

“INSIDE THE PLAY” GUIDE

JULY 9-21, 2024



LIVE ON STAGE!

**Inspired by the Hasbro board game
Based on the fan-favorite film
Directed by Casey Hushion**

**Based on the screenplay by Jonathan Lynn
Written by Sandy Rustin
Additional Material by Hunter Foster and Eric Price**

©2024 Hasbro. All rights reserved.

This “Inside the Musical” Guide offers supplementary curriculum containing educational content, interactive activities, opportunities for reflection, and resources based on the themes of the show *Clue*. This guide can be utilized before or after experiencing the show.

Questions? Reach out to educationprograms@5thavenue.org

Content Contributor: Beth Pollack

Graphic Design: Christa Fleming

The 5th’s “Inside the Musical” Guides are curated and developed by the Education and Engagement team:

Ariel Gomez-Bradler — Director of Education and Engagement

Amberlee Joers — Associate Director of Education

Aviona Rodriguez Brown — Associate Director of Engagement

Jessica Ellison — Education and Engagement Programs Manager

Miranda Quintanilla — Education and Engagement Coordinator

Albert Evans — Dramaturg

Beth Pollack — Dramaturg & Curriculum Specialist

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABOUT THE SHOW

Synopsis	3
Character Breakdown	4

ARTICLES

The Infinitely Adaptable “Clue” by Beth Pollack	5
McCarthyism & The Red Scare by Beth Pollack	6
From Forgotten to Phenomenon: The History of the 1985 Film by Beth Pollack	7

ACTIVITIES

Create Your Own “Clue” Character	8
--	---

CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION	9
--------------------------------------	---

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS	10
------------------------------	----

WORKS CITED	11
-------------------	----



SYNOPSIS

Based on the iconic 1985 Paramount Pictures movie which was inspired by the classic Hasbro board game, *Clue* is a hilarious farce-meets-murder mystery. The tale begins at a remote mansion, where six mysterious guests assemble for an unusual dinner party where murder and blackmail are on the menu. When their host turns up dead, they all become suspects. Led by Wadsworth — the butler, Miss Scarlet, Professor Plum, Mrs. White, Mr. Green, Mrs. Peacock, Colonel Mustard, and the maid Yvette race to find the killer as the body count stacks up.. *Clue* is the comedy whodunit that will leave both long-time fans and newcomers in stitches as they try to figure out...WHO did it, WHERE, and with WHAT!

CONTENT ADVISORY:

Clue Live on Stage is generally recommended for ages 12 and up and contains sexual suggestiveness, adult language, strobe light effects, gunshots, fake smoking, and simulated alcohol use

For more detailed information please visit
<https://www.5thavenue.org/shows/2023-2024/clue/>



