

INTRODUCTION: Detained in the Desert

JOSEFINA LOPEZ

Detained in the Desert received its world premiere in Los Angeles, California, at CASA 0101 (October 1–November 21, 2010), located in the heart of Boyle Heights, where Josefina Lopez herself grew up. The play's story pivots around two people detained in the desert, how they got there, and the impact the experience has on their thinking about immigration and the role they both occupy within the specific political landscape of Arizona. Significantly, Lopez wrote this play during a time of national conflict so as to prevent herself from falling into a state of despair and to lend her voice to the struggle of those in Arizona working against the rhetoric of hate that has come to permeate the cultural landscape, from the legislature to the media. To write this play, Lopez conducted research that included following the evolution of SB 1070, listening to talk radio, and studying performed struggles at the U.S. Arizona-Mexico border between humanitarian activists and vigilante Minutemen types, the latter known to aggressively follow and sabotage the efforts of groups such as Border Angels by targeting for shooting practice the containers of water they leave throughout the desert for desperate crossers.

Lopez's play is written in a genre she describes as cineteatro, a form that brings to the dramatic script key cinematic elements, such as a sense of highly directed framing and editing, including the appearance of jump cuts. The play signals the conventions of film and works from familiar modes of reading in order to expand the narrow frames of reference that shape and inform our thinking. *Detained in the Desert* positions its audience to bear witness to the impact of anti-immigration activities on public interactions as well as interpersonal relationships. Lopez begins by featuring

emblematic talk radio conversations that insistently focus on disenfranchisement. The climate is one in which people perceive the world through affect, asserting that they do not enjoy the privileges they used to enjoy and, more importantly, felt and still feel entitled to. The play's focus on a protagonist who is a shock-jock radio host serves to illustrate how an infotainment narrative of disenfranchisement has come to replace political analysis of historical and material disenfranchisement. Significantly, the play's second featured protagonist is a college student, a Chicana who upon completing her master's degree is in the process of returning home to her community. What she will do with her education remains a question that charges the play.

Detained in the Desert is also clearly interested in the shock wave that Arizona has sent across the country as other states model legislation on SB 1070. Well over a month after Lopez's play premiered, the media reported Jared Loughner's shooting of Arizona's Rep. Gabrielle Giffords. Significantly, in the information about Loughner that the media has unfurled, there appears a consistent thread of logic permeating Loughner's world-view: that there is no reliable or trustworthy structure on which to build his life. He ranted about being rejected by the military, employers, and college. Information has been unearthed that suggests he obsessed about Giffords' not adequately answering a question he posed to her in 2007 at one of her political events. Among his obsessive rants against government, he is reported as having said, "What is government if words have no meaning?" Notably, his comments emphasize that he felt completely disenfranchised. In a post-traumatic response to the shooting, James Fuller, a Democratic activist and former campaign volunteer for Rep. Giffords, threatened a Tea Party spokesman, "You're dead! It looks like [Sarah] Palin, [Glenn] Beck, Sharon Angle and the rest got their first target." Notably, the majority of news stories insistently focused on the shooting as solely a freak event perpetrated by a mentally unstable young man on a downward spiral; very few reports discussed the larger historical and cultural contexts framing the event and linking it to other acts of violence born from a shared cultural climate. In Arivaca, Arizona, May 2009, nine-

year old Brisenia Flores was shot in her home at point blank range; Shauna Forde, the alleged mastermind behind her murder, publicly represented anti-Latino hate groups, including the Minutemen and the Federation of Americans for Immigration Reform. In their recent publication, Soldadera de Amor: Mujeres de Maiz Flor y Canto (2011), the collective dedicate the zine to Brisenia and comment, "Her murder represents the violence that follows when hateful and dehumanizing rhetoric and the groups that promote it go unchecked." Read in tandem with current events, Josefina Lopez's Detained in the Desert offers an incredibly timely and important call to analyze the many convergent factors, but most especially the rhetoric of violence, that shape thinking about citizenship.

Playwright's Notes

I was in Arizona on vacation when it was announced that SB 1070 had passed. Quickly I got texts from immigrant rights organizations telling me where the protest would be that night. I was seriously considering going, but my husband's family was having a family reunion, and he would not let me skip it. I wanted to do something more than just protest, so I decided to write this play to show the ridiculousness of this law but also to explore the motives of "hate talk" which in the past few years has led to a 40 percent increase in hate crimes toward Latinos. When I read about the many hate crimes that have happened and the similarities between them, it made me wonder if the men at the forefront of this "hate talk" and fear of immigrants are aware that they have blood on their hands. They have a right to freedom of speech, but they must realize that spreading hate causes more hate. All of us must realize the power of our words to separate humanity or bring humanity together. I hope with my words I have created some degree of understanding that goes beyond the immigration rhetoric and fear mongering that is happening right now in this country. Hopefully with this play I've shed some light on the darkness of ignorance.

—Josefina Lopez, October 2010

DETAINED IN THE DESERT

JOSEFINA LOPEZ

Characters

SANDI BELEN, 20s, second-generation Latina who does not speak Spanish but is dark skinned and looks almost Native American.

LOU BECKER, 50s, a portly, Anglo conservative talk show host who criticizes “illegal aliens” on his shows and encourages Americans to “Take Back America.” This slogan is also the title of his radio show.

ERNESTO MARTINEZ, 50s, an activist who distributes gallons of water throughout the desert to provide aid for migrants crossing. He is founder of Angels of the Border.

MATT WILLIAMS, 20s, blond-haired and blue-eyed, Sandi’s boyfriend of six months. He is an undocumented Canadian.

MILAGROS, 20s, a soon-to-be deported woman who befriends Sandi at the detention center.

TALL FIGURE/SAUL, 20s, Latino, an angry man who lost his brother to a hate crime.

SHORT FIGURE/J.C., 20, Latina, an angry woman who lost her brother to a hate crime.

MEDIUM FIGURE/CHUY, 20s, Latino, an angry man who lost a brother to a hate crime.

FEMALE GUARD at the Detention Center, 40s, African American, sympathizes with Sandi.

ARIZONA POLICE OFFICER, 40s, a racist cop who racially profiles Sandi.

CARL DUNLOP (VOICE), a Minuteman who eventually becomes the next host of *Take Back America*.

KEN BEAVERS, 40s, radio producer of the show *Take Back America*.
DOCUMENTARY FILMAKER & her CAMERAMAN, both from
England.

ARTEMIO HERNANDEZ, 40s, a dark-skinned man who was murdered in
the desert.

MRS. ARTEMIO HERNANDEZ (VOICE), 40s, a woman who writes to
thank ERNESTO for returning her husband's bones.

Scene

TIME: Over a period of a few days in the summer of 2010.

SETTING: Multiple locations in the state of Arizona—KRZT 1070 radio station DJ booth; front seat of a car; a tent somewhere in the desert; a road somewhere in the desert; a detention center in the desert; a water station; and Ernesto's SUV.

SCENE 1

In the darkness we hear short bits of audio from various radio stations as the dial moves in search of a station. Spanish language radio plays for a second or two, and then the dial stays on a station that is broadcasting in English. A jingle identifies the radio station as KRZT 1070. LIGHTS FADE in on LOU BECKER sitting at a DJ booth welcoming his listeners.

LOU: Good morning Phoenix! This KRZT 1070. Welcome to *Take Back America*. My fellow Arizonans I am so proud of us for finally taking the correct measures to keep all the illegals out. Our lousy government and the Bozo in office has been too weak to get the job done, so it was up to us to do it...and for that, many hate us. It took courage to do what we did. We have to stand proud in the face of adversity. We shall overcome. While protests at the state capital continue, we must hold firm to the belief that we are doing the right thing, even if the snobs in California and New York think we are

racists. This is not about racism or racial profiling. We are just sick of paying for all those illegals that come to our country and state to live and breed like cockroaches. What do you think? I want to hear your thoughts. What can we do to stay strong and continue the fight to take back America? We're going to the phones.... Oh, look, it's lighting up like a Christmas tree. We have a lot of callers on the line. So let's get this tea party started. (*LOU presses a button.*) We have Thelma from Scottsdale. Thelma, what do you do to stay strong?

THELMA (*voice over, a white woman in her 70s*): I just think it's so unfair that everyone thinks we're racist when we're not. So, when someone calls me a racist, when I'm out there holding my protest signs defending Sheriff Arpaio and our fine governor against all those Latino protestors, I just look up to God and ask for patience and peace.

LOU: That sounds like a great idea. Patience and peace.

THELMA: It's just awful what they are doing to Sheriff Arpaio.... He is so brave for standing up to the criminals. So what if he makes his prisoners wear pink underwear? Don't come to this country illegally, if you don't like it.

LOU: Did you know that one third of the prison population is made up of illegal aliens?

THELMA: No, I did not know that, but I suspected it.

LOU: People call us racists, but we just really love this country. I'm a patriot, not a racist. I don't want this country to go to the pits, the dogs, hell-in-a-hand-bag, or whatever you want to call it. I don't want tuberculosis and whatever diseases those vermin bring across the border.

THELMA: That's right. My granddaughter got lice the other day from some dirty Mexican kid who gave it to her. Why should my granddaughter be

exposed to that? I pay my taxes, and my husband and I have worked hard to give her a great life. Lou, you are a great man to stand up for us.

LOU: Thank you, Thelma. I'm just a humble servant to all my listeners....

(LOU presses some buttons.) Now we have Adam from Flagstaff. Adam, welcome to *Take Back America*.

ADAM: Lou, I am fighting back by encouraging all my friends and family to participate in a "Buy-cott." I bet you that there are more people who are for us than against us.

