

'Spycops' scandal inspires immersive Welsh production

PRODUCTION NEWS JUN 5, 2025 BY GEORGIA LUCKHURST



A previous production from the Cardiff- and Bradford-based theatre company Common/Wealth, who are creating the spycop show Demand the Impossible

A world premiere immersive production will investigate how undercover police infiltrated and duped hundreds of political groups in the past 50 years.

Demand the Impossible is to explore the so-called "spycops" scandal, as an [official inquiry into undercover policing](#) continues to seek the truth about the shady practices of covert policing in England and Wales between 1968 and the 2010s.

Cardiff- and Bradford-based theatre company Common/Wealth said Demand the Impossible would be "part-performance, part-gig, part-sensory experience", created with those impacted by "police injustice".

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Opening at the Corn Exchange in Newport on October 6, the show is a co-production with the Wales Millennium Centre, supported by National Theatre Wales, and is informed by "close collaboration" with organisations such as the Undercover Research Group.

The production follows in the footsteps of other recent shows inspired by public controversy, such as [Pentabus'](#) [touring musical Make Good: The Post Office Scandal](#), which unpacked the misfortunes of sub-postmasters accused wrongly of misdoing.

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[Common/Wealth artistic director Rhiannon White](#) told The Stage: "Lots of my friends were impacted by undercover police."

"I come from a community, a council estate in Cardiff, that has its own historic stories of police injustice. It felt really important to me, to work with my friends and to be able to highlight the injustice that they experienced."

White added: "Often the spycops story is quite sensationalised, in a sense."

Referring to the plight of women who had children with men who, unbeknown to them, were in fact undercover police, White said that was a "very important" issue, but that Common/Wealth hoped to draw greater attention also to "the wider impact" on activism and society.

"The police infiltrating movements that could potentially change the way the world works and who we have in power," White said, "that stunted the growth of our communities and kind of held us back."

From the question of how political activists were spied on, to how working-class and ethnic minority communities were handled by police, White said the production will attempt to understand "the lengths to which the state will go to uphold the status quo".



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Audiences will be treated to punk music performances, the likes of which could have been under surveillance by police in the early-2000s, while Common/Wealth has for the first time received funding from the Immersive Arts support programme to further its exploration of the form.

Nathaniel Mason, a creative technologist, is working on creating an "added layer" of the live performance through the addition of what White called a "mad, glitchy" app – designed to take attendees inside the "Black Mirror" world of undercover observation.

Demand the Impossible is presented in partnership with Police Spies Out of Lives, Undercover Research Group and Spycops Info podcast in a co-production with Wales Millennium Centre.

It is funded by Arts Council of Wales, Immersive Arts and the John Ellerman Foundation, and supported by National Theatre of Wales.



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