



DISCUSSION GUIDE

A RESOURCE GUIDE FOR THE PLAY
BY LUIS ALFARO

DIRECTED BY GLYNNIS O'DONOGHUE

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**“An eye for an eye
will only make the
whole world blind.”**

Mahatma
Gandhi

- Have you ever felt torn between honoring your family and choosing your own path?
- What messages about masculinity did you grow up with?
- Have you witnessed or experienced generational expectations shaping someone's choices?
- Is revenge ever justifiable? Under what circumstances?
- Do you see opportunities to grow beyond what you were taught or experienced in your upbringing?

GROWING UP CHICANO: A PERSONAL REFLECTION ON IDENTITY AND CULTURE

by Luis Medina

My hometown of Woodland, California is about twenty minutes away from Sacramento, the state Capitol, two hours north of San Francisco, and nine hours north of Los Angeles. Woodland is a farming community, composed of a melting pot of people. My mother, uncles, and grandparents moved from New Mexico in the 1950's, and were considered Mexican-Americans (born Americans who were of Mexican descent). By the time my cousins and I were born in the 80's, we were known by a different name- Chicanos.

Growing up in Woodland was a slice of nostalgia. I remember my Grandmother telling me stories while she made tortillas, tacos, and New Mexican style enchiladas. My mother would tell me stories of when she was growing up, working in the fields picking produce during the summer, talking about when Cesar Chavez would visit to speak to the workers about creating a labor union. The first Saturday in August was known throughout town as "Cruise Night", a day when car enthusiasts from the Chicano community would proudly show off their hot rods, lowriders, and custom motorcycles for all the town to see, cruising up and down Main Street for several hours after sundown, while the Sacramento radio station sponsored a free outdoor "Golden Oldies" concert.

Being a Chicano wasn't just about cars and music, it was also learning about our history, having pride, celebrating where we came from, honoring our families and partaking in traditions passed down from older generations. One of my teachers, Sr. Sepulveda, was integral to that pride. He was my teacher from the second grade up to the sixth. He wanted us, our parents, and families to be proud of who we were, to be strong, and to show the world we deserve to be in the room.

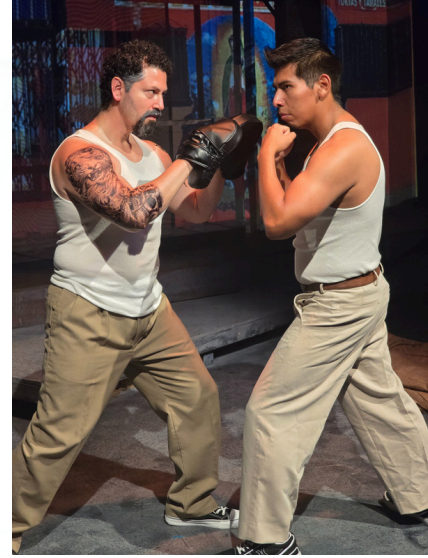
In the 4th grade, Sr. Sepulveda knew we were the age for possible recruitment. Due to his upbringing, schooling, and friends, he took it upon himself to teach us about gangs. Although activity was very low in Woodland, it was not so in Sacramento. We had reformed members come and speak to us, being transparent because for us, it was life. The scary thing is, by this point, some of my classmates were already approached.



Reading this you're probably wondering why anyone, especially a child, would ever consider joining? To have a group of people be loyal to you, have your back, be there when you need them, and to be your familia is incredibly enticing. The darker sides you eventually learn is how one gets initiated, and the required actions one must take to prove their loyalty.

Later in the school year, we learned just how cruel "the life" can be. One of Sr. Sepulveda's friends, a young man attending Sac. State who was working with us in class as a teacher's aid all year, was found dead in the Sacramento River. We were told the reason he was killed was because he refused the offer to be initiated. Although we were too young to comprehend the magnitude of the circumstance, it served as a reminder of what being a Chicano could also mean... if we chose that path.

Over the years, various neologies have been used to describe who we are: Mexican-American, Chicano, Hispanic, Latin, Latino, and now-Latinx. According to search engines, being considered a "Chicano" was a social and political act to combat structural racism. For myself and all others who grew up Chicano, it meant celebrating our culture while embracing the things that made life worth living- good food, good music, good cars, and familia. Being a Chicano from California comes with a rich, beautiful, and complex history. As my character "Nino" says; "That's the life. It's surprise destiny, mijo."



About the Author: Luis Medina has been acting for over two decades, performing on stages in New York, Charlotte, and beyond. He is thrilled to play Nino in *Electricidad* and to share his insights as an essay contributor to the show's discussion guide.

Additional Resources To Watch

SIN NOMBRE

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1127715>

REAL WOMEN HAVE CURVES

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0296166/>

MI VIDA LOCA (MY CRAZY LIFE)

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0107566>

Book Corner

WOMAN HOLLERING CREEK: AND OTHER STORIES BY SANDRA CISNEROS

<https://tinyurl.com/mr27zbbt>

CHOLO STYLE: HOMIES, HOMEGIRLS AND LA RAZA BY REYNALDO BERRIOS

<https://tinyurl.com/3w8thaha>

ALWAYS RUNNING LA VIDA LOCA: GANG DAYS IN L.A.

BY LUIS J. RODRIGUEZ

<https://tinyurl.com/2u9wk89v>

TATTOOS ON THE HEART BY GREGORY BOYLE

<https://tinyurl.com/mmv7k5n8>

To Listen

FEELINGS

<https://g.co/kgs/iWkWcr9>

EL PACHUCO HOP

<https://g.co/kgs/q7iEs84>



Move the Mission Foward

Our mission is to create a performing arts experience that is socially engaged, professionally managed, and creatively inspired.

Now that we've introduced you to "Electricidad" we encourage you to join us in fostering meaningful conversations within your loved ones. Share your reflections on the play's themes, engage with others to deepen your understanding, and consider how you can contribute to creating safe spaces for more open dialogue.

