

The Language of the Unheard

A Play in One Act

By Alisha Espinosa

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Cast of Characters (2 F, 2 M with doubling)

Lucia Padilla	24 years old, a graphic designer, Afrolatina
Liliana Padilla	21 years old, a student and artist, Lucia's sister
Xander Briggs	26 years old, bi-racial a local cop
Aaron Mitchell	21 years old, a student, any ethnicity
Student 1	*doubles as XANDER
Student 2	
Dean	*doubles as STUDENT 2 and LUCIA

Place

A neighborhood in a college city in the USA.

Time

Spring Semester, 2014

N.B. The flashbacks of scene sixteen take place among the remains of Liliana's installation.

V.O. text from The Read, Ep. Distrust Funds (November 20, 2014)

Scene One

LUCIA is standing in a park. She is dressed like a dark Lady Justice. The blindfold over her eyes is sheer. She holds a whip in her left hand and set of lopsided scales in the other. The lower scale has painted cotton bolls. The higher scale has a photo of Tamir Rice and another photo of a young Black boy. There are candles and a propped up cell phone at her feet. The gloaming falls around her. A red glass cup sits alone somewhere else in the park.

XANDER enters. He is armed to the teeth, like a police officer should be. There is a silent stand-off.

XANDER

What are you doing?

LUCIA

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for the redress of grievances.

No response. Sirens sound off in the distance. A long period of silence. XANDER begins to pace. He picks up the glass cup.

XANDER

Does this belong to you?

LUCIA

No.

XANDER

Do you know what it is?

LUCIA

Am I under arrest?

XANDER

No. Why would you be under arrest?

LUCIA

I don't know. Who's the last person you remember arresting with good reason?

XANDER

You're not under arrest.

LUCIA

Why are you interrogating me then?

XANDER

...

XANDER puts the cup back where he found it and finds a new spot to stand in. Silence. LUCIA moves toward the cup. She examines it.

XANDER

Do you know what it is?

LUCIA

It's a cup.

XANDER

Yes, but what's the writing mean?

LUCIA

It's hard to make out.

XANDER

What's it doing here?

LUCIA

I don't know. Don't they pay you to investigate and follow clues? Or are you only expected to kill children?

XANDER

...I'm not a detective.

LUCIA

Yes, I can see that, Officer Shanley.

The chime of a cell phone alarm.
LUCIA packs her things and starts
to exit.

XANDER

Have a good night, Miss.

LUCIA

Ms.

XANDER

I'm sorry.

LUCIA

"Miss" is a belittle title of the patriarchy. Ms. is my
title.

XANDER

Good night, Ms...?

LUCIA

Nice try.

She exits.

SCENE TWO

The same night. LILIANA is in a
papa san chair, reading a book.
She hears the keys in the door and
jumps. LUCIA enters.

LUCIA

Liliana? Are you home?

Silence. LILIANA continues to
read.

LUCIA

Lily, don't read with the lights off.

LUCIA turns on the lights.

LUCIA

Did you just get home? (Beat) How was class today? (Beat) Has the dean scheduled your appeal yet? You could at least nod.

LILIANA closes her book and exits.
LUCIA drops her things and sits on the floor. She turns on the television.

REPORTER (V.O.)

Today marks the fifth day of riots downtown and six days after the death of Andre Lanzo. The officers involved, Officer Pierson and Officer Shanley, have been placed on administrative duty as of this morning, but that has not quieted down the protesters. For more on this, Ben Appel is on the ground where protests near the courthouse are escalating. Ben, can you tell us more about what you're seeing this evening?

LUCIA turns off the TV.

SCENE THREE

A split scene—XANDER is sitting in his patrol car. AARON is playing a video game; he's wearing a headset, talking to someone else playing the game.

AARON

No, I just got to the bunker. Don't spoil it, man. (Beat.) I've been working on my paper for Intro to Visual Culture. I promise you I'll beat it over the weekend.

POLICE RADIO

10-30 in progress at 520 Main. Suspect is a Black male, wearing a black hoodie and white sneakers. Need additional unit. Do you copy?

XANDER lifts his radio. He presses the button to speak, but doesn't.

POLICE RADIO

10-4. This is Officer Blake responding. Headed there now.

AARON

Nah, the party's going to be next weekend. Save it till after midterms when everyone wants to blow off some steam. None of the girls are going to want to go hard if their projects aren't finished and handed in. (Beat.) Liliana? I don't know, man. I thought we were cool. She used to be so easy going. I thought we might get a thing going, you know, like fuck buddy thing, but she lost it. She was always putting up this liberal feminist front like "let's burn our bras and have sex with whoever we want." I don't know. If she chilled the hell out though, I'd hit that again. She's fucking hot.

POLICE RADIO

10-58: ambulance in need of assistance at 1650 Lake Road. Disorderly patient, possibly dangerous.

XANDER goes to answer and stops as the radio sputters again.

POLICE RADIO

Patient is a fifty-two year old Black male, possibly having a psychotic break.

XANDER hangs up his radio. He picks up the glass cup and moves his fingers carefully around it.

AARON

What do you think about Melissa, though? So hot. She's got that like theater nerd thing going. I bet she'd role play. Theme party? Yeah, that'd be sweet. How about cops and robbers? Her Halloween costume was so slutty, man. Definitely a theme party. Dude, nice save. I don't know and I don't care. Collaborative projects are so dumb. We're not here to learn how to play nice with others. Visual art is a solo endeavor. Fuck everyone else; my opinion is what matters--I mean, in my art at least. Right? Right. Bunker! Bunker! Go!

POLICE RADIO

All available units report to Fifth and Main. Assistance required at potential riot. All available officers report.

AARON

Shit. I should call it for tonight. I've got grad school applications to work on. Later, bro. Ultimate frisbee tomorrow, right? Awesome.

AARON logs off, exits. XANDER
turns on his sirens.

SCENE FOUR

XANDER is alone in the park. There are two glass cups. LILIANA enters. There is a brief moment as she notices XANDER's presence. She then sets up her soapbox, dressed today as dark Lady Liberty. She carries a book in one hand, *The New Jim Crow*, and a paper mache torch made out of newspaper in the other hand. Her crown resembles the crowns of saints more than monarchs. She places framed photographs of Tamir Rice and Andre Lanzo at her feet. She lights her candles and sets her cell phone on the ground.

XANDER

Good evening.

She stares into the distance.

XANDER

It's nice to see you again.

LUCIA

What did you just say to me?

XANDER

I said--

LUCIA

It's nice to see me again?

XANDER

Yes.

LUCIA

Why? Why would you say that?

XANDER

Because it's--

LUCIA

I'm here holding a vigil for two dead children and you think that's nice to see?

XANDER

I didn't mean any offense. I --

LUCIA

You what? What are you even doing here? Is it not bad enough that one of you pigs killed a boy in this park? You have to keep watch over it like some sick Cerberus?

XANDER

This is my assignment.

LUCIA

Really? Guess you must be bummed you don't get to billy-club peaceful protestors to death.

XANDER

Some of those protestors are looting businesses.

LUCIA

Some of your fellow officers are killing innocent children, but nobody beats them within an inch of their life. They don't even go to jail--even if it's caught on camera. So you tell me who's more dangerous--you or me?

XANDER

Please back away from me, ma'am.

LUCIA

Or else what? You're going to shoot me?

XANDER

Ma'am. Please step away.

LUCIA points to her cell phone.

LUCIA

No, you won't shoot me. That's not what pigs do to women. You'd rather handcuff me and rape me in your patrol car and then fake my suicide.

XANDER steps away from her.

XANDER

That's not--I wouldn't--This is a very dangerous part of town. This is my assignment. You're going to see me here a lot.

LUCIA

Well then I guess we're going to become the best of friends.

LUCIA goes back to her soapbox.
She retrieves some paper from her bag.

LUCIA

"On April 22, 2015 at approximately 1522 hours, CPD Communication Center received a 911 call from a woman, who only identified herself as 'redacted,' advised Dispatcher Scott Redmond there was a male in Rosewood park at the corner of 5th and Zane with a "pistol." The caller provided a clothing description of the male, that he was swinging a large, long object around that looked like a gun and "scaring the shit out of people." She also stated that he could be a 'juvenile' and that the object was 'probably a stick' but he couldn't tell "if it was a gun or not.'

