

# WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

MARK LAMOS, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR | MICHAEL BARKER, MANAGING DIRECTOR

## NEWS RELEASE

**Contact:** Patricia Blaufuss, Public Relations Manager  
(203) 227-5137 x197 | (203) 571-1287 | pblaufuss@westportplayhouse.org

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### **Westport Country Playhouse Presents Script in Hand Playreading of “Dot,” a Comedy/Drama about Mid-life Crises and Aging Parents**

**Written by Colman Domingo, star of AMC’s “Fear the Walking Dead,” and directed by Q. Smith**

Westport Country Playhouse will present a Script in Hand playreading of the comedy/drama about mid-life crises and aging parents, “Dot,” written by Colman Domingo, star of AMC’s “Fear the Walking Dead,” and directed by Q. Smith, on Monday, March 14, at 7 p.m. The live performance will be captured on film for on-demand streaming, from Thursday, March 17 through Sunday, March 20. Script in Hand playreadings offer intimate storytelling as professional actors bring the words to life without sets or costumes.

“Colman Domingo’s ‘Dot’ invites us to come together to spend time with an extraordinarily funny and loving family in a moment of deep uncertainty,” said Mark Shanahan, curator of the Playhouse’s Script in Hand playreading series and Playhouse Radio Theater. “Domingo’s impressive play is as unsettling as it is compassionate, tackling the bonds of family and friendship with intelligence and heart.

“Domingo deftly crafts a family comedy which confronts big, difficult issues which are sometimes too difficult to talk about, and does so with an abundance of laughter and insight. The Shealy family is certain to strike a chord with many of us, and I am sure our Playhouse Script in Hand audience will find much to discuss after spending time with these remarkable, brave, vulnerable, and hilarious characters.”

In their West Philadelphia home, the Shealy family, headed by proud, lovable matriarch Dot, is ready to celebrate the Christmas holiday. But this year, the family must grapple with more than exchanging presents as Dot’s memory is beginning to slip. While her three grown children reunite, each with their own personal challenges to attend to, they must also struggle with how to best care for their mom as she faces the difficulties ahead.

By turns uproariously funny and achingly heartfelt, playwright Colman Domingo has crafted a touching and irreverent play which speaks to the uncertainties of life as well as the power of love and family. Adult language and themes. Running time is approximately two hours, plus one 15-minute intermission.

Playwright Colman Domingo is an Olivier, Tony, Drama Desk, and Drama League award-nominated, and OBIE, GLAAD, and Lucille Lortel award-winning actor, playwright, and director. He stars in the AMC original series, “Fear the Walking Dead” as Victor Strand. Domingo has also recurred on the Cinemax series “The Knick,” as well as guest-starred on “Horace and Pete” and “Lucifer.” He co-starred in the Academy Award®-nominated film “Selma” as Reverend Ralph Abernathy, directed by Ava

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25 POWERS COURT WESTPORT, CONNECTICUT 06880

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE T (203) 227-5137 F 203.221.7482 | BOX OFFICE T (203) 227-4177 F (203) 454-3238

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

DuVernay; "Lincoln," directed by Steven Spielberg; Lee Daniels' "The Butler"; Spike Lee's "Red Hook Summer," "Passing Strange," and "Miracle at St. Anna"; and Nate Parker's "The Birth of a Nation." Domingo starred on the West End in London where he reprised the role he originated on Broadway in Kander and Ebb's "The Scottsboro Boys." In addition to "Dot," Domingo is the author of "Wild with Happy," "A Boy and His Soul," "The Brother(s)," and "Up Jumped Springtime." "Dot" received its world premiere at the Humana Festival at Actors Theatre of Louisville, directed by Meredith McDonough, and subsequently was produced Off-Broadway at the Vineyard Theatre, directed by Susan Stroman.

Director Q. Smith returns to Westport Country Playhouse, having performed in the 2008 annual gala. Smith is currently playing the role of Hannah and others in the Tony Award®-winning musical "Come From Away." Smith was in the Broadway production of "Mary Poppins," and was the first African American to have a leading role in the history of the show. Also on Broadway, she was in the first revival of "Les Misérables." Off-Broadway she performed the role of Mabel Washington and recorded the soundtrack for "Fame on 42nd Street." She has toured with the North American Broadway show "A Night with Janis Joplin," playing the roles of Aretha Franklin and Nina Simone. Other noted credits include "Abyssinia: A Gospel Celebration" with Wynton Marsalis at Lincoln Center, "Showboat" in concert at Carnegie Hall, guest soloist for Hillary Clinton's Vital Voices Global Leadership Awards at the Kennedy Center, and guest soloist at Barack Obama's inaugural ceremonies. She has shared the stage with Gladys Knight, Rita Coolidge, and Gary U.S. Bonds in "Smokey Joe's Café."

Script in Hand curator Mark Shanahan appeared at Westport Country Playhouse in "Around the World in 80 Days," "Tryst," "Sedition," "David Copperfield," "Journey's End," and over 20 Script in Hand playreadings, and directed readings of "Butterflies Are Free," with Blythe Danner and Jonathan Groff, and "The Greatest Gift" by Weston playwright David Wiltse. He is the creator and curator of Westport Country Playhouse Radio Theater and writer/director of the Playhouse radio adaptation "A Merry Little Christmas Carol." New York acting credit includes "The 39 Steps," "Small World," "Checkers," "Tryst," "The Shaughraun," "As Bees in Honey Drown," and "The Internationalist." His directorial work has been seen at Alley Theatre, George Street Playhouse, Virginia Stage, Arkansas Rep, White Heron, Fulton Opera House, Weston Playhouse, Florida Rep, Penguin Rep, Merrimack Rep, The Cape Playhouse, and many more. He has written numerous radio plays for White Heron's Ghost Light Series (featuring Christopher Plummer and Judith Ivey, among others), and is the author of the Off-Broadway and regional hit comedy, "The Dingdong"; "A Merry Little Christmas Carol"; "A Murder at Fernly Hall"; and "A Sherlock Carol," which premiered last fall Off-Broadway at New World Stages. [www.mark-shanahan.net](http://www.mark-shanahan.net)

Casting will be announced soon.

Tickets to attend the playreading in person are \$20. Tickets for on-demand streaming are \$20 individual, \$40 pair, and \$80 household. Each purchase entitles the ticket buyer to one individual link.

Upcoming Script in Hand playreadings will be on June 13, November 14, and December 12, titles to be announced.

The Script in Hand Playreading Series is supported by Stephen Corman and the White Barn Program of the Lucille Lortel Foundation.

All dates, titles, artists, and formats subject to change.

All audience members must present proof of vaccination and booster and wear a mask at all times while inside Westport Country Playhouse. Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the U.S., requires that actors perform only at theaters where audiences wear masks. For updates on Covid-19 health and safety protocols at the Playhouse, visit <https://www.westportplayhouse.org/visit/covid19safety/>

To purchase tickets, visit [westportplayhouse.org](http://westportplayhouse.org), call (203) 227-4177, or email [boxoffice@westportplayhouse.org](mailto:boxoffice@westportplayhouse.org). Stay connected to the Playhouse on Facebook (Westport Country Playhouse), follow on Twitter (@WCPlayhouse), and on YouTube (WestportPlayhouse).

## **ABOUT WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE**

Founded in 1931, Westport Country Playhouse is celebrating its 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary year. The mission of Westport Country Playhouse is to enrich, enlighten, and engage the community through the power of professionally produced theater of the highest caliber 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; 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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