

InsideOUT

PRODUCED BY THE DENVER CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

Denver Center
Theatre 
KENT THOMPSON
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR **Company**

OTHER DESERT CITIES
BY JON ROBIN BAITZ

**OTHER
DESERT
CITIES**

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2012/13
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COMMUNITY

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InsideOUT

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Synopsis

“The apparent ease of California life is an illusion, and those who believe the illusion will live here in only the most temporary way.”

— Joan Didion

Lyman Wyeth and his wife Polly are leading members of that small, endangered Hollywood clique, the conservative Republican elite. Lyman, a former movie star and United States ambassador, and wife Polly, a once successful screenwriter, are comfortably ensconced in their Palm Springs home. Polly’s sister, Silda, who collaborated with her in writing a successful film series, lives with them while she recovers from recurrent alcoholism. Trip, Lyman and Polly’s son and the producer of a popular if inconsequential TV reality show, has joined the family for Christmas dinner along with their once clinically depressed but now medicated daughter, Brooke. A successful author, she has come from Long Island to present them with copies of her soon-to-be published family memoir. Brooke feels she must publish the book even though it will bring up painful memories for her family and push them into the spotlight. Indeed, she gets plenty of reaction from her parents and family, but not quite the reaction she was expecting. ■

THE PLAYWRIGHT

—JON ROBIN BAITZ

Baitz was born in Los Angeles, California, the son of Edward Baitz, an executive of the Carnation Company. Baitz was raised in Brazil and South Africa before the family returned to California where he attended Beverly Hills High School. After graduation, he worked as a bookstore clerk and assistant to two producers; that work experience became the basis for his first play, a one-act entitled *Mizlansky/Zilinsky*. He also drew on his background for his first two-act play, *The Film Society*, about the staff of a prep school in South Africa. Its 1987 success in L.A. led to an off-Broadway production with Nathan Lane that earned him a Drama Desk Award nomination for Outstanding New Play. This was followed by *The End of the Day* starring Roger Rees, and *The Substance of Fire* with Ron Rifkin and Sarah Jessica Parker.

In 1991, Baitz wrote and directed the two-character play *Three Hotels* for a presentation on PBS's "American Playhouse," then reworked the material for the stage, earning another Drama Desk Award nomination for Outstanding New Play. In 1993, he co-scripted (with Howard A. Rodman) *The Frightening Frammis*, which was directed by Tom Cruise and aired as an episode of the Showtime anthology series *Fallen Angels*. Two years later, he was cast as a gay playwright who achieves success at an early age in the film *Last Summer in the Hamptons*; the following year he appeared as Michelle Pfeiffer's business associate in the screen comedy *One Fine Day*. In 1996, he was one of the three finalists for the Pulitzer Prize for his semi-autobiographical play *A Fair Country*.

Subsequent stage works include a revised *Mizlansky/Zilinsky* starring Nathan Lane and directed by Baitz's then-partner Joe Mantello (1998), a new adaptation of Henrik Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* (first at L.A.'s Geffen Playhouse with Annette Bening in 1999, then at Long Island's Bay Street Theatre with Kate Burton, followed by a Broadway production.) In 2001 Donald Sutherland and Julianna Margulies starred in Baitz's *Ten Unknowns*, while 2005 saw Ron Rifkin and John Glover in *The Paris Letter*. His screenplays include the adaptation of his own *The Substance of Fire* (1996) and *People I Know* (2003) starring Al Pacino.

In 2006 Baitz was named creator and executive producer of the ABC-TV drama *Brothers and Sisters*. Baitz created the series with the idea of telling a story “about a matriarch, about her children, about political dialogue in this country—all of the things that I believed would have made a great television show.”¹ But Baitz and the network disagreed on the direction of the show and, after the first year, he left, going to eastern Long Island where he spent a painful year venting his rage in blogs and essays. He feels the network drove the storylines “younger and younger, whiter and whiter, and with less and less reflection of the real America.”² Out of this abyss emerged *Other Desert Cities*. ■

