



A View from the Bridge

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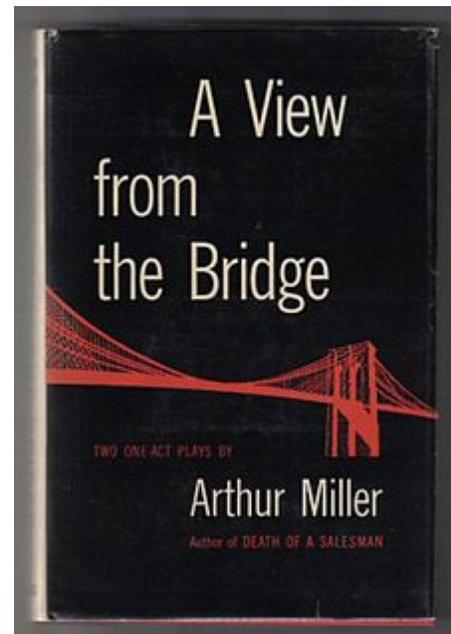
A View from the Bridge is a play by American playwright Arthur Miller. It was first staged on September 29, 1955, as a one-act verse drama with *A Memory of Two Mondays* at the Coronet Theatre on Broadway. The run was unsuccessful, and Miller subsequently revised the play to contain two acts; this version is the one with which audiences are most familiar.^[1] The two-act version premiered in the New Watergate theatre club in London's West End under the direction of Peter Brook on October 11, 1956.

The play is set in 1950s America, in an Italian-American neighborhood near the Brooklyn Bridge in New York. It employs a chorus and narrator in the character of Alfieri. Eddie, the tragic protagonist, has an improper love of, and almost obsession with, Catherine, his wife Beatrice's orphaned niece, so he does not approve of her courtship of Beatrice's cousin Rodolpho. Miller's interest in writing about the world of the New York docks originated with an unproduced screenplay that he developed with Elia Kazan in the early 1950s (titled *The Hook*) that addressed corruption on the Brooklyn docks. Kazan later directed *On the Waterfront*, which dealt with the same subject. Miller said that he heard the basic account that developed into the plot of *A View from the Bridge* from a lawyer who worked with longshoremen, who related it to him as a true story.

Synopsis

The action is narrated by Alfieri who, being raised in 1900s Italy but now working as an American lawyer, represents the "Bridge" between the two cultures.

A View from the Bridge



First edition cover

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Written by | <u>Arthur Miller</u> |
| Date premiered | September 29, 1955 |
| Place premiered | <u>Coronet Theatre</u> (now <u>Eugene O'Neill Theatre</u>) New York City |
| Original language | English |
| Setting | The apartment and environment of Eddie Carbone |

Act 1 – In the opening speech Alfieri describes the violent history of the small Brooklyn community of Red Hook and tells us that the second-generation Sicilians are now more civilized, more American, and are prepared to "settle for half" (half measures) and let the law handle their disputes. But there are exceptions, and he then begins to narrate the story of Eddie Carbone, an Italian American longshoreman who lives with his wife Beatrice and her orphaned niece Catherine.

Eddie is a good man who, although ostensibly protective and fatherly towards Catherine, harbours a growing passion for her as she approaches her 18th birthday. We learn that he has not had sex with his wife for nearly three months. Catherine is studying to become a stenographer and Eddie objects to her taking a job she has been offered until she finishes her coursework, expressing a dislike for the way she dresses and the interest she is beginning to show in men. Beatrice is more supportive of Catherine's ventures and persuades Eddie to let her take the job.

Eddie returns home one afternoon with the news that Beatrice's two cousins, brothers Marco and Rodolpho, have safely arrived in New York as illegal immigrants. He has agreed to house them saying that he is honoured to be able to help family. Marco is quiet and thoughtful, possessing a remarkable strength, whereas Rodolpho is more unconventional, with plans to make a career singing in America. Marco has a family starving in Italy and plans to return after working illegally for several years, whereas Rodolpho intends to stay. Although Eddie, Beatrice, and Catherine are at first excellent hosts, cracks appear when Rodolpho and Catherine begin dating.

