



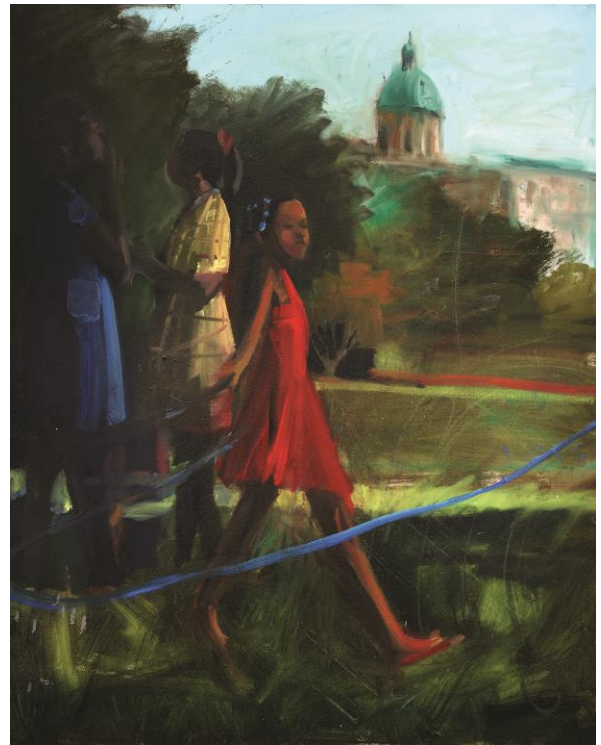
# INDIANA REPERTORY THEATRE

BINGHAM  
GREENEBAUM  
DOLL <sup>LLP</sup> PRESENTS

## April 4, 1968:

Before We Forgot  
How to Dream

by James Still



October 20 – November 15, 2015, on the IRT Upperstage

# STUDY GUIDE

edited by Richard J Roberts & Milicent Wright

with contributions by Janet Allen, James Still, Courtney Sale

Russell Metheny, Samantha Jones, Michael Lincoln, Michael Keck, Austin Yoder

Indiana Repertory Theatre

140 West Washington Street • Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Janet Allen, Executive Artistic Director

Suzanne Sweeney, Managing Director

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# ***April 4, 1968: Before We Forgot How to Dream***

## **by James Still**

IRT's playwright-in-residence shares an intimate look at one Indianapolis family and their personal experience surrounding the events of April 4, 1968, which include Bobby Kennedy's history-making speech on the night of Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination. This play is inspired by true stories gathered through four years of community conversations.

Estimated length: 2 hours, 15 minutes, including 1 intermission

Recommended for grades 7 through 12.

### **Themes & Topics**

Race and the Civil Rights movement Political Awakenings  
Generational Change Learning Across Lines of Difference  
Indianapolis History

Student Matinees at 10:00 A.M. on October 28, 29, November 3, 4, 10

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***cover art by Kyle Ragsdale***

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# Home

by Courtney Sale, Director

In my first staff meeting at the Indiana Repertory Theatre, more than two years ago, I was asked to manage and catalogue “the RFK videos.” As a new staff member and recent transplant to Indianapolis, I had expected that there would be incidents of institutional shorthand. Now I wondered, what might the IRT’s connection be to RFK? Before I dove into those videos, I had no idea that Robert Kennedy was in Indianapolis the night of Martin Luther King Jr.’s assassination. Or of the extensive interviews that James had conducted with people who had been in the park that night. I was one week in living in my new city. I barely knew how to get to the grocery store, and now I was discovering a major historical moment that had occurred mere blocks from my new home.

Two months later, I accompanied James on a follow-up interview. A teenager in 1968, she had made her way to the park that drizzly April evening. Now she welcomed us into her home on a frigid November night in 2013, greeted us with glasses of wine, and unfolded her visceral experience of that night in the park. I remember thinking to myself: this is an extraordinary way to find out about *home*. To be invited, to be trusted, to be changed.

*April 4, 1968* offers us a rare look at home. The play transports us to an extraordinary time in the history of our city, in order to be changed in the present moment. It calls forth a radical, racial honesty about that night, in



*The Landmark for Peace Memorial in Dr. Martin Luther King Park, 17th and Broadway, honors both Robert F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr.*

order to examine how that legacy plays out today. In the Fields family we find multiple perspectives wrestling with the newfound loss of one of America’s most important leaders. The older generation in the play has their lumbering sensibilities jolted with the shock of this news. And the younger generation is grappling with how they might stand up for justice on every platform available and keep the pressure on for change. It’s a messy, complicated song. It is a reminder that revolution is not polite, it is not convenient, and it does not ask for permission. Even on the micro-scale of one Indianapolis family.

In the spirit of that frigid night in November in 2013, when I was a new Indianapolis resident, we welcome you to this story. We invite you, we trust you, we hope we are changed.

# From History to Art

by Janet Allen, Executive Artistic Director

Helping to bring a new piece of art into the world is a labor of love, and often that labor begins with a gestational idea from many years ago. As long as we have been thinking about plays inspired by Indiana's history—our now 13-play Indiana Series—we have been thinking about April 4, 1968, and the events that took place on that rainy spring night in the park. Over much of the last 15 years, playwright-in-residence James Still and I have wondered how that story might someday become a play. Now we know.

Our Indiana Series began about 20 years ago as we considered how we could make new pieces of theatre that would inspire us to think more deeply about this place we call home. That yearning led us to compile a list of historic events, biographical subjects, even pieces of fiction that we thought would create exciting foundational material for plays. Some of these plays have happened pretty quickly. One of the early entries into the Indiana Series was James's play *Looking over the President's Shoulder*, chronicling the life of Hoosier Alonzo Fields, who served 21 years as a White House butler. James researched and wrote that play over the span of about eight months. Some of these plays have needed much more time and research to write, like James's own *Interpreting William* (dramatizing William Conner of Conner Prairie fame) or Charles Smith's *The Gospel According to James* (telling the story of a double lynching in Marion in 1930). These

plays each developed over more than five years, and each was packed not only with hundreds of hours of research, but with thousands of hours of a playwright's ruminations and re-workings of historic content.

The thing about plays is that we don't need them to be historically accurate—documentaries are perfectly good at that. We need plays to be authentic and evocative, to elicit deep emotional responses from



*The late John Henry Redwood as Alonzo Fields in James Still's Looking over the President's Shoulder, 2001.*





*Tim Grimm as William Conner and Delanna Studi as Mekinges in James Still's Interpreting William, 2009.*

audiences, and to inspire conversations and memories. Sometimes the most direct route is not the most efficacious. In the case of *April 4, 1968: Before We Forgot How to Dream*, the process entailed years of locating people who had been at the park that night, asking them for interviews, setting up those interviews, conducting those interviews, and transcribing those interviews. And that was only the research phase. Only after that could the art making begin—the art of carving an abundance of genuine memories into a fictional yet authentic play.

I offer this time-frame observation not only to remind us that, as Stephen Sondheim wrote, “Art isn’t easy,” but to consider that our view of historic moments changes as history marches on. When we first started talking

about the possibility of creating this play more than ten years ago, we probably weren’t anticipating that a black American would become President in the ensuing decade. Or for that matter, that acts of racial hatred would continue to ignite our cities, causing the same kind of violence that was taking place in the streets of many American cities in 1968. Many things have changed since that year; too many have not. A piece of new art like this one asks us to reinvest in our own city, in its unique blend of cultures, and in its own brand of hope.

Welcome to the 13th play we’ve created that explores our Hoosier heritage, made up of people just like the Fields family. Thanks to James Still for taking the long road home.

