

BORDERLINE JUSTICE

By

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FADE IN:

EXT. SAN DIEGO - EVENING

SUPER: THE GARDEN OF JUDGE MARTIN WILKINS' HOME, SAN DIEGO.
THE PRESENT.

Balmy evening.

A refined wedding reception unfolds. Guests cluster in conversational groups. A STRING QUARTET plays softly beneath the ambient chatter.

A tight knot of MALE POLITICOS huddle together, their body language closed, exclusive.

WAITERS glide through the crowd, silver trays balanced with champagne flutes and canapés.

The centerpiece: a tiered wedding cake inscribed "Anne and David, Mr. And Mrs. Cunningham."

ANNE CUNNINGHAM/WILKINS (24), striking brunette in white silk, grabs her father U.S. DISTRICT COURT JUDGE MARTIN WILKINS (late 50s), handsome and composed, extracting him from a circle of OLDER WOMEN who visibly bristle at the interruption.

ANNE

Forgive me, ladies. The bride needs
her father.

The women's smiles tighten.

Anne gestures toward DAVID CUNNINGHAM (25), slim in a tailored black suit, locked in conversation with the POLITICOS.

ANNE (CONT'D)

Should I worry?

Martin's shoulders rise and fall—a non-answer.

ANNE (CONT'D)

He's changing!

MARTIN

Give him time. He'll find his
footing.

Martin trails off, uncertain.

EXT. CENTRAL MEXICO - EVENING

SUPER: THE VILLAGE OF SAN CRISTOBAL, MEXICO.

NOTE: All dialog for this scene is in Spanish, subtitled.

Warm evening. Dust hangs in the air above a ramshackle collection of huts surrounding an open plaza.

A world away from San Diego. Fiesta energy crackles—balloons strung between posts, piñatas hanging from branches, strings of lights beginning to glow.

VILLAGERS in vibrant shirts and dresses move to the MARIACHI BAND's rhythm, their movements loose and joyful.

A long table groans under platters: tacos, enchiladas, salsa, carnitas.

A battered pickup truck, its bed overflowing with flowers, rumbles into the plaza. ONLOOKERS erupt in cheers.

MUSICIANS sprint toward the truck, launching into MARIACHI WEDDING MUSIC.

The truck skids to a halt, dust billowing.

WOMEN shield the food tables with their bodies.

CROWD

Welcome the bride and groom!

Truck doors swing open. Bodies tumble out in a cascade of laughter.

CIPRIANA PLASCENTIA (17), beautiful brunette bride in a flowing white dress, emerges. Her newly-wed husband, ANTONIO BORJA (19), follows in a gaily-colored suit that catches the light.

Cipriana's father DEMETRIO PLASCENTIA (45), guayabera shirt and striped trousers, tumbles out behind them.

TERE ARELLANO (40), an attractive woman in a flowery dress, waves everyone toward the table with both arms.

TERE

Come eat! Eat!

The couple slice the wedding cake. Tere distributes slices to the gathered guests.

Cipriana smashes cake into Antonio's mouth. LAUGHTER ripples through the crowd.

CHEERS, MUSIC, and DANCING consume the plaza.

EXT. JUDGE WILKINS' GARDEN - EVENING

A drum roll signals the moment.

Guests migrate toward the center table and its elaborate cake.

Anne searches the crowd for David.

He's deep in conversation with CONGRESSMAN BRENT ISHERWOOD (50a), tall and sharp in a black suit, WAYNE BEDFORDSON (MID 60s), portly in white linen, and their WIVES.

DAVID

Anne, I want you to meet
Congressman Isherwood and his wife.
And this is Mr. Wayne
Bedfordson—I've told you about him.

Bedfordson's eyes rake over Anne from head to toe.

BEDFORDSON

Well, ain't you just a cuddly
little bundle. Hope your husband
hasn't been filling your pretty
ears with stories about me.

ANNE

Pleased to meet you.

BEDFORDSON

The pleasure's all mine.

Anne tugs at David's arm.

ANNE

David!

DAVID

I apologize—it's Dr. Bedfordson,
isn't it?

BEDFORDSON

You write a big enough check to the
right university, they'll slap any
title on you. I got a whole
collection of 'em.

His gaze returns to Anne, lingering.

BEDFORDSON (CONT'D)
So the judge's daughter married
into money. Smart girl.

He pulls Anne into an embrace, his hand settling on her
backside. She wrenches free.

BEDFORDSON (CONT'D)
Sweetheart, if I was forty years
younger--

Anne drags David away from the group.

ANNE
David, we need to cut the cake.

Martin captures the moment on his camcorder, his eye pressed
to the viewfinder.

Camera flashes strobe as the couple cuts the cake. David
immediately returns to Bedfordson and Isherwood.

DEIDRE and MALLE, both attractive and middle-aged, circle
Martin like sharks scenting blood.

DEIDRE
(latching onto Martin's
arm)
Let me get a selfie with the future
California Supreme Court Justice.

MARTIN
The Governor hasn't decided yet.

DEIDRE
My nephew, Congressman Isherwood,
could make a very persuasive
endorsement.

Malle claims Martin's other arm.

MALLE
Wayne Bedfordson can do far more
than endorse. When he opens his
wallet--

The two women lock eyes. Competition ignites.

DEIDRE
And such a handsome widower.

Meaningful glances flash between them.

Martin excuses himself at the sound of raised voices.

Anne appears at his side, smiling. She threads through the crowd; Martin follows.

MARTIN

You didn't!

ANNE

I did. Where were your toadies when Mom needed them? Rita was there.

Rita stayed.

(and then)

It's what Mom would've wanted instead of those empty-headed gold-diggers.

Before Martin can respond, Anne pulls him toward RITA FUENTES (late 40s), striking in a black pants suit, her dark hair flowing. She's jabbing her finger into Bedfordson's substantial belly.

Rita jabs her finger into Bedfordson's large belly.

RITA

Some climb the highway to wealth.

Not Mr. B. He prefers the back alleys.

Bedfordson's face darkens. He pulls David aside.

BEDFORDSON

Who the hell invited this woman?

DAVID

Not me, Dr. Bedfordson.

Anne steps between them.

ANNE

I did. I'm the bride.

Rita's drink spills across Bedfordson's new cowboy boots. He jumps back.

BEDFORDSON

What the--

Rita strikes a theatrical pose.

RITA

Ay, Señor B! Rita so sorry! Let Rita clean your boots! Mexicans, we very good at cleaning boots!

She turns to Martin, her expression shifting.

RITA (CONT'D)

This is strike one against Rita,
yes, judge?

(pause)

Two more strikes and Rita go to
jail!

Martin's jaw tightens.

MARTIN

Leave your politics at home for
once.

RITA

Rita try to brush off her politics,
judge, but politics not brush off
her. Politics are Rita's skin.

MARTIN

You're leaving. Now!

RITA

(change of mood())

Since your wife died, Martin, a
tequila canal splashes between us.

(pause)

I miss seeing you!

MARTIN

And I miss you. But you're leaving--
now!

RITA

Soon we take a journey together.

MARTIN

Where?

RITA

You know where. La frontera. Your
wife's dying wish.

Martin's confusion registers.

RITA (CONT'D)

"Take him to the border, Rita.
Open his eyes."

She thrusts a wrapped gift into his hands.

RITA (CONT'D)

For the bride's father. The more
you lock away, the closer you get
to El Gran Premio.

She disappears into the crowd. Martin returns to the group.

Bedfordson nods toward the gift.

BEDFORDSON

I'd have security check that before
opening it, judge.

Martin hands the gift to MARIA, his housekeeper (30s), and
gestures toward the house.

Bedfordson corners Martin.

BEDFORDSON (CONT'D)

Woman like that could win over the
Latino vote for Isherwood. All
she'd have to do is stand there,
smile, and keep her mouth shut. But
once these people get a taste of
power—

He gestures at Anne.

BEDFORDSON (CONT'D)

Your daughter's got her mother's
bleeding heart. If she was mine,
I'd keep her on a tighter leash.
You gotta manage your women, judge.
Keep 'em from saying or doing the
wrong things.

Martin pulls Anne aside.

MARTIN

What were you thinking?

ANNE

I invited my guests. You invited
yours—the ones useful to your
career.

MARTIN

That's not fair.

ANNE

Isn't it? Look at them. Self-
absorbed. Fawning over that creep.

MARTIN
Bedfordson is--

ANNE
I know exactly what he is. So do
you, but you won't say it.

MARTIN
Rumors.

ANNE
Are they?
(pause)
Since mother died, you've become a
shell, stumbling around, not
rocking the boat, waiting for your
big reward: California Supreme
Court Justice. Big fanfare.

She jerks her head toward David.

ANNE (CONT'D)
And now both men in my life are
ready to drop their pants for
Bedfordson.

Anne storms away.

EXT. SAN CRISTOBAL - EVENING

NOTE: All dialog for this scene is in Spanish, subtitled.

JOAQUIN ARELLANO, Tere's husband (45), wiry and weathered,
pours pulque down Antonio's throat. He's deeply drunk.

JOAQUIN
God's law. First the pulque. Then
the woman.

TERE
Listen to him! When Joaquin drinks
pulque, nothing comes out but
nonsense.

She curls her index finger mockingly.

Joaquin lurches toward her and collapses. Tere stands over
him, finger still curled. Women cheer and laugh.

Demetrio dances with his daughter, pointing skyward.

DEMETRIO

Listen—your mother speaks from heaven. "Demetrio," she says, "our Cipriana has chosen well. Many grandchildren for you to play with in your old age."

Cipriana slaps his shoulder playfully.

DEMETRIO (CONT'D)

Tonight is yours, mi hija. Tomorrow we leave.

CIPRIANA

One more day, Papa.

DEMETRIO

One more day and we miss our ride north.

Cipriana grabs Antonio and pulls him toward a hut.

Women's curled fingers meet the drunken men's obscene gestures.

JOSEFA (middle-aged), attractive, points toward the sky.

JOSEFA

Your dead wife speaks to me, Demetrio. "Dance with my husband, Josefa," she says. "Dance until he falls at your feet."

She drags him into the dancing crowd.

EXT. JUDGE'S GARDEN - NIGHT

Guests depart. Waiters clear tables and fol

INT. JUDGE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Martin climbs the stairs to his study.

Shouts from Anne and David's bedroom.

ANNE (O.C.)

You promised things would be different when we came back to San Diego. What happened? You wanted to fight for social justice and equality.

DAVID (O.C.)

That doesn't bring in money in the real world.

ANNE (O.C.)

But marrying me was part of joining that real world! A step up! My father the judge!

DAVID (O.C.)

Anne, I'm thinking about us. We'll soon be settled, and then we can rethink our priorities.

ANNE (O.C.)

Until then, your priority is sticking your head as far as you can up Bedfordson's backside.

DAVID (O.C.)

I am not--.

ANNE (O.C.)

The way that man looks me up and down. Stripping me naked with his eyes. Maybe you don't care. Maybe you'd like me to--. To further your career!

DAVID (O.C.)

That sounds like something that Rita Fuentes bitch, would say. Why the hell did you invite her to our wedding?

SOUND OF A SLAP.

Martin moves down the hallway to his study.

INT. MARTIN'S STUDY - NIGHT

The room is heavy, solid. Oak bookcases filled with law books.

Martin stares at framed photo of his dead wife.

He picks up Rita's gift. Shakes it suspiciously. Opens it. A photo album falls out. Martin flicks through the pages.

Mug shots of Latinos, each with a name and number beneath.

MARTIN (V.O.)

Gomez. Drugs. Fifteen years. No parole. Hernandez. Drugs. Fifteen years. No parole. Arrival. Drugs. Fifteen years. No parole.

SUPER OF GAVEL POUNDING DESK. LOUDER as the names and photos flash before the judge's eyes. He turns to the front of the album.

Martin slams book shut. He opens the card attached to the front.

CU of inscription: "Paso a paso hasta la cima de la montaña. La frontera no está tan lejos si deseas aprender. Sigue siendo tu amigo. Con Carrie, Rita Fuentes." Step by step to the top of the mountain. The border is not that far away if you wish to learn. Still your friend. Love, Rita Fuentes."

