



**JULY 30 - SEPTEMBER 1, 2013**



Written by **Jonas Hassen Khemiri**  
Translated by **Rachel Willson-Broyles**  
Directed by **Anna C. Bahow**  
**The Midwest Premiere**

# INVASION!

Written by **Jonas Hassen Khemiri**  
Translated by **Rachel Willson-Broyles**  
Directed by **Anna C. Bahow**

*INVASION!* is presented by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc.

The video and/or audio recording of this performance by any means whatsoever are strictly prohibited.

*INVASION!* was first presented in Chicago as part of the 2012 International Voices Project, directed by Anna C. Bahow. (ivpchicago.org)

**SILK ROAD RISING** is a proud associate of:



Silk Road Rising (formerly known as Silk Road Theatre Project) creates live theatre and online videos that tell stories through primarily Asian American and Middle Eastern American lenses. In representing communities that intersect and overlap, we advance a polycultural worldview. Silk Road Rising understands that cultures are inherently linked. We seek the intersection of cultures without denying the specificities of cultures. And we strive to create a world that values art over ideology and inquiry over dogma.

Contact Silk Road Rising for information on how to get involved:

Administrative Offices  
Silk Road Rising  
6 East Monroe Street, Suite 801  
Chicago, Illinois 60603

Tel: 312-857-1234  
Fax: 312-577-0849  
info@silkroadrising.org  
http://www.silkroadrising.org

## CAST LIST

**Kamal Hans\*** | A  
**Glenn Stanton** | B  
**Amira Sabbagh** | C  
**Dan Johnson** | D  
**Owais Ahmed** | Understudy  
**Anu Bhatt** | Understudy  
**Omer Abbas Salem** | Understudy

## PRODUCTION TEAM

**Malik Gillani** | Producer  
**Jamil Khoury** | Producer  
**Anna C. Bahow** | Director  
**Corey Pond** | Production Manager  
**John Grant-Phillips** | Stage Manager  
**Dan Stratton** | Set Designer  
**Carol J. Blanchard, U.S.A.\*\*** | Costume Designer  
**Sarah Hughey, U.S.A.\*\*** | Lighting Designer  
**Peter J. Storms** | Sound Designer  
**Jesse Gaffney** | Props Designer  
**Ellie Humphrys** | Master Electrician  
**Neal Ryan Shaw** | Dramaturg  
**Alan Earnstein** | Technical Director  
**Becca McCracken, Claire Simon Casting** | Casting Director  
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**Sarah Ibis** | Program Editor  
**Katie Welch** | House Manager  
**Al Gillani** | Box Office Manager

\* Member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.

\*\* Denotes member of United Scenic Artists, the union of professional designers, artists, and craftspeople.

## CAST BIOS

**Kamal Hans** (A) is thrilled to be working with Silk Road Rising again! Most recently Kamal appeared as Avinash in *Disconnect* at Victory Gardens and as Mourad in *Impenetrable* at Stage Left Theatre. Look for Kamal as Don Leonato in Rasaka Theatre's upcoming *Much Ado About Nothing--Bollywood Style* at Victory Gardens. Favorite roles include Mayor in *Fuckin' A* (Urban Theater), Marius in *Fanny* (ITC), Caliban in Shakespeare's *Tempest* (ITC), Devendra in *Merchant On Venice* (Silk Road Rising), Salieri in *Amadeus*, and Anatoly in *Chess* (Phoenix). Kamal has studied at the Theatre School at DePaul, Julliard, Illinois Wesleyan, and with Uta Hagen. Thank you to my wife and beautiful daughter Karina for allowing me to spend so much time away!

**Glenn Stanton** (B) is thrilled to be making his Silk Road Rising debut. Glenn was most recently seen in the role of d'Artagnan in Lifeline Theater's *The Three Musketeers* and in *Measure for Measure* at the Goodman Theater. Other Chicago credits include *Romeo & Juliet* and *SS! Macbeth* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater), *Motion* (Signal Ensemble), *The Apple Tree* (Illinois Theater Center), *Cyrano* (House Theater), *Soul Samurai* (Infusion Theater), *Ghost of Treasure Island* (Adventure Stage Chicago), *Once on this Island* (Porchlight), and *A Christmas Carol* (Metropolis), among others. Regional credits include several shows at the Utah Shakespeare Festival and the Cumberland County Playhouse.

