



# SOME OLD BLACK MAN

*A Play by* **James Anthony Tyler**

*Starring*

**Wendell Pierce** and **Charlie Robinson**

*Directed by*

**Joe Cacaci**

UMS Digital Presentation

Hosted on UMS.org

*Executive Producer / UMS*

*Producer / 59th Limited Liability Company*

Friday Evening, January 15, 2021 at 7:00 (Digital Premiere)

Streaming on demand through Monday, January 18

The Jam Handy

Detroit, Michigan

**THANK YOU TO SUPPORTERS OF THIS UMS DIGITAL  
PRESENTATION**

Lead Presenting Sponsors

**TIM AND SALLY PETERSEN  
MICHIGAN ENGINEERING**

Presenting Sponsors

**DTE ENERGY FOUNDATION  
NEWMARKET LLC**

Patron Sponsor

**JERRY AND DALE KOLINS ENDOWMENT FUND**

Funded in part by

**COMMUNITY FOUNDATION FOR SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN  
UMS SUSTAINING DIRECTORS**

This digital presentation of *Some Old Black Man* is supported by Tim and Sally Petersen, Michigan Engineering, DTE Energy Foundation, Newmarket LLC, and the Jerry and Dale Kolins Endowment Fund.

This digital presentation is also funded in part by the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan and the UMS Sustaining Directors.

## **CAST**

Wendell Pierce / *Calvin Jones, Ph.D.*

Charlie Robinson / *Donald Jones*

## **CREATIVE TEAM**

Joe Cacaci / *Director*

Justin Lang / *Scenic and Lighting Design*

Suzanne Young / *Costume Design*

Jim Lillie / *Sound Design*

Tiffany Robinson / *First Assistant Director*

Matt Hoffman / *Director of Photography*

HMS Media / *Editing and Post-Production*

*This production runs approximately one hour and 45 minutes in duration and is performed without intermission.*

## SYNOPSIS

In *Some Old Black Man*, Calvin Jones (Wendell Pierce), a hip, coolly intellectual African American college professor, moves his 82-year-old ailing but doggedly independent father, Donald Jones (Charlie Robinson), from Greenwald, Mississippi into his Harlem penthouse. The play begins with an argument over what to eat for breakfast, then turns into a generational clash over race, opportunity, and a decision that Calvin made years ago. Donald's grumpiness is peppered with disturbing outbursts, revealing bits of his past, informed by growing up Black and poor in the South. Donald is wary that he isn't seen by his gifted, accomplished son as being good enough, and Calvin resents Donald as being a self-righteous, relentlessly tough parent. Father-son strife escalates when their generational conflict is lensed through civil rights.

## ARTISTS

**James Anthony Tyler** (*Playwright*) is the recipient of the 3rd Annual Horton Foote Playwriting Award. He is an inaugural playwright to receive a commission from Audible and currently has commission with Williamstown Theatre Festival. His plays include *Artney Jackson* (world premiere at Williamstown Theatre Festival, 2018 Edgerton Foundation New Play Award), *Some Old Black Man* (Berkshire Playwrights Lab at St. James Place and 59E59 Theaters), and *Dolphins And Sharks* (LABYrinth Theater Company and Finborough Theatre in London). He recently was the staff writer for the new OWN Network show *Cherish The Day* created by Ava DuVernay. His upcoming plays scheduled to be released in 2021 include an online workshop presentation of *Talkin' to this Chick Sippin' Magic Potion* (TheaterWorks Hartford), a short audio drama *All We Need is Us* (Keen Company, NYC) and a full-length audio drama *Hop tha A* (Audible). BA: Central State University. MFA in Film: Howard University. MFA in Dramatic Writing: New York University, and Graduate of the Lila Acheson Wallace American Playwrights Program: The Juilliard School.

**Joe Cacaci** (*Director*) has directed new plays at The Public Theater, Coconut Grove Playhouse, New Jersey Rep, commercially in New York (Baruch Performing Arts Center), Los Angeles (Coast Playhouse, Court Theater), and most recently at New York's 59E59 Theaters. That play, *Some Old Black Man*, by James Anthony Tyler, starred Wendell Pierce and was scheduled to re-open at The Sheen Center for the Arts with Mr. Pierce and Charlie Robinson this past spring before COVID cancelations. Mr. Cacaci's own plays have premiered at The Long Wharf, The Public, and commercially in LA.

In TV, he was show runner/executive producer of two prime-time series: Showtime's *The Hoop Life*, and CBS's *Education of Max Bickford* (Richard Dreyfuss and Marcia Gay Harden, Peter O'Toole). He directed the pilot of PBS's *Copshop*. He wrote/directed the short film *Food for Thought* (Berkshire International Film Festival; & KCET TV), starring Minnie Driver and Tony Shalhoub, the short trilogy, *Public Speaking*, by Richard Dresser, starring Treat Williams, and the National Lampoon film, *Snatched*, starring Andrew McCarthy and Ernest Borgnine.

