

# TALLEY'S FOLLY

**UPSTAGE  
GUIDE**

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**EDUCATION AT  
ROUNABOUT**

# UPSTAGE CALLBOARD

## Talley's Folly

At the end of World War II, Matt Friedman, a Jewish immigrant who has spent his life keeping others at a distance, returns to the small town where he first met Sally Talley. Nothing like her conservative Protestant family and neighbors, Sally is a nurse's aide with deep misgivings about the country's future. After a lifetime of believing they'll never truly belong in the world around them, Matt has worked up the courage to ask Sally for her hand and convince her that they do belong—together.

## a note from Todd Haimen

It's been more than 30 years since the original production of Talley's Folly first hit the stage and I'm so happy to be giving his masterpiece its first ever New York revival. It seems right that one of the first productions here since we lost Lanford should be of a play that was so close to home for him.

<http://www.roundabouttheatre.org/talleysfolly>

*when*     **July 4, 1944**  
*Early evening*

*where*     **An old boathouse on the  
Talley place, a farm  
near Lebanon, Missouri**

## *who*

**Matt Friedman** 42, dark, and rather large. Warm and unhurried, he has a definite talent for mimicry. In his voice there is still a trace of a German-Jewish accent, of which he is probably unaware.

**Sally Talley** 31, light, thin, quite attractive, but in no way glamorous or glamorized. Straightforward, rather tired, and just now quite angry. In this state she has a pronounced Ozark accent, but when she concentrates on what she is saying, the accent becomes much less pronounced.



There are several characters mentioned throughout the play that are not seen on stage. For the Talley family tree, please see pg. 11.

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# LANFORD WILSON

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Sarah Paulson and  
Danny Burstein.  
Photo by  
Joan Marcus.

## HIS LIFE

Lanford Wilson was born on April 13, 1937 in Lebanon, Missouri. At age 11, after his parents divorced and mother remarried, Wilson moved with his mother to Ozark, MO. It was in Ozark that he developed an appreciation for art and tried his hand at performing in high school plays. He went on to study at Southwest Missouri State College for one term before moving to California to study art at San Diego State College and reunite with his father, who had relocated to the area after the divorce. While getting along wonderfully with his father's new wife and his two half-brothers, Wilson's relationship with his father was strained; his father refused to accept his son's homosexuality (in 1970 Wilson would write *Lemon Sky*, a largely autobiographical account of this conflict between father and son). Wilson spent only a year at San Diego State while simultaneously holding a factory job, riveting planes at Ryan Aircraft Plant, before he again became restless and decided to head to Chicago to visit friends. The visit began in 1957 and would last five years while Wilson worked as a graphic artist and took writing classes at the University of Chicago. It was only when he realized that one of his stories would be better suited to the stage that he shifted to writing dramatic work. As he grew increasingly interested in writing plays, Wilson felt there wasn't enough of a theatre scene in Chicago to sustain his fledgling career, so he took off for New York City.

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## HIS WORK

While supporting himself with odd jobs in New York, Wilson found a creative home in the Caffe Cino. This Greenwich Village coffeehouse, opened by retired dancer Joe Cino, had rapidly evolved from a place to grab a drink with friends into a theatrical venue where regular patrons were encouraged to explore and experiment with their art. Not only was Caffe Cino the catalyst for the off-off-Broadway movement, it was also one of the first safe havens for LGBT artists to perform and write about their experiences without being ostracized. In 1964, Wilson's *The Madness of Lady Bright* became Cino's most successful production, receiving more than 200 performances and considerable mainstream attention. A solo piece about an aging drag queen, *The Madness of Lady Bright* was considered by some to be the first play to represent gay characters without contrivance or sensationalism.

While producing work at Caffe Cino, Wilson met and would form a lifelong collaborative relationship with director Marshall Mason. He and Mason workshoped and eventually produced Wilson's next critical success, *Balm in Gilead*, at La Mama in January 1965. About the intersecting lives of prostitutes, drug dealers, and junkies in an Upper Broadway diner, *Balm in Gilead* was the first full-length off-off-Broadway production to be staged, as well as the first off-off-Broadway show to have its script published. A show is typically defined as "off-off-Broadway" if it takes place in a theatre that has fewer than 100 seats, but can also be recognized by its artistic contrast to the work being produced on Broadway and off-Broadway. While many shows occurring on and off-Broadway were commercial and mainstream, Wilson's off-off-Broadway production chose to tell a riskier story.

Wilson continued to have work produced around the city, receiving a Drama Desk award for his off-Broadway production of *The Rimers of Eldritch* in 1967 and making his Broadway debut in 1968 with *The Gingham Dog*. In July 1969, after the tragic death of Joe Cino and subsequent closing of Caffe Cino, Wilson and Mason joined director Rob Thirkield and actress Tanya Berezin in founding the Circle Repertory Company. Circle Rep would produce a substantial amount of Wilson's work, often directed by Mason, over the course of the following three decades. Among these productions were *The Hot I Baltimore*, an award-winning commercial success that transferred off-Broadway and spawned a short-lived television series; *The Mound Builders*, an ambitious piece that Wilson was deeply proud of; and the "Talley Trilogy:" *Fifth of July*, *Talley's Folly*, and *Talley & Son*.

## HIS IMPACT

For an emerging writer to make such a huge mark on a developing theatre movement and have his plays steadily staged on Broadway—within less than a decade of moving to New York City—was unprecedented. British arts critic Michael Billington observed that Wilson often explored "the conflict between the traditional past and the insidious present, between surrogate families and a life of lonely isolation." He leant an ear and gave a voice to characters living on the margins of society when very few other writers were willing to do so, and he did so without judging the people about whom he wrote. Wilson, an incredibly prolific and widely celebrated playwright, passed away on March 24, 2011 from complications of pneumonia at the age of 73. He left behind an impressive body of work and a lasting impact on the American theatre.



Lanford  
Wilson

# INTERVIEW WITH MICHAEL WILSON

Director Michael Wilson shared some of his insight and experience with Education Dramaturg Ted Sod.

**Ted Sod:** Why did you want to direct *Talley's Folly*?

**Michael Wilson:** Having produced Lanford's penultimate play, *Book of Days*, in its East Coast premiere as Artistic Director of Hartford Stage, I was very curious some 14 years later to explore his work as a director. When I re-read the play, I was struck by its pervasive humor, truthful simplicity, and (not always) quiet heartbreak. There was one moment, however, about half way through the play when I knew I had to direct the play: Matt is bearing down on Sally as to why she has never married at her age. Lanford writes: "A long pause. Sally tries to speak and can't." Finally, she manages: "There's time...enough...for..." (Pause.)". Matt has hit his target, but at a cost. Suddenly, any sentimental associations I had ascribed to the play fell away. Here were two real middle aged people groping in the dark to see if the other might possibly be a light that would obliterate the shadows of their painful past and offer a desperately needed hope for the future.

**TS:** What draws you to the work of Lanford Wilson?

**MW:** I was ten years old growing up in rural North Carolina, which is not that different in temperament than Lanford's rural Lebanon, Missouri, when ABC debuted a new series on Friday nights called "Hot L Baltimore". Each episode had a disclaimer cautioning the viewer of the show's mature themes. I vividly remember a character sauntering into the hotel lobby with only a chocolate chip in her navel, her private parts blacked out by network censors. Following "The Brady Bunch" and "The Partridge Family," this was an utterly fantastic vision to me. It completely contrasted television's traditional and carefully constructed view of American life, as producer Norman Lear had done with other shows such as my all time favorite, "All in the Family." Only this show was based on Lanford's hit play, which had been running off-Broadway for two years, and would continue to run for another year after the series was cancelled. I was fascinated both by the depth of Lanford's humanity, his sympathy for these derelict drifters of the Hotel Baltimore, but also impressed by the powerful reach of his storytelling.

**TS:** What are the challenges of directing a two-person play like *Talley's Folly*?

**MW:** There are a number of challenges, but I think the hardest thing is how to maintain a truthful, dramatic tension between the two characters throughout the play. Larger cast plays have the benefit of characters sweeping in from time to time, changing the life, the rhythm, the pulse of a play. Here, you have to mine the play's inherent dynamism, and give it visual variety and find its tonal shifts with only two players. It can be done—it must be done—but the work is very concentrated, and by nature, very specific to each second in the 97-minute play.



