

# LA BROA'

(BROAD STREET)  
PROJECT DISCOVERY STUDY GUIDE

BY **ORLANDO  
HERNÁNDEZ**

INSPIRED BY  
*LATINO HISTORY OF RHODE  
ISLAND: NUESTRAS RAÍCES*  
BY MARTA V. MARTÍNEZ

DIRECTED BY  
**TATYANA-MARIE CARLO**

**2023-24 SEASON**  
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Created by Am Wyckoff &  
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# THEATER ETIQUETTE

*Please read carefully and go over with  
your classes before the show.*



## TEACHERS:

Speaking to your students about theater etiquette is ESSENTIAL. Students should be aware that this is a live performance and that they should not talk during the show. If you do nothing else to prepare your students to see the play, please take some time to talk to them about theater etiquette to help the students better appreciate their experience. It will enhance their enjoyment of the show and allow other audience members to enjoy the experience. The questions below can help guide the discussions. Thank you for your help and enjoy the show!

## ETIQUETTE:

What is the role of the audience in a live performance? How is it different from seeing a film? Why is it important not to chew gum or eat popcorn at a live theater performance? Why shouldn't you talk? What can happen in live theater that cannot happen in cinema?

Reiterate that students may not talk during the performance. Please make sure all cell phones and alarms are turned off. Recording devices and cameras are strictly prohibited. Students may not leave the building during intermission. Talking is not allowed during the performance, but your laughter, applause, and attention are welcome and greatly appreciated!





# QUESTIONS BEFORE SEEING THE SHOW AT TRINITY REP:

What are the differences between live theater and cinema? (Two-dimensional vs. three-dimensional; larger than life on the screen vs. life-size; recorded vs. live, etc.) Discuss the nature of film as mass-produced, versus the one-time only nature of live performances. Talk about original art works vs. posters. Which do they feel is more valuable? Why? What is the responsibility of an audience when watching a play? What is the responsibility of an audience when watching a Shakespeare play?

## OBSERVATION #1

When you get into the theater, look around. What do you see? Observe the lighting instruments around the room and on the ceiling. Look at the set. Does it look realistic or abstract? Try to guess how the set will be used during the show.

## OBSERVATION #2

Discuss the elements that go into producing a live performance: The lights, set, props, costumes, and stage direction. All the people involved in the “behind the scenes” elements of the theater are working backstage as the play unfolds before the students’ eyes. Tell them to be aware of this as they watch the show. Observe the lighting cues. How do special effects work? How do the actors change costumes so fast?

Pay attention to when you’re excited about something on stage. What excited you? Pay attention to when you’re bored. Why were you bored? What would you have done differently to make the play more interesting? Actors in a live performance are very attuned to the audience and are interested in the students’ reactions to the play. Ask the students to write letters to the actors about the characters they played and to ask questions of the actors. Send these letters to: Trinity Repertory Company, c/o Education, 201 Washington St., Providence, RI 02903 or email to: [Education@TrinityRep.com](mailto:Education@TrinityRep.com).



# USING THIS STUDY GUIDE IN YOUR CLASSROOM

## *A Letter from the Education Department*

Welcome to Trinity Rep and the 57th season of Project Discovery! The education staff at Trinity Rep had a lot of fun preparing this study guide and hope that the activities included will help you incorporate the play into your academic study. It is also structured to help you to introduce performance into your classroom through the following elements:

- **Community Building in Your Classroom**
- **Inspiration and Background on the Artist**
- **Entering and Comprehending Text**
- **Creating Text for Performance**
- **Performing in Your Class**
- **Reflecting on Your Performance**

Trinity Rep's Project Discovery student matinees help high school students in the following common core areas (for more information on the National Core Arts Standards, visit [www.NationalArtsStandards.org](http://www.NationalArtsStandards.org)):

- Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively (CCS. ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1)
- Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme (CCSS.RL.910.3)
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (CCSS. RL.9-10.44)
- Investigate how cultural perspectives, community ideas, and personal beliefs impact a drama/theatre work (TH: Cn10.1.I.)
- Analyze and compare artistic choices developed from personal experiences in multiple drama/theatre works (TH: Re8.1.I.)
- Respond to what is seen, felt, and heard in a drama/theatre work to develop criteria for artistic choices (TH: Re7.1.I.)
- Evaluate and analyze problems and situations in a drama/theatre work from an audience perspective (TH: Re9.1.I.)

***Enjoy the show!***



# UNIT ONE: ABOUT THE PRODUCTION



## ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

Orlando Hernández is a performer, choreographer, theater-maker, musician, and writer from Hoboken, New Jersey. He is a tap dancer who came up in the tap dance community in New York, and has studied with some of the masters of the form. He then worked with the Boston-based tap dance company Subject:Matter, and now is a member of the tap dance and live music company Music from the Sole. He studied English and Creative Writing at Yale University. He first focused on poetry, but continues in translation, hybrid work, and writing for performance. He has presented his work at On the Boards, SPACE Gallery, Movement Research at the Judson Church, the Provincetown Dance Festival, DANCE NOW at Joe's Pub, the Motion State Dance Festival, Trinity Repertory Company, and La Casa de Cultura Ruth Hernández Torres. He's been a part of Trinity Rep and Rhode Island Latino Arts' free bilingual theater initiative, Teatro en El Verano, since 2016 as an actor, adapter, and choreographer. His past writing for theater includes *Tanta Bulla ¿y Pa' Qué?* (2019), with Kufa Castro, Brown/Trinity MFA Program, and *La Tempestad* (2018), created for Trinity Rep and Rhode Island Latino Arts' Teatro en El Verano. Nuestras Raíces interviewed Orlando, and you can find that interview here: <http://nuestrasraicesri.net//RILatinoVoices-OrlandoHernandez.html>





## INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR, TATYANA-MARIE CARLO

**Am Wyckoff (Education Apprentice):** Thank you so much for meeting with me! My first question is: what is the core of this play about, or what pertinent questions do you think the play asks?

**Tatyana-Marie Carlo:** I think two parts: at the core of this play, it's about the history of Latines here in Rhode Island, and ways in which we came to be here. I'm a transplant, so I have a different journey. But we have been coming since before the 1940s, and so we track (really from around the 1950s to today), the stories of individual people who came at that time. [The] question that it asks is -- How can we continue to amplify and use our voices to support other Latine people when it comes to labor, politics, and healthcare. We follow people who dabbled in politics and also became healthcare workers. If you look at the way that translators are in all of Rhode Island hospitals, that was a big thing that the Latine community did, alongside the Portuguese community, and made that happen. And then also labor -- we used to have a lot of factories here in Rhode Island, and [the workers] weren't always treated the best way or paid the same as the American workers, and for that they banded together and made sure to have labor laws in place, and that's because of the Latine community. So how do we continue to take the work that has already been done and continue to amplify that, whether that be running for office or supporting Latine people, or people who support the Latine experience here in Rhode Island? And do we continue to put that work forward that already has been happening? And I talk about this a lot -- a lot of people were coming to Rhode Island and there weren't necessarily elders -- the oldest person might have been in their 40s, so it was a bunch of young people making their way in Rhode Island, and it's that young people can make

their way. It's hard sometimes to do something when you don't have models, but even without models the Latine people came and thrived here. We are stronger together, I think that's the important thing, too. Within our own communities, we tussle, but when we come together -- that's when we're strongest.

**AW:** What excites you about telling all the stories included in *La Broa'*?

**TMC:** I think it's exciting to see where we've been, what people were doing at that time is really exciting, and there's a lot of people that I talk to that are here that don't understand the origin or the stories and the individual people that made it possible for us to be here and thrive here. The reason that I decided to stay in Rhode Island was because I found community here. I moved from somewhere like Miami that had a predominantly Latine population to Rhode Island that also has, (Providence, where I moved) a large population -- I think at the last census it was [around] 45 percent, is Latine. And I think ... out of middle school and elementary-aged children it's even higher. And in Central Falls it's [around] 70 percent Latine. And I felt really comfortable staying here. I think bringing individual people's stories to life is most exciting. I think we hear about people like Buddy Cianci, who have had like this huge impact -- he used to be the mayor of Providence and was a notorious mayor of Providence -- but [there are] individual, regular people who worked to make their little slice of the world a better place, and we sometimes don't get to hear those stories. We hear the ones that hit the news cycle, but we don't hear the people who are doing it day-to-day, every single day. In *La Broa'* we get to meet them, the people who are doing that kind of stuff day to day without cameras in their face, just to help the community.



**AW:** And especially before social media, or extremely immediate journalism, getting to spotlight these is really amazing. Thank you! On the flip side, what do you anticipate being the biggest challenge while directing *La Broa*'?

**TMC:** There's a lot of people in this play! There's 10 actors in this play, so that's an immediate challenge, but we needed that amount of people to make sure we had a diverse group of people, because Latinidad is vast, and in Latinidad we have every single race, and so how do we make sure we're telling the stories of the Guatemalan people, the Puerto Ricans, the Dominicans, the Mexicans, the Colombians, and make sure to highlight them. Another challenging thing is making sure that we honor the people. We use the language of the Crown: "It's a blend of fact and fiction inspired by true events". So making sure that we're honoring the people that laid the foundation. I wouldn't say that's a challenge but it's having an awareness of it. What's another challenge? We have a lot of elements – we have dance in the play, we have music in the play, there's a fire, there's a flood. How do we make a fire and a flood happen at the same time? I have no idea. But I'm excited to figure it out!

**AW:** Very cool. Along those lines, are there any sneak peeks



**you can give the student audience or anything you're especially excited for them to see on stage?**

**TMC:** I'm excited for them to see people in the community be in the play. So, the majority of the cast are people from and around Rhode Island. And they're Latine people who started – some of them, if not all of them – through Teatro en El Verano, which is our summer touring show. And when I first came to Brown, they were in their second year, and now I think they're going into their eighth. And in that second year, I was like, ok, they're doing this amazing work and this touring show, but there wasn't a pipeline to the mainstage. There being a pipeline now – a way in which you can be a part of Teatro en El Verano, and even for young people. If they're going into high school, if they're working age, they can be in Teatro en El Verano; and that is a way in which – it's not guaranteed – but there is a pipeline to the mainstage. And that is really exciting to me because we're investing in the community, investing in artists in the community to be on the mainstage as well. So that's what has me the most excited. Also, to highlight – there's a fire that happens, and that fire actually happened at Providence College, and people actually died and lost their lives. So to be able to uplift and highlight that experience I think is important. Because these are real people – that's an experience that Marta Martínez also went through. So I think we get to honor those folks in this play as well, and highlight that story, to know that they're gone but not forgotten.

**AW:** What is the most exciting about directing a bilingual play, and what do you want audiences who may speak only one of the languages featured to know when they come see the play?

**TMC:** For me, what made me excited about bilingual theater, is that it meant that generations of families could watch a piece of theater together without language being a barrier. So many of my cousins (at the time when my grandma was alive, my grandmother spoke very little English, and my cousins speak it, because assimilation used to mean survival), my younger cousins don't speak Spanish. I was fortunate enough to grow up in Miami, and they grew up in New York and other places, and I was the only one who grew up in Miami, so I was able to maintain the language. But, for other people, because they were assimilating, or because they needed to survive, they lost their language. Which meant any time that we were together, my grandmother tried – she understood some things, and they could say some things in Spanish, but with bilingual theater it removes any kind of language barrier in that way and it makes it possible for everyone to enjoy theater together. And, it makes the work more accessible, which I am really excited about too – it definitely makes the work more accessible. The play is mostly in English, it does have Spanish in it. But the Teatro en El Verano shows are fully bilingual plays, but this one is leaning on the English side, but definitely does have Spanish in it.



**AW: My last question: is there anything that you think will specifically speak to young audience members?**

**TMC:** I think that we're standing on the shoulders of great people that we might not know. And that great person might be your aunt, your uncle, your neighbor. Individual people can have such an incredible impact without being megastars. We hear the impact of philanthropists and megastars, and politicians. It's like, yes, you can run for office, but there are also people who are supporting those people and supporting their community on the ground. And that you can have an impact just in your neighborhood, and that will then have a ripple effect that goes out. You, the individual, can make an impact in your community. And it could be just your block! And it could also be running for office, it could also be the whole world, and also it could be the people at your job, your school, on your block, your family. I can't tell you how many conversations I've had about identity and race and things like that within my own family structure and have then shifted some mindsets. Not all! But I've shifted some mindsets just because I invested in being like: Let's talk about this and let's have a dialogue about this.

**AW: Amazing! Is there anything else that you want to mention?**

**TMC:** The playwright, Orlando, adapted this from the book, and Marta Martínez has been collecting oral histories for a long time, and it's just the way that art intersects with real life. She wasn't doing the oral histories thinking that this was going to be a play – she did the oral histories because she was curious about people and their experiences here. And also being a sort of outsider to Rhode Island, you know, someone who's a transplant – I mean she's been here for a long time now – but at the time being a transplant as well and finding community within other people. And, a lot of the overlap – while we're all different, and guess what, we don't all eat the same food – [but] there are overlaps in our experiences that can definitely bring us together. And Orlando adapted the play based on actual events.

**AW: Thank you so much! This was amazing, I really appreciate it.**







## THE POWER OF BILINGUAL THEATER

La Broa' is a bilingual play, moving between English and Spanish. Tatyana-Marie Carlo, the director of La Broa', writes about the power of bilingual theater, and why bilingual theater is crucial. Please read her words, in both English and Spanish, below:

"As a bilingual theatrmaker from Miami, my heart beats in service to the community that shaped me. Some of my most lasting artistic and cultural influences come from the people around me and those I've worked with. Growing up in Miami, I was surrounded by an environment that relished life and celebrated who I was, making me feel I could live without compromising my cultural identity. This freedom and assurance of self was further encouraged by my grandmother, who was a major influence in my upbringing. Orphaned at age five, she was a strong, playfully serious woman who always emphasized the importance of family, education, and how we should each work to improve "our little slice of the world." Her perseverance, hope, and indomitable spirit gave me life, and her tenacity was something I sought to emulate in my work.



## EL PODER DEL TEATRO BILINGÜE

Como una teatrera bilingüe de Miami, mi corazón late al servicio de la comunidad que me formó. Algunas de mis influencias artísticas y culturales más duraderas provienen de personas que me rodean y con quienes he trabajado. En Miami, donde me crié, estuve rodeada de un ambiente que disfruta la vida y celebra quién soy, permitiéndome vivir sin sacrificar mi identidad cultural. Esta libertad y sentido de confianza en mí fue inculcado y animado por mi abuela, quien fue gran influencia en mi crianza. Huérfana a los cinco años de edad, era una mujer fuerte, con un humor juguetón pero serio, y que siempre enfatizó la importancia de la familia, la educación, y cómo deberíamos trabajar para mejorar nuestro "pedacito del mundo". Su perseverancia, esperanza y espíritu indomable me dieron vida, y su tenacidad es algo que intento emular en mi trabajo.

Mi trayectoria en el teatro comenzó como un escape lleno de alegría, y una forma de conectar con otros, una ruta para hacer de mi "pedacito de mundo" un mejor lugar y un espacio que celebra qué, y a quién, amo. Mi abuela se aseguró de nunca faltar a una de mis obras, sin importar la distancia. Aunque mi trabajo era primordialmente en inglés— y ella lo hablaba muy poco—siempre hacía el esfuerzo de felicitarme, comentando sobre los vestuarios o cuán guapo era un actor. Tristemente, siempre supe



Initially, my journey into theatre began as a joyful escape and a way to connect with others, an avenue for making my own "little slice of the world" a better place, and a space to celebrate what, and who, I loved. My grandmother made sure to never miss one of my plays, no matter the distance. Although my work was primarily in English— and she spoke very little of it— she always made an effort to congratulate me, commenting on the costumes or how handsome an actor was. I sadly knew, though, that however much she wanted to support me, she wasn't able to fully participate in the theatrical event or engage with the thematic material itself. It was my desire to bridge this linguistic gap with my grandmother, and connect with her through an art form that I felt was so powerful, that was the primary catalyst for my interest in bilingual theatre.

