

*The Sweetheart Deal*  
by  
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*The characters and story in this play are fictional.  
What is not fictional is that Cesar Chavez, Dolores Huerta  
and Larry Itliong founded the United Farmworker's Union and  
changed the course of history.*

*Dedicated to JD.*

*I think that I would like to write the story of this whole Valley, of all the little towns and all the farms and ranches in the wilder hills. I can see how I would like to do it so that it would be the Valley of the world. -*

*John Steinbeck 1902-1968*

Characters: 6 actors/2 Female/4 male

MARI Late thirties, big hearted, a realist, a fighter, W

WILL Her husband early 40's, an idealist, M

MAC MARI's brother, 40's, trouble, M

CHARLIE 40-45 a union organizer thinks out of the box, a Boston native, M

LETTIE A campesina/union organizer, 40's-50's, F

CHON Editor of the newspaper, solid, 50's, M

All characters above are Mexican-American except for CHARLIE.

Throughout, various characters are played by the ensemble.

There are two playing areas.

The story unfolds primarily in the office of El Malcriado "The Voice of the Farmworker", the underground newspaper of the United Farmworkers Union in Delano, California. This space also doubles for the Salinas UFW office. Like so many of these locales they look very much alike save for signage indicating Delano or Salinas.

There is also a playing space outside of both offices that is neutral and transformative.

Sound scape is vital. Cesar Chavez is never seen, only heard in snippets during the sound scape of rallies. The sound should be multi-layered, and sensor-round. If you use projections, please, no projections that designate place, that look like slides on a big white screen. They should be quilt like, layered and surround us.

Music: It would be cool to use songs from the era or at least a kind of extrapolated 70's sound mixed with today's heartbeat. Try when you can to bridge the gap between contemporary rhythms and those of the 70's. Think about creating a heartbeat for the actos. Are they underscored with a rhythmic vibe? Music is going to help underscore the contemporary quality of the entire experience.

*And finally: A NOTE ABOUT THE COMPANY AND THE ACTOS*

*The piece functions within two realities: THE PLAY and THE ACTO. The ACTOS are performed by a theatre company, who are also the actors in the play.*

*We see the company change costumes, help each other set up for subsequent scenes, change set pieces, etc.*

*ACTOS were short agit prop sketches created by Luis Valdez and El Teatro Campesino and used to educate the farm workers on the issues of the strike. The farm workers and the organizers performed them in a Brechtian style; think Brecht crossed with commedia dell arte performed by Cantinflas. The villains wore masks, the farmworkers and the scab characters did not. All characters wore signs around their necks designating character: Boss, Scab, Farmworker, etc.*

*Highly theatrical in style, the ACTOS should be approached with the skill it takes to do commedia dell arte and the soul of Brecht. The style is heightened not overly broad.*

*As the play progresses the acto and play merge.*

Prologue

1970

AT A UNITED FARMWORKER'S RALLY. VOICEOVER.

CESAR CHAVEZ

**We're fed up with being the worst paid workers in America.  
We want a new life. We want a new union we want to do  
something for ourselves and our families.**

[Crowd reaction. Chanting. Applause.]

Lights UP ON BACKSTAGE on a group of actors: a teatro preparing to go on.

We hear chants.]

AUDIO

**Si se puede, si se puede, si se puede**  
(Yes, we can.)

**Huelga. Huelga. Huelga.**  
(Strike.)

VOICEOVER

**Gracias, Cesar. Y ahora, damas y caballeros, El Teatro  
performing EL SWEETHEART DEAL.**

[Cheers. Whistles.]

THE CROWD applauds; staring first at a regular pace,  
then in unison building to a crescendo; heretofore  
referred to as the Chicano Clap.]

[We see the actors enter and SUDDENLY WE ARE IN  
REVERSE-NOW THE COMPANY IS ON-STAGE.]

The company joins the audience in the Chicano clap.  
The actor who plays CHON leads it.

Then, they perform their first ACTO.

ACTO # 1

Patrón

*[He addresses the house.]*

**Muchachos, I have someone I'd like you to meet.**

Farmworker

**Oh si, Patrón.**

*[The Patrón sings.]*

Patrón

**Oh, my Darling,**

**Oh, my Darling**

**Oh, my Darling, Clementine.**

**You are mine and that's forever.**

**Gorgeous woman, Clementne.**

**She's a pretty young thing, the daughter of my *amigo*, Jimmy from out there in Dee-troit. Come on; gather round so you can meet her up close and personal, like.**

**Sweetheart, why don't you come out and meet the boys?**

*[We hear a stripper theme, bombarabombarrabombom and in walks a voluptuous, blonde wigged man in drag. She/he wears a sign around his/her neck that reads "sweetheart".]*

Sweetheart

*[Very breathy, sexy voice]*

**Hi, there boys.**

Farmworker

*[Aside to the audience]*

**Ay, que fea! (Ay how ugly!)**

Patróncito

**Now, Sweetie, here, is gonna take care of all my farming needs, ain't that right, my little Clementine? Oh, and just so SHE don't forget who you are, and so YOU'LL get paid on time, just SIGN your name on this little piece of *papelito* and we WILL be on our way.**



*[Sweetheart takes out of her bosom a scroll that she rolls out with the flick of her wrist that says, "TEAMSTER CONTRACT"]*

Sweetheart

*[Speaks Spanish with American accent]*

**Cabrones, I mean mis amores, firmen esta papelito aquí en este linea.** *(Assholes, I mean, my loves, sign this little piece of paper here on this line.)*

*[The grower pulls out a giant pen and hands it to the farmworker.]*

Farmworker

**Boss, this is a contract. You can't tell us what union to choose.**

Sweetheart

**Just a second, my little cabronito, and I say that with all my affection, (sexy and breathy) I'll be very, very good to you, anywhere, anytime.**

Farmworker

**Not when you're in cahoots with the boss. We demand elections so we can decide!** *(He elicits a response from the crowd.)* **Right, raza?**

*[There is little or no response from the crowd/audience]*

**I can't hear you. We need to hear you so we know you are with us. We demand elections so we can decide. Right, gente?**

*[The crowd-audience responds.]*

**Eso.**

Patróncito

**Now wait a minute, wait a minute, wait a minute. Who told you that? Those comunistas? (spits) Those Chavistas-the United Farmworker's union? (spits) The UFW? (spits)**

*[A UFW organizer appears with a sign around her neck that reads UFW Organizer.]*

UFW Organizer  
**I did.**

Patróncito  
**And who the hell are you?**

UFW Organizer  
**I'm the UFW and we tell the truth, and the truth is that the boss' sweetheart is a Teamster. A teamster. *Quieren engañarnos.* Trick us. Take our rights away.**

*[The teamster pretends to cower in fear.]*

Sweetheart  
**Oh, you're sooooo scary. Boo hoo hoo. Try to touch me. I'm protected, beaner lover. I got friends in high places. (to Patrón, in a gruff man's voice) Toilet breath, you told me this was gonna be easy. (back to woman's voice) Wait until my Daddy hears about this.**

*[Patrón follows after her.]*

Patrón  
**Now poopsie, be reasonable.**  
*[They exit.]*

Farmworker  
**We won!**

UFW Organizer  
**But only for the moment. We have to be vigilant, raza! (to audience-crowd) Are you with us?**

Crowd-Audience  
**Yes!**

Farmworker  
**Are you with us?**

Crowd-Audience  
**Yes**

UFW Organizer  
**¡Qué viva la Unión!!!**

All  
**Que Viva!**

*[Cheers of VIVA as lights shift and sound of UFW rally. Applause crescendos.*

*Lights come up on...]*

SCENE ONE

*EL MALCRIADO OFFICE*

*July*

*[The actor who plays the Patrón, takes his mask off and hangs it on a hook in the office. He is CHON.*

*The actress who plays the UFW ORGANIZER also hangs her sign and becomes, LETTIE.]*

LETTIE

**What's there not to like. I think it's a toda madre. The grower has a sweetheart and she's a man in drag. It's a funny cartoon. It makes its point. Besides, it was approved.**

CHON

**What do you mean?**

LETTIE

**We passed it by the powers that be and they approved it....**

*[...indicates slight overlap]*

CHON

**...I'm the editor here. Everything is passed by me....**

LETTIE

**.....We passed it by you.....**

CHON

**.....Then it's your job to make me remember that.**

**This issue's a mess. And we are so goddamn late....**

LETTIE

**...Well, we're understaffed. I do everything. The interviews, the photo editing, the layouts for the cover. And, I make the pinche coffee.....**

CHON

**By the way, the pinche coffee's weak.**

You're the one that's been complaining about not having enough responsibility.

LETTIE

*Pero, hombre, be reasonable.*

*[Will and Lettie enter.]*

CHON

You the new volunteers? You're late.

MARI

Yeah. We went on a wild goose chase. What kind of newspaper runs out of paper? They sent us to some warehouse in Timbuktu.

WILL

We got the supplies. We're ready to start.

CHON

Well, where are they?

WILL

Damn, I left them in the truck. I'll go get them.

CHON

No, no, no forget it. We don't have time. We have a staff meeting in a few minutes.

That's all we do around here, meet. I can never get any work done.

MARI

I told Will we should be using the company car when we run errands.

WILL

I told you, there is no company car.

MARI

Well, there should be.

LETTIE

We'll get on that right away, Missy.

Can we move it here? I've got shit to do.

CHON

Look, everyone's covering Salinas right now. So, we're behind.

MARI

So all the action is closer to San Jose where we just moved from? Isn't that interesting Will?

WILL

Yeah, it sounds like everything's heating up there. I've been reading about it.

CHON

Well, you know we're doing a good job when the growers start feeling threatened.

WILL

Hiring all those goons to make trouble.

CHON

WILL, I want you to edit my piece on the sweetheart deal.

WILL

Sure. You know, I can write, too. I brought some writing samples.....

CHON

.....Not now. Mari, you'll be working with Lettie on photo editing.

MARI

I don't know anything about photo editing.

LETTIE

Neither do I, Chula, so we'll make a great team.

MARI

Where do I put my purse?

LETTIE

You're kidding, right? Anywhere is fine. That chair.

*[Referring to purse]*

WILL

Mari.

MARI

What? I need it? I don't get it. Will's father was a teamster. He made a good living and benefits. Why are the teamsters the enemy now?

WILL

MARI, I told you a million times. I can explain it to her lat...

LETTIE

...*Ay Dios mio*, I don't have time for this. I got to get to the staff meeting. You coming?

CHON

In a minute.

WILL

*(hurriedly)* The teamsters signed a deal with the growers to make sure the *campesinos* signed contracts with them instead of the UFW Union.

MARI

I still don't get it.

CHON

It's shady. The growers are blocking the farmworkers from voting for us, the union, the UFW, by making a deal with the teamsters. They want the teamsters to rep the farmworkers. But the teamsters have no idea how to represent *campesinos*. So, that's the fight in Salinas right now. In their eyes: our success is their failure.

MARI

Oh, ok. See, he's clear.

CHON

Tough times all over. It's good you guys don't have kids.

WILL

We have a kid. We have a son.

CHON

Ah, didn't know.

MARI

He's going to college.

