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Cover Photo: Michael Symonds and Christopher Symonds  
in *The Fine Print*, on stage at *The Promenade Theatre*,  
Los Angeles, June 2009.

*Guilty Moments*  
First Printing, 2010  
Printed in U.S.A.  
ISBN 978-1-934962-29-9

*For my father.*

## *Howie's Last Words*

Cast: (1M, 1F)

HOWARD: A stuntman returning from a close call.

LACY: His concerned wife.

SETTING:

Written for a bedroom, but not specific.

TIME:

The play takes place in the present.

HOWIE'S LAST WORDS received its premiere Equity performance at the Annual Summer Shorts Festival, City Theatre, Miami, FL. June 2nd, 2005.

The play was directed by Barbara Lowery

Cast was as follows:

Howard: Greg Weiner

Lacy: Shana Youngblood

AT RISE:

*(A bedroom. LACY is sitting on the bed.)  
(HOWARD enters.)*

LACY: How'd it go?

HOWARD: Yeah.

LACY: What?

HOWARD: It was fine. I need a few minutes.

LACY: You stink.

HOWARD: It's the gel. I cleaned off as much as I could in the trailer, but I need a shower.

LACY: Yeah, you do. Smoke and chemicals.

HOWARD: I know. I just need my ten minutes, okay?

LACY: I missed you.

HOWARD: Jeez, Lacy, I was gone ten hours. Most people work every day.

LACY: I was worried.

HOWARD: Ten minutes, Lacy. I've got to have my ten, especially...

LACY: What?

HOWARD: Nothing. I'm getting in the shower.

LACY: So it went okay.

HOWARD: You asked that.

LACY: You don't look okay.

HOWARD: I'm here.

LACY: I was worried.

HOWARD: I know what I'm doing out there.

LACY: I know. I was just worried.

HOWARD: Yeah. It wasn't good.

LACY: Do I want to know?

HOWARD: Everything was fine, I just thought it was... The valve on the airtank screwed up.

LACY: While you were on fire?

HOWARD: Yeah. Or right before they lit me... whatever. They got the shot, I just got a little freaked.

LACY: Tell me.

HOWARD: Really?

LACY: I want to know.

HOWARD: We were on that soundstage in Brooklyn, it's the only one that lets you have open flames inside. I've got the little airtank on, 'cause it's gonna be a couple of minutes, tops, from hoods on to fire out and the hoods off. But the valve jammed, so instead of breathing from the tank, I'm breathing the air in this little pocket - trapped between the nomex and me. But as I'm sucking air in, it's pulling the fumes in from the fuel. That hexane glue, so while I was on fire, I was essentially sniffing glue. I started hallucinating, and I didn't know why, and I couldn't figure it out because I'm friggin' high on glue fumes.

LACY: Oh my God.

HOWARD: I just knew something was wrong, and I couldn't tell why or what, so I thought I must be dying. Burning to death. I remember going down, and Babs and Steve coming in with the extinguishers, and putting me out. I remember, very clearly, grabbing the hoods and ripping them off so I could breathe. I just had to get air, and I couldn't see. There were flashes of white, but I was blind. I didn't pull the hoods off.

LACY: I thought –

HOWARD: Yeah, I thought so too. Apparently, I was just lying there. Babs grabbed them - she pulled them off. She said my eyes were open, but she could tell I wasn't seeing anything. She thought I was blind. I remember pulling them off, though. I remember doing that. The worst thing was... after I could breathe, and I'm lying there, thinking they've put me out, and it's over and whatever went wrong, it's over, I'm okay... and then I heard it again.

LACY: What?

HOWARD: Flames. Fire from the inside. There's nothing else that sounds like that. It's like scuba diving, everything sounds different underwater? Everything sounds different inside fire, too. Only in the opposite way. ... So I heard the flames, and I realized I was still on fire, and they hadn't put me out at all, I had just hallucinated that they

## *Tiger in a Cage*

Cast: (1M, 1F)

HAROLD: M. Late twenties. Unable to sit still for very long. Edgy, twitchy... repressing.

PSYCHIATRIST: W. Young enough to still believe she can make a difference to the world - which makes it hard for her to remain unemotionally involved with her patients.

SETTING:  
A jail cell.

TIME:  
The play takes place in the present.

