



THE MORALIST

Arthur Miller, photographed in New York City in 1962, four years before the birth of his son Daniel.

No photograph of him has ever been published, but those who know Daniel Miller say that he resembles his father. Some say it's the nose, others the mischievous glimmer in the eyes when he smiles, but the most telling feature, the one that clearly identifies him as Arthur Miller's son, is his high forehead and identically receding hairline. He is almost 41 now, but it's impossible to say whether his father's friends would notice the resemblance, because the few who have ever seen Daniel have not laid eyes on him since he was a week old. When his father died, in February 2005, he was not at the funeral that took place near Arthur Miller's home, in Roxbury, Connecticut. Nor was he at the public memorial service that May, at Broadway's Majestic Theatre, where hundreds of admirers gathered to pay homage to his father, who was, if not the greatest American playwright of the last century, then certainly the most famous. In the days after his death, at the age of 89, Arthur Miller was eulogized around the world. Newspaper obituaries and television commentators hailed his work—including

those keystones of the American canon *Death of a Salesman* and *The Crucible*—and recalled his many moments in the public eye: his marriage to Marilyn Monroe; his courageous refusal, in 1956, to “name names” before the House Un-American Activities

Committee; his eloquent and active opposition to the Vietnam War; his work, as the international president of PEN, on behalf of oppressed writers around the world. *The Denver Post* called him “the moralist of the past American century,” and *The New York Times* extolled his “fierce belief in man's responsibility to his fellow man—and [in] the self-destruction that followed on his betrayal of that responsibility.”

In a moving speech at the Majestic, the playwright Tony Kushner said Miller had possessed the “curse of empathy.” Edward Albee said that Miller had held up a mirror and told society, “Here is how you behave.” Among the many other speakers were Miller's sister, the actress Joan Copeland, his son the producer Robert Miller, his daughter the writer and film director Rebecca Miller, and her husband, the actor Daniel Day-Lewis. Miller's oldest child, Jane Doyle, was in the audience but did not speak.

Only a handful of people in the theater

ARNOLD NEWMAN

Arthur Miller's Missing Act

For all the public drama of Arthur Miller's career—his celebrated plays (including *Death of a Salesman* and *The Crucible*), his marriage to Marilyn Monroe, his social activism—one character was absent: the Down-syndrome child he deleted from his life

By Suzanna Andrews

knew that Miller had a fourth child. Those who did said nothing, out of respect for his wishes, because, for nearly four decades, Miller had never publicly acknowledged the existence of Daniel.

He did not mention him once in the scores of speeches and press interviews he gave over the years. He also never referred to him in his 1987 memoir, *Timebends*. In 2002, Daniel was left out of the *New York Times* obituary for Miller's wife, the photographer Inge Morath, who was Daniel's mother. A brief account of his birth appeared in a 2003 biography of Miller by the theater

stitutionalizing him at birth, refusing to see him or speak about him, virtually abandoning him. The whole matter was "absolutely appalling," says one of Miller's friends, and yet everyone probably would have kept silent had it not been for the rumor that began to spread earlier this year, passing from Roxbury to New York City and back. Although no one was sure of the facts, the story was that Miller had died without leaving a will. Officials had gone looking for Miller's heirs, and they had found Daniel. Then, the rumor went, the state of Connecticut had made Arthur Miller's estate pay Daniel a full quarter

baffles some people and angers others. But the question asked by friends of the father and of the son is the same: How could a man who, in the words of one close friend of Miller's, "had such a great world reputation for morality and pursuing justice *do* something like this"?

What none of them considered was the possibility that Arthur Miller *had* left a will and that, six weeks before he died, he was the one who, against common legal advice, made Daniel a full and direct heir—an equal to his three other children.

