

LUCHA

Registered WGAw

FADE IN:

INT/EXT. POLICE ACADEMY MONTAGE -- DAY

Opening shot is an impactful view of LUPITA MACHADA--known as Lu--a big gorgeous Chicana in tight, police/fatigue workout clothes doing some mat exercise. She's a babe, she's tough, and she's in dynamite shape.

Lu shows dead-eyed concentration on the firing range, drilling tight groups with pistol and rifle alike.

Opening montage continues to show Lu off: running through sun-dappled woods like a panther, doing some outrageous splits and presses, boxing the martial arts bags, or just sweating--looking awesome and sexy in general. A tawny blaze of a girl, our Lu, athletic and generally hell on wheels. The montage slows down as she does some martial arts with another woman, both of them dressed in identical navy gym suits.

INT ACADEMY GYMNASIUM -- DAY

As music drops to the point we can hear dialog, the montage freezes into real time--the unarmed combat class. A familiar scene; an entire class of Cadets in sweats, listening to the INSTRUCTOR on the mats. The Instructor is also par for the course; buff and tuff and bent on instilling manhood. He claps for attention and the entire class stops workouts to watch a Tall Cadet doing a half-assed job of subduing a stocky Black Cadet.

INSTRUCTOR

Damn! Did anybody learn anything the last ten weeks? Richards! Get out here. Pick a perp.

RICHARDS, a rangy cadet with a mean streak, steps up confidently, scans his classmates perfunctorily, and points.

RICHARDS

Machaca!

LU

(Stepping right up)
It's "Machada", dork.

RICHARDS

Whatever, Little Latin Lupe Lu.

INSTRUCTOR

Knock it off, Richards. You agress first, Lu.

Lu takes a position behind the smirking Richards and suddenly grabs him around the upper body. He does the standard Neilson Method defense, ends up tossing her onto the mat. She gets to her feet and turns to face the Cadets, back to Richards. He moves to grab her, but instead of trying the same grip, he roughly cups her hips and pulls her to him, pumps her, ala doggie.

Lu's face is a frozen mask. The class gasps and the Instructor heads over, pissed off.

But Lu suddenly bends forward from the waist, pulling Richards with her, then snaps her head back into his nose, creating a bloodburst. Swiveling her hips to the side, she backhands her fist into his crotch, then pivots to kick him off his feet.

Lu looms over Richards, lying on his side in fetal pose. She kicks him hard in the stomach.

She turns around and starts to walk back to the class, who are stunned into silence. She is blocked by the Instructor, who stands toe to toe and yells into her face.

INSTRUCTOR

Are you out of your mind, Machada?
Whose side are you on here?

LU

Mine.

INSTRUCTOR

Yeah, what I thought. I already said you don't have the stuff for law enforcement. So somebody gropes you. Aw gee.

He is apoplectic by now, crowding into her face.

INSTRUCTOR

You think nobody out on the street
is going to dis you? Are you going
to trash everybody you arrest?
What's the matter with you?

LU

You're about to tell me.

INSTRUCTOR

(Still raging)

How you gonna cope, Machada? What
you going to do if some asshole does
something like THIS?

He grabs her face with his hand, throwing her down. She
falls passively.

INSTRUCTOR

What you gonna do, somebody does
THIS?

He steps on her hand.

She suddenly tightens her hand on his foot, then sweeps her
other foot, impacting his knee with an audible snap. As he
gasps and bends to his leg, she slams the heel of her hand
into his face, knocking him flat, then rolls to her feet.

LU

Probably something like that. Why?

INT. TROPICANA -- NIGHT

Subdued SOUNDTRACK MUSIC drifts out of a speaker somewhere.

Lu sits in a theater chair, thoughtful and disgusted.

SOL (OS)

So ya handled that one with your
usual charm and finesse, huh,
Lollypop? You'd have been getting
Federal pay, building retirement.
Busting guys for money instead of
giggles. But you can't handle
authority.

LU

And I don't let authority handle me.
So I guess it's a push.

SOL is a sixtyish old sport, so obviously a promoter there's no need to mention it.

Sol and Lu watch the stage together as he talks. Lu, sitting two seats away, is keeping an eye on what he's looking at, mostly to keep from looking at Sol.

SOL

No, Lupita baby, it's a TKO. I ask you again, you don't take what I'm offering here, what you going to do? Keep on teaching martial arts to femnazis for twelve bucks an hour?

Sol and Lu are seated at the main stage of the Tropicana, a plush Hollywood nightclub where some of the sexiest women in Los Angeles wrestle in mud or oil. At the moment the room is empty except for a Janitor and a few Techs doing techie things with the stage and lights.

On stage two very Built Women in swimsuits wrestle with each other while two other Tryouts fidget at the side. While Sol and Lu talk, the attractive women are constantly wrestling, either in foreground with Lu and Sol beyond or in the background beyond them.

LU

Some sort of pro sports, I guess.

SOL

Pro sports? You got kicked off the SC volleyball team, doll. You blew the gymnastics scholarship for crissakes. And you're going to handle professional discipline?

Lu frowns and shrugs, eyes the voluptuous bodies of the girls in the mud pit.

SOL

I don't suppose pro wrestling...

LU

Get real, Sol. Not only is it fake...

SOL

I always thought of it as soap opera for men.

LU

But the women don't even wrestle, they're just bimbo beef.

SOL

Well, what happened with the boxing? You were doing great with that, weren't you?

LU

You know yourself, Solly. There's no real money or future for women who don't have the same last names as heavyweight champs. And they won't let me fight men so it's all a second class riff.

SOL

Ah, ya poor thing. You're too much, kid.

(Louder to Built Women)

Thank you ladies, take a break. In fact, take a shower.

The two Built Women nod at Sol and head towards the ropes.

LU

Go with the redhead, Sol. She's tough and got attitude

SOL

But the blonde's got the titties. Nice for you you've got both, but you oughta know which pays the rent.

(Louder to Tryouts)

Let's see your stuff, there, cuties. Impress me.

The Tryouts start circling warily.

SOL

Contact, ladies, contact. There's no prize for winning the match, here, just putting on a show.

One of the Tryouts grabs the other by the hair and starts bulling her around.

SOL

By Jove, I think she's got it.
(To Lu)
Hey, ever try like, I dunno,
bodyguard for some rich bitch?

LU

There's no real challenge in that,
Sol. It's just shouldering through
people, rushing drunks. There
aren't really any ninjas out there
trying to assassinate wealthy ho's.

SOL

Pity, too. Well, I hear you were an
all-time dominatrix. In fact that
Madame Whatsherjugs still bugs me
about you taking a few calls.

LU

Ah, that was such a bore.

SOL

Bored, she was. You couldn't even
cut it as a whore.

LU

Not whore, goddess. I could've cut
it. But you know what? I just
couldn't let them... You know...
Hell, I don't know...

SOL

Win. You couldn't let them get off
on you a little, even when they're
paying the freight. You screw with
your eyes closed so you won't have
to see a man enjoying himself?

LU

Something like that maybe. What do I
know?

SOL

Which brings us back to what am I
going to do with you. All the other
girls know you win some, you lose
some. We're not going for blood,
we're entertainers here. Artistes.
But you gotta be Vince Fucking
Lombardi.

LU

Sorry Sol. Look, give me another chance. I'll patch things up with Tiffany...

SOL

She'll be rill thrilled. Look, a damned expensive plastic surgeon "patched things up" with Tiffany. So I paid for that nose, twice now. The tits, too, if you just gotta know. At least you didn't break them. Do you know what I mean by the term "investment"? Money, *capishe*?

LU

Why do you talk that mob Italian, Sol? You're Jewish, you're from Reseda.

SOL

And you're from zilch, Dolly. Unless you want to do this Tijuana gig. I wouldn't even be talking to you about it if you weren't like the son I never wanted. You haven't noticed, there are a lot of titsy wrestlers around here who are a little more manageable. I think I'm making an offer you can't refuse.

