for us to have this conversation. Think of it this way: Imagine that you’re sitting on a crowded bus in the city of Chicago. You’ve got all kinds of people on the bus in Chicago, and the last thing you’re going to talk loudly about on this bus with a friend of yours is race. Because you’re afraid you’re going to step on somebody’s toes. It’s just a taboo subject. And I think sooner or later we’re going to have to un-taboo it. Things are never going to get better until it’s no longer taboo. Whatever I can do to make that subject not taboo—I’m all for it. This is just one more step along that road of taking those layers off.

LG: In your career you’ve directed a lot of historical dramas that depict the African American experience. Do you consider this a bit of a departure for you, thematically?

CS: I love historical dramas, as an African American and as an African American artist. I think that, unfortunately, we don’t teach history well in this country, and there are a lot of young African Americans that have no idea who they are or where they come from. And it all goes back to slavery, which is why we don’t want to talk about race, because it always goes back there and nobody wants to go back there, so we just want to bury it and move on. But you can’t—you’ve got to discuss it, because it’s a part of the history, so anything I can do to bring the history out, I’m all for. In that regard Race is sort of a departure for me, but at the same time I also think of it as something of a continuation of that interest, because it carries on the conversation. And I especially love that it brings intelligent black characters to the forefront.

LG: Do you think it’s our responsibility at the Goodman to use theater as a platform to address contemporary social issues?

CS: I think it’s every theater’s job to address contemporary issues. Theater is and should be a mirror of the society. People should come to the theater not only to be entertained but also to learn things, and also to be able to identify with what they see on the stage. And this is a play that I think fulfills all of that.

LG: What do you hope audiences will take away from this production?

CS: All I want the audience to take away from it is a desire to talk to someone about race, and to keep the debate going. That’s my desire for this production. I want people to leave the theater and want to talk. To me that’s the sign of a good play: if that discussion goes on for a day, or a couple of days, and keeps on going. In the best of all possible worlds, after the curtain goes down I hope members of the African American community will look over at white people and say, “Come on, let’s go have a drink and talk about this.” [Laughs.] That’ll probably never happen. But at least when they leave the theater I want them to think that we’ve got to talk to each other.
Mametspeak: The Distinctive Voice of David Mamet
REPRINTED FROM GOODMAN THEATRE'S MARCH 2006 ISSUE OF ON STAGE MAGAZINE

WHEN DAVID MAMET FIRST ERUPTED ONTO THE AMERICAN THEATER SCENE IN THE MID-1970S, HIS WORK WAS HERALDED AS STRIKINGLY ORIGINAL BY THE LEADING CRITICS OF THE DAY. What set his plays apart, they argued, was not only his subject matter—which ranged from frank explorations of the volatile relationship between the sexes in Sexual Perversity in Chicago to the schemes and ambitions of petty criminals in American Buffalo—but also the language he used to render those stories theatrically. That language, described as a “heady combination of euphemisms, approximations, ellipses...[and a] startling juxtaposition of the stilted and the profane” by the Village Voice, came to be known as “Mamet-speak,” instantly recognizable as the product of this now famous American playwright.

Three decades later, Mamet continues to be identified by his distinct use of language. Not only does it set his work apart, it also is his central vehicle for exploring character, story and meaning. “My main emphasis is on the rhythm of language,” he explained in a 1977 interview. “Our rhythms describe our actions—no, our rhythms prescribe our actions. I became fascinated—I still am—by the way the language we use, its rhythm, actually determines the way we behave, more than the other way around.”

With language serving such a central role in his drama, academics and theater critics have devoted countless pages to deciphering the dramatist’s linguistic code. This is no easy task, since part of what distinguishes Mamet’s language is its opacity. “[Mamet’s characters] often use their talk as an aggressive mask to hide behind,” argues Dennis Carroll in his 1987 book-length study of Mamet’s drama. In other words, his dialogue often conceals more than it reveals, forcing the audience to work hard at extracting its meaning.

Mamet’s words smart, bristle and obscure. American Buffalo and Glengarry Glen Ross combine his signature Chicago bluecollar patois with the distinct, arcane language of a particular subculture: the low level crooks who frequent Don’s junkshop in American Buffalo, for example; or the desperate real estate salesmen in Glengarry Glen Ross. These are plays about business, about ambition and about survival; there is no room here for self-expression. “People only speak to get something,” Mamet explains. “That’s the only reason anyone ever opens their mouth, on stage or off stage. They may use a language that seems revealing, but if so, it’s just a coincidence, because what they’re trying to do is accomplish an objective.” Talk, then, is mistrusted, for it’s understood that in this world, talk hides an agenda. Levene, the aging salesman in Glengarry Glen Ross, expresses this succinctly when he accuses Williamson, the office manager, of withholding the best ‘leads’ in a characteristically “Mametian” exchange early on in the play:

WILLIAMSON: MY JOB IS TO MARSHAL THOSE LEADS...

LEVENE: MARSHAL THE LEADS...MARSHAL THE LEADS? WHAT THE FUCK, WHAT BUS DID YOU GET OFF OF, WE’RE HERE TO FUCKING...
sell. Fuck marshaling the leads. What the fuck talk is that?...Where did you learn that? In school...(Pause) That’s ‘talk,’ my friend, that’s ‘talk.’ Our job is to sell.

This play’s bleak vision of human relationships and social values in America, its world of foul-mouthed crooks and con men, has come, for many, to symbolize Mamet’s theatrical universe. “I’ve always been fascinated by the picaresque,” he confessed to critic John Lahr in a 1994 interview. “That’s part of the Chicago tradition: to love our gangsters and con men, the bunko artists and so forth.” Audiences seem to love his conmen, as well—American Buffalo and Glengarry Glen Ross remain among his most commercially successful plays.

Only the contentious battle of the sexes rivals petty criminals in Mamet’s dramatic universe. First explored by the playwright in Sexual Perversity in Chicago, a play he describes as being about “how a nice, healthy relationship between two nice young people was ruined by the incursion of a misogynist,” Mamet’s uncompromising depiction of the gulf between men and women—along with his own highly publicized persona as a lover of such quintessentially masculine hobbies as hunting, gun collecting, high-stakes poker playing and race-car driving—have fueled accusations that both the playwright and his plays are misogynistic. This accusation peaked in the early 1990s with the premiere of Oleanna, a taut and unnerving exploration of power that features a male professor and the female student who accuses him of sexual harassment. Audiences reacted with uncharacteristic violence: shouting matches and fistfights erupted in the theater. Many were quick to accuse Mamet of engaging in “backlash sexual politics” by using his theater as a soapbox to express hostility toward the contemporary feminist agenda, a charge the playwright denied.

Undoubtedly, it is Mamet’s extraordinary success that has inspired such a strong public perception of his work. It’s unfortunate, however, that this perception often prevents us from arriving at a more complex and layered understanding of his plays. Even his dark, profane and aggressively masculine plays—which represent only a portion of Mamet’s startlingly vast and varied canon—offer deeper interpretations. While Mamet has clearly disavowed the label “political playwright,” many critics view him as a moralist who, through his depictions of ethically and spiritually bankrupt individuals and institutions, explores our attempts at authentic connection and community. As he explained in a 1977 Village Voice interview, “My plays are about people trying to become connected. People who are confused...trying to do good...But no one knows how. No one ever quite makes it.”

Artistic Director Robert Falls’ revival of A Life in the Theatre is the centerpiece of Goodman’s David Mamet Festival. The play bears many of the hallmarks of Mamet’s signature plays, with its all-male cast, sparse, fractured language and episodic structure. It also makes literal what many see as a thematic thread in Mamet’s work—life as a kind of theater in which we perform ourselves, often at the expense of authenticity and genuine intimacy. But ironically, the characters in A Life in the Theatre, actors in an abstracted, almost Beckettian repertory company, seem less trapped by their roles than the hoodlums of American Buffalo or the salesmen of Glengarry Glen Ross. Robert, the aging actor, and John, the young up-and-comer, are, according to critic Dennis Carroll, “less circumscribed by social conditioning...” than their more volatile counterparts. “They fight with more success to break through social masks and constraints and move towards communion with each other...there is an indication that [they] are more vulnerable and uncertain.”

