

MARTÍNI AND THE MAILMAN

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. CALIFORNIA INSTITUTION FOR MEN — MORNING

MARTÍN (30s) sits at a prison visitation center. Prisoners and visitors converse on phones separated by glass.

Martín waits on the visitors' side.

A worn sticker on the glass in front of him reads:

ALL PERSONS UNDER SURVEILLANCE.

Martín picks at it. Scratches off ALL PER-

Leaving: SONS UNDER SURVEILLANCE.

(beat)

A baton taps the safety glass above Martín's head.

PRISON GUARD
He refused the visit.

Martín looks up at the clock on the wall.

He stands. Looks down the hall on the prisoners' side.

On his way out, at another phone, a kid presses his hand to the glass. A prisoner meets it from the other side.

Martín watches for a moment.

Then keeps walking.

FADE TO BLACK.

OVER BLACK:

ABBA INSTRUMENTAL MUZAK plays from a speakerphone.

MARTÍN (O.S.)
Jesus. Hello? Hello?

FADE IN:

EXT. HIGHLAND PARK — APARTMENT CARPORT — MORNING

Martín wears a vintage, blue, mechanic's shirt with a patch that reads NORMAN. He sweats profusely. Phone in hand.

He's perched on a milk crate with his back towards the world.

Looks over his shoulder. Then back to his business.

He picks out a tiny tube from a greasy, oversized, toolbox.
Applies ointment to a rash around his government-issued
ankle bracelet.

He can't get his finger under the plastic band.
He tugs, but it won't budge.
It blinks.

Martín wedges a flat-headed screwdriver under the bracelet.

Grips a ball-peen hammer.

(beat)

Tosses the tools back in the box.

Pulls out a pint of cheap vodka. Takes a swig. Caps the
bottle and drops it back in.

Two kids on a beach cruiser skid into the carport.

NEIGHBORHOOD KID 1 (O.S.)

Martín!

MARTÍN

Jesus!

A kid holding a Slurpee hops off the handlebars while his
brother keeps the bike steady.

NEIGHBORHOOD KID 1

Gotta wrench?

Martín slams his toolbox shut.

MARTÍN

No.

NEIGHBORHOOD KID 2

You didn't even look.

MARTÍN

X-ray vision. Superman.

NEIGHBORHOOD KID 2

Check it out.

The boy swings the bike's janky seat from side to side.

MARTÍN
What's in it for me?

NEIGHBORHOOD KID 2
What do you want?

MARTÍN
A house with a white picket fence.

Martín inspects the seat carefully. He cracks open the toolbox out of their view. Dangles a set of Allen wrenches.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)
Beg. On your knees.

NEIGHBORHOOD KID 1
C'mon!

The kid swipes the wrenches from Martín. Can't fix it.

MARTÍN
Dumbshits. What am I, your daddy?

Martín grabs the kid by the hair.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)
One up? Or two down?

NEIGHBORHOOD KID 2
What do you mean?

MARTÍN
OK. One up.

Martín yanks the kid's hair straight up. The kid yelps-drops the wrenches. Martín tightens the seat with one crank.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)
Perfect. Two words: Super. Man.

On their way out, they hurl the half-empty Slurpee at Martín.

NEIGHBORHOOD KID 1
Super-man! Super-drunk!

NEIGHBORHOOD KID 2
Martíni!

Wrenches in hand, Martín aims-the punks are already gone. He empties his vodka into the Slurpee cup.

ABBA MUZAK continues.

Slurpee, toolbox, and phone in hand, Martín heads around to the building's front metal security gate.

He punches in a code: BEEP. BAP. BEEP. BOP.

The gate clicks open. He heads upstairs to a corner unit. Lets himself in.

INT. MARTÍN'S APARTMENT — MORNING

ABBA MUZAK still blares from Martín's phone.

Several young women mill about a modest, open-plan living room/kitchen. Cottage cheese ceilings. Coffee. Low chatter.

Martín "greet" everyone—raises both hands.

MARTÍN

Ladies!

Nobody cares. The guests keep milling.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)

Aw. No love?

He drops his toolbox on the kitchen counter.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)

For my next trick...

He pulls a bouquet of blue-sprayed carnations from the box.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)

...it's a boy!

Martín sidles up to his mother, MATILDA, who's lighting a cigarette, mid-conversation with a sharply dressed woman.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)

Not in the house.

MATILDA

Finally! Where've you been—did you visit your father?

Martín winces.

MATILDA (CONT'D)

Junior.

MATILDA (CONT'D)

Well?

Sangria?

MARTÍN

MATILDA (CONT'D)
We're talking. Finish up. Pronto.

Martín grabs his stuff and jogs down the hallway. He kicks open the last door and slams it behind him.

MATILDA (CONT'D)
(aside to her guest)
One disappearing act after another.

INT. BABY'S NURSERY – MORNING

ABBA MUZAK drones on.

Martín stands on a baby-blue plush rug with an IKEA nightmare before him. Wooden dowels. Fasteners. White melamine slats...

The nursery is all elephants – wallpaper, nightlight, and a mobile with winged elephants circling a lovely rainbow.

He plants himself on the floor. Leans against the wall.

Pauses. Looks up. Exhales.

Takes the lid off the Slurpee and sloshes it down.
His ankle bracelet blinks. Blinks again.
He's back.

Martín whips out the Allen wrenches and flips them in the air like a gunslinger. He gauges them and picks out a match.

He fits it into a fastener on the white melamine. Listens like a safecracker. CLICK. CLACK. CLICK-CLACK.
Pulls down too hard-shreds the particle board.

MARTÍN
Jesus!

Gripping his phone, threatens to smash it...then drops into the fetal position.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)
No, no, no, no, no.

Rolls onto his back. Looks up. The rainbow turns very slowly.

ABBA MUZAK changes tempo.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)
Hello? Still there?

ABBA MUZAK cuts out. Silence. BEEP.

IKEA CUSTOMER SERVICE
 (Nordic accent.)
 Yes. Please validate your account.
 Last name first.

MARTÍN
 Last name's Espinoza. Junior. First
 name's Martín. "i" with an accent.
 Pronounced Mar-teen.

IKEA CUSTOMER SERVICE
 Understood. Your Härlig crib was
 delivered with a part missing?

MARTÍN
 I want it to look like the catalog.
 What does it take?

IKEA CUSTOMER SERVICE
 Is it the part? If so-

A DOUBLE KNOCK at the door.

MATILDA
 Five-minute warning!

MARTÍN
 Hold on!

IKEA CUSTOMER SERVICE
 May we send you a replacement part?

He fishes a small pipe filled with weed out of the toolbox.
 Lights it. Sucks on it. CRACKLE of burning stems. Holds it.
 Exhales. Pot smoke pushes through the mobile's rainbow.

IKEA CUSTOMER SERVICE (CONT'D)
 Sir? Mr. Martín?

MARTÍN
 Nothing fits. The tools are...

Martín unplugs the elephant night light and studies it.

IKEA CUSTOMER SERVICE
 Metric. Are they metric? The tools
 must be metric.

He runs his finger down the elephant's back.

IKEA CUSTOMER SERVICE (CONT'D)
 Our hex wrench is metric. We can
 send it to you.

Martín tries to plug the elephant nightlight back in.
 He can't get the job done. He chuckles.

INT. MARIA AND MARTÍN'S LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN – DAY

Martín exits the nursery with a pep in his step. Trips hard on the way to the living room. Plays it off.

Friends and family arrange chairs in a semicircle.

MARTÍN
Mom! Decorations?

Matilda appears with an impeccably dressed woman, NANETTE (40s). Navy blazer with brass anchor buttons. Cheap glasses.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)
What happened?

MATILDA
Junior. It's-

MARTÍN
What?

Martín pulls a case of champagne from the fridge on to the Formica counter. Arranges plastic champagne flutes on a tray.

MATILDA
-coming out of your pores.

MARTÍN
We'll do sangria later.
Wait. Don't open that.
After she comes in, we pop the
corks. She can sit in the big
chair-in the middle.

A couple guests are positioning the big chair.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)
That's perfect! There!

MATILDA
Junior. Listen.

MARTÍN
(Handing her a flute)
Here you go.

MATILDA
Martín, this is Nanette.

Nanette extends her hand out for a formal greeting.

NANETTE
Hello Martín. Pleased to meet you.

Martín hardly looks up.

MARTÍN
Hi! You too. Welcome.

Martín hands her a flute. Locks eyes. Big smile.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)
Here. For champagne.

Martín is suddenly animated. He claps and gesticulates.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)
Ok-Everybody-Listen up!
Stand in the living room. Around
the corner. She comes in-I bring
her here-You jump-"Surprise!"

MARTÍN (CONT'D)
(To Matilda and Nanette)
I'll fill the glasses.

KEYS RATTLE at the front door.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)
She's here! Go! Hide! Hide!

Holding a champagne bottle and flute, Martín races to open the door to greet his wife, MARIA. Sundress. Flip-flops. Very pregnant. Formidable.

Maria's friend SIMONE (30s), sturdy with a carabiner key chain attached to her jeans, follows close behind.

Martín hugs Maria. Winks to Simone.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)
Yay! You're home!

Martín ushers Maria around the corner into the living room.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)
Surprise! Surprise!

GUESTS
Surprise.

MARIA
Surprise. Hello. Hi guys.

Maria nods her head and mouths "thank you" to each friend. Martín leads Maria by her arm to the big comfy chair.

MARTÍN

Here. Sit here. The seat of honor.

Before Maria can sit down, Martín rips foil off the champagne bottle. POP! He fills the flutes and starts toasting.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)

Surprise to the best wife...and mother-ever! I love you.

Martín holds his drink in the air. Maria takes him by the hand. Kisses his wedding ring. Guides him into the big chair.

MARIA

I love you too. Baby...sit here.

He sits.

Nobody reaches for a drink. Everybody takes their seats. Nanette remains standing.

NANETTE

Perfect. Martín, Listen. This...
(Gesturing to the room.)
This isn't Maria's baby shower.
This is what's called an
intervention. Your intervention.

Martín goes blank.

Looks to Maria. To his mother. Back to Nanette.

MARTÍN

Wait. Who are you?

NANETTE

My role is to facilitate...

Nanette's speech muffles. Martín slides down into brain fog.

All SOUNDS DROP OFF.

A high-pitched TINNITUS rises.

Champagne bubbles burst in slow motion.

Sweat drips.

Martín lurches forward and gulps down his champagne.

(beat)

Projectile vomits.

FADE TO BLACK.

A LEAF BLOWER sounds off in the distance.

FADE IN:

INT. CROSSWAYS REHAB – MARTÍN'S ROOM – MORNING

Martín lies under cheap sheets in a twin bed, staring at the ceiling. Cinderblock walls. Drab tan. High-gloss finish. Marbled linoleum. Worn.

The leaf blower hums outside.

Wires crisscross the safety glass window. A thorny bush presses against it.

A beam of sunlight cuts through the window.

A rainbow is cast on the floor.

Martín leans in. Squints.

The leaf blower stops.

A spider clings to the ceiling in the far end of the room.

Martín grabs a shoe and moves towards it.

THWACK-THWACK!

A bird slams into the window-sputters back into the bush. Martín spins around and approaches the window to investigate.

The leaf blower ROARS.

Bushes whip violently. Dust swirls.

A masked gardener in goggles emerges.

Presses the dead bird against the glass.

MARTÍN

Jesus!

The blower idles. The gardener moves on.

Martín collapses to the floor.

He spies for the spider but now it's gone.

The rainbow falls across his feet.

His toes wiggle. The rainbow vanishes.

His ankle bracelet blinks.

The spider re-enters the light.

FADE TO BLACK:

PAPERS SHUFFLE. A STAPLER POUNDS INTERMITTENTLY.

FADE IN:

INT. CROSSWAYS REHAB – WANONA KELLY'S OFFICE – DAY

A hanging spider plant drapes around a corner window.

1990s-era black lacquered desk beneath it.

Martín sits across from WANONA KELLY (late 40s).

Wanona STAPLES.

It jams. She can't get it open. Martín reaches for it.

Wanona places it out of reach.

WANONA KELLY

Rough night? Know why you're here?

No response.

WANONA KELLY (CONT'D)

Family's worried about you.

How about this-have you ever
considered you might be an
alcoholic?

(beat)

Or an addict?

Silence.

WANONA KELLY (CONT'D)

What do you want Martín?

He looks around.

WANONA KELLY (CONT'D)

Listen. We can sign you in right
now. You can stay here. Or...

Wanona waves her hands like a model on a game show.

WANONA KELLY (CONT'D)

Door number two. Outpatient?

(beat)

Martín taps twice on the table.

Stands.

Walks out.

