

WIMBORNE
DRAMA PRODUCTIONS

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WORST WEDDING EVER

A COMEDY by CHRIS CHIBNALL



20 - 22 February 2025
Tivoli Theatre Wimborne

EVENINGS 7.30PM, £17.50 SAT MATINEE 2.30PM, £15.50
BOX OFFICE: 01202 885566 ONLINE: TivoliWimborne.co.uk
(Booking fees may apply)

This amateur production of "Worst Wedding Ever" is presented by arrangement with Imaginary Friends Productions Ltd. and 42M&P Ltd.



WITNESS

FOR THE PROSECUTION

By **Agatha Christie**

24 - 26 October 2024
Tivoli Theatre Wimborne

Director's Notes

WELCOME to the Tivoli Theatre! Or is it the Old Bailey? Or, indeed, is it the murky region, somewhere between Fact and Fiction, known as Bias?



David Beddard-Banks

What was once accepted as “true” because a person or institution of high esteem declared it so, can now be challenged by anyone with a smartphone and a desire to learn. What, once, would have been dismissed as “false” by editors and consigned to oblivion can now be published and spread around the entire world within hours. What is the Truth?

Psychologists have categorised hundreds of distinct cognitive biases and heuristics which our minds use as filters and shortcuts so that we can go about our daily lives in reasonable confidence without having to constantly and rigorously scrutinise every single detail around us. Could we really handle the Whole Truth?

Within half a lifetime, we've gone from living in a world in which information had to be sought like oases in a desert, to a world in which information became available on tap, to a world in which the pipe burst and we increasingly wish we could escape the information flood. Can we ever achieve Nothing But the Truth?

Agatha Christie's *Witness for the Prosecution* is a masterful exploration of Bias, couched in the high-stakes context of a murder trial where execution is very much an option. It's my favourite of the Queen of Crime's works, and I'm thrilled to be making my directorial debut with this play.

It has taken a large team to bring this production to life and

Coming soon to The Tivoli

WORST WEDDING EVER

A comedy by
Chris Chibnall

(Creator of BROADCHURCH)

20-22 February 2025

Directed by
Tracey Nicholls

CALENDAR GIRLS

Based on the Miramax
motion picture

by Juliette Towhidi
and Tim Firth

22-24 May 2025

Directed by
Sali Pike

TICKETS ON SALE SOON

WIMBORNE DRAMA PRODUCTIONS

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War, the Old Bailey was bombed and severely damaged, but reconstruction work restored most of it in the early 1950s.

- ◆ There are 74 cells in the historic court building.
- ◆ Until 1868, hangings were a public spectacle in the street outside the Old Bailey and large crowds would gather.
- ◆ The last person to be publicly executed was Michael Barrett on May 26, 1868. Thereafter hangings took place inside Newgate Prison, away from the baying crowds.
- ◆ The last person executed at the Old Bailey was George Woolfe, for murder, on May 6, 1902.
- ◆ The last executions in the UK took place in 1964. Capital punishment was abolished for murder in 1965 (1973 for Northern Ireland).
- ◆ The death penalty remained a legally defined punishment for treason until it was completely abolished in 1998.
- ◆ Famous trials held at the Old Bailey include those of Oscar Wilde, Dr Crippen, William Joyce ('Lord Haw-Haw'), John Christie, Ruth Ellis, the Kray Twins, the Yorkshire Ripper and Jeffrey Archer.



The Grand Hall of the Old Bailey

I'm exceedingly grateful to them all; everyone who has helped to build and decorate the set, everyone who has sourced and contributed props and furniture, everyone who has handed out flyers, everyone helping with the scene changes... This programme is far too small to contain the full praise everyone deserves! But I would be remiss if I did not express my particular thanks to our magnificent Stage Manager, Tracey Nicholls, and our set designer extraordinaire, Chris Durham, for their wisdom, guidance, support, and outstanding contributions. Then there's our amazing cast! I could not have wished for a more talented or committed team. Thank you all!