1. www.jewishjournal.com

2. www.buzzsugar.com

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jon_Robin_Baitz

<http://www.buzzsugar.com/Jon-Robin-Baitz-Writes-About-His-Ouster-from-Brothers-Sisters-921142>

<http://www.jewishjournal.com/hollywood/article/the-winding-road-to-other-desert-cities>

PALM SPRINGS

SILDA: *"Palm Springs isn't a refuge; it's King Tut's tomb. The whole town is filled with mummies with tans."*
—*Other Desert Cities*

Incorporated in 1938, Palm Springs was by the 1990s a gateway to a center of communities running southeast along Interstate 10 and Highway 111 in the Coachella Valley of Riverside County. Moving to the Southeast, these communities include Cathedral City, Rancho Mirage, Indian Wells, Palm Desert and La Quinta among others. Settlers and tourists have always been attracted by the warm dry climate of the winters.

Hollywood fell in love with this city in the 1930s; it was just over the hills from Hollywood and its dramatic settings of mountains, palm canyons, desert and rushing creeks could turn the place into Egypt, Turkey, and South America. "With their cowboys, Arabs, and legionnaires, and their daring deeds as the cameras churned, they injected at least the temporary excitements of another, faster world." ¹.

The city of Palm Springs became a center of spas—offering mud baths, massages, and chiropractic therapies. The Betty Ford Center for Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation became an institution of international importance with celebrities of every field checking in (or out) for treatment. Metro Palm Springs also became a center for cosmetic dentistry and plastic surgery.

"All this—the workouts, the spa treatments, the occasional surgery—had visible results; Metro Palm Springs abounded in very fit and attractive people of a certain age who seemed to be winning the struggle with time." ².

Some 33 streets are named for such Hollywood celebrities as Bing Crosby, Dinah Shore, Ginger Rogers, Danny Kaye, Jack Benny, Barbara Stanwyck, Greer Garson, Bob Hope, Frank Sinatra.

In time, Palm Springs began to attract presidential couples. Dwight Eisenhower spent time playing golf at the El Dorado Country Club; in 1977 Gerald and Betty Ford took up residence in Rancho Mirage. During the 1980s Ronald and Nancy Reagan would fly in on Air Force One for New Year's Eve parties. Sonny Bono, of

Sonny and Cher fame, became the mayor of Palm Springs and in 1995 was elected representative to the 104th Congress.

Tourism is a major factor in the city's economy, along with a film festival that was Sonny Bono's brainchild and is now very well regarded by critics and participants. The city had 1.6 million visitors in 2011; it has more than 130 hotels and resorts, numerous bed and breakfast inns and more than 100 restaurants and dining spots. ■

1. Wild, p.141.
2. Starr, p. 326.

Starr, Kevin. *Coast of Dreams: California on the Edge 1990-2003*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004.

Wild, Peter, ed. *The Grumbling Gods: a Palm Springs Reader*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2007.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palm_Springs_California

SCREENWRITERS

TRIP: “*Mom and Aunt Silda wrote those crazy...Hilary movies.*”
—*Other Desert Cities*

The advent of sound in film came in the 1920s. Writers from the fields of literature and journalism flocked to Hollywood. In the 1930s came William Faulkner, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Bertolt Brecht and Thomas Mann among others. In spite of the then-menial salaries, these celebrated authors churned out scripts at a furious pace but were at the bottom rung of the studio ladders.

By the end of World War II, screenwriters began to complain about their place in the Hollywood pecking order. Leonard Spigelgass, editor of *Who Wrote the Movie and What Else Did He Write*, summed up the screenwriters lack of prestige: “Over the years we have been called hacks, high-priced secretaries,...pulp writers, sell-outs, cop-outs.”¹

In the 1950s the status of movie stars increased and they allied themselves with screenwriters. For example, Katherine Hepburn requested the script of *Woman of the Year* be written by Ring Lardner, Jr. and Michael Kanin for which they received \$100,000. John Huston, a writer and a filmmaker, demanded in his contract that he be given the opportunity to write and direct his movies. By the mid-1950s, screenwriting was a lucrative career.

