

# No saco nada de la escuela

1969

First Performance: Centro Cultural Mexicano, St. John's  
Church Fresno, California

## Characters:

Francisco  
Moctezuma (Monty)  
Malcolm  
Florence  
Abraham  
Grade School Teacher  
Esperanza  
College Professor  
Nixon  
Vato

Elementary School. School Yard sounds: children playing, shouting, laughing. Four kids come running out. FLORENCE, a white girl in pigtails and freckles; MALCOLM, a black boy; then FRANCISCO and MOCTEZUMA, two chicanitos.

ALL: (A cheer.) Yeah! Ring around the rosey, pocket full of posies, ashes, ashes, all fall down! Yeah! Let's do it again! (FRANCISCO has been watching from the side. He is

grabbed by FLORENCE and MONTY, and pulled into circle, trying to get in step.) Ring around the rosey, pocket full of posies, ashes, ashes, we all fall down! (Bell rings off stage.)  
FLORENCE: Oh! The bell! (They jump to their places, and sit in two rows facing each other. Two on each side.)  
MONTY: Heh, look! Florence has a boyfriend! Florence has a boyfriend, y es un negro!  
FLORENCE: No I don't. I don't have no boyfriend. (TEACHER enters, short bowlegged, old, ugly. She wears a white mask and her feet stomp as she walks. She carries a huge pencil, two feet long, and a sign which she places on a stand at upstage center.)  
TEACHER: (Mimicking writing on blackboard.) Elementary A-B-C's. (Students begin to throw paper wads across the room at one another. TEACHER turns, commands with high pitched voice.) Children! I want those papers picked off the floor immediately! (Students run to pick up papers. Then sit down.) There now, that's better. (Her version of cheerfulness.) Good morning, class. (Class begins to sing except for FRANCISCO, who looks at others, bewildered. TEACHER leads singing with her pencil.)  
ALL: Good morning to you, good morning to you, good morning dear teacher, good morning to you.  
TEACHER: That's fine. Now for roll call. Florence.  
FLORENCE: Here teacher.  
TEACHER: Malcolm.  
MALCOLM: Yeow.  
TEACHER: Moc . . . Moc . . . (She can't pronounce "Moctezuma.") Ramírez!  
MONTY: Here.  
TEACHER: Francisco.  
FRANCISCO: Aquí. (MONTY raises FRANCISCO's hand.)  
TEACHER: Abraham.  
MONTY: Teacher, teacher. He's outside. He's a crybaby.

(ABRAHAM comes running out and runs across front stage, crying. He is dressed in cowboy boots, baseball cap on sideways, face is pale white with freckles.)

TEACHER: (Helps him.) There, there now, dear, don't cry. I want you to sit right there. (Points to MONTY.)

ABRAHAM: Wah! I can't sit there, he's brown.

MONTY: No, I'm not. (Rubs forearm trying to remove color.)

TEACHER: (Turns him around.) Well, then I want you to sit right over there. (Points towards MALCOLM.)

ABRAHAM: Wah! I can't sit there, he's Black.

TEACHER: Well, then do you see that nice little white girl over there? (Points to FLORENCE.) Would you like to sit there?

ABRAHAM: (Man's voice.) Uh-huh!

TEACHER: Boy! (Points to MALCOLM.) You move. (ABRAHAM sits next to FLORENCE, MALCOLM moves over by MONTY and FRANCISCO. They pantomime playing marbles.)

TEACHER: Now, all rise for the flag salute. (Sweetly.) Stand up, Florence. Stand up, Abraham, dear. (Turns to others.) I said stand up! (MONTY, MALCOLM and FRANCISCO jump up and begin flag salute.)

ALL: I pledge allegiance to the flag . . . (ABRAHAM sneaks behind the TEACHER's back and pokes FRANCISCO in the behind. FRANCISCO thinks it was MONTY and hits him, pushing him into MALCOLM. They stand up straight again to continue and ABRAHAM sneaks over, again he pokes FRANCISCO who again hits MONTY, who again pushes into MALCOLM. MALCOLM points to ABRAHAM. All three then attack ABRAHAM and throw him to the ground.)

TEACHER: (Turns screaming.) Class! For heaven's sake! (ABRAHAM, MONTY and FRANCISCO run back to their seats.) Did they hurt you Abraham, dear? (Turns to MONTY and FRANCISCO.) You should have more respect!

FRANCISCO: Pero, yo no hice nada.

TEACHER: Shut up! (FRANCISCO cries.) Shut up! I said shut up! (FRANCISCO continues crying. TEACHER kicks him and he shuts up. TEACHER moves to center stage.) And now for our elementary A, B, C's. Florence, you're first. FLORENCE: Here's an apple, teacher. (Hands TEACHER an apple.)

TEACHER: Thank you, dear.

FLORENCE: (Moves down stage center.) A is for apple. B is for baby. And C is for candy. (Pantomimes licking sucker and skips back to her seat giggling.)

TEACHER: Very good! Now let's see who's next. Willie? (She means MALCOLM, who sits daydreaming.) Willie? (MALCOLM does not respond.) Willie! I meant you boy! (Points at him.)

MALCOLM: Teacher, my name ain't Willie. It's MalcolM.

TEACHER: It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter. Do your ABC's! MALCOLM: A is for Alabama. B is for banjo and C is for cotton! (Stamps foot, walks back to his seat. All the students are giggling.)

