



**Artistic Director**  
Leda Hoffmann

# THIRST

**Playwright** C.A. Johnson

**Directed by** Andrea J. Dymond

**Scenic Designer**

Evan Frank

**Costume Design**

Jos N. Banks

**Properties Design**

Amanda Barth

**Fight Director**

Sam Hubbard\*

**Casting Director**

Karissa Murrell Myers

**Lighting Design**

Adrienne Miielle

**Sound Design**

Heath Hays\*

**Stage Manager**

Jean E. Compton

**Production Manager**

Paul Cook

**Dialect Coach**

Jason A. Fleece

## CAST

Kalil..... Saniyah As-Salaam  
Terrance ..... Gregory J. Fields  
Coolie..... Tamarus Harvell  
Greta..... Laura Resinger  
Samira..... Tracie Taylor  
Bankhead ..... Johnard Washington

## UNDERSTUDIES

Azaria Adams, Tara Bouldrey, Arthur Lockhart, Bobby C. Owens, Jr.,  
Larry D. Trice III and Kayla V. White.

\*Denotes Strawdog Ensemble Member

## ADDITIONAL PRODUCTION STAFF

Assistant Directors .....	Angela Forshee and Will Pettway
Assistant Stage Manager .....	Collin Sparks
Technical Director .....	Evan Sposato
Master Electrician .....	Benjamin Carne
Front of House Manager .....	Mark Maxwell
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## A NOTE FROM ARTISTIC DIRECTOR LEDA HOFFMANN

Welcome to Strawdog! I'm so glad you could join us for the Midwest premiere of *Thirst*, this play's second production. We're so grateful to be working with playwright C.A. Johnson and for her trust in us to shepherd this play forward.

*Thirst* is one of the first plays I read when I became Strawdog's Artistic Director. I was instantly captivated by C.A.'s investigation of family and love at a time of extremes. *Thirst* came to our attention from the Kilroys List - a great yearly list of un- and underproduced plays by woman, trans, and non-binary playwrights - check it out if you don't know it already.

Sadly, this is Strawdog's last production in this space. With this play we celebrate the work we have created in here at 1802 W Berenice and looking forward to our future work in other spaces across the city. First up, our final play of this season *Welcome to Keene, New Hampshire* will be running April 16 - May 30 at Filament Theatre at 4041 N Milwaukee Ave. Please join us!

## A NOTE FROM DIRECTOR ANDREA J. DYMOND

*Thirst* exists astride two worlds. Its characters live on the verge. The world of the play is rife with contrasts: war and peace; love and pain; natural and built environments; nurturing relationships and destructive ones; order and chaos; magical moments and realistic ones; the powerful hold of the past and the equally powerful striving for a future.

It deals with race relations and relations between the sexes. It is a broken family play and a healing family play. To my mind, the power of the piece is that it is all these myriad things, at once. It offers up, explores and explodes the complexity of our human experience, all at once.

Did I say two worlds? *Thirst* also ranges across time. It plays with the time-space continuum. It is an evocative memory play, which lives in a tremulous and finally explosive present and looks toward a hopeful, if yet undefined future.

Filled with elements of our very challenging present, *Thirst* calls us to consider our choices as we are drawn into a story from a very possible, and possibly very near future.

## CAST BIOGRAPHIES

**Azaria Adams (U/S Kalil)** is excited to be understudying *Thirst*. She developed a love for acting in 6th grade. A resident of Chicago and a freshman in the Acting Conservatory of The Chicago Highschool for the Arts, she has been a part of Emerald City Theatre, Ovations Academy in Oak Park, Lookingglass Theatre summer camp on the lake, and Free Street Theatre. Outside of acting Azaria also enjoys dancing. She performed as a Junior Luvabull for 3 years at the United Center. Azaria would like to thank her mom, grandparents, and siblings for their cherishing love and support.

She also thanks both the casting director Karissa Murrell Myers and the director Andrea Dymond for letting her have this opportunity.

