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Shakespeare, Moses and Joe Papp
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Also Available From OWP

Gloriana

by Chuck Spoler

2 Males, 2 Females

(some playing multiple roles.)

Synopsis: A drama with plenty of comedy, Gloriana tells the story of Beth Cromwell, a disturbed teenager who believes that she is Elizabeth I. Consumed by "court intrigue", she spends her days speaking in Elizabethan English to her imaginary court jester, Trigolid. For two years Beth has refused to take anti-psychotic medication, as it would destroy her delusions. In order to manipulate Beth into taking her medicine, Dr. Burger, her psychiatrist, inserts himself and her parents into Beth's fantasy, as historical characters. The mystery deepens as Burger begins to suspect that a dark family secret is at the root of Beth's psychosis. If she finally takes the medication, she will lose the defense mechanism that has protected her, but if she doesn't, others may fall prey to the shadow that has encompassed her life.

To Bury Caesar

by Chris Dickerson

1 Male

Synopsis: He was a star - the Errol Flynn of the 19th Century Shakespearean stage.

He became America's first terrorist - and altered America's destiny forever.

Called the most handsome man in America, rich, dashing, and romantic, John Wilkes Booth was the favored son of a famous family, the darling of theatrical circles, a daring swashbuckler on-stage and off, the idol of hundreds of beautiful women.

At age 26, he seemed to have it all. Nothing was beyond his reach.

But behind Booth's dark good looks and flashing wit lurked a deadly obsession -- a burning hatred for the United States government and its president, Abraham Lincoln.

On the night of April 14, 1865, Booth ignited a conspiracy to bring down that government.

Shakespeare, Moses and Joe Papp

by Ernest Joselovitz

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Robert Moses, at age 70

Jesse Seligman, a young man, his new secretary

Joseph Papp, at age 37

Jacob Rose, his colleague and friend

Peggy, his wife

Robert Wagner, New York City's Mayor

The Narrator, who also takes on the roles of the lawyer Silverstein, the lawyer Levenson, and the lawyer Schwartz: all of whom wear dark suits, carry expensive briefcases, and whose names are seldom seen in newspapers.

and various voices

TIME

The end of 1958 to August 1959.

INTRODUCTION

Joe Papp has roots in the Jewish culture of Eastern Europe; Robert Moses carries with him the money, class and proud heritage of the German Jew (who were here first). This is a clash between these two men defining two worlds: Robert Moses' world is of a spacial abundance, a facade of orderliness, a world of plaques and folders, a large solid desk, a model of the Verrazano Narrows Bridge. Joseph Papp's world seems at first a cramped chaotic mess, except just about everything in it denotes one set of activities, one ambition: the telephones, the manual typewriter, the changing model of the JULIUS CAESAR set. The two men occupying these worlds seem very different, too: Moses, always in a formal suit and tie, is cool, quiet, his emotions under a control nurtured and defined by experience and birth; Papp, dressed in old slacks and an open shirt, is wired, quick energy. But a closer look, and as their drama unfolds, reveal similarities: a vision not only for themselves but everybody else, and a single-minded driving ambition, carrying in its wake large egos.

This is history as myth. There are significant visual images - a wall of plaques, a model of the then-proposed Verazzano Narrows Bridge, a theatre set model - but the central focus is on the larger-than-life individuals. If it's not noted, I don't "see" it. I have tried, in the writing, to encourage a continuous flow, avoiding stagehands in blue light.

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SHAKESPEARE, MOSES AND JOE PAPP

ACT I

Robert Moses sits at his desk.

NARRATOR: Robert Moses.

The young man, Jesse Seligman, dressed with the same immaculate easy innate grace as his new boss and old family patriarch, walks in with a set of manila folders.

He stops to gaze at the wall of plaques and citations.

SELIGMAN: Uncle? There's a missing plaque.

MOSES: The Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Society of Civil Engineers.

SELIGMAN: Oh. Great. When did you get that?

MOSES: I haven't yet.

SELIGMAN: Oh.

MOSES: But I will. (*Moses is already looking through his first folder of the day.*) I will.

NARRATOR: Went to Yale University, Oxford, and Columbia. Entered the Civil Service in 1922. By 1958 Robert Moses was the New York State and City Parks Commissioner, controlled the New York State Public Works Department, New York State Power Authority, New York Bridge and Tunnel Authority. Among other things. Robert Moses built every bridge and tunnel and highway in the state and city of New York, every single public house or building, for thirty-five years. By 1958, Robert Moses had built over six hundred parks in New York City alone, and had decided every event in every one of those parks.

Cross-fade to:

PAPP: (*entering*) Jake? I quit!

ROSE: You what?

PAPP: CBS! - TV! - junk! it's junk!

ROSE: A full-time job ...

NARRATOR: Joe Papp, aka "Yussel Papirofsky", son of Yetta and Shmuel, a trunk maker who was usually unemployed. Did not attend Yale or Oxford or Columbia. Graduated high school to work as a janitor, a barker on Coney Island, delivered laundry. Among other things.

Then he joined the Navy. Which is when he started to put on shows. After the war he joined a sheet metal factory and the Actors Lab, which was mostly Communists, like himself. He wandered through a few marriages and a job as floor manager for CBS.

PAPP: "I turn my back. There is a world elsewhere." Coriolanus, Act 3, scene ...

ROSE: It's a paycheck!

NARRATOR: Not what you'd call a prescription for greatness.

PAPP: Stop! Jake!

ROSE: You have Peggy, the new kid, the alimony payments.

PAPP: I know - I will. I've still got Shakespeare.

NARRATOR: And oh yes, this man passionately loved the plays of Shakespeare. So, in 1953, at a rundown church on Avenue D, Joe Papp and Jake Rose had started the New York Shakespeare Theatre.

ROSE: Oh you do ... A theatre company without a theatre, not even a budget, that charges no admission for a season of 400 year old plays running outdoors for a few summer months? You understand this.

PAPP: There is greatness here, for me, for you, this is it, right here.

