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*University of Texas-Pan American*

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SET AND LIGHT DESIGN FOR *CON MIS MANOS/WITH MY HANDS*

A PLAY IN TWO ACTS

BY MISAEL MARTINEZ

A Thesis

by

LAWRENCE ANDREW LOPEZ

Submitted to the Graduate School of the  
University of Texas-Pan American  
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

December 2009

Major Subject: Theatre

SET AND LIGHT DESIGN FOR *CON MIS MANOS/WITH MY HANDS*

A PLAY IN TWO ACTS

BY MISAEL MARTINEZ

A Thesis  
by  
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December 2009

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## ABSTRACT

Lopez, Lawrence Andrew, Set and Light Design for Con Mis Manos/With My Hands A Play in Two Acts By Misael Martinez. Master of Arts (MA), December, 2009, 263 pp, 8 appendices.

An examination and analysis of the process of creating and executing a set and light design for a new show in a new space. This thesis will delve into the problems and solutions that helped to create the set for *Con Mis Manos/With My Hands*, a play by Misael Martinez, for production in the Albert L. Jeffers Theatre at the University of Texas-Pan American.

## DEDICATION

Completion of this Master's Thesis is dedicated to my wife, Catherine, my daughter, Hero, and to my undergraduate mentor who inspired my love of technical theatre and design, Tim Francis. I also wish to thank my parents-in-law, Johnny and Diana Lopez for watching Hero for innumerable hours while I was stuck in the theatre. Thank you all for your love and support through this difficult process.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank all of the students and faculty members who worked on *Con Mis Manos/With My Hands* without whose hard work the production would not have been realized as magnificently as it was. I extend special thanks to Mr. Tom Grabowski, who guided me through the design process, Mike Salazar, who spent far more hours working on this show than was healthy, and Misael Martinez, author of the play.

I wish to extend specific thanks to Mr. Tom Grabowski for extensive hours spent helping with my show while he was dealing with extracurricular issues. Also, I would like to thank him for the use of a bench seat out of his van for one of the set pieces. Without that seat we would have had far more work than we did.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Borders have always fascinated people. The place where two things intersect is never clear and defined, like a line on a map, but is much more like the colors in a rainbow, distinct but still melding together. All along the Rio Grande in Texas there exists a border between countries and between cultures. Nowhere else in the United States has American culture blended in such a way with that of Mexico; a narrow section extending from Reynosa to Piedras Negras, on our side Brownsville to Eagle Pass, experiences a strange conglomeration of people, cultures and traditions. The Rio Grande Valley is a unique setting for a play; while other playwrights have written stories about life on the border, few if any have captured the essence of what it means to be Hispanic in the Valley. To understand fully the nuances and subtleties, one would have to have grown up here.

*Con Mis Manos/With My Hands* tells the story of the Gutierrez family, Esteban and his wife Josephina with their two kids David and Jessica, dealing emotionally with Josephina's recently-diagnosed brain cancer. The family struggles as Esteban attempts to hide behind celebration after celebration before he is forced to confront the fact of his wife's imminent death by Sulema, his sister in law, and ultimately Josephina. When Josephina does die, Esteban curls into himself and loses interest in living, only to be

rescued from depression by David. This story is not unique, but the setting and players are. My primary goal in working on getting this show produced is to honestly portray the unique culture of the Valley for people who are not residents. Theatre is a unique place for people to gather and reinforce their cultural identity, and this play could provide that.

In order to create theatre that portrays Valley culture in an honest and valuable way, I have chosen to involve myself in creating *Con Mis Manos* for production on the Albert L. Jeffers Theatre stage for Pan American Summer Stock Theatre 2009. PASS is the production arm of UTPA's Summer Theatre Workshop. Students who enroll in PASS provide the build staff and perform the productions presented. PASS occurs over five weeks, and in 2009 produced two shows. The students enrolled take on all roles within the production schedule, from construction crew to running the lights and sound for the two productions. This year, *Con Mis Manos* was the first production to open, giving us approximately four weeks to rehearse the show, build the set and practice the technical parts of the show. I have chosen to design the set and lights for this show, both of which present some opportunities to overcome obstacles. First, the timeframe of the show requires designing and creating the set and lights in time for the opening on July 2<sup>nd</sup>. Second is the Jeffers itself. This theatre is a thrust stage with stadium style seating; in other words the seats surround three sides of the stage which is at floor level. In addition, the stage is not symmetrical along center line. The proscenium is offset the width of a cinderblock across the plaster line due to a construction error that was never fixed. Working with the asymmetry is not hard, but it does factor into any measurements made during the design phase. All things considered, the job of creating a set and light design would be a significant challenge.

The creation of a set depends on several factors all coming together in anywhere from two weeks to two months, depending on the complexity and rehearsal length. In the case of *Con Mis Manos* I was working under a deadline of four weeks with a set design completed in a similar amount of time. Starting the design required reading the play five or six times, in order to fully analyze the development of the plot and requirements of the action. A number of problems needed to be solved in order to successfully create a set for this show on a thrust style stage. First, and most difficult, the play is written as a series of interconnected scenes set in different locations. This leads to a disjointed, cinematic feel to the play which makes scene changes, costume changes and set dressings more challenging than with a more traditionally-scripted play. Second, I had to create a working set, requiring multiple set changes, on a fairly small stage. Solving these and other problems to be discussed later resulted in a set design that used the focus of the family, the back yard, as a permanent set while the other scenes are defined with as few pieces of furniture as possible. The permanent parts of the set, the house and patio, were allowed to shatter towards the edges, petering off into darkness in such a way as to suggest the emotional fracturing of the family as their anchor is taken from them.

The construction process developed over a three week period from a two dimensional tape layout through to getting the full set up and ready to go. Laying the ground plan was a several hour process in which the measurements from the design were carefully transcribed to the stage, and then linked with tape in a huge game of connect-the-dots. Once the tape was laid out we mixed paint for the process of creating a floor texture. Walls were slightly delayed by the lengthy process of painting the floor; a series of five or six layers of paint followed by sealing the floor to prevent the paint from being



pulled up by mopping or scraped off by lazy feet. The floor paint was laid in two sections, one as a concrete deck layered with dabs, drips and spatters of several colors to simulate an exterior slab after years of wear and tear. The rest of the stage was a scumble of greens and browns with several layers of sprayed texture in the same greens and browns with some blue and yellow thrown in. All of this paint was then followed by a layer of sealant. While the floor was in process the walls got a similar treatment, with both rag rolling and sprayed texture in a warm cream color. This color was chosen because it would pick up the lights and reflect the changing moods. Paint on the floor was followed by the fence and walls being erected and the roof installed. The roof was slightly delayed by a late night of painting and texturing shingles cut from 1/8" plywood. Along the way paint colors were altered, trim covered seams between walls and masking was added. The last details pulled the set together and created a canvas to paint with lights.

The lighting of the set required not only understanding the emotional nuances of the show in order to reinforce them, but also learning the lighting system of the Jeffers theatre. I started with warm ambers to bring out the color of a Valley sunset, and then contrasted them with cool blues and purples. I tried to achieve both the clinical coolness of fluorescent lighting as well as a good contrast to the amber/yellow in pale blue/white. These two washes, combined with various patterns, color breakups and Christmas lights on the roof of the house set allowed the subtle manipulation of the mood of each scene, from warm and inviting, to cold and tense with a simple cross fade. Areas of light were used to define the locations of the show. Light pools emphasized the connection that the family has both to each other and to the house as a center of their lives. The nature of

lighting a thrust stage makes it very difficult to completely isolate light pools, leaving the rest of the stage in darkness, because light reflects off of so many surfaces. The house, because of reflected light, is always somewhat visible and thus is always present to some degree in both the character's actions and in the audience's mind. This fact allowed the development of light design that would reinforce that presence, cementing the image of the house and therefore illustrating the fact that the home and family are always central in the mind of these characters.

The set and lights worked together to reinforce the action of the script, as well as to provide different commentary on the emotional content. The set should be more than background and lights should provide more than illumination for the actors; instead the actors should be able to perform in and work with a well designed set as if it were simply another character. The lights should do more than illuminate; they should also reinforce the emotional drive of the play. The lights should help the audience understand the underlying feelings that are not broadcast. For *Con Mis Manos* the set functions both as a location, and as a permanent reminder of the center of the family. The set also frayed around the edges, reinforcing the sense of disintegration that the family feels as Josephina slowly succumbs to her illness. The lights reinforced the emotional tension, changing color and direction to reveal the undercurrents of emotion. For example, in the cafeteria scene from Act I, cool light and isolation brought out the turmoil of emotion that David and Jessica feel while they wait for news about their mother. When Hector comes in, the lights warmed up and expanded the light pool, releasing some of the pressure as Hector relieves some of the pressure on David and Jessica with news and jokes. This is only one

of many places where lights, set and actors work together to suggest the emotional content of the scene, bringing the audience along.

The first sketches for the set put a wall filling the proscenium, with hinged sections to provide a route for furniture to move on and off the set. During the refining process, and while thinking about the sheer number of set changes called for, I managed to catch a bit of *The Old Matador* from October 2005 production tape showing on the lobby televisions. The set had a house exterior on stage right, with a chicken coop stage left and most of the action took place downstage of the set. This set gave me the idea of pulling the house to one side of the stage, thus allowing for furniture to move freely from backstage while still maintaining the set and playing areas for the action of the play. This design would also take advantage of the asymmetry of the stage. The upstage-left corner is the strongest playing position, further reinforcing the homes role as anchor for the family.

My primary goal with this play is to provide a set that will support the action of the show as well as enabling the actors and stagehands in performing their very necessary tasks. In addition to these goals, I aimed to make the set aesthetically appropriate and pleasing to the eye. The set from *The Old Matador* provides the basic layout plan, modified to serve *Con Mis Manos*; a layout that emphasizes the choreography of the scene changes. Next, to find inspiration for the look of the set; I took drives through the communities around the Rio Grande Valley, looking at houses and other buildings to gain some understanding of the architectural decisions, as well as cultural influences and the ever-elusive flavor of this area.

I am in a unique position of staging this show on a thrust for the first time, without having seen pictures of the Texas State University-San Marcos production, which was staged on a proscenium theatre with significantly different choices made in set and lights.<sup>1</sup> Research indicates a certain feel that the outside of houses get in the Valley, a dusty wear that comes from long hours of intense heat and humidity combined with less-than-excellent construction techniques. Another frequent feature of Valley homes is a tendency towards do-it-yourself repairs of dubious quality due to lack of the appropriate knowledge. My first response then was to try to capture the essence of self reliance due to a combination of pride and finances. Esteban chooses to perform repairs himself--even if he doesn't necessarily know what he's doing--because of his machismo and pride. He believes that the fix will be better, and definitely cheaper, then hiring a professional. To capture this attitude, I moved my palette more into creams and other readily available colors, and tried to achieve a flow to the set that would indicate Esteban's hands at work. Small additions to the set emphasized the do-it-yourself method, from paint on the screen door to the slightly-wrinkled screen in the window.

The subtleties of the set are lost without appropriate lighting; however, lighting has an in-built delay when designing a set. Lights require a much shorter time frame to set up, and cannot be focused properly without the major structures of the set in place. It also helps when lighting a set to have the basic color palette of the set already in place so that the gel colors can be properly harmonized. When the set was mostly finished, the development of the light design began. First the emotional flow of the show was analyzed; in other words where the tension is built up, and where it plateaus in order to

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<sup>1</sup> Production photos available at <http://www.theatreanddance.txstate.edu/productions/archives/2004-2005/manos.html>

follow that flow with the lights. *Con Mis Manos* follows a fairly traditional short series of arcs leading up to the major climax in scene eight of Act II. The design followed this flow with color and intensity changes; shifts from warmer to cooler colors, and relative low intensity to high changed the way the audience perceived the stage. Cool colors and high, harsh intensity increases the tension, while warmer colors combined with lower intensity relieve the tension. In addition, the size of the area lit either increased or decreased the tension of the scene; larger pools allow for more movement and therefore less tension. This is wonderfully illustrated in Act II, scene 8 where the light pool seems to cover a significant portion of the stage, in fact it covered about a third of the area, but at the same time more than half of the stage is in darkness, and the actors are forced to perform in a small space, pressurizing the fight to an explosive finish. Lights are not separate from the set, but an extension thereof, both echoing and enhancing the performance of the actors without overpowering them.

Now that we have examined the process of the two parts of the design, let us examine the details. We will closely examine all of the artistic decisions made, along with lessons learned and discoveries that created a working set and lights along with a learning experience for the actors, director and designer.

## CHAPTER II

### SET

Having taken a cursory look at the practicalities of building a set, we must now examine the realities, the artistic discoveries, and especially some of the re-designs that were made. It's important to examine every facet, especially those places where problems were encountered in order to learn from them; thus I will not ignore any part of the process.

#### Starting Process

##### Inspiration

The inspiration for a painting can come from just about anything, but the inspiration for a set is usually grounded in reality. *Con Mis Manos/With My Hands* is heavily episodic, and the way the playwright scripted the scenes calls for a more ephemeral set design that allows for frequent set changes. Because of this need for frequent scene changes that do not interrupt the narrative, I focused more on finding the impression rather than the reality of a house and back yard. While traveling around the Edinburg and McAllen area to look at houses much of what I saw led to a slightly run down, but at the same time well-loved appearance to the house. The lawns of houses also brought inspiration in the generally yellow-green color and patchy pattern. I also used

images from the internet<sup>2</sup> to try to find the essence of the Rio Grande Valley home, along with color, sound and atmosphere for other locations needed in the show. Investigation plus inspiration then leads to beginning the development of the set.

### Collaboration

No production can happen without the interaction of a group of people who are willing to work as a group to accomplish something great, the creation and performance of a play. My work on *Con Mis Manos/With My Hands* brought me into a circle of artists all working toward that end. In this section I will discuss the process of collaborative creation as well as my experiences working with the director and the playwright in the creation of the production.

The relationship between a director and a designer is unique in the process of a production because of the intimate quality of the work that they both do. My set would be very pretty to look at, but ultimately useless without a cast of actors to perform the play. In this section I will explore my working relationship with the director.

Working with Emily Ruby Fierros on *Con Mis Manos* gave me the opportunity to watch a director from the unique position of designer. Ruby and I have similar experiences working in theatre, but this was our first opportunity to work together as colleagues producing a show. The most valuable part of this experience for me is that I have now become more familiar with the process of working with another artist, as well as Ruby's artistic style.

I believe that the hardest part of any artistic collaboration is learning to shut up and allow the other artists the freedom to experiment, and if necessary, make mistakes. All of the mistakes that I made during the design process made my design stronger as I

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix D for research images.

fixed said mistakes. I had to choose to stay silent and allow Ruby to find her own path to the ultimate expression of the action of the show on her own. I offered advice when it was solicited, but in the end, Ruby had to make the hard choices.

Friendship before the start of the production is always helpful because the two of you will be spending long hours together working out the details of the show. It also helps if you can be honest with the director, especially in those situations where he or she might be about to make a mistake and comes to you for advice. Give them your honest opinion and then let them make their choice, whatever that choice is.

Working directly with the creative mind behind the text of a play is a valuable experience for any designer or director as there are fewer opportunities for misinterpretation. Misael Martinez was able, while watching rehearsals and observing construction, to offer small bits of direction that helped us to capture his vision on stage more accurately, while still expressing our own interpretation of what the play needed. In addition to direct artistic input from the playwright we were also able to have immediate response on any script changes that we might find necessary.

### Preliminaries

The creative process for anyone, designer director or playwright, is based on the sum of his or her experiences. *Con Mis Manos* as a text developed out of Misael's personal experiences with the culture of the Rio Grande Valley. Ruby's direction grew out of her experiences both directing and being directed in previous shows. Just as my fellow artists were influenced by their previous experiences, the set and lights for *Con Mis Manos* grew out of my design aesthetic, influenced by a myriad of designs and historical precedents. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the art of stage design began to



change rapidly. Prior to 1915, sets were mainly reflections of the 18<sup>th</sup> century French wing and drop style. The aesthetic changes that came to be called the New Stagecraft shifted the standard toward a clean simplified stage that spoke to the text as much as the work done by the actors. Set designs by such artists as Joe Mielziner, Donald Oenslager, and Ming Cho Lee have been my primary influence in the aesthetic choices made for my designs. The New Stagecraft is grounded in the concept of conservation of expression, in other words, the elimination of unnecessary decoration. In addition, most sets under this design aesthetic have eliminated the need for accurate recreation of real world locations. This idea is reflected in the set for *Con Mis Manos* through the manipulation of space and time through lights, furniture and action on a relatively empty stage.

After collecting images and incubating ideas for a while I began to create preliminary sketches and play with ideas to solidify the design with the focus on the aesthetic of the New Stagecraft. The first few drawings were eventually discarded as insufficient to the needs of the show. Eventually, I managed to catch a small piece of a video of *The Old Matador* while waiting for a meeting and noticed the way that the designer had pushed the house to one side of the stage. This solution that would work well for *Con Mis Manos*, as it would allow for set changes to happen quickly and smoothly without the need for hinged walls or other mechanical monstrosities.

With the basic set structure figured out, it was now time to develop the drafts that the technical director and shop crew would use to create the set. First came a ground plan, the basic layout of walls, platforms and other set features that never leave the stage during the show. The furniture was placed, divided by scene, onto the stage. VectorWorks™, the drafting program used, is a powerful aid to the designer. The

program allows one to lay out a ground plan and then alter it at will. The flexibility that this feature offers allowed me to place the furniture for a scene, and then move it around and tweak the look until it seemed right. In addition, it allowed me to see what furniture could stay on stage between scenes.

Once the ground plan and furniture plan were done, the elevations were developed for the walls, roof sections, fence and other details that needed to be built. These elevations, along with the ground plan, were then delivered to the scene shop staff to begin the build. This is the point where most set designs begin to show where they are weak, and where modifications need to happen.

#### Problems to Solve

*Con Mis Manos* is a very complex show, with many scene changes that need to happen quickly. Since the Albert L. Jeffers stage has less storage space in the wings than was desirable, the first problem to solve was finding a place for all of the furniture to stay while not on stage. Shop space is limited, and there is the problem of getting furniture on stage without disturbing the set significantly. In addition, due to the design of the stage, several pieces of furniture need to come on stage from the vomitory, also called the vom, which has even less space for set pieces as it is also an audience entrance.

The first of our solutions came from the studio theatre next door to the Jeffers. We were able to store some of the bulkier furniture there, while others were stored in the prop room off the vom. With storage solved, let us turn our attention to set changes. The style of stage in the Jeffers makes complex scene changes challenging at best, impossible at worst. For *Con Mis Manos* eighteen scene changes ranging from simple to very complex and all absolutely necessary to the progress of the show presented a significant

challenge. Adapting the design was necessary to accommodate all of the set changes, as well as allowing for anything that the director decided she wanted in the show.

### Solutions

The best solutions to most of the problems was to change the fence from masking the cyclorama in an upstage location, to meeting the wall of the house further downstage with a pair of gates that would allow the passage of large furniture and other set pieces. The gates would solve the movement problem, but storage was still an issue with a sofa, bench seating and a wagon dressed as a car. The car wagon was able to stay behind the fence, but still on stage, while the bench and sofa needed other places to stay while waiting for their moment in the light. The bench which is normally in the lobby stayed there till curtain, and then was returned there after the scene. The sofa was stored in the prop storage room until needed right at the end of Act I, and then put away since it was not needed for Act II.

With most of the logistical problems solved, certain design issues needed to be tweaked. The roof needed to be worked out carefully, since it was three pieces sloping up at an angle from walls that were also at angles from one another. In addition, it was necessary to mask from audience view the backstage through all of the openings in the walls. The window would require more than a screen to be opaque enough; however it would still need a certain level of translucence in order to read as a window. This was also a problem with the screen door. Since doors open, the same solution used for the window could not be used. The door was partially solved by having a solid door behind the screen. However, this would not be enough to completely mask the backstage when it needed to be open due to the extreme sightlines. The window problem was solved with

a layer of translucent plastic behind the screen, which allowed some light through without letting the audience see what was actually behind the window. For the door, hanging a curtain from the masking walls behind the door achieved sufficient masking for the purpose of the show while allowing for easy actor access.

### Evolution of the Design

Very few set designs are able to make it from page to stage without some changes. For the most part, these changes fall into three categories, which I will use to explain the changes that happened to the design. These categories are aesthetic, practical and sympathetic. The first category encompasses changes made because the set will look better. The second covers any changes made because they would make construction or set changes easier. The last covers changes made because of a change made for one of the first two reasons, or because the designer simply felt that the set would be better for the change.

### Aesthetic Changes

The biggest aesthetic change, one that tied the set together, was changing the color of the door frame and window. I had originally painted the door and window to resemble poorly maintained wood. However the trim of the house was a warm salmon color. As one looked at the house, the door and window would stand out and not look right. In addition, Esteban is not the kind of man who would let his home fall into that kind of disrepair. In addition to the aesthetic discord introduced by the original color, it also pulled the house into a lower socio-economic class than was suggested by the text. We pulled the window and door frame out of the walls and repainted them to match the

trim and interior door. This simple change made a huge difference in the appeal of the set as a representative house.

The second change was to flip the up stage center wall upside down from its original orientation in order to put a smudge of paint up inside the eaves. The smudge came from the Hudson sprayer dripping paint while texturing the wall. Attempting to blot up the spill with a sponge made a mess of it. As it turned out, flipping the wall was unnecessary when the fence went in, because the new line of the fence would have covered the smear. This is a good example of changes that contradict each other after the fact since the wall flip was made before the fence went in.

Third, I chose to make the shingles a green blue color that complemented the blue and yellow in the floor texture rather than make them grey. The blue shingles expressed the idea of the house better than being strictly true to life. In this case, the shingles could read even though they would rarely be directly lit. The blue worked well in semi-darkness and even read well in front of the cyclorama. In addition, blue shingles are more interesting to look at than grey shingles, leading to a stronger stage presence.

### Practical Changes

One of the biggest changes was moving the fence from the upstage edge of the set, to terminating at the wall about six feet further downstage. We moved the fence so that we could store the car wagon behind the fence while it was not on stage. This supplanted a previous idea of storing the car inside the house behind a hinged wall; an idea that worked on paper, but would have been clumsy in execution. The new design allowed the car to be set and struck quickly, with a minimum of fuss between scenes 2 and 3 in Act I. This change also reflects in the previous category since it did change the

look of the set for the better. I feel that the set flowed better with the fence in the new orientation than the original concept.

The second change made for practical reasons was the addition of masking drapes backstage of the door. I added these drapes because the masking walls would not mask the upstage right corner while the front door was open. This was a design flaw to be discussed in more detail later; suffice to say that it was a problem solved through a simple change.

The next change involved moving the grill from in front of the door to down stage of the window on the edge of the patio area. This alteration allowed the actors an easier path from the front door to the car during Act I scene 1 where Esteban carries Josefina out of the house and to the car. The grill's original location was far too close to the wall of the house and blocked easy movement. The change made it much smoother and more natural. This change was made during a rehearsal by the director, but after seeing the blocking with the new location, I was happy with it and kept the change in the design.

The last change was the car wagon. The original design was a group of four chairs that would stand in for the car during the extremely brief Act I scene 2. The director was unhappy with this idea, and so we worked out the wagon. It would be easier to move, and would be able to support real car seats. This was the stronger design choice because it would allow set changes to progress faster, as well as supporting the idea of a car better. The original back seat was in two pieces with no support structure, which would have to be built. We felt that this would be more work than could get finished, especially in light of the bench seat we were able to borrow from Tom Grabowski's van. The front seats were acquired from a junk yard, along with a steering wheel which was

scrapped because it would have been more work than it was worth to install on the wagon. The stripped-down design also allowed the actors to “create” the rest of the vehicle through their actions, a design choice that flowed into the rest of the design better.

### Sympathetic Changes

Sympathetic changes are those that are the result of other changes made for any number of reasons. This type of change usually comes after the inspiring change is made and after a good look at the set. *Con Mis Manos* did not have very many of these, but they were there. First was the addition of nice-looking hinges and handles on the upstage gate in the fence. We decided that, since the gate is obviously there, we might as well incorporate it into the overall design. This change then inspired its own series of little additions that were not, strictly speaking, changes since they were never part of the original drafting.

Moving the grill also caused a series of other moves to accommodate the new location. The cooler and folding chair moved to the other side of the door when they are not pulled downstage for the actors to use.

Changes are inevitable with any set design when it meets the realities of transforming from a drawing on a page to the reality on a stage. These changes are healthy, as long as the vision of the director is maintained throughout the process. The changes made to my design enhanced the overall power of the set, allowing me to capture the essential emotional content of the play. My primary goal has always been to support the action of the play as well as reinforce the message through the set. The changes helped to accomplish this goal.

### The Refining Process

The process of creating a set is not without bumps and problems, the most persistent of these are in some of the decisions that the designer makes. Some of these issues get solved, others go unrecognized until the show opens and you realize too late that you should have done that one thing differently. The weak choices I made were mainly due to inexperience and the challenge inherent in designing for a multiple sightline performing space, and the solutions that happened for most of them were natural extensions of the learning process.

### The Decision Process and How I Learned From It

Changes are, as already stated, inevitable to the process of creating a set design. During the build for *Con Mis Manos/With My Hands* we found a lot of little places where the thought process was not complete. Since I was intimately involved in the build, I was able to complete those thoughts and finish the idea to a reasonable facsimile of what was in my head. In spite of my involvement, there were some mistakes that slipped past me initially, only to be caught in dress rehearsals, or in one case, not at all.

One of the most glaring problems which I should have caught during the design phase was the insufficient masking behind the walls of the set for the front door. If the front door was open, the audience could see all the way to the upstage right corner of the stage, well into technician territory; a flaw that would have been unacceptable to leave alone. I had provided some masking for the door, but it only masked for house left, while house right had an unobstructed view of the cyclorama. A curtain hung behind the door provided enough to obscure the workings backstage, but it was inelegant and , to use a



“technical” term, half-baked.<sup>3</sup> A proper fix would have been to paint and texture another pair of walls to provide the masking that was needed, while still allowing the actors enough room to move about and do what they needed to do back there. Due to my unfamiliarity with the space and with designing the practical parts of sets, I did miss what should have been a glaring issue. One should always look at sight lines in the space one is using before adding masking walls to the set design. I also learned to be adaptive and flexible when it comes to finding problems with a set. The problem of the masking continued to show itself through the rehearsals until finally solved with the curtain. This lead to yet another lesson, actors should never be asked to keep doors closed for masking. Find another way to achieve the masking needed because the door will get left open.

A second incongruity that I managed to catch before the show opened, and one that was somewhat silly, was that in the process of mounting the seats on the car wagon the build team put the two front seats on backwards. The seats did face front, but the seatbelt buckles were on the outsides of the seats rather than in the middle where they belonged. While this was a relatively minor problem, it was just the sort of error that the audience would have noticed right away. While you can get away with calling four seats on a rolling platform a car, you just cannot get away with having the seatbelts wrong. We fixed it by removing the buckles completely. However, for the next five or so rehearsals with the wagon the actors had to be reminded to mime the buckle in the center of the car, not on the outside. One should always search for a simple solution that will save time and effort, but end with the same result as the more obvious, but more time-consuming solution.

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<sup>3</sup> Half-baked is used to describe any job that is not done to the best of your abilities. In this case, I stapled some duvetyn to the wall rather than taking the time to fix it properly.

Some issues did not get fixed before the show premiered. The first of these comes from much introspection about the flow of the action combined with post-show clarity. I should have put the door on the angled wall and the grill under the window on the downstage wall. This little change would have helped the set to flow better in action, as well as giving another location for David to give his soliloquies. As it was, there was a lot of juggling to get through the door, past all the obstructions, and downstage for the end of Act I scene 2. Putting the door on the angle would have given them a straight shot, with all the various set pieces out of the way. This is another case where lessons are learned through experience alone. I learned to listen to my instincts and allow gut reactions a respectable place in making decisions. If I could do it again, I would move that door.

This last mistake was brought to my attention by Dr. Marian Monta. Somewhere during the process of gathering the furniture, I agreed to use the rehearsal chairs during the show, as long as they got a coat of black paint to cover the original colors. This decision was so glaring and so simple to fix. I should not have OKed the use of those chairs for the run, but had the prop master look for more appropriate chairs to use for the show. Dr. Monta mentioned that the chairs pulled her out of the show, and that there was a set of dining chairs in prop storage. This situation was another lesson about attention to detail. In every production the details are just as important, if not more so. Designers should pay attention to these details in order to maintain a solid show.

Mistakes always get made. Sometimes they are due to lack of attention, or lack of experience, other times they are simply oversights because the process of creating a show is always hectic. Mistakes will get made, but what makes for a good design is the

acceptance of this fact, and the willingness to correct them. This report cited two examples of changes that were made, and they made the show stronger. It also gave two examples of ones I should have made and didn't; these made the show weaker than it could have been. All of these situations taught me something; if nothing else then to never do that specific thing again. They were not wasted effort.

### Wrapping Up

Creating a set is a long difficult process, from inspiration to execution to strike. *Con Mis Manos/With My Hands* had its collection of unique problems, errors and hiccups that made the experience unique. I would not hesitate to try this show again in a few years, if for no other reason than to further refine the process and try to make the show better than before.

## CHAPTER III

### LIGHTS

A set is a beautiful thing, but no set is complete until it has been illuminated by a wonderful collaboration of artistic expression. The best part of creating theatre is that is it not a solitary experience; indeed theatre depends on the work of many people coming together to create something beautiful. This kind of collaboration is only seen in other performing arts, such as dance and music. Since the set had been completed, we now move on to discussing the process of developing the lighting design for the show, from concept to execution; then leading into problems, solutions and the intricacies of working with actors.

#### Illuminating the Set

No part of producing a show is independent of the other parts. The actors cannot perform to the best of their ability without a set to perform on; the actors would look out of place performing without appropriate costumes; the actors, set and costumes would be impossible to see without lights. All parts of the process come together to create the world of the play that the audience then is able to immerse in for several hours and, as one of my favorite authors puts it “eat chocolates in a room where the world is a different place.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> From *Monstrous Regiment*, by Terry Pratchett

### Relationship Between Set and Lights

The collaborative nature of a production means that lighting must be discussed in relation to the set. Costumes can stand on their own as well designed and constructed articles of clothing. Sound design is still able to convey emotion through the music. Even the set can stand by itself in terms of construction and effectiveness. Lighting, however, has to have something to illuminate. A light cue on an empty stage would say nothing emotionally, or psychologically; while the set, unlit, can convey the physical and practical reality of a space, but is emotionally and psychologically empty. Both set and lights lack an element that the other can bring, thus rendering the lighting more than another element tacked into the set, but as a crucial ingredient for an effective show.

Since the lighting provide the emotional reinforcement where the set cannot, let us discuss this show in terms of where the lighting is most crucial. The lighting reinforces the set through emotional suggestion, creating an environment that fosters the appropriate emotional response from the audience. *Con Mis Manos/With My Hands* is a drama about the death of an important family member, the mother, and the emotional impact that her slow decline has on the family. The audience should feel exactly what the family was feeling watching Josefina on stage, to feel her resentment as Esteban blithely refuses to accept the impending funeral. There ought to be an audible sigh of relief when “pinche Tio Hector” comes on stage in the first act to pick up David and Jessica. While building the set one is concerned with practicalities; will the actors be able to fit through that space without ripping costumes, or can the audience see through that window where they shouldn’t be able to. With lighting one is more concerned with supporting the right emotional effect of the scene. Emotions can be controlled through

very subtle means; the color, intensity, and even area of illumination can all send subliminal messages to the audience that will enhance the scene, and charm the audience.

Lighting provides three major functions on stage. It provides selective visibility, it reveals the form of the actors and separates them from the background, and it fills in the rest of the picture drawn by the set. Selective visibility allows the actors and set to be seen without revealing more of the stage than is needed. *Con Mis Manos* required careful manipulation of the visible areas of the stage in order to maintain the flow of the narration while still allowing for scene changes. Picking the actors out from the background required multiple angles of light illuminating from both in front and behind. The light also completes the picture started by the set, creating both a visual representation of a place and an emotional picture with which the audience can connect. Lighting also fills in the corners of the picture started by the set. The set for *Con Mis Manos* is the image of a backyard in the Rio Grande Valley in the summer. The walls of the set were able to convey the physical reality of the house, while the lighting provided temporal and emotional anchorage for the set. The cyclorama behind the house as well as the glowing window and glimpses of light from the door when it was opened all contributed to the full picture.

From a purely practical standpoint, one must work within the simple fact that the actors have to be seen to be able to convey the message effectively. The designer must properly illuminate the set, or actor, as the case required. Herein lies another inescapable facet of the inherent collaborative nature of theatre. Because we are working in a relatively small space, there is no need to mike the actors. However, if they are not properly illuminated the audience will not hear them. Scientific research demonstrates

that 30% of speech is understood by seeing the speaker's lips moving.<sup>5</sup> This phenomenon led to a more practical outlook on creating the light design than I might otherwise have done. I ended up cutting intensities and sometimes turning fixtures off completely in scenes where I was trying to keep all the actors lit and should not have. It was throwing off the emotional impact and pulling attention away from the speaker. Simply put, light the actor who is speaking so the audience will understand him or her, everyone else can be in semi-darkness if that's what is called for by the script.

Now that we have discussed theory, let us examine the process of creating a light plot from beginning to end; from light plot to working fixtures and a list of cues.

### The Process

#### Light Plot Development

Light design is the process of placement and control of light in order to provide illumination as well as fill in the stage picture through emotional and psychological support. Part of the design is creating a light plot, the paper schematic of the placement of fixtures along with a circuit diagram and color choices laid out in an easy to understand format. The light plot helps the designer experiment with a working light design without climbing a ladder. With the plot the designer can place fixtures, work out areas of light and decide color and gobo choices before ever touching a wrench. Lighting an actor on stage requires light to be projected from several angles and directions to reveal form since if an actor is only lit from the front, they appear flat. For *Con Mis Manos* we hung fixtures to project light onto the actors from the front, the back and from above to fully sculpt the contours of their bodies and faces or to provide general illumination. In addition, we hung fixtures that would provide a specific function for the

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<sup>5</sup> Articles available online from many reputable journals.

design. These fixtures are called specials because of their limited range of function. In addition, I used the angle/color key located in the bottom right side of the plot to indicate which gel needed to be added to fixtures.

*Con Mis Manos* is a play with many small scenes taking place in a lot of different locations set within the same physical space. In order for these scenes to work well on the thrust stage, I wanted to light the scenes with discrete pools of light, to isolate each scene from the rest of the set. I developed groups of fixtures to light nine areas with down and front light, as well as an additional five upstage areas solely with front light. These fourteen light areas, which were labeled A through N, are used to give the designer the resources needed with which to construct each cue. These areas could be lit with as many as five different fixtures providing the multi-angle light required. Once these areas were selected, the plot was created, the schematic of what needed to be done to achieve the desired effect. There already existed a standard plot of fixtures for the theatre, basic groups to light specific areas of the stage for general illumination, so my job in developing the specific plot for *Con Mis Manos* was to use this basic plot, touch up the focus to suit the needs of this production and either remove, add or refocus fixtures as necessary for specials to create the specific plot needed for this show.

Most of the basic plot was kept, other than changing the gel colors. The next decision was where special light needed to be added and then place fixtures in the plot. Specials are fixtures added to a plot that provide a specific function for the production, whether that is a spot light to pick out an actor from the scene for a special speech, or to add patterns and texture. For this production, the specials either lit a point that needed extra focus, or provided a pattern or color to enhance the look of the scene. The set



needed fixtures on both wings, as well as two locations downstage to light actors in special locations. Three of these specials provided illumination for the narration, while the fourth illuminated the actor at the lectern during the funeral. Two fixtures were also added on either side of the stage to throw a leaf-like breakup for exterior scenes as well as four fixtures for dichroic color breakups and one other for a window projection. These various pattern fixtures enhanced scenes that needed a little more definition. The spot specials were mainly used to light David as the narrator when he had a speech at the beginning of a scene, in order to allow the rest of the stage to be in semi-darkness for a set change. This particular combination of lights and set change minimized impediment of the flow of the narrative, while still allowing the actor to be seen and heard. A similar effect was used with the funeral scene, Act II scene 9, to keep Sulema in clear view while the rest of the stage was mostly dark. The dichroic filters in this scene added a color breakup that resembled the pattern thrown by a stained glass window. In addition, a pair of three-inch fresnel fixtures behind the walls threw light on the window and into the space behind the door for visual effect. I also added circuits for the Christmas lights used at the end of Act I.

### Color Choices

After adding the specials that would provide the focus of each cue, I went about developing a color palette for *Con Mis Manos* that would allow me to explore the range of emotions needed, as well as creating a comfortable level of illumination without burning out too quickly. The darker the color of a gel, the more of the light spectrum it absorbs. Dark blue and purple gels tend to burn out very quickly if used for long scenes because the gel ends up absorbing most of the red spectrum, in other words, the hot end.

The gel bleaches out in the middle and is rendered useless. The color range needed to be able to express a range of emotions, from the casual contentment of Act I, scene 1 to the intense frustration and anger of Act II, scene 6. To achieve this, I decided that blue and amber would be good hues to start with, and then tried to find a comfortable range to move within each color. These two colors are most commonly used to light stages because they work well with most other colors as well as complementing each other on the color spectrum. The setting, both temporal and geographical, call for a specific feel to the light, which led to blues for darker, more emotionally intense scenes with ambers filling out the warm scenes. The blue also translated well to night scenes as the amber did for day scenes. The blues were mostly a light, but cold feeling blue from the front, and a more saturated blue for the down light. This range would allow enough flexibility to manipulate the feeling of the cool scenes by varying intensity between front and down light. The amber range consisted of three colors, a medium dark amber for the down light, R16, with two colors of front light, a reddish bastard amber, R02 and a more yellow straw amber, R08. I needed more of Roscolux 02, the color of bastard amber that I was going to use for all of the front light. By combining R02 with R08, which was a similar color, though more yellow, we achieved a range of amber saturation on stage that would change the overall mood, without changing the color significantly. These two color combinations would work for the majority of the scenes in the play, but there were still scene changes to consider, as well as the specials and the cyclorama. A dark lavender color worked well for scene changes as it provided enough illumination for the stage hands to see what they are doing while still keeping the stage fairly dark. The lavender

color also complemented the much lighter lavender used in the actor specials, and contrasted nicely with the yellow light in the window.

### Hang and Focus

Once the plot was finished and color choices made it was time to begin the hard part of any light design, hanging and focusing the fixtures. The crew was mainly moving the fixtures that were already there to their new locations, or changing the focus of fixtures that did not need to move. The existing plot required very little manipulation. We ended up moving seven Source Four ellipsoidal reflector spotlights to new locations; four for the dichroic filters, as well as three others for steel gobos. The Source Fours were chosen because those fixtures are designed to project gobos and therefore project less heat out through the front. Four other ERS's were moved to good locations to accommodate specials at the two upstage exits, as well as one downstage center and one slightly stage left of center for the podium in the funeral scene. We also installed the pipes and then hung Aquasplash fixtures with dichroic four color wheels as well as a mirror ball to reflect them. These fixtures use a pair of specially molded glass discs to create a seemingly random ripple effect in the projected light. When the designer inserts different color wheels, the effect can either simulate water, fire or in this case, the subtle twinkle of reflected Christmas lights. Two three-inch fresnels were added backstage and adaptors were used to provide places to plug in the Christmas lights and Christmas tree for Act I, scene 9.

Once we had finished hanging the fixtures, and making sure that they were all in place and working, we began focusing the light in the right location. The crew pulled gels and put them in frames while I assigned the circuits to specific channel numbers.

The computer that controls the lights allows dimmers and circuits to be assigned to specific DMX channels in order to make the process of building cues easier. Since the assignment is digital rather than hard wired, it can be changed easily which makes changing the design much faster. The basic assignment pattern also allowed me to think in terms of fixture location and corresponding channel number to develop my scenes. Since there was an existing channel schedule, we chose not to alter that, but add specials on channels that were not currently in use. Thus, the various specials that were added ended up on specific, easy to remember channels. After the channels were assigned and gels framed, each fixture would be turned on. Then it was adjusted to throw light where it was needed, and then shuttered to limit where the light spilled. Focus went quickly, and within an hour all fixtures were focused and had the gel frames with gel or gobos inserted.