Mr. Cacaci teaches TV Writing in the graduate film school at Columbia University and TV/Screenwriting in the undergraduate film program at Wesleyan University.

He co-founded and is co-artistic director of Berkshire Playwrights Lab in Great Barrington, MA, developing new plays since 2007.

**Wendell Pierce** (*Calvin Jones, Ph.D.*) stars as James Greer in Amazon's international hit series *Tom Clancy's Jack Ryan* alongside John Krasinski. He recently appeared with an all-star cast in *Between the World and Me*, a new special event based on the #1 *New York Times* bestseller from Ta-Nehisi Coates, which premiered in fall 2020 on HBO. Mr. Pierce starred as Clarence Thomas in HBO's multi-award-winning *Confirmation*, opposite Kerry Washington. He is recognized as Robert Zane on USA's *Suits*, starred on Anthony Hemingway's *Unsolved* miniseries, and recurs in a multi-season arc on *Chicago P.D.* for Dick Wolf and Eriq La Salle. Universally hailed for his portrayal of Det. Bunk Moreland on HBO's *The Wire* (Image Award nominee), Mr. Pierce was additionally a three-time Image Award nominee for his starring role

Antoine Baptiste on David Simon's next HBO series, *Tremé*. Other credits include *Ray Donovan* opposite Liev Schreiber, the HBO's *Strapped* (Forest Whitaker), and *Life Support* (Image Award winner; WIN Award winner) opposite Queen Latifah.

Wendell Pierce won the "Best Actor Award" at the 2019 Tribeca Film Festival, is an Independent Spirit Award and Gotham Award nominee for his performance in *Burning Cane*, and stars alongside Alfre Woodard and Aldis Hodge in the 2019 Sundance Grand Jury Prize winner *Clemency*. Mr. Pierce was an Independent Spirit Award nominee and won the prestigious Acting Award from the LA Film Festival for the intense drama *Four*. His other features include *Selma* (Ava DuVernay; Black Reel Award winner), *Horrible Bosses*, *Twilight: Breaking Dawn 2* (Bill Condon), Taylor Hackford's *Parker* alongside Jennifer Lopez and Jason Statham, *Ray* and *Love Ranch*, Wim Wenders' *Angst & Alienation in America*, and *Hole in One* opposite Michelle Williams (Tribeca Film Festival), *Fighting Temptations*, Spike Lee's *Get on the Bus* and *Malcom X*, *Sleepers*, *Waiting to Exhale*, *A Rage in Harlem*, *Bonfire of the Vanities*, and *Casualties of War*.

The Juilliard alumnus, Tony Award-winning producer (for *Clybourne Park*), and 2010 Obie Award winner has most recently received rapturous personal reviews and was nominated for "Best Actor in a Play" for a London Olivier Award for his portrayal of Willy Loman in the two acclaimed 2019 presentations of *Death of a Salesman*, first at the Young Vic and then in its West End transfer to the Piccadilly Theatre for director Marianne Elliott. Mr. Pierce earlier starred in world premieres of the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, *Cost of Living* at Williamstown and *Queenie Pie* at the Kennedy Center. Included among

his Broadway stage credits are *The Piano Lesson*, *Serious Money*, *The Boys of Winter*, and the New York premiere of the award-winning *Broke-ology* at Lincoln Center. Off-Broadway productions include the New York premiere of *Some Old Black Man* at 59E59th, *The Good Times are Killing Me*, as well as *'Tis a Pity She's A Whore*, *Cymbeline*, and *Two Gentleman of Verona* for the New York Shakespeare Festival. He received rave reviews for *The Cherry Orchard* at the Classical Theatre of Harlem (VIV Award nomination, best lead actor), followed by *Waiting For Godot*, set on a rooftop surrounded by water in post-Hurricane Katrina New Orleans, and then starred opposite Laurence Fishburne and Angela Bassett in August Wilson's *Fences* at the Pasadena Playhouse. He next appeared in the Oedipus Plays in the ancient Herod Atticus Theatre at the Acropolis in Athens, in association with the Washington DC Shakespeare Theatre.

A New Orleans native, Wendell Pierce is known for his service to the city, focusing on efforts to rebuild the neighborhood in which he was raised after Hurricane Katrina. Ponchartrain Park Development Corp, a non-profit corporation he created to build affordable and environmentally friendly homes, committed to help longtime residents come back to their neighborhood. His work was featured on CNN in the documentary film *New Orleans Rising* with Soledad O'Brien, and he has been a featured guest on *CBS Morning News*, NPR's *Talk of the Nation* and *Money Matters*, as well as a host of other national outlets. Mr. Pierce notably appeared in Spike Lee's documentary *When The Levees Broke* telling his family's story of loss during Hurricane Katrina. His memoir *The Wind in the Reeds* was published to rave reviews in 2015. He is part of Equity Media, the new ownership group of WBOK 1230 am, a 70-year-old

legacy Black talk radio station in New Orleans, the oldest African American owned radio station in Louisiana.