LU

Christ, Sol. Wrestle customers? That's not sports, it's not even a show. It's a full body hand job. I'd be better off turning tricks.

SOL

Hey, there's a lamp post right out front. Look, it's actually better money than here. And you want to mix it up with men, here's your chance.

LU

But I've got to let them win, right?

SOL

I don't know. Maybe they get off on having their asses kicked.

LU

Well in that case...

SOL

Thank me later Kid. And look, could you try to get along? I want to keep you on. Build your bankroll, pay your rent while you're training for that New Gladiators shtick.

LU

I'm almost there, Sol. I can win that thing, I can get the job. You know I'm better and tougher than Ice and all those dykes they use to have on there. I'm not getting any younger. It's my only shot at doing what I do best.

SOL

Right now your only chance is get your incredible ass down Mexico way, get nekkid, get muddy, and get a fucking grip.

(Shakes head)

Getting any younger, shit. I have to baby-sit you now.

LU

Thanks, Solly. Tell Tiff I said, "Hi and sorry," if you think I should.

SOL

(A measuring look)

You need to learn some compassion kiddo. Some humility wouldn't hurt, either.

LU

Yeah, it would.

EXT. LA LINEA -- DAY

MUSIC OVER: Herb Alpert's "Tijuana Taxi"

"The Line" crossing the border to the U.S. is awash of taxis and hustlers. The Cabbies are grab-assing and reading dirty comics, while the "GAMINES", or street kids, mill through them, setting up for a day of working the border traffic.

Two burr-headed eight year-olds, PEPITO and CHUCO, both totally grubby and dressed in rags, move confidently in the chaotic milieu of the borderline. Pepito is taller and smarter, the obvious leader. Chato is stocky, stolid, slower. He looks like a guttersnipe and in fact, has a bent for drugs.

The two are negotiating (using professional emoting and gestures) with a Peddler, hiring out their wobbly shopping cart to carry his heavy bags from the cab stand over the pedestrian ramp to the crossing. He finally nods, shows them a bill, and gives them each a cigarette, which they stick behind their ears.

They load his wares into the cart and cross the ramp over the lines of jostling cars.

Several Zapotec Women sit begging, all with small children around them. The tiny, primitive Women are being arranged by MAGÓN, a husky pimp for the beggars. Magón looks like the savage brute he is, but you can see the cunning--he's nobody's Artful Dodger.

He hands a small guitar to a tiny ZAPOTEC GAMIN, and gestures for him to play it. The kid flubs it and gets slapped around. The Zapotecas look elsewhere, blank-faced.

Pepito and Chuco hurry by, their "fare" trudging behind them. As they jockey across the lanes of traffic, Pepito waves to AMPARO, a ragged ten year-old girl, selling "chicles" to people waiting in cars. She is a street flower, pretty but ill-used, dragging along her five-year-old brother MOMO, a chubby-cheeked little rascal.

PEPITO

Hola Amparo! Que onda, Momo?

AMPARO

Hola, Pepito!

MOMO

(Gravely pointing)

Oha, Pito.

As the boys pass, a Driver throws a fast food bag out his window and Amparo swoops down on it, wolfing the remains of a sandwich and draining the last few drops out of a Coke can.

BLANQUITA, a tall, slim girl of eleven, is selling flowers car to car. She pauses and smears VapoRub under her eyes, causing her eyes to start watering. She gives Pepito and Chuco a teary wink.

BLANQUITA

Hola, Chuco.

CHUCO

Hola, Blanquita. Don't cry, my darling. I'll buy your stupid roses from you.

Blanquita laughs, then moves to a car window, where her "crying" gets her a quick sale and heartfelt headpat from a sympathetic Lady Tourist

They pass other GAMINES selling ugly ceramic trinkets, begging with styrofoam cups, casing pickups for things to snatch. Some wave or nod to the boys.

Two GAS HUFFING CAMINES are hiding by a truck, siphoning some gas from its tank into a cracked plaster mug in the shape of a huge breast with drinking nozzle at the nipple. Pepito grins at them, makes admonishing signs. They laugh as one takes a deep breath of the gasoline fumes and mimes ecstasy from sniffing.

At the border gate, the boys unload the cart for the Peddler, who pays them and shoulders his load to wait for the foot traffic line to pass the border inspection.

They slap fives over the money, but as they turn to go back, they spot CHATO, a hulking thug who works with Magón, moving towards them. Chato is Magón without the charm--a huge, ignorant slab of cruelty.

PEPITO

Oh, shit, it's Chato.

CHUCO

Ah, Fuck. Quick, this way.

Leaving the cart, they run out into the lanes of cars, dashing through the confusion with Chato lumbering behind them.

They reach the other side of the highway and sidewind up onto the pedestrian ramp--right into the outstretched bulk of Magón, who grins sickeningly and holds out his hand.

Pepito starts to hand over the money, but Chuco has a rebellious moment, and grabs the bill out of his hand.

CHUCO

Forget it, Magón!

Magón instantly lashes out, cuffing him to the ground. He takes the money from the recumbent boy then, as an afterthought, grabs the cigarette from behind his ear. He wags a finger at them, snarling, then walks off.

Several Gamines have gathered around. They stare at the man and give a little support to Chuco, who jumps up defiantly and shakes off their hands.

Pepito pulls his cigarette from behind his ear, lights it, then hands it to Chuco, who pauses, then accepts, takes a drag.

PEPITO

That fucking animal, Magón.

CHUCO

His mother fucked an animal, that's what.

He takes a deeper drag, tunes Pepito out. Pepito heads back for the shopping cart as the two Gas Huffers sidle up and offer Chuco a hit from their boob mug. He shrugs and squats down with them behind a taco stand to take a deep drag of fumes. His face congeals in a glazed, resentful stare.

Pepito returns, pushing the cart, and looks at Chuco, who has slipped into a stupor. Pepito takes it all in with no expression at all. He bends down and starts rousing Chuco. He gestures for help and two other Gamines help him load the younger boy into the shopping cart.

INT. "DEVIL RAYS" -- NIGHT

SOUNDTRACK MUSIC: Rowdy bar boogie

Devil Rays is everything the term "Tijuana strip club" promises and even less--loud, dark, smoke-filled, pandering and evil. On the back wall is a neon DEVIL LOGO, a leering stingray with wings curving up on the sides to resemble devil's horns, and tail curved down and around so that the tip of it pokes forward underneath the ray's body, highly suggestive of a big dick.

There is a small, rectangular wrestling ring on the stage, under the spots. The ring is filled with yellowish mud, with a narrow apron around it. Seats and boxes, filled with raunchy players of various sexes and nationalities, surround the stage where we will see Lu do her thing.

HOUSE LIGHTS DOWN

SUDDEN SILENCE, broken by TRUMPET FLOURISH--HERB ALPERT'S "THE LONELY BULL".

LU suddenly appears, spotlit on a ramp by the pit, strutting her stuff in a long black and gold satin robe spangled like a matador's "suit of lights". She also wears a black matador hat. She stands frozen, a powerful tableau under a shower of lights.

MUSIC CONTINUES OVER

She starts to move arrogantly around the stage, mimicking a matador's pinched-ass strut. Her cape flirts open, teasing flashes of flesh underneath. Customers are leaning into the ring area baying with animal lust, clutching handfuls of money. Lu torments them while a tuxedoed manager collects.

A Fat Customer leaps onto the ramp, snorting and flexing. Lu takes a stance, inviting his charge, which she neatly sidesteps, swirling her robe in a "veronica" pass. The Fat Customer gets caped right off the ramp into the mud pit, aided a little by Lu's disdainful shoe. The crowd howls its delight.

A slim, Intense Customer steps up, shedding his jacket and stepping into the pit. Lu reaches dramatically to her throat, as though frightened or overcome with emotion, then unclips the cape, which falls away, revealing her oiled and gleaming body in a very taut black thong bikini. The crowd goes wilder yet. She taunts them awhile, flaunting her body, then steps into the mud pit and waves the Intense Customer on in. He steps forward in a wrestler's crouch, licking his lips.

