

# READY FOR BOARDING

The official report on the  
CIA's Detention and Interrogation Program

A live audio play



**BRACHLAND-ENSEMBLE**  
Performing Arts | Documentary | Installation

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The official report on the  
CIA's Detention and Interrogation Program

A live audio play

Brachland-Ensemble  
in cooperation with Amnesty International  
Cooperation with Tafelhalle Nuremberg

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## *the world's first theatrical adaption*

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**SUMMARY**

*“Ready for Boarding” is the world’s first theatrical adaption of the official senate report on CIA torture. It was edited for the stage by the Brachland-Ensemble in cooperation with Amnesty – Team Kassel.*

### **Premiere**

April 22, 2016 - Kassel  
September 28, 2016 - Nuremberg

### **Involved**

3 performer  
1 stage manager

### **Duration**

80 minutes

### **Language**

English or German

### **touring / playing for schools**

We are happy to receive your request

### **age recommendation**

we recommend a minimum age of 16.

### **The play**

Three professional speakers set to sound the stunning text with very few props. It is in parts rewritten as dialogues to translate the report of 600 pages into living but still incomprehensible situations. Breathtaking is not only the perfidy of the CIA’s system of imprisonment and torture, but the proceeding of a bureaucracy, that failed when it mattered. The production was initiated and accompanied by Dr. Michael Müller-Schwefe and Stefan Dewald, both from Amnesty team Kassel.

### **Topicality**

Considering the terrorist attacks in Europe as well as the new US-Government, the production keeps a political relevance. Can we rule out the torture program’s reactivation or even maybe an establishing on European soil?



***“We’ve got to spend time in the shadows in the intelligence world. A lot of what needs to be done here will have to be done quietly, without any discussion.”***

***Dick Cheney - US vice-president 2001 – 2009***



ABOUT

## *new forms of torture*

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Waterboarding is vicarious for a new quality of modern and concealed warfare. In times of whistleblowers and global networking the governments have to contrive new strategies to avoid losing their people's support because of a moral dilemma.

The summary of the report on CIA's program was released by the senate committee in 2014. Since then there are hundreds of pages to read how after September 11 the CIA started to hunt people all over the world, keep them in illegal prisons, humiliate

and torture them. In detail the committee revealed the web of lies, which the CIA has spun for the public, the government, the house of representatives and the senate.

## *the live audio play's genesis*

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Dealing with the question, how within a system there can be state legitimized torture and where it begins de facto, brings the audience straight to the developers' calculating minds. Using sound, light and voice, the many people and events in the report are brought to life. Working on the stage adaption it was made sure that content and facts remained

unchanged. Furthermore events were brought into a chronological order and emails and talk logs were modified into dialogues, so that connections could be revealed more clearly. Three key points are playing a crucial role here: alienation, sensuality, social discourse.

*“But do I feel it works? Absolutely I feel it works.”  
Donald Trump – 2017*



**REALISATION**

### alienation

Printed words are dead. The report mirrors a frankly perfidious bureaucratic way of thinking and use of language. Collateral damage is more „bearable“ than the ragged family. “Enhanced interrogation“ is easier to justify than torture. These means of presentation have an impact on civilians. So most of them are not able to comprehend the psychological finesse of some torture techniques. “Waterboarding“ just creates an image of a bit water in the face. This kind of alienation plays a crucial part in the concept of the interrogation technique developers. The production breaks this alienation open and makes its system visible to the audience.

### sensuality

The method of alienation deprives the well-deserved attention from the psychological torture. But: fantasy is the meanest torturer. Like there was one prisoner who was told, they’d bring soon his mother to the neighbor cell to rape her. He was told to listen carefully. Then light was turned off in his cell. After three days he started to injure himself. Instead of bringing realistic methods of torture on stage, the rehearsals were used to find means to activate the audience’s fantasy and to lead to an empathetic understanding, intellectually and emotionally.

### social discourse

After publishing the report the public debate subsided rather quickly. In times where people talk more often about upholding our values, but at the same time these values are “de-valued“ and the word ‘humanity’ becomes questionable, “Ready for Boarding“ is supposed to contribute to a culture of thought and speech that promotes freedom. It was made sure not to feed an anti-americanism, but to uncover systems and structures and to activate a sense of justice within the audience so it can draw its own conclusions. Recently a study said, especially younger people had a fatalism regarding political changes. Not least for them for them the production wants to offer a little oasis of confidence. For the evening’s conclusion is: The legal system can work, if, by the initiative of every single person, our core values are defended everyday anew.

