

The American Drama Group Europe and TNT theatre  
present:

## CROOKED LETTER, CROOKED LETTER

based on the novel by Tom Franklin  
adapted for the stage by Paul Stebbings & Phil Smith

This powerful and gripping novel, set in the American Deep South, is dramatised TNT theatre in a dynamic staging. Tom Franklin's award winning novel deals with issues of racial and gender inequality and the troubling desire of society to find scapegoats for crime in an exciting format: the classic American thriller. The setting is rural Mississippi in the late 1970s. Larry Ott and Silas "Jones" were boyhood pals. Their worlds were as different as night and day: Larry, the child of lower-middle-class white parents, and Silas, the son of a poor, single black mother. Yet for a few months the boys shared a special bond and became secret friends. But then tragedy struck: Larry took a girl on a date to a drive-in movie, and she was never heard from again. Was it murder? She was never found and Larry never confessed, but (like O'J. Simpson) everyone thought they 'knew' that Larry killed the girl. The incident shook the county and perhaps Silas most of all. His friendship with Larry was broken, and then Silas left town.

More than twenty years passed. Larry, a mechanic, now lives a solitary existence, never able to rise above the whispers of suspicion. Silas has returned to Mississippi as a police constable. He and Larry have no reason to cross paths until another girl disappears and Larry is suspected again. And now the two men who once called each other friends are forced to confront the past they have tried to bury under the shadow of a new murder.

Writer and director Paul Stebbings returns to the familiar territory of the American South, having had great success with his *LIFE AND DEATH OF MARTIN LUTHER KING*. His previous adaptations include *ONE LANGUAGE MANY VOICES*, *MOON PALACE* and the recent *MY SISTER SYRIA*. A multi-racial cast bring Franklin's fine political thriller to the stage with verve and intensity. There has perhaps never been a time when the culture of rural America has been more important for us in Europe to understand. This novel and play offer a unique opportunity to explore this fascinating and at times disturbing culture.

"The production evokes the American Deep South and the turmoil of the Civil Rights movement with emotional and theatrical power." *Luxemburger Wort*

"Highly effective and charismatic theatre." *Village Voice New York*.

"TNT demonstriert alle Tugenden des Englischen Theaters auf einmal." *Süddeutsche Zeitung*