

Transcript for Alexandra Hidalgo's "Motherhood on the Screen: An Exploration of Wounds Opened and Closed Through Home Video," published in *Kairos: Rhetoric, Technology, Pedagogy* (23.2), available at <http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/23.2/topoi/hidalgo>

## **Motherhood on the Screen: An Exploration of Wounds Opened and Closed Through Home Video**

by Alexandra Hidalgo

**NOTE:** The conversations in this video essay take place in English and Spanish. The Spanish sections have been left in Spanish with the English translation following in brackets to meet the needs of *Kairos's* audience, which is primarily English-speaking.

LILIAN: Cuando aparece "RS" está grabando.  
[When it says "RS" it's recording]

ANTONIETA: Vamos, Alexandra, por favor.  
[Come, Alexandra, please.]

LILIAN: Esta es la primera grabación que se hace con esta máquina.  
[This is the first recording with this machine.]

ALEXANDRA: Mentira.  
[Better not.]

LILIAN: El día. Qué día es hoy?  
[On... what day is it today?]

ANTONIETA: Hoy es... Ya le vamos a poner la fecha. Hoy es 27 de Septiembre.  
[Today is... We'll add the date. Today is September, 27.]

ALEXANDRA: In 1991 my mom bought a home video camera. As thousands did at the time, she hoped to create a record of our lives for future viewing. Susan Sontag (1977) writes about photographs that "[a]fter the event has ended, the picture will still exist, conferring on the event a kind of immortality (and importance) it would never otherwise have enjoyed" (p. 11). Immortalized in the footage you see our inability not to think of videos as extensions of photographs. We pose as one would for photos whenever we see the lens pointed at us. If I hadn't become a filmmaker, however, none of our home videos would have been immortalized at all.

ANTONIETA: En el caso de los videos, era algo valioso que yo quería pero yo no me iba a dar el trabajo.  
[In the case of the videos, it was something valuable that I wanted but I wasn't going to take the trouble to]

ALEXANDRA: Es que, mami, a menos que hubieras pagado un dineral para hacerlo, no tienes el equipo. Osea, es lo que te digo, fue tan difícil conseguir ese equipo en Michigan State University.  
[But, Mom, unless you'd have paid a lot of money to have it done, you don't have the equipment to do it. It's what I'm saying, it was so hard to find the equipment at Michigan State University.]

ANTONIETA: Pero en el año 97.  
[But in 1997, it wasn't so hard.]

ALEXANDRA: Ah.  
[Ah.]

ANTONIETA: No era tan difícil.  
[It wasn't so hard.]

ALEXANDRA: No.  
[ No.]

ANTONIETA: En el año 97, yo le he podido pasar a VHS. Después del VHS yo lo he podido pasar a aquello, lo otro. Si yo me hubiese mantenido. Total. Pero ahí es donde la vida te lleva por otro camino y tú dices, "tengo que llevar al niño al colegio, tengo que llevar al otro al médico, tengo que ir para acá, tengo que cumplir con este cliente" y el pobre cassette se queda ahí.  
[In 1997, I could have transferred them to VHS. After VHS I could have transferred them to something else and so on if I'd stayed on top of it. But that's where life takes you down different paths, and you say, I have to take my son to school, I have to take my other son to the doctor, I have to go here, I have to go visit this client, and the poor tape stays there.]

ALEXANDRA: Life, the very thing the tapes had recorded, got in the way of my mom's ability to digitize them when the technology was still available. Here, Jody Shipka (2012) shows "some of the projectors we've acquired... Add to this, the ability to operate, locate parts for and to repair these obsolete technologies." Much like Shipka, two decades since we made our last high-8 tape in 1997, it took me dozens of emails and conversations to find the needed digitizing equipment, and when I did, I had to be by the computer for days because whenever the equipment stopped recording the tapes would keep going, making it hard to find the right spot again. And so it was that for a few weekends I found

myself watching my past alongside my two young sons. The viewing healed many old wounds and opened a few new ones.

