

SWALLOWS

A play with music in
Two Acts by

Manuel Martin, Jr.

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ACT ONE

CAST OF CHARACTERS

In Cuba:

YOUNG BOY

*Captain, Rebel No. 1, Juancho, Uncle,
Investigator, Armando, Ugo, Cain,
Boy No. 1, Man, Miguel

LUCIA

*Hermina, Rebel No. 2, President of the
Defense Committee, Aunt, Hortensia,
Eve, Cristina, Sister, Woman

NEMESIO

*Militia Man, G-2 Agent No. 1, Assistant
to the Investigator, Pancho, Priest,
Communist Youth Representative, Dionisio,
Man

CANDIDA

*Tita, Mother, Carmela, G-2 Agent No. 2,
Cousin, Aurora, Girl, Woman

In the United States:

MARIA

*Anita, Terrorist No. 1, Woman

JOSE RAMON

*Danielito, Mario, Student, Domingo,
Man, Milton

ANTONIO

*Perico, Emilio, Terrorist No. 2,
Servando, Man

DULCE

*Official at the Custom House, Flora,
Onelia, Woman

*Also will be playing these additional characters

Act One - Scene One

At the very beginning of the play the stage is completely bare. 8 actors - 4 men and 4 women enter the stage. Four of them ascend the steps of a platform situated upstage; the other four enter the downstage area carrying suitcases. They sit on the suitcases and face the audience. One of the actors addresses the audience.

Man #1: This evening our company will try to express some of the opinions of the Cuban people, in exile and in Cuba, about the Revolution and the way it affected their lives. Since actors presently living in Cuba cannot yet perform in the U.S., the four actors on the platform will voice the opinion of the people "over there," los de alla. We, on the downstairs section will play the people "over here," los de aca. To represent the existing barrier between "over here" and "over there" aqui y alla, our actors will bring down a plastic curtain which will divide the two areas during the play. (Two actors on the top platform and two on the bottom one lower two ropes to bring down a heavy plastic curtain secured to a heavy piece of wood making it tight appearing like a dividing piece of glass which will separate the two areas during the play). And now we can start the play. (He stands center)

January 1st, 1959 about 3:30 a.m.

Black out. One of the actors on the upstairs platform turns on a flashlight. He crawls on the floor, and he is followed by another actor who is carrying several sticks of dynamite. Then, one of them lights a match and proceeds to light the fuse. (While the fuse is being started a third actor appears and yells to them.)

Act One - Scene One (Cont.)

Woman #1: Stop it! Chico, stop it!

Man #1: What happened?

Woman #1: Viejo, it's all over. Batista is gone. El hombre se fue de Columbia.

Man #2: What do you mean is gone? Woman, you are crazy.

Woman #1: (Embracing the two men) Batista is gone. He left the country. Radio Rebelde announced that Fidel will be coming down from the hills! Happy New Year! Viva Fidel! Viva la Revolucion! (Lights suddenly come on in the upstairs and downstairs areas. The actors embrace each other and jubilantly scream and jump (Slide of Fidel Castro projected on the upstairs screen. Lights fade out and individual spotlights fade in on the eight actors.)

Woman #1: (Playing an old lady) No quiero que anden por la calle que la cosa no esta buena. Dicen que han arrancado los parquímetros del Hotel Plaza y han saqueado el Casino....

Man #1: They said that Batista and his court left for Santo Domingo.

Woman #2: Pero Fidel Castro ya esta en La Habana?

Man #2: No, they are fighting in Santa Clara, but they are winning and for sure they are going to take over the power.....

Woman #3: A pesar de ser sucios y barbudos se ven bonitos.....

Man #3: (Playing a pimp) Don't fuck with them, they have syphilis....

Woman #4: Gozen bastante ahora que con esta gente la mariconeria no va a ser igual.....

Woman #5: Esta es tu casa Fidel!

Man #4: Cecilia, may I borrow your camera? I want to take a picture of Fidel.....

Slide of crowd celebrating the triumph of the Revolution.

Act One - Scene Two

Spotlight on Maria, a girl in her thirties. She stands on the downstage platform.

Maria: Twenty one years ago and the images are still fresh in my memory. Some of the words I have forgotten, but the images are still fixed in my mind. I was so young, I guess eleven or twelve, but I remember it was a glorious event, like Mardi gras, un carnaval. It was a very spontaneous happening, like an unrehearsed parade. Even the children were embracing and congratulating each other. People were screaming to the full capacity of their lungs: "Viva la Revolucion! "Batista is gone! Viva el 26 de Julio!" Later on, these words became slogans, but at the beginning it was a very spontaneous thing. The words were not fixed. It was a very special moment, something I don't see any more.

Spotlight on Jose Ramon, a boy in his early thirties. He stands on the downstage platform. Stage right.

Jose Ramon: It was about 6:30 in the morning and I was getting ready to go to the Sunday Mass. I was shining my shoes when we heard over the radio the news that Batista had left the country. I didn't wait for my breakfast; I flew out of the house and ran through the streets of my town to be the first one to tell all of my friends. I remember as if it had happened only a few minutes ago. I, merely a kid of eleven, knocking at the front doors and yelling "Batista left the country! The rebels are coming!" When they finally opened the doors, they would say: "Shut up! They are going to kill you if you don't shut up!" And I

Act One - Scene Two (Cont.)

Jose Ramon: laughed because they didn't believe me. I knew the people I could tell. In a town with a population of three hundred, you knew exactly who were on the rebels's side. It was a glorious day! It was our victory!

Spotlight on Dulce, a woman in her late fifties. She stands on the downstage platform. Stage left.

Dulce: Well, to tell you the truth, I wasn't very excited about the whole thing. My husband and I were Batista fans, so the news that he had left the country created a feeling of uncertainty in my family. Oh, I remember how everybody went out in the streets, and how happy most of the people were. I also remember the destruction, the loitering, the ransacking of the big mansions. You give a break to the masses and they immediately behave like wild animals. I told Danielito - Danielito is my son - Danielito, don't go out of the neighborhood. No me pongas un pie fuera del barrio. You didn't have to be a fortune teller to know what was going to happen. I knew it, I knew it from the very beginning.

Spotlight on Daniel a man in his thirties. He stands stage center on the downstage platform.

Daniel: I woke up at 4:00 a.m. and heard the milkman talking to my father: "They say that Batista left!" I got up and turned the T.V. on to Channel 12. An announcer was saying: "In a brief moment we will give important news to the people of Cuba." He repeated that every five

Act One - Scene Two (Cont.)

Daniel: minutes and then the sign-off signal would appear on the screen. About 6:00 a.m. you could hear the screaming on the streets: "Viva Cuba Libre!", Abajo Batista!"

The students were delirious with joy. We used to live on the corner of the University. You know, right where Jose Antonio Echevarria was killed. I wanted to be part of the event, but my mother wouldn't let me go out of the neighborhood. I wasn't a street wise kid, but I knew the Revolution was needed. It was hope!

Eight spotlights fade in on the eight actors simultaneously.

- Man #2: HOPE!
- Woman #1: HOPE!
- Man #3: HOPE!
- Woman #2: HOPE!
- Man #4: HOPE!
- Woman #4: HOPE!
- Men and
Women: (Together) HOPE!

Act One - Scene Three

Spotlight on a woman in her forties. She stands on the downstage platform. Stage center.

Woman #1: Then they came from the hills, and we all went out to receive them. (Slide of Fidel Castro with doves resting on his shoulder.)

Woman #2: I went to the Presidential Palace to hear Fidel speak. I remember I was pregnant, and I had to push people away with my belly. I knew it wouldn't hurt my baby. I remember holding my belly with both of my hands listening to this Christ-like man and saying, "I will name you Maria Victoria". It was our moment of victory. Then came the

Act One - Scene Three (Cont.)

Woman #1: time for revenge. The execution wall. Paredon!

Man #1: Paredon! (Actor stands on the edge of the upstage platform and falls backwards, the rest of the actors will follow and will repeat the action several times)

Woman #4: Paredon!

Men and
Women: (Together) PAREDON!

Woman #1: I don't like this. I have seen people signing their own death sentence with a cross. Ese guajiro no sabia ni leer ni escribir.

Man #2: He killed my son, my wife, my mother. Execute him. Paredon con el. I want justice!

Woman #2: Do you know what Agrarian Reform is?

Man #1: Do you own land. If you do, watch out!

Woman #3: Fuck the Urban Reform! I'm not going to give my house to my laundress!

Man #4: Todo el mundo chilla cuando le pisan un callo.

Woman #4: Chicha, do you have a cake of soap I can borrow?

Woman #1: Niña! Have you heard of the embargo?

Man #2: Be patient. This is the Revolutionary process. Pa atras, ni pa coger impulso!

Lights slowly fade out.

Lights fade in on Man #1

Man #1: Then the exodus began. Thousands of Cubans left the island. Some of them legally, others illegally by sea, in small boats, even hidden under the wheels of a jet plane.

Woman #1: One of the most common meeting places for exiles during the sixties was inside the fish bowl - la pecera at

Act One - Scene Three (Cont.)

Woman #1: the Havana Airport. This was some kind of an isolation booth where exiles had to wait before boarding the plane.

Man #2: Any Cuban who left the country was considered a traitor to the Revolution.

Woman #2: We were called worms - gusanos.

Man #2: Worms!

Woman #3: Worms!

Man #3: Worms!

Woman #4: Worms!

Man #4: Worms!

All together: Worms!

Man #1: When I left in the sixties, my family wasn't allowed to the observation deck. We said good-bye in the gardens of the airport. I embraced my parents, my aunts, my uncle. It was a quick embrace. Have you ever felt so much, that you didn't feel anything?

Actors in the upstage and downstage platforms embrace imaginary characters.

Woman #1: Fill your eyes with this scenery. You are not going to see it anymore.

Man #2: They called my name, I walked up the boarding steps and that was it. I entered the plane. I had awaited that moment for so long, that when the moment came I took it with amazing calm. I thought I was going to feel great emotion, but I felt almost indifferent. But it wasn't indifference. How could it be?

Act One - Scene Three (Cont.)

- Maria: Then I sat down and the stewardess offered me a Coca-Cola. The plane took off. I knew I wasn't going back. I kept repeating to myself: Remember you are not going back there. You are not going back.....It happened at the moment the plane took off, because before, I thought they could still tell me I had to get off. People in the plane were happy in a very peculiar manner. It was a very sad happiness.... It wasn't a genuine happiness. It was an exchange, we had to give up other things.
- Man #3: I looked out of the window, although it was very dark and I could hardly see it anymore. I was leaving and I was looking down at that place. I don't know how to explain it. A place where I had suffered a lot, but at the same time where I had been born and would die. It's strange but I felt relieved that I could leave.
- Woman #4: In the confusion I forgot to embrace my favorite sister. Your relatives could not enter the fish bowl, and then I said to myself: don't worry I will see her through the glass windows. When I entered the fish bowl I discovered that the glass windows were covered with plywood. I could hear knocking on the other side of the glass. I couldn't see my sister, but I heard the knocking.
- Man #4: They called us worms, I thought they should have called us swallows. Small and graceful, long-winged birds. They are swift and proud and well-known for their migration habits.

