

OJISA

I read somewhere that everybody on this planet is separated by only six other people. Six degrees of separation between us and everyone else on this planet. The President of the United States, a gondolier in Venice, just fill in the names. I find that extremely comforting, that we're so close, but I also find it like Chinese water torture that we're so close because you have to find the right six people to make the connection. It's not just big names it's anyone. A native in a rain forest, a Tierra del Fuegoan, an Eskimo. I am bound you are bound to everyone on this planet by a trail of six people. It's a profound thought: how Paul found us; how to find the man whose son he claims to be, or perhaps is, although I doubt it. How everyone is a new door, opening into other worlds.

FROM PREFACE OF HIS PLAY John Guare, Playwright

A writer learns his or her life as a writer is entrusted to work being done in a room, a studio, an atelier not at the top of a stair but hidden somewhere within the mind. Why the hell is the place that is truly us the place that is most inaccessible? And a writer grows to hate that room and its gnawing presence and its inaccessibility. A writer's life becomes a history of the trek of how he or she returns to that room down a path as trustworthy as mercury. The writer strews the path with booze or drugs or lies and resentments and fear of abandonment and despair and jealousy and self loathing and hatred that we have lost the way to that path which is most us. Because the inhabitants of that room demand attention when they are ready or else they will drive us mad. You didn't try hard enough to find me. You didn't structure your life in the right way to hear us when we called. But you have to go on living. This is not Dostoevsky. This is not Byron.

I heard about an event in 1983. Read about it in the papers. Forgot the event. Or thought so. Six years later in 1989 I was breaking my back trying to solve a play and also working on a film script that I liked but that would also pull double duty of paying to support my playwrighting habit. Overwhelmed? My plate was very filled.

And of course what's when the knocking started. *Six Degrees of Separation* – title and all – announced it was ready and must be collected and everything else put aside. Now! The workshop had spent the past six years collecting data, reworking, inventing, finding a style of narrative. Luckily the call didn't come during an appendectomy or wartime invasion or a loved one's emergency or a parachute jump. It came when I was in proximity to my pen.

Which I picked up. Because you cannot say to that knocking: Later. Or not right now. It's perverse, that unconscious. It only shows up at the most inappropriate time, when it's not been asked for. I wrote the play. I showed it to the people at Lincoln Center. It went into production.

Jack DePalma, Play Development Director at the Globe recently sat down with director Trip Cullman to discuss his thoughts about *SIX DEGREES OF SEPARATION*

JACK: Tell me about what attracted you to this play.

TRIP: I feel that this play is a masterpiece. The first thirty minutes of it are the best first thirty minutes of any American play ever written. It (depicts) the kind of dinner party that as a New Yorker you either always dream of either having or attending. I immediately latched onto this idea of transgression, that these people are living in this ivory tower above Fifth Avenue in this hermetic perfect palace world and the idea of Ouisa reaching out beyond the walls of this Eden that she's created for herself and how the act of empathy or reaching beyond those walls shatters the walls and all of a sudden the World, invades upon her psyche and she's forever transformed by that. I thought that was quite exciting and I think it's the theme of transgression actually, that goes throughout the play whether it's how the Mormon kid is seduced by Paul and sleeps with him all the way up to what Paul does with Ouisa and Flan.

JACK: In 1990, this play captured the zeitgeist of that time. Sometimes plays like that don't stand the test of time. *Six Degrees* absolutely does.

TRIP: As all truly great plays do. I do think we have progressed in terms of race in this country. I don't know if it's as politically or socially incendiary as it was then but certainly as a piece of writing, as a piece of art absolutely it still has incredible power. I think the dialogue is among the best dialogue ever and also his ability to etch fully three dimensional characters who appear for like a page, that I think is really extraordinary.

JACK: What about the idea that the parents curry favor with their children – the roles are reversed.

SIX DEGREES *of* DAVID HAMPTON

The New York Times

HOAXER STAYED IN MANHATTAN HOMES AS 'STUDENT'

(NYT): METROPOLITAN DESK

October 18, 1983, Tuesday

By convincing at least four New York couples recently that he was a friend of one of their children, a young man who said he was a Harvard student and the son of the actor Sidney Poitier gained entrance to their homes, dined with them, borrowed money, stayed...

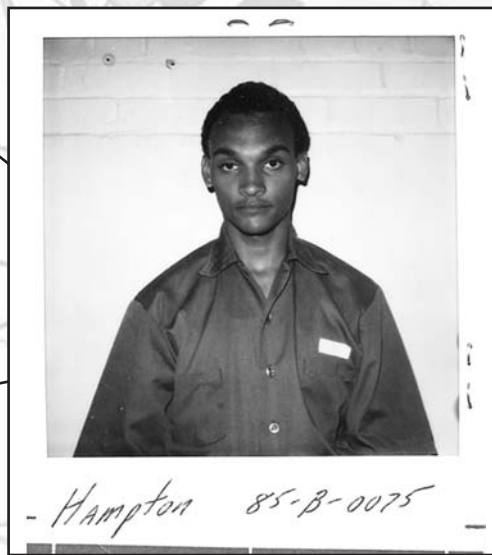


JOHN GUARE, Playwright

OSBORN AND INGER ELLIOTT
Friends of John Guare who were taken
in by David Hampton's scam.



David Hampton's mug shot



JOHN JAY ISELIN and
wife Lea were also duped by
Hampton. They are friends
of the Elliotts.