LOU: Yes, more people are in support of our law than against it. Before you know it, ten more states will be passing this same law. Florida is getting ready to pass even tougher laws, so I know we are not alone in this.

ERNESTO MARTINEZ appears close to the DJ booth.

LOU: Thank you Adam.

LOU signals for ERNESTO to come in and sit down next to him. ERNESTO puts on the headset, knowing the routine.

LOU: Ladies and gentlemen, as all my listeners know, I am not afraid to speak the truth and to speak it on this station in public and in private, and I have always invited all these idiotic liberals who believe that the borders are an imaginary line to come debate me on my show. Do they ever take me up on my offer? No! At the heart of all those liberals, there's nothing but a coward. However, today is different. I got a call the other day from a man some of you know as the "Minutemen's Enemy Number One." Now, before anybody accuses me of sympathizing with this man, let me just say that as a law-abiding American, I respect a U.S. citizen's right to exercise his First Amendment right, which is free speech. I do not agree with this man, but

I wanted to give him the opportunity to tell his side of the story. So let's welcome Ernesto Martinez, founder of *Angels of the Border*, an organization that provides relief for illegal—

ERNESTO: Migrants. We help people in need of help in the desert regardless of legal status—

LOU: They are illegal! They break the law. They're illegal—what's so difficult about saying what it truly is?

ERNESTO: They are human beings. I help human beings.

LOU: Why are you breaking the law?

ERNESTO: All I do is put water out in the desert—

LOU: Aren't you encouraging people to cross the desert by putting water out there? Aren't you enticing them to cross the border by making it easier to cross the desert?

ERNESTO: It's seventy-six miles of desert! No human being would cross the border and risk their life just to get my water. Things have to be dire and desperate for someone to decide to cross the border. Everyday one person dies crossing that border.

LOU: If they cross the border illegally, then they deserve it!

ERNESTO: No human being deserves to die alone in a desert trying to feed their families. Everyone has a right to survive and strive for a better life—

LOU: Yada, yada, yada... You idiotic liberals always give me the same emotional bullshit! You have no respect for the laws that clearly state you can't come and live in this country without the proper documentation—

ERNESTO: Lou, you know that you can't legislate morality. You know there used to be laws that barred blacks and women from voting, Jews from—

LOU: They broke the law!!!

ERNESTO: Were you a good history student?

LOU: Yes, I do fancy myself a history buff.

ERNESTO (*affirmatively*): Then I'm sure you know about the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and how Americans constantly broke the law and crossed the Mexican border illegally and eventually stole Arizona, Texas—

LOU: That's a lie! Don't come on my show and distort the truth! We did not steal it!

ERNESTO: And I don't need to remind you how this land originally belonged to the Apaches and all the Native Americans before it was stolen by the Mexicans and then your "forefathers"—

LOU (*sarcastic and disgusted*): So what's your solution? Giving it back?

ERNESTO: The solution is immigration reform. New humane laws need to be created that are compassionate towards families and that give opportunities to those who are here—

LOU: Why should we reward people who break the law? Criminals don't get rewarded in prison—

ERNESTO: They are not criminals. No human being is illegal or a criminal for—

LOU (*staring down ERNESTO*): Yes they are, and so are you! What you do is

criminal! You should be arrested—

ERNESTO: I take orders from a higher source. Laws, like men, are flawed, so God has told me to do this, and until God tells me to stop, I will continue. Until then, I must do what is right.

LOU: So God told you to do this?

ERNESTO: Yes.

LOU: You know how crazy that sounds? So God told you to break the law?

ERNESTO: In Matthew—

LOU: Shame on you for bringing God into this. Don't bring God into this!

ERNESTO: I will bring God into this. What kind of God do you believe in that allows poor people to die in the desert and children to get separated from their families? Or do you believe in God? Or do you believe that only white people are God's children?

LOU breaks his stare down with ENRIQUE and changes the subject.

LOU: Now, let's take a break for station identification. (*LOU presses a button and the show's identification jingle plays, severing the tension.*) Would you like some coffee or water?

ERNESTO (*civil*): Water would be great. Can never have enough water.

The jingle ends and Lou takes the mic again.

LOU: Welcome back to *Take Back America*.... Today my guest is Ernesto Martinez, founder of *Angels of the Border*. (*To Ernesto.*) I have a surprise for you. (*Lou pushes a button.*) Caller, you're on the air.

CARL (*voice over, a white male speaks with a Texas twang*): Hello, Lou, thanks for having me on your show. Ernesto, my name is—

ERNESTO: Carl. I know who you are. You're a poor confused man who thinks poking holes into the gallons of water I leave out in the desert is a patriotic act. Or taking shotguns to the border and dressing up like G.I. Joe is an act of—

CARL (*voice over*): I am a proud member of the Minutemen, and I am defending this country against the illegal invaders who want to—

ERNESTO: That makeshift green uniform that you proudly wear, trying to imitate a Border Patrol Officer, is made by undocumented labor. I know that because I've visited those factories where undocumented people get paid pennies to make your uniform. That rifle that you use for target practice in the desert, those parts are assembled in Mexico by maquiladora workers who are exploited by NAFTA. That cap that you wear—

CARL: Now, that's made in China so don't even lie.

ERNESTO: Yes, it's made in China by forced prison labor.

LOU: Carl, you're out there defending the border.

CARL: Yes, I'm right here now.

LOU: Do you think what Ernesto is doing should be considered a crime?

CARL: Yes, it certainly is!

ERNESTO: Gentlemen, I can see we are not going to come to any understanding, and I have a lot of water to deliver. This is going to be a very hot week, so I better get back to work. I just hope that one day you see the

light, but hopefully not before you...finally see the light.... Goodbye. *(He gets up and exits, leaving LOU and CARL to insult him in the wake of his absence.)*

LOU: See. These liberals know they can't stand up to me....

LIGHTS FADE OUT.

SCENE 2

LIGHTS FADE IN on the front seat of a car. It is night. SANDI drives with MATT. She spots something outside as they drive by.

SANDI: Did you see that?

MATT: No, what?

SANDI: There was a strange man by the side of the road. I wonder if he was waiting to cross, or if he wanted a ride.

MATT: What man?

SANDI: He was on your side.

MATT: No, I didn't see anything. It's so dark outside, except for all the stars.

SANDI: Yeah, it's kind of scary. This reminds me of a horror film I saw once...I would hate to have a tire blow out and get stuck here. *(SANDI turns on the radio. She dials it. A ranchera song comes on.)* God, I hate rancheras. Not another ranchera station. *(After a few seconds she moves the dial and settles on a station broadcasting Take Back America. We hear part of the show we just witnessed, the moment when LOU BECKER tells ERNESTO that what he does is criminal.)* This show is so stupid. *(SANDI turns off the radio.)* People in

Arizona are so stupid.

MATT: Where are we?

SANDI studies the map and fully opens it to follow a route.

SANDI: I can't wait to get a job so I can buy a car with GPS. This old clunker is ready to die...I just hope it gets us to California.

MATT (*sarcastic, joking*): With your master's degree in English, you should be able to get a high paying job.

SANDI laughs. She continues studying the map.

SANDI: We are...we are...in butt-fuck Arizona.... Some stupid route close to the border.... Why did you get off the 8 freeway?

MATT: I didn't know I got off...it just sort of kicked us off and put us on this road.

SANDI: We gotta get back on the freeway, or it's going to take us longer, and I told my mother we'd be there for lunch.

MATT: Well, let me know when you see an opportunity to get back on the freeway.

SANDI: I'm so glad we're going to California now. If I hadn't gotten a scholarship to the University of Texas, I would have never gone to Texas. Man, I should never have left California. I miss San Diego.

MATT: I'm glad you did, otherwise we would have never met.

SANDI: We would have met. I know we were destined to meet...I can't wait for my mother to meet you.

MATT: Are you sure your mother is not going to mind me staying with you over the summer?

SANDI: I spoke to her. She says it's fine.

MATT: I really appreciate it, but you don't think it's going to be awkward... with your mother in the other room?

SANDI: Whoa. Don't tell me you have sexual hang ups?

MATT: No...I just know that if you came to my parents' house in Vancouver, and we slept in the room next to theirs...well...I just wouldn't feel right.... My parents are conservative, and I probably couldn't sleep with you in their house, unless we were married.

SANDI: Your parents are definitely more conservative than mine...than my mother. My mother is pretty hip. She's had several boyfriends since my father and doesn't believe in marriage anymore so don't worry about it.

MATT: That's interesting that my parents are more hung up on these things, when you're Mexican and Catholic.

SANDI: I'm not Catholic, and I'm not...well, I'm different. I am not a typical Latina like the other girls you might have met in college.

MATT: That's true. None of the other Hispanic girls would go out with me.

SANDI: Yeah, the freshmen ones are all afraid their parents are gonna kill them if they lose their virginity while away in college...especially to a gringo.

MATT: I'm not a "Gringo"—I'm a Canadian—

SANDI (*joking*): Any man as pale as you automatically is a "Gringo."

MATT: Yeah, well, I'm the only "Greengo" who doesn't have a "Green-cardo."

SANDI laughs. MATT doesn't. There's a pause in their conversation as SANDI stares at MATT, quickly figuring out that what he is saying is not a joke.

SANDI: No way.

MATT: I can trust you with that information, right?

SANDI: Of course. Of course. I feel honored that you are confiding in me. Your secret is safe with me.

MATT: Good, because you're the only person I've ever told this to. Not even my mother knows.

SANDI: Wow...I never imagined.... Hmm... Well, I feel special knowing you trust me...

MATT: Of course I trust you...I love you.

SANDI: I love you, too. *(Beat.)* How did you get all those scholarships?