Martin walks to the window and stares down at the empty garden.

He picks up the photograph of his dead wife. His POV as the smiling face of his dead wife in a photograph dissolves into Rita's.

He drops the photograph.

EXT. VILLAGE, NEXT MORNING - MORNING, NEXT DAY.

NOTE: All dialog for this scene is in Spanish, subtitled.

Outside Demetrio's hut, women make tortillas. BANG of exhaust and grinding of gears in distance. Women rush to cover the food.

WOMEN

The truck is coming! It's Martinez. He takes you to meet the coyote.

Men rush to the huts to gather their clothes.

INT. DEMETRIO'S HUT - DAY

NOTE: All dialog for this scene is in Spanish, subtitled.

Demetrio rushes into the hut. Cipriana lies naked alongside Antonio.

DEMETRIO
 Antonio! He's here. We must
 hurry!

More O.C. BANGS.

DEMETRIO (CONT'D)
 We must go, daughter!

O.C. BANGS getting closer. Demetrio rushes outside.

EXT. OUTSIDE DEMETRIO'S HUT - DAY

NOTE: All dialog for this scene is in Spanish, subtitled.

An old truck, spluttering and banging, pulls into the street and coughs to a stop. Driver, JOSE MARTINEZ (50s), squeezes out of the truck.

He yells at his truck.

MARTINEZ
 Mother of God! This is me, El
 Jefe, Jose Martinez speaking. I
 tell you to stop, you stop!

A kick of the tire and the engine dies.

Martinez swaggers to the bushes.

MARTINEZ (CONT'D)
 We don't have all day! I go to the
 bushes, I piss, I am empty. I
 drink a mouthful of pulque, I am
 full. Then I leave. You're on the
 truck, you get to the border of El
 Norte. You're not, you stay here
 and starve.

Women and men, each with a change of clothing wrapped in a bandanna, climb onto the truck.

Martinez crosses to Demetrio.

MARTINEZ (CONT'D)
 A good wedding celebration, no?

DEMETRIO
 Yes, Jefe. Thank you!

MARTINEZ
 Not cheap. Mariachis, flowers,
 meal.

DEMETRIO
I'll work twice as hard.

MARTINEZ
You, I trust. And your new son-in-law is strong. He works hard in the fields. Helps pay me back, yes?

He strolls to the bushes, unbuttoning himself.

As Demetrio climbs into the truck, Josefa thrusts a loaf of bread into his hand.

JOSEFA
Freshly baked. More when you return.

DEMETRIO
Gracias. Antonio!

Antonio exits the hut pursued by Cipriana. She hangs on, kissing him repeatedly.

Martinez buttons himself as he returns to his truck.

One of the women hands him a bottle of pulque. He grabs the bottle in one hand and the woman's buttocks in the other.

MARTINEZ
¡Vamonos!

DEMETRIO
Hurry, Antonio!

Martinez grabs a DRUNK trying to hide in the truck and drags him out.

MARTINEZ
Mother of God! Never again! This I told you last time. No work, no money, just drink!

The drunk staggers away.

DRUNK
But my wife and family!

MARTINEZ
You lie! No wife, no family. Just drink. Stay here and dry out!

Martinez squeezes his large bulk into the driver's seat. Antonio frees himself from Cipriana.

Joaquin hugs his wife, Tere.

JOAQUIN
Don't forget me!

TERE
Forget you? I scrub your stench
from these walls every time you
leave. Back you come, reeking worse
than before.

Joaquin laughs, sweeps Tere into his arms and kisses her hard.

TERE (CONT'D)
Come back to me, my husband.

DEMETRIO
Antonio, move!

The group chants "¡Mueva rápidamente!"

Antonio sprints toward the truck bed.

ALICIA (30s) stretches her hand from the truck, dragging Antonio up and over her body into the bed.

ALICIA
Alicia will keep you warm,
newlywed—until I find my rich
American in El Norte.

Antonio pushes off Alicia and settles beside Demetrio. He shouts toward Cipriana.

ANTONIO
I'll send dollars for the baby.

The group erupts—cheers, whoops, shouts of "Para el bebé."

INT. JUDGE WILKINS' COURTROOM - DAY

An UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANT MALE (40s), handcuffed, stands in the dock. Packets of cocaine and pills are arranged on the D.A.'s table like evidence in a museum.

Martin studies the chart before him.

The courtroom doors crash open. Rita enters with JOSEPH DELGADO (40s), a Latino defense lawyer in a rumpled suit, glasses sliding down his balding head.

MARTIN

Mr. Delgado. The courtroom was peaceful in your absence.

DELGADO

There are extenuating circumstances here, your Honor.

MARTIN

Your law books overflow with extenuating circumstances, counsel. Poverty isn't a legal defense.

DELGADO

Always the small fish, judge. You'll never catch the sharks until you act like a real judge.

MARTIN

Mr. Delgado, you're wasting the court's time again. If you don't like the law, take it to Congress.

Delgado raises a booklet.

DELGADO

An article from The Indiana Law Review. Page fourteen. I quote: "Mandatory minimum sentencing has robbed judges of their discretionary power—the very reason they entered the legal profession." You should recognize it, your Honor. You wrote it.

Martin nods to the BAILIFF, who grabs Delgado and forces him toward the exit.

MARTIN

The law is the law!

Martin returns to his chair.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

The prisoner is guilty of violating U.S. Drug Law. Third violation. Mandatory minimum: fifteen years. No parole.

Martin's gavel cracks down. The Undocumented is led away.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Recess. One hour.

BAILIFF

All rise.

INT. JUDGE'S CHAMBERS - DAY

Martin eats a hamburger, fries, and soda. He pulls a Law Review Journal from the shelf. The headline reads: "Borderline Justice." He reads, absorbed.

Rita barges in. Martin closes the journal quickly.

Rita picks through his food, tossing half of it into the trash.

RITA

Your wife dies and you eat garbage.
It's rotting your brain, Martin.

MARTIN

I can't fight the law!

RITA

Ever wonder why they risk it?

MARTIN

They could get work permits.

RITA

Sixty types of permits. Pages of paperwork. Small print. English only. For a few months' work. Then back to Mexico. You do the math.

He digs into his food, refusing to engage.

She perches on his desk.

RITA (CONT'D)

Your daughter is drowning.

MARTIN

I didn't force her to marry David.

RITA

Men change. One smile from Isherwood, one wave from Bedfordson's grubby fingers and the boy crawls.

She gestures toward the courtroom.

RITA (CONT'D)

Another victory. Fifteen years to life.

MARTIN

He was caught smuggling drugs.

RITA

He's a mule. A fly in the spider's web. Easy to deceive. Easy to catch.

(pause))

Never the businessmen. Never the ones at the top. They know how to stay out of your courtroom.

She taps a large plaque on the wall—mock congratulations.

RITA (CONT'D)

San Diego Yacht Club membership. Signed by El Presidente Wayne Bedfordson himself.

She moves closer, musses his hair.

RITA (CONT'D)

Ever fished for shark, judge? No? Too much of a challenge?

(pause)

Our judge prefers sardines and minnows. Safe waters. Close to shore.

(pause)

Soon we cross the border and fish for shark.

MARTIN

I have crossed the border.

RITA

A conference! Talk, food, wine, women drooling over the handsome widower. Rita is very impressed.

(pause; shift in tone)

I'll take you to my Mexico. The one your wife and I visited. Many times.

The bailiff appears in the doorway.

BAILIFF

Time, your honor!

Rita sweeps the rest of Martin's food into the wastebasket.

RITA

This poison makes you sick, señor.

(pause)

I'll pick you up tonight. Be ready! Anne will join us.

MARTIN

I am not--

She's already moving toward the door.

RITA

Father and daughter. ¡Nos vemos esta noche!

She exits. Martin straightens his hair and follows.

EXT. MEXICO, ROAD NORTH TO THE BORDER - DAY

NOTE: All dialog for this scene is in Spanish, subtitled.

Villagers sit around a small fire. Tortillas cook. A bottle of pulque passes hand to hand.

ANTONIO

One day I'll have my own farm.
Horses.

ALICIA

And I'll marry a rich gringo.
Hollywood. Big house. Swimming
pool.

JOAQUIN

Here's the secret, Antonio. Work
one hour, make one dollar. Buy a
lottery ticket. Win a million
dollars in one day.

ANTONIO

I'll make plenty of money. You'll
see.

ALICIA

With that face and body, gringa
women will pay. You could make
movies.

DEMETRIO

Don't listen to them, Antonio. Work
hard. Make honest money for
Cipriana and the baby.

JOAQUIN
And your grandkids!

A Jeep tears down the road and screeches to a halt. FEDERALES pour out, patting down the villagers.

ALICIA
You touch, you pay!

Meager money and trinkets pile on the ground. The Federales search under the truck. Nothing.

The SERGEANT (50s) approaches Martinez.

SERGEANT
Where's the coyote money? No coyote, you die.

Martinez hands him cash.

SERGEANT (CONT'D)
More! Where is it?

Martinez spreads his empty hands.

Sergeant turns to the villagers.

SERGEANT (CONT'D)
All Mexican? No Hondurans,
Colombians, Salvadorans,
Panamanians, Guatemalans,
Venezuelans?

The villagers shake their heads.

SERGEANT (CONT'D)
Sing "Himno Nacional Mexicano."
Now. My men will listen. One wrong
word, you die.

The villagers stumble through the Mexican National Anthem as Federales walk the line, listening to each voice.

VILLAGERS
Mexicanos, al grito de guerra
El acero aprestad y el bridón,
Y en sus centros la tierra
Al sonoro rugir del cañón.

The sergeant waves his hand. Stop.

Satisfied, he gestures his men back to the Jeep.

SERGEANT

When you return from El Norte,
we'll be waiting.

The Jeep speeds away. Villagers collect their belongings.

JOAQUIN

You gave him all our money?

Martinez remains silent.

JOAQUIN (CONT'D)

Where is it?

MARTINEZ

I tell you, you tell them. So I
don't tell you. Your money is safe
with me. Let's go! The border
waits.

The villagers pile onto the truck. Martinez squeezes into the
cabin.

EXT. DRIVEWAY OF THE WILKINS' HOUSE - EARLY MORNING, NEXT
DAY.

Car headlights cut through darkness.

INT. MARTIN'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Lights of car light up his room.

Martin rises and looks out the window. Checks his watch.

MARTIN

Damn!

A Jeep screeches to a halt. Rita, dressed in one-piece
dungarees, leaps out. The driver LEANS ON THE HORN.

INT. ANNE AND DAVID'S BEDROOM - MORNING

David and Anne, dressed, peer out of the window.

ANNE

Female company for my father.

David's hand slides across her buttocks.

DAVID

Even judges get horny.

Anne elbows him hard.

David sees Rita below.

DAVID (CONT'D)
 What the hell? All those women
 throwing themselves at him, and he
 picks her!

ANNE
 She's good for him.

Anne exits.

DAVID
 Where are you going? You're going
 to destroy my career before it
 starts.

INT. MARTIN'S BEDROOM - MORNING

The Jeep horn blares.

Anne rushes in.

ANNE
 Ready?

MARTIN
 For what?

ANNE
 Father and daughter time.

The horn sounds again.

MARTIN
 I should have that woman arrested
 for disturbing the peace.

ANNE
 Get dressed. For me.

She picks up a photo of her mother.

ANNE (CONT'D)
 David's leaving again. Another
 photo-op.

She holds the photo in his face.

ANNE (CONT'D)

Do it for both of us. She and Rita fought so hard for immigrant services.

(pause)

I'll be downstairs.

She exits as David enters.

Martin begins to dress.

DAVID

You're not actually going, are you, judge? I'd strongly advise against it.

MARTIN

Would you?

David leaves.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - MORNING

Martin exits the house and approaches the Jeep.

FLORENZIO (30s), burly and Latino, pulls him inside.

INT. JEEP - MORNING

Rita and Anne sit in the back. Rita ruffles Martin's hair.

