

Trying

by **Joanna McClelland Glass**

Directed by Gary Payne

From the Playwright

In the autumn of 1967, in Washington D.C., I began working as secretary to Francis Biddle. He was 81 at the time. On my first day of employment he told me, quite emphatically, that he was certain he was in his final year of life. He died in October of 1968. We spent our months together "trying" to negotiate and span our enormous differences of youth and age, of class and culture.

We worked in an office that was located atop a garage, an aerie that had once been a hayloft. The trek of approximately 150 feet from his house to the garage was a chore for him; the ensuing climb of a dozen stairs left him winded. And although his physical discomfort angered him, he reserved his deepest rage for the way in which his brilliant mind now betrayed him.

Occasionally he drove me to tears, but I knew that I was witnessing a man of great intellectual stature doing battle with his mortality. And as our sometimes comical, sometimes argumentative days together passed, my fondness for him grew.

He was obsessed with the two deaths that forever changed his life – his father had died when Judge Biddle was only six years old, and one of his sons had died when only seven years old. And he deeply regretted, in his mind, his heart and all of his written correspondence, his role as Attorney General during the internment of 125,000 Japanese- American citizens during World War II.

In 1970 I wrote the first version of *Trying*, in the form of a one-act play. I put the play away, but the image of Biddle fending off the Grim Reaper lingered with me across almost four decades. Not until recently did I return to the material and write a full-length play.

From the Director

This is the Texas premier of this smart, funny, and touching play. I believe the journey it takes you on will speak for itself. I would instead like to take this opportunity to personally acknowledge and thank the wonderful members of First UU Church for their generosity. The set you see would not have been possible (certainly not without significant cost) without your donations of set pieces and props. In this sense you helped "make this play happen." This special relationship between First UU and Paradox Players is truly unique in my experience - may it continue for many years to come.

The Cast

Sarah SchorrNancy Eyermann
Judge Francis BiddleDon Owen

ACT I

Scene 1: *The second week of November, 1967, Monday, 8:35 a.m.*

Scene 2: *The next day, 9:00 a.m.*

Scene 3: *Two weeks later, 9:00 a.m.*

ACT II

Scene 1: *Early January, 1968*

Scene 2: *A Friday morning in mid-April*

Scene 3: *The third week of June, 1968, 9:30 a.m.*

The Crew

Director: **Gary Payne**

Assistant Director: **Anna Easterling**

Stage Manager: **Bethany Harbaugh**

Co-Producers: **Ann Edwards, Barbara Weeks**

Technical Director, Sound: **Tom Martin**

Set Construction Designer/Supervisor: **Bob Bethke**

Costumes: **Elizabeth Anderson**

Props: **Alice Cashman**

Light/Sound Operators: **Monty Newton, Kate Morter, Ernie Wood**

Backstage: **Pearl Meltzer, Alice Cashman**

Set Construction: **Bob Bethke, Susan Bethke, Paul Arndt, Bethany Harbaugh, Dave Parker, Kelly James, Ann Edwards**

Set Artist: **Susan Bethke**

Set Painters: **Alice Cashman, Barbara Weeks**

House Managers: **Kathryn Govier, Tomas Rodriguez, Greg & Veryan Thompson, Gary & Amy Bennett, Kit Christie, Steve Davis, Jim & Sherry Coombes, Douglas & Kim Manger, Karen Neeley, Ron Turner**

Postcard/Poster Design: **Melinda Barker; photo by Marina Lewis**

Program: **Kitty Traylor, Barbara Weeks**

Photographer: **Bill Reid**

Reservations: **Ann Edwards, Alice Cashman, Barbara Weeks**

Media/Marketing Promotion: **Gary Payne**

Communications: **Kathleen Lawson**

Volunteer Coordinators: **Kathryn Govier, Veryan Thompson**

Webmaster: **Brendan Sterne**

Who's Who

Gary Payne (*Director*) has been associated with over 75 theater productions as either an actor or director. This is his fourth directing turn with Paradox Players, and he has appeared in two Paradox shows, *Sleuth* and *Avow*. In addition, he is the Founder/Producer/Director of the Capital City Mystery Players, an Austin-based acting troupe specializing in interactive mystery dinner theater.

Anna Easterling (*Assistant Director*) is a recent transplant to Austin. She holds a B.F.A. in Theatre Performance from Southwestern University of Georgetown, TX. Her favorite projects include *The Tony Kushner Project* (Ensemble), *The Vagina Monologues* (Director), and *The Maids* (Solange). *Trying* is her first Austin production.

Bethany Harbaugh (*Stage Manager*) *Trying* is the 5th Paradox Players production she has been involved in, either onstage or backstage. In a few weeks, she can be seen as "Lucy" in Weird City Theatre's production of Richard Sheridan's *The Rivals*, and later this summer she will play "Miranda" in Pollyanna Theatre Company's production of *The Tempest*.

