

WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

MARK LAMOS, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR | MICHAEL BARKER, MANAGING DIRECTOR

NEWS RELEASE

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Westport Country Playhouse and Westport Library Partner for Free-of-Charge Documentary Screening about Kenya's Illicit Ivory Market

Presented in conjunction with the Playhouse's October staging of "Mlima's Tale"

Westport Country Playhouse and The Westport Library are partnering to present a free-of-charge screening of the documentary, "When Lambs Become Lions," directed by Jon Kasbe, about the illicit ivory market in Kenya, on Monday, September 16, 7 to 8:30 p.m., in the Library's Komansky Room. The film is presented in conjunction with the Playhouse's October production of "Mlima's Tale," a powerful, theatrical fable about a magnificent Kenyan elephant named Mlima hunted for his coveted ivory tusks.

"I was swept away by this stunning documentary," said Mark Lamos, Westport Country Playhouse artistic director. "In the heart of Africa it takes you right into the lives of men who slaughter helpless animals in order to keep their families from drowning in poverty — while their brother park rangers struggle to protect the victims."

Lamos added, "The filmmaker has embedded himself and his camera into the lives of two cousins on opposite sides of this ethical and economic conflict, where the worst victims are helpless animals whose herds are diminishing. Watching it took me into the very heart of the play I'm directing now, the extraordinary 'Mlima's Tale'."

The 2018 documentary, "When Lambs Become Lions," is a rare and visually arresting look through the perspectives and motives of the people at the epicenter of the conservation divide. In the Kenyan bush, a small-time ivory dealer fights to stay on top while forces mobilize to destroy his trade. When he turns to his younger cousin, a conflicted wildlife ranger who hasn't been paid in months, they both see a possible lifeline. The plummeting elephant population in Africa has captured the attention of the world, and as the government cracks down, both poachers and rangers face their own existential crises—what is the value of elephant life relative to human life? And can we understand these hunters who will risk death, arrest, and the moral outrage of the world to provide for their families? Director Jon Kasbe followed the subjects of "When Lambs Become Lions" over a three-year period, gaining an extraordinary level of access and trust. The film's running time is 79 minutes.

This project is supported in part by CT Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Registration for the film is suggested as space is limited. Call Westport Country Playhouse at 203-227-4177 during regular box office hours, Tues.-Fri., 12 to 6 p.m.

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Westport Country Playhouse's production of "Mlima's Tale," written by two-time Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Lynn Nottage and directed by Playhouse artistic director Mark Lamos, will be staged from October 1 – 19.

Single tickets for "Mlima's Tale" start at \$30 during preview performances (October 1-4), and after October 5th Opening Night, tickets start at \$40, and are subject to change based upon availability. Buy early for best prices. Special offers are available for seniors, students, educators, and playwrights. For details, visit westportplayhouse.org/special-offers.

All play titles, artists, and dates are subject to change.

For more information and to buy tickets, visit www.westportplayhouse.org, or call the box office at (203) 227-4177, toll-free at 1-888-927-7529, or visit Westport Country Playhouse, 25 Powers Court, off Route 1, Westport. Stay connected to the Playhouse on Facebook (Westport Country Playhouse), follow on Twitter (@WCPlayhouse), and on YouTube (WestportPlayhouse).

ABOUT WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

The mission of Westport Country Playhouse is to enrich, enlighten, and engage the community through the power of professionally produced *theater worth talking about* and the welcoming experience of the Playhouse campus. The not-for-profit Playhouse provides this experience in multiple ways by offering live theater experiences of the highest quality, under the artistic direction of Mark Lamos; educational and community engagement events to further explore the work on stage; the New Works Initiative, a program dedicated to the discovery, development, and production of new live theatrical works; special performances and programs for students and teachers with extensive curriculum support material; Script in Hand play readings to deepen relationships with audiences and artists; the renowned Woodward Internship Program during the summer months for aspiring theater professionals; Family Festivities presentations to delight young and old alike and to promote reading through live theater; youth performance training through Broadway Method Academy, Westport Country Playhouse's resident conservatory program; and the beautiful and historic Playhouse campus open for enjoyment and community events year-round. Charity Navigator has recently awarded its top 4-star charity rating to the Playhouse in recognition of its strong financial health and commitment to accountability and transparency.

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