RITA

Meet my little brother, hermanito, Florenzio.

Florenzio's jams the seatbelt on Martin.

Rita tosses a baggy, checkered shirt at Martin.

RITA (CONT'D)

It's Florenzio's. Make you look like a tough guy.

Florenzio bursts out laughing.

FLORENZIO

Tough guy!

LAUGHTER as Rita rubs dirt on Martin's face and jams a baseball cap on his head.

EXT. MEXICAN BORDER TOWN - MORNING

NOTE: All dialog for this scene is in Spanish, subtitled.

Martinez's truck winds through the crowded, narrow streets.

BLAST OF HORN as Martinez sees RAMON (50s), jeans, plaid shirt. He stops the truck.

The villagers get out of the truck.

Joaquin shakes Ramon's hand.

JOAQUIN

Greeting, my friend. When I return this time, Ramon, I'm a wealthy man.

RAMON

You say that every time, Joaquin.

DEMETRIO

Ramon, this is my new son-in-law, Antonio.

RAMON

Plenty muscle. Good for hard work.

He turns to Alicia.

RAMON (CONT'D)

Alicia, this time you find your rich gringo, right? You're not getting any younger.

ALICIA

They say, good wine gets better with age.}

Ramon laughs. He signals to a saloon.

RAMON

Inside! A drink for everyone!

Demetrio takes Antonio's arm.

DEMETRIO

One drink. And you don't talk to anyone.

The doors of the bar fling open. A man is hurled out.
CURSING.

INT. BAR - MORNING

NOTE: All dialog for this scene is in Spanish, subtitled.

Crowded.

A line of men and women leads to a table in a corner where three men sit.

JESUS (40s), center, cowboy hat over his eyes. A MAN (40s) steps forward. He mumbles to Jesus who listens and nods.

The MAN-TAKING-NAMES (40s), writes notes, takes money from the man and counts it. Money passed to third man, the BODYGUARD (40s). He deposits it in a large sack.

Ramon signals to the barman who sets up glasses of beer for the villagers.

Demetrio raises glass to Antonio.

DEMETRIO

Like the Americanos say, it's safer
than the water.

Another man steps up to the table. He gestures to his wife and baby. Jesus signals. The Bodyguard grabs the man.

MAN-WITH-WIFE

I pay you later. Brother in LA.
Rich man.

He's thrown out of the bar. The wife, cursing, follows. Others slide out of the line.

Ramon whispers in Jesus' ear and points at Martinez and villagers. Jesus nods.

The Man-taking-names counts the villagers. He writes price on a piece of paper. Martinez reads the note, shakes Jesus' hand and deposits the money.

The villagers sit at tables.

The Bodyguard whistles and points to the clock on the wall. People in line scatter.

The barman places two glasses of Tequilas on the bar. The clock strikes.

TWO FEDERALES (50s) enter. They lay their hats on the bar and swallow back the Tequilas. Glasses refilled.

Bodyguard drops money into hats. Federales finish their drinks, put on their hats and exit.

The line before Jesus forms again.

EXT. STREET - MORNING

Jeep with Florenzio, Rita, Anne and Martin stops outside the bar. Rita and Anne jump out. Men on sidewalk WHISTLE.

PROSTITUTES scowl at Anne and Rita, sizing up the competition.

INT. JEEP - MORNING

Rita holds out her hand to Martin.

MARTIN
Why this place? Take me home
immediately!

ANNE
One beer.

MARTIN
We'll have a serious talk when we
get home, young lady.

Florenzio pushes Martin out of the Jeep before it screeches away.

WOLF WHISTLES as Martin, Anne and Rita approach the bar.

EXT. STREET - MORNING

Martin pushes men aside who try to grab the ladies.

MARTIN
This is kidnapping!

RITA
When we get back to San Diego, you
throw Rita in prison, judge.

MARTIN
I will.

RITA
If we get back!

MARTIN
That's not funny.

They enter bar.

INT. BAR - MORNING

WOLF WHISTLES and CALLS of "gringos," as Anne, Rita and Martin enter and cross to bar.

RITA
Cuarto cervezas, por favor.

The barman gives them the beer and takes money.

Rita raises her bottle.

RITA (CONT'D)
Salud!

A group of men surrounding the three ECHO "SALUD."

Martin stares at table in the corner. Jesus returns the stare.

Rita jerks Martin's head.

RITA (CONT'D)
Did't your mother tell you? It's
rude to stare.
(pause)
His name is Jesus. He helps people
cross the border. They work in the
fields, mow lawns, build houses,
etc. No drugs.

Rita leans in to Martin.

RITA (CONT'D)
Smell getting to you? Los chivos.
Goats. That's what they call
themselves. Without them and their
cheap labor, you'd pay six to ten
dollars a head for lettuce in your
supermercado americano. Same with
other vegetables, fruit, etc. Your
meat factories would close down
without them. They work for
pennies. And if someone offers
them extra money--

MARTIN
They don't have to take it.

RITA
Most don't.

The men in the bar edge closer to Rita and Anne.

ANNE
Prepare to protect us, father!

Florenzio enters and walks to the trio. GROWLS at the men.
They scatter. Florenzio downs a beer.

FLORENZIO
Dos Cervezas

Florenzio gestures "Salud" to Jesus who returns the greeting.

The villagers cluster together. Demetrio grabs Antonio's arm
as he moves away.

DEMETRIO
Where are you going?

Antonio gestures to the bathroom.

DEMETRIO (CONT'D)
You talk to nobody. Nobody,

Antonio slides through the crowd.

A small thin man, CARLOS (30s), watches Antonio enter the
bathroom. He follows him.

RITA
A quick visit to the ladies' room,
then we leave. You should go too,
judge. Long journey back. Anne is
safe with Florenzio.

Rita stands. Men WOLF WHISTLES.

RITA (CONT'D)
You help Rita part the Macho Sea,
judge?

Martin leads her to the bathrooms.

INT. MEN'S BATHROOM - MORNING

NOTE: All dialog for this scene is in Spanish, subtitled.

Antonio peers into a broken mirror. Splashes water on his
hair. Combs with his fingers. Carlos offers him a comb.

CARLOS

Keep it!

Stares at Antonio.

CARLOS (CONT'D)

Just married?

Antonio nods.

INT. OUTSIDE BATHROOM - MORNING

Martin waits.

INT. MEN'S BATHROOM - MORNING

NOTE: All dialog for this scene is in Spanish, subtitled.

Carlos offers Antonio a cigarette. He refuses.

CARLOS

Work in the fields of El Norte.
Dawn to dusk. Sun up, sun down.
Little money. The farmer gives your
money to the foreman, Contractista.
He says you don't work as many
hours as you say. You argue but who
listens?

Carlos unwraps a belt from around his waist. Cocaine packets
sewn into the fabric catch the fluorescent light.

CARLOS (CONT'D)

Three dollars an hour. Contractista
takes dollar fifty cents for
"Social Security" and "Workers'
Compensation." Big joke! Meanwhile
your wife waits for Western Union.
No guarantee south of the border.
Federales open letters. Keep money.

Carlos dangles the belt before Antonio's eyes—a silent
proposition.

CARLOS (CONT'D)

Little bags. Two, three hundred
dollars each. No Contractista. No
Western Union. No Federales. Money
personal delivery to your wife.
Guaranteed.

The belt vanishes beneath his shirt in one fluid motion.

The bathroom door explodes inward. Carlos drags Martin inside and slams him against the tile wall, a knife pressed to his throat.

CARLOS (CONT'D)
¿Habla Español, hijo de puta?

MARTIN
English.

CARLOS
Your mother is a whore.
Understand?}

MARTIN
English.

Carlos hurls Martin into a stall. His body crashes against the metal partition.

CARLOS
Piss in there, gringo!

Carlos pulls a wad of bills from his trouser pocket. Fans them before Antonio's face.

CARLOS (CONT'D)
Twenty, forty, sixty, eighty, one
hundred. American dollars.

He extends the money toward Antonio, then pulls it back—a tease.

CARLOS (CONT'D)
Later, amigo. The name's Carlos.
We meet again, soon.

Carlos drags Martin from the stall, knife at his throat.

CARLOS (CONT'D)
Now I slit your gringo throat!

Demetrio crashes through the bathroom door. His forearm locks around Carlos's neck. He wrenches the knife away and hurls Carlos out into the hallway.

DEMETRIO
Why you take so much time? Who's
this man?

ANTONIO
Crazy gringo. Only speaks English.
I spoke with nobody.

Demetrio presses his bandana against Martin's bleeding neck.

DEMETRIO

Keep it!

He and Antonio exit. Martin stares into the mirror—his reflection unfamiliar. He ties the bandana around his neck.

INT. BAR - MORNING

Martin stumbles from the men's room, the bandana stark against his skin.

RITA

Lots of comings and goings in there, judge. What was going on—beside the obvious?

Martin's jaw tightens. He glares at her.

RITA (CONT'D)

Like they say, A veces usted necesita caminar en los zapatos de otra persona. Need a translation?

ANNE

Sometimes you need to walk in someone else's shoes.

MARTIN

I know what she said!

RITA

What happened to your neck?

Martin shoves past her toward the exit.

Rita, Anne, and Florenzio follow.

EXT. FREEWAY NORTH - DAY

The Jeep accelerates northward through traffic.

INT. JEEP - DAY

Silence fills the vehicle. No one speaks.

EXT. BORDER-PATROL HEADQUARTERS - EVENING

Brent Isherwood, David Cunningham, and a PHOTOGRAPHER exit a sedan and approach the building.

OFFICER HENDRICKS (50s), border patrol-crew cut, vicious scar bisecting his cheek-joins them.

HENDRICKS
 Congressman Isherwood. Perfect
 timing. Got someone inside you'll
 want to see.

Isherwood clasps Hendricks' hand and pivots toward the Photographer. Camera flashes strobe the entrance.

INT. INVESTIGATION ROOM - EVENING

An UNDOCUMENTED MALE (20s) crouches in the corner, trembling. A SHORT BORDER-PATROL OFFICER (40s) spots the approaching men, yanks the male to his feet, and dumps him into a metal chair.

SHORT OFFICER
 Are you deaf? ¿Estás sordo?

The undocumented male cowers, arms wrapped around himself.

INT. OUTSIDE ROOM - EVENING

Isherwood and David observe through the two-way window.

SHORT OFFICER
 Drugs! Jail! Understand? ¡Las
 drogas! ¡Cárcel! ¿Entender?

Isherwood turns to David, eyes gleaming.

ISHERWOOD
 Get that photographer in here ASAP.

David nods and leaves.

ISHERWOOD (CONT'D)
 Let's join in the investigation,
 Officer Hendricks.

They enter the investigation room.

INT. INVESTIGATION ROOM - EVENING

David and the photographer enter. Camera flashes ignite repeatedly.

HENDRICKS

Picked him up on a farm east of here, congressman. Local Contractista turned him in.

CUNNINGHAM

Drugs?

HENDRICKS

Cocaine, heroin, opioid pills, fentanyl—you name it. Seen it all! This one's got a long criminal record.

SHORT OFFICER

You got more, ain't you, Pancho? Más. Where are you hiding the drugs? ¿Dónde escondes las drogas?

The male undocumented trembles, eyes darting between the men.

HENDRICKS

You get us more agents, complete that goddamned wall you promised, and we'll shut this crap down.

ISHERWOOD

If I'm reelected, you'll get what you want, Officer Hendricks. Wall, razor wire, officers, everything.

HENDRICKS

You've got my vote, congressman.

ISHERWOOD

Brent.

SHORT OFFICER

Mine too.

HENDRICKS

(nodding to the prisoner)
You won't get his vote, but he ain't got one.

ISHERWOOD

Unless we vote in one of those bleeding heart liberals.

The Short Officer turns back to the prisoner.

SHORT OFFICER

Your choice, Pancho. Easy or difficult. Fácil o difícil?

HENDRICKS

Officer Mendez will get his answers.

DAVID

You promise to tighten the noose around these illegals and their drug smuggling operation. That'll send you back to Washington, Brent.