# Listening & Writing

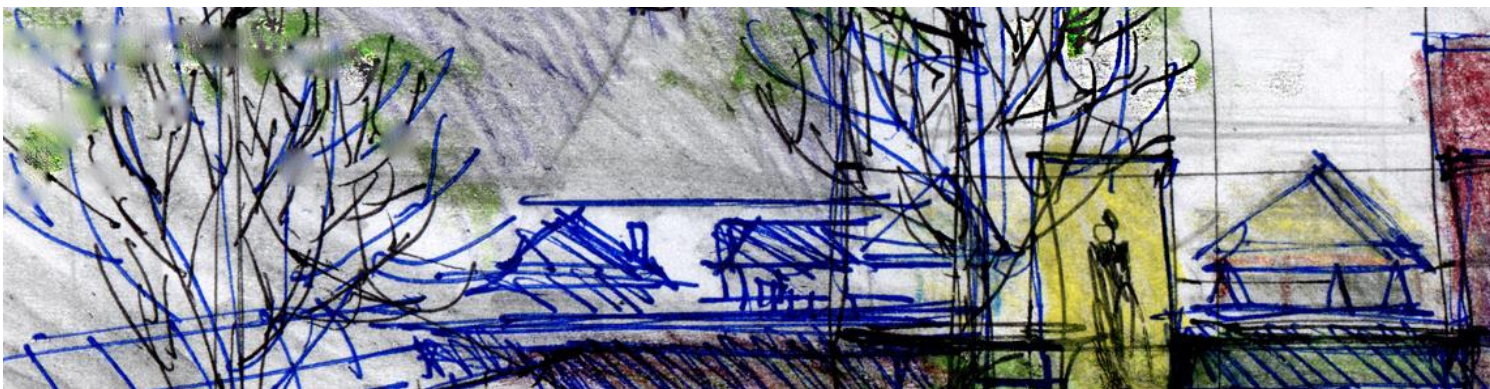
by James Still, Playwright

It is disingenuous (and untrue) to say that plays write themselves. They don't. A writer writes plays. It requires solitude and time and meditation and stamina and resilience. It is simultaneously an act of courage and an act of forgiveness. The writer has to have the courage to pursue the insides of the play day after day, while also forgiving himself for lagging behind the play's sheer willpower to be heard. Every play I write seems as though it might be my last. And something about that rather (overly) dramatic feeling becomes motivation to dig deeper, reach higher, risk something new. All of this (and more) has been part of my experience during the writing of *April 4, 1968: Before We Forgot How to Dream*.

But something I've learned from the many plays I've written over a bunch of years is that writing a play isn't just about the time spent moving my fingers over a keyboard. That's only one part of the writing process. For me, writing a play is a rigorous and mystical experience. I have learned to forgive myself for walking away from the keyboard, because I've learned that I'm always writing the play.

I'm writing the play in my sleep, in yoga class, during a run, listening to music, and during just about any and every other thing you can imagine. Writing a play isn't a part-time job. You don't get to go home early or take a holiday in the middle of it. There are no office parties or casual Fridays or promotions or corner offices. It's something else, not better or worse—but unique. Sometimes I think it is a strange, strange way to make a living. And it always surprises me.

For *April 4, 1968*—I really started writing this play nearly twenty years ago. It shocks me to write that, to see my admission on paper. In 1998 I started my work as the IRT's first-ever playwright in residence, and the first commissioned play was a project that became *He Held Me Grand* (which premiered at the IRT in 2002). For that project, I interviewed senior citizens about the span and scope and changes experienced over the 20th century. One of the stories told to me multiple times was about the night Bobby Kennedy gave a speech in Indianapolis and told the crowd that Martin Luther King Jr. had been killed. For most people that night, Dr. King's death was news, and Bobby Kennedy was the messenger. I sought the speech out and felt like I had discovered a kind of "Gettysburg Address" for 1968. I knew that this event was too enormous to be part of a





bigger play; that if I was ever going to truly write about it, it would be in a play all its own. Maybe I would write it, maybe I wouldn't.

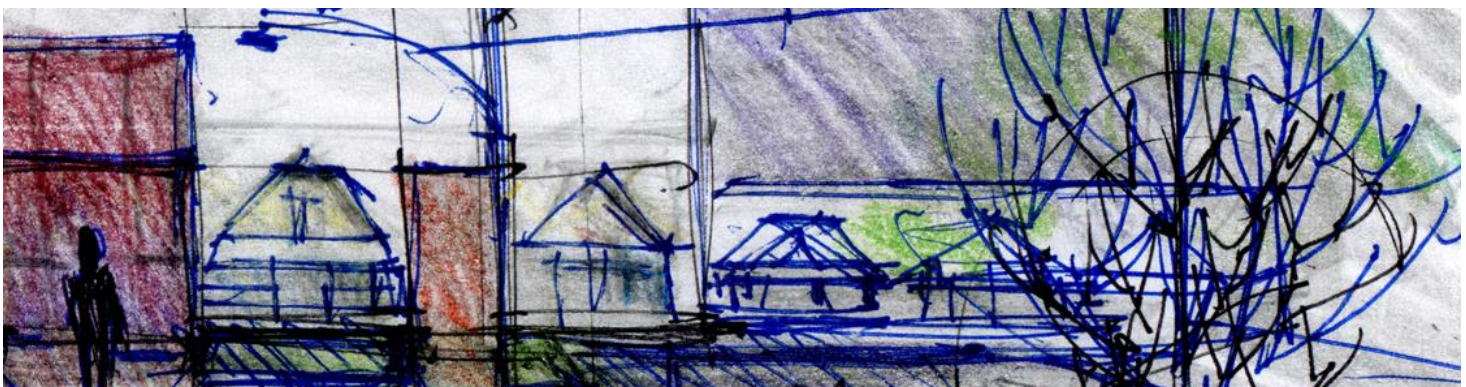
Since January 2011, I have been privileged to be part of a community listening project that has been my primary research for what would become *April 4, 1968*. I have sat with people in Indianapolis who were in the park at 17th and Broadway that night in 1968 and heard Bobby Kennedy mourn for Dr. King. I've talked with people mostly one-on-one, usually in person—sometimes at the IRT, sometimes in their homes, sometimes in their offices at work, sometimes on the telephone, and sometimes via email. While some of the people I've talked with were not at the park that night, all of them had a relationship to the event, to that moment in time. All of them had a story to share. All of them affected me. All of them gave something to my play.

How does a writer transition from the act of listening, with a head full of hundreds of pages of verbatim conversation transcripts, to

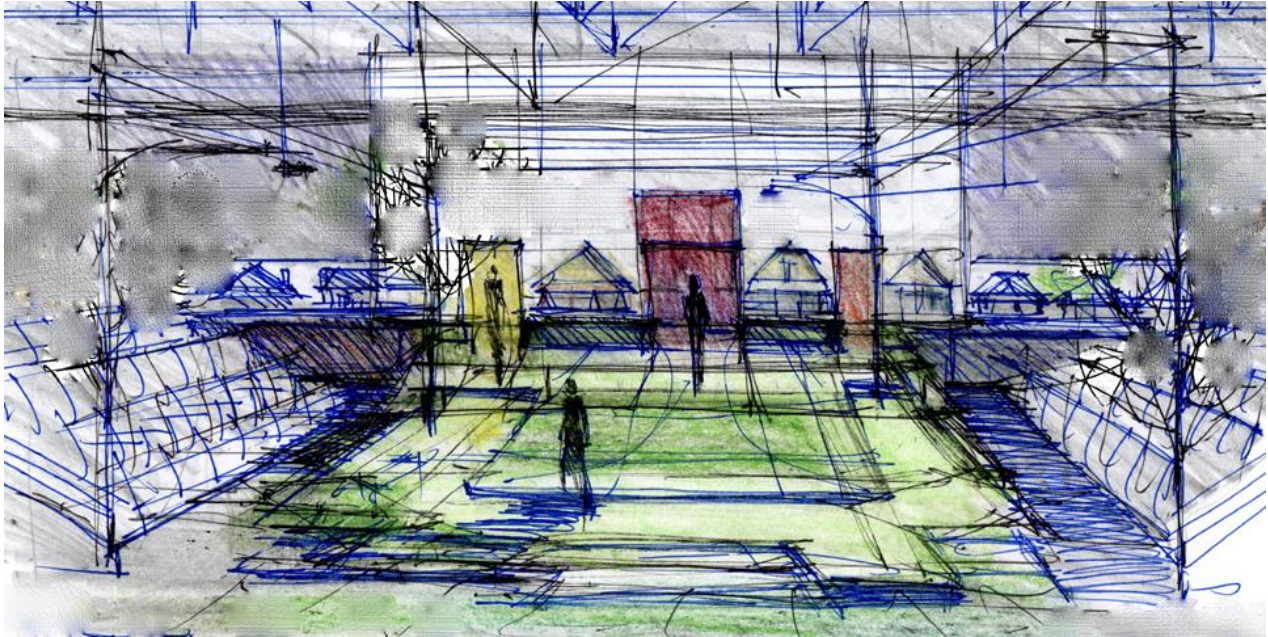
a play that is not docudrama or collage or agitprop theatre? I wish I could succinctly describe that process, but it is made up of many parts. Most of it is borne out of deep listening that lingers, and a determination to let the play reveal itself to me on its own terms. In other words, I didn't have all of those conversations to justify my play; rather, the play was having its own kind of conversation with all the people I was listening to.... Little by little, sometimes quickly and sometimes slowly, always mysteriously, the play was assembling itself in ways that I would eventually catch up to and be inspired by; true to the process, writing the play has also been its own kind of community listening project. I've always believed in listening to the characters I'm writing, and for *April 4, 1968* I have listened with urgency and wonder and heartbreak and gratitude.

