

OLD SAN JUAN DETECTIVE AGENCY
UNSOLVED MURDERS MYSTERIES SERIES

PRESENTS

#thecondadolife

Tropical murder mystery

CHARACTERS

Álvaro Sifuentes	Protagonist. Private Detective. Middle aged. Mysterious air, introverted, attractive, agile. We will meet him at a time of personal crisis.
Yolandita Ruíz Ruíz de Parker	Absent character. The murder victim. <i>Socialité</i> from the Condado Ward, San Juan, Puerto Rico.
Honorable Charles Parker	Absent character. The victim's husband. Deceased. Well known judge.
Elba De Jesús	Absent character. AKA "The Maid". Of Dominican nationality. Accused for the murder and acquitted by a jury.
Lucy Parker	The heir. <i>Socialité</i> from Condado. Wealthy, elegant, beautiful, of some age. She is, of late, in a spiritual journey and will act "zen" and speak softly. Has lived a submitted life, first under her father, and now her husband.
Michael Forsanier	Lucy's husband. Publicist. Arrogant. Confident. Imposing. Cold hearted, conniving, social climber.
Peter Ruíz alias "Peter Flow"	Victim's only son. Complex personality. Urban music artist. Currently famous. Has speech mannerisms. Antisocial tendencies.
Delia De Jesús	The Maid's granddaughter. Dominican nationality. Young, intelligent, beautiful, poor.
Lieutenant González	Police Lieutenant (Álvaro's friend). Older man. Pragmatic. Bureaucrat.
Agent Joseph Rodríguez (Joseph)	Police agent. <i>Rookie</i> . Honest young man. Charming. Typical "Gen Z": very tech savvy but awkward in his social interactions.
The Professor	Secondary character. Neighbor and acquaintance. University professor.
Mr. César	Secondary character. Elena's husband. Coffee shop owner. Easy conversationist.
Ms. Helen	Secondary character. Álvaro's friend. Attorney.
Tony	Secondary character. Real estate agent.
Ex-Secretary Melissa	Secondary character. Ex-secretary. Young. Unpleasant.
Guard Pérez	Secondary character. Condo's guard.

FIRST ACT

FIRST SCENE

We are at a small office space. It is located in a historic building (tall ceilings and large tall pane windows), and in repair (maybe some paint, plastic and scaffolding). The space is luminous and hot. A typical detective office door (wood and glass) is seen at the back with the “Old San Juan Detective Agency” logo. The space is subdivided by a curtain. Behind the curtain a minimum reception area without decoration (a small desk, some untidy pile of files, a small cabinet, phone, and some chairs). Then towards the proscenium, after the curtain, we find a make shift bed, fan, desk, and chair. We also see some evidence of someone living/staying the night (a pot over a portable stove, utensils, cans, clothes). The sun came out some time ago. Street sounds. Protagonist is semi clothed lying on the bed, sleeping.

A low budget social media ad is projected over the stage. The “Old San Juan Detective Agency”, and slogan “El “Macaracachimba” with some type of tropical musical score: “¿Do you have a mystery to solve? Don’t look further. Here for your problem. “El “Macaracachimba”. “The Big chief”. Expert Detective. Call Now”. We see the “Play Again” button. It plays again.

MELISSA enters the office (she has keys). She notices the Detective is there goes back out and loudly knocks at the door. He initially ignores her. She insists.

MELISSA: ¡Mr. Sifuentes! Please open the door. I know you are in there. Mr. Sifuentes, open the door please. I must speak to you.

DETECTIVE: (*Ignores her*)

MELISSA: (*Keeps knocking the door*) I said, I know you are there. I am not leaving until you open the door.

DETECTIVE: (*Resigned*) Yes, yes I am coming... (*With evident effort he smiles and welcomes her*) Mrs. Melissa what a surprise! It is a pleasure to see you today!... Should I’ve known I would of..... Come in, come in.

MELISSA: (*Looks around and does not hide her disgust*) Hmmm... I see, I see...

DETECTIVE: It’s not what it looks like, the thing is.... I was, I was...working late, yes...

MELISSA: *(Talks to him while intermittently looking at her phone)* Ohh, you don't have to explain yourself to me, I, I really ...I wouldn't care less. Mr. Sifuentes, I've come to pick up my paycheck. I've woken up very early today, to see if I would get a hold of you, and here you are. According to my calculations you owe me one month. That's a lot, one whole month's salary. And well, I have been trying to reach out to you and ... did you get any of my messages?

DETECTIVE: Messages, eh, I really don't recall, I haven't heard the phone...

MELISSA: My WhatsApp messages...

DETECTIVE: Ohh! I don't have ... eh ... "Gguasap"

MELISSA: *(To herself)* This is a lost case, I am telling you Melissa. *(To him)* Well then there is not much to say. I, I quit!...There, I've said it. I mean you are never here ... You know, I just don't know, I mean, it's just not my look, not my look at all. I rather have the "Condado Life" look, like this *(shows him the phone)* a nice, fancy, beautiful look... Also, you disappeared for so long, I mean, what is a girl to do here all day. And now this.... *(shows the phone)*... "El Macaracachimba"... Pfftt!... I am glad I didn't show this whole week, I would be so embarrassed... Ohh I almost forgot, Mr. Gervasio came up and left you a letter. Where is it? Ahh here it is *(She finds an opened letter amongst the cluttered piled up files)* It says that you need to pay your rent ... Well like I said. I am not coming back, this is not my thing... and you need to pay me my check *(She reaches out her hand)*

DETECTIVE: Mrs. Melissa...

MELISSA: It's Misssss

DETECTIVE: Miss Melissa, you caught me at a bad time, if you at least allow me to, to ... *(His phone rings)* Just wait here, let me get my phone... *(Shuts the curtain and gets the phone, lying somewhere)* Hello!

MAN ON OTHER SIDE OF THE LINE: Yes. Hello. Is this Detective Álvaro Sifuentes?

DETECTIVE: Yes Sir. This is him speaking...

MAN ON OTHER SIDE OF THE LINE: Are you the one they call "El Macaracachimba"? *(Starts laughing)*

DETECTIVE: *(Irritated)* Yes. Who is this? What do you want? Is this a prank?

MAN ON OTHER SIDE OF THE LINE: Whoa, don't get your pants in a bunch...
Man can't take a few laughs... Look my boss he, they, want to meet with you. Today. Fornasier
and Parker. I suggest you see them.

DETECTIVE: Oh? What about?

MAN ON OTHER SIDE OF THE LINE: It's about the case, the Yolandita case? Ruíz Ruíz
de Parker?

DETECTIVE: The Yolandita case ? *(a second or two)* You mean the case of The Maid.
The Maid that was acquitted ... *(We hear MELISSA getting impatient)* Ehhh ... I can see them
right way, I am dealing with another matter, but I'll be finishing up soon....Can we make it for
11:00 am? My fees for the first appointment are....

MAN ON OTHER SIDE OF THE LINE: *(Muffled sound)* Yes, they will se you at 11
am. Yeah, yeah, don't worry about your fees, I've already spoken to the Lieutenant. *(Hangs up)*

DETECTIVE: *(Pretending and out loud for the sake of MELISSA)* Ohh you saw the
ad and want to hire me? You will pay whatever I charge? Tell Fornasier and Parker I will see
them. Fantastic! Yep right in front of Cesar's coffee shop *(Hangs up)*

MELISSA: Did you say Fornasier and Parker? You've got to be kidding.

DETECTIVE: Miss Melissa, I am sorry to say we will have to cut our meeting
short. I have an important client I have to get ready for. Here, here is my checkbook. You said, a
month? That will be a month, minus the week you didn't show, that is three (3) weeks... Here
you go...Hand me the keys and now off you go. *(He gently pushes her out the door).*

MELISSA: But, but... *(Once outside.)* Detective I think there's been a terrible
misunderstanding.

DETECTIVE: Melissa, maybe we will talk later. Now I really need you to leave.

SECOND SCENE

Same office. Nearing midday. Light is brighter. Curtain held hidden behind a chair. The DETECTIVE has made an effort to look presentable, and is tidying up. While doing this two people appear at the door. It's a middle aged couple. Elegantly dressed. They seem wealthy. MICHAEL knocks. The DETECTIVE lets them in.

DETECTIVE: Welcome to my humble abode. Please do sit. Here we are. Please speak freely. What urgent matter has brought you here. Your... Secretary? He mentioned Lieutenant González referred me?

MICHAEL: Lieutenant González?...Ahh yes, good officer... I've met him, I believe, when, when, you know... But truth be told, our contact is the Commissioner, Commissioner Santiago. He's what brought us here. Eh, Lucy and I, we were wondering if you...

LUCY: *(Interrupts)* We need for You to bring peace to my belated fathers spirit and clear his name.

(Michael is irritated by Lucy, and takes out his phone. During the next scene he looks scarcely interested in the conversation. Might grunt or assent as necessary.)