My mom, who lives in Venezuela, couldn't visit us this summer, so I decided to instead interview her over skype, which is how we see her during most of the year. From home videos to skype conversations, screens, with their curious pixilation, continue to shape our love. This is a story about love on the screen and what that representation says about love in real life. Not the walk-into-the-sunset Hollywood love but complicated real-life love that unfolds in two countries, Venezuela and the United States. Two years after my mom bought the camera in 1991 we moved to Dayton, Ohio. In 1997 my mom, my stepdad José, and my brothers Eduardo and Gustavo returned to Caracas and I stayed to attend college. The videos end when our time together did, a record of a family, now separated by land and sea, living together for the last time.

Although we are from a different culture, our home video work was close to what Richard Chalfen (1987) learned about American home video users in 1987 and what David Buckingham, Rebekah Willett, and Maria Pini (2011) learned about British home video users in 2011. As Chalfen (1987) writes, "most home moviemakers were extremely reluctant to do any editing at all" (p. 5). Not only are home videos rarely edited, they are rarely watched, as Buckingham, Willett, and Pini (2011) found out (p. 113). I would argue these are not unrelated issues.

ALEXANDRA: Mi último cassette es el 97. Osea que 20 años después todavía no se han visto.

[My last tape is from 1997. 20 years later the family still hasn't seen them.]

ANTONIETA: Bueno lo hemos hablado en otras ocasiones. Yo creo que tú tienes razón, se hacen muy largas. Como se hacen muy largas tal como tú dices, al no editarlas, al no cortarles esos momentos que no tienen mucho contenido. Son momentos que uno va filmando, filmando, filmando, y después si uno lo contrae sacas algo bueno. Pero si lo dejas así largo se hace tedioso.

[Well, we've talked about this at other times. I think that you're right. They get too long. It's as you say. They get long because we don't edit them. We don't cut the moments that don't have a lot of content. There are moments when one keeps filming,

filming, filming and if later you cut it down you get something good, but if you leave it as it was filmed, it's tedious.]

ALEXANDRA: Home videos also feature what Chalfen (1987) calls the home mode, which he describes "as a pattern of interpersonal and small group communication centered around the home... One primary characteristic of the home mode is its selection of an audience" (p. 8). Not only do home videos feature those we love, but they are made for those we love (again I'm using that complex version of love), not for people we hardly know.

Home videos, according to Chalfen (1987), are driven by Kodak Culture, which refers to the fact that people create home videos in similar ways, an extension of the smiling family portraits that we learned to take, in part from the way Kodak and other companies presented the technology. As Chalfen (1987) writes, "no national, state, city, or county law exists to coerce parents to take pictures of new born children or children's birthday parties; it is 'strange' and unusual, however, to find families who do not conform to this unwritten expectation... picture taking habits and picture showing habits are guided by unspoken and unrealized social conventions" (p. 47). While Kodak Culture is clear in my family's home videos, I, like James Moran (2002), am wary of putting the whole of the responsibility for it on the creators and advertisers of recording technology, because as he says, "Such conclusions implicitly deny that the desire to represent home and family may be embroiled in a history of material practices predating the designs of Kodak and its competitors" (p. 50). Most likely from a blend of thousands of years of familial relationships and from our own participation in the society we were born to, my family and I adhered quite closely to the rules of Kodak Culture.

As Buckingham, Willett, and Pini (2011) found, "babies are commonly videotaped much more than are older children or adults" (p. 101). My younger brothers played a much bigger role in our home videos than I did and I was thankful for the research, which helped me realize that my parents were not excluding me on purpose but rather performing an unspoken Kodak Culture rule.

According to Chalfen (1987), other rules include not filming those who are ill (p. 59), and making sure to thoroughly document vacations, holidays, parties, and special events such as graduations and baptisms (p. 61-62).

Although my family and I faithfully performed Kodak Culture, there are a few exceptions. Chalfen (1987) explains that much of the traditional home activity is missing from home videos, "one seldom, if ever, finds family members preparing, eating, or cleaning up from breakfast, lunch, or dinner in home movies" (p. 62). That was clearly not the case for us.