CHON

Well, you know, you can't hide from what's going down, and you can only protect your kids so far. I mean, I've never seen anything like it- the whole country's on fire: the movement, Vietnam protests, the moratoriums. I tell you everything's happening at the same time and if it wasn't true, I wouldn't believe it. It's just too goddamn much. Too goddamn much.

I got to get out of here.

Straighten up the place until we get back. When it's a mess I can't think.

*[Charlie Simmonds enters.]*

CHARLIE  
Hey, Chon they're waiting for you.

CHON  
Orale. I know. I know. *(packing his stuff up)* Hey, how was the move?

CHARLIE  
I hate moving.

CHON  
Charlie moved to Bakersfield.

MARI  
*(With disdain)* Why?

CHON  
Delano wasn't good enough for him. Big city organizer and all.

CHARLIE  
Not even. That is not true.

CHON  
Oh no? What was the problem then?

CHARLIE  
These guys needle me all the time about moving. Sometimes I like to go out to dinner and a movie.

CHON

And have a glass of wine in the middle of a revolution.  
Shocking how bourgee (*boozhee*) he is. That's my nickname  
for him, El Boo.

CHARLIE

Delano is not exactly the hot bed of culture.

MARI

You have time to go out?

CHARLIE

No. I just like the distance. Gives me perspective.

WILL

It's the idea that you can. I get that.

*[Lettie enters]*

LETTIE

Chon, we're waiting for you. Come on, man. Enough with the  
coffee klatch.

CHON

Ok. Ok. Watch out for this one. He thinks too much.  
Que no, Boo? *[He exits]*

CHARLIE

Andale, get out of here.

MARI

You don't have to go to the staff meeting?

CHARLIE

I wanted to welcome you first. Believe me it will still be  
going on when we finish. So, you settled in...

WILL

Yeah. We did.

MARI

I didn't know we'd be sharing the place.

CHARLIE

Housing's limited. It energizes the volunteers when we put  
everyone together.

MARI

Even couples?



WILL  
It's fine.

MARI  
It's not really.

WILL  
It's fine.

CHARLIE  
How's it been here in the office?

WILL  
We're getting in the groove. But it's what I expected. I don't mind running errands until I get more responsibility. The paper's short of staff. I get it. You were pretty clear about what we were getting ourselves into.

MARI  
They have us cleaning up, too.

WILL  
I don't have a problem with that. It's how you start.

MARI  
But you're not writing.

CHARLIE  
It'll happen.

WILL  
I know it will. We just got here, Mari.

MARI  
I know but you ran a paper at home. You'd think they'd put that skill to work. He was the editor of the paper.

WILL  
It was a neighborhood rag sheet.

MARI  
It was way more than that.

WILL  
Charlie knows all about the paper. Anyway, I'm glad we're here.

CHARLIE

It'll all start making sense, Mari. And I'm sorry about the housing. It's the best we can do under the circumstances.

WILL

It's fine.

CHARLIE

Hey, I did a little research on your brother, Mari.

MARI

How did you know I had a brother?

WILL

I told him. He asked if we knew anybody in the area.

I told him we went to Korea together.

*[He looks at MARI but she offers nothing]*

He's a trucker in Fowler.

CHARLIE

Did you know he was a union steward for the teamster local?

WILL

He is? Did you know that, Mari?

MARI

I didn't.

CHARLIE

So neither of you knew?

WILL

No. We would have said something.

CHARLIE

So you served in Korea together?

WILL

Yeah. But you know, you get married and go your separate ways. I took advantage of the GI Bill and got my BA and MAC decided to be a cop. It didn't work out so he moved his family to the Valley.

MARI

Why do you ask?

CHARLIE

Just trying to find some interested parties to help us get some insight into the opposition's activities and I wondered if Mac might be a candidate.

MARI

You mean like an informant?

CHARLIE

Not quite that dramatic but someone we could trust and since you were family and working with us, might this be an entry point for him to listen to our, you know, your side of the story?

WILL

Well, seeing how he's a steward, it seems like he's pretty dedicated to the local.

CHARLIE

Maybe, but if he's a family man could we use that angle?

WILL/MARI

.....

CHARLIE

Ok. Well, just exploring all options.

MARI

I don't like my brother.

WILL

You haven't seen him in years. Like, what? Ten?

MARI

Will called him.

WILL

War buddies, you know. I got on the phone and we joked, said we had to get together.

CHARLIE

Well, do that. No harm in finding out where he's at and see if he's open to, say, an exploratory meeting.

MARI

Will.....

WILL

...We'll talk about it...

MARI

Does the UFW do this kind of thing?

CHARLIE

What kind of thing?

WILL

...this double agent stuff...

CHARLIE

...again, not that cloak and dagger-only an idea at this point. Keep it to yourself.

WILL

Sure.

CHARLIE

Ok. Good. I'm leaving again tomorrow to Hollister and then the field office in Salinas.

MARI

So, you travel a lot?

CHARLIE

I do. I check in on all the field offices. We have lots of offices all over the country.

You could be called on to fill in where ever we might need you.

WILL

Well, I hope the paper works out. It would be a dream come true, really.

Mari

That's the whole reason we came.

Will

You need to be patient, Mari.

MARI

I am trying to understand what we've gotten ourselves into so don't dismiss me like that, please.

CHARLIE

I tell everyone who's going to volunteer that when they join us, there are a lot of unknowns. You'll be one of our soldiers and we may have to deploy you to several fronts as needed. Not to say that the paper won't work out.

Look, Mari, this isn't easy for anybody. Once you get to know some of the people here, you'll feel better.

MARI

I can't wait.

*(Off a look from WILL)*

MARI

What? Really, I can't wait.

CHARLIE

Let's concentrate on your job here at the paper and I'm serious about pursuing your brother to see if he can help.

MARI

I don't see it but....

WILL

...Like I said we'll talk about it and you know, we want to do the right thing.

CHARLIE

Great. Again, an early idea and maybe I spoke too soon but uh....

WILL

.....We got it.

CHARLIE

You have the number where I'll be at, call me if there are any developments. And let's keep this quiet for the moment, please.

WILL

Yeah, ok.

CHARLIE

Take care, Mari. *Todo va estar bien.*

*MARI tries to muster up a smile.*

WILL  
**Thanks, man.**

*[CHARLIE exits. MARI stares at WILL.]*

WILL  
**Now what?**

MARI  
**Shall I go down the list? What was that?**

WILL  
**I haven't been here long enough to know how things operate.**

MARI  
**Exactly.**

WILL  
**Charlie is a respected organizer here and I trust him. And, if we can get Mac to agree, that might be a good move for me.**

MARI  
**Mac is never going to agree to a meeting not even if you're doing the asking.**

**And, I'm not exactly his favorite sister.**

WILL  
**Water under the bridge.**

MARI  
**You baby him.**

WILL  
**And, you're hard on him.**

MARI  
**Do you blame me? What he did to my Dad was unforgivable. He really hurt him and my Dad never trusted him again.**

WILL  
**That was twenty years ago.**

MARI  
**People don't change.**

WILL

They do. A lot of the guys from the war are fine now.

MARI

How would we even bring something like that up?

WILL

I think you just do it-like it's no big deal.

MARI

Yeah, but what's the question? Hey, you want to play 007?

WILL

Maybe he's not happy with the way things are developing. You don't know. All we can do is ask.

MARI

I'm not following.

WILL

It's a battle. It's ammo. Charlie's being creative. I don't know. We're just following orders.

MARI

I guess.

WILL

Come on, we made a plan.

MARI

I know but give me a break. I can't imagine being here for a year. This is so different.

WILL

Different but better, life at home was a dead end.

MARI

How can you say that?

WILL

You might as well say I was the editor of the Penny Saver. It was that inconsequential. So small town. This paper, the articles, the editorials, its connection with the people. It has power. It's national. Don't tell me you don't see it. And maybe it's a stepping stone and if it isn't well, then ...

MARI

A stepping stone? Sweetheart, you're a lowly volunteer. No one's going to know your name, know what you did, know what you sacrificed?

WILL  
I'll know.

MARI  
And that's enough for you? You keep saying it could be a stepping stone. You think that's true?

*(Off a look from WILL)*

MARI  
I'm just asking, Will. We left everything.

WILL  
It could be, yes, once people read my stuff, and maybe this thing with your brother could be toward our benefit.

This could be a whole new life for you, too.

MARI  
I was happy with the old one.

WILL  
Don't kid yourself. What were you going to do in an empty house?

MARI  
*(He's got a point)* Mop twice a day? Rearrange the furniture like I should do here. This place is a mess. I don't know. Get a job, I guess.

WILL  
So, you'll find a job here.

MARI  
I don't want to be dead weight.

WILL  
Come on. It takes time?

MARI  
That's what everyone says. Time. Give it time. What if time turns out to be the enemy?



WILL

**Or the friend.**

*Lights shift as we hear*

*Sound FX of rally: Cesar's voice dominates loud and clear*

*"There's no turning back. We WILL win. We are winning  
because ours is a revolution of mind and heart...."*

*Then lights up on...*

SCENE TWO

EL MALCRIADO OFFICE  
*Late Afternoon.*  
*Same Day*

MARI and LETTIE set up to do captions. A typewriter sits on the table.

CHON  
Come on, come on, come on. Where are the captions?

LETTIE  
Geezus, we just spent three hours in a friggin' meeting. We're going to work on them right now.

CHON  
Well, hurry.

LETTIE  
That man is driving me insane.  
Ok. So you type?

MARI  
Yes. I worked at a school. Part time secretary.

LETTIE  
Thank you, Lord Geezus. Ok. Sit there. How can you walk with those shoes? And cover up, *mujer*. There are a lot of *moscas* (flies) around here if you know what I mean.

MARI  
(*Gets a little self conscious*) Oh, thanks, of course. I was wondering what everyone was staring at...

LETTIE  
Let's get started. So, this caption is for the right hand photo and should read, TOP in caps, then; semi-colon, then caption should read: WORKERS PROTEST HIGH RENTAL RATES.

MARI  
(*As she types*) HIGH RENTAL RATES. Ok. Got it, but it should be a colon.

LETTIE  
Really? Are you sure?

MARI  
Yeah.

LETTIE  
Ugh. I've been doing semi-colons all this time and no one's noticed. *Que verguenza*. Ok, pues..... How did you know that?

MARI  
I don't know, high school?

LETTIE  
Maybe I should have tried me a little of that. Huh? Ok. Well, for a city girl, you might be helpful after all. Next page, top: Dolores Huerta, right with Robert F. Kennedy.

MARI  
I'm not a city girl. I was born here.  
Whose on the left?

LETTIE  
*Sepa*. Just put unidentified....

MARI  
How about supporter?

LETTIE  
Yeah, supporter. (*impressed by her*) Very good. All this *pedo*, and you're from here? And, then, bottom of page, photo credit: Chris Pena.

MARI  
Yeah. Picked on all these farms. Youngest of eleven kids. Delano is my hometown. When my parents decided to settle in San Jose, I was cheering to the heavens. Oh my, God. No more smelling like garlic, or getting bit by spiders in the vineyards, or picking lice out of our hair. We are going to stay in ONE school for the WHOLE year. Yay. Then my father gets diagnosed with TB. Spends time in a sanitarium. Gets out and goes right back to working in the fields and dies when he's 48 of an asthma attack, of all things. I don't think I'm over it. So, to come back to this, it's heartbreaking.

