

THE UNTOLD STORY OF CHILDREN  
WHO GIVE A VOICE TO GENERATIONS

# TRANSLATORS



## FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

Proudly Presented by **usbank**

LA HISTORIA AÚN NO CONTADA DE  
LOS NIÑOS QUE DAN VOZ A UNA GENERACIÓN

# TRADUCTORES

PROUDLY PRESENTED BY U.S. BANK

A DOCUMENTARY SHORT DIRECTED BY  
RUDY VALDEZ

LOS SERVICIOS PUEDEN ESTAR DISPONIBLES SOLAMENTE EN INGLÉS.

TRANSLATORSFILM.COM

TRADUCTORESFILM.COM

# DEAR SCREENING HOST,

Thank you so much for hosting a screening of *Translators*. By hosting a screening event, you are now a crucial part of the Odyssey Impact California-based social impact campaign to uplift the complex and multifaceted ways children and youth thrust into the role of translators and interpreters and their families need a better path towards language justice.

The Odyssey Impact campaign for *Translators* is designed to educate, engage and activate the public around the need for an examination of the opportunities or lack thereof, for language justice and show how these unique children and youth are assets and essential to building the future. The impact campaign will also highlight the urgent need for professional translators and interpreters and enable immigrant and migrant parents to better support their children. The film and Impact Campaign resources will encourage community conversation on various topics, including the importance of community responsibility and language access.

As part of this campaign, we encourage you to use *Translators* as a tool for training and/or teaching, guided by the campaign goals below:

- 1 Represent the personal experiences of the children who serve as translators.**
- 2 Acknowledge the trauma of migration and immigration and its impact on children and youth.**
- 3 Empower parents to advocate for their legal rights to translation and interpretation services in**
  - a. Schools**
  - b. Medical Facilities**
  - c. Government Intitutions**
  - d. Other Business Areas**
- 4 Educate the public on the importance of the diversity of languages.**
- 5 Educate heritage English speakers about the collective responsibility of society to these children and youth.**
- 6 Reframe multilingualism as an asset.**

Screening *Translators* is only the first step. The story within the film is a springboard to more extensive discussions you can have within your family and community about educating people about language justice in an English-dominant society, the need to reframe multilingualism as an asset, and uplifting the children and youth to serve as translators, interpreters, and cultural brokers for their immigrant parents.

Thank you for bringing *Translators* to your community. Now, let's get to work!

Sincerely,

**The Odyssey Impact Team**

# ABOUT THE FILM



Every kid needs their parents. But for 11-year-old Densel, 13-year-old Harye, 16-year-old Virginia, and the over 11 million children across the U.S., who are the only English speakers in their family, sometimes that relationship gets flipped. This is the untold story of kids who act as their family's translators on matters that are sometimes more adult than they are.

Directed by  
**RUDY VALDEZ**



# MEET THE FILMMAKER



## RUDY VALDEZ

Rudy Valdez is a two-time Emmy Award-winning filmmaker committed to creating social, cultural, and political stories through a cinematic and meaningful lens. He got his start in film as a Camera Operator on the Peabody Award-winning Sundance series “Brick City” and went on to direct a true passion project, *The Sentence* (HBO). Shot and directed by Valdez over the course of a decade, this feature documentary tells the very personal story of his sister's plight in the criminal justice system while tackling subjects like mandatory minimums and sentencing reform. For this work, the filmmaker won the 2019 Primetime Emmy Award for Exceptional Merit in Documentary Filmmaking, US Documentary Audience Award at the 2018 Sundance Film Festival, and was a 2018 Critics Choice Documentary Awards Best New Director nominee.

Prior to *The Sentence*, Valdez has worked as a Cinematographer on a multitude of projects, including *The Last Patrol* (HBO), directed by Academy Award-nominated Director Sebastian Junger; Whoopi Goldberg presents *Moms Mabley: I Got Something To Tell You* (HBO) produced and directed by Whoopi Goldberg, premiering at the 2013 Tribeca Film Festival; *Remembering the Artist, Robert De Niro, Sr.* (HBO), premiering at the 2014 Sundance Film Festival; *The Conversation Series*, a New York Times OpDoc; the series *Second Coming?: Will Black America Decide the 2012 Election?* (BET); *Prison Dogs*, directed by Primetime Emmy Award-winning Director Geeta Gandbhir and Perri Peltz, premiering at the 2015 Tribeca Film Festival; *Buried Above Ground*, directed by Ben Selkow, premiering at the Woodstock Film Festival; as well as, *The Talk* (PBS), directed by Academy Award-nominated Director Sam Pollard.