## *educational accompaniment for schools*

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*The production is non-fictional, it's a narrative documentary. In our performance the students get insight in the complex processes of domestic and foreign politics. It imparts the main ideas behind current political debates about peacekeeping. Our production demands and promotes building competently an own point of view as well as empathetic thinking from different perspectives, without being influenced and prejudiced by the media. Thereby, especially in the follow-up discussion, there is the possibility to take a critical position in a constantly changing society, and to get an idea how to influence political, societal and economic processes individually. So the students get to see human rights violation as something that is made by man and thereby can be changed by man.*

### topics

American domestic and foreign politics, European domestic and foreign politics, psychological manipulation, democratic awareness, civil society, system of values, Security Council, media competence, individual and the societal change, legitimization of state violence, human rights, international terrorism, international law, peace policy and safety policy, systematic alienation, data protection

### preparation

In advance there can be preparational visits of artists and/or Amnesty International. We recommend a minimum age of 16, younger audiences should be prepared accordingly. When required we offer additional material.

### follow-up discussion

Within our follow up-discussion together with representatives of Amnesty International we invite to a panel, where the students can discuss the performance and ask us questions. The panel is supposed to help the students to extend their new knowledge and to build a further competence, regarding an orientation in individual and social processes and the participation and exertion of influence in those. We will discuss the stately legitimization of use of violence and torture, processes of human alienation in a restrictive system. Our production includes no anti-americanism, but raises the question, how systems work and how a society reacts on threats. Amnesty International's expertise is an important factor for the play's conception as well as the follow up-discussion.

## *tours and cooperations with ai teams*

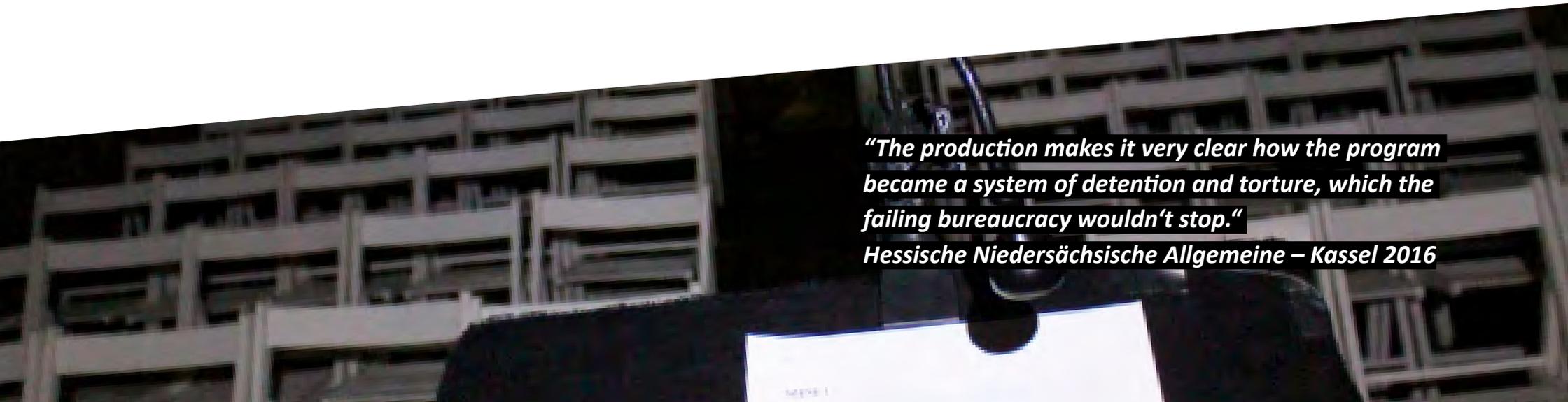
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AI-GROUPS

*After the fixed performances in Kassel and Nuremberg, the focus lies on a nationwide tour. The guest performances are supposed to be planned and carried out with local Amnesty-teams and other possible local organizers. An English version allows performances for an international audience as well as tours abroad.*

### *actions and campaigns*

In advance of the performance there can be actions in the city center, like a campaign on the subject 'torture'. The Brachland-Ensemble has a lot of experience with theatrical events and promotional campaigns in public and will assist the groups with an individually planned action and/or advise on theater education work. Such a cooperation allows it to both partners to wake interest in a wider public. A follow up-discussion after the performance gives the opportunity to exchange with the ensemble and Amnesty. This offer was accepted and appreciated and so it makes an elementary part of the evening.



***"The production makes it very clear how the program became a system of detention and torture, which the failing bureaucracy wouldn't stop."***

***Hessische Niedersächsische Allgemeine – Kassel 2016***

## *guest performances*

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*In Addition to the classical theater stage the play can be shown easily and largely autonomously almost anywhere. It was performed, for example, in a former world war bunker. Other possible places: courtroom, station concourse, airport hangar, library, school auditorium, gymnasium, etc.*

*Depending on the location, we offer two different versions. It is recommended to check the condition within the room, acoustics and technical equipment in advance. In some cases a technical run-through might be necessary.*

**ON TOUR**

### 1. studio-version

A classical live audio play with studio microphones and spot lights.