EXT. CAL STATE LA - DAY

Martín is taking a big hit off a small pipe. He sits on the
passenger side of a lime-green VW bug. Passes the pipe to
IVAN (20s), perpetually stoned.

A silver BMW pulls into the spot next to them.

MARTÍN

Oh shit.

IVAN

What?

PROFESSOR SANTIAGO (60s), earth tones, linen, hemp bracelet.
Steps out of his car. He walks by without saying a word.

MARTÍN

My Advisor.

EXT. HIGHLAND PARK – DAY

Martín jaunts down the sidewalk and passes a stuffed animal on the curb.

He circles back.

Picks it up.

Dusts it off.

Places it on a wrought iron fence.

The toy falls off.

He catches it. Tries to set it again. It falls again. He grabs it-smashes it into the fence. It tears. He wads it up.

Chucks it down a storm drain.

EXT. CORNER MARKET – DAY

Martín is horizontal on a bus bench.

(beat)

He sits up. Heads over to the flower stand.

INT. CORNER MARKET – DAY

Martín tosses blue carnations into a red shopping basket.

He runs to the tiny baby section. Grabs Vaseline, a pacifier, and wipes.

An aisle is filled with dusty bags of dried peppers and pork rinds. He pulls an enormous jar of pickles off the top shelf.

Martín drops the full basket on the front counter.

MARTÍN
Got a big gift bag?

SHOPKEEPER
No.

MARTÍN
We're having a baby.

No response.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)
We're having a baby.

SHOPKEEPER
Great.

Martín picks out two Hershey Kisses from a display.

MARTÍN
And these.

A penny tray with "Take a Penny, Leave a Penny" stamped on it holds a few pennies and a dime. Martín swipes the coins.

Shopkeeper gives him the stink eye.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)
They want us to have them.

The Shopkeeper is baffled.

Martín shifts a display of miniature whiskey bottles on the glass counter.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)
That's better. You see?

(beat)

Two scratchers.

The Shopkeeper reaches under the glass.

Martín grabs a fistful of mini whiskey bottles.

FADE TO BLACK:

GLASS CLINKING. STAINLESS STEEL CLANKING.

FADE IN:

INT. MARTIN LUTHER KING HOSPITAL - DAY

A cart of bottles and bed pans are on the move. A nurse pulls back a stained floor-length curtain to reveal Martín.

He is "swaddled" under a blanket with restraints over his torso and legs. The nurse swaps out his bedpan and moves on.

Martín sweats. Hacks. Dry heaves.

MARTÍN
Hello? Hello?

The nurse returns and slips a pan near his head.

INT. MARTIN LUTHER KING HOSPITAL - NEXT DAY

Martín studies the drips running through his IV.

Curtain swishes open.

DOCTOR
How're you feeling?

MARTÍN
Where am I? Crossways?

DOCTOR
No. County. Paramedics brought you.

Maria arrives looking distressed.

MARTÍN
Aww. There she is! Martín!

MARIA

MARIA (CONT'D)
Hello. I'm Maria. Martín's wife.

DOCTOR
Hello.
(To Martín)
You almost choked on your own
vomit. Lost some oxygen up here.

Points to his head.

Lucky. No permanent damage.
This time.
I expect a full recovery...
depending on how you define
recovery. Any mental illness in
your family?

(beat)

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
It wasn't rhetorical.

MARTÍN
When do I get out of here?

The doctor notes his chart-stops looking at Martín.

DOCTOR
I wrote you a prescription.
Antibiotics. Watch it. You could
lose the ankle.

I'll sign you out.

We need the beds.

The doctor moves on.

MARIA
Here.

Maria hands Martín a blue and white striped plastic bag and
takes a seat in a hard metal chair next to him.

They sit in silence.

MARTÍN
Thanks for bringing this stuff.

MARIA
It's nothing.

MARTÍN
Nothing?

MARIA
It's just an expression.

They sit in silence. Unpleasant HOSPITAL SOUNDS resume.

MARTÍN
What was that? We couldn't just
talk? You couldn't trust me?
All that-behind my back.
I'm building the crib.

(beat)

We could've handled it.

Us.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)

Shame on you.

(beat)

MARIA

Yeah. Shame on me.

She gathers her things. Leaves. Doesn't look back.

Martín looks away. Curtains close in around him.

EXT. SACRED HEART SCHOOL – DAY

A Catholic school girl smashes a tether ball. Children run with hula hoops. Maria blows a whistle. Recess is over.

MARIA

Let's go, let's go!

She walks over and sits on a bench as the kids file into their classrooms.

A nun wearing a Virgin of Guadalupe apron rolls a ball her way. Maria picks it up-flashes a smile. The nun flashes one back. Closes her classroom door.

Empty blacktop.

(beat)

Maria eyes the school's garish mural-students, families, priests, sisters, crosses, doves, you name it.

Her ringtone: SOUND OF MUSIC. It's Martín. Lets it go to voicemail.

(beat)

Rises. Walks by the mural. Heaves the ball at it.

THWACK. With an echo.

Ball bounces as she walks away.

INT. CROSSWAYS REHAB – WANONA KELLY'S OFFICE – DAY

Wanona pulls an Arby's roast beef sandwich out of a greasy to-go bag and feeds her face. The CHEWING is torturous.

She rattles the ice in her 20oz soda and takes a long slurp.

Martín sits across from Wanona's desk.

Wanona has mayo on the corner of her lip. Martín gestures towards his lip. He passes her a napkin near her Arby's bag.

WANONA KELLY

Thank you.

Martín rises and wanders over to the bulletin board hanging in the office. He studies the flyers.

Wanona flips the lid off her drink and CRUNCHES her ice.

WANONA KELLY (CONT'D)

What do you think? Are you done?

MARTÍN

This picnic happened months ago.

Martín removes a thumb tack and takes down a flyer.

WANONA KELLY

Don't touch that.

He takes down a couple of more flyers. He slowly straightens and repositions the board.

WANONA KELLY (CONT'D)

Freeze.

So.

Riddle me this. Why are you here?

MARTÍN

You mentioned something about outpatient?

Wanona has eyes on her desktop monitor.

WANONA KELLY

I see.

Well. In order to stay, you have to be teachable. Are you teachable?

She looks up.

Martín avoids eye contact.

(beat)

She's back on her computer.

Teachable or not-your insurance has run out.

MARTÍN

What? No. It should be good.

WANONA KELLY

You're on your wife's policy. Would you like to call her? I'll call.

Martín nods. Wanona punches in the number, turns her archaic land-line phone around, and hands Martín the receiver.

MARTÍN

It's me. Hi. We need to fix-

Martín holds up the receiver.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)

She wants to talk to you.

Wanona grabs the receiver and slowly swivels her chair away.

WANONA KELLY

Yes. Speaking. No. I understand.
Hold on.

Wanona puts it on speakerphone.

MARIA

Martín, listen. I love you and I want to be helpful. But I don't know how much more I can help you.

I'm able to file for a qualifying life event at work. A three months extension on the insurance. It's expensive...honestly, we can't really afford it. But it's an option.

If we go this route. You have to stay clean. You have to get tested. Can you commit to that?
Can you promise?

Martín is silent.

(beat)

Wanona picks up the phone.

WANONA KELLY

Hi. No. I understand. Yes. You too.

She hangs up. Starts flipping through a Rolodex.

WANONA KELLY (CONT'D)
Remind me. What city are you in?

MARTÍN
Highland Park. For now.

WANONA KELLY
Right.

Wanona scribbles on a piece of scratch paper.

WANONA KELLY (CONT'D)
When you're ready...

Pushing the paper towards Martín.

WANONA KELLY (CONT'D)
...call this guy. Max. He's a good
man. He's got long-term sobriety.

MARTÍN
That's it?

WANONA KELLY
What do you mean?

MARTÍN
I get a plastic bag and a piece of
scratch paper with a phone number?
What am I supposed to do now?

(beat)

WANONA KELLY
Use that number.

INT. HIGHLAND PARK – BUS – DAY

Martín stares out the window, clutching his plastic bag.

He peeks inside. Phone. Charger. Velcro wallet. Toiletries.
On top sits an envelope with Martín's name neatly printed.
The accent on the "í" is a tiny heart.

Martín pulls out the wallet and opens it. VELCRO RIPS.

EXT. CORNER MARKET – DAY

Martín steps off the bus at the same market as before.

He sways back and forth, desperate for a bathroom. He tries
the market. No luck.

EXT. MARIA AND MARTÍN'S APARTMENT — DAY

At the gate, Martín punches the code: BEEP. BAP. BEEP. BOP.
No good. Tries again. It doesn't work.

He shifts side to side. Looks up at his balcony.

Simone appears on the other side of the gate heading out.

MARTÍN

Simone! Let me in? It's busted.

SIMONE

No way, dude.

MARTÍN

(motioning to his gut)

I gotta go. I'll just go to the
laundry room. Just wait here, and-

SIMONE

-run down to the market, get a
bunch of blue carnations, and black
out on mini bottles of Wild Turkey?

Martín steps in front of the gate.

SIMONE (CONT'D)

Back off.

Martín steps back and bows like she's royalty.

Simone passes through. She holds the gate.
Looks him in the eye—lets it slam.

She pushes past him with her shoulder—doesn't look back.

MARTÍN

(under his breath)

Fuck you very much.

Martín is about to burst.

His balcony door is open a crack. A pepper tree branch within
reach. Coast is clear. He goes for it.

Branches scratch his face on the way up. He swings to the
balcony and SMACKS into the stucco wall. His hand rips the
screen door as he smashes into his bedroom.

INT. MARIA AND MARTÍN'S APARTMENT — BEDROOM — DAY

Martín fumbles with his belt.
Pants down-trips.
Stumbles.

MARTÍN

No.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. MARIA AND MARTÍN'S APARTMENT — BATHROOM — DAY

Martín is vigorously scrubbing his underwear in the sink. He wrings them out. Wads it up and chucks it under the vanity.

Wriggles into his pants-commando style.

Steps into the hallway. Stops. Everything is gone.

Dust outlines where pictures were.

LIVING ROOM

Stripped bare.

NURSERY

The crib is still a pile of ruin. Plugs in the elephant nightlight. Doesn't work. Slips it into his jean jacket.

KITCHEN

Opens the fridge. No light. Empty.
Picks up a champagne cork. Smells it.
Smells his fingers.

EXT. MARIA AND MARTÍN'S APARTMENT — CARPORT — EARLY EVENING

Martín huddles in his carport.
His phone plugged into an outdoor outlet.
Twilight. A breeze.

OFFICER KIM

What's going on?

MARTÍN

Oh. Hi. I can straighten this out.

OFFICER SANCHEZ

On your feet.

They frisk him. Cuff him. Guide him into the back seat.
The window's open. He can't hear them.

The neighborhood kids pull up on their beach cruiser.

NEIGHBORHOOD KID 1
S'up Martíni?

NEIGHBORHOOD KID 2
Your place is empty.

MARTÍN
(snickers)
No kidding.

NEIGHBORHOOD KID 1
We saw Maria move. With a big guy.

MARTÍN
Don't worry about it. You guys-

NEIGHBORHOOD KID 1
Man, he was strong. He carried a
big chair like it was nothing.

They peel off.

OFFICER KIM
Okay Mr. Espinoza-

The policeman helps Martín out of the car and uncuffs him.

OFFICER KIM (CONT'D)
(Reading off a tablet)
Your P.O.'s been flagged. You're in
a designated spot, so, technically,
you're not in violation.

MARTÍN
Yeah. I live here.

OFFICER KIM
...we spoke to your wife. Nice
lady. She's not pressing charges.

MARTÍN
Excuse me?

OFFICER KIM
She filed for assault.

MARTÍN
There was no physical contact.

OFFICER KIM

Dropped it.

Moved out. Lease is in her name.
You're breaking and entering.

OFFICER SANCHEZ

You don't want that. Move along.
Call a friend.

The officer hands Martín his I.D.
Martín gathers up his belongings and the police drive off.

The kids fly past again. Laughing.
He hurls the elephant nightlight.
Misses.
Hits the curb-ricochets-disappears into the drain.

EXT. LIQUOR STORE — NIGHT

Rain threatens. Martín squats outside the liquor store. His
phone plugged into an outlet.

An older woman pulls up in a late model Cutlass Supreme. She
enters the store. She steps out with two heavy jugs of water.

Martín gets up.

MARTÍN

Let me help you with that-

NEIGHBORHOOD LADY

No!

Martín recoils.

NEIGHBORHOOD LADY (CONT'D)

No. Thank you.

She loads the water into her backseat. She wraps her head in
a plastic scarf. Rolls her window down.

NEIGHBORHOOD LADY (CONT'D)

Míjo, can I buy you some food?

MARTÍN

What?

