

Manahatta—Island of Many Hills

Dr. Alan Haffa

Writer: Mary Kathryn Nagle:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K407AL6CmYg>

- Citizen of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma and honorary member of the Ponca Tribe of Nebraska
- Works as a lawyer specializing in tribal sovereignty
- Her writing often tells stories related to the law because the law had such an impact on the subjugation of Native peoples
- *Adoptive Couple v Girl*, 2013 at SCOTUS
- “Sovereignty,” produced last year at Arena Stage, is about her grandfathers, the Supreme Court decision that that declared Cherokee Nation to be a sovereign nation and President Andrew Jackson’s refusal to enforce that ruling.
- A reading of *Manahatta* took place at The Public Theater’s New Work Now series, 2013



Native Theatre and Form

- Theatrical tradition in Native American cultures is different
- Does not fit Western genres like comedy and tragedy
- Action moves episodically through temporal and spatial realms similar to oral story telling, which itself mirrors memory
- Often includes dance, music, verse, drums, face paint
- Interplay between time/place overlap
- The two different settings and times, Oklahoma and Manatta, 1600s and 2008.

Jane/Le-le-wa'-you

- Jane/Lele-wa-you: Jane is a Lenape woman and citizen of Delaware Nationa in Oklahoma. She has an MPB from Stanford and works in NYC with Lehman Brothers.
- Lele-wa-you is a young Lenape woman from 1600s in Manahatta who is curious about the Dutch and trades with them.
- Actress: Tanis Parenteau. Experienced New York stage actress.



Debra/Toosh-ki-pa-kwis

- Jane's older sister who has moved into the family home to care for their mother, Bobbie. Very connected to her culture and works to start a Lenape language program.
- Toosh-ki-kwis-I is a Lenape woman in 1600s who is protective of her younger sister, Le-le-wa'-you and encourages her to leave Manahatta because of Dutch violence
- Actress: Rainbow Dickerson. Will play Bianca in Othello. Experienced off Broadway actress.



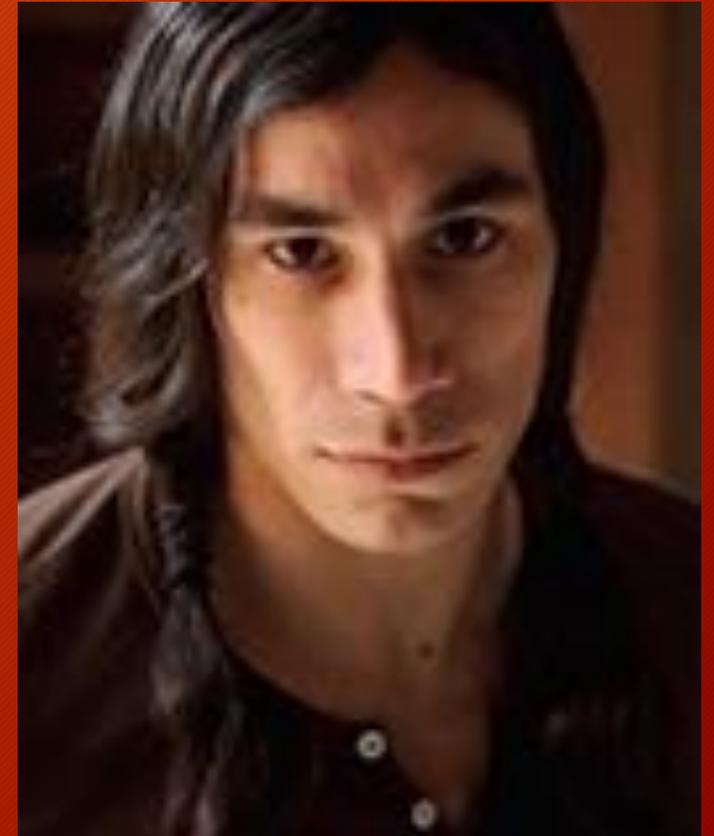
Bobbie/Mother

- Mother of Jane and Debra. Stubborn and lives in the traditional Lenape way.
- Mother is a Lenape elder in Manahatta in 1600s who is cautious about trading with the Dutch and worries about the future of the Lenape people.
- Actress: Sheila Tousey. Second season at OSF—played Cicero in Julius Caesar. Has played in several Broadway plays.