"Dispatch put out a call requesting an available unit to respond to a Code 1--"

XANDER

Stop. Please.

LUCIA

I bet that's what Andre said--oh wait, he didn't because your pig buddies didn't even speak to him before they drawn their weapons and shot him five times in the chest. And those were only the shots that met their target. They discharged their weapons eight times.

XANDER

I know. I know.

LUCIA

You know? We all know! That's the point. We all know that boy was killed for no reason but we're the animals for demanding justice.

XANDER

Please. Stop. I--

XANDER begins to have a panic attack.

LUCIA

Whoa. Whoa whoa whoa. Um...sit down. Sit down, Jesus!

XANDER sits.

LUCIA

Um..fuck. Are you okay? What do I do?

XANDER

I--I--I just need--

His panic continues.

LUCIA

Fuck. Fuck. Uh...

LUCIA rummages through her bag again and finds a box of colored pencils and a coloring book. She throws them at XANDER.

LUCIA

Here. Take it.

XANDER

What--what is this?

LUCIA

Art therapy!

Beat. Xander's panic morphs into laughter. Inexplicable, uncontrollable laughter.

LUCIA

What the hell is so goddamn funny?

XANDER

I don't know!

LUCIA

I don't know either!

XANDER

You threw a coloring book at me.

LUCIA

Yeah...well I'm not a fucking medic.

XANDER laughs again.

LUCIA

Yeah, okay. Keep laughing. But it worked, didn't it?

XANDER

Is that how you intended it to work?

LUCIA

A lot of things don't go how I intend--I'm trying to learn to live with that. Are you okay?

XANDER

I'm not sure. You're not screaming at me or treating me like the scum of the earth so I'm afraid I'm hallucinating.

LUCIA

Wow. You should have a panic attack more often--it makes you interesting instead of a mindless tool of the prison industrial complex.

XANDER

Nevermind. Definitely not hallucinating.

An uneasy beat.

XANDER

Is this a Disney coloring book?

LUCIA

Yes. Don't even think about laughing again

XANDER

No. Of course not. Not laughing.

LUCIA

It's therapeutic. I wasn't making that up.

XANDER

Is that what you do? Art therapy.

LUCIA

Ha! No.

XANDER

What part of that is funny? The art part or the therapy?

LUCIA

The therapy.

XANDER

So you're an artist?

LUCIA

If by artist you mean, I spend my days answering phone calls as a customer service rep while I making pastel illustrations and my nights moonlighting as a vigilante-- then yes. I'm an artist.

XANDER

Could you draw something for me?

LUCIA

What is it with you civilians? I'm not a trained circus animal. I don't do feats of artistic wonder on demand.

XANDER

Did you just call me a "civilian"?

LUCIA

Yep. Would you prefer I call you a normie?

XANDER

I'll take civilian I guess.

LUCIA

I don't speak to a lot of cops, usually the term's not so sticky.

XANDER

You don't know any cops other than me?

LUCIA

To be clear: I don't know you.

XANDER

Yeah, okay, right.

LUCIA's phone chimes.

XANDER

Someone's calling you.

LUCIA

Shit. It's not a call.

XANDER

What is it?

LUCIA

My alarm.

XANDER

Curfew doesn't start until tomorrow night.

LUCIA

Curfew? What the--forget it. I'll google it. I have to go.

She exits.

XANDER

Good night.

The coloring books is left in LUCIA's wake. XANDER picks it up and puts it in his pocket. His radio crackles.

DISPATCHER

All officers report to northwest Vine and Main, 10 - 34 in progress.

SCENE FIVE

LILIANA is sketching outside in the quad, mid-afternoon. Her backpack is at her feet. Her phone is playing a podcast.

THE READ (V.O.)

Oh, wait! Black Excellence. Black Excellence, this week, goes out to a seven year old girl by the name of Leah Flynn from Sanford, Florida. Leah Flynn is, basically, a violin prodigy and told her mother that she wants to go to Ferguson to play her violin to try and promote peace because she didn't really understand what was going on when she saw photos and videos, I guess, on the news of stuff going on in Ferguson. But what she did understand was that people looked sad. And so she wants to go out to Ferguson and play her violin to make people happy and bring peace. And when I tell you that little girl slays that piece of instrument...

She is alone working for a moment until AARON crosses in front of her. He clocks her, exits, returns.

AARON

Is that your midterm proposal?

LILIANA

No.

AARON

What is it? Looks cool.

LILIANA

Stop talking.

AARON

You know I still don't have a partner for that Advanced Photography project. I know you hate collaborative projects as much as I do.

LILIANA

Stop talking. What part of "stop talking" makes you think I want to work with you?

AARON

Lily, I--

LILIANA

Right. It's not about what I want. It's about you attempting to hide your mediocrity behind my work.

AARON

You never used to be this vocal about my work before--

LILIANA

Before? Before what? I'd love to hear you say it--before what?

AARON

Come on, Lily. I--I didn't want to upset you. I want you to know no hard feelings about what you said. I'm headed to class. Walk with me.

LILIANA

No, thanks.

AARON

I'm sorry you lost your job, but it's crazy for you to keep blaming me. You're the one who came to the party.

(Beat.)

LILIANA

I'm going to leave now.

AARON

No, come on. Don't. I want us to be good. I thought we were friends.

He reaches to touch her. She recoils.

AARON

Fine. I'll go. But what happened to you is not my fault.

AARON leaves. LILIANA waits. She tries to leave but sits back down immediately. She hyperventilates, screams, calms, and then exits in the opposite direction from AARON.

SCENE SIX

An empty stage. LILIANA is sitting alone in her chair, staring into nothingness. A flash of light--we see AARON standing next to her. He's there and gone. LILIANA alone again. She picks up her sketchbook and works.

LUCIA creeps into the room, hovering in her doorway with her sketch pad. She enters the room cautiously, sitting down next to her. She starts to sketch silently. They sketch for a long time without words.

LUCIA reaches for LILIANA. A disembodied scream and a long exhale. She pulls her hand back.

LUCIA

You made dinner.

LILIANA

Yeah...?

LUCIA

Nothing. Thank you. It was good.

They sketch.

LUCIA

I miss this.

LILIANA

I miss it too. (Beat.) I like that color.

LUCIA

It's called "Serenity."

LILIANA

I bought this new paint called "Volcanic Glass."

LUCIA

I love that.

LILIANA

You've got pastel all over your face.

LUCIA

What else is new?

LILIANA

True.

LUCIA

I'm covered in pigment in half the pictures of me.

LILIANA

Mom loves that story about you taking crayons to your bedroom furniture.

LUCIA

"Either I enrolled her in art classes or we were going to lose all our furniture to Crayola."

LILIANA

"I don't know why I never bought stock in that company."

LUCIA

Dad is so funny. They think they're so clever with that story: their little tag team routine. Although, I think the real breaking point was when I started using the markers to give you tattoos.

LILIANA

I liked the tattoos. I was obsessed with your drawings for so long. I wanted to draw exactly like you. Mom was the one who made me an artist. She was the one who told me I had to stop copying you and find my own voice.

LUCIA

It's no wonder we're so smart, raised by that lady. Mom called by the way. She wants you to call her.

(No answer. LILIANA sits in the chair with her sketchbook.)

She says you have to call her or she's coming to town. Please, call her. I don't want her to worry. (Silence) I don't want her to pull you out of school. I know this...I know this hasn't been easy. I know this isn't working out the way I—I'm doing my best. Please just call Mom. Or tell me what I can do. I want to be here for you. I think we can get through this together.

LILIANA stops sketching.

LILIANA

How is fucking everything always about you?

LILIANA slams the sketch book onto the ground. She storms off. LUCIA remains. LILIANA re-enters with a bag, headphones over her ears, and exits. LUCIA follows suit.

SCENE SEVEN

LUCIA is alone in the park. She is standing on her box with a gag in her mouth, her right fist is raised in the air. There are a pair of broken handcuffs on both of her wrists. She is alone for awhile. She gets off the box. She looks at the three glass cups on stage. She picks one up and rubs her finger against it. She lines all three of them up side by side. She reads the words written on them.

LUCIA

You. Can't. Hide.

She gives up on the task. She finds and opens a large sketch book and unpacks her pastels. She furiously sketches.

XANDER enters in plainclothes. He watches her for a moment.

