

5-2023

How This Bitch Made This Bitch: A Play on Defiant Women of Color

Adrienne B. Dawes
University of Arkansas-Fayetteville

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.uark.edu/etd>



Part of the [Performance Studies Commons](#), and the [Playwriting Commons](#)

Citation

Dawes, A. B. (2023). How This Bitch Made This Bitch: A Play on Defiant Women of Color. *Graduate Theses and Dissertations* Retrieved from <https://scholarworks.uark.edu/etd/4971>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks@UARK. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@UARK. For more information, please contact scholar@uark.edu.

How This Bitch Made This Bitch: A Play on Defiant Women of Color

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Fine Arts in Theater

by

Adrienne Dawes
Sarah Lawrence College
Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Arts, 2004

May 2023
University of Arkansas

This thesis is approved for recommendation to the Graduate Council.

John Walch, M.F.A.
Thesis Director

Yajaira Padilla, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Lissette Lopez Szwydky, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Les Wade, Ph.D.
Committee Member

ABSTRACT

The workshop production of my full-length, bilingual play “This Bitch: Esta Sangre Quiero” marks the culmination of my course of study at the University of Arkansas. In this thesis, I will discuss the development process of “This Bitch” from its humble Zoom reading beginnings to regional theater development to its workshop production as part of the university’s 2022-2023 Mainstage season. Through the lens of this new play process, I outline my artistic evolution during my four years of graduate school, interrogating and celebrating the ways this bitch has been inspired by “This Bitch.”

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My supporters & collaborators: Eric Johnson, khattieq, Estefanía Fadul, Daniel Jáquez, Dr. Daphne Sicre, Sylvia Blush, Dr. Erin Alice Cowling, Dr. Glenda Y. Nieto-Cuebas, Mariana Baidon Carillo, Michael Galvan, Minerva Villa, Kholoud Sawaf, Vanessa Gonzalez, Audrey Romero, Trey Smith-Mills, Elita Hoard, Ashton Franquiz, Abby McManis, Elissa Kasper, Kimberly Powers, Helene Siebrits, Jackson Smith, Abby Hogan, Alli Herman, Allie Sorenson, Collin Smith-Mills, Ben Corbett, Mollie Armour, Adam Rose, Shelby Kennedy, Erick Soto, Chris Hecke, Alternate ROOTS, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Joanna Ortega & Matt Stabile (TheatreLAB at Florida Atlantic University), Teatro Vivo, Marissa Castillo, Elizabeth Keel & Kenn McLaughlin (Stages Repertory Theatre), Lupe & Jasminne Mendez (Tinteros Projects), Adriana Gaviria & Katherine George (Sol Project); Dr. Laura Muñoz & Dr. Barbara Fuchs (Diversifying the Classics), W. Fran Astorga and Réal Vargas Alanis (In the Margin Theatre), Lyndsay Burch (B Street Theatre), Nehemiah Lockett, M. Reina Ruiz, Gregg Henry (The Kennedy Center), Dr. Les Wade, Dr. Yajaira Padilla, Dr. Lissette Lopez Szwydky-Davis, & John Walch.

My graduating cohort mates: Sarah Loucks, Lacy Post, Huan Bui, Leah Smith, Edwin Green, Jordan Williams, Ana Miramontes, Gabriel Franco-Kull, Grace Taylor, Riles Holiday, Callie Lythgoe, Ripley DeCaluwe, Austin Bomkamp, Zack McJunkins, and Morgan McInnis.

DEDICATION

For my family & friends, thank you for loving & supporting this bitch.

And for Lope Félix de Vega Carpio. You treated women like shit. But you wrote women as deeply funny, intelligent, and complex humans. I acknowledge these two truths as a single reflection of a deeply complicated, much-beloved man who was both a phoenix and a monster of nature.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCING THIS BITCH	1
BITCH, RESEARCH	11
BITCH, PROCESS.....	21
BITCH DID IT	322
POSTMORTEM, OR BITCH WE OUT	455
REFERENCES	499
APPENDICES	50
APPENDIX A: EXCERPT OF REVISED PRODUCTION SCRIPT	50
APPENDIX B: PROCESS EPHEMERA.....	107
APPENDIX C: PROCESS PHOTOS.....	110
APPENDIX D: LIST OF WORKS COMPLETED, PRESENTED, & PUBLISHED..	118

INTRODUCING THIS BITCH

“If you apply, you’ll get in.”
- recent alum, University of Arkansas

Looks can be deceiving, and so can fully funded opportunities for emerging artists. A few years before I began graduate school at the University of Arkansas, I was accepted into the inaugural writer’s cohort of Tulsa Artist Fellowship (TAF), a 3-year artist residency program funded by oil and gas billionaire George Kaiser. I remember everything looked and sounded so good on paper. Three years of a rent-free existence. A \$20K annual stipend and subsidized workspace. No need for the usual slog of survival jobs and cascading side hustles, the program offered just enough support so that a single artist on a strict budget (without any parenting or caregiving duties) could focus their time entirely on creating new work. It's true, we would live mere steps from the ruins of Black Wall Street (Tulsa’s violent, racist history barely addressed or acknowledged), and yes, we woke every morning to an overpowering, eye-watering stench as nearby oil refineries burnt off toxic chemicals before sunrise, but wouldn’t it be worth it if you could dedicate yourself to your art for the next 3 years?!

It's very funny to me (now) how these experiences foreshadowed my fate at the University of Arkansas. Swap toxic fumes for toxic DEI initiatives, invert the art washing of Tulsa’s historic Greenwood neighborhood for “Bike, Blues, and Barbecue,” a city-sanctioned event that draws hundreds of White supremacists to downtown Fayetteville each year, and you’ve just begun to scratch the surface of my experience as a Black and Latina M.F.A. student in the Department of Theater. Everyone has the best of intentions. The *best*. White leadership will repeatedly assure you of this, as they confirm advocacy for BIPOC artists in one breath, and

in the next attempt to forbid the casting of Black actors in a colleague's thesis production because otherwise "there wouldn't be enough roles for White actors¹."

I promise, I never wanted to be a bitch in graduate school. Far from it. I saw my femme-identified TAF colleagues fight foundation administration for (what felt like) very worthwhile causes: the completion of our contracts as drafted (we were promised living and workspaces but many artists arrived at studios not yet ready for occupancy), fair and equal compensation regardless of our status (the program continues to slant in favor of its visual artists, particularly the big, established ones with national recognition), and access to a printer. Yes, a printer. One of the many oversights of TAF's program was the assumption that all 20 writers traveled with high-volume printer-scanner-copiers. Another assumption was that writers all wrote from home and even though we were housed literally above a foundation-owned co-working space, it took several direct confrontations and tense email exchanges before the writing cohort received adequate workspaces, office supplies, and access to glorious, beautiful color printers.

Though I admired the tenacity of my defiant, outspoken colleagues and benefited from their tireless advocacy, I didn't actively participate in their campaigns against administration. I didn't want to be trouble. Didn't want to be one of the difficult ones. Because we'd all been offered this enormously generous gift, remember? Remember no one is obligated to support your personal creative endeavors, financially or otherwise. Remember there are a hundred other

¹ While this incident occurred outside my own casting process, it is worth noting as a very recent example of how the department failed to meet its own diversity initiatives (mandated by the University of Arkansas). I spent an entire academic year volunteering on the department's DEI committee (most often as the sole person of color on the committee), so this incident impacted my experience working on a mainstage show. For reference our department's "inclusive casting policy" (drafted Fall 2022) specifically states: "We seek greater representation of people from diverse backgrounds (based on gender, ethnicity, disability, and sexual orientation) in leading roles. We believe diverse artists should be considered for any role - and not confined solely to those written with their own personal characteristics in mind. We seek to ensure we audition a diverse group of artists for every role." While I have redacted the names of all offending professors in this thesis paper, in the spirit of transparency I am happy to provide this information in private to any prospective students and/or chismosos curiosos.

applicants who would drop everything just to be where you are, to have what you have.

Remember you are lucky, one of the chosen ones. Was this really how you wanted to repay the elderly oil billionaire's kindness?

For most of my life, I've avoided confrontation. My go-to strategy has always been to place as much distance as possible between me and a problem. If I gave people some breathing room and time to process, surely things would cool down or blow over or be forgotten entirely. I maintained many long-term friendships this way, if we hit a sudden roadblock (most often, a romantic partner I didn't deem worthy of their time and attention), I'd just disappear for a bit. I almost always came back, I just preferred waiting out conflict rather than confronting it.

In one of my earliest day jobs, I worked as a Human Resources assistant for a social services non-profit. In that particular office, with its devoted "strengths-based" work culture, we called confrontations "carefrontations." We were to approach conflict with care, respect, and grace. I remember attending a work-mandated training in "Crucial Conversations" where we were asked to recount how we responded to conflict as children. Did we react with loud outbursts, big physical tantrums? Did we strategize, aligning with one parent or one of your siblings? Did we fumble towards de-escalation, using the best of our childlike facilities to work towards resolution? Or did we go the opposite direction, making ourselves as small and quiet as possible? Did we disappear?

No matter what the tactic, the goal of any confrontation was survival. And the fear of confrontation, at its basest level, was always violence. We're afraid that initiating difficult conversations and confronting conflict will result in violence. Someone would get hurt or be hurt by our displaced anger or frustration. I know this fear, quite intimately, as I spent my first few years of life in a home where I was screamed at constantly. I wasn't a perfect toddler, far from it,

and my birth mother often resorted to emotional and physical violence to set me straight. I was going to learn every lesson; I was going learn to be right. I honestly don't remember much from this time of my life, maybe I blacked out some stuff but also, I was just so young. I was a tiny baby sponge and most of the stories about my life at that time come second or thirdhand from other family members. They often marveled at my ingenuity, sharing stories like the time my birth mother asked which one of my uncle's belts I wanted her to beat me with. I replied, "None." What a smart toddler I must've been, feebly navigating the emotional landmines of my birth mother's mental illness to avoid punishment. And what an education I received at such an early age about conflict and resolution: *Don't make trouble. Don't be difficult. Be a good girl and the problems will disappear.*

"Crucial Conversations" trained employees to identify the stories we told ourselves about conflict and taught us how to move conversations into safety. In our training workbooks, we'd journal about our fears and frustrations. We'd also script future "carefrontations" in dialogue form, which made the process (particularly for a playwright) appear deceptively easy. If you identified common goals and created a safe space for conversation, resolution would be inevitable. Included in our workbook was one of my favorite sayings ever: "Silence is violence." My previously tried-and-true tactics, while they offered some protection, didn't actually solve conflict. More often, it made things much worse because bad behaviors continued without accountability or consequence. My anger manifested in the most inopportune and inappropriate ways, lashing out unexpectedly at unrelated, minor inconveniences. Or the anger and frustration calcified, hardening into a deep-seated, unyielding resentment. "Not a cute look," as my friends would say.

Since leaving that job, my “carefrontation” workbook traveled with me from Austin to a 4-year stint in Chicago to study at the Second City, then back home again after a disastrous second round of graduate school applications (all rejections). I packed the workbook for the Tulsa Artist Fellowship, and it followed me to shorter-term residencies in Memphis, TN, Muncie, IN, and Lake Forest, Chicago, after I broke my TAF contract in December 2018. By that point, I felt stalled personally and professionally. The dream was dead. Oil and gas billionaires don’t just offer up free housing and mountain bikes to unknown, emerging artists out of the goodness of their hearts or a desire to strengthen their local community’s “creative classes.” They do it for social status, tax havens, or as a down payment for future real estate development.

In early 2019, I wasn’t sure what my next steps would be or could be. I just knew that I didn’t want to return to Austin, TX. Not yet. Austin was and will always be my first artistic home. I was comfortable making work there. I had a community and a following. I’d left on such a high, the final projects of my independent production company, Heckle Her, were both critically acclaimed, sold-out shows featured in local and national press. We won a slew of local awards but one of the best gifts was revenue from show merchandise (split between the performers and crew). Audiences actually wanted to wear our enamel pins and plaster our stickers all over their water bottles and laptops. This felt equivalent to winning a “street TONY,” the Austin community appreciated our work and wanted to remember it. It’s something you can never predict or plan for, but when your mostly self-funded, temporal performance has permanence with an audience, it’s enormously satisfying. I don’t know if I’ll ever be able to top that experience, but at least I have some measure of artistic success to try to live up to.

Though I had a healthy body of work and strong artistic home base, where I struggled in my career at that point was to connect with theatres outside my hometown bubble. My choice to live in fly-over, “off the beaten path” places had been intentional. I just didn’t see a pathway to both cultivating my artistic practice and paying rent in expensive cities like Los Angeles or New York. I also didn’t believe I needed an M.F.A. to work professionally as a playwright, I had many examples of professional writers who flourished outside the academy. Writers like Jaclyn Bauhaus, Diana Burbano, and Sharon Bridgforth all had successful careers and still found their way into higher education *because of* their unique training and experience.

Still, this nagging voice in the back of my head told me I should try another round of graduate school applications. Maybe the third time was the charm. Maybe an M.F.A. degree would help advance my career. Maybe I’d make valuable connections and find new collaborators. Maybe someone would finally teach narrative structure. Maybe I’d enjoy teaching. Or maybe I wouldn’t and then I wouldn’t waste time competing for the few, meagerly-paid adjunct positions in small towns with nary a community theater.

I planned to apply to graduate school in Fall 2019 (for a Fall 2020 start, ha ha) until a playwright acquaintance (now a University of Arkansas alum) encouraged me to apply to the University of Arkansas. I was in Fayetteville for an early rehearsal session for TheatreSquared’s 2019 Arkansas New Play Festival to work on my play “Teen Dad.” We got breakfast at Mockingbird Kitchen just before I had to head back to Tulsa, and I asked her about the University of Arkansas’ program. She gushed enthusiastically about the playwriting chair John Walch, “He’s the best playwriting teacher I’ve ever had.” She’d left another grad program for the University of Arkansas and confided that she was *sure* I would get in if I applied. I didn’t know exactly how to take her comment – was this just a generous offer of encouragement? Or was the

program really that easy to get into? Maybe the program didn't see many applications each year. Maybe folks were wary (as I was and still am) of living in NW Arkansas. Or maybe I'd stumbled upon a secret creative oasis. Maybe I'd be like a pioneer playwright plant, unfurling new roots into fresh soil. Maybe the University of Arkansas is where I could grow.

“Do you really want to come here?”

A month later, I sat with John Walch at one of TheatreSquared's post-festival events hosted in a local print shop. I held my freshly printed “Arkansas New Play Festival” shirt in one hand, a drink in the other, and wondered, as we writers often do, “What was the question behind the question?” Wasn't my signed acceptance letter a tell-tale sign that I wanted to go to the University of Arkansas? Did the program chair need further convincing that I wanted to pursue my M.F.A.? Or was this another warning?

I'd received a few by that point from other alumni of color. One pulled me aside after a rehearsal and in his most supportive, loving older brother way told me there was a very specific, narrow path expected by the powers that be at the Fulbright College. He reminded me I didn't have to follow that, I just had to make work that was meaningful and exciting to *me*. Another alum, arguably the most successful and decorated playwrights to graduate from our program, repeatedly warned me about the department, urging that I did not actually need the degree. We now joke about self-producing a festival of plays inspired by our University of Arkansas graduate experiences, where their play about “well-intentioned White people” could be programmed alongside my yet-to-be-titled play about a quartet of tenured White male professors

stuck in some sort of padded purgatory as they await results from their respective disciplinary hearings².

It's not like I didn't know what I was getting into. I'd seen the faculty page on the department website, a grid of all White faculty and staff posed formally against a tasteful beige-brown backdrop. I'd also reviewed the intended course plans with such diverse offerings as Acting I, Acting II, Acting III, and Acting IV. I knew that if I attended the University of Arkansas's program I would have to expand outside my department for rigorous coursework, more multidisciplinary approaches to artmaking, and the opportunity to work with faculty of color. I knew there would be some adjustments, some compromises but I have an undergraduate degree in "Liberal Arts" from Sarah Lawrence College. I knew what it meant to study at a predominately White institution.

For the uninitiated or morbidly curious, it means that sometimes, without invitation or warning, you become a teacher. You teach White colleagues and professors about Black & Latinx identity. You teach how those two identities are not mutually exclusive. You often teach about class and privilege, which at first comes as a surprise because until that point you had always thought your upbringing was middle class. Your family owned a car and house (or were making payments towards ownership), both parents worked full-time, and you could always go to the doctor when you were sick. Wasn't that middle class?

It was until you befriended the children of Fortune 500 CEOs who owned multiple vacation homes yet insisted, they weren't "actually rich." Your new college friends can't understand for the life of them why you don't ask your parents to pay your credit card bill so you

² I drew inspiration from the Google Image search discovery of my Spanish professor's mugshot after a recent DUI arrest on campus. While this perhaps explained his erratic behavior in the classroom, it does not forgive the grade he gave me.

can afford the same spring break excursions. Then their jaws drop when they realize you don't even own a credit card, "Aren't you like 20 years old?" You let them pay your way a few times, promising to pay everyone back as soon as you get your next work-study check. But you also sit out most nights, alone in a huge, empty beach house watching the good cable and eating random leftovers because isn't that why you bought a huge load of groceries to begin with? Were they really going to eat out every night when there was food at home? Were you really channeling your mother already? Weren't you like 20 years old?

You swallowed your pride, you swallowed the shame, and you accepted that your budget was different. You summoned an immense amount of patience for ignorance, mild misunderstandings, and frequent microaggressions. You became adept at quickly shifting topics whenever conversations got too uncomfortable, lobbing silly jokes as misdirection, and casual neck acrobatics to avoid hungry White fingers as they tried to claw through your curls and textured locs at parties.

"Do you really want to come here?"

I think often about that early grad school conversation before I had moved to Fayetteville, AR, before I attended a single class at the University of Arkansas, and before I had met any of my cohort mates. I answered as truthfully as I could at that moment, given the circumstances. Yes, I wanted my M.F.A. Yes, I wanted 3 years of funding and support to develop my work. And most importantly, yes, I wanted to be a part of a creative community after 2 years in Tulsa, where I felt like I had no purpose. I had no people.

In August of 2019, I put a deposit on an apartment I'd found online (sight unseen), just a short walk uphill to campus. I unpacked my "Crucial Conversations" workbook once again, placing it on the particle board bookshelf next to research books saved from previous projects:

The Body Keeps Score by Bessel Van Der Kolk, M.D. (research for “Teen Dad,” a subversive kitchen-sink dramedy about a blended Black and Latino family recovering from trauma), Casta Painting by Ilona Katzew (primary text for “Casta,” a hybrid performance that explores casta paintings, colorism, and mixed-race identity in 17th century Mexico), and Brothel by Alexa Albert (dramaturgy for “You Are Pretty,” a dark workplace comedy about sex workers in a legal brothel). I wasn’t sure where the University of Arkansas’ program would lead me, but I felt prepared to handle any conflict that might arise. I was grown, after all. I was older than the grads airdropping in right after undergrad. I had professional experience as a stage manager, production manager, and producer. I’d won grants and fellowships, my work had been published and produced. I knew some things about theatre-making and writing but there was also so much I didn’t learn in my undergrad program or through my own explorations. I wanted to learn from the “best playwriting professor” my colleague had ever studied with. I wanted to study at the University of Arkansas.

