

VIVA

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EXT. MATANZAS, CUBA - NIGHT

Small houses in total disrepair are crammed along a gravel road. A typical neighborhood in a Cuban suburb.

TITLE CARD: Matanzas, Cuba

FOUR OLD MEN sit under a dim, yellow street light at a folding table playing DOMINOS - their nightly ritual.

A weathered hand adjusts the broken antenna of an OLD RADIO. Soft CUBAN JAZZ cuts through the static.

SHIRTLESS KIDS (ages 2-5) play unsupervised with a mangy DOG.

The nights this time of year aren't much cooler than the days. Skin glistens in 100% humidity.

The domino players stop and look to the corner - an old, blue, COVERED PICK-UP TRUCK rumbles past - its LIGHTS OFF.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - NIGHT

Behind the wheel, LUIS CORDOVA (27), nervously drives his old truck - struggling to see out the cracked windshield.

A baby CRIES.

His wife, ISORA (25), next to him tries to soothe their 1-YR-OLD in her arms. Each pothole they hit makes the baby cry louder.

Mom to baby - SHHHH

Luis pulls the truck over and kills the engine. He slinks down low in his seat and makes sure his wife does the same. He angles his SIDE-VIEW MIRROR and watches it closely.

A WOMAN (50) and her SON (30) emerge from the shadows with duffle bags and jugs of water - they await the signal...

Luis jiggles the gear-shifter in and out of reverse. The white backup lights FLICKER.

That's the signal! Mother and son scramble to the truck.

SWOOSH - headlights wash over the truck. A POLICE CAR rounds the corner. Isora clutches Luis's arm. Luis quickly TAPS the brakes.

The mother and son see the truck's red brake lights FLASH - something is wrong.

The police headlights start to illuminate the mother and son as they DIVE into a giant pile of trash.

Luis ducks as the police car slowly drives by - it turns the corner. He and Isora breathe a sigh of relief.

All clear.

Luis flickers his backup lights. Mother and son rush from the trash pile into the rear of his truck.

INT. COVERED REAR BED OF PICKUP TRUCK - NIGHT

The son opens the cargo cover for his mother, revealing six other refugees and their gear already inside. They crawl in and knock on the back of the cab. Ready to go.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - NIGHT

Luis starts the truck and slowly drives. Lights off.

EXT. MATANZAS, CUBA - NIGHT

Luis's truck comes to a stop in another neighborhood.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - NIGHT

Luis kills the engine and grips the wheel in thought.

Note to reader: all italicized dialogue will be spoken in Spanish.

ISORA

No. We don't have time for this!

LUIS

I have to try one more time.

ISORA

And if the police come back!?

LUIS

I'll be two minutes.

EXT. STREET MATANZAS, CUBA - NIGHT

Luis hops out of the truck and closes the door without a sound. He leaps over a make-shift fence and skirts through a backyard with a muddy pen of illegal PIGS.

Over another fence into another backyard. This time he approaches a window with BARS and quietly RAPS on the old wood shutters. They open.

EXT. LORENA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Luis's mother MARTA (50s), father CARLOS (50s) and sister LORENA (25) are huddled together. A tiny, disheveled typical Cuban house. Marta and Lorena in tears.

Lorena lights up when she see's her brother - her best friend. Amidst dingy, moldy walls her inner spirit shines bright. Wearing a LEOTARD and SWEATS she runs to the window - her hair still in a bun from dance practice.

Luis grabs her hand through the bars and kisses it. She pulls away and rushes out of the room.

MARTA

What can I tell you to make you stay?

LUIS

What can I tell you to get you to come with me?

CARLOS

Goddamnit, Luis, come inside. The neighbors are going to hear you!

MARTA

I can't lose both of my sons like this.

LUIS

No one is getting lost. Tonight is perfect. The weather is on our side.

MARTA

*(weeps harder)
That's the same thing your brother said.*

LUIS

Please mom. Just come with us. There's room. We should be together.

CARLOS

*(whisper / yell)
Enough! Get inside. The neighbors...*

Lorena rushes back into the room holding an over-stuffed BACKPACK and JUG OF WATER.

LORENA

I'm ready!

Enraged, her mother yanks the backpack off Lorena's shoulder and swats the jug out of her hand. They tug-of-war over the backpack.

LORENA (CONT'D)

Let go...!

MARTA

*Are you crazy!? I told you no!
You're not going anywhere!*

LORENA

This place is a prison!

LUIS

Mom, don't do this...

Lorena and her mother continue to fight over the backpack.

MARTA

*Damnit, Luis, do you see what
you're doing?! Tell your sister no
one is going anywhere.*

Lorena, let's go of the backpack and her mother falls back.

LORENA

*Keep those old clothes! I can buy
more when we get there. I can buy
anything I want!*

Lorena spins to run but her father GRABS her. He grips her tight. She tries to break free.

Luis hears his truck horn HONK.

LUIS

*Let her come with me. You know I
will take care of her.*

LORENA

Please, mother!

MARTA

The ocean is stronger than you.

LUIS

Please, dad. Let her go.

CARLOS

Luis, stop this - you're killing your mother. Your brother thought he could beat the ocean - and he lost. This isn't a game!

MARTA

You're a father now - why risk killing that beautiful baby, too!?

Lorena wrenches her arm through the open window pane and clutches her brother's hand tight.

CARLOS

If you get caught think of the terrible things the government will do to this family. Come inside.

Luis hears his truck horn HONKING again. He locks eyes with Lorena - tears fall from brother and sister.

LUIS

*(to Lorena)
I'm sorry, little flea.*

LORENA

No, Luis! You can't leave me here. This was always OUR plan!

Those words rip Luis's heart out. He pries his little sister's fingers off him.

LUIS

When I get there I will figure out a way for you to come. I promise. I will call you in three days.

MARTA

No, son!

Luis takes off his NECKLACE with a KEY on it and puts it in his sister's hand.

LUIS

My house key. I won't need it anymore.

Lorena falls back in tears.

LUIS (CONT'D)

Three days...

Luis rushes back to his truck.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - NIGHT

Luis's truck rockets down a bumpy DIRT ROAD. Branches from banana trees whip against the top of the truck. The BEACH is fast approaching.

INT. TRUCK - NIGHT

Tears well in Luis's eyes. He SLAMS the truck into the next gear. He FLOORS the gas. He grabs Isora's hand.

Isora kisses their screaming baby.

Luis SINGS a traditional Cuban lullaby to his child.

INT. BACK OF TRUCK - NIGHT

The eight people crammed in the back of the truck are being tossed around mercilessly. Their collective fear is obvious. They clutch crosses, photos of family and each other.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - NIGHT

The truck BURSTS through a WOODEN GATE meant to keep vehicles off the beach. Its speed carries it through the soft sand and with a hard SPLASH - it crashes in the ocean.

MOTIONLESS.

INT. TRUCK - NIGHT

After the hard smash into the water, Luis looks at his wife - a BLOODY GASH above his eye.

 LUIS
 You two ok?

Isora checks the baby and nods.

INT. BACK OF TRUCK - NIGHT

Everyone was thrown into a PILE against the front of the truck bed on impact. They gather themselves. All are ok.

INT. TRUCK - NIGHT

Isora looks under her seat.

ISORA

No leaks.

Luis smiles. He removes the ASH TRAY revealing a SECRET LEVER
- he PULLS it.

EXT. UNDERWATER - NIGHT

Under the truck, a ROPE pulls back a piece of cloth revealing
a PROPELLER.

INT. TRUCK - NIGHT

The moment of truth. Luis turns the key in the ignition.
After a few failed attempts --- it STARTS.

Luis gingerly steps on the gas and it turns the propeller
under the truck.

His home-made amphibious vehicle works!

The passengers CHEER.

EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT

As Luis's floating truck disappears into the black horizon,
the title of the film FADES UP:

VIVA

EXT. KEY WEST, FLORIDA - DAY

The SOUTHERN MOST POINT MONUMENT in the United States is at the southern tip of Key West. Tourists, musicians, street vendors and artists crowd the pier.

Tourists take photos next to the sign:
90 MILES TO CUBA

Here - MONEY exchanges hands for hotdogs, ugly t-shirts, henna tattoos and other tchotchkes.

A BOY (8), wearing the latest superhero-branded clothes, is play-fighting with his SISTER (10). She smacks him with her iPad, making him drop his ice cream on the ground. The boy starts SCREAMING and CRYING.

Their mother quickly swoops in for the coddle - she brings her crying son's head close, whips out a \$50 bill and instantly replaces his ice cream. Crying stops.

High above this spot in the sky we see an AIRPLANE flying by.

EXT. SKY - DAY

We zoom in on the tiny airplane in the blue sky until it fills the frame.

TEXT GRAPHICS appear around the airplane:
AA Flight 414 non-stop from Miami to Havana
Type : Boeing 737
Altitude : 24,000 feet
Destination : 90 miles
Time : 72 minutes

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Polished, Silicon Valley businessman, SIMON REEVES (30s), navigates several windows on his LAPTOP.

He jumps between coding software, checking stocks and scanning the Wall Street Journal. Multi-tasking is how he channels his constant, nervous energy.

He straightens his tie and smooths his hair. A little OCD keeps him wound tight.

As he glances up to the MOVING MAP in the seat back in front of him, it shows his plane nearing Cuban airspace.

His PHONE vibrates.

TWO NEWS ALERTS have come in. With a swipe of his finger he sends the news to his LAPTOP SCREEN. The articles read:

PRESIDENT BIDEN VISITS RUSSIA

He scrolls down to the next headline and clicks on it:

AMTEL VISITS CUBA - THE TECH STARTUP NEARS BANKRUPTCY

AIRPLANE CAPTAIN

(over loudspeaker)

Good morning again - this is your captain. We've started our initial descent. In a few minutes, once we enter Cuban airspace, WiFi service will automatically terminate. The flight crew will come around one last time. We hope you've enjoyed your short flight to Cuba.

Simon skims a pro-Cuba ARTICLE touting things including: Socialist government, free education, free health care and free food from the state. He likes this article.

A chat window pops up marked PAUL.

PAUL > HERE IS THE LATEST PRESENTATION.

He receives the file. Opens it. Skims a few of the pages.
Keywords: FREE WIFI FOR CUBA

SIMON > GOT IT

PAUL > IT IS VITAL YOU CLOSE THIS DEAL

SIMON > I KNOW

PAUL > YOU KNOW WHAT IS AT STAKE.

Simon pauses. He looks out the window with a sigh.

SIMON > WHY DID THEY REQUEST ME AGAIN? I'M AN ENGINEER NOT IN SALES.

PAUL > I STILL DONT KNOW

SIMON > HOW DO I GET 2 HOTEL?

PAUL > EMBASSY REP WILL MEET YOU

SIMON > NAME?

The chat windows turn GREY. His computer displays a BROKEN WIFI ICON.

A DING rings through the plane's speaker and the WiFi lights in the cabin shut OFF.

Simon notices on the MOVING MAP - the plane has just entered CUBAN AIRSPACE.

Turbulence jostles the plane. A few items FALL OFF Simon's seatback table on to the floor.

An ELDERLY WOMAN across from Simon struggles to put her purse in the overhead bin. The bumpy plane knocks her off balance.

Simon stops her from falling and helps her to her seat.

ELDERLY PASSENGER
(Struggling with English)
Thank you very much.

SIMON
Entiendo Español. But speaking...?

ELDERLY PASSENGER
Ah OK! Me too with English. *Your first time to Cuba?*

SIMON
Yes. I'm excited to see it. Mojitos and cigars! Do you live there?

ELDERLY PASSENGER
No. I have family there. Where are you staying? Varadero?

SIMON
Havana.

ELDERLY PASSENGER
Aw... Well I hope you can get out and see the real Cuba.

She squeezes his arm 'thank you' with a warm smile.

As Simon gathers his things that fell on the floor the elderly woman picks up his BOOK that slid near her feet. On the cover is an image of CHE GUEVARA.

She stares at the his image. Her smile fades.

The elderly woman hands the book to Simon with a disgusted look.

CUT TO:

INT. LORENA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Lorena's bedroom is a narrow portion of a room she has made private by hanging a SHEET for a wall. She lays on her tiny mattress clutching a worn PHOTO of her two brothers laughing with Lorena in a ballet outfit on their shoulders.

She caresses the KEY NECKLACE her brother gave her, as if it were him.

The sound of her neighbors' SQUEALING PIGS, BARKING DOGS and ROOSTERS is deafening. Louder still is the sound of her THREE YOUNG COUSINS horsing around on the other side of the sheet wall.

Lorena sits up. Her pillow is soaked with TEARS. She dries her eyes and collects herself.

Her narrow room is packed with all things 'America.' Old Debbie Gibson posters adorn moldy walls. Shelves of rock-n-roll cassette tapes, stacks of old movies on VHS, etc...

She stares at herself in a hazy mirror. Even after hours of crying, her classic beauty shines through.

She takes a photo from her mirror - a dancer from the Ballet Nacional De Cuba wearing the iconic BLACK AND GOLD UNIFORM. Dancing her way out has always been her back-up escape plan. With her brother gone - this plan is now her focus.

Lorena hoists a bucket of water over to the window and cranks it open. She sticks her head outside to wash her face and brush her teeth.

She does a few quick STRETCHES only a dancer could pull off.

The tattered clothes she slept in change into less tattered clothes she wears to college. She grabs her backpack.

INT. LORENA'S HOUSE - MORNING

Lorena emerges from her sheet wall into the larger portion of the room where two of her cousins are now fighting with the third. She clips her sheet wall SHUT to maintain privacy.

As she passes through their cluttered room she shoves the two boys off the girl.

LORENA

Stop fighting! And stay out of my room.

BOY COUSIN

(mocking her)
Stop fighting!

INT. LORENA'S HOUSE - MORNING

Lorena walks in to the tiny kitchen/living room. Her mother is crouched down weeping and praying in front of an ALTAR of Cuban saints. Offering bowls and photos of Luis are mixed with a handful of candles.

Her father sits in a chair smoking a cigarette. He stares out the window.

Her mother notices Lorena and turns to her with open arms.

MARTA

Come here, sweetheart.

Lorena pushes past her to the front door. She stops at an old cup of coffee on the counter and drinks it.

MARTA (CONT'D)

Don't walk away from me. We need to be together at a time like this.

LORENA

"A time like this?" You want me to tell you it's ok you keep taking my brothers away from me?! I have no one left.

CARLOS

Lorena...!

MARTA

I'm trying to keep our family together!

LORENA

No. You think "family" means filling your prison full of people you can boss around. Family is about being together. Being happy.

MARTA

I'm trying to keep us together but your brothers wouldn't listen. I begged them to stay. What else could I have done!?