She mops the place up with the guy as he barely lays a finger on her. Her face is a mask of scorn. He's just the first.

SERIES OF SHOTS show her destroying a series of eager lechers, some with more exertion than others, as we watch the play of light on her bod. She fights like a tiger, looming up out of smoke and spotlights gleaming with mud, her heroic breasts heaving, her buttocks impossibly chiseled, hypertoned muscles thrumming, Amerind cheekbones and jaw jutting, roaring like the Hulk. The stuff wet dreams are made of, our Lu.

Intercut with the ballet of destruction are shots of customers checking it out. Men increasingly attracted but pissed off. One corner table, raised with a low balustrade, is occupied by several Gangsters, dressed mostly alike in black Stetsons, fast-styled western suits and white shirts. They are obviously packing.

They are deferential to one of their number, dressed like them but with a flame red shirt; a muscular, coldly handsome, commanding presence we will learn is the owner of this gin joint, RAY (or Rey if you will). He is watching Lu with a basilisk eye, growing more intent by the minute.

INT. DEVIL RAYS -- LATER THAT NIGHT

MUSIC IS LOWER, Mexican rap

The bar is closed, emptied out except for a few odd waiters, whores, and gangsters. Two women wrestlers chat over a beer at a pitside table, Sol and Lu are talking at another table, both looking fairly pleased.

RAY approaches them, his phalanx of Ray-Banned BODYGUARDS giving him plenty of space. He gives Lu a respectful salute, then slips into the vacant chair.

RAY

I didn't think she could be as wonderful as I had heard, now I see that nothing I heard did her justice.

(To Lu)

Señorita, you were incredible. The top star at this place from this moment on. Are you tired?

LU

No, but I think I'm about to have a headache.

SOL

Hey, Lu...

RAY

(Talking over Sol)

Would you consider wrestling for me professionally--the bigtime *Lucha Libre* circuit?

LU

Professional wrestling circuit in Mexico. Right up there in my ten wildest dreams.

SOL

Lu, I think you should listen, not talk. Definitely not talk.

LU

Listen to this asshole? Are you serious?

SOL

Sure, I'm serious. So is he. He promotes wrestling in Mexico. Among other interests such as owning this joint. Lu, meet your boss.

RAY

Just call me Ray.

LU

Hi, Ray. Got my foot in my mouth,
huh?

SOL

Again.

RAY

Hey, wrestlers get their feet in
their mouth all the time.

LU

So you'd be The Ray, the genuine
devil guy?

RAY

You know, down Mexico way, "Rey"
means "King", Ms. Machado.

Lu opens her mouth to reply, but Sol shuts her up, talks
over.

SOL

And what he's talking about now is
the real thing, dollnik. Women, no
holds barred, winner takes the
purse. You got eyes?

LU

Well, it's certainly worth taking a
look.

RAY

Well, that's what I'd like to give
you. A real good look.

EXT. GAMINES SHRINE - NIGHT

Pepito threads his small body through a labyrinth of junked
cars and broken concrete slabs. We can see the bottom of a
freeway ramp above him. Behind him we see Chuco
negotiating the tricky path through this dump terrain.

A faint radio plays SOUNDTRACK CUT, getting stronger as the
boys squirm towards it.

A car brakes audibly on the roadway above, then a worn tire and sack of trash flies over the rail and crashes into the maze underneath. The car peels out. The boys cover the last few yards of their trip sliding on their raggedy asses down a tilted slab of concrete.

Other Gamines have entered a clearing in the dump around them, an open spot between abutments presenting a surrealistic interior of third world discards. There are dozens of candles and cans with burning wicks in them surrounding the clearing, illuminating a large group of Gamines, including kids we saw at the line earlier. One of the Gas Huffers saunters over to examine the sack of trash from above.

Amparo is there, and comes over to hug Pepito and playfully slap Chuco, who grins. The kids are swaying to the music from a battered boombox, passing cigarettes among themselves, and sniffing a little gas and glue. This is their place, a fortress adults don't bother worming into. It's a social hall and also a shrine.

One abutment has become an altar and artwork, where kids have piled things up for years, creating something out of nothing. It is a phantasmagoria of graffiti and "found art", in a weird way resembling the front end of a Catholic church.

At the center of it all, protected in a niche made from an automobile hood, is a poster of the Virgin of Guadalupe, Mexico's own special religious figure. Above her serene blue gaze is attached a bull's head with a bicycle handlebars for horns and a crucifix on its brow. Throughout the entire mound/sculpture are shining candle-vases with peeling icons on them.

Amparo stands up and moves to the altar, starts lighting the candles. A hush comes over the kids, the radio cuts off.

Kids are furtively getting rid of their smokes and intoxicants. They move towards the altar, forming a semi-circle in front of it. A Dark Girl with a much smaller kid on her hip crosses herself, staring at the Virgin. There is a sudden moment of silence, a collective catching of breath. The eyes of the Virgin open.

Her eyes sweep the group, looking at them with concern and ineffable love.

EXT. TIJUANA COLISEUM - NIGHT

A rough, scarred door in the Municipal Coliseum fills screen, plastered with layers of Mexican wrestling and rancharo band posters. Two burly wrestler arms push it open to instant bedlam of crowd noise, distorted Loudspeaker Music, frantic Spanish play-by-play announcing, and enormous sweaty motion. Lu, Sol, and Ray walk through the door, flanked by gigantic wrestler Bodyguards.

INT. LUCHA LIBRE ARENA - NIGHT

LOUD, ROWDY SOUNDTRACK MUSIC Narco-corrido by Los Tucanes de Tijuana.

The place is a madhouse of insane fans, flashy mayhem on the raised stage, and various craziness in the cleared aisle in front of the stage. Ray's Bodyguards push the group down the aisle and past stage. They stand there awhile, watching the action from close-up.

A hothead behind them pops up to yell at them, but one Bodyguard turns around and pushes him down into his seat. Lu takes a close look at the action. She smirks a little, but keeps on scrutinizing. She seems to find it exciting, but shakes her head and rolls her eyes at Ray, who motions the Bodyguards to continue on.

INT. COLISEUM BALCONY - NIGHT

LU, SOL and RAY are standing at the rail of a private balcony above the arena floor, looking down at the action. Two Female Wrestlers are going at it below, and being none too dainty about it.

RAY

See, the *Lucha Libre* isn't just for men. I also manage a few *luchadoras*.

LU

Well, they seem to be doing it for real.

RAY

No simulated orgasms in this production.

LU

But there seem to be "Good Guys" and "Bad Guys". How does that work?

RAY

It's more formalized here. There are two basic types of wrestler, *Tecnicos* and *Rudos*.

SOL

Okay, now you're shitting me.

RAY

Would I joke about something as serious as masked wrestlers in capes?

(To Lu)

See, the *Tecnicos* are the admirable guys, who are skilled and talented and handsome, dedicated and all that. They wrestle against the *Rudos*, who are mostly rotten attitude. Same way with the women, *Tecnicas*, *Rudas*. You get to decide which you're going to be.

LU

Well, which do you think?

RAY

Well, you've got the talent, the looks. But I kind of think you're a *Ruda* at heart.

LU

You bet your sweet ass I am.

RAY

So there you have you.

SOL

The suspense was killing me.

Ray beckons to somebody off screen.

RAY

Black Orchid is the best *luchadora* in my stable.

BLACK ORCHID looms up beside Ray, glaring at Lu. She's a hundred kilos of lesbian panic, lumpy and threatening in her black mask and cape.

RAY

Want to tell her she's just a clown doing a fake gig, go ahead. I'll translate and hold your coat.

Lu steps closer for a better look.

LU

Piece of cake, Ray. But I believe you.

RAY

Hey, around here, you wanna get rough, you get rough. And if you can't get any decent competition from the girls on the tour, maybe we could fix you up with somebody like Dinamita or Black Venom.

LU

Don't really ring a bell.

RAY

(Laughing)

Don't be too sure.

(Calling off screen)

Dino, ven aca!

