



## **The latifundista-entrepreneurial femicide of Baucis**

**DENISE OBRECHT SAMSON, BAU'S MOTHER: "HIS CHOICE WAS BEAUTIFUL"[1].**

***X victoria aldunate morales, lesbian anti-racist feminist.***

"She was a girl who was just beginning to know herself in those respects. She wore her skirt, went to feminist marches. I feel like she was like a light that helped unite a lot of causes."

Baucis can be translated as feminine shoe or as someone who will transcend into plants. She was a defender of land, territory, "animals and bodies."

She was killed at the age of 25, shot in the hundred, after midnight on Tuesday, February 16 (2021), by "hired assassins hired by the owners and administrators of the Riñimapu luxury condominium", in Desagüe, 21 kilometers from Panguipulli, Region of Los Ríos (Gulu Mapu).

Denise Obrecht Samson, mother of Baucis denounces: "Fernando Puga Matte and Manuel García, who present themselves as administrators of that condominium, hired Bau's murderer, Francisco Javier Jara Jarpa. And Peter Hill Planella, owner of a house in the condominium, allegedly lent him his shotgun. They were presented as supposed 'gardeners', but in reality they have criminal records and were there to prevent free access to the beach to people who were not from the condominium. They made a perimeter fence with barbed wire, and the neighbor at the other end, Gerardo Martí, maintained electrified fences that went into the lake. They didn't care that people and animals could get hurt or electrocuted. I personally heard Martí say that he would kill ten Mapuche if they removed the fences from the shore.

Emilia Milen Herrera Obrecht, or Baucis as Denise's daughter called herself, was born on July 15 at the San Pancrazio Clinic in downtown Santiago, and died of brain death early Wednesday morning, February 17 of this year, in the Valdivia emergency room.

His death was the result of gunshots fired by alleged "gardeners" of the "Riñimapu" condominium. This is a homicide with illegal possession of weapons in which there are currently two detainees.

On the night of Tuesday, February 16, while several Mapuche lamngen took Bau to the emergency room to try to save his life, seven men escaped in a vehicle with at least one shotgun, who were detained by carabineros [2].



### **Who was Bau?**

When Bau was born, Denise "lived around the 27 and a half stop of Vicuña Mackenna" in Puente Alto, Metropolitan Region. She was a baby girl with a Cancer sign (of the zodiac), "very sensitive, an artist, with many changes", and her mother, a 36-year-old woman who wanted to have a child before she was 40.

There was a man I had liked for 20 years and when we started a relationship I proposed to him that we had a child. It was a spectacular pregnancy, I was very happy. Do you think your daughter became this sensitive, rebellious and rebellious because of your influence?

Maybe, although I feel that we are also learning a lot from these young people. I think Emilia's choice was wonderful because it was not only an individual choice, but a collective one.

Denise is an art teacher and worked all her life, Baucis' whole life, at the Victor Jara school in the commune of La Pintana: "There you get to know so many children's life stories, personal things that are not divulged, but you feel them, they hurt. My daughter had a story too... I became sensitive like that and maybe she, in the same way, growing up with those lives so close through me".

In 2020 Bau and his dissident community were in defense of the alerce trees that will be felled for section 2 of the Corral-La Unión road, which crosses the Coastal Alerce Park. It is a highway framed in the IIRSA plan, South American Regional Infrastructure that favors private interests throughout the southern cone, and in the case of section 2 Corral-La Union, will kill 200 larch trees that are protected as world heritage and should never be cut down or moved [3].

Along with the defense of the alerce trees, the dissident community of Baucis joined the Lof Llazkahue, a Mapuche community in recovery of the lake and river border, which the "Riñimapu" condominium has privatized.



## **WHO WOULD BE BEHIND BAU'S FEMICIDE?**

For Denise there are direct perpetrators, but "the intellectual authors are on the loose, people with big surnames who are not interested in life, least of all the life of a person like my daughter".

In fact, surnames associated with extended endogamous-business networks, coming from Creole oligarchies and the bourgeoisie of the holding companies, appear insistently in cases of assassinations of Mapuche and other people who resist extractivism.

Only twelve days before the murder of Bau, there was the murder of Francisco Martínez Romero, the juggler and demonstrator, who was killed by a policeman in the city of Panguipulli. In 2016, in Tranguil, 800 kilometers from Panguipulli, Macarena Valdés Muñoz was murdered, allegedly by hired killers of a hydroelectric company. And if the young Mapuche Alex Lemún Saavedra was killed by carabineros in 2002 in Temuco, on land privatized by Forestal Mininco, owned by the Matte family, Bau's femicide is related to hitmen hired by the Puga Matte family.