**Amira Sabbagh** (C) is excited to be back at Silk Road Rising with her "boys," Jamil and Malik, with whom she's had a lovely working relationship for the past decade. Previous shows at SRR include *Re-Spiced: A Silk Road Cabaret*, *Merchant on Venice*, *Precious Stones*, a number of staged readings, and the video play *The Balancing Arab*, currently on the SRR website. Amira has worked with Eclipse Theatre, Theatre Seven, Vitalist Theatre, Court Theatre, and Erasing the Distance. Amira has a degree in modern dance and is an active member of the Bodhi Spiritual Center. Thanks to everyone involved in this production!

**Dan Johnson** (D) is insanely excited to be making his debut at Silk Road Rising! He hails from Independence, Missouri but has called Chicago home for the past five years. He attended The Theatre School at DePaul University, graduating in June of 2012. His previous theatre credits include *The Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo* with director Heidi Stillman at the Lookingglass Theatre, and *Cheek to Cheek* under director Krissy Vanderwaker at the Pine Box Theatre Co. Dan also guest starred on the scripted comedy series *Underemployed* on MTV, as well as on NBC's *Chicago Fire*.

**Owais Ahmed** (Understudy) is very excited to be a part of *INVASION!* He was most recently seen in *Blood and Gifts* at the Timeline Theatre, and will also be seen in Rasaka Theatre's upcoming production of *Much Ado About Nothing--Bollywood Style* at Victory Gardens. He also understudied in Victory Gardens' *Disconnect* (Ross/Giri). Owais recently graduated from Illinois State University, where his notable credits included Anon in *Anon(ymous)* and Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*. Owais is also a national Irene Ryan scholar through the Kennedy Center's ACTF.

**Anu Bhatt** (Understudy) is thrilled to be working with Silk Road Rising for the first time. Recent credits include *Henry VIII* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater), *The Tempest* (Theatre Hikes), *Kabulitis* (Rasaka Theatre/Polarity Ensemble Theatre), and *A Streetcar Named Desire* under director Steve Scott (Chicago College of Performing Arts). Film credits include *Google Me Love*. Anu holds her MFA from The Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University. This September, she can be seen in Rasaka Theatre's *Much Ado About Nothing--Bollywood Style*, directed by Lavina Jadhvani.

**Omer Abbas Salem** (Understudy) is happy to return to the Silk Road Rising stage. He most recently understudied the part of Vijay in their world premiere of Rajiv Joseph's *The Lake Effect*. He has also worked with the Neofuturists, Polarity Ensemble, Chicago Dell'Arte, and Leftend Productions. He would like to thank his friends for their unlimited support and Danny DeVito for his truly inspiring work.

## PRODUCTION TEAM BIOS



**Jonas Hassen Khemiri** (Playwright) was born in Sweden in 1978. He is the author of three novels and six plays. His first novel, *One Eye Red*, received the Borås Tidning award for best literary debut. His

second novel, *Montecore*, (published by Knopf in 2011) won several literary awards including the Swedish Radio Award for best novel of the year. Jonas Hassen Khemiri's works have been translated into more than fifteen languages, and over 40 companies have performed his plays internationally. In 2011 *INVASION!* premiered in New York City and the author was awarded a Village Voice Obie Award for playwriting.



**Rachel Willson-Broyles** (Translator) is a freelance translator specializing in literature. She lives in Madison, Wisconsin. She received her BA in Scandinavian Studies from

Gustavus Adolphus College in 2002 and her Ph.D. in Scandinavian Studies from UW-Madison in 2013. Her other translations include Jonas Hassen Khemiri's novel *Montecore--The Silence of the Tiger*.



**Anna C. Bahow**

(Director) is committed to the development of new work and a diversity of voices. She is an Associate Artist at Premiere Theatre and Performance, the side project, and Chicago Dramatists.

