

Combining theater with psychology and political protest, Hector Aristizábal embodies his story of arrest and torture at the hands of the Colombian military in a sparse, stark one-man dramatic presentation performance, *Nightwind: A Colombian Reality*. *Nightwind* was brought to the Bonn Studio at Boston College on March 28, 2007 by the school's Contemporary Theater group, with co-sponsorship by the Latin American Studies Program, the Counseling Psychology Program at the Lynch School of Education, and the Center for Human Rights and International Justice.

Aristizábal's highly physical presentation evoked a range of characters, using minimal props of a black shawl, yellow balloon, red sheet of paper, and two photos, and the assistance of a single musician. Using his voice, body, and props Aristizábal brought to life military officers, his mother, and a mortician, along with his own narrative, as he carried the audience through his childhood in Colombia, to arrest and torture by Colombian military forces who charged him with "subversive" activities, through migration to the United States and ultimately return to his home country to claim the body of his brother, later tortured and killed by Colombian para-military forces.

Aristizábal book-ended the production with the question, "Where does a terrorist come from?" During and after the performance he kept in the audience's sight their own complicity in the events in Colombia, reminding the audience that, as his childhood friends became paid killers for Colombian drug traffickers, that the audience's government was supporting Plan Colombia. "This is happening today," he told the audience, "at least 20 people in Colombia alone, thanks to Plan Colombia that you finance." Additionally, he reminded the audience that at the time of his detainment, delegates from the U.S. were in Colombia to observe the election process. Like many of

the audience members, at the time of his capture by the military, Aristizábal was a university student. He now holds a master's degree in Counseling Psychology and a degree in marriage and family therapy. His approach psychodrama is meant to re-ignite emotion in audience members and to thereby incite them to political action. In articulating his work, he cited an African proverb that says, "A bad dance does not kill the earth, but not to dance kills the spirit." He analogized this to his perspective on the U.S.'s role in the world, killing the earth because of a dulled spirit. Aristizábal concluded that to kill off terrorists, "we need to keep dancing."

Aristizábal then invited the audience members to process the experience of witnessing the presentation through active meditation. He led the audience members through a series of group physical and non-verbal vocal expressions of the impact of the show upon them and their proposed "antidotes" to the feelings and situations evoked. He called upon the audience members to carry their experience there forward and to act in the world, reminding them that they are now witnesses to his story, with the reminder that each of us must do something to fight the injustices that we find personally repugnant.