

Season 2026 sponsored in part by **Harry Reagan**
presented by **THE 5 & DIME**,
with support by **Holly & Redgie Gutshall**



AMERICAN SON

written by **CHRISTOPHER DEMOS-BROWN** | directed by **RHODIE JACKSON**

JULY 31 — AUGUST 8 2026 | in residency at the **FLORIDA BALLET**



A thriving creative economy enhances the quality of life for us all. Supported in part by the Merit-Based Cultural Service Grant Program, administered by the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville with funding from the City of Jacksonville and our elected officials, we extend our gratitude to all partners who make this possible.

LIVE THEATRE is the art of now.
What happens tonight will never happen again. Enjoy!



THE 5 & DIME tells stories that engage, inspire, entertain, and challenge audiences, nurturing a rich artistic culture in Jacksonville. **We believe that now, more than ever, it's important for theatre to be a space for bold and diverse stories** — the kind The 5 & Dime has brought to our community since its founding.

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Technical Director: Ryan Walker
Volunteer Coordinator: Jenny Tammera

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Anvar Gashimov • Rhodie Jackson • Michael Lipp • Cole Marshall
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A SPECIAL THANK YOU

The following people and organizations helped in ways both large and small, but each has made a significant impact on the quality of this production. To them we offer our most sincere thanks.

Ky'Eisha Black • Melissa Coll • Andrew Forbess • Players by the Sea

SEASON 2026 sponsored in part by **Harry Reagan**
THE 5 & DIME, with support by **Holly & Redgie Gutshall**, presents

AMERICAN SON

written by **Christopher Demos-Brown**

directed by **Rhodie Jackson**

TIME & PLACE

An early morning in June, shortly after 4:00 am.
The waiting room of a police station in Miami-Dade County, Florida.

CHARACTERS

KENDRA ELLIS-CONNORZonnetta Marie
OFFICER PAUL LARKINAJ Heekin
SCOTT CONNORHunter M. Showalter
LIEUTENANT JOHN STOKES Eugene Lindsey

*This play is performed without an intermission.
The use of photography, audio, or video recording is strictly prohibited.*

SPOTLIGHT SPONSORS

JUL 31 **Christopher Collinsworth & Jay Henderlite** and **Cynthia Riegler**

AUG 2 **Colleen Hennessy Lydon, Mary Robison,** and **Julia Suddath**

AUG 6 **Dimitri Demopoulos** and **Phillip Markou**

AMERICAN SON is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc.
www.concordtheatricals.com

The world premiere of American Son was presented at Barrington Stage Company, Pittsfield, MA in 2016,
Julianne Boyd, Artistic Director and Tristan Wilson, Managing Director.

Original Broadway Production produced by Jeffrey Richards; Simpson Street; Rebecca Gold; Will Trice; Stephen C. Byrd; Alia Jones-Harvey; Nnamdi Asomugha; Domnick LaRuffa, Jr. & Co.; Greenleaf Productions; Van Kaplan; Willette & Manuel Klausner; Jada Pinkett Smith; The Miami Group; Lu-Shawn M. Thompson; Act 4 Entertainment; Gabrielle Palitz; Carl & Robin Washington; Bruce Robert Harris and Jack W. Batman; Shonda Rhimes; Bellanca Smigel Rutter; Salmira & Son; Jayne Baron Sherman; Steve Stoute for United Masters; Steven Toll; Dwyane Wade; Gabrielle Union-Wade; and The Shubert Organization.

PRODUCTION TEAM

Director	Rhodie Jackson
Stage Manager	Rhonda Fisher
Scenic Design / Master Carpenter	Logan Forbess
Costume Design.....	Phedre Delinois
Prop Master	Heather Goliber
Technical Director	Ryan Walker
Asst. Technical Director	Maya Williams
Lighting Design	Kaitlyn Gemmell
Sound Design.....	Jillian Cote
Fight Choreography.....	Cole Marshall
Box Office Manager	Krysten Bennett
House & Bar Manager	Amanda Fraser
Production Photographer	Jon Scherf
Promotional Photography / Graphic Design / Webmaster	Caryl Butterley

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

American Son is a play about waiting.

Waiting for answers. Waiting for the phone to ring. Waiting for someone to listen. And, for one mother, waiting to know if the person she loves most in this world — her son — is safe.

But beneath that waiting, lives something much larger.

At its heart, *American Son* is the story of two parents desperately searching for answers about their child. Within that search, however, the play forces us to confront difficult questions about race, identity, privilege, perception, parenthood, and the assumptions we make about one another. These are two people who love the same child completely, yet experience and understand the world he moves through in profoundly different ways.