There are many kinds of screenwriters. For example, spec scripts are film or TV scripts written without commission from a film studio, production company or TV network. Feature writing mostly occurs under contract with a studio, production company or producer. Rewriters or script doctors punch up the dialogue or humor; sometimes they rewrite parts of the plot that are not working. A staff writer for a TV show usually works in-house, writing and re-writing episodes of a TV series. Finally, there is the new field of video game writing which employs screenwriters. Screenwriters today are important and often powerful players in the movie-making process, often paid as well as producers and directors. ■

1.learner3learner

<http://learner3learner.org/interactive/cinema/screenwriting.html>
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Screenwriting>

DEPRESSION

BROOKE: *"I take the lovely little pills and I see the blessed Dr. Leighton every week, twice a week...and I have learned optimism just like the magazines tell us to."*
—*Other Desert Cities*

Depression is a medical illness that causes a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest. It can cause physical symptoms and affect how one thinks and behaves. Depression is a chronic illness that usually requires long-term treatment like diabetes or high blood pressure.

The symptoms of depression are many and varied. They include feelings of sadness or unhappiness; despondency and loss of interest or pleasure in normal activities; insomnia or excessive sleeping; change in appetite causing weight loss or weight gain; slowed thinking and body movements; fatigue, tiredness and loss of energy; feelings of worthlessness or guilt and trouble thinking, concentrating or making decisions. Depression affects each person in different ways, so symptoms can vary in each individual.

Scientists do not know exactly what causes depression. Numerous factors may include biological differences; hormone imbalance; inherent traits (other family members who have this condition); life events such as divorce, loss of a loved one; financial problems or high stress, and early childhood problems.

Numerous depression treatments are available. Medications and psychological counseling are effective for most people. A primary care physician can prescribe these pills, but a psychiatrist who specializes in diagnosing and treating mentally ill patients is often needed. SSRIs (selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors), one major group of anti-depressants, include Prozac, Paxil, Zoloft, Celexa, and Lexapro. Norepinephrine and Dopamine reuptake inhibitors (NDRIs) such as Wellbutin are sometimes recommended, but high doses may cause seizures. Atypical anti-depressants include Oleptro and Remeron which are sedating and can only be taken in the evening.

Monoamine oxidase inhibitors (MAOs) are prescribed only when other medications have failed; they have serious side effects when a strict diet is not followed. Everyone responds to medication in

different ways; patience is required as some medications need eight weeks or longer to take full effect. A doctor may prescribe a blood test to determine why one can't metabolize an anti-depressant.

Anti-depressants affect the neurotransmitters in the brain. They act like chemical messengers passing an electrical signal from one nerve cell to another. Keeping neurotransmitter levels high improves communication and mood.

Psychotherapy (the talking cure) is also effective for depression. Cognitive behavioral therapy helps identify negative beliefs and behaviors; it teaches one to think and behave in more positive ways.

Sometimes medication stops working. This can happen because of worsening depression, another medical condition, undiagnosed bipolar disorder, age or what is called “the poop-out” effect, when a drug simply stops working.¹ Then a doctor must step in and determine if what's needed is changing the dose, changing to another anti-depressant or adding another drug. ■

1. www.mayoclinic.com

Gotlib, Ian H. and Hammers, Constance L. *Handbook of Depression*. New Jersey: Guilford Press, 2002.

Kim, Henry H., ed. *Depression*. San Diego, CA: Greenhaven Press, 1999.

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/depression/DS00175>

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/antidepressants/AN01312>

ALCOHOLISM

SILDA: *“You know, I am going to have to learn
to deal with you now that I’m sober.”*
—*Other Desert Cities*

Alcoholism is defined “as a chronic and often progressive disease that includes problems controlling drinking, being preoccupied with alcohol, continuing to drink even when it causes problems, having to drink more to get the same effects or having withdrawal symptoms when one stops drinking.”¹

Symptoms of alcoholism include inability to limit the alcohol one drinks; a strong need or compulsion to drink; a tolerance to alcohol so that one needs more to feel its effects; forgetting conversations or commitments; keeping alcohol in unlikely places at home or in the car; and experiencing legal, financial, employment or relationship problems due to drinking.