BITCH, RESEARCH

“When I saw Megan Thee Stallion in a rap video talk about how she was a bitch, I thought here is a woman taking control of her identity and also taking control of some of the ways women have been diminished.”

- Judy Chicago, artist

In Fall of 2019, I enrolled in a Spanish Theatre Production course. Led by professor M. Reina Ruiz, the course’s primary objective was to study, then perform in a production of a Spanish Golden Age play on campus. Paired with an undergraduate intermediate Spanish language class, I felt I had set myself up for an excellent challenge in my first semester of graduate school. Two courses, four and half hours a week, totalmente en Español. Surely, I’d be writing bilingual plays and echando el chisme with my Spanish-speaking friends in no time.

Of course, in a class made up of mostly native-speaking Spanish Literature grads and advanced-level undergrad Spanish majors, I was the odd duck out. I was the only theater major, the only one with any acting experience, and unfortunately for everyone, I had the worst Spanish speaking (and reading and writing) abilities. I knew my performance would be embarrassingly, impressively bad, but after years of spending thousands of dollars to “seriously study improv comedy,” I was numb to failure and public humiliation. I was also genuinely excited about the text Professor Ruiz selected, “El perro del hortelano.”

Written in 1613, “El perro del hortelano” or “Dog in the Manger,” is an epic comedy written by the monstrously prolific Spanish playwright and poet, Lope Félix de Vega Carpio (1562-1635). I will repeat this next factoid to all future collaborators, students, and random passersby for the rest of my natural life: Lope de Vega’s output exceeds all Elizabethan and Jacobean drama put together. In addition to his novels, epic poems, and collections of verse, de Vega wrote as many as 1800 plays in verse, and 400 autos sacramentales, of which 426 comedias

and 42 autos currently survive (Oliver, 16). William Shakespeare, America's most produced classical playwright, has maybe 38 plays attributed to him. "Maybe thirty-eight" is a paltry number compared to Lope de Vega's 2200 dramatic works. This is not to suggest all 2200 plays were good, but you understand why Cervantes hated him with such a passion. If one of my cohort mates was churning out a new full-length play written in verse every other month, I too would call them *un monstruo de la naturaleza* (to their face).

Despite his enormous output, Lope de Vega is not commonly taught in most American theater educational institutions. I know this because not one of my theatre professors or instructors taught his work as part of theatre history's "classical canon" or in our comedy training. We began studying Shakespeare in middle school, advanced to the Ancient Greeks in undergrad, and here in graduate school our classical offerings have been Ibsen, Molière, and you guessed it, more Shakespeare. Even in my literature review for this process paper, I found Albert Bermel's "comprehensive and definitive" guide on farce didn't mention Lope de Vega. Not once. Why is this massively influential comedy writer missing from our American theatre education?

Is this a result of the Spanish empire's failure to maintain dominance of what is now known as the United States? While that might sound like something your racist Tío³ argues at Thanksgiving dinner (before launching into his semi-annual tirade against the word "Latinx"), it is true that in other parts of the world, particularly Hispanophone countries, Lope de Vega is as revered as his contemporary Shakespeare. But if this were strictly an issue of language, why then are comedies by Molière and Chekhov a part of our classical canon? English translations of Lope

³ Disclaimer, this is the exemplar Tío, not a reference to any real uncle or guncle of mine! Thank God!

de Vega's plays have been widely available for years but I've yet to see a single production.⁴ I never even thought about exploring comedias from the Spanish Golden Age until Professor Ruiz's course.

One of the first intentions of my adaptation of "El perro del hortelano" was to educate audiences about Lope de Vega. I envisioned future theatre history and theatre appreciation courses exploring Spanish Golden Age farces as the predecessor to contemporary "social justice driven" dramas, modern telenovelas, and popular TV sitcom comedies. Maybe my play could be the assigned reading or an extra credit excursion. If I could find a way to bring together college-age students, Golden Age scholars, and Lope de Vega fan girls, maybe this play could achieve a truly ephemeral, theatrical experience that connected audience and artist. I imagined Spanish speakers leaning in to quietly translate the Olmo-Alma storyline for their English-speaking dates, Golden Age scholars quickly explaining palace comedies to their guests during intermission, and maybe there'd be avid pop culture consumers of a certain age who'd understand both the Shamir and Shamu references⁵. I hoped my play could be both a playground for the creative team and a meeting place for differing perspectives, age groups, and expertise.

In Spring 2020, I began John Walch's graduate adaptation workshop with a very clear idea of where I might take Diana, Teodoro, and Marcella (renamed Madeinusa) in my version of "El perro del hortelano." My first instinct was to translate the hierarchies of Golden Age palace comedies to today's social media influencer culture. In our modern world, particularly in American culture, there are few instances where such strict, antiquated ideas about status and

⁴ Google dramaturgies tell me that there was a production of "Dog in the Manger" staged in my hometown by Austin Shakespeare in 2005. It was the first play produced outside their usual Shakespeare repertoire and their first-and only-time producing Lope de Vega in their now 39-year history.

⁵ One is a non-binary lo-fi singer/songwriter, the other a fictional killer whale that liberated himself from a water park.

romantic partnerships still exist. Most people feel free to form romantic partnerships despite their different racial or cultural backgrounds, religious practices, social classes, etc. The glaring exception to this would of course be partnerships widely recognized as “socially deviant,” such as the coupling of adults and children, incestual relationships, or extreme age gaps between partners (2 out of 3 for Woody Allen and his adopted daughter-wife Soon-Yi Previn).

But within the public construction of celebrity and social media influencers’ identities, there can still be massive personal and professional consequences if you are partnered with someone your fans, followers, or corporate sponsors do not approve of. In “This Bitch: Esta Sangre Quiero,” the countess Diana became a mid-level Pilates influencer who struggles to balance her ambitions of fame and greater social media status with her “disgusting” need to find true love and acceptance. Diana is the titular bitch, cruel and manipulative to her entourage of servants Madeinusa (makeup), Dorotea (hair), Armando (stylist), Teodoro (social media), Tristán (video/photographer), and Fabio (security). While she has some fame and status thanks to her sexy Pilates content, she hasn’t found life at the top as fulfilling as expected. While her DMs are flooded with suggestive messages from famous athletes and B-list celebrities, Diana hasn’t quite found her match. She’s looking for a partner that can either meet or improve her social status. But she also wants to maintain her autonomy and authority within the relationship, “It’s not gender or sexuality that I am attracted to – it’s intelligence! Endurance! Complete deference to my control!”

Girl, same⁶. I identify with Diana’s dating frustrations; I’ve been single far longer than I have been coupled with anyone. It’s not for a lack of interest or effort, mine eyes have seen the Tulsa Tinder and there wasn’t much glory to be found in awkward hunting and fishing photos.

⁶ I’m kidding. Or am I??

One of my favorite Tinder profile pictures (screenshot to the hard drive for posterity), featured a young man of the Caucasian persuasion, shirtless in camo cargo shorts, posed with a cigarette gripped between his lips as he held a hunting rifle in one hand and presumably his infant child in the other. It's a shame we didn't match, I'm sure my acerbic wit and overall literacy would've been a welcome challenge. My dating profile used to mention that I loved comedy until I realized men thought that meant I laughed at literally anything. These men thought they had jokes when in fact, *I would be the one making jokes*. I quickly learned this was not attractive to 99.9% of the men I was interested in. I also learned there was no way to conceal or change what was essentially a core aspect of my personality. If I observed something off or weird, I was going to make a joke and it was going in my next play. While I can conform to *many* expectations of the modern heterosexual romantic relationship (I once attended a Superbowl party for a dude⁷), I couldn't pretend that my then-boyfriend's workout mix wasn't hilarious. What was he doing jogging to sad dad music? Was this a thing guys really did: blast Bon Iver, run and cry and contemplate existential crises?

For Diana, there is absolutely no concealing or changing her ambition or sexuality. Celebrity suitor Coco Wawa (a riff on the original text's flamboyant Marquis and real life's flamboyant children's entertainer, Jojo Siwa) can give Diana the status and fame she so desperately desires, but Coco is still very much in a closet of her own design. Coco believes that being in an openly queer relationship will cost her fans, followers, and fame, but this doesn't mesh with Diana's personal and professional brand narrative of both pelvic and sexual freedom (her hashtags include #sexy #pansexual #pilates). Through monologue, original text soliloquy,

⁷ I recently watched the film Avatar 2 for a dude.

and conversations with Armando, Diana reveals that she doesn't love Coco. She admits she has “real feelings” for her social media manager Teodoro despite his low status.

Teodoro is the kind of character intentionally designed to hide in plain sight of the audience. Teodoro is nerdy, fashion-challenged, and awkward, but also immensely talented. As an aspiring poet, he shares Diana’s obsession with Spanish Golden Age-inspired texts (their monologues are taken from Lope’s original text and performed in Spanish) and uses his literary powers to help Diana reach fame and fortune. But his ambitions lie elsewhere, at first Teodoro pines for the love and attention of Madeinusa, then advances to his employer Diana once he discovers her attraction and that his literary abilities have real sexual power over her. The bitch is cruel, manipulative, and vindictive but how Diana *melts* for a beautiful sonnet.

Although Teodoro claims to be a feminist and seems highly sensitive to his best friend Tristán’s inflammatory, misogynist views of “females,” he repeats Tristán’s words almost verbatim to cruelly reject Madeinusa and deny Diana’s pansexual identity. Though Tristán resists⁸ selling out Teodoro after Diana confronts him about his late-night whereabouts, Teodoro quickly folds and names Tristán as his accomplice. Here’s the truth about Teodoro: he’s not a good friend or a good boyfriend. So why then, would we root for him to get with Diana?

The short answer is because that’s the design of the original text. At the end of “El perro del hortelano,” Teodoro’s false construction of noble status (cleverly engineered by his servant Tristán) allows him to marry the countess Diana and they live happily ever after. Or so we think. In the concluding moments of “El perro del hortelano,” Teodoro directly addresses the audience for the first and only time, asking us to help keep his secrets so he can remain with Diana. This moment exposes the frayed wiring in the drywall, we understand this romantic relationship is a

⁸ In the stage directions, Tristán is described as experiencing deep, emotional, psychic pain when he forfeits an extremely rare and expensive Kobe Bryant hat to preserve Teodoro’s good name.

flimsy construction (at best), but the audience is asked to be complicit. And after almost three hours of romantic hijinks, mistaken identity, and an out of left field random murder plot performed entirely in verse, we happily comply: “Let’s let these attractive, young people be attractive and young together, even if they’re awful.” Even if their relationship falls apart seconds after the curtain drops, we understand our role and we dutifully play our part.

I rewrote this final moment to fulfill a very different purpose in my adaptation. Throughout “This Bitch,” a tertiary love story runs concurrent to Teodoro and Diana’s. With dialogue almost entirely in Spanish, Alma and Olmo’s love story specifically privileges a Spanish-speaking audience and gives visibility to characters otherwise forgotten or overlooked. In my earliest drafts of the play, I was ambivalent about adding these new characters to the play and almost cut them out entirely. Where they are now considered a vital piece of the “This Bitch” ensemble puzzle and the play’s most grounding forces, in the first stages of development, Alma and Olmo felt like unnecessary additions to an already too huge ensemble. Over time, as multiple drafts and different workshop opportunities accumulated, I began to make a stronger case for why they belonged in this play, what purpose they served, and how they were ultimately a reflection of the macro story on a micro scale.

Alma, a spirited and resourceful hotel concierge, aspires to move up the hospitality hierarchy from her indoor front desk position to manager of the luxury resort. In contrast, her lover Olmo is a taciturn maintenance worker, who works almost entirely outside where he is invisible to resort guests, until they complain to management about his smell. The resort’s week-long El Summit festival is a huge test of Alma and Olmo’s evolving relationship, which until this point has only been on a seasonal basis. But there are real feelings here and Alma really wants

Olmo to stay in Tulum with her after his seasonal shift, desiring permanence in their otherwise casual relationship.

Unfortunately, Alma's invitation comes right when Olmo is at his breaking point. He's tired of cleaning up after rich, spoiled tourists who necessitate the need to sweep the beaches clean each morning, overfill local landfills, and transport huge 8 feet tall mounds of stinking seaweed deep into the jungle so they can burn it. However, when Olmo sees an opportunity to help Alma, he selflessly assumes the persona of Puerto Rican rapper and singer Riqui Tiquismiquis (basically Bad Bunny⁹) when the super-star doesn't appear for the festival's finale performance. From the depths of his awkward introversion, Olmo churns out a convincing end-of-festival performance to save the day and support the woman he loves. After the concert, just before the New Year's Eve ball drops, Alma and Olmo lean in to share a goodbye kiss. Just before their lips touch, they notice the audience for the first time. Alma begs us to let them have their moment, to let them "keep up the game." She directly acknowledges the bittersweet truth that these moments of connection are important but so fleeting, "we know it won't be like this forever."

Then the audience finally realizes or remembers¹⁰ to great horror, sadness, and comedic effect: the closing ceremony of El Summit takes place on December 31, 2019. As the characters excitedly welcome the year 2020, the audience is left with the sinking reality of everything to come. It's a moment that exposes our shared vulnerability, revealing the silly, flimsy constructions scaffolding every inch of society and aspect of our everyday lives. I wrote this final

⁹ Benito Antonio Martínez Ocasio, Puerto Rican rapper and mega-influencer (aka Bad Bunny).

¹⁰ There are clues about time of year littered throughout the play, beginning with the opening promo video. I make a few other 2019-2020 references (Tristán's obsession with Kobe Bryant being perhaps the most noticeable) but I'm banking on the audience being distracted and/or having very short-term memory.

scene in response to a prompt to write an “impossible stage direction,” envisioning flashy fireworks, a full cast song and dance number, all the glam and glitter one theatre production could afford. But then I wanted the bottom to drop out from under us, I wanted audiences to crash back to life, back to reality. I wasn’t sure exactly what a live audience’s response would be, but my first crack at the scene had left me sobbing at my desk. If only we could escape our world and live within this fantasy. If only love could survive.

During the initial months of writing “This Bitch: Esta Sangre Quiero,” the world as we knew it completely broke open. As we entered our “coronial age,” the coronavirus forced most people indoors in lockdown as we isolated ourselves to limit the spread of COVID-19. On the University of Arkansas campus and across the globe, in-person performances were canceled, including the Theatre Department’s 2020 ArkType New Play Festival. ArkType is typically an annual developmental showcase of graduate student work, where I had planned to present an early draft of my play “underneath.” “underneath” is a dystopian drama about a Black family struggling to survive after the loss of multiple male family members due to police violence. The play centers on an emergency dispatcher who raises her only surviving son completely underground in a secret bunker.

As I found myself in lockdown, doom scrolling for hours upon hours about extensive police violence in response to peaceful protests in response to the murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor, I knew that for my mental health it was time to put down the draft of “underneath.” I pivoted instead to working on “This Bitch,” escaping to a world without COVID-19, state-sanctioned violence against Black people and other people of color. I firmly dug my heels into the sands of my imaginary Tulum beach resort to build a playground for this ensemble of ridiculous influencers, their followers, and the invisible support staff who

must serve them. I saw only the people I wanted to see onstage: a diverse ensemble of beautiful, funny, and vulnerable humans stumbling either toward or away from love in the most surprising and tender ways.

BITCH, PROCESS

“Bitches get stuff done.”

- Tina Fey, comedian

The very first reading of “This Bitch: Esta Sangre Quiero” was presented as part of a reimagined digital ArkType Festival in January 2021, directed by guest director Estefanía Fadul. Thanks to generous support from Alternate Roots, I was able to employ guest actors Michael Galvan and Chris Hecke (University of Arkansas alum M.F.A. ‘16) to support our student cast of graduate and undergraduate students.

VIRTUAL DEVELOPMENT

When we first began rehearsals, I just had the first act of the play drafted. To contain expectations, I told my cast and creative team upfront that we might not share a complete play for the festival. I would try my best to make it to “End of Play,” but we only had 40 hours in our workshop process (about three weeks total). I had been making strides towards speeding up my writing process, being less precious about my first drafts, and cranking down the volume of my Inner Editor Bitch, the voice in my head that delights in criticizing every aspect of my life.

“I wouldn’t say it that way,” she’ll cruelly grin, wiping warm saliva from her chin as she perches over my desk while I write. Inner Editor Bitch’s hunger for cruelty? Insatiable. If she had her way, I would never write another word. “Are you *sure* you know what you’re doing?” She has at her disposal, a library of my innermost insecurities and fears. The only way I’ve found to work with her is through my calendar. If I can point to the huge blocks of “office hours” I’ve set aside in my Google calendar each week for writing and I can show her pages as proof, only then will she quiet down. She’ll still be there with her knife-sharpened red pencil when it comes time to share my work publicly or begin a rewrite process, but at least we have a working

agreement. Her job is to hate everything I write, and my job is to let her hate it. Instead of these moments completely derailing my process, I've come to recognize them as welcome milestones. "Ah, today we hate the draft with the fire of a thousand suns! Good! A better draft is coming."

With just 30-40 pages drafted, our ArkType rehearsal process began with blocking the pages we had for a live-stream audience. Actors worked with Estefanía to choreograph their performances for their laptop cameras, incorporating simple props and costume pieces sourced from the actor's homes, the department's costume shop, and "borrowed" with Amazon Prime's generous return policy. Estefanía and I also spent a few days devoted to a devising process in the first few weeks that helped me with my writing process. The cast was split into smaller groups (organized in Zoom "break out rooms") with a specific set of instructions outlined almost like a "performance recipe." Each group had to accomplish a set of designated "constants" (ingredients that had to appear in every scene):

- Clear start/finish tableau
- Try to accomplish the "moment" but there is some kind of conflict or disruption
- Strong character POV & relationships
- Can use text from the script (original or adapted)
- Location: Tulum resort
- Scene runtime – 2-3 minutes

Actors were also given a second set of elements that they could pick and choose from, we just asked that they incorporate at least 2 of the following:

- A moment of hysterical laughter
- 5 seconds of silence
- 5 seconds muttering at the same time
- Something important is lost due to distraction
- Role reversal
- Forbidden touch
- Emotional armor

Estefanía and I would then hang out in the Zoom “lobby” while actors had 10 minutes to devise their short scenes before we pulled everyone back to the main room to share. Most actor pairings were intentional, I specifically wanted to see Fabio and Madeinusa in a devised scene together because I knew by the end of the play, they would somehow become a couple. In the original text, this pairing of the lower status servants is super sloppy, like: “Sorry Teodoro rejected you for someone WAY better, here’s Fabio.” I hated the randomness of this choice, Marcella is given no agency, zero apologies for being treated as a narrative prop to complicate Diana and Teodoro’s relationship. Why was Lope de Vega so hard on this character? All Marcella wanted was to love Teodoro. Unlike Diana, Marcella is about the same status as Teodoro, she just lacks Teodoro’s formal education. But is this really a reason to throw this character under the bus? She’s not book smart, so we shouldn’t root for her?!

“JUSTICE 4 MADEINUSA,” I typed into the Zoom chat as actors read new pages of a breakup scene for Act 2. A flurry of emojis and texts followed in the chat, confirming that my cast and creative team agreed: Madeinusa deserved love just as much as Diana. It was painful watching Teodoro reject Madeinusa, especially when he disparages her intelligence and status.

MADEINUSA: This isn’t you. You’re better than this!

TEODORO: Yes – exactly.