ROSE: Well. But. Giving up your day job....

PAPP: You'll do it, mark my words, someday, you'll be out too, out of that ice box job.

ROSE: Oh you think.

PAPP: Think? I know. My bones tell me, my blood tells me . Joe Papp, Jake Rose - can't you see it? touch it? great things. You're here, with me, believe in this, the two of us. Producers!

ROSE: Maybe so, well sure, well yes.

PAPP: Well yes. Jake. The two of us, the North Atlantic, L.A. Actors Lab, New York.

NARRATOR: Unspoken now, the pain and anger too recent: the House Committee, subpoenas and testimony, the two of them, refusal and defiance, and the blacklist.

Between them, a silence.

ROSE: Hey.

PAPP: Hey. “We have set our life upon a cast...!”

ROSE: “And we will stand the hazard”!

PAPP: Right.

ROSE: Right. (*Holds out one of the telephones*) Get to work.

Cross-fade to:

MOSES: (*dictating to Seligman*) “Dear Jerry, Thank you for your article of November-the-22nd, 1958. I am pleased to confirm the accuracy of your reporting, I can always count on your sympathy and your thorough knowledge of the subject. The proposed Verrazano Narrows Bridge will provide tens-of-thousands of jobs, benefit millions of motorists every year, a work of art, commerce and convenience.

“Dear Mr. McConaga, Minneapolis Star, article of November-the-22nd. I am pleased to confirm the accuracy”... so forth so on, the same.

“Dear Mr. Bateman, San Francisco Chronicle, article of November the 23rd. I wish to correct your misapprehension of the facts regarding the displacement of residencies necessitated by the proposed Verrazano Narrows Bridge. It was, I’m sure, unintentional. Attached is the correct information. Our legal counsel will be in touch with you about the wording of your printed retraction.”

“Dear Isaac, Atlanta Constitution, “Your article of November-the-23rd ...

Moses notices a manila envelope.

MOSES: How did this get here?

SELIGMAN: Today’s 9 a.m. delivery, along with oh... my God.

Having opened it, Moses pours out (as expected) large- denomination dollar bills ...

MOSES: You did not see this. I did not see this.

SELIGMAN: A bribe, this is a bribe, it’s illegal, I’ll report it, we have to report it to the proper authorities.

MOSES: I’m the proper authority, Mr. Seligman, over a dozen unions, hundreds of contractors and sub-contractors. So: no name, no return address, you’ll mail it from ... Manchester Vermont. It’s a donation - with an unsigned cover letter, “ in gratitude for ...” and a request for anonymity- send it to Fordham University. That way Fordham University has a new lab. And my hands are clean.

SELIGMAN: But this particular contractor will think you're obligated.

MOSES: ... when I'm not.

SELIGMAN: But they're breaking the law.

MOSES: An anonymous businessman making a generous donation to Fordham University?

SELIGMAN: But if you don't hire them ...

MOSES: They'll think they've succeeded in breaking the law. And that I wield so much power over construction contracts that I got a better offer. (*He holds out his tight fist:*) I've got them by the balls, Mr. Seligman. (*He opens his empty hand:*) Without a trace of their dirt, a hint of their stink. (*returning to dictating letter:*) "...Isaac," Atlanta Constitution, "...your article of November-the-23rd, I am pleased" so forth so on.

Meanwhile:

PAPP: (*on the telephone*) Me? Am I what? This makes a difference in your charitable donation? (*A beat.*) Well yes, I am Jewish. (*A beat.*) Yes. It's Papirofsky. (*A beat.*) Shalom to you.

ROSE: (*to Papp*) Jewish? You? Your mother knows, I know... Does your wife? ...

PAPP: It's New York, it's the theatre: so now I'll be Jewish. For a donation of \$500 I'd be a Nepalese Buddhist.

And then ...

SELIGMAN: Temple Emanuel, the High Holidays.

MOSES: Two seats. In the back, you'll insist. Then purchase two seats... (*finds the envelope*) here, at Temple Israel.

SELIGMAN: Which one will you attend?

MOSES: Neither. Yom Kippur. No disrespect, but on what other holiday does a fella pay \$50 for a seat and then never get to sit down? This way I'm happy, the rabbis are happy. Any questions, remember, my wife insisted we attend ... whichever, "the other one." (*A beat.*) Next.

As Moses is handed another, thick folder ...

Cross-fade to:

ROSE: (*on telephone*) Department of Corrections? Mr. Fleming? Jake Rose...We are in dire need of some billy clubs. It's a modern JULIUS

CAESAR. One? Two? ...

PAPP: (*grabbing Rose's telephone*) Ten!

ROSE: (*grabbing it back*) Three? (*A beat.*) Three. Yes. Thank you.

PAPP: (*On telephones*) Sanitation? This is Papp.

NARRATOR: ... Papp, Joe Papp, who reached Mayor Wagner, wanting not money, "not one cent, just in-kind services, from a few, you know, city agencies."

ROSE: Actually, yes, there is more.

PAPP: Right.

ROSE: Handcuffs.

PAPP: A pick-up truck.

ROSE: Whatever you can spare ...

PAPP: (*grabbing Rose's telephone*) Ten!

ROSE: (*having grabbed back his phone*) Mr. Fleming? Mr. Fleming. (*He's hung up.*)

WAGNER: Sure, well, sure. Shakespeare.

NARRATOR: ... the Mayor thinks,

WAGNER: ...A couple shows on the lawn, how much could that possibly amount to?

Meanwhile, Papp nods, clicks off, dials again.

PAPP: Office of Civil Defense? Papp here.

NARRATOR: "How much could that possibly amount to," he thought.

PAPP: Paint: that army green, a few gallons ... twenty?

ROSE: (*into telephone*) Housing Authority.

PAPP: (*back into telephone*) Department of Public Events?

ROSE: Jake Rose here.

PAPP: Papp.

ROSE: Scaffolding, metal.

PAPP: Two-by-fours.

