

*i put the fear of méxico in'em*

by

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***characters***

Efren – *mexican*, 37

Juana – *mexican*, 30

Adray (*uh-dray*) – *güera*, 34

Jonah – *güero*, 34

Vivia – *female*

All Other Characters – *mexican*

***place***

Tijuana, México

***time***

Now

act one

lights reveal the sort of alley you're not supposed to go down.

EFREN corners JONAH and ADRAY against a wall, they wear backpacks and frightened faces.

EFREN clears a Tecate, drops the can to the floor, and kicks it at JONAH and ADRAY; they flinch.

EFREN laughs his ass off, then looks to JUANA does not laugh her ass off, but only smiles politely.

There are several emptied cans of Tecate around both EFREN and JUANA's feet.

EFREN

(to JONAH) C'mon...I'm not gonna do nuthin'. Hey, c'mere. (pause) I wanna know something. (pause) C'mon, I just said I won't do nuthin'.

(JONAH reluctantly walks to EFREN)

So uh...you don't look too comfortable, huh?

JONAH

You could say that.

EFREN

I just did fuckin'say that.

JONAH

What was it you wanted to know?

EFREN

...so like, if you could like be anywhere but here, where would you be?

JONAH

...

EFREN

Like right now, if you could disappear someplace, *anyplace*, where would you go to?

JONAH

...a bar.

EFREN

(to JUANA) Hey, Fea, a bar he says.

(EFREN motions for another Tecate, JUANA tosses one to him, he opens, takes a sip, then offers to JONAH, who accepts)

Ehh, salud. To our wives.

(to ADRAY) Oh shit, wait, you two married?

JONAH

Yea.

EFREN

(to JONAH) I wasn't talking to you, was I.

(to ADRAY) You two married?

(ADRAY nods)

What's a matter, you don't talk? Ain't you gotta tongue? Shit, I'm about to feel lotta sorrow for Jonah here if I hear you don't gotta tongue?

JONAH

She has one.

EFREN

(to ADRAY) So why don't she talk then, I ask you a question, why don't you talk.

JONAH

She talks.

EFREN

I ain't ask you, did I.

JONAH

Adray, will you...

EFREN

(to ADRAY) Hey, yoo-hoo, Little Thing...I hear you got a good tongue in that mouth. ...why don't you lemme see that purty tongue, huh? Awh, what's a matter, Little Thing, you a shy one? Hmm?

(to JUANA) Hey, Fea, why don't you show Little Thing here about what kinda tongue *we* got.

(JUANA shows the entire of her tongue)

(to ADRAY) Now you see that, tha's the kinda tongue a man can come home to. Wake up with. Tha's the kinda tongue make a man stay put for life. (pause) So why don't you show me what your husband come home to...

JONAH

Mister uh, Efren, can I get another?

(A moment of EFREN sizing up JONAH)

EFREN

Fea, the man ordered up, huh.

(JUANA pulls a fresh Tecate)

JONAH

(to JUANA) It's for her.

(JUANA tosses the beer to ADRAY, she catches, drinks)

EFREN

(to ADRAY) Tha's some kinda gentle man you got there, Little Thing. (pause) Always comin'home good an early. (pause) Never lay a hand, raise a fist. (pause) Never got lipstick on his neck, never got other-women-scent on his fingers. (pause) Always make sure you cum. Every time.

(EFREN waits for response)

Yea, with a man like that you must get real, real thankful, yea? (pause)  
How thankful?

(ADRAY pulls in Tecate, then sticks her tongue out at EFREN)

Oh. Little Thing you ain't so little. Will you lookit that, Fea. What's a little güera like you doin'with a lengüita like that, huh?

EFREN(cont)

(to JONAH) Shit, no wonder you treat her so good. Hey, how is it, her lengüita? Is it fast? Does it circle around down there? Does it do tricks?

JONAH

You said imagine we were at a bar.

EFREN

You know what, you're right. Know what happened? I got whatsitcalled...side tracked, yea? (pause) Okay, okay, so picture just us two, we're in a bar sitting. We got our legs open, we got our Tecates in hand. An know what? Just for picture's sake, there's a fútbol game, huh? (pause) What? You wan'something else, beisbol?

JONAH

Soccer's fine.

EFREN

Okay, so we can watch "soccer" on the T.V. (pause) An do you know what I like the best about two men talking good with each other at a bar?

JONAH

That we don't have to—

EFREN

That we're honest. (pause) Women don't give a shit, they'll tell to each other whatever the fuck, but men, we say the truth to each other, huh?

JONAH

Yea.

EFREN

So do you know what I would like to ask, at this bar, with our Tecates, watchin'our fútbol, huh? (pause) What I would like to ask is... How Is Your Wife's Tongue?

(EFREN puts his hand on JONAH's shoulder)

JONAH

It's...fine.

EFREN

Is it fast?

JONAH

It can be.

Does it circle around down there? EFREN

If she's in the mood, yes. JONAH

Yes? EFREN

It does. JONAH

Does what? EFREN

Circle around down there. JONAH

An does it do tricks? EFREN

None that I know of. JONAH

Does It Do Tricks. EFREN

JONAH  
...she used to, she...used to use the bottom of it, of her tongue. The underneath.  
Was softer.

EFREN  
Thank you, Mister Jonah. For bein'honest with me.

(EFREN and JONAH share a moment. Efren's phone rings, they both notice. Lights focus on JUANA, who stands up allowing us to see clearly that she has had an assault rifle hanging from her shoulder the entire time. She walks to ADRAY and speaks to her closely)

JUANA  
(to ADRAY) That shit all true, güera? 'Bout usin'the bottom part uh your lengüita? That shit really work? (pause) Wow. You know what I think, though? If you use the bottom, es like you can't really taste what you're putting your tongue to? Cuz even if

JUANA(cont)

mi Efren don't always taste so good, I like to know es him I'm making happy. So maybe is it you use the bottom cuz es softer, or cuz you don't like to taste? (pause) You're not gonna respond to me, huh? (pause) Tha's okay, I know es hard to have a real, honest conversation between adults if one of you...

(JUANA holds up the machine gun awkwardly)

Efren says it to me that I haffta hold the gun cuz why, Feo?

EFREN

Equal rights.

JUANA

He's so stupid. Between you an me, güera, I think it just turn him on. A woman, a gun, sometimes I think I never understand the men. (pause) For truth tho', güera, lookit me, I don't understand the gun either. I leave it on "safety" an there's nothing he could say to me that I'd set it to unsafety. (pause) Know what tho'? I like holdin'it. Heavy. I feel like you hear me, you know? But maybe that's not such a good thing, huh, feeling finally like you listen, cuz me I'm holding in my hands something that was not meant for talking.

Es like earlier today when we tried to speak to you. What? You don't remember? (pause) Over by where all that shit with the red busses. I know I seen your eyes pass over us when come up close to you. I guess we were just one small part of your foto background. But when we try to speak, when we try to ask if you need help, you yank your husband away from us like he the one that be needing the help. An lookit you now, now you do need help, don't you. Both of you, and yea, güera, I bet if you take a foto now, we won't be background no more. But not because we equal. Es just because you're scared. That we might shoot you.

(JONAH enters JUANA and ADRAY's light)

For truth tho', güera, I don't know how people do it. Los Narcos. Los Soldados. Los Policias. Es only for our son, Javier, he's thirteen, for mi Javi that I holding this gun.

JONAH

We have a daughter. Angela. She's close to your Javier's age. She's home. Alone. We promised to call three times daily. We did this morning, but...this morning feels like a lot of days ago.

(Lights shift to several hours before. ADRAY and JONAH are both on their mobiles in a San Ysidro Motel 6. A moment. They both hang up)



ADRAY

Angela says she's in love.

JONAH

Mexicoach says there's won't be any busses at *all* today.

ADRAY

She wanted to wait till we were away. That I'm judgmental.

JONAH

Apparently there's some sort of glitch. Like in all the busses. The entire fleet; some sort of mechanical failure?

ADRAY

Some boy who sits in the back of the class. Shy.

JONAH

She called you that? Judgmental?

ADRAY

So, what, there's no tour busses anywhere? Thank God.

JONAH

Service on indefinite hiatus.

ADRAY

She said cuz I always roll my eyes at those movies you two like.

JONAH

All that shit you talked about the red busses an here ya go, I hope yer happy.

ADRAY

Jonah, I just don't want our daughter growing up thinking that's what love is gonna—

JONAH

What, an we're not romantic?

ADRAY

Are we?

JONAH

I proposed to you at the top of—

ADRAY

That's different.

JONAH

You cried.

ADRAY

I had bites on my ankles. I was hungover from that forty-percent bullshit you got suckered into. Your breath was stale, sorry. Movies don't ever show any of that, but that's what love is like.

JONAH

You were also on your period.

(They share a laugh)

ADRAY

See, it's a sign, Jones, we argue all over the little red busses and now lookit us.

JONAH

Yea, you got your way. Again.

ADRAY

Oh, shut up. C'mere.

(She pulls him in for a kiss)

ADRAY

So that website said we could just take one of the sidestreets off that Revolution street, down a little hill and there'll be like multiple cars.

JONAH

It said there'd be station wagons, Adray.

ADRAY

Yea, station wagons driven by actual citizens, like real people...

JONAH

You're doing the talking.

ADRAY

"Yo queiro ir a Ensenada."

JONAH

You have to say it in 'we' form.

ADRAY

I'm sure they'll get it.

JONAH

Adray, the website didn't say anything about driving us back.

ADRAY

Jones we were stupid in Marseille, this time I have the public transport schedule printed out, we have the street map—

JONAH

This isn't fucking France, you know. How fucking accurate do you think a public transportation print out is.

ADRAY

Well, it's only a hundred and ten kilometers from Tijuana, even if its all-the-way backwards, I'm sure we can—

JONAH

Miles. Its seventy miles okay. You're not European.

ADRAY

Jones, c'mon, it'll be just you an me. That dirt road we saw on that one website. We'll push past all the beer cans and left diapers— What? What's the matter?

JONAH

It's just with Mexicoach there was a credit card record of where we were going. What bus times. If anything happened Angela could at least—

ADRAY

C'mon, Jones, a little off-the-map between consenting adults...

JONAH

If you think I'm doing *anything* in public, in fucking Mexico...

ADRAY

Just knowing that like...even satellites couldn't trace us. God, it's so...real.

JONAH

Yea, satellites don't cover Mexico, I forgot. Alright, so fine, I'll go along with the station wagons, but we are *getting off* at that little lobster town whatever.

ADRAY

...fine, *when* we resurface, we'll visit yer little Puerto Nuevo tourist bullshit people acting like they don't have a goddamned ocean at home.

JONAH

I like the idea of fried lobster. Langosta.

ADRAY

You like romantic comedies.

JONAH

So what else'd she say, she didn't wanna talk to me?

ADRAY

Know what does scare me though, Jones? (pause) How much her heart will be broken. How many hearts she'll break. It's like until today, she was safe. That boy in the back of the class, was safe. But now... I almost wish it she would wait. Just get a couple more years of being untouched.

JONAH

Touched, she said touched?

ADRAY

No, not *touched*.

JONAH

Oh. Well...I think its cute then. Her, some boy. I'm glad he's shy.

ADRAY

Awh, maybe he's just like—

JONAH

Well would you rather him be, what, forward?

ADRAY

No, I wish...I just didn't think we'd have to deal with this so—

JONAH

Her heart is open, Adray, least we know it works.

ADRAY

What was that, a line from movie? My God.

JONAH

Shut up.

ADRAY

Look, after lunch, why don't you call her. See if she tells it to you any different. "Her heart is open..."

JONAH

Just don't forget the phone card.

ADRAY

Got.

JONAH

Hey, really, why don't we just take one of our phones, it's stupid not to.

ADRAY

Oh God, my wife's a fucking tourist too. Way to disconnect, Jonah.

