

# SUPPLEMENTAL VIEWING RESOURCE

In America, it should not be  
impossible to dream.

CARA MÍA THEATRE AND IGNITE/ARTS DALLAS' PRODUCTION OF

# WET: A DOCUMENTED JOURNEY

WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY ALEX ALPHARAOH

NOV 8 - 25

EMERSON PARAMOUNT CENTER  
JACKIE LIEBERGOTT BLACK BOX

[ARTSEMERSON.ORG](http://ARTSEMERSON.ORG) / 617.824.8400

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## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the supplemental viewing resource guide for [WET: A DACAmended Journey](#) by Alex Alphaaraoh. In seeing **WET**, you are joining a community of people moved by Alex's performance in Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, and multiple cities across Connecticut and Texas. Each time the play is performed there seems to be new headlines reporting some clarification or reshaping of the ever-changing immigration system. This is one of the great challenges – policies change faster than accurate information can be spread. An attorney may offer a client an option one day just to have it removed from the table the next day.

As an organization we have learned so much from Alex's story and the guidance of organizations and movements working locally and nationally for a more humane immigration system. We hope that this guide gives insight to the show, to the artist, the conversations it can inspire, and a window to resources available to help get a better sense of this complex issue.

[Alex Alphaaraoh's WET: A DACAmended Journey](#) at the Jackie Liebergott Black Box in the Emerson Paramount Center NOV 8-25, 2018.

## ABOUT THE SHOW

[WET: A DACAmended Journey](#) is a true story of what it means to be an American in every sense of the word except one: on paper. Written and performed by Alex Alphaaraoh—an award-winning actor, director, spoken word artist and teaching artist—who knows firsthand the emotional and psychological hardship of this unending process; he risks his own freedom to share his story in this nationwide tour. **WET** rockets between hilarity and heartbreak to capture one man's relentless journey toward becoming a documented citizen.

## A MESSAGE FROM ARTSEMERSON - PAGING GEORGE ORWELL

DAVID DOWER, Artistic Director Photo Credit: Asia Kepka



“Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore,  
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me,  
I lift my lamp beside the Golden Door.” –Emma Lazarus

For most of us, the chaos and menace in the current climate around the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals is invisible and unfelt. Start to engage with it and you’ll see how incomprehensible it is that this is what our nation is doing with the promise etched into the base of the Statue of Liberty.

And it seems deliberate, designed to create confusion, rather than a path to citizenship. Here are the first three items appearing on the official USCIS.gov site on the US Citizen and Immigration Services DACA landing page:

First comes a callout box with the following warning:

**“Archived Content:** *This page contains information that is no longer current but remains on the site for reference purposes.*”

Then another box:

**“Important information about DACA requests:** *Due to federal court orders, USCIS has resumed accepting requests to renew a grant of deferred action under DACA. USCIS is not accepting requests from individuals who have never before been granted deferred action under DACA. Until further notice, and unless otherwise provided in this guidance, the DACA policy will be operated on the terms in place before it was rescinded on Sept. 5, 2017.*”

The next paragraph:

*“This page provides information on requesting consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals (DACA). **You may request DACA for the first time or renew your existing period of DACA if it is expiring.**”*

So, you may use this page to apply for DACA for the first time or to renew if it is expiring. Except, until further notice, no new requests are being accepted, only renewals. Except this information may no longer be current.

And, lest you have forgotten, this is not a program for new arrivals. This is for adults who, brought here as children, have grown up in this country. People like Alex Alphaaroh. There are 800,000 stories in this DACAmended nation. [WET](#) is one of them.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST



**ALEX ALPHARAOH** ([Video](#)) is an award-winning stage and film actor, writer, director, producer, spoken word artist, solo performer, and teaching artist from Los Angeles. He has performed in various venues and open mics throughout Los Angeles, including Da Poetry Lounge, Sunday Jump, Washington D.C.'s Busboys and Poets, and New York's renowned Nuyorican Cafe. As a teaching artist, Alpharaoh teaches a highly popular Fundamentals of Spoken Word and Performance Poetry class, advising

individuals how to connect with their deeper selves, using their words and expressions as a form of healing.

Alpharaoh is the creator of *SP!T: Spoken Word Theatre*, a series he originally developed at Urban Theatre Movement, where he is a founding member. He went on to produce a full run of Hollywood Fringe's 2015 world premiere of his spoken word play *Don't Talk About It, SP!T About It* at the CASA 0101 Theater in the summer of 2016. *SP!T* continues to grow in popularity, including a special one-night performance that was part of Da Poetry Lounge's *1st Annual L.A. Get Down Festival* this past April.

