

PROPERTY LINE

by

Juan C. Sanchez

1661 SW 3 Street, #7
Miami, FL 33135
305-342-7762
Juans461@aol.com

PROPERTY LINE
by Juan C. Sanchez

CHARACTERS

- MAG: Anglo-American, late 50's, liberal
- CHARLIE: Mag's husband, Anglo-American, late 50's, retired travel writer
- BLANCA: Cuban housewife, middle to late 40's, conservative
- DANNY: Blanca's son, 17 years old
- JOE: Mag and Charlie's attorney, late 30's, has standard all-American boy-next-door looks but is of American Indian descent

TIME

The present

PLACE

Miami, Florida.

In Mag and Charlie's garage; a room in Blanca's home; Joe's office; and their backyards.

ACT I

SCENE 1

Darkness. The sound of two crying eagles.

The lights slowly come up to reveal BLANCA, a woman in her late 40's, on one side of a fenced yard. She's kneeling on the ground looking over some oversized plats with a tape measure in her hands.

Light slowly comes up on the other side of the fence to reveal CHARLIE, a man in his late 50's. He wears lycra bike shorts, a long t-shirt and has a ten-speed bike.

CHARLIE

(Waving at her.) Hey B, how you doin'?

BLANCA

(Looking up at him. Angry.) That isn't my name, asshole. My name's Blanca. Not B. It's Blan-ca Ca-ma-cho. That's Spanish in case you don't know, you greedy, son-of-a-bitch, hijo de puta, fuckin' American gringo.

BLANCA storms off leaving CHARLIE wide-eyed and open-mouthed. Music plays as the lights go down.

SCENE 2

Later that day. The garage. A hang-out place for CHARLIE. MAG is seated, hunched over, massaging her legs. CHARLIE, her husband, still wears the same bike shorts t-shirt. He's replacing the seat and doing general maintenance to his bike.

MAG

It was so damn hot. Africa hot. Egypt hot.

CHARLIE

Mm-hmm.

MAG

You remember Egypt.

CHARLIE

Mm-hmm.

MAG

Well, it was that hot. It was desert hot. Egypt hot.

CHARLIE

Mm-hmm.

MAG

And those signs. Those horrible signs: GOD HATES FAGS. DIE, FAGS, DIE.

CHARLIE

Mm-hmm.

MAG stares at CHARLIE for a few beats, stunned at his lack of response and then says:

MAG

That's when the redneck pulled out a gun and shot me in the head.

CHARLIE

(Stopping what he's doing and turning his full attention to her. Concerned.) What?

MAG

Is that what it takes to get your complete, undivided attention? Telling you that I was shot in the head?

CHARLIE

Jesus Christ, Mag.

CHARLIE picks up a wrench and resumes working on the bike.

MAG

You have to pay attention to me when I talk, Charlie.

CHARLIE

I do. I am.

MAG

You're messing around with that monkey wrench. You're lefty-loosy, righty-tighty fiddling with those damn screws. You're doing it right now.

CHARLIE

(Setting the wrench down, turning to face her and then freezing in place:) I'm here, Mag. Frozen in space and time listening to you. Speak, Mag, speak.

MAG

You know what I think? (Beat. And then very studied and cool.) I think you love that bicycle more than you love me.

CHARLIE

(Like "Here we go again.") Oh no.

MAG

More than you love Robert. Your own son.

CHARLIE

Don't be ridiculous.

MAG

You stood me up, Charlie.

CHARLIE

I called you.

MAG

To tell me you weren't coming. A phone call telling me you're not coming is the same thing as standing me up.

CHARLIE

The bike got a flat and I didn't have a kit with me to patch it up. I had to find a place to get it fixed. By the time the flat was taken care of, by the time I got back to the house to change clothes and head out there to meet you, I didn't have the energy. I was exhausted. I needed a day off.

MAG

You can't just take a day off.

CHARLIE

It's one march. I missed one march.

MAG

That's how it starts. You miss one march, then it's two, three, four, five--

CHARLIE

It doesn't mean that I love you and our son any less.

MAG

We're not living on a graceful planet, Charlie.

CHARLIE

(Back to working on the bike.) Mm-hmm.

MAG

The world is not a graceful place.

CHARLIE

Mm-hmm.

MAG

(Through gritted teeth.) Charlie!

CHARLIE

I can work on the bike and listen to you at the same time.

MAG

Those marches and rallies...the campaigning for human rights and equality...is important work. We have to stand up and fight for what is right. We need to rally against injustice. It's our job, our duty.

CHARLIE

I know, Mag.

MAG

We're doing it for Robert. Our son. And you missed it, Charlie. You left me stranded. Abandoned. Alone.

CHARLIE

What about Joan?

MAG

Nope.

CHARLIE

What do you mean 'nope.'

MAG

No-show.

CHARLIE

What about Helen and Paul?

MAG

Nobody from our group showed up. No one. But you know who did manage to show up? The maniacs. The lunatics. The crazy fucks. With their crazy signs.

CHARLIE

In my defense: you said nothing about being alone.

MAG

When I spoke to you, I hadn't a clue everyone had decided to take a fuckin' holiday -- you know, the day off?

CHARLIE

You should've called me back.

MAG

By then, I was too distracted to call you back. Too overwhelmed, too--

CHARLIE

Angry?

MAG

Of course I was angry. Between the heat and those horrible people and the signs and the shouting and being stood up by everyone -- well, of course I was angry. I was livid! If I were a volcano I would have erupted! A tsunami of hot, molten lava...hungry, ravenous...ready to swallow everything in my path. Thank god, I'm over it.

CHARLIE

(A little sarcastic, not mean.) You seem over it.

MAG

My anger is more than validated. I've earned it. (Taking in his shorts.) Have I told you how much I hate those shorts?

CHARLIE

Only every time I wear them.

MAG

And you still wear them?

CHARLIE

They're designed for comfort. They're padded and prevent chafing. And bacteria build-up.

MAG

That's gross.

CHARLIE

I have about a dozen of them. You should be used to them by now.

MAG

Aren't you even a little embarrassed to go out in public like that?

CHARLIE

Not with the looks I get. You ought to see the looks I get.

MAG

Well, of course you get looks: they're a little ridiculous those shorts. They're a lot ridiculous.

CHARLIE

I have a legion of fans because of these shorts. Groupies.

MAG

Groupies? Please, Charlie.

CHARLIE

One look at me in these stretched out-babies and...wham-bam-slam!...you're an instant disciple worshipping in the House of Charlie.

MAG

Stop talking like a moron.

CHARLIE

In some parts of town, I'm bigger than Elvis, bigger than the Beatles, bigger than sliced bread. (He flexes his biceps.) And take a look at these guns, will ya?

MAG

Guns? For chrissakes, Charlie, you sound like a dumb teenager. What's next? One of those...what, a spiky hair-do on your head?

CHARLIE

Don't sweat it, baby.

MAG

A man your age wearing lycra shorts is unnatural. Not to mention in bad taste.

CHARLIE

The approving, lingering glances at my assets prove otherwise.

MAG

Spandex was invented for the young.

CHARLIE

It's clothing gear designed for professional cyclists!

MAG

You're not a professional cyclist!

CHARLIE

If they're good enough for Lance Armstrong.

MAG

You're a travel writer with *five* books on the shelf. You should dress like a travel writer.

CHARLIE

I'm retired.

MAG

So dress like a *retired* travel writer.

CHARLIE

They're just shorts. What's the big deal?

MAG

They're super, super tight, that's the big deal.

CHARLIE

People are so hung up on the body. Afraid of curves and folds. Nervous about the way things hang or stick out.

MAG

Where's the beautiful hippy I married, huh?

CHARLIE

He just spoke to you but you weren't listening.

MAG

I'm talking about the one with the Levi's jeans and the love beads. I want my hippy-husband back. Come back, hippy-husband, come back.

CHARLIE

I wasn't wearing Levi's when you met me. I was naked, remember? Hey, you should sketch me. You should pull out your sketch pad and draw me. Like when we first met.

MAG

I haven't picked up a sketch pad in twenty years. (Laughing. Remembering.) Oh, my god, you were so nervous that day. Remember how nervous you were?

CHARLIE

It was my first time posing naked in front of a class.

MAG

You got used to it pretty fast, though.

CHARLIE

The encouragement from the class helped. The adoration. I was good model, wasn't I?

MAG

You were a great model. And we did adore you. The entire class. You were so smooth. So shiny and bright. Your skin looked like it was made of gold. You were so damn gorgeous, Charlie. With your hair down to your shoulders--

CHARLIE

And I was naked.

MAG

Yes, Charlie, you were naked.

CHARLIE

I could've had anybody from that class.

MAG

You could have.

CHARLIE

But you were the prettiest girl there.

MAG

I was 22 is what I was. Oh, god, that was a lifetime ago.

CHARLIE

You're still the prettiest girl in the room.

MAG

I'm the *only* girl in the room. (Stiffening up.) Stop trying to play me like a fiddle. I'm still mad at you for missing the march. Strolling down memory lane won't make it go away.

CHARLIE

I saw B this morning.

MAG

You saw her? Where?

CHARLIE

She was outside.

MAG

When?

CHARLIE

After my bike ride.

MAG

That's a good sign, isn't it? That she was outside? She's kept herself cooped up in that house for too long. It's a beautiful house, but still. Was she *okay*?

CHARLIE

She was measuring the fence.

MAG

What fence?

CHARLIE

The fence that divides our houses. Our property.

MAG

What do you mean measuring it?

CHARLIE

She was on her hands and knees on the ground with a tape measure and she was measuring the fence. I can't be any clearer.

MAG

Why was she measuring?

CHARLIE

I don't know the *why*, Mag.

MAG

It didn't occur to you to ask?

CHARLIE

Do you want to know what happened or not?

MAG

Yes, go on.

CHARLIE

When I got back from the bike run I saw her on her side of the fence. She was on the ground with some papers spread around her. So I waved hello. When she saw me, she picked up her papers...kind of in a rush...like she didn't want me to come over...and she headed back into the house.

MAG

(Beat.) Those shorts probably scared her.

CHARLIE

You're a pain in the ass, you know that?

MAG

So that's it?

CHARLIE

She gave me the finger.

MAG

The finger?

CHARLIE

I said, "Hey, B, how you doin'?" And she gave me the finger.

MAG

The middle one?

CHARLIE

Yeah, this one. See it? (Waving the finger at her.) Then she yelled at me, "That isn't my name, asshole. My name's Blanca. Not B. It's Blan-ca."

MAG

She said that?

CHARLIE

Then she stormed off with the papers under her arm, the tape measure in her hand.

MAG

You waited this long to tell me?

CHARLIE

You came in all sound and fury. All tsunami-like.

MAG

My best friend is having a nervous breakdown!

CHARLIE

She's been having a nervous breakdown for a year.

MAG

It hasn't been a year. It's been ten months.

