



**ORLANDO  
SHAKESPEARE  
THEATER**  
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH UCF

## Curriculum Guide 2014-2015



by Mark St. Germain

based on the book

*The Best of Enemies: Race and Redemption in the New South* by Osha Gray Davidson

### Standards

Theatre	English	Social Studies	SS.912..S.2.7	SS.912.S.4.9
TH.68,912.C.2	Language Arts	SS.912.H.1.5	SS.912.S.2.9	SS.912.S.6.3
TH.68,912.C.3	LAFS.612.L.3.4	SS.8,912.C.1.5	SS.912.S.8.2	SS.912.S.6.5
TH.68,912.H.1	LAFS.612.L.3.5	SS.8,912.C.1.6	SS.912.S.3.1	SS.912.S.6.7
TH.68,912.O.1	LAFS.612.SL.1.1	SS.912.H.1.2	SS.912.S.3.2	SS.912.S.7.1
TH.68,912.O.3	LAFS.612.W.1.1	SS.912.H.1.5	SS.912.S.3.3	SS.912.S.7.2
TH.68,912.S.1	LAFS.612.RL.2.5	SS.912.S.2.10	SS.912.S.4.1	SS.912.S.7.4
		SS.912.S.2.11	SS.912.S.4.10	SS.912.S.7.5
		SS.912.S.2.12	SS.912.S.4.3	SS.912.S.7.6
		SS.912.S.2.6	SS.912.S.4.5	SS.912.S.7.8

**Content Advisory: Parental Advisory:** *The Best of Enemies* is set during a racially-tense period in the desegregation of Durham, North Carolina schools. The play includes racist and mature language, mild violence, and adult themes. The play is best suited for ages 13 and up.

## **Table of Contents**

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>p. 3</b>
<b>Enjoying Live Theater</b>	<b>p. 4</b>
<b>The Holocaust Center of Central Florida</b>	<b>p. 6</b>
<b>About the Play</b>	<b>p. 7</b>
<b>Plot Summary</b>	<b>p. 7</b>
<b>Meet the Characters</b>	<b>p. 7</b>
<b>Meet the Playwright</b>	<b>p. 8</b>
<b>Meet the Author</b>	<b>p. 8</b>
<b>A True Story</b>	<b>p. 9</b>
<b>Historical Context -</b>	
<b>Jim Crow Laws</b>	<b>p. 12</b>
<b>Brown vs. Board of Education</b>	<b>p. 14</b>
<b>About the KKK</b>	<b>p. 16</b>
<b>Activities</b>	<b>p. 18</b>
<b>Themes &amp; Discussion</b>	<b>p. 21</b>
<b>Bibliography and Supplemental Resources</b>	<b>p. 21</b>

# *The Best of Enemies*

## *Introduction*

Educators:

First, let me thank you for taking the time out of your very busy schedule to bring the joy of theatre arts to your classroom. We at Orlando Shakes are well aware of the demands on your time and it is our goal to offer you supplemental information to compliment your curriculum with ease and expediency.

With that in mind, we've redesigned our curriculum guides to be more "user friendly." We've offered you activities that you may do in one class period with minimal additional materials. These exercises will aid you in preparing your students to see a production, as well as applying what you've experienced when you return to school. We've included Sunshine and Common Core Standards to assure you that those curriculum needs are being met.

It is our hope that by streamlining our guides they will invite you to dip in to grab historical background on an author or playwright, a concise plot summary and colorful character descriptions, discussion questions to explore in class or as writing assignments and interactive activities to bring the magic of live performance back to your classroom. And, of course, how to prepare your students to enjoy live theater.

We look forward to hosting you at the Lowndes Shakespeare Theater. Additionally, should you wish to bring our Actor/Educators into your classroom, we will work around your schedule. Feel free to contact us at Orlando Shakes should you have any questions or suggestions on how we can better serve you. We are always learning from you.

Thank you for your tremendous work in nurturing our audiences of tomorrow.

Bravo!

Anne Hering

Director of Education

# To Kill A Mockingbird

## Enjoying Live Theater

### Theater Is A Team Sport

The **Playwright** writes the script. Sometimes it is from an original idea and sometimes it is adapted from a book or story. The Playwright decides what the characters say, and gives the Designers guidelines on how the play should look.



Sound Designer Bruce Bowes  
Photo: Rob Jones

The **Director** creates the vision for the production and works closely with the actors, costume, set and lighting designers to make sure everyone tells the same story.



Costume Designer-  
Denise Warner  
Photo: Rob Jones

The **Actors** use their bodies and voices to bring the author's words and the director's ideas to life on the stage.