DETECTIVE: Your belated father? I don't know that I can help you with his... mmm... spirit... or clearing his name.... I don't follow.... as far as I know your father was not accused of the murder...

LUCY: Ohh my! You are not aware of anything. I hope I have not made a mistake coming here *(looks at her husband for assurance)* Mr.?

DETECTIVE: Sifuentes. Álvaro Sifuentes.

LUCY: Mr. Sifuentes. Yes, you are right. Lieutenant González mentioned your name sometime back. I then saw your ad and remembered you. So... peculiar... Despite it, I convinced Michael to come here today. Yet you seem like you are not very aware of our dilemma. Did he not mention us to you or our troubles?

DETECTIVE: I am afraid not.

LUCY: Michael please let me explain. After the terrible event... You do know now what I am referring to? Yes? You know what I am talking about? I mean you do know who we are? Or

do I need to discuss all the horrible details here, with you, I really can't... Maybe this was not a good idea.

MICHAEL: *(Is about to say something)*

DETECTIVE: Please Ms. Parker, I apologize. I misspoke. It's my fault. Don't doubt yourself, not for a second. I know of you both and your noble and generous effort as a leading family in our community. I also know everything about the case. You are referring, of course, to the murder of Mrs. Yolandita Ruíz Ruíz de Parker. May she rest in peace. Second wife to your belated father the Honorable Judge Charles Parker. May God Save his Soul. My condolences to you Mrs. Parker. I heard about his passing away through the news, like any other commoner. Please continue.

LUCY: *(Evidently at ease)* Thank you. See Michael!... As I was saying, after that dreadful incident, our lives changed. Everything changed. I took it upon me to do some soul searching, and found some peace in my spiritual journey, I will always be grateful for that... But for my father, everything was harder. Change was difficult. Not only did he suffer the loss of his wife, which we all lament of course, but how can I explain... he became involved, we all were involved by something dark, something sinister, fetid, rotten. It's like this dark mass of negativity weighed over us... like a dark soot that begins seeping everything your walls, your furniture, your clothes, your skin... All our social relations, all our conversations, all our activities were tainted by this darkness, by the death of this woman... and silence. Yes. Silence. We could hear the rumors, the conversations whispered behind our back, but to us, people hadn't a word to say. After the initial condolences that is. Then the conversations dried out. Everyone grew mute. Silence. Those were the worst years. My father, he withdrew. He stopped his work, his writing, his seminars, his classes. He stopped receiving visitors. He hid away in that apartment. Until he stopped living. Alas! That is the reason I took to the light, to try to get away from the darkness, not let it swallow me like it did him. What saddens me the most, what breaks my heart is that he will always be remembered, not by his legacy as a Judge, but by that vile incident. And at the end, we know nothing. No closure, nothing was resolved. Well the point I am trying to make, the point is *(She starts digging in her purse and takes out a letter)*

MICHAEL: *(With ill disguised impatience)* The point Lucy, the point, what is the point? Detective, I tell my darling Lucy to leave things in peace, don't you agree?... Are we like minded? Why stir this whole mess, what is the word I am looking for, this pile of shit up? I apologize for the vulgar expression. Let sleeping dogs lie I say! That's much better! For our peace of mind. The case was investigated and processed. That The Maid was acquitted, well yes! But that's a mere technicality. Those things happens. At the end of the day everyone knows it was her and she and all her lot fled the country. Good riddance! That is what we wanted and that is the result we got. We couldn't be happier, I mean the community... Our streets were cleared

off that rift raft, the criminals lost and the good guys won. Ahh Lucy? I am only here at the bequest of my darling queen. These crazy thoughts have overcome her and I cannot get a moments peace. You know, happy wife, happy life....

LUCY: Michael, we talked about this... (*She implores*). You agreed you promised you were going to cooperate. This is my last try, I promise, just allow me this will you, please, let me finish...

MICHAEL: Agh... ok, ok darling, Talk, go ahead, talk.

LUCY: In this letter. In this letter. He left me this letter and begs me to continue to investigate, to not give up. It's a very personal letter. He confesses he did not do it. He says it's not what people think, that things weren't what they seemed, that they were misunderstood, and I believe him. He was incapable of an act of violence. He was never violent. On the contrary, he was of a quiet character, I mean he used to read all day, a book worm, like a mouse. He was a judge, a being that sought truth. After I read this letter, well my whole mission changed, my goal is to put his spirit to rest, for him to know that I will do my best, and seek that truth. But it's been difficult. Like hitting imaginary walls over and over. I called the police, and all I have received are excuses: "the fiscal crisis, limited personnel, low funding, dead end". I personally spoke to the Lieutenant, I mean something could be done, to help me fulfill my father's last wishes, and Michael helped, he and I wrote a letter to the Commissioner. And eventually, that road led me, I mean, lead us, to you. You have to understand it can't be any other way. I am my father's only heir and his legacy is all we have right know. And I need to do away with the darkness... It lingers. My followers have dwindled to half...And the trolls are wreaking havoc... I have no way or manner to defend myself. I need to prove to them, to everyone, that they are wrong. I am the daughter of a wonderful man, and my father was not a murderer...Ahh I just want to restore things to their rightful place you know? To erase that chapter and have everyone remember us by the good things he gave and offered to the country. The way I remember him, and not because of his fateful relationship to that women and the people surrounding her. Do you understand? It's a matter of principle and of fulfilling his dying wish.

DETECTIVE: But what exactly is it that you want me to do? As far as I am aware this case was investigated, whew.. for what was it, three years! Before an accusation was brought forth and a suspect accused. The Maid. She was indicted and after a very long public trial, excessively scrutinized by the media, they couldn't find evidence linking her to the crime and she was acquitted! I mean dozens of investigators, prosecutors, forensic experts, police officers... everyone studied this and I just can't see how...

MICHAEL: There it is! I told you so Lucy. Álvaro, can I call you Álvaro? You don't have to say more, we understand. We appreciate your time. We tried baby, we really did. There is nothing more to do. (*He is standing, he is helping her get her purse to leave*)

DETECTIVE: (*Quickly reacts*) I mean I didn't say I won't do it. Sit down, sit down... What I am trying to say, eh.. express, eh... make clear, is a ...manage your expectations, yes... that this will be a very difficult task. But if there is someone up to it, someone capable to affront this epic challenge, it's me, yes, it is me, and I, for me, it will be my honor to do so. That is what I was getting to.

LUCY: Then you will take our case? (*Surprised*)

DETECTIVE: Yes. Of course.

MICHAEL: (*Annoyed*). Okay, okay... Eh... Let's do this then. Let's give it a month, what my wife says, a last effort to, you know, fulfill the old guys dying wishes and so forth... But also to put and end to this. If at the end of the month you don't have something substantial, something new, we leave it there Detective. (*To Lucy*) My darling, this is to protect you Lucy, we can't allow other people to gain from our tragedies, now can we? We have spent enough as it is...

LUCY: It's my money Michael, my inheritance money, and if I want to spend it in whichever way I want to spend it I will...(*hesitates, takes in the place*) but ok, I understand, whatever you say...

MICHAEL: (*To the Detective*) Well?

DETECTIVE: Ok. I can work with that. A month's time... that will work just fine.

MICHAEL: (*Takes out his checkbook*) Great. Let's be done with this. How much?...

THIRD SCENE

Place: The coffee shop. The coffee bar is to the back. Some tables and chairs up front. There is a line of people, coming in, and stepping out, in rhythmic order. The Detective gets in line.

The scene consists of a visual narrative of the murder thru newspaper headlines that read: "Wealthy Condado Family is overwhelmed by murder", "Who killed Yolandita Ruíz Ruíz de Parker?" "The Maid Did It! Maid Accused of Yolandita's murder". "The family jewels: the motive of the Condado Murder", "Dominican Community seeks Justice for The Maid", "Senator Gonzalez proposes new law to combat illegal immigration and criminality" "Prosecutor admits not interviewing the Judge", "Peter Flow talks: Exclusive Interview", My Grandmother is an honest person; Testifies The Maid's Granddaughter" "¡Not Guilty!" "¡Not Guilty Verdict Rendered! The Maid is set free", "R.I.P Judge Charles Parker", "Senate renders Homage to Judge Parker". The images include photographs of Ms. Yolandita, the Judge, a younger Lucy, Michael in the back. There are also video clips of the Judge fleeing the press, as well as The Maid's granddaughter in a fit, surrounded by reporters. We see close ups of famous Peter Flow in a television interview.

FOURTH SCENE:

It's the Detective's turn to order.

DETECTIVE: Good day Don César, how are you?

DON CÉSAR: Same old, same old... Would you like your usual?

DETECTIVE: I'll like a double today, got lots of work...ahh and another for a friend... Hey, do you remember the case of The Maid?

DON CÉSAR: *(While he is busy preparing the coffee)* ¿The maid? The maid ...Ohh... You mean the poor Dominican woman? Ahh yes, I remember, she was set free... Now *that* was a miracle! That surprised everyone, even me... and I don't get surprised easily, no sir, not by anything... It was like seeing a glimpse of true justice right then and there, a strange thing in these times. Why do you ask?

