

Truth or Consequences

A Full Length Play

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CHARACTERS

CHAVEZ	Female, Mixed Latinx, Mid 20s Top of her class.
HOGAN	Male, White, Early 50s About to retire from field work.
WATCHTOWER	Nonbinary, White, Any Age Voice of the Bureau.
CELESTE	Female, Mexican American, Early 30s Skipping grief counseling.
MEYER	Male, African American, Late 20s Former Bureau agent. A memory.

FIGMENTS¹

MALE VOICE/ BOY VOICE	Any Race, Any Age.
FEMALE VOICE	Any Race, Any Age.

SETTING

A Pocket Dimension Locally Recognized as the El Dorado Motel
in lovely Truth or Consequences, New Mexico

NOTES

“—”	Indicate a character being cut off by the next line.
“...”	Indicates a stillness, whether in thought or staging.
“/”	Indicates that the next line should start while this line continues.

¹ Figments appear on the other side of the wall. They are akin to mannequins, or when you dream about people, but can't see their face. If necessary, the figments can be played by MEYER and CELESTE respectively.

ACT ONE

Darkness. A rumbling. A hunger.

WATCHTOWER appears in all their bureaucratic glory, bathed in a deep red light.

They address The Audience. The Board.

WATCHTOWER

Good evening, esteemed members of The Board. I am so very proud to present to you today the culmination of all our hard work. We've found it.

The sound of distorted breathing can be heard. It could be confused for pain, maybe fear, but it is excitement.

WATCHTOWER

Yes, yes! I could barely contain myself. For decades we have struggled to crack its feeding habits and finally, a breakthrough. You see, we've long suspected that this creature feeds on pain, and now... Well. The bait has been set. Because, you see, I've found the key. Or rather...keys.

Lights up on either side of the stage to reveal CHAVEZ and HOGAN. They stare out into the darkness, revealed only briefly by the light before fading away.

WATCHTOWER

Tonight, we finally kill The El Dorado Motel.

The sound of distorted breathing grows in ferocity until— blackout.

Lights up on Room 209 at the El Dorado Motel. The front door and window is stage right, the bathroom stage left. A closet door sits along the back wall and a large queen bed sits in the center of the room, flanked by end tables with lamps.

There is a small round table with two chairs near stage right. The floor is a faded burgundy carpet, the window has earth tone paisley curtains, and the walls are covered in yellowing wallpaper. There is some art on the wall, depictions of pueblos and the desert under blue and pink skies.

A television set, which is unseen and would be sitting against the fourth wall, turns on and paints the dim room in a flickering light. It's the intro to the Truth or Consequences game show, or an approximation of what the room remembers of it. The lights of the room gently flicker with the canned laughter of the intro. The theme plays briefly, but stops abruptly as someone comes to the door.

CHAVEZ opens the door, key in hand. MEYER steps into the room first followed by CHAVEZ who closes and locks the door behind her. She turns on the light, makes eye contact with the bed, and sighs heavily.

CHAVEZ

Jesus Fucking Christ.

MEYER

(He laughs.)

Remember that motel in Tulsa. They didn't even bother to cover up the burnt carpet.

CHAVEZ

Don't remind me. I can still smell it. Like old ketchup and charcoal.

They are both wearing black slacks and black dress shoes, a white button up paired with a thin black tie and matching suit jackets. CHAVEZ has a small rolling suitcase and a briefcase handcuffed to her wrist, both of which are black.

MEYER

Or what about that trailer park in Sedona.

CHAVEZ

The one that was sinking?

CHAVEZ crosses the room and heads to the closet. She places her suit jacket on a hanger and tucks the suitcase into the foot of the closet, front pocket facing out. She stands silently for a moment, the handcuffed briefcase in her hands. She looks around the room. She looks under the bed, inside the bathroom, in each bedside table.

MEYER

That's the one! Bathroom was at a slight angle. Fucked with my head. A minute or two on that toilet and I thought the room was spinning.

CHAVEZ laughs. She finally decides to handcuff the case to the closet cross bar. She secures it, the suitcase now hanging in the closet. She slides her suit jacket to the briefcase in an effort to conceal it and closes the closet door.

CHAVEZ

I ask so little of these places. Give me a bed and a level floor. Is that so much to ask?

MEYER

It was beautiful though, Sedona.

MEYER sits and bounces on the edge of the bed for a moment, testing the springs. He takes a deep breath and looks out into the audience.

CHAVEZ

Yeah... sure was.

MEYER

Those mountains.

All those colors.

CHAVEZ

CHAVEZ sits on the edge of the bed closest to the phone. Both her hands and MEYER's are thrown back behind them, propping themselves up. Their hands are almost touching.

After a moment, CHAVEZ shifts and reaches for the corded telephone on the bedside table. She dials 000.

MEYER stands and walks towards the edge of the stage.

WATCHTOWER

(A musical chime plays briefly, something ethereal.)

Hey Sugar, looking for a good time?

CHAVEZ

Sure am, hun. I love the desert this time of year.

WATCHTOWER

Ain't it just marvelous? I love thunderstorms in the southwest.

CHAVEZ

Rolling waves of light, and thunder that makes your bones ache.

WATCHTOWER

(Almost like flirting.)

What's your name, Shug?

CHAVEZ

Chavez.

(Beat.)

Train Car. Homestead. Coyote. Azul.

WATCHTOWER

(The demeanor of the voice changes.)

We are so happy to have you back, Agent Chavez. How did medical leave treat you?

CHAVEZ

It was...short.

WATCHTOWER

Yes, well, I'm sure you're happy to be back at work.

(There is a moment of uncomfortable silence.)

It is unfortunate what happened to your partner.

(MEYER turns to face CHAVEZ. CHAVEZ faces MEYER.)

A terrible thing. I can't imagine what it must've been like. To be there. To see it happen.

The lights around MEYER seem to dim. After a moment, he smiles and walks out into the darkness, disappearing.

CHAVEZ

Yes. A terrible thing.

WATCHTOWER

But we are so glad to have you back.

CHAVEZ

Watchtower, I do have one question.

WATCHTOWER

Yes, Agent?

CHAVEZ

You are aware that there is only one bed?

(Silence.)

Isn't there supposed to be another—

WATCHTOWER

Agent Hogan is not to be told about the package.

CHAVEZ

Right, of course—

WATCHTOWER

Agent Hogan is en route back to Bureau Headquarters for his retirement party and shouldn't be troubled with the origin or final destination of the package.

CHAVEZ

I understand—

WATCHTOWER

Agent Hogan has served under the Bureau for an almost unparalleled amount of time in the field and, while we want to ensure his utmost comfort on the final leg of his journey, we regret that due to budget cuts—

CHAVEZ

Yes, yes, yes. Message received, Watchtower.

(Silence.)

Watchtower?

WATCHTOWER

Your tone, Agent. I'd be mindful of it.

CHAVEZ

Of course, my apologies—

WATCHTOWER

You've shown great promise, Agent Chavez. Only two years in the field, and already your track record puts you in the top percentile of your class. It's unfortunate what happened to your partner, Agent...

(There is a riffling of paper.)

Meyers.

CHAVEZ

Meyer.

WATCHTOWER

But your completion of the mission despite your partner's death has gained the attention of The Board.

CHAVEZ

(Gulps.)

The Board?

WATCHTOWER

Yes, Agent. The Board. So, I'd be careful not to disappoint.

(Silence.)

Have a good night's rest, Agent.

(The line is dead. CHAVEZ hangs up the phone.)

CHAVEZ

(To the closet where the briefcase is hidden.)

Did you hear that, Meyer? The Board.

(She sighs. Looks around. Sniffs.)

You know what this place smells like? Mesquite. This whole time I've been trying to figure it out. My abue used to cook with it. Corn, poblanos, steaks. I can almost feel the bristles of his mustache on my cheek.

(There is a deep rumbling, maybe from the ground, maybe from the walls. CHAVEZ doesn't notice.)

Yeah. Mesquite. And just a little bit of piss. The Bureau really knows how to pick them.

A noise can be heard from outside. Someone is walking towards Room 209. They have company.

HOGAN

(Off stage:)

Traveling salesman? Do I look like a traveling salesman? Honey, baby, no. I'm way more than just a salesman.

HOGAN unlocks the door. He takes one step into Room 209 with one arm wrapped around CELESTE and his other arm rolling a luggage bag behind him. It's a little larger than CHAVEZ's. HOGAN is whispering something in her ear when he enters so CELESTE notices CHAVEZ before he does. She gives an awkward smile and a little wave. Finally he turns and sees CHAVEZ.

CHAVEZ

Hi, I'm—

HOGAN

Jesus Fucking Christ.

He rushes out the door, CELESTE in tow. His luggage bag falls to the floor and sits in the open doorway.

CHAVEZ

Well, that could've gone better.

Lights up on HOGAN downstage right. He's wearing the same Bureau uniform as CHAVEZ, but his tie is thicker, a more classic look. HOGAN is muscular, but thick. A dense man with broad shoulders and a wide chest. A bit of a gut that he keeps sucked in.

CELESTE is standing in the background smoking in the dark, we can see the glow of her lit cigarette.

HOGAN pulls out his phone and dials 000.

HOGAN

Uh huh, yeah, I love the desert this time of year.

(He pinches the bridge of his nose.)

Yes, yes, Rolling waves of light and thunder that makes your bones ache. Can you just hurry up and transfer me to—

(Annoyed.)

Hogan. Pete Moss, Tundra, Buffalo, Amarillo.

(Finally.)

Protocol? You want to talk to me about protocol? What the fuck is with the shared bed. No, no, let me back track. What the fuck is with the shared room?

(Listening.)

Twenty five years. Twenty five fucking years traveling across this god forsaken country cleaning up Bureau messes and you're going to talk to me about budget cuts?

(Listening.)

Fuck you, Watchtower, transfer me to the Director.

(Beat.)

Twenty five years, Watchtower. Transfer me to—

The light above him suddenly turns a deep, dark red. He is frozen, listening intently to WATCHTOWER. After a moment the light changes back to a pale yellow glow.

HOGAN

(Nervously, plays with the end of his tie.)

Yes. Yes. Of course, Watchtower. I'm sorry, I—

(Listening.)

Yes. I forgot my place. I'm sure the room is lovely.

(He hangs up.)

Fuck.

CELESTE

(Coming out of the shadows and into the glow of the street light.)

What kinda business did you say you were in again?

HOGAN

(Deflated.)

The kinda business you don't wanna know about.

CELESTE

What? You get reamed out by your boss?

(Beat.)

Hey, it's okay. Forget them. We can get another room. It's no big deal.

HOGAN

It's the principle of the thing.

(He mutters to himself.)

Twenty five years...

(Pulling out his wallet and taking out a twenty dollar bill. He gives it to CELESTE.)

Here, go get us some beers, but take your time. I'll try and sort this out.

(CELESTE looks at the twenty and gives HOGAN puppy dog eyes. After a moment he chuckles and pulls out a few more bills.)

Get yourself some smokes too.

CELESTE

Oh, you're too kind sir.

(She gives a small curtsy. She gets a laugh out of HOGAN.)

Oh, will you look at that?

HOGAN

What?

CELESTE

(She smiles.)

You've got a cute smile.

(Beginning to exit, then:)

Hey, what's this place called again?

HOGAN

The El Dorado Motel. Room 209.

HOGAN exits.

CELESTE

The El Dorado...huh.

(Looking back up towards the room.)

I've never heard of *you* before.

CELESTE takes out her phone and snaps a quick picture of the motel. She types away at something and we hear the faint chime of a sent message. She exits.

Lights back up on Room 209. CHAVEZ is nervously pacing back and forth between the bed and the bathroom on stage right. She's chewing her thumbnail. There is a knock on the door. She turns to face it.

CHAVEZ

Yes?

HOGAN

It's, uhh, it's me. Can I come in?

CHAVEZ

Yeah, of course.

We can hear the jingle of his key as he tries to unlock the door. He drops the keys.

HOGAN

Fuck.

We can hear him pick them back up, he grunts as he bends over. He unlocks the door and steps inside. He looks around the room and sees his bag sitting on the edge of the bed closest to him.

HOGAN

Oh, my bag. Thanks, I hadn't even realized I, uhh—

CHAVEZ

No problem, I was happy to.

HOGAN

(An awkward silence, and then.)

One bed, huh?

CHAVEZ

Yeah...

HOGAN

(Shaking his head, and sucking at his teeth.)

Watchtower and all those other penny pinchers. I'm Hogan.

(He extends his hand, CHAVEZ crosses the room to shake it.)

CHAVEZ

Chavez. It's good to meet you.

HOGAN

(He takes note of the small blood stain on the end of her sleeve, right by her wrist.)

What division?

CHAVEZ

Blue.

HOGAN

(A little surprised. Didn't hide it well.)

Blue!

CHAVEZ

Yeah! Almost two years now.

HOGAN

How old are you?

CHAVEZ

That's rude.

