

I CAN GET IT FOR YOU WHOLESALE

SHOW GUIDE



WELCOME

We're delighted to share this Show Guide for *I Can Get It for You Wholesale*, which gives you a deeper look into this production.

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A NOTE FROM JILL RAFSON

CSC PRODUCING
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

I Can Get It for You Wholesale comes to Classic Stage Company after a long journey into the theatrical canon.



In 1937, Jerome Weidman wrote the novel that started it all, adapting it to the stage for a 1962 Broadway premiere with songwriter Harold Rome. In the intervening years, *Wholesale* has been largely ignored – beyond the occasional association with giving a young Barbra Streisand her start. Why has *Wholesale* been awaiting its return to the spotlight for so long?

It's fair to say that *Wholesale* was overshadowed in its own time. Opening in proximity to future classics like *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* and *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (in what was surely a peak moment for lengthy musical titles), *Wholesale* was a tougher show to explain,

not fitting into any particular category. Like *How to Succeed*, it had a main character who made questionable decisions. Like *Forum*, it played with the tropes of musical comedy. And like both, it had a killer role for its leading man. And perhaps not incidentally – *Wholesale* was very Jewish. A couple of years before *Fiddler on the Roof* would make it to Broadway, this was no small thing.

Harkening back to yet one more classic musical, *Wholesale's* Harry Bogen had a lot in common with *Pal Joey's* Joey Evans – these rakes didn't always treat the people around them well, and audiences at the time often had trouble digesting that kind of behavior.

So what makes 2023 the perfect moment to finally bring Harry and his misdeeds back? We're living in a time when anti-heroes like Joey or Harry are not so much the exception as the rule. Looking across stage, screen, and literature, our culture is littered with cads and ne'er-do-wells (and that's not accounting for the less fictional characters). We're not repelled by these characters anymore – we want to understand them. And in this reimagined *Wholesale*, Harry's first-person narration from the novel has been restored, giving us direct access to what makes him tick.

Wholesale may have arrived at the tail end of Broadway's Golden Age, but it was already ahead of its time. Today, it's not just the garment industry that finds itself full of Harry Bogens. Perhaps by engaging with Harry on his own terms, we'll find that he's as fitted to today as a well-tailored suit.

A NOTE ON LABOR MOVEMENTS



I Can Get It for You Wholesale starts with a strike. A strike not unlike the 252 others that have occurred in the US between January 2023 and August 2023. Among these labor actions, the strikes in the entertainment industry demonstrate some of the concerns currently facing workers nationwide.

In the past few months, every major American city has witnessed workers from UPS, Amazon, Starbucks, hotel chains, and entertainment companies going on strike in what is being nicknamed "Hot Strike Summer." You may have noticed that your favorite late night television show is airing reruns instead of new episodes or that the new season of the show you and your family watch together is "delayed indefinitely." This pause is due to a nationwide action taking place where members of the Writers Guild of America and the Screen Actors Guild are striking in favor of a contract that gives writers and actors in Hollywood increased compensation and job security.

In May of 2023, contract negotiations between the WGA (Writers Guild of America-

the union that represents television and film screenwriters) and the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers broke down, leading the WGA to go on strike. After about two months, the Screen Actors Guild and the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA) also went on strike, making this the first time that both Hollywood's writers and actors have gone on strike together since 1960.

Since the last strike, technology has drastically changed the way that we create and consume entertainment. A major reason the WGA and SAG-AFTRA are striking has to do with the way writers and actors are compensated for work showcased on streaming services.

Typically, an actor or writer will be paid up front for their work on a show, and then they are paid residuals – additional money after their work is distributed. When a television show airs on a network, the actors and writers involved are paid a percentage of the network's profits – if the project does well, the creatives are paid more. These days, streaming services tend to pay the upfront cost for the creatives' work but pay far less for residuals. Streaming has also meant that more shows are being produced on a more fluid

production schedule, with fewer episodes per season, with entire seasons being released at one time. This has led to less job security, fewer opportunities for career advancement, and falling pay despite rising living costs. Workers are also striking to ensure that production companies do not use AI (Artificial Intelligence) to replace writers and actors. With the emergence and popularization of AI to create content, there are many unknowns as to how the technology will be used to replicate and remix the work of actors and writers. This has led to concerns over AI replicating an actor's image or rewriting a writer's work without their consent.

In July 2023, the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) – the union that represents about 1,500 stagehands, hair and makeup artists, and wardrobe personnel – narrowly avoided a strike after reaching a tentative contract agreement with the Broadway League and Disney Theatrical Productions.

As of September 2023, more than 320,000 workers have gone on strike across varying industries including health, service, railway, automobiles, and entertainment. This "Summer of Strikes" is leading many to wonder how and why the issue of compensation and working conditions

led to this nationwide movement. Now audiences will have to wait and see if an agreement can be reached, and if the writers and actors can return to creating entertainment.

THE WORLD OF THE PLAY

I Can Get It for You Wholesale is a musical with music and lyrics by Harold Rome and a book by Jerome Weidman adapted from the 1937 novel of the same name, also by Weidman. It has been revised by Jerome's son, John, for this production.

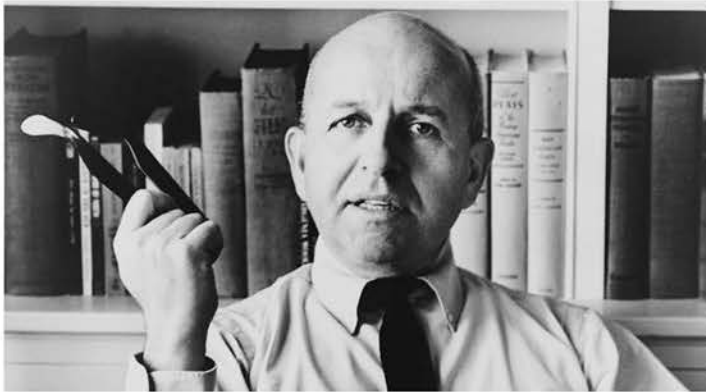
THE ORIGINAL WRITERS



Harold Rome

Harold Rome (music and lyrics) was born in Hartford, CT in 1908. He worked as an architect before becoming a Broadway composer and lyricist. He wrote musicals

and musical revues both alone and in collaboration with other notable writers of the Golden Age. He is best known for writing the music and lyrics for the feature films *Anchors Aweigh* and *Rear Window*, and the Broadway shows *Fanny*, *I Can Get It for You Wholesale*, *Pins and Needles*, *Sing Out the News* with George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart, and *Wish You Were Here*, among others.



