

Want a Ride?

A period play

By Peter Del Re

Contact:
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Time: The Summer of 1965

Place: Brooklyn, New York

Characters:

ARTURO: 22, Male, Italian-American

RAÚL: 22, Male, Mexican-American

LUCRETIA: 52, Female, Italian-American, Arturo's mother

CAMILA: 49, Female, Mexican-American, Raúl's mother

***Production Note:** The roles of Raúl & Camila MUST be played by actors of Hispanic/Latine descent.

SCENE ONE

Brooklyn. 1965.

ARTURO walks on Bowery street with his hands in his pockets. The street is neglected and dimly lit.

Eventually, he spots RAÚL, 23, leaning against a Black Chevrolet Chevelle convertible, smoking a cigarette. The top of the car is down.

ARTURO picks up his pace.

RAÚL spots ARTURO and smiles. He takes out his cigarette, drops it on the ground, and stomps it out.

ARTURO
(sarcastically)

Whattayou doin' here?

RAÚL

Yeah, yeah. Get in.

ARTURO

You sure it's alright?

RAÚL

Yes. C'mon, get in.

ARTURO crosses to the car, opens the door, and gets in.

RAÚL walks around to the driver's side, opens the door, and gets in. He then turns the key into the ignition and starts the car. He turns the steering wheel and begins to drive.

ARTURO

Thank you for doing this.

RAÚL

Ah, it's cool.

Beat.

Know it beats taking the train this late.

ARTURO

Eh, well. I've been doin' it for three years now.

RAÚL

Three years? Jesus.

ARTURO

What? Train's not that bad.

RAÚL

No, I mean. You've been working at Astroland for three years now?

ARTURO

Since it opened.

RAÚL

You're nuts.

ARTURO

Eh, it's good money.

RAÚL

How much kid barf you had to clean in the last three years?

ARTURO

These is the questions you're askin'?

RAÚL

(mockingly)

These is the questions that's important to me.

ARTURO

Uh-huh. And where you work, then that's so much better?

RAÚL

I'm a waiter.

ARTURO

Waitin' tables gets you a nice car like this?

RAÚL

When you wait at 21 club it does.

ARTURO

Shit.

Beat.

Good for you.

RAÚL

Eh, thanks. That's why I can't wrap my head around why someone would stay workin' at an amusement park as long as you.

Beat.

ARTURO

I don't know. I don't mind it.

Beat. RAÚL slowly brakes the car to a halt. He looks over at ARTURO.

Don't get me wrong the kid barf is a pain in the ass, but- Sometimes I just look to my right and see the waves crash onto the sand and I get to feel the breeze for just a moment. And it's just nice. I like the view, y'know?

Beat. RAÚL nods as he looks at ARTURO.

RAÚL

Yeah, I get that.

ARTURO turns to face RAÚL. After a beat, they break eye contact and RAÚL accelerates the car and drives again.

Beat.

ARTURO

I never got your name.

RAÚL

Raúl.

ARTURO
Raúl?

RAÚL
(rolling his r's)
Raúl.

ARTURO
Alright, hot shot.

RAÚL
Can't roll your R's?

ARTURO
Of course I can roll my R's. I'm Italian for Christsakes.

RAÚL
(sarcastically)
'Ey, no shit!

ARTURO
Got a problem with that?

RAÚL
(chuckling)
Nah. You I-talians are cute.

ARTURO
Cute?

RAÚL
Yeah, witcha funny little accent--

ARTURO
Ey--

RAÚL
And ya "tough guy" attitudes--

ARTURO
Oh, so Mexicans don't have no "macho" attitudes then?

RAÚL
Who says I'm Mexican?

Beat. ARTURO's smile drops.

I--

ARTURO

RAÚL lets out a huge cackle.

RAÚL

The look on your face, man! Oh, that, now that was rich!

ARTURO shakes his head and eases up.

ARTURO

You're somethin' else, man.

RAÚL

Ya damn right, Art. Can I call you Art?

Beat.

ARTURO

I don't think I've ever been called Art.

RAÚL

Really? What do people call you?

ARTURO

'Turo.

RAÚL

'Turo?

ARTURO

Yeah.

Beat.

RAÚL

I like Art. I'mma call you Art.

Beat.

ARTURO

Alright.

Beat.

Suddenly, RAÚL slams his foot on the brake
and his hand on the horn.

RAÚL
(shouting)

Pinche culero! Cabrón!

ARTURO

Easy.

RAÚL
(sighing)

Sorry, asshole cut me off.

ARTURO
(jokingly)

Mother's tongue?

RAÚL

She'd beat my ass.

Beat.

Father's.

ARTURO

Yeah?

RAÚL furrows his eyebrows and turns briefly at
ARTURO, still watching the road.

RAÚL

What is this? An interrogation?

ARTURO

What? No?

RAÚL

What about your father? Where's he?

Beat.

ARTURO

'Nam.

Beat.

Shit. I'm sorry. RAÚL

It's fine. Really. ARTURO

Beat.

How you feel about it? RAÚL

About what? ARTURO

His fight. RAÚL

His fight? ARTURO

C'mon, Art. You tellin' me you never though about his role in all this? RAÚL

He's a lieutenant... I think? ARTURO

Sent over to do what? RAÚL

Probably god knows what. ARTURO

See, that don't sit right with me. RAÚL

What? ARTURO

The not-knowin', but knowin' it's fucked. RAÚL

Hey, they're doin' what they gotta do-- ARTURO

RAÚL

What do they gotta do? We don't got nothin' to do bein' over there.

Beat.

Look, I'm sorry. Your father's over there and all and I'm runnin' my mouth but... We're sending men to die over there... That doesn't bother you?

Beat.

ARTURO

Sure it does.

Silence. After a short while, RAÚL speaks.

RAÚL

(pointing)

This you?

ARTURO

Yup.

RAÚL pulls the car over to the side of the road.

