

WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

NEWS RELEASE

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Westport Country Playhouse Presents Political Thriller, “Warrior Class,” a Script in Hand Playreading on Monday, December 4

Westport Country Playhouse will present a Script in Hand playreading of “Warrior Class,” a drama at the crossroads of politics and morality, on Monday, December 4, at 7 p.m. The play is written by Kenneth Lin, who began his career writing on Netflix’s “House of Cards,” and directed by Mark Shanahan, curator of the Playhouse Script in Hand playreading series and also Playhouse incoming artistic director.

"Fans of Kenneth Lin's work on 'House of Cards' know what a master he is at weaving a taut political thriller," said Shanahan. "Warrior Class' crackles with suspense, a crisp character study which explores the role of truth in politics. As delivered by our stellar cast, this electric Script In Hand reading will provoke plenty of discussion from our Playhouse audience long after the actors take their bows."

"Warrior Class" centers on Julius Lee, a New York State assemblyman who's been dubbed "The Republican Obama." Lee is the son of immigrants and a decorated war veteran with a seemingly limitless political career ahead of him. But Holly Eames remembers a far more disturbing side to Julius going back to their college days. Now those long-buried secrets threaten to derail the young politician's ambitions. Enter Julius' political fixer, Nathan Berkshire, who is determined to work out a deal to protect his protégé. But in the world of politics, can the past ever truly stay in the rear-view mirror?

The three-member cast includes **Robert Cuccioli** as Nathan (Broadway's "Jekyll & Hyde" - Tony nomination, "Les Misérables," "Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark"; Off-Broadway's "And The World Goes 'Round" - OCC Award, "Rothschild and Sons," "Jacques Brel," "A Touch of the Poet"; currently in Off-Broadway's "Til Death"; www.robertcuccioli.com); **Maggie Lacey** as Holly (Westport Country Playhouse as Emily in "Our Town," which transferred to Broadway, "The School for Husbands," "Lips Together, Teeth Apart," Laurence Maslon's "I'll Drink to That," and Script in Hand playreadings; TFANA's "A Doll's House"/"The Father" in repertory; Hartford Stage/Signature Theatre's "The Orphans' Home Cycle"; television's "Cititiots" pilot which she co-wrote); and **Kevin Schuering** as Julius (Westport Country Playhouse Radio Theater's "The Return"; National Tour of Lincoln Center Theater's "The King and I"; NY/Off-Broadway's "On This Side of the World," "Wearing Black," "Carousel," "Lost in Shanghai"; regional theater's "Miss Saigon"; www.kevinschuering.com). Stage directions will be read by **Joanna Parson** (Westport Country Playhouse Script in Hand playreading of "Theatre People"; New York's "A Man of No Importance," "The Wild Party"; national tour "Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story"; television's "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel"; comedy cabarets; @joannaparsonactor).

Playwright **Kenneth Lin** is an Emmy-nominated screenwriter and playwright, and currently an executive producer on "Star Trek: Discovery." Lin began his television career writing on "House of Cards," for which he was nominated for an Emmy and WGA Award. His theatrical plays, including "Warrior Class," "Intelligence-Slave," and "Kleptocracy," have been performed around the world and garnered widespread acclaim. He is the winner of the Princess Grace Award, Alliance Theatre's Keneda National Graduate Playwriting

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Competition, Williamstown Theatre Festival's L. Arnold Weissberger Award, and TCG Edgerton New Play Award.

Director **Mark Shanahan** is also Playhouse Script in Hand curator, and was recently named Westport Country Playhouse incoming artistic director for 2023-24. He will assume the position in March 2024. Shanahan is the writer/director of *The New York Times* Critics' Pick "A Sherlock Carol" (Off-Broadway Alliance nomination, Best New Play 2021), playing two seasons in New York, annually at London's Marylebone Theatre, and for the 2023 holiday season at Westport Country Playhouse, December 19-23. He recently 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 theatres. 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 **Megan Smith** who has stage managed many Westport Country Playhouse productions and Script in Hand and New Works playreadings since 2005.

Tickets are \$25. Running time is approximately 90 minutes, no intermission. The play is appropriate for age 15 and up.

For full details on the Script in Hand playreading of "Warrior Class," visit:

<https://www.westportplayhouse.org/show/script-in-hand-december/>

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

More Script in Hand playreadings are scheduled in 2024; dates and titles to be announced. Script in Hand playreadings offer intimate storytelling as professional actors bring the words to life without sets 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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