

St MICHAEL'S PLAYERS

present

# PACK OF LIES

by

**Hugh Whitmore**

*50p*

This production is entered in the 1995 Hounslow Drama Festival

## PACK OF LIES

Hugh Whitmore's documentary drama, "An Act of Betrayal" was produced by the BBC in 1971 and was based on the circumstances surrounding the arrest in 1961 of Helen and Peter Kroger on charges of spying for the Russians.

Long after its transmission, the subject of his play continued to excite Whitmore's interest. To quote his own words: "In addition to the themes of loyalty and deception I became increasingly preoccupied with the role of the ordinary citizen in our society. Is it ever possible for the average, relatively powerless, man or woman to make anything more than a token stand against officialdom? Is it not potentially risky to allow the state (albeit for well-argued reasons) greater moral licence than the individual? Or is it, perhaps, naive to expect more than an approximate degree of truthfulness from governments and their spokesmen?"



*Pack of Lies* was first presented at the Theatre Royal, Brighton, on 11 October 1983 before moving to the Lyric Theatre, London, on 26 October of the same year.

The cast included Michael Williams and Judi Dench as the Jacksons and Larry Hoodekof and Barbara Leigh-Hunt as the Krogers.

"That a lie which is all a lie may be met and fought outright,  
But a lie which is part a truth is a harder matter to fight"

Tennyson: *The Grandmother*

**THE CAST**  
(in order of appearance)

Bob Jackson	Mervyn Jupe
Barbara Jackson	Fran Fox
Julie Jackson	Claire Murphy
Helen Kroger	Jane Atkinson
Peter Kroger	Mike Robinson
Stewart	Adam Richardson
Thelma	Ruth Reid
Sally	Carine Williams

The action takes place in the Jacksons' house

Act 1	December 1960
Act 2	January 1961

"The cruellest lies are often told in silence"

R L Stevenson: *Virginibus Puerisque*

*St Michael's Players*  
**Recent Productions**

1985	Spring Autumn	Table Manners Whose Life is it Anyway?
1986	Spring Autumn	Habeus Corpus Separate Tables
1987	Spring Autumn	See How They Run Living Together
1988	Spring Autumn	Night Watch The Magistrate
1989	Spring Autumn	On Monday Next Quartermaine's Terms
1990	Spring Autumn	Man of Destiny / Face the Music Alphabetical Order
1991	Spring Autumn	Mixed Doubles Present Laughter
1992	Autumn	Rough Crossing
1993	Spring Autumn	Round and Round the Garden The Deep Blue Sea
1994	Spring Autumn	Steel Magnolias Love Affair
1995	Spring Summer	Still Life Before Dawn

## THE COMPANY

Director	Peter Woods
Producer	Sue Darrieulat
Stage Manager	Dave Lye
Lighting	Chris Hulatt
Costumes	Mavis Smith
Set design and construction	Dave Lye Members of the Players
Business Manager	Chris Hulatt
Prompt	Kate Goatley
Sound	Denis Beresford
Printing	Chris Hulatt
Props	Carine Williams

## THE KROGERS AND THE PORTLAND SPY RING

Peter Kroger (real name Morris Cohen) was born in New York in 1910 and was educated at Mississippi and Illinois universities. He later fought against Franco in the Spanish Civil War where he was wounded in action. He married Helen (real name Lona) in America in 1941 and served in the American army in Europe during the second world war. Back in New York, they both worked for the spy ring that obtained America's atomic secrets, but when their colleagues, the Rosenbergs, were arrested in 1950 they made their way to England. Peter's new cover as an antiquarian bookseller enabled him to visit book fairs throughout Europe.

A disgruntled Polish Intelligence service officer told the CIA that the Russians had information about British anti-submarine defences and the CIA in turn alerted MI5 and Special Branch. The subsequent investigations became known as the Portland case, involving, among others, Harry Houghton, a clerk at the Naval base, Ethel "Bunty" Gee, a clerk in the Admiralty records office, and Gordon Lonsdale, a Canadian businessman.

The Krogers were implicated through their connection with Lonsdale but it was only after their arrest that an American journalist identified them from a newspaper photo.

The Portland case set off a number of spy scandals - The Vassall affair, the Profumo scandal, the arrest of George Blake and the defection of Kim Philby. The exchange of the Krogers in 1969 (for a lecturer accused of smuggling anti-Soviet literature) exasperated MI5.

The Krogers settled in Lublin, on the Russian-Polish border. Helen died in 1992 and Peter in Moscow in July of this year. They had no children.

## In 1960

- ♥ Britain decided to fund a supersonic passenger aeroplane, latterly known as Concorde.
- ♦ In South Africa, in March, 56 were killed at the Sharpeville massacre.
- ♣ A U2 spy 'plane, piloted by Gary Powers was shot down by the Russians over whose land space it was flying.
- ♠ *Psycho* with Anthony Perkins and Janet Leigh was premiered. It was no longer safe to go into the shower.
- ♥ After 80 years of Belgian rule, the Congo (now Zaire) obtained its independence.
- ♦ Aneurin Bevan, the architect of the NHS, died in July.
- ♣ The world's first woman premier was elected when Mrs. Bandaranaike took over the reins of power in Ceylon.
- ♠ Peter Hall launched The Royal Shakespeare Company.
- ♥ *Oliver!* opened.
- ♦ In November, JFK became the youngest and first Roman Catholic President of the USA.
- ♣ Clark Gable died at 59. He had a heart attack while making his final film, *The Misfits*



### *Acknowledgements*

Artwork by Deborah Jackson

Watercolours by Rene Clowes

"Dare to be true, nothing can need a lie;  
A fault, which needs it most, grows two thereby."

George Herbert: *The Temple*

**DON'T FORGET**

If you would like to join

**St Michael's Players**

or simply want to be on our  
mailing list

Please contact our secretary,

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