LORENA

We could have gone with them. You could have let me go. If you are happy with this life... fine. But you know I'm not. He was my chance to get out. To be happy.

CARLOS

When you live on your own you can do what you want. You can risk your life then. But while you live...

LORENA

And those three little shits you gave our room to? That was Jose's and Luis's room!

CARLOS

Again... your uncles were out of space so we agreed to help them out. We're family, Lorena.

LORENA

Oh now we're "family". We're family when it helps you make a point.

Lorena shoves the door open and walks out.

EXT. LORENA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

LORENA

But don't families stick together? Wouldn't a family be with their son on an amazing machine he built that could get us to the United States? To freedom.

Lorena's father rushes to the door. He nervously waves at the neighbors.

CARLOS

Not outside... please...

LORENA

Luis built that for us - his family.

MANOLO, their neighbor across the street, who Lorena's father fears - opens his door and listens from the shadow inside.

CARLOS

*(indicating to Manolo)
Lorena, please. Don't do this now.*

LORENA

Yea - I know he's listening and I don't care! Hi, Manolo! Family is supposed to be there for one another. To support each other.

(MORE)

LORENA (CONT'D)

*In three days when the phone rings
and Luis calls me from the United
States - I will never talk to you
again!*

MARTA

May God have mercy on you.

LORENA

God doesn't hear Cuba's prayers.

Her father nervously smiles at all of his nosy neighbors.

Lorena's street-wise friend, TATI (20's), in a revealing outfit showing off all her tattoos, waits on the corner to walk to school together.

CUT TO:

EXT. JOSE MARTI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

Simon steps onto rusty METAL STAIRS rolled up to his plane. He scans for his escort but doesn't see anyone.

It's hot - he wipes the SWEAT from his brow.

The passengers are ushered down the cracked runway towards the small terminal building. He shoots video of his first moments in Cuba on his phone.

SOLDIERS with MACHINE GUNS and DOGS, motion NO FILMING.

Just then a small military escort rushes up behind Simon. CAPTAIN MARTINEZ (50's), dressed in fatigues, grabs Simon's arm with intent.

MARTINEZ

Simon Reeves?

Simon spins around wide-eyed.

SIMON

Yes?

Martinez takes the PASSPORT from Simon's hand, confirming his identity. He gives it right back and extends his hand and a huge, CHARMING SMILE.

Martinez hands him a BUSINESS CARD. It has the Cuban government official seal and his name/title:
CAPTAIN MANUEL MARTINEZ / DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

MARTINEZ

(in English)

Apologies, Mr. Reeves. The General sent me instead of the rep from your embassy. Don't worry, it's an upgrade - for your protection.

Martinez leads Simon away from the crowded passenger line and through a side door.

SIMON

I haven't cleared Customs yet.

MARTINEZ

No need, mi socio! You're our special guest.

EXT. JOSE MARTI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT PARKING AREA - DAY

Simon is led to a parked diplomatic CONVOY. He gets in the back of an old, Russian-made, LADA SUV with small Cuban flags on the hood.

Through the windshield we see a guard load Simon's SUITCASE into one of the military jeeps surrounded by ARMED SOLDIERS.

The convoy leaves the airport.

INT. LADA - DAY

Martinez chomps on an UNLIT CIGAR for the flavor. He dons a full-time, easy smile, endless confidence and unbound charisma. He is the government's top greeter.

MARTINEZ

I will be your personal escort while you are here. We wish to make sure you are very comfortable and have everything you need. So please let me know if you require anything at all - big or small. Bienvenido a Cuba!

Martinez hands Simon a nice bottle of CUBAN RUM with a bow.

Simon nods and smiles.

EXT. CUBA - DAY

The convoy speeds past several BILLBOARDS with Che Guevara's image and sayings about 'La Revolución.'

INT. RUSSIAN LADA - DAY

Simon snaps photos of the scenery on his phone.

SIMON
Those billboards... they look new.

MARTINEZ
What kind of phone is that?

SIMON
A prototype. I don't see other
billboards. No other
advertising...?

Martinez laughs and slaps Simon on the knee.

MARTINEZ
I like you, chico! You are an
intelligent young man. We're going
to have fun this week.

The last billboard is GRAFFITIED with a clown face painted
over Castro. An army crew is cleaning it up.

SIMON
And that?

MARTINEZ
Just - kids.

The convoy passes men with DONKEYS on the broken road to
Havana.

SIMON
Your English is fantastic, Captain.

MARTINEZ
My father worked for the government
and made us all learn English when
we were young. He said we would get
the best jobs that way.

SIMON
Working for the government?

MARTINEZ
It's the best job in the country,
hermano.

The convoy enters central Havana and passes several monuments
like the PLAZA DE LA REVOLUCION and THE GRAN TEATRO. It
stops at a traffic light in front of the University.

MARTINEZ (CONT'D)

That's the I.S.A. Our world famous university. Many incredible artists have graduated from there.

Some dancers are practicing outside on the grass.

SIMON

College is free here, right?

A male dancer raises a beautiful young woman in an OVERHEAD LIFT - It is LORENA. The sunlight outlines her body perfectly. Time SLOWS DOWN for Simon in this moment.

MARTINEZ

Absolutely. We take great care of our people. Doctors are free. We offer free food. There is little crime. Our people live a good life.

Simon is impressed.

The caravan drives on. Winding through Havana.

Out the window Simon sees tourists doing all of the things he can't wait to do: taking photos of old cars, buying panama hats, smoking cigars and drinking mojitos.

They arrive at the famous HOTEL NACIONAL DE CUBA.

MARTINEZ (CONT'D)

"Lucy, I'm Home..!" - ah, too young for that joke.

SIMON

'I Love Lucy' - Desi Arnaz. My mother loved TV.

MARTINEZ

Dalé!

EXT. HOTEL NACIONAL - DAY

Martinez and his men escort Simon into the palatial hotel.

INT. HOTEL NACIONAL - DAY

MARTINEZ

This is one of our most famous and historic hotels. If these walls could talk - as you say. Amazing mojitos by the pool.

(MORE)

MARTINEZ (CONT'D)

An incredible Salsa band in the lobby bar. A tailor will go to your room and make you a custom Guayabera. And the concierge can arrange for anything else you may care for.

They arrive at the PENTHOUSE. Martinez produces the KEY from his pocket and opens the door.

MARTINEZ (CONT'D)

Take an hour to settle in and get prepared. We will be waiting right here to take you to the General.

SIMON

Sounds good.

Martinez walks away.

MARTINEZ

See you en una hora, Jefecito!

INT. SIMON'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY [CONTINUOUS]

Simon walks up to a gigantic GIFT BASKET made of sugar cane reeds placed on his bed:

Twelve bottles representing every rum Havana Club makes. Four boxes of Cuba's finest hand-made cigars. VIP tickets to the Tropicana Nightclub. A bag of sugar and a bag of coffee.

Also, a TOURIST PAMPHLET highlighting iconic Cuba: colonial buildings in Old Havana, cars from the 1950s, pristine beaches, mojitos, salsa dancers, smiling musicians, etc...

Simon pulls out his cell phone. He flicks a switch on the back of the phone.

Phone screen display: SATELLITE CONNECTED

A flood of incoming text messages from work:

**PAUL > YOU NEED TO CLOSE THIS DEAL / CALL ME ASAP /
YOUR JOB DEPENDS ON THIS**

CUT TO:

EXT. HAVANA STREET - DAY

Lorena and Tati hop off a crowded bus and walk through bustling NEIGHBORHOODS made of rubble.

Some people are dressed for a job, while others are in little more than their underwear.

TATI

*I thought you would be gone today.
What happened?*

LORENA

He's gone.

TATI

Your brother left you?! No...

LORENA

*Luis came to get me, but my parents
forced me to stay.*

Lorena notices Tati's fancy NEW CELLPHONE.

LORENA (CONT'D)

*Is that another new phone? How do
you afford all this stuff?*

Tati shrugs.

They cross a busy intersection and pass a MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN selling FRUIT.

TATI

Good morning, Mrs. Suarez.

MRS. SUAREZ

Hi girls. Is it time already?!

Mrs. Suarez quickly gathers her things and rushes past them down the street.

LORENA

I have to get out of here, Tati.

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - DAY

Lorena and Tati enter and sit next to each other.

Their teacher, Mrs. Suarez, quickly rushes in, puts her sack of fruit behind her desk, and goes right to the chalkboard.

LORENA

*(whispering)
You have to help me.*

TATI

Me? What can I do?

LORENA

You're cool and popular. You have a bunch of friends. You have to know someone who can get me out of here.

TATI

What about your dance? Aren't you using that to escape?

LORENA

That's a backup plan. I don't know if I am good enough.

TATI

You're amazing.

Mrs. Suarez SHUSHES them to be quiet.

EXT. UNIVERSITY HALLWAY - DAY

Lorena and Tati walk to their next class.

LORENA

Hoping I'm good enough to make the touring company is a dream. I need to find another way. Think of the people you know.

TATI

I know a bunch of losers.

LORENA

Yes! Exactly! Those street-smart ones always find a way to escape. What about that party guy... Pacho?

EXT. LUNCH TABLES - DAY

TATI

Pacho!? He sells us weed and paquete. He can't build a raft.

LORENA

I don't need a rafter. Just someone who knows a way out. Someone who knows a pilot, can get me on a boat, someone at the embassy - I will pay them whatever they want.

TATI

You don't have money.

LORENA
I'll get it.

TATI
O.K. calm down. I'll ask around...

The school bell RINGS.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL NACIONAL - DAY

Simon exits his room wearing a fresh, stylish suit with a modern briefcase. Two soldiers await him.

SIMON
 Captain Martinez?

A soldier MOTIONS politely for Simon to walk ahead. He does. The other soldier walks behind.

EXT. HOTEL NACIONAL - DAY

Martinez and the concierge share a laugh by the SUV convoy. Martinez sneaks him a bundle of CIGARS the concierge tucks under his shirt. The concierge hands him a carton of EGGS.

The concierge leaves.

Martinez turns to Simon with open arms.

MARTINEZ
 Mi socio! Did you freshen up? Are you ready to impress?

Simon puts his game face back on, as well.

SIMON
 I'm sure your bosses will be pleased with our proposal.

MARTINEZ
 Eso! That's why you are here!

EXT. STREETS OF HAVANA - DAY

Simon's convoy winds through the heart of Havana.

INT. RUSSIAN LADA - DAY

Simon obsessively takes photos on his PHONE.
Martinez hands Simon a CIGAR.

MARTINEZ

Lots of time for photos. Try this.

Simon mimics Martinez and chomps on his cigar the same way.

SIMON

OK... I could get used to this.

MARTINEZ

You know what the pope's favorite
cigar is?

Simon shakes his head no.

MARTINEZ (CONT'D)

Holy smokes!

The two men share a chuckle.

EXT. THE INTERIOR MINISTRY BUILDING - DAY

The convoy enters a heavily guarded government COMPOUND and
crosses a security checkpoint.

INT. THE INTERIOR MINISTRY BUILDING - DAY

Martinez and his men escort Simon down a MASSIVE MARBLE
HALLWAY. Men and women, dressed in both business attire and
army fatigues, bustle about.

Simon checks his cell phone discretely.

Incoming text:

PAUL > IT'S GAME TIME. I'M ROOTING FOR YOU.

Martinez motions to a large door at the end of the corridor.

MARTINEZ

That's us.

Simon discretely texts back:

SIMON > NO PRESSURE

Martinez opens the large conference room doors for Simon.

INT. INTERIOR MINISTRY CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Simon is escorted into a large, EMPTY CONFERENCE ROOM. He pops open his brief case and takes a SMALL CUBE out.

MARTINEZ

You need to hook up your computer?

Simon walks to the three large screens at the front of the room and he sets his SMALL CUBE down on the table near them.

He TAPS his phone and the cube comes to life. It wirelessly commandeers the three screens and the AMTEL LOGO appears.

SIMON

Hooking up to external systems is not secure. I'm ready to go.

Simon takes a seat.

MARTINEZ

The General is going to love you.

Martinez opens the door and tells the guards they are ready.

After a few moments, footsteps are heard approaching the room. The door opens. Simon stands to greet the General and his Cabinet but only two young men, in cheap suits, enter.

Simon looks confused. Martinez purposely avoids eye contact. The two young men approach Simon and introduce themselves.

JUAN MIGUEL

Juan Miguel Castillo.

OMAR

I am Omar Navarro. The General sends his apologies. He was called into a last minute meeting and has sent us to...

SIMON

A last-minute meeting?

Simon looks to Martinez who is avoiding eye contact.

SIMON (CONT'D)

With respect, we've been planning this presentation for months. I'm here to discuss a massive contract that will forever change the way the people in your country communicate. The General requested that I come personally.

OMAR

Mr. Reeves, everything is fine.
There is no problem. Again, we
apologize and ask that...

SIMON

Let's reschedule. I came to meet
with your boss. No offense.

Simon TAPS his phone and his projection cube SHUTS DOWN - the
AMTEL logo DISAPPEARS.

SIMON (CONT'D)

When he's ready, I'll be at the
hotel drinking mojitos.

OMAR

Mr. Reeves, today was simply a
formality. AMTEL'S proposal is
perfect. We have no questions.
Tomorrow is the day we finalize
terms - the General will be here
then.

SIMON

He said he had a special workaround
for us to do business together that
he would only explain in person.
Today he was supposed to break that
down for me so I could run it past
my team. And if the plan is sound
then tomorrow we do the deal. You
know... that little thing called
the US embargo that prevents my
company from doing business here.
He said that wouldn't be a problem.

OMAR

There's no problem, Mr. Reeves.

Simon senses something is amiss.

SIMON

What is this? What are we doing? I
am here to speak to your boss
directly, Omar.

Omar and Juan Miguel share a glance - Simon isn't buying it.
They look to Martinez who approaches with his easy smile.

MARTINEZ

Papo, please... what will it take
for you to share your presentation
today?

SIMON

The whole point of meeting the General today is making sure my company can actually do business with your country tomorrow.

MARTINEZ

Mi socio, we are very resourceful. We have an old saying, "Within the Revolution, everything. Outside of the Revolution, nothing." You will get everything you want. Imagine being able to say you made world history by being the man who brought free Wifi to Cuba! That would be quite a headline.

As Martinez turns to head back to his post near the door he leans in close to Simon.

MARTINEZ (CONT'D)

It would be hard for Paul to fire you then wouldn't it...?

Simon stiffens. How did Martinez know?

MARTINEZ (CONT'D)

We do our homework. I assure you, things will work out for you. Let's hear what you came to say - please.

Simon considers the situation carefully.

He TAPS his cell phone and his projection cube lights up. The AMTEL logo REAPPEARS on the screen.

