

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

Power politics, the Cold War, breakup of families – why? As a family or who's behind these choices and why people that make choices that affect us for the rest of our lives. Denver Center, about Reagan, what happened when I landed here. Journalism, research, that's where Blind Date started. Love affair, three year commitment, one year to write it, one year to workshop it, and one year to get it produced. I need to know everything possible about the world around it, I'm writing about real people so I have to know everything about them. I need to act responsibly and I need to know that they could have said that, even if they didn't say it.

Example: quote about Tom Mallon, Watergate, and Mrs Nixon: “a small act of novelistic treachery, designed not to dishonor Mrs. Nixon but to make her the emotional heart of my story. I was trying to get at some larger truth through a particular lie, which is finally what all fiction, historical or otherwise, has to do. 11:35.” You really need to get into Pat's head. Telling truth through imagined circumstances. Where I begin and where I end is a very different place. Blind Date. Play writes itself easier than the research does; it takes you down a rabbit hole; it's almost like procrastination. The first time Gorbachev and Reagan meet. The first time that secretary general has met an American president as well since about the Carter years. “We have to give him the exit gracefully. And that person was George Shultz. And I didn't know about him.” I zeroed in on one point. You don't want to meet that person. Writing is a form of betrayal; you don't want to become friends with the person you are writing about. Shows his files: I went through everything that has been written about. Interpreters – there's no recording of the meetings, only notes. You do all the research and then you begin to write because what you remember is what's important to the story. Information in the Reagan Library that was initially classified. Everybody loves a secret. The dinner invitation – what they served, who was going to be there, where they were going to sit. Important? You start getting on the heads of people. What you serve is diplomacy in action. Letter exchange: 27:00. This is when it clicked.

First draft: characters always force themselves into the play, take over the play. I like restaurants, steak houses. Places of power. And so I had George Shultz at a restaurant; suddenly he stepped forward into the story. The last character to come into the story took over. Historical references but the play has to be about you, you have to have a very strong emotional point of view to the story.

Russian accent?? Was it used?

First scene, it's about the emotional relationship between these two men. My father in law favorite drink is a Manhattan. But the specific always makes it universal, pulls us in. So this was as much about my life as about the life of these two people. We do the research so that we can take liberties; I am convinced that this is George Shultz. The research allows you get in there and make things up.

This is how a character begins but I don't know how it's going to end till I get to the end.

Phase one you overwrite; phase two – then you start to clean it up. Grand children is the center, then you trim it. What do I want to say with this play? I say write me a blurb about how you would market this play. If it matches, great, if not, then I have to edit.

MH: This play is epic in nature – has many characters. RM: I don't think that way, I write as big of a play as I want to write. Directors and Designers will want to work on this play, challenge them. José Rivera: Write impossible stage directions. I don't get as many productions as I would like but . . .

MH: this has been lost in American theater. Big plays, big ideas, big tasks.

People go to theater to see stage changes. People want to be dazzled-dazzled. Actor playing Reagan had to go to the bathroom and we had to stop the play. I love these problems. If I

could write a mistake into a play, I would do it. A mistake makes the audience member feel special. They want to help you; they want to root for you.

Writing exercise: pitch me a story, who you want to write about, avoid the news today; person alive, events in the past, why should I be excited about it. It should be someone you now things about. 8 sentences.

MH: You gave us an inside on how you work, your research, the first scene, the exercise, telling the story from the sidelines, from the silences of history.

Make sure that there's passion and that it carries over for 3 years. Yu need to do some soul searcing before yous tart writing. And be open. If somebody wants to come in to that play, if the person is insisting on entering the pay, let him do it.