Once everything was ready, focused, gelled and patched into the right circuit, it was time to program cues. The channel breakdown assisted here since specific groups of fixtures were assigned to channels based on what part of the stage they would light. I would turn on lights to illuminate a specific area of the stage, and then adjust the intensity to achieve the look that I wanted, then move on to the next change. The timing of each transition was also a significant part of developing the cues. Each transition had to be timed to correspond with the movement of the actors and technicians. Blue light, in small pools was used to create tense scenes where the characters were under a significant amount of emotional pressure, while other scenes would use warm light and larger pools to release that pressure and allow the audience to relax briefly. Scene changes were characterized by a violet wash and a spot to pick out David as he led us from one scene to

the next and the furniture was shifted behind him. Once the scenes were roughed out, we through the cues to get a feel for how the show would flow from one scene to the next, making changes as necessary, as well as looking for trouble spots and other small issues to solve. Designing and creating the set was significantly different from the work I did to create the light design. Once the set was done, most of the tweaking was minimal, and mainly aesthetic, while with the lights I was making significant changes all the way up through the open dress rehearsal. Most of the changes made were directed more towards making the flow of the cues work better with the action of the characters rather than trying to make the design more aesthetically pleasing.

#### Problems to Fix

Most of the problems with lights stemmed either from the physical light plot, or from problems with the fixtures themselves. Problems with lights are usually more time consuming to fix than difficult, but are no more or less annoying than problems with the set.

#### Light Plot Problems

My first attempt at creating a light plot failed utterly when I began to play with the tools available in VectorWorks, since I had never created a light plot in the program and therefore was not used to using the tools. The first plot ended up simply laying new symbols on top of the existing plot which led to some very confusing errors; it was unusable. After a brief tutorial under Tom Grabowski, my second attempt was much better. I added all of the fixtures needed while removing fixtures that had either moved or been taken down. The result was much clearer and was actually useful to the crew. The problems with the light plot were minimal when I found out how to use

VectorWorks properly. Subsequent problems were mainly with light fixtures or with gel colors.

### Color Problems

I had selected Roscolux 02, bastard amber for my warm front light because I am very used to using it due to the influence of my undergraduate technical director. During the initial hang the crew pulled gel from storage and put it in frames for dropping in the fixtures. We found only enough to fill 13 of the 26 total. We discovered that there was more than enough R08, an amber that was more yellow than the reddish R02, so we gelled all of the front light in R08, while the corresponding backlight fixtures received R02. This method of distribution, as arranged on the color key, created darker ambers coming from behind the actors, emphasizing the shadows around their shoulders, which pushed the actors out from the set better.

Other color problems arose as rehearsals continued and the lights were on for many hours. Some of the dark lavender gel began to fade in the middle, throwing light blue splotches into the scene changes. This problem was an easy fix, as there was plenty of gel. But it did require someone to climb the ladder and take care of the replacement on the catwalk.

### Evolution of the Design

Just as the set evolved as it came in contact with the realities of the stage and the play, so did the light design change as the actors on stage performed the scenes. The original list of cues was modified to fit the action on the stage better, or to illuminate the scene better or to refine the timing to fit the action on stage. I watched each night and modified cues and timing to improve the look or emotional impact of the action. For

example, the funeral started with lots of light to keep the actors in view, but as the rehearsals progressed we found that the scene could be played in semi-darkness not unlike a scene change because only one actor was speaking at any given time, and light could be added where it was needed for that actor. The cuing structure of this scene had the lighting following the changes in acting focus as the scene progressed.

The specials for David's narration were programmed to follow the shift into the scene change. I wanted the light to come up just as the actor was stepping into the pool of light, thus eliminating a lengthy wait for the audience with a pool of light on stage with no one in it. This was difficult because the actor had some trouble with consistent timing. He couldn't always see the stage before his entrance because he was changing his costume, and the follows were computer controlled to be always the same time. We found after several nights of rehearsal that it would be easier to simply cut the follow and let the board operator to activate the cue at the right time.

The three specials to light David during his speeches seemed to be sufficient for the show, but as tech rehearsals progressed it became obvious that a fourth special would be required. We focused another fixture for the funeral scene in order to light the actor at the lectern properly during her speech. I had expected to light the lectern using the existing front light for that area, but as I dropped the overall intensity of the lights in that scene, she was in darkness. A fixture was added to insert light where she was standing in order to preserve the look of the rest of the scene.

### The Process of Refinement

As with the creation of the set, I made some weak decisions while creating the light design. However, I like to think that I was able to learn from those decisions and next time will have a better idea of what I am doing.

The first revisions involve the addition of specials. When I first designed the funeral scene in Act II, I had intended to light the lectern with existing lights for area A, downstage left. After staging the scene several times, each time lowering the ambient levels to change the impact of the scene, we added a special to light the lectern, not just because the overall ambiance was lowered in intensity, but because the lectern was further downstage than originally intended. This situation taught me to be more careful about the staging of scenes and that the lights need to change to accommodate the set and the staged action, rather than the other way around. I also added the specials backstage of the set after realizing that the window was dark through the play and would not read properly as a window unless it was lit from behind. I had to add a piece of two-by-four to the roof supports for the fixture, which properly lit that window. One must not forget the details, as they can break the design. The audience can forgive big things, but small inconsistencies will be felt unconsciously.

As stated above, the cues were originally written to automatically bring up David's specials when he approached the area for his speeches between scenes. I thought that doing so would make it easier for the board operator during the scene change when there are a lot of cues being called. In action, this did not work well. If the actor was late, the audience would be watching a scene change with an empty light pool for several seconds before the actor stepped in. The pool of light should come up just as the actor



steps in, thus providing a clear indication that something is happening. This situation was the result of too much automation. Instead of expecting the actor to be cued by the light, the board operator should execute the cue off of the actor. My lesson here was to allow the light to be cued by the actor, since actors may have inconsistent timing, while the board always does the same thing every time. The stage manager is the best person to help with refining the timing of light cues and to smooth the process out as quickly as possible. Since the stage manager is in charge of everything during a performance, they often have information about what is happening of which the designer may not be aware. In addition to trusting the board operators to do their job, the designer should also interface regularly with the stage manager.

### Working with Actors

Most of my difficulties and lessons creating a light design came from working with actors. I had to learn their rhythms, and allow for it in the lights instead of trying to force the actors to conform to my light design. Actors can be problematic about finding pools of light properly, but for the most part, I had an easier time giving the actors the space they needed while still working to keep the emotional content of the scene. The actors have a relatively short rehearsal time with all of the tech elements during summer stock as well as many scene and costume changes to work with during *Con Mis Manos*. Both of these situations made achieving a smooth light design challenging.

In Act II, scene 5 Esteban and Josefina have an argument that takes them all over the kitchen waving their arms here and there. The scene was originally designed to be small, keeping the pressure up and inducing the audience to feel the tension as Josefina finally loses her temper and reveals her feelings to her husband. The emotion was right,

but the actors were not watching the edges of the light pool and consistently wandered into the dark while emoting. Reminding them of the light pool did not fix the issue, as the next night Esteban again left the light in the midst of his rant. This situation called for an expanded light pool to fix the problem. With the added area, the pressure was still there and the fight flowed better since the actors were not forced to watch their feet for the edge of the pool. This scene needed the lights to serve the actors, similar to the situation with David's specials. Allowing for the actors improved the scene.

### Wrapping Up

I had some experience with the practical side of light design before this project, but my work for *Con Mis Manos/With My Hands* helped me to really understand what lights do for a production and how they synchronize with the set to create a total world on stage rather than a pretty pattern of light and shade that doesn't ultimately mean very much. I greatly appreciated the opportunity to explore this facet of my artistic nature. The production was a great learning experience.

## CHAPTER IV

### REFLECTING ON THE BUILD

While earning my bachelor's degree at Trinity University we would gather as a group after closing to discuss the show we had just finished. This post mortem allowed us to examine the work that we had just done and offer each other constructive criticism in order to improve as a group. At the time I found these meetings a little tedious, but with the clarity of hindsight I realize how valuable those meetings were. Examining your work through other's eyes helps you to see mistakes that you might have missed.

#### Lessons Learned

The design and construction of a set is a long and complicated process. *Con Mis Manos/With My Hands* took a month to design, and three weeks to build. In the end the product was seen by family, friends and perfect strangers. I observed the audience for a few nights, looking for their reaction to the set, the lights and the action of the play as an indication of how well the story was communicated. As a result, I can deduce that the message was received, but could have been communicated more effectively if not for some choices made in the creation of the world, as well as a few mistakes made during rehearsals. As the designer, I will concentrate on the weak decisions in the designs, what they mean and what they taught me about the play and about designing as a profession.

### Painting

Painting for the stage is a little different than painting for a house. First, scenic paint does not have to last as long as other paint jobs; second, scenic paint only has to look good from about 10 feet and further; and third, scenic paint is usually mixed by hand. I had not, up to this point, been very concerned with the painting aspect of a set build. As an undergraduate I worked as foreman in the steel shop where my duties consisted of cutting and welding steel framed flats and other pieces. The paint was applied in the paint shop which was on the other side of the stage, or on stage with the piece in place, therefore I was inexperienced in painting techniques.

As the person responsible for the paint for *Con Mis Manos/With My Hands* I spent several days mixing paint before application could begin. I was somewhat overwhelmed by the amount of paint needed as well as the number of colors that the set was going to require. The most time consuming error with the paint was failing to mix in a logical progression that would leave some leftovers and prevent scrambling to get paint mixed, thus slowing down the process. By being more methodical in paint choices and mixing, I would not have gotten bogged down in details and could have been more careful about color choices, application and finishing. Mixing is a complex process that can take a long time, and color matching is a difficult process requiring quite a bit of intuition and a good eye. While mixing is simply going to take time, color matching can be helped if one mixes a bit more paint than is needed. With these precautions I could have had the painting done in a much more efficient manner and possibly completed faster.

Paint application can be achieved through many methods, the most common being a brush or roller and a nice smooth coat. Scenic painting is based on creating the illusion

of textures and surfaces. To achieve this end, we applied paint with everything from rag rollers to a pump sprayer. This last application method was the most difficult, since the sprayer was very picky about the exact viscosity and volume of the contents of the bottle in order to lay an even spray without dribbling. The first few attempts to use the sprayer resulted in large drops and ugly splatters that were simply not acceptable. The sprayer continued to give difficulty until the viscosity of the mix was properly adjusted, as well as the volume of the paint in the jar increased until the sprayer stopped dripping. In retrospect, I should have practiced before spraying the floor and the walls in order to prevent the smears and drips that were so very evident on both. Inexperience working with that particular tool, along with the close time frame contributed to my hasty use of a tool that was obviously not working properly. This situation could have easily been avoided by simply taking the time earlier to fix the tool rather than wasting time fixing the mess that the malfunctioning sprayer caused.

Malfunctioning tools and mixing issues aside, my biggest blunder was wasting time, paint and effort on repainting the door and window after some weak design decisions based on poorly thought-out ideas. The original paint scheme called for a grey base that would then be dry-brushed and decorated to look like badly weathered wood that was not holding paint well. Given the personality of Esteban, the father in the play, he would not have allowed his house exterior to get to that point. In addition to that discrepancy, I had chosen to paint the trim on the walls to match the interior door. This was a reddish brown color which would have clashed with the door and window frames. The fix was simply a matter of pulling the window and door out of their flats and repainting, which took two days. The door and window color was a case of the designer

not thinking through the colors clearly before mixing, and the direct result of that was wasting time and paint that could have been better used elsewhere. This error can be avoided by being more careful when developing a color palette, as well as to think before mixing and applying paint.

Most of these problems cost us in resources and time, both in short supply when working on a summer stock production. This was the first time that I had created a set that I designed, and it was a great learning experience. I feel the best way to learn is to examine something that went wrong and to figure out how to make it work anyway, or even fix it so that it fits the original intention. In this case, *Con Mis Manos* gave me many excellent opportunities to do exactly that, and I feel that I have grown as a designer and as a person for having produced this show.

### Construction

Paint aside; there are always problems with the build that need to be fixed. The two problems discussed here never got fixed satisfactorily and thus, in my opinion, reduced the overall effectiveness of the show. The first of these is the missing masking backstage. I had masked the door appropriately, but only from one side of the stage. From the other, the audience could see all the way to the cyclorama. I fixed this issue with a curtain, but should have had the foresight to have masked sufficiently with walls. This mistake is mostly due to inexperience with the space, but inexperience is a poor excuse for not looking at the sightlines before construction. One should be most careful about sightlines in a theatre like the Albert L. Jeffers, where the extreme sightline seats are facing each other. My lesson with the masking walls is to always assume that there is a seat somewhere that can see backstage until it is proven otherwise. This will keep from

having to get masking installed on the last night of rehearsal, thus giving the actors a harder job than they had before. I could have installed the curtain long before I actually did, but in my stubbornness, I refused to believe that the problem was in my design, not in the blocking. Future cases of this particular issue will be solved as soon as they become apparent without badgering the actors to do something that they can't.

My second weak decision was not as serious as the first, but it has continued to bother me after the fact. I should have put the door in the angled wall rather than the wall facing the audience. This would have made masking a little easier, as well as made blocking easier for a few scenes. I could also have changed the angle on that wall so the door would have been directly facing down the vom. This change would have been a fresh idea for that stage, as there are a limited number of ways one can do a door with something on either side. Also, it would have strengthened the narrative by making it easier to use the space behind the window for short scenes or simply to accent the action with something in the background.

### Lighting

Lighting a show like *Con Mis Manos* is an exercise in subtly manipulating the scene to help the audience feel what the actors are expressing more keenly. The color choices that the designer makes are critical to achieving the effect that is needed for any particular scene. I may not have made the best decision in color for the scene changes and for the specials.

I did not consider the Albert L. Jeffers theatre construction when developing the down light color. The relationship of the stage and seating causes the stage to function in many of the ways that the cyclorama does in a proscenium theatre with a raised stage.

The audience looks down at the stage, and the floor pattern in the primary textural element to the scene. The down light was a dark purple that allowed the stage hands to change the scene in semi-darkness while the audience watches David give one of his speeches introducing the next scene. This color is well suited to certain shows, but for *Con Mis Manos* I should have used a dark blue instead of purple, so that it would have meshed well with the light blue used for some of the scenes. The blue would also have complemented the lighter purple used for David's specials. This change would have strengthened the show, and pulled more focus onto David as he gave the speech. When it comes to lights, contrasting complementary colors work best together because they allow whatever is lit in the lighter color to pop out from the background while still keeping the rest of the stage lit enough for things like scene changes. This technique could have been used to keep parts of the stage darkened for quick changes of scene while another scene is taking place. In addition, blue down light would have helped the stage blend into the lighting for the scene changes, helping the audience to visually "tune out" the stage hands, thus allowing David to be the center of attention, even if he was not standing center stage.

Specials are a difficult case because the designers never really know how many are going to be needed until they see the action of the show and determines where extra light is needed, whether anchored to a set piece or based on actor blocking. While designing the lights for *Con Mis Manos* I concentrated on establishing the scenic emotional tone and finding where David would be standing for his speeches. This caused me to overlook the need for a special on the lectern for the funeral scene where Sulema gives the eulogy for her sister. Adding in this special was not complicated, but it did take



time. When you are working on a production, every second counts. I learned from this delay not to assume that everything has been taken care of, but to make sure early in the process so that trips into the grid are minimized. Developing the lighting is both a proactive and reactive process. Designers need to consider each scene's needs, even as they read the script, then revise the overall design as blocking and directorial input change the circumstances of the scene.

### Final Reflections

*Con Mis Manos/ With My Hands* was my first time to design, and then build a set in conjunction with designing lights. It was the first opportunity to deepen my understanding of my design aesthetic, and I tried to embrace it fully by exploring the limits of my abilities in creating this set. In spite of the weak decisions and problems that developed during the process, the design was successful in establishing a place and time as well as creating the emotional echo that the scenes needed. There are some changes that I would like to have made, but as with all productions, time was a factor and those changes were not evident until after the show.

Reflecting on the show has given me a better understanding of both what served the show well as well as what didn't work quite as well. The strength of my set was the versatility of the permanent parts, a "home base" both physically as well as psychologically, combined with a large open playing area where furniture could be brought in, arranged and then struck after the scene is complete. The set was flexible and simple to maintain the flow of a narrative written cinematically. I found that my strongest aesthetic is to allow the action to speak louder than the set. The use of a simplified set works well because of the value that this kind of set brings to creating a

scene within the audience's mind. A full visual set will provide for the scene, but the same scene played with as few elements as possible will ask the audience to bring the scene to life in their imagination as well as stretch the acting abilities of the performers. I wish for my sets to ask the audience to think about what they are watching, and the best way to do this is to keep the set as simple as possible.

Set and lights should harmonize and provide reinforcement for the emotional content of the scene. As stated earlier, both of these elements provide a different kind of support for the scene and without one or the other, the scene will not work. In *Con Mis Manos*, lights are used as more the illumination and emotional evocation. The lights helped define the edges of the acting area for the scenes. The edge of the lights became the symbolic walls of the area, which allowed the creation of many little rooms on stage with transparent walls for the audience to peer into and feel the same pressure and desperation that the family was feeling. Thus the lights have allowed me to keep the set Spartan without detracting from the scene at the same time as well as stage a significant number of scenes in the same physical space while still suggesting multiple different locations.

The strongest lessons from *Con Mis Manos* were the problems that arose as well as the solutions that fixed them. With no problems I would not have had to consider the process or learned to be flexible and develop solutions, both with and without assistance, while keeping on schedule and meeting deadlines. This was my greatest lesson, and I will use it to keep creating and developing my style and aesthetic.

## Strike

Strike is the final act of any production. In order to strike a show one must put away all the props, demolish the set, clean up the debris and then clear the stage so that it looks as though nothing was there. Theatre is one of the most transitory of the visual art forms. When we create a painting, or take an art photograph, we would thereafter have a physical record of the emotion. Writing and music all have a physical product that is the full and complete emotional package that recreates feelings. Only theatre has no concrete evidence of the emotional turmoil of the stage after it has been taken down. In fact, it could be said that theatre only exists while the performers, audience and play are in the same room at the same time. One may claim, “What about the script, video, or photographs of the production?” But the truth is that these recording forms fail to capture the visceral reaction that the audience has to watching a live performance. There is the same effect when one goes to a concert; the reaction to a live performance of your favorite songs is much different then listening to a recording.

This essay is the record of my reaction to the creation of a production, a special production because it was the very first production that I have personally designed and lit. It is a poor facsimile of the actual process, and the actual performance, but it will have to do. I am very proud of my work on this show. I did make mistakes, but I corrected them and what is more, learned from those mistakes. In the future I will be able to create even better sets for even more complicated stages because of what I learned from creating this show. My drawings and pictures are a record of what I did for the Jeffers Theatre in creating *Con Mis Manos/With My Hands*, but what is even more permanent than those pieces of paper and collections of digital information is the

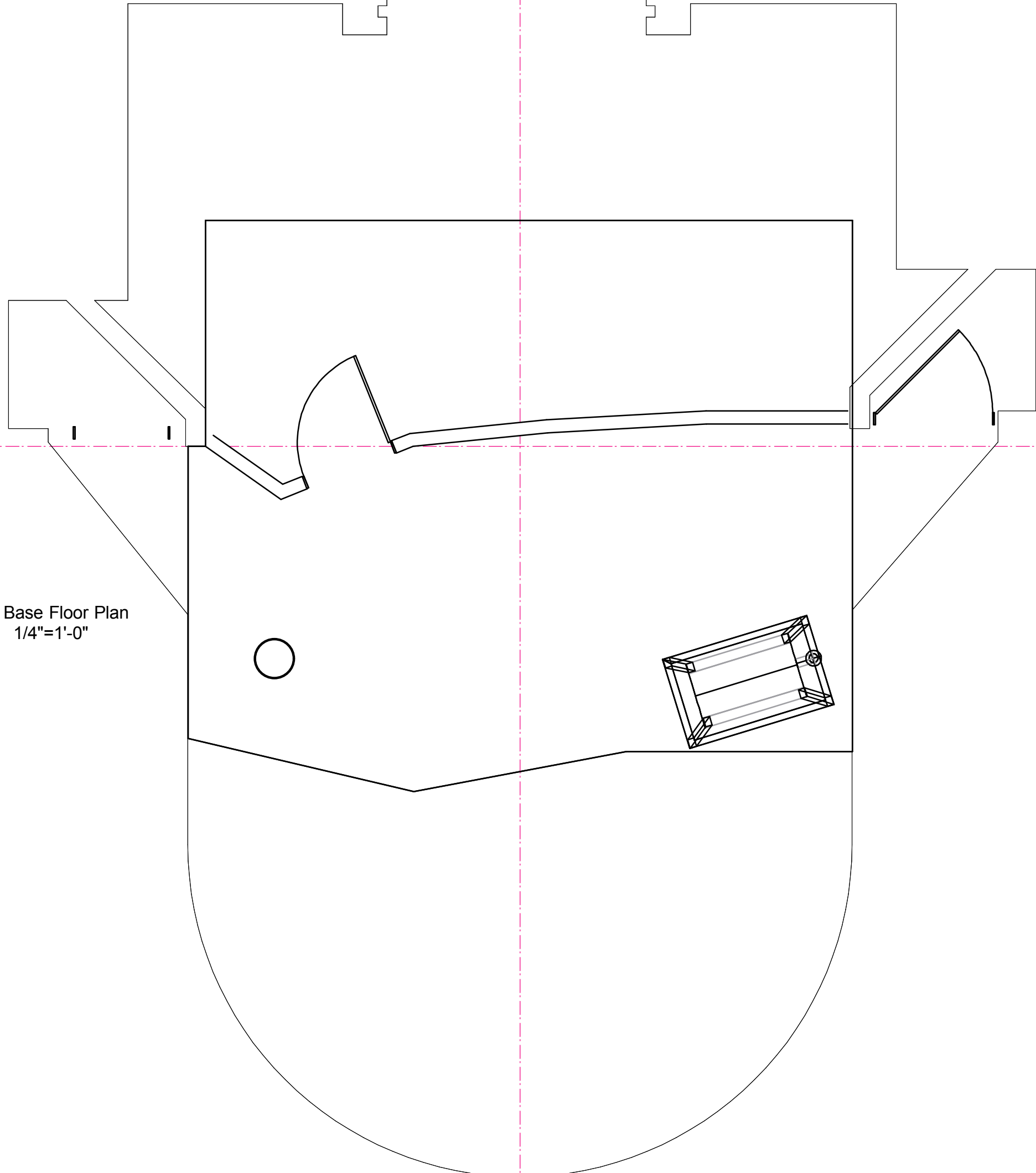
powerful lessons learned in creating this set that will allow me to make better sets for others. I feel honored to have been given the privilege to learn and have this production here at the University of Texas- Pan American.

## APPENDIX A

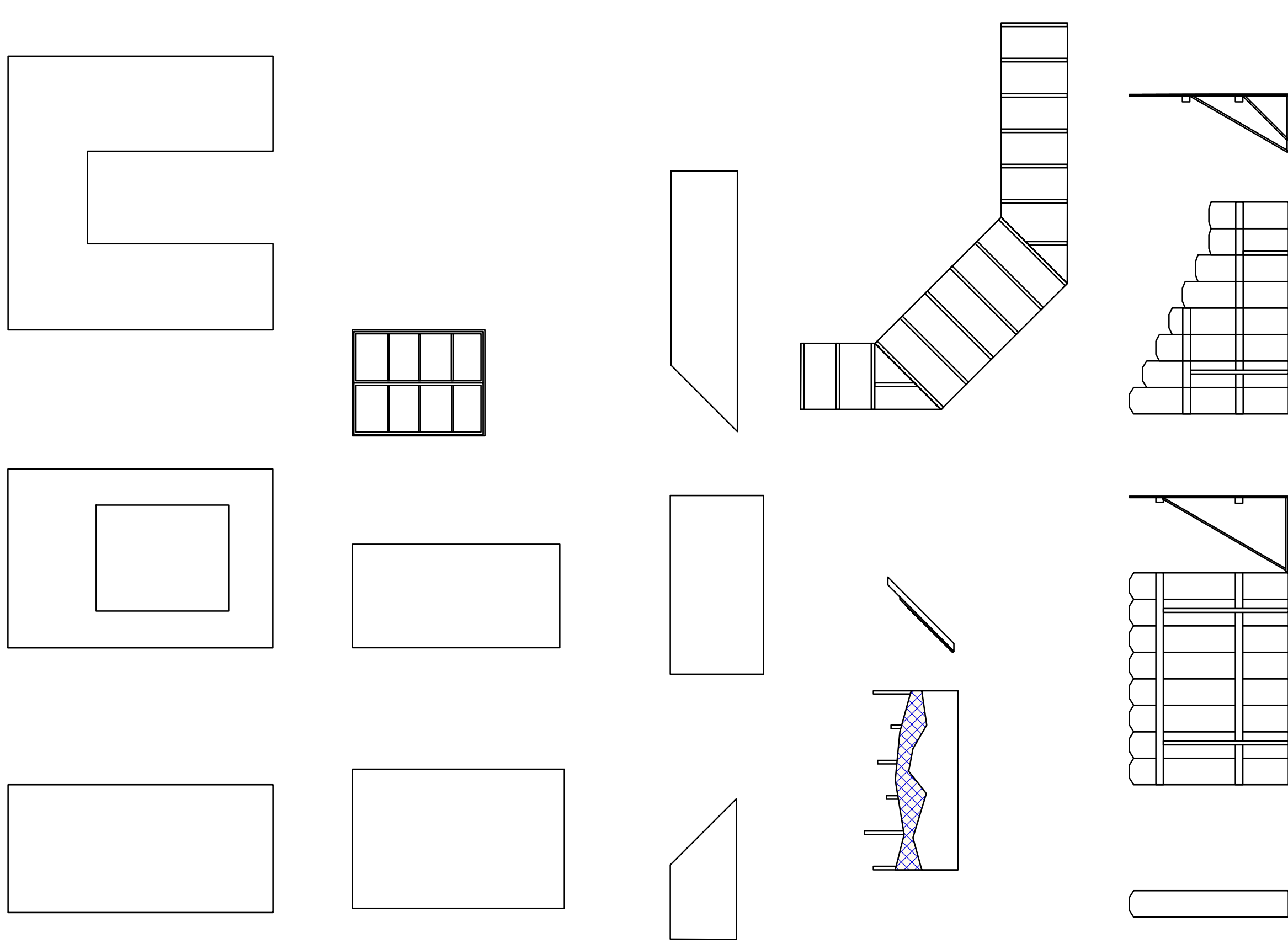
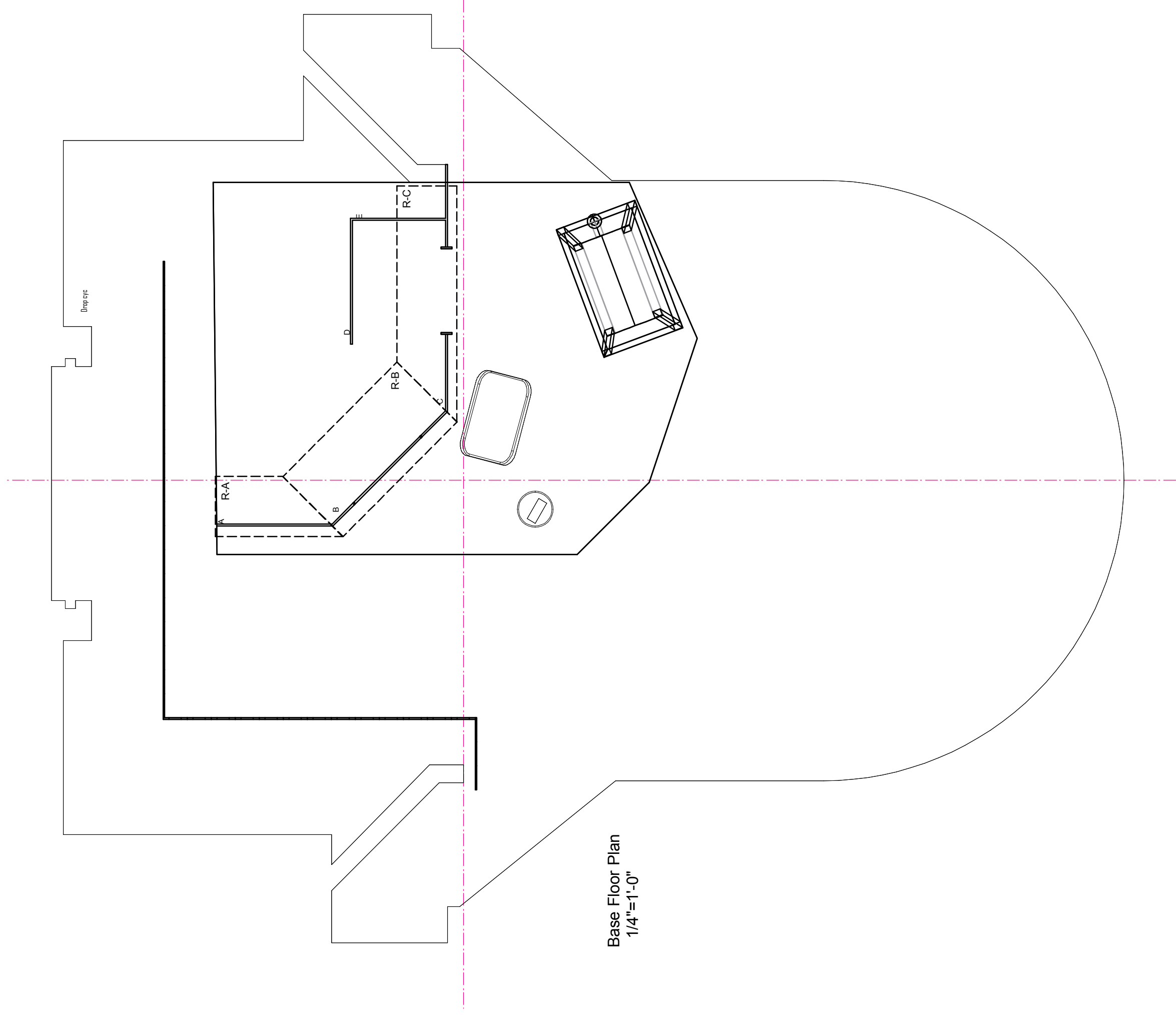
## APPENDIX A

### DRAWINGS AND DRAFTS

What follows is the collection of drawings associated with the design and construction of *Con Mis Manos*. Drawings one through three are of the design progression from initial concept through final construction. Drawing four is a three dimensional rendering of the set in black and white. The remaining nineteen drawings are the furniture arrangements for each scene in order from Act I, scene one through to Act II, scene ten as I designed them. Please note that there were changes made as the scenes were blocked by the Director.

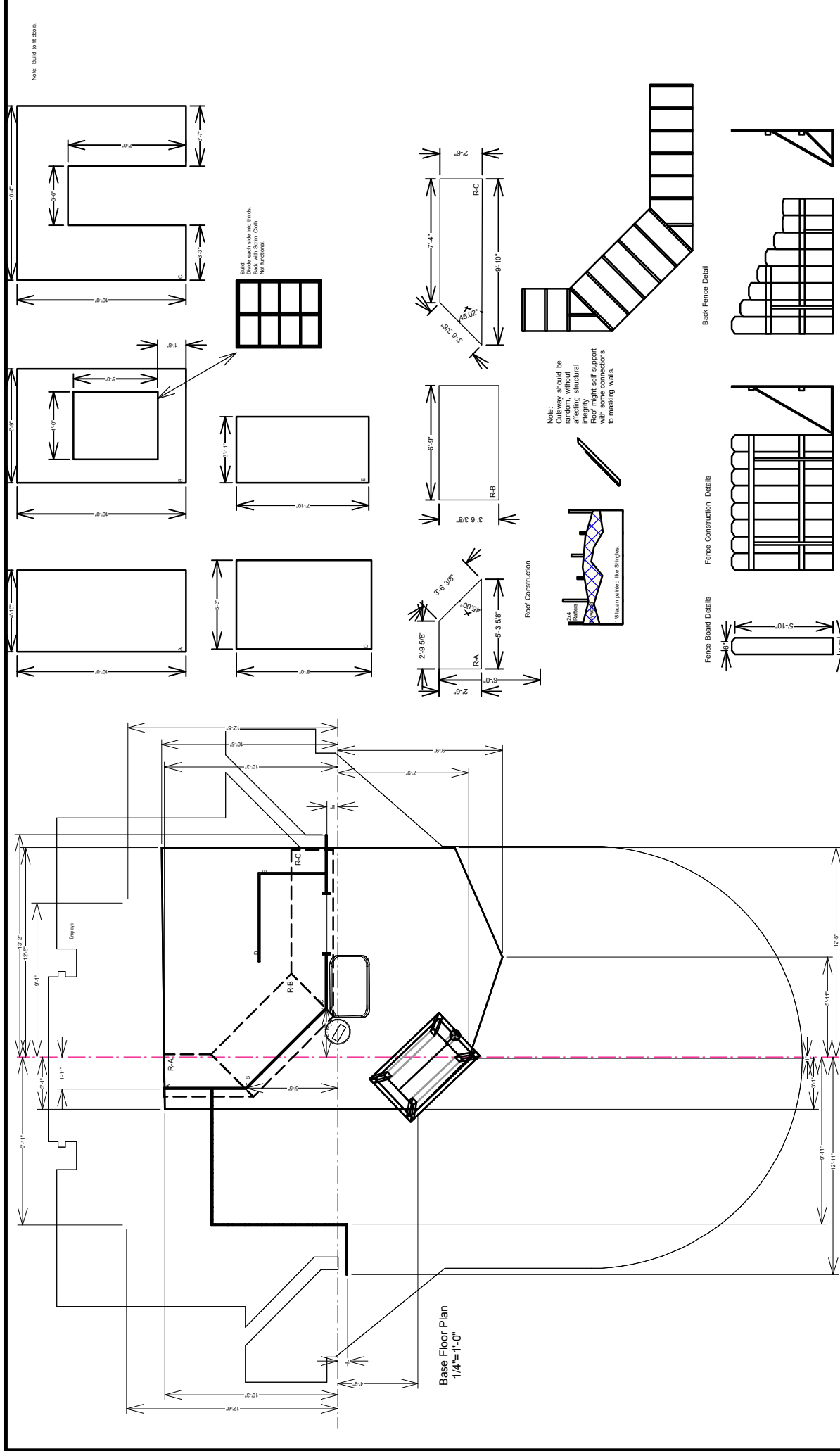


Base Floor Plan  
1/4"=1'-0"



Show Name		Location	
Con Mis Manos/With my Hands		Jeffers Theatre	
Scale	As Noted	Designed by	Drawn by
Date	03-29-09	Andrew Lopez	
Drawing #		File Name	
2 of 2		.VWX	





Show Name	Location
Con Mis Manos/With my Hands	Jeffers Theatre
Scale	As Noted
Designed by	Andrew Lopez
Date	03-29-09
Drawing #	2 of 2
Drawn by	L.A. Lopez
File Name	.VWX
Drawing Name	Ground plan take 2

Drop cyc

R-A

B

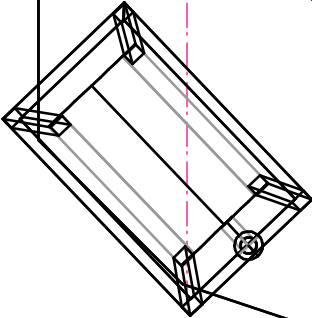
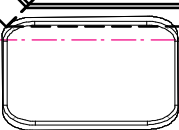
D

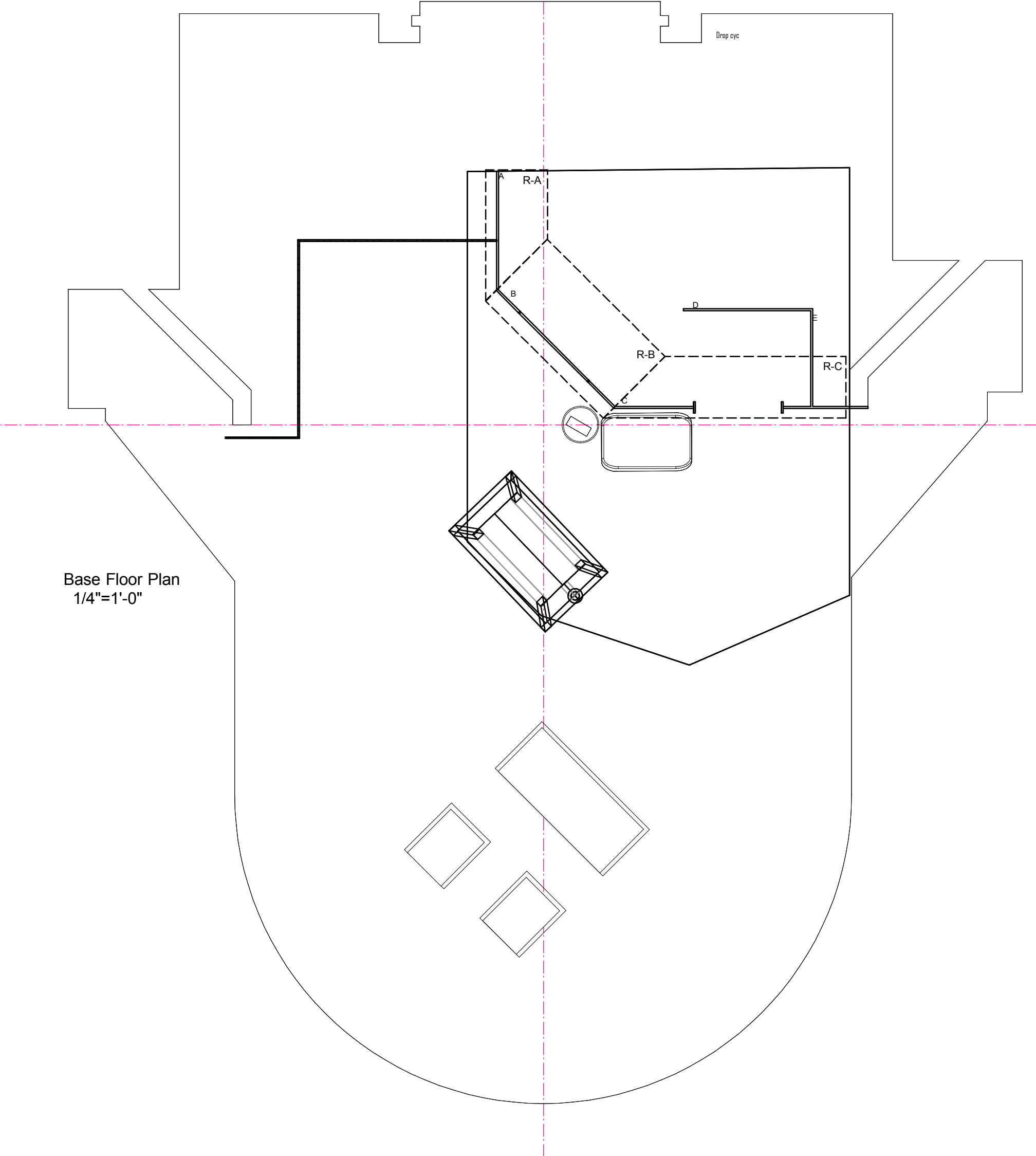
R-C

R-B

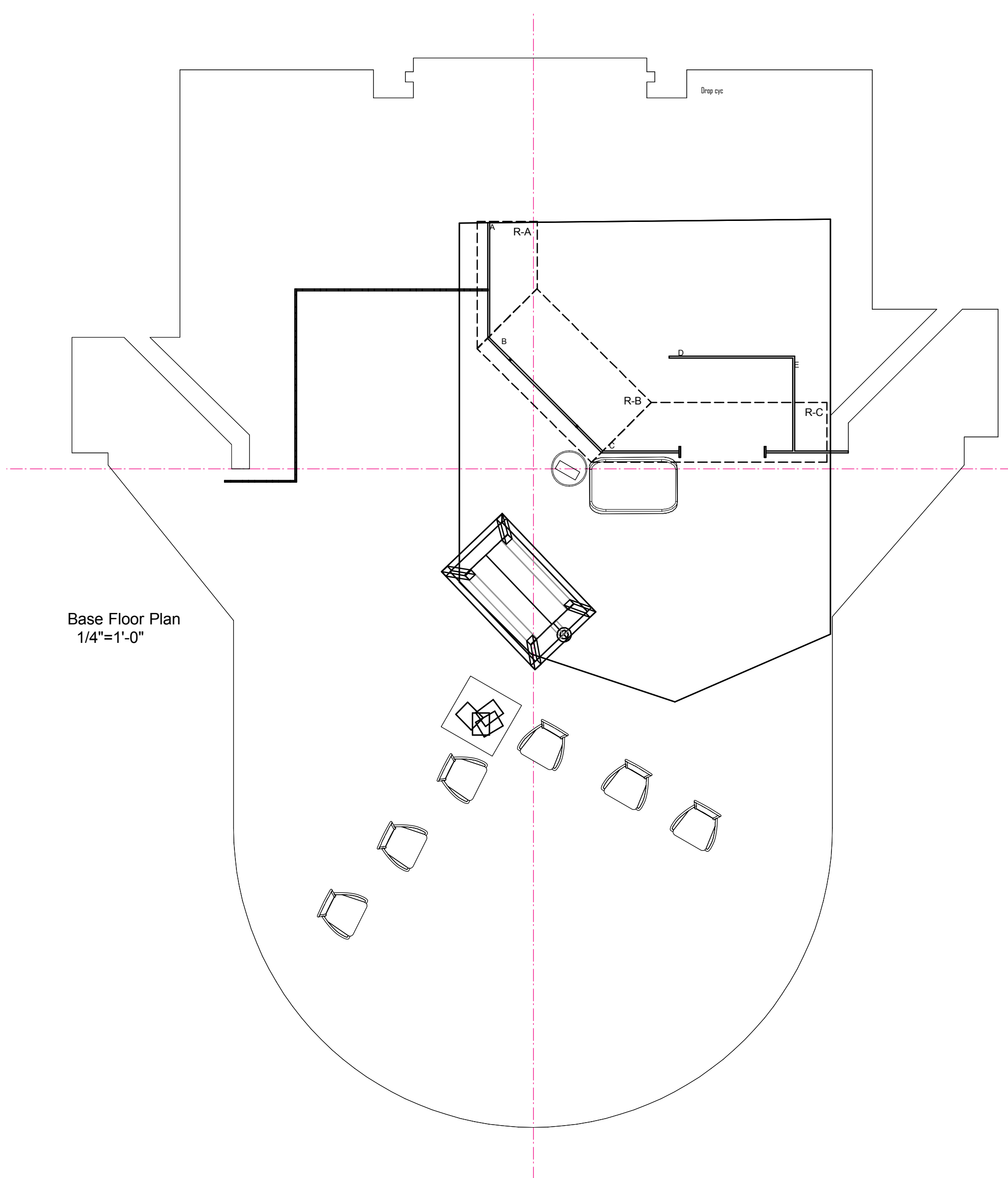
C

Base Floor Plan  
1/4"=1'-0"