HOGAN

(Sucking at his teeth.)

When did you graduate from the academy?

CHAVEZ

(Knows what he's getting at.)

Two years ago. I was placed in Blue right after graduating.

HOGAN

That's impressive. It usually takes years to qualify for Blue placement. Your qualifying exam scores must've been good.

CHAVEZ

(A little proud, as she should be.)

They were. In fact, I was top of my—

HOGAN

(He gives her a smile, a little stiff.)

Good for you.

(Gesturing to her shirt.)

You should do something about that.

CHAVEZ

Excuse me?

HOGAN

Your shirt, the sleeve. Blood.

CHAVEZ

(Looking at her sleeve and noticing the blood.)

Oh...oh! Umm, it's old. The blood, it's been a bitch trying to get it out.

HOGAN

Don't worry, I've got something for that.

HOGAN crosses to his luggage bag, which is still sitting on the bed. He opens the front pocket and pulls out a Tide To Go Pen. He crosses to CHAVEZ, his outstretched hand offering the pen. Right before she is about to take it, he pulls it away.

HOGAN

That's pretty sloppy for a Blue.

(He smiles and hands CHAVEZ the Tide To Go Pen.)

Bit of that and some cold water, you should be all set.

(He gives her a small wink.)

CHAVEZ

Yeah. Thanks.

CHAVEZ turns away and rolls her eyes. She makes her way to the motel room bathroom and closes the door behind her. We can still see her as she takes off her white button up, she's wearing a white a-frame shirt underneath.

The rest of the bathroom is illuminated to reveal MEYER sitting on the edge of the bathtub, brushing at his dress shoes with shoe polish.

CHAVEZ tends to the shirt with the Tide To Go Pen as HOGAN continues to talk.

HOGAN

(Speaking slightly louder to cover what he is about to do.)

When I was young, I was never big on uniforms either, but my old man was. Me and him, we'd sit down and watch old football games. He'd recorded dozens, maybe hundreds of games.

CHAVEZ turns on the faucet and begins to wash the sleeve in the sink. This is what HOGAN was waiting for.

He quickly crosses to the other side of the bed and opens the closet door. He pulls out her rolling suitcase. He continues to talk as he goes through CHAVEZ's bag.

HOGAN

He wouldn't fast forward through the commercials either. Instead he'd use that time to check on my mom. He'd have her behind the couch ironing his uniform.

He opens the suitcase. It's mostly clothes. A pair of walking shoes. A small toiletries bag. Next, he opens the front pocket. He finds a few candy wrappers, bus ticket stubs, and a pack of smokes. American Spirits, Blue. He takes one, and tucks it into his pocket. He puts the pack back in the pocket and closes it.

HOGAN

I'd sit there watching old ads for movies or beer and he'd be inspecting every stitch. Every crease. He was, uhh, well. He loved the way he looked in that uniform. Said the dark green brought out the color of his eyes.

CHAVEZ shuts off the running water. HOGAN freezes and looks over his shoulder. She is now patting dry her shirt sleeve with a bathroom towel. She softly sings Elvis Presley's, "Any Day Now." HOGAN listens to her. Something about the song... He shakes it off.

HOGAN

I can't really picture them anymore. His eyes.

HOGAN quietly puts the luggage bag back in the closet, the front of the case is facing the wrong way. CHAVEZ pulls a small, dingey hair dryer from under the sink and plugs it in. She begins to dry the shirt sleeve.

HOGAN

Watching those games with him, after a while, I'd just tune them out. Started focusing on my mom, listening to the iron as she guided it along every fold. She was, uhh, well she was gentle. You know?

HOGAN is about to close the closet door when he catches a glimpse of the briefcase. He touches the metal cuffs briefly before the hair dryer turns off.

HOGAN hurries back to the other side of the bed and begins to unpack his suitcase. CHAVEZ, with her cleaned and dried shirt back on, reenters.

HOGAN

It come out?

CHAVEZ

Yeah! Yeah. It did.

(Toying with the Tide To Go Pen.)

All you Yellows have one of these pens handy?

HOGAN

Not just Yellows, people with common sense. Besides, without us—

CHAVEZ

Yeah, yeah, yeah. “A Yellow on the scene keeps a crash sight clean.”

HOGAN

I’ve never heard that one before.

CHAVEZ

It’s a good one. Gets right to the point doesn’t it.

(She tosses the Tide To Go Pen back to HOGAN who catches it and returns it to his bag.)

I like picturing Yellows with little mops and buckets. You got yours stashed around here somewhere?

HOGAN

I get it.

CHAVEZ

(She sighs.)

I should get some rest.

HOGAN

The blood. Was it your partner’s?

(CHAVEZ is caught off guard by this.)

My condolences.

CHAVEZ

Um, thank you.

(Beat.)

The mission was top secret, how did you—

HOGAN

(Laughs.)

Every mission is top secret, kid. But us Yellows, we keep in touch. We clean up your messes after all. Blues get to do all the flashy stuff. All the fighting and investigating, but us Yellows, we’ve gotta clean up after it all. Wipe the memories, fill out the paperwork. That’s not to say what happened to Meyers was a mess—

CHAVEZ

Meyer.

HOGAN

Hmm?

CHAVEZ

His name was Meyer.

HOGAN

Right. Sorry. Umm, again, my condolences.

CHAVEZ

Can we change the—

HOGAN

What's your poison?

(On CHAVEZ's reaction.)

You a wine, gal? Beer?

CHAVEZ

Whiskey, actually.

HOGAN

(A big smile.)

Whiskey! I wouldn't've pegged you as a whiskey drinker.

CHAVEZ

(A small laugh.)

And I wouldn't've pegged you as a soccer mom.

HOGAN

Easy now, chica. Not when we're about to become friends.

CHAVEZ

(Almost playful.)

Friends? How do you figure that? And don't call me—

HOGAN

Because I've got a little something special packed in my bag. Now, you and I, we didn't get off to the best start. I was a little confrontational, I'll admit it, my skin isn't so thick that I can't, umm, you know, but why squander this opportunity?

(Reaching into his bag.)

I was gonna save this for the retirement party, but why share it with a bunch of suits and ties in a stuffy office when we can split it between two boots on the ground, right?

(He takes a plastic Walgreens bag out of his suitcase. From the bag, he pulls out a tall glass bottle in its own cloth bag. The cloth bag is covered in dried mud. He makes a show of untying the cinch at the top.)

We aren't really supposed to accept gifts, but sometimes, well, sometimes people are just really grateful for our services.

CHAVEZ

Grateful for what a Blue does, you mean?

HOGAN

(A small, annoyed smile.)

To civilians, there isn't a difference between the two of us. Us, "Men in Black," we all just blend together. That's part of our allure after all. A few years back, almost a decade now, the, uhh, well, La Chupa was in heat so—

CHAVEZ

Wait, wait. La Chupa? You mean *the* Chupacabra?

HOGAN

(A wide smile.)

The very one. The old girl was in heat and causing all sorts of trouble along the Rio Grande Valley. Tearing through cattle ranches like a kid in a candy store, just gobbling up everything in sight. Back then, Bureau rules still stipulated that Agents could not interfere with, undermine, or endanger registered cryptids so the Blues I was tagging along with set up, this uhh—

(He laughs to himself as he remembers.)

God, they built this big ole monstrosity, this ugly looking thing that they covered with goat pheromones. This "approximation" of what a male chupa might look like and, well. They let her have at it.

CHAVEZ

That. Is. Disgusting.

HOGAN

I know! Right? It was unreal. And the sounds she made! Like a wolf if it had a mouth full of tin foil and engine grease. Anyway, folks were real grateful for us saving their cattle. This one rancher, right before I wiped his memory, he gave me this.

(Finally, he pulls out the glass bottle. It is tall and pristine. It is filled with clear liquid. It has a faded parchment label on it.)

Said he was saving it for his daughter's wedding, but that if it wasn't for me, well...

(Motioning between the two of them, but meaning The Bureau.)

"Us." There would be no cattle. No cattle, no money. No money, no wedding, so...

(Looking the bottle over.)

He gave me this beautiful bottle of Mezcal de Conejo².

(Takes it in.)

But, we can't accept gifts, so I buried this guy out in the river bed of the Rio Grande. Figured now was the time to go dig it up.

CHAVEZ

Oh, tequila does not agree with me.

HOGAN

It's mezcal and you have to try it. I promise it's unlike anything you've had before.

(Motioning to the closet.)

Can you see if the ice bucket is in there?

(CHAVEZ checks the closet and finds an ice bucket on a shelf on the far right. She tosses it to HOGAN.)

Sweet.

(HOGAN crosses to leave the front door.)

It's best chilled. I'll be right back!

HOGAN opens the front door and, instead of an exit, there is a brick wall. He closes the door and opens it again. Bricks.

HOGAN

Chavez—

CHAVEZ

Holy shit.

² Double distilled espadin mezcal blended with wild fruits, herbs and nuts, and, on the final pass in distillation, two white-tail rabbit carcasses are placed in the still.

HOGAN places the empty ice bucket and the bottle of mezcal down on the small round table near the door. He crosses to the window and pulls apart its curtain. Through the vertical blinds we can see that the window is also bricked up. CHAVEZ crosses to the bricked up doorway and runs her fingers along the grooves.

CHAVEZ

The cement isn't wet, it's completely dry.

HOGAN

Stand back.

(HOGAN moves past CHAVEZ and places his shoulder against the brick wall. He begins to shove his weight against it. It doesn't budge.)

Fuck!

(HOGAN kicks the brick wall, hurting not only himself, but the room. The walls around them seem to shift and there is a deep groaning coming from inside them. HOGAN and CHAVEZ look around the room, stunned.)

What the fuck is going on here?

Suddenly, the hotel room phone begins to ring. CHAVEZ and HOGAN lock eyes and then slowly look at the phone. It buzzes. There's a slight echo to it. HOGAN begins to cross first, CHAVEZ motions for him to wait, but he brushes her away. He picks up the phone. He is silent for a moment, then:

HOGAN

(After a moment.)

Yes, Watchtower. I'm putting you on speaker.

(He presses a button and puts the receiver down by the phone.)

WATCHTOWER appears at the edge of the stage.

WATCHTOWER

Good evening, Agents. Since the Southwest Branch of The Bureau opened in '47, we've been tracking a location, of sorts. You see, the El Dorado Motel is the Bureau's Moby Dick. Our very own great white mystery hidden away in the desert.

CHAVEZ

Watchtower, what are you—

WATCHTOWER

Agent Chavez, I'd appreciate it if you allowed me to finish your briefing.

CHAVEZ

Briefing?

WATCHTOWER

Agent Chavez, do you remember who gave you your room key?

(Beat.)

What about you Agent Hogan? Do you remember the front desk? Did you speak with a clerk? Perhaps you remember ringing a little bell?.

(Beat.)

Do either of you remember how you got your room key?

CHAVEZ

HOGAN

No, I don't.

Uhh, no.

WATCHTOWER

The Bureau sent two agents to a small town with no place to stay. The El Dorado Motel sensed a hole that needed to be filled and, well, here you are. So, shall I continue with your briefing?

CHAVEZ

Yes, Watchtower.

WATCHTOWER

The first recorded manifestation of the El Dorado was as a phone booth in the late 1890s. Since then, we've confirmed appearances as a laundromat, voting booth, bakery, thrift store, and even a taco pop-up. Each one carrying some variation of the El Dorado monicor and all in lovely Truth or Consequences, New Mexico. Agents, I want to stress to you that this has been a mission in the making for decades. We only just cracked its feeding pattern—

HOGAN

Feeding—

WATCHTOWER

We've never understood what made the El Dorado appear. We'd always assumed it was some combination of the stars, planets, perhaps climate, or even local elections, but then, we had a breakthrough.

(Beat. To CHAVEZ:)

We can't let an opportunity like this be squandered. And, since Bureau policy stipulates that no agent can go on a mission alone... Well.

(Beat.)

Congratulations are in order for Agent Hogan. You're finally getting what you've always wanted just 25 years and 12 applications later.

HOGAN

Excuse me?

WATCHTOWER

A promotion, Agent Hogan. By direct order from the Board, you are hereby promoted to a Blue tier agent. Congratulations. And welcome to your first mission. Kill the El Dorado Motel.

The line cuts out and WATCHTOWER disappears into a darkness that consumes the entire stage.

A cell phone rings.

Lights up on CELESTE. She is standing near the edge of the stage. She has a six pack of beers in one hand and her phone in the other.

CELESTE

Yeah, hello?

COUNCILOR (V.O.)

Celeste, where are you?

CELESTE

Oh! Father Michael—

COUNCILOR (V.O.)

You didn't come to tonight's session, is everything okay?

CELESTE

Yeah, about that, did you get my picture?

COUNCILOR (V.O.)

Yes, I did. What is this?

CELESTE

It's a motel—

COUNCILOR (V.O.)

Uhuh—

CELESTE

The El Dorado—

COUNCILOR (V.O.)