In most households studied by Chalfen (1987) "the male head of the household used the camera most of the time. In a few cases, a teenage son (but not daughter) who was learning about cameras and filmmaking, took over this responsibility" (p. 60). In our case my mom was the one who mostly wielded the camera. It is in some ways through our sharing of the camera and the conflict that resulted from it that we broke Kodak Culture convention by showing the rarely seen conflicts that erupt between the smiling moments we are used to watching on home videos. Before we get to those conflicts, however, I want to explain who we made these videos for. Buckingham, Willett, and Pini (2011) "found several instances of video being used to create and sustain links within families across generations and places. Several parents videotaped their children in order to show the footage to their own parents, who were living in distant parts of the world" (p. 99).

Most of our videos were made for our family living outside the US and for the friends I'd left behind in Caracas. Here is my mom discussing videos we made for her sister, Jenny, who lives in Portugal, when her sons came to visit us in Dayton.

ANTONIETA: Es esa añoranza de si estuviéramos todos viviendo en un país pudiésemos compartir las cosas, pudiésemos ir de paseo juntos, pero ya de que eso no se dio, el futuro nos llevó por aquí, por allá. Pues bueno, por lo menos que puedas ver que yo estoy con tu hijo. Y mira como podemos compartir como siempre hubiésemos querido. Siempre nuestro anelo era que nuestros hijos llevaran una relación cercana.

[It's that longing. If we lived in the same country, we could share these things. We could go on trips together. But since that didn't happen, the future took us to different parts of the world, at least you can see that I'm here with your son. And you can see how we can spend time together just like you and I hoped we could. Our wish was always for our children to be close to each other.]

ANTONIETA: Vamos a ver. Aquí está nuestro cuarto. Bueno, con le desorden de ahora de tantos visitantes, pero estamos felicísimos. Miren como están aquí todos jugando.

[Let's see. Here is our bedroom. Well, and the mess that comes with having so many guests, but we're so happy to have them here. Look here, they are all playing together.]

- Hola.

- Hi.

- Hola.

- Hi.

ANTONIETA: Hola, Portugal. Hola, Venezuela.

[Hi, Portugal. Hi, Venezuela.]

ANTONIETA: Párenme al muchacho para que la tía le vea el traje. Ves, Tía Jenny, ese lo mandaste tú. Bueno, pero enséñame el traje, chama. Ah? Me tienen al muchacho ahí.

[Lift the kid up so his aunt can see his outfit. See, Aunt Jenny, you sent him this. But show him the outfit, girl, eh? You're carrying the kid funny. ]

ALEXANDRA: Tía. Tía.

[Aunt! Aunt!]

ALEXANDRA: A mi me da risa porque para mi la gente que vio los videos no fuimos nosotros. Fueron las otras personas. Fueron los Cardier, fue Jenny.

[I think it's funny because we're not the ones who watched the videos. It was others who watched them. The Cardiers, Aunt Jenny.]

ANTONIETA: Pero bueno, yo no necesito verlo porque yo tengo mi vivencia en mi memoria. La otra persona necesita verlo porque yo quiero que vea como la pasamos, donde fuimos, cómo estamos. Que tú tengas la oportunidad de estar presente a pesar de que no estás con nosotros en este momento.

[But I don't need to watch the video because I have the experience of what we filmed in my memory. The other person needs to see it because I want them to see what we did, where we

went, how we are. For you to have the opportunity to be present even though you are not with us at that moment.]

ALEXANDRA: I am not sure that video can in fact make you feel present in moments you haven't experienced, but it can help you feel that you've witnessed them, even if what you witnessed is a representation of that moment.

Of course, decades later, what was fresh in our minds at the moment of filming has been distorted by our memory's selective portrayal of what unfolded. And not only our memory, but our own development as human beings. In my case I moved from Venezuela, a culture where a person's weight is often critiqued to their face, to the United States, where it isn't.

ALEXANDRA: Una de las cosas que sí aparece en los videos, que yo no recordaba pero wow, es cuanto nos metemos los unos con los otros con el cuerpo. Con cuanto come la persona, con quien está engordando, quién no está engordando y es todo el mundo... todos contra todos.

[One of the things that does show up on the videos that I didn't remember, but, wow, is how much we mess with each other's bodies. With how much a person eats, with who is gaining weight, who is not gaining weight, and it's everybody. Everybody against everybody.]