DINAMITA lumbers up, two meters of rough, buff and hard to bluff. He wears a spangly mask, but no cape over his blocky, oiled muscles. He stands a little too close to Lu and looks down at her impassively.

LU

Whoa.

She reaches up and thumps the hard flat slab of Dinamita's pectorals. He growls at her menacingly.

LU

(Impressed)

Damn!

Dinamita turns and trundles away.

LU

I gotta say, Ray, you know how to turn a girl on.

CHATO

It's a possibility down the road. *Bella y Bestia*, you know. A fair fight, you'd be on your own. Nobody's ever done it, but I think we could do some smash box office with it.

SOL

Now that you mention box office, Ray. You draw a lot of hicks to these things but what are they really coughing up to get in here and slobber? Like *nada*, that's what. Where's the money going to come from? Just to get us clear on it, you understand.

RAY

Hey, I understand. First of all, there is television.

(Points to cameras)

Not as sweet as in the States at this point, but we're starting to televise Lucha on American TV. There's a big Latino market, but we plan on crossing over to the gringos. People have seen about all WWF has to offer at this point. And your girl might be just what gets us there.

LU

You mean people in the States would see me doing this?

RAY

(Grinning)

Worried about exposure, *chica*? Doesn't sound like you, somehow. And in case you didn't notice, *Luchadoras* wear masks. Or maybe you're thinking the exposure could be a good thing? Hey it didn't do Sable any harm, did it?

SOL

What else?

RAY

It gets bigger, builds on itself. This might seem like an intangible, but you step right into this as a top-billed star, *Chiquita*. No building up to it, no dues to pay. You're the goods.

Sol nods, impressed.

RAY

You're going to be highly visible on both sides of the border right away and get magazine coverage. Like maybe Playboy, ever think about that? Girls of SOB wrestling.

Lu arches an eyebrow at that.

RAY

South of the Border, honey. I can almost guarantee a major spread in the Mexican and South American editions of Playboy. And that just might impress those Gladiators.

Lu shoots Sol a look. How did he know about that? Sol shrugs.

RAY

Believe me, that'll look like small time to you a year from now.

SOL

Yet all we really have so far is grubby pesos at the door, Mexican TV, and possibly some U.S. TV.

RAY

So having fun and bruising your knuckles doesn't count for anything any more? Seriously, Sol, there's alot more I'd like to show you. My office tomorrow, before the bar opens? Stick around here, check it out as long as you want. I've got to go down to the locker room, do a Gipper on the Earthquake Bros.

Ray shakes hands and leaves, accompanied by his Bodyguards. Black Orchid and Dynamita follow slowly.

They pass close to Lu, being intimidating. She looks up at Dinamita's studded black leather mask and bats her eyes, then growls gutturally in his face. Dinamita links behind his leather mask, then smiles. Black Orchid snorts angrily and thunders out the door.

EXT. -- LA LINEA - NIGHT

MUSIC OVER a speechless sequence.

A van with the Devil Rays logo lurks along the sidelines of the border crossing craziness. It prowls slowly with Chato sitting in the sliding side door. As it comes to a group of Gamines, Zapotec Women, and Beggars he shakes them down for the day's pickings.

When in doubt, Chato frisks them, or even pulls off their clothes or runs a hand up for a quick body cavity search. When he finds sequestered money, he cuffs the offenders and tosses them roughly into the back of the van. When the van is totally packed, Chato closes the door, the sliding black slab BLACKING OUT the scene.

INT. ABANDONED FACTORY -- NIGHT

MUSIC CONTINUES OVER another speechless scene

The Devil Rays van is pulled up in front of the huge, gaping door of an abandoned factory. We can see through the door as Chato manhandles the last stragglers out of the van, two Zapotec Women fretting with babies and impassively accepting his cuffs and kicks. Magón, standing inside the door, is taking the unsold junk from Vendors and handing it to two Henchmen to stack away for tomorrow.

The Zapotec Women move deeper into the shadows the building, revealing it as a big dormitory for a whole herd of street Beggars and Gamines. Several Zapotec Women are cooking over fires, while children wait with empty bowls. Older Beggars are bedding down in ratnests of raggedy sheets. Gamines are sleeping in a heap in the corner.

Shafts of red light stab across the dirty bodies in the "stable". Everybody looks towards door, where a police car has pulled in and flashed its light bar. CU on two Gamines looking at each other with guarded hope. The car's doors open and two Cops step out and stroll into the building. Magón goes out to meet them, greets them familiarly. The Cops talk to him, the Magón points back into the building. He and the Cops roll back to the sprawling pile of Gamines.

One Cop talks briefly into a portable radio, then to Magón, who shrugs and taps out a Shaved Head Boy, who holds his hands, covered with green and red rubber bands, in front of his face in fear.

A cop's hand, wearing black leather fingerless gloves, reaches in, grabs the Shave Head Boy by the nape, and hauls him off. If we had thought the Cops came to rescue the kids, we're over it by now.

INT. RAY'S CLINIC - NIGHT

MUSIC CONTINUES OVER, scene continues speechless

Two Orderlies in white coveralls are lounging in reception area of what appears to be an upscale clinic or doctor's office. JESSICA, a beautiful young woman in a fetching white uniform, steps in from behind a reception counter and speaks to them, obviously sending them on an errand. She points to an interior door.

INT. RAY'S LAB -- NIGHT

MUSIC CONTINUES OVER, scene continues speechless

The Orderlies get up grudgingly and approach the door, turning to wait while Jessica pushes a button to it. They sidle through into a laboratory, complete with lab tables, special equipment and racks of cages for experimental animals. They walk to an exterior door and open elaborate locks. Outside is a loading dock, where hands of unseen workers toss two large dog travel cages up onto the dock. The Orderlies wave down to the unseen porters below, clown around a little, pick up the cages and start back inside the lab.

Clutching the bars of the cage are a child's fingers... wrapped in rubber bands.

INT. RAY'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

About what you'd expect--flashy, gilded, full of tech toys, nudes and posters. Hi-tech chairs and a huge black glass desk. Behind the desk is a very big screen TV.

SOUNDS through open door, show that office is located in the bar: music, chairs scraping, glassware clinking, waiters talking.

Ray is holding his hands up to Sol in a "stop, wait a minute" gesture.

RAY

I hear you. I hear you. But first let me just show you this movie.

SOL

Oh, you bet, Ray. Can we get some popcorn?

Grinning victoriously, Ray whips out a remote and punches it. A Sexy Waitress pops in.

RAY

Palomitas.

The Sexy Waitress vanishes, returns a second later with a bowl of popcorn. Ray nods at Sol. The Waitress hands him the bowl, gives a questioning glance at Ray and vamooses.

SOL

You slay me, Ray.

RAY

Just watch the movie. And eat your popcorn.

The TV screen which shows a videotape of a Mexican wrestling movie already in progress. No sound. Mascara Sagrada and his caped pals are busting up a narco ring. Sol looks at Lu and lifts his hands in "what's up" gesture.

Lu waggles her hand side to side. Let's watch. The TV shows a close-up on Mascara Sagrada in romantic scene with girl.

RAY (OS)

My point is, it's more than just athletics. These may be cheapie movies, but they sell and rent big all over Latin America. If you're a Lucha Libre star, you're almost automatically movie star material. You get action figures.

Lu and Sol stare at screen, amazed.

LU

That's it.

SOL

What's it?

LU

Action figures. That's what these wrestlers are. Live superhero action figures.

SOL

You're right. More than American wrestlers. Hell, more than GI Joe. Was being Masked Action Barbie ever part of your career goals?

LU

I always wanted to be a superhero, Sol. But I've never been anything other than an action figure.

RAY

You've got it. And besides the movies, there are TV series. Don't laugh.

SOL

Who's laughing?

RAY

You remember Eric Estrada, that CHIPS dork? He's currently starring in "*Dos Mujeres Un Camino*", syndicated in thirty-seven countries worldwide, including the Soviet Union for some reason. Whatever they call it now. Nice chunk of change for Eric on the way down.

