

Dicho House

Andres Flores

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Abstract

Dicho House

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This thesis is an exploration in process as much as product. The process and origin of this thesis were deeply personal, the result aims to retain a sense of the genuine while also applying to the broader conversation of Architecture. Dicho House is a collection of stories, told by my father, about the house he grew up in which my grandfather built. This thesis uses a variety of tools including genre theory, miniature, interviews, animation, and video to tell the stories of the house based on my father's memory. It is also an effort to use architecture to connect with an individual from my past, my grandfather whom I never knew, exploring how architecture can be used to build family and individual identity. This thesis is also about memory and architecture; the stories it recounts are not historical records bent on accuracy. Instead my father's memories are active and changing tools of storytelling inherently subjective to both his experiences and my interpretation. This thesis rejects the use of memory as an objective narrative or truth and instead views memory as an active, performative, and generative process.

Forward

Dear Jesse when you died I was three years old. Growing up I wanted to know who you were and to know more about who I am. I heard the stories about you. With a fifth grade education you could build a house. When I decided to go to Architecture school I felt I was continuing your story. The house that you built holds the memories of who you were. This thesis has been my opportunity to look for those stories, I asked your son to help me find them. You were a carpenter. I am trying to be an architect. We spoke through your house, can I tell you what I found?

Matters of Logistics

This document presents the process of this thesis both in its distinct parts and how these parts work together to form the whole. Concurrent storylines run the course of this document just as they did during the creation of the thesis, each chapter will present these different elements:

Letter to my Grandpa Jesse: This document is a letter to a person I never knew, throughout these pages I write directly to my grandfather, Jesse Flores, explaining my process and thoughts directly to him.

Conversation with my Dad: Much of this thesis is built from the memories of my father, Ruben Flores. I called him constantly to ask about stories of Jesse and the house. Throughout the document transcripts of the conversations between me and my father are presented.

Journal: This thesis is also about a particular time in my life. Throughout the process I recorded daily video journals which have become a record of what my world looked like during this time.

Genre Theory: The theoretical framework of this thesis is built on the study of genre. Throughout this writing I show how genre was used as a tool to generate and study stories of the house, exploring the theory of specific genres along the way.

Artistic Inspiration: Each of the stories represented here is inspired by the work of one or more artists, the references that are made here are done with the deepest respect, admiration, and humility to the original works.

Stories from the Dicho House: The culminating effort of each chapter is a story from the Dicho House. The entire collection of animations lives in a video file that can be accessed through the graduate school. This document presents the narrated transcript and still images from the film.

The presentation of these parts illustrates the process of finding and telling stories of the house while weaving together the greater narrative of this project. The story of the Dicho House is a record of a journey I took with my father, a journey through memory and architecture to find stories of a house and a man. To start this journey I asked my father the following question: "Where are we from?" Here is his answer:



Miniature of the Dicho House. $1/8"=1'-0"$
Materials: Wood, cardboard, acrylic paint, hot glue, plastic sheet.

Father, where are we from?

We're from east Texas and northern Mexico
From a tiny farming community in south Texas
And a sweat shop in north Monterrey
We're from the vast openness of northern Africa
And the fertile olive groves of Italy
We're from the heat and sand of the Coastal Bend in Texas
And the dirt road barrio on the west side of Corpus Christi
We're from the sleepy university campus in northern Colorado
And the stillness of a college campus in south Texas
We're from the bustling boulevards of central San Antonio
And the quiet streets of north Fort Collins
We're from wherever our family has called home
And from where we've loved, cherished and supported one another

By Ruben Flores



Father, where are we from? film by Andres Flores. Text by Ruben Flores. Song, "San Francisco (Be Sure to Wear Flowers in Your Hair) [Instrumental]" By Daniel Herskedal, from *The Last Black Man in San Francisco* (Original Motion Picture Soundtrack), © 2019 Lakeshore Records.

1. Foundations

Letter: Where to start? A house is full of stories. Memories that are altered each time they are visited. Genre is the tool I used to better ask about the stories in the Dicho house. When you hear a story of a genre you expect to find certain things, much like opening a particular door in a house, walking into a specific room. There are innumerable genres and stories to be found in the house, I will show you a few that I found.

Genre As Generative

The driving forces of this thesis was the search for stories of the house and of my grandfather. As I began working it was clear that I needed a structured system to look for these stories, a method to guide the conversation with my father and the creation of the stories I found. Genre became this structural framework. Genre is used to classify a variety of works based on the set expectations and conventions of a story.¹ Genres are also about the breaking and expansion of these expectations, as Steve Neale states, “Genres are instances of repetition and difference.”² Genres are ever evolving as new works are added and thus allow a wide variety of stories to fall under different generic categories, this is a continual process of conforming to and subverting the expectations of a genre. In this thesis I used genre as a starting point for structured conversation with my father. This process sought to use genre as a tool for communication. As Vilmos Voigt states, “In the theory of communication there is a firm place for the studies of genres. Genres could be very easily studied in terms of special forms of coding, decoding, and message.”³ Through conversation with my advisors and father I eventually identified and presented stories in three distinct genres about the house, Folklore, Horror, and Satire. Each story using these genres adheres to some of the basic expectations of the genre and draws on other works such as film, music, and art to reinforce the genre of each story of the house.

Miniature

This thesis began with the idea of using miniature as a tool to investigate the story of my grandfather’s house. I have extensive experience with miniatures, and my undergraduate thesis at Colorado State University involved interviewing veterans from a variety of wars and creating miniatures that represented their experiences. In this project titled “Voices of War” I interviewed three veterans of three different wars, recording interviews of their experiences that I paired with a small diorama depicting a specific memory. I interviewed my maternal grandfather for this project learning about his experiences as a commanding officer in the

1 Neale, Stephen. *Genre and Hollywood*. Routledge, 2000.

2 Neale, pg. 48

3 Voigt, Vilmos. *Suggestions towards a Theory of Folklore*. Mundus Hungarian University Press, 1999, pg, 45.

10th Mountain Division in the mid 1950's. This experience taught me the possibilities and limitations of miniatures as artistic work of interpreted memories, an idea that carried into the work of Dicho House.

Miniatures have a rich history as artwork of various cultures appearing in archaeological sites across the globe.⁴ During my graduate education I was taught to use architectural models, which are a type of miniature, as tools for both study and communication. One of the primary differences between architectural models and the miniature is the purpose of creation. Architecture models often simplify surroundings, materials, textures, and site for the purpose of communicating an architectural vision. Often the building in such models is constructed from one uniform material to easily see the relationships of the project. Miniatures are less beholden to the purity of built form that architecture models focus on. Miniatures constitute a wide range of models and art from neolithic figurines to table top trains sets. They run the course of purposes from the sacred to the playful. The miniatures that were eventually constructed and used for this thesis fall into the artistic rather than the representational. In the models of the Dicho House some elements are simplified or ignored while others are overemphasized to better illustrate each story. The miniatures in this thesis could also be considered set pieces, miniatures that are constructed specifically for use in a film often to create an immersive world that would be too complicated or expensive to create in other media. The blurring of the use of miniature in this thesis is an intentional approach to this artwork, the works here are not fully miniature, set piece, nor architectural model and are instead fluid pieces that serve multiple roles.

Animation + Video

The key tool of this thesis is the use of video. The end result of this work is a twenty-six minute documentary video, the content of which is reflected in this document. The video Dicho House is the most comprehensive way for a viewer to experience the work of this thesis and has many important elements that are not fully replicable in a written document. This thesis is about the communication of memory and architecture.

I asked my father to remember stories of the house and his father and relate them to me. I used a variety of media to interpret and represent these stories. This process of filtering and layering information about a place I have never been to and a person I have never met is fully represented in the video through the use of photos, miniatures, drawings, voice overs, recorded conversations and original animations. The ability for video to combine all of these elements into a single coherent piece is uniquely powerful to the medium, as Sergei Eisenstein suggests in a 1949 Film Forum essay:

⁴ Garfield, Simon. *In Miniature: How Small Things Illuminate the World*. Atria Books, an Imprint of Simon & Schuster, INC., 2019.

“Now why should the cinema follow the forms of theater and painting rather than the methodology of language, which allows wholly new concepts of ideas to arise from the combination of two concrete denotations of two concrete objects?”⁵ The combinations of “concrete objects” such as my father’s voice and my imagined animation of the house allow for the creation of a third thing, a combination of memory, architecture and imagination that reveals the story of the Dicho House. Like memory, video provides a non-static means of storytelling and representation. Both video and memory are layered, combine numerous senses, and allows for greater interpretation than words on a page or a static model. Throughout the creation of this thesis I experimented with a variety of animation and video techniques from multiple disciplines including art, documentary, and film. Drawing on multiple disciplines and techniques allowed me to match the style of the work to the genre of the story, creating a connection between each memory and the style in which it was represented.

5 Eisenstein, Sergei, and Leyda, Jay. *Film Form; Essays in Film Theory*. 1st ed.]. ed., Harcourt, Brace, 1949. pg, 70.



My Father, Ruben Flores, film still from the opening sequence *Father, where are we from?* from *Dicho House*.

2. El Palito

Letter: I talked to my dad about memories of the house, he told me about the idea of a Dicho, a saying or proverb used to teach a lesson or pass down a piece of knowledge. I decided to investigate this Dicho and what it could tell me about your house.

Genre: Folklore

In the initial conversations I had with my father about his memories and the house he brought up the idea of the dicho, a saying or proverb in the Mexican-American culture that was a key memory of his upbringing. The dicho is a type of folklore⁶ used to teach a lesson or pass along a cultural value. Folklore is foundational to the working of a community or people, often used as an informal tool of education and sharing of generational knowledge. The process I was about to undertake, asking my father about stories of his father and the house, is situated in the tradition of folklore. I was seeking to gain knowledge of my Grandfather, his house, and his tradition and values through the oral stories from my father's memory. With the genre of folklore in mind I decided to call my father to find out more about the dichos of his childhood.

Call Transcript: February 03, 2020

Ruben: Dichos are very very prominent in the Mexican-American Culture. Dichos is a saying, another way of looking at it is a proverb, is what a lot of people would compare it to.

Andres : Yeah

Ruben: A dicho was always said when it didn't need a lot that to be said was the way that we were brought up. So for example one of the dichos that we grew up with was, 'Somos pobres pero somos limpios' we're poor but we're clean. In other words you have to be accountable for yourself, you can't say just because I'm poor doesn't mean I don't have to take a shower or I don't have to change my clothes or whatever.

Andres : Yeah

Ruben: Right? So that's an example of a Dicho that we heard a lot growing up.

⁶ "Proverbs-wherever found-fit the description 'the wisdom of many, the wit of one.'In Mexican-American lore they are plentiful. Under the labels refranes or dichos (sayings), but never proverbios, they constitute, 'a philosophy of life.'"pg, 39. West, John O. *Mexican-American Folklore : Legends, Songs, Festivals, Proverbs, Crafts, Tales of Saints, of Revolutionaries, and More.* 1st ed., August House, 1988.

Dicho and Mexican-American Folklore

My father told me about the idea of a Dicho, a short saying or proverb from his childhood that taught a lesson. Dichos and proverbs are often associated with communication about the everyday and are easy ways to teach complicated facets of life, “The range of subjects for proverbs is almost without end, although comparisons, analogies, and hidden significances often deal with the most common items of life-household details, domesticated animals, foods, everyday activities, in short, the ‘facts of life’ as experience teaches us.”⁷ The Dicho my father shared with me “We’re poor but we’re clean” revealed some of the values of his family and the house. My father grew up in a family of six, often the resources of the family were spread thin and my Grandparents had to work hard to provide. They never allowed their circumstances to become an excuse to neglect the things they had. My father told stories of the immaculately clean house of his childhood. The front living room was reserved only for guests and held in such esteem that the back door was the primary entrance and exit for the house. My father told me that his family used to joke with him when he was a child, asking him to go to the front door and laughing when he would inevitably walk to the back door of the house. This mission of cleanliness was explained, enforced, and justified through a Dicho. I quickly realized that the folklore of the house would relate to the art of the everyday, the creative ways in which the house and its values were maintained.

This Dicho about the simple act of cleaning led me to the study of folklore that looks beyond the art, festivals, or creative works of a people and instead asks what we can learn from studying the creative ways that everyday tasks are accomplished. This study of folklore and the everyday has been historically resisted in favor of studying the art and creative works of a culture.⁸ Mary Douglas explains this bias “But the bias towards play and art still causes the family folklorist to overlook housework as an expressive activity that takes place in families.”⁹ In her essay “Why Folklorists Should Study House Work” Judith Levin makes a compelling case for why housework should be studied and valued, “If ‘housework’ meant exactly the same thing to everyone and if the various tasks were done in the same way by everyone, there would be nothing to study. It is because housework consists of culturally and variable tasks, techniques, and attitudes that one can ask what is shared and what is specific to an individual, neighborhood, region, ethnic group, family, generation, class, or gender”¹⁰ With this in mind I decided to ask my father about how the members of his household accomplished everyday tasks, curious about the specificities that made this work an art all its own.