WILL  
Hey, I'm running to the post office for Chon. I'll be right back. And he's letting me do a little interview.

MARI

Alright. Great. Be careful.

Ok. Finished. Now what? I'm talking too much. I'm sorry.

LETTIE

Yes you are but it's good *chisme* (gossip) Go to the next page, middle. So, why the hell come back?

MARI

My husband says it's his duty to help make change. I don't feel that. I don't. I was so happy to get out of here. And now, I'm stuck again. I mean, he said he wanted me to come with him but if I didn't, he'd go with out me. I was making apricot jam the day he gave me the ultimatum. The house smelled so good, apricot with ginger. I mean, what was I going to do? He was my husband.

LETTIE

Well, I'm on my second husband and a half so I wouldn't know.

MARI

(*doesn't get it-"a half"*)

LETTIE

We're not married yet, just living in sin and I'm kinda liking it. Seriously, *mujer*, get on with it. Or you're going to be miserable. I don't have the patience with people who are soft. This is not a place for hesitancy.

MARI

Middle of page, right?

LETTIE

Look, what happened to your papa is still happening today. So how would you change it?

MARI

I don't know. I'm just a volunteer.

LETTIE

Volunteers are core.

MARI

Do people even notice us?

LETTIE,  
*Mujer*, are you kidding? No political movement happens  
without volunteers.

MARI  
Charlie wants to talk to my brother. Try to get him on our  
side, which I think is crazy because he's a Teamster  
steward. Why would my brother want to help? What do you  
think of Charlie?

LETTIE  
He doesn't always follow the rules.

MARI  
That worries me.

LETTIE  
Look, I don't have any reason not to trust him. He's in the  
union's inner circle. He organized in the South. I'd say,  
give it a shot. All your brother can do is say no. What's  
your gut?

*[Lettie takes out eyeliner and reapplies it]*

MARI  
My gut is that we're in over our head. How do you do that?  
It's so straight?

LETTIE  
It's an art. Go on.

*[Lettie continues to apply make-up and when she  
is through she puts it all away. It's a girl  
thing.]*

MARI  
At home, everything was in its place. But here, I hate not  
being in control. I want to trust people, but I don't. And,  
I don't know what I'd do about my brother.

LETTIE  
Meet with him, go all the way with it.

MARI  
I can't picture it.

LETTIE

Well, visualize it. Use your imagination. Think about how you'd convince him. Strategize so that you are prepared. That is key. Otherwise, it's a waste of time.

MARI

To get him involved in all of this... What if, you know, I mean, is it worth it?

LETTIE

Look, I'm working in an office basically because I couldn't organize anymore. It was too hard on me. I felt guilty turning in our own people for being scabs. They had no papers. And I did it all the time.

MARI

Could you even sleep?

LETTIE

Hardly. But my action, which I had felt so bad about, I had done for the greater good. So, if you get your brother involved, think about the bigger picture. It takes the big picture to win.

*The lights begin to shift as rally chant begins.*

*Si se puede*

*Si se puede*

*Si se puede.*

*(It underscores dialogue below.)*

LETTIE

Dive into it. Set up the meeting. Read all you can. Talk to people. Do whatever it takes to make it work. Ok? Now, move over so I can finish.

MARI

No, let me help you.

LETTIE

No. Go. You talk too much. Just think about it. If you're still around tomorrow, and I hope you are with a better attitude, and less to say, we can get some work done, I'll see you then. *(Without looking up LETTIE continues to type)* And, remember: si se puede.

As.... *Lights shift actors enter to dress for ACTO. The Chicano clap crescendo's ending with Que Viva la Union.*

SCENE THREE

ACTO #2

*[MARI is caught up as a SCAB sign is hung around her neck. She is given a hat to wear.]*

MARI

**No...I can't. I don't know what to... do... I'm not prepar...**

*[Then suddenly, in an isolated light an actor (the same actor who plays MAC, MARI'S BROTHER) appears wearing a sign hanging around his neck. His sign reads "El Coyote" which indicates farm labor contractor. He howls as lights rise onto...]*

Coyote

**Aooooouuh. (howls) My name is Don Coyote. Translation (in perfect English) Don Coyote. I'm a farm labor contractor and I work for the grower, my Patróncito—the boss. He owns all this land.**

*[Enter the boss. He wears a mask and a sign that reads El Patróncito]*

**Oh, here he comes.**

Patróncito.

**Whatcha' got for me today, Don Coyote?  
Bring any scabs to pick my fields?**

Coyote

**Oh, you betchu. Plenty of scabs, Patróncito, to peek your grapes and break the strike.**

Patróncito

**I like the way you think.**

*[The coyote whistles and the scab enters. MARI, reluctant, is pushed on stage. She wears a sign that reads SCAB.]*

Coyote

*(to the scab)* **Vente.**  
*(to the boss)* **Well, what do you think, boss?**

Patróncito



**Great. Strong back. Long arms. Built close to the ground. Perfecto, Coyote.**

**Come here, Amigo. You don't know how afortunado (with very heavy American accent) you are. Working for me you get exercise, you're out in the fresh air, plenty of sun AND you get paid for it- a 120 (aside to audience) cents, an hour. Don't you feel lucky, muchacho?**

*[MARI/Scab is silent. Doesn't know what to say.]*

Coyote  
**Uh, the boss is talking to you, boy.**

MARI/Scab  
*(trying to get into character)*  
**Oh, si Patrón, its gud, boss.**

Coyote  
*(aside)* **Yeah, 10 cents on the dollar is mine for getting him the job AND he's got to walk a mile to get to the toilet and there's no drinking water. BUT, he's desperate. He's got to work to feed the family. Good for me!(he laughs)**

MARI/Scab  
*(getting more into it)*  
**Oh, tank you Patróncito, you're very generous. Such a yentalman.**

Patróncito  
**Why thank you, boy. Come here. I'm going to let you kiss me. Right here,**

*[Bends over so Scab can kiss his ass. The Scab kisses his left butt check. Sound of a big kiss-a SMACK]*

**Now this one.**

*[The boss turns so scab can kiss the other cheek. Sound of a big kiss-a SMACK]*

*A striker appears in the background waving the union flag.]*

Striker  
**Sálganse de los files, esquirols. (Scabs, get out of the fields).**

Scab  
What's a scab?

Patróncito  
Pay him no mind, boy. Just a pesty little bugger. Don  
Coyote, what do we do with these damn bugs?

Coyote  
Oh, we spray them, Patróncito. Like des!

*[The Coyote takes out a miniature crop duster and flies it through the air as he makes the sound of the engine and the spray. He sprays pesticides on the Striker and the scab. Both begin coughing. The Patróncito and Coyote shake hands and laugh. The union organizer regains composure and yells:]*

Farmworker  
Nosotros venceremos.

*[Don Coyote howls as lights slowly transition out of acto.]*

*[Sound of applause, cheers, Si Se Puede chants begin as lights shift. We hear the cacophony of UFW rally sounds that we heard at the beginning.]*

*We see THE ACTOR PLAYING MAC take off his sign and costume and hang it up. He enters into the following scene and takes his place as MAC. MARI does the same.]*

*They join WILL.*

*Abruptly, lights up on.....*

SCENE FOUR

*EL MALCRIADO OFFICE*

*One month later.*

*August*

MARI

**You think Pop got TB from pesticides?**

MAC

**No.**

MARI

**Why not? It's possible.**

MAC

**The doctors never made that connection.**

MARI

**Maybe they weren't looking for it.**

MAC.

**People got TB in the old days. The point is he got cured.**

MARI

**Yeah. Right, but I mean. It's just too...never mind, anyway, like I was saying, when he was in the sanitarium, my *Tio*....**

MAC

**Our *tio*...**

MARI

**...I know that.**

MAC

**...Well, then why didn't you say *OUR Tio*?**

MARI

***No me friegues. (Bug off.) Geez. You're such a freak. Tio took us to visit and he was the one that made us play outside the window so Dad could see us.***

MAC

**Yeah. Ok. So? That was no picnic. Pops was inside that joint almost two years.**

MARI

God, you make it sound like he was in prison.

MAC  
He was.

MARI  
He wasn't

MAC  
He couldn't get out.

WILL  
You guys sound like you're 12 years old. Stop.

MARI  
Not before I finish my point. When you got out you  
wouldn't stop. Shooting pigeons in the barn?

MAC  
It was just a BB gun.

MARI  
Yeah, dead pigeons everywhere-blood on the assembly line-  
on the cellophane wrappers for the celery. Pops couldn't  
control you.

MAC  
...And neither could you.

Mari  
But you were his favorite. You were everyone's favorite.

*[Mac flashes a big smile]*

WILL  
Man, you were always a good shot.

MAC  
I came out of the *pinche* womb shooting.

WILL  
Best shot at boot.

MAC  
Excuse me, best shot in the 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment.  
And don't you forget it.

So, where is everybody? I got to get to work.

WILL

**They'll be here.**

MAC

**Well, my time is precious like I am.  
That's why you love me.**

MARI

**It's been a long time, Mac.**

MAC

**It has. MariMacandWill. Always had a ring to it 'til you  
guys found love and broke us up.**

WILL

**Ever see any of the guys?**

MAC

**Nah.  
So, where you two staying?**

WILL

**Place down the street.**

MAC

**The barrio down there?**

WILL

**Yeah. The Union's housing us.**

MAC

*(knows it isn't)*  
**Must be nice.**

MARI

**Not really.**

MAC

**Dime. What are the Delano High Homecoming King and Queen  
doing here? You're gonna get so dirty. Don't you miss your  
castle?**

MARI

**You're so annoying.**

MAC

I'm surprised my little sister let you bring her back here.

WILL  
She followed me here.

MARI  
Yeah. Kicking and screaming.

WILL  
This is the place to be, brother. Mari sees that.

MAC  
(TO MARI) Pues, orale, a Chavista now?

MARI  
Don't be *sangrón*. This isn't easy, ok?

WILL  
How's the family? Linda? The kids?

MAC  
Linda's fine. The kids are spoiled.  
And, your boy?

WILL  
Trying to find him self. First year in college, you know.

MAC  
No, I don't. We joined the Marines. Found ourselves on the  
battle field. That's how that went.  
Alright, I was here on time. Where are those losers?

WILL  
There was a last minute strategy meeting...

MAC  
*¿No me importa eso, ok? Mira, be here on time-not Mexican  
time. You know these people have a bad rep for being  
disorganized.*

MARI  
Mac, come on. Sit. Let me make you some coffee-the way  
you like it-with *canela* (*cinnamon*).

MAC  
Ay, that sounds real warm and cozy, *chula, pero*, it's  
gonna be 99 degrees in about ten minutes so a nice cold six  
pack would be more my style. *Sabes que?* I don't have time.

When they get back bring your truck to my place and I'll have one of the guys check it out. It could be the starter. (*He's out the door*)

WILL

Listen, Mac, wait up. Want to talk to you about the teamsters?

MAC

Yeah....what about the teamsters?

WILL

Well, they're working against us? And we thought, maybe....

MAC

...What do you know, Willie? You just draw cartoons?

WILL

.....I write articles....

MAC

...I thought you used to doodle.....

