

FALFURRIAS

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. US-MEXICO BORDER, NUEVO LAREDO - EVENING

Traffic moves across the Rio Grande River on the World Trade Bridge. Vehicles stop at checkpoints.

Guards. Dogs. Guns. This is a dangerous place.

EXT. CITY STREET, NUEVO LAREDO - EVENING

The cracked steeple of an old cathedral, its dulled bell surrounded by the stark white of stucco.

Wild dogs running down the cobbled street.

A group of old men playing cards, a faded Mexican flag wilting in the heat behind them. A cracking wooden sign that reads 'Nuevo Laredo, Mexico'.

EXT. OPEN AIR JUNK SHOP - EVENING

A Junk shop on the outskirts of town. An iron gate runs around its perimeter.

The red sun is low in the West. The gnarled mesquite trees struggle in the wasted soil. The junk shop's roof-line lists drunkenly in the heat.

INT. OPEN AIR JUNK SHOP, CASH DRAWER - EVENING [CONTINUOUS]

Closing time.

The discarded refuse of consumers run amok. Dirty chairs, boxes of cassette tapes, bullshit for sale.

ARACELI, a hispanic woman in her twenties, plain but with a kind face, covers some of the junk with a tarp to keep the moisture off during the night.

Araceli's employer, ESTEBAN, is counting out the day's cash. In Spanish, he calls her away from her work.

ESTEBAN
(in Spanish)
Araceli, leave that for me.

Araceli stops. She walks over to Esteban.

Esteban counts out Araceli's pay and hands it to her.

ESTEBAN (CONT'D)
I shouldn't have let you stay so long.

Araceli puts the money in her shoe.

ARACELI

Thank you.

She hurries off through the rusted iron gates.

EXT. CITY STREET, NUEVO LAREDO - EVENING

Araceli walks briskly through the deserted street. The sun has sunk behind the horizon. An ambient light bathes the ragged buildings.

She passes a wall with graffiti scrawled on it. It reads, 'Police of Nuevo Laredo...silver or lead. The choice is yours. -Los Zetas'

INT. MONEY TRANSFER OFFICE - EVENING

A shoddy looking money transfer office.

Behind a rickety counter, protected by bullet proof glass, CARLOS FLORES sits watching the clock. 5:50 pm. It's almost closing time.

The door opens. Araceli hustles up to the counter. Carlos is not thrilled by the last minute arrival.

Araceli counts out sixteen-hundred Pesos and lays them on the counter. The rest she puts back in her shoe.

CARLOS

(in Spanish)

You're sending?

ARACELI

Yes, to my sister, in Fort Stockton,
Texas.

Carlos stares at her blankly.

ARACELI (CONT'D)

It's Near Odessa.

Carlos takes the money and slides a form to Araceli who begins to fill it out.

INT. PHONE BOOTH, NUEVO LAREDO - NIGHT

A phone booth on the outskirts of a deserted lot. A fluorescent light flickers inside. Plastic bags swirl around the lot in the dirty breeze. Stray dogs wander, their torn paws stepping brutishly into the pebbles and broken glass.

Araceli stands with her ear pressed against the phone, listening to the tone as the line rings over and over.

She's about to give up, then, a stranger's voice on the other end in English.

MARIA

Hello?

Araceli is caught off guard. She was expecting her sister.

ARACELI

Yes, Hello. I'm trying to reach Rosalinda.

MARIA

Araceli?

Araceli is confused.

ARACELI

Yes. Who is this?

EXT. PAY PHONE, FORT STOCKTON TEXAS - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

MARIA, an Anglo woman in her seventies, stands in a rundown trailer park with the phone pressed against her ear.

MARIA

I'm Maria, your sister's neighbor.

ARACELI

(recovering)

Yes. Hi. Hi Maria.

MARIA

Hi.

INTERCUT BETWEEN ARACELI AND MARIA

ARACELI

Is everything OK?

A long pause. Clearly it's not.

MARIA

Listen, your sister is much worse than before. She can't come to the phone tonight. She's too weak. She told me to tell you she's sorry.

The sound of vehicles in the distance. Araceli looks up alarmed. Possible danger.

It's a convoy of military vehicles. Relieved, she looks back at the phone.

ARACELI

Has she seen the doctor? She was supposed to see the doctor.

MARIA

Yes.

ARACELI

What did he say?

MARIA

She wants you to call back in the morning. She's stronger in the morning.

Tears are welling up in Araceli's eyes. She can't keep it together. She knows it's bad.

ARACELI

Alright. I'll call back. Thank you.

Araceli hangs up. THE RECEIVER CLANKS on the cold metal of the cradle.

In the flickering light, Araceli sinks to the the floor of the phone booth.

EXT. CITY STREET, NUEVO LAREDO - NIGHT

Araceli walks down the empty street. She's jumpy.

A DOG BARKS. She looks nervously toward the sound.

A SIREN starts up in the distance. She picks up the pace.

A car rounds the corner and approaches from behind her.

Araceli begins to jog. She's terrified as the car approaches. She's trembling, but the car keeps going.

Relief.

EXT. ARACELI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A long line of doors like an old motel. One tiny, shitty apartment after another. Bars on the windows. Curtains drawn. A hunkered down feel to the whole place. Real poverty.

Araceli opens the door with her key and hurries inside.

INT. ARACELI'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

Araceli enters.

The bare minimum. A tiny room with a little stove. A bathroom off to one side. Araceli draws the curtains. Darkness.

CLOSE ON Araceli strikes a match.

A warm glow casts shadows in the darkness. She lights the candles on a silver candelabra, the only nice thing she has.

The candelabra is sitting on a little altar in the corner. Pictures of Araceli's family from generations past surround the shrine. Stern vaqueros in stiff clothing. A crucifix. The Virgin of Guadalupe.

Araceli pulls a coffee can from under the altar and stuffs the remaining Pesos from her shoe inside.

CLOSE ON She pulls the nob on a tiny black-and-white TV.

The glow of the TV fills the room. She adjusts the rabbit ears until the American news station from just across the border comes in.

In English, a NEWSCASTER reports on the growing Cartel violence in Nuevo Laredo.

INT. ARACELI'S APARTMENT, KITCHEN AREA - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

A cast iron frying pan heats up. Araceli heaps a spoonful of lard into it.

She rips up stale tortillas and drops them into the hot lard. She stirs them around, frying them as she listens to the news cast.

NEWSCASTER (O.S.)
Mexican authorities confirm that the
chief of police of Nuevo Laredo was
gunned down today in broad daylight.

Araceli pours green chili sauce into the frying tortillas.

NEWSCASTER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Reports of escalating instability on
the Mexican side of the border are
increasing as rival drug cartels
battle authorities and each other
for control of the city streets.

Araceli crumbles up bits of cheese into the pan.

INT. ARACELI'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

Araceli sits down with her food at a small table in front of the TV. She turns down the sound on the TV. Images continue to flicker across the screen.

She crosses herself in the Catholic tradition.

As she begins to eat, she opens a book that sits on the table. It's a medical anatomy text book. She looks at the cutaway drawings of the human body as she eats.

Suddenly, she hears the CRACKLE OF GUNFIRE in the distance. She looks up.

The news images of unrest seem to parallel what she's hearing outside.

More GUNFIRE, but closer, and from a different direction. Then more.

Now, A FIST POUNDING ON A DOOR several doors away. A MAN SCREAMING.

CLOSE ON The book closing.

Araceli peeks out of the window. The silhouette of a man is advancing from door to door, pounding as he goes.

INT. ARACELI'S APARTMENT, BATHROOM - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

Araceli climbs into the bathtub and lies there. There's a pillow and a blanket in the tub. This is a regular occurrence.

The POUNDING is getting closer and closer. Three doors away...two doors away.

Now the man is at her door. POLICE SIRENS. GUNFIRE. POUNDING AT THE DOOR.

She can make out the voice of the man now, and he's speaking english.

RINGO
(muffled through the
walls)
Let me in! I'm an American! Let me
in. Please! Open the door. I'm a
tourist.

Araceli is frozen.

RINGO (CONT'D)
I can hear your TV. Don't let me die
out here.

ARACELI
(answering in English)
Go away! I'll shoot!

The voice on the other side of the door is encouraged by the response.

RINGO
Lady, please, I'm a tourist. I'm
from Texas. I'm a tourist.

No response.

RINGO (CONT'D)
I swear to God. I'll pay you! Let me
in.

INT. ARACELI'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

Araceli cracks the door. RINGO SIFUENTES stands in the doorway, mid-twenties, rail-skinny, handsome, scared.

His white t-shirt is neatly tucked into his baggy dress pants, a homemade tattoo of a cobra on his right arm.

He gives Araceli his best panicked smile. He's a charmer.

RINGO
Lady, please. The shit is going down
out here. I'm a tourist. I'm from
Odessa.

ARACELI
My sister lives in Fort Stockton.

Ringo is not in the mood for chit chat.

RINGO
That's great. Can I come in?

Araceli undoes the chain lock and Ringo slithers in.

INT. ARACELI'S APARTMENT, BATHROOM - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

Ringo and Araceli huddle in the bathtub together. SIRENS WAIL as the GUNFIRE continues.

Searchlights sweep past the windows. Authorities give commands over vehicle-mounted loudspeakers.

ARMY LOUDSPEAKER (O.S.)
(passing by)
Stay in your homes. Do not exit your
homes. Stay in your homes...

FADE OUT:

INT. ARACELI'S APARTMENT, BATHROOM - DAY

Ringo opens his eyes to the sounds of BROKEN GLASS BEING SWEEPED UP.

He picks up his things and puts them in his pocket.

He slides them in one by one. A ragged deck of cards. An empty wallet. A tiny plastic pocket game where the object is to roll a ball through a maze.

INT. ARACELI'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - DAY [CONTINUOUS]

Ringo walks into the living room.

He looks at the shattered window, a bullet hole straight through it. He can see Araceli outside sweeping up glass on the sidewalk.

EXT. ARACELI'S APARTMENT - DAY [CONTINUOUS]

The front door opens and Ringo steps out into the morning light.

ARACELI
(in spanish)
Good morning.

RINGO
I told you, I don't speak Spanish.

ARACELI
(switching to English)
Your parents didn't teach you even a little?

RINGO
I know some stuff, the stuff everybody knows.

ARACELI
That's sad.

RINGO
It's not sad. I'm an American.

Araceli stops sweeping and stares at Ringo.

ARACELI
But they deported you?

Ringo rolls his eyes. He takes the broom from Araceli and starts sweeping.

She stands with her arms crossed watching him.

RINGO
Listen, how far is Matamoros from here?

ARACELI
About four hours by car. I guess you're going back?

RINGO
Yep.

ARACELI
Why don't you just cross here?

RINGO
In Matamoros, it's cheap, better odds.

Ringo stops sweeping.

RINGO (CONT'D)
Listen, this is awkward.

Here it comes. The son-of-a-bitch wants money.

RINGO (CONT'D)
I don't have any money.

Araceli takes the broom back.

ARACELI
You tell a lot of lies, don't you?

RINGO
Hear me out.
(beat)
I'm going back to Odessa.

Araceli is unimpressed.

RINGO (CONT'D)
Someone there owes me a lot of money.
If you give me cash now, I'll pay it back to your sister.

ARACELI
I don't have any to spare.

RINGO
I swear to God. I'll pay it back.
Help me out here.

Araceli doesn't budge. Ringo acts like he's giving up.

RINGO (CONT'D)
I understand. Thanks anyway.

Ringo starts walking off.

Araceli starts sweeping.

He calls back over his shoulder, hamming it up.

RINGO (CONT'D)
I'll write you Araceli. Thanks for
everything.

Araceli does her best to remain stern as she watches Ringo go, but she can't resist.

She darts in the house for a moment. She emerges again and hustles up to Ringo.

He can feel her coming up behind him, but pretends not to notice.

Araceli puts her hand on his shoulder. He turns. She hands him some crumpled up Pesos.

RINGO (CONT'D)
Thanks.

He kisses her on the cheek. She flinches. She knows she shouldn't like him, but she does.

RINGO (CONT'D)
How do you say, I'm going to
Matamoros?

ARACELI
(in Spanish)
I'm going to Matamoros.

RINGO
(imitating Araceli)
I'm going to Matamoros.

We know we shouldn't like him...but we do.

Ringo smiles, then turns and walks away.

INT. OPEN AIR JUNK SHOP, CASH DRAWER - MORNING

Araceli pulls a tarp off the junk as Esteban counts money and puts it in his cash drawer. Araceli eyes the money as it goes into the drawer.

Esteban closes the drawer and picks up a stack of photos.

ESTEBAN
(in Spanish)
Look at these.

He holds one up. It's of his two daughters.

ESTEBAN (CONT'D)
Luisa's Quinceanera.

Araceli looks at the picture.

ARACELI
They're lovely.

Esteban is clearly proud.

ESTEBAN
The whole family came.

Araceli turns away and begins arranging junk.

Esteban notices her change in demeanor. He puts the photo down.

ESTEBAN (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. I forget you're alone
here.

Araceli continues to work.

ARACELI
I'm just tired.

Esteban tries to console her, but it's probably the wrong move.

ESTEBAN
What happened to your parents was a
terrible crime.

Araceli doesn't respond. She picks up the picture and looks at it.

CLOSE ON The photo of the two sisters.

CUT TO:

INT. PHONE BOOTH - DAY

Araceli stands in the phone booth. The phone rings. A weakened woman's voice answers in Spanish.

ROSALINDA
(in Spanish)
Hello?