ANTONIETA: Yo siento, yo, que eso es muy venezolano. Yo como siempre tuve una variedad de clientes iba de repente a un cliente, de repente a otro cliente y entraba a una oficina. Eso era impresionante. En una misma semana yo podía ir donde un cliente que me decía, "Oye, pero como te has engordado." Y de repente iba a un cliente y me decía "Pero tú si has rebajado peso." Pero con qué facilidad la gente te lo comenta. Te lo comentan sin saber si a ti te duele, si tú estás haciendo un esfuerzo por rebajar. En mi familia, eso fue siempre mamá en ese comentario. "Tú tienes que tener cuidado, porque tu forma de cuerpo, a tu estructura no le va bien que aumentes quilos.

Entonces yo veo que tal. Mamá siempre fue así.

[I feel that that is very Venezuelan. Because I always had a variety of clients, I would go to one office and then to another. It was incredible. During the same week I could go to see one client who would tell me, "You've gained so much weight." Then I would go to another client, who would say, "You've lost a lot of

weight." People mention it with such ease, without knowing whether it hurts you, whether you're making an effort to lose weight. In my family, my mom would always say, "You have to be careful because with the shape of your body, with your structure, you should not gain weight, and I'm seeing that you're gaining." My mom was always like this.]

ANTONIETA: Cuidado con mi vasito. Se ve gordita. Se le ven los cacheticos gorditos.

[Careful with my cup. You look plump. Your cheeks look plump.]

ANTONIETA: Un perfil.

[Let's see a profile.]

JOSÉ: Esperamos—

[We're hoping—]

ALEXANDRA: Un perfil, Josito, un perfil.

[A profile, Josito, a profile.]

JOSÉ: Esperamos—

[We're hoping—]

— Un perfil.

— A profile.

ANTONIETA: Gustavo, deja de estar pendiente de comida, chico. Besito a papá.

[Gustavo, stop paying attention to the food. Blow your dad a kiss.]

JOSÉ: La otra desde que llega es comiendo. Debe estar pasando un hambre. La vieron? La otra. La voy a enfocar. Sólo comiendo, véanla.

[Since this one got here she's been eating. She must be going hungry at school. Did you see her? I'm going to zoom in on her. All she does is eat, watch.]

ALEXANDRA: Déjame decirte que no debo estar comiendo tanto Porque...

[Let me tell you that I can't be eating that much because...]

JOSÉ: No, por eso. Está pasando hambre.

[That's what I mean, you must be going hungry there.]

ALEXANDRA: Mami, fílmale la lipa a Pancho.

[Mom, film Pancho's gut.]

JOSÉ: Fílmale la lipa ahí.

[Film his gut.]

ANTONIETA: Ya se la acabo de filmar. Otra vez?

[I just filmed it. Again?]

ALEXANDRA: Ah, no.

[Ah, no.]

ANTONIETA: Otra vez?

[Again?]

ALEXANDRA: Por favor, a petición del público, repetición de la lipa de Pancho.

[Please, due to popular demand, let's see Pancho's gut again.]

ANTONIETA: Mira, yo no sé que sobresale más. Ah?

[I don't know what sticks out more, eh?]

ALEXANDRA: Qué pasada.

[Outrageous, Mom. ]

ANTONIETA: A ver. Pancho, por favor. Ahora la lipa de frente.

[Let's see. Pancho, please. Now your gut from the side.]

PANCHO: Antes y después.

[Before and after.]

ANTONIETA: Vamos a cargar a Gustavo.

[Why don't you carry Gustavo?]

ALEXANDRA: Dónde está el gordo? Ya va.

[Where's my baby boy? Hold on.]

ANTONIETA: Vamos a filmarla parada. Esta como que no quiere filmarse parada.

[We're going to film her standing up. It looks like she doesn't want us to film her standing up.]

ALEXANDRA: Ay, no estoy...

[Hey, I'm not...]

ANTONIETA: Por favor, de perfil. Eso, chamo. Quién te tiene ahí?  
[Please, in profile. Hey, kid. Who's holding you?]

ALEXANDRA: Es increíble por que yo, yo veo esos videos y yo digo, yo era flaquita y yo me sentía gordísima. Lo otro es que se meten mucho con mis batatas. Todos. Tú también. Todo el mundo y yo digo pero las batatas son... yo nací con mis batatas. Eso es genético. Yo no puedo hacer nada.