That catalyst eventually sparked an opportunity to join the creative team at MicroTheater Miami, a primarily Spanish language theatre housed in El Centro Cultural Español (CCE Miami), a cultural center that serves the surrounding Hispanic community. There, in collaboration with Executive Director Jorge Monje, I not only developed the theatre's first

English-language season but also uncovered and expanded my own understanding of Spanish-language theatre. In the process of developing work in both Spanish and English, MicroTheater Miami showed me bilingual theatre's wider outreach. By adding an English season, our audience grew, with more multigenerational families coming together to watch plays and connecting afterward because of it. I saw the potential bilingual work has for both increasing theatre's cultural impact and facilitating human connections within my own community. As a director and theatremaker, I felt this was a true lightbulb moment and an affirmation for me on my artistic journey to keep moving forward in a way that served my people.

In addition to witnessing the reach and impact of bilingual theatre firsthand, I found that working in MicroTheater Miami came with unexpected serendipity. The open floor plan and open work culture of CCE led to opportunities to work with the glorious women who ran that organization: Mayte de la Torre, Mildred Cabezas, Veronica C. Alvarez, and Ena Columbie. In a predominantly female space, I saw empowered women leading compassionately and effectively,

que por más apoyo que me quería dar, ella no era capaz de participar por completo del evento teatral, o de entrar de lleno en la temática del material. Era mi deseo cerrar la brecha lingüística con mi abuela y conectar con ella a través de la forma artística que consideraba tan poderosa. Este fue el primer catalizador de mi interés por el teatro bilingüe.

Este catalizador eventualmente me brindó la oportunidad de ser parte del equipo creativo de MicroTheater Miami, un teatro primordialmente en español, albergado por el Centro Cultural Español (CCE Miami), un centro cultural que está al servicio de la comunidad hispana circundante. Allí, en colaboración con el director ejecutivo Jorge Monje, no sólo desarrollé su primera temporada en inglés, sino que también descubrí y amplí mi propio entendimiento del teatro en español. En el proceso de crear trabajos tanto en inglés como en español, MicroTheater Miami me enseñó el amplio alcance que ofrece el teatro bilingüe. Añadir una temporada en inglés, hizo crecer nuestra audiencia, y más familias multigeneracionales comenzaron a ver nuestras obras juntas y a conectar al salir. Vi el potencial que tiene el trabajo bilingüe para aumentar el impacto cultural de un teatro, y facilitar conexiones humanas con mi propia comunidad. Como directora y teatrera, siento que esto fue un momento

de esclarecimiento y afirmación en mi travesía artística para continuar en ella al servicio de mi gente.

Además de presenciar de primera mano el alcance e impacto del teatro bilingüe, encontré que trabajar con MicroTheater Miami me ofreció momentos de serendipia. La apertura de los espacios y la cultura de trabajo en el CCE, condujo a oportunidades de trabajo con las mujeres magníficas que operan la organización: Mayte de la Torre, Mildred Cabezas, Verónica C. Álvarez y Ena Columbine. En un espacio predominantemente femenino, vi a mujeres empoderadas liderar con compasión, eficacia, y triunfando en sus respectivas áreas, mientras abrían camino para otros. Estas mujeres brillantes y poderosas, trabajaban unas con otras de forma impecable, tomando en consideración cada idea ofrecida, incluyendo las más cuando ni siquiera trabajaba para ellas. Tenían la habilidad de hacer sentir a todos escuchados y valorados, y me sentí inspirada al presenciar los beneficios de esta confianza en su proceso colaborativo, sin juicios. Busco emular la forma en que manejaban la organización en mi propio proceso creativo al guiar, como directora, espacios creativos con la receptividad, vulnerabilidad y seguridad que permiten que las ideas florezcan.



and excelling in their fields, all while making space for others. These brilliant, powerful women worked with one another seamlessly, considering every idea in a room, including my own, and I didn't even work for them! They had a way of making everyone feel heard and valued, and I was inspired after seeing the benefits of this trust in their nonjudgmental collaborative process. I sought to emulate the way they ran their organization in my own artistic process by guiding creative spaces as a director with an openness, vulnerability, and safety that allowed ideas to thrive.

With respect to my own theatremaking, I believe that every voice matters. Trust matters. By trusting every idea, impulse, or glimmer of a suggestion from my community of collaborators, I seek to embrace a process that allows every artist the space and time to exist in the rehearsal space, creating a nuanced perspective about the work. As a director, my role is to filter these ideas in a coherent and meaningful way. This approach is particularly effective when producing bilingual theatre, where it is imperative to create a space where each person has a personal stake in the production, particularly if we're doing work that will reflect a greater community. The creative process is just as important as

the end product and is inextricable from the experience of theatre as a whole, especially in light of how a particular community receives the work. If we take care of the culture we are inhabiting and sharing with our audience, respect its customs and traditions, the art we create resonates more deeply than something with no flexibility for inside perspectives. Work that is more in tune with a community's pulse allows for deeper and more relevant discussions to be had, especially about particularly difficult issues. By creating work that is intimately of the people, you allow for a vulnerability that breaks down walls, helps us explore taboo cultural subjects, encourages personal investigation, and challenges our assumptions in the context of our community.

On a larger scale, I also see bilingualism as a rebuttal to the dominant cultural hegemony that has historically policed people like me. Though the United States doesn't have an official language, speaking a foreign language in public was once considered dangerous and even illegal. Growing up, my own mother would receive letters from her school expressing the harm that speaking Spanish in the home could cause. And while we've begun moving forward, vestiges of a system imbued with censorship and discrimination still manifest

En cuanto a mi propio quehacer teatral, creo que cada voz importa. La confianza importa. Confiar en cada idea, cada impulso, o hasta el destello de una sugerencia de mis colaboradores, busco acoger un proceso que ofrezca a cada artista el espacio y el tiempo de existir en un lugar de ensayo para crear una perspectiva de trabajo matizada. Como directora, mi rol es eventualmente filtrar estas ideas de forma eficaz y coherente. Este acercamiento es especialmente eficaz al producir teatro bilingüe donde es imperativo crear un espacio donde cada persona tiene un interés personal en la producción, particularmente si hacemos trabajo que refleja a una comunidad mayor. El proceso creativo es tan importante como el producto final, y es inextricable de la experiencia teatral completa, especialmente al tomar en cuenta cómo una comunidad particular recibe y responde al trabajo. Si cuidamos la cultura que habitamos y presentamos a nuestra audiencia, con respeto a sus costumbres y tradiciones, creamos arte que resuena con mayor profundidad que algo sin flexibilidad para perspectivas internas. Un trabajo que está en armonía con el pulso de una comunidad, da paso a discusiones más profundas y relevantes, en especial sobre asuntos difíciles. Al crear trabajo que es de la gente, damos paso a una vulnerabilidad que derriba muros, a explorar temas culturalmente tabús,

incentiva la investigación personal, y reta suposiciones en el contexto de nuestra comunidad.

A gran escala, también veo el bilingüismo como una refutación a la hegemonía de la cultura dominante que, históricamente, ha controlado personas como yo. Aunque Estados Unidos no tiene un idioma oficial, hablar un idioma extranjero en público, en algún momento, se consideró peligroso y hasta ilegal. Mi propia madre recibía cartas de la escuela hablando del daño que puede causar hablar español en el hogar. Aunque hemos comenzado a avanzar, los vestigios de un sistema empapado de censura y discriminación aún se manifiestan al día de hoy. Monitorear el lenguaje, sea intencionalmente sistémico o a través de suposiciones examinadas es una forma de borradura que niega a la gente su cultura y herencia y es, tristemente, síntoma de un prejuicio mucho más arraigado. Sin embargo, puedo retar este prejuicio al apoyar y crear trabajo que eleva a mi comunidad. Con los cimientos que construí en MicroTheater y CCE, estaba determinada a perseguir una carrera que ponga enfoque a artistas Latinx bilingües.

Durante mis estudios de maestría en Brown/ Trinity, expresé mis intenciones artísticas y finalmente me encontré en contacto con Marta Martínez, la Directora Ejecutiva de



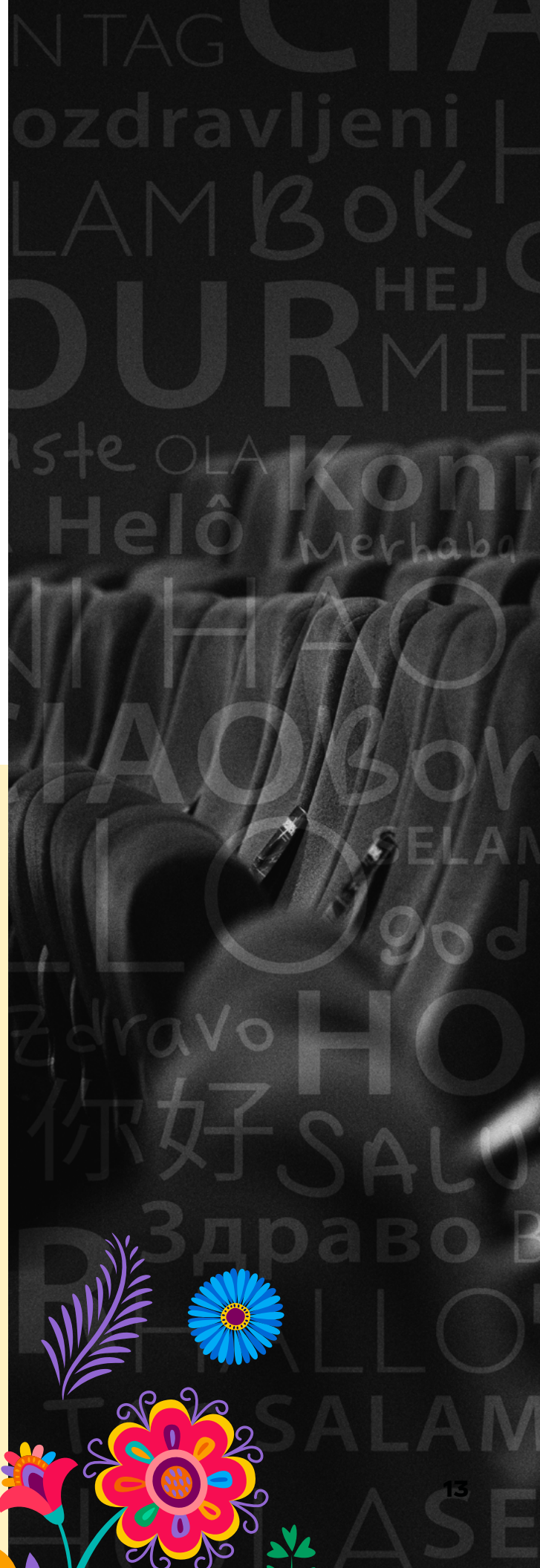
to this day. Policing language, whether it's intentionally systemic or through unexamined assumptions, is a form of erasure that denies people their culture and heritage, and, sadly, is usually a symptom of a more deep-seated prejudice. However, I saw how I could challenge this prejudice through supporting and creating work that uplifts my community, and with the foundations I built at MicroTheater and CCE, I was determined to pursue a career that centered Latinx bilingual artists.

It was my desire to bridge this linguistic gap with my grandmother, and connect with her through an art form that I felt was so powerful, that was the primary catalyst for my interest in bilingual theatre.

During my graduate school journey at Brown/Trinity, I was vocal about my artistic intentions and eventually found myself in contact with Marta Martínez, the Executive Director of Rhode Island Latino Arts (RILA), and the former Associate Artistic Director of Trinity Rep, Tyler Dobrowsky. Together, both RILA and Trinity Rep were re-envisioning their Teatro en El Verano partnership program, a touring, bilingual summer production that I ended up directing. Here, I applied the ethos I cultivated in Miami and found once again that

Rhode Island Latino Arts (RILA) y el, entonces, Director Artístico Asociado de Trinity Rep, Tyler Dobrowsky. Juntos, tanto RILA como Trinity Rep estaban rediseñando su programa de colaboración, Teatro en El Verano, una producción rodante de verano bilingüe para la que terminé dirigiendo. Aquí, practique el espíritu que cultivé en Miami y descubrí una vez más que la experiencia única, el sentido de sí mismo, la comprensión cultural y las contribuciones artísticas de cada colaborador dan paso a un teatro más sólido y matizado.

Fui particularmente inspirada al ver cómo el dominio cultural en el trabajo de Marta como historiadora oral abrió paso a que un teatro bilingüe de comunidad fuera próspero. Como alguien profundamente conectada a la ciudad de Providence, ella fue alguien que resonó con el alma de la comunidad y facilitó la creación de arte realmente transformador. Esto impulsó aún más mi creencia en que, por naturaleza, el teatro bilingüe debe trabajarse en colaboración. A menudo, confiar en la comprensión limitada o parcial de un autor institucional para guiar un espectáculo resulta como una muestra superficial o auto engrandecedora de diversidad para una audiencia que ve de manera transparente un barniz de cultura sin un verdadero compromiso con esa comunidad. Es difícil presentar una obra de teatro bilingüe Latinx de







each collaborator's unique expertise, sense of self, cultural understanding, and artistic contributions allowed for more robust and nuanced theatre.

I was particularly inspired to see how cultural expertise in Marta's oral historianship enabled community-specific bilingual theatre to thrive. As someone deeply tapped into Providence, she resonated with the soul of that community and facilitated the creation of truly transformational art. This furthered my belief in how bilingual theatre must be approached collaboratively by its very nature. Oftentimes, relying on an institutional auteur's limited or biased understanding to guide a show comes off as a shallow or self-aggrandizing display of diversity to an audience who transparently sees a veneer of culture without a true commitment to that community. It is difficult to put on a Latinx bilingual play authentically without involving Latinx people. Rather, by employing a democratic forum of ideas, guided and led by a cultured, patient, and intentional director, a safe space is created for intimate work to be done. I believe this type of work is not only an artistic endeavor but also essential for our survival.

Though I was essentially an outsider, the Latinx Providence

manera auténtica sin involucrar a personas Latinx. Más bien, al emplear un foro democrático de ideas, guiado y dirigido por un director culto, paciente e intencional, se crea un espacio seguro para realizar un trabajo íntimo. Creo que este tipo de trabajo no es solo un esfuerzo artístico, sino también esencial para nuestra supervivencia.

Aunque era esencialmente una forastera, la comunidad Latinx de Providence me acogió como a uno de los suyos, y esa solidaridad es la razón por la que me quedé en Rhode Island después de mi maestría. Me hizo reflexionar sobre cómo sobrevivimos como comunidad. Hay algo que decir acerca de tener un espacio seguro en un mundo en el que constantemente estás "ajeno". No tengo ninguna duda de que la experiencia comunitaria de la "otredad" es también parte del motivo de la solidaridad. Sé que mi abuela debe haber sentido eso, y tal vez por eso mantuvo un hogar abierto para todos en su comunidad, a pesar de su propia lucha. Su compasión fue informada por un mundo con mucho sufrimiento, y al cuidar su propio "pedacito del mundo", buscó sanar a su comunidad. Supongo que esto es también lo que estoy tratando, de hacer de alguna manera, con mi propio arte. Mi teatro es tanto una expresión de esperanza como una extensión del amor sacrificado de mi abuela por su comunidad. De la misma manera que ella



community took me in as one of their own, and that solidarity is the reason I stayed in Rhode Island after graduate school. It made me reflect on how we survive as a community. There is something to be said about having a safe space in a world where you are constantly "othered." There's no doubt in my mind that the communal experience of "othering" is also part of the reason for solidarity. I know my grandmother must have felt that, and perhaps this is why she kept an open home to all in her community, despite struggling herself. Her compassion was informed by a world with much suffering, and by caring for her own "little slice of the world," she sought to heal her community. I guess this is also what I am trying to do in a way, with my own art. My theatremaking is both an expression of hope and an extension of my grandmother's sacrificial love for her community. In the same way she sought to bring people into her home and create a family, I seek to bring people into the artistic process and create something that contributes to communal healing. More satisfying than the work itself, the friendships and relationships I built at RILA made Rhode Island feel like home for me. That is how being with my grandmother felt. We could be anywhere in the world, and she always felt like home to me.

