



# BUILDING THE WALL

BY ROBERT  
SCHENKKAN

DIRECTED BY CHIP WALTON



SPREAD  
THE  
WORD!

July 7-27, 2019

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# About Curious Theatre Company

WE ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY IN IMPORTANT CONTEMPORARY ISSUES  
THROUGH PROVOCATIVE MODERN THEATRE

Now in our third decade, Curious Theatre Company is Denver's home for feisty, unapologetically progressive, professional theatre that you won't see anywhere else in Colorado. We have the guts to make theatre that can change the world.



## *Building the Wall: The Conversation Isn't Over*

After taking a risk on an untested, fiery play two years ago, the conversation on the US response to immigration looms larger than ever. The questions are more prescient. The impact more immediate. And the play's events have become all-too-close to reality. We must take action on this important issue.

Please check out our website for more information on getting involved and simple action steps you can take NOW to make change on these important issues.

## LOCAL ACTIVISTS AND ALLIES

Join us after every performance to talk about immigration issues with those who directly work with immigrants and push for policy change on the ground every day including:

- American Civil Liberties Union
- American Friends Service Committee
- Casa de Paz
- Coloradans for Immigrant Rights
- Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition
- Colorado People's Alliance
- International Rescue Committee
- Justice and Mercy Legal Aid Clinic
- Together Colorado
- Metro Denver Sanctuary Coalition

GO DEEPER.

CuriousTheatre.org

# Curious Theatre Company

*presents*

## **BUILDING THE WALL**

by Robert Schenkkan

Directed by Chip Walton

*This play is performed without an intermission.*

### CAST

Celeste M. Cooper\*, *Gloria*  
John Jurcheck\*, *Rick*

### TIME & PLACE

A prison meeting room.  
El Paso, Texas. Spring 2020

### PRODUCTION TEAM

*Lighting Design*, **Shannon McKinney\*\*** and Jack Trembath  
*Sound Design*, **Jason Ducat**  
*Costume Design*, **Kevin Brainerd\*\***  
*Dramaturg*, Heidi Schmidt  
*Stage Manager*, **Lisa Boehm**  
*Assistant Stage Manager & Board Operator*, Jon Collins  
*Assistant Sound Design*, CeCe Smith  
*Scenic Construction*, Michael Morgan

*BUILDING THE WALL* was first produced as a National New Play Network Rolling World Premiere by The Fountain Theatre (CA), Curious Theatre Company (CO), Forum Theatre (DC), Borderlands Theatre (AZ), and City Theatre (FL), with support from Paul Prokop. For more information, please visit [nnpn.org](http://nnpn.org).

*BUILDING THE WALL* was developed at The Lark, New York City.

*BUILDING THE WALL* is presented by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc. New York.

**Bold** = Curious Artistic Company Member

\*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

\*\*Member of United Scenic Artists, Local USA 829 IATSE



When Curious produced *Building the Wall* in April of 2017, it was a dystopian tale. Something no one (except playwright Robert Schenkkan) believed could ever really come true. In the years following, a horrific number of the play's events have come true. This is a timeline comparing the play to actual events. For a more robust timeline, visit [CuriousTheatre.org/wall-timeline](http://CuriousTheatre.org/wall-timeline).

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## JANUARY 2017

Trump signs executive order to begin construction of a border wall, to hire an additional 10,000 border security agents, and begin detaining and deporting undocumented immigrants.

Trump signs executive order to block Syrian refugees from entering the US for 120 days and ban immigrants from seven predominantly Muslim countries for 90 days. Mass protests erupt.

[ *Gloria: "He wins, doesn't waste any time and on January 27th issues his first Executive Order curtailing immigration. Chaos results."* ]

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## MARCH 2017



Trump announces the Fiscal Year 2018 Budget that includes a request for 1.5 billion dollars to add 51,379 beds to expand detention capacity at the border.

[ *Rick: "Normal times you got maybe 20 to 40 people a day and processed out about the same but suddenly we're getting 200 to 400 people a day so you got this terrible overflow."* ]


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## JUNE 2017



Trump administration rescinds DAPA and DACA, programs aimed at providing individuals who entered illegally a pathway to citizenship.

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## NOVEMBER 2017 - JANUARY 2018

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) ends protected status for migrants who came to the US after natural disasters in Nicaragua, Haiti, and El Salvador.



## DECEMBER 2017

A pipe bomb was partially detonated in the New York City subway injuring 4 people. This sparked Trump to call for an end to chain migration in the US.

[ *Rick: "The Russian investigation was heating up then and the attack certainly took focus off that."* ]



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MARCH 2018



Attorney General Sessions announces a “zero tolerance” policy that directs US Attorney’s Offices in the Southwest to prosecute illegal entry or attempted entry to the fullest extent possible.

