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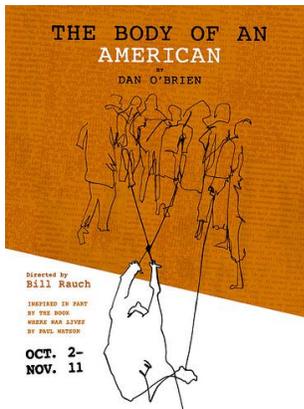
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## M E D I A R E L E A S E

***Portland Center Stage hosts free community programs around  
world premiere production of  
The Body of an American***

**October 3, 2012 – PORTLAND, ORE.** What is the responsibility of bearing witness to an atrocious act? A



war photographer becomes haunted by the spirit of the soldier whose body he photographed. Portland Center Stage's world premiere production of *The Body of an American* by Dan O'Brien, inspired in part by the book *Where War Lives* by Paul Watson, begins preview performances on Tuesday, October 2, opens on **Friday, October 5** and runs Tuesday through Sunday through **November 11, 2012**. Tickets **start at \$39**, with discounts available for students and those under 25. Rush tickets are \$20. In his first production at PCS, Oregon Shakespeare Festival Artistic Director Bill Rauch is directing

this riveting world premiere. Show times and a complete listing of performance dates are available at [pcs.org/body](http://pcs.org/body).

In support of *The Body of an American* Portland Center Stage is hosting the following community programs. **All programs are free** and open to the public.

### **First Thursday Gallery Reception**

Thursday, October 4, 2012

4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Studio and Gallery Lobbies

Beginning on October 4 and continuing throughout the run of *The Body of an America*, PCS is featuring a new show in our Ellyn Bye Studio Gallery from local artist [Jim Lommasson](#) called *Exit Wounds: Life After War - Soldiers' Stories*. The exhibit deals with the effects of the United States' wars in Iraq and Afghanistan by focusing, through photographs and interviews, on returning American soldiers as they reintegrate into civilian life. It is an ongoing collaborative effort, documenting in images and words the personal experiences and stories of these veterans. |

Jim Lommasson is a freelance photographer and writer living in Portland, Oregon. He received the Dorothea Lange–Paul Taylor Prize from the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University for his first book, *Shadow Boxers: Sweat, Sacrifice & The Will To Survive In American Boxing Gyms*. Lommasson is currently working on a book about American veterans from the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars and their lives after their return from war. The book will be called *Exit Wounds: Soldiers' Stories—Life After Iraq and Afghanistan* and will be based on this exhibit.

Featured at PCS on the Gallery Level is local Portland artist [Susannah Kelly](#). Susannah is a painter and drawer who often draws on the human figure as a source of inspiration for her work. Also featured on the gallery level are three animations playing on the monitor by video artist [Matt Reynolds](#).

### **Shop Talk: New Work**

Tuesday, October 9

6:30 p.m.

Studio Lobby

What makes a script stand out among hundreds of submissions? What were Associate Artistic Director Rose Riordan's first impressions when *The Body of an American* came across her desk? How has the script changed during its development? For our second installment of this FREE pre-show discussion series, Kelsey Tyler will sit down with Rose to discuss the process of cultivating new work.

### **Formative Stages**

Sunday, November 4, 2012

following the 2:00p.m. performance

Ellyn Bye Studio

This series, a collaboration with the [Oregon Psychoanalytic Society](#), puts theater on the couch and the audience in the conversational driver's seat. A lively post-matinee discussion will focus on the issues, themes and lessons gleaned from the plays – revealing that theater is truly a microcosm of life.

### **Life after War: Photography and Oral Histories of Coming Home**

Monday, November 5, 2012

7:30 p.m.

Studio Lobby

In honor of our production of *The Body of an American*, PCS will be featuring this [Oregon Humanities Conversation Project](#).

When does a war end? Does it ever? Many returning soldiers bring wars back with them, and these wars can reach beyond the battlefield or firefight, infiltrating the very thing that defines comfort and safety: home. The trials of homecoming are vast and complex, often resonating with tales of Odysseus' journey back to Ithaca from the Trojan War. Photographer Jim Lommasson has collected oral histories from returning soldiers and documented their struggles at home. In this conversation, participants will consider the wars at home faced not only by returning veterans, but also by communities at large.

### **Military and Veterans Family Portraits**

Sunday, November 11

1:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Theater Lobby

In honor of Veterans Day, Portland Center Stage is hosting professional photographers in our lobby who will be donating their time and skills from 1-6 p.m. in gratitude to military and veteran families. All

individuals or families will leave with instructions on how to access digital copies of selected portraits taken.

In addition to the above mentioned programs, Portland Center Stage is now participating in [Blue Star Theatres](#), a collaboration between **Theatre Communications Group** and **Blue Star Families**, with leadership support from the **MetLife Foundation**. By offering discounted admission to all military personnel and their families, as well as veterans, this initiative is intended to recognize the contributions of service families, to build stronger connections between the theatre community and military families in communities all across the country and to help in whatever small way to aid service people and their families as they seek to be integrated into the lives of their communities.

### **About *The Body of an American***

War reporter Paul Watson has witnessed some of the most devastating scenes in modern history, and created perhaps the most disturbing image of modern warfare: the photograph of a dead American soldier being dragged through the streets of Mogadishu. As the ghosts of the tragedies he's recorded bear down on him, his story catches the attention of playwright Dan O'Brien, who's battling ghosts of his own. In locations as varied as Kabul, Los Angeles and the Canadian High Arctic, the two men form a tentative friendship in a quest for absolution. *The Body of an American* is the story of their relationship, and the roles each take in helping the other process the responsibilities, and the damages, of bearing witness.

Support for Portland Center Stage community programs is provided by **U.S. Bank, James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation** and **Macy's**. Additional support for *The Body of an American* is provided by **The Boeing Company** and **Diana Gerding**. Portland Center Stage's 2012/2013 season is funded in part by **Umpqua Bank**, our lead corporate champion; the **Regional Arts & Culture Council** and **Work for Art**; the **Oregon Arts Commission** and **National Endowment for the Arts**; the **Paul G. Allen Family Foundation**; **The Oregonian**, and **Tim & Mary Boyle**. The Mark Spencer Hotel is the official hotel partner for Portland Center Stage.

[PORTLAND CENTER STAGE](#) inspires our community by bringing stories to life in unexpected ways.

Established in 1988 as a branch of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, PCS became an independent

theater in 1994 and has been under the leadership of Artistic Director Chris Coleman since May 2000. The company presents a blend of classic, contemporary and original productions in a conscious effort to appeal to the eclectic palate of theatergoers in Portland. PCS also offers a variety of education and outreach programs for curious minds from six to 106, including discussions, classes, workshops and partnerships with organizations throughout the Portland metro area.

**THE GERDING THEATER AT THE ARMORY** houses a 599-seat Main Stage and the 200-seat black box Ellyn Bye Studio. It was the first building on the National Register of Historic Places, and the first performing arts venue, to achieve a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Platinum certification. The Gerding Theater at the Armory opened to the public on October 1, 2006. The capital campaign to fund the renovation of this hub for community artistic activity continues.

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