ARTURO opens the passenger side door and gets out. ARTURO then walks around to the driver's side of the car.

RAÚL rests his arm on the driver's side window as he looks out onto the street.

ARTURO makes his way to the driver's side and leans on the door, grazing RAÚL's arm.

ARTURO

Thanks again for the ride.

RAÚL seems to snap out of a brief trance and turn to face ARTURO.

RAÚL

Oh, yeah, yeah, no problem.

Beat.

ARTURO

You want somethin'? Like a beer, or some of my ma's left--

RAÚL

Nah, nah. I think I better get goin'.

Beat.

ARTURO

Oh, okay. Uh, see you around, then,

(rolling his R's)

Raúl.

RAÚL chuckles. ARTURO smiles before turning around and beginning to saunter up the driveway.

RAÚL

See ya around, Art.

ARTURO turns back for a moment.

ARTURO

Hm. Not as fun to say.

RAÚL

(smiling)

Go on. Get.

ARTURO turns back around and saunters up the driveway and offstage. RAÚL watches for a bit before shifting the gear and turning the steering wheel.

Lights fade.

SCENE TWO

The next day. RAÚL sits in the driver's seat of his Chevelle. He looks at himself in the side view mirror as he adjusts it. He's also smoking a cigarette that's nearly finished.

The cigarette fizzles out and RAÚL tosses it on the ground. He grabs a pack of cigarettes from the glove compartment only to find that it's empty.

RAÚL

(sighing)

Damn.

ARTURO then enters walking with his hands in his jacket pockets. He doesn't notice RAÚL nor his Chevelle.

RAÚL notices ARTURO and waits a moment before whistling at him. ARTURO turns to look and sees RAÚL.

ARTURO

'Ey, whattayou doin' here?

RAÚL

Eh, nothin'.

ARTURO

Wait. Was you waitin' for me?

RAÚL

(chuckling)

Yeah, 'cuz you're so special.

Beat.

Hey, you got a cigarette?

ARTURO

Nah, I don't smoke.

Pfft. Okay.

RAÚL

Beat. ARTURO stares at RAÚL.

Well, get in.

ARTURO smiles and walks around to the passenger side door and opens it.

Thanks.

ARTURO

ARTURO gets in the passenger seat and closes the door.

Eh, don't thank me yet. We're taking a detour.

RAÚL

I don't got nowhere to be.

ARTURO

Good.

RAÚL

RAÚL shifts the gear and starts to drive.

Where're we goin'?

ARTURO

Need to pick up a pack of reds.

RAÚL

This late at night?

ARTURO

I know a place that's open. And that'll give me a discount.

RAÚL

Beat.

So, how was your day?

ARTURO

How was my day?

RAÚL

Yeah, what?

ARTURO

You wanna know about my day?

RAÚL

Am I fucking speaking gibberish, right now? Yes, I want to know about your day.

Beat.

ARTURO

It was alright, I guess.

Beat.

RAÚL

That's it?

ARTURO

What? It was fine.

RAÚL

No broken down rides? No assholes you had to deal with?

ARTURO

Oh, well there was this one scumbag--

RAÚL

Ah, look, we're gettin' somewhere.

ARTURO

They had me cleanin' the men's restroom and this guy walks in while I'm moppin' and throws a loogie on the floor--

RAÚL

Eugh, christ, I can't stand spittahs.

ARTURO

You're tellin' me. An' so I looked up at him like "the hell, man" and he just snorted like some fuckin' bear and went into the stall. Then I gotta hear him shittin' his fuckin' brains out--

RAÚL

Alright, alright.

ARTURO
You wanted the story.

RAÚL
Skip to the end.

ARTURO
He comes outta the stall, gives me a look, and says, “you should get started on that,” and points to the stall and laughs.

RAÚL
Fuckin’ gross. Did’ja clean it?

ARTURO
Fuck no.

RAÚL
Good. ‘Cuz I don’t want none of that shit in my car.

ARTURO and RAÚL laugh.
Their laughter dissipates.
Beat.

Well?

ARTURO
Well what?

RAÚL
You not gonna ask me how my day was?

ARTURO
What the fuck is wrong with you?

RAÚL
I’m giving you a fuckin’ ride the least you can do is ask me about my fuckin’ day.

ARTURO
Alright, shit, how was your fuckin’ day?

RAÚL
Eh, thanks for askin’, uhh. It was good, y’know.

ARTURO chuckles and shakes his head.

I worked. Mostly served those rich midtown fat cats, y'know the ones that always look like they're headed to an important business meeting. Most of them tip well so I don't mind, but... some of them annoy the shit outta me.

Beat.

The way they stare at me. I bring them their drinks and ask if they're ready to order and somehow they all gave me the same look and tell me to give 'em some more time. It's like they look you up and down without moving their eyes. No smile no nothin'.

Beat.

I know it sounds crazy to get all worked up over a look some sonofabitch gave you but, I don't know. It just gives me this weird feeling in the pit of my stomach.

Beat. ARTURO stares at RAÚL. Silence.

Ah, here it is.

RAÚL gestures across the way.

Open 24 hours.

RAÚL pulls the car over to the side of the road. He stops the car and puts it in park. He then opens the driver's side door and gets out. He walks offstage.

(offstage)

Hey, Johnny! What's goin' on what's happenin'?

Beat.

RAÚL re-enters.

You want anything?

ARTURO

Oh, uh, nah, I'm good.

RAÚL

You sure? Not even like a thing of altoids or chiclets?

Nah, nah, I'm fine.

ARTURO

You want a beer?

RAÚL

Beat.

You're okay with--

ARTURO

RAÚL turns back around and walks offstage again.

A Schlitz for the lady.

RAÚL
(offstage)

ARTURO chuckles.

Asshole.

ARTURO

Beat.

After a moment, RAÚL re-enters carrying a pack of reds cigarettes and a Schlitz beer bottle.