Okay?

CELESTE

Weird, right?

COUNCILOR (V.O.)

Celeste, what's going on? Is something wrong?

CELESTE

Yes something is wrong! The El Dorado Motel, that's what.

COUNCILOR (V.O.)

Celeste, I'm sorry, I'm really not following.

CELESTE

I've lived in this town my entire life and this place, this motel, I've never heard of it.

(Waiting for a response.)

Hello?

COUNCILOR (V.O.)

Celeste, we've talked about how detrimental it is to miss nights with the support group—

CELESTE

Right, right, bereavement and all that—

COUNCILOR (V.O.)

Celeste.

CELESTE

Look, I'm sorry, okay. I just...

COUNCILOR (V.O.)

I'm worried about you.

CELESTE

No. No, no, don't do that.

COUNCILOR (V.O.)

We're all worried about you, Celeste. We're in your corner.

CELESTE

I'm tired.

(Beat.)

I am. And I'm tired of listening to them—

COUNCILOR (V.O.)

It's not just about you, Celeste.

(Beat.)

It's important for people to feel stable in times like this. You know how important it is to have familiar faces helping guide you along the path. It's been years since Mason passed on, but others here are experiencing their grief for the first time—

CELESTE

So what? I should be all better now?

COUNCILOR (V.O.)

No, of course not, that's not what I'm—

CELESTE

Celeste should be all smiles and hugs by now, right? Celeste should be what, their rock? A shoulder to cry on?

COUNCILOR (V.O.)

You're putting words in my mouth—

CELESTE

Then how long should it take?

COUNCILOR (V.O.)

This is not the time.

CELESTE

How long Father? A year? Two?

COUNCILOR (V.O.)

Celeste, I'm sorry. I misspoke. I shouldn't have pressed, but you have to understand that—

CELESTE

Look, Father. I've got a case of beer, a pack of American Spirits, and a hot date. I'll see you next week.

CELESTE hangs up the phone.

Lights out on CELESTE and lights up on MEYER who stands on the opposite side of the stage. Near him is CHAVEZ sitting on the edge of the bed. The two are dimly lit. It feels like a private moment. We can barely make out HOGAN pacing in the background. As MEYER speaks his first line, the light slowly spreads, fully illuminating Room 209.

MEYER

Do you remember Dr. Feynman? Our teacher for Introduction to Cryptozoology? Strange guy, sad eyes, big bottle glasses. We had him *first* thing in the morning on Mondays and Wednesdays. Whenever we're on these stakeouts, I think of him.

HOGAN

(To himself.)

This has to be some sort of joke.

CHAVEZ

Let me think.

MEYER

He'd go on and on about the mating calls of Bigfoot. Had all these tapes and during his lunches he'd listen to them with these big old headphones.

CHAVEZ

(Under her breath.)

God fucking dammit.

MEYER

Everyone wrote him off as losing it, but you... You stayed after class and you asked him about those tapes. You knew there was something more.

(Beat.)

You had a good instinct for that kind of thing. You knew which rock had the best bugs underneath it.

CHAVEZ

Just let me think...

MEYER

He just looked at us with those big sad eyes.

(Beat.)

He said, they weren't just mating calls. They were maps.

(Beat.)

Directions on how to find them. Details about how the river bent or how thick the tree line was. They were singing about how beautiful the forest was from their point of view.

MEYER fades into the darkness.

Something dawns on CHAVEZ. She slowly starts to stand as the pieces fall into place.

CHAVEZ

(To HOGAN.)

How did you get into town?

HOGAN

Twenty-five years I've been wearing this suit, twenty-five years—

CHAVEZ

Agent.

(He is still.)

Focus.

(Beat.)

I took a bus into town. Greyhound. Thirteen, no, twelve passengers. Got on in Las Vegas. Stopped in Albuquerque, then Socorro, then here. You?

HOGAN

(Sitting on the edge of the bed now.)

I, uhh, I...

CHAVEZ

Deep breath.

HOGAN

(Takes a deep breath.)

Rental. I got a rental car. Picked it up in Odessa. Drove, drove straight, no, I stopped in Esperanza first.

CHAVEZ

Texas?

HOGAN

Yeah. To dig up the, uhh—

CHAVEZ

Mezcal—

HOGAN

Yeah, and then a pit stop in El Paso, then straight here.

CHAVEZ
What kind of car?

HOGAN
A Lincoln. Black. 2010 I think.

CHAVEZ
And where did you park it?

HOGAN
Out front, motel parking lot.
(He motions to the bricked up window.)

CHAVEZ
Keys.

HOGAN
What?

CHAVEZ
Toss me your keys.

HOGAN
(He tosses them to CHAVEZ.)
We're locked in here—

CHAVEZ
Shh.

CHAVEZ moves to the wall space between the bricked up front door and window, moving furniture if she has to. She raises the car keys into the air with one hand, and cups her ear to the wall with the other. The room is very still. HOGAN, without realising it, is holding his breath. She presses a button on the car keys. Faintly, just outside the brick wall, we hear the distinct sound of a car lock beeping.

HOGAN

What are you—

CHAVEZ

Wait.

She presses the button again. Faint beeping. And once more. Faint beeping. She turns back to HOGAN, discreetly pocketing the keys.

CHAVEZ

Three times I pressed the button, three times the car beeped. So, we've confirmed that your rental car is still outside, or rather, that we're still outside your rental car.

HOGAN

What are you talking about? Of course we are.

CHAVEZ

If Watchtower is right... The moment we stepped into this room, the moment we closed that door, we stopped being in our world.

(There is a moment of stillness as CHAVEZ lets this settle, then:)

HOGAN

(He begins to roll up his sleeves.)

I remember stairs, do you? To get up here.

CHAVEZ

Yes! Yes, stairs. We're on the second floor. At the top of the stairs I took a left turn and passed two rooms.

HOGAN

I remember three. 206, 207...

(Crossing to the back wall, placing a hand on it.)

208. Right?

CHAVEZ

If this is 209 then...was there a room after ours?

(Looking out into the audience.)

I don't remember if there's a 210. The guard rail, did it stop?

HOGAN

I don't know. I don't remember. But here's a question. Which will be thinner? The floor, or the wall?

CHAVEZ

Excuse me?

HOGAN

I'm getting out of this room, Chavez.

(He pulls a flip knife from his back pocket and switches out the blade.)

The front of the room is bricked up and all I've got is this knife. My money is on this wall.

CHAVEZ

Hogan, you cannot just start tearing through walls. We don't know what's on the other side.

HOGAN

You just said my rental is out there.

CHAVEZ

Yes, out front, but that's outside of the motel. You're trying to cut your way into another room.

HOGAN

(Beginning to roll up his sleeves.)

I was on clean up duty for that sentient mold out in Reno. I spent the better part of a month tearing down walls. This'll be a piece of cake.

CHAVEZ

Hogan, wait—

HOGAN turns to the back wall and swiftly plunges his knife into the wall paper. He pulls down, cutting a slit into the wall about a foot long. He looks pleased, almost impressed with himself, until the wall begins to bleed.

HOGAN

What the fuck...

From the wall oozes thick red blood. HOGAN steps closer and reaches out to catch a drop when a long tentacle bursts from the slit, grabbing HOGAN.

CHAVEZ

Oh my God—

HOGAN

Chavez, help—

The tentacle swiftly pulls him towards the wall. HOGAN hits his head against it. The tentacle releases him as he collapses onto the floor. Before he can stand back up, another tentacle writhes out from beneath the bed and latches onto HOGAN's throat, choking him.

HOGAN

(Struggling to breathe.)

Cha...Vez... Help...

CHAVEZ

Fuck.

Suddenly, the ceiling light turns off. Replaced by the dim yellow lights of the bedside lamps. The room is much darker than it was before.

The television set turns on. Illuminating the room with its pale white glow.

CHAVEZ

Is that you? The El Dorado?

(Slowly raising her hands.)

I'm sorry for what he did.

The room groans in approval.

CHAVEZ

So, El Dorado, can I call you that? El Dorado?

*The unseen television seems to change channels.
We can hear the distorted intro of “Dora the
Explorer,” a brief, static encrusted snippet:*

FEMALE VOICE as DORA

D-d-d-d-d-Dora, D-d-d-d-d-Dora—

CHAVEZ

(Taken aback, but going with it.)

Dora? Okay, I can work with that. Dora, we’re not here to hurt you.

*The bedside lamps flicker as a buzz plays from the
television, the kind a game show would play when
the contestant has given the wrong answer.*

CHAVEZ

Okay, okay, yes. We were sent here to hurt you, but we didn’t know! We didn’t know until we were already here!

(Silence.)

You can trust us—

*Buzz. Wrong answer. The lamps flicker again, and
this time they take a little longer to return to
normal.*

CHAVEZ

(She gulps.)

You can trust *me*, because...because...

*MEYER enters from the bathroom. He is wiping his
hands dry on his pants. He is muttering to himself
as he crosses the stage towards CHAVEZ.*

MEYER

You had a good instinct for that kind of thing.

CHAVEZ

Because...

MEYER

You knew which rock had the best bugs underneath it.

(He exits.)

CHAVEZ

Because...you want something.

(Silence.)

You *need* something from...me?

The television set tunes once more.

FEMALE VOICE as DORA

Need your help— Need your help— Need your help—

CHAVEZ

Yes! I can help! I'll help you! What can I do?

FEMALE VOICE as DORA

Grab your backpack!

CHAVEZ

What?

FEMALE VOICE as DORA

Grab your backpack!

CHAVEZ

Dora, what does that mean, I don't have a backpack—

HOGAN

(About to pass out.)

Cha...vez.....

CHAVEZ

Dora, let him go!

The room groans with anger. The bedside lamps flicker.

CHAVEZ

You know the rules, Dora. You heard them. I can't do this job without a partner. Let him go and I'll help you.

Silence. DORA thinks. Finally the room starts to brighten as the ceiling light turns back on. The tentacles release HOGAN. He collapses to the ground, gasping for air, his hand rubs at his neck as he coughs. CHAVEZ quickly runs to him, trying to help him up.

CHAVEZ

Hogan? Hogan, you okay?

HOGAN

What the fuck—

CHAVEZ

Hogan, come on—

HOGAN

(Standing and stumbling away.)

What the fuck is this shit—

CHAVEZ

Hogan, look at me.

HOGAN

What.

CHAVEZ

Look at me, Hogan.

(He looks at her.)

You good?

HOGAN

(Rubbing at his throat.)

Yeah. Yeah, I'm fine.

CHAVEZ

Good. Now apologize to her.

HOGAN

You can't be serious.

CHAVEZ

(Quietly. Stern.)

You pissed her off. Keep the peace.

(Beat.)

Apologize to Dora.

HOGAN

(Turning to look at the gash in the wall.)

Right. Umm. Dora, I uhh— You know, things were really intense there for a second and I may have— You know what, I have the perfect thing for that.

(He goes to his bag and, from the front pocket, pulls out two or three small bandages.)

I'm just gonna do this nice and slow, okay. So no, uhh, tentacles, please.

(Slowly, he places the bandaids gingerly along the gash in the wall.)

There you go, that's, uhh, better. Right?

(He looks around the room, no response.)

Okayy.

CHAVEZ

You didn't apologize.

HOGAN

I just did.

(He stops for a moment and looks her in the eyes. This isn't easy.)

And, uhh, thank you. For the assist—

CHAVEZ

Bureau rules, right? Always work in pairs. That's it.

HOGAN

(Something about this makes him sad. Or angry. He can't tell, but he pushes it aside.)

Right. Bureau rules.

CHAVEZ

From here on out, we do things my way. Understood?

HOGAN

You got it *chica*.

CHAVEZ

Don't start—

Suddenly, CHAVEZ's knees buckle. She nearly falls to the ground. HOGAN rushes to her side and helps her stand.

HOGAN

Hey, hey, you okay?

CHAVEZ

(Taking his arm and standing.)

I'm fine. I just...need to lie down.

HOGAN

Okay, okay I got you.

HOGAN helps CHAVEZ across the room. He helps her into the bed, removing his suitcase so there's more room. He takes a small glass from a bedside table and goes to the sink to fill it with water. He brings her the glass and she drinks.

CHAVEZ

Thank you.

HOGAN

There's something seriously wrong with this place.

CHAVEZ

Yeah, no kidding.

HOGAN

Do you mind if I...

(He points to the other side of the bed.)

CHAVEZ

Sure, go ahead.

HOGAN

(Crossing to the other side of the bed, he lays down.)

This is not how I pictured this night going.

CHAVEZ

(A genuine, but rough, small laugh.)

No? This is exactly what I imagined. In a dusty bed next to a cranky old man in a smelly motel room. No offense, Dora.

HOGAN

No offense, Dora? What about me?

CHAVEZ

Complete offense to you. Total offense.

(They both laugh.)

Oh, God. Weren't you with a woman? Was she a hooker?

HOGAN

Her name is Celeste, and no. She's not a hooker. I met her at the gas station.

