

7 STAGES



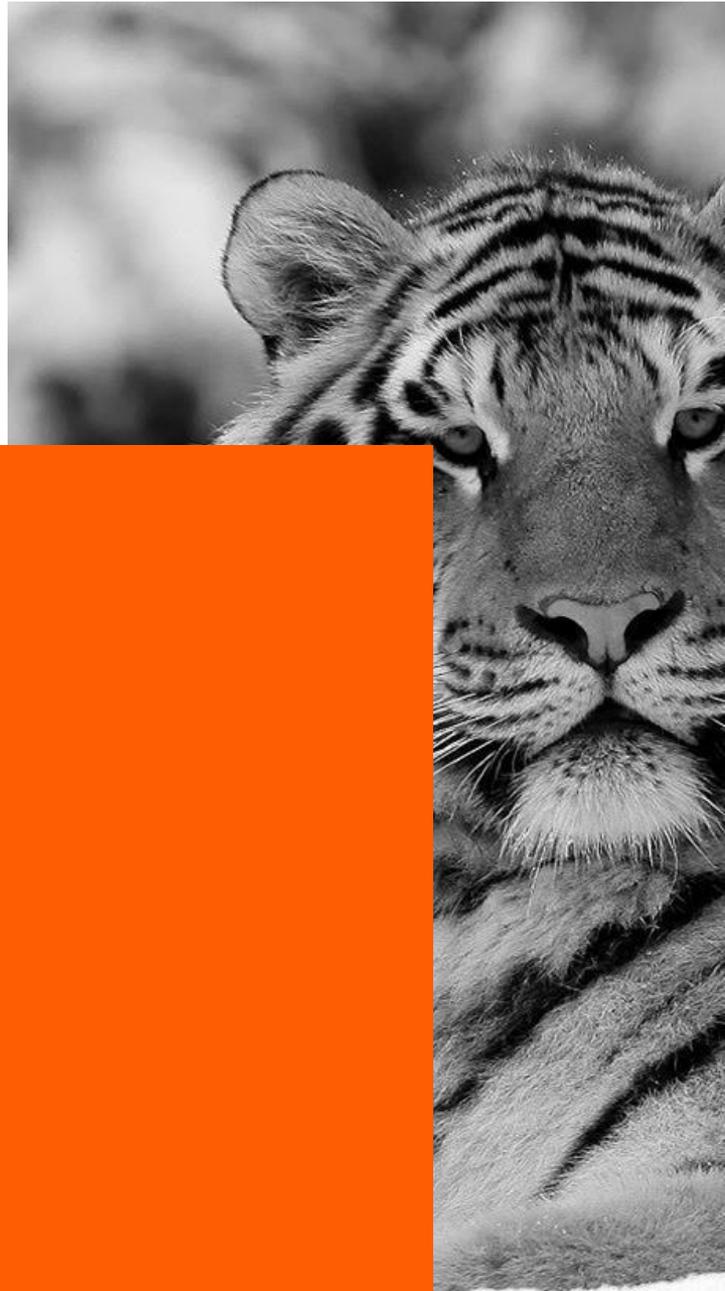
THE BENGAL TIGER

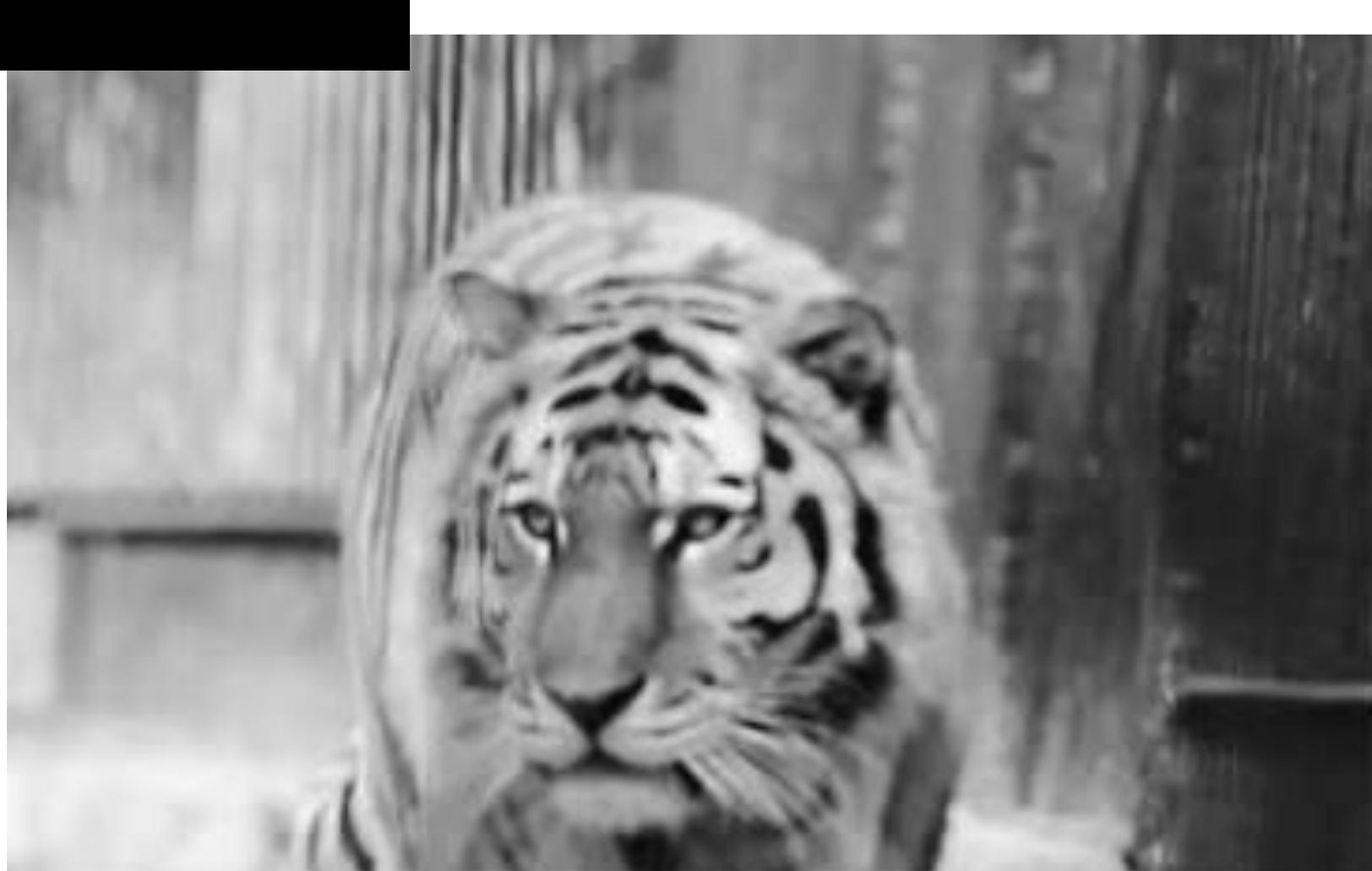
Syllabus

Perspectives on the American-Iraqi Conflict

Michael J. Haverty, Director

In producing a play where history slides into magical realism, knowing your facts is of primary importance. Staying true to the experiences of American soldiers and Iraqi citizens in 2003 takes lots of research. Luckily there is a wealth of information and analysis about the American occupation of Iraq. The easy access to cameras gives us the opportunity to see the war from the soldiers' point of view, but our goal isn't just to be historically accurate - the playwright didn't write a purely historical play, instead using his knowledge of history to create characters who are 'refractions' of the event. As we witness their lives irrevocably changed through exposure to warfare, we embark on an existential investigation into human nature. That the foundation of this investigation is based in history gives it an edge that is hard to forget. Unique details stick in the mind and help breed creative decisions: playlists of the death metal our soldiers listened to in combat; video recordings of the call to prayer echoing over devastated buildings; photos of emaciated animals in the Baghdad Zoo; the colors of a sandstorm in the desert; they all combine to form an atmosphere of sounds, sights, smells, and feelings that best direct our story to your brain and heart. Deep dive with us into the dramaturgy that forms the foundation of this absurd and moving play.





Rebekah Suellau, Assistant Director

It's no accident that Musa, the Iraqi translator in *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo*, is also an artist. In some ways, all art is translation: preserving meaning from the inner language of thoughts and ideas as we bring it into the outer language of images, words, and shared experience. And translation itself is an art, requiring not just clarity, but nuance and sensitivity, to preserve the fullness of meaning from one form into another. In war, the translator's understanding of all the languages involved, spoken and unspoken, is often quite literally the difference between life and death.