CHARLIE

Today she's on her hands and knees measuring a fence and giving me the finger.

MAG

But the name calling, the measuring--

CHARLIE

She's unhinged. We already know that.

MAG

Her husband's head was cut off in a car accident!

CHARLIE

It's a terrible thing what happened.

MAG

He was decapitated, Charlie, and for you to be flip about it.

CHARLIE

What I'm saying is that she's angry at the world. At everyone. All the time. And it's not easy on the people around her.

MAG

How do you expect her to act?

CHARLIE

She's got a son. She's got Danny to look after.

MAG

If it were me.

CHARLIE

Don't go there.

MAG

If something like that were to happen to you. To your head.

CHARLIE

Leave my head out of this.

MAG

To you or to Robert. Oh, my god, Robert.

CHARLIE

He's in San Francisco. He's perfectly fine.

MAG

But it's California. The *earthquakes*?

CHARLIE

You're making connections where there aren't any.

MAG

Nobody was sitting around thinking that Guillermo's head was going to be cut off. But it happened.

CHARLIE

Accidents are beyond our control.

MAG

I'm not trying to control anything. I just want you to behave differently, that's all.

CHARLIE

That's all?

MAG

To be a little more sympathetic.

CHARLIE

She wasn't in that car.

MAG

I know.

CHARLIE

It was Danny who saw his dad like that. Not her. He's a kid and he's bearing the brunt. She's being selfish. A terrible mother.

MAG

Oh god, this is going to make me sound a little crazy because I know her life is completely out of sorts right now.

CHARLIE

Right.

MAG

I know that Guillermo's death is the thing...the tragedy. But I'm concerned about this other change. She's changing, Charlie. Everyday she's a little more different. Less like herself.

CHARLIE

She's definitely meaner.

MAG

It's more than that.

CHARLIE

Danny's changing, too.

MAG

He's a teenager. But B, she's becoming robotic.

CHARLIE

She was lively and tremendously spirited in her cursing me out in Spanish.

MAG

Her views are shifting.

CHARLIE

Shifting?

MAG

She's beginning to sound more conservative. Less liberal, you know?

CHARLIE

Less liberal?

MAG

She's beginning to sound a little hard, a little harsh. Like those people at the rally.

CHARLIE

Oh, come on, Mag.

MAG

No, I'm serious. Guillermo was an unflinching conservative, right-wing fundamentalist. And that was fine. It's who he was. But B, she was on the fence. Leaning toward the more liberal side. She voted Democrat in the last election. But lately, she just seems--. She's changing. I think we're losing her, Charlie. She's being swallowed up by something greater than the tragedy of losing a husband. I just can't quite put my finger on it.

CHARLIE

Maybe she's decided to check out.

MAG

What do you mean check out?

CHARLIE

I don't mean it like a suicide. I'm talking about not giving a crap.

MAG

Is that supposed to be better?

CHARLIE

There comes a time when we should stop caring so much. Take these marches and rallies. We've been at it for a long time now and nothing. There's no movement, Mag. We're living in a state of constipation. And by state, I mean Florida.

MAG

Making my work at the rally insignificant so you can get yourself off the hook for standing me up isn't going to work. You don't get off that easy. You owe me big time, buster.

CHARLIE

Oh, do I, now?

MAG

And I have ways of making you pay.

CHARLIE

Ooh, that sounds naughty.

MAG

Shut up, Charlie.

CHARLIE

Please tell me your ways of making me pay are naughty.

MAG

Quit it. Keep fixing whatever you're fixing on that bike.

CHARLIE

You wanted my complete, undivided attention? Well, now you have it.

MAG

I don't want it, anymore. Shoo! Shoo!

CHARLIE

Lady, you started it. With your vampy ways and your vampy talk and that sexy threat.

CHARLIE is now doing something physical, like trying to get her to lie back on the couch or something. They're having fun with this, it's playful.

MAG

Get off me, Charlie. I bet you haven't even showered from your bike run.

CHARLIE

I haven't showered, no.

MAG

Oh, god, I bet you're all sweaty underneath.

CHARLIE

You don't like sweaty?

MAG

No! Yuck! You're smelly. Stinky.

CHARLIE

It's hippy-husband musk. Is it turning you on?

MAG

No, it isn't. Now get away from me!

CHARLIE

Come on, you know you love it.

MAG

If you were Lance Armstrong. *Maybe.*

CHARLIE

He might be a professional cyclist but he's got nothing on me, baby.

MAG

He's got youth, Charlie.

CHARLIE

Are you calling me old?

MAG

You're ancient. Older than petrified wood!

CHARLIE

Oh, I'll show you old.

MAG

(Mock struggling and calling out:) Lance! Help me, Lance! Save me, Lance!

CHARLIE

Oh, I've got a lance for you, all right!

MAG

If you don't let me go, I'll scream.

CHARLIE

That's part of the plan, baby.

MAG

You're horrible, Charlie.

CHARLIE

You married a stud, baby.

MAG

Then I want a divorce. If that's what it takes to get you to leave me alone, then I want a divorce. I want it right now, Charlie. Give it to me right now!

CHARLIE

That's what I'm trying to do. I'm trying to give it to you right now.

MAG

No! Get away from me, Charlie.

There's a little playful roughhousing between them until Charlie maybe strokes her cheek or something and things get a little more serious for him.

CHARLIE

In my travels--

MAG

Oh, god, I know where you're going.

CHARLIE

...in every part of the world I've been to--

MAG

I can tell by your voice.

CHARLIE

...there's always a place far from the city...

MAG

No, Charlie.

CHARLIE

...far from the busy mill of urban living.

MAG

The answer is no.

CHARLIE

Where the people are close to...connected to the land. A place without laws. Or rules.

MAG

Dammit, Charlie. Damn you.

CHARLIE

Where people live by instinct alone. They roam the land and live directly from it.

MAG

I should put in a little time in the garden before it gets dark.

CHARLIE

And those people...those hunting, gathering types...they wear loincloths, Maggie. Indigenous people wear loin cloths.

MAG

Yes, I have to change clothes, into gardening clothes.

CHARLIE

No inhibitions, restraints or constraints. No need for conscience, intellect or reason. Only instinct, Maggie. Instinct. Imagine the freedom. Imagine.

MAG

Indigenous people from where, Charlie? Who the hell wears a loincloth anymore? Where?

CHARLIE

Indian tribes, for one. The smaller tribes that roam the equatorial rain forests. Or the aborigines in Australia. All of them, Maggie. The men. The women. All ages. They don't have any hang-ups about their bodies.

MAG

You don't roam the equatorial rain forests, Charlie, and you don't live in some remote part of Australia. You're not an aborigine from anywhere, Charlie. You live in Miami. You're in Miami.

CHARLIE

The females...they walk around bare-breasted.

MAG

Imagine me walking around bare-chested with nothing but a tiny, little piece of cheese cloth covering my pussy. Yeah. I'm right on it, Charlie. Right on it.

CHARLIE

When it rains, Maggie...imagine the rain plop-plopping...on your bare shoulders and then trickling down your lovely back...between your shoulder blades down to your waist...and over the beautiful curve of your beautiful, beautiful ass. As the soft rain falls, Maggie...there you are...glistening. Wet. With a flower in your hair. A sight for sore eyes. A beauty.

MAG

That does sound nice. The way you describe me. With the raindrops falling.

CHARLIE

Plop-plopping on your shoulders.

MAG

Tell me, Charlie...as I stand there...in the rain...with that beautiful flower in my hair, bare-breasted and wearing a loincloth...tell me, Charlie, are you wearing those tacky bike shorts you love so much?

CHARLIE

I want to go there, to a place like that.

MAG

I'm not moving, Charlie. This is my home. I belong here. So do you.

CHARLIE

Fine.

MAG

That's it? Fine.

MAG walks to CHARLIE, who has left his toolbox opens, and discovers a baggie of pot. She takes it.

You were stoned this morning, weren't you? That's the real reason you stood me up, isn't it?

CHARLIE

Maybe.

MAG

Just change out of those goddamn shorts, okay. I really hate them, okay?

DANNY

(Offstage)

What a bitch, yo. My mom's the biggest fuckin' bitch I ever met in my entire life, yo.

DANNY bursts in carrying a cardboard box with the flaps closed. He's 17, wears a Miami Heat shirt, basketball shorts that hang too low--his underwear hanging out; sneakers, pulled-up black socks and a turned-back baseball cap. He's agitated.

CHARLIE

Hey, Danny, tone it down, okay?

MAG

No, let him. You can't hold that kind of anger inside. Let it out, honey. Let it all out.

DANNY

Here's the tupperware from all the food you've brought over the last few months.
 She wanted me to return them, like, *right now*.
 It was either bring 'em to you or bust your windows with 'em.
 Yo, she wanted me to break your windows and shit.
 She wanted me to put rocks - *big ass, heavy rocks* - inside every container and throw 'em through your windows.
 She's pissed off, yo.
 She says you've been stealing from her.
 Land.
 Some shit about the yard and the fence.
 She's talking about moving it.
 The fence.
 She says some of the yard that's on your side actually belongs to us.
 She's got a new lawyer, too. Some dressed up lady. She was there today. They were going through a bunch of papers. I got her card. You wanna see it?

CHARLIE

Yeah.

Danny pulls out the business card from one of his pockets and gives it to CHARLIE, who reads it.

DANNY

That's when she called you a bunch of thieves. A pair of motherfuckin' thieves.
 And don't think about going over there. She's cleaning the guns.
 My dad's hunting rifles.
 I'm over it, yo.
 I'm seventeen, yo. I can take care of myself.
 I'm sick and tired of her bullshit and her acting all stupid.

MAG

Have you, at any moment, felt your life was in danger because of her? With or without the guns? Do you feel threatened in her company?

DANNY

No.

MAG

Do you believe she's dangerous?

DANNY

No.

MAG

Then I'm going to see her.

CHARLIE

Mag!

MAG

Come on, Charlie, we're friends.

CHARLIE

Mag, let's just wait, okay?

MAG

I want to know why she wanted to throw rocks through the windows of my house.

She exits.

CHARLIE

Goddammit.

Blackout.

SCENE 3

A few weeks later. JOE's office. JOE, their lawyer, is in his 30's to early 40's, with all-American good looks, He sits, looking over some plats. CHARLIE is also sitting down. MAG is on her feet.

JOE

According to the land survey they've provided, your fence is on their property.

MAG

What do you mean *their* property?

JOE

On paper, based on this legal document, they own and additional fifteen feet of land into your property.

MAG

Into my garden area.

JOE

Yes.

CHARLIE

But it's our house. We paid for it.

JOE

You didn't have a survey done when you bought the house twenty-six years ago.

CHARLIE

Right.

JOE

So, technically, you don't really know what you bought and paid for.

CHARLIE

Okay.