The Power of Denial

In all the public references to Daniel, which appear to be based on Martin Gottfried's biography, his birth is said to have taken place in 1962. As friends remember it, however, he was born in November 1966. Arthur Miller had just turned 51, and he had already written his two best-known plays, *Death of a Salesman*, which won the Pulitzer Prize in 1949, and *The Crucible*, which was produced in 1953. Although he did not know it, his best work was behind him. In 1966 he was dealing with the fallout from his most controversial play, *After the Fall*, a thinly disguised account of his troubled marriage to Marilyn Monroe. Produced in 1964, two years after Monroe's suicide, and greeted with some disgust by critics

and the public, it was widely viewed as an attempt by Miller to cash in on her fame. The public outcry had left Miller angry and wounded, and professing not to understand how anyone could have thought that the play

was based on Monroe. "There is no better key to Arthur's personality," says a woman



MISMATCH
Miller (top) and his second wife, Marilyn Monroe, with the cast and director of *The Misfits*, 1960.

“ARTHUR WAS **TERRIBLY SHAKEN.**” HE SAID,
“I’M GOING TO HAVE TO PUT THE BABY AWAY.”

critic Martin Gottfried. But even then Miller maintained his silence. At his death, the only major American newspaper to mention Daniel in its obituary was the *Los Angeles Times*, which said, “Miller had another son, Daniel, who was diagnosed with Down syndrome shortly after his birth in 1962. It is not known whether he survives his father.” Citing the Gottfried biography, the paper reported that Daniel had been put in an institution, where Miller “apparently never visited him.”

Miller's friends say they never understood exactly what happened with Daniel, but the few details they heard were disturbing. Miller had not only erased his son from the public record; he had also cut him out of his private life, in-

of his father's assets, an amount that was believed to be in the millions of dollars.

For some of Miller's friends, the possibility that Daniel had been given his fair share brought a measure of relief that, finally, a wrong had been righted. Attention had been paid. The feeling was shared by the social workers and disability-rights advocates who have known and cared for Daniel over the years as it became clear that he had indeed gotten a share of the Miller estate. “An extraordinary man,” “very beloved by a lot of people,” Daniel Miller, they say, is a “guy who's made a difference in a lot of lives.” They also say he is someone who, considering the challenges of his life, has in his own way achieved as much as his father did. The way Arthur Miller treated him

who was a close friend of Miller's wife, than “his refusal to acknowledge that people who knew *After the Fall*, and who loved Marilyn, would be offended. Like all of us, he had powerful powers of denial.”

Monroe and Miller had divorced in 1961. A year later, Miller married his third wife, Inge Morath. She was an Austrian-born photojournalist who had studied with Henri Cartier-Bresson and had worked for Magnum, the international photo agency. She met Miller in 1960, on the set of the film *The Misfits*. Miller had written the screenplay for Monroe, whose erratic behavior almost kept the film from being made. Morath's photographs of Monroe, fragile and well into her struggle with alcohol and barbiturates, would be among the most emotionally in-



Daniel was born four years later, in a New York City hospital. The Broadway producer Robert Whitehead, who died in 2002, would tell Martin Gottfried that Miller called him on the day of the birth. Miller was “overjoyed,” Whitehead said, and confided that he and Inge were planning to name the boy “Eugene”—possibly after Eugene O’Neill, whose play *Long Day’s Journey into Night*, which had won the Pulitzer in 1957, had awed Miller. The next day, however, Miller called

raise Daniel at home. Another friend remembers that “it was a decision that had Rebecca at the center.”

Within days, the child was gone, placed in a home for infants in New York City. When he was about two or three, one friend recalls, Inge tried to bring him home, but Arthur would not have it. Daniel was about four when he was placed at the Southbury Training School. Then one of two Connecticut institutions for the mentally retarded, Southbury was just a 10-minute drive from Roxbury, along shaded country roads. “Inge told me that she went to see him almost every Sunday, and that [Arthur] never wanted to see him,” recalls the writer Francine du Plessix Gray. Once he was placed in Southbury, many friends heard nothing more about Daniel. “After a certain period,” one friend says, “he was not mentioned at all.”



ALL HIS SONS?