As women grow older they are more affected by alcohol. Aging seems to reduce the body’s ability to adapt to alcohol because women are “smaller in size than men and have a lower proportion of body water relative to fat than men.”²

Women also have lower concentrations of a metabolizing enzyme which helps to break down alcohol. As a result, they become inebriated faster. Mature women often take drugs that can affect mood, though they can interact with alcohol in harmful ways. In addition, alcohol problems in older people are often mistaken for age-related conditions.

Treatment for alcoholism can begin only when the person accepts that the problem exists and agrees to do something about it. The first step in treatment is detoxification; withdrawing from drink can result in seizures, hallucinations and confusion, and it can become a medical emergency. Rehabilitation involves counseling and medications to give the recovering alcoholic the skills needed for sobriety.

When patients return home, abstinence is the most crucial factor. One must avoid places where drinking is the norm; join a self-help group; enlist the help of family and friends; replace alcohol dependence with a hobby or volunteer work and begin an exercise program. ■

1. [mayoclinic.com](http://www.mayoclinic.com).
2. pubs.niaaa.nih.gov.

Tracy, Sarah. W. *Alcoholism in America*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2005.

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/alcoholism/DS00340>

<http://www.md.com/mental-health/alcohol-abuse/understanding-alcohol-abuse-treatment>

<http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/brochurewomen/women.htm#drinking>

REALITY TELEVISION

BROOKE: “*A fake TV courtroom with fake trials
featuring roving litigants out to make a buck?*”
TRIP: “*Hey! ‘Jury of your Peers’ is a huge hit. It’s not fake.*”
—*Other Desert Cities*

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“ ‘**R**eality TV’ is a catch all category that includes a wide range of entertainment programs about ordinary people. Sometimes called popular factual television, reality TV is located in border territories, between information and entertainment, documentary and drama,” write Cummins and Gordon in *Programming our Lives*.¹ There are reality programs about everything and anything, from healthcare to hairdressing, from fashion to farming. The format has been sold all over the globe, with only the titles changed.

Precursors of the reality format include Alan Funt’s *Candid Camera* (1948), early TV game shows such as *Beat the Clock* and *Truth or Consequences* and *A Current Affair*, developed in Australia and hosted by Maury Povich. The first reality show in the modern sense was the PBS series, *An American Family*. In that acclaimed program we saw a nuclear family face crises such as the divorce of the parents and a gay son coming out of the closet. Whatever its origins, the variety and continuing popularity of reality based programming, both in America and around the world, shows no signs of fading away.

There are numerous kinds of reality shows. One popular type is reality game shows. *Big Brother*, a format originated by Endemol, a Dutch corporation, locks up nine people in a house for 100 days, endlessly watched by 24 TV cameras. Once every week the audience votes against “one of the inmates who has to leave the house, until the last person to stay can be called a winner.” Another favorite is *Survivor*, which places auditioned members on a deserted island or in some other challenging environment. As Mark Burnett, its creator, conceived of it, there would be “two tribes, challenges, a tribal council, a vote-out and a farewell comment by the evicted tribe member.”² By the summer of 2002 reality game shows dominated the primetime TV schedule.

Another type is the celebrity reality show. This format shows a celebrity going about his/her everyday life: examples include *The Kardashians*, *The Osbournes* and the now divorced *Newlyweds*:

Nick and Jessica. Incidentally, the precursor of this kind of show was Edward R. Murrow's interview show *Person to Person*.

Dating-based competition shows involve choosing one partner out of a group of suitors. Over the course of a single episode or an entire season, contestants are eliminated until the chosen one and the final suitor remain. Shows that have aired include *The Bachelor*, its spin-off *The Bachelorette*, *Temptation Island* and *For Love or Money*.

The Job search category revolves around a skill that contestants were pre-screened for. Competitors perform a variety of tasks based around that skill, are judged, and then kept or removed by an expert or panel of experts. Examples include *The Apprentice* (business skills), *America's Next Top Model* (posing and looking good), *American Idol* (singing), *Hell's Kitchen* (cooking), and *Project Runway* (clothing design).