The **Designers** imagine and create the lights, scenery, props, costumes and sound that will compliment and complete the director's vision.

The **Stage Manager** assists the director during rehearsals by recording their instructions and making sure the actors and designers understand these ideas. The Stage Manager then runs the show during each performance by calling cues for lights and sound, as well as entrances and exits.



Costume Apprentice-  
Sheldon Desmond  
Lamar Roberson  
Photo: Rob Jones



Stage Manager-Stacey  
Renee Norwood  
Photo: Rob Jones

The **Shop and Stage Crew** builds the set, props and costumes according to the designer's plans. The Stage Crew sets the stage with props and furniture, assists the actors with costume changes and operates sound, lighting and stage machinery during each performance.

The **Front of House Staff** welcomes you to the theater, takes your tickets, helps you find your seat and answers any question you may have on the day of performance.

**The Theater** is where it all takes place. Orlando Shakespeare Theater In Partnership with UCF is the only professional, classical theater company in Central Florida, reaching students and audiences in the surrounding eight counties.

### Mission/Vision:

With Shakespeare as our standard and inspiration, the Orlando Shakespeare Theater In Partnership with UCF produces bold professional theater, develops new plays, and provides innovative educational experiences that enrich our community. Our vision is to create theater of extraordinary quality that encourages the actor/audience relationship, embraces the passionate use of language, and ignites the imagination.

# *The Best of Enemies*

## *Enjoying Live Theater*

### **The Actor Audience Relationship**

The Audience is the reason Live Theater exists. At Orlando Shakes, we cherish the Actor/Audience relationship, the unique give and take that exists during a performance which makes the audience an ACTIVE participant in the event. The actors see the audience just as the audience sees the actors, and every, laugh, snuffle, chuckle and gasp the audience makes effects the way the actor plays his next moment. We want you to be engaged, and to live the story with us!



Photo: Rob Jones

There are certain Conventions of the Theatrical Event, like, when the lights go down you know that the show is about to start, and that the audience isn't encouraged to come and go during a performance. Here are some other tips to help you and your classmates be top notch audience members:

- Please make sure to turn off your cell phones. And NO TEXTING!
- Please stay in your seat. Try to use the restroom before you take your seat and stay in your seat unless there is an emergency.
- Please do not eat or drink in the theater.

### **Talkback**

After the performance, the actors will stay on stage for about 10 minutes to hear your comments and answer any questions you have about the play, the production and what it means to be a professional actor. We'd love to hear what you felt about the play, what things were clear or unclear to you, and hear your opinions about what the play means. This last portion of the Actor/Audience Relationship is so important to help us better serve you!

Here are some things to think about while watching the show. You might be asked these questions in the talkback!

1. What is the effect of actors playing multiple characters in the play? Is it confusing? Why or why not? How does it change the impact of the scenes?
2. How did the director and designers let you know the location had changed on stage?
3. How did you know time had passed?
4. Note when the actors directly address the audience. Why do you think they do this at some times and not others? How does it make you feel?



# *The Best of Enemies*

## *The Holocaust Center of Central Florida*

### **About the Holocaust Center**

This Center was built by people who believed in the power of knowledge. As victims and witnesses to the Holocaust they felt a deep responsibility to teach future generations about the ultimate cost of prejudice and blind nationalism. It is not enough to know the names and dates and places of tragedies; we must also remember the reasons that these tragedies occur.

We want to inspire visitors to be compassionate and accepting of others, to be responsible and respectful members of a diverse community, and to acknowledge their responsibility to protect the rights of others as fervently as they protect their own.

There is no continent without ethnic conflict and no community where there is not distrust. We know that the future of humanity depends on understanding these deep-rooted problems, and working together to create a future where everyone is safe and is welcome.

The Holocaust Memorial Resource and Education Center of Florida

851 N Maitland Ave.

Maitland, FL 32751

Phone: 407-628-0555

Fax: 407-628-1079



# *The Best of Enemies*

## *About the Play*

### **ABOUT THE BEST OF ENEMIES:**

Inspired by Osha Gray Davidson's book of the same name and based on a true story, Mark St. Germain's new drama, *The Best of Enemies* reveals a universal truth: all of us, no matter our differences, are capable of change. It is a story of triumph and hope, and a real life example of love's winning over fear.

### **PLOT SUMMARY**

Ann Atwater is a fearless, grass-roots civil rights activist and C.P. Ellis is an outspoken exalted cyclops of a klan chapter. The two meet when Bill Riddick, a federal mediator is sent by the Department of Education to oversee court-ordered desegregation. Riddick is charged with putting together a steering committee that represents the community's various viewpoints: C.P. and Ann agree to serve on the committee in spite of their differences, and strong opposition from C.P.'s wife, Mary Ellis. Amidst their incendiary words of prejudice and fear, Ann and C.P. forge an alliance based in respect and trust - and score a victory for civil rights - in this honest-to-goodness, modern-day parable of transformation.