Base Floor Plan  
1/4"=1'-0"



Base Floor Plan  
1/4"=1'-0"

Drop c/c

R-A

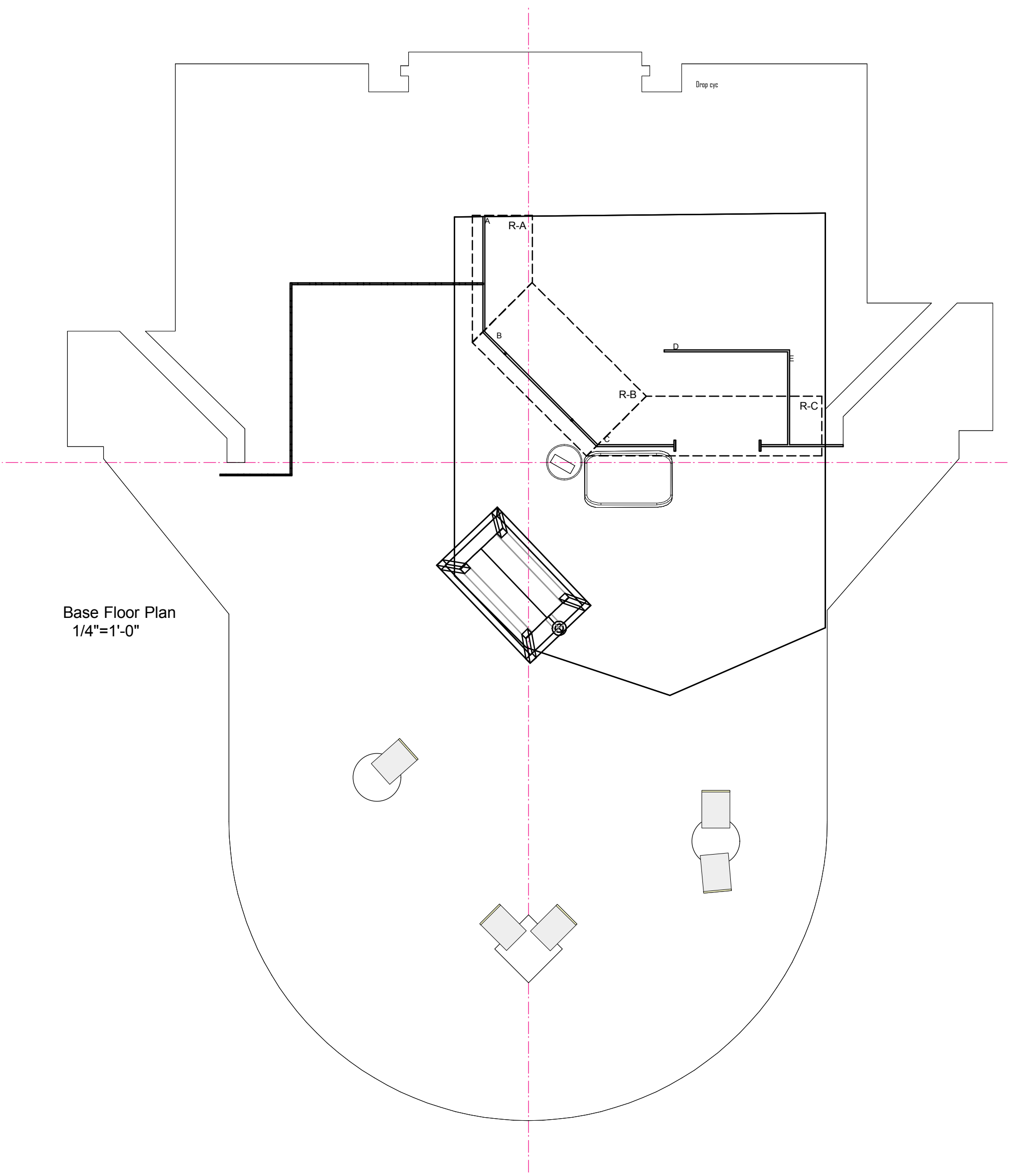
B

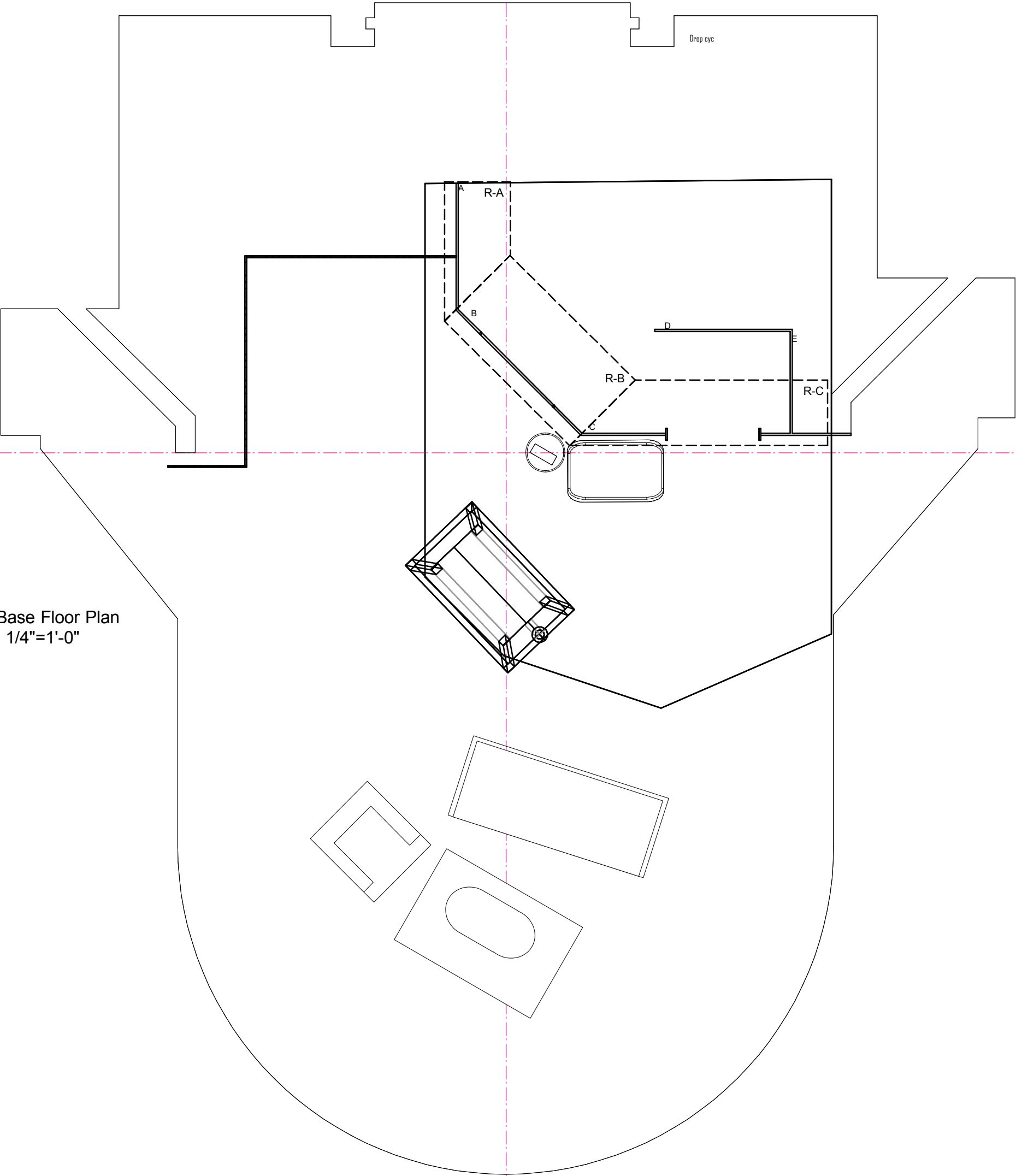
D

R-C

R-B

Base Floor Plan  
1/4"=1'-0"





Drop cyc

R-A

B

D

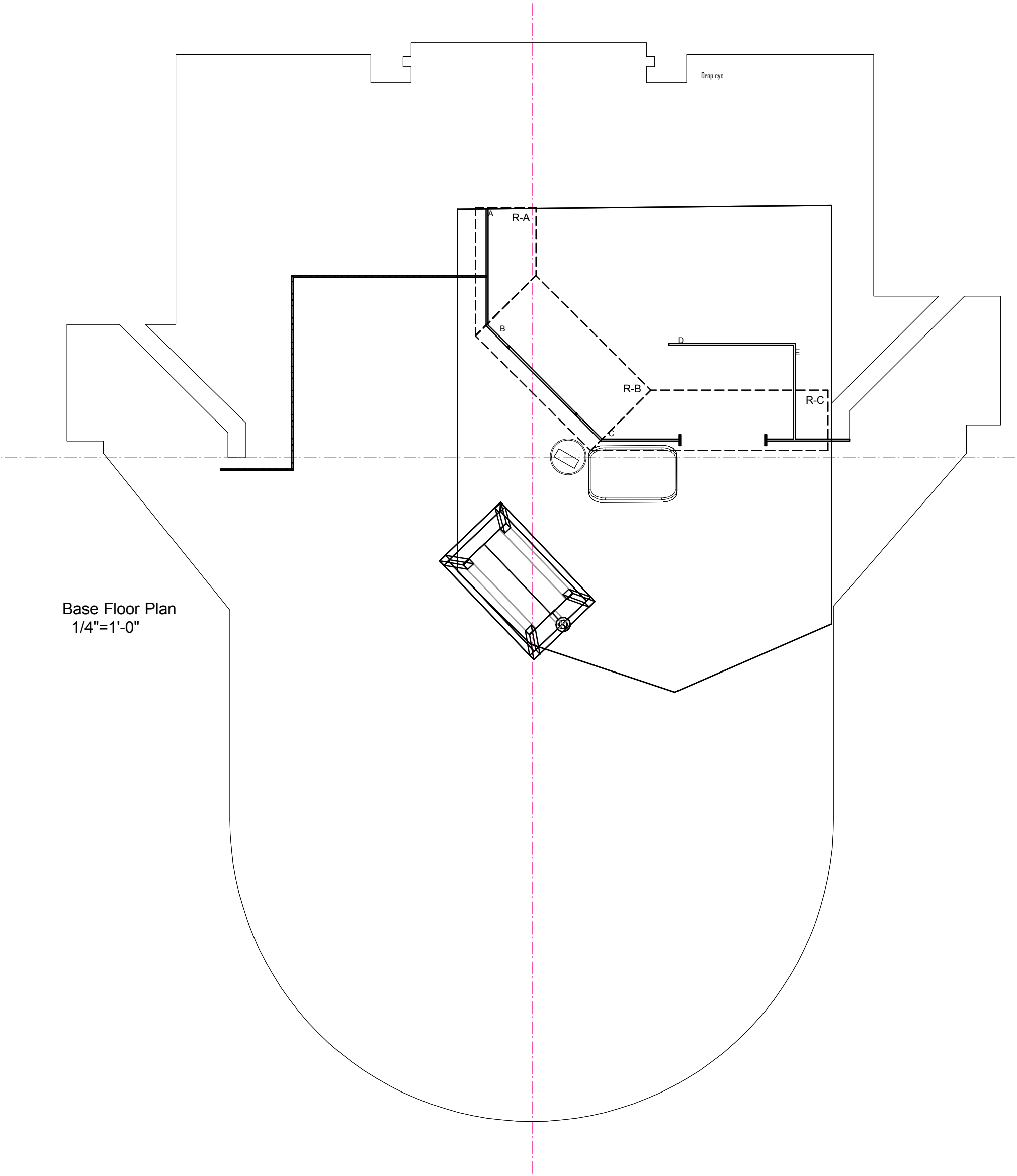
E

R-B

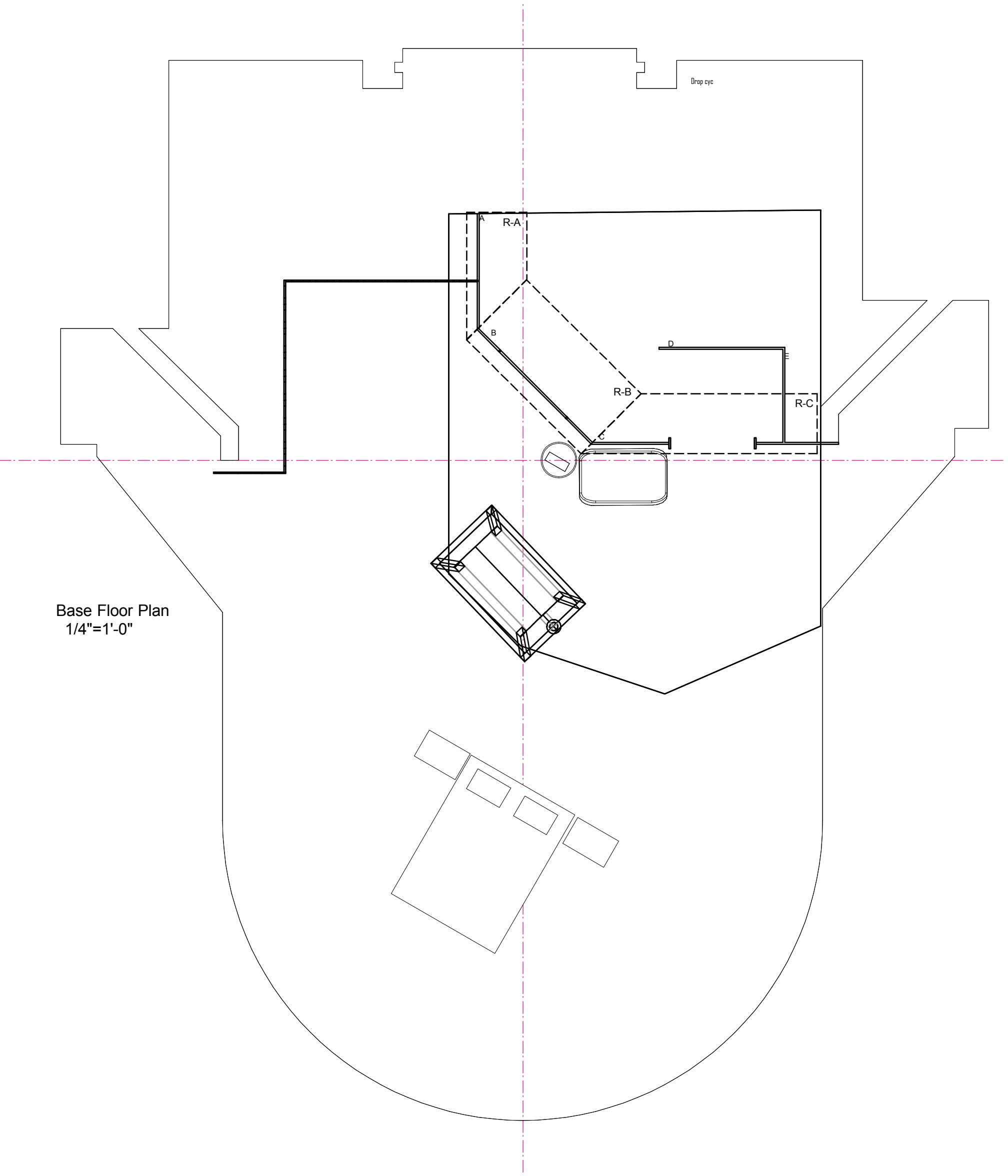
R-C

C

Base Floor Plan  
1/4"=1'-0"

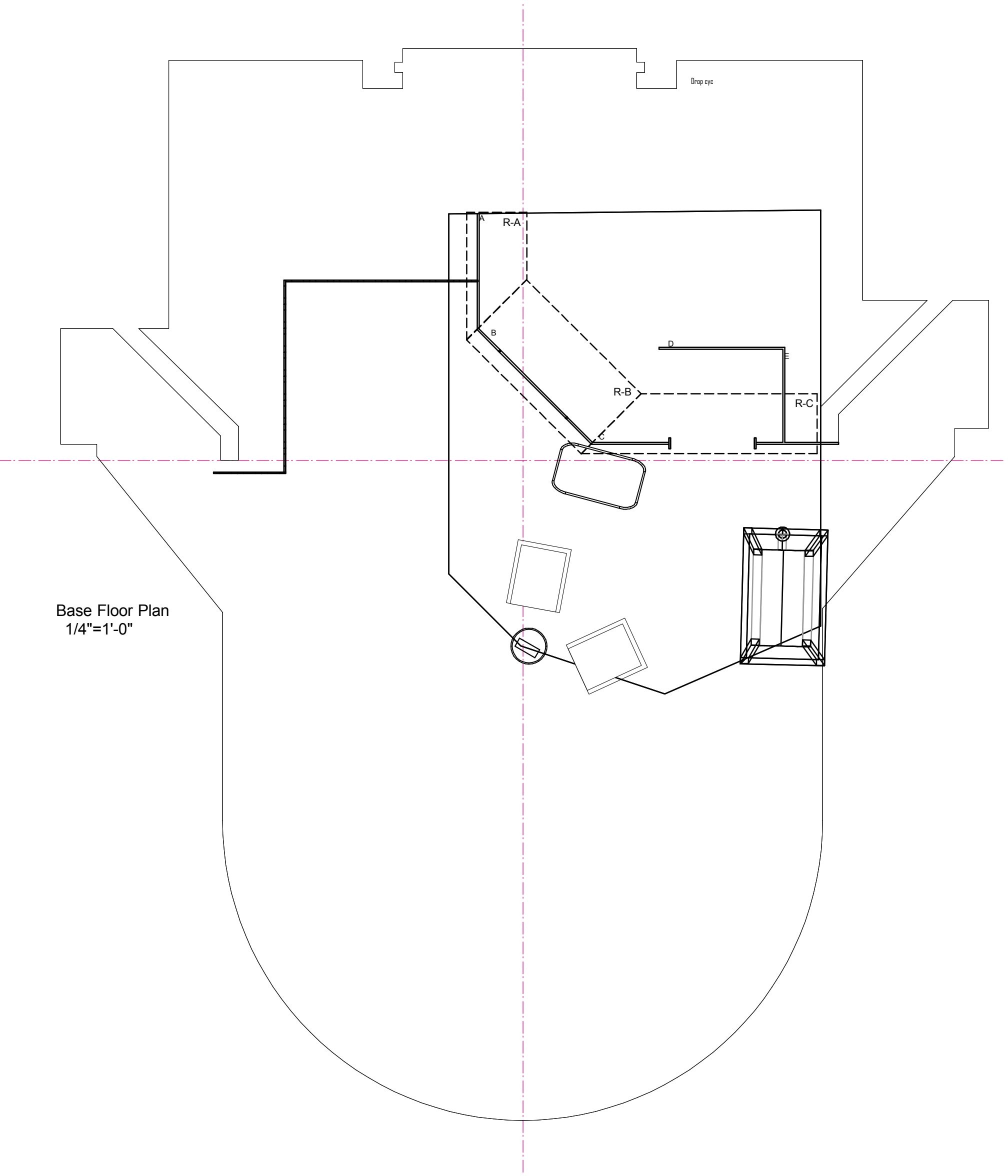


Base Floor Plan  
1/4"=1'-0"

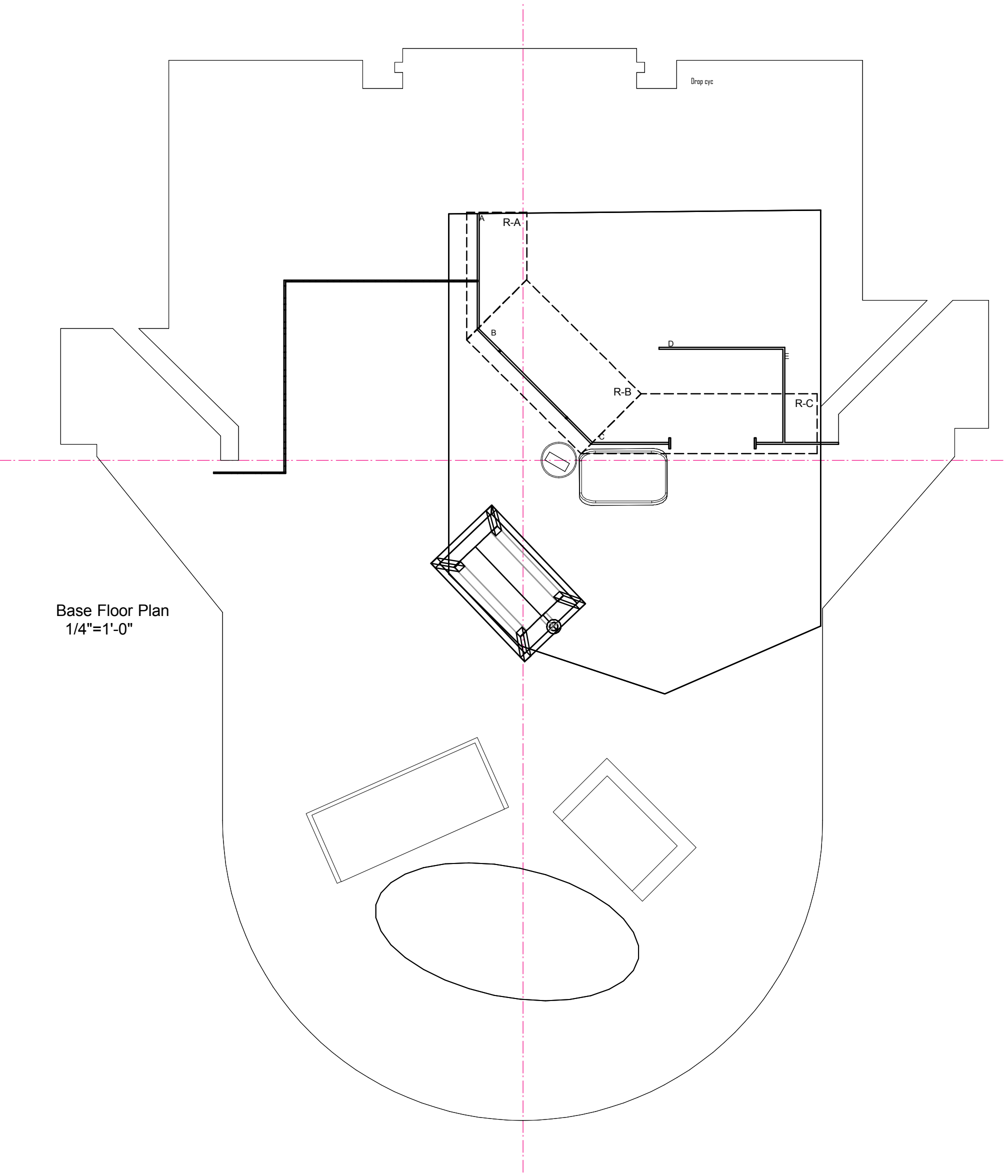




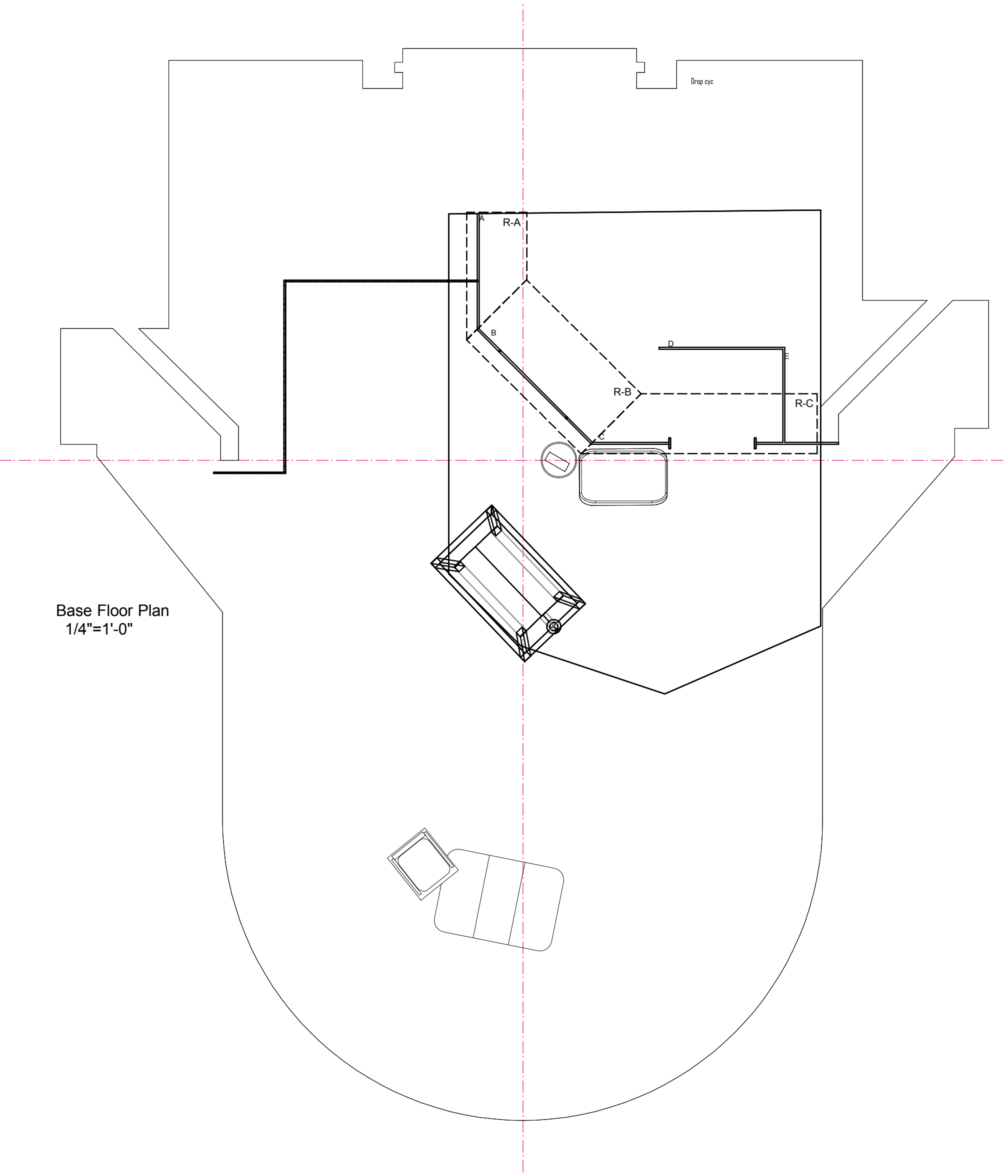
Base Floor Plan  
1/4"=1'-0"



Base Floor Plan  
1/4"=1'-0"



Base Floor Plan  
1/4"=1'-0"



Drop cyc	
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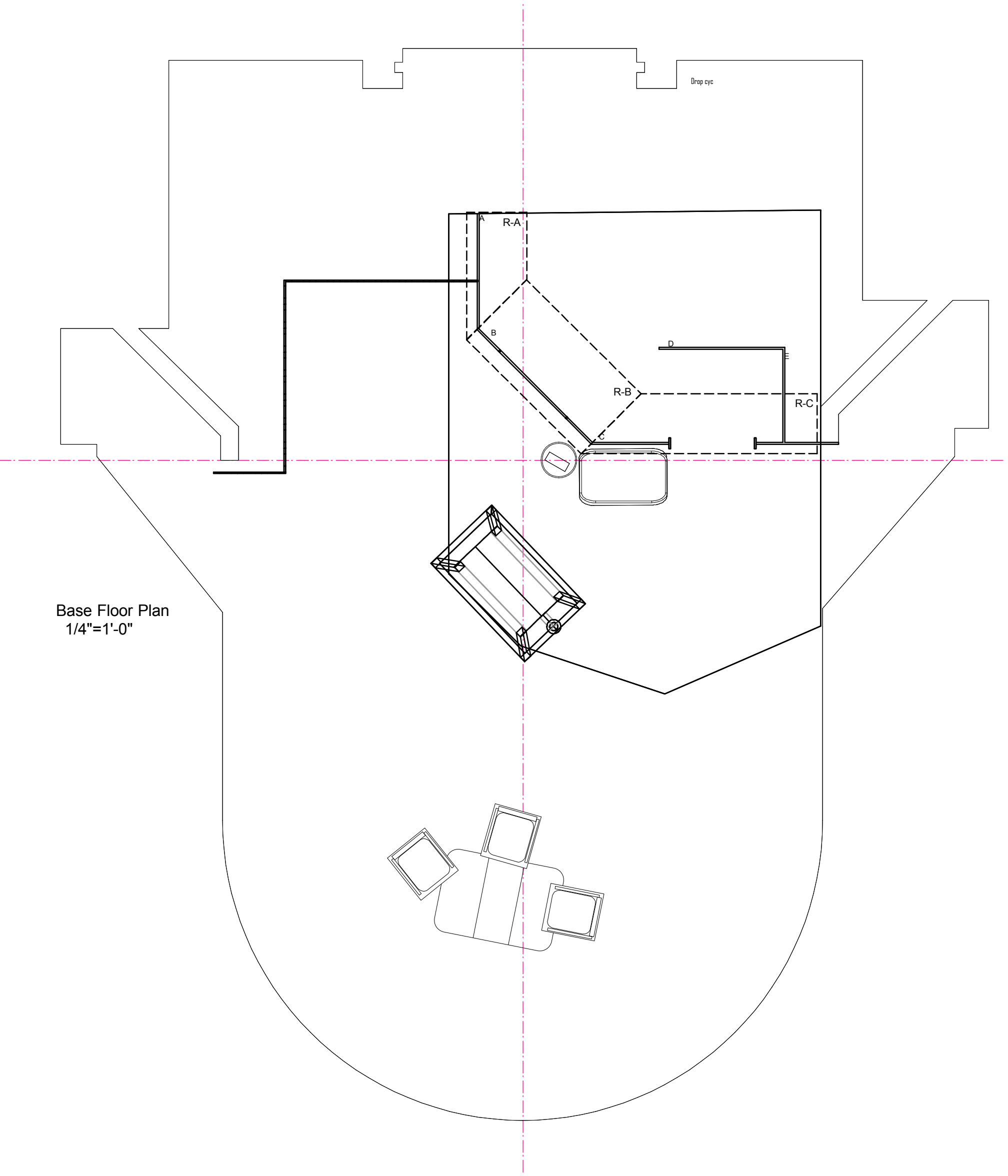
	A	R-A
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$$\text{R-B} \rightarrow$$

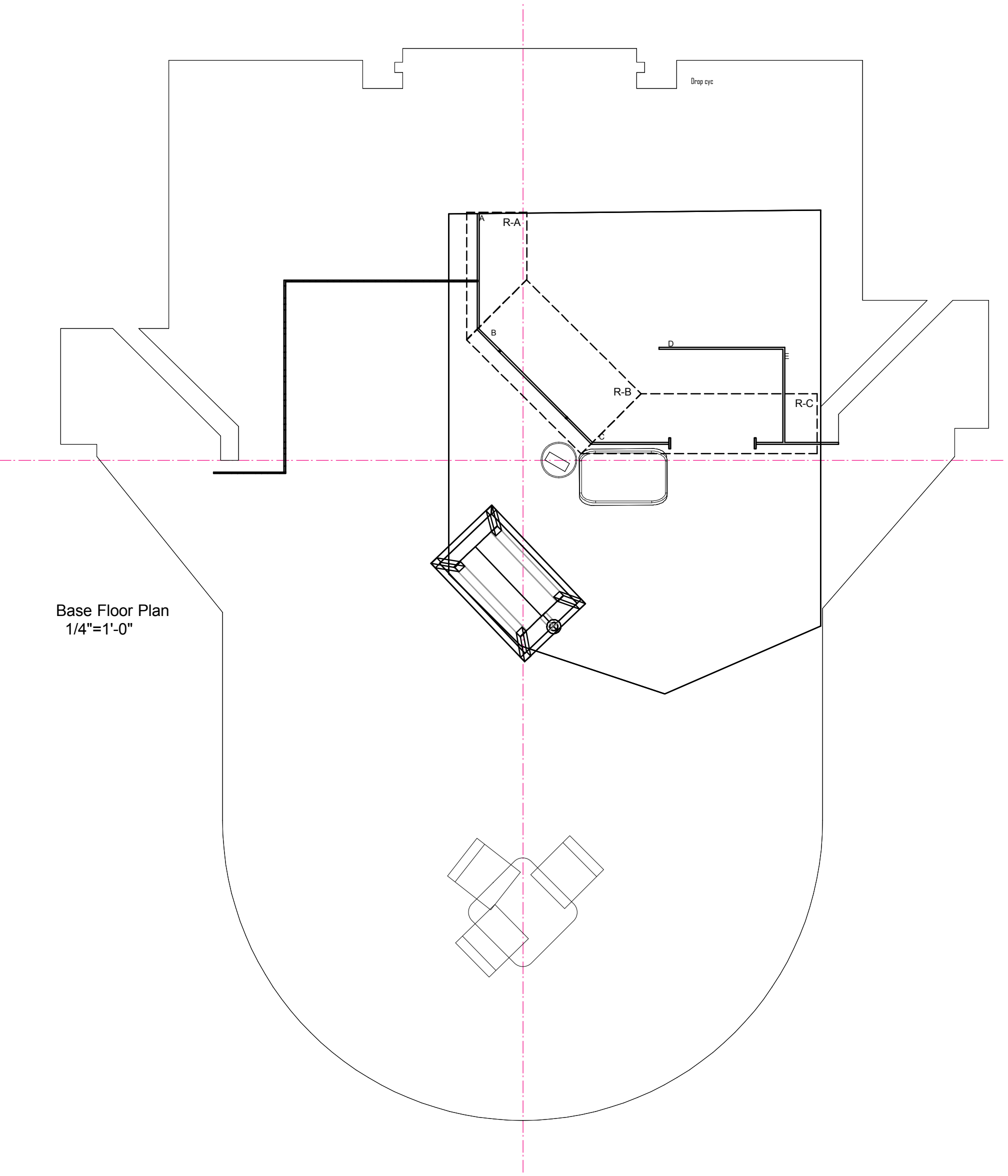
A diagram of a single room. It is a rectangle with a door on the left wall and a window on the right wall. The text "R-C" is written inside the room.