Self-improvement/makeover shows cover a person or persons trying to improve some aspect of their lives. A group of experts give the subjects advice, encouragement and instruction on how to better themselves. Examples are *The Biggest Loser* (weight), *Extreme Makeover* (entire physical appearance), *Supernanny* (child rearing), *What Not to Wear* (fashion and grooming) and the late *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* (style and grooming).

{ The Renovation show transforms a person's living space, workspace or vehicle. The British program *Changing Rooms* became the American *Trading Spaces*, while others include *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*, *Designed to Sell* and *While You Were Out*. }

There is some controversy about whether talent-search shows such as *American Idol*, *Dancing with the Stars* and *America's Got Talent* are reality TV or just reincarnations of *Star Search* and *Ted Mack's Amateur Hour*. The programs follow the reality competition conventions of removing contestants per episode by judges and/or audience vote-in, but there is a great deal of interaction between contestants and judges.

Reality TV proliferates and profits on all TV networks because it is cheap to produce. These programs do away with high-priced stars and union talent; agents who occupy the role of program developers and demand a fee; and, most importantly, the writers. Instead, the industry uses "nonunion,

freelance production crews.”³ In addition, “the genre has been an integral part of network strategies to control labor unrest.”⁴

The writers’ strike of 1988 was the year that gave rise to reality TV because it ushered in programs such as *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?* and *Survivor*. The networks ordered more “reali-TV” series to prepare for potential strikes and because they had high ratings. In addition, modern technology such as hand-held cameras and available lighting made production relatively inexpensive. Reality TV attracts the 18-49 year old audience (the networks’ most desirable crowd) and can be distributed worldwide.

When dramas cost one million dollars per episode and half-hour situation comedies cost a half-million apiece, “reali-TV” programs offer considerable savings in production costs, sometimes over 50% compared to fictional programming.”⁵ ■

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1. Cummins and Gordon, p. 38.
 2. Hill, p. 15.
 3. Raphael, p. 124.
 4. Raphael, p. 125.
 5. Raphael, p. 127.

Andrejevic, Mark. *Reality TV: The Work of Being Watched*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2004.

Carter Bill. *Desperate Networks*. New York: Doubleday, 2006.

Cummins, Walter and Gordon, George. *Programming Our Lives: Television and American Identity*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2006.

Escoffery, David S., ed. *How Real is Reality TV?* London: McFarland and Co., 2006.

Holmes, Su. “When Will I Be Famous?”

Franko, Elizabeth Michelle. “Democracy at Work? The Lessons of Donald Trump.”

VIETNAM WAR PROTEST MOVEMENT:

1968-72

1968

- **January 18** – While in the White House for a conference about juvenile delinquency, black singer-entertainer Eartha Kitt yelled at Lady Bird Johnson about the generation of young men dying in the war...
- **January 30** – The Tet Offensive was launched and resulted in much higher casualties and changed perceptions.
- **March 16** – Robert Kennedy joined the race for the US Presidency as an anti-war candidate.
- **In March**, the Gallup poll reported that 49% of respondents felt involvement in the war was an error.
- **April 26** – A million college and high school students boycotted class to show opposition to the war.
- **June 5** – Bobby Kennedy was shot and killed. It was the morning after he won a decisive victory over McCarthy in the Democratic primary in California.
- **August** – Gallup poll shows 53% said it was a mistake to send troops to Vietnam.
- **August 26 – 29** – During the 1968 Democratic National Convention, held in Chicago, anti-war protesters marched and demonstrated throughout the city. Chicago mayor Richard J. Daley brought to bear 23,000 police and National Guardsman upon 10,000 protestors.

Tensions between police and protesters quickly escalated, resulting in a “police riot.”

1969

- **March** – Students at SUNY Buffalo destroyed a Themis construction site.
- **May 22** – The Canadian government announced that immigration officials would not and could not ask about immigration applicants' military status if they showed up at the border seeking permanent residence in Canada.
- **August 15–18** – The Woodstock Festival was held at Max Yasgur's farm in Bethel, New York. Peace was a primary theme in this pivotal popular music event.
- **November** – Sam Melville, Jane Alpert, and several others bombed several corporate offices and military installations (including the Whitehall Army Induction Center) in and around New York City.
- **November 15** – Crowds of up to half a million people participated in an anti-war demonstration in Washington, D.C. and a similar demonstration was held in San Francisco.