Thanks, John. Take care.

RAÚL
(facing offstage)

RAÚL turns around, walks to the car, and hands ARTURO the beer can. He then opens the driver's side door, and gets in the driver's seat. He then pulls out a cigarette, puts it in his mouth, and lights it with his lighter. He takes one drag and turns to ARTURO.

You wanna try one?

RAÚL gestures the box at ARTURO. Beat.
ARTURO seems to think about it for a moment.

ARTURO

Alright.

ARTURO takes a cigarette from the box and puts it in his mouth. RAÚL leans over and lights it for him. He takes a big drag and starts hacking up a lung immediately.

(coughing)

Shit.

RAÚL

(laughing)

Why'd you take that long of a drag for?

Beat. ARTURO continues coughing.

Okay, okay, wash it down with your beer.

ARTURO opens his can of beer frantically and starts downing it. He continues to cough.

RAÚL reaches his hand over and starts patting ARTURO's chest.

Alright, get it out, get it out.

ARTURO then grips onto RAÚL's hand over his chest as his coughing slows.

ARTURO

Fuck, man.

RAÚL

You good?

ARTURO

I think so.

Beat.

ARTURO finally looks down at his chest and realizes he's gripping onto RAÚL's hand. He quickly releases and RAÚL retracts his hand.

Sorry.

RAÚL

All good.

Beat.

Let's get you home.

RAÚL shifts the gear and begins to drive again.

ARTURO stares at RAÚL for a moment and then stares out onto the road.

Lights fade.

SCENE THREE

The next day, ARTURO enters and notices the Chevelle parked next to the sidewalk. He approaches the car and hops into the passenger seat. He stretches and leans back in the seat.

Eventually, RAÚL enters tossing his keys. He stops and sees the back of ARTURO's head sitting in the passenger seat. He smiles, scoffs, and shakes his head as he approaches the car.

RAÚL

(jokingly)

Can't take the train, lazy ass?

ARTURO turns around to face RAÚL.

ARTURO

Whaat? My ride's here.

ARTURO honks the car's horn.

C'mon!

RAÚL chuckles and shakes his head. He walks over and hops into the driver's seat.

He then notices that ARTURO starts holding onto his stomach as he winces slightly.

RAÚL

You ate anything yet?

ARTURO

Not since my lunch.

Beat.

RAÚL

You wanna swing by my place for dinner?

Beat. ARTURO and RAÚL stare at each other.

ARTURO

Alright.

ARTURO smiles.

RAÚL smiles. He turns the key into the ignition.

Lights fade.

SCENE FOUR

Later that evening, after dinner. RAÚL enters followed by ARTURO. They both approach the Chevelle. RAÚL smokes a cigarette and ARTURO is drinking from a Coca-Cola can.

ARTURO

So, she doesn't keep any alcohol in the house?

Beat. RAÚL leans on the hood of the car and takes a long drag of his cigarette.

RAÚL

Nope.

Beat.

Not since my father left.

ARTURO

Big drinker?

RAÚL

Wasn't always.

Beat.

All started when he got back from Korea... My mother was thrilled he came back in one piece.

ARTURO

Well. Yeah, that's good.

RAÚL squints faintly as he looks at ARTURO.

RAÚL

(sighing)

He didn't.

ARTURO

Huh?

RAÚL

That war shattered him.

Beat.

The man couldn't get happy unless he was at least four beers in.

ARTURO

Oh.

Beat.

RAÚL

I remember one night. Don't know why I was up but I guess I couldn't sleep.

Beat.

I heard him wake up and let out a noise I never heard from him before. He was breathing so heavy. I heard him walk to the kitchen and open the fridge. At some point I finally fell asleep but I wasn't out cold for long.

RAÚL takes a hit from his cigarette as
ARTURO listens intently.

I woke up to the sound of my mother screaming at him. She never liked how much he drank.

Beat.

That was the first time he hit my mother. I thought it was a gunshot. It felt like it. The way it rang in my ears. I'd never heard anything like it before. And then hearing her body collapse to the floor it--

Beat.

And he didn't say a word. I know he didn't. He opened the fridge again, took another beer, and started walking back down the hall. I remember pulling the covers over me, thinking he was headed for my room next.

Beat.

There were more nights like that, and then days like that. Until one day he made the stupid mistake of trying to lay a hand on me.

ARTURO

Woah, you hit him back?

RAÚL

Nope. My mother lost it. I never seen her that angry. I don't know where she found the strength but she beat the shit outta him. She kicked him out right then and there.

ARTURO

Wow.

RAÚL

In there's the strongest woman I know.

Beat.

(half-jokingly)

So when you asked for a beer, just know I saved your sorry ass by offering to get you that coke.

ARTURO chuckles. He raises his eyebrows and stares at the Coca-Cola can in his hand. He takes a long sip.

Beat.

(deep-in-thought)

I never went into the kitchen that first night. To check on her. I never went into the kitchen at all. I fucking hate myself for that.

Beat.

ARTURO

C'mon, you can't take that on.

RAÚL

I shoulda checked on her.

ARTURO

You were a kid.

RAÚL

It woulda been nothing to just, go and talk to her.

ARTURO

Raúl--

RAÚL

You don't know what that feels like.

RAÚL turns to face ARTURO.

ARTURO tilts his head back sharply. He turns to face the street. He takes a deep breath and then a long sip from his coke, finishing it.

RAÚL takes a hit from his cigarette.

ARTURO

My grandfather used to work on the trains, laying track. He'd go to work bright and early in the morning, hammer wood to metal all day, and come home drenched in sweat.

Beat.

No one would bother him. He wanted his cigar and his bottle of Ol' Forester. My mother would tell me not to go near him. To stay in my room.

Beat. RAÚL turns to face ARTURO.

She told me he used to know his way with the trains so well that he'd knock out on the ride and wake up just before his stop. He felt the individual tracks as the car rode over them, she said. The tracks he knew better than any other sucker in the car, because it was his bare hands that nailed them down.

