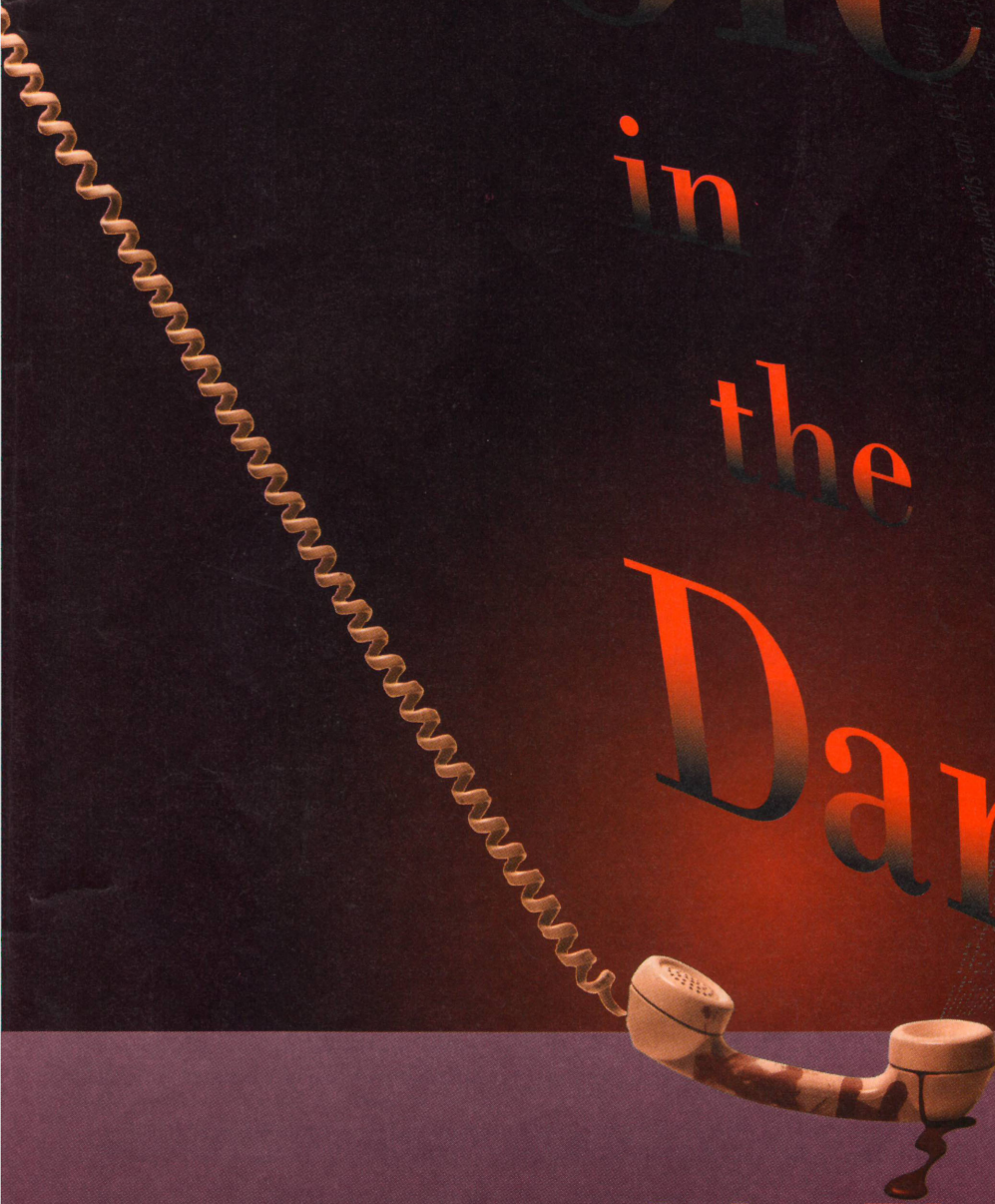




# Voices in the Dark



Written and directed by **John Pielmeier**



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Written and directed by **John Pielmeier**

October 15 – November 13, 1994

- 6** Program Notes
- 9** Title Page
- 10** The Actors
- 12** Directors and Production Staff
- 15** Remarks by the playwright
- 18** Contributors: 1993-94 Annual Fund
- 4** General Information and Acknowledgements
- 14** *A Christmas Carol*    **16** ACT Board and Staff

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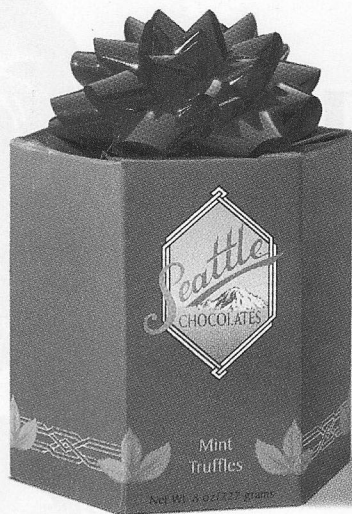
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We invite you to attend a **sign-interpreted performance** of *Voices in the Dark*, Friday, November 4 at 8:00 p.m.

