

# WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Stage and Screen Writer Jeffrey Hatcher Is Symposium Guest at Westport Country Playhouse on Sunday, July 16**

#### **Hatcher will discuss his new adaptation of “Dial M for Murder” with director Mark Lamos at free event, open to community**

Stage and screen writer Jeffrey Hatcher, creator of the new adaptation of “Dial M for Murder,” playing at Westport Country Playhouse from July 11 through July 29, will be the guest at the Playhouse’s Sunday Symposium, following the July 16, 3 p.m. performance of the suspense thriller. Hatcher will discuss how he re-thought for the stage the classic tale of blackmail and revenge.

The symposium will be moderated by Mark Lamos, Playhouse artistic director, who also directs the production, his final work at the Playhouse prior to his planned retirement in January 2024 after 15 seasons as artistic director. In addition to “Dial M for Murder,” Lamos directed Jeffrey Hatcher’s “Compleat Female Stage Beauty” at San Diego’s Globe Theater in 2002.

“Jeffrey Hatcher, an incredibly prolific writer, will discuss his new version of one of the most famous mysteries written for the stage,” said Lamos. “If audiences think they know ‘Dial M for Murder,’ this is going to be quite surprising. It’s a whole different take on the play but still really thrilling.”

The Playhouse Sunday Symposium program is free and open to the public. No performance ticket is necessary to attend the Symposium. Guests are invited to arrive at the Playhouse approximately two hours after curtain time; the Symposium will begin immediately after the performance, at approximately 5 p.m.

“Dial M for Murder” is an edge-of-your-seat tale about a devious husband, his wealthy wife, and her lover. The new version offers even more surprises and diabolic twists than the renowned Hitchcock film. The plot unfolds as Tony is convinced that his wife Margot has been cheating on him. Now it seems that the affair is over, but in his jealousy Tony spins a web of suspicion and deception that will tighten around them and ensnare them both in danger, recrimination and murder. The five-member cast includes Kate Burton as Inspector Hubbard, Patrick Andrews as Tony Wendice, and Kate Abbruzzese as Margot Wendice.

Jeffrey Hatcher’s work at Westport Country Playhouse includes his adaptation of Henry James’ “The Turn of the Screw” in 2007, and Script in Hand playreadings of “Scotland Road” in 2016, “Tuesdays with Morrie,” co-written with Mitch Albom, in 2018, and “Mrs. Mannerly” in 2021.

Hatcher’s Broadway credits include the book for “Never Gonna Dance.” Off-Broadway credits include “Three Viewings,” “A Picasso,” “The Government Inspector,” “Scotland Road,” “The Turn of the Screw,”

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[westportplayhouse.org](http://westportplayhouse.org)

and "Tuesdays with Morrie." Film and television credits include "Stage Beauty," "Casanova," "The Duchess," and episodes of "Columbo."

Hatcher's adaptation of Frederick Knott's "Dial M for Murder" premiered at The Old Globe in San Diego in July 2022. Knott's original version of the play was first presented on the stage in London in June 1952. In October 1952, the play premiered on Broadway. The 1954 film adaptation, directed by Alfred Hitchcock, starred Ray Milland and Grace Kelly.

Mark Lamos has helmed many plays at Westport Country Playhouse since 2008, earning five Connecticut Critics Circle Awards for his direction. Under Lamos' artistic direction, the Playhouse was named "Theater Company of the Year" by *The Wall Street Journal* in 2013. Lamos' extensive New York credits include "Our Country's Good," for which he received a Tony Award nomination. A former artistic director at Hartford Stage, he earned the 1989 Tony Award for the theater's body of work. He was awarded the Connecticut Medal for the Arts as well as honorary doctorates from Connecticut College, University of Hartford, and Trinity College, and in 2016, was the recipient of the John Houseman Award.

More info on "Dial M for Murder" at <https://www.westportplayhouse.org/show/dial-m-for-murder/>

The Sunday Symposium Series is supported, in part, by the White Barn Program of the Lucille Lortel Foundation. "Dial M for Murder" Production Sponsor is Barbara K. Streicker. Production Partners are Czekaj Artistic Productions and Allen and Lorraine Noveck. Corporate Production Partner is RBC Wealth Management. 2023 Media Sponsors are Moffly Media and WSHU Public Radio. 2023 Marketing Sponsor is Haddad & Partners.

The complete schedule of Playhouse events is available at [westportplayhouse.org](http://westportplayhouse.org). All play titles, artists, dates, and times are subject to change.

Westport Country Playhouse recently announced a "Save Your Playhouse" fundraising campaign to engage the community and raise funds to help the Playhouse transform into a center for live theater and a wide array of performing arts that will thrive for generations to come. For highlights of the campaign and to donate, visit <https://www.westportplayhouse.org/support/save-your-playhouse/>

For Westport Country Playhouse information and tickets, visit [westportplayhouse.org](http://westportplayhouse.org) or call the box office at (203) 227-4177, toll-free at 1-888-927-7529. Stay connected to the Playhouse on Facebook (Westport Country Playhouse), Instagram (wcplayhouse), and YouTube (WestportPlayhouse). Westport Country Playhouse is located at 25 Powers Court, off Route 1, Westport.

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