DETECTIVE: Oh... it's nothing, just reading up on this and that... yeah man, but it's sad they never found the murderer...

DON CÉSAR: What do you mean he was never found? He was right there all the time... everyone knows it was the Judge! That it was an inside job... evil from the entrails of the monster... He did not last long after, did he? Probably the guilt killed him. Karma, they now call it.... Next! (*Moves away to the next person*)

The Detective goes to sit and on the way says hello to a man on the line, the Professor. He sits as Lieutenant González arrives. González sits and the background fades. The Detective intentionally ignores the man while texting in his phone. The Lieutenant tries to talk and the Detective raises his hand and stops him for a couple of additional seconds.

DETECTIVE: Now. Please explain.

LIEUTENANT GONZÁLEZ: (*Feigned hurt*) Hey...not even a hello? a how are you? How little respect you have for your superiors... For me! Your life long friend... I came out all this way to see you, had to park two blocks down...walk in this heat...always doing you favors, sending clients your way...

DETECTIVE: Stop it right there buddy. Save your sad story. You do not fool me. The only one you did favors for was to yourself. By getting rid of those people (*Shivers*). Now kindly explain to me what do I do with this dead body? This “mystery” is already solved...Ask anyone! No matter what the distinguished ladyship believes! (*In a low tone*) It was the *Judge*! What am I supposed to do now? What do I tell the distinguished ladyship if what I find confirms what everyone in this city already knows? That her father, the “honorable” Judge hired a hit man to kill his wife in a jealous rage. No. I don’t like this one bit...You know that apart from all my faults I have integrity. This is my work, my reputation at risk. I like to do things the right way. I don’t like to lie or cut corners. That is why I’m not into politics, nor do I work a government job like you, no offense.

LIEUTENANT: (*Smiles*) Heh, heh... I knew you would take the case. Álvaro don’t get upset. I had no other choice. Put yourself in my shoes. It’s not easy having those people, specially those types of people, asking you for explanations, for results, “following-up” indefinitely. One can do what one can do. And after the debacle in court... uff... Heads rolled at the precinct! After that no one dare spoke about the case. People avoided the case like the Covid... I don’t even remember what happened afterwards. I probably shut it out and hid it in a very dark corner of my brain. Well, eventually, at the end, everything calmed down. Years have passed. And now we have the new found interest of the Countess... Do you know what she did? She filed a complaint with the Superintendent, a written complaint, incompetence and I don’t know what other nastiness. In an election year!...No, I mean this was hot potato, hot potato, hot potato and guess who got stuck? I got a call to re-open the case. I gotta take care of myself Álvaro. Watch for my interest. I am due for retirement soon and I can’t risk it. You know what

they are capable of, specially you. Though with the retirement cuts who knows if I even get a retirement... did you know they proposed a new budget cut to...

DETECTIVE: Enough, enough. Don't change the subject. Well, the way I see it is you got me into this and the least you could do is help me thru it. Get me some resources man.

LIEUTENANT: Yes! Ok. I got it all figured out, you'll see! You are going to talk to Laura from Dead Files, the one with the pretty eyes... and wow what eyes does she have...

DETECTIVE: Go on...

LIEUTENANT: So, I checked and these are officially public records, which doesn't mean you can just take them, but I can get you clearance. They are all there: boxes and boxes. You can dive right in, and once you get a feel for who's who, you know, you go out and do your thing, ask questions here, ask questions there, and problem solved! Or better yet not solved... the wife stays dead, the Judge stays innocent, the Countess is satisfied, yet again, with your effort, and you get a pay day! That there is a happy ending. And in the meantime you get them out of my hair until my retirement comes thru. And so you know that I am not such a bad guy, I am sending you Joseph, this rookie I am mentoring. He is a good hearted kid. Really trying to keep from getting hurt... He can assist you, you know, a liaison between your office and the force, to maintain dialogue, official collaboration, whatever you want to call it, you know the drill... Hey, and you haven't told me, how much are they paying?

DETECTIVE: A spy?...You are sending me a spy to watch me... Bah. Don't get confused old timer, I don't work for you anymore... "do my thing?" "not solved", "happy Countess". Man everything is so easily worked out from a desk. That's the problem with the world right now that you desk types don't get. Real life does not work that way (*Looks at the time*) I gotta go, I have an appointment with the realtor. (*Leaves*)

LIEUTENANT: (*Shouts*) Not even a good-bye, ungrateful bastard (*He remembers something*) Álvaro...the side entrance to the hallway, the service entrance, its key... Talk to Laura and then call me.

Álvaro leaves. The Lieutenant is left drinking his coffee and just pensive watching the passerby's Don César looking at his mobile phone signals him and calls him.

DON CÉSAR: Lieutenant take a look...

The Lieutenant turns surprised.

SECOND ACT

FIRST SCENE

We are at a luxury apartment in Condado. The Detective and a middle aged man dressed in very flashy clothing, enter the room. The visit has been on-going for a while. There is an exit to the left and right of this hallway.

REALTOR: *(Walking in from the the right, interior of the apartment)* It's nice, am I right? A true hidden gem. For me the principal attraction is the terrace jacuzzi, I mean, what a view! Just imagine yourself there, a couple of beers, a nice sunset, a beautiful "*muchacha*"... You can fall in love every night...am I right?

DETECTIVE: *(Overwhelmed)* Wow those were a lot of rooms, huh... These people are wealthy.

REALTOR: True luxury. Top of the line. Living for the 1%, as I like to say. We saw there a formal living room, four guest bedrooms, five bathrooms, a family room, library or office, master bed room, home gym, terrace... Mediterranean style decor, just like if you were living in the Greek Islands...I for one love the place! And the kitchen, we still haven't seen the kitchen.. state of the art appliances, intelligent refrigerator, six burners, two ovens, what am I missing.... Ahh the laundry room, and the maid room.eh, right, right... let's deal with the reason for the visit. There. This is where they found her.

The Detective examines the area. The Realtor meanwhile finds a mirror and starts fixing his hair, makeup, etc.

REALTOR: You take all the time you need. I am going to check how things are going down at the lobby. I mean it's been a while since so many reporters came by and one has to look good for the cameras, am I right?

DETECTIVE: Reporters, here? What do you mean, why are there reporters here?

REALTOR: To talk to you of course! Why else? Did you not see the "Live" Ms. Lucy posted on her Insta? Ohh you really hadn't seen? Didn't know? *(Looking at his appearance up and down)* No wonder... Look!

The Realtor shows the Detective his phone. The video is projected in the scene. We see Lucy in yoga attire and behind her a paradisiacal setting. The live video begins:

“A wonderful day to my fans and followers. Today I make this live in front of this blessed view from my humble terrace to declare power and resilience. I declare you. As you all are aware these have been trying years for our family, but know that the Fornasier Parkers do not give up. With the help of our good friend the Commissioner we have re-opened the case. I declare happiness and truth. I declare. We are confident that with the help of our new member of the team, the illuminated Detective Sifuentes, everything will come to light. For my lovely and curious press followers, I wish I had all the details, but since I do not and do not want to leave you with concerns, I do wish you ask all your questions directly to him. He will be there shortly. Here is the Pin (“ping sound”). The name of my much loved father Charles Parker shall be vindicated. I declare it and it will be so. That is all for now. Now let’s continue with the Morning Meditation session. Because remember that The Condado Life requires all your dedication, effort and sacrifice. I’ll see you later my friends during the Midday Beach Stroll Session. Please like, and share. If you are new to this streaming, don’t forget to subscribe to my YouTube Channel. #TheCondadoLife, #ForsanierParkerFamily, #VotePPP #SantiagoFor Commissioner.

DETECTIVE: ...Huh... That’s “The Condado Life”, look at that...Jizus! But who told these people that I was going to be taking questions or doing interviews?

REALTOR: That is so funny... you think they need your permission? Don’t you work for them? You know what, I’ll handle this. Don’t you worry, I’ll take care of press. For what its worth “I declare it will be sold today!” Wish me luck!

The Realtor starts to leave to the right. The Security Guard knocks at the wall, comes in from the left.

GUARD: Hello Don Tony. I am sorry to interrupt. Ms Lucy texted that how much more time, that I should let you know its time for the press conference ...

REALTOR: *(Talks to Santiago but for the benefit of the Detective)* Hello Pérez! I was just leaving to handle all those nosy reporters. The nerve to show up like that uninvited! Pfft! Can you stay up here with the Detective, just to make sure the reporters don’t come up before I get there, I mean you really don’t want them interfering with the, with the, with this, yes, the investigation ... *(Leaves running, comes back)*... Detective, what do you say? You’ll come down in 15-20 minutes?

DETECTIVE: *(Is looking at photographs)* Sure.

We see crime scenes photographs mixed in with snapshots of the Realtor addressing the press downstairs while actively marketing the apartment (pop up poster presentation, with a really wide smile). Crime scene photos depict an attractive middle aged woman, in a white robe, lying

in the floor, with a red blood mark from a gunshot wound to her chest. Different angles and close-ups.