Beat.

She comes into my room one day, sits down on my bed, and stares off, not looking at me. She starts tellin' me a story. One day, back when she was a kid, the kids on the block were playing with some slip joint knives somebody found. Guess there was nothing better to do for latchkey kids in the 20's. Anyway, one thing leads to another and my mother gets a gash on her cheek. The kids jumped into action, trying to get her to calm down and clean her up, so they wouldn't get in trouble. She was the youngest of the bunch. My zio, her brother, somehow got her to stop crying. He found my grandmother's foundation and tried to hide the gash with it. But my grandfather wasn't an idiot.

Beat. ARTURO sighs.

My grandfather walks in and sees my mother and my zio sat at the dining table, sitting all upright with their hands folded. "Ciao Papa." My grandfather took one look at my mother and walked over to her. He grabbed her by her hair and slammed her face into the table.

Beat.

RAÚL

Shit.

Beat. RAÚL takes a hit from his cigarette.

ARTURO

He took my zio to his room to belt him and told my mother to stay put. She said she sat at that table for hours, holding back tears, before my grandfather finally told her to go to her room. Then, she let it all out into her pillow.

Beat.

She laughed as she told me she woke up to find a blotch of foundation on it.

Beat. RAÚL places his hand on ARTURO's shoulder.

RAÚL

Art, listen, I'm sorry for--

ARTURO

She always tells me how amazed she is that I know the trains so well. She's never been too good with them. She tells me, "your Nonno would've been so proud of you."

Beat.

She says I remind her of him.

RAÚL raises his eyebrows. He gradually lifts his arm off of ARTURO and takes a hit from his cigarette.

Beat.

Uhm, I should probably be gettin' home.

RAÚL drops his cigarette on the ground and stomps it out. He pulls out his car keys.

RAÚL

Yeah, yeah. Get in, I'll drive you home.

ARTURO

Thanks.

RAÚL walks around to the driver's side and gets in the driver's seat while ARTURO walks around to the passenger's side and gets in the passenger seat.

RAÚL then turns the key into the ignition, starting the car. He then shifts the gear and pulls the car out of the driveway. He begins to drive.

Beat.

RAÚL
You okay?

ARTURO
Yeah, yeah I'm fine.

Beat.

RAÚL
I'm sorry.

ARTURO
Don't be. Honestly. I think I needed that.

RAÚL
Needed what?

ARTURO
To get that off me. Y'know. I've never told anyone that before.

RAÚL
Oh. Shit, well. Happy to help.

RAÚL chuckles. ARTURO smiles, exhales, and shakes his head.

Anyway, let's talk about something else. You got a girl?

ARTURO
You sound like my mother.

RAÚL
(laughing)
C'mon.

ARTURO
(laughing)
I don't.

RAÚL
Ah, okay. 'Ats fine. More time to yourself.

ARTURO
(sarcastically)

Just what I need. You?

RAÚL

Nah, I got this one chick though.

ARTURO

You do?

RAÚL turns briefly to face ARTURO and furrows his brows. He then looks back at the road.

RAÚL

Whattaya mean “you do?” Have you seen me?

ARTURO
(jokingly)

Relax.

RAÚL
(laughing)

We ain't nothin', at least not right now. Haven't seen her in a minute. Took her to see Goldfinger, though.

ARTURO

Goldfinger? Really?

RAÚL

What? Figered she'd like it. Told her she'd look great in my bed all painted gold like that.

ARTURO
(laughing)

Oh, so you told her she'd look great dead.

RAÚL playfully punches ARTURO's arm.

RAÚL

Ah, y'know what, you're an ass. I thought that was smooth as hell.

ARTURO
(sarcastically)

No, no, you're right. You're just oozin' with suave.

RAÚL

Thank you, thank you... Don't ever say I'm "oozin'" with anything ever again.

ARTURO and RAÚL laugh. After a beat, their laughter dissipates.

Beat.

ARTURO

I never had a girl. Never even been on a date with one. My moms gives me so much shit for it.

Beat.

I try to avoid her.

RAÚL

That why you work so much?

Beat. ARTURO shrugs.

ARTURO

I think she worries about me.

RAÚL

That's what all mother's do. Worry.

ARTURO

Well, what you doin' that keeps you're mother worried?

Beat.

RAÚL

She's worried I'll get sent.

Beat.

ARTURO

To Vietnam?

RAÚL

(sarcastically)

No, to Jersey. Yes, to Vietnam.

Beat.

She tells me she knows I'd make it out alive, but--

ARTURO

She's worried how you'll come back.

Beat.

RAÚL

Yeah.

Beat.

Y'know I dropped his name.

ARTURO

Huh?

RAÚL

I used to be Raúl Santos-Garcia. Now I'm just Raúl Garcia.

ARTURO

You can do that?

RAÚL

I don't know legally, but. I did it.

ARTURO

Hate your dad that much?

RAÚL

It's not that I hate him. I can't hate him. It's just. The father I had died in Korea. Keeping the name just started reminding me of the man that came home.

Beat.

ARTURO

I get that.

RAÚL turns onto ARTURO's street.

RAÚL

Your father been sent before?

ARTURO

He enlisted after Korea. Served his time, came home, then Vietnam happened. Felt he needed to go.

Beat. RAÚL pulls over in front of ARTURO's house. He puts the car in park.

RAÚL

You ever think about what a war might do to him?

A long beat.

ARTURO

I do.

Beat.

I think about my pops a lot. Truth is, I don't know what he thinks he's fighting for. Why he cares. I don't think he can handle a war.

RAÚL

None of us can, Art.

ARTURO turns to face RAÚL.

ARTURO

Y'know, there are times when I love my father. There are other times where I don't wanna be anywhere near 'im. I don't think I can just "drop" Vitale off my name.

RAÚL

Eh, you could take ya mother's name.

