

WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

NEWS RELEASE

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Westport Country Playhouse Script in Hand Playreading of “The Shark Is Broken,” about Making of “Jaws,” on Monday, June 9

Westport Country Playhouse will present a Script in Hand playreading of “The Shark Is Broken,” based on true events during the making of the film “Jaws,” on Monday, June 9, at 7 p.m. The play is written by Ian Shaw, son of actor Robert Shaw, one of “Jaws” stars, and Joseph Nixon. Director is Mark Shanahan, Playhouse artistic director and Script in Hand curator.

“And just when you thought it was safe to go back in the theater, our Script in Hand series will take an even deeper dive into the ‘Jaws’ legacy,” said Shanahan. “This hit Broadway play takes us behind the scenes with the movie’s three main actors as they battle bad weather, mechanical failures, and each other to bring ‘Jaws’ to life. It’s the perfect pairing with the June 2 film screening for an unforgettable, cinematic summer celebration. Get your tickets now, because the buzz around this event has us thinking--we’re gonna need a bigger theater!”

In “The Shark Is Broken,” stranded on a boat are the three legendary stars of “Jaws” - Robert Shaw, who played Quint, a shark hunter and captain of the Orca; Richard Dreyfuss, who portrayed Matt Hooper, a marine biologist; and Roy Scheider, who played police chief Martin Brody. They grapple with long delays, cramped quarters, and clashing personalities as they wait for their famously unreliable mechanical shark to work. Based on real events this critically acclaimed play takes audiences into the tense, hilarious, and unexpectedly heartfelt moments when the camera wasn’t rolling. With razor-sharp dialogue, “The Shark Is Broken” explores the egos, anxieties, and friendships that shaped “Jaws.”

“The Shark is Broken” premiered in 2019 for a three-day run in Brighton, England, followed by a run at the 2019 Edinburgh Fringe and transfer to London’s West End in 2021. The show received an Olivier Award nomination for Best Entertainment or Comedy Play and ran in Toronto before transferring to Broadway in 2023.

The cast, in alphabetical order, includes **Seth Andrew Bridges** as Roy Scheider (Westport Country Playhouse: “The 39 Steps,” Script in Hand playreading “Murder by Misadventure,” fight choreographer for “A Sherlock Carol”; Off-Broadway: Mint Theater Company; Regional: Alley Theatre, etc.; Film/TV: Over 100 credits, including “Billions,” “Only Murders in the Building”; Training: NYU; @sethandrewb); **Ciaran Byrne** as Robert Shaw (Theater Highlights: “Philadelphia Here I Come” at Irish Repertory Theatre - Drama Desk, Lucille Lortel, and Outer Critics Circle award-nominated production for Best Revival of a Play; “Moment” at Studio Theatre D.C. - Helen Hayes Award nominee for Best Production; Television: “Public Morals,” directed by Edward Burns, produced by Steven Spielberg); **Patrick Halley** as Richard Dreyfuss (Westport Country Playhouse: Script in Hand playreadings of “Lombardi,” “Miracle on South Division Street,” “A Merry Little Christmas Carol”; Off-Broadway and at many of the country’s major theaters, including The Pearl, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Alliance Theatre, four seasons with Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival; Bucknell graduate); and **Faith Sandberg** reading stage directions (Westport Country Playhouse: Script in Hand playreading “How the World Began,” “A Danger to Yourself and

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Others”; Stage: “Fun Home,” “Peter & The Starcatcher,” “Mamma Mia”; originated roles of Terri in new musical “The Good Girl,” Sophie in an adaptation of “Tom Jones,” Kitty in season one of HBO’s “Boardwalk Empire”).

Playwrights are Ian Shaw and Joseph Nixon. **Ian Shaw** trained at the Webber Douglas Academy of Dramatic Art, having obtained a BA in American Studies at Sussex University. Theater includes: “War Horse” (National Theatre); “The Importance of Being Earnest,” “The Philadelphia Story,” and “The Brothers Karamazov” (Manchester Royal Exchange); Television includes: “Wuthering Heights,” “The Queen,” and the Emmy award-winning “Hiroshima.” **Joseph Nixon** is the author (with Brian Mitchell) of the plays “Those Magnificent Men” (New Perspectives, 2010); “Big Daddy vs. Giant Haystacks” (The Foundry Group, 2011); “Seven Studies in Salesmanship” (The Foundry Group, 2013); and the musical “The Opinion Makers” (Mercury Theatre/Derby Theatre 2013.)