**Tara Bouldrey (U/S Greta)** (she/her) Notable Chicago credits include: NICOLE in *Shadows of Birds* (Glass Apple Theatre), TRISH in *The Departure* (Haven Theatre - Director's Haven), LUCENTIO in *The Taming of the Shrew* (The Arc Theatre), DEMETRA in *Forty-Two Stories* (City Lit Theatre), and JULIET in *Farewell My Friend* ((re)discover theatre). She spent

## CAST BIOGRAPHIES

much of this year filming the role of MARA in an independent web-series entitled *City in a Jar* (intended for release early next year - @cityinajarwebseries). She is a founding member of The (Beat) Theatre Collective. [www.tarabouldrey.com](http://www.tarabouldrey.com)

**Gregory J. Fields (Terrance)** is excited to be making his Strawdog debut. Recent Chicago credits include: *P.Y.G., Or The... (u/s)* (Jackalope Theatre), *Donor Class* (NoMads Art Collective), *The Burrow* (MCA Chicago & Prop Theatre). Gregory received his BFA in Acting at The Theatre School at DePaul University while completing a screenwriting minor. He is represented by DDO Artists Agency.

**Tamarus Harvell (Coolie)** is happy to be working with Strawdog Theatre for the first time. He has worked with several theatre companies in Chicago, such as Raven Theatre, Artemesia Theatre, The Gift Theatre, Black Ensemble Theatre and MPAACT Theatre. He has worked on several indie films that have been selected for the Black Harvest Film Festival. He would like to thank his parents and fiancé for the continued love and support. He is currently represented by Big Mouth Talent Inc.

**Arthur Lockhart (U/S Terrance)** is a BA Acting major from Chicago. This is his debut role as an understudy at Strawdog Theatre. His passion for theater began during his military service. His past credits include Columbia College New stew play "*Familiar*," Columbia College MainStage play Space, performing as a stilt performer for Walkabout Theatre Company, Columbia College student films, True Confessions, Call it, Blind Privilege and Slam Dance.

**Bobby C. Owens, Jr. (U/S Bankhead)** is a native of Tuscaloosa, AL; graduate of The University of Alabama – major: Management Information Systems, minor: Computer Science. Having moved to Chicago via New Orleans where he studied Philosophy and Theology at Notre Dame Seminary, received Voice training and sang in the Schola, Bobby is a Baritone, has performed with Windy City Performing Arts and CGMC. and has studied Acting at the Second City Training Center. Seen in NoMads Art Collective's production of *Advantage* as "Alan Connelly/Jason Sanford"; currently singing with Harmony, Hope, and Healing; Bobby is grateful to be a member of the cast of *Thirst*.

**Laura Resigner (Greta)** previously understudied two shows at Strawdog: *Once in a Lifetime* and *Damascus*. Recent/favorite credits include *The Father* (Remy Bumpo),

*Into the Breeches* (Shakespeare Festival St. Louis), *It's a Wonderful Life* (Oil Lamp Theater), *Measure for Measure* (Any Other Name Company), *Two Days in Court* (City Lit), and the feature film, *Hell is Empty*. Laura holds an MFA from The Theatre School at DePaul University, is a certified Lessac Voice Practitioner, and has studied extensively with the SITI Company. Many thanks to everyone involved, and especially Andrea and C.A.

**Saniyah As-Salaam (Kalil)** is a 12-year-old native Chicagoan who attends Medgar Evers Fine & Performing Arts School. She is in the seventh grade, an honor roll student, and her favorite subjects are English and Music. Saniyah is extremely excited to join the cast of *Thirst* as Kalil at Strawdog Theatre Company. She played the role of *Baby Renee / Newsboy in Gypsy* at the Jeff Award Winning Porchlight Music Theatre in Winter 2018. Saniyah has been a part of Maywood Fine Arts Associations: Stairway of the Stars Dance Studio for seven years, performing each year in multiple dance productions; most recent productions include *School Daze*, *Coppelia*, *In It to Win It*, *Swan Lake* and *Santa's Christmas Bake Off*. She joined the B.FLI Productions Performing Arts Camp's six-week summer intensive program in June 2018 at the ETA Creative Arts Theater, where she performed in the *B.Fli Performing Arts Showcase 2019* and *From One to All: There's Power in Numbers 2018*. Saniyah also enjoys singing, dancing and writing poetry.