- darkenable room
- 2 square and stable tables, 3 chairs/stools
- seating for the audience
- sound and light system (can be provided if necessary)
- access to two sockets (220 V) onstage or nearby
- play area: minimum 6m width x 3m depth
- individual setup possible

**Setup incl. soundcheck: approx. 2 to 3 hours**

### 2. unplugged version

Some locations already have special atmosphere, that can make additional amplification with microphones and sound filters counterproductive. The three speakers are standing behind consoles, speaking without microphones, instead of having office lamps they wear headlights. Original sound bites and music are still played via sound system, which will be brought along.

- darkenable room
- 2 consoles, 3 chairs/stools
- seating for the audience
- access to two sockets (220 V)
- play area: minimum 4m width x 2m depth
- individual setup possible

**Setup incl. soundcheck: approx. 1 to 2 hours**



***“And if human rights laws stop us from doing it,  
we will change those laws so we can do it.”***

***Therea May – 2017***



**TEAM**

## *team*

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*The production will be performed with a changing cast of members of the Brachland-Ensemble.*

**Book and directing**

Dominik Breuer

**Sounddesign**

Milan Pešl

**Production manager**

Maria Isabel Hagen

**Company manager / booking**

Annemarie Schorcht

**Design**

Felix Kramer

**Dramaturgy**

Gunnar Seidel

**Dramaturgy consulting**

Dr. Michael Müller-Schwefe

**Photographer**

Olga Holzschuh

**Performers (changing cast)**

Morgane de Toeuf

Irina Ries

Anika Pinter

Maria Isabel Hagen

Eric Rentmeister

Gunnar Seidel

Milan Pešl

Dominik Breuer

Further information and CV's at: [www.brachland-ensemble.de/ensemble](http://www.brachland-ensemble.de/ensemble)



**BRACHLAND - ENSEMBLE**  
Performing Arts | Documentary | Installation

**ENSEMBLE**

## *the brachland-ensemble*

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*Founded in 2011, the Brachland-Ensemnle is an independent group of professional stage artists and cultural workers, from the fields of acting, performance art, dance and film. They develop their projects in the interplay of performing arts, documentation and installation, always in changing group constellations. Project-related there are additional artists from other fields.*

The Brachland-Ensemble always creates his own projects, based on a current topic or on the curiosity about an aesthetic idea. It is always an investigation of social constructs and the questioning of the following conventions. in the foreground artistically is the exchange between different types of theatre and the experimenting with these. Often the focus is on a documentary approach.

The Name ‚Brachland-Ensemble‘ (“fallow land ensemble“) refers to the the groups interest to detect and to use fallow potentials.

Since 2011 there has been a wide range of projects. The ensemble’s work is funded project-related. There is no fixed venue. The ensemble members work Germany-wide.

### **Awards**

**2017** – Audience Award *MADE-Festival*

**2017** – jury award at ‘Hessische Theaterstage‘

**2015** – promotional award, City of Kassel

**2013** – nominated for the *Kurt-Hackenberg-Award*, Cologne

**2013** – young experts award, ‘Hessische Theaterstage‘

**2011** – jury award, ‘AllesWasTanztGipfel‘, Cologne



## *amnesty international - teams kassel*

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As for a concrete matter, the teams currently provide guidance for Mr. Chiuo Ho-Shun, who is on death row in “Taipei Detention Center No 2” in Taiwan for more than 20 years. He was sentenced to death in a trial disregarding every necessary fairness. Eleven times his case was referred back and forth about its re-opening in front of the supreme court and wasn’t re-opened for formality reasons. Joining forces with the AI-expert team for Taiwan and other teams in the world, the teams Kassel are trying to overturn the death sentence, by continuously sending letters and petitions, by spreading the information among the public, press and politics. November 4, the head of the expert team Taiwan visited to inform about the situation. Furthermore a working group is building a lesson unit to be performed in schools.

***“The CIA torture report includes more than 6500 pages, the published part about 550 pages, but the live audio play „Ready for Boarding“ accomplishes to convey it all in 80 minutes - and much more vivid than reading of the 550 pages would achieve. I can say this, me, who has read the report and experienced the live audio play: It is indeed an impressive experience.”***

***Dr. Stephan Dewald, attorney-at-law and Amnesty International’s district speaker for Göttingen/Kassel***

*"Status: target surprised and disturbed.  
Begin Interrogationlevel 1:  
forced nudity and sleep deprivation."*

*Telex from detention site Cobalt*

CONTACT

## *contact*

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