MATT: I lied about my status and nobody has asked.

SANDI: What about law school? You mean nobody has figured out you're using a fake social security number?

MATT: Oh, it's a legitimate one...I got it from a dead person.

There's a pause as SANDI slowly turns to MATT not knowing if he is just joking. The information takes a few seconds to sink in.

SANDI: Hey, you aren't some serial killer that is gonna take my car and leave my corpse in the desert?

MATT: Why would you ask that?

SANDI: Oh, using dead people's social security numbers isn't something I take lightly.

MATT: Oh, no, no.... I paid some guy in Vancouver, and he got me one and.... It's actually easier than it sounds...I didn't go to someone's grave and pick out a name or anything like that...

SANDI: So what's your dead man's name?

MATT: Mathew Williamson.

SANDI (*after a beat*): So what's your real name?

MATT: I can't tell you.

SANDI: Why not?

MATT: Because then I would have to kill you. (*He tickles her and they laugh. The laughter settles down, and he caresses her cheek.*)

SANDI: So come on, tell me your real name.

MATT: Ah.... It's Dylan Thompson...

SANDI: Wow, almost like the English Poet...

MATT: Ah, yeah.... Just don't call me by that name, OK?

SANDI: OK.

MATT: So forget what I told you, OK?

SANDI: Sure.... So what if somebody found out?

MATT: Ah.... If I don't go to jail for using a fake social security number, then I guess they'll just deport me back to Canada.

SANDI: That will be the day!

MATT: It could happen. One Canadian friend did not renew his Visa, and he was sent back.

SANDI: I would hate for you to be forced to leave this country.... *(Beat.)* I would marry you.

MATT: Huh? What did you say?

SANDI: I said...I would marry you if it meant keeping you in this country.... I know we've only been dating six months so I don't want to creep you out by making you think I want to get married...like right now...but I truly care about you.

MATT: Wow. That's the most beautiful thing anyone has ever said to me.... If I weren't driving, I would kiss you.

SANDI: You should pull over soon at the next gas station. We're almost out of gas.

MATT pulls over and stops the car.

SANDI: What are you doing?

MATT grabs SANDI's face and plants a kiss on her lips. SANDI kisses his neck and makes her way down to his crotch. MATT sticks his hand behind her back and unhooks her bra. She is about to unzip his pants when they hear footsteps, and a light in the distance interrupts their foreplay. An ARIZONA POLICEMAN approaches their car and stands next to the driver's side window.

ARIZONA POLICEMAN: Good evening. Is everything all right?

SANDI and MATT just nod. SANDI looks away trying to adjust her bra.

ARIZONA POLICEMAN: What are you doing parked on the side of the road?

MATT (*cautious*): Ah.... We got lost. We were trying to figure out where we are on the map.

ARIZONA POLICEMAN: Aha.... The border is just a few miles away from here.

MATT (*still cautious*): Yes, we know.

ARIZONA POLICEMAN: So what are you doing here so close to the border?

MATT (*remaining cautious*): Like I said. We got lost.

The ARIZONA POLICEMAN stares at SANDI who is acting suspicious with weird movements as she tries to discreetly place her breasts back into her brassiere. He walks over to the passenger side of the car. SANDI looks up and freezes.

ARIZONA POLICEMAN: Oh, I think I know what is happening here...

MATT: You do?

ARIZONA POLICEMAN: Who is this woman?

MATT and SANDI turn to look at one another. SANDI is about to open her mouth, but MATT answers.

MATT: She's my girlfriend.

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ARIZONA POLICEMAN: How long have you known her? Or do you even know her?

MATT: Excuse me?

ARIZONA POLICEMAN: Where did you pick her up?

SANDI: Hey!

MATT shoots SANDI a look that communicates, "Let me handle this."

MATT: Officer, this is my girlfriend of six months. We met in college and—

ARIZONA POLICEMAN: Let me see her documents.

MATT: Documents?

ARIZONA POLICEMAN: Son, it is a crime to transport an illegal alien in exchange for sexual favors.

SANDI: What?! I'm not an illegal alien!

ARIZONA POLICEMAN: Then show me your residency card...please!

SANDI: I don't have one!

ARIZONA POLICEMAN: Well, then step out of the vehicle.

SANDI: No! I don't have a "Greencard" or any documents with me because I am a U.S. citizen, and I don't need to carry any!

ARIZONA POLICEMAN: Well, if you can't prove you have a legal right to be here—

SANDI: I'm a U.S. citizen! I don't have to prove it!

ARIZONA POLICEMAN: You are six miles away from the border and you look—I mean...you have given me reason to suspect that your status—

SANDI: He's in the same car with me. Why haven't you asked him to show you his papers?

MATT: Sandi! (*MATT shoots her another look that indicates for her to chill out and let him handle it.*)

ARIZONA POLICEMAN: Please step out of the vehicle.

SANDI: No! I won't step out of the car. Why don't you ask him for his documents? How do you know he's not an "illegal Canadian alien?"

MATT (*annoyed*): Sandi!! God!!

ARIZONA POLICEMAN: Lady, you are interfering with my job. I have a right to ask you for your papers and to ask you to step out of the vehicle—

SANDI: Well, I'm not showing you any documents.

MATT: Sandi, just show him your California I.D.—I'm sure that's all he needs to see.

SANDI: No! I am not showing you no stinking badges, cabrón!

ARIZONA POLICEMAN: Did she just call me a "cabron?"

MATT: No! She called *me* a "cabron!"

SANDI: I'm speaking to you in English. Do you notice I don't have an accent, and I'm not afraid of you? Doesn't that tip you off that I am an over-entitled American who went to college and is exercising her right to civil disobedience?

ARIZONA POLICEMAN: Lady, I don't care what you think you are. You are now resisting arrest. I'm only going to ask you one more time. Step out of the car at the count of three, or I'll have to personally remove you from the vehicle. *(He begins to count slowly.)* One...

MATT turns to SANDI with pleading eyes and begs her to stop her "civil disobedience."

MATT: Sandi, please, just show him your driver's license and your college I.D. Come on, baby, this could end badly, for both of us.

SANDI: No. He's called me an "illegal alien" and practically called me a "whore." How can you just sit there and let him do this to me?

MATT: What can I do?

SANDI: You went to law school. Think of something.

MATT: Officer, you have no right—

ARIZONA POLICEMAN: Yes, I do.... Two!...

MATT: Come on! Show him your I.D.

SANDI: No!

MATT grabs her purse and searches for her I.D. She snatches her purse back from him.

SANDI: How dare you! You have no right to do that for me!

MATT *(whispers)*: I don't want to get deported.

SANDI: Dylan, this is wrong!

MATT: Sandi, stop this, now!

SANDI defiantly throws her purse out the car window.

ARIZONA POLICEMAN: Three.

SANDI crosses her arms and sits silently in protest.

LIGHTS FADE OUT.

SCENE 3

LIGHTS FADE IN. In the darkness we hear a phone ringing.

The call goes to voicemail.

VOICEMAIL MESSAGE (*voice over*): Hey, this is Saul. Please leave a message. Hola, soy Saul. Dejame un mensaje.

YOUNG MEXICAN MAN (*voice over*): Saul, es Raul. Te estoy llamando para decirte que por favor le mandes dinero a mi Ama porque ésta semana necesito comprarle ropa a mi niña y con la renta—pues... [Paco, I'm calling you to ask you to please send money to my mother this week because I have to buy clothes for my daughter and with the rent—well...] (*Footsteps are heard in the background of the message.*) Qué quieren? [What do you want?]

YOUNG WHITE MAN #1 (*voice over*): You fucking wetback, go back to your own country!

We hear the sound of a baseball bat making contact with flesh and then a bloodcurdling scream.

YOUNG MAN #2 (*voice over*): Take that you scum of the earth! You fucking criminal!

YOUNG MEXICAN MAN (*voice over*): Auxilio! Ayudenme! [Help! Help me!]

YOUNG MAN #3 (*voice over*): You piece of shit alien! Bringing leprosy and tuberculosis—you deserve to die!

YOUNG MAN #1 (*voice over*): Let's kill the cockroach!

YOUNG MAN #2 (*voice over*): Die cockroach! Die!

There are sounds of spitting, feet stomping hard against the ground, and bats pounding on flesh, followed by screams of agony. There are also other undecipherable sounds.

YOUNG MEXICAN MAN (*voice over*): Por favor! Ayudenme! [Please! Help me!]

The sounds of the attack subside. A final blow is heard as it smashes the cell phone, and after that, nothing else is heard. The voice over abruptly ends. LIGHTS FADE IN on a tent. (The tent is located in the desert, but this is not yet made clear to the audience.) LOU is tied to a chair, gagged and blindfolded. Dried blood is caked on his head and nostrils. He is full of sweat and surrounded by THREE FIGURES who all wear ski masks and appear male. They take off his blindfold and remove the duct tape covering his mouth. LOU is jolted by their appearances. He looks around, horrified.

LOU: Who are you? What do you want? Where am I?

The THREE FIGURES stand in menacing silence.

LOU: Why did you kidnap me?

They remain silent.

LOU: How did you...? How did you...bring me here? What do you want from me? Who are you?

The THREE FIGURES turn to each other and nod. The tallest one presses a button on a digital device and plays for LOU the horrible murder sequence documented on the YOUNG MEXICAN MAN's voicemail message.

LOU: Who are you? Are you terrorists? Do you speak English?

TALL FIGURE: The only thing you should be asking is *how* are you getting out of here.

LOU: How can I get out of here? Are you holding me for ransom? Who have you called? What did my wife say? How much money are you asking for?

TALL FIGURE: This isn't about money.