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MAY 2018

Trump refers to unauthorized immigrants as “animals.”

[ Rick: “We were being paid by the body-”  
Gloria: “The person” ]



More than 1,600 children were moved to a “tent city” in West Texas because the shelters that were previously used are overflowing.

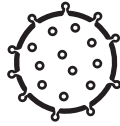
[ Rick: “So, we kind of borrowed a page from Sheriff Arpaio and put up tent facilities in the exercise yard for the single men, but I didn’t like that.” ]

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DECEMBER 2018

The first two children die in US custody. DHS Secretary Nielsen said the system has reached a “breaking point” from the “dramatic increase” of migrants, particularly minors, being detained.

[ Rick: “Whatever the reason, people are stacking up. Normal facilities are overwhelmed.” ]



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FEBRUARY 2019

An outbreak of mumps in two detention facilities, including one in Aurora CO, quarantines 2,200 detainees as chicken pox also runs rampant. In Aurora, only one in-house physician treats the 1,500 detainees.

[ Rick: “I had an infectious outbreak on my hands!” ]

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MAY 2019



Seven current and former DHS officials go on record to share that the administration wanted to target families after the president’s “zero tolerance” policy failed. The government moved swiftly and 90% of those targeted were found deportable; coordinated raids against parents with children took place in neighborhoods.

[ Rick: “He protects Americans, real Americans, and starts fulfilling his campaign promise to deport illegals. Not exactly a surprise since he’d been talking about that since the beginning. And come on, we’ve been ‘rounding up people’ forever.” ]

\*For a list of sources please visit [CuriousTheatre.org/wall-timeline](http://CuriousTheatre.org/wall-timeline). This information is current as of June 2019.

# Bios



**Celeste M. Cooper** (Gloria) is making her debut at Curious Theatre Company. Celeste is based in Chicago and one of Steppenwolf Theatre Company's newest ensemble members. Some theatre credits include: *BLKS*, *The Doppelgänger*, *Familiar*, and *A Doll's House, Part 2* (Steppenwolf), *Barbecue* (Strawdog Theatre); *Blues for an Alabama Sky* and *The Hard Problem* (Court Theatre), *Measure*

*for Measure* (Goodman Theatre), *Stick Fly* (Windy City Playhouse), *Never the Sinner* (Victory Gardens Theater), *The Mecca Tales* (Chicago Dramatists), *Our Lady of 121st Street* (Eclipse Theatre), *Ruined* (Eclipse Theatre), *The Hammer Trinity* (House Theatre/ Adrienne Arsht), *You On The Moors Now* (The Hypocrites) and her original one woman shows *Fight 4 Your Life* and *The Incredible Cece* (MPAACT and Stage 773). TV and Film credits include a recurring role as the medical examiner on *Chicago PD* (NBC), Spike Lee's *Chirag*, *Sense8* (NETFLIX), and is leading an upcoming indie feature called *Range Runners*. Celeste is also an ensemble member and casting associate with Eclipse Theatre Company. She has a B.A. in Speech Communications & Theatre from Tennessee State University and an M.F.A. in Acting from The Theatre School at DePaul University. She is represented by Paonessa Talent Agency.



**John Jurcheck** (Rick) has appeared at Curious as David in *The Luckiest People* and *Your Best One*, Timothy in *Hand to God*, Sam in *The Flick*, Stevie in *Good People*, Andrew in *Becky Shaw*, Big Stone in *Eurydice*, Wesley in *Curse of the Starving Class*, Cuffs in *The Denver Project*, multiple characters (and dialects) in *Mall Mart: The Musical!* and Shane Mungitt in *Take Me Out*. Other local credits include *This Is*

*Modern Art* (DCPA Off-Center), *Metamorphoses* (The Avenue Theater), *Bus Stop* (Paragon Theatre), *Wall of Water* (Hunger Artists) and several seasons with Stories on Stage. John has also performed at the Chance Theater in Los Angeles, at The Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and with the San Diego Children's Theatre. John has served in many capacities at Curious over the years; he's been a member of the

Artistic Company for over a decade and served as Associate Producer, helping to launch the Curious New Voices National Collective in 2014. This year, John and his wife Courtney founded Denver Collaborative Events and spend their days creating surprising theatrical experiences with a diverse collective of talented artists.