One of the things that drew me to this play is its honesty. These characters are complicated. They are frustrated. They interrupt. They misunderstand. They say things they cannot take back. They carry their histories, fears, disappointments, and

experiences into a room where the stakes could not be higher. And through it all, they are desperately trying to be heard.

As a director, I wanted this production to feel immediate. I wanted there to be no comfortable distance between the audience and what is happening on stage. Tonight, you are in that waiting room with them. You feel the passing minutes. You hear the rain. You experience the silence between the words. And, like these characters, you must wait for answers.

American Son does not promise easy answers. It may make you uncomfortable. It may challenge what you believe. It may even leave you with more questions than you had when you entered the theatre. But perhaps that is where theatre can be most powerful. It gives us a place to confront difficult truths, to listen to experiences beyond our own, and to begin conversations that might otherwise remain unspoken.

My deepest thanks to this extraordinary cast and creative team for trusting me with this story and for approaching this work with honesty, vulnerability, courage, and truth. Thank you to my friends and family for always being my greatest support system.

And to you, our audience — thank you for showing up. Thank you for listening. Thank you for being willing to sit in this room with us and experience this story.

Theatre only truly comes alive when there is someone on the other side of the stage willing to listen.

When the final lights fade tonight, our work onstage will be finished.

But I hope the conversation is only beginning.

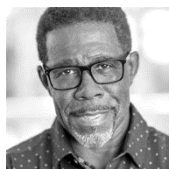
— Rhodie Jackson

ABOUT THE CAST



AJ HEEKIN (*Officer Paul Larkin*) is excited to return to The 5 & Dime stage after appearing in *The Baltimore Waltz* last year and directing *Body Awareness* in the spring. He returned to Jacksonville after 15 years as an actor, director, and playwright in NYC, where he was a regular fixture with Tongue in Cheek Theatre Company, performing in *The Mistakes Madeline Made*, *The Drunken City*, and *Our Town* to name a few of his favorites. You may recognize him from co-starring in HBO's *Boardwalk Empire*, where he shared the screen with Steve Buscemi and

Michael Stuhlbarg. He'd like to thank his partner, Travis, for all his love and support – and for holding down the fort while he treads the boards. Love you.



EUGENE LINDSEY (*Lieutenant John Stokes*) is thrilled to be back at The 5 & Dime. It's been more than seven years since he last performed here. You may have caught him in some of our past productions. Eugene actually helped us kick-off our very first show as Captain Beatty in *Fahrenheit 451*. Since then, he's appeared here in *John Coffey Refuses to Save The World*, *The Call*, and "*Master Harold*"...and the Boys. More recently, Eugene performed at the Alhambra, giving life to Ollie in *Morning After Grace*. Other recent notable roles include Hoke Colburn in *Driving Miss Daisy*, Troy Maxson in *Fences*, Mister in *The Color Purple*, and Nomax in *Five Guys Named Moe*.



ZONNETTA MARIE (*Kendra Ellis-Connor*) a Boston native, has appeared in *Elegies for Angels, Punks, and Raging Queens* (The 5 & Dime, 2013), *Small Mouth Sounds* (The 5 & Dime, 2019), *The Sweet Delilah Swim Club* (Theatre Jacksonville, 2022), and served as the first storyteller to open Florida Theatre's *Untold Stories* series (2022). Her additional credits include *The Royale* (The 5 & Dime, 2022), Story & Song Center for Arts and Culture (Storyteller, 2022), *Doubt* (Theatre Jacksonville, 2023), *Trouble in Mind* (Players by the Sea, 2024), and voice acting for Jewish Family & Community Services' Annual Event (2023). She has also performed for Clay County Fire & Rescue (AED Demonstration, 2024), *Cadillac Crew* (Lumen Repertory Theatre, 2024), *The Clockmaker* (Mark Elijah Productions, 2024), and *A Serenity Prayer* (Theatre Jacksonville, 2026).



HUNTER M. SHOWALTER (*Scott Connor*) is humbled to be making his 5 & Dime debut. A native of Jacksonville and St. Augustine, he has spent the past 20+ years in Atlanta working as an accountant and, most recently, an actor! His past favorite roles include Alan Raleigh (*God of Carnage*, Limelight Theatre), Johnny Martin (*Home, I'm Darling*, A Classic Theatre), Otto Frank (*The Diary of Anne Frank*, Player's Guild at Sugar Hill in Atlanta), Jay (*Tapas: The Bow*, Academy Theater in Atlanta), Jack Key (*Maytag Virgin*, Centerstage North in Atlanta), Paul Sheldon (*Misery*, Onstage Atlanta in Atlanta), Richard the Lionheart (*The Lion in Winter*, Lionheart Theatre in Atlanta), and Tony (*Men Are Dogs*, Pumphouse Players in Atlanta).