MAG

Shit. But the fence was there when we bought the house. The realtor walked us through the property. He pointed at the fence with his little stretched-out-realtor-finger and he told us everything inside the fence was part of the house.

JOE

Real estate agents aren't qualified to delineate property boundaries.

MAG

But--

JOE

The only advice they're qualified to give is to instruct one to hire a professional land surveyor.

MAG

This whole thing's preposterous. It's maddening.

JOE

The courts are filled with cases like these. Twenty years ago, surveys weren't commom. Realtors would go by a fence or the end of a driveway.

MAG

So it's a realtor mistake. Can we sue the realtor? Or the agency?

JOE

No.

MAG

But if we were given the incorrect property line, the realtor should be held accountable..

JOE

It was your responsibility to get a survey.

MAG

But he lied. Unwittingly or not, the realtor lied.

CHARLIE

Mag.

MAG

Are you sure we can't sue the agency?

JOE

Here's the real bad news: your neighbor can make you move the fence.

MAG

Are you serious?

JOE

Legally, on paper, they own it.

MAG

So that's it? Are you telling me we've lost?

JOE

She might be willing to sell it back to you.

MAG

I shouldn't have to *buy back* my own yard.

CHARLIE

But it might be the easiest way to handle this.

MAG

No.

CHARLIE

Let's, at least, find out how it works, what she wants. I mean, do we really want to go into litigation with her?

MAG

Yes.

CHARLIE

But she's your friend.

MAG

Where in the world have you been? She's not my friend. She's nobody's friend. Certainly not mine. Not anymore.

CHARLIE

But if she has legal claim to it--

MAG

Joe? We hire you for an outrageously insane amount of money and your legal strategy is 'buy it back" from her?

CHARLIE

Mag--

JOE

It's all right, Charlie. These cases, they can be frustrating. I know what she's going through.

MAG

Don't talk about me like I'm not in the room. I'm in the room. Yes, I'm frustrated. I'm irritated and disappointed and mad as hell. A douchebag realtor lied twenty-six years ago, on purpose or not, who knows, and now we have to give up a substantial chunk of our yard.

JOE

We're just talking right now. Trying to get a sense of what you're willing to do. Or not do.

MAG

I'm not willing to buy back my own land. I won't be bullied. I won't play that game.

CHARLIE

Nobody's playing a game.

MAG

Exactly! This isn't about a plastic little red hotel like in Monopoly. This is a real house, Charlie. *Our* house. *Our* home.

CHARLIE

We're not losing the house.

JOE

Let me set up a meeting with her attorney.

CHARLIE

I put her card in there. With the documents.

JOE

I saw it. I've met her attorney. Arlene Hill with TrotterJackson. She's tough. A piranha when it comes to these cases.

MAG

Oh, great.

CHARLIE

What if we decide to sell?

MAG

Why are you talking about selling?

CHARLIE

Losing land would depreciate the value of the house. I'm looking at the big picture.

MAG

Well, stop it. The only "big picture" is that she has twice the amount of land we have. She has enough room to build ten pools if she wanted to.

CHARLIE

Really, ten pools?

MAG

The point is--

CHARLIE

What *is* your point, Mag?

MAG

The point *is* that I gave her flowers from my garden. Roses and lilacs and sunflowers. From soil I tended to with love and care. I plucked the most beautiful, glistening, sun-kissed blooms in the bunch and I walked them to her front door with an open, generous heart. It was my roses that perfumed and brightened up the inside of her dark, dark house. Maybe I've over-estimated our friendship. This is ten years of friendship down the drain. Down the fuckin' drain.

CHARLIE

Mag, please.

MAG

Joe?

JOE

Yes?

MAG

You understand why this is so important to us, don't you?

JOE

Of course, I do. It's your property. Your home.

MAG

It's more than that. It's my land.

JOE

It's your land, yes.

MAG

You know what I'm talking about when I say that, don't you?

JOE

I think so, yes.

CHARLIE

I think I'll have some scotch. Just a finger. You don't mind, do you?

JOE

Of course not.

MAG

I'm talking about the land thing, you know? The land thing?

JOE

What land thing?

MAG

The land connection between us.

JOE

What land connection between us?

CHARLIE

(A warning.) Mag.

MAG

I'm talking about your great-grandfather. He was Native American, wasn't he?

JOE

American Indian, yes. From the Miccosukee tribe if you want to be more specific.

MAG

Okay, then.

JOE

What does that have to do with anything?

MAG

I'm talking about your ancestors. About the land that once belonged to you and your people.

JOE

To me and my people?

MAG

The lush, green land that once was a home to you and your people. To the natives. The American Indians. A land that was lost.

JOE

I'm not sure where you're going with this.

MAG

I'm talking about all that loss. It must have been passed down to you. It must live in you.

JOE

The only loss that lives in me is the loss of my vacation home in the divorce. A beautiful, six-room cottage house on five acres of land.

MAG

You lost it? Oh, good. I don't mean good like I'm happy it happened. I mean it like now we have that in common, too. With real estate. With the land.

JOE

Did you call me because I'm a real estate attorney?

CHARLIE

Because you practice real estate law, yes.

JOE

Or because I'm an *Indian*?

MAG

Because of both. Because you're an attorney and an American Indian.

JOE

I'm a little speechless right now.

MAG

You're not offended, are you?

JOE

I'm just speechless.

MAG

(Like asking for help.) *Charlie*?

CHARLIE

And we called you because you're a friend. I grew up with your dad. You're practically family.

MAG

We put together a list of possible lawyers. When we got to your name, I thought your background, your history, your heritage and experience would make you more sympathetic to what's happening to us. To our plight.

JOE

This could be misconstrued as racist.

MAG

I'm not talking about race. I'm talking about experience. I'm trying to appeal to you in the realm of shared experience.

JOE

I'm not even full-blooded. I'm like one-sixteenth. That's like a drop. Look, Mag, my great-grandfather was a Miccosukee who deserted his tribe when he met my great-grandmother, a Cracker from the Florida swamps. They fled their families and here I am: a white man. While I honor and respect that cultural part of me, I'm not very connected to it. I mean, look at me: I look like a white man. I talk like a white man. I'm a white man. End of story.

MAG

But the land. The land that belonged to your people.

CHARLIE

He's telling you it's not his land.

MAG

How can you not feel a devastating loss about it? It was taken away! Ripped away from their hands.

JOE

Yes, by your people!

MAG

Don't take it out on me. I wasn't there.

JOE

I'm only pointing out that your connections--

MAG

(Sudden realization.) That's why you're in real estate! Why you settle land disputes. Hundreds of years of loss have been passed down to you.

JOE

I'm in real estate because I like money. I wanted to make lots of money.

MAG

I'm sure there's a more noble reason if you dig a little deeper.

CHARLIE

Mag!

MAG

It's known that Buffalo Tiger, former Chief of the Miccosukees, met with Fidel Castro when he was trying to gain statehood for the tribe.

JOE

Why are you bringing Fidel Castro into this?

MAG

When they were trying to build the casino on Krome several years ago someone from the tribe went to Cuba.

JOE

Who told you this?

MAG

Charlie did.

CHARLIE

Rumor has it that the state was creating a lot of red tape for them because they were so close to the Everglades, so a representative from the tribe went to Cuba and got a letter from Fidel saying he would buy the land if they couldn't build.

JOE

It's sovereign land, the tribe could do whatever they want with it. Including sell it to Cuba.

MAG

They blackmailed the state into making it easier for them to build? That's a brilliant, savvy plan. I bet it was a lawyer who came up with that plan.

CHARLIE

It's only a rumor.

MAG

That's the kind of savviness we need for our case. That savviness that comes from...from the gut! It's in you, too, Joseph, I know it's in you. You're not as nice and clean-cut as you look. I bet you can play dirty.

JOE

If you're imagining I have some phantom American Indian chip on my shoulder, you're mistaken. The past is the past.

MAG

I'm not implying you have any kind of a chip on your--

JOE

There's tribal law and there's invented law. Tribal law consists of doing what's right for the community as a whole.

MAG

So the tribe did what had to be done. Good for the Miccosukee's. Now what about us? What will you do for us? To help us keep our land?

JOE

I don't think I can represent you, Mag.

CHARLIE

Okay.

JOE

Charlie, I know you and my dad grew up together and I want to honor my father, but I'm not sure I can do it this way. I'm happy to offer advice, though. Free advice.

CHARLIE

I understand.

MAG

Did you know that I was born and raised here?

JOE

No, I didn't.

MAG

Do you know the Hare Krishna Temple in Coconut Grove?

JOE

Yes, I do.

CHARLIE

(A warning, under his breath.) Mag.

MAG

Before it was a Krishna Temple it used to be a house. Before it was turned into a place of worship for the Indians--the other Indians-- it was a regular house with a front porch and a yard and some mango trees.

JOE

Okay.

MAG

My great-grandfather built that house with his own hands. He lived there.

JOE

That's, well, that's incredible.

MAG

My mother was born in that house.

CHARLIE

Mag, honey.

MAG

(Beginning to lose it, crying.) The house where my mother was born is now a Hare Krishna fuckin' temple! I have nothing against the Krishnas, god bless 'em. But my mother was born there!

CHARLIE

When the development started, her family sold it.

MAG

It was a take-over, is what it was.

CHARLIE

Mag.

MAG

I've seen one type of neighborhood become another type of neighborhood overnight. It's happening everywhere. And I'm fed up.

CHARLIE

This isn't a take-over. It's different.

MAG

(Totally losing it.) How, Charlie? How is it different? This is my house, Charlie. It's my home! She wants to mess with it. What will she want next? What will she discover or say belongs to her next week? How will I ever feel safe in my own house if someone--an outsider--can waltz in and take a chunk of what's mine? I don't want to lose any part of my house, Charlie. I'm losing my yard. I've lost my best friend. I hate her today but she used to be my friend, my only friend in the fuckin' neighborhood. I've lost my son to California.

CHARLIE

No, Mag, you're not--

MAG

Look, Charlie, I know you don't care about this as much as I do. Talking about selling the house. This is a way out for you. The perfect getaway.

(MORE)

MAG (cont'd)

You're thinking screw the yard, screw the house, screw it all, let's just pack our things and go live in a hut. Well, let me tell you something, those fifteen feet of green grass is part of my home and nobody's taking it away from me. It's my damn property. This has everything to do with greed. Her greed. But I'm not losing today. I'm not losing anything today or any other day. And you, Joe, you've got to help me. This is why we hired you. There's got to be something you could do.

CHARLIE

This ranting and raving isn't helping the situation.

MAG

It's helping *me*, Charlie. It's helping me a lot!

JOE

I think it's best that you...talk it out...at home.

CHARLIE

It's okay, Joe. We're good. It's all good.

MAG

(Sarcastic.) Yeah, Joe, Charlie's good. He's doing real good.

CHARLIE

Come on, Mag. Seriously, Joe, we're good.