She served as the 2011-2012 Michael Maggio Directing Fellow at Goodman Theatre. Chicago world premieres include the Jeff recommended *Comrades Mine* for City Lit, *Brewed* for Tympanic Theatre and The Ruckus Theatre, and *The Rocks* and *Rewind* by Laura Eason for the side project; the Jeff nominated *Odin's Horse* for Infamous Commonwealth and *New Orleans* for the side

project (both Chicago Tribune Top Five Fringe production of the year plays); *Gray City* by Keith Huff for Premiere Theatre and Performance, *St. Colm's Inch* for Chicago Dramatists, *Martin Furey's Shot* for the Timeline (winner of a Special Jeff Award for use of Multi-Media), and *Vintage Red* and *The Dust of the Road* (winner of a Jeff Award for New Work and a Steinberg Nominee). Thanks to the International Voices Project and David Henry Hwang. [www.annabahow.com](http://www.annabahow.com).



**Malik Gillani** (Producer) is the Founding Executive Director of Silk Road Rising. Malik is a recognized leader in the creation of innovative arts programming that expands artistic access. Most notably, he developed SRR's

model for creating online video plays, which are now being accessed across the globe. Malik also established SRR's arts integrated education program, Myths to Drama, which was heralded as one of the finest elementary school arts education programs in the Chicago Public Schools system. He also piloted a new arts education program for high school and elementary school students in partnership with San Diego's Playwrights Project called EPIC (Empathic Playwriting Intensive Course). Malik earned a BA in Liberal Arts from St. John's College in Annapolis, Maryland, with an emphasis on the Great Books. He is a Kellogg Executive Scholar (Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University) and has been awarded a Certificate of Professional Achievement in Nonprofit Management. Malik is currently pursuing a Masters in Non-Profit Administration from North Park University.



**Jamil Khoury** (Producer) is the Founding Artistic Director of Silk Road Rising. Jamil is currently writing a new video play/docudrama called *Mosque Alert* and a video play called *Multi Meets Poly: Multiculturalism and*

*Polyculturalism Go On a First Date*. He devised two critically acclaimed cabarets, *Re-Spiced: A*



*Silk Road Cabaret* (2012) and *Silk Road Cabaret: Broadway Sings the Silk Road* (2009). He also conceived of and was a featured playwright in Silk Road's production of *The DNA Trail: A Genealogy of Short Plays about Ancestry, Identity, and Utter Confusion* (2010). Jamil's short play *WASP: White Arab Slovak Pole* inspired the short video play *both/and* (2011) and the documentary film *Not Quite White: Arabs, Slavs, and the Contours of Contested Whiteness* (2012). Conversations with his personal trainer inspired the short video play *The Balancing Arab* (2012). Jamil is also the author of the plays *Precious Stones*, *Fitna*, and *Azizati*.

**Corey Pond** (Production Manager) is thrilled to have joined Silk Road Rising full time. Previous work at SRR includes assistant director for *Re-Spiced* and *The Lake Effect*; house manager for *Yellow Face*, *Re-Spiced*, and *Night Over Erzinga*; and stage manager for various staged readings. Corey holds a BA in Theatre from Illinois State University. Directing credits include *Lady Lazarus* (Gorilla Tango), "Flash" (KCACTF Region III, Best Director), *Doubt* (FreeStage, ISU), and "Going Nowhere" and "Double Feature" (Heartland Theater, 10-Minute Play Festivals in Normal, IL). Corey also enjoys adapting from sources like short stories, albums and autobiographies.

**John Grant-Phillips** (Stage Manager) is back at Silk Road Rising after working on *The Lake Effect*. He is proud to be part of the mission of this fine company. Jack spent nine seasons as the Production Stage Manager of A.R.T. in Cambridge Massachusetts, a season at the North Shore Music Theatre, and one year on tour with *I'm Getting my Act Together*, among others. Locally, he stage managed *Guys and Dolls* and *The Wiz* for the Theatre at the Center. Jack holds an MFA degree from the Acting/Directing Division of the Yale School of Drama.

**Dan Stratton** (Set Designer) has an MFA from Northwestern University's stage design program and a BFA in sculpture from the University of Michigan. Dan also teaches set design and production at North Central College in Naperville. He recently designed the sets for Steep Theatre's *Love and Money*, *Lake Boat*, and *Festen*. Other regional scenic design credits include *Peter Pan: A Play*, *As You Like It*, *Suicide Inc.*, *Abigail's Party*, *Kill the Old Torture their Young*, *R.U.R.*, and the New York/San Francisco productions of Fools Fury's *The Devil on All Sides*.