Valdez's most recent project, *ReOpening Night*, is a feature film about The Public Theater's staging of a beloved New York City institution, *Shakespeare in the Park*, following the COVID-19 pandemic. It premiered on HBO Max in December. This past summer, *Breakaway*, a feature film following WNBA superstar Maya Moore and her fight for criminal justice reform, premiered on ESPN in July 2021 (produced by Rockin' Robin Productions). Its complementary short, *Make Him Known*, premiered at the 2021 Miami Film Festival and made appearances at the Sarasota Film Festival, The Brooklyn Film Festival, Minneapolis Film Festival, and Nantucket Film Festival. His four-part docu-series, *We Are: The Brooklyn Saints* (produced by Imagine Documentaries), is currently streaming on Netflix. He also co-directed the premiere episode of *Through Our Eyes* (HBO) alongside Academy Award-winning director Geeta Gandbhir, a four-part docu-series from Sesame Workshop that explores the lives of American families from the perspective of children, how they navigate their circumstances with their families and the world at large.

He is also in production on the definitive feature documentary of Carlos Santana (produced by Imagine Documentaries) and Disney +'s CHOIR, a docu-series following the Detroit Youth Choir after their star turn on “America's Got Talent” (also produced by Imagine Documentaries). Valdez's repertoire now extends into the scripted arena as he recently sold a genre TV series he created that is loosely based on his family and life experiences as well as a Feature film he will direct based on a story written by Valdez that is slated to shoot in the Spring.

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I'm very proud to have made **TRANSLATORS**; the subject matter is particularly poignant for me. Growing up, my parents had a small Mexican grocery in the center of a community with a lot of first-generation Spanish speakers. I witnessed dozens of times when a person would come in to ask my parents for help with translation - both for small things and in critical moments. This sometimes meant closing the store and heading to the emergency room, lawyers' office, or their child's school. As a kid, I understood this as the norm. We were a community, and we helped each other. As I grew up I started to notice that feelings toward non-English speakers are mixed and outside of their communities, often negative. My goal in this piece is to show that although being a non-English speaker can certainly be a barrier, it also encourages younger generations to take the lead in communicating for their family.

- RUDY VALDEZ

## USING THE FILM AS A CATALYST FOR CHANGE

- What goals do you have for the outcome of your screening event?
- What support is needed regarding the needs of immigrant and migrant parents and their children who act as language and cultural brokers?
- Are there other organizations, congregations, and/or community leaders who would benefit from attending this screening and could collaborate on a Call to Action?
- Are there models of action other communities have used that you could adopt in your community?

# STEPS TO HOSTING A SCREENING EVENT

**1 Decide when and how your audience will watch the film. You can give your audience a time frame to watch the film or set a specific time when everyone watches together.**

The film will be delivered as a password-protected Vimeo link a week from your event. If you have any questions, please let us know by sending an email to [screenings@odyssey-impact.org](mailto:screenings@odyssey-impact.org).

**2 If you choose, invite a moderator and/or panelists for a post-screening discussion.**

We always recommend inviting panelists and/or moderators from your community. This will help guide the conversation to something specifically relevant to your community.

**3 Depending upon your audience, create an RSVP system through Eventbrite, or a similar platform, to gather the email addresses of your audience members.**

Send the audience members the link to the pre-screening survey before the event.

**4 Send your audience the link to the film or set a time to watch together, and send invitations to the post-screening discussion.**

Some suggested ideas for post-screening discussion include a panel discussion, community Q&A, or an audience talkback. Suggested virtual platform options include Zoom, Google Hangouts, Facebook Live, Instagram Live, YouTube, Twitch, Webex, or CrowdCast.

**5 Publicize your event by using the promotional materials provided by the impact campaign and encourage your network and/or community to help spread the word by:**

- Promoting the screening on your local Spanish-speaking AM radio station
- Handing out flyers in your neighborhood
- Starting a phone or text chain via What's App
- Asking your clergy or other faith-leader to speak about the event on a Sunday

**6 Remind your audience before the event is over to fill out the post-screening survey via What's App. Take pictures/screenshots of the screening and the post-screening discussion.**

*Please note: If you are concerned about visibility, limit these photos to the back of people's heads, hands, and feet. Be particularly mindful to avoid school logos, license plates, and building or home addresses.*

**7 Engage in a post-screening activity and/or announce your call to action.**

**8 We want to hear about your event!**

Email [screenings@odyssey-impact.org](mailto:screenings@odyssey-impact.org) and let us know how it went! We welcome quotes, testimonials, and photos from your event!

# CONDUCTING PURPOSEFUL CONVERSATIONS



## I. GUIDELINES

The topics you will engage with in this conversation may be emotionally charged for all those involved. Engaging in a courageous conversation can be challenging and uncomfortable for many people. Creating and maintaining a purposefully brave space throughout the conversation allows each person to express themselves while respecting others.