This difference is rooted in the language, which, while crafted with Mamet’s usual rhythm and precision, is less profane, less colloquial than much of his work. The relationship between these men is also more positive than other Mamet depictions of teacher-pupil relationships, here reflecting genuine experience and skill. Perhaps this is because it is Mamet’s homage to the theater. Mamet writes that A Life in the Theatre is “an attempt to look with love at an institution we all love, the theater, and at the only component of that institution (about whom our feelings are less simple), the men and women of the theater. These are the world’s heartiest mayflies, whom we elect and appoint to live out our dreams upon the stage.” While it may be a loving portrait, Mamet is unafraid to expose his characters’ weaknesses, and much of the play’s considerable humor derives from Robert’s pomposity, or as one critic put it, “the gap between the mundane nature of the subject matter and the elevated language that the character applies to it.”
The Goodman’s David Mamet Festival aptly pairs this early comedy with *Romance*, the playwright’s most recent work for the stage, set in a courtroom in a large, anonymous metropolis that’s in the midst of a Middle East peace conference. Law and order quickly devolves into chaos, as the pill-popping judge, the straight-laced prosecutor, his preening young boy toy, the evasive Jewish defendant and his anti-Semitic lawyer face off, fall apart, and struggle to stay on track. When the ironically titled farce premiered in New York last season, critics seemed startled that Mamet would tackle the comic form, “confounding expectations by stretching outside his natural register,” and speculated that this was the work of a mature writer experimenting with an entirely new genre. Others saw the play as a kind of self-parody. “It’s *Glengarry Glen Ross* on laughing gas,” one reviewer suggested.

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The play’s high-octane language is vintage Mametspeak, and its all-male cast fits into the mold of plays like *Glengarry Glen Ross* and *American Buffalo*. But while those plays use arcane language and over-identification with the more Darwinian aspects of American capitalism for tragic effect, *Romance* portrays the characters’ struggles to break out of a determined language and a set of confined roles with comic brilliance. Their ambitious goals—world peace, love and understanding, a sense of belonging and justice—may be absurd, but their desire to achieve those lofty goals is sincere.

The perception of *Romance* as a radical departure also fails to recognize the playwright’s long history of experimentation. From the beginning of his career, Mamet has been a prolific writer who embraced a variety of forms including full-length plays, short experimental works, and plays for young audiences. In 1975, the year that *American Buffalo* premiered at the Goodman, the controversial *Sexual Perversity in Chicago* opened off-Broadway on a double bill with *The Duck Variations*, a gentle and witty meditation on mortality. In addition, *The Revenge of the Space Pandas or Binky Rudich and the Two-Speed Clock*, a wildly imaginative fable for young audiences, was written for the St. Nicholas Theatre and *Marranos*, a play about Jewish life under the inquisition in sixteenth-century Spain, was produced at the Bernard Horwich Jewish Community Center in West Rogers Park.

Part of this productivity and range no doubt arises from the author’s very pragmatic approach to playwriting. “I was very fortunate, coming from Chicago, because we had that tradition there of writing as a legitimate day-to-day skill, like bricklaying,” Mamet explains. “You know… you need to build a garage but you can’t afford a bricklayer. Well, hell, figure out how to lay bricks. You need a script, well, hell, figure out how to write one.” But the diversity of his work is also a reflection of his voracious intellectual appetite. In interviews, he often cites the influence of other writers and dramatists on his work, a list which includes not only European playwrights Harold Pinter, Eugene Ionesco and Bertolt Brecht, but also Midwestern novelists Sinclair Lewis, Willa Cather, Sherwood Anderson and Theodore Dreiser. He has written a number of contemporary adaptations of Anton Chekhov’s plays and short stories as well as adaptations of works by British writers J.B. Priestley, Harley Granville-Barker and Terrence Rattigan. Author Leslie Krane, who has published two book-length studies of Mamet’s work, argues that the “moral vision” presented in his plays has been “developed and bolstered” by his reading of Aristotle, the Stoics, Freud, Karl Marx, Bruno Bettelheim, Joseph Campbell, the Chicago turn-of-the-century economist Thorstein Veblen and Stanislavskys, among others.

This range of knowledge and experience has clearly stood him in good stead; more than 30 years after his initial success, David Mamet continues to be one of the leading playwrights of the English-speaking world, in addition to being a much-lauded screenwriter, director, essayist, adaptor, poet and thinker. In the last 10 years, his creative output includes the plays *The Cryptogram*, a haunting drama about the betrayal of a young boy by his parents; *Boston Marriage*, a period drama about a lesbian couple and their maid; the films *Spanish Prisoner*, a thriller, *The Winslow Boy*, a period drama, and *State and Main*, a contemporary showbiz comedy; several collections of essays about the nature and purpose of drama, the crafts of acting, playwriting and screenwriting; and a book of reflections on Torah readings entitled *Five Cities of Refuge: Weekly Reflections on Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy*, co-written with Rabbi Lawrence Kushner. While he continues to be identified with the terse, testosterone-laden and often foulmouthed language of *American Buffalo* and *Glengarry Glen Ross*, an honest assessment of his work confirms that what constitutes ‘Mametspeak’ has changed radically over the years. What has not changed, however, is his incisive and unsentimental grappling with the horror, humor and absurdity of what it is to be human.
David Mamet: A Timeline
COMPILED BY ELIZABETH RICE from “File On Mamet,” and Goodman Theatre’s Mamet Festival Timeline

Nov. 30, 1947 — Born in Flossmoor, Ill.

1949 — Mamet family moves to Park Forest

1952 — Mamet family moves to South Shore

1957-1958 — Parents divorce

1958 — Moves with his mother and sister to Olympia Fields

1963 — Moves to Lincoln Park with his father

1963-1965 — Works at The Second City as bus boy and backstage at the Hull House Theater; exposed to works by Pinter, Brecht and Albee.

1965-1969 — Attends Goddard College in Vermont; receives his B.A. in English literature.

1966 — Works as steward on cargo boat on Lake Michigan.

1967 — Spends summer in Montreal as dancer for Maurice Chevalier’s company.


1969 — Graduates from Goddard College; joins theater company based at McGill University in Toronto and theater company in Montreal; stage manages The Fantasicks.


1971 — Works as acting teacher for a year at Goddard College; forms St. Nicholas Theatre Co. with two students, William H. Macy and Steve Schacter. They perform first drafts of The Duck Variations and Sexual Perversity in Chicago. They also perform Lone Canoe, slapstick version of old Indian legends.

1972 — Invited back for another year at Goddard; appointed artist in residence. During the summer, The Duck Variations and Sexual Perversity in Chicago produced by a small company in Boston; it does poorly. Returns to Chicago, disbanding St. Nicholas Theatre Co. In fall, The Duck Variations is billed with monologue Litko in the New Room at Body Politic Theater in Chicago.

1973 — Acts in Body Politic Theater’s The Night They Shot Harry Lindsey with a 155mm Howitzer and Blamed it on Zebras. Shows Sexual Perversity in Chicago to Stuart Gordon at Body Politic Theater and they begin to rework it. Works at a children’s theater in Chicago and meets J.J. Johnston.


1975 — American Buffalo premieres in Goodman Theater’s Stage Two season of new plays. The Bernard Horwich Jewish Community Center hosts St. Nicholas Players’ production of Marranos (Swine), about the persecution of Jews during the Spanish Inquisition. Sexual Perversity in Chicago opens off-off-Broadway and is awarded Obie for Best Play. The St. Nicholas Players move into permanent home on Halsted in Chicago and open with American Buffalo and organize classes in acting technique, based on the Sanford-Mersner method. (By 1977 this will become a full training program for actors, designers, directors and stage managers.) Mamet is contributing editor at Oui magazine and a visiting lecturer at the University of Chicago.

1976 — Resigns as artistic director for St. Nicholas Players and moves to New York. Sexual Perversity in Chicago and The Duck Variations open off-Broadway at the Cherry Lane Theatre and run for 273 performances. Wins Jefferson Award for American Buffalo, Obie for American Buffalo and for The Cherry Lane production of Sexual Perversity in Chicago and The Duck Variations. Awarded grant from the New York State Council for the Arts, Rockefeller Foundation Award and CBS Fellowship in Creative Writing, which requires him to lecture part time at Yale University.