GUARD: (*Whistles*)

DETECTIVE: Hmmm ... You worked here during the murders, didn't you?

GUARD: Yes sir! Been close to fifteen years here. Poor Ms. Yolandita (*takes off his cap and makes solemn gesture*) Ohh but what a wonderful woman she was, sweet as pie, I mean because of her kindness.

DETECTIVE (*Is busy comparing, taking notes*)

GUARD: Sat right there when the Judge found here. We were all here. The whole building came to his aid. He wasn't himself. Didn't know what to do. Poor guy. Up and down, up and down tidying up the place making space for the neighbors. The neighbors had to take over the kitchen, help him out. It was thru this exit. Leading to the side hallway. That's the way they left.

DETECTIVE: I imagine you said this to the Police when they interviewed you? Showed them the way? Same as you are doing today?

GUARD: Yep. Just the same. Too much of a woman for just one man. If you get my meaning. Poor guy, really.

DETECTIVE: Yeah, yeah. (*To himself*) Then why The Maid? Ms..... Doña Elba?

GUARD: I really can't say.. Figure it's because they don't want us here. You know, only in our place.

DETECTIVE: What?....Ohh sorry I wasn't talking to you, I was talking to myself, is a rhetoric question... never mind...

GUARD: (*Silent*)

DETECTIVE: Hmm... is there something you want to tell me? Something that you haven't already told the Police?

GUARD: Me? Tell you? Tell you what? No. Nothing... I have nothing to tell. You know, I have to work. I can't be here all day. They will miss me at the lobby and I can get in trouble. I am gonna go now. You are doing just fine. I can go and you can stay here.

DETECTIVE: Relax, relax. I didn't mean to scare you off. Look, I am not the police. I am in fact, no one. I am just trying to understand. You can talk to me freely, I mean no one has to know we've had this conversation. It's between you and me. Wait ...are there cameras here? Are they recording us?

GUARD: Cameras? (*Looks at the cameras*) Oh those. Yes but they are not working, they are not recording. They told us to de-active them, just before... just before, because they were upgrading the whole system. Yeah, I remember now! Getting some new equipment. That must be there also in your papers. Look, I know who you can talk to that will help you understand. It's this guy who is still doing the rounds, the strong guy from the gym. He still visits the ladies in the building, always with the tight t-shirts, the big arms. No shame at all. You'll see him and you'll know.

DETECTIVE: You mean the personal trainer, this guy? (*Shows him a photograph*) He still comes here?

GUARD: Yep. Every Tuesday and Thursday. Early in the morning. At Sunrise. Visits the lady from 804 at 6 am, and then goes to the lady at 1008, and later to the one on the third floor... what's her apartment number? I forget... I've been watching him all these years. Like a hawk. He is trouble. I know.

A man comes in from the left. The Security Guard sees him and pounds at him.

GUARD: Heeey....What are you doing up here?!.... This is private property. Go wait down stairs like the others...and no photos!

Man: (*Startled*) I don't have a camera! I don't have a camera!... I am from the Po..po..police...Ehh...I am looking for Detective Alvaro Sifuentes. I am Agent Joseph Rodríguez (*He is nervous and his ID falls and he does a little juggling act trying to get at it, which is very awkward*).

DETECTIVE: Was I the only one who didn't know that I was going to be here today? So you are the "resource" the Lieutenant sent to help me. Great. And how did you know I was here?

AGENT: That's easy! I followed the Insta live stream, its the trending topic of the hour... and stepped thru the side of the building, just after the crowd. The street gate was open. Then came up the stairs and voilà....now what?

DETECTIVE: Now? We need to get out of here. I need to figure out this racket. Excuse us Pérez. Come Agent ...

They both leave thru the left (Batman music?)

SECOND SCENE

We are at the Detective's office. We hear and see a visual narrative, from a first person point of view. In some instances Detective Sifuentes, in others Agent Rodríguez, are asking the same question to different witnesses: Did you know Ms. Yolandita? What did you think of her? What did you think of her husband Judge Parker? Among the interviewed we see people from the community (the hairdresser, the massage technician, the personal trainer, neighbors, the owners of nearby stores). They are talking, working, going about their day. We hear clipped phrases were the adjectives "divine", "sweetie", "lively", "lovers", "many friends", "beautiful", "daring", "respectful", "impotent", "formal", "serious", "cranky", "old", "senile".

Weeks have passed. It's late. The office is filled with boxes and files. Agent Rodríguez is reading a file. There is just barely enough light in the room. The detective is standing carefully peaking out the window.

DETECTIVE: Turn down the lamp a minute Joseph, I need a better look. I think another press van just parked outside for the night. Man! They are relentless animals, they just won't let go... *(He sits, to continue his reading and after a beat)*...You know something just doesn't sit with me.

AGENT: *(Stops reading and listens)*

DETECTIVE: Everything seems to fit too squarely. All the interviews, lead to the same line of investigation: Tony's comments about the jacuzzi and the decor, Pérez's statement plainly describing the exit of two men from the place, witnesses confirm one another about seeing the victim in public with men, attractive young men, men's voices, in plural, were heard thru the corridors, the doors were not forced, no one heard screaming, she was in her bathrobe, the gunshot was at point blank range, they found genetic material of not one but two unknown people on her...Everything points to the same conclusion, the victim was attacked by one or two people, apparently men, who knew her, well enough for her to feel comfortable in her bathrobe, and/or who also knew about the side entrance to the building...

AGENT.: Maybe the Judge caught her red-handed and shot her in a fit of rage. End of story.

DETECTIVE: Exactly! That's were it all leads to... But that's the time line doesn't add up. She was described by a shopkeeper as "overtly sexual" and having "many men friends", "throughout the years". Meaning, if the shopkeeper knew, well this was the talk of the town. It wasn't and isolated incident... it had been going on for years. We have clear records of private massage sessions with her male masseuse, "special" sessions with the personal trainer, God knows what that means, and man, even the Uber Eat's guy was a regular visitor! which is very weird. The appointments were kept in her calendar at her desk. She did not hide them. They were in plain sight for the Judge to see... If she had more than a friendship with her many men friends, or suitors, there was no intention to keep anything secret. The whole neighborhood was aware about her comings and goings. It was more of a lifestyle I would say...

AGENT: Ahh but that's easy! The last person to find out was the Judge, and he had her killed, and since he is dead, and dead men can't confess or be convicted of crimes, end of story. *(Hesitant)* Well, there is also the theory of the robbery gone wrong. At the beginning, the day of the murder, the Judge's first impression was that he was robbed, this because.... yes, here it is "the master bedroom" was a mess.

DETECTIVE: *(Thoughtfully)* After so many years married, why would he want to take action now? Avenge her alleged infidelities at the twilight of his years, and not before? Wasn't the Judge taking physical therapy at that time? due to his knee or something? barely strong enough to stand?

AGENT: Yep, here it is. He was using a walker.

DETECTIVE: She was fit as a fiddle, she could've easily overpowered him.

AGENT: So, he hired them as hitmen...

DETECTIVE: Then were does "The Maid" fit in? And if there were two intruders, they didn't leave off with anything, did they?

AGENT: The only accounted items missing by the Judge were the bracelets, but later during trial he recounted, that these were given away, a gift... Maybe he made her look bad so she would take the fall, or intruders got scared and ran away before they could actually find anything. It is a big penthouse... I mean, boss, I don't know, I am tired... I feel like my brain is fried. I can't even see anymore with this low light, I feel like we are just going round and round and getting nowhere... Why are we even trying so hard? I thought it didn't really matter.

DETECTIVE: You thought wrong Joseph. It matters. It matters a lot. We are talking about a life here. Of a person who loved and suffered. A woman: daughter, wife, lover, and

mother. Who was full of dreams, like you and me, and who, by the looks of it, still very much enjoyed her life- and to top it all off was re-victimized by a hounding press when details of her non-conforming lifestyle were revealed. A life that some bastard took from her and I very much want to learn who... Okay, okay look let's brainstorming for a couple of minutes... Hear me out, if the intruder or intruders left running, tell me why did the Police invest all their resources in prosecuting "The Maid", when it was evident and everyone agreed that she was not the actual murderer, rather that it was that or those intruders, and at the same time, the investigation avoids the obvious explanation: the Jealous Judge...

AGENT: It's like if the force wanted to put a lid on the rumors ...

DETECTIVE: But why?

AGENT: Hmm I guess... To protect him, to avoid public scrutiny and humiliation?

DETECTIVE: That's it! And shift the focus to "The Maid", make her the "brain" of the attempted "burglary", turned statutory murder, plus she was the perfect scape goat, of Dominican descent, poor, no community ties, and not a single chance... Win, win situation for the force... they caught the perpetrator, cleared the community, and all is settled...

AGENT: (*Excited*) Oh I like that, just like a movie! Or a streaming series everyone watches: "The Murderous Maid"! Or the "Hateful Help" I very much like the sound of that... even I would watch that!