JONAH

You know Mexicans do have cell phones, Adray

ADRAY

And I'm not judging, y'know. That she thinks she's in love.

(Beat)

JONAH

Well, I just hope this Nepalese statue is as off the map as Google said it was.

ADRAY

Oh, shut up, how else are you supposed to—

JONAH

Yea, yea, just don't forget your underground website print outs, Miss Native of México.

ADRAY

Don't worry, they're in my bag right next to your balls, Princessa.

(Lights up on a bar, cheap strobe affects and twitching neon. Sits JONAH, he looks about amused. A salted margarita on ice gets placed in front of him. He looks at it surprised, sniffs. As he delightedly takes a sip, a souvenir, straw cowboy hat with red bandana reading: "Viva Tijuana!" is placed on his head, he looks to see who placed it, but no one is there. JONAH clears his margarita and watches happily and in disbelief as he is refilled. JUANA takes a sit next to him. He looks at her strangely. Lights shift back to alley)

EFREN

You're never going to believe this, Little Thing.

ADRAY

Where's Jonah, is he okay?

EFREN

He's in a bar, just like he wished for. Es okay, mi Juana, she likes the bar too. So, know what you ain't gonna believe?

ADRAY

A bar where?

EFREN

Me, I just got off the phone. Mi Javier, he calls me like multiple times a day, little shit misses me I guess. But do you know what he call me about today?

ADRAY

What bar?

EFREN

There's lots of bars in Tijuana, güera, an I bet you couldn't tell the difference between one of'em. (pause) So...he say that some girl, some little güerita who sits in front uh the class, is top-of-the-heap-in-love with him. Can you believe that?

ADRAY

...I'd like to go the bar where my husband's at.

EFREN

No, you don't. I know you didn't come down here for that.

ADRAY

Well, I'm sure he'd rather be here with his wife—

EFREN

When Mister Jonah wants to be here with you, güera, he will be.

(Lights brighten over JONAH, as he's served two margaritas, he drinks ravenously. JUANA watches him. Lights dim over the bar)

EFREN(cont)

So Javier, he loves to sit in the back of the class. Well, I don't know that he loves it, more like...he prefers to sit in the back of the class. Hey, you listening?

ADRAY

...yea.

EFREN

So there he is just sittin', and this little güera comes on up to him, an— oh shit, wait, you know what a güera is?

ADRAY

I get the implication.

EFREN

So what is it then?

ADRAY

A...a woman who's white...  
(under her breath) ...an unwelcome.

EFREN

Oh, no, es not like that. Es just, yea somebody like you, but... güera don't mean you're not welcome.

ADRAY

Thank you.

EFREN

Where was I?

ADRAY

The back of the class.

EFREN

So some güerita comes up to mi Javi, right in the middle of some movie their showing. Plate teh'tonics or...how's it called—

ADRAY

Plate tectonics.

EFREN

You know?

ADRAY

Yes, I know what it is, go on.

EFREN

So what is it then.

ADRAY

It's...it's the movement of the plates, like continents...away from each other. Like from Pangaea, I suppose.

EFREN

Pan-wha?

ADRAY

Pangaea. It's when, it's the belief that all the continents or—

EFREN

All six.

ADRAY

Anyways, Pangaea is one of the theories that all the plates, or continents, were...all together at one point.

EFREN

Well Javi didn't say nuthin'about that.

ADRAY

Maybe wasn't paying attention—

JAVIER

Yea, or maybe he jus'don't give a fuck about continents.

ADRAY

Okay.



EFREN

So anyways, right when the classroom is all dark...this little güera comes up and sits in the empty seat next to him. Smiling that smile. You know?

ADRAY

I think so.

EFREN

Hey, how come girls smile like that, huh?

ADRAY

...I guess they want to seem welcoming.

EFREN

Hey, “welcoming,” we were just talking about, huh?

ADRAY

We were.

EFREN

So...she leans over right close into his ear and says... “I think I’m in love with you, Javier.” (laughs) Can you believe in that?

ADRAY

If you say so.

(EFREN takes ADRAY softly by the hand, she reacts, but he motions her to relax)

EFREN

An then, know what? Mi Javier took her hand out into the hallway where nobody is and nobody’s supposed to be.

(Lights turn young, EFREN leads ADRAY to a corner spot. They speak as teenagers)

“Don’t worry, no one will come. No one will see.”

ADRAY

“But we shouldn’t—“

EFREN

“Shh....I wanted to bring you here, Angela, because I didn’t want any one to hear what I want to tell you.”

ADRAY

“...tell me...?”

EFREN

“Do you know why I sit in the back of the class all the time?”

(ADRAY shakes her head)

“It’s cuz I’m afraid.”

ADRAY

“Of what?”

EFREN

“like if I sit too up close that...”

ADRAY

“What?”

EFREN

“That I won’t be able to look at you. That you’ll see me looking. That you’ll know.”

ADRAY

“Know what?”

EFREN

“...how I feel.”

ADRAY

“...how do you feel?”

EFREN

“I feel like when I wake up, I only do it cuz I wanna see what you’ll be wearing. I feel like when I get ready for school, I’m really gettin’ ready for you.”

ADRAY

“...you never told me...”

EFREN

“Can...can I kiss you?”

(ADRAY nods. EFREN kisses her)

“Know what I think about?”

(ADRAY shakes her head)

EFREN(cont)

“Promise you won’t make fun, promise it will be our secret, just yours and mine.”

ADRAY

“I promise.”

EFREN

“I think about what it would be like to touch you...like underneath.”

ADRAY

“Me?”

EFREN

“So...soft. So clean.”

ADRAY

“..well, maybe...maybe you could put your hand...”

EFREN

“You aren’t teasin’, are you?”

ADRAY

“...I wouldn’t tease, not with you. Here, you can...”

(EFREN gently puts his hand up ADRAY’s shirt. She allows.  
They both enjoy for a few innocent moments)

EFREN

“Do you have brothers?”

(Shakes her head)

“Have you ever seen it?”

ADRAY

“What?”

EFREN

“It.”

ADRAY

“No, omigod, of course not.”

EFREN

“Do you want to?”

ADRAY

“No, what if somebody comes.”

EFREN

“See, it’s got all hard now. Because of you.”

ADRAY

“Omigod.”

EFREN

“I want you to.”

ADRAY

“No, really we should—“

(EFREN offers her a peek down into his pants. She glimpses)

“...it looks...crowded. Are you sure there’s enough room down there for it?”

EFREN

“You can touch it if you want to.”

(ADRAY takes a few moments, then dips her hand in. EFREN closes his eyes, she watches him, then touches more. She kisses him)

“So...you’ve seen mine...I’ve never seen what yours looks like. I don’t have any sisters.”

ADRAY

“Well...I can’t show you *here*.”

EFREN

“What if I just like peek in. Like you did.”

ADRAY

“I don’t think you’ll be able to see like that.”

(EFREN kneels)

ADRAY(cont)

“No, c’mon.”

EFREN

“Please, just for real quick.”

(ADRAY gives EFREN a peek, then reaching out to touch, she allows. He explores. She closes her eyes. EFREN stands up and returns her hand between his legs with his between hers. They both close their eyes. A few beautiful moments of connection. Then interruption, EFREN opens his eyes)

“Shit. Somebody’s coming.”

(He pulls his pants up and walks away)

“C’mon.”

ADRAY

“But...”

(She looks at her hand. Smells. Then wipes it on her clothes embarrassed, then looks around nervously. Lights shift, EFREN resumes his usual voice)

EFREN

With a morning like that, I can’t even guess what the rest of their day was like, huh.

ADRAY

Can I please use your phone.

EFREN

...

ADRAY

I’d like to call my daughter.

EFREN

Ta say what?

ADRAY

To see how she is.

I just tol'you how she is. EFREN

Please. ADRAY

What, you don't believe me? EFREN

Can I make my call or can't I? ADRAY

You think I was just makin'that story up for your amusements? EFREN

I have a calling card. ADRAY

Congratulations. EFREN

It won't cost you any money. ADRAY

What will it cost then? EFREN

I just want talk to my daughter. ADRAY

What, I ain't reliable? EFREN

Thank you anyway. ADRAY

What will it cost me, güera? EFREN

I'm not calling, so nothing I guess. ADRAY

EFREN

If I let you make that call, that'd be saying that the story I told you, about mi Javier and your Angela, was untrue.

ADRAY

What do you want? If you want money, it's yours.

(ADRAY throws her wallet at EFREN)

If you want to embarrass us, you have.

EFREN

What I want, Little Thing, is for you to believe in a world of continents where a little girl like your Angela and a boy like mi Javier could and would sneak themselves into the hallway. How you say, "lose their innocence" together, yea? That that could happen.

ADRAY

Why don't you leave my daughter out of whatever it is you're doing. Please.

EFREN

That boy, in the back of the class, do you know his name?

ADRAY

What?

EFREN

Your daughter. She's in love with some boy. Back of the class. Do you know his fucking name?

ADRAY

...no, I do not.

EFREN

Could it be Javier?

ADRAY

...

EFREN

So how do you know it wasn't him? How do you know my boy and your girl didn't get their paws an mittens mixed up this morning?

ADRAY

Well, for one they live in different countries.

EFREN

So. You an me are different countries, but here we are. Talking intimately about intimate things. Hell, we might as well be rubbing our paws an mittens too.

ADRAY

It'd be a little hard for your Javier and my Angela to be in the same school, wouldn't it?

EFREN

Did I tell you what school mi Javier attends?

ADRAY

...does it matter?

(EFREN hands her the phone)

EFREN

Use your fucking calling card.

(ADRAY takes a moment, then pulls a card and begins the process)

ADRAY

(into phone) Hey, kiddo, what're you— (pause) Oh, I'm glad I caught you then. (pause) We're at...we're outside shopping. Are you...okay, everything's usual as usual? (pause) Yea, I'll see what we can find, okay. (pause) I know, I know. Listen, Angela, that uh...boy you told me about this morning. Did you see him, I mean was he at school— (pause) I'm just curious is all. (pause) Did...did he talk to you, I mean did you get to talk to him today? (pause) What's a matter, you sound nervous. (pause) No, your voice just ...must be the connection. (pause) An you think he likes you, yea? (pause) So...what's name anyways? (pause) Oh. And...um...what's his first name then...?

(Long godawful pause)

...okay look, uh, I lost your Dad, I gotta run. I'll call you later okay. I will. I know. Bye, baby.

(ADRAY lowers phone, closing it)

EFREN

What's a matter, Little Thing, you're lookin'at me like you know me.



ADRAY  
Who are you.

EFREN  
Me, I'm just some mejicano nobody.

ADRAY  
How do you know my daughter.

EFREN  
Me, I never met her myself.

ADRAY  
Where did you get that story from.

EFREN  
Mi Javier tol'me.

ADRAY  
What school does your son go to?

EFREN  
Dos Pueblos.

ADRAY  
...how do you know that name?

EFREN  
Don't most parents know the school their kid goes.

ADRAY  
How do you know who my... (pause) ...how do you know that name?

EFREN  
We're not so far apart, Little Thing. I know there's supposed ta be an iron'steel wall between us. But see, your Angela.

ADRAY  
...don't say her name...

EFREN  
Your Angela and mi Javi. They're not tall enough to know about any iron'steel wall between them. They don't have anything between them. Not yet. They get up, they go to school. They're just little kids every day, but they're also not just little kids every

EFREN(cont)

day. (pause) Me, I don't find it such a strange thing that they got a  
whatcha'muh'callit...a shared experience. I'm glad Javier's Dos Pueblos and your  
Angela's Dos Pueblos are like one fucking pueblo.

ADRAY

We haven't done anything to you.

EFREN

An me, what have I done to you?

ADRAY

You grabbed us—

EFREN

NO, no I didn't grab no one—

ADRAY

You forced us into this alley—

EFREN

I asked.