7 West, pg. 40

8 “we must treat the spring millinery and spring cleaning in our towns as renewal rites which focus and control experiences as much as Swazi first fruit rituals.” Douglas, Mary. *Purity and Danger: an Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. Ark, 1984 pg, 288.

9 Dougals, pg, 289.

10 Hollis, Susan T., *Feminist Theory and the Study of Folklore*. University of Illinois Press, 1993, pg, 291.

My father told me about the process of his mother, Clemensia, doing laundry. This weekly task took on a ritualistic nature with careful procedures and tools. It also perfectly reflected the Dicho that my father had shared with me--even with very few resources Clemensia made sure that everyone in the household had clean clothes. Clemensia had a very specific way of doing laundry as is shown in the film. One unique aspect of this was her insistent use of a stick, *el palito* or the stick, as a tool for agitating that laundry when it was in the washer. Even though the washing machine had an agitator my Grandmother insisted on the use of *el palito*, something my father recalled with clarity and fondness. I decided to tell the story of laundry and *el palito* and began looking for inspiration.

Inspiration: Roberta Cantow and Laika Studios

Further reading of the essays by Judith Levin led me to the film *Clotheslines* by Roberta Cantow.¹¹ This 1981 film consists of Cantow interviewing women in New York City, Brooklyn, and Queens about their process of doing laundry. Cantow expertly reveals the complex relationship many of the women have with this everyday task, both taking extraordinary pride in how they accomplish it and their deep dislike for the never ending job. The interviews show how social norms and values are communicated through laundry, "These are matters of importance: hanging wash at the wrong time or hanging the wrong wash--black lace underwear, for example--can damage a woman's reputation."¹² This provided an instant connection to the story of how Clemensia did her laundry and how this process reflected the values of the house. The film also illustrates the folklore of laundry as a task that is taught from generation to generation, often resistant to change as Levin states, "Sometimes changes in technology mean that something that was once instrumental or functional is now symbolic or expressive, as when women doing laundry insist on washing the white clothes before the colored ones, a holdover from when the clothes would have all soaked in succession in the same water."¹³ This was also true for the laundry of the Dicho House. As is shown in the story, my grandmother used the stick to agitate the laundry even when the machine was capable of doing this. Cantow's film served as the basis for *El Palito*.

In this first animation I took inspiration from the work of traditional stop motion animation and Laika Studios. I created a small set of the laundry room and a small figurine of my grandmother. The creation of these objects and subsequent use in stop motion was important to the process and the creation of the physical object became a physical representation of a person and space I was trying to learn from. I took inspiration from Laika Studios, a leader in the field of modern stop motion animation. This is the story I found.

11 Cantow, Roberta. *Clotheslines*. Filmmakers Library, 1988.

12 Hollis, pg, 292.

13 Hollis, pg, 292.



Left: Poster for Roberta Cantow's 1981 graduate school film *Clotheslines* documenting the folklore of laundry.

Right: Poster for Laika Studio's 2016 film *Kubo and the Two Strings* a magical fairytale story, "A young boy named Kubo must locate a magical suit of armor worn by his late father in order to defeat a vengeful spirit from the past." I studied and took the basic principles of stop motion animation from this film.



Process photo of the miniature for *El Palito*.
Materials: cardboard, bass wood, museum board, acrylic paint, and found objects.

El Palito

1. **Begin:** Laundry was done once a week in our home. My mom even used a stick to push the clothes down to the bottom of the tub. She used the same stick year after year after year.
2. **Order.**
3. **Sort:** My mother insisted that all of the whites had to be washed together. Sheets, white socks, and underwear.
4. **Wash Whites:** Had to be washed in the hottest setting and there was a touch of bleach added to that to help them be cleaner.
5. **Dry (according to kind):** When the whites were done you had to hang all of the whites with like items, in other words, all of the underwear had to be hung together, all of the socks had to be hung together, and then the sheets.
6. **Wash- Colors:** And then when that cycle was done, we worked on washing the colored clothes.
7. **Inside-Out(Colors Only):** With the colored items, you had to turn them inside out because she insisted that the sun faded clothes. So you always hung them inside out, never ever clothes on the clothesline overnight.
8. **Remove (Mandatory):**
9. **Repeat:** She always encouraged us to use that because she didn't want that hot water and the bleach getting on our hands and she'd always say "Usa el palito", Use the stick.

By Ruben Flores



El Palito film by Andres Flores. Text by Ruben Flores. Song, "Ausencia" By Roberto Lara, from Argentina: The Guitar of the Pampas, © 1997, Lyrichord Discs Inc.



1. Film still from *El Palito* Grandma Clemencia begins the process of laundry.



2. Film still from *El Palito* Grandma Clemencia confronts the unruly laundry monster with her trusted tool el palito.



3. Film still from *El Palito* white clothes and sheets are sorted.



4. Film still from *El Palito* white clothes and sheets are washed.



5. Film still from *El Palito* after washing the clothes are dried according to kind.



6. Film still from *El Palito* Grandma Clemencia confronts the unruly laundry and washes the colored clothes.



7. Film still from *El Palito* colored clothes are turned inside out before being hung to dry.



8. Film still from *El Palito* all of the clothes must be removed from the clothesline before the sunsets.

3. Celia

Letter: I had heard some stories of Hurricane Celia, a category 3 storm that hit Corpus Christi, Texas in the late summer of 1970. The story of Celia revealed much about your character, Jesse. My dad told me about how you acted to protect your family and how you and grandma used this destructive event to make something new, adding the second story to the house after the storm.

Genre: Horror

At its roots, horror is about the breaking of what we understand to be normal. In *The Horror Film*, Stephen Prince writes about the horror film *The Thing* directed by John Carpenter, “The basic structural principle of the film involves the transgression of boundaries, the violation of the specialized social systems. What is outside comes in, formlessness invades form, rupturing and destroying the linguistically and socially ordered community.”¹⁴ The horror genre breaks what we have accepted as normal, illustrating how thin our societal contracts of behavior and reality truly are reminding us of how close we live to the horrific. Prince states, “The significance of this structure, and perhaps the reason why audiences never tire of being frightened, is that it bespeaks the fragility of human identity. Horror films may be regarded as a compulsive symbolic exchange in which members of a social order, of a class or subgroup, nervously affirm the importance of their cultural inheritance,”¹⁵ Horror as a mechanism for breaking what we view as safe is often used in conjunction with the house. Houses are supposed to be the barriers between our fragile selves and the horrors of the world, breaking this contract is the basis for the haunted house. In *The Architectural Uncanny : Essays in the Modern Unhomely* Anthony Vidler states, “The house provided an especially favored site for uncanny disturbances: its apparent domesticity, its residue of family history and nostalgia, its role as the last and most intimate shelter of private comfort sharpened by the contrast of the terror of invasion by alien spirits.”¹⁶ These conventions of horror and the house match my father’s experience during hurricane Celia. The boundaries and safety of his home were literally broken, in the climax of the story he describes the water pouring down the wall through the thermostat. The outside force of the storm breaking to within.

There is a well established relationship between horror and architecture, especially horror and the house. I wanted to ask my father about a time when he felt afraid in the house. I called my father and he eagerly talked about his experience during hurricane Celia. The house is located in the central city neighborhood of Corpus Christi Texas, an overwhelm-

14 Prince, Stephen. *The Horror Film*. Rutgers University Press, 2004, pg, 125.

15 Prince, pg 129.

16 Vidler, Anthony. *The Architectural Uncanny : Essays in the Modern Unhomely*. MIT Press, 1992, pg. 10.

occurrence in the coastal bend region and an understood part of life for these communities. My father told me about how hurricane Celia surprised many of the residents of Corpus Christi. Original forecasts for the storm predicted landfall northeast of Corpus, however the storm veered south at the last moment. Additionally the storm traveled a significant distance inland before looping back towards the central city neighborhood. As my father relates in the story this unexpected turn of events made Celia all the more horrifying for him as a child.

Inspiration: William Kentridge and Bill Viola

The story of Celia explored a new style of animation – the work of William Kentridge who uses charcoal and paper to create a form of animation.¹⁷ Kentridge draws a series of images on a single sheet of paper, photographing each change and compiling these images to create the illusion of animation. The result is a beautiful mix of frame by frame animation and a layering of information on the same page. Kentridge’s process related to horror and the story of Celia both in the mood of the drawing that is produced and the inherently destructive process. In order to create the story the drawings are slowly altered until they are no longer recognizable, the destruction of the old to create something new. For my interpretation of this process I created a model of the section of the house that my dad describes in the story. I then photographed this model and projected images of it on the sheet of paper. I then copied Kentridge’s technique, drawing and photographing single frames of animation over and over on a single sheet of paper.

I took additional inspiration from the work of video artist Bill Viola, specifically his 2002 work *The Deluge (Going Forth By Day)*¹⁸ in which the facade of a building and its inhabitants are slowly overwhelmed by a flood of water. The thermometer sequence in Celia is directly inspired by this work. In *The Deluge (Going Forth By Day)* Viola shows the power and transgression of water as it interacts with the building and people. This breaking of the boundary through a natural force resonated with the story of Celia. This is the story I found.



Left: Film still from William Kentridge's 1996 film *History of the Main Complaint*.

Right: Bill Viola, *The Deluge (Going Forth By Day)* (2002). ©Long Beach, CA, Bill Viola Studio.

17 Van Tonder, Helené “Dealing with Interwoven Memories and Histories: Some Perspectives in Conversation with William Kentridge’s ‘History of the Main Complaint.’” *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Teologiese Tydskrif*, vol. 54, no. 3-4, 2013, pp. Nederduitse Gereformeerde Teologiese Tydskrif, 12/2013, Vol.54(3-4).

18 Viola, Bill. *Going Forth by Day*. [Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation], 2002.

Celia

Newscaster: Over the night the weather reports were that Celia, a small hurricane with predicted winds of 90 miles per hour or so would have landfall well north of this part of the coast of the Gulf of Mexico, but with dawn's early light on Monday, August 3rd, the story was a different one. An unexpected western turn at 5 am pointed hurricane Celia straight into the coastal bend area

It was early August in 1970 and the rain intensified as the wind picked up. We soon realized that this was not going to be an ordinary storm.