1977 — A Life in the Theater opens at Stage 2 of Goodman Theatre; surprising hit. American Buffalo opens on Broadway, wins Drama Critics Circle Award. All Men Are...
Whores opens at Yale Cabaret. Revenge of the Space Pandas opens at St. Clements Theatre. Sexual Perversity in Chicago and The Duck Variations opens in West End. Mamet marries actress Lindsay Crouse.


1979 — The Lone Canoe opens at Goodman Theatre, panned by critics, mocked by audiences. A Life in the Theatre is revived at The Goodman to critical and audience acclaim. Hired by Bob Rafaelson to write screen adaptation of The Postman Always Rings Twice.

1980 — The Postman Always Rings Twice is shot starring Jessica Lange and Jack Nicholson. Revised version of Lakeboat opens at Milwaukee Repertory Theater, subsequently produced at the Long Wharf Theatre and Goodman Theatre.


1982 — Edmond opens at the Goodman Theatre, directed by Gregory Mosher; later opens off-Broadway at the Provincetown Playhouse.

1983 — Mamet receives an Oscar nomination for best adapted screenplay for The Verdict. Glengarry Glen Ross premieres at The National Theatre in London on Harold Pinter’s recommendation.

1984 — American premiere of Glengarry Glen Ross at Goodman Theatre; directed by Gregory Mosher, which transfers to Broadway.

1985 — The Shawl presented at Goodman Theater; directed by Mosher.


1988 — Writes and directs film, Things Change. Speed the Plow presented by Lincoln Center at the Royal Theater in New York, directed by Gregory Mosher.


1993 — Oleanna opens off Broadway at the Orpheum Theater, directed by Mamet. It runs for 513 performances.

1994 — Writes screenplay for Vanya on 42nd Street. Writes and directs film version of Oleanna.

1995 — Writes The Cryptogram.

1996 — Three Uses of the Knife published.

1997 — Writes screenplay for The Edge. Writes and directs The Spanish Prisoner. Writes screenplay for Wag the Dog. The Old Neighborhood opens at the American Repertory Theater in production directed by Scott Zigler; subsequently mounted by same director at Booth Theatre on Broadway.

1998 — Writes screenplay for Ronin.


2000 — Writes and directs State and Main, writes screenplay for Lakeboat, directs Catastrophe.

2001 — Writes screenplay for Hannibal. Writes and directs Heist.


tice of the Movie Business published.


A 2009 Time Capsule
BY ELIZABETH RICE

David Mamet premeired Race on Broadway in 2009. The world around us, whether directly or indirectly, often effects our attitudes and perceptions of art. What was happening in the world that may have informed Mamet’s writing and life during Race? How might current events effect the perception of his audiences?

In the News:

Jan. 20: Inducted as the 44th U.S. president, Barack Obama becomes the first African-American to hold this position.

Feb. 12: For the 200th anniversary of President Abraham Lincoln’s birth, the U.S. government issues four commemorative pennies.

April 3: Iowa Supreme Court deems that denying same-sex marriage is unconstitutional. It is the third state to allow same-sex couples to marry.

June 25: Michael Jackson, the King of Pop, dies at age 50.

June 29: Bernard Madoff is sentenced to 150 years in prison for 11 federal felonies on fraud, turning his wealth management business into a mass Ponzi scheme.

Aug. 8: Sonia Sotomayor is sworn in as the 11th Supreme Justice and first person of Hispanic decent to hold the position.

Sept. 9: Obama addresses the joint Congress on health-care reform, in which he assures that illegal immigrants will not be covered by his proposal. South Carolina Rep. Joe Wilson interrupts the president’s speech, claiming that Obama lied about the issue.

Sept. 24: RAINN Day, the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network’s annual campaign to stop sexual assault, is held on college campuses.

Sept. 27: Director Roman Polanski is arrested in Switzerland on an outstanding warrant from 1977 for the rape of a 13-year old girl.

Oct. 9: President Obama wins the Nobel Peace Prize for “his extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples.”

Oct. 28: Obama signs the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crime Prevention Act extending federal hate crime law to include crimes motivated by victims’ gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and disability.

At the Movies:

Transformers 2: Revenge of the Fallen: The Autobot characters of Skids and Mudflap are harshly criticized as “racially insensitive.”

The Blind Side: Based on a true story, The Blind Side tells the story of a wealthy white Southern family taking in a local black teen, Michael Ohr. Their deed is called into question when his extraordinary football skills win him a scholarship to their alma mater.

The Princess and the Frog: Disney features its first African-American princess.

On Broadway:


Goodman’s Robert Falls directs Mamet’s American Buffalo but because of bad audience turnout, it is only open between Nov. 17 and Nov. 24, 2008.

To explore more happenings of 2009, visit: http://education.goodmantheatre.org
David Mamet’s politics are perhaps even more controversial than are his plays, especially in recent years. Beginning in 2008, Mamet has made a very public conversion from liberalism to conservatism that has ruffled more than a few feathers. Back in March 2008, Mamet wrote an essay for *The Village Voice* entitled “Why I am No Longer a Brain-Dead Liberal.” In this article, he detailed the reasons for his change of heart, which he summed up as follows: “I took the liberal view for many decades, but I believe now I have changed my mind.” Three years later, he became the author of a book entitled *The Secret Knowledge: On the Dismantling of American Culture*, published in June 2011.

In *The Secret Knowledge*, Mamet develops a polemic against perceived liberal ideals and programs, from the New Deal to affirmative action, global warming to ripped jeans. Although the book has received an average of 4 stars from customers on Amazon.com, it has been widely slammed by reviewers. David L. Ulin of *The Los Angeles Times* states that Mamet “targets liberalism but misfires” and compares his argument to a list of Fox News talking points. Christopher Hitchings of *The New York Times* writes, “This is an extraordinarily irritating book, written by one of those people who smugly believe that, having lost their faith, they must ipso facto have found their reason.” In the book, Mamet states without question that he believes reason lies on the conservative side of the political spectrum.

It is interesting to note how this political change of heart overlaps with the timeline of Mamet’s playwriting. His first play about politics, *November*, was written in 2007 and first produced on Broadway in early 2008. His *Village Voice* article was published around the same time, and in the article he directly connects his political shift to the writing process, albeit sarcastically: “I wrote a play about politics. And as part of the ‘writing process,’ as I believe it’s called, I started thinking about politics.” If he had not already begun writing *Race* at this time, he must have started shortly thereafter, because *Race* opened on Broadway on Dec. 6, 2009. Less than two years later came the release of *The Secret Knowledge*.

Many parallels can be noted—for instance, the play’s harsh criticism of affirmative action lines up well with segments of *The Secret Knowledge*, in which Mamet discredits affirmative action by asserting that racism is no longer a problem. He asks, “When was the last time you heard a racist remark or saw racial discrimination at school or work?”—assuming that the answer is “Never.” In an editorial, “Why We Can’t Stop Talking About Race in America,” published in *The New York Times* three months before the play’s Broadway debut, Mamet compares the status of nonwhites in today’s America to that of whites in Jim Crow-era America: “For just as personal advantage was derived by whites from the defense of slavery and its continuation as Jim Crow and segregation, so too personal advantage, political advantage and indeed expression of deeply held belief may lead nonwhites to defense of positions that, though they may be momentarily acceptable, will eventually be revealed as untenable.” Statements like this seem to be clearly linked to Mamet’s newfound conservatism.

Interestingly, in a 1984 interview (held here in Chicago, at the Drake Hotel) with Hank Nuwer that predates his conservative conversion by nearly 25 years, he makes a statement about the topic of race that also seems to apply well to the play: “The only person who can get what he wants is the individual man. You can’t do it as a race; you can’t do it as a culture.” This every-man-for-himself affirmation of the individual certainly comes across in *Race*, particularly in the final scenes.

