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Pasadena Playhouse
Betsy Brandt in
Good Boys
by *Riverdale* creator Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa
Directed by Carolyn Cantor
Now through July 21, 2019
with Ben Ahlers, James Carpinello,
Toks Olagundoye, Dylan Arnold and Brett Cooper

PASADENA, CA (June 30, 2019) - Pasadena Playhouse, the State Theater of California, presents the Los Angeles premiere of Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa's ***Good Boys*** starring Betsy Brandt (CBS' *Life in Pieces*, and AMC's *Breaking Bad*) as Elizabeth Hardy, and directed by Carolyn Cantor on the mainstage of Pasadena Playhouse.

Good Boys also includes Ben Ahlers (NBC's *The Village*, CBS' *Instinct*) as Brandon Hardy, James Carpinello (Broadway's *Rock of Ages* and *Saturday Night Fever*) as Russell Shea, Toks Olagundoye (ABC's *The Neighbors* and *Castle*, HBO's *Veep*) as Tamilla, Dylan Arnold (*Halloween*, *Fat Kid Rules The World*) as Justin Simmons, and Brett Cooper¹ (Paramount Network's *Heathers*) as Cheryl Moody. The cast is rounded out by Tristan Boesch, Bradley Cloversettle, Danny Cron, Will White and Zack Gearing as Prep School Boys.

The design team features scenic design by Dane Laffrey; costume design by Sara Ryung Clement; lighting design by Elizabeth Harper; and sound design by Dan Gower.

Tickets for ***Good Boys*** can be purchased online at PasadenaPlayhouse.org, by phone at 626-356-7529, and in person at the Pasadena Playhouse Box Office, 39 South El Molino Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91101.

The production is Aguirre-Sacasa's fresh and revisited look at his previous work, ***Good Boys and True*** (world premiere, Steppenwolf Theatre Company).

Good Boys is a riveting drama set in 1988 at a private prep school - involving a model student in the mold of his father, a disturbing video tape, and the privileged family that is faced with difficult choices. In the play Aguirre-Sacasa writes the story of a

¹ Editors please note that Brett Cooper replaced the previously announced Annamarie Kasper

boy from the *right side of the tracks* getting caught up in a media explosion of his own making -- as a pornographic video tape makes the rounds.

GLAAD Media Award nominee Aguirre-Sacasa has unusual pedigree for this play: he is a Marvel Comics author including *Spider-Man Turn off the Dark* and *The Stand*; wrote episodes of *Glee* and *Big Love* and developed *Riverdale* and *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*; is an established playwright, (Manhattan Theatre Club, 2econd Stage, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, South Coast Rep); and Chief Creative Officer of Archie Comics.

When the play made its debut in 2008, *The New York Sun* said, "Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa has proven to be a natural ... actors like to sink their teeth into his dialogue, and his hard-charging stories proceed with the speed and verve of television. But he takes a leap forward with his latest drama, *Good Boys and True* [the play's original title], displaying a new deftness in layering troubling moral questions under a smooth, entertaining surface. The play goes down easy, but its aftertaste is sharp. *Bloomberg.com* called *Good Boys and True*, "a craftily constructed, psychologically astute, absorbing play that harbors claws the fiercest feline could envy."

Aguirre-Sacasa is now revisiting his play - which understands the satisfying *well-made American play in which family secrets are revealed and reveal all*. Here characters grapple with privilege vs. the truth: when the play was first written gay identity was a strong theme. Now *Good Boys* has a crystal ball on today: college admission, what of your past is relevant to your credentials (i.e. Supreme Court justice), and family system theories are all part of the material. In *Dear Evan Hansen*, the characters are offered redemption; in *Good Boys* that path is more difficult - because they have a lot farther to fall.

While the actions of Brandon, and his gay friend Justin drive the plot, the person who finds herself most caught up in his scandal is his mother Elizabeth, who at the start of the play has spent a life time doing the right thing, being a good doctor, thinking she is a good mother, and questioning how to be a good wife.

In this new Pasadena Playhouse production staged by off-Broadway and regional director Carolyn Cantor, she is played by Betsy Brandt - one of America's most popular television actresses --currently starring in the CBS family comedy *Life in Pieces*, alongside Colin Hanks, Dianne Wiest and James Brolin. The series is currently in its fourth season. Betsy will also have a recurring role later this year in the highly anticipated Suits spinoff, *Pearson*. She is also filming the Blumhouse horror-thriller, *Run Sweetheart Run*.

Last Fall, Betsy was seen in Lifetime's original movie, *Flint*, alongside Queen Latifah, Jill Scott and Marin Ireland. The film follows the true story of three of the real-life women turned activists from Flint, Michigan who brought the water crisis to a national level. It was nominated for a Critics Choice Award for Best Movie Made for TV.

Among her many television credits, Betsy is well-known to television audiences for her portrayal of Marie, the sister-in-law of meth-making mastermind Walter White in the Emmy, SAG and Golden Globe award-winning series *Breaking Bad*. She also starred as

Michael J. Fox's wife in the comedy *The Michael J. Fox Show*. Her recurring television appearances include *Masters of Sex* and *Parenthood*.

Brandt received rave reviews for her starring role in the indie dream *Claire in Motion*, which had its World Premiere in the narrative feature competition line-up at the 2016 South by Southwest Film Festival. Her other film credits include: *Landline*, Steven Soderbergh's *Magic Mike* and the independent feature *Quest*.

