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"I really started to notice a positive change."

▶ David, 27, Utah



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Torture memo inspires 'Sunlight': Redwood City's Dragon Theatre production remains timely

November 24, 2015, 05:00 AM By [Judy Richter](#) Daily Journal

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When, if ever, is torture justified?

That's a principal question at the heart of Sharr White's "Sunlight," presented by Dragon Theatre, but the issues extend beyond that as four characters grapple with their changing relationships.

Matthew (Tom Bleecker) is the liberal president of a small, private East Coast university. His son-in-law, Vincent (Ben Ortega), is a longtime protégé who has become dean of the university's law school. Matthew allowed him to take that post even though Vincent's views are much more conservative than his.

Matthew is appalled that Vincent has helped to write a justification for the torture, aka enhanced interrogation, of terrorism suspects in the wake of the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. Such interrogation includes waterboarding. Matthew's reaction leads him to acts that imperil his job.

Torn between the two men is Charlotte (Marjorie Hazeltine), Vincent's wife and Matthew's daughter. An attorney, she's a survivor of the 9/11 attacks in New York City.

Maryanne (Monica Cappuccini), Matthew's longtime, no-nonsense executive assistant, often serves as referee in the other characters' encounters.

Tempers flare and emotions rise and fall one snowy spring evening as the four await a faculty vote of confidence or no confidence in Matthew.

White is said to have based his plot on John Yoo, the UC Berkeley law professor who wrote legal memos essentially giving the Bush administration a green light to torture after 9/11.

The Dragon cast, directed by Brian P. Luce, carefully negotiates the play's emotional roller coaster. Each actor is fully engaged.

"Sunlight" premiered at Marin Theatre Company in 2010. At the time, I wrote, "It's difficult to predict how this play will fare in later years when the events that inspired it are more distant memories."

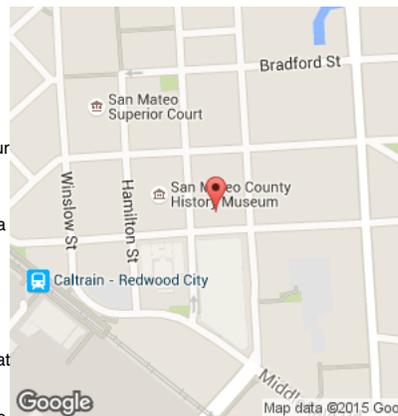
Unfortunately, it's still timely. Just this week, following deadly terrorism attacks in Paris and Mali, Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump advocated waterboarding suspected terrorists, among other measures.

The two-act play runs about two hours with one intermission.

It will continue through Dec. 13 at Dragon Theatre, 2120 Broadway, Redwood City. For tickets and information call (650) 493-2006 or visit www.dragonproductions.net.



Kimberly Wadycki
Tom Bleecker, Marjorie Hazeltine, Monica Cappuccini and Ben Ortega star in 'Sunlight.'



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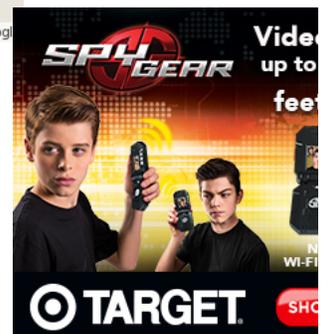
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