Finally, it is also noteworthy that in the same 1984 interview, Mamet also is quoted as saying: “The purpose of the theater is not primarily to deal with social issues; it’s to deal with spiritual issues.” One wonders, did Mamet still believe this when writing *Race* in the late 2000s? Does he view *Race*’s dealing with the social issue of, well, race, as an exception to his theater-is-not-for-social issues principle? Or does he believe our dealings of race to be of spiritual consequence? Given the play’s emphasis on the theme of guilt, it seems entirely possible.
Change in America: The Civil Rights Movement
BY CAT CROWDER

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was the most sweeping civil rights legislation passed in this country since Reconstruction. And although it prohibited discrimination in public places, provided for the integration of schools and other public facilities, and made employment discrimination illegal, the term “affirmative action” was first used by President John F. Kennedy in 1961. Executive Order 10925, signed by JFK on March 6th, required government contractors to “take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed, and that employees are treated during employment, without regard to their race, creed, color, or national origin.” This Executive Order also established the President’s Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity, which later became the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) in the Civil Rights Act.

It had been a hard-fought struggle to get legal protections from discriminatory practices. Here is a timeline, originally written for the Magnolia study guide in our 2008-2009 season, that gives a glimpse of the struggle for equality.

1863 President Lincoln signs the Emancipation Proclamation, which claims to free all slaves, but in effect frees none. General Sherman’s troops burn Atlanta in the “March to the Sea.”

1866 The Ku Klux Klan is formed by a group of Confederate veterans; Nathan Bedford Forrest is reportedly the Klan’s first Grand Dragon.

1865 The American Civil War ends and the 13th Amendment abolishes slavery in the United States.

1866 “Plessy v. Ferguson” establishes the segregationist doctrine of “separate but equal.”

1896 The Ku Klux Klan is formed by a group of Confederate veterans; Nathan Bedford Forrest is reportedly the Klan’s first Grand Dragon.

1909 The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is founded.

1954 The Supreme Court orders public schools desegregated in “Brown v. Board of Education.” Southern segregationists vow to oppose the ruling and label this day “Black Monday.”

1955 Emmett Till, a 14-year-old from Chicago, is murdered while visiting family in Mississippi. His supposed crime was whistling at Carolyn Bryant, a white woman.

1955 The Montgomery Bus Boycott begins on Dec. 1 after Rosa Parks refuses to give up her seat to a white man on a bus.

1963 NAACP Field Secretary Medgar Evers is killed outside his home by Byron de la Beckwith, who is not convicted until 1993 when he is tried for the third time.

1957 The “Little Rock Nine” integrate the all-white Central High School in Little Rock, AR, despite the presence of angry mobs.
1963 On Nov. 22 President John F. Kennedy is assassinated in Dallas, TX.

1964 President Johnson signs into law the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

1965 Malcolm X is assassinated, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 is passed and President Johnson issues Executive Order 11246, which codifies affirmative action for the first time and outlaws racial discrimination in admissions and hiring.

1968 The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is assassinated in Memphis, TN. His memorial service is in Atlanta, GA. The King Center in Atlanta houses his remains and draws millions of visitors each year.

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1973 Maynard Jackson is elected Mayor of Atlanta. Jackson is the first African-American mayor of a major southern city.

1975 The Voting Rights Act is extended.

1989 Gen. Colin Powell is the first African American appointed chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Douglas Wilder of Virginia is the first African American to be elected a state governor.

1978 In “Bakke v. California,” the Supreme Court rules that the use of racial quotas in university admissions are unconstitutional. Affirmative action programs designed to give equal opportunity are upheld.

1992 April riots in Los Angeles kill 53 people. The rioting is a response to the acquittal of four police officers who were videotaped beating Rodney King, an African-American motorist.

1997 In “Robinson v. Shell Oil Company,” the Supreme Court rules in favor of Robinson, who claimed he was fired because he was black and was later given an unfavorable recommendation by his former employer. His right to sue his former employer for discrimination and for their retaliatory action was upheld.

2005 Condoleezza Rice is appointed Secretary of State. She is the second African American (after Gen. Colin Powell) and the first African-American woman to hold the position.

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Affirmative action is a practice in the U.S. to overcome racial and sexual discrimination both in education and business. Although other groups, such as the elderly, disabled and homosexuals, have been discriminated against, affirmative action programs are more often geared toward women and racial minorities. Affirmative action is only one issue in a long history of civil and equal rights abuses that exist in the U.S. It stems from the racism and segregation associated around people of color in the early centuries of this country and the low social standing given to women during the same time period. Both groups have fought long and hard for equal rights; affirmative action programs help bridge the gap that history created.

The term was first used by President John F. Kennedy in an executive order that established the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in 1961. This board oversaw the government and made sure its contractors did not use discriminatory hiring practices. This was further enforced by President Lyndon B. Johnson’s Executive Order establishing the Office of Federal Contract Compliance (OFCC) in the Department of Labor. They helped implement affirmative action by requiring companies to submit affirmative actions plans. Although President Kennedy first coined the term, the semblance of what we consider to be affirmative action really began to take root in 1952. Some families in Topeka, Kansas, backed by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), argued that racial segregation, especially in education, perpetuated inferior treatment of Americans of color, thus violating their Fourteenth Amendment rights. The landmark case ruled in the favor of the families, ending the years of segregation, and was especially strengthened by the 1896 Plessy v. Ferguson case.

While the NAACP was fighting for equal rights in education, President Harry S. Truman created the Committee on Governmental Contract Compliance in 1953, the predecessor to Presidents Kennedy and Johnson’s programs. They urged governmental agencies to “act positively and affirmatively to implement the policy of nondiscrimination.” Thus, Truman rather than Kennedy ushered affirmative action into the government workspace. Though Brown v. Board of Education ended segregation, other Supreme Court cases in the late 1940s and early ’50s were already working toward equality and integration in higher education. Plaintiffs in cases Sipuel v. Board of Regents of University of Oklahoma (1948), Sweatt v. Painter (1950), and McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents (1950) were rejected from colleges because of race. In every case, the court ruled that the schools were not to reject applicants based on race and must provide education for students of color equal to that of white students. Affirmative action has been a long, drawn-out battle that still rages on today.

Problems within the education system originally helped end segregation. Today, problems within the education system often question the validity of current affirmative action efforts. In 1978, the case of Bakke v. Regents of the University of California came up in the Supreme Court. Allan Bakke, a white student, had accused UC Davis of violating his Fourteenth Amendment rights to equal protection because of his race. He challenged that the medical school’s affirmative action program was unconstitutional. He was rejected from the program while other students of color were accepted with lower grades and tests scores as part of UC Davis’s “special admissions.” The court ruled that UC Davis’s affirmative action program was unconstitutional, but affirmative action plans, in general, were acceptable. Some schools had decent plans that helped develop the quality of student life. The court found that these plans needed to meet on of the three points: compelling interest, strict scrutiny or educational diversity to maintain its constitutionality. This case ultimately opened up affirmative action to be challenged, especially in higher education.

In 1989, the Supreme Court case of Ward’s Cove v. Antonio changed the face of how discrimination is perceived in the workplace. Workers from the Alaskan cannery, Ward’s Cove Packing Co., filed suit that the company used discriminatory hiring practices because most skilled laborers at the company were white and most unskilled laborers were people of color. The standing rule of thumb in affirmative action cases was such that employees simply needed to show that discrimination was occurring in their workplace. The ruling on Ward’s Cove v. Antonio, however, found that accidental discrimination was not justifiable for employer punishment. If the only people qualified for the job were white, it was not the company’s fault that such stratification existed. This caused any future affirmative action suits to show...
intentional discrimination rather than discrimination in general.

Iconic Supreme Court case Plessy v. Ferguson caused 58 years of state-permitted “separate but equal” doctrine, but affirmative action programs are not without their flaws. In the most recent years, many have argued that these programs are another kind of racism. African-American Californian businessman Ward Connerly has been a big critic against affirmative action, claiming that it is another way of labeling minorities as inferior to Caucasians because they are treated differently and assisted in education and job applications. In 1995, Connerly pushed for University of California to drop its affirmative action program, and was successful until 2002, when the school board voted to reinstate it. Other state universities across the country have done away with their affirmative action programs, and in 1996 and 1998, the states of California and Washington, respectively, banned affirmative action of any kind in their states.

Affirmative action has helped forward civil rights in this nation, but as the scope of the world changes and we become more multicultural, affirmative action returns to the controversial state is held when first instituted. While it can benefit female and racial minority citizens, can affirmative action, despite good intentions, be considered a discriminatory gesture?
Amendments, Cases, Executive Orders, and Laws in Affirmative Action’s History
BY RACHEL KRANZ in “Library in a Book: Affirmative Action” and ELIZABETH RICE

Amendments

The 13th Amendment
Abolishes slavery as a legal institution.