Alpharaoh had a chance to act alongside his daughter, Aileen Alfaro, in Urban Theatre Movement's Hollywood Fringe production of *Urban Unrest*, which won the 2017 Premiere Award, presented by Rogue Machine Theatre, and for which he also served as executive producer. Several of his one acts and full-length plays have been produced at companies such as EST/LA, UTM, Antaeus Co. and CASA 0101 Theater.

Alpharaoh developed this latest solo show, *WET: A DACAdmented Journey*, at EST/LA, a place he has called home. *WET* is a story about being a new kind of American in search of the old dreams that may not exist in our country anymore. The play was chosen by Human Rights Watch Student Task Force to be the focus of this year's action initiative program. The show was originally workshopped through EST/LA's True Story, Winterfest, and Fuel Workshop programs, and received a residency at Hi-ARTS NYC.

The Los Angeles production was recognized with *Best Solo Performance* by the LADCC, and Ovation Award nominations for both *Best Playwriting* for Mr. Alpharaoh and *Best Production* for Ensemble Studio Theatre/Los Angeles.

## WET BLOG POST: What is DACA?

August 17, 2018

Immigration policy in the United States has always been on the lips of politicians, whether it's pushing for reform or striking out programs. Especially in our current political climate, the information regarding immigration has saturated various media outlets, each with conflicting messaging and nearly incomprehensible legalese. This fall, ArtsEmerson is honored to welcome Alex Alpharaoh to our stage with [WET: A DACAmended Journey](#), where Alpharaoh has created a theatrical space to detail his own experience as an immigrant and the daily repercussions he faces stemming from the decisions made on Capitol Hill. Alpharaoh's brutal honesty allows audiences to engage with the issue via a first-person perspective that is often buried by headlines and sound bites.

DACA stands for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, introduced by President Obama in June 25th, 2012. Unlike the proposed DREAM Act, DACA does not provide a pathway to citizenship, but it is a renewable two year agreement to defer deportation and allows recipients to become eligible for work permits and obtain a driver's license.

The program was designed for young adults who grew up in the United States, but entered the country unauthorized. The basic premise was to provide temporary safety and protection for children who are Americans in every sense of the word except one: on paper. While DACA was not intended as a permanent solution, the two year status could ostensibly be renewed until a version of the DREAM Act is passed or the DACA-status-individual obtained citizenship through pre-existing methods.

In order to apply for DACA, you must have entered the country before June 15th, 2007 at a time when you were 16 years old or younger. In addition, you must have completed high school, a GED, or been discharged from the Coast Guard or Armed Forces, proven you are not a threat to national security, and not have conflicted a felony or significant misdemeanor. While the requirements seem fairly simple, the actual acquisition process becomes much more complicated, as Alpharaoh details in [WET: A DACAmended Journey](#). Not only is obtaining DACA status difficult to begin with, but the renewal process is never guaranteed, based on changing eligibility and the consistent threats to terminate DACA from the current presidential administration. Those who have DACA are now left in a state of immigration limbo, so to speak, with no direct path to citizenship.

For ArtsEmerson, [WET: A DACAmended Journey](#) comes to Boston at a particularly uncertain time for all immigrants; we hope that this production will inspire you to take action and to continue the conversation, whether it is with our upcoming engagement events surrounding this production or at home with family and friends.

# WET BLOG POST: The Narrow Path to U.S. Citizenship

October 31, 2018

Becoming a United States citizen is a process laden with bureaucratic loopholes, stifling processes, and nearly aspect is requires a innate knowledge of the immigration system. With [President Trump's recent proclamation to revoke birthright citizenship](#), the path continues to narrow and become more deluded. While there are several different methods to becoming a citizen, the general process takes at least five years and includes background checks, written tests, and judgments of character.

In order to become a citizen through Naturalization, the individual applying for citizenship must:

- Be at least 18 years old.
- Prove that you are a permanent resident (like holding a Green Card) for at least five years.
- Show that you have lived for at least 3 months in the state or United States Citizenship and Immigration Service district where you apply.
- Demonstrate continuous residence in the United States for at least 5 years immediately preceding the date of filing Form N-400.
- Show that you have been physically present in the United States for at least 30 months out of the 5 years immediately preceding the date of filing Form N-400.
- Be able to read, write, and speak basic English.
- Have a basic understanding of U.S. history and government (civics).
- Be a person of good moral character.
- Demonstrate an attachment to the principles and ideals of the U.S. Constitution.