ROSE: No? (*Beat.*) Nothing? (*Beat.*) Where? (*Writing it out*) Sewer... Services.

Hands slip of paper to Pap.

PAPP: You have two-by-fours - How many? (*Sign from Rose: four.*) Eight. (*A beat*) Six? OK. By tomorrow.

ROSE: City Armory? Jake Rose. He did? Yesterday/ A cannon? You sent us a cannon?

PAPP: Sewer Services? I could use some scaffolding, metal.

ROSE: Well what have you got in the way of knives and pistol?

Cross-fade to:

MOSES: (*Goes to another folder*) What's this? "Papp ..."

SELIGMAN: Shakespeare in Central Park.

MOSES: What now?

SELIGMAN: He can't ask for donations, that was your ruling. Loop-hole, he found a loophole: that the Welfare Department actually has jurisdiction over the Park's northwest corner at 81st Street.

MOSES: Which is where his actors passed the hat? (*Moses chuckles, shakes his head in admiration. Then.*) Letter, New York Municipal Welfare Department; we'll have to put a stop to this.

SELIGMAN: But, sir ...

Moses goes to the model of the Verrazano Narrows Bridge. He is slowly pulling out a piece of one of the girder's foundations ...

SELIGMAN: The bridge ... Sir? - What you're doing ... it'll collapse ... sir?!

Moses stops.

MOSES: One piece, permit one weak spot, Mr. Seligman, one loop-hole, and the whole structure collapses.

SELIGMAN: Yes sir.

MOSES: Send the letter.

NARRATOR: That's the start of it, the way we see it now.. Joe Papp and Robert Moses, hero and monster. Now that they're both dead. Now that years have gone by. Events become memories become... what? - fiction. Hindsight becomes foresight, two-and-two adds up to five. One story and another, first- second- third-hand. "Magnetism", "vision", "genius". Well not here. Not this.

Cross-fade to:

ROSE: Welfare Department. The Parks Commissioner, Moses, got to them. No more donations.

PAPP: No.

ROSE: “Undignified” is what he calls it.

PAPP: (*bolts out of his seat:*) What? - “Undignified” - What’s he talking about? - People want the opportunity, a token of appreciation, nothing wrong with that.

He slams paper into his typewriter...

ROSE: (*His hand over Papp’s*) Stop.

PAPP: It’s not his damn corner!

ROSE: Think - Joe? - think. He ... is ... right

Papp stops: an abrupt silence.

PAPP: Jake - what are you saying?

ROSE: That he’s right.

PAPP: Right wrong, we need the money.

ROSE: ...Right about us passing the hat - what are we anyway? Beggars?

PAPP: Beggars, well no, but ... Jake - what are you saying?

ROSE: Handouts - there’s something wrong - about handouts from poor people hungry for a little culture.

PAPP: Hardworking people, family people.

ROSE: Struggling students.

PAPP: Old people.

ROSE: Taxpayers.

It’s as if a light bulb has gone off!

PAPP: Are you saying ... ?

ROSE: Tax ...

PAPP: ... money.

ROSE: Government money. Our government.

PAPP: Money for the people ...

ROSE: The people's needs ...

PAPP: ...for a little culture.

ROSE: Like Shakespeare.

PAPP: The people's Shakespeare.

ROSE: Educational

PAPP: Recreational.

ROSE: Like schools. Libraries.

PAPP: Like ... parks.

ROSE: From the City Council. The Board of Estimates.

PAPP: The Parks Commission itself!

Papp whirls to his typewriter. His fingers bang away ...

ROSE: Money for theatre.

PAPP: (*typing away*) Free... Shakespear.... in Central Park.

By now, Papp is busily typing

NARRATOR: It was for him, at the time, just another letter, "money for theatre", that's it, that's all.

Cross-fade to:

MOSES: Does he understand the full meaning of the term "Parks Commissioner"? Did I miss a letter here? A written request of some sort?

SELIGMAN: He does pledge not to pass the hat.

MOSES: "Undignified?" He says it's undignified?

SELIGMAN: You said that.

MOSES: Should be unnecessary, he says. When I build him a theatre!

SELIGMAN: He's naive. He means well. It's Shakespeare, after all, Shakespeare for the underprivileged.

MOSES: Oh? He's already taken enough lumber from this department to build a house. And now he demands - demands! - a \$200,000 theatre facility? All for what? - for six weeks a year?

Cross-fade to:

PAPP: *(as he types)* “Dear Mr. Atkinson. I want you to be the first to know about this summer’s extended twelve week season in Central Park. Be there. Challenge us. Lend us the unequalled prestige of the New York Times.” *(To Jake Rose)* Type out another one of these to Watts at the Post, Kerr at the Herald-Tribune, Chapman, with “the unequalled prestige of” the Daily News, ...

And back to:

MOSES: Something’s up. What he wants is to settle into Central Park, permanently. *(A beat.)* There’s an amphitheater at Corlears Hook. On the Lower East Side - he can go back to his kind of people. Sure. An underprivileged neighborhood - still plenty of minorities, poor people, youngsters, all that. Offer him the Park at Corlears Hook, free theatre, lights, sound equipment, make the offer as generous as you want.

SELIGMAN: That’s wonderful.

MOSES: Mr. Papp, I predict, won’t share your enthusiasm.

SELIGMAN: I don’t see why not.

MOSES: You don’t. This is not about Shakespeare for the little guy. This is about Central Park, the Upper Westside, raw personal ambition in the guise of public service. I know, I’ve seen it with my own eyes - Some people, at the beginning, are sincere. But then there is the power, the money, the means becomes the ends, intentions become excuses, and the public words lose their meaning. *(Pointing them out in Papp’s letter:)* “Marginal income people” ... “cultural life” ... “community activity”. When I first started, it was “the urban masses”, “recreational habitat”. Mark my words. He will reject this offer. And I will have to get rid of him.