**TS:** What do you think the play is about? What do you think Wilson is saying to audiences about life in the Midwest circa 1944? How do you think his feelings about his home in Lebanon, Missouri inform this play?

**MW:** *Talley's Folly* is first and foremost a love story. Lanford has written that he wanted the play to be like one of those romantic films of the 1930s and early 1940s: "gentle and bright." But his genesis for writing *Talley's Folly* was in response to an actor's question she had about her character's history while rehearsing his Tony Award nominated political play of social unrest, *Fifth of July*. The late Helen Stenborg [mother of Roundabout Resident Director Doug Hughes] was playing Sally Talley in 1977, now 33 years older than the character is in *Talley's Folly*, and wanted to know what Matt had been like, what he looked like, sounded like. In answering her question, he was sketching the outline for what would become *Talley's Folly*.

*Fifth of July* had sprung from Lanford's frustration at our country's complacency in the aftermath of the Vietnam war. Lanford was angry and dismayed that the activism and energy from the protest movements of the 60s and 70s were being dissolved by carefully crafted corporate campaigns that he felt were woefully dishonest, designed to quell any lingering spirit of rebellion in the people. So though Lanford approached *Talley's Folly* as a kinder, gentler play set in the 1940s as opposed to the more overtly turbulent times of *Fifth of July*, he nonetheless imbues both Sally and Matt with a



deep suspicion of the status quo. They are people who term the “they-sayers” as “all liars.” They are in essence a 1940s version of once-good-but-now-disillusioned soldiers, who have lost faith in government, church, and family. They essentially have only each other to build a future life of love and hope.

All of this is set against the backdrop of Lanford’s childhood home of Lebanon, MO for which he possessed an array of complicated feelings, like any artist. There is both a longing and nostalgia for this small town American life that seems safely sequestered from the horrific casualties of the D-Day assault. Yet, there is a desire in Sally, as well as Matt, to escape the suffocating mendacity of a family and a culture in which any kind of “otherness” was not to be tolerated.

**TS: You have two amazing actors playing Matt and Sally. What did you look for in casting them?**

**MW:** The play is deceptively tricky to cast. Both characters require very nuanced, sensitive playing. The actors who portray them must be attractive and sexy, but not in a super conventional way, especially Matt. They must both be fiercely intelligent, have a passionate emotional life, but also be broken in some mysterious way. Humor and wit are their weapons of resiliency and salvation. Matt must have buckets of charm, and Sally a deep but fragile soulfulness that is in danger of being crushed forever. Add to it that these two actors must commit for a minimum of 4 months during what is still considered to be the peak pilot season period for television, that these actors must also elicit rapt attention from an audience for almost 100 minutes, and you can better understand the casting challenge, and why perhaps the play has not been revived in New York for over thirty years.

Artistic Director Todd Haimes, Casting Director Jim Carnahan, and I began with Matt. We discussed an impressive group of actors, but Danny Burstein emerged as the actor with that unique blend of warmth, humor, charisma, and pathos to make him the one to follow in Judd Hirsch’s footsteps and bring Matt to life again for this 21st century revival.

Once we had Danny, the task became ever more crucial as we struck out to find his Sally, who needed to be more than 10 years his junior, and who must be capable of turning Matt’s life so upside down that he can no longer conceive of living without her. Well, this narrowed our list considerably. Almost simultaneously, the three of us seized upon Sarah Paulson, whom I first saw on stage some 19 years ago in Horton Foote’s *Talking Pictures*, and have been in love ever since with her particular alchemy of bewitching beauty and relentless truth. I could not believe our great good fortune when we were able to schedule our production around Danny’s performance in the Broadway revival of *Golden Boy*, and in the hiatus following Sarah’s second season turn in “American Horror Story”. We now had a dream cast for Lanford’s dream of a play. It’s my job now

to not get in their way, but figure out how best to unleash their rich trove of talent to realize Lanford’s unabashedly romantic story.

**TS: How will the play manifest itself visually?**

**MW:** As we began the design process, I thought about all of the potential “third characters” in the play: Sally’s family in the Talley house up the hill (given life through Jeff Cowie’s scenic elevation up stage right, Mark Bennett’s sounds of Fanny Brice wafting down from the family radio, the moisture on the hem of David Woolard’s dress for Sally, from where she has had to stride through a thick bouquet of high grass made golden sunset yellow and white moonlight blue by Rui Rita’s lights); the river where the audience sits (the illusion created by the raking deck of Jeff’s set, the rippling waves footlights by Rui and sounds by Mark); the Barnette farm

stage left (mostly created by Mark’s sounds of their dog Blackie, barking); but the most potent third character is undoubtedly Sally’s Uncle Whistler, who built the boathouse, in the style of a gazebo, but made it his particular folly, filled with whirligigs, louvers, lattice and geegaws. The designers and I all felt that if we could bring Whistler on stage with the sights and sounds of the boathouse we would have gone a long way to helping the audience understand who Sally is: specifically, that she is more like her Uncle, a heretic, rebellious, unconventional soul, trying to stake out an independent existence within a family who makes great noises about conforming to the community’s mores all the while living lives of great hypocrisy. We wanted to create a space that would not only have enticed Sally to make it her special sanctuary, but would also enchant Matt.

**HERE WERE TWO REAL MIDDLE AGED PEOPLE GROPING IN THE DARK TO SEE IF THE OTHER MIGHT POSSIBLY BE A LIGHT THAT WOULD OBLITERATE THE SHADOWS OF THEIR PAINFUL PAST AND OFFER A DESPERATELY NEEDED HOPE FOR THE FUTURE.**

**TS: Will you talk about people who influenced your artistry?**

**MW:** A lot of people have influenced me. I have been very blessed to have had a number of amazing mentors, including secondary school teachers such as Margaret Griffin and Phyllis Dunning; UNC-Chapel Hill professors such as Milly Barranger and Ben Cameron; Artistic Directors such as Robert Brustein and Gregory Boyd; and a diverse range of artists such as Andre Serban, Horton Foote, and Elizabeth Ashley, among many others. A director is the sum total of all his experiences in the theater. Talent is a mystery, but the craft, discipline and essential interest must be cultivated and passed down. I am fortunate to have learned from the very best teachers, beginning with my late father, who as my first little league baseball coach, taught me the importance of building a joyous esprit de corps among one’s team, which has been the basis of how I built ensembles for plays ever since. •

# INTERVIEW WITH SARAH PAULSON

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Before starting rehearsals for *Talley's Folly*, Sarah Paulson spoke with Education Dramaturg Ted Sod about preparing to play Sally Talley.

**Ted Sod:** Can you give us some background information on yourself?

**Sarah Paulson:** I was born in Tampa, Florida, but my mother moved us to New York City when I was five years old. I lived in Queens, Gramercy Park, on West 11th St, and we ended up settling in Park Slope, Brooklyn, for many years. I went to Performing Arts High School, right behind Lincoln Center. I feel like I wanted to be an actress in the womb—I just came out that way. I don't understand how or why we have these impulses. Being able to make a living doing it is such a gift.