Top, Miller with daughter Jane and son Robert, 1961; right, Miller with new wife Inge Morath, 1962.

timate pictures taken of the doomed star.

Intelligent and seemingly fearless, Morath had been forced to work in an airplane factory in Berlin during the Second World War, for refusing to join the Nazi Party. After one bombing raid, she ran through the streets of the shattered city holding a bouquet of lilacs over her head. When the war ended, Morath made her way back to her home in Austria on foot. “Everyone was dead, or half dead,” she once told *The New York Times*. “I walked by dead horses, by women with dead babies in their arms.” After that, she decided never to

Life in the Wards

Marcie Roth remembers seeing Daniel for the first time when he was about “eight or nine.” Now the director of the National Spinal Cord Injury Association, Roth worked at Southbury during the 1970s. “Danny was a neat, neat kid,” she says, “a very friendly, happy guy.” Although there were close to 300 children at Southbury at

WHEN HE WAS **TWO OR THREE**, INGE TRIED TO BRING DANIEL HOME, BUT ARTHUR WOULD NOT HAVE IT.

photograph war. “Arthur always thought of her as a heroic creature, and she was,” says Joan Copeland. “Everything had to be perfect that she touched, and did. And it was perfect, if she involved herself in it.”

Arthur and Inge’s first child, Rebecca, was born in September 1962, seven months after they were married. From the first, her parents “absolutely doted on her,” friends recall. She was, says one, “the precious object. She was stunningly beautiful. Arthur and Inge were not really beautiful people, but they produced this exquisite daughter.” Wherever Arthur and Inge went, they took Rebecca—on their trips around the world and to dinner parties hosted by Roxbury friends such as the artist Alexander Calder and the novelist William Styron and his wife, Rose. After Rebecca arrived, it seemed to some friends that Jane and Robert, Miller’s children from his first marriage, to Mary Slattery, “were almost never in the picture.” Miller loved his older children, his sister says, “but Rebecca was special.”

Whitehead again and told him the baby “isn’t right.” The doctors had diagnosed the infant with Down syndrome. Born with an extra 21st chromosome, children with Down syndrome are often recognized by their upward-slanted eyes and flattened facial features. They suffer from hypotonia—decreased muscle tone—and mild to moderate retardation. Many are born with heart problems, and in 1966 they were not expected to live past the age of 20.

“Arthur was terribly shaken—he used the term ‘mongoloid,’” Whitehead recalled. He said, “I’m going to have to put the baby away.” A friend of Inge’s recalls visiting her at home, in Roxbury, about a week later. “I was sitting at the bottom of the bed, and Inge was propped up, and my memory is that she was holding the baby and she was very, very unhappy,” she says. “Inge wanted to keep the baby, but Arthur wasn’t going to let her keep him.” Inge, this friend recalls, “said that Arthur felt it would be very hard for Rebecca, and for the household,” to

the time, everyone, she says, knew Danny Miller. This was partly because they knew who his father was and partly because Daniel “was among the more able of the young children with Down syndrome,” Roth says. But mainly it was because of Daniel’s personality. “He had a great spirit about him,” she says. This was no small achievement, because, according to Roth, “Southbury Training School was not a place you would want your dog to live.”

When it opened, in 1940, Southbury was considered one of the best institutions of its kind. Set on 1,600 acres in the rolling hills of central Connecticut, it was magnificent to behold, with porticoed, neo-Georgian red-brick buildings surrounded by endless lawns. It had a school and job-training programs, and its residents were housed in “cottages”—with their own living areas and kitchens. Well into the 1950s, Southbury was so highly regarded that wealthy families in New York City would buy country homes in Connecticut to

establish residency so that, for a minimal fee, they could place their children there.