It's ROSALINDA, Araceli's sister. Araceli is happy to hear her voice.

ARACELI
Rosalinda! Rosalinda how are you?
How are you?

EXT. PAY PHONE, FORT STOCKTON TEXAS - DAY [CONTINUOUS]

ROSALINDA, gaunt, haggard, exhausted, stands in the dust.

ROSALINDA
I'm tired.

ARACELI
I wired money.

ROSALINDA
I know. Thank you.

INTERCUT BETWEEN ARACELI AND ROSALINDA

ARACELI
You should be resting. Are you
resting?

ROSALINDA
It won't matter.

A moment of silence. Araceli listens to the low hum of static on the line.

ROSALINDA (CONT'D)
How can I tell you this Araceli? I
never thought I would be telling you
this.

Araceli eyes the stray dogs milling around the vacant lot nearby.

ARACELI
Don't tell me.

ROSALINDA
I'm dying.

ARACELI
That's not true.

ROSALINDA
It is. It is true. This is the one
thing that's true.

ARACELI
Don't tell me this.

ROSALINDA
There's nothing the doctors can do.
I waited too long. I have cancer
Araceli.

ARACELI
Where's Thomas?

ROSALINDA
He's gone, moved on to follow the
work.

ARACELI
Jesus.

Araceli looks down. She thinks for a moment.

ARACELI (CONT'D)
You've got to get Maria to bring you
back. You can see a doctor here.
Tell her to bring you back. I'll
take care of you.

ROSALINDA
I'm too weak. We've discussed it. I
can't make the trip.

ARACELI
There must be...

ROSALINDA
(interrupting)
Araceli, listen. I want one thing
from you. You can't let me die alone.
I can't die alone.

Araceli thinks about it. She's desperate, scared, ready to
act.

ARACELI
I'll come, but you won't die.

ROSALINDA
Do you swear you'll come?

ARACELI

Yes.

ROSALINDA

On our parents graves?

ARACELI

Stop it! I swear!

ROSALINDA

I have something for you, something
I have to explain...

ARACELI

(interrupting)

You'll get better. I'll take you
home. You never should have gone.

Rosalinda hangs up the phone.

She walks back toward the rusted Airstream trailers, a tiny figure in a flat sea of sand.

EXT. WORLD TRADE BRIDGE, NUEVO LAREDO - DAY

Araceli stands near the banks of the Rio Grande River and looks across the World Trade Bridge toward the United States.

Hundreds of trucks and cars swarm towards the US. Boats with armed BORDER PATROL AGENTS patrol the river.

In the distance, the Texas state flag flutters in the wind.

INT. ARACELI'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - DAY

The candles on the candelabra are lit.

Araceli finishes a prayer at her makeshift altar. She looks over at a picture that sits on the altar. In it she stands with Rosalinda and her parents. They look happy.

She stands up and blows out the candles. Wax drips down the candelabra.

INT. ARACELI'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Araceli sits in front of the TV eating dinner. Images from Mexico's drug war unfold on the news. She studies the medical book.

EXT. CITY STREET, NUEVO LAREDO - DAY

Araceli walks through the dirt and poverty of Nuevo Laredo.

INT. PHONE BOOTH - DAY

Araceli stands in the phone booth with the phone pressed against her ear. The phone is ringing.

A CONSULATE WORKER from the US Consulate answers in English.

CONSULATE WORKER (O.S.)
US Consulate.

Araceli is nervous.

ARACELI
Yes. Yes, Hello.

CONSULATE WORKER (O.S.)
Hello.

ARACELI
I need to speak with someone about a Visa.

CONSULATE WORKER (O.S.)
I'll transfer you.

ARACELI
Wait, I...

Too late, she's been transferred. Straight to voicemail.

VOICEMAIL (O.S.)
Thank you for calling the United States Consulate located...

Araceli hangs up. She inserts coins and dials again.

CONSULATE WORKER (O.S.)
US Consulate.

ARACELI
Yes, I just called and...

CONSULATE WORKER (O.S.)
Sometimes it drops the call. I'll transfer you.

ARACELI
No! No, wait.

Too late. Voicemail.

VOICEMAIL (O.S.)
Thank you for...

She dials again.

CONSULATE WORKER (O.S.)
US Consulate.

ARACELI
Please! Please don't transfer me.

A pause on the other end.

ARACELI (CONT'D)
How long does it take to get an
appointment?

CONSULATE WORKER (O.S.)
They can tell you that when you
schedule. I'll transfer you.

ARACELI
Please! Just let me ask you one
question.

CONSULATE WORKER (O.S.)
Ma'am, any questions you have can be
answered on our web site.

ARACELI
My sister is dying.

A long silence.

ARACELI (CONT'D)
Help me, just for a minute.

CONSULATE WORKER (O.S.)
What's your question?

ARACELI
Can I get a Visa to enter the US,
just for a few days? To bring my
sister home.

CONSULATE WORKER (O.S.)
Yes.

ARACELI
How long does it take?

CONSULATE WORKER (O.S.)
Three weeks to a month.

ARACELI
I don't have that long.

CONSULATE WORKER (O.S.)
The process can be expedited, provided
you have strong ties to Mexico.

ARACELI
Strong ties?

CONSULATE WORKER (O.S.)
A bank account with twenty-five
thousand dollars in it, or a house,
something to ensure you'll go back
home.

Silence.

CONSULATE WORKER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Ma'am?

INT. ARACELI'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Araceli reaches under her family altar and pulls out the coffee
can. She opens it and pulls out all of the money she's saved.

She counts it.

EXT. CITY STREET, NUEVO LAREDO - DAY

A HUSTLER sits near a run-down church waiting for something.
This is what he does, he waits for opportunity.

Araceli approaches cautiously. She knows this is the place to
go to when you need something. She stands next to the man.

HUSTLER
(in Spanish)
What do you want?

ARACELI
I need a Visa.

The Hustler's face lights up.

HUSTLER
You need a Visa? I can get you a
visa. I can get you anything.

ARACELI
How much?

HUSTLER
Three thousand. Give me half now.

ARACELI
When I see the visa.

HUSTLER
No deal. Get out of here.

The Hustler gives Araceli a hard look.

ARACELI
Ok. Ok. Some now.

Araceli pulls money from her shoe. The Hustler looks at it.
He can see she's got a lot.

She hands him some.

HUSTLER
It's going to take more than that.

ARACELI
When you come back.

HUSTLER
What's your name?

Araceli glares. She's distrustful.

HUSTLER (CONT'D)
It's best to put your real name on
the document.

ARACELI
Araceli Longoria.

The Hustler smiles kindly.

HUSTLER
Wait here Araceli.

The man walks off.

EXT. CITY STREET, NUEVO LAREDO - LATER

Araceli sits on the curb waiting. She drinks a soda and watches
people walk by.

EXT. CITY STREET, NUEVO LAREDO - EVENING

The sun is setting. Araceli is standing, gazing down the
street. She suspects she's been ripped off. CHURCH BELLS TOLL
in the distance.

EXT. CITY STREET, NUEVO LAREDO - NIGHT

It's dark now. Araceli sits with her back against the wall,
her knees drawn up to her chest. She's giving up. She's been
had.

She stands. As she starts to leave, a voice from down the
street.

HUSTLER #2
(in Spanish)
Hey. Hey you!

Araceli turns. This is not the man she was dealing with. The new man trots up. He seems relieved that she's still there.

HUSTLER #2 (CONT'D)
Araceli?

ARACELI
Yes.

HUSTLER #2
I'm supposed to get you the visa.

ARACELI
Where's the other guy?

HUSTLER #2
He handed it off to me. That's how it works. How much do you have?

ARACELI
Three thousand.

HUSTLER #2
It's five thousand, didn't he tell you?

Araceli stares at him.

ARACELI
He said three thousand.

The man pulls a visa from his pocket as an example and shows it to her.

HUSTLER #2
Look, it's the real deal. It's not cheap.

Araceli looks.

ARACELI
I don't have five thousand.

HUSTLER #2
But you have more than three thousand, right?

ARACELI
Yes.

HUSTLER #2

Let me see it.

Araceli pulls the money from her shoe and shows it to the man.

HUSTLER #2 (CONT'D)

Give it to me.

Silence.

HUSTLER #2 (CONT'D)

Look, take it our leave it. It's a perfect visa.

No dice.

HUSTLER #2 (CONT'D)

Ok. You can give it to me later. You have to come with me anyway.

ARACELI

Why?

HUSTLER #2

I have to take your picture.

EXT. CITY STREET, NUEVO LAREDO - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

Araceli and Hustler #2 walk through the deserted street. Araceli is having second thoughts. She lags behind.

HUSTLER #2

Come on, hurry up. It's not far.

Araceli stops. He's too enthusiastic.

HUSTLER #2 (CONT'D)

Are you coming or not?

She's not.

HUSTLER #2 (CONT'D)

Come on. We're almost there.

The man walks back and grabs her arm to pull her forward. She won't budge.

ARACELI

Let go of me. I've changed my mind.

He lets go.

Araceli turns to leave but the man repositions himself in front of her.

He pulls out a badge.

HUSTLER #2

Do you want me to arrest you for
trying to buy forged documents?

SPORADIC GUNFIRE IN THE DISTANCE. A SIREN.

HUSTLER #2 (CONT'D)

Is that what you want?

She swallows hard.

HUSTLER #2 (CONT'D)

Don't waste my time.

They're alone in the dark. He grabs her arm. His grip is tight.

HUSTLER #2 (CONT'D)

Do you understand what I'm saying,
how much I mean what I'm saying?

Araceli hands him the money.

He walks away. Araceli watches him go.

EXT. CITY STREET, NUEVO LAREDO - DAY

Araceli pushes a beat-up shopping cart down the dirty street.
It contains her TV, her pots and pans, and the candelabra.

She passes the sign that reads, 'Police of Nuevo Laredo...silver
or lead. The choice is yours. -Los Zetas'.

EXT. OPEN AIR JUNK SHOP, CASH DRAWER - DAY

Esteban stands at the cash register. Araceli enters through
the gates pushing her cart.

Esteban eyes the shopping cart as she approaches. He knows
something's up.

ESTEBAN

(in Spanish)

We're full-up on junk.

ARACELI

I need to talk with you.

Esteban opens the cash drawer and begins putting the day's
money in it.

ESTEBAN

OK.

She doesn't waste any time.

ARACELI
My sister is dying.

Esteban stops.

ESTEBAN
My God, I'm sorry.

ARACELI
She has cancer. I have to go to her.

ESTEBAN
In the US? It's too dangerous.

ARACELI
I tried to buy a visa, but they took my money.

ESTEBAN
You can't get through with a fake visa. Everyone knows that. How much did you lose?

ARACELI
Everything.

ESTEBAN
Your school money?

ARACELI
Everything.

Esteban looks forlorn. He knows what she wants.

ESTEBAN
It would have been better to bring her here. That would have been easy.

ARACELI
She's too weak to travel.

Araceli begins to unwrap the candelabra.

ARACELI (CONT'D)
I'm going to Matamoros to cross.

Esteban eyes the silver candelabra.

ESTEBAN
Put that away.

ARACELI

Please, listen to me. This has been
in my family for generations, It's
very valuable.

She places it on the counter in front of Esteban.

ARACELI (CONT'D)

I'll come back for it and I'll repay
you. You know I will.

Araceli eyes a picture of Esteban's daughters that's taped
near the cash drawer.

She looks down. She composes herself. The big push.

ARACELI (CONT'D)

Esteban, think of your daughters.

He tries to look away but she won't let him.

ARACELI (CONT'D)

Would you want one of them to die
alone?

Esteban thinks. He looks at the picture.

ARACELI (CONT'D)

I'm begging you.

Esteban looks back at Araceli.

INT. ESTEBAN'S CAR - DAY

Esteban's clunker limps down Mexican Federal Highway 2 toward
Matamoros.

The hot, shitty, brush country stretches out in all directions.

Araceli clutches her backpack and gazes through the cracked
windshield.

Esteban points to the East. Sunlight dances on the jagged
edges of the plants.

ESTEBAN

(in Spanish)

The land is like this for hundreds
of miles, thorn desert. You have to
have water. You have to keep your
wits about you. It's Texas.

ARACELI

Have you been there?

ESTEBAN

When I was a young boy, you could
cross the river.

ARACELI

I would have walked to New York.

ESTEBAN

It's a long way to New York.
Thousands of miles maybe.

ARACELI

I'd like to go up in the Empire State
building.

Araceli is daydreaming a little now.

ESTEBAN

You'd be lucky to make it out of
Texas.

ARACELI

I'd hop a train or something.

She leans against the window, trying to get comfortable.

ARACELI (CONT'D)

My mother had a tiny Empire State
building on a key chain. I used to
put it on the table, close one eye,
and look up at it.

She closes one eye and looks up at the clouds.

The car rounds a curve in the road.

As they do, Esteban sees something. It's a car blocking both
lanes.

He hits the breaks. They come to a stop in front of the
abandoned car.

ESTEBAN

Shit.

He opens his door and steps out.

EXT. ESTEBAN'S CAR - DAY [CONTINUOUS]

Esteban stands in the road looking at the abandoned car. As
he does, three men emerge from the brush. Bandannas cover
their faces. They clutch AK-47 assault rifles.

They point the rifles at Esteban. He instinctively raises his
hands in the air.

BANDIT #1
(in Spanish)
Keep 'em up friend.

ESTEBAN
We have nothing.

BANDIT #1
No one has nothing.

ESTEBAN
What?

BANDIT #1
Everyone has something.