Jerome Weidman, courtesy of Music Theatre International

Jerome Weidman (book) was born in New York City, NY in 1913. His work explored the "rough underside of business and politics – and daily life – in New York City" (*The New York Times*) and included the novel and subsequent libretto for the Broadway musical of *I Can Get It for You Wholesale*, other Broadway shows including *Tenderloin* and Duke Ellington's *Pousse-Café*, and more than 10 film and TV projects, including *House of Strangers*, *The Damned Don't Cry*, and others. Like *Wholesale*, much of his work for the stage or screen was

adapted from his earlier novels. He won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1960 for *Fiorello!* (with music by Jerry Bock and lyrics by Sheldon Harnick).

THE STORY OF THE STORY

The opening stage direction describes the world of the Garment District in the 1930s as "a boundaried area within which America's dresses are manufactured by firms owned, operated, and staffed entirely by Jews."

The first known Jewish immigrant to New York City, Jacob Barsimson, arrived with the Dutch West Indies Trading Company in 1654. Just one month later, the first group of Jewish refugees arrived, fleeing persecution during the Inquisition. The most significant wave of Jewish immigration was from the 1880s through the 1920s, when over 2 million Jewish people fled persecution and came to New York City (the vast majority directly to the Lower East Side).



Jewish family working on garters in kitchen of tenement home, courtesy of Library of Congress

In addition to introducing bagels to the New York City palate, many Jewish immigrants brought skills as tailors from the old country and found employment in the garment industry. This was no coincidence; due to prejudice, the garment industry was one of few where Jewish workers could find employment.

Despite the fact that Jewish entertainers are responsible for some of the best-known American music and cinema of the 20th century, many, including Bob Dylan (Robert Allen Zimmerman) and Mel Brooks (Melvin Kaminsky), anglicized their names in order to eschew the limitations they would have faced due to antisemitism.

When they were not working, many of the children of immigrants found themselves caught between the "Old" and the "New" as they juggled their parents' expectations and traditional family responsibilities with the individualism of America and the excitement of being young in New York City.



Women on the Picket Line at the "Uprising of the 20,000," February 1910, courtesy of Library of Congress

Workers gathered again in 1911, led by queer activist Rose Schneiderman, to protest the devastating fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory that took the lives of 146 workers (123 women and girls, nearly half of whom were Jewish, and 23 men).



Rose Schneiderman, courtesy of National Photo Company Collection and Library of Congress

By the turn of the 20th century, more women were earning a living in factory settings and the fashion industry than ever before. Unwilling to be exploited due to their gender, in 1909 they fought sexism to secure better working conditions and pay in "The Uprising of the 20,000."

By 1910, 70% of women's clothing and 40% of men's clothing in America was made in NYC, primarily downtown, in the warehouses of Greenwich Village and Soho and tenement sweatshops of the Lower East Side. But all of that was about to change.



Fifth Ave. hotels, New York, N.Y., courtesy of Detroit Publishing Company photograph collection (Library of Congress)

SHALL WE SAVE NEW YORK?

A Vital Question To Every One Who Has Pride In This Great City

SHALL we save New York from what? Shall we save it from unnatural and unnecessary crowding, from depopulated sections, from being a city unbearably crowded from refts, from excessive and illy distributed taxation? We can save it from all of these, so far at least as they are caused by one specified industrial evil—the erection of factories in the residential and amusement retail section.

The Factory Invasion of the Shopping District

The factories making clothing, clothes, hats, fur, portieres, etc., have forced the large stores from one section and followed them to a new one, displacing it all or in part, and filling in what big buildings displacing homes.

The fate of the section down town now threatens the fine residential and shopping district of Fifth Avenue, Broadway, upper Sixth and Madison Avenues and the great streets. It is a serious concentrated concentration of business along side. The evil is constantly increasing; it is growing more serious and more difficult to handle. It needs instant action.

The Trail of Vacant Buildings

Shall the few scattered vacant sections in the world, from Third-Stry Street north, become blighted the way the old part of New York has been?

The better whorled and retail districts are deserted, and there is now enough vacant space to accommodate many times over the manufacturing plants of the city. If our modern factory buildings are required, why not encourage the erection of such structures in that section instead of creating factory buildings in the midst of our homes and fine retail sections.

NOTICE TO ALL INTERESTED

I N view of the facts herein set forth we wish to give publicity to the following notice: We, the undersigned merchants and such other persons who may later join us, will give the preference in our purchases of such cloths, furs, trinkets, perfumery, etc., in forms now limited to the retail trade, to any firm or person who shall erect a house bounded by the upper end of Third-Stry Street, Fifty-ninth Street Third and Seventh Avenues, also including third street and thirty-third street, from Sixty to Seventy-two feet wide.

February 1st, 1917, is the time that this notice goes into effect, so as to enable manufacturers now located in this zone to secure other quarters, and those who have no place to go to give up their place, removes their plants from this zone. This plan will ultimately be for the benefit of the different manufacturers in the above mentioned zone, as among other reasons they will have the benefit of lower rentals.

LOUIS C. TAYLOR JAMES H. SIMON & CO.
ARTHUR CONSTATABLE & CO. SAKS & CO.
BOWMIT BROTHERS L. GIBBY & CO.
JAMES BRIDGEMAN & CO. STEIN BROTHERS
J. M. MACY & CO.

