



Raffo as a mystic river dweller

NINE PARTS OF DESIRE Theirs are tales of terror: Women kidnapped and forced to become sex slaves, then beheaded for prostitution. A baby thrown to starving cats. A girl coated in honey and fed to Dobermans. We've been told of the inhumanity Iraqi women experience. Told by men.

Off Broadway

Coming from a woman's mouth – in this case, chameleonic actress-playwright Heather Raffo – the words cut bone deep. Aided by an abaya (a traditional black robe) and an arsenal of accents, the Iraqi-American inhabits the title's nine parts, including a renowned painter, an 'N Sync-obsessed young girl, and a pro-war expat. What Raffo unearths, beneath the aforementioned Saddam-inflicted atrocities, is the universal and very basic human trait of insecurity. It took nearly 10 years of research to give voice to these profoundly moving stories, and we only need to listen. (TC)

A – *Melissa Rose Bernado*