

Summary

The following writing samples were produced as assignments during the Fall 2020 semester in my Public Relations Writing course at American University in Washington, D.C.

- Media Advisory + Pitch
 - Following up on my previous Six Books Apart project, I decided to create a media advisory promoting a fictional event for the event. I also drafted an email pitch to send out to potential reporters that would cover the event.
- News Release + Pitch
 - For the news release assignment, my product announces that Michelle Obama would be joining the Executive Board of a fictional charter school in Washington, D.C. I also drafted an email pitch to send out to potential reporters that would cover the event.
- Blog Post
 - For the blog post assignment, I drafted a post for Latinx pop culture website *Remezcla*, in which I discuss three reasons why people should still be talking about the Super Bowl LIV halftime show, which was headlined by Shakira and Jennifer Lopez.
- Social Media Posts
 - The attached social media posts were created to accompany the blog post I created about the halftime show of Super Bowl LIV.



MEDIA ADVISORY

Six Books Apart's Black Lives Matter Book Talk: **September 24**

WHO: Six Books Apart presents a free virtual Black Lives Matter themed book talk.

- **Angie Thomas**, author of “The Hate U Give” and “On the Come Up”
- **Akosua Ali**, NAACP DC Branch president
- **Juan Pelaez-Barboza**, Six Books Apart president

WHEN: Thursday, September 24, 2020, 5:30pm-6:45pm

REGISTRATION: Email events@sixbooksapart.com to request Zoom meeting access.

ABOUT: The Black Lives Matter book talk, taking place virtually, will provide a forum for people to gather and discuss the selected novels and issues related to social justice.

Author **Angie Thomas** will offer insight into the inspiration behind her two novels, and moderate a discussion on Black Lives Matter and other social justice movements, during which **Akosua Ali** will highlight a number of topics, including:

- The impact COVID-19 is having on Black Lives Matter demonstrations;
- The state of affairs within police departments as many advocate for defunding; and
- Ali's and Thomas' thoughts on what people should expect next.

The event will also feature Six Books Apart president **Juan Pelaez-Barboza**, who will also offer insights into current social justice movements and share his personal story in supporting Black Lives Matter. The virtual event will also look back at highlights of social justice victories over the years and reflect on what can we learn from these moments to apply to the future.

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About Six Books Apart:

Founded in 2020 by Juan Pelaez-Barboza, Six Books Apart is an organization dedicated to encouraging people to explore their love of reading and engage in purposeful conversation with the world around them. Playing on the idea of staying “six feet apart” during the COVID-19 pandemic, Six Books Apart uses digital tools such as Zoom to connect avid readers who share common interests to participate in active discussions surrounding literary works of their choosing.

MEDIA CONTACT

Six Books Apart

Juan Pelaez-Barboza, 202-885-1035

juan@sixbooksapart.com

From: Juan Pelaez-Barboza

Sent: Wednesday, September 17, 2020 5:30 PM

To: Editor

Subject: Black Lives Matter Virtual Book Talk – [September 24](#)

Hi Editor,

I hope you're well and staying safe!

Six Books Apart is hosting a live, virtual discussion to talk about Black Lives Matter and other ongoing social justice movements in the United States.

Juan Pelaez-Barboza, president of Six Books Apart will be joined by Angie Thomas, critically acclaimed author of novels such as "[The Hate U Give](#)" and "[On the Come Up](#)," and Akosua Ali, president of the NAACP's DC Branch, on [Thursday, September 24 at 5:30pm](#) for an informative and engaging event.

Question: Would you – or one of your featured writers – want to schedule an in-depth conversation with Angie and Akosua, perhaps before or after the event? And would you/your writers like to attend the event next Thursday?

I've included the media advisory in this email for further information. Thanks so much, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Best,
Juan

**MICHELLE OBAMA JOINS SAKS INNOVATION CHARTER
SCHOOL EXECUTIVE BOARD**
**Obama to serve as Executive Advisor for Development and External
Affairs.**

For Immediate Release
September 30, 2020

Contact: Juan Pelaez-Barboza
(202) 546-4477
jpelaezbarboza@sics.edu

WASHINGTON – Saks Innovation Charter School (SICS) today announced that Michelle Obama has been appointed to its Executive Board effective October 1, 2020.