Act One - Scene Three (Cont.)

Man #4: Small and graceful, long-winged birds. They are also known because they always return to their place of origin.

SWALLOWS

Man #4: (sings) Beware of the swallows
 Though we're small and shy
 We have wings of iron
 We are meant to fly
 To fly, to fly, to fly, to fly
 Roughness of journey
 We'll take without fright
 Look out for the swallows
 We are swift and free
 To fly, to fly, to fly
 We are dancing in the air
 We are playing with the wind
 Swallows' lovely feathers
 Are plated with steel
 We are dancing in the air
 We are playing with the wind
 With the wind
 Watch for the swallows
 We follow the same track
 Look out for the swallows
 We could also come back
 Come back, come back, come back, come back

Act One - Scene Three (Cont.)

Man #4: (sings) Roughness of journey
 We'll take without fright
 Look out for the swallows
 We are swift and free to fly
 To fly, to fly, to fly, to fly

Act One - Scene Four

Spotlight fade in on Dulce.

Dulce: (To the interviewer) So you want me to tell you my experiences.

Oh, God! I could write a novel.....You see, I was imprisoned in 1960. They told me they were investigating my property. I was accused of malversation of funds. Can you imagine? I didn't have any thing to do with public funds. My family never worked for the Batista regime, so how could that be? (She straightens herself on the chair) I guess my only sin was to be a daughter of Arturo Gomez de Villanueva, a doctor, a wealthy man. Have you ever heard of him? He was a very well known doctor in Camaguey. I was thrown in jail with pu.....I mean prostitutes, a few high class women, and also political prisoners. Imagine, I didn't know anything about politics! I was a housewife, a hard working woman. I spent two months in prison, until one day a captain, came to see me. He checked my papers and said: "This is terrible - que canallada, I'll pick you up and get you out tomorrow morning." I said to him that I would not leave with him, if he came wearing that uniform I hated that uniform. (To the interviewer) and you know what he said?: "Forget about the uniform. Probably some day you'll see me dressed as a civilian." And years later I found him in Miami, he was also a refugee, like me, so you see.....I got out the next day.

Act One - Scene Four (Cont.)

Dulce: Then, I said to myself, "Dulce, you got to get yourself and your family out of this country." I remember one day, Tita, a good friend of mine came to visit me.

Act One - Scene Five

Lights fade in on the upstage platform. A woman in her thirties stands in the center of the platform.

Tita: Dulce, I have a surprise for you. Can you take it?

Dulce: Chica, you know I have a heart made of steel.

Tita: Do you remember my cousin Rene?

Dulce: The one whose wife tried to commit suicide last year?
La pobre.....

Tita: That's the one. (Whispers) Well, you know he has a contact in Mariel. They are trying to hijack this small boat and force the crew to go to Miami. Rene says that the plan can't fail. You wanted to go to the United States, didn't you?

Dulce: Tita, how can I get in touch with him? I'm ready!

Tita: Hecho!

Lights fade out as both women shake hands.

Act One - Scene Six

Lights fade out on stage center and a spot fades in on a woman in her late thirties who is standing left on the upstage platform. She is Dulce's sister, Herminia. Another spotlight fades in on the grandfather, brother, and mother who are also standing on that area. On the downstage platform, Dulce, stage center, is surrounded by her husband, a man in his forties, a young son about 9, and her daughter about 11.

Herminia: So you want to leave the country.

Dulce: My God! News travels so fast.

Act One - Scene Six (Cont.)

- Herminia: Let me tell you, if my mother sets one foot out of this country, I will consider her dead.
- Dulce: If you were to change your mind some day and decide to go to the States, I will be the first one to open my doors to you.
- Herminia: No, thank you. This is my country, and I'm not going to abandon it when it needs me the most.
- Grandfather: Herminia, let it ride. I think they have the right to choose.
- Herminia: They? She is the one who wants to leave. Those children don't have any formed opinions yet. But you are going to be sorry. No one is going to stop this Revolution. Go! Don't ever look back.
- Dulce: I'll go but I will never stop loving you. You see, Herminia, you are my sister, and our family was here before the Revolution....
- Husband: And we were doing all right until they took over.....
- Herminia: You shut up! If you had any authority in your home, you would stop my sister from destroying her family.
- Mother: Dulce, think about us. Your grandfather is going back to the hospital next week. We are getting older.
- Dulce: But my children are young and I don't want them to grow up under this system. We were a close family before. Look at our family now.
- Herminia: Why don't you say the truth. Everything was going fine until the Revolution touched your property. You don't want to share it with the poor, you don't want to teach the illiterate ones.....
- Dulce: Our father was an honest man, worked for his money all of his life, built his property with his own sweat and blood. He left us his

Act One - Scene Six (Cont.)

Dulce: legacy. If you believe that money is the only thing I care about, you are mistaken. I was born naked, and God provided me very well up to this point. So we are leaving Cuba the same way we were born. Do you know why? Because more than money and material things I really love freedom (To the mother and grandfather) Now, may I have your blessing?

Grandfather: (As he blesses them) I would like to help you, but it is so late in life.....What can I do?

Mother: Write as soon as you can (to the boy) Danielito, take care of your family. You are a big man now. (To the girl) Anita, you are not going to forget me, are you? (To Dulce's husband) Take care of them, will you?

Dulce looks at Herminia. Herminia turns her back to her. Lights on the upstage platform fade out.

Dulce: (To the interviewer) The next day we left by car for Mariel. We rented a small boat for a fishing trip. This little boat - una lancha, had a small crew of militia men. They were very nice and believed our story. It was the 5th of September in 1961.

Act One - Scene Seven

Lights fade in on the upstage platform. The captain of the small boat and three militia men go about their duties in a relaxed manner. Dulce and her family are preparing the fishing paraphernalia.

Captain: (To Dulce's husband) Perico, I want to have some fish for lunch, so hurry up!

Perico: (Placing some bait on the hook) Don't worry Captain. Do you know the story about the time Danielito caught a 35 lb. Cubera?

Act One - Scene Seven (Cont.)

Captain: (Laughing) No, I don't.

Danielito: (To Perico) Viejo, you are not going to say that story again.

Perico: Why not?

Dulce: Perico, leave the boy alone. Will you? (To Danielito) No le hagas caso mi hijo.

Captain: It looks as if it is going to rain.

Dulce: I can feel it in my bones. We better hurry up if we want to have lunch soon. (To her husband) Perico, could you get me some fishing line and a large hook from the basket? I'll teach you how to catch a fat fish.

Perico gets up and brings the basket and places it between his wife and his son. He quickly opens the basket and gives a gun to Dulce, another one to Danielito, and he himself grabs the last one. They turn around at the same time.

Perico: (To the Captain) Drop your gun and tell your men to come out and drop them too.

Captain: Perico, you must be teasing me.

Dulce: We are not teasing you. Hurry up!

Captain: (To his men) Antunez, Pedrosa, Trapaga, come here!

(The three men come in) Drop your guns!

Militia man: What?

#1

Captain: Do as I tell you!

The three men drop their guns.

Perico: Danielito, pick up the guns!

Danielito quickly approaches the area where the men are standing and picks up the guns.

Dulce: (To the captain) We want to go to Miami.

Captain: You can't be serious.....

Dulce: Perico, get the map! (Perico gets a map out of the basket) We

Act One - Scene Seven (Cont.)

Dulce: promise you that nothing is going to happen to you if you cooperate.
 (To Perico) Perico, get one of the men to start the boat.

Captain: I really liked you.

Dulce: We like you too, Captain, but we want to leave.

Captain: I don't think we are going to go very far. Look at the sky. I don't
 like the way the wind is blowing.

Dulce: We'll make it, Captain. I'll take care of that.

The actors in both areas get into fixed positions, but flexible enough that they can move to the blowing of imaginary wind. The wind becomes a tempest. The actors in the downstage platforms get a piece of plastic and place it on top of them. They struggle with the plastic as if the plastic was water. The imaginary boat gradually begins to sink. Lights fade out. A spotlight fades in on Dulce.

Dulce: (To the interviewer) The boat sank. We held on to the pieces of wood until another boat, packed with refugees, picked us up. We all survived except one - my daughter. She didn't know how to swim. My husband held her until they were separated by the fury of the sea. Sometimes at night I believe I can still hear her voice, the way she screamed. She was so frightened of the sea, never wanted to swim.....She was only even. When we finally arrived in Miami, they sent ambulances to pick us up. We had been on the boat for three days. The compass was out of order so we had lost our route. The crew from our boat stayed in Miami, but the Captain, loyal to the Revolution, went back to Cuba. I heard Fidel condemned him to 20 years in prison because he should have made us come back. I don't regret having left. I'm getting older now, but you see: I'm still here!

Lights fade out.

Act One- Scene Eight

A campesino stands stage center on the upstage platform.

Nemesio: (To the interviewer) Pase, have a seat. Do you know that your sister taught every one in this house how to read and write? How can I forget it. She taught me how to sign my name, Nemesio Alvarez. Those are things one never forgets, when one sees one's name in paper.

(Makes the gesture as if he was signing his name) Nemesio Alvarez.

For an old man, it really means a lot. I have seven children. They all went to school, four of them have degrees. They think nothing of it. It was so different before. I married in 1948 and me and my Carmela went to live at the Escambray mountains. I can tell you stories you probably won't believe. The campesinos in this country were worth nothing. The abuses we had to take. The rich always took advantage of us. I never worked for less than I should, even if my family had to starve. You know, a man has to have some pride. Then, while Batista was the president, the national guards came here very often. I remember once they came here looking for a man who apparently looked like me. They took me out of the house and tried to get some information out of me that I swore I didn't know. My wife was seven months pregnant, and she was so scared that she started with the labor pains the following morning. That's why my son Rafaelito is like a man who does not grow. The doctors in Havana say that he has the mind of an eight year old. Because of that incident, I joined the rebels when they went there during the war. We also had some bad experiences with the rebels. They created a lot of terror among themselves and among us. That's when el "Che" arrived; It was if he was our father.

Act One - Scene Eight (Cont.)

