

# WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

## NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 26, 2025

### **Nina Hellman and Jeremy Shamos to Star in Westport Country Playhouse Script in Hand Playreading of “What the Constitution Means to Me” on December 1**

Westport Country Playhouse will present a Script in Hand reading of the boundary-breaking, Obie Award-winning play, “What the Constitution Means to Me,” written by Heidi Schreck, directed by Amanda Charlton, and starring Nina Hellman, Jeremy Shamos, and Jocelyn Shek, on Monday, December 1, at 7 p.m.

A *New York Times* Critic’s Pick, Tony Award nominee, and Pulitzer Prize finalist, “What the Constitution Means to Me” is a buoyant, deeply personal, and thought-provoking exploration of how our nation’s defining document continues to influence our lives and ideals. With humor, heart, and insight, the play invites us to consider what the Constitution means today, and what it could mean for the future.

“I’m so proud to share this remarkable piece of theatre with our Playhouse audience,” said Mark Shanahan, Playhouse artistic director. “Heidi Schreck has created a funny, heartfelt, and profoundly thoughtful play that asks us to look with honesty, humor, and compassion at the ideas that have shaped our country. At a time when our nation is so divided, this play reminds us how deeply personal our shared history is, and how vital it is that we always continue to keep questioning, listening, learning, and hoping for a path forward together. To have Nina Hellman, Jeremy Shamos, and Jocelyn Shek under Amanda Charlton’s expert direction is a gift, as they are the perfect artists to bring this story to life.”

The story tells of playwright Heidi Schreck, who, at age 15, earned her college tuition by participating in Constitutional debate competitions across the country. In this hilarious, hopeful, and achingly human play, she revisits her teenage self to explore how this living document has shaped her family, her future, and the very fabric of our nation.

Nina Hellman’s credits include, Off Broadway: “Trouble in Paradise” - Obie Award, “The Internationalist” – Lortel nomination, “Greater Clements,” “Pericles,” “10 Out of 12,” “Paris Commune”; Television: “The Blacklist,” “New Amsterdam,” “Inside Amy Schumer,” “Search Party,” “Nurse Jackie,” “Law & Order”; Film: “Staten Island,” “Wet Hot American Summer,” “Role Models”; associate artist, The Civilians; board member, Clubbed Thumb; Artistic Advisory Committee, The Nantucket Performing Arts Center.

Jeremy Shamos’s credits include, Broadway: “Clybourne Park” – nominations for Tony Award, Lucille Lortel Award, Drama League Award, “Meteor Shower,” “Noises Off,” “The Assembled Parties,” “Glengarry Glen Ross”; Off-Broadway: “Gutenberg! The Musical,” “If I Forget” - Drama Desk Award nomination, “Animals Out Of Paper” - Drama Desk Award nomination, “Dinner with Friends” - Lucille Lortel Award, “Engaged” - Obie Award, Stephen Sondheim’s final musical, “Here We Are”; Film/Television: “Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom,” “Bad Education,” “The Big Sick,” “Birdman,” “Better Call Saul,” “The Handmaid’s

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25 POWERS COURT WESTPORT, CONNECTICUT 06880

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[westportplayhouse.org](http://westportplayhouse.org)

Tale," "Succession," "Dead Ringers," "Nurse Jackie," "Fosse/Verdon"; SAG Award nomination for recurring roles in "The Gilded Age" and "Only Murders In The Building".

Jocelyn Shek's work spans performance, producing, dramaturgy, playwriting, and lighting design. From 2020 to 2022, she performed on the national tour of "What the Constitution Means to Me," alongside Maria Dizzia and Cassie Beck. A student at Harvard University, serves on the board of the Harvard-Radcliffe Dramatic Club.

Playwright Heidi Schreck's credits include, Broadway: "What the Constitution Means to Me" played an extended, sold-out run in 2019 and was nominated for two Tony Awards; filmed version of the play premiered on Amazon Prime Video and was nominated for a Critics' Choice Award, a PGA Award, and a DGA Award; "What the Constitution Means to Me" was named Best of the Year by *The New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Time Magazine*, *The Hollywood Reporter*, *The New Yorker*; Other plays: A new translation of Chekhov's "Uncle Vanya," "Grand Concourse," "Creature," "There Are No More Big Secrets"; Screenwriting: "I Love Dick," "Billions," "Nurse Jackie," "Dispatches from Elsewhere"; Awards: Three Obie Awards, Drama Desk Award, Theatre World Award, Horton Foote Playwriting Award, Hull-Warriner Award from the Dramatists Guild, Smithsonian Magazine's 2019 American Ingenuity Award.

Director Amanda Charlton's credits include, Williamstown Theatre Festival: Artistic Associate and Artistic Director of The Professional Training Program from 2001-2011; NYC/Regional: directed and workshopped plays including Williamstown Theater Festival, Atlantic Theatre Company, Manhattan Theater Club, Rattlestick Playwrights Theatre, Naked Angels, EST, Juilliard, NYU Grad, The Kennedy Center, The Geffen Theatre, Geva Theatre, Cape Cod Playhouse, Merrimack Rep.; board member, SPACE on Ryder Farm for five years; graduated Carnegie Mellon University.

Stage Manager is Liz Beatty's credits include, Broadway: "Death Becomes Her," "Water for Elephants," "MJ," "The Shark is Broken," "Company," "Mrs. Doubtfire"; Off-Broadway: "Walking with Bubbles," "Kinky Boots"; BFA: NYU Tisch.

Tickets are \$30. Running time is 95 minutes, no intermission. Age recommendation is age 12 and up.

For full details, visit: <https://www.westportplayhouse.org/show/script-in-hand-december-2025/>

"What the Constitution Means to Me" is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc. [www.concordtheatricals.com](http://www.concordtheatricals.com)

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.

The Script in Hand 2026 season begins on January 12; titles to be announced.

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](http://westportplayhouse.org). All play titles, artists, dates, and times are subject to change.

For Westport Country Playhouse information and tickets, visit [westportplayhouse.org](http://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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