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## SHOW INFORMATION

*Mr. Confidential* is presented by The New York Musical Theatre Festival and Babyhead Productions, and was developed with the assistance of The York Theatre Company and The Anna Sosenko Trust. Starring Kevin Spirtas; with Amy Bodnar, Erin Leigh Peck, and Paul Michael Valley; and featuring Jane Blass, Joshua Dixon, Badia Farha, James LaRosa, Michael Marotta, Rachel Alexa Norman, Elyssa Samsel, and Aléna Watters. Book and Lyrics by Samuel Bernstein, Music by David Snyder, Producer Ronald Shore, Directed and Choreographed by Stephen Nachamie, General Manager Ryan Conway/Davenport Theatrical Enterprises (DTE), Musical Director Kevin Cole, Set Designer Alan Edwards, Lighting Designer Peter Bragg, Sound Designer Matt Kraus, Press Agent Jeremy Shaffer/The Publicity Office, Assistant Director/Associate Choreographer Donald Garverick, Production Stage Manager Aislinn Curry, Casting Cindi Rush, Graphic Designer Jeffrey Lee Holtzman, Video Designer Jeremy Blair/Blair Bones Media.

## SYNOPSIS

### ACT I

Ominous music. A projected blow-up of a tabloid:

#### **CONFIDENTIAL PUBLISHER KILLS WIFE & SELF!**

Then a total change of tone as dapper BOB HARRISON (KEVIN SPIRTAS) enters, singing about hot nightlife, and how much fun it is to be famous.

Then jump back to the beginning of Bob's story. He is taking photographs of his girlfriend JEANNIE (AMY BODNAR) for one of his girly magazines, *Titter*. There's a set, a crew, and sexy models everywhere, but Harrison is also surrounded by family—his doting older sister, EDITH (JANE BLASS), and Edith's two children, MARJORIE (ERIN LEIGH PECK) and MICHAEL (JAMES LaROSA). Then, the Postmaster General brands Bob's magazines obscene, and shuts him down.

He will be penniless unless he can figure out a new plan, and he makes a surprising discovery: people are obsessed with gossip. He hires HOWARD RUSHMORE (TBA), the alcoholic, drug-addicted, red-baiting friend of media titan WALTER WINCHELL (MICHAEL MAROTTA)—knowing it will whet Winchell's interest, and help the magazine. For Rushmore and his equally alcoholic wife FRANCES (RACHEL ALEXA NORMAN), it's actually a much-needed new start.

Bob launches *Confidential Magazine*, and it is a huge hit, but he alienates Rushmore by concentrating on Hollywood smut rather than anti-Communist articles.

Meanwhile, Marjorie is unhappy with being just a wife to FRED (JOSHUA DIXON) and mother. She takes over the Hollywood investigative arm of the company and starts loving the excitement, working with a mysterious informant, FRANCESCA di SCAFFA (ALÉNA WATTERS).

Trying to pull focus back to himself and his stories, Rushmore successfully stages a huge publicity stunt, pretending to be kidnapped by Communists.

Rushmore ends up alienating Walter Winchell as much as he does Bob, but then a twist: On a vacation in the Dominican Republic, news comes that Bob has been shot—the victim of a jealous playboy. It's a jungle love triangle and Bob is missing! Even his family doesn't actually know if he is dead or alive.

## INTERMISSION

### Act II

Bob arrives home safely, more famous than ever. His family is furious that he put them through worrying about him, and they don't buy his excuses that making them afraid for real made the stunt that much more believable to the public.

Marjorie doesn't mind though. She's busy with her own rise to success. Plus, her mother, Edith, believes something fishy is going on—is it money? Bribes? Marjorie and Bob want her to butt out. Then the State of California indicts them for Criminal Conspiracy to Commit Libel, and Obscenity, and Felony Perpetration of a Public Fraud.

The trial is a carnival of half-truths. The prosecution is only interested in putting the Harrisons out of business and punishing them. Bob and Marjorie keep a brave face—they actually haven't lied or published anything they believe is obscene. But the trial exposes family fissures and romantic tensions between Bob and girlfriend Jeannie.

A hung jury leads to an offer of settlement that includes no jail time, but would mean an agreement to shut down the magazine. Bob equivocates.

Then news comes that Rushmore has killed Frances and himself.

THAT is the headline that started the show. They just got it wrong, it wasn't **CONFIDENTIAL PUBLISHER** who killed his wife and himself; it was **EX-CONFIDENTIAL WRITER**.

For her part, Jeannie has had enough. She leaves Bob, as well as the whole *Confidential* merry-go-round. That finally snaps Bob out of his mania to keep the magazine alive at any cost. He agrees to give up his magazine for love of family and love of Jeannie. He proposes to Jeannie, as a new headline occurs to him: **LOVE BRINGS CONFIDENTIAL PUBLISHER BACK FROM THE DEAD!**

Does anyone really believe that Big Bob won't be back?

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NYMF is the flagship program of The National Music Theater Network, a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization, and is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and from the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency. Now celebrating its 11th year, The New York Musical Theatre Festival (NYMF) exists to revitalize musical theatre culture by discovering and promoting new musical theatre artists, producers and projects, nurturing a vibrant and innovative artistic community, and connecting one of America's greatest art forms with a diverse, contemporary audience.

*Mr. Confidential* is based on the book *Mr. Confidential: The Man, His Magazine & the Movieland Massacre That Changed Hollywood Forever* by Samuel Bernstein.