Warranted At Herman & Crosby & Crosby & Crosby & Crosby & Crosby & Crosby & Crosby & Crosby & Crosby &	At New York Herman & Crosby & Crosby & Crosby & Crosby & Crosby & Crosby & Crosby & Crosby & Crosby &	Hobart & Hobart & Hobart & Hobart & Hobart & Hobart & Hobart & Hobart & Hobart & Hobart &	W. & S. Green W. & S. Green W. & S. Green W. & S. Green W. & S. Green W. & S. Green W. & S. Green W. & S. Green W. & S. Green W. & S. Green	Bonding Brokers Bonding Brokers Bonding Brokers Bonding Brokers Bonding Brokers Bonding Brokers Bonding Brokers Bonding Brokers Bonding Brokers Bonding Brokers
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We, the Citizens, Merchants and Civic Bodies to co-operate and send letters endorsing this plan to the committee, care of J. H. Burton, chairman, 267 Fifth Avenue.

March 15, 1916, courtesy of The New York Times Photo Archives

The FAA boycotted garment factories, passed the first zoning law in the nation in 1916, and effectively quarantined the garment industry to one part of the city: a newly-created Garment District stretching from 5th Avenue to 9th Avenue between 34th and 42nd Streets.

STITCHING DREAMS

THE GARMENT DISTRICT'S LEGACY

I Can Get It for You Wholesale transports its audience to the bustling streets of New York City's Garment District during the 1930s, where a remarkable transformation was underway, giving birth to the golden era of American fashion. This era prioritized craftsmanship, sustainability, and individuality in clothing over mass production and fleeting trends. The district, which stretched from 34th Street to 42nd Street between Broadway and 9th Avenues, was a hive of creativity and ingenuity. By 1931, the area boasted the world's highest concentration of clothing manufacturers.



"The Garment Worker" by Judith Weller, courtesy of CSC

Among the various communities that played a significant role in shaping the Garment District's success, Jewish immigrants were key contributors, bringing with them a rich legacy of textile skills. Many of them had experience in tailoring, dressmaking, and pattern-cutting from their home countries, which often included Russia and Eastern Europe. Others learned the trade as they settled in New York City, embracing the opportunities offered by the Garment District and finding work as laborers, cutters, seamstresses, and designers. Their contributions laid the foundation for the district's enduring reputation as a global fashion hub. These immigrants stitched together dreams and left an indelible mark on the world of fashion. The innovation they brought to the industry continues to influence fashion and garment production today.

1930s New York City was home to some of the most talented designers and manufacturers in the world, and the garments that were produced there were known for their quality and style. Initially, numerous designers created ready-to-wear versions of garments resembling Parisian haute couture (high fashion, elegant clothing), while American designers remained relatively unknown. However, the impact of World War II impeded French dominance, leading

American designers and manufacturers to showcase their abilities in designing their own fashions. Furthermore, the rising prominence of New York as a financial center attracted wealthy individuals interested in obtaining custom apparel and accessories.



Dress factory, garment worker, N.Y.C., photo by Treistman, courtesy of NYPL/Wallach Division Picture Collection

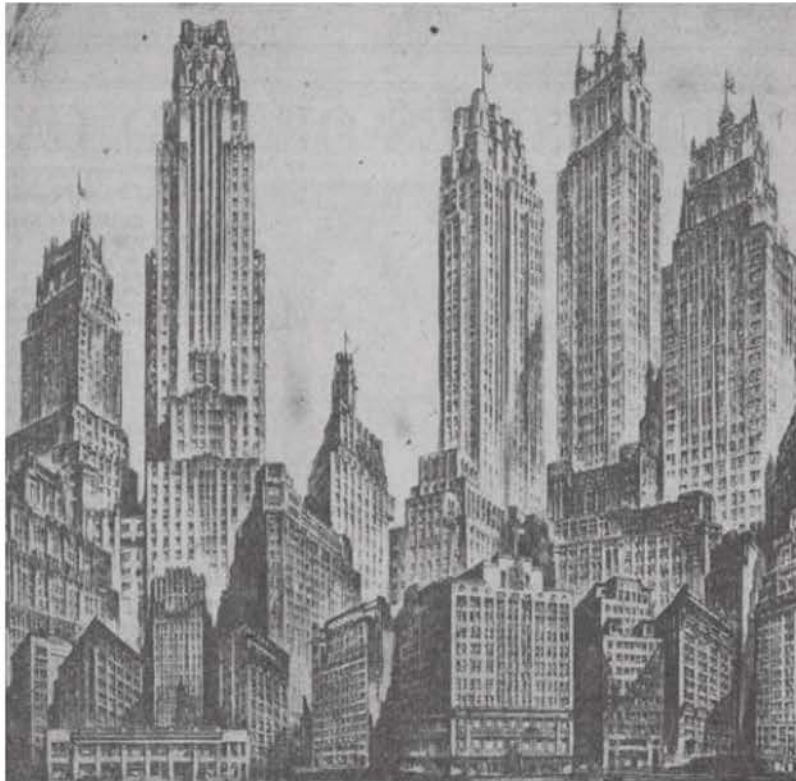
Unlike today's fast fashion industry, in which clothing is produced rapidly and inexpensively to meet ever-changing trends, clothing manufacturing in the 1930s Garment District was steady and sustainable, emphasizing quality over quantity. Clothing pieces were made to last, with durable fabrics and sturdy stitching. Local sourcing was a cornerstone of garment production. Designers and

manufacturers often procured materials from nearby suppliers, contributing to a sense of community and supporting local economies. This practice stands in stark contrast to modern global supply chains, which tend to prioritize cost-efficiency at the expense of local connections. Whereas today customers are used to purchasing mass-produced, uniform clothing pieces that only last seven to 10 wears, customers in the 1930s often sought unique garments that could be worn for years. Designers catered to these preferences by creating custom-made, long-lasting pieces. It could take weeks or even months to produce a single garment. Today, garment production is heavily automated. Pieces can be rapidly produced in a matter of hours, contributing to the exploitation of workers around the world and the industry's major role in climate change and pollution.