Eddie convinces himself that Rodolpho is homosexual and is only expressing interest in Catherine so he can marry her and gain status as a legal citizen. He confronts Catherine with his beliefs and she turns to Beatrice for advice. Beatrice, starting to realize Eddie's true feelings, tells her that she should marry Rodolpho and move out. In the meantime, Eddie turns to Alfieri, hoping for help from the law. However, Alfieri tells him that the only recourse he has is to report Rodolpho and Marco as undocumented. Seeing no solution to his problem, Eddie becomes increasingly desperate and takes his anger out on Rodolpho and, in teaching him to box, 'accidentally' injures him. Marco reacts by quietly threatening Eddie, showing his strength by holding a heavy chair above Eddie's head with one hand and 'smiling with triumph'.

Act 2 – A few months have passed and Eddie reaches a breaking point when he discovers that Catherine and Rodolpho have slept together and are intent on marrying. Drunk, he kisses Catherine and then attempts to prove that Rodolpho is gay by suddenly and passionately kissing him also. After a violent confrontation, Eddie orders Rodolpho to leave the apartment.

Eddie visits Alfieri and insists that the kiss has proved Rodolpho is gay and that he is only marrying Catherine for citizenship, but once again Alfieri says the law cannot help. Out of desperation, Eddie phones immigration services but in the meantime Beatrice has arranged for Marco and Rodolpho to move in with two other undocumented immigrants in the flat above. Eddie learns that Catherine and Rodolpho have arranged to marry within a week and about the two new immigrants that have moved into the building and, with both anger and fright, frantically urges Catherine and Beatrice to move them out. When immigration officials arrive and arrest Marco, Rodolpho, and the two other immigrants, Eddie pretends that the arrest comes as a complete surprise to him, but Beatrice and Marco see through this. Marco spits in Eddie's face in front of everyone and accuses Eddie of killing his starving children. Eddie tries to convince the neighborhood of his innocence but they turn away from him.

Alfieri visits Marco and Rodolpho in custody, obtaining their release on bail until their hearing comes up. Alfieri explains that Rodolpho will be able to stay once he has married Catherine but warns Marco that he will have to return to Italy. Vengeful, Marco confronts Eddie publicly on his release, and Eddie turns on him with a knife, demanding that he take back his accusations and restore his honour. In the ensuing scuffle, Eddie is stabbed with his own knife and dies, as his stunned family and neighbours stand around.

When he witnesses Eddie's death, Alfieri trembles, because he realises that, even though it was wrong, something "perversely pure" calls to him and he is filled with admiration. But, he tells the audience, settling for half-measures is better, it must be, and so he mourns Eddie with a sense of alarm at his own feelings.

Production history

Premieres

The one-act, verse version of *A View from the Bridge* opened on Broadway on September 29, 1955, at the Coronet Theatre (now the Eugene O'Neill Theatre); Marilyn Monroe was in the audience.^[2] It ran for 149 performances. This production was directed by Martin Ritt and the cast included Van Heflin as Eddie and Eileen Heckart as Beatrice.^[3] Its two-act version premiered in London's West End under the direction of Peter Brook. It opened at the New Watergate theatre club (currently Harold Pinter Theatre) on October 11, 1956, and the cast included Richard Harris as Louis and Anthony Quayle as Eddie,^[4] with lighting design by Lee Watson.

Revivals in New York

Dustin Hoffman acted as assistant director and stage manager for a successful 1965 production of the play Off-Broadway at the Sheridan Square Playhouse in New York City. The play's director, Ulu Grosbard, suggested to Arthur Miller that Hoffman would one day make a great Willy Loman (a role that Hoffman would later play to great acclaim). Miller was unimpressed and later wrote that "My estimate of Grosbard all but collapsed as, observing Dustin Hoffman's awkwardness and his big nose that never seemed to get unstuffy, I wondered how the poor fellow imagined himself a candidate for any kind of acting career."^[5] Another production in New York opened on February 3, 1983, at the Ambassador Theatre, with Tony Lo Bianco as Eddie and directed by Arvin Brown. It ran for 149 performances.^[3] An award-winning production in New York opened on December 14, 1997, at the Criterion Center Stage Right and subsequently transferred to the Neil Simon Theatre. It ran for 239 performances. It was directed by Michael Mayer and the cast included Anthony LaPaglia, Allison Janney, and a young Brittany Murphy.^{[3][6]} The production won the Tony Award for: Best Revival of a Play; Best Leading Actor in a Play (LaPaglia); it also won Drama Desk Awards for Outstanding Revival, Outstanding Featured Actress in a Play (Janney), and Outstanding Direction of a Play. A revival at the Cort Theatre on Broadway in 2009 starred Liev Schreiber, Scarlett Johansson and Jessica Hecht. The limited, 14-week engagement, directed by Gregory Mosher, began with previews on December 28, 2009, and officially opened on January 24, 2010. It ran until April 4, 2010.^{[3][6][7]} Johansson won a Tony Award for her performance. From October 2015 through