The 14th Amendment
Was originally designed to protect the rights of the newly freed slaves and people of color in the U.S.
Anybody born or naturalized in the U.S. is a citizen.
No state can make any law limiting the “privileges or immunities” of citizens.
No state can deprive any person of life, liberty or property without due process of law.
No state can deny any person the equal protection of the law.

The 15th Amendment
Voting rights of any citizen cannot be “denied or abridged” by federal or state government “on account or race, color or previous condition of servitude.”

The 19th Amendment
Guarantees women’s rights to vote.

Title IX of Educational Amendments of 1972
Bans sex discrimination in both employment and admissions at all schools that receive federal funding.

Laws

Civil Rights Act of 1866
The first piece of civil rights legislation in the U.S.
All people in the U.S. and its territories have the same right to “make and enforce contracts, to sue, be parties, give evidence, and to the full and equal benefit of all laws and proceedings for the security or persons and property as is enjoyed by white citizens.”
Congress overrode President Andrew Jackson’s veto. However, lack of legal help for people of color and no prescribed punishment for violators prevented this act from taking a foothold in U.S. culture.

Civil Rights Act of 1875
Prohibited discrimination in public nongovernmental entities.
Overturned by the Supreme Court in 1883 on the basis that the 14th amendment prevents the state from discriminating against individuals; however, it may not prohibit private individuals from discrimination.

Equal Pay Act (1963)
Outlaws unequal payment of wages based on sex.
Jobs requiring “equal skill, effort and responsibility and performed under similar working conditions” must receive equal pay.

Civil Rights Act of 1964
Outlawed discrimination based on “race, color, religion or national origin” in public establishments that had a connection to interstate commerce or that were supported by the government. For example, hotels, motels, restaurants, gas stations, bars, public schools, colleges, etc.
This was later amended to prevent gender discrimination.

Title VI
Portion of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that prohibits race discrimination in admissions and employment in any program that receives federal funds.

Title VII
Portion of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that bans discrimination based on race, color, religion or national origin by any employer with 15 or more employees; applies to public and private education institutions as well.

1965 Voting Rights Act
Allows the Department of Justice power to enforce the 15th Amendment’s guarantee of voting rights to all Americans.

Equal Opportunity Act of 1972
Prohibits employment discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs and marital or familial status.
Allowed the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to investigate, mediate and file suit against any employer who violates this.

California Proposition 209/Washington Initiative 200
Anti-affirmative action initiatives that were passed in California and Washington.
Prohibits government from discriminating against or granting preferential treatment to individuals or groups
based on race, sex, color, ethnicity or national origin in public employment, public education or public contracting.

Executive Orders

Executive Order 10925
Ordered by President John F. Kennedy.
First time the term “affirmative action” is used
Establishes the President’s Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity to prevent discrimination in employment by government and their contractors.

Executive Order 11246
Ordered by Lyndon B. Johnson.
The Department of Labor is responsible for enforcing affirmative action laws.
The Office of Federal Contract Compliance (OFCC) develops regulations requiring government contractors to submit affirmative action plans.

Cases

Dred Scott v. Sanford, a.k.a. The Dred Scott Decision (1857)
Establishes that people brought to the U.S. as slaves and their descendants (whether slave or free) cannot be U.S. citizens and are not protected by the U.S. Constitution.
This was overruled by the 13th and 14th Amendments.

Yick Wo v. Hopkins (1886)
Yick Wo owned a wooden building laundry and believed that his 14th Amendment rights were violated by a San Francisco law that made it illegal to operate a laundry without the consent of the city council unless it was located in a stone or brick building.
Though the law itself didn’t explicitly discriminate against race, it was open to be administered unfairly and thus ruled as an illegal law.

Plessy v. Ferguson (1896)
In 1890, the state of Louisiana enacted a law that established different train cars for black and white people. Homer Plessy, who was 1/8th black and thus considered to be black by law, was arrested for sitting in the White Only car. His case was appealed to the Supreme Court. The ruling established the “separate but equal” ideal and racial segregation in private businesses.

Three cases in which a student’s admission into a university was denied due to race.
The Supreme Court decided that the schools (University of Oklahoma and University of Texas) needed to provide education to people of color equal to education offered to Caucasians and could not provide different treatment to a student solely because of his or her race.

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (1954)
This was a class action suit brought forth by 13 parents representing 20 students to the Board of Education in Topeka, Kansas, in complaint of segregation in public schools.
The Supreme Court’s ruling overturned Plessy v. Ferguson, establishing separate public schools for black and white students to be unconstitutional.

Regents of University of California v. Bakke (1978)
Allan Bakke challenged UC Davis’s affirmative action program when he was rejected as an applicant to the medical program, while people of color with lower grades and test scores were admitted as part of “special admissions.”
The Supreme Court ruled that University of California’s affirmative action program was unconstitutional. However, this did not mean that all affirmative action programs necessarily were.
The ruling also led to a change in affirmative action programs, requiring them to show three points: compelling interest, strict scrutiny and education diversity.

A group of cannery workers at Ward’s Cove Packing Company were complaining that the company used discriminatory hiring practices because a large number of skilled laborers were white, while a large number of unskilled laborers were people of color, primarily native Alaskan and Filipino.
The ruling changed affirmative action again, in that instead of proving discrimination existed in the workplace, employees had to show that discrimination had been specifically intended.
affirmative action: The principle that institutions should take positive action to overcome discrimination and ensure broad representation within their ranks. Affirmative action in employment might involve active efforts to recruit employees from among under-represented minorities and/or women; to expand the presence of minorities and/or women in largely white and/or male departments; and to increase the numbers of minorities and/or women in management. Affirmative action in education might entail efforts to increase enrollment by minorities and/or women.

Black Code: Laws passed in many Southern states after the Civil War separating people of color from white people by depriving their rights and civil liberties.

Civil Right Movement: The movement that began in the 1950s in which African-Americans and their allies demanded an end to segregation and the beginning of fully equal opportunity for people of color.

class action suit: A suit brought by a group, or class, of people, all claiming to be injured by the same problem. For example, a group of employees might claim that they all suffered from discrimination by the same employer.

compelling interest: A legal term referring to the reasons why the state might take action, especially action restricting something that is otherwise considered a legal right. Part of the Supreme Court’s job is to determine cases in which the state needs a compelling interest to act, and then whether said state has a compelling interest.

constitutional: Acceptable under the U.S. Constitution. The Supreme Court’s job is to decide which laws are constitutional.

disability rights: A concept coined in the 1980s referring to the need to respect the rights of people with disabilities. The term is a reference to the civil rights movement, which concerned the rights of people of color.

discrimination: Action or policy that is unfair to a particular group, keeping them from enjoying the same opportunities as do other people.

due process of law: The principle that the law will work the same way in every case, for every citizen; a right guaranteed by the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments of the Constitution.

educational diversity: A principle mentioned by Justice Lewis Powell in the 1978 Bakke v. University of California Board of Regents case and frequently cited thereafter in affirmative action cases; the ideal of a student body formed of many diverse types of people as an educational goal.


“equal pay for equal work”: Concept that people doing the same job should receive the same amount of money despite race, gender, creed and sex. Slogan used by feminist groups in the latter 20th century when protesting for equal work.

equal protection: The principle that every citizen deserves the same protection of the law; a right guaranteed by the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

Equal Rights Amendment: A proposed constitutional amendment that would have guaranteed women equal rights under the Constitution, for which there was a campaign in the 1970s; however, the amendment failed to win the necessary support and was never ratified by a sufficient number of states.

glass ceiling: Term coined to express the perception that women could rise to only a certain level in an institution or job, after which they hit an unofficial invisible barrier that nevertheless is impassable (the glass ceiling).

institutionalized racism: A concept coined by supporters of the civil rights movement to indicate the kinds of discrimination that were practiced because of the policy of institutions rather than individual decisions. For example, if a college degree is required to work at a particular job, and if few African-Americans in the area have college degrees, the policy may be considered an example of institutionalized racism, especially if it can
be shown that the knowledge represented by the degree has no actual relationship to the job.

integration: A term meaning intermixing or to make part of the whole; often refers to the process of bringing people of color together with white people in schools, jobs and public accommodations. The opposite of segregation.