CHARACTER BREAKDOWN



WADSWORTH

A British Butler



YVETTE

A French Maid



MISS SCARLET

A D.C. Madam



MRS. PEACOCK

A Senator's Wife



MRS. WHITE

A Tragic Woman



COLONEL MUSTARD

A Military Man



PROFESSOR PLUM

An Arrogant Academic



MR. GREEN

An Anxious Rule Follower

The Infinitely Adaptable



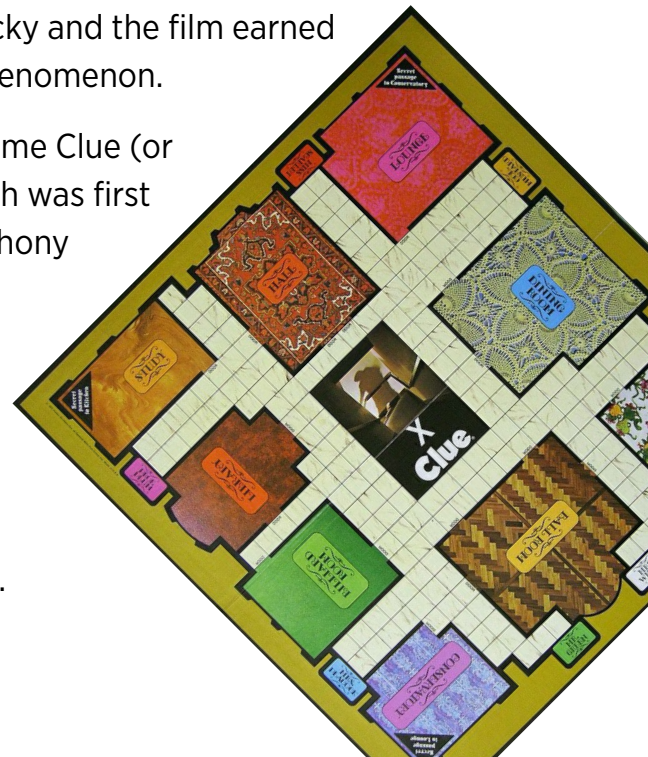
By Beth Pollack

***Clue* touts itself as a play based on a movie based on a game based on a book — but what does that actually mean?**

Sandy Rustin's 2020 adaptation of *Clue* has become one of the most popular scripts of the last few years; Rustin's *Clue* was tied for third on American Theatre Magazine's List of the 10 Most Produced Plays of 2022-23.

Rustin's version of the story is quite faithful to the fan-favorite 1985 film of the same name. While it's said that P.D. James, Tom Stoppard, Anthony Perkins, and even Stephen Sondheim were at one point linked to the development of the film's screenplay, it eventually fell to director Jonathan Lynn to finish the script. The movie's multiple endings were initially seen as gimmicky and the film earned mixed reviews but has since become a pop culture phenomenon.

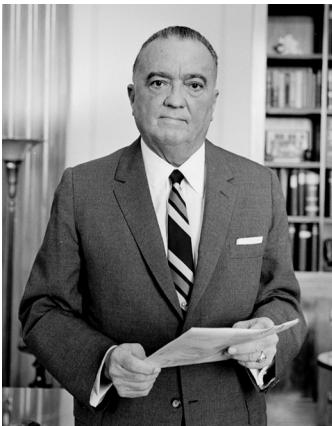
The film is, of course, inspired by the Hasbro board game *Clue* (or *Cluedo* as it is known outside of North America), which was first published in the United Kingdom in 1949. Creator Anthony E. Pratt, inspired by murder mystery games played in detective novels and the genre of country house mysteries, dreamed up the game while sheltering from air raids during the Second World War. Though not based on any particular book, famous literary detectives like Sherlock Holmes and Sam Spade were used in advertising for the board game over the years.



McCarthyism & The Red Scare

By Beth Pollack

While many audiences find enjoyment in the classic film *Clue*'s homage to slapstick comedy and others delight in its loving spoof of the murder mystery genre, it is considered by some to be a satire of conservative hypocrisy. As an extension of this legacy, playwright Sandy Rustin observes, "It is worth noting for context that this play takes place at the height of McCarthyism and the Red Scare. By definition, McCarthyism is the practice of making accusations of subversion or treason without proper regard for evidence. How apropos. No?"



Set in 1954 and released during the Reagan era, *Clue* makes several references to the tense political climate of its setting, including alluding to the watchful eye of J. Edgar Hoover and the oft-quoted line "Communism was just a red herring." The play preserves many of these movie moments,

but for modern audiences who may be encountering *Clue* for the first time nearly 40 years after the film's release and 70 years removed from the realities of McCarthyism, these references may feel bewildering and a quick recap of McCarthyism and the Second Red Scare may be in order.

The Second Red Scare refers to the period of time spanning from the post-WWII period into the Cold War, during which there was a sharp increase in public fear of communism. During this time, Senator Joseph McCarthy waged a campaign against alleged



communists in the US government and other influential institutions. Many people were blacklisted or lost their jobs during this time, although many of the accused were not in fact members of

the Communist Party. In 1954, McCarthy was involved in 36 days of televised investigative hearings that ultimately led to his downfall. During the hearings, the American public was able to witness his unscrupulous behavior firsthand, which, coupled with the ongoing condemnation of journalists and other politicians, turned the tide of public opinion against him. McCarthy was censured by the Senate in December of 1954 and was replaced as the chair of the Subcommittee on Investigations in January of 1955. Though his influence was vastly diminished, he continued to serve in the Senate until his death in 1957 and he remains a controversial historical figure.

