

MICHAEL JACKSON AND THE DEVIL'S BOOK/ WHITNEY HOUSTON AND THE DEVIL'S BOOK

WRITTEN BY
Terry Guest

DIRECTED BY Wardell Julius Clark
DRAMATURGY BY Jared Bellot



NEW FRONTIER SERIES

BLOG

PLAYWRIGHTS RT

DIRECTORS RT

DRAMATURGES RT

FEATURING

Netta Walker	Christopher Wayland
Donovan Sessions	Marcus D Moore
Adhana Reid	Adia Alli
Victor Musoni	Renee Lockett

PRODUCTION TEAM

NFS CO-PRODUCERS Monét Felton* Danielle Stack*	PROGRAM DESIGNER Michelle Maurer
CASTING DIRECTOR Catherine Miller*	BOX OFFICE MANAGER Jonathan Mayo*
AV COORDINATOR Steve Labeledz*	MANAGING DIRECTOR Tina El Gamal*
POSTER DESIGNER Jake Freund	ARTISTIC DIRECTOR Kaiser Ahmed*

*denotes Jackalope Company Member

ENSEMBLE CONTRIBUTORS: Michael Turrentine,
Breon Arzell, Meagan Dilworth & Falashay Pearson

Would you sign over your life for immortality? The Devil's Book Plays are macabre fantasias that use the myth of The King of Pop and The Voice to explore Black Celebrity, madness, greed, murder and The American Dream. A multitude of Black superstars (Including OJ Simpson, Billie Holiday, Michael Jordan, Diana Ross, James Brown etc) appear out of the shadows to tell the story of what happens to a person who becomes a God.

A NOTE FROM OUR ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

You are about to witness a masterpiece in progress. From the fearlessness of his approach, the crystal clear subtext in his every line, to the Shakespearean sized characters he effortlessly captures in what I can only describe as an American version of the Netflix series *The Crown* (but Blacker and better), Terry Guest is sharing a world that is so personal it becomes universal. Terry's writing feels at once like nothing you've ever seen and something you've always needed. These two companion plays have both been developed as far as they can over Zoom thanks to the ferocity in approach of these artists. It's been among my greatest honors to support Terry's team as they germinated a play about Michael Jackson into this growing saga that is part coming-of-age, part heightened biopic, and all Black excellence. Sneak this peek now of what will surely be on national stages within a few months of re-opening.

All three of our New Frontier Series commissions found their way to exploring commonalities of queerness, celebrity, and identity in this contemporary American experience. These are the voices of our country, our stories, our people, today. We stand tall and proud behind these new plays. Thank you for being here and standing with us. — Kaiser Ahmed

Paper's Edge Presentations are the culminating virtual readings of Jackalope's New Frontier Series of commissioned and developing plays. This 10-month new play creation process began in June 2020, as playwrights were paired with directors and dramaturgs to aid in the formation of their first drafts. These plays have undergone several private actor-supported readings of new pages over throughout the program. An early draft of this play was publicly presented under the Rough Cut Virtual Readings in December 2020.

ARTIST BIOS



TERRY GUEST (*Playwright*) is a Chicago based playwright, actor, teaching artist and Governing Ensemble Member at The Story Theatre. His plays *At The Wake of a Dead*

Drag Queen, *Marie Antionette* and the *Magical Negros*, and *The Magnolia Ballet* are having productions all over the country and his newest piece *A Ghost in Satin* will be having it's World Premiere at The Williamstown Theatre Festival summer 2021. As an actor he has worked with Steppenwolf, The Goodman Theatre and The Story Theatre (Chicago), Alliance Theatre, Actors Express, Aurora Theatre (Atlanta) and more. Other works include: *The Madness of Mary Todd* (Goodman Theatre), *Andy Warhol Presents: The Cocaine Play* (First Floor Theatre), *Ghost Town* (Chicago Children's Theatre), *DEAD GIRLS* (Random Acts Chicago). He is represented by DDO Chicago.



WARDELL JULIUS CLARK (*Director*) is a Company Member with TimeLine Theatre, where he also serves as a Teaching Artist in the Living History

Program. Select Chicago directing credits include the sold-out and transferred online smash hit *Kill Move Paradise* (Timeline); the sold out and extended shows *Sheepdog* (Shattered Globe); *Hoodoo Love* (Raven Theatre); and *His Shadow* (16th Street), and *Dutch Masters* (Jackalope). Select acting credits include *Flyin' West* (American Blues); *Suddenly Last Summer* (Raven); *Silent Sky* (First Folio); *Othello* (Theater at Monmouth); *The Gospel According to James* (Victory Gardens). His television and film credits include *Proven Innocent*, *Shameless* and *Chicago Fire* seasons 1 & 4. He is represented by Gray Talent Group, Inc.



JARED BELLOT (*Dramaturg*) is a Chicago based arts educator, dramaturg and company member at Jackalope. Select dramaturgical credits include:

This Is Modern Art (Steppenwolf for young adults), *No Child...*; *An Octoroon* (Definition), *Kill Move Paradise*; *Cardboard Piano*; *Sunset Baby*; *The Last Wife*; *Paradise Blue*; *The Audience*; (Timeline), *Insurrection: Holding History* (Stage Left), *The Scottsboro Boys* (Porchlight), *Blood at the Root* (The Yard). Jared is the Associate Artistic Director at Definition Theatre, and an Associate Artist at TimeLine Theatre.



