



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SPECIAL DELIVERY FROM CINCINNATI...

PERSEVERANCE THEATRE HOSTS SELECTIONS FROM *THE STORK FILES: TRUE STORIES OF ADOPTION, ABORTION, AND HAVING NO CHOICE*

(JUNEAU) — Unswaddling secrets. Terminating shame. Bearing witness. Fostering community. These are *THE STORK FILES: TRUE STORIES OF ADOPTION, ABORTION, AND HAVING NO CHOICE*, a “play in gestation” by former Juneauite Julie Coppens. This sold-out hit of the 2023 Cincinnati Fringe Festival performs a one-night stand at Perseverance Theatre, 7 p.m. Tuesday, August 8.

“My birth was a covert operation; my adoption, a comedy of errors,” says Cincinnati-based journalist/theatremaker Julie Coppens. “With *THE STORK FILES*, I hope to inspire the kind of personal truth-telling that cuts through political rhetoric, deepening our understanding of these complex social phenomena that have such profound impacts on our lives and communities.”

“Coppens is able to tell the stories from all sides of the reproduction debate with humor and sensitivity,” writes Katrina Reynolds, reviewing for the League of Cincinnati Theatres. “The ideas are strong; nothing feels preachy... You will want to see how this baby grows.”

For this special Juneau engagement, Coppens will present excerpts from the show, followed by a community discussion around the themes of adoption, identity, and reproductive choice: “I know this Alaskan community has many stories to tell—and *THE STORK FILES* is all about creating a safe, healing space to hear and honor all our many experiences of difficult life choices, or lack of choice.”

Coppens is well known to Juneau audiences for her work with Perseverance Theatre’s youth programs, and as the director of such local productions as *HERE’S LOOKING AT YOU*, *CASABLANCA*, among many other creative projects over the seven years she lived here, before relocating back to her Ohio hometown in 2019. She and son Seth Coppens have kept a foothold in the community, and are currently co-stage managing Shakespeare’s *TWELFTH NIGHT* for Theater Alaska.

“Like any expectant mother, I’m always a little terrified to perform *THE STORK FILES* for a new audience—but the reactions to the show, as it’s grown and evolved, have been so beautiful and deeply felt,”

says Coppens. She originally conceived THE STORK FILES as a magazine article, “Who Am I?,” published in *Dramatics* in 2016, tracing the adoption theme through time; most recently, she performed an excerpt for middle schoolers at Sitka Fine Arts Camp, and in October, she’ll bring a new version of the show to a national retreat for Concerned United Birth Parents, in Redondo Beach, California. A 2024 staging at the Museum of Motherhood in St. Petersburg, Florida, and an interactive website (www.thestorkfiles.org), are also in the works.

“These stories are deep. These stories are powerful. It matters how they are told, and who gets to tell them. For us, now, in 2023 in the United States,” Coppens adds, “it matters a lot.”

THE STORK FILES synopsis:

In the summer of 1972, a suburban Cincinnati mom brought home a new wig... and an adopted baby. Five decades (and a few Supreme Court decisions) later, one journalist/theatremaker considers her unlikely “life” story, amidst the reproductive-rights tug-of-war—and invites others to share their truths—with this funny, poignant work-in-progress.

About the creator:

Like a lot of adoptees, Julie Coppens is a shape-shifter, having played many roles over a long career in theatre, journalism, nonprofit leadership, and parenting. She produced the student podcast *Democracy & Z* and the “What Does Justice Look Like?” YouTube series for Cincinnati Public Radio; previously she served on the national publications staff of the Educational Theatre Association, as an editor of *Dramatics* magazine and director of the Thespian Playworks program for high school writers. In between came a seven-year stint in Alaska, where she led youth programming and communications at Perseverance Theatre, among other creative projects. Offstage, Julie’s a longtime volunteer and current Board President of Ski for Light, Inc., which introduces the sport of cross-country skiing to adults with visual or mobility impairments. Her son Seth Coppens, who has a cameo role as The Stork in THE STORK FILES, has performed in numerous local productions and is bound for Carnegie Mellon University this fall, Directing BFA program in the School of Drama.

Julie was featured in the Adoption Network Cleveland’s Monday Evening Speaker Series, May 15 on Zoom (view the recorded session here: [YouTube link](#)). She also spoke with WGUC’s Elaine Deihl for an upcoming Cincinnati Spotlight (listen here: [Soundcloud link](#)).

Show info:

THE STORK FILES: TRUE STORIES OF ADOPTION, ABORTION, AND HAVING NO CHOICE

A “play in gestation” by Julie Coppens

- Special Juneau engagement, one night only! 7-8 p.m. Tuesday, August 8
- Perseverance Theatre, 914 Third Street, Douglas, Alaska (Phoenix studio space)
- Show runs about 20 minutes, with community discussion immediately following.
- Pay-what-you can; proceeds to support Perseverance Theatre’s STAR program and Planned Parenthood – Juneau Health Center.