

BORDERLINE

By

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CHARACTERS:

MYKAL - 30's, modestly dressed.

MIGUEL - Early to mid 20's. A Mexican American, dressed in modest but clean clothes.

SETTING: A darkened street, early morning. A late model car is parked under a streetlamp.

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*PLAY OPENS to MYKAL - standing near a streetlamp. He shuffles back and forth to stay warm. The car radio is heard in the distance playing a classic rock tune. He prims in car's side mirror. He touches his chest. He notices MIGUEL who approaches the vehicle cautiously.*

MYKAL: (Psyching himself up) Here we go. Open for business. (To Miguel) Hey, man. You need something? What you need? (Embarrassed, MIGUEL motions as if he needs a ride.) You like the car, huh? Yeah, she's a beaut. Look, it's kinda cold and uh, you never know who's watchin'. Can I do something for you?

MIGUEL: Tiene un trabajo?

Comment [D1]: You have a job?

MYKAL: Uh. I don't speak Spanish. Can you show me what you need? You NEED?

MIGUEL: Mi inglés puede no ser bueno. Pero soy trabajador muy duro.

Comment [D2]: My English may not be good. But I am a very hard worker.

MYKAL: You like classic rock? (indicates in the car)  
Classic Rock. Three Dog Night? Freebird?

MIGUEL: Si. Freebird! Si. Si.

MYKAL: Wanna listen? Huh? Off the street. Do business someplace less conspicuous?

MIGUEL: Así pues, usted me da un trabajo? Núcesito empleo.

Comment [D3]: So you will give me work? I need work.

MYKAL: The car's open. Geez. It's been such a long time since I had Ms. Aguilar for Spanish in the ninth grade. Let's see. Unos. Dos. Tres. Quatro. Cinco... Wait. Sesame

Street! Abierto! You know. (*mimicking a funny voice*)  
Abierto! Cerrado! Abierto! Cerrado! The passenger's side.  
El Automobile door. It's open. Abierto. Abierto.

(*MYKAL motions to MIGUEL to get in the vehicle. Both men settle in. A beat.*)

MIGUEL: Soy Miguel.

MYKAL: Miguel. (*laughs*) Hey! No kidding. Me namo, uh, nombre, Mykal. (*points to him*) Miguel. (*points to himself*) Michael. Michael? Michael.

MIGUEL: Ah, Si. Miguel, Mykal. Usted necesita un hombre para? Yo soy el hombre para ayudarle. |

Comment [D4]: You need a man? To help you? I am the man to help you.

MYKAL: I don't understand. No comprende. NO COMPRENDE.

MIGUEL: Ay! Usted no tiene que gritar. Mi oídos está muy bien. |

Comment [D5]: You don't have to yell. My hearing is fine.

MYKAL: That's ok. I'm cool. So what do you want?

MIGUEL: Un trabajo? |

Comment [D6]: A job?

MYKAL: (*repeating*) Un trabajo. Wait, I know that - Trabajo. Trabajo...

MIGUEL: (*overlapping*) Si. Trabajo. Trabajare para Usted. Um... A job.

MYKAL: A job. Oh. A...blow-?

MIGUEL: (*interrupting him, showing MYKAL his hands*) Trabajo con mis manos. Soy buen trabajador |

Comment [D7]: I work well with my hands. I can do a good job for you.

MYKAL: Your hands? Okay. Yeah. Yeah - I hear you- you want to use your hands.

MIGUEL: Si. A job.

MYKAL: Si. I got you, hombre. Sure, we can do that. Then I guess we do speak the same language, then.

MIGUEL: Si. Tu Comprendes!

MYKAL: You know, that's what I thought you were up to. A man doesn't come out here unless he's looking for some kind of action. I've got stuff too if you wanna get high. But this, this is ok, too. I'm an equal opportunity... person. Just so I get the whole picture. Do you like to give? You wanna watch, maybe?

MIGUEL: You give me job?

MYKAL: Yeah. Ok. (*nervous*) I give you a job. Use my hands?

