



Appomattox

Christopher Hampton

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4th March, 1865: On the night of his second inauguration, a few weeks before his assassination, Abraham Lincoln meets the veteran black abolitionist Frederick Douglass in the White House to discuss the prospect of extending the vote to black men who have served in the soon to be victorious Union armies.

4th March, 1965: In the White House, Lyndon Johnson, anxious to introduce a new Voting Rights Act, is briefed by his sinister and "unfirable" FBI director, J. Edgar Hoover, on the imminent Selma to Montgomery march, led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.. It is a demonstration prompted by a state trooper's murder of the young activist Jimmie Lee Jackson, in Marion, Alabama, following a rally in support of voter registration in Perry County.

In his ambitious new play, commissioned by the Guthrie Theater, Minneapolis as the centrepiece of a retrospective of his plays and films, Christopher Hampton traces a line which runs from the last days of a brutal Civil War to the high-water mark of the Civil Rights movement and on, all the way to the present day; and considers the agonisingly slow healing of a wound, universal, but especially deep and painful in America: racism.

Appomattox premiered at the McGuire Proscenium Stage in the Guthrie Theater on 5 October, 2012.

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