ADRAY

Your wife pointed a machine gun at us.

EFREN

Yes. Yes, okay, my wife did point the machine gun toward you.

ADRAY

We didn't mean anything by...

EFREN

Why did you get off the main street?

ADRAY

Excuse me?

EFREN

You heard me.

ADRAY

We wanted to...that statue...on the way to Ensenada. We were taking one of those  
station wagons at the bottom of the hill—

EFREN

Why didn't you just wait for the red busses like everybody else?

ADRAY

We just didn't.

EFREN

Why not.

ADRAY

There wasn't any red busses, we talked to Mexicoach, there was some glitch, some mechanical failure—

EFREN

So, if there was no “glitch” or “mechanical failures” you would not be here with me?

ADRAY

...if it were up to me, I don't know where I'd be.

EFREN

Let's just pretend for talking sake then, güera , that things *are* up to you.

ADRAY

...I was glad the busses broke down. I don't like going places that way.

EFREN

What way?

ADRAY

That...packaged way.

EFREN

Oh...so you *wanted* to be walking down that street with no one around an be crawling into the back of some shitty little station wagon all crowded.

ADRAY

Yes. I did.

EFREN

Well then you should thank me, Little Thing. This is like un'packaged as shit. Look at how close everything is. You and me here. My wife and your husband there. My son and your daughter, look how close we all have come. (pause) This is what you wanted, no? This is the kind of story you wish to go back with, eh? Machine guns an

EFREN(cont)

real locals telling you real local things. Drunken mejicanos. An alleyway. There's even a little sexuality, huh? Little bit. Teenage.

ADRAY

Look, you can think what you wish about me. That's fine. But don't talk about my daughter. I'm asking you.

(EFREN looks at her. A moment)

And...okay, look if you need me to go to an ATM or—

EFREN

Oh, c'mon now Little Thing, let the assholes who hang out on La Revolución play with the money. Let them be cliché.

ADRAY

Well, what is it you—

EFREN

Me? I just want what you do, güera. What everybody want. To get close. To be less alone.

(ADRAY covers her body and turns away from EFREN)

Oh Little Thing, you don't have to worry about that. I don't even like güeras. All güeras ever do is...just lay there. (pause) What, you don't? You don't just lay yourself down and let whatever just—

ADRAY

I *never* just lay there.

(Lights shift to JONAH and JUANA, several empty margarita and shot glasses in front of them)

JUANA

So, this is what you would do tho', eh? If your vacación were up to you, this is where you would be, no?

JONAH

Maybe.

JUANA

What you mean “maybe?” I jus’asked you a question what you want. How can you say “maybe?” (pause) What, you don’t wanna talk to me?

JONAH

I think I’d need a little more than Cuervo shots and margaritas to put me in the mood for anything besides wanting to go the fuck home.

JUANA

Tha’s funny. Most people, they come here, they drink Cuervo shots an margaritas and they get in the mood to never wanna go home.

JONAH

Well most people don’t get held up by fucking gunpoint an hour after they cross the border.

JUANA

No, but some do though, huh?

JUANA

Mister Jonah, you say if you could be anywhere in the world, you would be in a bar. An here you are. Sitting with tequila sliding down the bar to you, with margaritas always filled up. This is what people pay good money for, well, maybe not *good* money, but they pay a little money, huh, like bargain.

JONAH

Yea, this has all been just fucking fantastic. You two should offer your personal fucking machine gun service to more tourists, really.

JUANA

So tell me, Mister Jonah, why did you not bring your Angela?

JONAH

What?

JUANA

Was my English confusing?

JONAH

Why did you ask that?

Why did you not answer?  
JUANA

Look, what is this?  
JONAH

What is what?  
JUANA

JONAH  
This. You hold me an my wife up, you scare the shit out of us, and now what, you wanna drink with me? You wanna talk with me?

JUANA  
I was just curious. Angela. So close to mi Javi's age. At home alone. An that you call to her three times a day, like you are scared for her to be safe, but...

JONAH  
But what?

JUANA  
If you are so scared that she will not be okay, why did you leave her then? Why do you not bring her to things?

JONAH  
We don't not bring her.

JUANA  
You didn't come here to drink in the bars, you didn't come here to dance all night. And, I don't know if this is for truth or not, but it don't look like you two came here to be...

JONAH  
Be what?

JUANA  
A man an woman.

JONAH  
Okay, you know what? Why don't you drop talking about my family, alright? You don't hear me talking about yours.

JUANA  
You don't know mine.

An that's fine with me. JONAH

You are not curious? JUANA

No, I am not curious. JONAH

How come? JUANA

(JONAH drinks, ignores)

Ay, Jonah, lo siento. I didn't mean to say about how you leave your daughter places. I just feel bad for her, tha's how come.

My *daughter* has fucking school, okay? JONAH

Ahh, so tha's how come? Si, yo entiendo. Her education was "the most important thing." JUANA

(JONAH finishes his drink, ignores)

Angelita...I would like to meet her someday.

Okay, maybe this is a me thing, but I don't like hearing strangers talk about my daughter so...familiar. JONAH

Me, I don't know your Angelita. I am not familiar. JUANA

Exactly. JONAH

But are you? JUANA

JONAH

Look, the only reason I even mentioned we *had* a daughter was just in case you two had some sort of conscience.

JUANA

Es okay, you know. I know it is hard to be close to your children.

JONAH

Just because we didn't bring our daughter to fucking Mexico doesn't mean— ...this is ridiculous.

JUANA

What is?

JONAH

That we're even—

JUANA

Even what?

JONAH

That I'm sitting in fucking Tijuana talking about my daughter with you.

JUANA

We're just two parents talking about our children, güero. So...

JONAH

So what?

JUANA

You were scared she would slow you down? That she would see things not good for kids?

JONAH

...yes, to both, I guess.

JUANA

...if ugly is how you and your wife see things here in México, why do you come? (pause) Or maybe it is just your wife. Whatever güerita want, güerita get, huh?

JONAH

Look, I agreed to come because I wanted to, okay. I *wanted* to come here. An, what, just because you meet my wife for—



What. JUANA

It's not whatever she wants. JONAH

No? JUANA

An... JONAH

What, say it, Jonah. JUANA

Despite what you may think, Adray is a wonderful mother. JONAH

An you? (pause) Are you a *wonderful* father? JUANA

(JONAH drinks)

Well, my hope is that you both are, equally, the most wonderful parents that could be. (pause) What? What is it?

(Beat)

...when Angie was a uh...when we finally put her crib in the other room...you know she'd cry. She'd be so loud, that if we were sleeping of course we'd wake up. We'd— JONAH

I get it. JUANA

Right, so do you know what I would do? JONAH

You tell me. JUANA

JONAH

I would just leave her there. With my eyes shut. With my breathing as if I was sleeping. I would stay like that until Adray got up and checked on her herself. I didn't want to deal with it.

JUANA

So, you're lazy.

JONAH

No, see every time Angela'd cry, always I would have these nightmares in my head that I'd walk into her room, peer over the rail and...the loose end of a blanket stifling her breathing. A toy sticking out of her mouth. Blood *anywhere* in that crib. And so instead of getting out of bed and picking Angela up, I would leave her for Adray to deal with. It made more sense for Adray to curse me under her tired breath and think me the laziest son of a bitch that ever laid horizontal than to wake up to nightmares like those ones.

(Beat)

JUANA

Do you know what parenting is?

JONAH

Making sure your children have better than you did.

JUANA

No, that's a result of parenting.

JONAH

*You're* gonna tell me what parenting—

JUANA

An what the fuck does that mean?

JONAH

...

JUANA

Well...

JONAH

You're holding a machine gun.

JUANA  
So. Did I shoot you?

JONAH  
No.

JUANA  
You listen to me, huh. Every night I say the prayers and lose at least one hour sleep for my boy. An d'you know how come?

(JONAH shakes his head)

Because I worry. Because that's what parenting is. It's worry. Worrying about somebody else's life in front of yer own. (pause) You can fuck up. You can make the mistakes. But if you don't let your worry guide you in everything that you do...then you're separate from your children and what good are you.

JONAH  
I worry about Angela.

JUANA  
But you also run from her.

JONAH  
My worrying'll only worry her.

JUANA  
And one day she'll run from things the same that you do.

JONAH  
Or maybe she won't. Maybe she'll look at me and do better than I did.

JUANA  
You need to face your daughter Angela, no matter how ugly you imagine things to be. Otherwise she'll grow up thinking you only like the pretty parts of her, when she has no troubles. Otherwise you'll be a tourist in your own daughter's life.

JONAH  
(to bar) Can I get another fucking margarita, blended with no fucking salt, please.

JUANA  
Why not have a shot on top.

JONAH

And another Cuervo Gold, this time chilled, por favor. Can I get that muy rapido, please!

JUANA

Your drink. Drinks. Are there.

(JONAH drinks)

Mi Javier fell in love today. With some girl front of the class.

(JONAH spits up. A moment. Lights shift to behind them, a spotlight and smoke rise on a pole. A strip club pole to be exact. A young girl, VIVIA, who is about nineteen, but could easily play fourteen in a movie, walks up to the pole and tries to maneuver it. Fails. She tries again. Fails. She tries one last time before failing and hurrying off the stage. Lights shift back to the bar)

JONAH

Who the fuck are you?

JUANA

Just some ridiculous mejicana, I guess.

JONAH

I'm going.

JUANA

Where, back to the alley? Un momento por favor, let me just grab the machine gun then.

JONAH

What Do You Want.

JUANA

For you to be okay with me Javier.

JONAH

Fine, I'm okay with Javier.

JUANA

With your Angela.

JONAH  
I told you not to use her fucking name.

JUANA  
Why don't you order another.

(He does)

JONAH  
Where the fuck am I?

JUANA  
This is a bar in Tijuana, where the fuck are you.

(Enter VIVIA, she walks to him)

VIVIA  
Hello. I Vivia.

JONAH  
Uh, Jonah. ...hi.

VIVIA  
Do you...want to...?

(VIVIA looks towards the back of the room)

JONAH  
Um...thank you, I'm okay.

VIVIA  
Oh. (pause) They make us ask. Es okay if you don't want.

JONAH  
...gracias..

VIVIA  
Would you like to know something?

JONAH  
I'm actually not here to...

VIVIA

I don't know how the pole work? For the job, they just say show up. They think you will already know.

JONAH

I...I'm sorry.

VIVIA

They should let you come with them the night before and let you sit up close to it. So that you can see how they do.

JONAH

Yea, I guess so.

VIVIA

Can I have a drink with you?

JONAH

...look—

VIVIA

(whispering) We are supposed to say that too.

JONAH

Fine.

(A drinks slides in front of VIVIA)

VIVIA

Thank you, Mister... (pause) So, eh...I shy.

JONAH

...me too.

VIVIA

...I know because I don't have many clothes on that I don't look like I shy, but...

JONAH

(to JUANA) Can we???

JUANA

This ain't got nothin'to do with me, güero.

VIVIA  
Es okay if you don't like me.

JONAH  
You're fine.

VIVIA  
But no to the back?

JONAH  
No to the back.

VIVIA  
I am supposed to keep asking. About you and me going to the back. See, es just right there, not so far. Psst, Mister Johah, we could just pretend to go to the back and—

JONAH  
Look I'm not gonna go to the back in fucking Mexico!

(VIVIA puts down her drink and begins to leave)

Shit, hey...

VIVIA  
No, yo entiendo. I don't know how to work the pole, I don't know how to wear these things I wear, ja I understand you don't want to go to the back with me. But do you know something, Mister Jonah?

JONAH  
I didn't mean to—

VIVIA  
I'm not the one drinking Tequilas at a bar with a pole in it.

JONAH  
...I shouldnt've raised my voice.

VIVIA  
You sit here an you look just like all the other men that sit here. But when I try to talk, when I try to do my job, you answer to me like I'm the one who don't belong.

