

Warrior Class

By Kenneth Linn

Study Guide

Production History

Fall 2011 Presented by the Araca Group, directed by John Doyle

Fall 2011 Presented at South Coast Repertory NewSCRipts, directed by Oanh Nguyen

Spring 2012 Presented at South Coast Repertory Pacific Playwrights Festival, directed by Evan Cabnet

Summer 2012 World Premiere Production at Second Stage Theatre Company, directed by Evan Cabnet

Awards

2012 TCG Edgerton New Play Prize



Photo by Jann Whaley

Vito D'Ambrosio, left, as Nathan Berkshire and Nick Maccarone as Julius Weishan Lee in the Alley Theatre's production of *Warrior Class*.

Reviews

"A restaurant in Baltimore or a sleek New York apartment: It's all one big back room, where political horse trading is conducted with ruthless intensity and oily smiles in *Warrior Class*, an absorbing, incisive new play by Kenneth Lin that crackles with authenticity."

- *New York Times*

"Lin's taut, provocative play thrives on its characters' ambivalence; it avoids being reductive while examining 'lowest common denominator thinking' inherent in today's politics, especially where race is involved."

- *Entertainment Weekly*

"What's this -- a new play with an actual brain in its head? ... Kenneth Lin's *Warrior Class* is not only smart, it's also politically potent material for an election year."

- *Variety*

"This smart, tight, topical 90-minute tale of political maneuvering assembles an ace cast. When you think all has been said and done, it delivers a final surprise move."

- *New York Daily News*

Playwright

Kenneth Lin



Mr. Lin's plays *Warrior Class* (TCG Edgerton New Play Prize), *Fallow* (Barrymore Nomination: Outstanding New Play, Brown Martin Philadelphia Award), *Intelligence-Slave*, *Po Boy Tango*, (TCG Edgerton New Play Prize), *said* (Keneda Graduate Playwriting Competition Winner, L. Arnold Weissberger Award, Princess Grace Award), *Life On Paper*, *Agency** and *Genius In Love* have been seen at theaters throughout the country, including the Alliance Theatre, Second Stage Theatre Company, Northlight Theatre Company, Alley Theatre, People's Light and Theatre Company, Manhattan Theatre Club, South Coast Rep, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Arena Stage, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Marin Theater Company and East West Players. He is a writer on the Emmy-nominated Netflix's series "House of Cards," and the creator of original programming for USA. Education: Cornell University, Fulbright, Yale School of Drama.

Synopsis

Warrior Class centers on Julius Weishan Lee, a New York assemblyman who's been dubbed "The Republican Obama." Lee is the son of Chinese immigrants and a decorated war veteran with a seemingly limitless political career ahead of him. Then someone from his past threatens to reveal a college transgression, and Lee must decide how far he'll go to keep the incident out of the public eye. Whatever his decision, the consequences may be costly.



Carol Rosegg

Katharine Powell and David Rasche in *Warrior Class*

Director

Eric Ting



Alliance Theatre debut. Recent credits: Jackie Sibblies Drury's *We Are Proud to Present...* (Soho Rep) for which he received a 2013 Obie Award for Direction; *Clybourne Park* (Long Wharf); Nora Chipaumire's *Miriam* (BAM Next Wave). As Associate Artistic Director at Long Wharf Theatre (New Haven, CT) Ting has directed multiple world premieres, adaptations and revivals, including *Agnes Under the Big Top* by Aditi Brennan Kapil and Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man & the Sea*. Other Long Wharf credits: *The Bluest Eye* (with Hartford Stage); *Underneath the Lintel* (CT Critics Circle awards for best play and best direction); and his Vietnam War-era adaptation of *Macbeth*. Upcoming: *Rising Son* (Singapore Rep), Kristoffer Diaz's *The Upstairs*

Concierge (Goodman), *4000 Miles* (Long Wharf). Ting is a founding member of the artists' collective INTELLIGENT BEASTS and a recipient of a 2012 MAP Fund Award for the development of *motherland/foreign relations* by Meiyin Wang.