**Charlie Robinson** (*Donald Jones*), this past summer, completed a limited episodic for Freeform TV called *Love in the Time of Corona*. Pre-pandemic work included *Last Romance* at The New Theatre, reuniting him with Michael Learned, with whom he had played opposite in *Driving Miss Daisy*. Since then he starred in the first season of *The Guest Book* for TBS, then guest performances on CBS's *NCIS*, NBC's *This is Us*, *Better Things* for FX, and now has a recurring role on Disney's *Raven's Home*, and continues to recur on CBS's *Mom*, and for theater, he performed at the Dallas Theater Center in *The Trials of Sam Houston*. Mr. Robinson received the Fred Award by the Pasadena Playhouse, for the role of Simon in Matthew Lopez's *The Whipping Man*, and a role he reprised for LATW's radio program, after successfully running the play at South Coast Rep. and the Old Globe, for which he won the Best Actor 2010 Image Theatre Award. A veteran actor from Houston, Texas, Mr. Robinson studied at Studio 7 Workshop and at the University of Houston along with the Alley Repertory Theatre; he was acting VP of the Urban Theatre, before he moved to Los Angeles and became a member of the Actors Studio. Mr. Robinson honed his craft at the Mark Taper Too, Inner City Cultural Center, the Actors Studio with Lyle Kessler's *Unlisted*, also acclaimed *Driving Miss Daisy* with Diane Ladd and other LA roles, including Willy Loman in *Death of a Salesman* at SCR. His film credits include: *Apocalypse Now*, *The River*, *Set it Off*, *Antwone Fisher*, *Even Money*, *Jackson*, *Steam*, *Natural Disasters*, *Sweet Kandy*, *Hoovey*, *Maybe Someday*, and *Russell Madness*, as well as Ellen Gerstein's short, *Come Away With Me*. Television

credits include many pilots, as well as having been a regular on *Buffalo Bill*, *Night Court*, *Love & War*, *Ink*, and *Buddy Faro*; in addition, recurring characters on Disney's *KC Undercover*, *Hart of Dixie*, *The Game*, *The Quad*, *Disjointed*, and *Home Improvement*. There were great roles performed in *Grey's Anatomy*, *McBride*, *Big Love*, *The Riches*, *My Name is Earl*, *Cold Case*, *House*, *Bernie Mac*, *Still Standing*, and countless others. Twice a CAMIE Award winner, for his made-for-TV movie roles in *Miss Lettie and Me* and *Secret Santa*. As for radio, one of his favorite performances was the lead in Walter Mosley's *Black Betty*, for LATW. Charlie Robinson was the 2006 Ovation Award Winner for "Best Actor in a Play" as Troy in August Wilson's *Fences*, and part of the winning *Jitney* ensemble for the 2013 Theatre Image Award. He has performed for years as a guest artist for the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and countless other national theaters. Married to Dolorita Noonan-Robinson, children Luca, Christian, Charlie, and Byron, as well as a grandfather, great-grandfather, and dog-dad to "Nala."

**Tiffany Robinson** (*First Assistant Director*) is thrilled to work with UMS and the *Some Old Black Man* Off-Broadway team (James, Joe, and Wendell), again. This proud native of Philadelphia holds a BFA in Theater Arts Administration from Howard University. Ms. Robinson has had the pleasure of working as a professional stage manager in Philadelphia and New York for the last 15 years. Selected shows: *MJ The Musical* (Broadway 2021), *The Cher Show* (Chicago and Broadway), *Motown the Musical* (Broadway and 1st National), *Memphis* (1st National), *Three Sisters* (Classical Theatre of Harlem), *Dreamgirls* (National Tour), and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (Broadway — African American cast).

## **UMS ARCHIVES**

This digital presentation marks the UMS debuts of both Wendell Pierce and Charlie Robinson.



**DIRECTED BY**

Joe Cacaci

**WRITTEN BY**

James Anthony Tyler

**EXECUTIVE PRODUCER**

University Musical Society of the  
University of Michigan

Mark Jacobson / *Lead Producer and  
Senior Programming Manager*  
Cayenne Harris / *Producer and Vice President,  
Education & Community Engagement*  
Matthew VanBesien / *President*  
Tim Petersen, Chair / *Board of Directors*  
Sara Billmann / *Vice President,  
Marketing & Communications*  
Ryan Davis / *Vice President,  
Chief Development Officer*  
Michael Kondziolka / *Vice President,  
Programming & Production*  
Carmen Rodriguez / *Vice President,  
Finance & Administration*