By the early 1970s, however, around the time Arthur Miller put his son there, Southbury was understaffed and overcrowded. It had nearly 2,300 residents, including children, living in rooms with 30 to 40 beds. Many of the children wore diapers, because there weren't enough employees to toilet-train them. During the day, they sat in front of blaring TVs tuned to whatever show the staff wanted to watch. The most disabled children were left lying on mats on the floor, sometimes covered with nothing but a sheet. "In the wards you had people screaming, banging their heads against the wall, and taking their clothes off," says David Shaw, a leading Connecticut disability lawyer. "It was awful."

Toni Richardson, the former Connecticut commissioner for mental retardation, who worked at Southbury during the 1970s, recalls that in those days restraints were still used on children who were considered "rambunctious": the strips of cloth used to tie them to chairs or door handles were called "belly bands"; there was also something that "looked like a straitjacket, except that it was made of cotton."

The number of children admitted to Southbury began to taper off in the mid-70s. With federal legislation mandating public education for children regardless of disability, there were more educational opportunities outside institutions such as Southbury. There was also a growing realization among medical and psychiatric experts that children needed to be raised at home. But for those children

seen things more clearly. After a Sunday visit to Southbury, du Plessix Gray recalls, Inge said, "'You know, I go in there and it's like a Hieronymus Bosch painting.' That was the image she gave."

In *After the Fall*, the character based on Inge has a recurring dream. "I dreamed," she says, "I had a child and even in the dream I saw it was my life, and it was an idiot, and I ran away. But it always crept onto

less mongoloid" whose mother was given to "mocking his fluffy speech to his face" and "flying at him in a rage."

Miller's memories of Carl Barnett may have influenced his decision to institutionalize his son, but he also would have had the support of doctors, who in 1966 were still advising parents to put their children away. "Babies with Down syndrome are absolutely the most adorable chil-

WHERE'S DANNY?

Morath and Miller in Roxbury, 1975. Inset, Miller celebrates his 75th birthday with his daughters, Jane and Rebecca, and Morath, 1990.



dren," says Rich Godbout, a social worker who knew Daniel for 10 years. "I can't imagine giving up a child like that, but it happened." Still, by 1966, large numbers of parents of Down-syndrome children were ignoring their doctors' advice and keeping their children at home. It wasn't easy. Even the most intellectually able Down-syndrome child requires a tremendous amount of care and reinforcement.

But there are huge rewards, too, which Arthur Miller seemed not to see. As Joan

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who remained at Southbury, life did not get easier. Some children never had any visitors. Their parents put them in Southbury and never saw them again. Other parents, like Inge Morath, were dedicated visitors. "They came like clockwork, every visiting Sunday," says Richardson, who wonders how many of them were fully aware of the conditions in which their children were living. "If you were a parent who had left your child in that situation, would you ever want to admit that Southbury was like that? How could you live with yourself? You had to tell yourself it was all right." Inge, however, appears to have

my lap again, clutched at my clothes." Miller wrote those lines several years before Daniel's birth, and Joan Copeland says, "That's the first thing I thought of when I found out about Daniel." She believes the dream speech may have been a reference to their cousin Carl Barnett, who also had Down syndrome. Barnett, who was a few years older than Arthur, was the son of his maternal uncle, Harry. At a time when babies with Down syndrome were almost always institutionalized, Barnett was raised at home, and the Miller children saw him often. In *Timebends*, Miller referred to Barnett as "a help-

Copeland remembers it, her cousin Carl was anything but a burden to his family. They "adored him and they spoiled him," especially his two younger sisters, who took care of him throughout his life. "Never, for a minute, did anyone in that family ever think they could live without Carl," says Copeland. There were many things Carl couldn't do, she recalls, but "he wasn't helpless." Although doctors told his parents he probably wouldn't live past the age of 7, he lived to be 66.