Nemesio: Everybody respected and admired that man. Most of the time he was alone, never talked too much but always took time to speak to the campesinos; and we were sure he was listening. He always carried with him this little thing that he used for the asthma, but at the same time he would never let go of his cigar. What a man! Never accepted any food or presents from us unless there was enough so his men could share it with him. That was the kind of man he was. You see, people couldn't be enjoying the Revolution if it wasn't for the campesinos help. Then we helped move the camp to a place hidden by trees, very close to the swamps. Parcels of land were distributed among the campesinos. You see, the Agrarian Reform had started in the Escambray before the triumph of the Revolution. El Che promised us that everything in that camp - the grains, the cows and the land - was going to be divided in equal parts when the war was over. And that's the way it was done. He accomplished everything he had promised. If you want to know something about the Cuban Revolution, ask me; I will tell you. Before, to say campesino and dog meant the same thing. Now, we are treated as human beings. You see, youth is forgetting our history, they didn't have to fight for anything. The only thing we have to do now is work.

Lights fade out.

Jose Ramon, a man in his early thirties smiles at the interviewer, then he speaks.

Jose Ramon: I don't remember exactly when my parents first became disenchanted with the Revolution, but I think it was 1961. I remember vaguely bits and pieces of conversations like: "We are leaving the country," or "We are against the Revolution." I used to pray before I went

Act One - Scene Nine (Cont.)

Jose Ramon: to bed, and in my prayers I would beg God not to let my parents change. I wanted them to stay on the side of the Revolution like my friend's parents. (Smiles) It seems that God didn't hear my prayers. I myself never became disenchanted with the Revolution, and I never felt betrayed by it. How could they betray me? I was only a child. I felt very confused. Due to my town's geographical position, it was very easy to receive messages from the radio stations in the U.S. You could hear broadcasts saying, "Attention, Villa Clara, attention, Villa Clara. We are winning the battle." I was in the territory where they were supposed to be winning the battle, and there was no battle. Do you understand? They also talked about what they did to children in school, and I was in school and nothing was done to me in the way which was described. I also remember my uncle, my aunt, the Spanish priest, and my little cousin.

Lights fade in on the upstage platform. A priest about 40 stands in the center of the platform. A little girl about nine, a man in his thirties, and a woman in her forties stand right and left of the priest.

Priest: Alberto, you must take the child out of the country. I went through the Civil War in Spain, and I am telling you they are following the same pattern. You don't know what it is. I've seen it with my own eyes, thousands of children piled together in trains and taken away from their parents. Do you know what patria potestas means?

Act One - Scene Nine (Cont.)

- Uncle: Alberto don't believe anything they tell you. It's a false alarm. You are going to send the kid away; and God knows when you are going to see him again. The Revolution is not going to kidnap the kid from you. Come on, compadre, you know better than that.....
- Cousin: Jose Ramon, is it true you are going to the U.S.A. Do you know that they are Protestants? Jose Ramon, what is going to become of you. Don't let them convert you. Do you hear me?
- Aunt: Alberto, Jose Ramon is already teaching peasants. He is holding in one hand a reading method and in the other the Marxist theories. Send your son to the U.S. It is your responsibility. Do something! Alberto, do you know what patria potestas means?

Lights fade out on the upstage platform and fade in on the downstage area.

- Jose Ramon: So it was decided that I should go to Florida. The next thing I knew was that I had on a blue suit that was too big for me. The tailor made it that way on purpose so it would fit me when I grew up. My father said good-bye, kissed me, and left me in the gardens at the Havana Airport. There were rumors that my trip could be cancelled if my relatives went there to say good-bye. My father had made arrangements with a family who was also travelling to the U.S.A. and would take care of me until I arrived in Florida. This family would be waiting for me at the ticket counter. My oldest brother Emilio was already in Miami, and he would be waiting for me. My mother couldn't come to say good-bye because she was already ill. I said good-bye to her at home, never to see her again. I took a Pan American plane, it was

Act One - Scene Nine (Cont.)

Jose Ramon: September 6, 1962, and to me the whole thing was an adventure. After all, my parents had told me I was going to study in Florida for three months, and then I was going to come back. It was like a vacation.

Act One - Scene Ten

A spot fades in on a custom house official who is asking Jose Ramon for his passport. He looks at it and places a stamp on it. Jose Ramon looks at the stamp and hands the passport back to the custom house official.

Jose Ramon: Why did you use that stamp? I am a student. I came here to study.

Official: (Throwing the passport at him) You are a refugee!

Jose Ramon places his passport on the inside pocket of his jacket.

Jose Ramon: (speaks) CUBAN REFUGEE

Refugee?

I was meant to be a student
ended up a refugee

(sings) The beginning of an era
endless questions
you will see.....

better learn

where do you come from?

can you spell it?

and slowly, please!

You must learn

and know the answers

to the questions

you will see.....

Act One - Scene Ten (Cont.)

Jose Ramon: Are you Cuban?
 Yes, I am
 I'm a Cuban refugee
 Be a master
 of your patience
 when you are told
 and this you will
 that you don't look
 like a Cuban
 like a Cuban refugee
 Hold your tongue
 If someone mentions
 That his best friends
 Cubans are
 Train your ear
 If someone tells you
 That your accent is alright
 Better learn of competition
 And get used
 To a brand new name
 You are the Jew of the Caribbean
 Learning the rules of the game
 They are right
 I came to conquer
 And to battle the brave sea
 Are you ready Lady Liberty?
 For a Cuban refugee.

Act One - Scene Eleven

An old lady about seventy-six smiles at the interviewer. She takes a long pause and then speaks.

Candida: Bueno, ask me the questions and I let you know if you can tape my answers. You never know, right? (Pause) Let me tell you, this Revolution has been very good for some people and very bad for others. As my poor husband, may he rest in peace, used to say: "Candita, I don't like the way this man talks. He is too generous with other people's property." You see my husband used to own a hardware store in El Cerro. That store was his whole life. Forty years of hard work, and if you know a Spaniard, you know that when they work, they work. When the Revolution took over private business, my husband lost his hardware store. It was as if they had taken part of his life. He became a different person. You see, when you are younger you can start all over again, but what can a man do at sixty-four? I remember one day at lunch time, while I was fixing our beloved pea soup, my husband was watching T.V. Fidel had been speaking for about two hours, and I remember as if it was yesterday, my husband got up from the rocking chair and said to me:

At this point one of the actors on the upstage platform approaches Candida.

Pancho: Do you realize that he has been talking for over two hours now?

Act One.- Scene Eleven (Cont.)

- Candida: Why don't you listen to the radio?
- Pancho: He is also on all the radio stations. I won't see the image, but I'll hear the voice.
- Candida: If he upsets you so much, why don't you turn the T.V. off?
- Pancho: They criticize capitalistic propaganda. What's the difference? Before we were saturated with toothpaste, perfume, detergent and toilet paper commercials. Now we have revolutionary commercials. The selling of a Revolution. What's the difference?
- Candida: Don't get upset. Remember what the doctor said about your blood pressure.
- Pancho: What's for lunch today?
- Candida: Guess.....
- Pancho: Not again!
- Candida: I don't know why you ask.
- Pancho: Candita, forty years. Forty years gone to waste. I didn't have to check the inventory. I knew where every nail, every screw, every light bulb was. Every penny invested in that store was made honestly. You know how we saved for years.
- Candida: Pancho are you going to start all over again?
- Pancho: What do we have now? A bowl of pea soup and a lunatic on the T.V. screen!
- Candida: Viejo, don't get upset.

Act One - Scene Eleven (Cont.)

Pancho: He said that this Revolution was more Cuban than the palm trees, and now he is more Russian than Vodka!

Candida: Pancho, turn off the T.V. and listen to the record player.....

Pancho: (Pointing at the T.V.) But he is not going to last, oh, no! He's got to pay for every nail, every screw, every bolt, every can of paint, every light bulb, that he has taken away from me. He has to fall, Candida, he has to fall.....(He collapses) He has to fall....

Lights fade out on Pancho. A spotlight fades in on Candida.

Candida: He died that day. It sounds like a soap opera, but his heart couldn't take it. Forty years to build a business is a long time. Don't you think so. When my friend Xiomara and her husband were leaving for the U.S., she came here and asked me if I wanted to leave with them. I told my son, Tito. Well, Tito is not my real son. I picked him up in the streets when he was seven years old. He used to sell balloons and newspapers. His family never took care of him, and for sure he was going to become a crook. Well, when I told Tito I was going to leave, he looked at me with his sad brown eyes and said: "What about me?" He just said that. So I didn't have the heart to leave him behind. He is now a marine biologist and more Communist than Fidel. But he is a good son, and I don't regret that I stayed. I think I was able to go through the years of the Revolution, because I'm a religious woman. You know something, there is one thing that Fidel hasn't learned: that no leaf will stir on a tree without the will of God. (Looking at the interviewer) You are leaving so

Act One - Scene Eleven (Cont.)

Candita: soon? Come back soon! (Pause) Next time bring
chewing gum!

Lights fade out.

Act One - Scene Twelve

Maria a woman in her early thirties looks at the interviewer and begins to speak.

Maria: I don't mind if you use the tape recorder. Why should I? (Pause) I always thought that the Revolution was very special, almost like an ideal person, and I also believed that the people who were making that Revolution although not perfect were part of that special being. In 1962, I was admitted to the National School of Art. I was selected for a very important position in the Communist Youth. I had to attend meetings constantly and also "speak to the masses". I did know, however, that what I represented was very important, historically. In those meetings, I always defended the individual whose values were questioned. I resisted becoming a judge of other peoples' characters, an investigator. (Pause) At some point I began to notice that most of the people around me spoke the same words and acted in the same way. I began to feel guilty in front of the so-called "great revolutionaries". Now I realize they were great reactionaries. I also realized that their opinions were becoming very dogmatic. Dogmatism was emerging not only

Act One - Scene Twelve (Cont.)

Maria: at the School, but all over Cuba. Everything was being measured, in order to arrive to the final verdict: whether you were a revolutionary or not. I felt guilty about not being fully committed to the Revolution. I guess, that, in a way, this had also to do with my discovering that I could be a lesbian. I was at an age when one begins to discover her own sexuality, and this created a sense of duplicity. They are right, I thought, so I must be wrong. This is how I was feeling when certain things started happening.

Lights fade in on two actors on the platform. They sit in front of an imaginary table as if they were having lunch. Maria, to illustrate the story, sits on a chair and also has an imaginary table in front of her. She is having lunch and talks to her classmates on the upstage platform.

Aurora: Guess who was called upstairs to Valdes' office.

Maria: Don't talk so loud! (PAUSE) Who?

Armando: Rosa.

Aurora: (To Armando) Am I going to say the story or is it you?

Armando: Go ahead. You take so long.

Aurora: Rosa is upstairs and I bet that Valdes is going to ask her about us.

Maria: She isn't going to say anything. Anyway, don't exaggerate the situation. Probably it's something else.

Armando: Something else?

Act One - Scene Twelve (Cont.)