JONAH  
...

VIVIA

But if you don't want to belong here, why did you come?

(Beat)

JONAH

Please, Vivia, finish your drink.

VIVIA

...

JONAH

Salud.

(They clink awkwardly. A moment)

VIVIA

Do you see how these clothes are like...too tight, see I can barely fit myself inside them...see, how I spill out...

(VIVIA shows him the elastic of her outfit. She waits. And waits. Finally, he embarrassedly places several dollars underneath it. She sits back down. JONAH looks at the two women sitting on either side of him and wonders how the fuck he got there. Lights switch to EFREN and ADRAY in the alley)

ADRAY

Not even when I was a teenager and didn't know what the fuck I was doing. I *never* just laid there. Not even when I was scared as shit.

EFREN

Hey, tha's yer husband's problems, not mine.

ADRAY

...can I get one of those Tecates?

(EFREN tosses one to her, she catches)

EFREN

Man up.

(ADRAY clears it)



Más?

ADRAY

Fuck that.

EFREN

(EFREN pulls a cheap, mini-souvenir bottle of Gusano Rojo Mezcal)

What's that?

ADRAY

Authentic shit.

EFREN

Is that with the worm?

ADRAY

Do I hafta dangle it in front of you, or are you gonna come an bite already.

EFREN

(EFREN tosses to ADRAY, she opens sniffs)

Hey, it ain't for smellin', it's for pourin' over that tongue.

(ADRAY clears it)

Otro mas.

ADRAY

(EFREN tosses another, she opens)

Ain't you havin' any?

(EFREN laughs)

No gracias.

EFREN

(EFREN coughs up, he pounds his chest, trying to swallow)

You okay? What is—

ADRAY

(EFREN takes control, cracks a Tecate, and downs. When he is done, he notices ADRAY looking at him. A moment)

ADRAY(cont)

What was that?

EFREN

You ever get this...

(EFREN touches his pipes, ADRAY looks confused)

Es nada.

(EFREN clears his drink, ADRAY gets him another, he takes. A moment)

ADRAY

So here we are. We got our Tecates in hand. We got our wives someplace else.

EFREN

Salud, to our wifes someplace else...

ADRAY

...Mister Efren...can I ask you honestly?

EFREN

I don't know, can you?

ADRAY

See, I can be here with you, I can drink with you. I can do my best not to be just some stupid güera. But I need to ask you.

EFREN

So ask.

ADRAY

I need to ask if you're going to... Whatever the answer may be. I don't even care what it is. Just...*are you going to hurt us?* (pause) You can just say it. Say it to me like I'm not even listening.

EFREN

You are a strange fuckin' white lady.

ADRAY

This is honesty, right, isn't that what you're looking for.

EFREN

Si, pero...is that what you're doing, huh? Yer bein'honest with me, güera?

ADRAY

I'm trying.

EFREN

Drinkin'with me, talking with me how you don't just lay there. This is how you are for reals?

ADRAY

Well what would you like to see? Would you like me to speak up to you, answer whatever macho bullshit question you throw out there like my husband? Hmm? Would you like me frightened in the corner? Is that what *you* think *we* all do?

EFREN

You know what's like universal?

ADRAY

What?

EFREN

Women. They never want to be like other women.

ADRAY

Okay...

EFREN

Always they want to be like the exception to the expectation. Louder than people think they are, an more thoughtful then people assume. Here you are in Tijuana, away from your husband and you're doing everything you can think to prove to me that you don't come from a long line, is that how you say, of women who just lay there. But really, what do you care?

ADRAY

I don't. I know you lookit me an see something you can just roll over. But that's not me.

EFREN

*...I don't know.*

ADRAY

What?

EFREN

I was answering to you your question: I don't know.

(ADRAY reacts. Enter a MARIACHI GUITAR PLAYER, he begins to play. EFREN offers ADRAY his hand to dance. She takes a moment, and then accepts. ADRAY attempts to move to the music. She is out of tune, so EFREN leads and they move together. The song softens to a ballad; MARIACHI sings softly to ADRAY and EFREN places her arms around him. A moment. EFREN pulls ADRAY closer, his hands roam to her hips, but instead of touching for pleasure, he begins to guide her hips in their swaying. He motions her hips so that they are in perfect rhythm with the music. When she seems to feel the pulse, EFREN moves back, letting her dance on her own. She holds the beat for a few steps; a smile breaks across her face. However when the music changes tempo, ADRAY falters, she tries to catch up, but almost trips over her own feet. She stops, opening her eyes embarrassed. MARIACHI keeps playing, inviting her to try again.

ADRAY

Alright, alright.

(Music ceases)

(to MARIACHI GUITAR PLAYER) Please...please can you just...

(She motions him to move on. MARIACHI GUITAR PLAYER disappointedly slides his guitar on his back and nods to ADRAY pleasantly. ADRAY instinctively reaches for money, but realizes she threw her wallet at EFREN earlier. She apologizes. MARIACHI GUITAR PLAYER begins to exit, but then he stops. He looks back at ADRAY)

MARIACHI GUITAR PLAYER

You know what? No. I don't feel like goin'. I just played my heart out, I just played for you a song I wrote especial for my little one, and you ask me to go like some waiter who is in your face every five seconds? Like some motherfucker just trying to earn a tip...?

ADRAY

I'm sorry, I—

MARIACHI GUITAR PLAYER

You know how come you can't hear mi música?

ADRAY

...

MARIACHI GUITAR PLAYER

Cuz I'm a joke to you.

ADRAY

He has my wallet.

MARIACHI GUITAR PLAYER

Repita por favor???

(ADRAY looks to EFREN)

EFREN

Hey, this between you an—

MARIACHI GUITAR PLAYER

“He has your wallet?” An what does that mean, Señorita?

ADRAY

(to EFREN) Can you please give me my—

(EFREN tosses the wallet to ADRAY, she doesn't catch it.  
MARIACHI GUITAR PLAYER picks it up)

MARIACHI GUITAR PLAYER

You know something, if that is how you see things between us, Señorita; if you see us that we can be only just jokes to each other, than what can I do?

ADRAY

I'm sorry, I don't know what you're—

MARIACHI GUITAR PLAYER

Señorita, señorita, por favor. Do I have the permissions to talk?

ADRAY

Yes.

MARIACHI GUITAR PLAYER

You see, I tried to make you beautiful. I tried show you what my love sound like. But I don't haffta do that. See:

(MARIACHI GUITAR PLAYER begins the intro to "La Bamba," then quickly bows, removing his sombrero and dumping her entire contents of her wallet inside it before placing it back on his head)

I only hope for two things the next time we are close to each other. First, that you get smaller shoes. Those are too big for you, y'know. No wonder you trip all over yourself.

ADRAY

And?

MARIACHI GUITAR PLAYER

Ehh?

ADRAY

The second thing you hope for.

MARIACHI GUITAR PLAYER

That you won't give up on things so easy.

(MARIACHI GUITAR PLAYER exits strumming the ballad he had previously been playing)

Adios Señorita!

(The music drowns away. ADRAY picks up her emptied wallet, she looks up at EFREN embarrassed. Lights spill to VIVIA and JUANA sitting on either side of JONAH)

VIVIA

Eh...Mister Jonah, can I get for you something else, something else to help you enjoy...

JONAH

...something else...?

VIVIA

Sí.

(VIVA whispers into JONAH's ear, his attention raises.  
JUANA looks away disappointed)

JONAH  
You...you can get that?

VIVIA  
For you, si.

JONAH  
How much?

VIVIA  
Cheaper than you ever paid and more than you ever had.

JONAH  
Two-for-one?

VIVIA  
Not for this.

JONAH  
How would we, I mean do, where do we—

VIVIA  
You just have to come with me just over there a little ways.

(JONAH looks to JUANA)

JUANA  
Don't look at me, this between you an—

JONAH  
But is it—

JUANA  
Safe?

VIVIA  
Don't worry, Mister Jonah, I be right next to you like the whole time. Come...

(JONAH takes a few moments, but then allows VIVIA to lead him away from the bar. JUANA watches him go. Then looks around at the bar with wonder and nerves)

JUANA

Hey mijo, I hope that everything okay for you today. I know es exciting to find someone. I remember. An...if white's the way you like'em, white's how I'm gonna like'em too. (pause) Just make sure that she treat you all-the-time-good, no matter how things get, that she always on your side of things, mijo. (pause) An hey, whatever happen, I'm glad you got yourself a little somebody to be with. Even if she a güera, I'm real glad.

(JUANA puts her mouth for another sip, then doesn't like the taste. Lights shift to VIVIA and JONAH standing across from MEXICAN DRUG DEALER, played by same actor as MARIACHI, counting American dollar bills, when he is done he blatantly tosses a tiny, packed plastic rectangle of off-white. JONAH doesn't catch it and worriedly drops to the floor to scoop it up)

MEXICAN DRUG DEALER

Eh, maricón, ain't you play beisbol?

JONAH

No I...

(JONAH studies the bag conspicuously)

...never played...

MEXICAN DRUG DEALER

Hey, maricón, it's no shit you never played, you can't catch for shit. (to VIVIA) Hey Vivia, where you find this maricón?

(VIVIA shrugs)

What, you don't know?

(JONAH opens the bag, dots his finger, tastes)

You bring some maricón who can't play beisbol to me an you don't even know if you found him in the drunk tank or in the lobby Camino Real?

VIVIA

I think he one uh the ones stuck from the red busses.

MEXICAN DRUG DEALER

Que?



VIVIA

Los autobuses rojo. Mexicoach.

MEXICAN DRUG DEALER

I understand what red means, Vivia. What about them?

VIVIA

The busses, they all broke down this morning. So en la Revolucion all los turistas are stuck. They don't know what to do, stay or go.

JONAH

We didn't—we weren't on any of the red busses.

MEXICAN DRUG DEALER

'Scuse me?

JONAH

I'm just saying, my wife an I, we weren't on the red busses, that's all.

MEXICAN DRUG DEALER

So you don't play beisbol, you weren't on the red busses. Wow. Maricón, you sound like a fas'cin'ating motherfucker.

(Beat)

JONAH

Um...

MEXICAN DRUG DEALER

(to VIVIA) What did he say?

VIVIA

I think he said "Um."

(JONAH holds up the packed plastic)

JONAH

There's like...specks.

MEXICAN DRUG DEALER

Specks?

JONAH

The color, see? It doesn't look...pure.

MEXICAN DRUG DEALER

So, Vivia, if you didn't find him from the busses, where did you find him then?

VIVIA

...I think I found him in a bar, I think.

MEXICAN DRUG DEALER

Is he drunk?

JONAH

It's just...kinda a lot of money is all.

MEXICAN DRUG DEALER

Maricón, where you from ?

JONAH

The States.

MEXICAN DRUG DEALER

You sure?

JONAH

Um, yea.

MEXICAN DRUG DEALER

Like one-hundred percent?

JONAH

Positive, why.

MEXICAN DRUG DEALER

Cuz I don't know what it is, but something about you, maricón, look like you live right close to here, that you are here all the time, maybe San Diego, maybe—

JONAH

No, I'm north of Los Angeles actually, by—

(MEXICAN DRUG DEALER excites, he nudges VIVIA)

What...?

MEXICAN DRUG DEALER

So...do you know where like is Santa Clarita, California?

JONAH

Yea, that's *exactly* where I—well no, not exactly, but—

MEXICAN DRUG DEALER

Is it like complicated to get to?

JONAH

...not really.

(They both stare at JONAH)

...you'd just go up the 5.

MEXICAN DRUG DEALER

Tha's it?

JONAH

Why are you asking?

MEXICAN DRUG DEALER

Vivia here has a little *vacación* of her own coming soon. Eh, "coming soon," that sounds like how in the movies, huh? "Coming Soon...Vivia's Vacation, starring..." well fuck, starring Vivia I guess, huh?

