

FACEBOOK TRIBUTES E. L. DOCTOROW

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July 22, 2015 ·

E. L. Doctorow (“Ragtime”) died yesterday. Known for his novels, he did write one play: “*Drinks Before Dinner.*” The NY Times obit described the play, “about a party of urbane New Yorkers that is hijacked by an existentially outraged guest with a gun, directed by Mike Nichols and starred Christopher Plummer, when it was first performed, in 1978 at the Public Theater in Manhattan.” . . .I didn't see the original production, but I staged the play as a reading a few times and assigned some of its stunning speeches to the acting students in my classes.

Though not a born playwright, Doctorow was playwright enough to understand that, in writing for the stage, dialogue requires a built in projectile quality on the page that the live actor can blast off with and detonate for a live audience. Amazing to me that the “*end of the world*” tone embodied by these sophisticated, super-articulate dinner partiers, resonates more than ever today. I would love to see an HBO production with world-class actors, capable of handling the language. Or. Same cast, on an audio CD. RIP, E.L.