### **Meet the Characters**

C.P. Ellis: Exalted Cyclops of the Durham Ku Klux Klan

Ann Atwater: A Civil Rights Activist and Civic Leader

Mary Ellis: Wife of C.P. Ellis

Bill Riddick: Charrette Organizer



## *The Best of Enemies* *About the Play*

### **Meet the Playwright**

Mark St. Germain has written many plays including *Freud's Last Session* (Off Broadway Alliance's Best Play Award), *Camping With Henry And Tom* (Outer Critics Circle and Lucille Lortel Awards), *Forgiving Typhoid Mary* (Time Magazine's "Year's Ten Best"), *Johnny Pye and the Fool-Killer* (AT&T "New Plays For The Nineties Award"), *Scott and Hem in the Garden of Allah*, and *Dr. Ruth, All the Way*. Television credits include *The Cosby Show*, *Crime and Punishment*, and *The Wright Verdicts*. He was also a scriptwriter on the CBS Daytime serial *As The World Turns*. As a personal project, St. Germain directed/co-produced the documentary "*MY DOG: An Unconditional Love Story*", featuring Richard Gere, Glenn Close, and Lynn Redgrave. As a dramatist, St. Germain shows a strong preference for historical fiction, bringing to life historical events and personalities with vivid, imagined dialogue.



### **Meet the author of the book *The Best of Enemies: Race and Redemption in the New South***

Osha Gray Davidson is an award-winning author, freelance writer, and photographer. His work has appeared in *Rolling Stone*, *InsideClimate News*, *The New York Times*, *Mother Jones*, *Grist*, *OnEarth*, and many other publications. He is the author of seven books of non-fiction besides *The Best of Enemies: Race and Redemption in the New South*, most recently, *Clean Break: The Story of Germany's Energy Transformation and What Americans Can Learn from It* (InsideClimate News, 2012). Osha co-wrote the screenplay for the IMAX documentary, *Coral Reef Adventure*. He publishes *The Phoenix Sun*, a blog about renewable energy and the environment from the American Southwest.





## *The Best of Enemies* *A True Story*

*The Best of Enemies* is based on a true story. Read on for a behind the scenes look at the actual event that inspired the play.



Ann G. Atwater & Claiborne P. Ellis, School Integration Charette Leaders - Herald Sun

Ann Atwater and Claiborne P. Ellis had much in common, although it would take years of battling each other across the racial divide before they were able to see their similarities. Atwater lived in a dilapidated house on an unpaved street in Durham's Hayti district, where she struggled to support her two daughters. Ellis lived across the tracks in a neighborhood nearly as destitute, but white. He worked multiple jobs to support his family, but like Atwater, he barely found the funds to make ends meet. The two were fiercely dedicated to improving the prospects of "their" people, Atwater as a militant activist for housing reform, and Ellis as the Exalted Cyclops of Durham's Ku

Klux Klan. Ellis's position at the margins of white society frustrated him, and looking for a scapegoat, he turned to the target provided by the Klan, as he explained in a 1980 interview with oral historian Studs Terkel:

"I really began to get bitter. I didn't know who to blame. I tried to find somebody. I began to blame it on black people. I had to hate somebody. Hatin' America is hard to do because you can't see it to hate it. You gotta have somethin' to look at to hate. The natural person for me to hate would be black people, because my father before me was a member of the Klan. As far as he was concerned, it was the savior of the white people. It was the only organization in the world that would take care of the white people. So I began to admire the Klan."

Ellis found his voice in the Klan, and rising to become the its local leader, he began to take the Klan in a new public direction. As the civil rights movement increased in urgency and militancy, he believed acting as a spokesman on behalf of the Klan was crucial to upholding the "Southern way of life" and its "natural" social hierarchy. Conservative town leaders were largely receptive to his message.

## *The Best of Enemies*

### *About the Play*

In the 1960s, eighty percent of black Durham residents lived in substandard housing, a figure which had remained unchanged since the 1920s. The Housing Authority, part of an old boy network headed by autocratic cotton mill executive Carvie Oldham, failed to enforce housing codes. Any discussion of the matter ended bogged down in a bureaucratic cycle of “commissions, committees, councils, boards of inquiry, official investigations, delegations, panels” – a endless “substitution of talk for action.” Atwater, emboldened by community organizer Howard Fuller, discovered a passion for housing reform and a natural talent for leadership first with Operation Breakthrough, then as chairwoman for the United Organizations for Community Improvement. She organized her community to rail against the city’s repressive and reprehensible policies towards black housing, often peacefully in pickets and marches and city council meetings, but she was not averse to more violent tactics, as when she participated in the bombing of the Housing Authority.