Omar and Juan Miguel breathe a sigh of relief and take a seat. Martinez grins proudly - never failing his duty.

An ASSISTANT walks in with a large PITCHER OF WATER for everyone.

As Simon's Power Point slide presentation begins, we see a montage of images:

SLIDE: A WIRELESS WORLD. Simon Talks.

Less water in the big pitcher - the passage of time.

SLIDE: UNDER SEA FIBER OPTIC CABLE. Simon Talks.

Less water in the big pitcher - the passage of time.

SLIDE: SATELLITE CONNECTIVITY. Simon Talks.

Less water in the big pitcher - it is EMPTY.

SIMON

So to wrap up...

Simon displays a map of limited WiFi coverage in Havana.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Communication is the key to growth.
We recently helped restore the
cellular and Wifi networks in Haiti
and Puerto Rico. In doing so, we
live up to our core value which is
connecting people through
technology.

The final "Thank You" SLIDE appears on screen.

Omar, Juan Carlos and Martinez politely applaud.

Simon shuts off his projection cube, nods a 'thank you' and begins to gather his things.

Martinez signals to Omar -

OMAR

Thank you Mr. Reeves. We also have
a proposal for you.

Omar brings up Simon's FACEBOOK PROFILE on the large screens using the keyboard in front of him.

OMAR (CONT'D)

You are a true admirer of the way
we run our country - yes?

Omar scrolls past images of Che and several Marxist quotes on Simons social media profile.

SIMON

Well, I mean, sure. What's not to
love about a government that takes
care of its people and provides
free health care and free
education, right?

OMAR

Exactly. We can see you appreciate
the strength of our country over
the United States. Over capitalism.
That is why we asked to meet with
YOU.

Juan Miguel helps Simon find a seat. To get him comfortable.

SIMON

Ah - I was wondering.

OMAR

You're the engineer who leads the teams developing new technologies at your company, correct? Technologies you then sell to your government.

SIMON

Yes, but we can't discuss any of that with you because of national security. And well, because of the US Embargo.

OMAR

Understood. But what if the embargo didn't apply to you?

Simon nervously chuckles but - no one else is laughing.

OMAR (CONT'D)

The embargo prevents *American businesses* from conducting trade with Cuban interests. But what if you did your job - but not for an American business?

Simon struggles to follow.

OMAR (CONT'D)

Imagine a new life - working in a thriving socialist country. In the very world you dream about living in. A place where health care and education are free. A place where you are respected and rewarded for your contributions. A place with the best mojitos in the world...

SIMON

Cuba? You mean... living here?

OMAR

We can make that dream come true. Here, you could build your own team with our best people. And we would provide whatever resources you need to develop technologies for us.

SIMON

...for your military?

OMAR

Here, there is no difference between the people and the military. One government. One voice.

SIMON

Look... I am just here to convince you to hire my company to set up a network that would bring free Wifi to the whole island.

OMAR

You could do that for us. And so much more - if you did it here. You wanted to know what the general's plan to work around the embargo was. This is it. A way for you to do the work you want and have the life you dream of on Facebook.

Omar pulls up a PHOTO on Facebook of Simon wearing a t-shirt with Che Guevara's iconic image.

Simon is speechless. His mind processes the surprise of this potentially life-altering offer.

SIMON

I would be a traitor to my country.

OMAR

Che left Argentina and found a new home in the countries he revolutionized.

Omar clicks on posts from Simon's Facebook as he continues.

An image of Simon's friend signing a cast on his broken arm -

OMAR (CONT'D)

Would you rather worry if your insurance will cover your cancer surgery or just walk into the hospital here for treatment?

An image of Simon graduating in his cap and gown -

OMAR (CONT'D)

Would you rather take out loans to send your kids to college or let us make them lawyers for free?

Martinez comes up behind Simon and squeezes the tension out of his shoulders.

MARTINEZ

This is a lot to consider, hermano.
Let's go get that mojito.

Omar takes Simon's projection cube from the table and admires it. He and Juan Miguel walk Simon to the door.

OMAR

You could be our new revolutionary.

The three men shake hands.

Simon takes his cube back from Omar. He puts his CIGAR back in his mouth. The game is afoot.

Simon looks to Martinez with a faint smile.

SIMON

A last-minute meeting, huh?

CUT TO:

EXT. MATANZAS, CUBA - DAY

Lorena and Tati walk down the street together after school. Lorena's worn BALLET SHOES are slung over her shoulder. They pass an old baseball field - a game is in progress.

LORENA

So did you get a hold of Pacho?

Teasing, Tati shakes her head "no" just long enough for Lorena to fall sad.

TATI

Yes! He said to come by later.

LORENA

Thank you! I am dying here.

TATI

Don't thank me yet. Listen, you need to be very careful - what you are asking people to help you with is very dangerous. You need to be careful about what you say and to who. People who get reported talking about this stuff just "disappear."

LORENA

Yes, yes... I'm very careful.

A group of ROWDY BOYS in high school uniforms walk the same direction across the sidewalk. They call over to the girls.

MIGUEL

Tati, what's up? You guys should come to my house.

TATI

Another day. We have plans with other friends.

MIGUEL

I'm your friend! What about you? Lorena, right? How come you never talk to me?

Lorena doesn't respond. She smiles to Tati and keeps walking. She moves her BALLETT SHOES to her other shoulder.

MIGUEL (CONT'D)

You're a dancer!? Oooh. You must be very "flexible!"

Miguel's friends laugh.

MIGUEL (CONT'D)

I'm a dancer, too. I can show you some moves...

Miguel thrusts his hips back and forward mimicking sex. His friends cheer him on.

LORENA

*(whispering to Tati)
Your friend is an idiot.*

TATI

Those are the same kind of idiots you asked me to introduce you to earlier. Those are my friends!

MIGUEL

You think you're too good to talk to me?! Dancers are all stuck up. Whatever. I'll see you later, Tati.

The boys peel off at the corner.

Lorena motions to the building they are in front of. This ABANDONED JAIL has been converted into her DANCE SCHOOL.

LORENA

OK then - I'll see you after.

INT. DANCE STUDIO - DAY

The bars have been removed but the layout of the old prison is unmistakable. Classes are being taught in the former cells.

Tati changes into her dance clothes in the old locker room.

She joins up with a small class in progress. The YOUNG GIRL DANCING is amazing. She looks about 12 years old and is dancing to Tchaikovsky. Classic ballet style.

She finishes. The class APPLAUDS.

The teacher motions to Lorena.

Lorena stands, hands the teacher a CASSETTE TAPE then takes her position. As the teacher fumbles with an OLD BOOM BOX she looks over to Lorena.

DANCE TEACHER

Are you ready for tomorrow?

LORENA

I think so. I hope so.

DANCE TEACHER

Worrying is pointless. Everything will work out as it's supposed to.

Lorena's song starts. It's soft and classic, another orchestral Tchaikovsky score. Her dancing matches the song - graceful and fluid.

She is mesmerizing.

Just then the song starts to CHANGE into a mash-up infused with a rock-n-roll song. Drums and electric guitar spice up the symphonic music. It morphs into a rock opera.

Lorena's dancing explodes in a new direction. The intensity and fire inside of her comes out on full display. Classic ballet moves are mixed with rock choreography. Her energy ignites the room. Everyone claps in unison to the music; they bob their heads and smile.

The song ends. A strong finish.

BIG APPLAUSE.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOTEL NACIONAL - DUSK

Martinez's convoy pulls up in front of the Hotel.

INT. HOTEL NACIONAL LOBBY - DUSK

Simon enters the lobby ahead of Martinez and his soldiers texting:

PAUL > WELL?

SIMON > MEETING DELAYED.

Martinez is droning on about the cigar in his hand. Simon is slowly realizing all things are not as they seem -

MARTINEZ

...it's the price people pay for these little sticks that amazes me. Each costs less than \$1 to make and some tourists pay \$50 for one.

SIMON

It's all about perception.

MARTINEZ

Exactly, my friend. Perception.

SIMON

So that was a fun ambush.

MARTINEZ

Excuse me?

SIMON

I know you're just a company man, and being friendly to foreign assholes like me is your job. But you got me. You got me good. I didn't see that coming.

MARTINEZ

Have I offended you, Mr. Reeves?

SIMON

On the contrary... I like you. You're very good...

Martinez chomps down on his cigar. He hands Simon a fresh Cohiba and motions to the bar.

MARTINEZ

I always... get my way. One important thing, papito - don't share our offer to you with anyone back home. It would be easy for us to deny.

SIMON

Of course.

Simon pulls out the tourist brochure from his gift basket. He eyes the idyllic photos of Cuba.

SIMON (CONT'D)

You said you live in a beautiful estate?

MARTINEZ

I did. The government has provided a wonderful life for me and my family. We are right on the beach. They will take very good care of you too...

SIMON

Well, I'd love to meet your lovely family. Let's go and smoke this at your villa?

MARTINEZ

I'm afraid that's not possible. They are at our vacation home in Cienfuegos for the week. But, on your next visit you will be my guest. Our chef makes a delicious vaca frita.

SIMON

Wow. Well does the government provide this wonderful life for everyone else?

MARTINEZ

Of course. But I simply speak for myself, since I've devoted my life to the service of Cuba.

SIMON

There's the company man.

MARTINEZ

What is this phrase you keep calling me?

Simon heads to the elevator.

SIMON
I'll see you in the morning,
Capitàn.

Martinez eyes him carefully.

Simon presses the elevator button. The lift opens and Simon enters.

As the elevator doors close, Martinez turns and walks out. His men follow.

Just before the doors close - Simon HOPS OUT. He strides down the hall in the opposite direction.

The CONCIERGE across the lobby SPOTS Simon and snatches up the PHONE.

CUT TO:

EXT. DANCE STUDIO - NIGHT

Lorena walks out of the dance studio thanking her friends and teachers as she leaves.

Back on the SIDEWALK the pride she feels quickly fades as she realizes her surroundings - Cuba. She starts to walk home.

An OLD CONVERTIBLE CHEVY pulls up next to her. Tati hangs out of the passenger seat.

TATI
Hop in! We're going to Pacho's.

Lorena smiles and hops in. The car speeds off.

EXT. CONVERTIBLE CAR - NIGHT

Her hair blows in the warm, humid air. The young DRIVER cranks up the RADIO which blasts some American pop music.

Tati playfully hops into the back seat onto Lorena's lap.

TATI
Can I be an awesome ballerina too?

LORENA
Sure, if you want to.

TATI
Can you teach me?

LORENA
Of course!

Lorena starts doing the cheesy Macarena dance with her arms. They both laugh.

After a beat - Tati's smile fades.

TATI
*You sure you want to go to Pacho's?
I don't think you know people like
him.*

LORENA
*I told you, I'll do anything to get
out of here.*

Tati gives her a skeptical look.

EXT. PACHO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The car pulls up to a bright pink house. A few SHADY PEOPLE sit on milk crates PLAYING DOMINOS on the sidewalk in front of the entrance. Drinking and smoking.

Tati and her friends hop out of the car. One of the domino players hugs Tati and opens the door for them.

They enter the yard.

EXT. PACHO'S YARD - NIGHT

Pacho's front yard is full of piles of TRASH. Bass-thumping REGGETON MUSIC comes from the house. The girls walk past a rowdy COCKFIGHTING MATCH. Tati leads Lorena inside.

INT. PACHO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

No furniture. Just dim lights and DANCE MUSIC that wash over a packed room of people drinking, smoking and dancing.

Lorena stops to take in these new sights for the first time. Tati takes her hand and pulls her deeper into the house.

They walk down a hall past SCANTILY CLAD GIRLS putting makeup on - Tati and Lorena enter the last room.

INT. PACHO'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Pacho has every creature comfort he can cram in his large, man-cave room. He has several air conditioners blasting, flat screens playing gangster films and even a couple motorcycles on display. SLUTTY-LOOKING GIRLS lounge all around.

In one corner, a couple COMPUTER GUYS download "el paquete" and make USB thumb drives of it to distribute.

Next to them SWEATY, SHIRTLESS THUGS package lousy weed and counterfeit cigars.

PACHO (30's) notices Tati and Lorena right away and motions them over. He sits on a large sofa next to an OLDER MAN sorting MONEY on the coffee table. He wears a fedora, some gold chains and an unbuttoned shirt.

Pacho finishes his beer and stands. He KISSES Tati on the lips and SQUEEZES HER ASS. He takes Lorena's hand gently.

PACHO

This must be the friend you told me about. She's beautiful.

LORENA

Lorena.

PACHO

It's a pleasure.

Pacho smiles. Still holding her hand he sways to the reggeton music and SPINS her around - a wolf assessing his prey.

PACHO (CONT'D)

Let me guess... a dancer.

(to Tati)

The tight body. The way she walks.

Lorena steps back, trying to hide her uneasiness.

TATI

She has money. She wanted to know if you could help her, like you helped Julio's cousin.

PACHO

Ahhh... Escape to the United States. That's very expensive.

LORENA

I can pay.

PACHO
You can? How much do you have?

LORENA
How much is it?

Pacho moves to Lorena and starts dancing with her again.

PACHO
Do you have the money now?

LORENA
No, but I can get it. Whatever it costs.

Lorena reluctantly DANCES with Pacho. He moves her to face three sad-looking girls putting on make-up, near one of his motorcycles.

PACHO
*They want the same thing you do.
 They are working for the money now.
 Some have kids they want to take
 with them. Others have mothers,
 brothers... how many are you
 taking?*

LORENA
Just me.

PACHO
*Oh perfect. Then it shouldn't take
 you too long. Maybe two years.
 Since you're pretty, I'll connect
 you with the busy resorts on
 Varadero. The Germans love girls
 that look like you.*

Lorena PULLS AWAY. Rage building.

LORENA
*Just tell me how much it is and
 I'll get the money myself.*

Pacho sits back on the couch.

PACHO
*Honey, I know all of the rackets on
 this island and this is the fastest
 way for you. I keep 70% of your fee
 and the rest goes to your ticket
 out of here. If you just do
 straight sex, I can book you with
 the Canadians.*

(MORE)

PACHO (CONT'D)
*But the Europeans pay a lot more
 for the kinky stuff...*

Lorena rushes out of the house.

The OLDER MAN sorting money next to Pacho hands him a cell phone.

OLDER MAN
It's him.

Pacho takes the phone and sits up straight.

PACHO
*Captain Martinez - what can I do
 for you?*

Tati turns to leave, but Pacho grabs her arm.

PACHO (CONT'D)
 (on the phone)
*I understand. I'll send one of my
 best girls to get you what you
 need. Yes, like before - photos.
 Understood.*

Tati, too, understands. She takes a deep breath.

EXT. HAVANA STREET - NIGHT

Simon strolls down El Malecon, Cuba's iconic sea wall. He studies the city from afar.