Obama, 56, is a former First Lady of the United States, and a cofounder of the Obama Foundation, a nonprofit that empowers people to work together to make impactful change. Prior to politics, Obama served as the vice president for Community and External Affairs of the University of Chicago Medical Center.

As part of the executive board at SICS, Obama will serve as executive advisor for Development and External Affairs. In this role, Obama will oversee the school's development and external affairs efforts, and make recommendations on strategic initiatives that SICS should pursue.

"I am thrilled to partner with Michelle to help guide the future of our school, bring new communities into our Saks family, and elevate our values to a diverse audience, said Mary Lou Catania, executive director of Saks Innovation Charter School. "We look forward to engaging Michelle's exceptional leadership qualities as we deepen our involvement in the Washington, D.C. community."

The D.C. Public Charter School Board recently approved Saks Innovation Charter School's application. SICS will open during the 2021-2022 school year as a pre-kindergarten through grade three school, and will expand one grade each year until it reaches eighth grade in 2026. The school will be housed in a building built specifically for it located at 1227 Fourth Street NE, Washington, D.C. 20002.

About Saks Innovation Charter School

Saks Innovation Charter School (SICS), established in 2020 in the District of Columbia, is a pioneer in PK-8 education. Using the Expeditionary Learning Model, SICS allows students to learn all of the skills they would in the classroom in conjunction with real-world expeditions. SICS is dedicated to nurturing a diverse group of students to be lifelong, active participants in their own education, develop a sense of self and community, and become responsible, compassionate members of society.

###

From: Juan Pelaez-Barboza

Sent: Wednesday, September 30, 2020 5:30 PM

To: Editor

Subject: Michelle Obama Joins Executive Board of Saks Innovation Charter School

Hi Editor,

I hope you're well and staying safe! I read one of your recent articles about Lin-Manuel Miranda joining the ranks of LaGuardia High School in Manhattan, NY as a Curriculum Advisor for Arts Programs. I wanted to run another story opportunity by you.

Michelle Obama, former First Lady of the United States, and cofounder of the Obama Foundation, is joining the executive board of the Saks Innovation Charter School (SICS), a PK-8 educational pioneer in Washington, DC! Mrs. Obama will be serving as the school's **Executive Advisor for Development and External Affairs**, where she'll oversee the school's development and external affairs efforts, and make recommendations on strategic initiatives that SICS should pursue.

Question: Would you – or one of your features writers – want to schedule an in-depth conversation with Michelle? And would you/your writers like to learn more about SICS and what makes us unique?

I've included the press release in this email for further information. Thanks so much, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Best,
Juan

Nine Months Later, Here's Why You Should STILL Be Talking About the Super Bowl LIV Halftime Show

By: Juan Pelaez-Barboza

SHARE



Shakira, left, and Jennifer Lopez stand together at the end of the Super Bowl LIV Halftime Show.
Courtesy: Getty Images

On Sunday, February 2, families across America gathered around their living room television sets for the annual Super Bowl, which was filled with many firsts: the Kansas City Chiefs won their first championship in 50 years, and the [halftime show](#) featured not one, but TWO Hispanic performers as headliners.

If you had forgotten about this star-studded, monumental performance, it's time for a refresher on why you should still be talking about it!

1.) The diversity

In September 2019, it was announced that Jennifer Lopez, born and raised in New York City but of Puerto Rican heritage, and Shakira, born and raised in the Colombian city of Barranquilla, were selected to headline the show. Their selection was intended to reflect the Hispanic culture of Miami, which hosted Super Bowl LIV.



Jennifer Lopez performing with rapper J. Balvin. Courtesy: Shutterstock

Surprisingly, this was only the third time that Hispanic music artists headlined the Super Bowl halftime show. Gloria Estefan is the only other artist to do so, having headlined both the 1992 and 1999 halftime shows.

Both singers were joined by special guests Bad Bunny and J. Balvin, both of Puerto Rican and Colombian descent.

When thinking about Hispanic or Latino populations in the U.S, Cubans and Mexicans are the first that come to mind. But there are so many more nationalities, such as Colombian, Puerto Rican, Peruvian, among others. Here lies a golden opportunity to continue increasing Hispanic representation in American media.



