



## [A View from the Bridge](#), by Arthur Miller

### **In A Nutshell**

*A View from the Bridge* tells the story of Eddie Carbone, a Brooklyn longshoreman, whose incestuous love for his niece drives him to his own destruction. Playwright Arthur Miller first heard the story while doing research in Red Hook, Brooklyn for a totally different project. It wasn't even a play. The celebrated director, Elia Kazan, Miller's long time friend and collaborator, had hired Miller to write a screenplay. It was to be called *The Hook*, and was supposed to expose all the corruption going down in the docks of Red Hook. It was a bad scene – evil mob bosses, corrupt union leaders, you name it. Miller didn't end up writing the screenplay, though, because his arch nemesis, the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), led by Senator Joe McCarthy, pressured Columbia Pictures to turn the evil mob bosses into evil communists. Miller said, heck no, and quit the project. Kazan ended up going ahead with a different screenwriter. The film became the famous *On the Waterfront*, starring Marlon Brando. (Learn more here.)

HUAC actually caused a lot more trouble for Miller. He was called before the committee and asked to name names of suspected communists. He refused and has been lauded by the artistic community ever since. Kazan was called too, but unlike Miller, he named names when asked to do so. This caused a major falling out between the two. They didn't work together again for many years after that.

Some say that Miller and Kazan are metaphorically fighting it out with *A View from the*

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*Bridge* and *On the Waterfront*. In Miller's play the protagonist, Eddie, chooses to call Immigration on his wife's illegal cousins. He's reviled for this naming of names just like Kazan. In *On the Waterfront*, though, Marlon Brando's character, a dock worker like Eddie, ends up blowing a whistle on all the corruption. Unlike Eddie, when he names names he's viewed as a hero. Coincidence? We think not. If you want to learn more about the notorious HUAC check out Shmoop History's "Cold War: McCarthyism Red Scare." For more information on Arthur Miller and his views on the HUAC, take a look at Shmoop's guide to Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*.

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## Big Picture Study Questions

- 1 How would the play be different if the characters were descended from another culture? What if they were Mexican or Irish for example?
- 2 Is honor worth dying for?
- 3 How is *A View from the Bridge* similar to classical tragedies? How is it different?

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