Hendricks, Isherwood, David and Photographer exit.

The Short Officer waits until the door closes.

SHORT OFFICER

You don't know what the hell's happening, do you, Pancho? It's called American politics, and you just played us a trump card. It's a game of numbers. Fill up the prisons. We needed somebody, anybody, to convince the congressman. And today you were that someone.

LAUGHS.

EXT. BORDER - EVENING

The Jeep idles in a line of vehicles waiting to cross into California.

INT. JEEP - EVENING

Rita turns to Martin, her expression serious.

RITA

Say something. Tell me this was a stupid idea. Tell me you never want to see me again.

The Jeep slides forward in line.

A LOW GROWL from Florenzio. Rita follows his stare.

EXT. BORDER STATION - EVENING

Television cameras swarm Brent Isherwood. Hendricks and David flank him, smiling for the lenses.

INT. JEEP - EVENING

Rita's jaw clenches. She looks at her brother.

RITA

Officer Hendricks, Still has the scar you gave him. And there's Isherwood. Never turned down a photo op.

She turns to Martin.

RITA (CONT'D)

Some poor undocumented will be before you soon, judge.

MARTIN

If he's guilty...

RITA

Upcoming election, judge. Guilty is guilty, and innocent is guilty. Political hunting season.

ANNE

And there's David at Isherwood's side.

Rita embraces Anne. As she does, her hand reaches toward Martin's neck wound. Her lips form the words: "Forgive me."

EXT. BORDER TOWN, MEXICO - EVENING

NOTE: All dialog for this scene is in Spanish, subtitled.

A dirt street. Stray dogs scavenge through trash heaps.

Martinez's truck lurches through deep ruts, splashing mud. It stops. Villagers jump from the bed.

MARTINEZ

Antonio! You make lots of money, you buy me a new truck.

LAUGHTER.

He points to a darkened house.

MARTINEZ (CONT'D)

You go there. Sleep in the
backyard. Wait for one of Jesus's
men to take you to the border.
¡Dios vaya contigo!

The villagers approach the house.

Martinez climbs back into the cab. The truck bounces down the
street and disappears.

EXT. SAN DIEGO, INTERSTATE 5 - EVENING

The Jeep accelerates along the freeway, taillights bleeding
into the dusk.

INT. JEEP - EVENING

Rita tugs at Martin's shirt collar, examining the bandana.

RITA

Style suits you. Judge tough guy.

MARTIN

It's not funny! I could have been
killed.

RITA

Por favor no arrest Rita, señor!

Silence shatters. Florenzio's deep guffaw fills the Jeep.

FLORENZIO

Judge tough guy!

LAUGHTER as they all repeat the words.

Rita kisses Martin on the cheek. Cuddles into him.

EXT. BACKYARD OF SAFE HOUSE - NIGHT

NOTE: All dialog for this scene is in Spanish, subtitled.

Bare earth, weeds, pools of stagnant water. A hose drips from
a rusted faucet.

The house interior glows—television noise bleeding through
closed drapes.

Sleeping forms grumble as intruders step over them. Alicia
kicks a sleeping figure.

ALICIA
Move, stupid!

The figure shifts slightly. Antonio settles next to Joaquin on the hard ground.

ANTONIO
How long?

JOAQUIN
An hour, a day, a week.

ANTONIO
A week?

Joaquin shrugs and rolls over, already asleep.

EXT. VILLAGE OF SAN CRISTOBAL - NIGHT

NOTE: All dialog for this scene is in Spanish, subtitled.

Women gather around a fire, tortillas sizzling on a griddle.

Cipriana emerges from the bushes, retching. Josefa supports her as they return to the fire.

JOSEFA
Your baby was not made two days ago, Cipriana. Maybe you and Antonio—
(gesture)
Eat this bread! We don't have much, but what I have I give to you—and the baby. Tomorrow we sell trinkets to tourists in town. town.

They sit near the fire's warmth.

EXT. PATIO - NIGHT

NOTE: All dialog for this scene is in Spanish, subtitled.

Antonio stretches his leg. It bumps a SLEEPING MAN (50s). A knife flashes—pressed to Antonio's throat.

SLEEPING MAN
Touch me again, I kill you!

Demetrio grabs the man's wrist, forcing the knife to the ground.

DEMETRIO

This boy married my daughter. You
touch him again, I kill you!

The man stumbles away into the darkness.

DEMETRIO (CONT'D)

Try and sleep!

ALICIA

He's missing your daughter!

ANTONIO

I need to piss!

He walks out to the street.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

NOTE: All dialog for this scene is in Spanish, subtitled.

A car, no lights, slides along the street, deserted except
for stray dogs.

The car stops periodically. Shadowy forms run from the
backyards of houses.

They stop at the car, takes something and return to the
backyards.

Car stops alongside Antonio. Carlos gets out.

CARLOS

Moon shining on your village, on
your wife.

Opens the car's trunk.

CARLOS (CONT'D)

Back and forth to El Norte. Three
months with your wife, nine in El
Norte. Hard work, little money.
It's not a life, amigo!

Pulls out belts with packets of drugs attached.

He opens his baggy pants. Tightens belt around his waist.
Pulls up his baggy pants back up and slides his shirt over
his pants.

CARLOS (CONT'D)

Someone contacts you. You give him
the belt, he gives you money.
Easy.

Offers Antonio the belt. He takes it.

CARLOS (CONT'D)

Antonio Borja, right? Someone
waits for you on the other side.

He closes the trunk and gets back in the car. It continues
down the road.

Antonio wraps the belt around his waist and returns to
backyard of the safe house.

EXT. SAN DIEGO YACHT CLUB - MORNING, NEXT DAY.

Martin relaxes in a deck chair on his yacht.

Locked wire gates RATTLE. It's Rita.

RITA

Señor, don't forget your promise to
the señorita.

OLDER COUPLE (70s) on the yacht next to Martin's stare.

Martin unlocks the gate.

RITA (CONT'D)

Gracias, Señor. You like talking
to Rita, yes? She have beauty and
brains. Not like others.

Older Couple strain to see. Rita waves to them.

RITA (CONT'D)

Don't forget suntan lotion on your
white skin. When Rita rich, she
invite you both come visit on her
boat.

Older man pushes his wife below deck.

Rita joins Martin on his boat.

Older couple peek as the two of them board Martin's boat.

EXT. MARTIN'S BOAT - MORNING

Martin drops into his deck chair. Rita grabs another and sits next to him.

RITA

Remember, Señor: plenty of sun block. Otherwise, you look like me.

(pointing to the old couple)

Then those people not like you.

MARTIN

I come here for peace and quiet.

Rita stares out to sea. She shifts uncomfortably.

RITA

It's the quiet I remember most. It was our wedding anniversary. Fifteen years. Vacation at Mazatlan. Playa Las Brujas. Sun, beach, ocean.

She breathes deeply, holding back tears.

RITA (CONT'D)

I can still see my husband's arm waving to me. Way out at sea. I watched his strong arms plough through the waves.

A pause.

RITA (CONT'D)

I looked away for a second. A distraction. When I looked back--.

(Pause. Sighs and tears)

It was all so quiet. Vendors selling trinkets and sunglasses. People lying around, reading. Children playing in the waves. And me, staring, staring.

She stifles a sob.

RITA (CONT'D)

They say I screamed for hours. My voice stopped. My mouth was open, but no sound.

Martin searches his pocket for a tissue. She takes it

She compares the brown and white of their arms.

She grabs the suntan lotion and rubs it into his arms.

RITA (CONT'D)

One death from cancer is enough in your family. I looked after your wife, and now I'm looking after you.

She settles back in the deck chair.

She takes his hand. Mouths thank you.

INT. JUDGE WILKINS' HOUSE, DINING ROOM - DAY

Anne picks at a pack of cigarettes.

Maria enters with coffee.

MARIA

Not good for you, Miss Anne.

Anne gives Maria the pack of cigarettes.

ANNE

Hide them!

Maria puts them behind the television.

ANNE (CONT'D)

Were you ever married, Maria?

Maria shakes her head. Dusts vigorously.

ANNE (CONT'D)

Engaged? In love?

Maria nods. Dusts even harder.

ANNE (CONT'D)

What happened?

MARIA

He try come to El Norte across desert. Alone, no coyote. Very dangerous. Many die.

A car roars up the driveway and stops. Anne looks out.

EXT - DAY

David exits car and rushes indoors.

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

David enters. He searches for something. Clicks his fingers at Maria.

DAVID

Coffee!

(pause)

Did you see this morning's news?
Isherwood's speech on gangs, drugs,
illegals? Classic!

Continues searching!

DAVID (CONT'D)

Where did that fucking woman put my
briefcase? Shit! If she was my
servant...

ANNE

But she's not. And she has a name.

Anne points to the briefcase.

ANNE (CONT'D)

It's on the floor next to the sofa.
Where you left it.

David rips it open and sorts through the papers inside.

ANNE (CONT'D)

I want to go back to Berkeley. See
our old friends from graduate
school.

DAVID

A couple more days, the election's
over and things will be different.

ANNE

Will they?

David pulls a paper from his briefcase.

DAVID

Look at this! Got it from
Bedfordson. Motel bill. Seems
Isherwood's opponent spent the
night alone with a married lady.

(MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)

When this gets into the press'
greedy little hands--.

He exits, briefcase and letter in hand.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Don't forget tonight. Bedfordson's'
fund raiser for Brent's campaign.
Look beautiful.

He exits.

Anne grabs the pack of cigarettes and hurls it after him.

EXT. MARTIN'S BOAT - DAY

Rita and Martin prepare to leave the boat.

Older Couple watch through the portholes.

Martin walks to the gate.

As she exits, Rita leans on the rail of the older couple's
boat.

RITA

Rita go now. She wave bye bye.
You come back on deck when Rita
gone.

She walks up the walkway to the gate.

Immediately she and Martin leave, the woman emerges with
elbow-length rubber gloves and a spray bottle. Sprays and
cleans all the areas Rita touched.

EXT. BACKYARD OF SAFE HOUSE - NIGHT

NOTE: All dialog for this scene is in Spanish, subtitled.

Farm workers talk. Voices YELL from street.

VOICE (O.C.)

¡Vamonos! ¡Vamonos!

The villagers stuff items into their bandannas. Antonio
tightens the belt around his waist.

Jesus and two friends accompanied by SALVATORE (40s), jeans
and Dodgers T-shirt.

JESUS
This is Salvatore. You listen to
him! You don't listen, you die!

SALVATORE
!Vamonos!

The villagers climb on the back of a pickup truck.
Man-taking-names checks . Signals OK.

JESUS
¡Dios vaya contigo!

Truck bumps off down road.

EXT. OUTSIDE WAYNE BEDFORDSON'S HOME - NIGHT

Gates protected by TWO ARMED POLICE check occupants of cars.
David and Anne drive forward.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

David dangles over steering wheel, taking in the sight.

DAVID
Wow! We are talking big-time. Big,
big time!

A knock on the window. David winds down the window and pulls
out his invitation to the event.

DAVID (CONT'D)
David Cunningham.

ANNE
And his wife, Anne.

FIRST POLICEMAN checks it over.

FIRST POLICEMAN
Welcome to the home of Mr. and Mrs.
Bedfordson.

He waves them through the gates and up driveway.

EXT. DRIVEWAY OUTSIDE THE BEDFORDSON HOME - NIGHT

David gets out of the car.

A Latino attendant holds out his hands for David's keys.

David stands awestruck. Attendant lets Anne out.

David rushes inside house. Anne stands alone. Looks between her and the attendant.

David realizes he's forgotten Anne. Rushes back out of the house and takes her hand.

EXT. U.S.-MEXICAN BORDER - NIGHT

Mexican side of border.

BEGIN MONTAGE:

--NOISE. Air of festivity.

--A group plays MUSIC AND SINGS.

--Couples dancing.

--Men play soccer with rolled-up rags.

--Vendors selling tortillas, etc.

--Jeeps patrol on the American side of the border.

--Drones fly overhead.