TIGER IN A CAGE received its premiere performance at the Rudyard Kipling Theatre Louisville, KY. March 2, 2007.

DARKNESS:

*(A FEMALE VOICE grunts. High pitched, breathy, rhythmic grunts. Exertion.)*

*(A smacking noise - not immediately recognizable, but sexual. Deliciously sexual.)*

*(Grunt. Pause. Smack... ...over and over.)*

*(Louder.)*

*(The sounds cut off abruptly as:)*

LIGHTS UP ON:

*(HAROLD lying on the cot.)*

*(The SOUND of a steel doors rolling open, clanging shut.)*

*(The PSYCHIATRIST enters, carrying a case file, and a small folding chair.)*

PSYCHIATRIST: Back again.

HAROLD: I didn't do nothing this time.

PSYCHIATRIST: And yet.

HAROLD: I guess they told you why.

PSYCHIATRIST: Actually, no. I was in the next building for a hearing, they dropped me a note, I came straight over. I wanted to hear from you first - I can read the police report later. But I wanted you to tell me.

*(She shows him a document from the file.)*

Whose signature is that?

HAROLD: Yours.

PSYCHIATRIST: Mine. On the bottom of a parole recommendation. I signed off on you, Harold.

HAROLD: I know. I didn't want to...

PSYCHIATRIST: To what?

HAROLD: I didn't do nothing.

PSYCHIATRIST: And yet. We were doing so well. You were doing so well.

HAROLD: I fell off the wagon.

*(She gestures - continue.)*

HAROLD: They put me next to the honeymoon suite.

PSYCHIATRIST: That sounds like a rationalization.

HAROLD: You don't understand, I been trying! ... I been trying. I was next to the honeymoon suite. That channel they have? I put a block on it. Downstairs, at the desk, even before I got to the room, I had'em block it. Guy looked at me like I was nuts. "It's a parental block," he says, "There's a code to override" I don't want the code, I tell him. ... I think he thought I was a nutcase - one of those religious types. And then this dickless wonder puts me next to the honeymoon suite. Half the night, banging away just the other side of the wall. I could hear everything. Voices, grunts - she was - I could hear her like she was in the bed, like right next to me. I couldn't take it.

PSYCHIATRIST: What did you do?

HAROLD: What d'you think I did? I went into the bathroom... and, you know... cut myself.

PSYCHIATRIST: We've discussed these kinds of -

HAROLD: I know! I know! I don't even keep a razor no more, I got a 'lectric one now and everything... but... I couldn't help it. I used those nail clippers. Two little parallel - they weren't even cuts, like little scratches. I screwed up again, didn't I?

PSYCHIATRIST: I'm not here to judge you, Harold.

HAROLD: Then what good are you? Tell me what I should've - What would you have done?

PSYCHIATRIST: That's hardly my -

HAROLD: If you don't tell me what's normal, how'm I gonna know? I want to get well.

PSYCHIATRIST: I want that too. We all do.

HAROLD: They don't. They want that chemical castration.

PSYCHIATRIST: It's a treatment therapy based on -

HAROLD: It's castration. That's what it is, that's what they want. They put the word chemical there so they can get away with it. They're sick. They're sick bastards.

PSYCHIATRIST: You need to sit down.

## ***Every Battle, Every War***

Cast: (4 m)

LIEUTENANT: British, upper class accent. Very proper. (*note: the British pronunciation was lieutenant, leading to “lefty” as a nickname for all officers of that rank.*)

TONKERS: London cockney. A coward.

NIGEL: Lower class English. Combative.

SKEETER: American, a southern redneck. Patriotic.

SETTING:

A muddy trench in a forward area.

TIME:

1916 - The War to End All Wars...

Later known as World War One.

EVERY BATTLE, EVERY WAR was first produced as part of AMERICAN HISTORY 101 by The Black Box Theatre Company in June, 2007

The play was directed by Paul Messinger

Cast was as follows:

Nigel: Christopher Symonds

Lefty: Michael Symonds

Tonkers: John Frank

Skeeter: Morris Nash

*IN DARKNESS:*

*(The sound of gunfire in the distance.)*

*(A HUGE EXPLOSION - close.)*

*(Flashes of light, a red glow.)*

*AT RISE:*

*(Three British soldiers huddle together in a trench - LIEUTENANT, NIGEL and TONKERS)*

NIGEL: Bleedin' hell, Sir - that one was close!