Jim Crow: Colloquial term referring to a set of practices in the South that officially and unofficially segregated African-Americans from voting and gave white people more credibility in legal proceedings.

minorities: A term used to refer to people of color. Considered acceptable in the 1970s, it came under attack in the ’80s, when people of color pointed out that in face, white people were in the minority worldwide and in some parts of the U.S.

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP): A civil rights organization for minorities, especially African-Americans. Begun in 1909, its mission is “to ensure the political, educational, social and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate racial hatred and racial discrimination.”

Niagara Movement: The predecessor of the NAACP. Founded by W.E.B. Du Bois in 1905, the Niagara movement was a black civil rights organization that opposed racial segregation.

Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs: Originally the Committee on Governmental Contract Compliance created by President Harry Truman, this office in the Department of Labor sees that businesses with federal contracts comply with nondiscrimination laws.

open admissions: A policy adopted by some public educational institutions whereby anyone with a high school diploma (and, in some cases, a minimum grade point average) is accepted; an effort to make higher education more widely available and to avoid discriminatory decisions about who should attend college.

reverse racism: A term coined in response to affirmative action efforts, claiming that the victims of historic racism practice their own racism against white people.

segregation: Literally, separation; refers to the primarily southern system of law and custom that kept African-Americans and other people of color separate from white people in employment, schools and public accommodations.

separate but equal: The principle established in the 1896 Supreme Court decision Plessy v. Ferguson, asserting the African-Americans could be segregated into separate schools and public accommodations as long as those separate institutions were equal to those of white people. The concept represented an effort to continue segregation despite the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, which asserts that every citizen has an equal right to the due process of law, regardless of race, color, or creed.

sexism: Discrimination on the basis of sex; generally used to mean discrimination against women, but occasionally used to mean discrimination against men.

strict scrutiny/intermediate scrutiny: Rigorous examination; a term used to indicate that a policy must be strictly examined to see whether it is necessary, as opposed to intermediate scrutiny or other less rigorous types of scrutiny. Strict scrutiny is generally called for in the case of programs that a judge believes may violate individual rights. It is needed to see whether such violations are indeed necessary for larger purpose. Strict scrutiny is often used to determine compelling interest. Intermediate scrutiny is less rigorous examination used to determine whether a law or program is constitutional.

structural inequality: Likened to institutionalized racism, the term refers to a kind of inequality that results from the structure of a situation rather than a specific intent. For example, if a greater proportion of African-Americans than white people cannot afford college tuition and are educated in inferior schools, the situation creates structural inequality between the two groups with regard to college admissions.

suffrage/suffragists: Suffrage is the civil right to vote through democratic process. Suffragist(s) is a term used to describe groups in the late 19th and early 20th century that promoted voting rights for women.
Justice for All?
BY JESSICA KADISH

The closing line of the Pledge of Allegiance - “With liberty, and justice for all” – suggests that justice applies equally to everyone in America. However, the justice system in this country has a history of treating people in a decidedly unequal manner – often along lines of race, gender, citizenship status, and class.

Justice and Race

In the opening scene of Race, lawyer Henry Brown alludes to this history in a conversation with his client, Charles Strickland:

CHARLES: I’m guilty.
HENRY: Yes.
CHARLES: Because I’m white.

Henry’s reference is double-edged. He is specifically referring to justice in the early- to mid-20th century, when there were several well-documented instances of white defendants acquitted of crimes against Black victims, despite evidence of their guilt. One of the best-known cases was the 1955 murder of Chicagoan Emmett Till.

Roy Bryant and J. W. Milam, the two men who admittedly kidnapped Till from his uncle’s home, were also charged with his brutal murder. Despite testimony from several black witnesses, the two were acquitted of both the murder and kidnapping. Less than a year later, and protected by double jeopardy, Milam admitted killing Till in a 1956 interview for Look magazine.

Henry’s dialogue also references contemporary issues of race, class and justice. Henry is also implying that in the present day, Charles’s whiteness is exactly what will lead him to be found guilty: “Your people, if they were assured by God, that you were innocent would sell you out.”

Mamet seems to be painting a picture of a United States where 50 years ago, whiteness was a protective factor, but today, it’s condemning – a country where the tables have turned, so to speak. Is there any truth to this?

Examining the numbers, it seems that Mamet’s inference of assumed white guilt doesn’t hold up offstage. Civil rights advocate, litigator and legal scholar Michelle Alexander’s recent book The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness (2010) takes a hard look at what she calls the “new racial caste system” produced by the late-twentieth century American criminal justice system. Based on the data provided, it seems clear that whites do not find themselves in the lower castes.

Take the case of illegal drug use and the War on Drugs, a nationwide legal initiative to combat illegal drug use started in the 1980s under then-President Ronald Reagan. Nationwide, the majority of illegal drug users and dealers are white. However, 75 percent of all people who have been imprisoned for drug offenses are black or Latino (Alexander 96-97). This disparity was recently highlighted in the GOP Presidential debates by the Libertarian Ron Paul.

“True racism in this country is in the judicial system,” he said in his counterattack to the ABC News panelist at the New Hampshire debate. “And it has to do with enforcing the drug laws. Look at the percentages. The percentages of people who use drugs are about the same with blacks and whites. And yet the blacks are arrested way disproportionately. They’re prosecuted and imprisoned way disproportionately. They get the death penalty way disproportionately.”

Statistically, this is true for youth as well as adults. A 2000 study by the National Institute on Drug Abuse reported the following:

- White students use cocaine and heroin at seven times the rate of black students
- White students use crack at eight times the rate of black students
- White students and black students use marijuana at nearly identical rates

Not only are white youth more likely to use illegal drugs, they are more likely to use them in a way that is particularly dangerous to their bodies, as indicated by emergency room statistics. Alexander notes that white youth have about 3 times the number of drug-related emergency room visits as African American youth. Finally, white youth are more likely to sell illegal drugs as well. Findings from the 2000 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse revealed that white youth between the ages of 12
and 17 were over 33% more likely to have sold illegal drugs than black youth.

Despite these numbers, a 2007 Department of Justice study found that African American youth are disproportionately more likely to be reprimanded by the criminal justice system for drug use. Although African American youth are just 16 percent of all youth nationwide, they account for:

- 28 percent of all juvenile arrests
- 35 percent of youth sent to adult criminal courts
- 58 percent of youth admitted to adult state prisons

So what explains the difference in incarceration rates?

While there are many possible explanations, one is particularly relevant to Mamet’s *Race* because it relates to the psychology of the courtroom. Numerous studies (such as one in a 2004 issue of *Law and Human Behavior*) indicate that an offender’s race can cause prosecutors to react to identical criminal behavior in different ways. This is an idea that comes up over and over again in the play – that Charles Strickland’s race influences the way he will be perceived in the courtroom. In terms of documented real-world experiences, however, whiteness seems to influence lighter sentencing in court, not harsher. One review of sentencing reports for young people in Washington found significant differences in prosecutors’ descriptions of the reasons youth of different races committed crimes. Internal characteristics, such as disrespect, were most commonly given for black youth. External circumstances, such as difficult family situations, were most commonly given for white youth.

It is not just in the courtroom and in prison that white and black offenders are treated differently. Law enforcement at the everyday level also affects the lives of people of different races in different ways. Here in Illinois state police specifically targeted Latino drivers with an anti-drug program called Operation Valkyrie in the late ‘90’s. Although Latinos were less likely than whites to have illegal drugs in their vehicles, and they only made up 8% of the Illinois population at that time, they comprised 30% of those whose vehicles were stopped and searched.

Differential treatment by police officers is particularly present in urban ghetto communities, where police presence demands mental and physical submission by lower-class Black residents in a way that is shocking to non-ghetto residents. One law student at the University of Chicago reported the following information after riding along with Chicago police for a day:

“Each time we drove into a public housing project and stopped the car, every young black man in the area would almost reflexively place his hands up against the car and spread his legs to be searched. And the officers would search them. The officers would then get back in the car and stop in another project, and this would happen again. This repeated itself throughout the entire day. I couldn’t believe it. This was nothing like we learned in law school. But it just seemed so normal – for the police and the young men,” (Alexander 122-123).