END MONTAGE.

EXT. BORDER - NIGHT

NOTE: All dialog for this scene is in Spanish, subtitled.

Salvatore's truck grinds to a halt.

SALVATORE

Last chance to buy food before we
cross.

He gestures toward a cluster of food trucks glowing in the darkness.

SALVATORE (CONT'D)

We meet again over there. Hurry!

Villagers spill from the truck bed toward the food vendors.

ANTONIO

Cross here?

Demetrio shakes his head, pointing across the border where Jeeps cut through the darkness.

JOAQUIN

They watch from over there and from up there.

He points skyward at a drone's blinking lights.

DEMETRIO

Eat. You'll need every ounce of strength for what comes next.

JOAQUIN

You swim, Antonio?

Antonio shakes his head.

JOAQUIN (CONT'D)

Then you'll drown if you let go of the boat.

ANTONIO

Boat?

Joaquin's laugh cuts through the night.

JOAQUIN

You could try the desert. No boats, but plenty of graves.

DEMETRIO

We cross at the All-American Canal.

JOAQUIN

Your choice, Antonio. Drown in water or burn in the sun. Or live—and return to your young wife with dollars in your pocket.

He laughs.

JOAQUIN (CONT'D)

Only two ways to make real money. Win the lottery or—

He mimes sniffing cocaine. Demetrio grabs his arm.

DEMETRIO

Don't joke about that. Fifteen years if you're lucky.

JOAQUIN

Out in time to crawl home and die.

Pause.

SALVATORE

Everyone on the truck.

Salvatore stands at the tailgate, counting heads, blocking stragglers. The engine roars to life and the truck lurches forward.

INT. SAN DIEGO - NIGHT

Bedfordson's home pulses with bodies—men in blazers, women in cocktail dresses clustered in tight knots.

Bedfordson cuts through the crowd toward David and Anne.

BEDFORDSON

My protégé and his charming wife.

He signals toward Mrs. Bedfordson.

BEDFORDSON (CONT'D)

Why don't we let the wives catch up on some gossip, my boy? That way you and me can do some serious talking. Over here, honey!

Mrs. Bedfordson weaves toward them, drink sloshing in her hand.

Bedfordson's arm slides around Anne's waist.

BEDFORDSON (CONT'D)

We're gonna have to get you two to my new restaurant. Put some meat on those bones. Nothing a man appreciates more than a woman with something to hold onto. Ain't that right, son?

Anne twists away from his grip.

David waves at faces in the crowd, pretending not to notice.

Mrs. Bedfordson presses against David's chest.

MRS. BEDFORDSON

You must work out.

BEDFORDSON

I was just saying, honey, we four
need an evening out together. A
little tête-à-tête.

Anne wrenches herself free from Bedfordson's grip.

DAVID

It would be an honor, Mr.
Bedfordson.

BEDFORDSON

I need you to look over the
accounts for my restaurants. Use
that degree of yours to get Uncle
Sam off my back.

His eyes rake across Anne.

BEDFORDSON (CONT'D)

Always looking out for a man good
with figures. I'll make it worth
your while.

Mrs. Bedfordson tugs Anne away.

MRS. BEDFORDSON

Money, taxes. Man talk.

Bedfordson snags two drinks from a passing waiter's tray.

BEDFORDSON

Swallow it down, boy. Got some
important people I want you to
meet.

DAVID

Better say hello to Brent.

BEDFORDSON

Isherwood's just a politician. They
come and go. You want to get ahead,
you need to know the real movers
and shakers in this town.

He locks onto David's arm and steers him into the crowd.

EXT. ALL-AMERICAN CANAL - NIGHT

NOTE: All dialog for this scene is in Spanish, subtitled.

Salvatore's truck stops alongside a muddy field bordering the
canal.

Villagers climb down.

SALVATORE

This way!

The group moves through a field dotted with bricks.

Antonio looks to Demetrio, understanding dawning.

DEMETRIO

Each brick marks a grave. Drowned
in the canal. Eaten by coyotes.

ALICIA

Or some young women who refused--
(gesture)
--or fought back!

The group reaches the canal's steep concrete edge.

DEMETRIO

Antonio, don't touch anything in
the river! If it's not garbage,
it's a rat or a snake.

JOAQUIN

Or a dead body.

Silence.

JOAQUIN (CONT'D)

Remember, Antonio—one eye on La
Migra, one on rattlesnakes, and
your third eye on my fat backside
so you don't get lost.

Villagers strip down, bundling clothes atop their heads.

DEMETRIO

Off with your shirt, Antonio. Dry
clothes on the other side. Wet
clothes only for wetbacks.

Antonio disappears behind the truck.

JOAQUIN

Hey, Alicia--need help changing?

She gestures dismissively and vanishes behind the truck.

ALICIA (O.C.)

Don't worry, Antonio. Nothing I
haven't seen before.

Villagers embrace, whispering prayers. They cross themselves.

Salvatore inflates a rubber raft and pushes it into the canal.

Before he gets in himself, he ties a rope securely to a tree.

He grabs a paddle and guides the raft across, letting rope slip through his hands.

Men cling to the raft's sides.

The current catches the raft, pulling it downstream.

SALVATORE

Kick! Don't let us drift too far!

Dead bodies bob against the raft. Salvatore shoves them aside.

Antonio stares at the bloated corpse of a young boy.

DEMETRIO

Don't look! Keep kicking!

The raft scrapes the far bank. Villagers scramble up the concrete slope.

JOAQUIN

Welcome to the United States!

Salvatore points toward a narrow trail cutting through the brush.

SALVATORE

I leave you now. Follow the track.
The road is one mile ahead. Another
truck waits. Watch for La Migra!

Salvatore grabs the rope and pulls himself back across the canal.

The group disappears into the brush.

EXT. WAYNE BEDFORDSON'S HOME - NIGHT

Martin's car pulls up to the gates. Rita sits beside him.

MARTIN

Try to behave yourself!

She giggles and crosses herself.

A policeman approaches the window.

MARTIN (CONT'D)
Judge Martin Wilkins.

The policeman checks his clipboard.

POLICEMAN
Just have your name, judge.

RITA
I'm the judge's hot date, Rita
Fuentes.

She nuzzles against Martin and kisses his cheek.

POLICEMAN
Welcome to the home of Mr. and Mrs.
Bedfordson.

The Policeman waves them forward.

He signals a second officer to check inside the car. Thumbs
up.

EXT. FRONT OF HOME - NIGHT

A Latino valet opens Martin's door, then Anne's.

Rita addresses the valet in Spanish.

They walk towards the house.

RITA
I asked him if Bedfordson pays him
enough.

MARTIN
And?

She makes a so-so gesture.

She links her arm through Martin's.

INT. BEDFORDSON HOME - NIGHT

The room goes quiet as Martin and Rita enter.

A young man in his late 30s leans into a cluster of women.

YOUNG MAN
Seems our Judge found himself a hot-
blooded Latin lover.

Deidre and Malle exchange glances.

Guests part to let Martin and Rita through.

RITA
(to Martin)
This is what we call the parting of
the Redneck Sea.

She shakes Bedfordson's hand.

RITA (CONT'D)
My people thank you for inviting
me, Mr. B.

Bedfordson looks to Martin.

MARTIN
Her car broke down. She said you'd
invited her.

BEDFORDSON
That so?
(pause)
Well any friend of the judge is a
friend of mine.

RITA
And Rita is a very good friend of
the judge.

BEDFORDSON
Got yourself one high-spirited
filly here, judge. Best keep a
tight rein on her.

Rita giggles.

RITA
Rita likes tight reins!

BEDFORDSON
Reminds me of your wife. Whatever
she thinks comes right out.

Rita pats his belly.

RITA
I see your restaurant business is
thriving.

BEDFORDSON

That it is.

RITA

You remember my brother, Florenzio,
Mr. B? He is—how do you
say?—tenacious. When someone does
something he doesn't like—

They lock eyes. Martin watches, lost.

RITA (CONT'D)

Wine, judge? Red?

The crowd parts as she heads towards the bar.

BEDFORDSON

Got a call from the governor's
aide, judge. State supreme court
judgeship is yours—provided you
keep doing what you're doing and
don't get sidetracked.

He glances at Rita.

As Rita returns with Martin's drink, Bedfordson drifts away.

MARTIN

You lied. He didn't invite you.

RITA

Perdóneme, su honor. Anyway, Rita
here now.

MARTIN

And what the hell was that about
Bedfordson's restaurants?

RITA

No fun playing the game, judge, if
you don't know the rules. When
you're ready to learn--

Anne intrudes, dragging Mrs. Bedfordson.

ANNE

Rita, Mrs. Bedfordson.

Mrs. Bedfordson tries to leave, but Rita grabs her.

RITA

Mrs. B, I was reminding your
husband of my brother, Florenzio.

Mrs. Bedfordson is very uncomfortable.

RITA (CONT'D)

You remember him, don't you?

Mrs. Bedfordson rushes away seeking her husband.

MARTIN

What does that mean?

RITA

Like I say, judge, when you're ready to dive in the deep end--

Bedfordson stands on a chair and taps his glass with a spoon.

BEDFORDSON

We got ourselves a politician here, folks, and you know how they like the sound of their own voices. So here he is, Brent Isherwood.

ISHERWOOD

Thanks, Wayne. I'll try to keep this short.

BEDFORDSON

That's what they all say.

LAUGHTER.

ISHERWOOD

Friends, we are a generous people, but that generosity has its limits. At least a hundred million illegals crossed into the U.S. last year. Gangs, MS13, drug traffickers, rapists, you name it! Thirty percent of our prison population are illegals. They're sucking our economy dry. We feed them, educate their children, provide public housing, health care and food stamps. And, if their children are born here, they're counted as U.S. citizens.

Boos from the crowd.

ISHERWOOD (CONT'D)

And what do we get in return? Drugs, cocaine, heroin, fentanyl, opioid pills, sex trafficking--you name it!

(MORE)

ISHERWOOD (CONT'D)

Long criminal record, that's what's needed. These illegals are ruining this great state of California and this country.

CLAPPING.

Rita leans closer to Martin.

RITA

He's good. You should vote for him, Señor.

ISHERWOOD

So I say, Let's stop it--now! I propose we build a twelve-foot high fence, with razor wire on top, the length of the border! Three thousand new agents. Death penalty for drug-runners! Deportation for all illegals--men women and children--and, Constitution be damned, no citizenship for their offspring born in this country.

CHEERS. Bedfordson waves a check.

BEDFORDSON

Five hundred thousand dollars.
Half a million.

More checks waved.

Bedfordson sidles up to David and Martin.

BEDFORDSON (CONT'D)

I was tellin' your new son-in-law here, he could earn himself a coupla thousand dollars checkin' the books at one of my restaurants. Damned IRS wantin' more and more paperwork. Figure I can either hand over a wad of greenbacks to the government so they can invite more these illegals into the country, or slip a coupla thousand in your boy's back pocket for him and your daughter to have themselves a vacation. Two grand for a couple of hours work. Easy money.

Rita leans closer.

RITA
 (Spanish subtitled)
 With money the dog dances.

BEDFORDSON
 What she say?
 (pause)
 When you figure out what your
 little lady-friend is playing at,
 judge, you let me know.

He leaves.

MARTIN
 We need to talk--now!

He grabs Rita's arm and marches her to the patio.

EXT. BORDER - NIGHT

NOTE: All dialog for this scene is in Spanish, subtitled.

The villagers hide in the Manzanita scrub as a lone Border
 Patrol Jeep passes on the dirt path.

Antonio leans against a rock. HISSING SOUND Alicia strikes
 the snake.

ALICIA
 Snake bites, you're left for La
 Migra.

DEMETRIO
 Ready? The road is just ahead. We
 wait there.

The villagers walk through the brush to the road.

A large truck pulls to the side of the road.

The DRIVER, a CONTRACTISTA (50s), jeans pants and jacket, T-
 shirt, drunk, exits cab.

Drops tailgate and opens the back of the truck. Villagers
 run from bushes and climb into the truck.