- Aurora: Did you see how the guards came in at 1:00 o'clock in the morning and turned the lights on? They are doing that in every one of the dormitories.
- Maria: They didn't find anyone doing anything, did they?
- Aurora: No.
- Maria: So, they can't prove anything.
- Armando: Valdes is out to get us, Maria.
- Aurora: That's right.
- Maria: Valdes is an ape. He can barely manage with his classes on Marxism and Political Consciousness.
- Aurora: That ape is now Deputy Director for the School of Theatre. He's a State Security Man and he was sent here to do his job.
- Armando: He has to follow his orders.
- Maria: Whose orders?
- Armando: Ramirez, the head of the National Cultural Council. You know that "effeminate men and lesbians" cannot study in any of the arts schools. He has orders to find them and eliminate them.
- Aurora: Don't talk so loud and stop waving your hands if you don't want to be caught right now. It's true, Maria. The purge has started in the Dance School, in Music, in Visual Arts, and now is the time for Theatre.
- Maria: Cut it out! You make it sound as if it was Hitler's final solution. Ugo will never let this happen here.

Act One - Scene Twelve (Cont.)

Armando: Ugo is only the director of this school. Now he is manipulated by Valdes. You'll see.....

Aurora: Remember what happened to Ohilda.

Maria: They picked on her because she was different and because they thought she acted strange. Do you remember how tall she was? They never proved any other thing.

Armando: And where did you see her last?

Maria: In a psychiatric ward.....

Aurora: Then?

Maria: It isn't going to happen to us. We are close to graduating. Ugo won't let them do it. We are "the future generation of artists of the Cuban Revolution". They can't touch us!

Armando and Aurora freeze in the background as the lights fade out. Maria turns to the interviewer and speaks to him.

Maria: One by one, they called all of our roommates to Valdes' office. So they could assist with any important information about us. You could see the fear in their faces. They knew they could be expelled from school if they didn't collaborate. Finally an officer of the Communist Youth came to interrogate Aurora, myself and another student for a closed door trial. The year 1964 was ending, and the witch hunt of homosexuals had started.

Act One - Scene Thirteen

Lights fade in on the upstage platform. Valdes', the President of the Communist Youth, and Ugo, the Director of the School of Theatre are sitting behind a long table. Hortensia, a witness, is sitting in front of the table facing the audience on the downstairs area. Aurora, Maria and Cecilia sit facing the audience.

President: (To Hortensia) Compañera, have you seen any thing out of the ordinary in the dormitory occupied by the three students under investigation.

Hortensia: Well, I couldn't say I have witnessed anything physically or verbally peculiar among the three accused.

President: Las compañeras are not being accused of anything. They are under investigation.

Hortensia: That's right, compañero, I didn't witness anything physically or verbally peculiar among the three compañeras under investigation.

President: Are you sure? You seem puzzled. Do you want to add anything else to your testimony?

Hortensia: Well, there were certain things going on in that dormitory between those two....(Points at Maria and Aurora)

President: What do you mean by certain things? What can you say to clarify the matter?

Hortensia: I can't tell you exactly compañero, but the way they looked at each other, something in the atmosphere of that place when they were not talking, but you knew they were thinking.

Act One - Scene Thirteen (Cont.)

Maria: (To the President) I didn't know la compañera was a mind reader.

President: Don't get upset. You'll clarify your situation when questioned.

Hortensia: Oh, now I remember something very specific Maria told me happened to her a long time ago.

President: How long ago?

Hortensia: Five years ago.

Maria: Five years ago!

President: Compañera, por favor!

Maria: (Lowering her head) I'm sorry.

Hortensia: Maria told me that about five years ago she was attracted to another girl that we both knew. I told her I didn't like that kind of talk and asked her not to tell me those stories anymore.

Maria: That's a lie! (To the President) Compañero, do you realize that five years ago I was only twelve years old?

President: That's enough! (To Hortensia) You may leave now.

(To Hortensia at the door) Tell la compañera Martinez that she may come in.

A very young girl enters the upstage platform and sits on the chair formally occupied by Hortensia. From this point on the President speaks using gibberish. In some moments he will remain silent and simply make small gestures with his hands or will nod his head. During Maria's monologue Aurora and Cecilia will always answer: "No, it isn't true", or simply "Yes" or "No" to all questions asked by the President.

Act One - Scene Thirteen (Cont.)

Maria: (To the interviewer) The trial lasted for two days. I started very well, but after a while I couldn't lift my head. I was very frightened. The fact is that we were lesbians, but they couldn't prove it. The truth is that we didn't do anything sexual at School. My relationship with Aurora was more of a platonic nature. It was a trial out of a Kafka story: An investigation is opened (imitates the President's voice) "Because we have to investigate, because we have to cut sickness at it's root." Aurora and I were found innocent. We were "cleared" thanks to Ugo, but Cecilia was found guilty and expelled from school. There is always a scapegoat. I knew the relief was momentary. Valdes wasn't satisfied with the verdict and three months later, letters were sent out to our parents requesting their presence so they could pick us up. Out of the eighteen students up for graduation, twelve were expelled. I was among the chosen ones. I didn't wait for my mother. I packed my belongings and disappeared for a week. When my mother finally found me, I was in such a state, she couldn't even scold me. (Lights fade out on the upstage platform. Cecilia and Aurora leave the downstage area carrying suitcases). Since I was blacklisted I wasn't allowed to hold a job, or even less to work in any state theatre. A group of people - intellectuals, friends, some of the expelled students -

Act One - Scene Thirteen (Cont.)

Maria: raised money so I could direct a play on my own - an unthinkable project in Cuba. The play curiously enough dealt with the lives of Adam and Eve after being expelled from paradise. The setting was Cuba at the beginning of the century.

Act One - Scene Fourteen

Two actors on the upstage platform close a translucent curtain which divide the platform in two. The actors playing appear with their backs to the audience. They are playing for an imaginary audience upstage. The President of the Communist Youth enters the downstage area and approaches Maria who is arranging the tickets in the box office.

Maria: It is you again.

President: Yes, compañera, it is me again.

Maria: If you want tickets, this performance is sold out.

President: I'm not interested in buying tickets. (Looks around)
May I speak with you in the office?

Maria: Of course you can.

Maria and the President of the Communist Youth walk from stage center to stage right. Milton, a very young boy, is typing some envelopes.

Milton: (Looking suspiciously at the President of the Communist Youth) Would you like me to leave?

Maria: No, please stay. El Señor Machado is the President of the Communist Youth in Havana.

Milton: (Coldly) I know.

Act One - Scene Fourteen (Cont.)

- President: I don't think I have to repeat the reasons why you were expelled from the School of Theatre, but my being here has to do with it.
- Maria: I know I am not allowed to work for any State Theatre, but this is an independent production with independent funds.
- Milton: Everything has been done legally. Very respected artists have donated their time and money for this production and
- President: We know exactly where all the money came from. We also know that everyone involved in this production was expelled from The School of Theatre, and that each and every one is also a homosexual. Which means that this play should close at once. Is that clear?
- Maria: Is it? Even if what you are saying, is true, what does it have to do with the play having to close or not?
- President: Compañera, the Revolution is trying to purify the arts from immoral and unnecessary aberrations. You and your kind have a distorted view of life that shouldn't be presented before the masses.
- Maria: Have you seen the play?
- Milton: That's right! How can you judge something you haven't seen?
- President: Compañeros, I came here to accomplish my mission. My mission is to inform you that this play is having its last performance this afternoon!

Act One - Scene Fourteen (Cont.)

Maria: But.....

President: You know we are doing this for the benefit of our people. You know our ideals are pure; we are trying to do our best to satisfy the necessities of our country. You know that.....

At this point the President begins to speak gibberish and eventually he and Milton will freeze as Maria walks stage center and places a sign reading "This Play Has Been Cancelled" on top of the box office counter.

Maria: (To the interviewer) There was no coherence in anything that he was saying. It was a repetitious language, so repetitious that it didn't make any difference if one tried to interfere. I think unconsciously we did the play to defy the authorities. The play had to do with Cain - a true revolutionary - and his encounter with authority, in this case Adam, and furthermore, with the Lord. Since we were under a strict censorship, the plot could be interpreted as having a second and very political meaning. The Lord could be Fidel, and Cain, a dissident. Now, I also realize that this play was the first Gay production to be done in Cuba. We did it to demonstrate that in spite of everything we could survive. The play closed that afternoon, never to open again. Since I had already tried suicide, exile was the next best thing, so in 1966 I left for the U.S.

Act One - Scene Fifteen

Lights gradually fade out on the upstage platform. Suddenly a spot lights the same area on a woman standing right in the center of the platform. She is Maria's mother. Maria is still standing on the downstage area but now she is standing next to a suitcase. Her face is lit by an afternoon sun-like light.

Cristina: Are you sure you have everything?

Maria: We are allowed to take out three dresses, one pair of shoes, one pair of panties, one bra and no money. How could I miss anything?

Cristina: Mi'ja, you leave because you want to. You are welcome to stay.

Maria: I think it's best for everybody if I leave.

Cristina: It's your decision, hija. (Pause) Maria, I have the feeling we are not going to see each other again.

Maria: Of course we will. You can always come and visit me, you know.

Cristina: You know we are not going to see each other again.

Maria: How can you say that? I've got to go. (Cristina and Maria embrace each other)

Maria: I hate saying good-bye. I'll see you again. (She picks the suitcase up and starts walking towards the audience. Lights fade out on Maria's mother. Maria now speaks to the interviewer) Of course I knew I wasn't going to see her again.

Act One - Scene Fifteen (Cont.)

Maria (sings):

CAN'T BEAR GOOD-BYES

Let's bury sweet memories
Deep down in the dark
Forget all your fantasies
They're crushed in the past

Why think about Ugo
or Milton

Forget about Aurora
Let's erase the past
Let's erase the past

Can't bear good-byes
Can't face farewells
Let's fight against feelings
Let's forget the past

Can't bear good-byes
Can't face farewells
Let's forget the past

Let's bring down the curtain
There is nothing behind
Your mother and sister
Assylum, the blind

Be strong and carry your torch high
And burn your bridges behind
Let's think of tomorrow
Let's forget the past

Act One - Scene Fifteen (Cont.)

Maria (Sings):

Can't bear good-byes
Can't face farewells
Let's fight against feelings
Let's forget the past

Can't bear good-byes
Can't face farewells
Let's forget the past

Can't bear good-byes
Can't face farewells
Let's fight against feelings
Let's forget the past

Can't bear good-byes
Can't face farewells
Let's forget the past

Act One - Scene Sixteen

Lights fade in on the downstairs area. Maria speaks to the interviewer.

Maria: When I arrived at the airport in Miami, I went through customs, then they took my pictures and finger prints. At the moment it bothered me. I guess they wanted to make sure that I was not a fugitive or an infiltrated Communist. When I left the airport, one of the first things I did was visit a supermarket. Then I realized I was in a foreign country. I saw so many things, all different, all wrapped in beautiful packages. They were things I had never seen in my life. A supermarket so crowded of beautiful things. Now I hate them!

