



Harvey Guillén models his virtual red carpet look at the 2021 GLAAD awards on April 8. photos courtesy of Harvey Guillén



ROUND, BROWN, PROUD

**Harvey Guillén
breaks barriers
as the first queer
Latinx actor
nominated for
a Critic's Choice
Award**

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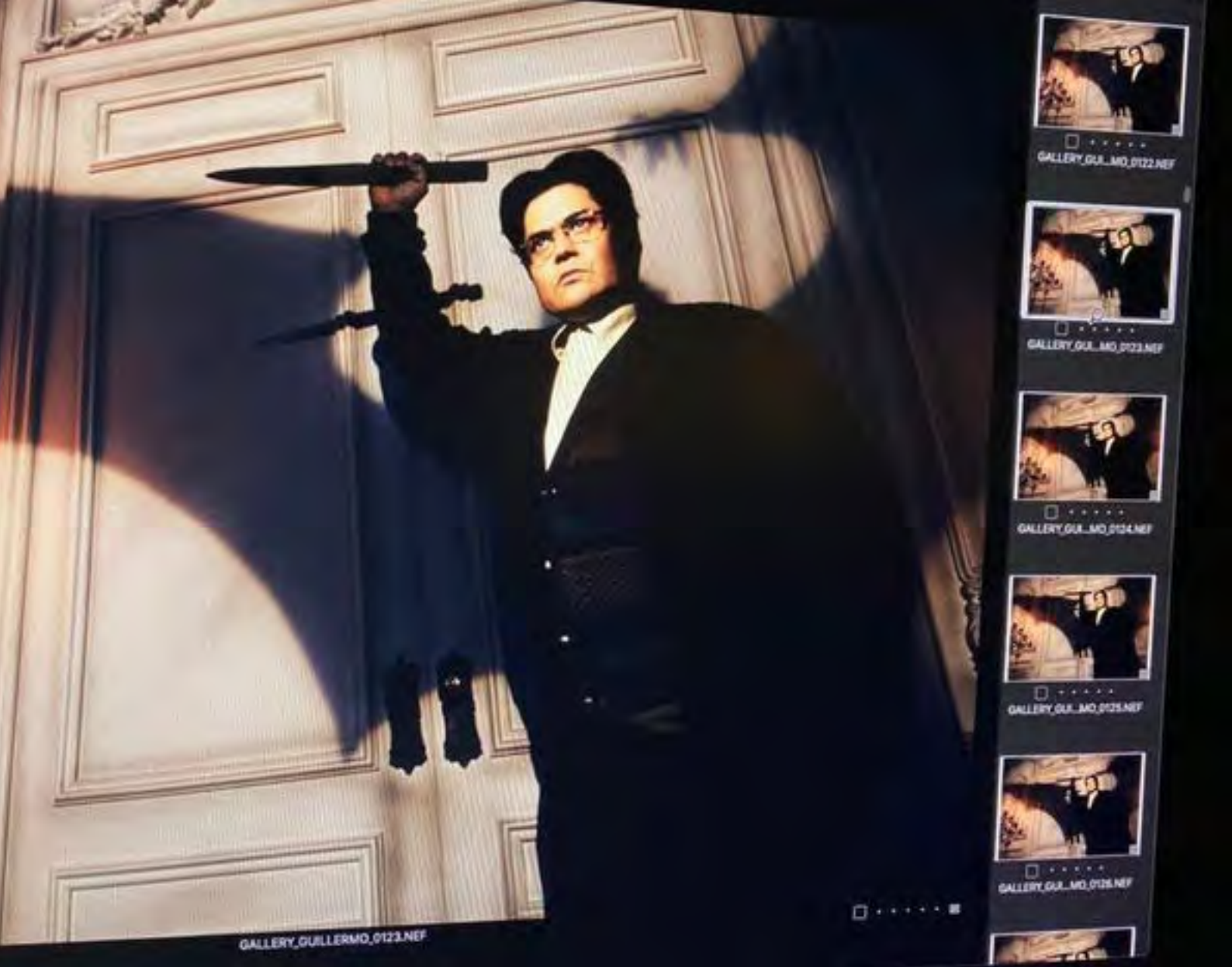
Guillén's Latinx background inspired him to pursue a career as an actor. His hard work as a Citrus Singer and theater major assisted him in achieving his dream.