Actors

Clayton Landey (*Nathan Berkshire*) Clayton was last seen in *Little Foxes* at Theater In The Square after 40 plays, 40 films, 150 TV episodes, 85 commercials Clayton stopped counting. Drama-Logue Award, LA Weekly Award, Maddy, Garland Award, Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Nomination: Luther Adler World/LA premiere of *Names*. Drama-Logue for Producing *Andrea's Got 2 Boyfriends*. *Norma Rae*, Clayton's first feature film, was named in 2011 to The Library of Congress National Film Registry. Venice (*The Reluctant Fundamentalist*), Cannes (*She's So Lovely*), Sundance (*Shadow Hours*). Recent: *Footloose*, *Trouble With The Curve*. Starred "1st and Ten", first original comedy series for HBO. Recurring roles eight other TV series including "Drop Dead Diva", "Necessary Roughness", 3 seasons "Knots Landing", 1 year "Days of Our Lives". Board Member Atlanta SAG-AFTRA. Chair, Muriel Moore/Danny Nelson SAG-AFTRA Conservatory.

Moses Villarama (*Julius Weishan Lee*) is making his Alliance Theatre debut. His regional credits include *King Lear*, *Amadeus*, *The Ladies of the Camellias*, *A Christmas Carol*, and *1001* at the Denver Center; *Fornicated From The Beatles* at the A.R.T. Emerging America Festival; and *Arabian Nights* at Kansas City Rep. Moses lives in New York where he has appeared in *Prison Dancer* (NYMF Outstanding Ensemble Award), *167 Tongues*, *Lifetime Fairytale*, *Romeo & Juliet*, and *Henry VI, Part 3*. He has performed at Signature Theatre, Lark Play Development Center, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, and Magic Theatre in San Francisco. He received an M.F.A. in Acting from the National Theatre Conservatory.

Carrie Walrond Hood (*Holly Lillian Eames*) Carrie is excited to be back at the Alliance after understudying two roles in *Bike America* earlier this year. Past Atlanta stage credits include *No Exit* (Estelle), *Unnecessary Farce* (Karen), *Fuddy Meers* (Claire) and *The Underpants* (Louise). Carrie has acted in a number of regional and national commercials, and recent TV/film credits include Lifetime's "Drop Dead Diva" and "Witches of East End", as well as the role of Principal Walters in Tyler Perry's soon to be released film, *Single Mom's Club*. Carrie is a producer and director of video content for The reThink Group.

Characters

Nathan Berkshire - A many faceted political creature with an easy demeanor. Berkshire helps young politicians prepare for the media scrutiny brought on by running for office.

Holly Lillian Eames – A suburban housewife who sees an opportunity to use her past relationship to advance her present.

Julius Weishan Lee – An Asian square-jawed Marine turned politico who's past may destroy his future.

Unfamiliar Words and Phrases from *Warrior Class*

aged steak- traditionally this means dry aged beef, which is an expensive process of keeping beef at near-freezing temperature for almost a month in order to allow the connective tissues to break down. You can also wet age beef, which involves vacuum-sealing the beef in its juices for several days. As the less expensive option, wet aging has become more popular in the U.S.

The Inquisition- The Inquisition is a permanent institution of the Catholic Church with the sole purpose of finding and prosecuting heresies against that Church. In the early medieval period, the powerful and bureaucratic Catholic Church was capable of managing such an institution, but still relied on secular authorities to prosecute heretics. In the 12th century Pope Gregory the IX sent out decrees that would become the Inquisition. An inquisitor had no restraints on his methods of questioning. The accused did not have a right to face their accuser or interrogate the circumstances around that accusation. There was no process of appeal.

Nine Eleven Mosque Site-(also called the Ground Zero Mosque) this site is Park51, a proposed Islamic community center located two blocks from the World Trade Center site. This site was also called the Cordoba House in an earlier proposal, but now that term is used to describe the interfaith dialogue wing of the facility. Controversy around the community center rose in the summer of 2010, with vocal and avid supporters and detractors. Most polls show that a majority in the United States do not support the completion of Park51. Although there is an Islamic center currently at the Park51 location, it is not the fully proposed scale.