TEACHER: Not bad at all, boy, not bad at all. Let's see. Who's next? Abraham dear? Say your ABC's.

ABRAHAM: A is for animal and B is for . . . black and brown! (Points to MONTY and FRANCISCO and MALCOLM.)

TEACHER: Oh! He's able to distinguish his colors. Go on.

ABRAHAM: And C is for . . . for . . .

TEACHER: It has a "kuh," "kuh" sound. (Meaning cat.)

ABRAHAM: Kill! (Brightens up. Points to FRANCISCO, MONTY and MALCOLM.)

TEACHER: Oh, no, we mustn't say those things in class.

ABRAHAM: (Crying.) I promise never to say it again. Teacher, look. (Points upward. TEACHER looks and ABRAHAM spits on FRANCISCO, MONTY and MALCOLM. They start to get up but are interrupted by TEACHER.)

TEACHER: Class! Did you all know that Abraham here was named after one of our most famous presidents? Mr. Abraham Lincoln—the man who freed the slaves!

ALL: (Aghast.) Gaw-lee!

TEACHER: After they were forced to pick cotton against their own free will.

ALL: Shame, shame, shame.

TEACHER: (To ABRAHAM.) Now, aren't you proud of your heritage?

ABRAHAM: A-huh. (Laughing.)

TEACHER: Of course, you are. Who's next. Moc . . . Moc . . . (She can't pronounce his name.) Ramírez!

MONTY: Yes, teacher?

TEACHER: How do you pronounce your name?

MONTY: Moctezuma.

TEACHER: What?

MONTY: Moctezuma.

TEACHER: Oh! What a funny name! (She laughs and class joins her. TEACHER stomps foot and shuts them up.) Class! (To MOCTEZUMA.) And what ever does it mean?

MONTY: He was an emperor in the times of the Indians. He was a Mexican like me.

TEACHER: Oh! You mean Montezuma.

MONTY: No, Moctezuma.

TEACHER: Montezuma.

MONTY: Moctezuma.

TEACHER: Montezuma!

MONTY: Moctezuma!

TEACHER: Montezuma! (Begins to march up and down stage singing "The Marines Hymn.") "From the halls of Montezuma to the shore of Tripoli." (Using her oversized pencil as a bayonet, she stabs MONTY, who falls forward with head and arms hanging.) Now what's your name, boy? (Lifts his head.)

MONTY: Monty.

TEACHER: Do your ABC's.

MONTY: A is for airplane, B is for boat and C is for . . . ah, C is for . . . for cucaracha!

TEACHER: What!

MONTY: (Crying.) Cuca . . . caca qui qui.

TEACHER: (Twisting his ear.) What you meant to say was cock-a-roach, right?

MONTY: Sí.

TEACHER: What? (Twists his ear even more.)

MONTY: Yes!

TEACHER: Yes, what?

MONTY: Yes, teacher!

TEACHER: Sit down! (He sits down crying.) And shut up! Let's see who's next. Oh, yes, Francisco.

FRANCISCO: ¿Qué?

TEACHER: Oh! Another one that can't speak English! Why do they send these kids to me? You can't communicate with them. Is there anybody here that can speak Spanish?

MONTY: I can, teacher.

TEACHER: Tell him to do his ABC's.

MONTY: Dice que digas tu ABC's.

FRANCISCO: Dile que no las sabo en inglés, nomás en español.

MONTY: Teacher, he don't know how.

TEACHER: Oh, sit down! This has been a most trying day! Class dismissed . . . (Students start to run out cheering.) except (They freeze.) for Monty and Franky. (TEACHER points to them. The rest of the class runs out.)

MALCOLM: (Offstage.) You better give me that swing.

ABRAHAM: (Offstage.) No!

MALCOLM: (Offstage.) I'm gonna hit you.

ABRAHAM: (Offstage.) No. (Slap is heard and then ABRAHAM wails.)

TEACHER: (TEACHER, MONTY and FRANCISCO freeze until after the above, then they begin to move again.) Now look, boy. Tell him his name is no longer Francisco, but Franky.

MONTY: Dice que tu nombre ya no es Francisco, es Franky.

FRANCISCO: No es Francisco . . . Panchito.

MONTY: Hey, teacher, he said his name is still Francisco.  
 (FRANCISCO punches him in the back.)  
 TEACHER: Look boy, Francisco . . . no; Franky . . . yes.  
 FRANCISCO: No, Francisco.  
 TEACHER: Franky!  
 FRANCISCO: Francisco!  
 TEACHER: Franky!  
 FRANCISCO: Okay. (As TEACHER begins to walk away to audience.) Francisco.  
 TEACHER: It's Franky!  
 FRANCISCO: (Grabs sign and throws it on the ground.) Es Francisco, ya estufas.  
 TEACHER: Oh! You nasty boy! (Beats him over the head twice.) Remember the Alamo! (His him again.) And just for that, you don't pass.  
 MONTY: Teacher, teacher, do I pass? (Picks up sign, and hands it to her.)  
 TEACHER: I suppose so. You are learning to speak English. (To audience.) They shouldn't place these culturally deprived kids with the normal children. No, no, no. (She leaves. Stomps out. MONTY begins to follow.)  
 FRANCISCO: (Getting up from floor.) Oye, Moctezuma, ¿qué dijo esa vieja chaparra y panzona?  
 MONTY: Dijo que tú no pasaste. You don't pass.  
 FRANCISCO: ¿Y tú pasaste?  
 MONTY: Sure, I pass. I speak good English and, besides my name isn't Moctezuma anymore . . . it's Monty.  
 FRANCISCO: No, es Moctezuma.  
 MONTY: Monty.  
 FRANCISCO: Moctezuma.  
 MONTY: It's Monty. See, you stupid? You never learn. (Sticks his tongue out at him and leaves.)  
 FRANCISCO: (Crying.) Entonces dile a tu teacher que coma chet! (Leaves crying.)