An **audio-described performance** is scheduled for *Voices in the Dark*, Sunday, November 6 at 7:00 p.m. It is provided by AVIA (Arts and Visually Impaired Audiences), funded in part by the Seattle Arts Commission, King County Arts Commission, Washington State Arts Commission, National Endowment for the Arts, The Boeing Company, Airborne Express, and Nesholm Family Foundation.

**Assistive listening devices** are available at no charge for all performances (except those which are audio-described). They are provided by Ackerley Communications, Inc. Please see the House Manager for them.

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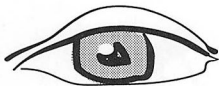
# on Hillians & Voyeurs

by Tonia Steed



"Marvelous technology at our disposal and instead of reaching up for new heights we try to see how far down we can go... how deep into the muck we can immerse ourselves!... You've got nothing. Nothing. Absolutely nothing. No brains. No power. No future. No hope. No God. The only thing you believe in is me."

(Bogosian, Eric. *Talk Radio*. Samuel French, Inc., 1987)



"I like my audiences to feel first, and then to think," says playwright John Pielmeier. "If they can do both, I'm very happy."

(Interview with William Mootz, [Louisville] Courier-Journal, 1988)



"The setting for [thrillers] is most commonly a well-to-do...country home, preferably one...isolated by both geography and inclement weather to intensify the aura of entrapment."

(Carlson, Marvin. *Deathtraps: The Postmodern Comedy Thriller*. Indiana University Press, 1993)

"I want to talk to ordinary people with ordinary problems," complains Lil, the radio therapist protagonist of John Pielmeier's *Voices in the Dark*. "I'm the number one *freak* show. Nobody calls up any more because their husband snores, for God's sake. They call 'cause he's a maniac who threatens them every night with a hack saw." "And there," her friend Hack replies, "there's your ratings." Ratings as currency have transformed advice shows — and the dysfunction which feeds them — into a lucrative market. Witness the proliferation and mass appeal of media advice gurus such as Dr. Joyce Brothers, Dr. Joy Browne, Dr. Ruth Westheimer, Dr. David Viscott, and radio-turned-t.v. talk show host Sally Jesse Raphael. A 1992 film called *Straight Talk*, featuring Dolly Parton as a radio therapist dispensing sensible down-home homilies to Chicago listeners, enjoyed a box-office boom despite the critics' derisive howls, summed up in this terse review in the L.A. *Daily News*: "*Straight Talk* is as trite and superficial as your average radio shrink's two-minute analysis."<sup>1</sup> At this year's Emmy Awards, *Frasier*, a sitcom built around a Seattle radio psychiatrist, won top honors. During the spring television ratings sweeps, talk format broadcasts get more "dramatic, more bizarre and even more competitive."<sup>2</sup> *Washington Post* media reporter Paula Span further articulates the glib, often prurient attitude of the media advice circuit which so concerns our ambivalent heroine, Lil: "Guests who once seemed compelling and provocative — long-lost siblings being tearfully united, say — seem stale. 'We've all seen the mother of a kid who's been molested,' yawns [talk show producer] Stuart Krasnow..."<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, in the world of reality programming the old formula of sex and violence still sells, and even the "true story" remains populated with familiar characters: damsels in distress, victimized as well as victimizing villains, and hope-inspiring heroes. In the case of the increasingly popular media advice show, the host is the new hero, bolstered by the almost omnipresent, certainly omniscient mystique that communication through the airwaves can create. And this leads to the inevitable query: Are radio therapists playing God?