Sadly, on November 16, 2020, we lost our family's matriarch. While having only completed second grade herself, she gave us the greatest education we could've received. She taught us that community is a collective striving, a fight to make our little slice of the world a better place. It's listening to all the voices, not just the loudest ones in the room or those with the largest seat at the table. Community is knowing that you aren't alone, and it's more than engagement: it's about commitment. Commitment to change, commitment to growth, and commitment to uniting our individual paths toward a common goal. Theatre can be a celebration of life and joy. I've made it my goal to uplift, uncover, and challenge cultural conventions; to awaken change, to yell out loud, and to make noise in spaces where people who have never crossed paths before begin to brush shoulders and engage in deep dialogue around their hopes, dreams, and aspirations. And by carrying on my work and bettering my "little slice of the world," I know my grandma is still home with me.

¡Sí Se Puede!

buscó traer gente a su hogar y crear una familia, yo busco traer gente al proceso artístico y crear algo que contribuya a la sanación comunitaria. Más satisfactorio que el trabajo en sí, las amistades y las relaciones que construí en RILA hicieron que Rhode Island se sintiera como estar en casa para mí. Así se sentía estar con mi abuela. Podríamos estar en cualquier parte del mundo y ella siempre me hacía sentir como en casa.

y entablar un diálogo profundo en torno a sus esperanzas, sueños y aspiraciones. Y al continuar con mi trabajo y mejorar mi "pedacito del mundo", sé que mi abuela todavía está en casa conmigo.

¡Sí Se Puede!

Lamentablemente, el 16 de noviembre de 2020, perdimos a la matriarca de nuestra familia. Aunque solo había completado el segundo grado, ella nos brindó la mejor educación que pudimos haber recibido. Nos enseñó que la comunidad es un esfuerzo colectivo, una lucha para hacer de nuestro "pedacito del mundo" un lugar mejor. Se trata de escuchar todas las voces, no solo las más fuertes, o las que tienen el asiento más grande en la mesa. La comunidad es saber que no estás solo, y es más que participación: se trata de compromiso. Compromiso con el cambio, compromiso con el crecimiento y compromiso de unir nuestros caminos individuales hacia un objetivo común. El teatro puede ser una celebración de la vida y la alegría. Mi objetivo es mejorar, descubrir y desafiar las convenciones culturales; despertar el cambio, gritar y hacer ruido en espacios donde personas que nunca se han cruzado antes comiencen a rozar los hombros



# WHAT'S IN A NAME?

*By Marta V. Martínez; An article featured in the La Broa' program*

Marta V. Martínez is the curator of Nuestras Raíces: Latino History in Rhode Island, which inspired La Broa' (Broad Street). The character of Ana in La Broa' is based on Marta and her experiences.

Pertenezco a la comunidad latina, un grupo en los Estados Unidos conocido por su rica diversidad en cultura, apariencia física y tradiciones.

Me pueden llamar latinoamericana. Me pueden llamar latinx. Lo que prefiero es que me llamen mexicanoamericana, chicana, latina.

¿Por qué es importante esto?

En América Latina, no nos identificamos como "hispanos" o "latinos/latinas." Mientras crecía, yo era mexicana, a mi alrededor, los guatemaltecos se llamaban a sí mismos guatemaltecos, los colombianos se referían a sí mismos como colombianos, los dominicanos

como dominicanos, y así sucesivamente. Pero, al llegar a los Estados Unidos, muchos de nosotros aprendimos rápidamente que ahora éramos parte de un grupo homogeneizado etiquetado como "hispano" o "latino," que servía como puente hacia la asimilación en nuestro nuevo país.

Crecí en una ciudad fronteriza de los Estados Unidos. Pero no fue hasta que me mudé a Rhode Island que me impusieron el término "hispano". En ese momento, a también nos llamaban "minorías," y el término "hispano" se sentía menos ofensivo porque, a diferencia del primer término, no me hacía sentir que era menos.

Para mí, el proceso de nombrar a un grupo étnico es similar a nombrar a un niño, un rito cultural especial que transmite un reconocimiento único de la identidad y el lugar dentro de la historia familiar. A diferencia de otros grupos étnicos categorizados por su país de origen,

I belong to the Latino community, a group in the United States known for its rich diversity in culture, physical appearance, and traditions.

I can be called Latinx. I can be called Latin American. What I prefer to be called is Mexican American – a Chicana, a Latina.

Why does this matter?

In Latin America, we don't identify ourselves as 'Hispanic' or 'Latino/Latina.' While growing up, I was a Mexicana. Around me, Guatemalans called themselves Guatemaltecos, Colombians referred to themselves as Colombianos, Dominicans as Dominicanos, and so on. But, upon arriving in the United States, many of us quickly learned that we were

now part of a homogenized group labeled 'Hispanic' or 'Latino,' serving as a bridge to assimilation in our new country.

I grew up in a border city in the United States. But it wasn't until I moved to Rhode Island that the term 'Hispanic' was imposed upon me. At that time, people of color were also being referred to as 'minorities,' and the term 'Hispanic' felt less offensive because, unlike the first term, it did not make me feel like I was less than. To me, the process of naming an ethnic group is akin to naming a child, a special cultural rite that conveys a unique recognition of identity and place within family history. Unlike other ethnic groups categorized by their country of origin, such as the Irish, Germans, or Italians, we Latinos are distinguished by our shared mother tongue – Spanish. However, in the U.S. we are quickly labeled and stripped of our identity as individuals, no matter where we were born. The reality is that Latin Americans encompass a rich tapestry of cultures, languages, and histories across





como los irlandeses, los alemanes o los italianos, los latinos nos distinguimos por nuestra lengua materna compartida: el español. Sin embargo, en los Estados Unidos somos rápidamente etiquetados y despojados de nuestra identidad como individuos, sin importar dónde hayamos nacido. La realidad es que los latinoamericanos abarcan un rico tapiz de culturas, idiomas e historias en 21 repúblicas, cada una con su propia historia, lenguas indígenas, religiones, comidas y filosofías. Esta diversidad desafía la categorización simplista bajo términos como "hispano," "latino," "latinx" o "latíné." Comprender esta diversidad es crucial para alguien como yo, para poder verme reflejada con precisión en las discusiones sobre la identidad.

Por ejemplo, como mexicoamericana, los frijoles y los tacos son un alimento básico en mi hogar. Pero también sé que mis amigos y colegas dominicanos podrían preferir servir habichuelas o mondongo. No todos los latinos escuchan mariachis, bailan salsa o comparten un solo color de piel

(marrón).

El lenguaje intencional es una parte crucial para reconocer la diversidad y el carácter compartido de las perspectivas e identidad latinas. Hoy en día, la adopción de "Latíné" y "Latinx" por parte de algunos refleja el deseo de un término positivo e inclusivo que reconozca estas experiencias compartidas. Sin embargo, no todo el mundo está de acuerdo con estos términos, y algunos pueden asociarlos con estereotipos negativos, discriminación o marginación. Mientras que algunos los ven como unificadores y políticamente

21 republics – each with its distinct history, indigenous languages, religions, foods, and philosophies. This diversity defies simplistic categorization under terms like 'Hispanic,' 'Latino,' 'Latinx,' or 'Latíné.' Understanding this diversity is crucial for someone like me, to be able to see myself accurately reflected in discussions about identity.

Por ejemplo, as a Mexican American, pinto beans and tacos are a staple in my household. But I also know that my Dominican friends and colleagues might prefer to serve habichuelas or mondongo. Latinos do not all listen to mariachis, dance salsa, or share a single skin color (brown).

Intentional language is a crucial part of recognizing the diversity and sharedness of Latino perspectives and identity. Today, the adoption of "Latíné" and "Latinx" by some reflects a desire for a positive and inclusive term that acknowledges these shared experiences. Yet not everyone agrees on these terms, and some may associate them with negative stereotypes, discrimination, or marginalization. While some see them as unifying and politically representative, others





representativos, otros prefieren identificarse principalmente con su nacionalidad o herencia cultural específica.

Pero para llegar a la razón de por qué estás leyendo este artículo sobre la obra *La Broa'*, me gustaría mirar más allá de estos términos y cuales sustantivos o pronombres se usan para describir a los latinos, y quiero hablar un poco sobre la obra.

## **CELEBRANDO LA IDENTIDAD A TRAVÉS DE ESTA OBRA**

*La Broa'* está inspirada en un proyecto personal que llamo *Nuestras Raíces*. Es un libro basado en 110+ historias orales grabadas de la gente de habla hispana de Rhode Island. Las historias en el escenario de Trinity están tomadas de experiencias reales, y las personas (a las que me referiré como "latinos" para esta pieza) las vivieron, ¡y no se sabe si uno podría estar sentado a tu lado en la audiencia!

En muchos sentidos, me parece convincente transformar las historias orales, que son una forma de contar historias, en una obra de teatro, y he aquí por qué:

La historia oral y el teatro comparten puntos en común en su énfasis en la narración de historias y la experiencia humana. Ambos tienen como objetivo conectar a las personas a través

de experiencias compartidas. La historia oral captura los relatos personales de los individuos, preservando sus voces y perspectivas. Del mismo modo, el teatro da vida a las historias en el escenario, lo que permite al público empatizar con los personajes y comprometerse con los aspectos emocionales de la narrativa.

Lo que me parece más convincente de ver estas historias en el escenario es la representación: Al escenificar historias orales de latinos, Trinity Rep proporciona una plataforma para las voces subrepresentadas (los latinos), lo que permite una representación auténtica de sus experiencias individuales.

Mi esperanza es que esta obra ayude a romper los estereotipos y promueva una comprensión más matizada de la cultura latina, de la experiencia latina en Rhode Island.

Estas historias orales también contribuyen a la preservación de la herencia cultural latina de Rhode Island, ya que se convierten en parte de la narrativa cultural más amplia y se transmiten a las generaciones futuras.

Espero que *La Broa'* empodere a las personas cuyas historias se retratan en el escenario validando sus historias y experiencias, y que la obra permita a los participantes en

prefer to identify primarily with their specific nationality or cultural heritage.

But I'd like to get to the meat of why you are reading this piece about the play *La Broa'*, I'd like to look beyond these terms and what nouns or pronouns are used to describe Latinos and talk a bit about the play.

## **CELEBRATING IDENTITY THROUGH THIS PLAY**

*La Broa'* (Broad Street) is inspired by a personal project I call "*Nuestras Raíces* (Our Roots)." It is a book based on 110+ recorded oral histories of the Spanish-speaking people of Rhode Island. The stories on Trinity Rep's stage are taken from real experiences, and the people (who I will refer to as 'Latino' for this piece) lived through them, and one might just be sitting next to you in the audience!

In many ways, I find it compelling to transform oral histories, which are a form of storytelling, into a play, and here is why:

Oral history and theater share commonalities in their emphasis on storytelling and the human experience. Both aim to connect people through shared experiences. Oral

history captures the personal accounts of individuals, preserving their voices and perspectives. Similarly, theater brings stories to life on stage, allowing audiences to empathize with characters and engage with the emotional aspects of the narrative.

What I find most compelling about seeing these stories on stage is representation: By staging oral histories of Latinos, Trinity Rep provides a platform for underrepresented voices (Latinos), allowing for authentic representation of their individual experiences.

My hope is that this play will help break stereotypes and promote a more nuanced understanding of Latino culture, of the Latino experience in Rhode Island.

These oral histories also contribute to the preservation of Rhode Island's overall Latino cultural heritage, as they become a part of the broader cultural narrative and are passed on to future generations.

I hope that *La Broa'* will empower individuals whose stories are portrayed on stage by validating their stories and experiences, and that the play will allow the participants



esta historia ver sus vidas y luchas reconocidas y celebradas.

Al presenciar las experiencias vividas por los latinos en el escenario, el público puede desarrollar una comprensión más profunda de los desafíos y triunfos que enfrenta esta comunidad, fomentando la empatía y la comprensión.

Lo más importante es que, después de ver La Broa, yo veo el potencial de las historias retratadas en cada escena para educar al público sobre la diversidad dentro de la comunidad latina, arrojando luz sobre eventos históricos, tradiciones y problemas contemporáneos: quiénes somos hoy como comunidad y por qué.

Yendo más allá del término que elegimos usar, o de lo que hay en un nombre, veo que ésta obra, La Broa está cerrando las brechas en la comprensión y el fomento de la conciencia intercultural, para que todos podamos ver a los latinos como individuos en lugar de un grupo homogéneo.

in this history to see their lives and struggles acknowledged and celebrated.

By witnessing the lived experience of Latinos on stage, audiences can develop a deeper understanding of the challenges and triumphs faced by this community, fostering empathy and understanding.

Most importantly, after watching La Broa' I see the potential for the stories portrayed in each scene to educate audiences about diversity within the Latino community, shedding light on historical events, traditions, and contemporary issues: who we are today as a community, and why.

Going beyond which term we choose to use, or what's in a name, I see La Broa' bridging gaps in understanding and fostering cross-cultural awareness, so we can all see Latinos as individuals instead of one homogenous group.





# PLOT SYNOPSIS

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The play opens with a prologue in which we see images, text, and videos, and hear audio of people who live in Providence today. These are "glimpses of the future" -- because at the end of the scene, the TV screens read: Providence, 1992, which is where *La Broa'* is set.

The scene begins with Ana, a Mexican college freshman who grew up in Texas and came to RI to go to Providence College, talking into her tape recorder. She talks about how Rhode Island feels like Mars. She reaches Roger Williams Park, and runs into Doña Rosa, who is climbing a fence. Doña Rosa tells Ana that she is trying to get into her market.

Ana visits Doña Rosa's house, and meets Lucrecia, or Luz, Doña Rosa's daughter. Ernesto and Anthony come to visit. Anthony, a firefighter, invites Doña Rosa to be the guest of honor at the firefighters' gala, and reveals that she and her husband provided food for their events and helped Latino kids join the squad. A friend Luís visits, and reveals that Doña Rosa is "the mamá of all us Dominicans in Rhode Island." Ana accidentally tells

Luís and Luz that she found Doña Rosa trying to get into the market, and Luz explains that their lease expired and it's not their business anymore, and she was trespassing. Doña Rosa explains that she was looking for a photo of her husband. She is clearly still grieving his loss.

Ana goes back to her dorm, and Susan reveals that Ana is the first person she's met who speaks Spanish, and she makes an offensive joke. This is our introduction to their relationship.

Lucrecia and Rosa attempt to get into the old building to find Luz's late father's items.