NEIGHBORHOOD LADY

Some food?

Martín approaches her window at a respectable distance.

MARTÍN
No. No, thank you. I'm good.

NEIGHBORHOOD LADY
I know you-Matilda's boy?

(beat)

Doctor, no?

MARTÍN
I'm working on my PhD.

NEIGHBORHOOD LADY
I thought you were a homeless person. Do you need a ride?

He leans into her window.

MARTÍN
I'm saving for a down payment.
My friend is picking me up.
Thanks though.

NEIGHBORHOOD LADY
Well. Take care. Stay warm.

Rosary beads dangle from the rearview mirror. She drives off with an eye on Martín.

Martín returns to his spot. Dials his phone.

MARTÍN
Yeah. Hi. Wanona Kelly please.
Well. It's not a big deal-pretty sure I can still get an extension on my insurance. That's all. I changed my mind. So. I can come in.

(beat)

When does she get back? Oh. Right.
What time does she get in? Listen.

(beat)

Ok. Thanks.

Rain pours. Martín shuffles inside the store.

The clerk shakes his head. No.

He grabs a free LA Weekly off the rack and heads back out.
Plops down outside the door. Places the paper under his seat.

The filthy trashcan beside him reeks.

He settles in-almost puts his hand on a used condom.

(beat)

VELCRO RIPS slowly.

Out comes a scrap of paper.

INT. COFFEE SHOP — NIGHT

Martín enters. Scans the room for Max. Spots a fellow reading the paper in a sharp, charcoal grey, suit.

He passes a gaggle of high school kids. An old mailman nursing a tea bag. Slides into a booth across from the suit.

The man looks up from his menu.

MARTÍN

Are you Max?

The man shakes his head no.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)

My bad.

Martín heads back towards the front. The mailman flags him.

MAX

You Martin?

MARTÍN

Mar-teen.

MAX

Ha. I'm Max. In disguise.
(Gestures at his USPS uniform).

MAX (CONT'D)

Have a seat, Mar-teen.

Martín sits on the edge of the booth-ready to bolt.
Max slowly wraps the string around his tea bag.

MAX (CONT'D)

So-you got my number from Wanona?
How long were you at Crossways?

MARTÍN

Not too long. A couple of times.

MAX
How many days?
Clean and sober, I mean?

MARTÍN
Four. No. Five

MAX
Job?

MARTÍN
Getting a PhD.

MAX
Ah. Professor. Where?

MARTÍN
Cal State LA.

MAX
Cal State LA has PhD? Gotta family?

MARTÍN
Yeah. I'm married. My wife. Maria.
We're...she's 8 months pregnant.

MAX
Where is she?

MARTÍN
I'm not sure. I mean, she's with my
mom. We got in a fight. It's
complicated. You're asking a lot of
questions. She needed some space.

MAX
What about your dad?

Martín starts to get up.

MARTÍN
Wanona said I should call.

(beat)

MAX
Relax. Sit down.

Martín sits down.

MAX (CONT'D)
I didn't know how to stop drinking.
I had never done it before.

(beat)

I love the hard stuff. But once I start...I don't know how it's going to end. One drink later-I wake up on a train in Fresno.

MARTÍN

Yeah. Well. That's not me. We're not the same. I've never even been on a train...let alone Fresno.

(beat)

You and I.
We're not the same.

MAX

You just got out of rehab?

MARTÍN

Yeah.

MAX

You black out?

MARTÍN

Sometimes.

MAX

Your wife left?

The waitress brings Max some fresh hot water.

MAX (CONT'D)

Do you even have a place to stay tonight? Pie?

MARTÍN

What?

MAX

Hungry?

MAX (CONT'D)

(to waitress)

Cherry?

MAX (CONT'D)

(to Martín)

A la mode?

Martín nods.

MAX (CONT'D)
You gotta go a la mode.

Martín and Max eat pie.

MAX (CONT'D)
What are your triggers?

MARTÍN
What do you mean?

MAX
Ha. Triggers. Situations? People?
Places that make you wanna drink?

Me. I can't hang out in pool halls.
Hospitals still freak me out. I'm
like a kid in a candy shop-
pocketing pills, swiping all kinds
of stuff.

What about you?

(beat)

MARTÍN
No triggers. It's called willpower.

MAX
Is that how it works? You use your
willpower to call perfect strangers
and meet them at diners?

(beat)

MARTÍN
I'm pretty much in control-just
some temporary setbacks.

MAX
That makes perfect sense. Except-

Max taps the window with a ring on his finger.

You're as transparent as glass.

Melting ice cream. Crust is picked at.

MARTÍN
Technically speaking, how do you
know you're...

MAX
An alcoholic?

When I start-I can't stop. Always.

MARTÍN
Is it genetic? What studies have
been conducted? What research?

MAX
Look at me. I'm a mailman.

Does it matter?

The waitress refreshes the hot water and drops the check.

All I know is that I can't remember
my last hangover...or the last time
I threw up. Or shit myself.

I know where I was last night.

For me, that's progress.
That's what I know.

Max reaches for the check.

MAX (CONT'D)
On that note. My treat.

Martín makes a weak gesture towards his wallet.

MARTÍN
You sure?

MAX
I'm sure.

Max leaves a tip as they head towards the cash register.

Max pauses.

MAX (CONT'D)

(beat)

You know, Wanona was right-I can
help. But you have to want it.

My experience-you can't think your
way through it. I mean, all of your
best ideas landed you here. Right?

(beat)

Max pays the check.

He pulls out a pack of gum and offers some to Martín.

MAX (CONT'D)
Take two. One for later.

I'm going to a meeting tomorrow if
you want.

MARTÍN
Thanks. I appreciate it. But, I
think. This. It isn't for me.

Max nods sincerely.

MAX
Oh. That makes sense. Best of luck.

(beat)

Martín unwraps a piece of gum, pops it in his mouth. Nods.

MAX (CONT'D)
You got a place to crash?

Martín fidgets.

I've got a couch. Sofa bed.

Nothing fancy.

Martín nods.

MAX (CONT'D)
Ha. Good.

Max holds the door open for Martín.
They head toward a mail truck parked under the lamppost.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. FAMILY LAW OFFICE — DAY

Bars on the windows. Freeway noise.

Maria sits across from MS. WATTERS (40s), attorney, warm.

A bonsai tree sits on the desk. Ms. Watters reads aloud,
running her pen through paperwork.

MS. WATTERS

Married.
Addiction.
Student.
No history of violence.
House arrest.
Little debt.
No assets.

MARIA

That's all Martín.

Ms. Watters looks up.

Back on it.

MS. WATTERS

Okay. I'm caught up.

(beat)

So you're here because?

MARIA

He's never hit me—just to be clear.

I don't know. It's like I'm getting divorced but I don't know it yet? I want to feel safe. I want to just, have my baby. I want all the chaos to end. Do I need to protect my half? Legally?

Do you have suggestions?

Ms. Watters eases back from her desk.

MS. WATTERS

First things first—congratulations.
How are you feeling? Your first?

Maria nods. A little overwhelmed.

MARIA

Yes. It's not what I thought. It's supposed to be...different.

MS. WATTERS

You did the right thing coming in.
This doesn't have to get worse.

MARIA

How do you mean?

MS. WATTERS
Stay out of court if you can.
It's messy and expensive.

MARIA
I don't want to hurt him.
He's trying.

MS. WATTERS
Can I ask-as a couple, what have
you tried?

MARIA
Well. At this point, does it
matter? I mean it's over, right?

Maria stops rubbing.

MS. WATTERS
Not necessarily. There's mediation,
counseling, Al-Anon.

MARIA
Is that what you recommend?

MS. WATTERS
A lot of couples start there.

And succeed.

Maria hears it with a glimmer of hope.

MARIA
Super lovely.
Your bonsai.

Maria rises.

MS. WATTERS
Oh. Thanks. Ever so often...I just
snip away the ugly.

Ms. Watters stands up.

Maria smiles in gratitude.

FADE TO BLACK.

(O.S.) SQUAWKING. FLAPPING.

FADE IN:

EXT. MAX'S HOUSE — FRONT YARD — MORNING

California bungalow. Wild green parrots splash in a terra cotta bird bath beneath an avocado tree.

A mix of potted succulents crowd the yard.

INT. MAX'S HOUSE — LIVING ROOM — MORNING

Martín wakes up to the sound of PARROTS SQUAWKING.
He sits upright with the blanket on his lap.

Soaks it all in.

Floor-to-ceiling wooden beads, with an image of a parrot, hang in between the living room and the hallway. A jade green surfboard is mounted above a midcentury sofa.

A black-and-white photo of a handsome Hawaiian man with 80s glasses in a bamboo frame.

BEADS CLACK as Max enters the room.

MAX
Good morning.

MARTÍN
Hey.

MAX
Sleep okay? Couch okay? Too hot?

MARTÍN
Yes. I mean. No, not too hot.

Max slips into the kitchen.

O.C. KETTLE FILLS. STOVE CLICKS. IGNITES.

Max comes back in and heads toward the front door.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)
What now?

MAX
Now?

MARTÍN
Yeah, because I was thinking.
I should make some calls. Smooth
some things out with my Prof.
Maria will call. We'll build the
crib. Paint clouds in the nursery.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)

So, when I say "now"-

MAX

Now is Sunday.

Max opens the front door and picks up the Sunday paper.

MAX (CONT'D)

I do Sunday stuff on Sunday.

Max hands Martín the LA Times in a dewy plastic bag.

MAX (CONT'D)

I don't do coffee. Ok? I do matcha.

MARTÍN

Sorry?

MAX

Matcha. Tea. It's tea time.

Martín nods.

INT. MAX'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Max pours water into the teapot. Martín looks out the kitchen window. The neighbor's swing set rises over the fence.

A brother and sister sing to the CREAK of the swings.

KIDS ON SWING

Patty cake, Patty cake, Baker's Man...

MAX

Ha. Kids.

MARTÍN

Do you have any kids?

MAX

Nope. Never did.

MARTÍN

I like your place.

MAX

Wabi-sabi.

MARTÍN

I've heard of that.

MAX

It's like me. Cracks and scratches.

Max and Martín sit in the kitchen sipping tea and reading the Sunday paper together. Kids swing and chant to the CREAKING.

MARTÍN

They can't fix that?

MAX

What?

MARTÍN

The swings.

Max neatly folds up his newspaper. He slides it into a bundle of recycling on the floor near the sink. It's hefty.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)

Let me take that.

MAX

Ok. Thank you. These go out back.
Next to the garage. The blue bin.

Martín carries the recycling down the side of the house.

A Nerf football flies over from the neighbor's yard. He places it on the cinder block fence. It rolls back down. Tries again. No go.

He winds back to chuck it. Second thoughts. Lobs it over.

KIDS

Thank you!
(charming, melodic)

He doesn't see any bins, so he tries the garage door. It's locked. He peers through the window on the door. It's dark. He turns around and Max is coming toward him.

MAX

No. That's locked. The bins are way
around the back. Let me show you.

DON HO'S TINY BUBBLES is Max's ringtone. He picks up.

MAX (CONT'D)

Slow down. Get coffee. It's okay.
Stay there. Gimme 10 minutes.

Max hangs up the phone and glances upward for a beat.

MAX (CONT'D)

So. When it rains, it pours. Come on. Let's go.

MARTÍN

Go where? What do you mean go? I told you-I've got stuff to do.

MAX

I got a call. I'm gonna show up.

(beat)

Last night, I got a call.

(beat)

Get it?

Martín nods.

EXT. MARGIE'S DONUT SHOP - DAY

A rough block. Freshly power-washed sidewalk.

INT. MARGIE'S DONUT SHOP - DAY

A worn 1960's relic. Scratched windows. Orange plastic seats.

Decent donuts.

Max enters the shop with Martín close behind. At the back booth sits JULIAN, 21, slight, sweet, in over his head.

MAX

There he is!

Julian gets up to give Max a "bro" hug.

MAX (CONT'D)

I'm glad you called.

JULIAN

Aww. Thanks for coming, man.

MAX (CONT'D)

Of course. Always. Martín's new. He's on day-

MARTÍN

Six.

Martín nods to Julian.

MAX

Both of you. College studs. Living the dream.

MAX (CONT'D)

Julian's fresh out of County.

Rough night?

JULIAN

Man. Had the shakes. I'm fried.

MAX

First things first.

Max passes Martín twenty bucks.

MAX (CONT'D)

Grab us some donuts, ok? I'll take
a maple bar.

JULIAN

Naw, man, I'm good.

Martín heads to the counter.

MAX

And tea. Tea!

INT. MARGIE'S DONUT SHOP — FRONT COUNTER — CONTINUOUS

Martín reaches the counter where he meets BARBARA (60s).