1970

- **National Student Strike** – More than 450 university, college and high school campuses across the country were shut down by student strikes and both violent and non-violent protests that involved more than four million students, in the only nationwide student strike in U.S. history.
- **May** – A Gallup poll shows that 56% of the public believed that sending troops to Vietnam was a mistake.
- **May 4** – A week after the Kent State shootings, 100,000 anti-war demonstrators converged on Washington, D.C. to protest the shooting of the students in Ohio and the Nixon administration's incursion into Cambodia.
- **June 13** – President Nixon established the President's Commission on Campus Unrest. The commission was directed to study the dissent, disorder, and violence breaking out on college and university campuses.

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- **August 24** – Around 3:40 a.m., a van filled with ammonium nitrate and fuel oil mixture was detonated on the University of Wisconsin-Madison in the Sterling Hall bombing.

1971

- **May 5** – 1,146 people were arrested on the Capitol grounds trying to shut down Congress. This brought the total arrested during the 1971 May Day Protests to more than 12,000. Abbie Hoffman was arrested on charges of interstate travel to incite a riot and assaulting a police officer.

1972

- **May 13** – Protests again spread across the country in response to President Nixon's decision to mine harbors in North Vietnam and renewed bombing of North Vietnam (Operation Linebacker). ■
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RONALD REAGAN: A TIMELINE

- **Feb. 6, 1911** Ronald Wilson Reagan is born in Tampico, Ill., to Nelle Wilson Reagan and John Edward Reagan. The Reagans already had one previous son, Neil.
- **1920** After a series of moves in rural northern Illinois, the Reagans settle in Dixon, Ill., which Reagan considered his hometown.
- **1928** Reagan graduates from Dixon High School, where he was student body president and participated in football, basketball, track, and school plays.
- **1928-1932** Reagan attends Eureka (Illinois) College, where he majored in economics and sociology. During his sophomore year, Reagan becomes interested in drama. He also serves as student body president.
- **1937** Reagan enlists in the Army Reserve as a private but is soon promoted to 2nd Lieutenant in the Officers Reserve Corps of the Cavalry. An agent for Warner Brothers “discovers” Reagan in Los Angeles and offers him a seven-year contract.
- **1940** Reagan plays Notre Dame football legend George Gipp in his most acclaimed film, *Knute Rockne, All American*. The role earns Reagan the nickname “the Gipper.”
- **Jan. 24, 1940** Reagan marries actress Jane Wyman.
- **Jan. 4, 1941** Daughter Maureen is born.
- **1942** Reagan is called to active duty by the Army Air Force. He is assigned to the 1st Motion Picture Unit in Culver City, Calif., where he makes over 400 training films.
- **1945** After the war, Reagan resumes his acting career, which continues for 20 years. Reagan makes 53 motion pictures and one television movie during his career.
- **March 1945** The Reagans adopt Michael.

- **1947** Elected president of the Screen Actors Guild for the first of five consecutive terms, Reagan testifies as a friendly witness before the House Committee on Un-American Activities Committee.
- **1948** Reagan supports Harry Truman for president.
- **1949** Reagan and Wyman divorce.
- **1952** Reagan campaigns as a Democrat for Eisenhower.
- **March 4, 1952** Reagan and movie actress Nancy Davis wed.
- **Oct. 21, 1952** Daughter Patricia (Patti) is born.
- **1956** Reagan campaigns as a Democrat for President Dwight Eisenhower's re-election.
- **May 20, 1958** Son Ronald Prescott (Ron) is born.
- **1960** Reagan campaigns as a Democrat for Richard Nixon for president.
- **1962** Reagan officially changes his party registration to Republican.
- **1966** Reagan becomes Governor of California after defeating incumbent California Governor Edmund G. "Pat" Brown in a landslide.
- **1968** Reagan makes a tentative run for the presidency, waiting until the Republican National Convention in Miami to announce his candidacy. He later joins in supporting nominee Richard Nixon.
- **1969** Reagan sends in the National Guard to break up protests at the University of California at Berkeley after university officials block activists' efforts to create a "People's Park".
- **1970** Reagan is re-elected Governor of California.

