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**THEATRE AND THE OVERWHELMING QUESTION:
Why Make Theatre in These Times?**

by

Mónica Valeria Sánchez
B.U.S. University of New Mexico 1987

DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of

**Master of Fine Arts
Dramatic Writing**

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This is dedicated to Petra and to my beloved father Heráclio, for his love of language and his vision of a teatro de la raza cósmica.

**Theatre and the Overwhelming Question:
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By

Mónica Valeria Sánchez

B.U.S.

Master of Fine Arts in Dramatic Writing

ABSTRACT

The following essay communicates my journey as a longtime theatre artist as I have navigated my way through the discipline, and towards the craft of playwriting. My intention to study in the program was soon escalated by an existential turning point subsequent to the neoliberal agenda that gained momentum pre, post, and during the election of 2016. This thesis is in response to the question, "Why make theatre now?" I approach this query through the themes and the characters in my plays; through a socio-cultural-historic lens, and via an examination of the creative process as it relates to the metaphysics of dreaming and the science of quantum physics. This essay culminates with a description of my thesis play, *Los Dreamers* and the text of the play itself.

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INTRODUCTION

One of the most powerful actions you can do to intervene
in a stormy world is to stand up and show your soul.
~Clarissa Pinkola Estes

For while the tale of how we suffer, and how we are delighted
and how we may triumph, is never new, it must always be heard.
There isn't any other tale to tell. It's the only light we've got in all this darkness.
~James Baldwin

Since I began the MFA program in the fall of 2015, the world, the country, and myself, have undergone significant shifts in perspective and priority. There are moments that I can only perceive of as the demise of civilization--from the natural disasters taking their toll on the planet to the multitudes of populations being displaced to the near-daily mass shootings of civilians and the ever-more outrageous and audacious actions of our global leaders. As influential as my studies in the program have been to my writing (in method and content) so have been these times--this era dramatic as it is absurd has begotten unremitting doubt regarding why make theatre (not the ideal context in which to pursue a terminal degree in art!)

Why make theatre now, when there are so many other things to address, so many other ways to respond to the sound and fury of these times? And yet, alongside this doubt runs a compulsion to create, and between the two a dynamic tension emerges and makes it imperative for me to follow through. And so I have. And so I do.

The following pages map my personal, artistic, and academic odyssey soon to find completion with the receipt of my Master of Fine Arts degree. Like Joseph Campbell's hero, at the end of the journey, (2008) I offer my elixir to share: a body of dramatic writing and these reflections and revelations addressing the overwhelming question: "why make theatre in these times?"

THE THEATRE AND ME

In 1985 I met my destiny. When the theatre and I found each other, I recognized at once the complement to my proclivities and susceptibilities: the visual arts and design, the written and spoken word, music and song, movement, gesture, dance, and perhaps most importantly, collaboration. I discovered that not only was an interdisciplinary approach possible but rather, it was vital to making the kind of theatre that I'm drawn to.

For thirty-plus years I've followed my bliss towards a life in the theatre and the theatre of life. I've honed the craft of professional actor; written and devised work collaboratively and independently for the stage; directed a handful of productions small and large; and enjoyed a myriad of assignments as a teaching artist and community engagement facilitator.

Over the years my commitment to my craft has been colored by the theatre's potential for political expression and social change from my early collaborations with the likes of Luís Valdez' El Teatro Campesino and the San Francisco Mime Troupe. As my own self-taught methodology developed, I began to see acting as a spiritual act. The ability to focus, to cultivate presence onstage, became for me, the rehearsal for mindfulness offstage.

In 2013 I returned to my native New Mexico after twenty-plus years working as an actor in California. Once again I was surrounded by blood family and a handful of friends, but I did not have an artistic community or the consistent opportunities to grow and to work professionally as an artist. To create options in the theatre is often to create the work itself. I saw playwriting as a natural progression not only of my voice and presence in the theatre but also of my identity as a NEW Mexican. The complex and unique cultural and historical milieu in New Mexico is not only ripe for dramatic exploration but also sorely missing from the canon of the American theatre.

When I applied to graduate school, I recognized my need and desire for structure, the “encouragement” of deadlines and a community of artists at once critical and supportive. I did not identify as a playwright but rather as a theatre artist seeking to round out a neglected skills set and to engage in a community of others compelled to tell stories.

To make theatre is ultimately an act of resistance—resisting the status quo, challenging the imposition of a definitive social narrative or a conditioned methodology. And yet, resistance is not an end in and of itself. A review of the process and content of my work authored over the last three years reveals the deceptively flippant realization that one’s happiness is perhaps one’s most potent form of resistance. It is a realization fraught with the profound responsibility of scrutinizing the superficial in order to identify the essential. Happiness, at least in this cultural moment would seem synonymous with consumerism and materialism. This is not the happiness of my pursuit. These are in fact the conceits to be resisted and/or

refined in making way for a holistic and balanced state for the individual and the community. I believe our left-brain, technology-fed culture prevails to the detriment of our capacity for feeling and compassion--how can we translate the monolithic oppressions, struggles, issues, into stories, words, and images that we can digest and re-metabolize? How can the theatre in moments personal and public, arouse meaningful discourse? How can I as an artist, provoke our presumptions and assuage our sorrows?

Among the many contradictions evident in my experience as a mature Chicana artist is the inverse relationship between the quantity and the scope of roles available for older female actors and the depth of craft and life experience that she offers. That is one of the reasons I have chosen to focus my theatre-making skills on playwriting: to create material that addresses the underrepresented portrayals, as well as the creative potential of the Latino community. To that end, I have written a modest body of work presenting a vast spectrum of Latino characters and how they respond to a myriad of human conditions and social complexities. The deliberate cultural context that I am writing from and for is one resounding answer to the question, "why make theatre now?"

The agency to access and to share and one's truth; the opportunity for human connection, community, confession and compassion in real time, in a common physical space, are compelling reminders of and catalysts to our humanity. These are the emerging answers to my question regarding why make theatre now. The following will illuminate an analysis of

my progression, plays, and process as acts of resistance, an invitation to community and in pursuit of happiness, culminating with my thesis project, *Los Dreamers*.

PLAYWRIGHT'S JOURNEY PART I: BEFORE GRADUATE SCHOOL

As previously mentioned, I began my longtime allegiance to the theatre as an actor. My training was not formalized institutionally but rather experientially: on-the-job. Beyond the craft of acting, I took many opportunities to learn about theatre-making--running the sound and light boards, working in the costume shop, set construction, etc. I enjoyed whatever occasions arose to study with other theatre artists, usually as short-term workshops. Before graduate school only two of those were in playwriting, I had however written a handful of well-intentioned texts for the stage, all of them realized in production.

I based my first play on linguist/ethnographer Juan Rael's collection, *Folk Tales from Colorado and New Mexico* (1997). From these five hundred tales, Rael culled extensive research on the distinctive archaic Spanish of northern New Mexico and southern Colorado. Thematically these stories address poverty, infidelity, manners and a very Catholic cosmology through the lens of a folk, i.e., rural culture.

I co-adapted *You Say Chaquegüe and I Say Shaquegüe: Una Noche de Cuentos Nuevo Mexicanos* as series of bilingual vignettes with music. In retrospect, I see that this was an effective "baby-step" for a first-time playwright. Besides the inherent structure to the original material that I could emulate, the vignette was not as daunting a form to tackle as a full-length play, and I was writing for the members of the theatre company to which I belonged. I had also recently returned from three-years in a northern New Mexican village, and the

cultural context of the source material was ripe for me to begin exploring my own language-play, particularly in regards to code-switching and bilingual verse. This song for example:

Estos eran dos rancheros
Que vivían side by side
La mujer ya era viuda
Ni tenía el hombre bride

Cada uno por su niño
Trabajaba day and night
Mientras que los dos muchachos
Se criaron side by side.

Entre más grandes, más curiosos
Estos dos budding teenagers
Y la Rosie decidió
Que era tiempo that he date her.

The whimsical nature of this piece was framed within an original narrative addressing a disappearing oral tradition and cultural memory.

Ten years would pass before I would pen another full-length play. In the meantime, I devised work (though “devised” was not part of theatre lexicon in the early 1990’s) for The Latina Theatre Lab in San Francisco, and for the educational component of El Teatro Campesino where I interned for one year. Also during my time at El Teatro Campesino, I had the task of creating and performing for our weekly Comedy Cabaret. This work was fast and furious and a chance to experiment with many forms including performance art and sketch comedy. During this period I wrote and staged *No Experience Necessary*, a ten-minute autobiographical play which I returned to during the second year of my MFA and developed into my full-length play, *Rubi X: #her too*.

The next play I wrote was a commission from the arts and social justice non-profit, Working Classroom. In 1999 I penned *No Swamp Like Home*, an allegory of a frog, “Simón Sapón” who leaves his idyllic island determined to make it big in the city where he predictably has his amphibian-heinie kicked. He returns home where the prodigal frog is welcomed back by the residents of Isla Loca, an island paradise of equality and ecology unspoiled.

The story was simple though the task was complicated by my commitment to write a play that was bilingual via context versus redundant translation. For example, when Simón Sapón asks how “Tortuga,” (the turtle) his soon-to-be guide how she knows his name, she answers:

Compradito, tadpolito,
do you know what I am?
I'm a tortuga, old as this sand.
Why, I've seen all your familia grow
from little tails in the swamp
into the frogs that you know.
Conozco a todos los rincones de la isla--
Ya se que andas de prisa
so I won't keep you--me voy a comer,
but remember what this “cara de cascara” said:
Everybody needs a home
No one wants to be alone
Don't be blinded by the hype
Learn to see the fruit that's ripe.
If it's life you want to know, just remember:
Truth is slow,
Slow, como una tortuga.

“Truth is slow....” Apparently, I took this to heart regarding my writing as it would be a few years before I completed *From the Chronicles of Odisia Sánchez*, a one-woman one-act which I also performed. Not unlike the frog Simón’s journey, Odisia also leaves home, though her escape is *from* the city *to* an idyllic location where she ultimately is cast out of paradise. This contemporary odyssey is drawn from personal history defamiliarized as

autobiographical mythology. It was not a deliberate strategy, though in hindsight I suspect that the style enabled me a freedom to reveal the good, the bad and the ugly of an intimate story by favoring a poetic truth over a factual narrative. The language is in a heightened style of blank verse, distantly descended from the couplets of *No Swamp Like Home*.

Odisia:
Where the liquid horizon meets only sky in every direction
we drop the giant nets that had filled the boat
as flying fish race toward the sun
and the sky sinks heavy with stars
and the shark full sea rocks me to sleep in the tiny cradle
and Lázaro fisherman perfect
keeps vigil over my sleep and the sea and the night.

Odisia marks a perceptible evolution in my use of language and theatricality. I wrote this to be performed with two set pieces: a cajón to be utilized as a percussive instrument as well as a set-piece to sit and stand on. I also employed a hammock that represented a fish net, a boat, a cradle, a way to divide space, a swing, and oh yes, an actual hammock. *Odisia* is abstracted as a staged-poem dedicated to imagery and a stylized language which remain traceable through to my current work. Although I couldn't know it at the time, these sketches, performance pieces, devised works and a handful of unpolished plays written before graduate school, laid the groundwork for a new phase of my path as a theatre maker: playwriting.

THE PLAYWRIGHT'S JOURNEY PART II: GRADUATE SCHOOL

THE FULL-LENGTH PLAYS

The Captive is the first full-length play that I completed. It is based on a true-to-life story of a minister who takes the fall for his unscrupulous mortgage consultant during the sub-prime mortgage bubble of 2006-07. The only shock greater than his incarceration is that his cellmate turns out to be his estranged birth father.¹ This was the premise that I began with as a factual springboard to my own theatrical conceits and philosophical underpinnings. In this story lies the inherent drama of a reunion between father and son, further deepened by the historical and social strata of contemporary Americans who are also black and men. My dramatic license added the characters of “Victoria,” the Puerto Rican-mulatta-wife of “Ernesto” the good-son, and “Blanca” his Mexicana mother, loosely modeled on the iconic, “Blanche du Bois” from Tennessee Williams’ *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

I was drawn to the irony of this story of a black man who worked diligently and followed the rules so as not to be like his errant father and yet, ended up literally in the same place. I drew heavily from Ta-Nehisi Coates’ essay, “The Case for Reparations” (2014) to illuminate a legacy of institutionalized racism. I am neither male nor African-American. Partly at the risk of appropriating this culturally specific story, and partly with the intent of writing a role that I myself would want to play, I added the two female characters. To play Blanche DuBois is a terrifying and coveted wish that I share with many stage actors. I aspired to write Blanca

¹ <https://www.npr.org/2014/08/29/344253951/my-cellie>

in that vein: a woman in her middle years, broken and consumed by the delirium of substance abuse and deep psychic wounding. In short, with my first full-length play, I attempted to formulate a critique of “The American Dream,” through two black males while emulating an iconic anti-heroine of the American Theatre! It should come as no surprise that my reach deplorably exceeded my grasp.

And yet salvageable lessons prevailed. I gleaned scant success with a bit of compelling dialogue, an exploration of the shadow-side, a rare portrayal of middle-aged sexuality and perhaps a theatre first: the making of a prison birthday cake in real time (the “oreo-cookie-pokie special.”)

Ultimately my approach proved too convoluted for this nascent playwright. I am of course the one responsible for complicating a script perhaps better simplified as a duet instead of the quartet that I fashioned. The significant takeaway for me from *The Captive* is a new appreciation for writing what one knows as a means to access the unknown, be it from the subconscious or the imagination. I see now that this axiom, (“write what you know”) is not a quid pro quo of knowledge to text but rather as a source from which to draw. This transformation is the work of the artist and the art of the work.

Following on my all-too-ambitious heels of *The Captive*, I wrote *88 Crosstown*, a play set during an urban crosstown bus ride in the middle of the night. A third character serves as a guide who calls out each stop along the way and is also musician/Foley artist creating the

ambient sounds of the night ride. Two lone passengers travel this nocturnal route, “Young Man” and “Woman.” What begins as a threatening, unwanted advance by Young Man evolves into an unlikely and intimate friendship between the two by the time the bus ride is over. These two Latino characters, despite disparities in gender, age, education, and class, expose their common challenges presented by gentrification, substance abuse, family and romantic relationships. Although the play could take place in any city with a long crosstown bus line-- in writing it I recalled my years on public transportation in San Francisco. Unlike my previous script, *(The Captive)* the characters and the dialogue in *88 Crosstown* are composites from a myriad of people I’ve known, conversations I’ve had or overheard and a healthy dose of invention. The built-in structure of a crosstown bus ride simplified the playwright’s task. This more personal premise better equipped me to fulfill the opportunity for the two Latino characters to connect with each other and therefore to us. This is one reason I make theatre now: to offer an alternative to a didactic analysis of human nature and social issues.

For *RUBI X: # her too*, I drew on autobiographical history as well as my newly acquired skills from a rigorous first-year in the MFA program. *RUBI X: # her too* is a reversal of a coming-of-age story. Our protagonist, “Rubi” is precocious beyond her fifteen years. She strives to maintain a precarious balance between her integrity and her delinquency as she deals with a naïve best friend, negligent parents, a transient boyfriend, and a predatory employer. Her journey reaches back toward the possibility of innocence. There are six characters in this play, all portrayals of people of color, with the possible exception of her

employer. The story is set in the late 1970's in Albuquerque. Specific local references include the bygone bastion of Yale Park, as Orán, Rubi's boyfriend tells us:

Smells of patchouli and weed a block away...acoustic riffs, paisley and denim, wafting smoke, and yards of hair on heads, bopping in concentric eccentric circles: second generation hippies hanging on to nineteen seventy-funk.

Rubi X utilizes a non-quotidian lexicon to illuminate the inner monologues of the characters. At times it serves to mitigate a harsh reality or at other times to reveal what is remarkable for the character but otherwise routine for us, the spectator. For example, a form of the following litany is repeated in various contexts by several of the characters:

ZUL (Rubi's father)

Once I was a breath. Once I was a seed. Once I was a moment. A little baby.
Once, I had mother. Once. I had a father. I learned to crawl, to balance, to take a first step.
Once I ran... and skipped... and galloped. I wrecked bikes, cars... lives.

Once and again and again and again--I fell, in and out and in and out of love and new fights and new flights ...

Rubi X is semi-autobiographical. In writing it I was dependent on the altered state of memory, a liminal space where one exists simultaneously in the past and the present. It is a state of complementarity, a concept that I will address in greater detail later on.

The characters represent three generations including recent immigrants and an established Latino community. The storytelling provides a window into the days of yore in Albuquerque and a pre-AIDS San Francisco. We glimpse a Nuevo Mexicano veteran of war and the vestiges of his impoverished yet bucolic childhood and the alcoholic condition he survives in post-war.