ARTURO turns to face out the window.

ARTURO

Hm.

RAÚL stares at ARTURO. He then extends his hand and places it firmly on ARTURO's leg.

ARTURO looks down at RAÚL's hand on his leg and then looks up at RAÚL.

RAÚL

You can always talk to me, Art, y'know, if you need someone to talk to. I'm a good listener, after all.

ARTURO smiles. RAÚL smiles back. They stare at each other intensely. After a beat, ARTURO's smile disappears and he abruptly breaks eye contact with RAÚL as he turns to face the car door and opens it. RAÚL, confused, pulls his hand away from ARTURO's leg.

ARTURO

I gotta go.

RAÚL

Huh?

ARTURO

Mom's probably up waitin' for me, sorry.

RAÚL

Oh, uh, okay.

ARTURO climbs out of the car and closes the door behind him. He briefly turns back to face RAÚL.

ARTURO

Thanks for the ride. Bye.

ARTURO turns back around and walks up the driveway to his side door entrance, exiting.

RAÚL

(frozen)

Bye.

After a long beat, RAÚL turns back to face the front, shifts the gear, and turns back onto the road as he drives away.

After a beat, RAÚL turns a knob on the car radio. The transmission of an FM radio station is heard for a bit before RAÚL turns the knob again, cutting to another station's transmission.

After a beat, RAÚL, frustrated, turns the knob again, and then again, and then again. Finally, he lets out an annoyed sigh before he turns the radio off.

After another beat, the lights shift.

As RAÚL continues to drive, he occasionally seems to snap his mind out of something, fighting certain thoughts.

Eventually, though, ARTURO enters and saunters over to the car. He hops in and RAÚL looks over at him in shock.

| | |
|---|--------|
| | RAÚL |
| Art?! | |
| | ARTURO |
| Thank you for doing this. | |
| | RAÚL |
| How the hell did you- | |
| | ARTURO |
| These is the questions you're askin'? | |
| | RAÚL |
| YOU JUST HOPPED INTO MY CAR GOIN' 50 MILE-AN-HOUR YES THESE ARE THE QUESTIONS I'M ASKIN'. | |
| | ARTURO |
| Waitin' tables gets you a nice car like this? | |
| | RAÚL |
| Oh, fuck, no, no- | |
| | ARTURO |
| You're somethin' else, man. | |
| | RAÚL |
| I'M-? Oh my god I'm goin' crazy. | |
| | ARTURO |
| Easy. | |

RAÚL
You! You're makin' me crazy!

ARTURO
You want somethin'? Like a beer or-

RAÚL
I want you to get OUTTA MY CAR.

ARTURO
I don't got nowhere to be.

Beat. RAÚL takes a deep breath.

RAÚL
Why- Why did you do that just now?

ARTURO
You wanna know about my day?

RAÚL
We were havin' such a nice conversation. I never get deep like that. I pour my heart out with you and you pour your heart out with me and then all of a sudden you turn frigid.

ARTURO
You wanted the story.

RAÚL
I just wanted to let you know I cared.

ARTURO
What the fuck is wrong with you?

RAÚL
I REALLY WISH I KNEW!

After a beat, RAÚL sighs.

I think I got a thing for you.

Silence. ARTURO stares out.

Oh, so now you got nothin' to say?

Silence. RAÚL sighs and looks frustrated as he stares out.

Lights fade.

SCENE FIVE

The next morning. RAÚL leans on the side of his Chevelle, smoking a cigarette.

ARTURO enters carrying his keys in his hand,. He notices RAÚL and turns his head away from him as he continues to walk. He is about to pass the Chevelle when RAÚL notices him and stomps out his cigarette.

RAÚL

‘Ey!

ARTURO ignores him.

‘Ey! You good?

ARTURO ignores him. He then walks around his Chevelle and in front of ARTURO, blocking his path.

Hey, did’ja hear me back there?

ARTURO

Hard not to.

RAÚL

Then what gives? You ignorin’ me?

ARTURO

I’m already late--

RAÚL

Cut the shit.

RAÚL steps back for a moment and looks ARTURO up and down.

Jesus. You look like hell.

Thanks.

ARTURO

Beat. Suddenly, RAÚL spots ARTURO's keys in his hand and swiftly grabs them and crosses back to his Chevelle.

C'mon, man. Cut it out.

ARTURO

Come and get 'em.

RAÚL

ARTURO begins to cross to RAÚL.

I don't have time for this.

ARTURO

RAÚL swiftly runs around to the other side of the Chevelle.

Jackass.

ARTURO goes to walk around the back of the car, but then RAÚL goes to walk around the front of the car. ARTURO then stops himself and goes to walk around the front of the car, but then RAÚL goes to walk around the back of the car in response. They go back and forth like this for a little bit, causing ARTURO to get more and more frustrated.

Eventually, ARTURO fakes out RAÚL, causing them both to end up at the front of the car.

Oh-ho nice--

RAÚL

ARTURO lunges to try and grab his keys but RAÚL moves his hand out of the way just in time.

This happens two more times before ARTURO's frustration reaches its tipping point and he abruptly shoves RAÚL hard, pushing him to the ground.

RAÚL winces in pain on the ground and looks up at ARTURO in shock.

The fuck? What's up with you?

ARTURO

What's up with you?!

RAÚL

You're trying to avoid me.

ARTURO

I told you, I'm late--

RAÚL

An' I told you that's bull. I'm not an idiot, Art.

ARTURO scoffs and begins to walk away, but RAÚL gets himself up off the ground and grabs onto ARTURO's arm.

What's up?

ARTURO

Nothing!

RAÚL

Yesterday you act all cold to me all of a sudden when I dropped you off. Today you got some fucking bug up your ass. Something's up.

ARTURO

Would'ja let go of me already?

Beat. RAÚL lets go of ARTURO. ARTURO rubs his arm where RAÚL's grip was.