LIEUTENANT: Steady there, chaps. The Bosch couldn't hit a double decker bus if they were riding inside it.

TONKERS: *(fearful)* Think we'll be goin' over the top soon, Lefty?

LIEUTENANT: In a hurry to be in the fray, are you, Tonkers? Good man. We'll be marching down the streets of Berlin by christmas time, you mark my words.

*(A soldier in a US uniform runs on, scrambles next to them.)*

SKEETER: Shoot, man! Where th'hell am I?

LIEUTENANT: Durham's light infantry - Fifth regiment.

SKEETER: Well sheee-oot, Ah'm loster than a turnip on a hog farm.

LIEUTENANT: I'm terribly sorry, I don't understand a word you're saying.

SKEETER: Don't 'pologize, man! I'm on yer side.

LIEUTENANT: Oh, you're American.

SKEETER: Hell yeah.

LIEUTENANT: Well, you're bloody late.

SKEETER: Late fer what?

LIEUTENANT: For the war, man! You should've been here two years ago.

SKEETER: I only jes' joined up last month.

LIEUTENANT: Well, try to be on time for the next one.

NIGEL: I 'eard this was the war to end all wars, sir.

LIEUTENANT: That's what they say. ...It would be nice to think so, son.

NIGEL: I mean - in't that what we're fightin' for, Lieutenant?

LIEUTENANT: We're fighting for King and Country, Nigel. The glory of the empire!

SKEETER: And mom's apple pie.

LIEUTENANT: What?

SKEETER: Fightin' fer mom's apple pie.

LIEUTENANT: I'm sorry, bit of the old shellburst tinnitus - I thought you said your mother's apple pie.

SKEETER: Sure did.

LIEUTENANT: That's what you're fighting for.

SKEETER: Yep.

LIEUTENANT: That's the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard.

TONKERS: I'll fight for some of me mum's rhubarb crumble, if it'll help.

LIEUTENANT: Shut up, Tonkers. You'll fight for King and Country.

TONKERS: Yes, sir.

NIGEL: *(to Tonkers)* Rhubarb crumble? Are you flamin' jokin', mate?

TONKERS: Woss wrong wiv me mum's crumble?

NIGEL: Ooh, aren't we posh - rhubarb bloody crumble. You should try me mam's sticky pudding.

TONKERS: Sticky pudding?

NIGEL: Better than yer mum's crumble.

LIEUTENANT: You're both fighting for King and Country, and there's an end to it.

NIGEL: Well, yes, sir. But if we was to fight fer - well, you know - I'd rather fight fer me mam's sticky pudding than 'is stuck-up rhubarb bloody crumble, no offense.

TONKERS: Just cause some of us 'as some standards -

## *After It's All Over*

Cast: (1F, 2M + recorded voice)

RECORDED BROADCAST - A radio news broadcast.

FATHER - Aware of politics and the outside world.

MOTHER - Aware of family relationship and the inside world.

SON - Late teenage. Naive but earnest.

SETTING:

A post-war survival bunker

TIME:

A hazy future.

AFTER IT'S ALL OVER premiered as part of the 2009 VIGNETTES OF THE APOCALYPSE at the Gene Frankel Theatre in New York City, February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

The play was directed by Ilana Landecker

Cast was as follows:

Father: Dylan Weinberger

Mother: Kristy Schepke

Son: Amy Chang

*DARKNESS:*

*RECORDED BROADCAST: The war is over, the time for peace is at hand. In a recorded statement, the highest ranking surviving government official, the former intern of the deputy under-secretary to the National Endowment of the Arts and current Commander in Chief of the remaining Armed Force, Abigail Boniface, stated earlier today that the war is over. The United States, facing the overwhelming technology and insurmountable odds of the enemy forces, today declared unconditional surrender. This has been a recording. This message will repeat.*

*AT RISE:*

*(MOTHER and FATHER wait impatiently.)*

MOTHER: Maybe he stopped to look for supplies.

FATHER: Delays are to be expected. There's a war on.

MOTHER: The war is over. They keep saying it on the radio.

FATHER: I've heard a lot of things on the radio. Doesn't mean I believe them. We never surrendered in my day.

MOTHER: You think it's a trick?