February 2016, a production of the play that originated at the Young Vic Theatre in London in 2014 ran on Broadway at the Lyceum Theatre featuring its original London cast.^[8] It won the Tony Award for Best Revival of a Play; the director, Ivo van Hove won the Tony Award for Best Direction of a Play.

Revivals in London

The National Theatre of Great Britain staged a production in 1987 at the Cottesloe Theatre. It was directed by Alan Ayckbourn and Michael Gambon gave an acclaimed performance as Eddie. *Time Out* called the production "near perfect" and the *New Statesman* called it "one of the finest events to be presented at the National Theatre since it moved to the South Bank."^[9] Another West End production was staged at the Duke of York's Theatre, opening in previews on January 24, 2009, and officially on February 5. It ran until May 16, 2009. It was directed by Lindsay Posner, with Ken Stott as Eddie, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio as Beatrice, Hayley Atwell as Catherine and Harry Lloyd as Rodolpho.^[10] The production subsequently toured the UK. In 2014, Belgian director Ivo van Hove and lead actors Mark Strong (as Eddie), Phoebe Fox (Catherine), and Nicola Walker (Beatrice) revived the play to huge success at the Young Vic.^[11] This revival won three Laurence Olivier Awards in April 2015, for Best Actor (Mark Strong), Best Revival and Best Director (Ivo van Hove). The Young Vic production transferred to Broadway with its British cast intact.^[12]

Other revivals

In 1992, the Royal Exchange, Manchester staged a production directed by Greg Hersov with Jonathan Hackett, Michael Sheen and Kate Byers. After Ivo van Hove's production closed on Broadway, it was restaged by the Centre Theatre Group of Los Angeles with a new cast that included Frederick Weller (Eddie), Andrus Nichols (Beatrice), Catherine Combs (Catherine), Alex Esola (Marco), and David Register (Rodolpho); this cast then toured to the Kennedy Center in Washington.^{[13][14]} In 2017, van Hove directed the play at the Goodman Theatre in Chicago. Combs and Nichols reprised their roles, joined by Ian Bedford as Eddie.^{[15][16]}

Adaptations

Film

Italian film director Luchino Visconti directed a stage version of the play in Italy in 1958. The plot of his film *Rocco and His Brothers* (*Rocco e i suoi fratelli*), made in 1960, has many affinities with *A View from the Bridge*.^[17]

A French-Italian film based on *A View from the Bridge* titled *Vu du pont* was released in February 1962. Directed by Sidney Lumet, the film starred Raf Vallone and Maureen Stapleton as Eddie and Beatrice, with Carol Lawrence as Catherine.^[18] The film was the first time that a kiss between men was shown on screen in America, albeit in this case it is intended as an accusation of being gay, rather than a romantic expression.^[19] In a major change to the plot of the play, Eddie commits suicide after being publicly beaten by Marco.

In 2005, a new film version of *A View from the Bridge* was announced to be directed by Barry Levinson, with Anthony LaPaglia as Eddie, Scarlett Johansson as Catherine, and Frances McDormand as Beatrice,^[20] but it never went into production. In January 2011, *Variety* reported that another version of the film was scheduled to begin shooting in June in Melbourne and New York with new director Robert Connolly and a cast featuring

LaPaglia, Vera Farmiga, Mia Wasikowska and Sam Neill,^[21] but it never went into production after Miller's daughter Rebecca rejected LaPaglia's request to extend the rights to the film that had expired on October 11, thus officially ending the project.^[22]

Television

On 4 April 1966, ITV aired *A View from the Bridge* as its "ITV Play of the Week", of which no copies survive. Vallone also played Eddie in that version.

In 1986, the BBC aired a TV dramatisation of the play produced by Geoff Wilson.