**Tracie Taylor (Samira)** is a performing artist from South Bend, IN. She is a first year graduate student at Columbia College Chicago, pursuing her MFA in poetry. She is a writer as well as an actor, and she is thrilled to make her Chicago debut at Strawdog Theater Company. Some of her previous roles include: Izzy (*Rabbit Hole*), Billy (*Billy the Girl*), Kendra (*The Gulf*), Minnie (*Parade*), and Marty (*Grease*). She always hopes that the audience takes something home with them from her shows!

**Larry D. Trice II (U/S Coolie)** is pumped to be at Strawdog for *Thirst*. They are Team members of Trans Voices Cabaret Chi, a celebration of Trans and Non-Binary musical theatre performers in Chicago. Some of their favorite credits include: *Back In The Day* (Urban Theater Company), *Shrek* (Windy City Performs), *Kingdom* (Broken Nose), *Magic Treehouse: Showtime with Shakespeare* (Emerald City Theatre), *Akeelah and the Bee* (Adventure Stage), *Once On This Island* (That Was a Show Theatre Co.), *Rocky Horror Show* (Stage Wright Productions), *Waking Lazarus* (Prologue Theatre), *Pirates Of Penzance* (COT/

## CAST BIOGRAPHIES CONT.

ASM), *Spring Awakening* (Music For Theatre Chicago), and countless other shows and play readings. Love to the friends, fam, and my little guy Eli.

**Johnd Washington (Bankhead)** is extremely excited to be working with Strawdog theatre for the first time in this production of *Thirst*. He is a company member of Red Tape Theatre (*A Hedda Gabler*, *A Walk Across America for Mother Earth*, *Lear*, *The Skriker*, *Mother of Smoke*, *Elephants Graveyard*.) He has also worked with Promethean Theatre Ensemble (*Gross Indecency: The Trials of Oscar Wilde*); Broken Nose Theatre (*At the Table*); Oracle Productions (*This House Believes the American Dream is at the Expense of the American Negro*, *The Hairy Ape* (remount); Red Theatre-Chicago (*Three Soldiers for Sisters*); Akvavit Theatre (*Hand in Hand*); First Floor Theatre

(*Polaroid Stories*). Johnard spent the previous summer studying at the School at Steppenwolf.

**Kayla V. White (U/S Samira)** is ecstatic to be in her first Strawdog Production. She has a BFA in Music Theatre (Illinois Wesleyan University) and a yoga teaching certificate (All Yoga Bali), and believes that these mean she never has to wear real pants again. Previous credits include: *Cat (Un) Seen: A Phantasmagorical Story of Tangled Minds; Clock Productions*), *Nedda (Last Laugh; Clock Productions)*, Ensemble (*below Heaven, above Chipotle*, Second City Writing), *Ophelia (here comes the tide, there goes the girl; Hairpin Arts)*, and Chief (*Princess and the Pea; Missoula Children's Theatre*). This show is for her amazing support system- her family, roommate, friends, teachers, and this STUNNING cast/crew.

## PRODUCTION BIOGRAPHIES

**C.A. Johnson (Playwright)** hails from Metairie, LA, but currently lives and writes in Queens, NY. Her plays include *Thirst* (2017 Kilroys List, The Contemporary American Theater Festival), *An American Feast* (NYU Playwrights Horizons Theater School), *The Climb* (2018 Cherry Lane Mentor Project), *All The Natalie Portmans* (upcoming at MCC Theater) and *Mother Tongue*. She is a Core Writer at the Playwrights Center. She was previously the 2018 P73 Playwriting Fellow, The Lark's 2016-17 Van Lier Fellow, a Dramatists Guild Fellow, a member of The Civilians R&D Group, a member of The Working Farm at SPACE on Ryder Farm, a Sundance/Ucross Fellow and a 2018 Sundance Theatre Lab Fellow. Her work has been developed with The Lark, PlayPenn, Luna Stage, Open Bar Theatricals, The Dennis and Victoria Ross Foundation, and The Fire This Time Festival. BA: Smith College MFA: NYU.