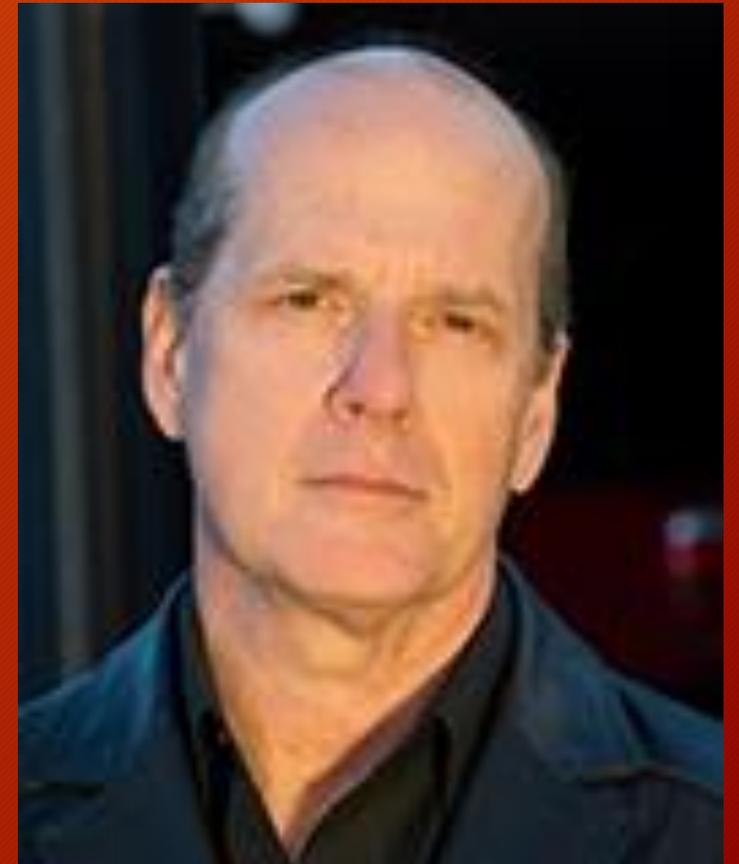
Luke/Se-ket-tu-may-qua

- Luke is a young man in the Delaware National. He was adopted by his white father, Michael when young after being taken from his parents.
- Se-ket-tu-may-qua is a Lenape from 1600s who is intelligent. He learns to speak Dutch and trades furs with them.
- Actor: Steven Flores. Comanche descendant and adopted Lakota Medicine Man by study



Dick Fuld/Peter Minuit/Peter Stuyvesant

- Dick is Jane's boss and CEO at Lehman Brothers
- Peter Minuit is the director of the Dutch West India Company who "purchased" Manahatta
- Peter Stuyvesant is Dutch colonial Governor of New Amsterdam and ordered the building of the wall on what is now Wall Street to displace the Lenape.
- Actor: Jeffrey King. King Henry IV and Henry Bolingbroke



Joe/Jakob

- CFO of Lehman Brothers
- Jakob is a Dutch fur trader in Manahatta and acts as a liaison between Lenape and Peter Minuit.
- Actor: Danforth Comins. Also playing Iago, Brutus in Julius Caesar; Hamlet; Edmund in Long Day's Journey into the Night; Stanley Kowalski in Streetcar Named Desire; Brick in Cat on a Hot Tin Roof



Michael/Jonas Michaelius

- Michael is a church choire director and banker in Oklahoma.
- Jonas Michaelius is a missionary sent to the Manahatta by the Dutch West India Company to convert them.
- Actor: David Kelly. Also playing Henry Condell; 26 seasons at OSF



Plot

- Set in 1600s Manahatta and present day, Anadarko, Oklahoma where the Lenape were resettled.
- Jane is living in Manhattan and working for Lehman. When her father dies, she must confront her family back in OK. Her relationship with her sister and mother suffer and Debra questions her sister's lifestyle.
- The Lenape tribe are suffering from land encroachment, disease, and crop destruction. Mother unknowingly "sells" Manahatta to Peter Minuit. Le-le-wa'-you and Se-ket-tu-may-qua trade furs with the Dutch but are hit with heavy taxation. Jonas Michaelius attempts to convert Toosh-ki-pa-kwis.
- Bobbie takes a mortgage to cover medical costs but can't keep up with payments and defaults. Lehman Brother's disintegrates and Jane's family homestead goes to bank foreclosure.
- Peter Stuyvesant is sent by Dutch West India Company to govern there and to deal with Lenape. He orders Jakob to kill them and to use slave labor to build a wall to keep the Lenape out of Manahatta.