JOE

Sometimes these cases, well, they get ugly. Just last month in Hialeah a guy shot his neighbor point blank in the head because the neighbor's car was parked an inch over his side of the driveway. An inch. One's dead now, the other's in jail.

MAG

We don't live in Hialeah.

JOE

They were fighting over the division line of their driveways.

MAG

It's a different world over there.

CHARLIE

Then again, with what happened last week.

JOE

What happened last week?

MAG

She wasn't waving a gun around in your face, threatening to shoot you, was she?

CHARLIE

No, but she yelled at me, flipped me the bird and called me a bunch of names. It was very aggressive.

JOE

Did you call the cops?

MAG

The cops?

CHARLIE

You think I should?

JOE

You should file a report. These things, they spiral out of control very quickly and it helps to have some kind of report on file.

MAG

We're not calling the cops on her.

JOE

I can't force you to do anything but be careful, okay? Watch your step.

MAG

Oh, god, what a horrible feeling I have inside me. Like it's the end of the world. Like it's here. The Apocalypse. (Beat.) I'm sorry, Joe. I didn't mean to make a fool of myself like this, like--. Thank you for your time. Come on, Charlie, let's go. Before security comes in for me.

JOE

Hold on, Mag.

MAG

Yes?

JOE

There's something we could try.

MAG

You're going to help us?

CHARLIE

You sure, Joe?

JOE

We could file a claim of adverse possession with or without color of title.

CHARLIE

What is that?

JOE

The acquisition of title to personal property without the consent of the prior owner.

MAG

This means so much to me.

JOE

It's a longshot.

MAG

I understand.

JOE

I'm not promising anything.

CHARLIE

So how does it work?

JOE

We start by collecting heavy burden of proof that your possession of the land has been hostile, open and notorious.

CHARLIE

Hostile? Notorious?

JOE

I need to know of any additions to the house, any change in layout, anything that may have compromised the division lines of the property.

CHARLIE

Other than the actual landscaping to build the garden, everything is pretty much the same since we bought it.

JOE

The work you've done with the garden fits with the adverse possession claim. It shows you've cultivated, maintained and made improvements to the land.

MAG

Oh, good.

JOE

You've been in actual possession, using it continuously and openly, for the required uninterrupted period of seven years, correct?

CHARLIE

Yes, yes, correct.

MAG

Twenty-six years, actually.

JOE

Has anyone made you aware that the property in question, while you were living there, wasn't actually yours?

MAG

No. Never.

CHARLIE

Wait a minute, what about her survey? The one that says she owns it. What are you saying now? That it's no good?

JOE

No, it's good. It's legal. But we'll get to that in a second.

MAG

You really think we have a shot?

JOE

You've been paying taxes on the property, correct?

CHARLIE

Of course, I pay taxes.

MAG

Charlie, no one's accusing you of tax fraud.

JOE

Tax payments are registered in the tax Collector's Office and are public record. Since you've been paying property taxes on the portion of land in question, that can be considered a notorious act because your neighbors have had ten years to stop you from paying taxes on their property and to claim the land as their own.

MAG

I feel a surge of electricity coursing through my body. A renewed energy. I think I'll call it *happiness*. Yes, that's it. Happiness.

JOE

Keep it in check, Mag. I said it's a longshot.

MAG

It's a glimmer of hope. A shiny, bright light of hope.

CHARLIE

And we're going to the light, aren't we?

MAG

Charlie, don't be afraid to fight.

JOE
(Looking over the documents.) About these surveys, you knew nothing about them?

MAG
Not until this week.

JOE
Because this one's dated over a year ago.

CHARLIE
What does that mean?

JOE
There are two surveys, actually. The first one was done a year and half ago.

MAG
It was Guillermo.

JOE
Who?

MAG
I bet you anything it was that little prick who started this whole mess.

CHARLIE
Mag, please, he's dead.

MAG
And I feel *terrible* for him.

JOE
You're talking about the deceased husband.

MAG
Her dead husband, yes. He must've had them done before he died.

JOE
The second survey was done only a few months ago.

MAG
And she's continuing it. The bitch. She's finishing what her husband started.

JOE
It looks like it, yes.

MAG
So this change of hers...this personality change...it has nothing to do with grief. With the healing process. She's been preparing for battle. For war. Oh my god.

(MORE)

MAG (cont'd)

I knew she was a cunt the minute I laid eyes on her ten years ago. I should've listened to my gut!

CHARLIE

Mag.

JOE

If she wins, you can sue her for the tax money you've paid on the property.

MAG

She's not going to win.

JOE

It's another option you should be aware of.

MAG

I will set fire to the house first. No, to the neighborhood. I will burn down the neighborhood.

CHARLIE

Mag.

MAG

I swear it. I will burn it down.

Rap music plays; something like B.I.G's "Dead Wrong." Lights out.

SCENE 4

A few weeks later. DANNY wears headphones, rolls a joint and he raps to B.I.G's "Dead Wrong."

DANNY

Relax and take notes while I take tokes of the marijuana smoke
 Throw you in a choke, gun smoke, gun smoke
 Biggie Smalls for mayor, the rap slayer
 The hooker layer, motherfucker say your prayers
 Hail Mary, full of grace
 Smack the bitch in the face, take her Gucci bag
 And the North Face off her back, jab her if she act
 Funny with the money, oh you got me mistaken, honey
 I don't wanna rape ya, I just want the paper
 The Visa, kappesha?

I'm shooting babies, no ifs ands or maybes
 Hit mummy in the tummy if the hooker plays a dummy
 Slit the wrist of little sis, after she sucked the dick
 I stabbed her brother with the icepick
 Because he wanted me to fuck him from the back
 But Smalls don't get down like that

(MORE)

DANNY (cont'd)

Got your father hiding in a room, fucked him with the broom
 Slit him down the back and threw salt in the wound
 Who you think you're dealing with?
 Anybody step into my path is fuckin' feeling it!
 Hardcore, I got it sucked like a pussy
 Stab ya 'til you're gushy, so please don't push me
 I'm using rubbers so they won't trace the semen
 The black demon, got the little hookers screaming

SCENE 5

Three monyhs later. MAG is working in her garden. BLANCA enters from her side of the fence and watches her unnoticed. After a few moments:

BLANCA

Mag?

MAG

(Turning around to face her, a little startled.) Oh, my god,
 B--

BLANCA

It's Blanca.

MAG

It's so good to see you--

BLANCA

Blanca!

MAG

Okay, okay.

BLANCA

I have a god-given name.

MAG

You should have told me you didn't like it ten years ago.

BLANCA

I'm telling you *now*.

MAG

Okay, okay.

MAG stands up, the gardening shears in her hands. BLANCA stops her with a hand gesture.

BLANCA
Stay where you are. And put down the shears.

MAG
Oh, for crying out loud.

MAG sets the shears down on the ground
and then faces BLANCA.

MAG
You look good.

BLANCA
I don't feel good.

MAG
Can I come to you?

BLANCA
No. Stay where you are.

MAG
I want to hold your hands and talk. Like we used to.

BLANCA
When did we ever hold hands and talk?

MAG
In our kitchens. We used to sit and talk and hold hands,
remember? Like sisters.

BLANCA
That was a long time ago. And you did most of the talking.

MAG
We haven't spoken in *three* months. Are you pretending we
were *never* friends?

BLANCA
Yes, we had a friendship.

MAG
We went to the theater together.

BLANCA
The theater, yes.

MAG
Movies, concerts, dinner.

BLANCA
They weren't dinners. They were barbecues in our backyards.
On holidays.

MAG

But you and I, we--

BLANCA

We did stuff together, yes.

MAG

And what about dance class? We took salsa lessons.

BLANCA

Yes, we did.

MAG

And Danny has been running in and out of our house since he was six.

BLANCA

Seven. And a half.

MAG

Our son, Robert, babysat him. Robert taught him how to ride a bike, for chrissakes! In this very yard. I remember that day like it was yesterday. Danny was afraid of giving up the training wheels for the longest time. And then one day I look out the window and I see Robert jumping up and down and there's little Danny, riding free like the wind and right into the fence, smack into the--

BLANCA

I remember that day, Mag. I remember the bloody nose. I don't need you to draw me a picture. You're not a better mother than I am.

MAG

Who said anything about being a better mother?

BLANCA

I have Kodak memories about my son, too. They're in my head. Vivid and alive and in full color. Those defining moments. They're engraved in my head, too.

MAG

We love him, B., that's all.

BLANCA

I love him more.

MAG

Both Charlie and I, we don't want him to get hurt.

BLANCA

If you don't want him to get hurt, then why are you fighting me about the fence?

MAG

I want it to stop. This stupid legal battle. I want it to stop, too.

BLANCA

Then stop fighting me.

MAG

We were here first. Before you and Guillermo moved in.

BLANCA

We have legal, binding documents--

MAG

That doesn't make it right.

BLANCA

But it's the law. The law's on my side.

MAG

What about moral law? What about 'do the right thing'? What about love thy neighbor? Look, we both know that a lot of stuff that shouldn't happen *happens* under the guise of the law.

BLANCA

You're wasting your money. And your time.

MAG

I've got plenty of money. And plenty of time.

BLANCA

Look, Mag--

MAG

No, you look. You've ignored me for months. Haven't returned a single phone call. You wanted to throw rocks through my windows! And now you come out here and ask me to stop. To just stop?

BLANCA

I couldn't talk to you before. You know what it's been like, what I've been going through.

MAG

I think you're lying.

BLANCA

Excuse me?

MAG

I said I think you're lying.

BLANCA

I should've reached out sooner, I know, but I--

MAG

You don't need fifteen feet of my land.

BLANCA

It's for Guillermo. I'm doing it for Guillermo.

MAG

Bullshit. You didn't find out about this new survey until *after* his death.

BLANCA

I have an obligation to finish what he started.

MAG

He didn't start anything. He wanted us to keep it, that's why he sat on it. He valued our friendship.

BLANCA

He hated you, Mag. He despised you.

MAG

We had our differences. We were polarized in our beliefs. He was a damn Republican.

BLANCA

He hated you.

MAG

What about all those barbecues? All those burgers, all those shish-kabobs? All that healthy debate?

BLANCA

More than anything he wanted to strangle you after each barbecue. He'd lie there in bed and he'd tell me how much he wanted to go over to your house...in the middle of the night...and take that little, ugly neck of yours in his hands and squeeze it...tight. He wanted to choke the living life out of you.

MAG

If he wanted to kill me, then, I'm glad he's dead. Off with his damn head. Oh, god, B, I didn't meant it like that.

BLANCA pulls out a semi-automatic gun. She never points it at MAG. She can hold it up, the barrel facing the sky, or to the side, or down to the ground.

BLANCA

That's a baby eagle. You hear it? There are more bald eagles in Florida than any state except for Alaska. But they're hard to see. Do you know how lucky we are? How honored we should feel? To have an American Bald Eagle, the symbol of this country, living on our property? My property, I mean. The tree and the nest, they're on my side of the fence, they belong to me.

