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Unseen Arthur Miller drama set for world premiere

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The Hook, which Miller originally wrote as a film, never made it to the big screen due to political tensions in the US.

Miller went on to use the same setting in his classic 1955 play A View From the Bridge.

The Hook will open at Northampton's Royal and Derngate theatre next June.

It will then have a run at Liverpool's Everyman Theatre in July.

Director James Dacre began researching and collating copies of Miller's "play for the screen" six years ago.

"Even though what he has written has the scale of cinema, it's a piece that translates very directly to a stage production," he told the BBC.

"What makes it a very prescient story to both Liverpool and Northampton is that they are both industrial centres exploring extraordinary levels of immigration and social change."

Adapted for the stage by Ron Hutchinson, The Hook tells the story of Marty Ferrara, a longshoreman (dockworker) who challenges the gangsters and corrupt officials who control Brooklyn's waterfront.

'Extraordinary integrity'

Dacre describes Marty as "one of Miller's great men".

"What fascinates me about the piece is that Miller clearly had a sense that so many of its themes would endure today," he said.

Miller - who died in 2005 - and producer and director Elia Kazan had wanted to film *The Hook* in the early 1950s.

But the project was abandoned after Miller was urged by Hollywood executives to make communists the villains of the piece.

"There was enormous pressure on him to conform to the political climate of that age," said Dacre.

"Miller was a man of extraordinary integrity. He was absolutely determined to depict the work as it was rather as other people demanded he describe it."

The play, a co-production with Liverpool's Everyman, coincides with the centenary of Miller's birth.

Dacre said: "I'm aware of several productions by exciting companies across the country which will doubtless shed new light upon the idea of Miller as a writer, thinker and a major figure of the last century."

Other plays in the Royal and Derngate's 2015 season include Shakespeare's *King John*, which will be staged in Northampton's Holy Sepulchre Church to mark the 800th anniversary year of the Magna Carta, and a new version of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* by Dawn King.

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