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Stay home if you're that persnickety

By Craig Goldwyn

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So Chicago has demanded that the actors in the hit musical "Jersey Boys" stop smoking on stage, no doubt to remind the world of the time we busted Lenny Bruce for using naughty words and when we fined chef Doug Sohn for serving foie gras.

Apparently a person in the audience complained. This burns me up. This leads to a slippery slope. Next thing you know they will ban drinking on stage and that's the end of Eugene O'Neill and half the other playwrights I studied in college.

I have a better solution. The theater just needs to inform patrons of potentially problematic parts of a play so they can choose to stay away if they are allergic or will be offended. At the box office they just need to add this alert: "This play contains smoking. If this bothers you, stay home."

There is a precedent. Many playbills say "there are loud noises and flashing lights in this presentation" so people will not have heart attacks or other reactions. And movies tell us that "no animals were hurt in making this film."

While they are at it, the theater can please everyone by just adding some other warnings. Here are a few I think might prevent patrons from discomfort, because the last thing a playwright wants is to cause the audience discomfort:

There is cussing in this play.

There is kissing in this play.

Some of the actors in this play don't belong to the union.

There are bare ankles, nude neck napes and a quick glimpse of a male buttock.

There is shouting in this play.

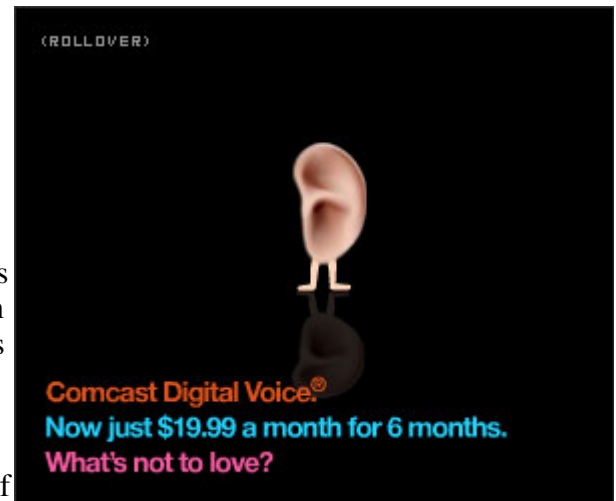
There is war in this play. With blood.

There are fried foods in this play.

And pork.

There is booze served during intermission.

And sugary beverages too.



There are politically incorrect words in this play.

There are politically correct words in this play.

There are people of races different from yours in this play.

Act 3 takes place in France.

Some of the costumes in this play were made in Mexico.

The director's maid may be an illegal immigrant.

The author of this play is gay.

And a Jew.

And the guy next to you didn't shower today.

And he has his cell phone on.

And he ate beans.

So why don't you just stay home and rent Snow White? Oh, sorry, I forgot.

Seven small men living together with a beautiful unmarried young woman. Try Bambi. Arrrrgghhh. Hunters. Dumbo? Nah, those black crows will really make you squirm. Lady and the Tra . . . Never mind.

Craig Goldwyn writes for AmazingRibs.com, where fatty pork is recommended.

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