The two were thrown together in 1971 as co-chairs of a charrette, a series of long and intense meetings between a diverse group of people. The purpose of this charrette was to

discuss school desegregation, a still contentious issue, and to draw up a series of recommendations to present to the school board. Considering their history of mutual animosity, Atwater and Ellis were reluctant to work with the other, but both knew that to have their opinion represented, they must participate. It was during this series of meetings in the summer of 1971 that C.P. Ellis began to change. Sitting down with his nemesis, he realized that his struggles were her struggles too, and that they shared a fundamental commonality of experience. Ann Atwater, in an interview with the Carolina Times, expressed this sentiment:

“Mr. Ellis has the same problems with the schools and his children as I do with mine and we now have a chance to do something for them. There certainly is no deep seated love between Mr. Ellis and myself but this school project brings out problems we all have. We are going to have to lay aside our differences and work



## *The Best of Enemies* *About the Play*

together. This will be the first time two completely different sets of philosophies have united to work for this goal of better schools. If we fail, at least no one can say we didn't try."

Change did not come easily or suddenly, and the two faced ostracism, even death threats; C.P. Ellis had an especially difficult time returning to his life post-charrette, as he had "lost his effectiveness in the conservative community," which he acknowledged in a toast on the last night of the charrette. Ultimately, the school board disregarded the proposals put forth by the charrette, but the friendship C.P. Ellis and Ann Atwater established during that time endured, as did Ellis' change in attitude. He went on to organize



labor unions for both blacks and whites. Ellis and Atwater spoke together about their experience at events around the country, and at C.P. Ellis's funeral in 2005, Ann Atwater delivered his eulogy.

<http://andjusticeforall.dconc.gov>



Durham police arrest anti-segregation demonstrators at Howard Johnson's. May 19, 1963. (Courtesy of Tony Rumble, *Durham Herald-Sun*)



# *The Best of Enemies*

## *Historical Context*

### Jim Crow Laws



From the 1880s into the 1960s, a majority of American states enforced segregation through "Jim Crow" laws (so called after a black character in minstrel shows). From Delaware to California, and from North Dakota to Texas, many states (and cities, too) could impose legal punishments on people for consorting with members of another race. The most common types of laws forbade intermarriage and ordered business owners and public institutions to keep their black and white clientele separated. Here is a sampling of laws from various states.

**Nurses:** No person or corporation shall require any white female nurse to nurse in wards or rooms in hospitals, either public or private, in which negro men are placed. Alabama

**Buses:** All passenger stations in this state operated by any motor transportation company shall have separate waiting rooms or space and separate ticket windows for the white and colored races. Alabama

**Toilet Facilities, Male:** Every employer of white or negro males shall provide for such white or negro males reasonably accessible and separate toilet facilities. Alabama

**Intermarriage:** The marriage of a person of Caucasian blood with a Negro, Mongolian, Malay, or Hindu shall be null and void. Arizona

**Intermarriage:** All marriages between a white person and a negro, or between a white person and a person of negro descent to the fourth generation inclusive, are hereby forever prohibited. Florida

**Cohabitation:** Any negro man and white woman, or any white man and negro woman, who are not married to each other, who shall habitually live in and occupy in the nighttime the same room shall each be punished by imprisonment not exceeding twelve (12) months, or by fine not exceeding five hundred (\$500.00) dollars. Florida

**Education:** The schools for white children and the schools for negro children shall be conducted separately. Florida

**Restaurants:** All persons licensed to conduct a restaurant, shall serve either white people exclusively or colored people exclusively and shall not sell to the two races within the same room or serve the two races anywhere under the same license. Georgia





Parks: It shall be unlawful for colored people to frequent any park owned or maintained by the city for the benefit, use and enjoyment of white persons...and unlawful for any white person to frequent any park owned or maintained by the city for the use and benefit of colored persons. Georgia

Housing: Any person...who shall rent any part of any such building to a negro person or a negro family when such building is already in whole or in part in occupancy by a white person or white family, or vice versa when the building is in occupancy by a negro person or negro family, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and on conviction thereof shall be punished by a fine of not less than twenty-five (\$25.00) nor more than one hundred (\$100.00) dollars or be imprisoned not less than 10, or more than 60 days, or both such fine and imprisonment in the discretion of the court. Louisiana

Education: Separate schools shall be maintained for the children of the white and colored races. Mississippi