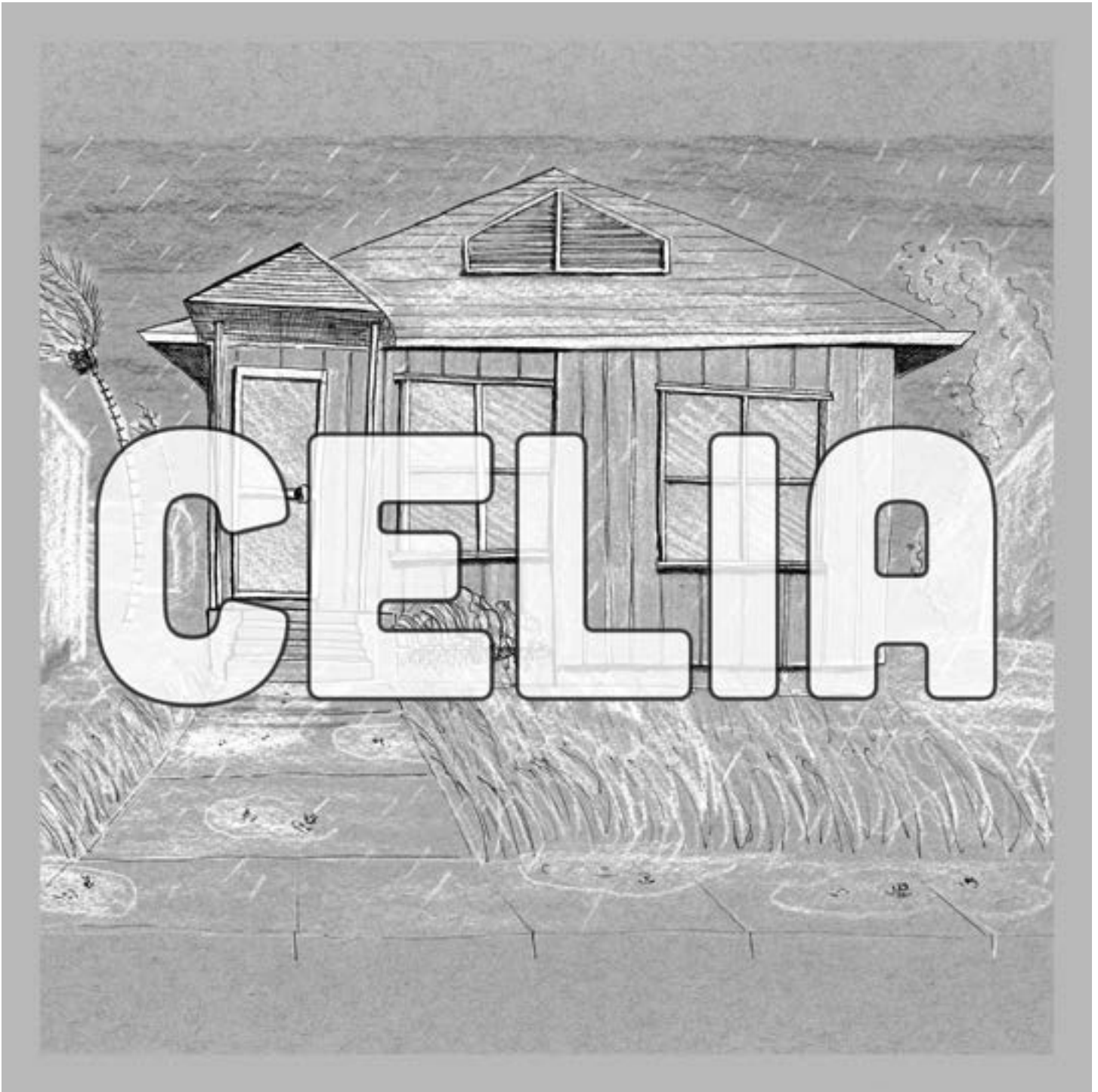
The winds intensified so much that it tore off the plywood off the windows and we rushed to the middle bedroom and he took encyclopedias and raised the bed up so we could easily get under the bed and be protected by the mattresses but we could easily get out if we needed to.

We were under the bed for what seemed like an eternity and my mother was holding me so tight I could barely breathe. I was so scared and all I could hear was the wind howling and the rain lashing against the house.

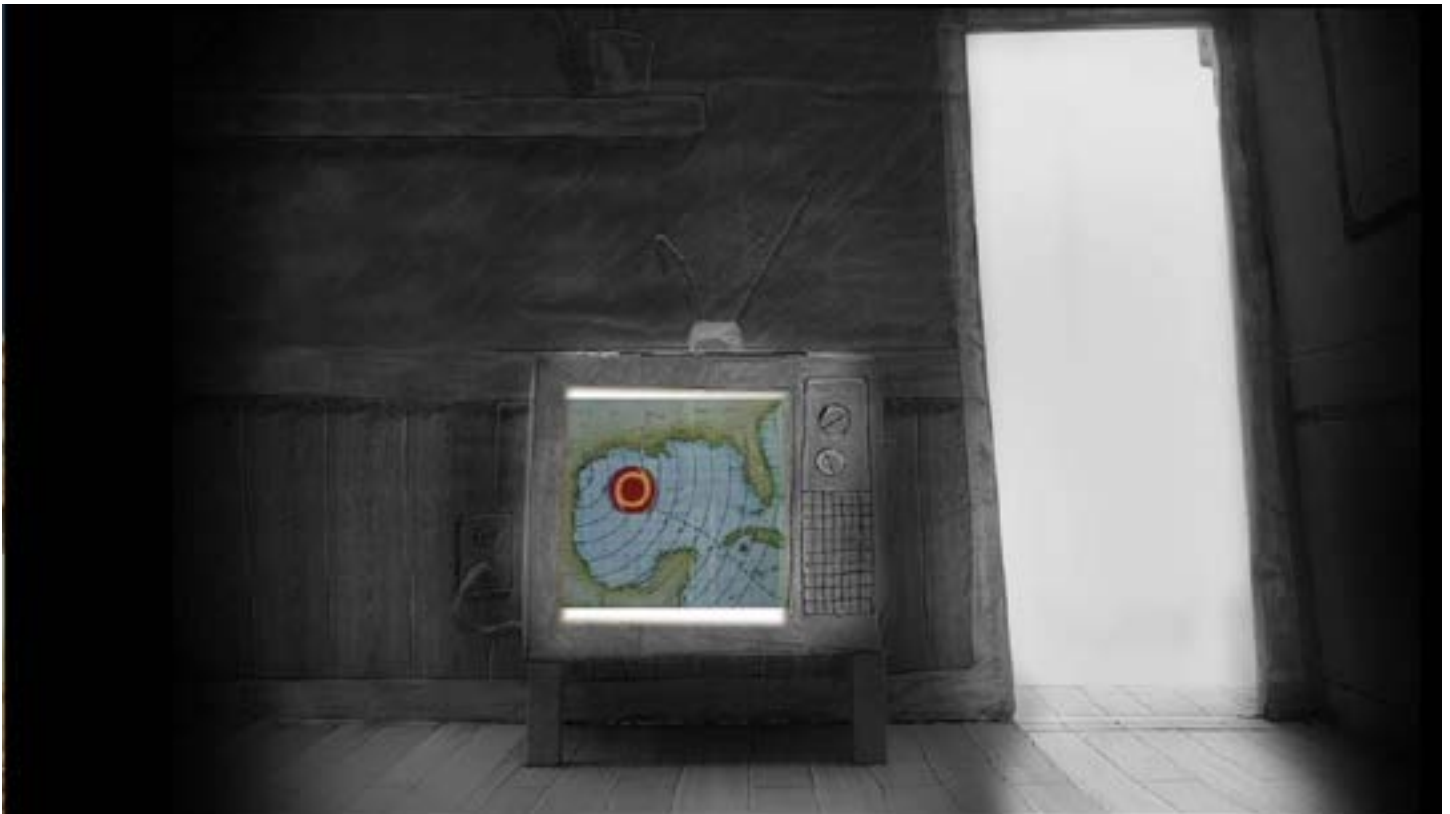
When the plywood was torn off the windows in that room, we ended up in the hallway. Water was seeping through the thermostat on the wall; I just remember someone shining a light on the thermostat and seeing water rushing through that thermostat and just down the wall and that's when I knew that things were really really bad.

Thankfully none of our friends or family were hurt in the storm, but when the storm did stop, and we opened that front door and we saw the devastation that was created by hurricane Celia we knew that it was going to be a long road to recovery.

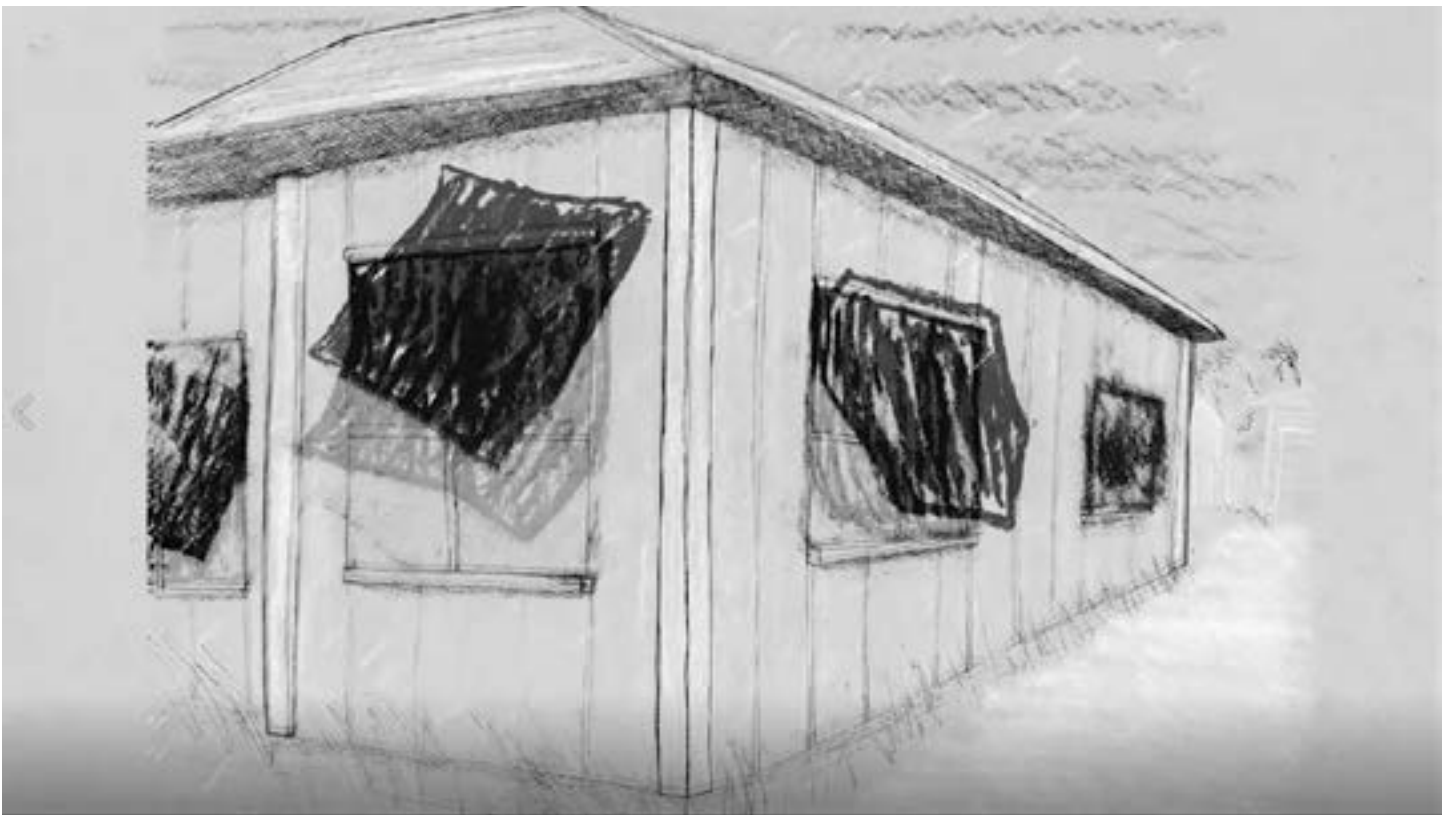
By Ruben Flores



Celia film by Andres Flores. Text by Ruben Flores. Song, "Mother Nature" By Dan Romer and Benh Zeitlin, from *Beasts of the Southern Wild* (Music from the Motion Picture), © 2012, Cinereach Productions LLC.



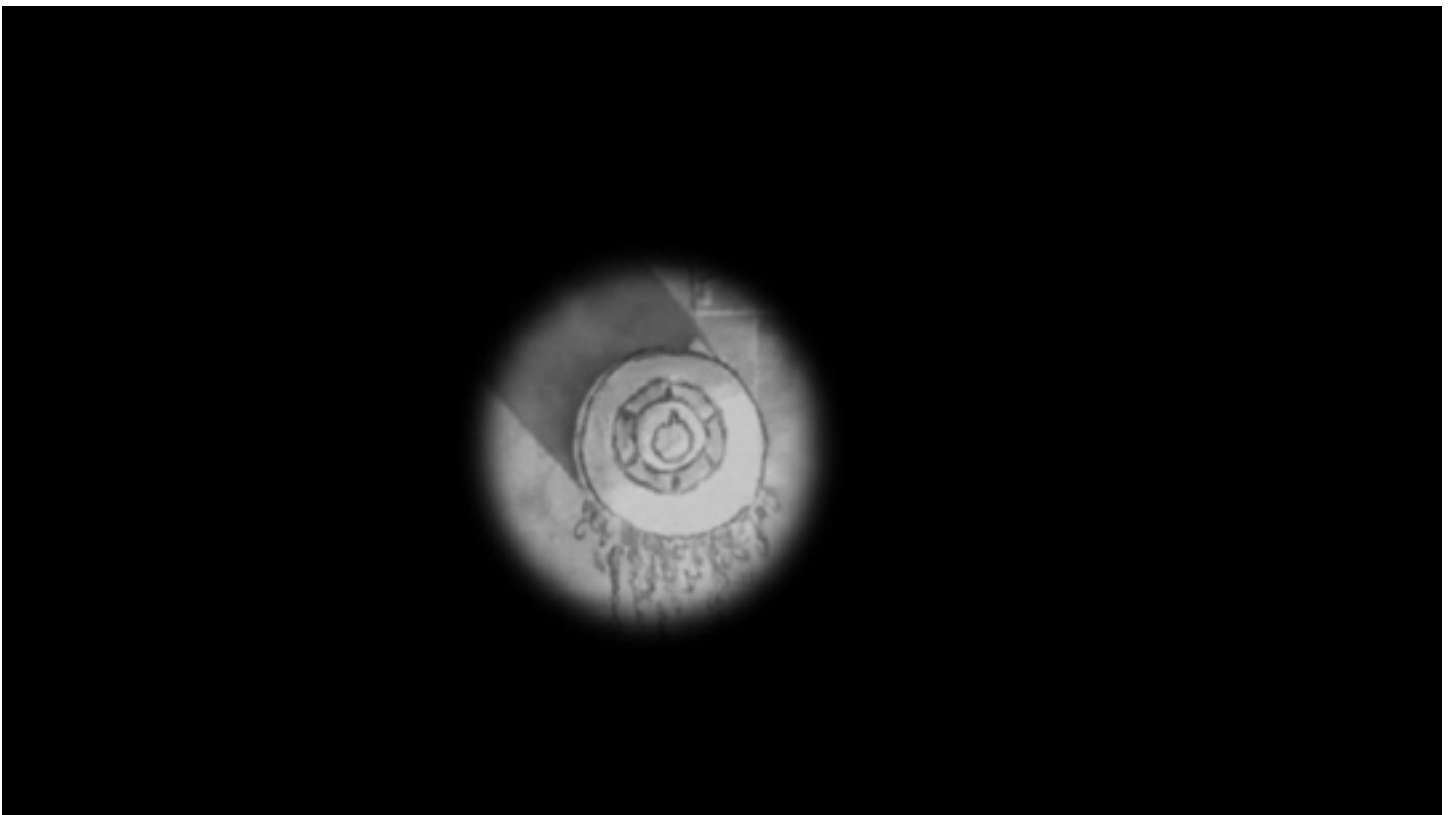
1. Film still from *Celia* archive footage of hurricane Celia plays on the family TV.