Rubi's intelligence is evident, not in spite of the fact that she is a high school drop-out, but because she left school. She is sexually active, and she is sexual prey. Her employer is her predator. A full year before the "Me Too" movement emerged, *Rubi X* shed light on an age-old abuse of power.

The varied cultural perspectives that the characters embody, the opportunities for actors of color to portray those characters, the elucidation of an era, and the still timely issues that challenge our heroine—these are compelling elements ready for, and yet scant in the theatre. *Rubi X* is one answer to "why make theatre now?"

My play *BELLE RUN* is an existential journey composed as a road trip. "Belle" (Isabel) has coerced her empathetically deficient, adult son, "Samuel" to drive her from her home in Baltimore, across the United States to Oregon, passing through her native New Mexico along the way. Unbeknownst to Samuel his mother is terminally ill and has chosen Oregon, a right-to-die state as her final destination. Along for the ride, (in the self-driving rental car) is "Maya" the ghost of Samuel's lover, dead by suicide. These three characters avoid, grapple, and come to terms with the fallout of their relationships within family, between intimates, and with death. *Belle Run* deals head-on with depression and with suicide. Maya opens the play with the following:

MAYA

Do you ever wake up in the morning and wish you were dead?
Do you ever go to sleep at night hoping you don't wake up?
Do you ever wish you could just dissolve away into thin air?
Have you ever made a plan for your death--no, not your death, your suicide.
Yes, suicide!
It's irresponsible not to. Plan.

She appears throughout the play where time is fluid and space is mutable. Of the four full-length plays discussed here, *Belle Run* is the least realistic. It is a three-person play to be played by a Latino cast. There is little to no Spanish. The story takes place primarily on the road. The characters are worldly and educated. There is a Mexican song, "La Barca de Oro" used as a motif when Belle makes peace with her mother's death as they pass through New Mexico.

So, what exactly is it that makes these characters Latino? I do. I have written three well-spoken characters of means that go on a journey and happen to be Latino. Because there are Latinos who do not speak Spanish, who do not live in the barrio, who travel at will, who deal with treatment-resistant depression and terminal illness- and yet we seldom see their portrayals on the screen or stage. This is another reason I make theatre.

The pivotal moments for my characters are the moments of honest, human connection. It is this connection that the theatre uniquely offers-- in the rendering of story as much as in the experience of a shared moment between and among audience and performer. To be present on either side of the stage during a performance is akin to throwing down the gauntlet to the cell phone, to the computer, to the car—all things that compartmentalize and isolate us—if only for ninety minutes. Connection. Following an impulse towards unity; this is why I choose to make theatre now.

The beginning of the MFA program presented a formidable challenge for me as I could not depend on the somatic and intuitive approach that I cultivated as actor or deviser. Words are the result of a cognitive, left-brain function. My default is the right brain. Much of my work during this program has been towards enabling a courtship between the cerebral and the soma; between the head and the heart. As in any relationship, time, effort, and consistency have reaped their rewards, albeit sometimes more successfully than others. I have come to embrace writing as a physical act. Through sheer practice, I am more adept at concretizing illogical, magical, and abstract ideas and images through language--the literary aspects of dialogue as well as relating visual metaphor via the text, i.e., stage directions. For example, in *Los Dreamers*, Scoobi's birth and Ramiro's death during a battle of the Zapatista army are conveyed in following stage directions:

Sound of gunfire as a cascade of black ski masks falls from the sky.
Silence.
A newborn's cry as Ramiro's single, distinctive bandana falls from above.

I had one clear objective when I applied to this program: to produce a body of work. I'm pleased to say that I have fulfilled that goal. I have four full-length plays in various states of readiness as well as a score of short plays and musings that are ripe for development. This course of study has crystallized the tacit knowledge that playwriting is not (only) writing dialogue. There are countless stories to tell and a myriad of ways to convey them. The work of the playwright is to render story to paper; to harness the possibilities of a given story and to adroitly share a vision of a living, breathing event on a two-dimensional page. Sometimes the artist must create problems. Most times the artist must solve them. As a playwright, I have found the joy in both.

PLAYWRIGHT'S JOURNEY PART III: DREAM SPACE, the QUANTUM FIELD and THEATRE

(A slight but relevant detour addressing "why make theatre?")

Imagination lays the tracks for the train of reality to follow.
~Caroline Casey

Until the day that you are me and I am you.
~Stevie Wonder

The loveliest and most poignant of all stage pictures
are those that are seen in the mind's eye
~Robert Edmond Jones

Darkness descends. Sounds, images, and characters appear. A narrative ensues, context is set, obstacles arise, and a resolution is or is not reached. Everything heard and seen is a metaphor, a representation of something else. We are invested, we believe it. Are we asleep and dreaming? Or are we present at a well-executed theatrical production?

The play, like a dream, is a world in suspended disbelief. It exists in its own reality. The audience and the performers believe and invest in it. The playwright, not unlike the lucid dreamer² who once she is aware that she is dreaming, manipulates the narrative--a significant difference being that the lucid dreamer remains solitary while the playwright's work is not complete until realized in community.

² A lucid dream is a dream in which the dreamer is aware of dreaming and able to exert her will within the dream.

One of my very first memories is of a dream. I wake up inside this dream. I'm in the living room of my childhood home where the blue penumbral light glows through the draped picture window. I get up from the couch; my mother is waiting for me in her upholstered rocking chair. I am small enough that I can climb into her arms where she holds me and tells me how glad she is that I "finally woke up!" I had been asleep all my life.

Ever since this first dream-within-a-dream, I have questioned the nature of reality and consciousness. (If I were I a character in a play, this dubiousness would no doubt be my through-line.) In many ways this theme has informed the very trajectory of my life either by enabling a freedom to take risks—it is only a dream after all—or it has at times engendered an inertia for me *not* to act--why bother if it's *just* a dream? Making theatre is a way for me to address this conundrum, it is in a way, my form of lucid dreaming.

The dreamer and the dream share a concurrence similar to the actor/character. The dreamer is both subject and observer of the dream: awake and active in the dream while at the same time stationary and asleep. The layered and shifting meanings during performance are not unlike the dreamer's experience while navigating inside of a dream or in a post-waking analysis. Within a Jungian framework, an understanding of the dream's symbolic language (a denotation-connotation dialectic) is a vehicle towards totality, the integrated personality, "individuation."³ Unity.

³ From Jungian psychology-- an evolved state of being integrating the conscious and the unconscious, encompassing the philosophical, mystical, and spiritual areas of the human being.

Although our methodologies differ, the essence of my praxis and the science of quantum physics share an ongoing questioning of reality and the nature of consciousness. In full disclosure: my forays and research into quantum physics still leave me with a layperson's understanding. It is from this level of expertise or lack thereof that I draw my comparisons. In the following, I will parcel out my ruminations identifying commonalities to dreaming, theatre, and certain quantum precepts as I understand them.

Complementarity

Complementarity, a fundamental tenet of quantum theory refers to the hidden unity of opposites—hidden, in that complementary properties cannot be quantifiably separated or observed. The classic quantum example of complementarity is the wave/particle duality⁴

Complementarity in the theatre includes:

- The mimetic space--the physical space where a performance takes place is complemented by the diegetic space-- the offstage space in the mind's eye. Each necessarily gives context to the other.
- The connotative-denotative dialectic that is manifest in every aspect of the performance-- be it the set, the design, the production elements—all of which are at once an element and a representation of another element in an ever-shifting exchange of primary and secondary meanings. (Kier Elan)

⁴ The wave-particle duality refers to the quantum physics concept that light and matter exhibit properties of both waves and particles.

- The simultaneity of actor and character.

The Observer Effect

In physics, the “observer effect” refers to the effect on an outcome by the mere act of observation. The classic “double slit experiment” revealed the wave/particle duality of a photon. More astonishing though was the revelation that the photon reacts differently (sometimes as a wave, sometimes as a particle) depending on if it is being observed or not.

Anyone who has ever performed on-stage or seen the same production on different days knows how influential an audience (the observer) can be to the performance (the observed) and in turn how the mutability of the performance rebounds again to the spectator. Performance studies scholar E. Fischer-Lichte identifies this phenomenon as the autopoietic feedback loop wherein “spectators should not be understood as passive recipients of a message. They create meaning themselves” (2014:173). The word “theatre” from the Greek theatron: a place for viewing, implies dependency on the viewer. What is not indicated is the active role of the observer/audience in any given performance. Theatre is, after all, an event, a living process. A play script is not a performance. The viewers are the final and necessary element for performance to live.

The Implicate Order

The final quantum concept that I will add to this discourse comes from theoretical physicist David Bohm. The implicate order is a matrix from which all matter unfolds wherein space

and time are no longer primary factors, “ostensible separateness vanishes and all things seem to become a part of a larger unified structure” (2005:305).

For Bohm the perpetual enfolding and unfolding from the implicate to the explicate order, (and vice-versa) can account for the extraordinary properties of the subatomic, including, for example, the wave/particle duality.

For Montague Ullman, pioneer of dream research, “dreaming consciousness is situated between the two orders... a relay-station with input from both orders” (2005). Those two orders, being the implicate and the explicate. As Bohm explains, the implicate order is a process, therefore this relay-station, (dreaming consciousness) is not stationary at all, but rather a fluent enfolding and unfolding of the implicate to the explicate and back again (1995). To harken back to a Jungian framework, in the context of dreaming or creating, one could extend the connotation of the implicate order to the collective unconscious⁵ and likewise, the explicate order as the dream or the product of creation. In conspicuous alignment with Ullman’s quantum application to dreaming as a relay-station, is theatre’s function as a conduit that alchemizes the implicate into the explicate and vice versa, an idea perhaps best summarized by the painter Paul Klee: “Art does not reproduce the visible; it makes it visible.”

⁵ The concept that all human beings share latent memories from our ancestral and evolutionary past that Carl Jung refers to as archetypes.

The quantum world reveals a fundamental unity of energy and matter. Within a Jungian framework, the semiotics of dream analysis is vital towards individuation. Complementarity, the observer and the observed, the implicate/explicate orders, the prominence of signs and symbols—all resonate within the processes and product of the theatre. It is not far-fetched nor coincidental that physics, metaphysics, and art share a common drive toward integration and wholeness: commUnity.

CULTURE OF DREAMS

We are such stuff as dreams are made on.
~William Shakespeare

All of life is but a dream,
and dreams are only dreams.
~Calderón de la Barca

The above iconic quotes from 17th-century dramatists are familiar examples of the plentiful references to the dream world in literature and drama. The subsequent philosophical and metaphysical questions which arise from them can and do fill volumes. Here I will address two works written by two Spanish language prose writers and how they have informed my sensibility as an artist.

Given the formative nature of my first dream-memory, it is not surprising that two of my favorite short stories are *The Circular Ruins* by Jorge Luís Borges and *The Night Face-Up* by Julio Cortázar. Each of these narratives follows a solitary nameless character. In Borges' story the figure whose task is "to dream a man into being" comes to the realization "with relief, with humiliation, with terror" that he himself is an apparition of another's dream. *The Night*

Face-Up develops as a series of alternating episodes of dreaming and consciousness that careen toward the hero's revelation that what he thought was real is actually the dream and conversely, the dream that ends with him face-up on a sacrificial stone before the priest-executioner, is his final reality.

I present the above short stories not as literary illustrations so much as examples of a cultural outlook on the nature of consciousness. I suspect this line of questioning is as much a part of my cultural DNA as it is a literary heritage. The dream-within-a-dream premise of each of the above stories that made its way into the mind of a three-year-old girl dreaming in Bernalillo, New Mexico many moons ago, is still preoccupying her thinking. Why? I do not know! How? I will posit the following.

Much of Latin American literature, often labeled as “magical realism” is perhaps better understood as a chronicle of dream-reality; a contradiction that does not defy logic for cultures rooted in living, ancient and indigenous traditions. For those who identify like me, as *mestiza*⁶, we belong to a culture that celebrates death and life as a symbiosis essential as is waking and dreaming.

The dream-reality that I'm describing is not dependent on sleep. I am referring to an altered state of consciousness that one may access through games and play, sex, prayer, meditation, ritual, poetry, music, dance, all of the arts—and especially the theatre whose ephemeral

⁶ Literally, “one who is of mixed race.” “Mestiza” implies an embracing of an indigenous lineage as well as a consciousness cast from a tolerance of ambiguity and contradictions as they relate to identity.

verisimilitude is in elegant congruence to that of actual dreaming. The fields of psychology, medicine, anthropology and performance studies (to name a few) support the supposition that dreaming is necessary to our well-being.

I will extrapolate that so too is the theatre—beneficial if not necessary to our well-being-- as a mode for catharsis, community, and perspective. The theatre, fleeting and curious as is a dream, allows for us to process the challenges of being alive, to envision an alternative reality, and to befriend our evanescence. This is another reason why I make theatre.

ABOUT LOS DREAMERS: THE THESIS PLAY

My thesis play, *LOS DREAMERS*, is a story of resistance and persistence. The protagonist “Scoobi” represents one of the nearly 700,000 undocumented young adults who were brought to the United States as children, and are currently (as of this writing) protected under the DACA program (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals.) She is a dreamer.⁷

“Scoobi” and her mother, “Petra” conspire to make it possible for “Scoobi” to complete her law degree. She marries “Dylan,” an “all-American” citizen as a means to get her citizenship. The play employs four actors to inhabit eleven roles, including a talking “Cucaracha.”⁸ The story unfolds as an examination of privilege, presumptions, and a lineage of resistance. Scoobi’s mother, Petra, is a former insurgent captain from the EZLN.⁹ Her views on violence and agency exemplify an evolution of indigenous, feminist and female consciousness, albeit in her inimitable manner:

PETRA

Que chinga’o? Honor. Revenge. Violence—it’s all a bunch of overcompensating mierda so we don’t have to be accountable—so we don’t have to actually grieve!
Whoever kills the most is the winner?? No imagination!

⁷ The term Dreamers comes from the proposed DREAM Act, (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors) which offered legal status in return for attending college or joining the military. It was first introduced in 2001. The latest version was voted down in the Senate in December 2010. There is also, of course, the connotation of “The American Dream.”

⁸ La Cucaracha (“The Cockroach”) is a traditional Spanish-language folk song made during the Mexican Revolution. The cockroach is a metaphor for the underlying.

⁹ The Zapatista Army of National Liberation, a guerrilla group in Mexico, founded in the late 20th century. On Jan. 1, 1994, the Zapatistas staged a rebellion from their base in Chiapas, the southernmost Mexican state, to protest economic policies that they believed would negatively affect Mexico’s indigenous population.

SCOOBI

You are such a hypocrite—

PETRA

Am I? ...No, I don't think so. Even in the beginning, the gun was a last resort and we knew it was transitional. We knew violence cannot sustain peace.

SCOOBI

What about that "certain dose of bullets?"

PETRA

Exactly. We used a *certain* dose of bullets. And then it was time for literacy, and co-ops, and art and music and poetry, and us, the women. It's our time to offer another way. The *compañeros* in the mountains, they know it. and now it's time they know it here too.

This play came about from my screenwriting course; I was pitching ideas for characters to be part of a TV pilot based in Albuquerque. I wanted to employ the potential visibility of television to broadcast from the margins. I conjured "Scoobi-the Dreamer." Ultimately my pitch didn't make the cut, but once the image of Scoobi emerged—a young woman in a modest white dress her back to us—she would not retreat! She would not, could not, go back into the bottle. The young woman in white facing away from me, tossed her bouquet of flowers behind her, daring me to catch it and commit to the telling of her story. This was October 2016. I recorded her "bridal toss" as a prologue, and from there the first twenty-three-page-scene unfolded as this odd quartet--Scoobi, her mother Petra, Dylan her groom, and Roko her ghost-- returned to the studio apartment as a family, for the first time. This first revelatory domestic scene came to an end. And then next words appeared, "Part II: Chiapas 1993." I had no idea why or what to write. After attempting in vain to steer the narrative in another direction, I surrendered to the wisdom of the subconscious and began to find the

relationships between the past and the present in the world of this play and two distinct time periods became embedded: 1994 and the present.

Chiapas, Mexico 1994 is the time and place of Scoobi's conception and birth. It is also the time of the uprising of the indigenous EZLN placing *Los Dreamers* within an historical lineage of resistance and struggle for justice. The antecedent to the Zapatista army that formed in the Chiapas highlands in the 1980's was the Mexican Revolution of the early 20th century; indeed, this army like their infamous namesake Emiliano Zapata, denounced a corrupt government, demanded radical agrarian reform, and successfully mobilized disenfranchised peasants desperate for justice. This Chiapas narrative sources Scoobi's social consciousness within a cultural and political lineage of resistance.

The inciting incident of *Los Dreamers* takes place in the present wherein "Scoobi," the dreamer and her mother take action, indeed they break the law to ensure Scoobi's citizenship. In addition to the constant threat of deportation looming and the demands of law school, Scoobi is grieving the death of her lover "Roko," another dreamer whose soldier-life was taken in Afghanistan. "Roko's" ghost is a character who haunts Scoobi as she struggles with life-changing decisions. I would hope that "Roko" whose expedited road to *posthumous* citizenship might also haunt the viewing public with this sad irony that many in the "real world" have shared.