The bandits are close now, surrounding the car. They look at Esteban. They look at Araceli. They look at Esteban's piece-of-shit car.

BANDIT #2
(to Araceli)
You. Get out of the car.

The door opens and Araceli steps nervously out.

BANDIT #2 (CONT'D)
Get over there with your father.

Araceli walks in front of the car to stand by Esteban.

Bandit #1 covers them with his rifle while Bandits #2 and #3 begin to paw through the car.

ESTEBAN
I sell junk. I'm taking her to see
her dying sister...

BANDIT #1
(interrupting)
Quiet please.

Bandit #2 pulls Araceli's backpack from the car. Araceli, alarmed, takes a step toward him.

Bandit #1 aims his rifle at her. She stops.

Bandit #2 opens the backpack and looks through it. He unwraps one of Araceli's family photos.

ARACELI
Please.

He looks at the photo. He dumps the contents of the bag onto the ground. Old pictures. A bottle of water. Some clothes.

Dried beans and rice. The medical textbook. A box of tampons.

BANDIT #2

Worthless.

He drops the bag.

Meanwhile Bandit #3 is done with the car.

BANDIT #3

Nothing boss.

Bandit #1 takes a few steps closer with his rifle, menacing Esteban and Araceli with it.

BANDIT #1

I want you to be good while my
companions search you. This is not
personal. This is the way of the
world.

Bandits #2 and #3 hurry over to Esteban and Araceli.

They grope them as they search their bodies for loot.

Esteban's wallet is removed. Bandit #2 quickly opens it and thumbs through the cash. He's pleased.

He pockets the money and drops the wallet on the ground. He backs off.

Meanwhile, Bandit #3 has managed to find a tampon in Araceli's back pocket.

He chuckles as he pretends to smoke it like a cigar, leaning in close to Araceli and blowing filthy puffs of fake smoke in her face.

The Bandits laugh at this.

BANDIT #1 (CONT'D)

You're free to go.

The Bandits walk back toward the abandoned car and climb in.

BANDIT #1 (CONT'D)

(calling out as they
pull away)

Please, give your family our
condolences. I mean that sincerely.

And we believe he does.

EXT. ESTEBAN'S CONTACT'S SAFE HOUSE - DAY

CLOSE ON the gas cap on Esteban's clunker as it's unscrewed.

Esteban pulls on a lanyard that leads down into the tank. He withdraws a small plastic container that's attached to the end of the lanyard.

He snaps open the container and removes a wad of cash. He quickly passes it to Araceli.

They stand in front of a run down house in the middle of Matamoros.

ESTEBAN
(in Spanish)
Wait here for Rogelio. Tell him I
sent you.

ARACELI
I will. Thank you.

Esteban gets back into the car and starts it up.

ESTEBAN
Good luck.

The car speeds off. Araceli watches it go. She's alone.

EXT. ESTEBAN'S CONTACT'S SAFE HOUSE - EVENING

Araceli has dozed off on the steps of the safe house. Long shadows stretch out on the street.

As she sleeps, a man's shadow stretches over her.

A foot nudges her legs. She's startled awake. She looks up. It's Ringo.

RINGO
I know what you're doing here, and
so does everyone else who walks by.

Araceli stands. She's happy to see a familiar face.

ARACELI
What are you doing here?

RINGO
Same thing as you, trying to get
across.

ARACELI
Still?

Ringo doesn't answer the question.

RINGO
Listen, the man you're waiting for
won't be back for several days.
He's a known coyote, and he's
expensive. Everyone who's seen you
knows you have money.

Araceli glances around.

ARACELI
I don't have money.

RINGO
You're a bad liar.

Araceli knows it.

RINGO (CONT'D)
Let's go. Dinner's on you.

EXT. RINGO'S MATAMOROS CAMPSITE - EVENING

The banks of the Rio Grande. Ringo's makeshift campsite. He's managed to assemble a small tarp for shelter, a dirty sleeping bag, some plastic jugs of water.

Araceli and Ringo sit under the shade of a mesquite tree and eat burritos.

RINGO
Rogelio will charge you twelve hundred
to get across.

Araceli listens.

RINGO (CONT'D)
And he doesn't have a good track
record.

ARACELI
Says who?

RINGO
Me. I've been here for a while. I
know things.

Araceli looks out at the river and chews her food. The jet-black grackles hop around in the trees.

RINGO (CONT'D)
I know someone who'll do it for five
hundred, and he hasn't failed once.

Ringo takes another bite of his food. He chews slowly. He's full.

He holds the burrito out to Araceli.

RINGO (CONT'D)
You want the rest of this?

Araceli eyes it.

ARACELI
I don't eat meat.

Ringo smirks at this.

He throws the rest of his food out into the dirt. The grackles swoop down from the branches and begin to pick it apart.

RINGO
Listen, if you pay my half, I'll pay
it back in Odessa.

ARACELI
You already owe me.

Araceli wraps up the rest of her food and puts it in her backpack.

RINGO
I know how to get around in the US.
We need each other.

Ringo slides his hand over and rests it on Araceli's leg.

She cuts her eyes at him suspiciously, but the truth is, she's glad he's there.

EXT. RINGO'S MATAMOROS CAMPSITE - MORNING

Araceli wakes beside Ringo. She stands up and walks over to the river. She looks over the water toward the US bank. It's tantalizingly close.

She picks up an old bottle and tries to throw it across to the other side. It falls short and splashes into the river.

INT. PHONE BOOTH, MATAMOROS - DAY

Araceli stands in the phone booth as the LINE RINGS.

INT. PAY PHONE, FORT STOCKTON TEXAS - DAY

Maria answers.

MARIA
Hello?

ARACELI
Maria?

INTERCUT BETWEEN ARACELI AND MARIA

MARIA
I don't know what to do. She can hardly walk. She won't go to the hospital.

ARACELI
I'm leaving tonight. Tell her.

MARIA
You have to make it. She has something for you.

ARACELI
What? What does she have?

MARIA
It's not my place to say.

EXT. MATAMOROS STREET - DAY

Araceli walks along the street past the brightly colored buildings.

EXT. RINGO'S MATAMOROS CAMPSITE - DAY

The camp is broken down. Ringo sits beside Araceli's backpack. It's stuffed full. He shuffles his deck of cards.

Araceli returns through the brush. Ringo eyes her approach.

He stands and slides the cards in his pocket. He grabs the backpack and slings it over his shoulder.

RINGO
I put my things in your pack.

ARACELI
Ok.

Ringo smiles and walks past her. She follows.

EXT. BANKS OF THE RIO GRANDE - NIGHT

Araceli climbs into a rubber raft on the banks of the Rio Grande.

FOUR STRANGERS, others paying their way across, sit in the Raft.

A fifth, a YOUNG KID, sits at the bow.

Ringo climbs in behind Araceli. His foot sinks into the water as he goes.

RINGO

Shit.

The group turns and looks at Ringo.

YOUNG KID

(in Spanish)

Quiet.

Ringo settles down in the raft.

The Young Kid leans forward and begins to paddle across the river with his hands.

EXT. MIDDLE OF THE RIVER - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

Darkness, the dark water and the SOUND OF THE PADDLING. The nervous faces of the travelers as they drift across the river.

EXT. OPPOSITE RIVERBANK - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

The raft hits land. The people scurry onto the bank. It's Araceli's turn. She's out.

Then it's Ringo's turn. He clutches the backpack in his hand, sets one foot on land.

Out of nowhere, THE SOUND OF A TRUCK approaching from down river. It's driving along a road parallel to the water.

Ringo freezes, one foot on land and one in the raft.

The group looks at one another. Is it their ride?

Suddenly, a spotlight turns on in the darkness. It begins to scan the water as the truck bumps down the dirt road.

YOUNG KID

(in Spanish)

Border Patrol.

Everyone hits the deck. Ringo loses hold of the backpack as he scrambles to get out of the raft. THE BACKPACK SPLASHES INTO THE WATER and drifts.

Araceli sees it.

She starts to go for it, but Ringo forces her back to the ground.

RINGO

Let it go.

They lie with their faces next to each other, breathing hard in the wet dirt.

The truck moves past the group, its spotlight missing them and illuminating the river beyond.

The truck continues down the road, ITS MOTOR DRONING INTO THE DISTANCE. The backpack is lost, carried off by the current.

The Young Kid stands and motions the group forward. They move up the bank toward the road beyond.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

The group moves onto the dirt road.

A VEHICLE ENGINE FIRES UP. Panic.

Out of the brush, a van backs onto the road.

Its back doors swing open. Coyote #1 leans from the back of the van and motions to the group.

COYOTE #1

(in Spanish)

Hurry! Hurry!

The group scrambles into the waiting van.

EXT. COYOTE'S TEXAS SAFE HOUSE - DAY

The Coyote's safe house. A dingy old barn surrounded by mesquite.

INT. COYOTE'S TEXAS SAFE HOUSE - DAY

CLOSE ON a queen of spades being laid over a king of hearts.

Ringo sits on the floor next to Araceli playing solitaire. Araceli eyes the progress of Ringo's game.

Coyote #1 sits at a rickety table cleaning his fingernails with a big knife, a joint tucked behind his ear.

Daylight filters through tiny windows. Dust floats in the air.

Coyote #2 leans against the wall in a chair balanced on two legs. He's asleep.

The rest of the travelers try and get some rest, sprawled out in various positions on the floor.

A CLOCK TICKS. Ringo is bored. He lays a card down.

RINGO
(to Coyote #1)
Hey.

No response.

RINGO (CONT'D)
Hey.

Coyote #1 cuts his eyes at Ringo, his head still tilted down toward the big knife blade.

RINGO (CONT'D)
You speak English?

Coyote #1 looks back down at the blade of his knife.

COYOTE #1
This is America ain't it.

RINGO
How long until we leave?

COYOTE #1
Not until dark.

RINGO
When does it get dark?

COYOTE #1
When the sun goes down.

A few chuckles from the lounging travelers.

RINGO
You wanna play cards?

COYOTE #1
What stakes?

RINGO
Fifty bucks.

Araceli looks at Ringo disapprovingly.

RINGO (CONT'D)
(to Araceli)
Trust me.

COYOTE #1
The stakes are weak.

RINGO
It's all I can risk.

COYOTE #1
What game?

RINGO
Your choice.

COYOTE #1
The game is Hombre. Trumps are spades.

EXT. COYOTE'S TEXAS SAFE HOUSE - EVENING [LATER]

The sun is low on the horizon. Wind rustles the leaves of the mesquite trees.

The little wooden safe house casts a long shadow.

From inside, LAUGHTER FROM THE CARD GAME.

INT. COYOTE'S TEXAS SAFE HOUSE - EVENING [CONTINUOUS]

Ringo, Coyote #1 and Coyote #2 are sitting around the table playing the ancient Spanish game of Hombre. The game has been going for some time.

Araceli and the other travelers stand around the men watching.

A small dish in the middle of the table is full of cash.

RINGO
I play.

Ringo places the last of his money into the dish. Coyote #2 shakes his head.

COYOTE #2
I pass.

Coyote #1 reaches in his pocket and pulls out another hundred dollars. He places it in the dish.

COYOTE #1
I play more.

Ringo eyes him.

RINGO
I don't have more.

COYOTE #1
I'll take your marker.

RINGO
The stakes are set.

COYOTE #1
You can always change the stakes.
(beat)
Don't worry, I'll take your marker.

Ringo looks to Araceli. She looks grim.

ARACELI
No. No more.

Coyote #1 smiles at this.

COYOTE #1
Mama cut you off?

The travelers chuckle.

Ringo thinks.

Coyote #1 pulls the joint from behind his ear and lights it.
He holds it out to Ringo. Ringo waves it off.

RINGO
Never touch the stuff.

Coyote #1 pulls the joint back and takes a drag.

COYOTE #1
You know, there's something about
you I don't like.

Ringo stares, then motions toward the money.

RINGO
I'm in.

COYOTE #1
You sure? You might need that money.

RINGO
I said I'm in.

COYOTE #1
For me, this money is nothing, but
for you...

Ringo lets out a dramatic sigh.

COYOTE #1 (CONT'D)
I'm telling you, I'm going to win
the hand.

RINGO
Then win.

Coyote #1 slowly lays his last card down. Ace of Clubs.

THE TRAVELERS GASP. He smiles.

Ringo looks forlorn. A long sad look.

Araceli is distraught.

Ringo slowly lays his card down. His look of sadness turns
sarcastic as he places the Ace of Spades on the table.

Coyote #1 frowns.

RINGO (CONT'D)
What are the odds?

Ringo reaches out and takes the stack of money. He passes it
over his shoulder to Araceli, then looks back at Coyote #1

RINGO (CONT'D)
Too bad mama didn't cut you off.

The travelers laugh hard.

INT. VAN - NIGHT

MARIACHI MUSIC on the van radio.

The van travels on Texas highway 77 through the dark South
Texas brush country. Araceli, Ringo, and the travelers look
at one another as they ride through the darkness.

EXT. VAN - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

The van pulls over to the shoulder of the road. Coyote #1
opens the front passenger door and steps out.

He walks around to the back of the van and opens the doors.

COYOTE #1
(in Spanish)
There's an inland Border Checkpoint
up ahead. We have to go around on
foot. The van will pick us up on the
other side.

The travelers look nervous.

COYOTE #1 (CONT'D)
Everybody out!

The group scurries out into the darkness.

Coyote #1 SLAMS THE BACK DOORS OF THE VAN. The van pulls off.