LUCIA

I can feel you there.

XANDER

Sorry, I didn't want to scare you. Are you always so vigilante?

LUCIA

Why don't you ask my pepper spray?

XANDER

I'm going to pretend you didn't say that.

LUCIA

What do you care? You're in civilian clothes.

XANDER

That's why I'm going to pretend this time.

LUCIA

You're late.

XANDER

I didn't know we had a date scheduled.

LUCIA

We didn't. I thought you had a job to do.

XANDER

Even pigs get a day off sometimes.

LUCIA

...

XANDER

Can I...join you?

LUCIA

It's a free country--for some people.

XANDER sits down and takes out the coloring book.

LUCIA

Can your masculinity survive coloring Disney princesses?

XANDER

I guess it's a risk I'm willing to take.

They color.

XANDER

You really shouldn't be out here by yourself after dusk.

LUCIA

Why the fuck not?

XANDER

It's a dangerous neighborhood.

LUCIA

This park is part of the University campus. What do you mean it's dangerous?

XANDER

It...is.

LUCIA

You mean except for the University housing, the neighborhood around this south side of campus is predominately Black, Brown, and poor because this is the housing near the city proper and th highway and not the housing on the north side, which is the housing near the country club?

XANDER

There's a higher crime rate around here. That's all I meant.

LUCIA

And I bet you someone on the north side is having a swinger party with grams of cocaine and X to keep everyone loose enough to fuck the ugly hedgefund lawyer so his wife can have sex with the hot doctor from down the street. But we don't count that in the crime rate of that neighborhood because they're white and rich. Crime statistics are the skimpiest bikinis.

XANDER

What?

LUCIA

The most important parts are the ones you can't see. (Beat). I've got another pack of colored pencils if you want to a different color value.

XANDER

Thanks.

More quiet coloring.

XANDER

Can I tell you something?

LUCIA

I can't really stop you.

XANDER

I really admire you coming out here every day.

LUCIA

What?

XANDER

It's really beautiful that you stand here on the ground he...the ground he died on and hold vigil for him.

LUCIA

Oh. Thank you.

XANDER

Can I ask you a question?

LUCIA

I don't know--can you?

XANDER

Why doesn't everyone else do it like you?

LUCIA

Do what?

XANDER

Protest?

LUCIA

Are you asking why people march or why people riot?

XANDER

The latter I guess.

LUCIA

You people. You never ask why people riot when PennState wins a football game? Why do you ask why people riot when someone is dead?

XANDER

Because it seems like violence should not be the answer to violence.

LUCIA

It's not violence! It's release. It's a statement. Have you ever been so scared for so long that you forget what ease feels like? Have you ever had so much quiet rage and desperation stuffed in your gut for so long that it starts to feel like a thousand bees and wasps are trying to break through your skin? That's what it feels like to be Black in the United States. To be numb and constantly aggravated all at the same time. That's the status quo until a child dies because he's Black in America and then the alchemy of numb and overwhelmed becomes rage. Because: "A riot is the language of the unheard. And, what is it that America has failed to hear? It has failed to hear that the promises of freedom and justice have not been met. It has failed to hear that large segments of white society are more concerned about tranquility and the status quo than about justice and humanity."

Bet that's not a quote your white friends ever sling on Martin Luther King Day. But that is why a riot.

A riot is the only language when white supremacy returns to its old lynching tricks because we are also filled with guilt that we've been complacent. And the guilt and the rage come together and we remember that property--that capital is the ultimate tool of the oppressor and the thing they keep stealing from us so we find righteousness and poetic justice. And then we find a brick and we throw it through window. We find a brick that a cop probably put there in order to tempt us so that our so-called violence can become a larger part of the conversation than our cries of pain and our please for justice. Because the world is on fire inside of us every day so it should be on fire so that everyone can see it.

XANDER

But not everyone riots.

LUCIA

I can't believe you even admit that.

XANDER

I'm not blind. If not everyone riots, it shows that most people think there's a better way.

LUCIA

How is there a better way when the police force came out in riot gear before the riots even started! Does that escalation of force seem appropriate to a protest of people, chanting and singing because someone from their community was murdered? Why isn't the riot seen as a response to the police's escalation of force.

XANDER

That's the protocol for a protest.

LUCIA

That's standard protocol for people exercising their right to redress their grievances with the government? Have you ever wondered why? People can turn over cars and set buildings on fire if a football team wins the Super Bowl or if Joe Paterno is forced to resign from his position at Penn State, but people can't march against injustice without a militarized response? A twelve year old boy was murdered, and a peaceful protest about that seems so radical that it's deemed dangerous? What's so terrifying about people decrying an atrocity?

XANDER

I don't know. Everything. Everything.

LUCIA

Okay. Can I ask you something?

XANDER

Yes.

LUCIA

What is the point of you?

XANDER

What?

LUCIA

What is the point of policing as an institution?

XANDER

To prevent crime.

LUCIA

That's everyone's first response but when was the last time you prevented a crime?

XANDER

I haven't been on the force long...

LUCIA

So never. And when is the last time a victim saw justice from what little you could do after their life was destroyed.

XANDER

Unless I'm a witness in a case, I don't really follow cases after the DA takes them over.

LUCIA

So you don't even have anything to do with the justice of wrong doing.

XANDER

We keep law and order.

LUCIA

Do you? Then why is there still theft? Why is there still killing? Why is there still rape?

XANDER

There's no way to completely eradicate crime. But if there was no police force, we would be over run by lawlessness.

LUCIA

Is that what you say to comfort victims? I know we failed you but at least it's not more of you?

XANDER

What is it you have against the police?

LUCIA

The utter uselessness of you as an institution. You cause death for the innocent and you allow life to go on for the guilty. My sister was raped on this campus--not by some dangerous member of this community, but by some white kid who lives on this campus and you let him walk free. Your fraternity of "peace keepers" destroyed the evidence and now my sister suffers. I don't even recognize my sister any more because the system failed to protect her and now it won't even serve her by bringing justice. I can't reconcile with how utterly fucking useless you all are.

XANDER

I'm sorry about your sister. I could--

LUCIA

No, you can't. Don't offer. Just shut up.

She screams, an ugly, loud, scream of the ancestors. She starts to take off the gag and handcuffs but she is having a hard to time getting them off.

XANDER

Here, here. Let me help. Please

She manages to pull of the gag, but he unlocks the handcuffs. He grasps her hand and holds it.

XANDER

Curfew starts soon.

LUCIA

Then I guess you should help me get home safely.

XANDER

I don't even know your name.

LUCIA

Lucia Padilla.

XANDER

Alexander Briggs.

LUCIA

Alexander.

XANDER

Call me, Xander.

LUCIA

I'd like to go home now, Xander.

They exit together, holding hands.

SCENE EIGHT

LUCIA and XANDER enter LUCIA's home.

LUCIA

Uh, welcome. Can I get you a...glass of water?

XANDER

Oh, yeah, sure.

LUCIA throws her things down and exits. XANDER looks around. LUCIA returns with water.

XANDER

Thank you.

LUCIA

Uh...take a load off? Stay awhile?

XANDER

Yeah, yeah. Thanks.

He goes to sit in the papa san
chair.

LUCIA

Not there.

XANDER

Oh, okay. Sorry.

LUCIA

Sorry, it's my sister's chair.

XANDER

Got it.

He sits on the floor.

XANDER

It's very neat in here.

LUCIA

What's that supposed to mean? You thought I was some kind
of anarchist living in a cardboard box with conspiracy maps
everywhere?

XANDER

No--no! I was thinking more like giant murals on the walls
and paints strewn all over. Some plants. I don't know.

LUCIA

Oh, okay yeah. You were expecting a movie set. Well, we
rent this place and I want my deposit back so we don't
exactly use it like the studio of our dreams. Gotta keep
the pastels and paints off the walls and the bullshit
hardwood.

XANDER

Right.

LUCIA

So is your apartment all austere with one bookshelf and your academy graduation certificate in a Michael's Craft Store frame?

XANDER

I've got a PS4, a big screen TV, and a spider plant too.

LUCIA

Ah, *una mala madre*.

XANDER

What?

LUCIA

Mala madre, the bad mother--because she shoots her babies out away from her.

XANDER

Oh, wow. I guess that's true. You speak Spanish?

LUCIA

I speak Spanglish and bad Catholic.