Hack's rejoinder taps into the thematic axis of Pielmeier's suspenseful, *visceral* psychological face-off, spinning even more vital questions now in constant, high profile circulation: Should media counseling be subject to the same ethical codes and concerns as more traditional forms of therapy? Who bears the burden of responsibility when advice over the air is misconstrued or mishandled? Is media exposure — bringing it all out into the open, so to speak — genuinely therapeutic, or is it merely exploitative; another level of victimization? If, as a

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"[Sally Jesse Raphael] will readily point out that her own life has been full of mistakes, which she says have been painful at times. Asked if she always follows her own advice, she responds with a laugh. 'Oh, of course not,' she says. 'It's very easy to tell other people what to do, very difficult to lead an exemplary life.'"

(Parks, Louis B., *Houston Chronicle*, 1988.)

study recently published in the *Journal of Communication*<sup>4</sup> indicates, people who call in to radio advice shows tend to be more isolated, and more intimidated by face-to-face interaction, than average listeners, does this form of therapy alleviate or exacerbate a sense of alienation? What are the consequences

of this kind of alienation, which is practically epidemic now in technologized nations? What are the effects of an "instant" culture that wants even its most complex problems solved by adding water and stirring? While the hungry voyeurs in us happily consume, they may also inadvertently bring violence to a boil. In *Voices in the Dark*, Pielmeier draws the bottom line — *tout*: In trying to touch a wider audience through network technology, our well-intentioned advisors of the airwaves are becoming — perhaps dangerously — out of touch.

— Tonia Steed

(Tonia Steed is a Ph.D. candidate in Drama at the University of Washington. Please see page 15 for remarks by John Pielmeier.)

<sup>1</sup> Strauss, Bob. "Parton Falls Flat in 'Straight Talk,'" (Los Angeles) *Daily News*, April 3, 1992.

<sup>2</sup> Span, Paula. "Where Do They Find These People?," *Washington Post*, April 16, 1992.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Armstrong, Cameron B., and Rubin, Alan M. "Talk Radio as Interpersonal Communication," *Journal of Communication* 39 (2), Spring, 1989.



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**Peggy Shannon**  
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**Phil Schermer**  
Producing Director

**Susan Trapnell Moritz**  
Managing Director

**Gregory A. Falls**  
Founding Director

presents the PONCHO World Premiere of

# Voices in the Dark

Written and directed by **John Pielmeier**

Scene Designer	Kent Dorsey
Costume Designer	Christine Dougherty
Lighting Designer	Rick Paulsen
Sound Designer	Steven M. Klein
Assistant Director	Mark Anders
Fight Director	Geoffrey Alm
Composer	Albert Ahronheim
Stage Manager	Jeffrey K. Hanson

## The Cast

in order of vocal appearance

Caller #1	Karen Kay Cody
Lil	Jacqueline Knapp
Caller #2	????
Owen	James Marsters
Hack	Mark Chamberlin
Red	Lenny Blackburn
Bill	Alec Dennis
Blue	Eddie Levi Lee
Egan	Michael MacRae

Act One, Scene One	Friday, 10:45 p.m.
Scene Two	Saturday, 3 p.m.
Scene Three	Saturday, 9 p.m.
Scene Four	Sunday, 4:45 p.m.
Scene Five	Sunday, 8:30 p.m.

Act Two, Scene One	Sunday, 11 p.m.
Scene Two	Monday, weeks later, 10:50 p.m.

**There will be one intermission.**

*Voices in the Dark* was first read at the Repertory Theatre of St. Louis and workshopped at The Gathering at Bigfork.

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This production is partially underwritten by **PONCHO**  
with additional underwriting provided by Graham & Dunn and Totem Ocean Trailer Express.

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## The Actors



**Lenny Blackburn**  
*Red*

is pleased to make his Seattle debut in this production. He has appeared on Broadway in *The Visit* at The Roundabout, with Jane Alexander, and in the New York Shakespeare Company's production of *Titus Andronicus*. He first played a character named Red in the Indiana Rep's *When You Comin' Back, Red Rider?* in Indianapolis, where he also attended the Indy 500, his second passion. He has guest-starred on the television series *Law and Order, L.A. Law* and *Murphy Brown*, and is featured in the soon-to-be-released film, *Only Son*. Lenny is married to actress Leona Kay and the proud father of Kanada and Merryly.