MIGUEL: Mi esposa-que ella necesita - necesitamos los pañales para mi bebé... [

Comment [D8]: ...she needs. We need some diapers for the baby.

MYKAL: (*thinking he understands a word*) Bebe? Baby? Well, sure, but no need to sweet talk me, hombre. How about we take care of the business part. You know? Dinero?

MIGUEL: Cuánto? [

Comment [D9]: How much?

MYKAL: You want to do it here? I mean, if you have money for a hotel, we could do a lot more-

MIGUEL: Diez? Quisiera diez dólares. La hora, por lo menos. [

Comment [D10]: Ten. I would want ten. Per hour, at the least.

MYKAL: Ten? Ten dollars, huh? Going rate is usually twenty-five. But for you -

MIGUEL: Que? (*thinks*) Five...cinco? Vien-

MYKAL: You know, Vien-thay-sinko?

MIGUEL: Si. Si. Si. (*He shakes his hand, excited.*)

MYKAL: Wow. I never shook on it before. Ok. Ok, take it easy, we've got the car shaking.

MIGUEL: (*excited/overlapping*) Esto significa mucho.

Construyo las casas de donde vengo. [

Comment [D11]: This means a lot. I build houses back home.

Y si usted puede pagarme en efectivo... you como que major. [

Comment [D12]: And if I can get cash, that would be better.

(PAUSE. Each waits for something to happen.)

MYKAL: Ok. Well, meter's running.

MIGUEL: ¿Vamos? [

Comment [D13]: Are we going?

MYKAL: Let's go.

MIGUEL: Si. Go.

MYKAL: Is this your first time?

MIGUEL: Que?

MYKAL: You married?

MIGUEL: Marr-

MYKAL: You have a wife? Wifey?

MIGUEL: Wife? Si. Si. Ya Dije ya. Con un bebé.

Comment [D14]: I already said, with a baby.

MYKAL: Oh... (*finally making sense*) Baby. Bebe.

MIGUEL: Si! Si! ella está embarazada. Neuve  
meses (*indicating swollen belly*) Ya tenemos un nombre para  
él - Miguel.

Comment [D15]: She is pregnant. Nine months.

Comment [D16]: We already have a name for  
him - Miguel.

MYKAL: (*seductively*) What is it, then - she doesn't give you  
what you like?

(A touch. MIGUEL backs away)

MYKAL: Nine months. Belly grande, huh?

MIGUEL: (*cautious*) Si. Grande.

MYKAL: I thought pregnant women could at least give blow  
jobs in their ninth month. Must be a catholic thing.

MIGUEL: Que?

MYKAL: Catholic. You get to confess it later? Jesu Christo?

MIGUEL: Si. Porqué. Jesus Christo? El tenderá un bautismo.

Comment [D17]: Yes, what of it? Jesus Christ?

Comment [D18]: We will baptize him.

MYKAL: Of course, I will be different than your wife. You  
know what they say, once you go with-

MIGUEL: (*cutting him off*) Go? Si. We go.

MYKAL: Ok, then. The money?

MIGUEL: No entiendo.

Comment [D19]: I don't understand.

MYKAL: Quit dancing around it and let's see it. Hey, is that your wallet?

MIGUEL: Wallet? No. No sé...

Comment [D20]: No, I don't know.

(MYKAL points to MIGUEL's pocket.)

MIGUEL: Que estas haciendo?

Comment [D21]: What are you doing?

MYKAL: No money, no honey. Comprende? Where's your wallet? Are you sitting on it? Is it in your back pocket?

(MYKAL goes for MIGUEL's pants. Upset, Miguel exits the car.)

MYKAL: (to himself) Why do I always get the freaks.  
(Yelling out the window) Look, man. If you don't want to do anything. Why don't you move along. You're killing my action.

MIGUEL: No job?

MYKAL: What the hell do YOU think?

MIGUEL: No job.