XANDER

I feel you on the bad Catholic. I've been better recently.

LUCIA

That was my grandmother's response to everything: church. Got a problem? Pray the rosary. Put it in God's hands.

XANDER

I've been going to church more often recently. I'm not sure it's helping me.

LUCIA

It must be nice to have faith.

XANDER

I think that's why I started going again. My mom has never stopped.

LUCIA

Yeah, mine either.

XANDER

It makes you think there's got to be something to it, right? I guess that's what I hoped. I realized I had faith in my Dad and...my place in the system of policing. I believed in my father and now he's as known to me as a black hole, and the institution I believe in betrayed me. I feel my Dad was my foundation and his foundation was his job. But his job...his job--I remember when I started driving he told me the first thing I should so when I was pulled over was say I was a cop's son. I thought that was protection--privilege. I thought it was a sign that his presence there was influencing the system--that I could influence the system. Now I see how foolish that was. The look of fear--of hate--on your face when you first saw me in the park. We have no right, as an institution, to expect people to have faith in us. I'm hoping if I can find faith in God again, maybe he'll have the answers on how we can restore faith in a system.

LUCIA

I don't trust God to fix anything, especially not the messes we make ourselves. I don't know how the world ever gets fixed. Every problem is more complicated than the last. It's like looking at a puzzle that a toddler drooled and chewed on. The pieces are jagged, no clean lines.

XANDER

Even if the lines were clean, the pieces are wet, disintegrating in your hands, slippery.

LUCIA

I did hate you when I saw you. I hated you because my whole body was seized by the instinct of fear and that instinct is amplified by the knowledge that if you decided to harm me that day, I would have had no recourse. That if I had died, my family would wander the world for the rest of their days aching for justice. I know the risk I take on by refusing to be polite--by even daring to hold the pictures of dead children in a vigil. I could feel it in my body--the adrenaline of fight or flight even though I was just imagining the harm you could do to me, and imagining fully that you most likely wouldn't shoot me. That I would be raped and if I was lucky you would kill me.

But if I was unlucky and I lived a wailing, wrecked Lavinia, that at least there'd be some comfort in knowing I could maybe talk to my sister again. That we would have sisterhood instead of this chasm of unshared, unknowable trauma.

XANDER

It means a lot that you've brought me to your home.

LUCIA

Is that a question, officer?

XANDER

No. I know. You have faith, whether you think so or not, and I will honor that faith.

LUCIA

I'm not sure if it's faith or pheromones that lead us here.

XANDER

Pheromones?

LUCIA

Yes, pheromones. I'm saying I am attracted to you, Officer Briggs.

XANDER

Alexander--well, Xander please.

LUCIA

Xander.

XANDER

I'm very attracted to you, Lucia.

LUCIA

It's been awhile since I've kissed anyone. Would you like to see how out of practice I am?

XANDER

Very much. I would like that very much.

They kiss like something dangerous
could happen if they move to fast.

LUCIA

Would you...like to see the rest of the house?

XANDER

I would like you to show me.

They hold hands and exit.

SCENE NINE

Moaning, the sound of sex. The stage is dim, almost completely dark. The sounds of sex are blended with the sounds of riots, protest songs, shouting. AARON, LILIANA, LUCIA, and XANDER dart around the stage, playing a game of tag with glow-in-the-dark paint on their hands. The sounds of a rape weave into the soundscape until the riot dies away and the sound of sex and rape end in a staggered climax. They are covered in each other's glowing hand prints.

SCENE NINE

LILIANA is alone on stage. She's blowing glass. The furnaces glow red hot around her. The glow reveals glimpses of a giant red pyramid. AARON enters dressed as a police officer.

As "OFFICER" AARON speaks, LILIANA preheats the tip of the blowpipe, dips it and gathers the molten glass. She rolls the glass on the marver, and then starts to blow. She works for a beat and then stops, clearly unsatisfied. She re-dips the blowpipe to start again.

She does this several times,
barely starting before she is
unsatisfied with the work. She
tries one last time.

"OFFICER" AARON

Suspect Mitchell states he was hosting the party in the house at 29 Parkwood Drive. States Victim Padilla arrived at about 2300 hours. Throughout the night, he flirted with many girls at the party. He was drinking and assumes Victim Padilla was too. About thirty minutes after her arrival, Suspect Mitchell says he and Victim Padilla started dancing. He stated that he and the victim have known each other since their freshman year. Claims Victim Padilla made advances at him. He stated that he kissed the victim and they went upstairs. He took off the victim's underwear and fingered her vagina. He also touched the victim's breasts. Suspect Mitchell stated that he is right handed and used his right hand to finger the victim and touch her breasts. Suspect Mitchell stated that the victim opened her legs and he penetrated her with his penis. Does not recall the victim saying no. Suspect Mitchell describes the victims as seeming drunk. He left the room after ejaculating onto her. Suspect Mitchell states he saw the victim leave the party approximately ten minutes later. Describes her hair as disheveled and knotted. Her dress was bunched up around her hips. The top of her dress was stretched down over her right shoulder, exposing her bra. She was wearing a necklace that had a feather pendant. The necklace was wrapped all the way around her neck so that the pendant portion was now centered on her back. Witness 02 Campus Officer Turner makes similar description of Victim Padilla's appearance upon meeting her at 0100 hours.

A drop of molten glass drips onto her pants. She shouts, grabs for a knife to cut off the fabric where the molten liquid is burning a hole. She screams, tossing away the blowpipe. Her phone rings. She gathers herself quickly.

LILIANA

Hi, Mom. What? No. Yeah, I'm okay. I just—I'm at the studio and I just burned myself. (Beat.) No, Mom. I'm fine. I'm going to class. I got an A on my last paper.

(Beat.) No, I don't hate her. I don't know why she feels that way. I'm not doing anything to her; I'm just doing my own thing. I keep to myself. (Beat.) I'm not going to apologize to her. I haven't done anything wrong. Why does it matter if she feels appreciated? (Beat.) I'm not going to therapy. I don't have time. It's not going to change what happened. I have to go. Bye, Mom. I love you too.

She returns to her work. "OFFICER"
AARON watches.

SCENE TEN

LUCIA sits alone in the living room of her home, working with her pastels. She is mostly dressed. XANDER enters not mostly dressed. There is an air and a gesture of intimacy.

LUCIA

Could you do me a favor?

XANDER

Uh, sure.

LUCIA

Could you put on a shirt?

XANDER

Oh sure.

LUCIA

Sorry, I don't live alone. My sister could come home at any moment.

XANDER

Oh, shit. Right. Okay.

XANDER exits and returns with shirt.

LUCIA

I appreciate it.

XANDER

No problem. Just glad it's not because you think I'm ugly.

LUCIA

If I thought that, I'd just ask you to leave.

XANDER

Did you--was that good for you?

LUCIA

Well, if you couldn't tell...

XANDER

Damn.

LUCIA

Kidding. It was good. Very good.

XANDER

You're very good.

LUCIA

Thank you; it's been a minute.

XANDER

Because of...what happened to your sister?

LUCIA

Yeah, I guess if I actually spent some energy on the proper therapy for this that might be the main cause. Though, the not going to therapy part probably isn't helping either. Stress compounds and somehow I'm not really in the mood to troll dating apps.

XANDER

Yeah, I get that. Me either.

LUCIA

No, you'd rather pick up performance art vigilantes. Seems like a much easier way to get women.

XANDER

Heh. You caught me.

LUCIA

Is this even legal? Well, not legal, but ethical?

XANDER

You're not currently under investigation for anything, right?

LUCIA

Not that I'm aware of. The FBI has been known to tap the phones of Black people who resist the oligarchic, racist system we live under thought.

XANDER

Well, I'm not the FBI.

LUCIA

True.

XANDER

No outstanding warrants or parking tickets?

LUCIA

No. Do you have to ask everyone you sleep with this stuff?

XANDER

You asked. And I typically don't. I feel I have plausible deniability. I can't reasonably know about every case in the city, but I'd have to remove myself from a case if it turns out I did have personal ties.

LUCIA

Hmmm. I see. So why are you a cop?

XANDER

Wow. What a non-sequitur.

LUCIA

Eh. Not really. Answer the question.

XANDER

Do we...we just had sex.

LUCIA

Exactly. I want to know what type of person I had between my legs.

