

# Andrew Boryga

**Gerry:** Hi, my name is Geraldo Cadava and welcome to season two of Writing Latinos, a podcast from Public Books. We're back for more conversations with Latino authors writing about the wide world of Latinidad. As always, some of our episodes are nerdy and academic, while others are playful and lighthearted. All offer thoughtful reflections on Latino identity and how writing conveys some of its meanings.

If you like what you hear, like and subscribe to Writing Latinos wherever you get your podcasts. Now for the show. We are talking today with Andrew Boryga about his new and debut novel *Victim*, published by Doubleday. It's about Javier, a young writer who learns how to use narratives of victimization to his advantage, and how the advantages become even greater when he embellishes the truth.

But beyond Javier, *Victim* includes a whole bunch of interesting characters, the teachers who encourage him to tell narratives of victimization, his family members that are perplexed or downright upset with him for telling these negative stories about his upbringing, a girlfriend's complicated influences on him, and a best friend named Gio.

It's a really gripping read that deals with issues of race, identity, and performances of racial identity that are so relevant today. So, you have to go get your hands on a copy. In addition to *Victim*, Boryga has written for *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic*, *The Paris Review*, *The Daily Beast*, and *The New York Times*, where he was an intern at the age of 18.

He writes fiction and nonfiction, he has been a teacher, and last year started a Substack newsletter called *Dwell*, where he writes a lot about writing, and I would totally recommend that you subscribe to that as well. So, Andrew, we're so glad to be spending this time with you, talking about your book.

Thank you so much for joining us. Thank you so much for having me, man. One place I wanted to start is just, if you could tell us a little bit about why you chose to write this story. I mean, I imagine that all of the dynamics that you write about in the book are things that you've observed throughout your lifetime, but when did you begin to think that you had to write a book about them?

**Andrew:** It was a very long journey to write this book. It actually took 10 years. I started it, uh, when I was probably my sophomore year in college, which was around the time that, um, I started reading fiction that really inspired me to write about my own upbringing. I sort of had this idea before that, that, uh, I had to write a version of *On the Road* or something like that, but I'd never been on the road.

I've, I'd been, you know, in my neighborhood and, and then I went to Cornell. And so I didn't really have that sort of, background, but I was sort of interested in it. And, um, I guess I, I thought I had to, I guess I thought I had to write a certain way, you know, this sort of white male author, um, tone. And, um, and then I started reading people like, you know, Diaz, Ernesto Quinones, you know, um, people writing about this urban Latino experience that I had in the Bronx.

And that sort of just inspired me to write about, you know, the people that I grew up with, my family, my community. So the book really started from there. And it was really, um, a story about these two friends who took different paths in life and sort of the, the survivor's guilt that I felt getting to a place like Cornell because I had friends who, ended up in prison or addicted to drugs and, you know, really took different paths in life, uh, when we actually just started from the same place.

And I couldn't, could never really wrap my mind about around that. Like why did I make it out and they didn't make it out. So I wrote a version of a book trying to grapple with that. I was just sort of sort of working things out. But at the same time I was writing during this period where diversity and inclusion was really sort of up and coming and everyone wanted to hear, you know, from writers of color.

And I was seeing all these books come out and I noticed that a lot of them had themes, you know, sort of around trauma, around, you know, making it out. And, um, and I sort of thought I had to write that as well and sort of tried that, which was kind of that initial version of the story, but Seeing those developments and then also parallel to that, I was writing as a journalist.

So I was working for the New York times, freelancing for the New York or the Atlantic for Paris review, all these places I had pieces in and also noticing there in a sort of like the fictional world, there was this demand again for these diverse voices, but sort of a specific type of narrative. It was definitely in demand, you know, this, this narrative of like, explain to me your oppression, you know, explain to me how hard you had it or, you know, and, and not to say

that, that isn't valid, but it started to feel to me that, like, do they really want to hear from us or they want to hear like this one type of story?

And, um, around 2020, uh, I was working on this novel throughout that whole period, it just kept changing and changing, but around 2020, it sort of really crystallized. And, um, And I, I, I sort of didn't want to fall into that path. I was like, that's the easy path ahead of me to write that sort of book. And it felt more fun and, and interesting to write a version of it that talks about those themes, but that like put someone like Javi, the protagonist, you know, a person of color from a marginalized background in the driver's seat.