Promotion of Equality: Any person...who shall be guilty of printing, publishing or circulating printed, typewritten or written matter urging or presenting for public acceptance or general information, arguments or suggestions in favor of social equality or of intermarriage between whites and negroes, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and subject to fine or not exceeding five hundred (500.00) dollars or imprisonment not exceeding six (6) months or both. Mississippi

Intermarriage: The marriage of a white person with a negro or mulatto or person who shall have one-eighth or more of negro blood, shall be unlawful and void. Mississippi

Hospital Entrances: There shall be maintained by the governing authorities of every hospital maintained by the state for treatment of white and colored patients separate entrances for white and colored patients and visitors, and such entrances shall be used by the race only for which they are prepared. Mississippi

Textbooks: Books shall not be interchangeable between the white and colored schools, but shall continue to be used by the race first using them. North Carolina

Libraries: The state librarian is directed to fit up and maintain a separate place for the use of the colored people who may come to the library for the purpose of reading books or periodicals. North Carolina

Theaters: Every person...operating...any public hall, theatre, opera house, motion picture show or any place of public entertainment or public assemblage which is attended by both white and colored persons, shall separate the white race and the colored race and shall set apart and designate...certain seats therein to be occupied by white persons and a portion thereof , or certain seats therein, to be occupied by colored persons. Virginia



## *The Best of Enemies*

### *Historical Context*

#### **Brown v. Board of Education (1954)**

Brown v. Board of Education (1954), now acknowledged as one of the greatest Supreme Court decisions of the 20th century, unanimously held that the racial segregation of children in public schools violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Although the decision did not succeed in fully desegregating public education in the United States, it put the Constitution on the side of racial equality and galvanized the nascent civil rights movement into a full revolution.



In 1954, large portions of the United States had racially segregated schools, made legal by Plessy v. Ferguson (1896), which held that segregated public facilities were constitutional so long as the black and white facilities were equal to each other. However, by the mid-twentieth century, civil rights groups set up legal and political challenges to racial segregation. In the early 1950s, NAACP lawyers brought class action lawsuits on behalf of black schoolchildren and their families in Kansas, South Carolina, Virginia, and Delaware, seeking court orders to compel school districts to let black students attend white public schools.

One of these class actions, Brown v. Board of Education was filed against the Topeka, Kansas school board by representative-plaintiff Oliver Brown, parent of one of the children denied access to Topeka's white schools. Brown claimed that Topeka's racial segregation violated the Constitution's Equal Protection Clause because the city's black and white schools were not equal to each other and never could be. The federal district court dismissed his claim, ruling that the segregated public schools were "substantially" equal enough to be constitutional under the Plessy doctrine. Brown appealed to the Supreme Court, which consolidated and then reviewed all the school segregation actions together. Thurgood Marshall, who would in 1967 be appointed the first black justice of the Court, was chief counsel for the plaintiffs.

Thanks to the astute leadership of Chief Justice Earl Warren, the Court spoke in a unanimous decision written by Warren himself. The decision held that racial segregation of children in public schools violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, which states that "no state shall make or enforce any law which shall ... deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." The Court noted that Congress, when drafting the Fourteenth Amendment in the 1860s, did not expressly intend to require integration of public schools. On the other hand, that Amendment did not prohibit integration. In any case, the Court asserted that the Fourteenth Amendment guarantees equal education today. Public education in the 20th century, said the Court, had become an essential component of a citizen's public life, forming the basis of democratic citizenship, normal socialization, and professional

## *The Best of Enemies*

### *Historical Context*

training. In this context, any child denied a good education would be unlikely to succeed in life. Where a state, therefore, has undertaken to provide universal education, such education becomes a right that must be afforded equally to both blacks and whites.

Were the black and white schools "substantially" equal to each other, as the lower courts had found? After reviewing psychological studies showing black girls in segregated schools had low racial self-esteem, the Court concluded that separating children on the basis of race creates dangerous inferiority complexes that may adversely affect black children's ability to learn. The Court concluded that, even if the tangible facilities were equal between the black and white schools, racial segregation in schools is "inherently unequal" and is thus always unconstitutional. At least in the context of public schools, *Plessy v. Ferguson* was overruled. In the *Brown II* case a decided year later, the Court ordered the states to integrate their schools "with all deliberate speed."

Opposition to *Brown I* and *II* reached an apex in *Cooper v. Aaron* (1958), when the Court ruled that states were constitutionally required to implement the Supreme Court's integration orders. Widespread racial integration of the South was achieved by the late 1960s and 1970s. In the meantime, the equal protection ruling in *Brown* spilled over into other areas of the law and into the political arena as well. Scholars now point out that *Brown v. Board* was not the beginning of the modern civil rights movement, but there is no doubt that it constituted a watershed moment in the struggle for racial equality in America.