Two ghosts, Roko and Ramiro, appear in *Los Dreamers*, Maya-the-ghost appeared in *Belle Run*. At the most pedestrian level, the presence of a ghost onstage indicates a deviation from realism or naturalism. Despite the special effects that film or television may offer in representing the supernatural, I believe it is the theatre that excels in mining the imagination. As a theatre artist and as audience, I'm interested in plays that capitalize on the elements that are unique to the theatre: the interdisciplinary aspects, ideas embodied as gestures, the manipulation of time and the energy of live performance.

In many ways the play itself is a ghost— an enduring spirit(s) of the author or the epoch manifested as script or performance. The theatre can allow the dead, a freedom of action and expression not always possible for the living. In *Los Dreamers*, “Roko” the ghost, speaks to another group of dreamers; those who find the military to be a last-ditch option not only for citizenship but also for gainful employment and access to higher education-- but at what cost?

It is unfortunate that *Los Dreamers* is a timely play. At this writing, the fates of over half-a-million lives are in jeopardy--as the current administration in Washington, D.C. dangles the DACA program as political bait, meanwhile taking increased action toward deporting the undocumented with extreme prejudice. Meanwhile these young dreamers are caught in a bureaucratic imbroglio periling their education, livelihoods, and families.

The title, *Los Dreamers*, indeed refers to those who are reliant on the DACA program, however, the scope of its connotations is broader. It harkens to the hopes that each of the characters harbor; it informs the stylistic conventions that remove this play from the genre of realism or naturalism; and it imbues an historical echo from the time of the Spanish “conquest” of what is now Mexico and the southwest United States.

In his account of the conquest, historian, Thomas Reed Fehrenbach reveals a portrait of Motecuhzoma II, last of the Aztec emperors, as a reactionary emperor ruled by superstition who “sometimes to the despair of his counselors and kin was often blind to the practical problems of his realm” (1977:124). In the Mexica (Aztec) world, priests, magicians, and seers—dreamers, were held in high regard. Before the appearance of the Spaniard Cortez, vast numbers of these dreamers prophesized his arrival and the subsequent downfall of the Aztec empire. Unable to kill the messengers of these bad tidings, (being magicians and wizards they inexplicably escaped captivity!) Motecuhzoma II enacted his vengeance on their families (p103). Poet/novelist/scholar, Ana Castillo’s book of essays, *Massacre of the Dreamers* takes its title from this despotic action. Castillo concludes,

“The dreamer, the poet, the visionary is banished at the point when her/his society becomes based on the denigration of life and the annihilation of the spirit for the sake of phallogocentric aggrandizement and accumulation of wealth by a militant elite. This is accompanied by a fierce sense of nationalism and “ethnic pride.” (1994:16)

Many of the DACA dreamers are no doubt, descended from the ill-fated Mexica empire. More relevant though is the congruent relationship they share with the 300,000 Mexica citizens doomed by their misled leadership. The Mexica dreamers and the DACA dreamers were and are portents of change. For Motecuhzoma II it was the end of his empire. For the

nationalist elite like Donald Trump, the DACA dreamers present a threat to their very worldview in which they are the rightful custodians of wealth and privilege. The U.S. Census predicts that by 2020 over half of the children in the United States will be part of a minority race or ethnic group. While current governmental policies are devastating to the lives of hundreds of thousands, if not millions, they are ultimately an effete struggle against the rising current of a changing world.

Admittedly, *Los Dreamers* presents a utopian ending to this particular story: the principal quartet, (Scoobi, Petra, Roko, and Dylan) are all able to let go of the ghosts that no longer serve them. Scoobi and Dylan fall in love. Dylan has a family to love and be loved by. Scoobi-the-lawyer is positioned to advocate momentous change for the vulnerable. Petra voluntarily returns to Mexico, from where she will work with the Indigenous women of Chiapas. They all have dreams no longer deferred. It is in this case, a happy ending because after all, this artist is also a dreamer.

CONCLUSION

The most authentic endings are the ones which
are already revolving towards another beginning.
~Sam Shepherd

Turning and turning in the widening gyre,
the falcon cannot hear the falconer.
W.B. Yeats

It is interesting to me that the venerable Sam Shepherd uses the word “revolving” as opposed to any other verb that might imply linear progress. I wonder if he may have meant “evolving?” No, no doubt the dramatist-wordsmith chose exactly the words he meant to. Perhaps like I do, he envisioned this revolving as a “widening gyre,” a vivid image from which to extrapolate the conclusion of this essay and academic sojourn.

There have been many times during my MFA tenure, that I felt as though I was going in circles, in my writing and otherwise. The slightest hindsight reveals that indeed I was. What I was not aware of at the time was that the circular motion was a widening gyre--one that encompassed all that came before with an ever-broadening perspective.

In regards to the writing of *Los Dreamers*, each rewrite was a return to ground zero, sometimes deliberately and sometimes with Sisyphean resistance to restructuring the dubious house of cards of the early drafts. Rehearsal began in early March 2018, and I met my director Tiffany Nicole Green. After years of being in rehearsal rooms and scores of table-readings, I was in the rehearsal room with the sole hat of the playwright, for the very first time: another gyre. I listened carefully as the actors read, trying to ascertain when the

writing was not clear and when it was simply a matter of the actor not being familiar with the material. Over the course of rehearsal, I renewed my vows to the specificity of punctuation and the possibilities of interpretation. When is punctuation (the scoring of the text) vital to the music, the rhythm, the denotation of the text and when is there room for the interpretation that may not follow my intended score? Professor Moss wisely asked how I might address these issues within the script. Indeed, the playwright has the license to call attention to her intentions in various ways including the plasticity of the page; utilizing the visual composition of the letters on the page to impact and inform the experience of reading and interpreting the text. In the end, however, it is out of the playwright's hands—directors will direct, actors will embody, and audiences will interpret—all from a myriad of subjective and individual histories.

I stated at the beginning of *Los Dreamers*, “this is not realism.” In retrospect perhaps it was not wise to state a negation; I said what it was *not* but I did not say what it *was*. My intention for this statement was to be an invitation if not a challenge to the creative team to push the theatrical elements in the storytelling. I suspect that my early theatre imprinting from the likes of El Teatro Campesino has left me with a predisposition for a presentational style that is not necessarily in the theatrical lexicon of a younger generation of the performers and designers more at skilled with the naturalism of the ubiquitous mediums of film and television. Perhaps this is a topic for another essay.

The production enjoyed two performances over the course of one week as is customary for the thesis plays. It was invaluable and essential for me to see my pages embodied for me to make necessary changes, cuts and adjustments that could not have come to light without this collaborative process. After all a script is not a play. There were elements of my script that for various reasons were not realized. Besides the aforementioned limitations, I speculate that our theatre culture is (still) inordinately beholden to a reliance on dialogue to the detriment of the image. In *Los Dreamers* there are images written into the narrative of the play that were not staged. I would very much have liked to have seen how they might have played out.

There was one afternoon that myself, the director, one of the actors and the stage manager went to eat together. W four generations of women of color kvetched, shared stories from our lives, talked about politics and all the “isms,” we laughed and maybe shed a little tear. Without taking anything away from the rehearsals or performances, that afternoon was perhaps the highlight of the process for me. It was a true moment of profound connection. It was theatre, our theatre of life, made possible only because we were making a play together. That moment with my collaborators, (among others) reinforced my commitment and my compulsion to make community through sharing our stories.

As in best of endings, the completion of my MFA harkens to another beginning--one that I am primed for with a cache of material and methods. It remains to be seen how my center will hold – I am after all, now both falcon and falconer.

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APPENDIX – *Los Dreamers*, the text

LOS DREAMERS

by Mónica Sánchez

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Draft 03/25/2018

LosDREAMERS

CAST OF CHARACTERS

To be performed by a total of four (4) actors.

Petra.....The mother, 40's - 50's
Penelope (aka Scoobi).....The daughter, 20's
Soldier (Ricardo aka Roko).....The ghost of Scoobi's boyfriend, 20's.
Dylan.....Scoobi's groom, 20's

Young Petra.....Petra in her 20's. Double cast with Petra.
Adela.....The sage. Double cast with Scoobi.
Ramiro.....Zapatista revolutionary. 20's. Double cast with "Soldier"
Güero.....Soldier of Song for the EZLN. Double cast with "Dylan"
Martínez.....The immigration official. Double cast with "Petra" or "Soldier"
Zacharías (aka "Zack").....Güero's son. Double cast with "Soldier"
The Cockroach.....Double cast with someone-not-"Scoobi" probably "Petra"

This is not realism.

ACT I

Here and now (more or less.)

Scoobi enters through the audience. She carries a bouquet of fresh corn. This is her bridal march towards the altar of the stage.

SCOOBI

In the time before the world came into being, the gods came together to create the first people.

They were to be strong and beautiful, so the gods made them out of gold. But these, golden people were too heavy to walk, or work, or be of any use beyond decoration.

So the gods came together again, and made another group of people, this time out of wood and the wooden people worked and worked and walked and walked and moved and lived and the gods were content. But the wooden people were not; the people of gold had made them their slaves.

The gods realized that they had made a mistake, a big mistake. And so they tried once more. This time they made the people out of corn. Corn, that thrives under so many conditions, corn that grows in so many colors and becomes so many kinds of sustenance.

And the gods themselves deferred to the people of the corn to settle this injustice. The corn people did not take this task lightly. They went to the mountains where they stayed for countless orbits, learning from nature and the spirits about the mysteries of life and death, and then they made a plan, the best plan for every living thing.

And now, it's time.
The golden people have been dreading it.
The wooden people have been hoping for it.
It's time.
We are here.

Scoobi throws the bouquet behind her, like a bride.

The Apartment. Late afternoon.

PETRA

(O.S.)

PENELOPE!!!

SCOObI bolts in. DYLAN follows behind her.

The SOLDIER, ROKO, in desert combat fatigues (bloodied from a fatal wound) follows. Only Scoobi sees him unless otherwise indicated.

DYLAN

Uh, wait up. Uh, aren't I supposed to like carry you, through the door jamb?

SCOObI

Really?

PETRA enters winded, with her camera.

PETRA

Okay, re-verse. Go back, get back through the door, close it and count to five. Now! Carry your bride over the threshold.

SCOObI

Oh come on!

(to Dylan)

No.

PETRA

(to Scoobi)

Yes.

(to Dylan)

Yes!

Petra ejects them out the front door and preps her camera.

PETRA

Okay, I'm ready. Count to five. ...Are you counting? Ay chinga'o--

Problem with camera. The door bursts open. Dylan has Scoobi over his shoulder like a sack of potatoes.

PETRA

You didn't say you were counting.

DYLAN

I was.

PETRA

Go back. I didn't get it. That's not how you carry a bride hombre!

SCOObI

Mom, no--

Petra pushes them out again.

PETRA

Anda. Take two. Start counting...now!

She slams the door and takes her position, camera wielded, counting silently to five. The door flings open.

Dylan has Scoobi in his arms, like a bride. A limp bride. Her tongue hangs out for effect.

PETRA

Por el amor de dioschingado! Niña, stop clowning. We're going to do it again--

DYLAN

Again?

SCOObI

What, I'm too heavy for you?

PETRA

Once more. With feeling!

DYLAN

Not really. You look like you'd be heavier.

SCOOBI

You look like you'd be stronger.

PETRA

NOW! We have to document this! Lala's nephew had to show a whole wedding album!

Scoobi jumps from Dylan's arms and walks toward the door. Looks back at him.

SCOOBI

(to Dylan)

And you better look happy.

He follows, they close the door behind them. Petra readies the camera. 5 count. The door flings open. A radiant, smiling bride in the arms of her victorious groom enter, over the threshold. Petra takes the photo.

Dylan goes in for a kiss. Scoobi bolts from his arms and exits.

PETRA

(to Dylan)

Welcome to marriage m'ijo.

Petra exits.

Scoobi returns with a thick file folder.

SCOOBI

Okay I prepared this for you. You know we're gonna have an interview with Immigration, right?

DYLAN

Yeah. So?

SCOOBI

So?! Oh my god! See this folder? You need to learn this backwards and forward. If you mess this up for me...

DYLAN

What? What'll happen? You'll divorce me?

Beat.

SCOObI

We have to prepare--most couples already know each other better than we do by the time they get married.

DYLAN

I don't think my folks did.

SCOObI

Here's the lists you need to memorize as soon as possible. The first section is family. I don't really have any besides my mom, so it'll be pretty easy. Then the personal facts about me: favorite color, favorite food, your favorite dress on me, here's what we gave each other for Christmas, oh wait, are you Jewish?

DYLAN

O'Reilly?

SCOObI

Oh yeah, right. Okay, here's my dream destinations, the kind of law I study. My birthday, you have to know when my birthday is and here's what you got me for my birthday last year.

DYLAN

A watch?! That watch?

(Indicates watch on Scoobi's wrist)

SCOObI

Well, what would you have gotten me?

DYLAN

I don't know, something more fun than that.

SCOObI

Maybe that's what I asked for.

DYLAN

Is it?

SCOObI

No! I didn't ask for anything remember! Look, you think of something more creative, let me know. We just have to be on the same page.

DYLAN

Well, what do you like?

SCOObI

Oh my god!!! It's all right here in the file.

DYLAN

Okaaaay. What about me? What did you get me for my birthday?

SCOObI

Here. This is your section. Fill it out as soon as you can and get it back to me so I can memorize you. Oh yeah, here, write your number, here's mine. Let's put them in our phones right now, some kind of pet name would be good.

They enter numbers in phones.

SCOObI

How did you put me down?

DYLAN

Wifey.

SCOObI

Wifey?

DYLAN

How'd you put me in your phone.

SCOObI

Never mind, doesn't matter.

DYLAN

Hey I showed you mine! Show me yours!

He reaches for her phone, she holds it away. A grappling ensues that takes them to the floor. Awkward then playful, then very competitive, then very sexually tense. Stillness. Their eyes meet.

SCOObI

I'm. Tapping. Out.

Scoobi surrenders her phone.

Beat.

DYLAN

It's locked.

SCOOBI

Oh? Maybe you should learn...my birthday!

She recovers from the floor.

SCOOBI

Okay! Here's your ATM card. All the account information is in the file. This is our joint savings account. There's \$327.00 in there right now. As far as ICE knows, we each have our separate checking accounts plus this joint savings account. Okay, I think that's a good start, any questions? No? Good.

Beat.

SCOOBI

I'm serious. Don't mess this up.

DYLAN

Yes ma'am!

SCOOBI

Look, this doesn't just affect me!

DYLAN

Well yeah, I need my degree too, remember?!

SCOOBI

That's right. And if this doesn't work out for you, what's gonna happen...?? Oh I know! Daddy won't release your trust and you might actually have to get a JOB!!

DYLAN

(realizing the gravity of his situation!)

Fuck.

Scoobi exits.

DYLAN

Uh...I'm gonna go get my stuff from the car?

Dylan exits.

Scoobi returns with a stack of books. She sits at the dining table and starts to study.

Petra appears in comfy clothes.

PETRA

Mi'ja, do you have any cards you want me to flash you with ?

SCOOBI

Uh-uh.

PETRA

I'll make coffee.

SCOOBI

Okay.

Petra disappears into the kitchen.

PETRA (O.S.)

Are you hungry?

SCOOBI

Nope.

Petra returns.

PETRA

Here, you need more light?

She turns on more light.

SCOOBI

Thanks.

Dylan enters with a gym bag overflowing with clothes.

PETRA

Should I put the white noise on?

DYLAN

Oh...should I be louder?

PETRA/SCOOBIE

...?

DYLAN

Hey, remember jokes?

Dylan puts his things down and exits.

Petra and Scoobi watch as he returns wearing a Yankees baseball hat and carrying a well-worn stuffed toy. Did I mention he's still in his wedding attire?

DYLAN

I just brought part of my stuff, for now. Do you want to show me where my room's gonna be?

PETRA

Here Dylan, we cleared out this closet for you. And there in the bathroom, there's some drawers for your drawers. Please, make yourself at home.

DYLAN

Do I smell coffee?

PETRA

Yes! How do you take it?

SCOOBI

Whoa! Are you gonna wait on him now?!

DYLAN

Ah, no, it's okay. I don't drink coffee.

PETRA/SCOOBI

You don't drink coffee?!

DYLAN

Uh no, not really...but...I could?

PETRA

Penelope get your husband a cup with a lot of milk and sugar.

(to Dylan)

That's how we get the kids used it.

SCOOBI

Are you serious?

DYLAN

Uh, no. Thanks, maybe in the morning! That sounds good. Yeah.

SCOOBI

This isn't going to work.