Though Madeinusa tries to use Fabio to make Teodoro jealous (just as Marcella does in the original play), I wanted to divert from the original text to give her a satisfying love story. I just needed to figure out a way to make Fabio, Diana’s dimwitted bodyguard, a worthy and deserving partner. During our devising process, actors Audrey Romero and Jordan Williams

improvised a silly, innuendo-heavy scene they imagined took place in the resort's pool. While I wasn't going to put a pool onstage (especially not after writing a portable ball pit for Coco Wawa), I did love this idea of a water-related rendezvous for Fabio and Madeinusa. Maybe their hot-tub hookup began as a silly ploy to make Teodoro jealous, but then maybe they see the potential for real feelings. Leaning into Madeinusa's background as a makeup artist, I thought about the intimacy of her work, how close she has to get in her clients' faces to cover up each imperfection, to make them beautiful. There's also an immense amount of trust required between makeup artist and client, as they wield brushes, sponges, and other application tools close to some of the most vulnerable parts of our face.

In Act 3, I wrote a very silly, tender Fabio and Madeinusa scene that I thought did justice to what Audrey and Jordan built in their devising exercise but also accomplished my goal of bringing these two together in a satisfying and believable way. Madeinusa wakes to find herself in Fabio's hotel room after a crazy night together and what follows is an escalation of character reveals. First, even though Fabio is ripped (he never misses a 5 am workout), he has body dysmorphia and in an act of self-care has all the mirrors removed from his hotel room. Second, we learn Fabio's aloofness is selective. His attention might wander off when Diana barks orders at him, but if Madeinusa speaks, he hears *every word*. He asks Dorotea to bring up Madeinusa's makeup bag to his room because he *knows* it's important to her. But in a hotel room without any reflective surfaces, Madeinusa can't see herself until Fabio offers to be her mirror. He kneels before her and with her instruction, Fabio delicately applies Madeinusa's eyelashes.

While workshopping this scene, I knew we stuck the landing when cast members started swooning in the Zoom chat, "FABINUSA! FOREVER!" In this world of constructed identities and romances, Fabio and Madeinusa hit something so real and pure. We could see these

characters actually falling in love with each other, they both appreciate each other as they truly are (not how they advertise themselves to be). In the hierarchy of emotional intelligence in this play, I would rate Fabio and Madeinusa much higher than Teodoro or Diana. Fabio and Madeinusa can express their true feelings and acknowledge their weaknesses without fear or shame. That is a special kind of love and a special kind of power.

Against all odds, I was able to finish a full and complete draft of “This Bitch” after the first 2 weeks of our online ArkType rehearsal. I think I was running on fumes, adrenaline, and the frantic impulse to see this project to the end so my actors could perform fully fleshed out characters with a satisfying journey. There was also the ArkType audience to consider, while I didn’t imagine we’d have a big one over YouTube, I did want to give whoever logged in a full story to experience rather than smaller bits and pieces. I was also curious; how would an audience of Lope de Vega scholars react to my adaptation? What did I get right? What did I get wrong?

I leveraged our online festival offering as an opportunity to invite members from the Association for Hispanic Classical Theater (AHCT) in hopes that I might be able to connect with a Lope de Vega expert. I ended up connecting with three amazing scholars: Dr. Laura Muñoz (Colorado Mesa University), Dr. Glenda Nieto-Cuebas (Ohio Wesleyan University), and Dr. Erin Alice Cowling (MacEwan University). The recording from the initial ArkType Zoom performance was not only shared with their students, but it is the subject of a recent academic article by Dr. Muñoz published in *Romance Quarterly*. Dr. Nieto-Cuebas and Dr. Cowling will also reference the Zoom performance of “This Bitch: Esta Sangre Quiero” in their book chapter for an upcoming anthology on digital comedias.

After ArkType, the play received virtual readings in Teatro Vivo’s Austin Latinx New Play Festival (May 2021) and B Street Theatre/In the Margin’s New American Play Festival (October 2021). The reading with B Street Theatre and In the Margin was presented as part of the National New Play Network’s (NNPN) 2021 Bridge Program created to incentivize member theaters to develop, produce, and extend the life of new plays by BIPOC artists as well as develop and implement anti-racist practices in their productions. This reading also initiated formal collaboration with Dr. Muñoz who served as our dramaturg, providing vital research on Lope de Vega and the Golden Age with our actors and creative team.

IN-PERSON DEVELOPMENT

The first in-person reading of “This Bitch: Esta Sangre Quiero” was in February 2022 as part of Sin Muros: A Borderless Teatro Festival produced by Stages Repertory Theater in Houston, TX. I had worked with the company on a reading of my play “Teen Dad” in February 2020, just before lockdown. My first experience of the Sin Muros festival had been extremely positive, it was my first time working in Houston and as my cohort mate Edwin Green confirmed from his first audition to his final graduate performance as Lovborg in “Hedda Gabler,” those Houston actors *were something else*. I was thrilled that another play of mine had been selected for a festival reading in person, especially as so many people confused the project as a Zoom production, something meant only for online performance. The play was always intended for live production, and here was an opportunity to prove just that.

I was also grateful that we were allowed to cast all 11 performers¹¹ for this reading.

While a huge cast show is ideal for university settings, somewhat manageable for larger regional

¹¹ The cast size can be reduced to 9 performers if Alma/Sheila and Olmo/Armando are doubled. This choice places actors at both ends of a wide socio-economic spectrum which is really fun and interesting, but it does present more challenges in the casting process and blocking.

or commercial theaters (assuming the playwright is famous), but almost impossible for the smaller, independent companies (the ones most likely to take a chance on a new play and an emerging playwright). Stages Rep and festival organizers had a relationship with Houston's universities, so we had a great acting pool of mostly college-age students, many of whom were bilingual.

What is remarkable about that festival experience is that casting was done entirely online from video submissions. Actors had no idea which plays they were auditioning for, so while we reviewed a lot of great tapes, most actors auditioned with very serious, dramatic monologues. This made casting a role like Coco Wawa *extremely difficult*. Could this stern-faced actor making all these gorgeous, small choices in their 2-minute audition do an enormously loud character that needs to be able to talk-rap children's songs in one breath and whisper sexual innuendos in Spanish in the other? Spoiler alert: yes, yes Olivia Swasey could.

The casting Gods were smiling upon us because everyone we cast for that reading (including/especially our stage directions reader Brenda Palestina) was phenomenal. The first table read rehearsal was a wonderfully fun and funny experience where I got to hear the play out loud in person for the first time as actors cold read the play discovering their characters literally in the moment. The explosions of laughter, from tiny titterings to deep belly laughs were everything a comedic writer dreams of. Everyone seemed so excited to play, so down for the game at hand and I felt really proud of the playground I had built. It had its flaws, like any early draft, but it also had its charms.

I think of my presence in the rehearsal process, especially those 29-hour or less workshops, as primarily fulfilling a support role. I'm there as the script handywoman to patch up the holes, keep the characters consistent, and listen for anything that feels phony or false. I try to

keep out of the way and allow the cast and creative team to do their work without interruption unless something is really off the rails (or something precious is missing). Ideally, my script or performance blueprint is airtight, I shouldn't have to step foot in the rehearsal room unless I absolutely want to.

One of the things the Sin Muros experience gifted me was the ability to just be another audience member of my own play process. I kept my script binder closed and sat on my hands most rehearsals, only taking notes if I absolutely had to remember something. I got to ride the ride first, then take time later to smooth out the bumps and sudden drops. Experiencing the final readings with a live audience (many of whom were Spanish speakers) was an incredible lesson on the play's pacing, tension, and comedic timing. I was happy to hear laughter when and where anticipated, but this was also an audience fiercely protective of the play's servant characters. They audibly groaned whenever Teodoro would badmouth Madeinusa, they rooted for Tristán and Dorotea, and when Alma and Olmo finally kissed, it felt like a big win everyone deserved. I was so pleased with this reversal of status accomplished in my adaptation. The audience rooted for the underdogs; they celebrated the character actors. This is a play where the supporting cast can truly shine.

Another important discovery from this process concerned the role of Sheila Wawa. I realized from earlier audition and rehearsal processes that Sheila was often confused as a soft, sugary Midwestern or Southern dance mom. A sort of "gosh darned it" Kris Jenner who "happens into" a random murder plot after her powerfully famous daughter Coco Wawa is rejected in favor of the lowly Teodoro. The murder plot is borrowed from the final act of "El perro del hortelano" but the original is ten times more batshit. Federico, one of Diana's suitors who happens to also be her cousin, teams up with rival suitor Ricardo to hire Tristán to murder

Teodoro. I initially experimented with another influencer character as a third competing suitor for Diana, I envisioned a kind of viral prankster, an offensive pretty-boy in the vein of a Logan Paul (but Latinx). I just didn't see how I could shoehorn in yet another love interest in an already packed script, much less explain the whole "kissing cousins" aspect. So instead, I turned to a supporting sidekick for Coco Wawa and when I thought about a "momager" figure for her, my instinct was that her tone and energy should be the complete opposite of Coco's. I wanted a mother-daughter dynamic where the audience wonders if maybe Coco was born in a medical lab. Like how does she still have such a high level of energy and enthusiasm, if her mother is so low energy, barely functioning? I also thought it could be possible Sheila was once as ridiculously cartoony and high energy as her daughter¹², but after decades of managing her career from child star to adult star (who still for some reason behaves as if she's a child), Sheila was somehow broken, never to be repaired again.

For the Sin Muros reading, we were gifted with an excellent actor in Jennifer Roger for the role of Sheila Wawa. From first read, Jennifer was determined to "get her right," I think she very quickly recognized that her instrument within the comedic orchestra had to play a very specific tone. Sheila could stand out *because* she is so cold and one note. Mama Wawa's outburst into a victorious song and dance number (after she attempts to bribe Diana into dating her daughter) could actually surprise the audience, we could maybe forget for a minute that she's a Dance Mom. Maybe that reveal could illicit laughter because it's so obnoxiously obvious,

¹² Shout out to actor M.R. Chibbi Orduna, who performed in the Sin Muros reading as Armando. His Sheila Wawa line flub not only leveled the rehearsal room (we were crying-laughing hysterically for much longer than is productive) but made it into the final script:

DIANA: But I don't love Coco.

ARMANDO: Well neither does her manager but she's *still* her mother. What?!

Sheila's a stage parent, *of course* she'd have vocal and dance training! *Of course* she'd attempt to murder her daughter's competition!

One reference I gave the actor was the character Bill in the 2007 low-budget horror film *Murder Party*. The basic premise of the film is that a guy gets a random invitation to a Halloween costume party where it turns out the guests want to murder him for the sake of their art. Madness and hilarity ensue but one of the creepiest turns is from the character Bill (whose costume is a baseball fury, referencing the 70s cult film *The Warriors*). Bill is practically silent the entire film, we don't anticipate him as a threat at all because he's barely at the edges of the audience's attention until the very end when he viciously chases after the protagonist, wielding a baseball bat. It's funny, unexpected, and terrifying, all the qualities I thought would help distinguish Sheila amongst the larger-than-life cast of "This Bitch." Sheila's strategy could be to do and say the absolute minimum so that when we pivot into murder plot territory she is oddly terrifying. Post *Sin Muros*, the cast breakdown page of the script was updated to better signal to the cast and creative team what I intended with Sheila's character: she's cold and calculating, rich and exhausted. Watch out for this bitch: she could and would murder you.

After *Sin Muros*, "This Bitch: Esta Sangre Quiero" was presented in person in July 2022 with TheatreLab at FAU in Boca Raton, FL. My play was also recognized for "Distinguished Achievement" in the Latinx Playwriting Award category by the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival (KCACTF), a national theater program to celebrate student theatre artists. Monologues from the play placed in the semifinals of NBC/Nosotros Org's Ya Tu Sabes Monologue Slam and were later performed as part of Sol Project's digital festival in August 2022 (which employed actors from the original ArkType Zoom performance).

These early shows of support for my play-in-progress afforded ample development time in a variety of different settings and locals with different collaborators. From regional to community theater to university development programs, “This Bitch: Esta Sangre Quiero” employed a vast cohort of wickedly talented, diverse artists from Fayetteville, Austin, Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, and beyond. The script felt ready for production and the best suited of my plays for a university audience. So I proposed “This Bitch” as my thesis production.

BITCH DID IT

“My job is to make a great fucking show so the next time a woman wants to run her show, somebody says, ‘Yeah, she can do it because that other bitch did it.’”

- Courtney Kemp Agboh, showrunner

“This Bitch: Esta Sangre Quiero” was scheduled to begin thesis rehearsals in late August at the start of the Fall 2022 semester. However by the end of July, in my final fellowship week at the Sewanee Writer’s Conference, I began an interview process for a staff writing job with ABC Signature and Hulu. My manager texted in the middle of a craft lecture saying she wanted to submit me for a TV show, could I please send her a copy of my play “Teen Dad?” I snuck out of the lecture hall¹³ and scurried up to my dorm room to email a PDF copy. The writer’s room was supposed to start at the beginning of August, and I anticipated a very short turnaround time, naively believing that Hollywood stuck to a strict production schedule. So, I thought I would know really quickly either way if I got the job.

In the weeks following my Zoom meetings with the producer and showrunner, my confidence waned. I was as green as they come in terms of the industry and TV writing, but I did have valuable, relevant experiences that reflected the series’ themes of adoption and disability. The tone of the TV show also felt like such a good fit, it was pitched as a dark comedy inspired by a true story that split perspective between the lead female characters. I just wasn’t sure what my chances were, so I moved forward with life as if nothing would change. I’d be in Fayetteville enrolled in my 8 credits, teach theatre appreciation Tuesday/Thursdays, and attend rehearsals the first week for tablework and dramaturgy, then show up only as requested or for full runs of the show. My director, returning guest Estefanía Fadul, was well-versed in the show and several of

¹³ All apologies to Maurice Carlos Ruffin!

the actors in our cast were reprising their roles from the first ArkType development reading. This, thankfully, wasn't a new collaboration or situation where I felt I had to be protective of the script or cast. I was confident Estefanía could lead the production and I could support by doing audience outreach within the greater NW Arkansas community, arranging events with campus RSOs, and encouraging university professors to assign the performance in their beginning Spanish classes, theatre appreciation sections, and theatre history courses.

FIRST WEEK OF REHEARSALS

While in private I was struggling to survive the longest waiting game of my life, in public it was just another start to the Fall semester. In the first week of rehearsals, Estefanía began each day with a grounding practice to bring the cast and creative team into the room, into our bodies, and into the present moment. I appreciated this practice because inside, I was a panicked, feral squirrel frantically darting back and forth between two possible life outcomes. Either I was moving to Los Angeles for five months on a moment's notice for my first TV writing job, or I was picking myself back up after making it so close to a big dream that arrived much earlier than anticipated. Either way, I already had a busy five months ahead of me. My play "Casta" was going to finally receive its world premiere in Austin as part of the Blanton Museum of Art's "Painted Cloth" exhibit, a massive project that spanned many years and collaborators. I also had another world premiere slated for February 2023, Salt Lake Acting Company was producing "Hairy & Sherri," a script they had helped develop in their virtual series during the early part of the pandemic. No matter what happened with the TV job, I kept reminding myself to keep calm, "Cool shit is coming!"

In my rehearsal draft for "This Bitch," I included some new jokes (highlighted in a tasteful neon green) I wanted to try on with our cast. The understanding was that those highlights

meant I was considering a new choice, I wanted to hear it first in the actor's voice and decide later what we kept and what we trashed. It was about 50/50 what survived and what was lost to the "project graveyard" (a running document I keep with the lines cut lines from a project in hopes they may one day be revived in a future draft). There would be micro line edits throughout the process, but I wanted a really firm deadline for the script to be locked down so that we weren't wasting huge reams of paper to reprint everything. I also wanted to avoid a situation where actors would be receiving new pages in technical rehearsals, days before opening. It's a nightmare for even the best actors with the fastest memorization skills so if I noticed line edits beyond this deadline, I just added them to my "post-thesis" draft.

As part of our first week process, Estefanía guided an exercise to create "community agreements" amongst the cast and creative team. Many of the actors asked for patience and affirmation. From fight and intimacy choreography to big musical numbers, to performing in Spanish, this was a project that would stretch every single performer. The cast had to be a solid team, they had to support each other onstage and off.

I made two notable contributions to the community list of agreements. I asked that people ask first before posting stuff on social media (not every theatre artist wants every aspect of their rehearsal process public). I also begged the actors to deliver the text exactly as written. It remains one of the biggest challenges I continue to face in every new play process, second only to Grand Canyon-sized pauses actors like inject between lines (another gripe for another thesis paper). "This Bitch: Esta Sangre Quiero" has to move like a shark, the farcical pace is fast, always forwards, always something new and unexpected. We had to be intentional about when we let the audience take a breath, when we wanted them to really sit with a character and hear word after word. But first, the actors had to read the words exactly as I wrote them on the page. Not

the essence of what was written, not a clever ad-lib or improvised line (unless I asked for one), and not the same words in a different order. I tried to explain that while I am not Shakespeare (or Lope de Vega), I needed to hear my text verbatim. My line edits were often surgical, moving a word or punctuation completely changed the tone or meaning of a line. “I love you” means something completely different than “You, I love,” which is different than the variant, “I, love you.” I can almost always hear it when an actor paraphrases instead of performing the line as scripted. My face will scrunch up and I’ll frown disgustedly, “Ugh, did I write *that*?” Imagine the frustration of having exactly one job in rehearsal (make sure the script makes sense) and thinking you’ve completely failed, then come to find out, it’s not your fault at all a line isn’t working. The actor flubbed?! Wasn’t it their job to know their lines!?

Months after this process, I thought of additional community agreements I want to share in future new play processes. One pet peeve of mine is calling in actors when they do not have scene work scheduled that day. While they can always work on lines in the hallway or absorb stuff by osmosis, it often feels like a massive waste of an actor’s time. Obviously, in some processes the director and stage manager might not have a precise schedule and I understand that some stuff has to evolve in its own time, but it feels like a request I could easily voice on behalf of the cast and understudies.

The other agreement more closely relates to table work. I want my actors to do a deep dive into my scripts, to understand the specific dramaturgy of the piece so they can make informed decisions that best reflect the text. I think what helps me most in that process is to hear the full text read as often as possible, and to hear the actors respond to guiding questions about their research and discovery. For “This Bitch,” Estefanía gave each actor a research topic to report back on and they emailed extensive character studies exploring the knowns and intuitions of

their characters. I got to read their responses after the fact and I would've loved for some of this conversation to happen around the table, led by the actors and understudies. I know I just badmouthed actors for poor memorization habits but now let me exalt their superior instinctual powers. Actors find all kinds of wonderful, unexpected discoveries in their analysis and personal process with a new script. One example I can share from the "This Bitch: Esta Sangre Quiero" process is the development of the character Tristán.

Tristán's unwavering loyalty to Teodoro (despite recognition or reciprocity) was something actor Edwin Green brought up in our first rehearsals for the play's first virtual reading for the 2021 ArkType festival. Why was Tristán so "ride or die" for Teodoro? Within this extremely self-centered, narcissistic world of celebrities and influencers, Tristán makes huge personal sacrifices to ensure his best friend Teodoro can succeed. There had to be a specific reason. Edwin's early curiosities inspired me to further define possible motives for the character. I left some specific breadcrumbs that actors are encouraged to explore.