Shakira performing with rapper Bad Bunny. Courtesy: Getty Images

2.) It was one hell of a good show

The halftime show was a thought-out process that took several months to successfully plan and execute.

Among the highlights of Shakira's performance was her belly dancing routine and, during her performance of "[Hips Don't Lie](#)," wagging her tongue in an Arab tradition known as *zaghrouta*, both serving as nods to her paternal Lebanese ancestry. Her wardrobe also peaked the



Shakira wagging her tongue in an Arab tradition known as "zaghrouta." The photo was trending on social media immediately following the performance.

Courtesy: NFL

attention of viewers, as her sequin outfits worn throughout her set was later revealed to have been made out of 10 million Swarovski crystals.

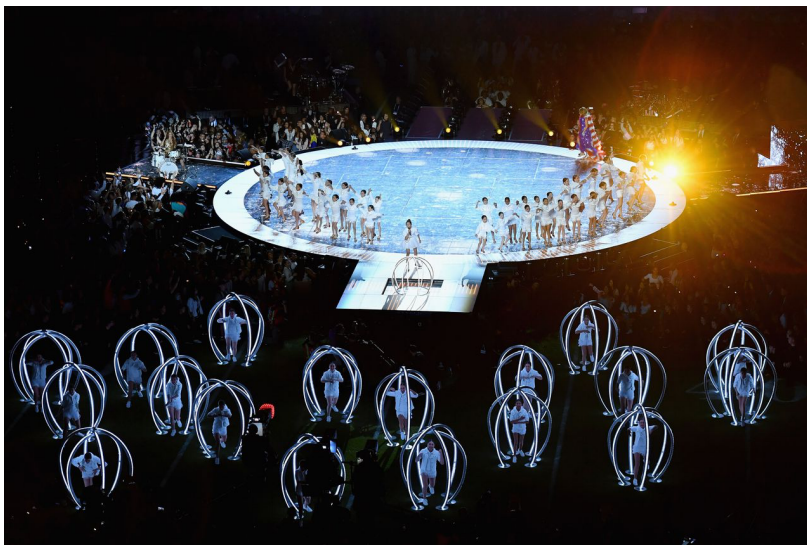
Taking inspiration from her recent movie, *Hustlers*, J. Lo first arrived on the stage rising from a "skyscraper-turned-stripper pole," performing her hits "[Jenny from the Block](#)," and "[Ain't It Funny](#)." Later she underwent a costume change and sang "[Waiting for Tonight](#)"

while pole dancing.

3.) It sheds light on the current state of affairs in America

J. Lo then performed "[On the Floor](#)" before her daughter, Emme, appeared on stage to sing "[Let's Get Loud](#)" (and a snippet of "[Born in the U.S.A.](#)") with Lopez in front of an all-girl choir.

During this section of her set, J. Lo was wrapped in a feather cape that featured both the Puerto Rican and American flags, while children on the field appeared in "cage like structures," which many viewed as a statement on the crisis at the southern border.



Children appear in cage-like structures as J. Lo's "Let's Get Loud" is performed. Many have viewed this as a political statement about the crisis at the US-Mexico border. Courtesy: Getty Images

It's no secret that the United States under the administration of President Donald Trump has become a political climate where immigrants and American Hispanics have been widely demonized. Despite drawing negative criticism for including the political inuendo, the halftime show overall received plenty of praise for what it was: a no-nonsense affirmation of Latin pride and cultural diversity.



Remezcla

November 2 at 4:45 PM • 🌐

Did you know: the Super Bowl LIV halftime show is only the third show to have been headlined by Latinx artists? Nine months later, here's why you should still be talking about it: bit.ly/sbliv



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REMEZCLA 

@REMEZCLA

Should people **STILL** be talking about the Super Bowl LIV halftime show? Yes! Here's why: bit.ly/sbliv



5:30 PM · Nov 4, 2020 [Buffer](#)

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remezcla Let's get loud! 🇲🇽 Yes, it's been nine months since the Super Bowl LIV halftime show. What was your favorite part about the show? Click to see ours ➡ bit.ly/sbliv

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November 2