DETECTIVE: Just like a script... He, he.... Good work Joseph! I really think this helped... Hey it's getting late, go... I'll keep at it for a while, see you tomorrow... (*Joseph hesitates*) Go on, go on home.

Picks up his stuff and leaves. At the door.

AGENT: Bye boss. Good night!

After a beat.

DETECTIVE: Hmmm, it was a miracle...

Lights go out.

THIRD SCENE:

We are in Barrio Obrero.¹ We see the front of a the place, located in an avenue between a mechanic's garage, and a I-phone repair shop. The balcony is closed up with wrought iron railings/fencing. A black screen leads to the living area. There are passersby, sounds of honking, music, motorcycles. There is a mechanic under a car. Agent Rodríguez arrives walking, almost passes the house. He calls from the sidewalk.

AGENT: Good afternoon. Good afternoon. Hello there. I am looking for Doña Elba De Jesús. I need to talk to her.

DELIA: *(From the inside of the house in a rant)* You'll have to go look for her all the way to Santo Domingo. .. She doesn't live here anymore... loooong time since that. Who are you? What do you want? Are you from the news? Go away! We don't want no one from the news, not from the newspaper, not from tv, not from the radio, and specially not from that God awful talkshow, what's the name? "Exclusive"?....

AGENT: Yes. "The Exclusive"

DELIA: You are still there? Didn't you hear me? I said go away, I am not kidding I will call the cops... *(She comes out to the balcony)*

AGENT: I, I, I am the cops, I mean I am the po..po...lice, I mean I am Agent... Ohh!

(He is taken aback by her beauty and somehow his badge ends up in the mound of garbage in the sidewalk and Delia, delighted, stays to watch him rescue it.)

AGENT: *(Once he rescues the badge)* Argh...I am Agent Joseph Rodríguez. I am not a news reporter. I work with the Detective Álvaro Sifuentes. Maybe you've heard of him?

DELIA: Ah...*(disappointed)* You mean the one that Ms. Lucy and everyone is talking about? ...You work for Ms. Lucy then. Not interested. I have nothing to say to you... *(Goes back inside)*

AGENT: No you are wrong. We don't work for Ms. Lucy. I mean for Ms. Parker. I mean yes, but no, not like that. Yes, she hired him, but he doesn't listen to her. He does what he thinks... what he needs to do. He doesn't listen to anyone really. If I can get five minutes of your

¹ This is a depressed (poor) area of the city. Mostly blue collar, working class residents and immigrants live here. Dirty streets, a lot of trash, homelessness, criminal activity, etc.

time. You know the faster we get to the end of this investigation, the faster they'll stop bothering you. I mean the people from the news.... At least you won't need to hide anymore and they'll leave you alone. Can I at least get your name?

DELIA: *(Comes back out)* Delia. I am Delia. And I am not hiding. Also don't even for a minute think you are convincing me. I am going to hear you out because I am bored. I still have some time before my next client gets here. *(She sets herself up against the wrought iron rails.)*

Scene freezes.

At the other side of the stage we are again in the cafeteria. People on the line are gawking. The Detective and Peter Ortíz, alias Peter Flow, are seated at the Detective's usual table. Peter Flow is in the latest fashionable tracksuit or whatever is in style for fashionable reggaeton artists.² He is wearing dark shades. He looks pale. His hands are trembling, and he is drinking from his own bottle. He has a folded newspaper with him. Behind him there is a big and tall body guard. Dressed in black. The Detective is staring, notepad on table. Peter Flow turns in his seat to murmur something to his bouncer in confidence.

DETECTIVE: Do you need more water? Maybe something to eat? Look, free advice: whatever it is that you are doing and that got you in this state, stop doing it. It will kill you....

PETER FLOW: Ain't that right. *(Sarcastic)* No. Thank you. I am fine. This is my ritual. I've got here my special tea to rehydrate, get those electrolytes going, you know "pa' bajar las pepas de la discoteca"³ he, he ... Like I was saying I didn't make this hell of a sacrifice and get myself here at this ungodly hour in the morning "to have a coffee and chat" *(sarcastic)* I came to talk to you face to face, no WhatsApp, no Insta, no iPhone, nothing, I don't want any of this running around in any form, so if you don't mind. *(Makes a sign and the bouncer gets a hold of the notepad on the table)*

DETECTIVE: Whoa, whoa, whoa... there's no need for that, I really need it back

Peter looks at the pad, tears the first page, and hands it back to the Detective, Bouncer looks menacingly.

DETECTIVE: Look, I am putting it away *(Puts the notepad away)* Now, what is it that you wanted to tell me? You were the one who contacted me, not the other way around.

² "Reggaeton" is a music style. a form of dance music of Puerto Rican origin, characterized by a fusion of Latin rhythms, dancehall, and hip-hop or rap.

³ In sing song. Reference from song by Farruko.

PETER: Do not quote me anywhere. Do not mention my name. This conversation never happened. And just in case, you are not recording this are you? I can have you patted down.

DETECTIVE: No. No I am clean.

PETER: So here is the thing. I just want to tell you one thing (*Theatrical pause*) : She is crazy. That's it. That's what I wanted to say.

DETECTIVE: What? Who?

Delia is leaning against the rail. Agent Rodríguez is also leaning in while talking to Delia. Even though he has his notepad out, he is just watching her closely.

DELIA: Oh man, I told you... I don't know what else is there to know. Like I said before, everything's already been said. At the end my grandmother had nothing to do with all this. That was proved and that's that. Don't be twisting everything trying to get her to talk or blame her again.

AGT. RODRÍGUEZ: No, of course. I mean I know that's been cleared up. It's not about your grandmother anymore...The thing is, we have had to reread all the interviews and redo some interviews, with the neighbors, and family, and there is something that everyone new, and that was brought up in Court but it never lead to anyone in particular. ...So here's the thing, it's ...not a nice subject and the questions may seem uncomfortable, but I only ask because I have a duty to ask...

DELIA: (*Flirty*) Uncomfortable questions, ooh, this is getting interesting...

AGENT RODRÍGUEZ: So the victim, Ms. Yolandita was accused, or better said, ehh, was said to have had multiple lovers... outside of her marriage. So you know, she was unfaithful, cheating on him. Did your grandmother tell you anything to those effects? That Ms. Yolandita had, er, lovers? We are trying to find maybe an upset lover....

DELIA: Oh is that it? How sweet! You really thought that would offend me?...I though you were going to ask about me... If what you want to know is if my grandmother talked about what she saw at that house... you are wasting your time. She was tightlipped about that subject. She would never talk about that, much less to me. I don't think she would ever get involved in others people's business or love triangles, least of all Ms. Yolandita's. Don't think she had the time or energy to. Besides she never ever would say a damning work about that

woman or, now that I think about it, about Don Charles. You know they might squabble, but it was over silly things, like what detergent to use...

AGENT: Oh. So nothing there then.

DELIA: Not that my grandmother would talk about, no. But there are things I did see with my very own eyes...

PETER: Ohh its true! So true!! See all this time I grew up feeling like I was I was damaged goods, the weird one, the black sheep.. I thought I was the crazy motherfucker. She was the “goody two shoes” step sister. She did what she was told. Everything, no complaints. Married the “well-to-do” motherfucker. But know I have come to the realization that they were protecting her, because *she* was crazy! I was normal and the bitch was fucking cuckoo. All this time... I mean she was the one who hung out with her dad all the time, who does that? And always needed her daddy’s approval for everything. She was the one who had a nervous breakdown her first semester abroad because she couldn’t cope. I mean she lived with her father until she was married at what 35? finally? And then she was strapped to that social climber whose only interested is her money... Man they spun me for years... Just wanted to let you know because now they’re spinning you into their own little crazy web. I’m telling you for your own good. You are being taken for a sucker, looking like an ass out there. Just thought you needed the heads up. You look like an honest working man and man, you know, I was poor. Respect.

DETECTIVE: (*stares*)

PETER: You still don’t believe me! Think it through man! While were here they’re getting paid thousands of dollars for interviews. The motherfucker’s are living off *my* tragedy! Do you get it! They are getting rich of my mother’s fucking murder! (*Livid*)

DETECTIVE: Okay, okay. Take it easy man. I have something I want to ask you. Lets’ say it’s all true. All that babble about your crazy sister and me being her errand boy, and that all of this, the investigation is great big sham. What do you win by telling me all of this? Let’s say I believe you and I quit. The only thing that’ll happen is that everything will go back to how it was. Everyone will forget about this in a week, two weeks top. Your mother, may she rest in peace, will remain dead, so will Mr. Parker. And who ever is the culprit will continue out there running free... living his/her life. So even if I agree that your sister maybe a bit “off”, at last she is doing something about it, whereas you....what are you doing? I mean besides that (*makes a gesture taking him in*)

PETER: Ohh, I'll do something about it. I will. Just you watch. I am just figuring out the details out. The only thing she is doing about it is getting rich at my expense. Man forget it you are star struck, can't see a thing...