"I think Arthur saw, in the Barnett family, how it just played into everything," his sister says, "how the presence of this broth-

PHOTOGRAPHS: TOP, BY ALFRED EISENSTAEDT; BOTTOM, BY CARLA GAHR

er” affected everyone. He also saw the sacrifices that Copeland made in caring for her own son, who was born with cerebral palsy. “I think when he saw the adjustments that had to be made in [our] lives because of [our child], he didn’t want to have anything to do with that,” she says. Miller, says one friend, may have been afraid—“ashamed” is the word another uses—of the genetic problems in his family. Some believe Miller may have feared losing Inge’s attention to a needy child; others suggest that he simply didn’t want anything to interfere with his work. All agree that the issue of Daniel was extremely painful for him, and that he did not deal well

excuse painting his child out of his life.” “Arthur was detached, that’s how he protected himself,” says Copeland. “It was as though he thought if he didn’t speak about it, it would go away.”

“He Really Had Nothing”

In the early 1980s, when he was around 17, Daniel was released from Southbury. According to Jean Bowen, a prominent Connecticut disability-rights advocate, Daniel’s social workers and psychologists were eager to get him moved into a group home, but they were afraid that his father would object. Many parents did in those days, fearful

session was this little tiny transistor radio with earplugs. It was something you’d pick up at a five-and-dime. And he was *so* proud to have it. You couldn’t help but think, *This is Arthur Miller’s son?* How could this be?” Bowen wrote up her report, and then the staff met with Daniel’s parents. The result stunned everyone. “I was told that the meeting went beautifully,” says Bowen. “Miller didn’t say much but ultimately did not object.” Daniel was free to go, and “for that he owes his father a great thank-you,” she says. “There are so many people left at Southbury whose parents won’t let them go. So he couldn’t connect with his child emotionally, for whatever reasons, but he didn’t hold him back. He let him go.”

In 1985, the U.S. Department of Justice sued Connecticut over the poor conditions at Southbury. The following year it ordered the state to close Southbury to new admissions. By then, Daniel was living in a group home with five housemates, and making huge strides. He had a lot to learn—how to live on his own, how to use public transportation, how to shop for groceries.

Experts say it is difficult to measure how much Daniel had been held back by years of living in an institution. Early-intervention programs, nurturing families, and special-education classes—all of which Daniel missed out on—have contributed to a 15-point rise in the I.Q. scores of Down-syndrome children in the last 30 years, says Stephen Greenspan, a professor of psychiatry and former president of the Academy on Mental Retardation. Today, many higher-functioning

Down-syndrome children can read and write; some graduate from high school and



UNHAPPY HOME
Southbury Training School, in Connecticut, where Daniel spent most of his childhood.

“SOUTHBURY TRAINING SCHOOL WAS NOT A PLACE YOU WOULD WANT YOUR DOG TO LIVE,” SAYS ROTH.

with emotions. His plays were often acutely psychological—tackling the complicated relationships between fathers and sons, the corrosive effects of guilt and fear, and the price of self-deception—but in his personal life he could be shockingly devoid of emotional understanding. He was not cold, however. Although few people knew it, Miller did visit Daniel at Southbury on rare occasions. That he never acknowledged him as a son, though, is something friends find almost impossible to comprehend or accept. The author Donald Connery, who worked with Miller on the Peter Reilly wrongful-conviction case in the 1970s, says, “I speak with great affection for Arthur, and with admiration for all the good things he did in his life,” but whatever led him to institutionalize Daniel “doesn’t

for the safety of their children. As bad as the conditions were in many state institutions, they offered parents the assurance that their children would be taken care of for life. Determined to get Daniel out of Southbury, his social worker called Bowen and asked her to put together a report for Miller.

Bowen recalls the first time she met Daniel: “He was just a delight, eager, happy, outgoing—in those days even more so than now, because of his isolation.” He showed her his room, which he shared with 20 other people, and his dresser, which was nearly empty, because everyone wore communal clothing. “I remember very clearly trying to respond with happiness, but it was very hard, because there was nothing there,” she says. “He really had nothing. His sole pos-

even college. Chris Burke, the actor with Down syndrome, who played Corky on the television show *Life Goes On*, lives in his own apartment in New York and commutes to work. Daniel, by contrast, had to learn basic reading skills. He had to work on his speech, and people say it is still difficult to understand him unless you know him.