PETRA

Penelope!

SCOOBI

I'm going to the library.

She packs up her books and exits. The soldier follows.

DYLAN

Uh, bye and uh, thanks a lot, for...the wedding.

PETRA

I never thought someone could be so smart y tan pendeja a la vez.

DYLAN

Uh, like Elvis??

PETRA

So you don't do coffee huh?

She pulls out a bottle.

How 'bout tequila?

She produces two glasses.

DYLAN

Dude!

PETRA

No, it's "Don Julio."

She opens the bottle and lets a drop fall to the floor.

DYLAN

Hey, it's spilling--

PETRA

For the muertos, you don't offer, they'll take it.

DYLAN

...?

She pours two shots. Dylan shoots his.

PETRA

Pero, Dylan! What the hell are you doing?!

DYLAN

Uh...shots?

PETRA

Oooh, here we go. Okay, Dylan, I know this goes against everything you know about tequila--

DYLAN

Aren't you gonna drink yours?

PETRA

BUT, you're family now, and I have no choice but to be accountable to you. Dylan, mi'jo, this ain't no cheap-ass ho-zay coo-ervoe. This...is the blood of the maguey! Would you want some foreign kid to just drink up all your juices like they were endless? Nevermind! Bad example! Okay, Dylan. Dylan! Dylan Tomás! You know Dylan Tomás?

DYLAN

Uhh-

PETRA

Dylan Tomás was a great Welsh poet--

DYLAN

Oh!

PETRA

Here's my point. He drank whiskey, scotch whiskey. Probably a lot of it. I'm not stereo - typing I'm just saying, his scotch, was like our tequila. Now Dylan, when have you ever seen a bozo shoot a cup of good scotch?

DYLAN

Uh, sorry. Is it really good stuff?
She pours him another.

As the glass reaches his lips:

PETRA

Stop! Right there! Okay sorry, I don't mean to be no "tequila police" ... that doesn't even make sense, does it? Anyway okay, hold it right there up to your nostrils. Vez? Like this, watch.

The following could be the most sensual tequila tasting ever.

PETRA

Cheers. But just a little one!

A slo-motion sip.

Dylan fixated takes just a sip.

DYLAN

Wow.

He follows suit: swirling and sniffing, finally sips.

DYLAN

My tongue is numb.

PETRA

Salud mi'jo!

She clinks his glass and takes another sip as tho this was manna from the heavens...because it is.

DYLAN

You're so cool. My parental's an asshole.

PETRA

Well, we all have a little asshole in us.

DYLAN

Huh?

PETRA

I mean, we can all be an asshole at times... it's usually a projection...even though, technically the culo is, recessive... ay nevermind! Sometimes I think I get caught up in all of Scoobi's angst.

DYLAN

Scoobi has angst?!

PETRA

A lot! You'd think she was white. No offense mi'jo.

DYLAN

Yeah, uh it's cool.

Beat. As they sip.

He goes to pour another shot.

DYLAN

Is it okay? Uh...can I?

PETRA

You MAY.

She pushes her glass forward.

He obliges the empty glasses.

They continue to sip and savor during the following.

DYLAN

Uh, I still don't really understand.

PETRA

Understand what?

DYLAN

How you can afford this, me, uh you know...or exactly why?

PETRA
Have you seen my car?

DYLAN
I didn't think you had one.

PETRA
I don't.

DYLAN
Oh, right, Scoobi's is the shop?

PETRA
She doesn't have one either. Have you seen our big screen TV?

He looks around.

DYLAN
You don't have a TV!?!

PETRA
Have you seen a copy of our mortgage?

DYLAN
Wait, really. Where's the TV?

PETRA
You wanna see our mortgage?

DYLAN
For an apartment? You own the building?!

PETRA
No, and we don't have a mortgage. We rent. How much do you think we pay?

DYLAN
Uh, I don't know. How many bedrooms?

PETRA
Come.

She gets up. He follows her around the space.

PETRA

Let me give you the grand tour. This is the living room slash dining room slash study slash office slash gym slash bedroom. The bathroom is there, also known as the meditation suite and thru there is the kitchen.

DYLAN

Wait, there's no bedroom?

Petra points at the couch.

PETRA

Right there.

DYLAN

Where's everyone-- where am I going to sleep?

PETRA

It's a sofa bed. For you and Penelope.

DYLAN

Wait...I don't get a room? You said I'd get room and board--

PETRA

I have a cot out in the utility room, passed the kitchen, you want to trade?

DYLAN

I don't want a "cot" I want a bed.

PETRA

Good. So does Penelope. And here it is.

She indicates the sofa.

PETRA

You see Dylan? That is one way we save a LOT of money. And do you know why?

Dylan doesn't.

PETRA

Because, my dear mi'jo-in-law, we are the People of the Corn. And now so are you. Salud!

They toast. Beat.

DYLAN

You know, your English is really good. You barely even have an accent.

PETRA

... ?

DYLAN

What? I mean it as a compliment. Like, I understand you perfectly.

PETRA

Thank you. I return the compliment.

DYLAN

Uh, yeah but I was born here.

PETRA

Dylan, how old are you?

DYLAN

Well, I'm gonna be twent--

PETRA

I've had twice that here, to learn English.

DYLAN

My bad. Wait, you've been here that long? When did you come to America?

PETRA

Mi'jo, I was born in America. I came to Yankeelandia when I was eight.

DYLAN

Why do you need me if Scoobi was born here?

PETRA

She wasn't born here. I had her in México.

DYLAN

What? Why would you go back to have her and then come back again?

PETRA

Because, Dylan. We are the people of the corn. We need the land and the lands need us.

DYLAN

Is it a religion or something? I didn't agree to go to church or--

PETRA

Ay...you know how some people think they came from Adan y Eva, a few hundred years ago?

DYLAN

Ye-ah.

PETRA

Well, our story goes way, way back to the time we were corn!
Dylan, it's a creation myth!

DYLAN

Ooooh, yeah, Cool-- except for Scoobi, having to be born there, huh?

PETRA

Well, she got to know, Adela. And now we have you.

DYLAN

Was that your mom?

PETRA

Oh, no Dylan. I said goodbye to my mom long before Penelope was born.

The tequila's taking effect, everything's warmer and looser, especially for Dylan,

DYLAN

I never said bye to my mom. More like she didn't say bye to me.

PETRA

Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't realize she'd passed.

DYLAN

Yeah she passed alright, on being a mother. She didn't die though. She dropped me off at summer camp, for good... 'till my dad and his arm-candy, Candy-- picked me up just to drop me off at boarding school. ...You know, the "terrible twelves?"

PETRA

Boarding school?

DYLAN

Boarding school. Shit, what they paid to keep me outa their hair, woulda put me and Scoobi thru college and then some.

He sips.

PETRA

But you got a good education!

DYLAN

Hell yeah, all the kids out there were the offspring of doctors, dentists, shrinks...I got a pretty good education in pharmacology alright.

PETRA

Drugs? You did drugs at boarding school? You said you didn't do--

DYLAN

I don't! I did, just for a minute, then I got into sports! But at first, what else was there to do? No girls, no parents, but plenty of Oxy, Perco, Xanax, Valium, Vicodin...yeah it was kinda fucked up.

He starts to tear up.

DYLAN

I was, just like... I just...I mean I--

PETRA

It's okay Dylan. What?

DYLAN

I just like...I wanted...my...my mom.

He is crying. Petra moves to him. He leans into her maternal embrace. He holds on tighter and tighter, burying his face in her neck. She backs him off.

PETRA

Okay, mi'jo! Enough, family tree for tonight!

DYLAN

Oh shi--- sorry...

The door opens. Scoobi enters.

PETRA

Penelope! So soon?!

SCOOBI

The library was closed.

Come, let's have a brindis!

PETRA

How much have you guys had?

SCOOBI

Here, sit down.

PETRA

She pours shots for all three of them.

To our new lives. All for one and one for all.

PETRA

She slams the shot.

Hey, what about--

DYLAN

Well time for me to turn in. You two enjoy the nightcap, get to know each other. Good night, god bless you, happy drinks--dreams! Happy dreams.

PETRA

She beelines toward her utility room.

I can't believe she slammed it.

DYLAN AND SCOOBI

They look at each other.

Jinx.

DYLAN AND SCOOBI

You owe me a coke.

DYLAN AND SCOOBI

Okay, that's just...

SCOOBI

...weird.

DYLAN

Beat.

They sip.

DYLAN

Uh, you looked really pretty today.

SCOOBI

“Looked?”

DYLAN

Yeah. Oh, I mean, yeah, you still do, look good, I just, you just looked super pretty in your dress and everything.

SCOOBI

Your eyes are red.

SOLDIER

Like you were crying-

DYLAN

Oh yeah, allergies...I think I'll take a shower, is that cool?

SCOOBI

Yeah, sure. Towels are in there.

Dylan exits.

SOLDIER

Not the brightest crayon in the box is he?

Scoobi attempts to ignore.

During the following Scoobi makes two beds. One on the couch, not unfolded the other on the floor.

SOLDIER

He's got a good inguinal fold though, I know you like that.
You'll see. (Probably couldn't bench what I did though.)

It's okay Scoobi. I ain't mad. You are way outa his league though..

He keeps trying to get her attention, she puts great effort into ignoring him.

SOLDIER

Hey, look up little Mrs.! He done made you an honest woman...and pretty soon a legal one too. Scoobi, it's good, you're doing the right thing.

You always wanted to be married!

Damn girl, how long you gonna be mad at me? Huh?

She glares at him. He cowers. She dismisses him and discreetly changes into her pajamas.

SOLDIER

Scoobi, remember the first poem I wrote you? Only rhyme I could think of for Scoobi was "boobi."

Okay that's all I could think of, period...and then, something changed, something dropped in, way down deep, way passed your teta, way down, straight to your heart.

I'm still pulsing thru your blood Penelope.

SCOOBI

Go away!

She buries tears and a sob into a pillow. Dylan appears with a towel around his waist.

DYLAN

Decent water pressure--you okay?

SCOOBI

Allergies. You know.

DYLAN

Right.

Dylan finds a pair of shorts and replaces the towel with them. Scoobi notices the athlete's body in all it's glory.

SCOOBI

I'm gonna turn in now. Long day tomorrow. Should I set an alarm for you?

DYLAN

Uh oh yeah. I'm gonna re-register for classes. Yeah, I guess ten would be good.

SCOObI

You need an alarm to wake up at 10 am?!

DYLAN

Well I wanna get an early start tomorrow, you know.

SCOObI

Yeah. Okay.

DYLAN

Well what time do you get up?

SCOObI

Depends. Tomorrow's Monday. I'm out the house by 7:30. Maybe you should just set your phone. Okay, goodnight.

Scoobi gets under the blankets on the couch. She puts an sleep mask over her eyes.

DYLAN

Uh.

Scoobi points to the bedroll she's made for Dylan on the floor.

Scoobi puts in earphones.

Dylan lies down on his bedroll for a moment. He looks to his phone.

DYLAN

Shit, half-way thru the 7th! I gotta see this on a big screen!

He looks to Scoobi, sound asleep. Dylan starts to get dressed. Soldier takes Dylan's keys, sits at the table, and props his feet up.

SOLDIER

Do you believe in love at first site? I met Scoobi at a party. You ever been to a matanza? It lasts a couple of days, at least. First day, first thing in the morning we start the fire. Some of us start to digging the hole, someone's splitting wood. That's when the beers and the stories start. Shit, I don't know what I miss more--the food or the stories.

Dylan looks frantically for his car keys.

SOLDIER

Oh, dude. My bad. You better get--bases loaded.

Soldier places Dylan's keys where he can find them.

A puzzled Dylan retrieves them and bolts out of the house.

Soldier watches Scoobi sleep.

During the following night passes. We see the morning light rise imperceptibly.

SOLDIER

We'd kill the pig, sometimes a goat or two. Hang it up, slice open the belly, collect all the entrails coming out like from a slot machine. The blood lets... and then something inside all those veteranos lets loose too. We wash it and wrap it and when all the fire's turned to hot coals we lay it down, bury it and spend the day in "prayer" (*makes drinking gesture*) waiting for the resurrection.

When I was a kid there was always a viejito there with his violin. Lately, we're lucky if one of the chavalitos can strum out the cords to "Free Bird." What did you like best--I can't remember--the chicharrones or the blood sausage?

Finally that night, after we took the pig and the cabritos out the holes. Musta been two hundred happy hungry people there. Stacks a' tortillas, everyone's famous chile, the smell of cedar burning, and something else, in the air: your shoe!! 'Member?

My olfactory was the first on site. You sitting by the fire eating your tacos, all oblivious to your smoking foot. That's when I sprang into action, ran to you, scooped you up and swept you away, to the acequia. Damn, you woulda thought I was kidnapping the queen herself. Wasn't till you saw the steam coming from your foot in the ditch that you got quiet. So quiet, like vacuum-of-space quiet, and you looked at me and I looked at you, from your foot all the way up to your face. And I saw you.

They say “love is blind.” Uh-uh. Love, is clear as a bell. I saw you. Under the blinding moonlight I saw you.

Scoobi stirs. She pulls the earphones from her ears. She lifts the her night-mask. She stares straight into Soldier’s eyes for a long time.

Stare. Stare. Stare.

Then.

Go away. SCOOBI

Really? SOLDIER

She bolts up.

Go. SCOOBI

Go where? Scoobi-- SOLDIER

GO! SCOOBI

We hear noise coming from the door. It’s Dylan who has locked himself out. He knocks gingerly.

A very annoyed Scoobi gets up to let him in.

Where’s your key?! SCOOBI

I, I don’t have one, a house key DYLAN

Oh. SCOOBI

She turns to go back to bed.

The soldier stands between her and the sofa bed.

Stubborn, he's not going anywhere.

Dylan is shedding clothing.

Scoobi looks to him.

DYLAN

I'm really sorry I woke you up. I went out to watch game seven and on the way back I ran out of gas and my phone died and I had to walk--

Scoobi makes sure the soldier sees as she goes to Dylan and plants a big kiss on his mouth.

The soldier is at last defeated and he goes away. For now. Dylan is confused. Happy, but confused.

SCOOBI

(indifferent)

Stay out as long as you want. I'm not your mom.

She returns to her bed, dons her eye mask, but does not go back to sleep.

Light coming from the kitchen. We hear the morning Mexican radio station and Petra busy. She appears in her robe with a bath towel.

PETRA

Oh. Dylan, you're up already!

DYLAN

Uh well--

PETRA

Oh, I didn't think to coordinate--are you done in the bathroom? I was about to shower, but I can--

DYLAN

I already showered.

Oh good, excuse me?

PETRA

She exits to the bathroom.

The tea kettle whistles. Dylan startles, then exits to the kitchen and apparently figures out how to turn off the stove.

He comes back to the living space.

Petra enters fresh from shower.

DYLAN

Wow. That was fast.

PETRA

What was fast?

DYLAN

Uh, your shower, really quick.

PETRA

Well, there's three of us using the hot water now.

DYLAN

Right. ???

Petra exits. Dylan examines Scoobi sleeping, begins to settle in--he starts looking for something.

We hear Petra in the kitchen.

PETRA (O.S.)

Dylan, I made you a lunch. It's the blue vinyl bag in the 'frigerator.

Dylan has found his favorite stuffed animal. Petra appears fully dressed for work, various bags in hand.

DYLAN

Are you going out?

PETRA

To work!

DYLAN

Where do you work?

PETRA

Ay Dylan, today? First the sewing factory then the medical offices.

At this hour? DYLAN

I know, I'm running late! PETRA

Scoobi's gotten out of bed.

Okay mi'jo you have a good day. PETRA

(to Scoobi)
Buenos días mi vida.

Morning mom, que te vaya bien. SCOObI

The soldier returns. Scoobi sees him pick up Dylan's stuffed toy and cradle it like an infant. She exits to the bathroom.

Dylan, I have to go. We'll talk later, no? PETRA

She moves to the front door.

Petra registers Scoobi's couch-bed and the Dylan's 'bedroll' on the floor.

Is this where you slept? On the floor?! PETRA

Uh-- DYLAN

Esa muchachita! Pobrecito Dylan. No wonder you don't look rested! Don't worry, we're gonna fix that-- PETRA

She scurries through the front door.

Omiga' I can't be late! Bye mi'jo, hava gooday! PETRA

DYLAN

Uh, should I walk you?--wait! I could give you a ride! I have ...a car...

We hear Scoobi in the bathroom, vomiting.

Dylan goes to knock on the door.

The Soldier tucks the stuffed toy into Scoobi's blankets.

(Off)

DYLAN

Hey! Are you okay?!

SCOOBI

Yes! I'm getting dressed!

DYLAN

Do ..you...want anything? Coffee?

SCOOBI

NO! Thanks.

Dylan returns, starts to undress for bed. He notices his stuffed toy. He examines Scoobi's sleep mask. He smells it. He smells her pillow. Soldier watches.