For all the people who shared their stories with me: thank you. All of you—every one of you—are at the heart of this play.

*Below: Detail from a preliminary sketch for April 4, 1968  
by scenic designer Russell Metheny.*



# 17th & Broadway



*Preliminary sketch by scenic designer Russell Metheny.*

## **Russell Metheny** *Scenic Designer*

The characters in this play are vividly drawn. Their voices and physical beings need the freedom to move, to dance, to be intimate with the audience. While visiting the actual park and surrounding neighborhood of homes, stores, schools, and churches was a gold mine of stimulus, it was important not merely to design a documentation of 1968 in Indianapolis. It became very clear that the Fields's home wanted to be poetically merged with their neighborhood—that the world outside of the house needs always to be present. The action is placed in the center of this world without walls. Sidewalks, patches of grass, streets, streetlamps, telephone wires, multiple front steps, a vista of houses and stores, and the music of the local radio station are the “home,” the life, of this family.

## **Michael Lincoln** *Lighting Designer*

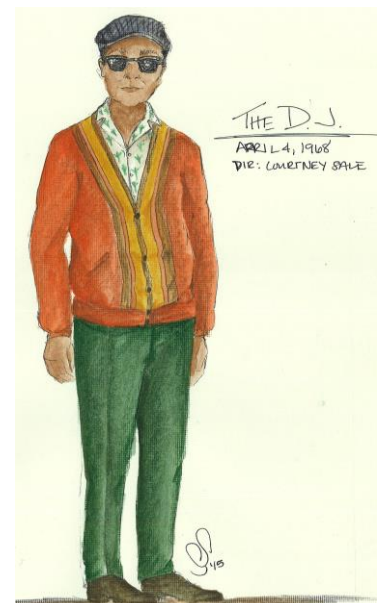
This play concerns a family intersecting with an historic event. As I contemplate designing it, I am more interested in what the play says rather than how to design it. When Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated, I was a 15-year-old boy living in a little rural town in western Nebraska. There was one African American family in our town, so I was ignorant of the racial strife in the rest of country. In early June 1968, I made my first long-distance trip by myself on the train to Bloomington, Indiana, to visit my brother and his wife, who were in graduate school. On June 5, Bobby Kennedy was assassinated, reminding me vividly of my 10-year-old self being traumatized by John Kennedy's assassination, and cementing my perception that this country was being ripped apart by social unrest. This play asks, gently, that we take stock of our progress.



### **Samantha Jones** *Costume Designer*

There are a lot of big themes that swirl around *April 4, 1968: Before We Forgot How to Dream*: the limitless, often confounding, promise of youth, confronting lost dreams, lasting love and exceptional loss, what it means to be black in America, what it is to be white, and what it is just to try to exist. But the heart of the story is the people, this one family and what it means for them when the world changes overnight. So my goal in the design of this show is to make them as real and relatable as looking through a family photo album (I actually did quite a bit of that for research). Director Courtney Sale and I have had extensive discussions about who these people are, what little quirks in their personality inform how the audience views them, how we can make them feel—at least visually—like your family too. I hope that the recognition of something familiar is what comes through when you watch the play. Then the costumes will just fade into the background and you can enjoy a really touching story.

*Costume renderings for Miss Davine (left) and the DeeJay (right) by designer Samantha Jones.*



### **Michael Keck** *Composer*

Indy's first black FM radio station, WTLC, was newly licensed in 1968, its urban music format providing a soulful soundtrack for the Indianapolis African American community. Focusing on the themes of our production, I searched for iconic music, news clips, and commercials that might provide commentary and in some fashion highlight the challenges and concerns of the Fields family and their community. I turned to industry magazines *Cashbox* and *Billboard*, discovering an abundance of amazing melodies and lyrics about finding and losing love, as well as songs affirming black consciousness. I'm particularly inspired by music emerging from the Black Arts Movement, where artists like Nina Simone, Curtis Mayfield, and Stevie Wonder courageously released songs speaking truth to power. It seems to me that Geneva Fields has been influenced by these songs amplifying the African American experience. In this production, R&B hits broadcast from WTLC-FM, as well as social justice and gospel music from the period, along with my own original instrumental pieces, will find their places in the Fields's public and private soundscape.

# MLK

More than four decades after his death, Martin Luther King Jr. is one of the most widely honored Americans of the twentieth century. He has been posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the Congressional Gold Medal; Martin Luther King Jr. Day was established as a national holiday in 1986; and more than 750 streets in the United States have been renamed in his honor.

Born in 1929 in Atlanta, Georgia, young Martin attended segregated public schools and graduated from high school at the age of 15. He earned a degree in sociology at Morehouse College and a Bachelor of Divinity at Crozer Theological Seminary. He married Coretta Scott in 1953; they would have four children. By 1954, when he was appointed as a pastor in Montgomery, Alabama, he was already a member of the executive committee of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. He earned his Ph.D. from Boston University in 1955.

King's leadership of the year-long Montgomery Bus Boycott made him a national figure at the age of 26. In 1957, King and 60 other church leaders and civil rights activists founded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) to develop nonviolent civil rights activism through an organization of churches. Over the next 11 years, King would travel more than six million miles, write five books, and deliver some 2,500 speeches against injustice. His "I Have a Dream" speech, delivered in 1963 on the



steps of the Lincoln Memorial, became one of the most famous in American history.

*Time* magazine chose King as 1963's Man of the Year, and he was awarded the 1964 Nobel Peace Prize for combating racial inequality through nonviolence. Increased nationwide awareness led to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. As time went on, King became more interested in the fight against poverty and the need for fundamental changes in the nation's economic policies. On the evening of April 4, 1968, while visiting Memphis, Tennessee, to support striking black sanitation workers, King was assassinated by escaped convict James Earl Ray.

Once when asked how he would like to be remembered after his death, King said: "Say that I was a drum major for justice. Say that I was a drum major for peace. I was a drum major for righteousness. And all of the other shallow things will not matter."

# RFK

Robert Francis Kennedy was born in 1925 in Brookline, Massachusetts, the seventh of nine children born to Joseph and Rose Kennedy. Growing up in a world of wealth and privilege, he attended Milton Academy near Boston. After serving in the Navy as a lieutenant during World War II, he graduated from Harvard in 1948 with a degree in government. While attending the University of Virginia Law School he married Ethel Skakel; they would eventually have 11 children.

Kennedy rose to fame as chief counsel to the Senate Labor Rackets Committee, investigating corruption in the Teamsters Union and prosecuting its president, Jimmy Hoffa. In 1960 he managed John F. Kennedy's campaign for president and was subsequently appointed Attorney General, fighting organized crime and supporting the Civil Rights movement. As his brother's chief advisor and assistant, he was deeply involved in the administration's dealings with the Vietnam War and the Cuban Missile Crisis.

After John Kennedy was assassinated in 1963, Bobby was elected a Senator for New York. He continued his fight for equal rights, improving education, and housing the poor, and his national popularity grew. In 1968 he announced his candidacy for President, saying, "I do not run for the Presidency merely to oppose any man, but to propose new policies. I run because I am convinced that this country is on a perilous course and because I have such strong feelings about what must be done, and I feel that I'm obliged to do all I can."



