



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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*Transfiguration*

A Solo Play by [Michael Miller](#)

Performed by [Gary Hilborn](#)

Directed by [Graydon Gund](#)

Produced by Michael Miller (The Arts Press)

Videos by [Lucas Miller](#)

Stage Manager, [T. Rick Jones](#)



[Coming up in the United Solo Theatre Festival](#) at Theatre Row, 410 West 42nd Street, New York City, October 22nd, 7:30 pm

The United States, above all other countries, is beset with an epidemic of random killing, usually by a weapon which seems to have held a mythic aura in the American psyche since the arrival of the first Europeans. The gun is the weapon of choice for Americans who want to do harm, especially semi-automatic assault rifles which can be modified to be even deadlier than their makers' intentions. Most of us are exposed to the biggest massacres through the major media, the most recent of which are listed in the footnote below.<sup>1</sup> If the scope, circumstances, and number of dead and wounded are not sufficiently shocking, it is important to know that multiple and mass shootings, if not consistently a daily occurrence, occur regularly several times a week. These are only reported locally, because the limited body counts don't merit national attention. Only a few days passed without an incident during the month of September, 2018, and not

seldom multiple mass shootings occurred in one day, as one can see on [Gun Violence Archive](#). It is only too true that we are living in an age of random, senseless mass murders.

Since the health care and law enforcement systems have proven unable to identify individuals who should not have access to guns before they attempt to acquire them, the only viable limitation of these mass murders is to investigate the purchaser of a firearm when he actually initiates the sale. As we all know the legal framework behind such controls is very weak in the United States, because of lobbying by gun manufacturers and the greed of American legislators. The situation has been amply studied by psychologists, criminologists, and political commentators, to mention only a few.

Michael Miller, the author of *Transfiguration*, was not aiming to present an investigation comparable or even derived from the work of experts. The idea for *Transfiguration* came from something he observed over a decade ago at a seasonal local parade in the northern Berkshires. He saw two small boys, no older than nine at the most, patrolling the crowd with toy assault weapons in their hands, presumably with the approval of their parents. In places like New York and Los Angeles the police have been known to shoot before examining the toys closely enough to see what they are. Miller photographed one of the boys and continued to brood about the moment. "What could the boy have been thinking? He seemed to be surveying the crowd, perhaps singling out people he wanted to kill." This seemed like a very early start on the way to growing into a Cruz, or a Paddock, or a Mateen. The fantasy of power from holding an efficient weapon engenders an ultimately self-destructive thirst for murder which has now become so common that only a few incidents go beyond the local. Even the highly-publicized shootings grip the public's attention for no more than a few days. Then, complacently believing themselves to be safe, they return to their daily activities and small pleasures.

The protagonist and narrator of *Transfiguration*, Ralph Belard, is one of us, an Everyman in his self-centeredness and indifference. After being at the center of a senseless bullet-storm, of which he is the sole survivor, he shakes it off and moves on. *Transfiguration* is a play, artwork for the stage, seeking to explore the metaphysical absurdity of these destructive orgies we almost take for granted. The facts and figures are readily available, and so are many interpretations of them. The story-telling and moods created by playwright Michael Miller, director Graydon Gund, actor Gary Hilborn, and Lucas Miller's videos can also play their part.

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[Michael Miller](#) is a playwright, director, actor, and arts journalist. He is Artistic Director of [The Arts Press](#), which, in addition to producing plays, concerts, and exhibitions, publishes the online arts magazines [New York Arts](#) and [Hudson-Housatonic Arts](#). For the stage he has written the libretto of [Midi \(Medea\)](#), an opera with music by Pulitzer

Prize-winning composer, [Lewis Spratlan](#), and a full-length play, *Witzelsucht*, set in 1930s Cleveland. He studied Classics and Fine Arts at Harvard and Oxford, and theater at The Dramatists Guild (Gary Garrison and John Dietrich), HB Studios (Austin Pendleton), Atlantic Theater Company (Karen Kohlhaas), Shakespeare and Company, and with Grace Kiley. He divides his time between New York City and North Adams, MA

[Gary Hilborn](#) is an actor whose television credits include guest appearances in numerous hit series, including *The Sinner*, *Daredevil*, *The Blacklist*, *Quantico*, and *Blue Bloods*. Recent films include the award-winning feature *Jane Wants a Boyfriend* and the romantic comedy *In Stereo*.

His many stage credits include a run as Eddie Carbone in a New York production of Arthur Miller's modern tragedy *A View from the Bridge*, for which he was nominated for a Broadway World Award as Best Actor in a Play. He was recently seen in the New York premiere of Carol Carpenter's *Sweet, Sweet Spirit* at Manhattan Theatre Works, and he originated the role of Mickey Maloney opposite [Karina Arroyave](#) in her play *The Love Junkies of Hell's Kitchen*.

Gary has studied at the Atlantic Theater Company (founded by David Mamet and [William H. Macy](#)), as well as with Tony and Academy-Award winning actress [Mercedes Ruehl](#). He is the Founding Artistic & Managing Director of [The Southern Theatre Company](#) in New York City.