**TS:** Was your mom supportive?

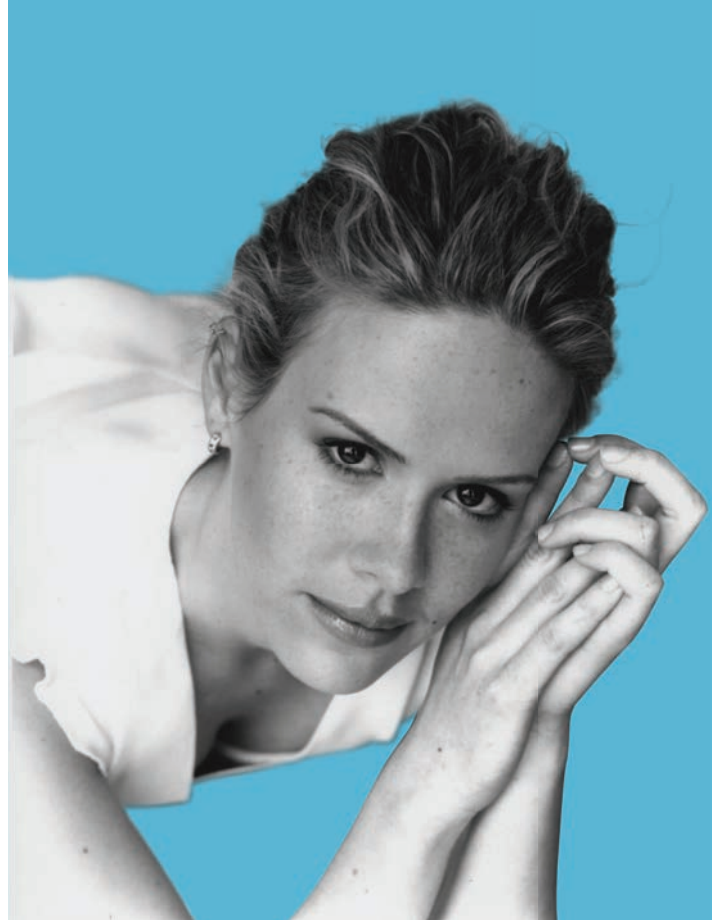
**SP:** Absolutely. I remember she hooked me up with some friend of hers whose son went to Performing Arts High School. He walked me around the school when I had to audition there. I was all of 14 years old. My mom was very supportive. Although, I will say, when I got my first job and I told my mother I got the job, her reaction was, "Oh no, you're actually going to do this?"

**TS:** So, you went right to work after high school?

**SP:** Yes, right out of high school I did *Talking Pictures*, a Horton Foote play at the Signature Theatre. I did a "Law & Order" episode, and then a movie of the week for Hallmark with Kathleen Turner playing my mother. I went to North Carolina for a TV series entitled "American Gothic," which was cancelled rather quickly. But then I was flown to LA to audition for a pilot for CBS, and I remember testing against Hilary Swank. I got the job, but things worked out well for her so I don't feel too bad.

**TS:** Why did you want to play Sally in *Talley's Folly*? I know you're still quite busy working on TV.

**SP:** Well, that's precisely why. I've been playing an incredibly dark and brutalized character on "American Horror Story" for the last five or six months of my life. I've always been a huge Lanford Wilson fan and have worked at Roundabout before, so when *Talley's Folly* came along, I wanted to do it. I haven't been onstage for about two years, which is about as long as I like to go without doing a play because I start to fear that my muscles will atrophy and I'll become a person who can't be onstage—I would never want that to happen! I think you end up taking on each job that comes your way because of where you are in your own life. There's just something about *Talley's Folly* that spoke to me. I'm a little older than Sally, obviously, but I have no children—not because I can't have them, I just haven't yet and I don't know if I will—but there's something about this woman, the time period, and this love story—her commitment to believing that there was something wrong enough with her that she would never be able to find anyone. I think there's something very moving and poignant about her story. It struck a chord in me. Sally is someone I wanted to explore for a few months. And, of course, it was appealing



to work with Danny Burstein and Michael Wilson. So, there is a myriad of reasons for choosing to do *Talley's Folly*, all of which are equally important to me.

**TS:** You haven't started the rehearsal process yet, but can you talk about the dynamic between Sally's independent spirit and her relationship with her family?

**SP:** I've yet to discover a lot of it. And sometimes with great plays you don't completely figure it out until you are finished with the run, if ever. Seven months later you'll think, Oh, I forgot to think about that when I was doing the play!—that happens all the time. At this particular point, before we've started rehearsing, I think Sally is completely in love with Matt. But I think she's convinced herself that she doesn't love him. In the beginning of the play she's so angry at him for coming to her door and making everything harder for her with her family. She wants to get out of that house and just can't seem to do so. In *Talley & Son*, her Aunt Lottie says it's because she doesn't have the courage to do it and Sally says that if there was anywhere to go, she would have gone. Of course, she probably could have rented a room somewhere, so what is it that really keeps her from doing it? It's her family. She's tied to them, and as much as she thinks they are ignorant fools, she's a member of that tribe. For all of her bravado and desire to leave, she's 31 years old and hasn't done it. Why hasn't she done it? I think that's going to be very interesting to figure out.



**TS: What do you look for in a director?**

**SP:** I love the idea of a director having a very strong blueprint so that you can go out there and know where your ceiling is and where the floor is—you can go anywhere in that world. You've built such a beautiful house in rehearsal that you know all of the different boundaries, parameters, and how far you can go within them. I like when a director creates a strong and clear foundation so that when you go on stage, life can happen. In the rehearsal room, you can't prepare for what happens to the dynamic when the audience is present. It's like taking the training wheels off the bike and letting the audience and everything else that happens while you're performing be part of the experience. If you've got a strong foundation, it's all going to be right and good no matter what happens because you have been so well prepared. This is the second two-hander I've done. There aren't a lot of two-handers, so I feel very lucky to be doing another one. There's something so incredible about having just one other actor to rely on.

**—SPOILER ALERT—**

**TS: Can we talk a bit about the research you have to do in order to play this role?**

**SP:** Well I've done some, but topics will come up in rehearsals and I'll take my cue from there. For example, I didn't want to read *Fifth of July* because it is set near the end of Sally's life. I didn't want to know about that yet. I didn't want to play the ending. *Talley & Son* is different because I think it's brilliant that Wilson features Sally in the beginning of that play, and then off she goes to basically do *Talley's Folly* and then comes back into the house to say, "I'm leaving with him." Sometimes as an actor you wonder what your character was doing the moment before the play starts—where were you? I actually have Sally's moment before in Wilson's writing. She's up at the house, says how angry she is, and goes out to the boathouse right from the house. It's also helpful to know that every time I tell Matt, "Lower your voice, they are going to hear you," I am thinking about all of Sally's family. I think Sally's behavior is a result of the time period and how different she is from most women of that period. She's just not your typical 31-year-old woman in 1944. I will find out more about the 'typical' woman of 1944. I like doing that kind of initial research and then I put most of it away.

**TS: If you ran into someone who never read or saw *Talley's Folly*, what would you tell them it was about?**

**SP:** It's a love story, in all that a love story encompasses. It's not just a saccharine, sweet romance. It's a real love story in the truest sense of the word—it's complicated, moving, funny, thought-provoking, and frustrating.

**IT'S A REAL LOVE STORY IN THE TRUEST SENSE OF THE WORD—IT'S COMPLICATED, MOVING, FUNNY, THOUGHT PROVOKING, AND FRUSTRATING.**

**TS: Do you have any advice for young men and women who want to be actors?**

**SP:** I want to repeat what Jane Kaczmarek said to me when I was a young actor. She had taken over for Mercedes Ruehl in *Lost in Yonkers*, the great Neil Simon play. I loved her in that play. I remember writing her a letter because I was just so blown away by her performance—and she wrote me back! She said, "There's no secret to great acting, just be real and listen. It takes three things: talent, luck and perseverance—and of the three, perseverance is the most important." Because if you really want to have a career, it's not about immediate fame. Careers are long and they are varied. They curve, they shoot up and down—that's just the nature of what we do. You've got to be willing to buckle up and expect that as part of the journey and just know that for every 'down' moment, the 'up' one is coming.

**TS: Is there anything else that you'd like to say about the play *Talley's Folly* or your role of Sally?**

**SP:** All I want to say is just how terrified I am and how much that's a part of the process. Today is the first day of rehearsal. We're going to read the play out loud for the first time. There's something precious about that experience, like giving birth. You have no idea what's going to come out because there hasn't been any work done yet. It's just a cold reading. The play hasn't been done in New York for over 30 years. The original production of *Talley's Folly* was beloved. Danny and I have seen each other a couple of times in the last week. We both keep gripping each other saying, "I'm scared! I'm really scared too!" I think there's something so terrifying about starting a new thing, especially when it's something as beautiful as this play. It's something that we both want to get right. •

# LEBANON, MO: UNDERSTANDING THE TALLEY FAMILY BACKGROUND

## THE TALLEYS'S HOMETOWN: LEBANON, MISSOURI

*Talley's Folly* is set in 1944 in Lebanon, Missouri, a small city and the seat of Laclede County. The famous Route 66 ran right through town. The area is part of a region known as the Ozarks, a mountainous, forested area encompassing parts of Arkansas, Oklahoma, Kansas, and Missouri. Mining, logging, and cattle and dairy farming were the dominant industries in the county. Lebanon, which began as a rural town, was transformed into a center of industry and commerce with the arrival of a railroad in 1868.

