



THE **UNMUTED** COMPANION

# WHITELISTED

BY CHISA HUTCHINSON

A WORLD PREMIERE

SPONSORED BY NANCY & CARY FELDMAN

## **UNMUTED COMPANION**

for *Whitelisted* by Chisa Hutchinson

CREATED BY YUNINA BARBOUR-PAYNE, DRAMATURG

**THE UNMUTED COMPANION** is a dramaturgical component designed to enhance your **CATFUNMUTED** experience. We've designed the UC Volumes to act as counterparts to the six BOLD, NEW PLAYS, in this year's digital experience. You can sample, survey, or study these online offerings—with no fear of spoilers!

Each companion will give you—

- A sneak peek into the 2021 Season
- An introduction to the creative teams
- An exploration of the world of the plays
- A deep-dive into the new play process

Come and join us as we **thinktheater** and **talktheater**.

We promise not to “give you all the 2021 goodies”—just enough to make you eager for more.

## A LETTER FROM ED HERENDEEN

**Can you imagine a world without LIVE theater?** The theater is an art form performed by living artists witnessed by a live audience in the very specific HERE and NOW. The artists and the spectators come together in communion and perfect harmony with each other in the same moment. Somewhere during this sacred moment, the spectator's consciousness is awakened and enlightened. Together this community of audience members becomes one with the artists on stage. Live theater is an awesome experience. Live theater is urgent and simply indispensable. The energy created in a live performance can change lives. The power emanating from a live work of art is SPELLBINDING!

**So I ask you: Can you imagine a world without live theater?**

It is impossible for me to imagine a world without live theater. I miss casting and callbacks. I miss face to face, in-person collaborations with designers. I miss the back and forth, lively discussions of production meetings. I miss finding creative solutions to the budget challenges. Most of all, I miss the rehearsal room and the rehearsal process: that first Company Read Thru, those inspirational "break-thru" and "AHA" moments, sitting next to the living playwright...listening to their every breath as they respond in the moment.

Yes, I miss rehearsal. And I miss the audience – our ultimate collaborator and partner in producing and developing new work.

**I cannot imagine a world without live theater.**

I would miss the risks, the challenges, the emotions, the thrill and excitement of transporting a living audience to those special places...sacred places that only exist in the imagination.

Live theater, live storytelling provokes philosophical and political ideas. Ever since the Greeks invented drama on stage, the theater has shaped, stimulated, provoked, and entertained humans.

Yes, I miss live theater. BUT - we want to connect with you NOW! We cannot wait. We want to share our creative process with you NOW! **We are CATFUNMUTED!**

This digital - **UNMUTED EXPERIENCE** is an exciting prelude of what is to come in our 2021 Theater Festival. Our next season begins here! An innovative online experience that begins the process of creating the future of LIVE contemporary theater next summer in our beloved SHEPHERDSTOWN, WEST VIRGINIA.

I am honored to introduce you to six contemporary playwrights. Artists that have the extraordinary ability to converse with the voices of the past: Terence Anthony does this in *The House of the Negro Insane*. His historical play confronts oppression, incarceration, and human rights. Jacqueline Goldfinger and Victor Lesniewski imagine the voices of the future in their plays *Babel* and *The Fifth Domain*. Their plays warn us about government control, abuse of power, and cybersecurity. Kevin Artigue, Chisa Hutchinson, and Caridad Svich imagine the pain and the horror of our fragile present in their plays: *Sheepdog*, *Whitelisted*, and *Ushuaia Blue*. Plays truly set in the present...in the here and now... that hold us accountable for racism, gentrification, greed, and climate grief.

Yes, this is a prelude of a new repertory of six new plays that listens to the past, examines the present, and imagines an uncertain future.

Yes, I can imagine sharing our **UNMUTED EXPERIENCE** with you. This digital repertory invites you to escape and engage by surrounding yourself with new works that deserve your attention...new work that is **alive** and **dynamic**...the **heart** and **soul** of what makes the **Contemporary American Theater Festival** compelling and necessary - right now and forever.



Ed Herendeen  
Founder & Producing Director

## INTRODUCTION TO THE VOLUME

Chisa Hutchinson's *Whitelisted* is a modern-day horror drama set in New York City and in the Bed-Stuy neighborhood.

Exploring the topics of health, homelessness, race relations, gentrification, and motherhood, we find ourselves on the second floor in the newly renovated brownstone of young professional Rebecca Burgess. Rebecca is an artisan specializing in custom handmade dollhouses. She has recently moved into a neighborhood formerly occupied by predominantly Black and Brown residents.