Cross-fade to:

PAPP: *(on telephone)* Papp, Joe Papp. *(a beat.)* But I know you. *(A beat.)* No, Mr. Browne, I’m not offering you Othello. It’s Brutus. *(A beat)* “As Caesar was valiant, I honor him ...”

VOICE: *(completing it, with British accent)* “...but, as he was ambitious, I slew him.”

PAPP: Except not that way. You’re American, this is an American production for an American audience. “They do it with a better grace, but you shall do it more natural.”

VOICE: It’s an All-Black production, right?

PAPP: Your wife will be a freckled redhead, Colleen Dewhurst.

VOICE: A workshop production?

PAPP: Central Park, 20 performances, 100,000 people.

VOICE: You're not paying me for this.

PAPP: Not all that you're worth.

VOICE: Brutus.

PAPP: "Be not afraid of greatness.

VOICE: Brutus.

PAPP: "... Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some ...

VOICE :some have greatness thrust upon'em."

PAPP: The contract's in the mail.

VOICE: Right on.

As Papp hangs up the telephone, the letter from Moses has been handed to him. He reads it ...

ROSE: He's offering the amphitheater, all the lighting and sound equipment we'd need for whatever number of performances.

PAPP: We can't.

ROSE: No?

PAPP: No.

ROSE: Well ...

PAPP: Jake - It's nowhere, no way, it's ... it's ...

ROSE: ... On the river,...

PAPP: ... At the harbor,...

ROSE: ... Surrounded by abandoned warehouses.

PAPP: That's it.

ROSE: It's inaccessible.

PAPP: Has poor ...

ROSE: ... Visual lines.

PAPP: The accoustics are ...

ROSE: ... Unsuitable.

PAPP: Unsuitable.

ROSE: It is something. (*A look from Papp...*) Not Central Park, no, but ...

PAPP: Central Park... We can't leave Central Park.

ROSE: (*That stops him cold.*) Joe - what are you saying?

PAPP: (*slower*) We can't leave Central Park.

ROSE: But we already do. Those bus-and-truck tours.

PAPP: ... Which costs a lot of time and money.

ROSE: It's what we do, I mean, people who would otherwise never

PAPP: Central Park is central, a central location. (*No response from Jake ...*) For Harlem.

ROSE: The college students.

PAPP: The Upper Westside.

ROSE: The office workers.

PAPP: The Broadway crowd. The critics.

ROSE: What we're talking about are salesmen, tourists, bank clerks.

PAPP: Sure! Central Park! - See it! - a place for people of all colors, classes to come together, think, feel together, experience the excitement of the world's greatest playwright.

ROSE: That's right.

PAPP: That's it.

ROSE: Central Park.

PAPP: Where we'll stay.

Cross-fade to:

Robert Moses completing his lunch, sitting at a side tray. A white cloth napkin is on his lap. He sips from a crystal glass of water. He slices and forks pitted fresh pear halves on a small white plate. He is talking to Seligman.

MOSES: (*on telephone*) Is there a problem with this bridge? All of a sudden, I don't know what I'm talking about? - I'm too old? - out of touch? No! (*Slams down the phone.*) The Verrazano Narrows Bridge will be the longest suspension bridge in the world, Mr. Seligman, a

bridge so long we must make a 1-1/2 inch adjustment for the curvature of the earth: 9,865 feet end to end, clearance above water of 228 feet. These towers - 72 stories high. A bridge of the future, the first bridge designed by computer, a beautiful bridge, safe, economical, and beautiful. Any man's lifetime achievement.

Just as he looks at his watch, a waiter comes in and removes the tray.

MOSES: And I will get this bridge. Despite the Board of Equalization, Corp of Engineers, the governor, mayor - my bridge, my way, the right way.

Moses goes to his desk, opens a folder, hands a letter to Seligman:

MOSES: Read this.

Joe Papp, munching on his second hot dog and with a paper cup of coffee, glowering over a model of the JULIUS CAESAR set which is plopped down in the midst of the office mess. A pail now catches drippings from a ceiling leak.

MOSES: You've read the letter - what does it say?

SELIGMAN: There seem to be technical problems at Corlears Hook Park ...

MOSES: *(interrupting him)* What does Mr. Papp's letter say?

SELIGMAN: *(conceding)* He insists on Central Park.

MOSES: And you believe his reasons why?

SELIGMAN: Summer night, on the Great Lawn in Central Park, is beautiful, sir.

MOSES: You believe his reasons why?

SELIGMAN: *(referring to letter)* Corlear Hook is out of the way, sir.

MOSES: Poor people are out of the way.

SELIGMAN: Sir: it's bare cement, it smells bad, a wind at night comes off the river ...

MOSES: It's quieter there than in Central Park, easier visibility - I built it that way; I know - easier visibility, a larger stage than Central Park.

Seligman shrugs helplessly.

MOSES: So. That's it. That's the kind of person we are dealing with.

Papp, meanwhile, hovers over the theatre model set (with miniature plastic figures):

PAPP: He's an aristocrat, a hero, an honorable man, a devoted husband, father. Julius Caesar now seems all-powerful - but is he? -. The risers slightly off-center, that's good ... at an angle, in order to see underneath ... So, Caesar stands atop this riser, it seems solid, but we can see that it's not.

Meanwhile ...

MOSES: (*dictating to Seligman:*) "Dear Mr. Papp ..." It's not me writing this letter, this letter originates from the office of my assistant in charge of parks, ...

SELIGMAN: Stuart Constable.

MOSES: That's it. "Dear Mr. Papp ..."

Cross-fade to ...

PAPP: A dictator, who needs to be brought down, and the only way to bring Caesar down is with Brutus, a man devoted to the social good ... Or is he? He comes from below, from under here, at the very foundations.

ROSE: If we want Central Park, we'll have to charge a dollar.

PAPP: Won't do it. (*A beat.*) Caesar's fall must be, you know, brutal, literally, he crashes down, down, (*his fist thumping the table!*) and he brings the whole damn edifice down with him. (*Knocking them over:*) This, this, this. My set designer can do it, yes, we can, yes.