Around 18,000 people lived in Laclede County in the 1940s. Most were white, the descendants of German or Scots-Irish pioneers. Almost everyone in town was born in the United States, and almost everyone in town was Protestant, a type of Christianity that includes most non-Catholic denominations, including Methodists and Baptists.

In *Talley's Folly*, the Talley family is part owner of a successful garment factory in town. They are wealthy, prominent, and belong to the Methodist Church. Most members of the Talley family share a conservative political ideology. Like many native-born Americans of the time, they dislike immigrants, particularly Catholic or Jewish immigrants. They're also deeply concerned about the spread of socialism and communism, and see immigrants from Europe—like Matt Friedman—as potential socialist agents.

**"WHAT HAPPENED TO CHANGE THIS GOLDEN GIRL INTO AN EMBARRASSMENT TO THE FAMILY? INTO A RADICAL OLD MAID WHO IS FIRED FROM TEACHING SUNDAY SCHOOL?"**



## SALLY TALLEY

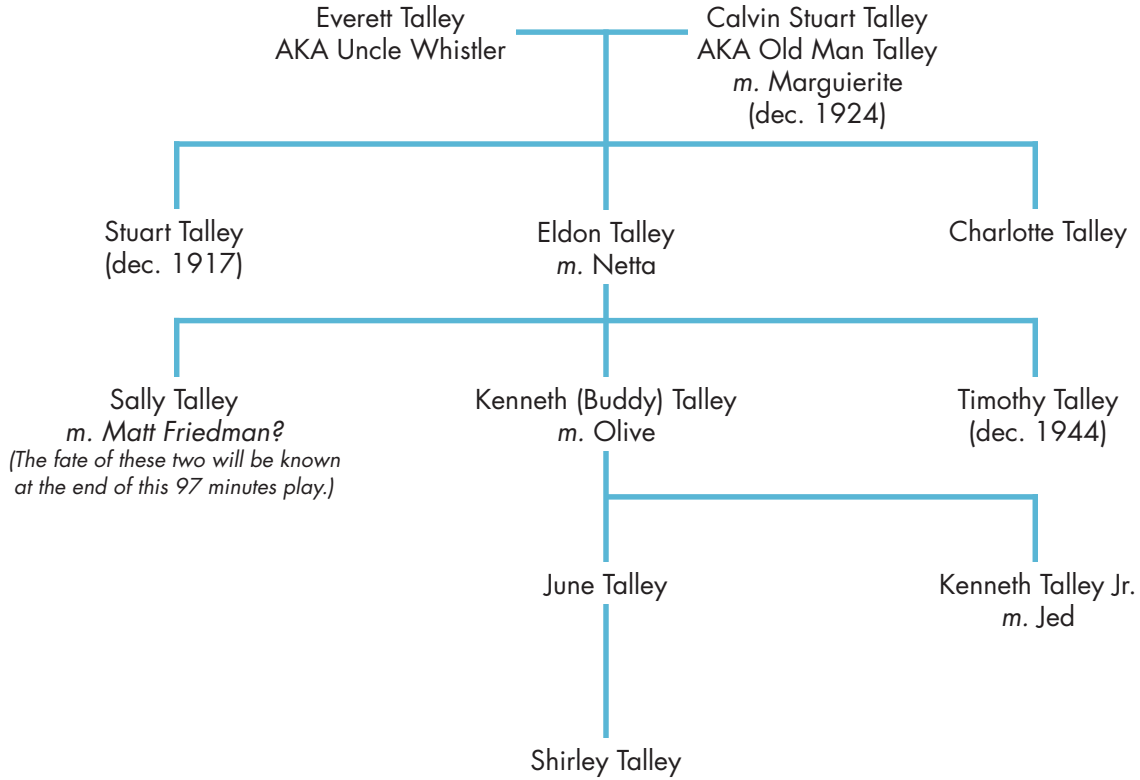
Sally Talley was born in 1913, seven years before women won the right to vote. In a rural Midwestern city, she would have had considerable physical freedom as a child, attending public school, church, and playing outdoors. She would not have had a "coming out" party or been subject to the social strictures of a formalized upper class. But like all women of her generation she would have been expected to follow traditional gender roles for her life: graduate high school, marry young, and—in an era before the birth control pill—quickly become a mother. Women were often expected to share the political and social opinions of the men in their lives. It was considered inappropriate for a woman to speak out on a political or social issue, especially if her opinions ran counter to those of the men in her family.



Women of Sally's class and generation did not work outside the home, in part because maintaining a home and family in an era before prepared food and electric appliances was challenging and time-consuming. There were virtually no women in elected government, and few women in leadership positions at all. During the 1930s, about 24% of women worked outside the home, mostly as domestic help or in jobs seen as appropriate for women, such as nurses, teachers, and secretaries. Women earned roughly 50% of what men earned. In the 1940s, many women went to work in jobs that supported the war effort. Some, like Sally, provided nursing care to wounded soldiers, and others took on important manufacturing jobs after male workers left to join the military.

The world changed rapidly during Sally's life: first during World War I, then the Roaring Twenties, the Great Depression, and finally the Second World War. Despite these changes, most women remained anchored to home and family.

**TALLEY FAMILY TREE**



**LANFORD WILSON'S "TALLEY TRILOGY" SUMMARY**

**Fifth of July:** *The last play chronologically, but the first play Lanford Wilson wrote in what would become his "Talley Trilogy."* This piece takes place on July 5th, 1977, thirty three years and one day after *Talley's Folly* and *Talley & Son*. Kenneth Talley Jr., a paraplegic Vietnam War veteran, has moved back to his childhood home with his partner Jed. An impromptu reunion takes place over the course of the weekend. Ken's sister, June, is visiting, along with her daughter Shirley and their Aunt Sally (the same Sally from *Talley's Folly*). Ken and June's childhood friends, John and Gwen, now country musicians, are also up for the weekend with their guitarist friend Weston. Gwen wants to buy the Talley home and turn it into her personal music studio, but Sally is not ready to give the house up. Family secrets are revealed, and the characters have to face up to past decisions that impact their future choices.

**Talley's Folly:** *This is the second piece in the Talley Trilogy and takes place simultaneously with Talley & Son.* This is the only play in the trilogy where we step outside of the house and into a different area of the Talley farm. The ornate but dilapidated Victorian boat house is where Wilson places the unlikely love story of Matt Friedman and Sally Talley.

**Talley & Son:** *This play takes place at the same time as Talley's Folly on July 4th, 1944, but it was the last piece of the Talley Trilogy to be written.* The play starts with a glimpse of Sally Talley running out of the house to find Matt Friedman after he has been run off by her brother, but much of the play revolves around Old Man Talley's relationship with his eldest son, Buddy. Mr. Talley, despite his slow slide into dementia, refuses to give up ownership of his textile factory to his son and their business partner. Mr. Talley is determined to save the factory for youngest son Timmy to run when Timmy returns home from the war. The play is narrated by Timmy, who has been killed in the war, information that his family has not yet learned.



# INTERVIEW WITH DANNY BURSTEIN

Before rehearsals began for *Talley's Folly*, Education Dramaturg Ted Sod interviewed Actor Danny Burstein about the role of Matt Friedman.

**Ted Sod:** Tell us about yourself. Where were you born and educated?

**Danny Burstein:** I was born in Mount Kisco, New York—although my family was living in the Bronx at the time. That's just where I decided to be born. When I was 14, I was lucky enough to get into the High School of Performing Arts. The year I auditioned, more than 4,000 kids auditioned. By some stroke of luck, I was one of the 128 that made it in, which started me on my path to being an actor. I never thought I actually could be an actor. I was always pretty shy and quiet. But I loved the theatre—my dad gave me many plays and books to read. The dramatic form just spoke to me. After high school, I went to Queens College. I studied with Edward M. Greenberg, who ran The Muny (The Municipal Theatre Association of St. Louis). When I was 19, he gave me my Equity card. After Queens College, I got into the Masters program at the University of California San Diego. I promised my parents—who were both teachers—that I would get my Masters so I could teach if this silly little acting thing didn't work out. I spent three years working in San Diego at the Old Globe and La Jolla Playhouse. I came back to New York City in 1990 after graduating from the University of California San Diego. I had a teaching job waiting for me at Queens College. I taught for a semester, but couldn't work out my teaching schedule with my acting schedule because they just didn't jive. So, I had to make a decision. And by sheer luck, I'm sure, I have not stopped working as an actor.