(To Lu)

For you, something nice on the way
up.

SOL

So what we're really talking here is
multi-entertainment, not just
sports.

Ray grabs a newspaper off his desk and flips it to Lu. She
spreads and looks at the page. It's a sports page, with
pictures of wrestlers right beside the soccer and
basketball shots. We even recognize Dinamita his own
humongus self.

RAY

This isn't a clown show like the
states. See, it's reported on the
sports page. These are athletes,
like boxers, but with more sideshow
and folklore. Check this out.

Ray hands Lu a stack of "Lucha" magazines. The glossy
cover shows up close beef clash.

RAY

It's the real deal.

Ray grabs leans over the desk, hands Sol a stack of videos.
Sol fans them, peers at them. They are all action pictures
featuring wrestlers, babes, and machine-gun toting cowboys.

RAY

And those are just the movies
featuring wrestlers I handle myself.
I'm sure you've checked me out by
now. I manage some of the biggest
names in the business. Male and
female *Luchadores*.

SOL

Black Venom, Fatal Shadow, the
Hunchbacks, Psicolico, The Trouble
Twins, Red Death, Killer Cobra,
Speed King, Godzilla...

RAY

All major stars of this sport--and
of movies and TV.

SOL

And all *Rudos*. Didn't I hear something about how you are introducing a new breed of ultra-violent, unsportsmanslike wrestler and bringing the game down with a bunch of sicko mask imagery and publicity?

RAY

(Deprecating moue)

You did check me out, Solly. Yeah, that's my rep. I've jazzed this thing up, part of my plan to sell it North of the river, you follow? And your girl fits into that, as well as brightening up that image. Don't you think?

LU

Gee, I just wanted to pick up a few bucks kicking drunks' butts in the mud.

RAY

And some guy walks in and offers you a career. International stardom. Let me move this out one more notch for you. It's about time for you to start thinking of where you'll be ten years from now when you can't just get by on your body.

SOL

Amen to that, anyway.

RAY

This is the time to make the smart move, which is towards media. This movie, TV thing can go on for a long time after your active years. Show host, commentator: all sorts of avenues open up when you're video people. Endorsements? Holy shit. You could be the female Oscar de la Hoya. And you know I'm not bullshitting about that, don't you, Sol?

LU

Hey, Sol, how come you never thought of all this stuff, you're supposed to be so on top of things?

SOL
Aw, come off it, Lu...

RAY
(Smoothly interrupting)
Because it's not part of the world
he lives in. It's all down here in
my patch. That about it, Sol?

LU
It's like discovering a new world,
all right.

RAY
Like offshoring her future. But you
know what?
(Pause, then to Lu)
I think I'm working too hard on
selling this. I think you're going
to do it just because you like
handing people their ass. You want
to tell me I'm wrong?

Sol starts to speak, but Lu lays a hand on his knee.

LU
Okay. I'm in.

Sol gives her a take, shrugs and subsides in his chair.

LU
For the whole ball of wax. But Sol
is my agent. Anything about money
goes through him.

Sol shoots Lu a look.

SOL
Thanks kid.

LU
For what, Solly? I need you, here.

Ray regards this little scene sourly.

RAY
Hey, I discover a new world, I don't
get a taste? A contract, some
points? I don't get a piece of you?

LU

Depends on whether you dream in color. Look. Ray, you're the promoter, right? If you can't make out on that, there's no point in even talking about anything more complicated. You book me through Sol, you're the man on a gig by gig basis. You own all the other stuff anyway, don't you? The movies, the TV?

RAY

But all the stuff is in Spanish, contracts are by Mexican law.

LU

So he hires some translators and lawyers, how tough is that? And I think we're talking about international contracts aren't we Sol?

SOL

Viva la NAFTA. I can handle it.

RAY

I don't know. All of my wrestlers are under my personal contract as promoter and agent. That synergism has been...

LU

(Cutting in)

It must be really fun for you in bed with all those beefcakes, but most of your wrestlers don't have tits like this, do they? And most of them couldn't fight their way out of a wet tamale, could they?

Ray laughs.

SOL

Don't pay any attention to her, Ray. You're the man here, you're Don King. Obviously I'm giving you the sweetheart deal of all time. She just wants somebody she knows to watch her back. Can you blame her? We'll work it out just fine, trust me.

RAY

(Resigned shrug, sigh)
 Sure Solly, you're an easy guy to trust. All right then, Let's start sending each other paperwork.

LU

(Briskly)
 So, when do I start? Boss.

RAY

Soon as we get the paperwork handled.

SOL

Coupla weeks.

RAY

Meanwhile, you're still top bill at the club.

Ray turns to cut off the movie.

LU

Wait.

Lu points at the screen, where we see Mascara being heroic.

LU

Who's that guy with the fancy white mask? He's in all these magazines, too.

RAY

That's Mascara Sagrada, maybe the most famous *Tecnico* in the game.

LU

Sacred Mask, right?

RAY

You got it. There's a whole story on it. Was this really bad gangster, doing nothing but kicking ass and taking people off, then he was drunk in an alley or something and had a vision of the Virgin Mary on the wall. She must have given him hell, because he swore an oath to her. Now he only works for good and wrestles with that special sacred mask she gave him.

LU

Is all that for real?

RAY

Mascara's real, all right. He's Tecnico of the Year time after time, does a nice box office with these half-assed bean operas.

(Dismissively)

But the VirginVision? What do you think? It's something to sell to the hicks.

LU

Well, I guess it beats corporate sponsorship.

RAY

Come in early tomorrow night, get fitted for your costume.

LU

I thought I'd go as Dorothy, from the Wizard of Oz.

SOL

Forget it, cutiepie. We're not in Kansas anymore.

INT. RASSLIN MONTAGE -- NIGHT

Lu glistens in a spotlight on black background, gesturing to a crowd behind the ropes at the arena. She's smashing in a knockout costume: a long white and gold cape over a gold lamé thong bikini, and a gold metallic mask with very sexy eye shape and a row of tubular "ports" extending up from the crest of the head, her hair protruding in a spiky crest like a Spartan helmet.

Lu doffs the cape and moves to the center of the ring, circling a huge Luchadora in a one-piece red suit and shoes. The Luchadora slips off her cape, revealing enormous tits bulging out over her glossy red one-piece suit, and tosses it over the ropes, where it is caught by Dinamita, an amused spectator.

The crowd seems to like the red Luchadora. As do Dinamita and GODZILLA, another monstrous beefburger from Ray's stable, who are watching through the ropes, giving Lu the thumbs down and waving the red cape around.

Lu sizes up the opposition, gives a sidelong head-toss to the audience, then snatches the Luchadora's top down to her waist, the monster jugs flopping free.

The Luchadora grabs her boobies in both hands but, stung by the crowd, drops them and charges Lu. Lu grabs the oncoming tits and flips the Luchadora flat on her back on the canvas.

When she gets to her knees, Lu kicks her damn head off. The ref has something to say, but Lu is walking a victory lap, hands spread wide as the crowd goes nuts.

Dinamita and Godzilla are laughing their hypertrophied butts off, and Dinamita holds his hand up as Lu stalks past him. She does likewise and he slaps her a cataclysmic high five. Lu lets the slap put her in a 360 spin, emerges in a comic combat crouch. Dinamita and Godzilla crack up.

This kicks off a MEDLEY OF WRESTLING SHOTS, establishing her success in her new career. Action shots are a mix of erotic, violent, and cool moves. Intercut with the crowd shots and the succession of women she is blitzing in the ring are a few takes with men in the mud pit at Devil Rays.

A SHOT SEQUENCE within the Wrestling Montage establishes Lu's growing camaraderie with the Dinamita and pal. They cheer her on, give her the thumbs up and victory sign, even a pat on the butt from Dinamita, which Lu starts to react to, then smiles and does him the down-low-too-slow routine.

The last shots of the sequence are in Devil Ray's, Lu slithering out of a near-pin to wipe out a tough-looking cowboy, which brings the montage back to the club, and into the after-work scenario to come.

