



MINE EYES has at its center the character of Albert Lawrence Tekton, advertising genius-turned-mouthpiece for the American white supremacist militia movement, who sold his employers' brand of paranoid and racist patriotism as easily as he had once sold soap or socks. But at the height of his influence, successful beyond his dreams, a violent subway encounter with young racists not only broke his body but forced him to face the real cost of the hatred he had spread. Now, after several years of self-exile, a reporter has tracked Tekton down, and Tekton agrees to confess his story in order to find a way to redeem himself and rejoin the human race.

Though on the surface MINE EYES is a cautionary tale about the corruption of wealth and pride, Tekton's journey digs right into the core paradox of being American: the constant wrestle in the American heart between freedom and security. Real democracy, where we take full responsibility for all our actions and inactions, is a frightening experiment because if everything fails, we have no one to blame and shame but ourselves. And since Americans, like most humans, hate to feel blame and guilt, we also harbor a lean toward fascism and "security" so that we can palm off onto a "them" out there some of the anxiety that comes with being imperfect democrats in a chaotic world that often does not treat us as the "chosen" people we think we are.

What audiences will find when they take Tekton's journey is how one human being learns to resist the urge for "security" and live with the contradictory gift of being a free and faulty human being -- a message made very urgent by our own country's recent slide toward oppression and empire-building.

- Michael Bettencourt, playwright