XANDER

...

LUCIA

You're mixed, right?

XANDER

Um, yes.

LUCIA

How do you justify being in the police force to yourself? Are you one of those who thinks you're white? Because you may pass the paper bag test, but that's not how racism really evaluates if you should be lynched for mouthing off or not.

XANDER

It's personal. My Dad...was a cop.

LUCIA

Was?

XANDER

Yeah, was.

LUCIA

Sorry. So it's a familial legacy thing.

XANDER

I guess. I know it's a problematic institution--

LUCIA

Problematic? To say the least.

XANDER

I know. But how can it be fixed or monitored if only White people are in the system. It's not like the police are going away any time soon. Isn't trying to be a good part of the system the least I could do? My father and my grandfather were cops; I thought I could have an impact. I thought I could be the change I wanted to see in the world.

LUCIA

You know Ghandi was a racist, right?

XANDER

Wouldn't colorist be more accurate?

LUCIA

Oh, look who suddenly got woke. Tomatoe tomato.

XANDER

Nothing to say about my actual reason for joining the force.

LUCIA

I'm trying not to be a complete asshole since you opened up or whatever. I'm sure that's what qualifies as you police officers opening up.

XANDER

You might as well say whatever you have to say.

LUCIA

Okay. You talk about wanting to reform the system from the inside. So what happens to whistleblowers? What happens if you report misconduct?

XANDER

Well, the IAB is called in to investigate--

LUCIA

Blah blah blah, protocol sure. But what really happens?

XANDER

I don't know what you mean.

LUCIA

Have you ever reported misconduct?

XANDER

No.

LUCIA

Have you ever seen misconduct?

XANDER

...

LUCIA

I'll give you an easier one: has any one else on your force reported misconduct?

XANDER

Yes.

LUCIA

And what happened to that person.

XANDER

She was fired.

LUCIA

Did they even bother to come up with a good excuse?

XANDER

I don't--

LUCIA

So what was that you were saying about fixing the system from the inside?

XANDER

Can we go back to when I was kissing you and--

LUCIA

And I was quiet and non-combative?

XANDER

You call what happened in that bed non-combative?

LUCIA

For me. We can try again--see if we get different results.

XANDER

Can I ask you a question first?

LUCIA

Okay, fine.

XANDER

Have you always lived with your sister?

LUCIA

Weird question. Uh, no. I used to live on my own, but my sister. Well, my sister was an Resident Advisor on campus. She was removed from her position after she was raped.

XANDER

Did she asked to be removed?

LUCIA

No. She reported the rape, which took place at a party. She was not drinking at the party, but apparently someone said that she was intoxicated and that there were minors at the party so she was fired. I moved closer to campus over winter break so that we could move in together. It was my mother's idea. I'm not sure it's helping as much as she thought it would.

XANDER

She's not going to get better overnight. That's not on you. My family's been having a hard time dealing with what happened to my dad.

LUCIA

How do you deal with feeling like you're useless?

XANDER

Most days? Nothing. Live in paralysis. Some days I can convince myself that there's nothing for me to do but be there when they need me. I know they're there when I need them so I try to remember that the same is true in reverse.

LUCIA

Do you have siblings?

XANDER

Yeah, older brothers.

LUCIA

Baby of the family. It's different when you're the older sibling. I can't sit around here and know that I'm useless. I've been grieving for Tamir and Andre, but I think holding vigil for them is also a way for me to feel useful--to grieve what was stolen from my sister. People treat injustice like it's some sad thing that happens sometimes. That it's something that doesn't ripple. But watching my sister struggle to process a world where a crime--an assault--was committed against her and there will be no justice. I watch her eaten alive not only by the trauma of the assault, but also the trauma of society breaking its promise to her. Out there, holding vigil for those boys, is the only time my brain goes quiet.

I don't go to the marches because I'm afraid that I would throw bricks and rocks and my fists at anything that I could.

XANDER

You could hit me if you like.

LUCIA

I would like...to hit that as it were.

XANDER

I don't have to work till tomorrow night.

LUCIA

What I do barely counts as a job so I guess we both can be up all night.

They exit. A moment in time.
LUCIA's alarm goes off.

SCENE ELEVEN

Same night. Same place. The room is dark. The papa san chair sits empty.

XANDER, shirtless, enters with a glass of water in hand. A key turns in the lock. LILIANA enters holding a glass bottle. They face each other, frozen.

XANDER

Oh, hi. You must be Lucia's sister.

LILIANA

Who are you? How do you know my name? What are you doing in my apartment?

XANDER

I'm Xander. I'm a friend of--

LILIANA

I know my sister's friends. I don't know you. What do you want?

XANDER

Nothing. Nothing. Just calm down for a second. Your sister is asleep. I'll go wake her and—

LILIANA

No! Don't move. Don't fucking move.

She breaks the bottle on the doorframe. She brandishes it as a weapon.

LILIANA

Get out!

XANDER

Okay okay okay. Let me get my things and—

LILIANA

No! No! I told you to get out.

XANDER

Miss. Miss, it's okay--

She rushes at him. They struggle. In the tussle, she manages to cut him before he subdues her.

XANDER

Lucia! Lucia come out here!

LILIANA

Lucia! Help! Help! Lucia!

Wearing XANDER's shirt and brandishing a baseball bat, LUCIA rushes in.

LUCIA

Lily?!

LILIANA faints.

XANDER

It's okay. Everything's okay. I've got her. She—she...?

LUCIA

Blacked out. It's... It happens to her sometimes when she...

LILIANA goes to pick up her
sister.

XANDER

No, stop. I got her. Where's her room—I'll—

LUCIA

No. Put her here; she loves this chair.

XANDER places her in the chair.

LUCIA

I'm sorry. I didn't think about...you're bleeding.

XANDER

I'm fine. Don't worry about me.

LUCIA

I'm not. I mean I am. I—you shouldn't be here when she
wakes up. I—I have to talk to her. Let me clean you up.

XANDER

It's just a scratch. I can clean it up.

LUCIA

No, please. Let me.

XANDER

It's okay. I can help. Let me fix this.

LUCIA

It's not yours to fix. Forget it. Please just leave.

XANDER

I'm sorry.

LUCIA

Goodbye, Officer Briggs.

She ushers him out. The door
closes and she goes to her sister.
She kneels beside the chair,
bowing her head. Tableau. Lights
out.

SCENE TWELVE

Later that night—the devil’s hour.
LUCIA sits on the floor, looking
at glass bottles—some broken, some
whole, all clear without labels.
LILIANA wakes up gradually; she is
draped in a colorful blanket and
has a stuffed animal under her
arm.

LUCIA

You blacked out. I’m sorry. I think it was because—

LILIANA

You think? You think it was because of the guy in our
apartment.

LUCIA

Lily, I’m sorry. I wasn’t thinking. I’m used to living
alone.

LILIANA

Sorry my rape has been such an inconvenience to your sex
life.

LUCIA

That’s not what I said.

LILIANA

It’s what you implied.

LUCIA

It is not, and you know that is not—what are these?

LILIANA

You went into my room?

LUCIA

To get your blanket and your piglet. You’re avoiding the
question.

LILIANA

So you’re trying to psychologically traumatize me by
bringing a man into my home late at night and by betraying
my privacy?

LUCIA

What are they?

LILIANA

What do they look like?

LUCIA

They look like beer bottles. I can't tell if you're an alcoholic or if you're running a recycling program. Or are they weapons?!

LILIANA

The broken ones are sanded down; they'd make terrible weapons. I have a knife for that. Your fuck buddy's lucky I left mine in the studio.

LUCIA

So you made them—in the school's studio? Is that where you've been all night?

LILIANA

Is this interrogation making you feel useful?

LUCIA

Lily—

LILIANA

Yes. That's what I've been doing.

LUCIA

Why couldn't you have told me that before? I could have been driving you. I could have helped.

LILIANA

I didn't want you to drive me. I don't want your help. You can't help! I didn't want you to know, *carajo*.

LUCIA

But what are they for?

LILIANA

It's none of your business.

LUCIA

You can tell me. Please I—

LILIANA

No, I can't! No! That's what they said, too—the officers who I found. You can tell me. You can tell me. Yeah, so they could tell the dean. So they could tell me that I was drunk and it probably didn't happen. So they could tell me that I passed out and had a nightmare. And I was so out of it I let them take me back to my dorm. I let my RD put me in the shower.