And thank you for joining us! Can you, as members of our jury, "truly try and true deliverance make between our sovereign lady the Queen [of Crime] and the prisoner at the bar", sort Fact from Fiction, overcome Bias and correctly judge the outcome? Let's find out!

David Beddard-Banks
Director

The Queen of Crime



Born in Torquay in 1890, **Agatha Christie** is the best-selling novelist of all time. With over one billion books sold in English and another billion in over 100 languages, she is outsold only by the Bible and Shakespeare. She wrote 80 crime novels and collections of short stories, over 25 plays (including *The Mousetrap*, the world's longest running play), and six novels under the pseudonym Mary Westmacott. Her first novel, *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*, introduced the world to the Belgian detective Hercule Poirot, followed a decade later by the shrewd and often-underestimated Miss Marple. Agatha Christie was made a dame in 1971. She died in 1976.

Witness For The Prosecution: From Page To Stage

AGATHA CHRISTIE'S suspense filled courtroom play, *Witness for the Prosecution*, has been thrilling audiences with its themes of justice and betrayal since 1953.

The play started life as a short story first published in 1925, only five years into Agatha Christie's career as a published author. It appeared in *Flynn's Weekly* magazine under the title *Traitor Hands* before being published as *The Witness for the Prosecution* in the short story collection *The Hound of Death* (1933).

In 1951 Christie was approached by theatre producer Peter Saunders who suggested she revise the short story into a courtroom drama for the stage. Christie originally resisted, telling Saunders that if he wanted a stage version he'd have to write it himself, which he did! But after being disappointed with his adaptation, Christie decided to write her own, and within a few weeks had returned her version of the script to him.

Drafts were sent back and forth between England and Iraq, where Christie was assisting her husband, Max Mallowan, with his archaeological dig at Nimrud. Christie and Saunders jokingly referred to the project throughout this process as "Saunders' Folly" and over the weeks the producer skilfully cajoled the absent playwright into completing her adaptation.

The very first draft was titled *Hostile Witness*, although this was crossed out in favour of the story's own revised title (without its "The"), and under it Christie had written "legal fun to be added!" Saunders enlisted the help of barrister and keen amateur actor Humphrey Tilling to ensure the legal aspects of the

The Old Bailey

- ◆ The Old Bailey was built in 1539, although the site's history goes back more than a thousand years, having been occupied by the notoriously bleak Newgate prison from the 12th century onwards.
- ◆ The present building, officially known as the Central Criminal Court, dates from 1902. It comprises 18 courts spread over three floors.
- ◆ The name 'Old Bailey' comes from the street on which the court is located. The road marks the route of the City's original fortified wall (or 'bailey').
- ◆ The River Fleet runs underneath the Old Bailey.
- ◆ Above the main entrance are inscribed the words: "Defend the Children of the Poor & Punish the Wrongdoer".



◆ The 22-ton, 3.5m tall figure of Lady Justice is the Old Bailey's crowning glory — clutching the sword of retribution in her right hand, and the scales of justice in her left. But contrary to the well-worn adage, this particular Justice is not blind (folded), as her "maidenly form" is supposed to guarantee her impartiality which renders the blindfold redundant.

◆ During the Blitz of the Second World



Top: Russ Guillaume, Richard Neal & Amanda Senitt; Jenny Hughes
Bottom: Jemma Cable; Calum Hearne

plot were authentic. Christie read several volumes of *Notable British Trials* to learn about the play's Old Bailey setting and Saunders also undertook research, attending the trial of serial killer John Christie.

Adapting the short story to a play meant making several radical changes, including the introduction of the pivotal character of Sir Wilfrid Robarts, QC (memorably played by Charles Laughton in the 1957 film), and a new ending.