EXT. RED ZONE STREET -- DAY

Pepito, Chuco, and Amparo are shuffling along a street in the brothel district, passing sleeping drunks, musicians, young girls in tight clothes standing in front of hotel doors, food stands. Amparo has Momo slung across her back, sleeping in an Indian sling, one child caring for another.

Amparo points at GABRIELA, a girl of around twelve, coming out of a hotel with a middle-aged man, stuffing bills into the bodice of her tight ho rags. She is heavily made up.

AMPARO

Look, Pepito, it's Gabriela.
(Shouting)
Hey, Gabi! Hey, wait!

Gabriela, surprised and embarrassed, tries to ignore the Gamines pressing up around her.

PEPITO

Gabi, where have you been? Hey, you look great.

AMPARO

Why don't you ever come to see Our Mother anymore, Gabi? We...

Gabriela pushes by the Gamines, refusing to speak. They stare at each other a minute, then chase her down the sidewalk.

AMPARO

Gabi, what's wrong?

PEPITO

Don't you remember us?

CHUCO

(Mumbling)
Let the bitch go if she doesn't like us anymore.

A black van with the Devil Ray logo on its side pulls in to the curb ahead of the children. Chato steps out of the curbside door, grinning as he waits for Gabriela's approach. Magón gets out on the street side and heads around, as if to cut her off.

Turning to the Gamines, she shoves Pepito into the others hard, tosses her head towards the thugs coming to pick her up.

GABRIELA

You don't know anything, you little idiots. Stay away from them. They're just letting us get old enough to harvest, like sheep. Then they come get you, like a butcher comes and gets a pig.

Sobbing, she runs off, right into the arms of Magón, who grabs her hair and filches the money out of her blouse.

Chato stares at the retreating Gamines, points at Amparo with his chin

CHATO

That one would do nicely.

MAGÓN

And in time, she will.

Meanwhile, Chato caresses the girl's ass as he hustles her into the side door of the van.

PADRE MELO, the priest, happens to be passing and is visibly shocked by Chato's handling of the girl. He rushes over to the van, blustering.

PADRE MELO

Listen, you there. You can't...
Where are you taking that child?

Chato idly pushes him down on the sidewalk and steps into the van's front door. He leers out the window at Padre Melo.

CHATO

Don't be impatient, Padre. By the time you've saved enough money she'll be old enough to suit you.

The Gamines stand on the sidewalk staring after the departing van.

CHUCO

Hey, I always thought she was a pig.

Pepito clips him one, Chuco grins. Amparo stands frozen, watching the van turn the corner. Momo stirs in the sling, sniveling in his sleep.

Brushing himself off, Padre Melo approaches the children solicitously. Amparo turns towards him, tearfully.

AMPARO

Why does God let them treat us like
this, Father?

Padre Melo, taken aback, starts to speak, but is cut off by Pepito.

PEPITO

The Virgin says we need to search
for a hero, somebody to protect us.

AMPARO

(Nodding, wiping tears)
She says we should spend all our
time thinking about it, looking
everywhere. That if we search truly
enough, we will find what we need
right in front of us.

CHUCO

Are you our hero, Padre? I've seen
the Virgin in your temple.

PADRE MELO

(Highly embarrassed)
Well, I'm not much of a hero, I'm
afraid.
(Pauses)

But yes, you should all look for
heroes in this world. Saints of
righteousness and light.

AMPARO

We are, Father. Our Mother will
help us. She said so.

PADRE MELO

Oh, yes. Your mother. Very good.

Padre Melo suddenly looks askance, remembering that these kids are street orphans. But by that time they are running off up the street. He stands looking them, a small slash of rigid black against the tacky swirl of the Red Zone.

PADRE MELO

Seek, my children. I wish there was
a hero for you in this place.

EXT. RAY'S CLINIC -- DAY

A ritzy mansion in Las Playas, seen darkly through the
glass of a moving limousine. Bronze plaque by door,
"INSTITUTE FOR LIFE ENHANCEMENT"

The automatic gate opens, the limo pulls into the parking
area behind the mansion. Past the car is a loading dock,
with the two clinic Orderlies stacking empty cages outside
the big door.

A liveried Chauffeur appears and opens the limo door just
as Jessica, the nurse, shows up with a wheelchair.

EXT. CLINIC OFFICE -- DAY

Ray is leaning forward in his desk chair, attentive to a
wizened AGED CLIENT, slumping in the wheelchair, and only
somewhat younger CLIENT'S WIFE. The desk is littered with
brochures and charts he has been showing them.

Jessica is also on hand, holding hands and proffering
documents.

RAY

We're not just talking about
simulating youth here, we're talking
about stimulating the libido itself.
The proof is in the pudding. Much
of the rejuvenation from our program
is done by chemicals the body itself
secretes in response to our
"resetting" of its psycho-sexual
clock.

FLASH to the lab, face-on the cages filled with caged
children. These quick cutaways recur during Ray's
conversations in his office.

RAY

We're not just injecting people with
tiger cells or whatever. We use
exotic materials from our own
research, and we offer genuine
youth.

FLASH of a Gamín strapped to a lab table with a catheter in place and an Orderly adhering electrodes to his temple.

AGED CLIENT

What sort of materials?

RAY

Mostly very special animal hormones and glandular enzymes.

AGED CLIENT

What kind of animals?

FLASH of Gamín Girl strapped into phlebotomy chair, one Orderly holding her while Jessica fills a huge syringe injected into a diaphragm surgically implanted over the vacuna of her skull.

RAY

(Smiling almost invisibly)

Kids.

CLIENT'S WIFE

I beg your pardon?

RAY

We use young goats. Known for their toughness, vitality, and sexual...drive.

FLASH to a clinic bed, where Jessica is injecting a large syringe into the IV tube leading into an age-speckled arm, which visibly relaxes and firms.

RAY

Young animals secrete certain powerful chemicals into their bloodstreams as a reaction to stress. These chemicals are associated with the ultimate in vitality. Our part comes in the harvesting and use of this natural glandular output.

FLASH to a Gamín Boy, tied to a bed and hooked up to an IV rig, being chewed by a ferocious dog, while an observing Orderly monitors gauges and blood flow.

RAY

A lot of this has to be seen to be believed, but you'll see plenty on your tour. Jessica, would you do me a favor and get your driver's license for us?

Jessica smiles and crosses the room to her dainty white purse. She comes back with a billfold, withdraws her license and hands it to the Client's Wife.

FLASH to a gurney, where second Gamín boy lies strapped and tied down. Arms reach in, swab his throat, and insert a needle connected to a stainless steel pump with a large glass reservoir attached. As the reservoir starts filling with blood, we can see Boy's vitality slowly drain.

In the office, the Wife is amazed, and shows the license to the Client.

RAY

Incredible, isn't it.

(With subtle irony)

You wouldn't believe how old I am.

(Standing)

But I think you'll believe a lot more after you see the place and talk to some satisfied customers. I'll talk with you again up in the Solarium. Jessica?

Jessica helps the Wife to her feet and wheels the Client's chair toward the door.

FLASH of the Gamin Boy. An arm pulls a blanket over his face.

Sol enters through the office door, looking back at the departing Jessica. He turns to face Ray, and extends his hand.

SOL

Wow layout you've got here, Ray.

RAY

My headquarters and abode. The place was built for Juan Gabriel.

SOL

The singer?

RAY

Yeah, you know, "Juanga". But he sold it because of rumors he was having Satanic orgies here.

FLASH to a swirl of dark masked figures around a pale naked body--a preview of coming scene.

SOL

Well, it's pretty damn impressive.

RAY

I try to keep it comfortable.

FLASH to lab, where the Orderlies are giving the caged kids slop in little doggie bowls.

RAY

You see, the club downtown isn't really representative of my operations. I guess it's mostly to remind of me when I used to wrestle myself. And, of course, to keep pretty girls around--great for entertaining customers and partners. And it does make a buck. But I'm a lot more diversified.

