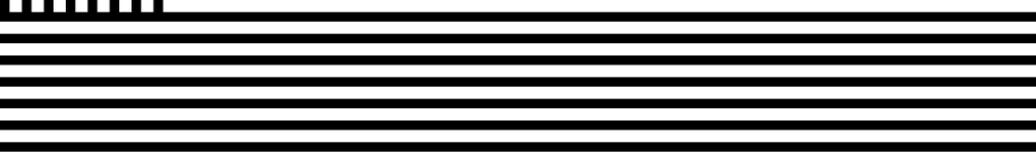
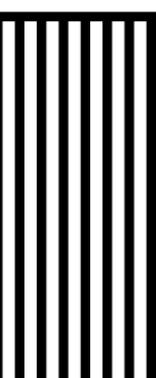


AMERICAN HERO

BY **BESS WOHL**



DRAMATISTS
PLAY SERVICE
INC.



AMERICAN HERO
Copyright © 2014, Bess Wohl

All Rights Reserved

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that performance of AMERICAN HERO is subject to payment of a royalty. It is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America, and of all countries covered by the International Copyright Union (including the Dominion of Canada and the rest of the British Commonwealth), and of all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention, the Berne Convention, and of all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations. All rights, including without limitation professional/amateur stage rights, motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video or sound recording, all other forms of mechanical, electronic and digital reproduction, transmission and distribution, such as CD, DVD, the Internet, private and file-sharing networks, information storage and retrieval systems, photocopying, and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved. Particular emphasis is placed upon the matter of readings, permission for which must be secured from the Author's agent in writing.

The English language stock and amateur stage performance rights in the United States, its territories, possessions and Canada for AMERICAN HERO are controlled exclusively by DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE, INC., 440 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016. No professional or nonprofessional performance of the Play may be given without obtaining in advance the written permission of DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE, INC., and paying the requisite fee.

Inquiries concerning all other rights should be addressed to Creative Artists Agency, 405 Lexington Avenue, 19th Floor, New York, NY 10174. Attn: Chris Till.

SPECIAL NOTE

Anyone receiving permission to produce AMERICAN HERO is required to give credit to the Author(s) as sole and exclusive Author(s) of the Play on the title page of all programs distributed in connection with performances of the Play and in all instances in which the title of the Play appears, including printed or digital materials for advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the Play and/or a production thereof. Please see your production license for font size and typeface requirements.

Be advised that there may be additional credits required in all programs and promotional material. Such language will be listed under the "Additional Billing" section of production licenses. It is the licensee's responsibility to ensure any and all required billing is included in the requisite places, per the terms of the license.

SPECIAL NOTE ON SONGS AND RECORDINGS

For performances of copyrighted songs, arrangements or recordings mentioned in these Plays, the permission of the copyright owner(s) must be obtained. Other songs, arrangements or recordings may be substituted provided permission from the copyright owner(s) of such songs, arrangements or recordings is obtained; or songs, arrangements or recordings in the public domain may be substituted.

For the sandwich artists

The world premiere of AMERICAN HERO was produced by the Williamstown Theatre Festival (Jenny Gersten, Artistic Director) during its 2013 season. It was directed by Leigh Silverman; the scenic design was by Timothy R. Mackabee; the costume design was by Clint Ramos; the lighting design was by Jennifer Schriever; and the sound design was by Jill BC Du Boff. The cast was as follows:

SHERI Erin Wilhelmi
TED James Waterston
JAMIE Ari Graynor
BOB/CUSTOMER/
SANDWICH/GREGORY..... Omar Metwally

The New York premiere of AMERICAN HERO was produced by Second Stage Theatre (Carole Rothman, Artistic Director; Casey Reitz, Executive Director) in May 2014. It was directed by Leigh Silverman; the set design was by Dane Laffrey; the costume design was by Clint Ramos; the lighting design was by Jennifer Schriever; the sound design was by Jill BC Du Boff; and the production stage manager was Stephen Milosevich. The cast was as follows:

SHERI Erin Wilhelmi
TED Jerry O'Connell
JAMIE Ari Graynor
BOB/CUSTOMER/
SANDWICH/GREGORY..... Daoud Heidami

CHARACTERS

SHERI: 18. Awkward, soft-spoken, and weird. Doesn't stand up straight, ever. Utterly exhausted.

TED: 40ish. Relentlessly positive. A follower of rules. A true believer in the American Dream. Secretly in despair.

JAMIE: 30ish. Hot. Gum snapping. Sexy mini-skirts. Glittery eye shadow. Full of rage.

BOB: 40s. New to America. Thick, unplaceable accent. Very anxious for unknown reasons.

CUSTOMER: 40s. A regular guy who wants a sandwich.

SANDWICH: 40s. A sandwich.

GREGORY: 40s. A man from corporate.

PLACE

A toasted subs franchise somewhere in America.