Barbara smells like cigarettes—and looks it. She's crusty,
but kind, and will give it to you straight.

BARBARA

Hey there. What can I get-cha?

MARTÍN

Hey. I'll have a maple bar, two
teas, and...

Martín looks through the donut selection.

BARBARA

Take your time.

MARTÍN

Got apple fritters?

BARBARA

Sorry. That fellow. Who just left.
He got the last apple fritter.

MARTÍN

Damn.

BARBARA

Yeah. Right before he left, he said, "Norman loves 'em, so, gimme the last one."

Said you can buy it on the interweb at: thelastapplefritter.com

You a friend-a Max's?

MARTÍN

Uh. Yeah.

BARBARA

You a friend-a Bill's?

MARTÍN

Bill?

BARBARA

Bill W?

MARTÍN

No. Don't know him. I'm Martín. Are you Margie?

BARBARA

Nice to meet-cha Martín. No, I'm Barbara. There is no Margie. This was a Maggie's Donuts. The new owners changed it to Margie's Donuts. I was just messin' wit-cha. I've got more fritters in the back.

Barbara returns with a red, plastic tray. Martín hands her the twenty. She waves him off.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Na. It's on me.

Martín nods and brings the tray back to the booth.

JULIAN

...they beat the shit out of me. So fuck. Now I'm broke. I'm gonna have to sell something. Supposed to be starting classes and my mom's like, "What's with you?"...and I'm like-where can I get some shit?

Martín takes his seat and carefully assembles the donuts. Hands Max the twenty bucks.

MARTÍN
(whispering to Max)
It's on Barbara.

Max nods, but he's on Julian.

MAX
Slow down. We both know getting
high's not going to help. Right?

Max takes a bite of his maple bar. Martín places the apple
fritter on a napkin. Cuts it with the wooden coffee stirrer.

(beat)

Okay. You're fresh out of jail.
You're broke. You don't have a job.
You're behind on the semester. Your
mom's pissed and your jonesin'.
Right? Am I hearing you correctly?

JULIAN
Yeah. Yeah.

(beat)

MAX
Sounds like the perfect time to
make a gratitude list.

JULIAN
What? F.U.

MAX
You called. I came.

JULIAN
(To Martín)
You believe this guy? What you got?

MARTÍN
Me?

JULIAN
You got cash? A lady?

(beat)

MARTÍN
I've got six days.

JULIAN
Six days.
(scoffs)

JULIAN (CONT'D)

You don't know me. Know how many times I've had six days? What step are you on? Got a sponsor?

MARTÍN

I called this guy. I'm here.

JULIAN

Sounds like you're on step zero

MAX

Cool it. You. Gratitude list.

(beat)

MAX (CONT'D)

I start.

Max rolls up his sleeves. Extends his hands out, palms down.

MAX (CONT'D)

My arms work.

He rotates his palms up.

MAX (CONT'D)

My hands work. You go.

JULIAN

My eyes work.

MAX

Good. My mom loves me.

JULIAN

My mom loves me.

MAX

Go on.

JULIAN

My abuela is proud of me.

JULIAN (CONT'D)

I have a car.

MAX

You've got this Julian.

JULIAN

I'm still enrolled.
I can get my job back.

JULIAN (CONT'D)

I'm gonna be a badass lawyer.

MAX

I love it.

Martín pushes the apple fritter half towards Julian.
Julian nods.

JULIAN

Zero.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIL TRUCK — MOVING — DAY

Martín's fidgeting with his phone. He flips it over. The screen has Maria's photo. Flips it back.

MAX

What are you thinking?

MARTÍN

That guy's intense.
Gratitude. Seemed to work.

MAX

He wanted an out.

(beat)

You stayed.

MARTÍN

Does it always work?

MAX

It does for me.
So far. So good.

MARTÍN

What about this?

He pulls up his pant leg up—revealing the ankle bracelet.

(beat)

Does it help with this?

MAX

Ha. Try it with your P.O. and
report back.

MARTÍN

Next time I see Maria—I'll try it.

MAX

Explain.

MARTÍN

We can tell each other what we're grateful for. The house. The future. We gotta smooth things out.

(beat)

MAX

Smooth things out?

MARTÍN

You know. Patch things up. Get back on track.

(beat)

MAX

Can you maybe weld it?
Weld it tight?

MARTÍN

What?

MAX

Or, like, encase it in concrete?

Wrap it up like an egg roll?

MARTÍN

Jesus.

MAX

Is that what we're doing? Smoothing and patching?

Martín feigns punching Max in the shoulder.

MAX (CONT'D)

I'm getting jealous. Let's call Maria-give me her number. We can Twelve Step her ass right now.

(beat)

They ride-Highland Park murals. Hipster barbershops. Bakery. Martín looks at his watch.

MARTÍN

Shit. You know St. Ignatius?

MAX

Ha. You mean St. Ignatius of Loyola
on Terrace?

MARTÍN

Can you drop me off? Maria goes to
the eleven o'clock.

MAX

No problem. You know, you can crash
at my place again.

Martín steps out of the truck.

MARTÍN

God you're weird.

Okay.
Thanks.

MAX

Hey. You know it's not marriage
anonymous right?

Martín nods.

MAX (CONT'D)

What day is it?

MARTÍN

Sunday.

Max nods. Drives off.

EXT. ST. IGNATIUS CHURCH — ACROSS THE STREET — DAY

Martín sits on the curb waiting for church to let out across
the street. A lady strolls by with a baby carriage. A man
parks his ice cream cart and waits.

Before long, kids are swirling around the cart.

A two-year old with an ice cream bar breaks from the flock.
He wobbles along the red curb.

Martín watches.

The toddler's ice cream tumbles into the gutter.
The boy crouches, peering into a drain.

He leans too far.

Martín bolts.

CUT:

The toddler is scooped up by his mother.
She wipes up his hands and wags her finger at him.

Martín catches his breath.

A brief smile.

(beat)

He spots his mother and Maria at the top of the steps.
They're talking to their family priest.

FATHER PAUL (40s) speaks just above a whisper. His pencil-thin mustache is odd-matches his personality.

The ladies spot Martín, and he knows it.

(beat)

He starts up the stairs.

Father Paul scurries down and intercepts him halfway.

FATHER PAUL
Martín! Blessings! How are you?

Maria and Matilda head inside the church.

MARTÍN
Maria!

FATHER PAUL
Martín. Honey-

MARTÍN
I just want to talk to her.

FATHER PAUL
Now is not a good time.

MARTÍN
I can fix this. I'm pretty sure
once we get a little alone time.
That's all we need.

FATHER PAUL
She's very upset, Martín.

MARTÍN

Yeah, I've seen this before.

It's two steps forward, one back.
That sorta thing.

Martín backs down a couple of steps.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)

Besides. If anything. I need
clothes. My laptop. Stuff.

Matilda reappears at the top of the steps.

MATILDA

Stuff?

(beat)

She's fine. The baby's fine.

Maria joins Matilda.

MARIA

Mom, let it go.
Martín, did you bring it?
Is that why you're here?

MARTÍN

Bring what? What do you mean?

MARIA

Did you even read my letter?

Martín loses eye contact.

MARTÍN

Yeah I read it.

Maria slumps.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)

How are you? C'mon. Hug?

MARIA

Really?

MARTÍN

I need clothes.
My laptop.

Maria sits down on the steps.

Martín hurries over but keeps his distance.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)

You okay?

She looks at him straight on.

MARIA

(Whispers)

We deserve better.

(beat)

MARTÍN

We? Whose we?

MARIA

Us. The baby.

MARTÍN

Oh. Now it's us. You can't cherry
pick it Maria. It's we and us
whenever it's convenient for you.
And me? What about me?

(beat)

MARIA

Me? What are you talking about? We.
Us. Martín. Do you even hear
yourself? I can't keep doing this.

Maria rises.

Matilda reaches to help. Maria shrugs her off.

MARIA (CONT'D)

I didn't sign up for this.

(beat)

FATHER PAUL

Why don't we-

MARIA

We had a plan.

I raised half the house money.
Am I wrong?
Where's your half?

Martín goes down a couple of steps.

MARIA (CONT'D)
I just-we can rewind. Re-set.
But you have to be honest with me.
With yourself.

Maria watches Martín walk down the steps.

Out of sight.

INT. IKEA STORE – SERVICE COUNTER – DAY

Maria pulls a ticket, number thirty six, from the machine.

She stands next to a cart with the remains of the crib piled on top of a piece of cardboard packaging. Holds a plastic bag filled with fasteners and dowels. Watches happy couples.

A young couple is playing with a bag of frozen meatballs.

Another couple fusses over a plant, unsteady on their cart.

36 LIGHTS UP on the board.

Maria approaches the counter, ticket in hand.

MARIA
Hi. What's your return policy?

IKEA SERVICE COUNTER REP
Hey. Depends. Usually up to one hundred and eighty days if it's in good or unused condition. What have you got?

Maria gestures to the mess on her cart.

IKEA SERVICE COUNTER REP (CONT'D)
Yeah, sorry. We can't accept that.

MARIA
What if I have a receipt? Can I get store credit?

IKEA SERVICE COUNTER REP
I'm sorry. It's too far gone.

Maria nods.

(beat)

MARIA
How about the "As-Is" section?

IKEA SERVICE COUNTER REP
Ah. No. You've got broken pieces.

MARIA
Okay.

(beat)
I get it.

Maria turns. Pushes the cart. Slats of melamine slide off.

(beat)

She bends down. Too pregnant.
Gets on her knees. Gathers the items.
Nobody helps.
Happy couples.
Kids scamper.

(beat)

She pushes the cart to the elevator.
Exits on the top floor.
Makes her way to the crib section.
Parks the cart in the middle of all the cribs.

(beat)

Rubs her belly.
Leaves the cart.

Walks away.

INT. MAX'S HOUSE — KITCHEN — DAY

Max rearranges his newspaper.

Martín pulls out Maria's letter from his bag. Tears open the envelope. Something drops—METAL CLANG. Martín slaps it flat.

He turns over his hand.

Maria's wedding ring. White gold. Diamond encrusted.
Martín pulls out the letter and reads it aloud.

Martín,

I love you.

But I don't trust you.

I can't trust you with our baby.

MARIA (CONT'D)

When you're ready.

MARTÍN
(a quiet chuckle)
When I'm ready...

Show me.

Bring me this ring.

Marry me again.

- María

MARTÍN (CONT'D)
Jesus H. Christ

...why is she fucking with me?

(beat)

It's exhausting.

Martín buries his head in his hands.

He clutches the ring.

MAX
You want to be married to María?

MARTÍN
Yes.

Max pulls paper, an envelope, and a pen from a kitchen counter drawer. Places them on the table.

MAX
Write her back.

MARTÍN
What do I say?

MAX
Just put pen to paper.

(beat)

You don't have to send it.

LATER

Martín writes. Max reads. They drink tea.

Kettle WHISTLES. They wrap the tea bag strings around the soggy bags that rest on their spoons.

INT. MAX'S HOUSE — MAX'S BEDROOM — MORNING

Faint city traffic blends with the occasional parrot squawks.

Max wakes up in a California King bed dressed in full silk pajamas. The other side of the bed is empty. He puts on his slippers. He moves to the empty side. Kneels. Prays.

He shaves. Takes a pill. Lathers his face with sunscreen. Buttons up his USPS uniform. Checks himself in the mirror.

"Think, Think, Think" scribbled on a post-it note hangs upside-down. He taps it with his finger.

INT. MAX'S HOUSE — KITCHEN — MORNING

Max picks up Martín's unstamped letter on the kitchen table. Martín is under blankets on the couch.

MAX

Ha. Progress. Mail it?

Martín peeks from under the blanket and gives a thumbs up.

MAX (CONT'D)

Are we gonna regret mailing this?

Martín puts the blanket over his head.
Max exits and gently closes the front door behind him.

Martín remains under the covers.

The CREAK of the swings.

(beat)

Martín sits up wrapped in a blanket.
Crosses the room. Stands in front of the living room window.

(beat)

Looks at the two wedding rings stacked on his finger.
The swings CREAK.

(beat)

INT. TOWNHOUSE FOR SALE — DAY

Maria wears a lovely summer dress. Her woven bag matches her straw, wide-brimmed hat.

She enters the front door into a living room with high vaulted ceilings. People mill around. The place is staged.

A stack of flyers sits on the island in the kitchen. Maria slides her hand across the white marble counter.

A toddler waddles by. Dad, who at a glance looks like Martín, is in hot pursuit wearing a blue mechanic's shirt.

(beat)

REAL ESTATE AGENT
It's beautiful. Right?

MARIA
Yes. Very.

Maria picks up a flyer.