Based on the current rhetoric of colorblindness and the prevailing idea that racism is much less of a problem today than it once was, it’s almost impossible to argue successfully that police can and do engage in discriminatory behavior. Patterns don’t raise suspicion; only explicitly racist remarks do. In Alexander’s words: “So long as officers refrain from uttering racial epithets and so long as they show the good sense not to say ‘the only reason I stopped him was ‘cause he’s black’, courts generally turn a blind eye to patterns of discrimination by the police”. The same principle holds true in the courtroom. In the 1987 case of McCleskey vs. Kemp, the Supreme Court ruled that under the 14th Amendment, racial prejudice in criminal sentencing could only be challenged if the defendant could prove intentional discrimination by the court. Essentially, no matter what the numbers show, unless the defendant is able to prove that the court has racist intentions toward him or her, that defendant cannot successfully allege discrimination. In an age where few admit to racist intentions, this is legally very tricky (and would likely provide the verbal gymnastics for another Mamet play).

**Justice and Class**

Justice in the United States also seems to be delegated along class lines. A book released earlier this year, *With Liberty and Justice for Some*, by Glenn Greenwald, argues that in recent years the courts have become especially effective at shielding the elite (like Charles Strickland) from being held accountable for their illegal
“Each time we drove into a public housing project and stopped the car, every young black man in the area would almost reflexively place his hands up against the car and spread his legs to be searched. And the officers would search them...This repeated itself throughout the entire day. I couldn’t believe it. This was nothing like we learned in law school.”

Access to adequate lawyers is a key factor separating the poor from the rich in the courtroom. As we see in Race, the wealthy Charles Strickland is able to freely choose the lawyers he feels will best represent him. He started out with another lawyer named Greenstein, but came to Jack and Henry because he “didn’t like the way he was handling the case.”

People with lower incomes do not have this luxury. According to a 2004 report called “Schools and Prisons: Fifty Years After Brown vs. Board or Education,” about 80% of criminal defendants are indigent and cannot hire a lawyer. In many cases such defendants are represented by a public defender, but the caseloads of these public-service lawyers are often so overwhelming that it becomes impossible to spend sufficient time or energy on any one case. As Alexander points out, those defendants who are lucky enough to secure a meeting with a lawyer often only have a few minutes to talk before making a decision that will impact them for the rest of their lives.

As Greenwald writes in the introduction of his book, “Those with political and financial clout are routinely allowed to break the law with no legal repercussions whatsoever... The criminal justice system is now almost exclusively reserved for ordinary Americans, who are routinely subject to harsh punishments even for the pettiest offenses.” Of course, there are notable exceptions, such as former Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich who, after a highly publicized trial, received 14 years in prison for 18 counts of corruption. He is a member of the elite political class, but he still did not avoid a prison sentence. Then again, he got off easier than Weldon Angelos, a 24-year-old Greek-American Utah resident who was given a 55-year sentence in 2002 as a result of just 3 instances of selling marijuana with a weapon on his person. He had no prior felony record, denied he was carrying a gun at all, and there was no evidence he ever drew the weapon. However, mandatory minimum sentencing for armed drug dealing insisted he get at least 55 years in prison. Even the judge was horrified at having to impose this sentence. Suddenly Blagojevich’s 14 years don’t seem quite so long.

Though Mamet would have us believe in the world of his play that the deck is stacked against Race defendant Charles Strickland because he is white, examining the racial breakdown of today’s justice system would lead us to believe otherwise. Henry tells Charles that he will be found guilty because no white jurors will want to be thought racist by acquitting a rich white man. It seems, however, that if Mr. Strickland’s case were to come to light in real-world America as we know it today, his whiteness and his wealth would likely serve as two major protective factors in his favor.
Race in the Headlines
BY ELIZABETH RICE

A white businessman – wealthy, articulate, powerful – is accused of rape by a woman of color. Although there is physical evidence of a sexual encounter, the businessman claims the woman was not coerced.

These are the bare bones of David Mamet’s play Race which premiered in 2009. But Mamet seems almost prescient, his story leaping from the stage and into international headlines.

On May 14th, 2011 Dominique Strauss-Kahn, managing director of the International Monetary Fund, was accused of sexual assault and attempted rape by Nafissatou Diallo, a maid at the Sofitel New York Hotel, where Strauss-Kahn was staying. Diallo accused DSK, as he is popularly known in France, of suddenly appearing naked out of the bathroom when she entered to clean his hotel room. He proceeded to attack her and force her to perform oral sex on him. The case rocked the political and economic worlds. Although the charges were ultimately dropped, the accusations caused Strauss-Kahn to quit his job at the IMF and prevented him from running in France’s 2012 presidential election as the prime candidate for the Socialist party. He was believed to be a front runner in the election. Strauss-Kahn, a well-known womanizer, had been confronted by the media on multiple occasions as a “seducer” and his friends and advisors feared that his hedonistic ways would interfere with his political career. Not long after Diallo’s case was brought to light, a writer in France, Tristane Banon, filed charges against DSK for sexual assault and attempted rape that occurred in 2003. She had named him as her assailter in a 2007 interview, but fearing defamation charges, the program had covered his name. Banon did not press charges previously on the advice of her mother, a Socialist Party politician. There is speculation that DSK has been involved in other incidences of assault, however, settlements prevent any of these victims from speaking out. In addition, there is a tradition of silence in France when broaching sexual crimes.

With this backdrop, it was not unreasonable to believe that Strauss-Kahn was culpable. As the investigation continued, however, the Manhattan District Attorney’s office revealed inconsistencies in the maid’s statement of events and discovered that their client had not been entirely truthful about her personal history. They found that Diallo’s timeline of the afternoon had changed. In some retellings, she had waited outside of DSK’s room for him to leave. On other occasions, finding that the room was still occupied, she had gone to clean another adjacent room before entering DSK’s room. There was also conjecture that the floor of the hotel she normally cleaned was not the same level where the alleged assault took place.

Nafissatou, originally from the West African country of Guinea, immigrated here under asylum with her teen-aged daughter. Within the confines of the investigation she cited that she had been raped in her past, a story she admitted later that she had fabricated to coincide with her asylum application, however, after further review, there was no mention of the rape in the record. It was also found that she had claimed a friend’s child along with her own as dependents to receive a larger tax return. On the day of the incident, she was recorded...
calling an incarcerated felon, who she claimed as her friend, about an opportunity of financial gain. This man had been convicted for possessing 400 lbs of marijuana. He was one, in a group of members, whom periodically made deposits into Diallo’s bank account, totaling close to $100,000, of which Diallo claims she was unaware. It is these inconsistencies and connections that lead the Manhattan District Attorney’s office to eventually drop the case in August.

Despite the ire of the general public on the treatment of Nafissatou Diallo and the case, one can understand the stance of the prosecution to file for the case to be dismissed. An inability to trust your client with an inconsistent story could be difficult to defend in a courtroom, especially if you are unsure of your client’s innocence. However, one might ask how much of this mistrust was fabricated by the media? Soon after the story first broke, the New York Post claimed Diallo to be a prostitute. She and her attorney, Kenneth Thompson, quickly filed a civil suit for slander. Few articles in the media focused on Diallo or tried to present the trauma she was going through, both physically, mentally, or emotionally. It could be argued that the psychological shock of assault caused her to lose the timeline of events. When the prosecution and media started to focus on Diallo’s faults and inconsistencies in her history, no one questioned whether victims of sexual crimes needed to have immaculate backgrounds to be defended.