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## DEEP DIVE INTO THE SCENE

### PLAY SETTING

In the height of social media, #hashtagging, and the new age of Instagram - this play takes place in 2018 Bed-Stuy Brooklyn.

### INTRODUCTION TO THE SCENE

In the opening scene, we peer into the comfortable life of Rebecca Burgess. We find her mid-monologue, practicing her culinary skills and on the phone with one of her BFFs from work. In this scene we will hear playwright Chisa Hutchinson read the stage directions to highlight the action.

As you hear the conversation between Rebecca and her BFF on the other end on the phone, relationship and place become central themes in their conversation. We notice the colloquialisms as Rebecca throws around "bitch" amid her fascination with Indian spices.

### EXCERPT FROM THE SCRIPT

*Scene 2 - And there's the owner, REBECCA BURGESS, in all her gentrifying glory. Presently, she's in the kitchen looking for something on an elaborate looking spice-rack and talking on her cell. A pot simmers on the stove.*

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## FEATURED TECHNICAL ELEMENT: SPECIAL EFFECTS

Later in the first scene as Rebecca becomes distracted from the meal that is cooking on the stove, the pan sets ablaze. This theater-craft moment and more are sprinkled through the drama of *Whitelisted*, adding to its horror and mapping out story arcs of the production, through a series of surprises.

Special effects have a long history in live theater, dating as far back as 17th century. Used to enhance audience experience, dramatic special effects today are observed across a wide array of performance genres. Theater technicians are primarily responsible for the research, development, and invention is theatrical effects. Sound designers, lighting designers, and scenic designers work in collaboration to create special effects on stage. In *Whitelisted*, special effects, such as the fire on the stove, are accomplished with that theater magic. Theatrical effects can include the appearance of water on stage, moving chandeliers, fog, smoke or haze, trap doors, and suspension.

Achieving the illusion that a pan has been set aflame onstage, in Act 1 Scene 2 of *Whitelisted*, may be developed through stage pyrotechnics. Pyrotechnics consist of flame projectors, photo flash, smoke, light, and material and color manipulation that are utilized by technicians, in order to simulate the appearance of fire onstage.

CONSULTED SOURCES: [Theatre Crafts](#) • [Theatre Effects](#)

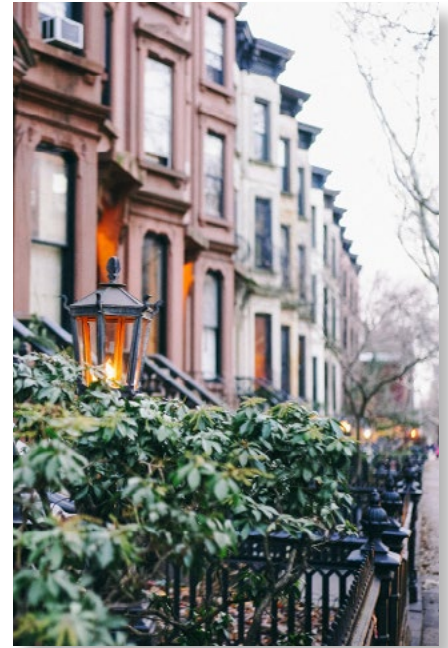


PHOTO BY JOSH WILBURNE ON UNSPLASH

## CONVERSATIONS WITH THE CREATIVES

In a conversation with **Playwright Chisa Hutchinson** and **Director Jade King Carroll**, both artists state that their first shared experience of the play was at a New Dramatists Workshop in New York City. An excerpt from an interview, conducted by Dramaturg Yunina Barbour-Payne is below:

*YBP: What is your relationship with the play, having heard and read it for the first time in New York?*

JKC: It felt very honest for me. I didn't think too deeply about it because, the story felt very familiar and personal. It just felt like the honest place for it to be. I never questioned it. I accepted it immediately. One of the things I love that Chisa does exquisitely is setting up that very distinctive place of where we are, the world in which we are. I remember when I first started working with Chisa, I said "I am not going to have anything to do because she's described every stage direction!" Which is not the case, because it is so beautifully written. Not just the language, but the fabric of the world.

To me, Brooklyn really is a character in this play. The street is a character in the play. The building is the main character. The house is really the bones of the story - the bones of the architecture, of how we take old bones and disregard them. That's such a significant part. I was immediately there, from the name conversation on the phone, to Rebecca calling her friend "bitch." I knew exactly what the apartment looked like, where it was in Brooklyn, and even if I didn't have the name of the street. Simply accepted.

*YBP: Why New York for this play?*

CH: Technically I was born in New York.