Antonio: (To the interviewer) I was impressed with the cleanliness of Florida. But when I arrived in New York, I couldn't get over the billboards; it had been so long that I had not seen anything else but political billboards. To see the lights again.....I don't know if it was that I felt happy or it was true that there was happiness around me. But damn, it felt great!

Domingo: (To the interviewer) I was a political prisoner and arrived in Florida last September. I had to stay in the basement of Tropical Park because of security reasons. You have to wait there until someone comes and gets you out. The Cubans who run the place, which by the way had the atmosphere of a flea market, were wonderful. They gave me pastel colored cupcakes,

Act One - Scene Sixteen (Cont.)

Domingo: sandwiches, tea, Coca-Cola, and old clothes. Some people filled their shopping bags in a desperate manner. They didn't feel any shame. When I passed clearance I had to leave through a ramp. The police had barricaded the stadium. When they called your name, the audience clapped and sang the Cuban National Anthem. A lot of photographers and reporters were waiting to interview you, microphones, tape recorders, flash lights, madness! It was hysterical and utterly mad! I felt like leaving the United States in a rocket and perhaps land in a healthier planet, like Mars. It was incredible. Cubans capitalizing on the Cuban thing. It must be such a big business, that Rescue Committee.....(To the interviewer) Do you know what I found in my shopping bag? (Pause) One package of band-aids, five aerosol shaving cream cans and one package of Kleenex.

Dulce: (To the interviewer) Nineteen years. Would you believe it? I have been in New York nineteen years. I arrived in this city with \$50 in my purse. And we were three. My husband Perico, my son Danielito and I. The hotel room cost \$16 a day. It hasn't been easy. My son Danielito is a concert pianist. The poor thing had to work as a dishwasher. His fingers were so stiff that he could hardly play the piano. I had to go and work in a factory. You see, I was a housewife in Cuba, and I never had to work. My husband was the one that didn't

Act One - Scene Sixteen (Cont.)

Dulce: have to struggle. He was always very handy, and he became a plumber. But now I am retired, my son is recording his first album, and my husband does a little work here and there. We are doing alright, but nineteen years is a long time

Man #1: (On the upstage platform) After nineteen years Fidel Castro announces that Cuban refugees are allowed to return to the island.

Woman #1: (On the downstairs platform) It's absolutely forbidden to call Cuban refugees worms - gusanos. Now, we are called butterflies - mariposas.

Man #1: (On the downstairs platform) It's amazing how money changes the aspect of things.

Actors on the upstage and downstage areas embrace imaginary characters.

Men and Women: (Downstage area) We are going back!

Men and Women: (Upstairs area) They are coming back!

SWALLOWS

Men and Women:
(Together sing)

Reprise.

Lights fade out.

ACT TWO

Act Two - Scene One

Lights fade in on the downstage area. A huge pink tulip is situated upstage center. The tulip opens. The petals slowly fall to the floor and right in the center there is a young girl wearing a birthday party outfit. This outfit is the typical one with the hoop skirt, all lace and embroidery. She is wearing gloves and of course, has a tiara on her head. She graciously steps out of the tulip and slowly walks stage center. She smiles mechanically. The background music is "Over the Waves". At a certain point she will dance with her father and then with a young man. Her mother is sitting stage right, writing a letter. Her aunt on the upstage platform is also sitting, but stage left, and is reading a letter.

Mother: Let me go over this letter, Union City, October 17, 1979.
Dearest sister. I want to share with you one of the greatest and proudest moments of my life. We celebrated Ivette's fifteen years old party last Saturday. Do you remember when you carried her to the airport? It seems like yesterday. I bet you haven't forgotten her tantrums. Que perretas, mi hermana. Well, we decided to give her this party, and you know that when Servando does something, he does it all the way. You know he is doing very well with his catering service. Thank God, money is no problem, you know.....

Father: The officer at the bank couldn't believe it. A seven thousand dollar loan for a fucking birthday party.....

Aunt: To give you a better idea of the magnitude of the event, let me repeat the words as described by El Habanero

Act Two - Scene One (Cont.)

Aunt: Ausente, our local newspaper: "A Saturday to remember at the Antillano Club. Very seldom has Union City witnessed a birthday party like the one offered by Servando Machin and his lovely wife Onelia in honor of their beautiful daughter Ivette. Ivette who reached the most awaited age of her life, fifteen years, or better said, fifteen springs, looked radiant as she stepped out of a gigantic tulip.....(To her husband also on the upstage platform) Dionisio, she stepped out of a tulip!

Uncle: What?

Aunt: "and graciously greeted the fourteen beautiful young ladies with their respective escorts. The young ladies threw pink gladiolas at Ivette's feet. The gladiolas were crushed by her majesty as she passed among the young men who were wearing tails and would tip their top hats as she hurried to her father's arm....."

Father: \$75 worth of gladiolas, all crushed.....

Father and daughter begin to dance.

Aunt: "It was a truly emotional moment, when the proud father began to dance the first waltz with his darling Ivette. The band of Nestor Sepulveda played "Over the Waves" until Ivette was ready to dance with her fiancée, Amadeo Rodriguez, un correcto caballero of the best society of Hoboken. At that point the fourteen couples covered Ivette and in just a few seconds she reappeared fully dressed as an odalisque....(To her husband) Dionisio

Act Two - Scene One (Cont.)

Aunt: she is now dressed as an odalisque!

Uncle: What?

Aunt: "The orchestra then quickly changed the mood to the exotic music of "In a Persian Market" and Ivette skillfully proceeded to dance an oriental piece choreographed by Machito Diaz, the choreographer of the stars. All in cue, the fourteen couples burned jasmine incense. A magic moment out of the Arabian Nights.

Father: \$50 worth of incense.....\$50.

Aunt: "The dance appropriately ended with Ivette at Amadeo's feet. Amadeo in a gallant gesture, as the gentleman he is, quickly helped Ivette to her feet and romantically danced el danzon "Almendra". A moment of Cuban nostalgia.. .." (To her husband) Ay! Dionisio, they danced "Almendra".

Dionisio: Dressed as an odalisque?

Aunt: "After this marvelous moment, the guests moved to the dining room where a typical Cuban dinner from Servando's Catering Service - Mr. Machin's enterprise, was served. The birthday cake, in pink and white, was another masterpiece by Valencia Bakery. Fourteen swans holding the four tiers of the cake and on top a single swan on which a little doll, an exact replica of Ivette, was sitting. When Ivette posed for the pictures, real water sprinkled from the tiny fountains in the bottom of the cake. Excerpts from the Swan Lake were played through the quad-

Act Two - Scene One (Cont.)

Aunt: rophonic system. It was certainly an evening of enchantment." Dionisio, they played Swan Lake through the quadrophonic system.

Dionisio: No kidding. Write your sister to send multivitamins. Lights slowly fade out as the mother folds the letter and the girl returns inside the pink tulip.

Act Two - Scene Two

Lights fade in on the downstage platform. A middle aged man, about fifty, comes in and sits on a chair. He is drinking a glass of beer.

(To the interviewer)

Antonio: I am sorry I couldn't make it Monday. To tell you the truth, I wasn't sure I was going to make it tonight either.....When you mentioned that you were going to use the tape recorder and you were taking movies..... You see, you never know. I trust you, but one never knows. I really don't care about myself, but I still have family and friends over there.....Anyway, I don't want you to use the tape recorder, and no way I'm going to let you take any movies either.....Do you mind? (Smiles at the interviewer) What do you really want to know? I am afraid my story is not very different from any other exile. Let me see, now that I try to think of any specific story nothing comes to mind. Oh, well you already know a little bit about my background. I am a poet. My work was established before

Act One - Scene Two (Cont.)

Antonio: the triumph of the Revolution. I won several national prizes in the 1960's but suddenly my work came to a halt. I couldn't write anymore. I wasn't producing.... Oh, now I remember something that may be of interest to you. It happened in 1972. It was the second of November. I remember because it was a religious holiday. Well, anyway, I used to live in Miramar in this small apartment house. There were only five apartments in the whole building. Well, about three o'clock in the morning I was in bed with this very young militia man who used to visit me once in a while. (A young man in the background undressed and places a pillow, a robe and a sheet on the floor. He then proceeds to get in bed and cover himself. Antonio also undressed and gets into bed next to the young man). We were both fast asleep when someone knocked at the front door. (One of the actors on the platform knocks on the floor. Behind him there is another man. They both look extremely suspicious. One of them knocks on the door again). I got up and went on all fours trying to look under the door. I could see the silhouette of two men standing in front of my door. I knew that something was wrong, but I didn't want to open the door. You see, first of all I didn't have any right to have anybody sleeping over without

Act One - Scene Two (Cont.)

Antonio: permission from el Comite de Defensa, and on top of that, how could I convince anyone that a very young militia man was visiting me at 3:00 o'clock in the morning? I waited and didn't open the door hoping my friend wouldn't wake up, and whoever it was at the door would leave. They did leave, but I had the feeling I was still being watched. I didn't go back to bed, and at 6:30 a.m. I looked through the venetian blinds and saw two men sitting in a black car, looking up at my apartment. (Antonio goes to his friend who is still sleeping and tries to wake him up).

Antonio: Juancho, Juancho! Get up!

Juancho: What is it?

Antonio: Juancho, get dressed as fast as you can and leave. I think there are two G-2 agents in front of my building, and they are watching my apartment.

Juancho: You are always imagining things.

Antonio: Get up and look outside. Just across the street.

Juancho: (Gets up and carefully lifts two slots of the venetian blinds) Coño, I think you are right. Don't worry. How do you know they are watching you?

Antonio: I tell you I know. Two men knocked at my door at 3:00 o'clock this morning. Get dressed and leave.

Juancho: (As he gets dressed) You are probably right. Do you think they know I am here? Man, you know, I belong to the Communist Youth.

Act Two - Scene Two (Cont.)

Antonio: Big deal.....Leave right away and pretend that you live here and you are going to work. Try not to be obvious.

Juancho: (As he stands in front of the door) Would you mind if I don't see you for a while?

Antonio: No, I understand. Good luck.

Exits Juancho.

The two actors on the upstage platform stand in front of an imaginary door and knock. Antonio who is still wearing the bathrobe opens the door.

Agent #1: Your name?

Antonio: Antonio Valdes.

Agent #2: Don't worry, this is a routine matter.

Antonio: A routine matter? What have I done?

Agent #1: (As he puts the cuffs on Antonio) We will let you know when the time comes. (Snaps his fingers at the other agent) We have an order to search your apartment. (To agent #2) Go and get the president of the Defense Committee.

Antonio: (Trying to fix his robe which is open) Could I get dressed? I don't want to embarrass la compañera of the Committee.

Agent #1: (As the Agent #2 leaves) No, don't worry. Stay like that so la compañera can see the way you dress when you are alone.

Enters Agent #2 with the President of the Defense Committee.

Act Two - Scene Two (Cont.)

