

WHORES

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by Lee Blessing

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#502

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A violent order is disorder.

--Wallace Stevens

*Shoot first and inquire afterwards,
and if you make mistakes, I will
protect you.*

--Hermann Goering

CHARACTERS

Miou-Miou A whore, twenties
Josette Another whore, thirties
Angelique Another whore, forties
Carmencita Another whore, fifties
Raoul A retired General

(Author's note: while all the characters have non-English names, these are not their "real" names. Their accents—if any—depend on which of numerous roles they may be playing at the time)

Now. Florida.

(A porn film set: two walls of a room formed by flats connected at an angle. A door in one of them. A backless fainting couch sits in the middle of the room. The lighting is harsh. No one in sight. A soft knocking at the door. A moment passes, then another knock, louder. Still no one comes. A third knock, much louder, and a voice from behind the door)

MIOU-MIOU

(off)

What's going on? I'm here! Aren't we rolling?!

(Angry, off-stage voice from behind the audience)

CARMENCITA

(off)

Raoul!! Where the fuck--!!?

RAOUL

(hurrying in, buttoning up his pants)

I'm here, I'm here, I'm here! Sorry!

(RAOUL, in slacks and polo shirt, hurries toward the door)

CARMENCITA

(off)

A button fly?!

RAOUL

It makes me horny.

CARMENCITA

(off)

It's not a three-hour movie, Raoul. Ok, cut!

RAOUL

No, don't cut! Don't cut! I'm ready! Let's go!

CARMENCITA

(off)

Shit. Ok, knock on the fuckin' door! *Action!*

(Another knock on the door. Raoul suavely opens it, revealing a young nun—complete with habit—smiling nervously. In the scene they act as woodenly as we'd expect)

RAOUL

Yes? Oh hello, Sister.

MIOU-MIOU

Hello, Mr...?

RAOUL

General.

MIOU-MIOU

Mr. General? I'm from the new nunnery down the street? We're saying hello to everyone in the neighborhood—

RAOUL

(ushering her in)

You don't say.

MIOU-MIOU

I do say. Are you Catholic?

RAOUL

Why, yes.

(practically shoving her down on the couch)

Have a seat.

MIOU-MIOU

Thank you.

RAOUL

Show me your breasts.

MIOU-MIOU

(doing so)

Do you attend church regularly?

RAOUL

Of course I do. Pinch your nipples.

MIOU-MIOU

(doing so)

Do you like me to twist them, too?

RAOUL

(starting, with some difficulty, to
unbutton his fly)

Please.

MIOU-MIOU

We're just a nunnery of course, so you can't attend us. But I'm sure we'll
see each other at the Church of Our Lady of Archbishop Romero—

RAOUL

Absolutely.

(One of the buttons is stuck)

Damn it—!!

MIOU-MIOU

Do I arouse you?

RAOUL

Of course you do.

MIOU-MIOU

That's good, because we're a service order—

RAOUL

Great. Just be a minute—

CARMENCITA

(off)

Cut!! Damn it, Raoul!! I told you!!

RAOUL

It makes me horny . . .

(CARMENCITA, the film's director, enters)

CARMENCITA

Yeah, well we're out here reading a book.

(to MIOU-MIOU)

And where are all the extra lines coming from?

MIOU-MIOU

He was taking so long—

CARMENCITA

It's your job to sit there, smile pretty and twirl the titties, babe. From now on, you're from a silent order.

MIOU-MIOU

You can't do that—

CARMENCITA

(with a look at RAOUL)

Freed the monster?

RAOUL

Almost.

CARMENCITA

Christ! I'm going back to couples films.

(to an unseen cameraman)

When you see dick, roll it!

(As she strides off, MIOU-MIOU suddenly laughs seductively and wrestles the embarrassed RAOUL, still struggling with the last button, down onto the couch. She climbs on top of

him, reaches down beneath the folds of her habit and undoes his fly. Then, unseen, slips him inside her. She groans with outsized passion)

MIOU-MIOU

Omigod—!! You're huge!!

CARMENCITA

(off)

And how are we supposed to know that?

MIOU-MIOU

(suddenly realizing)

Oh—! Sorry . . .

(She starts to pull up her habit, but RAOUL stops her, holding it in place and humping her furiously)

RAOUL

No! *No!* I like it! I want it!

CARMENCITA

(off)

We can't *see* anything, Raoul!

RAOUL

It makes me horny!! It makes me so . . . fucking . . . HORNY!!!!

(He orgasms. Gradually his humping ceases. MIOU-MIOU stares down at him with disbelief)

MIOU-MIOU

What an amateur!

CARMENCITA

(off)

Jesus fucking Christ.

MIOU-MIOU

(to her)

He's like a total amateur. I can't work with him.

CARMENCITA

(reentering, staring down at RAOUL)

We didn't see a thing. We've got a reel full of black cloth.

RAOUL

That . . . that . . .

CARMENCITA

Yes, your Generalship?

RAOUL

That was the best it's ever been.

(Blackout. Sound of *salsa* music. Lights up on RAOUL, dancing—rather well—with JOSETTE, a pretty woman in a tight dress. The porn set is gone. RAOUL, now in a trendy jacket, keeps trying to kiss her as they dance, but she constantly turns her head, laughing with and at him)

RAOUL

Let me kiss you!

JOSETTE

I'm a married woman.

RAOUL

No one knows us here.

JOSETTE

Everyone knows you.

RAOUL

They pretend not to.

(menacing an unseen crowd of dancers around them)

They'd *better* pretend!

JOSETTE

You dance like a soldier.

RAOUL

I am a soldier. I'm a general!

(to the crowd again)

Nobody heard that!

(passionately, to her)

I wish I could dance like this in real life.

JOSETTE

Like a soldier?

RAOUL

No, you stupid girl! Forever! I wish I could dance forever! Swinging 'round this floor with a woman I'll make love to later, over and over—a woman not my wife, a French woman—!

JOSETTE

Josette!

RAOUL

A woman who knows how to make love to a man like me.

JOSETTE

(caressing him)

It takes special skill to make love to a murderer.

RAOUL

Yes, it does. It does.

(again to the unseen dancers)

None of you heard that!

JOSETTE

I made love to a rapist once. I made the sweetest love to him. He was amazed. He never knew it could be like that. So sweet. Like two children discovering each other for the first time. He cried. I remember his tears made my breasts so wet.

RAOUL

And then he *raped* you—!

JOSETTE

(triumphantly)

Yes! Over and over!

(She suddenly twirls away from him,
into the shadows, disappearing)

RAOUL

He raped you! He raped you, he . . .!

(noticing she's gone)

Josette? Where did you—?! *Josette—!?*

(The music cuts off and lights change as
CARMENCITA enters, now dressed as
his wife. She takes him by the elbow
and hurries him toward an exit)

CARMENCITA

Come along. You can't be late for your trial.

RAOUL

My trial . . .? What trial?

(As they speak, she helps him off with his
night-clubby jacket and on with a one more
suitable for the courtroom)

CARMENCITA

For all the murders . . .

RAOUL

Murders?

CARMENCITA

And the tortures . . .

RAOUL

I don't remember any tortures—

CARMENCITA

That's exactly right. Of course you don't. But you must be there to say that. What if they call on you today?

RAOUL

(as it starts to come back to him)

I don't testify today. Today they have all the liars.

CARMENCITA

I don't want the liars there ahead of me, all right? I want to be in courtroom hall when they arrive, so I can look them in the eye as they pass by—

RAOUL

They won't let you near the witnesses—

CARMENCITA

(riding over him)

I don't care. I have to have something to look forward to. Another day of staring at the back of your head is just not enough, understand? You don't know what it's like back there for me.

RAOUL

I don't care.

CARMENCITA

You're right. Why should you care? Why should you spare a single thought? I'm not the one on trial. But it's my money too, if you lose.

RAOUL

They'll never get our money.

CARMENCITA

(helping with his tie)

You hope. Thank God this is America, and you can't be tried as a criminal.

RAOUL

I'm not a criminal. I'm a soldier.

CARMENCITA

You *were* a soldier. Back when you were a criminal.

RAOUL

You believe them, don't you?

CARMENCITA

I don't have to believe them. I lived there, remember?

RAOUL

We did what we had to do.

(as she tightens his tie)

That's too tight. Too tight . . . !

(She tries to strangle him with it. He struggles to get free of her)

CARMENCITA

I lived there! Remember?! *I lived there!!!*

(as he finally tears away, pulling at his tie, coughing, gasping for air)

Of course, I am your wife, and I support you completely. Ready to go?

(She smiles and exits. Cautiously, he follows her. Lights change as we hear a radio address, circa 1980, by Archbishop Romero of El Salvador—in Spanish, of course—heard at a low level. JOSETTE, MIOU-MIOU and ANGELIQUE sit in jeans and shirts on a low wall. Each of them has a completely plucked chicken on her lap)

MIOU-MIOU

We never plucked chickens in El Salvador.

ANGELIQUE

Who had the time?

JOSETTE

The villagers always did it.

MIOU-MIOU

What a strange imagination he has. He likes to think of us with naked birds between our legs.

JOSETTE

Dead ones. Ones that we've tortured.

ANGELIQUE

We wouldn't have plucked them *alive*.

(stroking her chicken)

It's almost Christlike, isn't it? All these wounds.

JOSETTE

Angelique, it's a chicken.

ANGELIQUE

Don't call me Angelique. Use my real name.

JOSETTE

He doesn't like us to do that.

MIOU-MIOU

What's that voice on the radio?

ANGELIQUE

Archbishop Romero.

MIOU-MIOU

The dead one?

JOSETTE

Who else?

ANGELIQUE

It plays in his head. He can't help it.

MIOU-MIOU

We'll never get any rest.

(sighing)

Oh, well. When do the movies start?

ANGELIQUE

They're not really movies. They're more like projections, I think.

MIOU-MIOU

Projections? Do you think that's what we are? Projections to God?

JOSETTE

We're three French whores. I wish you'd remember that once in awhile.

MIOU-MIOU

It's hard when he's not here.

JOSETTE

It's hard when he *is* here.

(All three share a lascivious laugh)

MIOU-MIOU

Who made him, do you think?

ANGELIQUE

God made him.

MIOU-MIOU

Why did—?

ANGELIQUE

(suddenly)

Shh!

(pointing somewhere in the air)

It's beginning again.

(They all look at that point. Lights fade as a tight spot appears downstage. RAOUL sits in his suit. He looks nervous, giving a deposition in a hostile lawyer's office. The voice of a lawyer with a gentle southern accent is spoken from the upstage darkness alternately by ANGELIQUE, JOSETTE and MIOU-MIOU)

ANGELIQUE

(from off, as lawyer)

Would you please state your name?

RAOUL

My name is Raoul.

JOSETTE

(from off, as lawyer)

Your full name, please?

RAOUL

Raoul . . . Raoul. My full name is Raoul Raoul. General Raoul Raoul Raoul Raoul . . . de Raoul. In Central America we have long names. Is that camera necessary?

MIOU-MIOU

(from off, as lawyer)

I'm afraid it is.

RAOUL

(as CARMENCITA, now an interpreter,
quietly enters and sits next to him)

I'm sorry I have to speak Spanish for this deposition. I know it's cumbersome to use an interpreter, but as you can hear my English is execrable. I have certain rights, after all—inalienable rights, even though I'm not a US citizen. I'm a resident. A permanent one.

(to CARMENCITA)

Permanente.

CARMENCITA

(looking toward the camera)

Permanent.