Sean Hannity- a conservative political commentator and host of *Hannity*, a show on Fox News Channel. He has written three bestselling books and has a reputation for politically polarizing opinions.

Silver Star in Kuwait- the Silver Star Medal is the fifth highest award given in the United States. It is given for combat valor and acts of gallantry in action. There were four silver stars given to Marines for actions during the Gulf War.

Teach for America- a non-profit organization that seeks to recruit high-achieving recent college graduates to teach in low-income communities for at least two years. They receive at least five weeks of training to teach full time.

Harvard Law Review- a student-run organization whose primary purpose is to publish a journal of legal scholarship. Student editors make all editorial and organizational decisions and, together with a professional business staff of three, carry out day-to-day operations.

General Counsel – a chief attorney for a corporation or government department who is usually paid for full time legal services.

Ministry of Hope- established in 1999 by Malawian Fletcher Matandika, the Ministry of Hope is a Christian organization whose mission is to aid the approximately 2 million orphans in Malawi.

Arthur Murray- a dance studio chain founded by dance instructor Arthur Murray. Although Murray retired in 1964, there are currently about 200 Arthur Murray Dance Studios in operation.

Forest Hills Gardens- one of the oldest planned communities in the U.S. found in Forest Hills, Queens. It is modeled after an English village. The average home price in Forest Hills is above \$700,000. A house in Forest Hills Gardens averages \$1.7 million.

New Rochelle- this is a Metro-North Railroad station that serves northern New York City and Southern Westchester riders. It is also a stop for travelers between Boston and Washington, DC.

“Ronald Reagan jelly bean thing”- Ronald Reagan originally ate jelly beans to quit smoking, but they became a signature snack for the president. Three-and-a-half tons of Jelly Bellies were shipped to the White House for his 1981 Inaugural festivities.

Corn Lobby- There are multiple corn lobbies including the Illinois Corn Growers Association, Minnesota Corn Growers Association, the Minnesota Corn Processors, the Corn Refiners Association, the North Dakota Corn Growers Association, and the National Corn Growers Association. The NCRA is the largest, and they gave \$557,000 in 2012.

Aneurism- a brain aneurysm is a bulge in a blood vessel in the brain. An aneurysm can leak or rupture, causing bleeding into the brain. This type of rupture quickly becomes life-threatening and requires immediate treatment.

“All Summer in a Day”-a short story by Ray Bradbury first published in *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction* in 1954.

Upstate- this term can refer to anything north of the New York City metropolitan area. This includes the cities of Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, and Albany.

Racing and wagering- The Racing and Wagering Board has now merged with the New York State Division of Lottery. The commission regulates all aspects of gaming and gambling activity in the state, including horse racing and pari-mutuel wagering, Class III Indian Gaming, the state lottery and charitable gaming. This division refers bills to the Assembly Standing Committee on Racing and Wagering.

Atlantic stakes racetrack – The horse racing tracks in New York are Aqueduct (New York City), Belmont Park (New York City), Buffalo Raceway (Hamburg), Finger Lakes Race Track (Farmington), Monticello Raceway (Monticello), New York Racing Association (NYC), Saratoga Equine Sports Center (Saratoga Springs), Saratoga Racetrack (Saratoga Springs), Vernon Downs (Vernon), Yonkers Raceway (Yonkers)

Sino-American Political Action Committee- There is no PAC by this name. There is, however, a PAC called the Asian American Action Fund (AAAF).

extra lulu- a fixed allowance paid to a legislator in lieu of reimbursement for actual expenses.

Virginia Tech shooting- The Virginia Tech massacre is a school shooting at Virginia Tech in April of 2007. Seung-Hui Cho, a South-Korean permanent resident alien and a senior at Virginia Tech shot and killed 32 people and wounded 17 others in two attacks between 7am and 10am.