LOU: No? Then what else do you want?

The THREE FIGURES turn to each other and nod. The TALL FIGURE presses a button and replays the audio of the murder. LIGHTS SLOWLY FADE OUT. (Beat.) LIGHTS FADE IN on LOU still tied to a chair and surrounded by the THREE FIGURES with the recording of the murder in progress again.

LOU: Stop! Stop playing it! Stop!!! Why are you doing this to me?

TALL FIGURE: Why do you do it?

MEDIUM FIGURE: Why do you spread so much hate?

LOU: Who are you? What group are you with? Are you illegal aliens?

They remain silent. They turn to one another and nod. The TALL FIGURE pulls out a gun and points it at LOU who immediately gasps in horror. The other two

FIGURES grab a brush and a bucket full of a dark liquid. The SHORT FIGURE brings a bag with clothes, and the MEDIUM and SHORT FIGURES put the items close to LOU. The MEDIUM FIGURE releases LOU from the chair and places him directly in front of the SHORT FIGURE.

SHORT FIGURE: Take off your clothes!

LOU: What?!

SHORT FIGURE: You heard me, fuck face!

LOU removes his clothes and turns away from them, keeping on only his boxers.

SHORT FIGURE: All of it!

LOU takes off his boxers and stands completely naked. The short figure gives him a pair of pink boxers.

SHORT FIGURE: Put this on!

LOU: What kind of a sick joke is this?

MEDIUM FIGURE: You are the sick joke. Now put them on before I shoot your balls off!

LOU puts on the pink boxers.

LOU: This is so childish.

TALL FIGURE: Shut up asshole!

The SHORT FIGURE proceeds to take photos of him.

SHORT FIGURE: These are going to be so funny. People are gonna love these on the internet.

LOU: Come on, how much money do you want? I'm not a rich man, but I can get you at least twenty-five thousand—

TALL FIGURE: I told you this is not about money!

LOU: Oh, so then what? You just want to humiliate me? Is that it? Teach me a lesson?

TALL FIGURE: Shut up!

LOU: You're not going to get away with this.

MEDIUM FIGURE: This fuckin' pink pig needs to be taught a lesson!

SHORT FIGURE: Let's get started.

The TALL FIGURE gets close to LOU and points the gun at LOU's head. LOU winces, thinking he is going to get shot.

LOU: Don't kill me! Please don't kill me!

TALL FIGURE: Take that brush and dip it into the bucket.

LOU does as he is told.

TALL FIGURE: Now, paint yourself with it.

LOU brushes the brown liquid on himself and stops to smell it.

LOU: What is this?

MEDIUM FIGURE: Just keep brushing!

LOU: This is bar-be-cue sauce!

He puts it all over his body. When he is done, the SHORT FIGURE takes photographs of him.

TALL FIGURE: So how does it feel to be brown?

LOU: Ha, ha, ha. Just stop this nonsense. Look, if you leave me alone now, I promise you that I will not prosecute you.

MEDIUM FIGURE: Shut the fuck up, pendejo! This isn't your racist radio show where you can say whatever bullshit comes out of your caca brain. You are our special guest, and we are going to give you the royal treatment. (*He turns to SHORT FIGURE.*) Did you get the dildo and the rope?

SHORT FIGURE: I sure did.

TALL FIGURE: Let's see how he likes it.

LOU: What are you going to do to me?

MEDIUM FIGURE: Just sit back and relax. Yeah, it's better if you relax. It will go easier for you.

LOU: No, you can't do this to me! This is not right!

LIGHTS FADE OUT. LOU screams.

SCENE 4

LIGHTS FADE IN on a DETENTION CENTER. A FEMALE GUARD pulls into an interrogation room her detainee, SANDI, who is in handcuffs and wearing a light blue uniform. She looks disheveled, like she lost a fight. She has a small tissue paper stuffed into one nostril to keep the blood from dripping. She is made

to sit on a chair. A spotlight goes on her. She squints, uncomfortable, still very upset.

INTERROGATOR'S VOICE: Deme su nombre y fecha de nacimiento. State your name and date of birth.

SANDI says nothing.

INTERROGATOR'S VOICE: Cual es su nombre y fecha de nacimiento?

SANDI: Fuck you!

INTERROGATOR'S VOICE: You speak English. State your name and date of birth.

SANDI remains silent.

INTERROGATOR'S VOICE: I see you not only resisted arrest, but you are not going to cooperate either.

SANDI remains silent.

INTERROGATOR'S VOICE: There are serious consequences for not cooperating. You can go to jail not only for resisting arrest, prostitution—

SANDI: I am not a prostitute!

INTERROGATOR'S VOICE: What were you doing six miles from the border?

SANDI continues her silent protest.

INTERROGATOR'S VOICE: What is your country of origin?

SANDI (*with exaggerated Canadian accent*): Canada, Aeeee...

INTERROGATOR'S VOICE: Excuse me?

SANDI (*continues with Canadian accent*): I said, Canada. That's where I'm from.

INTERROGATOR'S VOICE: What part of Canada?

SANDI (*with British accent*): No, I'm actually from England.... (*With Irish accent.*) Oh, I just remembered, I'm from Ireland.

INTERROGATOR'S VOICE: Guard!

The FEMALE GUARD takes SANDI by the handcuffs and drags her to another location. LIGHTS CHANGE SLIGHTLY. The FEMALE GUARD removes her handcuffs.

SANDI: Where am I? Is this jail?

FEMALE GUARD: You're in a detention center.

SANDI: A detention center out here in the desert?

FEMALE GUARD: It's kind of like jail, but it's temporary.

SANDI: What do you mean?

FEMALE GUARD: As soon as it is determined that someone has broken the law and they have no right to be in this country, they get deported.

SANDI: What about a judge? Or a trial or—

FEMALE GUARD: You've been watching too many movies. That doesn't happen here.

SANDI: But I'm a U.S. citizen! I don't belong here. I'm not like these people.

FEMALE GUARD: Listen, I don't know about your case, so I can't help you.

SANDI: But this is not fair. I got racially profiled, so I refused to show my identification, and I refused to step outside of the car I was in—

FEMALE GUARD: Well, you broke the law, and that's why you're here.

SANDI: But this law is unfair—

FEMALE GUARD: I don't make laws, I just enforce them.

SANDI: You know there used to be laws that did not permit blacks to vote or ride at the front of a bus. Why did Rosa Parks refuse to give up her seat?

FEMALE GUARD: Don't tell me you are trying to be the Rosa Parks for Latinos?

SANDI: No! I just don't think it's fair that I have to show my papers and my Canadian boyfriend doesn't have to.

FEMALE GUARD: Honey, I want to have sympathy for you, but I hear hundreds of people with sadder stories, so I don't have time for this.

SANDI: So, what do I do here?

FEMALE GUARD: Well, if you really are a U.S. citizen, then just chill until someone comes to get you out.

The FEMALE GUARD exits. SANDI sits down and looks all around her. Although we don't see anyone, there are several voices speaking in Spanish and other foreign languages. We may not understand some of the languages, but they are all sad voices of people in dire situations. There is also crying heard. SANDI hums, but before she realizes it, she, too, is crying. LIGHTS FADE OUT.

SCENE 5

LIGHTS FADE IN at the tent. LOU is tied up again. He is sleeping. The TALL FIGURE drops a bucket of water on him, causing LOU to shake himself awake.

MEDIUM FIGURE: You don't get to sleep fascist fat boy!

As the TALL FIGURE goes to press the play back button to launch the voicemail recording, LOU yells.

LOU (*begging*): No, don't play that again! Please don't play that again!

TALL FIGURE: I won't stop playing it until you ask the right question!

LOU: What's the question? What's the question I'm supposed to ask?

MEDIUM FIGURE: Think about it!

LOU: Ah.... Well.... (*Pause*) *Who* is getting killed? Is that the question? Am I supposed to ask about who got killed?

SHORT FIGURE: Finally figuring it out!

TALL FIGURE: So ask me!

LOU: Who is getting killed?

TALL FIGURE: My brother.

LOU: That's your brother?

TALL FIGURE: Now ask me why.

LOU: Why is he being killed?

MEDIUM FIGURE: You tell us motherfucker? Tell us why he got killed!

Tell me why my brother got killed. Tell her why her brother got killed!

LOU: Why would I know that?

TALL FIGURE: And you still can't figure it out!

The TALL FIGURE slaps LOU uncontrollably. The other two FIGURES pull him away. He takes a second to recompose himself. He gets in LOU's face and unmask himself.

TALL FIGURE: Look at my face. I want you to look at me closely. I look exactly like my brother. You killed my twin brother!!!!

LOU (*perplexed*): How did I kill your twin brother?

SHORT FIGURE: And you still have the nerve to ask?

MEDIUM FIGURE: You tell lies about Latinos, and you teach others to hate, and you still ask?!

Beat.

LOU: Ah.... Ah.... Listen, I am not responsible for what drunk white teenage boys do to illegals—

The TALL YOUNG MAN sticks the gun in LOU's mouth. LOU tries to pull away.

TALL FIGURE: You say "illegals" one more time, and I'll put a bullet in your mouth!!!

He pulls the gun out of LOU's mouth.

LOU: I don't tell anyone to go kill Latino people. I only tell people to fight

back...I mean, I only tell people to defend our country against criminals, many of whom happen to be illegal.

TALL FIGURE: Liar! Your hate spreads hate, and you may not be the person who took a bat to my brother's head, but you inspired those teenagers and gave them the words and the justification to kill my brother!

Beat.

