



# 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. PEEL** .....Cliff Chamberlain  
**MAYOR SUPERBA** ..... William Petersen  
**MS. JOHNSON** ..... Brittany Burch  
**MR. BLAKE** .....James Vincent Meredith  
**MR. BREEDING** ..... Kevin Anderson  
**MR. HANRATTY** ..... Danny McCarthy  
**MR. ASSALONE** ..... Jeff Still  
**MS. INNES** ..... Penny Slusher  
**MS. MATZ** .....Sally Murphy  
**MR. OLDFIELD** .....Francis 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



**ASSALONE (PYM).** “There’s been much activity from the Sioux in this area, Mr. Farmer. We’ve had many reports of stables burned and horses thieved. Farmers and trappers clear from here to Grassland have made report of skirmishes and the like. And while I like not to scare your daughter Debbie, it is true that the Sioux put a store in white children, particularly young girls.”

**SUPERBA.** “The whole of the Farmer family bedded down in the parents’ room, while four of the men slept in the room of the Farmers’ daughter Debbie. The other four soldiers slept in the hayloft. Sergeant Otto Pym slept with his men in the barn, for he was the sort of soldier who insisted that no man under his command would suffer more hardship than he. A November wind in this country can be mistaken for many things, even the devil himself, so the soldiers could be forgiven for dismissing the early signs of the stealthy Sioux.”

(**OLDFIELD** *hoots.*)

And indeed it was not a *sound* that alerted Sergeant Pym to the Sioux’s attack...but a smell.”

**ASSALONE (PYM).** “What’s that smell? Stanton! Are you smoking a cigar? What the – FIRE! SIOUX!”

(**OLDFIELD** *crinkles paper to create the sound of fire.*)

**SUPERBA.** “The dry hay of winter ignited like nitro! The soldiers in the hayloft awoke to the horror of their bedroom barn engulfed in flames!”

(**MEMBERS** *scream.*)

**ASSALONE (PYM).** “Save the Farmers!”

**SUPERBA.** “Pym flew out of the hayloft and literally ran through fire, blindly charging into the smoky night where he was set upon by a young Sioux warrior!”

(**ASSALONE** *grapples with HANRATTY.*)

“Around them, chaos reigned! Twenty Sioux warriors torched the Farmers’ home, rounded up the Farmers’ horses, and shot every white man in sight indiscriminately, civilian and soldier alike, with long rifles as well as the bow and arrow. Pym, struggling valiantly with his young savage, saw his best soldier, young Archibald Stanton, shot in the back while running for the Farmer house.”

(**ASSALONE** *overcomes HANRATTY.*)

“Finally, Pym overcame his adversary and took up a vantage point behind the Farmers’ well. Using the young warrior’s long gun, he began to pick off the marauders with remarkable sharp-shooting. One, then two, then four, then five. The Sioux realized they were being decimated by a lone sniper and so they approached the well. That only made them easier to see, and to shoot! Now Pym had picked off ten, now twelve! The savages had their fill, and they had their horses, and they called out for a retreat. The remaining Sioux gathered themselves and thundered off into the night. And Sergeant Pym was able to approach the half-burned Farmer house.”

(**ASSALONE** *approaches BREEDING.*)

**ASSALONE (PYM).** “Mr. Farmer, they’re gone! They’ve done in your barn and they’ve stolen your horses but your crops survive. I’ve lost many of my men. Is your family hurt?”

**BREEDING (FARMER).** “DEBBIE! They’ve stolen my daughter! They’ve stolen my beautiful daughter and now we’ll never see her again!”

**INNES (MRS. FARMER).** “They will rape her and raise her as one of their own! It is a fate worse than any death!”

**SUPERBA.** “But Mrs. Farmer’s sentence was not complete before Sergeant Pym was on horseback and riding after the Sioux.”



(**ASSALONE** gallops off on an imaginary horse.)

**SUPERBA.** “The Farmers began to put their shattered lives back together. They covered the dead soldiers and dressed the wounded. They saved what they could from the smoldering embers of their barn and house. And in the first light of a frigid dawn, they had nearly collapsed from exhaustion...when they heard the clop-clop of horse hooves.”

**BREEDING (FARMER).** “I swear, Mother, I might be asleep and dreaming. Or I might be dead. But tell me, please tell me, do you see it too?”

(**ASSALONE** re-enters, carrying **MATZ**.)

**SUPERBA.** “Sergeant Otto Pym rode onto that homestead. He got down from his horse and walked to Mr. and Mrs. Farmer with little Debbie Farmer in his outstretched arms. He handed their daughter to them and said...”

**ASSALONE (PYM).** “Here is your future.”

**SUPERBA.** “And as soon as they had taken Debbie from him, he collapsed to the ground...with three arrows protruding from his back. And the town of Big Cherry was saved.”

**ALL.** “And the town of Big Cherry was saved.”

(**ALL** stare at **PEEL**.)

**PEEL.** Wow. Wow, that’s...quite a story. Wow.

**SUPERBA.** “And the town of Big Cherry was saved.”

**PEEL.** Yeah, wow. That’s...you know, it’s interesting but the Natalie Wood character in *The Searchers*, Natalie Wood gets kidnapped by Indians, and her name is Debbie.

**SUPERBA.** Deborah Farmer grew to be an important figure in this town. Almost like royalty.

**PEEL.** Oh yeah?

**SUPERBA.** Land holdings, oil and real estate. Tremendous wealth.

**PEEL.** Really, that’s really...

**SUPERBA.** “Here is your future.”

(*The **MEMBERS** now return to their seats.*)

**PEEL.** Yeah, wow, he really said that. With three arrows in his back, that’s quite a...quite an achievement.

(**ALL** continue to stare at **PEEL**. Some smiles, some nods.)

Quite an achievement. My wife is from here, it’s weird she never told me that. That’s really some, that’s...vivid.

(*Turns his attention to the rendering.*)

And so the statue here is the guy from the story.

**SUPERBA.** Sergeant Otto Pym.

**PEEL.** Otto Pym, right, I wonder why they didn’t name the town Pymville or Pym Town or Pymsylvania. I mean, why Big Cherry, there aren’t any cherry trees around here.

**ALL.** (*Some mumbled paraphrased version of:*) I think there used to be cherry trees.

**PEEL.** So this is Otto Pym crashing the Sioux party to get back Little Debbie.

**HANRATTY.** Yes, and right here, at the base of the fountain, there would be a ribbon. Not an actual ribbon, a ribbon of stone, and it says...

**HANRATTY.**

**SUPERBA.**

“And the town of Big Cherry was saved.”

“Here is your future.”

**HANRATTY.** Uh, no, it says, “And the town of Big Cherry was saved.”