SOLDIER

What the --?

Dylan exhausted, surrenders to the comfort of Scoobi's couch, falls asleep with his stuffed toy.

Scoobi emerges from the bathroom, dressed. She goes to the kitchen and returns with a stack of saltine crackers that she nibbles (to quell her nausea) as she gathers her school things. She startles when she sees Dylan on the couch.

She deliberately drops a book onto the floor, to wake Dylan.

SCOOBI

(hint-hint)

I always make the bed before I leave.

DYLAN

Huh?

Does he have a chubby?!

SCOOBI

....!

Dylan jumps up.

DYLAN

Oh. Right. Sorry. I was just resting my eyes. Excuse me!

He exits to the bathroom.

Scoobi sees Soldier.

SOLDIER

Nice try. Musta been some kiss. Too bad you didn't mean it.

Scoobi folds away her linen from the couch and Dylan's bedroll from the floor.

She picks up the stuffed toy and starts to cry.

Dylan emerges from the bathroom with dog tags in hand.

DYLAN

Hey, who's "Ricardo Antonio Tovar"?

SCOOBI

Give me those!

She snatches them from him.

DYLAN

Was that your dad?

SOLDIER

(to Scoobi)

“Who’s your daddy?”

DYLAN

I know, I know. It’s in the file right?

SOLDIER

Am I? Am I in that stack of paper you’re passing off as your life?

DYLAN

Wait, “Tovar”? How come you don’t have your dad’s name?

SOLDIER

Tell him Mrs. O’Reilly.

An easily distracted Dylan, discovers the saltines.

DYLAN

Hey, can I have some crackers?

He helps himself.

SOLDIER

Go ahead, you are what you eat! ...Scoobi?

SCOOBI

GO AWAY!

SOLDIER

I did.

DYLAN

....??

Scoobi tries to recover:

SCOOBI

Shoo fly, go away!

She swats at the elusive soldier.

Dylan tries to see the fly that Scoobi is apparently chasing throughout the obstacle course of the room.

The soldier is enjoying this a little too much.

Scoobi accidentally drops the dog tags in the ensuing chase. Everything stops.

Beat.

SCOOBI

(re: dog tags)

Ricardo Tovar. Roko.
He wasn't my father. He was my...
We were together.
We were supposed to stay together.
But he wasn't born here either.
And one day he went far away, first to Iraq then to Afghanistan.
And he didn't come back.

(to Soldier)

And now he's gone. Forever.

(to Dylan)

That's not in the file, but you probably should know that.

Beat.

Dylan offers her a saltine. She accepts.

DYLAN

Did you guys meet in Mexico?

SCOOBI

...??

DYLAN

When your mom went back and had you?

SCOOBI

What? What did she tell you?

Scoobi's phone sounds.

SCOOBI

Shit! What time is it?!

DYLAN

It's early! Barely 8 o'clock.

SCOOBI

Damnit! I'm late!

She scrambles to gather her things.

DYLAN

Where are you going?

SCOOBI

I -- I have an appointment-- then work. Then class, then seminar, then my other job, then study group, then the law clinic--shit!

She's out the door.

DYLAN

Uh, bye? Wait! Do you want a ride? I have a....

Dylan makes the bed. He finds Scoobi's enormous file folder and sits on the couch to study. Dylan reads for a bit, a paper falls from the file. He picks it up.

DYLAN

(reading)

"Capitán Insurgente Petra... a rebel insurgent ... uprising against the Mexican Government... whaa? "

"In war we should be ready to lose what we love most."

Dylan exits with the file. (to bathroom?)

The Medical office.

Scoobi enters, sits on the table. She places a sheet over her lap and lays down supine, head downstage. Legs spread, knees bent, feet in metal stirrups.

The Soldier appears.

	SOLDIER
Scoobi, no.	
	SCOOBI
Go away.	
	SOLDIER
Scoobi, no! Don't do this.	
	SCOOBI
Go. Away. I mean it.	
	SOLDIER
Please Scoobi.	
	SCOOBI
Oh my god, not now, you can't be here now. You can't be here anymore!	
	SOLDIER
Scoobi, babe--	
	SCOOBI
No!	
	SOLDIER
Scoobi, don't this do this. Don't kill me twice.	
	SCOOBI
I told you not to go. I begged you not to go.	
	SOLDIER
You were right. You're always right. Almost always; but not now. This is us Scoobi. That's a piece of me that's going to love you forever. Please just wait Scoobi--	
	SCOOBI
Stop.	
	SOLDIER
Don't you know how beautiful our kid will be?	
	SCOOBI
Stop.	

SOLDIER

What if it's a girl Scoobi?

SCOOBI

Shut up.

SOLDIER

How could you do this to our little baby girl? Scoobi, I saw, I saw it on NOVA on PBS, our little girl's inside of you, right now her little fin hands are there, holding onto her lifeline, caressing it, holding on to us.

SCOOBI

Go away--

SOLDIER

We made a little astronaut Scoobi. How can you cut the tether? How can you send our little soul out into orbit like that?

SCOOBI

Fuck you, I'm lost, I'm the one orbiting.... in the deepest darkest, inner-space.

SOLDIER

Scoobi, I'm sorry-- It was gonna work. What else could we do? I enlisted. I finally had a job, a legit job. I sent you everything I made. I was almost done. I had benefits, credit, I was gonna get my papers, for us!

SCOOBI

Oh, by the way, you got them. First Lieutenant Ricardo “Roko” Tovar, citizenship granted. Posthumously.

Beat.

SOLDIER

Yeah, bad timing huh?

SCOOBI

Insult to fatal injury.

SOLDIER

We shoulda got hitched before I went in...like you said.

SCOOBI

I can't even say “I told you so!”

SOLDIER

Uh, you just did?

Beat.

SOLDIER

Scoobi, I knew it when it happened.

SCOOBI

SHHHHHHHHHhhh--

SOLDIER

It was when I came home on leave, during Ramadan. They cut a bunch of us loose.

SCOOBI

I didn't think I'd see you for at least another six months.

SOLDIER

I'd already talked to your moms, to the Van Southerlyquelachingadas, who you were supposed to babysit for that weekend...

SCOOBI

When I got home, somehow I felt you

SOLDIER

I watched thru the vertical blinds as you came to the door and ...

SOLDIER/SCOOBI

...stopped.

SCOOBI

It was like...I could see the door breathing.

SOLDIER

I held my breath.

SCOOBI

I wished, everyday I wished, I dreamed about opening the door and finding you, waiting for me. And now. I could feel you. I wanted, I needed you to be there but I knew if you weren't there...if you weren't there...I'd...

SOLDIER

But I was there.

Beat.

SCOOBI

You were there.

SOLDIER

The door opened..

SOLDIER/SCOOBI

And you were there.

SCOOBI

I--

SOLDIER

You couldn't talk! Shit, how I'da liked to freeze that moment; for the first time ever you didn't know what to say.

Scoobi shakes and nods her head.

SOLDIER

So I picked you up. Like a bride. And I carried you to my cousin's truck.

SCOOBI

It didn't seem real...I buried my head in your neck and I could smell you. It was you, all your smells combined to smell like you. The way any hint of garlic crept through your pores, the smells of the sun on your skin, onions growing near a ditch, like pecan trees in the spring before they know there're pecans, like a mustang in heat--what's so funny?

Nothing. (laughing)

SOLDIER

What?

SCOOBI

Nothing!

SOLDIER

What's so funny?

SCOOBI

Nothin--"like a mustang in heat!" Ay que poetic!

SOLDIER

Scoobi's feelings are hurt.

SOLDIER

...Hey, come here.

SCOOBI

...

SOLDIER

Come here.

She does.

SCOOBI

Stinky!

SOLDIER

We drove around and found a place where we could put a tent.

Soldier throws the sheet over the table creating a tent.

SCOOBI

And there we were.

They both crawl inside/under.

Beat.

Scoobi screams back until her air runs out..

Soldier screams back until his air runs out.

Beat.

Scoobie, now calm as glass.

A moment. Their eyes glued.

Kiss. Super glued. Finally, Scoobi peels herself away and returns to the table.

SCOOBI

You were supposed to pull out.

SOLDIER

Yeah, tell that to the Commander in Chief.

Scoobi is not amused

SOLDIER

I know. I couldn't. I didn't.

SOLDIER

It was the last time for me Scoobi. I'm not sorry.

SCOOBI

You can't stay. Any part of you.

SCOOBI

Everything's already so hard I have so much to do. They're rounding us up Roko, they're sending us away-- I have to finish school, I'm so close now! But not with a baby! Not with your--I'm ...I can't tell you what I'm doing, but it's important, a lot of us are working, planning, organizing--I won't detour like my mom. I can't--

Not even for me?

SOLDIER

Beat.

You're dead.

SCOOBI

Penelope.

SOLDIER

Roko. You're dead.

SCOOBI

Roko moves slowly away from her, resisting the vacuum of his death.

Scoobi is once again supine on the table, sheet over her from the waist down, her feet in the stirrups.

A knock at the door.

A final look to Roko.

Come in.

SCOOBI

Lights out on Scoobi.

Roko in his own space stands and melts away through his tears. We hear the sounds of his fatal battle.

Later, the apartment.

Scoobi enters, moving slowly.

She walks around the space as though looking for something...or someone.

SCOOBI

Roko?
(sotto)

Silence.

She moves to the couch, where she finds Dylan's stuffed toy. She holds it to her belly and curls into a fetal position. Her eyes close.

A giant cockroach emerges and makes itself comfortable. Scoobi's eyes open.

THE COCKROACH

300 million.
300 million years.
That's me.
(with disdain)

200 thousand years. That's you.
So young, and so naive--
Barely a dingle-berry's dingle berry on the ass of time....
God... that sounds good--you got any crumbs around here?

The Cockroach gets up, staggers as it tries to walk.

THE COCKROACH

“La Cucaracha, la cucaracha
ya no puede caminar...”

The Cockroach looks to Scoobi to complete the phrase.
She doesn't.

THE COCKROACH

“Porque no tiene, porque le falta...”

Again The Cockroach looks to Scoobi to complete the phrase. Again she doesn't.

THE COCKROACH

“Marijuana ...?
pa' fumar?”

Crickets.

Goddamnit! You don't smoke, do you?!
Damn I miss Roko!

Beat.

Okay, okay!
I know when I'm not wanted: always!
Hey don't look so scared,
when we come crawling into your dreams esa,
its a sign of longevity, tenacity, somos tercas pues!
Just ask my Tío Gregor—
Shh...hold on....you hear that? Shit! La migra! Time to hide!
Ay vienen! Ponte trucha--
In war we should be ready to lose what we love most.

The Cockroach exits.

We hear noises at the door. Dylan again. Without a key.

Scoobi drags herself to the door to let him in and immediately returns to the couch.

DYLAN

Hey thanks, I didn't think anyone was here. I thought you had class and jobs and..stuff all day.

SCOOBI

I don't feel well.

DYLAN

Oh yeah you were hurling this morning. Maybe it's --

SCOOBI

Cramps! Women get cramps. Or don't you know?

DYLAN

Really? I didn't think that was a thing...? Should you go to the doctor or something?

SCOOBI

Jesus!

I just need to rest for a little bit, okay? Don't you have some place to be?

DYLAN

Oh yeah! I went to go re-register for the semester, but I forgot my ID...where did I leave it...?

Scoobi watches as he looks for it.

SCOOBI

So what did you?

DYLAN

....?

SCOOBI

You know you have to tell me, right?

DYLAN

What?

SCOOBI

Why you're here--

DYLAN

I told you. I need tuition and room and board!

SCOOBI

CUT THE BULLSHIT!

DYLAN

Okay! Jeez, someone's a little cranky.

Scoobi has a sharp cramp.

SCOOBI

Just forget it.

DYLAN

Okay look, I had a scholarship, a baseball scholarship, but I messed it up and my dad cut me off until I finish school. I just have one more year to go---you're right, I never really had a job-job--

SCOObI

What did you do to get kicked off the team? Drugs?!

DYLAN

Are you kidding me?

Look, I don't mean to brag, but, I mean, look at me. I'm an athlete. My bod is my temple.

SCOObI

WHAT DID YOU DO?

DYLAN

I, it was dumb.

SCOObI

Obviously.

DYLAN

But look, it wasn't against the law, I didn't hurt anybody-- I'll tell you, I promise, but I really need to get back to register before the nice lady that was helping me goes to lunch.

Scoobi cringes with pain.

SCOObI

Alright! Just go, like I said, I'm not your mom. But you are going to tell me.

DYLAN

(sotto mocking)

"But you are gonna tell me." Sounds like mom to me!

Dylan exits to kitchen.

SCOObI

What did you say?! Come back here!

DYLAN
(off)

I'm putting water on!

Scoobi's phone blows up with message alerts

Oh no. No. Oh shit.

SCOObI

Dylan returns.

DYLAN

I think somebody needs a nice cup of tea--

She texts furiously.

Damnit.

SCOObI

What's wrong?

DYLAN

They raided the sweatshop. No one knows where she is...

DYLAN

The captain insurgent!?

SCOObI

...??

DYLAN

It's in the file! Dang! Who made the raid?

SCOObI

I.C.E.!

La Migra!!!

DYLAN

I didn't think that really happened

SCOObI

Oh my god, this is a nightmare.

She cries.

DYLAN

Is it really bad?

They're gone...
SCOObI

Huh?
DYLAN

Everyone. Everyone's gone.
SCOObI

Hey I'm here, and Petra, she'll be back...right?
DYLAN

...?
SCOObI

Right?!
DYLAN

SCOObI
(still in her phone)
I don't know! They took everyone. They came in with guns and rounded everyone up who works there. If they don't have papers, they'll sent away, far away from their homes, their jobs, our families. It's not "fake!"

DYLAN
Wow. I didn't know, I mean I kinda knew, but I didn't realize. What are you gonna do?

SCOObI
I don't know. No one knows anything yet, except that there was a raid.

Sound has been building: helicopters? Urban sounds? The tea kettle whistles, startling Dylan and Scoobi.
Dylan exits to the kitchen to turn it off. The Mexican radio station comes on: "El Himno Zapatista/EZLN"

TRANSITION TO CHIAPAS 1993

The rickety bus to San Christobal de las Casas, Chiapas. The corrido plays from the driver's console. Young Petra is asleep on the shoulder of the campesina beside her.

Young Petra wakes up startled to find herself on the stranger's shoulder.

YOUNG PETRA

I'm so sorry.

ADELA

Shh. No need to apologize.
It's good to take the time to dream...before we wake up.

YOUNG PETRA

Do you know how much longer to San Cristóbal?

ADELA

Getting close.
You come from the States, yes?

YOUNG PETRA

No. I was born here, Veracruz. But yes, I live in the States.
How can you tell?

ADELA

(laughing)

How? Everything!
Are you on vacation ?

YOUNG PETRA

Vacation? What is that!?

ADELA

Ah yes. You're still a Mexican after all.

A moment. They assess each other. Adela "sneezes" = "the code." Petra returns the signal: a white handkerchief with the classic floral filigree design.

ADELA

(sotto voce)

Petra??

YOUNG PETRA

Yes...

ADELA

Do you have the supplies?

YOUNG PETRA

They're stowed below.

ADELA

You don't look like a lawyer.

YOUNG PETRA

I'm not. Not yet anyway.

ADELA

What do you do then, in the north?

YOUNG PETRA

Mostly I'm a student. I work at restaurant and I clean houses.

ADELA

Husband?

YOUNG PETRA

No!

ADELA

Children?

YOUNG PETRA

Hell no! No way.

ADELA

Not yet.

YOUNG PETRA

Not in the picture. Ever.
What's so funny?

ADELA

Pues, you! You'll see.

YOUNG PETRA

And you, how are you called?

ADELA

"A certain dose of tenderness is necessary in order to walk when there is so much against you ... A certain dose of tenderness is necessary in order to see, in this darkness, a small ray of light ... A certain dose of tenderness is necessary in order to get rid of all of the sons of bitches that exist. But sometimes a certain dose of tenderness is not enough and it's necessary to add...a certain dose of bullets." Call me Adela.

The bus comes to a stop.

ADELA

This is us. Ready?

YOUNG PETRA

Bullets?

ADELA

Remember, you're just passing through.

The plaza at San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas MX.

Young Petra and Adela supervise a relay of boxes that come off the bus.

GUERO, a street musician (same actor who plays "Dylan") inseparable from his guitar, and RAMIRO (played by same actor as "Soldier") help unload.

Ramiro, has a **distinctive** bandana tied round his head, covering his face from the eyes down.

YOUNG PETRA

(re: his bandana)

Asthma?

RAMIRO

Who can breathe?

YOUNG PETRA

Really? This air is so fresh.

RAMIRO

Thank you for bringing these.

Ramiro pulls out a knife and slices a box open. He examines the merchandise: black knit ski masks.

