

PITCH DECK: ETHNICITY

A Play in Three Acts by Bernard Mersier

1. LOGLINE

Ethnicity is a raw, unflinching exploration of racial tension, identity, and the human cost of prejudice, told through interconnected stories of love, violence, and redemption in a fractured urban landscape.

2. SYNOPSIS

Ethnicity weaves together the lives of characters from diverse backgrounds—immigrants, racists, lovers, and survivors—as they grapple with the weight of their biases, the consequences of their actions, and the possibility of change. The play unfolds in three acts, each escalating the stakes:

- **Act I** introduces the characters and their conflicts: a father-son immigrant duo, a racist busboy, a violent street altercation, and a mother's bigotry tearing her family apart.
- **Act II** deepens the tensions: a gas station confrontation, a racist's comeuppance, a mother's fear for her daughter's interracial relationship, and a tragic act of violence.
- **Act III** forces reckoning: a son's suicide, a survivor's guilt, and a glimmer of hope as a reformed racist bonds with his brother over shared music.

The play asks: *Can empathy overcome hatred? Can love survive prejudice? And what does it cost to hold onto bias?*

3. CHARACTER BREAKDOWN

Main Characters

Benny, 19, Middle Eastern, Son of Samir; manages his father's gas station. Pragmatic, brave, and weary of racial stereotypes.

Samir, 50s, Middle Eastern, Benny's father; immigrant who built a life in America. Proud, hardworking, and protective.

Kyle, 20s, White, In love with Maria; struggles with his mother's racism. Idealistic, passionate, and ultimately broken.

Maria, 20s, Black, Kyle's girlfriend; confident, loving, and tragically murdered.

Elizabeth, 40s, White, Kyle's mother; virulently racist. Cold, domineering, and unyielding.

Ryan, 40s, White, Kyle's father secretly regrets losing a past Black lover. Reflective and weary.

Matthew, 20s, White, Racist busboy; learns empathy through violence. Arrogant, then humbled.

Timothy, Teens, White, Matthew's nephew; curious and impressionable.

Ricky, 30s, Black, Violent, racist against non-Blacks. Charismatic but self-destructive.

Hubert, 30s, Black, Ricky's friend; conflicted, ultimately remorseful.

Clarence, 40s, Black, Sheriff; calm, authoritative, and unyielding in the face of racism.

Supporting Characters

- **Will**: Black, aggressive, and predatory; murders Maria.
 - **Gang Leader**: Black, young, and reckless; tests Benny's resolve.
 - **Homeless Man**: Struggling with addiction; humanizes Benny's compassion.
 - **Female Officer**: Black, disillusioned, and blunt.
 - **Chaldean Doctor**: Middle Eastern; silent victim of Hubert's racism.
 - **Male Officer**: White, calm.
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4. STAGE SETTING

Key Locations

- **Gas Station**: Benny's workplace; bulletproof glass, cash register, shelves, and a counter. *Props*: shotgun, cigarettes, coffee, water bottle.
- **Retro Living Room**: Elizabeth and Ryan's home; 1970s decor, floral wallpaper, avocado-green appliances. *Props*: cake, coffee, family photos.
- **Hospital Room**: Hubert's recovery; sterile, with a bed, IV, and bandages. *Props*: medical charts, handcuffs.
- **Bedroom**: Kyle's room; cluttered, with a laptop, bloody clothes, and a pocket knife.
- **Liquor Store**: Shelves of alcohol, chips, and a counter. *Props*: wine, liquor bottles, chips.
- **Restaurant**: Upscale; tables, chairs, and a menu. *Props*: glassware, napkins, sheriff's badge.

Lighting & Sound

- **Lighting**: Harsh fluorescents for the gas station; warm, dim lighting for homes; clinical whites for the hospital.
 - **Sound**: Rap music, police sirens, gunshots, and ambient city noise.
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5. PROPS LIST

Scene

Props

Act I, Scene 1

Laptop, water bottle, keys, cedar-scented vase, blinds.

Act I, Scene 2

TV, rap video, busboy uniform, backwards cap, jersey.

Act I, Scene 3

Liquor bottles, chips, bloodied clothes, knife.

Act I, Scene 4

Cake, coffee, retro dress, family photos.

Act I, Scene 5

Handcuffs, case file, coffee cup, tattoos (costume).

Act II, Scene 1

Bulletproof glass, shotgun, cigarettes, cash register, pop can.

Act II, Scene 2

Vanity, comb, chips, pops, knife.

Act II, Scene 3

Sheriff's badge, glassware, menu, handcuffs.

Act II, Scene 4

Vanity, comb, chips, pops.

Act II, Scene 5

Coffee, phone, spilled coffee.

Act II, Scene 6

Liquor bottles, cigarettes, car, gas pump, nine-millimeter gun.

Act II, Scene 7

Cell bars, pocket knife, bloody clothes.

Act III, Scene 1

Laptop, pocket knife, bloody clothes, store counter, chips, pops.

Act III, Scene 2

Gas pump, shotgun, cigarettes, nine-millimeter gun, spilled gas.

Act III, Scene 3

Laptop, pocket knife, family photos, bloody clothes.

Act III, Scene 4

Hospital bed, bandages, medical charts, handcuffs, sheriff's badge.

Act III, Scene 5

TV, rap video, bruises (makeup), backwards cap.

6. THEMES & TONE

- **Themes:** Racism, identity, love vs. hate, redemption, the cost of prejudice.
- **Tone:** Gritty, urgent, and emotionally raw, with moments of dark humor and tragic irony.

7. WHY THIS PLAY?

Ethnicity is a timely, provocative work that challenges audiences to confront their own biases. Its interconnected stories and morally complex characters make it ideal for:

- **Theatre companies** seeking bold, socially relevant productions.
- **Educational institutions** exploring themes of race, identity, and empathy.
- **Audiences** ready for an unflinching, thought-provoking experience.