You know, I think what frustrated me a lot of, about other versions of that story is that it was the forces against the character. And I sort of wanted. a story where the character is a driver, where he's not necessarily good or bad, but like it's more complicated, you know, and I thought that that might create a more nuanced picture of things, but also not feel like I was taking the road that didn't feel real or authentic to me.

**Gerry:** You know, I kind of understand and maybe have learned that it's annoying for, uh, interviewers to ask authors about. the kind of relationship between their fiction and their lived experience. So I'm kind of glad that you opened the door just a little bit by talking about your own kind of evolution and, you know, move from where you grew up to college and you're thinking about how your experience kind of diverged from the experience of your friend and You know, how that was kind of an original or an early important moment in the evolution of this project, but I can tell from the book that you are kind of uneasy with these narratives about You know, tell me about your trauma.

Tell me about how you've been a victim That's that's what the book's about in a lot of ways But would you say that that you were also you Andrew or the writer were also uncomfortable with these? and expectations that this is, this is the story that people want to hear about us.

**Andrew:** Yeah, for sure. It felt like it was sort of one robbing me of any agency.

Like I think about people like my grandmother and people, you know, in my family from back in Puerto Rico who like, they tell these stories and I'm like, God damn, that's like, that was rough, but like they don't, They don't think of it that way. They might cry when talked about it and get emotional, but like, if you try to take the position that like, wow, you were such a victim, they will get

really angry at you for, for, for looking at them, at them that way, you know, like they don't see themselves that way.

Myself, I didn't see myself that way. It was interesting, like going from a place like the Bronx and, uh, my upbringing to Cornell, um, I would tell people about like, Things I did growing up and you know things that happened in my family and whatnot things I've been through like wow that must have been so bad.

I'm like Really? I don't know. It was, you know, it just, it is what it was, you know, like, I like to tell people, like, I didn't really realize I was even poor until I went to Cornell, you know, and when I was back in the Bronx, I had a single mom, but she was really devoted. I thought I had, I was, I had a treasure.

I thought I had a lot going for me compared to people around me. So it's odd to like, then go into another space and then have be looked at as like this person who needs help. And it's complicated because like, some people really did just. like, appreciate that journey and really did want to help me and that was authentic.

And it was very disorienting, um, you know, being at a place like Cornell and then also being in the New York Times newsroom, being in, you know, these sort of elite spaces and, and just like hearing your worldview and your, you know, your community described in, in terms and, and that don't really align up with like what you know coming from them.

**Gerry:** Your observation of these dynamics happened ten years ago, but you were actually writing about them. Through the character of Javi in a much more recent period and I have to imagine that Just there a lot has changed in the past ten years even around these conversations of identity and the performance of identity I feel like that word you brought up like trauma.

I don't know that that was even really a word that I don't know Maybe you tell me you were I graduated college in 2000 and I know that between 1997 and 2000 that word trauma victimization. I don't think it was part of the vocabulary, and I don't know if it was for you in college.

**Andrew:** Not really, no. Um, you know, I think a lot of that stuff happened, I would say, yeah, like 2013, 2014, 2015.

That's when I started to pick up on it. But I think having that perspective of being a few years out of college, maturing, seeing these developments in the culture, it made me look at my experience in college in a different way. and sort

of understand it a little bit better. Things that like maybe felt a little weird or odd in college that I didn't know what it meant.

I feel like this new developing language, as you say, you know, it sort of put context around some of that. It was sort of the early rumblings, I think, you know, I was, I was not necessarily on campus when people were Uh, you know, really talking about this stuff, but I was right before that, and then I was out in the world when it was happening, so I kind of had this interesting vantage point.

And also, I think, particularly with the media aspect, having come to the New York Times so young, I was in that newsroom in 2009, you know, and, um, things were different back then, you know? Like, couldn't really get a story written about the Bronx. You know, it was very hard. I used to pitch them a lot and, and, you know, it was very difficult.

And then it was like 2015, 2016. And it was like, you want to write about the Bronx? Oh my God, you know, please. Um, so it was like this really

**Gerry:** big shift, this big swing. I assume that the, the you and the novel will kind of weave in and out of the conversation. But, um, in terms of thinking about how I wanted to go about asking questions, it made sense to me.

It's to me to ask questions about Javi before college, during college, and then after college because it seems like, um, you know, the lessons he's learning about narrating his victimization and the benefits to be gained from doing so, they change during these moments as it kind of evolves before, during, and after college.