Hmong- the Hmong are an Asian ethnic group mostly found in mountainous regions of China, Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand. The U.S. actively recruited a number of Hmong to fight the communists in the Laotian Civil War. The Hmong were singled out for retribution when the communists took control in 1975. Many of the thousands of refugees were resettled in Western countries beginning in the late 1970s.

“that Chinese guy shooting hunters in the forest-” Chai Soua Vang is a naturalized U.S. citizen who immigrated from Laos. He moved to Minneapolis around 2000 and then to the neighboring city of St. Paul. He shot eight people while on a hunting trip in Wisconsin in 2004. Six were killed. He is now serving six consecutive life sentences.

dirty harries- Dirty Harry is the title character of the 1971 film starring Clint Eastwood. Harry Callahan, frustrated by the bureaucratic systems of the law while attempting to stop a serial killer, disregards those laws and adopts a renegade style of reciprocity. He kills the villain, but the movie implies he loses his position as well.

HUD - the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development is a department of the Executive branch of the federal government. Its proposed mission is to create strong communities and quality homes for all. HUD helps people of low and mid-level incomes acquire home loans. Almost every aspect of home ownership and care comes under the jurisdiction of HUD.

Cowbirds- a brood parasitic bird that eats insects, particularly those that are stirred up by the movements of cattle. Female cowbirds will watch for other birds to lay their eggs and then lay their own eggs among them so that the host will care for them as their own.

Party boss- a leader of a political party who controls votes and dictates appointments. The term usually infers corruption.

PAC- a political action committee is an organization that pools campaign contributions from members and donates to campaign for or against candidates. An organization is classified as a PAC when it receives or spends more than \$1,000 for the purpose of influencing a federal election.

SEC- U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. A federal agency that is responsible for regulating the securities industry, stock and options exchanges, and other electronic securities markets in the United States.

World Trade Center- a complex of seven buildings anchored by the twin towers. The towers were destroyed in the 9/11 attacks in 2001. 2,996 people died in the collision and building collapse.

Lupus- a chronic inflammatory disease that occurs when the immune system attacks your own tissues and organs. Inflammation caused by lupus can affect joints, skin, kidneys, brain, heart and lungs.

IVF-In Vitro Fertilization. IVF is a procedure used to treat fertility problems and assist with the conception of a child. Mature eggs are retrieved from ovaries and fertilized by sperm in a lab. The resulting embryo is implanted in the uterus.

“Pound of flesh”- a payment or punishment that involves suffering and sacrifice on the part of the person paying. It originates with Shakespeare’s characters Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*. Shylock is a moneylender who lends money to his rival against a pound of his rival’s flesh.

Audibles- a football term for a new or substitute offensive play called by the quarterback or a defensive play called by a linebacker at the line of scrimmage as an adjustment to the opposing side’s formation.

Post Traumatic Stress- a mental health condition triggered by a terrifying event. Symptoms may include flashbacks, nightmares and severe anxiety, as well as uncontrollable thoughts about the event. If these symptoms do not lessen with time and care, the persistent form of these symptoms is classified as post traumatic stress disorder.

Kuwait- Iraq invaded Kuwait on Aug. 2, 1990. After months of diplomatic efforts on the part of the United Nations, a multi-country force led by the U.S. attacked Iraq on Jan. 16, 1991. The conflict lasted for just over six months and depended on air attack. There were approximately 150 dead 1,000 wounded Americans in the Persian Gulf War.

Seneca-Cayuga Casino- the casino is proposed by the Seneca-Cayuga tribe (which is now mostly located in Oklahoma) to be built on 229 acres the tribe owns in Cayuga County, New York. The federal government rejected their request in 2008, but their proposal was resurrected in 2012.