WILL

...I did...

MAC

...Yankee doodle dandy and shit...

WILL

Always the joker.

MAC

Trying to keep it light, man. Don't take all this stuff so *pinche* seriously. What's there to work against?

WILL

They don't know a thing about organizing farm workers.

MAC

And you do? You left here when you were a *mocoso*. Both of you did.

MARI

We were way older than that.

MAC

Not by much. Look, I make a good living driving a truck, got me a nice *ranchito y todo*. I don't know anything about working against whatever.

WILL

That's what we've been hearing.  
You get a fast education here. All the volunteers do.

MAC

Volunteer? You mean they don't pay you?

MARI

That's what volunteer means, *cabron*. Unless you're using another Webster dictionary we don't know about.

MAC

(*incredulous*) *¿No les pagan?*

WILL

Come on, you knew that.

MAC

Ok, man. Just a little brotherly advice, I'd re-examine this whole *cosa* here and you're involvement. Sounds pretty fishy.

WILL

Well, there's a philosophy, that you sacrifice through your service.

MAC

*Que chingaos?* Sounds a little *holy roly* to me.

WILL

I hear you but it's the backbone of the union. It's the same principal as volunteering at a church.

MAC

Sounds like you're getting soft. This ain't no church, college man. They're taking advantage.

WILL

Well, that advantage gives the union its edge.

MAC



Did they wash your brain out with Borax super strength or que? That sounds *medio estúpido*, to me, with all due respect, of course. But what do I know? I'm a lowly truck driver trying to make a buck.

MARI

You're more than that.

MAC

I didn't know you thought so highly of me, sis. I'm touched.

*CHARLIE and CHON enter.*

WILL

Hey. We've been waiting. Mac was just leaving

MAC

Yeah. You almost missed my beautiful presence. Where did you park the truck?

CHARLIE

Sorry. You know how it is around here.

MAC

No, I don't.

CHON

Every day, it's a 7.5 on the richter scale. Everyone's got a beef: the Birchers, the Farm Bureau, agribusiness, the chamber of commerce. You name it.

MAC

Sounds like people don't like you.

CHON

Well, if it wasn't for the *campesinos*...

WILL

Mac, this is Charlie and Chon, Charlie works....

MAC

So, where's the truck? I got a *jale en una media hora* (*I've got a gig in a half an hour*) .

CHARLIE

We're making change and trying to give people the basics to live on and in the establishment's....

MAC

.....Excuse me? What are you talking about? I came here to fix a truck. And just so you know, before all you people came, I thought things worked pretty well here.

CHARLIE

Well, you haven't been out there working *la pisca* (*the picking*).

MAC

And you have? I've been close enough to see a lot of the *raza* with jobs.

CHON

Jobs that pay nothing.

MAC

They're making more than my brother-in-law, here.

WILL

That's my choice.

MAC

I know a lot of people. And I tell you it was working.

CHARLIE

Listen, Mac, your sister and brother think you can help us because you do know everyone. You know the ins and outs of the community. You know the players. You could be influential.

MAC

How do they know all that? They've been around for about a minute...

MARI

About a month, Mac, but people talk. And, we hear good things, that you're the steward of the local.

MAC

Yeah, so?

CHARLIE

Well, you know, the UFW and teamsters aren't particularly getting along.

MAC

I don't know anything about it.

CHARLIE

We know people like you. You care about them. You're a leader. If we have someone like you on our side -who the community respects it lessens the fear for those who are too afraid to strike.

MAC

(To WILL and MARI) Where's this going?

MARI

Mac, you were always the most popular guy in high school. People like being around you.

MAC

I wish I had time to talk about my sparkling personality but I got a job to do so give me the keys to your truck and I'm outta here.

WILL

Mari's truck doesn't need fixing.

MARI

Will? What the hell?

WILL

It's true. Let's lay it on the table. Mac's family.

MAC

What am I doing here?

MARI

We wanted you to talk to Charlie and Chon and we didn't know how else to get you here.

MAC

Well, so far *hermanita*, it's not going well. I don't like Charlie and Chon hasn't said a fuckin' word.

CHON

Hey, *compa*, no disrespect meant. We're just trying to figure out if you feel the way we do about the rights of our *gente*.

WILL

And, I know you do, Mac.

CHARLIE

We'd like you to join our cause and since we're already working with your family we thought...

MAC

You're barking up the wrong tree.

MARI

There could be benefits for you that extend to your family, right Chon?

CHON

Right.

MAC

Sister girl, I don't know what benefits you're talking about but I'm not interested in any further discussion. The party is over.

*[He starts to leave]*

WILL

Our people are working like burros out there, man. We can't look the other way?

MAC

Are you saying I'm looking the other way?

MARI

Mac, listen, didn't Linda's sister...

MAC

Let your husband answer, *por favor*. (to WILL) Are you suggesting I'm looking the other way? Are you?

WILL

I'm not saying that, Mac. I'm on your side. Semper Fi.

MAC

Good. Just checking.

WILL

I owe you. You know that. Semper Fi.  
So, I'm watching out for you. This might be a good deal for you.

MAC

**Thought that was all in the past.**

*[MARI jumps in unsure of herself but trying nonetheless...]*

MARI

**Mac, listen to me.**

MAC

**Excuse me, I'm talking to your husband.**

MARI

**Didn't Linda's sister work at Inter-Crops with bad arthritis in her hands?**

MAC

**How did you know that?**

MARI

**Uh, well, it doesn't matter. If they had a union contract, she would have health insurance. At least, that's what I'm understanding.**

MAC

**Inter-crops is never going to sign with Chavez. How did you know that, about Linda's sister?**

MARI

**It's, ah, a small town. People talk.**

MAC

**Right.** *(doesn't believe her)*

MARI

**Inter-crops would sign if there were enough *campesinos* who wanted to unionize. I'm no expert but....**

MAC

**Linda's sister is not interested. And I'm not interested in hearing you of all people talk about unions.**

MARI

**She's not interested because she's too sick to work at 42 years old. That's crazy, Mac. And now her kids are working in the fields?**

MAC

She's lucky to have them.

MARI

The kids shouldn't be out there and she needs to take better care of herself.

MAC

Teamsters have health plans, *sonsa*.

MARI

But, not as good.

MAC

Mind your own business. What do you know? Besides, our family worked the fields. I don't see us suffering.

MARI

That's because Mom pushed us out. Not everyone's as lucky.

WILL

Let's get together with Linda. Fill you guys in on what the union is planning.

MARI

Let's do that, Mac.

MAC

You want to get together? I'm surprised you even called.

MARI

I'm surprised you came.

WILL

Union or not, we should get together, see the kids.

CHARLIE

This is great. We need some local heroes....

*To CHARLIE*

MAC

Let's get this straight, *cabron*. You and your kind are a pain in the ass. I don't want you poking around in my private life. This whole thing, this Chavez thing has made *puro desmadre* of our lives. And I had kept it at a distance until you guys showed up with all your fancy college talk and your do gooder attitude. Thinking you're all high class and have all the answers. Changing

everything. You don't know. You don't know the systems we have in place to make this work. It was a good life.

And now you got my sister and her *marido* involved? Good move because they think they're high class, too.

Mari  
That's not fair, Mac.

Mac  
(to Will and Mari) When we meet, I want only family, there. Family. I don't want any of these *cabrones* near me again. Got it? I'll call you, *hermanita*. It's a truce.

*He exits and slams the door. A moment's pause...*

WILL  
He went for it.

MARI  
Why did you tell him my truck didn't need fixing?

WILL  
It was true.

MARI  
We almost lost him there.

WILL  
But we got him back. Right? He went for it.

CHON  
You both did a good job.

WILL  
Thanks.

CHON  
Mari, you're a natural.

MARI  
I was ok. Trying to save it. He didn't know you Charlie. He was getting flustered. But Mac's right, what do I know?

WILL  
No, you did good. We did good. I tried to....

CHARLIE

...I stepped back once I saw that, Mari. Thanks.

MARI  
Well, I just know him.

CHON  
Good instincts, Mari.

*[Will notices the attention Mari is getting. Proud, but it's complicated, you know.]*

MARI  
That Lettie. She knows what she's talking about.  
Preparation's the key.

CHARLIE  
She'll be happy to hear how it went.

MARI  
Oh my God, when he started to ask how I knew about Linda's sister, I just threw in that thing about it being a small town. I wasn't going to tell him Charlie told me. But, he didn't buy it.

WILL  
No, really. You handled it well.

*LETTIE enters.*

LETTIE  
Guys, turn on the TV.

CHARLIE  
What's up?

LETTIE  
The moratorium's today. It's the 29<sup>th</sup>. The cops are harassing protesters and making arrests. Tear gas everywhere. It's a mess.

*Lights shift slowly as....*



SCENE FIVE

All exit except MARI who listens to the moratorium unfold. We hear audio sound bites from newscasters of the time, the riot that unfolds, the announcement of the killing of Ruben Salazar.

*There is a layering of images of the Chicano moratorium, August 29, 1970, UFW rallies in Salinas, headlines from El Malcriado: killing of Ruben Salazar, police tear gassing demonstrators in East L.A.-everything happening at once.*

MARI watches, alone on stage. As lights shift she walks into the office and picks up the phone. The news is not good.

*Lights slowly shift to:*

SCENE SIX

*EL MALCRIADO OFFICE*

*Two Weeks later*

*Mid September*

*[There are stacks of newspapers everywhere tied up ready to be distributed. MARI seems rushed, anxious as she tries to organize the mess and get the newspapers delivered.]*

MARI

**Too goddamn much. Lettie, I thought these were going to get delivered today. By the time people get them it WILL be the end of September. We've got to move them.**

LETTIE

**I'm working on it. Maybe you should call them again.**

MARI

**When's Chon getting here?**

LETTIE

**I think now.**

MARI

**Oh, God. Maybe, I can just organize them better and he won't notice. No, I know, let's move them into the back room.**

LETTIE

**There's no time.**

MARI

**Ugh. You're right.**

*[WILL enters.]*

WILL

**Hey.**

MARI

**Hey, talk to your son. You have to help me with him. It's like I'm raising him all by myself. I told him, he didn't know those guys he went down with...**

WILL

He knew them from the dorms.

MARI

But, he didn't really know them.

WILL

He knows more than you're giving him credit for...really,  
MARI, stop. You're obsessing and it's not helping.

*[CHON enters.]*

CHON

Orale. What's all this?

WILL

Welcome back. How was Salinas?

CHON

I'll tell you once we clear this place. You know how I feel  
about messes.

WILL

Yeah, we're taking care of it. There's a lot more demand  
for the paper.

CHON

Alright, well, hurry, man, we've got another issue to get  
out and we don't have time to wait around until someone  
comes to pick up this shit. You know what I mean? By the  
way, thanks for covering. Good job.

WILL

No problem.

CHON

So, who's picking up? Call 'em.

WILL

Actually, Mari's the contact.

MARI

Yeah, I'll call again. Listen, Chon, I don't know if you  
heard, but my son was arrested in the march.

CHON

Is he ok?

MARI

He's fine. But it scared the hell out of me.

CHON

What did they charge him with?

MARI

They dropped the charges.

WILL

You know, a bunch of his buddies drove down from UCSB. College kids. You can't blame them for wanting to be involved.