CHAVEZ

Cute.

HOGAN

Shut up. She was trying to buy beer and her card was declined. I told her we could go out for drinks after I dropped my stuff off. I just wanted some company. Wanted to impress someone with stories from the job, you know?

CHAVEZ

Hogan, you can't tell people about what we do.

HOGAN

What? You've never wanted to talk to someone? Someone outside of all this. I'm about to retire, Chavez. I don't give a shit about the rules. I just wanted to talk with someone for the first time in...well, a long time. That's it.

CHAVEZ

So you weren't trying to sleep with her?

HOGAN

I didn't say that.

(They laugh.)

I gave her some cash for beers. She probably just took it and left.

(Beat.)

Would you believe that wasn't even the first time something's tried to eat me?

CHAVEZ

(Smiling)

You're joking.

HOGAN

Land sharks up in Perfection, Nevada.

(Trying to be sly.)

Tell you what, we get out of this, I'll tell you the whole story. Deal?

CHAVEZ

Deal.

Lights down on Room 209.

Lights up on CELESTE. She's on her phone again, drinking one of the beers she bought. The rest of the pack dangles from her hand and swings wildly as she talks with her hands.

CELESTE

Hey Chuy, yeah hi, it's Celeste, from the circle

Yeah, yeah, three years, listen

I've been trying to get a hold of Denise, do you have her number?

What?

Just...gone?

I...

No, no, I was just looking for a place

A, uhh, flower shop that she talked about

Do you remember anything about that?

Yes! Yes, El Dorado Florists, that's it

She talked about it all the time...

Chuy, what do you mean by...gone?

Vanished? She didn't tell anybody?

God, I just saw her, what, a month ago...

Jesus.

What about Eric? The trucker. He was at the circle what, a few months ago—

Him too? Was he local?

Oh, Chuy, I'm sorry. I didn't know you were close.

I...don't mean to pry, but...did he mention anything about an El Dorado Motel?

I thought maybe, since he knew other truckers they might've talked about—

A laundromat? El Dorado Cleaners?

Chuy, that's strange right?

Chuy?

Yeah, of course. I'm sorry.

No, yeah, it's hard.

When I lost Mason it...well, it still hurts.

Listen, thank you Chuy

And hey

Next week, at the circle

Let's grab a drink after, okay?

Yeah, see ya Chuy.

CELESTE hangs up the phone and exits.

Lights up on the bed of Room 209. HOGAN and CHAVEZ are fast asleep. The room begins to groan, but neither of them stir.

Suddenly, the bedside lamp next to HOGAN flickers red. He stirs and, after a moment, wakes up. He wipes at his eyes and looks around the room, squinting. A light turns on over the small window side table. WATCHTOWER sits at it, though they are largely hidden by shadows.

WATCHTOWER

Agent Hogan, please come in.

HOGAN

(Standing suddenly, almost at attention.)

Watchtower, is that you?

WATCHTOWER

(Gesturing at the darkness around them.)

This is my office, isn't it?

HOGAN

Uhh, yes, of course.

WATCHTOWER

You are here for your annual review, aren't you?

HOGAN

My review? Yes! Yes, I am.

WATCHTOWER

Please. Sit.

(Beat.)

How long have you been with The Bureau, Hogan?

HOGAN

Twenty five—

WATCHTOWER

Twenty five years! Wonderful. And I understand you're planning on retiring soon?

HOGAN

Yes, that's right.

WATCHTOWER

That's wonderful.

(Beat.)

Hogan, can I be frank with you?

HOGAN

Yes, Watchtower. Of course.

WATCHTOWER

I love my office.

HOGAN

Excuse me?

WATCHTOWER

My office. Isn't it lovely? I worked hard to earn it. Climbed the ladder, as they say. Do you know how long I've been with The Bureau?

HOGAN

I can't say that I do—

WATCHTOWER

Ten years.

HOGAN

Oh.

WATCHTOWER

Yes. Only ten. And in that time I found myself here. In this lovely office. Isn't that impressive?

HOGAN

Yes, Watchtower.

WATCHTOWER

Some people, Hogan, just have a sort of drive about themselves. Do you know what I mean?

HOGAN

Yes, Watchtower.

WATCHTOWER

See, Hogan, I don't think you do. I look at your file and I think, what a waste.

HOGAN

Excuse me?

WATCHTOWER

Twenty five years a Yellow—

HOGAN

Well, I have of course applied to—

WATCHTOWER

Be a Blue yes, but Hogan, why not a Red?

HOGAN

Well. I've of course thought of it, but being a Blue...

WATCHTOWER

You can say it.

HOGAN

That's where the glory is.

WATCHTOWER

Hmm. It seems you take after your father. Do you agree, Hogan?

HOGAN

My father?

WATCHTOWER

He felt the same way, didn't he? The glory of being on the front lines?

HOGAN

How do you know about—

WATCHTOWER

I've been reviewing your file for a little side project of mine and well, I've discovered some very interesting things.

(Beat.)

See, unlike you, I have drive. As nice as this office is, I have my eyes set on something a few floors up if you catch my drift.

HOGAN

The, uhh, The...

WATCHTOWER

Yes, The Board, but do you know what that means?

(HOGAN shakes his head.)

There will be an empty office. My office.

HOGAN

Are you saying—

WATCHTOWER

Nothing is guaranteed of course, but like I said, I've been looking over your file and, well, I have something special in mind for you... A last hurrah, if you will, for an Agent as *seasoned* as you.

Lights down on HOGAN as we return to CHAVEZ who is still lying in bed. She is propped up against the headboard. After a moment, MEYER appears, army crawling out from the foot of the bed until his head and shoulders are exposed. He is wearing large goggles whose lenses are painted red. There may be small lights along its side. They should look high tech. He props himself up on his elbows as he speaks.

MEYER

You know, I knew that being a Blue meant that we'd be on the front lines, but no one ever said that being on the front lines meant that sometimes you're covered in mud and sitting in a deer blind hunting down goblins in, Wherever-the-fuck-we-are, Kentucky.

CHAVEZ

What? This isn't the glorious, front line action you were looking for?

MEYER

Nothing glorious about goblins. I could punt them into next year if I wanted to.

CHAVEZ

What were you expecting when they sent us out to Kentucky?

MEYER

I don't know, but I sure as hell wasn't expecting to have to rub deer piss all over myself.

(Beat. CHAVEZ snickers.)

You put the deer piss on too, right?

CHAVEZ

No. I absolutely did not.

MEYER

And you didn't tell me?

CHAVEZ

I didn't think you would actually put it on!

MEYER

What happened to Agent "we gotta do this by the book" Chavez, huh?

CHAVEZ

I've got the mud on, don't I?

MEYER

(He laughs.)

I hate you.

(CHAVEZ chuckles.)

Seriously though. "On the Front Lines Defending America Against the Occult, Perverse, and Grandiose. The Board Needs You!" Crock of bullshit. Should've listened to my old man.

CHAVEZ

Why's that?

MEYER

He said no one goes poking around neighborhoods like ours unless they're looking for cannon fodder. Bureau's no different than the Army or Navy or anyone else trying to stick us in a uniform.

CHAVEZ

Yeah. Maybe.

MEYER

At least I got paired with you. Don't know how long I would've lasted with a white partner, that's for sure. Leave that shit for the movies.

CHAVEZ

(Playfully.)

Stop it.

(Beat.)

Besides, don't forget where we are.

MEYER

Ugh.

CHAVEZ & MEYER

Kentucky.

CHAVEZ

We're still well within horror movie territory.

The sound of a branch shaking makes them both go silent. A twig snaps. Some leaves rustle. Then, the sound of a raccoon chittering before running away.

They both laugh.

MEYER

Jesus Christ.

CHAVEZ

Scared of a raccoon, Meyer?

MEYER

I was so ready to beat the hell out of a goblin.

CHAVEZ

America can rest soundly knowing that you're on the front lines.

Night sounds continue. After a moment.

MEYER

Bet the other agents don't get sent on missions like this.

CHAVEZ

Sure they do.

MEYER

Not the white ones.

CHAVEZ

The young ones do.

MEYER

It's not because we're young.

CHAVEZ

Okay.

MEYER

It's true.

CHAVEZ

I said okay.

MEYER

You believe in aliens and monsters, but you can't believe that the Reds in charge of sending us on missions aren't racist?

CHAVEZ

I believe they put the right agents on the job.

MEYER

We're covered in mud and piss. Is this the best use of our skills?

CHAVEZ

I'm not covered in piss.

MEYER

(He laughs, but he's done trying.)

Alright, alright. Tell you what. I'll take the first watch. Don't need both of us falling asleep and getting our eyes eaten by goblins.

Suddenly, CHAVEZ bolts awake. MEYER recedes into the bed as the lights of the room come on fully.

CHAVEZ

Hogan, we fell asleep! Hogan? Hogan, wake up!

HOGAN sits asleep at the window side table. WATCHTOWER is gone. CHAVEZ quickly gets out of bed and crosses to HOGAN. She tries to wake him up, shaking him at first, and very nearly slapping him awake.

HOGAN

What— What!

CHAVEZ

We fell asleep!

HOGAN

How the hell did we fall asleep? How long have we been out?

CHAVEZ checks her watch and, after looking confused, checks her phone.

CHAVEZ

They're both dead.

HOGAN

What?

(He checks his phone.)

Fuck. Mine too. That can't be good.

CHAVEZ

No, definitely not.

The sound of a door slamming on the other side of the wall. Room 208 is occupied. They sound like a young couple, college age possibly. They are giggling, laughing out loud at times. He's tickling her, and she's laughing for him to quit it.

CHAVEZ

Stop, stop, you hear that?

HOGAN

Looks like we've got company.

CHAVEZ

Shh, shh—

HOGAN stands and moves the end table on the left side of the bed so he can lean against the wall, pressing his ear up against it. CHAVEZ gets up and kneels in the bed, ear against the wall above the headboard.

The voices on the other side continue as muffled voice overs.

MALE VOICE

You're absolutely gorgeous.

FEMALE VOICE

(Laughs.)

Oh, stop it!

MALE VOICE

The most beautiful person I've ever met.

FEMALE VOICE

You say that to all the girls.

MALE VOICE

Sometimes, sure. But this time, I mean it.

FEMALE VOICE

Jeff, that is the biggest crock of shit I've ever heard.

MALE VOICE

Sarah, I love you.

FEMALE VOICE

What?

MALE VOICE

It's true. I love you.

The sound of muffled kissing takes over.

HOGAN

(He chuckles.)

It's just a couple of kids.

(He raises his fist and bangs on the wall.)

Hey! Hey!

(The kissing continues.)

Quit your smacking and listen to me!

MALE VOICE

Ow!

FEMALE VOICE

Sorry—

MALE VOICE

You bit my lip, fuck—

FEMALE VOICE

I just got a little excited Jeff, that's all.

MALE VOICE

Fuck, you split my lip. Shit.

FEMALE VOICE

Jeff...

MALE VOICE

And now there's blood on my collar. Jesus Fucking...

(Heavy breath.)

You know what. You're gonna wash this.

FEMALE VOICE

Sure. Yeah, of course. I'm sorry—

MALE VOICE

Sinks over there. And use cold water.

HOGAN

(Under his breath.)

What a fucking asshole.

(Banging on the wall again.)

Hey! Asshat! We're stuck in here!

Across the stage, a young woman appears in a sundress, she is facing away from the audience. We can hear water running as she rubs away at a dark green button up. We should be able to see this person through the walls of the motel room itself.

She begins to sing. "Any Day Now," Elvis Presley.

FEMALE VOICE

Any day now, I will hear you say
Goodbye my love
You'll be on your way
Then my wild beautiful bird
You will have flown
Any day now I'll be all alone /
Oh, oh, oh

HOGAN

What the fuck—

FEMALE VOICE

Any day now, when your restless eyes
Meet someone new /

CHAVEZ

I know this song.

MALE VOICE

Hey, is it coming out?

FEMALE VOICE

Yeah, it's all out. Here.

MALE VOICE

What am I going to do with a wet shirt? Iron it.

We hear the squeaking metal sound of an ironing board unfolding. The woman appears again, this time, through the wall that HOGAN is standing in front of. He's facing her and, although her face is covered in shadows, she is looking at HOGAN.

She is ironing. She sings. HOGAN joins shortly after she begins.

FEMALE VOICE & HOGAN

I know I shouldn't want to keep you
If you don't want to stay
Until you've gone forever
I'll be holding on for dear life
Holding you this way
Begging you to stay /

HOGAN

Mom?

FEMALE VOICE

Any day...now...

The woman looks at the wall between HOGAN and her. She begins to raise a hand to it.

CHAVEZ

(Turning to HOGAN, slowly rising.)

Hogan.

HOGAN

(Almost like he's in a trance.)

It can't really be her, can it?

CHAVEZ

It's not, you know that.

HOGAN

This place—

CHAVEZ

Look at me, Hogan. Breathe.

