

Tracy Letts on *The Minutes*:

“The impulse of the town hall meeting was, of course, to take something very small and specific and hope that it represents a larger idea. For me, *The Minutes* was a way to look at how we write and pass along our history. The way we function with it, the way we move forward through a day, through our lives, knowing what we know about our history, knowing the things that we have learned or unlearned or learned wrong about who we are and how we got here. I’m pretty conscious of that, I have to say—every time we throw out food or the casual ways in which we live with great comfort and take that for granted. I wanted to explore that.”



“I started writing the play during the 2016 election, but it really wasn’t about that. I’m not actually writing about Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton. I’m not writing about Republicans and Democrats. I’m not writing about this political moment, though I think in some ways the play does address it because it deals with history. It addresses just how we got here: How did we get to this place we’re at right now?”

“What often happens in plays of mine, we go from a sort of hyper-realism to a more expressionistic moment. I think it’s more about the way it makes it feel rather than what happens or any intellectual understanding of what happens. It moves from nice comedy to something darker and scarier.”

“I’m born and raised in Oklahoma, and I carry it with me wherever I go, but I’m careful not to identify the state.” If I identified it as Oklahoma, the good people of Kansas would say, ‘That’s not us,’ and I want everybody to think that it’s their state.”

"As we've continued to work on the play, we have made sure that I've consulted with Native voices. There are no Native characters on stage, but we've consulted with those voices just to make sure that we're saying what we want to say in the way that we want to say it. And we've had very positive response to all that. Cultural appropriation is actually one of the themes that the play gets into a little bit. I feel pretty confident that we're not blindly stumbling into some problematic area. We've really stepped into the problematic area, and the play kind of takes it on. That's in some ways, what the play is all about."

“I have to say that that sharp turn was always part of the conception of the play. I can never write a play unless I know what the ending is before I start it, so I always knew we were going to take that very sharp turn into dark territory. There’s something about a sharp shift into the unexpected for the audience. As much as they might feel they know where the play is going, I don’t think that they necessarily know it’s going to quite that place. I always enjoy taking the audience to that place. Sometimes they want to come with you, and sometimes they don’t.”

“I look for that kind of split-personality in individual audience members. It’s also good for starting fights as people leave the theater. People have pretty hearty disagreements about what they’ve seen or whether they like what they’ve seen. That makes me happy. I want to write a play that engenders discussion and argument rather than a play that’s easily tied up and dismissed.”