Christ, some grip you got there.

RAÚL

Look, there's something you're not tellin' me, Art. I know it. But, fine. If you don't wanna say it, don't say it.

Beat.

I just wanted to hang out again today.

ARTURO

We've hung out nearly every day this week?

RAÚL

And? I like hangin' out witchu. Is that a fuckin' crime?

Beat.

ARTURO

No.

RAÚL

Can't you just be straight with me?

Beat. ARTURO shrugs, sighs, and looks away.

RAÚL scoffs, shakes his head, and looks off.
After a beat, he shifts his gaze back to
ARTURO, who has his back turned to him.

I'm leaving tomorrow morning. Bright and early.

ARTURO turns around abruptly to face RAÚL.

ARTURO

What?

RAÚL

I'm headed for Toronto.

ARTURO

Toronto? Why you headin' for Toronto?

RAÚL

Same reason I'd head to fucking Timbuktu.

Beat.

I can't get drafted, Art.

ARTURO stares at RAÚL in shock.

My mom depends on me. Since my father left I've had to help her with bills. If I get drafted, my whole family's screwed.

ARTURO

But how are you gonna help in Toronto?

RAÚL

I'll get a job. Send money over the border every month.

ARTURO

It's illegal to escape the draft, Raúl.

RAÚL

It's illegal to do a lot of things. Doesn't change what I know I have to do.

Silence. They stare at each other.

ARTURO

Shit.

RAÚL

Listen, Art. You can't just, ignore this draft. LBJ doesn't give a rat's ass about us and I'm not dying for nothing in some marsh halfway across the world.

RAÚL walks closer to ARTURO and places his hands on both of his shoulders.

You need to think about who's war this is.

RAÚL lightly squeezes ARTURO's shoulders and gives them a pat before removing his hands from them.

He then walks to his car and hops in the driver's seat as ARTURO watches. He turns the key into the ignition, starting the car.

I'll see you around.

The two make brief eye contact before RAÚL shifts the gear and turns his head around and begins to back out the car.

Lights fade on the Chevelle as a spot emerges on ARTURO, frozen.

After a beat, lights fade.

SCENE SIX

ARTURO sits centerstage. His mother, LUCRETIA, enters. The following conversation(s) can be spoken in Italian, English, or a mix of the two.

| | |
|------------------|----------|
| | LUCRETIA |
| How's work? | |
| | ARTURO |
| Good. | |
| | LUCRETIA |
| Good? | |
| | ARTURO |
| Mhmm. | |
| | Beat. |
| | LUCRETIA |
| You're good? | |
| | ARTURO |
| Yeah. | |
| | LUCRETIA |
| Hm. | |
| | Beat. |
| How's the pasta? | |

ARTURO
Good, grazie.

LUCRETIA
Good.

Beat.

Anything new?

ARTURO
Like?

LUCRETIA
“Like,” he says. I don’t know, Arturo. A girl?

ARTURO
A girl?

LUCRETIA
A girl. A girl you like?

ARTURO
A girl I like?

LUCRETIA
Jesus Christ, Is my son a fucking parrot?

Beat.

ARTURO
No.

LUCRETIA
Hm. So nothing new.

ARTURO
Yeah.

LUCRETIA
Why?

Beat.

You're by the beach all day. You can't find one girl?

ARTURO

I'm busy working.

LUCRETIA

Bull. You're 22, Arturo. You're young, you have a job. You should have no problem finding a girl.

ARTURO

I don't have time. I got other things to think about.

LUCRETIA

What other things?

Beat.

Mhmm.

Beat.

You're working too much. I don't know how we're both sitting here right now. We haven't had dinner together in months. And now we finally have dinner and you have nothing to say.

Beat.

Take some days off. Is this not nice? I finally get to see my son and not when he's walking through the door so late at night.

Beat.

Just because you're father's not here doesn't mean I have to live in a lonely house, Arturo.

ARTURO

Ma, stop--

LUCRETIA

You think I want him so far away from home either?

ARTURO

Ma--

LUCRETIA

But he's fighting for this country, he's fighting for this family. Something you wouldn't know about--

ARTURO

ALRIGHT, Ma.

Beat.

Can we talk about something else?

Beat.

LUCRETIA

How's the pasta?

ARTURO

Good.

LUCRETIA exits.

Lights dim. We hear the following radio broadcast: "JULY 9TH, 1965. LBJ SAYS WAR IN VIETNAM WILL GET WORSE BEFORE IT GETS BETTER. MORE U.S. TROOPS WILL BE SENT TO VIETNAM. WALTER CRONKITE REPORTS FROM ZONE D IN SOUTH VIETNAM, WHERE THERE HAVE ALREADY BEEN 425 COMBAT DEATHS. REPORT FROM DANANG AIR BASE. GENERAL MAXWELL TAYLOR RESIGNS, REPLACED BY HENRY CABOT LODGE. ROBERT F. KENNEDY CHALLENGES UNITED STATES POLICY IN VIETNAM--"

The radio broadcast abruptly cuts out. Lights up on ARTURO again. LUCRETIA re-enters.

LUCRETIA

You couldn't wash the tray last night?

ARTURO

Buongiorno to you too, Ma.

Don't be smart with me. LUCRETIA

I'm sorry. ARTURO

Mm. LUCRETIA

Beat.

You didn't take the train home last night?

Beat.

Who told you-- ARTURO

Frankie, next door. You taking rides now? LUCRETIA

He works with me. ARTURO

Paulie? LUCRETIA

Paulie don't own no car. ARTURO
(scoffing)

Who, then? LUCRETIA

Beat.

New guy. ARTURO

Listen, Arturo. Don't start taking rides from strange men. LUCRETIA

Strange?-- ARTURO

LUCRETIA

This city's not safe like it used to be. Every day it gets worse and worse--

ARTURO

Well ol' Frankie next door would know a thing or two about--

LUCRETIA

(shouting)

I mean it.