So that's how I'll do it. But first, just tell me who Javi is. Tell us a little bit about how you imagine Javi as a character. So

**Andrew:** Javi to me, um, he's, he's somebody who is extremely ambitious. You know, he has this idea. He wants to be successful. That's an idea I wanted to play a lot with, you know, having coming from this environment and just wanting to be a success, wanting to make it out.

His dad is a drug dealer, right? His dad is killed. He sees that happen. He sort of sees that lane. He says at one point, like, I don't have the heart for that. I can't do that. He's not an athlete. He's not. rapper or whatever. And so he's like, you know, he's, he's a nerd. And so he sort of, uh, realizes, okay, like, I like writing.

Can I, can I make it out being a writer? And he has this scene early on where he goes and asks us about money and, you know, to a book reading. And, uh, he sort of sees it as his hustle, right? Or not his hustle, but his, his lane. And then, uh, slowly, I think he starts to realize that. That lane, like getting to where he wants to be or his idea of success, which is sort of up in the air for him, um, can, he can skip a lot of stops if he starts like playing up his, his background, a background that he's never actually looked at in the way that he realizes.

It's sort of a commodity, but that he realizes have, again, having this sort of like hustler mentality from his dad and the people he grew up around that I can kind of pimp this out. This can be my thing, you know, from those early drafts that I mentioned, he was a lot more like me because I, I read a book and I saw, I automatically assume sometimes like, Oh, this is probably the writer, you know?

Um, and I think that's natural, but I was afraid of that as a writer for a while. It's like, I can't make them be too bad. I can't make them say wrong things or do bad things. Cause if I do, they're going to think that's me. And, and then, I don't know, I just had this moment, I guess I got old enough or I had kids and I was like, you know, I got other, I have a life.

If I let go of that pretense or that idea that, that, that worry and just like lean into him and make him as like, crazy and bad and manipulative as I want to to for the purpose of the story, it becomes more exciting. He's in a lot of ways like maybe the person that I, I could have become if, if I, you know, decided to sort of sell out.

**Gerry:** Yeah, I guess that's one of the, you know, creative licenses you have when you're writing fiction. You can write some version of, of a real person that, Uh, it's kind of a fantasy that you can play out with, um, whether it's a good fantasy or a bad fantasy. It's interesting. Um, okay, so tell me, in high school, when and how does Javi first learn the lesson that he can, gain advantages from telling stories about his tough upbringing and stories of him as a victim.

**Andrew:** So he learns it in the, in the process of trying to apply to colleges. He goes to a not great public school in the Bronx, you know, a very under resourced school, devoted teachers, but under resourced, right? And guidance counselors are few and far between. He has one who's sort of a rubbish stamping things and not really around to pay attention, but the school gets sort of a grant.

from a very rich private school in the Bronx in the Riverdale section to send some of their counselors over and help out the kids in Javi's school. And it's there that he meets Mr. Martin, who sort of opens his eyes to this opportunity. Um, and, uh, Mr. Martin is interesting because I don't, I don't see him as somebody who's trying to take advantage of Javi.

I think he's actually trying to help him. He's telling him things that work out, right? Hey, if you write about this, you're probably going to get further. But Javi realizes when I tell people, when I tell this guy who doesn't know me and like lives in Brooklyn and teaches this fancy, fancy school about just normal things that happen to me, he's really moved and thinks I'm somebody.

And so he sort of like falls in love with that. I, you know, I think he's constantly in search of affirmation in search of the idea that he's thought of as successful or as, as notable. And that's kind of his first taste of it.

**Gerry:** And I think your novel is prescient in a lot of ways, not least because it's going to come out in a post affirmative action world.

And I'm sure you've thought about this a little bit in the sense that, you know, the Supreme Court justices in their decision, they almost seem to be inviting essays that force students to really relive all of their worst traumas. They said something about how colleges can't favor minority applicants as a group, but of course they can continue to consider how individuals have faced and overcome adverse circumstances and even talking with friends, colleagues, you know, one of the concerns is that what, um, admissions officers are going to get now are just a whole bunch of essays that just force people to relive either true or exaggerated versions of their worst experiences.

What are your thoughts? You know, how, how your book will be read in a post affirmative action world and what lessons it might offer. I mean,

**Andrew:** I really don't know. It'll, it'll be interesting to see, you know, I can't say I thought that would ever happen. It's, it's so complicated, man, because it's like, you're sort of leaving the door open.