One breadcrumb was Tristán's performativity, he plays lots of different characters within the play (thanks to his Level B improv skills). When mistaken for Fabio by the Wawas, he quickly assumes a hypermasculine "security guard" persona. Later, he effortlessly slips into an over-the-top, effeminate portrayal of fictional talent manager Caftan Martine to help Teodoro. Tristán is a wily trickster character who knows his audience and knows how to perform for them. But he also knows when to drop the mask, he is capable of sharing an honest face, especially if it's with someone he cares about. Unfortunately, when Tristán tries to open up to Teodoro about his waning attraction to women after his disastrous experiences of "yacht week," Teodoro doesn't hear him. The audience is immediately whisked back into Teodoro's messy love triangle narrative, as Tristán mutters after him, "Fucking females, fuck!"

Could Tristán’s offensive humor, incessant misogyny, and self-medication be a mask for internalized homophobia? Yes. Tristán could love Teodoro, or he could *love* Teodoro. In my thesis production, actor Trey Smith-Mills opted for the latter and I thought it added such great tension in his relationship with Teodoro (played by Gabriel Franco-Kull). It also made sense why Tristán always follows him and why Tristán doesn’t support Teodoro’s relationships with either Madeinusa or Diana: he gay.

When Alma gifts Tristán the limited-edition Kobe hat at the end of the play, I’ll admit, it is a bit of a consolation prize. Despite being something of a “fan favorite,” Tristán isn’t one of the characters that achieves love in “This Bitch.” We see his yearning, his unwavering loyalty, and his hilarious sense of humor. He represents many positive qualities and hopefully in the near future (or television adaptation), he *will* find someone that finally sees and appreciates him.

FIRST PRODUCTION MEETING

As rehearsals progressed, the design team convened for the first production meeting to share preliminary designs. Just before the start of the semester, the department lost their guest faculty projections designer, so the creative team scrambled to meet the needs of the production, dividing the projection work between our guest scenic designer Kimberly Powers and graduate lightning designer Austin Bomkamp. Initial conversations about projections illuminated several challenges in design that we had not anticipated in the play’s earlier Zoom format. In the online readings, we could easily switch from a laptop camera to a front-facing cell phone camera thanks to the video streaming tools on Zoom and OBS (Open Broadcast Software). Now the creative team had to figure out to pull off some of those same effects between live performance and recorded video (cued and controlled from the booth). The monologues Teodoro and Diana used to perform as a blend of live performance and live feed from their devices changed to blocking

that indicated “live performance” with the performers mouthing their lines along to try to match their recorded video projected above them. There were also moments of expert back acting or “backing,” where a performer turned away from the audience with cell phone in hand, so the projected video could represent everything the audience couldn’t see but the performer could still indicate the monologue’s performance with just the backsides of their bodies.

I was thankfully included in design conversations about character’s social media profiles which were a big part of the projection design. I wrote tweets for Tristán’s Twitter feed and described the sorts of Instagram pictures and captions Dorotea might post on her profile. While the final iteration of our video projection wasn’t exactly as written in the script (or imagined in our previous Zoom explorations), I am proud of the creative team’s ingenuity and resourcefulness to try to pull off the script’s original intent as best they could.

Much of the productions’ costume design conversations began way ahead of the rehearsal process during the summer as that team had a huge cast to dress in a short amount of time. We were lucky to have Helene Siebrits, head of the M.F.A. in costume design, as our designer. One thing that was immensely helpful in jumpstarting our conversation was the extensive collection of photos and screenshot references I collected throughout my writing process. Just as I build lengthy music playlists to capture the mood and vibe of a project (and to give me something to listen to while I write), I now gather reference images for every aspect of design. The intention is not to limit the designer’s process, but to give them a window inside my brain. I could send Helene and Estefanía stills from Pilar Miró’s film adaptation of “El perro del hortelano” and show them exactly which image inspired Diana’s huge red sun hat and veil. My conversations with Helene and Estefanía also helped me to better define how I saw some of the supporting character’s costumes. For example, I had not identified exactly what Dorotea looked like. I knew

she was hip, mellow, party-girl but as the design process for my thesis developed, I realized what would make a lot of sense for this character was more in the neon raver, hallucinogens at Coachella realm. There wasn't much difference between the look of Coco Wawa's Patronus Jojo Siwa and the stuff folks wear at Burning Man, they just have more of an elevated Mad Max vibe whenever they weren't appropriating indigenous headwear. This alignment of Dorotea and Coco Wawa's costumes helps fill in the blanks of their relationship at the very end of the play. Though all we catch are the initial sparks of their blossoming romance onstage, we get a glimpse of how they might maintain their unique sense of style (and self) while also complementing each other as partners.

In early conversations with Helene and Estefanía, there was a lot we were aligned on. Diana's looks had to be big, bold, and as sexy as our lead actor could comfortably move and work in. We knew Teodoro was fashion-challenged and awkward, but by the play's end, his look gets a huge boost thanks to Diana's severance check and Armando's designs for closing ceremony. Helene's initial takes on Coco and Sheila weren't exactly what I had in mind (too femme for Coco; *way* too sexy for Sheila) but as our design conversations evolved, we found a happy medium between everyone's ideas. This experience confirmed "This Bitch: Esta Sangre Quiero" is a huge costume play, even if it were to be produced without the addition of ensemble members (in this production a 6-person undergraduate ensemble was cast that performed as resort guests, Diana's followers, and Coco's backup dancers, in addition to covering understudy tracks for the main cast¹⁴).

¹⁴ We did not have understudy coverage for Teodoro or Olmo. We only saw 2 Latino men in our entire audition process (both actors were cast) and while we would've been open to casting female actors (either gender-flipping the role or adjusting pronouns), we only had 2 native speaking actresses audition for this production.

Upon preparing highlights of my designer collaborations for this process paper, I realized one of the reasons I have so little to say about the set design was because there was so much our guest scenic designer Kimberly Powers understood about the look of the world and movement of this play. The beach is a static fixture onstage, but sometimes we stroll between locations at the resort, other times there are very rapid scene changes as characters pile on and off stage. Kim gave my reference images a lot of consideration, and I was happy to see them echoed throughout her design. I am obsessed with the symbol of a triangle for this play as it reflects our two primary love triangles: Coco – Diana – Teodoro; Fabio – Madeinusa – Teodoro. Triangles appeared in many of Kim’s reference images and ultimately in the Pilates backdrop built for Diana’s wellness event, which consisted of a large triangle made up of smaller triangles.

Between conversations with Kim and our lighting designer Zack McJunkins, I realized that time of day was an important aspect to nail down as both were trying to make sense of how to build the physical world of this play. I created a reference document that page by page outlined what time of day it was in each section of the script. The design process got a little bit tricky, because I chose to follow the format of the original text so there are no specific scenes identified, just act breaks. That necessitated the creation of a “French scenes” dramaturgy resource to break down the script by each and every character entrance and exit. While that wasn’t a super intentional choice in my adaptation, I like that this requires a very close reading of the text by the director and design team.

XNA TO LAX

By the end of our first week of rehearsal, I finally got an answer back about the TV job. My manager texted around noon on a Friday that an offer was coming! I needed to be in Los Angeles that weekend to begin in the room by Monday morning. I went to my thesis rehearsal

that night to give final line edits and share both good and bad news. Bad news: I wouldn't be as active in the rehearsal process as I had planned. Good news: I got my first TV job! I'd return for opening weekend to see a few performances and celebrate with the cast and crew.

The first few months of the TV job were something of a blur. It all happened so quickly, suddenly I was on a one-way flight to LAX, settled into the guest room of my friend's house in Eagle Rock, then into a sublet of my own in Sherman Oaks as I Lyfted back and forth from the Disney Burbank lot.

What was this life?! The lot had its own Starbucks on campus and even though I rarely patronized the coffee chain, I quickly figured out how to time my online order as my Lyft pulled up to the Disney security gates, so that after my weekly COVID test, I could pick up my latte and breakfast sandwich before a long day of breaking story. Around 12:30pm each day, assistants would arrive with our lunch orders as if by magic. The breakroom? Stocked with all our favorite snacks and stress-eats. Fever-Tree ginger beers in the mini-cans? A hot commodity, you grab two when they appear in the fridge or miss out until the next grocery trip. The lime Topo Chicos in the glass bottles? Just the *perfect* amount of spice in their carbonation but beware if you gesture excitedly when you speak, it's too easy to tip one over and soak the conference table.

Thrilling beverage and snack options aside, this new world of being a professional writer in Hollywood came with many new challenges I had not anticipated or expected. Which is not saying much because what did I really know about this world? Nothing. Nothing could've prepared me. I stumbled through my first few months, learning to pitch by watching the more experienced writers, trying my best to navigate the difficult hierarchy of that space. A development process in TV is not a democratic process, even in the most open, collaborative rooms. You serve a showrunner's vision of a story. So unlike, a play development process,

where I can quickly and easily change a line or redirect a scene if it feels weird or flat, in TV you yield to the majority. As a staff writer, I had my foot in the door of a huge, powerful industry that is almost impossible to break into. But I did not have any say over story. I did not have the power to challenge choices or to suggest a rebreak if something felt off or weird.

Whenever I was able to return to my playwriting life via Zoom, visiting “This Bitch: Esta Sangre Quiero” tech rehearsal, the first table read of “Casta,” and casting sessions for “Hairy & Sherri,” it felt like I was myself again. I knew how this world worked. In a new play process, the playwright is always heard. I never felt like I had to quiet down or make myself small, someone always listened to me and considered what I had to offer. As the “This Bitch: Esta Sangre Quiero” cast texted rehearsal videos and behind-the-scenes photos of their photo & video shoots, I grew anxious to see them again. I was excited to see my play on its first feet and planned to fly in for the first Saturday night performance and Sunday matinee.

LAX TO XNA

Thanks to the university’s football schedule, the Saturday performance of “This Bitch: Esta Sangre Quiero” was canceled so I was only able to see the matinee performance on Sunday. Overall, I was extremely happy with the experience, it was a huge relief to hear laughter so early and so frequently within the play. The initial scene is always a bit jarring, it’s an overload of information and new character introductions all thrown at the audience at once, but once the audience got the hang of it, they were in for the ride. They adored our cast, and rightfully so, it was such a talented group of very hardworking performers that formed an airtight ensemble. From the audience, you felt how much everyone enjoyed working and playing together. There seemed to be a real love for the material and true enjoyment in performing for a live audience after the first iteration had only lived online.

One of my favorite moments from the matinee performance was an unscripted set malfunction, where Madeinusa and Fabio's bed got stuck onstage when the scene was supposed to end. As crew members struggled to pull them offstage, the actors began to break character which had the entire audience howling with laughter. Actors Audrey Romero and Jordan Williams (reprising their ArkType roles) finally found a way to cover, by hiding under the blankets together until they were finally whisked offstage. It wasn't a moment I wrote, nor could I ever design myself alone at the writing desk, but it was a joyful mistake that serendipitously poked fun at the production's scenic design (which incorporated a lot of rolling scenic elements that had to be locked into place).

There are of course some things I hope will be different in future productions of "This Bitch." I hope to see this play produced in communities with a wider range of diverse actors so that native speakers can be cast in all four roles that require Spanish fluency (Diana, Teodoro, Olmo, and Alma). I believe the casting process will be greatly improved outside the confines of the University of Arkansas' Theatre Department. There was an excruciating lack of communication and zero transparency about the casting process for the mainstage season. While my thesis proposal was greenlighted in the Spring 2022 semester, it appeared that by Fall auditions very few members had actually read my script. Faculty repeatedly suggested BIPOC actors for roles explicitly written for Black male actors, as if to assume one actor of color could easily suffice for another. When pushed on the subject, it was clear faculty didn't actually know the racial background of their students, they just assumed if someone was Black, they must be. It was incredibly disheartening and demoralizing to sit through long-winded casting meetings with faculty that would ultimately have the final say on our cast lists even though most had not attended a single audition. It also upset me that my director was held to specific expectations in

the casting process that previous guest directors were not. It felt like some faculty and staff treated Estefanía like another M.F.A. student instead of a guest director specifically brought in to collaborate with the graduate cohort. I cannot unsee the disparities between how previous guest directors were treated (almost all of them older, White men) and how Estefanía, a mid-career Latina director, was treated.

I am very grateful to my cast and creative team for preserving despite a difficult work environment that was not always organized, communicative, or professional. “This Bitch: Esta Sangre Quiero” was a huge show to pull off and required an enormous amount of departmental resources. Though I waffled throughout the process, unsure if the stress, uncertainty, and microaggressions were worth it, in the end, I am incredibly proud of the work we accomplished.

POSTMORTEM, OR BITCH WE OUT

"If I am a witch, then so be it, I said. And I took to eating black things - huitlacoche the corn mushroom, coffee, dark chiles, the bruised part of fruit, the darkest, blackest things to make me hard and strong."

- Sandra Cisneros, author

In one of our final classes together as a Playwriting cohort, John Walch asked my cohort mate Sarah Loucks and I to write postcards with three intentions for our fourth and final year of graduate school. We'd been gifted this additional "COVID year" to see our thesis productions fully realized as Mainstage productions, to continue another year of classes outside the scope of the usual M.F.A. Theatre curriculum. How to proceed?

INTENTION 1

I want to replicate the Zoom ArkType experience (good process, good people, good performance) for all.

As I was not physically present for much of my thesis production's process, I can't tell you how successful I was in this intention. From Los Angeles, I kept up with rehearsals primarily through our stage manager Allie Sorenson's rehearsal reports, texts from director Estefanía Fadul, and bimonthly Zoom meetings with my advisor John Walch. What I can reflect is this distance between the playwriting and play production process is probably a very healthy and necessary step in my career. It is now logistically and geographically impossible to be a part of each and every rehearsal process. I need to have faith in the blueprints I've built and in my creative collaborators (many of whom I have a hand in selecting). I also need to remember that if something is awkward or unclear onstage in production, I can always do a rewrite afterward.

This is playwriting after all. Our scripts are living, breathing documents that can be changed at any time until cemented by publication. And even then, there's always the possibility of a reprint.

INTENTION 2

I want to shield myself and others from the toxic work environment of this department.

My cohort experienced a lot in our four years together: mental health crises, painful breakups, not to mention the global pandemic that resulted in a complete shutdown of the art form and industry we'd devoted our lives to. This experience asked each of us to abandon what we thought we knew about ourselves and our craft. We were forced to rebuild and recommit ourselves towards a highly competitive career that is extremely expensive to pursue and offers zero job security. We needed each other to make sense of the nonsense, to feel connected to a greater purpose and community. While we lost many valued and valuable members of our cohort (the design track in particular had difficulty retaining talented students), many of the original members of our directing, playwriting, and acting cohorts survived. Not all of us received the same support or autonomy in our program of study. But most of us tried to advocate for each other. We tried to expand ourselves and our craft despite pesky nuisances and limitations. We were here to see each other grow, and ultimately, succeed.

I am grateful to my graduate cohort for all opportunities they've created for interdisciplinary collaboration, rigorous discussion, and their commitment to producing creative projects that challenged the status quo. I hope future generations of theatre grads love each other as much as we loved each other. I hope they continue to embrace experimental storytelling and

let their freak flags fly high¹⁵. I also hope they see an expansion of our department's meager diversity efforts. Maybe they'll see more faculty of color? In a leadership position? One day.

INTENTION 3

I want to focus on (an) easy departure.

Even the most refined, compartmentalized presentation of myself, I still carry an air of “too muchness.” No matter how awkward or introverted I may feel, I will almost always be seen and heard loudly. I can't say I know what to do with this superpower, it's like realizing your invisibility cloak is in fact a huge brightly colored foghorn that announces your every movement with an ear-splitting alarm. I don't want to be in the spotlight, I don't have to always be the leader or the loudest voice in the room. But like it or not, I have a specific kind of status and visibility and that comes with great responsibility. I feel that even now as I crank out the concluding paragraphs of this process paper which has run longer than it needed to only to prove a point to myself¹⁶. All I need now is a final summary with an honest appraisal of my experiences at the University of Arkansas and my thesis project “This Bitch: Esta Sangre Quiero.”

How do I share the truth of this experience? How do I hold up both extreme gratitude and disappointment? I went searching for my trusted “Crucial Conversations” workbook, surely there was some insight I could share, some tidy bookend to wrap this paper up.

¹⁵ Don't let undergraduates' prudish reactions to sexual content deter you, these kids watched the TV show *Euphoria in high school*. They may be conservative, religious, and largely conformist but they will still root for Jules and Rue EVERY DAY.

¹⁶ I have already exceeded the page length of an antagonist's thesis paper, which was the primary, motivating factor for this final assignment.

“Move from Learning to Doing. The commitment you made is just the first step. Now, take the next steps . . . (and) Teach a friend what you have learned.” (Grenny et al.)

Friends, I can honestly say, this experience of graduate school changed me. It transformed my art. It changed the way I approach adaptation, collaboration, and working within the extreme limitations of an academic institution. It taught me, not exactly the education I expected to receive but an education, nonetheless. I learned that I have power and presence. I have a unique voice. And most important, I have people that love and care about me no matter how funny, weird, critical, or bitchy I may be.

Already I’ve said too much. Much too much. So, time for the easy out: I learned a lot; I loved my cohort a lot; this is the end.

REFERENCES

- Bermel, Albert. *Farce: A History from Aristophanes to Woody Allen*. Simon and Schuster, 1982.
- Bucksbaum, Sydney. "Watch Tina Fey and Amy Poehler's Best Weekend Updates and Other 'SNL' Moments." *EW.com*, 02 October 2019, <https://ew.com/tv/2019/10/02/snl-tina-fey-amy-poehler-weekend-update-15th-anniversary-saturday-night-live/>.
- Cowling, Erin Alice, et al. *Social Justice in Spanish Golden Age Theatre*. University of Toronto Press, 2021.
- Cisneros, Sandra. *Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories*. New York: Vintage Books, 1992.
- Grenny, Joseph, et al. *Crucial Conversations: Participant Toolkit*. McGraw Hill Professional, 2012.
- Hill, Libby. "Courtney Kemp Agboh on How She Became a Showrunner, and Why She Doesn't Feel Responsible to Make 'Better Female Characters!'" *Vulture*, 10 June 2015, <https://www.vulture.com/2015/06/courtney-kemp-agboh-on-great-female-characters.html>.
- Houghton, Norris Ed, and Lope De Vega. "The Sheep Well." *The Golden Age. Selected & Introduced by Norris Houghton*, Dell, 1963.
- Matthews, Brander. *Papers on Playmaking*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1957.
- Muñoz, Laura Alcaide. "This Bitch: Self-fashioning and Social Media in an Adaptation of El Perro Del Hortelano." *Romance Quarterly*, Routledge, Jan. 2022, pp. 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08831157.2021.2017242>.
- Rosen, Miss. "Judy Chicago on Setting the Patriarchal Art World Ablaze | Dazed." *Dazed*, 23 July 2021, <https://www.dazeddigital.com/art-photography/article/53616/1/judy-chicago-art-world-patriarchy-interview-the-flowering-book-memoir>.
- Vega, Lope de, and Stanley Appelbaum. *Fuenteovejuna*. Dover Publications, 2012.
- Vega, Lope de and Nick Drake. *Madness in Valencia/Peribañez*. Oberon Books, 1998.
- Vega, Lope de and William I. Oliver. *Lady Nitwit = La Dama Boba*. Bilingual Press/Editorial Bilingüe, 1998.
- Vega, Lope de and Tanya Ronder. *The Young Vic Theatre Company Presents Peribanez*. MIT Press, 2003.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: EXCERPT OF REVISED PRODUCTION SCRIPT

THIS BITCH: ESTA SANGRE QUIERO

inspired by Lope de Vega's "El perro del hortelano"

by Adrienne Dawes

THESIS EXCERPT: May 1, 2023

CAST | *hablan en ella las personas siguientes*

11

+ indicates Spanish-speaking roles (fluency or native speaker preferred)

^ indicates roles with *some* Spanglish (do not have to be fluent!)