The baby eagle is heard crying again.

BLANCA

Just the other day, I saw the mother swoop down and dig her talons into the back of a squirrel and carry it up into the air. Which is strange, because eagles prefer fish, and we're surrounded by water. I can only guess that squirrel must've done something that really pissed off the eagle. Like maybe it tried to squirrel up the tree to the nest. I felt a little bad, a little sad, for the squirrel. But maybe it got what it deserved, you know?

MAG

You're gonna shoot me, aren't you?

BLANCA

I think that's pretty damn clear. Crystal clear.

MAG

(Paralyzed with fear.) Charlie...

They stare at each other, hard, as the lights slowly dim to black.

END OF ACT 1

ACT II**SCENE 1**

BLANCA is on the floor. There's an assortment of weapons, a rifle, a shotgun, a bow and arrow and an assortment of hunting knives, spread out in front of her. She's wiping down the knives. Maybe there's a deer head mounted on a wall. DANNY watches her.

BLANCA

Please say it?

DANNY

Say what?

BLANCA

Call me mom in Spanish. Say it.

DANNY

Nah, man, I'm not doing that Spanish-talking thing, yo.

BLANCA

Come on, say it. Yo soy tu mamá.

DANNY

It makes me feel stupid, yo.

BLANCA

Please?

DANNY

Okay, but only one time, okay? (Beat.) Mamá.

BLANCA

It's like a cool, blue, ocean. Like a waterfall. Like a sunlit sky with puffy white clouds--

DANNY

--and some rainbows and shit?

BLANCA

Again.

DANNY

I told you. Only one time.

BLANCA

Come on, say it again. Please, please?

DANNY

Okay, but this is it. (After a heavy sigh.) Mamá. That's it. No more.

BLANCA

Like a mountain of chocolate powder. Like Ovaltine. Remember Ovaltine? You used to love that when you were a kid. Or Nutella spread on toast. With banana and strawberry slices. Say it one more time.

DANNY

No, that's it, yo.

BLANCA

Let's take it to the third grade level now. Use the word madre this time.

DANNY

Madre?

BLANCA

It's another word for mother. Yo soy tu madre. Say it.

DANNY

Madre. Oh, yeah, like 'me cago en tu madre'.

BLANCA

Not like that. 'Shit' and 'mother' don't go in same sentence together. Now say it the right way.

DANNY

Tu eres mi madre. Mi mamá.

BLANCA

(Giddy.) Oh, my god, you sound so cute when you speak Spanish.

DANNY

Mi mamá. Tu eres mi mamá.

BLANCA

It's like you're a little boy again.

DANNY

Mamá, mamá, mamá.

BLANCA

I love it, love it, love it.

DANNY

Mamá?

BLANCA

Si?

DANNY

Why can't we keep the fence where it is?

BLANCA

You opened your mouth...and poof...a black cloud came out.

DANNY

It's been there since forever, since we moved in.

BLANCA

We were getting along so well, too.

DANNY

I just don't get why you want to move it.

BLANCA

I won't reward their feeling of entitlement.

DANNY

What are you talking about?

BLANCA

People like Mag think the rules don't apply to them.

DANNY

What rules?

BLANCA

She's so self-centered she hasn't realized we've been pulling back from them. I've been trying to sever ties with that woman for two years.

DANNY

Why?

BLANCA

She took me to the theatre.

DANNY

A movie?

BLANCA

No, it was live theatre, a play.

DANNY

And?

BLANCA

The actors in this production spoke perfect English.

DANNY

So?

BLANCA

That was a problem for her.

DANNY

I don't get it.

BLANCA

The play was written in English. It was set in Cuba but it was written to be performed in English. There was no reason for those actors to speak their lines with an accent.

DANNY

I don't get it.

BLANCA

She said she wanted them to have accents to make it more authentic for her. They sounded too American. Too much like her.

DANNY

I don't get it.

BLANCA

You *still* don't get it?

DANNY

No.

BLANCA

In her world, all Hispanic people should have an accent. Even the ones who speak English. In her mind, it's what separates us. They need us with accents and they need the signs in Spanish. Otherwise, there's no us versus them.

DANNY

That makes no sense, yo.

BLANCA

It's the South. They don't call it South Florida for nothing.

DANNY

What?

BLANCA

The Ku Klux Klan lives here.

DANNY

Now they're the KKK?

BLANCA

Maybe not the KKK. But she doesn't like Cubans.

Who does?

DANNY

Hey--

BLANCA

DANNY

It's true. She's not alone, yo. Cubans are loud. Obnoxious.

BLANCA

You're Cuban.

DANNY

I was born here.

BLANCA

There's Cuban blood in you.

DANNY

Blood isn't born anywhere. It's just blood.

BLANCA

You're too young to understand what I'm talking about.

DANNY

I don't get why you can't leave the fence right where it is.

BLANCA

They're playing a skin game.

DANNY

A what?

BLANCA

A con game. They knew that fence was in the wrong place. They just kept their mouths shut.

DANNY

That's crazy, yo.

BLANCA

That land belongs to me. One day it will go to you.

DANNY

I don't want it. They can keep it. Charlie's my friend. He's like--

BLANCA

He's not your father, your grandfather, or your friend. He's using you to manipulate the situation. You're gonna get hurt, Danny, I swear it. They will hurt you.

DANNY

You know you look crazy with those knives, right?

BLANCA

These knives, these guns, they're what's keeping me sane.

DANNY

Were you gonna shoot her?

BLANCA

I don't have any control over what she thinks. I can't help it if she distorts things. Did it get a little heated between us? Yes. Did I lose my top a little? Yes. Did I threaten her? No. And she didn't have to call the cops on me.

She wipes down a knife as DANNY watches.

DANNY

You were out there with a gun.

BLANCA

I didn't know I had it. Not until she pointed it out to me.

DANNY

One of these days, they're gonna take you away. They're gonna put you in jail.

BLANCA

I have the right to hold my registered gun on my own property.

DANNY

If you go to jail, what's gonna happen to me?

BLANCA

She's the one who threatened me.

DANNY

How?

BLANCA

She had gardening shears in her hands.

DANNY

Because she was gardening, yo.

BLANCA

They were big and they were sharp and she had a dark, mean glint in her eye. I didn't tell the cops about the glint in her eye. I should have.

DANNY

Were you gonna shoot her?

BLANCA

Why do you always take their side? Don't you understand what's going on here?

DANNY

Yeah.

BLANCA

If you don't get it, then tell me so I can make it clearer for you.

DANNY

They want to buy back the land.

BLANCA

They can't have it.

DANNY

Why not?

BLANCA

Your father was waiting for the right time. And the right way to take it back.

DANNY

But if dad knew about the error and didn't do anything about it--

BLANCA

Those motherfuckers!

DANNY

What?

BLANCA

Those sons of fuckin' bitches. I knew they'd turn you against me.

DANNY

No, they--

BLANCA

I know you love them. But they're bad people. Leading you down the wrong path.

DANNY

They didn't tell me to throw rocks through *your* windows.

BLANCA

(Beat.) That was an extreme a moment of anger for me. A crazy moment. I wouldn't've let you do it, you know that, right? You believe me, don't you.

DANNY

Yeah, I believe you. Like I believed you when you said a tree was gonna grow in my stomach if I swallowed my gum. Which I did. Lotsa times.

BLANCA

If it weren't for that little white lie, you could have serious digestive tract issues today. All mothers tell their children about that tree.

DANNY

It freaked me out, yo.

BLANCA

Are you still mad about Santa Claus, the tooth fairy and the Easter Bunny?

DANNY

A tree growing inside your stomach is a lot scarier than finding out your mom is Santa Claus.

BLANCA

And dad.

DANNY

Yeah, whatever.

BLANCA

(Handing him a knife.) Here, wipe this one down.

DANNY

I'll take a gun.

DANNY takes a gun or rifle and takes it apart.

BLANCA

You know what freaked me out when I was a kid?

DANNY

Nothing.

BLANCA

I was scared of something.

DANNY

What?

BLANCA

Not because they were *Cuban*; because they were *scary*. You don't know what it's like to live in fear that somebody's going to kill you.

DANNY

Yeah, I do.

BLANCA

Promise me that you'll look both ways before you cross the street.

DANNY

What?

BLANCA

I want you to go to school and come back home and don't talk to scary people and once in a while look up at the sky for falling planes.

DANNY

Oh, come on.

BLANCA

And you need to start wearing regular clothes again. If you keep dressing like that, someone's going to see, think you're not who you really are, and something terrible will happen to you.

DANNY

Nigga, please.

BLANCA

Excuse me?

DANNY

What?

BLANCA

What the *fuck*?

DANNY

What did I do now?

BLANCA

Nigga?! Who said you could use that word in this house?

DANNY

It's just a word.

BLANCA

First of all, I'm not a nigga, I'm a Cuban. Second of all, that's an ugly word.

DANNY

Nigga, you a spic.

BLANCA

You don't live in the ghetto. This way of talking you've picked up. I know it's television and the music you listen to. I know it's the way kids talk, but, it makes you sound really stupid. Everybody who talks like that sounds stupid. Do you even hear what I'm saying?

DANNY

You need to take a chill pill.

BLANCA

Oh, my god, if I had a *belt*.

DANNY

One of these days, somebody's gonna call child services on you.

BLANCA

Who's going to call child services?

DANNY

I'm just saying.

BLANCA

Mag! Fuckin' Mag!

DANNY

It was *nobody*, yo!

BLANCA

I know it *wasn't* Charlie. That man's a coward. It's Mag who wears the pants in *that* house.

DANNY

That's not true, yo. He's not a coward. Don't talk like that about him.

BLANCA

Do they feed you? Do they put clothes on your back? Do you live under their roof?

DANNY

Pretty much, yeah.

BLANCA

Is that supposed to be funny?

DANNY

No.

BLANCA

To bring child services into this, to even bring up the words.

DANNY

I should stay with them for a little while.

BLANCA

Excuse me?

DANNY

It's quiet over there. They never fight.

BLANCA

What do you mean *stay* with them?

DANNY

Live there.

BLANCA

You're just a *replacement*.

DANNY

What?

BLANCA

You're a fuckin' replacement, you stupid, little shithead.

DANNY

I'm not stupid!

BLANCA

Robert left and they replaced him with you.

DANNY

So?

BLANCA

What they say they feel about you has nothing to do with you. It isn't real. They don't even see you. They don't love you.

DANNY

They *do* see me, they *do* love me.

BLANCA

They don't see your face. They see Robert's face. They don't see your brown eyes. Your father's eyes. They see Robert's eyes. They don't see your hair. Or your smile. Your father's chin and his neck.

DANNY

I'm nothing like dad.

BLANCA

They don't hear you. They hear Robert.

DANNY

At least they're listening.

BLANCA

I miss him. Your dad. Don't you miss him? Not even a little bit?