FLASH to a van door, with Devil Ray logo. The door snaps open to reveal a tight-packed stack of plastic bags packed with white powder.

SOL

You wrestled professionally?

RAY

Yeah, back in the States. In high school, too, come to think of it. The real stuff. I was pretty good at it, too. Until I found other interests.

SOL

So you're American?

RAY

Doesn't it show? Yep. Born and crossbred. I moved down here following a legal scrape in the States. Or two.

FLASH of Ray, naked in a dark room, using a heavy belt to repeatedly lash a Nude Woman on a bed--her legs thrashing as he slashes at her.

RAY

I took to this culture like an aquarium fish tossed into the ocean, baby. I swim wider, grow bigger, eat better. I wouldn't go back if I could.

SOL

I heard you own a steroids factory.

FLASH of Ray sitting on a pressing bench; his sweating, pumped-up muscles flanked by two massive stacks of weights. He has tied off one arm and is slamming something. As it hits, his head flops back.

RAY

Common knowledge. A boon to weightlifters and bodybuilders. It's all legal here, but my products run into a few hassles North of the border. Like my rejuvenation therapy. Which, if you won't be offended by my saying so, you might check out. Anyway, I don't sell anything I don't use myself.

FLASH to a dingy whorehouse we'll visit later. A Drunken Customer slaps money on the bar and heads up the stairs in company of an Underaged Whore.

SOL

And maybe that factory turns out some amphetamines, too?

RAY

(Laughing)

Now that would take a crazy motherfucker wouldn't it? Like I said, I don't sell what I don't use.

FLASH to Ray, wearing a black leather fetish mask, his bare upper body recognizable, snorting an enormous white line, convulsing with the rush, then grabbing a black leather whip and heading for a naked Bound Woman tied spread-eagled onto a Striker frame. He spins the frame, and howls with laughter as the Bound Woman wheels around in front of him.

RAY

But anyway, the reason I asked you to come by is that I've got a special proposition for Lu and wanted you to spring it on her.

SOL

She's hit on all your action so far.

RAY

Well this is different. It's almost like a favor.

SOL

Those she's a lot less likely to go for.

RAY

Oh, it pays. Pays well. But it's sort of a private show. After club hours. Here at the house.

SOL

It would be "Gordo" something, wouldn't it?

RAY

What?

SOL

Spanish for "Fat Chance".

RAY

Come on, Sol. Nothing like that. I just want to put on a special show for some of my business associates. More like a merchants club. An honorary fraternal thing.

SOL

Other drug dealers, you mean?

RAY

Could be, I guess. Same guys that patronize the club downtown, pay off your meal ticket. You getting picky at this point?

SOL

Let me take it up with Lu. You probably noticed she makes her own decisions.

RAY

Yeah, good thing she's also got all that respect for authority and employers. You'll be here to watch out for her interests if she wants. Oh, and tell her it'll be one on one with Black Orchid. She wins that, she gets to take on Dinamita, see if she has a chance at that level.

SOL

Oh, I'll definitely get this to her. I kind of hope she accepts. I'd like to see that one myself.

RAY

Yeah, me too.

EXT. TIJUANA STREETS -- DAY

INTSRUMENTAL MUSIC over a sequence of shots that show several Gamines wondering the streets, shopping for hero and role models.

Amparo, Momo, Chuco, Pepito and Blanquita stand at a busy traffic *glorieta*, staring up at a heroic Morelos holding his hand up.

CHUCO

What's he saying with his hand?

AMPARO

Stay back *Mexicanos*, it's no better across the border.

All laugh.

They look at the mounted Zaragoza statue.

PEPITO

This guy's saying, "Hey, you. Come sweep up behind my horse."

They stand dwarfed by the huge white globe of CECUT, examining the bust of Columbus.

MOMO

(Pointing)

Lumbo

PEPITO

Yeah. He came all the way across the ocean to make slaves out of us Indios.

CHUCO

He was the one?

Chuco stares up at bronze face of Columbus, looks around furtively, then pulls himself out and pisses on the Discoverer. Pepito cracks up, the girls giggle and act alarmed.

The group stares up at the huge bronze of Lincoln, chains dangling from his hands.

PEPITO

I don't get this. He's a gringo. Why is he here?

AMPARO

Because he freed the slaves.

CHUCO

The hell he did.

AMPARO

The black slaves in the *Estados Unidos*, Chuco.

CHUCO

So where's the guy who freed us Gamines, here in Mexico? Where, huh?

The group is walking by the IMSS hospital when Amparo gives a gasp. She points up at the huge bronze IMSS logo, an eagle wrapping a woman and child in its wings.

AMPARO

Look. Up there. Oh, it's wonderful.

BLANQUITA

That's it. 'Paro. What we need. Somebody to hold us, like a mother. That would be so good.

PEPITO

Somebody to protect us. Why isn't there anybody to take care of us?

AMPARO

Well, there's the government.

Pepito eyes a police car cruising by, looking at the kids.

PEPITO

Well, not exactly. Something like that. Look how fierce the eagle is.

BLANQUITA

And look how protective, big soft wings.

CHUCO

(Bitterly)

Yeah, we need Big Bird. What we need is Zapatistas: ski masks and machine guns.

They are all standing in front of the Diana Cazadora *glorieta*, frozen in awe of the power and beauty of the strong, nude archer statue. Momo loses it, pointing at the statue and jabbering.

PEPITO

(Breathless)

Look at her. Big and strong and beautiful.

BLANQUITA

Diana the Huntress. Goddess of the Moon.

CHUCO

She's sure got the butt for it.

Amparo and Blanquita both sock Chuco up.

As they walk away, Chuco mutters to Pepito

CHUCO

The knockers are pretty great, too.

PEPITO

A goddess of hunting. Wow.

CHUCO

We need somebody to hunt down Chato
and Magón, shoot their dicks off.
Then start freeing the Indio kids
from slavery.

AMPARO

(Suddenly stopping)

Then that's what we should pray for.

She turns around to face the Diana, drops to her knees on
the sidewalk. Momo does the same, the others awkwardly
follow suit.

AMPARO

Blessed Mother, we need somebody
like the eagle lady to protect us,
to take us in her arms and keep us
safe, to love us. They're taking us
away out here, dear lady. We need a
defender, a strong hunter with wings
and claws. Perfect: beautiful,
strong, deadly. Please help us,
Dear Mother.

They rise, happy, and start walking down sidewalk.
Suddenly the same police car they saw earlier cuts them
off.

MUSIC ENDS ABRUPTLY

In silent menace, the prowl car's rear door opens. Inside
we see Magón in the back seat.

A thick arm ending in a black fingerless glove extends from
the front window, points at Blanquita, and makes a come-
hither motion.

Blanquita cringes in terror, but slowly moves towards the
car.

She timidly crawls into the seat beside Magón. Chuco runs to the car to stop her, but the gloved hand snakes out, grabs him by the face and throws him down on the sidewalk. The door slams shut.

The car moves out of the frame, leaving only the rest of the Gamines, solemn and sullen, Amparo and Momo crying, Chuco staring with dull hatred.

INT. DEVIL RAYS -- NIGHT

Another after-hours scene, the Waiters and Wrestling Girls shaping up to go home. Lu and Sol are again seated together, talking, Lu in sweats with her hair wet. Back in a dark alcove, the gangster table, Ray is just about overcome, drinking fast and staring at Lu, ignoring the partying at his table. One of his party, Dinamita in a swank formal suit but recognizable by his mask, gets up to leave, but stops by Lu's table on the way out.

Lu and Dinamita do their deaf- salutations, much mauling and congratulatory hand signals.

LU

I tell you what, big boy. We're just going to have to get it on one of these days.

(Beat)

You know, in a professional sense.

Dinamita guffaws uncomprehendingly, points pistol fingers at her and splits.

LU

(Turning back to Sol)

Geez, wotta hunka man.

SOL

Yeah, yeah. He'd love to jump on your bones, you'd love to stomp on his dick.