LOU: Is this what this is about? Do you want an apology? Because I am truly sorry that you lost your brother, and I know nothing I say can bring him back and—

TALL FIGURE: Shut up, shut up! You are a liar! You lie about undocumented people being a third of the population. You know that's a fuckin' lie, and you still say it! You get paid to lie, and you are doing it right here with me!

The MEDIUM FIGURE tapes up LOU's mouth.

TALL FIGURE: Let's kill him.

MEDIUM FIGURE: What?

SHORT FIGURE: This was not part of the plan! We didn't agree we were going to kill him!

TALL FIGURE: I know. I know. But now that I took off my mask, he knows what I look like. He'll know how to find me. We have to kill him.

LOU shakes his head and protests, but can't be heard.

MEDIUM FIGURE: Okay, let's kill him because, fuck, it's too hot for this

mask!

He takes off the ski mask to reveal himself. He wipes the sweat off his face with the ski mask. The SHORT FIGURE takes off her mask to reveal a young woman with long hair.

LIGHTS FADE OUT.

SCENE 6

LIGHTS FADE IN at the DETENTION CENTER. SANDI sleeps. The FEMALE GUARD gently nudges SANDI awake.

FEMALE GUARD: You have a visitor.... Looks like your Canadian boyfriend is here to get you out.

The FEMALE GUARD escorts SANDI to a desk and chair where MATT is already seated holding several papers. SANDI sits.

MATT: How are they treating you?

SANDI: It's not as bad as jail.... Well, I wouldn't know the difference, but from the movies I've seen, it's not as bad.... Lot of crying...

MATT: You?

SANDI: No, all the people that are getting deported...

MATT: Well, I called your mother, and I asked her to fax me your birth certificate and whatever else she could, to prove that you're a U.S. citizen. You're mother is so nice—

SANDI: I didn't ask you to do that.

MATT: Sandi, I'm going to get you out of here...I'm working on getting you a lawyer so that once I prove you're a citizen, they can drop the charges, and we can get to California.

SANDI: I don't want you to show proof. Don't you get it? What I do want is for you to go to the local paper and tell them about me so they can interview me and do a story on racial profiling and how I ended up here.

MATT: So this is what you wanted? You want publicity and fame out of this horrible experience? I could have gotten arrested and deported because of you.

SANDI: No, I don't want publicity for myself. I'm just tired of always having to prove that I am an American. It's not right!

MATT: You are nuts! I don't understand why you would put yourself and me through this just to prove a point.

SANDI: No, Matt, you will never know what it's like to be me. You don't have dark skin. Nobody ever questions your right to exist or succeed. You have no clue how hard it is to be an American when you look like me!

MATT: You want me to feel sorry for you because you're not white?

SANDI: No. I want you to understand that this is a very personal struggle that I'm going through, and I want you to be the kind of boyfriend who gets it!

MATT: Look, I get it. I know it's not fair, but it's not up to you to change the law. You can't do anything about your situation except get out of it.

SANDI: If I do nothing.... No, I can't just do nothing...I don't know what else

to do but this. But I can't do nothing.... So will you help me out by going to the newspaper?

MATT appears to briefly consider her request before arriving at his response.

MATT: No, I just don't feel comfortable doing that. It doesn't feel right. It feels manipulative, and I can't get involved. I just can't jeopardize everything I worked for.... Not for you. I can't.

Beat.

SANDI: I see.... (*SANDI takes a deep breath.*) All right, Dylan...well, then I'll see you later.

MATT: Just please come to your senses. Let me help you.

SANDI: No. I have to do this. You will never understand why I need to do this. This is not for anyone else, but for me.

LIGHTS FADE OUT.

SCENE 7

LIGHTS FADE IN. ERNESTO walks into the desert and is followed by a DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKER and a CAMERAMAN. ERNESTO places two full gallon containers on the ground. He assembles an orange flag and places it on a pole.

ERNESTO: I actually love the desert, especially when it rains and the monsoons make the air smell so fresh and beautiful.

DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKER: How hot does it get out here?

ERNESTO: It can get as hot as 127 degrees.

DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKER: How many people have died crossing the desert?

ERNESTO: Since Operation Gatekeeper, approximately ten thousand. Each day, one or two people die in the desert.

DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKER: Have you ever seen a dead body on your water rounds?

ERNESTO: Yes, several. No matter how many I've seen, it still shocks me to see a human being in such a state of.... It's hard to describe the feeling...I guess "helplessness" would be the word. I just feel devastated that I couldn't do something to reach them in time.... No matter how bad it is people will not stop coming.

DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKER: Of all the deaths you've witnessed is there one, in particular, that has made an impact on you?

ERNESTO: There are too many tragic stories that I carry in my heart.... But, yes, there is one in particular. One time when I was delivering water, I saw several empty bottles of water, trash, and a burnt out fire. As I got closer, I saw a woman lying down on the ground. She looked dead, but she was not dried up or damaged. She looked like she had been dead for maybe a day. Suddenly, her body started moving, and I got happy thinking she was still alive, and I could rush her to the hospital, and possibly save her life. When I got close to her body, I quickly jumped back, startled. A black snake slithered out of her mouth, and I saw her body wiggle as a five-foot snake came out of her. She was dead...I guess the group she was with had left her behind, and the animals.... Ah.... Well, I started crying. What else could I do? After the

snake went to hide in a hole at a distance, I took her hand, and I said a prayer for her.... I think about the souls of the 10,000 who have perished wandering in the desert. I carry crosses in the desert. I carry crosses in my heart, for all these poor souls.... Sometimes it's too much to bear, so I try not to think about it and keep busy. (*ERNESTO picks up empty containers.*)

DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKER: So why do you do it?

ERNESTO: Because it's the right thing to do.

DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKER: Yes, but why? What difference does it make? Like you said, two people will die in the desert whether you put water out here or not. No matter what you do or how many migrants die out here, people will not stop coming.

ERNESTO: I have to believe that what I do makes a difference.... You know, I heard Gandhi's grandson Ravi tell a story that has always stayed with me. He said, that a father and his young son were walking along the beach, and there were thousands of tiny starfish that were on the sand, and the sun was drying them up. The small son started throwing the starfish back into the water, trying to save them. The father told him to stop because what difference did it make—there were thousands of them. His son picked up one of the starfish and replied, "It will make a difference to this starfish." He threw it back into the water and continued picking up starfish and throwing them back into the water.

In the distance we hear trucks approaching. Some honking is heard.

ERNESTO: Hmmm. The Minutemen are here. Let's go before they start acting stupid and threatening us.

DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKER (*to her CAMERAMAN*): Make sure

JOSEFINA LOPEZ

you zoom in on them. Ernesto, let's go confront them. I need to get this on camera. I have to capture some conflict to sell this documentary.

ERNESTO: Are you sure?

DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKER: Of course.

ERNESTO (*jokingly, light hearted*): All right. Let's wave at them and shout, "Buenos días!" That pisses them off.

They smile and wave.

DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKER: Buenos días. Did you hear that, Ritchie? Buenos días.

ALL (*smiling and waving*): Buenos días!!!

DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKER: I think he sees us. He's flipping us off.

ERNESTO: Hey, Carl!

CARL (*off stage*): Don't talk to me, wetback lover!

LIGHTS FADE OUT.

SCENE 8

In total darkness we hear the jingle for KRZT.

GUEST DJ VOICE/CARL DUNLOP: This is Carl Dunlop sitting in for Lou Becker who is...on vacation. He's probably having a great time right now. Welcome back to *Take Back America*. Have you had enough? Are you

thinking of joining the Tea Party? Are you a member of the Tea Party? If so, call me and tell me why you have joined. These lines are open. All righty. Our first caller is Lindsay, calling from Douglas...

The voice fades out. LIGHTS FADE IN on the tent. Still tied up in pink underwear, LOU sleeps. He is a mess. With dried bar-be-cue sauce crusted all over him, he looks like he has been through hell. The SHORT FIGURE is the only FIGURE still present. She is now unmasked and holds the gun. She browses through the photos stored on her digital camera featuring LOU posed in embarrassing and compromising positions. LOU wakes up from a nightmare and screams, "No!" He looks up at the SHORT FIGURE absorbed in looking at her photos.

LOU: How does a pretty girl like you get involved with these losers?

SHORT FIGURE: How do you know this wasn't my idea?

LOU: You don't look like you have it in you to kill.

She remains silent.

LOU: I know you don't want to kill me...I can tell by your kind eyes that you are different from the others.... Why don't we make a deal? Why don't you let me go, and then I can meet you somewhere and give you some money as a reward for saving my life.

SHORT FIGURE: So, just because I'm the only female in the group, you think I'm stupid enough to believe you?

LOU: I know you are not a killer. You don't want my blood on your hands. You know you are better than that.... If you think I'm wrong about Latinos being criminals, then show me I'm wrong by showing me some mercy.

SHORT FIGURE: I know what you're trying to do. If you're gonna start playing mind games with me, you better stop because I have a black belt in mind games.

LOU: Where are the other two guys?

SHORT FIGURE: They went to get gasoline.

LOU: Why?

SHORT FIGURE: They want to pour it all over you and set you on fire. That's the way they want to do it, but I don't like that.

LOU: Why not?

SHORT FIGURE: Well, we debated all the ways we wanted to kill you. We researched all the ways people have committed hate crimes against Latinos, and they thought setting you on fire was poetic. But I didn't want us to kill you to begin with. I just wanted to scare you. I agreed to help them out just to scare you and avenge my brother's death, but I never agreed to kill you.

LOU: Then don't kill me. Let me go! Please, before they return.

SHORT FIGURE: Hmm...maybe.... But you have to tell me why you do it.

LOU: Do what?

SHORT FIGURE: Why do you do your show?

LOU: It's what people want to hear.