With a platform focusing on racial and economic justice, a non-aggressive foreign policy, decentralized power, and social change, Kennedy engaged young voters, calling them the future of a reinvigorated American society based on partnership and equality. Although he was popular with African Americans, young people, social activists, and Roman Catholics, the white South hated him, big business distrusted him, and the middle class was suspicious of him.

Kennedy was campaigning in Indiana when word came of the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., and he announced the news to an Indianapolis crowd that evening. While there were many riots across the country, Kennedy's heartfelt, impromptu speech is often credited for the lack of violence in Indianapolis that night.

Just two months later, on June 5, 1968, having just won the California primary, Robert Kennedy was himself assassinated by Sirhan Sirhan. In his eulogy, younger brother Ted Kennedy quoted Bobby's campaign theme, paraphrased from George Bernard Shaw: "Some men see things as they are and say why. I dream things that never were and say why not."



# The World in 1968

## News

Tet Offensive in Viet Nam War

USS Pueblo captured by North Korea

Civil Rights Act signed by President Johnson

Astronauts orbit the moon

Student riots in Paris

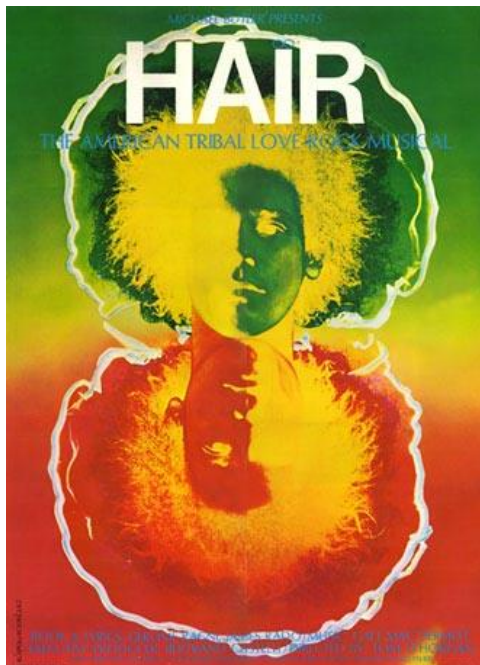
61 nations sign Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

2 athletes give Black Power salute at the Olympics

Police brutality at Democratic convention in Chicago

Shirley Chisholm is first black woman elected to Congress ↑

Richard Nixon elected President



## Theatre

*The Great White Hope*

*Joe Egg*

*Loot*

⇐ □ *Hair*

*George M!*

## New on TV

*Laugh-In*

*Hawaii Five-O*

*60 Minutes*

*The Mod Squad* ⇒

*Julia*



## Movies

⇐ □ *2001: A Space Odyssey*

*Planet of the Apes*

*Oliver!*

*Funny Girl*

*The Lion in Winter*

*Rosemary's Baby*

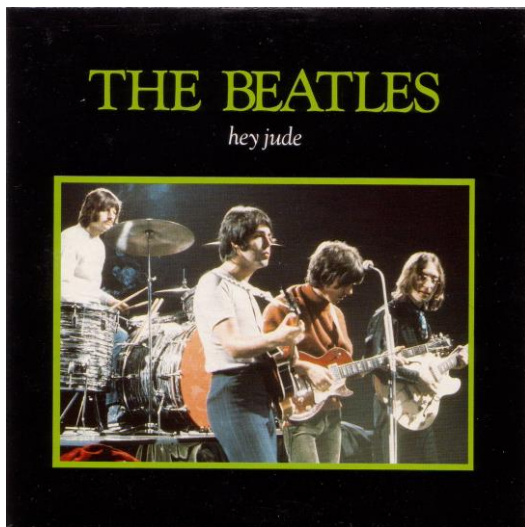
*Bullitt*

*Romeo and Juliet*

*Night of the Living Dead*

**New in 1968**

Aswan Dam in Egypt  
 supertankers  
 the Big Mac  
 Waterbeds  
 Jacuzzi whirlpool baths  
 the 747 ⇒  
 Gateway Arch in St. Louis  
 air bags in cars  
 ATMs  
 Hot Wheels

**Songs**

◀◻ "Hey Jude"—The Beatles

"(Sittin' on) The Dock of the Bay"—Otis Redding

"People Got to Be Free"—The Rascals

"Mrs. Robinson"—Simon & Garfunkle

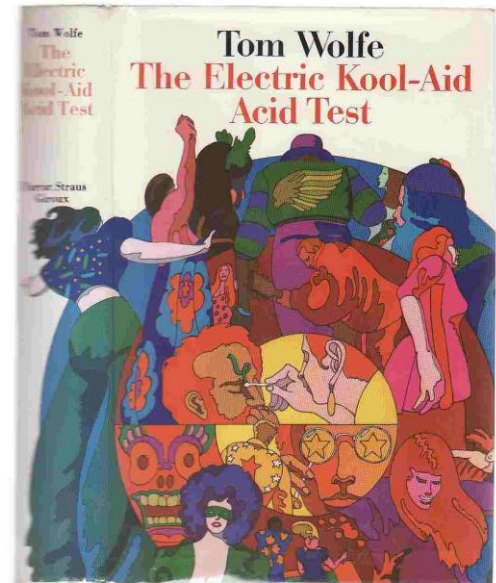
**Books**

*The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* by Tom Wolfe ⇒

*Airport* by Arthur Hailey

*The Lessons of History* by Will & Ariel Durant

*Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* by Philip K. Dick

**What Things Cost**

average new house: \$15,000

average annual income: \$7,800

average monthly rent: \$130

gas per gallon: 34 cents

◀◻ average new car: \$2,800

movie ticket: \$1.50

minimum wage: \$1.60 an hour



# The 1968 Democratic Presidential Primary Campaign



It was widely assumed in early 1968 that President Lyndon Johnson would be the Democratic nominee, and that he would have little trouble in winning the Democratic nomination. Despite the growing opposition to Johnson's policies in Vietnam, only Senator Eugene McCarthy of Minnesota proved willing to openly challenge Johnson. Running as an anti-war candidate in the New Hampshire primary, McCarthy won 42% of the primary vote to Johnson's 49%, an extremely strong showing for such a challenger. Senator Robert Kennedy announced his candidacy four days later. Two weeks later, President Johnson startled the nation by announcing he would not seek re-election.

Johnson believed that he could not win the nomination without a major struggle and, even then, he would probably lose the election in November to the Republicans. By withdrawing from the race, he could avoid the stigma of defeat and hope to keep control of the party machinery by giving the nomination to Hubert Humphrey, who had been a loyal Vice President. Johnson also hoped that he could secure his place in the history books by ending the war before the election in November; this did not prove to be true.

With Johnson's withdrawal, the Democratic Party quickly split into four factions, each distrusting the other:

- Labor unions and big-city party bosses (who had controlled the Democratic Party since the days of President Franklin D. Roosevelt) supported Hubert H. Humphrey, Johnson's Vice-President.
- Anti-war students and intellectuals supported Eugene McCarthy (although in 1968 the minimum voting age in the United States was 21, and therefore most students could not vote; the voting age was not lowered to 18 until 1971)..
- Catholics, African Americans, and other racial and ethnic minorities supported Robert Kennedy.
- Conservative white Southern Democrats, or "Dixiecrats," eventually supported Alabama governor George C. Wallace's third-party campaign in the general election.

Humphrey concentrated on winning the delegates in the 36 non-primary states, where party leaders controlled the delegate votes in their states, thus winning the nomination. Ultimately, however, he lost to Republican Richard M. Nixon.



# The Vietnam War

Lasting from 1959 to 1975, the Vietnam War was fought between the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam) and the U.S.–supported Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam); Laos and Cambodia were also drawn into the conflict. More than 1.4 million military personnel were killed (including 58,000 Americans); estimates of civilian fatalities range from 2 to 5 million. The Vietnam War is America's longest-lasting combat war so far.