A plain-clothes policeman (30s) in a MARLINS BASEBALL CAP follows a distance behind Simon unnoticed - studying his passport photo.

Simon stops near a few old STREET MUSICIANS playing SALSA. They could easily be headlining any jazz club in the U.S.

The percussion is hypnotic.

A few beats later Simon pulls out his cell phone and scrolls past a stack of text messages from his office. The last one -

PAUL > YOUR UPDATE IS HOURS LATE!

Simon glances at the time on his watch. Rubs his face. Then turns and heads back in the direction he came.

EXT. PACHO'S YARD - NIGHT

Lorena watches the cockfight in Pacho's yard with disgust. Tati walks out of the house touching up her lip gloss.

LORENA
What the hell, Tati!?!

TEARS of frustration streak down Lorena's face.

TATI
I tried to tell you...

LORENA
*TELL ME WHAT?! THAT I WOULD HAVE TO
SCREW MY WAY OFF THE ISLAND!*

TATI
*You said you would do anything. I
didn't know by anything you
actually meant - NOT anything.*

Tati appears insulted. Lorena calms herself.

LORENA
*You're right. I'm sorry. I'm
just... This is a good option for
some people. I just... need to keep
looking. I'm sorry. Thank you. Yes,
I did ask for your help and I did
say "anything." I guess I just
didn't expect this.*

Lorena hugs Tati.

TATI
*It's ok. You need to stop obsessing
about escape. It's making you
crazy. Come out with us tonight.
Relax.*

LORENA
No, I can't. I have to go home.

TATI
*And what? Keep fighting with your
mother?*

Lorena gives Tati a hug goodbye and turns to leave.

LORENA

My recital is tomorrow. Joining that dance company is my last chance to get out of here, so I need to rest and prepare for it.

TATI

Prepare!? All you do is dance and rehearse. If you aren't ready yet, nothing you do tonight is going to make a difference.

LORENA

I can't...

TATI

Besides, your mother isn't going to let you in the house without fighting about your brother. And that zoo of smelly kids you share your room with, won't let you sleep anyway. So, let's go...

LORENA

I don't know...

TATI

The last thing you need before your big show is a head full of family drama and stress. Come out with us. Blow off some steam and clear your head. We've never gone out and partied together.

LORENA

Where are you going?

Excited, Tati grabs her hand to rush off with her.

TATI

Yes!

Lorena doesn't budge.

LORENA

Where?

TATI

It's a surprise.

LORENA

I don't know...

TATI
Its going to be amazing!

CUT TO:

INT. GRAND HAVANA HOTEL - NIGHT

Simon strolls into his hotel's grand FOYER lost in thought.

He gives the concierge a FRIENDLY NOD - but gets an APOLOGETIC LOOK back.

Simon FREEZES. Something isn't right.

The other GUESTS in the lobby stare at him - motionless. Just then, Martinez and his men SURROUND Simon. Guns drawn.

SIMON
Are you shitting me?

For the first time we see Martinez enraged.

MARTINEZ
Are you shitting ME?! Where did you go?!

SIMON
What the hell is this?! I don't need your permission to go out.

Martinez is about to explode in his face. But years of escort protocol take control. He calms himself.

He MOTIONS for his men to stand down. They back away.

MARTINEZ
My orders were to bring you right back to your hotel.

SIMON
Your orders? That's your problem. I'm not your prisoner.

Simon SHOVES past Martinez towards the elevator.

On Martinez's command two of the convoy guards rush after Simon.

Simon stops and stares at their RIFLES.

SIMON (CONT'D)
(to Martinez)
Really?

MARTINEZ
For your protection.

SIMON
Yea... you keep saying that. But
the only danger I've seen here is
you.

MARTINEZ
I apologize, Mr. Reeves. It's
simply my...

SIMON
...orders. Yes. Keep blaming
anything that bothers me on your
orders. Well, how about this -
there is absolutely nothing you can
do to stop me from boarding the
morning flight back to San
Francisco. How will that look to
your bosses if you pissed off the
guy you're trying to buy
unsanctioned MILITARY GRADE
INTELLIGENCE TECH from and he said
FUCK YOU and just flew home?

Simon walks past the guards and heads to the elevator.

SIMON (CONT'D)
I'm going upstairs to take a shower
and then I'm coming back down here
to get drunk. If I see you or any
of your men - I'm gone. So go home,
leave me alone tonight and I'll see
you out front at 8 AM... or don't.

A tense moment.

Checkmate. Martinez knows that if Simon leaves, his career
and life will be over.

Martinez slides a COHIBA out of his pocket and chomps on it.
His charismatic smile returns.

MARTINEZ
Apologies, Mr. Reeves. It's been a
long day. Enjoy your evening.

Martinez hands Simon a COHIBA as a peace offering. He SIGNALS
his men to head out. They all leave the hotel.

Simon heads to the elevators. Stops. Looks back out the doors
at Martinez and the CONVOY driving off.

He stares at the cigar Martinez gave him carefully. Then he THROWS it in the trash.

Simon waits for the concierge to be distracted then sneaks out again.

EXT. GRAND HAVANA HOTEL - NIGHT

Simon hops in a GYPSY CAB and points to the CONVOY leaving.

SIMON
Follow the middle car.

CUT TO:

EXT. CONVERTIBLE CAR - NIGHT

An OLD CONVERTIBLE speeds down Highway Nacional towards Havana. TWO GIRLS from Pacho's house are applying make-up. Lorena and Tati are crammed in the back seat.

AMERICAN POP MUSIC is BLASTING. A bottle of RUM is passed around. These kids are in party mode.

LORENA
Where are we going?

TATI
It's a surprise...

LORENA
I can't come and go like you. If my mom finds out she'll kill me. So tell me!

TATI
Havana.

LORENA
What!? Are you crazy!? Stop the car! Stop the car!

The boy driving looks back.

TATI
(to the driver)
No, no, everything is fine.

Lorena, relax. We do this every week. It's a great time.

LORENA

Seriously, Tati, I can't. I have to rest before tomorrow. Havana is two hours - each way!

TATI

Look - We'll be there by 9. Dance and party until midnight. And then you can sleep on the way home. You'll still get more sleep than you would if you were home fighting with your mom and cousins...

Lorena gives up and slumps back.

Tati tries to pour a SHOT OF RUM down Lorena's throat.

LORENA

What the hell!?! Are you crazy - I have to be sharp for my dance tomorrow. Does no one understand this?

TATI

Well, you're going to need a shot when you see the dress I'm letting you borrow...

Tati holds up a tiny, sexy dress.

Lorena's eyes widen.

CUT TO:

INT. GYPSY CAB - NIGHT

From across the street Simon watches Martinez get out of his SUV. He hands his WALKIE-TALKIE BELT to one of the guards like an actor leaving his costume at the theater. Grabs his carton of EGGS.

Simon PAYS his driver and hops out of the taxi.

EXT. STREETS OF HAVANA - NIGHT

Keeping a safe distance, Simon FOLLOWS Martinez - unnoticed.

Martinez takes off his army green work shirt and tucks it behind his belt. His WHITE TANK TOP is dirty and tattered. He lights a CIGARETTE.

Simon follows him through a very poor neighborhood. Martinez seems to know everyone.

Simon SNAPS PHOTOS of the poverty he sees here on his phone.

Martinez stops at a SIDEWALK BUTCHER STAND and trades some EGGS for unrefrigerated mystery MEAT.

Eventually, Martinez arrives at his TINY HOUSE. It is no beach front palace. It is falling apart and looks uninhabitable. Yet, his large family lives there.

Simon RECORDS VIDEO on his phone of Martinez's unkempt wife greeting him at the door. They kiss. She takes the cigarette from his mouth and smokes it herself.

Martinez calls his TEENAGE SON over who leans on the bars of the porch. Long hair, paint on his hands, artsy - the opposite of his military dad. But instead the young man turns his WHEELCHAIR around and rolls inside.

Simon realizes he has just seen behind the curtain.

EXT. CENTRAL HAVANA - NIGHT

The tourist area of central Havana is alive at night. Simon walks past various bars and restaurants full of HAPPY FOREIGNERS having an amazing time.

The PLAIN-CLOTHES COP in the BASEBALL CAP assigned to tail Simon is in a sweaty panic when he finally catches up to his lost target - Simon. He whips out his CELL PHONE and sends a message.

EXT. CENTRAL HAVANA - NIGHT

PEPITO (13) wears a MARLINS BASEBALL CAP and hangs out with his friends on a street corner. His CELL PHONE dings. He has been sent Simon's passport photo and a map location. He knows what to do.

EXT. CENTRAL HAVANA - NIGHT

Simon walks up to a 1950's Cuban taxi.

SIMON

(In poor Spanish)

How far to the Hotel Nacional?

Just then, Pepito runs up to Simon waving a stack of night club FLYERS and FREE DRINK TICKETS.

PEPITO

Amigo! Let me take you to the best club in Havana. Free drinks.

SIMON

(laughing)
No thanks, buddy.

PEPITO

Beautiful señoritas. Great DJ. Free drinks. Vamos. I take you.

SIMON

Another night.

PEPITO

Señor, if you just let me take you to the door they will pay me. You don't have to go in. This is how I make money for my family. It's very close. Por favor.

Simon considers this. He looks to the taxi. Then smiles at the boy and heads off with him.

CUT TO:

EXT. NIGHT CLUB LINE - NIGHT

Lorena, Tati and the other girls from the car walk up to a NIGHT CLUB.

Even though Lorena is uncomfortable wearing Tati's tight, short dress and make-up she looks STUNNING.

Tati's skimpy outfit reveals all of her TATTOOS. She leads her friends to a group of other scantily-clad young women pooling near the entrance. They all exchange hugs.

LORENA

Are we going in?

TATI

It's like the beach here. They don't let locals in. We can only go with a tourist.

Tati checks her phone to confirm Simon's passport PHOTO and NAME. She scans the street for him.

LORENA

Hang on... this isn't what Pacho wanted me to do is it!?

TATI

Well, not exactly. Here, you're in control. This is as much or as little as you want to make it. The tourists like to have a pretty girl to dance with and buy drinks for. So you can go in just for that. But most of them will pay a lot more for some 'company.' Just pick a cute one and do what you want.

LORENA

You're a... you do this?

Ashamed of nothing - Tati faces Lorena.

TATI

Yea. So what?

LORENA

Nothing. I... I just didn't know.

TATI

Just because I don't talk about it doesn't mean I hide it. You didn't know because you didn't want to know.

LORENA

I'm going to wait for you in the car...

TATI

No! Just come in and dance. You don't have to do anything you don't want to do. You say you're tired of your parents controlling you - well they aren't here now. So for once, do what YOU want. Relax.

Lorena looks lost. She pulls out her old WALKMAN, slips in her earbuds and listens to music.

Tati touches up her LIPSTICK and gets into character. She flips on her sexy switch, WRITHES around and chats up a German tourist that approaches her.

EXT. NIGHT CLUB ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Simon and Pepito walk up to the front of the club. The doorman slips the boy a few Cuban pesos as promised. Pepito fist-bumps Simon.

PEPITO
Thank you, amigo!

As Pepito rushes away, he makes eye contact with Tati and points out Simon - HER ASSIGNMENT. Tati NODS.

The doorman is trying to convince Simon to enter - it's not working.

EXT. NIGHT CLUB LINE - NIGHT

Tati is anxious to connect with Simon. She leans in close to HANS, the German tourist she is chatting with.

TATI
(In English)
Tonight is your lucky night. My friend is a ballet dancer. Do you know what that means?

Hans shrugs his shoulders as he sips from his mojito.

Tati grabs his crotch with a smile.

TATI (CONT'D)
It means she is very flexible.

The German likes that. He eyes Lorena.

Tati pulls out Lorena's earbuds and yanks her over.

TATI (CONT'D)
(To Lorena in Spanish)
We're going in. This is Hans from Germany. He thinks you are beautiful and he loves ballet. Let's go. If we get split up meet back at the car at midnight. The driver will take you back home. Midnight. Don't be late.

LORENA
Split up?

Tati makes a b-line for Simon.

As Simon backs away from the doorman to leave, he spins and BUMPS right into Tati. She purposely SPILLS the contents of her purse on the ground.

SIMON
Sorry!

Simon and Tati kneel down to pick up her things.

Hans and his two buddies with other girls from the line-up enter the club ready to party. Lorena moves to hang back with Tati but Hans DRAGS HER INSIDE.

Simon hands Tati the last of her things.

SIMON (CONT'D)
(In Spanish)
Sorry about that.

TATI
(Back to English)
It's ok -- oh no!

SIMON
What?

TATI
My friend - she has my keys.

SIMON
Who?

TATI
The girl I was with. They were going to take me in. I am not allowed in without a... tourist.

SIMON
Let me talk to the door guy.

TATI
Can you just take me in? Just to get my keys?

SIMON
I...

TATI
Come on. It will be fast!

Tati leads Simon by the hand into the front door.

INT. HAVANA NIGHTCLUB ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Simon and Tati enter the club. It is PACKED. The music is LOUD, the lights are DAZZLING and the atmosphere is a PARTY. Simon can't help but smile as he takes it in.

Lorena is DANCING by a speaker. She's amazing - turning lots of heads.

The German she came in with drunkenly paws at her, but she moves away. He persists. Annoyed she walks off the dance floor. He happily follows.

The song changes to a popular PITBULL TRACK and the crowd roars. Tati howls. One arm shoots up and sways to the beat. She drags Simon onto the dance floor.

INT. HAVANA NIGHTCLUB DANCEFLOOR - NIGHT

SIMON

No, no, no... I don't dance.

TATI

You don't have to. Just enjoy.

With that, Tati let's the music possess her and she writhes on Simon like a snake coiling up prey.

Simon doesn't know where to look or what to do, so Tati takes his hands on a tour of her body.

Each time Simon pulls away Tati returns like a magnet.

Eventually, she corners him against a speaker. Tati bounces to the hard bass beat and gets closer and closer until their noses are touching.

She moves Simon's hand to her ass and parts her lips to kiss him. Just as their mouths are about to meet -

Simon pulls away.

INT. HAVANA NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Simon walks off the dance floor. Tati is right behind him.

TATI

I love that song. Sorry if I...

SIMON

No... I just... I...

TATI

But you are very sexy, Simon. I lost control a little bit.

Tati spots Lorena in the VIP area waving her over. She takes Simon's hand and leads him through the crowd.

SIMON

Sorry, did I tell you my name?

TATI
(thinking fast)
Yes, of course. Outside.

SIMON
No - I don't think so.

They get to the table with Lorena and the German tourists.
Tati sits next to Lorena and pulls Simon down next to her.

Simon instantly recognizes Lorena as the girl he saw
practicing ballet in front of the university.