+**DIANA**: (20s, Latina/x F or femme person) powerful Pilates influencer and pansexual goddess [after Miya Ponsetto]

+**TEODORO**: (20s, Latino/x M or masculine person) Diana's socially awkward but talented social media manager

^**ARMANDO**: (20s, M or masculine person) Diana's snooty stylist and closest confidante,

^**MADEINUSA** aka **MADÉ**: (20s, Latina/x F or femme person) Diana's makeup artist [after Rosa aka Adam Ray Okay], huge personality, huge heart, and hopeless romantic

DOROTEA: (20s, Non-White F or femme person) Diana's hairstylist, a hip raver/burner party girl with a soft spot for D-list celebrities, not so secretly into Coco Wawa

TRISTÁN: (20s, Black M or masculine person) Diana's videographer, Teodoro's best friend

FABIO: (20s, Black M or masculine person) Diana's bumbling security guard, not so secretly into Madeinusa

^**COCO WAWA**: (28, F or femme person), one of Diana's suitors, a hyperactive reality TV star and internet celebrity, sequin tomboy energy, severe Peter Pan syndrome [after Jojo Siwa; actor must be able to dance & maybe sing?]

SHEILA WAWA: (40s-50s, White F or femme person) Coco's Momager, cold & calculating, rich & exhausted

+**OLMO**: (20s-30s, Latino/x M or masculine person), seasonal maintenance worker at the hotel; and Olmo's impersonation of Riqui Tiquismiquis, international trap and reggaeton star [after Bad Bunny; actor must be able to rap]

+**ALMA**: (20s-30s, Latina/x F or femme person), hotel concierge from Tulum

[VOICEOVER WOMAN can be recorded or performed by an actor offstage]

SETTING

End of December 2019. Tulum, México. A luxury resort.

SCRIPT NOTES

This text FLIES. *Transitions hurtle*. Take out alllll the air.

A forward slash / indicates an interruption point.

Productions can substitute their own underwhelming, not exotic, not beautiful (or tolerant) city name for Harrison, AR.

English translations are provided in [brackets] underneath most of the Spanish text for a bilingual ensemble. Spanish does not have to be translated for an English-speaking audience.

Selected text is sourced directly from Lope de Vega's "El perro del hortelano."

Recommended English translation: Victor Dixon (1990)

Doubling is possible (Alma/Sheila - Olmo/Armando) with *very quick* turnarounds. Productions are welcome to include an ensemble of Coco's backup dancers, Diana's followers, hotel concierge, maintenance workers, and/or other resort guests.

ORIGINAL MUSIC

"I AM COCO"

Lyrics by Adrienne Dawes

Music by Eric Johnson

"RIQUÍSIMO"

Lyrics by Lope de Vega

Adapted by khattieq

Music by Eric Johnson

TRANSLATION

Spanish translation by Adrienne Dawes, Daniel Jáquez, Estefanía & Jeanette Fadul, with help from Joanna Orrego, Sylvia Cervantes Blush, Laura Muñoz, Ana Miramontes Loya, & Mariana Baidon Carrillo.

Jojo Siwa translation by Adrienne Dawes

PRONUNCIATION GUIDE*

Diana /Di = DEE-AN-NAH or DEE

Teodoro/Teo = TAY-OH-DOR-OH or TAY-OH

Madeinusa/Madé = MAH-DAYEN-OO-SAH or MAH-DAY

Tristán/Tris - TREES-TAHN or TREES

Dorotea/Téa= DOR-OH-TAY-AH or TAY-AH

Riqui Tiquismiquis = REE-KEY TEE-KEYS-MEE-KEYS

*everyone knows how to pronounce everyone's name, except maybe Sheila and/or Voiceover
Woman

PROLOGUE - PROMO

Projection: A promo video for “El Summit” arts and music festival. B-roll footage of beautiful women playing on the beach, Burning Man-esque wellness events, palm trees, Mayan ruins, cocktails. Luxury. Decadence.

A voiceover woman speaks in halting vocal fry, very bad Spanglish:

VOICEOVER WOMAN

Bienvenidos and welcome to El Summit - an immersive music and wellness festival located in Tulum, Mexico! Join us for seven transformative days or maybe one amazing week for the best in food, fitness, art, music, and sustainable settler colonialism. Featuring pilates with DianaBianca!

A small image of DIANA smiling seductively amidst her branded hashtags: #Sexy #Pansexual #Pilates! Follower count: 1 Million.

VOICEOVER WOMAN

On the Rainbow Stage - it's Coco Wawa from Dancing Baby Diva Moms!

A medium-sized Nickelodeon-style headshot of COCO WAWA posing with double peace signs. Follower count: 10 Million.

VOICEOVER WOMAN

And on our Pre-Hispanic Mainstage reggae-ton superstar Riqui Tiquismiquis performs our closing ceremony.

A huge image of RIQUI TIQUISMIQUIS posed in his signature bunny mask and colored lens sunglasses. Follower count: 400 Million.

VOICEOVER WOMAN

We - are all connected a El Summit!

Title card: El Summit, Tulum, México - December 2019.

ACT ONE

Late night/early morning. Sound of crashing waves. The quiet hum of a diesel generator. Piles of seaweed wash onto the private beach of a luxury resort. Huge "El Summit" banners hang from the trees.

OLMO, a hotel maintenance worker walks along the beach with ALMA, dressed in a hotel concierge uniform.

OLMO

Cada mañana, esta puta mierda se acumula y se acumula y se acumula.
[Every morning, this fucking shit accumulates and accumulates]

ALMA

(snickers)

¿Cual mierda, específicamente? Los turistas menso o los yoga DJs / ?
[Which shit specifically? The stupid tourists or yoga DJs /]

OLMO

Los turistas gringos y su basura. Estoy seguro que ellos traen el cochino sargazo. No sé como vives aqui.
[Gringo tourists and their trash. They bring the nasty seaweed, I'm sure of it. I don't know how you live here.]

Alma bumps into him playfully.

ALMA

¿Dónde más? Es mi hogar y es hermosísimo - cuando no es "El Summit." Pero si esta semana puedo demostrar que puedo ser gerente, me tienen que dar un promoción.
[Where else? It's my home and it's beautiful - when it's not "El Summit." But if I can prove myself this week, if I show that I can be manager - they have to give me a promotion]

OLMO

(frowns)

¿Quieres ser gerente?
[You want to be a manager?]

ALMA

Quiero dinero, viejo / ?
[*I want money, man /*]

OLMO

Sí /?

ALMA

Sí y . . . quiero hacer mi propio horario, ¡no más early check-in!/
[*And. . . I want to make my own schedule, no more -*]

OLMO

(nods)

Sí, no - ¡no más!

ALMA

Y quiero tener mi propio lugar para no tener que escaparnos a la playa cada vez que
queramos /
[*And I want my own place, so we don't have to escape to the beach every time we want to*
/]

Olmo awkwardly interrupts.

OLMO

Sí, sí! Sí.

She holds onto him.

ALMA

Tal vez así no me dejarías otra vez, al final de la temporada, solitita -
[*Maybe then you wouldn't leave me again, end of season, all alone /*]

She leans in to kiss him just as we hear the
sound of a man YELPING! Then the sound of a
woman YELLING OUT in shock!

Alma and Olmo look at each other, laughing:
What was that?

TEODORO runs in, dressed in boxer shorts and
a gold bedsheet. TRISTÁN follows a few steps
behind, fully dressed and wearing a knock-off
Kobe hat.

TRISTÁN
(out of breath)

Holy shit /

TEODORO
Shit shit shit that wasn't her cabana /

TRISTÁN
You couldn't knock Teodoro / ?

TEODORO
Madé says I'm too passive! This was me being forceful /

TRISTÁN
This was you half-nekkid outside the wrong cabana, snapping pics of your dick /

TEODORO
You don't think Diana recognized me, do you?

They run off. Alma and Olmo exchange a look,
laughing: *Weird.*

They lean in to kiss again just as DIANA runs
in. She's dressed in an expensive robe, her hair
in rollers and a clay mask on her face. She stops
at the edge of the seaweed.

DIANA
(screeching)
STOP! DO NOT RUN! I SAW YOU TAKING PICTURES! EVERYONE WAKE THIS
INSTANT! NO ONE SLEEPS IF I DO NOT! WAKE UP!
(bellowing)

NOW!

Diana's bodyguard, FABIO, stumbles out,
rubbing his eyes sleepily. He pulls on a shirt,
dressed in his early morning work out clothes.

FABIO
Hey - woah Diana - you good / ?

DIANA
Good?! La cólera mía justo esa flema me da. Hurry! Follow them /
[I am blazing with rage.]

FABIO

Follow who?

DIANA

That man or woman or person! Outside my luxury cabana trying to photograph as I sleep!
Move! They're getting away!

FABIO

I'm moving. I'm moving.

Fabio wrests a lit Tiki torch out of the sand and runs off with it. Alma begrudgingly breaks from Olmo to intervene. He watches Diana and Alma for a few beats before exiting.

ALMA

Señora, está / ?

DIANA

¿Qué tipo de resort está manejando aquí?! I wake to unauthorized interruption, some person lurking outside! My beach was to be private!
[What type of resort are you running here?!]

ALMA

It is Señora /

Fabio reenters, his Tiki torch now unlit.

FABIO

OK! I couldn't see cuz they threw their hat.

DIANA

What!?

FABIO

They threw their hat right at my Tiki torch, what could I do.

DIANA

What could you do Fabio!? What could you do?!? *You kill them.*

ALMA

Señora, there are hundreds of people here por El Summit /

DIANA

I'm featured guest!!!

ALMA

I know. So. Maybe. There is someone trying to find you, take a picture because you are /

DIANA

I am / ?

ALMA

Famous? On the internet?

DIANA

I am famous. Influencer. Yes. Everyone wants to see me, touch me, be me. Yes. I bet some follower, some deranged, obsessed fan tried to access my beach. They are no doubt desperate to seduce me, but no matter. I will find who stalks me and punish them beyond what is natural.

(at Fabio)

You say they threw their hat /

FABIO

You think I could find it?

Diana glares at him.

DIANA

Ya think?!

Fabio exits.

Diana and Alma retreat into Diana's cabana.

Diana angrily rips rollers out of her hair as Alma follows, picking up after her.

DIANA

If any of my people are to blame, I will send them back to Los Angeles WITH LAWSUIT!

She pushes over a small ceramic statue, it shatters on the ground.

ALMA

Señora!! Son las 4 de la mañana / !

DIANA

And?!

ALMA

And you think you could maybe lower your /

DIANA

IF I AM UPSET, ALL ARE UPSET!

ALMA

Yes but other featured guests are along the beach. Just arrived from Cozumel /

DIANA

(frowns)

Cozumel, what's in Cozumel, why am I not invited to Cozumel?

ALMA

Just a connecting flight. Coco had a show in Cleveland /

DIANA

Coco /

ALMA

Coco Wawa, the /

Diana sits down at her vanity.

DIANA

(smiles wickedly)

Oh I *know* Coco /

ALMA

And Riqui Tiquismiquis. He should be here in time for closing /

DIANA

Does she arrive alone? Coco. Or she brings someone?

ALMA

Coco brings Sheila? Her mom and manager?

DIANA

(rolls her eyes)

Her Momager? Coward.

Fabio reenters, holding Tristán's hat.

FABIO

(proudly)

OK. Found it!

Diana examines it, frowning.

DIANA
¿Qué diablos es esto?

FABIO
In English, we say “hat” /

DIANA
The label, it’s counterfeit! Some low-budget burner stalks me?!!

She glares at Alma, de facto hotel
representative.

ALMA
Se lo prometo, esto no es nuestro estándar. En la mañana, podremos investigar /
[*I promise you, this is not our standard. In the morning, we can investigate /*]

DIANA
Es la mañana! Podemos investigar - NOW!
(to Fabio)
Go! Summon the Glam Squad!

FABIO
Glam Squad? Uh they *just* got back from the bar /

DIANA
(bellowing)
GET THEM NOWWW!

Fabio quickly exits. Alma awkwardly lingers
near the doorway.

ALMA
... Bien. ¿Puedo traerle café o /?
[*Can I bring you coffee or /*]

Diana glares at her.

DIANA
(fuming)
You really think I drink coffee now? Ya estoy a 100. A 1000!

Fabio brings in Dorotea, Madeinusa, and
Armando, still tipsy from partying. They cling
to each other for moral and physical support.

FABIO
OK. Brought all the ones I could find.

Diana rotates her vanity chair slowly to face them, scowling.

Dorotea, Madeinusa, and Armando jump back in shock.

DIANA
(at Alma/Fabio)

Leave us.

Alma and Fabio awkwardly head for the door.
Diana wipes off her face mask at the mirror.

ARMANDO
(calls after Fabio)

Chao! Fabio!

MADEINUSA
(snickers, at Armando)

He don't hear you, Thirsty /

Fabio pops back in to grin goofily at Madeinusa.

FABIO
Madé? You say something / ?

MADEINUSA
Not to you!
(at Armando)

Fucken necio, dude.

Armando purses his lips, angrily.

FABIO
Oh uh. See you later. Maybe. *Madé.*

Fabio shoots an awkward gesture as he exits.
Madeinusa and Dorotea stifle laughter.

DIANA
Here, Dorotea.

Dorotea carefully approaches.

DOROTEA

(nervously)

Heyyy, girlfriend. What is up /

Diana sniffs loudly in her direction.

DIANA

You entertained tonight?

Dorotea adjusts her outfit nervously.

DOROTEA

Tonight? Uh I think I had jokes / ?

DIANA

Somebody famous?

DOROTEA

Wha /?

DIANA

Somebody arrived late tonight at the hotel?

DOROTEA

Tonight? I don't know /

DIANA

You don't know Coco?

DOROTEA

Coco?

DIANA

Wawa from Dancing Baby Diva Moms? You have her scent. Eau 2 B Me /

DOROTEA

(horrified)

Oh! No! That's a children's body spray, I would never /

DIANA

You'd never want to "play" with the Coco?

DOROTEA

Coco?! No no - I mean maybe when I was a kid but I'm like full-adult now /

Before Dorotea can finish, Diana holds out her phone.

Projection: Dorotea's profile. 10K followers. Multiple pictures of Dorotea posing goofily in the vicinity of Coco Wawa's entourage.

DOROTEA

(awkwardly)

Oh that's uh . . . those are jokes / ??!

DIANA

You see her on our beach tonight or no?!

DOROTEA

No! I mean, I don't think so, I mean / !

ARMANDO

(sneers)

Died as she lived, groveling like a little bitc/

DIANA

(growls)

Te mando Mando!

Armando and Dorotea swap positions.

ARMANDO

Diana! I'm here! Can't believe I left you all alone, you really should've come out /

Diana holds up a hand to silence him.

DIANA

¿Qué hombre es éste que afuera de mi sala; which one of you betrays me?
[Who man was this outside my room]

ARMANDO

Di, you're like my bestie, I'd never /

Diana stands.

DIANA

Acércate más /

ARMANDO

(grins)

Ooh. Secrets.

Armando moves closer.

DIANA

Más.

Armando moves closer. Armando and Diana are practically nose to nose:

DIANA

(intensely)

I do not tolerate lies /

ARMANDO

OK, your breath smells so good right now /

Diana glares at him.

DIANA

Who was on my private beach? Who?!

ARMANDO

(squirms)

OK. Diana. *If* there was someone /

DIANA

There was / !

ARMANDO

There was someone. But maybe, maybe they were there on accident? Maybe they weren't there to see you?

She pulls back.

DIANA

(scoffs)

If not to see me, then who?

ARMANDO

Madeinusa /

MADEINUSA

Fucken what / ?

DIANA

Madeinusa?!

ARMANDO

(quietly, to Diana)

Madeinusa. But trust me, guy is super lame, like *zero* aesthetic /

DIANA

I know this man? ¿Quién es, Armando?!? *Who comes to see Madé!*

ARMANDO

It's Teodoro!

DIANA

Teodoro?!

ARMANDO

(reads as disgust)

I know! I said! Teodoro's been sneaking in to see her when you're asleep.

DIANA

My . . . social media Teodoro? With *Madé*?

(pause)

Stand down.

ARMANDO

(awkwardly)

Like move away or back, I don't / ?

Diana pushes him away to beckon Madeinusa.

DIANA

(trying for calm)

Madé.

MADEINUSA

(snickers, to Dorotea)

She always be beckoning!

Madeinusa approaches, sucking on the tips of her acrylic neon nails. Armando joins Dorotea. They watch with horror as:

MADEINUSA
(grins)

Dude, what /

DIANA
What the fuck? ¿Eres tú de quien fiaba mi honor y mis pensamientos?
[Is this how you betray my honor and my trust?]

MADEINUSA
OK, what Armando say? Cuz I didn't do nothin,' I'm fucken loyal as shit /

DIANA
¿Tú, leal?
[You, loyal?]

MADEINUSA
Miss! How I offend you now, seriously / ?

DIANA
No es ofensa que en mi casita you fuck my social media manager?
[It's not offensive that in my casita . . .]

MADEINUSA
OK ma'am, miss, that wasn't all fucking.

DIANA
No /?

MADEINUSA
Está tan necio, I swear to God, but mostly it's *talking*. *Teodoro can talk*.
[He's so stupid ...]

Diana frowns.

DIANA
What does he say to you? *Tell me!!!*

MADEINUSA
Chill! He's like, he's like . . .

Lights shift. A sexy Teodoro appears in the ocean, shirt hanging from his shoulders as he walks on water towards us. Only Diana can see him.

TEODORO

Yo pierdo el alma por esos ojos.
[I lose my soul for those eyes.]

DIANA
(gasps softly)

Ayyyyy?????

MADEINUSA

Right? Then he'll say some shit like . . .

The wind ruffles Teodoro's hair. He adjusts his glasses, suavely.

TEODORO

Yo vivo por ellos; esta noche no he dormido, desvelando mis deseos en tu hermosura.
[I live for them; I have not slept tonight revealing my desires in your beauty.]

Diana's face drops; Madé reads this as disgust.

MADEINUSA

Necio, what I say? Also, he begged for my extensions / ?

TEODORO

Para atarlos, porque estás en mi pensamiento quedos.
[To tie them up, because you stay in my thoughts.]

Teodoro holds up a clip-in hair extension, smells it, then drops it into the ocean. It bursts into neon-green flames. Teodoro disappears into pastel clouds.

Diana takes a second to recover.

DIANA

He is . . . very good with words, Teodoro.

MADEINUSA
(shrugs)

Kinda /

DIANA
So you like him.

MADEINUSA
(grins)
OK I don't *not* like him? He just like *really* likes me in like a *really* real way but /

DIANA
But /??!

MADEINUSA
Never saw myself with a White dude.

DIANA
He's Cuban from Florida / ?

MADEINUSA
(nods vigorously)
Exactly!

Diana fights to contain her anger/disgust.

DIANA
Then. You should. Be together.