As an extension of this legacy, playwright Sandy Rustin observes in the introduction to *Clue Live on Stage* that "it is worth noting for context that this play takes place at the height of McCarthyism and the Red Scare. By definition, McCarthyism is the practice of making accusations of subversion or treason without proper regard for evidence. How apropos. No?"

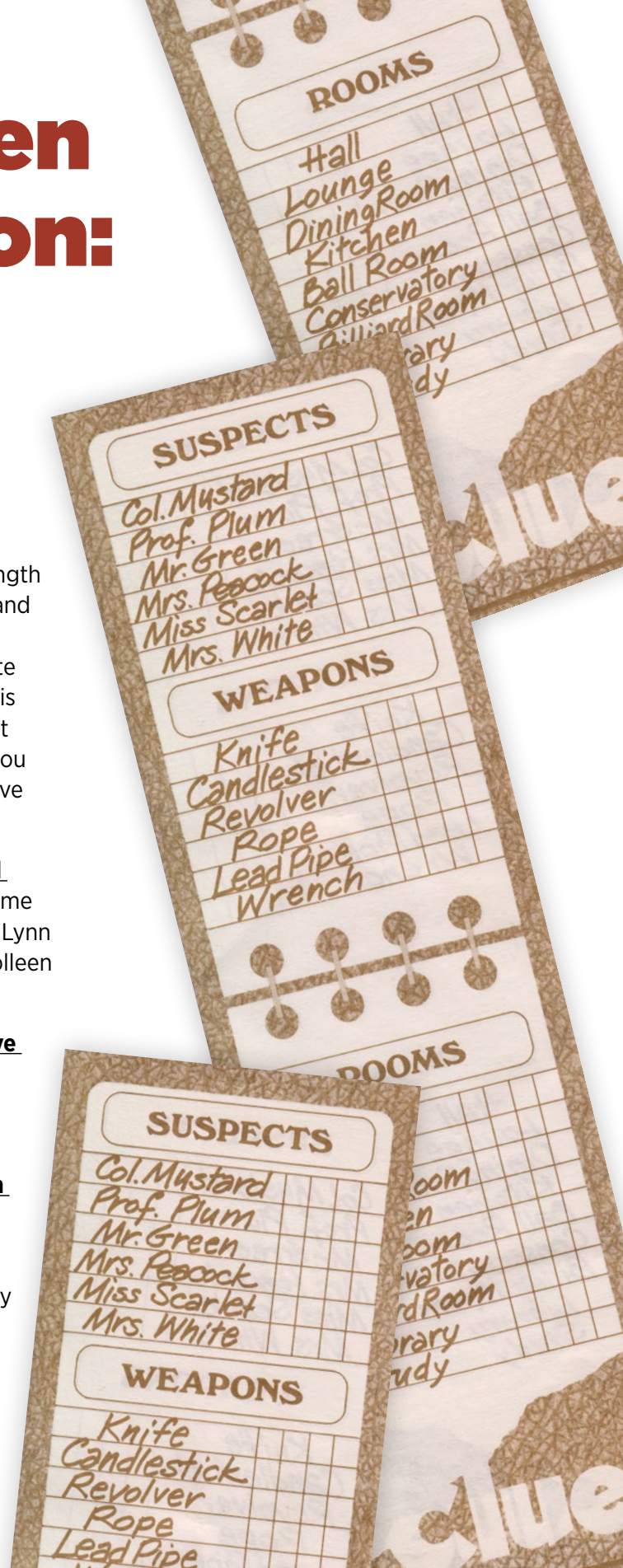
—Sandy Rustin, playwright

From Forgotten to Phenomenon: The History of the 1985 Film

By Beth Pollack

A board game may seem like unlikely fodder for a feature length film. After all, the classic game Clue has a mix of characters and locations (and weapons, of course) but arguably little in the way of story. Though the 1985 film Clue was not an immediate box office success, today it's a cultural sensation. How did this transformation occur? Luckily, the journey has been a subject of fascination for many of the film's devoted followers, and you can check out the information and oral histories that they have gathered over the years:

- **Red herrings, skateboards, and Carrie Fisher: An oral history of mystery classic Clue** — an interview with some of the team behind the 1985 film, featuring Johnathan Lynn (writer/director), Leslie Ann Warren (Miss Scarlett), Colleen Camp (Yvette), and Michael McKean (Mr. Green).
- **Lesley Anne Warren Answers Every Question We Have About Clue** — an interview with Lesley Ann Warren (Miss Scarlet) about the making of Clue and its enduring cultural impact.
- **The Crazy Story of How “Clue” Went From Forgotten Flop to Cult Triumph** — an article about the rise of Clue as a cultural phenomenon.
- **Who Done It: The Clue Documentary** — a documentary that delves into the behind-the-scenes story of the movie and includes interviews with the director and some of the actors in the 1985 film.



