

WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

NEWS RELEASE

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Westport Country Playhouse Presents Screening of Award-winning Documentary, Sponsored by TEAM Westport, on Friday, June 14

A conversation follows the screening with Sharon Washington, Tony-nominated playwright, upon whose life the film is based.

Westport Country Playhouse will present a screening of the award-winning documentary, "When My Sleeping Dragon Woke," based on the childhood of Sharon Washington, veteran actor and 2023 Tony-nominated playwright for "New York, New York," on Friday, June 14 at 7 p.m. The event is sponsored by TEAM Westport, the town's multicultural advocacy committee.

"This award-winning film and its talkback beautifully present the universal story of living an experience, reflecting on it, writing a work about it, staging the work for presentation, and presenting it as performer," said Harold Bailey, Jr., Westport Country Playhouse trustee and TEAM Westport chairman. "All this with the added dimension of handling the emotional baggage unearthed at every stage of the cycle. It is not to be missed."

Bailey added, "This is great entertainment anytime but especially for the weekend before Juneteenth."

"When My Sleeping Dragon Woke" is about Sharon Washington growing up in a custodial apartment inside a New York City public library, where her father stoked its coal furnace 24/7. Through a mix of interviews, animation, and verité, the film follows Washington as she commits to writing a play about her past, delving into her upbringing, her relationship with her parents, the process of letting go of the idealized narratives of childhood, and, as a young woman, embracing new opportunities and breaking down barriers. But creating the play comes with an unforeseen cost – waking the family dragon she thought she'd silenced decades ago.

"When My Sleeping Dragon Woke" was voted Best Documentary Feature Premiere at the Heartland International Film Festival, and was an Official Selection at the City of Angels Women's Film Festival 2023, The Women's Film Festival Philadelphia 2023, Chagrin Documentary Film Festival 2023, Sedona International Film Festival, and RKY Women's Mtn Film Festival 2023.

Following the screening, a conversation and audience Q&A with Washington and Chuck Schultz, the film's creators, will be moderated by Mark Shanahan, Westport Country Playhouse artistic director.

Washington was nominated for a 2023 Tony Award for Best Book of a Musical as co-writer of "New York, New York." She debuted as a playwright with her solo play "Feeding the Dragon," which played Off-Broadway at Primary Stages and was nominated for Outer Critics, Lortel, and Audelco awards. She was the 2017-18 Primary Stages Tow Foundation Playwright-in-Residence. The play was

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recorded as an Audible Original and selected as an Audible Essentials Top 100 pick. As an actor, Washington was seen as Queen Margaret in the 2022 Public Theater/Shakespeare in the Park production of "Richard III," broadcast on PBS's "Great Performances." On Broadway, Washington appeared in "The Scottsboro Boys," and she has had roles in numerous films, including the original "Joker" and the upcoming sequel "Joker 2: Folie à Deux." She holds an MFA from the Yale School of Drama and a BA from Dartmouth College.

More information on "When My Sleeping Dragon Woke," at:
<https://www.westportplayhouse.org/show/when-my-sleeping-dragon-woke/>

The film's trailer is at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l-Kp09hqZE8>

Tickets are \$25; general admission, seating unreserved. The program will run approximately 90 minutes. Appropriate for ages 12 and up.

2024 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.

A complete schedule of Playhouse events is available at westportplayhouse.org. All play titles, artists, dates, and times 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) and on YouTube (WestportPlayhouse).

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