Fernando Puga Matte's curriculum reveals him to be close to the Chadwick group, linked to agribusiness, port construction, real estate, mining, electricity and what is relevant in the depredation of marine fauna, partner and founder of the first salmon companies (Puga Mujica S.A. and Hatfield International Canada).

He is the "general manager, partner and director of Loteo Riñimapu on the edge of Lake Riñihue and the San Pedro River[4], and his web page reports that this luxury condominium originated in the "traditional and familiar" Riñimapu Hotel in the Desagüe Riñihue sector, where "always" they would have "shared between Chileans and

foreigners". Nothing is mentioned about the Mapuche people who have inhabited the area for centuries before the large landowners and settlers.

They also advertise that they "reserved" this lot "to share it with a select group of new owners". And, yes, it must be very selective because these are homes where the land alone costs between 175 and 380 million pesos (about half a million dollars).

To sell they promise 21 sites that would come "with lake and river shore", another 12 sites close to the lake and river, and "permanent caretaker". There are 33 sites in total.



## **LUXURY CONDO, HYDROELECTRIC AND FEMICIDE**

There appears to be more than a luxury condominium at stake. A project of the Matte Larraín and Larraín Matte family is advancing through their company Colbún S.A., which also has numerous shares in Pension Fund Agencies (AFP), to install a hydroelectric plant downstream of the drainage, which would be described and in the process of qualification by the Environmental Evaluation Service (SEA)[5].

It should be noted that the regional director of the SEA of Los Ríos, Karina Bastidas, has been denounced by Yagán and Kawesqar communities for conflict of interest, in relation to her business ties with the salmon industry in Magallanes (2010 to 2018), and that upon being transferred to Los Ríos, Sergio Quinan, leader and representative of Mapuche communities of the Valdivian coast and member of the Red de Defensa de Los Territorios (RDT) of the Los Ríos region, has had the same apprehensions[6].

In this context, at the end of November 2020, the Lof Llaskawe initiated the territorial recovery of their territory. In December they informed the administrator Manuel Garcia that they would wait until the 21st to proceed with the opening of fences that prevent free access to the beach. In January 2021, mails arrived at the Los Ríos Intendancy, presumably from neighbors of the sector, alerting of the dispute between Lof Llaskawe and the condominium. Some of these mails stated that the Mapuche people were willing to dialogue. The response of the authorities to this alert was "security" (drone flights and monitoring), and on the part of the Riñimapu condominium, new guards, in addition

to those already in place. According to the spokesperson of Lof Llazkahue, Andrés Roldan Mankel, these supposed "gardeners" came "to intimidate and show guns".

In February a family of tourists arrived to camp, "parents, grandparents and children", and it was agreed with the official guards of the condominium and with the carabineros that the campers would spend the night on the shores of the lake, but on February 16, the supposed "gardeners" tried to expel the family from the beach in a very violent manner.

The campers shouted for help from the Mapuche community, a few people came to support them. As they walked towards one of the gardeners, asking for a conversation, the "gardeners" shot at the group. Bau was in that group. "She was dressed in kupän, the only one in full Mapuche dress." One of the bullets hit her head. Did they see her, did they recognize her... The Mapuche people saw her fall and took her in a vehicle to the emergency room, they knew no more about what happened there.

The version of the Riñimapu company and a Twitter account from the APRA Foundation, Association for Peace and Reconciliation in Araucania, was that a mob of people who had taken over the territory had attacked the guard house and the barbecue area, setting fire to them. This version was supported in the first instance by the media such as Radio Biobío, the Libero, and also by the intendant of the Los Ríos Region, presidential delegate, César Asenjo Jeréz.

It is not superfluous to say that APRA is a political association created in 2019 in the south of Chile, presumably to weaken the Mapuche territorial resistance, and that its founder is Francisco Alanís Porcella, father-in-law of Martín Pradenas, charged in the case of rape of Antonia Barra, a young woman who committed suicide after Pradenas' aggression. Alanis Porcella is indicated by the media as the one who placed an appeal for protection in favor of Pradenas, in order to force Antonia's family to "abstain from making publications" that would defame this sexual aggressor.



### **HIS MOTHER COULD ONLY SEE HER, DEAD**

On the day of her murder, Bau had just arrived from a trip in search of her roots in Vilcún. A month earlier, Bau and her mother had made a trip together. They left from Valdivia: "It was a beautiful trip, we went to Quepe and Lican Ray. We visited the Mankel family.