High School. Scene begins with same stand at center stage. High school teacher, male, grey business suit, white mask. Walks across stage. Places high school sign on board.

STUDENTS: (Backstage, singing.) Oh hail to thee, our Alma Mater, we'll always hold you dear. (Then a cheer.) Rah, rah, sis boom bah! Sock it to them, sock it to them! (FLORENCE enters stage right. ABRAHAM enters stage left. His neck has a reddish tinge. He tries to hug FLORENCE and is pushed away. He tries again and is pushed away. FLOR- ENCE continues walking.)

ABRAHAM: Where you going?

FLORENCE: To class.

ABRAHAM: What do you mean to class? I thought we were going steady.

FLORENCE: We were going steady.

ABRAHAM: (Mimicking her.) What do you mean "We were going steady?"

FLORENCE: That's right. I saw you walking with that new girl, Esperanza.

ABRAHAM: That Mexican chick? Aw, you know what I want from her. Besides, you're the only girl I love. I'll even get down on my knees for you. (Falls on knees.)

FLORENCE: Oh! Abe, don't be ridiculous, get up.

ABRAHAM: (Getting up.) Does that mean we're still going steady?

FLORENCE: I guess so.

ABRAHAM: Hot dog! (From stage right FRANCISCO enters wearing dark glasses and strutting like a vato loco. ABRA-

HAM to FLORENCE.) See that spic over there? Just to show you how much I love you, I'm gonna kick his butt!

FLORENCE: Oh, Abe, you can't be racist!

ABRAHAM: Get out of my way. (Does warm up exercises like a boxer. FRANCISCO has been watching him all along and has a knife in his hand, hidden behind his back so that it is

not visible.) Heh, greaser, spic!

FRANCISCO: (*Calmly.*) You talking to me, bato?

ABRAHAM: You want some beef? (*Raises his fists.*)

FRANCISCO: (*To audience.*) Este vato quiere pedo. ¿Cómo la ven? ¡Pos que le ponga! (*Pulls out a knife and goes after ABRAHAM.*)

ABRAHAM: (*Backing up.*) Heh, wait a minute! I didn't mean it. I was only fooling. I . . . (FRANCISCO thrusts knife toward ABRAHAM. FLORENCE steps in between and stops the knife by holding FRANCISCO's arm. Action freezes. From stage right MALCOLM jumps in and struts downstage. He wears a do rag on his head, and sun glasses. He bops around, snapping his fingers; walks up to FRANCISCO and ABRAHAM; looks at knife, feels the blade and walks away as if nothing is happening. From stage right, MONTY enters with his arm around ESPERANZA "HOPI." He runs up to MALCOLM.)

MONTY: Hey, man, what's going on here?

MALCOLM: Say, baby, I don't know. I just don't get into these things. (*Moves away.*)

MONTY: (*Stops him.*) Hey, man, I said what's going on here?

MALCOLM: And I said I don't get into these things! What's the matter with you? Don't you understand? Don't you speak English?

MONTY: (*Angered.*) You think you're better than me, huh?

(MONTY grabs MALCOLM by the throat, and MALCOLM grabs him back. They start choking each other.

TEACHER enters stage center and observes the fight.)

MONTY: Nigger!

MALCOLM: Greaser!

MONTY: Spic!

MONTY: Coon!

ESPERANZA: Oh, Monty, Monty!

TEACHER: Okay, that's enough. Cut it out, boys! We can settle this after school in the gym. We might even charge admis-

sion. Everyone to your seats. (MONTY and MALCOLM separate. FRANCISCO puts his knife away and all move back to their seats.)

TEACHER: Now, before we begin, I want to know who started that fight.

ABRAHAM: (*Innocently.*) Mr. White? He did, Sir.

FRANCISCO: (*Stands up.*) I didn't start anything. He insulted me!

ABRAHAM: Who you going to believe, him or me? Besides, he pulled a knife.

TEACHER: (*To FRANCISCO.*) You did what? Get to the Principal's office immediately!

FRANCISCO: Orale, but you know what? This is the last time I'm going to the Principal's office for something like this. (*Exits mumbling.*) Me la vas a pagar, ese, qué te crees.

TEACHER: I don't understand that boy. And he's one of the school's best athletes. (*Opens mouth, sudden realization. Runs to exit, shouts after FRANCISCO.*) Don't forget to show up for baseball practice. The school needs you.

FLORENCE: (*Stands.*) Mr. White? I refuse to sit next to Abraham. He's a liar!

TEACHER: (*Stands next to ABRAHAM.*) Why, Florence, Abe here is the son of one of our best grower families.

FLORENCE: Well, I don't care if you believe me or not. But I refuse to sit next to a liar. (*Gives ABRAHAM his ring.*) And here's your ring!