Opera

Renzo Rossellini, the brother of film director Roberto Rossellini, was the first to adapt the play into an opera with his *Uno sguardo dal ponte*, which premiered at the Teatro dell'Opera di Roma in 1961. In 1999, another operatic version, with music by William Bolcom and a libretto by Arthur Miller, premiered at Lyric Opera of Chicago starring Kim Josephson as Eddie Carbone. The work was performed subsequently at the Metropolitan Opera in 2002, again at the Washington National Opera in 2007, and by Vertical Player Repertory Opera in 2009, starring William Browning as Eddie.^[23] The opera was first performed in Europe at Theater Hagen in 2003 in German translation. The first English (original) language version produced in Europe opened at the Teatro dell'Opera di Roma in Rome on January 18, 2011.

Radio

L.A. Theatre Works released a radio adaptation of the play in 1998. BBC Radio 3 produced a radio adaptation in 2017.

Awards and nominations

Original Broadway production

| Year | Award ceremony | Category | Nominee | Result |
|------|----------------------------|----------|------------------------|--------|
| 1956 | <u>Theatre World Award</u> | | <u>Richard Davalos</u> | Won |

1983 Broadway revival

| Year | Award ceremony | Category | Nominee | Result |
|------|-----------------------------------|--|-----------------------|-----------|
| 1983 | <u>Tony Award</u> | <u>Best Revival</u> | | Nominated |
| | | <u>Best Performance by a Leading Actor in a Play</u> | <u>Tony Lo Bianco</u> | Nominated |
| | <u>Drama Desk Award</u> | <u>Outstanding Featured Actor in a Play</u> | <u>Alan Feinstein</u> | Won |
| | <u>Outer Critics Circle Award</u> | <u>Outstanding Actor in a Play</u> | <u>Tony Lo Bianco</u> | Won |

1997 Broadway revival

| Year | Award ceremony | Category | Nominee | Result |
|---------------------------|--|--|-------------------------|-----------|
| 1998 | <u>Tony Award</u> | <u>Best Revival of a Play</u> | | Won |
| | | <u>Best Performance by a Leading Actor in a Play</u> | <u>Anthony LaPaglia</u> | Won |
| | | <u>Best Performance by a Leading Actress in a Play</u> | <u>Allison Janney</u> | Nominated |
| | | <u>Best Direction of a Play</u> | <u>Michael Mayer</u> | Nominated |
| | <u>Drama Desk Award</u> | <u>Outstanding Revival of a Play</u> | <u>Arthur Miller</u> | Won |
| | | <u>Outstanding Actor in a Play</u> | <u>Anthony LaPaglia</u> | Won |
| | | <u>Outstanding Featured Actress in a Play</u> | <u>Allison Janney</u> | Won |
| | | <u>Outstanding Director of a Play</u> | <u>Michael Mayer</u> | Won |
| | | <u>Outstanding Sound Design</u> | <u>Mark Bennett</u> | Nominated |
| | | <u>Outstanding Lighting Design</u> | <u>Kenneth Posner</u> | Nominated |
| | <u>Outer Critics Circle Award</u> | <u>Outstanding Revival of a Play</u> | | Won |
| | | <u>Outstanding Actor in a Play</u> | <u>Anthony LaPaglia</u> | Won |
| | | <u>Outstanding Featured Actress in a Play</u> | <u>Allison Janney</u> | Won |
| | | <u>Outstanding Director of a Play</u> | <u>Michael Mayer</u> | Won |
| <u>Drama League Award</u> | <u>Distinguished Production of a Revival</u> | | Nominated | |

2009 West End revival

| Year | Award ceremony | Category | Nominee | Result |
|------|-------------------------------|--|-----------------------|-----------|
| 2010 | <u>Laurence Olivier Award</u> | <u>Best Revival</u> | | Nominated |
| | | <u>Best Actor</u> | <u>Ken Stott</u> | Nominated |
| | | <u>Best Actress in a Supporting Role</u> | <u>Hayley Atwell</u> | Nominated |
| | | <u>Best Director</u> | <u>Lindsay Posner</u> | Nominated |

2010 Broadway revival

| Year | Award ceremony | Category | Nominee | Result |
|------|-------------------|---|---------------------------|-----------|
| 2010 | <u>Tony Award</u> | <u>Best Revival of a Play</u> | | Nominated |
| | | <u>Best Performance by a Leading Actor in a Play</u> | <u>Liev Schreiber</u> | Nominated |
| | | <u>Best Performance by a Featured Actress in a Play</u> | <u>Scarlett Johansson</u> | Won |
| | | | <u>Jessica Hecht</u> | Nominated |
| | | <u>Best Direction of a Play</u> | <u>Gregory Mosher</u> | Nominated |
| | | <u>Best Sound Design of a Play</u> | <u>Scott Lehrer</u> | Nominated |