MARI

He had no business driving down to L.A. I don't even know who he is anymore. This whole thing has thrown him off.

WILL

You can't tell me all this hasn't affected you? Whose idea was it to send all these extra papers out? Whose?

MARI

Ok. Ok. It was my idea. The reality is, Chon, that my kid put himself out there in danger, uninformed, acting like he was going to a church picnic. And it shook me up so much that I started well, you know, seeing the other side of things. He needs to be more informed. Anyway, so, I asked where he hung out and who I should talk to and, now, we're sending out more copies of the paper to kids like him.....

*[...overlap...]*

CHON

.....Ok. Good call. Good call.....

MARI

.....More people should be reading the paper....

CHON

.....You're right. You're right. At the moment we don't have anyone focused on getting it out more..

MARI

...I'll work on that. Let me do it.

CHON

Ok. Just make sure when they get ordered they get delivered. And, I'm sorry about your kid.

MARI

Thanks.

CHON

Listen, Will, we've got to do a Ruben Salazar piece. We'll make room for it. You know, Ruben Salazar—friend of the farm worker, journalist, killed August 29<sup>th</sup> and then details.

WILL

Mari had a good suggestion. I'm not sure it's gonna work but...

CHON

...Well, what is it?

MARI

I thought we could do a short piece about the Chicano struggle—the lack of political power, high drop-out rate, Vietnam.

CHON

You gonna write it?

MARI

I could take a stab at it. I'm just learning about the issues. But my son suggested a few people to interview.

*[CHARLIE enters and stands by the door until CHON finishes.]*

CHON,

No it's too much. Will, include a couple of sentences in your Salazar piece. Ok, this issue, guys, remember, is focused on the violence in Salinas, with specific examples. And I have a couple of "traitors" I want to expose. Thinking about expanding that feature. Lot's of people working against us. Ok? That's it. Will, let's connect about your piece.

*[MARI goes to make a phone call. LETTIE busies herself with photos. CHARLIE goes to join CHON and WILL as they talk.]*

WILL  
Hey, stranger.

CHARLIE  
How's it going?

WILL  
I can't believe we've been here almost three months.  
There's no time to think.

CHARLIE  
Didn't I tell you?

WILL  
How was Boston?

CHARLIE  
It's a strong hold.  
Millions of Americans are boycotting grapes.

CHON  
And, it's a lot more cultured for *este hüey, el Boo*, in  
Boston. He's turning into quite a *wine-ito* over there.

CHARLIE  
*Cabrón*, you're never going to let me live that down.

CHON  
Never. And he met a *muchacha* over there.

CHARLIE  
You are such an old lady. *Chismosa*.

CHON  
What? It's true.

WILL  
I've never been to Boston.

CHARLIE  
My family's there so it makes it easy for me to go back and  
do meetings. We'll have to get you there.

WILL  
Mari might like that.

CHON

(to Will) Ok. It's not Boston, but how would you like to go to Salinas? I thought you could do some of the interviews with the organizers that are there for the next issue. You could take Mari maybe for a week or so. Finish the Salazar article and you can go.

WILL

It sounds great.

CHON

By the way, you don't have to take Mari. Your call.

WILL

Are you kidding? She won't let me leave her.

CHON

And, she's good. Growing, taking initiative.

CHARLIE

Have you had a chance to see Mac and his wife?

WILL

Hasn't happened yet. We'll keep trying.

MARI

What are you guys conspiring? Hey, Charlie.

CHON

I'm proposing that you and Will go to Salinas to do some interviews.

MARI

When?

CHON

Couple of weeks. I don't have anyone else to do it and I've got to start thinking ahead toward the next issue. We've got some crew there already but they're working on getting this one out.

MARI

What are you doing here, Charlie?

CHARLIE

What? I came to visit, say hi.

MARI

I don't buy that. Every time, you show your face, my blood pressure goes up a notch.

CHARLIE

You might see your brother when you go to Salinas.

MARI

Ok.

CHARLIE

The situation we're in now is serious. Kircher from the AFL-CIO was threatened and intimidated by twenty teamster goons at his motel room.

CHON

Two guys pointed a shotgun at Chris Peña, our photographer and told him "take one more picture and I'll blow your guts out."

MARI

Teamsters?

CHARLIE

Yeah.

CHON

So, going to Salinas is not a walk in the park.

*[MARI and WILL are silent.]*

WILL

You're ok about it?

MARI

Yeah. I'm ok about it. We should go.

*[Lights shift as MARI and WILL are left alone as all exit.]*

*We see them change. WILL dons a hat, a jacket. MARI carries a bag with a tape recorder and notebook. Signage changes to indicate SALINAS OFFICE. This can be projected. Consider simply transforming office to give it a slightly different look than its Delano counterpart.]*





SCENE SEVEN

OUTSIDE THE SALINAS OFFICE

Two weeks later.

October

*[Now in Salinas, WILL and MARI have just returned from their interviews and wait for MAC outside of the office which is empty and visibly lit in this scene.]*

MARI

I think they're good. There's a lot of material to edit and you can write a good intro.

WILL

We might even be able to get two articles out of it.

MARI

I could write the other one, maybe focus on women?

WILL

Sure. Let's see what Chon thinks, but, yeah.

*[MARI checks her watch.]*

MARI

He's late.

WILL

He'll be here.

MARI

How we going to bring up Charlie's idea?

WILL

Play it by ear.

MARI

We should be more prepared. He called you?

WILL

Yeah. Caught me at the office. Said his truck got hit. Needed a ride to the shop.

MARI

Wonder what happened.

WILL

Apologized for not getting back to us. Anyway, the more we hang out with him the better.

MARI

'Member when he came to my *quince* with a big ole *stain* on his white t-shirt?

WILL

It was red wine but he said it was tie dye.

MARI

My brother—the character. I miss that version of him. Before Korea.

WILL

Yeah. I haven't heard you talk about home for a while.

MARI

I got tired of hearing myself say how much I missed it.

WILL

Do you still?

MARI

Of course, I do. I miss my things. Our lumpy bed. Coffee in the morning. Reading the paper. My car. *I know, very bourgeois of me.* I miss my boy whose growing up. That picture he sent us. A beret? Really?

WILL

I know. I think we'd miss him more if we were still living at home. It was good leaving when we did, right?

MARI

I guess.

WILL

Excuse me. Why am I never right?

MARI

Ok, sweetheart. You're right. *Gawd*, so sensitive.

WILL

Just want to hear you say it, again.

MARI

You're right.

WILL

Sweet music to my ears. Yes.

MARI

Can I continue?

WILL

You may.

MARI

Now, I feel silly.

WILL

No, go on.

MARI

Well, when *Mijo* (*son*) called me after the moratorium he sounded so excited, you know. But all I wanted to do was hold him and keep him sheltered...It so hard to let go...

WILL

Yeah. I know.

MARI

He's so young. He's only 18 and we've sent him off.

WILL

He was ready. And he's almost 19.

MARI

Don't you miss him?

WILL

I do miss him. I told you I did.

MARI

It's like part of me has been ripped away.

WILL

I know.

MARI

Sometimes, here, I feel like we've no past. Just the present. Like what our life was like before is not

important. It's all about who and what we are now and in the future. There's no personal. But, I have you still and when I look at you I see my son and our life before and it makes me feel better. That's all. Is that corny?

WILL

No.

MARI

I'm afraid we'll never get it back.

WILL

We will. We'll get it back. And it'll be better.

*A moment.*

MARI

I'm glad we did this.

WILL

Salinas?

MARI

Yeah. And, together.

WILL

We've *been* together

MARI

I mean alone. It's nice to be alone with you without the other volunteers around. You know what I mean?

WILL

I do.

MARI

And earlier, what I said, I, I'm actually getting used to the pace and the people. I'm fine. And, it's only for a year. So... (*sees WILL shift*) That's our deal, right?

WILL

Maybe.

MARI

A year. That's what you said.

WILL

Ok. Ok. But, I'm getting a lot more responsibility, and this is a good place for you. You might not see it but I do.

[MAC enters.]

MAC

Hey, sorry, I'm late. What are you doing out here?

WILL

Waiting for you.

MARI

We just got back from doing some interviews.

MAC

For El Malcriado? Hell of a name for a newspaper: bad kid. Isn't that what Pops used to call me: *(imitates his father)* "Callate, malcriado!"

WILL

....Isn't it like ill bred kid?.....

MARI

.....I've heard rebel kid.....

MAC

Whatever. So, that's what you guys are doing in town?

WILL

Yeah.

MAC

Busy.

MARI

Yeah. How bout you? What are you doing in Salinas?

MAC

Business.

WILL

For the local?

MAC

Nah. Been doing deliveries. My term's almost over. I'm done with all that. Too much pressure.

MARI

Really? Sounds like things are getting a little rough.

MAC

Who you been talking to?

WILL

Charlie.

MAC

I don't like him.

WILL

He's alright.

MARI

How's Linda?

MAC

She wanted me to tell you that things got crazy with her work *y todo*, but she still wants to see you.

MARI

I want to see her.

MAC

How much longer you staying in Salinas?

WILL

Going back to Delano in the morning.

MAC

Thought you'd be here for the big rally tomorrow?  
What time was that?

WILL

Think at two. Yeah, out on Fairview. Castle Farms.

MAC

Big shindig, huh? At Castle Farms? Who knew?

WILL

Yeah. Big event.

MAC

So, you living in Delano full time now?

WILL

Yeah, for at least a year, maybe more.

MAC

That's a mistake.

WILL

The union's getting stronger.

MAC

Come on, man. It's an amateur operation. They can't even organize a hiring hall.

MARI

It's powerful, Mac.

MAC

Hardly. So, who's coming to this thing?

Will

People from all over.. The press. They'll be there, too.

MAC

Well, nobody wants them here. Nobody.

WILL

That's wrong, brother. The workers do.

MARI

It's national. People are watching. Supporting. Cesar's really moving....

MAC

*(he might laugh)* I'm sorry. I can't get used to you looking this way and mouthing Chavista rhetoric. Don't you miss your little church lunches and your pretty little dresses? Hey, Willy, sorry to rush, man, but we should go. I told the shop I'd be there in a half hour.

Will

My truck's in back. Let's go.

*[They begin to exit.]*

MARI

*(To MAC)*

So, you've made up your mind.



MAC

**About what?**

MARI

**The UFW?**

MAC

**The UFW's never on my mind, *mija*. *Vamonos*, Willy. After I pick up my *troca*, let's go grab a beer like old times.**

MARI

**We're leaving early, right?**

MAC

**What are you worried about, *hermanita*? I'll have him home in plenty of time to tuck him into bed. He'll still be yours. I won't get in the middle.**

MARI

**I'm not worried.**

WILL

**Early is better. Fog over Pacheco Pass. But a beer sounds good. I'll drop you off, then I gotta run an errand. I can meet you there.**

MARI

**So what time will you be back?**

MAC

***Hijole*, pussy whipped. The third degree over a beer. You haven't changed.....**

MARI

**....Well, I was hoping you had.....**

WILL

**.....Come on, guys, don't start.....**

MARI

**....It's just that I'm going to start transcribing the interviews so I'll be at the office.**

WILL

**Got it.**

MAC

Mac and Will together again. Don't be too jealous. I'll make sure he doesn't pick up any little chickies.....

