

PRESS RELEASE

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VENUE: 533 Sutter Street, @ Powell
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CASTING ANNOUNCED

West Coast Premiere

THE STORY

BY TRACEY SCOTT WILSON

DIRECTED BY MARGO HALL

Opens (Press Night) March 21st through April 25, 2009

Previews March 18, 19 and 20

San Francisco, CA (February 2009) – San Francisco, CA (February 2009) – The SF Playhouse (Bill English, Artistic Director; Susi Damilano, Producing Director) and Lorraine Hansberry Theatre (Stanley Williams, Artistic Director; Quentin Easter, Executive Director) are pleased to announce casting for their co-production of The West Coast Premiere of *The Story*.

“A riveting drama about race, reporting and the truth”—Associated Press

Inspired by real-life events, an ambitious newspaper reporter goes against her editor to investigate a murder and finds the best story...but at what cost? Wilson explores the elusive nature of truth as the boundaries between reality and fiction, morality and ambition become dangerously blurred.

Originated at the Public Theatre featuring Phylicia Rashad and directed by Loretta Greco, the NY Times called it “conscientious and absorbing”. *The Story* is inspired by the Janet Cooke scandal at the Washington Post in 1981 where Cooke won The Pulitzer Prize for writing about an inner city child, Jimmy, only to later admit the story was fraudulent.

The play will be directed by Margo Hall and feature Afi Ayanna, Dwight Huntsman, Halili Knox, Awele Makeba, Craig Marker*, Allison Payne*, Ryan Peters, Rebecca Schweitzer, Kathryn Tkel *Courtesy of Actor's Equity..

Tracey Scott Wilson (Playwright) was born and raised in Newark, New Jersey. She received a B.A. from Rutgers University and an M.A. from Temple University. While at Temple

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she wrote a satiric novel entitled *I Don't Know Why That Caged Bird Won't Shut-Up*. After receiving 28 rejections for that novel in one day, she developed writer's block for one year.

To combat this block, Ms. Wilson took a playwriting class at the 63rd Street YMWCA in New York City. The following year she won a Van Lier Playwriting Fellowship from the New York Theatre Workshop. In September 2000, Theatre Outrageous produced her first play, *Exhibit #9*, an outrageous satire greatly influenced by George C. Wolfe's *Colored Museum*. In April of that same year, New Georges Theatre produced her second full-length play, *Leader of the People*. She received the Helen Merrill Award for Emerging Playwrights and was a finalist for the Susan Smith Blackburn Award for her play, *The Story* for which she won the 2004 Whiting Award, and the 2004 Kesserling Prize. She went on to win the 2007 Weissberger Playwriting Award as well as the 2007 Time Warner Storytelling Fellowship. Current plays include *The Good Negro*, *The Story*, *Order My Steps*, and *Exhibit #9*. Ms. Wilson holds a Master's degree in English Literature from Temple University.

Margo Hall (Director) is an award winning actor/director/playwright. She most recently directed *Sonny's Blues*, a story by James Baldwin, for Word for Word, which toured France. Prior to that she co-directed *Bulrush* with Ellen Chang, a new play by Eisa Davis, which was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. As an actress she most recently received rave reviews in Jessica Hagedorn's *Fe' in the Desert* as the title character *Fe'*. She has performed for Arena Stage, Olney Theater, and Source Theater, in Washington, D.C., the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis, and locally at American Conservatory Theater, Berkeley Repertory Theater, Magic Theatre, Brava! For Women in the Arts, and Word For Word. She is a founding member of Campo Santo where she worked with many amazing artists such as Naomi Iizuka, Phillip Kan Gotanda, Jessica Hagedorn, Octavio Solis, and Dennis Johnson. She debuted as a Director with The World Premiere of *Joyride* from the novel *Grand Avenue* by Greg Sarris, which was the Bay Area Critics Circle Winner for Best Original Script; the SF Weekly Black Box Awards for Best Production, Best Ensemble, Best Director; Drama-Logue Awards-Northern California for Best Production, Best Ensemble; the Backstage West-Garland Awards- Northern California for Best Production, Best Ensemble, and the Bay Guardian GOLDIE Award Winner for Stage, and directed *Mission Indians*, a new play by Sarris, with Nancy Benjamin. She CO-Directed Erin Cressida Wilson's award winning *The Trail of Her Inner Thigh* with Rhodessa Jones. She also

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directed *Hotel Angulo*, by Luis Saguar, Sam Shepard's *Simpatico* for Campo Santo. She directed Alice Munro's *Friend of My Youth* for Word for Word, the triumphant *Funnyhouse of a Negro* for Intersections Directions and *SPUNK, The Trojan Women, It Falls* and *Ragtime* for Chabot College. Look for her next project in the fall as a performer in the world premiere of *This World in a Woman's Hands*, by Marcus Gardley, for Shotgun Players.

Lorraine Hansberry Theatre (LHT) was established in 1981 to present high-quality, professionally directed plays by America's foremost African American playwrights; provide employment and career-building opportunities for local actors, directors, designers, and technicians of color; and foster youth development and cultural enrichment through instructional workshops and special outreach programs. LHT develops and presents works that explore, celebrate, and reflect the lives and experiences of African Americans—believing this important cultural expression to be an indispensable part of the American culture. Now celebrating a milestone twenty-eight (28) years, Lorraine Hansberry Theatre is one of the leading African American theatres in the region. Founders Stanley Williams and Quentin Easter still serve, respectively, as the organization's Artistic and Executive Directors. LHT productions reach approximately 20,000 theatre-goers annually, with a strong base in the African-American community and with audiences throughout the entire Bay Area region, LHT has built one of the most diverse audiences of any theatre in the region and the nation.

Founded by **Bill English and Susi Damilano** in 2003, **The SF Playhouse** is Union Square's intimate, professional theatre. Using professional actors and world class design, The SF Playhouse, which won the SF Weekly 2007 Best Theatre Award, Bay Guardian's 2006 Best Off Broadway Theatre Award and about which the *San Francisco Chronicle* raved, "In only its fifth season, SF Playhouse has been making smart enough choices to attract an impressive roster of talent to its stage," has become the intimate alternative to the traditional Union Square theatre fare, garnering multiple awards for its productions and providing a creative home and inspiring environment where actors, directors, writers, designers, and theatre lovers converge. The SF Playhouse, hailed as a "small delicacy" by *SF Weekly*, "eclectic" by the *San Francisco Bay Guardian* and "local theater's best kept secret" by *San Francisco Magazine*, strives to create works that celebrate the human spirit.

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FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

WHAT: ***“A riveting drama about race, reporting and the truth”—Associated Press***
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DATES: Previews: **March 18, 19, 20, 2009**
 Open: **March 21, 2009**
 Close: **April 25, 2009**

SHOWS: Tuesday 7pm, Wednesday through Saturday at 8 p.m., plus Saturdays 3p.m..

WHERE: **The SF Playhouse**
 533 Sutter Street (one block off Union Square, b/n Powell & Mason)

TICKETS: For tickets (\$30 previews, \$40 regular) or more information, the public may contact The SF Playhouse box office at **415-677-9596, or www.sfplayhouse.org**.