**TS:** Tell us about your decision to do *Talley's Folly*.

**DB:** I was asked by director Michael Wilson and Todd Haimes, Artistic Director, if I wanted to do the role. I said, "Of course I do!" They asked if I would be willing to do double duty for a couple of weeks, rehearsing during the last three weeks of the run of *Golden Boy*. I said, "Absolutely." I have great respect for Michael Wilson, and I'm a huge fan of Sarah Paulson.

**TS:** What do you make of the character you will play—Matt Friedman?

**DB:** He is a good man and a lonely soul. Deep down he wants to give his love to someone and be loved in return. But he doesn't have much hope that it will ever happen. And then by some miracle, some "mischievous angel," as he calls it, sends him on a vacation to Lebanon, Missouri and he meets this girl, Sally Talley. I think deep down he had probably given up hope that there would ever be someone that would fall in love with him.

**TS:** Why do you think he picks Sally? It's fascinating that a Jewish man at that time would go after someone whose family is obviously anti-Semitic.

**DB:** Sally is smart, has gone to school, and is independent. I think that really strikes a chord with him. She's not like the average gal



from the neighborhood. Part of it is his great intuition and part of it is he has convinced himself she's the right one for him. He says, "This is the only time I've ever been in love," and I think he probably feels if it doesn't happen tonight, that's it.

**TS:** Do you see the play as a straight romance?

**DB:** I don't know if it's a typical romance. In fact, everything points to them not getting together. There's some bond that ties them, something beautiful. I think he has to convince her that this is the night she should take a chance on love and happiness. That's the crux of the play.

**TS:** I'm sure it's very difficult for her to make a decision to leave her family because women were not all that independent in 1944.

**DB:** Exactly. Women just didn't do that. They were supposed to help the men folk and to keep the social status quo. Their job was to be subservient. This is a huge step for any woman.

**TS:** What kind of research will you have to do to prepare to play Matt?

**DB:** I've been researching the time. I have actually already done that with *Golden Boy*—from the depression into World War II and how it affected the country. It has great impact on this play, actually—being that Sally works in a hospital and takes care of wounded soldiers coming back from the war. Matt's not directly

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involved in the war, but world events have influenced his life as well as hers. So it's very important to know the history and region going into it. His family probably bounced around a lot when he was a young man—I figure he can speak at least four or five languages. The fact that he speaks English so well is an amazing thing, too. He's a super bright person and I hope I can live up to the role.

**TS: What do you look for from a director?**

**DB:** I look for a director to continuously push me to be as honest as possible and ask me important questions. Honestly, at the end of the day, I want any director that I work with to be smart and to have great taste. As an actor, I can throw a million options on the table. I can justify one line in 20 different ways, but the director has to be the one making the decision about what we're going to keep, based on his or her vision for the piece. No matter what the genre—a musical, play, or whatever—I try to start from a real place, find out what the parameters of the game are, and then push the envelope to make it deeper and more rich every single night. That's my job, and I love doing it.

**TS: I want to talk to you about doing a two-hander, a play with only two characters. Have you ever done one before?**

**DB:** The last time I did a two-hander was in school when I did Christopher Durang's play *Laughing Wild*. In a two-hander, it's just you and someone else out there, who you've got to trust 100 percent. Your concentration can't let up for one second. It's not like there's a big ensemble to carry you if something happens. I think it's going to be the most difficult role I've ever done.

**TS: Have you ever worked on a Lanford Wilson play before?**

**DB:** Yes. When I was in high school I fell in love with the play *The Gingham Dog*. And as a kid I did readings for Circle Rep, which Lanford co-founded. And I was lucky enough to be directed by Wilson's longtime collaborator, Marshall W. Mason, in *The Seagull*. Marshall actually just sent me an email to say that he heard I was doing this show and gave me his blessing. Getting his pat on the back before we start rehearsals meant a lot to me.

**TS: What about this role do you sense will be your biggest challenge?**

**DB:** I honestly don't know. I try to make all my work as honest as possible. I want the audience to feel like they're watching two people talking—having a conversation—as opposed to watching actors fake it. I want the audience to get lost in the fact that this is so good it could be real.

**TS: Do you want the audience to feel as if they're eavesdropping?**

**DB:** Exactly. But this is an unusual piece because Matt talks to the audience at the very beginning of the show and invites them into his predicament. He asks for the audience's patience and tells them to root for him. I think it's a terrific way to start this romantic play.

**TS: You have a remarkable ability to perform in both musicals and straight plays. Do you have to prepare differently depending on the type of show you are cast in?**

**DB:** I view everything as reality. I try to make everything I do as real as possible. I never chose to do musicals particularly—I never had dancing or singing lessons. The next thing I knew I was singing in the chorus of *The Music Man* with Jim Dale and Pam Dawber at the St. Louis Muny. People suddenly only wanted to cast me in musicals, even though I had been studying to be a dramatic actor. I had to show people I could do other things, which was another reason I went to grad school. I wanted to put dramatic roles on my resume so people couldn't pigeonhole me. I'll never forget: I had a teacher at the High School of Performing Arts say, "Well, what type do you see yourself as?" I said, "What do you mean, type?" He said, "What will you play?" I said, "I can do anything." That's my answer to this day. I can do anything, just give me a chance. The old Asian woman in the corner deli? That's me! I can't wait to play that role.

**TS: If you were approached by a young person interested in becoming an actor, what advice would you give them?**

**DB:** I'm not one of those people that say, "If you can think of anything else in the world that you would rather do, do that." I think if it's in your heart, then you will know and you'll go for it. And if it's not, then go for what is in your heart. I have two sons. If they said they wanted to be actors, I'd say, "Just be good ones and work as hard as you can." If that's what they love and want to do with their lives, then who am I to tell them to not do that? •

**DEEP DOWN HE WANTS TO GIVE HIS LOVE TO SOMEONE AND BE LOVED IN RETURN. BUT HE DOESN'T HAVE MUCH HOPE THAT IT WILL EVER HAPPEN. AND THEN BY SOME MIRACLE, SOME "MISCHIEVOUS ANGEL," AS HE CALLS IT, SENDS HIM ON A VACATION TO LEBANON, MISSOURI AND HE MEETS THIS GIRL, SALLY TALLEY.**

# THE PRUSSIAN, THE UKE, THE LAT AND THE LIT: UNDERSTANDING THE FRIEDMAN FAMILY

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When Matt reveals his family history to Sally, he speaks indirectly and uses irony, black humor, and euphemism to tell his tragic story in “the only way I can tell it.” Matt’s family, like millions of European Jews, would have been victims of anti-Semitic beliefs that went back centuries and became more widespread in the 19th century. *Talley’s Folly* takes place in 1944, when anti-Semitism in Europe reached an apotheosis under Hitler and the Nazis, but the events that orphaned Matt go back 30 years earlier—before World War I.

## “PEOPLE IN EUROPE BEING VERY WASTEFUL OF OTHER PEOPLE”

Matt’s father was Prussian; until the late 19th century, Germany was known as Prussia. Part of the nationalistic movement to unify German included a “völkisch movement” (folk or people’s movement). To identify with the völkisch meant seeing Germans as a unique and proud race, and Jews as an inferior race that could never be assimilated. Despite this emerging belief, Jews experienced a period of relative legal equality from 1848 until the 1930s; however, statutory equality and actual practice did not coincide. German politicians included anti-Semitic beliefs as part of their party platforms. In 1905, there was hardly any chance of a Jew receiving a judgeship, and even then only if the Jewish candidate renounced his faith and converted to Christianity. Matt tells Sally that while his Jewish father could have a career as an engineer, he could not advance in the Kaiser’s army.