FATHER: Let me ask you - this Abigail Boniface - do you think she's competent to lead an army to surrender?

MOTHER: Not much of an army. Before he got blown up, Reggie from the next bunker said we were down to six hundred National Guard reservists in Alaska. I could organize six hundred people.

FATHER: You'd have them all looking for cans of soup.

MOTHER: Better than charging up Bunker Hill with muskets when the enemy has laser sweeps and disinterays.

FATHER: We ran out of muskets years ago.

MOTHER: It was a simile.

FATHER: No it wasn't.

MOTHER: Or do I mean metaphor?

FATHER: God only knows what you mean, woman. I don't trust Abigail Boniface to surrender. She's probably pretending.

MOTHER: She's the government, she doesn't need to pretend.

FATHER: You can't trust the government. It's like what happened with the oceans.

MOTHER: That wasn't the government.

FATHER: But they lied about it! The enemy boils the entire ocean - cooks the sixth fleet and every man, woman and child within fifty miles of a shoreline - you could expect some coverage. What did they report? Minor damage in the Florida Keys. They boiled the ocean, woman!

MOTHER: Don't get all worked up.

FATHER: In Wyoming, it rained shrimp for three days.

MOTHER: Well, Wyoming...

FATHER: Cooked shrimp!

*(beat)*

You can't fight that. How do you fight shrimp? How do you launch a counter-attack when every navy vessel is too hot to touch?

MOTHER: I wish it would rain shrimp here. I could make gumbo.

FATHER: What is it with you and soup?

MOTHER: We've surrendered. A growing boy doesn't need a weapon anymore, he needs food.

FATHER: How do they know we surrendered?

MOTHER: Someone told them.

FATHER: Who?

MOTHER: Abigail must've sent someone.

FATHER: Who is there to send?

MOTHER: You're scaring me.

FATHER: I'm just saying.

MOTHER: Well, don't.

*(Their SON enters, carrying a charred box of dented soup cans.)*

MOTHER: Thank God you're back.

SON: I think God's dead. I saw part of his foot.

FATHER: We were - your mother was worrying about you, son.

## ***Better by Candlelight***

Cast: (1M, 1 F)

MAN: 40's. Deceptively pleasant - with a sense of danger.

WOMAN: 30's. Almost perceptive enough to realize it.

### SETTING:

A dark bedroom, lit by a single candle.

### TIME:

The play takes place in the present.

BETTER BY CANDLELIGHT received its first production by the Rockland Theatre Company in Los Angeles, May, 2006.

The play was directed by David Shinebaum

Cast was as follows:

Man: David Shinebaum

Woman: Danielle Ozymandias

*AT RISE:*

*Darkness*

*(A match flares - a candle is lit, barely revealing two figures and a bed.)*

*(The stage is largely dark - two figures moving in and out of a tiny pool of light, visible at the edge of the bed, but if they lie back they are shrouded in darkness. )*

*(A MAN and a WOMAN.)*

WOMAN: Here. It's better by candlelight. You can believe anything.

MAN: How long have you had that candle there?

WOMAN: A while.

MAN: Sitting ready.

WOMAN: It's not like I planned –

MAN: You just happened to start putting a candle next to the bed.

WOMAN: There's a difference between planning and hoping.

MAN: I'm surprised there isn't a box of condoms next to it.

WOMAN: There's...

MAN: What?

WOMAN: There's actually some in the drawer.

MAN: You have condoms.

WOMAN: I'm allowed to have condoms.

MAN: Do you... do we need them?

WOMAN: What d'you mean?

MAN: Has there been anyone – no, forget it. I don't want to know. I don't even know why I'm here.

WOMAN: Look, we don't... this wasn't my –

MAN: I'm not in the mood.

WOMAN: You came over here.

MAN: I've changed my mind.

WOMAN: The box is unopened.

*(Beat)*

MAN: Unopened.

WOMAN: There hasn't been anyone since you.

MAN: Really?

WOMAN: Would I lie to you?

MAN: But you had them ready.

WOMAN: In case. I was hoping you would come back.

MAN: Why would you –

WOMAN: Have you?

MAN: I uh... I'm not –

WOMAN: I think you have. I think you should wear one.

MAN: You don't trust me.

WOMAN: Well it's not – I um... It's been a while.