(As the deposition continues, CARMENCITA mumbles the lawyer's questions and RAOUL's answers in something that might be Spanish or English—or neither—at such a low level that we can barely hear, let alone understand, her)

RAOUL

I'm a political refugee. Threats have been made against my life.

ANGELIQUE

(from off, as lawyer)

Who made these threats, specifically?

RAOUL

The right and the left.

JOSETTE

(from off, as lawyer)

No, no—specifically.

RAOUL

That *is* specific. The entire right and the entire left. And I wasn't too sure about the middle, either. In general, the whole country wanted to kill me.

(MIOU-MIOU, dressed as a lawyer, enters and sits)

MIOU-MIOU

And why was that, General Raoul Raoul . . . de Raoul?

RAOUL

Because of the subversives. The country was riddled with subversive elements. The communists of course, because in those days we had communists, and they ate our children because they were poor *campesinos* . . .

(He looks at CARMENCITA, who speaks clearly into the camera)

CARMENCITA

Peasants.

RAOUL

Yes, peasants who ate whatever children they could find.

(ANGELIQUE, dressed now as a lawyer, enters and sits staring at RAOUL)

ANGELIQUE

I see.

(JOSETTE, dressed as a lawyer, enters and sits)

JOSETTE

And what other subversive elements wanted to kill you?

RAOUL

Anyone. Everyone. A woman walking down the road with a basket of fruit on her head—she could have a grenade in that basket, yes? And she could pull the pin on that grenade and stick it up my ass. What’s to stop her?

ANGELIQUE

Anyone else?

RAOUL

The extreme right. The death squads.

MIOU-MIOU

Death squads?

RAOUL

Yes, they ran all over, distributing death. *La Muerte*.

CARMENCITA

(to camera)

Death.

ANGELIQUE

(as lawyer)

Isn’t it true the “death squads” were members of armed forces under your control?

RAOUL

(to CARMENCITA)

What is this word, “control”? I don’t remember this word.

(as CARMENCITA whispers in his ear)

Oh, yes! Yes—control. Like when you control your bladder, when you control your sphincter, when you—

JOSETTE

We're glad you understand the word, General.

RAOUL

The death squads were for death, you understand? Death was the only thing they distributed. So the concept of control . . . How could there be control? A death squad's mission is the conversion of the living to the dead. For them, anyone alive is, you know, material.

ANGELIQUE

What is the name of your country, General de Raoul?

RAOUL

It's . . . It's . . .

(to CARMENCITA)

What's my country?

(as she shrugs)

It's on the tip of my tongue. Just give me a minute. Um . . . *damn!*

JOSETTE

We need it for the record, General.

RAOUL

I know you do. It's . . . it's . . . I *know* it!

ANGELIQUE, JOSETTE & MIOU-MIOU

(together)

What-is-your-country?

RAOUL

You think I don't know my own *country!*?

(A beat. CARMENCITA leans toward him)

CARMENCITA

El Pais-

RAOUL

I know the damn word, you fucking *puta-!!*

CARMENCITA
(to the camera)

Whore—

RAOUL
Stop all this! STOP IT NOW!!

(Suddenly the lighting changes. All four women shift in their seats, cross their legs and adopt new personas: CARMENCITA, ANGELIQUE and JOSETTE are tv producers. MIOU-MIOU is their assistant. RAOUL appears confused)

MIOU-MIOU
Would you like something to drink? Diet Coke? Water? O.J.?

RAOUL
What? No. No, thanks. Where did—?

CARMENCITA
Where did what?

RAOUL
Nothing. What were we talking about?

MIOU-MIOU
Coffee? Tea? We have herbal.

RAOUL
No. Thank you.

MIOU-MIOU
How about a juice box? Apple, cranberry, tomato—?

RAOUL
No.

CARMENCITA
Leave him alone, Miou-Miou.

CARMENCITA (cont'd)
(apologetically, to RAOUL)

Sorry. It's all we use her for.

JOSETTE

You were telling us about your idea.

RAOUL

Idea?

ANGELIQUE

For your movie. Your movie of the week?

RAOUL

My movie . . . ?

CARMENCITA

"Raoul de Raoul: Savior of Central America". You were just telling us about it.

RAOUL

I was?

JOSETTE

(flipping through her notepad, reading back)

"The public crucifixion of a guardian of liberty . . . America turns its back . . . underappreciated immigrant story . . ."

ANGELIQUE

We like it so far.

RAOUL

You do?

MIOU-MIOU

Snapple? Seven different flavors.

RAOUL

What? No . . .

MIOU-MIOU

How about a nice, California chablis?

RAOUL

No!

MIOU-MIOU

Maker's Mark? Vodka? Scotch—?

CARMENCITA

Miou-Miou. As I understand it, you're in the midst of this trial or something right now? Being tried for, what—murder, torture . . . ?

RAOUL

They say I killed those four nuns.

ANGELIQUE

(as they all suddenly show enthusiasm)

Oh, the four nuns!

JOSETTE

Nuns!

RAOUL

One was a lay worker.

JOSETTE

(making a note to alter this
uninteresting detail)

Right. Change *that*.

CARMENCITA

Four nuns. People love nuns. That was a terrific movie of the week. I don't remember it.

ANGELIQUE

Great ratings.

JOSETTE

Long time ago.

ANGELIQUE

But this is here and now. The trial, I mean.

MIOU-MIOU

How about some nice grappa?

CARMENCITA

So the trial is, what? It goes one way or the other, right? You win, you lose.
What do you get if you win?

RAOUL

Um . . . I get to stay here, keep my money, clear my name—

CARMENCITA

Clear your *name!* There we go! Falsely Accused General Clears His *Name!*
Who's the President?

RAOUL

What?

CARMENCITA

Who the hell was it, anyway? Reagan, right? Reagan. Who's Reagan?

JOSETTE

Martin Sheen?

CARMENCITA

He's already president. And he's too damn short. Somebody good with
jelly beans.

ANGELIQUE

Connery?

JOSETTE

Won't do tv.

ANGELIQUE

Too bad. A president with a Scottish accent.

JOSETTE

Yeah, cool.

CARMENCITA

Besides he's older than the real Reagan. Can we set this in the future? Could it be a woman?

ANGELIQUE

Now we're talking.

JOSETTE

President Streep.

RAOUL

How could it be in the future? It's in the past!

CARMENCITA

What's the difference?

RAOUL

It's history!

CARMENCITA

You're saying there's no history in the future?

MIOU-MIOU

Maybe your car needs something. We have motor oil. Ten-twenty, ten-thirty, all-weather? Or I know—transmission fluid! Nobody ever checks that.

(As RAOUL slowly turns his look towards MIOU-MIOU, lights shift. All but ANGELIQUE and RAOUL exit. A tango plays. RAOUL looks around anxiously as ANGELIQUE smiles charmingly and holds out her arms. She's now a dance instructor)

ANGELIQUE

Shall we?

(RAOUL awkwardly takes her into his arms. It's clear he doesn't know how to dance at all)

RAOUL

I really don't know how to—

ANGELIQUE

Shh . . . You must relax into the dance. Especially the tango.

(as she dances with him, leading)

People think it's all drama, but they never notice the deep, inner relaxation of the dancers. Turn. The tango is a performance, it is passion, it is love-making in full view. And in love-making, the nervous only rob themselves.

RAOUL

I'm nervous all the time. I'm on trial for murder.

ANGELIQUE

Ooh, that *is* dramatic. Turn.

RAOUL

My wife—Carmencita, I can't remember her real name—thought if I had dance lessons it would take my mind off things.

ANGELIQUE

And make you a better partner.

RAOUL

No, no. She doesn't care about that. She won't even touch me.

ANGELIQUE

I don't believe it.

(spinning and slamming herself against him)

You're such a handsome old man. And strong.

RAOUL

I'm not that much older than you.

ANGELIQUE

But I can dance. I don't have one foot in the grave like you.

RAOUL

(suddenly recoiling with horror)

AAAAGGGHHHH—!!

ANGELIQUE

(as the MUSIC STOPS)

What's wrong? You're learning. It's only a matter of time—

RAOUL

Quiet!! There's a sound. Can't you hear it?

ANGELIQUE

What sound?

RAOUL

That sucking sound. That sound of . . . wet clay.

ANGELIQUE

I assure you, there's no wet clay—

RAOUL

The death squads never buried anyone. They left them by the side of the road. So others would see as they went by, so others would— It was a signature. The peasants had to get permission to bury them. Once they did, though—once they put them in the clay, it was forever. They were never dug up again. Forgotten. Nonexistent. Except for the nuns. Except for those *puta Norte Americana* nuns!

ANGELIQUE

Maybe this isn't a good day for the tango.

RAOUL

Have you ever pulled a body out of wet clay? Have you ever pulled four corpses out of a common grave?

ANGELIQUE

Maybe something bouncier. What about the *cha-cha*?

RAOUL

They were all shot in the back of the head. One had her face blown off.

ANGELIQUE

I remember that! That was a movie of the week when I was in college. I cried so hard. It made me want to be a nun.

RAOUL

Yes, it was a good movie of the week. All part of the system, I thought. All part of the crying and forgetting. We had graves of wet clay, you have movies of the week. They help us cry, say too bad and *move on*. Why aren't we moving on?!

(ANGELIQUE snaps her fingers, and a *cha-cha* comes on. She smiles at RAOUL and brings him into a dancing position)

ANGELIQUE

I'm not sure, General Raoul. But whatever you've done just remember this: you can't dance on someone's grave unless you can dance.

(As she starts to teach him the dance, lights shift to CARMENCITA, JOSETTE and MIOU-MIOU in another area, praying. MIOU-MIOU speaks to the others)

MIOU-MIOU

My name is Miou-Miou, like the French actress Miou-Miou. But I'm not an actress, I'm a lay worker.

(JOSETTE gives a lewd snort. CARMENCITA instantly slaps JOSETTE on the arm)

CARMENCITA

Stop it! Show a little respect at prayer.

JOSETTE

Who are we praying to?

CARMENCITA

(jerking her eyes upward)

You know.

JOSETTE

Is He in here?

CARMENCITA

A form of Him.

JOSETTE

That's hard to believe.

CARMENCITA

Belief is *for* what's hard to believe. It has no other purpose.

MIOU-MIOU

I can't concentrate.

JOSETTE

Neither can I.

CARMENCITA

Neither can I. My name is Carmencita, like a little Carmen. I am not Carmen. I'm not some Frenchman's vision of a man-destroying temptress from old Spain. I'm a dead and mouldering corpse, a bunch of brown bones buried in a state like Ohio.

JOSETTE

My name is Josette, but I am not Josette—which is the name given by the only real French whore the General ever slept with. Or did he only imagine it? She was of course not really French, but he thought she was since he met her in America, where everything is possible. She prayed with him that night. She even pretended she was a nun.

MIOU-MIOU

Hail Mary, full of grace . . .

CARMENCITA

Hail Mary, full of grace . . .

JOSETTE

Hail Mary, full of . . .

CARMENCITA

How does the rest of it go?

