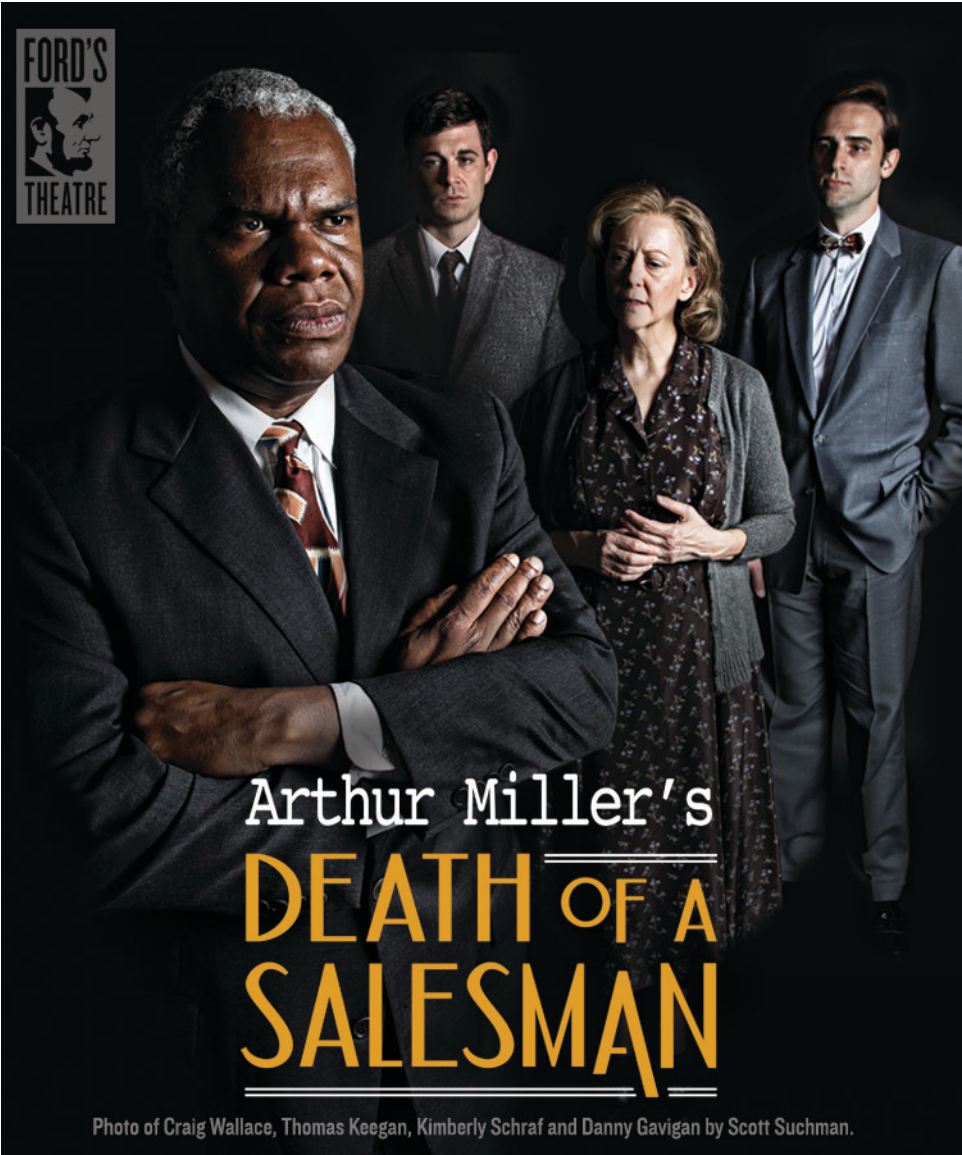


Ford's Theatre Student Matinee

PROGRAM



Arthur Miller's
**DEATH OF A
SALESMAN**

Photo of Craig Wallace, Thomas Keegan, Kimberly Schraf and Danny Gavigan by Scott Suchman.

www.fords.org

Well, obviously...

Anyone can see that *Death of A Salesman* is about:

- a) A man haunted by his choices.
- b) A family that can't talk to one another.
- c) A son who can't forgive his father.
- d) All of the above
- e) None of the above! I think it's about:



It's pretty obvious Arthur Miller was making the statement that:

- a) The American Dream is not attainable, and is, in fact, a total lie. (Team Biff)
- b) Capitalism asks people to work their whole lives to pay for things that don't make them happy. (Team Willy)
- c) People in families are unable to see and appreciate each other for who they really are. (Team Loman)
- d) The trappings of a traditional life (job, marriage, house, kids) will ultimately not be fulfilling. (Team Happy)
- e) Something else entirely: _____



Biff: Parents Just Don't Understand

Even though family counseling was not common in 1949, we asked professional therapist, Judy Liss, LCSW-C, what she would have done if Willy and Biff had come for therapy. Here's what she advised:


Getting Them to Talk to Each Other

"The two need to listen to and **validate** the other's perspective and try to have **empathy** for the other. For Willy, he must understand that his son suffered because he witnessed his father's infidelity and was made to keep it a secret. Biff needs to understand what **delusions** are and what mental illness really means. Mental illness is still illness, and his father is having delusions and a psychotic break. Once Biff is better educated about his father's illness, he can try to have empathy towards him.


About Needing to Be Well-Liked

"Willy's inner child is reaching out for **acceptance**—he never had validation from his own parents (Willy's father died when he was young, and his brothers left home), which helps you be successful on your own and **self-soothe**. Willy can't find approval inwardly. I often see that in therapy with the adults I work with who have had difficult relationships with their parents. They're constantly looking to others and to me for approval and support."

Coffee questions



Arthur Miller once said this play was "a love story between a father and a son." **Do Biff and Willy love each more or less at the end of the play?**



Do parents ever see their children for who they really are?

What are the top 3 things teens and adults fight about?

How Important Is It To Be Popular?

Willy constantly talks about how popular Biff was in high school. But does being popular in middle and high school really help you out in the rest of your life?

A professor at the University of Virginia, Joseph P. Allen, followed a diverse group of 185 students from Charlottesville, Virginia, from ages 13 to 24. Here's what he observed:

1. The more popular teenagers were more likely to get into trouble with bad behavior, like shoplifting or vandalism, and to drink or smoke marijuana.
2. As the popular kids went to college and into adulthood the drinking and marijuana

use actually became even *more* of a problem.

3. Teenagers who thought of themselves as well liked and comfortable with their peers were just as socially successful over time as those who were deemed popular by others.



Who is popular at your school and why?

What's Important?

Which of these brings people the most happiness? Being...

- Really popular
- Enormously intelligent
- Great-looking
- Highly talented (in music, sports, art, etc.)

**Tweet Us Your Answer! @FordsEdu!
#FordsSalesman**