MAN: A year. A year ago today.

WOMAN: Really.

MAN: Yeah.

WOMAN: So you should wear one.

MAN: You waited for me.

WOMAN: Yes, honey.

MAN: Sweetie.

WOMAN: Yes, sweetie. ... You need to wear one.

MAN: We never used to.

WOMAN: Well... It's been a while. Things have changed.

MAN: I don't want them to have changed.

WOMAN: Yeah, I noticed.

MAN: Do you still love me?

WOMAN: Is that what you want?

MAN: Tell me you do.

WOMAN: Are you sure?

## *The Waiting Room of the Gods*

Cast: (2M,2F)

CUPID: A grown man, out of shape, dressed in a diaper with a quiver of arrows on his back. Sick to death of both of his compatriots, Erato and Venus.

VENUS: Young, beautiful and seductive, dressed in a diaphanous gown. Sick to death of Cupid, but tolerant of Erato's foibles.

ERATO: A cheerful old lady, completely in her own world. Possibly while also in a wheelchair, using an old fashioned ear trumpet. No clue that she's tiresome to the others.

ED: In a word, spineless - including his physicality.

SETTING:

A very old fashioned waiting room.

TIME:

The play takes place in the present.

THE WAITING ROOM OF THE GODS premiered in Chicago at the Appetite Theatre's BRUSCHETTA 2009 SHORT PLAY FESTIVAL September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2009

The play was directed by Dan Krall

Cast was as follows:

Cupid: Nathan Hicks

Venus: Megan Brown

Erato: Chris Genovese

Ed: Kevin Crispin

*AT RISE:*

*(CUPID, VENUS and ERATO sit on dusty chairs in an antique waiting room. Bored.)*

*(ED enters.)*

CUPID: Ah, crap. There's no room! Go away!

VENUS: Play nice.

*(to Ed)*

Hello.

ED : Hi.

CUPID: Sod off.

VENUS: Don't mind him - he just needs his diaper changed.

CUPID: Oh, you're so funny. How'd you like an arrow up your lute?

ERATO: Her what?!

CUPID: Lute. Lute!

*(to Ed)*

Deaf as a post.

ED : I'm not sure I'm in the right place.

CUPID: You a god?

VENUS: Of course he's a god.

ED : I'm not exac-

CUPID: Don't want any more muses.

ERATO: What did he say?

VENUS: He's calling you a muse again.

ERATO: Well if you think he is.

ED : I was told to wait here.

ERATO: Why?

ED : I'm not really sure how it all -

ERATO: He doesn't *seem* funny.

ED : What?

ERATO: Why is he so funny?  
ED : Who, me?  
CUPID : *(to Erato)* Shut up, you old bat!  
ERATO: He's not at all amusing.  
VENUS: No. Cupid was saying –  
CUPID: You! You're a bloody muse, you shouldn't be here!  
ERATO: *(to Ed)* How do you do. I'm Erato. *(brightly)* I'm a muse.  
CUPID: He knows that, you harpy!  
ED : Very pleased to meet –  
CUPID: Quit lying to that withered up prune - are you a God?  
ED : I'm –  
VENUS: Stop being so elitist.  
CUPID: It's a simple question.  
ED : I'm not a god.  
CUPID: I knew it.  
VENUS: Are you a personification?  
CUPID: Of course he's a bloody personification!  
ERATO: Erato, the muse of Erotic Poetry... Of course, I don't get out much these days.  
CUPID: Shut up!  
VENUS: *(sympathetically)* You're not some awful sexual-politics satire are you?  
CUPID: If he's the ghost of a gay marriage amendment with some moral to preach, I'm gonna stab him.  
VENUS: You couldn't stab a pincushion.  
CUPID: I will! I'll grab an arrow and just stick it in his –  
*(CUPID pulls an arrow from his quiver - but it is as limp as a piece of rope)*  
– what the hell is up with my arrow?!

VENUS: Apparently nothing.

## *The Fine Print*

Cast: (1M, 1 Either)

ARCHIE: A somewhat mousy man. Precise, to the point of geekiness.

THE DEVIL: Elegantly dressed, and visibly the devil.

SETTING:

A kitchen in Archie's modest home.

TIME:

The play takes place in the present.