DETECTIVE: Look, er, Mr. Flow. The thing is I've always been underestimated. My whole life. Even you now. But don't worry, I am not offended. I guess since I am not living the flashy life, you know have a nice car, wear suits, buzz around the new hot bars, like you do, people think I am not successful or good at what I do. But I do see things. Sitting back here in the dark, away from the limelight. I see you all in a perfectly clear light. Now I am going to tell you what I see and what I know about your sister...

PETER: ..half-sister...

DETECTIVE: Your half sister... and you tell me if I am not up to the task. The thing is that your sister is not the only one who caught a ride in the media wave caused by your dear departed mother's murder. I know that when tragedy struck you went on a "*media tour*" against "The Maid". You were convinced, one hundred percent certain, that she was behind the murder. (*Grabs the notepad*) That's a clip from "Today News" ... December 10 (*Shows it to him*). And then when "The Maid" was released you were the first in the family granted and exclusive interview with "The Exclusive". Now how did that fare on your first album release? It was released that same year, right? Ohh and you practically accused your stepfather of the murder. Do you want to see the clip? Because I also have it right here, well in iPhone somewhere. So if you ask me, she is not the only one taking advantage...And by the way, there were those who questioned your motives, here it is, the note from the interview where a woman said you blackmailed those poor old folks into giving you the money for your studio, here it is. Headline reads: "Who's who: Flow cast in shadow"...

PETER: (*Gets a hold of the paper*) ...That bitch.... Bro that's not true. Not a word that comes out of that woman is true. That there cousin is vermin, she feeds off me, whatever garbage she can get. She doesn't know what she's talking 'bout. Look when my mom was murdered I wasn't right in the head. I was low, real low, and was living in a dark place man. Too much booze, and drugs, and all of the sudden everyone knew me? Knew about me? Everyone wanted to talk to me? One gets confused. It was like a daze. That's just jealous gossip. I paid my mother every cent she loaned me.. every fucking cent.. but that article doesn't say that does it. And I mean why not? Why couldn't she lend me the money? Who was I? The fucking dog? I mean, I didn't get into an Ivy League like the cuckoo step bitch, or any of that bullshit, but I am still a person right? I was her son. Her only son. And I made it better and bigger than any of those stupid people will ever make it in their lifetime, or their kids lifetime, or their kids kids lifetime... Spending their morning talking shit about me over the coffees in their churches...I am fucking living the life and if those motherfuckers don't like it well fuck them.. You know it took

me a while, I know am a bit slow, it's been bugging me for ages, this thought, round and round and round in my mind, but I am getting there, I am surely getting there... *(Puts the newspaper on top of the table and starts to leave)*

DETECTIVE: Round and round?... I truly don't understand what you are getting at....

PETER: Aren't *you* the Detective? Isn't it *your* job to find out? Do I really need to spell it out for you...Man I hand it to you in a silver platter and you still don't get it do you? What do I win with all of this? The pleasure of wiping off that fake smile off their fucking face... They think they got away with it but they have something else coming for them... *(To the Bodyguard)* We are out of here, bro.

Peter leaves. Gawking fans go after. The Detective picks up the newspaper. We see projected in the stage a news page. There's a photograph of the Governor in the front, along with other people, in front of a building. Headline: "New Heights in Luxury for Condado". Lucy Parker, Michael Fornasier with great smiles on their faces, in the back. A brown legal envelopes falls from the newspaper.

AGENT: *(Disappointed)* Well I do really appreciate you opening up and telling me all of this but the truth is you would not believe the number of people that can testify that they also saw Ms. Yolandita with all sorts of men and in all sorts of places... I guess I won't take anymore of your time. If there is nothing else, thank you for everything.

DELIA: Well but the others wont tell you that that didn't sit well with Ms. Lucy, and the arguments they had...

AGENT: Arguments between your grandmother and Lucy?

DELIA: No, not at all ... Not my grandmother...Ms. Lucy is too... too... exquisite. She would not even look at my grandmother or at me for a fact, much less talk to us... her husband was a different story, he sure did look, too much looking if you ask me... I mean between Ms. Lucy and Ms. Yolandita. Ms. Lucy would always say all sorts of nasty things to Ms. Yolandita, she would question Ms. Yolandita's friendly treatment of others. Including us, "those people" she would call us.

AGENT: Ok I see... but it couldn't have been that bad.... I mean.. the gifts. The press first reported that the bracelets were stolen and that that was the motive for The Maid, I mean, sorry, your grandmother's involvement, but later Mr. Parker himself recounted and said they were a gift. That was very generous, I don't think any employer I know would...

DELIA: And you believed that story? That Ms. Lucy who never ever said one word, no hello, no goodbye, no how are doing, to us, or to my grandmother, who worked there for years, that she would want to gift my grandmother with a set of bracelets worth tens of thousands of dollars?

AGENT: What do you mean? It was Mr. Parker who made the gift, that's what he said...

DELIA: Oh you must have read it wrong. I was there, remember? It was Ms. Lucy's gift... My poor grandmother always beat herself up for taking such an expensive gift... "gifts come with strings" she would say. And she was right... it was almost the end of her.

DELIA: *(Sees someone coming and waves)* Hola mi amor! *(to the Agent)* we had a real nice talk but I need to go now, my client is just arriving... you know a girl needs to work to eat.

Delia greets a woman, who steps in the house, as she is about to enter, she turns

DELIA: Joseph? Right? Come by over another day maybe we can talk a bit more, or I can remember something else that's good for your case.

Agents Rodríguez stays for a beat, and then walks off.

The man who was fixing the car is up and about washing his hands. It is Leo. He takes a break and sits on top of the car, and looks at his iPhone. A man walks up. He is wearing hoodie, and sunglasses. It's Peter. They embrace.

PETER: You've got it?

Leo: Right here. *(Grabs something wrapped in brown paper bag)*

PETER: See you. *(Starts to leave, then stops)* When I'm done, I'll come around, we'll talk.

Leo: You do what you got to do. Just look out. Anyone I know?

PETER: Nah, it's a family matter...

Peter leaves. Leo waits until Peter's gone and gets going.

Coffee shop brightens. Coffee shop is empty. Detective walks up to the bar, which is also empty. Don César walks in from the back with a wash clothes in his hand.

DON CÉSAR: Yes Álvaro, do you need something?

DETECTIVE: Don César, would Helen be there by any chance?

DON CÉSAR: *(Calls)* Helen, darling, you have a visitor.

Helen steps up from the back. She is a handsome mature woman, with elegant clothes and papers on her. Its closing time and Don César is putting up the chairs while they talk.

HELEN: Hey Álvaro! Good to see you! It's been a while!

DETECTIVE: Yes indeed. How have you been? How is everything?

HELEN: Same old same old, doing a bit of this and of that. Giving Cesar a hand, as usual. End of month. Dealing with reports and statements, and... just so much paperwork and bureaucracy. I mean we are up to here *(signals her temple)* paying taxes for this and that and whatnot and if you could actually see the good of it, you know with your own eyes, see some improvement in our daily lives, in our streets, nice sidewalks, better services, but no....The government takes and takes but only to benefit the few and us, the many, working our tails off just to make ends meet ... I am sorry, let's change the subject. I always get riddled up, and I will start and you will never hear the end of it. How is Ana by the way? I haven't seen her for a while either.

DETECTIVE: Yeah, um fine, fine I guess *(changing the subject quickly)* Helen I really wanted to talk to you about something work related... I just received this document, can you take a look and tell me what this is about. There's this job.. er... my reputation, I mean my life basically is depending on this and I do not really want arrive at the wrong conclusions. *(Gives her the envelope)* Hey and you can bill me, full rate, this time I can pay ...

HELEN: You better! *(She jokes, then she puts on glasses and takes a quick read at what's inside the envelope, and her friendly demeanor changes notably, it is serious now and a bit alarmed)*... Hmmm. I'll keep this in the safe. I will call you once I have a moment and can take a look at it. Or better yet, come see me by the office tomorrow. Around 2 pm if you can. We'll talk in person.

Helen and Álvaro say their goodbyes. Don César waits for Álvaro to leave and is locking up the door for the day. He sees someone out in the street and stares for a bit. Then pulls the curtain and goes to the back.

FOURTH SCENE

We are in an alleyway of Old San Juan ⁴. The alley has nice potted shrubs and some entry steps into the buildings. The stage is illuminated by a low white light. It's the light of the moon. At some point in the scene Leo enters and hides imperceptibly behind a shrub.

DETECTIVE: *(Arrives casually walking and talking over the phone)*
 ¿Rodríguez? Well, how was it? Did you locate "The Maid"? *(He stops, sits in a step, and lights up a cigarette)* Oh really? That cute? I see... And did she tell you anything of interest? Yeah, yeah, but we've heard all about that haven't we?...What bracelets? Ahh! The Maid's motive... what does that have to do with anything? Look, look, where are you? Let's better meet at the office. We'll talk there. I am walking that way. I met Peter Flow today... He's ... um... ok, I guess. He's like this character of a movie I've seen... Oh, okay, okay. See you in a bit.