Tables, chairs, and a sandwich counter.

NOTE

When a double slash (//) appears, it denotes overlapping dialogue. The next line should begin at the double slash, over the line that is being spoken.

“Quiznos has killed me. Destroyed my life. Destroyed my family life for the past seven years. It has been a harrowing experience. Can someone stop this? ... I believe there will be justice. But it will be too late for me.”

— From the suicide note of
Bhupinder Baber, Quiznos franchisee,
who walked into his Quiznos on Nov. 27, 2007
and shot himself in the chest three times.

AMERICAN HERO

Scene 1

An empty storefront in a strip mall. Sheri sits at a small table opposite Bob, who is reading from a large manual with some difficulty.

BOB. ... For Grand Opening. Manager and franchise owner. *(Looks up.)* That is me. Bob. *(Looks back down.)* Will hire three sandwich artists. *(Looks back up.)* That is you.

SHERI. *(Introducing herself.)* Sheri.

BOB. Okay. *(He looks back down, finding his place.)* To be considered, applicant must fill out job application form. *(He finds a form and passes it to her.)*

SHERI. Okay. *(She spends a while filling it out. Bob watches her carefully. She looks up at him periodically, quite uncomfortable. She finishes and reads it over one last time.)* I think I'm done. *(He holds his hand out. She passes him the form. He scans it.)*

BOB. This is "i"?

SHERI. Yeah. Sheri with an "i." *(A pause. He frowns. Shakes his head. Sheri slumps in her seat, without hope. She picks at a hang nail. At long last, he looks up at her. He sighs.)*

BOB. You are hired. *(Sheri perks up.)*

SHERI. Cool. *(Sheri tries to sit up a tiny bit straighter. Bob looks troubled.)*

Scene 2

The store is still mostly empty, but a few more lights are operational and a sandwich counter has been installed.

Several new tables and chairs have appeared. Stools are stacked in a corner. A Coke machine sits on a counter, not yet hooked up.

Bob addresses Sheri, along with two other new employees, Ted and Jamie. He reads from his manual. Ted is taking notes. Jamie is twitchy and restless. Sheri is falling asleep.

BOB. (*Reading.*) The jobs are baser. Finisher. Wrapper. (*To Sheri.*) You shall be baser. (*To Jamie.*) You shall be finisher. (*To Ted.*) You shall be wrapper. (*Thinks, then again to Ted.*) No, you shall be finisher. (*To Jamie.*) You shall be wrapper. No, you shall be baser. No. Hmmm. (*To Ted.*) You shall be finisher. (*To Jamie.*) You shall be wrapper. (*Decided now.*) Baser. Finisher. Wrapper. I am manager. (*Happy with this, he goes back to reading.*) First. Baser. You shall introduce the sandwich. Questions you must ask are, “For here or to go?” “White or wheat or wrap or multigrain flatbread?” Or, “Would you like ‘enter condiments here?’” (*Looking up.*) Try.

SHERI. (*Waking up.*) What?

BOB. Try! The questions! “For here, or ...”

SHERI. For here or ...

BOB. To go!

SHERI. To go.

BOB. Keep going.

SHERI. Um, what was the next question —

BOB. White or wheat or wrap or multigrain flatbread.

SHERI. White ... Or wheat ... Or wrap or ...

BOB. Or multigrain flatbread!

SHERI. Multigrain flatbread.

BOB. Would you like, “Enter condiments here.”

SHERI. Would you like, “Enter condiments here.” (*He stares at her in disbelief.*)

AMERICAN HERO

by Bess Wohl

5M, 2W (doubling)

At a toasted subs franchise in the local mall, three up-and-coming “sandwich artists” — a teenager, a single mom, and a downsized refugee from corporate banking — are perfecting the mustard-to-cheese ratio according to the company manual. But when their shot at the American dream is interrupted by a series of strange events, they become unlikely allies in a post-recession world. AMERICAN HERO is a supersized dark comedy about life, liberty, and the pursuit of sandwiches.

“[Bess Wohl’s] darkly funny comedy . . . takes a wry, compassionate attitude toward American workers barely clinging to the bottom rungs of the economic ladder.”

—The New York Times

“Wohl’s quirky comedy observes a few specimens of the embattled American working class . . . Simmering beneath the heroic battle to succeed in a cutthroat market — and the great crisis when the franchise is abandoned by its corporate owners — is a metaphorically rich survival drama about individual pluck and group courage.”

—Variety

“ . . . no matter where you fall on the food chain, you’re bound to encounter frustration in a day and age when uniformity and profit are valued over creativity and inspiration. AMERICAN HERO calls to mind a range of anxiety-generating post-recession narratives, among them Laura Marks’ Bethany . . . but the ideas [Wohl] is toying with leave you plenty to chew on.”

—NBC (New York)

ISBN 978-0-8222-3234-6



DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE, INC.

9 780822 232346