THE FINE PRINT received its premiere performance, and won the Audience Favorite Award at THE NEW PLAYS FESTIVAL AND COMPETITION, The Promenade Playhouse, Los Angeles, CA.  
June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2009

The play was directed by Danielle Ozymandias

Cast was as follows:

The Devil: Michael Symonds

Archie: Christopher Symonds

*AT RISE:*

*(ARCHIE reads a large document.)*

*(Behind him paces the DEVIL.)*

DEVIL: It's a fairly standard contract.

ARCHIE: I always read them until I understand them.

DEVIL: Oh, for God's sake.

*(Archie looks up, mildly surprised.)*

DEVIL: I can say his name. I'm not frightened of him. ... Are you telling me you read every word of your cell phone agreement?

ARCHIE: Of course.

DEVIL: That's a first.

ARCHIE: Twice.

DEVIL: It's anal retentive, that's what it is.

ARCHIE: Saved me getting stuck paying for two more years if I took the quote unquote free replacement option in paragraph fourteen.

DEVIL: Yes, but if it takes you two years to read the contract, I fail to see any advantage.

ARCHIE: This is my immortal soul we're talking about here.

DEVIL: There's nothing in there about an immortal soul.

ARCHIE: Well, soul.

DEVIL: No one mentioned immortal, the contract says nothing about immortality - that would be stupid.

ARCHIE: Which is where I run into difficulty.

DEVIL: What don't you get?

ARCHIE: It all seems... mundane.

DEVIL: You think there should be fire and brimstone, and eternal damnation.

ARCHIE: This doesn't even mention an afterlife.

DEVIL: Jesus Christ! You're fixating.

ARCHIE: Could you not take his name in vain? I'm not dammed yet.

DEVIL: Take his name in vain? What does that even mean.

ARCHIE: Here we go again.

DEVIL: Listen. If you hit your thumb with a hammer, God really isn't bothered if you shout his son's name, even if you give him a new middle one beginning with an "F." Omniscient, remember? He knows the difference between that and an intentional beseeching prayer. That's not taking his name in vain.

ARCHIE: Then what is it?

DEVIL: It's nothing! It's like saying "Ow policeman!" The crime - and the ten commandments are a list of crimes - the crime is *taking* his name in vain. It's the same crime as impersonating a police officer. You dress up as a cop, and start ordering other citizens around - or fining them for speeding and pocketing the cash - that's a crime. Same thing. Pretending to be God - or to speak for God to make a quick buck - that's against his rules. Trust me, Jimmy Swaggart's gonna burn in hell. Metaphorically.

ARCHIE: Why do I feel you're being self serving?

DEVIL: Good God above, you're an irritating little man.

ARCHIE: Then why are you so keen on getting my soul?

DEVIL: You're fixating on this soul business. It's a word - I don't think there is a soul.

ARCHIE: And yet –

*(Archie indicates the contract.)*

DEVIL: Believe what you like - I've never seen one.

ARCHIE: You're the devil! Which leads me to two assumptions.

DEVIL: Why am I not surprised that you need to analyze it?

ARCHIE: Firstly, your existence proves there are supernatural powers. If the devil can appear before me, seeking to bind me to a contract, then God must also exist. Heaven, Hell - a struggle for my soul.

DEVIL: Man, what an ego.

ARCHIE: Secondly – secondly, you lie. You are the prince of lies, of deceit, of trickery. I cannot believe a word you say.

DEVIL: So why imagine that I'll hold to a contract?

ARCHIE: What?

## ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

Arthur M. Jolly was born in the UK, and lived in England, Kenya, Madagascar and France until the age of eleven, when his family moved to New York City.

He was awarded the *Don and Gee Nicholl Fellowship in Screenwriting* by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in 2006, and lives and works as a screenwriter and playwright in Los Angeles.

His first play to be produced was *Howie's Last Words* - chosen from 850 submissions to be included in the prestigious *Summer Shorts Festival* by the Miami City Theatre in 2005. Future plays would be produced on both coasts, and from Miami as far north as Toronto. His full length play *Past Curfew* won the 2008 AOPW Fellowship, and his full length play *A Gulag Mouse* won the 2009 *Joining Sword and Pen* competition. Upcoming productions and a complete bio and resume are available at [www.arthurjolly.com](http://www.arthurjolly.com). He is represented by The Brant Rose Agency.