MADEINUSA
Really?! You ain't mad we /

DIANA
No, no, no, no. I would like to help you Madé. If my employees are not happy, I am not happy.

Dorotea and Armando exchange a look: *Really, bitch?*

DIANA
I will speak to Teodoro, then we can do a big photo announcement on Insta /

MADEINUSA
Main page / ?

DIANA
(hisses)
Stories /!!!

MADEINUSA
(excitedly)
Really?

DIANA

It's real feelings, isn't it?

MADEINUSA

Yeah you know, now that you say it: I think I do really like him!

DIANA

Yes, well he's actually /

MADEINUSA

Maybe I fucken love him. Teo's actually . . . Teo's *smart!* That's probably why I go straight for the D cuz if I left *my* mouth open?

DIANA

(mutters)

Idiota /

MADEINUSA

(cackles)

Exactly! But that's really, that's sweet Miss, you're actually /

She tries to hug Diana. Diana deflects.

MADEINUSA

You're sweet. You're sweet! Mostly scare the *fuck* outta me but sometimes you can be nice. You can be nice.

Diana bites her lip, suppressing a huge explosion. Madeinusa joins Armando and Dorotea, as they exit:

ARMANDO

(aside to Madé)

¿Qué mierda /

MADEINUSA

What the fuck with you, Ar-mando? 'Least now she's not mad /

DOROTEA

You really trust this bitch?

MADEINUSA

No, she's pretty! Look at her! She just wants to help! Right, bitch?!

Madé waves at Diana. Diana throws a chair in her direction, screaming:

DIANA
(explodes)

GET OUT!!!!!!

Dorotea quickly pulls Madé offstage.

Diana exits her cabana, walking down the beach. She passes (but does not notice) Olmo who rakes up brown seaweed with a teeshirt wrapped around his face as a mask.

As Diana walks and walks, her luxury cabana rolls out of view. The sky changes, the sun shifting closer to the horizon.

Diana opens her phone, adjusts her pose for optimal lighting. She records a private video, projected into the clouds.

DIANA

When we speak of love . . . it's never for pleasure. Only business. My brand narrative. How I love my sponsors! Love my followers! I must give everyone their big social media romance so I can be seen as more "accessible." "Relatable." Everybody intimidated by my ambition, perfect body, my dark sexual energy! But isn't this who they ask me to be? DianaBianca. Sexy. Pansexual. Pilates. And who can love her? Who can love Diana? All of her?

(pause)

I will have a love that's mine. Not for corporate sponsors but for myself. Look at me. I am not a woman who should be alone. I should have *everything* I want and yet . . . I am so love-deprived.

Diana notices Teodoro and Tristán exiting the treehouse suite, Teodoro now fully dressed.

DIANA

What is this feeling taking root deep inside me? Both envy and regret. That I am not lesser than I currently am. Or that Teodoro could be more so that I might . . . so that I might love him.

Diana returns to her phone, kisses the screen, then chucks it deep into the ocean.

Teodoro takes notice of Diana and awkwardly salutes in her direction. She scowls and flips him off, exiting.

TRISTÁN
(to Teodoro)

The fuck were you waving for?

TEODORO
As far as she knows, we just woke up. We could be going for a morning jog.

TRISTÁN
Jog, Teo?

TEODORO
We could jog /

TRISTÁN
(sourly)
Never ran so much in my life. Lost my Kobe hat. That hat was like my son /

TEODORO
I know /

TRISTÁN
Told you to quit sneaking off but you couldn't do it /

TEODORO
Nunca el amor se resiste.
[Never resist love]

TRISTÁN
Neither can your dick apparently.

Teodoro retrieves a scented hand-sanitizer spray from his pocket and douses himself with it as if it's perfume.

TRISTÁN
What are you /

TEODORO
Lavender. Madé likes me smelling clean.

TRISTÁN
Gross.

Teodoro heads towards the luxury cabanas,
Tristán following.

TRISTÁN

Dude, what are you - we almost lost our lives /

TEODORO

I'll be fine. I know exactly where I'm going.

He runs off.

TRISTÁN

How? The cabanas all look alike!

Tristán chases after Teodoro. The set transforms,
the sun shifting again.

Tristán finally catches up to Teodoro on the
beach just outside Diana's cabana. They're both
lost and very out of breath.

TRISTÁN

(out of breath)

I hate you, I hate you /

TEODORO

(also out of breath)

Then quit following, I'll find it /

TRISTÁN

You have to quit this shit. These females /

TEODORO

Don't say females /

TRISTÁN

These females are defective, and that is fact /

TEODORO

You're not going to monologue /

TRISTÁN

Soliloquy, peasant! I loved once /

TEODORO

Oh no /

TRISTÁN

I loved. I'm not hard to look at. *Look at me.* Most people find me *very easy* once they limber up /

TEODORO

Gross /

TRISTÁN (CONT'D)

But there was this one time, I was doing video for yacht week in Greece /

TEODORO

What is yacht /

TRISTÁN

It's a week for yachts; I don't want to admit this but I caught something /

TEODORO

Chlamydia /

TRISTÁN

Chlamydia of the heart, yes. *Feelings.* I caught feelings for this chick Aphrodite /

TEODORO

Her name wasn't /

TRISTÁN

All Greek women are named Hymenia fucking Dithyramb, anyway one of Ditey's faults, *and there were many*, was her vaginay which was so cavernous, she could hold *all* these Greek yachtreprenuers like Trojan, the first wooden condom /

Teodoro reacts, horrified.

TEODORO

That's not /

TRISTÁN

So obviously, obviously I had to forget the bitch, but memories man. Memories. It could be *months*, I'd just be driving, then out of nowhere I'd smell jasmine petals, golden quince, white chocolate orchid /

TEODORO

(appreciatively)

Oh wow Tris /

TRISTÁN

All the base notes of "Fantasy," by Britney Spears /

TEODORO
(disgusted)

Wow Tris /

TRISTÁN

I had to take those powerful sense memories and transform them. *Gahzahhh!* Jasmine petals become anal discharge from your mom's Pomeranian. *Blizzzah!* Golden quince: Bongzilla water. I told you - the guy from Vegas who built the /

TEODORO

8ft bong, yes, you posted like twice /

TRISTÁN

And white chocolate orchid? *Trissstaaaah!* Stank keto breath waking you up in the morning asking "Can we get brunch?" You see? Love and hope, I transform into emotions more useful and powerful: hatred and repulsion. I know where I stand with that. But love? True love?! I don't fuck with that.

(pause)

And thank you for coming to my TED talk /

TEODORO

Yeah thanks for *whatever that was*, but I'm not forgetting Madé anytime soon /

Diana appears, dressed in a skimpy Pilates outfit, her hair and makeup DONE. She sniffs haughtily at Teodoro.

DIANA

Teodoro.

In unison:

TRISTÁN
ooo she's still mad /

TEODORO
Morning! Diana /

DIANA

I must speak at you.

Diana offers Teodoro her iPad in its rose gold case.

DIANA

I have a friend /

TRISTÁN
(whispers, to Teodoro)

Already *that's* a lie /

DIANA
And she is uncertain of her writing skills. She asked me to compose a post for her but . . . knowing so little of heterosexual love, I want you to improve upon it. Toma y léele.

Teodoro adjusts his glasses nervously.

TEODORO
But I-I don't know about romantic love. I've never really /

DIANA
Never?

TEODORO
No. I'm kind of a huge nerd. As you always say.

DIANA
Not always /

TEODORO
Uhhh yeah, you kind of do though /

TRISTÁN
(quietly)
You do /

DIANA
Nerd is not a bad word.
(at Tristán)

You should hear *what some men say about women*. No, I only mean you are . . . smart, sensitive. You would *never* break my rules because that would betray your *enormous intelligence*.

TEODORO
(gulps, nervously)
Uhhh yeah /

DIANA
“Uh yeah.” Where were you last night? I had social media crisis and you were nowhere to be found.

Teodoro looks to Tristán for the assist.

TEODORO
Uhhh I . . . I was /

TRISTÁN
He was out.

Diana raises an eyebrow.

DIANA
Outside my luxury cabana half-naked?

TEODORO
No / !

DIANA
Somebody said you were creeping /

TRISTÁN
Ma'am, I can confirm, Teodoro was with me the entire night, fully dressed /

TEODORO
Wait, sorry, who told you I was a creeper, cuz I've never crept/

She gestures to the iPad.

DIANA
Lee, lee!

As he reads, lights shift and we see Diana narrate, in a fantasy dream moment:

DIANA
Amar por ver amar, envidia ha sido;
y primero que amar estar celosa
es invención de amor maravillosa,
y que por imposible se ha tenido.

De los celos mi amor ha procedido
por pesarme que, siendo más hermosa,
no fuese en ser amada tan dichosa,
que hubiese lo que envidio merecido.

Estoy sin ocasión desconfiada,
celosa sin amor, aunque sintiendo:
debo de amar, pues quiero ser amada.
Ni me dejo forzar ni me defiendo;

DIANA (CONT'D)

darme quiero a entender sin decir nada:
entiéndame quien puede; yo me entiendo.

Lights shift.

TEODORO

Oh. Wow. Wow. It's . . . it's beautiful.

DIANA

I know it's beautiful, tell me what's wrong with it.

TEODORO

Uhhh . . . maybe a little long for social media /?

DIANA

And /

TEODORO

And ye olde Spanish? Might confuse some people /

DIANA

Peasants, and / ?

TEODORO

And . . . the jealousy part / ?

DIANA

(sharply)

What jealousy?

TEODORO

"I only loved after seeing you love?" Is that even real love /

DIANA

Yes, yes she really loves this man! Yes. He is just not . . . instafamous so there's no possible way for them to be together. But when she found, my friend, not me, when she found he had been with another she was suddenly *roused* to love him with her *full entire being*. How - how is this possible?

TEODORO

I don't know . . . maybe she *does* love him? Because otherwise /

TRISTÁN

Why do all this / ?

TEODORO

Yeah. Why would she care? I mean let people love who they wanna love. Doesn't affect you.

DIANA

It is my friend but if I were she, if I were now deeply in love with a man I never appreciated, whose mere presence now *moves me to madness!!!*

(recovers)

Then yes. I suppose it could be love. Yes.

TEODORO

Cool. Yeah. Well. Caption's great. Couldn't top it /

DIANA

Try.

TEODORO

What?

DIANA

Try to top me. *Now*.

TEODORO & TRISTÁN

Uhhh /

DIANA

You heard me. Go!

Teodoro and Tristán turn to exit.

DIANA

You. Tristán. Stay.

Teodoro and Tristán exchange a look or gesture:
It's been real. Light a candle for me.

Teodoro exits.

TRISTÁN

(trying for connection, also a liar)

So . . . I don't eat ass /

DIANA

Tell me about Teodoro. You know him well?

TRISTÁN

Yeah, we grew up together /

DIANA

He's a fuckboy.

TRISTÁN

(laughs)

Excuse me?

DIANA

Teodoro. He fucks around?

TRISTÁN

Uh Teo *wishes!* He doesn't exactly have the moves or organizational prowess. Plus you keep him so busy, when would he have time?

Diana smiles wickedly, in spite of herself.

DIANA

Yes. I have. I do.

TRISTÁN

(slight pout)

Barely even see him unless we're working together /

In the background, Alma appears with a fresh set of towels.

DIANA

Yes. You would sabotage?

TRISTÁN

Say what now?!

DIANA

If Teodoro is so consumed with work for me, he no longer has time for you, his *little friend!*

TRISTÁN

Best friend, no I'm not out here trying to make him lose his job!

DIANA

So it wasn't you "creepin'" outside my luxury cabana?

TRISTÁN

Hell no! I was back in the treecrib, watching 90 Day Fiancé.

She holds up Tristán's hat. His name is embroidered inside in bright gold letters.

DIANA

This isn't yours?

TRISTÁN

Mm n-no . . .

DIANA

There's another Tristán?

TRISTÁN

Could be . . . another Tristán. On a private beach.

(pause)

Lemme take that off your hands /

Diana pulls it back.

DIANA

I keep as evidence. To press charges /

TRISTÁN

Charges? I wasn't even /

DIANA

(grins)

It was you!!!

TRISTÁN

OK but we weren't creepin'! Zero creep /

DIANA

Who was with you?

Alma tidies up, lingering to listen in.

TRISTÁN

With? No one was with /

DIANA

You said *we*.

TRISTÁN

We . . . yeah we - there were these bats /

DIANA

Bats?

TRISTÁN

Vampire bats all over the beach, chased me right out the girls' cabana. I did 10 miles easy didn't break a sweat, then stopped for a selfie cuz the moon looked good /

DIANA

The moon / ?

TRISTÁN

Then the bats caught up with me, so I had to fight em off, threw my hat like
triissstowww /

Diana pulls out the designer version of Tristán's hat packaged in a see-through case. Tristán gasps in spite of himself.

TRISTÁN

(melts)

Oww my Jesus! *Who is she?*

DIANA

Just a little something I had flown down private charter with my new phone. Do you know this hat?

TRISTÁN

(choked up)

That's the . . . that's . . . Kobe Bryant Limited Edition, 18-karat gold. Only 8 in existence
/

DIANA

I had them make *a ninth*.

Tristán whimpers, holding out his hands to receive it. Diana pulls the case back.

DIANA

Where was Teodoro last night? And you think carefully who pays for you to be here. Your friend /

TRISTÁN

Best friend /

Or me.

DIANA

Tristán shifts nervously in place.

OK. Hold on. I'mma need a second.

TRISTÁN

Tristán doubles over. Finally, painfully:

He wasn't there. Teo. It was just me.

TRISTÁN

It was only you?

DIANA

Tristán nods his head, whimpering in agreement.

Are you crying?

DIANA
(grins)

TRISTÁN
(covers, painfully)

Edible just hit. I'm fighting for my life.

DIANA

Hm.

Diana beckons Alma, then hands her the limited edition hat.

DIANA
(whispers to Alma)

¡QUÉMALO!

Alma quickly exits, a shocked look on her face.

Thank you for your honesty.

DIANA
(sweetly, to Tristán)

Oh yeah, yup /

TRISTÁN
(pained)

DIANA

I understand now what I must do.

(demonic, convincing)

I will find each infested bat and drain them of their blood, drip by drip /

TRISTÁN

(horrified)

Ma'am / !?!

DIANA

So that never again should you have any reason to wake me with this CHEAP SHIT!

Diana throws Tristán's hat at him. Fabio enters.

FABIO

(urgent news)

Diana uh Diana uh /

DIANA

WHAT FABIO?!!

FABIO

Coco Wawa! She's coming to see you /

Diana's energy immediately shifts!

DIANA

(panicked)

Coco Wawa?! Not here!!!

Diana, Tristán, and Fabio all run offstage in different directions.

Lights rise on a different area of the beach. Huge "EL SUMMIT WELLNESS" banners are stuck in the sand framing a makeshift stage. Diana runs in, then skids to a stop and poses. Fabio and Alma follow after her; Tristán snaps photos with his camera.

A yogified version of Coco's song "I AM COCO" plays as Pilates underscore.

DIANA

(smoothly, at audience)

But *here!* With my sexy Summit followers here for Pilates with DianaBianca!

DIANA (CONT'D)

We'll start on our backs, sexi flexi arms extend, bridging up and down, carving with our core, in, out . . .

She continues with her sexy Pilates moves.

DIANA

(stalling)

Never know who might show up. Or when. There are *many* reasons one could be late.

(at Fabio)

Or fired!

As Diana leads class, Alma notices Olmo approaching, with a huge wheelbarrow. He is drenched in sweat.

ALMA

(to Fabio)

Excuse me, one second /

FABIO

Oh real quick, you wanna get me a water?

ALMA

Uh /

Fabio holds up a single peso as tip.

FABIO

Get me a water and *this* is for you.

ALMA

(smiles, politely)

. . . You're too kind.

Alma joins Olmo.

OLMO

¿Quién es tu amigo?

ALMA

¿Mi amigo?

Olmo nods in Fabio's direction. Fabio holds up his peso.

ALMA

Ahh te refieres a mi amante secreto?
[Ahh are you referring to my secret lover?]

OLMO

(rolls his eyes)

OK /

ALMA

En serio, este hombre! Tan inteligente y generoso! Tiene mucho que ofrecerme, prometió llevarme con él /
[Seriously, this man! So smart and generous! He has so much to offer me, he promised to take me with him]

OLMO

¿A dónde?
[Where are you going?]

ALMA

Al lugar más exótico y tolerante en todo los Estados Unidos, Harrison, Arkansas!
[To the most beautiful and tolerant place in all of the United States . . .]

Olmo cracks a smile. Alma grins and throws an arm around his neck.

OLMO

Oye, huelo mal /
[Hey, I smell bad]

ALMA

No, me encanta tu olor, tu fuerte almizcle!
[No, I love your smell, your strong musk]

She leans in to smell his armpit.

OLMO

(laughs)

Alma! Oye!

ALMA

(sniffs)

Parte sudor, parte basura quemada, huevo podrido /
[Part sweat, part burnt garbage, rotten egg]

Olmo moves away from her.

OLMO

Tuvimos que quemar montones de sargazo en la selva /
[We had to burn piles of seaweed in the jungle]

ALMA

(frowns)

Pensé que tenías que llevarlas al basurero?
[I thought you had to take it to the landfill]

OLMO

(tiredly)

Está todo lleno. Además los montones tienen 2 metros de altura, no podemos moverlos.
[It's all filled up. Plus the piles are 8ft tall, we can't move them.]

ALMA

O. ¿Quieres almorzar? Puedo robarme algo de /
[Oh. Do you want lunch? I can steal you something from]

OLMO

No, Alma.

Olmo exits.

ALMA

(frowning)

Okay . . . ?

As Alma exits in the direction of the hotel,
COCO WAWA suddenly appears in a sequin
uniform, her hair pulled up into a painfully tight
& high pony.

COCO WAWA

(gargle-excited)

Ggragggh Diana Bianca!

Diana upon seeing Coco immediately drops into
her most difficult and sexual Pilates move.

DIANA

(feigns surprise)

Oh Coco Wawa. Everyone look! Look who comes to Pilates with DianaBianca!

Sounds of excited Pilates audience members.

COCO WAWA

Ggagghh yeah! I freaking love your 'Lates!

DIANA

(coy)

Oh. Everyone! *Coco loves.*

Dorotea does a quick walk-on, sneaks a selfie with Coco framed behind her, then walks off.

COCO WAWA

(gurgle-laugh)

Hrghghgh! Hey is that my . . .

DIANA

(smiles, victorious)

Your song. Yes! You would not sing it for us now?

COCO WAWA

Hrghghg would I?

Coco suddenly has a microphone. Professional lights appear out of nowhere, maybe a fog machine? On the beach? We don't know how.

COCO WAWA

(sings)

IT'S AMAZING AZING AZING
I GET EVERYTHING I WANT
DON'T YOU PLAY ME PLAY ME PLAY ME
YOU'RE JUST JEALOUS I FLAUNT

YOU CAN TAKE A SNAP IF YOU'D LIKE TO
BUT'CHA BETTER BE NICE CUZ I DON'T DO
SELFIES IF YOU'RE REALLY RUDE
NO, I DON'T DO RUDE!

HATERS COMING FOR ME, I SAY NO
DON'T GOT TIME FOR THAT NEGATIVE FLOW
KEEP IT UP, NEVER DOWN
ALWAYS SMILE-ILE-ING-OH!