2. Film still from *Celia* the storm rips the plywood off of the house, exposing the windows to the fury of the storm.



3. Film still from *Celia* my father and his mother huddle under the bed, propped up by encyclopedias, to try and shelter from the storm.



4. Film still from *Celia* after retreating to the safety of the hallway a light is shined on the thermostat, revealing water gushing down the wall and into the house.



5. Film still from *Celia* after the storm the front door is opened and the damaged is assessed



4. Church in the Barrio

Letter: Jesse, your house was more than just a place for your family. My father told me stories of the house as a place for the neighborhood to come together and to find refuge. You and Grandma were pillars of your community; my father recalls a long list of neighbors sitting with you at the kitchen table, seeking your advice and perspective. The story I found in the genre of Satire testifies to the community functions of the house. When a space was needed for catechism classes and the church was unable to provide, you volunteered the space that you had to serve the community.

Genre: Satire

The first two stories of the Dicho House began to create a picture of a family trying to survive with very few resources and in the face of many challenges. From talking with my dad I knew that there were also stories to be found that weren't solely focused on struggle or suffering. Funny things happened in the house. Stories that still illustrated the need for resilience and creativity while also showing a family connected to the community doing the best that they could. These thoughts led me to the genre of satire. Growing up I had heard stories from my father about a church service being held in the family garage. I called my dad to see what I could find.

Call Transcript: February 05, 2020

Ruben: Hey, how are you?

Andres : Good, how are you?

Ruben: Good

Andres : I was curious about the story of the church

Ruben: And so because we didn't have a church building we would have had catechism classes probably once a week so we had to sweep the garage and then take all those chairs out and put them like auditorium style with an aisle down the middle and then they would close the garage door and that's where we would have catechism classes.

Andres : To have the activities of a church being done in a garage I think is really interesting

Ruben: Yeah, that's cause there was no money. But if you went across town to where the cathedral was or where the bishop lived, he lived on Ocean Drive of all places in a really nice house. Yeah, so talking about the haves and the have nots. I mean we all called it the Barrio cause that's what it was.

I was immediately drawn to the story of church services in the garage. The layers of family, community, and cultural context mixed with a hint of the ridiculous fit comfortably with the genre of satire. My father grew up in a Catholic household, and religion was an important part of his childhood. During his young adulthood several negative experiences between his family and the church drove him away from the Catholic faith. During my first year of graduate school I converted to Catholicism in preparation for my own marriage, I became very familiar with both the sacred and ceremonial practices of the church. Catholicism is rooted in ceremony and the structures of churches play a key role in this tradition. Imagining the architectural manifestation of the garage-church hybrid excited both the architect and artist within me.

The story of the church in the garage also provided an opportunity to learn about the role of the house, and my grandparents, in the neighborhood. As previously stated the central city neighborhood of Corpus Christi is a diverse and poor community, growing up my father and his family called it the Barrio, a word used in Mexican American communities to describe a largely hispanic and impoverished neighborhood. My father related stories of my grandparents role in the neighborhood. My grandma, Clemencia, was born in Guerrero Viejo, Tamaulipas, Mexico and immigrated to the United States when she was a child. Guerrero Viejo was flooded and the residents were forced to relocate when the Mexican and United States governments agreed to build a dam nearby in 1953. Throughout her life in the U.S Clemencia was extremely active in the community and especially interested in local politics. One of her greatest accomplishments was successfully lobbying the city to install sidewalks and proper drainage in the barrio replacing the unsanitary ditches that lined the roads affectionately called “Mexican Swimming Pools” by the kids of the barrio. Jesse was also a pillar of the community. Involved in the local carpenters union and often offering advice to families in the barrio who gathered around the kitchen table of the Dicho House. It is not surprising that when the Church asked someone to host services Jesse and Clemencia volunteered the space in the garage.

Approaching this story through the lens of satire allowed me to both ridicule the circumstance that necessitated the garage-church and offer a humorous imagining of what this might have looked like. The text *Chicano Satire* by Guillermo Hernández offered insight into how Mexican-American communities have uniquely used satire as a form of protest and reflection. In writing about the use of Satire by marginalized communities, Hernández states, “The evolution of satire is thus a fine register of cultural change and a record of the ingenuity of groups to gain ascendancy over normative space.”¹⁹This interpretation of satire seemed to fit the church narrative perfectly. The community of the barrio knew all the right

¹⁹ Hernández, Guillermo. *Chicano Satire: a Study in Literary Culture*. 1st ed., University of Texas Press, 1991, pg, 6.

words and procedures of Catholicism, but because of their location and the lack of funding from the church they were forced to the margins. I decided to investigate how I could use a normative space of the catholic church to tell a story of a marginalized community.

Inspiration: Lawrence Welk. Jay-Z. Speedy Gonzalez.

The Church in the Barrio offered an unique image of the practices of the Catholic faith. I decided to ask my dad about how he viewed religion growing up, trying to understand what images came to his mind. He told me about watching the *Lawrence Welk Show*, a musical variety show hosted by big-bandleader Lawrence Welk. I watched several episodes of the show focusing specifically on content that offered a picture of religion and church. One particular performance stood out, an episode featuring musicians Ralna English & Guy Hovis performing the hymn “Church in the Wildwood.”²⁰This hymn, written by Dr. William S. Pitts in 1857, is about a picturesque church in the Iowa countryside and offers a very specific view of what a church is. I decided to re-write this hymn imagining if it was written about the church in the barrio.

I took further inspiration from the 2017 music video *Moonlight* by Jay-Z from his 4:44 album.²¹This video shows a portion of an episode of the sitcom *Friends* except with all the characters replaced by black actors, the set and lines are the same as the original episode being reenacted. In the video one the characters played by actor and comedian Jerrod Carmichael realizes that even with all the right words, clothes, and stage the actors are not able to occupy creative spaces created for and by white people. This realization is further emphasized by the lyrics rapped by Jay-Z “We livin’ in Lala Land. Even when we win we goin’ lose” referring to the 2017 Oscar fiasco in which the film *Lala Land* was mistakenly announced the best picture winner instead of *Moonlight*, a mistake which robbed the actors and creators of *Moonlight* their moment. The combination of the visualizations of actors of color trying to occupy spaces created for white audiences and the power of Jay-Z’s lyrics further inspired me to imagine a music video for a hymn about the church in the barrio.

I set out to write a reimagined version of *Church in the Wildwood* a song instead called *Church in the Barrio*. I wrote the lyrics to the song and collaborated with fellow graduate student Alex Barr who composed and performed the song. The style of the video *Church in the Barrio* is derived from traditional animation techniques and aesthetics. The backgrounds of each frame were hand drawn, inked, and colored using photoshop. Having grown up with Looney Toons I was inspired to add a singing character to the video. In researching this animation I was specifically interested in the character Speedy Gonzalez, a mouse that is

20 “Ralna English & Guy Hovis - ‘Church in the Wildwood.’” Youtube, uploaded by Lawrence Welk Show Fans, 5 Jan. 2015, www.youtube.com/watch?v=EU4mySkeVSU.

21 Carter, Gloria, et al. 4:44. [Explicit version]. ed., Roc Nation, 2017.

criticized for depicting mexican stereotypes while also being celebrated by many in the Mexican-American community who were excited to see a representation of a Mexican character in a childhood cartoon, an experience I remember from my own childhood. With this wide array of influences I set out to tell the story of the *Church in the Barrio*. This is the story I found.



Ralna English & Guy Hovis performing the hymn *Church in the Wildwood* on *The Lawrence Welk Show*.



Still from the music video *Moonlight*.
Music video by JAY-Z performing *Moonlight*. (C) 2017 S. Carter Enterprises, LLC. Marketed by Roc Nation & Distributed by Roc Nation/UMG Recordings, Inc.



"Speedy Gonzales (1995)." Imdb, 2020, www.imdb.com/title/tt0048649/mediaviewer/rm36320256.

Church in the Barrio

There's a church in the alley in the Barrio
A place for the sinner to pray
No place is so dear to my childhood
As that church on a clear holy day.

Come to the church in the barrio
The church that's just two houses down
No spot is so dear to my childhood
As the church on the brown-side of town.

How sweet on a clear sabbath morning
we walk down the road hand n' hand
To us lord Jesus is calling
To the prettiest church in the land.

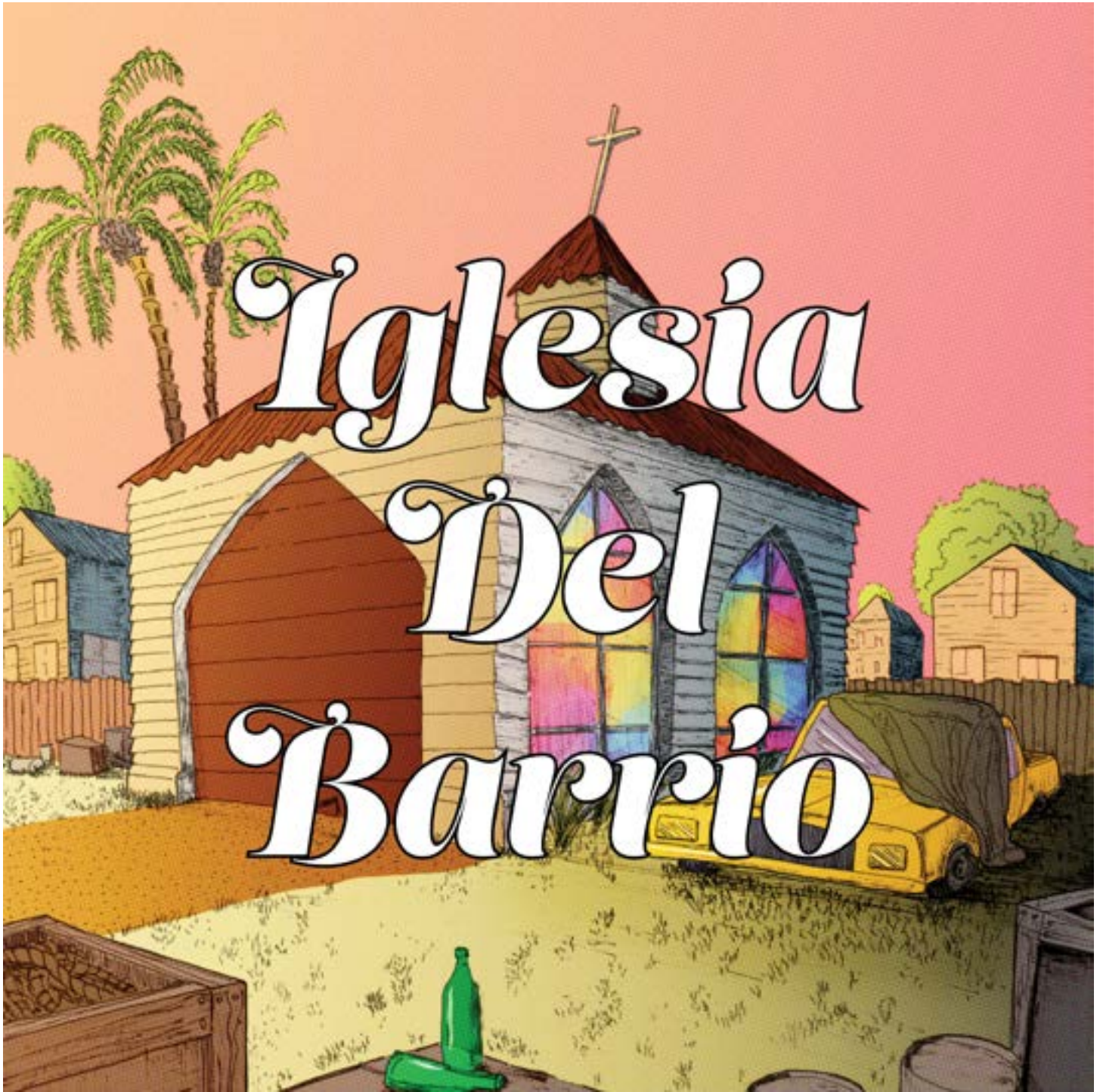
Come to the church in the barrio
The church just two houses down
No spot is so dear to my childhood
As the church on the brown-side of town.