WILL

...Lay off her.....I'll call you.

*[They exit as MARI makes her way back into the office to begin transcribing. She puts on head phones as actors enter and don costumes for the growers, teamsters, goons and farmworker. They perform the ACTO as Mari transcribes.]*

SCENE EIGHT

ACTO #3

*[Grower and Teamster Sweetheart enter arm and arm-real lovebirds. Both wear masks and signs around their neck that read GROWER AND TEAMSTER SWEETHEART. Teamster Sweetheart wears a wedding veil.]*

Grower

**Oh, cupcakes, it' five years since we tied the knot and I'm still so in love, poopsie woopsie.**

Teamster Sweetheart

**Oh my darlin' it's been so quiet here in Salinas-our honeymoon valley where we can do naughty things together.**

Grower

**Describe those naughty things to me and make it dirty.**

Teamster Sweetheart

**We undercut farmworkers wages over and over and over again.**

Grower

**Oh yeah, yeah, tell me more, more.**

Teamster Sweetheart

**We beat it into to them harder and harder that we're the only union of choice. We make it so HARD for them to do anything else. Beatings, and slashings, and burnings. Oh yeah.**

Grower

**Oh, girl, you're speaking my language. Yes. Yes.**

*[Suddenly, actor who is playing the UFW enters with a tiny Huelga flag on a long "puppet" pole.*

*As if in a distance the UFW starts chanting:]*

UFW

**¡Huelga, huelga, huelga!**

*[The UFW manipulates the flag as if it is a pesky fly buzzing around.]*

Grower

**Pesty bugger.  
Swat if for me, honey.**

Teamster Sweetheart  
**Shoo there. Shoo. There you go, poops, now back to  
naughty.**

*[The UFW returns this time with a larger flag on a  
pole. Does the same thing.]*

*[This time we hear the chanting louder and closer.]*

UFW  
**¡Huelga, huelga, huelga. ¡Salgánse de los files esciroles!**  
*(Get out of the fields, you scabs!)*

Grower  
**Swat that thing.**

Sweetheart  
**I just did**

Grower  
**Well, I'll call in my dogs so you don't have to get your  
pretty little hands dirty.**

*[Grower whistles and TEAMSTER GOON enters wearing a  
mask and a sign that reads GOON.]*

*UFW now enters full size with his normal size Huelga  
flag.*

*It is clear that the UFW is played by the actor  
playing WILL.]*

UFW  
**Teamster raids are an act of treason against the  
aspirations of farmworkers.**

**Traitors, traitors, traitors.**

Growers  
**What's he saying about ass wipes?  
(to the goons) Get him.**

*[In a choreographed move, the teamster goon with prop  
baton or baseball bat begins to hit the UFW as the  
Grower and Sweetheart egg him on.]*

Grower  
**Hit him harder and harder and harder.**

*[The move goes from acto style to realistic  
As this transition happens the actors throw off their  
costume pieces and acto props as the lights shift to a  
realistic scene. It has turned dark and real. The  
actors start kicking the actor who has been playing  
the UFW.]*

Grower  
**...and harder and harder and harder and harder.....**

*[Suddenly the acto characters scatter leaving  
WILL on the ground.]*

*[Lights up on MARI kneeling over WILL in the  
Salinas field office.]*

MARI  
**Oh, my God. Who did this?**

WILL  
*.....(trying to compose himself)*

MARI  
**What happened to him?**

LETTIE  
**We found him outside.  
He must have driven himself back here.**

*[CHON and CHARLIE enter from outside]*

CHON  
**Someone drove him back and carried his body to the front  
door of the office. There's blood on the passenger side.  
The truck looks pretty beat up.**

MARI  
**They just dumped him here. Why?**

CHARLIE  
**Make a statement.**

MARI

**Don't move.**

CHON  
**Who did this?**

MARI  
**Call an ambulance**

WILL  
**I'm fine..**

CHARLIE  
**You look pretty worked over. Do you remember anything?**

MARI  
**Charlie, not now, please.**

WILL  
**The Ramirez brothers. I went to serve papers to their two foremen.**

MARI  
**What papers? Where?**

CHON  
**The Giamatti Ranch. They've been hiring illegals to scab. Were you serving court docs?**

*[Will nods]*

WILL  
**The old Filipino volunteer...**

CHON  
**Juan?**

*[Will nods]*

WILL  
**He wasn't feeling well- so I volunteered to ....**

CHARLIE  
**...deliver the papers.**

WILL  
**Yeah.**

MARI  
**I thought you were going to have a beer with Mac.**

WILL

I never made it. It seemed simple. Just serve the papers and get out.

MARI

You had no business there.

CHARLIE

So, what happened?

MARI

Don't make him talk.

WILL

I drove my truck onto the ranch. Saw a cloud of dust behind me. Someone following me. I stopped. Got out. They swerved around me. Backed up to hit me. I jumped on my hood to avoid the hit. Tried to get back into my truck but door was stuck. Gave them time to grab me and knock me to the ground.

MARI

Oh, my God. That's enough. He needs to be still.

CHARLIE

They must have known who you were.

MARI

How?

CHON

The paper's a target because we call people on their shit and it's out in the open for all to see.

MARI

No one knows us here.

CHARLIE

Was it the two older Ramirez brothers?

WILL

Yeah. The Giamatti's showed up later with —looked like irrigation piping. They brought a couple of scabs as back up. They put a match to the court docs. Threw them at me. Stepped on my hand. Felt the hits. I blacked out.

MARI

I can't believe you moved him?

LETTIE

We didn't think about it.

CHARLIE

Ok. The ambulance will be here soon. Meanwhile, I'll call the main office and let them know what happened. This isn't an isolated incident. It's been happening all over.

We don't have any control over how the growers, or even the teamsters conduct themselves.

MARI

He looks like he can't move that arm.

CHON

Let's get him to the hospital. It may not be as bad as it looks.

WILL

Mari?

MARI

I'm here. Just be still. Be still.

*[Sound of ambulance siren louder and louder..as  
MARI holds WILL...]*

WILL

I saw a truck parked in the distance with a guy sitting stone faced. Just watching the pipes swinging, the blood spurting. It was Mac.

*[Lights shift slowly.]*



SCENE NINE

ACTO #4

*[Two figures enter. They waddle. They are the GROWER, and the TEAMSTERS. Joining them are the SCAB and the UFW who is played by MARI. They wear signs around their necks. The GROWER AND the TEAMSTERS are inflated with balloons inside their costumes that give them big muscles and big stomachs. Both of them hold bags of money and are eating lettuce.]*

El Grower

**Lettuce, the ambrosia of the Salinas Valley. Helps us keep our girlish figures.**

Los Teamsters

**Hmm. Yes. Delicioso.**

UFW

**Senores. You need to share some of that money with the workers. We demand elections or we BOYCOTT LETTUCE.**

El Grower

**Well, girlie, can't you see we've got a good thing going on here. And, there is no way in hell, we are letting you in on it. Isn't that right?**

Los Teamsters

**We got this covered, girrrrrrrrrrl. See.**

*[Refers to scab]*

El Scab

**Oh, boss, I love you so much. You are so gud to me. Better than my own mah-ther. When the strike comes, you WILL find out what side I am on.**

El Grower

**See, he doesn't take this business of strikes and elections, too seriously and neither should you. You got no RE-course but to leave my land.**

*[The Teamster begins to chase the UFW with a irrigation pipe. But the UFW is much more agile than the TEAMSTER. The SCAB exits in fear.]*

Los Teamsters  
**You worthless little bugger!**

*The UFW pulls out a giant pen.*

UFW  
**Well, if strikes and elections don't work we have POWER IN  
THE PEN and WE WILL DEFLATE YOU.**

El Grower  
**What the hell!**

*[The LOS TEAMSTER and the GROWER start to run but they are so big, they can't get away. The UFW catches up to the GROWER and deflates him first. He spins as the air is let out of him and exits offstage.*

*The UFW then runs after the TEAMSTER. She catches him and then deflates him. He spins around as the air is let out of him. As he spins, the actor playing the TEAMSTER tosses off his costume and sign and lands on his back as MAC.*

A soundscape of applause, cheers, chants POWER IN THE PEN, POWER IN THE PEN, QUE VIVA EL MALCRIADO!!!  
transition into .....]



SCENE TEN

SALINAS  
Next day

[MARI kicks MAC who is under a truck, fixing it.]

MAC  
What?

MARI  
Get up.

MAC  
God damn it. That hurt.

MARI  
Will said he saw you at the ranch when he got beat up and you didn't do a thing to stop it.

MAC  
What the hell are you talking about?

MARI  
He saw you sitting in a truck watching as he got beat up and now he's in the hospital.

MAC  
Mari, go home before things really start to get rough. These people play dirty.

MARI  
How could you, Mac?

MAC  
Why are you always blaming me for shit?

MARI  
Because, somehow you're always to blame.

MAC  
You're in over your head. Man, Will could'a married anyone and he picked you. Unbelievable.

MARI  
You lie. You're a *vendido*. You're working for the growers.

MAC

No seas *pendeja*. Even if I wanted to sell out, no one's buying.

MARI

You said you were going to quit the teamsters.

MAC

You think it's that easy? You think I love living in *Del-ahno*, the crotch of the universe? You think I love tumble weed rolling across my lawn, the aromatic smell of rotting row crops after harvest. I'm making a living. How much you getting paid?

MARI

You're such a hypocrite. You were a cop, a public servant. A peace keeper. What happened to all that?

MAC

I'm making a living doing this. It's not that hard to figure out, *sonsa*. You know how hard it was being a cop on that police force. The only brown man trying to prove that I was worthy. I had served my country—and that didn't mean a goddamn thing to them—all those accusations—that I was using too much force. They were jealous of me, and you and *toda la familia* believing them.

MARI

Something happened to you in Korea, Mac. You need help.

MAC

I was fine. Will was taking care of me until you got into the picture and broke us up.

MARI

I didn't break you up.

MAC

How could I have even known where Will was going yesterday? He had already dropped me off.

MARI

You followed him. It's not that hard to figure out considering your history.

MAC

Don't start. Don't start bringing up the past, bringing up Pop.

MARI  
Who's talking about Pop? Oh, my God. You haven't changed.

MAC  
.....That was an accident.....

MARI  
.....you knew his balance was....you hit him, bad. And you were his favorite. Do you know what that did to him?

MAC  
.....He was always sick. He was weak....

MARI  
...He was your father, my God... And now, Will? We've been here before, Mac. Same place. Same topic. Repeating ourselves.

MAC  
This is bullshit.

MARI  
You know, after the thing you had with Pops, he told us he never wanted to be left alone with you. I wanted to press charges so bad but I did nothing because Dad didn't want me to... but with Will, I'm not going to let this one go.

MAC  
I blacked out. I told all of you. But this thing with Will, I didn't touch him and that's the truth.

MARI  
You didn't touch him but you watched him. You're dangerous, Mac. So now, I'm watching you, too. Be careful.