And my dad and I spent the first couple of years of my life in New York. I went away and wound up sort of New York adjacent then, and I moved in with a friend who wound up being my ma and lived with her in Newark, NJ, and I would visit my dad who still lived in Queens. I wound up traveling to see my dad every fourth and eighth weekend and every time I would be like "look at those brownstones, man yay! I want one. I want to live in one of those one day" - and bonus if there were lights on inside these people's homes. I am nose-y. I am very interested in people. I want to see what's on your wall, what books are on your shelf, what lighting fixtures do you have up there? You know, I want to know what's going on. What color did you paint the wall?

I always been very interested in New York architecture, sure. But then also the social status of owning a place and being able to live in a very expensive place like New York. So, Manhattan is of course is the peak that. Who can afford to live in New York City anymore? And Brooklyn, which used to be the more affordable option, is suddenly becoming the new Manhattan in a way - I find kind of disturbing, because the people who came up in Brooklyn can't even afford to live in a brownstone there. Yeah, I just wanted to speak with that in the play and who has access to those spaces. And how neighborhoods

## The Creative Team

DIRECTOR  
**JADE KING CARROLL**

SCENIC DESIGN  
**DAVID M. BARBER**

LIGHTING DESIGN  
**D.M. WOOD**

SOUND DESIGN  
**VICTORIA DEIORIO**

COSTUME DESIGN  
**SHANE BALLARD**

are changing because of the limited access.

*YBP: What do you, as the playwright, want the audience to know about the inspiration for this play?*

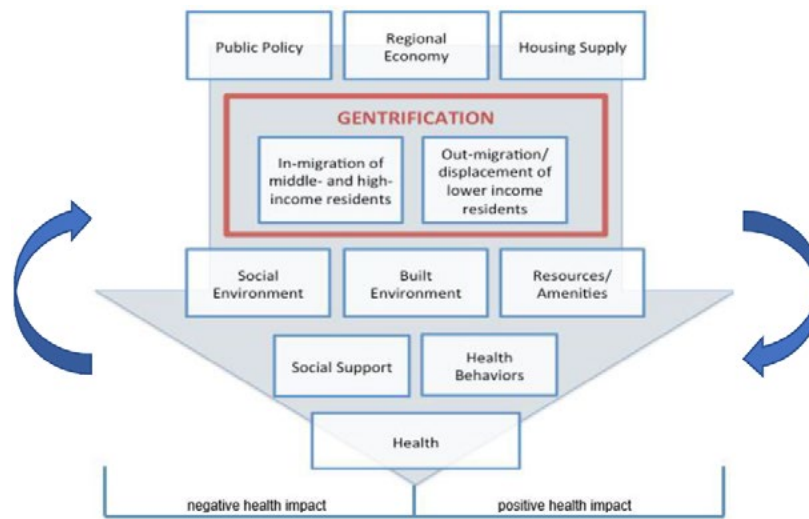
CH: I really wanted to express my personal impulse to get revenge and retribution in the most grotesque manner possible because - I'm kind over the forgiveness narrative and "let's just all understand each other." Right now I am pissed and I wanted a way to express that reality. It's an adequate container for the anger that I am feeling right now. I needed something bigger, something larger than life. And something that will make an audience experience it on a visceral level - what it means to feel haunted. To feel unsafe and to feel like you have lost control a little bit... Or a lot a bit. And try to arrive at some sort of empathy through that channel.

# Process of Gentrification



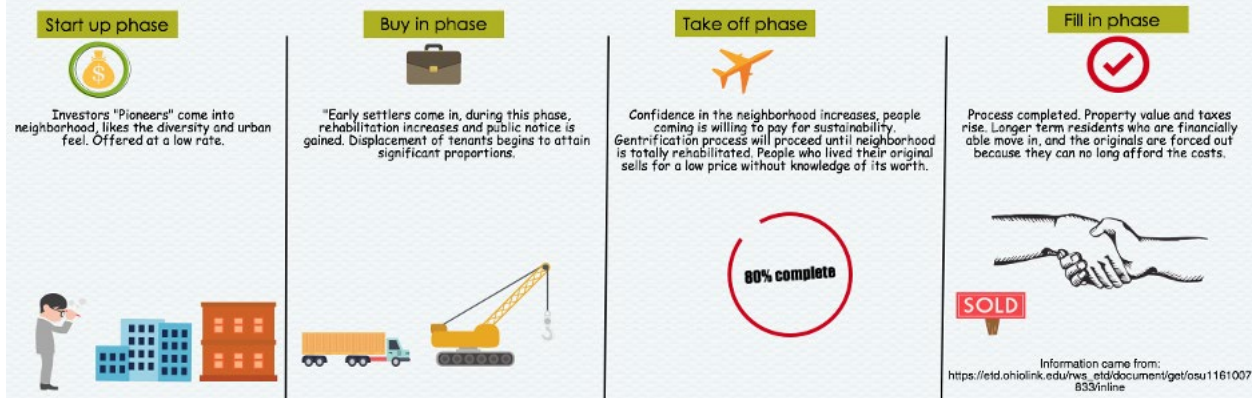
	Early Stage	Mid Stage	Late Stage
Where	Near CBD, High Income Areas, Amenities, Historic Sig.	Same	Same
Gentrifiers	Artists, Students, Counterculture, Single Parents	Yuppies Dinks	Elite Cosmopolites
Gentrified	"Original" Residents, Lower and Working Classes	More "originals" and marginal gentrifiers	Affluent—Originals and marginals can't afford to live here
Gatekeepers	Banks, Mortgage Companies, Police	Architects, Police, Planners, Developers	Residents themselves