TATI
Well let's do it again. I'm, Tati.
This is Lorena. And you are...?

SIMON
(laughing it off)
Simon.

TATI
Simon. Mucho gusto.

A man across the way catches Tati's eye. It is the UNDERCOVER
POLICEMAN in the baseball cap. He signals Tati over.

Simon pulls out the stack of drink tickets Pepito gave him.

SIMON
Look, I'm going to go, but - here.
Apparently, you and your friends
can drink for free.

Tati stands and stops a cocktail waitress.

TATI
I will be right back. But, order me
whatever you are having. Wait here.

Tati rushes off.

Simon hands the waitress a couple drink tickets.

SIMON
Two whiskies.

The waitress smiles and walks off.

Suddenly, Lorena backs into Simon hard. She is scooting away
from Hans, the drunk German is trying to kiss her.

Simon stands to give Lorena room.

Hans moves in to kiss Lorena again and she angrily backs away. The sauced German smiles, looks down and grabs her breasts as a consolation prize. Then SLAP -

Lorena BACKHANDS Hans across his face.

The German is stunned - then quickly consumed by rage.

He LUNGES forward to grab Lorena by the throat, but Simon STOPS his hand before it can touch her.

Hans shakes free then turns his attention to Simon. He stands to face him.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Hey, buddy... just take it easy.

Hans's two pals stand to back him up. The German takes off his large, fancy watch and readies to fight.

Scared - Simon gently moves Lorena away. She DARTS off.

Tati rushes back over and gets in between Simon and Hans.

TATI

Amigos - no! Come on let's have fun. Everything is OK. No problems here. Everybody happy. Càlmanse.

Tati moves Simon away from the table. He is shaking - not used to drama like this.

TATI (CONT'D)

Are you, OK?

Simon takes a beat and calms himself down.

SIMON

Yea. I'm... going to the restroom.

Simon walks away.

Tati looks across the room. The undercover cop motions for her to follow Simon.

Simon enters the hallway to the restrooms. As he approaches the door to the men's room, he stops to notice another door marked 'exit'.

Simon looks over his shoulder. All clear.

He dashes through the exit.

Just then, Tati enters the hallway and tries to look inside the busy men's room as the door swings open and closed.

She pulls out her lip gloss, stands against the wall and waits for Simon.

EXT. HAVANA NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Simon leans on the club's back door and takes a massive breath of fresh air.

He looks down the alley and see's a girl, heels in hand, DANCING and then she disappears out of view.

Simon curiously follows.

EXT. STREETS OF HAVANA - NIGHT

It's Lorena. She dances her way through the streets of Havana - lost in the world of the music playing on her earbuds. She eventually gets to an empty plaza.

Simon waves as he approaches, trying to not startle her but she's lost in dance and music - WHOA!

She jumps. Yanks out her earbuds.

LORENA

It's you. From the club.

SIMON

Yea. Sorry - I had to get out of that place, too. Saw you dancing -

LORENA

I have an audition tomorrow.

SIMON

Oh. For what?

LORENA

For everything.

Lorena crosses her arms uncomfortably across her revealing dress. Simon puts his jacket around her shoulders.

LORENA (CONT'D)

Thanks. My clothes are in my friend's car.

SIMON

...Tati?

Lorena nods.

SIMON (CONT'D)
She's... Intense. Lorena, right?

Lorena nods.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Simon.

They shake hands.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Were you practicing dance earlier
at the University outside?

LORENA
"I don't know how to put this -
but, I'm kind of a big deal."

Awkward pause.

They both laugh.

SIMON
Was that... Will Ferrell from
Anchorman?!

LORENA
Very good!

SIMON
"You talkin' to me? You... talkin'
to me?!"

LORENA
Easy. DeNiro. Taxi Driver. 1976.

SIMON
I'm impressed.

LORENA
Me and my little cousins are
obsessed with American movies.

SIMON
So was my mom. The rebel in the
family. We watched a million movies
together.

LORENA
You speak Spanish too?

SIMON

Not really.

LORENA

*Perfect. So I can say bad things
about you and you have no idea.*

SIMON

No, por favor.

Simon and Lorena exchange shy smiles.

LORENA

"Key West is as far south as we go
without having to speak Spanish."

SIMON

That's... that's from... Running
Scared, 1986! Wow! You're good.

LORENA

Movies have been my escape. In
1955, there were more theaters in
Cuba than in New York and Paris.
Now I hope dance will get me out of
here.

Simon playfully attempts one of Lorena's fancy ballet moves.
She demonstrates the proper way - they chuckle.

LORENA (CONT'D)

So, now what?

SIMON

Now, I'm going back to my hotel to
prepare for *my* big day tomorrow.

LORENA

You have a dance audition too?

SIMON

Something like that. Work stuff.

LORENA

What do you do?

SIMON

I work with technology that helps
connect people. Boring to talk
about. And you? Just going to dance
the night away out here?

LORENA

I have a few hours until my ride
back home.

SIMON

Where do you live?

LORENA

Matanzas. About two hours that way.
I was going to my cousin's house.
He lives nearby. You want to have
one more adventure?

SIMON

With you?

LORENA

His place is super cool. I think
you will like it, Simon, from La
Yuma, who thinks he's good at movie
trivia and knows a little Spanish
from his nanny...

SIMON

Very funny.

LORENA

And, who is a terrible ballet
dancer - I almost forgot that part.

SIMON

Let's go.

LORENA

You won't need this...

Lorena reaches over and slides off his necktie. She THROWS it
in a nearby TRASH CAN.

SIMON

Really!?

EXT. HAVANA STREET - NIGHT

Simon and Lorena weave through people on the sidewalk. The
buildings here are falling apart. They are well outside the
tourist area.

Simon SNAPS PHOTOS with his phone.

SHIRTLESS BOYS drive a wagon full of junk pulled by mules
down the street. TWO SANTERIA PRIESTESSES in white robes
stroll by. UNIFORMED SCHOOL KIDS giggle past.

LORENA

My friend is a DJ. He made me a special mix for my audition tomorrow. Wait here.

Lorena shoves Simon in between a couple locals crowding a WALK-UP CAFE WINDOW.

LORENA (CONT'D)

(To the OLD WAITRESS)

Hi, auntie. A café con leche for my friend please.

Lorena drops a few CUC's on the counter, pats Simon on the back and rushes to her friend selling CD's on the corner.

EXT. CAFE - NIGHT

Simon watches the deadpan, OLD WAITRESS make his coffee. He smiles - this is the Cuba he had wanted to see.

GARCIA (70s), a well-dressed man selling roses, squeezes in next to Simon and removes his hat.

The old waitress comes right over to Garcia with a big SMILE. She sets down his coffee and pastry with a kiss on the cheek.

OLD WAITRESS

Doctor!

GARCIA

What's new?

OLD WAITRESS

I'm still here - so, nothing. How's Gloria?

GARCIA

Good. She said to say hello.

OLD WAITRESS

Kisses for her. And how are you?

GARCIA

It's slow tonight. I heard many flights got delayed.

The COOK calls the waitress over.

OLD WAITRESS

Excuse me.

GARCIA blows her a kiss. The waitress goes back to work.

Simon glances at the old man - his kind face, his aged suit, the bundle of flowers.

SIMON
Why did she call you doctor?

GARCIA
(Back to English)
Ahhh... a tourist! What are you doing all the way over here?

SIMON
I'm with... a friend.

Garcia pats Simon on the back with a smile.

GARCIA
So, what do the young ladies call you?

SIMON
(a laugh)
Simon.

GARCIA
Ah, like *Présidente Simón Bolívar!*
That's a strong name.

SIMON
And you?

GARCIA
Garcia. It's a pleasure.

SIMON
The waitress called you doctor. So, you want me to call you Garcia and the ladies to call you doctor? I see. Women like doctors...

GARCIA
(laughs)
No. Well, most people know me as Doctor Garcia.

SIMON
You're a doctor?

GARCIA
An orthopedic surgeon for over 40 years.

SIMON
Retired?

GARCIA

No. As long as my hands stay steady
I will keep practicing.

SIMON

I thought you sold flowers.

GARCIA

I do. After work. Where are you
from?

SIMON

The United States.

GARCIA

La Yuma! Doctors here make less
than gardeners in your country. So
we do what we can to get by.
Understand?

Simon nods and stares out at the sea.

GARCIA (CONT'D)

In another life I could be the lost
tourist from America and you could
be the handsome Cuban doctor he
meets in this cafe.

Warm smiles. They cheers with their coffee and drink.

SIMON

So what happens when you sell all
those flowers?

GARCIA

I go home.

SIMON

To Gloria?

GARCIA

(laughs)
You were listening. Yes... my wife.

SIMON

How much is a flower?

GARCIA

The tourists pay \$5 for one.
Here... a gift.

Garcia hands him a FLOWER.

GARCIA (CONT'D)
I like you. You make me laugh -
Simón Bolívar!

Simon pulls out a wad of cash from his wallet.

SIMON
I'll make you a deal. Let me buy
all of your flowers.

He puts the money in Garcia's hand.

SIMON (CONT'D)
There. You're done for the night.
Go home and give them to Gloria.

GARCIA
Are you crazy!? This is too much
money.

SIMON
Well, let me also pay for some
advice - I'm being offered a new
life here in Cuba. But the people I
would be working for have been
lying to me since before I stepped
off the plane. What would you do?

GARCIA
Since you're asking the question -
I think you have your answer.

Lorena hops in between the two men.

LORENA
*I'm sorry doctor. Is this strange
American bothering you? He knows a
little Spanish, is bad at movie
trivia and even worse at dancing.*

Dr. Garcia and Lorena exchange a quick friendly hug.

SIMON
Hello. I'm right here. And I can
understand you...

GARCIA
(laughing)
*Simon made my night! And my wife's
night, too!*

LORENA
Let's go!

Lorena pulls Simon away.

SIMON

Thank you for the conversation -
and for the flower, Dr. Garcia.

They shake hands.

EXT. HAVANA SUBURBS - NIGHT

Outside of Havana's tourist area, everything is dilapidated and falling apart. Lorena and Simon walk down a street sharing her earbuds - listening to her new mix tape. Both smiling and nodding to the beat.

SIMON

You're going to dance to this?

LORENA

It's so good, right?

Lorena and Simon approach WILLY'S GARAGE. A CRUMBLING HOUSE surrounded by OLD CARS. She puts her Walkman away.

LORENA (CONT'D)

My cousin fixes cars. My brother
spent a lot of time here.

SIMON

Spent? And now?

LORENA

He's gone.

SIMON

Oh... I'm sorry.

LORENA

Not dead - hopefully. But, gone.

SIMON

What do you mean 'gone?'

LORENA

To the United States. He's trying
to make it to Miami.

SIMON

Miami? How? ...on a raft!?

LORENA

Something like that. He is going to
get me out of here. He promised.

(MORE)

LORENA (CONT'D)

Over 35,000 people have escaped
Cuba on rafts. Many died. But he
will make it.

Lorena makes the sign of the cross.

SIMON

Why are so many people trying to
escape this great country?

LORENA

Great country!?

SIMON

The state takes care of you. Food,
medicine, education...

LORENA

Wow. OK you need to stop believing
that propaganda. How good is a free
hospital if there is no medicine.
How good is free food if there are
no cows?

They reach the carport of the house. Two young men GRIND
METAL off the frame of an old car on cinder blocks. A shower
of SPARKS.

One of the men, TURI (20s), stops. He takes his bandana and
sunglasses off and gives Lorena a hug and kiss.

TURI

*Hey, primita! You finally made it!
Wow... you look so grown up!*

LORENA

Yea - don't tell my mom I'm here.

TURI

Ahhhh... ok. Who's this?

LORENA

My friend, Simon.

Turi gives Simon a FIST BUMP.

TURI

*Please come in! Willy is going to
be so surprised!*

Turi pulls back a sheet of thick plastic hanging behind him.
It's the entrance to the backyard.

Lorena and Simon duck their heads and step through.

EXT. WILLY'S BACKYARD - NIGHT

It's like a mini carnival. The whole area is covered by criss-crossing STRING LIGHTS that casts a warm glow. A hidden oasis to celebrate self-expression and freedom.

Cars and car parts everywhere. Between it all are YOUNG FRIENDS playing MUSIC and hanging out.

Lorena heads to the back of the yard where a small group is gathered around an OLD TELEVISION.

SIMON

So the guy out front is your cousin?

LORENA

Well, yes kind of. In Cuba, if someone knows you for a long time, they call you cousin. So, here I have a lot of primas and primos. But Willy is my real cousin. And this... is his place.

SIMON

A secret junkyard.

LORENA

It's much more than that..

WILLY (20s) is tinkering with a computer hooked up to the television. He spots Lorena and rushes over. They EMBRACE tightly. Both of their eyes well up with tears.

WILLY

Have you heard from him?

LORENA

No. He said he would call in three days.

WILLY

So that's tomorrow?

LORENA

Day after tomorrow.

Willy pulls out his CELL PHONE and shows Lorena a PHOTO.

WILLY

It's the day he left.

The photo: WILLY and LUIS stand on the old green truck Luis drove into the ocean. BIG SMILES.

They are covered in grease, holding tools. The hood is open. ISORA and the BABY are there.

Lorena pinch-zooms in on the baby in the photo.

LORENA

Luisito is so precious.

WILLY

I loved your brother. I helped him build that thing. But, I didn't want him to go.

LORENA

Where did you get the truck?

WILLY

Oh. It was a customer's.

LORENA

A customer's!? Someone gave you their truck to fix and you let my brother drive it into the ocean?

WILLY

Yes. He calls me everyday. I keep telling him I'm looking for a part.

Willy and Lorena stare at each other expressionless and silent. Then - burst into LAUGHTER.

LORENA

You're crazy.

WILLY

I'm glad you finally made it over. It's been almost two years!

LORENA

Don't tell my mother.

WILLY

Of course not. And him?

LORENA

That's my friend, Simon.

Willy gives Simon a fist-bump.

SIMON

Hi. Great spot. Great vibe.

WILLY

Thanks. Well, grab a seat. The show is about to start.

Willy guides them to the front of the group gathered around the small, old TV. Lorena and Simon sit on the ground.

SIMON

(back to English)

He and your brother were close?

LORENA

Yes. My brother was lucky. He spent more time here than at home. They grew up together.

SIMON

Willy seems great. Why don't you spend more time here?

LORENA

I live two hours away in Matanzas. Half of my family is here and the other half is there. Cuba's not an easy place to get around. So you said you work in technology?

SIMON

Yea, it's boring to talk about.

LORENA

Bore me.

SIMON

My company is here to set up the first high-speed WiFi network in Cuba. Everyone will have access to free internet.