DANNY shakes his head no.

Sometimes it's good to talk, and we haven't talked.

DANNY shakes his head no again.

About the painful things--

DANNY

Are you going to leave the fence where it is?

BLANCA

There are stages to the grieving process--

DANNY

You gonna move the fence?

BLANCA

In order to heal, in order to get at the root of the problem.

DANNY

Are you gonna move the fuckin' fence or not?

BLANCA

He's not coming back. He's gone, Danny. Your father's gone.

DANNY

I was *there*, yo, I *know* that.

BLANCA

And the memory of him. All the memories -- the good ones, the bad ones -- they'll eventually disappear with time, too. All you'll have left is something like a feeling that you know someone from a long time ago. That there was, at some point, a person you talked to and slept with and ate with and had a child with. But even that feeling will start to go away with time, until it feels like there was nothing there to begin with. You're my proof that he was here.

DANNY

What does moving the fence prove?

BLANCA

It's our land...and putting a fence around it...is proof that something real is in there...and that it's ours.

DANNY

I don't need proof about nothing. Put a fence around that, bitch!

She raised her hand to strike him, but doesn't.

BLANCA

I think your grandparents should take you for a little while.

DANNY

Fuck Pompano Beach! That place is whack. I'm moving in with Mag and Charlie.

BLANCA

I will kill you first.

DANNY

I should pack my things. I'm old enough to do what I want.

He exits.

BLANCA

You get back here!

She goes after him. They struggle offstage and she drags him back in by the back of his shirt.

And give me your phone.

DANNY

For what?

BLANCA

I said give me your phone.

DANNY

No.

BLANCA

Don't make me punch you in the face.

She tries to go into his pants/shorts pocket and tries to take his cell phone. They struggle.

DANNY

What the fuck, mom, leave it alone, okay? Leave me alone. Stop acting like a psycho, yo. You're a psycho.

She grabs him by the hair and pulls hard.

Ow!

BLANCA

I'm not a psycho.

DANNY

Let go of my hair, you psycho.

BLANCA

I paid for that phone. That makes it mine. Now give it back to me.

DANNY

Okay, okay.

He pulls out the phone and hands it to her.

Indian giver.

She takes it. She lays it on the ground and raises her leg to crush it.

That's gonna hurt you more than me. You paid for that phone.

BLANCA

(Threatening to crush the phone.) Are you going to see them again?

DANNY

That phone's made of, like, titanium. You can't break it.

BLANCA

(Getting closer to crushing the phone with her foot.) One, two--

DANNY

Mom, that's my connection to the world. Without my phone, I'm dead, yo.

She picks up the phone from the floor.
She opens it and removes the SIM card.
She gives him the phone back.

DANNY

He was cheating on you. Since I was like 13 or 14.

BLANCA

Danny.

DANNY

Whenever he'd take me camping or hunting. When he thought I was asleep. He was always on the phone with someone. In the car, the day of the accident. He thought he was being all smooth.

BLANCA

He was talking to me.

DANNY

Is your name Gina? 'Cause he'd say stuff like, "Gina, baby." Or "I miss you, too, Barbara." Or Patty. You never even had a clue. But I did. 'Cause I was always in the car. I was in the car.

BLANCA

Go. Just go.

He wants to take back what he said.
But he doesn't. He runs out.

Blackout.

SCENE 2

Lights up on CHARLIE smoking a little
grass listening to something like Al
Hirt's *Green Hornet* or some Jimmy
Buffet in the garage.

Blackout.

SCENE 3

JOE's office. BLANCA, dressed very
smart and proper, is on her cell phone
talking to her attorney, ARLENE.

In this scene, Blanca's generally more cool and collected than ever before, maybe even a little cheery. She's trying hard to stay calm, to keep her anger in check. MAG, on the other hand, is desperate, wearing her misery, frustration and anger on her sleeve. JOE stands behind his desk, which is covered with plats and documents. MAG and JOE watch BLANCA.

BLANCA

(Into the phone.) Okay, we'll talk later. Bye (She hangs up.) That was Arlene. She's stuck in traffic.

JOE

We can reschedule.

BLANCA

No, I want to finish this. Show me what you have and let's get it over and done with.

MAG

Our land, combined, used to be owned by a man named John Colquinn.

BLANCA

Okay, so?

MAG

General John Colquinn.

BLANCA

Oh, okay. So?

MAG

He was a General. He fought in the only major American Civil War battle in Florida.

BLANCA

Again. So?

MAG

Our property was his plantation.

JOE

His *estate*.

BLANCA

Plantation?

JOE

Estate. They're now called estates.

MAG

My house still has some of the original wood frames and some of the windows still have--

BLANCA

(To Joe.) What's her point?

JOE

The land might be of interest to historical preservationists.

BLANCA

Oh.

MAG

If the land and the architecture were deemed to be of historical value--

BLANCA

Are you fuckin' kidding me? (To Joe.) Excuse me, Joe. (Back to Mag.) Are you threatening to bring in some fuckin' team of preservationists to muck around--

MAG

No no no.

JOE

There might be some interest by some parties to preserve and keep the land unchanged--

BLANCA

You're amazing, you know that? Did you really think that would work? Joe, is it legal? To do this?

JOE

She isn't breaking any laws. Neither am I.

MAG

I'm trying to appeal to your sense of duty and honor. To your patriotism to this country. I'm asking you to honor our history.

BLANCA

By letting you keep land that belongs to me?

MAG

America has opened up its arms to you. She has spread open her wings and taken you in. The least you can do is to pay your debt to America.

BLANCA

I'm going home.

MAG

It used to be mine. Your yard? All of it used to be mine.

BLANCA

Back in 1863.

MAG

Yes.

BLANCA

That General, was he a Confederate soldier? He was fighting to keep slavery alive, right?

MAG

Yes, but that's beside the point. What he stood for is unimportant. It's the historical element that's important.

BLANCA

I will not honor a racist soldier. Where do you stand on this, Joseph?

JOE

On the side of whomever is right.

MAG

It doesn't really matter where he stands. Besides, Joe's different. He's an American Indian who doesn't identify with his culture, his heritage.

JOE

When did I deny my heritage?

MAG

You didn't deny it, but you said it. You said "I'm a white man."

JOE

I think you misunderstood what I was trying to say.

MAG

Then it's me. I guess I don't understand anyone or anything. I must speak and hear totally foreign tongues all the time.

BLANCA

(To JOE.) You're Native American?

JOE

Great-grandfather.

BLANCA

You don't look it. Well, maybe a little. Your lips.

JOE

My lips?

BLANCA

You have Indian lips.

JOE

I'm sorry, but what are Indian lips?

BLANCA

Oh, that means, they're full. Most Native Americans, they usually have full lips..

JOE

Kind of how Cuban women are a little wide around the hip area?

BLANCA

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to insult you, I didn't mean anything by it.

JOE

It's okay.

MAG

These documents clearly stipulate that the land where your house is built once belonged to me.

BLANCA

These surveys, these plats, these documents are bullshit. (To Joe.) Excuse me, Joe. (Back to Mag.) They mean nothing. They're the past.

JOE

I think this meeting's over.

MAG

I know you're doing this for your husband. You think it's your duty to finish what he started.

BLANCA

I'm not doing it for Guillermo anymore. I'm doing it for me. And for Danny.

MAG

Okay,...then for Danny's sake, let's...let's try to keep the peace.

BLANCA

I'd like that. To keep the peace. So when where you going to call child services on me?

MAG

What?

BLANCA

And why did you call the cops on me?

MAG

Because you pointed a gun to my head.

BLANCA

What?

MAG

You were going to shoot me in the head.

BLANCA

You were charging at me with a pair of gardening shears in your hands.

MAG

What?

BLANCA

You were going to stab me.

JOE

Mag, Blanca -- ladies, please.

BLANCA

You're a lunatic, you know that?

MAG

What about your spying on me? She's installed tiny, little cameras. You think I can't see them?

BLANCA

They're for security reasons, Joe. In case of burglars.

MAG

You've got them on one side of your house only. The side facing my house. She doesn't have cameras anywhere else.

BLANCA

How do you know that? Have you been snooping around?

MAG

Of course not.

BLANCA

It's private property. You're not jumping over the fence, are you? That's trespassing, right Joe?

MAG

I'm a grown woman. I don't climb or jump over fences.

BLANCA

Then I must have your twin on tape.

MAG

What?

BLANCA

I have you on video. Spying on me.

MAG

Spying?

BLANCA

Running around. She's tiptoeing, Joe, tiptoeing--

MAG

Tiptoeing?

BLANCA

Yes, tiptoeing like the goddamn Pink Pather!

MAG

That's a lie--

BLANCA

You're lucky I haven't called the cops on you for trespassing.

MAG

You admit it, then. You *do* have cameras! She's been watching me.

BLANCA

Yes, I do! Joe, I have cameras everywhere recording every ugly, law-breaking thing she does.

MAG

Have you notified the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service program about the eagle's nest?

BLANCA

For what?

MAG

It's under strict protection. I haven't done too much research, or anything like that, not really, but it's the damn law to report it when you see a nest, right Joe?

JOE

The sighting doesn't need to be reported.

MAG

But there's something about fences. I think they need to be a certain number of feet away from the nest.

BLANCA

The nest is fine, Joe.

MAG

Moving the fence would disturb its natural habitat. And there's a law about *that*. It might endanger the life of the eagles.

BLANCA

How?

MAG

I don't know, Blanca, household cleaner or some kind of poison might accidentally -- *oh, I don't know*. I'm just thinking out loud.

BLANCA

Are you threatening to poison--

MAG

I'm saying it would be a terrible thing if something were to happen to the eagle. You'd be held accountable. It's on your property. Your responsibility.

BLANCA

(To Joe.) Is she threatening me?

JOE

No, she isn't, isn't that right, Mag.

BLANCA

I'm not scared of you.

MAG

I'm not scared of you, either.

BLANCA

I want you to stay away from Danny.

MAG

And I want you to go back to Cuba. All of you. To stay.

BLANCA

I see. Goodbye, Mag.

CHARLIE

Whatever you're thinking or talking about, you're wrong, okay?

DANNY

I'm wrong?

CHARLIE

Yeah.

amDANNY

What am I wrong about, yo?

CHARLIE

Danny, I can't work on the bike and listen to you at the same time.

DANNY

Sorry. (Beat.) Can I have some?

CHARLIE

Some what?

DANNY

You know, weed?

CHARLIE

Stop it with these stupid questions. I don't touch the stuff.

DANNY

You don't smoke weed? Really?

CHARLIE

When Nancy Reagan told me to say no to drugs, I listened.

DANNY

Then how come you got those rolled up joints in the toolbox?

CHARLIE

What?

DANNY

You got joints in there, yo.

CHARLIE

They're cigarettes, yo! Rolled up tobacco.

DANNY

I can keep a secret. You can trust me. We tight, yo.

