

AARON JAFFERIS, 2020 AWARDEE

Theatrical Project: “Smooth Criminal”

Aaron, a poet and playwright, has been creating his hip-hop play, “Smooth Criminal”. This autobiographical work, focusing on the “white dude” who grew up embracing Black culture, examines if racism exists in him, his family and his community.

Last spring, with the Bitsie Fund's support, Aaron presented the first-ever reading of a full, two-act draft of “Smooth Criminal.” This workshop was presented to students and staff at Choate Rosemary Hall, in conjunction with workshops inviting attendees to delve into the relationship between social power and social change in their own lives. Aaron incorporated feedback from the readings into a new outline and the beginning of a second draft of the script.

Since then, the Bitsie Fund and a Connecticut Humanities Artists Respond Grant helped fund a series of interactive developmental readings of the first draft of the script throughout the state of Connecticut. These are barebones script-in-hand readings with actors only, no music. The focus has been and will be on fine-tuning the script and the interactive audience elements, especially the audience prompts within scenes and the participatory intermission. Upcoming venues include Quinnipiac University.

A New England Foundation for the Arts, New Work New England grant will support three next steps in 2023: the creation of the full beatbox/fiddle/sung/rapped score; rehearsals to create a script-in-hand workshop performance with full music; and a series of four interactive developmental showings at New England venues TBA.

Dec 2 · [Smooth Criminal reading](#) · [Quinnipiac University](#)
Jan 20-22 · [Stuck Elevator](#) · [Nashville Opera](#)
Mar 29-May 28 · [How to Break](#) · [Village Theatre](#)

Aaron Jafferis · [playwright & poet](#)
Artistic Director, [The Word](#)