She goes to Doña Rosa's house and hears Luz asking the new owners of the building if the family can go in to find her late father's items. They deny the request. Ana asks Doña Rosa if she can profile her. Doña Rosa is initially nervous, but agrees, and her and Ana have their first interview. Doña Rosa tells Ana about her love of cooking, her decision to leave the Dominican Republic, and her arrival in New York. She tells



## DOÑA FEFA AT HER MARKET IN THE 1960S



Ana about the Dominican custom to share half of every piece of food with someone you love. We are transported back in time to 1949, when Doña Rosa is at the train station in New York and meets Toño. When they met, both Doña Rosa and Toño worked at restaurants, and we hear about how they came to Rhode Island and worked at restaurants while selling food they missed from a food truck. Doña Rosa reveals that they were “the first Hispanic social workers. Because we helped people with housing, with jobs, con la inmigración.” Rosa meets with their dentist, neighbor, and friend, Dr. Freitas, who helps them out with supplies. A friend Ximena visits and asks for Luz’s help translating.

Finally, they open their market. “We were the only market in Rhode Island with Hispanic food.” The market is a place to eat and also a place to meet friends and new community members.

Ana notices Pacheco, who Rosa introduces as a Colombian man who works at the textile mill. We see a flashback from Pacheco’s life: Pacheco, Pepe, and Chama discuss Central Falls and Rhode Island. Pepe almost eats dog food by accident.

Back at Ana’s dorm room, Ana is listening to the radio about the 1992 Los Angeles Riots. Ana and Susan argue about the protests, and Ana shares a time when a white farmer evicted her family from the land they owned. At Doña Rosa’s house,

Ana and the family continue the conversation about the protests and Lucrecia explains how she identifies with Black histories and struggles: “Think about how we’ve been treated in this country.” Doña Rosa resists criticizing America. Lucrecia gets her talking about Carlos, a Puerto Rican activist and lawyer who is a family friend. Carlos tells us his story, discussing his life growing up and his experience in Rhode Island. Ana and Carlos have “the same experience 20 years apart,” longing for their mothers’ food and a sense of community.

We return to Pacheco, Chama, and Pepe at the textile mill. Chama reveals that he’s saving money to bring his brother to the US so he can get surgery. Pacheco pulls out his own tooth because he can’t afford the dentist.

At the start of Act III, Ana reveals to Susan that she got a B-minus on her first journalism assignment, the profile of Doña Rosa. The professor wrote that, “Doña Rosa was ‘charming but lacking in wider resonance.’” Ana says, “it just felt like my professor dismissed it because she’s a woman, and she’s Hispanic.” Susan and Ana bond as Susan shares that her dad told her mother not to go to college.

Later, at Newport Creamery, Doña Rosa tells Ana that after Toño died, running the market just wasn’t the same, and that there are now other grocery stores where la comunidad Latina can eat and not feel lonely. Doña Rosa tells a story about Yolanda, who practices



her order at the creamery to learn it in English during her lunch break. At the nursing home, where she works, Yolanda's coworker Elena is reprimanded for something that wasn't her fault, and Yolanda shares her cheeseburger.

Pacheco enters, and talks about picking tomatoes with Pepe and Chama and singing together. Then, Pacheco gets the idea to later open a record store. We then see Yolanda call her son on her international calling card.

We learn that Carlos started working with Charlie, a Cape Verdean Merchant Marine, who is now an activist and organizer. Charlie teaches Carlos about effective organizing.

We hear Elena's story of arriving to Boston. Yolanda tells her Latina coworkers at the nursing home that the white women get paid for two hours more than they do. Yolanda confronts her boss, rips up her contract, and leaves. We see a media montage of bombings in Vietnam, of Roe v. Wade, the overthrowing of democratically elected Allende, Nixon's resignation, the radio War of the Worlds mishap, and Buddy Cianci's election. We learn a little more about Yolanda's life after the nursing home.

Carlos and Pacheco run into each other, and they exchange records and flyers.

We witness an organizing meeting at Rosa's market, where people share their experiences of landlord abuse, profiling, and healthcare



neglect. Ori blames Yolanda for her experience with a landlord who was discriminating against her because of her children, and a bigger fight starts brewing between Carlos and Pedro about the right way to organize and the legitimacy of each other's organizations. Ori says, "See, I told you we shouldn't invite Dominicans to this." and Pedro says, "You can't trust Puerto Ricans..." Matias reminds Carlos not to worry and that, "We all come from countries where we have dictatorships and revolutions, so we come with that fighting mindset. Puro Wilfredo Gomez. Dejame saber, okay? Cuidate, compay."

Rosa and Ana dance salsa together. At the opening of Act III, Doña Rosa finds Ana's tape recorder and begins to tell her the truth about her childhood and her parents. She reveals that her father was killed by Trujillo's secret service men. She and Lucrecia grieve together. There are further news updates.

Pedro and Matías go to speak

with Councilman Visetti and are immediately shown out. We then hear Ori's story, and how he became a police officer. We also hear about how Yolanda has since gone to school to become a nurse through a state program. She was able to bring her two children and mother from Guatemala, and has her first child in the United States.

In the next flashback, we learn that Pedro is running for office. He's running as a Republican, and explains that the Democratic Party exploits minorities, which he learned from a Black speaker at a conference in DC, and that he "wants the Hispanic community to realize that this is a two-party system, and when you really look closely enough, there's not a great, whole difference between the two."

Back at the dorm, Susan and Ana share memories of home. They try tortillas from a can that Ana found at the grocery store, and they are gross. Susan reveals that St. Joseph's Hospital has just hired a Spanish-language interpreter.

The organizers meet again. Pacheco

*An invisible representative can only produce invisible results . . .*

*Juan Francisco wants to be your visible representative . . . Juan Francisco wants to produce visible results for you.*

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Francisco**

**STATE REPRESENTATIVE 20TH DISTRICT**

*A poster for Juan Francisco's election, whom Pedro is based off.*





*A business card for Fefa's Market, the real place that Rosa's market is based off of.*

tells the group that Chama was able to get his brother to the US, but he had a bad seizure and had to go to the hospital. Once at St. Joseph's the doctors gave him a medication he was allergic to, and he almost died. The group discusses how doctors will give Latinx patients treatment and sometimes surgeries that they don't understand and consent to by accident because they don't speak English. Yolanda mentions that St. Joseph's does have a few staff members who speak Spanish and interpret while they're there, but when they're off, there is no one who can interpret for patients. The group demands 24-hour bilingual interpreters for patients, and we see their protest and picket line.

Ana tells Susan that her journalism professor wants to publish her piece about the activists in the 1980s who organized for trilingual interpreters (the organizers we just saw!). Ana and Susan decorate their dorm for Christmas for the dorm decorating contest. Susan leaves her flat iron on the floor and it lights some tissue paper on fire. The fire spreads. It's revealed that Susan passed away as Ana gives her a eulogy. She says, "After all that fighting and fighting, I realized that we were becoming family."

We return to Doña Rosa in Rosita and Toño's market, which has been flooded by a burst pipe. Ana reveals that Susan passed away in the fire. They comfort each other. Back at home with Lucrecia, Doña Rosa is prepared to send half of Toño's ashes back to the Dominican Republic.

In the final scene, Ana reveals that she eventually moved back to Rhode Island after college, and started the Latino Oral History Project of Rhode Island, whose first interview was Doña Rosa. Each character talks about what happened to them after the events of the play. We learn the real names of each character, and the play ends.



# CHARACTERS AND BIOS

## DOÑA ROSA

based on **Doña Fefa Rosario**

Doña Rosa is Ana's first interviewee and a leader in the community. Ana meets and learns of each character's history through Doña Rosa. Doña Rosa introduces Ana to a community and a history in Providence that she can explore and get involved in. In La Broa', Rosa's story starts with her attempt to re-enter her now closed-down famous market. We see Rosa's life story from her arrival in America to her relationship with Ana.

Nuestras Raíces introduces Doña Fefa, "Josefina Rosario, affectionately known as "Doña Fefa" among generations of Dominicans who currently live in Rhode Island, has been credited with launching the first wave of immigration from the Dominican Republic, beginning as early

as 1955. She and her husband, Tony are remembered by many people who say they sponsored their families to come to the United States; gave them free room and board until they were able to find jobs; and made sure that they had everything they needed. In 1930, Rafael Trujillo came to power in the Dominican Republic and established one of the longest-lasting dictatorships in Latin America. It endured until 1961, when he was assassinated. It was during Trujillo's reign of terror that many Dominicans, fearing they would be killed by Trujillo's men, first began to flee the Dominican Republic for the United States. Fefa was personally affected by Trujillo's power when in 1937, her father was murdered by secret servicemen while recovering in the hospital from gunshot wounds. Her mother was left alone to raise 10 children, and later became paralyzed when she suffered a stroke. Fefa, the youngest child, eventually made her way to New York City where she had an older sister waiting for her, and where she met her husband." She details the founding of her iconic market, where her community could meet, grow, and organize, her social work, helping community members find housing, often in her own house, and jobs, and helping Hispanic people to register to vote. Known as the "Mother of the Hispanic Community," you can read her story in her own words here, including a description of the iconic Fefa's Market, here: <http://nuestrasraicesri.net/DonaFefa1.html>





### **TOÑO**

based on **Tony Rosario**

Toño is Doña Rosa's husband. They meet and move to Rhode Island together, working together to open the market and begin their life. Toño, like Doña Rosa, helps Latinx people move to Providence and provides them with resources, including turning on their heat in the winter. Together, he and Rosa create Latinx spaces to gather and build community.

### **LUCRECIA**

based on **Cecilia Santana, Madeline Rosario, Miriam Reyes.**

Lucrecia is Doña Rosa's daughter and a passionate advocate, friend, and organizer in her own right. She forms a relationship with Ana at the beginning of her project and contributes to and discovers the family's history throughout the play. She is based on the real-life daughters of Doña Fefa.

### **DR. FREITAS**

based on **Dr. Emerson Torigian, Father Tetrault**

Dr. Freitas is a Portuguese dentist who lived next to Doña Rosa on Broad Street. When Doña Rosa's "sort-of boarding house" for people from New York, New Haven, and Santo Domingo got too full, Dr. Torigian would host people. He gives the other characters medical and political advice throughout the play.

**XIMENA** Ximena is a family friend of Doña Rosa's, who Doña Rosa and her family help.



### **ANA**

based on **Marta Martínez**

Ana is a student at Providence College studying Journalism. She is from Texas, and misses her family, her community, her food, and all the things that make Texas home. She meets Doña Rosa one day near her old market, and interviews her for a journalism project, thus beginning her career as an oral historian and discovering a community in Providence.

You can read Marta Martínez's bio and hear about her incredible work in our bio of her and our interview above.





### **PACHECO**

based on **Don Pedro Cano, Gustavo Carreño**

**Pacheco** is a musician and record store owner from Colombia, who works at Cadillac Textiles. He is part of the organizing effort to get necessary interpreters in hospitals.

**Don Pedro Cano** talks about his experience when he came to the US, the differences between Central Falls then and now, and how his family came to live with him in Central Falls. Read his story in his own words here: <http://nuestrasraicesri.net/PedroCanoSr.html>

**Gustavo Carreño** opened one of Rhode Island's first Latin record stores, and Pacheco's experience with his record store is based on his life.

### **CHARLIE FORTES**

based on **Charlie Fortes**

Charlie Fortes was a Cape Verdean merchant marine and community organizer. Robert González says, "And if you get to find out something about Charlie Fortes, it's that he was probably one of the best community organizers that Rhode Island has ever seen. He was from the old Saul Alinsky school of community organizing, the "in-your-face" type: picketing, raising a closed fist that was meant to embarrass the corporations, the institutions that we felt were discriminating ... and things like that. Charlie had worked with the Martin Luther King movement and he had a wealth of experience and knowledge. So he took us under his tutelage, you could say, and trained us to work on behalf of the Hispanic community. He was very astute because he saw that the Hispanic community was a growing community, even back then when there were few of us. And he knew that it would be important to include the Hispanic community in the whole Civil Rights Movement. So, he got us going."

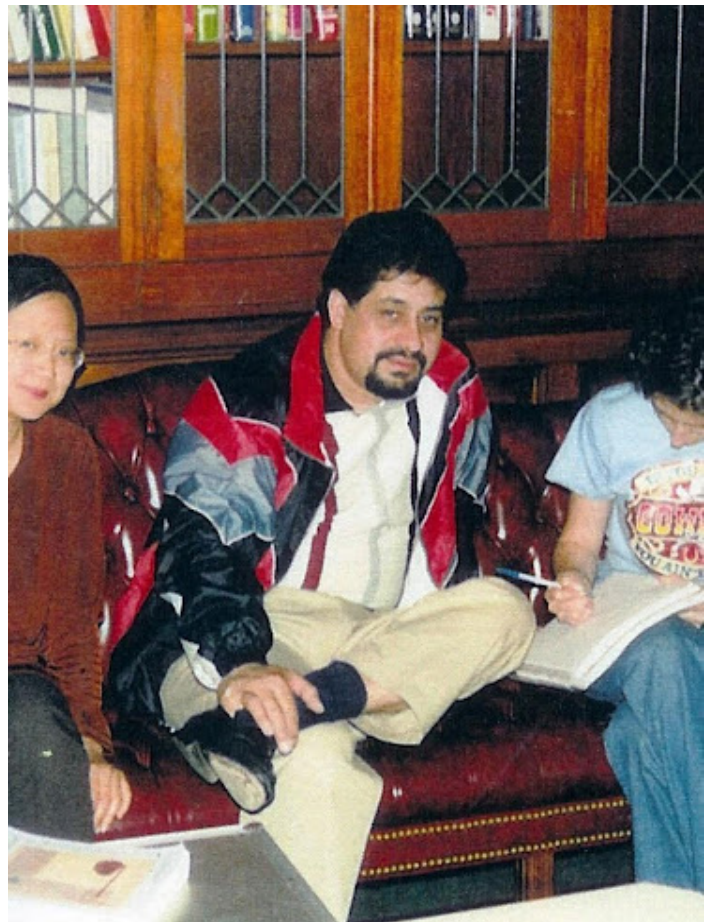
### **ORI**

based on **Oswaldo Castillo**

*The following section is paraphrased from interviews with Oswaldo Castillo. We've attempted to maintain as much of his original language & intention as possible.*

**Ori** is a Puerto Rican man in his 20s. He's Carlos' older cousin. He argues with Yolanda at the organizing meeting. Although he incites conflict with Pedro and Yolanda, he is an organizer and is proud of his Puerto Rican community.

**Oswaldo Castillo** recounts his experience creating a Puerto Rican neighborhood around the Broad Street area, having found only five or six Puerto Rican people in Rhode Island. He talks about the music he listened to during that time. He shares his perspective on race and the Hispanic community in America as a Puerto Rican, and his experience of tension in Rhode Island. He also discusses his experience as the first Latino Police Officer in Providence, organizing the first Puerto Rican Parade, and founding Casa Puerto Rico, the first Hispanic Multi-Service Center for the community, which later united with other Hispanic groups – which he expresses pride about. Another moment of pride is when Puerto Ricans renamed "Bishop Street" in South Providence to "Borinquen Street." He says, "Working together is progress for everyone, not just Hispanics, but everybody benefits." Read about his experience in his own words here: <http://nuestrasraicesri.net/OswaldoCastillo.html>







### YOLANDA 🗣️

based on **Julieta Marroquin Castellanos,**  
**Olga Noguera**

**Yolanda** is a Guatemalan woman in her 30s who works in healthcare as a certified nurse. She's saving money to bring her two children and her mother from Guatemala. She joins the organizers, sharing her experience of being discriminated against by landlords for having kids, and facing discrimination at work, finding out that she isn't paid as much as her white counterparts. She is assertive and stands up for herself and her community.