DANNY tries to do a knuckle bumpshake but CHARLIE ignores him.

(MORE)

DANNY (cont'd)

Look, Charlie, since we tight and all, friends and all, I should come clean about something: I pinch, yo.

CHARLIE

You pinch what?

DANNY

In small quantities. And only when I'm low on my own supply. I've been feeling guilty about it. So I'm coming clean. Because you and me: we're friends for life yo.

DANNY tries to knuckle shake again.

CHARLIE ignores him.

CHARLIE

You've been stealing my shit?

DANNY

Yo, yo, stealing is what crackheads do, yo. I'm no crackhead.

CHARLIE

Goddammit, Danny.

DANNY

What? You smoke weed. Are you a crackhead?

CHARLIE

It's perfectly fine for me -- an adult -- to engage in adult activities that may or may not involve the use of a controlled substance such as cannabis. I smoke a little grass, everyone once in a a blue moon. A little doobie, if you will. To take the edge off.

DANNY

You smoke every day, like six times a day. You're a stoner.

CHARLIE

Says who?

DANNY

I can smell it. You burn a lot. I got a nose, yo.

CHARLIE

How did you know to go into my toolbox?

DANNY

I put two and two together and I got toolbox. It's like me hiding the bullets from my mom. They're in my closet inside the dirtiest, smelliest pair of sneakers. They stink bad. Yo, my mom would be too disgusted to pick them up. She'd puke. (Beat.) So high-five?

DANNY tries to high-five CHARLIE but
CHARLIE ignores him.

Holla? Say cheese? Please?

CHARLIE
How long have you been pinching?

DANNY
Not long. Only about two years now.

CHARLIE
Two? Two fuckin' years?

DANNY
Does Mag know you smoke?

CHARLIE
I think you know the answer to that.

DANNY
I bet you don't want her to find out.

CHARLIE
Are you trying to blackmail me?

DANNY
That's a strong word, yo. It sounds evil.

CHARLIE
It's corrupt. You're corrupt.

DANNY
So I'm corrupt.

CHARLIE
You're a thief and a blackmailer--

DANNY
I'm your friend, yo.

CHARLIE
...ah, Jesus Christ...

DANNY
Now can I have some pot?

CHARLIE
No.

DANNY
I don't want to steal it anymore, yo. I wanna smoke it with you.

CHARLIE

I won't be your tambourine man.

DANNY

My what?

CHARLIE

Never mind.

DANNY

Dude, it's not my first time smoking weed. You're not turning me into a junkie. I smoke weed, yo. I smoke a lot of weed. Like you. I could be smoking crack or doing crystal meth and shit, yo. But I'm not. I'm trying to hang out witchoo. I just want to chill in a safe place with a good friend and shoot the shit, to clear my head, you know? (Beat.) You know?

CHARLIE

(Beat.) You can't have any of my rolled up joints.

DANNY

Hell yeah, yo!

CHARLIE

You gotta get your own pipe.

DANNY

(Still reeling, pulling out his pipe.) All systems are go, yo.

CHARLIE

You shouldn't be carrying that around. (Beat.) I know I'm going to regret this.

He goes to the toolbox and takes out the ziploc bag and tosses it to DANNY.

DANNY

Our friendship has reached a new level, yo. A new platitude.

CHARLIE

You mean *plateau*.

DANNY

(Packing the pipe.) Whatever, bro. I don't need book smarts. I got street smarts. (Smoking.) This is good stuff, yo. But I knew that already. (He starts to rap animatedly.) "Relax and take notes while I take tokes of the marijuana smoke. Throw you in a choke, gun smoke, gun smoke-

CHARLIE

Okay, I draw the line at rap music.

DANNY

This music, it's what gets my heart racing and my blood pumping.

CHARLIE

(Not paying attention to Danny and opening and bag and getting excited.) Look at that deep, rich, purple-black color. It's an African varietal. Did you feel how oily it was to the touch? Rub your fingers together. Feel that oil? That slickness? That little wetness means quality.

DANNY

You know what we need? To make this perfect? A drink.

CHARLIE

A drink?

DANNY

A whiskey. (DANNY pulls out a couple of miniature bottles of Jack Daniel's from his pocket.) You want one?

CHARLIE

Put those away, you're a minor.

DANNY

You draw the line at beer and cigarettes, huh?

CHARLIE

And rap music.

DANNY

I'm seventeen, I drink whiskey and I smoke weed.

CHARLIE

Boozing it up and drugging it up?

DANNY

Sex, drugs and rock-n-roll, yo. By the way, I'm fucking my English teacher.

CHARLIE

What?

DANNY

Yep.

CHARLIE

Like a teacher from your school?

DANNY

Sweet, huh? You can call me the dawg man.

CHARLIE

Oh, shit, man--

DANNY

You're the only person I've told.

CHARLIE

I might have legal responsibility to notify the school--

DANNY

Are you crazy?

CHARLIE

--your mother--

DANNY

Like out your mind crazy?

CHARLIE

Look, I know it's a fantasy scenario, but--

DANNY

I made the first move, yo. I seduced her. With my charms. She couldn't resist my charms, yo.

CHARLIE

Your charm is beside the point.

DANNY

Nigga, please.

CHARLIE

Look, Danny--

DANNY

I'm in love with her, Charlie. We're in love. It's a hundred percent real and we can't control it. We got like animal magnetism.

CHARLIE

I'll take one of those bottles now. I feel thirsty all of a sudden.

CHARLIE downs the whiskey.

DANNY

You're not gonna rat me out, right?

CHARLIE

No.

DANNY

Cool. So we tight?

CHARLIE

Yeah, we tight.

DANNY

I's kidding about the teacher. I was just testing you to see if you would rat on me. But we tight. You're my friend, nigga.

CHARLIE

Danny, I think we need to cool it.

DANNY

Cool it?

CHARLIE

Just for a little while, okay?

DANNY

Whadda ya mean cool it?

CHARLIE

You need to stop coming around so much.

DANNY

What?

CHARLIE

Just for a little while. Until this fence thing blows over.

DANNY

You want to stop talking to me?

CHARLIE

It makes your mother really angry.

DANNY

'Cause of my mother?

CHARLIE

We're thinking about your welfare. We're concerned for you.

DANNY

What does Mag have to say about it?

CHARLIE

She agrees that my relationship with you is adding fuel to your mother's anger.

DANNY

Then why don't you give her what she wants?

CHARLIE

Who?

DANNY

My mom.

CHARLIE

It's not that simple.

DANNY

Yeah, it is. It's that simple, yo. Give my mother what she wants and things will go back to normal. We'll be able to chill out and drink whisky and smoke weed.

CHARLIE

Taking a break is the right thing to do. The best thing to do.

DANNY

So a little piece of dirt is more important than I am? Dirt is more important than a person?

CHARLIE

Mag feels--

DANNY

She's your wife, yo. She's the woman and you're the man. Or is it the other way around with you guys? Are you the pussy wife?

CHARLIE

Hey--

DANNY

It's your house, too. You have rights.

CHARLIE

Listen, Danny, you're still a kid. You don't understand the complexity of a marriage...the compromise it requires. Mag and I, we're partners, we're--

DANNY

You're afraid of of standing up to her. You're a coward.

CHARLIE

I pick my fights.

DANNY

Then pick this one. It's about our friendship, man. It's about us.

CHARLIE

I can't.

DANNY

She disrespects you. Bosses you. Pushes you around. And you do what she says. She even told you to stop talking to me and you're gonna do it.

CHARLIE

She didn't say it like that.

DANNY

You told me I could count on you.

CHARLIE

You still can--

DANNY

I've never asked you for anything before. I never begged you for anything.

CHARLIE

Sometimes you have to step out of yourself and do the right thing, you know. An act of nobility goes a long way. Everyone's running around, driving around, like hotheads. I almost get run over like three times on the road when I'm biking. Everyone's living in this thing...in this heated place...and no one wants to give an inch. Well, I'm budging. Giving our friendship a rest is an act of nobility toward your mother.

DANNY

Does that mean you're gonna move the fence?

CHARLIE

No, that means, ah, jeez--

DANNY

I'd move it if I were you. If you know what's good for you, yo.

CHARLIE

What?

DANNY

I could go to the cops. I could tell them you got me high and drunk. I could go right now.

CHARLIE

Danny, come on, will ya?

DANNY

Tell Mag to drop the case.

CHARLIE

You know I can't do that.

DANNY

Your gay son tried to have sex with me.

CHARLIE

What?

DANNY

He gave me blowjobs when I was a kid.

CHARLIE

I think you should leave.

DaNNY

He said he'd kill me and my family if I ever told.

CHARLIE

Are you listening to the shit spewing out of your mouth?

DANNY

That's what I'll tell the cops, yo. I'll tell 'em and they'll believe me.

CHARLIE

You'd make up a lie like that to get what you want?

DANNY

That patch of dirt just became more important to me than Robert, Mag...or you, bitch!

CHARLIE

You little prick.

DANNY

Fuck you, Charlie. You don't give a shit about me. My mom's right. You're a bunch of assholes.

CHARLIE

I know you're angry, I know it feels like I'm betraying you, but it's not like that.

DANNY

I'm not fucking around witchoo anymore, white motherfucker!

CHARLIE

Hey--

DANNY

I said I'm done witchoo, nigga. Just give my mother what she wants. You hear me? (He backs out and raps Eminem's "Kill You" as he exits) "Bitch, I'ma kill you, you don't wanna fuck with me. Girls neither - you ain't nothing but a slut to me. Bitch I'ma kill you! You ain't got the balls to beef. You better kill me! I'ma be another rapper dead for popping off at the mouth with shit I shouldn't said. But when they kill me--I'm bringing the world with me. Bitch I'ma kill you! Like a murder weapon, I'ma conceal you in a closet with mildew, sheets, pillows and film you..."

BLACKOUT.

SCENE 5

MAG is in the garage. She's maybe spinning the bicycle's tire. She's talking to CHARLIE, who's offstage.

MAG

So I told her to go back to Cuba. She was yelling at me. And she was flirting with Joe. By the way, I think we need a new lawyer. I felt cornered, backed up against the wall and it just came out. (Beat.) What are you showing me, huh? What's the big secret?

CHARLIE

You're gonna love it.

MAG

Then show me.

CHARLIE

Are you ready?

MAG

Yes, Charlie, I'm ready.

CHARLIE

Close your eyes.

MAG

Jesus, Charlie!

CHARLIE

Just do it, okay? Close your eyes. And don't peak.

MAG

Fine, they're shut.

CHARLIE enters wearing a loincloth and carrying a spear. He looks either like an American Indian or like a Bush Man. He carries a sketchpad. He stands in front of MAG, maybe strikes a pose and freezes.

CHARLIE

Open your eyes.

MAG

What in god's earth are you wearing?

CHARLIE

I got you a sketchbook.

MAG

What's that get-up about?