**Andrea J. Dymond (Director)** is very pleased to be working at Strawdog on this fascinating new play. A Chicago-based freelance director, specializing in developing and directing new work, she most recently directed world premieres of *The Greatest Theatrical Event...EVER!* at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and Shepsu Aahku's *Black and Blue* for MPAACT. Andrea was formerly Resident Director at Victory Gardens Theater, where she directed 11 productions, including 7 world premieres, and helped to develop and launch The Ignition Festival of New Plays.

In addition to directing around Chicago and the U.S., her experience includes literary management, research and production dramaturgy, directing at new works festivals; serving as thesis play advisor for MFA playwrights at Carnegie Mellon University and directing at NNPN's MFA Playwrights Workshops at the Kennedy Center. A teacher at Columbia College Chicago, Andrea's courses have included Directing, Collaboration, African American Scene Study, Text Analysis, Dramaturgy, Acting and New Play Development. She was also facilitator of the Theodore Ward Award for African American Playwriting.

**Jos N. Banks (Costume Designer)** studied Musical Theater & Costume Design at Millikin University. National Tours: INTL: *Kinky Boots* (Lola), *Hair* (Hud), *The Color Purple* (Harpo). Regional: Steppenwolf, Drury Lane- Oak Brook, Paramount Theatre, About Face Theatre, Porchlight Music Theatre, Congo Square, Windy City Playhouse, 16th St. Theatre, Raven Theatre, Apollo Theatre, Boho Theatre, Black Ensemble Theatre, Pride Films & Plays, Theo Ubique, Royal George. Film: "The Chi", "The Chicago Code" & Rise Against' music video "Make It Stop" (Lead). Nominated "Best Costume Designer" for the 2012, 2015/16 & 2019 BTAA (Black Theater Alliance Awards). Representation: Paonessa Talent Agency. Be FEARLESS. [www.FearlessJos.com](http://www.FearlessJos.com) // Follow Me: @JosNBanks

**Amanda Barth (Properties Designer)**

is a Chicago based designer, her work was last seen in *America's Best Outcast Toy* for Pride Films and Plays. She is a properties apprentice for Steppenwolf Theatre Company and graduated from Millikin University with a B.F.A. in Theater Design and Production. She is very excited to work with Strawdog and their great company.

**Ben Carne (Master Electrician)** is a freelance lighting designer and electrician originally from New Hampshire. Ben's recent professional credits include *Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins* at Strawdog, *Proxy* at Underscore Theatre and *Mad Beat Hip and Gone* with Promethean Theatre Ensemble. Ben's work has also been seen at Jackalope Theatre, Trap Door, and Silk Road Rising, Prop Thtr, Pride Films and Plays, and Underscore Theatre. He is a graduate of Columbia College Chicago where he received a BFA in theatre design. A portfolio of his work can be found at: bcarnedesign.com.

**Paul Cook (Production Manager)** is thrilled to join the Strawdog team. Some favorite Chicago past collaborations include time spent with Pride Films and Plays, Midsommer Flight, Oakton Community College, and the Chicago High School for the Arts (where he is also a staff member). Paul has his MFA in Directing from the University of California, Irvine, and is a proud supporter of Equity in the Arts. Love to Team WPJC.

**Jean E. Compton (Stage Manager)** Jean's Chicago credits include *The Death of Gaia Divine* (Momentary), *Spirits to Enforce* (The Passage Theatre), *3:35PM*, *Candide*, and *Mudpie 2018* (Mudlark Theater Company), *You for Me for You* (Sideshow), *Lizzie* (Firebrand), and *Shining Lives* (Northlight). Her regional credits include *Into the Breeches!* (Cleveland Play House), *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *An Octoroon*, and *Into the Breeches!* (Chautauqua Theater Company), *Venus in Fur* and *The Whale* (Rep Stage), and seasons at Two River Theater and Cleveland Play House. She is a graduate of The Theatre School at DePaul University. Next up: *All-One: The Dr. Bronner's Play* with The Passage Theatre. [www.jeanecompton.com](http://www.jeanecompton.com)