**Julieta Marroquin Castellanos** "was a businesswoman, an entrepreneur and one of the first to raise awareness about Guatemalan folkloric dance, music and her beautiful handmade textile work to the broader Rhode Island community," as Nuestras Raíces bio describes. She was a Licensed Practical Nurse at Roosevelt Hospital and moved to the US to work as a CNA in a nursing home in Norton, Massachusetts. She became an activist when she discovered she was being paid less than her coworkers. She later opened a bodega called Julie's Market at 72 Appleton Street in Providence. She founded a Guatemalan cultural committee in Providence called Comité Guatemalteco known as the Guatemalan American Association of Rhode Island today. Later, she was hired at one of the Providence Health Centers as an interpreter, and became a counselor because of her degree in Psychology and was promoted to department coordinator – she believes she was the first Latina with a degree in Psychology and Sociology in Rhode Island. Yolanda's experiences at the nursing home, as a nurse, and her memory of Newport Creamery are based on Julieta Marroquin Castellanos' experiences, which you can read in her own words here: <http://nuestrasraicesri.net/Julieta%20Marroquin%20Castellanos2.html>

You can hear an interview with Julieta and Marta Martínez here:  
<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/omivfg9vOd23x6mh1q2yb/Julieta-Castellanoswav?rlkey=seir98b9rkerxrw7lod6mk6k9&dl=0>

Yolanda's experiences coming to America, working and going to school, and saving to bring her children with her are based on Olga Noguera's life. She recounts her experience coming to America and working for a family and a factory, and then she joined the state program to work part time and go to school. She became the secretary of the principal at a school and advocated for the students. Eventually, she had a daughter in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and was able to bring her sons from Guatemala. She began interpreting for people at employment offices and hospitals. She became active in the Colombian community and in Acción Hispana in Central Falls. She worked for health service centers in Rhode Island, and then started informing her community about the services they could access. Read the rest of her story in her own words here: <http://nuestrasraicesri.net/OlgaNoguera.html>







### CARLOS

based on **José González, Roberto González**

Carlos is a Puerto Rican activist and lawyer who is friends with Doña Rosa and Lucrecia's family. His story begins with his experience as the only Latinx person who graduated from Central High in 1969. He went to URI but felt alienated once there. He became a community organizer, working with Charlie Fortes.

José González talks about learning English, and his experience in high school in Providence. He says, "There were six Latinos who graduated from Central High School, the year I graduated. Six Latinos! People then didn't know what Puerto Ricans were. They thought I was Cape Verdean. They thought I was Portuguese. They thought I was everything else, but they had never heard, they didn't even know where Puerto Rico was. A lot of people couldn't even tell you on a map where it was. They didn't know that we spoke Spanish. It was a very new experience. Central High School is so different now, from when I graduated – right now (2002) it is 60% Latino. And there were six of us then that weren't down in the basement, in the ESL class. So, the numbers have really turned around." He talks about being accepted into URI's Special Program for Talent Development, and how overwhelmed he was. He says: "I got kicked out of the university because I just didn't have the skills and abilities to survive a college experience. I was coming from a public school in Providence that was, large, urban, under-funded, and drastically under-prepared its students." He transferred to Rhode Island College, where he formed the first Latin American Student Organization. He found success at RIC, and got a Masters in Bilingual Education. His main goal was to "give back to the Latino community by going into social work." He talks about his childhood, and his perspective on how to create change. Read his story in his words here: <http://nuestrasraicesri.net/JoseGonzalez.html>

You can hear and watch a video of José telling his story here: <http://nuestrasraicesri.net/RILatinoVoices-JoseGonzalez.html>

Roberto González talks about his experience moving from Brooklyn to Rhode Island. Carlos' experience in high school is based on Roberto's experience: he talks about not knowing where he fit in in the segregated school environment, and the tensions between the Black and white students. He also went to URI, and Carlos' experiences are based off both his and José's experiences. He left URI and joined the Vista Volunteer Program, which trained you to work for the community, and both he and José were placed at an agency on Cranston Street with Charlie Fortes. He talks about Acción Hispana, which we discuss above, and forming the Coalition of Hispanic Organizations, and discusses the formation of the Hispanic Political Action Committee. He says, "I remember going to some of these forums where they would get a dozen cases of beer to attract people, get some food out, and then they would invite the candidates to come and talk to the group. The room would be packed with Hispanics and the candidates took notice." He talks about the growth of the Latinx community and "White Flight," noticing: "There were a lot of middle class or lower-middle class families just leaving the city. Not because of the Hispanic community, but I think because they had were now at a different socio-economic level, and were able to afford better homes and a better lifestyle. So they began moving out to the suburbs. And, gas was cheap then, so the commute to Providence was no problem if they had to drive to Providence to work. All that opened up a lot of housing opportunities for the Hispanic community, it almost created a vacuum. As the Irish community left their neighborhoods, some of the local business (like the pubs) had no clientele, so in comes the Hispanic community. Of course, the Hispanic community tends to be very entrepreneurial. So, they see opportunity..." Read his story in his words here:

<http://nuestrasraicesri.net/RobertoGonzalez2.html>







### **PEDRO**

based on **Juan Francisco**

Pedro, a Dominican man in his 20s, is a passionate organizer who dreams of political power for his community, through citizenship and voting power. He decides to run for City Council, as a Republican, because he's learned that the Democratic Party has exploited and betrayed the vote of la comunidad Latina. He's also involved with the campaign for interpreters in hospitals.

Juan Francisco talks about choosing to move to Rhode Island from New York because it "was closest to our experience in our native land. Primarily, it was the quietness, but also the pace of life, the beauty of the area, the vegetation, all that." He talks about how, in 1969 and 70, the police would order groups of people of color to "disperse!" He says, "You couldn't stay out too late at night or the police would come and bother you, and they'd force you to go home. We were the "newcomers," as they called it, and they didn't know quite what to expect from us, so they used that form of control." He talks about his education, and his community organizing, forming the organization Hispanos Unidos de Rhode Island, United Spanish-Speaking People of Rhode Island. He was elected President of the organization, and talks about how Latinx people finally felt they had a place at the table. Please read about how he advocated for political empowerment here: <http://nuestrasraicesri.net/>

JuanFrancisco2.html. He founded the Hispanic Political Action Committee, planning to "organize and develop an organization that strictly focused on developing a Hispanic political strategy, an agenda that would give us political muscle." Please read about his experience running for office here: <http://nuestrasraicesri.net/JuanFrancisco3.html>. He was the second Latino in Rhode Island to run for office, and he talks about important community issues, including education, which he says was the most important issue to him, immigration reform, housing, and police brutality. Read his entire story in his own words here: <http://nuestrasraicesri.net/JuanFrancisco1.html>

You can hear an interview between Juan and an associate from the Rhode Island College Ethnic Heritage Project here: <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/9g6aptj7g74hsbdyji32/Juan-Francisco.wav?rlkey=nj8gmxeuqztsedfwsnznvh7a2&dl=0>

### **MATÍAS**

based on **Victor Mendoza**

Matías is a Dominican man in his 20s, who raises the issue of discrimination against Hispanic students in school because they didn't speak as much English. He goes with Pedro to speak with Councilman Visetti, and is a part of Pedro's organizing. He eventually runs Pedro's campaign for city councilman.

Victor Mendoza talks about why he chose to move to Providence and getting involved with community organizing. He says, "See, many Latin Americans come from countries where there is conflict, revolutions, protests and dictatorships, so when you come to this country, you come with that mind. Of course, you don't come here to fight the system, but when you see the injustices around you, you learn that you need to work within the system to fight for your constitutional rights." He discusses the Coalition, and highlights a youth organization called Club Juvenil, and

Orientación Hispana, which took care of the elderly population. He talks about "putting aside any differences in our nationality, our Hispanic heritage," and the first Latin American Festival of Music in 1979, where 20,000 people came to Roger Williams Park to enjoy. He was the founder and chair of the Hispanic Cultural Arts Committee and was involved in the Annual Latin American Writers Conference. He was instrumental in the fight for bilingual education, fighting against discrimination and mistreatment because of a language barrier, and talks about how important it was to him to not be involved in a one-party system. Pedro's position that the Democratic party takes advantage of Latinx and Black constituents is inspired by Victor Mendoza's interview. He also ran Juan Francisco's campaign. Read about how he has fought to empower Latinx people at this link: <http://nuestrasraicesri.net/VictorMendoza1.html>



**LUÍS-ANTONIO** Luís-Antonio is another coworker at the mill.

**LUÍS** Luís is a family friend of Doña Rosa and Lucrecia's who visits their home.

**ANTHONY** Anthony is a firefighter who visits Doña Rosa and Lucrecia's home and invites Doña Rosa to be a guest of honor at the firefighter's planning committee annual gala.





### SUSAN

based on **The young women who died in the dormitory fire at Providence College on December 13, 1977: Jacqueline Botelho, Kathryn Andresakes, Donna Galligan, Catherine Repucci, Barbara Feeney, Deborah Smith, Sallyann Galligan, Laura Ryan, Dorothy Widman, Gretchen Ludwig.**

**Susan** is a student at Providence College and Ana's roommate. She's from suburban Massachusetts, and at first makes offensive assumptions about Ana and her life in Texas. Her and Ana fight about their values, but they end the play "feeling like family."

**10 students** passed away in the Aquinas Hall Fire. A student who went to school with them, Martha Reynolds, writes about mourning them here: <https://news.providence.edu/a-bond-forever/> There is a scholarship in Gretchen's honor.

### CHAMA

based on **Valentín Ríos**

Chama is Colombian, and a caring friend Pacheco and Pepe. He works as a weaver at the textile factory and saving money to bring his brother to America for surgery. His brother has epilepsy, and his mistreatment at the hospital sparks the organizing push to make hospitals equitable places for the Hispanic community.

Valentín Ríos talks about his arrival in America, helping his family and his brother afford medications, and his career path as an engineer. He talks about finding a Spanish speaking community, what it was like being the only three Colombians in Rhode Island, and his relationship with Pedro Cano. He also discusses learning about food in Rhode Island, and his eventual move to Seattle. You can read his story in his own words here: <http://nuestrasraicesri.net/ValentinRios.html>

And you can hear an interview between Valentín and Marta here: <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/5zulyn8tj4q417q1hx/Valentin-Rios-Colombian.mp3?rlkey=j5owajcxhd81o siembey6v1j&dl=0>

**ELENA** Elena is Yolanda's coworker at the nursing home, who tells her story about coming to Boston and her work since

### COUNCILMAN VISETTI

Visetti is a city councilman who treats Pedro and Matías with disrespect.

### PEPE

based on **Bernardo Chamorro**

Pepe is Pacheco's friend and roommate. He's funny and enjoys teasing his buddies.

Bernardo Chamorro speaks about organizing a fiesta to celebrate the Independence Day of Colombia on July 20th, and forming a group called Club Colombia, formalized as a non-profit in 1972 and named the Colombian-American Association, with the goal of being a social group for celebrations and enjoyment. He talks about how his Central Falls community has changed. Read his story in his own words here: <http://nuestrasraicesri.net/BernardoChamorro2.html>





# UNIT TWO: THEMES & CONTEXT

## NUESTRAS RAÍCES: THE LATINO ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

There is no better resource for learning more about La Broa' – the characters, the history, the inspiration, the places – than the Nuestras Raíces website and book. Nuestras Raíces features interviews with almost every character in La Broa', a historical timeline with images for the entire last century of Latinx history in Rhode Island: <http://nuestras-raicesri.net/LatinosinRI-Timeline.html>, and blurbs about "Latino Places That Matter:" <http://nuestrasraicesri.net/LatinoPlacesThatMatter-SoProvidenceRI.html>. You can also see a historical timeline, a "Timeline of La Broa': How Redlining, Racism, and the U.S. Highway System Influenced the Creation of Providence's Most Diverse Neighborhood," and an article on the Southside Cultural Center in both English and Spanish in the La Broa' program.

Marta Martínez (founder of Nuestras Raíces and Community Oral Historian), describes the project's goals: "Collecting our history is incredibly important for me because we, as Latinos, rarely are given the opportunity to share our history and to tell our story. My hope is for the younger generations to learn about all the successes that Latinx individuals have had in this country. However, Latinos must also talk about our struggles and push for programming or share stories that reflects our true history, stories about historical challenges or difficulties." Nuestras Raíces shares the stories of Latinx community members from history and today, educates about Latinx history in Rhode Island and New England, and inspires and prepares people to become oral historians or to share their own stories. 🇵🇷

## ABOUT MARTA V. MARTÍNEZ

Marta V. Martínez grew up in El Paso, Texas. She graduated with a B.A. in English from Providence College, and an M.A. in Journalism from George Washington University. She holds a Ph.D. in Fine Arts from Providence College. She is the Executive Director and Founder of Rhode Island Latino Arts, the oldest Latinx non-profit arts organization advocating for Latin American arts, cultural heritage and history in Rhode Island. She is also a teacher and an oral historian and founded Nuestras Raíces: The Latino Oral History Project of Rhode Island. She has won numerous awards recognizing her groundbreaking work, including the Rhode Island Pell Award for Excellence in the Arts by Trinity Repertory Company.

You can listen to this podcast about Marta as well: <https://thepublicsradio.org/episode/oral-history-project-shares-the-stories-of-latino-communities-in-rhode-island>

Here are snippets from an interview featured in Folk Notes, March 2009 to get to know Marta better:

### **"What project are you currently working on?"**

The Latino Oral History Project of Rhode Island

The Latino Oral History Project of Rhode Island began in 1991 when I met and recorded the memories of Josefina Rosario who had been





co-owner (with her husband, Tony) of "Fefa's Market," the first Hispanic bodega (market) in Rhode Island. In subsequent years, I met with and recorded the voices of many other Latino pioneers, among them community activists, social service providers, artists, health care providers, elected officials, educators, and others. Other projects: The Hispanic Heritage Committee of RI and the César Chávez Scholarship Fund of RI.

### **Describe your work.**

My work with my oral history project involves meeting and listening to individuals who feel they have a personal story to tell. In my Latino culture, we transmit knowledge and expressions of culture from one generation to the next by word of mouth or by example.

Traditional historians spend a lot of time trying to collect history by looking into the archives of scholarly organizations and libraries. But not all of us have an archive at home, instead what we have is living history. The people whom we love have stories that we need to hear. This, I believe, is an important way for a community to participate in the making of history: by sharing first-person accounts about a particular event in local or national history, or especially within our own families that can mean something to future generations. It's a way of personalizing history, and I like that. By listening, carefully gathering, documenting, and sharing these memories, I feel I am making

a difference and making history available to future generations to come.

I also enjoy working with young people. They are so full of energy, have great ideas and are very eager to be involved. My work with oral histories also focuses on the idea of connecting young people with the past so that they can learn from their elders, and in turn they can continue the process of education and preservation of their culture and history into the future.

[...]

### **What is your proudest accomplishment?**

I am especially proud of my accomplishments during my tenure as the Executive Director of CHisPA because it was during that time, the 1990s, when great social change happened in R.I. and also across the country. There was a great deal of energy in the Latino community, and it was very exciting to be part of that movement. People were looking to work together to make change. Government agencies, the private sector, communities of color, and key elected officials collaborated in wonderful ways, and everyone benefited. The Latino community was growing, people were waking up and seeing the value of political power, community involvement and social change. It was an exciting time, and after being part of that movement, I am proud at the thought that young people today have benefitted from what was accomplished during that time."

## **INTERVIEW WITH ,**

**MARTA V. MARTÍNEZ** 

**Am Wyckoff, Education Apprentice:** OK! Hello! So I want to ask you a couple questions in your own words about oral history, about your project and your work, and about the play as well – about the stories that are in the play. Would you introduce yourself first before we start?

**Marta Martínez:** I'm Marta V. Martínez, and I'm the executive director of Rhode Island Latino Arts and I'm also - people have been calling me a community oral historian - it's not my title, but I'll accept it.

**AW:** And I'm Am, I'm the Education Apprentice, and I've been the one writing the study guide - so hello! My first question is: was there a moment in your life that really ignited your passion for oral history or, more generally, what inspired you to begin oral history?