President: (looking at Antonio) (To the Agent #1) Could you take the handcuffs off of him? El compañero is not going to escape. I know him, he is a real gentleman. Everybody in the building likes him.....

Agent #1 (To Agent #2) Take the cuffs off him.

Agent #2 takes the cuffs off Antonio and then proceeds to search through drawers, books, and behind pictures.

Antonio: (As Agent #1 joins Agent #2 in the search) But how do you dare? Whose orders are you carrying out?

Agent #1: Will you sit down and let us do our work?

Agent #2: (Looking at a check stub) Look, compañero. This little queer makes \$400 a month. Boy, just for writing nursery rhymes.

Agent #1: (Looking at the check stub) No kidding. Este cabrón de mierda makes \$400 a month and we have to bust our balls for \$160. And he still complains. (He searches through the books and examines them carefully. He then reads the titles). Prometheus Bound, Prometheus Unbound, Walt Whitman, Artaud and the Theatre of Cruelty....He must be a sadist....Aha. This is good evidence. Pornographic material.

Antonio: Compañero, Rubens was a respected artist before pornography became popular.

Agent #1: You'll say that in your trial.

Antonio: My trial? But I haven't done anything.....(Everyone on the upstage platform freezes).

Antonio turns to the interviewer and continues his story.

Antonio: They took me to the G-2 offices. The offices were

Act Two - Scene Two (Cont.)

Antonio: located at Villa Marista, the former Maristas Brothers residence. It was there where the pre-trial investigations were conducted. I must say they never used physical violence. I will try to describe one of the several investigations I went through before they decided I was ready for my trial.

Act Two - Scene Three

Two actors on the upstairs platform, sit on two chairs and act as the investigator and his assistant. (Lights are very bright).

Investigator: Would you take a seat please? (Antonio sits. There is a long pause) Do you know why you were brought up here?

Antonio: I don't have the slightest idea.

Investigator: Do you know Hector Martinez?

Antonio: Yes, I do.

Investigator: So you know Hector, and you still maintain that you don't know why you were brought up here.

Antonio: One thing does not necessarily have to do with the other.

Investigator: You know that we know everything, don't you?

Antonio: Would you please tell me what you know, and then I will tell you if we both know the same thing.

Investigator: Do you know that Hector is in prison?

Antonio: No, I don't

Investigator: So, he is a very good friend of yours and you don't know he is in prison.

Act Two - Scene Three (Cont.)

- Antonio: I said I knew him. He is a very promising young writer. I didn't say he is a very good friend of mine.
- Investigator: Do you know why he is in prison?
- Antonio: I said that I didn't know he was in prison.
- Investigator: Hector said that you collaborated with him on the publication of a clandestine newspaper.
- Antonio: He probably said that, but the fact is that I didn't.
- Investigator: Don't get upset. Relax. It will be much better if you cooperate.
- Antonio: How can I cooperate if I don't know anything.
- Investigator: Compañero, let's quit playing games. We searched Hector's apartment and we found subversive material. You and your intellectual friends are suspected to be collaborators.
- Antonio: Me? A collaborator. It is absurd!
- Investigator: Are you sure compañero? Hector maintains that you collaborated for the newspaper under the name of Prometheus. We found these books in your house. Do you recognize them? Prometheus Bound and Prometheus Unbound.....Isn't that a coincidence?
- Antonio: Those are reference books. I'm a poet. Sometimes I need to clarify the images. You know how confusing Greek Mythology is.....
- Investigator: Compañero, I'm not an expert in Greek Mythology, and I don't belong to your literary circles, but I know

Act Three - Scene Three (Cont.)

Investigator: that Prometheus was chained to a rock on the orders of Zeus, the King of the Gods. Isn't that odd that you chose that name to disguise your counterrevolutionary activities.

Antonio: Counterrevolutionary?

The investigator and his assistant freeze upstairs as Antonio speaks to the interviewer.

Antonio: They could never prove that I was a collaborator on the newspaper. I was interrogated three times daily for thirty-seven days until I admitted I was a homosexual.

Act Two - Scene Four

Lights fade in on the investigator and his assistant. Lights are very bright on the area where Antonio is sitting.

Investigator: Do you recognize this book?

Antonio: Yes. It's mine.

Investigator: Do you enjoy reading Walt Whitman?

Antonio: Yes, very much.

Investigator: I know. You even underlined some passages of his poems. Let me quote them to you. (Reads the poem). "Smile, for your lover comes. Prodigal, you have given me love - therefore I to you give love! O unspeakable passionate love." Unspeakable?....

Antonio: Is Walt Whitman also under investigation?

Investigator: You are very sarcastic. Is Carlos Uria your lover?

Antonio: No, he is not.

Act Two - Scene Four (Cont.)

- Investigator: We found that poem in one of the love letters you wrote to him.
- Antonio: How could I write him any letters if we saw each other every day.
- Investigator: You saw each other every day. Hummmmmmm.....That's very peculiar.
- Antonio: You and your assistant are together every time we have met in this office, and I never found it peculiar.
- Investigator: You are insolent! You know that your lover and your brother are locked in another room in this house. Do you want to compromise them with your silence? You wouldn't want that, would you?
- Antonio: No, I wouldn't want to harm them.
- Investigator: (To his assistant) Show him the list. (The assistant shows Antonio a long list of names) Your lover's name is on that list. Is he a homosexual or a counterrevolutionary?
- Antonio: Neither one.
- Investigator: Supposing that you are saying the truth, and you aren't, is there anyone else on that list who is a homosexual or a counterrevolutionary?
- Antonio: (As he reads the names on the list) No, I don't think so.
- Investigator: You are a homosexual, aren't you?
- Antonio: Yes.

Act Two - Scene Four (Cont.)

Investigator: How come you are a homosexual, and you are not able to recognize your own kind.

Antonio: My own kind doesn't come with labels, and they are so frightened by people of your kind that they wouldn't dare to identify themselves.

Investigator: Get up! (To the assistant) Take him away! You know where.....

Antonio: Where are you taking me?

Investigator: Since you are not cooperating you are going to be executed.

Antonio: Executed?

Investigator: (Smiling) Sit down again. I was just teasing you.....Is Carlos your lover?

Antonio: I told you that he wasn't my lover. I'm a homosexual. He isn't. You see, I was always in love with him, and I told him, but he rejected me because he is straight. I'm the one, he isn't, he isn't!

The investigator and his assistant freeze. The lights on the platform slowly fades out. Antonio speaks to the interviewer again.

Antonio: I was condemned to one year in La Cabaña prison. I never betrayed any of the people who were black-listed. Many of them went to prison anyway. Perhaps I didn't speak, but someone else did. Carlos, who had been my lover for many years, but at the time of my trial wasn't, was also condemned to prison.

Act Two - Scene Four (Cont.)

Antonio: I was accused of being a degenerate and a pervert in front of my mother who was 84 years old. My sisters had to take her away from the trial..... You know, she didn't know I was a homosexual. Parents never know or pretend not to know. Many lies were said in that trial, including that I used to pay black men to satisfy my abnormal sexual appetite, and it wasn't true. And they said that in front of my family, and it wasn't true.....

Lights fade out at the end of his monologue.

Act Two - Scene Five

A woman in her forties carrying a suitcase, a hand bag, her purse, a movie camera, a photographic camera, an umbrella and a huge plastic doll is standing stage center in the downstage area. She is wearing a man's hat decorated with several scarfs. The scarfs are held with various pins. She wears three skirts, a man's jacket, two blouses, and underneath; a man's jeans, men and women's underwear, and a bathing suit. She is also wearing cowboy boots and underneath them women's shoes. She carries a pound of Bustelo coffee in each cup of her bra.

Flora: When they told me at the travel agency that I could only bring forty-four pounds of luggage and eleven pounds in a hand bag, I said to myself; "they must be kidding." I have my mother and father, four sisters, two brothers, six aunts, two uncles, seven nephews and eight nieces. Now, how can you bring

Act Two - Scene Five (Cont.)

Flora: presents to my whole family and not go over fifty-five pounds? But Cuban women have a way of getting around things, so I'll tell you how I did it. Hit it!

In the following song and dance number, Flora will take off all of her garments and paraphernalia and give it to the three actors on the downstage area. The actors on the upstage platform will react as they are receiving the presents. Flora sits on the suitcase and places the umbrella, the plastic doll, the hand bag, the purse and the cameras on the floor.

Flora: (sings) WHAT A JOY! I'M TRAVELLING!
 You first act very naturally
 Wearing cowboy boots
 No one knows underneath
 You've got high heel shoes

 Ain't my hat very feminine?
 Do you like my scarfs?
 For my cousins and nieces
 I'll give afterwards

 Crazy pins for my sisters
 And a hat for my dad
 What a joy! I'm travelling!
 I could bump and grind

 Disguising a man's jacket
 With a silver pin
 What about the two blouses?
 No one knows I'm thin

Act Two - Scene Five (Cont.) .

Flora: (sings) Do you like my skirt?
 Got two underneath
 When I feel athletic
 I wear a T-shirt

 I'm all for sports
 Wearing my jockey shorts
 What a joy! I'm travelling
 I could bump and grind

 If you like Latin coffee
 Got two pounds in my cups
 I will brew my Bustelo
 For my folks to drink up

 Please don't look, I'm wearing panties
 Over men's blue jeans
 What a joy! I'm travelling!
 I could bump like a queen

 Now I'm down to the basics
 In my bathing suit
 What a joy! I'm travelling!
 Going back to my roots
 What a joy! I'm travelling!
 Going back to my roots.
 What a joy! I'm travelling!
 Going back to my roots.

Lights fade out.

Act Two - Scene Six

A man wearing a black ski mask, black pants and a black turtle-neck sweater is lying on the floor and installing a time bomb in a suitcase. The open suitcase is held by two actors who are standing up on either side of the one on the floor. The ticking of the time bomb is heard through the loud speakers. Lights fade out on the terrorists. The stage is in complete darkness. The ticking of the bomb increases gradually. We can now hear the sound of a jet plane, then a small explosion and the voice of the pilot trying to communicate with the airport. A huge explosion in the dark and a sudden burst of red light floods the entire stage. Lights fade in on a tall woman in her late fifties who looks incredibly young for her years. She is standing on the upstage platform and carries a shopping bag full of groceries. She listens attentively to the interviewer and then speaks.

Lucia: Well, I really didn't expect to be questioned about this, so, I'm not really prepared. Let me get rid of the groceries. (To her daughter) Ana! (Her daughter who is blind enters stage left. Lucia places the shopping bag carefully on her daughter's arms) Would you put away the groceries? (To the interviewer) I understand about the tape recorder... But I hope you don't use it. One is not completely spontaneous when one knows one is being recorded. First of all, I want to make one thing clear: Our family was revolutionary, is revolutionary and will

Act Two - Scene Six (Cont.)