TEACHER: All right, sit over here. (FLORENCE moves across stage and sits next to ESPERANZA. FRANCISCO comes strutting in, whistling.) I thought I told you to go to the Principal's office.

FRANCISCO: I did, man.

TEACHER: What did he say?

FRANCISCO: He told me not to beat on anymore of his gabachitos. (*Taps ABRAHAM on the head.*)

TEACHER: (*Angered.*) All right, sit over there. (*Indicates a spot*

beside FLORENCE.) And you . . . (To ESPERANZA.) over here.

ESPERANZA: (Stops beside FRANCISCO at center stage.) You rotten pachuco. (She sits besides ABRAHAM.)

FRANCISCO: Uh que la . . . esta ruca, man. (He sits besides FLORENCE.)

TEACHER: Now, class, before we begin our high school reports, I'd like to introduce a new student. Her name is Esperanza Espinoza. (He gives the pronunciation of her name with an Italian inflection.) It sounds Italian, I know, but I think she's Mexican-American. Isn't that right, dear?

ESPERANZA: (Self-consciously rising.) No, my parents were, but I'm Hawaiian. And you can just call me Hopi.

TEACHER: That's fine, Hopi. Now for our high school reports. Florence, you're first.

FLORENCE: (Drumbeats. FLORENCE walks to center stage, swaying hips like a stripper.) A is for achievement. B is for betterment. And C is for (Bump and grind.) college! (More drumbeats as she walks back to her seat.)

TEACHER: (Impressed.) Well! It's good to see that you're thinking of your future. Let's see who's next. Oh yes, Willie.

MALCOLM: (Hopes to his feet.) I told you, man, my name ain't Willie. It's Malcolm!

TEACHER: All right, you perfectionist! Get up there and give your report.

MALCOLM: (Struts to center stage. He begins to snap his fingers, setting a rhythm. Everybody joins in.) A is for africa. B is for black like me. And C is for community like black ghetto.

ALL: (Still snapping to rhythm.) My goodness, Willie, you sure got rhythm. But then after all, all you people do. (Three final snaps.)

TEACHER: Now then, Willie, about your report. The first two pages were fine, but that last part about the ghetto . . . don't

you think it needs some improvement?

MALCOLM: You're telling me! Don't you think we know it? TEACHER: Okay, that's a good C minus. Back to your seat. (MALCOLM sits down.) Abraham, up front!

ABRAHAM: Jabol mein fuehrer! (Stomps to center stage.) A is for America: Love or leave it! (FRANCISCO and MALCOLM stand up to leave.)

TEACHER: Heh, you two! (Motions for them to sit down.)

ABRAHAM: B is for better: Better dead than red. And C is for kill, kill, kill! As in the United States Marine Corps. (Snaps to attention.)

TEACHER: (Marches up like a Marine.) Very good, Abraham! ABRAHAM: (Saluting.) Thank you, sir.

TEACHER: That's an A plus, Abraham!

ABRAHAM: What did you expect, sir?

TEACHER: Dismissed! (ABRAHAM marches back to seat.) Monty, up front!

MONTY: Yes, sir! (Marches sloppily to stage center. Salutes and freezes.)

TEACHER: (With contempt.) Cut that out, and give your report. MONTY: A is for American. B is for beautiful, like America the Beautiful. And C is for country, like God bless this beautiful American country! Ooooh, I love it. (He falls to his knees, kisses the floor.)

TEACHER: (Grabs MONTY by the collar like a dog.) Here, have a dog biscuit. (MONTY scarfs up imaginary dog biscuit, then is led back to his seat on all fours by TEACHER.) Now, who's next? Oh yes, Hopi.

ESPERANZA: (Rises prissily, goes to center stage.) A is for Avon, as in "Ding dong, Avon calling." B is for burgers, which I love, and beans, which I hate! (Sneers at FRANCISCO.) And C is for can't as in "I can't speak Spanish."

And we have a new Buick Riviera, and my sister goes to the University of California, and we live in a tract home . . .

TEACHER: (Leading her back to her seat.) Yes, dear! Just fine!

ESPERANZA: Really, really we do!

TEACHER: I believe you. That deserves a bean . . . uh, I mean B plus. (Pause.) Now let's hear from . . . Franky?

FRANCISCO: Yeah, Teach?

TEACHER: What do you mean "yeah, Teach?" You know my name is Mr. White.

FRANCISCO: I know what your name is, ese. But you seem to forget that my name is Francisco, loco.

TEACHER: Get up and give your report, you hoodlum.

FRANCISCO: Orale, ese vato, llévate la suave. (Moves to center stage.) A is for amor, como amor de mi raza.

TEACHER: What!

FRANCISCO: B is for barrio como where the raza lives. (TEACHER grows.) And C is carnalismo.

TEACHER: (Heated.) How many times have I told you about speaking Spanish in my classroom?! Now what did you say?

FRANCISCO: Carnalismo.

TEACHER: (At the limit of his patience.) And what does that mean?

FRANCISCO: Brotherhood.

TEACHER: (Blows up.) Get out!!

FRANCISCO: Why? I was only speaking my language. I'm a Chicano, ¿que no?

TEACHER: Because I don't understand you, and the rest of the class doesn't understand you.

FRANCISCO: So what? When I was small, I didn't understand English, and you kept flunking me and flunking me instead of teaching me.