**Mark Chamberlin**  
*Hack*

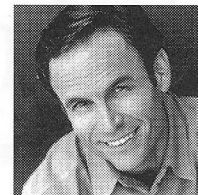
has appeared on our stage most recently in *A Christmas Carol, Sunsets and Glories* and *Shadowlands*. Previous appearances at ACT include *Halcyon Days, A Normal Life, Woman in Mind* and *The Downside*. Locally Mark was seen in *The Rememberer* at Seattle Children's Theatre, *How the Other Half Loves* at Intiman Theatre Company and previously at Seattle Repertory Theatre in *M. Butterfly, Much Ado About Nothing* and *Red Square*. He has worked around the country at the Arizona Theatre Company, Alliance Theatre, Pittsburgh Public, Huntington Repertory and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival/Portland. On Broadway, he created the role of William in *84 Charing Cross Road*. Mark co-stars in the films *Edge of Honor, Ghost Story* and *Kent State*. He is a graduate of Whitman College and the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York.



**Karen Kay Cody**  
*Callers, Doc and 911 operator*

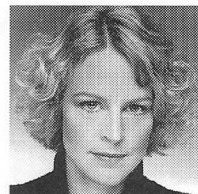
is an accomplished musical comedy performer, dramatic actress, cabaret singer and comedienne. Among her many professional credits are a recent stint at the Cabaret de Paris as one of the *Sirens of Swing*; she has also played Nellie Forbush in *South Pacific*, Agnes in *Agnes of God*, the title roles in both world premiere productions of *Little Lulu* and *The Magical Mrs. Piggie Wiggle*, principal roles in

*Guys and Dolls*, and a starring role in the long-running Seattle hit *Angry Housewives*. Karen Kay has sung in a variety of revues showcasing Irving Berlin, Cole Porter, '50s rock and roll, original music and pop and show tunes in Seattle, San Diego and Bermuda nightclubs. She is also a tap dancer.



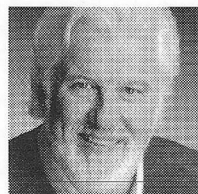
**Alec Dennis**  
*Bill*

is new to the Seattle area and happy to be here. A Los Angeles native, he made his theatre debut in *Leonce and Lena* at the Mark Taper Forum. Since then he has appeared regionally in *Of Mice and Men, Broadway Bound* and *Wait Until Dark*, and was an "intermittent regular" on the *Dear John* series for three years. Alec dedicates this performance to Michael, without whom...



**Jacqueline Knapp**  
*Lil*

Jacqueline played Maggie in Broadway's Tony Award-winning *Dancing at Lughnasa*. Also in New York she appeared in Romulus Linney's *Unchanging Love*, John Ford Noonan's one-woman play *All She Cares About is the Yankees*, and *Hillbilly Women* at the Actors Studio. Recently she played Regina in *The Little Foxes* at Virginia's Barter Theatre. Around the country she has appeared at the Cincinnati Playhouse, Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Portland Stage Company, GeVa Theatre, Baltimore's Center Stage, Pennsylvania Stage Company, Syracuse Stage, Emelin Theatre, The Guthrie Theatre and Long Wharf Theatre. Her favorite productions include *Deadfall, National Anthems, Under Statements, The Rainmaker* and *Talley's Folly*. Among Jacqueline's film and television credits are the roles of Camille Rawson on *All My Children*, Bethel Ford on *Loving*, Mrs. Casey in *The Cosby Mysteries* and Mrs. Vinson in *Dominick and Eugene*.



**Eddie Levi Lee**  
*Blue*

Eddie Levi Lee made his ACT debut with *A Christmas Carol* in 1991. As an actor, he has appeared at The Spoleto Festival, The Philadelphia Drama Guild, Actors Theatre of Louisville, The Kennedy Center, The



Dublin Theatre Festival, and off-Broadway theatres in a wide variety of roles. As a playwright, he has authored or co-authored more than a dozen plays, including *Nicholas DeBeaubien's Hunchback of Notre Dame* at The Annex, *Blood Orgy of the Bermuda Triangle* *Zombie Assassins* at The Empty Space, and such widely-produced plays as *Tent Meeting*, *The Illuminati Play* and *Hamlet...The Musical*. He is currently Artistic Director of the Empty Space Theatre, in Fremont.



**Michael MacRae**  
*Egan*

last appeared at ACT in *Four Our Fathers*. He has performed with the Seattle

Repertory Theatre in *Hogan's Goat* and *The Sisters Rosensweig*; with The Empty Space in *Speed-the-Plow* and *Scaramouche*; and with Intiman Theatre Company in *Angel Street*. He has worked with the McCarter Theatre at Princeton, the Antioch Theatre, the Los Angeles Actors Theatre, San Diego's Old Globe, Odyssey Theatre and South Coast Repertory Company. Recent film credits include *For the Love of Nancy* for ABC, *Deadly Vows* for Fox TV, *The Beans of Egypt, Maine* for PBS' American Playhouse, *Simon & Simon...Precious Cargo* for CBS and the Warner Bros. film *Katie*.