**TAKE THE  
CITIZENSHIP  
TEST**

The civics test specifically is comprised of ten questions, selected from a list of 100 total. In order to pass, the individual must get at least 60% of the questions correct. [The United States Citizenship and Immigration Service government website provides a practice test, with 20 questions ranging from government](#)

[structure, economic practices, and historical facts](#). While the test is required to become a citizen, it's probable that many citizens of the United States could not pass despite having lived in the United States for the majority or the entirety of their lives.

With **WET: A DACAdmented Journey** running NOV 8 – 25 in Boston, the issue of immigration and the pathways to citizenship remain at the forefront of the political world and our attention here at ArtsEmerson as human beings are treated like political chess pieces. The news cycle is constantly returning to immigration, from caravans to extending DACA to building walls. The current administration always returns to it with vibrato, but little empathy.

We believe that Alex Alphaaraoh's story and performance will bring us back to a place of compassion. While his story is one of many, it is one that needs to be heard right now.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### MORE FROM THE ARTSEMERSON WET BLOG

#### **Facing History and Ourselves**

<https://www.facinghistory.org/>

Facing History and Ourselves is a nonprofit international educational and professional development organization. Our mission is to engage students of diverse backgrounds in an examination of racism, prejudice, and antisemitism in order to promote the development of a more humane and informed citizenry.

- [The Continuing Debate Over Immigration: Teaching Ideas to Address Immigration and Current Events in Your Classroom](#)

#### **Informed Immigrant**

<https://www.informedimmigrant.com/>

A collective of nationally recognized immigrant-serving organizations, lawyers, technologists, and allies dedicated to helping the undocumented immigrant community. Since November 2016, Informed Immigrant has connected the undocumented immigrant community with the information and resources they need to become empowered in our current political environment. Their website also includes great resources for educators and allies.

#### **Irish International Immigrant Center**

<http://www.iiicenter.org/>

The Irish International Immigrant Center empowers immigrants and refugees from more than 120 countries by providing the legal, wellness and educational support they need to build successful lives. Building on our Irish roots of welcoming others and social justice, we help newcomers find community, and we stand up for immigration policies that are humane and just. America is a nation of immigrants, and despite the current political climate, we are proud to continue the tradition of welcoming immigrants to this country and working together to create a better future for all.

- [Immigration Legal Services](#)

#### **Office of Immigrant Advancement | City of Boston**

<https://www.boston.gov/departments/immigrant-advancement>

Our mission is to strengthen the ability of immigrants and Boston's diverse cultural and linguistic communities to fully participate in the economic, civic, social, and cultural life of our great City. We also work to promote the commemoration and public understanding of the contributions of immigrants to Boston.

- [Referral List for Immigration Assistance](#)

#### **Student Immigrant Movement**

<https://simforus.org/>

SIM is a MA-based statewide immigrant youth-led organization. We fight for the liberation of the undocumented community through the development of a network of immigrant youth organizers in high-density immigrant communities. We organize youth, ages 13-30, and provide political education, leadership training, protection, guidance, mentorship, and safe healing spaces.

## Teaching Tolerance

<https://www.tolerance.org/>

Our mission is to help teachers and schools educate children and youth to be active participants in a diverse democracy. Teaching Tolerance provides free resources to educators—teachers, administrators, counselors and other practitioners—who work with children from kindergarten through high school. Educators use our materials to supplement the curriculum, to inform their practices, and to create civil and inclusive school communities where children are respected, valued and welcome participants.

- [An Educator's Guide to the Immigration Debate](#)

## United We Dream

<https://unitedwedream.org/>

WE ARE THE LARGEST IMMIGRANT YOUTH-LED COMMUNITY IN THE COUNTRY. When you're undocumented, you face a lot of discrimination, and that creates a lot of fear. At United We Dream, we transform that fear into finding your voice. We empower people to develop their leadership, their organizing skills, and to develop our own campaigns to fight for justice and dignity for immigrants and all people. This is achieved through immigrant youth-led campaigns at the local, state, and federal level.

## ABOUT ARTSEMERSON



ArtsEmerson is Boston's leading presenter of contemporary world theatre. We are dedicated to engaging all communities through stories that reveal and deepen our connection to each other. By cultivating diversity in the arts and in the audience, we ignite public conversation around our most vexing societal challenges as a catalyst for overcoming them.

Founded in 2010 by Robert J. Orchard—the year the U.S. Census confirmed there was no single cultural majority in Boston—we committed to building a cultural institution that reflects the diversity of our city. We program a full season of performances, film and dialogue that invites each of us to engage in a more contemporary narrative of Boston as a truly global city.

**We believe in the power of art to ignite our vision of a thriving world.**