U.S. military advisers first became involved in Vietnam in 1950, initially assisting French colonial forces, then later training the Army of the Republic of Vietnam. President Kennedy increased America's troop numbers, and President Johnson continued that expansion.

At various stages the conflict involved clashes between small units patrolling the mountains and jungles, amphibious operations, guerrilla attacks on villages and cities, and large-scale conventional battles. U.S. aircraft also conducted massive aerial bombing, targeting North Vietnam's cities, industries, and logistical networks. Large quantities of chemical defoliants were sprayed from the air, in an effort to reduce the cover available to the enemy.

Opposition to U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War began slowly and in small numbers in 1964 on various college campuses in the United States. Widespread student activism (amplified by the large number of baby boomers) expanded to include Americans from all walks of life. The growing opposition was attributed to a number of factors. For the first time in history, television media coverage was extensive, and previously censored information was more accessible. Many protested the draft—in part because exemptions and deferments were more easily claimed by middle and upper class registrants, driving up the numbers of poor, working-class, and minority soldiers. By the end of 1967, as U.S. troop casualties mounted and the war ground on with no end in sight, public opinion polls showed a majority of Americans opposed the war and wanted it to end.

Almost all U.S. military personnel departed after the Paris Peace Accords of 1973. The last American troops left the country in 1975. The war ended with American withdrawal, the defeat of the South Vietnamese forces, and unification of Vietnam under the communist government of the North.

## Quoting the Greeks

In his speech in Indianapolis on April 4, 1968, presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy twice quoted the ancient Greeks. The first of these quotes was from Aeschylus (c. 525 BCE – c. 455 BCE), an ancient Greek poet and playwright. Prior to Aeschylus, a single actor had interacted only with the chorus, changing masks to show change of character. Aeschylus was the first of the ancient Greek playwrights to introduce a second actor to the stage, allowing for conflict between characters. Aeschylus also integrated the chorus directly into the action. Seven of his plays have survived into modern times, including *The Suppliants* and *The Oresteia* trilogy.



Robert F. Kennedy speaking in Indianapolis on April 4, 1968.

Kennedy quoted from the popular 1930 book, *The Greek Way* by Edith Hamilton (1867-1963). Raised in Fort Wayne, Indiana, Hamilton was considered the world's finest female Greek scholar during her lifetime. Kennedy slightly paraphrased Hamilton's translation of the following passage from Aeschylus's *Agamemnon*:

Even in our sleep, pain which we cannot forget  
falls drop by drop upon the heart,  
until, in our own despair,  
against our will,  
comes wisdom  
through the awful grace of God.

Near the end of his speech, Kennedy again quoted Edith Hamilton. She used the following phrase more than once in her writings and speeches, attributing it to "an old Greek inscription."

to tame the savageness of man  
and make gentle the life of this world

# Curriculum Support

Speak Truth to Power curriculum: Human Rights Defenders Who Are Changing Our World

<http://blogs.nysut.org/sttp/curriculum/>

Peace Learning Center

<http://peacelearningcenter.org/what-we-do/>

Kennedy King Memorial Initiative

<https://www.facebook.com/KennedyKingMemorialInitiative>

American Civil Liberties Union

<https://www.aclu.org/>

<https://constitutionday.aclu.org/docs/curriculum.pdf>

Facing History and Ourselves

<https://www.facinghistory.org/>

Desmond TuTu Center: For Peace, Reconciliation, and Global Justice

<http://www.desmondtutucenter.org/>

Race and Reconciliation in America

<http://raria.org/>

The King Center

<http://www.thekingcenter.org/nonviolence-education-training>

National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Motel

<http://civilrightsmuseum.org/learn/educators/>

Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute

<http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1994/4/94.04.04.x.html>

National Education Association

[http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/Racial\\_Profiling\\_Curriculum\\_Guide-GRADE\\_LEVEL.pdf](http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/Racial_Profiling_Curriculum_Guide-GRADE_LEVEL.pdf)

PBS

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/jefferson/mixed/onedrop.html>

Center For Leadership and Development

<http://www.cldinc.org/>



# Resources

## Books

*The Unfinished Odyssey of Robert Kennedy* by David Halberstam  
*85 Days: The Last Campaign of Robert Kennedy* by Jules Witcover  
*Robert F. Kennedy and the 1968 Indiana Primary* by Ray E. Boomhower  
*Robert Kennedy: The Last Campaign* by Bill Eppridge and Hays Gorey  
*Robert Kennedy and His Times* by Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.  
*Why We Can't Wait* by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.  
*Parting the Waters: America in the King Years 1954-63* by Taylor Branch  
*Pillar of Fire: America in the King Years 1963-65* by Taylor Branch  
*At Canaan's Edge: America in the King Years, 1965-68* by Taylor Branch  
*A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King Jr.*,  
edited by James M. Washington  
*Indiana's African-American American Heritage* edited by Wilma L. Gibbs  
*Indiana Blacks in the Twentieth Century* by Emma Lou Thornbrough,  
edited by Lana Ruegamer  
*The Sixties: photographs* by Robert Altman  
*Our American Century: Turbulent Years: The 60s*, from Time-Life Books

## Films

*Selma* (2014) with David Oyelowo  
*Boycott* (2001) with Jeffrey Wright  
*King* (1978) with Paul Winfield (television miniseries)  
*A Ripple of Hope* (2008 documentary)  
*Talk to Me* (2007) with Don Cheadle  
*Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* (1967)  
with Spencer Tracy, Katharine Hepburn, and Sidney Poitier  
*A Raisin in the Sun* (1961) with Sidney Poitier, Ruby Dee, and Claudia McNeil  
*To Sir with Love* (1967) with Sidney Poitier  
*Nothing But A Man* (1964) with Ivan Dixon, and Abbey Lincoln  
*Bobby* (2006) with Anthony Hopkins, Demi Moore, and Emilio Estevez  
*Stealing America: Vote by Vote* (2008 Documentary)

## YouTube

Robert Kennedy Announcing the Assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in Indiana 1968

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j6mxL2cqxrA>

A History of Voting Rights / The New York Times

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U4XtZ-tlzlA>

How America Got into The Vietnam War: History Channel Documentary

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IgtQIEZym2w>

War of Vietnam: Why did US enter into Vietnam war, Military Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=04OKzVXtW7o>

1968: The Year That Shaped A Generation, a 6 part series

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6vVZP2T60wI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hynKUzZtDuw>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zs\\_5A55MOrY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zs_5A55MOrY)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VyCYmqlrZdo>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0l4n5uw\\_GFM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0l4n5uw_GFM)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3tOMk5lpygA>

## Websites

Find out more about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.:

<http://www.thekingcenter.org/about-dr-king>

Find out more about Robert Kennedy:

<http://www.jfklibrary.org/JFK/The-Kennedy-Family/Robert-F-Kennedy.aspx>

From the *Los Angeles Times*: “The Term ‘Negro’? Color It Obsolete”

<http://articles.latimes.com/2010/feb/08/opinion/la-oe-kaplan8-2010feb08>

The 19th Amendment granted women the right to vote

<http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=63>

Civil Rights 101—Voting Rights

<http://www.civilrights.org/resources/civilrights101/voting.html?referrer=https://www.google.com/>

Voting and Elections in America

<https://www.usa.gov/voting>

## Discussion Questions

What does Geneva's dance at the top of the show tell you about her?

How does the DeeJay function in the play? What role do disc jockeys play in today's society?

How do you see Miss Davine's function in the story of the play? How has the role of extended family changed in society over the years?

The characters in the play discuss several terms with which certain ethnic groups have been defined, as well as terms those groups have chosen themselves. Why do people seek to define themselves? How does this type of labeling hurt? How might the process of choosing terms for yourself be self-empowering?

Even though it can be uncomfortable, why is it crucial to study local, national, and global injustices of the past?

Some have suggested that racism is no longer a pressing issue in the United States. Recent incidents of racial unrest in Charleston, Cincinnati, and Ferguson, for example once again bring attention to this difficult subject. How do generational, cultural, geographical, or other issues affect people's views on the subject of race? In what ways do we see the dreams and hopes of Dr. King accomplished? What issues still need tending, and why? How do we fight complacency in the face of partial progress towards long-term goals?