CHARLIE

Here, take it. The pad. Take the damn pad, will ya?

MAG

Seriously, Charlie, what the hell are you wearing?

CHARLIE

I thought you could draw me. We could pick up where we left off when you were 22.

MAG

I like the bike shorts better.

CHARLIE

Come on, Mag.

MAG

Were you not listening to me? We have a problem.

CHARLIE

(About posing.) Do you want me athletic or sexy? Or heroic like a Greek god. Or all three. I can give you all three. Sexy, heroic, athletic. I'll show you god-like later.

MAG

We need to find another lawyer. Someone who will play ball harder.

CHARLIE

I've made us two reservations to Australia.

MAG

Excuse me?

CHARLIE

(He produces two airline tickets.) Australia here we come.

MAG

Have you lost your mind?

CHARLIE

Me, Tarzan. You, Jane. (Beat.) I'm the husband. The man. You're the wife. The woman. You must do what I say.

MAG has a hysterical laughter fit.

CHARLIE

What?

MAG

I needed that laugh today. Thank you.

CHARLIE
I'm not kidding, Mag. I've got tickets to Australia. And we're going.

MAG
Says who?

CHARLIE
Says me.

MAG
We're losing the case, Charlie. I don't want to talk about your dreams of Australia right now. Or ever.

CHARLIE
Every time we start talking about this, you find some way to end it. To kill it.

MAG
I kill it because it deserves to be dead. You keep resuscitating it. I bury it. You dig it up.

CHARLIE
I'm miserable.

MAG
I know you're miserable. You're unhappy with the way things are in the world.

CHARLIE
I'm not talking about the world.

MAG
Life is miserable, Charlie. It's one long continuous string of misery with moments of distraction in between. That's why people write books, get married, have children, or go on week-long cruises to the Bahamas, the Caribbean. Those are distractions. You need a distraction, that's all. You should start writing an internet blog. To stay connected, to feel more relevant.

CHARLIE
I don't need to write a blog. To feel relevant. To stay connected. I don't need a cruise to the Bahamas. That's not what I'm talking about.

MAG
What you're going through, plain and simple, is a mid-life crisis.

CHARLIE
I'm not having a mid-life crisis.

MAG

A grown man bicycling through the city streets wearing spandex shorts in plain daylight -- that's a mid-life crisis. Straight from the pages of a novel. You're like a significantly flawed, modern-day, literary hero on the skids.

CHARLIE

Significantly flawed? Me?

MAG

You're acting like a disillusioned, middle-aged Holden Caulfield from *The Catcher in the Rye*...except you're on a bicycle.

CHARLIE

What the hell are you talking about?

MAG

Yes, like in that damn book, like some confused, angst-ridden teenager brimming with issues of identity and belonging and alienation.

CHARLIE

What the hell? It's got nothing to do with that.

MAG

What you're doing is trying to peddle that bike of yours backward in time. Into the past. You're trying to recapture something you lost. Your youth. But it's gone, Charlie.

CHARLIE

I've had an awakening.

MAG

Every couple of months...for the past year...you've asked me to uproot myself. To pack up our belongings and sell the house and go traipsing about...who the hell knows where...so the rain could land on our shoulders--

CHARLIE

--I said plop...

MAG

Fine...so the rain could plop on our shoulders and travel down our goddamn backs...in some third world country...in Australia...as we frolic in the mud wearing matching fuckin' loin cloths.

CHARLIE

Australia is not a third world country.

MAG

Nicaragua, Zimbabwe, Cuba, Paris, Brazil. I'm not going anywhere. We're not going, Charlie. I'm not going.

Dead silence. CHARLIE stares at MAG for a long time.

MAG

Charlie?

CHARLIE

Fine.

MAG

Fine?

CHARLIE

Yes.

MAG

That's it? For real?

CHARLIE

Yes.

MAG

Are we're really fine, Charlie? And this is the end of this conversation forever and ever and ever?

CHARLIE

Yeah.

MAG

I hate one-word responses. You know how much I hate them. There's no need to punish me. (Beat.) Please, Charlie, I don't want us to be this way. You know how much I depend on you and love you and respect you and need you. You mean the world to me, Charlie. You're my world. My whole world. But as much as I love you, I can't just pick up and leave my home. I've seen most of the world with you on assignment. And I've got to tell you, Charlie, I didn't love most of the world. Not really. I like it here. Miami is my home. My roots, my heart, it's all here. I'm sorry, Charlie, but I'm settled. I've--

BLANCA

(Offstage)

Charlie!

MAG and Charlie look in the direction of BLANCA's voice.

He's out of his mind wasted!

ACT II - SCENE 6

MAG and CHARLIE are on their side of the fence. BLANCA and DANNY are on theirs.

DANNY

(Cracking up.) Dude, what the hell are you wearing?

BLANCA

Do you see how wasted he is? Do you think it's okay to feed children booze?

CHARLIE

Look, Blanca--

BLANCA

(To Mag.) And you, Mag, you tell Danny what you told me. Tell him how you want us to go back to Cuba. Tell him!

MAG

Let me apologize--

BLANCA

Oh, no, you can't just take that back.

CHARLIE

I think we should all go inside.

MAG

I'm trying to apologize.

BLANCA

What you should be doing is ordering your husband to put on some normal people clothes. Is that how you do it in America? Is that the American way? Your almost naked, Charlie.

CHARLIE

We were born naked!

MAG

Charlie, go inside and change.

CHARLIE

We were born naked!

MAG

Change out of that fuckin' Bush Man-Indian-whatever get up--

CHARLIE

Don't talk to me like that. I've had it up to here with--

DANNY cracks up again.

DANNY

You are the pussy wife. You're the pussy wife.

CHARLIE goes into the house.

BLANCA

Go inside, Danny.

DANNY

Fuck you, nigga.

BLANCA shoves DANNY by the chest.

BLANCA

I told you about that fuckin' word!

MAG

(About the shoving.) Hey, B--

BLANCA

He's my son, not yours.

MAG

Just don't push, okay?

BLANCA

Don't push him? You can't push him. I can. (She pushes him with every 'push.') I can push him and push him and push him and push him.

DANNY

You're all fucked up, yo!

DANNY runs into the house.

BLANCA

And stay the fuck inside!

MAG

We don't need to do this, Blanca.

BLANCA

If you were a good mother, your son wouldn't be gay.

MAG

You bitch. It's your people who have ruined Miami.

BLANCA

My people?

MAG

The fuckin' Cubans.

BLANCA

We're a satisfied people. We're exuberant and full of *joi de vivre*.

MAG

In the last thirty years I've only seen irrational fuckin' behavior from most Cubans, not *joi de vivre*.

BLANCA

It's our pride that bothers you.

MAG

It's your fuckin' arrogance. You walk around like a bunch of peacocks. Like you own the place.

BLANCA

Because we do.

MAG

You're all a bunch of right-wing, intolerant--

BLANCA

That's because they don't know us.

MAG

Maybe if you learned to speak English.

BLANCA

Everyone's just fuckin' jealous of what we've accomplished.

MAG

Everybody hates the Cubans. The Dominicans, the Puerto Ricans, the Argentinians, the Italians, the Russians. Oh, and the Haitians.

BLANCA

They're jealous of our power.

The eagle cries intensify.

MAG

You're the laughing stock of America. You have turned our state, our politics, into a circus.

BLANCA

We make up the majority of elected officials in Florida.

MAG

Of the corrupt elected officials. All those little boys from that Belen school. All of them taught the same bullshit by their dumbass grandfathers. Do Cuban children not know there's a universe outside of Miami? It's like you crowd around and finger-fuck each other.

BLANCA

You're a cunt.

MAG

You're a Cuban. And that's worse in my book.

BLANCA

We've contributed to American culture.

CHARLIE enters wearing sweatpants and a t-shirt but is ignored by the women, who are intensely focused on each other only.

CHARLIE

Allright, ehough already!

MAG

Black beans and rice? Salsa music? Celia Cruz? Wait, I like Celia. Make that Gloria Estefan. That's your contribution? Beans and rice and a singing voice that sounds like a cat in heat? Cuban contribution will cover less than a paragraph in history books. Less than a paragraph. Why? Because you're a bunch of fuckin' idiots. You flee an oppressive society, you bitch and moan about it, but then you recreate the same kind of oppressive, intolerant society you left. Deep down inside, you're all in love with Fidel.

DANNY appears with a shotgun in his hands. He remains unnoticed by the others. There's a dark look in his eyes, on his face.

Oh, and don't get me started on the Elian Gonzalez--

She sees DANNY and freezes. The others follow her eyes to DANNY. Everything remains very still. DANNY has aimed the shotgun at MAG. BLANCA takes a short step toward him. He sees her through his periphery and stops her with:

DANNY

Shhhh. (He then whispers, as if trying not to disturb the silence.) Move back. It's loaded. (He mock shoots MAG.) POP. (He takes aim at CHARLIE and mock shoots him.) POP .

BLANCA takes another short step toward him. He takes aim at her.

You want me to call you mama but I barely understand Spanish. If I barely understand it, how can you ask me to talk it, huh?

BLANCA

You don't have to speak Spanish if you don't want to. You don't have to say anything to me anymore. Put down the gun, Danny.

The eagle cries.

DANNY

That bird! Shut up, bird.

BLANCA

Look at me, Danny, look at me.

More eagle crying.

DANNY

I'm warning you, bird. Shut the hell up, bird!

He aims the gun at the nest in the distance.

BLANCA

Danny--

CHARLIE

(Overlapping with above.) Danny--

MAG

(Overlapping with above.) Danny--

More eagle crying.

DANNY shoots at one of the eagles and hits it. There's a cacophony of bird cries for a moment and then the world stops. Silence. And the sky bleeds orange. The faint sound of native drums can be heard in the distance. The sky gets brighter and brighter as the drums get louder and louder. But nobody moves. Everyone is frozen in time. Until DANNY starts to sob uncontrollably and he drops the gun to the ground and falls to his knees.

The lights and everything else comes back to normal.

BLANCA

Baby?

CHARLIE

Danny?

JOE

Change is part of life.

MAG

Change comes with loss.

JOE

Absolutely. Sign here, too.

JOE

Nobody really owns the land. No matter how many fences we put up, no matter the boundaries we create -- the land, the sky, the sea, the birds -- ultimately, they belong to no one. It's free. Like the wind.

MAG

You're a real estate attorney.

JOE

And an American Indian. I read we're all going to look Mexican in a few hundred years. I wouldn't worry about it, though.

MAG sees the spear and picks it up.
She holds it through the end of the
play.

MAG

How do you do that?

MAG looks at JOE.

Lights come up on BLANCA on her side of
the fence. She wears sunglasses. She
looks at the fence and removes the
shades. She's been crying. Music,
something contemporary, like Gloria
Estefan's "Mi Tierra" begins to play.

LIGHTS OUT.

END OF PLAY.