Despite numerous manufacturing companies relocating overseas in recent years, the Garment District still maintains its significance as a pivotal hub within the fashion industry. As people today navigate a fast-paced, globalized clothing industry, they can look to the past for lessons on how to balance innovation with ethical considerations. By shopping locally, supporting small designers and businesses, and recycling and upcycling clothing, the spirit of the Garment District can be

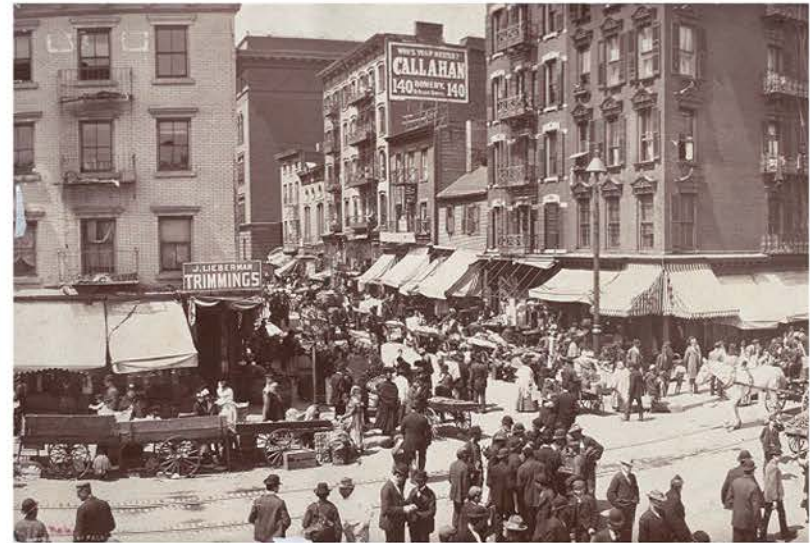
honored and a more sustainable, inclusive, and enduring fashion landscape can be created for generations to come.

—Emmy Weissman



"Lefcourt City," New York Times, November 20, 1922

A NEW AMERICAN SHTETL



"A scene in the ghetto, Hester Street",
courtesy of B.J. Falk/Library of Congress

At the turn of the 20th century, 1.75 million Jewish people fled Eastern Europe for a more liberal America. Half of them migrated to New York City alone, rapidly making it the largest Jewish settlement in the world, transforming the cultural landscape. Most Jewish immigrants settled in the Lower East Side, moving into crowded tenements with poor living conditions. These areas gradually improved as new zoning laws required buildings to create air shafts between them to allow for fresh air and sunlight. The first public housing projects, Henry Street Settlement and First Houses, offered low-cost living, loan

support, furniture and appliance repairs, gardens, and playgrounds. What the area may have lacked in wealth, it made up for in working-class culture and charm. Between Bowery and Second Avenue, Yiddish Theater was performed by the immigrant population, keeping a native language alive. Bustling with pushcart vendors, storefronts, folk music, and entertainment – this new American *shtetl* (little town) was born.

Judaism is and always has comprised a diversity of ethnicities, cultures, and perspectives. At this time, there were four major sects: Orthodox, Reform, Conservative, and Reconstructionist. In the 1930s, many of the more Orthodox Jews left Manhattan's Lower East Side for Brooklyn's neighborhoods of Williamsburg and Borough Park.

This shift influenced these areas and paved the way for more elegant synagogues and *mikvahs* (ritualistic baths). The construction of new bridges and subway lines was paramount to making the transition to life in an outer borough sustainable. This brought more Jewish families of diverse socioeconomic backgrounds to other Brooklyn neighborhoods: Brownsville, Crown Heights, Bedford-Stuyvesant, Flatbush, and Brighton Beach.

Despite their different interpretations, members of varying branches of Judaism celebrated Shabbat – and therefore had mutual dishes, practices, and customs. Shabbat is the seventh day of the Jewish week and is the day of rest and refraining from work, beginning on Fridays at sunset.

The ritual of breaking bread has historically had a beautiful way of uniting people. Just as important as the holiday dishes are to Jewish homes are the staples sold in kosher delicatessens and bakeries. For sweets, there's *sufganiyot*, powdered jelly doughnuts, eaten on Hanukkah. Just as delicious, there's *hamantaschen*, also jelly-filled, but triangular-shaped cookies made for the holiday of Purim. Another classic is *rugelach*, small pastries with sweet fillings (raisins, chocolate, nuts, marzipan), originating from Poland. Of course, there's pastrami on rye, which has become a New York-Jewish classic. The signature sandwich includes coleslaw, lettuce, tomato, Russian dressing or mayonnaise, with a side of dill pickles. The introduction of this recipe can be attributed to Romanian immigrant Sussman Volk, who brought it to the States in 1888.



Family at kitchen-table in a dumb-bell "New Law" tenement, ca. 1935, courtesy of the NYC Municipal Archives Collection

The same year on Ludlow Street, a small kosher deli, co-owned by two brothers with the last name Iceland, began serving up the sandwich. In 1903, the establishment changed its name from Iceland Brothers to Iceland & Katz, when they welcomed an additional partner, Willy Katz. Willy's cousin Benny joined in 1910, and eventually they bought it out, changing the name to what we now know as Katz's Delicatessen. Aptly located in the heart of the Lower East Side, Katz's was a beloved community hangout spot on Friday evenings for hot dogs and beans. It is said that Katz's owners would send the restaurant's food to their two sons serving overseas during the Second World War, and so the slogan, "Send Salami to Your Boy in the Army" was born. Though America had seemingly been a safe haven for Jewish immigrants, the 1930s brought about a different strain of

anti-Jewish sentiment. One example was Canadian-American Catholic priest and celebrity Father Charles E. Coughlin, who used his radio program and magazine, *Social Justice*, to launch an antisemitic



Katz's Deli's "Katz's That's all!" sign, courtesy of Columbia University Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies

media campaign. A highly popular figure in Depression-era America, his weekly broadcasts reached millions of listeners, approximately one third of the U.S. population. This surge of antisemitism took a significant toll on Jewish Americans, as prominent cultural gatekeepers made pacts restricting their access to many professions, housing communities, and universities. Harvard began imposing strict quotas on the number of Jewish students they admitted, and many northeastern colleges followed suit. This job market and education scarcity forced them to find work where they had prior background: peddling, shopkeeping, garments, and textiles. The conditions in these shops and factories were dire, but with no other outlets for income, Jewish immigrants made their way with *chutzpah* alone. Many

of these working-class families paved the way for higher status white-collar work for the second generation. With the rise of clothing as a major consumer good, the Garment District boomed, almost exclusively run by Jews.

