

WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

NEWS RELEASE

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Westport Country Playhouse Script in Hand Reading Pits Faith vs. Science in “How the World Began,” on Monday, January 13

Westport Country Playhouse will present a Script in Hand playreading of “How the World Began,” a drama probing the conflict between divine creation and evolution, and its effect on a small town, on Monday, January 13, at 7 p.m. The play is written by **Catherine Trieschmann** and directed by **Camden Gonzales**.

“After a recent string of comedies in our reading series, it feels like a perfect time to turn our attention to a suspenseful and gripping drama,” said Mark Shanahan, Script in Hand curator and Playhouse artistic director. “Catherine Trieschmann’s exploration of the tension between science and faith rings particularly relevant in today’s polarized world. With complex, heartfelt characters who face deeply personal struggles, the play powerfully captures the emotional depth of a fractured community. With this extraordinary cast delivering powerful performances, I’m thrilled to kick off our 2025 Script In Hand series with a work that’s sure to spark meaningful debate and invite important conversation.”

“How the World Began” examines the clash between science and religion in a small Kansas town torn apart by a recent tornado. When Susan, a science teacher from Manhattan, makes a casual remark about the origins of life, she triggers a fierce confrontation with Micah, a bright but troubled student. As tensions rise, Susan finds herself at the heart of a larger cultural battle, threatening not only her safety but the fragile unity of the community.

With sharp insights into belief, ideology, and human psychology, “How the World Began” is a thought-provoking look at how a single moment can unravel everything—highlighting the delicate and painful gulf between conflicting points of view and the urgent need for healing and mutual understanding.

The cast includes **Alexandra Kopko** as Susan Pierce (“A Sherlock Carol,” “Peter and the Starcatcher,” “The Great Gatsby,” “The Full Monty,” “The Two Foscari,” “The Bloody Beginning”; one half of the chatty comedic podcast “The Film Bros,” which can be streamed on all major platforms; comedy videos on Instagram and TikTok; @alexandrawideeyes); **Colin Konstanty** as Micah Staab (Graduate of Staples High School, Westport, CT; Off-Broadway: “Trevor: The Musical”; Film: “Trevor: The Musical” (Disney +), “Caravan,” “The Conversation,” “Love’s Labor’s Lost,” “The Awakening of Edwin Lorde,” “Murder in Maplewood”; new single “Favorite Sad Song” now streaming; NYU Tisch School of the Arts; IG @colinkonstanty); **Bill Phillips** as Gene Dinkel (Westport Country Playhouse: Script in Hand playreading “They Knew What They Wanted”; Penguin Rep: “Centennial Casting,” “The Savannah Disputation,” directed by Mark Shanahan; Off-Broadway: Originated role of Alan in Michael McKeever’s “After”; TV: “Law & Order: SVU,” “Shades of Blue”; Netflix: “House of Cards”; Prime’s “Z: The Beginning of Everything”; Tribeca Film Festival: “Little Boxes”; SXSW: “Porno”; www.billphillips.nyc); and **Faith Sandberg** will read stage directions (Westport Country Playhouse: Script in Hand playreading “A Danger to Yourself and Others”; Stage: “Fun Home,” “Peter & The Starcatcher,” “Mamma Mia”; originated roles of

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Terri in new musical “The Good Girl,” Sophie in an adaptation of “Tom Jones,” Kitty in season one of HBO’s “Boardwalk Empire”).

Playwright **Catherine Trieschmann**’s plays include “The Bridegroom of Blowing Rock,” “Crooked,” “How the World Began,” “Hot Georgia Sunday,” “The Most Deserving,” “Holy Laughter,” “OZ 2.5,” and “One House Over.” Her work has been produced off-Broadway at the Women’s Project, the Bush Theatre (London), Out of Joint at the Arcola Theatre (London), South Coast Repertory, Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, the Denver Center for Performing Arts, Geva Theatre Center, the New Theatre (Sydney), Florida Stage, the Summer Play Festival, Actors Theatre of Louisville, American Theatre Company, and the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, among others. She has received commissions from South Coast Repertory, Manhattan Theatre Club, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, and the Denver Theatre Center. She is the recipient of the Weissberger Award, the Otis Guernsey New Voices Playwriting Award from the Inge Theatre Festival, and a twice awardee of the Edgerton New Play Award. She also wrote the screenplay for the film “Angel’s Crest,” which premiered at the 2011 Tribeca Film Festival and was released by Magnolia Pictures. Originally from Athens, Georgia, she now lives in a small town in western Kansas.

Director **Camden Gonzales** is the associate choreographer for “Moulin Rouge! The Musical,” working with companies all over the world including London, Germany, and Australia. Previous credits include “A Sherlock Carol” (assistant director) at New World Stages, “Sing Street” (associate choreographer) at Huntington Theatre, “Peter and the Starcatcher” (choreographer) at White Heron Theatre as well as “Forget Me Not” (choreographer), a new musical which debuted at Manhattan School of Music.

Amadi Cary is stage manager (Westport Country Playhouse: “A Sherlock Carol,” “The 39 Steps”; Regional Theatre: “Blithe Spirit,” “Dial M for Murder,” “See Monsters of the Deep,” “Hound of the Baskervilles,” “Private Lives”; @halfhearteddragking).

Tickets are \$30. Running time is 90 minutes, no intermission. Age recommendation is age 14 and up.

For full details, visit: <https://www.westportplayhouse.org/show/how-the-world-began/>

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 Mofly Media and WSHU Public Radio. Westport Country Playhouse is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization.

The upcoming Script in Hand playreading season is scheduled on Mondays at 7 p.m. in 2025 as follows: Feb. 3, Apr. 14, May 5, June 9, Sept. 8, Nov. 3, and Dec. 1; titles to be announced. For details on the 2025 eight-play subscription series, visit: <https://tickets.westportplayhouse.org/packages/2367>

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. 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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