TEACHER: You are permanently expelled from this high school!

FRANCISCO: Big deal! You call yourself a teacher! I can communicate in two languages. You can only communicate in one. Who's the teacher, Teach? (Starts to exit.)

MONTY: We're not all like that, teacher.

FRANCISCO: ¡Tú te me callas! (Pushes MONTY aside and exits.)

TEACHER: That's the last straw! A is for attention. B is for brats like that. And C is for cut out. High school dismissed! (TEACHER exits, taking high school sign with him. MALCOLM exits also at opposite side of stage. ABRAHAM, FLORENCE, ESPERANZA and MONTY rise, facing each other.)

MONTY: (Looking at FLORENCE.) Oh, Hopi?

ESPERANZA: (Looking at ABRAHAM.) Yes?

ABRAHAM: (Looking at ESPERANZA.) Oh, Flo?

FLORENCE: (Looking at MONTY.) Yeah?

ABRAHAM and MONTY: (Together.) Do you wanna break up?

FLORENCE and ESPERANZA: (Together.) Yeah! (MONTY takes FLORENCE by the arm; ABRAHAM takes ESPERANZA.

MONTY: Oh boy, let's go to a party.

ABRAHAM: Let's go to a fiesta. (All exit.)

State College. Backstage sounds: Police siren, shouts of "pigs off campus!" College PROFESSOR enters and places sign on stand. It reads, "State College." FRANCISCO enters pushing a broom.

FRANCISCO: Oh, professor?

PROFESSOR: Yes?

FRANCISCO: I want to go to college.

PROFESSOR: Didn't you drop out of high school?

FRANCISCO: Simón, but I still want to go to college. I want to educate myself.

PROFESSOR: Well, that's tough. (Exits.)

FRANCISCO: Pos, mira, qué jijo . . . (Swings broom. FLORENCE enters followed by MONTY. FRANCISCO freezes.)

FLORENCE: Guess what, folks? Monty and I are living to-

gether. Isn't that right, Monty?

MONTY: That's right, baby. Just me and you.

FLORENCE: Do you love me, Monty?

MONTY: Oh, you know I do.

FLORENCE: Then, come to mamma!

MONTY: Ay mamasota, una gabacha! (*He runs over to her and begins to kiss her passionately.*)

FLORENCE: (*Swooning.*) Oh, you Latin lovers.

MONTY: (*Suddenly peeved.*) Latin lovers? Your people have been oppressing my people for 150 years!

FLORENCE: Yes, Monty!

MONTY: You gabachas are all alike!

FLORENCE: (*The guilty liberal.*) Oh yes, Monty!

MONTY: And that's why I'm going to give it to you! (*Rolls up his sleeve, clenches fist.*) Right between the you-know-what. (*Grabs her and begins to kiss her again passionately.*) ¡Viva Zapata! (*Makes out again.*) ¡Viva Villa! (*Raises fist.*) ¡Viva la Revolución! (*Wraps a leg around her. Kisses her. Then falls to the floor exhausted.*)

FLORENCE: (*Sitting on his back.*) Oh, Monty. You do that so well.

MONTY: (*Puffing underneath.*) Shut up. While my people are starving in the barrio, your people are sitting fat and reech.

FLORENCE: Reech?

MONTY: Rich! Rich, you beech. Oh, my accent slept . . . slopped, sloped! What am I saying?

FLORENCE: (*Noticing FRANCISCO.*) Monty, look, a chicken-o.

MONTY: A what?

FLORENCE: A Mexican-American?

MONTY: A what?

FLORENCE: An American of Mexican descent?

MONTY: I'm going to give you one more chance. I'm going to spell it out for you. (*Spells out C-H-I-C-A-N-O in the air.*) What's this?

FLORENCE: (*Reading his movements.*) C!

MONTY: And this and this? (*H and I.*)

FLORENCE: C-H-I . . . Chic! Chica . . . oh, Chicano! Chicano! (*Jumps up and down.*)

MONTY: Good! Now get out. And don't come back until I call you. (*FLORENCE exits.*) 'Cause this is a job for . . . Super-macho! (*Approaches FRANCISCO. Anglo accent to his Spanish.*) ¡Qué-húbole, esay bato loco? Heh, don't I know you?

FRANCISCO: ¿Qué nuevas?

MONTY: Isn't your name Francisco?

FRANCISCO: Simón.

MONTY: You're wanted.

FRANCISCO: No, I'm not! (*Begins to run across stage.*)

MONTY: For our program. (*Stops FRANCISCO.*)

FRANCISCO: What program?

FLORENCE: (*Sticking her head out from backstage.*) Now Monty?

MONTY: No, not yet. (*Turns to FRANCISCO.*) Hey, man, you know la raza is getting together! You know we have 300 years of Chicano culture? You know our women are beautiful?! Just look at them, mamasotas!

FRANCISCO: Simón, están a toda madre.

MONTY: Pero primero necesitamos unos cuantos gritos como los meros machos. Mira, fíjate, ¡Que viva la raza! (*FRANCISCO repeats.*) ¡Que viva la huelga! (*FRANCISCO repeats.*)

FLORENCE: (*Enters.*) Look, Monty, I'm getting tired of waiting, godamit!

MONTY: (*Turns to FLORENCE.*) Okay, just wait a minute. Just one more. (*Turns to FRANCISCO.*) Uno más pero éste con muchos tú sabes qué, ¿eh? ¡Que viva la revolución!

