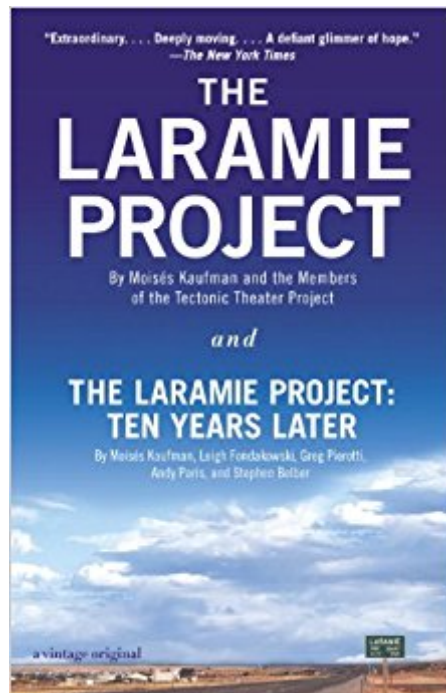




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# The Laramie Project And The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later



## Synopsis

The Laramie Project, one of the most-performed theater pieces in America, has become a modern classic. In this expanded edition, it is joined by an essential and moving sequel to the original play. On October 7, 1998, a young gay man was discovered bound to a fence outside Laramie, Wyoming, savagely beaten and left to die in an act of brutality and hate that shocked the nation. Matthew Shepard's death became a national symbol of intolerance, but for the people of the town, the event was deeply personal. In the aftermath, Mois Kaufman and members of the Tectonic Theater Project went to Laramie and conducted more than 200 interviews with its citizens. From the transcripts, the playwrights constructed an extraordinary chronicle of life in the town after the murder. In *The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later*, the troupe revisits the town a decade after the tragedy, finding a community grappling with its legacy and its place in history. The two plays together comprise an epic and deeply moving theatrical cycle that explores the life of an American town over the course of a decade.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"The Laramie Project is a terrific piece of theater, history, and life. . . . There emerges a mosaic as moving and important as any you will see on the walls of the churches of the world. . . . Nothing short of stunning. . . . A theatrical and human event." • New York magazine "A towering theatrical accomplishment. . . . [The Laramie Project is] Our Town for the new millennium, capturing from real life the same sense of humanity in the raw that Thornton Wilder did years ago with the fictional Grover's Corner. The play moves the theater in a

new and different direction. *San Francisco Times* "Deeply moving. . . . [Kaufman] has a remarkable gift for giving a compelling theatrical flow to journalistic and historical material. . . . This play is *Our Town* with a question mark, as in "Could this be our town?" *The New York Times* "Remarkable. . . . [A] probing and distinctive theater piece . . . assembled with care, compassion and dollops of comic relief. . . . The high-octane performances and unique staging make this a must see for any theatergoer." *New York Daily News* "Few playwrights have cut to the heart of tragedy so unerringly." *The Village Voice*

Mois Kaufman is a Tony and Emmy-nominated director and playwright, and the co-founder and artistic director of Tectonic Theater Project. Kaufman's plays *Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde* and *The Laramie Project* (which he co-wrote with the members of Tectonic Theater) have been among the most performed plays in America over the last decade. He is also the author of the Tony Nominated play *33 Variations*; *One Arm* (his adaptation of the Tennessee Williams screenplay of the same name); and the short play *London Mosquitoes*. He has directed numerous plays on Broadway including the Pulitzer and Tony Award-winning *I Am My Own Wife* by Doug Wright which earned Mr. Kaufman an Obie Award for direction as well as Tony, Outer Critics, Lucille Lortell, Drama Desk Awards nominations. Kaufman directed the film adaptation of *The Laramie Project*, which aired on HBO and was the opening night selection at the 2002 Sundance Film Festival. Kaufman is a Guggenheim Fellow.

There is no more serious subject than inhumanity in the human race, the subject of both plays. They differ in people's reaction to an occasion of inhumanity, depending on the proximity of the incident. Apart, they are both powerful commentary on the best and worst in people. Together, they suggest why bigotry is such a pernicious vice to eradicate and why humanity fails to learn from past mistakes.

I really enjoyed reading these plays - though the subject matter, of course, was so emotional and sad. I was really impressed by the theater company's efforts to listen to all sides of the story and present it objectively. I don't usually read plays but so glad I read this one. It was easy to follow, interesting, eye-opening, and moving. I look forward to seeing the plays in production one day.

This was as promised. The information within helped in preparation for performances of The Laramie Project. As actors, we tried to find out as much as possible about each person portrayed within The Laramie Project. Physically, the book arrived in a timely manner and in excellent condition. The play presented the largest variety of responses to hate, in various forms, toward various marginalized groups. It can and does happen here. Hate crimes have their "seed" in pejorative words. Its not just a matter of being politically correct. Its about human rights, feeling safe to walk down the street without fear of attack, physical or verbal.

These are essentially the scripts for the productions, which consist of a series of monologues or interviews. The actors each portray of several of the characters and without much--if any--scenery or costumes, they need to assume each new character by demeanor, since there are times when the same actor will segue from one part to another, simply by moving across the stage, or turning around. My son was in a production recently that ran over two weekends. I read these works in between. Even though I'd seen both shows before, I found it enlightening to see the directions for how a characters was to be portrayed; the one sticking in my mind is in the second book, where the convicted killer is not supposed to be portrayed as dark or sinister; which makes it all the more disturbing to hear the matter of fact manner in which he offers the details of what he did..After reading these works, the following week's performances had a number of "aha" moments, but even without being a frequent flyer, these are illuminating and worthwhile reads. I enjoy being at a show that will later have a "talkback" with the director or various actors. It's a chance to get clarification about why something was said or done in a certain way. This gave me a similar feeling, and with the large number of people in the town who were interviewed, it kept track of a few of the names and relationships I had confused.The Laramie Project Ten Years Later is not produced as often as the original work. I've seen the original a number of times, but only saw the ten year project once, at a simulcast when it was released. I'd forgotten a number of the details, yet this is as important as the original work, because it not only shows what has happened in the decade since then, but it includes interviews with the two convicted of killing Matthew Shepard. These two were only portrayed in the original piece in the courtroom, or through an interrogation transcript. Here they are interviewed by members of the same group that started the project.In the years since this took place, alternate theories about the incident have been offered. They are mentioned in the second project, but addressing these theories is not their aim. The purpose of either project had never been to solve a crime; that had already been done. Their aim had been to observe and record reactions to the crime, and let those who see the show draw their own conclusions about what these reactions

suggest. Every year, many productions of the show take place around the country. But every year, there are also groups that can't or won't, either because a school administrator vetoes the project, or or fear of audience reaction. Observing the unlikely subjects for shows that are produced--as musicals--with no censure, while the The Laramie Project is considered offensive and off limits is a good reason to read the stories, and decide for yourself.

One of my favorite books. I had the pleasure of meeting Matthew Sheppard's mom, and would likewise recommend her book The Meaning of Matthew.

Wow and Wow.. So emotional and educational at the same time.

Good read

Great

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