[It's incredible because I watch those videos and I say, I was so skinny and I felt so fat. The other thing is that you guys go after my calves a lot. All of you. You too. Everyone does it and I think calves are... I was born with my calves. It's genetic. There's nothing I can do about them.]

ANTONIETA: A verle las batatas a Alexandra. Un closeup. Epa, epa. Se me escapa! Se me escapa!

[Let's see Alexandra's calves. A closeup. Hey, hey. She's escaping! She's escaping!]

JOSÉ: Párense para que le vean las pantorrillas lo gorda que está. Póngase de ladito. Ven lo gorda? Les voy a enfocar ahora las pantorrillas, vean. Se parece o no a Maradona? Son las pantorrillas de Maradona.

[Stand up so they can see your calves and how fat you are. Turn to the side. See how fat? I am going to zoom into her calves. See? Does she or doesn't she look like Maradona? She has Maradona's calves.]

ALEXANDRA: Una de las peleas más grandes que yo recuerdo de mi adolescencia es en el viaje a Colorado.

[One of the biggest fights that I remember from my teenage years is during the trip to Colorado.]

ANTONIETA: Terrible.

[Terrible.]

ALEXANDRA: Y tiene que ver con la pila de la cámara. Patrick me dice que él quiere que yo filme algo. Yo lo filmo y tú te pones brava. Pero lo que ha sido interesante es que yo al ver los videos me doy cuenta que tú también le decías a José que no filmara. Osea que no era una cosa... Yo lo sentí como algo muy personal e injusto, pero aparentemente no lo era. Osea, era algo

que tú a José también se lo hacías y José simplemente decía, "Ajá" y seguía filmando.

[And it's about the camera's battery. Patrick tells me that he wants me to film something. I film it and you get mad. What has been interesting to me is that when I watch these videos i realize that you also told José not to film. That it wasn't... I felt it as something personal and unjust, but apparently it wasn't. It was something that you also did to José and José simply said, "Aha," and kept filming.]

ANTONIETA: Yo creo que ese es uno de los episodios que hace que yo diga, "Si hay que tener un pleito así para poder filmar, la filmación no vale nada. Teníamos unas vacaciones de ensueño, unas vacaciones maravillosas. Como dañar unas vacaciones así porque una pila se acabara? Pues bueno, si la pila se acaba se acabó. Pero en ese momento no lo vi así. En ese momento dije, "cónchale, cuando yo quiero filmar la... estoy sin batería. Fue un suceso triste. Un suceso que te dejó una herida a ti totalmente innecesaria. Por una pila.

[I think that that's one of the episodes that made me say, "If we need to fight like this in order to film, filming has no value. We were having these dreamy, wonderful vacations. How can a vacation like this be ruined because a battery was going to run out? If the battery runs out, it runs out. But in that moment I didn't see it like that. In that moment I said, when I want to film there is no battery left. It was a sad episode. An episode that left you with a completely unnecessary wound. Over a battery.]

ALEXANDRA: For me these images, which today I watch with a strange blend of shock and familiarity, are proof of how much living in a country can change you even if you were not born there. This particular issue is more cultural than personal. The biggest conflict I remember around the camera, however, is a personal one. Although we all took turns filming, my mom often controlled how much we each could film. If I wanted to film something during a trip, when battery life was precious, I risked getting in trouble. So I learned to ask permission, as I do here during a trip we took to Colorado when my cousin Patrick came to visit us from Portugal.

Although the tape where the conflict unraveled is missing, the tape that followed it shows my pain over the argument quite palpably. And yet, watching the home videos two decades after filming them primarily resulted in healing old wounds for me.

ALEXANDRA: Cuando llegamos a los cassettes ... comencé con el 91, después con el 92. Y honestamente yo no quería salir de Venezuela en mi mundo de cassettes. Yo quería quedarme en Venezuela. No quería ir a Dayton. Porque para mi, muchos de mis recuerdos de Dayton tienen tensión, tienen vainas de adolescencia, de inmigración. Complicaciones que yo no quería revivir. Pero interesantemente, la mayoría de los cassettes de Dayton, muestran una familia que se quiere mucho, que está muy feliz, que se ríe. No todos pero mucho de lo que se ve es un cariño muy grande.