**James Marsters**  
*Owen*

James is happy to be returning to the ACT stage, where he last appeared in *The*

*Cover of Life* as Tommy. James is co-artistic director of the New Mercury Theatre where he was last seen in their hit thriller *Killers*. He has also attempted the roles of Bentley Summerhays in *Misalliance*, Haemon in *Antigone*, and Lennox in *Macbeth*, all at the Intiman Theatre. Other regional credits include *The Tempest* and *Red Noses* at the Goodman Theatre, *Figaro* and *The White Plague* at the Northlight Theatre, and *Normal Heart* at the Next Theatre, all in Chicago. James has attended the Julliard and P.C.P.A. actor training programs. *Northern Exposure* fans may recognize him as Rev. Harding.

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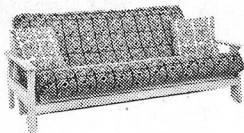
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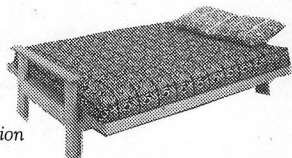
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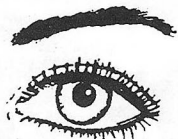
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### The Change Point

## ACT Welcomes Peggy Shannon!



Peggy Shannon has been named the new artistic director at ACT. She is currently the artistic director of the School of Theatre at USC in Los Angeles where she was associate artistic director of the Matrix Theatre and associate producing director L.A. Theatre Works. Seattle audiences may remember her for her work during the mid-1980s at The Empty Space, The Group Theatre, Northwest Theatre and Pioneer Square Theatre. She worked as an assistant director and dramaturg at ACT in 1985 and directed *Hunting Cockroaches* at the Seattle Rep in 1988. A highly respected free-lance director, Peggy's credits stretch across the country. Her production of *You Can't Take It With You* ran this season at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Ashland. Peggy will split her time between Los Angeles and Seattle this fall, and will begin her new duties full-time next January. We look forward to introducing you to Peggy Shannon in the next few months!

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## Directors and Production Staff

**Susan Trapnell Moritz** *Managing Director* joined ACT in 1982 as Administrative Manager and became Managing Director in 1989. Susan holds a B.A. in French from the University of North Carolina and attended the University of Lyons in France. She also did graduate work in dance education at George Washington University. Prior to coming to ACT, Susan spent four years with Bill Evans Dance Company/Dance Theatre Seattle as Educational Director and then General Manager. She served as a UNESCO bilingual aide in Paris and held writing and editing positions in the Washington, D.C., area. Other experience includes work with the National Urban League and a teaching position in Algeria. She is a member and past president of the Washington State Arts Alliance, a member of the King County Arts Commission, and a member of the Leadership Tomorrow class of 1992. Susan is a native of Arlington, VA.

### **Phil Schermer** *Producing Director*

has been working in professional theatre for over 25 years. He began his career at the Seattle Repertory Theatre as a painter and then scenic carpenter. He has also designed lighting for the Seattle Rep and its Second Stage, The Bathhouse Theatre, The Empty Space Theatre, The Seattle Group Theatre, Tacoma Actors Guild and Montana Repertory Theatre as well as numerous productions at ACT. He served as Technical Director and Production Manager at ACT before being named Producing Director in 1989. For the past five years, he has been actively involved in the design process for ACT's new facility. Phil received a B.A. in Literature/History from Reed College in Portland and an M.A. in Lighting Design/Technical Production from the University of Washington.

### **John Pielmeier** *Playwright and Director*

wrote and performed *Willi, An Evening of Wilderness and Spirit*, about mountaineer Willi Unsoeld for ACT in 1991. His first play, *Agnes of God*, premiered at Actors Theatre of Louisville and subsequently enjoyed a 17-month run on Broadway. His other plays include *Young Rube*, a musical written with Matthew Selman, which premiered at the Repertory Theatre of St. Louis; *Courage*, a one-man show about J.M. Barrie that premiered at Actors Theatre of Louisville and later ran at the Lambs' Theatre in New York City; *The Boys of Winter*, produced on Broadway in the 1985-86 season; *Jazz*, a romance with music, first presented at the O'Neill Playwrights Conference; and *Impassioned Embraces*, a collection of short plays and monologues produced in London. His television movies include *Choices of the*



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Heart, for which he received a Christopher Award and the Humanitas Award; *The Stranger Within*; *The Last P.O.W.? - The Bobby Garwood Story*; and an adaptation of Dominick Dunne's *An Inconvenient Woman*. Current projects include an adaptation of Joan Frances Casey's autobiography, *The Flock*, and *Acts of Contrition*, a thriller he is writing and producing with David Manson for CBS. An alumnus of New Dramatists, John is blissfully married to author and performer Irene O'Garden.