FRANCISCO: ¿La revolución . . . ? (*Looks at FLORENCE.*) Pos que viva, y a comenzar con esa gabacha, jija de . . .

MONTY: Hey, wait a minute, man. That's not where it's at, bato.

This is what you call "universal love." I don't think you're ready for college. (FLORENCE jumps on MONTY's back.) And when you are, come look for me up at the Mexican Opportunity Commission Organization: MOCO. And I'm the Head Moco. Chicano Power, carnal! (Exits.)

FRANCISCO: (To audience.) No, hombre, está más mocosos que la... (HOPI and ABRAHAM enter stage left. ABRAHAM is wearing a ten gallon hat.)

ESPERANZA: Guess what, folks? Abraham and I are engaged. Isn't that right, Abraham?

ABRAHAM: That's right, baby. Just me and you. (He leans her over to kiss her.)

ESPERANZA: (Snapping back up. To FRANCISCO.) What are you looking at?

FRANCISCO: Oh! Esperanza, ¿no te acuerdas de mí?

ESPERANZA: My name is Hopi.

FRANCISCO: Orale, esa, no te...

ABRAHAM: Is that Mexican bothering you?

ESPERANZA: Just ignore him, sugar plum, just ignore him. (They move stage right.) ABRAHAM: Do you know that my dad owns 200,000 acres of lettuce in the Salinas Valley?

ESPERANZA: Really!

ABRAHAM: And he has 200 dumb Mexicans just like him working for him.

ESPERANZA: Really!

ABRAHAM: My daddy's a genius!

ESPERANZA: Oh! You're so smart! You're so intelligent! Oh, you white god, you! (Bows falling on her knees in worship.) ABRAHAM: Shucks. You don't have to do that. Why, you remind me of a little brown squaw my grandpappy used to have.

ESPERANZA: Squaw! (Getting up in anger.)

ABRAHAM: Don't get mad, my little taco. My little tamale. My little frijol. (Pronounced free hole.)

FRANCISCO: Free hole?

ABRAHAM: Besides, I've got a surprise for you. Why, just the other day my pappy made me president.

ESPERANZA: President?

ABRAHAM: President!

ESPERANZA: Of the company?

ABRAHAM: Of the Future Farmers of America.

ESPERANZA: (Disappointed.) Oh, Abraham.

FRANCISCO: (Laughing, moves up to HOPI.) ¿Oyes, por eso venistes al colegio? ¿A toparse con un pendejo?

ESPERANZA: Well, at least he's not out on the corner pushing dope.

ABRAHAM: You Mexicans ought to be out in the fields.

ESPERANZA: (To ABRAHAM.) You tell him, sugar.

FRANCISCO: That's all you think I can do, huh? Well I'm gonna go to college on the E.O.P. program!

ESPERANZA: Look. I made it through college without any assistance. I don't see why you can't.

FRANCISCO: (Mimics her.) I made it through college... (PROFESSOR enters stage center, MONTY and FLOR-ENCE enter stage right.)

PROFESSOR: Ladies and gentlemen, can we prepare for our college seminar? (Spots FRANCISCO.) Aren't you the custodian?

FRANCISCO: Yes, but, a... Monty wants to talk to you.

MONTY: Oh, sir, we thought we might be able to get him in under MOCO, you know, Mexican Opportunity Commission Organization?

PROFESSOR: Now look, Monty, we got you in here and unless you want to be out, get back into your place. (To FRANCISCO.) No, I'm sorry, there's no room. No room! (Pushes him out.)

FRANCISCO: I want to go to college!

PROFESSOR: These students, they don't understand. (To audience.) They don't realize that there is no room in our college, no room at all. In this college there is not room for one more

student. Not one more minority student. (MALCOLM enters stage right wearing a black shirt, black leather jacket and black beret. He is carrying a rifle. ABRAHAM begins to shake and points at him.)

PROFESSOR: (To ABRAHAM.) I'll handle it. (Moves over to MALCOLM.) Pardon me, boy, but are you registered? (MALCOLM cocks rifle, PROFESSOR looks at rifle chamber, looks at MALCOLM, looks at audience.) He's registered.

ALL: He's registered.

FRANCISCO: (Peeking back in.) ¿Vistes eso, Moctezuma?

PROFESSOR: No, no, out! Out! (MOCTEZUMA helps PROFESSOR push FRANCISCO out.)

MONTY: (Pushes him out.) I'll see that it doesn't happen again, sir.

PROFESSOR: Well, see that it doesn't. Now class, in order to qualify for graduation, you must deliver one final report. And it must be concise, logical and have conviction. Miss Florence, you're first.

FLORENCE: A is for anti as in anti-war. B is for Berkeley as in anti-war Berkeley. And C is for chick as in anti-war Berkeley chick.

PROFESSOR: Well, that was a very personal and revealing account, Miss Florence, and that should qualify for...

ABRAHAM: That stunk! And if you pass her, I'll have your job. Remember, you are working for my daddy!

MONTY: Oh, sir, please give her one more chance.

PROFESSOR: Yes, just get back to your seat, Monty. I was about to say that it lacked conviction. Try again, Miss Florence. (Stands next to her.)

FLORENCE: A is for adult.

PROFESSOR: A-huh.

FLORENCE: B is for become, as to become an adult.