(MEXICAN DRUG DEALER pulls a small, clean photograph, he shows it to JONAH)

See, lookit that, *maricón*, tha's like the brochure I give to her. Take it.

(JONAH takes the photo, glances at it unimpressed)

Like a dream, huh? Tha's what's called a "dream house," no?

JONAH

I guess.

MEXICAN DRUG DEALER

Not you guess, es a dreamhouse or es not?

JONAH

Yes. It's...very dreamy.

MEXICAN DRUG DEALER

Give it to her.

JONAH

Give what.

MEXICAN DRUG DEALER

The dream house, I want you to give it to Vivia. Por favor.

(JONAH hands VIVIA the photograph, she looks at it and cannot help but smile like she hasn't in years)

Now, I want you to give to her direction.

JONAH

...you still just take the 5. Northbound.

VIVIA

The 5 to the north'bound, si.

MEXICAN DRUG DEALER

Tell her how easy.

JONAH

It's not hard.

VIVIA

I'm not so uh good behind the wheel, you know.

JONAH

...just stay in your lane, honk the horn if anybody gets too close. And just...ride all the way up. Really it's not that hard, I think...I don't know you, but I imagine you could...get there.

VIVIA

Thank you, my gentle'man.

MEXICAN DRUG DEALER

Y'know, you could be like a pretty good travel agent, same as me. Maricón the Dreamy, Gentle Travelman.

JONAH

Thank you.

MEXICAN DRUG DEALER

I'm gonna make with you a deal, eh.

JONAH

I'm actually fine, with the specks. I'm sorry that I...I don't need—

MEXICAN DRUG DEALER

See I'm a hard worker, maricón; I got three jobs. I deal in...specks, according to you.

JONAH

No, I didn't mean—

MEXICAN DRUG DEALER

Then there's the travel agenting. An...I don't like to float my own boat, is that how you say? Float my own boat?

JONAH

...yes.

MEXICAN DRUG DEALER

But...I dance. Yea. My body is like an instrument. You know, nothing fancy, just for pleasure's sake.

JONAH

That's great.

MEXICAN DRUG DEALER

But I don't do that for the money. If people give me money, okay, but I move because my heart wants me to.

JONAH

...I'd love to watch you sometime.

MEXICAN DRUG DEALER

Yea?

JONAH

Yea.

MEXICAN DRUG DEALER

No.

(VIVIA laughs nervously)

But with my other two jobs, I want to be the best that I can be with them. Do you know?

JONAH

Of course.

MEXICAN DRUG DEALER

So I make a promise to you right now, mister dreamy gentle maricón man, that I'm gonna get you that pure like you said for. No specks.

JONAH

I don't need pure, really, I probably can't even tell the difference—

MEXICAN DRUG DEALER

Hey, Dreamy'man. I want to.

JONAH

I appreciate that, but actually—

MEXICAN DRUG DEALER

As a matter of fact, Vivia here is going to help me get it.

VIVIA

I am the one going to...make it happen.

MEXICAN DRUG DEALER

See, maricón, right now you inspire me. All this time I been giving to people specks an I didn't even know it. Nobody ever complain before.

JONAH

Vivia, y'know what, maybe this was—can we cancel or—

MEXICAN DRUG DEALER

I look up to you. Your dreamy business sense. See I'm not like all those other lazy mejicanos. They all talk. Me, I do. Vivia, do. Thanks to you. Ha, see I rhyme too.

JONAH

...

MEXICAN DRUG DEALER

Mi Vivia here is gonna take like a little vacación a California. Al norte de Los Ángeles. An do you know how come?

JONAH

No.

MEXICAN DRUG DEALER

Because I don't want you to think I'm some kinda joke, selling specks an filthy shit. I'm movin' up. Like The Jeffersons. (pause) You know, on the T.V. (pause) Vivia, maricón-man don't know what I'm talking about, sing for him The Jeffersons.

VIVIA

(singing) We're movin' on up—

JONAH

I know the song, I know the Jeffersons.

MEXICAN DRUG DEALER

So wha's the next line then? (pause) Go on, say it to me.

JONAH

“...we're movin on up, to the east side. To a deluxe apartment in the sky...”

MEXICAN DRUG DEALER

Ay, maricón, you know what you're voice sound like?

JONAH

No.

MEXICAN DRUG DEALER

Es dreamy. When you sung about “up in the sky”...I like felt it. Didn't you feel it, Vivia?

VIVIA

A little.

(MEXICAN DRUG DEALER hands VIVIA a set of keys and a manila envelope)

MEXICAN DRUG DEALER

So go on then, Vivia, we've a customer waiting.

JONAH

Wait. Vivia, don't—

(VIVIA takes the keys and envelope downstage, lights shift to her. We are at an embankment of the Tijuana River. It is quiet. VIVIA dusts herself off. JONAH and MEXICAN DRUG DEALER watch)

VIVIA

(to audience) Well...he was never much of an agent. All the times, he just only always talk about how much a wonderful thing this one, especial vacation will be, 'specially for a new mother like me. An when I try to ask if he got any other trips to take...he don't. What kinda travel agent only have one place to go?

(to MEXICAN DRUG DEALER) You say it to me that it was a one in a million trip. One in a million. An si, I like how that sound coming from my mouth. I never have a million of nothing. 'Cept nosebleeds. I bet you that's where I take the queen, bleeding from my nose.

(to audience) An you know something, right when he's talking at me, my nose went bleeding. Yea, just like that. So he give me a torn page from *El Sol de Tijuana* to stop it up. An then he say to me a promise that all my bleeding will come to an end, if I take this one little trip.

A California. Al norte de Los Angeles.

Me, I don't believe in him at first. I know in my head I think about waking up in California all the time. I also know it ain't so easy as that. But I like what the nice gentle'man say to me, that I can get there.

So I believe.

I believe that a for reals Jeep Cherokee will be waiting for me an that this keys will work. I believe about these papers will have my foto an name. And I even believe how I'll roll my window down para La Migra and smile my eyes as I cross La Linea so easy. Speeding up the engine as I go up into the fat freeways what I seen on T.V.

An me, I will drive through Los Angeles, nobody noticing me for anything but that I belong. Maybe I'll even make my horn go if another car get too close. For truth, I don't know why people make their horns go, it don't do nothing, but me/I'd like to try. Ha. Wouldn't that be something, huh? Me making like I got a right to something. Like I got a say. Making my horn go all the way north the 5 freeway to that house in Santa Clarita, just like the gentle'man tell me to do. I still got the foto, see...

(VIVIA drops the keys and envelope, pulling a crushed, soiled photo from her person)

This is where I was gonna stay till I earn enough to bring over my baby. Felix. See, got a yard an upstairs too. An I can't really see it in the foto, but says there's a pool out back. With a view outlooking to some amusement park. Magicland or something likeso, I don't remember.



VIVIA(cont)

I'm gonna keep this foto with me. I know es stupid. I know I got no use. But I don't care, lookit me...

(She looks back towards river)

...I could use something nice to look at, huh? Even if it ain't so true.

(Beat)

Now, I don't know much for Jeep Cherokee; sure the engine sound okay, the license plate read California, just like he say...but it look used inside, all taped up. And this is I am thinking when a grey, Chevy van cuts me off. (pause) My hand to the horn...but it don't even make a sound. I should've asked for a Toyota.

Two of the men go after my tires, an one stands by my window, staring at me like he bored. Oh, an they all got machine guns. I think this is a thing-to-know, if you're telling a story about your dream vacación and it involves machine guns, you probably had not so good a travel agent.

They don't even keep the Cherokee. They just rip from my tires three packages wrapped in rubber and invite me with ugly mouths to get into the Chevy.

They tell me we are going for a swim. But they don't look at me in my eyes when then say this to me, no all six of their looks are looking at different parts of me. So I don't really believe in them.

My travel agent, he used to tell me I will be laying on la playa, watching the clean California water con mi Felix one day. But while I'm laying on the side of this river, on my back, waiting for all six, one by one... (pause) I look at the water and all I can think is how it don't look so clean. The water I lay next to is shit. I wouldn't want mi Felix here, anywhere close. An I feel so stupid for letting him down.

(Beat)

This morning, they found two men from la policía without their heads along this same river. So I'm not so much surprised when I see one of the men put down his machine gun an pick up a machete instead.

An d'you know something...I could still see. Even after he bring the machete down on my neck, for some little bit of seconds, I could still see as they kicked my body towards water.

VIVIA(cont)

It's not an unthinkable amount of kilometers between that pole I tried to make money for mi Felix in Tijuana and that photographic house in Santa Clarita. Magicland. Was just a Cherokee ride away.

(She looks back at JONAH, who cannot face her)

An I can't help but laugh at myself how close it seem, talking to this one gentle'man. Hearing him tell me how easy. All such shit telling me that I can get there. Be there.

But lookit me, smiling maybe, but my nose is probably bleeding again. It just doesn't need stopping up cuz, well...my body ain't so much attached, y'know.

But I know my heart will do that. Keep pumping blood, even if it has no place to go. I don't think you can blame a heart for that. It has no idea how far things are. Always they seem so close.

(VIVIA exits. Alone onstage is JONAH and MEXICAN DRUG DEALER, who reaches out for JONAH's hand and shakes it firmly. JONAH pulls his hand away, a little hurt. MEXICAN DRUG DEALER exits, leaving JONAH alone onstage. Lights out on Act I)

act two, scene one

JUANA and EFREN stand at the mouth of the alley, ADRAY and JONAH in the background. EFREN downs a Gallo wine.

JUANA

(across borders) Hey there, mijo, lookit you.

(to EFREN) Oh, lookit him, Efren.

(across borders) I love when you put that smile, mijo, so handsome. I wish it you would put it more, but I know, I remember. Sometimes everything feels like you don't wanna smile, but when you find a reason...es like es all you can do.

(to EFREN) Lookit him, Efren, lookit how he dressed so fit. Tucked his shirt an everything.

(across borders) An tha's how you haffta do, mijo, even if it don't feel like you, even if it feel like the clothes they don't really fit. You haffta try. So when the people there see you, they see that you fit just fine. You can fit anywhere, mijo, anywhere you wanna be you can fit into. My promise to you, huh. The most perfect shape you are, mijo. Just the most perfect...

(Beat)

(to EFREN) I'm worried, Efren.

EFREN

No...

JUANA

That Angelita say she like him okay, but—

EFREN

What is?

JUANA

What if I don't recognize him, Efren, what if now he gonna fit so many new places that when we see him again, (She signs the cross) what if he don't look like our boy no more. I don't want his shape to change, Efren.

EFREN

He'll be okay.

JUANA

How can you say that, *these people*...

EFREN

I know.

JUANA

If this is how they raised their Angelita...

(Switch to ADRAY and JONAH)

ADRAY

They don't want our money.

JONAH

I know.

ADRAY

What's wrong?

JONAH

She had a kid. Felix.

ADRAY

Who had a kid? Who the hell is Felix?

JONAH

No one, nevermind. Look we have to get out of here.

(Switch)

EFREN

Juana. No matter how we raised Javi, he better than me. Maybe even better than you.

JUANA

You think their Angela, that she better than—

EFREN

Hey. Salud. To our little shit...an his güerita.

(EFREN toasts with his bottle, then pulls back. When he is done, he thumps his chest, trying to help himself breathe)

JUANA

¿Que paso?

EFREN

Got that shit crawlin'up real bad today, Fea. I can feel it snaking up my pipes, stickin'it's acid wet tongue, beggin'ta get out.

It's more than before, huh? JUANA

(Switch)

They mentioned Santa Clarita. JONAH

What? ADRAY

Adray, what if they know where we live. JONAH

Our address is on my driver's license. ADRAY

(Switch)

I try ta drown him, Juana. But snake won't let me. See feel right here, put your hand. EFREN  
You can feel it in my chest slivering up.