EXT. FENCE - NIGHT

One by one the group scrambles through a hole in a barbed wire fence. Araceli and Ringo bring up the rear.

EXT. BRUSH COUNTRY - NIGHT

The group follows Coyote #1 through the tangles of brush. He pauses. They all stop, listening hard.

They continue on.

EXT. DRY CREEK BED - NIGHT

A dry creek bed with steep banks of loose white caliche rock.

Coyote #1 descends the bank, followed by the rest of the group.

Near the bottom of the bank, Ringo goes down, his ankle twisted.

RINGO
Fuck!

The others look back. Araceli takes a few steps back and kneels beside Ringo.

Coyote #1 walks back to them.

Ringo writhes on the ground in pain, clutching his ankle.

COYOTE #1
Get up.

Ringo tries to stand but falls.

COYOTE #1 (CONT'D)
You're fucked.

Coyote #1 starts to walk back toward the head of the group.

ARACELI
Wait.

Coyote #1 turns back.

ARACELI (CONT'D)
We can't leave him.

COYOTE #1
There's nothing we can do.

ARACELI
I can help him.

COYOTE #1
He'll slow us down. You know the
rules. He's on his own.

Araceli looks at Ringo. The pain has overwhelmed him. He's on
the verge of fainting.

RINGO
(to Araceli)
Don't leave me.

COYOTE #1
(to Araceli)
Let's go.

Araceli starts to walk off.

ARACELI
(to Ringo)
I'm sorry.

The group starts to move. Araceli hesitates. She stops again.

ARACELI (CONT'D)
(to Coyote #1)
I can't leave him here.

COYOTE #1
This is how it is. He's fucked.

Araceli thinks.

Coyote #1 spits on the ground.

COYOTE #1 (CONT'D)
You'll die.

Araceli hesitates. She's not sure what to do.

COYOTE #1 (CONT'D)
Your choice.

Coyote #1 turns again to leave.

ARACELI
Wait. Wait.

He turns back.

ARACELI (CONT'D)
At least leave us some water.

Coyote #1 unzips his bag and removes a bottle of water. He holds it out toward Araceli. She moves forward for it.

COYOTE #1
Five hundred dollars.

ARACELI
What?

COYOTE #1
Take it or leave it.

ARACELI
I don't have that much.

COYOTE #1
Everything you have then, that's the price.

Coyote #1 nods toward Ringo.

COYOTE #1 (CONT'D)
That's the price for him.

EXT. DRY CREEK BED - DAY

The red sun rising over the flat horizon. The orange light rooting out the shadows in its meanness.

Dawn in the thorny brush country. Twisted vegetation. Yucca plants and Spanish Dagger.

The bottle of water that Coyote #1 left Araceli is already sweating from the heat.

Araceli slowly pulls Ringo's shoe from his foot. She takes off his sock. He winces.

She feels his ankle. It's swollen. Black and Blue.

ARACELI
It's not broken.

Ringo looks unconvinced.

RINGO
Is that your expert opinion?

EXT. BRUSH COUNTRY - DAY

The South Texas chaparral.

Ringo and Araceli trudge through the brush, Ringo clutching a walking stick and limping.

EXT. FENCE - DAY

Ringo and Araceli arrive at a fence in the wasteland. Just beyond it lies a road.

They crouch at the fence and look toward the road.

ARACELI
Is this the road we came in on?

RINGO
I don't know.

ARACELI
Should we follow it?.

Ringo is thinking.

Then, a van visible in the distance traveling towards them.

They crouch lower and watch it approach.

It's a Border Patrol van.

As it passes, Ringo catches a glimpse of the prisoners in the back of the vehicle. It's Coyote #1, Coyote #2 and the other travelers.

The VAN speeds by. It disappears into the distance.

RINGO
Jesus Christ, did you see that?

ARACELI
Yes. What should we do?

Ringo points back the way they came.

RINGO
Cut away from the road. When it gets dark, make for the lights of a town or something.

EXT. BRUSH COUNTRY - DAY

CLOSE ON The blazing hot sun in the sky.

Ringo and Araceli walk through the vastness.

Ringo drinks down the last of the water. He throws the bottle down.

Araceli picks it back up and carries it with her.

EXT. BRUSH COUNTRY - DAY

They continue to walk, tiny specks in the savannah.

EXT. CATTLE TROUGH - DAY

A rusted barbed wire fence, and behind it, a concrete cattle trough filled with brown water. Ringo and Araceli pause for a moment, amazed by their luck.

They scramble through the wire.

They kneel at the trough, gulping down the dirty water.

WIND RUSTLES THROUGH THE NEARBY MESQUITE LEAVES. THE SOUND OF A RUSTED METAL WINDMILL SPINNING SOMEWHERE.

Then, POW, THE REPORT OF A RIFLE.

They look at each other. POW! ANOTHER SHOT AND THE CRACK OF A BULLET PASSING CLOSE BY.

Instinctively they bolt for the fence.

Ringo passes through easily, but Araceli gets caught. It's her foot. Her shoe is caught on the fence wire.

As she watches Ringo disappear, she pulls her leg forward, leaving her shoe behind.

She darts off after Ringo.

EXT. BRUSH COUNTRY - NIGHT

The black night. Ringo stands gazing toward the horizon.

Araceli sits with her back against a tree, picking thorns from her bloody foot.

ARACELI

Do you see anything out there?

Ringo looks. In the distance, he can see lights shimmering on the horizon.

RINGO

Yes.

He points.

RINGO (CONT'D)

I can see lights. There's a town out that way.

EXT. BRUSH COUNTRY - NIGHT

Ringo and Araceli huddle together in the darkness. They listen to the coyotes howl.

EXT. BRUSH COUNTRY - MORNING

THE SOUNDS OF A GOAT.

Ringo and Araceli open their eyes. A kid goat stands over them, a torn rope leash trailing from its neck.

RINGO

Holy shit.

Ringo stands up and grabs the rope, jerking the goat forward.
THE GOAT BLEATS.

Araceli crawls over and pets the goat's face.

ARACELI

(in Spanish)

Where did you come from?

The goat gently butts its head against hers. She smiles.

ARACELI (CONT'D)

We're lost too.

EXT. BRUSH COUNTRY - DAY

Three travelers against the horizon, mirages of heat distorting their figures. Ringo in the lead with his walking stick. Araceli limping behind, clutching the frayed rope of the goat.

Araceli stops and sits on the ground, her foot bleeding again. Ringo takes off his shirt and belt and throws them to her.

She wraps the shirt around her foot and secures it with the belt.

They continue on.

EXT. BRUSH COUNTRY - DAY

Araceli, Ringo and the goat move painfully slowly through the expanse.

EXT. BRUSH COUNTRY, GAS WELL VENTS - DAY

Araceli, Ringo and the goat stand in a field of gas well vents.

The spot is desolate except for the long pipes extending into the air with fire shooting from them.

They look at the fire.

RINGO
Jesus Christ.

THE BURNING AND HISSING FLAMES scorch the air.

ARACELI
This is what you saw? This is the
town?

They stand in the midst of the hellish flames and gaze at the empty expanse around them.

They let it sink in. After a while, they walk on.

EXT. RUINS - EVENING

Ringo and Araceli come upon the ruins of a crumbling stone house from the days of the Spanish settlements.

The roof is gone, long rotted. The mute stone walls lean, threatening to fall back to the earth.

INT. RUINS - NIGHT

The goat is tied in the corner near the ruins of the old fireplace. It stares at Ringo and Araceli through its square pupils.

Ringo and Araceli lie next to each other on the ground. They look up toward the night sky through the void where the roof used to be.

RINGO
Tomorrow, I'll kill the goat.

ARACELI
Why?

RINGO
We can drink it's blood.

ARACELI
What?

RINGO
Unless we can find water, it's our
only choice.

Araceli turns her head and looks toward the wall in protest.

A long silence.

Finally, Ringo moves his body towards hers. He kisses her neck. He slides his hands around her waist and presses himself against her.

She turns towards him. They kiss.

Ringo reaches down and starts to unbutton her pants. She stops him.

RINGO (CONT'D)
What's wrong?

ARACELI
I'm saving myself.

RINGO
You only live once.

ARACELI
I promised my mother.

Ringo tries again. Araceli struggles to pull his hand away. He resists and continues to kiss her.

ARACELI (CONT'D)
(whispering)
Stop. Please.

He stops.

She pulls away and turns her body from his. Ringo sighs. He rolls over and looks toward the sky.

INT. RUINS - NIGHT [LATER]

The goat steps lightly from side to side, pulling on its leash.

Ringo sleeps.

Araceli kneels beside the goat. She strokes its face with her hand.

She unties the rope and gently leads the goat outside.

EXT. RUINS - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

Araceli leads the goat off into the darkness.

INT. RUINS - MORNING

Ringo is awake. He sits with his back against the wall. He stares toward the spot where the goat was tied.

Araceli opens her eyes. She sits up.

RINGO
The goat's gone.

ARACELI
Really?

RINGO
What do you think about that?

ARACELI
It must have gotten loose.

Ringo looks at her.

RINGO
Do you think I'm an idiot?

ARACELI
What do you mean?

RINGO
You let it go.

ARACELI
No. It must have....

Ringo strikes her across the face with the back of his hand.

She instinctively puts her hand to her face.

INT. RUINS - DAY [LATER]

Araceli sits near the fireplace. Ringo sits with his back against the opposite wall.

They're quiet for a long time.

RINGO
(breaking the silence)
We've got to keep going.

Araceli doesn't respond.

RINGO (CONT'D)
We're going to die if we don't get water.

Araceli shifts her head slightly, an indication that she hears him.

More silence.

RINGO (CONT'D)
I'm sorry I hit you. It's not like me.

EXT. BRUSH COUNTRY - DAY

Araceli and Ringo walk through the brutal heat.

Araceli looks at Ringo's shoulders. They're blistered from the sun.

ARACELI

Wait.

Ringo stops and looks back.

ARACELI (CONT'D)

Take your shirt. You're burning up.

She bends down to remove the shirt that's bandaging her foot. As she bends down, her right thigh cramps from dehydration.

She falls to the ground in pain, her leg outstretched. She grabs her thigh with her hand.

Ringo walks back. He bends down.

ARACELI (CONT'D)

It's cramping.

Ringo rubs her leg.

EXT. SPANISH MISSION - DAY

Araceli's arm is around Ringo's neck. They help each other walk. They're struggling, weak. Up ahead they see something.

Rising out of the wasteland, in the distance, the stone walls of an ancient Spanish Mission.

Behind the walls a stone bell tower and cross stand stark against the blue sky.

Araceli and Ringo head towards the mission.

EXT. SPANISH MISSION, WOODEN DOOR - DAY

Ringo and Araceli stand under the walls of the mission in front of a formidable wooden door.

Araceli pounds on the door.

ARACELI

Hey! Hey! Help us!

Nothing. She pounds again.

Ringo joins her. They pound at the wooden door together.

ARACELI (CONT'D)
Help us! Help us! Please help us!

Silence. Only the stones soaking up heat.

RINGO
(giving up)
There's no one.

Araceli looks at the wall. A dark spot of moisture dampens the stone in a spot, water leaking slowly from somewhere.

CLOSE ON Ringo and Araceli pressing their tongues to the damp rock, trying to suck moisture from it.

EXT. BRUSH COUNTRY - DAY

Ringo and Araceli are on the move again. Slowly, slowly, through the twisted wasteland.

This is the end. Ringo falls to the ground. He props himself up, his back against a mesquite.

Araceli sits down beside him.

They sit for a long time, staring. They stare at nothing. They've given up.

EXT. BRUSH COUNTRY - DAY [LATER]

The sun beats down, always the goddamn sun.

Ringo and Araceli sit in the same spot. Ringo's eyes are closed, his chin rests on his chest.

Araceli is still awake. She has Ringo's tiny plastic game in her hands. She's trying futilely to get the ball through the little maze.

She starts to cry but no tears come. She's too dehydrated. She reaches up and touches her eyes, puzzled.

Her hands drop to her side.

Then, she sees something sticking up through the soil. She scratches at it and pulls it out. It's a tooth.

She digs more. A human jaw bone emerges, and near it, something shiny.

She digs at the shiny object. She pulls it from the ground and brushes it off. A tiny charm. A saint's charm. Saint Frances of Assisi. She looks at the charm.

CUT TO:

EXT. BRUSH COUNTRY - DAY [MOMENTS LATER]

Araceli stands over Ringo. She nudges him with her foot.

ARACELI

Get up.

He won't budge.

ARACELI (CONT'D)

Come on. Get up.

She pulls on him.

RINGO

Leave me alone.

ARACELI

I don't want to die here. Someone
else died here. I want to die
somewhere else.

RINGO

Suit yourself.

EXT. BRUSH COUNTRY - DAY

Araceli walks alone, looking for a place to die.

EXT. EDGE OF A VAST FIELD - DAY

The brush gives way to an inconceivably vast field. Araceli
steps out of the brush into the wide open space.

The Saint's amulet dangles from her hand.

She gazes out across the field.

In the distance, warped and shimmering like a mirage, she
sees a house surrounded by a mott of oak trees.

Araceli squints, not trusting her eyes, then starts out across
the field.

EXT. RANCH - DAY

An island in the vast openness of fields. A dilapidated ranch
house surrounded by oak trees.

An American flag turned upside down flutters on an old flag
pole.

Water from a pump well drips into a white bowl.

Araceli kneels and drinks from the bowl.

She pumps the handle of the well and fresh water pours out. She drinks blissfully.