Even so, Daniel didn’t seem to be scarred by his years at Southbury, according to one of his social workers. He had none of the odd behavioral tics or bouts of severe depression that afflict many people who have been raised in institutions. “He was amazingly well adjusted,” the social worker says.

Daniel was still in a group home when his father’s memoir, *Timebends*, was published, in 1987. In his account of 1966,

PHOTOGRAPH BY JACQUES DEL CONTE

Miller wrote that he felt “uplifted by what was clearly a new life being born around me”—referring not to the birth of his son that year but to the expansion of PEN. There are hints in *Timebends* that Miller was struggling with his guilt about Daniel. He wrote at length about his own father’s abandonment by his parents, and said that Marilyn Monroe, who was raised in a foster home, taught him to spot an orphan in a crowded room, to recognize in his or her eyes “the bottomless loneliness that no parented person can really know.” He repeatedly addressed the subject of denial. “Man is what man is,” he wrote, “nature’s denial machine.” There were those who read his memoir and sensed that he was

Miller met for the first time in public, at a conference on false confessions in Hartford, Connecticut. Miller had come to the Aetna conference center to deliver a speech on behalf of Richard Lapointe, a man with a mild intellectual disability who had been convicted, based on a confession that many people believed was coerced, of murdering his wife’s grandmother. Daniel was there with a large group from People First. Miller, several participants recall, seemed stunned when Danny ran over and embraced him, but recovered quickly. “He gave Danny a big hug,” says one man. “He was very nice.” They had their picture taken together, and then Miller left. “Danny was thrilled,” Bowen recalls.

The following year, Rebecca Miller mar-

have dreamed this for my son. If you would have told me when he first started out that he would get to this point, I would never have believed it.’ And you could see his sense of pride. Danny was right there, and he was just beaming.”

Miller never went to another meeting, and he apparently did not visit Daniel again at his apartment. But every now and then a social worker would drive Daniel to New York City to see his parents.

It was around this time, one close friend says, that Miller told a guest at a dinner party that he had a son with Down syndrome. The guest was a total stranger, “someone Arthur would never see again,” but his friends were amazed all the same. Miller had still

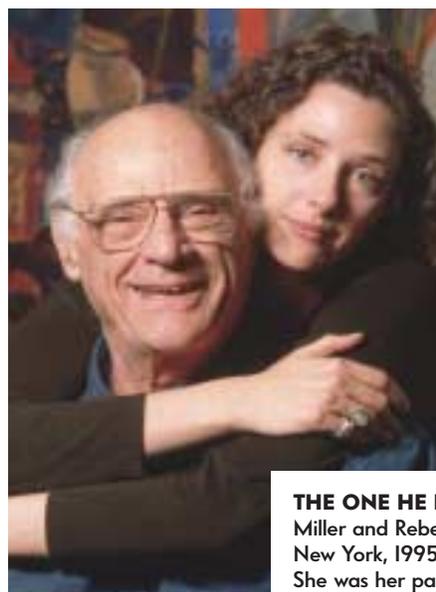
“THE ONLY PERSON WHO CAN TRULY ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS IS MY FATHER, AND HE IS DEAD.”

trying to tell the truth, without saying it out loud. It was “as if he *wanted* to be outed,” says one friend.

A Public Encounter

By the mid-90s, Daniel was doing so well that he was enrolled in a state-financed “supported-living program” that enabled him to stay in an apartment with a roommate. He still had someone looking in on him once a day, helping him to pay bills and sometimes to cook, but otherwise he was on his own. He had a bank account and a job, first at a local gym and then at a supermarket. He went to parties and concerts, and he loved to go out dancing. He was also a “natural athlete,” says one social worker. He learned to ski, and competed in the Special Olympics, in that sport as well as in cycling, track, and bowling. “Everyone loved Danny,” says Rich Godbout, who ran the supported-living program. “His greatest joy was helping people. He would insist. If someone needed help moving, Danny was always the first guy to volunteer to help.” Daniel also joined Starlight and People First, two “self-advocacy” groups that promote the rights of disabled people to govern their own lives. “He wouldn’t miss a meeting,” says Godbout. In 1993, Daniel attended a ceremony to celebrate the closing of the Mansfield Training School, Southbury’s sister institution. Three years later, Southbury came under a federal contempt order, and the question of whether it should be closed became the subject of a fiery political debate that continues today. Jean Bowen, an adviser to People First, remembers hearing Daniel speak out at meetings about his desire to see the institution shut down.