(EFREN tries to put JUANA's hand, she pulls away)

I don't like it sliverin' up. JUANA

(Switch)

Jonah, did Juana mention Angela? ADRAY

(JONAH nods)

Have you talked to her? JONAH

(ADRAY nods)

Is she okay? Wha'd she say, did you tell her anything?

...no. She seemed fine. But... ADRAY

JONAH

What?

ADRAY

You don't think that...maybe Efren and Juana are distracting us meanwhile somebody else is like...going towards Angela?

(Switch)

JUANA

You jus'be strong, Efren. For Javi. I ain't having no snake even close to where he—

EFREN

..way down from almost where my piss holds, all the way up to where I'm talkin'too loud with. Tha's almost two feet long this snake is. But I can hold him down there, Fea. For you. For Javi. An if ever it tries to sneak out, then I bite down hard an guess what's for dinner?

JUANA

What is?

EFREN

Snake soup.

(Switch)

ADRAY

What if Javier isn't even their son, what if he's some guy whose got our address and knows Angela is home alone. You even fucking said to Juana, she's home. Alone.

JONAH

Why would they do that? Why would go through *all* this trouble, drive *all* that way. We're middle class.

(Switch)

JUANA

Hey Efren.

EFREN

Yea, Juanita?

JUANA

I'm scared for Javi to be open like this. His little heart, his little mouth, his little everything.

EFREN

He'll be okay, Juana.

JUANA

What if all this time though, he was at least safe. But now with this little güerita let inside, what if other things sneak inside too.

(EFREN and JUANA turn back towards the belly of the alleyway, they watch JONAH and ADRAY)

ADRAY

Jones... (pause) I asked Angela what the name of that boy she's in love with is. She said his name is Javier.

JONAH

Juana told me the same thing.

ADRAY

What the fuck is this, Jonah.

JONAH

We'll find a phone; we'll call Angela, tell her go to next door and stay with them till we get home.

ADRAY

Are they even home?

JONAH

Then call the police, tell them...tell them there's a student at Dos Pueblos in Angela's year, an that his name is Javier and he's been harassing her. Threatening her. Tell them that whatever Javier is enrolled at Dos Pueblos needs to be picked up.

ADRAY

An if there's not a Javier enrolled there?

JONAH

Tell Angela to stay at the neighbor's till we come get her, tell her I don't want her going home. For anything.

ADRAY

You think our neighbors is safe?

JONAH

Well I don't know where—

ADRAY

Maybe Angela should just go to the police straight. Maybe she should go to them and just say that there's a kid or man named Javier who might be trying to hurt her.

JONAH

A man named Javier. That's gonna scare the shit out of her.

ADRAY

Well, what else can we do!

JONAH

Tell the police to just pick up all the Javiers in the entire city and hold them till she's back with us.

ADRAY

Just lock the entire city down a city, all of it.

JONAH

Then pull everybody over, check their ID an if it says anything resembling Javier, hold'em till every parent is safe and with their kids.

ADRAY

We still don't have a phone, Jonah.

(ADRAY and JONAH hold each other. Lights move to  
JUANA and EFREN)

JUANA

Do you see? Do you see the way they talk about him.

EFREN

Don't you worry, Javi ain't done nothing—

JUANA

They're calling my boy a harassing. A threatner. That he needs to be picked up.

EFREN

Nobody's pickin'him up, Fea.



JUANA  
Don't call me that.

EFREN  
Hey, que pasa?

JUANA  
If some Americano say he need to be picked up, Efren, he will be.

EFREN  
How they gonna call, huh? There's only one phone an I got it.

(JUANA dials the phone, immediate voicemail, she hangs up)

He not answering?

(Shakes her head)

JUANA  
What if something wrong, Efren.

EFREN  
Or maybe he just not answering. Cálmate, Juanita.

(JUANA looks to JONAH and ADRAY)

JUANA  
Lookit them. What kinda parents don't carry with them their phones, huh?

EFREN  
Hey, we already searched them, huh.

JUANA  
They proly got super small ones, can't even feel it over their clothes.

EFREN  
Juana, if they had a way to call, they would've.

JUANA  
You promise to me, Efren, that our Javi will be okay for reals. *Nothing* will happen to him.

EFREN  
Te lo prometo.

(EFREN and JUANA walk to JONAH and ADRAY. EFREN pulls his mobile phone and puts it in front of ADRAY)

EFREN(cont)

(to ADRAY) Dial your daughter. Por favor.

ADRAY

I already did earlier.

EFREN

I ain't asking earlier. I'm asking now.

JONAH

Has something happened?

JUANA

Three times a day, no?

ADRAY

Why're you—

(EFREN puts the phone aggressively in ADRAY's face)

JONAH

Hey!

(ADRAY takes her time in grabbing the phone. She pulls the calling card; EFREN takes the card from her and tosses it)

EFREN

I'll accept your charges, güera.

(ADRAY touches the phone keypad causing lights to turn young again. EFREN and ADRAY look at each other like teenagers, they speak that way too)

“Missed you.”

ADRAY

“All day I been looking. I was looking for you at lunch.”

EFREN

“I had to stay in Cooking”

ADRAY

“What happened?”

EFREN

“I dunno. The substitute said she needed me to stay in the room for awhile. Like that I stole something. I didn’t, but that’s what she acted like. So I was in there helping her wipe the countertops. But then know what I did?”

ADRAY

“What?”

EFREN

“I tol’to her that I didn’t steal nada. And that I shouldn’ve have let her keep me in her kitchen for during my free time. I said that I can’t be inside like that cuz...”

ADRAY

“Cuz why?”

EFREN

“Cuz I got somebody waiting for me now, an I’m not gonna let some stupid whatever-this-is keep me from you, Angela.”

ADRAY

“You told her that, you said my name?”

EFREN

“That’s all I been doing since earlier. Saying you’re name. Feeling it in my mouth. Angela.”

ADRAY

“So she knows...she knows that we...that me an you are like...”

EFREN

“Don’t you want people to know?”

ADRAY

“Yes. I do. Omigod, I wonder what they’ll think.”

(She laughs)

EFREN

“What’s so funny?”

ADRAY

“Um...my parents aren't home.”

EFREN

“Till when?”

ADRAY

“Supposed to be late tonight, but they always stay an extra day when they go places, always telling me how there's just one more something my mom just has to see, then they'll be back first thing.”

EFREN

“My parents would never do that. I gotta call'em like all the time.”

ADRAY

“They're strict?”

EFREN

“Nah, they just worry.”

ADRAY

“So...you wanna come home with me, Javier?”

(He nods eagerly)

EFREN

“So, what? You wanna walk out together, in front of everybody, right through the...”

ADRAY

“Yea, right where everyone can see, straight through the yard, to the north fence.”

EFREN

“You know who hangs out back there though, huh?”

ADRAY

“I know. I never go out that way. But now I got you.”

(They walk across through sounds of gossiping school children, holding each other's hands tight as they do. Proud. After a few moments though, they come to a stop)

EFREN

“Hey, uh...why don't we just go back the other way, c'mon.”

ADRAY

“No. Everyday those guys make me nervous, but not today.”

EFREN

“We’ll go this way tomorrow.”

ADRAY

“If we walk like we’re one person, they won’t be able to say anything.”

EFREN

“Promise?”

(ADRAY looks into EFREN’S eyes and kisses him. For a few moments it is beautiful. Like they have been meaning to kiss for generations. But soon a few teenage catcalls can be heard. EFREN stops the kiss and holds ADRAY’S hand tight as he looks offstage with handmade confidence)

ADRAY

(to offstage) “Why don’t you just leave us alone.”

EFREN

“Let’s just go.”

ADRAY

(to offstage) “So what if that’s his name. We’ve got just as much right to come through this fence as you do.”

EFREN

“Angela, c’mon, c’mon we can go back—”

(They stop holding hands. The lights dim rather quickly. In the darkness...)

ADRAY

(to offstage) “Look I don’t even know what you’re talking about. Who cares if he’s a Javier. Why don’t you just leave him alone! Leave him alone!”

(Lights grow old quickly; ADRAY hangs up the phone slowly. They speak as adults again)

JUANA

Oh, mi Javi...

(to JUANA) I'm sorry.

JONAH

Me too.

ADRAY

Efren, me lo prometiste.

JUANA

Lo siento, mi amor.

EFREN

(JUANA begins messing with the machine gun, trying to find a safety switch)

Juanita.

EFREN

JUANA  
After thirteen years of my perfect boy, now look at him. He gets called what, names at the school. They never bother him before. He tries to make it with her through a fence at a schoolyard and they won't even let him do that.

Maybe he's fine though, Juana.

JONAH

JUANA  
My boy is attacked today and you two look at me? Giving apologies to me?

ADRAY  
Efren, we're sorry for what happened.

JUANA  
Not Efren, estúpida! What have you to say to mi Javier? Huh?

JONAH  
We wish that none of this had happened. Any of it.

JUANA  
What about you, puta?

ADRAY  
The same.

JUANA  
Would you call for him to be locked up? Huh?

ADRAY  
...

JUANA  
No, you don't be silent with me, puta. You answer me what I'm asking.

ADRAY  
What do you want me to say?

JONAH  
We wouldn't do anything like that to him, we're not like that.

EFREN  
You never even met my boy, you never even care to know what he look like and you would have him locked up.

JONAH  
No, I'm sorry, but no we wouldn't have him locked up, we would *never* have *anyone's* child—

JUANA  
But did you *want* to? (pause) Did you want my boy an anybody resembling my boy to be locked up, güero? ¡Dime!

JONAH  
...yes, but...but we didn't mean it. We were...angry. Scared that...Angela might be...

EFREN  
Be what?

JONAH  
In danger.

JUANA  
From who?

JONAH  
I...I don't know.

JUANA  
You make yourself scared of mi Javier, then what chance does he have. Huh?

JONAH

Look, I don't know exactly, we were just scared for her and so we might've...

EFREN

What.

JONAH

We just didn't want to take any chances.

JUANA

Mi Javi isn't a harasser, he isn't anything bad unless you make him that way!

JONAH

We let our imaginations go a bit, that's all.

JUANA

Say it.

JONAH

He isn't anything bad.

JUANA

(to ADRAY) An now you, Little Thing.

ADRAY

Me, what?

JUANA

I want you to say that mi Javier is an honest boy. That he kind. And that he wouldn't hurt your Angela not ever.

ADRAY

What does it matter what I say?

JUANA

Say it.

ADRAY

What is that gonna do, me saying that I—

JONAH

Adray, what is the *matter* with you.

ADRAY

It doesn't matter what I say, Jonah.



JONAH

If it doesn't matter then just fucking say what they want.

ADRAY

Me saying something isn't going to make it happen.

EFREN

What would you say then, Little Thing, to make happen?

JUANA

You say it to me now, that mi Javier is okay next to your Angela or—

(JUANA nudges the gun towards JONAH)

JONAH

Adray, Jesus Christ!

EFREN

Juana, calmaté.

ADRAY

You want us to be honest. Right. (pause) Well, I don't want your Javier next to our Angela. I just do not. And I can't help if that's how I feel. She's our daughter, not yours.

(JUANA puts the gun at JONAH's chest)

JONAH

Adray!

JUANA

I tol'you there's only one reason for a gun to be unsafety.

ADRAY

Juana, if you do *anything* to him, my Angela will break your Javi's heart in fucking two.

EFREN

...the hell're you talkin'?

ADRAY

You said it yourself, they're in love right.

JUANA

Dile que pare, Efen, no me gusta.

ADRAY

I imagine she's right beside him in that hospital, y'know, just the way a girlfriend knows how to. His scared hand cradled in her perfect little paw, oh they're paws and mittens are mixed-up as fuck. But, Juana, Efren, the moment you put this Tijuana alleyway to unsafety, my Angela is gonna dig her manicured nails right past your boy's unsuspecting mitten into his trembling fucking paw.

