

***American Son***

Written by Christopher Demos-Brown | Directed by Thomas-Whit Ellis

**WHO MAY AUDITION?**

- Auditions are open to all Fresno State students and to community members. All cast members are eligible to earn up to two academic units of credit, which are highly recommended.

FULL COVID VACCINATION IS STRONGLY SUGGESTED.

**HOW DO I GET AN AUDITION FORM?**

- Audition forms can be found at the Theatre & Dance website ([fresnostate.edu/theatrearts](https://fresnostate.edu/theatrearts)).
- Audition forms will be available at the Preliminary Audition and you can fill out the form when you arrive.

**WHAT SHOULD I PREPARE?**

- Prepare a monologue (preferably memorized) no longer than 2 minutes long.
- Actors without a prepared monologue will be given a monologue to perform at the audition or in advance of the auditions by consulting our audition website.

**WHEN AND WHERE ARE THE AUDITIONS?****PRELIMINARY AUDITIONS**Tuesday, August 22<sup>nd</sup> | 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.  
John Wright Theatre, Speech Arts Building**CALLBACK AUDITIONS**7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. | Wednesday, August 23<sup>rd</sup>, Dennis & Cheryl Woods Theatre  
7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. | Thursday, August 24<sup>th</sup>, Dennis & Cheryl Woods Theatre

- Callbacks will consist of, but are not limited to, readings of scenes and monologues from the play, improv and actor exercises. Callback material will be on the Theatre and Dance website ([fresnostate.edu/theatrearts](https://fresnostate.edu/theatrearts)); and also available at the Preliminary Audition.

It is strongly recommended that those interested in being considered for AMERICAN SON, fully participate with the Preliminary Auditions, Tuesday August 22<sup>nd</sup>. If anyone is unable to attend the preliminary audition, they should contact the director prior to August 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Performers with conflicts with the Preliminary or Callback Auditions may be able to be seen at a different time. However, it is imperative that those needing an alternative audition date contact the director as soon as possible for an appointment.

**Director contact info:** Thomas-Whit Ellis | [thomee@mail.fresnostate.edu](mailto:thomee@mail.fresnostate.edu) or 559-278-2646.

## HOW WILL I KNOW IF I AM CALLED BACK?

A Callback list will be posted Tuesday (August 22<sup>nd</sup>) evening on the Theatre & Dance website ([fresnostate.edu/theatrearts](http://fresnostate.edu/theatrearts))

## HOW WILL I KNOW IF I AM CAST?

A cast list will be posted on the above Theatre & Dance website by Friday, afternoon, August 25<sup>th</sup>.

## WHEN ARE REHEARSALS?

- Rehearsals will begin Monday, August 28<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m., Woods Theatre
- Rehearsals are Monday – Friday from 6:30 p.m. – 10:30 p.m.
- Tech Week Rehearsals: Sunday, Sept. 24<sup>th</sup>, 1:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.  
Dress/Techs: Mon. Sept. 25<sup>th</sup> – Wed., Sept. 27<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.  
Preview: Thursday, Sept. 28<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 p.m. Actor Call

## ONCE I AM CAST, WHAT WILL BE EXPECTED OF ME?

- Performers must provide their own makeup kits and hair products. If you have questions about obtaining your make up kit please consult the director by the first rehearsal date.

## WHEN ARE PERFORMANCES:

- Friday, September, 29, Saturday, September, 30<sup>th</sup> 6:30 call 7:30 curtain; and Sunday, October, 1<sup>st</sup>, 1:00 call, 2:00 curtain; Tuesday, October 3<sup>rd</sup> through Saturday October, 7<sup>th</sup> 6:30 call 7:30 curtain

## ARE THERE ANY OTHER TIME COMMITMENTS?

- A photo shoot will be scheduled. This typically happens during one of the performances, no special preparations will be necessary. However, a few additional production photos may be taken after the show, lasting approximately 15 minutes. The exact date for the production shoot will be listed in the rehearsal schedule, available during the first day of rehearsal.
- Additional publicity photos taken prior to the show's opening. Actors may also be asked to appear on local television or radio programs to further promote the show. These activities will be held during the day and will be done on a volunteer basis.
- Performers must be available for costume fittings Mon. – Fri. between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. The costume shop staff will work to accommodate your daily schedule. Please make sure you actually stop by the costume shop for your initial measurements immediately after learning of your being cast in this show.

## DOES *AMERICAN SON* CONFLICT WITH OTHER FRESNO STATE PRODUCTIONS?

- *American Son* conflicts with the second show of our season which opens October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023. It is unlikely that a student cast in *American Son* will be able to perform or crew in *At the Wedding*. *American Son* does not conflict with *Seminar*. However, it may be inadvisable for actors with major roles in *American Son* to take on any other show commitments during its rehearsal/performance period.

## CAN I OBTAIN A PERUSAL COPY OF THE SCRIPT?

- It is highly advisable to familiarize yourself with the play before auditions. A PDF of the script is available, by request, on the Theatre & Dance website ([fresnostate.edu/theatrearts](http://fresnostate.edu/theatrearts)). It is also

recommended that interested actors see the Netflix movie of the play, which is based on this play. You may also email Professor Ellis directly for a digital copy.  
thomee@mail.fresnostate.edu or 559-278-2646

### **ABOUT THE PLAY AND CHARACTERS:**

An estranged bi-racial couple must confront their feelings about race and bias after their son is detained by the local police following a traffic stop incident. On a stormy night in a Miami police station, Kendra Ellis-Connor is waiting for a report on the whereabouts of her son Jamal, who has suddenly disappeared. She asks for help from Officer Paul Larkin, a rookie cop who can't tell her anything about the incident. Due to both protocol and a lack of knowledge of the incident, he tells her that he has to wait for Lieutenant John Stokes, the AM shift liaison officer. Her estranged husband, FBI agent Scott Connor, arrives at the station, demanding to know where Jamal is.

This is conceptionally modern American realism. The story revolves around one of the biggest fears in the Black community: the needless use of excessive force and the unclear facts the parents seek from the authorities. The parents are caught off guard and are thrust in the world of police procedure, stonewalling and lack of information.

### **ROLES (3 Men/1 Woman):**

**KENDRA ELLIS-CONNOR** - African-American, female, forties to early fifties. A professor of psychology and the mother of a teenage son. Recently separated from her White husband. Emotionally raw but trying to keep it together behind a professional façade. Exceptionally intelligent and self-possessed.

**SCOTT CONNOR**- White, male, late forties to fifties. Kendra's estranged husband. An FBI agent of predominantly Irish ancestry. Takes pride in his family's long tradition of military service. Though rigid in his views, he has a warm, sensitive side and is a deeply loving and devoted father.

**OFFICER PAUL LARKIN** - White, male, mid-twenties to thirty. An intelligent, congenial young police officer with bold career ambitions who lacks actual life experience.

**LIEUTENANT JOHN STOKES**- African-American, male, fifty to mid- sixties. A tough, no-nonsense career police officer who is used to having people listen when he talks. He has paid his dues. He knows the rules and has no hesitation enforcing them.

### **SETTING**

The waiting room of a police station in Miami-Dade County, Florida.

### **TIME**

A morning early in June of shortly after 4:00 a.m.

### **WHAT IF I HAVE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS?**

Contact Thomas-Whit Ellis (Director) | thomee@csufresno.edu