ROSE: He can make us do it. "Crowd control," he says here, "soil erosion..."

PAPP: What? (*Paying some attention now:*) Baseball causes soil erosion and that's free. The band concerts bring crowds, and they're ...He just does not understand. We charge a dollar, we'll have to pay union wages.

ROSE: I talked to Abe Katz at Equity, who said so and then apologized, which means he won't budge an inch. He did deny absolutely any recent conversation with the Parks Commissioner ...

Spotlight on Moses, talking into telephone:

MOSES: If this Papp needed to charge a fee - I'm speaking hypothetically here, just a dollar - what would be your union's response?

VOICE: A dollar, a dime, the son-of-a-bitch'll pay my actors more than meal money - gifted people, highly skilled craftsmen, being paid less than goddamn ditch diggers.

Blackout there, as ...

PAPP: Which means he's lying.

ROSE: You think.

PAPP: Which means it's Moses' way of getting me out of Central Park.

ROSE: No. Why?

PAPP: Why? - I ask myself, Why? Because I'm an ex-Red? I'm a high school drop-out?

ROSE: He can't object to Shakespeare. A person who would object to Shakespeare is a person who thinks TAMING OF THE SHREW is about animal training. Robert Moses is not that kind of person.

PAPP: (*shaking his head...*) I was a kid on the streets, a hoodlum...

ROSE: I know, I know - "porch stoop, fire escape, whatever, it's Hamlet, passion, fate ..."

PAPP: I remember it like yesterday, fifteen years old, a cold winter day, sitting on the front porch stoop, reading the Arden edition of Hamlet. And I was thrilled; the words lifted me up, past the smell of garbage, the urine, the noise of the el-trains passing overhead. God, the beauty, passion, the power, of words, I was shouting the lines of Shakespeare. It awakened something in my soul: an electric connection, like fate. Out there, look - see?

ROSE: Yeh yeh.

PAPP: (*oblivious...*) ...That man, those mothers out shopping, that news vendor, we people are hungry for words, music, spectacle, theatre, theatre, our common ground, food for society's soul.

*Jake is shaking his head, but he can't help smiling.
Papp has stopped cold.*

PAPP: Damn - Damn - Son-of-a-bitch.

ROSE: Well maybe ... Well he's a Yecke'.

Papp gives him a look of incomprehension.

ROSE: A snooty German Jew.

PAPP: What's that got to do with anything?

ROSE: You're galitzianish, like me, by which I mean a Slavic Jew, which for Moses means lice and vodka and ignorance.

PAPP: (*He's stiff-lipped now*) We'll give him the dollar.

ROSE: What?

PAPP: We'll agree to his one damn dollar admission.

ROSE: Then what? We'll have to pay union wages, we don't have the money, so we don't have a show in Central Park.

PAPP: He won't know that. So he'll demand something else, something more. Then we'll know - it's not the dollar he wants, it's me and you out of Central Park.

ROSE: No. You're talking about Robert Moses: the man is a public icon, a future statue in stone. He's a cultured person. He'll listen to reason. He'll understand.

PAPP: He wants to break us.

ROSE: OK, make believe you're right. So? Then what? (*A beat.*) Joe? - what are you thinking? (*Another, longer beat.*) No. Joe.

Papp stands firm.

Cross-fade to Moses at his desk. He has loosened his tie. Seligman looks at his watch ... It's late.

SELIGMAN: Sir?

MOSES: I will not compromise on this. "Cost overrun", the price of beauty, it's worth whatever the cost. Ammann is right - the engineer? The designer? - the man is an artist. Look at it: the economy of line and proportion, the hidden strength of steel and concrete. A bridge, this bridge, is more than a road across water. It's a monument to man's intellectual capacity, mathematics and money made beautiful.

SELIGMAN: Yes sir.

MOSES: (*handing over the folder*) So: the answer is "no", no compromise, be firm but polite.

One folder now remains on his desk. Moses glares at it:

MOSES: I don't understand it. This ... (*rummaging his brain...*)

SELIGMAN: Papp?

MOSES: It doesn't make sense. Where would he get the money? Actors, stagehands, whatever, all at union wages. He does not have the money. You've called, you've checked, you're certain.

SELIGMAN: Yes sir, I'm certain of it.

Moses rises, shakes his head, tightens his tie, readying to leave.

MOSES: How's your grandfather Seligman?

SELIGMAN: Fully recovered, sir, thank you. He's taking tap-dancing lessons.

This is amusing if not surprising to them both.

MOSES: Tonight is pot roast. My cook does a wonderful pot roast, you'll join me and Mary. (A beat.) Tap-dancing ... He's a good man, your grandfather. I wouldn't have this bridge without him and his bank. ... Tap-dancing.

At the door of his office, he stops.

MOSES: A dollar is not much to ask. A person can afford one dollar for a theatre performance. There are costs. This is not unreasonable. (A beat.) Tomorrow, first thing, the public housing project, Battery Park. Not every public house needs to be low-income, built, rented, maintained at a fiscal loss. (A beat.) He's bluffing. He can pay union wages? - then he can pay.... for security guards ... "We've reviewed the figures....underestimated the costs" ... After that, find something else - clean-up expenses, whatever it takes. Pays us in advance, until he can't pay anymore. I want him out of that park. Send it through...

SELIGMAN: Constable.

MOSES: Constable.

SELIGMAN: But, sir, are you sure... ?

But Moses has exited.

Seligman is left with this final folder.

Fade-out.

In his office, on the telephone:

PAPP: Mr. Atkinson, sir, I need your help. I have a situation here. It's about Robert Moses, Central Park, you know, the free Shakespeare. The man wants to charge a dollar, two dollars, God knows why. I have only my principles, and my determination. I am without resources: a leaky roof, a typewriter with a sticky "w", and the dream of a destitute kid on the back streets of New York City, with Julius Caesar in his back pocket, a dream I will not give up. Ten words, a paragraph, an article from you...