“Sale” of Manahatta

MINUIT: Do you own all of Manahatta?

SE-KE-TU-MAY-QUA: “Own”?

MINUIT: Does this land belong to you?

LE-LE-WA'-YOU: We live here, yes.

MINUIT: But, does Manahatta belong to you?

LE-LE-WA'-YOU: Manahatta is the word our ancestors used to describe their home.

MUNUIT: This place?

SE-KE-TU-MAY-QUA: Our home.

MINUIT: So, you own Manahatta!

SE-KE-TU-MAY-QUA: If you say so ...

MINUIT: No! Not me! You just said it's your home!

SE-KE-TU-MAY-QUA: I don't understand your word “own.”

MINUIT: Look, let's not overly complicate things ...

Mortgage on Family Home in Anadarko, OK

- MICHAEL: Do you own this home?
- BOBBIE: I live here, yeah.
- MICHAEL: But do you own it?
- BOBBIE: This is my home.
- MICHAEL: Yeah, but is your name on the deed?
- BOBBIE: It's on all the bills that come here.
- MICHAEL: Look, let's not overly complicate things. In order to take out a loan on this house, we have to show the bank that you own it.
- BOBBIE: I live here, yes.
- MICHAEL: But do you own this house?
- BOBBIE: Grandpa got this land in the allotment. He built the whole house himself, didn't get help from nobody. Grandpa and grandma moved in and six weeks later, Mom was born. I was born here and then I married Charlie and he moved in. We had Deborah and seven years later the Creator blessed us with Janie. So for as long as I can remember this has been our home.

Missionary Work at Request of Company

- MICHAELIUS: I've come to share the gospel.
- MINUIT: With the Indians?
- MICHAELIUS: The Company has asked me to.
- MINUIT: Well, I wish you the best in your endeavors, I truly do. But very few of them speak. And those that do have no grasp of basic concepts like capital, commerce, ownership. They have no idea how an economy actually works!
- MICHAELIUS: Understanding how an economy functions is one thing. I leave that to you. But hearing and receiving the Lord's word, is for all his children, savage may they be!

Abuse of Religion and Cultural Manipulation

- MICHAEL: You wanna just sit back and watch her lose her home?
- LUKE: I wanna make sure she understands the loan, y'know before ..
- MICHAEL: She doesn't. She never will. Folks like her, they have no grasp of basic concepts like capital, commerce, ownership. They have no idea how an economy actually works. And that's why we have to help 'em. Y'know ... reach out and share the Gospel with 'em.

Lenape (Original Men) Interaction with Americans

- Lived in Delaware, Philadelphia, SE New York state, and New Jersey
- Treaty with William Penn led to creation of Philadelphia
- They came to be called the Delaware by Whites after a name to Delaware river (Lord De la Warr)
- Treaty of Fort Pitt: George Washington made a treaty with them in Sept. 17, 1778. Mutual defense, free passage, and respect for territorial possessions. http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/del1778.asp
- Forced relocation: <http://delawaretribe.org/services-and-programs/historic-preservation/removal-history-of-the-delaware-tribe/>

Lenape Creation Story and “Turtle Island”