Matt’s mother, “the Uke,” came from the Ukraine in Russia. Russia had a large population of Jews, who for decades were perceived as a special problem. The Russian government confined Jews to living in “The Pale of Settlement” – mostly the western territories including Poland, the Ukraine, Latvia, (where Matt’s sister, “The Lat,” was born) and Lithuania (Matt’s birthplace). Russians did not regard Jews as useful citizens or subjects, but as enemies of Christianity, exploiters of the peasantry, and the fountainheads of the revolutionary movement against the Tsar and his government. Between 1903 and 1906, a violent wave of pogroms (large-scale, targeted riots against Jews) left around 2,000 Jews dead and many more wounded. These pogroms instigated large waves of emigration out of Russia.

## IN SWITZERLAND: THE INVENTOR WHO COULD GET NITROGEN OUT OF THE AIR

Switzerland remained neutral amidst shifting power conflicts in Europe during the early 20th century. Matt’s family would have been in Zurich at a time when many prominent scientists and engineers were studying at the Swiss Federal Polytechnic Institute in Zurich. Albert Einstein was getting his doctorate and publishing his first papers.

At this time, the German-Jewish chemist Fritz Haber was studying at the Institute in Zurich. It’s likely that Matt’s father, an engineer, may have spoken to Haber about his experiments with nitrogen. Scientists worried that population growth was outpacing global food production, and Haber saw a possible solution in adding nitrogen, a prime nutrient for plants, to fertilizer in order to boost agricultural production. Haber discovered what is now known as the Haber Process, a way to extract nitrogen from the air; today his discovery is responsible for feeding around two billion people. When World War I began, Haber converted to Christianity and returned to Germany, helping the Kaiser use his process to develop the first chemical weapons—toxic chlorine gas used against French and British troops. If Matt’s father possessed any information about the Haber Process, he would be an important target for the French. The Germans could not allow “The Prussian” or his family to escape with this information.





### **“EUROPE IS THE CHILD’S GAME OF MAY I”**

Matt describes the experiences of a Jewish family trying to escape Europe in 1911, a time when millions of Jews were emigrating from Russia and Eastern Europe to the United States and other parts of the Americas; however, the instability and dangers of living in Europe in this time affected not only Jews but all citizens. The first decades of the 20th century were characterized by intense political conflict, due in part to the rise of nationalism across Europe, ongoing territorial disputes, shifts in national alliances, and an overall sense that the balance of power in Europe had broken down. Enmity between France and Germany went back to the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, when a newly unified Germany humiliated France. Eager to claim its role as a superpower, Germany grew its empire and its military—provoking a naval arms race against England. Germany formed a Triple Alliance with Italy and Austria-Hungary, and in response, France, England, and Russia formed an opposing alliance. Many years before these factors lead to the outbreak of World War I, they had a direct impact on individuals across the continent, including the fictional Friedman family. After being detained and tortured by the French because of their connection to Fritz Haber, Matt’s parents would be “indefinitely detained” by the Germans. Matt would be merely one of the many European orphans caught in the power games of nations and the rising tide of anti-Semitism.

To explore many perspectives on Europe before and during World War I, visit: <http://www.pbs.org/greatwar/>

### **JEWISH PEOPLE IN ST. LOUIS**

As a Jewish man with Eastern European roots, Matt would be an outsider in small, rural Lebanon, MO; however, his adopted home city of St. Louis had supported a growing Jewish population since the mid-19th century. St. Louis began expanding into a major city during the 1830s, and large waves of European Jews began settling there between the 1880s and 1920s. The 1904 World’s Fair allowed St. Louis to celebrate its status as the fourth largest city in the United States, and immigrants could find work building, maintaining, and later dismantling the elaborate infrastructure for the fair. During World War I, when Matt would have arrived in St. Louis, the Jewish community strongly supported the American war effort. Germans—both Jewish and non-Jewish—were especially eager to be perceived as pro-American and not in sympathy with their native country. Several prominent members of the Jewish community held leadership roles in St. Louis. The next few decades saw the Jewish population moving out of the central city, into the surrounding suburbs. Through schools, synagogues, newspapers, and community organizations, Jewish people found community and prosperity in the St. Louis area throughout the 20th century.

# INTERVIEW WITH SET DESIGNER JEFF COWIE

Education Dramaturg Ted Sod spoke with Set Designer Jeff Cowie about his design process and perspective on the play.

**Ted Sod: What do you look for in a director when you are meeting to discuss a play you are designing?**

**Jeff Cowie:** I've asked some directors to pull a magazine picture or to name an artist whose work they think embodies the spirit of the play. In the second meeting, I always bring pictures. The whole dynamic for the shows Michael Wilson, the director of *Talley's Folly*, and I do together is different—we are partners and have lived and worked together for 20 years. When we're walking down the street, one of us might say, "Hey, could the boathouse in *Talley's Folly* have that kind of blah, blah, blah?" So, it's a little less formal. We had a meeting last week with all the designers at our apartment—and it's a luxury to get everyone together so early in the design process. I believe that there's true collaboration going on, a lot of unspoken clues and hints and language. It's hard to describe, but it's collaboration at its deepest and most exciting.

**TS: Is Rui Rita designing the lights for this production?**

**JC:** Yes, he is. He's been working with Michael for ten years or so. David Woolard, who has been working with Michael for almost 20 years, is doing the costumes and Mark Bennett is designing the sound and original music. I think that our shared history could be especially important to this valentine play.

**TS: It seems that the boathouse, which is the setting for the play, is an additional character. Is that true from your point of view?**

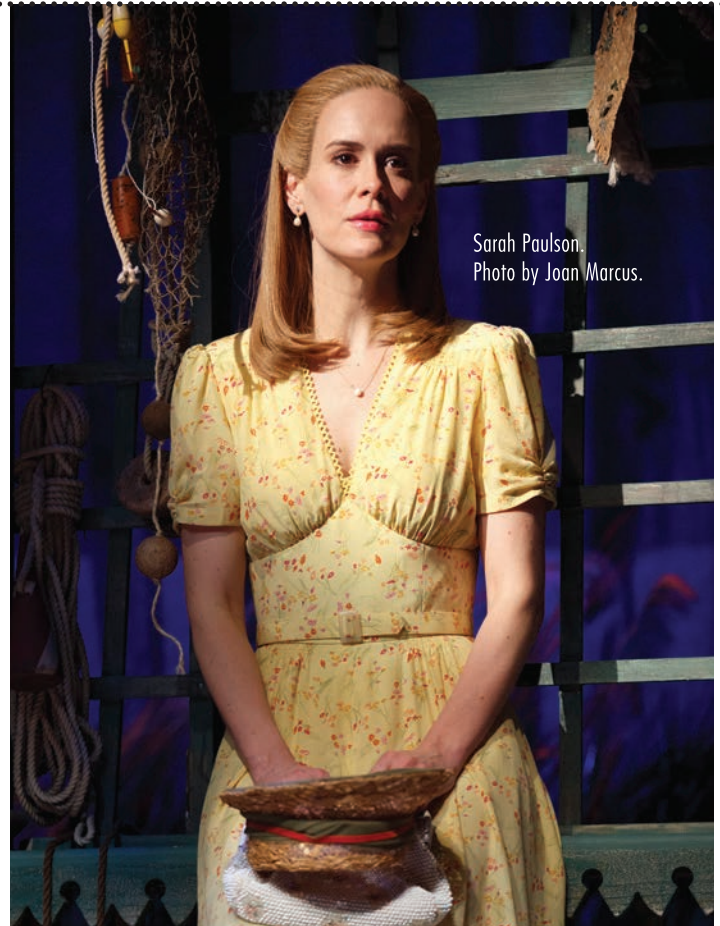
**JC:** I know that gets said a lot. I think the boathouse is the boathouse and it's the place where Sally goes to be alone. It probably has been that place for her whole life. I think of it more as her very private haven. Also, a year before the play's action, Matt and Sally made love there, so it has that very emotional history. For me it isn't really a character, it's a place.