Cross-fade to: Robert Moses still looks quietly elegant in his robe and slippers. He's at home. He sits in a lush straight-backed chair. He is behind that day's edition of the New York Times. He lifts the delicate

china cup of tea at his elbow: it gets midway and stops. A rumble is heard.

MOSES: Seligman!

Spotlight on ...

SELIGMAN: *(on the telephone)* The New York Times, no sir, I haven't, sir, I mean, sir ...

MOSES: *(standing now. On the telephone)* This nobody gets eight inches on the front page of the Metro Section to talk about "A confusing reversal of past policy."

SELIGMAN: Well actually ...

MOSES: "Mr. Moses' arbitrary order..."

SELIGMAN: Oh.

MOSES: "The actions of Mr. Moses are ill-considered."

SELIGMAN: Oh.

MOSES: How did this happen?!

SELIGMAN: Sir, there have also been calls here ...

Suddenly, silence. Moses waits.

SELIGMAN: Hulan Jack himself, from the Board of Estimate, and Councilman Stark.

MOSES: Abe Stark? Stark himself? *(Seligman nods.)* Well there'll be a formal letter, that's his way. Abe's a good man. What is going on here? My name, my reputation ...dragged through the mud, thirty-six years of my life. Invite him, with his wife ... what's-her-nameEsther, Tavern-On-The-Green, I want them there, Thursday, the Thursday luncheon, he likes poached salmon.

Spotlight on ...

MAYOR WAGNER: *(into a microphone)* Here I am, fellas, ...

NARRATOR: The Mayor of New York.

MAYOR WAGNER: Holding hearings for the largest city budget in the world, here I am facing an imminent strike of city hospital employees. We're talking hundreds of millions of dollars, talking sick people dead people, fellas. And you keep asking me about some "Much Ado" in the Park?! I have complete confidence in Commissioner Moses: that's all, that's my answer: the man is the most respected administrator in this city, this state, the whole damn country.

NARRATOR: The actor Ralph Bellamy was known for his stage role as a crippled young Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and was in 1959 the president of Actors' Equity, a largely ceremonial position. Except when he stood in front of ten news reporters, for the first time in anyone's memory alongside the President of the League of New York Theatres, which represents theatre owners. And what they said was ...

SELIGMAN: (*reading it:*) "Joe Papp brings to us the real spirit of Shakespeare, a Shakespeare for everyone. Bless him. 'Crowd control'? - What could Commissioner Moses be thinking? That struggling students, old people, poor families with their children, that these citizens of ours, wanting to enjoy a wonderful performance of the Bard, are an unruly mob?" And? Sir? If you'll look out your front window ...?

MOSES: What are those black kids doing on Long Island?

SELIGMAN: They're carrying a petition, sir, signed by every one of the 4th grade students at some school in Harlem.

MOSES: I'm taking away their Shakespeare - is that right? - A racist, is that what I am now?

SELIGMAN: Sir? - the call I got on this came from CBS Television News.

A camera flash surprises Moses, who backs away from the window. An insistent door chime is heard.

MAYOR WAGNER: (*at another microphone*) I'll be discussing this with Commissioner Moses.

A telephone rings ...

PAPP: (*at a press conference?*) This is not a new idea, gentlemen, that our people, no matter how poor, what their race, young and old, have a right to the riches of culture, the arts, classical theatre.

MOSES: This is the private telephone of Commissioner Robert Moses! Nobody ... Oh, forgive me, I did not realize, ... Mrs. Roosevelt, I ... But ... Yes, but ... He isn't, he doesn't, he uses everyone else's money ... He did - He told you that. He simply took over the space, Mrs. Roosevelt, he ... If you'll allow me to ... explain.

He stops, looks at the phone: she's hung up on him. Meantime:

MAYOR WAGNER: No comment!

SELIGMAN: No comment!

MOSES: No comment!

PAPP: (*waving the “checks” and a couple of \$5 bills:*) Five dollars, fifty, five-hundred! From a third-grader, a housewife, a corporation. In our first day! - Donations amounting to \$15,000! If that’s what we have to do in order to serve the needy people of this city, we will raise \$50,000 to pay for Shakespeare in the park.

MOSES: Son-of-a-bitch.

Fade-out until only Papp and, in the background, ROSE remain ...

ROSE: (*tearing up the “checks”*) Somebody might’ve asked to actually see the checks.

PAPP: It’s a theatrical device.

ROSE: Right.

PAPP: I’d say “The actual checks are in the mail.”

One might notice a second pail catching dripping water from a second leak. Rose has a letter, which he hands to Papp.

ROSE: We’re dead. It’s over. He’s sent these letters everywhere, to everybody.

PAPP: What - Moses? - There’s no name on this.

ROSE: No name, postmark - what? Manchester, Vermont - it’s him. “Joseph Papp’s a Red - took the Fifth ...”

PAPP: Moses - you’re sure.

ROSE: He’s done it before. I did not think he’d stoop to this. After all, it’s just ...

PAPP: It’s not just a couple plays by Shakespeare, it’s him and me, it’s personal, I made it personal, “culture”, “society”, all that, is personal.

ROSE: The council members will back off, the unions, the newspapers: this is his signal to them. And that’ll be that.

Papp is sitting; he mournfully shakes his head at the letter.

PAPP: “Wisdom and goodness to the vile seem vile.”

ROSE: We did make the front page of the New York Times.

PAPP: Councilmen have spoken up for me, the Mayor, ... (*shaking his head in wonder:*) It can’t be over.

ROSE: (*shrugs, grunts.*) We’ll go back to performing in the other parks. We can do that.

PAPP: No. Goddamn. Not me.

ROSE: We still have a place at the Church on Avenue “D” ...

PAPP: Jake, no, my God.

Darkness ...

The blue light of a dream scene.

Robert Moses, in his business suit and masked, is “onstage” as Julius Caesar:

VOICE: This is your big chance! - finally! - to prove yourself!

(VOICE OF) PAPP: But ... I can't ...