Base Floor Plan  
1/4"=1'-0"

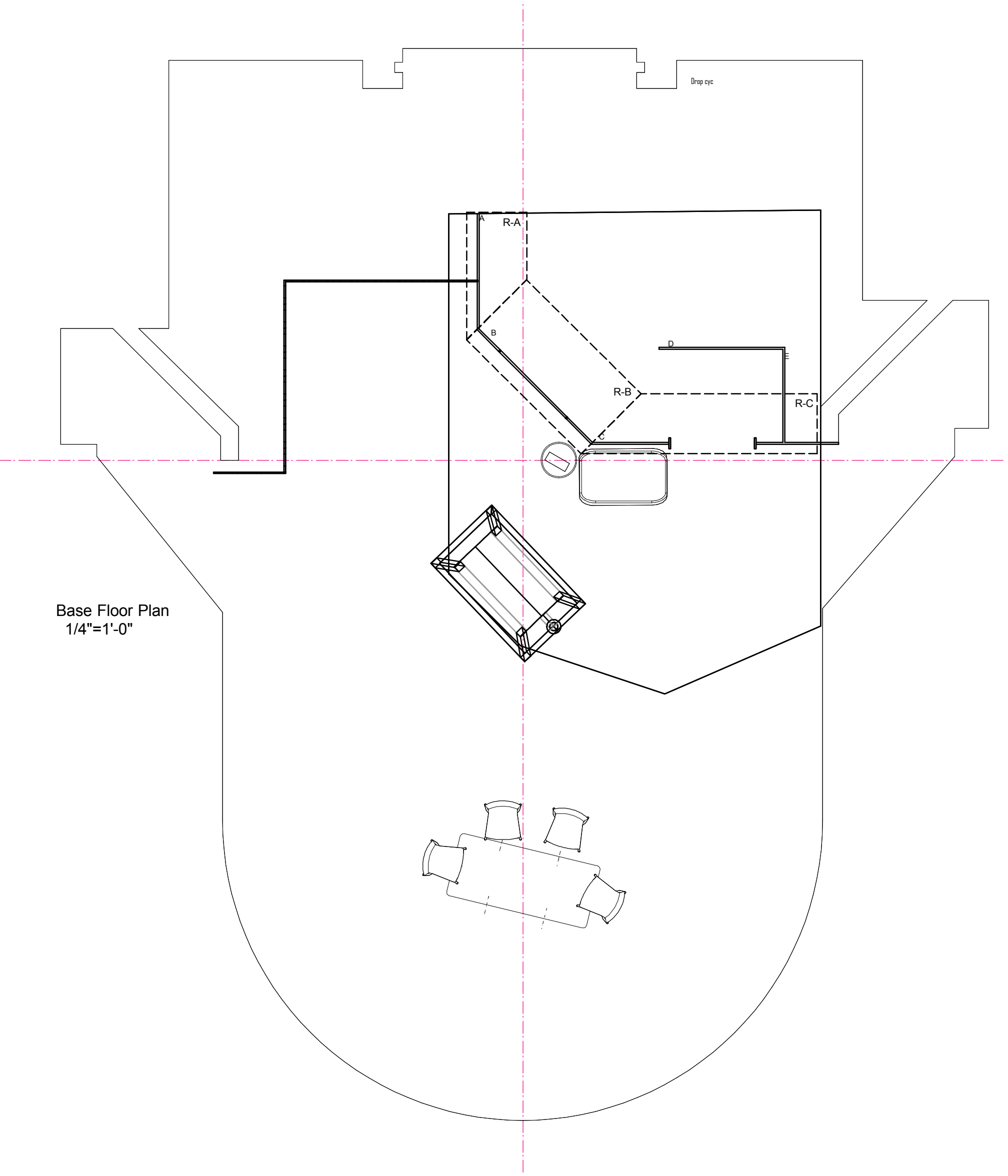
Base Floor Plan  
1/4"=1'-0"



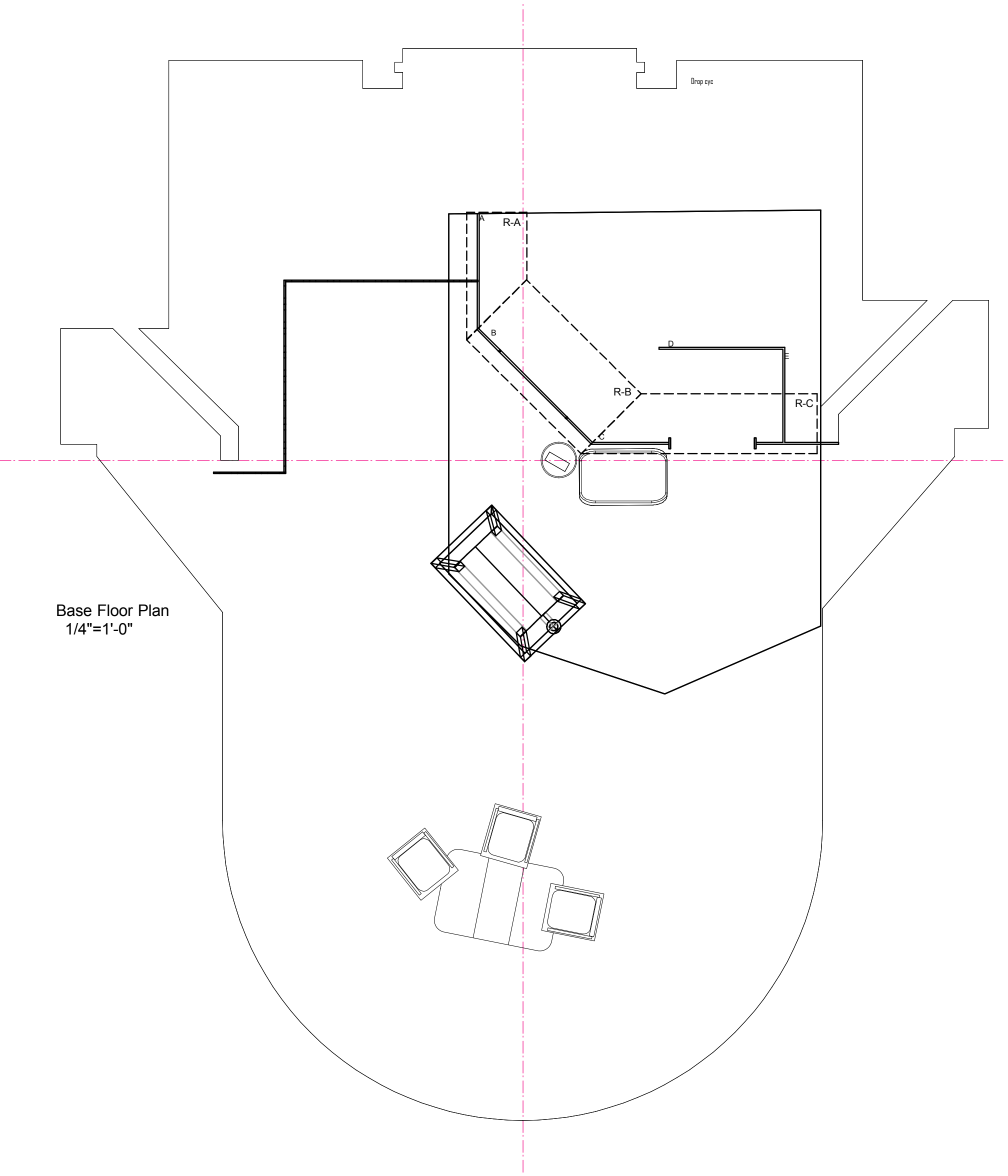
Base Floor Plan  
1/4"=1'-0"



Base Floor Plan  
1/4"=1'-0"

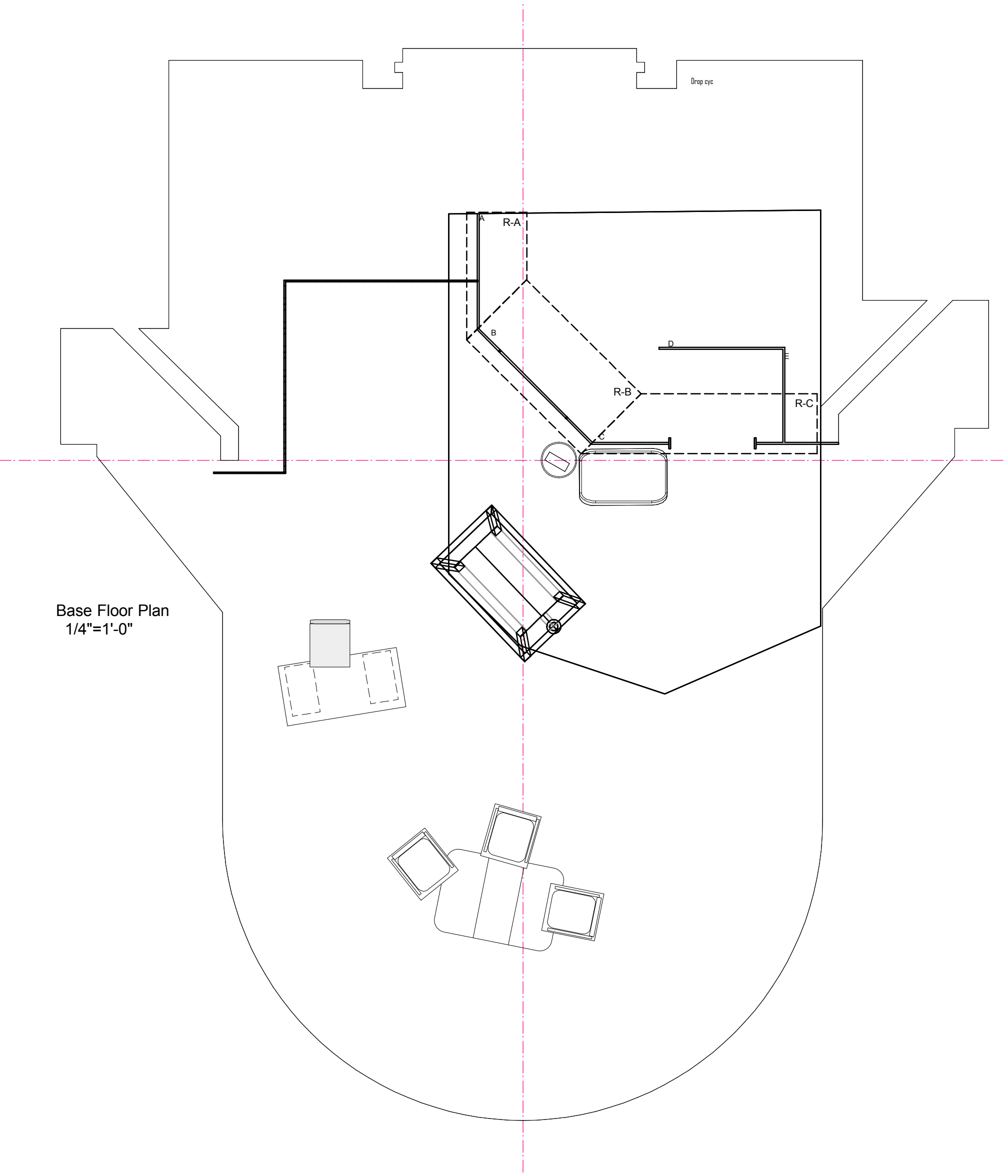


Base Floor Plan  
1/4"=1'-0"

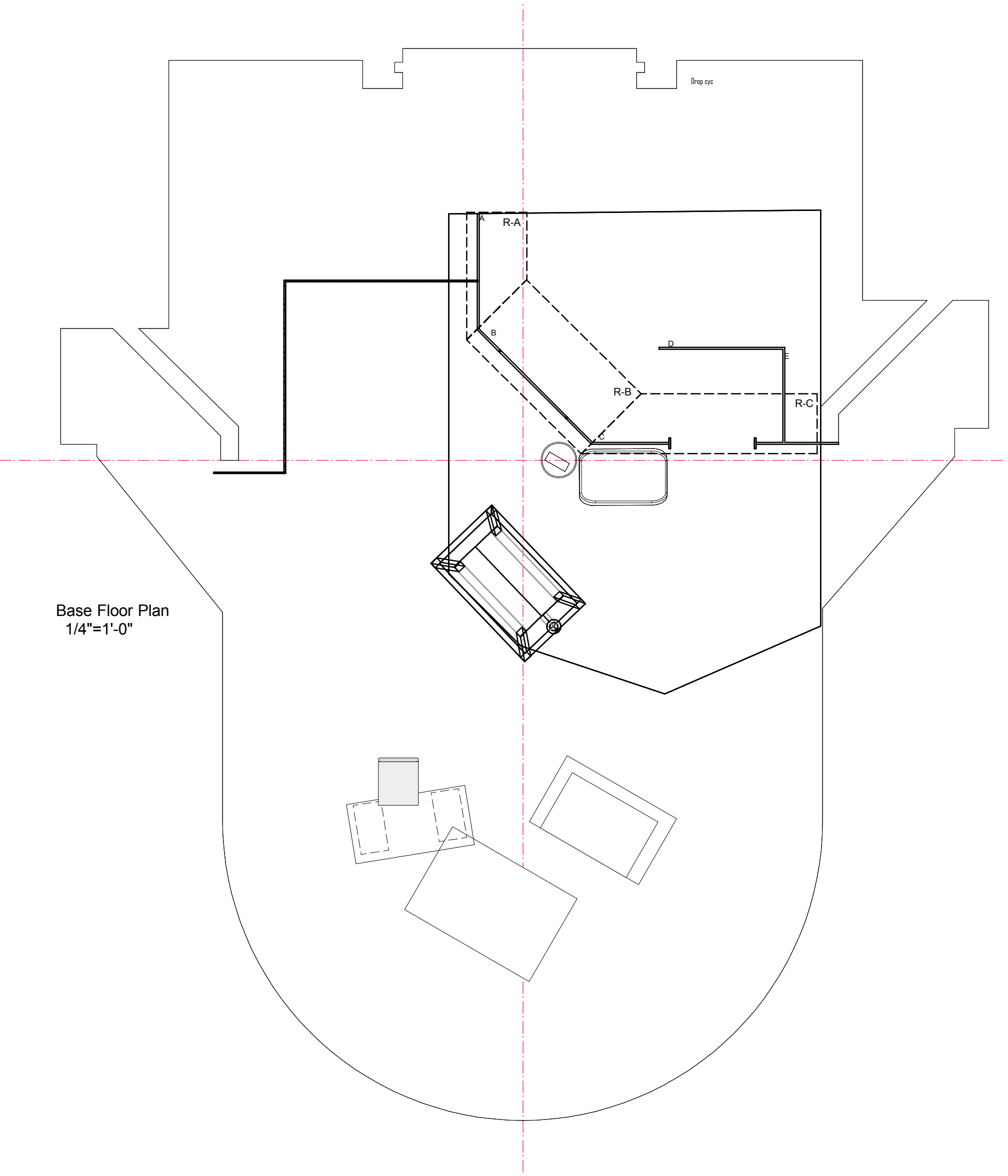




Base Floor Plan  
1/4"=1'-0"



Base Floor Plan  
1/4"=1'-0"



	Drop cyc
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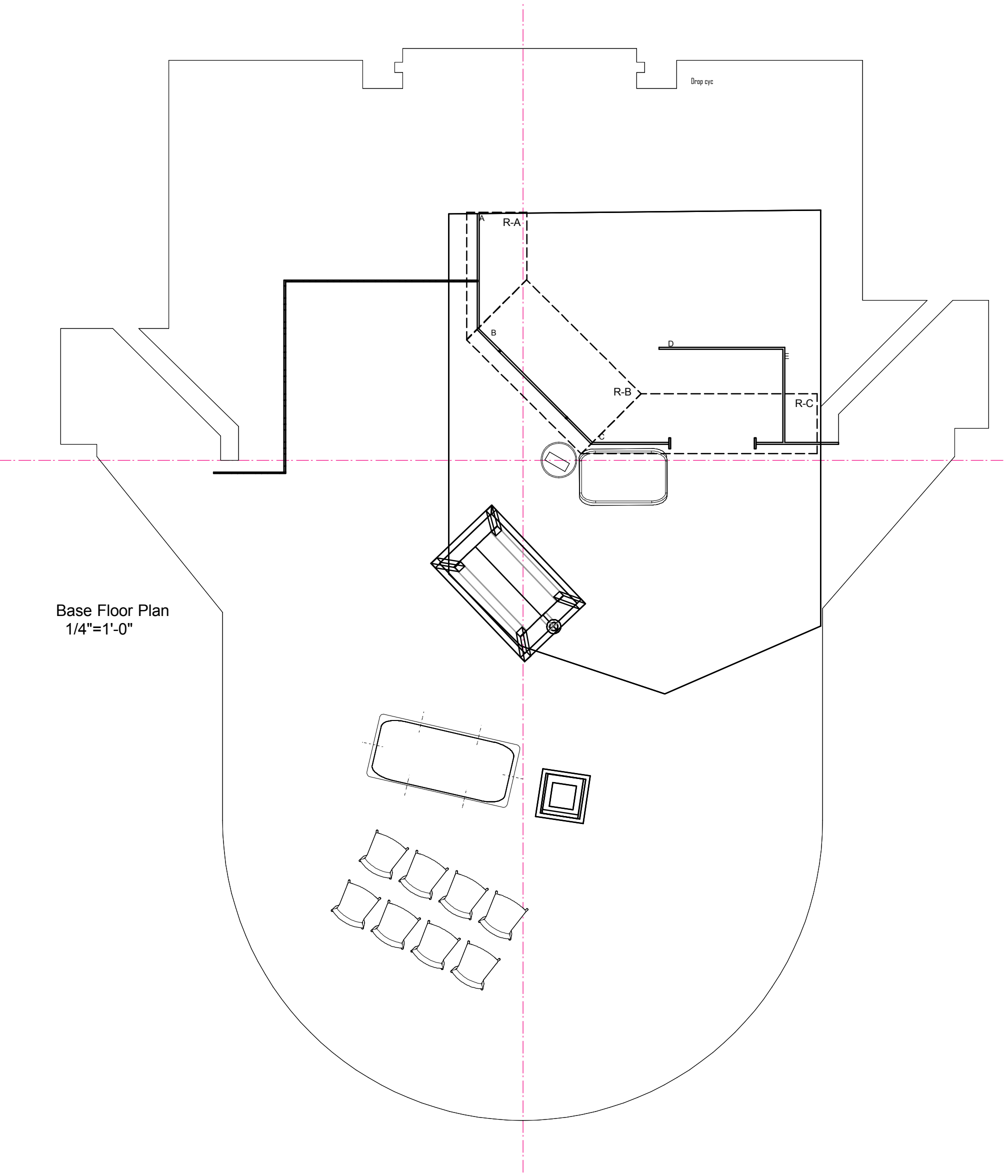
	A	R-A
--	---	-----

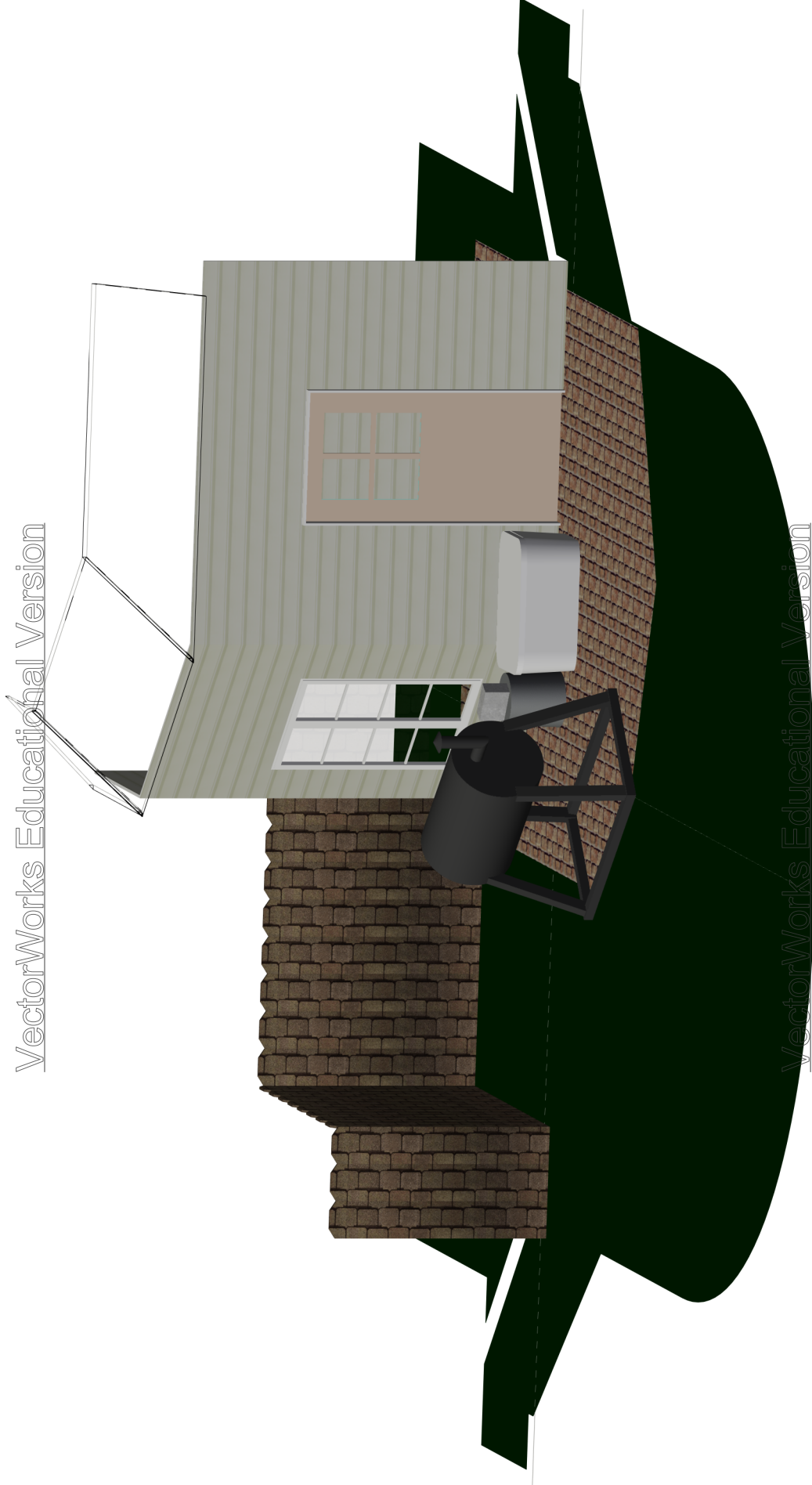
$$\text{R-B} \begin{array}{c} \diagup \\ \diagdown \end{array}$$

R-C

Base Floor Plan  
1/4"=1'-0"

Base Floor Plan  
1/4"=1'-0"



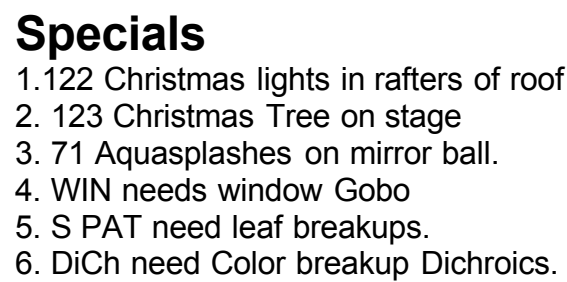


## APPENDIX B

## APPENDIX B

### LIGHT PLOT AND PAPERWORK

Creating a light plot generates a significant amount of additional paperwork. One needs to create a channel schedule, an instrument schedule and a color cut list. Fortunately, VectorWorks does all this for us from the information on the light plot.



Show Name <b>Con Mis Manos</b>		Location <b>Jeffers Theatre</b>
Scale <b>1/4"=1'-0"</b>	Designed by <b>L. Andrew Lopez</b>	Drawn by <b>L. Andrew Lopez</b>
Date <b>06-25-09</b>		File Name <b>.vwx</b>
Drawing # <b>1 of 1</b>	Drawing Name <b>Light Plot</b>	



## Con Mis Manos - Channel Schedule

06-24-09

Con Mis Manos  
Channel Schedule

L. Andrew Lopez

Channel	Dimmer Num	Inst Type	Vattag	Purpose	Color	Position
1	76 4	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T16	16	3rd Pipe
2	79 10	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T16	16	3rd Pipe
3	82 16	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T16	16	3rd Pipe
4	64 2	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T16	16	2nd Pipe
5	60 8	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T16	16	2nd Pipe
6	56 15	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T16	16	2nd Pipe
7	108 1	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T16	16	1st Pipe
8	111 6	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T16	16	1st Pipe
9	115 11	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T16	16	1st Pipe
10	122 3	Practical		CL	NC	
	122 2	Practical		CL	NC	
	122 5	Practical		CL	NC	
	122 4	Practical		CL	NC	
11	77 5	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T78	78	3rd Pipe
12	80 11	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T78	78	3rd Pipe
13	83 17	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T78	78	3rd Pipe
14	63 3	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T78	78	2nd Pipe
15	59 9	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T78	78	2nd Pipe
16	55 16	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T78	78	2nd Pipe
17	109 2	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T78	78	1st Pipe
18	112 7	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T78	78	1st Pipe
19	116 12	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T78	78	1st Pipe
20	123 1	Practical		Christmas Tree	NC	
21	78 6	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T56	56	3rd Pipe
22	81 12	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T56	56	3rd Pipe
23	84 18	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T56	56	3rd Pipe
24	62 4	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T56	56	2nd Pipe
25	58 11	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T56	56	2nd Pipe
26	54 17	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T56	56	2nd Pipe
27	110 3	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T56	56	1st Pipe
28	113 8	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T56	56	1st Pipe
29	117 13	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T56	56	1st Pipe
30	25 15	Source 4 36deg	575	WIN	6	5th Pipe
31	3 2	1KL6-30	1kw	A	8	5th Pipe
	51 4	1KL6-30	1kw	A	2	Right 1

## Con Mis Manos - Channel Schedule

32	8	3	1KL6-30	1kw	B	8	5th Pipe
	37	8	1KL6-30	1kw	B	2	Right 2
33	11	5	1KL6-30	1kw	C	8	5th Pipe
	39	7	1KL6-30	1kw	C	2	Right 2
34	4	1	1KL6-30	1kw	D	8	5th Pipe
	52	3	1KL6-30	1kw	D	2	Right 1
35	7	4	1KL6-30	1kw	E	8	5th Pipe
	38	6	1KL6-30	1kw	E	2	Right 2
36	10	6	1KL6-30	1kw	F	8	5th Pipe
	40	5	1KL6-30	1kw	F	2	Right 2
37	91	1	1KL6-30	1kw	G	8	3rd Pipe
	119	2	1KL6-30	1kw	G	2	Right 1
38	145	3	1KL6-30	1kw	H	2	Right 2
	155	1	1KL6-30	1kw	H	8	4th Pipe
39	143	4	1KL6-30	1kw	I	2	Right 2
	156	2	1KL6-30	1kw	I	8	4th Pipe
40	92	13	1KL6-30	1kw	J	8	Left 2
41	93	12	1KL6-30	1kw	K	8	Left 2
	120	1	1KL6-30	1kw	K	2	Right 1
42	73	2	1KL6-30	1kw	L	8	3rd Pipe
	144	2	1KL6-30	1kw	L	2	Right 2
43	74	3	1KL6-30	1kw	M	8	3rd Pipe
	142	1	1KL6-30	1kw	M	2	Right 2
44	31	15	1KL6-30	1kw	N	8	3rd Pipe
45	12	7	Source 4 36deg	575	DiCh	NC	5th Pipe
	20	10	Source 4 36deg	575	DiCh	NC	5th Pipe
46	30	12	Source 4 36deg	575	DiCh	NC	Right 2
	99	11	Source 4 36deg	575	DiCh	NC	Left 2
47	36	10	Source 4 36deg	575	S PAT	8	Right 2
48	94	10	Source 4 36deg	575	S PAT	8	Left 2
49	124	7	3 in Fresnel	100	Hall	8	
50	71	14	Aquasplash	250	MB	NC	3rd Pipe
	71	7	Aquasplash	250	MB	NC	3rd Pipe
51	19	12	1KL6-30	1kw	A	61	5th Pipe
	97	7	1KL6-30	1kw	A	61	Left 2
	125	6	3 in Fresnel	100	Glow	11	
52	22	14	1KL6-30	1kw	B	61	5th Pipe
	95	8	1KL6-30	1kw	B	61	Left 2
53	26	16	1KL6-30	1kw	C	61	5th Pipe
	67	4	1KL6-30	1kw	C	61	Left 1
54	18	11	1KL6-30	1kw	D	61	5th pipe
	98	6	1KL6-30	1kw	D	61	Left 2

## Con Mis Manos - Channel Schedule

55	21	13	1KL6-30	1kw	E	61	5th Pipe
	96	5	1KL6-30	1kw	E	61	Left 2
56	27	17	1KL6-30	1kw	F	61	5th Pipe
	68	3	1KL6-30	1kw	F	61	Left 1
57	139	4	1KL6-30	1kw	G	61	Left 2
	158	3	1KL6-30	1kw	G	61	4th Pipe
58	141	3	1KL6-30	1kw	H	61	Left 2
	159	4	1KL6-30	1kw	H	61	4th Pipe
59	33	21	1KL6-30	1kw	I	61	3rd Pipe
	106	2	1KL6-30	1kw	I	61	Left 1
60	88	8	1KL6-30	1kw	J	61	3rd Pipe
61	86	19	1KL6-30	1kw	K	61	3rd Pipe
	138	2	1KL6-30	1kw	K	61	Left 2
62	87	20	1KL6-30	1kw	L	61	3rd Pipe
	140	1	1KL6-30	1kw	L	61	Left 2
63	35	11	1KL6-30	1kw	M	61	Right 2
	105	1	1KL6-30	1kw	M	61	Left 1
64	34	13	1KL6-30	1kw	N	61	Right 2
65	146	4	FC-1	1000	Cyc	124	Backstage 2
	146	8	FC-1	1000	Cyc	124	Backstage 2
	151	12	FC-1	1000	Cyc	124	Backstage 2
66	147	3	FC-1	1000	Cyc	125	Backstage 2
	147	7	FC-1	1000	Cyc	125	Backstage 2
	152	11	FC-1	1000	Cyc	125	Backstage 2
67	148	2	FC-1	1000	Cyc	126	Backstage 2
	148	6	FC-1	1000	Cyc	126	Backstage 2
	153	10	FC-1	1000	Cyc	126	Backstage 2
68	149	1	FC-1	1000	Cyc	127	Backstage 2
	149	5	FC-1	1000	Cyc	127	Backstage 2
	154	9	FC-1	1000	Cyc	127	Backstage 2
69	46	5	1KL6-30	1kw	USL	8	Right 1
70	72	5	1KL6-30	1kw	USR	8	Left 1
71	16	9	16" Scoop	1kw	Work	NC	5th Pipe
	32	9	16" Scoop	1kw	Work	NC	Right 2
	90	9	16" Scoop	1kw	Work	NC	Left 2
76	14	8	1KL6-30	1kw	DSC	8	5th Pipe
77	125	6	3" Ficusnel	100	Glow	114	
78	7		1KL6-30	1kw	bcc	51	5th pipe

## Con Mis Manos - Instrument Schedule

6/24/09

Con Mis Manos  
Instrument Schedule

.. Andrew Lopez

Position	It Num	Inst Type	Vattag	Purpose	Color	Channel	Dimme
	1	Practical		Christmas Tree	NC	20	123
	2	Practical		CL	NC	10	122
	3	Practical		CL	NC	10	122
	4	Practical		CL	NC	10	122
	5	Practical		CL	NC	10	122
	6	3 in Fresnel	100	Glow	11	51	125
	7	3 in Fresnel	100	Hall	8	49	124
1st Pipe	1	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T16	16	7	108
	2	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T78	78	17	109
	3	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T56	56	27	110
	6	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T16	16	8	111
	7	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T78	78	18	112
	8	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T56	56	28	113
	11	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T16	16	9	115
	12	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T78	78	19	116
	13	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T56	56	29	117
2nd Pipe	2	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T16	16	4	64
	3	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T78	78	14	63
	4	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T56	56	24	62
	8	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T16	16	5	60
	9	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T78	78	15	59
	11	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T56	56	25	58
	15	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T16	16	6	56
	16	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T78	78	16	55
	17	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T56	56	26	54
3rd Pipe	1	1KL6-30	1kw	G	8	37	91
	2	1KL6-30	1kw	L	8	42	73
	3	1KL6-30	1kw	M	8	43	74
	4	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T16	16	1	76
	5	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T78	78	11	77
	6	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T56	56	21	78
	7	Aquasplash	250	MB	NC	50	71
	8	1KL6-30	1kw	J	61	60	88
	10	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T16	16	2	79
	11	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T78	78	12	80
	12	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T56	56	22	81



## Con Mis Manos - Instrument Schedule

	14	Aquasplash	250	MB	NC	50	71
	15	1KL6-30	1kw	N	8	44	31
	16	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T16	16	3	82
	17	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T78	78	13	83
	18	65Q 6" Fres	750W	T56	56	23	84
	19	1KL6-30	1kw	K	61	61	86
	20	1KL6-30	1kw	L	61	62	87
	21	1KL6-30	1kw	I	61	59	33
4th Pipe	1	1KL6-30	1kw	H	8	38	155
	2	1KL6-30	1kw	I	8	39	156
	3	1KL6-30	1kw	G	61	57	158
	4	1KL6-30	1kw	H	61	58	159
5th Pipe	1	1KL6-30	1kw	D	8	34	4
	2	1KL6-30	1kw	A	8	31	3
	3	1KL6-30	1kw	B	8	32	8
	4	1KL6-30	1kw	E	8	35	7
	5	1KL6-30	1kw	C	8	33	11
	6	1KL6-30	1kw	F	8	36	10
	7	Source 4 36deg	575	DiCh	NC	45	12
	8	1KL6-30	1kw	DSC	8	76	14
	9	16" Scoop	1kw	Work	NC	71	16
	10	Source 4 36deg	575	DiCh	NC	45	20
	11	1KL6-30	1kw	D	61	54	18
	12	1KL6-30	1kw	A	61	51	19
	13	1KL6-30	1kw	E	61	55	21
	14	1KL6-30	1kw	B	61	52	22
	15	Source 4 36deg	575	WIN	6	30	25
	16	1KL6-30	1kw	C	61	53	26
	17	1KL6-30	1kw	F	61	56	27
Backstage 2	1	FC-1	1000	Cyc	127	68	149
	2	FC-1	1000	Cyc	126	67	148
	3	FC-1	1000	Cyc	125	66	147
	4	FC-1	1000	Cyc	124	65	146
	5	FC-1	1000	Cyc	127	68	149
	6	FC-1	1000	Cyc	126	67	148
	7	FC-1	1000	Cyc	125	66	147
	8	FC-1	1000	Cyc	124	65	146
	9	FC-1	1000	Cyc	127	68	154
	10	FC-1	1000	Cyc	126	67	153
	11	FC-1	1000	Cyc	125	66	152
	12	FC-1	1000	Cyc	124	65	151

## Con Mis Manos - Instrument Schedule

Left 1	1	1KL6-30	1kw	M	61	63	105
	2	1KL6-30	1kw	I	61	59	106
	3	1KL6-30	1kw	F	61	56	68
	4	1KL6-30	1kw	C	61	53	67
	5	1KL6-30	1kw	USR	8	70	72
Left 2	1	1KL6-30	1kw	L	61	62	140
	2	1KL6-30	1kw	K	61	61	138
	3	1KL6-30	1kw	H	61	58	141
	4	1KL6-30	1kw	G	61	57	139
	5	1KL6-30	1kw	E	61	55	96
	6	1KL6-30	1kw	D	61	54	98
	7	1KL6-30	1kw	A	61	51	97
	8	1KL6-30	1kw	B	61	52	95
	9	16" Scoop	1kw	Work	NC	71	90
	10	Source 4 36deg	575	S PAT	8	48	94
	11	Source 4 36deg	575	DiCh	NC	46	99
	12	1KL6-30	1kw	K	8	41	93
	13	1KL6-30	1kw	J	8	40	92
Right 1	1	1KL6-30	1kw	K	2	41	120
	2	1KL6-30	1kw	G	2	37	119
	3	1KL6-30	1kw	D	2	34	52
	4	1KL6-30	1kw	A	2	31	51
	5	1KL6-30	1kw	USL	8	69	46
Right 2	1	1KL6-30	1kw	M	2	43	142
	2	1KL6-30	1kw	L	2	42	144
	3	1KL6-30	1kw	H	2	38	145
	4	1KL6-30	1kw	I	2	39	143
	5	1KL6-30	1kw	F	2	36	40
	6	1KL6-30	1kw	E	2	35	38
	7	1KL6-30	1kw	C	2	33	39
	8	1KL6-30	1kw	B	2	32	37
	9	16" Scoop	1kw	Work	NC	71	32
	10	Source 4 36deg	575	S PAT	8	47	36
	11	1KL6-30	1kw	M	61	63	35
	12	Source 4 36deg	575	DiCh	NC	46	30
	13	1KL6-30	1kw	N	61	64	34

06-24-09

**Con Mis Manos**  
**Color Cut List**

L. Andrew Lopez

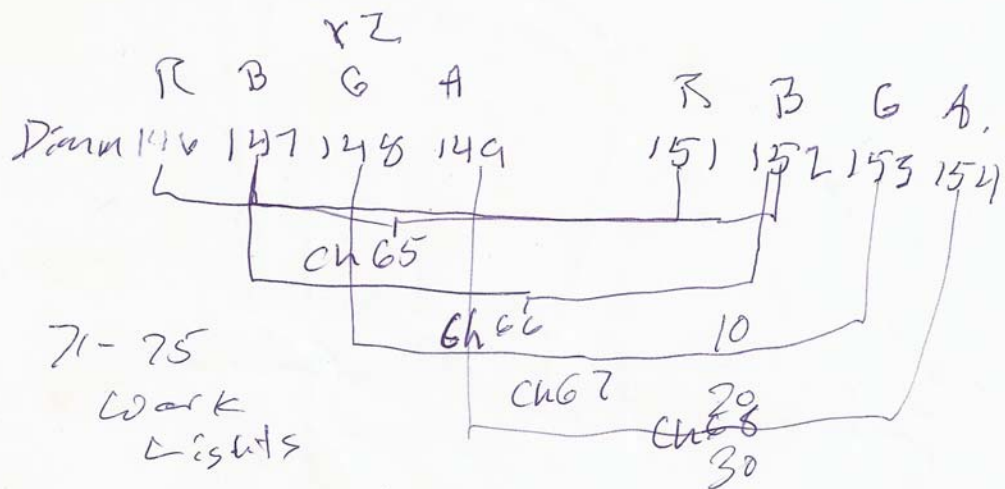
Color	Frame Size	# Cuts
8	7.5	16
	6.25	2
	3 3/4"	1
61	7.5	26
2	7.5	12
78	7.5	9
16	7.5	9
56	7.5	9
NC	16"X16"	3
	NA	2
		5
	6.25	4
125	10"x11.5"	3
126	10"x11.5"	3
127	10"x11.5"	3
124	10"x11.5"	3
6	6.25	1
11	3 3/4"	1
8	7.5	1

06-24-09

Con Mis Manos  
Color Cut List

L. Andrew Lopez

Color	Frame Size	# Cuts
✓ 2	7.5	26 → 13x2 + 13x108
✓ 208	6.25	2
✓ 61	7.5	26
✓ 78	7.5	9
✓ 16	7.5	9
✓ 56	7.5	9
NC	16"X16"	3
<del>88/62</del>	<del>6.25</del>	<del>6</del>
N/A	NA	2
		5
Dich Gobo	6.25	4
126	10"x11.5"	3
125	10"x11.5"	3
124	10"x11.5"	3
127	10"x11.5"	3
6	6.25	1





## APPENDIX C

## APPENDIX C

### SCRIPT

The complete script for *Con Mis Manos* with associated light cues marked by the letter Q and numbered from one through 67. These are scanned copies of the script that I used to develop the light design for the production.

# Con Mis Manos/ *With My Hands*

A play in two acts

LQ1 Top of Show

Pg. 2

LQ2 House Down

**Con Mis Manos/With My Hands**

LQ3 lights up

**Act I Scene 1****Time:** 1991

**Setting:** The Back yard of a lower Middle class home in South Texas. (Spotlight comes up on a dark stage. This reveals a big plastic cooler where David sits. Before him there is an overturned bucket which holds a portable radio. As the light comes up, David turns on the radio, adjusts the tuner to a *tejano* station and then extends the antenna.)

**DAVID:**

FM 98.6, *La Comadre*; my dad's favorite. I remember, back when I was a kid, growing up in South Texas, I used to think that my dad, Esteban Gutierrez, was the biggest, strongest man alive. I believed that in my heart until I took my parents to my first grade open house. (A Beat) He was rather short in comparison to everyone else's dad. The difference was a little more than noticeable. Still, with those arms of his, and the way he would just strip weeds from the ground without the aid of gloves, I was sure he could take them all. Cause you see, what he lacked in height, he more than made up for in *machismo* and character. "Con mis manos" He'd tell me. "With these hands your *papi* can fix anything." He was almost right.

Q3.5

(Lights up on stage and we see that David is not alone. To his left is a barbeque grill. At the far left of the stage, there is a screen door leading to the inside of the house. Esteban is standing behind it holding a barbeque fork.)

First page with light cues showing format

ESTEBAN:

*Súbele un poquito* David, I can't hear it.

(David raises the volume while  
Esteban lights a cigarette)

ESTEBAN:

(Talking with cigarette in mouth) *Mira no mas*, David. *Puro fajita y pollo*. Our very own *botana* platter.

DAVID:

It smells great. *Te aventastes*, Dad.

ESTEBAN:

*Simón que sí*, David. This is my best work yet. *Oyes*, grab me Natural Light from the cooler.

(David turns off the radio and  
crosses to the cooler  
and grabs two beers)

DAVID:

(To audience) OK, Natural Light has got to be the skankiest beer ever, but my dad swore by it. (Hands beer to Esteban) Here you go Dad. Can I drink one with you?-

ESTEBAN:

No.

DAVID:

C'mon-

ESTEBAN:

(Sternly) *Ya te dije* David.

DAVID:

Uncle Hector let me drink last week at his house.

ESTEBAN:

*No me piques los ojos* David. You're lying. Put it away and come watch me cook the *carne*. You've got to learn some time.

Pg. 4

(David puts the beer away, crosses to the BBQ grill and looks over Esteban's shoulders.)

ESTEBAN:

Look, you see how the flame touches the carne without smothering it. Now I leave them on their sides for several minutes before I flip them over. There's no exact time David, *no mas por un ratito*. Oyes, where's your mom with that *cebolla*?

DAVID:

She's taking a nap. Her headaches are bothering her again.

ESTEBAN:

*Ujale*. Pos, go inside and get me *unas cuantas* onions ...como five.

DAVID:

I'll be right back.

(David takes off stage left. Esteban minds the BBQ and starts humming along with the radio. David returns shortly after with five onions)

DAVID:

Hey, are you going to make a meat patty for Jessica? You know she doesn't like barbeque.

ESTEBAN:

Ah, *pues que coma soquete*. She needs to teach herself how to eat *con la familia*. She is lucky her father makes money enough to afford to treat everyone to a barbeque *de ves en cuando*. *Sabes que David?* *En mi tiempo*, when I was your little sister's age...-

DAVID:

(Sarcastically) *Ahora si*. Here we go.