There gathered in the church in the alley
The sun's heat it surely does swell
The nuns in their habits are falling
In here it is hotter than hell.

Come to the church in the barrio
The church just two houses down
No spot is so dear to my childhood
As the church on the brown-side of town.

In this town there's a church on a hillside
The church on the white-side of town
But we pray in the church in the alley
The church that's just two houses down!

Come to the church in the barrio
The church just two houses down
No spot is so dear to my childhood
As the church on the brown-side of town.



Chuch in the Barrio film by Andres Flores. Church in the Barrio: "Church in the Barrio" Based on the song "Church in the Wildwood" recorded by Ralna English and Guy Hovis. "Church in the Barrio" Lyrics by Andres Flores, composition and performance by Alex Barr, 2020.



There's a church in the alley in the Barrio

1. Film still from *Church in the Barrio* the opening scene.

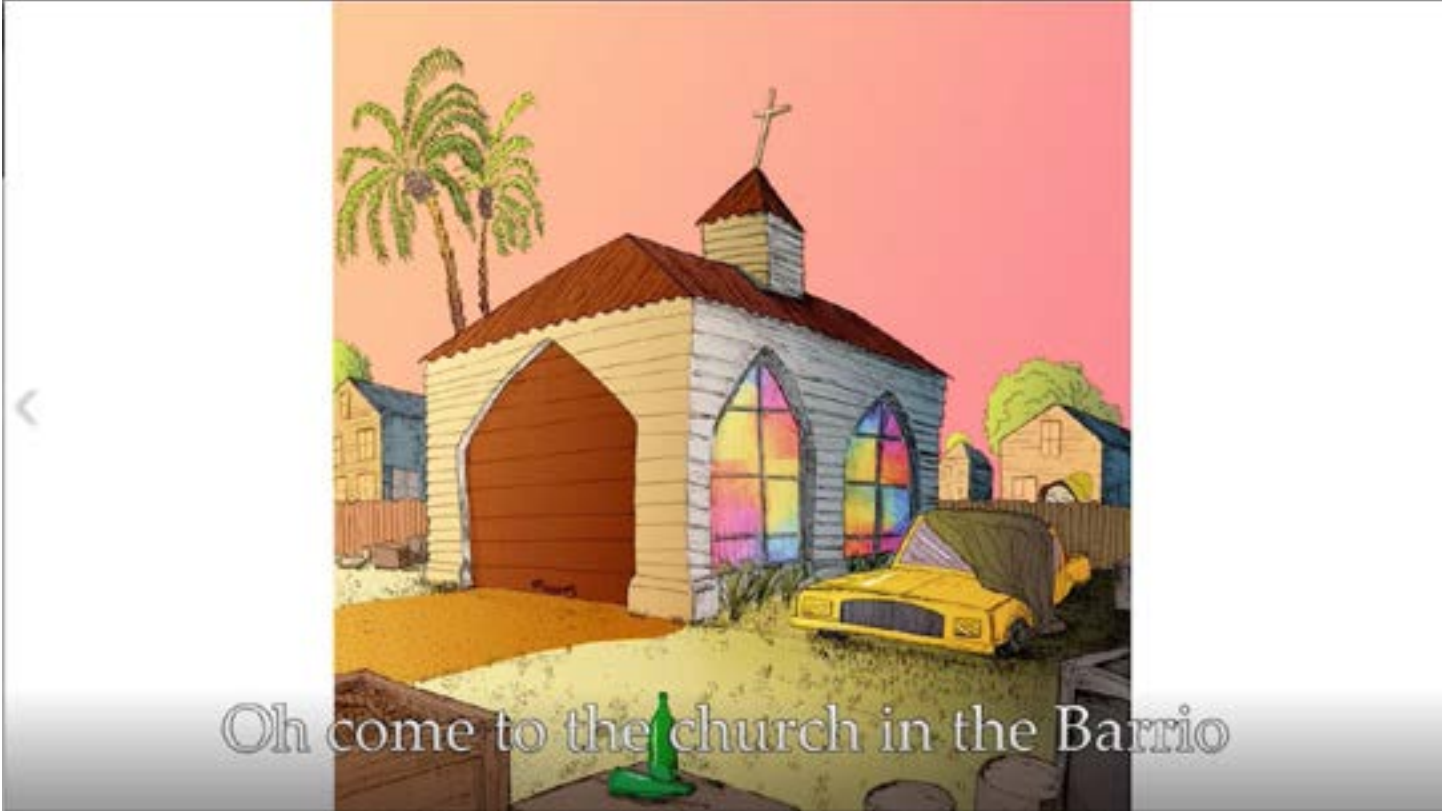


As the church on the brown side of town

2. Film still from *Church in the Barrio* our singing guide leads us through the barrio.



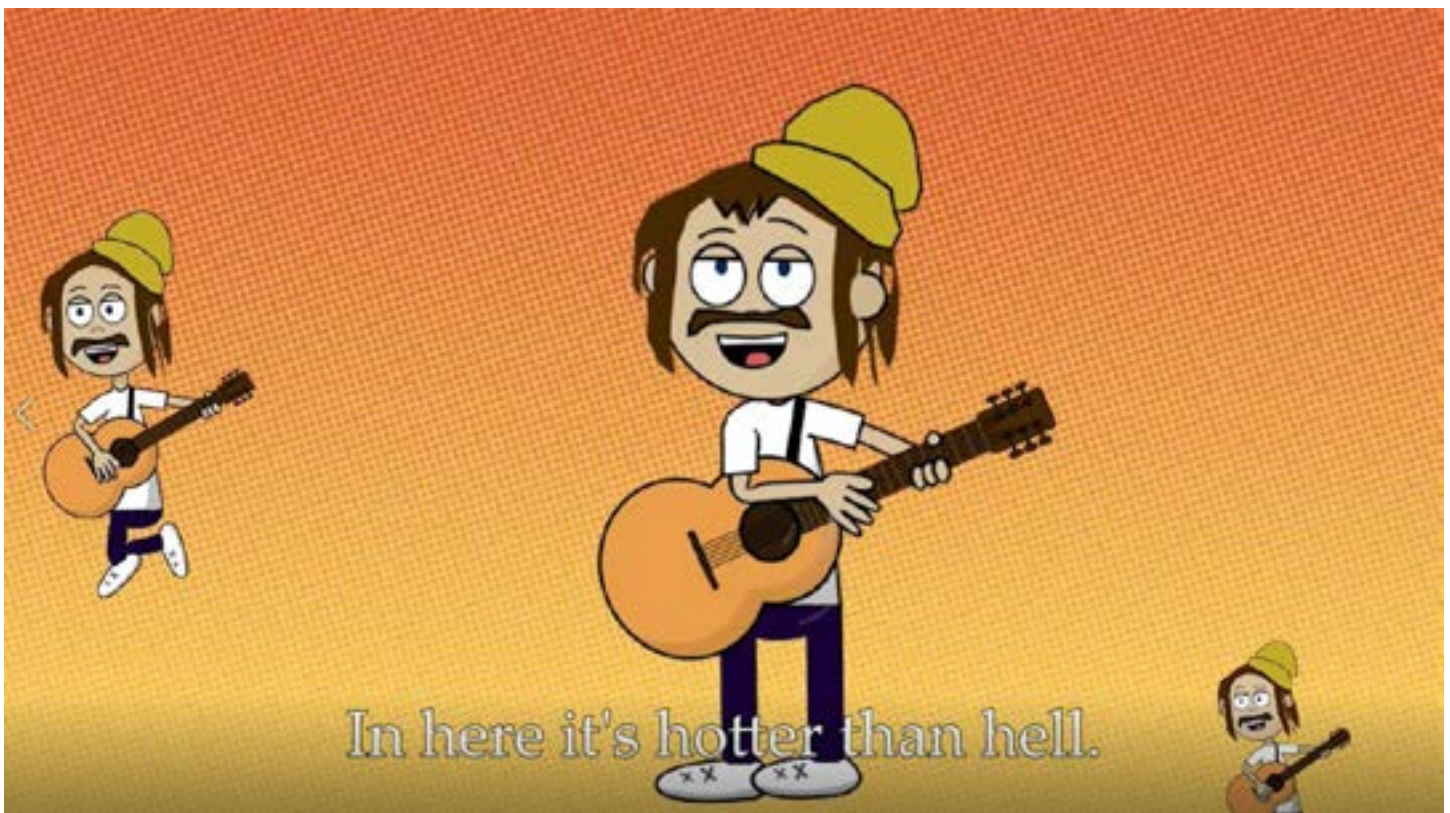
3. Film still from *Church in the Barrio* the drive way of the house serves as the path to the church.



4. Film still from *Church in the Barrio* the garage-church.



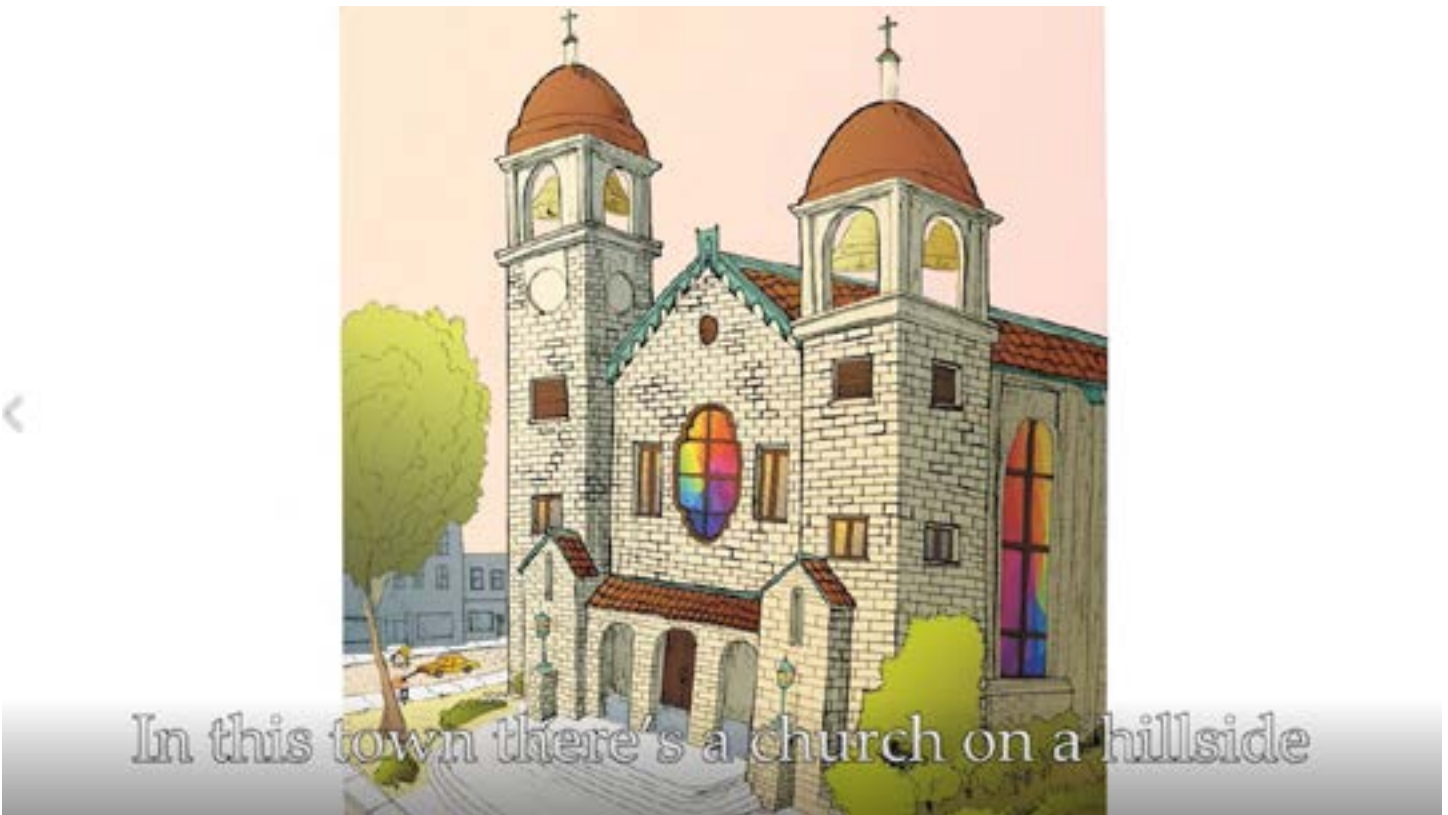
5. Film still from *Church in the Barrio* the garage is swept and the chairs are arranged.