He hangs up, discovers the moon and decides to take a minute and continues smoking in peace. Leo makes a move, but someone comes walking down the alley.

PROFESSOR: Hey Álvaro! I thought that was you... Good to see you!

DETECTIVE: Hey Paco! It's me alright. Taking a breather here... The night is beautiful isn't it? I mean the moon is spectacular...

PROFESSOR: *(Looks at the sky)* Oh yes it is spectacular... Hey do you know if Don César is still open?

DETECTIVE: No. He just closed up. I just left there... Needed that late evening coffee to continue with my night's work ...

PROFESSOR: Oh well... *(Disappointed)*

DETECTIVE: You'd like a smoke?

PROFESSOR: Sure. Thanks! *(Sits and they smoke peacefully for a beat when the Professor suddenly remembers something)* I just remembered! I knew I had something to talk to

⁴ Old San Juan is a historic area of San Juan. It is known for its beautiful cobblestone streets, alleyways and historic houses. It is also known for its active resident community component.

you about! You are working on with the case about Professor Charles Parker, I read something about it in the paper, right?

DETECTIVE: You mean Judge Parker, yes, yes ...it's true...

PROFESSOR: Oh yes. Judge Parker. I always call him Professor. He was my Professor, and I guess I always remember him that way, and it kind of stuck. You know I was his T.A for two years.... Great Professor, the best I had, so sad, everything that happened is so sad...

DETECTIVE: *(A bit spaced out)* You are talking about the University, right?...

PROFESSOR: Yes. Indeed. Ages ago. He was just fresh out of his private practice and came into the academia to teach. I was assigned to be his T.A. He really inspired me. He had an outstanding reputation and wonderful perspective on the criminal law system... being able to work all sides, as attorney to the police force, prosecutor, and then defense attorney...

DETECTIVE: The Police Force, you say?*(Interested)*

PROFESSOR: Yes. He began his career as the designated attorney for the police. Defended them in civil rights enforcement cases and all those types of cases. Quite a celebrity. Greatly esteemed for his work. Later I believe defense attorney, federal prosecutor, and then federal Judge, or what is the other way? prosecutor and then defense attorney? Point being he had worked on all sides and had great perspectives on the innings of the process. Great Professor. What a shame. Life is funny sometimes, he ended up just like the case of "The Black Whip". *(He starts to leave)*

DETECTIVE: The Black Whip? Now you got my attention. You are leaving? Don't leave just yet. Tell me about that...it might...er, um... it sounds interesting.

PROFESSOR: Okay sure. That's the nickname of a case Professor Parker was particularly proud of. Look it up. It must be there on Google. That was the brief time he was working as a defense attorney. I remember he used to tell this story, as an ice breaker, to all his students at the beginning of the year, and I also saw him recount it to colleagues and friends at social gatherings. I mean not just tell the story, he really got into it, displayed great showmanship, and well who forgets the name, right? "The Black Whip"!

Flashback Scene- *A grainy or black and white video of Judge Parker giving a lecture, standing before a blackboard, explaining the case of "The Black Whip", shows up in stage.*

State v. Hoyos, one of the most famous criminal cases of its time and of exceptional importance due to the attention it received from the press and the radio. The accused was a prominent doctor. He worked for a Hospital in Ponce. Him and his wife were both accused of the murder in the first degree of a young nurse student whose name was Vicenta. Vicenta had a lovely friend whose name was Coti. Coti and Vicenta would go out every Friday night, as is usual for persons of their age. One Friday night Coti returned alone. They asked Coti but she swears she lost track of Vicenta that particular evening. Vicenta's parents searched for her but couldn't find her. One of the places they searched was at Pedro's house, where Vicenta's boyfriend used to live. It was a narrow alleyway

PROFESSOR: Pretty much like this one, but much poorer and dismal...we are talking the town of Ponce in the 1940's...

Nearing his house in an abandoned wall there was a written in coarse black paint "The Black Whip". It was later learned that that was also Pedro's nickname. The parents continued the search that Saturday and did not find Vicenta so they contacted the authorities.

PROFESSOR: Imagine! What an omen!...

The next Sunday they found the body of Vicenta in a roadway named Hoyos. This was an interesting coincidence with the names of the accused. The discovery of the body resulted in extraordinary coverage from all the news sources of that time and it was what everyone talked about in Ponce and neighboring areas. The fact that the accused was a doctor, that the victim was a young nurse, the coincidence about the name of the place where they found the body and the accused last names, this led to salacious rumors about the relationship between the accused and his wife with the young nurse. The press, and particularly a radio station of the time, who was owned by the Prosecutor's brother, made echo of these rumors, and that was the main reason the couple was accused. The newspaper headlines would read: "Passion was the motive of the murder." A scandal! The atmosphere around the Court while the trial was celebrated was like a circus. People picketed and demanded the accused be condemned. We, the defense attorneys, were booed, and even threatened, while coming in or out of court, while the Prosecutors were cheered and applauded. The police later learned that that Friday night, when Vicenta disappeared, Pedro disappeared and no one ever heard of him again. Yet everyone centered their energies on the Doctor and his wife, and meanwhile not one single effort was made to locate "The Black Whip".

Finally and despite all this pressure, the jury rightfully acquitted the accused. It was shown that the witnesses had falsified their statements...Everything had been a big spectacle... to impress upon the public. The press played an important role in influencing public opinion. But why? With what purpose? Bad blood between the Prosecutor and the Doctor? A way to catapult the Prosecutor's political career? I guess we'll never know...

PROFESSOR: ...And half a century later BOOM! The Judge is involved in a similar situation!... A whirlwind of press that resulted in the speculations of a love triangle and false accusation of "The Maid" and our latest "Black Whip" running free....I mean, wow! Life really is stranger than fiction.. So sad!...and never mind how much he adored her...

DETECTIVE: Adored? The victim you mean?... Pfffft....That was some special kind of love, no? huh? Shared?...

PROFESSOR: Well yes, they were... different...yes they were (*mischievous laugh*) But it was love all right... I mean they were together for what? Ages... real strange crazy open love.... What I am about to tell you I hope you take it into confidence... how do I start, er.. am... It was because of Professor Parker that I got kicked out of Law School!

DETECTIVE: What ? But you just spoke so highly of him...

PROFESSOR: Yes, no, ohh I am not upset about that...that was the best thing that ever happened to me... but that is a story for another day.. What I wanted to confide in you is how it came to be ... The Professor had a kink and recorded her... Yes, you are listening correctly, and yes, it is what you think...Ha, ha...I have surprised you! A couple of friends from the University, well we were kids, I mean young adults, and had all this energy and were passionately arguing over some case or legal precedent and we barged right in into Professor office without a knock! He had on... a video, videocassette, this was 70's- and they way he was seated well we could clearly see what the video was about...Ohh What a mess! He got so nervous he blundered and the sound went up, and he couldn't get the machine to turn off, and then, and me and my friends were trying to help him, disconnect the thing from the tv, and then people from the office next door came in... (*chuckles*) Long story short, *she* was the main character in that movie if you get my gist...He was so humiliated, he apologized, but I never said a word... I guess I took the fall, mainly because I realized they were doing me a favor. It was a my way out of law school, no way my parents could dispute that...Ahh the 70s, free love, and open relationships... What fond memories.. (*Laughs*) Well enough stories from this old decrepit professor... I won't take more of your time... Plus I need to get my medication before the pharmacy closes! Thanks for the chat Alvaro! (*Leaves*)

DETECTIVE: *(Talking to himself)* Hmm...strange and complicated love...

The Detective starts to leave and Leo sees his chance and attacks him from the back, hits him over the head with a large blunt object, such as a baton. Detective falls immediately, which a crash, he has no time to react. The blow is life threatening. Leo pats him down, looking for something, opens his briefcase, empties the contents. Immediately we hear the Professor yell, who has seen him and is running back towards the detective. Leo takes off running. Professor enters the scene in a huff.

PROFESSOR: Hey! Hey you! You scoundrel!!! Stop!! Álvaro! Álvaro! Are you all right? Neighbor! Neighbor! Help! Help!

Windows and doors from the alleyway are suddenly open, people come out to take a look. We hear exclamation from one of the neighbors.

NEIGHBOR: Paco, It's that you?!

PROFESSOR: Oh Susan! They killed him!! Call 911!... Álvaro!... That bastard! I heard the blow! Looked back and saw him! The bastard! He went that way!

Neighbors surround The Detective and the Professor. Some stay and give The Detective first aid. Others bunch around the Professor and form a committee to look for the scoundrel. We see some neighbors texting. Images of WhatsApp flood the stage: "A person assaulted at the Tanca alleyway, gravely ill, anyone a doctor?" "All neighbors on the lookout for a man dressed in black" Has anyone contacted the Police?" "Municipality is part of the chat!" "Help! a man was assaulted!" "He needs emergency care!" "Did you call 911" "Susan did""Someone tell the Municipal officers" "Was it murder?" "Who died!!!?"