YOUNG PETRA

Thirty boxes of ski masks? In the jungle?

Ramiro slices the larger size box open. Pulls out a pair of boots.

RAMIRO

Five boxes of ski masks. Twenty-five boxes of boots.

He gives her an envelope of cash

RAMIRO

Next bus north comes by in two hours.

She examines and pockets it.

YOUNG PETRA

Im not ready to go back. Where do these go?

She goes to the boxes. Ramiro stops her.

RAMIRO

Compañera, you must be very tired, I can find you a place to stay tonight, but your job is done now, we thank you. Adela, can you please offer shelter or our compañera for the night?

YOUNG PETRA

Adela, thank you, but I'm really not tired just yet.

(to Ramiro)

Boots and ski masks... in the jungle? I don't understand, last time it was literacy materials, vitamins--who's in charge?

Beat.

This is not your struggle. RAMIRO

Bullshit. YOUNG PETRA

Actually it is. ADELA

Qué chinga'o? RAMIRO

Pos what would el Subcomandante say? ADELA

Subcomandante? YOUNG PETRA

Marcos! GUERO

Marcos? YOUNG PETRA

You see? I rest my case. RAMIRO

Who is Marcos? YOUNG PETRA

Who is Marcos?! Who is Marcos? I'll tell you who is Marcos! GUERO

A paper (communique) floats down from above into Güero's hands. He reads/declaims:

“Marcos is a gay person in the bible belt, Marcos is a black person in South Africa, a Mexican in Arizona, an anarchist in Spain, a Palestinian in Israel, a rocker in the Ex-Soviet Union, a Jew in Germany--

Okay, enough. RAMIRO

GUERO

In other words, Marcos is a human being in this world. Marcos is every untolerated, oppressed, exploited minority that is resisting and saying, "Enough!"

RAMIRO

Güero!

GUERO

Everything that makes those in power uncomfortable – -this is Marcos."
We are Marcos!

Beat.

YOUNG PETRA

He sounds like a woman.

ADELA

See?! *She* knows.

PETRA

So he is real!

RAMIRO

Compañera, I mean no disrespect. But we are not playing here. This is not a tourist attraction, or a research project--

GUERO

This is revolution man!

PETRA

Compañero, I mean no disrespect. But you're full of shit.

Ramiro is suddenly distracted, his focus in the distance.
Almost without looking he hands Petra a ski mask.

RAMIRO

Shit, they're here. Organize the boots by size, hurry, they don't have long!

Petra looks out to see where Ramiro is focusing. She is astounded.

PETRA

They all want boots?!

RAMIRO

And masks.

PETRA

(wide eyed astonishment) I
should have brought more...

She puts a ski mask on.

Güero and Adela sing as Petra and Ramiro distribute the
merchandise.

GUERO/ADELA

La Zapatista (tune of: "La Cucaracha") Y
El Zapatista
Ya no pueden aguantar
A las mentiras y las ideas
De lo neoliberal

We the men and women
Full and free and very conscious
Know this is the last resort to
Claim our freedom and our justice

We are armed with
The truth and fire
No more shame But
dignity
We'll shake the country
We'll wake the world up
To our sacred right to be

The now empty boxes form a shelter.

Young Petra and Ramiro, alone in the moonlit abode.
Ramiro hangs two hammocks in the space.

Petra, removes her shoes and ski mask, lays down in one
hammock. Ramiro, fully clothed, grabs a rifle and takes
repose in the other hammock. Sounds of the jungle.

Beat.

Ramiro produces a cord that he tosses to Petra. They each hold on to one end and use it to gently swing each other back and forth in their hammocks for a bit.

RAMIRO

For so long we were just a few. And then little by little we came together, until one day there we were, hundreds of us, maybe thousands, deep in the jungle, in front of our makeshift stage.

One comandante after another speaks in Mayan translated into Spanish. And then its time for el Subcomandante Marcos to speak. You can hear a pin drop when his tobacco pipe appears, hanging out of his ski mask. He takes the stage, waxes poetic for who knows how long, and then he says, “now I want to present the Zapatista army.”

And from the back of the make-shift stage come row after row of children, women, campesinos, with handkerchiefs around their face and in their hands, sticks, sickles, hoes-- and all kinds of farming tools and guns carved out of wood, painted black. And they just keep streaming out. People. Just people, this is the army that Marcos presents. This is our army: the people.

And then, he says, “Oh yes, we also have some commando units too”, and that’s when the rest of us file out in our olive drab and military gear--a few AK-47s, other weapons, you know. All of us behind kerchiefs and ski masks, hiding... to become visible.

They look at each other through the netting. Their eyes lock.

They each begin to remove pieces of clothing: one by one, a garment drops to the ground.

Ramiro, belays himself to Petra’s hammock. She pours herself into his net where he receives her.

She reaches for his face. He lets her.

PETRA

Qué guapeza.

RAMIRO

Tu.

They merge in a single net, two prey, willingly caught as:

El Güero plays music at plaza, San Cristobal.

A piece of paper floats down into el his hands.

GUERO

Atención!

Brothers and Sisters,

A new world war is waging against women, the indigenous, homosexuals, lesbians, people of color, immigrants, workers, peasants, queer, all those at someone else's margins-- But our humanity is not disposable!

For all those who share the song of life, the struggle against death, the flower of hope and the breath of dignity, we are united.

It is not necessary to conquer the world. It is sufficient with making it new.

The Zapatista Army of National Liberation Speaks.

Petra appears at the plaza, now very pregnant, bandana over her face.

PETRA

What do you think? Too on the nose?

GUERO

I think it's perfect. Poetic, provocative, pro-active. (re: her belly) And my little niece in her little orbit?

PETRA

A rebel with a cause...all night long.

GUERO

An insurgent... inside an insurgent...like a good Commie Russian doll!

PETRA

And your boy, how old is he?

GUERO

He's ten. He'll stay in the DF ...just for the winter of our discontent.

PETRA

Don't you miss him?

GUERO

Zacharías? My Zack? He's my heart. That's why we have to fight.

Ramiro appears, bandana over his face as well, loaded up with provisions.

PETRA

Here, let me help you.

RAMIRO

Na. You're already carrying enough.

PETRA

Por dios Ramiro, my hands are free!

RAMIRO

And that's how you'll keep them. Güero, hasta later.

GUERO

Later.

Petra and Ramiro walk away.

PETRA

I feel like I should be worried, but I'm not.

RAMIRO

Don't be worried. Be ready amor.

PETRA

Midnight.

RAMIRO

The element of surprise--if you wanna catch somebody, catch 'em when they're drunk and having a party. It worked for Fidel. Happy New Year--

PETRA

Pinches cabrones!

Inside a shelter.

Ramiro puts the supplies away. Petra takes to cleaning a rifle.

RAMIRO

Here, gimme.

She gives him the rifle and takes another one to clean.

RAMIRO

I don't need two.

PETRA

This is mine.

RAMIRO

Put it away.

PETRA

...?

RAMIRO

You'll stay here. Inside.

He takes the gun from her and puts it aside.

PETRA

Like hell I will!

She takes back the gun.

He yanks it from her hands.

RAMIRO

Woman!

PETRA

Ma-an?!

RAMIRO

You're staying here!

PETRA

No I'm not!

RAMIRO

Yes, you are!

PETRA

To hell with that, I don't need your permission!

RAMIRO

Do not defy me!

PETRA

Defy?! Oh, like this?

She takes her gun and begins to clean it.

He yanks it away again.

RAMIRO

Goddamnit! I
said NO!
I'M THE MAN AND YOU WILL YIELD TO ME!

Beat.

PETRA

Oh my god, who are you?!
"I'm the man!?"
"Yield to me?"

She beats her chest like Tarzan, walking around like an
ape, to demonstrate his attitude.

PETRA

"I'm the man! Yield to me! I'm the man"

Ramiro laughs in spite of himself. They both crack up,
laughing. Ramiro takes her in his arms.

RAMIRO

Mi negra, I know this is your fight too. You know I'll deny you nothing, but
tomorrow, you cannot fight.

PETRA

That's not for you to say! I'm a Captain, it's my duty.

Ramiro produces satchel.

RAMIRO

It's from la Comandante Chava.

From the satchel Young Petra pulls a carefully wrapped small, iridescent egg.

RAMIRO

You have to stay.

He caresses her belly, it almost hypnotizes her.

RAMIRO

Petra, mi negra, carifio mio, "the conscience of humanity passes through the female conscience."

YOUNG PETRA

Tomorrow...

RAMIRO

Tomorrow...if there is to be one, will be made...

YOUNG PETRA

...with the women, by the women.

They embrace and devour each other as though they might never see each other again.

Guero at the plaza, San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas.

GUERO

(To the melody of *La Cucaracha*)

On the first of January
1994 muy early
From the jungle mountains misty
Came the liberation army

A piece of paper (comunique) floats down into el his hands.

GUERO

To the People of the world :
Brothers and sisters:
After 500 years of struggle
The war that we declare is our last resort!

Gunfire. Guero rocks out, using his guitar as a weapon as
he sings:

GUERO

(La Cucaracha melody)

The Zapatistas
The Zapatistas
Won't put up with laNAFTA
Because they know that
this poisoned treaty
is the downfall of us all!

Adela and Petra at the hut. Petra squats. Adela donning
bandoliers, gun nearby.

Petra's wail prevails over the sound of gunfire.

GUERO

We demand nothing less than life!
To live, with a freedom that is not dependent on the slavery of others!

Sound of gunfire as a cascade of black ski masks fall
from the sky.

Silence.

A newborn's cry as Ramiro's single distinctive bandana
floats down from the sky.

GUERO

(Corrido melody: Valentin de la Sierra)

Durante los do-ce dias
We lost one-hundred-and-fi-ifty
To the federal soldiers
On the wrong side of our his-tory.

Petra limp in a hammock. Baby Penelope, in another.

El Guero plays a haunting melody .

Adela lays compresses over Petra's forehead. She rocks the baby's hammock, keeps it swaying.

ADELA

Nifia, niina. Sweet little creature. I wish you could stay.
How I ' d like to be there when you leap, and run and scream and shout with all the current of your daddy Ramiro, and all the fire of your mother Petra.

GUERO

After twelve days, a cease-fire
The world had heard our message
Our struggle still is evolving
Revolución is a process

ADELA

For now I will rock you gently gently...
Later it won't be so gentle.
But you'll know; you'll know to take their momentum, for our movement.

GUERO

Ya se acabó el corrido
For all those who gave their lives
Like my compadre Ramiro
Justice does not compromise.

ADELA

Asi es mi preciosa creatura, there are so many of you being born now.
Your fates will take you north where you will be unwanted--but needed.
We'll be ready to help mi'jita. We'll be ready.
Your birthday is just the beginning.

GUERO

(Slow. Bluesy. La Cucaracha melody.)

So much for our little detour
Back to 1994
Now you know how baby dreamer
Was begot from love and war.

Adela picks the infant up and carries her away. Petra packs up.

Petra dons her backpack and gifts Giiro Ramiro's kerchief. He makes a swift and painful goodbye.

Adela returns to hand Petra her a large bundle: a two-year old Penelope, sound asleep and wrapped in a blanket that drapes over Petra's shoulder.

ADELA

I told you, you--

YOUNG PETRA

...were just passing through. Yes, Adela.

ADELA

Time to go back. Time for her, to go back. La nifia, Penelope has work to do there.

YOUNG PETRA

Por dios, Adela she's only two!

ADELA

Well she better get busy!

YOUNG PETRA

Adela...

ADELA

Shh, It'll be okay. El Mosco will meet you in Laredo. He'll get you across. Don't trust anyone else.

They share a final embrace. Adela gives them a blessing.

A 'scratchy' corrido as the brakes of a diesel monster screech to a halt.

ADELA

Hasta la proxima.

The scratchy corrido morphs back into the Himno Zapateco and the ambient apartment sounds prior to Chiapas.

The apartment appears once again.

Pre-dawn, the following day.

Dylan is sleeping soundly.

Scoobi alone.

We hear someone at the door. Knocking.

END OF ACT I

ACT II

The apartment.

Pre-dawn, the following day.

Dylan is sleeping soundly.

Scoobi alone.

We hear someone at the door. Knocking.

Beat.

More knocking. Dylan doesn't wake.

Scoobi goes to open the door.

SCOOBI

Mom!

PETRA

Shh, you'll wake up Dylan.

SCOOBI

What?!

PETRA

Niña, what are you doing up at this hour?

SCOOBI

Oh my god, are you okay?? I thought they took you.

PETRA

Shh. Penelope. ? Have you eaten? Let me make you something to eat.

SCOOBI

WHERE WERE YOU?!

Dylan wakes. They don't notice. He observes.

PETRA

Oh let me see...dancing the night away? What do you mean, where was I?

SCOOBI

I wish! I wish you'd get a life-

PETRA

Penelope don't start. It's late--

SCOOBI

All you do, all you've ever done is sacrifice, sacrifice, sacrifice, work your ass off and then sacrifice some more. That's what you taught me, and now I did it, now I made the sacrifice and it--

PETRA

Pero niña, yes, we all sacrifice but you agreed to this, it's temporary--

SCOOBI

No it's not. It's done.

She looks closely at her daughter who turns away.

PETRA

What's wrong? Did something happen?

Beat.

SCOOBI

No! Yes, something happened! ...I thought they took you--

PETRA

No...that's not it--

SCOOBI

They said ICE took everyone.

PETRA

Niña, cálmate, it's been a long day, let's get some rest, no?

Beat.

SCOOBI

How are you here? Are you okay?

PETRA

Yes, I'm fine...I left my station to get some velcro and that's when ninja turtles busted in. I

found a place to hide inside a quinceañera dress.

SCOOBI

Mom, that went down at 10 am!

PETRA

No wonder I'm so hungry.

SCOOBI

Mom, I was--

PETRA

Why are you still dressed? Anda, get changed for bed. I'll make some breakfast and then we'll get some rest, no?

Go on! Pajamas!

Scoobi exits.

Petra's composure breaks, water from her eyes.

Dylan pretends to sleep, breathing extra deeply.

Petra recovers. Scoobi returns.

SCOOBI

He'd sleep through an earthquake.

PETRA

Have you tried? An "earthquake?"

SCOOBI

Mom! No...ew! I'm not hungry anymore.

PETRA

Why aren't you changed for bed?

I'm not tired. Mom?

SCOOBI

Qué?

PETRA

Beti?

SCOOBI

Petra shakes her head.

Lala?

SCOOBI

Petra shakes her head.

Consuelo?

SCOOBI

Petra shakes her head.

Pati?

SCOOBI

Petra slowly shakes her head no.

Shit! Goddamn it--

SCOOBI

PETRA

Shh. Get some rest. Tomorrow--later, we'll check in with their families. Don't be afraid mi'ja.

I'm not afraid. I'm pissed.

SCOOBI

Good.

PETRA

An alarm clock goes off from Petra's 'room'.

Time to wake up.

PETRA

Beat.

Dylan 'wakes' up with an exaggerated stretch and yawn.

DYLAN

Good...morning!

From the kitchen radio:

“Buenos días damas y caballeros. Tiempo para despertar y conquistar otro día!...”

Music from the radio plays as a sequence of movement ensues. It should be a stylized choreography conveying a passage of time.

Petra, Scoobi and Dylan going about a daily routine, negotiating each other's space and rhythms, until by the end they are familiar and second-nature.

The movements may include:

First Scoobi, then Dylan folding and unfolding the sofa bed.

Dylan's calisthenics.

Scoobi setting up her laptop, studying, standing, pacing, packs up her books and computer, exiting returning, repeat.

Scoobi asleep in her chair. Dylan picks her up and carries her to the bed. He lays her down, removes her shoes and tucks her in.

Petra enters the apartment, removes her shoes and sweater and leaves them by the door. She exits thru the kitchen. She returns, exits thru the kitchen, returns with her “lunch” bag. She dons her shoes and sweater and exits thru the front door. Repeat.

Petra emerging from the kitchen in a rush to put on her shoes. Dylan retrieves her lunch bag and thermos that he's prepared. He helps her on with her jacket and sees her out the door.

Until they are all out the door.

Weeks later. The apartment.

Petra and Dylan enter with duffle bags and laundry baskets. Scoobi follows.

SCOOBI

We should have just folded there!

PETRA

No. I don't think so.

DYLAN

That place is amazing. It's better than going through the car wash in your car. I mean, you get to see your stuff spinning around in suds, plus the amazing sea of humanity!

Petra and Scoobi empty laundry onto the table and begin folding.

SCOOBI

They're already wrinkled!

DYLAN

So many machines! We did, what? Like eight loads of laundry in one hour? That's crazy!

PETRA

(to Scoobi)

Would you prefer wrinkles or cucarachas?

DYLAN

(singing, kind of)

"La cucaracha! La cucaracha!"

Petra and Scoobi stop him with a look.

SCOOBI

You know what you're singing about? You're singing about a cockroach!

