

RELEASE IN PART
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From: Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>
Sent: Monday, November 21, 2011 3:34 PM
To: H
Subject: Fw: Fwd: Shanghai Daily on Top Secret

From: Derek Shearer [redacted]
Sent: Monday, November 21, 2011 11:03 AM
To: Mills, Cheryl D
Subject: Fwd: Shanghai Daily on Top Secret

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FYI-for Hillary, one other advance review of Geoff Cowan's play which opens in Shanghai on Thursday.
Please thank Hillary for her kind note to us, and her afterthought for [redacted].
Have a good Thanksgiving,
Derek

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Geoffrey Cowan** [redacted]
Date: Mon, Nov 21, 2011 at 7:47 AM
Subject: Shanghai Daily on Top Secret
To: "Derek Shearer [redacted]" <dshearer [redacted]>, Geoffrey Cowan < [redacted]>

ShanghaiDaily.com

Pentagon Papers row on stage

By Nie Xin | 2011-11-19 |  NEWSPAPER EDITION



"Top Secret: The Battle for the Pentagon Papers" takes an inside look at The Washington Post's decision in 1971 to publish the top-secret study of US involvement in Vietnam from 1945 to 1967.

A docudrama about the Pentagon Papers, one of the landmarks in American journalism and the public's right to know, will be staged next week at the Shanghai Drama Arts Center.

"Top Secret: The Battle for the Pentagon Papers" dramatizes the seismic legal battle that goes to the heart of the debate about the nature of democracy in America. It is an inside look at The Washington Post's decision in 1971 to publish the top-secret study of US involvement in Vietnam from 1945 to 1967.

LA Theatre Works (LATW) will perform the work in English (with Chinese subtitles) from next Tuesday through Sunday.

The publication of leaked documents that came to be known as the Pentagon Papers was an explosive political event, shining light on years of US government secrecy and lies in its policy in Vietnam and Southeast Asia. The battle pitted the press against the government.

The documents were leaked to The New York Times, which published a front-page article in 1971. When the Nixon White House obtained a court order preventing The Times from printing most of the story, The Washington Post stepped into the fray and published the documents.

"I've always loved dramas based on fact. The writer has to combine the requirements of drama with the need to be accurate. At the very least, there is usually the need to compress time and often to combine events," says playwright Geoffrey Cowan, president of the public policy-oriented Annenberg Retreat at Sunnylands in Rancho Mirage, California.

Most writers of such dramas take certain liberties with the facts by adding dialogue or scenes that are consistent with the facts and with the values of the people themselves.

"In this case, the most interesting challenge has been created by the continuing availability of new information - such as newly released White House tapes or new memoirs - that make for a richer drama," Cowan says.

The play explores the tension between US government's concern for secrecy on issues of national security; the responsibility of the press to inform the public about issues of great importance; and the court's role in determining when, if ever, the government has the power to prevent the press from publishing.

American stage and TV stars Amy Pietz, James Gleason, Russell Soder, Josh Stamberg, Henry Clarke, Nicholas Hormann, Tom Virtue, Peter Van Norden, Steve Vinovich and J.D. Cullum - some starred in HBO hit "Sex and the City" - are cast in the play.

"I've never been to Asia and can't wait to experience Chinese culture, both ancient and brand-new," says Josh Stamberg who plays The Washington Post Chief Editor Ben Bradlee.

"It strikes me as the perfect time to visit Shanghai, with a wonderfully provocative play, and definitively modern moment in the city's fabled history. I'm counting on Shanghai to be an eye-opener," he tells Shanghai Daily through e-mail.

Stamberg's current TV role is in the series "Drop Dead Diva," which is about to start its fourth season.

"In TV, you rehearse once or twice immediately before shooting, which is why preparation is so crucial. The truth is theater's my first love. It's where I started, and where I always return," says Stamberg.

For China tour, the play includes some fascinating and important information about the planning process of President Nixon's trip to China in 1971.

"In the audience there will be students from law and journalism schools as well as a great many people who want to learn more about how the American government functions," Cowan says.

He says he expects the audience in Shanghai to enjoy the play and learn a lot about history.

He observes that the media scene has been transformed since those days and the Internet and organizations such as Wikileaks make it virtually impossible to keep information secret indefinitely.