SHORT FIGURE: Yeah, I know, but why?

LOU: Why? Because fear sells, why else?

SHORT FIGURE: Yeah, but why? Why sell fear?

Beat.

LOU: Because...because that's all I know how to do.

SHORT FIGURE: What do you mean? I'm sure you can do other things.

LOU: I tried.... But I was no good at political commentary or serious journalism. I just couldn't cut it, so I landed this show, and I did with it the best I could...

SHORT FIGURE: But why? Why spread hate and not love?

LOU: When you get to be my age, spreading love is not that easy.

SHORT FIGURE: Do you really hate Mexicans and Latinos and illegals as much as you say you do?

LOU: No.... My father did. He was so afraid of foreigners taking over. I don't hate Mexicans.... My wife is Mexican-American...but like third or fourth generation...something like that.

SHORT FIGURE: For real? How come people don't know that?

LOU: I don't hide it or advertise it...

SHORT FIGURE: So when you were a little boy, what did you want to be when you grew up?

LOU (*sincerely recalling*): When I was growing up in Scotland, I wanted to be a tour guide in Edinburgh.

SHORT FIGURE: Edinburgh?

LOU: Yes, there were so many tour buses, I thought it would be nice to welcome people to my country.

SHORT FIGURE: Wait a minute. You mean you weren't born in the U.S.?

LOU: I met my wife in Canada, and I became a U.S. citizen through marriage.

SHORT FIGURE: You don't even have an accent.

LOU: I got rid of it when I knew I wanted to be in radio.

SHORT FIGURE: So you are an immigrant?

LOU: Ah...yes.... Yes, I am.... You see, you and I have more in common than you thought.

SHORT FIGURE: I was born in this country.... So you criticize immigrants and you—

LOU: I criticize *illegal* immigration! I did it through the correct channels. I had to wait in line to become a U.S. citizen.

The SHORT FIGURE yells and lunges at LOU with the butt of a gun in an attempt to strike him. LOU recoils and cowers, afraid.

LOU: Please don't kill me.

She steps back. After a few seconds, she regains her composure.

SHORT FIGURE: I don't want to kill you.... I don't want them to kill you either...but I don't want to get in trouble with them or the police.

LOU: If you let me go, I promise I won't go after you. Just them.

SHORT FIGURE: They're my brothers. I can't let them go to jail.

Beat.

LOU: Hmmm.... All right. Let me go, and I won't go after you or your brothers.

SHORT FIGURE: You promise?

LOU: Yes. I swear. I swear on all that is holy to me...

Beat.

SHORT FIGURE: I have an idea...I suffer from epilepsy, so at some point I'm going to untie you without the other guys noticing. Then I'm going to pretend I am having an epileptic seizure. In all the confusion, the guys will pay attention to me and will look for my medicine, and you then gotta run like hell.

LOU: Okay. Okay.... Where should I run to? Where am I?

SHORT FIGURE: We're in the desert, so just run towards wherever the sun is setting. Go west. That will get you close to the highway.

LOU: Got it.

LIGHTS FADE OUT.

SCENE 9

LIGHTS FADE IN low on the DETENTION CENTER. It is very dark, and snoring is heard. A woman, MILAGROS, is crying as she lies in the cot next to

SANDI's. SANDI wakes, sits up, and watches the woman cry.

SANDI: What's wrong?

MILAGROS: Que?

SANDI (*with an Anglicized accent*): Que pasa?

MILAGROS: It can't be. It can't be.

SANDI: Oh, you speak English...

MILAGROS: My children...I can't get to them. I wonder what is going to happen to them. They took me in the middle of the night while my husband was away in Texas for a job, and they left the children by themselves. I hope they are okay. I hope they are safe.

SANDI: Can you ask about them?

MILAGROS: They don't tell me anything.

SANDI: Maybe a neighbor took them in.

MILAGROS: No, no. They took everyone in that building who had no papers. They took everybody, except the children.

SANDI: Were they born in this country?

MILAGROS: Yes, they were all born here.

SANDI: Well, I'm sure if they see children wandering around, social services will come get them, and they will put them in foster homes or—

MILAGROS lets out a cry.

MILAGROS: They are taking them away from me, and I'll never see them again! Ay, mis hijos.... [Oh, my children....]

SANDI: Yes, you will. You will see them again.

SANDI puts her arm around her.

MILAGROS: We should have never left California. I told my husband I did not want to leave California, and he convinced me to move to Arizona, and I shouldn't have listened to him. *(She sobs.)*

SANDI rocks her. She doesn't know what to do. The silence is painful.

SANDI: Where in California did you live?

MILAGROS: San Fernando Valley.

SANDI: I lived there too.

MILAGROS: Sí?

SANDI: Yes. I was born there and lived there for most of my life, until I left to college four years ago, before I moved to San Diego.

MILAGROS: I liked it there. I felt right at home.

SANDI: What side did you live in?

MILAGROS: What do you mean?

SANDI: Did you live in the Mexican side of town?

MILAGROS: Oh.... Yes, of course.... But then later, it all became Mexican, que no? [Isn't that right?]

SANDI: Yes. Yes, it did.... I was there when it was...different.

MILAGROS: Yes, I went to school in the white part of town, and I didn't like it...

SANDI: Yes. White kids would call us names.

MILAGROS: "Beaners" and "Wetbacks".... It was awful...

Beat.

SANDI: At my school in the valley, I was one of a few Latino children. I was in first grade, and Courtney, who was also in my class, got lice. Her mother was furious, and she threatened the school. So without informing the parents, they rounded up all the dark skinned children, and they sent us to the detention room, and the nurse looked through our hair searching for lice. I tried to explain to the nurse that I didn't have any because I had never been to Mexico or anywhere but the valley...she didn't care. She was convinced I had lice like all the rest. When we were all returned to our classes, everyone laughed at us. Nobody wanted to be our friend because they thought they would get lice from us. There was only one other Mexican girl in my class. Milagros.... Yes, I think that was her name. One day at lunchtime, some kids were picking on her and calling her a "Beaner." She looked to me for help. I saw that she needed me to say something or step in front of her and protect her. But all these white kids...well, I was scared. I couldn't stand up to all of them, and I was afraid they would hurt me.... So I started calling her a "Beaner," too, and joined in the name calling.... Milagros started crying, and she tried to get away, but a group of boys continued following her and cornered her. They started pulling on her hair. She pushed them back and cried out for help, but I didn't do anything. They started spitting at her, and I had to look away. Finally, a janitor intervened and told all the kids to leave her

alone. The school bell rang, and I went back to class. Milagros was taken to the nurse. I thought for sure I was going to get in trouble for participating in the name calling.... But Milagros went home after, and she never came back to class. After that day, I was no longer seen as one of them. I was accepted, and nobody ever called me a “Beaner” or a “Wetback.” I stopped speaking Spanish and stopped calling myself Sandra and started calling myself “Sandi.” As Sandi, I would fit in better. Then Courtney and Britney and Brianna made an exception for me and became my friends. I was treated like I was different... and I liked it.... When I asked about Milagros, all I heard was that her mother decided to send her to a school in the Mexican part of town instead.... I have never forgotten Milagros. I always wondered what happened to her.

MILAGROS: What school was this?

SANDI: Garfield Elementary.

MILAGROS: Was your teacher Ms. Johnson?

SANDI: Yes.... How did you know?

MILAGROS: I am Milagros.

SANDI: Your name is Milagros, too?

MILAGROS: Yes, but I am Milagros, that little girl that got spat on.

Beat.

SANDI: I am so sorry. I am so sorry I stood back and did nothing. I am so sorry.... I was afraid and...

MILAGROS: ...and you were a little girl and you didn't know any better....

SANDI breaks down crying. MILAGROS puts her arm around her.

SANDI: Yes. I am so ashamed of myself, and I have never forgotten you or that awful day, and I am haunted by you and...

MILAGROS (*compassionately*): I forgive you. You don't have to cry anymore...

SANDI buries her face in MILAGROS' chest.

MILAGROS: Sandi, listen to me. Tomorrow night when they are taking us on the bus back to Nogales, something is going to happen. You need to stay awake the whole trip.

SANDI: What's going to happen?

MILAGROS: You just need to be awake. Promise me you will stay awake.

SANDI: Ok. I promise. I'll drink lots of coffee.

MILAGROS: Yes, and lots of water.... Lots of water...

SANDI: Okay.

Beat.

MILAGROS: I feel better now. Goodnight. (*MILAGROS lies down on her cot.*)

SANDI: Goodnight.

SANDI watches her and then lies down on her cot and goes back to sleep. LIGHTS FADE OUT. Seconds later LIGHTS FADE IN. SANDI is asleep on her cot.

SANDI wakes up, sees that the cot next to her is empty, and then looks around for MILAGROS.

SANDI: Milagros?

SANDI gets up and looks around. The FEMALE GUARD enters.

SANDI: Where is the woman who slept next to me? Was she deported?

FEMALE GUARD: There was no woman sleeping next to you.

SANDI: Yes, there was a woman next to me. She woke me up with her crying, and I spoke to her.

FEMALE GUARD: Maybe it was a dream. You must have imagined it, because nobody gets out of here without me knowing about it.

SANDI: I put my arm around her. She was real.

FEMALE GUARD: Hey, you won't be the first person to have seen a ghost around here.

SANDI: I don't believe in ghosts.... She was real. Her name was Milagros.

FEMALE GUARD: We don't have any Milagros booked here today.

SANDI sits down and takes it in. She clutches her stomach.

FEMALE GUARD: Are you all right?

SANDI: I want to throw up.

FEMALE GUARD: Maybe you're pregnant.