Your job as a facilitator is not to help the group agree but to create and maintain an environment where everyone can participate in a discussion [around this film] in an ethical and honest capacity, even if in disagreement with someone's perspective.

### CREATING GROUP NORMS:

- The creation of conversation norms for the group. We recommend consensus-based decision-making for this process (fist-to-five and asking questions two ways are helpful consensus tools).
- You can start by offering transparency in this process and open with something like:

“ As a group, I'd like us to take some time to establish group norms for this conversation. We want to make space for everyone who wants to share about this topic/film. What are some needs you have that will make you feel brave enough to share your thoughts?”

- Give the group space to reflect and answer intentionally. You can use reframes to ask clarifying questions about anything unclear i.e.

“ What I hear you saying is \_\_\_\_\_, correct?”

- Below are some norms to consider offering to the group if no one explicitly raises them:



## IN PERSON/GENERAL

- We ask that you show up in whatever way feels right for you.
- We invite you to be vulnerable with people you have met, and we hope you will share bravely in this space. It might look mostly like listening. We trust you to make that decision.
- If things come up for you unexpectedly, please prioritize taking care of yourselves in those moments. However, you need (you can exit the space, you can take an aside, you can close your eyes, you can take some deep breaths, etc.).
- Go slow and play with silence. We encourage you to lean into slowing down, asking the group to pause and ask clarifying questions. We should take the time to engage with these ideas and each other.
- If the sharing is personal, please respect everyone and their privacy within this group. Take the lessons you learn with you but leave the details of people's stories – *what's shared here stays here, and what's learned here leaves here*.
- During these sessions, be intentional with your language, avoid generalizations, and consider the impact it may have on people with different identities. Words are compelling.
- Unpack the perspective, not the person. When someone says something we disagree with, we can hear each other better if we focus on why we disagree with the idea or statement rather than whether the person who raised it is good or bad.
- Make Space, Take Space: Be aware of the space you take up. This conversation is meant to be collaborative and inclusive. If you notice that you are talking and taking up a lot of space in the discussion, consider making space for others by holding the silence and listening. If you notice that you are not talking, remember that we have this brave space together and encourage you to be courageous.
- We actively want to hear what you have to say! Privilege inevitably informs our relationships to conversation and space. If you find many places and spaces in the world where your voice is prioritized and valued, please actively focus on listening more than you speak.
- Owning intentions and impacts. We encourage you to acknowledge and discuss the intentions and the consequences when this conversation emotionally affects participants in the space.
- "One mic" - One person speaks at a time.

## ONLINE (SPECIFICALLY)

- We ask that you show up in whatever way feels right for you. Feel free to turn off your mic or camera anytime during the session. You can also use the chat box as much as you want; it's a great way to engage with the material and the group.
- Hide Self View! Looking at your face on Zoom for extended periods can be weird and exhausting, and none of us signed up for that kind of self-scrutiny, so feel free to click the "hide self-view" button so that the group can see you and you can see the group, but you don't have to see yourself.

## C O - B R A N D E D   G U I D E L I N E S

- If things come up for you unexpectedly, please prioritize taking care of yourselves in those moments. However, you need (offer: you can privately chat with me, take a break, and head back to the main session).
- Make content accessible for folks with different abilities (utilize closed captioning, chat, allow for video only, allow for audio only, etc.)

**AFTER GOING THROUGH THIS FRAMING,** ask participants the following questions:

- How do these norms sound to everyone?
- Is anyone uncomfortable with any of these norms?
- Does anyone have any other norms to add?

## II. THREE RULES OF RELIGIOUS UNDERSTANDING

Your conversations may directly or indirectly address religion, the religious beliefs of community members, or targeted religious identities. Consider including these guidelines or keeping these tools in mind as issues arise. These rules are also helpful for thinking through intergroup dialogues, regardless of whether religious identity is the most salient difference between these groups.

At a press conference in 1985, Dr. Krister Stendahl, a Bishop of Stockholm, responded to vocal opposition to building a temple there by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. He laid down three rules, which have been used across the globe to guide dialogues involving religion and topics that address faith.

- 1 When trying to understand another religion or community, you should ask the adherents of that religion or ideology (and not its enemies).
  - Note: *No one can speak for an entire faith tradition, community, or demographic (i.e., refugees, immigrants, etc.). It is important for each person to speak from their perspective about the practices or beliefs of their tradition or community.*
- 2 Don't compare your best to their worst.
- 3 Leave room for "holy envy."
  - By this, Stendahl meant that you should be willing to recognize elements in the other religious tradition or faith (or non-religious group) that you admire and wish could, somehow wish could, be reflected in your religious tradition, faith, or community. This also applies to groups not defined by their faith outside your identity (e.g., country of origin, socio-economic status, immigration status, political affiliation, etc.)