*Alex McBride for [www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org)*



# *The Best of Enemies*

## *Historical Context*

### About the KKK

Founded in 1866, the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) extended into almost every southern state by 1870 and became a vehicle for white southern resistance to the Republican Party's Reconstruction-era policies aimed at establishing political and economic equality for blacks. Its members waged an underground campaign of intimidation and violence directed at white and black Republican leaders. Though Congress passed legislation designed to curb Klan terrorism, the organization saw its primary goal—the reestablishment of white supremacy—fulfilled through Democratic victories in state legislatures across the South in the 1870s. After a period of decline, white Protestant nativist groups revived the Klan in the early 20th century, burning crosses and staging rallies, parades and marches denouncing immigrants, Catholics, Jews, blacks and organized labor. The civil rights movement of the 1960s also saw a surge of Ku Klux Klan activity, including bombings of black schools and churches and violence against black and white activists in the South.



### FOUNDING OF THE KU KLUX KLAN

A group including many former Confederate veterans founded the first branch of the Ku Klux Klan as a social club in Pulaski, Tennessee, in 1866. The first two words of the organization's name supposedly derived from the Greek word "kyklos," meaning circle. In the summer of 1867, local branches of the Klan met in a general organizing convention and established what they called an "Invisible Empire of the South." Leading Confederate general Nathan Bedford Forrest was chosen as the first leader, or "grand wizard," of the Klan; he presided over a hierarchy of grand dragons, grand titans and grand cyclopes.

The organization of the Ku Klux Klan coincided with the beginning of the second phase of post-Civil War Reconstruction, put into place by the more radical members of the Republican Party in Congress. After rejecting President Andrew Johnson's relatively lenient Reconstruction policies, in place from 1865 to 1866, Congress passed the Reconstruction Act over the presidential veto. Under its provisions, the South was divided into five military districts, and each state was required to approve the 14th Amendment, which granted "equal protection" of the Constitution to former slaves and enacted universal male suffrage.

### KU KLUX KLAN VIOLENCE IN THE SOUTH

From 1867 onward, African-American participation in public life in the South became one of the most radical aspects of Reconstruction, as blacks won election to southern state governments and even to the U.S. Congress. For its part, the Ku Klux Klan dedicated itself to an underground campaign of violence against Republican leaders and voters (both black and white) in an effort to reverse the policies of Radical Reconstruction and restore white supremacy in the South. They were joined in this struggle by similar organizations such as the Knights of the White Camelia (launched in Louisiana in 1867) and the White Brotherhood. At least 10 percent of the black legislators elected during the 1867-1868 constitutional conventions became victims of violence during Reconstruction, including seven who were killed. White Republicans (derided as "carpetbaggers" and "scalawags") and black institutions such as schools and churches—symbols of black autonomy—were also targets for Klan attacks.

By 1870, the Ku Klux Klan had branches in nearly every southern state. Even at its height, the Klan did not boast a well-organized structure or clear leadership. Local Klan members—often wearing masks and dressed in the organization's signature long white robes and hoods—usually carried out their attacks at night, acting on their own but in support of the common goals of defeating Radical Reconstruction and restoring white supremacy in the South. Klan activity flourished particularly in the regions of the South where blacks were a minority or a small majority of the



## *The Best of Enemies*

### *Historical Context*

population, and was relatively limited in others. Among the most notorious zones of Klan activity was South Carolina, where in January 1871 500 masked men attacked the Union county jail and lynched eight black prisoners.

#### **THE KU KLUX KLAN AND THE END OF RECONSTRUCTION**

Though Democratic leaders would later attribute Ku Klux Klan violence to poorer southern whites, the organization's membership crossed class lines, from small farmers and laborers to planters, lawyers, merchants, physicians and ministers. In the regions where most Klan activity took place, local law enforcement officials either belonged to the Klan or declined to take action against it, and even those who arrested accused Klansmen found it difficult to find witnesses willing to testify against them. Other leading white citizens in the South declined to speak out against the group's actions, giving them tacit approval. After 1870, Republican state governments in the South turned to Congress for help, resulting in the passage of three Enforcement Acts, the strongest of which was the Ku Klux Klan Act of 1871.

For the first time, the Ku Klux Klan Act designated certain crimes committed by individuals as federal offenses, including conspiracies to deprive citizens of the right to hold office, serve on juries and enjoy the equal protection of the law. The act authorized the president to suspend the writ of habeas corpus and arrest accused individuals without charge, and to send federal forces to suppress Klan violence. This expansion of federal authority—which Ulysses S. Grant promptly used in 1871 to crush Klan activity in South Carolina and other areas of the South—outraged Democrats and even alarmed many Republicans. From the early 1870s onward, white supremacy gradually reasserted its hold on the South as support for Reconstruction waned; by the end of 1876, the entire South was under Democratic control once again.