THEATRE is a form of knowledge; it should and can also be a means of transforming society. Theatre can help us build our future, rather than just waiting for it.

— Augusto Boal

ABOUT THE CREATIVE & PRODUCTION TEAM

CHRISTOPHER DEMOS-BROWN (*Playwright*) has written over a dozen full-length plays and screenplays. His honors include the Laurents/Hatcher Award, a Steinberg Citation from The American Theatre Critics Association, and multiple regional theatre awards (including two Carbonell Awards, multiple Silver Palms and the inaugural Berkshire Theatre Award for Outstanding New Work). His plays include *American Hero*, *Captiva*, *Stripped*, and *When The Sun Shone Brighter*. Chris is a graduate of Dartmouth College and holds graduate degrees from The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy and The University of Geneva. He is also a practicing trial lawyer and former prosecutor. Chris and his wife, Stephanie, are co-founders of Zoetic Stage, an award-winning theatre in residence at The Adrienne Arsht Center for the performing Arts in Miami, Florida. They also practice law together in Miami. Chris's play, *American Son*, recently had a successful run at the Booth Theatre on Broadway, directed by Kenny Leon, and starring Kerry Washington, Steven Pasquale, Jeremy Jordan, and Eugene Lee.

RHODIE JACKSON (*Director*) is delighted to return to The 5 & Dime, stepping behind the curtain as director of *American Son*. A passionate storyteller, she has had the privilege of directing on stages throughout the Jacksonville area, most recently *Once on This Island* at Limelight Theatre in St. Augustine and *Driving Miss Daisy* at Theatre Jacksonville. She was last seen under The 5 & Dime lights in *POTUS*. Rhodie believes theatre has the power to challenge, inspire, and start conversations long after the final blackout. She thanks her family and friends who are her greatest support system, and you — the audience — for keeping the magic of live theatre alive.

RHONDA FISHER (*Stage Manager*) has performed at Theatre Jacksonville, The 5 & Dime, Self Produced Theatre, and in local radio and short films in such productions as *Rumors*, *The Miracle Worker*, *The Subject Was Roses*, *It's a Wonderful Life*, *The Games' Afoot*, *Game Night*, *Wolf Hall*, *Pale Flesh*, *Machinal*, and *Run for Your Wife*. She has stage managed *Boeing Boeing*, *Old Love*, *Love Quest*, *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*, *Slow Food*, and *Doubt* at Theatre Jacksonville, and *The Royale* at The 5 &

Dime. Rhonda is grateful to be working with Rhodie again to help tell this remarkable story.

LOGAN FORBESS (*Scenic Designer / Master Carpenter*) is excited to work on another show with The 5 & Dime! While managing his day job at Apple, he has been finding joy in technical theatre since high school and continues to pursue it. His most recent credits are master carpenter in *The Legend of Georgia McBride*, *Alice by Heart*, *PUFFS*, and *Ride the Cyclone* at The 5 & Dime. He also holds master carpenter credits in *Sister Act* and *Violet* at Players by the Sea. He would like to thank his friends around him that have helped him become who he is today.

PHEDRE DELINOIS (*Costume Designer*) is thrilled to make their 5 & Dime debut as costume designer for *American Son*. A passionate theatre artist, Phedre has worked throughout Northeast Florida in acting, stage management, assistant directing, and costuming, with a love for using wardrobe to deepen character and support storytelling. Phedre is grateful to the cast and creative team for the opportunity to join their first 5 & Dime production and hopes *American Son* inspires meaningful conversation long after the final curtain.

HEATHER GOLIBER (*Prop Master*) is a passionate designer inspired by her artistically talented family. She nurtured her love for the arts through the deaf studies program at RIT/NTID, collaborating with director Bruce Alverson on *The Last Dance* and set design expert Phillip Graneto. After graduating, Heather moved to New Jersey, supporting local theaters in various roles. Later, she relocated to Massachusetts, actively involved as a backstage mom with Spotlight Studios and Centerstage Dance Academy. Now based in Florida, she continues to showcase her creativity as a Props Designer, Assistant, and Stage Manager. Heather would like to express her sincere gratitude to the director, cast, and crew for the opportunity to contribute her talents to *American Son*.

RYAN WALKER (*Technical Director*) is a Jacksonville native who has worked for local community theatres and performance venues in the region over the last ten years. He has experience working in every role in theatre that doesn't involve being on stage and is fully enjoying putting his mixed skill set to good use while serving as The 5 & Dime's Technical Director. This is Ryan's third season working with The 5 & Dime but you may have previously seen him working events for Limelight Theatre, Sing Out Loud, Tale Tellers, and various other organizations in the Northeast Florida area.