REAL ESTATE AGENT
I know. Pricey. In the market?

MARIA
No. I mean. Getting there.

It's a dream.

REAL ESTATE AGENT
Well. It doesn't have to be out of reach. There's a house for everyone. Or two!

Here, take my card.

MARIA
Thanks, that's okay. I'm already carrying a lot.

No. I take that back. Please.

REAL ESTATE AGENT
Great. You know, there are a lot of options. First-time home buyers' plan. Belong to a credit union?

MARIA
I do.

Maria smiles.

MARIA (CONT'D)
May I keep this flyer?

REAL ESTATE AGENT
Yes. Of course.

Maria walks out. Sits in her car. Reads the flyer.
Looks around. There's a park nearby. Lawn. Swings.

She crumples up the flyer.

EXT. FATHER PAUL'S RECTORY - DAY

Martín can't see through the security bars on the window. He
rings the doorbell. Steps back. LOCKS UNLOCK. Door opens.

Father Paul is wearing an ornate robe with matching slippers.

FATHER PAUL
Martín! Honey. Welcome. Please,
please, come in. You know the way.

MARTÍN
Hello Father. Take off my shoes?

FATHER PAUL
Oh. Please. No. I'm relaxing. This
is my, how they say, staycation.

Father Paul leads Martín into a salon with a dining table.

The place is tidy. The furniture is barely above thrift store
quality. A rollaway bag and a backpack sit on the table.

FATHER PAUL (CONT'D)
Please. Sit. Some tea?

MARTÍN
Oh. No thanks. I'm good.

Father Paul pours himself a cup.

FATHER PAUL
Are you well Martín? Are things, as
you say, smoothing out?

MARTÍN
I'm trying. I'm going to meetings.

FATHER PAUL
Good. That's good. Your mother
dropped off these items for you.

Martín opens his backpack and inspects his laptop and cables. Pulls out his passport. Sets it on the table.

MARTÍN

She even packed my passport.

He zips open the rollaway bag to reveal some clothes. Nothing is folded. He runs his hand through the panel pocket.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)

Is there a note? A message?

Father Paul shakes his head.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)

They ignore my calls. Honestly father, I'm hitting my limit here.

Guess I'll have to go to my mom's and straighten things out.

Even better. Listen. Father. How about you call Maria? Now. Put in a good word. It would go a long way.

Tell her we can smooth it out. Marriage has its ups and downs—for better or worse. That sort of thing. How bout it Father?

FATHER PAUL

Martín. There's nothing I can tell Maria—that you can't tell Maria.

Father Paul picks up the passport. Studies the headshot.

FATHER PAUL (CONT'D)

Oh. Look at you here. Such a baby.

Martín nods.

(beat)

INT. MAX'S GARAGE — DARKROOM — DAY

CLICK. A cassette tape plays TINY BUBBLES BY DON HO.

Max organizes photo trays. Switches on the timer. Lights off. Red safe light glows. Enlarger is switched on. Hunched over a grain focuser, Max adjusts the SQUEAKY dials.

(beat)

INT. CAL STATE LA CAMPUS – SOCIAL STUDIES BUILDING – DAY

Martín waits in a hallway outside an office. Watches campus life. Sun reflects on a lime green VW bug in the distance.

The door rattles open.

PROFESSOR SANTIAGO

Martín. Come in.

Martín stands at the edge of his desk. Professor sits.

MARTÍN

Thanks for seeing me.

So. My proposal. I'm thinking-next semester. Since you have your hands full with three upper division classes. I can pinch hit-pick up a couple lectures a week. I get some work study money. Take the pressure off you.

It's a win-win.

Professor Santiago nods. Smiles.

A small fish tank sits on top of a filing cabinet. The professor picks it up and puts it on his desk right in front of Martín.

PROFESSOR SANTIAGO

Have a seat.

He pulls a small bottle of fish food from his desk drawer.

He taps the bottle. Fish food comes out into his palm. He pinches a bit and throws it over his shoulder like salt.

Drops some into the fish tank. The fish scrambles.

He looks at Martín.

(beat)

MARTÍN

Nice fish.

Professor Santiago nods. Looks at his display.

You've got such a great topic...let's see...

You miss lectures.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)

Your work is late. When I do see something, it's thin. Sloppy. And then-full stop.

Overall-you don't deliver.

Reads like a lose-lose.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)

Yeah. Just...a lot going on.

PROFESSOR SANTIAGO

Everybody's got a lot going on.

Professor taps the fish tank.

Opens his desk drawer and pulls out a stapler.

PROFESSOR SANTIAGO (CONT'D)

Start producing-or you're out.
No program. No scholarship. No financial aid.

MARTÍN

What am I supposed to live off of?

Professor looks at his computer monitor.

Looks at Martín.

Taps on his display.

PROFESSOR SANTIAGO

Right here. Your enrollment status is flagged. Is your tuition paid?

Looks at Martín.

(beat)

The fish barely moves.

Taps the fish tank.

No change.

He takes the stapler and pretends it's an alligator trying to bite the fish.

PROFESSOR SANTIAGO (CONT'D)

Could you use a little extra help?
There are tutors at the library.

Martín rises.

Bumps the table.

Rocks the water.

MARTÍN

Sorry.

I can manage. Thanks.

INT. HIGHLAND PARK PAWN SHOP — DAY

Martín presses the Pawn Shop bell and attempts to look through the grated glass security door.

No response.

He presses again.

Door BUZZES.

Martín lets himself in and approaches the counter.

PAWNBROKER

Sell or pawn?

MARTÍN

Pawn. Some rings.

The Pawnbroker lays out a green felt on the glass counter.

Martín pulls Maria's letter out of his back pocket.
The heart over the "í" stares at him.
Shakes her ring out of the envelope. Takes off his own.

Martín hesitates.

(beat)

Places the rings down.

The pawnbroker drags Martín's wedding band across a stone.

Checks the diamonds with a loupe.

PAWNBROKER

Six hundred for the pair.

MARTÍN

What?

PAWNBROKER

The band checks out.
This one-glass.

MARTÍN

It's a family heirloom.

PAWNBROKER
Doesn't change anything.
Pawn it?

(beat)

Martín taps twice on the glass.

Bills are fed into a money counter. The machine spits out a stack of crisp twenties. Martín snatches the cash.

(beat)

He heads toward the door.

PAWNBROKER (CONT'D)
Ticket.

Martín circles back to the counter. The Pawnbroker hands him a carbon copy ticket receipt. Martín folds it carefully. Stuffs it in his back pocket. Heads out the door.

The Pawnbroker drops the rings in a small manila envelope. He licks the flap. Seals it shut. Drops it into a metal box.

INT. THE UNIVERSITY BURSAR'S OFFICE — DAY

Martín drops his I.D. into a metal bin under a tinted window.

STATIC SPEAKER—

BURSAR'S OFFICE
Two thousand two hundred
thirty-five dollars due today. Add
one fifty by close of business.
Wire. Cashier's check. Cash only.

Martín's I.D. is trapped inside the bin with a brochure.

Cover reads: *Before Filing Bankruptcy*

INT. CAL STATE LA — CREDIT UNION — DAY

The place is practically empty. Martín sits at a table across from the tellers. A loan officer joins him.

LOAN OFFICER
Sorry for the hold up. Ha. Just
kidding. Hold up.

So. You don't qualify.

LOAN OFFICER (CONT'D)

Not to mention. There's a felony on your report. Sound right?

MARTÍN

It's a non-issue. It was downgraded to-Listen. I need forty-five grand. This is for a house. Not tuition.

LOAN OFFICER

For that kind of money-you need collateral. Or a co-signer. It doesn't have to be a big deal-people do it all the time.

MARTÍN

Even with a record?

The Loan Officer opens a desk drawer.

LOAN OFFICER

It's about them. Not you. Find a co-signer-we'll put things in motion.

The Loan Officer hands Martín a brochure. Martín takes it.

Taps it gently on the desk. Twice.

EXT. SACRED HEART SCHOOL — GARDEN — DAY

Maria stoops over a garden box. Wrestles a tomato vine.

Sister Greta watches in amusement.

MARIA

The kitchen was dripping with marble. Just-Out of my league. Didn't have to be that way.

Maria rips out a dead vine.

It is what it is I guess.

SISTER GRETA

It's expensive. That's for sure. What about renting?

Maria nods.

MARIA

It's my best option. For now.

Was it hard?

MARIA (CONT'D)

I mean, deciding to simply-do without? Leave all your "worldly possessions"?

SISTER GRETA

Sometimes I think about it. Truth is. I didn't have much to miss. Sometimes...I mean. Who doesn't like cashmere?

Maria smiles. Tugs on a weed. Starts a pile.

SISTER GRETA (CONT'D)

My life is so full.
I invest every day.
Every day.
With you.
Friends.
Here.
The children.
The school.

It grows and grows.

Now if I could just...monetize it.

MARIA

Yes! I mean, no!

SISTER GRETA

Like you said...
It is what it is.

(beat)

The stuff. It doesn't serve me.

Maria nods. Dry, dead vines. Weeds. Debris piles up.

MARIA

Thing is. I don't think I'm greedy.
I work hard. I just want a nice place. Scratch that. I want a killer place. I deserve it.

She looks up at Sister Greta.

It's my turn. I mean. Right? Does that make sense?

SISTER GRETA

Absolutely.

Maria looks at the pile.

MARIA

What now?

Sister acknowledges the pile. Looks at Maria.

SISTER GRETA

If it doesn't serve you.
You burn it.

(beat)

MARIA

And that's why I love you.

(beat)

Maria grabs a fistful of vines. Creates an arc—a happy face.

EXT. CAL STATE LA — DAY

Martín walks off campus to the parking lot. Ivan lounges in his lime green VW bug, pipe in hand.

IVAN

Dude. Martin. ¿Qué pasa? Long time
no see.

MARTÍN

Dude. Mar-teen. Hey.

IVAN

Hang out. Take a hit.

Martín steps back.

MARTÍN

I'm good.

IVAN

You sure? Here. Hold this—

Ivan hands him the pipe. Ivan exhales, hops out, jogs around to the frunk, and grabs his backpack.

IVAN (CONT'D)

Dude. Remember that Redding stuff
that never came?

MARTÍN

Yeah.

IVAN
That's the shit.

(beat)

Burn and Learn.

Martín holds the pipe.

(beat)

Hands it back.

IVAN (CONT'D)
Where's your ride? I thought you
had a mail truck or some shit.

MARTÍN
No. Just a buddy. He's a mailman.

IVAN
Dude. Jackpot.

MARTÍN
What do you mean?

IVAN
Jackpot. Those guys are rolling in
dough all day long. One mail bag is
filled with all kinds of shit. The
credit cards alone. Ka-ching. I'd
hit that shit-five finger discount.

The shuttle pulls up.

Martín gets on. Doors close.

He watches Ivan. The shuttle pulls away.

Smells his fingers.

(beat)

EXT. COMMUNITY CENTER — EVENING

Max hands Martín a coffee mug with the old Apple logo and
"Think Different." Grabs Alaska Airlines "Fly the Friendly
Skies" for himself.

50+ folding chairs face a wooden podium. They take seats
three-quarters of the way back. The meeting has started.

SECRETARY ROBYN (20s) - androgynous with black jeans and a buttoned up maroon paisley collared shirt, leads the meeting.

SECRETARY ROBYN

...The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking...

MAX

(Whispers to Martín)
You good?

SECRETARY ROBYN

...Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

MARTÍN

I'm good.

SECRETARY ROBYN

At this meeting, we celebrate continuous lengths of sobriety. Tonight, our chip person is...Simone.

SIMONE

Simone, alcoholic.

AA GROUP

Hi Simone!

SIMONE

Is there anyone here tonight for their first meeting who'd like to take a welcome chip? If so, please stand and identify yourself and your disease. This isn't meant to embarrass you but so that we might get to know you better.

Martín hides.

SIMONE (CONT'D)

Any newcomers?

Max nudges.

Martín raises his hand.

SIMONE (CONT'D)

Can you please come to the podium and introduce yourself?

Martín slowly stands up. With a CLANG, stumbles over his metal folding chair on the way to the podium.

Simone greets him with kind eyes. With a warm hug, hands him a white plastic AA sobriety chip.

MARTÍN
My name is Martín.

(beat)
And I'm an alcoholic.

AA GROUP
Applause.

Martín can barely keep it together. He gets fist bumps on the way back to his seat. Max pats him on the shoulder.

Martín clutches his chip.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER — LATER

Max washes coffee mugs in the kitchen.
Martín stacks chairs. Simone approaches.

SIMONE
Hey Martín. Keep coming back.

MARTÍN
Thanks.

SIMONE
And I won't tell Maria or anyone I saw you. What happens here, stays here. Ok?