### **Mark Anders Assistant Director**

is a Seattle-based actor, singer and writer who has worked in regional theatre for 10 years. Recently, he played his childhood hero Joe Hardy in *The Hardy Boys* at the Seattle Children's Theatre. At Seattle's Intiman Theatre, Mark has appeared as Simon Bliss in *Hay Fever*, Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Prince Lir in *The Last Unicorn* and Czar Peter III in *Catherine*. Other credits include Tavy in *Man and Superman*, the Fool in *King Lear*, Leo in *The Little Foxes*, Fag in *The Rivals*, and Chris in *Merrily We Roll Along*. As a playwright and lyricist, Mark was the creator (with composer Todd Moeller) of the cabaret musical *Evil Reba*, and with Karen Kay Cody (Mark's wife) he devised the long-running seasonal entertainment *A Holiday Sampler*. Last but not most, he's the proud father of four-year-old Gemma.

### **Albert Ahronheim Composer**

was musical director/arranger for John Pielmeier's *Young Rube* and for the New York productions of *Eating Raoul*, *The Fertilization Opera*, *Pets!*, *Love in 2 Countries* and *Kiss Me Quick Before the Lava Reaches the Village*. He orchestrated/produced the incidental music for *The Tempest*, *As You Like It* and *The Mystery of Irma Vep* at Actors Theatre of Louisville, and for *Martha Stewart Living Television*. While in the University of Michigan Marching Band, he co-wrote a musical cheer, "Let's Go, Blue!", used in the films *The Big Chill* and *Country* and now played throughout basketball and football seasons nationwide. This and 45 of his arrangements have been published by Warner Bros. and United Artists among others.

### **Geoffrey Alm Fight Director**

is pleased to return to ACT, where his previous credits include *Fish Head Soup*, *Life During Wartime*, *Red Noses* (in which he appeared as Charlie Bembo), *The Illusion* and *Voice of the Prairie*. His other local credits include *Julius Caesar*, *Lips Together*, *Teeth Apart* and *Twelfth Night* at the Seattle Repertory Theatre; *The Kentucky Cycle*, *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* at Intiman Theatre Com-

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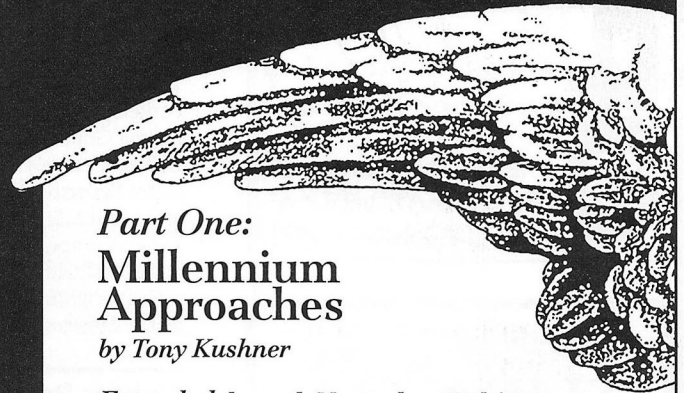
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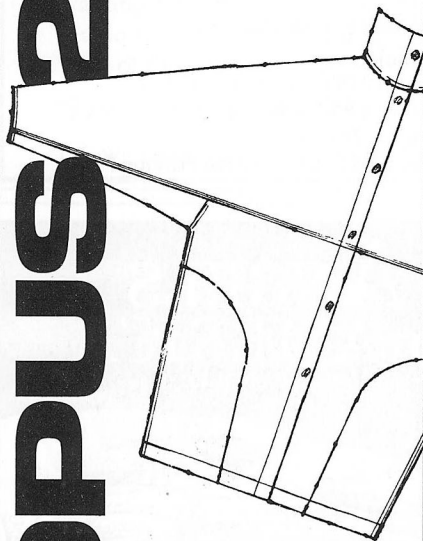


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pany; and *The Invisible Man* and *Dr. Doolittle in the Moon* at Seattle Children's Theatre. He also worked on *Henry V* for Montana Shakespeare in the Parks. Geoffrey is a certified teacher for the Society of American Fight Directors, as well as the national certified teachers' representative for the SAFD.