LUCIA

You weren't drunk. I know—

LILIANA

I know that! I know that! He drugged me. I know. Aaron Mitchell put a roofie in my lemonade and they helped him cover it up. They covered it up, and not even for a good reason. He's not even rich! He's just some charming douche bag who everyone's rooting for even though his artwork is worthless. Well, no, I guess they aren't rooting for him; they simply can't afford the scandal so Aaron Mitchell matters more than me even though he's a rapist.

LUCIA

Lily, I know. I know—

LILIANA

No, you don't! You know the facts. You know what happened after you swooped in to hold me and take me to the hospital. You don't know what happened to me. I don't know what happened to me. You thought making me move in with you was better than mom and dad taking me home. You thought you could fix it and make it go away. You can't. You can't make it go away and you can't fix it so you're just useless. You act like you want to know what happened to me, but you just want it to go away. No one knows—no one wants to know, but I'm going to make them. They can fire me, they can destroy my chance at justice, but they can't silence me. I won't be useless like you.

LUCIA

I'm not useless and I've been trying to give you what you need, but I'm not a fucking mind reader! And I'm too scared to ask you because everything I do is an excuse for you to bite my head off.

LILIANA

You're too scared to ask me? That's what your great big trauma is about--it's too hard for you to talk to me? I'm too scared to be in large groups, to listen to the damn Spotify playlist that was on that night, I'm too scared to talk to my professors and ask for help because they are part of the institution that betrayed me, I'm too scared to be touched by anyone. So let me cry big fat tears because you're scared of your baby sister being mean to you.

LUCIA

Fine. Fine, Liliana. You're right. I'll suck it up then. What do you want? What do you need from me?

LILIANA

What I need? What I need is for you to stay the hell away from me.

LUCIA

Okay. You don't want me to help. You don't want me around, then I won't be. If that's what you want, I won't help you at all.

LILIANA

Great. Glad we had this talk.

She exits.

SCENE THIRTEEN

Early Evening.

LUCIA is on the floor of her apartment, surrounded by her drawings, her pastels, and her bottles, which are open. A bottle of champagne, rum, and whiskey all half empty. There's a knock on the door. (*N.B. As the scene progresses, the glass pyramid LILIANA has created is revealed.*)

LUCIA

Go away. I'm Catholic. I don't care about Jehovah!

XANDER

Lucia, it's me. Xander.

LUCIA waits a beat. She rises and lets him in. He's dressed in uniform.

XANDER

You don't look so good.

LUCIA

That's because I'm not so good.

XANDER

I'm really sorry about last night. I didn't mean to scare her--I didn't realize she had walked in until...

LUCIA

Is that all you came here to say?

XANDER

Do you know where your sister is?

LUCIA

Probably in the glass blowing studio, where she is hatching her secret plan. What is it to you?

XANDER

Um, well I was hoping we could talk a little. I saw your sister--

LUCIA

Stop talking right now.

XANDER

What? What did I do to upset you?

LUCIA

What did you do? You lied. You lied straight to my face. I was up all night--couldn't sleep. So I went down a google rabbit hole because I wanted to see who you are. I started getting nervous when I couldn't find any social media accounts for you. It took a little extra digging but I figure out why. You cancelled them all because your father is one of the officers who shot Andre Lanzo.

Your full name is Alexander Shanley the third and you've been using your mother's maiden name ever since your father was fired from the force. Officer Alexander Briggs Shanley, son to Officer Alexander Shanley Jr., son of Officer Alexander Shanley Sr. It's nice to finally meet you.

XANDER

I was scared to tell you.

LUCIA

If you were scared, you know that concealing who you were from me was wrong. If you were scared, you deserve to be scared because I should curb stomp you for this.

XANDER

I've been concealing it from everyone. I've been trying to change who I am. I made the police department change my name on my badge. I couldn't stand all the officers winking at me and giving me condolences about my dad being fired. It's like they thought I was one of them. It's like they thought I would have shot him too. It's like I'm trapped in a fraternity of people who want to kill me but they're talking about it right in front of my face, like I'm not even there. I'm not white. I am Black. My mother is Black. I don't understand how my father did what he did. I don't know how to make sense of my world any more so I tried to make sense of it by changing something. I couldn't change Andre's death. I can't change who my father is. All I could change was me and I thought I'd start with my name. I'm sorry I kept it from you. I didn't know--I don't know how to own that legacy that my father gave me.

LUCIA

It was enough that I slept with a fucking cop. Then I had to find out who the fuck you were. I feel disgusting. I let you into my home--a symbol of the institution that murders my brothers and sisters. And as if that wasn't enough, an institution that destroyed the evidence of my sister's rape. And institution that claims to serve and protect but does nothing but betray and destroy.

XANDER

I know why you're angry. I...I hung around last night to make sure you both were okay. So while I know you're angry at me, I also know you're angry at yourself because you think you're letting your sister down. But you aren't.

XANDER

She has a place to stay because of you. She has someone who always thinks about her. She has an advocate because of you.

LUCIA

An advocate? Advocates work on behalf of others. The only thing I can do on her behalf is bring her rapist to justice, which I haven't done. I don't even try to do that because—

XANDER

Because there is no evidence. Because no one can arrest him without evidence.

LUCIA

Her word should be evidence enough. The hospital records should be enough even without his DNA.

XANDER

They should, but they're not and that isn't your fault. It's the system's fault. (Beat.) I only came because I saw your sister today when I started my shift. I was hoping she'd be home by now. She's in the park and there are a lot of women with her. They're making some kind of pyramid with those glass cups we found.

LUCIA

Fuck. I have to go down there.

XANDER

I don't think that's a good idea.

LUCIA

Don't tell me what to do.

XANDER

You're not in a good place--

LUCIA

You're not going to keep me from going down there. I have to protect her. It's the least I can do after I let you re-traumatize her last night.

XANDER

She'll forgive you for that. It was a mistake.

LUCIA

Stop talking to me like you know what you're talking about. It's already clear to me how useless you are. You're so ashamed of your father and what policing means in this community--in this country--then do something about it! Get out of my business.

XANDER

I'm trying to help.

LUCIA

Help? You're the reason I'm here. I wouldn't have to bear this burden if the police did their job--bring justice to the disenfranchised, punish those who abuse and terrorize us. This isn't my burden to bear. But I have to bear it anyway, like every other flaw of this country that Black people are forced to bear.

XANDER

I can help. I want to help.

LUCIA

Useless. Useless and anti-black. That's the other reason you don't know what to do. You hate that those cops see you as white because you can't admit that's how you've seen yourself your whole life and now you have to accept they'd shoot you just as fast as your father shot Andre!

XANDER

That's not fair. I'm not racist.

LUCIA

You think you're not racist because you're Black. Self-loathing is the most sinister kind of racism. And to the world, you're white. So don't pretend to understand what visibly black Black people go through. Get off of me.

XANDER

I can't let you go.

LUCIA

I have to. I have to support her. I have to do something.

XANDER

How can you support her when you've made all of this about you?

I may be paralyzed by my guilt, but you're blinded by it. If you go down there like this, you won't be supporting her. Sleep this off. I'll go down there. I can do it. This is what I'm supposed to do.

LUCIA

Then do it.

XANDER

I'll bring her right home.

LUCIA

Don't do that. Don't let her see you. Make sure she's safe. Don't do anything unless you absolutely have to. Serve and protect. Can you do that?

XANDER

I can do that.

XANDER almost exits.

XANDER

This is for you.

He hands her a crumpled piece of paper.

XANDER

I'll stay out there all night if I have to.

He exits. She opens up the paper ball; it's a page from the coloring book, completely colored in. She sits on the floor. Pastels or booze? She picks up a pastel and begins making large strokes on the floor. She draws in a frenzy. LILIANA enters picks up a pastel, sits down in front of her pyramid, and sketches.

LILIANA

We are not victims. We are survivors. That key linguistic change is the first thing they tell you in therapy. We should not be ashamed. We are not damaged or dirty, but we are different. I don't feel very different to be honest.

I am still me--not a victim, maybe a survivor, but always a warrior. That warrior has always been in me. I was raised in strength, raised to defy and to dream. The only thing that's different is now my warrior soul is at the front line of the war. Now all my strength, defiance, and dreams have been honed, forged by the flames of injustice as the greatest weapon that's ever been known to the world--the weapon of a woman's voice raised in clamor against the silence of oppression.