Lorena gives Simon a sideways look.

LORENA

Ha.

SIMON

You don't think we can do that?

LORENA

You don't think they would spend money on that, do you?

Willy and a friend BANG on the top of the OLD COMPUTER hooked up to the television. The side is open - they TINKER with the motherboard.

LORENA (CONT'D)

My cousin is good with cars, but not computers. Can you help him?

SIMON

What is everyone waiting to watch?

LORENA

El paquete. It's the latest movies, TV and news from around the world.

Willy gets the computer to work. It starts to play an episode of HBO's Ballers. The small audience CHEERS.

SIMON

Wow. I didn't know that was legal.

LORENA

It's not. But everyone does it. It's super expensive - about \$7 U.S. dollars. That's a week's pay.

Willy hands Lorena and Simon each a beer.

WILLY

Don't tell your mom.

LORENA

YOU don't tell my mom!

The three of them CLINK bottles - cheers.

Just then, the connection to the TV glitches and dies. The group playfully JEERS at Willy. Willy yells back. He and his friend go back to tinkering with the computer.

Simon hands his beer to Lorena. He reaches in his coat pocket and pulls out his small AMTEL CUBE.

SIMON

Can I try something?

WILLY

Please. I'm out of ideas.

Simon leans in for a closer look at the inside of the computer.

SIMON

This have WiFi?

WILLY

*Coño, it should have WiFi,
bluetooth all the latest stuff. I
traded a car for it!*

Simon pulls out his cell phone. He pairs the cube with Willy's computer.

SIMON

Can you move the TV please?

Simon opens an old A-FRAME LADDER and sets it about 20 ft back from the CONCRETE WALL where the TV used to be. He places his cube on a step. Aims it at a wall.

He TAPS his phone and the cube comes to life. It PROJECTS the package bright and large on the wall for all to see.

The small group CHEERS!

Willy raises his beer in thanks.

Simon nods.

Lorena and Simon exchange a smile.

Simon motions that he's going to wander around the yard. Lorena nods.

EXT. WILLY'S BACKYARD - [CONTINUOUS]

Simon walks over to a group showing off ART WORK. One of them has set up a TATTOO STATION where he's busy inking friends.

Another group crowds around someone turning a large poster of Castro into a clown using amazing spray painting skills. It is Captain Martinez's TEENAGE SON.

EXT. WILLY'S BACKYARD - [CONTINUOUS]

Music comes from another part of the yard where a group JAMS on instruments. Two rhythm guitars and a keyboard keep a song alive while others pass a CONGA DRUM around and take turns soloing.

Simon nods his head in time with the beat. He smiles and taps on his chest copying the drum pattern.

The guy soloing is lighting the conga on fire!

Lorena walks up shaking a big KEY RING to the beat, like it's a tambourine.

LORENA

You don't dance but you play drums?

Embarrassed, Simon stops thumping on his chest.

SIMON

No. Just listening. This is great.

LORENA

Don't be shy. I see you can play.

SIMON

I played a little in high school.
But, I'm no drummer.

LORENA

Eso!

Lorena motions to the drummer to pass the instrument. He finishes his solo with a flourish. The drum is passed to Simon.

All eyes on the American. Simon smiles and takes a step back from the instrument - politely shaking his head "no."

The crowd starts clapping in unison to encourage Simon to keep the song alive. Lorena shakes her keys giving him a rhythm bed to work from.

Reluctantly, Simon steps up to the drum. He starts playing. Basic and slow - but, in time.

An OLD-TIMER MUSICIAN from the crowd steps forward and shows Simon a Cuban rhythm on the conga. Simon copies it easily.

OLD TIMER MUSICIAN

*That's it! The Rumba - this rhythm
is the foundation of our music.*

The old-timer plays a CLAVE filling out Simon's conga beat.

The crowd loves it. Soon, Simon's hands fly over the drum heads like he's played the Rumba for years. He's a natural.

A TEEN BOY approaches Simon's drum and joins in his beat. Simon is surprisingly good - but the boy is GREAT.

As the teen takes over the melody, Simon backs away with a smile and a nod, clapping to the new rhythm.

EXT. WILLY'S BACKYARD - [CONTINUOUS]

Under some WORK LIGHTS a few friends work on a CAR that looks just like an engine on a frame. Something out of Mad Max. Simon and Lorena walk up. Simon leans in for a closer look.

SIMON

Nice work. Did you rebuild the carburetor yourself?

ENRIQUE (20s) covered in grease, with a cigarette dangling from his mouth and wrench in hand, stands from under the hood.

ENRIQUE

I rebuilt every part of the engine.

Enrique's friend, JULIO, chimes in from under the car.

JULIO

Ask Enrique why we call this car 'the zombie.'

The other gearheads working on the car chuckle.

SIMON

What's the story?

ENRIQUE

We brought it back from the dead. I needed an engine, so I went diving in the marina and pulled this out of a sunken boat.

SIMON

That's a boat engine!?

Julio slides out from under the car.

JULIO

Cleaning salt water out of an engine is impossible.

ENRIQUE

But we did it. It's back to life...

JULIO

This will be the 4th car he sinks in the ocean trying to escape! Ha!

Enrique flicks Julio the bird.

Simon points to some strange gears and hoses.

SIMON

What's that?

ENRIQUE

*Parts from a washing machine and a
blender. Willy's the mad scientist.
This was his idea. He can fix
anything.*

Proud to show off, Enrique pulls the starter cable under the hood and the motor ROARS to life. With no muffler, it screams like a WWII fighter plane.

ENRIQUE (CONT'D)

The zombie!

WILLY

OK! OK!

Enrique kills the engine. Willy and Lorena approach with two home-built, Frankensteined BICYCLES.

SIMON

*So, you're the mastermind behind
all of these contraptions?*

WILLY

*Ha! I'm no mastermind. I just have
a few ideas.*

LORENA

*You both do the same thing. Simon
connects people with technology and
you do it with garbage.*

WILLY

You see garbage - I see parts.

SIMON

*It seems like you can escape from
Cuba anytime. So why do you stay?*

WILLY

*My friends are here. My family is
here. The garage brings people
together who probably wouldn't
connect any other way.*

LORENA

*A mechanic, a drummer and a painter
walk into a garage -*

Willy swats at Lorena's head. She ducks and laughs.

EXT. HAVANA STREET - NIGHT

Willy stops on the side of the street and hides his bike in a bush. Simon and Lorena do the same.

Willy opens his BACKPACK and hands his skater friends CANS OF PAINT, BRUSHES and CLOWN MASKS - they put them on.

He tosses a small CAMERA to Lorena and a FLASHLIGHT to Simon.

WILLY

*Prima, take lots of photos. Simon
flash us if you see police. And
stay down!*

Lorena and Simon DUCK DOWN behind the bush. They watch Willy and his friends run across the street and graffiti a large, communist BILLBOARD on a busy road in to Havana.

The billboard is an image of Fidel with the giant words: PATRIOTISMO O MUERTE (Patriotism or Death).

SIMON

Are they crazy?

LORENA

100%.

SIMON

What happens if they get caught?

LORENA

Well, Willy's brother got caught with a little bit of marijuana and he is eight years in jail. This would be much, much worse.

She SNAPS a photo.

SIMON

Holy shit! Why are they doing this then?

LORENA

Why do people write poems or paint or dance?

SIMON

Yea - those ways of expressing yourself don't land you in prison.

LORENA

Actually... here they do.

She SNAPS a photo.

Willy and his friends have changed the words on the billboard
from: PATRIOTISMO O MUERTE (Patriotism or Death)

to: PATRIOTISMO ES MUERTE (Patriotism is Death)

...and they've painted a clown face over Fidel.

SIMON

Oh my God!

LORENA

Calm down. They're done. We're
leaving.

She SNAPS a photo.

SIMON

What are those pictures for?

LORENA

They make t-shirts. They're quite
popular.

EXT. HAVANA STREET - NIGHT

Willy and Simon pedal their bikes down the street. The three
skaters surround Willy laughing about the graffiti - high
from the experience.

Simon and Lorena ride behind.

SIMON

The government isn't really going
to give you free WiFi are they?

Lorena laughs out loud.

LORENA

If you believe that you're funnier
than you look.

She winks at Simon.

SIMON

After highschool I wanted to join
the Peace Corps but my father made
me go to college. I keep trying to
use my job to do good, but doing
good doesn't really pay the bills.

LORENA

The roads are falling apart and the hospitals don't have medicine. Do you really think they care about us having Facebook?

SIMON

The hospitals don't have medicine? I thought they were free here?

LORENA

Well, yes it's free to go. But you have to bribe the doctors to be seen. There is no medicine. No aspirin. Not even a laxative.

SIMON

Is school really free?

LORENA

That - yes. But what can you do with a degree when you live inside a prison? Being a lawyer or architect here pays you the same as being a trash collector. Like... ten dollars a week. There's no opportunity. No hope.

SIMON

Don't you get free food?

LORENA

Ha! You mean La Libereta? Where are you hearing all of this boberia?! Again... there is NOTHING free here. Amazing to know what foreigners think.

The group stops at an intersection.

LORENA (CONT'D)

(to Willy)

Primo, it's almost midnight! I have to meet my friend downtown - she's my ride back home!

WILLY

Is she cute?

Lorena hops off the handlebars and hugs her cousin goodbye.

LORENA

I have to go...

(to Simon)

(MORE)

LORENA (CONT'D)

I can walk from here. It's not far.
Why don't you stay with Willy and
continue your adventure.

Simon dismounts the bike and hands it to Willy.

SIMON

I'll walk with you.

Just then a POLICE CAR screeches around the corner. The three skaters try to take off, but the cop car RAMS two of the kids knocking them down.

OFFICER CHINO leaps from the passenger side and BEATS the fleeing skater to the ground with his BATON.

OFFICER RUIZ hops out of the driver's side and beats on the two kids he ran over. His baton CRACKING their faces open.

Willy rushes over.

WILLY

*Stop! Stop! What the hell is the
matter with you!? Stop!*

Officer Ruiz whips out his GUN and aims it at Willy.

OFFICER RUIZ

Stop!

Lorena SCREAMS.

SIMON

Oh shit!

Willy RAISES his hands.

WILLY

*Officer, please calm down. We have
no weapons. We were just out riding
bike. We didn't do anything.*

OFFICER RUIZ

*Liar! You just painted a billboard
on Via Blanca. Several motorists
reported seeing you.*

WILLY

*Me!? Impossible. We were riding
bikes. What did they look like?*

Gun still trained on Willy's head - Ruiz walks over and rips Willy's backpack off.

OFFICER RUIZ
They were wearing clown masks.

Lorena and Simon nervously look at one another. The masks are in the backpack.

WILLY
This is a big misunderstanding.

Officer Ruiz yanks the backpack open and inside he finds... a camera and a flashlight.

OFFICER RUIZ
Where are the masks?
(calling to his partner)
Chino, does he have a mask?

CHINO
No.

WILLY
Like I told you...

OFFICER RUIZ
Shut up!

Ruiz turns the camera ON.

Willy looks at Lorena. Sweat on his brow.

The camera is EMPTY. It flashes NO CARD.

OFFICER RUIZ (CONT'D)
What's this? Where are the photos?

WILLY
It's broken. I'm taking it to my friend who said he could fix it.

OFFICER RUIZ
You have a backpack just for this camera? And you all just happen to be wearing black? Let's go!

The cops CUFF and DRAG the kids to the POLICE CAR.

Simon walks forward holding up his U.S. PASSPORT.

SIMON
The kid is telling the truth. I was with them all night.

OFFICER RUIZ

Stay out of this, tourist. If we put you in this car you will be in jail a long time.

SIMON

I met these guys near my hotel and hired them to take me on a bike tour of the city.

Simon pulls out a WAD of CASH.

SIMON (CONT'D)

I'm a special guest of your government. And I'm here doing work with the Council of the State who controls the Ministry of the Interior who controls your department. So, if you don't want to be cleaning toilets in Guantanamo - let us go.

Ruiz looks at Chino. Chino shrugs - no way that's true.

OFFICER RUIZ

You're full of shit.

Simon stands nose-to-nose with Ruiz. He reaches in his pocket and pulls out the BUSINESS CARD Martinez gave him at the airport.

Simon puts the card on a thick wad of CASH and hands the whole BUNDLE to Officer Ruiz.

SIMON

If you don't believe me, call Captain Martinez. He's my personal escort. His number is right there.

Officer Ruiz slides the CASH from the back of the card into his pocket. He looks to Chino and MOTIONS to let them go.

Chino UNCUFFS the skaters.

Ruiz hands Simon back Martinez's CARD.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Keep it.

Willy picks up his BEATEN AND BLOODIED skater friends. He looks back to Simon and nods 'thank you.' Simon nods back.

LORENA

"I came here to chew bubblegum and kick ass. And I'm all out of bubblegum."

SIMON

Good one. Roddy Piper from *They Live*. 1988. One of my favorites.

EXT. HAVANA NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Lorena and Simon walk up to the NIGHTCLUB. They approach the CONVERTIBLE that drove Lorena down.

LORENA

That was very nice of you. You could have gone to jail with them.

SIMON

I had to try. Those police were insane. They would have never gotten a fair trial.

LORENA

Trial...? You're funny.

SIMON

A question for you - if you wanted something so bad, you were willing to do anything for it - but then you realized that getting it would go against what you felt was the right thing to do... What would you do?

Lorena laughs to herself.

LORENA

If you only knew.

SIMON

Knew what?

LORENA

What *I* would do and what I think you would do are two different things. I think you will choose what you want over what is right.

SIMON

Really!? That's the impression you get from me?

LORENA

You asked.

They reach the CAR. Lorena gives Simon his JACKET back.

SIMON

So that's it - time's up. It's midnight. You're about to turn into a pumpkin. I wish I had a witty Cinderella movie quote to say right now, but kid movies aren't my thing.

LORENA

You think Cinderella is a kid movie?!?

SIMON

I.. well... now, I feel like saying 'yes' would be the wrong answer.

LORENA

It's a movie about hopes and dreams. Released in 1950 - "A dream is a wish your heart makes." Does that quote apply to just kids?

They stare at each other. Knowing this is the last time they will see each other.

SIMON

And what's your dream?

Lorena looks around 360 scanning for north.

LORENA

North is...?

Lorena stands on her tip-toes and points north.

SIMON

North... The United States?

Lorena Smiles.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Freeze...

Simon whips out his phone and takes her PICTURE.

The DRIVER obnoxiously HONKS the horn at her.

DRIVER

*Tati is getting another ride back,
but made me promise to drive you
home. Let's go! Now!*

SIMON

You have a great cousin, good
friends, you're talented, funny,
beautiful, healthy. You have a lot.

LORENA

Maybe.