6. Film still from *Church in the Barrio* the church-garage gets hot in the Corpus Christi sun.



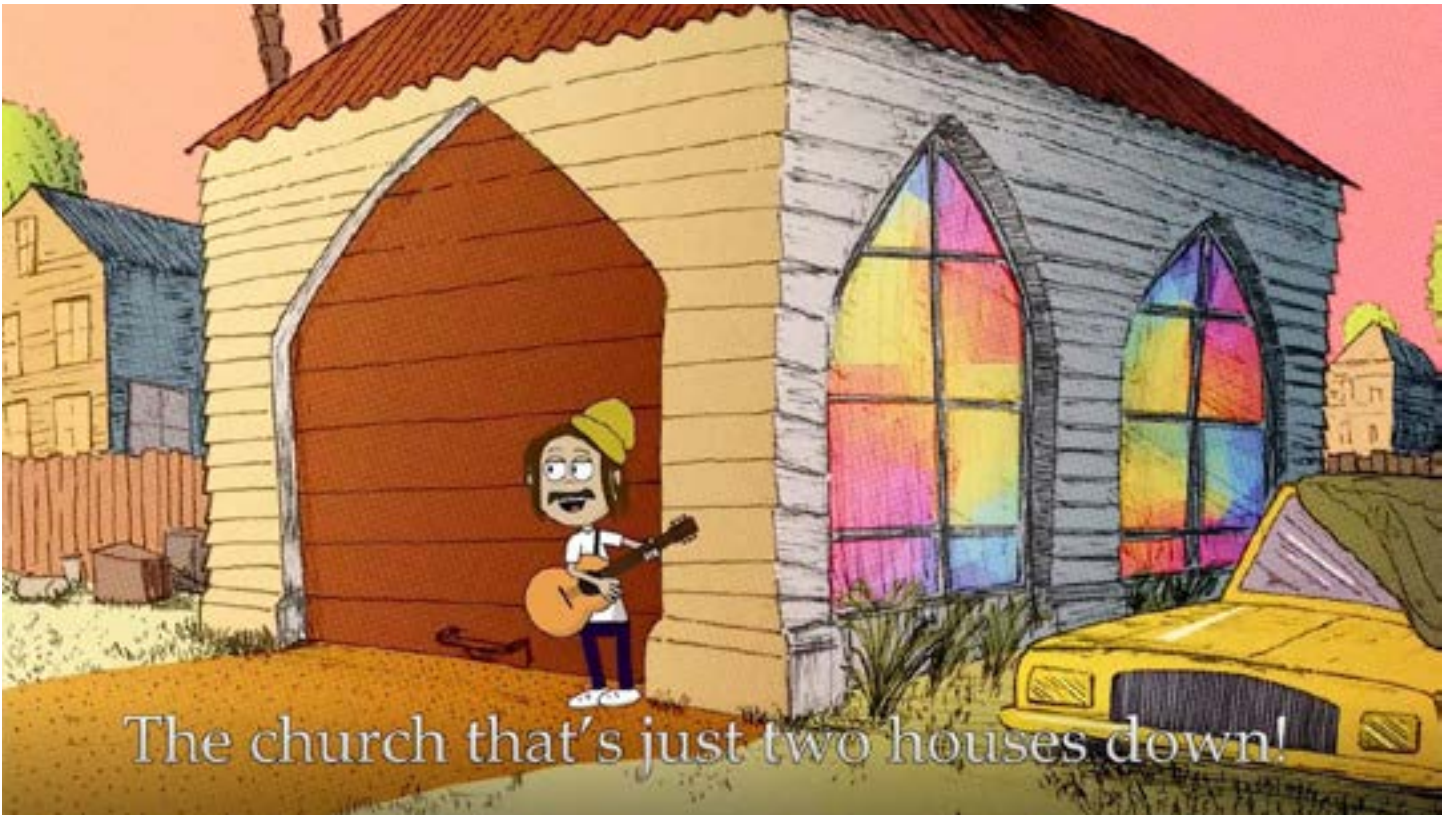
7. Film still from *Church in the Barrio* our guide leads us across town.



8. Film still from *Church in the Barrio* the cathedral on the white-side of town.



9. Film still from *Church in the Barrio*.



10. Film still from *Church in the Barrio*.



11. Film still from *Church in the Barrio*.



12. Film still from *Church in the Barrio*. Special thanks to Alex Barr.

5. Stories of the Barrio

Letter: Jesse, around this time things started to change. Our world moved to the virtual and we were far from people that we cared about. I became more and more worried about Audrey, who is a nurse. And I wished that I could talk to you, to hear your perspective on how to navigate a world rapidly changing. My workspace changed, but I was still determined to find more stories about you and to continue to listen to what you had to teach me. The stories to this point had taught me much about you and the house. I decided to visit the Barrio with my father, virtually, to spend some time there and explore stories of the people who made up the community around the dicho house. I focused less on a genre and more on listening to my father.

Changes

In the spring of 2020 the world experienced a global pandemic due to the COVID-19 virus. Daily life around the world changed. Architecture school was also different. Several of my classmates presented their thesis using online formats to end the winter quarter, and I speculated if I would do the same. Like many my world was transformed into one of fear and uncertainty. Living in Seattle, Washington put my partner and me in the origin of the U.S outbreak. Additionally my partner was working as a nurse at a local hospital, increasing our anxiety and fear for her safety.

Letter: My workspace changed, but I was still determined to find more stories about you and to continue to listen to what you had to teach me. The stories to this point had taught me much about you and the house. I decided to visit the Barrio with my father, virtually. I focused less on a genre and more on listening to my father.

As the pandemic spread across the United States I realized that my plans of visiting the house for this project were becoming more and more unlikely. I felt unsure of how to continue this journey seeking my grandfather and his house.

I decided to leverage the technology of the current moment to “visit” the house with my father virtually. I invited my father, who was living in Colorado at the time, to do a Google Earth tour of the Barrio with me. I decided to approach this experience with little planning or expectations. Instead I wanted to practice listening to whatever stories my father felt compelled to tell, much like we would have done if we had visited and wandered around the Barrio as we had planned. The resulting tour of not only the house and surrounding area, but much of the city of Corpus Christi, lasted almost three hours. Working through a severe delay in our internet connection my dad and I traveled around the city. He would tell me to pause in front of a house, building, or particular intersection and tell stories of the people and plac-

that he remembered. At first the process was cumbersome and frustrated us both as we tried to navigate the online platform, but we soon found a rhythm. He was astounded at the change that had taken place in the city. I was struck to hear the depth and fondness of his memories, especially when we paused in front of a nondescript or run down building that held important memories and stories. Many of the most impactful moments came from stories of the neighbors surrounding the house. My dad told me about families torn apart by the Vietnam War, his memories of neighbors that he played backyard football with, and some larger than life characters of the Barrio. My father described how Jesse and Clemencia were connected to these neighbors in the Barrio. Their care for the people around them further illustrated the character of my grandparents and the house. I decided to use one of the stories my father had told me about a humorous interaction between Jesse and an elderly neighbor of the *Dicho House*.

Inspiration: *La Jetee*

For the film *432 Torreon Street* I was inspired by the 1962 science fiction short film *La Jetee* by Chris Marker.²² This short but immersive film uses only still images and a narrator's voice to tell a story. The simplicity and direct quality of this technique fit perfectly with my experience touring the barrio with my dad. My first attempts at this technique lacked the discipline and editorial skills needed to tell a story, relying too heavily on a mix of disconnected images instead of a curated sequence. The final outcome *453 Torreon Street* tells the story of a house directly behind, and across the alley, from the *Dicho House*. The story within is simple, humorous and reveals the depth of the individuals that made up this community. This is the story I found.



Left: Film poster for *La Jetee*, by Chris Marker.

Right: Film still from the climactic scene from *La Jetee*.

22 Marker, Chris, et al. *La Jetée*. Guillame-approved special ed., Criterion Collection, 2007.

453 Torreon Street

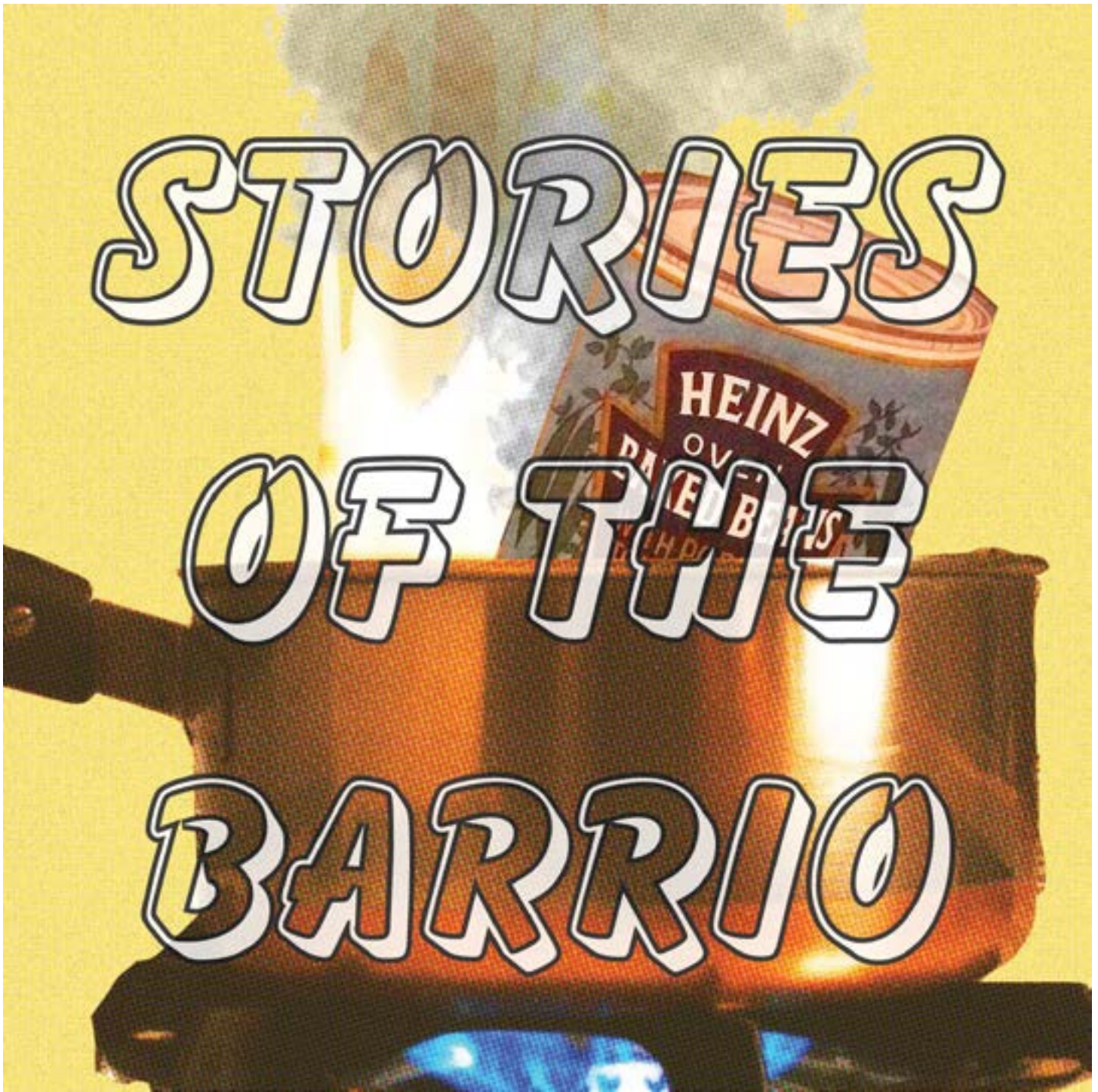
Ruben: On the back end of this li- *laughter*. On the back end of this light blue house there was another little shack and there was an old man back there, who lived back there and his name was Jesus, and he'd fall asleep while the food was on the stove, warming up on the stove and my dad would go over there because there was smoke coming out of the house, there was no smoke alarms or fire alarms. And my dad would be yelling at him, banging on the door. A form of respect, you call someone "Don," like in The Godfather, Don.