(Lights shift as RAOUL reenters, in full uniform)

RAOUL

The problem with killing nuns is that they take away your helicopters. We need helicopters to hunt down and kill insurgents. These people don't exactly come into the plaza, kneel down and say, "Kill us please." No, they hide in their villages, deep in the jungle, blending in with poor *campesinos*. Many are poor *campesinos* themselves. People who live like dogs. But some come from the city, some are students, some workers, some middle-class—why do we even *have* a middle class?!—and some . . . some are priests. Don't tell me they're not up there. Priests who bless the guns smuggled in from Nicaragua—was that my country? Yes!! No. And the guns from Cuba. Was that—?! *No!* It doesn't matter. We need helicopters to go and exterminate these priests, these cockroaches in cassocks that run everywhere, under the floorboards of the pitiful excuse for a church they build, into the jungle, across the border to Honduras. Was that?! *No!! Damn it, NO!!!*

(suddenly taking a deep breath,
composing himself, then congenially)

Please, don't misunderstand. I have no vendetta against the church. These are rogue priests. Men out of control. It can happen to anyone. Even the Archbishop—

(trying to ignore the low sound of Archbishop
Romero, rising on the radio once more)

Have you ever been to Central America? The countries are small. Like Massachusetts. How long would it take to fly to the end of Massachusetts in a fine, new American helicopter? An hour? A man should be able to control a country as small as that. Even without the American army to crush everything underfoot. Even without an American infrastructure to keep track of every citizen, every movement, every crime. Your FBI, how I want it. Your CIA—I could make love to it. Not that you don't share. You give us secret advisors, teach us how to interrogate prisoners, their wives, their children—how to keep them barely alive, in a state worse than death, in cells too small to *sit*, feeling cockroaches run up and down their bodies all night. You bring us to the very brink of full control, and then . . . *then* you deny you ever touched us and *take away our helicopters!* Why? Why do you undo all our good work? No wonder we're bitter. No wonder our soldiers lash out. You never let us *finish the job*. *TURN THAT MAN OFF!!*

(Romero's speech cuts out. Lights shift
as JOSETTE enters. RAOUL sits)

JOSETTE

(as the lawyer)

Are you sure that's the testimony you wish to give today?

RAOUL

What testimony? What did I say?

(As they continue, CARMENCITA enters and sits next to RAOUL as the translator. She mutters almost inaudibly a constant 'translation' to no one in particular)

JOSETTE

You said the country was very dangerous. That there were acts of horrendous violence from both the left and right.

RAOUL

Yes, that is exactly correct.

JOSETTE

You said there were many levels of command between yourself and the enlisted men who kidnapped, raped and murdered the nuns and the Catholic lay worker.

RAOUL

That is correct also. For all we know the men who were convicted of these heinous crimes acted on their own. But even if they were acting on orders from above—and this has *never* been proved, at least in a court of law—there is no way of saying that the order came from me.

JOSETTE

You have no command responsibility for the actions of your troops, even though they carried out many documented murders, rapes, acts of torture and even massacres while you were in charge?

RAOUL

A general can't be everywhere at once.

JOSETTE

Do you find it warm in this courtroom today, General Raoul de Raoul?

RAOUL

Yes, very warm.

JOSETTE

I do, too. If it please the court, I'm going to remove my stockings.

(seductively removing her shoes)

General, during your tenure were any officers under your command ever tried for any crime whatsoever in a civilian court of law?

RAOUL

Not that I can recall.

JOSETTE

(sitting, unsnapping her stockings from a garter belt)

No officer was ever charged with a crime in the murder of the nuns, isn't that correct?

RAOUL

You have to understand—

JOSETTE

(slowly rolling down a stocking)

Mmm . . . so much cooler. Understand what, General?

RAOUL

That we . . . we . . .

JOSETTE

(smiling at the tongue-tied RAOUL,
starting on the other stocking)

So—when prelates were murdered in their pulpits, when Americans were murdered in broad daylight in the middle of the capital, when thousands of villagers were raped, shot, hacked to pieces and buried in mass graves—were officers ever tried for those crimes? In the civilian courts, I mean?

RAOUL

What civilian courts?! There weren't any!

JOSETTE

Mmm . . . that's better. This doesn't bother you, does it?

RAOUL

No.

JOSETTE

Just because I'm a woman doesn't mean I should be uncomfortable.

(suddenly rising)

So no officers ever committed any crimes?

RAOUL

We got rid of the bad apples. We transferred them. We made them retire.

JOSETTE

An effective punishment, I'm sure. What could a soldier fear more than early retirement?

(suddenly sitting in his lap, straddling
him like a lap dancer)

When did you retire, General?

RAOUL

Years ago. More than ten years.

JOSETTE

You came here?

RAOUL

(stimulated by her slow gyrations)

Yes.

JOSETTE

To be with us?

RAOUL

Yes.

JOSETTE

Did you bring your wife?

CARMENCITA

Esposa. Mujer.

RAOUL

I know what the word means! Get out!

(as CARMENCITA disappears)

Yes, I brought my wife. I sent my children to school here as well. I sent them here years ahead of us.

JOSETTE

Are they still here?

RAOUL

Of course.

JOSETTE

Are they with us in the courtroom right now?

RAOUL

No . . .

JOSETTE

(unbuttoning her blouse)

Is anyone with us?

RAOUL

No.

JOSETTE

Then we're alone?

RAOUL

Completely.

(He moves to kiss her and caress her breast. She slaps him hard)

JOSETTE

What's my name?

RAOUL

What?

JOSETTE

What's my name?

RAOUL

Josette.

JOSETTE

What's my real name?

RAOUL

I . . . I can't remember. It's so long ago . . .

JOSETTE

(breathily, once more)

Of course you remember. Think hard. Think very hard.

RAOUL

I am. I mean, I'm trying—

JOSETTE

Come on . . .

RAOUL

It's coming back to me—

JOSETTE

Good boy.

RAOUL

I'm close, I'm close, I'm— I almost have it . . . !

(with a sudden, frustrated sigh)

Damn!! No use.

JOSETTE

I don't believe this!

RAOUL

I'm sorry.

JOSETTE

You don't remember my real name? How could you forget it?

RAOUL

There was a war on. I was so busy—

JOSETTE

(shouting into his face)

I don't care! You're a bad Daddy!! YOU'RE A BAD DADDY!!

(She rises abruptly, buttoning her blouse)

RAOUL

Does this mean we're not going to—?

JOSETTE

You're damn right we're not! God, what does it take to get you fucking people's attention?!

RAOUL

Why did you call me "Daddy"?

JOSETTE

I was a Catholic nun! Every man is Daddy for me! For Christ's sake, think about it. What's the Holy Trinity all about? I married my Daddy! And on you go, no sense of responsibility about it *in the least*. A nun is the ultimate passive entity. I *am* what I submit to. So I submit to Daddy, I submit to you, to the glory that is salvation and to the evil that takes my life—and what happens? You don't even remember my name! That's beyond good and evil, that's . . . that's *pre-religious!!*

RAOUL

I'm sorry.

JOSETTE

Don't say what you don't mean!

RAOUL

I'm sorry I said I'm sorry.

JOSETTE

(stepping into her shoes)

That's better. Whose imagination is this, anyway?

RAOUL

I don't understand. Why do you . . .? Why do you take my part sometimes?

JOSETTE

Isn't it obvious?

(kissing him full on the mouth, then
pulling away)

You're all I've got.

(She grabs her stockings and stalks out.
Lights shift to CARMENCITA, ANGELIQUE
and MIOU-MIOU in animated discussion.
They stand around a ruined well)

MIOU-MIOU

I think the Father is wrong. The first thing these people need is help repairing their well. They have to walk two miles for drinking water now.

ANGELIQUE

No one disputes they need a well.

CARMENCITA

But they also need protection. National Guardsmen are watching this village. They think it harbors rebels.

MIOU-MIOU

What if it does? People still need to drink!

ANGELIQUE

But Miou-Miou, the National Guardsmen are the ones who destroyed the well.

CARMENCITA

(looking into the well)

How many bodies do you think are down there?

ANGELIQUE

No one knows. They'd have to dig a new well in an entirely new place.

MIOU-MIOU

Then they should start!

CARMENCITA

If we start digging a well, it will be deemed a community project. The National Guard hears "community" and thinks, "communal". They hear "communal", they think "communist"—

MIOU-MIOU

That's ridiculous.

ANGELIQUE

To you, maybe. But the Father—

MIOU-MIOU

The Father just got here. How can he know what these people need most?

CARMENCITA

You owe your allegiance to him.

MIOU-MIOU

I do not. I'm not a nun like you. I'm a volunteer; I have a right to my opinion.

ANGELIQUE

Wait a minute, wait a minute—does something feel wrong to you?

CARMENCITA

Yes, it does.

MIOU-MIOU

What?

ANGELIQUE

I don't know. It's just . . . Did we actually work together? All of us, I mean?

JOSETTE

(entering)

No, we didn't. He's jumbling us up. It was practically the only time we'd been together, the night we . . . you know.

MIOU-MIOU

Where were we that night?

(A beat. They all struggle for the memory)

CARMENCITA

The airport.

ANGELIQUE

There was a car . . .

MIOU-MIOU

A Mustang!

JOSETTE

Not a Mustang.

MIOU-MIOU

Too bad. I always liked Mustangs.

ANGELIQUE

More like a van.

CARMENCITA

That's right. They burned it later. No fingerprints.

JOSETTE

Did we even like each other?

CARMENCITA

(as they pause to consider)

I think so . . .

MIOU-MIOU

We must have. I mean, don't all nuns love each other?
(as the others give her a look)

Oh . . .

CARMENCITA

We probably got along. There were so few of us. North Americans, I mean.

ANGELIQUE

That's true. Let's all agree that to whatever extent we knew one another,
that we also liked each other. I think that's what God would want.

CARMENCITA

Four loving people, working together, dedicated to improving the lives of the
destitute?

ANGELIQUE

Why not? Helping the poor, educating them, making them healthier—

JOSETTE

Showing them how to build their own water systems and churches—

MIOU-MIOU

And getting the oligarchs to give them more of the land.
(as the others stare at her)

Right?

JOSETTE

Not so sure about that last point.

ANGELIQUE

Sounds like trouble.

CARMENCITA

Not for us to decide.

MIOU-MIOU

How can you say that? A handful of families control practically all the land
in this country! The poor are nothing more than serfs.

CARMENCITA

You're only a lay worker, so I don't expect you to know this, but you must remember, God Himself gave the land to these families.

MIOU-MIOU

He did?

CARMENCITA

(as though to a child)

God made the land. Then He brought the Spanish to claim the land. Those who already lived here had no claim, because they were non-believers. So God gathered together His Spanish conquistador children and bade them promulgate His Word, and as a reward for their faithful efforts told the king to grant enormous tracts of land to those most effective at dominating and converting the pagan population. Later, God spoke through subtler means, like macroeconomics.

MIOU-MIOU

I can't believe you're saying this! It makes absolutely no sense.

CARMENCITA

No. It doesn't, does it?

(to the others)

I couldn't possibly have thought these things. It must be him. My goodness, he's affecting our reason.

(A beat. They look grim)

MIOU-MIOU

Wasn't there a Bible story? About a woman at a well?

JOSETTE

That sounds familiar . . .

ANGELIQUE

It's a lovely image. If there wasn't one, there certainly should have been.

CARMENCITA

I suppose we should remember that sort of thing.

MIOU-MIOU

I wonder if there were bodies down that well?

JOSETTE

Aren't there always?

(Lights shift to RAOUL, still in uniform, though he carries his tunic over his arm. He sits, opens a can of polish and with a rag begins to polish the buttons on his jacket. He speaks to the audience as he works)

RAOUL

Hello, America! Have I told you how much I love your country? My own country—whatever it was—was shit. I grew up in shit, like the loveliest flower, when so many others were suffocated by the manure pile of life. How did I do it? You never think of the ferocity of flowers. They're opportunistic—grow wherever they can, break stone apart for a millimeter of space. All around me people died, but I bloomed. I became chief of all the armies. The gringos couldn't wait to congratulate me. They invited me here, showed me off to Congress, gave me rifles, bombs, training—whispered, "Your enemy is our enemy," and sent me home. I knew what to do: weed the garden. Oh, things might've gone too far perhaps, in a few cases. People may have died who, in retrospect— Still, even they made a wonderful kind of political . . . mulch. How I miss the immediacy of those days! How quiet it got whenever people had to walk around a dead priest on the side of the road. The silence that blossomed out of that. The stillness of God.