On stage, she portrayed 'Holly' in the West Coast premiere of Geoffrey Nauffts' Tony-nominated *Next Fall* at the Geffen Playhouse in Los Angeles. She originated roles in award-winner Julia Cho's World Premiere of *The Language Archive* at South Coast Repertory and Beth Henley's *Ridiculous Fraud* at San Jose Rep.

Brandt studied theatre with the Moscow Art School and the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. She earned her BFA in Acting at Illinois Urbana-Champaign. A native of Bay City, Michigan, she currently lives in Los Angeles with her husband and two children. In her spare time, she works with Feeding America as a member of their Entertainment Council.

Aguirre-Sacasa says, "The dramatic situations in this play are uncannily similar to incidents and issues that we're *still* grappling with in this country—viscerally—even more so than when I first wrote *Good Boys*. In revisiting the play, I further explored themes like privilege, masculinity, and personal responsibility, as Brandon and Elizabeth find themselves on trial by their community and each other. *Good Boys* is a sort of 'moral thriller,' a game of cat and mouse between a mother and her son, with twists and turns that will keep you guessing about the truth right up to the end."

Calendar Listing for *Good Boys*

by Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa

Venue: The Pasadena Playhouse, 39 South El Molino Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91101

Dates: Now through Sunday, July 21

Performance Schedule:

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday evenings at 8:00 p.m.

Saturday at 2:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.; Sunday at 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.*

*(There is no performance on Sunday, July 7 at 7pm)

Tickets

Prices start at \$25

Online -- PasadenaPlayhouse.org

By phone at 626-356-7529

In person -- Pasadena Playhouse Box Office, located at 39 South El Molino Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91101

Information: For more information on all productions at Pasadena Playhouse visit PasadenaPlayhouse.org.

Description: As a senior at St. Joseph's Prep, Brandon Hardy has the world at his feet. He is handsome, athletic, smart, and a shining example of the perfect private school student, just like his father was. But when a sex tape becomes the talk of the locker room, the comfortable lives of the Hardy family threaten to shatter. Featuring Betsy Brandt (*Breaking Bad*) as Brandon's mother, *Good Boys* is a suspenseful drama that explores what happens when a family must separate fact from fiction—and, ultimately, choose to either preserve a legacy or risk losing everything in pursuit of the truth.

ROBERTO AGUIRRE-SACASA (playwright) is an award-winning playwright, comic book writer, and screenwriter. Broadway credits include the musical version of *American Psycho* based on the classic novel by Bret Easton Ellis and the upcoming Broadway musical *Magic Mike*. Mr. Aguirre-Sacasa was also part of the team brought in to overhaul *Spider-man: Turn Off the Dark*. His many plays include *Abigail/1702* (NYS&F), *Good Boys and True* (Second Stage Theatre and Steppenwolf Theatre), *Based on a Totally True Story* (MTC), *King of Shadows*, *The Mystery Plays*, *Dark Matters*, and many others published by DPS. Roberto is the Creator and Executive Producer of the television series *Riverdale* on the CW network and *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* on Netflix. Additional television credits include *Big Love*, *Looking*, *Glee*, and *Supergirl*. For MGM Films, he wrote new versions of both *Carrie* and *The Town that Dreaded Sundown*. He is Chief Creative Officer of Archie Comics.

CAROLYN CANTOR (director) is a New York based director of primarily new work. Off-Broadway credits include *Sell/Buy/Date*, *Regrets* and *Pumpgirl* (Manhattan Theatre Club); *Indian Summer*, *Fly By Night*, *Great God Pan*, *After the Revolution* (Callaway Award), *Stone Cold Dead Serious* (Playwrights Horizons); *Arlington* (Vineyard Theatre); *In a Dark Dark House* (MCC Theater); *Something You Did* (Primary Stages); *The Talls* (Second Stage); *Core Values* (Ars Nova); *Orange Flower Water*, *Living Room in Africa*, *Now That's What I Call A Storm* and *Life is a Dream* (Edge Theater), and *EVE-olution* (Cherry Lane). Regionally her work has been seen in *THEO* (Two River), *Sell/Buy/Date* and *Rabbit Hole* (Geffen, Garland Award), *The Violet Hour* (Old Globe), *After the Revolution*, *Not Waving and King Stag* (Williamstown Theatre Festival), *Vera Laughed* and *Get What You Need* (NYS&F), *Diary of Anne Frank* (Papermill) and many others. She has developed work at the O'Neill Playwrights Conference, the Ojai Playwrights Conference, the Sundance Theater Lab, Steppenwolf, the Goodman Theater, OSF and NYS&F. Carolyn has received the Seldes/Kanin Award from the Theatre Hall of Fame, the Boris Sagal and Bill Foeller Fellowships from WTF and a Drama League Directing Fellowship. She is a graduate of Dartmouth College, a member of SDC and the mother of two daughters

ABOUT THE PASADENA PLAYHOUSE -- The Pasadena Playhouse is a place where people have gathered for 100 years to experience bold and important theater. It is one of the most prolific theaters in American history with a legacy of profound theatrical impact and courageous new work. In 1937, the Playhouse was officially recognized as the State Theater of California for its contribution and commitment to the dramatic arts. Today it continues that tradition of excellence under the helm of producing artistic director Danny Feldman. Dedicated to enriching lives through theater, community programs and learning initiatives, Pasadena Playhouse is a living force in the community.