The woman suddenly fades away and the wall is opaque once more.

A sitcom laugh track suddenly plays from the television set.

HOGAN

What? You think this is funny?

Upstage, another figure appears behind the wall. A young man wearing a dark green uniform. He is facing away from us. He makes two sharp clicks with his mouth. HOGAN freezes, stunned. He slowly turns to face the man behind the wall.

MALE VOICE

Sarah. Sarah, I'm talking to you. Look at me. Look. At. Me.

(Beat.)

You know how much this uniform means to me, don't you? The shirt, it's more than just a shirt. It's a calling. It's a *fucking* creed.

(Beat.)

I'm sorry, I— I don't mean to yell, but you just get me so worked up. I—

(Beat.)

Go wash your face. Your makeup is running.

The figure fades away once more. HOGAN is left staring at the opaque wall. He is seething.

HOGAN

What did you say its name was?

CHAVEZ

Dora.

HOGAN

(Under his breath.)

Dora, huh? You having fun, Dora?

CHAVEZ

Maybe we shouldn't provoke her, right?

HOGAN

(He sucks at his teeth. Is he about to cry?)

This fucking...

(He straightens his sleeves. Slowly.)

Dora. Dora. Dora...

Suddenly, HOGAN rushes to the bathroom. He slams the door shut behind him.

CHAVEZ

Hogan!

He grabs the sink tightly and stares at himself in the mirror. Then, he screams. Loud. Ugly. Then he's done. He wipes away tears. He lowers himself to the ground and leans his back against the tub.

The room is silent. CHAVEZ walks to the closed bathroom door and lowers herself to the ground.

HOGAN

(Sensing her sit down.)

It wasn't them.

CHAVEZ

I know.

HOGAN

It can't have been them.

CHAVEZ

Exactly.

HOGAN

How could Dora know?

(CHAVEZ is silent.)

Chavez. How could she know?

CHAVEZ

I don't know.

HOGAN stands and looks at the mirror. He straightens his shirt. His belt. He pulls at his shirt where it is tucked into his pants, evening it out. He undoes his cuffs and rolls his sleeves up, folding them above his elbows. He starts to wash his face.

HOGAN

They sounded so young. They were young, I mean, it's just. You never meet them when they're young.

(Beat.)

My parents, they...you know. Whose parents are happy, right? Like, really happy.

(Beat.)

I grew up at the end of this dirt road. This little house sitting all out on its own. Empty lots and unfinished houses all around us. It was all supposed to be some up and coming suburb. Vista Hills or some shit. But the neighborhood never got built. Road never got paved. We didn't even get the paper.

(He runs his wet hands through his hair.)

When I think of my parents, I think of that empty road. A home that was over before it even started.

(He stares into the sink.)

Sorry, youngblood, I don't know why I'm—

CHAVEZ

I never knew my dad.

(Beat.)

It was just my mom and me, for a long time. Really kind woman. A school teacher. Our whole apartment was filled with plastic bins packed with school supplies. Post-its, crayons, notebooks. My mom couponed like crazy. Saved it all for students who couldn't afford the supplies.

(Beat.)

Growing up, my favorite time of year was the Springtime, because she taught this music class for First Graders. Found object instruments and tissue box guitars, stuff like that. She'd sit in the living room with me and a box of junk and we'd just make music, testing out what she'd take to class.

(Beat.)

I uh...it just sounds like we both had pretty gentle moms. You know?

HOGAN

Yeah. Gentle.

(Turning and opening the bathroom door. Facing CHAVEZ.)

And who needs Dads? Fuck'em.

CHAVEZ

(Smiling.)

Yeah. Fuck'em.

HOGAN

(He smiles and begins to cross the room.)

So. The El Dorado.

(He sucks at his teeth.)

What are we going to do, Chavez?

CHAVEZ

Well. Dora's old. Ancient even. She can control the television, so we can assume that goes for other electronics in the room.

HOGAN

Lamps, clocks, outlets.

CHAVEZ

Exactly. And the walls—

HOGAN

The walls have tentacles.

CHAVEZ

And if she drained the batteries in our phones and watches—

HOGAN

Then it stands to reason she's draining us too.

CHAVEZ

Which would explain how we fell asleep.

HOGAN

And doesn't bode well for how long we have.

CHAVEZ

That's some great detective work there, Hogan.

HOGAN

Thanks, but it doesn't tell us anything about those...people.

CHAVEZ

Hogan, I have to ask. How accurate were they?

HOGAN

Pretty fucking accurate.

CHAVEZ

Emotions aside, Hogan. Think carefully. Tone of voice, rhythm, colloquialisms—

HOGAN

Chavez. It was them. It's like Dora pulled them right out of a memory, but...they were young. I wasn't born then. It wasn't my memory.

CHAVEZ

So, Dora can what? Show us the past?

HOGAN

Or something that looks like it.

CHAVEZ

An imitation.

(She thinks.)

HOGAN

Have you seen anything? Anyone that you shouldn't be seeing?

CHAVEZ

(Beat.)

No. No, I haven't.

HOGAN

(Definitely not buying it.)

Chavez—

Suddenly, the motel room phone begins to ring, startling both HOGAN and CHAVEZ. They turn to the phone. HOGAN slowly walks towards it.

Wait.

CHAVEZ

It's probably Watchtower—

HOGAN

Watchtower or...an imitation.

CHAVEZ

We can use—

HOGAN

CHAVEZ raises a finger to her lips, shushing him, but she nods in agreement. CHAVEZ pulls the phone from the receiver and presses the speakerphone button, but does not say anything.

WATCHTOWER appears in a column of red light.

Agent Chavez? Hello?

WATCHTOWER

Who is this?

CHAVEZ
(After a moment. Cautious.)

Who is this? It's Watchtower, Agent.

WATCHTOWER

(Coughing.)
Are you looking for a good time?

HOGAN

WATCHTOWER

Is this a joke?

HOGAN

A good time, Watchtower, are you looking for a good time?

WATCHTOWER

Oh, I see now.

(Clears their throat.)

I love the desert this time of year.

CHAVEZ

Ain't it just marvelous? I love thunderstorms in the southwest.

WATCHTOWER

Rolling waves of light, and thunder that makes your bones ache.

HOGAN

What's your name?

WATCHTOWER

Watchtower.

(After a moment, they sigh.)

Sheet Metal. Refinery. Owl. Rojo. Are you happy now?

CHAVEZ

Thank you, we just—

HOGAN

We had to make sure it was you.

WATCHTOWER

Who else would it be, Agent Hogan?

CHAVEZ

We have reason to believe that the room can manifest, well, people.

WATCHTOWER

Corporeal? Tangible?

CHAVEZ

We aren't sure, we can just hear them in the other room.

WATCHTOWER

Interesting. And you're sure these aren't just other guests? The El Dorado after all is a beast with many mouths.

CHAVEZ

No, no these weren't just other people. They were...well...

HOGAN

They were my parents.

WATCHTOWER

Oh. Very interesting.

(They snap their fingers in the air and continue.)

Chavez, I called for a status report.

CHAVEZ

Yes, of course. Agent Hogan and I have confirmed that Dora is seemingly able to—

WATCHTOWER

Wait, wait, Dora?

HOGAN

The motel. It's her name. After the explorer.

WATCHTOWER

Oh? The motel has a...sense of humor...

CHAVEZ

Yes. It certainly seems like it.

Suddenly, from the shadows, a manilla folder is presented to Watchtower. It is thick and worn. Filled with papers covered in sticky notes and clips. WATCHTOWER opens it and begins to read out loud.

WATCHTOWER

Jeff and Sarah Hogan. Odessa, Texas. Is this all correct so far, Agent Hogan?

HOGAN

(Clenched teeth.)

Yes.

WATCHTOWER

Sarah Hogan, maiden name Ornelas. Housewife most of her life. Tailoring and mending on the side. Cleaning lady when times were tough. A series of restraining orders filed against your father all dropped fairly close to their issuing.

CHAVEZ

Watchtower—

WATCHTOWER

Jeff Hogan. Originally worked for your grandfather's cement company. Then as a truck driver, plumber, mechanic and...oh, that's interesting. Despite a pile of battering charges against him your father secured a job with the Border Patrol—

CHAVEZ

I'm struggling to see the point of all this.

WATCHTOWER

Well, I just wanted to know if these, let's call them...figments, added up to the real deal. Did they, Agent Hogan?

HOGAN

(Beat.)

Yes.

WATCHTOWER

Very interesting.

(They hand the folder back to the shadows.)

It seems we may have underestimated the El Dorado's abilities. I have always likened it to a mouse trap, but perhaps...perhaps these figments act more like the sweet and sticky venus fly trap.

HOGAN

You're saying these figments are part of the—

WATCHTOWER

Feeding process, yes.

HOGAN

But why show me my parents?

WATCHTOWER

I suspect it's for the pain.

(Beat.)

It was painful, wasn't it? After what happened to them...yes, hearing their voices must've been very painful. You never did get to say goodbye.

HOGAN

And whose fault is that?

WATCHTOWER

Watch your tone, Agent Hogan.

(They laugh.)

Agent Chavez. Have you seen any of these figments? Parents, friends? Colleagues.

CHAVEZ

(Beat.)

No, I haven't.

WATCHTOWER

Shame.

(They snap their fingers.)

I'd be very interested in seeing what *Dora*, cooks up for you.

(Beat.)

Hogan, please leave the room.

HOGAN

Excuse me?

WATCHTOWER

I must relay some classified information to the senior agent in the room.

HOGAN

Senior?

WATCHTOWER

She does have two years of experience over you, Hogan. Or, did you already forget you were a Blue?

CHAVEZ

Watchtower, I'm sure there's no need to—

WATCHTOWER

Take the receiver, Chavez and let me know when Hogan has left the room.

HOGAN

Where the hell am I supposed to go?

WATCHTOWER

I'm certain your room has a bathroom, Agent.

HOGAN looks to CHAVEZ who doesn't know what to do. After a moment, she moves to grab the receiver and takes WATCHTOWER off of speakerphone. As she does this, HOGAN moves towards the bathroom, but he grabs a water glass from one of the bedside tables without CHAVEZ noticing.

HOGAN makes a show of going into the bathroom. Loudly closing the door and stomping about. Once the door is closed, however, he takes the drinking glass and holds it to the door, listening.

CHAVEZ now has the phone to her ear. After she sees that HOGAN has closed the door, she speaks to WATCHTOWER.

CHAVEZ

Watchtower?

WATCHTOWER

Are you still in possession of the briefcase?

CHAVEZ

Yes, I am.

WATCHTOWER

I'm officially clearing you to access the contents of the briefcase should the situation be dire enough to warrant it.

CHAVEZ

What is in—

WATCHTOWER

No, don't speak. Only Yes or No. Understood?

CHAVEZ

Yes.

WATCHTOWER

Should you and Agent Hogan fail in your mission to kill the motel, you may open the briefcase and use its contents to... resolve your situation. Is that understood?

CHAVEZ

Yes, Watchtower.

WATCHTOWER

Good. Now, hang up the phone, and return to your mission.

CHAVEZ

Understood.

(Hanging up the phone.)

Hogan, you can come out now.

HOGAN

(Exiting the bathroom.)

The fucking nerve.

CHAVEZ

I know, I'm sorry—

HOGAN

Who the hell does Watchtower think they are?

CHAVEZ

Let's just forget about it, Hogan. We need to figure out how to—

HOGAN

Have you ever actually met Watchtower? They're a fucking spectre that gets off to budget reports and personel files.

CHAVEZ

Hey, hey. Look at me.

(Beat.)

Fuck them.

HOGAN

(He smiles, cocks his head. Surprised.)

Fuck them?

CHAVEZ

They aren't here. We are. And we're caught in a trap. What are we going to do?

HOGAN

You're asking me?

CHAVEZ

Yeah, *Agent* Hogan. What are we going to do?

HOGAN seems caught off guard by this. He thinks for a moment.

HOGAN

Okay. Okay. Let's see. You said Dora wants our help.

CHAVEZ

Right, but we don't know what she wants.

HOGAN

Well, I know what I want.

(To the room.)

Dora? You listening?

The room groans.

CHAVEZ

Hogan—

HOGAN

Now, you want our help, but I want a little something first, let's call it a peace offering. I want some ice.

The room groans, almost a question.

HOGAN

That's right. Ice. I've got a bottle of mezcal I want to crack open, but I want it chilled. Then, let's say we each have a glass and talk things over, because I've got an idea. I've got a feeling you don't want to die, and, we got that in common, okay? I don't want you eating me either. So let's say we discuss an exchange. You let us live, and we help hide you from The Bureau.

CHAVEZ

Hogan, what are you talking about?

HOGAN

Roll with it, youngblood.

(To DORA.)

You spend enough years cleaning up crime scenes, you can sure as hell fake them. You give me some ice, and Chavez and I here can come up with a way to hide you from the Bureau for good.

(Beat.)

How does that sound?