Andres: Yeah

Ruben: Right? But in Spanish it's don, Don Jesus

Andres: Mmhmm

Ruben: So my dad would be back there, your grandpa would be back there yelling "Don Jesus! Los frijoles están quemando!" uh Don Jesus, your beans are burning! Cause the guy would get home drunk and fall asleep and he'd leave the food on the stove and he did that several times. And then of all times he became a community activist so he was like really big into education as he got older. His daughter lived in that house and he lived in the back in a little shack.



453 Torreon Street film by Andres Flores. Recorded conversation Andres Flores and Ruben Flores Tuesday, May 12, 2020.



1. Film still from *453 Torreon Street* the house where the story takes place.



2. Film still from *453 Torreon Street* Jesse yells to try and wake up the sleeping Don Jesus.



3. Film still from *453 Torreon Street* Don Jesus burned the beans many times.



4. Film still from *453 Torreon Street* later in his life Don Jesus became a community activist.

Letter: Dad and I visited the Barrio a few times. We talked about stories of you and the house. I learned a lot about you. Your love of singing. Your skills as a cook which I have yet to inherit. And your struggles as well.

Over the next several weeks my father and I virtually visited the house and the barrio a number of times. My father continued to tell me stories of Jesse and the house. Jesse and Clemensia were married on May 19, 1946 in Tivoli, Texas. They bought two lots in western Corpus Christi for \$100.00 shortly after Jesse returned from his service in WWII where he served with U.S. 5th Army in Europe as a gunner on a halftrack with Battery D of the 432nd antiaircraft battalion. Trained as a carpenter before the war, Jesse built a small house on the lot next door to what would become the Dicho House. This small first house is located at 466 Vera Cruz. As his family grew he and Clemensia decided to build a larger house next door, 462 Vera Cruz, the Dicho House which was completed in May of 1955. My father grew up in this house with his older brother and two older sisters. Jesse worked with an architect named Roy S. Evans to build the Dicho House. After hurricane Celia, my grandfather independently designed and added a second story to the house. The house remains in my father's family and has been a rental property since Jesse's death in 1997.



My father (left) explains a story to me (right). One of many meetings about over the Sping Quarter.

Letter: As it became clear that I would not visit the house for this project my mind returned to the idea of Folklore. I had to rely solely on my dad to hand down stories about you and the house.

During these conversations I realized that my father and I were participating in the creation of our own family's folklore. The stories he told me were memories of a place and person I had no memory of seeing or meeting. I had to rely on these stories to try and construct an image in my mind about who Jesse was and in doing so had to trust my father's interpretation of person and place. Many of the stories that my father told seemed to hold little lessons about life, dichos, derived from the memories of his father and his house. Some of these dichos were simple stories about how to take care of a home, a relationship with a family member, or a family's responsibility to their community. Others were more serious, such as the story of my father's last time seeing his mother and the regrets that he still holds onto. The accumulated memories and stories that my father told me created a body of folklore about the Dicho House and Jesse.

El Cudratito: 466 Vera Cruz

Letter: As dad told me more stories one specific space kept recurring. El Cuartito, the little room. Built in the back yard of the first house that you built, this small unobtrusive space revealed many aspects of you.

One of the recurring spaces of these stories was a small shack built behind the first house, 466 Vera Cruz. This space that my dad called El Cuartito or "The Little Room" quickly became a place that revealed many aspects of Jesse's character and personality. I was drawn to the vulnerability that this space revealed about Jesse, his struggles and experiences as a father trying to provide for his family and a man with his own struggles. My dad told many stories of El Cuartito, I asked him to write a few of them down, here is the story that I found.

El Cuartito

My dad cared about family. He built el cuartito (the small room) for his mother. It's a small wooden structure built on a concrete slab and there's no indoor plumbing. It's a very basic space that had room for a single bed, a chair and a place to cook.

My dad loved to tinker and el cuartito served as a "lab" space for him to be inventive. He loved to fish so he made lead sinkers by melting recycled lead into a mold that he fashioned.

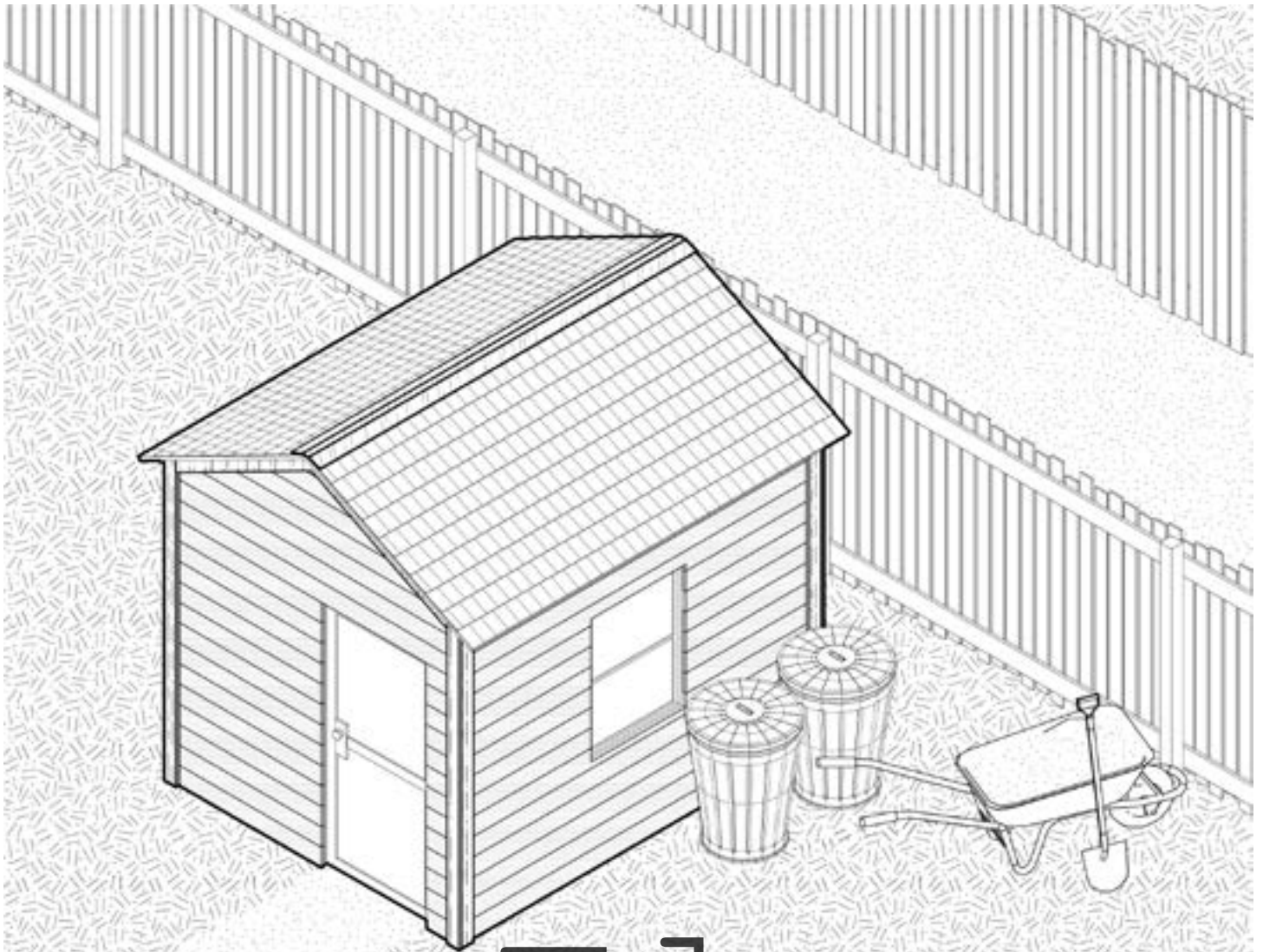
My dad fought in WWII for 3½ years and one way to cope with the horrors of war was drinking. Sometimes he drank too much. At times, he'd hide a six pack of beer in el cuartito and sneak in there to drink on the pretense that he was working on a project. After a heated argument with my mom about his drinking, I snuck in there and punctured holes in the cans with an awl.

My dad loved to cook menudo. He'd spend hours trimming the fat from the stomach lining while enjoying Mexican music from a transistor radio and drinking a few beers. Often times, he'd cook the menudo outdoors on a gas grill. El cuartito served as a refuge for him to cook when it was raining or too cold to be outdoors.

My older brother built a WWII model plane and wanted to make it look like it'd been damaged during a bombing mission. We stored the lawnmower and a can of gasoline in el cuartito. My brother's bright idea was to splash a very small amount of gas on the plane and light it on fire. I was recruited as the "lookout" to make sure that no adults would interfere with our idiotic experiment. I was standing in the doorway trying to do my job when I heard a whooshing sound as the gas fumes created a small fireball. My brother sprinted by me and I took that as a sign to abandon my post. The model was ruined but thankfully el cuartito was still intact.

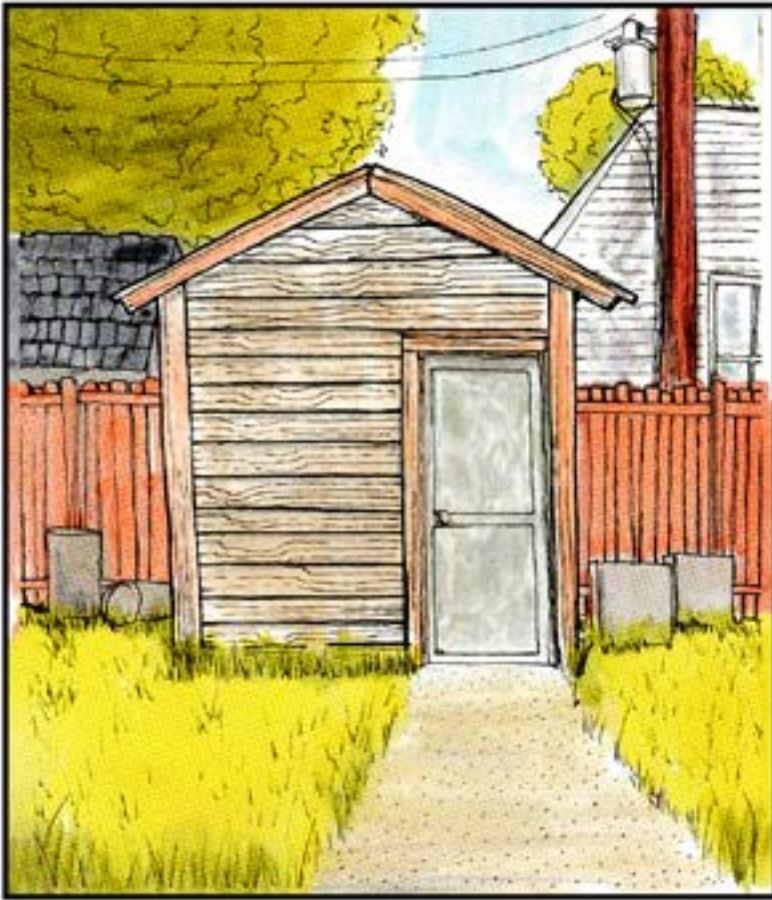
When you look at el cuartito on Google Earth, you see a dilapidated wooden building that has mold on the siding and is missing the lower half of the back wall due to rot. Time and decay will never erase the memories of el cuartito as a place of rest, invention and culinary delights.