ESTEBAN:

(Annoyed) Oyes, *estoy hablando contigo*, David.

DAVID:  
Sorry Dad.

ESTEBAN:  
*Bueno, pos* where was I?

(Esteban finally ashes his cigarette for the first time and realizes he's been smoking a filter for a while now. He puts it out and lights another.)

ESTEBAN:  
*En mi tiempo*, we'd be lucky if we had enough comida to go around. Your *abuelita* had to cook for 15 kids. She'd have to spread it out and get creative. We would eat *tamales de frijoles*, *tamales de pollo*, ...even *tamales de nopales*. Guess who had to pick the cactus to make those David? Eh? Me and your *pinche Tio Hector*. And we couldn't afford knives. Oh no. So we'd have to pick and collect the cactus *con los manos*. With these hands right here, David.

(The lights over the two fade to purple. David steps to the side as a spotlight comes up on him.)

DAVID:  
(To audience) One thing you've got to understand about my dad is that the barbeque grill was more than just a cooking device for him. It was his soapbox and his pulpit. And that meat fork was his microphone. His sermons centered on a variety of topics like:  
Current Affairs...

(Lights up on Esteban)

ESTEBAN:  
Your *pinché Tío Hector* still hasn't returned my ladder.

DAVID:  
Racism.

ESTEBAN:  
*Los gringos* will never respect us as equals David...

ESTEBAN:

Edward James Olmos should have had that Oscar for "Stand and Deliver", *y es todo*.

DAVID:

Religion.

ESTEBAN

Your mom makes sure the entire family goes to heaven. I make sure the car is running well enough to make the trip.

DAVID:

The problems with the Hispanic community.

ESTEBAN:

*Es que*, there's no unity. Los Mexicanos don't care about the Tejanos. The Tejanos don't care about the Cubanos. The Cubanos don't care about the Puerto Riqueños. The Puerto Riqueños don't care about building a decent soccer team, but that's a story for another *tiempo*. I think the problem with our *raza* is that there are too many names to choose from. *Latino, Chicano, Hispano, Mejicano Cubano* Ay ya yai... Look at the Africanos, no matter where they're from they are black and united because of it. Just like all the gringos are white. Just a color, easy to remember. *Bueno*, I thought about it, and from now on we should all be called brown.

DAVID:

(To Esteban) Brown?

ESTEBAN:

*Si* brown.

DAVID:

But not every one is as dark as you. Look at Tía Sulema?

ESTEBAN:

*Fíjate que si*. I'll go a little lighter then. How about (pause) *leche quemada*.

DAVID:

Caramel?



Pg. 7

ESTEBAN:

It's perfect and it comes in different shades of brown just like we-

DAVID:

(To audience) I'll cut him off there because he can go all day on that tangent alone.

Esteban:

David, I think some of the *fajitas* are done. Go get me a ~~sopera~~ from the *cocina* to put them in.

*Basija*

(Jessica runs out to the BBQ grill too distracted to notice that she let the screen door slam behind her.)

JESSICA:

Papi, Papi! Mom just-

ESTEBAN:

-Jessica, how many times do I have to tell you about the screen door? (To David) *Catorce, esta juerguita.*

JESSICA:

I'm sorry, but Mom-

ESTEBAN:

*Bueno, vale más que* next time you close the door right. Now what were you going to say?

JESSICA:

Mommy fell off the bed.

ESTEBAN:

(David and Esteban snicker) *Ah, que señora tonta.* She probably just had a nightmare. *Pos,* is she alright?

JESSICA:

She's not moving.

(Esteban lets out an elongated exhale of cigarette smoke as he stands there stunned.)

Pg. 8

Q4

He then snaps out of it and bolts for the door dropping the meat fork and the fajita on it on the ground. David and Jessica follow after him. Lights out.)

**Act I Scene 2**

**Setting:** Esteban's Car

**Time:** Moments later

DAVID:

(To Audience) When we got inside the house she was just laying there, motionless on the floor.

(Esteban and Jessica discover Josefina lying on the floor offstage.)

ESTEBAN:

(From offstage) Josefina.

JESSICA:

-Mommy!

DAVID

Without any hesitation my dad just scooped her up in his arms and ran her outside.

Q5

(Esteban enters with Josefina in his arms, Jessica is close behind.)

ESTEBAN:

David, agarra las llaves y abre la puerta for me and your mother!

(David unlocks and opens the door for his Esteban.)

ESTEBAN:

Jessica get in the front seat.

Scene Change with resulting cues

Pg. 9

DAVID:

She never left his arms. I had never seen him like that.

(A barely audible Esteban is heard pleading with Josefina as he positions her in the back seat.)

DAVID:

He was just pleading with her, pleading with her to wake up. And then, he did the strangest thing... he tossed me the keys.

ESTEBAN:

David, get in the front seat, you're driving!

DAVID:

But Dad I don't-

ESTEBAN:

-No mas hazlo! Dale.

(David fumbles with the keys, mirror and tries to turn on the car a couple of times.)

DAVID:

Ok. Ok. (To audience) You gotta understand, all I had ever done in that car, up to that point, was turn in on to hear the radio while I washed it. He let me drive it back from the gas station under his supervision once... once.

ESTEBAN:

Apúrale David!

DAVID:

I'm trying!

ESTEBAN:

Give it some gas, mijo.

(David finally starts the car.)

ESTEBAN:

C'mon Josefina. C'mon. Levántate. Wake up!...

JESSICA:  
Is Mom going to be OK?

ESTEBAN:  
Not now Jessica! No mas ayuda a tu hermano a manejar.

(Esteban's hands clasp Josefina's together as he tries to pray.)

ESTEBAN:  
(Praying nervously) Padre... Padre... Padre nuestro que estas... que estas... David, what comes next?

DAVID:  
What next? What are you talking about, next?

ESTEBAN:  
In the Lord's Prayer, *mijo*. What's next in the Lord's Prayer?

DAVID:  
Um... It's "Padre nuestro... que estas en los cielos"

ESTEBAN:  
*En los cielo's... que estas en los cielos, santificado sea tu nombre...*

DAVID:  
I'm hitting "I" Road. Which way do I turn?

ESTEBAN:  
*Pa la izquierda. Santificado sea tu nombre... (Praying)  
Vénganos hoy en tu reino... haga señor tu voluntad así en...  
así en la tierra-*

JESSICA:  
How come she's not moving?

ESTEBAN:  
Jessica, por-please! *Así en la tierra... como en los-* Pass this car David.

JESSICA:  
*Papi*, the light's turning red.

ESTEBAN:

There is no one else here. *No mas dale David!*

DAVID:

(Frustrated) OK!

ESTEBAN:

*Como en los cielos... El pan nuestro de cada día danolo hoy... Perdona nuestras deudas asi como nosotros perdonamos a nuestros deudores-You need to get on the Express-Way. And look for the Jackson Road exit. It'll come up in a while. Jessica, pela tus ojos también. (Praying) No nos dejes caer en tentación mas libranos del mal... Por que el tuyo es el reino el poder y la gloria por siempre jamás... Amen. David!*

DAVID:

What?! I'm on Jackson, what?!

ESTEBAN:

Turn on the head lights. They're on the dashboard. *Y dime when we're about to hit Ridge Road. (Praying) Padre nuestro que estas en los cielos, santificado sea tu nombre...*

(Lights fade out.)

### ACT I Scene 3

**Setting:** The hospital waiting room

**Time:** 12:25 AM

(Lights up slowly on David and Jessica. They are sitting on a bench in the waiting room. Jessica is leaning on the chair asleep.)

DAVID:

Shhh. (To audience) It didn't make any sense at the time. Me, a fifteen year old kid, entrusted with the duty of driving the family to the hospital during a crisis situation. Looking back, I guess I had to because for whatever reason my dad couldn't.

Q8

(As David puts the keys back in pocket, Jessica wakes up from the noise.)

JESSICA:  
David, where's Mom at? Is she gonna be OK?

DAVID:  
The doctors are still with her. Don't worry Jessica. She's probably just bumped her head.

JESSICA:  
Her head looked fine to me. Why wasn't she moving David?

DAVID:  
I don't know. Look, here.

(David reaches for his wallet and gives his sister two dollars)

DAVID:  
I saw some vending machines just past the lobby, near the bathrooms. Go get us some snacks.

JESSICA:  
Thanks David. I'll be right back.

(Jessica exits stage right. David sits there for a moment in deep thought. Esteban comes in looking distraught and physically exhausted.)

f.3

ESTEBAN:  
*Los doctores me dicen que they're going to run some tests or something on your mother.*

DAVID:  
Is she OK?

ESTEBAN:  
*Si, she is just fine. She doesn't even remember falling off the bed. Allí estamos esperando some doctor to come*



ESTEBAN:

and check on your mother. *Creo que un especialista*, a specialist is going to do the tests.

DAVID:

What kind of tests?

ESTEBAN:

*Yo no se*, David. I'm not the doctor.

(Esteban reaches in his pants pocket for his wallet. He produces a ten dollar bill and hands it to David)

ESTEBAN:

*Ten. Comete algo en la cafetería*. I think I saw some people eating hamburgers in there. *Y lleva tu sister-Oyes*, donde se fue Jessica? Where is she?

(Jessica enters holding on to an assortment of vending machine goodies including a Snickers bar)

JESSICA:

I'm right here Dad. Is Mom OK?

ESTEBAN:

Jessica, go with your brother to the cafeteria.

JESSICA:

But I have food right here.

ESTEBAN:

Jessica *por favor*. (To David) *Al rato* I'll call your Tío Hector to pick you and your sister up.

JESSICA:

¿Pinché Tío Hector papi?

ESTEBAN:

(Laughs) I needed that. No more *maldiciones* Jessica. That was a freebee. Y David, don't let her eat her Snickers until she finishes her food, *me oyes*.

DAVID:

Yes sir. Here are the keys back, Dad.

(David hands the keys to Esteban)

Esteban:

Good job today, miijo. We'll probably be home late.  
Jessica, remember to brush your teeth.

JESSICA:

I will papi.

ESTEBAN:

Andale, there's my little *princesa*.

(Esteban bends over to Jessica and motions to her. She kisses his forehead.)

ESTEBAN:

David, cuida a tu hermana. Keep an eye on her.

DAVID:

I will Dad.

ESTEBAN:

Eso es, David.

(Esteban exits. Lights out.)

**Act I Scene 4**

**Time:** Later that night

**Setting:** The hospital cafeteria

(David and Jessica are sitting at the table with their food. Neither is really eating. The day is showing wear on both their faces.)

JESSICA:

I don't understand why they won't even let us see her.

Q9

Q10



Pg. 15

DAVID:

We're not old enough Jessica. You have to have a driver's license in order to get visiting privileges.

JESSICA:

Well that's dumb. What does a driver's license change? She's still our mom. Maybe you can talk to that lady at the front desk.

DAVID:

It's their rules, Jessica. They aren't going to change them just because I ask nicely. If you don't believe me you can ask for yourself.

JESSICA:

Never mind. What else did Dad say about Mom?

DAVID:

Nothing has changed since the last time I told you.

JESSICA:

OK, you don't have to get all cranky, damn.

DAVID:

Jessica, don't use that word.

JESSICA:

What, "cranky"?

DAVID:

You know which one I meant.

JESSICA:

OK. (Pause) When's Tío Hector getting here?

DAVID:

He'll get here when he gets here.

JESSICA:

Well, I hope he hurries. This place is creepy. The hallways smell like bleach and I think that lady at the front desk was trying to give me ojo.

DAVID:

Jessica, no one was giving you the evil eye. Now stop asking questions and finish your meal.

JESSICA:

I'm not hungry. I just want them to let Mom go so she can come home with us. I hate the hospital David. I wanna go home.

DAVID:

(Pause) Me too.

(Enter Pinché Tío Hector)

HECTOR:

(to David) Hey. Hey cabron!

(David looks around confused for an instant, then he and Jessica realize it's their Uncle Hector)

DAVID and JESSICA:

Tío Hector!

(They get up and hug Hector. Jessica starts grabbing her things to leave. David tucks in both chairs.)

HECTOR:

Chingao. Apenas llegue, y ya you guys are done eating?

DAVID:

Aren't you here to pick us up?

HECTOR:

Pos si, pero deja sentarme por un ratito David. My feet are tired. Besides I just ordered me a combo. (looks at their plates)

JESSICA:

How's Mom? Did they let you see her, tío?

HECTOR:

She's just fine. *Ya se levantó.* She's sitting up and talking. *No te preocupes Jessica. Ques eso David?*

DAVID:

That's a BLT with no mayo.

(David slides his plate over to Hector)

HECTOR:

*Bueno si no lo quieres,* I'll eat it. (While chewing) I can't stand to see good food go to waste.

(Jessica slides him her plate)

HECTOR:

Is there mayo on this Jessica?

(Jessica slides it back from him.)

Jessica:

Sorry tío.

HECTOR:

Hey, Jessica, go see if they have my order. *Ten,* take my receipt with you.

(Jessica leaves)

HECTOR:

David, *hable con tu apa y ama* a few minutes ago. Esteban told me to go ahead and take you home to get a change of clothes for you and Jessica and then bring you back with me. You can sleep in James's room and Jessica will sleep with Diana. (Pause) *Cuantos años tienes David?*

DAVID:

I'm 15 years old, why?

HECTOR:

*Yo no te voy a echar mentiras* David. You're pretty grown up and I'm not going to lie to you. *Los doctores* are telling

Pg. 18

HECTOR:  
your dad *esto y lo otro*. We will get a straight answer tomorrow, *pero* I think we should pray tonight.

DAVID:  
How did Mom look, *tío*?

HECTOR:  
(Pause) It's hard to tell. Your mom is a strong woman who tries to be stronger... Yo creo que she can hold a smile through any storm that-*Chingao*, *ay* viene tu sister. Por *mientras*, try not to tell her any of this, David.

DAVID:  
OK.

(Jessica enters with Hector's tray.)

HECTOR:  
Mmm-mmm, thank you, Jessica.

JESSICA:  
You're welcome.

HECTOR:  
Hey Jessica, I stopped by the video store *ahorra en la tarde* and I picked up the last copy of-

JESSICA  
Robocop II ! Can we watch it tonight *tío* please.

HECTOR:  
(Laughs) *Chiflada*.

(Lights Out)

#### Act I Scene 5

**Time:** Morning the next day

**Setting:** Hector's Living room

(Lights up on David only. He is standing alone in the door way.)

Q12

Q13

DAVID:

Well I was out voted on the whole Robocop II thing. Hector and Jessica opted to watch the film as soon as we got back home from the hospital, while I opted to stare at the ceiling in my cousin's room all night. I know I eventually fell asleep because I remember waking up. While sneaking to the kitchen for some cereal my dad finally showed up.

(Lights go dim around David as he exits, but come up on Hector's living room. The doorbell rings. No response. The doorbell rings again; the same. The doorbell rings repeatedly which finally wakes Hector up and crosses to the door.)

Q13.3

HECTOR:

Ay voy, ay voy. I'm coming already. (under his breath)  
Chinga la madre.

(He opens the door to discover his brother Esteban. He looks like he's been up for days.)

DAVID:

He was worse for wear; when Hector answered the door my dad's hair was all matted and unkempt, and although I had just seen him hours ago, it looked like he had gone days without shaving. I just wanted to go to him and ask him how Mom was doing but as he started giving my uncle Hector the update on the situation I felt compelled to play the fly on the wall.

Q13.5

HECTOR:

Hey carnal. Pásale, pásale. Come in.

(Esteban enters)

HECTOR:

The kids are upstairs.

ESTEBAN:

Are they awake yet?

HECTOR:

*Nombre, ay están dormidos.*

ESTEBAN:

*Chale.*

(Extended pause)

HECTOR:

*Bueno, pues como amaneció-*

ESTEBAN:

*Oyes, Hector, si no tuve chanza ayer para decirte, I just want to thank you now for helping me out yesterday with the kids.*

HECTOR:

*No fue nada, buey.*

ESTEBAN:

*Es que, I just got back home from the hospital con Josefina.*

HECTOR:

*How is she doing?*

ESTEBAN:

*She's doing all right. She fell asleep as soon as we got back home. The doctors gave her some kind a medication for her headaches. I think it makes her sleepy. Yo no se...*

HECTOR:

*¿Que dicen los doctores? What was wrong with her after all?*

ESTEBAN:

*Me dicen (pause) nombre no. They're telling me this and that, esto y el otro. (Slight laugh) You know how doctors are (pause). We were there all night waiting for the specialist to show up. Llego cerca de las tres y media at the hospital. So he finally finishes his tests and it's almost five in the morning now. Luego he tells me the reason for her headaches, the reason she fell down yesterday es que ella tiene un tumor. She has a tumor. Y*



ESTEBAN:

*no saben...* They don't know if it's cancer or not. They want to...run some more-

HECTOR:

Esteban. (Pause) *Carnal.*

ESTEBAN:

*¿Que?*

HECTOR:

*Ven paca.*

(Extends his arms to Esteban)

ESTEBAN:

*Ya déjame, Hector.*

(Hector approaches Esteban with his arms extended for a hug.)

ESTEBAN:

*Déjame en paz por favor!*

(David enters the doorway from the noise but remains unseen. He watches from the shadows of the doorway. Hector hugs Esteban only at first. The Esteban hugs him back, harder and begins to cry on his shoulder.)

HECTOR:

(pause) *Shhh.*

ESTEBAN:

*Yo no sé que hacer.* What do I do?

HECTOR:

*Shhh, Ya no llores mas, buey. Me vas a poner a llorar también. No saben nada, carnal.* They don't know nothing. Josefina is stronger than this. They don't got tests for that *pero* we know she is.

ESTEBAN:

She is. She is stronger.

HECTOR:

*Te ves muy cansado.* Sit down on the couch; I'll go get us some coffee. Do you take your coffee with milk or no?

(David exits)

ESTEBAN:

*Simón* que si, Hector. Of course I do. How many times have we drunk coffee together that you don't know I take mine with milk.

HECTOR:

I forget these things, buey. Bueno pues I'll be right back with the coffee.

(Hector exits to the kitchen.  
Esteban sits alone on the couch.  
He notices an old photo album and starts thumbing through it. Hector comes back with two saucers and two mugs of coffee.)

HECTOR:

*Un cafecito con leche para mi hermano.*

ESTEBAN:

Did you remember the sugar?

HECTOR:

(A beat) *Pinché culero, apenas me dices.*

(Hector exits with the two saucers and mugs as Esteban continues thumbing through the album.)

ESTEBAN:

Hey, I remember this. This was *monte* behind our old house in Mission. Oyes, Hector how old were we in this picture?



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(Hector comes back in with the two saucers, mugs and a small bag of sugar.)

HECTOR:

*Ten, tú pinché azúcar.*

ESTEBAN:

*No te hagas, Hector. ¿Oiga, cuantos anos teníamos en este retrato?*

HECTOR:

*In this picture right here, yo tenía como unos doce años.*

ESTEBAN:

*You were twelve. That would make me fifteen in this picture.*

(Esteban inspects the photo more closely.)

ESTEBAN:

*Hector, porque tengo una curita? What's that band aid doing on my forehead?*

(Hector sits down on the couch next to him)

HECTOR:

*(Laughs) That was from when you and me went to go collect the nopales for ama. Te acuerdas de eso.*

ESTEBAN:

*Si como no, collecting from the old cactus patch. I remember.*

HECTOR:

*No teníamos una escalera. We didn't have a ladder between us so-*

ESTEBAN:

*Or knives.*

HECTOR:

-*Tampoco*. So *nosotros de estupidos*, we decided for you to balance yourself on my shoulders.

ESTEBAN:

*Como que "we decided"*. You were too *panzón* back then for me to carry. I would have popped a hernia trying to get you off the ground.

HECTOR:

(Annoyed) *No mames baboso*. I wasn't that fat.

ESTEBAN:

Why do you think *apa* stopped carrying you at age 2?  
(Laughing) *Gordo*.

HECTOR:

Do you want me to finish telling the story or no?

ESTEBAN:

*Pos andale pues...*

HECTOR:

(Slight laughter) *Chingao*. *Ay estábamos*, you'd pick the cactus from the very top of the plant and hand it down to me in the bucket. Y luego I caught my *chancla* on a rock or something porque yo no se-

ESTEBAN:

You did not catch your sandal on a rock *mentiroso*. You tripped because of your own clumsiness *y es todo*.  
(Sarcastically) "Caught my *chancla* on a rock."

HECTOR:

Whatever, pos whatever. So I start falling backwards and, *yo no se que paso contigo pero*, your entire body just took off head first into the cactus. I remember it clear porque it was the first I heard you use a *maldición*. Actually, *yo recuerdo* que you strung several bad words together as you collided.

ESTEBAN:

(Remembering) *Pinché vato que no vales-* (Esteban whistles threw his teeth)

(They both burst out laughing)

HECTOR:

You split your eyebrow open and kept cussing till *ama* got there with the iodine. *Creo que* she wasted half the bottle that day on you.

ESTEBAN:

*Mugre iodine mondado.* I would have taken any infection over that pain. (Slight laugh)

(Esteban turns a couple pages and discovers an old picture of him and Josephina from when they were dating.)

ESTEBAN:

Josefina. This from when me and her met back in Idaho. How old is this?

HECTOR:

*Yo no sé.* I don't know exactly *pero* I remember when you asked me to take it. It was the night right after the day when you met her. I had just bought a camera with the money I saved, and you woke me up *en la mera mañana* so I could take a picture of you and her as the sun rose over the potato field. *Me dijistes-*

ESTEBAN:

(Remembering) *Levántate Hector,* I spoke with an angel last night (pause) and I need a photo to prove I'm not crazy.

HECTOR:

*Ay joto.*

ESTEBAN:

(Slight laugh) Did I ever tell you how I met her Hector?

HECTOR:

*Si pero dímelo otra ves,* I like this story.

ESTEBAN:

*Bueno*, all day, I had been busy on the potato trucks; loading, cleaning and removing dirt and rocks for 12-16 hours straight. *Y ya pa las cinco y media*, almost five thirty in the end of my shift when I saw her, *por la primera vez*, working on top of another truck just to my left. I clocked out, waited till we make eye contact and then made my way to her. All the way there, *no mas pensando*, just thinking of something to say to her. When I get to where she is...*nada*. *Yo no podia pensar, ni hablar*. I couldn't think, I was just there. I remember then staring into the ground praying for the words that never came. And then it happened.

HECTOR:

What happened?

ESTEBAN:

*Se cayó*. She fell off the potato truck and I caught her *con mis manos*, with these hands right here I caught her. And she didn't even scream or nothing *cuando se cayó*. She just fell silently into my arms like a snowflake. I looked at her, she looked at me with those eyes of hers, *y nada*. Nothing. I still had nothing to say to this *angelita de Dios*. Then she smiled, and I smiled back. Still nothing. *Pero* it was a good kind of nothing. *Me entiendes, Hector?*

HECTOR:

*Simón*.

ESTEBAN:

Then she spoke. She said, "How long are you going you hold me up like this?" and I said "As long as you'd like." *Y ella se comenzó risi, risi*. She started laughing, at me probably, but I was still holding her.

HECTOR:

It probably sounded a lot smoother in your head, no.

ESTEBAN:

*Si como no*.

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HECTOR:

Esteban, from here on out, you are going to be tested. You need to be strong for your esposa y tus niños, (pause) for your whole family, *carnal*.

ESTEBAN:

*Ya sé, buey.*

HECTOR:

Recuérdate, if you need help with anything, *no mas me hablas*. You've got my new number, right?

(Esteban nods.)

Pos, let me go get the *moscas*.

(Hector starts to exit.)

ESTEBAN:

Hector.

HECTOR:

*¿Qué, buey?*

ESTEBAN:

(Pause) *Gracias.*

(Hector exits. Esteban thumbs through the album some more as the lights go out)

**ACT I Scene 6****SETTING:** The backyard**TIME:** Late afternoon.

(Josefina is visible in the background, asleep in her bed. The entire set is engulfed in a dark purple. David enters from stage left and approaches center stage. A spot light comes up just in front of him and as he enters it and begins to speak.)

Q15



DAVID:

I might have only seen part of their conversation but I heard all of it as I stood in the hallway. And it was weird for me, even at that age, watching my father, Esteban, be human for the first time. It was clear that even my Superman had a weakness. The ride home was eerily quiet, highlighted only by a late afternoon stop at McDonalds to pick up some drive-through milkshakes. He was trying to buy our silence, I thought. I was wrong.

(Esteban is sitting down in the background holding two milkshakes.)

DAVID:

When we pulled up to the house and let Jessica out of the car, we had a "man to man". No good news has ever been discussed in a "man to man," this time would be no different.

ESTEBAN:

David, we need to talk, mijo.

(David sits down next to his father and sips his milkshake nervously.)

ESTEBAN:

(Pause) Good milkshake, no?

DAVID:

Yeah, Dad.

ESTEBAN:

Como te fué con Hector?

DAVID:

It went alright. Tio Hector and Jessica stayed up watching a movie.

ESTEBAN:

Ah que Hector. No wonder she looked so tired. (Pause) Oye, David, how old are you?

Q16.3 (Spotlight on David.)

DAVID:

(To Audience) "How old are you?" That very phrase is synonymous with bad news, and although I was aware of the details, because of earlier at my Uncle Hector's house it would hit like new, all over again.

Q16.5 (Lights up on scene.)

ESTEBAN:

David?

DAVID:

I'm fifteen, Dad.

ESTEBAN:

Fifteen. (Pause) *Bueno, Hablamos con un especialista.* The doctors called a specialist in and they found a tumor in your mother's head. *Y el especialista checo por... digo... el cree que...* He thinks it might be cancer *mijo, pero* he's not sure. The first test he took; *no decía nada,* "Inconclusive." *me dice el huero.* So he took another test on your mom; a longer one. When they get the results back *nos van a hablar.*

DAVID:

When are they going to call?

ESTEBAN:

*Yo no se, mijo.* They'll call when they call.

DAVID:

Do you think its cancer?

ESTEBAN:

(Pause) I don't know what to think. I wish I knew what they knew. *Los doctores* speak to me and your mother like we went to. . . doctor school- Medical School with them or something. (Pause) *Sepa la bola David. Sepa la bola.* (Pause) Did I ever tell you how I met your mother?

DAVID:

Yeah. (Pause) But tell me again. I like this story.

ESTEBAN:

Bueno, pues all day, I had been busy on the potato trucks; loading, cleaning and removing dirt and rocks for 15, 16 hours straight....

(Light out on the rest of the Stage. Esteban exits.)

**ACT 1 Scene 7**

**Time:** Later that same day

**Setting:** Josefina's bedroom

DAVID:

We agreed later to not let Jessica in on the full extent of the situation until we knew more ourselves and until we were ready. Still, with myself and Jessica out of the way, it was my dad's turn to face my mom, for the first time since the hospital stay.

(The spotlight over David fades out as he exits the room. Esteban then enters the room and approaches the bed. He kisses Josefina on the forehead and proceeds to place a "breakfast in bed" tray on the lamp table as she continues to sleep. The tray contains a serving of *migas*, a couple strips of bacon, a short stack of horribly lopsided pancakes, a cup of coffee, and a ceramic jar of sugar. Esteban adds sugar and milk to the coffee and mixes it with a coffee stir. He blows on the coffee a bit to cool it down then motions with his free hand to direct some of the steam and scent towards Josefina. He then removes a guitar from its



case underneath the bed. He sets a chair at the foot of the bed and begins to play and sing "Cariño" a famous mariachi ballad. Softly at first but then, progressively louder as Josefina wakes up.)

ESTEBAN:

Q18.3  
Good morning *mi reina*.

(Esteban moves the "breakfast in bed" tray from the lamp table to the bed.)

JOSEFINA:

"Breakfast in bed" I love it Esteban.

ESTEBAN:

David helped me out with the *migas* pero I made everything else myself.

(Josefina picks up one of the horribly lopsided pancakes and displays it to Esteban who remains silent.)

JOSEFINA:

Even these pancakes?

ESTEBAN:

Bueno los pancakes me salieron...-

JOSEFINA:

(Laughs) -Ven *pacá*, Esteban.

(She meets him with a kiss.)

JOSEFINA:

That you attempted to cook anything is treat enough, *mi amor*.

ESTEBAN:

(Jokingly) Andale, vamos a eat.

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(Josefina starts into her food  
then stops abruptly.)

JOSEFINA:

(Pause) Do the kids know?

ESTEBAN:

No más David.

JOSEFINA:

(Pause) Esteban what are we going to do? I know the specialist was pushing for more tests but looking in his eyes, I know he knows the diagnosis already. *Y no es que yo no tengo faith.* It's just that I feel it in my heart that this is my time. I'm scared honey. There's a lot of things I may not get to see and do with you and the kids. *Yo se que* you don't want to hear this but it needs to be said. I want to see the man that I know David will eventually become. I want to see Jessica get married some day to a man that makes her laugh as much as you do me. *Y yo quiero* (pause), I want to have just one more Christmas with the family. It's out of our hands, I know. *Si Dios quiere.*

(Lights out)

#### ACT I Scene 8

**Setting:** The Gutierrez back yard.

**Time:** 5:30 p.m.

(At the far left of the stage, there is a screen door leading to the inside of the house. Esteban is sitting alone outside on one of a pair of wooden chairs. There is an over turned bucket in front of him that holds a bottle of Natural Light Beer, a canister of flaming hot peanuts, and a portable radio. Esteban lights a cigarette, extends the antenna and adjust the turner/volume as the lights come

Q19

Q19.3

Q20

Q20

up. Esteban smokes in deep thought as David enters.)

DAVID:

You know, Dad, I read somewhere that those things are bad for you.

(Esteban puts out his cigarette)

DAVID:

(Pause) You're thinking about Mom too, huh.

ESTEBAN:

Si, David. *Siéntate allí*. I need to talk with you, *mijo*.

(David sits and motions towards the flaming hot peanuts.)

ESTEBAN:

*Pos agarra unos cuantos David. Help Yourself.* (Pause) You know the situation *con tu mamá* is worse than I originally let on. The first test was inconclusive and we are still waiting on the results from the second one. But I have to agree with your mother that the look in the specialist eyes said everything. *Nunca va a terminar*, it's never going to stop David. One test leads to another, leads to another. It's all in God's hands now, *Si Dios quiere*. We can't wait for that now; we're running out of time. As the men of this family we can't let the weight of this situation come down on your mom so hard. I need you to help me, *mijo*.

DAVID:

I'll do whatever it takes Dad.

ESTEBAN:

(Perking up) Eso es, David.

David

What did you have in mind?

ESTEBAN:

I want you to help me give your mom Christmas.

DAVID:  
In the middle of July Dad?

ESTEBAN:  
Oyes, do you want your presents or no? *Tu mamá se fué para* your Aunt Sulema's house to watch their *novelas* together or something. That means we only have so much time to get this all done David.

DAVID:  
No, no Christmas in July it is. Let's do this. Let's do this for Mom.

ESTEBAN:  
*Pos vámonos recio.*

(The two just smile back at each other in silence. Then David's smiles slowly fades.)

DAVID:  
This means I'm going to have to poke around in the retarded attic for the Christmas decorations, doesn't it?

ESTEBAN:  
(Playfully) *No le saques, David. No le saques.*

DAVID:  
*Chale.*

(David exits through the screen door to get the decorations. Esteban readies the yard, moving the barbeque pit and the cooler aside as David reenters with the first of the boxes.)

ESTEBAN:  
(Ribbing him) Grab the big boxes too. I know how you are.

DAVID:  
Alright.

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(David starts to walk back to exit for more boxes. Esteban follows in a faster pace.)

ESTEBAN:

*Andale*, I'm going to beat you.

(They both reenter with more boxes and set up a Santa Claus and nativity set near the picnic table as the lights fade to black. Lights come up a light blue signifying a changing in time. It is now 8:30.)

ESTEBAN:

(Shouting from off stage.) Don't forget the orange extension cord!

(David and Esteban enter from opposite sides of the stage, each with a strand of orange extension cord in tow. They meet at center.)

David

I got it.

ESTEBAN:

*Andale*, *rompe todo el cartón* and put it in the bag so we can throw it away in one big pile. I needed to replace the boxes anyway. Now, I have a favor to pull out of your Uncle Hector.

(David starts ripping up the cardboard boxes and throwing the pieces away in the trash bag. The lights fade to purple as a spot lights comes over on David as he continues to work. Esteban turns off the radio and is talking on the phone in the background but is inaudible.)



DAVID:

When my dad puts his heart into something, the man can move mountains. He just has so much *ganas*. His drive is infectious, at least it better be for my Uncle Hector's sake.

(The lights fade back to blue again)

ESTEBAN:

(On the phone with Hector) I wouldn't be calling if you didn't offer me... C'mon carnal... *Hazme este favorcito...* Bueno, be here at exactly 10:15 PM and no later, me oyes... *Eso es Hector. Pos ay te wacho... Bueno, bye.*

DAVID:

What was that Dad?

ESTEBAN:

*Es un surprise David. You'll see.*

(Esteban picks up both ends of each extension cord.)

ESTEBAN:

Q22.5 Let's see what all our hard work has amounted too.

(As soon as Esteban plugs in both ends of the extension cord they are hit with a bursts of bright multi-colored lights. A recorded track "Feliz Navidad" sung by "Los ardillas" starts up as well. They stand there in awe their masterpiece. Esteban lets out a *grito*.)

DAVID:

*Te aventastes, Dad.*

ESTEBAN:

*Simón que si, mijo. Let's hope your mom thinks so too.*

(David notices one of the decorations for the first time.)

DAVID:

Dad, did you buy a new nativity set?

ESTEBAN:

Si. Pos, I had to. *El mugre* assistant manager de K-Mart wouldn't let me just buy the baby Jesus by itself. (A beat) Oyes, what are we listening to, David?

DAVID:

Feliz Navidad, dad-

ESTEBAN:

Si, ya se la canción, David, pero who's singing it? Alvin y los Chipmunks o qué?

DAVID:

No, it's the squirrels.

ESTEBAN:

Ah si, *Las Ardillas*. (Laughing) *Esos animales feos*. (Pause) Hey, let's go check the back yard.

(They start to cross upstage as the lights fade.)

#### ACT I Scene 9

Setting: The Gutierrez living room

Time: 10:11 p.m.

(The living room has the usual details. A couch and a love seat. The Christmas tree is up in the center and fully decorated. A couple of stockings are hung, but no presents yet. Esteban and the kids are getting ready for Josefina's arrival. They are all equipped with matching elf hats.)

ESTEBAN:

Ay viene. Everyone get ready.

(Josefina enters stunned)

Merry Christmas!!

ESTEBAN/DAVID/JESSICA:

(Josefina puts down her big purse and looks at the family portrait before her.)

It's beautiful.

JOSEFINA:

(She runs to meet Esteban. They kiss.)

All right Dad!

DAVID:

JOSEFINA:

Ay, You're going to make me cry in front of the kids honey.

ESTEBAN:

That's not the surprise though. Just wait a minute. Here it comes.

(Esteban examines his watch as the rest of the family waits in silence.)

JESSICA:

(Pause) *Papi*, what are we waiting for?

ESTEBAN:

No mas, wait Jessica. *Espera*, here it comes.

(The family listens carefully as the sound of sleigh bells comes from the front door.)

ESTEBAN:

*Oyen*, you all hear that? I think it's coming from the roof.

JESSICA:

It sounds like it's coming from the front door, *papi*.



ESTEBAN:

Jessica *por favor*. (Under his breath) *Chihuahuas*.

(There is a knock on the door.)

ESTEBAN:

Pos, go see who that is, Jessica.

(Jessica answers the door to discover Uncle Hector in a Santa Claus outfit complete with a trash bag full of presents.)

JESSICA:

It's Santa! It's Santa papi!

(Hector enters)

HECTOR:

Ho, ho, ho *Feliz Navidad cabrones!!*

(Everyone laughs)

JOSEFINA:

(To Hector) You thought of everything didn't you.

HECTOR:

(In a Santa Claus voice) Ho, Ho, Ho. I know what you're thinking. *Ah que Santa*. It's the middle of July, *péndelo*. Pero I had to make a very especial stop at this *casa*, ho, ho. The elves are on vacation right now so I had to ask my reindeer friends to wrap the presents for me. But since the silly reindeer were so last minute about everything they wrapped all the gifts in foil and newspaper. *Chale*.

(He starts reaching into his sack to distribute the gifts.)

HECTOR:

*Corre y se va con Jessica*.

JESSICA:

(Grabbing the present.) Hey, that's me.

HECTOR:  
(Chanting) *Que lo abra.*

ALL EXCEPT JESSICA:  
*Que lo abra. Que lo abra.*

(Jessica unwraps her present to reveal a small cage that houses a hamster.)

JESSICA:  
A hamster! Mom, I got a hamster. *Papi*, can I keep it?

(Jessica shows her hamster to Esteban. He recoils.)

ESTEBAN:  
*¡Que fregaos!-*

HECTOR:  
(Interrupting) -Don't worry Jessica. A hamster's *pelo* is different from that a dog or cat's and won't upset your *papi*'s allergies. At least that's what the guy at the pet store told me I hope he wasn't lying to me because Santa lost his receipt.

JESSICA:  
Smell him, *papi*.

(Jessica takes the hamster out of cage and tries to hold it up to Esteban's nose.)

ESTEBAN:  
Just keep it in the cage, *mija*.

JESSICA:  
Thanks *papi*. Look David, a hamster.

HECTOR:  
Santa's bag is still too heavy for his sleigh.

(Hector reaches into his sack and pulls out a large present.)

HECTOR:  
Is there a Josefina Gutierrez here?

JOSEFINA:  
Ay Esteban.

(Hector places the large and heavy box on the floor in front of her.)

HECTOR:  
Merry Christmas, ho ho ho.

JOSEFINA:  
Thank you, Santa.

(Josefina starts unwrapping her present.)

DAVID:  
What is it Dad?

ESTEBAN:  
*Espérate.*

(Josefina gets off the first layer of newspaper and ribbon.)

JESSICA:  
Wow, another microwave!

ESTEBAN:  
That's just the box, tonta. (Pause) David, don't laugh at your sister.

(Josefina opens the box to discover it filled with weights.)

JOSEFINA:  
Santa, Santa, Santa...

(Josefina gets to the bottom of the box and pulls out a smaller box and goes to work on it.)

DAVID:

Dad what is it already?

ESTEBAN:

David, Jessica, let me tell you a little something about your *papi*. Your dad can be very *terco* and hard headed sometimes.

HECTOR:

Sometimes?

ESTEBAN:

A lot. Your dad can be very hardheaded a lot. A little more than a two months ago, it was about a week before our anniversary. *Y fuimos* all the way to the Plaza Mall in McAllen. I had no idea what to get for your mom. *Pero* your mom knew this, and was trying to drop hints here and there. "Chris got Sulema a beautiful necklace," *me dijo*. I wasn't getting it. So I come back from the *baño*, *y tu mama* is at the jewelry stand talking to her friend *Panfila* and trying on *quien sabe que*. She tells me about the sale they were having. Twenty five percent off, *yo creo*.

(Josefina gets through the foil and ribbon and packing peanuts to reveal a smaller box)

JOSEFINA:

Another box, Esteban?

ESTEBAN:

So I can finish my story. *Bueno*, where was I?

(Josefina goes back to work on her present.)

ESTEBAN:

So what does your *papi* do; He goes over to *el mugre* Service Merchandise and buys your mom a microwave. That micro wave

ESTEBAN:

(pause) with a coupon. *Catorce*. I can't return it, because of the coupon so I go back to the jewelry store and talk to *Panfila*. "*Que quería mi Josefina?*" I ask her.

ESTEBAN:

What did she want? And although I didn't have the money for it then, I remembered.

(Josefina finally gets to the present.)

ESTEBAN:

A fourteen karat gold necklace with a heart-

JOSEFINA:

-shaped locket! Oh Esteban! I love you!

(They embrace and kiss.)

ESTEBAN:

*Déjame ver como se mira.*

JESSICA:

Mommy it's beautiful.

ESTEBAN:

*Levántate. Let me see.*

(Esteban starts to put the necklace on.)

ESTEBAN:

Jessica, some day when you're older...