*[She exits as lights shift to...]*

*Sound scape of Salinas boycott, rallies, snippets of Cesar speeches: I SIT IN A SALINAS JAIL. BECAUSE I AM PREPARED TO PAY THE PRICE FOR CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE". It accelerates to a frenzy. Suddenly lights up.]*

SCENE ELEVEN

*EL MALCRIADO OFFICE-DELANO*

*Three weeks later.*

LETTIE

**We just finished the profiles.**

CHON

**Good. Who's the lead in?**

LETTIE

**Maria Elena Meda. "Darling of the growers – betrays her people, cynical traitor", that kind of thing, plus a photo.**

CHON

**A close-up?**

LETTIE

**Yeah. Is Mari coming in?**

CHON

**Of course. She smells blood. Not good.**

LETTIE

**I don't think she gets how these profiles affect the families, the kids.**

CHON

**She's not thinking straight right now.**

LETTIE

**Don't we have a policy that we don't expose relatives?**

CHON

**Not that I know of.**

*[MARI and CHARLIE enter.]*

CHON

**Speaking of the devil. How did it go?**

MARI

**He's getting better. The cast will come off in another two weeks and then he'll just wear the arm sling. You know**

nothing broke in his hand, which is a shock. His hearing is still off and the doctors don't know what's causing that so that's worrisome. And the bruising is still bad...he wanted to come in...

LETTIE

It's too early.

CHARLIE

He looks good but still ...

CHON

It'll take time.

MARI

Yeah. I know.

LETTIE

He took a big hit. And he's not been the only one. There've been a lot of similar ones reported. Same style. The irrigation piping.

CHARLIE

Well, there's a lot of shit going on everywhere. With Cesar in jail, the violence is picking up, and the protests, too.

MARI

It's been hard to focus on anything else. But people have been amazing.

CHON

Well, all to your credit.

MARI

Thanks. Ok. What have you found out about Mac? I can't wait to print a big picture of him so everyone can know he's to blame. We should put a photo of Will next to him all bruised up.

CHON

Hold on, now. There've been witnesses who have seen Mac in action. He's actually not doing any of the heavy lifting. He always stays in the background but we're pretty sure he's behind a lot of shit that's been going down.

MARI

He's still playing innocent. Denying everything.



CHARLIE

Some of the strikers say he organizes teams of scabs. There are photos of him threatening farmworkers, holding a shotgun.

MARI

So, we've got it. We've got proof.

CHON

There's still no proof that he was at the ranch that day.

MARI

But will saw him.

CHON

It's not enough. Will was getting the shit beat out of him. He could have seen someone who looked like Mac.

MARI

No. It was Mac. I know it. I know it. When Mac and Will were in Korea there was an incident at this place called Heartbreak something. Hill? No, Heartbreak Ridge. It was in the middle of heavy fog and when it lifted the 24th found themselves in a field strewn with dead Korean soldiers. The stench was unbearable. Made everyone sick. There was this one Korean soldier, barely alive and he pointed his gun at Will. And Mac, seeing the guy, shot him, blew his head off, and the insides of this man's head exploded all over my brother. And he loses it. Cracks.

He's never the same. They get home, and Mac won't let Will alone. Follows him around, clings to him. Mac jokes that Will's paying his debt for saving his life. Will takes care of his every need for a year. So, when I get into the picture, and Will and I get serious, my brother can't handle it. He's so jealous. And I know, crazy as this sounds, he did this to my husband to hurt me.

CHARLIE

Mari, that doesn't prove he was there.

MARI

That day, when we saw him in Salinas, he asked us when we were leaving town and if we were going to stay for the picketing the next day. He asked what time it was and Will told him everything: place, time, who was going to be

there. That's not public knowledge. He played us. That's why there was so much chaos that day.

LETTIE

.....because Mac was behind it?

MARI

Exactly. He was using us and we were so friggin' naïve we didn't know.

CHON

Ok. We've got plenty to go on. But, we're not going to include the Will stuff. There's no tangible evidence.

MARI

My God. I've laid it all out for you.

CHARLIE

We don't need it.

CHON

We get the same results.

MARI

What are you afraid of?

CHON

Mari, there is so much evidence against him, he's going to be ostracized and we don't need to do a damn thing about it. It will happen on it's own. Believe me, I only have space in the paper to expose the Judas that no one knows.

People are talking. You don't need to get involved. He'll get his due and you don't have to get his family involved.

MARI

He didn't consider my family when he set Will up.

CHON

Com on, Mari, you're too angry to make a rational decision.

MARI

That's so condescending.

CHARLIE

We've got time to revisit this. I'm not comfortable, with why you want to do this, either. You have to live with the consequences.

MARI

What are you saying, because it's personal?

CHARLIE

Yes.

MARI

It's always about comfort with you, Charlie. Right?  
Can't get too uncomfortable.

CHON

That's not fair, Mari.

MARI

Why, because Charlie's too important to criticize? My  
brother's right. Charlie doesn't know anything about our  
people..

CHARLIE

I don't pretend to be an expert on your people.

MARI

Oh, really?

CHARLIE

This is about a cause we're fighting.

MARI

This is about my husband and son, and protecting them.

CHARLIE

I've got family, too, that I want to protect. My Dad is  
still organizing. I would prefer he wasn't. It's  
dangerous in the South right now. And, he's an old man.  
But his belief in causing change, keeps his motor running  
and I can't stop him. So, we are the same on some level  
with different needs. But our common goal here is to move  
people to action and you do that by focusing on the right  
kind of disruption that moves all of us forward and this  
isn't it.

CHON

This isn't about revenge, Mari.

MARI

You're in denial, all of you. Come on, exposing "enemies" of the union for harassing us, working against us? Printing their picture and their address? In my book, that's revenge.

CHON

No, it's retribution, a moral response to what's been done against us. We have to be clear about that. You hear me? Don't you dare confuse the two. What we do is disrupt the rules that have been set up against us. And we do that non-violently and judiciously.

CHARLIE

You can't push this. The role of an organizer, is to work with the people where they are, not where you are, or where you think they ought to be.

MARI

Who said I was an organizer? I'm a volunteer protecting her family.

CHON

The people we're fighting for are your family and our mission is to convince them that we can achieve justice together through collective action. So, every move we make is a joint decision. Got that?

*[Mari is silent as Chon and Charlie exits.]*

MARI

Charlie has his nerve. He doesn't even work for the paper.

LETTIE

He reps the union and the paper is the union. He has every right to be here.

MARI

Oh, God, I'm worried about Will. I mean he came here with such high hopes and now he ....He's just too naive. It's not good. And, if I can make it right, I will, even if I have to fight for it.

LETTIE

You should have seen me when I started. I was a chola chick from Fresno; right at the beginning of the Chicano movement. Everything was fight and we were trying to figure out who we were. I mean, we were making up words to define us. And, some of them stuck.

MARI

Like Chicano.

LETTIE

Yeah, like Chicano.

MARI

Even that. I don't know what the hell that means. It's embarrassing. It's like being political. A Mexican-American who's political, right?

LETTIE

Yeah, that's one way of thinking about it. Even though there are so many nationalities working for the union. I mean I think Charlie is a Chicano.

MARI

Oh, no. Really?

LETTIE

Think of it this way. The word Chicano serves as a frame; a kind of beautiful carved wood frame. And, anyone who is inside that frame, no matter what color, is a person that believes that she thrives inside community. She gives and the community gives back. It's an unbroken chain and we are forever tethered.

MARI

That's Will. He'd watch the news about the strike and say "those are our people, we have to help".

LETTIE

So your actions have to reflect not only yourself but how you affect your neighbor, your family, your country. And those conscious actions build and sustain a civilized nation. But, it's a struggle. No doubt about it. *No es facil.*

MARI

Mujer, you're pretty deep for a chola chick.

LETTIE

Girl, don't you know, Cholas are deep.

*[Lights shift to...  
Office reverts back to Delano.]*

SCENE TWELVE

EL MALCRIADO OFFICE-DELANO  
A couple of weeks later.

*WILL, MARI and CHARLIE return from the fields.*

*WILL collapses into a chair.*

MARI  
**You look like shit.** *(gets him some water)*

*WILL drinks the water.*

CHARLIE  
**Well, we can move you. You can work the boycott in another city. You can have your pick. Chicago, maybe.**

MARI  
**No, not now.**

CHARLIE  
**It's not that crazy. We move people around all the time. The two of you would be a great addition to any team and quite frankly, it would get you out of this environment and away from Mac.**

WILL  
**What about the paper?**

CHARLIE  
**...if you wanted to stay on...  
Mari, could move first and work as an organizer?  
She's got it in her.**

WILL  
**An organizer?**

MARI  
**I'm not going to leave Will, if that's what you're suggesting. So, don't waste your breath.**

CHARLIE  
**Mac could be more agitated with you around?**

MARI

I don't get you, Charlie. We brought Mac into all this at your suggestion, not ours and now you're blaming me for what's going on?

CHARLIE

Look, it's stressful for all of us.

MARI

Charlie, you send so many mixed messages. You confuse the whole issue and your timing couldn't be worse, really. I don't want to go anywhere. Will's not up to it.

WILL

You know, let me decide what I'm up to or not. I don't need either of you deciding what's good for me.

CHARLIE

Let's talk about this later.

WILL/MARI

.....

CHARLIE

I'll leave you two.

WILL

You do that.  
*(He exits)*

MARI

I'm not going without you.

WILL

You might as well. Obviously, I'm no good to anyone like this.

MARI

You're gonna make a full recovery.

WILL

I know that. No one else seems to believe it.

MARI

What do you want to do?

WILL

I want to get well. I want to stay here. Nothing's changed. Ok?

MARI

Ok. We're here. No argument.

WILL

(He takes her in) Look at you. You are really something.  
An organizer.

MARI

What? That's their thing.

WILL

And not yours?

MARI

I never imagined it.

WILL

Why not? You've taken all this on. You're brave. You speak  
the truth. You stand up to your brother. Everyone sees it.

MARI

It's your thing. Not mine.

WILL

Don't lie to yourself. You know you're made for this.  
And, maybe I'm not.

MARI

You are.

WILL

Maybe, not.

MARI

Oh, please.

WILL

I should just sit back and watch you become a *chingona* (bad  
ass) so I can say I told you so.

MARI

Very funny.

WILL

Fucking, Charlie. Getting Mac involved and now you.



MARI

We weren't exactly up front about Mac and you're the one that pushed me into this so why are you blaming Charlie?

WILL

I gotta have somebody to blame. I should'a never gone to that ranch.

MARI

But you did and he followed you. You're too trusting.

WILL

I tore out of there after I left him off. I was so late.

MARI

If he didn't follow you, how did he know where you were going?

WILL

I don't know.

MARI

We've got to let people know what he did.

WILL

Do we?

MARI

Yes. He could hurt more people. And, I'm getting push back from Chon but I'm going to keep pushing.

WILL

He's not going to take down the union single handedly. He's a cog in the wheel.

MARI

Lettie told me this story about how she had to turn in all these scabs and how she felt so much guilt over having to do this to her own people. But she overcame the guilt understanding that it was for the greater good.

WILL

This is your brother we're talking about, not some "community" member.

MARI

But when it's for the greater good? That's what I'm saying.

WILL

It's a tough call.

MARI

I know my brother. He brings up my father like it's a fresh wound and he keeps scratching it trying to draw blood. He's sick.