In the community I met a young man who had studied at my Victor Jara school when he was a child and we talked about 40 years ago, the things he had lived through, the

discrimination... In short, all that happens and it is so sad because no child should have to go through that. It was exciting to hug that little boy".

Was that time together good?

Very much so. I loved the community, everyone contributed what they could to share. When there was something important to talk about, they called trawun with the trutruca or the pifilka. They had accepted Bau as she was with so much love and respect... I appreciated it.

She, among other contributions to the mapu, taught other young people to speak Mapudungun, to recycle, and to build a dry toilet so as not to contaminate the lake waters. She had learned by herself, watching, listening.

We made sopaipillas together and talked. We took beautiful walks to the lake. On the shore there was clay and we collected a lot of it to take to the ruka, and then the children came and started making things out of clay. So naturally, it wasn't that I was teaching them, no, it was just fun to get their hands dirty and learn.



### **How was Bau at that time?**

Happy, fulfilled and curious to know about our roots, mine and his father's. Earlier he had called me in Santiago asking me those questions. In November 2020 he resumed contact with his biological father to ask those same questions and his father gave him the contact of his sister, Bau's aunt, to ask, figuring perhaps she remembered more about family milestones.

His aunt had received him very well, they were chatting and researching about grandmothers and grandfathers. Bau had also arranged meetings with a Machi who would help him unveil his roots.

### **And do you know how it went?**

Because she was murdered she didn't get to know everything she would have liked to know about herself and our families, but she did have that meeting with the machi in Vilcún and after that, on February 16 she was already returning to the community.

I was about to return to Santiago. Because of the pandemic there was no bus travel. In the afternoon we communicated and she told me "mommy don't worry, I already found someone to take me". Then I called her several times because I was nervous. At 10 o'clock at night, I even called her again and she did not answer.

Then one of her friends was told that something serious had happened in Panguipulli and that we had to go urgently to the hospital in Valdivia. Bau arrived at the hospital in an ambulance. The doctor told me she was brain dead. I asked to be allowed to see her, but they wouldn't let me. I could only enter when she was already dead.

I was with her for a long time and I told her many things, I kissed her, I was very fond of her....

Do you want to tell me about Bau's childhood, from the time she was a baby?

Yes, I took her from the age of three months to the Victor Jara nursery because of an agreement with the municipality to which I was entitled as a worker there, but Bau wanted to be with me all the time and she would leave the nursery. He would go to where I was. Then she went to differential, where she learned to read and write in record time, much earlier than other children. Then I sent her to "Raymapu" in La Florida because I knew it was a good school, there were people from the left and that made me think that the teaching would be more diverse, different.

### **And did it work out?**

Not so much (she laughs). She was very annoying because she was very advanced, she got bored. In sixth grade they didn't want to renew her enrollment because she was a troublemaker and restless. In seventh grade she went to a subsidized private school, which was nice, but the atmosphere was a bit dangerous. Bau, when he grew up, told me that he had used that school to learn to defend himself and that the "Raymapu" had been right to throw him out because he really "screwed up a lot".

### **And after elementary school?**

In High School he went to the Liceo Artístico Salvador because. He asked for it, and was intensely happy. He stayed up late doing artistic projects, he formed a very striking group. After graduating from high school he went to ARCIS. He was enthusiastic because he had friends who went there, and artists who had paid them visits and invited them.

At one point they took over the campus, and things happened that made him feel that the authorities had missed out on such a good project. Likewise Bau admired the professors, many ended up working for free.

That was in 2014. Bau had a girlfriend at the time and they went to Argentina together. In Chile he had already approached animalist causes that inspired him a lot in his artistic

expression and in Argentina he continued, he approached anti-patriarchal and feminist causes, and began his transition.

### **And his girlfriend?**

She took it well.

Now when we talked to her, we interpreted it as a transcendence of Bau, which has to do with the name she gave herself, someone who transcends in plants. She cared about trees, plants, she would take cuttings, put them in soil or water and they would all sprout. Her transition was another form of transcendence.