As our team works to translate Rajiv Joseph's beautiful play from the page to the stage, we have all become translators in our own right, diving deep into historical and cultural research in order to better understand the languages we seek to speak. Each of the resources included here has been key for us in learning the language of *Bengal Tiger*. By sharing them, we invite you to join us in the act of translation, to develop your own sense of the language and enter into dialogue with us.

Books

To Be a Friend Is Fatal: The Fight to Save the Iraqis America Left Behind by **Kirk W. Johnson**

Night Draws Near: Iraq's People in the Shadow of America's War by **Anthony Shadid**

Beirut Nightmares by **Ghada Samman**

Burning Country by **Robin Yassin-Kassab**

Kaboom: Embracing the Suck in a Savage Little War by **Matt Gallagher**

My War: Killing Time in Iraq by **Colby Buzzell**



Web Articles & News



[**Iraqi News-Baghdad**](#)

[**U.S. Soldier Kills Tiger in Baghdad**](#)

[**Costs of War-Iraqi Civilians**](#)

[**PTSD: A Growing Epidemic**](#)

[**Iraq's Drama: An Easier Sell on the Stage?**](#)



The Bengal Tiger YouTube Channel

Video sources
including news
footage, combat
footage and more.

[CLICK HERE!](#)

Ways To Get Involved

The Wounded Warrior Project

serves veterans and service members who were physically or mentally injured in service after 9/11.

<https://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/>

No One Left Behind helps Afghan and Iraqi combat interpreters resettle safely in the United States.

<http://nooneleft.org/>

Team Red, White and Blue helps enrich the lives of America's veterans by connecting them to their community through physical and social activity.

<https://www.teamrwb.org/>

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