(Esteban finishes with the necklace)

ESTEBAN

*...Mira la Snow White.*

JOSEFINA:

You know, I have a pair of earrings that would go perfect with it.

ESTEBAN:

*Pues go get them. Let me see.*

JOSEFINA:

I hope Santa brought a camera.

(Josefina exits to retrieve her earrings.)

ESTEBAN:

(Ribbing him) Me too. Where's your camera Santa?

HECTOR:

*Ya déjame.*

(Hector reaches into his sack and pulls out another box.)

HECTOR:

Here's one for David who has been extra good this year.

DAVID:

(noticing the box's size) Leather Jacket? Leather jacket.

HECTOR:

*Pos chequéalo, buey.*

(David rips his box apart.)

DAVID:

Alright!

(David puts on the jacket and poses.)

ESTEBAN:

Míralo, todo Knight Rider.

(The phone rings as Josefina returns. The family continues bantering as Josefina tries to speak on the phone.)

JOSEFINA:

Hello. Yes this is her. No, I'm not sitting down. (Getting louder) Just tell me. (Silence)

Q24

Pg. 45

(Esteban crosses towards  
Josefina.)

JOSEFINA:

Fine. OK. (Pause) OK then. I understand.

Q25

(Josefina hangs up the phone and  
turns toward Esteban. She begins  
to sob and he embraces her.)

Black Out

Q26

Q27



Q28 House Half

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Q29 House out

Q30 spot on D

## ACT II

## Scene 1

Time: Days later

Setting: The Gutierrez Kitchen

(Spot light up on David)

DAVID:

(To audience) A second trip to the hospital confirmed the diagnosis and our worst fears; Cancer. A rare inoperable tumor that had spread fast into other parts of her brain as well as her spinal cord. With what little the doctors knew, they knew this; it was terminal and my mom's days from that point on were numbered.

They get back from the hospital and my dad won't say two words about the situation. Telling me the last thing my mom needed was to be reminded. Jessica, was still in the dark about all of this and my dad insisted she stay there. I think my dad was waiting for a miracle.

Q31

(Lights up slightly on the rest of the stage and we see Josefina kneading a big bowl full of dough. On the table in front of her are all the ingredients; an open container of shortening, a bag of flour, baking soda and salt.)

DAVID:

It took my mom all of one day to get back to her old routine. 6:30 AM on a Wednesday morning saw her preparing tortillas in the kitchen while she listened to AM 1240 Radio Esperanza, a local talk radio station.

(Lights at full on the rest of the stage.)

Q32

JOSEFINA:

You're up early.

DAVID:

I woke up with the radio.



JOSEFINA:

I'm sorry *mijo*, was it too loud?

DAVID:

No, Mom. It was time for me to get up anyway. You're making *tortillas*?

JOSEFINA:

Yep. Try not to finish this batch so quickly this time David. You know how angry your father gets when he has to eat the store brand.

DAVID:

I'll try my best. (Pause) Do you need help with that Mom?

JOSEFINA:

You want to learn how to make *tortillas* David?

DAVID:

Yes, yes I do.

JOSEFINA:

*Bueno, lava tus manos primero* David. I won't have unclean hands touching the famous family recipe.

DAVID:

I'll be right back.

(David starts to exit)

JOSEFINA:

Wait, wait a minute David. Fill this with warm water for me. Thanks.

(David steps forward as the lights fade around him)

DAVID:

(to audience) My mom's famous family recipe. As given to her in her youth by her mother and to her mother by her mother before. The softest tastiest *tortillas* this side of the Rio Grande. I had planned on getting the family recipe when I moved out of the house and into a place of my own. But plans change.

(Light up on entire stage)

JOSEFINA:

David, I really need that water.

DAVID:

Sorry Mom. (Hands her the glass) Here you go.

(Josefina pours some of the water into the center of the dough where she had created a hole to catch it)

JOSEFINA:

There is no secret ingredient to it David. Your mother uses the same basic ingredients as every other mother in the valley, *mas o menos*. You got your 4 cups of flour, a teaspoon of salt, one of baking soda, water and *manteca*. See it's usually the last ingredient where my recipe differs the most. The *manteca*. My feeling is this- Just keep on rolling them into little balls for right now David. My feeling is that Mexican food has enough grease on its own. Now your *Tia Sulema*, a-ya-yai, she packs on the *manteca* like you wouldn't believe. "Restaurant style" she calls it. Your Uncle Chris doesn't seem to mind but he's from Houston. What does he know?

(They both laugh a little and continue breaking off and rolling pieces of dough into small balls)

JOSEFINA:

Just a handful of *manteca* is all it really needs. Grab that rolling pin there.

(David begins doing everything as Josefina guides him through the steps.)

JOSEFINA:

Now I take just a little bit of flour and sprinkle it on the cutting board so the dough doesn't stick, and a little on the rolling pin for luck. You put a ball of dough on the cutting board and with the rolling pin, just press down

(Light up on entire stage)

JOSEFINA:  
David, I really need that water.

DAVID:  
Sorry Mom. (Hands her the glass) Here you go.

(Josefina pours some of the water  
into the center of the dough where  
she had created a hole to catch  
it)

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uses the same basic ingredients as every other mother in  
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own. Now your *Tia Sulema*, a-ya-yai, she packs on the  
*manteca* like you wouldn't believe. "Restaurant style" she  
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the cutting board so the dough doesn't stick, and a little  
on the rolling pin for luck. You put a ball of dough on  
the cutting board and with the rolling pin, just press down

JOSEFINA (cont.):

on the center a bit and roll it back and forth, back and forth. Once it's flattened out a bit just rotate the dough and repeat.

(David finishes and holds up his creation)

DAVID:

Hey check it out Mom. *Me avente.*

JOSEFINA:

That's just perfect. You definitely get it from me because your father, he couldn't eat raisins with his cereal if I wasn't (pause) around to put them there. I'm going to get some tea. Are you thirsty David?

DAVID:

No, I'm fine.

(Josefina pours herself a glass of iced tea and sits next to David.)

JOSEFINA:

Tell me, *mijo*, is my little David still going to study to become a veterinarian when he goes to college.

DAVID:

I don't know anymore Mom.

JOSEFINA:

Well, whatever it is you decide to become, I'm sure you'll be the best. Know why?

DAVID:

Why?

JOSEFINA:

Because you're full of *ganas*, that's why. All the Gutierrez men are full of *ganas*, from your *abuelito* Wile, down to your father, and now to you. (Pause) You know your *abuelito* Wile still wakes up every Saturday morning to cut those one and a half acres-

DAVID:

I don't want you to go Mom. I don't you want leave us.  
Mom, please don't-

JOSEFINA:

I know *mijo*.

DAVID:

I don't want you to leave us. I don't want you to... I don't want...

JOSEFINA:

David, "right now" is all I can give you.

(Josefina and David hug as Jessica enters the kitchen)

JESSICA:

Mom, David, what's going on?

JOSEFINA:

Jessica, come here. I need to tell you something, *mijita*.

JESSICA:

What's wrong, Mom?

JOSEFINA:

Your mom is very sick. That's why I had to go to the hospital.

JESSICA:

Well, you're better now, right? Right?

JOSEFINA:

Jessica, come here and sit with your mom.

(Josefina and Jessica sit at the table, David soon joins them.)

JOSEFINA:

The other day, while the doctors were checking up on me they started asking me questions. Questions about how often I feel sick, how often I get headaches and how long



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JOSEFINA: (Cont.)

they last. So they decided to take an MRI just to rule out a worst case scenario, but instead they find a tumor. The doctors found a tumor in my head *mijita*. So they want to call a specialist so he can run some more tests. Meanwhile me and your father are there waiting and waiting for what felt like days. And your father is starting to get mad and frustrated and he's being rude to the nursing staff there. (Pause) Finally, the specialist gets there. Another test, some more waiting except this one doesn't say anything, good or bad. "Inconclusive" he says. So he does a different one, a longer one, and lets us go. Wednesday, he called with the results; the tumor is cancerous, it's cancer.

JESSICA:

They're going to take it out, right. They can always take it out right, David.

DAVID:

(Pause) (To audience.) Jessica wanted a "yes" so bad, and so did I.

JOSEFINA:

They can't *mijita*. It's too big, too deep to do... They just can't.

JESSICA:

Are you going to die?

JOSEFINA:

(Pause) (Josefina nods.) I'm sorry Jessica. *Ven paca mijita*, you too David.

(Josefina hugs her children tightly.)

JOSEFINA:

As long as I can fight it, I will be your mom. As long as you're still breathing I will love you.

(Lights dim on the rest of the stage. David lets go first.)

Q33

Jessica holds on for a moment longer then exits.)

Q34

**ACT II Scene 2**

**Time:** Later that same day.

**Setting:** The Gutierrez kitchen

DAVID:

(To audience) I could have stayed in those arms forever. You know nobody hugs you like your mom. Things between me and my mom were never the same after our talk. To me it seemed like I had both aged and regressed in the course of one conversation. It felt awful. With the news broken to Jessica, everyone in our family now was aware of the severity of the situation.

Q34.5

(Lights up on the rest of the stage to reveal Esteban and Josefina in the kitchen.)

ESTEBAN:

Guess who has a birthday coming up.

DAVID:

(To the audience still) Everyone, that is except for my father.

Q35

JOSEFINA:

Who?

ESTEBAN:

You do.

JOSEFINA:

Esteban, my birthday is not for another five or six weeks.

ESTEBAN:

*Ya sé, mi reina. Es que* I just thought that since your birthday, it usually falls in right during the back to school time, so I thought it would be better to get it out of the way while there is still time and money to do something special.

JOSEFINA:

Esteban, the Christmas was nice and everything, but I don't really care for-

ESTEBAN:

I'll let you invite your sister. Andale, it'll be fun.

JOSEFINA:

Fine. That sounds great.

ESTEBAN:

Bueno, pues I'm going to go run some errands. David there better be some tortillas left when I get home, *me oyes?*

DAVID:

Yeah, Dad.

ESTEBAN:

I had better take one for the road, just in case. (To Josefina) I won't be long, *mi reina*.

(Esteban kisses Josefina on the cheek and exits.)

JOSEFINA:

That (pause) sounds great.

(Lights fade on the rest of the stage except for David who begins to cross to stage right.)

### ACT II Scene 3

**Time:** Later that same day.

**Setting:** Sulema's kitchen

DAVID:

My dad preferred the quick fix. I guess that's why he bought so much duct tape. My mom on the other hand, always liked to sit and think things through and put everything in perspective. When that didn't work she had my Tia Sulema. My Tia Sulema was "tell it like it is" to the core. She'd spare no feeling, and pulled no punches.



(The lights come up to reveal the rest of the stage. They are in Sulema's kitchen. Sulema and Josefina sit at the table. Chris is offstage.)

Q37

SULEMA:

You know me, Josefina, I'm "tell it like it is" to the core. I spare no feelings and pull no punches. And I gotta tell you, your husband, Esteban, is acting like a real péndejo.

JOSEFINA:

Sulema. tub.

SULEMA:

I said acting. The jury is still out on whether or not he is one.

CHRIS:

(Shouting from offstage) Babe, where'd you leave the pickles?

SULEMA:

(Shouting back) They're in the third tray from the top, behind all the cokes. (To Josefina) So he just up and decides to throw you another party.

JOSEFINA:

He's at HEB right now, probably buying out the meat department.

SULEMA:

That's stupid Josefina. That's just plain dumb. Just tell him to cancel the whole thing. I mean the last thing you need right now is loud music, barbeque and salsa dip. What, does he think he's-

CHRIS:

I don't see them here.

SULEMA:

Check the second tray then. (To Josefina) What does he think he's helping with all these parties?-

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CHRIS:

I'm looking right at it babe. Nothing. No pickles anywhere. I don't know how you arrange any of this shit.

SULEMA:

*Este hombre tan ciego.* (Gets up) If I find it, I get to hit you.

CHRIS:

Got it.

(Chris Enters)

SULEMA:

Where was it? ... Where was it, Chris?

CHRIS:

...In the third tray, behind all the Cokes.

SULEMA:

(To Josefina) That's right. (Sits)

CHRIS:

Shut up.

(Chris goes in to playfully kiss Sulema. She pushes him off.)

SULEMA:

Ya, sit down and be quiet. Aye What were we talking about? Oh yeah, your *péndejo* husband.

JOSEFINA:

Sulema *por favor*.

SULEMA:

I'm only kidding.

(Chris sits down with the three sandwiches.)

SULEMA:

Mmmm, Chris you've outdone yourself. Are you hungry, Josefina?

CHRIS:

Oh, I'm sorry. Were you all hungry too?

(Sulema shoots him a look)

CHRIS:

I'm just playing Josephine.

(Sets the plates down.)

JOSEFINA:

I'm really not that hungry Chris.

SULEMA:

What's wrong then? If it's about your early birthday party we'll be there. You know that.

JOSEFINA:

That's not it. Listen, I didn't come over here just to invite you to a barbeque. I could have called you and done that.

SULEMA:

Then what is it? Dime, how can I help my big sister?

JOSEFINA:

I want you to... I would like for you to read the eulogy ...at the funeral... at my funeral.

CHRIS:

(Silence) I forgot the drinks. Who wants Dr. Pepper?

SULEMA:

I'll take one. Are you thirsty Josefina?

JOSEFINA:

Sulema, did you hear what I said?

SULEMA:

Yes, (Pause) yes I did.

JOSEFINA:

Then will you do it for me? Or do I have to ask someone else?

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SULEMA:

No, I'll do it. I just didn't realize how close it was getting. Have you started making arrangements yet?

JOSEFINA:

I want to, but I can't even get Esteban to stay on the subject for 5 seconds. He would feel too uncomfortable if I made him comparison shop and look at sites with me, and I don't want to do this by myself.

SULEMA:

This is not about his feelings anymore. That's the thing he needs to realize. You need to talk to him. You need to or I will, and believe me when I say you all don't need that.

(Sulema's joke delivery is lost in her emotion. Josefina extends her hand to Sulema's)

SULEMA:

(Pause) Where are you with those drinks, Chris?

CHRIS:

I'm coming.

(Chris enters with three glasses. He starts to cross towards them but stops.)

CHRIS:

(Pause) It's just that someone forgot to refill the ice cube tray when they used it last.

SULEMA:

(Apologetic) Oh, did I?

CHRIS:

Yeah, you did. I had to scrape the frost off the inside of the freezer.

JOSEFINA:

Chris, that's disgusting.

SULEMA:  
He's just playing with you.

(Pause as she looks for his  
reaction)

SULEMA:  
You're playing, right?

(Chris keeps a straight face.)

SULEMA:  
Who's up for some water?

(Chris laughs and sets glasses on  
the table.)

SULEMA:  
(To Chris) I hate you. (To Josefina) I hate this man. Come  
here so I can hit you.

(Chris gives Sulema his shoulder  
and laughs off her attack.)

SULEMA:  
Josefina, you're not eating.

JOSEFINA:  
I'm not all that hungry. Chris, could I trouble you for a  
refill.

CHRIS:  
Sure thing.

(Chris exits.)

SULEMA:  
How do the kids feel about all this? Did you ever get to  
talking to Jessica?

JOSEFINA:  
This morning.

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SULEMA:

*Pobrecita.* How'd she take it?

JOSEFINA:

It went better that I expected it to. I really should have talked to her earlier though.

SULEMA:

Y David?

JOSEFINA:

My little soldier. You know, he asked me to teach him how to make *tortillas* earlier today.

SULEMA:

Did he?

JOSEFINA:

Yeah, they came out good too.

SULEMA:

That's nice. Too bad he didn't ask me. He could have gotten the *good* recipe.

JOSEFINA:

*No comiences*, Sulema.

SULEMA:

Chris, honey.

CHRIS:

(From offstage) What's up?

SULEMA:

(To Josefina) I'm just playing. You can't compare the two really. Mine are more restaurant style.

JOSEFINA:

*Ya cállate con tu "Restaurant style".*

(Chris enters with the refill)

SULEMA:

*Pos* it's true.



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(Josefina gets up from the table.)

SULEMA:

Where are you going?

JOSEFINA:

Just to the bathroom. I'll be right back.

(Josefina exits.)

SULEMA:

You have a very deluded sister-in-law Chris. You like my tortillas the best don't you?

CHRIS:

Oh course I do. They're delicious. They're like (A beat) restaurant style.

SULEMA:

That's what I've been trying to tell her. Now she wants to say that the difference is in the amount of *manteca* we each use but I say-

(From the distance Josefina is heard gagging and then finally throwing up.)

JOSEFINA:

(From offstage) Sulema.

CHRIS:

(Pause) I'll get some paper towels.

SULEMA:

I'm coming! (To Chris) Grab a lot.

(They both get up from the table. They both exit, Chris crossing first for some paper towels. Josefina continues to throwing up.)

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SULEMA:

(From offstage.) I'm here. Let me see. Let me see Josefina. Chris hand me some towels. (To Josefina) It's alright. It's alright now.

(Josefina is heard coughing as the lights fade out.)

## ACT II SCENCE 4

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Setting: The Gutierrez backyard

DAVID:

Despite my mom and aunt's reservations, the barbeque was on. No one on my street could throw a barbeque as good as my dad did. The man went all out. He even shelled out the extra bucks for drinkable name brand beer. Give the man good music, good company and a grill and you won't see him happier. This was not the case with the entire family.

(Lights up on the rest of the stage. Jessica, Sulema, Josefina and Chris are all sitting at a picnic table stage right. Esteban, Hector and David are all by the barbeque. There is a bigger radio set up near them with Tejano music playing.)

SULEMA:

Look at him over there. (Referring to Esteban) You'd barely even realize this is your party. This rice tastes different. Did you switch recipes or something?

JOSEFINA:

No, Jessica and David did all the cooking for me today.

SULEMA:

You're so lucky.

JOSEFINA:

Yeah.



SULEMA:

I can barely even get my George and Arturo to put down the Nintendo long enough to eat dinner with the family. Oye, where are the boys, babe?

CHRIS:

Playing with their Game Boys in David's old tree house.

SULEMA:

(To herself) Why did we get them those things? These frijoles are not bad. Who made them, David?

JOSEFINA:

Yep, that's my David.

SULEMA:

It is really good. He has a gift.

Jessica:

I made the rice from scratch, tía.

SULEMA:

That's nice Jessica. You know Josefina-

CHRIS:

This rice is delicious. You made this yourself, Jessica?

JESSICA:

Well, Mom watched me but, yeah.

CHRIS:

Damn. I mean seriously-

SULEMA:

Babe, why don't you go talk to Esteban and them?

CHRIS:

What? What are we supposed to discuss?

SULEMA:

Well you like sports don't you?

CHRIS:

Football, I like football. They're probably talking about soccer or something.

SULEMA:

Christopher Thomas, no.

JOSEFINA:

Sulema, Esteban and Hector love soccer.

SULEMA:

Whatever. Just go cause I know how much our girl talk bores you to death.

CHRIS:

Alright already.

(Chris crosses to the barbeque grill.)

SULEMA:

I'm sorry.

JOSEFINA:

It's OK.

SULEMA:

He's from Houston.

(The three girls share a laugh. as Chris approaches the barbeque grill.)

HECTOR:

Spain beat Méjico? Spain beat Méjico?

ESTEBAN:

*Simón que si, buey.*

HECTOR:

*No mames pendejo.* The World Cup has Méjico's name engraved already, they're so unstoppable.

Q42

ESTEBAN:  
Hey Chris, long time no see.

CHRIS:  
Hey Esteban, Hector, David.

DAVID:  
Uncle Chris, did George and Arturo come too?

CHRIS:  
Yeah, they're in your tree house now.

DAVID:  
Cool. Call me when the *fajitas* are done, Dad.

(David exits)

ESTEBAN:  
They'll be out in *unos diez minutos*, David.

CHRIS:  
Who is Simon? (Pronouncing it like the English name.)

ESTEBAN:  
*Qué?*

CHRIS:  
Simon. I hear you guys say that a lot.

HECTOR:  
Not Simon, *Simón*.

CHRIS:  
That's right. "See-moan."

ESTEBAN:  
*Simón*, is like, I would say, an agreement of the highest...

HECTOR:  
(Unsure) Magnitude.

ESTEBAN:  
*Eso es*, Hector.

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HECTOR:

Like for example if I took a delicious *fajita* off Esteban's grill and ate it, I would tell my brother "*Te aventastes*" and he would tell me...

ESTEBAN:

*Simón que si*. Now stop picking at my creation. They'll be done in a while.

CHRIS:

So "See-moan" means "hell yeah" or "right on".

HECTOR:

*Simón*.

ESTEBAN:

Right on.

CHRIS:

OK. What does "te ah-ven-ta-tee-as" mean?

HECTOR:

(Unsure at first then realizing what Chris meant) Oh, "*Te aventastes*"... It's like telling someone they did a great job.

CHRIS:

Yeah, I'm starting to get all this.

HECTOR:

We'll make a Mexican out of you yet.

CHRIS:

(Impersonating a soccer announcer)...Goooal.

(Chris laughs nervously, then Hector and Esteban join in.)

CHRIS:

And "pen-de-hoe", what does that mean?

HECTOR:

*Péndejo*; that's what Esteban can be sometimes.

ESTEBAN:  
Ya cállate por dios, Héctor.

Q43 HECTOR:  
I was only kidding.

SULEMA:  
Well promise me you'll at least talk to him tonight once all this is over.

JOSEFINA:  
As soon as the last guest leaves. Believe me. Look, Sulema. It seems your husband has made some new friends.

(Esteban, Chris and Hector are heard laughing.)

HECTOR:  
Nombre no.

ESTEBAN:  
Este guy. (Referring to Chris)

Q44 JOSEFINA:  
How does he like it down here in the valley?

SULEMA:  
He misses his family obviously but he loves the food. I think he's doing pretty well, all in all.

(Heard from a distance)

CHRIS:  
Hey Jessica! Great rice. Te aven-ta-tee-as!

(Hector and Esteban laugh.)

JESSICA:  
Thanks, Uncle Chris!

SULEMA:  
(Jokingly) My husband's an idiot.

JOSEFINA:

No he is not.

SULEMA:

OK, your husband's an idiot.

JOSEFINA:

Sulema.

SULEMA:

It's just in their nature is what I'm saying.

JOSEFINA:

Mija, go inside and get me some water so I can take my pill.

JESSICA:

OK.

(Jessica exits)

SULEMA:

Do you have one of your headaches again?

JOSEFINA:

Yeah. One of my headaches.

SULEMA:

What are you taking for that?

JOSEFINA:

Just some aspirin.

SULEMA:

Didn't the doctor prescribe you-

JOSEFINA:

Yes, he did. But all it did was make me sleep all day. What's the point in that? I don't even know where I left the bottle.

SULEMA:

Do you need me to go look for it?

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Pause) Do you need me to help you to your room?

JOSEFINA:

No, I told you I don't need it. (Pause) This music is not helping matters.

(Jessica enters with a glass of water)

JESSICA:

Here you go, Mom.

JOSEFINA:

Thank you, *mijita*.

(Josefina takes a couple pills with her water. She sits still as if waiting for them to kick in)

SULEMA:

(Pause) Do you need me to help you to your room? (Pause) I can tell him you got tired.

JOSEFINA:

No, then he'll get all worried. I'm fine. I'm fine really.

SULEMA:

Josefina.

JOSEFINA:

(Pause) I know.

ESTEBAN:

(Calling offstage) David, *ya salió la comida!* Come and get it! Hector, grab me a Natural Light from the cooler.

(Hector hands Esteban a beer.)

ESTEBAN:

(Sips) Mmm-mmm. You thirsty, Chris?

CHRIS:

No, no thank you.

Q45



Pg. 69

(Hector grabs a couple plates  
and Esteban starts filling the  
first one with Barbeque.)

ESTEBAN:

*Dime when.*

HECTOR

Mas... mas... mas hombre...

ESTEBAN:

*Chihuahuas, save a little for round two buey.*

HECTOR:

*Pos con eso tengo. Only chicken for Patricia's plate.*

ESTEBAN:

Not even sausage?

HECTOR:

*Tampoco. She gets terrible heartburn at night.*

(Esteban and Chris groan in  
unison.)

HECTOR:

Even when she takes a Tums. It's awful. Oh well, more  
meat for me though.

(Hector exits.)

CHRIS:

*Too bad for Patty.*

ESTEBAN:

Poor Patty.

(Chris grabs two paper plates  
while Esteban fills them.)

CHRIS:

*So, how's Josephine been doing lately? We got a little  
worried yesterday when she got sick on us like that.*



ESTEBAN:

Ah she's fine now. It was probably something she ate. She has a very weak stomach *también*. I wouldn't worry about it, Chris.

CHRIS:

Well... well you should. I mean, she was in pretty bad shape the other-

ESTEBAN:

-I said I wouldn't worry about it Chris.

CHRIS:

I'm sorry.

ESTEBAN:

(Pause) Me too.

SULEMA:

I can smell it from here. I hope Chris is getting us plates. Are you feeling any better yet?

JOSEFINA:

Yeah, it wasn't as bad as usual.

(Chris approaches with the plates.)

CHRIS:

Anything you don't want, just move to my plate. I'll eat it later.

(Chris sits at the table.)

SULEMA:

Did you bring a plate for Josefina?

CHRIS:

Dang it. I knew I forgot something.

JOSEFINA:

It's alright. I can go get my plate.

SULEMA:

No, no don't bother. I'll go get it.

Pg. 71

(Sulema gets up)

JOSEFINA:

Sulema.

SULEMA:

Que?

JOSEFINA:

Behave.

SULEMA:

I'll go and come back. Trust me.

ESTEBAN:

(To David off stage.) I better not see any dirty plates or leftover *huesos* in the tree house David!

(Sulema crosses to Esteban and turns off the radio.)

SULEMA:

Pos que pues, Esteban.

ESTEBAN:

Sorry, Sulema. You're going to have to wait *un ratito*. David and your kids took the last of the *carne*. But some more should be coming out in about a minute. Sausage?

SULEMA:

No thank you. Josefina came to visit us the other day and...

ESTEBAN:

*Ya sé de eso. No te preocupes, she's fine now.*

SULEMA:

I know that. I was just talking to her. That's not even what this is about. Do you know why she was at our house?

ESTEBAN:

Pues does she ever need a reason? I don't know, to invite you to her *cumpleaños*?

SULEMA:

No. She was there to ask me to deliver the eulogy at her funeral. Yeah. You can imagine how shocked I was to be asked. That's the last thing I wanted to think about but it's... it's coming up according to her. So as much as I hated it and she hated asking, as soon as she left I got to writing. I did some brainstorming. I wrote an outline. I typed several pages about her life, her accomplishments and her nature, then I threw them away. When I finished the next draft I went back, corrected the spelling, read it over and threw it away as well. Chris will tell you, because he bore witness and made me coffee, I was up until sunrise; writing and rewriting, crying and yelling at him at myself at the situation... but I finished. And when, God help us, that day comes I'll be prepared. My question to you Esteban is this; are you prepared? Have you made any preparations in regards to her funeral?

(Esteban take a long drink.)

SULEMA:

That does not surprise me.

ESTEBAN:

Sulema, *por que venistes?* Why did you come then; to celebrate the life of your sister or to ruin my good mood?

SULEMA:

The real question is why did you throw this party; to celebrate the life of my sister or to feed your own denial?  
(Pause) Call me when it's done.

(Lights out.)

#### ACT II Scene 5

**Time:** Early the next morning

**Setting:** Josefina's kitchen

DAVID:

She wasn't fine to put it mildly. She went on with the party that day. She opened all the presents graciously and saw every guest to the door. It was getting late so she

Q 4 8

Q49  
DAVID:  
fell asleep that night, but brewing inside that petite  
frame of hers was a tremendous explosion with only one  
target in mind.

(Light's up on kitchen revealing  
Esteban on the phone.)

DAVID:  
All she needed was a spark.

(David exits)

Q50  
ESTEBAN:  
Bueno pues how about the Saturday after that? (Pause)  
Who's wedding? (Pause) Oh, well when is the nearest free  
day then?

(Josefina enters a little groggy,  
she pours herself a cup of coffee  
and sits at the table.)

ESTEBAN:  
Wednesday?! *Nombre no.* I work all night Wednesdays. Yeah  
on Thursdays and Fridays *también.*

(Josefina nods her head at Esteban  
who gestures with his hand and  
continues on with his  
conversation.)

ESTEBAN (cont.):  
It would have to be a weekend. (Pause) *Que?* Sunday... No,  
Sunday is good. I'll take that. (Pause) From seven to ten  
then. Well I gotta go. (Pause) *Si* (Pause) *Si.* *Pos ay te*  
*wacho.* Bueno bye.

JOSEFINA:  
Who was that?

ESTEBAN:  
Who was who?

JOSEFINA:

Esteban, no te hagas el menso. Who were you talking to?

ESTEBAN:

Nadien. (Pause) I wanted to keep it a surprise but...

JOSEFINA:

I don't need any more surprises.

ESTEBAN:

I was renting out a salon.

JOSEFINA:

Renting out a hall? Why? What for?

ESTEBAN:

Let me finish. *Chihuahuas*. I was renting out a salon so we can give Jessica her quinceañera. I already called several cake places up on prices y cuando se levante Jessica, I'm going to take her shopping for a good dress.

JOSEFINA:

(Pause) A quinceañera?

ESTEBAN

Mm-hmm.

JOSEFINA:

But, she's only eleven years old Esteban.

ESTEBAN:

*Es que*, she has a lot of *primas* that are the same age as she is. If I do it now the family will have money for presents.

JOSEFINA:

Money for presents? What about the money for this? This is not just another barbeque, Esteban.

ESTEBAN:

Don't worry about it. *No te preocupes mi amor*. I just want to do something nice for the family. What are we going to need money for if not for our kids?



JOSEFINA

Esteban, you are making no sense right now.

ESTEBAN:

*Como que*, "You're making no sense right now."

JOSEFINA:

Esteban. (Pause) Esteban what about me?

ESTEBAN:

What about you? This is for you.

JOSEFINA:

We're going to need to have some money put aside for me.  
(Pause) For the funeral.

ESTEBAN:

What are you talking about?

JOSEFINA:

What am I talking about? I'm talking about I'm dying *pendejo*! And when you die you need money for a funeral. The way you're spending, you and the kids will need to sell the house just to-

ESTEBAN:

Josefina.

JOSEFINA:

*Déjame hablar!* I need to tell you this because apparently the doctor wasn't speaking English or Spanish well enough for you to understand. I'm going to die, Esteban. And unlike you and the kids I know what I'm going to die of, and I know I'm going to die soon. Soon Esteban. I don't understand you lately. You want to plan all these parties back to back like you are going to find some kind of cure in your denial. Just accept it. Just accept the fact that there are some things not even you can fix. And all the good intentions and *cariños*, out of place celebrations and mock happiness are just that; out of place. They don't belong.

(Esteban goes to exit)

JOSEFINA:

Where do you think you're going?

ESTEBAN:

*Déjame señora.*

JOSEFINA:

You are not leaving this house with our daughter to go shopping for anything. Esteban look at me.

ESTEBAN:

*Ya te oí.*

JOSEFINA:

Then where are you going? Where are you going Esteban?

ESTEBAN:

*A donde quiera.* What does it matter to you anyway? You're going to die and that's just fine with you. *Ya te vas.* Say "hi" to Felix, my great Tío Isaías, and our old dog Palomo in heaven because you're almost there. *Ya mero.* Ya merito se muere tu mama so say "good bye" Jessica. "Adios" David because your mom is off to become a *mugre angelita de Dios!* (Pause) *Por que no miras?* Why can't you see I was just trying to do best by this family? Trying to give them what time and God took away; *la oportunidad.*

JOSEFINA:

The opportunity? The opportunity?!

ESTEBAN:

*Si, la oportunidad!* I gave them the chance to have just a few more days of celebration with their mother. Why; because it was best for our family, because I would have given anything for that same chance myself, and because someone had to be the strong one for this family o no? *Y luego me hablas como si I was the bad guy.*

JOSEFINA:

Strong for the family?

ESTEBAN:

That's what I said.

JOSEFINA:

Pg. 77

Idiota! I have been nothing but strong for this family since the first day. I have held my words and smiled. Laughed and carried on, but the only one that needed babying was you.

ESTEBAN:

Ya me voy.

JOSEFINA:

Don't you leave just now. We are not done talking here!

ESTEBAN:

I'm done talking! If you want to talk so bad go call your *pinché* sister! You two can talk all day it seems, PERO YO YA ME VOY!

(Jessica interrupts his escape by entering.)

JESSICA:

Papi?

(Light fade out on the family.  
Spot light up on David.)

#### ACT II Scene 6

Time: The following day

Setting: The Kitchen

(Josefina is sitting at the table while Jessica finishes preparing the salad.)

DAVID:

(To audience) The day that followed was the quietest in memory. You would have thought both my parents were done talking forever. My dad would take off for work in the morning, without any breakfast and when he got home it was straight to his study room. Through the closed door we could all hear the faintest cords being strummed on his guitar,



Q 53

(The light over Esteban's room comes up revealing him playing. He continues to playing and remains visible throughout the scene.)

DAVID (cont.):

but no singing. My dad was done singing. All that was left for Jessica and me was the aftermath. The aftermath of a battle we might have seen coming but couldn't prevent.

(David joins Jessica.)

(Lights up on the Kitchen revealing Josefina sitting alone at a diner table.)

Q 54

JESSICA:

David I'm done making the salad. Do we still have some ranch dressing or not?

DAVID:

I'd better check.

(Jessica joins Josefina while David goes to the fridge.)

JESSICA:

Look Mom. I made it all by myself. David didn't even watch me. (Pause) Mom you're not looking.

JOSEFINA:

It looks delicious, *mijita*.

JESSICA:

David, don't forget the sodas.

DAVID:

I got em'. Don't worry.

(David joins them at the table.)

JESSICA:

Do you want me to go get Dad?

Pg. 79

JOSEFINA:

No. *Ay déjalo.* He knows what time we eat.

JESSICA:

I'll save him a plate.

DAVID:

Have you tried talking to him? Maybe-

JOSEFINA:

He is through talking David or didn't you hear him. (Pause)  
I'm sorry David. I just cannot think straight right now.

JESSICA:

Do you want me to talk to him for you?

JOSEFINA:

No Jessica. *Sabes que?* Let's talk about something else.  
Jessica, what happened to your hamster? Did you ever name it?

JESSICA:

Yeah. I named him *Gordo* because he eats a lot. Even more than *Tío Hector*. I was trying to give him baths every day so he smelled nice, but David said it was bad for him.

DAVID:

People shampoo is not made for hamsters Jessica.

JESSICA:

It is a tear-free formula David.

DAVID:

Jessica, don't be stupid.

JESSICA:

I'm not stupid.

(Esteban starts to play *Cariño.*)

JESSICA:

I read on the label before I bought it. I'm not as dumb as you think.

DAVID:

I never said you were dumb, just stupid. Also, I just don't think hamsters need a bath every day like people, and if they did-

JOSEFINA:

Excuse me.

(Josefina exits abruptly.)

DAVID:

(To audience) Just like that. I mean what was I supposed to do through all this?

JESSICA:

Mom?

DAVID:

Let her go.

JESSICA:

But she was-

DAVID:

Just leave it.

ACT II Scene 7

Time: Days later

Setting: Esteban's study

DAVID:

My sister was right. She was smarter than I gave her credit for. She just waited a day and tried again on her own, to get her parents back.

(Lights up revealing Esteban sitting in cushioned chair playing his guitar. Jessica enters.)

JESSICA:

Papi, David is done making dinner. (Pause) Well, are you going to eat with us or not? (Pause) It's getting cold.

Pg. 81

(Esteban continues playing  
his guitar.)

ESTEBAN:  
I'm not that hungry, *mijita*.

JESSICA:  
I made some Jell-O. You can at least eat that with us.

JESSICA:  
C'mon.

ESTEBAN:  
My little *princesa* is cooking?

JESSICA:  
Yeah. I made the rice from yesterday. Don't you remember?

ESTEBAN:  
(Thinks about it) *Ah si*, I remember. Oye, you made that  
rice Jessica?

JESSICA:  
Yep.

ESTEBAN:  
That was good rice, *mija*.

JESSICA:  
So you'll come and eat with us then, because Mom wants to  
know.

ESTEBAN:  
Your mom wants me to come and eat?

JESSICA  
Yeah.

ESTEBAN:  
(Pause) *Pues*, I'll see if I get hungry later.

JESSICA:  
OK, I'll tell her.

Pg. 82

(Jessica starts to exit.)

ESTEBAN:

*Sabes que*, just bring my plate in here alright Jessica.

JESSICA:

(Disappointed) OK.

(Jessica exits. Esteban's playing gets a little louder. He starts to hum along softly as Jessica reenters with a big bowl of lime Jell-O, and two spoons.)

JESSICA:

I'm back.

(Esteban continues playing without looking at her.)

ESTEBAN:

Just bring me a plate later *por favor*-

(Finally noticing the Jell-O.)

ESTEBAN:

-Jessica I can't eat all that.

JESSICA:

Sure you can; it's Jell-O. Plus it's lime Jell-O. Your favorite.

(Jessica motions for Esteban to take the plate from her. Esteban ignores it at first.)

JESSICA (cont.):

This plate is getting heavy you know.

ESTEBAN

*Dámelo paca.*

(Esteban finally puts his guitar down and starts eating.)

JESSICA:

Good huh. That's because I used real limes. The box shows you how.

ESTEBAN:

This is good, Jessica. *Te aventastes mija.*

JESSICA:

Thanks.

ESTEBAN:

Chihuahuas, I didn't know I was this hungry.

(Esteban continues eating.)

JESSICA:

I brought two spoons for a reason.

ESTEBAN:

O si (Laughs). Ten.

(He gives her the other spoon.  
They start eating.)

JESSICA:

(Pause) You know, I bet Mom is really sorry for yelling at you.

ESTEBAN:

Jessica.

JESSICA:

I just think you should talk to her is all. I know she misses you.

ESTEBAN:

What am I supposed to say Jessica? All I can think of is "I'm sorry".

JESSICA:

That's a start. And you know what; I bet she's sorry too. A little at least.



ESTEBAN:

Your *papi* sure did make a big mess of things, didn't he?

JESSICA:

Yep.

ESTEBAN:

I'm sorry I had to yell like that in front of you and your brother. It was wrong of me, *mijita*.

JESSICA:

It's ok *papi*. I get mad a lot at David. I mean a-lot. And sometimes I just want him to go away. But I'm glad he doesn't.

ESTEBAN:

(Thinking) Your *Tio Hector* is right. Your *papi* can be a real *péndejo* sometimes. A *quinceañera*. *San Antonio*, what was I thinking?

JESSICA:

I bet it would have been a gorgeous dress. Well, it will someday.

ESTEBAN:

Will you go with me?

JESSICA:

Go with you where?

ESTEBAN:

(Pause) Go with me so your *papi* can apologize to your beautiful mother.

JESSICA:

Sure I'll go with you.

ESTEBAN:

First let me finish the last bit of this delicious lime  
Jell-O. Mmm-mmm. *Tan rico que esta*.

(Esteban starts eating again.  
Jessica grabs his guitar and  
starts strumming it.)

JESSICA:

Will you teach me how to play the guitar someday *papi*?

ESTEBAN:

You know, I was always hoping David would ask me, *pero si quieres aprender*, I'll be glad to.

JESSICA:

(Pointing to a notebook) Is that where you keep your music?

ESTEBAN:

No *mi princesa*. That's where I keep the lyrics. You see, your *papi* has trouble remembering the words sometimes. *Pero mis manos*, these hands right here never miss a note. *Déjame ver tus manos*.

(Jessica extends her hands to meet Esteban's. They connect palm to palm.)

ESTEABAN:

*Mira nomás*. They may seem small right now, *pero* I think there's room still for a song or two. And in time-

(David runs in.)

DAVID:

Dad, it's mom!

ESTEBAN:

*¿Que pasó!?*

DAVID:

She fell again, and she's not moving!

(Esteban drops his plate on the floor and they all exit running except for David. Lights fade.)

ACT II Scene 8

Time: Minutes later

Setting: The Gutierrez backyard



DAVID:

(To audience) She fell again, and my dad, same as before, ran to where she was laying and scooped her up from the floor into his arms. We were all ten times as scared this time because we knew. We knew what might be.