Create Your Own Clue Character

By Beth Pollack

Have you ever wanted to live inside your favorite board game? Here's your chance! Follow these simple steps to create your own Clue alter-ego.

1. Choose a name! Start with a title — here's a list to help you brainstorm beyond the titles already used in the classic board game:

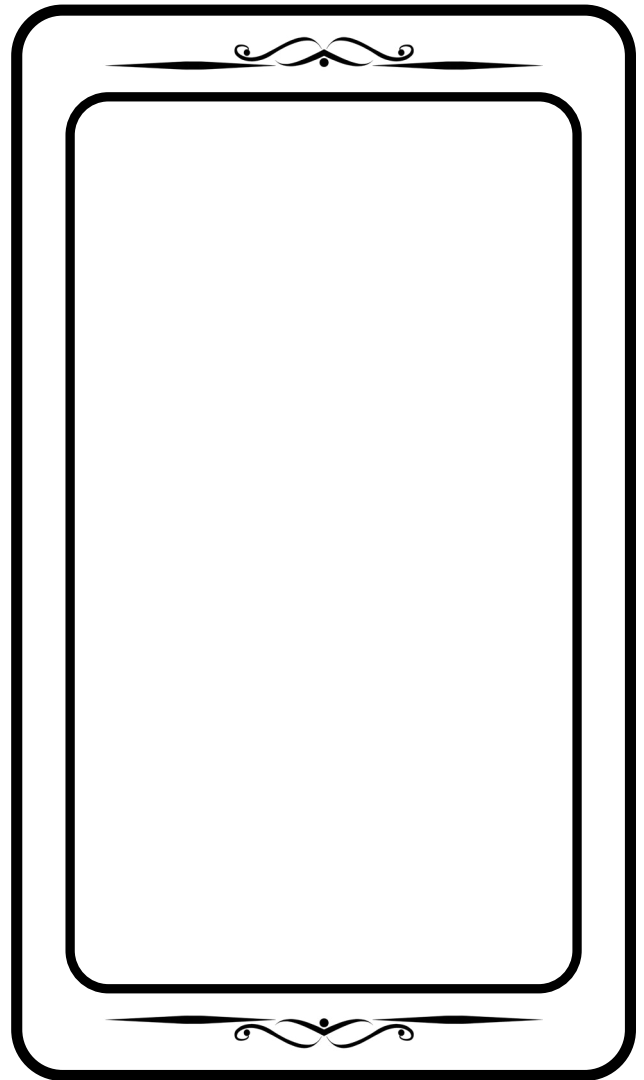
Madame
Reverend/Rabbi/Imam/Sensei
Sergeant
Lord/Lady
Inspector
Doctor
Mx.
Chancellor

2. Add a color. Get creative with a variety of hues and shades — here's some inspiration:

Magenta
Chartreuse
Fuchsia
Cerulean
Heliotrope
Indigo
Onyx
Taupe

3. Create a backstory for your character.

Why is your character at Boddy Manor?
What's their relationship to Mr. Boddy? Do they have a job at the Manor? In the film, all of the characters are being blackmailed — what secrets might your character have?



CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION

After you experience the show, reflect on the following questions:

- If you were familiar with the 1985 film, did the show seem similar to you? What differences did you notice, and how did you feel about them?
- *Clue* throws out a lot of...clues...through visual elements, sound design, and dialogue to hint at or foreshadow the events that will unfold. What were some of the production aspects that steered you towards the culprit? Did the show offer the audience moments to guess the culprit before the big reveal?
- *Clue* is based on the classic board game, and many of the characters, settings, and other elements of the story may seem quite familiar as a result. Were there any other aspects of the show that reminded you of playing the game? For example, were there moments when it felt like you were watching a character or characters were being moved by forces outside of their control (like a game player) or a moment when it felt like someone had a bad roll of the dice?
- Everyone at Boddy Manor has a secret and an ulterior motivation that ties them to the murders. Other than the culprit, which character do you think had the strongest or most suspicious motive and why?
- Comedic murder mysteries must strike a fine balance between humor and suspense. How did you feel about the balance between laughter and tension in *Clue*?
- Many murder mysteries and farces rely on stock characters, which are characters that rely on archetypal behavior and appearances to quickly communicate information about the character to the audience. What kinds of stock characters did you recognize among the suspects in *Clue*?

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS



Christa Fleming is a graphic designer whose experience spans over 25 years. She has worked with a number of Seattle area organizations, including: The 5th Avenue Theatre, ACT Theatre, Town Hall Seattle, Pratt Fine Arts Center, The Arboretum Foundation, Associated Recreation Council, Pasado's Safe Haven, Cornish, Book-It Repertory Theatre, Northwest Girlchoir, Navos, many independent schools, and more. She also crochets. A lot. You can check out her design work at christafleming.com.



Beth Pollack (she/her) is a Seattle-based performer, dramaturg, and teaching artist. She is the Dramaturg and Curriculum Specialist at The 5th Avenue Theatre. As a dramaturg, Beth has additionally worked with Seattle Shakespeare Company and Dacha Theatre. As an educator, Beth has worked with Seattle's Young Shakespeare Workshop, Seattle Children's Theatre, Seattle Shakespeare Company, Jet City Improv, Book-It Repertory, ACT Theatre, and Seattle Rep's Public Works Program. As an actor, you may have seen or heard her work with Seattle Children's Theatre, Village Theatre, Seattle Shakespeare Company, Book-It, Strawberry Theatre Workshop, or Dacha Theatre, where she is a proud company member. Beth graduated magna cum laude from NYU's Gallatin School of Individualized Study with a degree in Theatre Studies and the Historicization of Dramatic Literature, and would be happy to explain what that means. More at beth-pollack.com.

WORKS CITED

Ivie, Devon. "Lesley Ann Warren Answers Every Question We Have about Clue." *Vulture*, Vulture, 28 July 2021, www.vulture.com/2021/07/interview-lesley-ann-warren-clue-and-tim-curry.html.

Lenker, Maureen Lee. "An Oral History of 'clue,' the Classic Whodunnit." *EW.Com*, Entertainment Weekly, 13 Mar. 2023, <https://ew.com/movies/clue-oral-history/>.

"McCarthyism." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., 24 June 2024, www.britannica.com/event/McCarthyism.

Nayman, Adam. "The History-and Heart-of the Cult Movie." *The Ringer*, 25 Jan. 2021, www.theringer.com/movies/2021/1/25/22247710/cult-movies-history-definition-freaks-rocky-horror-picture-show-showgirls.

"Reagan, Hollywood, and the Red Scare." *The Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation & Institute*, www.reaganfoundation.org/education/curriculum-and-resources/resources/reagan-hollywood-and-the-red-scare/. Accessed 27 June 2024.

"Red Scare." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., 20 June 2024, www.britannica.com/topic/Red-Scare-politics.

Rustin, Sandy. *Clue*. Broadway Licensing Global, 2020.

Vary, Adam B. "The Crazy Story of How 'Clue' Went from Forgotten Flop to Cult Triumph." *BuzzFeed*, BuzzFeed, 10 Dec. 2015, www.buzzfeed.com/adambvary/something-terrible-has-happened-here-the-crazy-story-of-how.

Weinert-Kendt, Rob. "'clyde's' Is Most-Produced Play, and Lynn Nottage Most-Produced Playwright, of 2022-23 Season." *AMERICAN THEATRE*, 9 May 2024, www.americantheatre.org/2022/09/23/clydes-is-most-produced-play-and-lynn-nottage-most-produced-playwright-of-2022-23-season/.

"The Who behind Clue!" *The Scene*, The Scene, 3 Aug. 2022, <https://thescene.substack.com/p/the-who-behind-clue>.