Director **Mark Shanahan** is Playhouse artistic director and Script in Hand curator. In the 2024-25 Playhouse season, he directed “The 39 Steps,” “A Sherlock Carol,” and “Theatre People.” He also directed his own adaptation of “Agatha Christie’s The Murder of Roger Ackroyd,” in partnership with Agatha Christie Ltd., which premiered at the Tony Award-winning Alley Theatre. He is the author of “A Merry Little Christmas Carol,” “See Monsters of the Deep,” the Off-Broadway and regional hit comedy “The Dingdong,” as well as numerous radio plays as creator of the White Heron Ghost Light series, featuring Christopher Plummer, Judith Ivey, Rhonda Ross, and other notables. Shanahan has directed at stages around the country such as Alley Theatre, George Street Playhouse, Virginia Stage, Arkansas Rep, White Heron, Mile Square Theatre, Hudson Stage, Theatre Squared, Fulton Opera House, Weston Playhouse, Orlando Shakespeare Festival, Florida Rep, Penguin Rep, Merrimack Rep, The Cape Playhouse, and many more. As an actor, Shanahan has appeared on and Off-Broadway (“The 39 Steps,” “Tryst,” “The Shaugraun,” and others) and at many celebrated regional theaters. Shanahan has appeared on the Westport Country Playhouse stage in “Journey’s End” (2005), “David Copperfield,” directed by Joanne Woodward and Annie Keefe, (2005), “Sedition” (2007), “Tryst” (2008), and “Around the World in 80 Days” (2009), and numerous Script In Hand readings. Shanahan is also the creator and curator of Westport Country Playhouse Radio Theater, in partnership with WSHU Public Radio, and served as writer/director of the Playhouse radio adaptation of “A Merry Little Christmas Carol,” and as director of scripts commissioned for the series. mark-shanahan.net.

Stage manager is **Kevin Jinghong Zhu** (Westport Country Playhouse: “Dial M for Murder,” “Kim’s Convenience,” “As Bees in Honey Drown,” “Tribes,” “Paris”; Off-Broadway: “Bus Stop,” “A Delicate Balance”; Regional: “A Raisin in the Sun”; MFA: Yale School of Drama; bit.ly/kevinjzhu).

Tickets are \$30. Running time is approximately 90 minutes; no intermission. Age recommendation 14 and up.

For full details, visit: <https://www.westportplayhouse.org/show/script-in-hand-the-shark-is-broken/>

“The Shark Is Broken” celebrates the 50th anniversary of Steven Spielberg’s “Jaws” and is paired with a screening of the classic film on Monday, June 2, at 7 p.m. Details: <https://www.westportplayhouse.org/show/jaws/>

The Script in Hand Playreading Series is supported by Joyce Hergenhan and the White Barn Program of the Lucille Lortel Foundation. 2025 Programming and Season Sponsor is Barbara Streicker. Media sponsors are Moffly Media and WSHU Public Radio. Westport Country Playhouse is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization.

Upcoming Script in Hand playreadings are scheduled on Mondays at 7 p.m. on Sept. 8, Nov. 3, and Dec. 1; titles to be announced.

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Script in Hand playreadings offer intimate storytelling as professional actors use their skills to catapult the audience's imagination without benefit of scenery or costumes. For a video on Script in Hand, visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h2eWDaF-JXA>

A complete schedule of Playhouse events is available at westportplayhouse.org. All play titles, artists, dates, and times are subject to change.

For Westport Country Playhouse information and tickets, visit westportplayhouse.org or call the box office at (203) 227-4177, toll-free at 1-888-927-7529. Stay connected to the Playhouse on Facebook (Westport Country Playhouse), Instagram (wcplayhouse), and YouTube (WestportPlayhouse). Westport Country Playhouse is located at 25 Powers Court, off Route 1, Westport.

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