Citrus College alumnus Harvey Guillén worked hard to move past his time on the Spanish MetroPCS commercials.

"Mom, I won a GLAAD award!"
 "Oh, que bueno," his mother replied calmly. She paused. "Y los de MetroPCS?"
 "No, mom; I'm not doing that anymore," he said. "That was for, like, three years and I'm done with that."
 "OK," she sighed, resigned.

In the past year, Guillén has earned a Critic's Choice Award nomination and a GLAAD Award for his work as Guillermo de la Cruz on the Emmy nominated FX series "What We Do in the Shadows." His career took off after studying and performing as a Citrus Singer from 2003 to 2005.



"Anything he does, he is so memorable in," Citrus Singers director Douglas Austin said. "So whether it's a lead or a medium sized role, he makes it a starring role, he makes it a memorable role. He doesn't pull focus, he doesn't do anything to take the spotlight from someone else, but he knows how to make it his when the opportunity comes."

Guillén knew he wanted to be an actor when he was 6 years old. He grew up mostly in Rosemead and San Gabriel, but his family moved around a lot for his father's construction job. As the oldest son of Mexican immigrants, he was responsible for taking care of his younger siblings while his parents worked long hours to make ends meet.

"What was considered a chore in another household in America is considered your

culture in Latinx because it is expected of you," he said.

Guillén developed a positive attitude to distract his siblings from their family's struggles. As adults, he asked his sister how aware she was of their family's difficulties. She said she knew he was trying his best because he would always have a smile, he was always optimistic and he never let it show that they might be in trouble.

"That was me acting," Guillén said.

He also learned the value of hard work from his parents, who had to work hard because they weren't products of nepotism.

"Latinx people have to start from scratch," he said. "What that entails is that a lot of

top right: Harvey takes a shot of the monitor showing season two promotional images for "What We Do in the Shadows."

top left: Childhood photos.
bottom left: While at Citrus College, Harvey, center, performs as the lead in the musical "How to Succeed In Business Without Really Trying" at the Haugh Performing Arts Center in Glendora.

photos courtesy of Harvey Guillén



CASTING CALLS
Please see
Audrey when
you arrive at
the office of the
Director

NO TRUCKS
ALL TRUCKS
MUST BE
OUT OF THE AREA
BY 6:00 AM



You're Latinx and you're queer, and you're round.

It's all these elements that you traditionally don't see in a place that you see my character. So I find pride in that, that in some small way I've begun changing the narrative of what Hollywood sees (in) people of color, people of size, people who are queer.



Harvey points at a billboard for his hit show "What We Do in the Shadows" in Los Angeles.
photo courtesy of Harvey Guillén



above: Kayvan Novak (Nandor) holds Harvey (Guillermo) above his head on a flying rig in two behind the scenes shots from "What We Do in the Shadows." left: Harvey takes a selfie with Haley Joel Osment (Topher) on the set of season two of "What We Do in the Shadows." photos courtesy of Harvey Guillén

parents have to be out of the household and work long hours just to keep a roof over their kids' head."

Guillén's mother had a steadfast rule in the house.

"Once you (walked) through that threshold, you spoke Spanish," he said. "You ate Mexican food. You watched Spanish TV, Spanish news. So there were two worlds that I lived in."

Guillén remembers being inspired while watching old Mexican films in black and white and telenovelas with his father. Together they watched comedian and singer "Catinflas" Mario Fortino Alfonso Moreno Reyes, "Chespirito" Roberto Gómez Bolaños and María Félix in Mexican Hollywood classics of the '40s and '50s.