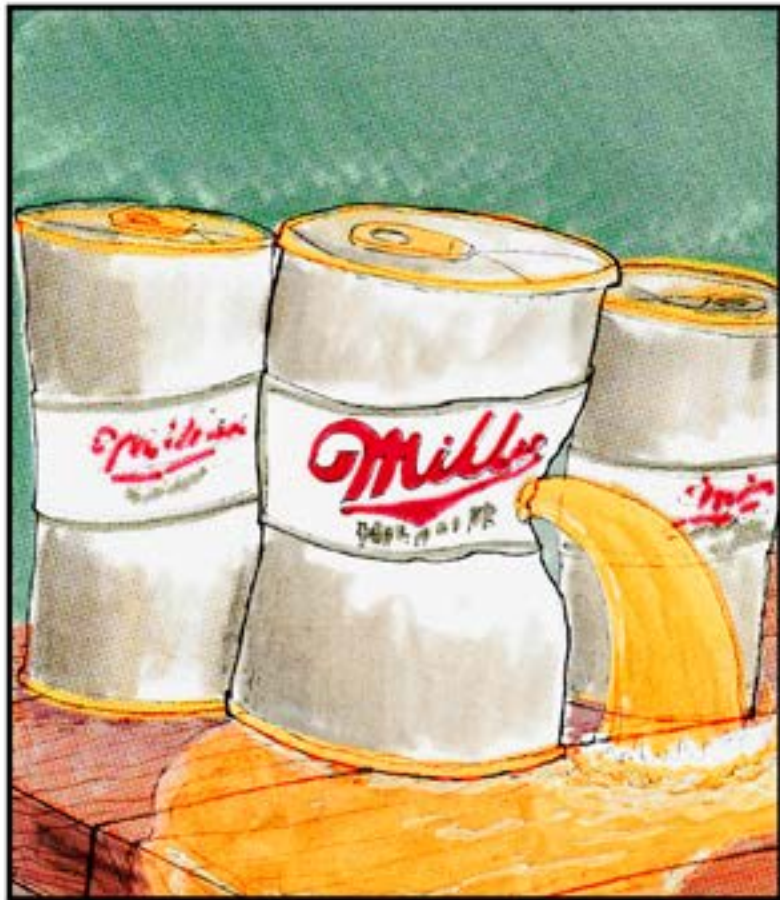
By Ruben Flores



El Cuartito

El Cuartito film by Andres Flores. Text by Ruben Flores. Song, "Fallaste Corazon" By Pedro Infante, from Mexico Gran Colección: Ranchera, © 2010, Orfeon. LLC.





6. Reflections

When can you say that you are done getting to know someone? I don't think that you ever really can, just like you can't say that you've heard all the stories. There will always be more stories to find, more doors to open, more rooms to walk into, and more Dichos to learn.

Conclusions (For Now)

This thesis began by asking if architecture can be used in a different way. Can architecture connect us to the stories of who we are and where we come from? This is a question that I still have, Dicho House is the answer that I have found thus far. I wanted to know more about my grandfather and the house that he built. During this process I also learned about myself, my father, and our relationship to each other and Jesse. In the most basic sense this project is a conversation between a father and son. A conversation that many of us have had when we ask our parents to help us understand who we are or to tell us a story about where we are from. This process is ongoing for me. I anticipate that someday, though perhaps not soon, my father and I will visit the house in Corpus Christi. I know that this will change the stories that I have heard and represented through this thesis. Architecture school taught me to freeze architecture in a specific moment, the way we represent our buildings imagines them frozen in an ideal state. The Dicho House has shown me how fluid architecture truly is; the stories that happen in the places we build are far more layered and nuanced than we show. Like memories, the lived experiences of a space are subjective, changing, and complex. As I write this the house and Jesse exist only in my imagination, in the stories I have found with my dad. This will change when I visit the house. Suddenly the fluid images and shadows that I imagine will be solid pieces of wood, trim, and glass. This process of seeing will answer some of the questions I have about Jesse and the house while also bringing up more. Jesse is more than the house that he built and I will never truly be able to know him through the architecture that is left. But this process allowed me to connect with Jesse in a way that had eluded me for much of my life. It allowed me to see him as a complex and layered person with struggles and triumphs all his own. It made me thankful that he was my grandfather. Dicho House is just one step in the process of knowing who I am and what I want to do with architecture, it is a conversation that will continue beyond this thesis. Before that conversation could continue, I needed to conclude this letter to Jesse.



Jesus (Jesse) Maria Flores, builder of the *Dicho House*. January 14, 1919-August 20, 1997

Dear Jesse,

Jesse,

These are some of the stories I found in your house. I know there are many more.

So what is a Dicho? School loves definitions, so here is one that I found.

A dicho is “the wisdom of many the wit of one.”

I think this fits your house. I know that when I visit someday I will see a simple house, one of many in the Barrio in a world full of Barrios and houses.

But it is also a place with stories. Stories of a man. A boy. A family. I have heard you through this house, I know more about you because of what I heard.

But I also realize that you are more than the house you built.

I will never truly know you, but your house showed me more of you, even if it was just your shadow on the wall.

I have learned a lot about Architecture over the past three years. Architects are advocates for a better world, we are taught to have ideas and to talk.

I also hope that Architecture is more than what I have been taught. Architecture is an opportunity to listen.

Your house is built with memories. The Dichos of who you were.

As I go into the world, I hope that I can carry some of these Dichos with me.

You were far from perfect, but you were inventive, generous, and hardworking.

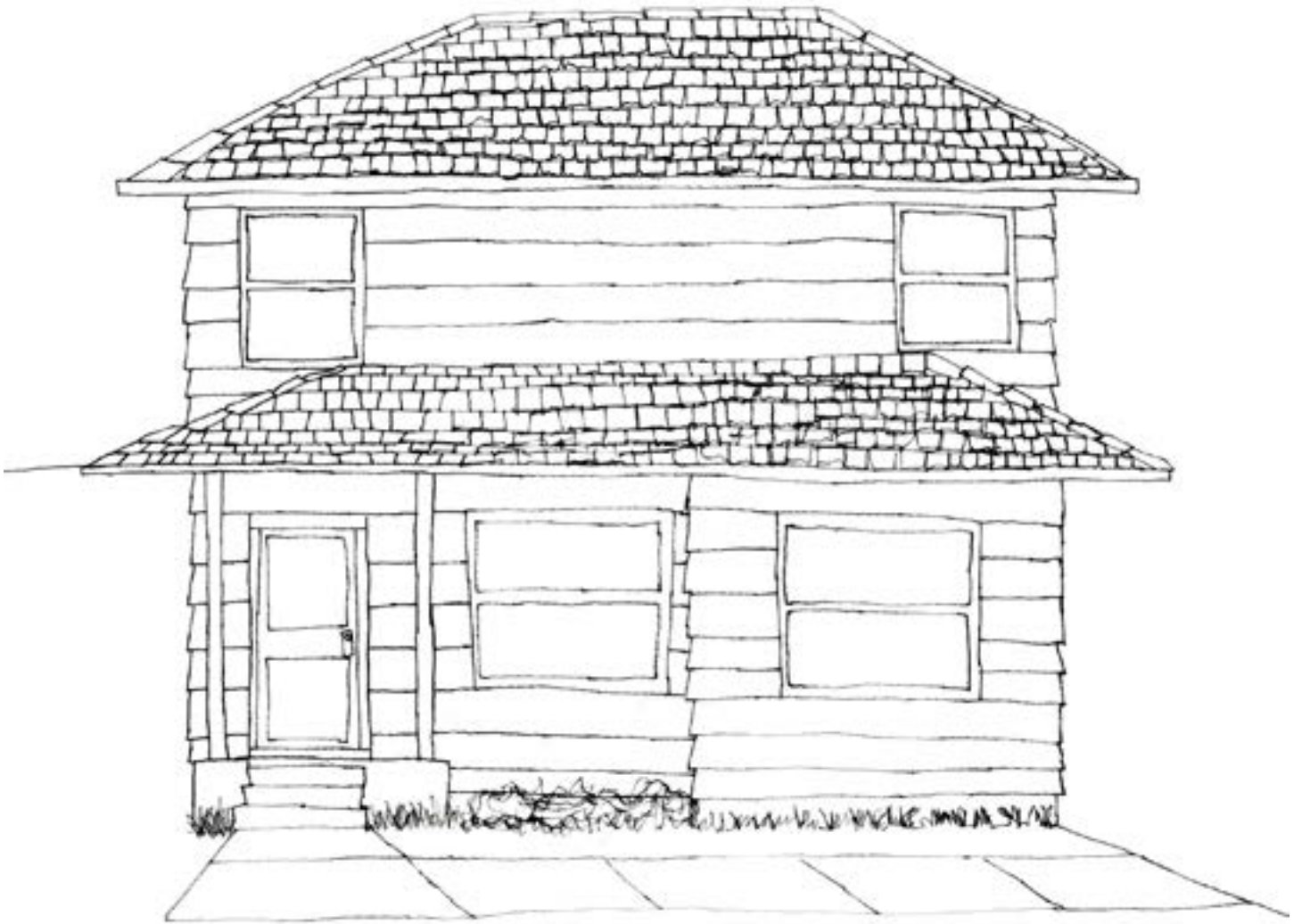
These are traits I will take from you and your house.

Thank you Jesse, for your house, for your son, and for the stories.

Love,

Your grandson,

Andres



Dicho House film by Andres Flores. Text by Andres Flores. Song, Outro: "Agape" By Nicholas Britell, from *If Beale Street Could Talk* (Original Motion Picture Score), © 2018 Lakeshore Records.

7. Conversations

This thesis was presented and reviewed over Zoom on June 4th, 2020. The reviewers were Jay Deguchi, Louisa Iarocci, Cameron Hall, Marty Brennan, and Kristopher Chan. The thesis chair was Alex Anderson and the committee member was Jennifer Dee. Here are some of the comments that came up during the conversation about the Dicho House and some reflections on those thoughts:

Jay Deguchi: “I think one question I had to ask is, now that you’ve gone through this. Do you see architecture or the typical house in a different way. And do you evaluate what good architecture is and what architecture should mean or should do now in a different way.”

After my experiences with the *Dicho House* I have a renewed appreciation for quiet architecture. In school we were often challenged to have the answer as architects, to make all the decisions and tell a compelling story about what a project would become and how people would inhabit the spaces we design. This project has taught me that often the most successful architecture actually fades to the background and becomes the places where stories unfold. Architecture is not a static, the places we create are changed, destroyed, rebuilt, and layered with the memories of who we are.

Jeffery Ochsner: “I’m just curious about the degree to which the interviews were actually more not what you are asking for. But what your father wanted to tell you.”

The stories of the Dicho House are not a historic record of the events from my father’s childhood. The stories told here are hazy with memory, imperfect in their recollection, and changed through interpretation. They are my father’s memories as told and interpreted by me. Some of the stories my dad told without prompting, others came from more direct questions, all of them help to build a picture of who Jesse was and the house that he built.

Kristopher Chan: “I’m curious if after this whole thing was over it, as if you intend on actually still going and visiting the house with your father and finishing what I think maybe intended on doing with this project.”

As of the writing of this document it is still a dangerous time to travel. It may be a year or more before my father and I are able to travel to the Dicho House. For now this is a coma in our conversation about Jesse and his house, a conversation that will continue and change when we finally do travel to the Barrio. I know that when I do see the house the stories I have told and been told will forever change. Many questions will be answered and many more will be asked, I am excited to see what other stories I will find.

Shortly after presenting the Dicho House to a group of academics and architects, I shared the work with my family. I am extremely grateful to my family for their help throughout my academic career, especially my father who has told me some truly amazing stories. I will let them have the last word.

What a novel presentation! I laughed, cried, remembered, and marveled at all the changes our family endured in our humble casita. Andres brought to life the dicho, "if these walls could talk...the stories they'd tell..." I feel extremely privileged to have grown up in such a loving and nurturing atmosphere. Congratulations to Andres.

Sylvia Schafer (Aunt, oldest daughter of Jesse)

I cried, I smiled, I laughed, and at times all at the same time. What a tender and fitting tribute to Jesse. The presentation does more than showcase Dad's talents though. It exposes how Andres uses all of his senses to make a man he hardly knew come alive. I felt Dad's presence as the stories were told. I know he would be extremely proud that his grandson saw him through the dicho house and honored him as a creative force. I feel that Jesse and Andres are kindred spirits now. God bless them both.

Irma Flores (Aunt, second oldest of Jesse)

The Dicho House thesis has been an opportunity to keep the memory of my parents alive for Andres. In those memories, I hope Andres learned that his paternal grandparents loved him dearly. When Andres asked me to tell him stories of the Dicho House, I was honored to play a small role in his pursuit of a master's degree in Architecture. As I watched Andres' video unfold, I was moved to tears and laughter as I treasured the stories he was telling in such unique formats. The Dicho House video tells a beautiful story of a carpenter who poured his heart and soul into building a house that became a home for his family.

Ruben Flores (Father, youngest son of Jesse)

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