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|---------------------------|-----------|
| <u>Drama Desk Award</u> | <u>Outstanding Revival of a Play</u> | | Won |
| | <u>Outstanding Actor in a Play</u> | <u>Liev Schreiber</u> | Won |
| | <u>Outstanding Featured Actress in a Play</u> | <u>Scarlett Johansson</u> | Nominated |
| <u>Outer Critics Circle Award</u> | <u>Outstanding Revival of a Play</u> | | Nominated |
| | <u>Outstanding Actor in a Play</u> | <u>Liev Schreiber</u> | Nominated |
| <u>Drama League Award</u> | <u>Distinguished Revival of a Play</u> | | Won |
| <u>Theatre World Award</u> | | <u>Scarlett Johansson</u> | Won |

2014 West End revival

| Year | Award ceremony | Category | Nominee | Result |
|------|-------------------------------|--|------------------------|-----------|
| 2015 | <u>Laurence Olivier Award</u> | <u>Best Revival</u> | | Won |
| | | <u>Best Actor</u> | <u>Mark Strong</u> | Won |
| | | <u>Best Actress in a Supporting Role</u> | <u>Phoebe Fox</u> | Nominated |
| | | <u>Best Director</u> | <u>Ivo van Hove</u> | Won |
| | | <u>Best Set Design</u> | <u>Jan Versweyveld</u> | Nominated |
| | | <u>Best Lighting Design</u> | | Nominated |
| | | <u>Best Sound Design</u> | <u>Tom Gibbons</u> | Nominated |

2015 Broadway revival

| Year | Award ceremony | Category | Nominee | Result |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|------------------------|-----------|
| 2016 | <u>Tony Award</u> | <u>Best Revival of a Play</u> | | Won |
| | | <u>Best Performance by a Leading Actor in a Play</u> | <u>Mark Strong</u> | Nominated |
| | | <u>Best Direction of a Play</u> | <u>Ivo van Hove</u> | Won |
| | | <u>Best Scenic Design of a Play</u> | <u>Jan Versweyveld</u> | Nominated |
| | | <u>Best Lighting Design of a Play</u> | | Nominated |
| | <u>Drama Desk Award</u> | <u>Outstanding Revival of a Play</u> | | Won |
| | | <u>Outstanding Actor in a Play</u> | <u>Mark Strong</u> | Nominated |
| | | <u>Outstanding Actress in a Play</u> | <u>Nicola Walker</u> | Nominated |
| | | <u>Outstanding Director of a Play</u> | <u>Ivo van Hove</u> | Won |
| | <u>Outer Critics Circle Award</u> | <u>Outstanding Revival of a Play</u> | | Nominated |
| <u>Outstanding Actor in a Play</u> | | <u>Mark Strong</u> | Nominated | |
| <u>Outstanding Actress in a Play</u> | | <u>Nicola Walker</u> | Nominated | |
| <u>Outstanding Director of a Play</u> | | <u>Ivo van Hove</u> | Won | |
| <u>Drama League Award</u> | <u>Distinguished Revival of a Play</u> | | Won | |

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Further reading

- Miller, Arthur (1955). *A View from the Bridge: Two One-Act Plays* (1st ed.). New York: Viking Press. OCLC 26621266 (<https://search.worldcat.org/oclc/26621266>).

External links

- *A View from the Bridge* (<https://www.ibdb.com/broadway-show/1324>) at the *Internet Broadway Database*
- *A View from the Bridge* (<http://www.iobdb.com/Production/3629>) at the *Internet Off-Broadway Database*

- *A View from the Bridge* (<http://www.sparknotes.com/drama/viewbridge/context.html>) from SparkNotes
 - English Literature: *A View from the Bridge* (https://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/english_literature/dramaviewbridge/index.shtml) from the BBC's GCSE Bitesize
 - Studying Arthur Miller's *A View from the Bridge* (<https://web.archive.org/web/20041216085700/http://www.eriding.net/amoore/gcse/viewfromthebridge.htm>) from eriding.net
 - *A View from the Bridge* (<http://www.shmoop.com/view-from-the-bridge/>) study guide, themes, quotes, teacher resources from shmoop.com
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