In September 1995, Daniel and Arthur



THE ONE HE LOVED
Miller and Rebecca in New York, 1995. She was her parents’ “precious object.”

ried Daniel Day-Lewis, whom she had met on the set of the movie adaptation of *The Crucible*. Day-Lewis, says Francine du Plessix Gray, “was the most compassionate about Daniel. He always visited him, with Inge and Rebecca.” Some say he was “appalled” at Miller’s attitude toward his son, and it is possible that Day-Lewis influenced Miller to make his first appearance, sometime in the late 1990s, at one of Daniel’s annual “overall plan of service” reviews. The meeting was held in Daniel’s apartment and lasted about two hours, Godbout recalls. As Arthur and Inge listened, the social workers who worked with Daniel discussed his progress—his job, his self-advocacy work, his huge network of friends. Miller “was just blown away,” Godbout recalls. “He was absolutely amazed at Danny being able to live out on his own. He said it over and over again: ‘I would never

not spoken about Daniel in public or to any of them, but he seemed to be wrestling with things. He began to ask his sister about her son, wanting to know if he could read and write. The questions “astonished” her, because Miller should have known the answers. Her son had worked in the mailroom of a company for 17 years by then. But it gave Copeland an opening to ask about Daniel, whom she had never met. “I asked him, ‘Does he know you?’ And he said, ‘Well, he knows I’m a person, and he knows my name, but he doesn’t understand what it means to be a son.’”

By then, one social worker says, Daniel did not really think of Arthur and Inge as his parents. The people who played that role in his life were an older couple who had met Daniel after his release from Southbury. “They were the ones you called when Danny needed anything,” says the social worker. “Money, anything—and you’d get it. We always assumed it came from the Millers, but they weren’t the ones you talked to.” Daniel spent holidays with the couple. Inge would visit, sometimes with Rebecca, and then return home to Roxbury to celebrate with friends and the rest of the Miller family. On Christmas of 2001, after years of noticing that Inge would disappear for several hours on weekends, Copeland finally asked where she was going. “To see Danny,” Inge said. “Would you like to come?” “I said, ‘Oh, yes, I would love to,’” says Copeland. “So I did see him, and I was very, very impressed.” Five weeks later, on January 30, 2002, Inge died of cancer at the age of 78. When Miller spoke to *The New York Times* for her obituary, he appears to have confirmed that she had only one child, Rebecca. When Daniel did not appear at the

LYNN GOLDSMITH

funeral, friends assumed that Miller's attitude toward his son had not changed.

A Dramatic Gesture

By the spring of 2004, Miller's own health was beginning to fail. He was 88 and lived in the Roxbury farmhouse with his girlfriend, Agnes Barley, a 33-year-old artist he'd met shortly after Inge's death. Miller was also putting the final touches on *Finishing the Picture*, a play based on the making of *The Misfits*. In April, a Roxbury neighbor named Joan Stracks, who knew nothing about Daniel, phoned Miller to ask if he would speak at a fund-raiser for the Western Connecticut Association for Human Rights—the disability-rights organization that had helped get Daniel released from Southbury. Miller agreed without hesitating. It's impossible to know if he was considering breaking his silence about Daniel, because in October his office

called to cancel. He was battling cancer and pneumonia. Toward the end of the year, he and Barley moved into his sister's apartment, off Central Park. The papers reported that he was receiving hospice care.