MARTÍN
Ok. Thanks for saying that. Have you seen her? How's she doing?

Simone holds a neutral expression.

INT. MAX'S MAIL TRUCK — NIGHT

MAX
Ha. Ha. Ha!

MARTÍN
No, I'm telling you. That Simone is a real bitch.

MAX

Oh Yeah. She's a real bitch. The way she handed you that chip? You got a welcome chip-from a "Welcome Bitch"!

MARTÍN

No! You don't know this girl!

MAX

Ha. And. What kind of bullshit hug was that? What a bitch!

MARTÍN

You're killing me!

Max pulls in front of his house. Puts the gear in park.

(beat)

MAX

Did you drink today?

MARTÍN

No.

MAX

Good. Progress.

They step out. Head towards the front door.

MARTÍN

Hold on. Forgot to lock the door.

He darts back. Opens the truck door. Peers inside the back.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. MARIA AND MARTÍN'S APARTMENT — DAY

Simone waits. Her ride is here. It's Maria and her Prius. Simone hops in the passenger seat.

MARIA

Hey girlfriend. Thanks for doing this with me.

SIMONE

Of course! That's what friends are for. It's a recon mission. You drive. I'll look.

They ride past a line of beat-up classic cars.

SIMONE (CONT'D)
Look. Already: FOR RENT.

MARIA
Too seventies. Pretty much what I
just moved out of.

SIMONE
I hear ya. Try there. Up the hill.

The Prius winds up to a string of apartment buildings that
hang off the cliff.

MARIA
This is more like it.

SIMONE
Oh. You'll never guess who I saw at
my meeting.

(beat)

MARIA
I'll never guess.

(beat)

SIMONE
No. I shouldn't say.

MARIA
Was it the hottie?

SIMONE
Yeah. And they were all paisley.

MARIA
Less talk-more action.
Just go for it.

Maria parks the car. APT FOR RENT. ONE BEDROOM.

She rolls down her window and looks up at the sky.

This one.
Mine.
Please.

Simone covers her ears.

SIMONE
Jesus save me!

INT. MAX'S GARAGE — DARKROOM — DAY

1940s HAWAIIAN UKULELE MUSIC.

FADE IN:

Photo paper floats in a tray. Max rocks it gently. Takes a bite of a sandwich. Rocks it again. An image emerges.

It's the photo framed in the living room.

The red safety light reflects off the water onto Max.

SOFT KNOCK on the door.

MARTÍN
(From outside)
Hello? Max?

MAX
Wait! Hold on! Don't come in!

Max transfers the paper to the Stop Tray.

MARTÍN
What?

Max turns down the music.

We can talk like this. What is it?

MARTÍN (CONT'D)
I fucked up.

Max takes another bite. Checks the timer.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)
My financial aid.

MAX
Go on.

MARTÍN
My life savings. Our home deposit.
It's gone. I wasted it away.

MAX
What about family? Can they help?

MARTÍN
There's no way.

MAX
Someone at school? An extension?

MARTÍN
I don't know. Doubt it.

MAX
I'd find out-lickety-split.

Martín leans his forehead against the door.

MARTÍN
I've got no money. No job. Nobody's
talking to me. Don't have my stuff.

MAX
Martín. Did you drink or use?

MARTÍN
No.

Martín sinks to the floor.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)
Max...I'm scared.

MAX
Yes. I hear you. You're scared
because it's scary...

MARTÍN
I'm supposed to be the dad.
The PhD. The house.
(beat)
Everything is shit.

MAX
Martín.
You're not a piece of shit.

(beat)

MARTÍN
So. What do I do?

Max doesn't answer.

He lifts the paper from the tray. Water drips.

MAX
What kind? Tudor? Ranch? Bungalow?

MARTÍN
House. Nice house. Grass. White
picket fence. I don't know.

MAX
I'm not worried about you Martín.

MARTÍN
No?

MAX
No. You sound good.

MARTÍN
I do?

MAX
Yeah. It's just...life on life's terms. You're here. Showing up. I worry about the guys who can't. Do me a favor-I'm on my lunch break. Can you run up to my truck. Grab my thermos?

MARTÍN
Do I need the keys?

MAX
In the bowl-kitchen table.

MARTÍN
Got it.

Martín scampers off.

A DARKROOM BUZZER goes off.

INT. DOCTOR'S EXAMINATION ROOM - DAY

A murky ultrasound image of a baby on a monitor.

Baby moves.

ULTRASOUND TECH (O.S.)
Was it dull or sharp?

Maria is wearing a hospital gown. Simone is by her side. The tech glides the ultrasound wand over Maria's exposed belly.

MARIA
Sorry?

ULTRASOUND TECH
The Pain. Either way. It's good you came in. Good job on the self-care. Better safe than sorry.

MARIA

Dull I guess. Thank you.

ULTRASOUND TECH

I'm guessing it was gas. I see a strong heart on a big boy. Would you like a picture?

MARIA

Really?

Tech wipes the gel off Maria's belly.

ULTRASOUND TECH

Of course. Let me run over to the printer. Be right back.

The tech exits the room.

SIMONE

I'm sorry he didn't show.

MARIA

Oh. That's okay.

SIMONE

Maria. It's not okay.

MARIA

No. I know. What I mean is. This is my third ultrasound. He didn't make it to any of them. So. Fool me once. Fool me twice. However it goes. You know? So.

I'm over it.

Maria rolls on her side with her back toward Simone.

(beat)

MARIA (CONT'D)

But, I mean...show or no show...I'll keep inviting him.

What's the alternative?
It's on him.

Not me.

No regrets.

Simone nods. Tugs Maria's gown.

SIMONE

I bet she thinks we're a couple.

Maria rolls back.

Smiles.

Tech enters the room and hands Maria the photo.

ULTRASOUND TECH

It's fuzzy. He's turned away.

Maria studies it. She closes her eyes.

EXT. CAL STATE LA - DAY

Martín calls his mother on the way to the bus stop.

MARTÍN

Mom? Hi. Thanks for picking up.

He stops walking and grabs a seat at an umbrella table.
ATM machines and several bulletin boards are nearby.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)

Yeah, I'm okay.

(beat)

I didn't want to bother Maria now.

Sun in his eyes. Tinkers with the umbrella.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)

No. Thing is. Yeah. Everything's
good. Just talked to my advisor.
Making progress...Yeah.

The crank is jammed.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)

Just have a tuition situation. I
want to avoid some fees.

I did some homework at the Credit
Union. Good news is that I can get
a loan. Consolidate things. Thought
maybe you'd want to help. We can
fix it.

No. Listen. I'm not asking for any
money. It's just a co-sign. People
do it all the time.

(beat)
No. You don't have to ask Maria.

(beat)
Mom- Listen.

The crank handle breaks off in his hand.

Mom, you're my mom. Not her mom.
Sorry. I thought I could ask.
No.

(beat)
Well-I can't ask my piece of shit
dad can I?

He hangs up.

DOLLAR BILLS SHUFFLE out of a nearby ATM machine.

A student stuffs a wad of cash into his wallet.

Martín chucks the handle at a bulletin board.
It hits a flyer with a drawing of a baby on it. He reads it.

Free Community Courses.

Parenting Workshops
All are welcome.

The corner of the flyer flaps in the wind. He finds an extra tack and mends the corner.

Picks up the broken handle. Tosses it into a trashcan on his way out.

INT. MAX'S GARAGE — DAY

MARTÍN
Max?

Martín KNOCKS on the garage door.

No answer. Tries the knob. Unlocked. Opens the door a crack.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)
Hello? Max?

Red safelight. Martín's eyes adjust. Photos gently swirl.
The enlarger projects a negative image. It looks familiar.

Max is at the door.

MAX
What the hell?

MARTÍN
Jesus!

A BUZZER goes off. The projection stops.

MAX
It must be important. I'm going to
sit. So I can listen carefully.

Go ahead.

MARTÍN
It was an accident.

Max places the paper from the projector into the first tray.

MAX
Let me show you an accident.

A gorgeous portrait rises to the surface.

Goes black.

MAX (CONT'D)
This. This is my...place.

Max fishes out the paper. Tears it in half. Tosses it.

MAX (CONT'D)
When you opened the door.

(beat)

You ruined it.

Max switches off the red light.

MARTÍN
Sorry, I knocked-great photo.

MAX
It's gone now.

(beat)

My Henry.

We caught the bug.

He died.

Max reaches out to one of the photos hanging above.

I got sober.

(beat)

Sorry I got upset.

MARTÍN

No. My bad.

MAX

I'm used to being alone. What did you need?

Martín hands Max the letter he had sent to Maria. It has "Return to Sender" stamped on it.

MARTÍN

What does it mean?

Can I fix it?

MAX

Fix it? Fix what?

MARTÍN

She doesn't get it. She's blowing things up. She just needs to stop-

MAX

Is that your job? What's your job-Dad? Martin-

MARTÍN

-Mar-teen! Jesus.
Martín

(beat)

You say "dad" like it's a good thing. I fuckin' hate my name. All my life it's a cluster mispronunciation hassle. Named after my dad-a real model citizen...Yeah. So I'm the dad now. Thanks for the reminder.

Max nods. Hands him back the letter. The letter is stamped with a Purple Heart.

INT. SACRED HEART SCHOOL – DAY

5th graders spill out of class. The day's over.
Maria walks alongside a wall of windows holding her tummy.

She watches kids load into a school bus outside.

(beat)

Takes a seat at her desk. Opens a folder of kids' drawings.
They're all the same theme: "What I'm grateful for..."
Roberto is grateful for his little brother.
Adriana loves her mommy and Jesus.

She pauses on a drawing: "World's Bestest Dad."

A boy and his father sit inside a giant trophy.
Dad wears a shiny gold crown.

(beat)

Maria pulls a peel-and-stick reusable frame from her desk
drawer. She fastens the drawing to it. Heads over to the
bulletin board and mounts it. Admires it. Touches the crown.

(beat)

DOUBLE KNOCK

SISTER GRETA (50s) wearing a habit and a Virgin of Guadalupe
apron, stands at the door. She carries an oversized gym bag.

SISTER GRETA

I wanted to make sure to swing by
on your last day. I'll miss you.

MARIA

You too. The lesson plan is in my
desk. The keys are in the cabinet.

SISTER GRETA

Enough. Stop worrying about us.
This is your time.

MARIA

Okay. Okay.

SISTER GRETA

Walk with me.

MARIA

Oh. Can I ask you something?

(beat)

Close the door.

Sister Greta drags the bag inside and closes the door.

SISTER GRETA

What is it? Are you alright?

(beat)

MARIA

Can I ask you...I mean, not as a
Sister. But as a friend?

(beat)

Sister Greta takes off her veil and puts it on Maria's desk.

SISTER GRETA

I'm your friend.

MARIA

What if you have a friend...someone
you love...and you see them
spiraling. No matter how hard you
try. You can't get through.

SISTER GRETA

I pray for them.
And for myself.

I pray I'm strong enough to know
where I'm needed-

(beat)

and where I'm not.

MARIA

What if you can't tell the
difference?

SISTER GRETA

No matter how much I love someone-

(beat)

I can't let them take me down.
Sometimes you have to let 'em go.

Sister Greta places her veil back on.
She picks up the hefty duffel bag.

SISTER GRETA (CONT'D)
Grab that side. Walk with me.
I want to show you something.

Maria grabs the other side of the duffel bag and they waddle down the hall carrying it together.

Some kids sweetly approach them with a wave and a smile as they pass by. One girl places an origami heart on the bag.

SISTER GRETA (CONT'D)
They love you.

They reach the teacher's lounge.

SISTER GRETA (CONT'D)
You first-

Maria opens the door.

TEACHERS
Surprise! Surprise!

Maria stops.

The lounge is decorated with crepe paper for a baby shower. A new crib has a big bow on it. Sister Greta unzips the bag to reveal wrapped presents.

Maria wells up.

EXT. SACRED HEART SCHOOL - PARKING LOT - DAY

Only a few cars around. Martín leans on Maria's dusty Prius.

Maria and Sister Greta waddle toward him with the duffel bag. Yards from the car, they stop. Drop the bag.

Maria pulls out her key-fob. Double click-SOFT BEEP.

Martín props up. Sees them. Jogs over.

MARTÍN
Let me help.

Maria pops the trunk. Leaves the bag. Moves toward the car. Sister Greta stays close.

Martín grabs the bag. Trudges over. Heaves it into the trunk.

MARIA
Thank you.

MARTÍN

Hi. Sorry. I didn't want to wait in
the car-startle you. Hi Sister.

Sister Greta nods. Maria holds out her hand.

MARIA

You don't need keys.

Martín complies. Detaches the key-fob and hands it to her.