By the 1940s, thousands of New York Jews had contributed in vital ways to the heartbeat of America's culture, science, and intellectual life.

—Andrea Abello



Promotional poster for *The Rabbi's Family*,
courtesy of John D. Woolf/American Jewish Historical Society

THREADING THE NEEDLE

HOW I CAN GET IT FOR YOU WHOLESALER GOT MADE

A TIMELINE

1908

Harold Rome is born in Hartford, Connecticut.

1913

Jerome Weidman is born in New York City to one of the great pocket makers of the garment industry.

1937

Jerome Weidman publishes ***I Can Get It for You Wholesale: A Novel***. The protagonist is a young but ruthless garment district shipping clerk named Harry Bogen, later described in *The New York Times* as "a vile faker who genuinely loved Mama's blintzes."

1946

John Weidman is born in New York City.

1951

Abraham Polonsky and Vera Caspary's **film adaptation** of *I Can Get It for You Wholesale*, directed by Michael Gordon,

is released. In an unexpected twist, it stars model-turned-actress Susan Hayward as model-turned-designer Harriet Boyd. *The New York Times* is not a fan of this change, arguing that Harriet "does not compare with Harry Bogen, the breezy, unscrupulous Bronxite who left a trail of broken promises in his sweep up Seventh Avenue."

1962

I Can Get It for You Wholesale, with music and lyrics by Harold Rome and book by Jerome Weidman, **premieres at the Shubert Theatre on Broadway**. The production is directed by Arthur Laurents and choreographed by Herbert Ross, starring Elliott Gould as Harry Bogen and Lillian Roth as Mrs. Bogen. Notably, it also features Barbra Streisand as Miss Marmelstein in her Broadway debut. (Streisand and Gould would marry the following year before divorcing in 1971.) Streisand's eponymous second act solo "Miss Marmelstein" is released as a single (Barbra's first) by Columbia Records to promote the production.

1993

Harold Rome dies in New York City.

1998

Jerome Weidman dies in New York City.

2023

I Can Get It for You Wholesale is **revived Off-Broadway** at Classic Stage Company, directed by Trip Cullman, featuring an updated book by John Weidman, and starring Santino Fontana as Harry Bogen.

I CAN GET IT FOR YOU WHOLESALE LOCATIONS MAP



LOCATIONS MAP KEY

THE BRONX

1. The Bogen Residence

Harry and his mother Ida Bogen live together on Honeywell Avenue.

MANHATTAN

2. Lewisohn Stadium

A large stadium and amphitheater used to present music (capacity: 8,000) at City College of New York in Harlem.



Audience at Lewisohn Stadium, photo by John Vachon, courtesy of Library of Congress

3. El Morocco

A swanky Manhattan nightclub frequented by internationally-renowned artists and celebrities, including Salvador Dalí, Marlene Dietrich, Marilyn Monroe, and Frank Sinatra.



El Morocco Nightclub, New York City 1965, photo by Wally Heim, United Artist Corporation-Chicago office, courtesy of Library of Congress

4. Gray's Drugstore

Referred to as "Gray's Cut Rate," this precursor to TKTS was the place to go for discounted tickets to performances.

5. The Metropolitan Opera

The "Old Met" was located on 39th and Broadway, in the heart of the Garment District. Not only was it the destination for operagoers, but it was also the site of the memorial held for the victims of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire.



The Metropolitan Opera House, courtesy of Library of Congress

6. The Garment District

From 9th to 5th Aves, between 34th and 42nd Streets, this was where the majority of America's clothing was produced.

Fun fact: The Garment District is sometimes called Lefcourt City after Abraham E. Lefcourt. Born Abraham E. Lefkowitz, Lefcourt was raised by Russian Jewish immigrants and rose from newsboy to real estate developer. He hired all Jewish architects to design and build the lofts of the Garment District, many of which he also named after himself.

Explore the Garment District on foot in a free walking tour with Mike Kaback, who worked over 35 years in the garment industry before becoming a tour guide. Learn more and reserve your spot [here](#).

7. M&S Schmalberg, Custom Fabric Flowers Since 1916

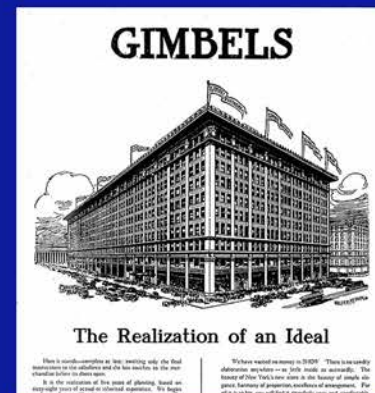
A four-generation, family-run handmade fabric flower shop located at 242 W. 36th Street.

"In the 1940s there were dozens of 'flower guys.' Throughout the years that number has [shrunk], and today, M&S Schmalberg is the oldest and last of [its] kind in America."

– Courtesy of M&S Schmalberg Website

8. Gimbel's

Gimbel Brothers Department Store was a rival to Macy's located at 6th Ave and 33rd Street in Herald Square. Closed since 1986, the building remains to this day as the Manhattan Mall.