Elizabeth Anderson (*Costumes*) is an Austin native, a graduate of the University of Texas College of Fine Arts, a circus historian and performer, and a freelance vintage clothing dealer. She works at Little Bohemia on S. 1st, a locally owned vintage store, and runs the internet store "Ermine Vintage" on etsy.com. Elizabeth is married to musician Brian Horst; her parents, Deborah Besch and Tyler Anderson, are members of First UU.

Nancy Eyermann (*Sarah Schorr*) would like to thank the kind and generous people of Paradox Players for this opportunity. She's been involved with theatre all her life, and while working as a sound operator for PP's recent show *Social Security*, she got the "bug" to get back onstage. Before moving to Austin in 2006, she worked with theatres throughout the country. Favorite roles include "Portia" in *The Merchant of Venice*, "Annie Sullivan" in *The Miracle Worker*, and "Raina" in *Arms and the Man*. Nancy works as a Theatre Arts teacher for Austin Independent School District and enjoys bringing the joy of theatre to young people. Thanks to friends, family, and husband for all the support!

Don Owen (*Judge Francis Biddle*) began his theater experience in an "old melodrama" staged aboard a stern-wheeler in Vicksburg, Mississippi, while serving in the U.S. Army. Before coming to Austin in 2005, he was very active in theater in Paradise, California. He has played roles in *Jake's Women*, *Laughter on the 23rd Floor*, *Noises Off*, *Moon Over Buffalo*, *Dark of the Moon*, *Something's Afoot*, *Othello*, and *Rumors*, to name a few. Since arriving in Austin he has performed in *Bent* and *The Hollow*, as well as in *Bus Stop*, *Our Town*, *Avow*, and *The Rainmaker* with Paradox Players.

Ann Edwards (*Managing Director/Co-Founder of Paradox Players; Co-Producer*) has been Managing Director of Paradox Players since its founding in 1999. She has played roles in comedy and drama and has produced several shows for the company. She also directs PP Readers' Theater and Sunday Shorts.

Paullette MacDougal (*Artistic Director/Co-Founder of Paradox Players*) has directed seven PP productions and co-directed two more. Holding an M.F.A. degree from Columbia University, she is an award-winning playwright and filmmaker whose plays have been staged widely. Paullette is not here tonight because she is representing Paradox Players at the American Association of Community Theatre Festival in Tacoma, WA and attending a production of her own play *Waiting for MacArthur* on Orcas Island, WA. This play was presented on our stage in 2002.

Barbara Weeks (*Co-Producer*) is a long-time member of Paradox Players, and has done time backstage, in the tech booth, and at the precarious helm as a producer. She also enjoys helping facilitate the PP Readers' Theater.

Pearl Meltzer (*Backstage*) is a recent transplant from New Orleans (courtesy of hurricane Katrina). She learned about Paradox Players from the PP Readers Theater group. Pearl has worked with community theater for over 40 years; in Austin, she co-produced PP's recent production of *Social Security*.

Tom Martin (*Technical Director, Sound*) is what every theater group absolutely must have—an engineer. He donates his time and expertise to help ensure that each PP production has the best possible sound, lights, and whatever else is needed.

Bob Bethke (*Set Construction Designer/Supervisor*) enjoys set construction and being part of the PP family. His hard work organizing the work crew as well as our sheds is helping keep this motley crew afloat.

Susan Bethke (*Set Artist*) Art is one of her passions. As a retired nurse, she enjoys having the time to support the arts and be part of the PP crew, painting and working on the sets. PP greatly admires Susan's ability to organize a painting schedule.

Monty Newton (*Sound and Light Board*) is an old hand at the tech board and is thrilled to return to his seventh Paradox Players production. A geologist by trade and a member of First Unitarian Universalist Church, he shares his Central Austin patch of heaven with his wife, two kids, and 10 chickens.

Alice Cashman (*Props, Reservations*) has been involved with Paradox Players for the last few years, starting out as running crew and progressing to prop coordinator for several shows. She finds her PP involvement "fulfilling and exciting."

Kathryn Govier (*Volunteer Coordinator, Tickets and Concessions*) has managed front-of-house volunteers for PP for several years; she enjoys getting to know so many people who are interested and dedicated to making the operation work successfully. Kathryn is a musician in whatever spare time she has left over.

Veryan Thompson (*Volunteer Coordinator, House Managers*) started out with the PP Readers' Theatre, went on to work with ticket sales and concessions for mainstage productions, and recently started coordinating the house managers. Veryan also edits the Paradox Players newsletter.

Kate Morter (*Sound and Light Board*) attended UTSA, Southwestern University, and the New York Film Academy in London. A self-described film bum, she currently works on various film projects in and around Austin.