Like now, now kids are going to for sure think like, I have, I'm going to have to do this sort of thing, you know, go through this process. They maybe might've thought that before, maybe might've been coached to, you know, to like, Hey, you know, eh, don't write about like how much you love running, write about, uh, that.

that you sort of overcame challenges. Like, it's really troubling to think that kids are gonna feel like they have to do this now. And, and also that the larger community think like, well, they could just do it as a one off. this one time get in. I don't know that that's the truth. You know, I think if you start writing that way, your worldview becomes to get into this elite institution, because it is mostly the Ivy Leagues, the places that are probably going to see these types of essays, let's be real, right?

So you think that to get into this place, I have to do this to myself, I have to write this way about my background, like, that's just going to leave you when you get into the doors. I think that's really going to shape how you think about yourself in this space. And how People will think about you. It's very troubling that, that that might be the outcome of this.

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Part of what's so interesting about the book, and I think you really wrestle with that, is that, you know, telling these stories over and over and seeing that you reap a reward from doing so, it really does shape your sense of yourself. It becomes who you are. I just had in mind. Um, the epigraph to the book, the opening quote from James Baldwin.

I, you probably know it by heart. What is it again? Perhaps

**Andrew:** the turning point in life, in one's life, is realizing that to be treated like a victim is not necessarily to become one. And that's, that's from this, this Paris Review interview that I, that I, um, I remember reading, I think back in college, I didn't know why that line was so important to me back then, but it was.

Like, I cut it out, and like, I remember, I was like, I had just made an Instagram, and I put a little picture of that quote, and I got like two likes. But it was so, it was so impactful to me, and I didn't know why, and it, and it slowly, you know, uh, it made sense

**Gerry:** why. What are the lessons, so you call the school Donlan, what are the lessons that he learns in college about the advantages to be gained from his victimization?

I mean, I'll just preview some of the scenes that I think were most interesting. They had to do with his professors, a professor Gleason, it had to do with the student group, uh, whose meetings he would attend and also his kind of, um, uh, budding romance with a character named Anais who becomes his. So what are the lessons that Javi learns at college through his kind of interaction with these different, in these different settings?

**Andrew:** Yeah, I think the biggest one is that his, his sort of status on campus increases, right? I think, um, again, he's, he's somebody so obsessed with being like seen as important or successful. Um, and he, you know, realizes early on that in his, I think it's a sociology class that he, you know, they have this exercise, which is actually an exercise that I did see happen in college, um, where they make everybody stand up and they start listing off things like, oh, you know, do you have two parents?

Do you like own your home? Do you have anyone in your family ever been arrested? Kids sit down and sit down and it's, and it is to, it's meant to illustrate that Um, actually, I don't know what it's meant to illustrate, but it's, it's meant to illustrate, I guess, socioeconomic differences and how people start off on different planes.

And I saw it happen and I was like, this is a weird, what has happened here? And so I, I thought about that for a long time. And, um, but he realizes in the class, he sort of like, sort of, uh, makes it so that he's the last one standing. And, and, you know, I think by the, by the questions that are asked, he's, actually the last one standing, whereas somebody like myself probably would have felt like really freaked out about that or like, this is a crazy experience.

He's like, Oh my God, everybody's looking at me. Like I have all the attention. Like I'm, um, they know me now, you know, I think he gets to campus and he realizes it's so big. And there's so many people like. How am I going to stand out here? And he starts to realize from this first college, little classroom experience, and then also going to the Latino, you know, sort of student organization on campus and realizing that they're kind of sitting around and yeah, they're hanging out, but they're also like telling stories about how they either felt like disadvantaged on campus or like felt that they've been targeted in certain ways.

And some of it's real. And some of it's like, Okay, like, there's varying levels and degrees of it and um, and he sort of realizes I have some really good stories to tell and if I tell them, they're I'm going to be seen as important in this group

too. And it doesn't, it doesn't hurt that the girl he's really pining after is a big member of this group and sort of important member.

And she starts to see value in him. It's seemingly because of his sort of authentic background and his hardship. So he's just becoming aware that like, this is something that I can leverage and use to gain status and sort of notoriety, notoriety on, um, on campus. And again, it's I think throughout the book, we're sort of, seeing him from high school to college, like his, his, this world, this understanding keep evolving and he sort of keeps pushing it.

So that's like natural end.