Gimbel Brothers poster, courtesy of Wikimedia

9. Wanamaker's Department Store

Located at 770 Broadway at E. 9th Street



Wanamaker's first location in the old A.T. Stewart Building, courtesy of New York Public Library's Digital Collections

10. E. 4th Street

The Weidman Family called E. 4th St home.

11. Rothfeld, Stern and Company

Founded 1887-8 by Sigmund and Solomon Rothfeld with J.H. Stern, this garment industry business at 515 Broadway & 88 Mercer Street is where Julius Seligmann Oppenheimer (father of J. Robert Oppenheimer) made his fortune.

12. Katz's Delicatessen

Fans of *When Harry Met Sally* will recognize this delicious and popular sandwich shop at 205 E. Houston Street serving up unparalleled pastrami and roast beef since 1888.

13. Eldridge St. Synagogue

Built in 1887, the Eldridge Street Synagogue was the first synagogue to be constructed by Eastern European Jewish immigrants. Tours are available through the Eldridge Street Museum.



Eldridge Street Museum, 2023, courtesy of Marella Martin Koch

14. Mendel Goldberg Fabrics

Founded from a pushcart in 1890 by Mendel and Channa Henna Goldberg, this fabric store at 72 Hester Street is still family-run today.



Mendel Goldberg Fabrics, 2023, courtesy of Marella Martin Koch

APPELLATIONS OF ENDEARMENT

An appellation is **"a designation, name, or title given to a particular person or thing."**

Harry Bogen may be a ruthless businessman in the garment district, but to his beloved mama, he's just "Heshie"—and her Heshie has quite a few fond nicknames for her: Mamaleh, Mom, Mother, Mama. Find them all in the scramble. *(Bonus: see if you can find Harry and Heshie, too!)*

Z B D L K I Z M B P V L A K M A M A L E H P
P L M W N S X C T Z Q L P A H S D W F F E S
D L O Y W E N X D Q T I O M A N N L P I S B
W X W B V Q O M E L U W S A R N P A R L H Z
S M O M Q Z V C I L O P Q M R L N D T W I D
R T I O W X B R F I D U L A Y P A M R Z E X
L X E T P R U W G R M C S L P T Q I H V P W
V C M H Y P W R M S Z O A L Q X C T X M U I
I L X E T S D P M K I W L K X Q E N B L O A
B Z D R L O P W R Y T D G H B V U D M C V O

COLORING EXERCISE

Download the image [here](#) to print and color!



EDUCATION SECTION

FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

This section was developed by CSC to help students and teachers prepare to see *I Can Get It for You Wholesale*. Feel free to share this section with your students.

This section contains spoilers!

THE STORY

It's 1937 in the Garment District, and the fashion of America is designed, produced, and sold by members of the Jewish community. All along 7th Avenue in Midtown Manhattan, immigrants and children of immigrants turn shapeless bolts of fabric into beautiful dresses. Heshie, a young delivery boy, is man of the house after his father dies. Yet his hard work offers him and his mother, **Ida Bogen**, no security in an antisemitic world. What little he makes is stolen from him by bullies. All he can count on is the love his mother provides.

Over a decade later, though he's now all grown up, **Harry "Heshie" Bogen** has not moved up in the world. Still making deliveries as a shipping clerk, he and his mother barely make rent. When a strike stops his family's income completely, Harry commits himself to getting rich – whatever it takes.

First, he approaches his employer, dressmaker **Maurice Pulvermacher**, Inc. At Pulvermacher's, the strike has halted all deliveries, and customers are beginning

to cancel their orders. **Miss Marmelstein**, Pulvermacher's dutiful secretary, fields nonstop calls from disappointed buyers. Harry arrives and makes Pulvermacher an indecent proposal: he offers to break the strike by working as a scab if Pulvermacher will give all the delivery work to his new company, The Needle Trades Delivery Service. Pulvermacher agrees, and Harry moves quickly to start the company (since it doesn't actually exist yet).

He convinces **Tootsie Maltz**, a trusting friend, to go into business with him and invest \$500. To get the next \$500, Harry returns to his old neighborhood in the Bronx and rekindles his friendship with **Ruthie Rivkin**, who has loved him since childhood. Ruthie gladly lends him the money, and The Needle Trades Delivery Service is formed.

It doesn't take long for business to take off (after all, Harry is breaking the strike as a scab, opportunistically snatching up orders from desperate dress manufacturers). With money pouring in for the first time in his life, Harry pays up the Bogens's back rent and buys Ida increasingly extravagant presents. He celebrates finally being able to provide for the most important person in his life. Mrs. Bogen, however, wonders whether the investment money came from Ruthie and asks Harry if they are dating.

He tells her no woman could ever be as important to him as his mother.

This taste of success makes Harry hungry for more, and he begins gathering a team for an even bigger business: his own dress manufacturing company. He convinces his mother to host a fabulous dinner for **Teddy Asch** (the best salesman on 7th Ave), **Meyer Bushkin** (the best designer), and Meyer's wife **Blanche** (who is pregnant with their second child). The dinner is a huge success, in no small part thanks to Mrs. Bogen's blintzes and Ruthie's attendance as Harry's presumed sweetheart. Not only does Harry impress Teddy and Meyer, but – more importantly – the warmth of the Bogen family erases Blanche's doubts. A deal is struck, and Apex Modes, Inc. is formed.

After celebratory wine and dancing, Mrs. Bogen questions whether Harry is serious about Ruthie or just wanted to make a good impression on his business partners. Ruthie tells Mrs. Bogen she can look out for herself before leaving with Harry. Back at Ruthie's apartment, Harry and Ruthie open up about what they want out of life. Ruthie is looking for love, but Harry yearns to get out of the Bronx...as soon as he can raise \$10,000 for the new business. Ruthie offers him \$10,000 her late father saved for her future husband. Harry refuses, because he

can't give her what she deserves in return. Alone, Ruthie wonders when the day she longs for will come, and Harry heads back to Midtown.