DYLAN

Really? That's rad!

PETRA

Actually, it's a metáfora. That's an old song m'ijo, from the revolution.

DYLAN

Yeah...that's what I thought.

Dylan exits to the kitchen.

SCOOBI

You really saw a cockroach there? Why didn't you say something?

PETRA

I did. I said, "let's go!"

SCOOBI

You should have told me. I'd of talked to the manager, they need to have standards. I'm going to report them to the health department. It's a public health hazard. I'll organize a boycottt--

PETRA (SOTTO)

Scoobi! The "cockroaches"... had badges on.

SCOOBI

Shit!

Dylan emerges drinking out of a carton of milk. The women stare.

DYLAN

What? Oh shit-shoot. Sorry Scoobi, I thought this was the whole milk. I'll put it back. Look, I barely drank...2% ... of the 2%....get it?

He returns the carton to the kitchen and returns.

PETRA

Dylan, why don't you help me. Do you know how to fold a fitted sheet?

DYLAN

Oh yeah, here I'll do it.

He takes the sheet and basically wads it up, proudly.

PETRA

Muy creative Dylan. Here, let me show you another method. Look, I'm gonna put it

inside out and now I'm going to bring two corners together like this. Now I'm going to do the same with the other two corners...and now I'm going to tuck them all together...see, little pockets! Now let's lay it out on the table, we fold the edges in, hide the elastic, and look we have a nice rectangle and it's easy to fold and fold and fold and Viola!

She finishes with a tidy little rectangle.

DYLAN

That. Is. Awesome. It's so smooth and perfect. Can we do another one?!

Scoobi throws a fitted sheet at his face.

DYLAN

Thanks! I got this!

He proceeds to fold it.

PETRA

Penelope, go on, study. I'll finish. You too Dylan.

DYLAN

No I want to fold these, plus I already did my homework.

SCOOBI

When? I've never seen you crack open a book.

DYLAN

Did you ever hear of a the tutoring lab, Miss Smarty Pants? I usually do my work at school, or at night while you're busy sawing some logs.

SCOOBI

I don't snore.

PETRA

Actually-

SCOOBI

Mom!

DYLAN

It's okay, really I kinda like it! It's like a weird little lullaby.

Scoobi holds back tears.

DYLAN

Uh, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to make you cry. You don't snore, I was just kidding.

PETRA

Well, actually--

DYLAN

Mom!

Beat.

SCOOBI

What the ?

DYLAN

Oh shi-oot. I'm sorry. It just slipped...

PETRA

Dylan, mi'jo! Come here. Yes, call me "mom". You are part of this family and I'm the mother.

DYLAN

Really?

PETRA

Nothing would make me happier.

DYLAN

Gracias, "mom!"

SCOOBI

This is a nightmare.

DYLAN

Actually, I'm out of whole milk, can I do a grocery run, mom?

PETRA

That'd be great Dylan.

DYLAN

I'll get the list.

SCOOBI

This should be interesting.

He's back.

DYLAN

What's a "fiddleee-oo"?

PETRA

Fideo. It's with the pasta, look for the vermicelli. Same thing.

DYLAN

What's coti-juh? Oh wait! I know, that's the cheese, right?

SCOOBI

You're a genius.

PETRA

Scoobi!

DYLAN

Thanks!

SCOOBI

Oh yeah, while you're there, I need some PADS. Get me a big box of maxi-pads.

DYLAN

O-kay. Big box of maxi-pads? Oh! Yeah, pads, like for uh...yeah, got it.

PETRA

Dylan, take the EBT card.

Petra produces the EBT card.

DYLAN

Oh yeah, what's the PIN again?

PETRA

It's the year Penelope was born.

DYLAN

Right. When were you born again? I mean, not 'born-again,' but when--

Scoobi walks away and returns with a ball point pen. She takes his wrist and writes on it.

DYLAN

Hey that tickles. Okay, all set. Bye Scoobi! Bye mom!

Beat.

PETRA

Why are you so mean to him? It's not going to bring Ricardo back.

Scoobi glares at Petra, then starts folding clothes double time. Petra folds as well.

PETRA

Niña, what's the matter?

SCOOBI

Everything! Now we can't even go to the laundry mat?!

PETRA

Penelope, we adjust.

They place the folded items into the laundry baskets. Scoobi brings her computer to the table and types furiously. Petra scrutinizes her.

SCOOBI

What?

Petra shrugs and keeps observing.

Beat(s).

Petra gets up and walks around the house quietly as though she is looking for something...or someone. Scoobi pretends not to notice. Petra returns to the table.

PETRA

He's gone, isn't he?

SCOOBI

Who?

PETRA

Roko.

SCOOBI
Yes mom. He's dead, remember?

Petra takes in a giant breath and lets it out.

PETRA
Que descanse en paz Roquito.

SCOOBI
Yup. Somebody might as well get some peace.

PETRA
It was time. Time you both let go.

SCOOBI
Rrrrrright.

PETRA
Qué qué??

SCOOBI
Nothing.

PETRA
Uh-uh, cómo qué, “rrrrrrright”?

SCOOBI
Never mind!!

PETRA
Say it.

SCOOBI
No!

PETRA
Spit it out! NOW!

FINE!!

When are *you* gonna “let go”?!

PETRA

Let go of what?!

SCOOBI

Let go of your own ghost!

PETRA

Scoobi don’t start. I don’t need a ghost; I have you--

SCOOBI

That’s not fair! I can’t be everything to you! So you can just work, work, work! You coulda had a companion!

PETRA

I --

SCOOBI

Besides me!

And I coulda had a father ...but you had to be such a righteous little mojada, staying faithful to your fucking ghost of a revolutionary, while you pimp me out to have the life you wanted for yourself, but were too scared to live--

Petra slaps her.

Beat.

SCOOBI

There! There it is! Finally! That’s all you got?! No wonder you’re revolution failed.

Petra breathes deep. She produces the tequila and two glasses.

PETRA

Sit.

SCOOBI

Wow, great parenting. When the going gets tough, pull out the booze!

Petra makes an offering, pours and sips.

Petra pushes the glass toward Scoobi.

Scoobi pounds it. Petra pours her another.

PETRA

(calm)

My revolution did not fail. My revolution, she just grew up. Salud.

You're right, the ghosts are still here, but not for me, you're the draw. The ancestors are counting on you.

SCOOBI

I didn't ask for this! Everything is so hard because you chickened out! What if you had stayed? What if we had stayed? My father sacrificed his life! He was a hero, and you just checked out?

PETRA

Your father was a pendejo.

Okay maybe not a pendejo, but a very very handsome macho idealist, and now we know better... we always did.

SCOOBI

...?

PETRA

Que chinga'o. "Honor,"? "revenge,"? "violence,"? it's all a bunch of overcompensating mierda so we don't have to be accountable, so we don't have to grieve, so we don't have to feel-- "Whoever kills the most is the winner?!"

No imagination.

SCOOBI

You are such a hypocrite--

PETRA

Am I? ...No, I don't think so. Even in the beginning, the gun was a last resort and we knew it was transitional. We knew violence cannot sustain peace.

SCOOBI

Right. What about that "certain dose of bullets"?

PETRA

Exactly. We used a *certain* dose of bullets. And then it was time for literacy, and co-ops, and art and music and poetry, and us, the women. It's our time to offer another way. The *compañeros* in the mountains, they know it. And now it's time they know it here too.

She starts to exit.

SCOOBI

Where are you going?

PETRA

I have to change for work.

SCOOBI

Really?!

PETRA

....?

SCOOBI

You should lay low.... ICE is coming out in force now --

PETRA

We still have choices Penelope.
I'm choosing not to stop.

She exits. Scoobi is still. Then she walks around the space as Petra had. She lays on the couch, eyes wide open. She gets up.

SCOOBI

Hello?

Nothing. Roko's absence sets in. Petra returns, in yoga gear with various bags.

SCOOBI

You're going to work like that?

PETRA

I have graveyard at the strip mall, the yoguero güeros are throwing in free class first. Why not?

SCOOBI

Yoga? Since when do you do yoga?

PETRA

I won't be here in the morning, I'm going straight to sew after that. Make sure you eat a good breakfast.

Petra kisses her goodbye and exits. Scoobi goes back to work at her computer.

A moment.

Dylan enters with bags of groceries.

DYLAN

I found the fideos!! Yes!!
And here, I didn't know if you wanted spring breeze or unscented.

She accepts the feminine products, gets up to help put away the groceries.

SCOOBI

Thanks, for doing the shopping.

DYLAN

No, I got it. Do your thing.

She goes back to the computer. He goes into the kitchen. We hear him putting things away.

DYLAN

Does mayonnaise go in the fridge or the cupboard?

SCOOBI

Cupboard, till it's open.

DYLAN

Tomatoes? Fridge?

SCOOBI

No! Counter.

Bread? DYLAN

Bread? You mean tortillas? SCOObI

No. Bread. Seems like it gets all moldy on the counter, but then it gets all cold in the fridge. DYLAN

He emerges in the doorway with two pints of ice cream.

Hey, which one? Chocolate chip mint or pistachio? DYLAN

You bought ice cream? SCOObI

Yee-ah. See? DYLAN

I can't believe you bought ice cream. Gimme the receipt. SCOObI

He does.

Oh my god. Fruit loops *and* Honey O's? SCOObI
Doritos?
Cheetos?
Ruffles?
Coke?!
Frozen Pizza?!!
Cheese Whiz?!!!
Ritz crackers?!!!!
Frozen waffles?!!!!!!

And ice cream! DYLAN

... SCOObI

What? I got everything on the list too! DYLAN

SCOObI
We're on FOOD STAMPS!

DYLAN
I know!

He proudly shows his wrist with her birthday PIN.

SCOObI
Look, see here at the bottom of the receipt? See where it says "balance"? How much?

DYLAN
Dude, there's still a balance! \$4.57!

SCOObI
For the rest of the month!

DYLAN
So?

SCOObI
So?! So you spent our budget for the next three weeks on junk food.

DYLAN
Wait. What?

SCOObI
We get a certain amount every month. It's called "budgeting." We don't have any more food stamps for three weeks now. It means we have to go into our pockets to buy food.

DYLAN
I'm sorry Scoobi. I didn't know. No one explained it to me. Here, I can return it, shit-

SCOObI
It's okay. It's okay.... It's not the end of the world.

DYLAN
I'm an idiot, god I'm a douche—

SCOObI
It's okay. Forget it. I should have figured, I mean, you've never been on food stamps.

DYLAN
Uh-uh.

Beat.

Scoobi? DYLAN

What? SCOOBI

Well, your dad. What happened to him? DYLAN

He died. The day I was born. SCOOBI

He died in childbirth?! DYLAN

... SCOOBI

Wait, that's not what I meant. DYLAN

Scoobi cracks up laughing. She can't stop.

Uh okay. It wasn't that funny. But hey, it's nice to see you laughing. I don't think I ever heard you laugh before! I made you laugh! Cool. DYLAN

Her laughter turns to crying.

Uh-oh. Here, here's a tissue. Scoobi? You okay. DYLAN

Yeah. I'm okay. SCOOBI

Sorry about your dad. DYLAN

He was a warrior. He died for what he believed in. SCOOBI

What did he believe in? DYLAN

Justice. SCOOBI

DYLAN

No wonder you're--

SCOOBI

What? No wonder I'm what?!

DYLAN

Nothing...I guess, no wonder you're so, feisty, I mean, look who your folks were.

SCOOBI

WHAT DO YOU MEAN "feisty"??!!

DYLAN

-----.

SCOOBI

Oh.

DYLAN

It's good. I like it-- I mean--

SCOOBI

Pistachio.

DYLAN

Oh, now you want what I have. Here.

He spoon feeds her. She lets him.

DYLAN

So, how did he die? It doesn't say in the file.

SCOOBI

He died fighting. It was an uprising. The people in the mountains of Chiapas took arms against the government, the federal government.

DYLAN

Damn! That's some George Washington, Lin Manuel Miranda shit!

SCOOBI

More like Boukman, Bolivar, Castro, Sandino, Popé, Crazy Horse, Geronimo, Sitting Bull, Zapata--

DYLAN

The people of the corn...

SCOOBI

Yeah...my dad was a revolutionary and then my mom joined the struggle.
The EZLN.

Her phone rings.

SCOOBI

Shit!
....Bueno?....Sí, sí, ya voy! Disculpa.

Hangs up.

SCOOBI

I'm late for shift at the law clinic.

Quickly gathers her things as she spills out:

SCOOBI

It's a movement. It started a long time ago.

In Mexico, the indigenous people, like the Native Americans here, like the black people here, have always been treated like shit.

In the Mexican revolution, 1910--Zapata and Villa fought for them. They called out the corrupt government, they demanded that the peasants, the indios be given rights to land, water, forests. And they got it, Article 27

Then in 1991, the asshole President of Mexico did away with it-- taking the land away from the people who worked it, lived on it, prayed on it, honored it, just so that a whole bunch of corporations could take over. Got it?

DYLAN

What—

SCOOBI

It's complicated. Google it. Zapatistas! Ski masks! Thanks for the ice cream.

She exits.

Dylan opens his laptop.

DYLAN

Zapa...zapatos? ...Zappa, Frank...Zappos?

Oh yeah, ski masks, ski masks... Emiliano Zapata... good-looking dude!

...Zapatista Army of National Liberation! Whaa?!

He presses “enter”. Dylan mesmerized, reads:

DYLAN

“We demand nothing less than life...to live with a freedom that is not dependent on the slavery of others...”

Woooooow...

The apartment and Dylan disappear.

Scoobi appears in the ceremonial robes for her doctorate of jurisprudence graduation.

SCOOBI

The law, like all of us, is far from perfect.

When I started law school, I was infatuated, anticipating a romance for the ages -- but, instead, I was often provoked, disillusioned, disappointed--by an opaque lexicon, by the seemingly endless contradictions of rhetoric, by the malleability of a so-called absolute.

(Does she make eye contact with Dylan here?)

And yet. A concerted investment of time and attention has yielded a poetry and truth I could never have imagined.

I stand here now, with a radical and profound appreciation for the letter of the law, and yet, more than ever, am conscious that it is the spirit of the law that must supersede our ignorance, our biases, and our fears.

None of us succeeds nor fails on our own. To my mother, Petra, thank you for the countless sacrifices you’ve made. And thank you, to my husband, Dylan. You have made the impossible possible.

Our work is just beginning.

As a great friend of my father's used to say,

RAMIRO, Scoobi's father appears, in all his Zapatista glory.

"Humanity lives in the chest of us all and, like the heart,

Scoobi sees her father, she is stunned.

SCOOBI

..it prefers to be on the left side."

Ramiro is beaming.

SCOOBI

And yes, "you may say I'm a Dreamer... but I'm not the only one."

Applause.

Scoobi slowly approaches the masked stranger.

A moment, as the two take each other in.

SCOOBI

Apá.

RAMIRO

Mi hija.

He is still there but she sees him fade away. She takes her cap to throw over her head

At her arm's full extension Ramiro takes the cap and waves it away in slow motion as he exits. Scoobi looks upward waiting for her cap to come back down.

The apartment.

Petra and Dylan at the table pour shots of tequila. Scoobi enters, lays her graduation gown nearby and joins them. Dylan still has his gown on, open.

The mood is oddly somber.

PETRA

To my children, the graduates!

DYLAN

No, this is for Scoobi. You were, you are amazing. To the summa cum laude!

SCOOBI

You too, Mr. Baccalaureate.

PETRA

I'm so proud of both of you. Salud!

They toast.

PETRA

And to Dylan, thank you for a wonderful meal at a beautiful restaurant.

SCOOBI

Yeah, cheers, that was really nice of you Dylan.

DYLAN

You're welcome. I mean, it wasn't me. My dad paid for it.

PETRA

I'm sure he wishes he could be here.

DYLAN

No he doesn't.

He does what he wants to do. Probably wasn't expecting me to finish. Probably didn't even want me to.

PETRA

Really? Are you gonna feel sorry for yourself, now?

SCOOBI

Mom?

PETRA

No, really. Dylan, you're my son-in-law, in the letter of the law, but like Penelope said today, it's the spirit of the law that counts. And in that spirit, pues, you're my son and you better snapear.

SCOOBI

Okay, enough, it's a celebration--

PETRA

So your dad didn't come to see his boy get a piece of paper.

Petra refreshes her tequila.

PETRA

It hurts. I know it hurts. But you're not a little boy anymore. You've known for a long time who those selfish, self-absorbed people are. You've know for a long time, they don't care about you--

SCOOBI

Amá!

DYLAN

Let her.

PETRA

Carajo Dylan! Get over it! I'm not saying to forget or to pretend they didn't hurt you, but let it go. You're young, you're healthy, you're handsome, now you're "educated" and you have at least two women who love you. Stop crying! You have our attention! You've had all our attention for the last year! We've provided you a home, it's modest, I know, but you've had a roof and food and your tuition and books and your gas money and you haven't had to do a thing outside this house but take your classes. Why? Because you were born here.