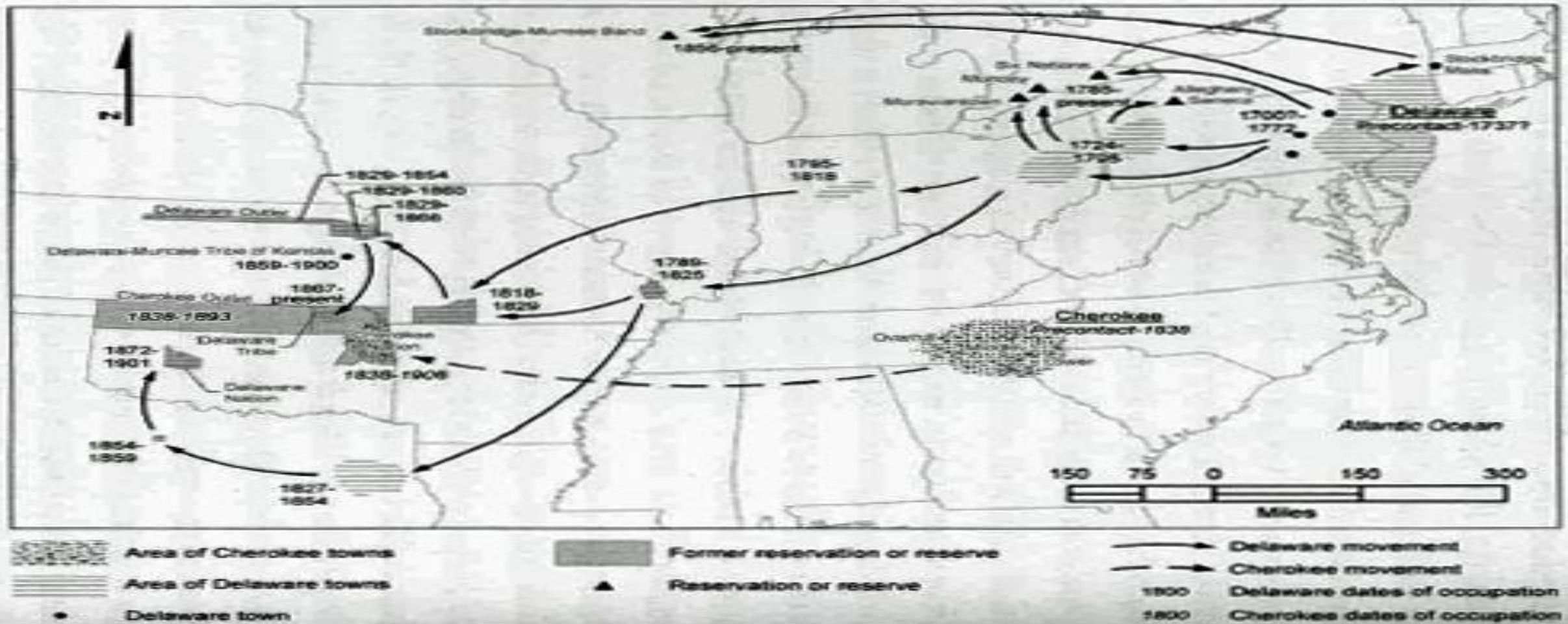
- After the Great Spirit and creator of all, “He-Who-Creates-Us-By-Thought,” brought the world into being, there came a time very long ago when the animals were living in deep water with no dry land. They grew weary of being wet and wanted to find a way to bring up the mud from under the water. From the greatest to the least, each one dove under the water. One by one they tried to dive deep enough to bring up some of the mud. And, one by one, they failed, being unable to dive so deep and so long. It seemed as though none could bring up the mud from the bottom. All came back to the surface, gasping for air. It seemed an impossible task, for none was willing to risk their life to bring up the mud. Finally, after all the others had tried and failed, humble Muskrat took his turn. Muskrat dove deep and was under the water for a very long, long time. The other animals feared that Muskrat had drowned, for he stayed below the water much longer than any of them had. When Muskrat finally came back up to the surface, he was exhausted and close to death. The animals saw that there was a clump of mud scraped from the bottom in Muskrat’s paw. Humble Muskrat had risked his life to dive deeper than any of them had in order to bring the mud up from the bottom... As Turtle continued to raise his back, more water drained off and the mud that grew and grew became dry, becoming the land. And the animals had dry land to live upon. One day, in the middle of the land upon Turtle’s back, there grew a tree. From that tree grew a shoot. And, from that shoot sprouted a man. The Man would have been all alone, but then the tree grew another shoot. And, from that shoot sprouted a woman. This was the first man and the first woman. They are the ancestors of us all.<http://nanticokelenapemuseum.org/news/1380/creation-stories/>

Other Stories:

<https://www.swarthmore.edu/SocSci/Linguistics/LenapeLanguageResources/pdf/story.pdf>