How did the playwright fold in actual events, people, writings, and political issues of the late 1960s, both national and local, into his fictional play? What other events of this period might have been included, and how would these events relate to the central issues of the play?

Today, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is held up as a great leader and example. Is such veneration inspiring or intimidating to ordinary people like the rest of us? What can we do to be more like Dr. King? What can and/or should we do for the betterment of our fellow man?

In the play, Miss Davine says the death of Dr. King is "our" loss. What does she mean? How does this statement apply to us almost 50 years later?

"The times they are a-changing" is an idea expressed more than once in the play. What was changing in 1968? What is changing today? Comparing then and now, what has changed, and what hasn't? Explore this question technologically, socially, culturally, artistically, economically, and politically, as well as in the areas of health, gender, style, and education.



In the play, Addie and John Henry talk about their jobs and the types of work that is available to them. how do the characters feel about these “opportunities”? How has the workforce changed since 1968? Take into account gender, race, age, education, technology, global influence, and culture trends.

Discuss the emphasis Geneva puts on voting in the play. How do the American people view the importance of voting? Look up the 14th and 19th amendments to the Constitution. What is the significance of these amendments? What does it say about voting in this country that these amendments were necessary? How has what we look for in a presidential candidate changed since the 1960s? How has it remained the same?

Playwright James Still began the process of creating this play by interviewing people who were in the park to hear Bobby Kennedy the evening of April 4, 1968: people who worked on the campaign, people who knew Dr. King Jr., even people who founded or worked for the radio station WTLC. As people we often look at our lives in relation to major historical events we live through. As a class, create list of historical events during your lifetime. Where were you when these events happened or when you learned about them? What significance do these events hold for you in relation to your own life?

Why do you think the mother, Addie, decides to bring Mike home with her and Geneva? What makes Mike feel safe enough to go with them? What issues of trust might either character be thinking about? In what ways would things be different if the father, John Henry, took Geneva to the park?

Discuss our current views and opinions on cultural differences. Do these outlooks differ due to generation, gender, experiences, religion? how are cultural differences celebrated, hidden, erased, and/or absorbed, today? Why? By the end of the play, what do you think Mike has learned about the Fields family, and they about him?

Miss Davine quotes Dr. King’s statement that we can either “live as brothers or die as fools.” Discuss how this idea applies to us today. How are we succeeding or failing at this?

How does John Henry’s term of “politricks” apply to people’s current feelings and views of politics?

The term “generation gap” was coined in the 1960s. Why was that gap considered particularly wide in the 1960s? In the years since then, how has that gap become narrower? How has it become wider? Discuss this idea in relationship to the scenes between Geneva and her parents. How do Geneva’s parents come to view her rites of passage? In what ways can different generations learn from each other?

In the play, the characters discuss the evolving use of terms such as *nigger*, *colored*, *Negro*, *black*, and *Afro-American*. How does this historical discussion relate to today's debate about these various terms? How do different generations view this issue from different angles? How do different races view this issue from different angles? Discuss the impact of self-empowerment anthems such as James Brown's 1968 song "Say It Loud—I'm Black and I'm Proud." How can a controversial word like *nigger* be seen as insulting by some people and not by others? Why do people from all walks of life feel strongly about choosing their own identifiers?

Make a list of all the locations where scenes in the play take place. How do the stage set, furniture, and lighting suggest these various locales? How does the scenery relate the Fields family to its community?

What in the play becomes personal for you? How does the humor infused in the play affect how you feel about the characters?

## Pre-Show Activities

An excellent way to get a sense of the feelings and politics of the 1960s is to listen to the music of that era. Have your students individually listen to a variety of music from the 1960s. They can find many examples on-line, but they can also go to the library or ask their elders. Challenge them to learn about the songs: Who is the singer? Who is the writer? When was the song written and recorded? Listen to a few songs in class and discuss the songs' messages. What do we learn about the 1960s and the topics that were current? Here are a few websites to get you started:

<http://www.articlemyriad.com/influence-60s-psychedelic-music-culture-modern-society/>

<http://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/sixties/essays/protest-music-1960s>

<https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/sixties/resources/what%E2%80%99s-sound-teaching-1960s-through-popular-music>

Do some research about Indianapolis from 1920 to 1970. The Indiana Historical Society at the Eugene and Marilyn Glick Indiana History Center—<http://www.indianahistory.org/>—has many interesting exhibits about the state including a current one about L.S. Ayres, a store that is mentioned in the play. Playwright James Still has often used the Indiana State Library—<http://www.in.gov/library/>—for research in writing plays for the IRT's Indiana Series such as *He Held Me Grand*, *Looking over the President's Shoulder*, and *Interpreting William*. What historic Indiana events have been important influences on the feelings and actions of its citizens today? Take into account the migration of African Americans from the South that is a theme in *April 4, 1968*.

# Post-Show Activities

We learn about characters from what they say, what they do, and from what other characters say about them. Working in groups, choose one of the characters from the play and do a character analysis beginning with those three points. Then expand to more biographical information about your chosen character, such as age, gender, education, passions, aspirations, likes and dislikes, hopes and dreams, work life, relationships, socioeconomic position, etc. If you were to write a sequel about your character, when would you set it? why? What would your character be doing in the 1970s? In 2001? Today?

Choose someone at least 25 years older than you and interview him or her about the year 1999 and the turn of the new century. Create a list of interview questions that will encourage your subject to explore that time from a number of perspectives, such as hopes and fears, music and clothes, key political figures, personal friends, and entertainment. Ask about likes and dislikes. What was he or she passionate about? Are those things still as important? After the interview you can do one of two things: either create a fictional character and write a monologue based on something from the interview, or create a mixed media presentation/ documentary of that year from your interviewee's perspective. Compare your individual projects in class. What areas inspire similar viewpoints among your interviewees? How do their viewpoints differ? What does the range of responses suggest about how perspective affects our view of history?

As a class, listen to and read aloud the speech that Bobby Kennedy gave on April 4, 1968. What makes it an effective speech? What oratorical tools did he make use of? Do you think this short speech might have won or lost him any voters? Why?

Research what happened in other major cities on the night Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated. What conclusion do you come to about the catalyst(s) of the actions of the people in those cities? Opinions vary about whether it was Bobby Kennedy's speech that prevented rioting in Indianapolis. From what you know about this city, do you think Indianapolis citizens would have been likely to take the actions of other major metropolitan cities? Look at recent incidents of racial conflict across the nation. How might such events come to occur where you live? How do you believe the people where you live would respond? In what ways can we as individuals and as a group deal with the emotions that come out of our reactions to violence? What examples can we take from those going through such experiences now, regionally, nationally, and globally?

View, listen, and read President Lyndon Johnson's speech on the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-AN4NZSROvs>

Discuss its impact on the Fields family. Discuss its relevance in our lives today. How has the 2012 Supreme Court decision affected the effectiveness of the Voting Rights Act.



Have your students interview people they know regarding their knowledge of and beliefs about Dr. King. Encourage them to interview people of different generations, different families, different races, even different geographic regions. Have the class as a whole devise the core questions to be used in each interview, to make it easier to compare and contrast the students' findings create graphs, charts, or other ways to compare data. How do others' feelings about Dr. King differ from your own? What has been his impact on others' lives? What can we learn from those whose opinions or backgrounds are different from ours? When important advances are made over time, how do we preserve our cultural knowledge of the struggles that made those advances possible?

Working in teams, create a documentary on any election year. Research, write a script, and then film it with the inclusion of firsthand accounts (if possible), mixed media, music, and speeches, as well as commentary on the year as a whole in cultural arts, pop trends, industry, society, and the economy.

## Writing Prompts

Write about how John Henry and Addie are investing in their daughters' futures. How are Geneva and Johnna Rae being shaped by their elders? Then write about the actions your family takes to invest in you and your siblings' future. In both cases, explore these ideas beyond monetary considerations and beyond traditional definitions of family members. What is family to you? How does family function in your life?