And the police will come. And who do you think they'll believe in? Oh, they'll drag him in for being a harasser. They'll yell an scream ugly things at him, and why he'll barely even be able to acknowledge to the police that he's ready to sign his name across that confession they've been putting in front of him for several hours.

But he will. He'll write his name in that ugly cursive that teenage boys do, that he, Javier, is a threat to the U.S. nation.

See, I don't care how guilty you want us. I've raised my Angela to protect herself.

(across borders) Ain't that right, baby? If that Javier gets up too close, you get away from him anyway you can think to. And then you call the police, even if you have to scream it from the streets.

(The lights sputter for a moment before turning over to JAVIER and ANGELA, played by the actors who played VIVIA and MARIACHI/DRUG DEALER. JAVIER sleeps in a hospital bed)

ANGELA

Hey...hey...is that you waking up, Javi? Can you hear me?

JAVIER

Is that you?

ANGELA

Yea, it's me.

JAVIER

Where am I? Are we...is this your parents' house?

ANGELA

No. This is a hospital.

JAVIER

How long...

ANGELA

Not long.

JAVIER

Am I gonna be alright?

ANGELA

Just keep drinking water. Try not to move.

JAVIER

My body hurts.

ANGELA

You've already got drugs in you to help the pain.

JAVIER

Thank you for staying.

(Beat)

ANGELA

Javier, I've never really had a boyfriend before.

JAVIER

Boyfriend?

ANGELA

I know it was only a day, but that's as close to boyfriend as I've ever...

JAVIER

Angela, you're the first girl I ever...I never even thought anyone would ever—

ANGELA

So I don't know how I'm supposed to do things, and I'm probably gonna mess this up.

JAVIER

Hey, you can't mess up with me.

ANGELA

Thank you for saying that. So this probably isn't the most ideal way to do this, but...I don't know if we're gonna work out.

JAVIER

Wait, wha—

ANGELA

I know, I know, maybe I'm supposed to wait to do this sorta thing, but I dunno, I just...if I wait, it's just gonna be that much harder to do, won't it?

JAVIER

Angela. Why're you...what is this?

ANGELA

So I just think...let's just get on with our childhoods, ya know?

JAVIER

I can be stronger. For you I can be stronger. I can be. Please just let me—

ANGELA

Coming through that fence with you, Javi—I didn't feel safe...like I imagined I would. I thought the two of us side by side, we shoulda been *so* strong. What possible danger could there be? To you an me. To love.

JAVIER

I do, you know. Love you.

ANGELA

Javi, you're so sweet. You are. But by that fence, in front of everyone, was like you were a joke. (pause) When they was laughing at you on the...oh, I'm so sorry to say this, but some weird tiny part of me almost wanted to laugh with them. Just to be safe. An I know this isn't probably the best time to tell this to you, but... I could feel we weren't meant for each other before they...crashed across your face.

(JAVIER begins looks away. He reaches out for the call button)

I don't think it works, Javier. I was pressing it earlier when you were still out. Just to see what would happen. Know what's funny? It feels good to press. Even if it don't go nowhere.

JAVIER

Why did you make us go through there?

ANGELA

What?

JAVIER

The fence.

ANGELA

I should go.

JAVIER

No, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, please don't leave me here by my—

ANGELA

I want a boy to make me feel safe.

JAVIER

Wait, what if I need—this button it doesn't—I need help.

ANGELA

I have to be home.

JAVIER

Ayúdame, por favor

ANGELA

Ayúdame?

JAVIER

It means help.

ANGELA

You see, Javier, even here by your hospital bed, hearing you talk, I know we aren't right for being next to one another.

(ANGELA moves to exit, then stops herself)

Thank you for the beautiful we shared this morning, I'll replay it in my thoughts often.

(ANGELA exits)

JAVIER

¡Mamá! ¡Papá! ¡Ayúdame! ¡Por Favor!

(Lights begin to dim)

JUANA

(across borders to JAVIER) ¡Javi!

JONAH

(across borders to ANGELA) Angela!

What happened to you, Angie? Why...why would you be like that?

ANGELA

(across borders to ADRAY and JONAH) Sorry. Thought that was what you wanted.

(ANGELA exits. A moment. Both couples stare at each other. EFREN takes the machine gun from JUANA; coughing, thumping his chest)

JUANA

Efren...

ADRAY

Think about what you're doing, Efren.

JONAH

Shut your mouth, Adray.

EFREN

Don't worry, mi Juanita, I bite him down for you, for Javi.

(EFREN moves in on ADRAY and JONAH with the gun in hands, it looks as though he is going to use the mass of it, do something with it; though not shoot)

JUANA

¿Efren, que estas hacien--

ADRAY

The longer you hold that gun, the more that's who you are. It doesn't matter why he holds it, Juana. In fact, maybe one day Javier will pick up a machine gun too. Cuz that's who he'll be. And your family will never change.

An I know you two don't want that. For your children and their children after. What parents would. So you can come at me with that unsafety machine gun, Efren, but just know what it is you're really doing.

JUANA

¿Efren, qué haces?!

JONAH

Why don't we just, maybe put the gun down and take a moment...okay so your son needs help, he's scared, okay, so how can we help him? What can we do here to help Javier?

ADRAY

Who's gonna help *us*, Jonah. We haven't got anyone to help us either.

JONAH

I'm not talking about us, Adray! Now look, we can either keep on making this worse, or we can at least try to ease the situation. Juana, Efren—

(EFREN throws the gun down at JONAH and ADRAY's feet, they jump.)

EFREN

See, I don't need a gun, or anything to put the fear of México in you. Cuz right now, *mi familia*, is scared of *you*.

Mi Javier, all he wanted for was to have his'self a little girlfriend. Somebody to make him feel a little home in your California. Just someplace where he could maybe rest his head an put his thoughts.

JUANA

An you can't even let him do that.

EFREN

I know you two are scared too. But *mi Javi*, he didn't have nothing to do with that.

JONAH

Look, I apologize so completely to you both for...my God, for everything that's happened to—

ADRAY

No, no you're not going to stand there with a fucking machine gun on the floor and make my Jonah apologize to you. We didn't do fucking anything to you.

JUANA

You did more to us than you'll ever know, *güera*.

ADRAY

No, Jonah and me walked through that gate this morning and neither me or him had done one fucking thing to either you or your Javier. This morning, when you spotted us on La Revolución, there was nothing between us. Zero. An now you say we hurt your perfect son, you say *you're* scared of *us*.

You Fucking Put A Gun To Our Faces. Is that what parents do here? No wonder this country is...

(JUANA stares at ADRAY, who moves quick, and grabs the gun, she points it)

JONAH

Adray, what the fuck. You need to calm yourself and put the fucking gun down.

EFREN

(to ADRAY) Es not as heavy as mi Juanita said, huh? Easier to carry than people think. Es the picking it up tha's heavy.

JUANA

You make us do so many ugly things, just to get your serious attention.

JONAH

Don't do this. Look at yourself, Adray.

ADRAY

We don't have any choices, Jonah.

(ADRAY begins to exit, JONAH does not follow)

JONAH

What, you wanna walk out there in the middle of Tijuana with a machine gun?

JONAH (cont)

Adray, you're gonna get yourself shot.

EFREN

(to ADRAY) He's right, you know. If you do like this...

(ADRAY points the gun at EFREN and JUANA as she exits, JONAH goes after her. She stops short. Enter LA POLICÍA, same actor as MEXICAN DRUG DEALER. He has a bloodied wrapped white cloth covering his neck. There is blood at his mouth, and bruises across his face)



LA POLICÍA

¿Qué está pasando aquí?

JONAH

Oh, thank God. Please officer, there's been a horrible misunderstanding. This isn't...it's not what it looks like.

LA POLICÍA

Heh?

JONAH

*Please* help us, me an my wife, we—

LA POLICÍA

You an your wife? You mean your wife with the machine gun? Just you two need help? How about them? How'bout me?

EFREN

¿Por qué está hablando chistoso?

LA POLICÍA

(to ADRAY/JONAH) You see, he ask how come I talk funny, but lookit him.

(to EFREN) You got something inside you, huh? You look like you need to be spit up, huh?

(to JUANA) Es that what he need, huh? Maybe a hand to his back an a good cough, huh?

JUANA

¿Estás bien? ¿Qué pasó?

(LA POLICÍA grins, showing his teeth)

LA POLICÍA

When I wake up this, morning...guess wha'happen? (pause) Three of my teeth fall out. Ja. I felt they were okay last night, but today...

(LA POLICÍA makes a whistling sound by breathing through his missing teeth)

Es like some fucked up toothfairy came an got me back for all the times I didn't leave her shit.

LA POLICÍA(cont)

An d'you know something, these were mi amor's favorite too. Yea, these one, two, three, were her favorite teeth of mine. And now? They'll be buried in the dirt. Yea, mi amor, tha's what she'll react. Buried out in the garden, like they goin'grow back.

JONAH

Officer, please.

LA POLICÍA

Okay, okay, so uh what's uh goin'on here?

JONAH

That's not our gun. Adray put the gun down.

ADRAY

I'm not putting anything.

JONAH

Adray, the police are here—

LA POLICIA

Nah, es okay, you hold the gun for a little bit if it make you happy. You look ridiculous holding it anyways.

JONAH

Could you, we'd like to go to the station. Can we do that?

(EFREN and LA POLICÍA laugh heavily)

LA POLICÍA

Quiere que lo lleven a la estación... eso es lo que dice.... Yea? Hey, okay, why don't you put those on then, huh?

(LA POLICÍA tosses a pair of handcuffs to JONAH)

Go on, es one size fit all.

ADRAY

Jonah, don't you even think about—

JONAH

(to LA POLICÍA) What happens, sir, if I put these on?

LA POLICA

Wha'happens? (pause) You're hands'll be stuck together, puto, what you think happen?

ADRAY

Look, these two used this gun to force us into this alley. They've been holding us here and the only reason I have the gun is because we just want to go home. No charges. No reports. We just want to get out of here. Can you understand that? Can anyone understand that?

LA POLICÍA

Eh...señorita, may I say something?

ADRAY

No.

LA POLICÍA

If you eh...start walking, holding a machine gun like that, I'm gonna haffta...do my job.

ADRAY

Yes, fine, go on then, do your job!

LA POLICÍA

Perdon, but Señorita, you don't know for my job. You don't know what happen in my everyday, the things I go through. An if you cannot be calm with the machine gun, Señorita, I'm going to have to ask you to put it down.

ADRAY

No doing.

LA POLICÍA

Why you no doing? Because I have thee policia uniform on an so you think that mean what? That I go crooked directions, ja? So many policia, they take the money an they have so many snakebites all under their uniform. La Mordida. But, me, look:

(He rolls up his sleeves, shows his clean arms)

No snakebites. No bribes. Me, I think many times what if I just take a little extra pesos here, close my eyes a little there...but to be truth, I just don't want anything that bites near mi amor an mi hijo. There are too many ugly things near our little house already.

ADRAY

Are you going to help us or aren't you? (pause) No? Jonah, let's go.

(ADRAY begins walking)

JONAH

Adray, what are you doing.

ADRAY

This is how it works down here, they all work together. They probably planned this.

JONAH

You don't know that, Jesus Christ, you don't fucking know that.

LA POLICÍA

Ay, señorita, you see how you do. You gimme no choices.

(LA POLICÍA unholsters. ADRAY points the gun upwards, looking as if to shoot)

JONAH

Adray, what the fuck.

ADRAY

Gunshots are loud, somebody will come.

JONAH

No, you're gonna get yourself in deeper an then what, Adray? And then what? I go home alone? I go back home and tell Angela what? Look At Yourself, Please.

ADRAY

They're not gonna let us go, Jonah. They never were.