INT. RANCH, LIVING ROOM - DAY

The front door creaks open and Araceli steps into the Ranch house. It's old, sparsely furnished.

INT. RANCH, KITCHEN - DAY

Araceli turns the faucet. Nothing.

She looks into the pantry. A few sacks of rice and pinto beans.

INT. RANCH, HALLWAY - DAY

Araceli creeps nervously down the long hallway toward the bedroom. The door is cracked.

INT. RANCH, MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Araceli slowly opens the door. She peers into the bedroom.

In the corner, a man sits in a wheelchair with his back to Araceli.

Startled, ARACELI SCREAMS.

For a moment, it seems that the man is holding the six shooter in his hand to his own head, but he spins his chair around so fast it's hard to say.

Now he's pointing the pistol at Araceli.

This is IRA MULLER, mid thirties, exhausted, dirty, alone. He wears a faded blue stetson hat.

He's a man whose first instinct is violence, and something of this shows in his eyes.

Ira and Araceli look at each other, unsure what happens next.

EXT. BRUSH COUNTRY - DAY

Ringo sits with his back against the same tree, presuming himself dead to the world.

Araceli leans down and lifts the plastic bottle she saved to his lips. It's full of water now. He drinks gratefully.

EXT. RANCH - MORNING

The next day. The sun rises over the fields. The inverted American flag flaps in the breeze, THE LANYARD CLANKING AGAINST THE METAL FLAG POLE.

A delivery truck pulls up in front of the Ranch.

INT. RANCH, SECOND BEDROOM - MORNING [CONTINUOUS]

Araceli sleeps. Ringo sleeps beside her. She wakes to the SOUND OF KNOCKING AT THE FRONT DOOR.

She can here two voices, Ira's and another man's.

INT. RANCH, LIVING ROOM - DAY [CONTINUOUS]

A DELIVERY MAN is bringing in a load of supplies. He stacks a few bags of rice and beans near the door.

Ira sits nearby, his pistol holster strapped to the side of his wheelchair.

The man puts a box on the countertop near Ira.

Ira hands the Delivery man some cash. The man starts to leave, but pauses.

DELIVERY MAN
Listen, you sure you're doing ok out here?

Ira nods.

DELIVERY MAN (CONT'D)
Alright. See you in a month.

The delivery man closes the door behind himself. HE CRANKS HIS TRUCK UP AND PULLS AWAY.

Immediately, Ira opens the box on the counter. He pulls a bottle of pills from it and scrambles to open it up. He dumps several pills in his hand. He swallows them and washes them down with a cup of water.

As he does, Araceli walks into the living room.

ARACELI
How many of those are you going to take?

Ira's not pleased to see her.

IRA
You a doctor?

ARACELI
I'm a nurse. Almost.

Araceli walks over and picks up the bottle. She reads the label.

ARACELI (CONT'D)
Says here you're not supposed to
take more than three a day.

Ira takes the bottle back and sets it on the counter.

ARACELI (CONT'D)
Those are addictive.

IRA
(sarcastically)
No shit?

Ringo walks in from the back bedroom.

IRA (CONT'D)
(to Ringo)
You got until sundown to get off my
property or I'm calling the sheriff.

Ringo looks around.

RINGO
With what. There's no phone in this
place.

Ringo flips the light switch.

RINGO (CONT'D)
Or power.

Ringo walks over to the window. He pulls back one of the
curtains and peeks out.

A 1950s Ford pickup truck sits outside.

RINGO (CONT'D)
That your truck?

IRA
Yep.

RINGO
You want to sell it?

IRA
Nope.

Ringo looks at Ira.

RINGO
You can't drive it.

Araceli's embarrassed.

ARACELI
(to Ringo)
Hey!

RINGO
He can't.

Ira's not amused.

IRA
It has sentimental value.

RINGO
What happened to you anyway?

IRA
I got blown up.

Ira wheels himself toward the back bedroom.

IRA (CONT'D)
You got until tonight. Comprende?

He disappears down the hallway.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY

A long dirt road through the fields. The landscape is oppressively flat and open, disappearing to the horizon in all directions.

Araceli and Ringo walk.

RINGO
There's no pay phone out here. Look around. There's nothing.

They continue to walk.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY

Araceli and Ringo sit by the side of the road resting. After a while, Ringo speaks.

RINGO
Nobody's going to drive by here.

ARACELI
What do you suggest we do?

RINGO
We have to get that truck.

Araceli doesn't like it.

RINGO (CONT'D)
You think you could get close enough
to grab his pistol?

ARACELI
It's not a good idea. He's fast with
that thing.

RINGO
You got a better idea?

EXT. RANCH - DAY

Araceli pumps the handle on the well and fills a cast iron
pot with water.

INT. RANCH, KITCHEN - DAY

Araceli strikes a match and lights the gas stove. She puts
the pot on the stove.

She heaps spoonfuls of Arbuckle's Coffee into the water.

She opens the cupboard and takes stock of the food. She unrolls
a burlap sack and looks at the pinto beans inside. She unrolls
another sack filled with rice.

Ira comes in and stops next to the counter, looking for his
pills. They're gone.

IRA
Where's your partner?

Araceli continues to look through the food.

ARACELI
He's outside somewhere. He's looking
for chickens.

IRA
What did he do with my pills?

ARACELI
Let us borrow the truck, then we'll
give them back.

Ira pulls his pistol.

IRA
Give them back.

Araceli doesn't respond.

IRA (CONT'D)
Give them back or I'll kill you where
you stand.

Araceli's terrified, but tries to act as though nothing is happening.

She reaches into the burlap sack and pulls out handfuls of rice. She heaps the rice into pottery crock.

Ira holds the pistol on her for several long moments. Then, he turns his chair and leaves.

INT. RANCH, KITCHEN - DAY

Ringo and Araceli sit at the table eating bowls of rice and drinking coffee.

Ira sits nearby in the living room next to an old gramophone. He drinks whisky from the bottle.

ARACELI
(to Ira)
Come eat.

IRA
I'd rather eat glass.

ARACELI
Listen, we'd leave if we could. We
don't even know where we are.

Ira winds the handle of the gramophone.

ARACELI (CONT'D)
Come eat.

IRA
I don't eat with wetbacks.

He lets the needle on the gramophone fall onto a 78. EDDY ARNOLD'S 'STREETS OF LAREDO' BEGINS TO PLAY.

They eat. Ira drinks.

EXT. FIELDS - EVENING

Araceli walks alone through the fields.

EXT. BRUSH COUNTRY - EVENING

At the spot where she discovered the human remains, Araceli bends down and opens a faded and rotting leather backpack.

She opens it and looks through it. She pulls out a Mexican identification card.

She bends down in front of the jaw bone. She looks at the bones and then at the water damaged picture on the ID card. It's of a young woman.

EXT. SPANISH MISSION - EVENING

Araceli looks at the Spanish mission in the distance.

EXT. RANCH - EVENING

Ira sits at the edge of the fields looking out at the setting sun. A chill is in the air.

Araceli comes up behind him and puts a light blanket around his shoulders. He looks at her.

INT. IRA'S PICKUP TRUCK - EVENING

Araceli climbs into the truck and opens the glove compartment. She pulls out a road map.

INT. RANCH, KITCHEN - NIGHT

The ranch is lit by a few oil lamps.

Araceli sits at the table with the map unfolded. Ringo sits in the living room playing solitaire.

Ira comes over to Araceli and looks at the map. He points to it.

IRA
You're about ten miles outside
Falfurrias.

Araceli looks at the map.

IRA (CONT'D)
Where're you trying to go?

Araceli points to the map.

ARACELI
Fort Stockton.

IRA
It's a hell of a ways.

ARACELI
My sister's up there. I'm going to
take care of her.

IRA
Where'd you come from?

ARACELI
Nuevo Laredo, but we crossed near
Matamoros.

Ringo stands up from his game.

RINGO
Let's go to bed.

Araceli stands up and begins to fold the map.

ARACELI
Can't you let us borrow the truck?

IRA
I don't know.

ARACELI
You're not going to call the sheriff
are you?

IRA
No.

Araceli starts to walk off.

ARACELI
Are you going to sleep?

Ira pats the wheels of his chair.

IRA
I sleep in the chair.

He smiles a little. He knows it seems pitiful.

EXT. RANCH - NIGHT

The Ranch and fields are dark except for a single oil lamp
burning on a table out back. Ira sits beside the lamp looking
out at the darkness.

Wisps of clouds pass by the full moon.

INT. RANCH, SECOND BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ringo sleeps. Araceli wakes beside him. She lies in the bed
looking up at the ceiling.

EXT. RANCH - NIGHT

The door opens and Araceli steps out. She has a glass of water in her hand.

She walks over to Ira. He's pale, in pain. She holds one of his pills out. He opens his mouth.

ARACELI

Three a day.

She holds the water up to his mouth and he drinks it.

ARACELI (CONT'D)

I know it's hard.

She pulls up a chair and sits down beside him. They're quiet for a long time.

IRA

What's wrong with your sister?

ARACELI

She has cancer.

IRA

Where're your parents?

ARACELI

Dead.

IRA

I'm sorry.

They watch the clouds pass. Then, Araceli opens up.

ARACELI

We were coming home from church. My father stopped at a red light.

She swallows hard.

ARACELI (CONT'D)

A gun fight broke out between the Zetas and police.

Ira looks over at her. He knows something of this kind of world.

ARACELI (CONT'D)

Bullets hit the car.

She stops for a few moments. It's hard to talk about. She's becoming emotional.

IRA

You don't have to talk about that
shit. I hate to talk about that shit.

Her lip quivers.

ARACELI

I could have saved my mother, if I
had known what to do.

Ira puts his hand on Araceli's shoulder. She's crying now,
but it's muted and restrained.

They sit together in the dim light of the oil lamp.

INT. RANCH, KITCHEN - MORNING

Ringo sits at the table. Araceli puts a bowl of grits down in
front of him. She places a basket of biscuits in the center
of the table.

Ringo grabs one.

RINGO

Isn't there any meat in this damn
place?

She puts a bowl of grits down for herself. She sits down.

As she starts to eat, Ira wheels up to the table. Araceli
looks at him. She slides her bowl of grits over to him.

IRA

Thank you.

ARACELI

You're welcome.

She stands up and gets another bowl. She sits back down at
the table.

They eat.

INT. RANCH BATHROOM - DAY

Ira sits in a bathtub full of soapy water, his chair and pistol
within reach.

Araceli scrubs his back with a cloth. She dunks the cloth in
the water and squeezes it over his head.

INT. RANCH, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ringo sits in the living room playing solitaire. Ira sits
nearby.

Araceli opens the blinds and lets light into the room.

She runs a damp rag over the gramophone, cleaning the layer of dust off.

She opens a drawer of an end table. Inside, lying with some odds and ends, she finds a bronze star and a purple heart.

She holds the bronze star up.

ARACELI

(to Ira)

What's this?

IRA

A party favor, compliments of the
First Cavalry.

Ringo looks up at the medal.

RINGO

Ira here's a hero.

Ira shakes his head.

IRA

Put it back. It doesn't mean anything.

Araceli puts it back.

EXT. RANCH - EVENING

Ira sits outside the Ranch looking at the setting sun. Araceli comes over to him. She gives him a pain pill and some water.

INT. RANCH, MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Araceli helps Ira out of his chair and into his bed.

A look of contentment comes over his face as he lays down for the first time in months.

INT. RANCH, SECOND BEDROOM - NIGHT

Araceli lies in the dark awake. Ringo sleeps.

EXT. SPANISH MISSION - MORNING

Araceli looks at the Spanish mission in the distance.

EXT. SPANISH MISSION, WOODEN DOOR - MORNING [CONTINUOUS]

Araceli stands in front of the wooden door to the mission. It's slightly cracked. She pushes the heavy wooden door open and enters.

INT. SPANISH MISSION - MORNING [CONTINUOUS]

Araceli walks into the nave. It's small, primitive. The heavy walls seem to press inwards.

Araceli stands in front of a lifelike wooden carving of Christ. She looks into the figure's eyes. She looks at the crown of thorns on his head.

Araceli hears something. She turns. A PRIEST stands in the sanctuary looking at her. He's old. Deep wrinkles line his face.

He walks into the confessional.

INT. SPANISH MISSION, CONFESSIONAL - MORNING [CONTINUOUS]

Araceli enters the confessional and closes the door behind her.

She can just make out the priest's face through the dark screen.

ARACELI

(In Spanish)

I confess to the Lord my God all the
countless sins committed by me. I
sin daily and hourly. It's been five
years since my last confession.

PRIEST

(In Spanish)

Continue.

ARACELI

(In Spanish)

I hold hatred in my heart for the
men who murdered my parents.

EXT. FIELDS - DAY

Araceli walks through the fields. As she does, she clasps the St. Francis charm around her neck.

INT. RANCH, KITCHEN - DAY

Araceli sits at the table sorting pinto beans. Ira sits with her and watches her separate out the imperfect beans into a separate pile.

IRA

Why do you do that?

ARACELI

It's tradition.

She continues to sort, pushing the malformed beans to the side. Ira watches. He watches her hands. He looks at the light on her brown skin.

EXT. RANCH - DAY

POW. A rusty can flies off a rickety sawhorse.

Araceli stands beside Ira. He's holding his smoking six shooter.

He takes aim again. POW. Another can flies off the sawhorse.

IRA

In Iraq, I came across the body of a young boy in a village.

POW. Ira fires again.

IRA (CONT'D)

To discourage the people from cooperating with us, the Mahdi Army stacked tires around his body up to his neck and lit him on fire.