NETTA WALKER (*Ensemble*) is a Jeff Award-winning actress and multidisciplinary artist who values collaboration in its truest form. Seen in Chicago

productions such as *truth and reconciliation* (Sideshow, Ensemble Member), *Yen* (Raven Theatre, Jeff Award for Best Supporting Performer), *How to Defend Yourself* (Victory Gardens), *Hamlet* (The Gift), *No Child* (Definition Theatre), *Continuity* (Goodman), *Great Expectations* (Remy Bumpo/Silk Road Rising), and in various staged readings and workshops around town. TV/Film credits include *The Big Leap* (FOX), *Chicago Fire* (NBC), *Come as You Are* (Featured at SXSW). Represented by Paonessa Talent Agency and MRK Management. "Everything I do, I do for Tony Walker."



DONOVAN SESSIONS (*Ensemble*) (he/him/his) is incredibly excited to be working with Jackalope Theatre! He is from Tulsa, Oklahoma

and is a graduate from a University of Oklahoma. Previous credits include: *Surely Goodness and Mercy* and *Six Degrees of Separation* (Redtwist Theatre), *Everybody* (Brown Box Theatre), and *Kill Move Paradise* (Timeline Theatre). He would like to give thanks to the Jackalope team, to Wardell and to the cast for being so warm, amazing and an endless pool of creativity.



ADHANA REID (*Ensemble*) is an actor, writer, singer, and dancer based in Chicago. Chicago credits include: *Michael Jackson & the Devil's Book* (Jackalope Theatre);

School Girls: Or the African Mean Girls Play (Goodman Theatre); *The MLK Project* (Writers Theatre); *Sheepdog* (Shattered Globe); *A Christmas Carol*, *The Color Purple* (Drury Lane Theatre); *Little Shop of Horrors* (Mercury Theatre); *Fantastic Mr. Fox* (Emerald City Theatre); *Eclipsed* (Pegasus Theatre); *Big River* (Theatre At the Center); & *Spring Awakening* (Marriott Theatre). You can follow her journey on social media @ uhh_dah_nuh or adhanareid.Com



VICTOR MUSONI (*Ensemble*) is an actor/poet/dancer from Chicago. Chicago credits include *Are you ready to smash white things?* (Definition Theatre); *La*

Havana Madrid (The Den Theater); *Luck of the Irish*; *Fun Harmless War Machine* (The New Colony); *No child* (Definition Theatre Company); *Blood at the Root*

(Jackalope); *Columbinus* (Steppenwolf/The Yard); *The Toilet* (Haven Theatre) and *How We Got On* (Haven Theatre u/s). TV/Film credits include *61st Street*.



CHRISTOPHER WAYLAND (*Ensemble*) (he/him/his) is thrilled to be a part of *The God Plays'* newest phase. In the Chicago area, he has worked at

Marriott Theatre, Porchlight Music Theatre, First Folio Theatre, 16th Street Theater, Oak Park Festival Theatre, Raven Theatre, Griffin Theatre, Teatro Vista, Haven, Story Theatre, and Stage Left Theatre. Regionally he has worked at TheatreWorks, Spotlighters Theatre, Fells Point Corner Theatre, and Baltimore Shakespeare Factory. His television credits include: *The Chi* (Showtime), *neXt* (Fox), *Chicago Med* (NBC), and *APB* (Fox). Christopher received an MFA in Acting from The Theatre School at DePaul University. Thanks to Jackalope and all who have invited me into this amazing process!



MARCUS D MOORE (*Ensemble*) is excited to be returning to Jackalope Theatre. His theatre credits include *His Shadow* (Jeff Award

Nominated; 16th Street Theatre), *The Shipment* (Red Tape Theatre), *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (U/S performed; Drury Lane), *Franklinland* (Jackalope Theatre), *X MARKS THE SPOT* (Chicago Children's Theatre; Tour) and *The Mountaintop* (Staged Reading; Raven Theatre). His TV/Film/Internet credits include co-starring roles on *Chicago Fire* & *APB*, supporting role in *Go To the Body Proof of Concept* (Dir.: Kyra Jones) and *The Onions Lab Clif Bar Internet Commercial*. Marcus is represented by Gray Talent Group. In regards to ART; "If it's inaccessible to the poor

its neither radical nor revolutionary." ~unknown



ADIA ALLI (*Ensemble*) (she/hers) is a Nigerian-born, Michigan-raised artist, educator, and administrator. Some Chicago credits include:

School Girls; Or, the African Mean Girls Play (Goodman Theatre); *The Niceties* (Writers Theatre, u/s); *United Flight 232* (The House Theatre of Chicago); *Cardboard Piano* (TimeLine Theatre); *The Escape* (Art Institute of Chicago); *No Child...* (Definition Theatre Company); and *The Doppelganger* (Steppenwolf Theatre, u/s). Adia plays Danielle in the web-series *Seeds!* She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre, a specialization in African American and African Studies, and a minor in Economics from Michigan State University. Represented by Gray Talent Group.



RENEE LOCKETT (*Ensemble*) was last seen in on a "real" stage in *Her Honor Jane Byrne* at Lookingglass, Renee is grateful to return to the Jackalope reading

series. Her first appearance was in Ericka Dickinson-Dispenza's *Cullud Watta*. A 2020 non equity Jeff award recipient for her performance in *Sugar in our Wounds* at First Floor Theatre, Renée is beyond grateful to still be a part of Chicago's theatre community. (I been around for a minute y'all) She can also be seen as Dorothy Lorene Brown in the hilarious series *South Side*, now playing on HBO Max. To be able to zoom into work, in a pandemic, in this town, and play with all these talented people is truly a gift. Renee is grateful to be represented by DDO Artists Agency.

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