Beat.

It's bad enough your father's left YOU the man of the house now. I don't need you leaving me too.

Beat.

ARTURO

Okay.

LUCRETIA and ARTURO exit.

Lights dim. We hear the following audio clip from Sid Davis Productions' "Boys Beware" anti-gay propaganda film from 1961: "WHAT JIMMY DIDN'T KNOW WAS THAT RALPH WAS SICK. A SICKNESS THAT WAS NOT VISIBLE LIKE SMALLPOX, BUT NO LESS DANGEROUS AND CONTAGIOUS. A SICKNESS OF THE MIND. YOU SEE, RALPH WAS A HOMOSEXUAL, A PERSON WHO DEMANDS AN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP WITH MEMBERS OF THEIR OWN SEX... THE DECISION IS ALWAYS YOURS, AND YOUR WHOLE FUTURE MAY DEPEND ON MAKING THE RIGHT ONE. SO NO MATTER WHERE YOU MEET A STRANGER, BE CAREFUL IF THEY ARE TOO FRIENDLY, IF THEY TRY TO WIN YOUR CONFIDENCE TOO QUICKLY, AND IF THEY BECOME OVERLY PERSONAL. ONE NEVER KNOWS WHEN THE HOMOSEXUAL IS ABOUT.

HE MAY APPEAR NORMAL, AND IT MAY BE TOO LATE WHEN YOU DISCOVER HE IS MENTALLY ILL.”

Lights come up again. This time, though, RAÚL sits centerstage. His mother, CAMILA, enters. The following conversation(s) can be spoken in English, Spanish, or a mix of the two.

RAÚL

He’s a friend, Mamí.

CAMILA

I’ve met your friends. I’ve never seen him before.

RAÚL

I can’t make new friends now?

CAMILA

Hey, don’t give me attitude, my son.

RAÚL

Alright, alright. I’m sorry.

Beat.

CAMILA

You know how I feel about people coming over unannounced.

RAÚL

I know, Mamí.

CAMILA

Where’d you even find him? He looks terrible.

RAÚL

He just got off a long shift.

CAMILA

Still, you’d think if you’re going over someone’s house you’d at least look nice.

RAÚL

Listen, Mamí. You always make more food than we can eat and he hasn’t eaten since this morning so I just thought--

He hasn't eaten anything?
CAMILA

No.
RAÚL

Beat.

Fine.
CAMILA

CAMILA exits.

Lights dim. An audio clip from Luis Valdez' short film, "I Am Joaquin," from 1969 is heard: "CONFUSED BY THE RULES, SCORNE D BY ATTITUDES, SUPPRESSED BY MANIPULATIONS, AND DESTROYED BY MODERN SOCIETY... MY FATHERS HAVE LOST THE ECONOMIC BATTLE. AND WON THE STRUGGLE OF CULTURAL SURVIVAL. AND NOW I MUST CHOOSE BETWEEN THE PARADOX OF VICTORY OF THE SPIRIT, DESPITE PHYSICAL HUNGER. OR TO EXIST IN THE GRASP OF AMERICAN SOCIAL NEUROSIS, STERILIZATION OF THE SOUL, AND A FULL STOMACH."

The audio clip cuts out as lights re-emerge on RAÚL. CAMILA re-enters.

Are you crazy?
CAMILA
(gasps)

It's not crazy, Mamí--
RAÚL

Flee the country? Where would you go? You know I risked everything to come here for you, and now you want to go back to Durango--
CAMILA

RAÚL
No, Mamí, I'd go to Canada.

CAMILA
Canada?! Que Canada?

RAÚL
It's less of a drive--

CAMILA
And how are you gonna get across the border?

RAÚL
I have friends that know what to do, know people that have done it and--

CAMILA
Oh, so if you're friends decide to jump off a bridge you'd jump too?

RAÚL
Ma, please.

CAMILA
You might as well just kill me now.

RAÚL
Mamí, don't say that.

CAMILA
Raúl Santos-Garcia--

RAÚL
You know I don't use his name anymore--

CAMILA
Don't. Interrupt me.

Beat.

Don't you realize that if you leave, I won't be able to afford this house anymore?

RAÚL
But you will, because I'm gonna get a job and send money over every month.

CAMILA

Oh, now he says he's gonna get a job. And how long did it take you to get this job you have now?

RAÚL

What? You think I don't deserve my job? I'm too stupid to get a job in Canada?

CAMILA

(sighs)

No, Raúl. That's not what I'm trying to say--

RAÚL

Oh, 'cuz working at the dry cleaners is real prestigious.

CAMILA

(sternly)

Raúl--

RAÚL

No, I'm not gonna take this shit from you--

CAMILA slaps RAÚL.

Beat. Silence.

CAMILA

I- I'm sorry.

RAÚL

No, mom. It's okay. I'm sorry

Beat.

I need to do this, mamá.

Lights dim. RAÚL exits.

ARTURO enters with a bottle of whiskey and starts to drunkenly sing to the tune of Domenico Modugno's "Nel blu, dipinto di blu".

ARTURO

VOLARE! OH-OH! EY, CANTARE. OH-OH-OH. NEL BLU, DIPINTO DI BLU. FELICE DI STARE LASSÙ.

After a moment, a door-banging noise is heard, followed by a door-opening noise.

LUCRETIA enters. The following conversation can be spoken in English, Italian, or a mix of both.

LUCRETIA

What are you doing in here? Getting drunk again?

ARTURO

(shrugs)

Nothing new.

LUCRETIA

Hm.

Beat. LUCRETIA lets out a heavy sigh.

You know Giancarlo got drafted?

Beat. ARTURO seems to stop in his tracks for a moment.

ARTURO

Tina's Giancarlo?

LUCRETIA

Yes.

ARTURO seems to sober up at this news.

ARTURO

Woah.

LUCRETIA

Giancarlo's strong. He'll be fine.