MARTÍN

Can we talk? I mean-just you and I?

Maria unzips the bag and carefully starts unloading presents.

MARIA

No. Sister, please stay.

MARTÍN

Hey. I miss you.
I want you to know I'm trying.

Maria has unpacked a dozen or so presents.

It's not wrapped up or
anything...but I brought you
something.

Martín pulls out his sobriety chip.

Maria glances. Unpacks the gifts. Hands Sister Greta the bag.

MARIA

Thank you so much.

Gives Sister Greta a warm squeeze.

MARIA (CONT'D)

I'm happy for you Martín.

Maria walks around the car to the driver's side. Sister Greta
opens the door for her. Martín follows.

MARTÍN

I was hoping I could call you.

I could finish the crib.

Maria rests her head on the steering wheel.

He holds out his hand with the chip in his palm.

The door is still open. The sun is in her eyes.

MARIA

Yes. The crib. Perfect timing.

Jesus.

All you need is a shiny crown.

She closes the door. He goes for the handle but stops.
She starts the car. Drives away with an eerie EV sound.

(beat)

Sister Greta hands Martín the bag. Walks back to school.

(beat)

A pick-up truck pulls up to the teacher's lounge. Sister
Greta rolls out the crib. Men easily load it.

Martín watches as they cruise by.

(beat)

The lounge door slams shut.

(beat)

INT. MARGIE'S DONUT SHOP – DAY

Martín and Max sit across from Simone.

SIMONE

Okay. I came. Why am I here?

MAX

Martín has something to say.

MARTÍN

Yes. Thanks. Hi. First off. Thanks
for coming Simone. Listen.

SIMONE

I'm listening.

MARTÍN

First off. I'm sorry for what I
said. And how I acted. I shouldn't
have pushed you.

(beat)

Simone slowly squeezes lemon into her tea.

SIMONE
That's all?

MARTÍN
I'm. I'm also sorry about the gate.
You didn't deserve that. I wasn't
drinking, but I was out of my mind.
I'm not good at this-I'm trying.

SIMONE
Well. Okay. Good for you Martín. So
why am I here?

MAX
Martín needs your help.

MARTÍN
I need a partner. For the class.
Maria trusts you.

I'm lost.

SIMONE
What are we talking about?

INT. CAL STATE LA — PARENTING WORKSHOP — NIGHT

Twenty couples on yoga mats.

GAIL (30s), loud scrubs, neon green Crocs.

GAIL
Breath in. Breathe out. Short
breaths. Hah. Hah. Hah.
Hold it.

Release.

Simone and Martín are on a mat. Simone is sitting on her
bottom, knees bent. Martín is crouched behind her.

MARTÍN
If my dad could see me now.
Oh wait, I don't have a dad.

The couples get up and make their way around to some tables.
They practice swaddling "simulator" dolls with blankets.

Across the room—a dad nails it. Calm. Effortless.

Martín watches.

Gail circles the room speaking in a clear, calm manner.

GAIL
Remember, the red light must always
be on. Always. If you're cold, baby
is cold. Feed baby. Burp baby.
Swaddle baby.

Gail walks by as Martín practices his swaddles. The blanket slips. He starts over. Puts baby on the blanket. Gail motions to him—rotate the doll ninety degrees.

Tries again. Folds. This time—it holds.

Success.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Good job, Dad.

(beat)

Martín looks at the doll.

(beat)

He turns.

Blinks away tears.

EXT. CAL STATE LA — PARKING LOT — NIGHT

Martín walks Simone to the lot. He carries the doll in a sling. Simone gets on her motorcycle. Straps on her helmet.

SIMONE
Good job Martín.

MARTÍN
Eh. It's all...phony.

SIMONE
You're welcome.

Simone pokes the baby gently.

SIMONE (CONT'D)
Goodbye baby.

Martín holds baby's toes.

Simone rides off.

Martín slips the doll out of the sling. He carries it by the ankle. It dangles as he heads towards the shuttle stop.

Martín pops the baby over his shoulder like a sack of coal.

INT. MAX'S HOUSE — LIVING ROOM — MORNING

Martín stands at the window wrapped in a blanket. Birds rest on the edge of the bird bath. No parrots today.

He opens the door. Brings in the Sunday paper.

Martín scans the room. The surfboard on the wall has a sticker. It reads: HANG LOOSE. He picks up the photo of Henry. Studies it. Turns it over. Made in China.

Wanders over to the fireplace. There's an urn on the mantle.

(beat)

Picks it up. Takes off the top.

Looks inside.

Gentle CLACK OF THE BEADS.

Max stands on the other side of the beads.

Martín caps the top and gently places the urn.

Max comes through the beads.

(beat)

MAX

Gather all this.

All your shit.

All of it.

All your baggage. All your whining.
All your bitching.

Jam it into your backpack.

And when you've done all that.

Call your daddy to come pick you
up. Or just.

Move on.

MAX (CONT'D)

(beat)

Now!

He opens the door and slams it hard on the way out.
Birds scatter.
Max grips a patio chair. Presses it into the ground. Sits.

(beat)

LATER

Max enters the front door.
Martín's sofa bed is made. Bags neat.
Max walks into the kitchen.
Martín is reading the paper.
Teapot is front and center.
Max's spot is open. His newspaper section in its place.
Max's tea is ready.

(beat)

Max nods.

Takes his seat.

Reads.

(beat)

INT. MAX'S HOUSE — KITCHEN TABLE — DAY

Martín practices swaddling his baby doll. He fails. Tries again. This time it's neat and snug.

Satisfied, he picks up the doll above his head.

(beat)

Glances at Max's keys in the bowl.

(beat)

Looks back at the doll.

MAX (O.C.)

Good job, Dad!

Martín whips around and spots Max outside the kitchen window.
Martín beams.

MAX (CONT'D)

Back to work!

Martín props up the doll.

Matilda appears at the kitchen window.

MARTÍN

Hang on!

Martín gently sets the doll down and opens the kitchen door.
Max stands behind Matilda. He shrugs.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)

What are you doing here?

MATILDA

I came for the ring.

MAX

Hey. Why don't you invite your
mother in?

All three sit at the kitchen table. Max pours tea.

MAX (CONT'D)

Honey? Lemon?

MATILDA

No. No thank you.

Doll starts fussing.

MATILDA (CONT'D)

Martín.

(beat)

The ring?

Doll cries.

MARTÍN

She asked me to hold it.

Martín is trying to manage the doll. Holding it upright.

MATILDA

Well. She wants it back. It's a
family heirloom. Where is it?

Martín gestures to Max to hand him the baby blanket.
Doll shrieks.

MARTÍN

I had it. Somewhere.

Crying continues. Martín starts swaddling.

MATILDA
Somewhere? It's sentimental. Wait.
Where's your wedding ring?

MARTÍN
My ring?...

Martín fumbles the swaddle.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)
I'm sorting it out.

(beat)

She studies him.

MATILDA
You can't even look your mother in
the eye. How do you expect Maria to
trust you?

Martín can't answer.

The doll cries.

MATILDA (CONT'D)
You made vows.
Maria made vows.

(beat)

It is what it is.

Max keeps busy. Doesn't look over.
The doll still cries.
The tea kettle whistles.

EXT. HIGHLAND PARK — PAWNSHOP — MORNING

Martín hops off a bus.
Crosses a busy street.
Looks up. Sees a liquor store sign.

(beat)

Rings the bell.
KNOCKS on glass.
Door BUZZES.

The Pawnbroker wears a denim apron. Polishes a silver cup.

MARTÍN
I pawned some rings? Two days ago.

PAWNBROKER

Ticket.

(beat)

MARTÍN

I lost it. Last name is Espinoza?
Can I show you my I.D.?

The pawnbroker keeps polishing.
A woman outside knocks on the front door glass.

PAWNBROKER

Find the ticket. Come back.

He BUZZES her in.

PAWNBROKER (CONT'D)

(to her)

Pawn or sell?

Martín is becoming invisible.
The Pawnbroker gestures to a sign:

NO TICKET. NO PROPERTY.

PAWNBROKER (CONT'D)

Miss?

The woman holds a gold chain. Hesitates.

PAWNSHOP CUSTOMER

Should I come back?

PAWNBROKER

No, this-

MARTÍN

Please?

Martín gestures and escorts her to the exit. He turns back
and heads towards the Pawnbroker.

BEEEEEP.

The ankle bracelet.

PHONE VIBRATES.

Martín turns. Lifts his leg. Trips.

Gets up.

Faces the Pawnbroker.

(beat)

MARTÍN (CONT'D)
These rings are my wedding rings.

Martín places the cash on the table. Fans it out.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)
Here. Please.

Pawnbroker keeps polishing.
Martín leans in.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)
I want my shit.

The pawnbroker steps back. Shakes his head no.
Another man appears behind the counter.
Pawnbroker sets down the cup.

(beat)

Door BUZZES.

(beat)

Martín snatches the cash off the counter.
Turns and heads towards the exit.
Stops. Cash in hand.
Pulls out his wallet but spills the bills.
He picks them up. Has to get on his knees.
Finishes.
Rises.
Tries the door. Locked.
Turns to the Pawnbroker.

Door BUZZES

(beat)

Exits.

CUT TO:

EXT. FATHER PAUL'S RECTORY — DAY

DING DONG

Father Paul answers the door wearing a floor-length red
velour robe with leopard trim. White loafers.

MARTÍN
Hello Father.

FATHER PAUL
Come.

Martín follows Father Paul down the hallway into his office.

MARTÍN
You said you had a letter for me?

Father Paul lights a cigarette on a long black holder.

FATHER PAUL
A message.

MARTÍN
What is it?

FATHER PAUL
Martín. Maria and I. We met.

(beat)

MARTÍN
Father. I know. She's unhappy.
Listen.

Martín leans in.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)
I know you mean well. But you don't
understand. We have a plan. We're
nesting. Getting ready for the
baby. We've got...trajectory.

I get the doctorate. Saving for a
house. Looking at neighborhoods.
Schools.

FATHER PAUL
She's asking for an annulment.

(beat)

MARTÍN
A what?

FATHER PAUL
Your marriage is over.

Martín has nothing. Sits with it.

(beat)

MARTÍN

No. It's not supposed to be that way. It's supposed to be the house-Why? What did she say?

(beat)

On what grounds?

FATHER PAUL

Unsound mind.

She also wants you to get tested.

MARTÍN

I'm clean. Almost thirty days.

FATHER PAUL

She doesn't feel safe.

(beat)

She wants you tested.
Drugs. STDs. All of it.

Father Paul places a large manilla envelope on his desk and pulls out a trifold brochure and a couple of flyers.

MARTÍN

And if I don't?

FATHER PAUL

Well, if you don't, she won't let you see the baby.

MARTÍN

She can't keep me from my kid.

FATHER PAUL

She can.

Rehab. Police reports. Refusing a test.

It doesn't look good.

MARTÍN

Jesus.

FATHER PAUL

Listen. Annulment aside, right or wrong, the question is...when the time comes, do you want to see your baby or not?

FATHER PAUL (CONT'D)

Take the test.

Or you don't see your child.

MARTÍN

Right...or wrong.

Father Paul abruptly crushes his cigarette in the ash tray.

FATHER PAUL

The clinic. Go today. No regrets.

Martín looks up at the crucifix.

Exhales.

INT. GROCERY STORE – DAY

Maria pushes a shopping cart with her tummy pressed against the handle. A young mother pushes a cart with a toddler.

TODDLER

I spy...a cookie. I spy...crackers

(beat)

I spy...

something fat!

Maria freezes.

YOUNG MOTHER

Hush! Gabriel...We don't say that.
That's not nice.

Maria gestures at her belly.

MARIA

Well...he's not wrong.
But that'll change.
Soon!

Maria bends down to pick up a giant bag of rice.

YOUNG MOTHER

Let me help?

The mother grabs the other end of the bag and they lift it into Maria's cart together.

YOUNG MOTHER (CONT'D)

Us moms gotta stick together.
Right?

MARIA

Thank you. It's all new for me.

YOUNG MOTHER

It's...it's the best. It's
like...you can't wait to see what
comes next.

Maria nods. Smiles.

MARIA

Thank you. I needed that.

And I don't feel so fat anymore.

They laugh.

INT. CLINIC — DAY

The Clinician hands him a urine test kit.

CLINICIAN

We need a clean catch.
Wash your hands.
Pull back your foreskin.
Restroom's down the hall.

MARTÍN

Okay.

They head towards the bathroom. Martín closes the door.
The Clinician stops it with his foot.

CLINICIAN

I have to observe.

MARTÍN

Bullshit.

Martín stops.
Looks at him.
Opens the door.

LATER

The Clinician bags the sample.

CLINICIAN

Sit.

