

# THE WILSON PAPERS



**19 - 20 February 2026**  
**Hexagon Theatre**  
**MAC Birmingham**

Politics · Power · Paper Trails

## SHORT SYNOPSIS

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When the private papers of former Prime Minister Harold Wilson are put up for sale, panic ripples through Whitehall.

As civil servants and family members clash over ownership and legacy, a quiet battle unfolds over who controls history, and what must remain hidden.

*The Wilson Papers* is a sharp political drama about power exercised politely, denial as policy, and the cost of being inconvenient to the state.

## FULL SYNOPSIS

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*The Wilson Papers* explores the quiet panic inside government when history refuses to remain private.

When the personal papers of former Prime Minister Harold Wilson are put up for sale, a seemingly administrative problem quickly escalates. Civil servants, archivists, and family members find themselves drawn into a struggle over ownership, authority, and control. What appears to be a question of paperwork becomes a deeper conflict about who has the right to decide how a life, and a political legacy, is remembered.

Set against the political climate of the late 1980s and early 1990s, the play moves between private spaces and institutional corridors, revealing how power is exercised not through speeches or slogans, but through procedure, delay, and quiet pressure. Files are mislaid, decisions deferred, and certainty carefully avoided, while the machinery of the state insists that everything remains under control.

As personal loyalty collides with institutional obligation, the characters are forced to confront uncomfortable questions. Are these documents private property, national assets, or something more fragile, a human attempt to make sense of a life as it fades? Who benefits when history is managed rather than examined, and what is the personal cost of being deemed inconvenient to the official record?

Darkly comic and deliberately restrained, *The Wilson Papers* is not a history lesson, but a political drama about memory, legacy, and the systems designed to protect themselves from the past.

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

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The Wilson Papers is not a history lesson.

It is a play about ownership; of memory, of legacy, and of truth, and what happens when private lives collide with the machinery of the state.

When a former Prime Minister's personal papers are put up for sale, the question is not simply who owns them, but who gets to decide how a life is remembered.

Are these documents private property, national assets, or something more fragile, a human attempt to make sense of a life as it fades?

Set against the political climate of the late 1980s and early 1990s, the play explores power exercised quietly, through files, letters, and procedural pressure, rather than through speeches or slogans. It is a drama about control exercised politely, and the personal cost of being deemed inconvenient by history.

At its heart, this is a play about loyalty; to people, to institutions, and to versions of the past we choose to protect.

Simon Ashton  
Director

## PRODUCTION DETAILS

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### THE WILSON PAPERS

Writer

Alex Viveash

Director

Simon Ashton

Producer

Mercia Theatre Company

Venue

Hexagon Theatre

Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

Performance dates

19–20 February 2026

Running time

Approximately 105 minutes (including 15 minute interval)

Genre

Political drama

Production

A Mercia Theatre Company Production

## CAST & CREATIVES

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Mr Clause / Robin Butler	.....	Karl Cooper
Mr Pitbaldo / Andrew Turnbull	.....	Peter Harrington
Mrs Wilson / Miss Andrews	.....	Liz Plumpton
Lady Falkender / Miss Phippard	.....	Skye Witney
Mr Coors / Newspaper Seller	.....	Simon Ashton
Lord Armstrong / Mr Cox	.....	Matthew Baylis
Written by	.....	Alex Viveash
Produced and Directed by	.....	Simon Ashton

## CONTACT & ASSETS

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### Press & media enquiries

Simon Ashton

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Mercia Theatre

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Website: [MerciaTheatre.com](http://MerciaTheatre.com)

Press assets available on request:

- Production stills (300dpi and web-ready)
- Poster artwork
- Programme PDF
- Trailer / teaser video