COCO WAWA (CONT'D)

I DON'T EVER WANNA GET OLD
GOTTA KEEP MY GLITTER GOLD
MY HAIR UP IN HIGH PONY
DON'T KNOW ME?

MY NAME IS CO CO CO CO CO CO CO CO CO CO CO CO
YOU SHOULD KNOW OH OH OH OH OH OH OH OH OH OH OH
MY NAME IS CO CO CO CO CO CO CO CO CO CO CO CO
LAST NAME! WA WA WA WA WA WA WA WA WA WA WA WA! Yeah!

Coco hits a strong pose. Diana inserts herself for optimal internet exposure as a thousand camera phones flash.

Coco and Diana talk to each other through their teeth as they shift poses.

COCO WAWA

Escuché que tal vez estarías aquí /
[I heard that maybe you'd be here]

DIANA

Sí?

COCO WAWA

Sí . . . y supe que tendría que venir and shoot my shot /
[Yes . . . and I knew I had to come . . .]

DIANA

(coyly)

Oh Coco?! Conmigo? Really.

COCO WAWA

Contigo, Diana. Really. Sé que un montón de people sliding in your DMs /
[With you, Diana. - I know that you get a lot of . . .]

DIANA

Constantemente . . .
[Constantly]

COCO WAWA

Pero . . . ¿por qué andas siempre soltera?
[But why are you always single?]

DIANA

(to her audience)

That's our class! See you tomorrow at the meet and greet! Wear something sexy!

COCO WAWA

(to her audience)

KEEP GLOWING AND KNOWING WITH YOUR SPARKLES AND BOW-OH-OHS!

Diana and Coco move to a shaded VIP section, for more privacy. El Summit banners roll out of view, Fabio keeps their followers at bay. Dorotea continues to sneak pics of Coco with her phone. Tristán retrieves a blunt from his pocket and exits to smoke.

DIANA

Quizas estoy soltera porque valoro mi libertad /
[Maybe I'm single because I value my freedom]

COCO WAWA

Quizás porque nadie te ha dado lo que realmente necesitas.
[Maybe because no one has given you what you really need.]

Diana stops and grabs Coco's hand, examining her nails carefully.

DIANA

Oh sweet Coco. I do not play with women who still pretend to be little girls /

COCO WAWA

Ni aunque fueras mi big Zaddy?
[Not even if you would be my]

Coco leans in and kisses Diana just as Teodoro appears with Diana's iPad.

TEODORO

Hey Diana, I - oh!

Coco pushes Diana away and frantically starts dancing, as cover.

COCO WAWA

(gargle-laugh)

Hrghghgh bom! I'm a dancer! Yeah!

TEODORO

Sorry, I didn't realize you had /

DIANA

I am never alone. Always accompanied by somebody powerful, famous.

They watch as Coco tries to do the Worm.

COCO WAWA

(catch-phrase)

Fitness! As my witness!

TEODORO

Uh I can - I can come back /

DIANA

Never leave me!

(covers)

Stay, Teodoro. Coco, I have to approve every post. *You know how it is.* We'll have dinner later?

COCO WAWA

(yells)

Lemme ask my Mom: MA?!

SHEILA appears, holding a huge iced coffee and her cellphone. She wears huge sunglasses and has a sharp "Can I speak to the Manager" haircut teased to the heavens with harsh honey blonde highlights.

SHEILA

(sighs, tiredly)

I'm *here*.

COCO WAWA

Mom, is it OK if Diana comes over for dinner? Please Mom, MA?!?

SHEILA

Colleen, you're 28. You don't have to /

COCO WAWA

(brightly)

YEAH! Mom says it's OK! We are going to have an AWESOME FLOSS EM time!

DIANA

Maybe I sleep over?

Coco chokes on the air she's breathing.

COCO WAWA

(gargle-covers, loudly)

Gaarghghghr yeah maybe! Because we are girls! And what do girls love more than cupcakes and rainbows? SLUMBER PARTIES!!!

Coco awkwardly high-fives Diana. As she exits,
Coco quietly confers with Sheila.

COCO WAWA

So what do you think?!

SHEILA

Klout chaser, desperate for followers /

COCO WAWA

Yeah but / ? ?

SHEILA

She does have that *Latinks* demographic /

COCO WAWA

(frown-grins)

Yeah and / ? !

SHEILA

If she's what you want.

Coco & her ponytail nod enthusiastically, as she
exits after Sheila.

Diana sits grandly on a wicker chaise lounge,
intermittently fanning herself as Teo writes on
her iPad.

DIANA

¿Escribiste tu respuesta?

Sí pero /
TEODORO

I am the judge. Lee.
DIANA

Teodoro reads from the iPad. Lights immediately cross-fade to rose pink.

Querer por ver querer envidia fuera
si quien lo vio sin ver amar no amara
TEODORO

Diana's fanning slightly quickens in pace.

Porque si antes de ver, no amara pensara,
después no amara, puesto que amara viera
TEODORO

Diana's fanning gets faster, she vocalizes. Teodoro looks over at her. Diana quickly stops and covers. She gestures with her fan:

Lee!
DIANA

Amor, que lo que agrada considera
en ajeno poder, su amor declara;
que como la color sale la cara,
sale a la lengua lo que al alma altera
TEODORO

Diana fans again faster (arriba y abajo), vocalizing louder. Somewhere an industrial fan flips on so that Diana's hair flies into the air. We probably can't even hear Teodoro.

No digo más, porque los más ofendo
desde lo menos, si es que desmerezco
porque del ser dichoso me defiendo.
TEODORO

Diana has an orgasmic fan finish. She collapses, falls asleep a second. Then she wakes and smokes from her designer vape pen, tiny clouds of smoke surround her.

Then Diana's fanning and vocalizing grow again, faster and louder. A second orgasmic wave.

TEODORO

Esto que entiendo solamente ofrezco;
que lo que no merezco no lo entiendo,
por no dar a entender que lo merezco.

Lights shift back to normal.

DIANA

(raspy, low octave)

Muy bien guardaste el decoro.
[You kept your decorum very well.]

Teodoro turns, not recognizing her voice.

DIANA

Don't look at me!!!

Teodoro averts his gaze. Diana adjusts her hair and sports bra.

DIANA

Now look at me.

Teodoro awkwardly makes eye contact again.

DIANA

Your poetry, it's . . . very effective.

TEODORO

Oh! Tha-nks. I-I liked yours from before /

DIANA

You've really *never* been in love? Ever?

TEODORO

Uhh no, not yet.

DIANA

But clearly you have affection for *someone*? To write all this?

TEODORO

Mostly imagination. You just try to imagine . . . what it might be like.

DIANA

Yes, what might it.

Diana lifts the iPad out of Teodoro's hands,
getting very close to him.

TEODORO

Oh, there's typos all over /

DIANA

It's perfect. As is.

TEODORO

Oh thanks . . . I hope your friend likes it.

DIANA

My friend? *My friend*, she will love it.

She pulls away.

TEODORO

Great. And . . . and I just wanted to say: thank you for this assignment. Not that I don't love writing the newsletters but . . . *this was a real challenge*. Which I like.

DIANA

So you like challenge?

TEODORO

Yeah. I guess I do.

DIANA

. . . Then you shall have more.

(pause)

NERD.

She exits.

Teodoro heads in the opposite direction. The
VIP area pulls off stage so that it's just Teodoro,
the white beach, and blue sky.

He records a private Instagram story with his phone, it projects in real-time against the clouds above him.

TEODORO

So, I'm genuinely in shock guys. Boss Lady (you know who) said my writing was perfect, "as is." Maybe . . . maybe I have her all wrong. Maybe the abject cruelty and daily humiliation, maybe that's just protective armor. She's waged this war with the world, like she'd rather fall on her own sword than reveal any vulnerability.

(pause)

"Then you shall have more" . . . honestly, honestly I don't know what to make of that. She's . . . well she's Boss Lady. NBA and WNBA players throw themselves at her every day, on every platform. I'm sure she's, she's probably exhausted and and . . . I'm "hanging" with Madeinusa anyway. That's like an ongoing, developing development so I'm not even - you know, more I think about it: "You shall have more," she's acknowledging this lack right? And Diana wants me -

(chuckles)

Not that she *wants me* does she?

Teodoro stops to think about this.

TEODORO

OK. OK. I'll admit: I've thought about it. Diana. I mean obviously she's - physically, she's -she's very, *very* good looking but also she's goal-oriented, like always this drive. She goes *hard*. I'm like . . . soft. I never go for anything I want. My writing career? I write more hashtags than poems. And Madé - Madé made the first move! Life just happens to me. I just let it happen. But Diana - Diana makes things happen. She's relentless. She's ruthless. Which is actually, it's an admirable trait, I don't mean to sound -

(chuckles)

I'm not trying to *hire her*, I'm just saying what makes Diana so desirable is . . . it's everything. All these complex ingredients in one tiny, volatile container.

(pause)

I don't mean to reduce women to containers.

He deletes the video and resets.

TEODORO

So, I'm genuinely in shock guys /

Madeinusa enters.

MADEINUSA

(at Teodoro)

Apollooooo! Dude, c'm here?

Teodoro scrambles to put away his phone.

TEODORO

Madé! Hey /

Madeinusa runs and tries to jump into his arms.
They both fall in the sand. Madé kisses him
passionately, then:

MADEINUSA

This is fucken crazy. Everything happening so fast /

TEODORO

What is / ?

MADEINUSA

(cackles)

You know stupid . . . you . . . me . . . us.

Madé wraps her arms around his neck. She bats
uneven fake eyelashes at him.

TEODORO

Us hanging out /

She puts an acrylic nail to his lips, shushing
him.

MADEINUSA

Ssh don't say a fucken word now, dude. Cuz last night? Last night was a whole different
day /

TEODORO

Okay . . .

MADEINUSA

OK like real talk like for real like last night when you was supposed to come to me as
Apollo and I was gonna be that bitch Aurora cuz just like the dawn every morning I too
renew rosy-fingered, but then my suite mate Armando, he's a little bitch, swear to God
him and me, we fixing to box by the end of this, cuz he didn't have to say all that, fucken
rat /

TEODORO

Wait, who - what /?

MADEINUSA

Baybee! Don't even sweat it, I'll fucken handle it cuz I'm that bitch and in the end, don't even matter cuz Diana knows you tried to see me last night /

TEODORO

Diana knows /?!

MADEINUSA

No but she like loves us! She was all: "Real feelings." And I was all "What?! Miss!! No!" And she was like, "Y'all should be a couple. He writes good!" and I was like "No you right."

TEODORO

Are you the friend /

MADEINUSA

Shut up, no, wait like I told her like flat out, I said "Diana. I got *feelings* for this White man" /

TEODORO

(aside)

So Diana doesn't want me /

MADEINUSA

Like I'm obsessed with you now, like there's nothing I wouldn't fucken do for you now like I would die two hundred thousand deaths just to be with you. So Diana said she'd hook us up.

TEODORO

Hook us up?

MADEINUSA

Like relationship, like hoetation *skkrttt!* I got a man.

(pause)

What? She didn't say nothing?

TEODORO

Uh no also why'd you ask Diana to /

MADEINUSA
(giggles)

Necio, you know me! Shy!

TEODORO

Are you shy?

MADEINUSA

‘Bout to find out, BOYFRIEND!

Alma walks past, struggling to carry a pool vacuum with an extremely long hose.

MADEINUSA

Miss, that’s my boyfriend!

Alma nods: *Congratulations*. She exits.

MADEINUSA

Haven’t had one boyfriend in a long time. Not a long time.
(sweetly)

Teodoro. Say something pretty in your poem voice.

She wraps her arms around him.

TEODORO

In my . . . OK . . .

(recites)

Con los brazos,
que son los rasgos y lazos,
de la pluma del amor,
pues no hay rúbrica mejor
que la que firman los brazos.

MADEINUSA
(coily)

Barely understand what you just said but . . .

She kisses him again.

Diana enters, dressed in a red beach outfit and huge sunglasses. Her red sunhat has a wide brim and long veil. She smokes from her vape, as smoke curls from her lips:

DIANA
(seething)

Happy couple.

Teodoro breaks apart, but Madeinusa hangs onto him.

MADEINUSA
Yeah, we're cute, right?

TEODORO
Diana, I'm sorry /

DIANA
Sorry? Why should you be sorry?

TEODORO
Madé told me you know about . . . last night. That it was me outside your /

DIANA
Just you?

TEODORO
Well Tristán was there /

DIANA
You give him up *so* easy! Your friend?

TEODORO
Yeah I'm . . . I'm kind of a terrible liar. I'm a better friend. I think. Uh look, I know this is - this is kind of weird, we all work together /

DIANA
You work for *me*.

TEODORO
Exactly! So for you to give "your blessing" or whatever,
(chuckles)
Not that you're our Mom /

DIANA
I'm your Dad.

TEODORO
(gulps)
Yeah well, yeah it means a lot. And we promise it won't interfere with El Summit.

TEODORO (CONT'D)

We know this is a big event. Your first time headlining. Definitely won't be running around like that again late night /

Madeinusa pulls his face to hers.

MADEINUSA

Maybe I just room with you /

DIANA

(shaking)

You will not - - !!!

Madeinusa and Teodoro shrink back.

DIANA

(dials it back)

Disrespect me or my brand any further.

MADEINUSA

We wasn't / !

DIANA

(snaps)

Madé you have one job - keep me contoured! And you . . . how many posts have you scheduled?

TEODORO

I was working on that poem /

DIANA

Nothing? I bring you to Tulum, I pay for *everything*, so you can what? Go on romantic vacation?! You two will not see each other again . . . for the rest of El Summit!

MADEINUSA

Fucken what?!

Dorotea appears, fruity margarita in hand. She saunters over, a little tipsy, dressed in her bathing suit, mod sunglasses, and neon visor.

DOROTEA

Hey guys, guys, they have mango ritas /!

DIANA

Dorotea /

DOROTEA

Oo strong veil /

DIANA

Dorotea. Take my cabana key. Lock Madeinusa inside.

MADEINUSA

WHAT BITCH / ??!

DIANA

SEE THESE HIGHLIGHTS, BITCH?!? You stay inside my luxury cabana, you count every acrylic, every single rhinestone, and if I see you again, you better have a clay mask waiting for me!

Madeinusa stares at her in shock. Diana thrusts her hotel key in Dorotea's face victoriously.

DOROTEA

(mumbles, to Madeinusa)

Let's go.

MADEINUSA

BUT SHE CAN'T!

DOROTEA

(shushes her)

Let's just go to the bar, come on!

They exit. Just Diana and Teodoro remain.

DIANA

Your girlfriend.

TEODORO

. . . Yeah, I guess.

Diana steps in closer.

DIANA

Why were you in costume last night? You can't fuck Madé unless you're in character? Have to role play?

TEODORO
(awkwardly)

Uhhh /

DIANA
“Uhhh. Uhhh.” Is that the only word you have? “Uhhh.” What were you even going to say to her dressed as . . . whoever?

TEODORO
I was Apollo, the Greek God? Like Apollo and Artemis? Or Apollo-Diana, Romans.

She steps in closer.

DIANA
What would you say to her?

TEODORO
(nervously)
What / ?

DIANA
What would you say? You are Apollo. *I am Diana.*

Lights begin to shift. A rose-colored spotlight on Teodoro. Eventually that damn industrial fan flips on again. Teodoro’s hair and shirt blow back in the wind.

TEODORO
Esos ojos,
Esas niñas bellas,
son luz con que ven los míos;
y los corales y perlas
de esa boca celestial

DIANA
(breathless)
Her celestial mouth?

OK, is this a vibe?

TEODORO
(chuckles awkwardly)
Yeah. Contractually bound to mention the mouth in romantic poetry.

Diana frowns. Lights shift back to normal, kill the fan.

DIANA

You'd waste such beautiful poetry on Madé's mouth?

TEODORO

W-Why? Is . . . is there someone . . . someone else I should waste it on?

Diana scoots away from him.

DIANA

(scoffs)

No. I think you'll be very happy with *my makeup artist*. I'm sure it's "true love" as she says /

TEODORO

She said / ?

DIANA

Madé *begged* me to order you to date her exclusively but I told her, I cannot force monogamy on my employees. But there's just no reasoning with her, she's completely /

TEODORO

Defective.

Lights shift. Back to rose-pink. Industrial fan, go. Diana scoots in again, very close to Teodoro.

DIANA

(swoons)

Defective

TEODORO

I can't believe I just let her *templar la boca con nieve y con azucenas* /

DIANA

Con azucenas y nieve? Such a *poultice* can cool a burning heart.

TEODORO

Poultice. That's an old word. Do you know what it means?

DIANA

A soft, moist mass of material applied to the body to relieve soreness and inflammation.

In swoony unison:

TEODORO & DIANA

Poultice.

They lean in close, this could very well be a first kiss but: lights and fan abruptly cut off. Diana pulls away, putting on her sunglasses.

DIANA

Paparazzi. Do you hear them? Hundreds of cameras.

Teodoro looks around but doesn't see Olmo in the background, pushing an empty wheelbarrow.

TEODORO

I don't see anyone /

DIANA

I can't be seen alone with you! HELP ME - NOW!

Teodoro slowly stands. Diana holds out her hand.

DIANA

(viciously)

What are you waiting for Teodoro?!

Teodoro reaches into his pocket and sprays his hands with hand sanitizer.

DIANA

What is this?

TEODORO

(defiantly)

If I am to properly *serve you*. Wouldn't want anyone mistaking me as your equal.

He then swiftly pulls her to her feet. Diana holds on to him.

DIANA

(softens)

Ohhh. *Teodoro*.

(leans in)

Men will never be my equal.

Diana gently kisses him, then swiftly exits. Teodoro turns the audience, sputtering awkward word vomit.

Olmo approaches.

OLMO
(shushing him)

OK come on, vámonos.

Lights fade as Olmo scoops up Teodoro in his wheelbarrow and whisks him offstage.

END ACT ONE

INTERMISSION

APPENDIX B: PROCESS EPHEMERA



THIS BITCH

ESTA SANGRE QUIERO

BY ADRIENNE DAWES
MUSIC BY ERIC JOHNSON,
ADRIENNE DAWES & KHATTIEQ
SEPT 30 - OCT 9, 2022

 **DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE**
J. WILLIAM FULBRIGHT COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES

TICKETS: 479-575-4752 or uarkartstickets.com

PERFORMANCE DATES:
Sept 30, Oct 1, 5-8 at 7:30 PM
Oct 2, 9 at 2:00 PM

LOCATION:
UNIVERSITY THEATRE
Fine Arts Center
340 Garland Avenue
Fayetteville, AR 72701

Image of Digital Program: <https://mailchi.mp/5e5d0a58db05/thisbitch>. Used with permission.