#### **REVIVAL OF THE KU KLUX KLAN**

In 1915, white Protestant nativists organized a revival of the Ku Klux Klan near Atlanta, Georgia, inspired by their romantic view of the Old South as well as Thomas Dixon's 1905 book "The Clansman" and D.W. Griffith's 1915 film "Birth of a Nation." This second generation of the Klan was not only anti-black but also took a stand against Roman Catholics, Jews, foreigners and organized labor. It was fueled by growing hostility to the surge in immigration that America experienced in the early 20th century along with fears of communist revolution akin to the Bolshevik triumph in Russia in 1917. The organization took as its symbol a burning cross and held rallies, parades and marches around the country. At its peak in the 1920s, Klan membership exceeded 4 million people nationwide.

The Great Depression in the 1930s depleted the Klan's membership ranks, and the organization temporarily disbanded in 1944. The civil rights movement of the 1960s saw a surge of local Klan activity across the South, including the

bombings, beatings and shootings of black and white activists.

These actions, carried out in secret but apparently the work of local Klansmen, outraged the nation and helped win support for the civil rights cause. In 1965, President Lyndon Johnson delivered a speech publicly condemning the Klan and announcing the arrest of four Klansmen in connection with the murder of a white female civil rights worker in Alabama. The cases of Klan-related violence became more isolated in the decades to come, though fragmented groups became aligned with neo-Nazi or other right-wing extremist organizations from the 1970s onward. In the early 1990s, the Klan was estimated to have between 6,000 and 10,000 active members, mostly in the Deep South.



# *The Best of Enemies*

## *Activities*

### ***Research A Hero***

Prepare an oral or written report of one of the following Civil Rights heroes from Florida:

Zora Neale Hurston - Author

Mary McLeod Bethune - Educator

Reverend C.K. Steele - Organizer

Lincoln T.M.A. Perry (a.k.a. "Stepin Fetchit") - Performer

Seth Gaines - Bus Driver

Virgil Hawkins - Civil Rights Pioneer

Virgil Darnell Hawkins - Student

### ***Hold Your Own Charrette***

The term "charrette" is derived from the French word for "little cart." In Paris during the 19th century, professors at the Ecole de Beaux Arts circulated with little carts to collect final drawings from their students. Students would jump on the "charrette" to put finishing touches on their presentation minutes before the deadline. Oxford Dictionary defines it as, "A meeting in which all stakeholders in a project attempt to resolve conflicts and map solutions."

Pick a conflict in your school or classroom and invite representatives of opposing views to a meeting to discuss ways to solve the conflict.



# The Best of Enemies

## Activities

### Page to Stage

Bringing a book to life on stage is difficult, and not just because fitting 298 pages of story into 75 pages of script means cutting out events, storylines and even whole characters. It's also difficult because there are things Davidson can tell a reader of his book that the playwright can't always convey. For instance, Davidson can write, "C.P. couldn't believe what he was hearing. But even more amazing to him was what he was saying -- and to whom. He was sharing his most intimate grievances, all of his doubts and failures, with the hated Ann Atwater."

#### Read this section of the book:

By the end of the afternoon, everyone was exhausted. After his last session, C.P. headed down to the auditorium, where a few people were still talking. He spotted Ann sitting by herself and collapsed into a chair next to her.

"How you doing?" he asked.

If she was surprised by his friendliness, she didn't show it. She smiled at him. "Bout wore out!"

"Yeah, me, too."

They chatted for a while about nothing in particular, neither of them in a hurry to go to dinner and just enjoying the pause between intense meetings. Before long they were alone in the large room.

"How're your kids?" C.P. asked Ann. "You got two, don't you?"

"Yeah, but my youngest ain't doing too good," Ann said. "She comes home from school every day crying."

"Why?"

Ann regarded him carefully before answering. "Don't take this personal, C.P. But her teacher's been saying her mama's a fool to be working with a Klansman. Other kids been fighting her over it."

C.P. stared at Ann openmouthed. "That's what's happening to my kids! But they're teased 'bout their daddy selling out."

Ann nodded. "Uh-huh. They say that 'bout me, too. But I told my girl this morning at breakfast that I'm doing this for her—so she'll have a place to stand in society. But she's afraid she'll get hurt over it."

"Ain't that something?" said C.P., incredulous. "Ain't that something?"

#### Now read this scene from the play:

(PAUSE. C.P. fills the silence, almost without thinking)

C.P.