RESOURCES

If you are interested in further exploring the themes addressed in this production, we suggest the following books:

Non-Fiction and Memoir

Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man by Emmanuel Acho

The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness by Michelle Alexander

Between the World and Me by Ta-Nehisi Coates

Locking Up Our Own: Crime and Punishment in Black America by James Forman Jr.

Rest in Power: The Enduring Life of Trayvon Martin by Sybrina Fulton and Tracy Martin

So You Want to Talk About Race by Ijeoma Oluo

Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption by Bryan Stevenson

Embodying Black Experience: Stillness, Critical Memory, and the Black Body by Harvey Young

Adult Fiction

The Care and Feeding of Ravenously Hungry Girls by Anissa Gray

An American Marriage by Tayari Jones

Such a Fun Age by Kiley Reid

Young Adult Fiction

The Day Tajon Got Shot edited by Kathy Crutcher

Anger is a Gift by Mark Oshiro

All American Boys by Jason Reynolds

Dear Martin by Nic Stone

The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas

Please support a local bookstore! Our favorite is:

Cafe Resistance Bookstore & Coffee Shop
5007 Soutel Drive, Jacksonville, FL

LIVE THEATRE. Every performance disappears the moment it ends. And because of that, it matters.

SUPPORT THE 5 & DIME

It's support from people like you that allows us to produce quality, thought-provoking theatre, and each and every contribution we receive ensures our ability to continue bringing change-making storytelling to the local stage.

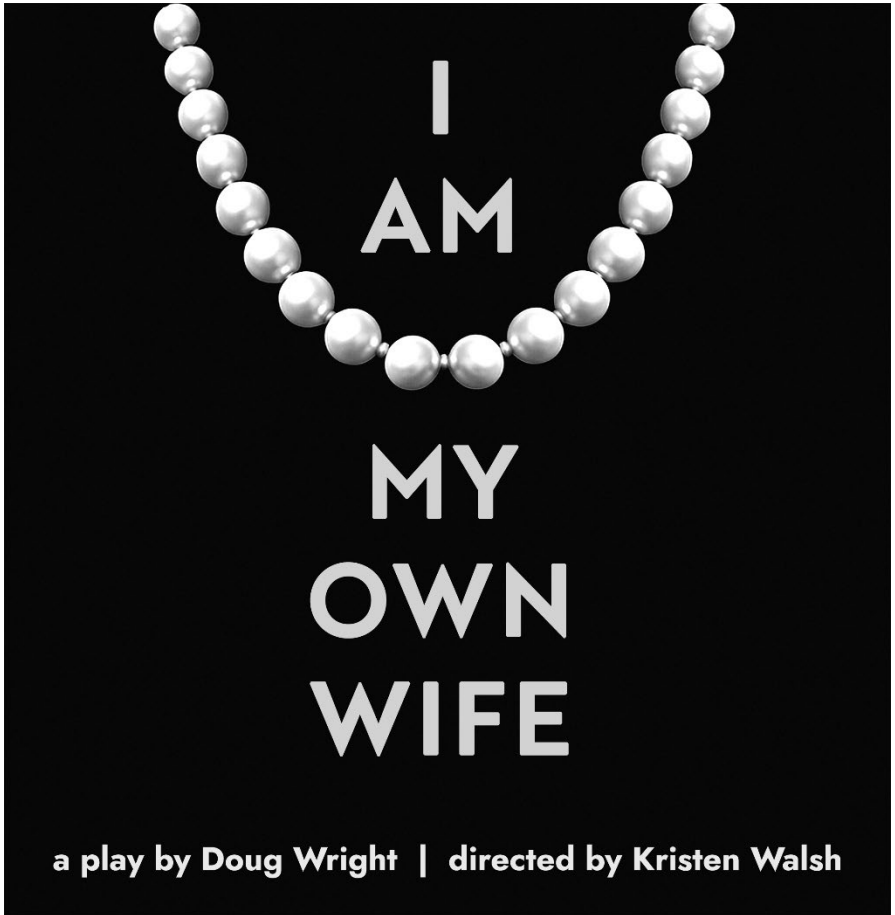


Many Thanks to the Following Individuals and Entities Whose Generous Financial Contributions Have Supported The 5 & Dime in the Past Year

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** List reflects contributions received July 16, 2025 - July 15, 2026.*

_____**NEXT AT THE 5 & DIME**_____



Join us **SEPTEMBER 18—27** for the true story of Charlotte von Mahlsdorf, an East German transgender woman who lived through both the Nazi and Communist regimes. An unforgettable portrait of identity and resilience, truth and transformation.

"It is both a bold and delicate flower of a play: a work of theater that quietly teaches us how to see, and listen, anew." — The New York Times

Special Location: **BABS' LAB** | Find out more at **The5andDime.org**



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