Initially Christie was told that her new ending wouldn't work and would have to be changed, but she fought desperately to keep it, going to the extreme of not allowing the play to go ahead without it. Fortunately, Christie got her way. She described the ending as "what could have happened, what might have happened, and in my view probably what would have happened", despite others resistance to it.



Agatha Christie at a rehearsal of *Witness for the Prosecution*

The play opened at the Winter Garden Theatre in the West End on October 28, 1953 and was a tremendous success from the beginning. It opened to equal acclaim on Broadway the following year.

Reminiscing in *An Autobiography*, Christie claimed it was “the only first night I have enjoyed,” going on to say, “I was happy, radiantly happy, and made even more so by the applause of the audience”. Christie, who was usually shy and avoided being in the public eye, remembers cheerfully signing autograph books, whilst fans praised her with comments including “Best you’ve written, dearie!” and “Loved every minute of it!”

In *An Autobiography* Christie fondly writes, “It was a memorable evening. I am proud of it still. And every now and then I dig into the memory chest, bring it out, take a look at it, and say, ‘That was the night, that was!’”

The play clocked up 468 performances in London, being described in the *Daily Mail* at the time as “an ingenious and absorbing murder thriller with more than the usual share of comedy”.

During its initial run, *Witness for the Prosecution* contributed to Christie’s world record of being the only female playwright to have three plays running in London’s West End simultaneously; the others being *The Mousetrap* and *Spider’s Web*.

Witness for the Prosecution returned to London in 2017, in the spectacular setting of the chamber at London County Hall. It was the first major London production of a play written by Agatha Christie since the 1960s and is still running today.

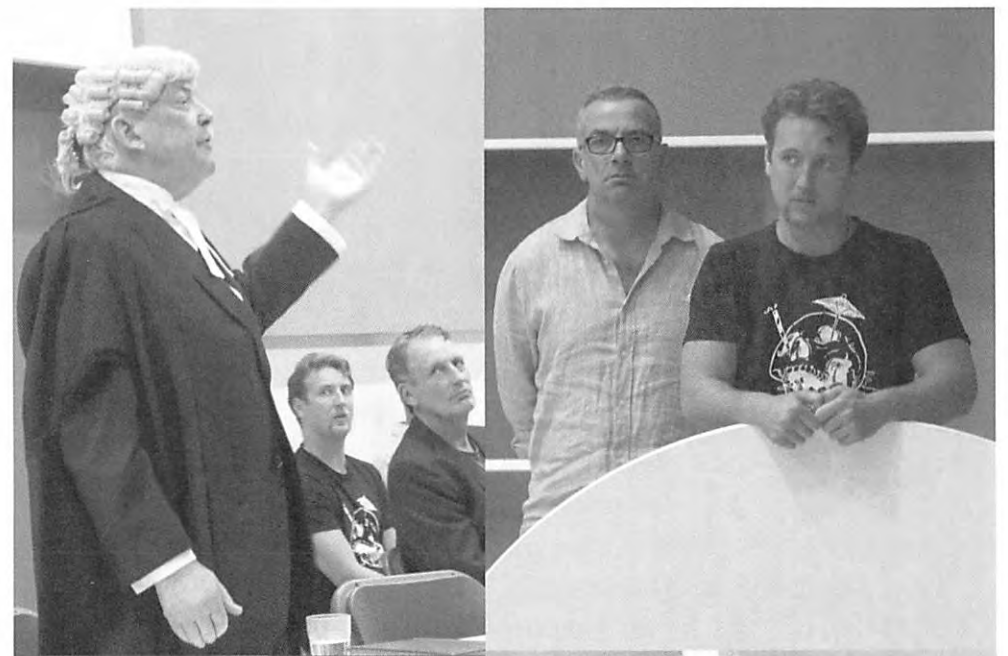
Photos courtesy of The Christie Archive Trust



Top: Judy Garrett & Sali Pike. Bottom: Chris Durham, Simon Jackson, James Bourner, Gary Paine, Richard Scotson, Sam Moulton, Andy Gill & Jan Stevenson