**PRODUCER**

59th Limited Liability Company

**CAST**

Wendell Pierce / *Calvin Jones, Ph.D.*  
Charlie Robinson / *Donald Jones*

**DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY/EDITOR**

Matt Hoffman  
HMS Media

**SCENIC AND LIGHTING DESIGNER**

Justin Lang

**COSTUME DESIGNER**

Suzanne Young

**SOUND DESIGNER**

Jim Lillie

**FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR**

Tiffany Robinson

**PRODUCTION**

Jeffrey Beyersdorf / *Production Director*  
Alex Gay / *Assistant Production Manager*  
Anne Grove / *Artist Services Manager*  
Rochelle Clark / *Assistant Stage Manager*  
Bridget Kojima, Jacob Rogers, and Justine Sedky/  
*Couriers*

**CAMERAS**

John Ford  
Joe Lukawski

**JIB**

Cameron Frazier

**MASTER ELECTRICIAN**

Chris Simko

**SOUND**

Aerial Enterprises  
Al Hurschman / *A1, Recordist*  
Mark Gougeon / *A2*  
Nathan Manuel

**WARDROBE**

Tiffany Robinson

**CREW****IATSE Local 395**

Kyle Chapman  
Michael Dubyak  
Devin Miller  
Dean Neeb  
Greg Schmidt  
Travis Sheldon

**IATSE Local 38**

Danny Berro  
April Campbell / *COVID-19 Safety Officer*  
John Dillon  
Robert W. Floyd  
Kimberly Glenn  
Fred Graham, Jr.  
Kristen Gribbin  
Adam Groves  
Shawn Harrington  
Felicia Hatcher-Brown  
Tyler Hively  
Kyle Jeffery / *COVID-19 Safety Officer*  
Keith Jex  
Suzanne Johnston-Steward  
James Kubiak  
Arthur Merriweather  
Timothy W. Poneleit  
Ross Robinson  
Randal Roy  
Randy Vanwormer / *COVID-19 Safety Officer*

**MUSIC**

"I Was Standing on 75 Highway"  
by Lightnin' Hopkins  
"Three Hours Past Midnight"  
by Johnny "Guitar" Watkins  
Used with permission by  
Universal Publishing Group

APM Music

**TELEVISION PRODUCTION  
AND POST-PRODUCTION**

Matt Hoffman/HMS Media

**CATERERS**

Canape Cart, Birmingham  
Ochre Bakery, Detroit

**TITLE DESIGN**

Phire Group

**MOTION GRAPHICS**

Jenny Conway

**POST-AUDIO MIX**

Andrew Twiss  
Twiss Audio

**LEAD PRESENTING SPONSORS**

Tim and Sally Petersen  
Michigan Engineering

**PRESENTING SPONSOR**

DTE Energy Foundation  
Newmarket LLC

**PATRON SPONSOR**

Jerry and Dale Kolins Endowment Fund

**FUNDED IN PART BY**

Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan  
UMS Sustaining Directors

**ADDITIONAL THANKS TO**

Ford Motor Company Fund  
LynxDx, Inc.\*  
Michigan Medicine  
Quest Diagnostics

\*The COVID-19 assay was developed at the University of Michigan and is being deployed in partnership with LynxDx, Inc.

**SPECIAL THANKS**

5th Avenue Furniture  
Black Stone Bookstore & Cultural Center  
Brooks Lumber  
Kathy Byrne, SAG/AFTRA  
Cadillac True Value Hardware  
Cowan, Debaets, Abrahams &  
Sheppard LLP/Josh Sessler  
Detroit Wallpaper Co.  
Keith Dickey, Michigan Medicine  
Fantasee Lighting  
HMS Media  
Henry Ford Hospital/Robin Damschroder and  
Gerald C. Koenig, MD, Ph.D.  
Simeon Heyer, The Jam Handy  
Jessica Hicks, Ochre Bakery, Detroit  
John K. King Books  
LynxDx, Inc./Steven Riggs and Ani Shirvanian  
Preeti Malani, MD, University of Michigan  
Bridget McCormack and Steve Croley  
for their generous housing assistance  
Kathleen O'Neill, Canape Cart, Birmingham  
Quest Diagnostics/Margaret J. Collins and  
Nathan T. Doyle  
Steinway Gallery of Detroit  
Holly Taylor  
University of Michigan Health Service/  
Lindsey Mortenson, MD and Jason Shellhaas,  
MD  
University Productions, University of Michigan/  
Doug Edwards, Paul Hunter, Rich Lindsay, and  
Beth Sandmaier  
Stacy and Jeffrey Weber  
Matt Wilson

Artists appear courtesy of the Screen Actors  
Guild and the American Federation of Television  
and Radio Artists



**SAG-AFTRA.**

Special thanks to the Director's Guild of America  
and IATSE Local 38 and Local 395

