

THE MARSH PRESENTS THE U.S. PREMIERE OF “THE INVISIBLE LINE” THE STORY BEHIND THE INFAMOUS “THIRD WAVE” SOCIAL EXPERIMENT

7:30pm, Saturday, August 8, 2020

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (16 July 2020) – As the Bay Area’s shelter-in-place continues, **The Marsh** through its MarshStream broadcast platform continues to offer innovative programming including the U.S. premiere of *The Invisible Line*, a new documentary about one of the world’s most famous social experiments gone wrong. Developed by author and director **Emanuel Rotstein**, *The Invisible Line* tells the story of “The Third Wave,” a social movement created by former Palo Alto history teacher Ron Jones intended to teach students about the appeal of fascism, and how it gave rise to the Holocaust. *The Invisible Line* will premiere **7:30pm, Saturday, August 8** on **MarshStream**, followed by an audience Q&A with Jones, Rotstein, and Stephanie Weisman, founder and artistic director of The Marsh. For more information, the public may visit www.themarsh.org/marshstream.

While discussing the Nazi regime in his history class at Palo Alto’s Cubberley High School in 1967, Ron Jones was asked how the Holocaust could have happened. When students were skeptical that the German population could accept the actions of the Nazi regime during the Second World War, Jones launched “The Third Wave” to help teach his students a lesson. The five-day experiment developed a life of its own, becoming an uncontrollable force that swept the school. Jones’ experiment began with implementing discipline and imposing strict rules of conduct on the students. For example, students were to stand up and limit themselves to a maximum of three words when answering a question. In the following days, Jones strengthened the students’ sense of community by developing his own greeting, similar to the Hitler salute, and assigning special tasks to students, such as guarding the door and recruiting new members. “The story appeals to students and young people [because] the participants of the experiments

were young people themselves. The viewers find themselves in these characters,” says director Rotstein. “It’s the same desires and aspirations, to be part of a group, a team, a community, that young people feel today. But it is also the desire to be noticed and to be valued. These things were used by Jones to make the students followers of a movement he ultimately lost control of.”

The Invisible Line is the first in-house production of the new true crime channel in Germany, A+E Networks Germany’s “Crime + Investigation (CI).” The one-hour documentary was filmed in original locations, such as Cubberley High School in Palo Alto, California, with Rotstein working closely with Jones and former student Mark Hancock on the development and realization of the production. It also features exclusive interviews with Jones, his wife Deanna, and some of his former students. In *The Invisible Line*, Jones looks back on the experiment 52 years ago: “I should never have carried out the experiment and put my class in such incredible danger. I crossed the invisible line and enjoyed my power, just like Stalin, Hitler, or Trump today,” said Jones. This production discusses the threats on basic social order through anti-democratic forces, revealing how the mechanisms of manipulation that once led to one of the greatest crimes against humanity have lost none of their effectiveness, and even continue to serve as tools for criminal individuals and groups. “It was important to us to understand the context, the era of the United States of America in the 1960s, when great social upheavals were determining people’s lives, such as the civil rights movement, the war in Vietnam, and the upcoming counter culture of the hippie movement,” said Rotstein. “We also span the arc to the present time and point out why the topic has lost none of its topicality.”

MarshStream launched in April and has received overwhelmingly enthusiastic response, with hundreds flocking to view and participate each night. MarshStream programming varies daily, with themed daily offerings, live full-length performance concert readings, archived performance streams, performance development classes, and more. MarshStream viewers are asked to contribute whatever they can afford. Donations can be made by joining The Marsh’s membership program and via a virtual “tip jar” both on the website, with funds going to support and sustain The Marsh and its performances. For more information, the public may visit www.themarsh.org/marshstream.

ABOUT THE MARSH

The Marsh is known as “a breeding ground for new performance.” It was launched in 1989 by Founder and Artistic Director Stephanie Weisman, and now annually hosts more than 600 performances of 175 shows across the company’s two venues in San Francisco and Berkeley. A leading outlet for solo performers, The Marsh’s specialty has been hailed by the *San Francisco Chronicle* as “solo performances that celebrate the power of storytelling at its simplest and purest.” The *East Bay Times* named The Marsh one of Bay Area’s best intimate theaters, calling it “one of the most thriving solo theaters in the nation. The live theatrical energy is simply irresistible.” Through live Marsh and MarshStreams programs, The Marsh and Marsh Youth Theater will deliver close to 1000 shows in 2020.

For Calendar Editors

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DATES: **7:30pm, Saturday, August 8, 2020**
Immediately following the film, Ron Jones, Emanuel Rotstein, and Stephanie Weisman will hold a brief Q&A, taking questions directly from the audience.

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PRESS: Contact Steph Keay, Carla Befera & Co.
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PHOTOS: Downloadable high-res photos are available here:
<http://cbpr.co/press/invisibleline>