Top: Gary Paine & James Bourner; Richard Neal
Bottom: Suzanne Viney; Rob Cording-Cook



Top: Chris Durham, James Bourner & Gary Paine; Richard Scotson & James Bourner
Bottom: Andrea Pellegrini; Sam Moulton & Jan Stevenson

WITNESS

FOR THE PROSECUTION

By **Agatha Christie**

The Cast in order of appearance

Greta	SALI PIKE
Miss Carter	JUDY GARRETT
Mr Mayhew	GARY PAINE
Leonard Vole	JAMES BOURNER
Sir Wilfrid Robarts, QC	CHRIS DURHAM
Inspector Hearne	ROB CORDING-COOK
Plain Clothes Detective / Warder	RICHARD SCOTSON
Romaine	ANDREA PELLEGRINI
Clerk of the Court	RUSS GUILLAUME
Mr Justice Wainwright	RICHARD NEAL
Mr Myers, QC	SAM MOULTON
Prosecution Barrister	JAN STEVENSON
Defence Barrister	SIMON JACKSON
Foreman of the Jury	AMANDA SENITT
Policeman	ANDY GILL
Dr Wyatt	JENNY HUGHES
Janet MacKenzie	SUZANNE VINEY
Thomas Clegg	CALUM HEARNE
The Other Woman	JEMMA CABLE

The Setting

Act 1: The Chambers of Sir Wilfrid Robarts, QC, one afternoon in October 1953
Act 2, Part 1: The Central Criminal Court ("The Old Bailey"), six weeks later, morning interval

Act 2, Part 2: The Old Bailey, moments later
Act 3, Scene 1: The Chambers of Sir Wilfrid Robarts, QC, the same evening
Act 3, Scene 2: The Old Bailey, the next morning

Running time approximately 2 hours 45 minutes, including a 20 minute interval

The Creative Team

Director	DAVID BEDDARD-BANKS
Set Designer	CHRIS DURHAM
Stage Manager	TRACEY NICHOLLS
Properties/ASMs	DEE HAWES
	PAUL SENITT
ASMs	MICHELLE BARTER
	KIRA BRADFORD
	HOPE PAINE
	COLIN PILE
Sound	NICK CLARK
Book Cover	HEATHER BIRCHENOUGH
Costumes	ROB CORDING-COOK
	TRACEY NICHOLLS
	KIRA BRADFORD
	RICHARD NEAL
Publicity & Programme	
For the Tivoli Theatre:	
Production Manager	KYLE BEST
Lighting	CHANDLER WHITELOCK
ASMs	JOSH BRINDLEY
	MAX WIGG

Production Acknowledgements

Costumes supplied by **Hierarchy Costumes**
Wigs supplied by **Hampshire Wardrobe** and **Bath Costume Hire**
This production would not have been possible without the generous help and support of Beaucroft College, Daisy Graphic, Forest FM, Gullivers Bookshop, Premier Inn Holes Bay, Radio Wimborne, Royal British Legion Wimborne, St Mary's Church Ferndown, Stour and Avon Magazine, Tivoli Theatre, Viewpoint and Wimborne Minster

Produced by *Wimborne Drama Productions at the Tivoli Theatre, October 24-26, 2024. This amateur production of "Witness for the Prosecution" is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals Ltd. on behalf of Samuel French Ltd. www.concordtheatricals.co.uk. 'Witness for the Prosecution' © 1953 Agatha Christie Limited All rights reserved. 'AGATHA CHRISTIE' and the Agatha Christie Signature Mark are trademarks of Agatha Christie Ltd.. All rights reserved. The rights to this play are controlled by Agatha Christie Ltd.. For further information about this play, others by Agatha Christie and about other stage adaptations of her stories, please visit: www.agathachristie.com The videotaping or making of electronic or other audio and/or visual recordings or streams of this production is strictly prohibited, a violation of United Kingdom Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 and an actionable offence.*