

Archbishop Tutu takes to New York stage: Raises objections to Guantánamo detentions in off-Broadway play

News in the [November 16, 2004](#) issue

To a résumé already gilded with honors and accomplishments, including the Nobel Peace Prize, Archbishop Desmond Tutu can now add the job title of actor. Off-Broadway actor, to be exact.

The South African Anglican prelate made two appearances in October as a British magistrate in the play *Guantánamo: Honor Bound to Defend Freedom*. He appeared in a performance at the Culture Project, a small theater in New York City's Greenwich Village.

Tutu, the onetime antiapartheid activist and more recently outspoken critic of the Bush administration's foreign policy, portrayed Lord Justice Steyn, a judge who raises objections to detainments at the U.S. military detention center in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

Tutu, 72, confided to a *New York Times* reporter prior to his first appearance that he had a bit of a case of stage fright. "I have butterflies," Tutu told the *Times*, adding, "I'm not used to playing someone else. Why did I get myself into this?" However, by all accounts Tutu overcame his stage fright for the brief role, helped perhaps by the standing ovation that greeted his initial appearance on a Saturday evening. He repeated the performance in a matinee the following day.

"He was incredible," Alyssa Seiden, the manager of the Culture Project company, told the BBC. "He moved the crowd." The play, originally produced in London, examines the legal and moral questions posed by the detention system at Guantánamo and is based on the actual experiences of British residents who have been detained at the U.S. facility. -*Religion News Service*