Lucia: be revolutionary. My husband's tragic death has not weakened my feelings about the Revolution. In fact, after his death I gathered all my strength and asked to be sent on a mission to any place they considered necessary. They didn't call me because at my age probably I wasn't very useful outside of this country. You see, in the beginning, when I first heard the news, there was a feeling of disbelief, then pain and finally rage. But then I realized that nothing would stop the course of the Revolution. One act of terrorism, or perhaps twenty, are needed to make us stronger and to show the world our integrity and strength. As Che said during the Vietnam era: "One Vietnam, two Vietnams, many Vietnams." You see, you have to love this Revolution and to love it you have to understand it. (Pause. Looks at the interviewer). I've never been asked that question. (Pause) I guess the first question I would ask a terrorist would be, (Pause) I don't know....."Are you an animal?" No, an animal has instinct and would not kill unless he is threatened or....."Do you have any feelings? Are you conscious of your deed? You have sold your soul.....I know you must have been paid to do your job....." A mercenary. Everything had to be planned, step by step. The time, when the plane was taking off, the area, the passengers, the crew, the athletes in the fencing team, the ages. A beast. How can one make a

Act Two - Scene Six (Cont.)

Lucia: beast understand. (Pause) I tried to rationalize everything. I went over all the details. How did they spend the last minutes before the explosion? How did it happen? Did they die in the sea? Did they suffer before dying? Did they ask for help? I imagined my husband in the first seat next to the cabin, the cabin door open. He would be coming in and out. You see, the crew knew him. He was a soldier, my companion of thirty-five years. If a terrorist only knew that the brutal way in which he hit everyone in that plane also hit each and every one of the members of their families. My husband and I talked about it many times. One is a soldier; a soldier is needed, and he must render his services. He risks his life in every mission, and he knows it. It was so easy to talk about it, but when one faces reality, it's a different story. I remember I came back from work and didn't see his luggage in the living room, the way he used to leave it every time he returned home from a trip. I really didn't think too much about it, but I called the airport to see if the plane was delayed. El compañero in information couldn't give me a straight answer. I then called my friend Susana who is married to a pilot. I asked her if she knew why the plane had been delayed so long.

Act Two - Scene Six (Cont.)

- Lucia: Then she started sobbing in an uncontrollable manner and told me: "How is it possible that you don't know. Everybody knows by now. Your husband was in that plane!" I just hung up. Never uttered a word. (She holds her head in her hands) How is it possible? It isn't true. It can't be.....Later on the compañeros started arriving at the house. The front door was open for nine days. I don't remember the faces, or the friends who called me over the phone. My son who had left the country in the sixties called twice. I had told my relatives that I didn't want to speak to anyone, to say that I wasn't home, that I had left the country, anything! But the third time I heard the phone ring. (A phone rings. She picks an imaginary phone up. Her son on the downstage area picks another imaginary telephone up.)
- Mario: Mother, I've been calling for hours. (Pause) Are you there? (Pause) Are you alright?
- Lucia: Yes. (Pause) How did you hear about it?
- Mario: I was getting ready to go to work. I heard it over the radio. The announcer was reading the list and I heard papa's name.....(Pause) Is there any hope that he could be alive? Can you hear me?
- Lucia: Yes, I can hear you.
- Mario: Would you mind if I come back to visit you for a few days?

Act Two - Scene Six (Cont.)

Lucia: Son, how can you ask that?

Mario: I don't know. Papa and you were so upset when I left.

Lucia: Mario, you are my son, and this is your house. Remember, the door will always be open.

Mario: Could I call uncle Luis so he can get me a visa?

Lucia: He will be glad to help you. How soon can you come?

Mario: Very soon mother. Sooner than you think.

They both hang up.

Lucia: He never came. Last time he called me, about six months ago, he told me he was willing to meet me in Spain. But I didn't want to go there. He was the one who left, I stayed here. He will have to be the one to come back to his sister, to his mother, to his land. At the time I spoke to my son, I was afraid he would discover resentment in my voice. At the time I believed that everyone in exile had contributed in one form or another to a system which had paid for my husband's execution. And my son was part of that exile, so he also was responsible. They were all guilty not only of my husband's death, but of every one in that plane. Time heals the wounds, but one never forgets. I hope my son will come back and visit us. I know he is afraid that someone in the family is going to reject him because he lives in the United States. He doesn't understand that he is part of our family, and that to us he is as important as the Revolution. You see, if I

Act Two - Scene Six (Cont.)

Lucia: had lost my husband before the Revolution, I don't think I could have taken it. The Revolution has made us braver and tougher. We must move on.

Lights fade out.

Act Two - Scene Seven

Spotlight on Domingo. He speaks to the interviewer.

Domingo: I was a political prisoner, but my case is so unimportant that I almost feel embarrassed talking about it. Perhaps you should have gone to Miami to interview people with more spectacular cases..... In 1969, I was sentenced to seven years in prison because I was caught distributing subversive propaganda. It was a one-man operation. Not even my wife knew about it. I distributed the pamphlets myself, in various places - movie houses, cafeterias, public toilets, parks, and under people's doors. I always waited for the right moment, when no one was in sight. I felt a mixture of excitement and guilt when I took more and more chances. After all, a married man in his thirties, the father of two kids, shouldn't be involved in what I was doing. But still, I felt and I still do that I was doing the right thing; what I had to do. In July, 1969, I was caught in a restaurant. I was leaving the package in the men's room, when one of the employees went in and saw me. He went out and

Act Two - Scene Seven (Cont.)

Domingo: reported me to the police. Two men were waiting for me when I got out. I didn't deny anything because I knew they were going to search my house, and I had more pamphlets hidden in my house. They took me to the police car and then to the station and afterwards they called State Security and brought me to Villa Marista, the G-2 headquarters. After being interrogated for twenty-four days, I was transferred to the Principe Prison in the political prisoners section. My interrogations and the trial were very simple because from the very beginning I declared myself guilty, and I programmed myself to repeat the same answers. I preferred to pass as a person without strong political convictions. The pamphlets I delivered were a direct attack against Fidel, saying that he was just another dictator of America, who had used the Communist ideology to perpetuate himself in power, that he had brought the country to a political chaos, and so forth. I didn't want to start with them a political philosophical discussion, the dialectic materialism of Communism. Do you understand? I knew I was in their hands, and when the questioning was over I had to go to prison where they were to sentence me. I was sentenced to nine years - they always ask for more, and then they reduce the amount. I wasn't surprised; it was what I expected. Then I was transferred to a camp in Pinar del Rio. We had to get up very early

Act Two - Scene Seven (Cont.)

Domingo: about four a.m. and one had to cut sugar cane until eight o'clock at night. You can't imagine what it is like to cut burnt sugar cane. It's really hell! Cold as ice in the mornings, but hot as a furnace in the afternoon. After a while, you can't open or close your hands. That's when I tried to escape. I was on the loose for four days. I had hidden my clothes and some money in a nearby place. I took off my inmate's uniform and put on my regular clothes. When I reached the road I took a bus which left me in the bus terminal and from there I took another bus to Havana. I spent four days looking for a life boat so I could escape to Miami and join my wife and children who had already left Cuba. One afternoon I was waiting for the traffic light to change so I could cross the street, and I don't know where they came from, but it was like magic. I disappeared! They pushed me into a car and took me back to Villa Marista, and then back to prison. They sentenced me to three years in prison, this time without a trial. Then I was transferred to a prison in Matanzas. I was sent to a punishment cell - inhuman conditions. A very tiny cell with some sort of a vent on the ceiling. Sores developed on my shoulders and hips from sleeping on the floor. I remember one evening when a very young inmate was brought in by a guard.

Lights fade in on the upstage platform. A young man about eighteen

Act Two - Scene Seven (Cont.)

is brought in by a guard. Domingo smiles at the young man but the man doesn't notice he is there.

Domingo: Were you transferred from another prison?

Miguel: No.

Domingo: Oh....(Pause) You don't mind if I ask you why were you brought here?

Miguel: I tried to escape.

Domingo: You too.....Did you get to the main road?

Miguel: No.

Domingo: (Seeing that Miguel does not volunteer any more information) Why were you trying to escape?

Miguel: My mother is ill.

Domingo: Is she terminally ill?

Miguel: No.

Domingo: Why did you try to escape?

Miguel: I wanted to be with her.

Domingo: Now it is going to be worse.....

Miguel: I know.

Domingo: (Trying to make conversation) This cell wasn't even big enough for one.....

Miguel: I don't really care.

Domingo: I'm sorry that you were caught.....

Miguel: I know. (Pause) You don't mind if I go to sleep?
I need some rest.

Domingo: You may use the concrete platform. Be my guest tonight.
It gives you the illusion that you are sleeping on a bed.

Act Two - Scene Seven (Cont.)

Miguel: (Looking up at the vent) I don't want to trouble you....

Domingo: Oh, no! The floor is good for my back.

Domingo lies down on the floor and Miguel lies down on the platform.

Domingo: What's your name?

Miguel: Miguel Rodriguez.

Domingo: Mine is Domingo Padron. Miguel do you know that I have a son that looks like you? (Pause) How old are you?

Miguel: Eighteen.

Domingo: My son is going to be eighteen.

Miguel: Is that so....

Domingo: Yes. (Pause) Good-night.

Miguel: Good-night.

Domingo falls asleep and Miguel cautiously gets up. He rips off both of the sleeves of his shirt. He proceeds to tie the sleeves together with a knot and then puts them through the bars of the vent. He then places the sleeves around his neck, makes a knot and jumps from the concrete platform, hanging himself. After a few seconds the sleeves give in and he falls on top of Domingo, already dead. Domingo wakes up and screams as he pushes the body away from him. (Domingo now talks to the interviewer)

Domingo: He fell on top of me, because there was no other place where he could have fallen. It happened in total darkness. I was covered with all the excrement, urine, semen, vomit, all of the impurities which come out of someone who has just hanged himself. I could feel how

Act Two - Scene Seven (Cont.)

Domingo: he became rigid on top of me. I screamed for about 20 minutes until the guard came in, looked at him and dragged him out to the hallway. (A guard comes in and drags the body away). I picked the piece of sleeve left hanging on the vent and from then on I used it as a pillow. You see, he was eighteen, he could have been my son.....After that incident I went on a hunger strike, and then I was transferred back to Havana, to La Cabana prison, and finally to el Combinado a more modern prison. When I got there someone gave me a cup of coffee. I collapsed and woke up in the hospital. They were feeding me intravenously. Then the dialogue between Cuba and the U.S. started, and newspaper men came to the prison. They brought the news that there was the possibility that political prisoners could be reunited with their families in the U.S.A. My name was one of the first ones on the list. I could see my family again! I have no hatred against anybody. It's not my nature, and I have been separated from my family so long that what I really care about is how much love I can give them now. But, you know what I haven't forgotten? The ones who were left behind, those who remained in prison, and especially Miguel. You know, that boy could have been my son.