Araceli listens.

IRA (CONT'D)

That's the way the world is. Some people deserve to die and some don't, but we all get it one way or another.

POW. Smoke curls from the pistol's barrel. He holds the pistol out to Araceli.

IRA (CONT'D)

Promise you'll give it right back.

She nods. She takes the pistol. She aims at the can and fires. POW.

CUT TO:

INT. RANCH, MASTER BEDROOM - DAY [CONTINUOUS]

THE SOUNDS OF THE GUNFIRE are audible outside. Ringo slides open a dresser drawer. He's looking for the truck keys. No luck.

He slides open another drawer and roots through it. Nothing.

INT. RANCH, LIVING ROOM - DAY [CONTINUOUS]

Ringo opens the end table drawer and looks at the Bronze Star. He pockets it.

EXT. RANCH - EVENING

Ira, Araceli and Ringo sit outside of the Ranch drinking tequila as the sun sets.

THE LANYARD OF THE INVERTED AMERICAN FLAG CLANKS AGAINST THE FLAGPOLE. Ringo looks at it.

RINGO
You get veteran's benefits?

A sickened look comes across Ira's face.

IRA
I don't want their money.

THE LANYARD CLANKS. It's irritating Ringo.

RINGO
What do you live on?

Ira points out to the fields.

IRA
This used to be my family's land.
We raised cattle. When I came home,
my parents where gone. I couldn't
run the ranch. I sold it as farm
land. I live off the money.

Ringo stands up and walks over to the flag. He looks up at it.

RINGO
This clanking is driving me crazy.

Ringo reaches for the flagpole lanyard.

IRA
Don't touch that.

Ringo touches the lanyard anyway.

RINGO
Why not?

IRA
That flag stays up.

Araceli look at it.

IRA (CONT'D)
This country's in distress.

Ringo's had enough. He's so bored he's ready to call Ira's bluff or get shot. He starts to undo the lanyard.

Ira moves his hand to his pistol.

Then, Araceli sees something.

ARACELI

Oh my god!

Ira and Ringo look.

Ambling across the field comes the lost goat.

Araceli stands and walks towards it. The tension broken.

EXT. RANCH - EVENING

The goat drinks from the white porcelain bowl by the hand pump well.

Araceli pets it as it drinks.

INT. RANCH, KITCHEN - NIGHT

The pinto beans cook in a cast iron pot.

INT. RANCH, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

Ringo, Araceli and Ira sit in the living room drinking tequila.

Ringo plays solitaire.

RINGO

(to Ira)

What'd you say we play cards.

IRA

No thanks.

RINGO

Come on. A game of cards for the truck keys.

IRA

I don't gamble.

Ringo shrugs.

Ira finishes his drink. He cranks up the gramophone. He lets the needle drop.

SAN ANTONIO ROSE PLAYS.

SERIES OF SHOTS

Ringo, Araceli and Ira drink.

Ringo holds his deck of cards between his thumb and index finger. He bends the cards back and lets them spray all over the room. Everyone laughs.

Araceli holds the handles of Ira's wheelchair, tipping him back. Ringo bends down, holding onto Ira in a waltz pose. The three pretend to dance around the room to the song.

Araceli lets the goat in.

Araceli bangs pots and pans together in a low-tech celebration.

Ringo takes one of the pans and smashes it into the wall, putting a hole in it. They laugh.

Beans boil on the stove.

INT. RANCH, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Araceli, Ringo and Ira sit around the table eating bowls of pinto beans.

They're all drunk, bleary eyed.

Araceli chews her beans.

ARACELI

Fuck this wilderness.

RINGO

Isn't there any meat in this goddamn place? How can you stand it?

IRA

I don't eat meat.

RINGO

Jesus Christ. I thought this was Texas. What's wrong with you people?

They eat. The goat wanders around in the living room.

ARACELI

I'm going to New York when my sister's better.

IRA

I've been there. It's beautiful. There's no trees or dirt, except in central park, but I bet they'll get that sooner or later.

They chew. THE GOAT BLEATS.

RINGO
I'm going to eat that fucking goat.

IRA
No you're not.

RINGO
That's our goat.

IRA
It's on my land.

Ringo starts to stand.

IRA (CONT'D)
Don't touch that goat.

RINGO
This again.

Ringo sits back down. He picks up his spoon again.

Then, in a quick move, he stands while pulling Ira's pistol from its holster.

As he jerks the pistol, the keys to the truck tumble out of the holster.

Ringo sees them and snatches them up.

RINGO (CONT'D)
There they are.

Araceli stands. Ringo levels the gun at Ira.

IRA
You're no killer.

Ringo tucks the pistol in his pants. He walks behind Ira and quickly dumps him out of his chair.

RINGO
(to Araceli)
Come on.

Ira tries to pull himself toward Ringo but it's pathetic. He gives up and looks at Araceli.

RINGO (CONT'D)
Come on.

INT. IRA'S PICKUP TRUCK, RANCH - NIGHT

Ringo sits in the driver's seat of Ira's pickup truck. Araceli sits beside him in the passenger's seat.

Ringo cranks the truck up.

EXT. IRA'S PICKUP TRUCK, RANCH - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

Ringo puts the truck in drive and pulls away into the darkness.

INT. IRA'S PICKUP TRUCK, DESERT ROAD - MORNING

West Texas. Vast, open land, broken by low mesas. The horizon swallows everything. The earth gives way to the abyss here.

Ringo steers the truck down the straight road. He's been driving all night. He's exhausted.

Araceli wakes and gazes out the window.

They drive.

EXT. IRA'S PICKUP TRUCK, DESERT ROAD - MORNING

Ringo and Araceli stand outside the pickup truck, taking a break from the road.

They look out across the flat and desolate landscape as the sun climbs over it.

Suddenly Ringo cross-draws Ira's pistol from his waistband. He fires a shot into the desert.

Araceli flinches. Ringo cuts his eyes at her, proud of himself.

INT. IRA'S PICKUP TRUCK, DESERT ROAD - DAY

The truck moves through the desert.

Up ahead, out of the nothingness, Ringo spots a small structure, a gas station perhaps.

He looks down at the gas gauge. Empty.

EXT. DILAPIDATED GAS STATION - DAY

Ringo steers the truck beside the rickety gas pump and stops. The DOORS TO THE PICKUP TRUCK CREAK OPEN. Ringo and Araceli step out.

THE WIND MOVES SOMETHING THAT MOANS WITH RUST in the distance.

INT. DILAPIDATED GAS STATION, MAIN ROOM - DAY

The door slowly opens. Ringo and Araceli step inside.

From the back room, old country tunes are playing quietly from an unseen radio.

RINGO

Hello?

No answer. They gaze around.

Araceli heads toward the back room, toward the sound of the music.

INT. DILAPIDATED GAS STATION, BACK ROOM - DAY

Araceli slowly pushes the door to the back room open. She steps inside.

She looks at the radio. A half-full cup of coffee sits beside it.

EXT. DILAPIDATED GAS STATION - DAY

Ringo and Araceli stand outside of the gas station looking around. The place is empty.

Ringo unwraps a tiny pecan pie and bites it, chewing as he thinks.

After a while, He lets the wrapper fall to the ground.

RINGO

Fuck it.

INT. DILAPIDATED GAS STATION, MAIN ROOM - DAY

CLOSE ON The register opening and the money being pulled out.

Ringo and Araceli hurriedly fill bags with items from the shelves. Beef jerky. Crackers. A shitty bottle of champagne. A can of beans.

EXT. DILAPIDATED GAS STATION - DAY [CONTINUOUS]

Gas spills out of the pickup truck's tank as Ringo overfills it.

EXT. DILAPIDATED GAS STATION - DAY [MOMENTS LATER]

The pickup truck screeches into the distance.

INT. REST STOP, BATHROOM - DAY

A dark bathroom at a desert rest stop. A trough to piss in. SOME FLIES BUZZ, happy for a place to feed.

Ringo walks in and stands in front of the trough. He unbuttons his pants, preparing to take a leak. As he does, the door opens behind him.

A tall SHERIFF walks into the bathroom. He's older, early sixties maybe. Grizzled.

He walks up and stands beside Ringo. He unbuckles his pants and drops them all the way down to the floor.

He stands there bare-assed and pisses into the stagnant trough water.

Ringo looks straight ahead, trying to concentrate on a spot on the wall, trying to will himself to piss, but he can't.

The sound of the Sheriff's stream continues for a long time. On Ringo's side, nothing.

Then.

SHERIFF
Hot, ain't it?

Ringo nods.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)
You speak English?

RINGO
Yep.

The Sheriff bends down and pulls his pants up. He walks out.

As soon as the door shuts, Ringo begins to piss.

INT. IRA'S PICKUP TRUCK, REST STOP - DAY

Ringo climbs into the truck beside Araceli.

Araceli has a road map opened on her lap.

RINGO
That Sheriff talk to you?

ARACELI
No.

RINGO
Did he look at you?

ARACELI
Yes.

Ringo starts the truck. Araceli glances down at the map.

ARACELI (CONT'D)
If we keep driving, we can make it
to my sister's tonight.

Ringo looks over at her.

RINGO
What's one more day?

ARACELI
We should keep going.

RINGO
I haven't slept.

ARACELI
I can drive.

RINGO
Listen, what's one more day?

Araceli thinks. Ringo slides his hand over and slowly pulls the map off her lap.

RINGO (CONT'D)
It might be the last time we see
each other.

He looks into her eyes.

RINGO (CONT'D)
Me and you. One more day.

EXT. ROAD HOUSE - DAY

The pickup truck pulls into the dirt parking lot of a rundown road house.

INT. ROAD HOUSE - DAY

Araceli and Ringo enter the dimly lit Road House.

The light from the door opening blinds the bartender and the three crusty drunks that sit at the bar.

Araceli and Ringo sit down at the bar.

The BARTENDER approaches.

She's comforting in a strange way. A well-loved grandmother come back from the dead...with whisky.

Ringo points to DRUNK #1.

RINGO
I'll have what he's having.

BARTENDER
(to Araceli)
And for you?

ARACELI
Same for me.

Ringo eyes a menu written on a chalk board.

The Bartender fetches them their drinks. Whisky straight-up in chipped tumblers.

Ringo shoots his down.

RINGO
(pointing to the chalk
board)
What's the steak challenge?

BARTENDER
It's a seventy-two oz sirloin. You
eat it all, it's free.

Ringo thinks.

She sweetens the deal, nodding to a couple of cowboy hats on the wall.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
And you get to wear them hats.

Araceli looks at Ringo.

The bartender jerks her thumb toward the wall.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
And you get your name on the wall
with the rest of the winners.

Everyone looks toward the wall. There are no names on it.

RINGO
I don't see any names.

Everyone laughs.

Ringo looks at the drunks.

RINGO (CONT'D)
You boys think I can do it?

The drunks smile stupidly and cut their eyes at each other.

RINGO (CONT'D)
You want to bet I can do it?

Ringo looks back at the waitress.

RINGO (CONT'D)
We'll have that.

Araceli smiles.

RINGO (CONT'D)
And buy these men a drink on us.

The drunks perk up.

RINGO (CONT'D)
And one for you.

The Bartender smiles. She knows he aims to spend.

CUT TO:

INT. ROAD HOUSE - DAY [LATER]

CLOSE ON Whiskey from a half-empty bottle being poured into Ringo's glass.

Ringo and Araceli both wear the Steak Challenge cowboy hats.

Ringo sits in front of his giant half eaten steak, still trying to finish.

Araceli has given up on her meal long ago. She's near the Jukebox dancing with DRUNK #1 to the song 'TWO WHOOPS AND A HOLLER'.

DRUNK #2 and DRUNK #3 stand close by. They look on with glee and stomp-clap to the music.

Everyone's having a grand time.

CUT TO:

INT. ROAD HOUSE - DAY [LATER]

The Drunks, Ringo and Araceli stand around a pinata near the dart board.

They drink straight from the bottle of whisky and cheer at Araceli as she tries to smash the pinata with a broom stick.

CUT TO:

INT. ROAD HOUSE - DAY [LATER]

Everyone sits around the bar again. They're bleary eyed. A SLOW SONG, 'HONKY-TONK ANGEL', PLAYS ON THE JUKEBOX.

Araceli eats from a pile of pinata candy.

A big stack of bills sits on the bar in front of Ringo, tip money for the Bartender.

Ringo tries to finish the steak but can't. He pushes the plate forward.

RINGO

I give up.

BARTENDER

Don't feel bad. Nobody makes it.

The door opens. Everyone looks toward it. The Sheriff walks in. He walks over to the bar and takes a seat near Ringo and Araceli.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)

What'll you have Sheriff?

SHERIFF

Whisky.

The bartender pours a whisky and slides it to the Sheriff. The Sheriff takes a sip and stares at Ringo.

Ringo stares back. He's clearly drunk. The two look at each other for few seconds.

Ringo's had enough of the staring. He moves his hand down toward his waist.

The Sheriff notices. He slides his hand down toward his pistol. This is the kind of thing he lives for.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)

Make your move son.

The drunks give each other nervous and lustful stares, excited by the prospect of violence.

Then, Ringo pulls Ira's bronze star from his pocket and slams it on the table.

RINGO

You see this?

SHERIFF

Yea, I see it.

RINGO

I got this fucker in Iraq.

The Sheriff stares at him.

RINGO (CONT'D)

I'm driving my woman to Fort Stockton
so she can see her dying sister.
I'd like to be able to have a drink
on the way. I think I've earned that
much.