**Gerry:** Yeah. I found that space of the Latino student group to be so interesting because part of what dawns on Javi is that all of these people who are Latinos, they're all the same. They all, you know, they're all seen as the same at that college that they came from. backgrounds of varying privilege, you know, fancy prep schools or, uh, Tony suburbs, well to do areas, et cetera.

Um, but the thing that brings them together at the college is the common language of their oppression at the college, you know? So, so it's also, um, you know, it's not just about the individual benefits to be gained from, you know, articulating your victimization or oppression. It's about how that becomes a kind of community identity for them at college too.

And it's fascinating. There wasn't a question in that, but that's what I liked about that group a lot. One of the things that Javi does is, you know, he goes home for breaks. And he kind of brings home the lessons that he's learning, um, at college and even fancy words, modernity. I can't remember what the others, uh, you mentioned were, but he starts talking about these concepts with his mom.

And what, what's his mom's reaction to what he's learning in college? She's sort of

**Andrew:** like, who are you? Like, where's my son? You know, who is this person? You know, what are you, what are you talking about? Why are you saying these weird things? Like, why are you asking me these weird questions? You know, um, which, which for me, that was important to, you know, to get at like a kid like Javi, you cross over into this elite intellectual space where they're talking about your, you know, certain classrooms.

and professors, they're doing research and talking about your life experience and your, your, you know, your community and using these like terms, you know,

that you've never heard of before. And that feels so odd and, and foreign to you. And then you bring those back to your neighborhood who has not had the luxury of maybe attending those types of schools and reading those types of things and being exposed to those types of ideas.

And it, and it just creates a disconnect. You know, I think, um, I, you know, I, I felt going, you know, from Cornell to the Bronx, like every single time I came home I would see it a little bit differently, a little bit differently, a little bit differently, you know, and sort of be pulled a little bit away from like, just the kid, you know, who hung out in his block all day.

And I, you know, and his in front of his building for like, years. Like, that's who I was. And then now it's like I'm under, I'm, now I know these like, fancy words and then, and like, okay, did my friend who went to jail was that. Was it because he did something dumb or was it because we have too many cops in our neighborhood who were like, you know, like all of a sudden you're thinking about things completely differently and it's, it's sort of, it's disorienting and it's, and especially for the people who sort of know you and you're like talking funny and you know, and they don't know what to make of it either.

So I think it's something a lot of people go through, especially people from a background like mine who end up doing it. make it into these sort of, you know, elite spaces.

**Gerry:** Yeah. Maybe this is a good time to talk about Gio a little bit because Gio is his best friend from home. Um, they do go in different directions, but, um, Gio is a friend that he keeps up a correspondence with while he's in college.

So, you know, what role, um, as, as Javi is like, evolving into this person who recognizes the benefits and advantages of his victimization. He's also kind of maintaining this correspondence with his friend from home, Gio, and what, um, what role does Gio play in his life and evolution as a kind of, um, as a victim, I guess?

**Andrew:** I mean, to me, Gio is, is a really, um, important sort of grounding factor for Javi. You know, he's, he's known him since he, uh, was a little kid. They grew up in the same building and have been best friends, basically brothers, essentially, you know, brothers from another mother. And, um, and, and he is somebody who, um, yes, like took a less than ideal path in life, but has also sort of this like commitment to just be who he is.

You know, he's, he's not as, um, necessarily, uh, I guess worried about status or, um, notoriety perhaps as, as obvious, you know, um, he, he sort of is in the beginning when he falls into this gang. And then, you know, I think the fact that he gets arrested young and has to go through the hardship of being in prison and coming out the other end and really reflecting on his choices, he actually emerges sort of more grounded than, than Javi who has gone on to these sort of quote unquote successful paths in life.

And, um, it's something that, uh, I felt it important to sort of balance like what Javi's doing with somebody who took a completely different path, a path that is seen as, again, negative or less than ideal, but who actually comes out the other end with sort of more of an understanding of who he is and who he's not.

Whereas Javi is completely disillusioned by the time they, they re, you know, reunite when, when he gets out of prison, um, some years later, and Javi's like a famous writer already. So he, yeah, he, he's just, he's meant to ground him, you know, he's meant to like, be the person like, Hey, come back over here. Like, you remember who you are?

You know, And, and that's a really important part of the book, you know, for me to, to, to hit that, that point.

**Gerry:** I wanted to also talk to you about writing a little bit. Um, you know, there's a moment toward the end where Javi writes that he was more proud of the reaction to his writing than of the, the writing itself.