**Robert Schenkkan** (Playwright) is a Pulitzer Prize, Tony, and WGA Award winner and three-time Emmy-nominated writer. He is the author of sixteen plays: *All the Way*, *The Great Society*, *Building the Wall*, *Hanussen*, *Shadowplay*, *By the Waters of Babylon*, *Handler*, *A Single Shard*, *Devil and Daniel Webster*, *Lewis and Clark Reach the Euphrates*, *Final Passages*, *The Marriage of Miss Hollywood and King Neptune*, *Heaven on Earth*, *Tachinoki*, *the Dream Thief*, and *The Kentucky Cycle* (Pulitzer prize, Tony, and Drama Desk nominations). He has also written a collection of one-act plays, *Conversations with the Spanish Lady*, and a musical (book and co-lyrics), *The Twelve*, winner of the 2015 Henry Award. The 2014 Broadway production of *All the Way* swept the Awards season, winning the Drama Desk, Outer Critics, Drama League, and Tony Awards as well as the Steinberg/American Theatre Critics Award, the inaugural Edward M. Kennedy Prize, and Boston's Elliot Norton Award. It also set two box office records on Broadway. It aired in May 2016 as a film for HBO, with Steven Spielberg producing, directed by Jay Roach, and was nominated for eight Emmys and the Humanitas Prize. His films include *Hacksaw Ridge*, directed by Mel Gibson and starring Andrew Garfield, and *The Quiet American* directed by Phillip Noyce. TV credits include *The Pacific* (HBO miniseries; WGA Award, two Emmy and Humanitas Prize nominations), *The Andromeda Strain*, *Crazy Horse*, and *Spartacus*. Website: [www.robertschenkkan.com](http://www.robertschenkkan.com) Twitter: @ROBERTSCHENKKAN

**Lisa Boehm** (Stage Manager) has stage managed many shows at Curious including *Your Best One*, *Building the Wall*, *The Denver Project*, *For Better*, *A House with No Walls*, *Tempodyssey*, *Fiction*, *The War Anthology*, *Bug*, *The Dead Guy* (tour), *Take Me Out*, *Paris on the Platte*, *The Goat*, *Trumbo: Red, White and Blacklisted* (mainstage and tour), *Yellowman*, *Inventing Van Gogh*, *Bright Ideas*, *Nickel and Dimed* (mainstage and tour), *Proof*, *The Rest of the Night*, *Mineola Twins*, and *An Almost Holy Picture*. Lisa also assistant stage-managed Curious' *Cloud Tectonics* and *Fuddy Meers* and was board op for *Coyote on a Fence*. Lisa has stage managed Denver Stories for 7 years and several Curious New Voices festivals throughout its 16 years at

**Lisa Boehm** (*cont.*)

Curious. Lisa's other stage management credits include *Grapes of Wrath* (TheatreWorks), *The Underpants* and *Colorado Catechism* (Theatre Aspen), *Soccer Mom*, *That Woman Show* and *Girls Only* (The Avenue Theater), *Hamlet* and *Tartuffe* (National Theatre Conservatory), *The New Kid*, *Gretel & Hansel*, and *A Thousand Cranes* (Denver Center Theatre Academy). Lisa is the Finance Manager of Curious Theatre Company. Other work includes TV, film and video production including Office Production Assistant for the HBO feature *The Laramie Project* and Production Specialist for Rocky Mountain PBS.

**Kevin Brainerd** (Costume Designer) has designed eighteen shows for Curious: *The Intelligent Homosexual's Guide...*, *Detroit '67*, *Appropriate*, *Building the Wall*, the three-part *Elliot Plays*, *Sex With Strangers*, *Charles Ives Take Me Home*, *Lucky Me*, *Venus in Fur*, *Rancho Mirage*, *God of Carnage*, *Maple and Vine*, *Becky Shaw*, *Clybourne Park*, *Homebody/Kabul*, and *Opus*. Other designs include *A Doll's House* for Byers-Evans House Theatre Company (Out Front Colorado Marlowe Award winner, Colorado Theatre Guild Henry Award and True West Award nominations) and productions for Maya Productions and Ami Dayan, Colorado Shakespeare Festival, Boulder Ensemble Theatre Company, five seasons for Theatre Aspen, and University of Colorado – Boulder (The Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival Award for *You Can't Take It With You*). He has designed Off- and Off-Off- Broadway (Urban Stages, 59E59 Theaters, Common Ground Theatre, SoHo Rep. and The Adobe Theater) and regionally (Victory Gardens Theater, The Contemporary American Theater Festival, Theatrefest, Capital Repertory Theatre, Phoenix Theatre, The Yale Dramatic Association). Other work includes Broadway, feature film, television, opera and dance.