**Evan Frank (Scenic Designer)** Evan is thrilled to be working with Strawdog again after designing *Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins* and assisting on *Masque Macabre*. Other designs include *A Little Night Music* for BoHo, *The Other Cinderella* at Black Ensemble, as well as the Chicago premieres of *Hands on a Hardbody* with Refuge Theatre Project and *Casa Valentina* with Pride Films and Plays,

and the world premieres of *May the Road Rise Up* at The Factory Theater, *Plainclothes* at Broken Nose Theatre and *Shadows of Birds* with Glass Apple. Next up is *Noises Off* at Metropolis. [efrankdesign.com](http://efrankdesign.com)

**Angela Forshee (Assistant Director)** is a Chicago-based director and is excited to be working with Strawdog for the first time. She has worked with several storefront companies, including The New Colony, Broken Nose Theatre, Walkabout, Interrobang, and Raven Theatre. Angela most recently assistant-directed *Blue Stockings* by Jessica Swale with Promethean, and completed The New Colony's Writers Room (which made her very proud of herself). She is an alumni of Ball State University, where she got her Bachelor of Science in Directing, and she could have gotten a BA if she would have taken the foreign language credit like her mother told her. Listen to your mother.

**Jason A. Fleece (Dialect Coach)** is thrilled to be working with Strawdog for the first time. Most recently, Jason was dialect coach for *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (Blank Theatre Co) and *In the Canyon* (Jackalope). Also a director, Jason has directed all over town, for companies including Pegasus Theatre Chicago, Stage Left Theatre, and BoHo Theatre. Thanks as always to Alex.

**Heath Hays (Sound Designer)** is an ensemble member at Strawdog Theatre, and a sound designer in Chicago. Heath has designed for many companies including Chicago Dramatists, The Hypocrites, Mortar Theater, BSTC, A Red Orchid Theatre, The New Colony, and many more.

**Sam Hubbard (Fight Director)** is a Strawdog Ensemble member, previously directing fights for *Great Expectations*, *Charles Ives Take Me Home*, *Robin Hood*, *Barbecue* and more. Recent fight direction credits include *King Hedley*, *The Hard Problem*, *Gem of the Ocean* (Court Theatre), *Too Heavy for your Pocket* (Timeline Theatre), *Yen* (Jeff Award, Raven Theatre), *Into the Breeches* (Northlight), *In the Canyon* (Jackalope), *Cocked* (Victory Gardens), and productions with Sideshow, The Artistic Home, Redtwist, Teatro Vista and Steppenwolf for Young Adults. Next is *Stick Fly* at Writers Theatre.

**Karissa Murrell Myers (Casting Director)** is a multidisciplinary theatre artist. As a loud and proud advocate for inclusion and diversity casting in the Chicago theatre community, she has been working in casting since 2017 with several local companies including (re)discover theatre, Black

## PRODUCTION BIOGRAPHIES CONT.

Ensemble Theater, and Our Perspective: Asian American Play Readings. MFA in Performance from the University of Hawaii at Manoa, BA in Acting and Directing from Boise State University. Proud member of SAG-AFTRA. Representation: Big Mouth Talent.

### Will Pettway (Assistant Director)

is elated to be working with such an amazing team. Will is a Joy-centered theatre artist from the south side of Chicago, who is in their last semester at Columbia College Chicago studying Directing and Acting. Their mission is to use art to achieve liberation, based on the belief that we have all we need to create the world we want to see. @Will.is.petty

### Collin Sparks (Assistant Stage Manager)

graduated from Wittenberg University with degrees in Dance and Theatre (conc. Lighting Design), developing interest in several areas including lighting design, performance, and stage management. He recently moved to Chicago from his hometown of Columbus, OH and is humbled to be working with this team on Strawdog's production of *Thirst*. Favorite lighting credits include *Dry Land*, *Next to Normal*, and *The Wedding Singer*; Favorite acting credits include *Balsero in Manual For A Desperate Crossing*, *Orpheus in Eurydice*, and *Warden/Fury in The Insanity of Mary Girard*.

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