And I think that this is such a, a really raw and incredible, um, feeling, uh, in this age of social media. And I'm wondering if you can walk us through that sentiment and if you ever felt that way yourself as a writer.

**Andrew:** You know, again, I was coming of age in this story in a sense, during the time where like virality was so huge, right?

You'd have these online pieces just like become the thing trending for the day on Twitter, you know, or mostly Twitter, I think. And, um, you know, at the same time, the journalism industry was collapsing, you know, local news, uh, funding, like I I've been on the insides of these places and, and like to survive, they have to chase clicks.

They have to chase sort of that viral aspect. If you've paid attention to the media in the last decade, you've seen them all sort of move towards that, right. With the types of stories they write. Um, so, you know, I think. With, with that

sentiment, I wanted to sort of play with the fact that, like, if you, if you chase that, right, and you're trying to hit those numbers, those clicks and things like that, you can sort of lose yourself in the process, right, and, and maybe write about thing, topics or, or sort of, you know, spin stories in a way that you, you know, are going to maybe play out better, right?

We all know like outrage plays better online, right? Um, tragic tales play better online, the more tragic the better. So it becomes when you're in a position as a freelancer, maybe to try to, you know, not only make some money, but also sort of gain some, some recognition out there. Like you can feel pulled in these directions.

When you, when you chase that viral reaction, you can start writing things you're not proud of. Right. I didn't necessarily do that, but I would really try to fight to write things I was proud of. I've said no to things that I probably maybe should have taken or maybe built. I could have developed relationships that would have led to a certain staff job or whatever.

But I think that with maturing and, and, and sort of like not caring as much about that online attention as I used to, you know, I used to care a lot about it. Why am I not verified? This is before Elon Musk. It was like, you were like being chosen by God to get the blue check. It was something that I really chased, even though it's not something I necessarily did.

I could understand that feeling, you know, I could understand writing stuff that like, wow, I really shouldn't have written that or so. Yeah, I could sort of understand that feeling and wanted

**Gerry:** to get at it. I mean, in some ways, back to the very beginning of the conversation, you talked about how writing Javi was fun in part because you could let him actually do the work.

follow through and do some of the things that you yourself were maybe a little bit uneasy about doing. And this is part of what he learns after college, right? Like you said, he becomes a famous writer and this is part of part of the story for how he becomes a famous writer. So, which leads me to, you know, want to ask again about his post post college lessons and tell us a little bit about his post college evolution as someone who benefits from telling stories about victimization.

**Andrew:** Yeah, I mean, everyone graduates college and you think, oh, I have this degree and I'm gonna, it's just gonna be the fast track to success now. And

he sort of realizes that it's a lot harder to make it. He becomes a creative writing teacher at a public school, partly because he likes the idea of doing it, but also probably because he thinks like, oh, this will make me look good.

As on my resume and um, and he's pitching things and he sort of realizes that like, okay, like editors are interested in me if I write like a certain type of story and they're reaching out to him only about this certain type of story. And when he tries to pitch maybe other more complex nuance nuance things, they're, they're not so interested.

But when they come back with like, Hey, there's this study about how, uh, the food in the Bronx is terrible. And it's like a food desert. You want to write about it? And he's, he reflects in his own life. And he's like, I ain't. I pretty, my mom cooked all my meals. I ate pretty well. And so he's, he's sort of like presented with these opportunities.

And again, like, instead of pushing them to the side, he sort of decides to capitalize on them and in the idea that he's eventually going to reach this space where he can write what he wants. In reality, he sort of slowly realizes that he's sort of lost his way so much. He doesn't even know

**Gerry:** what he's going after anymore.

Thank you for spending this time with us and everyone. listening, you need to go out and read Victim by Andrew Boryga. It's fantastic. So congratulations on the publication, and I can't wait to read whatever comes next from you, Andrew. Thanks a lot, man. Thanks for having me.

**Andrew:** And thank you for creating this space.

It's really important.

**Gerry:** Thank you for listening to this episode of Writing Latinos. We'd love to hear your suggestions for new books that we should be reading and talking about. Drop us a line at [Geraldo@publicbooks.org](http://Geraldo@publicbooks.org). This episode is brought to you by Public Books. It was produced by Tasha Sandoval. Our music is City of Mirrors by the Chicago based band Dos Santos.

I'm Geraldo Cadava. We'll see you again next time.