VOICE: You can do it, Joe.

(VOICE OF) PAPP: Me?

VOICE: Who else? Lee J. Cobb is blacklisted.

Joe Papp is in his underwear. He is “offstage”, scrambling through a paperback text of JULIUS CAESAR.

PAPP: But ... the lines ...

MOSES: “The Ides of March are come.”

PAPP: (*grabs a knife-holster*) But where are my pants?

MOSES: “The Ides of March are come.”

Papp is shoved onstage.

PAPP: “I kiss thy hand, but not in flattery, Caesar.”

MOSES: “In the world; tis furnished well with men, ...

PAPP: “Yet in the number I do know but one
That unassailable holds on his rank,
Unshaked of motion, ...

PAPP/MOSES: “And I am he.”

Papp, as Brutus, pulls out his knife, but it's only a handle.

PAPP: This is a nightmare - right?

He finds “Caesar” pulling off his mask to reveal himself as Robert Moses, and pulling out a really big (but obviously cardboard) knife!

MOSES: “Fly not, stand still, be not affrighted!”

PAPP: That's my line! I'm Brutus! (*Being chased over the stage...*)
Cut! It's over! Time to wake up!

MOSES: (*stalking him*) "The pound of flesh which I demand of you ...
Stops, waves Moses's knife away, which is easy since it's cardboard:

PAPP: What?!

MOSES: "Is dearly bought, ...

PAPP: Wrong play!

MOSES: "...is mine, and I will have it!"

Papp has stumbled to the side of the stage, picks up the prompt book, only to find it's ...

PAPP: But ... we're doing THE MERCHANT OF VENICE? I haven't read MERCHANT OF VENICE for years ...

MOSES: "Mazel tov, Yossel Papirofsky!"

Moses, over Papp's hunched back, plunges his knife with brutal force, to the amplified sound of awful tearing and a thump.

A moment of total shock then a blood-curdling scream from Papp, as blood gushes over his chest from what seems a dozen wounds. A brief blackout.

(VOICE of) PEGGY: (*faintly at first*) Joe? ... Joe ... Joe ...

The click of a lamp, a single light ... Papp sits up, sweating and disheveled, with his wife, Peggy.

PAPP: What? Where am ... ?

PEGGY: Here, Joe, sweetheart, you're shaking.

PAPP: Damn. Oh damn.

He is shivering. She wraps a blanket around him. He is sobbing, trying to get control of himself by breathing evenly, deeply.

PEGGY: It was a nightmare. It's over.

She embraces him. She begins to cry with him, in sympathy.

PEGGY: It hurts. I know. My God. Every night. Let go - You're tied up in knots - Why can't you let go?

PAPP: Oh God.

PEGGY: Joe. Breathe. Talk. Say... something.

PAPP: I feel ...

PEGGY: What?

He falls to his knees, clutching at his chest.

PEGGY: Joe? Joe?

PAPP: I am... I am ...Dying.

PEGGY: You are not dying.

PAPP: Feel small, stupid, nothing, I'm nothing to those people.

PEGGY: (*quieting him...*) Don't... Don't you let it take hold of you. Open your eyes. Look at me. At me.

PAPP: Not... will not ... let this ... h-happen.

PEGGY: You're here. With me. Damn fool. Love you. Joe? (*She is wiping his forehead, his face ...*) "He calls thee dog before he has a cause,..."

PAPP: "... b-before he has a cause,/ But, since I am a dog, beware my fangs."

PEGGY: Up. Get up.

PAPP: Yes.

He's breathing desperately, unevenly, but he rises.

She is already handing him his pants, slipping on his shoes ...

PEGGY: Do something - I think you know you have to do something.

PAPP: I can't. I don't... know... what....

PEGGY: What, well, what, there's always one more person, organization, whatever, newspaper...

PAPP: I'll... I'll go to the office. Telephone ...

PEGGY: Well no, Joe, it's 3 a.m.

PAPP: Write... I'll write ... something, a letter to him, somebody, ...

PEGGY: A press release.

PAPP: Press release, that's it, Atkinson.

As he exits...

PEGGY: Jacket?

But he's already gone...

PEGGY: Peggy is tired. Peggy goes back to sleep.

Blackout.

A while later. The not-very-rhythmic banging of typing. The office: an overhead light. Papp, who never did button his shirt or lace his shoes.

NARRATOR: It could have ended right here. It's easy to miss a moment like this. You look back, you see it all as inevitable, the sweep of events. Or figure that Moses and Papp, one or the other or both, right here right now, see the whole thing full and clear: inspired men, visionary men. That's not reality, that's the stuff of legends. Here, now, you're seeing one foot put in front of the other, one thought and then another, feeling good bad bored, whatever. Does this man look "inspired" to you?

Rose drags himself in.

NARRATOR: Or this one?

Seeing Papp, he's surprised... Who sees Rose, and grunts.

Rose rips out the sheet of paper in the typewriter.

ROSE: *(reading it)* "I was a communist. I never hid this fact."

PAPP: "Fact"! - "I was a communist. I never hid this fact." You know, this is no big secret. Anybody could have known this just reading the papers last year.

ROSE: *(crumples the paper and tosses it.)* It's hopeless.

PAPP: *(retrieves it, un-crumples it, reads)* "I was a communist. I am not ashamed of this."

Papp falls to silence, until finally:

PAPP: I am a political person, an idealist.

ROSE: But?

PAPP: But? *(A beat.)* "I was a communist. I never hid that fact. I am not ashamed of it. *(Typing it:)* "I am an idealist, activist, a political person. But ..." *(Stops; stumped.)* "I was ... not ashamed ... a political ..."

ROSE: But what's it got to do with Shakespeare?

PAPP: That's it.

ROSE/PAPP: (*typing it out.*) What's it got to do with Shakespeare?

PAPP: (*continues to type*) "I'm also Jewish. I'm also a war veteran."

ROSE/PAPP: What's it got to do with Shakespeare?