### Kent Dorsey Set Designer

designed sets and lighting at ACT for the world premiere of Erik Brogger's *A Normal Life*. His New York productions include *About Time*, *The Cocktail Hour*, *Yankee Dawg You Die*, *Suds* and *Another Antigone*. Kent has worked as both scenic and/or lighting designer for such notable directors as Jerry Zaks, Jack O'Brien, Ellis Rabb, Adrian Hall, John Hirsch, John Tillinger, Ed Call, Richard E.T. White and Sharon Ott. He has designed for resident companies including the La Jolla Playhouse, The Ahmanson, Playwrights Horizons, American Conservatory Theatre, Shakespeare Theatre at the Folger, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Philadelphia Drama Guild, Alliance Theatre Company, Denver Center Theatre Company, South Coast Repertory Theatre, Los Angeles Theatre Center, San Jose Repertory Theatre, El Teatro Campesino, and over 70 productions at the Old Globe Theatre. Kent designed sets and lighting for the west coast premiere of *The Lighthouse* for the San Diego Opera.

### Christine Dougherty Costume Designer

Christine's San Francisco Bay Area credits include *Dancing at Lughnasa*, *Mother Jones*, *Speed-the-Plow*, and *Life During Wartime* for Berkeley Repertory Theatre; *The Pope and the Witch* and *Taking Steps* for the American Conservatory Theater; and most recently, *The Comedy of Errors* for the California Shakespeare Festival. She has designed costumes for the John Houseman Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, the Old Globe, Buffalo Studio Arena, San Diego Repertory, Westwood Playhouse, and the San Jose Repertory Company. Operas include *Livietta e Tracolla*, *A Soldier's Tale* and *The Anatole Cycle* at Long Beach Opera, and *The Masque of Angels* for Valparaiso Music Festival '81. Christine has worked with her father, Ted Dougherty, on many of Christo's art projects since 1976.

### Jeffrey K. Hanson Stage Manager

returns to ACT after stage managing *Man of the Moment* and *Betty the Yeti* this season. Last season he managed *Dreams from a Summer House*, *Life During Wartime* and *The Cover of Life*. Previously Jeff managed *The Revengers' Comedies*, *Sunsets and Glories*, *Halcyon Days*, *The Illusion*, *Lloyd's Prayer* and, as part of the Goodwill Arts Festival, *The Falcon*. Other local credits include productions with The Bathhouse Theatre, Intiman The-

atre Company, The Empty Space and the Seattle Repertory Theatre. Regional credits include the Arizona Theatre Company and two seasons at New Mexico Repertory Theatre. A native of Minnesota, he earned his graduate degree from UCLA while stage managing a Los Angeles dance company.

### Steven M. Klein Sound Designer

most recently designed *Oleanna* and *Harvey* at the Seattle Repertory, *Noises Off* at the Arizona Theatre Company, *Kiss of Blood* at the Empty Space and *The Rememberer* at Seattle Children's Theatre. At ACT he designed sound for *Betty the Yeti* and *Fish Head Soup* his year and *Life During Wartime* and *Agnes Smedley: Our American Friend* last season. His previous ACT credits include *Shadowlands*, *The Revengers' Comedies*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Tears of Rage*, *My Children! My Africa!*, *Halcyon Days*, *Four Our Fathers*, *A Normal Life*, *The Jail Diary of Albie Sachs*, *The Downside*, *Breaking the Silence* and *Mrs. California*. Other favorites include *The Miser*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Long Day's Journey into Night*, *Measure for Measure*, *Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune*, *That's It Folks!*, *Tartuffe*, *You Can't Take It With You* and *Playboy of the Western World* at the Seattle Repertory Theatre; *The Puppetmaster of Lodz* and *Aunt Dan and Lemon* at the Empty Space Theatre; *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, *The Hoboken Chicken Emergency* and *Little Lulu* for Seattle Children's Theatre; *In My Father's Bed* and *Governing Bodies* for Alice B. Theater; *The Boys Next Door* and *Yankee Dawg You Die* for the Group Theatre Company; and *Mabeth*, *Aristocrats* and *The Grace of Mary Travers* for Intiman Theatre Company. Upcoming projects include projects for the Seattle Repertory, Seattle Children's Theatre and The Empty Space.

