

# ***Reckoning with Torture:*** **Memos and Testimonies from the War on Terror** **-- An extraordinary resource for your local work**

A remarkable resource is available that can help to invigorate your local work in confronting and ending torture.

The ACLU and PEN American Center have collaborated in producing a script for a very powerful dramatic reading that draws from actual testimony and documents related to the treatment of detainees in U.S. custody since 9-11. Celebrity performances of *Reckoning with Torture: Memos and Testimonials from the "War on Terror"* have taken place at Sundance and at New York City's Lincoln Center. And now local groups throughout the country have access to the script and can hold readings in their own communities. The words of former President George W. Bush, George Tenet, and others make clear that torture was condoned at the highest levels of the government. The words of detainees demonstrate the horror of what human beings endured at the hands of our own government.

This dramatic reading can happen in a range of settings, from a small group of people reading various parts of the script in a living room, to a staged production in a church social hall. What is needed is the script (available for free from the [ACLU website - www.aclu.org/reckoning](http://www.aclu.org/reckoning)), a few willing readers, and possibly a microphone or two. The National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT) has also produced a brief discussion guide for faith communities to accompany the script: [www.nrcat.org/reckoning](http://www.nrcat.org/reckoning).

A NRCAT-sponsored production of *Reckoning with Torture* took place in June 2011 at St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church in Studio City, CA. The event opened with the showing of NRCAT's 10-minute DVD, [Repairing the Brokenness: A Faithful Response to U.S.-sponsored Torture](http://www.nrcat.org/repair) ([www.nrcat.org/repair](http://www.nrcat.org/repair)). Seven actors then took turns at microphones, reading from the *Reckoning* script. At the end of the reading, the audience of more than 100 stood and recognized the actors with sustained applause.

A panel discussion followed with Constitutional lawyer Stephen Rohde, Program for Torture Victims Executive Director Julie Gutman, and Rabbi Aryeh Cohen, a member of Rabbis for Human Rights.

Susan Clark, one of the actors, said of this experience: "To be part of this incredible event is very affecting. It is one thing to read alone all of the horrible lies that have been forced upon us. But to read out loud in front of an audience is to experience these actions in our name with a deep sense of loss and sadness—for the victims and for us."

This news article includes a video with short segments of the readings:

<http://studiocity.patch.com/articles/reckoning-with-torture-in-dramatic-readings#video-6782338>

Julie Gutman, Executive Director of the Program for Torture Victims, said, “This dramatic reading had a powerful impact. I hope that communities all over the country find ways to bring this reading to local audiences”.

For more information about holding an event in your congregation or community, contact the organizer of the Studio City, CA event, Virginia Classick, who coordinates Los Angeles Region Religious Campaign Against Torture (LARRCAT): [vclassick@aol.com](mailto:vclassick@aol.com) or 818-225-0410.

The script can be downloaded at: <http://www.aclu.org/national-security/reckoning-torture-activism-toolkit>

A large banner that was made specifically to publicize the event in California is available for use in your congregation or community and will gladly be shipped to you. A section with the date and time of your event can be attached over the original date.