The walls groan and the ground shakes as DORA thinks. After a moment, the television clicks on and plays the opening theme to "The Price is Right." Studio laughter and static.

CHAVEZ
What is this?

HOGAN
Jackpot, baby. The Price is Right.

CHAVEZ
We need to talk about this.

From the bathroom we can hear ice clattering into the tub from the faucet.

HOGAN
(Turning to the bathroom, beaming.)
Ha! Now we're in business!

HOGAN crosses the room and grabs the ice bucket and bottle of mezcal from the table near the front door and runs back to the bathroom, scooping ice out of the tub and filling the bucket.

While he does this, CHAVEZ turns to the room, looking at the ceiling and walls, marveling at them. Turning to HOGAN.

CHAVEZ
Hogan, hey, Hogan—

HOGAN
What?

CHAVEZ
Thank her—

HOGAN
What?

CHAVEZ
The room, thank her—

HOGAN

Yeah, yeah, whatever. I'll pour one out for her when the mezcal is chilled.

(He continues scooping ice.)

CHAVEZ turns to the room and, softly, thanks her.

She turns back and enters the bathroom, closing the door behind her. Quietly:

HOGAN

You gonna thank me? I just saved our asses.

CHAVEZ

(Quietly.)

What's your plan here, Hogan? How the hell are you going to fake killing the El Dorado?

HOGAN

(Hushed.)

Oh no, we're not faking anything. We're killing this bitch.

CHAVEZ

Then what the hell is your plan?

HOGAN

We play along until we figure out what makes her tick. She's gotta have a weakness, right? A heart or some sort of core.

CHAVEZ

And then what?

HOGAN

You tell me, chica. After all, you're the one with all the experience, right?

End of Act One.

ACT TWO

CHAVEZ and HOGAN are still conspiring in the bathroom when the front door of the motel room opens. The bricks are gone and, in their place, stands CELESTE. She pokes her head in, gently knocking on the door as she takes a step in.

CELESTE

Hello?

She can hear HOGAN and CHAVEZ in the bathroom. She closes the front door behind her, quietly. CELESTE is wearing a large, baggy windbreaker from the University of Arizona. She is carrying a six pack of beer, probably Miller High Life, with two beers already missing.

She sits at the small table near the front door. She eyes the small 'no smoking' sign and flips it over before pulling out a pack of cigarettes. She lights one and sits in silence. After a moment, she goes for another beer. She pulls one from the plastic rings and opens it, loudly.

The whispering in the bathroom suddenly stops. CHAVEZ and HOGAN both look towards the closed door. After a moment, HOGAN slowly stands and opens the bathroom door. Peeking out, he sees CELESTE. She smiles, gives a small wave, and drinks.

CELESTE

Hey, handsome.

HOGAN

What the fuck? How did you get in here?

CELESTE

Rude.

HOGAN

Celeste, how did you—

CELESTE

You know, it wasn't easy finding this place. Which is weird. Did you know I grew up here and, for the life of me, I've never seen The El Dorado Motel before. I knew something sounded off about it. Thought it might be new, but look at this place. It's practically falling apart.

CHAVEZ

(Coming out of the bathroom.)

Hi, Celeste right?

CELESTE

There you are, I was beginning to wonder where you were.

CHAVEZ

Celeste, I just want to ask you a few questions, okay?

CELESTE

Funny, I was about to say the same thing.

CHAVEZ

Excuse me?

CELESTE

Like I said, this wasn't an easy place to find. Handsome over here gave me a name and room number, but no address. And it's not like Truth or Consequences is some big city, it's not. Got a population somewhere in the five thousands and I've been one of them since the day I was born.

CHAVEZ

Celeste, I'm sorry to interrupt you, but—

CELESTE

Then don't, easy as that.

(Something in the room has changed, there's a charge to the air.)

For a few years now, I've been part of this club of sorts. Lots of people lose loved ones, and, in a small town like this, we all sorta gravitate towards each other. Thursday nights, weak coffee, box of tissues, whole shebang. Normally, I tune other people out. My own pain is enough, but something Handsome said tonight got me thinking.

(Beat.)

The El Dorado Motel. Now, I'd never seen this motel before, but the name, the El Dorado, I recognized that. But when I heard about it, it was a flower shop, or a laundromat, or a bakery. See, all these little places, people would come and tell us about it at our little circle, try and get us to go with them, saying something about the places seeming inviting, but you think I want to spend even more of my time with people like me? No. And no one else does. But those folks, they'd go and they'd disappear. And so would the flower shop. The laundromat. The bakery—

CHAVEZ

That's why it's important that we talk to you, Celeste.

CELESTE

See, I think I've stumbled onto something here.

HOGAN

You're right about that.

CELESTE

Oh, I'll get to you handsome, believe me. But you, pretty thing, I'm gonna ask you a question, and I want you to tell me the truth, okay?

(CHAVEZ is silent, but gives a small, almost imperceptible nod.)

Who do you two work for?

CHAVEZ

Celeste, I know you think that's an important question, but—

CELESTE

No! You don't get to tell me what's important right now. I decide. Me. I don't know what this place is. It shouldn't exist, but it does, and I'm standing inside it, right now. All these people, disappearing, and no one else notices, but you know what? I noticed. Me.

Celeste-Fucking-Martinez. I noticed, because I pay attention.

(Beat.)

And now, here we are, the same night handsome over here just strolls into town, this *thing* pops up. That tells me you two have got something to do with this. Am I right?

CHAVEZ

You're right. This place. It just appears, whenever it wants. And when it does, people disappear, but I assure you, we don't have anything to do with it.

CELESTE

Bullshit.

HOGAN

She's telling the truth, Celeste.

CELESTE

(Sharply facing HOGAN.)

You. Did you come looking for me?

HOGAN

What?

CELESTE

Me, were you looking for me?

HOGAN

No!

CELESTE

Because I can't figure out how I got wrapped up in all this. I was just minding my own business when you strolled up and brought me into the fold.

HOGAN

Into the fold? What the fuck are you talking about?

CELESTE

Are you two government agents?

CHAVEZ

Celeste, please calm down.

CELESTE

Answer me.

CHAVEZ

Yes. We're government agents that investigate things like this. Strange occurrences. Like...well...

HOGAN

Like aliens, Celeste! Bigfoot, poltergeists, Nosfer-fucking-ratu!

CELESTE

Oh, fuck off. You think I'm an idiot? You think I'm going to believe that you two here investigate ghosts and aliens and shit? What is this place? Some sort of safe house? A cover for something?

HOGAN

No, Celeste, it's some of the weird shit we investigate.

CELESTE

Fuck you.

CHAVEZ

Celeste, please.

CELESTE

I'm going to expose what you have going on here.

HOGAN

And what do we have going on here?

CELESTE

Drug smuggling, trafficking! I don't know, but I found it!

HOGAN

Okay, go blow the lid off then.

CELESTE

You stay away from me.

HOGAN

Go tell every news outlet you can, alright? Tell them the government is investing its money in dingey motels all across the country to what? Do something strange?

CELESTE

I'm warning you.

CHAVEZ

Hogan—

HOGAN

Go, Celeste! Go warn them all!

CELESTE

I will!

CELESTE turns and runs towards the door. She pulls it open and we all see that the brick wall has returned. She stands confused and, after a moment, rushes to the window. She pulls the blinds apart and again we see the brick wall has returned.

CELESTE

What the fuck...

HOGAN

That's what we've been trying to tell you.

CELESTE

What's going on?

CHAVEZ

It's the motel, Celeste. You're right, it doesn't belong here. It's something otherworldly. Something that can change what it looks like.

HOGAN

It's a trap.

CELESTE

A trap?

HOGAN

And you just sprang it.

CELESTE

What does that mean?

CHAVEZ

Celeste, I'm going to tell you something and I want you to stay calm, okay?

(Beat.)

Are you with me, Celeste?

CELESTE

(Dazed, but trying to understand.)

Yes. Yeah.

CHAVEZ

Hogan and I have been trapped in this room all night. We were sent here to investigate it, but instead, we've been held captive and, Celeste, listen closely now. If we don't get out—

HOGAN

It's going to eat us, Celeste. This motel is going to digest every inch of you until there's nothing left.

CELESTE

Oh God—

CHAVEZ

Hogan, that's not helping.

CELESTE

Why me?

(Silence.)

Why did you come up to me, Hogan? Why did you bring me into this?

HOGAN

I don't know what to tell you.

CELESTE

Is it because I grew up here? Because, I had all the pieces? I, uh, just needed to put them all together, figure this place out, right?

HOGAN

Celeste...

CELESTE

Why me, Hogan? Was I...special?

HOGAN

(He softly shakes his head.)

No. You were just a pretty face.

CELESTE

(Weakly.)

Oh.

CELESTE collapses into one of the chairs at the window side table.

CHAVEZ

(To HOGAN, a forced whisper.)

Jesus Christ, Hogan.

CHAVEZ crosses to CELESTE and kneels beside her. She's looking for the right words to say.

The lights in the room fade, focusing only on CHAVEZ and MEYER who now stands across the stage. MEYER's hands are stained blue with some sort of strange blood. He wipes at his face and leaves a smear along his cheek.

MEYER

This isn't right, Chavez.

CHAVEZ

It's the job.

MEYER

They were worshipping it.

CHAVEZ

We had our orders.

MEYER

So what? What harm was it doing?

(Beat.)

Their crops were dying, it made it rain. Their elders got sick, it healed them. What harm was it doing?

CHAVEZ

It was upsetting the ecosystem, Meyer.

MEYER

You get that out of our pamphlet?

CHAVEZ

I can't do this right now.

MEYER

Because you know I'm right. We didn't just kill a cryptid, Chavez. We killed this people's culture. Their entire way of living. Shattered. And for what?

CHAVEZ

I don't know.

MEYER

(He looks at his hands.)

Fuck, Chavez. I'm going to go wash this blood off.

CHAVEZ

Okay.

MEYER

And you...you can think about what you're going to tell them. Explain to them how things are going to be okay. That the sun will come up like it always does, because I guarantee you,

right now, they're not sure they're ever going to see tomorrow again. I don't want any part of that.

CHAVEZ

Blood's on both our hands.

MEYER

I know. I know.

MEYER exits into the darkness as the lights return to normal. CHAVEZ is still kneeling besides CELESTE, a hand on her knee.

CHAVEZ

Celeste, I know you're scared right now.

(CELESTE nods weakly.)

Because I'm scared too. And that's probably not what you want to hear, but I want to tell you the truth, okay? I'm scared, because this room, this motel. She's ancient. She's powerful. But she needs our help.

(CELESTE looks at CHAVEZ.)

Earlier tonight, she told me that there's something I can help her with and I intend to do that, because I'm scared, and I want to live, and I don't want to see you hurt. And I mean that. Right, Hogan?

HOGAN

Yeah, right.

CHAVEZ

But there's another thing. I need your help, Celeste.

CELESTE

My help?

CHAVEZ

Yeah. Because you're right. You are special. You grew up here. We didn't.

CELESTE

(Nodding.)

Okay.

(She sniffles.)

What can I do?

CHAVEZ

Let's start off by getting you a glass of water okay?

CHAVEZ motions to HOGAN who goes to the bathroom and brings CELESTE back a glass of water. He hands it to her and she drinks. After a moment.

CHAVEZ

Now, look around this room and see if anything stands out, okay?

CELESTE

Okay.

(She stands and begins to walk about the room.)

I mean, I've been in places like this, they all sort of look the same. Same smell, same stains, same...

HOGAN

Jesus, what's the point of this, Chavez.

CHAVEZ

Shush. Keep going, Celeste.

CELESTE

I mean...

(After a moment, something catches her attention.)

Wait. Is that...

CELESTE crosses to the painting that hangs just above the bed. It depicts a lush, green forest and a mountain looming over it, but has it always? Earlier, wasn't it a pueblo? A desert?

She stands on the bed and inspects the painting closely.

CELESTE

Yeah, I've been here. That's San Mateo Peak.

CHAVEZ

Okay, tell me more about it, Celeste. Why is it special?

CELESTE

It's not really, but...when I was little, my family would go camping there. And there was a summer camp...oh.

CHAVEZ

What is it?

CELESTE

No, no. It's nothing. I don't want to talk about it.

CHAVEZ

It could be important, Celeste.

CELESTE

No. Not this.

CHAVEZ

Celeste, it's okay, I'm here with you.

(CELESTE looks to CHAVEZ.)

I've lost someone too. It's not easy thinking about them, but this place, it has a way of making you face them.

(Beat.)

You can do this.

CELESTE

(Thinking. She looks at the painting, then back to CHAVEZ.)

Three years ago I, uhh, the veteran's home was downsizing, cutting staff. They let me go. Money was tight, but a friend got me a job at the Comfort Inn.

(Beat.)

But the hours... I wouldn't have been able to take care of my son, so, there was this summer camp—

The walls groan as a figment appears

BOY VOICE

Everyone at camp bullies me.