As Geneva or Mike, write a journal entry for April 4, 1968. How did you feel at the beginning of the day? How did those feelings change over the course of the day, and why? What do you want to say about the new person you've met? What feelings and ideas from today are you going to carry into the future?

Write a review of the play. What moments made an impression on you? How do the elements of scenery, costumes, lighting, and sound work with the actors' performance of the text to tell the story? What ideas or themes did the play make you think about? How did it make you feel? To share your reviews with others, send to: [education.irt@gmail.com](mailto:education.irt@gmail.com)

# Glossary

## Indianapolis

*The play refers to a number of authentic Indianapolis people, places, and events.*

### **Arlene's House of Music**

Arlene's House of Music was located at 435 West North Street, across the street from the Madame Walker Theatre at the base of Indiana Avenue. They advertised rock and roll, blues, spiritual, and jazz records as well as 4 and 8 track stereo tape cartridges.

### **Arsenal Technical High School**

Arsenal Technical High School is a public high school in Indianapolis. It was established as Indianapolis's third high school in 1912 on a 76-acre campus that was originally a U.S. Civil War Arsenal. Most of the original buildings from the Arsenal still remain and are used.

### **L. S. Ayres**

L. S. Ayres and Company was founded in Indianapolis 1872 by Lyman S. Ayres. Over the years its Indianapolis flagship store, opened in 1905, became known for its women's fashions, Tea Room, holiday events and displays, and basement budget store. A long-time Ayres slogan, "That Ayres Look," promoted the company as a fashion leader; by 1972 it was the oldest continuous retail slogan in the United States. Following numerous acquisitions, the downtown store closed in 1992. Today most former Ayres locations are now part of Macy's, while the one-time downtown Indianapolis flagship location today houses a Carson's store.

### **Cleverley Cadillac**

James Cleverley's dealership was located at 56th and Keystone, "Where Service Is the Keystone" Bob Smith was an African American salesman at Cleverley Cadillac who advertised in the *Recorder* in 1968: "See Bob Smith for New and Used Cadillacs."

### **the Chrysler Plant**

Indianapolis Foundry was a Chrysler automobile foundry located at 1100 S. Tibbs Avenue. The factory opened in 1890 as the American Foundry Company and was purchased in 1925 by Chrysler and operated as a subsidiary. It became part of Chrysler property in 1946 and expanded numerous times through the 1980s. It closed in 2005.

### **Glendale Shopping Center**

Glendale was built in 1958 at 65th and Keystone. Originally an open air shopping center, it was converted to a covered mall in the 1960s, quickly becoming the city's premier retail center.

### **Indiana Avenue**

During its glory days, Indiana Avenue was an African American cultural center of Indianapolis. Following the Civil War, the neighborhood housed more than one-third of the city's total African American population. The Avenue was the site of the city's first African American church and numerous African American businesses. It was a well-known jazz center and a major stop along the Chitlin' circuit because of its large concentration of black-oriented clubs, businesses, and entertainment venues. Madame C. J. Walker built her theatre there, and it became a major neighborhood anchor. Many jazz great had their roots on Indiana Avenue, including Freddie Hubbard, Jimmy Coe, Noble Sissle, Erroll "Groundhog" Grandy and Wes Montgomery. As segregation laws began to change in the late 1950s, the African American middle class began leaving the once bustling Indiana Avenue corridor for greater opportunities elsewhere. In 1965 neighborhood decline forced the Madame Walker Building to close; by the early 1970s, Indiana Avenue was suffering from severe urban blight.

### **Indiana State Fairgrounds**

John Kennedy gave a campaign speech at the Indiana State Fairground Coliseum, where the Beatles would perform in 1964 and where the Pacers would play from 1967 to 1974.

### **Indiana Theatre**

When the Indiana Theatre was built in 1927, the space that is now the IRT's ticket office was a separate storefront. Before the IRT took over the building in 1981, that space was used as a newsstand, a candy store, and, in 1968, Bobby Kennedy's campaign headquarters.

### ***Indianapolis Recorder***

Indiana's longest continuously operated African American newspaper, the *Indianapolis Recorder* began in 1895 as a two-page church bulletin. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the *Recorder* pushed for action in regards to civil rights and desegregation. During this time, the paper reported on Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X while continuing to report on local church activities and marriages. The *Recorder* was owned and operated by the same family until 1988. It is still published today.

### ***Indianapolis Star***

A morning daily, the *Indianapolis Star* was founded in 1903. From 1944 to 2000 it was owned by the politically conservative Pulliam family.

### **Larry Liggett Band**

Larry Liggett (1921-2001) was the first African American to complete a music degree at Indiana State Teachers' College (now Indiana State University). From 1948 to 1978, he taught instrumental music at Crispus Attucks High School, an African American school near Indiana Avenue. He also maintained a strong reputation as a saxophone player. Comprised of mainly IPS teachers, the Larry Liggett Band had regular restaurant gigs for more than a decade, giving black musicians opportunities to play in traditionally white establishments.



### **Nation-Wide**

A Nation-Wide Shoe Store was located at 2030 West Washington. Its ad in the March 23 *Recorder* promises “Famous Brands” and “Shoes at Big Discount Prices.” Women’s and children’s shoes were \$3.88 to \$4.88.

### **Shortridge High School**

Shortridge High School opened at 34th and Meridian in 1928. Through the 1950s it was considered one of the nation’s top high schools, but fear of demographic shifts and a failed attempt to create a more focused academic curriculum led to the school’s decline and eventual conversion to a junior high in 1981. In 2009 Shortridge became a magnet high school focusing on law and government studies.

### **Shortridge High School *Daily Echo***

The Shortridge High School *Daily Echo* was the first and longest published daily high school newspaper in the nation, published from 1899 to 1971, when it became a weekly. Former *Echo* staff members include authors Kurt Vonnegut and Dan Wakefield and Senator Richard Lugar.

### **state basketball championship**

Gary Roosevelt defeated Shortridge High School 68-60 in an upset on March 23, 1868, less than two weeks before the events of the play. This is the closest Shortridge ever came to a state basketball championship.

### **St. John’s Missionary Baptist**

established in 1916, currently located at 1651 Dr. Andrew J. Brown Avenue

### **WTLC**

WTLC (105.7 FM) began broadcasting in January 1968. It was the first Indianapolis station to provide 24-hour radio programming for African Americans, and was instantly popular.

### **Weir Cook Municipal Airport**

Opened in 1931, the Indianapolis Municipal Airport was renamed Weir Cook Municipal Airport in 1944, in honor of a Hoosier World War II flying ace. Jet service began in 1961. Construction of a new terminal began in 1966 and was completed in 1968.

## Politics & News Events

### Black Panthers

The Black Panther Party was an African-American revolutionary leftist organization active from the mid-1960s into the 1970s, an icon of the counterculture and Black Power movements. The group's provocative rhetoric, militant posture, and cultural and political activism captured headlines, but its most influential programs were its armed citizens' patrols to monitor police behavior and its Free Breakfast for Children program. The group's political goals were often overshadowed by their confrontational, militant, and sometimes violent tactics against police.

### Marcus Garvey

Marcus Garvey (1887-1940) was a Jamaican political leader, publisher, journalist, entrepreneur, and orator who was a staunch proponent of the Black nationalism and Pan-Africanism movements. Garvey encouraged persons of African ancestry in the diaspora to "redeem" the nations of Africa by returning to their homelands and assuming independence and self-determination. His idea of African Redemption encompassed both the territorial redemption of Africa from colonial rule and the spiritual redemption of the black race.

### John F. Kennedy

John Fitzgerald Kennedy (1917–1963) was the 35th President of the United States, serving from 1961 until his assassination in 1963. After military service as a Naval commander during World War II in the South Pacific, Kennedy was a Massachusetts congressman from 1947 to 1953 and a senator from 1953 until 1960. He was the first President to have been born in the 20th century and the youngest elected to the office, at the age of 43. Kennedy was the first Catholic and the first Irish American president, and he is the only president to have won a Pulitzer Prize. He was assassinated in 1963 in Dallas, Texas. Today, Kennedy continues to rank highly in public opinion ratings of former U.S. presidents.