(CARMENCITA enters, wearing blue)

CARMENCITA

I am Mary, Mother of God. Why have you killed my priest?

RAOUL

He was a communist.

CARMENCITA

He was still my priest.

RAOUL

Well fuck you, Mary Mother of God. Instruct your priests better, or we'll have to kill them all.

CARMENCITA

Did you pull the trigger?

RAOUL

Of course not. I'm a general. I know of these events only back to front.

(standing, holding up his tunic)

Are my ribbons straight? How do they look?

CARMENCITA

Like a garden of valor.

RAOUL

That's more like it. Now you're catching on.

(putting on the tunic)

I would remind you, Mary Mother of God, that whatever sins I may commit, I fully intend to make a deathbed act of contrition that allows me to crawl into your lap in Heaven, right next to the Baby Jesus. And I warn you, I *will* fight for best teat.

(Lights fade on CARMENCITA as
JOSETTE and MIOU-MIOU enter.
They are RAOUL's college-age son and
high-school daughter)

JOSETTE

You asshole! You *fucking ASSHOLE!!!*

MIOU-MIOU

You call yourself a father?!

JOSETTE

You know what people are saying to me in class!? I can't even walk into my poly sci seminar! My prof looks at me like I've got *fangs!*

MIOU-MIOU

I was senior class president. Now they're asking me to step down!

JOSETTE

The guys in my frat want me out!

RAOUL

Esponaneo, Furiosa—listen to me. I can't control who brings me into court. Not in this country at least.

MIOU-MIOU

Why'd you have to be a general?

RAOUL

If I hadn't been, I couldn't have sent you here.

MIOU-MIOU

(having no answer)

I HATE YOU!!

JOSETTE

I'd have come here, even if I had to swim—across the *ocean!!*

RAOUL

Yes—and I would have done anything to get you here. So I did.

MIOU-MIOU

Big deal! I lost all my friends!

RAOUL

But we're together, the whole family. In America.

JOSETTE

It's no good if they hate us. We're in all the papers!

RAOUL

Give it time. It'll go away.

JOSETTE

Not if they convict you.

RAOUL

They can't convict me.

MIOU-MIOU

Why not?

RAOUL

Because Ronald Reagan said it was all right.

JOSETTE

You are so *full of shit!*

MIOU-MIOU

Like we even care about that stuff. We're Americans now. We just want to be left *alone*.

(With expressions of disgust, they stalk out)

RAOUL

I'm not going to lose this trial!

(to himself, with less certainty)

It's impossible.

(ANGELIQUE enters once more, as the dance instructor. She smiles and strikes a pose)

ANGELIQUE

Merengue!

(*Merengue* music is immediately heard)

RAOUL

Oh, not right now . . .

ANGELIQUE

Why not? You'll never learn if you don't practice.

(She begins dancing with him. He tries gamely to keep up, but he's hopeless)

RAOUL

My children don't understand me.

ANGELIQUE

Children don't understand anything. Stop. Stop—just watch me for a moment.

(as he does so, she continues alone)

You see? You see how your whole body moves? I can't believe you're a Latin and can't dance.

RAOUL

I've had other things to do.

ANGELIQUE

What could be more important than this? It's life. It's joy.

RAOUL

It's not for me.

ANGELIQUE

(still dancing)

You know, they say when you dance you forget everything else in the world.

RAOUL

Everything?

ANGELIQUE

Everything.

(She takes his hand. He starts to dance with her. Surprising them both, he dances better and better—until he's dancing beautifully)

ANGELIQUE (cont'd)

Look at you! You said you couldn't dance!

RAOUL

I can't. I mean . . . I couldn't.

(He laughs with pleasure as they dance. She laughs too. Lights begin to fade on the two of them. Suddenly CARMENCITA, a metal folding chair under her arm, storms in as the porno director while lights bump up and music fades)

CARMENCITA

What in hell do you think you're doing?!

(She grabs RAOUL by the back of his shirt collar and pulls him downstage into bright light. ANGELIQUE disappears)

RAOUL

I was dancing . . .

CARMENCITA

Tell me about it. God, I wish we had digital! Then you could fuck around all you want. Trouble is, you're not fucking around. Men don't pay good money to watch people *dance*. Not unless they've got a bright, shiny pole between their legs. All you've got is a limp dick. The only thing that gives you wood anymore is finding out your enemies are dead.

RAOUL

What's wrong with that?

CARMENCITA

It makes a really bad fuck movie.

(opening the chair, pushing him into it)

You know the difference between hard and dark?

RAOUL

Hard and dark? No . . .

CARMENCITA

It stays dark all night long.

(exiting)

Let's go! Roll 'em!

(Lights grow very bright on RAOUL.
MIOU-MIOU enters, a lawyer)

MIOU-MIOU

General de Raoul, isn't it a fact that once these enlisted men came under suspicion—I'm referring now to the men who were later convicted of murdering the nuns and the lay worker—when these men came under suspicion, were they

MIOU-MIOU (cont'd)

not in fact instructed by a superior officer to change their guns with soldiers from another unit? So as to foil any ballistic tests, I mean?

RAOUL

That officer was not me.

MIOU-MIOU

But he was answerable to you.

RAOUL

He did that on his own.

(CARMENCITA enters as the interpreter and sits silently next to RAOUL)

MIOU-MIOU

You never sought to impede the investigation in any way?

RAOUL

Of course not. I love justice.

MIOU-MIOU

Do you love truth?

CARMENCITA

La Verdad.

RAOUL

I know the word!

(to MIOU-MIOU)

I'm a truthful man.

CARMENCITA

Sincero. Onesto--

RAOUL

Will you shut up?!

CARMENCITA

You said you needed an interpreter.

RAOUL

Not when I'm speaking English!

CARMENCITA

I'm sorry. I'll leave.

RAOUL

Stay here! Are you an imbecile? I asked for an interpreter because it makes everything slower. The lawyer asks his question—

(mimicking the lawyer's rhythms)

Na-na-na-na-na-na-na-na . . . Then you tell me in Spanish . . . na-na-na-na-na-na-na-na . . . Then I answer you in Spanish . . . na-na-na-na-na-na-na-na . . . And then you tell the court . . . na-na-na-na-na-na-na-na . . . And the answer doesn't quite make sense, so they go over it again . . . na-na-na-na-na . . . And by then half the jury is asleep and the other half is terrified this will take the rest of their lives.

CARMENCITA

And this will make them acquit you?

RAOUL

This and the fact that none of them would ever want to be tried for murder in a place where they don't speak the language.

CARMENCITA

But you do speak the language.

RAOUL

It's all about presentation! It's what they see, not what we say. Everyone knows the more you listen to a case, the more complex it gets—the more morally ambiguous. What was I supposed to do? Allow no torture and never find out what the enemy was planning? Prosecute my own troops for murder and be seen as a tool of the left? I would have been removed. Someone worse than me would have come in! Was I good? Was I bad? The more a jury hears, the less it knows. But what a jury sees, day after day—that's how they decide. That's why I never wear my uniform in the courtroom. So they see me as a simple, retired family man—not as some banana republic *generalissimo*—

(He stops, conscious that CARMENCITA and MIOU-MIOU are staring at him. He suddenly becomes aware of his uniform)

RAOUL (cont'd)

Oh . . . *Oh!* Pardon me.

(RAOUL swiftly exits. He suddenly returns and obsequiously picks up his chair)

RAOUL (cont'd)

Excuse me. Pardon. Sorry.

(He exits with the chair. They stare after him)

CARMENCITA

He is so going to lose.

MIOU-MIOU

You think so?

CARMENCITA

Are you kidding? Look at him.

MIOU-MIOU

But as a nun, aren't you supposed to see through to the innermost innocence of all people?

CARMENCITA

I'm not supposed to be stupid.

MIOU-MIOU

I think there are lots of reasons he might win.

CARMENCITA

Such as?

MIOU-MIOU

For one thing, he's our guest. He didn't sneak into this country; we invited him.

CARMENCITA

We do make mistakes, you know.

MIOU-MIOU

And he's been very peaceful here.

CARMENCITA

When did you get so open-minded?

MIOU-MIOU

I don't know.

CARMENCITA

He's going to lose. I feel it in my bones.

(She exits. MIOU-MIOU speaks to the audience)

MIOU-MIOU

I thought becoming a Catholic lay worker would be kind of like camping out only, you know—more serious? I'd be helping people, and I'd be not so selfish, and after I was done I could come home and get married and have two babies and live in a Dutch colonial. I know that sounds heartless in a way, because the people I was helping would still need the help and everything. But that's the point of being a lay worker, right? The Church has all sorts of people who'd never give their whole lives to God but who still want to be of use. And it all helps, right? I mean, look how many people do absolutely nothing. Do you do anything? I bet you don't. I'd make a hell of a lot of money betting against each one of you, statistically speaking. Anyhow, I think the hardest thing about working with the terminally destitute sort of part-time like I do is that one day instead of helping them learn how not to starve and die I'm going to be saying, "So long!" and getting on a plane to a place that would be heaven on earth for them. But everybody told me there's a burnout point, and there's no staying past it, and I shouldn't be ashamed. I came, and I helped. What's so bad about that? You've probably guessed already I had plans to leave when we were kidnaped and . . . whatever it was happened. Sorry I can't describe it better, but honestly . . . I don't remember. You probably don't remember, either. It was a long time ago. They already made our movie. Hope they got somebody cute to play me. Wonder who my fiance married?

(JOSETTE enters angrily)

JOSETTE

Who are you talking to?

MIOU-MIOU

(pointing to the audience)

Them.

JOSETTE

Them?! Who said you could do that?

MIOU-MIOU

I don't know. I was just standing here, and—

JOSETTE

This is the audience! You can't talk to them.

MIOU-MIOU

I can't?

JOSETTE

I don't believe you! You're out here trying to prejudice the audience with what I'm sure was a lot of sentimental drivel— Don't you realize these people have to make up their minds?

MIOU-MIOU

About what?

JOSETTE

About Raoul, about the case, about us, about *everything*.

MIOU-MIOU

I never thought—

JOSETTE

Of course not. You didn't think.

(to audience)

I'd like to apologize for Sister Miou-Miou.

MIOU-MIOU

I'm just a lay worker.

JOSETTE

(irritably)

For Miou-Miou. She hasn't been with us all that long, and she doesn't realize how harmful it is to address the audience.

MIOU-MIOU

You're addressing them right now.

JOSETTE

What!?

MIOU-MIOU

You're talking to them.

JOSETTE

(glaring at her, then to audience)

I'm sure you will forgive me for this one further, unpleasant for you but very necessary, act of direct address. We will now to return to the mode of presentation you expected when you bought your ticket, for which you paid so much money.

MIOU-MIOU

How do you know what they paid?

JOSETTE

It's theater—they paid! They paid a lot!

(to the audience)

You paid a lot, right?

MIOU-MIOU

There, you did it again! You talked to them.

JOSETTE

(to audience)

I apologize for—

MIOU-MIOU

You can't apologize to them if your whole point is not talking—

JOSETTE

Will you *shut up!*?