(Beat.)

I've told the counselors, but they haven't done anything about it. I think it's because one of them is Brian's older sister. He's been waking me up at night and making me walk out into the woods without a flashlight.

CELESTE

Mason?

BOY VOICE

But, Brian says he's going to take me out to the gorge later. Says as long as I don't tell anybody, he'll show me where all the big kids go to smoke. I know, I know, I won't smoke, I promise, but I wanna see what it's like to be one of the cool kids.

CELESTE

(To HOGAN.)

What is this?

(To CHAVEZ.)

What the fuck is this?!

BOY VOICE

Brian's gonna take me to the gorge Friday, after sundown, and I was thinking maybe you could pick me up Saturday.

(Beat.)

I miss you.

CELESTE

(Facing the figment.)

Mason, don't go!

HOGAN

He can't hear you.

BOY VOICE

I know it would've been hard, but I wish we could've spent the summer together instead.

CELESTE

Mason, please—

BOY VOICE

Love you, Mom! Bye.

The figment fades away. CELESTE is shaking as she walks closer to the wall. After a moment, she turns back to HOGAN.

CELESTE

(To HOGAN.)

Get me out of here.

(To CHAVEZ.)

I want to leave.

CHAVEZ

I know. We're trying.

CELESTE

(To the wall.)

Was that— God, he felt real.

(Beat.)

No one, but the cops knew about that message. I—

CHAVEZ

I'm sorry for your loss, Celeste.

CELESTE

Everytime I think the wound is healing something comes and tears it wide open, but this...this is different.

(Beat.)

The room did that?

HOGAN

(Looking to CHAVEZ, she nods.)

Yeah. Yeah it did.

CHAVEZ

(Looking to HOGAN.)

It's shown us people too.

HOGAN

My parents.

(Beat.)

Five years ago, they, uhh, died in a house fire.

(Beat.)

This place, it doesn't play by the rules. It goes for the low blows.

(Realizing something.)

You know, we don't actually know how it works, these shadows. These figments. They've only ever been on the other side of this wall.

(Running his hand along the yellowing wallpaper.)

I wonder... Celeste, do you want to see your boy again?

CHAVEZ

Hogan, no—

CELESTE

Yes. Yes I do.

CHAVEZ

Celeste, that's not your little boy.

HOGAN

(Crossing to CELESTE. Taking her by the hand.)

He seemed like a sweet kid, Celeste.

CELESTE

He is!

HOGAN

Ask her to bring them back.

CELESTE

I...

HOGAN

You do want him back, don't you?

CHAVEZ

Hogan, stop this—

CELESTE

How do I...

HOGAN

Ask her, the room, Dora. Ask her to bring him back.

CHAVEZ

Celeste, don't do this. We don't know what will happen—

CELESTE

(Loudly.)

I want to see him again.

CHAVEZ

Celeste, please—

CELESTE

My boy, I want to see my boy again!

The room groans with hunger.

CHAVEZ

(Reaching out to CELESTE.)

Celeste, please stop.

HOGAN

Keep going, Celeste, it's working!

*CELESTE climbs onto the bed and puts her hands
on the picture frame of San Mateo Peak.*

CELESTE

Please, I want to see my boy! Mason! Mason can you hear me!

CHAVEZ

Celeste, please!

The room groans as the figment appears behind the wall again.

BOY VOICE

I know it would've been hard, but I wish we could've spent the summer together instead.

CELESTE

I know, baby! I know! I'm sorry! Momma's sorry! But I'm here! We can spend the summer together, every summer Mason! Please, come to momma!

BOY VOICE

I miss you—

CELESTE

I miss you too, Mason! I love—

Suddenly, CELESTE screams. She looks down at her feet. We can't see it, but something's grabbed a hold of her. She grabs at her legs, but it's too late. She begins to sink into the mattress as something pulls her in, dragging her into the depths of DORA.

CELESTE

Help me! Help!

CHAVEZ lunges for her, grabbing CELESTE's hands, but the force is too strong. CELESTE is slowly pulled into the mattress, disappearing where the pillows meet the headboard, as if she's being pulled into the wall behind the bed.

CHAVEZ

Hogan, help!

(Beat. Louder.)

Hogan!

HOGAN

(Stunned.)

Oh my, God.

CHAVEZ

Hogan!

The force is too strong. CHAVEZ can barely hang on. We don't even see CELESTE anymore. She's been completely consumed by the bed and, slowly, so is CHAVEZ. She screams as the bed also pulls her into the depths of DORA.

HOGAN

Chavez! Fuck— Chavez!

The stage goes dark as CHAVEZ sinks deeper into DORA. Suddenly, she bursts out of the bed, gasping for air. She looks around the room, but something is different. HOGAN is gone and the walls seem to glow.

MEYER appears from the bathroom, a mission briefing in his hands.

MEYER

Watchtower suspects the cult is in possession of a magical artifact—

CHAVEZ

Meyer?

MEYER

The Reds at the Bureau think we may be dealing with some sort of timeline altering object of power.

CHAVEZ

(Remembering.)

This could be it, Meyer. The big one.

MEYER

Right, the big one.

CHAVEZ

Come on, this proves it! The Board loves us!

(Meyer looks concerned.)

Why are you looking at me like that?

MEYER

Let's leave.

CHAVEZ

What?

MEYER

You. Me. Let's just go.

CHAVEZ

What's gotten into you?

MEYER

I don't feel good about this, Chavez.

CHAVEZ

Of course you don't.

MEYER

Don't—

CHAVEZ

You really think The Board is out to get us, don't you?

MEYER

Not just The Board, Chavez. All of them. We're a play thing to them.

CHAVEZ

It's our job, Meyer.

MEYER

These are our lives! Please. Let's leave.

CHAVEZ

Drop it.

MEYER

No, I'm not—

CHAVEZ

Drop it, Meyer.

MEYER

Chavez...

CHAVEZ

(Beat.)

This is our big ticket, don't you see that? The biggest mission of our careers. We bring this home, we prove them all wrong.

MEYER

It's not worth it, Chavez.

CHAVEZ

It is to me. If you don't want to go, then fine. Stay. But I'm going to finish this mission, with or without you.

(Silence.)

Well?

MEYER

Okay. One more mission. But after that, I'm gone. With or without you.

MEYER fades away into the bathroom. CHAVEZ, tearing away from the memory, runs to him.

CHAVEZ

Meyer! Wait! Please! Meyer!

Lights up on the table near the window. The BOY FIGMENT sits at the table, enshrouded in darkness, eating cereal. CELESTE is revealed. She is wearing hiking clothes.

CELESTE

Chavez? Is that you?

CHAVEZ

(Crossing to CELESTE.)

Oh my, God, Celeste, are you okay?

(Embracing her.)

CELESTE

(Caught off guard.)

Oh! Okay!

(Patting her back.)

I suppose it's been a long time.

CHAVEZ

(Pulling away.)

What do you mean?

CELESTE

Chavez...I haven't seen you in months.

CHAVEZ

I just...you were just...

CELESTE

Oh, I see. Well. That is strange isn't it.

The room groans with urgency.

CELESTE

Yes! Of course, of course. Dora wanted me to tell you something.

CHAVEZ

You can, understand her?

CELESTE

Somewhat. I've picked up some things while I've been here, she's actually quite chatty.

CHAVEZ

What does she say?

CELESTE

She says she needs your help.

CHAVEZ

I know that, but what does she need me to do?

The room groans intensely.

CELESTE

Oh! Oh, I'm so sorry, I didn't— That's embarrassing.

(To CHAVEZ.)

I misheard her. She doesn't need your help, she says *you* need *her* help.

CHAVEZ

What?

CELESTE

Chavez, it's okay to miss him.

CHAVEZ

What are you talking about?

CELESTE

Dora knows about Meyer.

CHAVEZ

That's impossible.

CELESTE

Impossible? Chavez, look around, all of this is impossible.

The BOY FIGMENT taps his spoon against his now empty cereal bowl.

CELESTE

Oh, sorry Mason, we'll leave in just a moment, let momma finish talking with her friend.

(To CHAVEZ.)

Sorry, we're going camping today, he's been looking forward to it all week.

CHAVEZ

Camping?

(Looking at the figment.)

Is that...

CELESTE

Yup, my little pride and joy.

(CHAVEZ looks to CELESTE.)

He's here too, Chavez. Meyer.

CHAVEZ

No.

CELESTE

It's true. You know it is.

CHAVEZ

None of this is real, Celeste.

CELESTE lets out a heavy sigh. She looks from CHAVEZ to the FIGMENT then back to CHAVEZ. CELESTE crosses closer to CHAVEZ and speaks in a hushed whisper.

CELESTE

That's my boy, Chavez. He's as real to me as he ever was. Maybe more so. And we're going camping today. And you can't stay here. You have to go back.

CHAVEZ

I don't understand.

The room groans. As CELESTE talks, she begins ushering CHAVEZ to the bathroom.

CELESTE

She says this isn't your room. It's mine. Mine and my boy's. Besides, you aren't finished yet.

CHAVEZ

Finished with what, Celeste?

CELESTE

I don't know, but Dora says there's still something you don't know. She says Watchtower is hiding something. I don't know what that means, if that's a person or a place, but she says you're close—

CHAVEZ

Close to what?

CELESTE

The truth. Now get in the shower.

CELESTE has led CHAVEZ into the bathroom and ushers her into the tub. She pulls the curtain closed as CHAVEZ yells.

CHAVEZ

Celeste, come with me! Celeste!

CELESTE

Goodbye, Chavez. And goodluck.

CHAVEZ

Celeste, please!

The walls groan and the lights turn a deep green as CHAVEZ is sent back to the other side, to our world. To Room 209.

Lights return to normal in Room 209. HOGAN sits at the window side table, the bottle of mezcal sits open in front of him.

Suddenly, CHAVEZ pulls back the tub curtains and bursts out, gasping for air. She is covered in a thick green slime. She collapses onto the bathroom floor.

HOGAN

(Standing and facing the bathroom.)

Chavez? Holy shit, is that you?

CHAVEZ

(Shivering.)

Hogan?

HOGAN crosses to CHAVEZ and pulls a towel from the rack, wrapping it around her shoulders.

CHAVEZ

God, it's so cold.

HOGAN

Come on, let's get you cleaned up.

CHAVEZ begins to wipe the slime off using the towel. HOGAN helps however he can. After a while, CHAVEZ goes into the room and retrieves her luggage bag, looking for a new shirt. She notices that the bag wasn't in the same position she left it. She notes this, and moves forward with grabbing a new shirt from the bag and changing.

CHAVEZ

How long have I been gone?

HOGAN

What?

CHAVEZ

How long—

HOGAN

An hour, if that.

CHAVEZ

Did I miss anything?

HOGAN

(Almost laughing.)

No, it's been quiet without you, youngblood.

(Beat.)

I thought I lost you.

CHAVEZ

Sorry to disappoint.

HOGAN

So, uhh, what happened?

CHAVEZ

I was on the other side. Whatever is on the other side of the walls.

HOGAN

Did you, uhh...was she—

CHAVEZ

Why did you push her, Hogan?

(He doesn't answer.)

I saw her. She was there, but...it had been months. And she was with her boy, Hogan. He was there. Or, part of him was...I...I don't know.

HOGAN

I just. I wanted to know how all this works.

CHAVEZ

She could've died, Hogan. She might still die. We didn't learn anything.

HOGAN

We learned something.

CHAVEZ

What?

HOGAN

You came back out. We can escape.

CHAVEZ

I got out, because Dora let me.

HOGAN

She...let you? Why?

CHAVEZ thinks for a moment. She looks at the closet, then HOGAN.

CHAVEZ

Call Watchtower.

HOGAN

What?

CHAVEZ

Call them.

HOGAN crosses to the phone and dials 000. He places the phone on speaker. We can hear it ringing.

WATCHTOWER

I hope you have good news for me, Agent.

CHAVEZ

Did you and The Board know what the El Dorado really was?

WATCHTOWER

I don't know what you mean, Chavez.

CHAVEZ

Cut the crap. The El Dorado. It's always been more than just a place, hasn't it. I've dealt with places of power before. Staircases that appear in forests. Doors that lead to other countries. Buildings that are bigger on the inside. But this. Dora. She's more than a place, isn't she.

WATCHTOWER

Agent Chavez, let me remind you that this mission was approved of and directly set in motion by The Board themselves. Your personal feelings aside, the success of this mission is paramount to—

CHAVEZ

Fuck you, Watchtower.

WATCHTOWER

Agent!

CHAVEZ

Meyer was right about you. I should've listened to him. If I had, he'd still—

WATCHTOWER

It's unfortunate, truly. Meyers was an outstanding—

CHAVEZ

Meyer!

WATCHTOWER

Yes, well, his death was certainly a setback—

CHAVEZ

You weren't there. You didn't see what happened to him. The way the artifact tore him apart. Every part of him ripping and tearing and burning and, God, it was so bright... And it was beautiful.