SANDI (*with attitude*): Just because I'm a Latina, you automatically assume I was put here to procreate.

FEMALE GUARD: Honey, let me tell you something. If Latinas don't die in the desert they get raped by coyotes—you know, the human traffickers, or bandits, or maybe even the Border Patrol officers, if you ask me. Pregnancy

is so common that sometimes I think contraceptive pills should be handed out at the Mexican side of the border. These women end up vomiting all over my detention center. I feel for them, but I didn't sign up for this job to be cleaning up vomit from morning sickness.

SANDI: Well, I'm certain I'm not pregnant.

FEMALE GUARD: Good. (*Pause.*) You will be happy we got the order to deport you and you'll be leaving this wonderful place this evening.

SANDI: I don't want to be deported.

FEMALE GUARD: What? I thought you wanted—

SANDI: I want to produce proof that I am a U.S. citizen and call my mother to come get me.

FEMALE GUARD: Well your mother can go get you in Nogales, then. It's too late. You should have presented your paperwork yesterday.

SANDI: But I'm a U.S. citizen.

FEMALE GUARD: Well, then, you'll have no trouble getting back in.

LIGHTS FADE OUT.

SCENE 10

LIGHTS FADE IN on the tent where the THREE FIGURES, all unmasked, are still keeping LOU. The male TALL and MEDIUM FIGURES talk about their murder plan, while the female SHORT FIGURE guards LOU, who is gagged and tied up.

MEDIUM FIGURE: So let me get this straight, we shoot him first, and then we set him on fire?

TALL FIGURE: No. We set him on fire first, and then when he's in so much pain that he wants to die, and he's begging us to shoot him, we won't shoot him. I want him to suffer and scream like our brother did, and then I'll shoot him.

MEDIUM FIGURE: Oh, and you know what we should also do? We should first cut out his tongue!

BOTH (*in unison*): Yeah!

MEDIUM FIGURE: That way, he'll never talk shit again!

They both get very excited about this and huddle closer to continue working on the details of the murder.

SHORT FIGURE (*to the guys*): Hey, we need to put more bar-be-que sauce on him.

TALL FIGURE: So what's stopping you?

She rolls her eyes and throws him a look of annoyance. She picks up the brush and puts bar-be-que sauce on LOU. She then stands behind him.

SHORT FIGURE (*whispers to LOU*): Wait. (*She puts down the brush and bucket.*) Hey, should we feed him before we kill him? Give him his last meal?

MEDIUM FIGURE (*bothered, with attitude*): Do whatever the hell you want.

The SHORT FIGURE sticks an apple in LOU's mouth and takes his photograph.

SHORT FIGURE: Doesn't he look like a pig now?

The THREE FIGURES look at LOU and laugh out loud. The SHORT FIGURE laughs the hardest, but then begins to choke and shake as she goes into convulsions. Her brothers run to her aid; one holds her jaw open and the other pins down her legs. She slithers and hisses, moving her tongue like a snake. LOU takes the opportunity to flee. After a few seconds the SHORT FIGURE stops moving. (Beat.) She stands, and the THREE FIGURES break out in hysterical laughter. Their laughter increases, becomes outrageous, and finally dies down.

MEDIUM FIGURE: You are one evil bitch.

SHORT FIGURE: No, I can't take all the credit.

TALL FIGURE: That was some plan of yours.

MEDIUM FIGURE: But what if he.... What if he survives in the desert?

SHORT FIGURE: If the bar-be-cue sauce don't roast him to death, the wrong directions will. That pendejo won't discover he went the wrong way until he's out of breath, and it's too late. He ain't gonna make it.

MEDIUM FIGURE: I just don't want to go to jail for this..

TALL FIGURE: We won't.

MEDIUM FIGURE: But how do you know?

SHORT FIGURE (*grabbing MEDIUM FIGURE by his collar and getting in his face with the meanest look*): Stick with the fucking plan!

MEDIUM FIGURE: But how about if he does survive?

SHORT FIGURE: He's as good as dead! Now grow some balls and help me pack up this place so we can get the hell out of town.

MEDIUM FIGURE: I'm starting to feel bad about this.

SHORT FIGURE: Feel bad about those white teenage boys getting away with killing our brother. Feel bad about that!

MEDIUM FIGURE: Yeah, but what did we accomplish? We humiliated the guy, and then he goes to the desert to die. That doesn't change anything. He's just one of many who keep spreading hate talk and—

TALL FIGURE: Hey, let's go kidnap another one. I really enjoyed this.

SHORT FIGURE: Me too. It won't bring our brother back, but it keeps me from going insane.

SHORT FIGURE: You are insane. We are all insane for doing this.

LIGHTS FADE OUT.

SCENE 11

LIGHTS FADE IN on a stretch of desert. SANDI appears, drenched in sweat. She runs out of breath, and lies on the sand. She fans herself and looks all around her.

SANDI: Where the hell am I? Where is the road? I'm burning up! (*SANDI takes off her orange uniform. She is left in her underwear. Her shoes are disheveled, and it's evident that she has been through hell.*) God, please take me now! I can't stand another minute of this. Please save me, or kill me, but I can't take it anymore! (*SANDI rests on the sand.*)

LIGHTS CHANGE and light upon another patch of desert. LOU stumbles in and falls on the sand. He is bright pink and looks like a roasted pig ready to eat.

LOU: I run and run and I can't find the highway. God, please help me! (*LOU cries. After a few seconds, he spots something in the distance.*) An orange flag? What's that?

LIGHTS FADE A LITTLE and RISE again. LOU approaches the orange flag, which is a marker for water. There are several jugs of water at the bottom of the flag. SANDI also approaches. Both she and LOU run toward the orange flag, which is surrounded by jugs of water. They each take a jug and drink from it only to discover it is empty. To their horror, they find all the jugs have been punctured (probably by a vigilante group). They desperately lick the jugs for any drops of water they might still contain. They both cry. (Beat.)

LOU: Who are you?

SANDI: Sandi...

LOU (*incredulous, half laughing*): Your name is Sandi, and I'm out here in the desert.... What a sick joke. (*LOU laughs to himself, somewhat out of his mind, at such a big cosmic joke. He stops laughing. After he touches SANDI and realizes she's not a hallucination, he seriously asks her a question.*) What are you doing here?

SANDI: I don't know.... I don't know why this happened to me. I can't explain what has happened.... I was on a bus to Nogales last night when the driver lost control of the bus, and then I heard gun shots, and people ran. It was so dark I couldn't see what was happening.... I just ran as far as I could from the gunshots and the screams, and I don't know.... Am I alive? Am I in hell? Where am I?

LOU: I was hoping you could tell me. I've been running all day and I don't know where I am...

SANDI: You think the Border Patrol will find us?

LOU: I hope so.

Beat.

SANDI: My feet are all swollen, and my skin is torn. I can't move anymore.

LOU: We have to keep moving or this sun will eat us up.

LOU gets up and takes SANDI's hand. Each step is a monumental achievement, but they can't go any further.

LOU: Here, let's rest by this rock. This little tree gives a little bit of shade.

They move toward a skinny tree that resembles a charred human skeleton. It has few leaves and gives more hope than shade. LOU and SANDI sit beneath the tree, practically naked.

SANDI: Please sun, go down, go away.

LOU tries to scratch off the bar-be-que sauce.

SANDI: What's on you?

LOU: It's bar-be-cue sauce.... It's a long story that I don't care to tell. (*LOU shouts in pain. His skin comes off. SANDI looks away, horrified.*) We're going to die...I deserve to die.... (*Beat.*) The sun is getting brighter.... It's so bright...too bright...

LIGHTS GROW VERY BRIGHT and then FADE A BIT to show the passage of time. Seconds later they FADE UP A BIT. The desert is dark and silent except for the wind howling.... They both shake, freezing, hugging each other for warmth, huddling together to cover each other from the wind. Footsteps are heard. LOU and

SANDI stop moving and shaking. Gunshots are heard and then a yell. It's as if it's all happening right in front of them, but no one is there.

LOU: Did you hear that?

SANDI: Yes.

LOU: What is going on?

ARTEMIO HERNANDEZ appears and walks toward them. He is wearing dirty clothes and carrying a small backpack. Startled, LOU and SANDI yell in unison.

ARTEMIO: Me puedes ayudar? [Can you help me?]

LOU: What's he saying?

SANDI: I don't speak Spanish.

LOU gives her a look.

SANDI: Well, I don't, all right. Why didn't you learn Spanish?

ARTEMIO: Me puedes ayudar? [Can you help me?]

SANDI: Sí.

ARTEMIO: Por favor, dile a mi esposa que estoy detenido? [Can you please tell my wife I have been detained?]

SANDI: Sí.

LOU: Ask him if he knows how to get to the highway.

SANDI shushes him.

ARTEMIO: Por favor, dile a mi esposa que no la he tracionado. Dile que me detenieron en el desierto y todavía estoy aqui esperando. [Please tell my wife I did not betray her. Tell her I was detained in the desert and that I'm still here waiting.]

SANDI: He says that he was detained in the desert and that he is still waiting here.

LOU: What does that mean?

SANDI: I can barely make sense of it. Let me figure this out.

ARTEMIO: Por favor, déjame acompañarlos. [Please take me with you.]

SANDI: I think he said he wants us to take him with us.

LOU: Take him where? He's asking us for help, when he's in better shape than us?

ARTEMIO disappears. SANDI and LOU look around and can't find him.

LOU: Where did he go? He does know the way out. Let's follow him.

LOU trips over something. SANDI goes to help him up. She looks at the ground and finds a bone.

SANDI: It's a bone! *(Beat.)* These are human bones! *(SANDI digs in the sand.)*

LOU: What are you doing?