Arriving at Club RioRhumba, where Broadway dancers head after their shows, Harry meets up with performer **Martha Mills**. Over drinks, Harry and Martha get to know each other. The two bond over their shared passion for money. Tootsie shows up, and Harry tricks him into buying him out of the delivery business, giving Harry the \$10,000 he needs. While many people would be appalled by this behavior, Martha is impressed and decides to get to know Harry better.

It's not long before Apex has its first fashion show, and Miss Marmelstein – who has left Pulvermacher's to pursue a younger, more attractive employer (Harry) – wrangles all the details. Mrs. Bogen arrives, and Harry surprises her with a locket that holds pictures of her and his late father. Mrs. Bogen reveals that she invited Ruthie to the launch so she and Harry could patch things up, and Harry calls the Metropolitan Opera to arrange tickets for a proper date. Yet high tensions between the co-founders threaten to spoil the atmosphere, as Teddy fumes over the expensive champagne, caviar, and perfume Harry has purchased

for the launch. The moment is made or break, and one primary buyer – Miss Springer – holds their fate in her hands. Her decision to buy turns an argument into a celebration. The successful launch also seals the deal with Martha Mills, who modeled the line; she gives Harry a key to her apartment.

Apex Modes, Inc. begins bringing in serious money, and Harry spends it – often on personal items for Martha. He also writes a big check as a gift for the Bar Mitzvah of Meyer and Blanche's son, Sheldon, on the company account. Teddy confronts him, and Harry claims that it was a mistake. The conversation escalates, but ultimately Meyer continues to sew dresses, Teddy continues to sell them, and Harry continues to handle the books.

The peace doesn't last long, as Teddy soon discovers the truth and tells Harry he wants no part of a business run only for Harry's personal gain. Harry stands by his choices and says that he and Meyer will buy Teddy out of the company. Harry then convinces Meyer to open a new account in Meyer's name from which they can make secret withdrawals to avoid paying taxes. Although Meyer has misgivings, Harry wins him over – and persuades Meyer not to run the plan by Blanche.

Harry's spending spirals out of control, and a foolish attempt to bribe a creditor backfires. Ruthie brings him the news that the firm is ruined and that she is engaged to be married. They have an argument about whether or not she ever loved Harry before the pair is interrupted by the start of bankruptcy proceedings. Harry and Meyer make a plan to testify in court about the secret account and, with his mother and Blanche's encouragement, Harry agrees to tell the truth. Yet ultimately, on the witness stand, Harry frames Meyer for his own misdeeds. Meyer is sent to prison, Apex Modes, Inc. is ruined, and Harry goes free. An unexpected business offer from his old boss Pulvermacher sets Harry right back where he started, but alone.

A GARMENT DISTRICT GLOSSARY

I Can Get It for You Wholesale serves up a slice of New York City in the early 20th century. Although the tale is old, some of the words might be new to you. Get wise, or you could wind up bamboozled out of your dough. Saps, schlemiels, and schmucks are easy targets and often get dragged into cockamamie situations. Tycoons and toughs tend to care less about sins and more about legal tender. There's a sucker born every minute.

Baste – to stitch (fabric, a seam, etc.) with loose or easily removable stitches, especially in preparation for sewing; to sew together (also, baster – the person who bastes fabric)

Bamboozle – to deceive by trickery, hoax, cozen, impose upon

Bar/Bat Mitzvah – a religious ceremony that marks a child's transition to adulthood

Bolt – a roll of woven fabric, generally of a definite length (i.e., 30 yards, 28 ells, or 40 feet)

Cockamamie – an absurd, muddled, or crazy situation or thing; rubbish

Dough – slang for money

Garment District – the area between 34th and 42nd Streets and 5th and 9th Avenues

Legal Tender – coin or other money a creditor is bound by law to accept when tendered in payment of a debt

Rabbi – a Jewish scholar or teacher with authority and expertise on law and ritual

Sap – a simpleton; a fool

Schlemiel – a fool; someone easy to deceive

Schmuck – someone obnoxious or disliked due to their foolishness

Shipping Clerk – someone who delivers the items from the manufacturers to the buyers

Sin – a transgression of the divine law and an offense against God

Strike – a concerted cessation of work on the part of a body of workers, for the purpose of obtaining some concession from the employer or employers

Tycoon – an important or dominant person, especially in business or politics; a magnate

THE PEOPLE

Get to know the people of
I Can Get It for You Wholesale.

THE BRONX

Honeywell Avenue

MRS. IDA BOGEN

HARRY BOGEN

RUTHIE RIVKIN

Club RioRhumba

MARTHA MILLS

7TH AVENUE

Maurice Pulvermacher, Inc.
Gowns of Distinction, Street + Formal

MAURICE PULVERMACHER
MISS MARMELSTEIN

The Needle Trades
Delivery Service

TOOTSIE MALTZ

Apex Modes, Inc.

TEDDY ASCH

MEYER
BUSHKIN

BLANCHE
BUSHKIN

SHELDON
BUSHKIN

BABY

ABOUT THE PEOPLE

HARRY BOGEN has taken care of his mother since the early death of his father. Harry ("Heshie" to his mother) is charismatic, ambitious, and above all, driven. He considers himself the smartest person in whatever room he's in and has not been wrong yet. He is not a sociopath, although his capacity for empathy is severely limited. He understands the consequences of his actions, but in the end he will always do what's best for himself. Having worked his way up from delivery boy to shipping clerk in the Garment District, he knows everything there is to know about how dresses get made—and by whom. Unfortunately, he also knows more than he would like to about the antisemitism he faces as a Jewish person.

MRS. IDA BOGEN is, at first blush, one standard-issue Jewish Mother: her blintzes are to die for, and she loves her son. She shares his intense ambition, but not his ends-justify-the-means ruthlessness. Her desire to care for and protect the people around her in her tight-knit community is never quite strong enough to trump her desire to see her son get ahead.