**MM:** I've always been interested – my path was journalist, and I've been interested and curious, I was always asking a lot of questions, and then that kind of led me to want to write and be a journalist. I was interested in television, and I went to a school that didn't have a degree in that, or even in journalism, so I ended up majoring in English and writing but I still had that passion. I've just always been curious, so if you ever find me in an elevator, I'll





strike up a conversation and ask two or three questions. I'm just curious, I just ask questions. And that's what prompted me here. When I moved to Rhode Island, I was hired to work for the Latino community at a social service organization, and I was not from here. So I felt like if I'm going to be representing or working with this community, I wanted to know who they were. So I went out on Broad Street - that was my first place that I went - First, I always tell the story I was trying to find like with oral histories and what I emphasize is it's a good way to connect with somebody that's like you. And I was looking for Mexicans - I mean, there were Latinos out there, but I was looking primarily for Mexicans for many reasons, for food too, and there were none, I wouldn't run into them. But there were these lovely Caribbeans, the Dominicans that I spoke to, and I just started asking questions! And I kept hearing - you know, I don't know much about what it was like to be an immigrant from the Dominican Republic, so I would ask that: Well, what brought you here? What's it like to live in the Dominican Republic and where do you live? And then I would go into some of the bodegas and I wasn't familiar with the food, so it was just led me to questions and questions and then I realized that there was this wonderful community that not too many others knew about, because I would come back and talk about the Dominicans or what I was doing on Broad Street, and some people were like, "Oh you don't want to be on Broad Street, that's not a very safe space" and others would be fascinated with what I said, you know, talking about plátanos and the food, and the people and even the Spanish was a little different, and I kept going back, I just kept being drawn back to it even though I really didn't have to, and from that I learned about Doña Fefa. Everybody's always mentioned her name, there was this name that kept popping up, and so my journalism instinct said there's something to this. So, I asked somebody who worked with me who knew her - same thing, same story, she brought her, and I didn't know anything more than that: "Doña Fefa, this lady named Doña Fefa, brought me here from the Dominican Republic." So I made arrangements

to meet her, and that's where it all started, I just walked in basically to get to know who this lady is, just like you know you want to know more about who I am, and again my journalism instincts jumped in. And when she started her story, I had a little tape recorder in my pocket that I was carrying because of my journalism background, and I put it on the table and recorded that story, and I'm so happy I did! That's where it all started.

**AW: That's amazing! Thank you for telling us about that. And I can picture that moment in the La Broa' a script, it will be wonderful to see that moment happen. Would you tell us more about why oral history, and what are some of the limitations of written history, and why oral history is so important? Especially for students to learn from.**

**MM:** So written history, that was part of my journey. So, what I did before I went to Broad Street, I went to the library because I said, well I want to read about this community! Where else would you be able to learn this than through the library newspapers. And there was nothing; I could not find anything. I found a few articles that were negative: people who were arrested or on welfare, or very negative, and I just knew, especially after spending a couple of days on Broad Street, that these are not the people that I was meeting. And so I realized that nobody was telling their stories, that journalists were interpreting ... it was the same, it was similar to what people were telling me, "Why are you on Broad Street, it's dangerous". I got the sense that nobody really wanted to go to Broad Street to feature stories, it was all the negative stuff. So it's being interpreted by the press and by the scholars, you know, there was nothing in the papers, nothing in the schools. I talked to teachers and students and they're like, "Oh no we study Rhode Island history, but it's all colonial, it's all about Roger Williams." And it's not just the Latinos, people of color weren't learning their own history. So, a lot of that just inspired me, you know, somebody needs to do this. And I didn't stand up and say one day "I'm going to be the one," it just kind of



fell in place. But it's connecting, having young people connect with somebody like them. And also learning that, like me, you know I didn't find Mexicans, but I found this other community – you have to learn other about other communities that are similar to yours and the fact that we are diverse, we are under this one umbrella that's called Latino or Hispanic or Latinx, but we're all from 21 different countries. So those are the things you learn. And in terms of collecting your own oral histories, I always tell you, you know, it's your story. You own it, and if you're not going to tell it, somebody else will tell it for you, and they'll interpret it the way they want to interpret it. Make sure you collect it, and you document it, and put it in an archive. And make sure that it's preserved.

**AW: Definitely. Not to talk about myself, but I remember an incident we were in class in college on Trans Cultural Production, and I'm trans, and we were all trans in the class, every student, and we were learning about the archive and how it categorizes trans people, and how trans people have been categorized throughout history. And like you said, so many of the only evidence we have of trans people in even recent history is a death certificate when people were 'found out' at their death or when they were arrested. It's always the negative thing that's catalogued. So I really resonate with how empowering it is to archive your own stories and create your own archive.**

**MM:** And to learn about that! Not just, yes oral histories, but what happens after that. Where can you go and look for it, you know, as a young person? It should be in the library! It isn't, I should say, mine is the only archive right now that has Latino history, but someday it won't be.

**AW: I was just in the library, actually, looking for books and there was not – like you said – it was mostly biographies of Roger Williams. That's definitely very real. My next question is: if students want to start learning their community's stories and documenting them, where is a good place for them to start?**

**MM:** Well hopefully in the schools, and I do that – they can come to the Rhode Island Latino Arts, and we give tours of the archives. I can come to their schools – I mean it's hard, there is no real place to go other than the public library, but I don't want to say the public library, not even the library is giving oral history workshops. What I tell people is: if it doesn't exist, create it. That's what I did. The history didn't exist and I created it, I found it. Somebody asked me – because I'm actually putting together a whole timeline, and that's where the play comes in, that's where I learned all this stuff that happened in the 60s and 70s. They said, "Well where did you find all that?" I said,

I just spend hours in the library. It's all there, it just needs to come to the surface. So take the time to look for it, and if you find it, bring it up to the surface, and the way you do that is by telling the stories, write poetry, write letters, write books, document it. Talking into a recorder, video, however you want to, record it, document it, and make sure that it is saved for the future generations, and make sure it always stays on the surface. Because very few organizations – it's dark it's a deep dark there somewhere. You just have to look for it.

**AW: What is your favorite part of your job, and then what is the hardest part of your job?**

**MM:** My favorite part is, aside from meeting everyone, is just – well there's two things: seeing history come to life, like I said, I spent a lot of time in the library. I find people whose names pop up a lot and so because I've been here long enough, I can ask them, like do you know this person, and if they know them that they connect me. But to see that name come to life. Like recently, I was trying to really pin down the first person who ran for an elected office who was Latino, and there's two or three people that came up, and especially with this play it got me to thinking, and I found him! And I've been reading about him all this time, and I have all these newspaper articles, and I have this little sketch of him – it's not even a photograph – and I met him, I went to DC, and I looked him up and so I interviewed him. He said that to me – how did you find all this stuff? And it was so cool to just see that name come to life. He sat in front of me, and he was a real person. And so you know that's part of what this play is: that the Latinos who come or anybody who comes to the play, this is not a fantasy, and it's not fiction; this was true. This happened in Rhode Island, all the good things and the struggles that you're going to see on stage, they happen, and that's what's so different about this play, that's my favorite part, is watching that come alive. And then also the moment when they realized that they made history. You know like when I talked to Manuel, that's who it was, he was like "No, are you sure I'm the first person?" I go, "I've done enough history," and then I had him kind of think, I had him go through this exercise, and he goes, "Oh my god!" I could almost see the bulb pop in his head, and his body language changes, and he's now all of a sudden just this humble person realizing what he did. That's my favorite moment, and that's happened a lot because I spend a lot of time and I want people to know you were there, you made history. The challenging part is building trust. There are some people who, they're afraid to tell their story, they're suspicious, and I spend a lot of years building trust just in the Latino community, and now I've got to the point a little bit where people know, "You're that lady who writes about history" and they say, "I want to be part of



that, I've read about it" and "I don't want to be part of it." It's challenging, but it's a fun challenge. I like it.

**AW: What you said about seeing the moment when people realize that they are part of history is so powerful.**

**MM:** Yeah, especially when you really put him through this exercise, and I watch. And I like to observe people, and when the body language changes, and the look in their face and just that moment of wow! And then I told him, I go, "You're in the play by the way." So that's really cool.

**AW: Yeah, that was one of my favorite things about reading the play, and that I'm excited about seeing, is at the end when they're all - not to spoil the play - but when they read all the names and then they spotlight the real person. That's such a powerful moment to see this ensemble that you've been getting to know connected to the real people.**

**MM:** Yeah, this is not fiction, these are real people. And they might be here.

**AW: Oh, that would be amazing, that would be really, really cool. My last question is what about La Broa' do you hope speaks to student audiences specifically.**

**MM:** Exactly that, that this was real. They could be your neighbor, and you never know, they could be your pastor - there's somebody here who is now a pastor who is a main character, and they could be the pastor in your church. Like you, when the real people's photos come up - that's a moment I'm looking forward to, not just because I'm hoping to have those people sitting in the audience, but those who are in the audience who will be getting that same aha moments, saying "Oh my God, that guy that I see all the time walking his dog in front of my house, he's famous." For the kids to see that that's their history too, especially the Latino students, because just in reading the play, he did a good job of covering all the different moments that happened but also touching upon all the different ethnic groups: the Colombians, the Guatemalans, the Dominicans, and the Puerto Ricans, and that could be you in 50 years.

**AW: Yeah, that's such a great message for them to take away. Is there anything else that you want to say to students who are coming to the show about your work, or about the play, or about oral history, or anything at all?**

**MM:** Yeah, I want people to know that oral history can be a profession. It's one of those things that like - if you want to be an artist, or in the theater, people say "Oh you don't want to do that" or they think it's a hobby, but that it's important that history, that they understand that public history and oral

history - people like me do it for a living, because, again, if we're not doing it, no one else would be doing it, and those who would be doing it would not be doing it justice. So don't be afraid to ask questions, and record your life. Like I said, write a poem, tell a story, record your life. Make sure that it gets documented.

**AW: I think that's so important - we want all the students to really engage with the play, but also use it as a jumping off point to create things of their own.**

**MM:** And for teachers, I would give them a lesson plan: have them write a poem, have them write reflections, have them go out and record. I know writing's important, I know all the standards, but also just tell kids to talk into their phone every night. Just reflect on your day, because now we are archiving audio. I wouldn't survive without audio to transcribe. Just take the time to make your own history, however you do it. However you feel you can contribute.

**AW:** Thank you so much for your time and for speaking with everyone! We're so excited for the play, and thank you.





# THE IMPORTANCE OF ORAL HISTORY



**LA BROA'**  
**(BROAD STREET)**

As Marta Martínez discusses in her interview, oral history is an important way for communities to have ownership of their stories. As history is written by the dominant population, American history has long left out the histories of Latinx people in America. Marta Martínez writes, "The U.S. public education system does such a poor job of teaching Latino history in this country, and often Hispanic Heritage Month is the only opportunity for many students to learn about it, and that is a real shame.

Why not highlight programming or write stories that reflect our true history, stories about historical challenges or difficulties? You cannot assume that Latinos already know about the lynchings in South Texas in the 1910s, the Zoot Suit Riots, about Mendez v. Westminster; the Chicano-led high school walkouts of the 1960s that permanently changed higher education enrollment for Latino students or the school segregation of Latino kids right here in Rhode Island. Approached in the right way, even these stories can be ultimately seen as uplifting because the historic struggles of Chicanos, Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans and other Latinos are uplifting stories. For only through those struggles have we been able to achieve more social justice in this country." When written history is lacking or biased, oral history can be one tool to provide a fuller picture, counteracting the way that written history prioritizes the dominant class of people.

Marta writes about oral history: "Oral testimony can provide powerful insight into the experiences of Latinos who first moved to Rhode Island and how they might compare to what is happening around the country in a broader sense. The 1960s, for example, was a time of local political upheaval and other social movements covered by the national news that played crucial roles in shaping this era, such as the Vietnam War, the Civil Rights, the Hippie Movement, and the Chicano Movement in the Southwest. We can learn whether newly-arrived Hispanics were even aware of these more global movements or issues, or were they too busy dealing with their own interpersonal experiences of assimilation into American society— learning English, finding work, taking driving tests, enrolling their children in local schools, simple tasks of figuring out how to use the American currency, and other such stories of every-day survival that we all take for granted. Oral testimony is an excellent tool for studying how the lives of these new arrivals may or may not have been affected. Oral memoirs can help us to move beyond easy slogans to see the complexity and the



human drama of the human experience.

Yet all oral history projects present special challenges. Sometimes we assume that first-person testimony represents the absolute truth, 'the way things really were.' It is more helpful to approach oral history as a form of memory--an individual's way of interpreting and narrating their experience during a particular event or period. Seen this way, oral memoirs can help us understand the crucial role of perspective and interpretation in history. This is particularly valuable in studying a controversial period such as the example of life in the 1960s, as mentioned above. Oral memoirs that present contrasting views of this period can help us explore the conflicts that divided the nation during these years-and how issues raised then continue to shape our social and political discourse today.

In addition, oral history can bring forth the history of ethnic groups that our children will never find in their history books at school. It can serve as a way to inspire young Latinos and to provide rising Latino leaders with a foundation and insight into the kinds of battles their forbearers led that brought them the things that they take for granted today."

As Marta spotlights, oral history provides a way to center human beings. It allows us to access social history through learning from the people who lived through that time. Oral history allows us to access those whose lives aren't recorded in legal documents or important books: this includes women, who were cut off from the public sphere (and the domestic sphere was often completely neglected in history's account), or anyone who wasn't part of the dominant ruling class, including those whose land was colonized, and people of color who have lived under systemic racism, like in the United States. Written history is often filled with bias, and written from the perspective of those in power, which means that it leaves out crucial perspectives.

However, when American university history departments began to incorporate oral history, these projects were often centered on white people as well, as Kacie Lucchini Butcher at the University of Wisconsin-Madison chronicles in **this article**. That's why projects like Nuestras Raíces are so important. And, as Marta Martínez said in her interview, "It's your story. You own it. And if you're not going to tell it, somebody else will tell it for you, and they'll interpret it the way they want to interpret it." Oral history is the oldest form of history – but in contemporary rhetoric, people sometimes create a divide between ancient oral histories (which are all the history we have for ancient periods – Thucydides and Herodotus, two ancient Greek historians, were recording oral history!) and modern oral history, positioning the former as more official or objective and the latter as subjective. But those histories are infused with the author's perspective – all history is! As Marta Martínez tells us, oral history can be a tool to take ownership of your story and learn and tell your community's story as well.







## NOTABLE THEMES

### RESISTANCE

*Content Warning: Discussions of police brutality, state violence, anti-Black violence, and racism*

Ana and Susan discuss the 1992 Los Angeles Riots, and in doing so allow the audience to ask the questions: what kinds of protest and resistance are seen as acceptable in America? What kind of resistance does America allow? How has protesting in America been commodified?

Susan argues that the protesters who were arrested must have been doing something bad, like looting. When Ana responds that those protesters were arrested for “having the wrong-color skin ... This whole thing started because police beat up an African American man for no reason,” Susan replies, “He was driving drunk, you told me that himself... He was breaking the law! Are you telling me he shouldn’t have been arrested either?” Ana replies, “I’m telling you he shouldn’t have been treated like that. And if he had been white, I doubt he would have been.” Susan’s response shows that she implicitly trusts the intentions of police officers and the police force, and her argument that they were “doing something bad” implies that she believes each person deserves the treatment they receive. However, Black people are far more likely to be arrested and charged than white people, **as the Sentencing Project Reports**. You can view **this NAACP fact sheet** for an overview of disparities at every level of the criminal justice process, and they report that “A Black person is five times more likely to be stopped without just cause than a white person.” And, of course, breaking the law should not warrant discrimination, police brutality, and horrific violence. The NAACP fact sheet also highlights the disproportionate amount of police violence that Black people face: “While white people make up a little over 60% of the population, they only make up about 41% of fatal police

shootings. Black people make up 13.4% of the population but make up 22% of fatal police shootings. This does not take into consideration other forms of police brutality, including non-lethal shootings.”

