

New York, December 14, 1964

Mr. Sergio Vodánovic  
c/o Instituto Cultural Chileno-Norteamericano

Santiago de Chile

Dear Mr. Vodánovic:

I am a professional director interested in producing your play, "Let the Dogs Bark", in an Off Broadway theatre. I was impressed by the play's contemporary nature and its exciting conflict of values and ideas.

I have a number of contacts in New York and I feel that it is possible to raise the necessary funds for the production of your play. To be frank, it will be impossible to raise these funds without your permission for a one-year option on the production of the play in the United States. The play is pertinent to what is happening not only in Chile, but also very definitely in the United States and, even more specifically, in New York. That is why I want to direct it.

Enclosed you will find a resumé substantiating my qualifications. As you can see, I have a great deal of experience and knowledge directing new playwrights.

Could you please tell me whether the original version in Spanish is available and the address of the translator, Lysander Kemp? You had a production at Baylor University. Who would I write to in order to get photographs of the American premiere, literature about it, and technical discussion of the play?

If you feel that the above-mentioned option is possible, I would like in the following paragraphs to cut through the formality of this letter and raise some questions about the script. Some of these questions, as you will see, are critical and have to deal with the technique and mechanics of the plot and dialogue rather than the theme--which I think is powerful enough to attract an Off Broadway audience and achieve critical success and also, I hope, financial returns.

1. Is it your intention in the description of the Uribe home to reveal the conflict of values in the play through the mixed nature of the furnishings? or the tasteless middle-class accoutrements in conflict with the sparse, native, and simple necessities?

2. Could you supply me with an article or a description of how middle-class values affect Chilean culture? Are Chilean lower middle-class homes as antiseptic as American ones?

3. A major flaw in the play seems to be that the wheels of "exposition" and "plot development" seem to grind too loudly. It is reminiscent of Ibsen's "Enemy of the People". Pseudo-sophisticated critics and popular audiences will single this out--they always think of a play as representative of a "traditional" approach and labor the point uselessly. I would like to work with you and exchange ideas on possible ways to achieve a more fluid and less mechanical flow in the development of plot.

4. Page 52 of the English translation needs additional dialogue for Octavio. The boy needs to be more bruised, alarmed, confused, torn up. He needs to express his battered idealism with psychological poignancy. The phrasing of his dialogue is too intellectual at this point--it needs to be an expression of human pain as well as a statement about philosophical values. The emotional effect upon the boy must counterbalance the message in the play to make it believable.

5. Page 95. Octavio's speech beginning "I'm trying to follow in your footsteps.....etc." Octavio wants his father to slap him in order to escape the choice Octavio must make. Octavio's cynicism covers his shame and heartbreak. If his eventual decision to fight alongside his father is to be believable, additional dialogue on Octavio's cynical coverup of what he really feels, at this point in the play, will motivate his eventual decision at the end of the play.

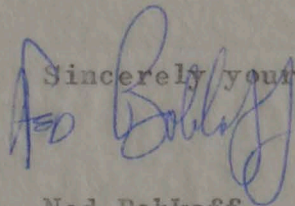
6. Page 125. Estéban says: "I've got friends, influential friends. Cornejo isn't the only person who can help me." Could you possibly add dialogue to this effect?-----

Octavio: (in the throes of irony and developing the conflict of ideas better)

"Friends? Influential friends? Father, you forget. You bought your friends. Soon--you will have no money. And no friends."

If you are interested in the possibility of your play's production, I shall appreciate hearing from you at your earliest convenience. I have high hopes for the fine contribution which "Let the Dogs Bark" could make on the Off Broadway stage.

Sincerely yours,



Ned Bobkoff