PROFESSOR: It happens to the best of us.

FLORENCE: And C is for cop-out, as to become an adult and

cop-out.

PROFESSOR: That is the American way, Miss Florence. You will graduate! Let's see who's next... Malcolm.

MALCOLM: (Moves forward menacingly.) A is for Afro, as in Afro-American. B is for Black, as in Afro-American Black Panther. And C is for Cleaver, Eldridge Cleaver, Afro-American Black Panther! (Gives panther salute.)

PROFESSOR: Well, I see the logic, but I don't like it.

MALCOLM: Good, that's the way we want it!

PROFESSOR: All right! All right! You'll graduate.

ABRAHAM: He graduates? (He begins to pantomime different ways of killing MALCOLM. Machine gun, grenades, airplane and finally builds a rocket.) A is for anti. (Puts first stage of missile.) B is for ballistic. (Builds second stage.) And M is for missile. (Puts final stage on missile. During the above, MALCOLM has just been standing, cool and collected. Everybody but MALCOLM begins the countdown.)

ALL: 5-4-3-2-1 Fire! (They make whistling noise of a rocket in the air. As the rocket lands with a loud noise, MALCOLM turns around and points gun at ABRAHAM.)

ABRAHAM: (Scared like a boy.) A is for animal. B is for back off. And C is for coward, Mama! (Exits.)

PROFESSOR: Abraham, come back! (FRANCISCO enters stage left dressed as a brown beret with rifle in hand.)

FRANCISCO: ¿Ya ves, Moctezuma? (MONTY tries to push him out, but is thrown back.) ¡Un lado!

PROFESSOR: Just a minute! Just a minute! (To FRANCISCO.) You want to go to college? What are your qualifications?

FRANCISCO: My qualifications? Pos, mira que jijo de... (Pulls back rifle into position to hit TEACHER from the front and MALCOLM pokes his gun at his back. They freeze and ESPERANZA walks over and moves around FRANCISCO, checking him out. She moves back to her place.)

PROFESSOR: (Jumps up and they unfreeze.) All right, you're in! FRANCISCO: Where do I sit?

PROFESSOR: Over there! (*Frantically.*) This is getting out of hand. Monty, Monty, my boy, your report.

MONTY: A is for American like a Mexican-American.

PROFESSOR: Wonderful!

MONTY: And B is for bright, like a bright Mexican-American.

PROFESSOR: Great! Great!

MONTY: And C is for comprado like a bright, Mexican-American comprado.

PROFESSOR: Bought and sold! Monty, my boy, you will graduate. Congratulations! And as you go forward into this great society, I want you to remember one thing. (*Points forward.*) I want you always to move forward, move forward in that great American tradition. (*MONTY has been looking to where the PROFESSOR has been pointing, gets scared and sneaks off to his place, moving backward.*) Forever forward. (*Looks around when he realizes that MONTY has left.*) Monty! Monty! (*Getting hysterical.*) Oh! This is getting out of hand! Out of hand! Let's see. Oh, yes, Hopi?

ESPERANZA: (*She has been talking to FRANCISCO and now has her arms around his neck.*) Who?

PROFESSOR: (*Scared.*) Hopi?

ESPERANZA: My name is Esperanza, you marrano!

PROFESSOR: Your report, please.

ESPERANZA: Orale, llévate la suave. (*Walks pachuca fashion to center stage.*) A is for action, as in acción social. B is for batos, as in acción social de batos. And C is for Chicana as in Acción Social de Batos y Chicanas. (*FRANCISCO lets out with a grito.*)

FRANCISCO: ¿Y ahora qué dices, Moctezuma?

PROFESSOR: All right, Francisco, your report.

FRANCISCO: Hey, wait a minute, man. I just got in here.

MONTY: What's the matter? Can't do it, huh?

PROFESSOR: (*Regaining a sense of authority.*) Is that your problem, boy, can't you do it?

FRANCISCO: Yes, I can! And don't call me boy!

PROFESSOR: (*Cringes in fear again.*) Fine, fine.

FRANCISCO: A is for advanced, as the advanced culture of Indigenous American Aztlán. B is for bronce as in the advanced culture of Indigenous American Aztlán, which brought bronze civilization to the Western Hemisphere. And C is for century, as the advanced culture of Indigenous American Aztlán, which brought bronze civilization to the Western Hemisphere and which, moreover, will create el nuevo hombre in the twenty-first century, El Chicano. Give me my diploma.

PROFESSOR: Just a minute, hold it right there! (*Goes to side and grabs book.*) I have here in my hand the book of American knowledge. There is nothing in here about As-talan, nothing in here about Chicken-o. In fact there is nothing in here about nothing and, as you can see, (*Turns book towards the audience, there is a dollar sign printed on page.*) this is the honest truth which is close to all of our American hearts. No, I'm sorry, but under the circumstances, I don't think that you will (*FRANCISCO has gun in PROFESSOR's face and MALCOLM puts his rifle to his back.*) be here next year, because you will graduate. (*MALCOLM and FRANCISCO move to their places.*) And now, students, line up for that golden moment, graduation! And here to present the awards on this fine day is none other than that great statesman, that golden-mouthed orator, that old grape sucker himself, the President of the United States, Mr. Richard Nixon. (*NIXON moves in from stage right, he is wearing cap and gown, giving peace symbol. Shakes hands with PROFESSOR.*) A few words, please, Mr. President.