(to audience, as before)

This is the *last time* I'm talking to you. Understood? I'm sorry, we are all sorry—even those of us not on stage right now—if we've made you uncomfortable in any way. There is a phenomenological wall between you and us which needs to be restored, and we will do that starting . . . *now*.

(JOSETTE quickly bows, then exits with a gesture to MIOU-MIOU to follow)

JOSETTE

Come on.

MIOU-MIOU

(as she leaves, to audience)

'Night everybody!

JOSETTE

Miou-Miou!!

(MIOU-MIOU hurries off as RAOUL, in his robe, rushes on from a different direction, agitated. He speaks to the audience)

RAOUL

What were they doing out here? Those bitches! I was in the bathroom. If they influenced you—! You have to hear my side, you know. You're Americans; you keep an open mind—you're famous for it. When I walk out of my house here under the bright Florida sun I wave to you. And you wave back. I smile at the check-out counter; you smile. I wave to you from my boat; you *wave back*. You don't prejudge me. How can you? We're on the same side. World democracy is a team effort, right? And you own the team. We don't complain. On the contrary, we spend our lives reading the fine print of your foreign policy. We read between the lines, too. "Lift up the world's poor" you say. But we know you're not serious. There are far too many of them. "Manage the poor". That's what you mean. "Keep them from rising up, from moving

RAOUL (cont'd)

around—from moving to Florida”. And we do. We keep them poor, we keep them ignorant, we keep them *off your back*. And what thanks do we get? You pretend we’re not even doing this for you. And if anything goes wrong, then it’s our fault. We’re bad leaders, we’re repressive, we don’t value human life. And when we’re through, and we’ve dedicated our lives to managing the unmanageable, so you don’t have to soil your hands, do you let us retire in peace, under the Florida sun? Do you even once say, “Thank you, General de Raoul, we couldn’t have done it without you”? No. You set your courts on us, as though we were common criminals.

(shaking his head ruefully)

We should have known. You sent us rifles and nuns. You are the least consistent people on the face of the earth.

(RAOUL turns to go, but is confronted by the women entering *en masse* as tv-movie producers. They all sit)

CARMENCITA

There you are. Did you get lost? Time is of the essence. We have to get back to the coast—

(to MIOU-MIOU)

What coast do we have to get back to?

MIOU-MIOU

(whipping out a cell phone)

I’ll check.

CARMENCITA

Now. We’re thinking for you, to play you, I mean—Denzel Washington.

RAOUL

But—

CARMENCITA

He’s finally getting old enough.

RAOUL

But—

ANGELIQUE

And he hasn't come back to tv yet, but I hear he wants to. Isn't that wonderful?

RAOUL

But he's black.

CARMENCITA

Is he black? Check that. Josette?

JOSETTE

(looking through her notes)

He is . . . black.

CARMENCITA

Oh. Well, you're brown . . . ish.

ANGELIQUE

And this is in the future.

CARMENCITA

Right! The future. Thank God for the future. He could be any color.

MIOU-MIOU

(off the phone)

They're not sure which coast we're going to.

CARMENCITA

But it *is* a coast?

MIOU-MIOU

Oh, yes. They're sure of that.

CARMENCITA

Fine. We're off then. Thanks, General. Can I call you General? We'll be in touch about your expert consulting fees. Plus we'll need a few pictures of you and Denzel hugging, French-kissing—whatever the hell. All in good time.

(rising, extending her hand)

So. We have a deal?

RAOUL

He's black.

CARMENCITA

And?

RAOUL

I'm not. It's not . . . accurate. It's not the movie I'm trying to make.

ANGELIQUE and JOSETTE

Oh, God.

CARMENCITA

What the hell movie are you trying to make, General? Every time you make one of your own, it turns into a porno—that's what you said.

RAOUL

I don't care! This is my life. This is my dignity. I . . . I want changes.

ANGELIQUE and JOSETTE

Oh, *God* . . .

CARMENCITA

Changes. I do not have time for this.

(after a great sigh)

Ok. You want changes, we'll talk changes. As soon as we're back from the coast.

RAOUL

But—!

CARMENCITA

Miou-Miou, be a dear?

(CARMENCITA, ANGELIQUE and JOSETTE all sweep offstage. RAOUL tries to follow, but he's intercepted by MIOU-MIOU who kneels in front of him for purposes of pleasure. He pushes past her, pursuing the others, who've disappeared. Angrily, he stalks out. MIOU-MIOU runs after him)

MIOU-MIOU

After we're done, you can have a juice-box--!

(ANGELIQUE enters, dressed as a lawyer. She addresses the audience as though they were the jury)

ANGELIQUE

(with a genteel southern drawl)

They flew in at evening. A short flight, from the neighboring nation of. . .

(trying to find it in her papers)

Of, um. . .we'll get that for you. In any case, Sister, um . . .

(searching again)

I *know* we have that. Somewhere. Meanwhile let's just call them Sister Angelique and Sister Josette--I mean, they change their names anyway, don't they? When they join the order? So, in they flew--long day, short flight--and there they were met by Sister . . . um . . .

(searching once more, to herself)

Damn that staff of mine! I could rape and murder every one of--!

(looking up, aware of the 'jury' again, smiling)

I tell you what. Let's just call them Sister Carmencita and, um . . . that lay worker--how about Miou-Miou? That's a peppy name. So there we have them, all at the airport, hugging and smiling, happy to be alive and helping others in that hellhole of a country--and needing to jump right in their van so they can beat ass home before curfew. And so they drive out of the airport. And Sister Carmencita's at the wheel, and the others are probably all gossiping about how things went at the big holy conference in that other country I can't remember the name of--sometimes don't you wish they'd just merge some of those little countries down there? Make a lot fewer names to remember. Anyhow, they're just riding along, maybe singing that "Domini-que-ni-que" song or something, and then straight ahead, there's a military roadblock. Not unusual of course, and anyway all the cars are being let through--until it's their turn.

(Lights crossfade quickly to RAOUL, who stands facing upstage. He wears a short-sleeved shirt and baggy shorts. He seems surprised)

RAOUL

(angrily)

Hey--!! Who turned on the lights?!!

RAOUL (cont'd)

(looking over his shoulder, noticing the audience)

Oh--didn't see you. Sneaking up on me, eh?

(turning, revealing that his hand is down
the front of his pants--absently stroking
himself as he speaks)

I went to a comedy club down in Miami. Don't know why, just felt like a laugh, I guess. Get away from the old balls and-- Sorry--*ball* and chain. You know how it is. The minute you go on trial for murder, your wife can become such a bitch. Anyhow, the comics were all doing their best, but somehow I couldn't help feeling that I could do it better. Funnier. I mean, I feel funny to you, right? Anyhow, it was open-mike night, so I asked if I could perform. The manager asked if I had any experience. I said I used to run the military of a Latin-American country, and he said, "Go right up."

(sound of a rim-shot)

I was wearing the same clothes I am now. My "lucky outfit", I call it. Just before I walked onstage he tapped me on the shoulder and asked if I was going to go out like that. He pointed at my, um. . .

(indicating his hand in his pants)

I said, "No! My God! Thanks for pointing that out!" I started to take it out--my hand, I mean--but he stopped me. And he said something that I've taken to heart ever since. He said, "Go with your instincts." So I went out and did a routine. And he was right--the audience loved this. So I keep it in.

(staring down)

I only do it when I'm nervous. 'Course I'm pretty much always nervous.

(after a beat)

I'm just jiggling my nuts a little. It's not even sexual. Sort of like those worry balls, you know? I can quit anytime. Really, I'm feeling more comfortable by the minute. I'm sure I'll stop soon.

(shrugging, as it continues)

Then again, sometimes I get a lot more anxious. And of course whenever that happens--

(as anxiety sweeps over him, suddenly putting
both his hands in pants and stroking)

My club act is going very well. I seem to kill every night. So far, I haven't had to think of a single joke.

(A cymbal CRASH. Swift crossfade to
CARMENCITA, dressed as RAOUL's wife,
and JOSETTE and MIOU-MIOU as his son
and daughter. They're all in mid-argument)

CARMENCITA

I don't care! You're coming to court today.

JOSETTE

No way! They haven't even started the defense yet!

MIOU-MIOU

How long is this going on? Like three years?

CARMENCITA

There were a lot of crimes.

JOSETTE

But Dad didn't do 'em *all!*

CARMENCITA

I never said he did.

MIOU-MIOU

I have to get ready for junior state government. The whole class is going up to Tallahassee tomorrow.

(to JOSETTE)

I'm gonna be Secretary of State.

CARMENCITA

You can pack tonight. Today you need to be there. Please, Furiosa—you can't let the jury see your father alone, with no family behind him.

JOSETTE

Why not? I don't recall him asking us to be there when he decided to head the most murderous army in the hemisphere.

CARMENCITA

Did you ever see him kill anybody? Did you ever see him take a gun and put it in someone's mouth and blow the back of their head off?

JOSETTE and MIOU-MIOU

No . . .

CARMENCITA

Ever see him use electricity to torture somebody to death? Anybody?

JOSETTE and MIOU-MIOU

No . . .

CARMENCITA

Ever see him set off a bomb in a public square filled with people grieving for their assassinated archbishop? Have you ever smelled blood on his hands, even once?!

JOSETTE

(muttering)

Once when he was picking a scab . . .

CARMENCITA

(as MIOU-MIOU laughs)

That's not funny! When I think of all he's done for you. When I think of all we've both done.

JOSETTE

Oh, big deal.

CARMENCITA

(incensed)

Listen to me, young man—!

JOSETTE

No, you listen to me! You and Dad just don't get it, do you? You're *immigrants*. Your whole job was to get us to America, and into good schools and good careers and then die. You did it all just fine, except the dying part. You completely screwed up the dying part!

CARMENCITA

(as JOSETTE angrily storms out)

Esponaneo—!

MIOU-MIOU

Mom, is it ok for the Secretary of State to wear a thong?

(Crossfade to JOSETTE, posing provocatively
in a revealing dressing gown for RAOUL)

JOSETTE

Who shall I be tonight?

RAOUL

The choices are infinite.

JOSETTE

Still, they fall into so few categories. Young, old; filthy, chaste; sophisticated,
naive; gay, straight; twosome, threesome—

RAOUL

Josette! Whatever you are, just so long as you are Josette.

JOSETTE

And who is Josette?

RAOUL

The one I love. The only one I've ever loved.

JOSETTE

(with a laugh)

Don't tell your wife that.

RAOUL

I love Josette.

JOSETTE

You don't even know my real name. You don't know where I'm from, or
how old I am, or if I love red or blue. The only thing you know is how it
feels to be inside me.

RAOUL

That's enough!

JOSETTE

(caressing him)

Yes. The rest of all knowledge is such a distraction, isn't it? Just the feel

JOSETTE (cont'd)

of the place you came from, that's enough. You can never crawl back inside, not all of you. So you send a messenger, a scout, a lunar lander. A little man toiling endlessly in his tiny spacesuit, charting the unchartable: a universe of comfort, which even he can never truly touch. An eternal home, in which he will be a stranger forever.

RAOUL

(very stimulated by her)

I have your money.

JOSETTE

I already took it. Your wallet was just sitting there. You really should be more careful. Time to go.

RAOUL

(as she starts out)

What about the sex?

JOSETTE

We already had it. Don't you remember?

RAOUL

No, I don't remember—!

(suddenly wondering if it's true)

Did we?

JOSETTE

It was very special. It always is.

RAOUL

(as she leaves)

How special? How special was it?!

JOSETTE

(from off)

You remember.