Araceli is nervous. She puts her hand on Ringo's shoulder,
trying to calm him down some.

ARACELI

Hey.

He shoots her a mean look.

RINGO

Shut the fuck up.

Araceli figures it's time to go.

ARACELI

(to the Bartender)
What do we owe you?

BARTENDER

You're square.

Araceli starts to take her hat off.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)

Keep the hats. They suit you.

Araceli and Ringo stand up and walk out.

ARACELI

(to the group as she
leaves)
Adios.

The Drunks wave, sorry to see them go.

DRUNK #1

Adios.

INT. IRA'S PICKUP TRUCK, DESERT ROAD - DAY

Araceli and Ringo drive. After a while, Araceli breaks the
silence.

ARACELI

Why did they deport you?

RINGO

I got pulled over for speeding.

ARACELI

And they deported you for that?

RINGO

I was born in Mexico. My parents
brought me to the US when I was three.
I'm not a citizen.

Ringo turns on the radio. A JOHNNY CASH RENDITION OF 'STREETS OF LAREDO' PLAYS, the same song that Ira played at the Ranch.

Ringo tries to change the station, but the radio is broken and he can't.

They drive along for a while as the song plays.

Araceli gazes out the window toward the distant horizon. She's drunk, sentimental, and the song makes her think of Ira.

Then, in the rear view mirror, Ringo sees a car. It's getting closer. He turns the radio off.

It's the Sheriff's car. It pulls up close.

RINGO (CONT'D)

Goddamn it.

Araceli looks back. They drive along in silence, the Sheriff's car behind them.

Finally, the Sheriff slows down and pulls over to the side of the road.

Ringo watches in the rear-view mirror as the Sheriff's car disappears behind them. He's relieved.

RINGO (CONT'D)

Jesus.

INT. IRA'S PICKUP TRUCK, TEEPEE MOTEL - EVENING

Araceli and Ringo drive into the Teepee Motel, an old tourist trap from the 1950s where the freestanding rooms are shaped like Teepees. There's an abandoned look to the place. Peeling paint, trash.

As they pull in they see an Indian couple, RONDA and DAN, sitting around one of the communal fire pits. They're drinking beer and cooking hamburgers.

Ronda is attractive in a run-down sort of way. She's dressed in a tight shirt and shorts.

Ringo notices her as they pull in. He waves as they drive past. Dan and Ronda wave back.

INT. TEEPEE MOTEL - EVENING

Araceli and Ringo enter the Teepee. There's a bed in the middle of the room with a fake animal fur blanket. A small black and white TV sits in the corner.

They sit down on the bed. Ringo pops the cork on the bottle of champagne from the gas station.

RINGO
Ain't life sweet.

They pass the bottle back and forth, wincing at the taste of the bitter champagne.

Ringo reaches into his pocket.

RINGO (CONT'D)
I got you something in the gift shop.

ARACELI
Really?

Ringo pulls out a silver and turquoise necklace, a gaudy piece of fake Indian jewelry.

He unclasps the St. Francis charm from around Araceli's neck and puts it on himself.

Then he puts the new necklace around Araceli's neck.

ARACELI (CONT'D)
It's beautiful.

Araceli smiles. They kiss, lying back on the bed.

After a while Araceli gently turns away from Ringo and faces toward the wall.

INT. TEEPEE MOTEL - NIGHT

Araceli wakes to the sound of arguing outside. She looks around the room.

The room is dark. The TV is on. An old cowboy movie plays through the static.

Ringo is missing. She looks toward the door.

EXT. TEEPEE MOTEL, FIRE PIT - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

Araceli exits the Teepee. She has the fake fur blanket wrapped around her shoulders to keep warm.

She walks over to the fire pit. Ringo is holding his bloody nose as Dan yells at him. Ronda stands off to the side and watches.

DAN
(yelling at Ringo)
You got some nerve.

Araceli interrupts.

ARACELI
What's going on?

DAN
This asshole made a move on Ronda
when I went to take a piss.

RONDA
It's true. He did.

RINGO
This is a misunderstanding.

Dan is deadly serious.

DAN
It's not misunderstanding mister.

RONDA
That's right, it's no
misunderstanding.

Ringo is defiant.

RINGO
Think what you want.

Ronda points toward Ringo's bloody face.

RONDA
(to Araceli)
You'd better take him back inside
before he gets more of the same.

Araceli puts her arm around Ringo and leads him back toward the Teepee.

INT. TEEPEE MOTEL - NIGHT

Ringo sits on the bed. Araceli cleans his bloody nose with a napkin.

The cowboy movie plays on the TV behind them.

EXT. TEEPEE MOTEL - MORNING

Araceli steps out of the Teepee into the chilly desert morning.

Nearby Dan and Ronda are loading up their car. Dan notices her.

DAN

That man you're with is no good.

ARACELI

I'm just traveling with him, trying to get to my sister. She's sick.

DAN

We'll give you a lift if you're going North.

ARACELI

Really?

Dan looks at Ronda. She nods in approval.

DAN

Get your stuff.

INT. TEEPEE MOTEL - MORNING

Araceli enters the Teepee. Ringo is asleep in the bed.

She takes some of the money from the dresser, leaving half. She takes off her necklace and places it beside the money.

She pauses, looking at the necklace. She looks at Ringo sleeping. She reconsiders.

EXT. TEEPEE MOTEL - MORNING

Araceli stands outside of the Teepee and watches Dan and Ronda pull away.

As they pass, Ronda looks at Araceli with pity.

INT. IRA'S PICKUP TRUCK, DESERT ROAD - DAY

The reflection of the desert in the windshield of the truck. Ringo's face against the desert expanse as he drives.

Araceli sleeps in the passenger's seat, the fake fur blanket from the motel wrapped around her.

INT. IRA'S PICKUP TRUCK, DESERT TOWN - NIGHT

A POPPING SOUND. Araceli is startled awake. Steam is pouring from under the hood of the truck.

Ringo is driving down the main street of a dusty one-horse town.

The truck moves through the middle of a small saint's parade.

Araceli looks out the window. A woman with her face painted like a skull gazes back at her through the steam from the truck's radiator.

ARACELI

Where the hell are we?

RINGO

We're lost.

People dressed as spirits and corpses move past them on both sides of the slow moving truck.

A few firecrackers go off. Steam pours out from the radiator and mixes with the smoke.

EXT. MECHANIC'S SHOP - NIGHT

Ringo steers the broken-down truck into the parking lot.

The shop's lights are off. It's closed.

Ringo turns the truck off and kills the lights.

INT. IRA'S PICKUP TRUCK, MECHANIC'S SHOP - MORNING

Ringo opens his eyes. He nudges Araceli awake.

RINGO

Hey. Hey.

Araceli is groggy.

ARACELI

What?

RINGO

Wake up.

INT. MECHANIC'S SHOP - DAY

Ringo opens the door to the shop.

PRESTON, the mechanic, sits at a table with ROY, his buddy. The two are playing a game of poker and sipping black coffee.

Preston is thin with a shaved head and thick mustache. He glances over the top of his cards at Ringo.

RINGO
My truck's broke.

PRESTON
I know. I saw it. I didn't want to
wake you. You and your lady were
sleeping so peacefully.

Roy smiles.

RINGO
You think you can fix it?

PRESTON
That's what I do.

Preston lays down three cards and draws three more.

Ringo looks at the dollar bills on the table.

RINGO
You playing for money this early?

ROY
Why, you feeling lucky?

EXT. MECHANIC'S SHOP - DAY

Araceli and Ringo sit outside the Mechanic's shop waiting.

Araceli plays with Ringo's plastic game, trying to get the
little ball through the maze.

Preston comes out from the garage, wiping his hands on a filthy
red rag.

Ringo and Araceli stand up at Preston's approach.

PRESTON
Radiator needs to be replaced.

RINGO
Ok.

PRESTON
It's an old truck. It might take a
day or two to find the part.

RINGO
How much?

PRESTON
Six hundred.

RINGO

Ok.

EXT. CANYON, CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

A series of slot canyons outside of town. Twisting smooth rocks like a maze.

Araceli and Ringo sit beside a fire under a rock overhang.

The light of the fire illuminates the rock wall behind them. Faded drawings, a primitive hunting scene, are visible painted on the rocks.

Ringo uses his knife to punch a hole in the top of a can of beans. He cuts the top open some and places the beans near the fire to warm.

He sticks the knife into the ground beside his leg.

ARACELI

How much do we have left?

RINGO

Seventy-five dollars.

Araceli is silent. She looks at the fire.

Ringo touches the can of beans. He picks it up.

RINGO (CONT'D)

You want some?

ARACELI

I'm not hungry.

Ringo lifts the beans up to his mouth and slurps some of the juice from the can.

RINGO

You got to eat sometime.

Silence.

RINGO (CONT'D)

Is there something you want to say to me?

ARACELI

No.

RINGO

You're mad we didn't go straight to your sister's? Is that it?

ARACELI
I didn't say anything.

Irritated, Ringo tosses the beans into the fire. The spilled beans sputter and pop on the hot rocks and coals.

After a while, Araceli stands up and walks off into the darkness.

EXT. DESERT ROAD - NIGHT

Araceli walks through the darkness, unsure of where she's going.

EXT. DESERT ROAD - NIGHT [LATER]

Araceli sits in the darkness by the side of the road, her knees drawn up to her chest. The road is silent and dark.

EXT. DESERT ROAD - NIGHT [LATER]

Araceli continues to walk. In the distance, she sees something. It's a light, and under it, the outline of a pay phone.

She begins to run. She runs into the distance, toward the phone.

EXT. PAY PHONE, DESERT ROAD - NIGHT

CLOSE ON quarters going into the pay phone.

Araceli stands under the light from the phone booth. THE LINE RINGS for a long time.

Finally.

MARIA
Hello?

There's static and distance in the sound of the voice, a vast gulf between here and there.

ARACELI
Rosalinda? Rosalinda?

MARIA
Araceli?

ARACELI
Rosy?

MARIA
No Araceli, it's Maria.

ARACELI
Can I speak with Rosalinda?

A long Silence.

Araceli knows her sister is dead.

MARIA
I'm sorry. She died yesterday. I'm
sorry Araceli.

Araceli can't speak.

MARIA (CONT'D)
I'm so sorry.

Araceli begins to cry.

MARIA (CONT'D)
You still have to come Araceli.
Rosalinda...

Araceli puts the phone down. She leans her head onto the cold metal and weeps.

The light from the phone booth illuminates her. She's silhouetted against the vast blackness of the desert.

EXT. DESERT ROAD - MORNING

Araceli sits on the edge of the road and watches the sun rise over the desert.

EXT. CANYON, CAMPFIRE - MORNING

Araceli stands over Ringo. He's asleep beside the ashes of the fire.

She looks at the pistol tucked in his belt and then at the knife stuck in the ground beside him.

EXT. CANYON, CAMPFIRE - MORNING [LATER]

Araceli sits with her back against the canyon wall. Ringo is awake. He's putting his shoes on.

He stands up.

RINGO
I'm going to find us a car.

Araceli is silent.

RINGO (CONT'D)
We have to get out of here somehow,
right?

Still no answer. Araceli looks away from him.

Ringo walks off.

EXT. CANYON, OUTCROP - DAY

Araceli sits on an outcropping of the canyon wall and looks off toward the twisting canyons.

The sun is high. The heat is oppressive.

EXT. CANYON, CAMPFIRE - DAY

Araceli stands near the ashes of the campfire eating crackers and looking at the paintings on the rocks. She's exhausted.

EXT. CANYON, DRY CREEK BED - DAY

In the sweltering heat, Araceli scrapes down into the rocky soil until a tiny bit of water seeps up from the ground.

She lies on her stomach and drinks from the hole.

EXT. CANYON, OUTCROP - EVENING

The day has passed. Araceli squats on the outcropping like an animal and waits.

In the distance, she sees Ringo approaching.

She watches him approach for a long time, a shimmering mirage trudging towards her.

After a while, she stands up and heads down toward the campfire ashes.

EXT. CANYON, CAMPFIRE - DAY [MOMENTS LATER]

Araceli walks toward Ringo. She stops in front of him. He holds a dress in his hand.

RINGO
I couldn't find a car, but I found a
card game.

Araceli is silent.

Ringo tosses a dress toward Araceli. She lets it fall to the ground.

RINGO (CONT'D)
I got you a dress.

No response.

Ringo reaches down and picks up the dress, a hurt look on his face. He holds it out to Araceli but she won't take it.

Suddenly, Ringo grabs Araceli's neck and chokes her.

She reaches up and grabs at his hands, but he squeezes tighter.

Finally, he lets go and Araceli coughs violently.

RINGO (CONT'D)
You ready to talk to me again?

Araceli recovers.

ARACELI
My sister is dead.

Ringo thinks about this for a minute.

RINGO
I'm sorry.

Araceli stands wearily in front of Ringo. He puts his arms around her and holds her rigid body to his.

They stand together in the maze of the canyon.

EXT. POKER HOUSE - NIGHT

A run down shanty, empty desert stretching out around it.

Through the window, Ringo, Preston, Roy and another man, RICK, can be seen playing cards.

INT. POKER HOUSE, BATHROOM - NIGHT

Araceli stands in the shower and lets the hot water pour over her.

She stands there for a long time, the steam coming up around her, the grime coming off her body and swirling down the drain.

INT. POKER HOUSE, BATHROOM - NIGHT [MOMENTS LATER]

Araceli dries off and slips on the new dress.