**TS: What type of research did you have to do to design the set for *Talley's Folly*?**

**JC:** I researched a lot of Victoriana. The history of the boathouse is talked about in the play, so there's a narrative about the place in the text. I'm trying to get across that wonderful smell of dampness and musty-moldy wood. The descriptive narrative also applies to the props. I think that since Matt finds a pair of ice skates in a trunk in the boathouse, it implies a whole world of what else is stored there. Finding ice skates can't be a stand-alone event. So, that leads me to think about Sally Talley's family and what other things they've stored there. That's one of the joys of designing, to try to dig into the history of the characters and the place to find reasons for what's onstage.

**TS: Will your design for *Talley's Folly* spill into the audience?**

**JC:** The play begins with Matt entering through the audience, breaking the fourth wall and outlining his plans to charm Sally in



Sarah Paulson.  
Photo by Joan Marcus.

the course of 90 or so minutes. He describes everything on the set. He tells us that Uncle Whistler, who built the boathouse, "must have broken a lot of jigsaws." He lists the attributes of this setting and says, "You people (the audience) are in the water." And then the dialogue between him and Sally begins. I had to make a list of everything the characters say about the boathouse and incorporate all those things into the design. It was really a lot of fun. Rui has designed a wonderful rippling water effect and Mark has a super 360 degree sound plot planned; so, yes, I think we're bringing the play out into the audience as much as possible. We were all in the theatre recently and it was a very open and collaborative discussion, working out the challenges before they become problems.

**TS: What's your take on Uncle Whistler?**

**JC:** Michael is specifically interested in how Sally describes her Uncle Whistler. He feels that Whistler built the boathouse for Sally. He's described as a very eccentric character. I think Whistler was sort of mad. He was an artist living in a somewhat repressive family and the boathouse was perhaps part of his fantasy life.

**TS: What challenges did you face in creating the design of this show?**

**JC:** I don't think you can draft the kind of damage caused when a building is falling into a river. I don't think you can draw it. It's even difficult in a model. I have a giant label on all my drawings



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that reads, “Consult with the designer for the level of destruction.” It sounds like I’m going to head into the shop with a sledgehammer—which I’d love to do—and basically break the set down. I find it’s difficult to design a set that really looks like it has aged naturally. That’s a challenge.

**TS: What really causes that kind of aging effect?**

**JC:** It’s structural. The building relaxes. It’s a function of time.

**TS: Will you tell us about yourself? Did you have any teachers who were influential? Where did you receive your training?**

**JC:** I had a very unconventional education before I went to college. I attended schools with no formal classes, no grades, every activity or pursuit was completely up to the individual. Sometimes I think that throughout my life I’ve been trying to return to that kind of intensely creative community. Making theater comes closest. The people I work with are my biggest influence. And of course I steal from the greats. I studied painting at Rhode Island School of Design, where there was no scenic design program. I met Michael and theater sort of found me. Set designers come from many walks of life, which is what’s interesting about the profession. Nowadays many people are trained to be set designers or lighting designers—most people come from grad programs. I think that’s great and natural.

**TS: How do you keep yourself inspired as an artist?**

**JC:** I still make paintings. I find it difficult to split time between making paintings and scenic design because the mindset is

different, but I’ll go through phases of working a lot on paintings. I think inspiration comes from one’s everyday life. When I’m working on a show that takes place in a brownstone, I start looking at brownstones, and literally, all I see while I am working on that show is brownstones! They jump out at me. Whatever the thing is that I’m researching at the moment is the only thing I will see.

**TS: Do you have any advice for a young person who would like to design for the theatre?**

**JC:** When I talk to younger designers, I tell them that the most important thing I did, the thing that has served me the most, was learning to draw. A designer needs to know how to express oneself visually, quickly and with emotion. We’ve all moved to computers, and that’s wonderful, but I think there’s nothing more important than being able to look and to draw.

**TS: When I interviewed Desmond Healy, who designed *The Importance of Being Earnest* for us, he said the same thing.**

**JC:** Did he really? Ah, fantastic. Well, thank you. That’s a compliment...I stand on his shoulders.

**TS: Is there anything else that you want to say about the play or your work on it?**

**JC:** I want my design to serve the play. I don’t want to grandstand and I don’t want people to leave the theatre “whistling the set” as it were. I want it to be as true as possible and to serve the play the way the play needs to be served, and sometimes that means to be almost invisible. That is my only goal.





# PRE-SHOW ACTIVITIES

FOR  
EDUCATORS

## HOW DO ACTORS USE TABLEAU TO CREATE A ROMANTIC PLAY?

Lanford Wilson wrote *Talley's Folly* around a romantic plot that has been popular for centuries. The plot can be simplified to: "boy meets girl/boy loses girl/boy gets girl." Explore how romantic stories are created and why they are so popular.

### ACTIVATE

Students work in pairs.

STEP 1: Each pair creates a series of 3 tableaus, tracing a romantic relationship:

#1: Two characters (A&B) meet

#2: A&B have a fight, break up, or are separated

#3: A&B get back together

Instruct students to make specific choices about the given circumstances: WHO are the characters? WHERE are they? WHEN is it happening? WHAT are the important events? WHY do they meet, separate, and get back together?

STEP 2: After showing the 3 tableaus, students create an additional 2. One goes in between #1 and #2 and shows what lead to the break-up. The second goes between #2 and #3, to show how the characters get back together. Again, be specific about the given circumstances.

### WRITE

Students could write 2 lines or more of dialogue for each tableau. Then, speak the dialogue within each tableau.

### REFLECT

How did the different romances vary from each other? What was similar and what was different in the relationships that you saw? Why is the "separation" central to the storyline? Why are plays and films about romantic relationships so popular? Why do we relate to romantic stories even when the characters are different from us?

## HOW DOES A PLAYWRIGHT CREATE A STORY THAT UNFOLDS IN REAL TIME?

*Talley's Folly* happens in "real time," meaning that the play is 97 minutes long, and the events on stage show 97 consecutive minutes in the lives of Matt Friedman and Sally Talley.

*Materials: paper, pencils, stopwatches, bell or buzzer*

### WRITE

Imagine a character with a specific task to complete during the time between classes (2 minutes in most schools).

Write down that character's task, why it's important to complete between classes, and what challenges the character encounters. The character should accomplish his or her task.

### ACTIVATE

Working in groups of three, improvise the scene you have just imagined. The writer should share his or her notes with the group, and help to shape the scene. Each scene should last exactly two minutes.

### REFLECT

Share scenes, using the bell or buzzer to mark the beginning and end of each scene. What challenges did you face in creating a scene that happened in real time? Did you feel these scenes were more or less interesting because they happened in real time? Why?

# POST-SHOW ACTIVITIES

FOR  
EDUCATORS

## HOW DOES A DESIGNER CREATE A SET TO REPRESENT A CHARACTER'S "SAFE SPACE"?

You've seen how *Talley's Folly* is set in the Talley boathouse—a unique place where Sally can be alone and feel safe from her family and the world. Think of a space where you feel safe, and create a set based on this place from your own life.

*Materials: paper, pencils, coloring utensils, shoe box, glue, tape*

**REFLECT** Why did the play take place in the boathouse? What details do you remember from the set and why were they important? From what you learned about Sally, why do you think she needed a place to be alone when she was growing up? Where do you go when you need to be alone?

**ACTIVATE** Students create a set design based on a safe space of their own. (Look at the set rendering on page #17 of this UPSTAGE to see how a set designer sketches a set). Depending on time and materials, this can be a 2-dimensional drawing or a 3-dimensional diorama. Remind students to include the details that make this setting unique.

**WRITE** Students could write a personal essay describing the place they chose, how they feel when they are in this place, and why this place is important to them.

## HOW DOES A PLAYWRIGHT CREATE A SEQUEL TO AN EXISTING PLAY?

*Talley's Folly* is one part of a trilogy of plays that Lanford Wilson wrote about the Talley family. Imagine you are the playwright. What happened immediately after the end of *Talley's Folly*, when Sally and Matt go into the house to share their decision?

*Materials: paper, pencils*

**ACTIVATE** As a class, create a list of given circumstances—what we already know about Matt, Sally, and the Talleys—at the end of the play. Who is in the house? What do they think of Matt? What are their hopes for Sally? What are their cultural beliefs? How do you think they will react? What time of day is it?