A huge tarpaulin is thrown over them.

Contractista grabs Alicia.

CONTRACTISTA
 Plenty of room up front. Radio,
 air-conditioning, beer.

Alicia moves to the front of the truck.

CONTRACTISTA (CONT'D)
 Anyone dies of heat in there
 doesn't get paid.

Closes tailgate and moves back to the cab.

Pats Alicia's backside as she enters the cab.

Truck drives off.

EXT. WAYNE BEDFORDSON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Martin and Rita are alone on the patio.

MARTIN
 What the hell was that Spanish you
 said to Bedfordson?

RITA
 Even the dog dances for money?
 (cuddling into Martin)
 You see one world, I see another.
 Same characters, different story.

She pats his cheek.

RITA (CONT'D)
 You're a good man, Martin, just a
 little lost. Every cat learns how
 to catch mice.

MARTIN
 No more riddles. And definitely no
 more jaunts to the border towns.

Rita kisses him.

RITA
 Rita promise she be good girl.

She cuddles into him and leads him inside.

INT. CAB OF TRUCK - NIGHT

NOTE: All dialog for this scene is in Spanish, subtitled.

The Contractista finishes his beer, tosses the can over his
 shoulder, and SINGS along with the radio.

He ignores the pounding from the back wall of cab. Slides his hand over Alicia's thigh.

CONTRACTISTA

Be nice to contractista, he get you extra money.

Unbuttons the front of his pants. Alicia opens her beer and tips it on his crotch.

CONTRACTISTA (CONT'D)

Bitch!

He throws the steering wheel to the side.

EXT - NIGHT

NOTE: All dialog for this scene is in Spanish, subtitled.

Truck swerves. Finally comes to a stop.

The Contractista gets out of the cab, dragging Alicia. Marches her to the back of the truck and opens the tailgate.

He draws back the tarpaulin.

CONTRACTISTA

Everyone piss! Hurry! Time is money!

Farm workers stagger from the truck. Wipe sweat from faces. Scatter to relieve themselves.

Return to truck.

Alicia climbs onto the back of the truck with the other villagers.

Tailgate closed.

Truck moves off.

EXT. YACHT CLUB - MORNING, NEXT DAY

David drives into the empty parking lot. Gets out of his car and walks to the entrance. Locked.

He wanders to the back. TWO MEXICAN NATIONALS, (40s) lie on sleeping bags alongside a large truck.

Seeing David, one man grabs a length of pipe.

MAN
(in Spanish, subtitled)
Who are you?

DAVID
I'm looking for Mr. Bedfordson.

Young man, RANDY (30s), exits restaurant and waves off the men.

RANDY
David Cunningham? Follow me.

DAVID
I came early.

RANDY
Never do that.

He nods at the two men.

RANDY (CONT'D)
Worse than a pair of pit bulls.

DAVID
Why does Bedfordson need them?

Randy smiles. Puts finger to lips.

INT. RESTAURANT - MORNING

Upscale interior of the club. Large windows overlook San Diego Bay.

David follows Randy.

They climb stairs to the office.

INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE - MORNING

Plush, comfortable. Large desk chair. On the desk three wooden monkeys. Photos of Bedfordson receiving awards and standing with distinguished figures.

Randy gestures for David to sit at the desk. Leans over David's shoulder and boots up the computer.

RANDY
Close you eyes. Secret password.

Computer boots up.

RANDY (CONT'D)

Voila! Financial charts. Cash flow in, cash flow out, overheads, etc. Calculator. Printer for computer read-outs. Pad, pencil. I'll be downstairs. Wedding reception this afternoon.

DAVID

Big operation like this why not a large accountancy firm?

Randy points to the three wooden monkeys on the desk. Gestures hear, see, speak no evil.

He exits.

David checks the items on the desk before crossing to the window.

He looks down at Randy who talks with men below. All three stare up at David who quickly retreats to the desk.

EXT. ROADWAY, SAN DIEGO COUNTY - MORNING

NOTE: All dialog for this scene is in Spanish, subtitled.

Truck turns off the main road and bumps down a dusty track through fields of cabbage.

Truck heads toward a large home.

Truck turns before reaching the home and heads toward some small shacks hidden among the fields.

Contractista gets out. Opens tailgate and pulls back the tarpaulin.

The villagers climb off the truck, sweating and blinded by the sun.

CONTRACTISTA

Men there, women there. Leave your stuff in the huts. Quickly. Time to work.

The villagers stagger toward the shacks.

EXT. SAN DIEGO YACHT CLUB - DAY

Martin's Mercedes glides to a stop before the Clubhouse. Rita sits rigid in the passenger seat, her jaw set.

INT. LOBBY - DAY

An older couple corners JOE TREVIS (30s), the Manager, their fingers jabbing toward Rita through the window.

Joes reaches for the phone.

JOE

Joe Trevis. I need Mr. Bedfordson.

He waits.

JOE (CONT'D)

They're here together. Like you said they would be.

He hangs up. All three turn back to the window. Martin and Rita walk toward his yacht, their silhouettes shrinking across the dock.

OLDER MAN

Do something!

JOE

There's nothing to do. Just watch.

The three stand frozen at the glass, eyes locked on the couple below.

EXT. SAN DIEGO COUNTY - DAY

NOTE: All dialog for this scene is in Spanish, subtitled.

Sun hammers down on the farm workers bent over the cabbage field, sweat darkening their shirts.

A PICKUP HORN BLARES. Workers scramble toward the truck's shadow, collapsing into its meager shade.

The CONTRACTISTA hurls empty milk cartons at them, then points to a hose coiled on the ground.

He grabs a beer from an ice container and settles back to watch, his shadow falling across the workers like a threat.

Demetrio approaches. The Contractista's hand closes around a tire iron.

DEMETRIO

Too long in the sun and we get sick. The law says we need clean water, rest, shade.

CONTRACTISTA

The law also says you shouldn't be on this side of the border. One call to ICE and we see how tough you are.

He grabs Alicia. She tears free.

CONTRACTISTA (CONT'D)

Not good enough for you, eh?

ALICIA

Breath like a dead dog. Belly like a sack of flour. When was the last time you actually saw it? Maybe it's all shriveled up.

The Contractista raises the tire iron. Demetrio steps between them, his body a barrier.

CONTRACTISTA

Back to work. Plenty of sun. Plenty of cabbages.

The workers shuffle back to the fields, heads down.

INT. MARTIN'S STUDY - EARLY EVENING

Martin reads, absorbed. A JEEP HORN BLARES outside—sharp, demanding.

He rises and peers out the window.

VOICES erupt downstairs. Footsteps thunder up the stairs.

Rita bursts through the door, breathless.

RITA

We're leaving. Now.

(pause)

You're not paying your maid, Maria, enough, Plus she needs time off to visit her family.

She hurls a bundle of clothes at him.

RITA (CONT'D)

Last night was your world. Early morning is mine. Rule one: always be ready. Your opponent won't announce his move.

MARTIN

This is insane. I have no interest
in your world.

Anne appears in the doorway, fully dressed.

ANNE

I'm going with or without him.

Both women exit.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - EVENING

Maria and Florenzio laugh together. Rita and Anne jump into the Jeep. Martin shuffles out, reluctant. Maria runs back inside.

INT. JEEP - EVENING

Martin settles into the front seat. Rita tosses him a black hoodie.

RITA

Now you're gangsta. And it's not
bulletproof.

Before he can respond, the Jeep lurches forward.

INT. SLEEPING QUARTERS - EVENING

NOTE: All dialog for this scene is in Spanish, subtitled.

Farmworkers sleep on stained mattresses scattered across the floor.

The Contractista enters and shakes Antonio awake.

CONTRACTISTA

You have something for me.

Antonio digs under his mattress and produces a belt.

ANTONIO

Dinero?

CONTRACTISTA

When my contact arrives. If he
arrives, you get paid. If not-

EXT. SAN DIEGO - EVENING

Florenzio backs the Jeep into a darkened alley between warehouses, the engine ticking as it cools.

INT. JEEP - EVENING

Rita takes Martin's hands, her grip firm.

RITA

When my brother speaks, you listen!
We don't want to lose you.

She kisses him. Florenzio rubs dirt across Martin's face and hands, darkening his skin.

FLORENZIO

(in Spanish, subtitled)
Too white.

They LAUGH—a sharp, nervous sound.

RITA

New TV series: distinguished judge
by day, street rat by night.

Laughter fills the Jeep. Martin doesn't join in.

Florenzio grabs Martin and pulls him from the vehicle. Rita wraps a blanket around herself and Anne, drawing her close.

ANNE

Tell me about my mother.

RITA

I was helping a young farm worker.
Raped. Beaten. No one cared.
"Forget it," they said. "No justice
for illegals."

(pause)

But the girl was terrified.
Threatened. She crossed back into
Mexico.

(pause)

Case after case. Your mother was
always there. Always pro bono.
Any money offered, she gave to my
immigrant rights organization.

ANNE

Nothing like my father.

RITA

More cautious, maybe. Kansas boy.
But he misses her.

ANNE

You remind him of her. He'd never
say it, but you do.

Anne rests her head against Rita's shoulder.

EXT. OUTSIDE WAREHOUSE - EVENING

Faded posters warn: "ATTACK DOGS" and "NO ADMITTANCE."

Florenzio pulls Martin behind a dumpster as a truck rumbles
toward the gate. Two men from the restaurant slide out of the
cab.

The warehouse door grinds open. DOGS BARK, frenzied. Martin
and Florenzio duck as flashlight beams sweep across the
alley.

INT. JEEP - EVENING

Anne's head rests on Rita's knees, her breathing steady and
deep.

ANNE

It happened so fast. No goodbye.

RITA

I was there. And Maria.

ANNE

Did Maria ever marry?

RITA

Her fiancé was working here
legally. Death in his family. He
went back to Mexico. Federales took
his papers. He crossed alone at
night.

(pause)

Tried crossing the freeway.
Devil's Highway. The truck carried
the body half a mile before it slid
off.

(and then)

So many stories.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - EVENING

Martin and Florenzio crouch behind a dumpster as a Mercedes pulls up. The gates grind open.

Bedfordson steps out.

The truck's rear doors open. A tailgate lowers. Pallets marked "PERISHABLE" rise on a forklift toward the warehouse entrance.

MARTIN

Perishable? Food for his restaurant?

FLORENZIO

Truck's not refrigerated. Armed guards. Attack dogs. Bedfordson out of bed at dawn. Add it up, judge.

MARTIN

Drugs?

Florenzio nods and points to a figure leaning against the warehouse wall.

FLORENZIO

Border patrol. Son of a whore!

MARTIN

He was at the border with Isherwood. Testifies in my court on drug busts.

(pause)

Bedfordson's friend?

FLORENZIO

No friends in this game.

He points to the forklift straining under the weight.

FLORENZIO (CONT'D)

Vegetables shouldn't be this heavy.

He shifts position for a better angle.

FLORENZIO (CONT'D)

Wait here.

He slides away into shadow. Martin cups his hands, trying to read his watch in the darkness. He lifts it toward the light.

Metal glints. A gun barrel jabs into his face.

ARMED GUARD

Gringo. Curiosidad mata al gato!
Curiosity kill cat.

The guard drags Martin to his feet. Martin's watch falls and skitters across concrete. As he bends to retrieve it, the gun whips across his cheek—a sharp crack of metal on bone.

An arm loops around the guard's neck. His body goes rigid. The gun drops.

VOICE (O.C.)

(in in Spanish, subtitled)
Pedro. Where are you?

Florenzio grabs Martin and drags him into the darkness.

INT. JEEP - EVENING

Florenzio dumps Martin into the passenger seat and straps him in. Blood and bruises mark Martin's face.

RITA

What happened? ¡Pendejo!

As the Jeep accelerates, a GUNSHOT cracks the night.

FLORENZIO

Judge escapes. Guard dies. No friends in this game.

EXT. FIELD - MORNING

NOTE: All dialog for this scene is in Spanish, subtitled.

Workers bend over the cabbage rows, their movements synchronized and mechanical.