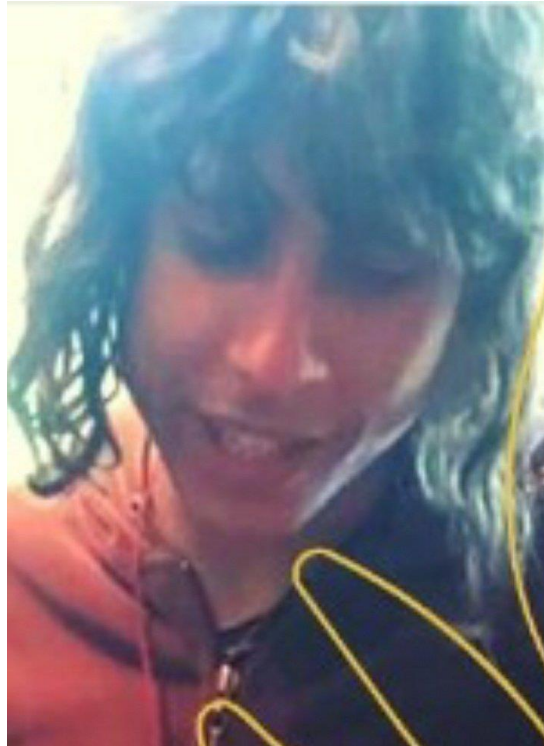
Bau always looked good with all his girlfriends. Once in Argentina she found some little cards in the street, which were for condolences, but she didn't know (I think), and she wrote a little card to each girlfriend she had been with and to several friends. She dedicated a few words and a drawing to each one. Then he sent them to me and asked me to distribute them. In a get-together that I organized with vegan food and a big canvas, many wrote and painted dedications to tell him that "they missed him, that they loved him very much, that he should come back now". It was a beautiful encounter...

I was surprised to see his relationship with all the girls who had been his girlfriends, and they had very nice friendships with each other too.

### **And how did you know about his transition?**

After two years in Argentina he came back and told me. I asked him why. He answered me: do you remember that once you came into your room and I was painting my lips with your rush... He said that I spoke to him as a typical mother, a typical phrase, that "rush was for women". She told me that this restriction had affected her, and I didn't even remember....





### **How did you take it?**

I was very afraid of the discrimination I knew I would experience. And yes, things happened to her, she was insulted in the street, she was made fun of... As a teacher you know about these things, children suffer a lot, they are hurt, they are mutilated, they are killed.

When she told me, I felt a bit shocked but finally I managed to tell her that I wanted her to be happy. It was hard for me to name her in the feminine and I apologized when I was wrong. The first name we gave her with her father was Boris, after an uncle who was a diver, but she was named Baucis.

### **What was Bau like?**

He changed as a teenager. As a kid he was annoying, at some point he even bullied others, then he understood. He became very sensitive and also very entertaining.

I was never bored with Bau! She was concerned about plants, about animals, about others. When she was a child she saved dogs, once she pulled one out from under a car. She brought another one and cured it because it was sick or run over, I don't remember exactly.

She cared about the animals' lives, their suffering. He wrote on the walls for the freedom of animals. He raised a little goose that died later in an accident, just when we were leaving on a trip to Lican Ray, and Bau cried a lot. He buried it in a big tree and filled it with flowers there. This was in January. The little goose had a sister who is now living in the animal shelter opened by Bau's dissident community.

She was also muscular and had strength. She was on a path of not accepting anything that was superficial. I didn't receive money, I lived a very austere life.

She visited a lot the Mapuche ñañitas, took them wool and talked with them for whole afternoons. She was very hardworking, loving, capable of walking for hours to go and talk to a person who had something to say. She started to go to Mapuche ceremonies, to walk barefoot because she wanted to feel the earth... She liked to cook vegan food, she exaggerated with veganism, sometimes... She hated machismo. She became very critical, she no longer wanted to be an accomplice of patriarchal attitudes. She had become separatist, her male friends did exactly what she detested the most: they abandoned their children, played soccer, barbecued, drank. She moved away from them to protect her environment, I think she expected personal growth from them... And she didn't shut up, she was direct, she didn't mince words, she told them what she thought.

### **What did Bau think of his birth?**

Bau was sorry that her father had moved away from her. I understand that he would have felt the same way if I had been the one to walk away, but it was him.

I had no fights with his father, he just walked away. And I never spoke badly about him. I tried to convey positive things to him. I tried to get them to meet but it didn't work.

She, already in kindergarten, was a frontal girl. One day her father came to see him and showed her some family photos, but Bau said something like, "I'm not interested in your photos."

Now the father is sorry... I hope the parents in this country will repent before it's too late.....