- After the Creator created everybody, he said to them, “I will allow you to pick the name for yourself of who you are.” Now the first animal comes up and goes, “I wanna be powerful and I wanna be strong and I wanna have a beautiful fur coat and I wanna have claws.” Creator says, “I will make you the bear. From this time on, you will be known as the bear.” Another animal comes up: “Creator. I wanna be able to run through the forest. I wanna be able to hear things coming far. I wanna be able to roam.” Creator said, “Brother, I will give you the name deer. I will make you a deer.” Another animal came and said, “Creator. I want to swim in the ocean. I want to be able to swim and never come up for air.” Creator said, “Brother. I will make you a fish.” All the animals came up.... Then the creator looked over and he saw this little bird sitting there. And he said, “Little Brother, you haven’t given me your name. Who do you wanna be?” Little bird looked up and said, “Creator, my feathers, well, they’re kinda plain looking, and I can’t sing very well. I don’t have a very good voice. My little wings, they can’t fly very far. My eyes can’t see too far. But Creator, this is the way you made me. So I’m happy and content to be this way.” The Creator said, “Little Brother, everyone else picked things or abilities or attributes that made them something they weren’t. You are the only one who was content to stay how I made you. So with that, I am going to make your feathers that you say are so plain the most prized thing of all the birds. I am going to make your voice that when you sing, your voice will be heard over the valleys and mountaintops. I am going to make your eyes that you say you can’t see much you’re going to be able to see from a mile high and see things all over. Your wings you say you can’t fly with I’m going to make it where your wings will soar and fly the highest of any bird. I’m going to call you Eagle.” And that’s why to this day the eagle, his feathers are the most sacred, he flies the highest of all the birds, he can see the farthest of all the birds, and when his call goes out, you can hear it for miles around. And that’s the story of how the eagle came about.

Relocation History: New Jersey to Ohio following Revolutionary War, to Indiana, to Missouri, to Nebraska and Kansas, and Post Civil War to Oklahoma



Oklahoma: Delaware bought land from Cherokee



Wampum (White Shell Beads):

<http://www.nativetech.org/wampum/wamphist.htm>

- Community meal that included crabs, oysters, mussels, clams
- Weapons laid aside; Peace negotiated
- Shells were cut to make beads, strung together with leather from deer hide and made into belts or other decorations
- Wampumpeag—shell bead strings—communicated the intentions of those who carried them
- Used in healing ceremonies, rituals of condolence, or worn as protection
- They could be made to recall a specific event that was important to the tribe
- Used in diplomacy and exchanged to build alliances
- Used as money during the settler-colonial era

Lenape language and Schools

- Native languages are at risk due to suppression
- Late 19th and early 20th century: Deliberate plan of “assimilation” by creation of residential boarding schools for native children as young as five
- Federally mandated until 1978, Indian Child Welfare Act
- Bobbie speaks about Riverside Indian School in Anadarko: physical punishment for speaking Lenape
- Speaking the language is an assertion of identity and connects her to the land of her origins
- Connection to Place is especially important to Native peoples

Double/Triple casting

- This is required by Nagle as it creates impression of motion through the characters as they transform from place to place and time to time
- This enacts the native idea of coexistence—we are rooted in place and time with our ancestors

Questions

- How does Jane learn about and come to terms with her identity?
- What is the connection between the Recession and the Lehman's Brothers collapse and the "sale" of Manahatta?
- What is the effect of "echoing"—where words and events are presented in parallel in two different times?
- What is the play saying about money and greed?
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Review:

<http://www.siskiyoudaily.com/entertainment/20180411/oregon-shakespeare-festival-review-manahatta-must-see-production>

- “Manahatta” is a stunning new play that challenges and enlightens in a way that only great theatre can. Playwright Mary Kathryn Nagle and director Laurie Woolery are to be commended for the way they make this world premiere a deeply meaningful work that does not flinch with its sometimes difficult subject matter. Everyone involved in this production has created a work that brings to light some shameful history in our past and in modern times that needs to be told. The cast is outstanding in this smart, insightful and heartbreaking work. The seven actors elevate the already strong material to another level in the intimate confines of the Thomas Theatre.

Review 2: <http://dailytidings.com/archive/osf-serves-up-a-potent-amp-x2018-manahatta-amp-x2019->

- Walls are built to keep people from homelands that were theirs long before arbitrary lines had been drawn by belligerent forces. The old and infirm lose their homes. People die for greed. America's longstanding tradition of bodily abusing the poor so that the rich might stand on their backs is unflinchingly showcased in this powerful and timely play.

Shock doctrine policies are nothing new to anyone who doesn't live at the very top of the American food chain. To be horrified by this play would be an undeniable indication of privilege. That said, the visceral physicality with which director Laurie Woolery stages her production does tend to leave one breathless and slightly nauseous.