SIMON

How do I get a hold of you?

LORENA

You can't. It's Cuba.

Simon hands her his BUSINESS CARD.

SIMON

Promise you'll contact me when you
make it to the U.S.

Lorena gently grabs his card.

LORENA

You are my first American friend.
I will call you from Miami.

Lorena pulls Simon's card, but he doesn't let go. It draws
him close to her -

They KISS.

The driver HONKS the horn again LOUD AND LONG.

Lorena returns Simons jacket. She hops into the back seat.

SIMON

Good luck dancing tomorrow!

As the car drives off, Lorena looks back at Simon - her hair
blows in front of her face. It's an image he won't forget.

Simon puts his jacket back on. He feels something in one of
the pockets. He pulls out Lorena's WALKMAN - her dance music
CASSETTE is still inside!

Simon runs after the convertible - but it is gone.

CUT TO:

INT. INTERIOR MINISTRY BUILDING - DAY

Simon walks down the familiar CORRIDOR to the conference room at the end. He is flanked by Martinez and his men.

Martinez gives Simon's shoulders a friendly squeeze.

MARTINEZ

I'm excited for you, papi. The revolution today isn't won with guerrilla warfare. It is won with technology and information. And you can be its leader. Your face can be on the t-shirt.

Simon's phone vibrates. Incoming text:

PAUL > YOU GOT THIS! BRING HOME THE BACON BABY!

Martinez opens the conference room doors. Simon expects to see the same two aids as before. But now - the room is FILLED with high ranking military officials. Standing room only.

INT. INTERIOR MINISTRY CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Simon walks in, taken aback by the turn out. He realizes he isn't trying to close the deal - they are.

Those seated STAND as a sign of respect. The GENERAL who was absent from the first meeting steps forward and greets Simon with a firm HANDSHAKE.

Simon walks to the front of the room. Omar greets him.

OMAR

Good to see you again, Mr. Reeves.
Do you need help setting up your projector?

Simon reaches in his pocket and realizes he left his projection cube with Willy.

He looks a bit lost - off his game.

SIMON

I... I... can just run the presentation from my phone.

Omar hands him a cable. Simon connects it. The AMTEL logo appears on the screen.

Everyone takes their seat.

Simon notices a CART OF LIQUOR in the corner. He walks over to it and pours himself a very LARGE WHISKEY - slams it.

The room erupts with MURMURS.

Simon walks back to the front of the table. His head low.

SIMON (CONT'D)

You invited me to come and represent my company, AMTEL. We were asked to build and design a detailed proposal to bring a free, WiFi network to Cuba, so its people could connect with each other.

From his briefcase Simon takes out a PROPOSAL HARDCOPY bigger than a phone book and slams it down on the table.

SIMON (CONT'D)

And we did. We spent months of time and energy putting a plan together that includes engineering profiles for undersea cables, towers, repeaters, control hubs and service centers. And frankly, I need this account *desperately*. But... the reason I chose this job is to use technology to connect people. It's no secret that Cubans try to escape the island all the time. I actually met someone last night who can escape any time he wants, but he chooses to stay, because his home provides a place for his friends to connect. Captain Martinez - please come up here.

Martinez is a deer in the headlights. He points at himself.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Yes. Please.

The whole room STARES at Martinez. With a strained smile he gets up, straightens his jacket and joins Simon.

SIMON (CONT'D)

You assigned Captain Martinez as my escort to paint an *honest* picture of Cuba, correct?

Simon pauses and waits. The General nods yes.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Here are a some photos of Cuba you first sent us, when asking us to bring free Wifi to your people.

Simon TAPS on his cellphone. Images display on screen of happy Cubans in guayaberas dancing in the street, eating delicious food and relaxing in beachfront homes.

SIMON (CONT'D)

These look like people who have it all. What more could they possibly want... except free Wifi, right? I was able to escape the Captain's watchful eye and take my own pictures that weren't staged with models. Here's what I found...

Simon TAPS on his cellphone. Images appear showing abject poverty: weathered faces in the doorways of crumbling homes, a crowded hospital, empty shelves in grocery stores, etc...

SIMON (CONT'D)

No food, no clothes, no medicine, corrupt cops. It seems like giving your people free Internet is the last thing you should be trying to provide right now.

The room ERUPTS in protest.

The general and many of the attendees quickly EXIT the room.

The deal is dead.

Martinez grabs Simon's phone. Simon YANKS it back.

SIMON (CONT'D)

It's all lies. My escort told me he lived in a palace that you gave him...

Simon TAPS his cellphone. The video of Martinez in his dirty tank top arriving at his overcrowded, sad, tiny home plays.

SIMON (CONT'D)

You said you wanted AMTEL to help the people of your country by giving them a way to communicate - but, really you just want to use our technology for your... Revolución.

Martinez furiously UNPLUGS the television.

Simon and the Captain lock eyes.

INT. RUSSIAN LADA SUV - DAY

Simon and Martinez sit across from each other in the back of the SUV.

Simon stares blankly out the window while Martinez, sweating, is now completely consumed by rage.

The tension is immeasurable.

Martinez eventually calms himself enough to finally light his cigar.

MARTINEZ

You felt deceived, so you expressed that to the Cabinet. Carajo... but why burn me like that?

SIMON

You sent that hooker to the nightclub to honey trap me didn't you? Just doing your job I guess.

Martinez blows smoke in Simon's direction.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Where are you really taking me?

MARTINEZ

You have caused me so much trouble.

SIMON

The guy with all the fancy military stickers on his jacket ordered you to escort me to get my things at the hotel.

MARTINEZ

I was raised living and breathing the revolution. When I pray at night, I hope that God AND Fidel hear me.

SIMON

Then take me right to the airport.

MARTINEZ

I pray that our enemy, the United States, will not destroy our country. And then, I am assigned to baby-sit you.

SIMON

Or was that all code to make me
"disappear?"

MARTINEZ

We're Cuba. Not North Korea.

SIMON

What's the difference?

The convoy STOPS in front of Simon's hotel.

MARTINEZ

You have five minutes to get your
things then we put you on a plane.
One minute longer and you *will*
disappear. My men will escort you,
Cucaracha.

SIMON

Nobody wanted this. I liked the
other version of you better. The
bullshit version.

Martinez BLOWS a mouth full of cigar right in Simon's face.

INT. HOTEL NACIONAL HALLWAY - DAY

Simon walks up to his hotel room door flanked by two of
Martinez's soldiers.

As he enters his room the soldiers try to enter, as well.
Simons STOPS them.

SIMON

The captain told you to escort me,
not wipe my ass after I take a
shit. Wait here and if I'm not out
in five minutes, you can kick the
door down and drag me out. Actually
here...

Simon hands one of the soldiers his ROOM KEY and slams the
door on them.

CUT TO:

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - DAY

Mrs. Suarez teaches a lesson at the CHALKBOARD about Fidel
Castro being superior to all other world leaders.

Lorena's focus is elsewhere. She sketches a dancer wearing the iconic uniform of the Ballet Nacional de Cuba on her worksheet.

Lorena looks to Tati's desk - she is ABSENT.

Another teacher rushes in the room - her purse over her shoulder. She whispers to Mrs. Suarez and rushes out.

MRS. SUAREZ
 (to the class)
*Mrs. Rodriguez has a family
 emergency and has to leave. I need
 someone to take over her class.*

A bunch of students raise their hands.

MRS. SUAREZ (CONT'D)
*Lore, you're not paying attention
 anyway. So you go.*

LORENA
 No, please. I can't stay late
 today. I have dance.

MRS. SUAREZ
Let's go.

Lorena's eyes widen. She quickly checks her bag.

LORENA
My music...

Mrs. Suarez guides Lorena out.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL NACIONAL - DAY

The two soldiers posted outside of Simon's hotel room are staring at their WATCHES. Simultaneously, they look at one another - his five minutes are up.

The soldier with the room key BANGS hard on Simon's door.

No answer.

He SWIPES the key and SHOVES the door open.

The window is open --- Simon is GONE.

The soldiers BOLT down the hallway and RADIO to Martinez.

INT. GYPSY CAB - DAY

Simon sits in the back of a gypsy cab that speeds down the highway.

SIMON
How far is Matanzas?

DRIVER
About 100 kilometers.

Simon shows the driver the PHOTO of Lorena on his phone.

SIMON
You wouldn't happen to also be her
cousin would you?

The driver looks at the photo and chuckles.

DRIVER
No, señor.

EXT. MATANZAS TOWN SQUARE - DAY

Simon's cab pulls up to a WiFi park in the TOWN SQUARE and he hops out.

He approaches the locals and shows them the PHOTO of Lorena on his phone. They shake their head 'NO.'

Finally, one person nods yes and points up the broken road.

EXT. MATANZAS STREET - DAY

Simon continues up the street showing Lorena's photo to anyone he can. He follows the directions of those that recognize her.

CUT TO:

EXT. LORENA'S HOUSE - DAY

Lorena rushes out of her house in a frenzy, mid-argument with her mother. She has CASSETTE TAPES and a wad of DANCE CLOTHES in her hands and struggles to stuff them in a bag.

Her mother yells after her from the porch.

MARTA

You have wasted years dancing. This is the last time you're going to that school!

LORENA

I'm not your prisoner!

Her father joins her mother on the porch.

MARTA

I don't want you moping around the house all weekend after you embarrass yourself.

LORENA

After today, I will be travelling around the world dancing. So, you won't have to see my face anymore!

MARTA

You can't leave. You're still just a little girl!

CARLOS

(to his wife)

Enough! Let her be!

Lorena SPINS away from her parents to rush to her audition and SLAMS into Simon. Her cassette tapes and clothes fall on the ground.

LORENA

Simon!?

SIMON

Hi.

Lorena picks up her things from the sidewalk.

LORENA

You can't be here.

SIMON

I *am* here.

MARTA

Who is that!?

Lorena's father notices MANOLO, their nosy neighbor, outside listening. He cautiously warns his wife with a SQUEEZE.

LORENA
(yelling to her Mother)
My dance teacher!

Lorena grabs Simon's hand and RUNS with him down the street.

EXT. MATANZAS STREET - DAY

Lorena and Simon RUN down the street to her DANCE SCHOOL.

LORENA
What are you doing here?

SIMON
I... think I'm heading home early.

LORENA
That doesn't answer my question.

Simon squirms to respond -

LORENA (CONT'D)
How did your presentation go today?

SIMON
Well... it went.

LORENA
Is that good or bad?

SIMON
It didn't go the way anyone
expected it would.

LORENA
Wow. You are amazing at not
answering questions.

SIMON
Sorry. Bad Habit. Try again.

LORENA
Ok. What do you do when you're not
working?

SIMON
I work.

LORENA
I mean when you're not working.

SIMON
I watch old movies and I work. I
work all the time.

LORENA
That's sad.

SIMON
I know.

EXT. DANCE STUDIO - DAY

Simon and Lorena stop in front of her DANCE SCHOOL. Out of
breath and sweating.

LORENA
So, what are you going to do now?

SIMON
Good question. I will probably head
straight to the airport. Try to
catch an early flight back. Update
my resume... find a new job.

LORENA
I did ask for your life story.

SIMON
Oh! Sorry, uh...

LORENA
I'm playing. I didn't think I would
see you again.

Simon searches for the right thing to say -

LORENA (CONT'D)
Do you want to watch?

SIMON
Can I? Is that ok?

LORENA
Sure. You are my guest.

SIMON
Do you feel ready?

LORENA
I did yesterday, but I lost my
stupid music. I think I can make it
work with another song.

Simon pulls out Lorena's WALKMAN. Her eyes widen. He hands it to her. She pops out the CASSETTE with a sigh of relief.

SIMON

One of the reasons I came.

Lorena smiles. She takes Simon's hand and rushes into the school.

EXT. DANCE STUDIO ROOFTOP - DAY

One of the rehearsal spaces the school uses is the ROOFTOP.

The roof deck is crumbling apart with a RUSTIC CHARM. It offers a beautiful view of the city at SUNSET.

The entire school has gathered for the recital - teachers and students.

In the front is the DIRECTOR of the Ballet Nacional de Cuba. A classy lady wearing their traditional BLACK AND GOLD dress.

Only official dancers in her company are allowed to wear the iconic uniform.

Simon sits in the back.

Lorena stands center stage. Her head lowered.

Lorena's teacher inserts her CASSETTE TAPE into the old PA system and hits PLAY. Classical music starts.

Lorena slowly raises her head and arms. Her dance begins. Graceful, elegant and flowing with the symphonic music. She shows incredible technical ability. Masterful in her craft.

Then the music CHANGES. The classical music is RE-MIXED with American ROCK-AND-ROLL. Lorena's style evolves - weaving unexpected rock moves into the traditional ballet - it's awesome.

Her teacher nervously glances at the director.

The director's stoic expression betrays nothing.

A few other dancers rush in to see Lorena's performance. One of them accidentally knocks over the PA.

CRASH ---

The old PA system falls forward and plastic knobs spray outward. A quick whine of feedback then --- SILENCE.

The music is dead.

All GASP. Her teacher rushes over to try and fix the PA.

Lorena is frozen in a pose on the floor. She slowly looks up and realizes what has happened. All eyes are on her.

The Director stiffens in her seat.

Breathing heavy, Lorena can feel her heart pounding out of her chest. But from the back of the room she hears the sound of a RHYTHMIC TAPPING.

The audience looks back. It's Simon. He is playing the CUBAN RUMBA with his hands on the bottom of a BUCKET while STOMPING the clave part with his foot.

It is MUSIC.

Gradually, her fellow dancers pick up on the clave sound and STOMP to the same rhythm. Their ballet toe shoes on the wood floor make a rich, percussive sound.

This gives Lorena something to move to. She RISES. Eyes closed. The sound puppeteers her.

Her dance takes on a new quality. Tribal in style but with balletic grace.

The dance ultimately builds to an exciting end. The rooftop erupts with APPLAUSE.

Tears of joy and accomplishment fill Lorena's eyes.

She finds Simon in the back of the crowd and smiles.

EXT. MATANZAS BASEBALL FIELD OVERLOOK - DAY

Lorena leads Simon to a HILLTOP overlooking a small BASEBALL FIELD. A well-known spot where friends and couples hang out.

Lorena is still GLOWING from her performance. Simon carries her bag.

LORENA

Did you really like it?

Simon struggles to find words.

SIMON

It was incredible. You are incredible. So much talent.

Lorena SITS and PULLS Simon down.

LORENA
I hope it was good enough.

SIMON
I'm sure it was.

LORENA
Thank you for what you did. That's
my one chance out of here.

SIMON
You're amazing. You'll make it.

She looks at Simon carefully.

LORENA
My brother would have liked you.