**Jason Ducat** (Sound Designer) has designed many shows at Curious including *Gloria*, *The Humans*, *Your Best One*, *Detroit '67*, *Appropriate*, *The Luckiest People*, *Venus in Fur*, *Good People*, *The Brothers Size*, and *Maple and Vine*. Jason worked as a resident sound designer at Denver Center Theatre Company where he designed *Glengarry Glen Ross*, *When Tang Met Laika*, *The House of the Spirits*, *Lord of the Flies*, *Shadowlands*, *Reckless*, *Superior Donuts*, *Heartbreak House*, and *Othello*. Other designs include *Henry IV*, *The Tempest*, *I Hate Hamlet*, *Macbeth* and *Richard II* (Colorado Shakespeare Festival); *Marat/Sade*, *The Winter's Tale* (Purdue University); *Lab Coats on Clouds* (Prague Quadrennial); *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (Elemental Theatre Company); *Sideways Stories from Wayside School* (Hope Summer Repertory Theatre); and *Tribulation and the Demolition Squad* (Chicago Dance Crash). Jason received his MFA in sound design from Purdue University.

**Shannon McKinney** (Co-Lighting Designer) has designed more than 25 productions at Curious including *Sanctions*, *The Intelligent Homosexual's Guide...*, *Building the Wall*, *Constellations*, *White Guy on the Bus* and *The Brother's Size*. Other designs include *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *Sin Street Social Club*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Electric Baby*, *Mamma Mia!*, *Sunday in the Park with George* (The Arvada Center for the Arts and Humanities), *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *Julius Caesar* (Colorado Shakespeare Festival), *The Snowy Day* (DCPA Theatre Company), and *Miss Bennet* (Boulder Ensemble Theatre Company). Regional designs include productions for Steppenwolf, The Goodman, The Court Theatre, Northlight Theatre, Lookingglass Theatre, Indiana Repertory Theatre, and The Alliance Theatre. Shannon has received seven CTG Henry Awards for Outstanding Lighting Design. She is a professor at The University of Denver Theatre Department.

**Jack Trembath** (Co-Lighting Designer) is going into his fourth year at the University of Denver as a theatre major focusing on acting and lighting design. He recently designed The Lamont School of Music's *Il Trittico* and the Senior Capstone *Seven Stages* at the University of Denver. He is currently working on Philomela Productions' show *Revolt. She Said. Revolt Again*. Jack also starred in Fearless Theatre's production of *Stop Kiss* as George. He is designing with Curious for the first time.

**Chip Walton** (Director, Producing Artistic Director) co-founded Curious Theatre Company in 1997 and has served as Producing Artistic Director for the entire history of the organization. Named Denver's "2005 Theatre Person of the Year," he has directed 50 shows for Curious over the past 21 years and his work has garnered more than 100 local and national awards. In 2008, Curious was honored with the Mayor's Award for Excellence in the Arts. Chip has served as the President and Vice President of the National New Play Network, a network of professional, non-profit theatres across the country dedicated to the development and production of new plays for the American theatre. Chip was also selected in the inaugural class of the Bonfils-Stanton Foundation Livingston Fellows, recognizing exceptional non-profit leaders with significant potential for contribution, change and leadership in Colorado's nonprofit sector; additionally, he served on the Board of Directors of the Bonfils-Stanton Foundation as their first Community Trustee. Chip has participated in the Visiting Professionals program at the Eugene O'Neill Theatre Center, as well as serving on the Leadership Group for *Imagine 2020: Creating a Future for Denver's Culture*. He has directed in the National New Play Network Showcase of New Plays, the Kennedy Center's MFA Playwriting

## Bios

### Chip Walton *(cont.)*

Festival in Washington, D.C., and accepted a National Theatre Company Award in New York for *Curious* from the prestigious American Theatre Wing. Most recently, Chip was honored to serve as a 2017 Aspen Ideas Festival Speaker.

**Actors' Equity Association** ("*AEA*" or "*Actors' Equity*"), founded in 1913, represents more than 49,000 actors and stage managers in the United States. Equity seeks to advance, promote and foster the art of live theatre as an essential component of our society. Equity negotiates wages and working conditions, providing a wide range of benefits, including health and pension plans. AEA is a member of the AFL-CIO, and is affiliated with FIA, an international organization of performing arts unions. The Equity emblem is our mark of excellence. [www.actorsequity.org](http://www.actorsequity.org)

# PROVASTIVE • POTENT • POETIC



Moses and Kitch stand around on the corner – talking shit, passing the time, and hoping that maybe today will be different. Everyday profanities are crafted into lyrical poetic riffs punctuated by police bullets in this provocative mash-up of a contemporary *Waiting for Godot* and the Biblical Exodus saga. *Pass Over* unflinchingly confronts the reality of young black men who hope only to survive yet dare to dream about a promised land.

Join us this fall for a crucial discussion about cycles of oppression, abuse of power, and young people looking for a way out.

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