## DEEPLY OFFENSIVE...

Carriageworks
Friday September 7

*Deeply Offensive and Utterly Untrue* is Version's 1.0's theatrically crafted telling of the Australian Wheat Board scandal. The 8500 pages of the Cole enquiry transcript provide their text which they cut and splice with strong visual metaphors, re-enacted news and courtroom interviews and scenes of the main players and enquirers set between Australia and Iraq.

It's obvious from the start that we're in the hands of a skilled, creative team who are apt at drawing from multimedia and a cross of performance techniques and styles in order to create a feel of the events, the confusions, the cover-ups and the cock-ups of the enquiry and surrounding events. The collaborative team are Sean Bacon, Paul Dwyer, Stephen Klinder, Jane Phegan, Christopher Ryan, Yana Taylor, Kym Vercoe and David Williamson.

The work weaves the transcript with the scenes and also engages with the performers playing themselves as theatre makers who are grappling with how to understand and depict the intricacies of the case. The performance is peppered with humour via transcript edits "I don't know I don't know I'm not sure I don't know I can't recall I can't recall I do not recall" and excellent good comic timing on all accounts. Harnesses for actors and bags of wheat create a dimensional experience, along with multi media of screens and televisions to refer to the real characters and events. The highlight of the show was without doubt Stephen Klinder's version of Alexander Downer on screen 'live from the bar'.

What the transcript doesn't show is silences and it is exactly the pauses, expressions and reactions of Klinder's Downer that speak to us until we're almost rolling in the aisles. The final sections of the performance seem to get messier and foggier, or perhaps that was our brains in keeping up by that point- so in that sense I guess we could really feel the muddy and cyclic arguments that occurred in this case. By the time Howard's speech was screened, we were ready to get out of there and join Alexander Downer at the bar. Version 1.0, knowing what they were doing, wrapped it up just after and let us do just that.

★★★★

*Ruby Boukabou*