Their fingers INTERTWINE. Just as Simon starts to lean in -
CHEERS erupt from the baseball game below. It kills their
"moment".

Lorena smiles. She stands and pulls Simon up with her.

LORENA (CONT'D)
Who knows - if you would have been
born here maybe you would be one of
those players trying to use
baseball to escape.

SIMON
Funny... Dr. Garcia told me
something similar last night.

LORENA
He's one of the honest doctors who
doesn't take bribes.

SIMON
I also came to tell you that you
were wrong about me.

LORENA
What are you talking about?

SIMON
I chose what was right - over what
I wanted.

LORENA

Oh, you mean what I told you last night? I was totally kidding.

Simon stares daggers at Lorena. She can't keep a straight face and bursts into laughter.

LORENA (CONT'D)

I'm joking. In this case - I'm glad I was wrong. I have no idea what you're talking about, but it's always best to follow your heart.

Lorena takes off her brother's necklace and give it to Simon.

LORENA (CONT'D)

This was my brother's. And if I get to wear the black and gold and make it out of here, I'll call you. And then you give this back to me. Deal?

Simon gently takes the necklase. He NODS. His eyes well with TEARS - he knows the odds.

Sadness grips him. Lorena doesn't understand.

LORENA (CONT'D)

...what's wrong?

Simon STEPS AWAY to collect himself.

Tati rushes up and JUMPS on Lorena's back giving her a big, excited HUG. Lorena doesn't react or turn to face her.

TATI

(Spanish titles in English)
Girl... don't be mad at me. You can't stay mad at me.

Lorena doesn't respond.

TATI (CONT'D)

Come on - if you're not talking to me, our walks to school are going to be very, very quiet.

Lorena smiles and finally TURNS AROUND.

She see's that Tati's face is BEATEN BADLY.

LORENA

Oh my God! What happened?!

TATI

It's nothing. Are we OK?

LORENA

Nothing!?! What happened? Who did this to you?!

TATI

Seriously. It's nothing. I don't want to talk about it. Are you and I OK?

LORENA

I'm sorry, girl. I think I just needed a minute to let everything sink in. What you do is none of my business.

TATI

It's fine. I didn't talk about it with you, because I didn't want you to think less of me. You're the best person I know.

LORENA

And you're the craziest person I know. That's why I love you.

TATI

So how did you do!?!

LORENA

It felt good. But I don't know.

TATI

What did your teacher say? And the director?

LORENA

My teacher said it was the best she's ever seen me dance...

Tati claps for her.

LORENA (CONT'D)

The director left right away. She always does. I will know in a few days.

TATI

Don't worry. We'll get you out of here.

Tati gives Lorena another giant HUG - excited for her friend.

Simon walks over. Tati instantly recognizes him.

TATI (CONT'D)
What's that son of a bitch doing here?!

LORENA
Tati!

TATI
You wanted to know who did this to my face...? He did!

LORENA
What are you talking about?

Tati stares daggers at Simon long enough for tears to well in her eyes. But not long enough for them to fall. She leaves.

SIMON
 What was that all about?

LORENA
I don't know.

EXT. MATANZAS STREET - DUSK

Simon walks Lorena home - he carries her things.

SIMON
 So Tati is trying to get you out of Cuba?

LORENA
 You get to leave. I have to escape. Two very different words.

Lorena stops walking.

LORENA (CONT'D)
 You have ten flights a day you can take home. They won't even let me walk on the beach here. Do you think they would let me get on a plane to Miami?

SIMON
 I know some lawyers. I'll help find a way to get you to the U.S.

Lorena keeps walking.

LORENA

Showing you Cuba reminded me of things I like about it.

SIMON

You know about its history, its culture. If I didn't know better, I would say you are proud of it.

LORENA

Of its people, yes.

Lorena stops walking again and takes her bag from Simon. They are at the street corner that leads to Lorena's house.

LORENA (CONT'D)

You can't come to my house.

SIMON

Why not? I'd love to meet your parents.

LORENA

Estas loco!? No... My mother already hates me. If I brought you home, she would kill me.

SIMON

She doesn't hate you...

LORENA

After I quit the job she got for me, she's always mad at me.

SIMON

Why did you quit?

LORENA

It was a job at a fancy hotel and they would strip search us on the bus home.

SIMON

Search you... why?

LORENA

Some people would take food, toilet paper, stuff - home... I got tired of it, so, I quit.

Simon shakes his head in disbelief.

Lorena holds his hand.

LORENA (CONT'D)
I am so glad I met you...

Simon smiles. He studies her carefully.

SIMON
I will see you again, soon.

LORENA
I hope so. Thanks again for the
music at my audition. You saved me.

They EMBRACE. Long and meaningful. Two lives deeply changed
by their meeting.

One final, tender kiss.

Lorena slowly steps away with a sad smile.

Simon TURNS before he loses it again.

As Lorena rounds the corner to her house - she SCREAMS:

LORENA (CONT'D)
Simon!

Simon RUSHES around the corner.

EXT. LORENA'S HOUSE

The MILITARY POLICE have surrounded Lorena's house. Lorena's
mother and father are HANDCUFFED and protesting, as they are
shoved into the back of a transport.

Her young cousins cry as soldiers drag them out of the house.

MANOLO, the nosy neighbor, shakes hands with Martinez and is
given an extra box of RATIONS.

The moment Martinez spots Simon, he POINTS and several guards
rush towards him - rifles drawn.

Simon and Lorena raise their hands.

Martinez saunters over. A dark grin.

MARTINEZ
And now... you *will* disappear. And
this family will be punished.

SIMON
Punished for what!?

MARTINEZ

For conspiring with an enemy of the state.

Soldiers CUFF Simon and Lorena.

SIMON

An enemy of the state!? Because I won't commit treason and move here to work for you!?

MARTINEZ

We discovered you to be an American spy. You fled our protection twice. And we find you hiding in a remote province conspiring with known separatists. Your embassy won't want to be a part of this mess you have created.

SIMON

Me a spy? These people separatists - that's bullshit! This is just a normal family.

A soldier GRABS a fist full of Lorena's hair and SHOVES her into the back of a transport.

LORENA

(Spanish titled in English.)
No please! What did we do?

SIMON

Where are you taking them?

MARTINEZ

They will be charged with treason.

SIMON

Treason? For what?

MARTINEZ

For knowing you. We need to find out what classified intelligence you have shared with them. Especially, the girl.

SIMON

You're doing this to punish me.

MARTINEZ

I'm simply following orders. As you say - I'm just a company man.

SIMON
Martinez, please.

MARTINEZ
We will hold them in prison until
their trial. And their trial could
take years to arrange.

Off Martinez's NOD, the soldier who cuffed Simon GRABS him by
the back of his neck and leads him to another transport.

Simon is led past the truck where Lorena was taken. She
cowers in the corner BAWLING her eyes out.

The other truck holds her confused, WEEPING PARENTS and her
scared, YOUNG COUSINS.

Simon reaches his transport. He keeps looking back at Lorena
who is confused and frightened.

MARTINEZ (CONT'D)
You have been so desperate to see
the "real Cuba" - well, this is it.
Have you heard of Combinado del
Este? Or Villa Marista?

Simon shakes his head - no.

MARTINEZ (CONT'D)
How about Guantanamo Bay? These are
our prisons. And we can prosecute
for anything. Especially, crimes
against the state. I am going to
submit a fat list of charges
against you, mi amigo.

SIMON
How is this going to look to the
rest of the world? Cuba INVITED me
here to do business and then you
ARRESTED me. Who else will do
business with a country that treats
its partners like this?

MARTINEZ
We control all the information in
and out, mi socio. That's not the
story the world will know. You were
a vendor we reached out to for help
to build up our communication
systems, but you were secretly
working with the U.S. Government to
infiltrate our country and
assassinate our way of life.

(MORE)

MARTINEZ (CONT'D)

The headline will read "Spy!" And, everyone loves a good spy story.

SIMON

Ok. Stop. You've made your point. What do you really want from me? My company's Intelligence technology that we can not sell you? Embargo.

Martinez sits in the back of the prisoner transport next to Simon. He looks around at the interior, curiously. His cocky grin fades.

MARTINEZ

Flacito, you are the first person who has made me fail at my job.

SIMON

That's probably the most honest thing you've told me since we met.

MARTINEZ

I would love to cut you open to see what makes you so different...

SIMON

Believe it or not, I don't think you and I are that different.

MARTINEZ

Now who's lying.

SIMON

Despite how this turned out, you're not the bad guy in this story. You are doing what you believe is right. And I'm doing the same thing. Hell, when I first got here I was excited to see socialism in action.

MARTINEZ

We take care of our people!

SIMON

I know you believe that. That thinking was in your father's blood. And it was passed on to you. I get it. But the world has moved on, Captain. There is no more revolution. It's over.

MARTINEZ

If you dared to speak like that on the street, you would be thrown in jail.

SIMON

And how is that ok!?

MARTINEZ

Because that is our law! That is our way.

SIMON

Your cars aren't the only thing trapped in time...

MARTINEZ

You sound like my son.

SIMON

I saw him at your house. How old is he?

MARTINEZ

He will be 18 next month.

SIMON

And is he going to be a third generation government official?

MARTINEZ

I'm not talking to you about my familia...

SIMON

I bet he's not. All of the younger generation here, know there's more to life than this. They want opportunity. A future. They are brilliant and resourceful and hard working. They want the freedom to choose their own path in life. Am I describing your boy?

Martinez looks outside.

SIMON (CONT'D)

So, if not the military, what does he want to do?

A long beat.

MARTINEZ

He loves computers. Something with that.

SIMON

Well... as you know, that's kind of my thing.

MARTINEZ

What are you saying?

Simon considers his next words carefully.

SIMON

In any country, a father would do anything for his child, right? You fed him when he was hungry. Picked him up when he fell. Hugged him when he cried... I'm sure that a person in your position can get a travel Visa approved pretty easily. Am I right?

Martinez shrugs. Starts working on a new cigar.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Get him to California and I'll take care of him. I'll sponsor him. I have friends who run big video game companies and I can get them to hire an entry-level Spanish speaking coder with just a phone call. I give you my word.

Martinez grins.

MARTINEZ

Primo, when we interrogate prisoners, you can tell the moment they break because they start saying anything they think will save their ass. We've had some real tough guys that lasted months before breaking. I respect some of the pendejos that lasted through days of the terrible shit we did to them. But you... wow. You were in my truck less than 5 minutes and cracked like an egg. Telling me all kinds of porqueria to get free.

SIMON

I'm not lying, Captain. I'm not scared of you.

(MORE)

SIMON (CONT'D)

We do business with U.S. Intelligence so I'm considered an asset. That means if you lock me up I'll be free in a couple days - back home. You'll still be trapped here dealing with your - revolution. But this is a real offer. Let this family go - and I give you my word I will help your son.

Martinez's smile fades. Anger boils within. Simon's offer challenges everything he stands for. But he knows that if it is real, it would be a gift no other Cuban father could offer their son.

Martinez leaps out of the car and SLAMS the door shut. One of his men approaches, but Martinez SHOVES him back. He needs space. He paces in thought.

Simon cranes his neck outside and locks eyes with Lorena in the other truck. A desperate look on her face. All Simon can offer is a weak smile. She returns the gesture.

Martinez leans on his truck near Simon's window. He undoes a couple buttons and feels the setting sun on his face.

MARTINEZ

If you don't do this thing you promise - I will hurt this family. Badly.

SIMON

I didn't make that offer just to save them, I would be thrilled to help a kid follow his dream. He can always come back, right? At least, he'll have a choice.

Martinez MOTIONS to the soldier who put Simon in the truck. The soldier REMOVES his handcuffs.

MARTINEZ

You know I will do what I say...

SIMON

I do. And you know I care about this family. One last question -

Martinez locks eyes with Simon.

SIMON (CONT'D)

(discretely)

How much of this do you actually believe? The revolution. The lack of freedom. How much of the Kool-Aid have you had?

MARTINEZ

When I was younger I drank a bathtub of it a day. But... I don't know anymore. Every morning I put the uniform on, run my hustles and give my family a life better than most. So I just keep doing it. There's no one to complain to.

Martinez takes his time drawing on his cigar. In that moment he transforms back into the charming and cocky man who picked up Simon from the airport.

MARTINEZ (CONT'D)

Cuba welcomed you. But your country - she will never love you.

SIMON

And yet I can't bring myself to desert her.

Martinez walks away. He NODS to the soldiers guarding the other prisoners -

Lorena and her family are RELEASED. They hop out of the trucks and EMBRACE each other.

Lorena turns to find Simon. She sees his truck pulling away.

Simon leans his head OUT THE WINDOW -

SIMON (CONT'D)

"Here's looking at you, kid."

LORENA

(whispering to herself)

Humphrey Bogart. Casablanca.

Lorena watches Simon drive away until he is out of sight.

INT. AIRPLANE - DUSK

Simon gazes out his window at the passing clouds.

He looks FILTHY and EXHAUSTED. Very different from the polished businessman we first met.

The red line on the ANIMATED MAP shows his airplane approaching California.

Simon looks at the person sitting next to him - it is Captain Martinez's son.

This is the young man's first time inside an airplane. He looks around in wonder. He feels Simon's gaze and faces him.

The young man and his new sponsor exchange a friendly smile.

Simon finds the one PHOTO he took of Lorena the night they met. In that moment he wishes he could be with her again.

Simon POKETS his phone. He stares at Cuba on the ANIMATED MAP - taking special note of just how CLOSE it is to the U.S.

EXT. LORENA'S HOUSE - DAY

A silhouette dances in front of the sun -

Lorena is in her back yard lost in her happy place. She is listening to music on her Walkman, marking through DANCE MOVES.

She lazily twirls through different dance positions. SUN BEAMS streak through the DIRT she kicks up.

Her pink, satin ballet slippers are filthy. The camera tilts up and REVEALS she is wearing the traditional BLACK AND GOLD DANCER UNIFORM of the Ballet Nacional de Cuba -

SHE MADE IT INTO THE DANCE COMPANY

A NEIGHBOR runs over frantically CALLING HER NAME.

Startled - she yanks out her earbuds.

LORENA

What's wrong, Flaco!?

NEIGHBOR

It's your brother...

LORENA

Oh, my God.

NEIGHBOR

He's on the phone - for you!

LORENA

Luis!? On the phone - now!?

NEIGHBOR

Yes.

Lorena SPRINTS up the street to her neighbor's house.

EXT. LORENA'S NEIGHBORS HOUSE - DAY

The OLD PHONE has a cord long enough to reach outside, so all the neighbors can use it. Lorena grabs the receiver.

LORENA

Luis!?

Static - a bad connection.

LORENA (CONT'D)

Luis...?

LUIS

I made it, Little Flea.

Lorena gasps.

END.