THIRD ACT

FIRST SCENE

The Detective's office. Some days have passed after the incident. The Detective is inside filing papers. He has a bandage on his head, and is also wearing an arm sling. His face is still swollen, black eye. Someone knocks on the door. It's Agent Rodríguez, who during this next scene will awe everyone with his quick reflexes not seen before.

AGENT: You are looking better Sir. So is the office. *(Sits down with familiarity)*

DETECTIVE: Thanks Joseph.

AGENT: You tell me Sir.

DETECTIVE: Let's see.... *(He is slow and has difficulty moving about)*. Let me think about this. Move here. No. Over here maybe. No. Not there. Err hide in there. Come out when I give you the signal.

AGENT: What is the signal?

DETECTIVE: Err... no never mind. I'll just call your name. When you hear your name, come out. Got it?

Agent: Yes.

DETECTIVE: Where's the Lieutenant?

AGENT: He's at Fortaleza Street. Waiting with two patrol cars.

We hear steps, and murmuring coming from the hallway.

DETECTIVE: They're here, go on hide!

Peter is escorted in by a police officer who immediately takes his leave.

PETER: Bro, can you explain why did you send a Marshall to my home to escort me here? What the fuck man? You are messing with the wrong person Detective. Do you know the damage this is causing me? My brand? Having me get into a police car? It's all over the fucking Internet!! It's been 15 minutes and my publicists and half the city already knows about it! Look! My iPhone is about to explode!

DETECTIVE: *(Irritated)* Oh stop the show, you love it and you know it...

He is interrupted by Lucy and Michael who enter the office.

LUCY: I told you Michael. I told you it was him. I knew it. I knew he had something to do with this. He's always had a fateful aura about him, it's a disgrace. Just irradiates negativity.

PETER: What the fuck? ...hello to you too sister.. Pfft

DETECTIVE: Agent Joseph Rodríguez!

Sprints out of his hiding spot and after some commotion returns with Peter to the scene.

PETER: Let me go! Do not touch the Flow! This is an illegal arrest! I will sue you for everything you have!

AGENT: Continue boss. *(Lets him loose)*

DETECTIVE: I am sorry Peter, you cannot just leave. Like I was saying...

LUCY: *(Abandoning her zen personality, goes toward Peter)* I knew you were filth. You are shameless!... This, this, this is unnatural! Your own mother! How could you! You were always jealous, of everyones happiness, of me, of my happiness, you were jealous because he was my father, and not yours, green with envy! of my friends, my social class, our lifestyle, our house, our trips, Michael's success... You are a monster! May you burn in hell!

PETER: You crazy confused bitch! Me? I had nothing to do with this! Lucy you are truly crazy! how could I hurt my mother... I mean those pills to keep you in that perpetual "zen" state have truly fucked up your mind... Do you even know who you are? where you are? I was the one that handed him the will? Isn't that right? Why would I hire someone and beat him up to get it back? Common man, tell her!

DETECTIVE: It's true.

LUCY: That you gave him the will? I don't get it ... *(Looks for a seat her semblance starts to break down)*

PETER: Jealous of what? Of "The Condado Life"? The Forsanier and Parker hashtag? Pretty people bullshit. ... Ha! So decent, go nice, so good... You can take all that bullshit morality and stick it up your ass Lucy. I don't give one shit about it, or about you, you crazy bitch. Always so smug when we were growing up, so superior. Never gave me a chance to connect. Never looked twice over my way. Sell your bullshit to the stupid people who don't know you. Really know you. You wish you were like me, as free as I am I say what I want and I do what I want, and people love me just the way I am. Don't have to be popping pills to keep me from eating, to keep me young, and in perpetual zen.. and it still doesn't work does it? You could be as thin as a rake, and he'll still fuck around, you get that right? That he doesn't give a rat's ass about you, that he married you for your money... And you motherfucker, how many people do you swindle every week?

LUCY: Leo? What does Leo have to do with it? Michael what does Leo have to do with this?

MICHAEL: *(Babbles)* I ... no ...didn't ...

PETER: Lucy he's just said it! Leo! He's the guy they arrested! You used my friend against me? You killed my mother? And now you want to set me up! Motherfucker you will die today!

Peter takes out a weapon, Michael hides using Lucy as a human shield. The Detective seeks cover. Agt. Rodríguez courageously intervenes and manages to kick the gun away from him. Peter gets a hold of Michael and Agent Rodríguez separates them and tackles Peter to the ground. Lucy is thrown to a sofá.

PETER: *(While being tackled)* I'll kill him. Lucy that is your husband. Lucy he is a murderer! Lucy open your eyes! Wake up from the dream, Lucy...

The Detective grabs the gun carefully with a handkerchief and puts it aside. While he is picking up the furniture Michael crouches along side of Lucy. Lucy is in shock, silently machinating.

MICHAEL: Lucy, Lucy are you all right? You are not going to believe that third rate hustler are you? By God Lucy I only hired him so you would shut up woman! Ohh Lucy, I didn't mean that, that was wrong of me... It's the nerves Lucy. That bastard almost killed me! Us... you saw everything, he attacked us! I protected you, you must have seen that! You know that woman was looking for trouble... it was her fault, she started it, I was only defending myself, defending us, she would have us destroyed... You said so yourself. You know what those people are capable of. Right now Leo's out there plotting against me... against us...

AGENT: Now?

DETECTIVE: Yes. Now.

Agt. Rodríguez picks up Peter from the floor.

DETECTIVE: Miss Lucy, I am going to need you to come this way. You Sir, also. If you don't do what I say I will ask Agent Rodríguez to let Peter go.

Scene goes black.

SECOND SCENE

Leo is seated in a chair in front of a table. He is in handcuffs. He is staring at the horizon.

We see a video projected on stage. It's a video taken with a mobile phone. At the penthouse. First a chuckle from author, and then a hallway. We then see Michael from the back with dress shirt and tie undone, he looks drunk. Author hides. Michael turns but does not see the person taking the video. Doña Yolandita is there, she is angry, upset, defensive. The discussion continues in hushed voices for a second. And then she has a gun in her hand. And all of the sudden Michael pounces. The author of the video runs towards them and we loose visual. We hear the shot. Commotion. We hear men grunting. We hear (Elba) What did you do! What did you do! Where did he go? Get out of here! Hurry! Run! More commotion and then the video ends.

THIRD SCENE

The Detective's office. Nighttime, same day. The Detective has taken out his makeshift bed, when he hears a knock. It's Agent Rodríguez. Detective opens the door. He has a couple of beer bottles.

AGENT: I knew you'd be here. I think this is more than necessary.

DETECTIVE: Thanks Joseph. But I am sober now.

AGENT: Ohh sorry. I didn't know...

DETECTIVE: It's ok. Go ahead. I don't mind. I'll join you with this (*shows a soda can*)

AGENT: To our health and solving the crime! Sorry... I thought you'd be in a more celebratory mood.

DETECTIVE: Are they still at the station?

AGENT: Yep. But about an hour ago a battalion of lawyers showed up. Lucy already published a "live" in his defense. Can you believe it? It's not going to be easy.

DETECTIVE: No, I imagine not. Wow, that was a quick change of gears on her part... And to defend Leo, anyone arrive?

AGENT: No. He is fried potatoes man. The only option he has is to cooperate. I know it's not our business now, but I got somewhat lost in the story... I mean Leo... Wasn't Leo Peter's friend?

DETECTIVE: Apparently Michael and Leo also have history. I was looking into it and Leo came into a lot of money all of the sudden and opened up his auto shop.... I was asking around and he said it was a loan, but I can't see him getting a loan, you know? Not with his background. I am guessing its money from the hit... or blackmail... Then somehow Michael knew Peter had gotten a hold of the will and that I had it. Maybe Peter told Leo, and Leo was passing on information to Michael. Or maybe it was the other way around. Who knows?

AGENT: Small community, no? Even the thugs stay in the family? First the Judge hired him to kill Ms. Yolandita and then Michael hires him to assault you. You sure were lucky that night. The moon and the neighbors protected you...

DETECTIVE: Sure was. But that weapon. Wonder why Leo kept that weapon and handed it down to Peter.

AGENT: I am guessing Peter will have a lot of explaining to do. I wish him the best of luck, because those guys at the station are not patient and one can hardly understand him when he starts explaining things. Well I am headed out. It was a pleasure working with you boss. Good night!

DETECTIVE: Go with God Joseph.

Without moving he says goodbye to Joseph. He is looking at his mobile phone. Lights go out and all we see is the blue reflection on his face. He dials a number, and it goes to voice mail. A woman's voice says " Hello" "Please leave your message". He is about to talk, share his day, but rethinks it, and says nothing. He hangs up. He sets the phone on the table and as he stands to continue about, he receives a call.

DETECTIVE: Yes, this is him. Detective Álvaro Sifuentes. How can I help you.

Scene goes black.

THE END