### Lyndon Johnson

Lyndon Baines Johnson (1908–1973) was the 36th President of the United States (1963–1969), a position he as Vice President assumed following the assassination of John F. Kennedy. He completed Kennedy's term and was elected President in his own right in 1964. Johnson was greatly supported by the Democratic Party as President, and he was responsible for designing the "Great Society" legislation that included laws that upheld civil rights, public broadcasting, Medicare, Medicaid, environmental protection, aid to education, and his "War on Poverty." Meanwhile, he escalated American involvement in the Vietnam War, stimulating a large angry antiwar movement. Historians argue that Johnson's presidency marked the peak of modern liberalism in the United States after the New Deal era.

## Malcolm X

Malcolm X (1925–1965), born Malcolm Little and also known as El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz, was an African American Muslim minister, public speaker, and human rights activist. To his admirers, he was a courageous advocate for the rights of African Americans, a man who indicted white America in the harshest terms for its crimes against black Americans. His detractors accused him of preaching racism, black supremacy, anti-Semitism, and violence. For nearly a dozen years he was the public face of the controversial Nation of Islam. He later became a Sunni Muslim and disavowed racism. He has been called one of the greatest and most influential African Americans in history, and in 1998 *Time* named *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* one of the ten most influential nonfiction books of the 20th century.

## Eugene McCarthy

Eugene McCarthy (1916–2005) represented Minnesota in the House of Representatives from 1949 to 1959 and in the Senate from 1959 to 1971. In 1968, McCarthy ran for president on an anti-Vietnam War platform. It was the first of his five unsuccessful presidential campaigns.

### “Suppose God Is Black”

“Suppose God Is Black” was the cover story of *LOOK* magazine on August 23, 1966. Written by Robert F. Kennedy, the 4-page article with photographs discussed his recent visit to apartheid South Africa. He wrote:

At the University of Natal in Durban, I was told the church to which most of the white population belongs teaches apartheid as a moral necessity. A questioner declared that few churches allow black Africans to pray with the white because the Bible says that is the way it should be, because God created Negroes to serve.

“But suppose God is black,” I replied. “What if we go to Heaven and we, all our lives, have treated the Negro as an inferior, and God is there, and we look up and He is not white? What then is our response?”

There was no answer. Only silence.

## Tet Offensive

The Tet Offensive was launched in January 1968 by the North Vietnamese. Because it was Tết (the Vietnamese New Year), the sound of firecrackers exploding masked that of gunfire, giving an element of surprise to the Vietcong attacks. More than 80,000 communist troops struck more than 100 towns and cities; fighting continued for two months.

## Viet Cong

The Viet Cong was the name given by Western sources to the National Liberation Front, the political organization that fought and defeated the United States and South Vietnamese governments during the Vietnam War. The term *Viet Cong* is a contraction of *Việt Nam Cộng-sản* (Vietnamese communist), or *Việt gian cộng sản* (“Communist Traitor to Vietnam”).



## Literature

### James Baldwin

The work of James Baldwin (1924-1987) is notable for the personal way in which he explores questions of identity and mines the complex social and psychological pressures of being black and gay long before the social, cultural, or political equality of these groups was improved.

### *Beowulf*

*Beowulf* is an Old English epic poem, possibly the oldest surviving long poem in Old English. Set in Scandinavia, it focuses on three great battles fought by Beowulf against monsters and dragons, a pagan tale told from a Christian point of view.

### Gwendolyn Brooks

Gwendolyn Brooks (1917–2000) was the first African American to win the Pulitzer Prize. Her poems ranged in style from traditional ballads and sonnets to poems using blues rhythms in free verse; her characters were inspired by her inner city neighbors.

### William Faulkner

William Faulkner (1897–1962) was a Nobel Prize-winning author. His highly emotional, subtle, cerebral, complex, and sometimes Gothic or grotesque stories and novels featured a wide variety of black and/or white, rich and/or poor Southerners.

### *The Fire Next Time*

*The Fire Next Time* by James Baldwin contains two essays that deal with race and religion in America. Published in 1963, it is considered by some to be one of the most influential books about race relations in the 1960s.

### Robert Frost

The poems of Robert Frost (1874-1963) are distinguished by their everyday language, New England settings, and focus on the natural world. “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening,” “Mending Wall,” and “The Death of a Hired Man” earned both popular and critical acclaim.

### Franz Kafka

Franz Kafka (1883-1924) wrote of society as a pointless, schizophrenically rational organization, with tortuous bureaucratic and totalitarian procedures, psychological labyrinths, and masochistic fantasies, into which the bewildered individual has strayed.

### Ann Petry

The work of Ann Petry (1908-1997) ranges from hard-hitting social commentary on the despair of black urban life to disillusionment and corruption in small town white America to the tragic consequences when love is confronted by racism.

## Pop Culture

### Diahann Carroll

Diahann Carroll (born 1935) is an actress and singer. Her TV series included the situation comedy *Julia* and the prime time soap opera *Dynasty*. *Julia* ran on NBC from 1968 to 1971 and was one of the first weekly series to focus on an African American woman as something other than a servant. Carroll played the title character, the widow of a downed Vietnam fighter pilot, a single mother who works as a nurse.

### Walter Cronkite

Walter Cronkite (1916–2009) was anchorman for the *CBS Evening News* from 1962 to 1981. He was often cited as “the most trusted man in America.”

### John Coltrane

John Coltrane (1926–1967) was a jazz saxophonist and composer. He was known for bebop and hard bop, the use of modes in jazz, and later free jazz. He influenced innumerable musicians, and remains one of the most significant saxophonists in music history.

### *The Flying Nun*

Starring Sally Field, *The Flying Nun* ran on ABC from 1967 to 1970. Sister Bertrille’s ability to fly was attributed to the large, heavily starched cornette worn with her habit, high winds near the ocean, and her light weight (under 90 pounds).

### *Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner*

*Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner*, released in December 1967, was produced and directed by Stanley Kramer and written by William Rose. It starred Spencer Tracy, Sidney Poitier, and Katharine Hepburn. The film was a then-rare positive representation of the controversial subject of interracial marriage, which historically had been illegal in most states of the United States, and was still illegal in 17 states until six months before the film was released.

### Sidney Poitier

Sidney Poitier (born 1927) is a Bahamian-American actor and film director. In 1964, he became the first African American to win an Academy Award for Best Actor, for his role in *Lilies of the Field*. In 1967 he starred in three successful films, all of which dealt with issues involving race and race relations: *To Sir, with Love*; *In the Heat of the Night*; and *Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner*, making him the top box-office star of that year.

### Leslie Uggams

Leslie Uggams (born 1943) won the Best Actress Tony Award in 1967 for her work in *Hallelujah, Baby!*, a musical about a black woman’s struggle for equality from the Depression to the Civil Rights movement. She later starred in the TV miniseries *Roots* (1977) and *Backstairs at the White House* (1979).

# Going to the Theatre: Audience Role & Responsibility



You, the audience, are one of the most important parts of any performance. Experiencing the theatre is a group activity shared not only with the actors, but also with the people sitting around you. Your attention and participation help the actors perform better, and allow the rest of the audience to enjoy the show. Here are a few simple tips to help make each theatre experience enjoyable for everyone:

Leave mp3 players, cameras, mobile phones, and other distracting and noise-making electronic devices at home.

You may think texting is private, but the light and the motion are very annoying to those around you and on stage. Do not text during the performance.

Food and drink must stay in the lobby.

The house lights dimming and going out signal the audience to get quiet and settle in your seats: the play is about to begin.

Don't talk with your neighbors during the play. It distracts people around you and the actors on stage. Even if you think they can't hear you, they can.

Never throw anything onto the stage. People could be injured.

Remain in your seat during the play. Use the restroom before or after the show.

Focus all your attention on the play to best enjoy the experience. Listen closely to the dialogue and sound effects, and look at the scenery, lights, and costumes. These elements all help to tell the story.

Get involved in the story. Laugh, cry, sigh, gasp—whatever the story draws from you. The more emotionally involved you are, the more you will enjoy the play.

Remain at your seat and applaud during the curtain call because this is part of the performance too. It gives you a chance to recognize a job well done and the actors a moment to thank you for your attention.