Digital Program

CAST

Diana..... ANA MIRAMONTES
 Teodoro..... GABRIEL FRANCO-KULL
 Armando..... RILES NEWSOME
 Madeirusa (Madé)..... AUDREY ROMERO
 Dorotea..... ELITA HOARD
 Tristán..... TREY SMITH
 Fabio..... JORDAN WILLIAMS
 Coco Wawa..... LEAH SMITH
 Sheila Wawa..... GRACE TAYLOR
 Olmo..... ERICK SOTO
 Alma..... ALYSSA MARTINEZ
 Ensemble..... ASHTON FRANQUIZ
SHELBY KENNEDY
ABBY McMANIS
COLLIN MILLS-SMITH
ALLI HERMAN

ARTISTIC/PRODUCTION STAFF

Playwright..... ADRIENNE DAWES
 Director..... ESTEFANÍA FADUL
 Assistant Director..... ELISSA KASPER
 Choreographer..... LEAH SMITH
ASHTON FRANQUIZ
 Intimacy Choreographer..... MOLLIE ARMOUR
 Fight Choreographer.....ADAM ROSE
 Vocal Coach..... BEN CORBETT
 Scenic Designer..... KIMBERLY POWERS
 Assistant Scenic Designer..... ABBY HOGAN
 Lighting Designer..... ZACK McJUNKINS
 Costume Designer..... HELENE SIEBRITS
 Assistant Costume Designers.....RIPLEY DECALUWE
CALLIE LYTHGOE
 Sound Designer..... JACKSON SMITH
 Projections Design..... KIMBERLY POWERS
AUSTIN BOMKAMP
 Stage Manager..... ALLIE SORENSEN
 Assistant Stage Manager..... ELLISON POELLOT
 Assistant Stage Manager..... HALEY LEWIS

ARTISTIC/PRODUCTION STAFF

Drapers..... Ripley DeCaluwe, Callie Lythgoe
 First Hands..... Valerie Lane, Mercy Embree,
Braedon Ulrich, Samanthe Burrow, Ruby Kempf
 Stitchers..... Tori Cooper, Lauren Mahan,
 Andi Palmer, Alexis Perez, Dana West, Anna Bisbee
 Coco Hair and Automation Artisan.....Callie Lythgoe
 Coco Automation Artisan..... Austin Bomkamp
 Wardrobe Crew Head..... Callie Lythgoe
 Wardrobe Crew.....Carrigan Hughes, Shelby Kennedy,Caitlyn
Murphy, Louis Waddell, Maddy Wycoff
 Hair and Makeup Crew..... Amani Jones, Zoie Rice

ARTISTIC/PRODUCTION STAFF

Lighting Board..... Nathaniel Wynn
 Sound Board.....Grace Killingbeck
 Projection Operator..... Dylan Priebe
 Deck/Props..... Brielle White, Khloe Shorb,
James 'Andrew' McFarland, Reece Edwards,
Andy Palmer, Brielle White
 Lead Carpenter.....Noah Johnson
 Propterties Lead.....Karl Hermanson
 Charge Artist..... Jamie Spillars
 Carpenters, Painters, & Props Artisans..... Abby Hogan,
Elissa Kasper, Lauren Mahan, Yesenia Mata,
Morgan McInnis, Grason Unzelman
 Technicians.....Marshall Donn, Andrew Fox, Ashton Franquiz,
Corbin Gildon, Addison Smith, Tre Smith, Robert Ward
 Apprentice Technicians..... Marshall Donn, Madison Harper,
Andrew Fox, Isalah Leggett, Sierra Scarlett, Robert Ward

Love Triangle dramaturgy document by author

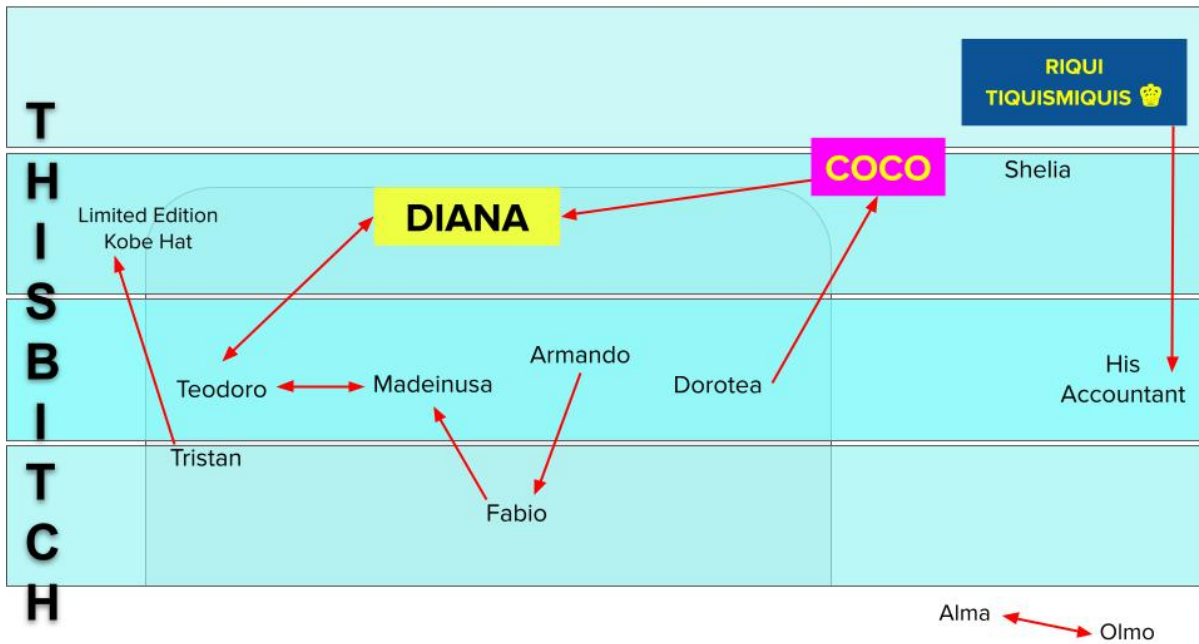


Image of French Scenes/Time of Day dramaturgy document by author

My TB - French Scenes

File Edit View Insert Format Data Tools Extensions Help

100% 123 Default... 10

link to El Summit schedule

Page # based on 08/07/22 draft (in progress)

112

Act	Scene	PG start	PG end	PG #	Location	Scene	Time	Alma	Olmo	Diana	Fabio	Made	Dorotea	Armando	Shelia	Coco	Teo	Tristan	COUNT		
A	PROLOGUE	4	5	1	Video	Promo Video	Video		?	?											
A	1	5	11	6	Ext to Int Diana's Cabana		Late night/early am	x	^	x	x								^	^	6
A	2	11	19	8	Diana Cabana		Late night/early am	x	x	x	x	x	x	x					^	^	7
A	3	19	27	8	Beach away from Cabanas		Morning/ then Later Morning			x								x	x		3
A	4	27	31	4	Beach away from Cabanas		Later Morning	^		x	^									x	4
A	5	32	34	2	Wellness Stage		Later Morning	x	x	^	^								^		5
A	6	34	38	4	Wellness Stage to VIP Green Room		Later Morning			x			^		x	x	x				5
A	7	38	41	3	VIP Green Room		Later Morning			x									x		2
A	8	41	47	6	Other Beach		Afternoon?	^		x		x	x						x		5
A	9	47	50	3	Other Beach		Afternoon?		^	x									x		3
B	1	50	53	3	Rainbow Stage to VIP Green Room		Next Morning	^		x	x		x	x	x	x					7
B	2	53	55	2	Beach		Morning			?	?		?	?				x	x		6
B	3	55	60	5	Beach		Morning			x	x	x	x					x	x		5
B	4	60	66	6	Int. Diana Cabana					x				x				x			3
B	5	66	68	2	Beach					x								x	x		3
B	6	68	70	2	Walking Beach to Bar						x							x			2
B	7	70	79	9	Bar			x		x		x		x				x	x		6
B	8	79	84	5	Int. Diana Cabana					x								x	x		3

APPENDIX C: PROCESS PHOTOS
ZOOM DEVELOPMENT PHOTOS



Figure #1: In-class workshop as part of John Walch’s Adaptation course, April 2020. Featured actors: Trey Smith, Ana Miramontes (top row), Chris Hecke, Gabriel Franco-Kull, Vanessa Gonzales (middle row), Leah Smith and Minerva Villa (bottom row). Screenshot by Adrienne Dawes

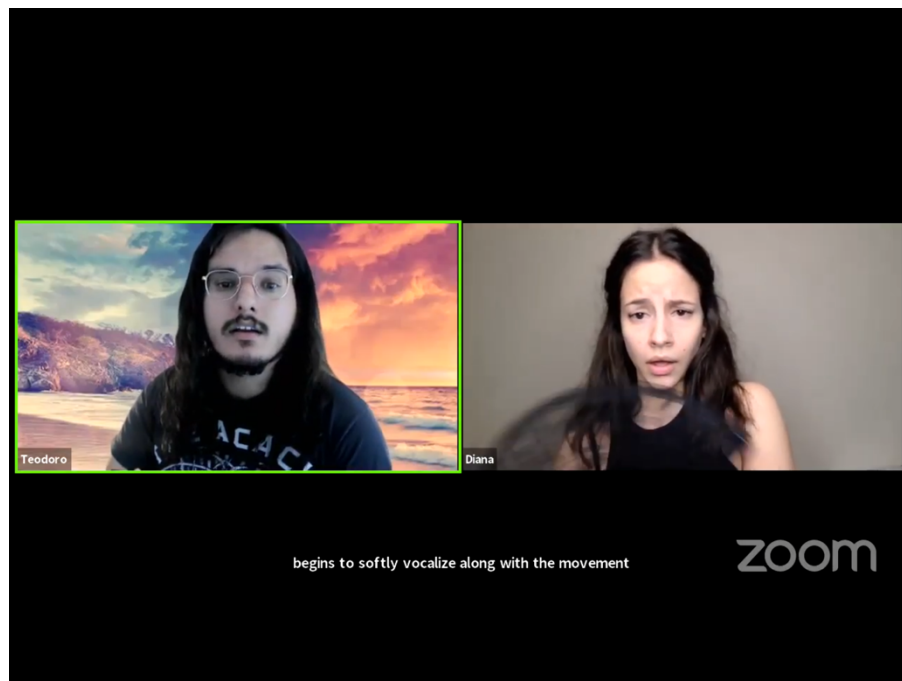


Figure #2: ArkType Festival, January 2021. Featured actors: Ana Miramontes and Michael Galvan. Screenshot by Adrienne Dawes

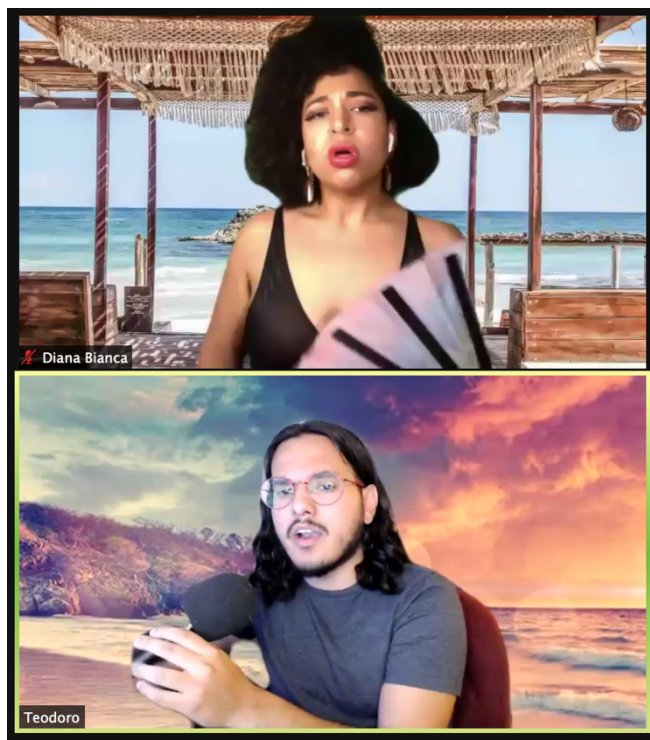


Figure #3: Teatro Vivo’s Austin Latinx New Play Festival, May 2021.
 Featured actors: Stephanie Fonseca and Michael Galvan.
 Screenshot by Adrienne Dawes

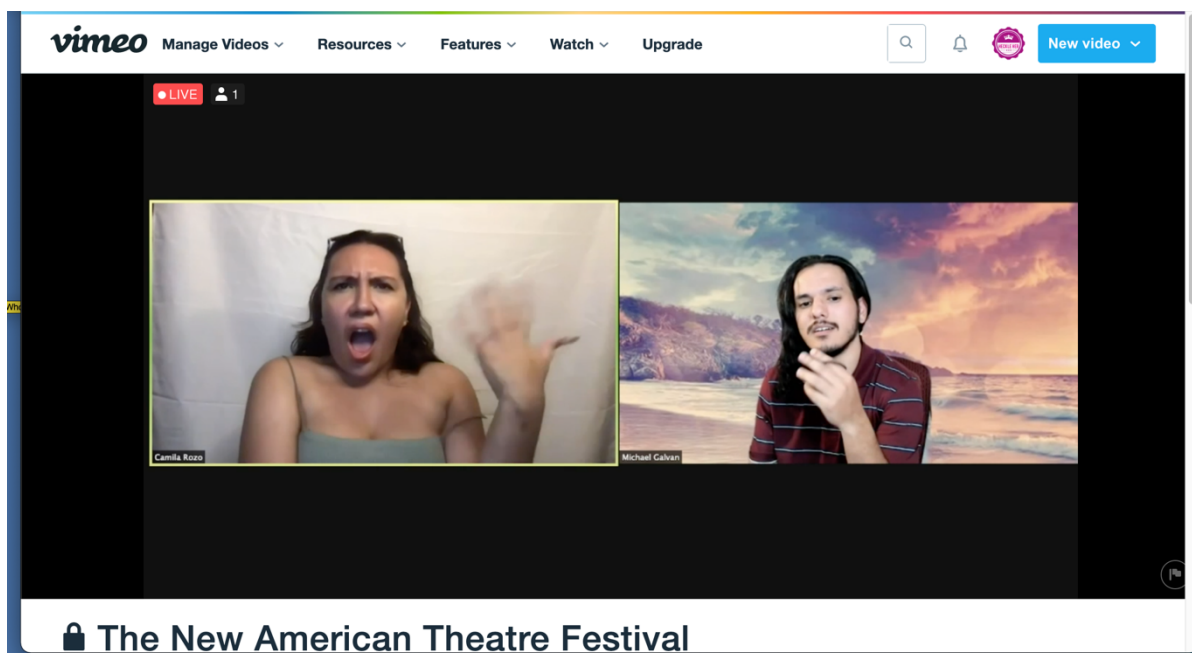


Figure #4: In the Margin/B Street Theater’s New American Theatre Festival, October 2021.
 Featured actors: Camila Rozo and Michael Galvan.
 Screenshot by Adrienne Dawes

IN-PERSON DEVELOPMENT PHOTOS



Figure #5: Sin Muros Festival, Stages Repertory Theater, February 2022.
Featured actors: Olivia Swasey and Elissa Cuellar.
Photo by Adrienne Dawes



Figure #6: TheatreLab at FAU reading, July 2022.
Featured actors: Alyssa Frewen and Dayana Morales.
Photo by TheatreLab at FAU

THESIS REHEARSAL PHOTOS



Figure #7: Hierarchy Tableau Exercise – Top of the Play, August 2022.

Featured actors: (l-r) Abby McManis, Shelby Kennedy, Ashton Franquiz, Jordan Williams, Audrey Romero, Leah Page Smith, Ana Miramontes, Grace Taylor, Riles Holiday, Elita Hoard, Gabriel Franco-Kull, Trey Smith, Alyssa Martinez, and Erick Soto.

Photo by Estefanía Fadul (Director)



Figure #8: Hierarchy Tableau Exercise – End of the Play, August 2022.

Featured actors: Abby McManis, Shelby Kennedy, Ashton Franquiz, Jordan Williams, Audrey Romero, Leah Page Smith, Ana Miramontes, Grace Taylor, Riles Holiday, Elita Hoard, Gabriel Franco-Kull, Trey Smith, Alyssa Martinez, and Erick Soto.

Photo by Estefanía Fadul (Director)

THESIS PRODUCTION PHOTOS



Figure #9: Thesis Production, October 2022.
Featured actor: Ana Miramontes.
Photo by Austin Bomkamp



Figure #10: Thesis Production, October 2022.
Featured actor: Ana Miramontes.
Photo by Xavier Smith (Professor X Photography)



Figure #11: Thesis Production, October 2022.
Featured actors: Audrey Romero and Gabriel Franco-Kull
Photo by Xavier Smith (Professor X Photography)



Figure #12: Thesis Production, October 2022.
Featured actors: Grace Taylor and Leah Paige Smith.
Photo by Xavier Smith (Professor X Photography)



Figure #13: Thesis Production, October 2022.
Featured actors: Leah Paige Smith, Ashton Franquiz, Alli Herman, Abby McManis, and Collin Smith-Mills.
Photo by Xavier Smith (Professor X Photography)



Figure #14: Thesis Production, October 2022.
Featured actors: Alyssa Martinez and Erick Soto (foreground), Jordan Williams, Elita Hoard, Audrey Romero, Grace Taylor, Collin Smith-Mills, Abby McManis, Ana Miramontes, Trey Smith-Mills, Gabriel Franco-Kull (background).
Photo by Xavier Smith (Professor X Photography)

APPENDIX D: LIST OF WORKS COMPLETED, PRESENTED, & PUBLISHED

LIST OF WORKS COMPLETED

2019-2020

underneath, full-length play

2020-2021

This Bitch: Esta Sangre Quiero, full-length play

Elgin, full-length play

Dupe, full-length play

Pee Baby, 10-minute audio play

How I Met Your Murder, web series pilot script & pitch document

2021-2022

End of the Day, Ep 1, full-length play

Tick on the Dick, short film script

Cry Time, short script & film

Respond, If You Please, short film script

Psychic Hearts, short script & film

Types of a Poem, short film

Dupe, short script & film

2022-2023

Get Soft, performance text

End of the Day, TV pitch document

LIST OF WORKS PRESENTED

2019-2020

Hairy & Sherri – reading, TheatreSquared (Fayetteville, AR)

2020-2021

Teen Dad – reading, Sin Muros Festival, Stages Rep (Houston, TX)

This Bitch: Esta Sangre Quiero – virtual reading, ArkType University of Arkansas

2021-2022

This Bitch: Esta Sangre Quiero – Sin Muros Festival, Stages Rep (Houston, TX)

This Bitch: Esta Sangre Quiero – virtual reading, Teatro Vivo

This Bitch: Esta Sangre Quiero – virtual reading, B Street/In the Margin

Can I Steal You for a Moment Forever – live-stream workshop, self-produced

*Not This White Woman & Future is F****** - short audio plays, Hyde Park Theater (Austin, TX)

This Bitch: Esta Sangre Quiero – reading, Theatre Lab/FAU (Boca Raton, FL)

End of the Day, Ep 1 – reading, ArkType Festival University of Arkansas

Hairy & Sherri – salon reading, Sewanee Writer's Conference (Sewanee, TN)

2022-2023

Monologues from *This Bitch* – virtual festival performance, SolFest (NYC)

Monologue from *This Bitch*– semifinalist, Ya Tu Sabes Nosotros/NBC (Los Angeles, CA)
Get Soft – collaboration w/ musician Lauren Clare, The Momentary (Bentonville, AR)
This Bitch: Esta Sangre Quiero – thesis workshop, University of Arkansas
Casta – world premiere, Salvage Vanguard Theater/Blanton Museum (Austin, TX)
Hairy & Sherri – world premiere, Salt Lake Acting Company (Salt Lake City, UT)
Unt. Orphan Project – limited TV series, ABC Signature/Hulu

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

2021 *Teen Dad* – TRW Publishing
2020 *RUN.HIDE. FIGHT* – Applause Theatre & Cinema Books