SCENE SIXTEEN

The glass Solo cup pyramids glow an eerie red in the moonlight. LILIANA is sitting quietly among the broken glass bottles and red wall, sketching with a pastel. XANDER arrives and tucks himself in the shadows. AARON enters. Tableau of AARON and LILIANA facing each other.

LILIANA

Welcome to the gallery.

AARON

What are you doing?

LILIANA

Waiting for you, of course.

AARON

What is this?

LILIANA

It's my midterm project.

AARON

It's not a joke. There are reporters at my dorm room. I guess I'm lucky they didn't find the message you left me.

AARON presents a pink glass dick, marked with spray paint.

LILIANA

I thought about etching the word "coward" onto it, but it seemed like too much effort. Spray paint seemed more apropos.

AARON

I've been really nice about all this, Liliana, but you're taking it too far. This is defamation. It's one thing to spout these lies to everyone on campus; it's another thing to make a public spectacle of my reputation.

LILIANA

Defamation? Are you kidding me? Even if I was lying about the fact that you raped me, you limp-dicked coward, what do you have to say about the twelve other women who have named you rapist.

AARON

It's absurd. I won't let you and a bunch of prudes ruin my chances at graduate school because of morning after regrets. Your little spectacle could destroy my career.

LILIANA

You should have thought of that before you raped us.

AARON

I never raped anyone. All of those girls flirted with me. You flirted with me. We were at a party; we were having fun. You all wanted it.

LILIANA

If we were having fun, why did you have to drug us?

AARON

I didn't drug you! You didn't want to drink so I gave you some social lubricant. You just needed to relax. It's like smoking pot—what's the big deal?

LILIANA

You can't actually be this evil can you? Or are you just stupid? You gave me a roofie. I was blacked out when you violated me. I only know you were inside of me because you left me covered in your cum, you disgusting savage.

AARON

You never said no.

LILIANA

I was incapacitated.

AARON

But you remember it all?

LILIANA

Remember? I don't remember—I remember pieces. I remember you on top of me. I remember my limbs were so heavy--my brain so weighed down by fog that I couldn't stop you from taking off my clothes. After that, darkness and waking up in the filthy bedroom alone to the sounds of cheering and laughing downstairs.

AARON

So maybe you just don't remember wanting it. Maybe you just don't remember taking me to bed.

LILIANA

That's not the truth.

AARON

What do you want from me, Liliana? No one sees it your way—is this sour grapes? Because we're not dating. I thought you could handle something casual. You used to be cool. Sexy.

LILIANA

Sour grapes? Sour grapes that we're not dating. You raped me. I want you to turn yourself in and admit that you're a sack of shit, worthless excuse for a human being who forces himself on women because he can't get laid.

AARON

I can get laid.

LILIANA

When's the last time a woman has enthusiastically said yes to you Aaron? Was it ever? Have you ever even had sex or have you only ever raped?

AARON

No one cares about your tantrum! No one's listening! You were asking for it and I gave it to you. You got fired because your conduct was unbecoming;

you violated the code of conduct, not me. Do you think this little circus is going to help your appeal to get your job back?

LILIANA

Fuck the job. I think this demonstration will bring out more women who have been too scared and confused to call you out for the predator you are. I'll be here every day and every night for every survivor who wants to name whoever has wronged them. We will not be ignored.

AARON

You're a freak show out here. You're just embarrassing yourself. Eventually, the novelty of it will wear off and you'll be reduced to the occasional Google search for public art installations. The other girls are only out here for the attention. They'll realize how humiliating it is sooner or later. Then they'll abandon you and come looking for me again.

LILIANA

Even if all the news camera leave and no one takes up our case, your name will forever be attached to that Google search. Every time an employer or a girlfriend looks up your name, it will be attached to this. Rapist. New job? Rapist. New Tinder Match? Rapist. If I can't be rid of what you did to me, neither can you.

AARON

You're an idiot. You think a glass sculpture is going to vindicate you. Are you kidding me? It's glass. All I have to do is...

AARON kicks over a glass bottle. It shatters. He walks toward the great glass pyramid. He almost touches it when LILIANA picks up a bottle and hurls it at him. He dodges and she continues to pitch them. Eventually, he makes his way through the barrage. She finds her knife. They fight. He disarms her and she picks up a shard of glass. She goes at him with a shard of glass, but he catches her.

She escapes enough to stab him in the groin.

LILIANA

Prick.

She starts to exit. As she turns her back, AARON picks up the glass and runs after her. XANDER shoots him from the shadows. Beat. The weight of consequence settles on them both. LILIANA steps toward him and pulls his radio off his belt. She holds it up to his mouth.

XANDER

Assault in progress at Rosehill Park. Request for backup. Possible Caucasian male suspect pursing female. (LILIANA screams.) Suspect is armed and dangerous.

He takes his hand off the radio. He takes two deep breaths and returns to his call.

XANDER

Shots fired. I repeat shots fired.

Sirens. Police lights flash across them. Police lights turn into camera flashes. More light, like the colors spots across your eyes when you've stared at the sun too long, like being attacked by fireflies. Lights until LILIANA and XANDER can't be seen. Lights obscure the stage until we see LILIANA sitting alone on in the park under the tree. She is dressed in a long white gown. LUCIA enters. Four years ago.

LUCIA

Woo! You did it! Wahoo!

LILIANA

We did it!

LUCIA

College had nothing on prep school. Cake walk. We're celebrating you—you made it! You did it!

LILIANA

As if there was any doubt. It's just high school; it's not rocket science.

LUCIA

I know. [She laughs.] I felt the same way when I graduated. Mom and Dad were so proud.

LILIANA

Whenever they say how hard I worked, I try not to roll my eyes. It wasn't that hard. It doesn't even really feel like I accomplished anything.

LUCIA

Because the expectation was that you would succeed. I know. Me too. [Beat.] I'm so jealous you're going to a party school.

LILIANA

What?

LUCIA

If I could do it over, I'd go to a party school.

LILIANA

Why?

LUCIA

Because it doesn't matter where you go. It matters how well you do and how much you want to learn. I could have learned just as much from my professors at a party school, and still have had the option to get lost in the morass of wild parties among hoards of people.

LILIANA

You know I'm not going to party.

LUCIA

I know you're going to learn in the greatest visual arts program in the country. I know. I guess...I was lonely in school. I wonder if I'd have been less lonely if there were more people to meet. Like my odds of meeting my kindred spirits would have been greater.

LILIANA

You're so greedy.

LUCIA

How?

LILIANA

Most people don't even find one kindred spirit—you've already got one and you want more.

LUCIA

Who is that?

LILIANA

Me. Duh.

LUCIA

Alright, you may have a point there.

LILIANA

Did Dad tell you he's thinking about retiring soon?

LUCIA

What's soon?

LILIANA

After I graduate, of course.

LUCIA

Oh, okay. He'll change his mind by then.

LILIANA

Mom wants him to retire yesterday.

LUCIA

Mom hates Dad's job more than Dad does.

LILIANA

Dad's job sucks. He's smarter than all those assholes, he's been working for the company for thirty years and they won't promote him because he doesn't have a degree. Fuck them.

LUCIA

I hate them, but dad can't retire. He's got two visual artists for daughters. We'll starve.

LILIANA

Shut up, *zangana*. You'll get a job soon. Just relax.

LUCIA

I know. It's not really the job...can I tell you a secret?

LILIANA

When have I ever said no to secrets?

LUCIA

I don't know what I want to do, Lily. I know what I want to do, but not what I want to do. I feel like there's something more...I feel like—

LILIANA

Go forth and set the world on fire—it's been messing with me too.

LUCIA

Thanks, Principal Marx for putting that expectation in the air.

LILIANA

I know what I want to do--be a fucking masterpiece!

LUCIA

Yep, I'm unsurprised by that answer.

LILIANA

I don't know how we'll do it, but we'll do it.

LUCIA

Probably we'll do it together.

LILIANA

The Padilla sisters against the world.

LUCIA

The Padilla sisters for the world. (Beat.) I love you, *hermana*.

LILIANA

I love you. I couldn't have done this without you.

LUCIA

We couldn't have done it without each other. Well, not without Mom or Dad, really.

