



POST PERFORMANCE DISCUSSIONS SCHEDULED FOR "CHURCH & STATE" - VIRGINIA TECH VICTIMS FAMILY OUTREACH FOUNDATION, EVERYTOWN FOR GUN SAFETY & NEW YORKERS AGAINST GUN VIOLENCE AMONG PARTICIPANTS

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POST PERFORMANCE DISCUSSIONS SCHEDULED FOR
"CHURCH & STATE"

A PLAY BY JASON ODELL WILLIAMS
DIRECTED BY MARKUS POTTER

NOW PLAYING AT NEW WORLD STAGES (STAGE 5)
(340 WEST 50TH STREET)

(VTV) VIRGINIA TECH VICTIMS FAMILY OUTREACH FOUNDATION, EVERYTOWN FOR GUN SAFETY,
AND NEW YORKERS AGAINST GUN VIOLENCE (NYAGV) SCHEDULED TO PARTICIPATE

Church & State, the critically acclaimed play by Jason Odell Williams that just opened at New World Stages (340 W. 50th Street – between 8th & 9th Avenues) has announced a series of post performance discussions to be held on three consecutive Wednesdays starting April 5. In attendance will be representatives from Virginia Tech Victims Family Outreach Fund (VTV) on April 5, Everytown For Gun Safety (featuring special guest Julianne Moore) on April 12, and New Yorkers Against Gun Violence (NYAGV) on April 19. For further details on these special events, please visit www.churchandstatetheplay.com.

Producer Charlotte Cohn said the decision to produce this play was an easy one to make. "I like to say, Church & State is not just a play; it's a movement. And that's because this play is not just an entertaining piece of theatre, though it is that, too. But it's also a conversation starter. A way to get people across the country with different points of view to come together after a shared experience in the theatre and talk about how we can deal with the issue of guns in America. Last night at our talkback we had Trump supporters and Hillary supporters, gun owners and people opposed to guns all talking together in a civil, reasonable manner. It's what this country needs right now! And to be able to partner with all of these charitable organizations and help spread their message as well... it was the best reason in the world to bring this play to a wider audience."

Church & State is a fast-paced, seriously funny take on faith, politics, and "The Twitter." Three days before his bid for re-election in North Carolina, a Republican U.S. Senator makes an off-the-cuff comment to a blogger that calls into question his belief in God. The Senator's devoutly Christian wife and liberal Jewish campaign manager try desperately to contain the damage with mixed results. This brutally honest and surprisingly funny new play sheds light on how religion, guns, and social media influence our politics and our politicians.

Originally developed with Artistic director Ralph Meranto and JCC CenterStage, Church & State was produced as a National New Play Network Rolling World Premiere at JCC CenterStage in Rochester and The Skylight Theatre in Los Angeles where it recently received three Ovation Award nominations including Best Playwriting for an Original Play, Best Production (Intimate Theatre), and Best Lead Actor in a Play. The Los Angeles Times praised it as "gripping entertainment," and "simply superb," while The Huffington Post called it "powerful, humorous and highly contemporary" and named it one of the Top Ten L.A. Theatre Productions of 2016.

Directed by Markus Potter (Stalking the Bogeyman), the cast of Church & State features Rob Nagle ("Castle," "Mad Men"), Nadia Bowers (The Farnsworth Invention, "Orange is the New Black"), Christa Scott-Reed (The Pitman Painters, Relativity) and Jonathan Louis Dent (The Broken Record, Romeo and Juliet).

The creative team includes David Goldstein (scenic design), Burke Brown (lighting design), Dianne K. Graebner (costume design), and Erik T. Lawson (sound design). Sofia Montgomery is Production Stage Manager.

The series is as follows:

Wednesday, April 5 (immediately following the 8pm performance)

VIRGINIA TECH VICTIMS FAMILY OUTREACH FOUNDATION (VTV)

VTV Family Outreach Foundation is a non-profit organization established by the families and survivors impacted by the April 16, 2007 tragedy at Virginia Tech. Determined to prevent a similar tragedy, VTV's mission is to advocate for stronger K-12 and campus safety. While they celebrate many achievements since that tragic day, they remember those lost and strive to do more in their honor. VTV's Paul Friedman (Executive Director) and Joe Samaha (President) will be in attendance. The discussion will be moderated by Charlotte Cohn (producer) and Jason Odell Williams (playwright).

Wednesday, April 12 (immediately following the 8pm performance)

EVERYTOWN FOR GUN SAFETY WITH CELEBRITY GUEST JULIANNE MOORE

Everytown is a movement of Americans working together to end gun violence and build safer communities. Gun violence touches every town in America. For too long, change has been thwarted

by the Washington gun lobby and by leaders who refuse to take common-sense steps that will save lives. But something is changing. More than 3 million mayors, moms, cops, teachers, survivors, gun owners, and everyday Americans have come together to make their own communities safer.

Julianne Moore became involved with Everytown for Gun Safety, the largest U.S. organization for gun violence prevention, which launched in 2014 through a combination of the groups Mayors Against Illegal Guns and Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America. Everytown, which boasts more than 3 million members, advocates for initiatives that would create stricter background checks and supports laws that keep guns away from domestic abusers and strengthen safety programs. Everytown President John Feinblatt will be in attendance. The discussion will be moderated by Charlotte Cohn (producer).

Wednesday April 19 (immediately following the 8pm performance)

NEW YORKERS AGAINST GUN VIOLENCE (NYAGV)

The mission of New Yorkers Against Gun Violence (NYAGV) is to reduce gun violence through legislative advocacy and education designed to encourage action, influence public opinion and lead to policy change. With a primary focus on New York State, NYAGV also advocates at the local and national levels for laws, policies and practices that protect New York State residents, particularly youth, from gun violence. NYAGV was established in 1993 by Brooklyn mothers galvanized by the senseless shooting death of a teacher in Prospect Park. It is a nonprofit organization. The discussion will be moderated by Charlotte Cohn (producer).

Church & State is produced by Charlotte Cohn, SCS Innovations, LLC, Forty-Eight Theatrical Group, Neil Gooding Productions, Ralph Meranto/JCC CenterStage, Brierpatch Productions, Karen Cohen/Jack Hayflick, and Bonnie E. Lautenberg, in association with NewYorkRep. Casting is by Wojcik | Seay Casting and Brierpatch Productions provides General Management.

Church & State plays the following performance schedule: Monday at 8pm, Wednesday - Friday at 8pm, Saturday 2pm & 8pm, Sunday 3pm & 7:30pm.

Tickets are \$59 - \$105 and are available for purchase through [Telecharge.com/212-239-6200](https://telecharge.com/212-239-6200). They may also be purchased in person at the New World Stages Box Office (340 West 50th Street. Visit www.newworldstages.com for box office hours.