**Carol J. Blanchard** (Costume Designer) is excited to be back at Silk Road Rising. An Artistic Associate, her costumes were seen on this stage in *Scorched*. She has designed for companies such as Cleveland Symphony's Blossom Opera, Shakespeare in the Park, Skylight Music Theater, Chautauqua Institution, First Stage, Karamu, and the Champlain Shakespeare Festival. Her Chicago credits include work with Victory Gardens, Drury Lane, the Mercury Theater, Porchlight Music Theatre, and PTAP. She has been honored with a Joseph Jefferson Award and, for her collaboration in SSR's *Golden Child*, an After Dark Award. She is a Professor Emeritus of Design at The State University of New York.

**Sarah Hughey** (Lighting Designer) is the Resident Lighting Designer at Silk Road Rising, where she designed *The Lake Effect*, *Night Over Erzinga*, *Yellow Face*, and *Scorched* (Jeff Award for Lighting Design). Her other Chicago credits include work with Redmoon, Chicago Children's Theatre, Teatro Vista, The House, Writers' Theatre, Fox Valley Rep, Northlight Theatre, Steep Theatre, About Face, and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. She is on the creative team of interdisciplinary performance collective Yellow House. Sarah is the 2013 recipient of Chicago's Michael Maggio Emerging Designer Award. She holds an MFA from Northwestern University, and teaches lighting design at NU and Columbia College Chicago.

**Peter J. Storms** (Sound Designer) is the Resident Sound Designer at Silk Road Rising, where he designed *Night Over Erzinga*, *Yellow Face*, and *Scorched*, for which he received a 2011 Joseph Jefferson Equity Award for Outstanding Sound Design. His sound design and music direction have also been heard at Circle, Noble Fool Theatricals, Theatre Building Chicago, Raven, and TimeLine. He serves as the accompanist for Unity Temple in Oak Park and is the touring keyboardist for Michael Londra and Beyond Celtic. Special thanks to Juliana for her love and support. [www.peterstorms.com](http://www.peterstorms.com).

**Neal Ryan Shaw** (Dramaturg) is the resident dramaturg for Silk Road Rising, having dramaturged *The Lake Effect*, *Night Over Erzinga*, and staged readings of works by Ezzat Goushegir, Fouad Teymour, and Shane Sakhrani. Last fall, Neal worked with the Valparaiso University on its production of *The House of Bernarda Alba* set in modern-day Iran. A member of the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas, Neal received his Master of Arts in Theatre from Illinois State University. [www.nealryanshaw.com](http://www.nealryanshaw.com).

**Jesse Gaffney** (Props Designer) is a resident designer here at Silk Road Rising and is glad to be working on another challenging production. Elsewhere in Chicago she is an artistic associate with 16th Street Theatre; she has also worked with Victory Gardens, Fox Valley Rep, Lifeline, Remy Bumpo, Chicago Children's, and Congo Square Theatre Companies. Jesse has worked for Allenberry Playhouse in Pennsylvania, Notre Dame Shakespeare Festival, and The Arrow Rock Lyceum in Missouri. Thanks and love to Warwick. [www.theatreprojects.blogspot.com](http://www.theatreprojects.blogspot.com).

## DRAMATURGICAL NOTES: THE IDENTITY INDUSTRY

By Neal Ryan Shaw

In his play *INVASION!*, playwright Jonas Hassen Khemiri demonstrates how malleable identity can be, not only from within but from without. Put on a different hat, assume a new name, survive a particular event in a particular cultural context, and suddenly you are a new person. It is fascinating how a culture's identity can be historically determined, redetermined, and redetermined again. The various folks like those that inhabit *INVASION!*—Arabs, Muslims, Middle Easterners, North Africans, South Asians—have been dealing with such determinations for quite some time.

Consider, for example, how the Orientalist art of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries depicted the East as a place of exotic mystery and sensual indulgence. The colorful and enigmatic East contrasted the drab and familiar West. “The Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience,” writes Edward Said in *Orientalism*. These ideas persist into the present to a not insignificant extent.

