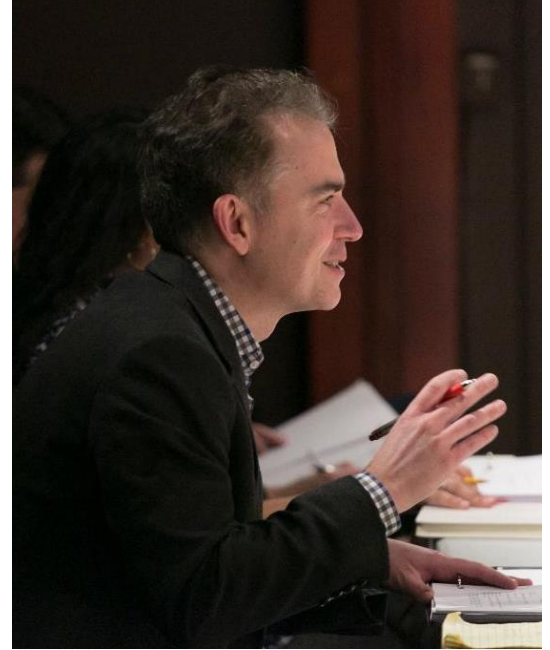


George Brant

Class of 1987

- **Internationally Acclaimed & Produced Playwright**

George Brant's earliest literary recognition may have set the stage for his future as an acclaimed playwright. He entered "Comic Book Kid," a yarn about a boy with special powers, in the Park Ridge Public Library's grade school short story contest and won. After graduating from Northwestern University, George realized that actors are at the mercy of casting directors. He decided to creatively venture out on his own—play-writing and self-producing. Before moving to Texas and earning a MFA in playwriting from the University of Texas at Austin, he produced plays through the theater company he founded—Chicago's Zeppo Theater.



As his writing has evolved, seemingly small historical events have often become catalysts for George's plays. A grainy black & white internet photo of the 1916 lynching of a circus elephant named Mary in a small Tennessee town became the seedbed for *Elephants Graveyard*, an exploration of the relationship between justice and violence, the fear of what we don't immediately understand, and the aching desire to be heard and understood.

George recently observed, "Lately I find myself increasingly interested in exploring the here and now." *Grounded*, his most successful play to date is at heart about moral responsibility and contradictory choices. The play is a taut one-woman show about a drone pilot who, from 9 to 5 and half a world away, delivers death and then goes home each evening to her life as a nurturing mother. *Grounded* has already had over 150 productions in 19 countries and is being developed into an opera at the Met.

When a playwright's special powers grow increasingly stronger, he acquires faith in his sources of inspiration. For George addressing the present directly, speaking to current events while entrenched in them ourselves creates risks that a writer must take in order to produce "work that believes in itself, work that is fearless...work that allows its characters the full spectrum of their humanity. Work that does not take the audience's presence for granted. I have found such work equal parts challenging and rewarding, and hope to continue writing in this fashion despite the risks, all the while taking that extra leap of faith that such work will find a home before its present is past."

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