### III. ANTICIPATE ISSUES TO CONSIDER BEFORE YOUR CONVERSATION

Discussions may be difficult for some participants to host or participate in for several reasons. We'd like to offer strategies to help manage and maintain a brave space throughout this courageous conversation.

- Managing the range of emotions that might arise during your courageous conversations.
  - Reference the previously established Group Norms as needed and, if necessary, acknowledge when people aren't respecting those norms (For example, "*I just wanted to notice that we have a couple of people speaking over each other, how would we feel about returning to our 'One Mic' norm we discussed earlier?*")
  - Periodically, check in about learning goals for the conversation. Ask everyone to offer ideas and suggestions for achieving those goals/purposes.
  - Give space to emotions as needed. Heavy topics will bring up feelings, and if we ignore them entirely, they will often still come out later and require even more space after having done damage. Some small ways to offer space for emotions include:
    - Asking questions to the person sharing, like, "Why do you think this is coming up for you now?"
      - Asking the group questions, such as, "What did it feel like to hear that?" or "Do other people feel this way?"
      - Making space for people to exit the group as needed.
      - Holding silence after heavy shares and acknowledging/appreciating vulnerable shares (a "thank you for your share" will suffice).
      - Reflecting the feeling(s), you heard (i.e., "It sounds like that was scary...")
- Make a plan, hold it loosely, and follow the group.
  - Planning is vital to feeling prepared when facilitating. Having a plan can help us think through timing, framing, and goals before we start the conversation. We recommend you keep in mind three things:
    - Keep it simple
    - Follow the group
    - Make space
  - Allow the group agency over the conversation as often as possible, especially regarding learning goals and objectives.
- Difficult dynamics.
  - It is vital to hold a purposeful space so there is room for everyone participating to share. If you notice the group is not following the agreed-upon norms, here are some ways to detect this dynamic aloud:
    - Ask the group members how they would like to handle the situation.

- Offer options that include the behavior that was disruptive (i.e., if there is a lot of side chatter, maybe offer some time for smaller group or pair-shares)
- Notice to participants, *We established some group norms at the beginning of this conversation. Does it feel like we are still following those norms? Would we like to revisit or reconsider those norms?*
- When someone has an emotionally charged share, reflect their comments or ideas to the group, check for accuracy with the original speaker, and ask the group what that share brings to mind for them.
- Respectfully try to intentionally balance the voices in conversation, making more space for those less dominant. For example, *I'm wondering if we could hear from some people who haven't shared yet. Do any of you have questions or thoughts?*
- If someone says something problematic, you can ask the group *What it felt like to hear that?* A likely participant will likely name the harm to address it.
- Responding to complex, complicated questions.
  - These conversations likely involve people discussing stereotypes, misconceptions, and interpretations about the event/film. Fact sheets can provide helpful, vetted information that will provide data for responses. Additional strategies include:
    - Pose the question to the group. As a facilitator, you do not need to be, nor should you be, the arbitrator of knowledge. Allow the group and the individual asking the question to answer it themselves.
    - If you'd like to respond, you can speak from personal experience. For example, *I believe \_\_\_.*

## IV. PRAYER/ INVOCATION ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONS OR OTHER IDENTITY-BASED GROUPS

There are several ways for people to share their religious traditions or culture to set the environment for the conversation. Consider:

- Opening the conversation with a land acknowledgment.
- Allowing volunteers to share words of greeting from civilization, their house of worship, or belief system.
- Asking people to take a moment of silence together as a group.

## V. DEBRIEF THE CONVERSATION

After courageous and difficult conversations, it is essential to reflect on the intention and impacts of the event. Debriefs allow participants to synthesize learnings, offer feedback, and continue processing reflections from the space.

Some questions to consider including in your debrief evaluations might be:

### 1 Logistics and Accessibility

- Location
- Date
- Format
- Language
- Support
- Accessibility issues that arise

### 2 Resources referenced

- Fact sheets or questions used

### 3 Participant experience

- What one takeaway is participants leaving the conversation with?
- What is something participants want to know more about or wish more space had been given to in this conversation?
- Did participants share how this conversation has affected their thinking about or engaging with this topic?
- Do participants plan to take any actions as a result of this event?
- Were there any difficult moments?
- What moments felt essential and/or meaningful in this discussion?

# THANK YOU

Thank you for screening the film and participating in the impact campaign!

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