RAOUL

No! I don't remember. *I don't remember!!*

(suddenly aware of the audience)

What are you looking at?! You think it was easy for me? To have so much power at my command, but still not be able to . . . When I grew up, they used to show pictures of Vietnamese officers shooting prisoners in the head, in the middle of the day, in the middle of the street! You can bet your ass *those* officers got laid. But I had to be careful—political. Never write down what you can say on the phone. Never phone what you can say in person. Never say to a group what you can whisper to just one relative. Never whisper if you can nod—if possible, never even nod. What use is power if it can't get me women? Even one woman, one loving . . . Nobody loses his hunger for love. Go ahead, kill millions. You'll yearn even more for a single warm, fragrant lap on which to rest your head. A soft voice, a small hand to glide gently across your slackening jowl. "It's all right. Sleep now. Love is here. Love is yours."

(ANGELIQUE enters with a chair for RAOUL.
Lights shift as she adopts a lawyer's persona)

ANGELIQUE

General de Raoul—that is your correct name, by the way?

RAOUL

Not exactly.

ANGELIQUE

Not exactly?

RAOUL

I made it up. But now it's the only name I can remember.

ANGELIQUE

Doesn't that seem a little careless to you?

RAOUL

Yes, I agree. I am quite careless.

ANGELIQUE

Speaking of carelessness, there were a series of murders committed by your

ANGELIQUE (cont'd)

soldiers against unarmed civilians during your tenure as head of the armed forces which I'd like to—

RAOUL

Pardon me.

ANGELIQUE

Yes?

RAOUL

(as CARMENCITA, as his translator,
comes in and sits next to him)

I was never in the armed forces.

ANGELIQUE

Are you saying you weren't even in the armed forces of . . . of that country we are *going* to remember the name of— Why in *hell* can't we get this straight!?

RAOUL

I have never even been in that country.

ANGELIQUE

You've never been there?

RAOUL

Never.

ANGELIQUE

Never?

CARMENCITA

Nunca—

ANGELIQUE

Shut up!!

(to RAOUL)

Then can you tell me why your passport, which we have in our possession . . .

(searching around, not finding it)

Um, somewhere around here, as well as countless other documents . . . um . . .

ANGELIQUE (cont'd)

in a box that's *very close by*, all identify you as General . . . you know—that name you can't recall?

RAOUL

Must be a coincidence.

CARMENCITA

Coincidencia.

(A tense moment. ANGELIQUE speaks to an unseen judge)

ANGELIQUE

Your Honor, we'd like to request a recess. We need time to relocate the documents which support our claim that this is the man who . . . did whatever . . . those things were that . . . have us all here today.

(Lights shift as ANGELIQUE, flummoxed, exits. RAOUL and CARMENCITA, still seated are just waking up in bed)

RAOUL

Oh! I had the most wonderful dream!

CARMENCITA

(tiredly)

Again?

RAOUL

None of them remembered anything. All their documents disappeared and—

CARMENCITA

And they let you go. So you had the dream again, so what?

RAOUL

Dreams can make things happen. I dreamed of becoming a great military leader, and I did. I dreamed of getting us all to America, and—

CARMENCITA

Why don't you dream of getting an erection sometime?

RAOUL

Carmencita!

CARMENCITA

Can't blame me for wanting a little fun.

RAOUL

You're an old woman.

CARMENCITA

You mean I'm over twenty?

RAOUL

Exactly.

CARMENCITA

(rising)

Time to get up. Time to care for the house, dress my children, send them to school, dress my husband, send him to court, dress myself . . . stand here until someone else needs something from me. Women are meant to serve—aren't they, Raoul?

RAOUL

That is what God wants.

CARMENCITA

And if they serve badly?

RAOUL

They should be terrorized, raped and murdered.

CARMENCITA

I'm glad I'm finally clear on God's plan. Sometimes it gets fuzzy for me.

(as he starts out)

What do you want for breakfast?

RAOUL

(exiting)

Your soul.

CARMENCITA

Sunny side up?

(suddenly donning a coat as lights shift,
adopting the pleasant, folksy drawl of the
lawyer, speaking to the audience)

Morning. Hope you all spent a pleasant night. I certainly did. Now, let me see—where did we leave off yesterday?

(consulting her notes)

Oh, yes. How could I forget? So now they ride, prisoners in their own white van—white for purity no doubt, but not for long—in the gathering dusk. A soldier drives. He doesn't wear a uniform, but he takes orders. Silently they pray and stare at the men who will not look in their faces. They try to believe in the basic decency of human beings. The sisters have their documents. They have their white North American skins, but for once no one cares. The van stops. They're forced out at gunpoint and taken into the deep and endless dark between the trees.

(Lights shift as ANGELIQUE, JOSETTE and
MIOU-MIOU enter, as tv producers. They all sit,
frozen. After a moment RAOUL reenters and
looks at them tentatively. They remain frozen.
Slowly he sits. The moment he's done so, they're
all instantly in mid-meeting)

CARMENCITA (cont'd)

Now I think we need to do the murders—open on the murders, I mean.

RAOUL

We do?

JOSETTE

Absolutely.

ANGELIQUE

We have to show what you've been falsely accused of.

JOSETTE

Give them a little grounding.

ANGELIQUE

It's been twenty years, after all.

RAOUL

Can't we leave it to their imaginations?

(All four women look at each other, then laugh)

CARMENCITA

Let's get serious. They were in a van, right? Dark, scary road, millions of, I don't know, Central American threats all around. What happens next?

JOSETTE

(looking at notes)

Um . . . soldiers shoot holes in the van.

CARMENCITA

A shoot-out! Great! The soldiers shoot at the nuns, the nuns shoot back—

ANGELIQUE

Excuse me, but nuns don't generally have guns. Do they?

MIOU-MIOU

Don't think so . . .

JOSETTE

Doesn't ring a bell.

CARMENCITA

No guns?

ANGELIQUE

Sorry.

CARMENCITA

Crap!

(The women rise to leave)

RAOUL

Um, Secretary Haig thought they did. He said so. I remember. Don't know why I remember . . .

CARMENCITA

(sitting, interested once more)

Really?

RAOUL

Yes. Right after the killings. He said we didn't know all the details, but maybe there was an exchange of gunfire.

JOSETTE

He said that? In public?

RAOUL

Yes.

ANGELIQUE

He said a van carrying four nuns might have *exchanged gunfire* with soldiers?

(RAOUL nods. The women look at each other, considering)

CARMENCITA

Hmm . . . Nuns with guns. Nuns . . . with . . . guns.
(finally shaking her head)

Nope, too stupid.

ANGELIQUE

'Way too stupid.

RAOUL

Even for tv?

CARMENCITA

Even for tv. Sorry. There'll still be plenty of shooting—just all one way. I wonder though, is that really dynamic enough?

(They all think)

MIOU-MIOU

We could have the van blow up.

CARMENCITA

That's *great!*

JOSETTE

The *van* blows up!

RAOUL

But it didn't blow up in the real-

ANGELIQUE

The nuns escape just in time?

CARMENCITA

Absolutely. Miou-Miou, you're a genius!

MIOU-MIOU

Can I have a juice-box?

CARMENCITA

No. So—do we rape and then kill, or kill and then rape? What do you think?

ANGELIQUE

How long is the segment?

CARMENCITA

Two minutes, max. A catch-me-up, top of the show.

JOSETTE

Kill then rape is nicer. I mean, it hurts less, right?.

ANGELIQUE

Still, is that really enough torture?

(RAOUL suddenly stands. They all freeze.
He addresses the audience)

RAOUL

I always imagine them as women, these tv people. Don't know why, except that's how I always picture the U.S.A. Bounteous mother of all fortune. All-forgiving protectress of those who serve her. Midwife overseeing the births and rebirths and--more often--stillbirths of our tiny, developing nations. Not that she doesn't know how to punish. She's spanking me right now--and it hurts like hell, believe me. But this only makes me love her more. Makes me want to possess her. I want to fuck the shit out of America. And I want her to fuck the shit out of me.

(He exits. As soon as he's gone, the four women, once again nuns and lay worker, are all at prayer)

CARMENCITA

Our Father, hallowed be Thy . . .

ANGELIQUE

Our Father, hallowed be . . .

JOSETTE

Our Father, hallowed. . .

MIOU-MIOU

Our Father . . .

CARMENCITA

Doesn't anyone remember it?

(as they shrug)

How can we be nuns if we can't even pray? Do you have any idea how much trouble we'll be in with God?

MIOU-MIOU

Maybe we'll luck out and discover there is no God.

ANGELIQUE

(sarcastically)

Oh, that would be lucky.

JOSETTE

If Raoul wins this case, maybe there really isn't. A God, I mean.

CARMENCITA

If Raoul wins, I don't know why I left home in the first place.

ANGELIQUE

I could have stayed in a convent in the glorious, unchanging womb of the Midwest.

JOSETTE

I could have helped the urban poor in America's rust belt.

MIOU-MIOU

I could have taken vows and joined a silent order so I wouldn't have to tell anyone I was secretly married.

(as they look at her)

As long as we're fantasizing.

(as CARMENCITA and ANGELIQUE shake
their heads and rise)

It was a joke . . .

(MIOU-MIOU follows them out. JOSETTE
remains alone, staring at the audience)

JOSETTE

I have to say this next part directly to you, even though you know how I feel about that. Personally, I don't believe you want to be reminded that I'm delivering a speech as some yet-unspecified communal and/or composite and/or disembodied entity while I stand here in the shape of Josette, which is of course not her real name—and may not be the name of anyone who is or ever was. I think it's bad enough that every two minutes I have to be a different character, who may or may not even have lived, and that supposedly I can't remember my 'real' name, even though as an actress—whose identity you have right there in your program—I have painstakingly researched the actual woman—that is, nun—I'm playing and know her almost as well as I know myself, although I'm *not allowed to say her name*. I've rehearsed over and over in my heart and mind her passion and suffering and murder and final presumptive transcendence. But do I get to play that? No. What I have to play is a voice that's talking about this character I *would* have played if her whole reality hadn't been hijacked by the brain of the man who, for all I know, ordered her execution. It's not that I'm anti-theater—at all. I completely accept the playwright's right to poetic license and formal license and all the

JOSETTE (cont'd)

rest of that precious-ass shit, and God knows I need this job, but damn it—I am *so pissed off!!*

(shaking it off, with a big sigh)

Ok, ok—better mad than sad. Anyway, the speech isn't going to say itself, so here goes:

(changing her manner, picking up ANGELIQUE and CARMENCITA's earlier narrative)

They stand in the dark, in the trees. Who knows what the soldiers say to them? The soldiers describe it later at a trial, but how well do even they remember? You beat four women, strip them, rape them—how can you be sure what anyone said? Just a few more groans and cries, soaked up by the night. The sergeant leaves, drives off to make a call. When he comes back you tie them up, put a gun to the back of their heads, one after another, and pull the trigger. One. Two. Three. Four. Blood flies everywhere, but it's the jungle, so nothing gets dirty. The rain will wash it off the leaves. Scores of tiny animals will lick it up and be nourished. Ants will clean it from their feelers, accepting the protein as one more gift from a universe of mystery and miracles.

(after a beat)

There. I hope you're all happy.

(Lights shift as she exits. CARMENCITA and RAOUL enter, back from a day in court. She helps him change into his uniform)

RAOUL

Where are the kids?

CARMENCITA

I told you, they couldn't be there. They're so busy in school—

RAOUL

They're never there! Don't they know how harmful that is to my case?

CARMENCITA

You won't lose—

RAOUL

I *might*. And when I do, where are they going to hear about it? On CNN?