Lights fade out.

Act Two - Scene Eight

Lights fade in on a young boy about sixteen who stands center on the upstage platform. He is waiting for a bus.

Young boy: (To the interviewer) You want to know about our economy?

(Smiles) You are not going to tape it are you? O.K.

I think we are going to get somewhere if we all push a little bit harder. When one knows that the government pays for everything, and you got a secure job, and every pay day you are going to collect your check.....I don't know, it just kind of destroys the spirit of emulation. We also need some sort of reward if we are asked to give so much. I would be nice to get better transportation, a few grocery stores, like the ones they have in America. Also, it would be nice if we could eliminate the rationing book, la libreta. Then we could buy some nice things to wear. You know, I don't mind the rationing of food, but not having nice clothes....Boy! Do you know what is the greatest aspiration of my life? (Pause) To own a Pitusa Lee. You don't know what a Pitusa Lee is? Well, in Cuba we call blue jeans "Pitusas". Don't ask me why. I guess many years ago they manufactured some jeans with that brand name. Now, if you have some relatives in the U.S.A. and they bring you a pair of Lee blue jeans, compadre, that gives you some status. You own a pair of Pitusas Lee. Do you understand? Unfortunately, I don't have any relatives in the U.S.A so I'm the only one in my group who doesn't wear a

Act Two - Scene Eight (Cont.)

Young boy: Pitusa Lee.

Young boy (Speaks):

PITUSA LEE

Oh dear Fidel

I'm young and naive

Perhaps my request

Sounds too weird to believe

Young boy (Sings):

We need more production

That's easy to see

Why not give the masses

Some Pitusas Lee

Chorus (Sings):

It's easy to see

It's easy to see

The masses are crying

For Pitusas Lee

Young boy (Sings):

I'll study Marxism

Ho Chi Minh, Galilee

But give all the youngsters

Some Pitusas Lee

Chorus (Sings):

But give all the youngsters

Some Pitusas Lee

Young boy (Sings):

Don't blame it on Carter

He wears dungarees

We still will be Cubans

With Pitusas Lee

Act Two - Scene Eight (Cont.)

Young boy (Sings):

Free trade with the North
Free trade with the East
We trust your good judgment
Bring Pitusas Lee

Chorus (Sings):

We trust your good judgment
Bring Pitusas Lee

Young boy (Sings):

Oh dear Fidel
The masses agree
We will be productive
With Pitusas Lee

Young boy and
Chorus (Sing):

We will be productive
With Pitusas Lee

Lights fade out.

Act Two - Scene Nine

Lights fade in on Man #1 on the downstage area.

Man #1: I had been away for sixteen years. I felt numb. Absolutely no feelings. I don't know, I guess I let my family do the reacting. They were so excited. I could see my family behind the glass window. My sister pointing out at my mother so I could look at her and wave to her in a friendly and loving manner. I did nothing. I guess I smiled. (Lights fade in on the actors on the upstage area). God! There is my father. How small people get when they get old! I finally went through customs and

Act Two - Scene Nine (Cont.)

Man #1: got out. No feelings still. Embracing, kissing, tender words and tears. Still, I had no feelings. "I bet you don't know this young man," my sister asked, and I didn't. He was my nephew. "I bet you don't remember me." I didn't. She was my cousin. My mother is bent from arthritis. I asked my sister if we could do something about her condition. My sister smiled and said, "It has been sixteen years, you know. One can not turn the clock back." I never thought about that. We got home. My relatives were all chattering. They sounded like a flock of birds. Chip, chip, chip. I was very exhausted and went to bed. I could hear my family in the kitchen. They were whispering. Lovely sounds for someone who has lived alone for sixteen years in New York. My mother is making coffee. Great aroma! There is a bush of wild flowers outside my window.....Ramillete de novia. The scent is unforgettable. All of a sudden I sense all the exuberance of the Cuban land. Now I understand what has been missing for sixteen years. I belong. God, I feel!

Lights fade out on the upstage platform and on Man #1 on the downstage area. Spotlight on Jose Ramon on the downstage area.

Jose Ramon: When I went back to Cuba I stayed in a hotel across from the Morro Castle. I woke up at six o'clock in the morning, got up, opened my windows and there it was. The Cuban flag, alone, waving on top of the Morro Castle. When my parents sent me to school in Miami, I always

Act Two - Scene Nine (Cont.)

Jose Ramon: saw the Cuban flag next to the American flag. I had never seen the Cuban flag alone in the United States. I became emotional and began to cry. Stupid, isn't it. But for the first time in my life I felt completely Cuban. I knew that over there no one was going to ask me "Where do you come from?" Anyway, if someone did ask me that question I would have answered: from Placetas, that's where I come from.

Lights fade out on Jose Ramon and fades in on Dulce, who is standing stage center on the downstage area.

Dulce: My grandfather died a year ago, and I had not been back since. After the initial shock of seeing my family again, I got up one morning and told my sisters to accompany me to the cemetery in our home town. We rented a 1959 Chevrolet, stopped in a flower shop for flowers and left for our journey. My home town seemed like the ghost towns in one of those American Westerns of the golden era of Hollywood. All my friends had gone. Friendly little houses, but no friends inside. Twice on my way to the cemetery, we met two old women who asked: "Do you remember us?" I said yes, but I didn't. It just hit me that I must look very old too. They changed the front door and the gate of the cemetery. It was so lovely. I guess the Revolution doesn't think too much about tradition. Well, anyway, we walked

Act Two - Scene Nine (Cont.)

Dulce: through the narrow roads of the cemetery, tombs with marble books, weeping angels, faded pictures, dried flowers and sad inscriptions. My grandfather insisted that he wanted to be buried in the Odd-fellows vault. He belonged to every organization and society in my home town. The vault was dusty, old, unkept. We looked for a vase, filled it with water, and then placed the flowers. (Lights fade in on the upstage platform. The actors follow the physical actions described by Dulce). How peculiar, I thought. My grandfather was a Spaniard, and he insisted on being buried in Cuban soil. He had given sixty-nine years of hard work to a land that wasn't his. Went from a construction worker to business owner. Built five houses, one for my mother, one for each of us. The Revolution came, and everything was gone. Sixty-nine years of lost investment, and still he wanted to be buried in that soil. He never opened his mouth, what's the use in a house where everyone was a Revolutionary. Now, he is silent forever - part of the soil he loved like his own.

Lights fade out.

Act Two - Scene Ten

Lights fade in on both upstage and downstage areas.

Man #1: (On the downstage area) Solution? Fidel should let new blood assume the power but with a democratic government. I don't want a reactionary government with

Act Two - Scene Ten (Cont.)

- Man #1: fascist ideas. We need new social, progressive ideas. Different political parties so every one can express their opinions liberally. Cuba should have relations with all governments of the world, communists or capitalists. People should be allowed to get out, andI guess I am fantasizing.
- Woman #1: (On the upstage area) We are realistic. We don't dream. I can't offer you a happy ending - that's an illusion, like an American movie. Many Cubans left, but the ones who remained behind, the ones who stayed in school, graduated. We graduated and majored in reality.
- Man #2: (On the downstage area) Solution? They have a sick society, and the new generation is also contaminated. It is a repressed society. Many years will have to pass before a new normal being is developed and that being can face his problems with normal vision, not a sick vision. Right now, there is no solution.
- Woman #2: (On the upstage area) This Revolution must be very well established to let 100,000 Cuban refugees come back to the island. I think it has been a mistake. All of those worms coming back, flashing their gold bracelets, their gold chains, and their digital watches at us. They can take their jewels and their stories and.....There is no solution, compañero.

Act Two - Scene Ten (Cont.)

- Man #3: (On the downstage area) The U.S. should stop the blockade. Cuba is a republic and has the right to live like a republic. I love this country. I grew up here and feel part of it. It hurts me that one nation I love is against the nation I was born.
- Woman #3: (On the upstage area) Solution.....There is one thing that Fidel hasn't learned: that no leaf will stir on a tree without the will of God.
- Woman #4: (On the downstage area) There is no solution! Are you going to resurrect the dead? Tell me, are you going to give me back twenty-one years of my life? There is no solution as long as there is Communism in Cuba.
- Man #1: (On the upstage area) The only thing we have to do now is work.
- Woman #3: (On the downstage area) Can you restore joy to the Cuban people?
- Man #4: (On the upstage platform) I don't know, it was kind of nice when my relatives came back. People say that Cuba is a country of two nations. They stayed only one week, and we were learning so much about each other...
- Man #4: (On the downstage platform) It's true. I reencountered not only an individual; I re-encountered a country.
- Man #4: (On the upstage platform) And still there is much more we can learn about each other.....
- Woman #2: (On the upstage platform) Shut up!

Act Two - Scene Ten (Cont.)

- Man #4: (On the downstage platform) Why should he? Enough is enough! Twenty-one years! It's now twenty-one years!
- Woman #4: (On the downstage platform) Twenty thousand years are needed to erase the past!
- Man #4: (On the downstage platform) Twenty thousand years, and we are all going to be dead! Twenty thousand years are not going to erase the fact.....
- Woman #4: (On the downstage platform) Say it! Which fact are you talking about?
- Man #4: (On the downstage area) The fact that in spite of everything, we are brothers.
- Woman #3: (On the downstage area) And sisters!
- Man #4: (On the upstage platform) We are!
- Woman #2: (On the upstage platform) You are a traitor! No worm is going to be my brother!
- Man #4: (On the downstage platform) Lift that curtain!
(No one moves) You are a bunch of cowards! You are afraid of loving, instead of hating.
- Man #4: (On the upstage platform) That's right! Lift that curtain!
- Woman #4: (On the upstage platform) Don't forget you are a member of the Communist Youth!
- Man #4: (On the upstage platform) Our family has been here longer than the party. Lift that curtain!
- Man #4: (On the downstage platform) I challenge you to lift the curtain!

Act Two - Scene Ten (Cont.)

Man #4 in both areas tries to reach the rope to lift the curtain. They struggle with the actors in both areas who open their arms and build a human barricade which stops them from accomplishing their goal. Finally, Man #4 in the upstage area tries in vain to reach Man #4 on the downstage area who stretches his arm, but seems to be unable to reach him. They both drop their arms, completely exhausted.

Woman #1: (On the downstage platform) Too soon.....

Man #1: (On the downstage platform) No way.....

Woman #2: (On the downstage platform) I can't.....

Man #2: (On the downstage platform) Not yet.....

Woman #1: (On the upstage platform) Too soon.....

Man #1: (On the upstage platform) No way.....

Woman #2: (On the upstage platform) I can't.....

Man #2: (On the upstage platform) Too soon.....

Man #4: (On the upstage platform) Not yet.....

Man #4: (On the downstage platform) Not yet.....

The actors look at each other and then in a puzzled manner they stare at the audience. Lights fade out.

CURTAIN