(Pointing to the sky, ADRAY pulls the trigger. She flinches for the sound, but none comes. It clicks. Nothing. She tries again, but there are no fireworks. She shakes the gun. All look at her)

JONAH

...Oh Jesus...Adray...how could you do that?

(LA POLICÍA pulls his revolver, points it at ADRAY)

LA POLICA

(to ADRAY) Pongase al suelo con sus manos detras de su cabeza, ahorita...

(JONAH puts his hands up)

LA POLICÍA(cont)

Your hands en su su cabeza, ahorita!

(LA POLICÍA steers ADRAY to the floor, cuffing her hands behind her head. He looks to JONAH who quickly does it himself)

Man, es too too hot for this shit. Sometimes I think how come for just some parts of the year, we an Canada can't like switch places.

(LA POLICÍA picks up the machine gun; shaking his head)

(to EFREN and JUANA) You know, you two are even estupider with a gun than her.

(LA POLICÍA walks the machine gun over to ADRAY)

D'you see? It was on special. Right over in one of the shops. Many turistas bring this home to their sons. Because of how real it look, see.

(LA POLICÍA then tosses the gun at EFREN and JUANA)

But this right here, for up close, c'mon you look.

(LA POLICÍA puts his revolver in ADRAY and JONAH's face)

That is what real smell like.

JUANA

Señor policía,

LA POLICÍA

Ehh?

(LA POLICÍA goes to EFREN and JUANA)

JUANA

They have a daughter.

LA POLICÍA

Lotsa people have daughters. Lotsa people have sons. What do you care. Lookit you.

EFREN

Policía, por favor.

(LA POLICÍA looks at all four of them. He walks around the situation)

LA POLICÍA

Listen up, eh. I got something to say.

JUANA

Señor, por favor.

LA POLICIA

That statement was like for all four of you.

EFREN

¿Qué haces?

LA POLICÍA

So...a police officer walks into a...alleyway. An he finds two Mejicanos and two Americanos. Oh, and a “machine gun” an a lotta Tecates. Shit, you guys need to drink better, that shit no good for you. So...he say to the Mejicanos, “If you two were being held up in a different country, by what you thought was a fucking assault rifle, what would you have me do? (pause) Contéstame.

EFREN

...we want help.

JUANA

...yo tambien.

LA POLICÍA

Si, you’d want me to do my fucking job. Like how I was trained to do.

(LA POLICÍA turns to ADRAY and JONAH)

(to ADRAY/JONAH) An so the police officer says to the Americanos, “Tell me...if I come to *your* country, and raise what look like a machine gun to a police officer, what would happen to me? (pause) Well, say it to me, what would happen?”

JONAH

...you’d be arrested.

LA POLICÍA

I'd be shot, motherfucker. Like more than once. (pause) Those two maybe not so bright, but you two...you two are the luckiest people here today.

JONAH

Officer, we'd just like to get back to our daughter.

LA POLICÍA

So, what's stopping you?

JONAH

We...need the key.

LA POLICÍA

Señor, those are not those kind of handcuffs, if you truly want to go, they will let you.

(JONAH and ADRAY try getting out of their cuffs. LA POLICÍA begins to laugh)

Tell me, back in America, is you two just always believe what somebody tell you. Of course you need the key, what kinda police officer walk around with handcuffs that don't lock.

(LA POLICÍA drops a set of handcuff keys by them and looks at both couples)

You people, all of you, you believe too many things.

(Enter VIVIA. All look at her. Dripping wet. She and LA POLICÍA look at each other)

LA POLICÍA

Hello.

(She responds)

Are you—

VIVIA

I seen you. Before. By the water.

LA POLICÍA

Me you too. By the water.

VIVIA

Where is your friend? The other one.

LA POLICÍA

...still by the river, I guess.

(LA POLICÍA pulls the cloth from around his neck, revealing a severe slice encircling his neck. VIVIA feels her neck as well)

Our bodies, they found in Rosarito close to where a grade school is. To where children same age like mi hijo will be in the morning. We were wrapped. But not wrapped from respect for the dead. Los muertos. No, we were wrapped like presents. Just so only when they found us would it be revealed. Revealed that while our bodies lay wrapped in Rosarito, our heads would be found unwrapped someplace else. En el Río de Tijuana.

(A luminescent blue over VIVIA and LA POLICÍA. Sounds of water. Both react)

VIVIA

En el Río de Tijuana.

LA POLICÍA

Where we understand each other that there was so many stupid forces for us to be by this horrible river. An maybe you think it was your own bad mistakes made you end so awful. An have no idea just how many kilometers deep an ugly the ocean is that swallowed us both up an then spit us out like that.

(The blue begins to swallow VIVIA and LA POLICÍA)

An now all I can think of, es mi familia defenseless, in our little defenseless house, knowing that los policías is just as defenseless as them.

An today mi familia isn't safe, an I was not strong enough to do anything about it.

(The blue swallows VIVIA and LA POLICÍA. Lights back to the alley. A few moments, nobody talking, nobody looking at one another. A ringing is heard. EFREN pulls his mobile urgently. He answers)

EFREN

¿Javi!? ¿Donde esta?! (pause) ¿Quien habla? (pause) Huh? (pause) Si, un momento, por favor.



(EFREN looks to JONAH, hands him the phone)

Es for you.

JONAH

...who is it?

EFREN

Take it.

(JONAH does)

JONAH

Uh...hello?

(Lights reveal ANGELA, same actress as before, she sits in a clean, white, kitchen; she has been crying. Both couples watch)

ANGELA

Dad?

JONAH

...Angie?

ANGELA

....so, how's Mexico?

JONAH

Angela, what's a matter?

ANGELA

Is it fun?

JONAH

Angie, what is it?

ANGELA

Who's number is this anyways?

JONAH

Nevermind the number, Angela, what is it?

ANGELA

I'm in the kitchen. I was gonna get a snack. Hey, do you care if I finish your frozen little pocket things? There's not that many left.

JONAH

Stoppit.

ANGELA

I just...I had a really confusing day, you know.

JONAH

What happened?

ANGELA

So...this boy...

JONAH

Yea, I know.

ANGELA

...

JONAH

Angela, are you still there?

ANGELA

I thought I really really liked him. Like a lot. Like more than I ever... We...were like so...connected or something? You know?

JONAH

Yea. I do.

ANGELA

An I thought that like, I could totally tell what I was feeling... But...I couldn't hold onto it. I wanted to hold onto it, but...it's like I wasn't strong enough. An I keep feeling like its all my fault, you know.

JONAH

It's not. Nothing, is your fault, Angie. Do you hear me? Not one thing is your fault.

ANGELA

You sound weird. Are you an mom okay?

JONAH

We're fine.

ANGELA

He was hurt, Dad. He was hurt real bad, an I'm the one that did it.

JONAH

No, it's not you, you wouldn't hurt anyone—

(A doorbell, ANGELA looks up towards it)

ANGELA

Wait, hold on, Daddy, somebody's at the door.

(ANGELA goes towards a door)

JONAH

No, Angela don't answer it.

(Before ANGELA can open the door, stands JAVIER, he looks exactly like somebody who fell in love in the morning, got the shit kicked out of them in the afternoon, and then had their heart broken not that long after)

Angela, who is it, who's at the door.

JAVIER

...

ANGELA

Javier, are you okay?

JAVIER

no. i'm not actually.

JONAH

Angela, who's there?

JAVIER

i don't understand, i thought...i thought we were like so...

ANGELA

So did I, I just...

JAVIER

what?

JONAH

Angela? Angela, can you hear me?

(JONAH hangs up phone)

ANGELA

My parents are always saying how important experience is. To seeing the world. But everytime I wanna go with them, they say I won't appreciate it till I'm older. So this morning, I thought, Javier, that you were gonna like help me experience so many things. And here we are and the day is almost over and...whatever I was supposed to get from you, Javier—

(JAVIER holds his chest)

What is it, what's a matter?

JAVIER

i got this like weight in my chest. like its full or filling up.

ANGELA

Where?

JAVIER

all along here.

(JAVIER runs his hand from belly to throat)

ANGELA

Do you wanna throw up?

JAVIER

do you have anything to drink?

ANGELA

There's Sunny D.

JAVIER

no, like to *drink*.

ANGELA

...

JAVIER

don't your parents have anything?

ANGELA

...I think maybe...

(ANGELA pulls a half full bottle of shit wine)

They use this for cooking sometimes.

(JAVIER takes the bottle)

I didn't know you drank.

(JAVIER uncorks and puts the bottle to his lips, taking it back)

I can get you a glass.

JAVIER

i just...i'm just tryin'ta drown him...

ANGELA

...is it working?

JAVIER

es like i feel it snaking up my chest, stickin'it's acid, wet tongue in from the back uh my throat...

(JAVIER coughs up, ANGELA offers a napkin)

See feel right here, put your hand. You can feel it in my chest slivering through me.

ANGELA

I'm okay.

(JAVIER stares at her)

What? What is it?

JAVIER

it might feel okay if you let me kiss you again.

ANGELA

We already tried that, Javier, an it didn't go anywhere.

JAVIER

but this morning, was just a few—i just wanna remember how close...

(JAVIER moves close to ANGELA, tries to touch her hair)

ANGELA

It passed, Javier.

JAVIER

i keep replaying your voice when you said it to me your parents were staying on vacation. so welcoming.

ANGELA

Well they changed their mind, they'll be home any minute. I'm actually on the phone with my Dad from the car.

(The kitchen phone begins beeping, as when left off the hook)

Please, I'm sorry you feel sick, but—

JAVIER

but you invited me here.

ANGELA

Sometimes, Javier, we visit places, but then we go home.

JAVIER

i just wanna feel what i felt before. so close. like you an me were on the same—

ANGELA

People drift. That's what they say.

JAVIER

But we fit so good, our shapes they fit right close like—

ANGELA

Well, I don't want to fit anything, Javier. I just do not. And I'm sorry, I can't help it if that's how I feel. This is my house, Javier, not yours.

(The bottle slips out of JAVIER's hand and smashes. Both him and ANGELA jump; startled. They stare at one another like as though they are a different species. Lights drown out on them)

(Lights surface up on the alley way. ADRAY and JONAH sit, still cuffed with their heads turned away, crying. JUANA sits defeated on the floor, EFREN stands downing a Gallo wine.

Several moments of them all unable to look at one another.  
Lights out. Curtain. END OF PLAY)

**Alternate ending:**

(Lights surface up on the alley way. ADRAY and JONAH sit, still cuffed with their heads turned away, crying. JUANA sits defeated on the floor, EFREN stands downing a Gallo wine. Several moments of them all unable to look at one another.

ADRAY

Juana...

(ADRAY looks to the mouth of the alley)

...parent to parent...

JUANA

Efren, they're daughter needs them.

EFREN

(to JUANA) ¿Donde está la llave?

JUANA

No lo tengo.

(JONAH begins looking for the key frantically)

JONAH

I have it, it's right here.

(JONAH uncuffs himself)

Adray, gimme your hands.

(He uncuffs ADRAY)

ADRAY

Jonah, c'mon.

(As they exit, ADRAY tries to put hoop her arm in JONAH's, he does not let her in. They walk off separate. Lights linger over EFREN and JUANA)

JUANA

Dame el teléfono.

(EFREN tosses the phone to JUANA, who opens the phone, the light illuminates her face)

EFREN

Juanita, I don't want for you to be disappointed.

JUANA

Ain't him I'm disappointed in.

EFREN

We tried, Juanita. We just wanted him to—

JUANA

I know, Efren. We didn't mean for anything. But here we are.

(EFREN takes a swig of Gallo, then spits it out)

EFREN

Fucking snake.

JUANA

I just hope he answers...

(JUANA begins to dial. EFREN leans down and they both listen to the receiver with nerves all over. They wait. In the far, distant background, a small voice can be heard to answer. The safety lights flicker out on JUANA and EFREN both unsure what to say. Curtain. END OF PLAY)