Retrieved from [Dealing with Gentrification](#)



Retrieved from MDPI

## Steps to Gentrification



Information came from: [https://etd.ohiolink.edu/ws\\_etd/document/get/osu1161007B33vonline](https://etd.ohiolink.edu/ws_etd/document/get/osu1161007B33vonline)

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Retrieved from [Solution to Unite](#)

## KEEP THE CONVO GOING

- How should community members respond when their neighborhood is changed by outsiders?
- What should be the actions, attitudes, or behaviors of new members of a community?
- In your opinion, what are the pros and cons of gentrification?

## LEARN MORE!

### NEWS

- [Take a Dive Into the life of Brooklyn's Mega Developer William Reynolds with a Virtual Tour](#)
- [For People of Color, gentrification is more a curse than a blessing](#)

### SCHOLARLY ARTICLES

- ["The Process of Gentrification in New York City"](#)
- ["From frying Pan to the Oven: Gentrification and the Experience of Industrial Displacement in Williamsburg, Brooklyn"](#)
- [Stop blaming the hipsters: Here's how gentrification really happens](#)
- [Postrecession Gentrification in New York City](#)
- [Bronx Community College: Gentrification New York Stories: Gentrification Conference](#)
- [The Transition of Greens Point](#)

### FILM

- [There Goes the Neighborhood](#)
- [Overview of the Crisis of Gentrification in Black America](#)

- [KCET: The Problem with the Second Phase of Gentrification](#)
- [Crowd.dna: The Neighborhoods Project](#)

### WEBSITES

- [Brooklyn Anti-Gentrification Network](#)
- [Center for Disease Control- Health Effects of Gentrification](#)

### SCHOLARLY TEXTS

#### GENTRIFICATION AND HOMELESSNESS

- [Kasinitz, Philip. "Gentrification and homelessness." \*Housing the homeless\* 17 \(1986\): 241.](#)
- [Dooling, Sarah. "Ecological gentrification: A research agenda exploring justice in the city." \*International Journal of Urban and Regional Research\* 33.3 \(2009\): 621-639.](#)

#### GENTRIFICATION AND MENTAL HEALTH

- [Gibbons, Joseph, and Michael S. Barton. "The association of minority self-rated health with black versus white gentrification." \*Journal of urban health\* 93.6 \(2016\): 909-922.](#)

**Gentrification:** the process of altering a neighborhood or community for the purpose of renovating the physical environment. Often driven by economic expansion, policy, and urban renewal, this process usually involves taking properties and transforming them into renovated spaces that increase property values and attract more affluent community members. As a consequence of this renovation process, many lower income residents may be pushed out of the communities due to rising cost of living and property expenses.

In *Whitelisted*, Rebecca Burgess is described by Playwright Chisa Hutchinson as a living in all her "gentrifying glory." For a quick glance at gentrification process and how it changes neighborhoods and communities, refer to the charts on page 6.

**Scenic Design:** the aspect of design that is focused on conveying the world of a play through physical elements of the play's setting. The scenic designer is responsible for creating buildings, furniture, and walls that reflect the makeup of a play's spatial relationships. The design may be a literal interpretation of place, a naturalistic reflection or - it could be a more figurative presentation of place that reflects the theme and ideas of a play. The scenic designer will likely collaborate with the director and design team to convey what the play requires of the place, time, tone, and setting of the story.

**Lighting Designer:** The lighting designer is responsible for conveying the tone, mood, and focus of the play through elements of visual technology. Actors, directors, and audiences may make strong decisions and inferences that may be influenced by the light color, intensity, focus, and area.

**Pyrotechnics:** a theater craft that is used to create the illusion of fire in live performance. Pyrotechnic compositions may incorporate a wide range of fire effects including explosions, flames, or smoke.