WILL

I thought he let that go. You know he's a vet and he...

MARI

No excuses. He's weak.

WILL

So, what are you saying? Kill the weak. Let the strong survive?

MARI

That's not what I meant....

WILL

...Look, I'm fine. I'm going to be fine. Really. Don't worry about me.

MARI

I am worried. I've seen this happen before and so have you. If something isn't done...he's....

WILL

Expose him?

MARI

Yes. What gnaws at me is that if we don't do it, we're hiding the truth. You're the one that always says the paper has power because it tells the truth. There's all these slogans that we shout out without really thinking about them. But, they're actually true. Power in the pen. That's true.

WILL

It is true. But, the movement can, well you know, depersonalize, make us forget, drift, float away from the familial, and well be careful.....

MARI

No, you be careful. That kindness of yours, that heart, I love, but when people are moving together and some one trips, you want to believe that there's someone to help them up but sometimes in a mass of people you get crushed. And that scares me... I don't know.

Will

Hey, did you hear the UFW has a secret weapon?

MARI

What are you talking about?

WILL

*(He jokes)* The UFW has a secret weapon and her name is Mari. The Teamsters have Mac. *(He puts his two hands out as if he is weighing each in a hand and comparing their weight. The hand with MARI proves to be heavier, very heavy.)* I think we win.

MARI

*(She lightens up)* That's lame and it's not even funny.

WILL

Come on, admit I'm right. Admit it.

*[He laughs. Then....]*

*[WILL holds his head and groans.]*

MARI

Ok. I'll admit you're kinda funny. You don't have to take it so hard. God. You're kinda funny, ok? *(She laughs having fun.)*

*[WILL touches one side of his temple.]*

WILL

Ugh. Too much sun today.

*[WILL touches both sides of his head. Grabs a bottle of aspirin. Downs a couple]*

MARI

**Really? I think your George Hamilton tan looks really, really good.**

WILL  
**Ugh.**

MARI  
**What? I like George Hamilton.**

WILL  
**My....(puts his hand to his mouth) Give me the....(he grabs a trash can and vomits into it)**

MARI  
**Will....(she grabs him and tries to hold him up as he holds his head.) What's wrong?**

WILL  
**Let me... sit...down...my ....**

*MARI begins to walk him to a chair when he collapses to the floor and takes MARI with her.*

MARI  
**Oh, my God. Will....Will.**

Blackout.

*Take your time with this transition. A song might be heard: YO QUIERO QUE A MI ME ENTIERREN. Simple and mournful. LETTIE might sing it.*

SCENE TWELVE

DELANO  
Days later

*[Lights up on MARI.*

*She stands very still holding a folded red and white UFW flag. She is flanked by black and white funeral flags (The background is black and the eagle is white)*

*LETTIE stands with her.]*

MARI  
I want to blame you so bad. I want to blame anyone and everyone who convinced my husband to come here. This place. This ugly dry place that he loved so much. I want to blame you for using him like he was somebody you could chew up and throw out. I want to blame my brother for stirring up this darkness. I want to blame myself for not holding him back.... I want to blame WILL, for leaving me and taking his heart, his sweet, sweet heart. He broke. Our promise We didn't even make a year. All this this and now he leaves me here. The joke's on me.

LETTIE  
Don't

MARI  
If I had stayed in San Jose, he never would have lasted here without me and he would have come back to me.

LETTIE  
Don't

MARI  
If I go now, where do I go now when he was always my home?

LETTIE  
You'll find a place.

MARI  
Will.

*[LETTIE stands near.]*

LETTIE

Listen, your son's about to sing, I can go get him before he starts. If you need him...

MARI

Don't. Don't bother him. *(beat)* He's got a good voice.

Will had a good voice in a Bob Dylan kind of way. He played, too. I always teased him. So, he stopped playing. Gave his guitar to our boy. I always felt guilty about that.

LETTIE

He probably lost interest.

MARI

He told me once he wanted me to be proud of him. And I was like "why are you telling me this? Of course I'm proud of you. Can't you tell? And, then I felt bad that I never told him enough of how proud I was of him and it goes on and on. Regret over this moment or that one.

LETTIE

Think about the good.

MARI

Do you think he knew how much I loved him? Do you? I worry...

LETTIE

He knew. You followed him here.

MARI

Do I stay here?

LETTIE

Decide later.

Why don't you come back in?

MARI

In a minute. Let me sit, just for a minute. If I just live one minute more, it's not so hard.

*[LETTIE exits. MARI stands.]*

*Lights shift to...]*  
*EL MALCRIADO OFFICE*  
*Weeks later.*

*[MARI walks into the office takes off her jacket, a suitcase is visible.*

*Lights up as she looks through some papers packing them in a brief case.*

*MAC enters. Disheveled. Drunk. A mess.]*

MAC  
**What's this? It's only been weeks and what, you're already moving on?**

MARI  
**Get out of here, Mac. Leave me alone.**

MAC  
**You're so cold hearted. *(kicks her suitcase)* Well, I'm not like you. I can't do that.**

MARI  
**You never could. I don't want to see you, Mac. Please, go.**

MAC  
**He's dead and you don't fuckin' care. *(He throws a chair and begins to sob)***

MARI  
**Is that what this is about? Your guilt?**

MAC  
**I didn't kill him. I didn't touch him. I wasn't anywhere near him. I saved his life once. Why would I take it now? He was my buddy, I would have taken a bullet for him if it had come to that.**  
*(He goes for her as if he's going to hit her, instead he trips)*

MARI  
**What are you going to do, hit me? So they can throw you in jail? *Por favor. No seas pendejo.* (Don't be an asshole)**

MAC

You accused me of all those lies.

MARI

It's true Mac. You know it. I know it. And I so wanted to let the world know, but you're lucky. There are good people here. And they wouldn't let me do that to Linda and the kids and they were right. I don't need to do anything to destroy you because you'll destroy yourself. That guilt is eating you up. And that makes me sad, very sad because I've lost a husband and brother.

MAC

Go back to San Jose and leave me alone.

MARI

I'm not going to San Jose.  
I'm going to Chicago.

MAC

Con ese, Charlie? To run and hide?

MARI

Charlie? You freak. I'm going alone to work for the boycott because its that successful. And Mac, the union's about to sign contracts with the growers in Salinas. We've won that battle for now. So you're sacrificing yourself to a losing cause.

MAC

He was my brother. Semper Fi. I didn't lay my hands on him. That's the truth. They were only going to rough him up. Rough him up. But it got out of hand and I couldn't move to do anything about it. I tried but I just couldn't move.

MARI

Ah. So that was the plan. To rough him up. And, that they did. That, they did. Go. Please. Just go.

*[Mari remains as Mac distraught and beaten leaves. The door closes behind him. Moment. Lights shift slowly.]*

*Mari grabs a hat and a sign that reads UFW RING LEADER. She tows the line between reality and acto.]*

UFW RING LEADER

Damas y caballeros, escuachame bien! From the deepest, darkest, reaches of Kern County we have found the enemy



bandaged and battle weary and have brought them here for all to see. Come closer, *companeros*, no *tengan miedo*. Cast your eyes upon the toothless, the cowardly, the vanquished, the defeated yesterday's news. What a glorious and victorious sight. Bring them in....

*[Enter el COYOTE and el PATRON. The COYOTE has an arm sling and a bandaged head. The PATRON walks with a crutch and bandaged hand. They limp. They are a sorry sight in which we delight. The ensemble elicits boos from the audience. ]*

COYOTE

*(Tries to howl. Its lame. He's pathetic)*

PATRON

This is a momentary set back. A momentary set back I tell you. These new contracts will mean nothing. Once I get some fresh RE-cruits for this little scuttle we're having out here in *Cal-lee-for-knee-I-a*, we will be back stronger than ever. Damn right. I am not going down without a fight. No siree. NOT WITHOUT A FIGHT. *(his bravado collapses and he starts to sob.)* I'm scared, Poopsie, where are you when I need you? Poops? Where for art thou?

MARI

*[To audience]*

Shall we let them know what we think of them?  
Shall we cast them off? Banish them from our land?  
Shall we?

*[Ensemble and Audience respond by saying yes.]*

I can't hear you.

*[Audience is louder: YES!]*

Se puede?

*[Ensemble and audience respond SI SE PUEDE.]*

Can we do this, people?

*[Ensemble and audience respond: YES, WE CAN!]*

The people have spoken. Remove them from our sight. But first know that we have won a battle, not the war and our vigilance to keep the fight going must remain strong because they will return with a vengeance.

Coyote and Patron  
(turning directly to the audience)

*Oh, yes.*

[The Coyote and Patron are removed.  
Ensemble begins to re-set the stage as MARI takes off her UFW RINGLEADER HAT and hands it to the actor playing LETTIE. Actor playing CHARLIE hands CHON MARI's suitcase.]

CHON

*Estas seguro? It's a struggle. It's not going to be easy.*

MARI

Chon, every day's a struggle here. I can't escape that, I guess. A lot is asked of you. The word sacrifice is bantered about constantly. But then I see people's faces - the striker's faces. I stare at their lines, so that I can know them. I read them. I study the wrinkle in the middle of their brow that's like a scar, or the deep canyons on their faces and those lines speak to me and they say that I am you. And I try to shake it off. I shake real hard but the face keeps staring back at me because it's true. That face is me. It's us.

CHON

*It's our cause.*

MARI

And, our effect. We're our own cause and our own effect. No one is doing it for us, you know? We do it for ourselves. And, that's power. And people feel that and want to be part of it. And, I've been so moved by that. Gente from all walks of life, all over the country, from the four corners, join us because our cause is just and long overdue. And we remind them to never forget those who labor day in and day out to pick the food we eat, to clean our homes, to take care of our children. There is honor in that. Not shame. And today in 1970, they may be humble people, but tomorrow their children will lead. And I want to be there for that. Make that happen. Because it will. We will stand on their shoulders. These are our giants. They sacrificed so that

**we could have a better life. And I, I will be forever grateful.**

*[The ensemble circles near. Music plays. LETTIE helps MARI change into contemporary clothes. The ensemble watches. She ages. She transforms into an older woman in her mid 80's.]*

MARI

**And, over the years I continue to hope. I always hope. It's a light that I keep burning. I hope that I'm doing good. I hope that I do right. That I did right; for me and my son, my husband, my people, even my brother. I'm not sure but I keep hoping and causing and fighting for a just world. We all must.**

Blackout.

End of play.

ACTO ROLES

ACT ONE/PROLOGUE

PATRON played by actor who plays CHON  
SWEETHEART played by actor who plays MAC  
FARMWORKER played by actor who plays WILL  
UFW played by actor who plays LETTIE  
AFL-CIO played by actor who plays CHARLIE

SCENE THREE ACTO

COYOTE-MAC  
PATRONCITO-CHON  
SCAB-MARI  
STRIKER-LETTIE

SCENE EIGHT ACTO

GROWER-CHON  
SWEETHEART-MAC  
UFW-WILL

ACT TWO/SCENE ONE ACTO

EL GROWER-CHON  
LOS TEAMSTERS-MAC  
UFW-MARI

SCENE EIGHT ACTO

UFW RINGMASTER-MARI  
EL VENDIDO-MAC  
GROWER-CHON  
COYOTE-CHARLIE