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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


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)