JOAQUIN

Bend lower, Alicia. The rich gringo likes the view.

Alicia swings at him, her fist connecting with air.

ALICIA

"Sorry I didn't make money today, wife. Too busy staring at Alicia's ass."

A PIERCING WHISTLE. Group moves into shade. Line up for water.

The Contractista grabs Alicia.

DEMETRIO
Leave her alone!

The Contractista turns to Antonio, his jaw clenched.

CONTRACTISTA
Keep him away from me, boy!

Demetrio stares at Antonio, a question in his eyes.

Alicia drives her knee up. The Contractista doubles over.

CONTRACTISTA (CONT'D)
¡Maldita perra!

Demetrio grabs Antonio by the arm.

DEMETRIO
Why does he order you to protect
him? What did you do?

Antonio pulls free and stumbles away.

INT. MARTIN'S HOUSE - DAY

Martin and Anne sit at the dining table. A bandage covers
Martin's cheek. His eye is swollen purple.

MARIA
You go to the hospital.

MARTIN
I have court.

MARIA
Where is your watch? Did you leave
in the bathroom again? I'll get it
for you.

MARTIN
I'll find it later.

A car roars up the driveway.

David rushes in and turns on the television.

INSERT: EXT. BEDFORDSON'S WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

A NEWS ANCHOR speaks over footage of the warehouse.

NEWS ANCHOR

Early this morning, a body was discovered in this dumpster. We go live to correspondent Clive Roberts.

The place swarms with police. CLIVE ROBERTS (30s), newscaster, stands before the dumpster.

ROBERTS

An unidentified Mexican male. Shot execution style. Police received an anonymous tip.

The camera finds Bedfordson. His arm wraps around his wife's shoulders as she sobs.

ROBERTS (CONT'D)

ROBERTS: With us is Wayne Bedfordson, restaurateur and warehouse owner.

DAVID (O.C.)

Look at those campaign buttons: "Isherwood for Congress," and "Stop Illegal Invasion." My ideas.

BEDFORDSON

What kind of city lets decent businessmen get murdered on their own property? Illegals everywhere. Drugs. We need to lock them up and throw away the key. Build that fence now!

END INSERT.

David kills the television.

DAVID

Perfect timing. Fence, illegals, drugs. Sound bites from a prominent businessman on election day.

MARTIN

We already have laws.

DAVID

Isherwood promises more.

MARTIN

Damn politicians!

David glances around the kitchen.

DAVID

Hey, where's breakfast? I've got things to do and places to be.

ANNE

Don't you talk to Maria like that!

David jumps to his feet.

DAVID

I'll grab a bite at McDonald's.

He storms out, slamming the door behind him.

INT. SLEEPING QUARTERS - NIGHT

Farmworkers asleep. Sounds of struggle outside. Antonio wakes.

EXT - NIGHT

NOTE: All dialog for this scene is in Spanish, subtitled.

Antonio exits hut.

Alicia, mouth gagged, is face down over a rain barrel. She is held in place by two men. Contractista, pants down, stands over her.

CONTRACTISTA

Woman like this asks for it! Then she squeals like a satisfied pig when she gets it!

He looks at Antonio.

He throws Alicia's dress up.

CONTRACTISTA (CONT'D)

Get back inside, boy! You hear me?

The door bursts open. Demetrio exits. He hurls Antonio aside and punches the Contractista.

The two men release Alicia and run.

The Contractista runs, pulling up his pants.

Demetrio stares at Antonio before helping Alicia back to the hut.

INT. HOTEL CONFERENCE CENTER - NIGHT

Isherwood supporters CHEER. Bedfordson, his wife and David watch.

BEDFORDSON

Judge not here? Should be. That man's gotta know his friends. Hope he ain't getting' blindsided by his sexy Señorita. That woman's trouble, just like that cousin of hers, Florenzio, and that lawyer, Delgado.

He drapes his wife over David's arm.

BEDFORDSON (CONT'D)

You keep the boy entertained, honey. I got some folks I need to talk to.

To David as he exits.

BEDFORDSON (CONT'D)

Don't do anything I wouldn't do.

He leaves.

MRS. BEDFORDSON

My husband said you did a great job sorting out those books at the restaurant. You interested in more work?

DAVID

Yes!

MRS. BEDFORDSON

I knew you would! Wayne wants to meet with you tonight. Oceanview Motel. Room 7. Private celebration of Brent's victory.

DAVID

In a motel?

MRS. BEDFORDSON

Very private.

She squeezes David's arm.

EXT. OUTSIDE FARM WORKERS' SLEEPING QUARTERS - NIGHT

A BORDER AGENTS (30a) grips the Contractista.

Officer Hendricks leans against car, his rifle dangling before him.

ANOTHER TALLER AGENT (50s) confronts Contractista.

TALLER AGENT

My friends don't appreciate always cleaning up your shit, Pancho. You gotta learn to keep your fly shut 'less you want it sealed up permanently. Last time you got in this fix, we had to send a good officer downriver.

CONTRACTISTA

I'll get you girls. Virgins, like last time.

The Agent grabs him by the throat.

TALLER MAN

You're a small cog, Pancho, but a mighty squeaky one.

They move to the sleeping quarters.

INT. SLEEPING QUARTERS - NIGHT

Door explodes open. Flashlights pierce the darkness. Shouts of "!Levantense!" and "!Todos de pie!"

BACK OUTSIDE - NIGHT

The workers stagger out and huddle together.

Hendricks trains his rifle at the group.

HENDRICKS

Straight line! Hands on your head!
Eyes front!

Contractista and two agents exit the hut holding a belt with packets of cocaine. Contractista points to Demetrio.

TALLER AGENT

What we got here, Pancho?

The Taller Agency grabs Demetrio.

DEMETRIO
 (in Spanish, subtitled)
 Not mine! No drugs! Not mine!

TALLER AGENT
 Like we ain't heard that before.
 If it ain't yours, whose is it?
 Name names.

Demetrio looks at Antonio.

The Taller Agent hurls Demetrio toward Hendricks.

TALLER MAN
 Rest of you back inside!

Demetrio stares at Antonio.

Contractista leers at Alicia. She spits at him.

INT. MEXICAN RESTAURANT, SAN DIEGO- NIGHT

Crowded. Mariachis play.

Martin and Rita sit at a table.

MARTIN
 No surprises tonight?

RITA
 None. Promise. Just two lonely
 middle-aged friends eating dinner.

She grasps his arm.

RITA (CONT'D)
 Where's your watch?

MARTIN
 I dropped it! At the warehouse!

RITA
 ¡Mierda! Let's hope Florenzio finds
 it before--

She shakes her head.

EXT. FARM WORKERS' SLEEPING QUARTERS - NIGHT

Alicia slips quietly out of the hut and stumbles off in the
 darkness.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A GUITARIST sings "Te Amo," a Mexican love song.

RITA

My husband's favorite song. Need a translator?

The guitarist stands at their table, singing to them.

EXT. ROADWAY - NIGHT

Alicia stumbles along the side of the road in the darkness.

A carload of TEENAGE BOYS YELL OBSCENITIES at her.

Pickup truck slows behind Alicia. Turns off its lights. Truck keeps pace closing in slowly.

Another car approaches. Pickup truck stops.

Second car's spotlight picks up Alicia. It's a patrol car.

Patrol car pulls up ahead of Alicia. Two PATROL OFFICERS, one MALE (50s), one FEMALE (40s), exit their vehicle.

The female approaches Alicia; the male moves towards the stopped pickup. He leaps back as the unlit truck roars off into the night.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Rita raises her glass and gestures to the room.

RITA

Black, white, brown, red,
yellow—all together. That's
California.

Martin takes a small box from his pocket and places it on the table. He takes her hands in his.

MARTIN

This past week was good for both of us.

RITA

Even with the bumps and bruises?

MARTIN

Even with the...mishaps. I have missed you. A present.

He pushes the small box across the table toward her.

Rita's cellphone RINGS. She listens, then stands and kisses Martin on the cheek.

RITA
Must go. I'll get a taxi.

She exits.

He pockets the unopened gift.

MARTIN
Wait! I'll come with you!

She waves him off. The waiter stops Martin.

WAITER
The check, Señor.

Martin fumbles to pay the waiter.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Martin exits the restaurant. No sign of Rita. Returns to his car.

EXT. OCEANVIEW MOTEL - NIGHT

David moves along the darkened motel, looking for Number 7.

EXT. ROOM NUMBER 7 - NIGHT

David knocks. Unlocked door opens. David enters darkened room.

DAVID
Mr. Bedfordson? Wayne?
Congressman Isherwood?

A young woman (18), naked, drags David inside, pushes him on the bed and leaps on top of him.

Flash bulbs. Room lights up.

Smiling face of Wayne Bedfordson. He gestures to the naked woman.

BEDFORDSON
It's on the table, honey.

She drags on a dressing gown and rushes to lines of cocaine on the table.

Bedfordson opens the mini refrigerator and pulls out two small bottles of whiskey. Hands one to David.

DAVID

Who is she?

BEDFORDSON

Someone. Anyone. Question is, where did she get them drugs?

DAVID

Wayne, what's going on?

Bedfordson pulls Martin's watch from his pocket.

DAVID (CONT'D)

That's the judge's watch.

BEDFORDSON

Is that right?

He stuffs the watch into David's pocket.

BEDFORDSON (CONT'D)

Tell the judge I found this. He'll know. Tell him not to be so careless.

He turns to the girl.

BEDFORDSON (CONT'D)

Slow down, honey. We don't need no accidents 'round here.

He opens the mini-refrigerator and swallows down another bottle of whiskey.

BEDFORDSON (CONT'D)

You wanna play in the big leagues, boy, you gotta do what your coach tells you. And I'm your coach!

Bedfordson picks the phone with a handkerchief.

BEDFORDSON (CONT'D)

Give me Pierce in narcotics.

(and then)

I'm hearing Officer Hendricks got his hand stuck in the cookie jar-- again. Patrol picked up an illegal. She's talking.

(MORE)

BEDFORDSON (CONT'D)
 Drop by Hendricks's house tonight
 before he talks to the press.

EXT. OUTSIDE A BORDER-PATROL STATION - NIGHT

Florenzio's truck pulls into the lot. Rita and Delgado climb out, met by a female officer whose jaw tightens with urgency.

FEMALE OFFICER
 She's talking. Undocumented
 workers, drugs, a farm in the
 valley. Rape. Corrupt agents—one
 with a scar on his face.

Rita turns to her brother.

RITA
 Same as last time. Only now it's
 your turn.

They walk into the station together.

INT. JAIL CELL IN BORDER PATROL STATION - NIGHT

Alicia sits huddled, her shawl wrapped tight. Rita, Delgado, and the female officer enter.

INT. LIVING ROOM, MARTIN'S HOME - NIGHT

Martin dials.

RITA'S VOICE (O.C.)
 No puedo venir al teléfono ahora.
 Por favor, deje su número y lo
 llamaré cuando regrese. And for my
 gringo friends—I cannot come to the
 phone now. Please leave your number
 and I'll call when I return.

The answering machine beeps.

Martin hangs up as Anne enters, her face flushed.

MARTIN
 David not home?

ANNE
 Celebrating! I gave Maria the
 night off.

She breaks down. Martin hesitates, then slides his arm around her. She collapses into him.

A car screeches up the driveway. A door slams. Keys clatter. Curses.

David staggers in, drunk. Martin moves toward the door.

DAVID
Stick around, judge! Wayne
Bedfordson offered me work. Salary.
Expense account. Time to celebrate!

Anne reaches for David's glass as he pours another drink.

MARTIN
Don't take the job!

David giggles swaying.

DAVID
Try that again!

MARTIN
Don't work for Bedfordson.

David snaps his fingers—a mocking gesture.

DAVID
Why don't you ask your Señorita
about her brother? Border patrol,
bribes, drugs. Up to his eyeballs
in it.

David pulls Martin's watch from his pocket and tosses it.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Catch! Wayne said you'd know where
you dropped it.

He staggers upright, then collapses onto the couch.