(Esteban enters with Josefina in his arms. Jessica is close behind carrying her mother's purse.)

ESTEBAN:

Jessica, donde estas?!

JESSICA:

I'm right here, Dad.

ESTEBAN:

Mija, I want you to run to your Tía Sulema's House and tell her to meet us at the Valley Regional Hospital. Me oyes?

JESSICA:

Yeah.

ESTEBAN:

Bueno, ándale.

(Jessica runs off stage right.)

ESTEBAN:

David, take the keys, you're driving!

(He tosses David the Keys.)

DAVID:

Yes sir.

ESTEBAN:

Open the back door so me and your mom can get in.

(David gets the door for his father.)

Pg. 87

Vámonos mijo! Pronto!

ESTEBAN:

(Lights out.)

Q59

ACT II Scene 9

Time: Days Later

Setting: The Funeral

(Spotlight up on David, stage right. In the background center, Esteban is standing behind a coffin. On stage left there is a podium with Sulema behind it. The lights are dark enough that only their silhouettes are visible.)

Q59.3

DAVID:

Sadly, my mom's worst intuition was right. She never made it to Christmas. She didn't even see the first dawn of November. And although my dad carried her into the hospital in his arms it was like he was gone too. (Growing progressively angry) He couldn't do anything. I had to make all the arrangements and telephone calls myself. Can you imagine that? Me, then only a fifteen year old boy calling each and every primo, prima, tío and tía, my abuelita from Raymondville, and telling them, "your aunt, your sister, your daughter, my mom died last night from complications of brain cancer. (Pause) My mother, Josefina, came from a family of sixteen; brothers and sisters. Do you know how many calls that adds up to?! (Pause) (Softly) A lot.

(Light's fade on David as he turns to his father. Lights up on the rest of the stage.

Q60

SULEMA:

Hello. For those of you who don't know me, my name is Sulema Garcia Thomas and Josefina was my big sister, my favorite sister.

Pg. 88

(Chris enters, crosses to the casket, says a small prayer and shakes Esteban's hand.)

SULEMA:

I'm not going to stand up here and list all of my sister's accomplishments in life because most of the people in here, her family and close friends, know all of them. More obviously, her family, her wonderful family.

(Chris hugs the children and exits.)

SULEMA:

Her children David and Jessica, and her husband Esteban.

(Hector enters, crosses to the casket, says a prayer)

SULEMA:

I just want to share with all of you all my fondest memory of my big sister Josefina. For three summers straight Josefina had saved up money to buy a bicycle.

(Hector crosses slowly to Esteban and gives him a hug.)

SULEMA:

It was a big beautiful bright red Huffy.

(Esteban hugs him back hard. Hector crosses to hug the children and exits.)

SULEMA:

(Pause) I remember watching her race up and down the street with her braids completely horizontal with the wind, and wanting so badly to be there too...

DAVID:

The one thing I remember vividly about my mom's funeral was my dad. Looking at him stand there so still so stoic, staring at the coffin, face completely devoid of expression. His arms crossed like some sort of Aztec

Q61

DAVID:

statue. And the sunglasses he wore; those dark aviators. I never knew if beneath the tint he was hurting as much as I was.

Q62

SULEMA:

So I'm on the bike, and at the time I was only seven years old so my feet couldn't even reach the pedals. In the midst of the whole struggle the brake came loose and the bike and me fell to the ground with a loud smack. My older brothers Eddie and Felipe were washing the cars and saw all of this. So naturally they start laughing and I start crying from embarrassment.

(Jessica crosses to the casket and stares.)

SULEMA:

It seemed everyone was laughing at me, except my big sister Josefina. She walks right up to Felipe, the oldest and biggest brother outside and tells him to shut up and finish washing the cars before Dad gets home.

(She motions for Esteban to pick. He finally does.)

SULEMA:

She was nine years younger than him and she was spouting out orders with an authority I had never seen her use. Felipe and Eddie didn't let out so much as a whisper as my big sister wiped the rock and dirt clusters from my knees and elbows.

(David joins Esteban and Jessica by the casket.)

SULEMA:

She stands me and the bike back up, sits me on the steering wheel and we take off through the neighborhood together, going twice as fast as that red Huffy was ever meant to go. And for the next half hour there was just the wizz of the bicycle wheel cutting through air, the wind

SULEMA:  
 sending our braids completely horizontal, me on the steering wheel, and my big sister, my hero on the pedals.

(Lights out)

**ACT II Scene 10**

**Time:** A year later, Summer 1992

**Setting:** The Gutierrez back yard

(Spotlight up on David. At the far left of the stage, there is a screen door leading to the inside of the house.)

DAVID:

You know, nothing stings you like that first holiday without your mom. December rolls along and my dad didn't fetch one wreath from the attic to put up. He was not in any mood to celebrate. By then I had gotten a part time job at local hardware store so I put a couple presents for Jessica under the television. Christmas day hits and my dad took us out to eat, took us to visit some family and then finally took us back home to nothing. He'd just walk back into his room,

(Another spotlight captures Esteban sitting down by himself. He removes his guitar from its case and starts to play it.

DAVID:

shut the door and start playing his guitar. No singing through all this. Just playing.

(David looks back at Esteban who plays the guitar softly.)

DAVID:

(Pause) He could be in his room by himself for hours.

(Lights out over Esteban. He Exits.)



Pg. 91

DAVID:

When school let out in May I put all my energy into getting my dad back, if not completely to his old self then at least to some extent. As July came by it hit me. It was a long shot but it hit me. I recruited the aid of Jessica, and put her to go to the attic and fetch my supplies; Bags upon bags of lights, decorations, you name it. We had all day, and it took all day, but between the two of us we finished. Then I added a finishing touch to personalize it.

(David mimes as he talks)

DAVID:

I took each end of the extension cords in my hand... and BAM.

Q64

(As soon as David plugs in the extension cords, he is hit with a burst of bright multi-colored lights.)

DAVID:

Now with my dad's arrival it was time to see, time to see what "all our hard work has amounted to."

Q64.3

(We hear a car approaching, slow down, and then finally park. Esteban enters stage right carrying bags of groceries, and he hears the song. He slowly lowers the bags of groceries and gazes in awe, at the lights before him. He finally drops the bags.)

DAVID:

What do you think Dad?

(Esteban is too distracted by the lights to hear David!)

DAVID:

(Pause) Dad?

You did all this *mijo*?

ESTEBAN:

*Con mis manos*, Dad.

DAVID:

(David gestures with his hands.  
Esteban does the same and takes  
moment examining his hands.)

So, what do you think?

DAVID:

(Esteban takes in all the lights  
and decorations.)

ESTEBAN

(Pause) *Te aventastes David.*

DAVID:

(Pause) *Simón que si, Dad. Simón que si.*

(They embrace)

(Blackout)

Q65

Q66 Black

Q 66.5 Curtain Call

Q67 House up

## APPENDIX D



## APPENDIX D

## RESEARCH PHOTOGRAPHS

What follows is a photographic series based on certain aspects of the set that needed some sort of image to help develop for the production



Car Exteriors here and following.







Car Interiors



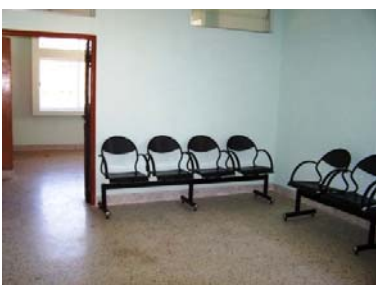


The Grill. I was dead set on this steel drum style.





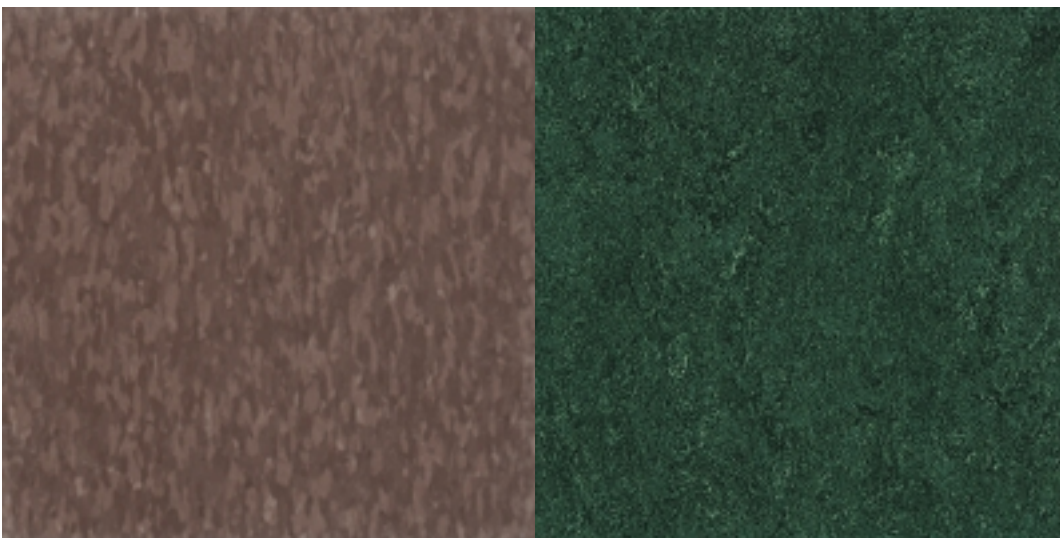
Cooler and can of Natural Light Beer. Both major features of the show.



Hospital rooms. I grabbed the idea for the Cafeteria tables from the first picture.



Pictures of Concrete for the Deck Palate.



Stage

## APPENDIX E



## APPENDIX E

## CONSTRUCTION PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographs to illustrate the construction process.



Stage at interim construction



Above: This grill just about matched my photo. Below: Roof sections on





Car Wagon: Junkyard seats and a lot of bolts.





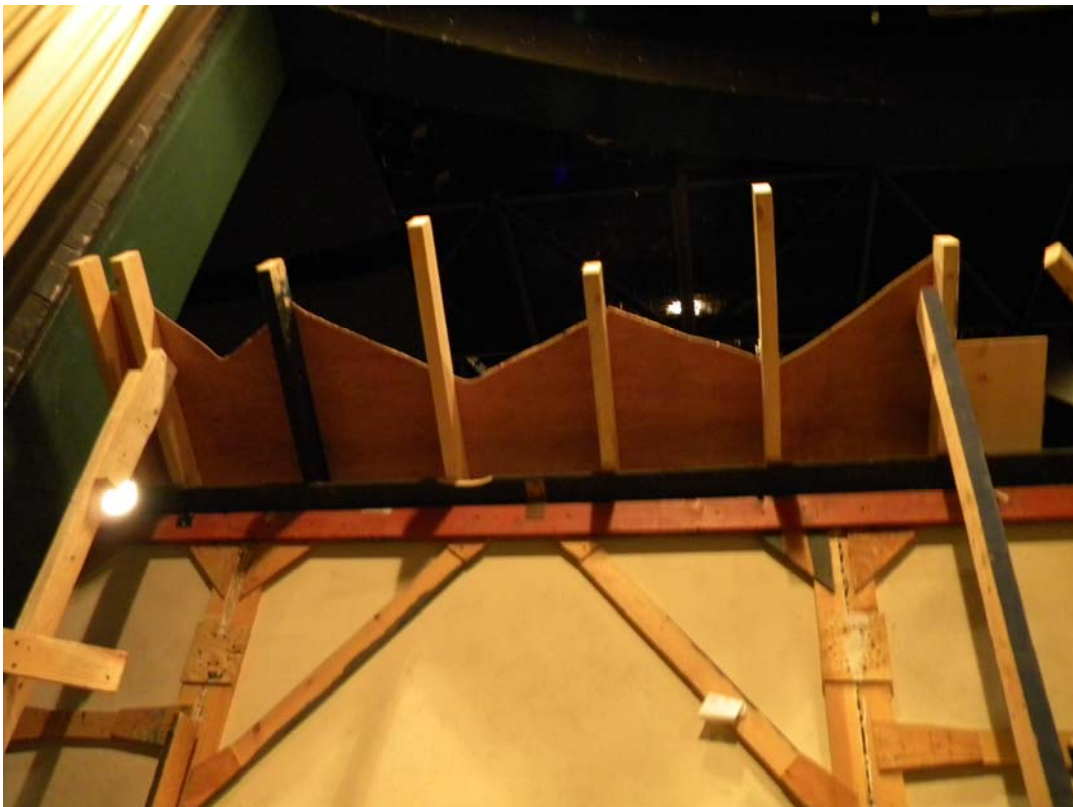


Roof Installed: Nearly Completed set.





Roof Construction





Finished set from stage left (above) and stage right (below)







Stage set for House Open.





Scene one (above) and scene two (below) of Act I. Notice the light pools.







Set Changes: Speed was critical.





Rehearsal: End of Act I.



## APPENDIX F

## APPENDIX F

## PERFORMANCE

Photos taken after the Matinee, before the strike.



Cast and Crew





Above: Act I, Scene One: Barbecue and Bad News

Below: Act I, Scene Two: Second Time Driving





Above: Act I, Scene Three: Cuida su Hermana

Below: Act I, Scene Four: BLTs





Act I, Scene Five: Hector? Gracias...







Act I, Scene Seven: Its in God's Hands Now







Above: Act I, Scene Eight Esteban Planning Christmas  
Below: Family Portrait





Act I, Scene Nine: Merry Christmas Cabrones!







Above: Act II, Scene One: Making Tortillas





Act II, Scene Two: Guess Who has a Birthday Coming Up?





Above: Act II, Scene Four.

Below: Act II, Scene Three: Visit the Sister







Act II, Scene Four: The Big Party





Act II, Scene Five: The Climactic Fight







Act II, Scene Six: The Quietest Day





Act II, Scene Seven: Jell-o made with real limes.





Act II, Scene Eight: She Fell Again!







Act II, Scene Nine: The Funeral





Act II, Scene Ten: Te aventastes mijito.



## APPENDIX G

## APPENDIX G

### REHEARSAL NOTES

The following are scans of the notes that I took during auditions, rehearsals, and the calendars that we based our work on. All designers and directors take notes in some way in order to keep everything straight. It is quite easy to forget a note after three hours of rehearsing.





150 Hours Earned

Class starts 12:45 - 1:45 <sup>class hour</sup>

Post class is Available for work

Shop open 9:00am - 5pm

Get Papers for Stage Furniture ASAP

GP PDF for Ruby

Natalie  
natalova@yahoo.com

Meeting 5-18  
Tom, Elva, Mike,  
Ronnie, Ruby

A 4'-10<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>"

B 6'-8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>"

C 10'-8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>"

D 5'-3"

E 3'-11"



# CON MIS MANOS/ WITH MY HANDS

## June 2009



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	8	9 7-10PM READ THROUGH	10 7-11PM BEGIN BLOCK ACT I & II	11 7-10PM BLOCK ACT I	12 7-11 PM ACT I	13 DAY OFF
14 7-10PM ACT I	15 7-11PM BLOCK ACT II	16 7-10PM OFF BOOK ACT I	17 7-11PM ACT II	18 7-10PM ACT II	19 7-11PM OFF BOOK ACT II	20 7-10PM ACT I & II OFF BOOK
21 7-11PM ACT I & II OFF BOOK	22 7-10PM ACT I & II OFF BOOK	23 7-11PM ACT I & II OFF BOOK	24 7-10PM ACT I & II OFF BOOK	25 7-11PM RUN ACT I & II	26 TECH RUN 6PM CALL 7PM GO	27 TECH RUN 1PM CALL 2PM GO
28 TECH RUN 6PM CALL 7PM GO	29 DRESS 5PM CALL 7PM GO	30 DRESS 5PM CALL 7PM GO	JULY 1 OPEN DRESS 6PM CALL 8PM GO	JULY 2 OPENING NIGHT 6PM CALL 8PM GO	JULY 3 6PM CALL 8PM GO 10PM PHOTO CALL	JULY 4 6PM CALL 8PM GO
P.A.S.S. SHOW 1 (CON MIS MANOS/WITH MY HANDS)						
JULY 5 12:30 CALL 2PM GO 4PM STRIKE	*SUBJECT TO CHANGE*					

\*\*\*CAST AND CREW THIS MEANS THAT NOW UNTIL THE SHOW IS OVER WE  
NEED TO PREPARE FOR THIS PRODUCTION. SEE YOU LATER!!!!\*\*\*

1  
3 11:00 am  
2/ Same  
5/ Same

~~Glow & Halt out on Q6~~

~~Reset Q8. Pull Down Stage~~

~~Q13, Take out Downlight~~

~~Q15, DSC N DSR~~

~~Q16, Take out TT~~

~~Add Q between 17 & 18 USR Focus~~

~~Add Q 20.3 w/ window~~

~~Reset Cye 21~~

~~Add delay to~~

~~Consider extra for Solilixs~~

~~Jessica Take a few steps more~~

~~into the light A2 SK~~

~~Edy, Sound like a Gougo~~

~~Cut 38 & 39~~

~~Remark Barberue to lessen~~

~~Difference Blue Areas~~

~~waits Between Opt Down~~

~~Remove Cye 50~~

→ ~~Pull Down Toplight 30 take 21-22 to 15~~  
~~SPLIT 58~~

~~Forward. Less light on Family.~~

~~Awesome Music~~

~~Cut the extension cord~~

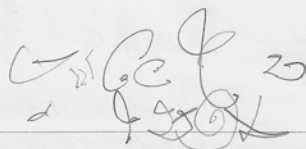
~~Build up Dilu on Fig Entrance~~

~~Certain Call-Preset - Mouse~~

~~light the scenery~~

1-6 special to USR      Call 6100  
 2-5 Delay Special  
 Tech Run 6-28  
~~116 Needs Attention - Done~~  
~~Q3 - More on David~~  
~~Q5 - Add Red to Cyc~~  
 work out  
 After 2nd → Q7 - Reset for Bench lights  
 Q8 - Add some Decorus stage  
 Calteria scene. 2nd table keeps moving SL  
 Hector's living Room Also moved SL  
 Clear Beer Bottles from Grill.  
 0008  
~~Rework scene change @ Cue 13~~  
 Q16 - Add extra light on David for sitting  
 that something in the cups for weight  
 Q17 - Follow 2sec to 17.3  
 11-12:10 Not yet in David. - CS single Bell's  
 11-12:00  
 11-12:00  
 11-12:00  
 802  
 2:49  
 9:45  
 0:02  
~~Richard, Head out as the light changes~~  
~~Soccer game sound Over. Trade to Bank~~  
~~Respond to standbys with standing by~~  
~~Johnson, Heads cork Part of Betty's Costume.~~  
~~Angel watch how far DS too Get in 2-5~~  
~~lay scene 5-6 transition special~~  
~~Rework exit on table 6-7~~  
~~Distance from window~~  
~~Q60+61 - Tower trucks?~~  
~~Casket rolls too much across?~~  
~~Add detail for spot after funeral~~

Niki.  
 Podium  
 spike.



Dry tech

5:00 pm

Things to work out

~~Bench in Waiting Room~~

~~Tables in Caf.~~

~~Hector's Living Room~~

Light tweets

~~Q3~~

~~Q5~~

~~Q7~~

~~Q8~~

~~Q16~~

~~Q17 follow to 17.3~~

For Silvia

Added 16.3 + 16.5

~~Q31~~

~~Q40~~

For David's Soling in

Backyard Milkshakes.

~~Q50 + 61~~

~~Q62~~

Added 51.3 Following 51'

Added a follow to Q after curtain call



(Retocus 25)











 M<sup>00</sup> Thash Shome  
 - Good Rem.

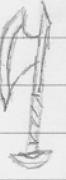

2 3 4 5  
 6 7 8 9 10 11 12  
 13 14 15 16 17 18 19

Run 6-30

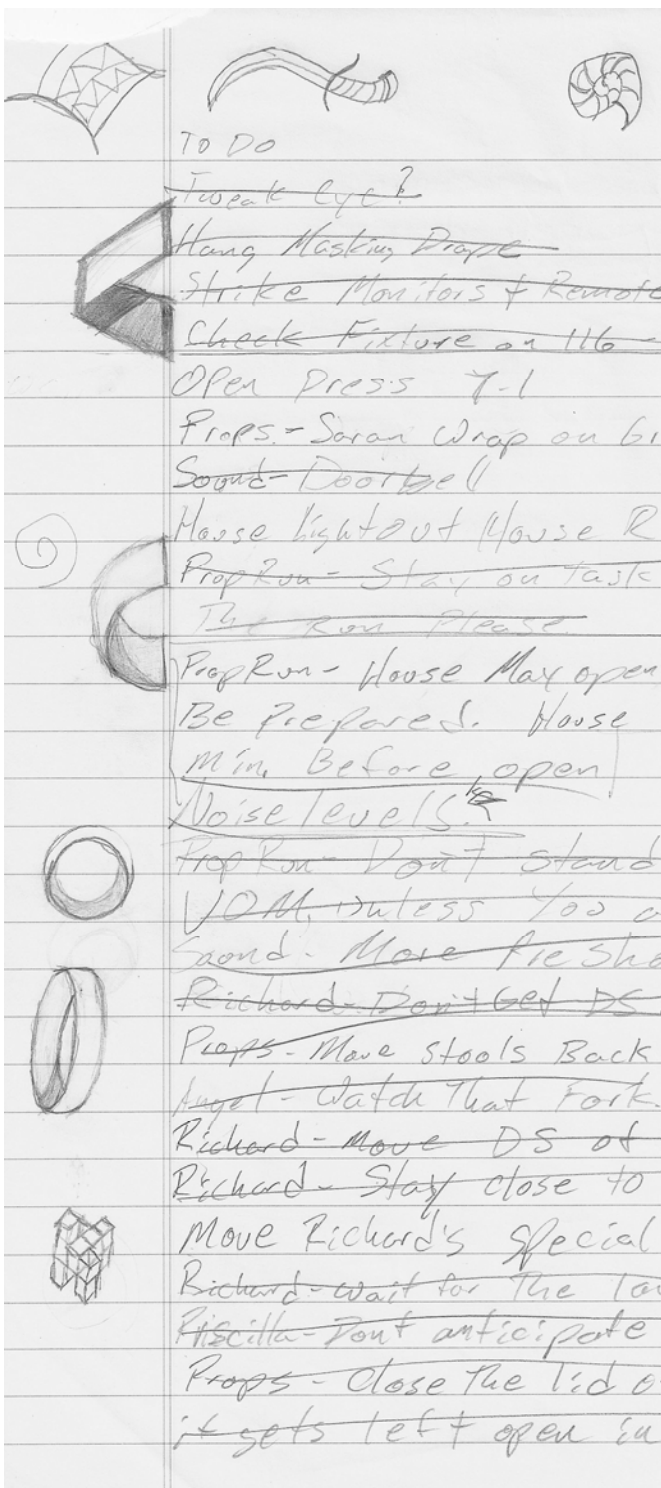
Light Board: Mike is F.M.C. Problems  
 It looks Good  
 Keep voices down in the Booth.  
 Spotlights  
 Restructure Scene 3, 2, 1, 5  
 Angel: I could see you at the Door  
 at Hector's living room scene  
 Door needs to stay shut as much  
 as possible. Work out Masking (curtains?)  
 Fade in window slowly. 11:59 & 10:00  
 What do you think of putting the  
 lock on Jessica for the funeral?  
 Check chan 19 → Change fixture tomorrow  
 David out sooner for his speeches  
 in A2  
 tanger follow after fight + 10:25  
 Manual special post funeral  
 Add Chan 73 to all cues. (35)  
 Power loss to Board:  
 Unplug Data  
 Repower then Reset Board  
 Then Reconnect Data  
 removed 7.5  
 Call: 6:00

TO DO  
 Tweak Cyc  
 Add Mustus  
 curtain  
 Backstage

Page 8.5 slower  
 Add transition

Need 4 fix Dad, London, Me, Cathy, Boyfriends  
 3 or 4 for Karen



To Do

~~Trapezoid Eye?~~

~~Hang Masking Props~~

~~Strike Monitors & Remote~~

~~Check Fixture on 116 - 19th~~

~~Open Press 7-1~~

~~Props - Soran Wrap on Grill. Wrap each grate?~~

~~Sound - Doorbell~~

~~House Light out House Right~~

~~Prop Run - Stay on task. Socialize After~~

~~The Run Please.~~

~~Prop Run - House Max open Early, you never know.~~

~~Be prepared. House should be Ready 10~~

~~min. Before open~~

~~Noise levels.~~

~~Prop Run - Don't stand Around in The~~

~~VOM, unless you are Vlogging~~

~~Sound. Move Pre Show Music~~

~~Richard - Don't Get DS of Bucket, in 1-1~~

~~Props - Move stools Back of curtains~~

~~Angel - Watch That Fork.~~

~~Richard - move DS of Angel 1-2~~

~~Richard - Stay close to the Platform 1-2~~

~~Move Richard's Special to Seperate Loc~~

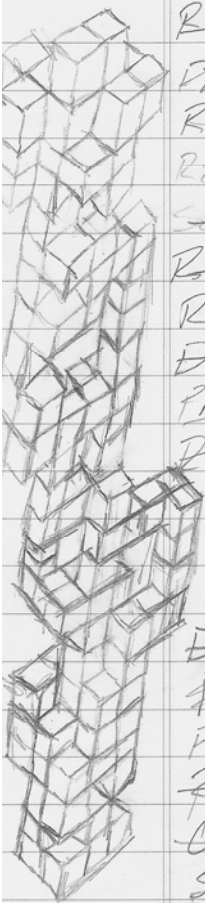
~~Richard - wait for The Laugh after Ojo~~

~~Riscilla - Don't anticipate The Robotop~~

~~Props - Close the lid of The Grill if~~

~~it gets left open in 1-1~~

Credit Cynthia  
as Costume Design



~~Props - What got Dropped Backstage 7-7~~

~~Richard - "I Read Somewhere" Louder~~

~~Props - What happened to The Big Bow?~~

~~Richard - More Excitement About The Jacket~~

~~Richard - Stay put - Between 1-2 & 1-3~~

~~Sound - Do we have Announcements?~~

~~Richard - That match - Brain Not Brain~~

~~Richard - Don't Go all the way off 2-3~~

~~Disconnect Richard's specials From Previous Qs in Act 2~~

~~Richard - Show more emotion on your face~~

~~What Happened w/ Trans. 5-6 -~~

~~Piscilla - Hold onto one of the spoons in the Jello score.~~

~~Disconnect Piscilla, late for Foured~~

~~Plights - TO DO~~

~~Place Richard's Special on separate Cue~~

~~Remove follows on all Richard specials~~

~~Check transition from 2-5 to 2-6, lost special on Richard~~

Cust Party Monday @ 5:00 pm

Fresnels; in #R02

R356

R83

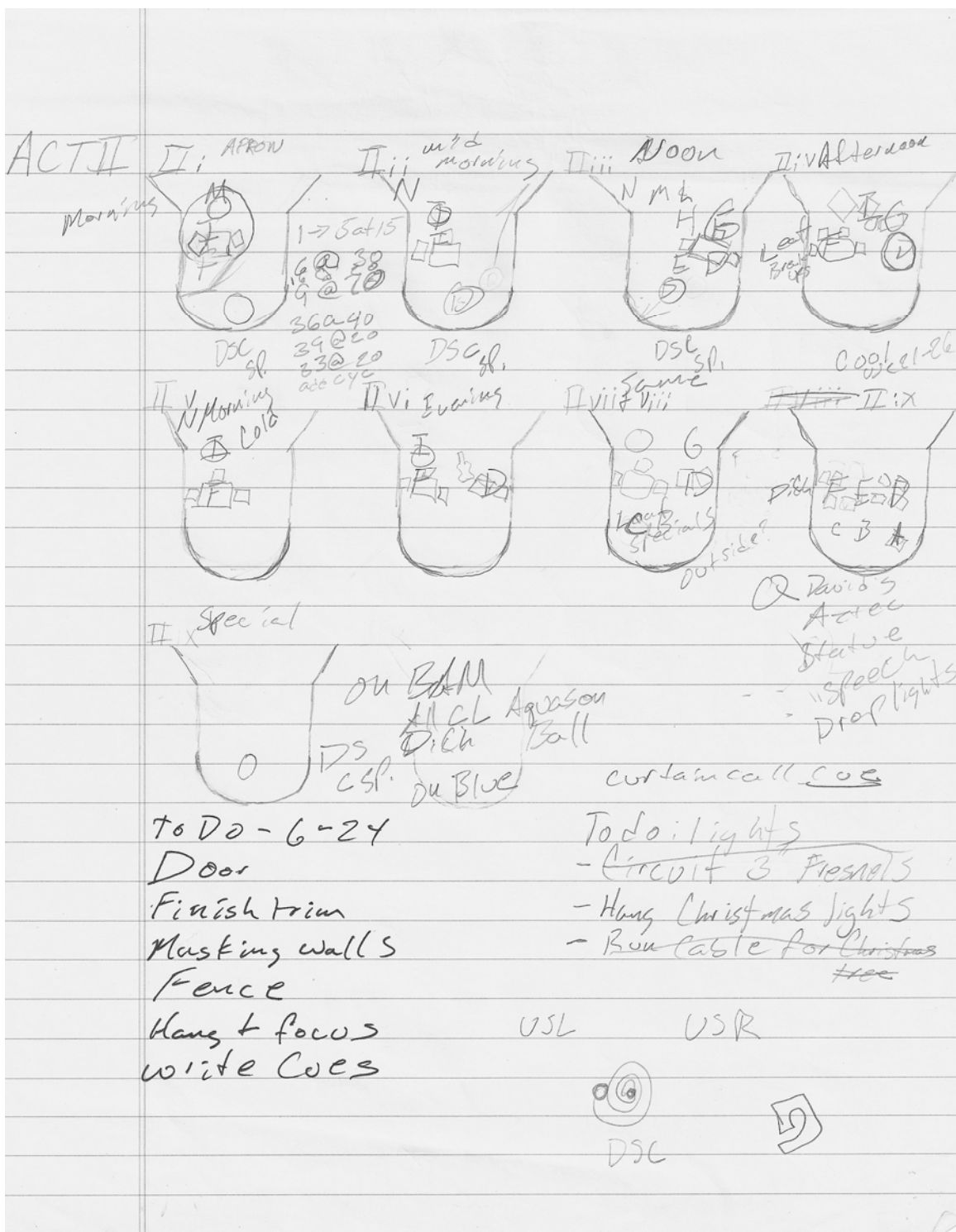
Cyc lights: R124 - 127

Aquasplash: Color wheel

Pattan S4's: R302

Additrus. Cont.  
6-8-09

- Picilla <sup>Vozeno</sup> for Jessica - Right age Range.  
Projection ~~could be~~ needs work. looks  
The Part to a T. Good choice
- Patty Moreno for Sulema or Josefina - ~~Too much~~  
Panic quality in Sulema Reads. So/so  
Pull The edge back. It's looming, abt outside the  
Door.
- Sonora Ruedas - Sulema or Jessica - Flowery.  
Big gestures. Certain venom <sup>lacking</sup> ~~missing~~  
You low get clipped quality to speech. SLOW IT DOWN  
Voice might be a bit low for 11/12 old
- Catherine for Jessica - Tiny little voice  
Good ~~body~~ <sup>body</sup> structure, good vocal quality
- Zachary for David - Little voice...  
(Too young...) lacks a certain... presence.
- Rick Miraltes for David - Solid Voice, Good Confidence.  
Could work for Hector as well.
- Reagan for Jessica - I'm a bad man. Flatness = Perfect.  
Solid voice, Good body. Could work well.
- Ariel for Jessica - Solid, Probably better in  
older Role.



- ~~- Move Spring on Door.~~
- ~~- Paint Tables.~~

→ shoes for Angel

# ACT I

2.

I..

I iii

7iv

Afternoon

# Evening

I'll  
Night  
Work special

IV  
Morrow

Iv;  
Late Afternoon

I vii  
Keep lights  
Subdued till  
first chords

I will low  
window 6060  
need someone to  
catch crissie  
special  
on  
the

I x  
 3  
 1  
 some  
 D  
 C  
 to  
 P

DS Color  
Cool?  
Poll focus  
to Attend  
of Act

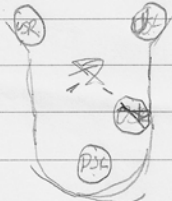
1- 9 DS  
11- 19 CS  
21- 29 VS

Window 6h 50  
Low B 45

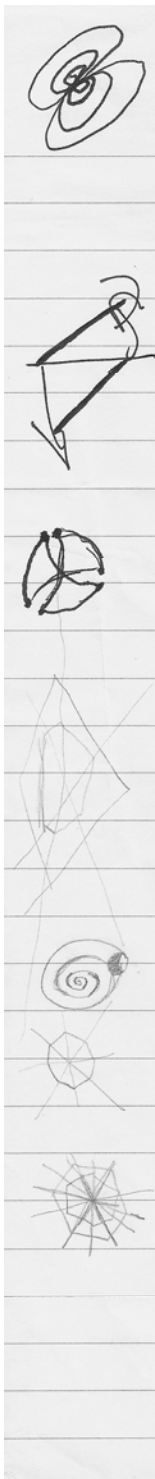
Just the  
Christmas  
tree for  
zone 9

Specials:  $USL$   $USR$   
 $40@69$   $72@70$   
 $DSL$   $DSR$   
 $14@76$

9 8 7  
6 5 4  
3 2 1







- Pulpit.
- Move Spring hook on the Door.
- Richard - Either gesture, or don't.  
Halfway don't cut it.
- Jacket to Cover Jessica?
- No pause Between Hospital + Crisis Situation.
- Need \$ For Waiting Room Scene
- Angel - Try not to give your cues into  
Jesse's shoulder.

To do: Revised 6-23

- ~~Finish Roof~~
- ~~Paint Shingles~~
- ~~Assemble + install Shingle sections~~
- ~~Install Roof sections over walls.~~
- ~~Trim e: l: r:~~
- ~~2nd Paint coat~~
- ~~Install trim~~
- ~~Seal Tape on Seam~~
- ~~Touch up on tape~~
- Masking walls
- Get em up
- Fence
- ~~Decide Final Dimensions. Has to fit Car Dragon W/ R~~
- ~~Assemble Fence~~
- ~~Gate~~
- Prop Cyl
- ~~Paint inside of Gilt lid w/ Black Tach Prime~~
- ~~See if Radium inside works~~

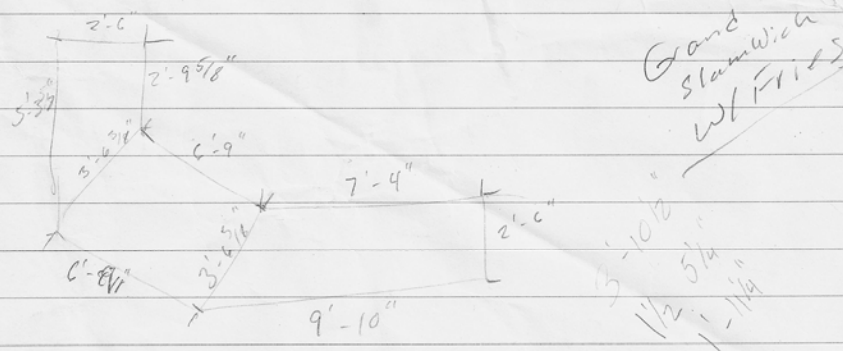
Rehearsal Con Mist'nos  
Notes

6-10-09

- Patty Replaces Erica as Josefina  
Need More Professionalism from The actors
- SHOW ON TIME: is 6:45 for  
a 7:00 Rehearsal

TO DO

- View Ports for All Scenes = Talk to Tom about
- Elevations on Root Sections = ~~Problems~~ Here.
- Arrange Saved Views
- ~~3-D Render for Ruby + Sylvia~~
- Costume Lists for Costume Crew
- Begin Light Plot
- Figure Out Car Seats for Car Scenes
- Door for SR Entrance - Cut. Not Needed
- L.D. Special for Josefina on the Phone w/ Doct.
- Find Doors for Wall. Need Screen + Solid
- Develop Paint Elevations for Floor + Walls. Floor tonight for Painting Satis



Karen Martinez: (956)



- Rehearsal shoes for Cast

- Texture Grass

- Wall texture - Ragdoll <sup>Paint</sup> mixed

- Floor spray 2 colors to go

- Seal Floor

- Erect Walls

Project

Wednesday

Todo 6-20

- Finish Roof Sections - Need

- ~~Cut, Paint & install shingles~~

- Trim for walls: 1x4 mitered to fit, Paint

- ~~Screen & Plastic in Window~~

- Erect Masking walls

- Cut, Assemble and Erect The Fence

- Drop cycl

- LIGHTS, LIGHTS, LIGHTS!!!

- Gate in Fence?, Adjust Depth of Fence

- Work Transitions.



Notes

- Richard - she just waited 2 day <sup>Short + A</sup> Not long

- Props - Plate and bowl for the girl - o? That 2nd spoon is a bit of a problem. Perhaps solve it with 5

- Props - Strap for The Guitar?

- Lights - How to end The Study Scene?

- Props - Do we have an urn maybe?

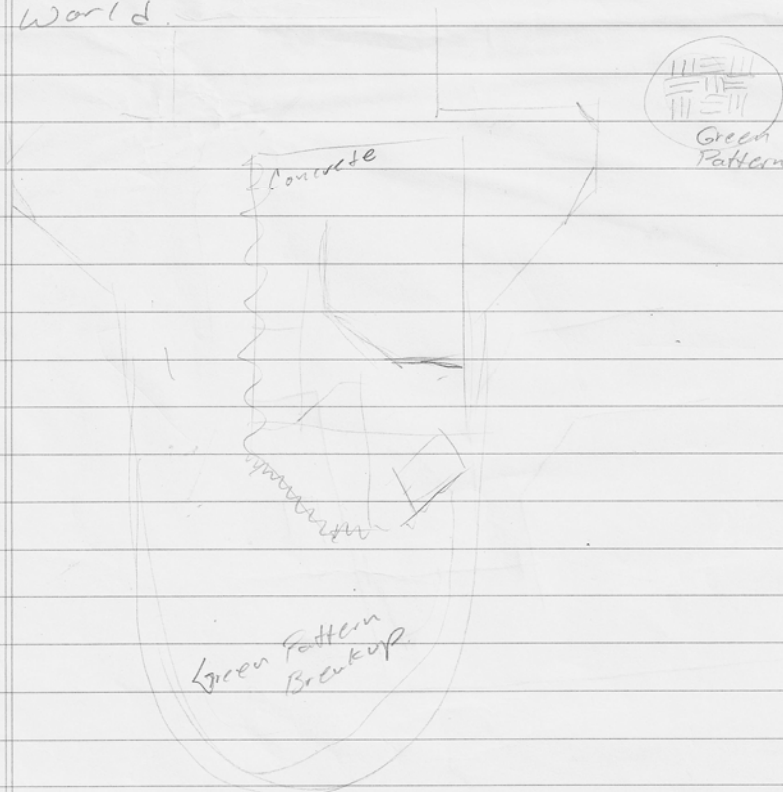
- Richard - Vividly. Work on Pronunciation



Paint Elevations Floor

Mainstage needs Predominantly Dark Green Breakup Pattern.

Deck Area Concrete grey With Stains, Rust and Expansion Joints. Border should be Somewhat Vague, Suggesting Overgrowth on A Lawn, as well as a fragmentation of The Solidity of The Gutierrez's World.



~~Adriana~~  
Auditions. Cont.  
8-8-07

Adriana for Solema - I like her vocal quality  
Good Hair. / Disetina - Decent. could do the job.

Jesse for <sup>Hector/Esteban</sup> ~~Esteban~~ - Solid body structure.  
work on ~~the~~ enunciation. Age Makeup

- Joel for Esteban - Fanciful. slow delivery.

- Eddy for David - Decent. Face is a little odd

- Angel for Esteban - Good voice. Bit of Age Makeup  
and a hat. Grow a beard?

### Proposed Cast List

David - Richard Salinas / Jesse Castellano

Jessica - Priscilla Lozano

Josefina - Erica Miranda

Esteban - Angel

Hector - Jorge

Chris - Felipe Alvarado or Joel / John Flores

Solema - Nikki San Miguel

Cut  
Dif  
on  
Salsa  
Dif  
Line.

Auditions 6-8-09 Con - Mis - Manos!