After the father moved away from Bau, Denise married, lived 20 years with a husband, until the murder of her daughter when she decided to separate. She explains: "With Bau's death I started to take into account things that I didn't see so clearly before: we were already estranged with my husband, I went to marches, he never did. We clashed a lot. All the time. Bau realized that, saw that I was unhappy and urged me to be free. Our plan was to live together. We were waiting for my retirement to go south to reforest the forest".

At the time of the Popular Revolt, Denise broke her foot and says that this triggered anger and sadness. It was "a mixture of her injury and the injustice; the repression and mistreatment that I saw the young people protesting. Also the indifference of many people. I feel that the whole country should have reacted and that one of the most painful things in this country is that the demonstrators were shot, leaving them with eye trauma and killing them".



## **Neither homeland nor husband**

The roots of the mother and daughter are in Chuquicamata. There Denise had three siblings "and five more on the outside". She was born in 1958 "in a right-wing family. When she was 4 years old my mother separated and my father forgot about us. My sister at 15 had to go out to work to support us.

When you have nothing to eat, you grow up fast. I left college to work too. My first job was at the Banco de Talca and I couldn't stand it. It was a horrible environment, pure people looking for less, and you had to sell credit cards to people, get them into debt. I preferred to be a teacher even though I earned little and I was happy working in the town.

We went to live in La Serena and then to Santiago. We lived in a nice house in Ñuñoa that was inherited from my maternal grandfather, but we were very poor, we only kept up appearances. The time of the coup d'état was a time that changed many things for us. You could hear the bullets, my sister saw the feet of dead children in trucks, my mother saw bodies tied with wire, people killed by the milicos... I think those memories triggered the Revolt in me, because those who want to be blind, deaf and dumb, let them be, but I can't... This is a country that does not take care of its children. La Pintana always reminded me of Calama, so many poor children, that one stops considering this country their homeland".

We talked with Denise for several hours... Neither husband nor homeland, I told her, "that's right", she answered.

She hopes to fulfill the dream of Baucis and herself. Although now without Bau: "To go to the south to live with the Bau community and support the shelter. I will take my dogs there and, later, when her children are older, my putative daughter, who is a former student of La Pintana, a daughter of love because we have supported and accompanied each other every time we have had to suffer".

This mother, woman, educator, demands justice and reveals that no matter how hard she has tried, the hegemonic media have not accepted to talk about the femicide against Bau, and she believes it is because of the "immense influence of the families involved".



[1] The interview took place on September 15 of this year and we have continued talking about its contents until today when we publish it with the intention and collective intention of denouncing and recording the femicide against Baucis.

[2] Seven arrested after proceedings for the death of a woman and fire in Desagüe Riñihue, Panguipulli Noticias, SERGIO PAREDES | 17/02/2021, <https://panguipullinoticias.cl/home/?p=5667>

[3] The "Mesa de Desarrollo Portuario" of Corral was activated in June 2015, second term of Michelle Bachelet. It is led by Public Works and Regional Government. Infrastructure project that corresponds to the IIRSA plan, Initiative for the Integration of South American Regional Infrastructure, whose main objective is to generate transnational corridors through industrial ports (in the case of Chile) to sell natural resources of the continent towards the Asian market. The "Mesa" was headed by the regional intendant Egon Montecinos, the senators, Alfonso De Urresti (P.S.) and Ena Von Baer (UDI), the deputy Bernardo Berger (RN), the mayor of Corral, Gastón Pérez and the seremi of Public Works of Los Ríos, Jorge Alvial. One of the highlights are the port "business opportunities" (<http://losrios.mop.cl/noticias/Paginas/DetalledeNoticias.aspx?item=534> ).

[4] This is Sociedad de Turismo Riñimapu Ltda., which documents available online reveal that it has a legal representative, Catalina Puga Valdés.

[5] NEIGHBORS INFORMED THE AUTHORITY THAT THE MAPUCHE COUNTERPART WAS WILLING TO DIALOGUE. Muerte de Emilia Herrera en Panguipulli: los correos desatendidos por el gobierno que buscaban evitar la escalación del conflicto, Ciper, Nicolás Massai D., 23.02.2021, <https://www.ciperchile.cl/2021/02/23/muerte-de-emilia->

[herrera-en-panguipulli-los-correos-desatendidos-por-el-gobierno-que-buscaban-evitar-la-escalada-del-conflicto/](#)

[6] Radio Lafken Mawida, January 4, 2020, <https://www.lafkenmawida.org/medio-ambiente/destruccion-de-alerces-milenarios-comunidades-mapuche-entregan-observaciones-contraproyecto-carretera-la-union-coral/>