"I feel like watching 'El Chavo del Ocho' ... his comic timing, the setup with jokes was so fun," Guillén said. "And I always knew that it made my dad laugh, so if you set up a joke with those beats in comedy, it's like a rhythm — a ballet; so I feel like I did get trained watching those."

While watching the diverse cast of characters in the children's telenovela "Carrusel," Guillén said he saw opportunities and a future for himself. That sort of representation was not reflected in American media at the time.

He began to recognize the importance of seeing himself on the screen after saving up for another TV so he could watch the trending American shows that his friends discussed in school.

"I guess I always looked for myself in the screen, but I never found myself because as a Latinx kid ... Brown, round, and proud: that's what I was, and those were not displayed in my television," Guillén said.

Despite this disheartening prospect, Guillén was determined to pursue acting after high school. When he left Southern Utah Universi-



ty's Shakespearean theater program, one of the friends he made in Rosemead introduced Guillén to Citrus College in 2003.

After proving his talent by singing on-the-spot to multiple people in the theater department, his voice earned him an exemption to join Citrus Singers after they had already filled all the spots for men. He joined the program because he was intent on taking an acting class that was already full.

"I jumped into this world without even knowing what it consisted of, and I'm glad I did because it taught me discipline and to — you know — be on time, know your stuff," he said. "And I got to join (Cherie Brown's) acting class!"

John Vaughan, dean of visual and performing arts, worked with Guillén as a choreographer during his time at Citrus. He said Guillén's charisma, energy and positivity was on full display as a student. Vaughan and Austin ran the musical theater department and worked extensively with Guillén.

Austin also described Guillén as charismatic, noting that he is not surprised at his success because he was practical and dedicated to every aspect of the Citrus Singers program. Whether he is singing in "Zoey's Extraordinary Playlist" or in a fight scene staking vampires on "What We Do in the Shadows," Guillén practiced the skills he learned at Citrus throughout his career.

"He's creative, he takes direction well. ... he was a joy to work with because not only does he bring a lot to the table, but he wants to

embrace everything that you envision (as the director)," Austin said. During Guillén's time at Citrus, Austin said he was not the norm; visually, energy-wise, personality-wise and comedically, Guillén stood out from the beginning. Although Guillén received negative feedback along his journey, he never let anyone discourage him from his hopes and dreams.

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He compared the first year at AMDA to his first year at Citrus, and after his three years of training at Citrus he felt ready for auditions. He said that since that was "frowned upon" at AMDA, he secretly went to auditions he found in Backstage West Magazine.

Two days before Christmas, he was offered a 13-month contract to perform in musicals at Universal Studios Japan in Osaka. Despite being told he wasn't ready, Guillén followed his gut in accepting the offer and left AMDA early.

"It was such a life-changing experience — I had to learn Japanese; the

One of his first commercial jobs was as José Alfredo, the comedic Metro PCS spokesperson that interrupted telenovelas at the most inopportune moments. His character would dress up as a viking, football player or wear full battle armor alongside Ricardo Mamood-Vega.

"He is super funny, super talented and super driven," Vaughan said. "There was no stopping him; he was going places."

Guillén briefly studied at The American Musical and Dramatic Academy after graduating.

show was in Japanese, which I didn't know when I got the part," he said.

Attacking challenges head-on like this was not a new experience for Guillén. He was often told that he had many factors that would limit his success.

"Oh, you're short and stout, that's a strike," he said, quoting the hurdles he faced on his journey. "Oh, you're queer? Don't tell anyone, that's going to affect you. Oh, you're Mexican? Well, you're only going to play gangbangers and you're gonna clean toilets (on TV)."

Undeterred, he persisted and defied industry expectations. From 2017 to 2020, his subversive humor made him stand out as the Fillorian cartographer Benedict in "The Magicians." He appreciated this role in particular because of the creators' effort to have a diverse cast that avoided stereotypes.