Susan and Ana’s argument also touches on the way that white people often critique protests. For example, when public discourse in 2016 erupted around Colin Kaepernick’s choice to kneel during the National Anthem. **This study, “Taking the star-spangled knee: the media framing of Colin Kaepernick,” by Steph Doehler** analyzes how. “Subsequently, the most dominant frame from the 2016 analysis highlighted that very little reporting addressed Kaepernick’s issues on racial injustice and police brutality, strongly favouring a focus on his action of kneeling instead ... even those who spoke more positively of Kaepernick focused attention on his method, reinforcing the dominance of this frame, ‘It wasn’t Kaepernick’s message that drew so much reaction; it was his method for dissemination’ (Blackstone Citation2016) and ‘It seems like most people are talking about WHAT Kaepernick did. Not WHY he did it’ (Somerville Citation2016).” The media was more interested in criticizing the way Kaepernick protested instead of engaging with his cause – and this critique can often completely silence those who protest, attempting to delegitimize them and their protests and staunch true discourse about their cause.

In fact, police officers brutalized peaceful marchers during the Civil Rights Movement in events like Bloody Sunday in Selma, at the Edmund Pettus Bridge, in 1965. The protests led by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. are widely praised for their peacefulness but resulted in immense state violence for the protesters and for Dr. King himself. Locally, Brown University has recently arrested 61 students for staging peaceful sit-ins, even though President Christina Paxson has repeatedly used Brown student activism as a selling-point (read this rigorous op-ed from some of the students arrested), and the university has a long history of impactful protests, like the Black



Student Walk-Out and sit-ins of 1968., which it often praises. When America claims to support the right to disagree with the government, how do state bodies like the police limit that freedom? How does the system punish dissent? Can you protest a society while still complying with its expectations?

But Susan asks: what about looting? What about destruction of property? Ana proposes an answer to this question in the scene. "I mean some kinds of violence look like violence. People smashing windows, hitting people, shooting guns. But some kinds of violence just look like everyday life... If you don't have enough food to eat—that's violence. Or if you're always treated like a second-class citizen in your own country." Ana reframes Susan's question: what kinds of violence do we deem acceptable? How does condemning protesters instead of changing the root causes of the protests uphold the status quo? Ana and Susan's conversation raises these questions, and they are worthy of discussion.

## US INTERVENTION IN LATIN AMERICA

*Content Warning: Brief mentions of kidnapping, torture, and death*

Carlos, based on José and Roberto González, explains how US policy has impacted Latinx lives in Latin America as well as in the United States. In the Harvard Review of Latin America, ReVista, John Coatsworth argues that between 1898 to 1994, the US government intervened successfully to change governments in America a total of at least 41 times. Direct intervention was used in 17 of those cases, which included military force, the CIA and its intelligence agents, or citizens employed by government agencies. In the indirect cases, regime changes were made in which local actors played a large role, but wouldn't have acted or succeeded without encouragement from the US government.

In Chile, which Carlos specifically brings up, NPR reports that the US spent hundreds of thousands on propaganda to stop Allende, a Marxist and member of Chile's Socialist Party, from taking winning the election, but he won the election anyway. The CIA attempted to create a coup, but Allende was sworn in – afterwards, the US and CIA spent millions to back opposition to Allende, setting the stage for the coup that instated General Augusto Pinochet. Pinochet's regime tortured, kidnapped, and killed hundreds of thousands of Chileans.

Ariel Dorfman writes, "I am still haunted today by these violations, those broken and twisted and unfinished lives. I cannot walk the streets of Santiago without constantly being reminded, 50 years later, of the pain perpetrated on the friends I lost and continue to mourn, and of the compañeros whose names and stories I never knew but who marched with me on our common quest for a better land. That was

our sin. To have participated, during the thousand days of Allende's government, in a process of national liberation and popular empowerment that had recovered for the nation its natural resources, implemented an agrarian reform that gave peasants the land their ancestors had toiled on for centuries, made workers and employees responsible for the factories and banks where they labored, and created a volcanic cultural transformation that brought millions of extremely inexpensive books to penurious readers. Because Allende's unique experiment—the first time in history that a revolution did not resort to armed struggle to impose its views or eliminate its adversaries—had captured the world's imagination, our defeat, and the savage repression that followed it, wielded an outsize influence far beyond the borders of what could be expected from a small, remote country at the far edge of the Southern Hemisphere."

And Mara Marques Cavallaro, in the spirit of oral history, writes with the lived experience of her grandparents behind her: "Personal loss is hard enough to understand. To attempt to grasp the scale of continental loss is debilitating. Hundreds of thousands of people were tortured, imprisoned, killed, or disappeared. In Guatemala, Indigenous communities were slaughtered. In the Dominican Republic, Haitians were massacred. An incalculable number of people were widowed or lost parents, children, or loved ones. Adoptees continue to learn that their parents were killed, and their origins were kept from them." This article is a history of the coup in Chile from the perspective of the writer's grandmother, who was a political exile from Brazil and then fled from Chile to Stockholm when Pinochet took power. The writer's grandfather was tortured and killed by the Brazilian military. NPR reports, "In America, the coup of Sept. 11, 1973, 'galvanized public opinion in a way that no other activity, no other coup, no other military dictatorship in Latin America did,' says Joe Eldridge, a longtime human rights advocate who was in Chile when it happened. 'It was the suddenness, the abruptness in a country that had a long tradition of honoring democratic governance. Chile galvanized, it crystallized in the minds of so many, what was wrong with U.S. foreign policy.'" The US government's intervention in democratic elections in Latin America to protect their own economic and political interests have irreparably harmed countless lives, and Carlos' attempt to organize within the country is informed by this knowledge – that Latin American self-determination and democracy has been continually undermined by the U.S.A.





# RESOURCES

*Community Organizing Spotlights: La Broa' tells the story of Latinx community organizing in Rhode Island. Nuestras Raíces features histories of community organizing in Rhode Island. Please explore these histories at these links:*

## **Organizing • Coalition Building • Political History**

La Broa' highlights many issues that are still facing Latin Americans today in Rhode Island and across the country. La Broa' specifically focuses on immigration, needing access to translators, housing discrimination, labor rights including wage equality, educational discrimination, and economic inequality. Through spotlighting community orgs, we hope you can learn more about these issues and how to work towards solving them through getting involved with your community.

For example, the organizing shown in La Broa' led to the later implementation of mandatory trilingual translators in hospitals. La Broa' showcases the roots of movements for justice in Rhode Island.

Roberto González, one of Los Pioneros, highlights the development of community organizations for Latinx people in Rhode Island. His first involvement with community organizing was with Acción Hispana, a group in Central Falls, which forms one of the inspirations for the community organizing meetings that take place in La Broa'. Later, in 1970, a group in

Providence started the Latin American Community Center on Harvard Street, which connected community members with government agencies to help them. After funding dried up and the center closed, Gonzalez helped to form the Coalition of Hispanic Organizations, known as "Coalicion," which had representatives from Pawtucket and Central Falls. There were individuals making community programming and those who were interested in politics. After it closed down, groups went on to establish their own community centers. From that came Progreso Latino, which we spotlight below, and HSSA CHis-PA. All of this information comes from Roberto González's interview on Nuestras Raíces: <http://nuestrasraicesri.net/RobertoGonzalez1.html>

You can learn more about all the orgs mentioned on the pages dedicated to Community Organizing and Building Coalitions on Nuestras Raíces, which we strongly recommend to complete this study guide: Community Organizing; Building Coalitions.



### **FUERZA LABORAL**

Fuerza Laboral is an organization with campaigns for workers' rights and immigrant rights. They have a Worker-Owned Cooperative Business Incubator, a goal of ending wage theft through targeted direct actions and pressure to passed legislation, offer workshops on labor rights, immigrant rights, leadership development, and job readiness skills, and organize the community to fight justice for immigrants in coalition with other grassroots organizations. Their mission is: "We are an organization of workers who organize to end labor exploitation. We educate and train workers in their rights, we develop new community leaders, and we take direct action against injustices to achieve concrete victories. We work together with state and national coalitions in order to create a larger impact." <https://www.fuerza-laboral.org/>



### **THE PROVIDENCE STUDENT UNION**

Their mission is to "build student power to improve our education and well-being." They have a list of demands called the Student Bill of Rights, which can be found here: <https://www.pvdstudentunion.org/student-bill-of-rights>. They organize and protest for student rights issues, take part in numerous coalitions, and provide a guide for protesting at school, forming a club at school, and for their various campaigns. <https://www.pvdstudentunion.org/guides>



### **PROVIDENCE YOUTH STUDENT MOVEMENT (PRYSM)**

PRYSM mobilizes queer Southeast Asian youth, families, and allies to build grassroots power and organize collectively for social justice." They have programs including the Queer Transformative Roots and the Queer Community Housing Initiative, the Community Defense Project, Rhode Island Civic Engagement, and the Organizing Circle. <https://www.prysm.us/>

***Each organization can also connect you to a variety of community services at the above links.***





## SISTA FIRE

"Our mission at SISTA Fire is to co-create a network of women of color and non-binary people of color to build our collective power for social, economic and political transformation. Our work includes four strategies: Building a strong membership base and network, solidarity and collective healing, growing our economic power, and organizing for change – organizing and the collective action of members will have a direct impact on the current conditions and policies women of color face day to day." Their initiatives include the Black Maternal Health Campaign, the Doulas of Color network, the Justice Circle, and mutual aid programs. <https://sistafireri.org/about/who-we-are/>



## THE CENTER FOR YOUTH AND COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION (CYCLE)

CYCLE at Roger Williams University "partners with youth, families, educators, and other stakeholders to build collective power and fight for educational justice." CYCLE's current projects included: the Cycle Strategy Institute, Manchester Public Schools Advancing Community-School Partnerships, New England Youth, Parent, and Community Organizing Support, New England Youth Organizing Network (NEYON), OurSchoolsPVD, Schools and Communities Organizing for Racial Equity (SCORE), Social Policy Hub for Equity Research in Education (SPHERE) at Rhode Island College, and Youth Leadership in the Partnership for the Future of Learning. <https://cycle-rwu.org/>



## AMOR

AMOR offers community support. They offer legal support from the Immigration Team. They also have a Police Violence Team, also known as the Community Defense Project, which "provides legal and organizational assistance to people who have been brutalized and/or suffered at the hands of the Providence Police." Their Mental Health Team connects individuals and families with providers. There's a Language Justice Team which "provides interpretation to community members, and raises awareness in our movements," offering, "translation and interpretation services and workshops on interpretation in service of social justice." There's a Transportation Team which "offers free services to people who are in need of timely transportation," and finally, a Community Response Team which "serves as the frontline resistance to threats against our communities, providing community support and public demonstrations." <https://amorri.org/es/iniciativas/>



## ALLIANCE TO MOBILIZE OUR RESISTANCE (AMOR)

AMOR is an alliance of community based grassroots organizations mobilizing at the intersections of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and immigration status to prevent, to respond to, and to end state violence against our community." Their initiatives include organizing for defunding the police, interpretation and language justice, community care, and immigration support. They have a legal fund to pay bond for people held inside of the Wyatt on the ICE contract and have pressured Rhode Island to pass legislation that would allow undocumented immigrants to obtain state issued driver's licenses. <https://amorri.org/>



## DIRECT ACTION FOR RIGHTS AND EQUALITY (DARE)

DARE organize[s] low-income families living in communities of color for social, economic, and political justice." DARE organizes protests and campaigns, working with people who are incarcerated and formerly incarcerated to build community with their Behind the Walls initiative, and the Tenant and Homeowners Association advocates for municipal and state legislation to address the root causes of eviction, foreclosure, and housing insecurity. <https://daretowin.org/mission/>



## PROGRESO LATINO

has been serving Rhode Island's Latino and immigrant communities since 1977. It is mentioned as one of the first and most influential community and services centers by many of the Nuestras Raíces pioneers, who also make up the cast of characters of La Broa'. "Progreso Latino's mission is to empower Rhode Island's Latino and immigrant communities to achieve greater self-sufficiency and socio-economic progress by providing transformational programs that support personal growth and social change." Progreso Latino offers educational programming, has a social services department with case workers who can act as navigators and help people address needs, and the CF food pantry. They offer income tax assistance and a job club, and also offer services to Latinx victims of domestic violence and particularly newly arrived immigrants with limited English proficiency, including education, case management, legal advocacy, individual counseling and support groups, and financial literacy. They have many other services that can be found here: <https://progresolatino.org/new-page-20>





# UNIT THREE:

## ENTERING THE TEXT

### EXERCISE 1: CREATE YOUR OWN CREATE YOUR OWN ORAL HISTORY

For our first exercise, we're encouraging you to get into your community and interview a business owner, pastor, teacher, principal, or someone you see all the time but don't know much about! Please refer to the Oral History Tips page at [Nuestras Raíces](http://nuestrasraicesri.net/OralHistoryTips.html) for guidelines and necessary steps: <http://nuestrasraicesri.net/OralHistoryTips.html> For the interview itself, you can start with five simple questions:

1. What is your name?
2. Where are you from?
3. What brought you to Rhode Island?
4. How many siblings do you have?
5. When did you become interested in doing what you do?

Then, you can open your ears to listen and let them talk from there, asking questions as they come up. Marta Martínez suggests that you get them talking – rephrase the question, ask them to tell you more. Make sure to ask your interviewee if you can record and record your conversation if they consent.

After you've completed your interview, share the three things you learned from your interviewee that most inspired you, surprised you, or moved you. Discuss with your classmates – did anyone else's interviewee have similar experiences, or live a similar life? How are your communities connected?

If you complete a class oral history project, please reach out to us and Marta Martínez, who has offered to feature your class stories on the *Nuestras Raíces* website! Your class could have their own section on the website, and the students' stories would be archived by Marta and the Latino Oral History Project!

### EXERCISE 2: "I AM FROM..." POEMS

Have each student make five columns, one for each of the five senses: sound, sight, touch, taste, and smell. In each column write things that you associate from either your childhood or where you live right now. For example, my columns might look like:

Sound: crickets chirping at night, my mom playing piano, my dog's footsteps, disco music in the car.

Sight: light filtering through the trees, cold blue skies, big trees, and striped wallpaper.

Touch: moss under my feet, my dog's soft hair, a scratchy carpet, a fuzzy sweater.

Taste: egg drop soup, fresh tomatoes, *baclava*, pasta, green tea.

Smell: old book pages, fresh laundry, grass, garlic cooking.

Then, construct a poem with an example from each column (you can also use multiple examples if time permits). As an example, here is my I am from poem:

**I am from** crickets chirping at night.

**I am from** light filtering through the trees.

**I am from** the feeling of moss under my feet.

**I am from** egg drop soup.

**I am from** old book pages.

If students are comfortable, have them share their poem with the class.



## EXERCISE 3: PLACES THAT MATTER

Nuestras Raíces has a page of Latino places that matter: <http://nuestrasraicesri.net/LatinoPlacesThatMatter-SoProvidenceRI.html>

For this exercise, go out into your neighborhood and photograph three places that matter to your story and the story of your community. Are there places everyone gathers? Places where you feel connected to your neighbors, family, and friends? Places that you associate with home, where you can buy your favorite food or listen to your favorite music? Take photographs of those special places, and write a description, considering these questions and ideas: How does the place look, sound, feel, taste, and smell? Also, tell us about the people you see when you go there. Do you have special memories of this place? How did you find out about it? Did someone show it to you? You can write responses, present your photographs, record a voiceover, or present them to your class. Maybe you'll have some Places that Matter in common.