LILIANA

They're pretty great, huh.

LUCIA

Yeah, we lucked out.

LILIANA

You know, they kind of lucked out with us? Do you think they sit back and marvel about how easy it was to raise us?

LUCIA

Probably not. But they should. We made it so easy for them.

LILIANA

Do you think all sisters are best friends?

LUCIA

Maybe, but not all sisters are as fucking perfect as us. Speaking of...

LUCIA pulls out a bottle of champagne from her bag.

LUCIA

To us!

LILIANA grabs the bottle and lifts it into the air. LUCIA grabs two Solo cups from her bag. LILIANA pours champagne.

LILIANA

To setting the world on fire!

LUCIA

To masterpieces!

LILIANA

To us!

LILIANA and LUCIA drink.

LILIANA

You know I really love these bottles.

LUCIA

Champagne bottles?

LILIANA

Yeah, and wine bottle and rum bottles. Alcohol bottles-- they're kind of sexy.

LUCIA

Oh yeah? And why are you so familiar with alcohol bottles?

LILIANA

Shut up.

(Beat.)

LUCIA

Doesn't that graduation party start soon?

LILIANA

Yeah, I should get going.

LUCIA

Okay. Are you going to change?

LILIANA

Nah. It's not everyday you can get away with wearing a gown around town.

LUCIA

True. Be careful.

LILIANA

Always. Distract Mom and Dad for me. I'll be home late.

LUCIA

Not too late.

LILIANA

Uh huh, yeah, okay.

LUCIA

Dios te bendiga, hermana.

LILIANA

That's enough, *abuela!*

LUCIA kisses LILIANA. LILIANA exits. LUCIA takes another drink from the bottle this time.

LUCIA

Cheers, old girl.

She whips the bottle toward the tree, splashing champagne everywhere. Lights dazzle like droplets of champagne. Lights clear LILIANA, AARON, STUDENT 1, and STUDENT 2 are onstage. LILIANA and AARON are paired as partners in a game of beer-pong against the other two students.

LILIANA

That's disgusting.

STUDENT 2

That's not true.

STUDENT 1

It absolutely is.

AARON

SAE. It's not a secret.

LILIANA

Sexual. Assault. Expected. That's not a secret? How are they still associated with this campus.

AARON

It's not just this chapter. It's every SAE chapter in the country.

STUDENT 1

You just have to have your wits about you when you party there.

STUDENT 2

Seriously? That's your response?

STUDENT 1

What? The girls who go down there have had plenty of warning. If it's so terrifying, don't go. There are other parties going on.

LILIANA

That's like saying---you know what, I'm not even going to dignify that with a comparison. That's shameful.

STUDENT 2

The university should be doing something.

AARON

Like what?

LILIANA

The university is never going to do anything. The students have to do something.

AARON

Like what?

LILIANA

Protest. Demand accountability. We're the only reason they're here. Our tuition dollars and our compliance.

STUDENT 1

Protest? Like that ever worked.

AARON

Yeah, the Civil Rights Movement was a total wash.

STUDENT 1

You know what I mean. The protests downtown aren't going to do anything.

STUDENT 2

Except make it even harder to find parking.

STUDENT 1

They're standing around, making noise, demanding justice from a system that has no incentive to listen. That has the right hand of the media demonizing their efforts. If a mass protest of students happened on this campus, it would take a New York minute for us to be called lazy, entitled, trouble makers.

LILIANA

That's because those protests are anemic. They aren't--a real protest demands a dedication that most people can't muster. It requires missing work, probably getting fired, bringing the system to a halt.

AARON

Most people, even as bad as police brutality is now, are still too comfortable. There's still too much to lose.

LILIANA

And even then--we can't use MLK's playbook forever. Isn't it time we reinvent the protest?

STUDENT 2

How do you reinvent a protest?

LILIANA

I don't know. It's something my sister and I were talking about. There's all this noise and nothing gets through. It's like justice is stuck in the doldrums. So what can we do to break through the noise? Well, all we have is our art. Art as protest.

STUDENT 1

It's not like it hasn't been done.

AARON

But it's also not being done.

LILIANA

Right, and not in a sustainable way--not long form. What would long form, artistic civil disobedience look like? It's just a question.

STUDENT 2

Mid-terms are coming up.

LILIANA

I'm not going to do it for a midterm. It's not an experiment for intellectual discussion. If I do it, I'm gonna do the damn thing.

AARON

Good for you.

STUDENT 2

Doesn't matter what you do; it all comes down to money. Systematic injustice is just the grease for the cogs of capitalism and art's not a big enough monkey wrench to disrupt that system.

STUDENT 1

Alright, we need more beer.

STUDENT 2

I'll get it.

AARON

I'll go with you.

They exit.

STUDENT 1

He's got his eye on you.

LILIANA

What are you talking about? So petty. Can't even partner with the opposite sex for a drinking game without bullshit.

STUDENT 1

It's not that. He looks at you like you've got diamonds at the meeting of your thighs.

LILIANA

Maya Angelou is rolling in her grave.

STUDENT 1

Whatever. Just be careful around him.

LILIANA

Him? Please. He's...he's no match for me. And I can't be bothered with relationships.

STUDENT 1

I don't think he bothers with them either.

LILIANA

What are you even talking about.

STUDENT 1

Nothing. Switch teams. You and I?

LILIANA

Yeah, alright. If you stop being weird.

LILIANA splashes water in the
STUDENT's face.

Bright lights. Sirens. Lights
clear. LILIANA enters. The DEAN, a
woman, sits behind a table waiting
for her.

DEAN

Lily, it's so nice to see you.

LILIANA

It's nice to see you too.

DEAN

You know we are still getting emails about that beautiful
mural you made for Founder's day. We would love to have the
Visual Arts Department work on more murals--a campus
beautification project. Maybe we could even find the budget
for some statues.

LILIANA

That does sound great. But, I'm actually here to talk to
you about something.

DEAN

Oh, yes, of course. Please go on.

LILIANA

As you may be aware, there was a sexual assault committed
on campus last week.

DEAN

No, that can't be. I would have been informed.

LILIANA

I'm afraid it did.

DEAN

Well, I can neither confirm or deny this at the moment, Liliansa. The students involved will have to come to me themselves.

LILIANA

Yes, that's why I'm here.

DEAN

You were involved in this incident?

LILIANA

I was the victim. And I need your help. The incident was grossly mishandled by campus police and my RD. The police are telling me I don't have a case because of the procedure they followed--

DEAN

Liliansa, what do you remember from that night? Were you drunk?

LILIANA

No. I was drugged at a party.

DEAN

What were you doing at the party? As an RA, that is considered a breach of your contract if there was alcohol.

LILIANA

I'm here to talk to you about the school's policies and procedures regarding sexual assault on campus.

DEAN

Sexual assault is not a problem we deal with on this campus. We've never had a single case.

LILIANA

I'm telling you about one right now. And I'm a resident advisor on this campus. I have heard the disclosures of way more than one woman who has been assaulted on this campus.

DEAN

Are you sure that's what happened? Parties can get out of control, my dear. Maybe you just did something you regretted in the morning.

LILIANA

The only thing I regret is trusting campus police to do their job. I was raped. I was raped on your campus, and it's come to my attention that I was not the only one and my rapists is not new to this.

DEAN

Ms. Padilla, if you're going to raise your voice this way, I'm going to have to ask you to leave. The University is unaware of any instances of sexual assault on campus. I trust you know better than to insinuate such things on campus. It could be cause for your dismissal if you're found telling lies to your residents about the safety of this campus.

LILIANA

That's what they told me you'd say. That's your script. You're a woman. How can you... Have a good afternoon, Dean. I'm sure we'll be seeing each other soon.

LILIANA exits. Black out.

LUCIA

Liliana? Liliana! I don't give a flying fuck about your crime scene! That's my sister! Let me through! Xander! Xander tell them to let me through!

Lights up on LUCIA running into the park. XANDER and LILIANA stand together. A sheet is over Aaron's body. The police lights illuminate them all.

LUCIA

What have you done? Lily, what happened? (No answer.) You were supposed to protect her!

She runs at XANDER, hitting him.

LILIANA

I didn't need protection.

The sounds of the riots
resurrecting. The chants of Black
Lives Matter. The cups glow red.

END OF PLAY