



The Minutes

by Tracy Letts

SAMUEL FRENCH

The world premiere of *THE MINUTES* was produced and presented at Steppenwolf Theatre Company (Anna D. Shapiro, Artistic Director; David Schmitz, Executive Director) in Chicago, Illinois, on November 9, 2017. The performance was directed by Anna D. Shapiro, with scenic design by David Zinn, costume design by Ana Kuzmanic, lighting design by Brian MacDevitt, and sound design and original music by Andre Pluess. The stage manager was Christine D. Freeburg. The cast was as follows:

MR. PEELCliff Chamberlain
MAYOR SUPERBA William Petersen
MS. JOHNSON Brittany Burch
MR. BLAKEJames Vincent Meredith
MR. BREEDING Kevin Anderson
MR. HANRATTY Danny McCarthy
MR. ASSALONE Jeff Still
MS. INNES Penny Slusher
MS. MATZSally Murphy
MR. OLDFIELDFrancis Guinan
MR. CARP Ian Barford

CHARACTERS

MR. PEEL
MAYOR SUPERBA
MS. JOHNSON
MR. BLAKE
MR. BREEDING
MR. HANRATTY
MR. ASSALONE
MS. INNES
MS. MATZ
MR. OLDFIELD
MR. CARP

Note: Innes and Oldfield should be older than the others.

SETTING

A city council meeting room

SUPERBA. Yes, Item 7.2, “Lincoln Smackdown.” You have the floor, Mr. Blake.

BLAKE. I mentioned last week at the meeting of the Big Cherry Heritage Festival Planning Committee this notion I had for an income-generating enterprise. Originally I had thought we would use it only temporarily for the festival, just a makeshift tent, much in the tradition of an attraction you might find at the state fair.

INNES. Like a freak show!

BLAKE. Yes, I suppose –

INNES. Oh I used to love the freaks. I remember this one man they advertised as the Missing Link. In reality, he was just this sad little man with misshapen feet dressed in a loincloth, sitting in a cardboard box. I never laughed so hard!

OLDFIELD. I don’t remember that but it *sounds* funny.

BREEDING. (*Loud whisper.*) Careful, the PC police are out in force!

INNES. Say no m-o-r-e.

HANRATTY. I know how to spell “more.”

BLAKE. I think now that Lincoln Smackdown might become a permanent fixture of the park. Essentially, Lincoln Smackdown is an opportunity for anyone to fight Honest Abe in a steel cage. We take a trained mixed martial arts fighter and dress him up as Abraham Lincoln. Shenandoah, black suit, stovepipe hat.

INNES. I love Abraham Lincoln. And violence.

OLDFIELD. You should get that giant lady to play Abraham Lincoln, she will scare the shit out of you.

HANRATTY. Mr. Mayor, I’m a little confused as to why we are hearing a proposal for Lincoln Smackdown when

we just heard it last week. Are we supposed to vote on Lincoln Smackdown at every meeting?

BLAKE. I’m trying to *help* you, Harry. I think we should just add one dollar to every Lincoln Smackdown ticket and that’s a way to pay for your fountain.

HANRATTY. First of all, Blake, I appreciate your help, but I have to be honest and tell you that I can’t see Lincoln Smackdown generating the revenue to pay for itself, much less to pay for the accessible fountain. And secondly, I find Lincoln Smackdown a deeply offensive idea and so does anyone else who is a person of conscience. Beyond being dumb and offensive, its point of reference is obscure; did Lincoln ever visit Big Cherry? Did he ever discuss it? Do we know if he was even *aware* of it?

BLAKE. If there’s one lesson the Civil War taught us, it’s that Lincoln was aware of *all* of America.

HANRATTY. That doesn’t mean he has anything to do with our town.

BLAKE. He was the Father of Our Country!

HANRATTY. George Washington was the Father of Our Country, nimrod.

BLAKE. So now Lincoln *wasn’t* the Father of Our Country?

HANRATTY. He was the Great Emancipator!

BLAKE. *You* gonna tell *me* about the Great Emancipator?!

HANRATTY. The Great Emancipator didn’t practice mixed martial arts!

BLAKE. Emancipate *this*, turkey!

(**HANRATTY** and **BLAKE** go at it. **PEEL** breaks them up. **SUPERBA** pounds his gavel.)

SUPERBA. All right, all right, gentlemen, that’s enough, calm down!