## EXERCISE 4: WHO TELLS YOUR STORY?

*Have the class split into pairs and label one from each pair A and B. Have A interview B about the origin of your favorite gift or childhood toy, your most embarrassing memory or an embarrassing moment from a family member, or your first time trying your favorite food. Then A will retell that story to the class, acting as an academic, a sales rep and a gossip columnist. Have B do the same for A performing as a spy, a flight attendant and a news reporter.*

Discussion Questions: What aspects from the story do each of these people pull out? How does the story change depending on who is telling it? How does your understanding of the original storyteller change depending on who is retelling it? Which version of the story are you most drawn to? How does this relate to La Broa' and what you've learned about oral history? Are there different themes that you gather from a performance versus reading the story in class? How does this affect our understanding of history? How does this affect our understanding of stories and how they are compiled or created?

From left to right, Assistant Stage Manager Anaïs Bustos, Director Tatyana-Marie Carlo, and Stage Manager Buzz Cohen







## EXERCISE 5: 101 WAYS TO READ A MONOLOGUE

A monologue, or soliloquy, is a long speech made by one person. Sometimes it can be a challenge for a young actor to take on a piece of text and perform it on his or her own, so this activity is a way to get your students to forget their inhibitions and have fun with it.

→ Pick one or more of the monologues below, and hand them out to your students. You can assign or let them choose which monologue they want to do and give them a few minutes to read it over a few times and familiarize themselves with it

→ In partners, let them read it out loud to one another a few times in whichever way they want to.

→ After this, using your own suggestions and those of your students, throw out different ways to read the monologue. Feel free to be as wacky as you want -- this is supposed to be fun. You can filter the suggestions and pick one that you think would work and let them do it that way. Some examples of different ways to read it include (but are definitely not limited to): an aerobics instructor, an army general, someone who desperately has to go to the bathroom, a squirrel, the laziest person in the world, singing it, whispering it, telling it like it's a scary story, like an interpretive dancer, like they are in a musical, like a President, or a King ... you can even use celebrity names and have them imitate them using the monologue.

→ This can be done with all the students working in partners or on their own at the same time. If this is a particularly brave group, you can challenge them to take your suggestions and perform individually in front of the class.

→ After every willing student has performed, take some time to talk about what they got from it. Did it help them understand the monologue better? If so, how? Did they find that any of the interpretations, as silly as they may have been, worked and made some sense? Which ones, and why? How does this help them as actors?





# SCENES AND MONOLOGUES

## ANNA

At first, Susan and I didn't get along. An American girl from suburban Massachusetts and a Mexicana from rural Texas. It felt like Providence College was playing a mean joke on us.

We fought—a lot.

We fought about one of us staying in the bathroom too long.

We fought about politics. About sports. About classes we were taking.

We fought about what it means to change society. If it even can change. We fought about the right way to do it.

And after all that fighting and fighting, I realized that we were becoming family.

Susan—had such a big heart. It felt like the world could fit inside of it.

I can't believe she's gone. Every moment, whenever I turn a corner, I think I'm going to see her there.

In my culture, the dead are never far away from us. We hear them whispering when the wind goes through the trees. We feel them next to us when we lie in bed at night. When we walk on the grass and the dirt, we're walking with them.

And when we tell their stories, we can feel their voices behind our voices, their breath inside our breath.

We don't always have the words. But we'll find them.

## PACHECO

At first, it was only me, Pepe, and Chama who spoke Spanish, but soon conocimos a un mexicano. When our mill closed for a week, ese man nos llevó a una granja. That was his job—to pick tomatoes. No recuerdo exactamente dónde, he just picked us up and took us to a big field.

Cuando cogimos un break, empecé a tocar mi guitarra. And I started singing—

*(sings) Yo vivo todo el tiempo sembrando café,*

*Yo vivo todo el tiempo sembrando café...)*

Y ese man me dijo, "Tocas bien, carnal." And I was telling him about Aniceto Molina, y también Alberto Pacheco y su Conjunto, who recorded that song, and that's when he says to me that I should open a music shop.

I had to stop and think about that for a second. I mean, no había ninguna en Rhode Island. ¿Por qué no? We could sell Latin American records, and instruments; we could have dances, y conciertos en vivo. That idea got stuck in my head like a good cumbia.

And it's funny—this man changed my life, ¡pero no recuerdo su nombre!

*Pacheco exits*



## ELENA

Eso no es nada. Imagina esto. The middle of August. Mrs. Sullivan comes to pick me up at Logan Airport. She's wearing, tú sabes, a dress with flowers on it, un sombrero, sunglasses, todo bien fancy. And me? I come out wearing a heavy jacket, una bufanda, una gorra así de invierno, guantes. Muchacha, ¡pensé que me iba a ahogar!

And Mrs. Sullivan says, "You must be so hot in all of those clothes! The weather here has been simply divine. It must be so cold in Guatemala." Y yo le contesté, "Yes, thank you, it is very cold in Guatemala." All I had heard was how cold Boston was—I didn't realize that it got hot in the summer!

## YOLANDA

(surprised) ¡Hola! Mi amorcito, you should be asleep!

¿Cenaste tan tarde?

¿Pollo guisado? Oo, qué rico. Tu abuela hace el mejor pollo guisando del mundo.

¿Te estás portando bien?

Ohhh, ¿es verdad? ¡Espero que tu abuela no me diga nada de lo contrario!

Ay querido, cómo te echo de menos.

Pronto. Pronto todos vamos a estar juntos.

(to herself) We'll all be together soon.

Mi cielo, ¿dónde está tu abuela?

Dale el teléfono a ella, por favor. ¡Y vete a dormir!

Yo te quiero mucho también. Mucho mucho muuuucho.

Okay mi amor. Que sueñes con los angelitos.

## ANNA

Tape Recorder Ana: In what kind of soil are you most likely to find a red maple?

Ana: Wet.

Tape Recorder Ana: Name two environmental sensitivities of the American Elm.

Ana: Um, salt, and... pH.

Tape Recorder Ana: Wet and dry soils, salt, and wide pH.

Ana: Wide pH. Wiiiiiiide pH.

Tape Recorder Ana: Name an example of a tree found in New England with a double compound leaf.

Ana: Um...

Tape Recorder Ana: Kentucky Coffeetree.

Ana: Hijo de la chingada, "Kentucky Coffeetree"!

*She turns off the recorder.*

Kentucky Coffeetree. How am I supposed to remember Ken-

tucky Coffeetree?

*She keeps walking. Takes in the street, hasn't come over this far before. She turns on her recorder.*

Dispatch from Mars, Rhode Island.

The people look like fish here. Like, halfway between fisherman and fish.

*Turns off the tape recorder. Turns it back on.*

Not like the fishing we do with Papá, when we go out en el río in a little boat. This is ocean fishing. They look... salty?

*Turns it off, walks. She's near Roger Williams Park now.*

*She reaches BROAD STREET.*

Wow, it's actually really beautiful here.

## ANA AND SUSAN

**SUSAN:** Well, you look awful! What swamp did you just crawl out of?

...

**SUSAN:** Is everything ok? Come on. Tell me.

**ANA:** Honestly, it's so stupid. I got back my first big journalism assignment – the profile that I wrote about Doña Rosa that I was telling you about. And I did terribly on it.

**SUSAN:** Did you fail?

**ANA:** No, I got a B-minus.

**SUSAN:** Oh my gosh, you are such a drama queen!

**ANA:** Shut up!

**SUSAN:** That's not even a bad grade!

**ANA:** It's not even the grade, it's the comments. My professor said my profile of Doña Rosa was "charming but lacking in wider resonance."

**SUSAN:** Okay, so why don't you write about something different next time?

**ANA:** That doesn't seem messed up to you? "Charming but lacking in wider resonance"? That's so patronizing!

**SUSAN:** I don't see what's so bad about that.

**ANA:** I shouldn't have even told you. I knew you wouldn't understand.

**SUSAN:** Okay, great, well I'll just continue with my day, then.

*She starts to leave.*

**ANA:** No, stop—I'm sorry. I'm really sorry.

*Susan sits back down..*

I met this amazing woman. She was an entrepreneur before people were even talking about women-owned businesses. She and her husband opened the first Hispanic supermarket in all of Rhode Island. And they helped so many people navigate the immigration system, find housing, find work, like, all



of that.

**SUSAN:** Did you say all that in your profile?

**ANA:** I thought I did. I don't know. Maybe the profile isn't even good. But it just felt like my professor dismissed it because she's a woman, and she's Hispanic. I just pictured him reading it and being like, Oh, cute, this woman opened a grocery store. Great. So "charming." I just got really upset.

**SUSAN:** Sometimes my dad talks to my mom like that.

**ANA:** Really?

**SUSAN:** Yeah. I hate it.

My mom—is really smart. And she's good at so many things. But my dad, like... I don't think he really wants her to be too smart. Does that make sense?

*Ana nods.*

My mom-- My mom got into Pembroke. You know, the sister school of Brown? Before they merged. I think she wanted to study anthropology. But she had just met my dad. And, pretty much, he told her not to go.

**ANA:** No.

**SUSAN:** Yeah. He told her that she didn't need that kind of education.

**ANA:** So she didn't go?

**SUSAN:** Nope. She got a two-year Associate's Degree and became a secretary. And when I was born, she stopped working. *They sit in silence for a few moments.* Oh my gosh, I was supposed to be comforting you! *Ana laughs.*

## ANA, ROSA, AND LUCRECIA

**ANA:** So, for my Journalism and Society class, we have to do a profile on someone who's important in our community. And I thought I could do a profile on you, Doña Rosa. I would interview you – but it would be really informal, I would just record our conversation with this. *(takes out her tape recorder)*

**ROSA:** Put that away, I don't trust that thing.

**LUCRECIA:** I think it's a great idea. Luís says it every time he comes over. He says, "You know your mom is a legend, right?"

**ROSA:** I don't like to talk about myself.

**LUCRECIA:** ¡Mentira!

**ROSA:** ¡Malcriada!

**ANA:** Here. We can try a little bit, just for practice.

*Rosa looks at Ana. Ana hits record.*

**ANA:** Estoy aquí en la casa de Doña Rosa y Lucrecia Delgado. ¿Cómo se siente hoy, Doña Rosa?

*Rosa tries to speak. Bursts out laughing. Ana turns off the tape recorder.*

**LUCRECIA:** It's okay, Mami, you got this.

**ROSA:** You're making me nervous!

**LUCRECIA:** Okay, okay, I'll let the professionals do their work. She exits.

**ANA:** No se preocupe. We can talk about anything or nothing.

**ROSA:** Come on, ask me a question. I'm ready.

**ANA:** Yeah?

**ROSA:** Yeah! Ana turns the recorder back on.

**ANA:** Did you always love to cook?

**ROSA:** Oh. Toño – loved to cook. I liked to cook. I loved figuring out how the food got to the people eating it. Esa fue mi vocación.

**ANA:** You had the master plan.

**ROSA:** Oh no, I was figuring it out as I went along. I was young when I came here. I was only 19 years old.

**ANA:** Did your parents support your decision to leave?

**ROSA:** Mi papá – died when I was a child. Mi mamá, she told me how much she was going to miss me. But it was hard en esos días en la República Dominicana. She made a special dress for me that I wore on the plane. It was striped blue and white, with white trim.

*Doña Rosa and Ana get up from her living room and watch. The actor who plays Lucrecia enters as ROSITA in a striped navy blue and white dress. Rosa adjusts Rosita's dress, like her mother adjusting hers. Hands her a small suitcase.*

**ROSA:** Imagínate, me arriving in New York wearing that dress and carrying only a small suitcase. I think it was full of candies! When I landed, it was so cold. Todavía tiemblo cuando pienso en ese frío. Before I left, my sister gave me an olive – you know, una aceituna. She ate half and gave the other half to me. In the old country, that is one of our customs. You share everything with someone you love.





## PACHECO, CHAMA, AND PEPE

*Pacheco, Chama, and Pepe have set up the textile mill where they work. Pacheco and Chama are weavers, Pepe is a loom fixer. They've been doing this from the time they were young and are highly skilled.*

*They speak in counterpoint with the factory sounds and their repeated movements. Throughout the scene, Pacheco massages his jaw. His tooth is killing him.*

**PACHECO:** (sings) "Baby, you can drive my car. Yes, I'm gonna be a star."

**PEPE:** Parces, when I get rich—! I'm gonna have a whole garage full of cars.

**CHAMA:** ¿Pa' qué sirve un garaje lleno de carros?

**PEPE:** Puedo usar un carro diferente pa' cada día. So when I wear my yellow suit, I can take out my yellow Volkswagen Beetle. And when I wear my red suit, I can take out my red BMW convertible.

**CHAMA:** That's why you're never gonna get ahead in this country. You spend all day dreaming about cars.

**PEPE:** I didn't dream about cars until I came to this country!

**PACHECO:** I don't care if I have a car that's falling apart. But a new guitar? Esooooo. That's what I want. Una guitarra que tenga la voz de un ángel.

**PEPE:** You better hope your guitar has the voice of an angel, because you have the voice of a bamboo...

**PACHECO:** Mira, your vocabulary is growing!

**CHAMA:** You should be saving money to bring your wife and child, not buy a new guitar.

**PEPE:** Come on, Chama. What are you saving your money for?

**CHAMA:** Nothing.

**PEPE:** Come on, hermano! You gotta be saving your money for something special.

**PACHECO:** ¡Pa' comprar un caballo! [...]

**CHAMA:** Déjame en paz.

I said leave me alone!

*They're startled. Chama hesitates.*

My brother, back home, is— epileptic. Le mando todo el dinero que puedo. The doctors said he needs to have a surgery so he doesn't—. I'm trying to bring him here. If you need to know, that's what I'm saving my money for.

*Some silence.*

**PACHECO:** Eres un buen hombre, Chama.

**PEPE:** Let us know if we can help. Envío dinero a mi pai, but he's doing okay recently. So, you know. Déjanos saber.

*They focus on their weaving.*

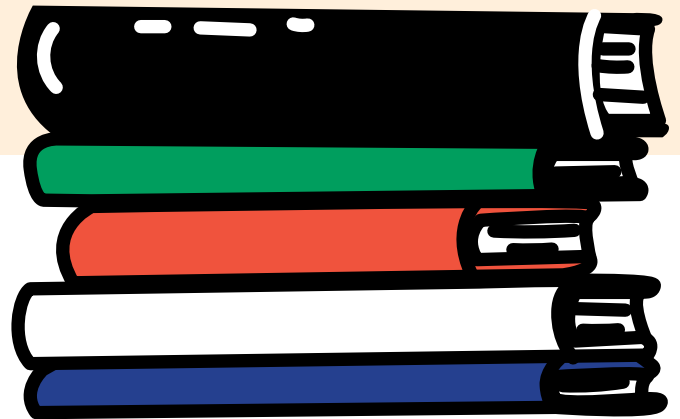
## FURTHER LISTENING AND READING

Emory University includes a helpful list of Latinx Oral History projects at this link: <https://guides.libraries.emory.edu/c.php?g=891442&p=6482280>

Yale includes this compilation of Oral History projects: <https://guides.library.yale.edu/c.php?g=512493&p=6248072>

And, the University of Pittsburgh provides a list here: <https://pitt.libguides.com/Latinx/OralHistories>

All of these are great resources for further reading. And, you should take the time to browse the Nuestras Raíces website, including their blog, their historical timeline, the Community Stories tab, which includes video stories from the Covid-19 pandemic, and the Latin@ Stories, which has a lot of video stories, including from some of Los Pioneros featured in La Broa'.





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