[When it came to digitizing the tapes, I started with the one from 1991, then from 1992. And honestly, I didn't want to leave Venezuela in my tape world. I didn't want to go to Dayton because for me, many of my memories of Dayton have tension, have teenage issues, immigration issues. Complications that I didn't want to relive. It's interesting, though, that the majority of the Dayton tapes show a family that loves each other very much, that is happy, that laughs. Not all, but much of what we see is a deep love.]

ANTONIETA: Sí, son extractos de momentos felices. Uno sigue filmando tal como tú dices, momentos felices, momentos festivos. Pero bueno, me alegra mucho que te hayas encontrado a esa familia amorosa, cariñosa. Quizás tú decías, todo el mundo contra mi y de repente en esos videos ves que no era, que no era 100%. Esos momentos malos los sentías como una totalidad pero no, no eran totalidad, habían otros momentos.

[Yes, they are extracts of happy moments. One keeps filming, like you say, the happy moments, the festive moments. But I'm happy that you found a loving, warm family. Maybe you felt that everyone was against you and suddenly in these videos you realize that it wasn't that way, not 100% that way. You had felt the bad moments as if they were a totality, but they weren't a totality. There were other moments too.]

ALEXANDRA: Perhaps the most generative bit of insight about this whole digitizing process came from my mom.

ANTONIETA: A mi me llamó mucho la atención cuando tú me dijiste que estabas viendo los videos, que a William le gustaba mucho Eduardo.

[I found it fascinating when you told me that you were watching the videos and that William really liked Eduardo.]

ALEXANDRA: Sí.

[Yes.]

ANTONIETA: Esa parte a mi me parece maravillosa. Yo cuando me puse a pensar, dije "Claro, este es un sobrino, que está viendo un tío a su misma edad.

[I find that wonderful. I started thinking. Of course this is a nephew who is seeing his uncle at his own age.]

ALEXANDRA: Sí.

[Yes.]

ANTONIETA: William a los cinco años está viendo a su tío de cinco o seis años y dice, "Ya no es un hombre grande con el cual yo tengo una distancia. Es un muchacho como yo, que juega, que salta, que se pone en el sofá, se pone al revés. Esa parte es fascinante. Que el video pueda hacer que dos generaciones diferentes puedan tener la misma edad esa parte es—

[William at five years of age is watching his uncle when he was five or six, and saying, "That is no longer a grown man from whom I am distant. It's a kid like me who plays, who jumps, who gets on the sofa, who gets upside down. I found it fascinating. The fact video can make it so that two different generations can be the same age is—]

ALEXANDRA: Mágico.

[Magical.]

ANTONIETA: Mágico. Es como ver un amiguito a tu edad y sentir que ya esa distancia tan grande que tú ves en la realidad. Tú ves a tu tío y tú dices "Ese tío es muy grande, muy viejo, muy inalcanzable para que yo pueda tratarlo de tú a tú." Y de repente, otra vez, del video tú dices, "No hay distancia."

[Magical. It's like watching a friend at your age and feeling that the distance you see in reality is gone. You see your uncle and you say, "My uncle is too big, too old, too hard to reach

for me to be able to be his peer." And suddenly on the video you say, "There's no distance."]

ALEXANDRA: Like some time traveling skype conversation where your voice is not heard, home videos can bring generations together and help foster new bonds. Buckingham, Willett, and Pini (2011) say that with their book, they "want to contest the sense of *disappointment* that pervades much academic discussion of home video making—the sense that some potential challenge to the Powers That Be has somehow been defused ... and that people have been distracted by trivialities" (p. 6).

One of the voices most often quoted expressing that disappointment is Patricia Zimmerman (1995). She provides examples of the potential of video cameras to change the world. She writes about a group of queer filmmakers whose video "work aggressively deconstructs the privileging of the bourgeois nuclear family and heterosexuality" (p. 154). Work that seems profoundly important but that, as I see it, can coexist with family videos like the ones my family took. Zimmerman (1995) argues that "[b]y removing cameras from their traditional yoke of the home, nature, and travel, home movies and home video may break with naturalism and emotional bonds as aesthetic organizing principles" (p. 153-154). However, it is exactly the emotional bonds in our home videos that to me are revolutionary. They have helped me see my past in a new way.