ARTURO

Giancarlo's 18. He just got outta high school.

LUCRETIA

I know, Arturo.

ARTURO

He's gotta go fight in a war now?

LUCRETIA

Well, he's- he's fighting for this country--

ARTURO

(frustrated)

Do you got anything else?

LUCRETIA

Hey. Watch your mouth.

Beat.

ARTURO

Aren't you worried?

LUCRETIA

About Giancarlo?

ARTURO

About me. That I'll get drafted.

LUCRETIA & ARTURO stare at each other in silence. After a beat, LUCRETIA takes a seat. She takes a deep breath.

LUCRETIA

You know, your father wanted to enlist during Korea?

Beat. ARTURO eases up.

But we were still raising you. I practically begged him to stay. For you.

Beat.

He went when you were sixteen, because I let him. He sent me letters about wanting to be sent anywhere. They stationed him down south, in Virginia. He hated feeling uhm... useless. They never sent him anywhere and he came home all frustrated... I think he just always wanted to be a part of something. I always admired him for that. How much he wanted to get right into the battlefield. I wanted to feel the same love he felt for this country that he'd be honored to die for it.

Beat.

Now, I don't know. After Tonkin he wanted to re-enlist. I think he knew a draft was coming. You were 21 so I had nothing to keep him here.

Beat. LUCRETIA sighs.

Not even me.

Beat. LUCRETIA stares off. ARTURO takes a moment to digest this. After a beat, he tries to reach for LUCRETIA's hand.

ARTURO

Y'know, Ma, I--

LUCRETIA moves her hand away.

LUCRETIA

I don't want to talk about this anymore, Arturo.

LUCRETIA gets up from her seat.

ARTURO

But, ma--

LUCRETIA

And put the whiskey away. I raised a man not a filthy fucking drunk.

At that moment, a telephone rings in the other room.

I'll go get that.

LUCRETIA exits and we hear the sound of a phone being pulled off the receiver. ARTURO stares off, dejected.

LUCRETIA (O.S.)
(answering the phone)

Hello?

Beat. We hear LUCRETIA gasp.

Vinny?!

ARTURO looks up, taken aback. We hear LUCRETIA gasp again.

(shouting)

ARTURO! YOUR FATHER'S COMING HOME!

ARTURO stares off for a moment, frozen. He then sits and takes a big swig of the whiskey.

After a beat, he then looks around for a moment before getting up and exiting. He returns shortly after with a small duffel bag. He places the bag on the chair. He then exits again and then shortly after returns with a passport. He places it in the duffel bag and then stares down into the bag for a moment. He then exits again as the lights fade.

SCENE SEVEN

The Chevelle sits in the driveway of RAÚL's home. Boxes are scattered about the driveway

RAÚL enters carrying boxes. He places the boxes he's carrying in the backseat. He goes around picking up all the boxes on the ground and either puts them in the backseat or trunk of the car.

Suddenly, ARTURO enters running and carrying a small duffel bag. He is out of breath.

RAÚL

Arturo?

ARTURO

(panting)

Raúl, I-uh-- Shit, gimme a sec.

ARTURO takes a moment to regain his composure.

RAÚL

You're outta breath.

ARTURO

(sarcastically)

You're kiddin'.

RAÚL

You came all the way here from Bensonhurst?

ARTURO

I told you. I'm good with the trains.

Beat.

RAÚL

What are you doin' here?

ARTURO

Just- Just let me talk.

Beat. RAÚL leans on the Chevelle.

Look. I was an asshole yesterday. I know that. I was just scared after you dropped me off the night before--

RAÚL

Scared? Of me?

ARTURO

No, no not of you. It was this feeling that kinda rushed through me--

RAÚL

Rushed through you?--

ARTURO

It was like-uh-- Like, y'know when you were a kid and you're mother would give you a kiss on the forehead in the morning to wake you up?

Beat.

RAÚL

I'm followin'.

ARTURO

That warm feelin'. And I realized I hadn't felt that in years. Until the night before.

RAÚL

(chuckling)

I didn't kiss you on ya forehead, did I?

ARTURO

No, wiseass. Fuck, I don't know. Before I met you I-- I felt like I knew a lot. But now I feel like I know nothin'. I dunno why when I look at you it gives me agita--

RAÚL

Gives you agita?

ARTURO

In a good way, fuck, just let me finish. I dunno why when I talk to you it- it feels like everything's gone. Like my problems is solved and I can just listen to the noise. I can hear the fucking sea when I'm with you.

Beat.

Christ, I never get to hear the fucking sea. And then you put your fucking hand on me and I turn into some kinda gavoona and you say things and I believe it and I don't believe fuck-all but I believe you.

Beat. RAÚL smiles.

Madone you're gettin' a kick outta this.

RAÚL

I am. I am gettin' a kick outta this.

ARTURO

Don't do that.

RAÚL

Don't do what?

ARTURO

Fuckin' look at me like that.

RAÚL

Look at you like--

ARTURO

This. This is what I'm talking about. Christ, what's wrong with me? I dunno, I dunno. I just needed to get that off my chest 'cuz it's been botherin' me all night how I was to you yesterday and then you sayin' you was leaving it- it hit me like a fucking truck and I--

RAÚL pulls ARTURO in for a kiss. It's electric.

After a beat, ARTURO pulls away and stares for a moment at RAÚL in shock.

RAÚL

Do you hear the sea?

Beat.

ARTURO

I hear the fuckin' sea.

ARTURO kisses RAÚL. After a beat, RAÚL pulls away.

RAÚL

I'm still goin', Art.

ARTURO

I know. I figured.

RAÚL begins to walk to the driver's side of the Chevelle.

I'm goin' too then.

RAÚL looks back at ARTURO and finally notices his duffel bag. He smiles.

RAÚL

Want a ride?

ARTURO smiles back.

Lights fade to blackout.

END OF PLAY.