(PAUSE. MIGUEL is stalling)

MYKAL: Come on, man, in or out - make up your mind.

(MIGUEL reluctantly gets back in the car.)

MIGUEL: (doing the best he can with his English) I.... need.... job. I...no...here...am from. I am not from here. Conseguiré un trabajo y después me haré ciudadano (more insistent) I...need... job! Please. What you need? Mi familia. My.... Em... my wife here. In Los Angeles. She... Ella tendrá un bebe. Ella al bebe en tres dias. I want... job... for dinero. To... em... provide. Provide?

Comment [D22]: I will get a job and then become a citizen

Comment [D23]: She will be having a baby. She is due in three days.

MYKAL: Provide? Si. Provide. A job. But you shouldn't - I mean, I wish I could help you, but I- Alright, alright,

alright. (*Mustering up his best Spanish and doing charades for what he doesn't know*) Let's say... Tu Senora. Tu Esposa. Esposa? would be very upset if she found you here. You made a mistake. I am not really gay. What's the word for 'gay'? How do I do "gay"? Homo-sexual?

MIGUEL: (*Thinking he understands "homo-sexual"*) No. (*suddenly angry*) NO! Soy masculine. Mi es macho. No puto! No puedes hacer esto! Eres mi patron! Quiero ayudarle! Quiero construir casas! Casas! HOME. No "homo"!

MYKAL: (*getting nervous*) So move along, then.

MIGUEL: No soy un residente de Los Angeles. No soy Americano. Oid dela amnistia cuando apennas era un muchacho en Mexico.

MYKAL: Just open the door and go If you... (*lowering his voice*) if you don't want trouble (*louder*) if you don't want anything.

MIGUEL: I want... I want... a job. Por favor? My... Papa work hard. But he no have e-enough money. Yo paque todo mi dinero. I give all my dinero. No tengo sufficient para mi esposa y mi hijo.

(*MYKAL reaches under his shirt. He pulls out a recording device.*)

MYKAL: Ok. Ok. Ok. (*whispering as he tries to dismantle the device*) You need to... comprende. Comprende? How can I make you understand.. (*HE smashes the device*) Now let's see if you comprende: I'm not your employer, I'm not a drug dealer, I'm sure as hell not a homo.

| MIGUEL: I work for you! Please.

MYKAL: (*simultaneously*) No! You don't get it, man!

MIGUEL: (*simultaneously*) No entiendes!

MYKAL: Don't freak out. They're watching us. Look - I'm sure you'll get a job if you just play it cool. I see you guys in front of the Home Depot all of the time. Just... don't say another word. And go... slowly.

Comment [D24]: You can't do this. You are my employer. I just want to help you. I want to build houses. Houses.

Comment [D25]: I am not a resident of Los Angeles. I am not an American. I heard about amnesty when I was a boy in Mexico.

*(MYKAL reaches past MIGUEL to open the car door for him from the inside. MIGUEL tenses up, gets defensive.)*

MYKAL: See? I'm not going to hurt you. Just go - be careful. They're watching. The police. You know policia?

MIGUEL: *(nervous)* Police?

MYKAL: Just get out of the car, slowly. Pretend nothing happened. GO!

*(MIGUEL looks at MYKAL for a long time, then looks at the door. He exits, cautiously.)*

MYKAL: There you go. Like nothing happened. *(Picking up the recording device and trying to speak into it)* Party has exited the vehicle, but he's clean, suspect is cleared- Hey. You copy? The piece got disconnected. No money was exchanged, let him go. Let him go, you guys copy? Fuck! *(yelling out the window trying to get the door open)* I SAID, LET HIM GO! You copy? He didn't do anything wrong.

*(MYKAL is defeated as he sees the following unfold. POLICE LIGHTS, sounds of "P.D. GET ON THE GROUND!" "I SAID GET ON THE GROUND!" "HANDS ON YOUR HEAD. DO YOU HAVE ANY WEAPONS!?" MYKAL turns up the music, drowning out the noise.)*

END OF PLAY