For a while, in the advent of political correctness, Americans of Arab, Middle Eastern and South Asian descent enjoyed a bit of a respite. Arab Americans, for one, were able to reclaim the white status their first generation of immigrants had won, and became what some call the “invisible minority.” And South Asian Americans, as a subset of the Asian American population, were granted the backhanded compliment of “model minority.” (We mainly talk about the damaging power of negative stereotypes, but the positive ones can often be just as problematic.)

In 1993, a group of Arab men attempted to destroy with a bomb the two World Trade Center buildings in New York City, killing six people and injuring many more. Between these and the more recent 2001 attacks, Arab, Muslim, and South Asian Americans have had to deal with the stigma of being nominally associated with, to put it lightly, a few bad apples. Consider how situations like these create stereotypical perceptions of Arabs and Muslims, and how quick many are to make that unfortunate association. By contrast, Timothy McVeigh did not create a similar identity crisis for white men when he committed the Oklahoma City bombing.

That nominal association is a major concern for the “brown-skinned.” Humans as a species are categorizers and box-putters, as exemplified by our census forms. The simpler the category, the easier it is to understand, though sometimes we end up using the wrong criteria. Therefore we mistake Sikhs for Muslims, or Indians for Arabs because some (but not all) Muslims are brown-skinned, and some (but not all) Middle Easterners are Muslim, et cetera. And unfortunately “Muslim” and “Arab” have more bad connotations than good. Call it a lack of education or understanding, but America has a bad case of Islamophobia, and that affects not only Muslims and Arabs but also those who are perceived to be Muslims and Arabs.

Islamophobia has been on a steep rise in recent years. One might even say that America has been building a sort of “Islamophobia industry.” Americans protest the building of mosques all over the country, notably one in the vicinity of Ground Zero. Muslim men are viewed as terrorists, Muslim women as the victims of religious oppression. Oklahoma voters feared the eventual implementation of Shariah—the Islamic code of conduct—passing an amendment barring its influence on state law. Texas Representative Louis Gohmert warned of “terror babies” who, indoctrinated with terroristic ideals by their parents, would wage war on America thirty years hence.

Other minority groups in America have experienced similar treatment throughout history, so sadly Islamophobia is not a unique problem. When it comes to issues like this, it's not enough to just rely on public policy. Certainly we must legislate ways of enforcing equal treatment and equal opportunity for all groups. But while certain media figures, activists, and politicians are busy building this Islamophobia industry, Hollywood and the entertainment industry must also share the blame. As long as Hollywood keeps casting Arab and South Asian actors mainly as terrorists or doctors (talk about the negative and positive extremes), the machine is going to stay well-fed. If Americans are as diverse as we like to claim we are, we have to reflect that diversity in our media—in our movies, our television and our theatre. It's not just enough to depict diversity; we must also critique constructions of race and identity. And *INVASION!* is a critique of the highest order.

## DIRECTOR'S NOTES

By Anna C. Bahow

Swedish playwright Jonas Hassen Khemiri invites us to see the world through his eyes. As the son of a Swedish mother and a Tunisian father, he does not fit our traditional idea of a blond-haired, blue-eyed Scandinavian. In a letter to the New York Times published on April 20<sup>th</sup> of this year, in response to racial profiling in his home country of Sweden, he wrote this:

“Welcome to my body. Make yourself at home. From now on, we share skin, spine and nervous system. Here are our legs, which always want to run when we see a police car. Here are our hands, which always clench into fists when we hear politicians talk about the need for stronger borders, more internal ID checks, faster deportation of people without papers.”

As I write, we continue to deal with racial profiling and prejudice in our own country and wrestle with the idea of security versus individual rights. The monitoring of phone calls and emails by the government dominates the news, Guantanamo still exists, we struggle with finding a “solution” for the Middle East, we discuss policy on drones, the senate debates the fate of 11 million undocumented residents, school closings in Chicago remain contentious, and gun violence is epidemic. How do we all (unintentionally, imperceptibly) fall into a pattern that perpetuates small prejudices that then allow larger prejudices to grow, leading to complex societal problems? What do we do by naming? How do we perceive, process, perpetuate, and distort, be it by a single word or a large idea?

