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## ***12 Angry Men: About the Playwright***

Read the following excerpt from Vertigo Theatre about Reginald Rose, the writer of *Twelve Angry Men*.



Reginald Rose was born on December 10, 1920 in New York City. He attended City College from 1937 to 1938 but did not graduate. During World War II and shortly after, he served in the U.S. Army, from 1942 to 1946, ending his army career as a first lieutenant. In 1943, Rose married Barbara Langbart and they had four children.

After the war and continuing into the early 1950's, Rose worked as a clerk, publicity writer for Warner Brothers Pictures, and advertising copywriter. He also wrote short stories and novels but he never had any luck selling his work until he turned to writing plays for television and sold his first teleplay..

Twelve Angry Men was inspired by Reginald Rose's experience of jury duty on a case in New York City. At first he had been reluctant to serve on a jury, but he wrote, "The moment I walked into the courtroom and found myself facing a strange man, whose fate was suddenly more or less in my hands, my entire attitude changed." The Internet Movie Database quotes Rose's memories of this experience: "It was such an impressive, solemn setting in a great big wood- paneled courtroom, with a silver-haired judge, it knocked me out. I was overwhelmed. I was on a jury for a manslaughter case, and we got into this terrific, furious, eight-hour argument in the jury room. I was writing one-hour dramas for *Studio One* then, and I thought, wow, what a setting for a drama." The result is a tense, engrossing drama in which eleven jurors believe the defendant in a capital murder trial is guilty, while one juror stands up courageously for what he believes is justice and tries to persuade the others to his way of thinking.

Reginald Rose died in 2002 in Norwalk, Connecticut from complications of heart failure.

(Credits to Vertigo Theatre at <http://www.vertigotheatre.com/files/pdf/TWELVE%20ANGRY%20MEN%20STUDY%20GUIDE.pdf>).