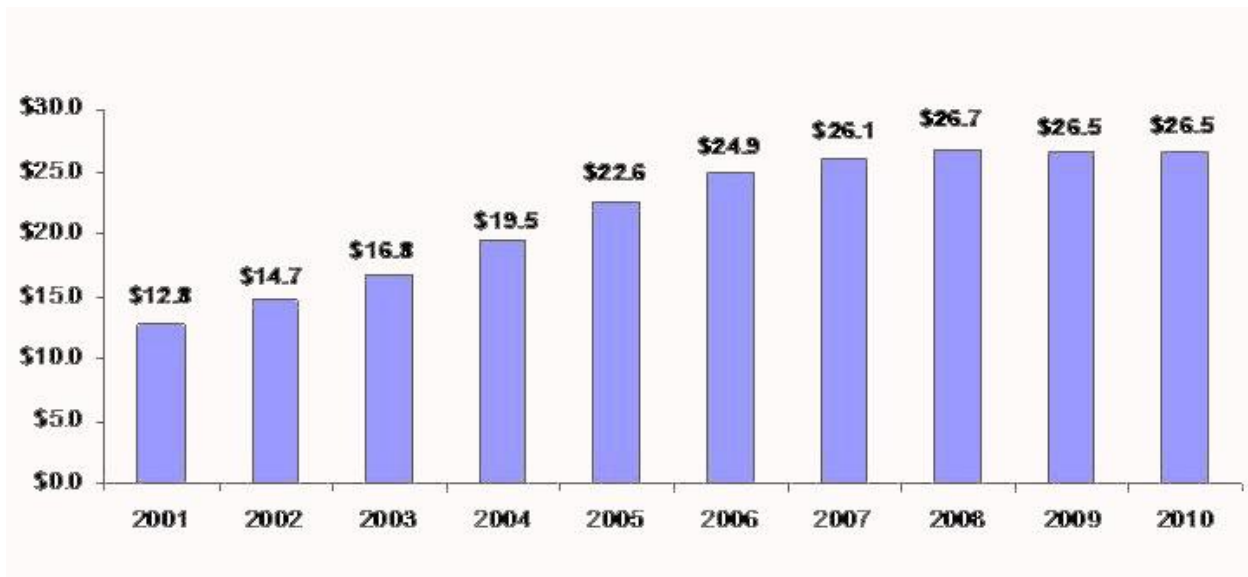
Elysian Fields- also called Elysium. In its early history, Elysium is a land of continual happiness at the end of the earth where heroes who have been given immortality reside.

“Know your enemy. Know your terrain. Know yourself.”- Berkshire is quoting Sun Tzu’s *The Art of War*

Native American Gaming

Since the 1970s, a battle has raged between the State and Tribal governments surrounding tribal sovereignty. States want to regulate activities on reservations, but the federal government has repeatedly upheld tribal sovereignty. This ruling opened the door to Native American casinos, bingo halls and other gaming establishments representing a \$27 billion business annually. Local communities frequently resist applications to build gaming resorts citing a reduction in county taxes and unconvincing evidence of positive economic impact for tribal members. In 1988, Congress passed the Indian Gaming Regulation Act stating that tribes and states must have agreements for gaming activities, but only the Federal Government can regulate gaming.

Red Hawk Casino



2010 Gross Gaming Revenue

Warrior Class in the Classroom

Pre-Show Questions

1. Does a Politician have to have a perfect past to be electable? Why or why not?
2. How do you define power? What is the purpose of the power afforded to political leaders?
3. "It is best to be both feared and loved; however, if one cannot be both it is better to be feared than loved." Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince* Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why? Would you prefer to be feared or loved? Why?
4. Can a person be a successful politician and be honest?

Post-Show Questions

1. Who is the protagonist of *Warrior Class*? Support your opinion with evidence from the show.
2. "Never attempt to win by force what can be won by deception." Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince* Which character most embodies this quotation? Support your opinion with evidence from the show.
3. Is Holly wrong to keep what she knows about Julius from the American public? Why or why not?
4. Do you believe Julius's or Holly's version of their college relationship? Support your opinion with evidence from the show.
5. In a world of Facebook, Twitter, and many other social sights, do you think there will be anyone who can run for government office in twenty years without a scandal?
6. Are politics ever useful for effecting positive change?
7. What is the worst crime committed in *Warrior Class*? Why?

Creative Writing Prompts

1. If you were the President, how would you change the United States?
2. Describe the characteristics of the perfect politician.
3. If you were Nathan, how would you advise Julius?