[Graydon Gund](#) New York directing credits include: *Golden Boy* (GK Arts Center), *Must Win* (Broadway Bound Fest), *Ginny* (Sam French Fest), *Summertime Sadness* (Ugly Rhino), *The Photo Album* (FringeNYC). Regional: *Nantucket the MusACKal* (SHIP / Deep End), *It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play* (White Heron). Assisting includes: *Fireflies*, *Most Beautiful Room...*, *Endgame* (Long Wharf Theatre), *A Wonderful Life*, *La Cage aux Folles* (Goodspeed Musicals), *Clybourne Park* (Chautauqua). Upcoming: *Plan G* with Randomly Specific Theatre

[Lucas Miller](#) is a filmmaker based in New York City. Of dual US-Italian citizenship, he has lived and worked across Europe. He took an interest in cinema from an early age, attending the 2008 Edinburgh International Film Festival as a member of the press when he was only eighteen (skipping his high school graduation ceremony so as not to miss a screener). His first feature-length documentary as Director of Photography, [Aterúe: The Singers from Elsewhere](#), is currently playing at theaters and festivals. In 2016, Lucas' documentary portrait of trans actress Jess Friedman, "Popcorn Princess," won Voter's Choice in the inaugural Everyday Humans competition. Formerly a supervisor at the beloved [Sunshine Cinema](#) in New York City's East Village (now sadly closed), he also worked as a film and literary events programmer at [Time & Space Limited](#) in Hudson, New York.

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**UNITED SOLO THEATRE FESTIVAL** is an annual international festival for solo performances held at the Theatre Row in the heart of the New York City theatre district on 42nd Street, currently in its 9th season. Fiona Shaw called United Solo "the mecca of the solo shows in the world." Over 130 participants from six continents will present their shows every day from September 13 until November 18, 2018. Numerous performances are already sold out. Through its mission, United Solo presents renowned artists as well as new talents, discovers original stories, connects artists with their audiences, exchanges diverse perspectives, fosters a dialogue for change, entertains, and now also educates through its professional training program led by distinguished artists and cultural icons. Artists and companies interested in being presented at The United Solo Festival in 2019 are now welcome to submit their applications online at [www.unitedsolo.org/submit](http://www.unitedsolo.org/submit)

1. **10 Killed - May 18, 2018** - Dimitrios Pagourtzis, 17, allegedly walks into an art class and begins firing, killing [8 students and 2 teachers](#) at Santa Fe High School in Santa Fe, Texas. t.

**17 killed - February 14, 2018** - [A former student unleashes a hail of gunfire at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida](#), killing at least 17 adults and children. Nikolas Cruz, 19, has been charged with 17 counts of premeditated murder.

**25 and an unborn child killed - November 5, 2017** - [A gunman opens fire on a small church in Sutherland Springs, Texas killing 25 people and an unborn child and wounding 20 others](#). The shooter, identified by two law enforcement sources as Devin Patrick Kelley, is found dead after a brief chase, but it's unclear if it was self-inflicted.

**58 killed - October 1, 2017** - In Las Vegas, [64-year-old Stephen Paddock](#) of Mesquite, Nevada, [sprays gunfire on a crowd of 22,000 concertgoers from the 32nd floor of the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino](#), killing 58 people and injuring almost 500. Witnesses say the gunshots last [sic] between 10 and 15 minutes.

**49 killed - June 12, 2016** - Omar Saddiqui Mateen, 29, opens fire inside Pulse, a gay nightclub, in Orlando. [At least 49 people are killed](#) and more than 50 are injured.

**9 killed - June 17, 2015** - Dylann Roof, 21, shoots and kills nine people inside the historic Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church, in Charleston, South Carolina. Eight die at the scene; a ninth dies at a hospital. Roof is arrested the following day; according to police, he confesses and tells investigators he wanted to start a race war.

**9 killed - October 1, 2015** - Gunman [Christopher Sean Harper-Mercer shoots and kills nine people](#), injuring another nine, at Umpqua Community College in Roseburg, Oregon. Six weapons were recovered at the school; another seven were recovered at Harper-Mercer's home.

**14 killed - December 2, 2015** - Married couple Syed Rizwan Farook and Tashfeen Malik open fire on an employee gathering taking place at Inland Regional Center in San Bernardino, California, [killing 14](#)

[people.](#)

**12 killed - September 16, 2013** - Shots are fired inside the Washington Navy Yard, killing 12.

**27 killed - December 14, 2012** - [Sandy Hook Elementary School](#) - Newtown, Connecticut. Adam Lanza, 20, guns down 20 children, ages six and seven, and six adults, school staff and faculty, before turning the gun on himself. Investigating police later find Nancy Lanza, Adam's mother, dead from a gunshot wound.

**12 killed - July 20, 2012** - [Twelve people are killed, and 58 are wounded in a shooting at a screening of the new Batman film in Aurora, Colorado](#). James E. Holmes, 24, dressed head-to-toe in protective tactical gear, sets off two devices of some kind before spraying the theater with bullets from an AR-15 rifle, a 12-gauge shotgun and at least one of two .40-caliber handguns police recovered at the scene.