

# Topical issues command center stage

BY PHILIP BRANDES

## 'Exit Wounds,' 'Confederates'

**The essentials:** Burbank's Grove Theatre Center presents the two finalists in the first year of the bi-coastal Hart New Play Initiative to provide fully staged productions of promising work. Accomplished local playwright Wendy Graf's "Exit Wounds" focuses on the enduring toll a decades-old school shooting takes on the perpetrator's shut-in mother and her estranged grandson, who's started to exhibit some all-too-familiar behavioral traits. New York-based Suzanne Bradbeer's "Confederates" pits journalistic ethical boundaries against the 24-hour news cycle appetite for scandal when an ambitious reporter uncovers a compromising photo involving the teenage daughter of an up-and-coming presidential candidate.

**Why this?:** Though both stories involve moral quandaries "ripped from the headlines," they remain fundamentally character-driven relationship plays about the human consequences of topical events. Selected from over 1,200 submissions, both are directed by Christopher Hart, a multiple Tony-winning producer, director and playwright whose Broadway producing credits include "Porgy and Bess" and "Hair."

**Details:** A Grove Theater Center production in association with Colony Theatre Company at GTC Burbank, 1111-B West Olive Ave., Burbank. Running in repertory on alternate weekends; see website for schedule. Ends Dec. 16. \$38 (\$60 for both plays). (800) 838-3006, [hartnpi.org/tickets](http://hartnpi.org/tickets)