"They built a world where people looked different and it was OK and it was never the topic of 'They're the villain' or 'They're the mean ones,' because it was across the board; everyone looked different," he said.

Today, he is most recognized for his leading role as Guillermo in the Emmy-nominated vampire mockumentary "What We Do in the Shadows." Guillén said he relates to this role the most, though initially he had a problem with being the familiar to Nandor the Relentless and needed to speak with the show's directors.

"Because for so long, you've been told to hide in the dark, to take what you can, to not be overambitious, and those days are gone," he said. "They end today, because we're living in a new world. The screen that you see in front of you, whether it's a movie or in television, should reflect the world you live in."

Guillén was told his character is the smartest, he just doesn't know how powerful he is yet because he allowed someone else to tell him who he is. By season two, he said his character "is coming into his own as a badass." He has a devoted fanbase, and people tell him how thankful they are to see him representing those that don't fit the cookie-cutter ideal.

"You're Latinx and you're queer, and you're round," he said. "It's all these elements that you traditionally don't see in a place that you see my character. So I find pride in that, that in some small way I've begun changing the narrative of what Hollywood sees (in) people of color, people of size, people who are queer."

Guillén said he walks a tightrope when acting because of all the interest and speculation about Guillermo's sexuality. Since his character has been a devoted familiar for 10 years, he hasn't had the opportunity to date, though Guillén admitted he's hinted at the subject.

"I can tell you ... I am really excited and honored to be part of a cast where the characters — all the characters — are queer, in some sense of the word, you know?" he said. "Whether it be pansexual or bisexual, every one of the characters in this household are in some way queer."

Through all the nominations and praise from Guillén's family and friends, his mother keeps him humble. To her, the pinnacle of his success was as a spokesperson for MetroPCS.

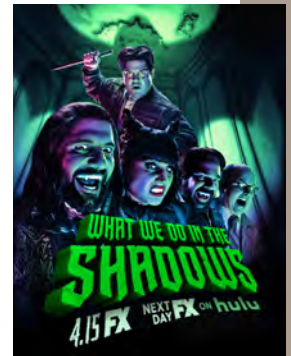
"You would have thought I won an Academy Award," he said. "Whenever I'd see her on the weekends, she'd be having tea with her neighbor and she'd (introduce me): 'Es mi hijo, de MetroPCS.'" **L**



STARRING HARVEY GUILLÉN

'WHAT WE DO IN THE SHADOWS' 2019 - 2020

Harvey Guillén plays Guillermo de la Cruz, the familiar to vampire Nandor, in the Emmy nominated FX mockumentary show following four vampires living together in Staten Island. Created by New Zealander Jemaine Clement, the show is based on the successful 2014 Taika Waititi movie of the same name.



'WEREWOLVES WITHIN' 2021

This horror comedy is an IFC Films adaptation of the video game by Ubisoft. Directed by Josh Ruben, this whodunit follows Sam Richardson as a park ranger investigating murders in his eerie small town. Premieres June 25 in theaters and July 2 on demand.



'ZOEY'S EXTRAORDINARY PLAYLIST' 2021

Harvey Guillén plays George alongside leading actors Jane Levy and Skylar Astin in the NBC hit musical dramedy. Levy plays Zoey, a young woman who can hear people's thoughts as songs with musical numbers. This 2020 Emmy winner for outstanding choreography features versatile actors displaying their talents as dancers and singers.



'THE MAGICIANS' 2017 - 2020

Harvey Guillén plays a Fillorian map maker in the SyFy adaptation of the book series by Lev Grossman. Created and written for TV by Sera Gamble and John McNamara, the series follows the lives of six graduate students attending a magic school called Brakebills. The group travels to the Narnia-like world of Fillory to defeat a powerful six-fingered adversary terrorizing the school.



Harvey is ready with a stake in a promotional image for season two of "What We Do in the Shadows." photos courtesy of Harvey Guillén