Arthur Miller signed his last will on December 30, naming as executors his children Rebecca Miller Day-Lewis, Jane Miller Doyle, and Robert Miller. Daniel was not mentioned in the will, but he was named in separate trust documents that Miller signed that day, which are sealed from public view. In those, according to a letter from Rebecca Miller, Arthur bequeathed "everything left over after taxes and special bequests to his four children. This includes Danny, whose share is

what happened. Shortly after the will was filed, Connecticut's Department of Administrative Services "issued one reimbursement claim to Danny Miller," according to the estate's lawyer, for a "portion of his care when he was a minor." That claim, the attorney says, is now in the process of being settled.

What Arthur Miller's intentions were at

shame, selfishness, or fear—or, more likely, all three—Miller's failure to tackle the truth created a hole in the heart of his story. What that cost him as a writer is hard to say now, but he never wrote anything approaching greatness after Daniel's birth. One wonders if, in his relationship with Daniel, Miller was sitting on his greatest unwritten play.

Today, Daniel Miller lives with the elderly couple who have long taken care of him, in a sprawling addition to their home that was built especially for him. He continues to receive daily visits from a state social worker, whom he's known for years. Although his father left him enough money to provide for everything he needs, Daniel has kept his job, which he loves and "is very proud of," according to Rebecca, who visits him



SECRET SHARERS
Morath and Miller,
1999. Top, Rebecca
with husband Daniel
Day-Lewis, 1996.

the end of his life remain a mystery. Did he ignore his lawyers' advice? In choosing not to establish a special-needs trust, did he want to free Daniel from the limits of government funding, to provide more for him than he would get from public assistance? The only person in a position to answer these questions is Miller's daughter Rebecca, but she refused numerous requests to be interviewed. In response to a lengthy list of questions about her father's de-

with her family on holidays and during the summers. "Danny is very much part of our family," she said, and "leads a very active, happy life, surrounded by people who love him."

“WHAT A LOSS FOR ARTHUR MILLER THAT HE COULDN'T SEE HOW EXTRAORDINARY HIS SON IS.”

no different from mine or my other siblings.”

It was a dramatic gesture, and one that almost no attorney would have encouraged. To receive state and federal funding, people with incapacitating disabilities must maintain assets at or below the poverty level. Any amount above that is often claimed by the state to pay for their care. To protect their assets and to get the maximum public funding, most wealthy parents of disabled children leave their inheritances to other relatives or create a "special-needs trust."

By leaving the money directly to Daniel, Miller made him too wealthy to receive government assistance—and left the Miller estate open to being hit up by the state of Connecticut for everything it had spent on Daniel's care over the years. Which is exactly

decision to institutionalize his son, his relationship with Daniel, and his 39-year effort to keep his son's existence a secret, Rebecca Miller, who also has never spoken publicly about Daniel and would not permit him to be interviewed, wrote: "The only person who can truly answer your questions is my father, and he is dead."

It would be easy to judge Arthur Miller harshly, and some do. For them, he was a hypocrite, a weak and narcissistic man who used the press and the power of his celebrity to perpetuate a cruel lie. But Miller's behavior also raises more complicated questions about the relationship between his life and his art. A writer, used to being in control of narratives, Miller excised a central character who didn't fit the plot of his life as he wanted it to be. Whether he was motivated by

Some wonder why Arthur Miller, with all his wealth, waited until death to share it with his son. Had he done so sooner, Daniel could have afforded private care and a good education. But those who know Daniel say that this is not how he would feel. "He doesn't have a bitter bone in his body," says Bowen. The important part of the story, she says, is that Danny transcended his father's failures: "He's made a life for himself; he is deeply valued and very, very loved. What a loss for Arthur Miller that he couldn't see how extraordinary his son is." It was a loss that Arthur Miller may have understood better than he let on. "A character," he wrote in *Timebends*, "is defined by the kinds of challenges he cannot walk away from. And by those he has walked away from that cause him remorse." □

TOP, BY PAUL SMITH