Equally infuriating and degrading were the many voices that agreed Strauss-Kahn might be guilty of the crimes against Diallo, but asked that we disregard his faults in favor of his economic and political brilliance. In a May 21st, 2011 article in The Economist, a writer subtitles their work “Whatever the man did, do not forsake his ideas: they are more important.” The article beseeches the audience, “But none of that should detract from the fact that Mr. Strauss-Kahn deserves a fair trial…and so do the ideas he stood for.” Nowhere does the writer mention Diallo or ask for her fair treatment. Further maddening are the comments from intellectual icons Bernard-Henri Lévy, a French philosopher, and Ben Stein of “Bueller…Bueller…” fame. Both go on record defending DSK and defaming both Diallo and Banon. Stein comments on Diallo, “People accuse other people of crimes all of the time. What do we know about the complainant besides that she is a hotel maid? ...How do we know that this woman’s word was good enough to put Mr. Strauss-Kahn straight into a horrific jail?” What Stein seems to assume is that all women regularly accuse men of rape. Like Stein, Lévy believes that DSK is without fault, and it is the woman’s fault that he is under such strict scrutiny. He speaks of Tristane Banon, “I hold it against all those who complacently accept the account of this other young woman, this one French, who pretends to have been the victim of the same kind of attempted rape, who has shut up for eight years but, sensing the golden opportunity, whips out her old dossier and comes to flog it on television.” To cap it off, New York Daily News writes in a September 26, 2011 article that DSK himself claims that he is too important to be sued and that Diallo’s accusation, which caused him to leave his job at the IMF, further complicated the global economy. One thing is for sure, Nafissatou Diallo never deserved to go through this experience. Yet, having weathered it, the world is no better.
In grade school, we played a game centered around the question, “What Are You?” We would rattle off our mixture of ethnicities defining ourselves as “English, French, German, Irish, Scottish, Swedish and Scandinavian!”

Envy and awe were reserved for those with the longest lists, usually of European, mostly Western European, descent. Although my list was short (Chinese, Polish and Irish), I could always gain Brownie points for exoticness. Plus, I would throw “American” in to keep me out of the bottom ranks.

I went to a primarily white grade school and a slightly more diverse high school. Growing up, every Sunday I also attended a Chinese school, where I learned about Mandarin and Chinese culture. One might think something labeled “Chinese school” would be as homogenous as the race in the name. They would be wrong. I will not deny that most of the students and families came from Chinese descent, but they could be further separated into Asians from Mainland China and Asians from Taiwan. Some students also could speak Cantonese, a dialect of Chinese but in no way intelligible to Mandarin speakers. In addition, multiple children came from mixed marriages like I did. Also, non-Asian families, who had adopted Chinese children under looser adoption laws, sent both their Asian and non-Asian children to learn Mandarin. For a few years, we had a family of color studying with us because the father did most of his business in China and they traveled there a lot. In a situation where I believed that I would stick out like a sore thumb because of my Western features, I found the largest hodge-podge of students ever, coming to the conclusion that you don’t have to be Chinese to learn Chinese.

One might think something labeled “Chinese school” would be as homogenous as the race in the name. They would be wrong.

Fortunately, I grew up in an environment ideal for cultural integration, but I have come across a variety of de facto racism through my life. The tendency for students of Arabic descent to hang out in a specific hallway in my school garnered the name “Camel Corner.” On another occasion, my mother was mistaken for my nanny instead of the woman who gave birth to me. I strive to never mentally segregate or pass judgment on people because of their ethnicity or race. Those assumptions are more often than not wrong, and I wouldn’t want anyone to assume such things of me. A quarter of the students at my Chinese school either looked white or were white, but when asked what time it was in Mandarin, they could respond “It’s two in the afternoon” fluently. On the other hand, I have met many first-, second- and third-generation Chinese-Americans who looked like they could have stepped right off the boat and wouldn’t be able to tell you “Please” or “Thank you” in their mother tongue.

Race is just a visual marker that relays suggestions of one’s background. None of these suggestions are absolutes and it is discourteous to take them as such. My race, my ethnicity, is just a string of words I recited on the playground. They may inform my history, but they are not who I am. I am not half Chinese, half white. I am much more interesting than that. I am Liz Rice.
Theatre Etiquette
with Chuck Smith

What should I wear?

Definitely dress nicely but comfortably; try business casual. No tank tops, ripped jeans, etc. Baseball caps or hats must be moved once you enter the theatre. The Goodman is air-conditioned so be sure to bring an extra sweater or dress warmly.

What should I bring?

Only what you really need. Electronic devices such as PSP, Nintendo DS, smart phones, and laser pointers are not permitted during the show. If it makes noise or is distracting, please refrain from having it out in the theatre. A purse, bag, or backpack is fine. School supplies are not necessary. Remember that you are here to sit back, watch and enjoy, so don’t bring anything you don’t need.

(Please remember):

No smoking, and
no eating or drinking
while inside the theatre.

What if I need to leave the theatre during
the show?

Only if it is an emergency. Otherwise, it’s very disrespectful. Make sure to use restrooms before the show, or wait until intermission.

Have respect for other audience members.

This means no talking during the performance, no feet on seats, and no kicking.

(For your safety and others!’)
How should I respond to what’s going on on the stage?

Honestly but appropriately. If you find something funny, then laugh—but don’t laugh for five minutes straight or laugh so hard that you need to leave the theatre. Theatre is very different from watching a movie at home. Always remember that you are in a room full of people who are there to watch the performance. They can hear your responses just as well as you can hear theirs. Most important, the actors can hear and see you. They will appreciate any appropriate feed back but might be extremely offended if it is inappropriate. WHETHER YOU ENJOY THE PLAY OR NOT, YOU OWE RESPECT TO THE ACTORS FOR HAVING GIVEN IT A TRY.

What to do during Intermission:

Most plays have a 15 minute intermission. This gives you time to stretch your legs, walk, use the restroom, get water and discuss the play with your friends.

We do ask that if you are sitting on the main floor that you remain downstairs and if you are sitting in the mezzanine that you remain upstairs. There are restrooms on both floors. When intermission is over, the lights in the lobby will FLASH SEVERAL TIMES; that is your cue to get back to your seat because the performance is about to begin!

What to do after the show:

There will be a post-show discussion immediately following the performance. Members of the cast will come out on stage and answer your questions. Feel free to ask anything that’s on your mind about the show, but please remember to be respectful.

What to do before the show:

When your class arrives, your teacher will let the Education staff know how many people are in your group. It is a good idea to arrive at least 15-20 minutes before the performance.

If you are late, often you will not be allowed to enter the show until after intermission. Once your group is called, an usher will lead you to your seats and hand you a program.

Please promptly sit where you have been assigned. Remember that the show needs to begin on time and everyone needs to be seated.

And remember the Golden Rule of Theatre-going:

THEATRE ARTISTS ARE PAID PROFESSIONALS. When you enter a theatre, you are entering their work space. Respect their work as you would have them respect yours.
As a patron of the theatre, it is important to know how to read your ticket and find your seat. Generally, seats for all performances in the Goodman’s Albert Theatre are assigned seating, so be sure to know how to be able to find your seat. When you come with your school, you will be ushered to a section where you and your fellow students can sit and enjoy the play together.

Below is a seating chart — a map of all the seats in the Albert Theater — and an explanation of how to read your ticket. If you have any problems, ask an usher for help. They’re here for you!

The section of the theatre you will be sitting in: Main Floor or Mezzanine

This is your seat number, located on the edge of the bottom seat cushion

The row where your seat is located, noted in a letter on the side of the end seat of each row

Day and date of performance

Play you are seeing and its author

Curtain time
Dear Cast and Crew,

I would have to say that every single one of you have done a superb job in this play. All the effort you have put forth into this play has resulted in a memorable experience for all of us. I thought it was clever that the actors, actresses and the orchestra interacted with the audience. From viewing the original film of Animal Crackers, I think the cast played in the play and the original cast of Animal Crackers very similar! This play might have been the first encounter of the Marx brothers for many teenagers and children and I believe that the crew and cast of Animal Crackers proved that early comedy can also be entertaining and memorable!

The director’s vision of the play was a rather conscious one. Exposing the Marx brothers to the vast majority of people who never knew about them and bringing back nostalgic memories to the older audience was a great idea. This play was actually my first play and a first trip to Goodman Theatre. I myself, as a young adult, finally realized that plays are enjoyable and gratifying. The play had all the elements of emotion and slapstick comedy which made it a great one. The technical aspects as well as the props were amazingly set to follow each scene. My favorite scene had to be the scene where Harpo and Rivelli tried to clear up the misunderstanding of “The Flash.” I though the script was very flowing and comfortable. Was there any improv involved? I did not find any negative aspects of this play. I have found the play and the ambiance of Goodman Theatre very positive. I give Animal Crackers two thumbs up.

Sincerely,

A CPS student