NIXON: I'd like to say just three things today, only three. First, don't forget that great American dollar which put you through college. (*Applause.*) Second, always kiss ass; and third, eat plenty of Salinas scab lettuce!

PROFESSOR: Thank you, Mr. President. Now, if you'll just step this way, we shall begin the awards. First, we have Miss Florence, a fine girl. (FLORENCE moves to center stage, receives diploma. NIXON places a graduation cap on her head. Cap comes with white hood, which covers her head completely. She moves back to her place.) Next we have, Monty. Good boy. (MONTY walks up and kisses the PRESIDENT's hand. Then he places cap over his own head, goes back to his place.) Next is Willie.

PRESIDENT: Here we are, Willie.

MALCOLM: (Takes diploma.) My name is Malcolm, you white mutha. (PRESIDENT and PROFESSOR duck.)

PRESIDENT: And here's your white bag.

MALCOLM: I don't need that.

PROFESSOR: But what are you going to do without it?

MALCOLM: You're going to find out. (He walks to stage right and whistles.) Come here, baby. (FLORENCE takes off her cap, moves to center stage, throws cap on floor, walks off stage with MALCOLM.)

PRESIDENT: A militant!

PROFESSOR: That's okay. There's a whole lot of them that aren't. Next we have Francisco. (FRANCISCO moves up, takes diploma, moves quickly back to his place. PRESIDENT tries to put cap on him, misses and almost falls on ESPERANZA. He backs off cautiously.)

PRESIDENT: Speedy, these Mexicans. Fast!

PROFESSOR: Next, we have Esperanza. (She moves to center stage, takes diploma.)

PRESIDENT: And here's your white bag.

ESPERANZA: I don't need your white bag!

PRESIDENT: But you can't exist in our society without me.

PROFESSOR: What are you going to do without your white bag? (From audience someone gets up and yells, "Hey, I want to go to college.")

ESPERANZA: That's what I'm going to do. I'm going to help

my carnales get into college.

BATO: ¡Ayúdenme! (Runs toward stage.)

PROFESSOR: No! (FRANCISCO and ESPERANZA try to help BATO from audience. There's tug of war.)

BATO: ¡Sí! (With FRANCISCO and ESPERANZA.)

PROFESSOR: No!

BATO: ¡Sí!

PROFESSOR: No!

BATO: ¡Sí! (Jumps up onstage, pushing PROFESSOR back. BATO waves to audience and yells.) Orale, I made it into college. (Gives Chicano handsake to FRANCISCO and ESPERANZA.)

PRESIDENT: Well, I can see that my job here is done. I shall now take my students, student . . . into the great white world. Right face! Forward march! (Exits stage right followed by MONTY.)

FRANCISCO: ¡Moctezuma! ¡Quédate con tu raza!

ESPERANZA: Ah, let him go. There's more where he came from.

FRANCISCO: ¡Pos, que le pongan! (Students start coming in from all sides of stage, everyone starts pointing at PROFESSOR yelling.) Teach us! Teach us!

PROFESSOR: Just a minute. Just a minute. (To audience.) So many brown faces, brown minds, brown ideas, what is this? A chocolate factory? (Everybody jumps at him.) I'm going to a college where they understand. Where they appreciate good white professors, where there won't be any Chicanos . . . like Fresno State College. President Baxter, help!!! (Exits stage right. Everybody starts looking for change. BATO begins to take collection.)

FRANCISCO: ¡Colecta, para qué?

FIRST NEW STUDENT: La birra.

SECOND NEW STUDENT: La mota.

THIRD NEW STUDENT: El wine.

FRANCISCO: Pos, ¿no están bien, calabazas? Estamos en

colegio. Hay que aprender de nuestra cultura, nuestra raza, de Aztlán.

BATO: (*Turns to next student.*) But who's going to teach us? (*They move on down the line asking each other the same question.*)

ESPERANZA: (*Last in line, asks FRANCISCO.*) Who's going to teach us?

FRANCISCO: Who's going to teach us?

ALL: Our own people! (*They point at audience.*)

FRANCISCO: ¿Entonces, qué se dice? ¡Viva . . .!

ALL: ¡La raza!

FRANCISCO: ¡Viva!

ALL: ¡La huelga!

FRANCISCO: ¡Chicano!

ALL: Power! (*Actors get audience to shout "Chicano power." Then all sing "bella ciao."*)

## The Militants

1969

### Characters

Dr. Bolillo  
Chicano #1  
Chicano #2

*A Gabacho enters and approaches the microphone.*

GABACHO: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, I am Dr. Bolillo and I am here to welcome you to the University of California's lecture series. We are very pleased to bring you an especially delightful speaker this evening. He is a well known member of the Mexican-American community, a rapper and most importantly, a militant. He has kindly consented to come here tonight and "tell it like it is." It is with great pleasure, therefore, that I now introduce this young man who is going to come out here and "sock it to us." His name is Benjamin Dejo — Ben Dejo! Let's give him a big hand. (*Applause.*) Ben? (*Two Chicano militants enter. The GABACHO only sees one of them. He shakes his hand. The other militant taps him on the shoulder. Turning.*) Oh, another one. Well, there must be some mistake. We only asked for one. Which one of you is Ben Dejo? (*Both militants step forward.*) I see. Okay. Well, sit down while