PAPP: Yes! The moon does not fall out of the sky, the planets do not stop circling the sun, Joe Papp and Jake Rose do not give up this, this, our life's work. (*rehearsing his lines:*) "I was for fifteen years a dedicated rabble-rousing card-carrying communist. So what?" ... No.

ROSE: (*scanning Moses' letter again.*) It won't work. Nothing will work.

PAPP: What he's done here is wrong.

ROSE: I don't see how ...

PAPP: I can make him put a name to this letter.

ROSE: We have no proof. You can't just accuse ...

PAPP: Sure I can! Angry: "Only a coward ... " No. Shocked: "I can't believe a man of his stature ... Disappointed, that's it, I'll be disappointed. "That a man I've always thought of as a hero, a class act, makes accusations against me, and he doesn't have the decency to sign his name." (*an idea!*) I'll make it a challenge!

He's already grabbed a telephone, and is dialing ...

PAPP: (*rehearsing the lines*) "I'm a war veteran. I'm proud to say. I'm a Jew. Proud to say. I was briefly at one time in my life a communist. What's all that got to do with Shakespeare? Bob Moses would have to answer that question. That's why Bob Moses did not put his name to this letter. I want an answer. I want Bob Moses to put his name on this letter of his." (*Into telephone:*) Atkinson, drama desk.

Fade-out.

SILVERSTEIN: Now the real story begins: "Enter Silverstein". . . Could be Harry Silverstein ... or Fred ... (*makes up his mind:*) Sam... call me Sam Silverstein. A lawyer, the lawyer, almost anonymous, almost invisible. A name, a dark suit, an expensive briefcase. A name seldom seen in the newspaper, never under a picture, never in a headline. Time goes by, and people like me are forgotten, we're not even a footnote. It's all Papp, Moses, and Wagner. But then, oh yes, then it was "get me Silverstein", as in "We have here a delicate situation", as in "confidential arrangement". Then it was an important name in the political world of, let's say, the Mayor of New York, or the business world of certain bankers. Or in the world of Robert Moses.

Lights rise on Seligman and, in his home, Robert Moses.

SILVERSTEIN: Jesse.

SELIGMAN: Sam. Mr. Moses can give you five minutes.

SILVERSTEIN: Your grandfather's ...?

SELIGMAN: Tap dancing.

SILVERSTEIN: (*nods.*) Hey.

Seligman leads him into the room. Moses, in his robe, sits in the straight-backed chair, before a portable desk stacked with folders, one of which is open before him. Except he now has a business card in his hand.

SILVERSTEIN: I do apologize for intruding, Mr. Moses. It was necessary. This is important.

MOSES: Mr. ... Silverstein? (*Seligman whispers in Moses's ear ...*) Ah ... those Silversteins.

He motions for Seligman to bring over a chair for the man, who motions his refusal, remains standing.

SILVERSTEIN: This is, you understand, a social visit. (*A nod.*) The public squabble between yourself and Mr. Papp must be ended.

MOSES: Squabble? - Mr. Papp? (*As if trying to remember*) He does what? Theatre, isn't he? In Central Park. Squabble? We don't squabble. We have responsibilities. I am a public ser ...

SILVERSTEIN: One Jew accuses another ...

MOSES: YOU HAVE INTERRUPTED ME, MR. SILVERSTEIN!

Dead silence. Moses has stood bolt upright, knocking over the portable desk, the folders flying. Moses slowly calms himself. Seligman straightens the desk, gathers together the spilled folders. Moses sits.

MOSES: ... Public servant, have been a public servant for forty years. I take my responsibilities, which are considerable, I take my responsibilities with the utmost seriousness.

Silverstein takes a long time responding.

SILVERSTEIN: One Jew, a respected leader, ...

MOSES: Jewish? Me? I am one thousand things before I am incidentally "Jewish".

SILVERSTEIN: “Jewish” is the public perception: first for them, foremost for them, a Jew is a Jew. And when one accuses another Jew of being a communist ...

MOSES: Someone sends a letter around ... certain facts about a man’s politics, facts about his lack of finances, distributes a factual letter.

Silverstein looks to Seligman, who glances away.

SILVERSTEIN: The letter, as you know, was unsigned. Mr. Papp has declared it was you. (*Handing them one after another to him*) Advanced copies of tomorrow’s newspapers, they all accuse you. Everyone seems to presume ...

Moses is quickly reading one after another of the articles.

MOSES: Trash ... trash ... (*well, not this one, or the next ...*) This is all speculation. Libelous, my lawyer will point out to ... A man like me, in the public spotlight, this sort of thing ... I don’t understand. A person, whoever it might be, accuses a bank robber of robbing banks. Is there something wrong with that? This man disrespects the laws of this land. I’m a public servant - he’s a communist! If I’m a Jew - he’s a communist! (*Calms himself ...*) Papirofsky? A Jew? - Since when? - Changes his name, tells everyone that his mother was English High Church, his father Polish Catholic. Suddenly, two months ago ... (*to Seligman:*) Show him the file, where’s that file. A Jew? with more divorces than degrees? What kind of Jew is that?

SILVERSTEIN: With all due respect, Mr. Moses, I was not sent here to argue. This Rosenberg espionage business, the Hollywood Ten, are fresh in the minds of the public. People might get the impression that all Jews are communists. This is no time for us - the survivors - no time for us to fight each other. A thing like this, in this heated atmosphere, is fuel for anti-Semites. It is time for solidarity, for caution. It’s time for us to stay out of the public spotlight.

MOSES: Spotlight? - what spotlight? - a few days, a few stories in the paper. What do you think I am? I don’t ask for a spotlight. I’m not some elected politician pandering for some votes. I’m not some special interest pawing my way to the public trough. I get things done. I build bridges, buildings, roads and parks. You tell me? I run the men who run New York!

He stops. Silence.

Silverstein shakes his hand:

SILVERSTEIN: Sir.

Moses motions to Seligman, who is there to accompany Silverstein out. Which he does.