

NYC
AROUND
TOWN



CHERYL BENTON
NYC AROUND TOWN

The tomato behind The Three Tomatoes. Cheryl Benton, aka the “head tomato” is founder and publisher of The Three Tomatoes, a digital lifestyle magazine for “women who aren’t kids”. Having lived and worked for many years in New York City, the land of size zero twenty-somethings, she was truly starting to feel like an invisible woman. She created The Three Tomatoes just for the fun of it as the antidote for invisibility and sent it to 60 friends. Today she has thousands of friends and is chief

Church & State – So Much More than Just a Play

BY **CHERYL BENTON** · APRIL 14, 2017



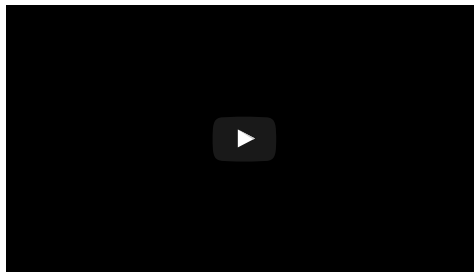
Rob Nagle. Photo by Russ Rowland.

The politics of gun control is the topic of this brilliant play now at New World

cheerleader for smart, savvy women who want to live their lives fully at every age and every stage. Because she's lived a long time, her full bio won't fit here. If you want the "blah, blah, blah", read more.

www.thethreetomatoes.com/about-the-head-tomato

Stages. It's brilliant on many levels. It's funny, it's poignant, it will make you cry, and it will make you think. The cast is superb, especially the outstanding **Rob Nagle** as the conflicted senator who changes his position on gun control after a shooting in his children's school. It's also brilliant because it's starting conversations on both sides of the issue. And perhaps most important it is hopefully furthering steps towards action with support from groups like Everytown.org and SandyHookPromise.org and celebrity star power like **Julianne Moore** who did a talk back after one of this week's shows (watch the video).



I first heard about this play over lunch with the producer, **Charlotte Cohn** whose husband, **Jason Odell Williams**, an award-winning TV writer, happens to be the playwright. Charlotte spoke passionately about this play and why it was so important to her and Jason to see it produced in NYC, after a successful run in LA last year. I knew then this would be more than just a play.



Jason Odell Williams and Charlotte Cohn

In an interview for [Hollywood Revealed](#) Jason said the idea for the play began for him after the shooting massacre at Virginia Tech in 2007." I went to UVA, so the images on TV of candlelight vigils by my Cavaliers for our rival Hookies touched me profoundly. Then Tucson happened, and I watched the news, riveted and angry. Then Aurora. And I watched again, riveted and angry. Then Newtown. And I'd had enough. A month later, in January 2013, I had a first draft of what would eventually become *Church & State*."

Well bravo to Charlotte and Jason. The show is powerful, it's moving audiences, and getting [wonderful reviews](#). I laughed, I cried, and sat in stunned silence with the rest of the theatre before we all broke out in applause.

This is a must see show tomatoes....and bring someone whose position on gun control is different from yours to see it too. Check for shows with talk backs too.

[Church and State](#) . Now playing at New World Stages, 340 West 50th Street, between 8th & 9th Avenues