Actor GARY SINISE allowed Hampton to stay
the night in the New York apartment he was
renting from Melanie Griffith and her hus-
band Steven "Rocky" Bauer. Hampton con-
vinced him he was friends with the couple and
had stayed with them in the past.



JOSIE ISELIN daughter of John
and Lea. Hampton claimed to be
her friend and a fellow student
with her at Harvard.

Actress MELANIE GRIFFITH and then hus-
band STEVEN BAUER met Hampton in Florida
while Bauer was filming the movie *Scarface*. Griffith later
told Gary Sinise that Hampton was "nuts."

Guildestern Are Dead, The Winter's Tale, Under Milk Wood, Moving Picture, The Blue Demon, Princess Turandot, The Love of Three Oranges, Williamstown Theatre Festival; *Heartbreak House, What the Butler Saw, Amphitryon, The Blue Demon*, Huntington Theatre; *Hay Fever, Princess Turandot*, Westport County Playhouse; *A Little Night Music, Amour*, Goodspeed Musicals; *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, Long Wharf Theatre; and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, Chicago Shakespeare Theatre. His opera credits include the American premieres of Victor Ullmann's *Der zerbrochene Krug* and Alexander Zemlinsky's *Der Zwerg*, Los Angeles Opera; and the American premiere of Rimsky-Korsakov's *May Night*, Sarasota Opera. UPCOMING: Walter Braunfels' *Die Vögel* at the Los Angeles Opera, conducted by James Conlon.

Jack O'Brien
(Artistic Director Emeritus)

Mr. O'Brien served as the Artistic Director of The Old Globe from 1982 through 2007. Recent Globe productions: *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels, Imaginary Friends, Twelfth Night, The Full Monty, The Seagull, The Magic Fire, Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas!* WEST END: *Love Never Dies* (sequel to Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Phantom*, Fall 2009), *Hairspray* (Olivier Award for Best Musical, Best Director nomination). BROADWAY: *Impressionism* (March 2009) Creator/Supervisor, *Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas!, The Coast of Utopia* (2007 Tony Award® for Best Direction of a Play, which won a total of 7 Tony Awards, including Best Play), *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* (Tony nominations: Best Director and Musical), *Henry IV* (Tony Award), *Hairspray* (Tony Award), *The Invention of Love* (Tony nominations: Best Director and Play), *The Full Monty* (Tony nominations: Best Director and Musical), *More to Love, Labor Day, St. Louis Woman, Pride's Crossing, The Little Foxes, Hapgood* (Lucille Lortel Award for Direction, 1995), *Damn Yankees* (Tony nomination Best Musical Revival), *Two Shakespearean Actors* (Tony nominations: Best Director and Play), *Porgy and Bess* for Houston Grand Opera and Broadway (Tony Award), as well as Radio City Music Hall, *Il Trittico*, Metropolitan Opera. RECENT AWARDS: 2008 Theatre Hall of Fame Inductee, 2004 Thomas DeGaetani Award (USITT), 2002 "Mr. Abbott" Award (SDCF), 2001 Joan Cullman Award for Extraordinary Creativity, 2001 Joe A. Callaway Award (SDCF), the Drama League's Julia Hansen Award for

Excellence in Directing, 2001. Honorary Doctorate, University of Michigan. Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters, University of San Diego. Recipient of ArtServe Michigan's 2008 International Achievement Award. Mr. O'Brien is a member of the College of Fellows of the American Theatre.

Vivia Font and Sloan Grenz appear in this production courtesy of Actors' Equity Association

FOR THIS PRODUCTION
Additional Staff

Assistant DirectorMilana Vayntrub
Assistant Lighting DesignShawna Cadence
Stage Management InternAmanda Salmons

SPECIAL THANKS

Use of computer donated by:
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This theatre operates under an agreement between the League of Resident Theatres and Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.



The Directors are members of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers, an independent national labor union.



The Scenic, Costume, Lighting and Sound Designers in LORT Theatres are represented by United Scenic Artists Local USA-826, IATSE.



This Theatre operates under an Agreement with the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees Local No. 122.

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TRIP: Yes – the parents are terrified of the children, the children hold the power. Part of the reason why the parents are so attracted to Paul in the first place is because of his in (with their children) to say that “oh I know your kids and we were talking about you” so they’re dying to find out what the kids say about them because they have no concrete relationship with their own children so they’re dying to hear about the relationship from someone else. They don’t have any other way in.

JACK: And Paul isn’t the only con artist in the play.

TRIP: I mean what is more of a con than the art market?

JACK: Look what they’re doing –getting money so they can borrow money and make that into a lot more money.....

TRIP: Absolutely. I love that line where Paul asks Trent whether these are all really really rich people and Trent says “oh no these people are hand to mouth on a higher plateau”, and that’s exactly what it is – where they’re absolutely scheming con-artists as well.

JACK: Are Ouisa and Flan the heirs of radical chic? Do you think if Paul were white – would they have fallen so hard?

TRIP: That’s a great question. I think if he were white and the son of Robert Redford, you know what I mean? I think that part of what it is – is the attraction of fame and notoriety and all that kind of stuff. Paul is such an interesting character because I think he’s someone who desperately wants everyone to love him but also is incapable...

JACK: There’s no malice in him

TRIP: None at all – the opposite. I think he’s an open wound and desperate for affection. Paul gives Ouisa and Flan and Geoffrey what they desperately needed and in that way I don’t think it is a con, getting something for nothing – I actually think he provides a great service to all three of those characters.

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