How many kids you got?

ANN

Two girls. You?

C.P.

Two sons. One daughter.

ANN

How many are still talking to you?

C.P.

What's that mean?

ANN

My girls get madder at me every day. Marilyn, she's a sophomore, the kids are at her 'cause her Mother's working with a Klansman. Lydia's friends say she's got a big head, since my name's in the paper. They're mad 'cause they're scared. And all they've got is me to be mad at.

C.P.

Ain't that something.

ANN

That's something all right.

C.P.

My boy Tim, he's been getting in a lot of fights. Kids say your Daddy sold us down the river. Vickie, my girl, picked up the phone a few nights back; somebody cussing me down, foul things. Foul. She was so scared she couldn't sleep. Still can't.

(PAUSE)

1. What are some things the playwright did to turn narrative (the book) into dialogue (the play)?
2. What things are included in the narrative that are not in the dialogue? Did the actors convey those things in the way they acted the scene? How? Did you see those things show up in other scenes in the play?
3. The director tells the actors what emotional tone he wants to show in the scene. In the production you saw, what emotional tone do you think the director wanted to show and how do you think he showed it?

## The Best of Enemies Activities

### Write a Review

Explain to students that the director's job is to take the words on the script from the printed page to the stage and bring them to life. Explain that theater critics review shows and publish their opinions. For AmericanTheatreCritics.org, critic Sherry Eaker wrote, "My point of view was that it wasn't the theatre critic's place to tell the playwright what he or she should be doing; instead, the critic should focus on what is already there and explain either why it works or why it doesn't work."

After seeing the production, have each student write a review of Orlando Shakes' production of *Les Misérables*. The review should include one paragraph each for:

- Introduction – What did you watch, where and when, and maybe, why?
- The script – Did you like the writing, the story, the characters? Why or why not?
- The score - Did you like the music? Why or why not?
- The acting – Did you believe and care about the characters as portrayed? Why or why not?
- The design – Did you like the set, costume and light designs? Why or why not?
- The staging – How did the director stage the violence? Was it effective?
- The audience – What ways did the audience respond to particular moments?
- Conclusion – What will you remember about this performance?

If you wish, send your reviews to us at: [anneh@orlandoshakes.org](mailto:anneh@orlandoshakes.org)  
We'd love to hear your opinions of our show!

Read more: How to Become a Theater Critic | eHow.com [http://www.ehow.com/how\\_2079002\\_become-theater-critic.html#ixzz1v9tEyMnc](http://www.ehow.com/how_2079002_become-theater-critic.html#ixzz1v9tEyMnc)





# *The Best of Enemies*

## Themes

**Status** - C.P. Ellis says, "I knew I was better than her. ... Folks don't stay upper class unless the rest of us are underneath them."

**Redemption** - C.P. must forgive himself to move on with his life

**Point of View** - Both C.P. and Ann are challenged to see things from their adversary's perspective

## Discussion

1. Why were people protesting integration?
2. Why were the schools segregated?
3. What does "separate but equal" mean?
4. W.E.B DuBois, Civil Rights Activist, said, "Begin with art, because art tries to take us outside ourselves. It is a matter of trying to create an atmosphere and context so conversation can flow back and forth and we can be influenced by each other." What examples of songs, plays or art can you think of that pose questions that get us talking?
5. In an interview, C.P. Ellis, speaking about living as a poor young man, said. "I really began to get bitter. I didn't know who to blame. I tried to find somebody. Hating America is hard to do because you can't see it to hate it. You gotta have somethin' to look at to hate. The natural person for me to hate would be Black people, because my father before me was a member of the Klan..." <http://www.cjournal.info/CJO/terkelEllisIntervu.htm>. Have you ever blamed someone for something you didn't like about your life? Was it really their fault?

## Supplemental Resources & Bibliography

*The Best of Enemies* (book) by Osha Gray Davidson, The University of North Carolina Press (July 20, 2007)

[www.floridamemory.com](http://www.floridamemory.com)

[andjusticeforall.dconc.gov](http://andjusticeforall.dconc.gov)

[www.oshadavidson.com](http://www.oshadavidson.com)

[www.cjournal.info](http://www.cjournal.info)

[www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org)

"Why I Quit the Klan"—An Interview with C. P. Ellis by Studs Terkel - [http://college.cengage.com/english/chaffee/thinking\\_critically/8e/students/additional\\_activities/p198.pdf](http://college.cengage.com/english/chaffee/thinking_critically/8e/students/additional_activities/p198.pdf)

[www.history.com](http://www.history.com)

[www.oxforddictionaries.com](http://www.oxforddictionaries.com)