SANDI finds a wallet with nothing in it except an I.D.

SANDI: I found a wallet...and there is an I.D. *(SANDI looks at it.)* Oh, my God! My God!

LOU: What? Who was he?

SANDI shows LOU the I.D. He takes it and studies it. She remains silent. He doesn't know what to say.

SANDI: These are his bones. That's what he meant. He wants us to take him with us.

LOU: You mean, he's a.... No, we must be hallucinating. Maybe we're asleep, and this is just a dream or a nightmare...we're going to die. (*LOU sobs.*) I don't want to die this way. I'm not proud of my life.... I just can't die this way. No. It's just not the way I...

SANDI: We're not going to die.

LOU: What chance do we have of making it out of here? Look at this guy. He probably rested and fell asleep and got baked in the sun...

SANDI: No, he was murdered. Those gun shots.... He was murdered... probably by some bandits who robbed him and left him here to die.... Wait! There's money in this wallet....

SANDI studies the wallet. LOU gets caught up feeling sorry for himself.

LOU: My wife...my children.... I should have been a better person...I should have...

SANDI (*suddenly realizing*): We're going to live!

LOU: How do you know?

SANDI: Because.... Because...something like this happened to me before, and I know that some force or something has brought you and me here.... It's meant to be.

LOU: I want to die. I just want to get this over with.

SANDI: No. We can't die. We have to live to return the bones to his wife and find out who murdered this man.

LOU: He was murdered?

SANDI shows him the piece of fabric that indicates the violence.

SANDI: His wife is still waiting for him. She needs to know what happened to him.

Beat.

LOU: Yes. If I were to die here, I would want my wife to find me.

SANDI: And if you were murdered she would want your killer brought to justice.

LOU nods. Beat.

SANDI: Let's pray for a miracle. Let's pray somebody finds us before...

LOU: God and me aren't on good terms right now. I don't think prayers are going to do anything.

SANDI: We have nothing left.

They look at one another and begin to pray together.

SANDI: Dear God, please do not leave us to die here. I am sorry for whatever I have done to put myself in this situation.

LOU: Yes. I am sorry for what I have said that has caused me to be in this situation.

SANDI: Please forgive me for my wrongs against others, against myself, and against you.

LOU: Yes. Please forgive me.

SANDI: Thank you for sending me this person next to me to keep me company in this hour of need.

LOU: Yes, thank you. Thank you for sending me someone to keep me company so that I don't die alone.

SANDI: Despite what is happening to me, now I know...it is the right thing, and whatever happens to me, I still love you.

LOU (*to GOD*): Love? I don't even love myself, much less you, so I'm not going to lie now just because I really need you.... (*Beat.*) But whatever happens...(*Beat.*) I love you. I do.

LIGHTS FADE OUT. A few seconds later, LIGHTS FADE IN. It is bright, hot, and sunny. SANDI and LOU are lying on the sand, still as corpses. Several seconds pass, and there is no movement coming from them. (We should be convinced they are dead.) Footsteps are heard. ERNESTO, who is carrying two gallons of water, enters by himself, singing a song. He puts water by the orange flag and notices the vandalized water containers.... He turns and sees SANDI and LOU. He walks up to them and puts his fingers on LOU's neck. He studies his face and recognizes him.

ERNESTO: Lou? Lou Becker? Lou, what are you doing here?

LOU wakes up.

LOU: You? What are you doing here?

ERNESTO: I'm doing my usual rounds. Why are you wearing pink

underwear? Who is this next to you?

SANDI wakes up. She sees ERNESTO and practically jumps for joy. He hands them water, and they quickly drink it.

SANDI: Thank you. Thank you! *(She hugs ERNESTO.)*

ERNESTO: Come on, I have a first aid kit in my SUV. I'll get you to the hospital. *(ERNESTO picks up LOU and walks with him.)*

LOU: Wait. We can't go yet. We have to take someone with us.

ERNESTO: What? There's someone else with you?

SANDI: Yes. We found the bones of a man named Artemio Hernandez. Can you help us collect his remains?

ERNESTO: I'll come back and get him.

(They exit.)

ERNESTO returns and pulls out a large plastic bag. He respectfully picks up the bones and places them in the bag. As he does, the voice of MRS. ARTEMIO HERNANDEZ fills the theater.)

MRS. ARTEMIO HERNANDEZ *(voice over)*: Querido Ernesto, I am writing this letter to thank you for letting me know how Artemio died and for returning his bones to me. I cannot thank you enough for the work you have done. I cried for two years, convinced he had betrayed me and abandoned me and my children...until the day I got your letter. Although I was crushed to discover that he was murdered and left alone in the desert to die, I was relieved to know that he was now in God's embrace. My family can now stop wondering what happened. We can begin to mourn him and come together to

pray for him. I pray that you never give up doing what you do and that God will always provide for you so that you can help other families like mine who want to escape poverty and misery. Sinceramente...Florencia Hernandez.

LIGHTS FADE OUT.

A song of mourning plays in the background until it blends in with the KRZT jingle.

SCENE 12

LIGHTS FADE IN on LOU at the DJ booth. LOU is tanned, but not fully recovered. He has a few bandages on his forehead and arms. The KRZT jingle plays.

LOU (*with discomfort*): I am Lou Becker, and I want to welcome you to *Take Back America*...I am back from my vacation...in Palm Springs, and I forgot to wear sunblock one day when I fell asleep by the pool.... You can never forget to wear sunblock, folks.... And you can never have enough water.... (*He picks up a piece of paper and reads.*) Today in the news.... Ten illegal aliens.... (*Beat.*) Ten migrants were caught at the.... Ah...I'm going to deviate today from my normal show.... You know I don't think I've ever shared with you the real reasons why I love this country. Not many of you know that I was born in Scotland and my parents moved to Canada, and that's where I met my wife and became a U.S. citizen through marriage. I am so lucky that this great country is truly the land of opportunity where a poor boy from Scotland with lots of hopes and dreams can end up having his own radio show and living well reaping all the benefits of this great country.... I love this country.... (*Beat.*) You know, I want to play a song for you that always inspired me when I was just starting out in radio. Let's start the day right with some inspiring music.

KEN BEAVERS, the show's producer, walks into the sound booth with a smirk, bothered.

KEN BEAVERS (*whispering*): Lou, what the fuck are you doing?

LOU plays Woody Guthrie's version of "This Land Is Your Land." He stands still in contemplation. (Beat.) LOU throws the day's script into the trash. The song keeps playing as he gathers his coat.

KEN BEAVERS: Hey, Lou, where you going? The song is going to end soon.

LOU exits the sound booth without turning back to give an explanation.

KEN BEAVERS: Commercial! Go to commercial!

A radio commercial plays for Arizona Bar-be-cue Sauce. LIGHTS FADE OUT.

SCENE 13

LIGHTS FADE IN on SANDI sitting in ERNESTO'S SUV.

SANDI: Thank you so much for the ride to California.... My boyfriend...I mean ex-boyfriend, took off with my car. He hasn't returned my calls, so I don't know where the hell he is.... Probably drove off to Vancouver.... It was an old car ready to break down. I hope it breaks down on him.... Sorry, don't mean to throw all my crap on you...I'm just really grateful for the ride back to California.

ERNESTO: Oh, no, thank you. I love company on my trips. Most of the time it's always just me.... Although, you're not going to believe this, but sometimes I swear I see spirits sitting in the backseat.

SANDI: Oh, I believe you. I know the mind can play tricks on us, but I also

believe in ghosts, spirits, whatever you want to call them.... So what can we do to find out who killed Artemio?

ERNESTO: Unfortunately Artemio's body was so deteriorated...there is no evidence left...

SANDI: But there was money in his wallet. Who would leave money in a wallet next to the body?

ERNESTO: Maybe it was a Border Patrol officer. There have been so many killings at the border.... It just gets worse.

SANDI: Ernesto, I want to help. Next time you go deliver water, I want to join you.

ERNESTO: That would be great. We're all volunteers, and no matter what the law says, we have to do what is right.

SANDI nods. ERNESTO turns on the radio. The jingle for KRZT comes in.

CARL DUNLOP (*voice over*): This is Carl Dunlop the new host of *Take Back America*. In the news today, more protestors have put graffiti on the state capitol. Augh!!! It just disgusts me when I hear this! When are these illegals gonna get it? We don't want you in our state, and we will do whatever it takes to exter—I mean expatriate—or whatever—send you back to your country. Go back to your countries and—

SANDI: Do you mind if I use your cell phone to call in?

ERNESTO: No, go right ahead. I have it on speed dial.

ERNESTO presses a few buttons and hands her the cell phone. SANDI dials.

SANDI: Hmm, I got their voicemail.... This is Sandra Sanchez. Why do you spread all this hate? Why? Well, we're not going to take it anymore! We are not going back to our countries. We are already in our country! We are Americans with the same rights as you, and we're not going to let you get away with this.

ERNESTO (*whispers*): Immigration reform—tell him about that.

SANDI: Ernesto Martinez wants me to remind you...that if you create laws that are unfair, we will protest, and we will stop them, and we will continue to fight! Immigration reform now! (*SANDI hangs up.*)

ERNESTO: Well said!

SANDI returns his cell phone back to him.

SANDI: Ernesto, I have a question for you—

ERNESTO: (*Joking.*) Yes, I'm single.

They both laugh and after a few seconds they smile.

ERNESTO: You like rancheras?

SANDI: Ah.... Well.... (*Beat.*) Yeah...I love rancheras, sure.

ERNESTO adjusts his radio, and a ranchera song comes on. They sing together at the top of their lungs.

LIGHTS FADE OUT.

THE END