ALEXANDRA: Lo que yo veo en las imágenes que nosotros filmamos es que va más allá de la cultura Kodak. Realmente hay un amor profundo. Hay una felicidad. Hay un cariño. Me gustó mucho verlo. Yo, wow, mira cuanto nos queremos y como se ve en el... [What I see in the images that we filmed goes beyond Kodak culture. There really is deep love there. There is happiness. There is warmth. I was happy to watch it all. Look how much we love each other and how clear it is in the—]

ANTONIETA: A pesar de tantos enfrentamientos, a pesar de tantos momentos difíciles sí había espacio para todos estos momentos de felicidad y a lo mejor son más de lo que tú creías que eran. [In spite of all the conflicts, of all the difficult moments there was room for all these moments of happiness, and perhaps there were more of them than you thought there were.]

ALEXANDRA: Obviamente, creo. Fue interesante porque me cambió mi perspectiva de mi adolescencia. [Obviously, I think. It was interesting because it changed my

perspective on my adolescence.]

ANTONIETA: Así que todas las madres deberíamos filmar. Yo creo que tantos adolescentes pasan por esas fases y deben sentir eso. [So all mothers should film. I think that so many teenagers go through those phases and feel like that.]

ALEXANDRA: Yo creo que sí. [I think so.]

ANTONIETA: Es que me rechazan. Yo no quepo aquí. Entonces de repente estos videos dicen, "no, la vida es un conjunto de cosas." Por supuesto que habían reclamos y habían comentarios y había todo, pero no era sólo eso. Ya puedes hacer una campaña, a filmar, a filmar. Todas las madres a filmar. [I'm being rejected. I don't fit here. Then suddenly you watch these videos and say, no, life is an amalgamation of things. Of course there are arguments and there are things people say you don't like and all that, but it wasn't only that. You can start a campaign, go film, go film. All mothers go film.]

ALEXANDRA: Of course, filming our past and revisiting that footage is not a panacea for familial strife and not all home videos will be like the ones featuring my family, but home videos are anything but trivial. There is great richness to be found in and between those birthdays and Christmas moments if one takes the time to really pay attention. Like the lives they represent, home videos will surprise us with unexpected moments of pain and happiness. It is how we choose to engage with those moments that can turn the filming and interpreting of home videos into something transcendent.

## **Written, Narrated, and Edited by**

ALEXANDRA HIDALGO

## **Featuring**

JOSÉ CARDIER

ANTONIETA AAGAARD DE CARDIER

ALEXANDRA HIDALGO

## **With**

DENNIS BERGHAEGER

PATRICK BERGHAEGER

JULIO CARDIER

EDUARDO CARDIER

GUSTAVO CARDIER  
LILIAN ELÍAS

## **Cinematography**

PATRICK BERGHAEGER  
NATHANIEL BOWLER  
JOSÉ CARDIER  
ANTONIETA AAGAARD DE CARDIER  
ALEXANDRA HIDALGO

## **Thank You**

To my relatives and childhood friends for letting me revisit old images and sounds of our lives together in this piece.

## **Soundtrack**

"Fragile, Do Not Drop" and "Sweet and Clean"  
By Podington Bear  
Downloaded from  
Soundofpicture.com

## **References**

- Buckingham, David, Willett, Rebekah, & Pini, Maria. (2011). *Home truths? Video production and domestic life*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Digital Culture Books.
- Chalfen, Richard. (1987). *Snapshot versions of life*. Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press.
- Moran, James. (2002). *There's no place like home video*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Shipka, Jody (2012). To preserve, digitize, and project: On the process of composing other people's lives. *Enculturation: A Journal of Rhetoric, Writing, and Culture*, 14. Retrieved from <http://enculturation.net/preserve-digitize-project>
- Sontag, Susan. (1977). *On photography*. New York, NY: Picador.
- Zimmerman, Patricia. (1995). *Reel families: A social history of amateur film*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

## **Creative Commons License**

Attribution  
By Alexandra Hidalgo

2018