CARMENCITA

I think things are going very well. Juror number four has eyes for you.

RAOUL

Number four? That blond, *gringa* bitch?

CARMENCITA

She's pretty, in a mature way. And at least she's not a Jew. Jews would convict you for sure. They know a fascist when they see one.

RAOUL

We were not fascists! We never got one train to run on time!

CARMENCITA

It doesn't matter. She voted for Reagan. The whole jury did. I checked. When I think of how many Jews live in this county, and your lawyers kept them off the jury. It's a miracle from Our Lady, nothing less.

RAOUL

You think the Mother of God intercedes for me?

CARMENCITA

Of course.

RAOUL

So you believe I'm innocent?

CARMENCITA

The Queen of Heaven intercedes for you. Who knows why?

RAOUL

Plenty of Jews voted for Reagan too, you know.

CARMENCITA

No one's hands are clean. Not even a child's. I remember watching the nurse wipe the blood off our newborn babies' hands.

RAOUL

Don't be morbid. Think positive thoughts and help me win this trial.

CARMENCITA

Our Lady will help you.

RAOUL

At least she believes in me.

CARMENCITA

No, she believes in me and the children. You she'll give a heart attack when this is all over.

(She exits as he sits, staring at the audience.
ANGELIQUE enters as his parish priest)

RAOUL

Father forgive me, for I have sinned.

ANGELIQUE

How have you sinned, my son?

RAOUL

I'm not sure. I don't remember. They say I murdered people, plotted to have them tortured, mutilated, killed, left by the side of the road—that sort of thing. They say I threatened them over tv. Was that me? Or someone else? I can't *remember* anymore!

ANGELIQUE

How can you threaten them over tv?

RAOUL

You just go on state tv and read their names off a list. "You, and you, and you—better mend your ways, or we'll have to kill you". Simple enough.

ANGELIQUE

Was this on CBS?

RAOUL

No, no—

ANGELIQUE

Sounds more like cable.

RAOUL

You don't understand—

ANGELIQUE

Pay-per-view?

RAOUL

It wasn't in America!

ANGELIQUE

I'm sorry, my son. Where was it?

RAOUL

It was in . . . It was in . . .

ANGELIQUE

I mean, what country—?

RAOUL

It's on the tip of my tongue. . . *goddammit!!* Sorry, Father. I'm very frustrated.

ANGELIQUE

That's not God's fault.

RAOUL

I know. I apologize.

ANGELIQUE

You don't apologize to God. You beg forgiveness.

RAOUL

Of course. I'm sorry.

ANGELIQUE

You're apologizing again!

RAOUL

I beg forgiveness, Father!

ANGELIQUE

Don't beg me, beg Him!

RAOUL

I beg you, God!! I BEG YOU! I BEG YOU!!

ANGELIQUE

That's better. If you can't tell me the country, can you at least tell me its region of the world?

RAOUL

Central America.

ANGELIQUE

Oh, that's a relief!

RAOUL

Why?

ANGELIQUE

Sins aren't as bad there. They're easier to forgive. Now, how many sins?

RAOUL

Thousands.

ANGELIQUE

Thousands?! Are you sure?

RAOUL

Certainly. We'd kill scores, sometimes hundreds at a time. Sometimes just a few, in the night. By "we" I mean the military, of course.

ANGELIQUE

Military sins. *Very* impressive. Remember, God doesn't mind how numerous or terrible your sins are—especially in Central America—so long as you beg forgiveness.

RAOUL

I do!

ANGELIQUE

God doesn't care what animal depths you sink to.

RAOUL

I'm begging!

ANGELIQUE

God doesn't care how you debase the bright, technological promise of tv, so long as you pay your sponsors.

RAOUL

We always paid!

ANGELIQUE

Repeat after me.

(as RAOUL softly and fervently does so) "Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thank You for making great sins possible, that we may have great forgiveness. Thank You for creating the World, and for giving the worst parts to the poor. Thank You for the poor. Thank You for unrest. Thank You for the enormity of evil, without which You are diminished. Thank You for human perversity and perverseness and perversion, in no particular order, and for all that holds us back from loving and obeying You. Thank You for the pit of Hell. Thank You for making Satan more interesting than You. Thank You for all these things, and for the limitless Salvation which they imply. Thank you for Divine Love, which is tough love. Thank You for making us conscious—of life and death, good and evil, rich and poor. And most of all, merciful Father, thank You for murder. Amen"

RAOUL

Amen.

ANGELIQUE

Now go. And sin some more.

RAOUL

Yes, Father.

ANGELIQUE

But not in Florida.

RAOUL

(rising)

No, Father.

ANGELIQUE

(as he starts out)

That'll be one trillion Hail Marys.

(RAOUL gives her a look, then exits.

ANGELIQUE exits another way. Lights shift as MIOU-MIOU enters)

MIOU-MIOU

(to audience)

If we do have souls—and who's to say we don't?—do you think we fly up all at once, or hover for awhile, just overhead? Are we dizzy at first? Do we recognize the murderers who stand laughing softly over our ruined houses—our corpses, I mean—with the strange excitement we all feel when we come close to death? Do we hear their nervous jokes about who was the best to rape, or their curses about having to drag our bodies to a discovery point beside the road? Maybe we linger to watch the terrified peasants bury us in wet clay—and stay one more day to watch the village leader whisper to a priest. And one more, to watch a priest stand with the American ambassador, quiet as the dead themselves, while we're exhumed—still sisters, still together. Why do we want to see our bodies again? We're through with them. Yet somehow they're still beautiful. A stiff kind of beauty—caked with mud, awkward, half-naked, hauled from the soft earth like so many swollen cattle after a flood. Why are we in love with *them*, of all things? But we stay, and float, and stare. If we could touch them, we think, even once. We watch as they're brought to the capital, where terrified local doctors pretend there aren't enough surgical masks to do an autopsy. Finally our bodies are parted from each other, and fall at last into the hands of those who love them. How puny the efforts seem—to reinvest us with dignity, I mean. Washed and combed, buried in our favorite clothes—here or back home, wherever that was. Not really our home, of course. Our home was love, and we were taken from our home. Forever, I think. I'm starting to think forever.

(Lights bump up suddenly to studio-bright as a FAST, LATIN DANCE RHYTHM EXPLODES. MIOU-MIOU instantly rises and rips off her

clothes in a raunchy striptease, revealing a sequined push-up bra and g-string. She slides and slithers all over the floor as CARMENCITA, JOSETTE and finally ANGELIQUE all enter from different directions. CARMENCITA is dressed as the porno director, ANGELIQUE as her director of photography and JOSETTE as a porno actress. They all stare at the writhing MIOU-MIOU)

CARMENCITA

(shouting off)

Cut the music! I can't hear myself think!

(The music fades down, but doesn't disappear. MIOU-MIOU keeps writhing)

CARMENCITA (cont'd)

(to ANGELIQUE)

Can you get a good angle on that?

ANGELIQUE

She'd be better on a table.

JOSETTE

Pool table's nice. The felt—it's warmer.

CARMENCITA

Did anybody ask you?

JOSETTE

No—

CARMENCITA

Then shut the fuck up and work on your fake orgasms.

(shouting off, as JOSETTE practices making orgasmic noises)

Hey, Superman! You ready yet?!

RAOUL

(from off)

Here I come!

(RAOUL enters in a cheap knockoff of a Superman costume, complete with cape as MIOU-MIOU continues to writhe on the floor)

CARMENCITA

Can you fuck her like that?

(RAOUL stares at MIOU-MIOU from where he stands, trying to move his hips in rhythm with hers)

RAOUL

Maybe if she slowed down . . .

CARMENCITA

We gotta get a new leading man.

(of his costume)

Where's the zipper on this thing, anyway?

RAOUL

Zipper?

CARMENCITA

Oh, Jesus . . . !

(shouting to the heavens)

God! Shoot me! Right in the head! Right now!!

(looking down at the ever-writhing MIOU-MIOU)

Stop it!

(to RAOUL, as MIOU-MIOU stops)

Just how were you planning to perform your duties in this thing, *hombre*?

RAOUL

I . . . I thought we could dry-hump.

CARMENCITA

Dry-hump?!

RAOUL

When I was a boy, it was very erotic to—

CARMENCITA

Dry-hump!!!? *Dry-hump!!!?*

(Incensed, she tries to grab him by what
would have been lapels if he wasn't in a leotard.
Failing, she hits him repeatedly)

CARMENCITA

You piece of two-bit Latin dictator *SHIT--!!!* This is *your fantasy!!* You can't
even do us the honor of fucking us properly?!!

(to the others)

He's a total failure—

RAOUL

I am not!

CARMENCITA

As a man, and as a superman. I just don't see how we can make him the
center of a Movie of the Week.

(The music has by now faded completely.
As they speak, and without changing clothes,
the women assume their tv-producer personas,
going and get chairs one by one and sitting.
RAOUL seems disoriented by this, but also
goes and gets a chair as the meeting continues)

ANGELIQUE

An impotent man; it doesn't spell ratings.

JOSETTE

It sure doesn't.

MIOU-MIOU

I'd rather watch "The Sound of Music" again.

CARMENCITA

That was a great movie! Plenty of nuns there, boy.

JOSETTE

Plenty of nuns.

CARMENCITA

So, listen. You may be the Savior of Central America or wherever, but it takes a hell of a lot more than that to get on American television. We play for keeps up here, you understand? We use *real* money.

ANGELIQUE

So unless you can give us a corrupt figure-skater, or a woman drowning her own children—

JOSETTE

Or cutting her husband's penis off—

MIOU-MIOU

Or sex on the Internet—

CARMENCITA

We're just not interested, understand?

(as RAOUL rises, humiliated and exits)

And get that stupid costume off. Do you have any idea how ridiculous you look?

(He's gone. CARMENCITA and ANGELIQUE start to take off their clothes, until they too stand in strippers' costumes. They sit down with the other two. When they do, they become the nuns and lay worker again--notwithstanding what they're wearing)

ANGELIQUE

Father went down to the ocean yesterday. They found more bodies there.

CARMENCITA

How many this time?

JOSETTE

Three. Miou-Miou and I went along. Father wouldn't let us climb down with him. I always want to help, but he says it's too dangerous.

ANGELIQUE

It probably is.

MIOU-MIOU

The cliffs are really steep. Over two hundred feet. And it's all rocks down there.

JOSETTE

I used to climb rocks all the time as a kid. He's just being a man.

ANGELIQUE

Josette.

JOSETTE

Sorry.

CARMENCITA

What did he do with the bodies?

JOSETTE

The usual. Took pictures, tried to identify them, burned them and brought up the bones.

MIOU-MIOU

It's too dangerous to try to carry the bodies up.

CARMENCITA

Did you ever imagine, when you chose to come here, that we'd wind up burning bodies?

(A silence. MIOU-MIOU looks at all of them)

MIOU-MIOU

Are we in the right clothes?

ANGELIQUE

I'm not sure . . .

JOSETTE

It's not really all that comfortable . . .

(to CARMENCITA)

Do these feel right to you?

CARMENCITA

I never know anymore. I'm no good with clothes—everything I buy clashes. That's why I took holy orders in the first place; I thought I'd get to wear a habit. Then *that* all changed . . .

MIOU-MIOU

Clothes determine our sexual destiny.

ANGELIQUE

Amen to that.

MIOU-MIOU

I had a whole course in college.

CARMENCITA

That's nice, dear.

JOSETTE

I think he's really starting to lose it.

MIOU-MIOU

Me too. What'll we do if he goes insane?

ANGELIQUE

He isn't now?

