

# Former CIA Director Jim Woolsey Takes to the Stage in *John Goldfarb, Please Come Home*

By Daniel D'Addario • 11/19/12 6:10pm



There are many paths one can take after leading the CIA. George H.W. Bush went on to become president; Porter Goss is a draw on the lecture circuit; Leon Panetta is now the secretary of defense; and, once the ongoing scandal over his indiscretions has abated, David Petraeus will land either a book deal or a lucrative private-sector post, and probably both.

Jim Woolsey has chosen the stage.

R. James Woolsey Jr., the director of central intelligence under President Clinton from 1993 to 1995, has lately been appearing in workshop presentations of the Broadway-aspiring musical *John Goldfarb, Please Come Home*. The musical, which until recently put on its workshops at the Cutting Room on East 32nd Street, is based on *The Exorcist* author William Peter Blatty's novel about a pilot lost in the Middle East. Mr. Woolsey, not stretching at all, plays a CIA director named Heinous Overreach.

“They figured the vocal requirements were not so significant as long as I could carry a tune, and it would be fun to have a former director, from time to time, play *Heinous Overreach*,” Mr. Woolsey told the Transom. He met John Goldfarb co-lyricist Michael Garin while the latter was playing piano at Elaine’s. Mr. Woolsey requested “Dixie Chicken,” a favorite song of his (he performs it in the video below), and the rest was history. When it comes to how his onstage role differs from the real deal, Mr. Woolsey noted that “the job of that person is not to make policy recommendations, and I didn’t, and most directors don’t. The job is to steal secrets from enemies of the United States and prepare intelligence reports for the country’s leaders.” In the play, he added, “*Heinous Overreach*, as his name suggests, gets off into making recommendations in terms of policy, and I guess what I’d say is he would make the most hawkish member of today’s Congress look like George McGovern.”

[youtube <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nBusGdZe4n4>]

Mr. Woolsey commented only in broad terms about the Petraeus scandal. When asked about whether a CIA director could expect his private life to remain private, he noted, “In those jobs, you’re in a kind of bubble occupied by your staff and your security people and the people you see all the time, and when you see the outside world, your security people are present. So it’s a curious kind of relationship with the world, where the people that work for you, you see a lot, and the outside world is a bit more formal and scheduled.”

Not that such formality or scheduling currently inhibits Mr. Woolsey, some 17 years removed from the job. Whether the show ends up on Broadway or remains in workshops around town, he will remain in Annapolis, coming to town for occasional performances. “I’d be delighted to hop on the *Acela* once or twice a month,” he said. “I have two new granddaughters who live in New York with their parents, so my wife and I are in New York a fair amount.”

And what sort of performance might the audience expect? “What I’m going to do—you might be pushing it a bit to call it performing,” Mr. Woolsey replied. “I will do my best to carry a tune up there and remember my lines.”

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