



# 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

## CARP

bound up with rubber bands and shoved in the bottom of a file cabinet, a bunch of oral histories, and one in particular, with your indulgence, **I'd like to read some of it to you.** I hadn't planned to get into all this with you tonight, I really didn't. I'm sorry I have to get into this at all. But some things need doing. And here we are. So strap in. This is an oral history, transcribed in 1942... by a schoolgirl at the Mackie Creek Indian Agricultural Academy, a boarding school now long gone, used to be on the farm-to-market road out by the water-treatment plant. The girl who took down this history is named Shannon Red Star, and she is transcribing a story told to her by her grandmother, a woman who was at the Battle at Mackie Creek. And her name was Makawee...

*(CARP puts on reading glasses.)*

"A boy from our camp had gone out for days to hunt. He came back very excited. He told the men he had found a big herd one-day's ride away. And a group of the men rode out with that boy to find the four-leggeds. They were excited because the herds had become so sparse and the freezing moon was coming. We lived by the river, we were the people who gather fish from the water, but four-legged beings meant we could get through the freezing moon. So they rode away. And it was that night that the soldiers showed up in our camp. It was like they knew the men would be away. And they made us get out and come stand in front of them while they went through our lodges and searched us. They said we had stolen eggs from a white family near to us along the river. I don't know if anyone had stolen eggs but why would we, we had our own chickens and our own eggs. They made all the men show them their guns and put their guns in a pile. But the only men there were the elders who could not hunt. And one of the men was deaf and so he could not hear what the soldiers were yelling at him and he did not know why they were trying to grab his gun. And they wrestled

with the gun and it went off and suddenly they were shooting at us. There were so many soldiers and there were not many of us, we were old men and women and children. We ran for the river but they rode after us and they were shooting us. Some women swam into the water away so far to get away from the shooting but the water was so cold and the water took them. I ran down the bank of the river as fast as I could go and I was pulling a girl with me, a little girl who was not mine but she was too young and she could not run as fast as me. I pulled her with me down the riverbank into the dark. I could hear the shooting behind me but I did not turn around, I just ran. The girl could not keep up but I was pulling her down the bank. And then we heard the horse behind us and the girl screamed but the soldier shot her and she went still. I went into the river then and hid in the freezing water. He shot his gun into the water but the water spirit took me and hid me. I saw him get off his horse and take his knife and take the ear from the girl who ran with me. And he put the ear on a string with other ears and he wore that string around his neck. They killed one hundred and twenty-two of us that night, mostly women and children. When the hunters rode back to the camp, the soldiers said they had started the fighting and the soldiers marched them back to the soldiers' fort and put them in the stockade, and they marched us to the reservation. They gave a lot of those soldiers medals for what they had done that night. The first white family who lived where our relatives used to found oil here in this ground and they became very rich from the Earth and started the town here. And do you know they named the town after us? Because what those men called us was 'cherry niggers' **and that is how this town got its name.**"

*(CARP lowers the paper. BLAKE takes his seat.)*

Forgive me, Bob.

*(Silence.)*