HOGAN

Chavez...

CHAVEZ

But it was slow. I wanted it to be over, I wanted to look away, but I couldn't do that to him. I stood there and watched as my—

WATCHTOWER

Agent—

CHAVEZ

No, Watchtower. You're not getting it.

(Beat.)

I'm not going back to the Bureau.

WATCHTOWER

Is that your final decision, Agent Chavez?

CHAVEZ

Yes.

WATCHTOWER

So, am I to understand that you are refusing to complete the mission as presented?

CHAVEZ

Yes.

WATCHTOWER

So be it, Agent Chavez. I sincerely thank you for your dedication to The Bureau. Hogan. Open the briefcase.

HOGAN

Excuse me?

WATCHTOWER

The briefcase, Hogan. The one Chavez has stored away. Open it.

CHAVEZ

You don't have to play along, Hogan. We can do this without them.

HOGAN

Come on, youngblood. Don't do this. Give me the keys.

CHAVEZ

Hogan, don't.

HOGAN

I'm not dying in here, Chavez. I know about the briefcase. I know where you stashed it.

(CHAVEZ doesn't answer.)

Come on. Hand them over.

Finally, CHAVEZ hands him a small set of keys. HOGAN crosses to the closet and removes the briefcase from its handcuff. He brings it to the bed where he unlocks and opens the briefcase.

WATCHTOWER

It's unfortunate, Agent Chavez. What happened to Agent Meyers, truly, but what will happen to you pales in comparison. I assure you.

Inside it is a single manilla folder containing two sheets of paper. One of which is a typed letter, the other a handwritten note from WATCHTOWER themselves. HOGAN takes the handwritten letter and begins to read it, stepping away from the briefcase. CHAVEZ looks over the typed report still left in the folder.

HOGAN

(Beginning to read the letter.)

To Agent Chavez and Hogan, I had hoped that it wouldn't come to this...

(To WATCHTOWER.)

Watchtower, what is this?

WATCHTOWER

Keep reading, Hogan. I suspect it will clear itself up.

HOGAN

(Returning to the letter.)

We have long suspected that the El Dorado was more than just a place. In fact, all evidence points to it being a god. An ancient being with a singular purpose: to provide a window into another world. A realm where our loved ones are returned.

(Beat.)

Of course, the Bureau can't let something this powerful operate in the American Southwest. It must be stopped, but, in the event of mission failure, a gift is to be presented to the El Dorado. An offering. An olive branch.

(Turning the page over in his hand, looking for more.)

That's it? What's the gift?

(To CHAVEZ.)

What does that say?

*CHAVEZ is still kneeling, reading the typed report.
She is stunned by what it says.*

WATCHTOWER

Oh, Hogan. You never cease to disappoint me. You and Chavez are the gift.

HOGAN

What? That doesn't make any sense?

WATCHTOWER

Like I said, the El Dorado feeds on emotion. Pain. Vulnerability. I felt that, should the agents we send fail to kill the El Dorado, we should ensure that those agents are as delectable of a treat as they can be.

HOGAN

Fuck you, Watchtower! We had a deal!

WATCHTOWER

You wanted glory, Hogan.

HOGAN

You promised me an office!

WATCHTOWER

Hogan. You were never going to be a Red. And your promotion to Blue was merely a formality. You agents, never looking at the bigger picture. The moving parts. That's the difference between you and I, Hogan. You could never look past your own ambitions.

HOGAN

No. No, no, no. I'm coming for you, Watchtower! No motel is eating us! Right, Chavez?
(Turning to CHAVEZ who is still reading. Her hand on her mouth.)

Chavez?

CHAVEZ

(To Watchtower.)

Is this true?

WATCHTOWER

Every word, Agent Chavez.

The line dies as WATCHTOWER hangs up the phone.

HOGAN

What does it say?

CHAVEZ

(To HOGAN.)

Hogan, you knew my mom?

(HOGAN freezes.)

How did you know my mom?

Suddenly, singing. CHAVEZ and HOGAN are still as two figments appear on the other side of the wall. A young man, dressed like a Bureau agent, with his back to the audience. A woman in a blouse and jeans is tending to a wound on the man's arm. As the man speaks, it is HOGAN's voice. Younger, lighter, but his.

The rest of the world seems to darken, giving us a clarity to these figments we've never seen before.

MALE VOICE

Any day now I will hear you say
Goodbye, / my love

FEMALE VOICE

Oh, you sing now too?

MALE VOICE

You'll be on your way
Then, my wild beautiful bird
You will have flown—

Ow!

FEMALE VOICE

Well, if you stayed more still I wouldn't accidentally poke you. What did this to you anyway?

MALE VOICE

You wouldn't believe me even if I told you, which I shouldn't!

FEMALE VOICE

Try me.

MALE VOICE

Well...it was a Thunderbird—

FEMALE VOICE

(Laughing.)

You're lying!

MALE VOICE

It's true! A giant hawk, dark as night with great big wings, damn near the size of this trailer!

FEMALE VOICE

And what makes this big bird so special?

MALE VOICE

Aside from the fact that it can create thunderstorms?

(He laughs and then winces at a sharp pain.)

Ow!

FEMALE VOICE

Oh, sorry—

MALE VOICE

No, no. It's okay.

(Silence.)

Thank you, by the way. I appreciate this.

FEMALE VOICE

(She smiles.)

Did you get this from fighting this big, bad Thunderbird?

MALE VOICE

No. I, uh, I'm just the guy transporting the bird. We hit a bad patch of road. I think it spooked him so I went to check on him, calm him down, but one of his talons nicked my arm.

(Beat.)

Looking into the eyes of something so ancient and powerful and seeing...fear? Confusion? You don't get used to that.

FEMALE VOICE

Where's home for you?

MALE VOICE

The Southwest branch of the Bureau is in—

FEMALE VOICE

No, no. Your home.

MALE VOICE

I, uh...you know, I haven't really decided.

FEMALE VOICE

Hmm. Well, tonight you're staying with me.

MALE VOICE

I really shouldn't—

FEMALE VOICE

You have such beautiful eyes.

(Beat.)

You don't have to be scared.

The figures fade away.

CHAVEZ

Hogan...

HOGAN

The room is playing another game—

CHAVEZ

You met her—

HOGAN

How could Dora know—

CHAVEZ

She knows. She's known this whole time.

(To the room.)

It's true isn't it?

HOGAN

Chavez, I—

CHAVEZ

(Back to Hogan.)

Did you know my mom?

HOGAN

(After a long moment.)

She found me at a drug store.

CHAVEZ

No—

HOGAN

I was scrambling for bandages, peroxide, a sewing needle. I must've been such a mess, scary even, but she helped me.

CHAVEZ

You went home with her—

HOGAN

Chavez—

CHAVEZ

My mom took you home... Does that mean—

HOGAN

No! No, it—

CHAVEZ

Hogan. Look at me.

(Beat.)

Are you...

(Beat. After a moment, he nods.)

Oh, my God—

(Disgusted.)

She told me all these stories of the brave agent who changed her life.

HOGAN

Your mom wasn't a one time thing, Chavez.

CHAVEZ

And that's supposed to make me feel better?

HOGAN

I wrote letters under a fake name. Got her a PO Box. We kept in touch and I saw her every chance I could. Any moment I could get away from the Bureau I gave to her.

CHAVEZ

Did you know about me?

HOGAN

I knew she was pregnant.

CHAVEZ

And?

HOGAN

I stopped writing. I didn't want to— I couldn't bring her— couldn't bring *you* into this life.

CHAVEZ

But here I am, Hogan!

HOGAN

That's not my fault!

CHAVEZ

All I wanted as a kid was to meet you. Get to know you. Find the man.

HOGAN

Meet the myth? You joined the perfect job then. That's all we do. Meet the myths then bag them and tag them.

CHAVEZ

No. You're no myth. You're just a man. A Yellow.

HOGAN

Enough, Chavez—

CHAVEZ

You left her—

HOGAN

Enough of this—

CHAVEZ

You chose The Bureau over her.

HOGAN

Of course I did! The Bureau was my life. I spent years in training to get to where I was. I couldn't stop, not when I had the whole world ahead of me. Twenty five god damn years I've given to it—

CHAVEZ

And what did that get you, huh? You've been a Yellow for twenty five years, Hogan. You what, thought you were going to become a Blue? Get a fancy badge and a company car—

HOGAN

You're damn right I did! I've done my time, paid my dues, played my part! But now all I see are candidates like you. Young and—

(He stops himself.)

CHAVEZ

Say it.

HOGAN

(Slowly.)

It's been clear to me, and other agents in the field, that recently The Bureau has been going out of their way to recruit candidates like you and Meyer.

CHAVEZ

What are you saying, Hogan?

HOGAN

I don't care what diversity initiative The Bureau tries to implement, I worked hard to earn my spot and youngbloods like you took it from me.

CHAVEZ

(Letting this settle.)

You never had a spot, Hogan. You were destined to be a glorified custodian cleaning up my messes.

HOGAN

(Gesturing to the room.)

Damn fine one we're in now, Chavez!

CHAVEZ

My mom said you were a hero.

(Beat.)

That you were someone trying to make a difference. That you were trying to save the world—

HOGAN

Grow up. Is that why you joined? Huh? Because of all the fairy tales your mother told you?

CHAVEZ

I joined, because those stories...because you inspired me.

HOGAN

Sorry to let you down, youngblood.

(Beat.)

I'm not dying in here, Chavez. I don't care if I have to tear my way out of Dora myself. I'm getting out of here.

CHAVEZ

No. You're not.

HOGAN

What are you going to do to stop me?

CHAVEZ

Not me. Her.

Tentacles burst out from beneath the bed and wrap themselves around HOGAN's ankles. They pull him down to the ground where two more tentacles wrap around his wrists, forcing HOGAN to his knees, arms stretched out before CHAVEZ. An offering not to DORA, but her.

HOGAN

What the fuck is this?

CHAVEZ

I've learned something, Hogan.

HOGAN

Let me go!

CHAVEZ

The Bureau, all it's done is destroy what makes the Southwest beautiful. All its magic. All its power. It doesn't come from us. It comes from them, the creatures we've hunted down.

HOGAN

Cut the crap, Chavez. Let me go!

CHAVEZ

And I have to wonder, after all of these monsters are gone, where will The Bureau turn its gaze next. Meyer was onto something, but I thought I knew better. How could an agency, so rooted in the world of mysticism and the occult, still be so backward in its thinking? People in the agency, like Watchtower, like you. You've all got this idea of what The Bureau and its people look like. And they don't look like me. They don't look like Meyer.

HOGAN

Chavez...please.

CHAVEZ

Celeste told me something, while I was on the other side. Said that I had it wrong. Dora didn't need my help. She never did. But I needed hers. She knew what you were. What The Bureau was. And she chose to help me. And this whole time I've been trying to figure out why.

HOGAN

Chavez...

CHAVEZ

It's because I'm part of this land too, Hogan. Just like Dora. Just like my mom, I'm what makes this world special. Not you.

(Beat.)

Do you know what happens to people that walk into the El Dorado, Hogan?

HOGAN

Chavez please—

CHAVEZ

They don't die, Hogan. They get to move in. Live out the rest of their lives with their loved ones. Dora was never here to torture people. She was here to help them.

(Beat.)

Imagine, Hogan. Being reunited with your parents. Getting to finally say your goodbyes.

(Beat.)

But I don't want you to have that. I want you to die.

HOGAN

Chavez! Wait—

CHAVEZ

Goodbye Hogan.

HOGAN

Chavez! Don't do this! Chavez!

CHAVEZ

Take him.

The room groans. It laughs

HOGAN

No! Noooo!

The tentacles pull on HOGAN, bringing him down to the ground and then dragging him under the bed. We can still hear him scream as he is torn apart.

CHAVEZ suddenly lets out all the pent up tension in her body, almost bringing her to her knees. She cries out into the empty room.

She stands in the center of Room 209.

MEYER appears in front of the bathroom door.

MEYER

Hey, Chavez.

CHAVEZ

(Pivoting to face MEYER, but not moving closer to him.)

Are you really...

MEYER

No. I'm Dora. But...you can have Meyer. If you want.

CHAVEZ

I... Meyer and I. It wasn't right, the way we left things.

MEYER

I know. But you can have a second chance. A new beginning.

CHAVEZ

That's the thing, Dora. You're not him. The real him, he's still up here. In my head. Scolding me. Reminding me that I can be better. He's not you. And you're not him. What you do...

MEYER

I help people.

CHAVEZ

You trap them in their own grief.

MEYER

I'm their home.

CHAVEZ

You're their prison.

The front door opens slowly. No brick wall. The sounds of the desert at night spill through.

MEYER

Then go.

CHAVEZ

(Looking at the open door, then MEYER.)

I never got to say I was sorry. I never got to say goodbye.

MEYER

You don't have to say goodbye.

CHAVEZ

I know. I know.

Lights out.

END OF PLAY.