Welcome to The Theatre.

## LETTER FROM THE FOUNDERS: THE PERSISTENCE OF SILK ROAD RISING

By **Jamil Khoury** and **Malik Gillani**

A little over ten years ago, the two of us immigrated to the theatre. We arrived with no experience, no training, no mentors, no role models, not a single theatre course between us, and no real relationships in the sector. The culture of theatre makers was entirely foreign to us (much of it still is) and the “rules” of producing were of little interest to us. What we had was a mission we felt passionate about, an aesthetic we were determined to establish, and politics that enabled us to soldier on even when the challenges seemed insurmountable. Like most immigrants, we were determined to preserve that which we loved most about “the old country,” and to assimilate those aspects of our “new home” that appeared most endearing. But, unlike many immigrants, we never thought our migration a permanent move. By design, we thought, Silk Road Rising would render itself unnecessary by virtue of its success.

But our thinking evolved. The idea that Silk Road Rising would have run its course once Asian American and Middle Eastern American stories had been integrated into the American story now strikes us as naive, and detached from the realities of representation. The fact is that Silk Road Rising will always be necessary. Just as there will always be immigrants from Asia and the Middle East (and the American born descendants of those immigrants) there will always be a need for our stories to be told; that is, for our stories to be told by us, playwrights of Asian and Middle Eastern backgrounds. Perspectives and experiences that arise from one’s family need to be shared. Representation doesn’t have an expiration date. Storytelling is never finished. Stories beget more stories.

If multiculturalism created space for previously unheard voices to be heard, then polyculturalism, our theory of choice, allows voices to listen and learn from each other. Polyculturalism concerns itself with the intersecting and overlapping of cultures. As such, we believe polyculturalism not only enshrines our relevance, it demands it. Terms will change, circumstances will change, identities will change, America will change, but our threads in the fabric of American storytelling will most certainly remain.

We will not always be at the helm of Silk Road Rising, but Silk Road Rising will always be.

Details notwithstanding, representation will always begin at home, and home will always be whatever and wherever a playwright decides. For that reason and so many more, Silk Road Rising will persist. After all, great stories never die.

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Kristin Patton & John Coleman  
Angelique Sallas

#### *\$1,001 and above*

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Jo Anne Davis  
Shirley Soo & Matt Gorman  
Joani Tarsitano  
Nisha Vijay & Vijay Murugappan



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## SPECIAL THANKS

To our gracious hosts at the **First United Methodist Church at The Chicago Temple**, who exhibit hospitality and generosity towards us on a daily basis, and provide us a space in which we can flourish and grow.

Also, to **International Voices Project, Patrizia Accera, Play Company, Gabe Ruiz, and Sean Paris.**

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**Philip Blackwell**  
Senior Pastor  
*First United Methodist Church  
at the Chicago Temple*

# Welcome!

We welcome all people to the life of this congregation. We believe that we are all in need of God's love and grace and that God, through Jesus Christ, intends the church to be a community that incarnates love, grace and justice for all people. Holding true to that belief, we welcome and encourage all persons, including persons of all sexual orientations and gender identities, in every aspect of our Christian life together.

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November 7 - December 15, 2013

WORLD PREMIERE

### *Paulus*

Written by **Motti Lerner**

Directed by **Jimmy McDermott**



Set between 58 A.D. and 64 A.D., *Paulus* imagines the Apostle Paul, who bridged Christianity from a Jewish sect to a global religion. Framed as an intra-Jewish debate, Paul's quest to universalize monotheism provokes strong opposition from the Jewish Establishment, the Jerusalem Church, the Emperor Nero, and a skeptical 62 year old Jesus.

May 1 - June 8, 2014

THE MIDWEST PREMIERE

### *The Hundred Flowers Project*

Written by **Christopher Chen**

Directed by **Joanie Schultz**



Digital media becomes the perfect ally for a group of actors collectively creating a play about Mao Tse Tung's Cultural Revolution. As their work-in-progress starts morphing into a propaganda play about the play itself, a frightening question emerges: who, or what, is controlling the narrative?

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