INT. POKER HOUSE, MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

Araceli walks out of the bathroom and into the main room. The men look at her as she walks out.

RINGO

There she is.

Roy whistles.

RINGO (CONT'D)

Sit down by me. Be my good luck charm.

Araceli sits down next to Ringo. He slides a shot of tequila toward her. She shoots it down.

He pours her another. She shoots it down. The men smile.

SERIES OF SHOTS

The group plays cards and drinks.

Bets are placed. Shots of tequila are taken. Preston wins again and again.

Laughter, smoking, smiling, but Araceli looks lost, wounded.

EXT. POKER HOUSE - NIGHT

Preston stands on the porch smoking a cigarillo. The door opens and Araceli walks out.

She's clearly drunk. She takes a step and almost falls.

Preston reaches over and steadies her.

PRESTON

You ok?

ARACELI

I need air. I can't breath.

Preston helps Araceli to the dilapidated porch railing. She clings to the railing and looks out into the darkness.

Araceli points to Preston's cigarillo.

ARACELI (CONT'D)

Give me one of those.

He hands her his. She takes a puff and coughs.

He takes it back.

ARACELI (CONT'D)

How far do you think New York is from here?

PRESTON

I don't know, far.

ARACELI
Where are we?

PRESTON
The desert.

The two look off into the darkness the way drunk people do.

Then, Araceli pukes over the railing.

INT. POKER HOUSE, BEDROOM - NIGHT

Preston helps Ringo. They lay Araceli down on a bed in the corner.

There are no sheets. Preston bunches up a jacket and slides it under Araceli's head as a pillow.

Preston and Ringo walk out and shut the door. Blackness.

INT. POKER HOUSE, MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

Ringo lays down his cards.

A collective and sarcastic AWWWWW from the other men as Ringo loses the last of his money.

Preston smiles and slides the cash in the center of the table towards himself.

PRESTON
It's just not your lucky day son.

Ringo looks at the pile of money in front of Preston.

RINGO
We can't end the night like this
boys.

Rick shrugs.

ROY
You got more money?

PRESTON
(to Ringo)
You'd better have more money.

Ringo's face says he doesn't.

PRESTON (CONT'D)
(to the others)
He's out of money. He doesn't have
enough for the truck. Can you believe
this?

Preston pours the last of the tequila into his glass. Ringo appeals to the men.

RINGO
Two hundred dollars credit against
the truck.

Preston shoots the tequila down.

PRESTON
I'm keeping that goddamn truck until
you pay me.

Roy lights a cigarette. The men stare at Ringo. Ringo licks his lips nervously. He's in a corner.

He reaches behind his back and produces Ira's pistol. The men are silent.

After a few seconds, Ringo lays the pistol down on the table.
Relief.

RINGO
What'll you give me for this?

PRESTON
Jesus, don't you know better than to
pull a pistol out at a card game?

RICK
Nobody's giving you credit against
that thing. Who knows what you've
done with it.

RINGO
You boys are making it tough for me.

Ringo picks up the pistol again.

The men shift nervously. Ringo tucks the pistol behind his back.

He points his thumb toward the bedroom.

RINGO (CONT'D)
How about her.

The men chuckle, thinking it's a joke.

Then, silence, as they realize he's serious.

Preston glances at the other men. He slowly slides fifty dollars towards Ringo.

Ringo wants more.

RINGO (CONT'D)
She's a virgin.

The men look at each other, wondering what a virgin's worth in the desert.

Preston slides another fifty across the table. Ringo reaches out and takes the money.

RINGO (CONT'D)
Deal 'em.

EXT. POKER HOUSE - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

A little light coming from the window of the house. THE SOUNDS OF THE DESERT AND THE WIND.

FADE OUT:

INT. POKER HOUSE, BEDROOM - NIGHT

Araceli lies on her back in the bed.

The door to the room slowly opens. A man is silhouetted in the doorway. The door closes.

It's Preston. He walks over and lies down on top of Araceli. Moonlight from the window plays across their faces.

Araceli's eyes are open. Preston pushes up her dress. He pulls his pants down and awkwardly puts himself inside her.

She lies still, her glazed eyes looking over his shoulder as he thrusts clumsily in the darkness.

After a few seconds, Preston finishes. He rests his face beside hers.

INT. POKER HOUSE - MORNING

Ringo quietly lifts up a set of car keys.

He stands next to Roy who's asleep on the couch.

INT. POKER HOUSE, BEDROOM - MORNING

Ringo opens the door to the bedroom and peers in.

Preston is passed out beside Araceli, but she's awake. Ringo motions to her to get up.

INT. PRESTON'S CAR, POKER HOUSE - MORNING

Ringo and Araceli climb into Preston's car. Ringo cranks it up. He looks over at Araceli.

RINGO
You make your own luck, you know
what I mean?

He puts the car in drive.

RINGO (CONT'D)
Let's get my money.

ARACELI
You said you would take me to my
sister's.

RINGO
Your sister's dead.

Ringo hits the gas and pulls onto the main road.

INT. PRESTON'S CAR, DESERT ROAD - DAY

Araceli and Ringo drive silently through the desert.

EXT. LAURA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A run down house sits alone. Ringo and Araceli pull up.

EXT. LAURA'S HOUSE, FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Araceli knocks on the door. Ringo stands off to the side.

LAURA, a young woman about Araceli's age, opens the door.

LAURA
Can I help you?

Ringo steps out from his hiding spot, Ira's pistol drawn. He pushes Laura inside. Araceli follows.

Ringo shuts the door.

INT. LAURA'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

Ringo aims the pistol at Laura. She's petrified.

RINGO
You think I wouldn't come back?

Laura looks down at the floor, avoiding Ringo's gaze.

RINGO (CONT'D)
What do you have to say for yourself?

Laura says nothing.

RINGO (CONT'D)
(to Araceli)
Laura here called the cops on me
after five years together.

A flash of anger in Ringo's eyes.

RINGO (CONT'D)
(to Laura)
Do you know what I've gone through
to get home?

Ringo hands the pistol to Araceli. Araceli awkwardly trains it on Laura.

INT. LAURA'S HOUSE, CLOSET - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

CLOSE ON Ringo's hand as he pries up the floor boards in the closet to reveal a makeshift compartment.

He reaches down into the compartment and pulls out a stack of cash and a bag of cocaine.

He reaches behind himself and stacks the money and the cocaine on the living room floor.

Araceli looks at the drugs in disbelief.

INT. LAURA'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

Ringo stands up and walks over to Laura.

RINGO
Are you going to apologize?

Laura trembles.

LAURA
No.

Ringo reaches out and begins to choke her.

RINGO
I feel sorry for you.

Araceli looks on, her finger shaking on the trigger of Ira's pistol.

Laura reaches up and pulls at Ringo's hands, but he won't stop. He chokes her harder. She's desperate.

She shifts her panicked gaze to Araceli. They lock eyes.

POW. Araceli fires.

The bullet knocks Ringo off his feet. Smoke hangs in the air. He lies on the floor, his head resting against the wall.

He puts his hand to his chest as the blood soaks his shirt.

RINGO (CONT'D)
Jesus Araceli.

INT. LAURA'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT [MOMENTS LATER]

Araceli and Laura kneel next to Ringo. Araceli tips a dented tin cup to his lips. He drinks the cool water. She wipes the sweat from his brow. She holds his hand.

After a while, the life goes out of his eyes. Laura reaches over to him and closes his eyes with her hand.

Araceli unclasps the saint's charm from around his neck.

EXT. LAURA'S HOUSE - MORNING

Araceli and Laura stand outside drinking coffee and watching the sun rise.

A blood-red sun is cresting over the horizon. It MAKES A CRACKLING AND BURNING SOUND as it forces new light across the desert.

LAURA
Thank you.

Araceli nods. Laura passes her Ringo's money.

LAURA (CONT'D)
Take it.

ARACELI
No.

LAURA
Please.

Araceli takes the money.

THE SOUND OF BURNING AND HISSING. The blood-red sun rises.

EXT. TRAILER PARK - DAY

A small cluster of rickety air-stream trailers in the desert.

In the distance, Araceli drives Preston's car toward the trailers. The tires kick up dust as the car approaches.

EXT. MARIA'S TRAILER DOOR - DAY

Araceli knocks on the door. Maria opens it.

ARACELI
Maria?

MARIA
Araceli?

ARACELI
Yes.

MARIA
My god, you came.

Araceli hugs Maria. As she does, a small girl steps around Maria and looks up at Araceli.

Maria and Araceli notice.

MARIA (CONT'D)
This is Inez. Your sister's child.
Rosy wanted to tell you about her in
person. She was ashamed, I think.

Araceli bends down and picks up INEZ. She holds the child to her.

INT. PRESTON'S CAR, MARIA'S TRAILER - DAY

Araceli opens a small bag that Rosalinda left for her. She pulls out a picture of Rosalinda and her parents.

She pulls out a letter that says 'Araceli' on the front. She opens it and reads it to herself.

She unfolds the road map and traces a path from Texas to New York with her finger.

She looks over at Inez sitting in the passenger seat. She starts the car.

INT. PRESTON'S CAR, HIGHWAY - DAY

Araceli and Inez drive down the highway headed for New York.

She turns on the radio. A JOHNNY CASH RENDITION OF 'STREETS OF LAREDO' PLAYS.

They drive for a while as the song plays. Then, Araceli suddenly swerves to take an exit.

EXT. MECHANIC'S SHOP - DAY

Araceli and Inez pull up in front of the garage.

Preston looks up from his work. He sees them, a look of shame on his face.

INT. IRA'S PICKUP TRUCK, MECHANIC'S SHOP - DAY [CONTINUOUS]

Araceli climbs into Ira's pickup truck. Inez sits in the passenger's seat. Araceli starts the truck and pulls off.

EXT. MECHANIC'S SHOP - DAY [CONTINUOUS]

Preston stands in the parking lot. He wipes his dirty hands on his red rag and watches as the truck disappear down the road.

INT. IRA'S PICKUP TRUCK, DESERT ROAD - DAY

Inez plays with Ringo's plastic game, trying to get the little ball through the maze.

Araceli drives.

Then, she notices the lights of a Sheriff's car behind her.

EXT. IRA'S PICKUP TRUCK, DESERT ROAD - DAY [CONTINUOUS]

Araceli pulls over to the side of the road. The Sheriff pulls up behind her. He steps out of the car and walks up to the driver's side window. It's the same Sheriff.

INT. IRA'S PICKUP TRUCK, DESERT ROAD - DAY [CONTINUOUS]

The Sheriff looks at Araceli and Inez.

SHERIFF
You were speeding.

ARACELI
I'm sorry.

SHERIFF
You have a license?

ARACELI
No.

The Sheriff looks at the pistol and the cash sitting on the seat of the truck.

SHERIFF
Is that your kid?

ARACELI

Yes.

SHERIFF

Where's your man?

ARACELI

I shot him.

SHERIFF

How come?

ARACELI

He let a man rape me for poker money.

The Sheriff thinks about this for a minute. He spits on the ground then points at the pistol.

SHERIFF

You shoot him with that?

ARACELI

Yes.

The Sheriff looks at the money.

SHERIFF

How much money is that?

Araceli hands him the money.

ARACELI

I don't know.

The Sheriff flips through the money. He separates it in half. He hands half of it back to Araceli. The other half he puts in his pocket.

SHERIFF

Give me that pistol.

Araceli hands him the pistol.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)

Don't speed in Texas. You hear me?

Araceli nods. The Sheriff walks around the truck to the side of the road. He rears back and chucks the pistol out into the chaparral.

He walks back to his car. He gets in, starts it up, and pulls off. Araceli watches the Sheriff's car in the rear-view mirror. It disappears into the desert.

EXT. PICKUP TRUCK, DIRT ROAD - DAY

Araceli drives Ira's pickup truck down the long road toward the Ranch.

EXT. RANCH - DAY [CONTINUOUS]

Ira sits in his wheelchair beside the goat and watches the truck approach.

Finally, the truck comes to a stop. Araceli steps out. She goes around to the passenger side and helps Inez out.

The two walk up to Ira. Araceli hands Ira his bronze star.

A SERIES OF EVENTS INTERCUT FOLLOWS

EXT. BRUSH COUNTRY - EVENING

At the spot near the human remains, a grave has been dug. What's left of the bones lie in the grave. Araceli, Inez and Ira stand around it.

EXT. RANCH, FLAGPOLE - EVENING

Ira sits in his wheelchair beside the flagpole. He unwraps the lanyard and hands the rope to Inez.

Inez lowers the flag. It CREAKS slowly down.

EXT. BRUSH COUNTRY - EVENING

Araceli places the dead woman's identification card into the grave.

EXT. OPEN AIR JUNK SHOP - EVENING

Esteban opens a letter from Araceli. He pulls out cash from the letter. He looks over at the candelabra.

EXT. BRUSH COUNTRY - EVENING

Araceli and Inez place the last field stones over the grave. A makeshift wooden cross is erected at the head of the grave. Araceli hangs the St. Francis charm on the cross.

EXT. RANCH, FLAGPOLE - DAY

Inez helps Ira fold the flag. They move toward the ranch together.

EXT. RANCH, WOODEN TABLE - EVENING

Araceli lights the candles on the candelabra. Inez, Ira and Araceli sit at the outdoor table.

The goat grazes quietly near the hand pump well. Water from the pump drips into the white porcelain bowl.

Araceli spoons beans onto fresh corn tortillas. Inez clasps her hands together and bows her head to pray. Araceli and Ira look on.

The sun sets over the vast fields.

FADE OUT.

THE END