SCOOBI

Here we go...

Scoobi refreshes her and Dylan's tequila.

PETRA

Because you're a man. Because you're a white man in the United States. So your daddy cut you off for a little while? What an asshole. Not for cutting you off, but for imposing *una disciplina superficial* twenty years too late. He wants to make you think you can earn something that you've been "entitled" to forever. He wants to make himself believe that he earned a place in the world when all he did was occupy the position laid out for him

and his daddy before him and his daddy before him... And they all thought that they “earned” it. Ha! Nevermind that there were always the negritos, the mojudos, the chinitos, the women who existed to make their lives possible.

Petra pours the last of the bottle into her glass.

C’est la pinche vie! Pero así es. We are alive! And there is nothing more sweet... or more painful. So get used to it Dylan. And don’t waste your tears, because there will come a time when you really need them. Pero mi’jo, this isn’t it. This, is our summertime and the living is easy. Salud!

She swallows the last drops of tequila.

PETRA

Good night. God bless you both and happy dreams. In this moment, I’m the happiest woman in the world!

She kisses them each and exits.

Beat.

SCOOBI

You okay?

DYLAN

Yeah. That was the nicest thing anyone ever said to me.

Beat.

SCOOBI

You hungry?

Dylan shakes his head “no.”

SCOOBI

I’m gonna get ready to turn in. You need anything?

DYLAN

I’m good, thanks.

Scoobi exits. Dylan begins to unfold the sofa bed A weight has been lifted. He slides around the room in his sock feet, and his graduation gown billowing, free as a bird. He gets undressed.

He lays his gown beside Scoobi's, intertwining the sleeves. He unrolls his sleeping bag onto the mattress and slips in. Scoobi emerges from the bath in her pajamas. She gets into bed. Lights out.

Beat.

Are you awake?
SCOObI

Mmm-hmmm.
DYLAN

You?
Beat.

Yeah. (she holds in a laugh)
SCOObI

What?
DYLAN

Nothing.
SCOObI

Could they still take you away?
DYLAN

What?
SCOObI

I don't want you to go...I mean back to Mexico.
DYLAN

Neither do I. ...That's why you're here, remember?
SCOObI

DYLAN

I don't understand why they're sending so many people back. Why can't Petra be a dreamer?

SCOObI

What? No, dreamers only have to do with the 'dream act'--

DYLAN

I know, I know about the DACA caca: "childhood arrivals" right? But Petra came over as a child too, right? ...Scoobi, I like it here.

SCOObI

Yeah, I like it here too.

DYLAN

I mean...I like it here, with you and mom. I like it here with you.

Beat.

DYLAN

Scoobi?

SCOObI

Yeah?

DYLAN

Goodnight. God bless you. Happy drinks.

Without looking she takes his hand. Their fingers intertwine.

SCOObI

Yeah, thanks. Happy drinks to you too.

They sleep.

We hear the tune of "La Cucaracha" whistled; a slow, blues-like rendition as Ramiro appears from the shadows

He approaches the table and begins to pour himself a tequila.

Petra emerges. Stops in her tracks to see him. Is she dreaming?

Ramiro pours a shot for her.

RAMIRO

If you don't make the offering, we will take it.

He hands her the tequila. She accepts.

He pulls his kerchief down from around his face.

PETRA

(sotto)

Que guapeza.

RAMIRO

“Macho idealist?”

Petra comes near. Ramiro produces a cord, stopping her. They each take an end and sway back and forth, as they did once upon a time in the hammocks.

RAMIRO

She's amazing. Of course she is. She's us.

PETRA

And so much more.

RAMIRO

We did it Petra. You did it.

PETRA

There's still a lot to do.

RAMIRO

I'm not coming back. Don't wait for me anymore.

PETRA

And what if I defy you

RAMIRO

Petra, you're still too juicy to wither on the vine.

He raises his glass.

RAMIRO

Compañera.

He drinks and disappears.

Petra does the same.

Immigration Office.

Scoobi and Dylan enter and sit on one side of a desk
(perhaps our ubiquitous table?)

DYLAN

Why are you so nervous?

SCOObI

I'm not nervous! Okay, did you read the--

DYLAN

Yup.

SCOObI

And did you memorize--

DYLAN

Yup.

SCOObI

You don't even know what I was going to--

DYLAN

Your favorite books and movies, how many pair of shoes in your closet, what you had for breakfast, what color is your toothbrush--right? Did I memorize your weird lists, right?

SCOObI

Yeah.

DYLAN

Scoobi, relax. I know more about you than I do about myself.

SCOObI
If they ask how we met?

DYLAN
I know how we met!

SCOObI
That's not what I meant! I know you know how we met-met, I want to know you know how we "met".

Beat.

SCOObI
You have to tell me. Now.

DYLAN
Okay. No, that dress doesn't make you look fat.

SCOObI
I'm serious, what if they ask?

DYLAN
They don't care about a white kid getting kicked out of the team

SCOObI
Times up, you have to tell me

DYLAN
Okay, okay. It was so dumb.

I had a game, a championship game, everyone was counting on me. I was really good, I'm not bragging, I really was good, MVP and all that. The same night of the final game of the championship, that afternoon, Melanie--my... mom calls me.

She hadn't called, written, nothing... in like five years. Now she's in town and she wants to have dinner. Its the last night she's here and she wants to spend it with me. She doesn't want to go to the game, she "wants me all to herself." And like a sucker I said yes, I'd meet her for dinner...

Beat.

SCOObI
She didn't show, did she?

Dylan shakes his head "no."

SCOOBI

(putting it together)

And you didn't show for the game.

Dylan shakes his head "no."

SCOOBI

And they lost...

SCOOBI

And you were out.

DYLAN

I told you it was dumb.

MARTINEZ, the Immigration official enters.

MARTINEZ

Good afternoon.

Martinez examines their file. Examines them.

Beat.

MARTINEZ

So, Mr. and Mrs. O'Reilly.

Tell me, how did you two meet?

DYLAN

Craigslist!

Scoobi is mortified.

DYLAN

Thank god for Craigslist.

MARTINEZ

Craigslist?

SCOOBI

Not exact--

DYLAN

Yeah, we met at a diner, and before I left that day, I knew I would marry her.

MARTINEZ

I thought Match was the place to be...but what do I know? In my day we used to meet in real life. Penelope, may I call you Penelope?

SCOObI

Yes, of course.

MARTINEZ

Congratulations, esquire. I see you've just completed law school at my alma mater.

SCOObI

Yes! I still have to take the bar though.

MARTINEZ

Your undergraduate degree?

SCOObI

Poly Sci & Latin American Studies.

MARTINEZ

A scholar after my own heart. And you?

DYLAN

Scoobi--Penelope's the brainiac in the family. I just barely got my bachelor's.

MARTINEZ

...in?

DYLAN

Liberal Arts!

MARTINEZ

Penelope. I see you've been undocumented most of your life here...it must be quite a relief to be on the verge of citizenship?

SCOObI

Yeah, I guess you're right. But it's not a relief, I mean, it feels better than a relief, to have someone.

Is she blushing?

Dylan is moved, puzzled, but moved.

MARTINEZ

Mr. O'Reilly, Dylan. A couple of questions. What day did you get married?

DYLAN

Oh! ...It was on a Sunday.

MARTINEZ

I meant the date, not the day. When is your anniversary?

Beat.

SCOOBI

Oh my god.

DYLAN

Uh, it's--

SCOOBI

Oh my god, you don't know our anniversary?!

DYLAN

Scoobi, yes, I know it, it was a great day, I just--wait, gimme a sec!

SCOOBI

I can't believe this!

DYLAN

Scoobi, I know it, I remember everything about that day, just give me a--

MARTINEZ

Let's move on. We'll come back to this. Dylan, when is Penelope's birthday?

DYLAN

It's...New Year's Day! January first...

He pantomimes a keypad.

DYLAN

1-9-9-4! 1994!

Martinez looks at the file, satisfied.

MARTINEZ

Penelope, when is your husband's birthday?

It's May 5th.
SCOOBI

Hey! You're right!
DYLAN

El 5 de Mayo?
MARTINEZ

...Yeah. (!) El 5...
SCOOBI

How you did arrive here today.
MARTINEZ

Oh, I'm working downtown at the Legal clinic so I just walked down, Dylan, I guess you drove here?
SCOOBI

Yeah, I drove. Found a broken meter, yes!
DYLAN

May I see your keys?
MARTINEZ

My keys?
DYLAN

Yes please. And yours, Mrs. O'Reilly?
MARTINEZ

They each pull out their key rings.

And please, separate the key to your front door, if you will.
MARTINEZ

Scoobi does.

Oh shoot.
DYLAN

Beat.

MARTINEZ

Is there a problem?

SCOOBI

No! There's no problem! Right Dylan?

Dylan pulls a string from around his neck with a single door key on it.

DYLAN

I forgot to leave it for mom. Dang it.

MARTINEZ

May I?

Martinez takes the keys and compares, makes a note and returns the keys, goes back into the folder.

MARTINEZ

Okay...we're just about done. May I see your cell phones?

SCOOBI

Yes.

DYLAN

Here.

They surrender their phones to Martinez.

MARTINEZ

Let's see, Dylan, this is yours, right? Where will I find Penelope's number?

DYLAN

I usually just voice dial it: "wifey."

SCOOBI

Still?!

DYLAN

Well yeah! We're "still" married aren't we?

SCOOBI

Oh my god, that's so cliché!

MARTINEZ

Siri, please call "wifey."

Scoobi's phone rings. Martinez picks it up, registers the caller ID.

MARTINEZ

"Gringón Dorado" Okay.

DYLAN

Really? You have me down as a gringón?! That's so, that's messed up.

SCOOBI

You don't even know what that means.

DYLAN

Oh I know what a gringo is! That's what you call me ...when you're calling me?
A Dorito gringo?!

SCOOBI

Dorado! Dorado, not Dorito!

DYLAN

Well what's the difference?

SCOOBI

Everything! Nevermind!

DYLAN

We can't all be some swarthy soldier (probably with a mustache!) all macho and brave and shooting off guns against the government--

SCOOBI

Dylan, stop --

MARTINEZ

Guns? Against the government?

DYLAN

Well guess what? Did you ever hear of the Vikings?! I come from Viking warriors!

MARTINEZ

Mr.--

SCOObI

So what?! Great! Good for you! Bring on the horns! Do you even know the difference between starboard and poop?

DYLAN

You think you have a corner on soldiers and men going to battle?

SCOObI

What is wrong with you? I don't care if it's a Viking or Zapatista or a Congressman-- you're all so...primitive! All testosterone and no imagination!

MARTINEZ

Okay, okay enough! Enough. Feel free to continue this discussion in the privacy of your own home.

SCOObI

Oh...oh no, I'm so sorry--

DYLAN

Uh yeah, we got a little carried away...we don't usually fight!

SCOObI

It's true, we never--

SCOObI/DYLAN

Hey, it's our first fight!

SCOObI/DYLAN

Jinx!

DYLAN

You owe me a--

Scoobi signals for him not to continue.

Martinez starts to return the phones.

Beat.

MARTINEZ

Dylan, do me one more favor, pull up your favorite picture of Penelope, will you--one that's appropriate?

Beat.

Dylan takes the phone, then returns it to Martinez.

DYLAN

Here. I love this one.

Martinez examines it.

MARTINEZ

What a peaceful sleep...she looks like she's snoring!

SCOOBI

Let me see that!

When did you take that?! I don't snore!

Martinez returns the phone.

MARTINEZ

Okay, Mr. and Mrs. O'Reilly, clearly you are hopelessly bound to each other and in the throes of an all-too legitimate marriage. Mazel Tov. You may leave.

SCOOBI

Wait, what?

MARTINEZ

Mr. O'Reilly, you have your work cut out for you. Mrs. O'Reilly, I think he's up for it. Good afternoon.

DYLAN

Uh thanks. Scoobi let's go.

SCOOBI

That's it?

They get up to leave the office.

DYLAN

C'mon, I'll buy us lunch.

DYLAN

C'mon, Scoob, let's go. Thanks, again.

Dylan swoops her away.

MARTINEZ

Ah, to be young and in love...and hungry.

That night. The apartment. Scoobi stares at her phone as though willing it to ring.

Dylan unfolds and folds the sofa bed, performs calisthenics. They both look to the door.

Dylan exits to the kitchen and returns with a plate of food.

DYLAN

C'mon Scoob, you have to eat something. Mom's gonna kill me if she finds out I didn't make you eat something.

SCOOBI

...

He sits down beside her and rolls the scrambled eggs or something (?) in to a warm corn tortilla.

DYLAN

Scoobi, c'mon. Just taste it. I never made a taco before! Look, I put the cotija!

He takes a bite.

DYLAN

Damn! Wow, that's really good. Seriously. Here Scoobi, try it. Please?

She takes a small bite that he brings to her mouth.

SCOOBI

That was good. That was really good. Thanks.

DYLAN

Have some more.

SCOObI

I can't. I'm not hungry. You eat it.

He can't eat either.

The phone sounds. Scoobi answers it before the ring finishes.

SCOObI

Bueno?!

DYLAN

Is that mom? Where is she?!

Scoobi puts it on speaker.

We see Petra on a phone in another space.

PETRA

I'm here niña.

SCOObI

Amá? I heard, they raided the yoga studio?! What the hell were they doing in that part of town?

PETRA

Así es. I was right in the middle of "Pigeon" when I realized I was a sitting duck. How did the interview go?

SCOObI

The interview?

DYLAN

(talks into the phone)

It went great! We got into a rad argument, just like married people!

PETRA

Que bueno! Scoobi, are you eating?

DYLAN

I told you! I told her mom, I've been trying to make her eat, I made tacos!

PETRA

Ay Dylan! I bet they were delicious! Did you put the onion?

DYLAN

Yes! Just like you do ...and I put the cotija!

SCOOBI

Stop it! Stop the taco talk! Mom, we need to make a plan. Where are they holding you? What's the call back number? What do you need? Are you safe? Mom, did they hurt you? I'm gonna call our congresswoman. We're coming, mom--

PETRA

Scoobi, listen to me. I'm okay. I'm fine. I'm in the DF for now--

DYLAN

The DF? El Distrito Federal that DF?

PETRA

Yes Dylan. I'm in Mexico City--

SCOOBI

What?! No, they couldn't of sent you back so fast, that's a breach--

PETRA

Scoobi, escucha, Dylan too, listen to me. They didn't send me, I volunteered to come back. I wanted to. I'm staying here. Not Chilangolandia, but Mexico. ...Scoobi, I stayed in the north for you, for your education. We did it mi'ja.

SCOOBI

Mom, no. I need you here, with me.

PETRA

Penelope, I'm staying. You were right, my work is here. It's time I get to know my home again. They think I'm a gringa here, can you believe it?

DYLAN

But, Mom...

A younger man, Zack, approaches Petra. He dons the Ramiro and Güero's kerchief.

PETRA

Dylan, Penelope, hold a second.

Petra? ZACK

Sí. PETRA

My father told me about you. ZACK

PETRA
(a flood of memories as she touches the kerchief)
El Güero.

ZACK
I'm Zack. Güero junior.

PETRA
Zacarías, sí!
Que descanse en paz el Güero.

Zack is taken by her and can't stop staring. It's mutual.

SCOOBI
Mom? Who are you talking to?

PETRA
Is Zack mi'ja. Zacharías

SCOOBI
Who's Zacharías?

PETRA
Listen, you two, take care of each other. I'm going back to Chiapas, Scoobi, with you there and me here...you know...you know the plan, it's time for phase two. I'm part of it again. My bus is about to leave. I'll call when I get there. Penelope, this is good. Soon, you'll be able to visit me, you'll come and go like a tourist!

SCOOBI
I'm not a tourist! Soy Mexicana!

PETRA
Sí, mi amor. Somos Mexicanos.

DYLAN
Somos Mexicanos!

Hasta luego niños.

PETRA

Shall we?

ZACK

He takes her bag, and offers his arm. They are clearly taken with each other.

Mom... you sound happy.

SCOOBI

Yes, mi vida.

PETRA

Petra and Zack are gone.

Beat.

Dylan and Scoobi, zombie-like unfold the sofa bed. Scoobi exits to the bathroom and returns in pajamas. Dylan slips into his sleeping bag on the sofa mattress. Lights out. Scoobi lays down beside him. They stare at the ceiling.

Beat.

Are you awake?

SCOOBI

Mmm-hmmm.

DYLAN

Beat.

She rolls over to look at him.

Beat.

She moves closer to him.

Beat.

She finds the zipper on his sleeping bag and begins to unzip it slowly.

Petra and Zack pull giant curtain panels across the stage made of red, white and blue kerchiefs, quilted to form the Stars and Stripes, united.

CURTAIN