### Rick Paulsen Lighting Designer

is pleased to return to ACT for his 11th season. In the past, his lighting has been seen in over 25 productions including *Keely and Du*, *Tales from Hollywood*, *Voice of the Prairie*, *Diary of a Scoundrel*, *Hapgood*, *Red Noses*, *Eleemosynary*, *Trust*, *Halcyon Days* and last season's *Dreams from a Summer House* and *Lonely Planet*. Rick's work has been seen extensively and nationally at the Goodman Theatre, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, San Jose Repertory, Denver Center Theatre, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Portland Center Stage and the Arizona Theatre Company. Recent work includes *Miss Evers' Boys* at Tacoma Actors Guild and *Kiss of Blood* at the Empty Space. Rick is the devoted father of two-year-old Paige.

Casting by McCorkle Casting Ltd.



## Why a thriller?

It was three years ago, during the run of *Willi*, that I had lunch with Jeff Steitzer at the Emerald Diner and we discussed the possibility of another commission. *Willi* had been written for ACT six months before, and when I asked Jeff what he wanted this time, he answered, "A thriller." "Okay," I said, "I can do that," and promptly began work on my next play.

The play I began to write was not *Voices in the Dark*.

*Voices* was one of two ideas I sketched out on my mental scratch pad, but it was an odd little piece I called *Noir* that I began to write. Over the next 18 months I wrote 8 pages. I wasn't worried — it sometimes takes years before a play growing inside me will out. But finally, impatient and deadline-aware, I turned to my second idea, a sketchy little notion about a radio talk-show psychiatrist, that I figured might be an easier birth.

I have no memory of having written it.

I thought about it and one day it was done. What was written flowed so smoothly and unconsciously out of me, I was frightened. This could be either good or bad, depending on how one views the result, but for me it was humbling and served to remind me of how little control we have over our artistic angels.

But — why a thriller?

Thrillers are often commercial, sometimes crass, frequently both sexist and violent, and seldom bear any resemblance to reality as we know it. But for me, the good ones are pure metaphor. They serve to remind us that we, who are on occasion faced with insurmountable forces conspiring to defeat us, can find within our souls that grain of power and hope capable of conquering anything. There is a price to pay, of course, but that price is growth. We will defeat the undefeatable only if we change. There is a death in that change — our old selves must always die — but out of the ashes comes our epiphany. We begin as humans, momentarily touch our superhuman capabilities, and the villain goes down in flames. All is possible, thrillers tell us, if we have hope.

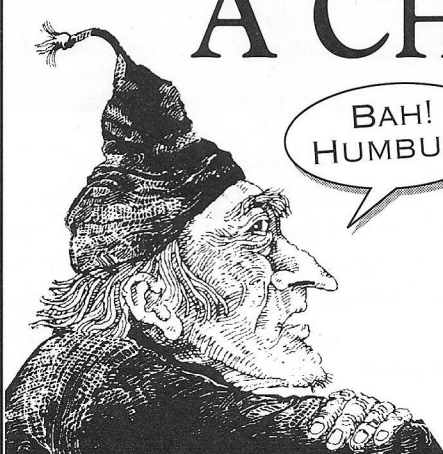
"Have hope," they say, and that's what the best of them can give us.

*John Rub*

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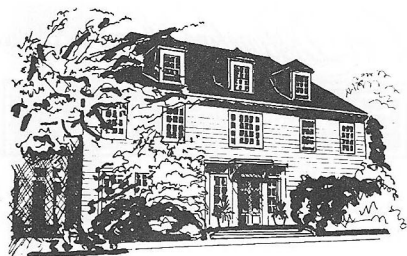
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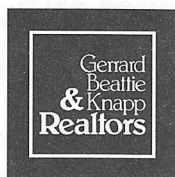
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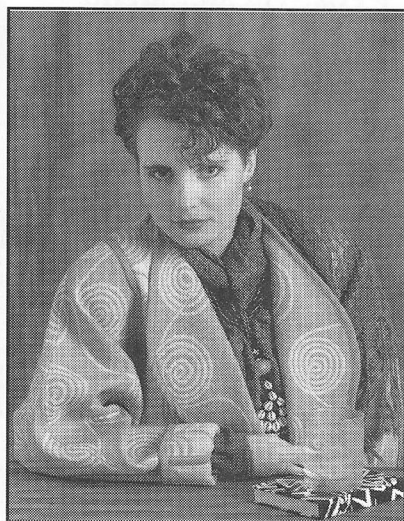
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