- **Nov. 20, 1975** Reagan announces his candidacy for the Republican nomination for president.
- **1976** He loses the Republican Party's nomination to Gerald Ford, but a strong showing sets the stage for Reagan's election in 1980.
- **Nov. 13, 1979** Reagan announces his candidacy for president. After winning the party's nomination, he chooses George Bush as his running mate.
- **Nov. 4, 1980** Reagan is elected president in a landslide victory over incumbent Jimmy Carter.
- **Jan. 20, 1981** Reagan is sworn in as the 40th president of the United States. On the same day, Iran releases the 52 remaining hostages who had been held at the U.S. embassy in Tehran for 444 days.
- **March 30, 1981** Reagan is shot in the chest upon leaving a Washington hotel but makes a full recovery after surgery.
- **April 28, 1981** Reagan appears before Congress for the first time since the assassination attempt. He receives a hero's welcome and overwhelming support for his economic package, which includes cuts in social programs and taxes, and increases in defense spending.
- **July 29, 1981** Congress passes Reagan's tax bill. Instead of a 30% tax cut over three years, Reagan accepts 25%.
- **Aug. 3, 1981** Air traffic controllers go on strike. Reagan gives them 48 hours to get back to work, and fires those who refuse.
- **September 1981** Reagan appoints Sandra Day O'Connor as the first female justice on the U.S. Supreme Court.
- **Fall 1982** The nation sinks into a serious recession. Reagan fears budget deficits as high as \$200 billion. On Nov. 1, more than 9 million Americans are officially unemployed.

- **Jan. 31, 1983** Reagan submits his fiscal 1984 budget to Congress. The recession, tax cuts and increased defense outlays are blamed for a projected \$189 billion budget gap. Reagan vows to “stay the course,” rejecting advice to raise taxes or cut defense.
- **March 8, 1983** In a speech to the National Association of Evangelicals, Reagan warns against ignoring “the aggressive impulses of an evil empire,” the U.S.S.R.
- **March 23, 1983** Reagan unveils his proposal for a Strategic Defense Initiative, later dubbed “Star Wars,” in a national speech.
- **Oct. 23, 1983** A suicide truck bomber crashes into the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut, killing 241 members of the peacekeeping force.
- **May 9, 1984** In a televised speech, Reagan urges helping the Contra “freedom fighters” in Nicaragua.
- **July 19, 1984** Walter Mondale accepts the Democratic presidential nomination and promises to raise taxes.
- **Oct. 7, 1984** In a debate with Mondale, Reagan’s poor performance raises the “age issue.”
- **Oct. 10, 1984** Congress outlaws funding for military aid to the Nicaragua Contras.
- **Nov. 4, 1984** Reagan defeats Mondale in a landslide.
- **Jan. 20, 1985** Reagan, 73, begins a second term, making him the oldest president ever to be sworn in.
- **Nov. 13, 1986** Reagan admits sending some defensive weapons and spare parts to Iran but denies it was part of an arms-for-hostages deal.
- **Nov. 25, 1986** National Security Adviser John Poindexter resigns and national security aide Col. Oliver North is fired in the widening Iran-Contra affair. In a press conference, Attorney General Edwin Meese announces that \$10-\$30 million of profits from the sale of U.S. arms to Iran had been diverted to the Nicaraguan Contras.