CARMENCITA

We have to work with what God gives us. That's all there is to it.

JOSETTE

And must we thank God?

CARMENCITA

With every breath.

JOSETTE

So-rry . . .

(Lights shift to RAOUL, now in a suit. He carries a framed proclamation of some sort. He speaks to the audience as the others exit)

RAOUL

See this? It's the award your Secretary of State gave me. For merit. Framed and everything. There's a video of the ceremony. He embraces me. We showed these things to the jury. I think they were impressed, but who can tell with those bastards? The award he should have given me was for creating a pattern out of chaos. Not as easy as you think. It must look like chaos, so no one is held responsible. But it must also communicate—to everyone, no matter who they are—that to oppose us is death. There's a village up in the mountains where they're still pulling bodies out of the ground, twenty years later. And they aren't even half done. Bodies of women, old people, children—lots of children. Oppose us and your *children* will die. You see? A message that lasts. Back then, I didn't want to know the name of the place—the less I knew, the more it seemed like chaos. Now of course, when I want to remember, I can't. The price we pay for getting old. The time will come when I can't remember anything, I suppose. The final chaos.

(smiling, holding up the framed document)

But see? Here's the pattern. The official record of my merit. You were only born here. I earned my way.

(MIOU-MIOU enters in her nun's habit from the top of the show. Without a word, she relieves RAOUL of his plaque and exits)

RAOUL (cont'd)

That's more like it. Back home you could tell the good nuns from the rest. The good ones wore their habits.

(as JOSETTE and ANGELIQUE enter in habits)

Yes. Yes! Just like this! You are so beautiful.

(quietly, to JOSETTE)

Do you still have on that underwear?

JOSETTE

Of course.

RAOUL

Excellent. A sight for sore eyes!

(CARMENCITA enters in a habit.
MIOU-MIOU reenters with her,
carrying a chair for RAOUL)

ANGELIQUE

Sit down.

RAOUL

What?

JOSETTE

Sit down!

RAOUL

(doing so)

What are we—?

ANGELIQUE

(as a lawyer)

Why would you say a Truth Commission placed eighty-five percent of the murders during the course of your country's unrest squarely at the feet of the military?

(CARMENCITA, standing behind RAOUL,
translates for him inaudibly)

RAOUL

I have no idea what—

JOSETTE

(as lawyer)

Why did one-fifth of your population feel so endangered by their own government that they left the country?

RAOUL

The government wasn't dangerous.

CARMENCITA

(as translator)

The government was dangerous.

RAOUL

Wait! I didn't say that—!

MIOU-MIOU

(as lawyer)

You left the country.

RAOUL

That's different! I was in danger!

CARMENCITA

(as translator)

I wanted to do stand-up in Miami.

RAOUL

I didn't *say* that—! What are you—?!

ANGELIQUE

How many officers were tried for murder in your country?

RAOUL

Officers--?

JOSETTE

Were any? Ever?

RAOUL

The rank is not important—

MIOU-MIOU

Are you familiar with the term, "command responsibility"?

RAOUL

I was always responsible! I just never knew what was going on.

ANGELIQUE

What about this one? A “pattern and practice” of violence?

RAOUL

We never practiced; it was always for keeps. *Dios mio!!* What ever happened to *good* nuns?!!

(The women all show instant contrition,
bowing their heads in shame)

ANGELIQUE

We try to be good.

JOSETTE

We do.

MIOU-MIOU

We do.

CARMENCITA

We really do.

RAOUL

You’re going to force me to exorcise you from my brain. To forget everything. Forever. Is that what you want?

CARMENCITA

We’re sorry.

ANGELIQUE

We’re sorry.

MIOU-MIOU

We’re most humbly sorry.

RAOUL

There was an amnesty in my country, years ago. I can never be prosecuted

RAOUL (cont'd)

there. But here you invent new laws every day to let insignificant, unworthy people drag me into court and accuse me of every crime in the world. It's just lucky I'm being tried by a jury of my peers, or I might really be in trouble.

CARMENCITA

So you think you'll win?

RAOUL

Of course I will. If they convict me, what are they going to do? Prosecute General Westmoreland for Lieutenant Calley? What happens when some other country tries an American under these same laws for murdering dirty, flea-bitten natives in a part of the world you wouldn't even piss on? International law is a joke. It's simply war in a courtroom. Those with the most power win.

CARMENCITA

Then why have you been so nervous?

RAOUL

Because people *make mistakes!!* Josette! Josette!! Where are you?!

(Sound of a SLOW LATIN RHYTHM.
JOSETTE begins dancing with RAOUL
as the others all exit)

JOSETTE

Here I am, dearest.

RAOUL

You even wore the nun costume.

JOSETTE

Anything to make you happy.

RAOUL

You're the only one I've ever loved.

JOSETTE

I know. Did you bring the money?

RAOUL

Of course.

JOSETTE

Your dancing is so much better.

RAOUL

Angelique's a wonderful teacher. But she won't fuck me. Not even for money.

JOSETTE

We all have our shortcomings.

RAOUL

I want to have sex with you.

JOSETTE

We already did.

RAOUL

Why can't I ever remember it?!

JOSETTE

Remembering isn't important. What's important is looking forward to the next time.

(She kisses him, slipping his wallet out of his pocket without his noticing, then exits as the MUSIC FADES. RAOUL stands bemused for a moment. Then CARMENCITA enters, as his wife)

CARMENCITA

So handsome.

RAOUL

What?

CARMENCITA

If the jury convicts you today, they will have convicted a handsome man.

RAOUL

Oh. Thank you. Where are the children?

CARMENCITA

They're at a sleep-over.

RAOUL

What--!!!?

CARMENCITA

It was planned for a long time. No one knew the verdict would come back today.

RAOUL

I don't believe this.

CARMENCITA

Besides, they hate getting their pictures in the paper.

RAOUL

Who have I done this for—all of it—if not for them?

CARMENCITA

They'll come to the victory party. If there is one.

RAOUL

I used to love being a father. Now I feel like the first stage of a space rocket, falling back to Earth, burning up in the atmosphere.

CARMENCITA

You were always such a poet. Shall we?

RAOUL

If I lose, will you speak to me again?

CARMENCITA

(with a shrug)

I married you. We're like two stones, tied together. If one is thrown into the well . . .

RAOUL

I wasn't such a bad man. I did what I had to do.

CARMENCITA

Let's go and get you over with.

(They make a circuit of the stage as the others, dressed as jury members, enter and sit. RAOUL's journey stops at his chair. He sits with CARMENCITA behind as the translator)

ANGELIQUE

(rising)

Yes, your Honor, we have reached a verdict in the case against General Raoul Raoul Raoul Raoul, um . . . de Raoul. We find for the defendant.

RAOUL

(triumphantly)

I knew it!!!

(Instantly, a *FAST, POUNDING LATIN DANCE RHYTHM* fills the room. RAOUL dances in celebration. The others watch silently. Suddenly the *MUSIC CUTS OUT*, and RAOUL looks up)

RAOUL

What? Oh . . . sorry, your Honor. Won't happen again.

(*sotto voce* to CARMENCITA)

Freedom!

CARMENCITA

La Libertad.

RAOUL

La Libertad!!

(as the *MUSIC IS INSTANTLY UP AGAIN*, then just as suddenly cuts out. To judge)

Right. Sorry.

(He mimes locking his lips and throwing away the key. But he can't contain his smile. MUSIC RETURNS YET AGAIN, FADING UP GRADUALLY BUT IRRESISTABLY. RAOUL begins dancing again, almost involuntarily. The others leave as RAOUL's dancing grows more spontaneous and celebratory. Slowly, MUSIC CROSSFADES into the SOUND OF A LAWNMOWER. Lights shift as RAOUL's dance morphs into the miming of mowing his lawn. He speaks to the audience)

RAOUL (cont'd)

Finally, I am one of you!

(As he speaks, he keeps "mowing". ANGELIQUE enters and begins to mime cleaning her swimming pool with a long, skimming device)

RAOUL (cont'd)

Now I am as innocent as you are!

(to ANGELIQUE)

Thank you, neighbor!

(ANGELIQUE smiles and waves while MIOU-MIOU enters in sunglasses, sits and mimes applying sun-block to her arms)

RAOUL (cont'd)

I have passed all the obstacles! I have worked a miracle! Thank you, too!

(MIOU-MIOU smiles and waves. JOSETTE enters and jogs in place)

RAOUL (cont'd)

And you! Thanks to all of you! I am living proof the system works! There's a pattern in the chaos! There's an orderly lawn at the end of death's road! There's—!

(He stops suddenly. CARMENCITA has entered,
unseen by him until now. SOUND CUTS OUT)

RAOUL (cont'd)

Carmencita! I didn't see you.

CARMENCITA

Your children are here.

RAOUL

They are?

(MIOU-MIOU and JOSETTE instantly
adopt their personas as his children as
ANGELIQUE continues to clean her pool)

RAOUL (cont'd)

Furiosa! Give me a hug.

MIOU-MIOU

Like *that's* gonna happen.

RAOUL

Esponaneo—

JOSETTE

We want a condo.

RAOUL

You what?

MIOU-MIOU

Or we'll say you did it. We'll say you confessed to us and everything.

JOSETTE

We want a place in SoBe rent free, and you never get to visit. Either of you.

CARMENCITA

You see what I put up with?

RAOUL

(angrily)

Fine! Why not?! What good are the two of you anyway?

JOSETTE and MIOU-MIOU

(slapping hands, elated)

All ri-ight!!

(They turn and head into the background with ANGELIQUE. RAOUL turns to CARMENCITA)

RAOUL

At least we have each other.

(CARMENCITA stares at him for a long moment in silence, then moves upstage to join the others. They all turn to stare at him as he addresses the audience)

RAOUL (cont'd)

This is the problem with life: finding something to live for. For me, it's mowing my lawn.

(SOUND OF THE LAWN MOWER returns. RAOUL mimes mowing once more, doing one or two right-angle turns. Then, giving the audience a "thumbs up" and a last big smile, he waves and "mows" his way offstage. SOUND OF THE LAWN MOWER CROSSFADES INTO A HOLY CHOIR. The four women move downstage. The CHOIR FADES OUT as they begin to speak)

CARMENCITA

Don't worry. We'll take care of him.

ANGELIQUE

He just needs love.

JOSETTE

Love and a firing squad.

CARMENCITA

Josette.

MIOU-MIOU

To tell the truth, we kind of like the challenge.

ANGELIQUE

If life were easy, there'd be no need for us.

JOSETTE

We need to be needed.

MIOU-MIOU

That's what keeps God's universe right-side up.

CARMENCITA

God the Father.

MIOU-MIOU

And the Son.

JOSETTE

And the Holy . . . something. I'll think of it.

ANGELIQUE

There's a system. We're sure of that much, anyway. And as long as we're sure, does it matter what the system is?

JOSETTE

Anyhow, we're sticking with him.

MIOU-MIOU

Not because we think he'll change.

ANGELIQUE

We're not that naive. No, I should think the reason's obvious.

(They all look at CARMENCITA, who seems surprised)

CARMENCITA

I don't remember why we're with him . . .

ANGELIQUE

You don't?

CARMENCITA

Don't you?

ANGELIQUE

We thought you did.

CARMENCITA

So no one remembers?

MIOU-MIOU

Don't get excited, everybody. If we just sit here and think a minute, it's sure to come back to us.

JOSETTE

Sure it is.

CARMENCITA

Josette.

(The four of them ponder in silence, assuming postures of deep thought. Lights slowly fade to black)

THE END