RUTHIE RIVKIN is the "nice Jewish girl" Harry left behind in his old neighborhood. Since the death of her parents, Ruthie has taken care of herself. By day she works as a secretary for an accounting firm in the Garment District, and by night she enjoys all the art and culture New York City has to offer. Although she makes the most of her independence, what she most wants is to take care of Harry.

TEDDY ASCH is the most accomplished salesman in the Garment District. A fast talker and snappy dresser who lives life on his own terms, his shrewd business mind is complimented by his natural charisma. Although he appreciates the finer things in life, he knows where the line is and would never risk his wallet for his heart.

MEYER BUSHKIN is the top designer in the Garment District. A factory man, he keeps a low profile and works diligently in the background designing dresses. A fundamentally good, decent man, he trusts others more than he should. Luckily, he runs all his business decisions by his wife, Blanche.

BLANCHE BUSHKIN is her husband Meyer's partner in life and business. Mother to their son Sheldon, with a new baby on the way, she loves and respects her husband through thick and thin.

SHELDON BUSHKIN is Blanche and Meyer's son, 13 years old when we meet him at his Bar Mitzvah. Serious, studious, and trusting, he feels secure inside his family and the larger Jewish community of which they are a part.

TOOTSIE MALTZ is a schlemiel (pushover/fool). He has something Harry wants—enough money to start a small business, and then just enough money to buy Harry out when it's ready to bust. Tootsie is an easy target for a smooth-talker like Harry, and innocent enough to believe their friendship is real.

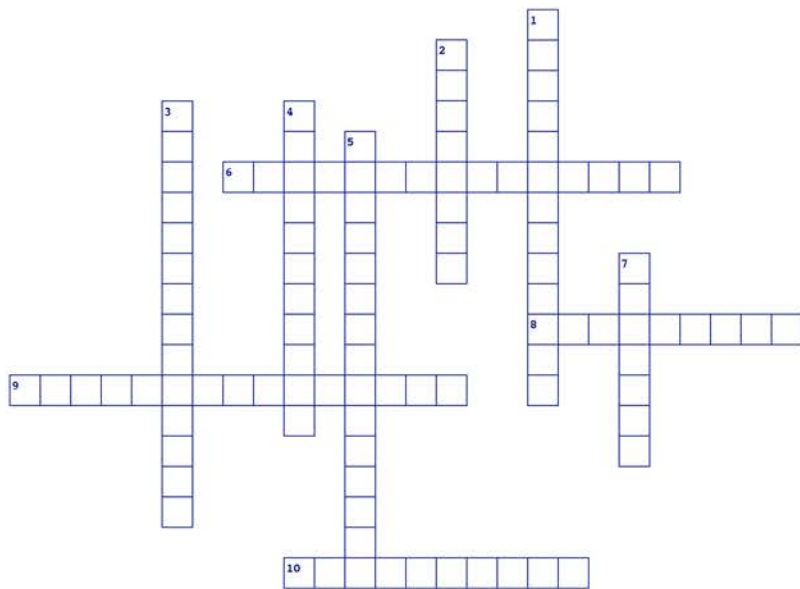
MARTHA MILLS is a glamorous Broadway showgirl who performs at Club RioRhumba. An ambitious realist, she has her eye on the prize: a luxurious life in the spotlight. She is everything Ruthie is not: she's not from the Bronx, and she's not Jewish. She and Harry understand each other instinctively.

MAURICE PULVERMACHER is, with his fancy showroom and car with a chauffeur, the most successful man in the garment business. He is such a powerful figure in the industry that the buyers come to him.

MISS MARMELSTEIN is Maurice Pulvermacher's whip-smart secretary. She is fiercely loyal to each of her employers until the moment she quits. As she explains to Harry, "A girl's gotta eat."

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

How much have you learned about *I Can Get It for You Wholesale*? Click [here](#) to fill out this puzzle online!



ACROSS

6. Actress who made her Broadway Debut at 19 in *I Can Get It for You Wholesale*
8. Name of the nightclub Harry and Ruth go to on their date
9. Famous Manhattan neighborhood where much of *I Can Get It for You Wholesale* takes place

10. Before the Garment District came to fruition, _____ could have arguably been considered the garment capital of the country

DOWN

1. Harry's original job at the beginning of *I Can Get It for You Wholesale*
2. Mrs. Bogen's specialty dish
3. Leading man in Classic Stage Company's 2023 production of *I Can Get It for You Wholesale*
4. Choreographer of the original Broadway production of *I Can Get It for You Wholesale*
5. Historical time period defined by economic hardship during which *I Can Get It for You Wholesale* takes place
7. Harry's first business partner who founds a delivery service with him

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

WHAT'S THE IDEA?

I Can Get It for You Wholesale deals with many themes, including:

Community
Discrimination
Faith
Family
Responsibility

1. Choose a theme (your own, or from the list above) explored in *I Can Get It for You Wholesale*.
2. With a partner, **tell the story of the show** as succinctly as you can (and in no more than 5 sentences), highlighting how the theme you have chosen is explored and expressed.

Discuss:

- Do the characters' actions support/uphold this theme, or do they contradict it?
- How is this theme present in today's world?

WHAT MATTERS MOST?

As human beings, we all hold values, and – by necessity – those values are, consciously or unconsciously, ranked. Our values show us what's important and help us make decisions accordingly. However, life can get complicated when our values are challenged or come into conflict with each other. Case in point: Harry Bogen, a man attempting to balance his duty to his family, his duty to his community, and his own dreams.

This brief value-identifying exercise adapted from a Columbia Business School seminar should help you understand Harry's position.

1. What are Harry Bogen's values? Make a list of at least five things you believe are important to him.
2. Now, write down a list of your own values. How do they show up in your life?
3. Compare your list of values to Harry Bogen's, imagining that you must trade one of your own values for one of his. What would you take? What would you be willing to give up – for a short time, or possibly forever?

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