- <sup>for</sup> ~~David~~ Richard Salinas - Needs more Projection  
Work on variety. Good Body Structure, work  
on Vocal Performance.

- Nancy Gonzales for Solema - Solid Voice  
Good choice for Role.

Karina  
- ~~Karina~~ Gomez for Jessica - Good little Girl voice,  
Decent Body structure. Might need to alter hair.

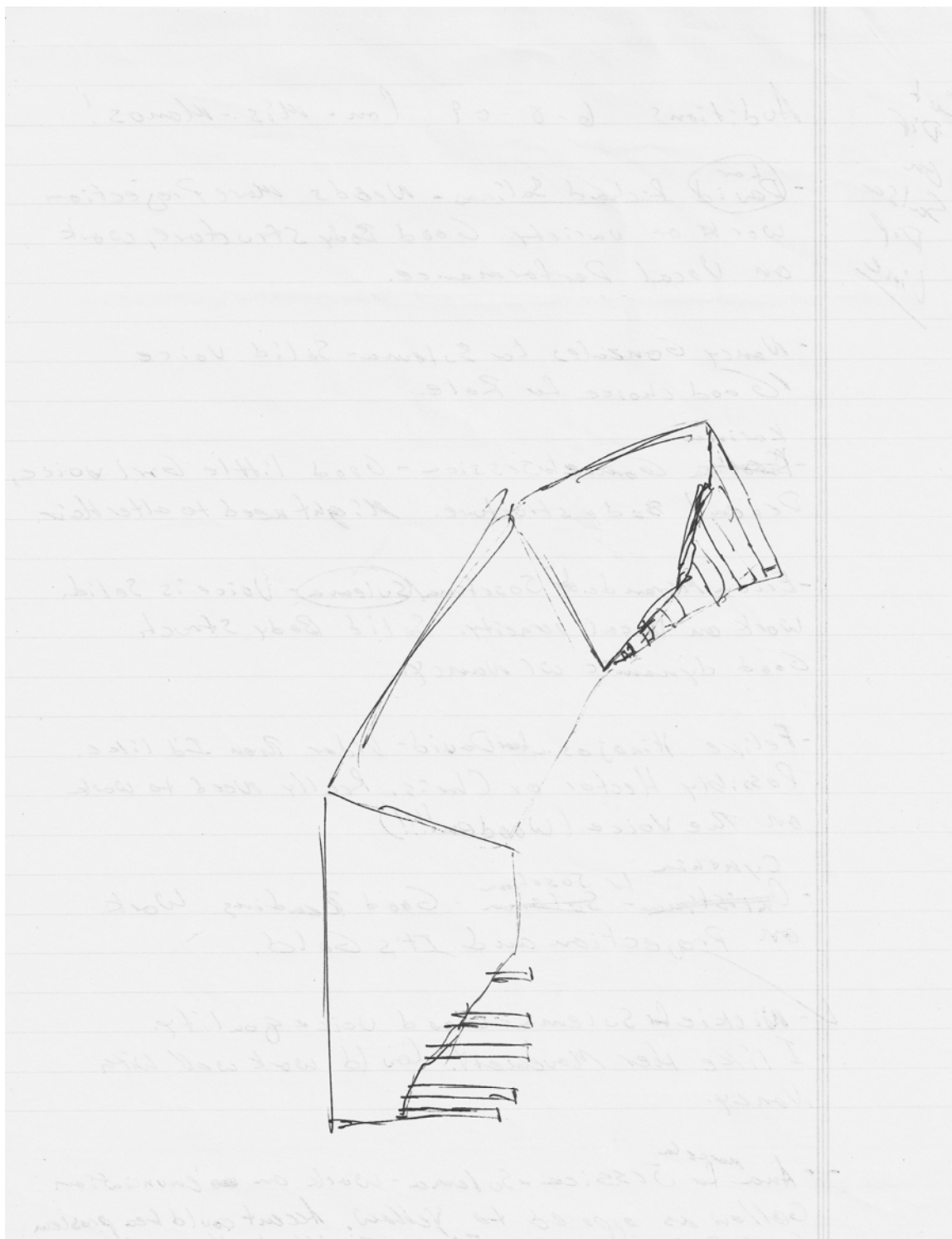
- Eric Miranda for Josefina ~~Solema~~ - Voice is Solid.  
Work on Vocal variety. Solid Body Structure.  
Good dynamic w/ Nancy.

- Felipe Hinojosa <sup>for</sup> David - Older than I'd like.  
Possibly Hector or Chris. Really need to work  
on The Voice. (Wooden!!!)

Cynthia for Josefina  
- ~~Christine~~ <sup>for Josefina</sup> - Solema - Good Reading. Work  
on Projection and It's Gold.

✓ - Wickie for Solema - Good voice quality.  
I like her Movement. Could work well with  
Nancy.

- Ana <sup>marcela</sup> for Jessica - Solema - Work on ~~the~~ enunciation  
Gellow as opposed to yellow. Accent could be a problem





Additrus. Cont.  
6-8-09

- Picilla <sup>Vozeno</sup> for Jessica - Right age Range.  
Projection ~~could be~~ needs work. looks  
The Part to a T. Good choice
- Patty Moreno for Solema or Josefina - ~~Too much~~  
Panic quality in Solema Read. So/So  
Pull The edge back. It's looming, abt outside the  
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- Sonora Ruedas - Solema or Jessica - Flowery.  
Big gestures. Certain venom <sup>lacking</sup> ~~missing~~  
You low get clipped quality to speech. SLOW IT DOWN  
Voice might be a bit low for 11/Year old
- Catherine for Jessica - Tiny little voice  
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- Reagan for Jessica - I'm a bad man. Flatness = Perfect.  
Solid voice, Good body. Could work well.
- Ariel for Jessica - Solid, Probably better in  
older Role.

## APPENDIX H

## APPENDIX H

### OTHER PAPERWORK

This is the rest of the paperwork that was generated by the process. Included are the Program, Photo Call Shot list, Scene Breakdown, a meeting agenda with some notes, and the director's notes on the play.

A note from the playwright (Misael Martinez):

## Awards and Honors

*Con Mis Manos/With My Hands* was selected by Angelo State University for entry in the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival during the 2003 play season. During the local level of competition at Plano (held at Colin County Community College on October 2003) the production received nine awards including, excellence in playwriting, excellence in directing, excellence in ensemble acting, and excellence in over all design. The play received two nominations to move on to the regional level (the next level) of competition; the maximum any production can receive. The production was awarded the critic's choice nomination and more importantly, the director's choice nomination; the second being voted on by the all the directors with competing productions. That December, the play was one of eight officially selected to move on to the KC/ACTF regional level of competition held in Fayetteville, Arkansas (Feb 2004). Once there, the production received excellence in playwriting and excellence in ensemble acting. The script itself was one of fourteen selected as a finalist for the David Mark Cohen playwriting award. In 2005, a staged reading of *Con Mis Manos/With My Hands* was featured in the Region One Education Services Hispanic Arts festival held in Edinburg, Texas. In 2006 the script was a runner-up in the Met Life Foundation's Nuestras Voces National Playwriting Competition (2006).

## Productions

*Con Mis Manos/With My Hands* has been produced at Angelo State University (Fall 2003), reprised for KC/ACTF competition February 2004, produced at Texas State University at San Marcos (Feb 2005), and most recently, by Gobo Trick Theatre (Oct 06) for production a Coastal Bend College and later at the Dougherty Art Center (Austin TX).

## Summary

The time is the recent past, 1991. The family Gutierrez is enjoying a leisurely summer barbeque outside. As usual, the father, Esteban, is sharing wisdom, laughs and some philosophies with his son David. All seems well until his daughter, Jessica, storms out of the house in a panic. Her mother, Josefina, who was trying to sleep off a headache, has fallen off the bed and is unconscious. The family rushes her to the hospital. There, they get some questions answered, but more raised. The doctors discover that Josefina has a brain tumor but are unsure as to whether it is cancerous or not. The mother however is tortured by an intuition that the tumor will be malignant. She confesses her sorrow and worries to her husband; lamenting the things she will possibly never get to see. Among them; seeing the daughter marry, her son mature and even yearly celebrations like Christmas with the family. Frustrated at what he can't give her, Esteban plots with his son David to decorate the entire house while Josefina is out and give his wife a Christmas in July. He gets more help in the form of his brother, Hector, who shows up in a Santa Claus outfit complete with gifts. The celebration genuinely touches Josefina and all seems well again until they get a phone call from the hospital. The family learns that the diagnosis is terminal cancer.

With the success of the earlier celebration, Esteban goes right back to planning even more festivities in hopes of keeping his wife's spirits up. It does the exact opposite and further drives a wedge between husband and wife. Alienated in her own house, Josefina seeks support in her sister Sulema. She explains that she wants to start funeral arrangements but her husband won't hear of that talk. Sulema orders with her sister to stand up to Esteban or she will. The last straw for Josefina comes when Esteban tries to plan their 11 year old daughter's *Quinceañera* (15<sup>th</sup> birthday party). Josefina finally confronts her husband on his unwillingness to face reality and except the inevitable. After the argument Esteban, silent in his shame, tries to avoid his family until his daughter, Jessica, convinces him to reconcile with Josefina. It is all too late though; Josefina passes away and Esteban is once again silenced. Wanting his father back emotionally, after so many months, David pays homage to his father's earlier chivalry by putting up all the lights and giving his father a Christmas in July. Esteban arrives home, honored and touched by the sentiment, remembers their work together giving his wife one last holiday, and embraces his son.

April 6, 2009  
11:00Am

## Agenda

- ❖ Read thru
  - Right After Children's Show. Set Date TBD
- ❖ Audition date
  - June 8<sup>th</sup> 49<sup>th</sup> Possible Call Backs (Call Her + let her know)
- ❖ Poster design
  - Talk to Mike + Ronnie
- ❖ Design
  - One Poster for P.A.S.S. - Talk to Elva (mention English language)

Set - Scenes

Break Down of Furniture

Lights - Waiting on Set to finalize

Costumes - Rough Drawings

Sound - Give to P.A.S.S. student



**BREAKDOWN SCENES – *Con Mis Manos***

ACT I: SCENE 1: BACKYARD

ACT I: SCENE 2: ESTEBAN'S CAR: MOMENTS LATER

ACT I: SCENE 3: THE HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM: 12:25AM

ACT I: SCENE 4: LATER THAT NIGHT: THE HOSPITAL CAFETERIA

ACT I SCENE 5: MORNING THE NEXT DAY: HECTOR'S LIVING ROOM

ACT I: SCENE 6: THE BACKYARD: LATE AFTERNOON

ACT I: SCENE 7: LATER THAT SAME DAY: JOSEFINA'S BEDROOM

ACT I: SCENE 8: THE GUTIERREZ BACK YARD: 5:30PM

ACT I: SCENE 9: THE GUTIERREZ LIVING ROOM: 10:11PM

ACT II: SCENE 1: DAYS LATER: THE GUTIERREZ KITCHEN

ACT II: SCENE 2: LATER THAT SAME DAY: THE GUTIERREZ KITCHEN

ACT II: SCENE 3: LATER THAT SAME DAY: SULEMA'S KITCHEN

ACT II: SCENE 4: 7:30PM: THE GUTIERREZ BACKYARD

ACT II: SCENE 5: EARLY THE NEXT MORNING: JOSEFINA'S KITCHEN

ACT II: SCENE 6: THE FOLLOWING DAY: THE KITCHEN

ACT II: SCENE 7: DAYS LATER: ESTEBAN'S STUDY

ACT II: SCENE 8: MINUTES LATER: THE GUTIRREZ BACKYARD

ACT II: SCENE 9: DAYS LATER: THE FUNERAL

ACT II: SCENE 10: A YEAR LATER, SUMMER 1992: THE GUTIERREZ



## To Do

- ~~Delete extraneous layers~~
- Place furniture into Classes Based on scene
- Organize Saved views Based on Scenes
- Set up Viewport for Director's GP list.
  - Send to Emily for Review
- Start light Design Based on Areas of Play
- Pick colors + specials for set lighting
- Develop cohesive Color Design for set.
- Consider going Home for Kindle Power Supply + Headphones
- Finalize costume decisions.

# **Con Mis Manos / With My Hands**

## **Shot Sheet List**

### **7/03/2009**

\*\*\*\*\*CAST & CREW -----CAST & CREW "RESTUARNT STYLE"

#### **ACT I SCENE I**

- FM 98.6, La Comadre; my dad's favorite.
- Look you see how the flames touches the carne without smothering it.
- Guess who had to pick the cactus to make those David?
- Mommy fell off the bed.

#### **ACT I SCENE II**

- Como en los cielos. Esteban saying the lord's prayer.

#### **ACT I SCENE III**

- The doctors are still with her. Don't worry Jessica. She probably bumped her head.
- Dad how's mom?
- I needed that.

#### **ACT I SCENE IV**

- Never mind. What else did dad say about mom?
- Tio Hector! (Priscilla hugging Jesse)
- She's just fine. Ya se levanto. She sitting up and talking.
- I can't stand good food go to waste.
- David I talked to your parents a few minutes ago. Esteban told me to go ahead and take you and Jessica home.
- Chiflada

#### **ACT I SCENE V**

- Well I was out voted on the whole Robo Cop II thing.

- Oyes Hector, no tuve chanza, I didn't get to tell you thank you for helping me out yesterday with the kids.
- Esteban standing – She has a tumor.
- Yo no se que hacer. What do I do?
- Un cafecito con leche pa mi carnal.
- Héctor por que tengo un curita. Why do I have a band aid on my forehead
- Why do you think pa stopped carrying you at age 2?
- Y ya pa las cinco y media, almost five thirty in the end of my shift when I saw her por primera vez.
- Then she spoke. She said, “How long are you going to hold me up like this?”

#### ACT I SCENE VI

- Ah que Hector. No wonder she looked so tired.

#### ACT I SCENE VII

- Esteban playing guitar for Patty.
- Breakfast in bed. I love it Esteban.
- I'm scared honey.
- I want to see the man that I know David will eventually become.
- Si Dios quiere, God willing.

#### ACT I SCENE VIII

- Esteban smoking his cigarette next to the window.
- I'll do whatever it takes dad.
- Let's see what our hard work has amounted too.

#### ACT I SCENE IX

- **Family Esteban Gutierrez picture**
- MERRY CHRISTMAS!!!!
- It sounds like it's coming from the front down papi.
- Merry Christmas Cabrones!!!!

- We went all the way to the Plaza Mall in McAllen.
- Shaped locket! Oh Esteban!
- Fine. Ok. Ok then. I understand.
- Patty hugging Esteban.

#### ACT II SCENE I

- There is no secret ingredient to it David. Your mother uses the same basic ingredients as every other....
- Mom please don't go.
- The other day, while the doctors were checking up on me they started asking me questions.
- They're going to take it out, right. They can always take it out right. David.
- As long as I can fight it, I will be your mom.

#### ACT II SCENE II

- Guess who has a birthday coming up?
- Ya se mi reina. I know.

#### ACT II SCENE III

- You know me, Josefina, I'm "tell it like it is" to the core.
- If it's about your early birthday party we'll be there.
- Mine are more "Restaurant Style".
- They're delicious. They're like restaurant style.

#### ACT II SCENE IV

- I made the rice from scratch.
- The hand shake with Chris.
- My question to you Esteban is this; are you prepared.

#### ACT II SCENE V

- Sunday is good. I'll take that. From seven to ten then.
- I'm talking about I'm dying pendejo!
- I'm done talking! If you want to talk so bad go call your pinche sister!

**ACT II SCENE VI**

- Look mom. I made it all by myself. David didn't even watch me.
- Let her go ( PATTY, PRISCILLA, DAVID)

**ACT II SCENE VII**

- Plus it's lime Jello-O. Your favorite.
- I just I just think you should talk to her is all. I know she misses you.
- Mira nomas. Look at that.
- Que paso!? What happened?!

**ACT II SCENE VIII**

- Mija, I want you to run to your Tia Sulema's hous.
- David, take the keys, you're driving!

**ACT II SCENE IX**

- I remember watching her race up and down the street.
- The one thing I remember vividly about my mom's funeral was my dad. Looking at him standing there so still.
- Esteban's family standing near coffin.

**ACT II SCENE X**

- So what do you think?
- Con Mis Manos/With My Hands.
- Simon que si.
- Father and son hug.



## CAST & CREW BIOS (cont.)

involved with UTPA's film department as well, completing an entire feature film, "Mason-Dixon" as an undergraduate. Other than his involvement in P.A.S.S., Charlie is embarking on his second feature film production this summer.

**Marcela Lamas (ASM)** - is currently a senior at UTPA, double majoring in Psychology and Theatre/TV/Film production. This is her first time as an ASM, and she is thrilled to be a part of this production. She'd like to thank everyone for giving her a chance to experience this wonderful opportunity. She'd also like to thank her lovely and amazing driver (aka her husband) which without his love and support she'd be parked. Te amo!

**Jesse Briones (Prop Master)** - this is Jesse's first time being Prop Master for a show here at Pan Am. He would like to thank everyone from the cast & crew for being so helpful to him. He would especially like to thank Emily Ruby for giving him the opportunity to work on this show. "I love you Menyamo."

**Richard Salinas (David)** - likes to act a lot. Enjoys doing what he likes which is acting

and pretending to be a character from movies. He knows a lot about movies, directors, and actors. He likes to go outside and hit his punching bag. He watches a lot of T.V.

**Priscilla Lozano (Jessica)** - is 11 years old and is very excited to be in this play. She's never participated in a play in a college theatre. She loves acting and wants to be an actress when she grows up. She grew up in Edinburg, TX and goes to school in Memorial Middle School. Priscilla can't wait to start performing!

**Angel Garcia (Esteban)** -dedicates this play to his family, "Thank you!"

**Jesse Castellanos (Hector)** - is a recent U.T.P.A graduate with a B.A in Theatre. He would like to thank everyone for the opportunity to return to the Jeffers Theatre and do what he loves. "This was a great experience thanks to the cast and crew." Special thanks to his ninja for her support and his family especially his mother. He dedicates this performance to the memory of his late Grandfather.

**Patty Moreno (Josefina)** - is a senior at UTPA. This is her 5th stage play at UTPA, but this is her first time performing for P.A.S.S. She would like to thank Emily Ruby for the

## CAST & CREW BIOS (cont.)

opportunity to take this challenging role. "Thanks to the Cast & Crew, it's been fun working with you. Break a Leg!" Also, she would like to thank her friends and family for all the love and support.

**Nikki San Miguel (Sulema)** - graduated from UTPA in 2007 with a Bachelor's in Theatre Performance. Since then she has been missing the theatre....she hates the real world! "I love RAY-REY!"

**Eduardo Escamilla (Chis)** - is currently a freshman in UTPA, who loves to receive chocolate and roses after shows, so shower him. He is very grateful to be in cast with such a talented group of actors, namely Nikki. Eduardo believes the best advice is always to make every moment count. "Thank you so much Emily, for giving me this shot. Break a leg guys!"

**Jonathan Dimas (Chris - Understudy)** - will be graduating this summer from UTPA. He has been in several productions with the UTPA Theatre, most recently Hedda Gabler. "Congrats to Emily Ruby for all her hard work and achievements, best wishes" Jackie Guerra is his girlfriend!

**Clarissa Villanueva (extra)** - is a Communication and

Kinesiology major with a minor in Theatre. She is grateful for having another opportunity to be a part of such a wonderful play. Would like to thank the cast and crew for a memorable experience, especially Jesse C! If it wasn't for him she wouldn't be in this play! Also she would like to thank her family for their never ending support. "Love You Much!"

**Francisco Fierro (extra)** - is a junior attending PSJA Memorial High School. He enjoys chocolate and spaghetti so feel free to toss him any of the two. He is very grateful for attending and being part of this play therefore he would like to thank everyone participating. "Thanks"

**Beatriz Garcia (extra)** - is a sophomore attending PSJA Memorial High School. She love to go and hangout with her friends. She is also in love with all the series of Twilight that she just reads them over and over. She enjoys literature a lot and enjoys being in school. She is a smart girl who loves to "act" with her aunt Gloria. She is a lovely kind and friendly girl.

### IN MEMORY OF ALBERT GARZA

Theatre is a fleeting artistic experience. Though much work goes into every production, those emotionally-charged performance moments of live stage stories simply cannot be preserved. They exist in the moment, with that specific cast, with that specific crew, with that specific audience. Then, the stage is struck, the lights go off, and those special theatre moments exist only in our memories.

We are sometimes reminded that this ephemeral quality can be true of the world when we lose a loved one.

In March of this year, the Valley suddenly lost a wonderful theatre talent, teacher, and friend in Albert Garza. As a theatre teacher in the Edinburg school district, Albert enriched literally thousands of young lives with his directing and teaching skills. A mainstay of the UTPA Theatre program, Albert acted, directed, and costumed many productions for the university. It is no stretch to write that Albert was one of the most loved and respected teaching professionals in the Valley.

Though Albert has passed on, we pause in our theatre pursuits to remember him. We hope he is watching. We will think of him always in the shining limelight of his love and dedication to theatre, to teaching, and to his friends and family.

From all of us here at the University Theatre, we dedicate the run of this show to Albert Garza.

### THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S BOARD (IWB)

The mission of the IWB is to contribute to the breadth, depth, and quality of education at The University of Texas-Pan American, act as ambassadors for the University, provide scholarships, promote fellowship and meet other special needs. Supporting UTPA's Study Abroad programs with scholarships, the IWB helps provide life transforming experiences for high achieving, outstanding UTPA students that study abroad in multi-disciplined classes, which are held throughout the world during summer sessions. For additional information contact the UTPA Development Office, 1201 W. University Drive ITT 1.210, Edinburg, TX 78539 (956) 318-5301

### CAST & CREW BIOS

**Emily Ruby Fierros (Director)** - is currently a graduate at UTPA pursuing her Masters in Theatre. She graduated from UTPA in '07 with a theatre major and is currently in her final year of graduate school. She has worked on many plays through out her career here at UTPA and has appeared previously in the House of Bernada Alba and the very popular hit of 2006 Late Bloomers. She can still be found hard at work at the University Theatre Box Office selling your tickets and arranging season subscribers their seats for each show. She would like to thank her family for all their support as well as Jesse B., Yolanda B., Elva Galvan, and her cast and crew from Con Mis Manos/With My Hands. She is also currently teaching Theatre Appreciation as a TA here at UTPA. She would like to thank UTPA and the TV/Film/Theatre faculty for giving her the opportunity to direct this summer. "Thank you Dr. Marian Monta"

**Silvia Serrano (Stage Manager)** - is a senior at UTPA. This is her first time as a Stage Manager and would like to thank Ruby for this opportunity! Also, she will like to thank her ASMs and the Prop Master for all their support. She would like to dedicate this play to her Dad. "Happy Birthday dad, I love you!"

**Gloria Perez (ASM)** - her destiny awaits her and everyone helped her get one step closer to it. "Thank you."

**Andrew Lopez (Set Designer)** - received his Bachelor's Degree from Trinity University where he majored in Drama, with a focus on technical theatre and design. This is the first time that Andrew has seen one of his designs end up on stage, a very exciting prospect. In this show, the

**Charlie Brenner (ASM)** - This production will be putting the finishing touches on his first year as a graduate student in the Theatre Department. Although Charlie has been involved in many theatre productions, this is his first time as an ASM. Charlie has also been very

family experiences disintegration, when the matriarch passes. To reflect this, Andrew has brought a visual example of that disintegration around the edges of the set. The roof peters off into bare rafters while the deck disappears into the grass of the lawn. The lawn itself fades into a random pattern towards the edges. All of these emphasize the disintegration of the family, while the central image of the back door brings stability that the edges lack.

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## FACULTY BIOS (cont.) - Theatre, Television & Film

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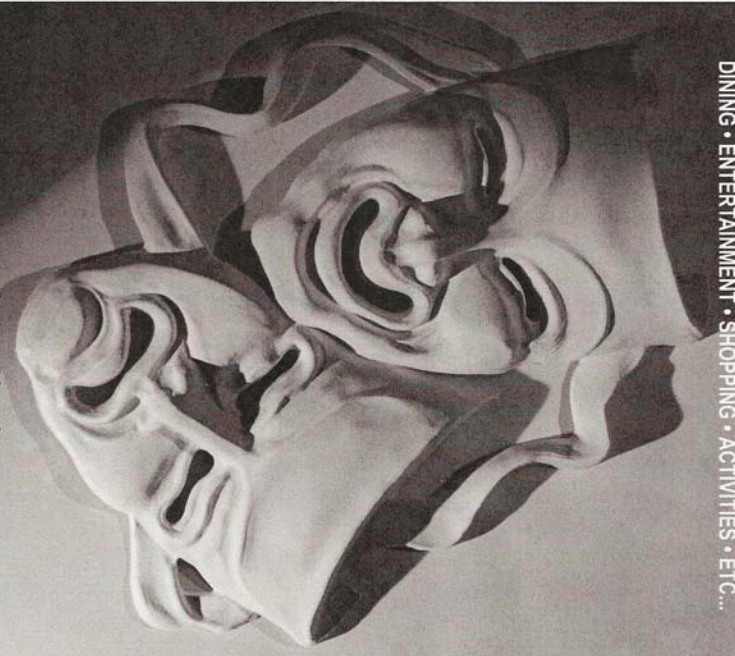
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## FACULTY BIOS (cont.) - Theatre, Television & Film

Texas Tech and is currently working on a second masters in communication. A member of the Phi Kappa Phi honor

fraternity, Trey's been teaching theatre and communication for 6 years. Mikolasky is a certified actor-combatant with the SAFF. A few of the plays he has directed include Elephant Man, A Few Good Men, All in the Timing, and Driving Miss Daisy, Brighton Beach

Memiors.

Summer Theatre in Valdosta, Georgia. Her work was last seen on our stage in Brighton Beach Memiors.

**David Carren** David Bennett Carren earned his Bachelor's in Journalism at the University of Texas and his Master's in Fine Arts at Spalding University. He has written, directed and produced more than 200 films and television shows, including Star Trek, Murder She Wrote, and Walker, Texas Ranger. His one act play Comments was produced at the Back Alley Theater in Los Angeles and was a winning entrant in STC's Annual Spring Play Writing Contest. As part of the 2008 Summer I (P.A.S.T) program, he directed and co-wrote (with Dr. Jack Stanley) The Red Queen, a feature film starring Valente Rodriguez. Its screenplay also won second place in the 2008 UFVA scriptwriting Competition. But his greatest achievement is his family, which includes a wife, two children, some cats, two dogs, and a pair of ball pythons.

**Stephanie Hawks** joined the theatre, tv, film faculty at UTPA in 2006. She moved here from Connecticut where she earned her MFA in costume design from the University of Connecticut. Her undergraduate degree is from the University of West Florida. She has been a teacher and freelance designer since the late seventies and has designed over seventy shows. Her work has been seen on stages from Florida to Rhode Island. Some of her favorite design work includes: The House of Bernarda Alba and Translations for The Connecticut Repertory Theatre, A Funny Thing Happened on the way to the Forum for Jacksonville University, and Ragtime for the Peach State

**Elva Galvan** Theatre Business Manager joined the University Theatre department in 2001. Elva takes care of what



## FACULTY BIOS (cont.) - Theatre, Television & Film

**Brian J. Warren** Creative Drama/Children's Theatre joined the theatre faculty at UTPA in 2002. He received his doctorate in educational theatre from the University of Houston. For the University Theatre Main Stage, Warren most recently directed A Christmas Carol in 2008. Other favorite productions directed at UTPA include The Fantasticks, Once Upon a Mattress, Julius Caesar, One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, and The Night of the Living Dead. Additionally, Warren has directed eight productions for children

and has written 10 plays for children, most recently The Piper and the Rats with co-author Marlene Galvan. He also established the UTPA Children's Theatre Workshop, which takes children's plays "on the road" each spring to Valley elementary schools. Warren is a member of the American Alliance for Theatre and Education and the Texas Educational Theatre Association's Adjudicator Organization.

**Trey Mikolasky** received an MFA in acting/directing from



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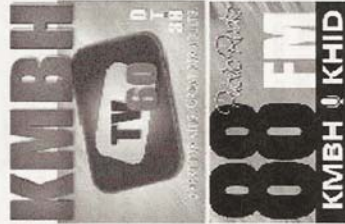
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## FACULTY BIOS - Theatre, Television & Film

**Marian Monta** retired Professor and Artistic Director of the University Theatre came to UTPA in 1971 and retired in May of 2007. She received her PhD in Theatre from Cornell University, and was born and raised in Hampton, Virginia. During her tenure at UTPA she has served as the Communication Department Chair and theatre-TV-film area head. In spite of all the productions she has done, she admits that the best production of her career is her daughter, Susan Smith, who teaches TV for EciSD.

1981. Dr. Stanley last directed *Cyrano and My Three Angels*. He is editing last PAST summer's movies and writing a new play for the stage.

### THE VALLEY'S PARENTING RESOURCE MAGAZINE

**Rio Kids Magazine** is the Valley's parenting resource magazine. It provides parents with current parenting topics, and hot children trends. It keeps parents informed about local business services geared towards family fun! The calendar of events is packed with exciting community events, where parents can enjoy quality time with their children by joining events happening in their backyard. Rio Kids Magazine's directory offers parents a place to go to for information about children services. We feature games, crafts, and easy recipes that any child will enjoy. By bringing all these resources together, Rio Kids is the parenting go-to resource magazine.



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### Tom Grabowski Set and Light

Designer has been the Technical Director, Set and Lighting designer at UTPA for over twenty years. He received his M.F.A. in Design from the University of Illinois, in 1981. His favorite productions with the University Theatre include *Hamlet*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *Secret Garden*, *Volpone*, *Anna in the Tropics* and *Oedipus the King*. He enjoys sharing rainbows.

### Eric Willey

joined the faculty in 1999 after taking a Ph.D. in Theatre from Louisiana State University and an M.F.A. in Playwriting from UT Austin. At UTPA he has directed *The Menoetchi*, *She Stoops to Conquer*, *The Tempest*, *Check Out Chekhov*, *Betrayal*, *A Glass of Water*, *A Flea in Her Ear*, *Proof*, *Oedipus the King*, *Late Bloomers* and *The House of Bernarda Alba*. He would like to send a shout-out to all his current and former acting students.

### Jack R. Stanley Theatre TV-Film

Coordinator received his B.F.A. from Texas Christian University in Ft. Worth, Texas in Radio-TV-Film in 1966. In the US Army he was an officer and a TV-Film Director both stateside and in Vietnam where he was awarded the Bronze Star. At the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor he earned both his M.A. (1971) and his Ph.D. (1973) in his field of Radio-TV-Film. He also received two of Michigan's most prestigious creative writing awards. The Hopwood, one for a one-act play and the second for a novel. He came to what was then Pan American University in

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## SYNOPSIS OF ACTS

### Act I

David remembers a childhood memory of his family, when a sudden event shocks his world. His family receives news that a bad fall by a family member might be more than what they expected, it might be a malicious tumor.

### Act II

With time counting down on the days his family have to be together, he is forced to leave his childhood behind. Everyone reveres roles when he and his sister have to take care of their parents and of each other. With everyone's emotions running high; it only needs a spark to ignite.

### Director Notes

Con Mis Manos/With My Hands is set in our back yard, and our home, in the Rio Grande Valley. When I first read the script I knew it was going to be a challenge. I saw the final product and the wonderful message the story told. The implication is that many of us rush through the day ignoring and forgetting that time is precious. It may seem we have a lifetime to be with our family, but it is not always the case. I want to spread the word through my work, regardless of family differences always appreciate them and make sure they come first in your life. So call a love one today and say, I love you. With that said, I love you mom, dad, Jessica, Crystal, April, Jesse, Coy Family, & Fierros Family; I love you.

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## PRODUCTION STAFF

Stage Manager.....	Silvia Serrano	Sound Design.....	Josh Becerra, Chris Montoya
Assistant Director.....	Sonnie Salinas	Sound Run.....	Josh Becerra, Chris Montoya
Assistant Stage Manager.....	Gloria Perez Charlie Brenner, Marcela Lamas	Light Run.....	Sonora Ruelas, Jonathan Dimas
Technical Director.....	Mike Salazar	Costume Head.....	Cynthia Santos
Prop Master.....	Jesse Briones	Costume Run.....	Cynthia Santos, Stephanie Salinas, Cristy Ecaymuquitz
Prop Build.....	Jesse Briones, George Magee, Essi R. Morris, Timothy Salinas, Mike Salazar, Emily Ruby Fieros, Gloria Perez, Silvia Serrano, Alyssa Galvan, Mario Galvan, Diomar Galvan, Charlie Brenner	Costume Build.....	Vanessa Lead, Stephanie Salinas, Cynthia Santos
Prop Run.....	Timothy Salinas, Leonel Moraida, Hector Ramos, Francisco Fierro, Beatriz Garcia	Make-up Run.....	Marcela Lamas
Set Build.....	Sonnie Salinas, Sonora Ruelas, Chris Montoya, Timothy Salinas, Charlie Brenner, Cristy Ecaymuquitz, Essi R. Morris, Natalia Sandoval, Leo Moraida, Jonathan Dimas	Box Office Supervisor.....	Eva Galvan
		Student Box Office Manager.....	Emily Ruby Fieros
		Box Office Staff.....	Gloria Perez
		House Manager.....	Sandra Cabrera

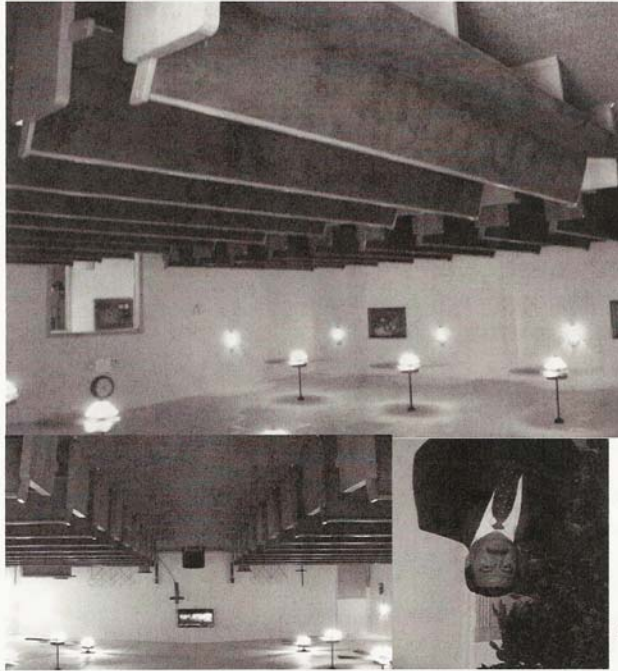
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# **Cast in Order of Appearance**

David Gutierrez..... Richard Salinas  
 Esteban Gutierrez..... Angel Garcia  
 Jessica Gutierrez..... Priscilla Lozano  
 Josefina Gutierrez..... Patricia Moreno  
 Hector Gutierrez..... Jesse Castellanos  
 Sulema Garcia..... Nikki San Miguel  
 Chris Thomas..... Eddy Escamilla  
 Chris Thomas( Understudy)..... Jonathan Dimas  
 Extras..... John Lozano, Beatriz Garcia,  
 Timothy Salinas, Francisco Fierro, Clarissa Villanueva



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Set/Costume Designer .....Andrew Lopez  
Light Designer .....Andrew Lopez

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**STUDIO PRODUCTION**  
TBA  
December 11-13, 2009  
FACULTY FAVORITE FESTIVAL  
March 26-28, 2010  
FROG PRINCE (children's play)  
May 06-09, 2010

**Off Main Stage**

**Main Stage**

OF MICE AND MEN  
October 14-18, 2009

THE RED AND THE BLUE  
November 18-22, 2009

NOISES OFF  
March 03-07, 2010

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING  
April 21-25, 2010

**P.A.S.S. 2009**  
Pan American Summer Stock

**ALL PERFORMANCES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE**

CON MIS MANOS/  
WITH MY HANDS  
July 02-05, 2009

THE BUTLER DID IT  
July 09-12, 2009

**2009 - 2010 University Theatre Productions**



## FACULTY & STAFF

Department Chair ..... Dr. Salma Ghanem  
 Artistic Director/Emeritus ..... Dr. Marian Monta  
 Director of Drama ..... Dr. Jack Stanley  
 Director of Theatre ..... Tom Grabowski  
 Technical Director ..... Mike Salazar  
 Costume Shop Manager ..... Stephanie Hawks  
 Theatre Business Manager ..... Elva Galvan  
 Workstudy Students ..... Leonel Moraida III, Gloria Perez,  
 Natalie Sandoval, Luis Tijerina

## SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

To Be Announced Fall 2009

## DONORS



### SUPER STAR

Yvonne Anderson Marian F. Monta IWB

### PRODUCER

Albert Gallo, MD Doug Johnson Mr. & Mrs. Glenn Roney

### DIRECTOR

Charles and Josie Ellard Leo and Beth Garrett

### STAR

Leona & Darrell Diener Dr. Martha Tevis

### OTHER

Kevin Shropshire	Ross Coddington	Sue Sexton
Lujan Friedman	Robert Butcher	Helen Bork
Lucy Fernandez	Ronald & Sandra Imhoof	Genevieve Parkin
Edward & Ann Barrett	Juanita Fernandez	

To ensure the enjoyment of the majority of our patrons who arrive on time, and in deference to the artists, late-comers will be admitted into the theatre at the discretion of the Director. No cameras and recording equipment in

the theatre is strictly **PROHIBITED.**

**NO** smoking, eating, or drinking in the theatre.

Please **SILENCE** ALL electronic devices, cellular phones, and pagers during the performance.

No one is allowed to re-enter the theatre while a performance is in progress.



If you would like more information about making a donation to the student scholarship fund, please refer to the Box Office Staff during intermission.

Any donation of clothing or housewares is greatly appreciated and welcomed at the University Theatre. Please contact Tom Grabowski at 381-3588 for more information.

If special accommodations are needed, please call the Box Office at least five days in advance at 381-3581

**2009 - 2010**  
**University Theatre Productions**  
**subscription form**  
**The University of Texas-Pan American**

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Section	_____
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**University Theatre Season**

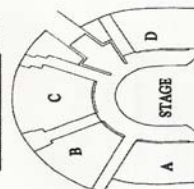
Main Stage \$40

Day of the week preferred:  
 please check one

- ☐ Wednesday  
☐ Thursday  
☐ Friday  
☐ Saturday  
☐ Sunday/Matinee

☐ I was a subscriber last year and want to keep my same seat.

☐ I prefer to move seats.  
 If space becomes available, call me.



For more information  
 please call

954/381-3381  
 Monday - Friday  
 during regular university hours

Mail to:  
 The University Theatre • Communication Department, CAS 165  
 1201 W. University Drive • Edinburg, Texas 78539-2999

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☐ Director \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$250 = \_\_\_\_\_  
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**UT** University Theatre Productions presents



**P.A.S.S. 2009**

Pan American Summer Stock

Albert L. Jeffers Theatre

CAS Building - corner of University Drive & Sugar Road

**Con Mis Manos**  
 With My Hands  
 by Misael Martinez

**THE BUTLER DID IT**  
 by Walter and Peter Marks



July 2-4 • 8 p.m.

July 5 • 2 p.m.

July 9-11 • 8 p.m.

July 12 • 2 p.m.

Warning: These shows contain language that may be offensive to some people.  
 Children under 3rd grade will not be admitted

Reserved - \$12 • General Admission - \$8

Non UTPA Students with school ID - \$3

UTPA Faculty/Staff/Students - Free Admission  
 with valid UTPA ID - plus one free guest

For special accommodations, more information, or reservations to any of the productions,  
 please call the Box Office at 956/381-3581

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Lawrence Andrew Lopez was born Lawrence Andrew Moore in Dallas, Texas in 1983. He spent the majority of his formative years in Quito, Ecuador, until he moved to Weslaco, Texas in 1992. He earned his Bachelor's Degree in Theatre from Trinity University in May of 2006, and struggled with the Theatrical community in San Antonio for several months until he found employment with MAXIMUS as an Image Assembly Specialist. Andrew went on to earn his Master's of Arts from the University of Texas-Pan American in Theatre with a specialization in Technology and Design.

Andrew can be reached at 930 Fairway DR. Edinburg, TX and at [andrewlope@gmail.com](mailto:andrewlope@gmail.com).