**WRITE** Working alone or in pairs, write either a scene about the moment Matt and Sally walk into the house and reveal their plans OR write a monologue spoken by Sally or Matt as they share their news. How does each character react? How do Sally and Matt respond?

**REFLECT** Is this situation unique to the Talley family? How would you write a scene like this if it was set in New York City in 2013? What would change? What would stay the same?

**OPTIONAL** Read *Fifth of July* and/or *Talley & Son* as a class. What themes do you see across the plays?

# GLOSSARY

## LANGUAGE OF THE TIME AND PLACE:

ALTE MOID	The Yiddish phrase for “old maid.” <i>Matt says he is getting rabies from an alte moid (meaning Sally).</i>
BENEDICTION	A blessing. <i>Sally says that holidays were a benediction, as she was relieved not to get any mail.</i>
CAPRICIOUS	Impulsive and unpredictable. <i>Matt describes the river as being capricious. Later, he says the same about Sally.</i>
CASTIGATE	To subject to criticism; chew-out. <i>Matt asks Sally not to castigate his impersonations.</i>
COMMUNIST TRAITOR INFIDEL	A string of insults implying affiliation with an unpopular political party, betraying Americans and opposing Christianity. <i>Momma and Buddy called Matt a communist traitor infidel.</i>
DEPRECATE	Bad-mouth, put down. <i>Matt asks Sally to not deprecate his car.</i>
FOLLY	A lack of good sense or foresight. <i>Many in the Talley family say that Uncle Whisler building a boathouse they didn't need was a folly.</i>
INOCULATE	A type of immunization where the disease is introduced to an organism in order to produce antibodies. <i>When Matt gets a cut, he says he won't get lockjaw because he's been inoculated.</i>
LOCKJAW	A symptom of the muscle disease tetanus. <i>Matt cuts himself, but doesn't fear lockjaw because he has had a tetanus shot.</i>
LOUVERS, LATTICE AND GEEGAWS	Details of the boathouse: wooden slats, crisscrossed wood, and knickknacks. <i>Matt says the boathouse is a genuine Victorian folly, constructed of louvers, lattice and geegaws.</i>
PROSPERITY	The condition of being successful, especially economically. <i>Matt jokes that the Talleys are in danger of prosperity.</i>
QUANDARY	A state of doubt or uncertainty. <i>Matt says that when he was away from Sally he was in a terrible quandary.</i>
RATIOCINATION	Exact logic; reasoning. <i>Matt says he has great powers of ratiocination when it comes to solving puzzles.</i>
SEPHARDIC	A community of European Jews with a different language and traditions from the Ashkenazi Jews. <i>Matt's mother claimed to be Sephardic.</i>
UNA FURTIVE LAGRIMA	The romance music of an Italian opera, L'elsir d'amore; literally “a furtive tear.” <i>Matt jokes that Sally's Uncle Whistler would sing “una furtive lagrima” if he saw what was happening to his boathouse.</i>

## PEOPLE OF THE TIME AND PLACE:

EMMA GOLDMAN	An anarchist and political activist. <i>Sally's family accuses her of becoming an old-maid Emma Goldman.</i>
FIBBER MCGEE (AND MOLLY)	A popular radio comedy series featuring a husband and wife vaudeville duo. <i>When Sally gets upset and speaks too loudly, Matt warns that she'll drown out Fibber McGee.</i>
HATFIELDS AND MCCOYS	Two families from the West Virginia/Kentucky area with a famous feud. <i>Sally tells Matt, “It isn't really the Hatfield and the McCoy’s.”</i>
HUMPHREY BOGART	An American movie star, often cast as a gangster. <i>Matt imitates Humphrey Bogart's voice.</i>
JAMES CAGNEY	An American movie star who often played tough-guy characters. <i>When Matt impersonates Humphrey Bogart, Sally asks if it is supposed to be Cagney.</i>
MISS FANNY BRICE	A Jewish star of stage, radio, and film. She created and starred in the popular radio program “The Baby Snooks Show”. <i>Matt says he and Sally have avoided confrontation with the Talleys thanks to Miss Fanny Brice.</i>
THORSTEIN VEBLÉN	An American economist who authored <i>The Theory of the Leisure Class</i> , a social critique of spending for the display of power. <i>Matt teases Sally for being fired from Sunday school, saying, “you were supposed to be teaching from the Methodist reader, not from Thorstein Veblen.”</i>

**TUBERCULOSIS**, also known as consumption or TB, is a bacterial infection usually affecting the lungs, though it can affect any part of the body.

- Tuberculosis is spread through the air.
- Tuberculosis causes coughing (often coughing up mucus or blood), night sweats, fever, fatigue, and difficulty breathing.
- In 1930, tuberculosis was the deadliest contagious disease in the United States, even though a vaccination was developed in 1921.
- In 1931, the year Sally had tuberculosis, the most common treatment was to isolate the patient in a special hospital called a sanitarium. There, healthy food, fresh air, and rest were prescribed to strengthen their immune systems.
- Antibiotic treatment for tuberculosis was developed in 1944.



# RESOURCES

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Sarah Paulson.  
Photo by  
Joan Marcus.

# WHEN YOU GET TO THE THEATRE

FOR  
EDUCATORS

## TICKET POLICY

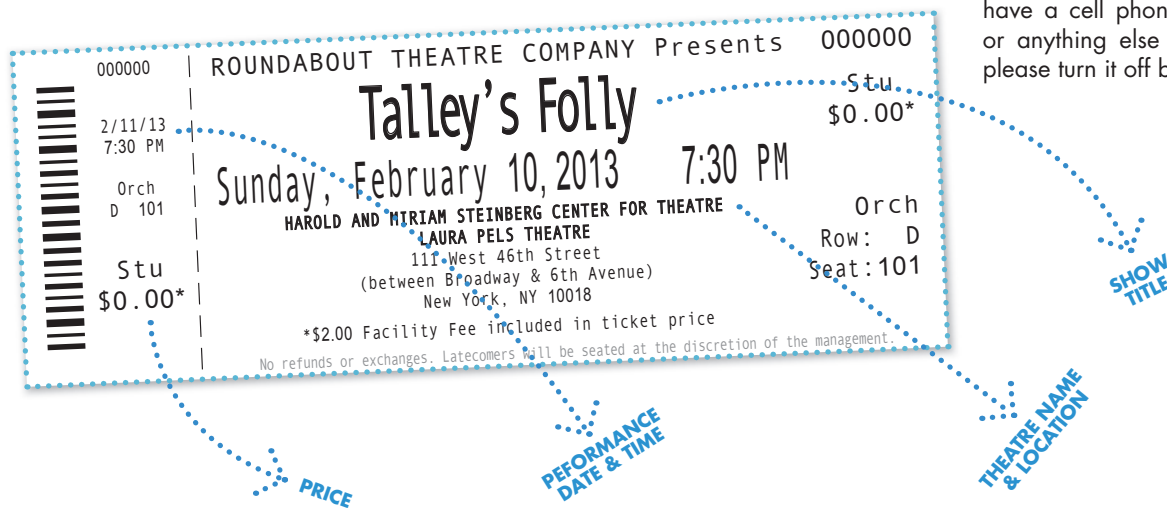
As a student participant in Producing Partners, Page To Stage or Theatre Access, you will receive a discounted ticket to the show from your teacher on the day of the performance. You will notice that the ticket indicates the section, row and number of your assigned seat. When you show your ticket to the usher inside the theatre, he or she will show you where your seat is located. These tickets are not transferable and you must sit in the seat assigned to you.

## PROGRAMS

All the theatre patrons are provided with a program that includes information about the people who put the production together. In the "Who's Who" section, for example, you can read about the actors' roles in other plays and films, perhaps some you have already seen.

## AUDIENCE ETIQUETTE

As you watch the show please remember that the biggest difference between live theatre and a film is that the actors can see you and hear you and your behavior can affect their performance. They appreciate your applause and laughter, but can be easily distracted by people talking or getting up in the middle of the show. So please save your comments or need to use the rest room for intermission. Also, there is no food permitted in the theatre, no picture taking or recording of any kind, and if you have a cell phone, beeper, alarm watch or anything else that might make noise, please turn it off before the show begins.



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