MARTIN
Sleep it off. Then ask Bedfordson
what he keeps in his warehouse.

Martin drapes a blanket over him.

INT. SLEEPING QUARTERS FOR FARM WORKERS - NIGHT

NOTE: All dialog for this scene is in Spanish, subtitled.

Antonio stares at Demetrio's empty bed.

Joaquin joins him.

JOAQUIN
They took Demetrio.
(pause)
I was young once. Stupid too. But
not as stupid as you.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

The Contractista and two men drive out of the farm.

A Jeep's headlights block their path.

EXT. CAR - NIGHT

The Contractista grabs a baseball bat and exits the pickup. A massive hand drags him toward the Jeep and hurls him inside.

INT. JEEP - NIGHT

The Contractista's head cracks against the steering wheel.

FLORENZIO
Take me to him-now!

EXT - NIGHT

The two men watch the Jeep screech away into darkness.

INT. MARTIN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Martin picks up the phone and dials. Outside a car screeches away from the house.

MARTIN
David, you damn fool!

EXT. STREET IN SUBURBIA - NIGHT

Police cars and ambulances flood the street, lights strobing.

Florenzio drags the Contractista from the Jeep.

Clive Roberts stands before a television camera.

ROBERTS

A quiet suburban street becomes a battlefield as police, acting on an anonymous tip, surround the home of three border patrol agents gone bad. When the shooting stopped, one man was dead, two injured. Officers found kilos of cocaine—street value in the hundreds of thousands.

A body is carried from the house.

The female patrol officer joins Florenzio. She pulls back the cloth covering one body. Hendricks.

FEMALE OFFICER

A kilo missing here, another there. Too many roosters pecking at the profits. Time to clean out the chicken house.

The Contractista gasps, trembling.

CONTRACTISTA

Arrest me!

FLORENZIO

Get him out of here!

CONTRACTISTA

I tell all.

(to Florenzio)

You! Honest cop getting too close. I can name names.

The Female Officer handcuffs him.

FEMALE OFFICER

(saluting Florenzio)

Go brush off your uniform, officer!

INT. JUDGE'S CHAMBERS, COURTHOUSE -- NEXT MORNING

Martin picks up the phone and dials.

RITA'S VOICE (O.C.)

No puedo venir al teléfono ahora. Por favor, deje su número y lo llamaré cuando regrese.

He hangs up. A Court Officer enters.

COURT OFFICER
Five minutes, your honor.

Martin puts on his robe.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING

Anne and Maria rush into the room. David lies on life support.

ANNE
What happened?

NURSE
Found him this morning in the
warehouse. A woman called it in.
She saved his life.

INT. COURT - MORNING

Demetrio stands in the dock, handcuffed.

BAILIFF
All rise for the Honorable Judge
Martin Wilkins.

Martin enters. He gestures for everyone to sit.

He reviews the documents, then looks up at the prisoner. His eyes lock on Demetrio.

FLASHBACK.

INT. BORDERTOWN BAR (FLASHBACK) - DAY

A bathroom. Carlos drags Martin from a stall, knife at his throat.

CARLOS
Now I slit your gringo throat.

Demetrio crashes through the door. His arm circles Carlos's neck. He wrenches the knife away before hurling Carlos out.

DEMETRIO
(to Antonio; in Spanish,
subtitled)
Why so much time? Who is this man?

ANTONIO
(in Spanish, subtitled)
Crazy gringo. I spoke with nobody.

Demetrio takes his bandana and presses it against Martin's bleeding neck.

DEMETRIO
(in Spanish, subtitled)
You keep it.

He and Antonio exit. Martin stares into the mirror. He ties the bandanna around his neck.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. COURT - MORNING

Martin reads the indictment.

MARTIN
The case of the State of California
versus Demetrio Plascentia.

INTERPRETER
(in Spanish subtitled)
Your name Demetrio Plascentia,
Raise your hand

Demetrio raises his hand.

A policeman hands the Bailiff a note. The Bailiff reads it and passes it to Martin. Martin reads it and strikes his gavel.

He stands.

MARTIN
I apologize. An emergency requires
my immediate attention. Court
stands in recess until this
afternoon.

He exits.

EXT - MORNING

Rita waits in her car. Martin jumps in.

RITA

Anne phoned. Bedfordson will be at
the Yacht Club.

EXT. YACHT CLUB - LATER, MORNING

Rita's car skids to a halt. Martin leaps out.

RITA

I'll wait.

INT. YACHT CLUB - MORNING

Martin brushes past Joe Trevis and strides into the main
office.

INT. MAIN OFFICE - MORNING

Bedfordson stares out of the window at the bay as Martin
rushes in. Mrs. Bedfordson nurses a drink. Bedfordson stares
out at the bay. Mrs. Bedfordson nurses a drink.

BEDFORDSON

Get your watch back, judge? Good. I
told you it belonged to the judge,
honey. Shouldn't be so careless
next time. Course there won't be a
next time.

MARTIN

What happened?

BEDFORDSON

See, honey, didn't I say the
judge'd be thankful? Lucky my wife
was down at the warehouse. Phoned
it in immediately when she found
your daughter's husband. If she
hadn't-

He continues staring at the water.

BEDFORDSON (CONT'D)

Clear blue ocean. Who'd guess
underneath that beauty there's rip
tides, currents, sharks? Best sail
along the surface and don't think
about what's underneath.

MARTIN

One phone call to narcotics and--

Bedfordson extends a card. Martin takes it. Oceanview Motel.

BEDFORDSON

Police picked up a young girl in room seven. Overdose. Manager saw a young boy leaving. Took down the license plate. Wrote it on the back of the card.

Martin turns the card over.

BEDFORDSON (CONT'D)

Looks like your son-in-law has some explaining to do. If that motel manager talks--

MARTIN

You won't get away with this.

BEDFORDSON

I thought people only said things like that in movies.

He turns to face Martin.

BEDFORDSON (CONT'D)

My friend, the aide to the Governor, phoned. Governor's announcing the new Supreme Court Justice tomorrow. Could be you'll be on the high court within the month. If.

He faces back to the ocean.

Martin leaves.

INT. CAR - MORNING

Rita watches as Martin returns and climbs in.

RITA

What did you expect? The honest judge versus the bad guys? Mano a mano? Stories like that only happen in movies. Maybe Anne's next. Or Maria. Or me. You gotta know how to play this game.

Silence.

MARTIN

Governor announcing the Supreme Court position soon.

RITA

Plain sailing for the right man.
Just don't muddy the waters.

She pats the passenger seat.

RITA (CONT'D)

Need a ride back to the courthouse?

MARTIN

I need time to think. I'll take a taxi.

Rita drives off.

INT. JUSTICE BUILDING. MARTIN'S CHAMBERS - DAY

The District Attorney, bailiff, staff, other justices, lawyers, reporters, and photographers crowd the chambers.

Martin enters. Cheers erupt. Cameras flash.

A large cake sits on his desk—a courthouse in Sacramento depicted on top. "California's Next Supreme Court Justice."

MARTIN

The Governor hasn't made the decision yet.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY

We know who's top of his list!

Everyone applauds.

MARTIN

Let's keep this short. I have a case pending.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY

(laughs)

Drugs, disorderly conduct, aggravated assault, Uno, dos, tres. No contest, judge. I'm sorry. Chief Justice Wilkins.

The crowd applauds again.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY (CONT'D)

Five minutes tops.

BAILIFF
Delgado's out there.

The District Attorney groans.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY
Okay, ten minutes.

MARTIN
Everybody out. I need to prepare.

Everyone leaves.

Rita enters as Martin puts on his robe. She stares at the photograph of his late wife.

RITA
Maybe your last case before this court. Bigger, better things wait. Easy case. Three made-up felonies. Man in his mid-forties. Fifteen years. Life sentence. No hay problema.

She moves toward the door.

RITA (CONT'D)
This case is not that simple, judge. Not that tidy. All tangled up with another case. What other case? Our judge doesn't know.

MARTIN
Are you finished?

RITA
Three corrupt border agents. One dead, two talking. Three corrupt border agents. One dead, two talking. The Contractista who brought charges against your defendant now begging to be arrested. Strange happenings. Still, no need to worry. Judge doesn't accept extenuating circumstances. For him it's just uno, dos, tres, and wipe his hands.

She exits.

Martin continues dressing. He picks up the photo of his dead wife. Pause before exiting.

INT. COURT - CONTINUOUS

Delgado confers with Demetrio. Rita joins Florenzio at the back of the court.

Reporters, photographers and television cameras line the back of the court.

BAILIFF

Silence!

(and then)

All rise for the Honorable Judge
Martin Wilkins.

APPLAUSE and CHEERS as Martin enters. The Bailiff waves his arms for silence. Martin gestures for everyone to sit. Cameras flash.

MARTIN

The State of California versus
Demetrio Plascentia.

Delgado mumbles in Spanish to Demetrio throughout. District Attorney gestures ten minutes to the Bailiff.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY

The prisoner is charged with
importing an illegal substance into
the United States.

Delgado leaps to his feet.

DELGADO

Permission to approach the bench,
your Honor.

MARTIN

Permission denied.

DELGADO

But your Honor, this case relates
directly to...

DISTRICT ATTORNEY

We are here to judge this case,
your Honor. Anything else is
irrelevant. The law says...

DELGADO

We all know what that law says,
your Honor.

He indicates Demetrio.

DELGADO (CONT'D)

One bang of your gavel and this man will end his life in prison.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Do we have to hear this again, your honor? The law is the law, Mr. Delgado.

DELGADO

Until some judge is brave enough to challenge it.

Martin gestures for the two to sit. The D.A. taps his watch and winks at the Bailiff.

MARTIN

This may be the last case I judge in this courtroom. Maybe not. My job is not difficult. You don't even need a law degree.

He holds up the chart.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

It's all here, on this chart, mandated by politicians. Fifteen years to life. No possibility of parole.

Delgado translates. Demetrio's body shakes.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

For a man of the defendant's age, this could well be a life sentence. Still that's the law. A judge like myself, despite his or her degrees and legal experience is mandated how to penalize.

(pause)

No need to hear the defendant's testimony. No need to explore the motivation behind the charges. No need for a judge's reasoned assessment of individual cases. No need even, as the defense attorney informs us, to consider relevant cases or exculpatory evidence.

(pause)

All I do is follow orders!

He holds up the chart.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Professionally I have much to gain by following orders. However, if I am not allowed to judge this case by and of and for itself in its entirety, including any exculpatory evidence, then I refuse to pass judgment.

Hushed crowd.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Mr. Delgado, the defendant will remain in your custody until all evidence, all relevant details and facts are known. Case dismissed.

Martin abruptly stands and exits.

A stunned silence then a melee breaks out as television cameramen and reporters clammer to exit with the story.

Courtroom left empty except for Rita, sitting alone, staring at the judge's empty chair.

EXT. PIER OF YACHT CLUB - LATER, DAY

Martin prepares to cast off. Wire fence rattles.

RITA

(in Spanish, subtitled)

Señor. Rita here! Don't forget her!

Older Couple watch as Martin opens the gate.

RITA (CONT'D)

Any word?

MARTIN

The Governor's reconsidering. It won't be easy to go back on his decision but--.

RITA

You've opened a door. That's all we wanted.

She walks to his yacht with him.

RITA (CONT'D)

And Anne and David?

MARTIN

The boy tasted the forbidden fruit.
It's their decision. They're both
young.

She takes his hand as he helps her into the boat.

RITA

Rita have gift for the Señor.

She hands him another photo album.

MARTIN

Not again!

She opens the first page. Photo of the two of them dancing
together in the restaurant.

RITA

You were going to give me
something.

Martin gives her the small box. Diamond earrings.

Rita puts them on.

Martin pushes boat from jetty. Starts motor and takes the
wheel. Rita cuddles into him.

They leave the dock.

Rita waves to the older couple and flashes her earrings.

RITA (CONT'D)

You like? Present for Rita.

She grabs Martin's arm and poses.

The husband pushes his wife below deck.

FADE OUT.

THE END