Paradox Players Board

Managing Director	Ann Edwards
Artistic Director	Paullette MacDougal
President	Sherry Coombes
Vice President	Chris Jimmerson
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Publicity Advisor	Gary Payne
Volunteer Coordinator	Kathryn Govier
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At Large	Charles R. Hill

Special Thanks

Linda Taylor, John Sanders, Jim Scott, Cyndi Stein, Ron Phares, Lara Douglass, Jim and Sherry Coombes

Kitty Clark, Kitty Traylor, Amy and Gary Bennett, Ray McLoud, Marge Loehlin, Ed Nichols, Sally Scott, Libby Raach, John Payne, Lynda West, Mary Farrar, Bob Porter, Linda and Kenneth Kurosky.

Benefit Events

Paradox Players welcomes the Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty (TCADP) on June 11, 2009.

TCADP is a state-wide grassroots organization working to end the use of capital punishment in the state of Texas. Major concerns surrounding the use of the death penalty, as well as the availability of the life-without-parole option, motivate TCADP members to work to this end using two avenues of action: legislative advocacy and education of the citizens. Individuals can learn more about and join TCADP by visiting www.tcadp.org.

Paradox Players traditionally arranges a benefit performance of each production to support a community non-profit group. Previous benefit partners include New Life Institute, LAMP, Meals on Wheels and More, Rotary Club, Story Circle Network, Texas Moratorium Network, Austin Area Inter-religious Ministries, and Austin Adopt-a-Mine Group.

We are now accepting applications for benefit partners for the September 2009 production. Contact Ann Edwards at annann@austin.rr.com.

Past Plays

Social Security
Third
Necessary Targets
The Rainmaker
Avow
Our Town
Dearly Beloved
Sleuth
The Oldest Profession
Bus Stop
Wrong Turn at Lungfish
Vanities
Over the River & Through the Woods
Uh-Oh, Here Comes Christmas
Love on Ice
Last of the Red Hot Lovers
Twelve Angry Jurors
Love Letters
Waiting for MacArthur
The Foreigner
Belles
The Day They Kidnapped the Pope
Everything I Need to Know I Learned in
Kindergarten

2009 Season Subscribers

Kim Akenhead	Zosia & Joseph Hunt	Sandy &
Austin Veterinary Hospital	Jeff & Candace Hutchens	David Parker
Joe Bain	John & Cynthia Keohane	Martha Poe
Gary Bennett	Michael LeBurkien	Carolee Ramsey
Dorothy Carter	Dana Lehman	Sue & Warden Rimel
Sherry Coombes	Mark & Mary Lett	Margaret & Sam Roberts
Barbara & George Denny	Marge & John Loehlin	Al Rogers
Beverly Donoghue	Paulette MacDougal	Sally L. Scott
Bill Edwards	Evangelina Mangino	Humphrey Seay
Bobbie Erb	Emilie & Norman Martin	Don Smith
Adrienne Gardner & Charlie Holt	Bobbie Mattord	Susan & Tom Thomson
Eve Gilbert	Brian Miller	Kitty Traylor
Carl & Genell Happel	Sharon & Brian Moore	Ron Turner
Camille Hemlock & Lynn Crissom	Karen Neeley & Jack de Loach	Daesene Willmann
Doris & Henry Hug		Marilyn Wilson
		Sheila Gladstone & Stephan Windsor

Front of House Volunteers

Lois Engintunca	Linda Buehlmann	Jeannette Swenson
Donna Pauler	Kitty Traylor	Laura Wood
Alice Sessions	Cyndi Louden	Bobbie Mattord
Eine Toivonen	Annette Stachowitz	Mary Sather
Carolyn Gremminger	John Franks	Paul Fisher
Natalie Freeburg	Marti Handel	Deb Duran

About Us



Paradox Players is a nonprofit community theater. The company stages three full-length productions annually and sponsors **Readers' Theater**, an open group that meets the second Monday of each month (except July and August) for the fun of trading roles in unrehearsed readings of plays. Started in 1999 under the name "mUUses," the company's mission is to offer opportunities for the creation, performance, and enjoyment of quality theater to the community at large. Paradox Players is based in Howson Hall Theater at the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin.

Coming Next!

On Golden Pond

September 18 - October 4, 2009

by Ernest Thompson

A humorous and revealing look at enduring love, new love, family love, and the need for change at any stage of life. *On Golden Pond* weaves a wonderful tale of life, love, and renewal.

Directed by Chris Jimmerson

Paradox Players Reader's Theater

Now on summer break - next meeting September 14, 2009

All Welcome - no experience necessary

Join us for the fun of unrehearsed readings on the second Monday of every month, September through June, at 7:30 p.m.



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