The Clinician shines a small flashlight at Martín's eyes.

CLINICIAN (CONT'D)
Follow my finger.
Open your mouth.
Arms.

MARTÍN
My arms?

CLINICIAN
Yes.
Remove the jacket.
Roll up your sleeves.

I need to check for needle marks.

(beat)

He takes off his jacket.
A Captain America t-shirt underneath.
He puts his arms out, palms up.
Rotates them down.

(beat)

The Clinician inspects his arms.

CLINICIAN (CONT'D)
Something funny?

MARTÍN
My hands work.

(beat)

The Clinician makes a note and moves on.
Martín lowers his arms.

(beat)

Rolls his sleeves down.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)
Did I pass?

CLINICIAN
We post lab results within 2 days.
See you next time.

MARTÍN
Next time?

CLINICIAN
It's weekly.
It's consistency.

Martín exhales.
 Unwraps a stick of gum.
 Nods.

INT. CHURCH REC ROOM — MEN'S STAG AA MEETING — NIGHT

MARTÍN
 Why are we here so early?

MAX
 The meeting before the meeting
 ...where ego...is not your amigo.

Martín drops off a box of donuts. Guys hover around. Martín picks out an apple fritter.

BILL, rough-face yet refined, heads over.

BILL
 What've we got? Eclairs?
 French crullers?

MAX
 Regular donuts for regular drunks.
 This is Martín. How many days now?

MARTÍN
 Twenty-six.

BILL
 Congrats! I'm Bill. Watch this
 guy-he'll ruin your drinking.

MARTÍN
 He's helping me out.
 (beat)
 I'm trying.

A couple of other guys eating donuts join the circle.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)
 My wife needed some space. So.

BILL
 Needed space?

Now another guy joins in.

MARTÍN
 Jesus. Well. Ok. She took it.
 She took the space.

(beat)

She took the shit out of it.

She emptied the whole apartment-

More guys

Took off with some guy-
Called the cops on me.

I'm on Max's couch, trying to
figure out how to get to my very
pregnant wife. I just hocked our
wedding rings for tuition money.
She thinks she wants an annulment.
Wants me tested. I made a Gratitude
List. I'm doing Sunday shit on
Sunday and...wait for it...Things
are looking up-
I got the last apple fritter. So.

AA GUYS

Donuts! Here's to donuts!
(All the guys raise their
mugs and donuts.)

The guys drift away.

BILL

I like your shirt.

Martín looks down at his shirt.

INT. MARGIE'S DONUT SHOP - NIGHT

A group from the men's stag fills the booths.
Bill, Max, and Martín stop at the counter.

MARTÍN

Hey Barbara-finally met Bill.

Barbara winks at Bill.

MAX

The usual please.

BILL

And a cruller!

BARBARA

Fancy!

The gang slides into a booth. Donuts scarfed.

MAX

Cruller. That's your new nickname.

Martín freezes.

MARTÍN

What the hell?

He gets up and heads out the door—Maria's Prius pulls away.
Martín comes back inside. Stops at the counter.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)

I just saw her.

BARBARA

And she saw you. Now she knows.

MARTÍN

What do you mean?

BARBARA

She sees you. With your buddies.
Donuts. Thing is, she can't see
what's behind the donuts.

Martín nods.

He heads back and slips back into his booth.

MARTÍN

Sorry about that. I saw her.

MAX

She just took off?

MARTÍN

I'm gonna call her.

He pulls his phone out.

MAX

She's got your number, right?

(beat)

He sets the phone down.
Flips it upside-down.

(beat)

BILL

Max says you're working on your
PhD?

MARTÍN

Yeah. I'm at Cal State LA,
researching DACA. Dreamers.

BILL

Neat. Like-what's a classic dream?

MARTÍN

People pretty much want the same
thing. Security. Shelter. Good
work. Future for their children.
There's a lot of variety in there.

MAX

Example.

MARTÍN

Some get hung up on economics.
Better car. Bigger house.

Maria stands at the edge of their table.

She pulls the ultrasound photo out of her purse and places it
gently in front of Martín.

MARIA

This is yours.

(beat)

Do you have something for me?

Martín stares at the photo. Looks at Maria.

MARTÍN

For you?

MARIA

Yes. My ring.

I'm tired. Tired of asking for it.
Just forget it. It's just.

I know it's worthless.

Been in my family. That's all.

She walks off.

(beat)

Martín stares at the photo.

Max looks at Martín. Taps the window with his ring. Twice.

Martín looks at Max.

INT. MAX'S HOUSE — KITCHEN — DAY

SMACK. Martín accidentally hits the baby doll's head against the door. The doll drops. He inspects it. The red "life" light is off. He taps it. Nothing.

Scrambles for his phone. Dials. Puts in on speaker.

MARTÍN

Hello. Hi. Yes. Espinoza. Martín.
Cal State LA. Hold on.

Martín looks at the doll's back near the red light.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)

The number is 467-A-2024. I whacked
his head. His light went out.

BABY TECH SUPPORT

Not a problem. Can you hear me?

MARTÍN

Yes. Go on.

BABY TECH SUPPORT

Is there any damage to the head?

MARTÍN

No. I don't think so. Just a scuff.

BABY TECH SUPPORT

Ok. Let's try this. Put the doll in
a seated position. Run your fingers
about two inches below the light.
Do you feel a slight bump?

MARTÍN

Yeah. Yes, I think so.

BABY TECH SUPPORT

Okay. That's the reset button.
Press and hold it for a bit.

MARTÍN

Ok. Holding.

Martín looks toward the neighbor's yard.

(beat)

CREAK of the swings.

(beat)

INT. MARIA'S APARTMENT — DAY

DISTANT CITY SOUNDS.

Drapes flap in the breeze in front of an open sliding door that leads to the balcony.

Maria sits in a big comfy rocking chair in her new apartment. She rocks.

Scans the room. It's an upgrade from where they were.

Contemporary, but modest. Vaulted ceilings. Stainless fridge.

THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT MARIA ring tone.

MARIA

Awww. Sister Greta...thanks for calling back.

She rises. Walks over to the fridge.

MARIA (CONT'D)

I do. I like it.

Opens the freezer, pulls out the ice cream.

MARIA (CONT'D)

One day-I'll buy...but you know, for now...It's perfect. You'll have to come by and see my view! Yes.

Scoops out an enormous amount into a tumbler.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Well. It is what it is.

Squirts honey on it. Pours milk over it. Starts mashing it.

Listen. I called because I wanted to thank you for the gift. Yes. Oh no, it's perfect...ha. I think I'm going to name it. Okay. I will. You'll be the first to know. Bye.

She opens a little gift box on the coffee table. Inside sits an elephant. She carries it, along with her ice cream, over to the balcony.

She studies the elephant. Places it on a smooth, flat stone.

Her fingers press down on moss. She trims the stray bits off the gnarled trunk of a miniature olive tree.

Her bonsai.
Maria sits. Puts her bare feet on the balcony railing.
Holds the ice cream on her belly.
Breeze.

EXT. MAX'S HOUSE — FRONT YARD — DAY

Max sprays bird shit off the bird bath with the garden hose.
Martín comes out the front door.

MARTÍN
Need some help?

MAX
I'm good.

(beat)
That tuition. You figure it out?

(beat)
MARTÍN
Two words—Payment. Plan.

Max nods.

MAX
The downpayment?

Martín shakes his head no.

MAX (CONT'D)
The rings?

No response.

Max sprays Martín's feet with the hose—

Martín jumps.

MAX (CONT'D)
It slipped.

MARTÍN
Jesus.

Martín's phone vibrates. It's Father Paul. He picks up.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)
(whispers)
Baby's coming.

He lowers the phone.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)
I need a ride.

(beat)

MAX
You got it.

Max turns off the hose.
He slowly, carefully, and methodically winds the hose.

Martín is in disbelief.

MAX (CONT'D)
Ha. Just kidding—let's go.

INT. HOSPITAL — MATERNITY WARD — NIGHT

Martín exits the 8th-floor elevator carrying a modest bouquet of carnations.

He spots his mother.

MARTÍN
Mom!

Matilda hops up to give Martín a hug.

MATILDA
Junior!

MARTÍN
How is she? Where is she?

MATILDA
She's alright. They're resting now.
The baby is downstairs in the
nursery. Maria's down the hall.
Room 842.

MARTÍN
Oh thanks mom.

Martín takes a breath.

Matilda places her hands on his shoulders and starts grooming him. She starts with his hair and then a stray piece of lint.

MATILDA
I know things have been rough.
Rough or not. Your father...
he could never show up.
You're here.

(beat)

Junior. Look at me.

She looks down.

No. Look at you.

I'm still calling you Junior.

(beat)

I'm proud of you Martín.

INT. HOSPITAL – MARIA'S ROOM – NIGHT

Martín quietly enters. Maria sleeps. He places the carnations in a vase on the nightstand and sits across from her.

Watches her.

(beat)

His eyes close.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. HOSPITAL – MARIA'S ROOM – NIGHT

Martín's groggy. His eyes come into focus.

Maria is sitting up, nursing her baby.

Maria and Martín lock eyes.

Martín makes his way to the foot of the bed.

Her toes peek from under the blanket.

She pulls them back.

MARTÍN

Hi.

MARIA

Hi.

(beat)

MARTÍN

You okay?

MARIA
I'm okay. Just tired.

(beat)

Martín walks around to Maria's bedside.

MARTÍN
He's perfect.

Maria partially turns away, cozying in with baby.

(beat)

MARIA
He is perfect.

(beat)

And I don't trust you.

Martín steps back.

(beat)

He gently brushes the carnation with his finger.
Carefully adjusts the vase from the edge of the nightstand.

He nods. Pauses at the doorway.

Starts to say something. Catches himself.

(beat)

MARIA (CONT'D)
His name is Martín.

Martín wells up.

(beat)

He dims the light.
Slowly closes the door behind him.

INT. HOSPITAL - LOBBY - NIGHT

The elevator doors open. Martín steps out.

MAX
Everything ok?

Martín nods.

MAX (CONT'D)
Good. Boy or girl?

MARTÍN
Boy. Martín.

MAX
Ha. Welcome to the world, Martín.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. HOSPITAL — MARIA'S ROOM — DAY

Matilda is organizing Maria's baby bag.
The nurse swings the door open.
Rolls in a wheelchair.
Flips open the foot rests.
Maria steps in, holding a neatly swaddled baby Martín.
Nurse starts to roll the chair out the door.

MATILDA
Wait.
The carnations.

Nurse pauses.

MARIA
Leave them.

Nurse rolls them out. Door closes.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. MAX'S HOUSE — KITCHEN — MORNING

OVER BLACK.

Parrots squawk. The swing set CREAKS. Teaspoons CLINK.

FADE IN:

Max is preparing for tea time. Martín enters wearing a "Dad's Rootbeer" t-shirt and carrying a stack of unopened mail. He hands Max the newspaper in a dewy bag.

MAX
Ha. Saturday.

MARTÍN
Morning.

Swing set CREAKS.

Martín starts going through his mail. Tears through most of it. He comes across a small, unfamiliar mail pouch.

MARTÍN (CONT'D)

Scissors?

Max reads the paper.

MAX

Top drawer.

Martín cuts off the top. A pair of hex wrenches falls out.

MARTÍN

Jesus.

MAX

What's that?

MARTÍN

These are the ones. Hex wrenches.
For the Härlig.

MAX

Härlig?

MARTÍN

For the crib.

MAX

Good tools?

MARTÍN

Metric.

Max nods knowingly.
Swing set CREAKS.

MAX

When you need em, you need em.

MARTÍN

Toolbox?

MAX

Under the sink.

Martín stoops to get under the sink. At a glance, his ankle bracelet is gone, replaced with some redness.

He pulls out a clean, retro, metal toolbox, and places it gently on the counter. He opens it—neatly arranged tools. Places the wrenches inside.

Sets water to boil. Looks out the kitchen window.

CREAKS.

Martín holds up the kettle.

Max holds up his tea cup.

Martín pours.

MAX (CONT'D)

Gonna see baby Martín today?

MARTÍN

Yeah, I hope so.

Martín puts down the kettle. Looks out again.

CREAKS.

MAX

What are you thinking?

Martín slides his hand across the toolbox.

CREAKS.

MARTÍN

I'm thinking...

Good.

Places the toolbox under the sink. Sits back down with Max.

Max reads the paper.

Martín fidgets with his phone. Flips it over. And back.

CREAKS.

(beat)

MAX

Don't do it.

(beat)

Martín gets up. Takes out the toolbox. Heads out the door.

CREAKS.

Max reads the paper, the hint of a smile lingering.

A child LAUGHS (O.S.).

Swing set CREAKS.

FADE OUT.