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- **Feb. 26, 1987** The Tower Commission report on Iran-Contra concludes that Reagan's passive management style allowed his staff to mislead him about the trade of arms to Iran for hostages held in Lebanon and to pursue a secret war against the Nicaraguan government.
 - **March 4, 1987** Reagan acknowledges a "mistake" in the Iran-Contra affair.
 - **June 12, 1987** In a speech at Berlin's Brandenburg Gate, Reagan demands Gorbachev "tear down this wall."
 - **December 1987** In a Washington summit, Reagan and Gorbachev sign Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty to eliminate 4% of the superpowers' nuclear arsenals.
 - **April 14, 1988** The Soviet Union agrees to begin withdrawing troops from Afghanistan.
 - **Nov. 8, 1988** Vice President George H. W. Bush defeats Massachusetts Gov. Michael Dukakis to become the 41st president of the United States.
 - **Jan. 20, 1989** George H. W. Bush is inaugurated. Reagan leaves the White House with the highest approval rating of any president since FDR.
 - **November 1989** The Berlin Wall comes down, allowing free movement between East and West Germany.
 - **December 1991** The Soviet Union is formally dissolved.
 - **Nov. 5, 1994** Reagan discloses in a letter that he has Alzheimer's disease.
 - **June 5, 2004** Ronald Reagan dies in California at the age of 93. ■
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PARTICIPATE

Free events designed to spark dialogue between actors, experts and audiences.

Perspectives - Denver Center Theatre Company's own "Creative Team" and community experts host interactive, topical discussions with attendees that provide a unique perspective on the production. This provides an in-depth connection that makes the stage experience even more rewarding.

3/29, 6pm, Jones Theatre

Talkbacks - Perhaps the best way to fully appreciate a production is by engaging in a stimulating dialogue with your fellow audience members and the actors who bring it to life.

4/7, Post-show

Higher Education Advisory Discussions - Audience members gain scholarly insight into the productions through discussions, facilitated by faculty members from regional colleges and universities.

4/14, Post-show

Theatre & Theology Discussions - In our continued partnership with Pastor Dan Bollman with the Rocky Mountain Evangelical Lutheran Synod and cast members, this discussion examines the relevant connections to the productions through a theological lens.

4/16, Post-show

QUESTIONS

PRE-PERFORMANCE QUESTIONS

1. What is a definition of a memoir? Are memoirs based only on fact or are they constructions of the author's perspective?
2. What is the importance of personal and familial reputation? What lengths do we go to protect our reputation and our family's reputation?

POST-PERFORMANCE QUESTIONS

1. How does the setting of Palm Springs set the tone of the play?
2. How does our memory work? Do we change what happened in our minds to help cope with past events? Do we manipulate the memories to prepare for the future?
3. How is the dynamic of the Wyeth family affected by their political allegiances? How do the different characters make their political views known? How do they interact with each other?
4. How do humans manage grief? How do the different members of the Wyeth family cope with the death of their family member?
5. How does Brooke's depression affect the other members of her family? What have they done to help her through her depression? What steps has Brooke taken to deal with her depression?
6. How would describe the relationships that Lyman and Polly have with their children, Brooke and Trip?
7. Compare and contrast the sibling relationships found in the play. How would you describe the way Polly treats her sister, Silda? How do Brooke and Trip get along?
8. How do Lyman and Polly respond to Brooke's memoir? How do Trip and Silda feel about the book? If the book is published, what is at stake for each of the Wyeth family members?
9. Why does Brooke want the blessing of her parents about her memoir? Do you agree with Brooke's decision of the fate of the book?

THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

at the Denver Center Theatre Company
also offers the following programs:

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Denver Center Theatre Academy On-Site Classes: affordable, high-quality theatre classes for children, teens and adults taught by industry professionals. Classes are offered on-site four times a year. Classes are available for all interest and skill levels for ages 3-103. Scholarships are available. Call 303/446-4892 for information.

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Dramatic Learning: Teaching Artists from the Academy bring the creative process into classrooms to support and enhance core curriculum. Workshops and residencies in any discipline are tailored for each classroom. Dramatic Learning benefits more than 90 schools and 5,000 students annually. Call 303/446-4897 for more information.

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Family Fun Forum: This event is FREE. Families juggle, sing opera, and hula-hoop on the tightrope. These are just a sampling of the zany and fun things families learn in this two-hour skills hunt presented by Denver Theatre Academy teaching artists. Families will rotate from classroom to classroom, learning new skills and winning tokens for the entire family. Families spend their “earnings” on face painting, balloon animals, fun food and much more. Call 303/446-4892 for more information.

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For more information also check out our website at

www.denvercenter.org