

THE FRONT PAGE

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GRADE RECOMMENDATION

Suitable for Grade 7 and up.

CONTENT ADVISORY FOR STUDENTS

Contains some mature themes and strong language.

STUDENT MATINÉE DATES

September 2, 11, 26; October 2.

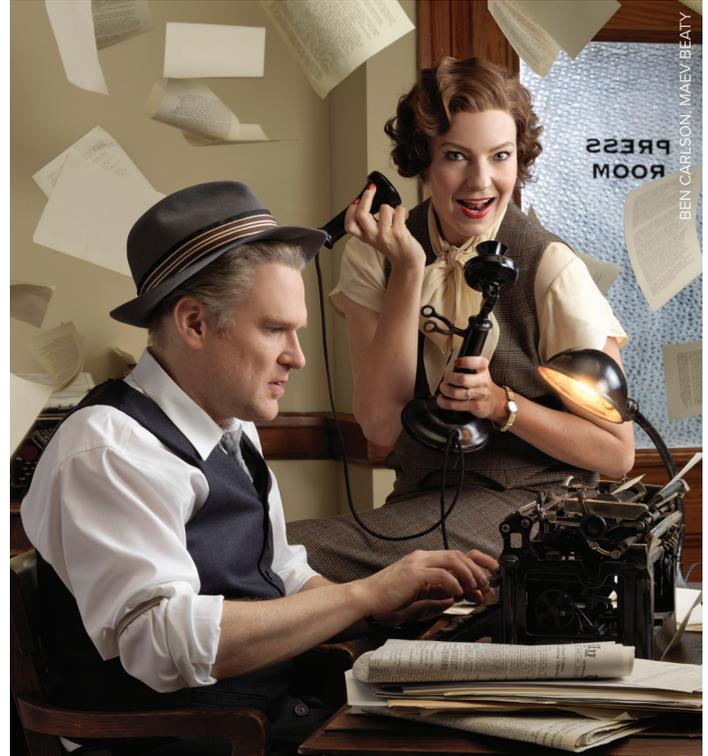
ABOUT THE PLAY

Originally written in 1928, the play is set in Chicago, in the heyday of newspaper journalism. It is a satirical look at the perversion of justice for political and financial gains. It examines the power of the spoken and written word and how it can uncover and expose the truth and lies or succumb to political corruption.

SYNOPSIS

This dark comedy-drama takes place in the press room of Chicago's Criminal Courts Building, overlooking the courtyard in which a supposed Communist agitator, Earl Williams, is to be hanged for the shooting of an African-American police officer. Reporters from all but one of the city's major newspapers are there, killing time as they await the 7 a.m. execution. The exception is Hildy Johnson, star reporter for the *Examiner*, who arrives only to announce that he's getting married and quitting the newspaper business.

Meanwhile, the Governor's office has sent a man carrying the reprieve for Williams, but the mayor bribes the official not to deliver the document. Hildy's determination to seek a new life is suddenly thwarted when Williams escapes from jail and clambers through the window into the office of which Hildy is now the sole occupant. Neither a Communist nor an intentional killer, Williams has become the unwilling pawn of corrupt local authorities – and Hildy is determined to get the story, even if it costs him the love of his life.



CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

GLOBAL COMPETENCIES:

- Creativity
- Learning to Learn/Self-Awareness
- Communication
- Collaboration
- Critical Thinking

GRADES 7–12:

- Language/English (listening to understand, speaking to communicate, reading for meaning)
- Drama, Music, Visual Art

GRADES 7–12:

- Health and PE (interpersonal skills, conflict resolution, harassment, bullying, leadership, decision-making, mental health, healthy relationships)

GRADE 11:

- Introduction to Anthropology, Psychology and Sociology (explaining human behaviour, socialization)
- Equity, Diversity and Social Justice (the social construction of identity, power and relations)

- Media Studies (understanding media perspectives, understanding the impact of media in society, industry and audience, ownership and control)

GRADE 12:

- Equity and Social Justice: From Theory to Practice (power relations, historical and contemporary issues, leadership)
- World History Since the Fifteenth Century (social, economic and political context)
- Adventures in World History (politics and conflict)

THEMES

- Truthfulness: Journalistic Integrity, Hypocrisy, Manipulation and Political Corruption
- Choices and Consequences: Loyalty, Greed and Reliability
- Racism, Intolerance and Justice

CLASSROOM WARM-UP

Divide the class into four groups. Hand out the questions listed below, chart paper and markers to each group. Invite one person from each group to act as a scribe, recording their group's responses.

Give students time to discuss and respond to each question.

What method do you use today to get reliable news?

Should limits be placed on journalists when pursuing a story? How far should they go to obtain a story?

Should the media be allowed to exaggerate news items or the way they tell their stories to evoke some sort of emotional response from their audience?

Should politicians do what they believe to be the right thing even if it means ignoring public opinion?

What is false information? How can we differentiate false from real news? What consequences should there be for journalists and politicians who spread false information?

After all groups are finished responding, have the class gather together to discuss their findings. Pin the chart sheets on the wall to see if there are similarities, commonalities and differences among the responses to the questions posed.

Debrief with the students and find out what they discovered. What surprised them the most? Was their disagreement among or between the groups? What question did they find most challenging to answer? Why?

ENRICHMENT

Workshops and post-show chats may be arranged by calling the Education Department at 519.271.4040, ext. 2354.

Festival Theatre and Costume Warehouse tours may be arranged by calling the Box Office at 1.800.567.1600.

BOOKING INFORMATION

Online: www.stratfordfestival.ca/schools

Email: groups@stratfordfestival.ca

Phone: 1.800.567.1600 or 519.273.1600

Mail:

Stratford Festival
Attn: Groups and Schools
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Production support is generously provided by Nona Macdonald Heaslip