LU

Nah, I kind of like the big lugnut. He's uncomplicated, you know.

SOL

That would be my guess. But listen, wrestling him?

LU

(Melodramatically)

My own agent is losing faith in my stuff.

SOL

Look, you're damn good...

LU

For a girl.

SOL

Yeah. That's what you are, I hate to break it. And that guy, let me point out, is a huge male tyrannosaurus. Would you really have a chance with him?

(Holding up deflecting hand)

I'm just asking, now. You can see where I might wonder.

LU

Yeah I can see. And I'm not sure I could take him. That's what makes it a sport, Sol. But I'll clue you--these guys aren't really athletes. They don't really compete out there, in case you haven't noticed. He's big, but he's slow, got no edge. And I don't think he really knows much technique, definitely nothing dangerous. I'd take even money.

SOL

(Shaking head)

I guess when you stop scaring me the thrill will be gone, kiddo.

Back in the dark alcove, Ray is alone, skulking on Lu.

RAY

(To himself)

Cool it, Ray. Don't do it. Don't blow it.

He stares at Lu a little longer.

RAY

Aw, fuck it.

Ray slides from behind his table and walks over

RAY

Lookin' good out there tonight, Lu.

LU

Thanks, Ray. I think the competition is getting a little better lately. You selling these stiffs better drugs or something?

RAY

(Laughing)

It must be fun for you, though.

(Straddling chair)

You know, I used to wrestle myself.

LU

Really?

RAY

Absolutely. How'd you like to go a fall or two with me, up there on the set?

She frowns.

RAY

For double what you cleared tonight.

SOL

Doesn't sound like a good idea, Ray.

LU

Oh, I don't know.

RAY

So we're on?

LU

I'm not sure what you're on, but I'm on overtime. Let's rock, pilgrim.

SOL

Careful now, Dollchick.

LU

It's okay, Solly. I know the boss.

SOL

You think you do.

LU

It's okay, Sol.

Ray stands up and strips down to his underwear. He's all sleek, hardmuscled bulk. Lu skins off her sweats and steps into the pit in her superhot panties and bra, Victoria's secret weapon.

The after-hours bunch crowds in excitedly, the Bodyguards nudging each other, the Whores and Waitresses giggling and sizing Ray up. Money appears and starts changing hands. Sol is the only one there who doesn't like it, and he waves off wagers. This is obviously the top card of the night, and Lu circles her new opponent cautiously but with no sign of apprehension. Ray stalks her, eyes intent on her body, his biceps and briefs bulging.

MUSIC UP AND OVER

Lu moves first: feints a grapple, then slams a right jab smack into his nose, drawing blood and rocking him back. excited hubbub in crowd. Ray gives her a look.

LU

(Nods)

Yeah, Ray, it's gonna be like that.

Ray also nods, switches his stance a little and wades in. He rushes her, grabbing for her body, then suddenly changing up and slapping her alongside the head, knocking her sideways and opening her up to get her leg grabbed. She quickly counters with a knee to his head, backs off shaking her head.

Sol shakes his head, too. And sucks on a cigarette.

The fight is fierce: he's stronger, a better wrestler, an accomplished street fighter. She's taking a beating and getting heavily groped. There are several flops in the pit, leaving both soaked and their underclothes in disarray. Ray is going for body holds, trying to tie her up and ooze all over her. She's fighting for space, for time.

Her eyes are watchful, unafraid. His are burning, exultant. Finally he pins her in a corner, wearing her down with his size and power. She can't hurt him with punches, can't control him with holds.

Lu takes a deep breath and gives him a blinding smile. Then she counters his next move with a lightning kung fu movement, taking control of the fight by switching to martial arts.

He is shocked, his anticipation chilling as she works him over with odd moves, slips his grips with splashy throws into the pit.

He makes a desperation rush at her, hunched over like The Maxx and thundering in.

She sidesteps, tossing a handful of mud in his face, then drops into a split and powers a jab straight from the shoulder into his crotch.

He doubles up and she is instantly on him, pinning his arms, bearing him down, and standing on his back in a victory pose.

Sol leans in and slaps the edge of the pit.

Lu steps off and walks over to the table, almost naked, coated in mud. Sol tosses her a towel from her gym bag and she wipes her face.

LU

You didn't tell him I cheat?

SOL

I think he got the picture.

Ray is on his feet by now, looming up behind her like a muddy golem as she cleans up, talking to Sol. He is obviously enraged and humiliated. Lu turns to him, innocent and perky.

LU

So, I suppose I'm fired.

RAY

(Choked with anger)

Oh no. *Al contrario*. You're exactly what I want.

Lu doesn't quite know how to take that, but she nods, shrugs and walks out of the light.

Ray, smoldering and coated with mud like a creature from some cut-rate lagoon, snatches a towel from a Bodyguard then backhands the man off his feet without looking. He gradually develops a horrifying smile.

RAY

(Barely audible simmer)
Exactly what I want.

INT. WHOREHOUSE -- DAY

A dingier part of Ray's far-flung entertainment empire, a typical scruffy-looking Tijuana bar with "a lot of fucking overhead". Beer brand tables, chipped linoleum floor, and a stairway leading up to a catwalk with numbered cribs where the *chiquitas* do the entertainment. The wall behind the bar is heaped with bottles, cockfight and bullfight posters, lewd mottoes, and a dingy mirror. It's before hours, so there are no customers, just Magón and Chato talking at the bar, ignored by several teen-aged Whores and an older MADAME. A Bartender makes desultory preparations.

Magón is chewing out Chato, and intimidating the hell out of the bigger man.

MAGÓN

Yes, I'm talking about the new girl.
Who else, *pendejo*? You were just supposed to pick her up from the cops and bring her here, nothing else.

CHATO

I did, I did. I picked her up from Felix and brought her straight over here, I swear.

MADAME

You're lying, you piece of shit!
She was crying and holding herself.
You fucking animal!

Magón takes a long look at Chato, then at the Madame, evaluating. Then he whips out a pair of nunchuks and attacks Chato, expertly beating the shit out of him and leaving him fucked up on the floor.

MAGÓN

I've said it a million times. Don't fuck with the merchandise. I check it out for El Ray, so you bring it to me in one piece.

He heads towards the stairs that lead up to the crib doors, but the Madame braces him.

MADAME

How could you, you pig? She's just a baby. This isn't just whoring, this is a crime! A sin! What is wrong with you?

He punches her in the stomach and pushes her aside.

MAGÓN

We need a new line of goods, bitch. An old *puta* should understand that.

The closed door looms, lit by an exposed bulb. A massive shadow falls across it: a coarse, brutal forearm reaches out to twist the knob and push it open.

Inside, the light sweeps across a small room with scratched walls and a single bed. Blanquita is on the bed. A shadow falls across her.

She looks up, sees the man who opened the door, and her eyes widen, she jolts up to her knees, lowers her head, clasps her hands and starts desperately praying.

A brute hand enters the picture, clasps her by the ponytail and tilts her head back, her whole pose by now so charged with sexual submission that nothing overt need be added.

Her lips are still praying, there are tears running from her eyes.

EXT. GAMINES SHRINE -- DAY

In the niche in the hideout, the eyes of the Virgin stay closed, but tears ooze out of them and run down the wall.

INT. RAY'S MANSION -- NIGHT

MUSIC SLAMS IN: Weird Marilyn Manson-type scree

The "gig", in the basement of Ray's pad is looking pretty weird. His rumpus room is peculiar, decorated with weird runes and cultish details; stops just short of being a dungeon. A long trestle table with ornate armchairs suggests the Last Supper in a monastery.

A small wrestling ring, complete with ropes and turnbuckles, dominates the room. The corner supports are strange, carved totems. Gargoyle heads top the corners. A low dam around the ring holds a foot of bright red Jell-O, transparent and shining under overhead spotlights.

The audience for the match is even more disturbing. This is apparently a fight club of some sort: Ray's MINIONS are all big, husky guys of all ages wearing bizarre, decadent wrestling masks and completely covered by satiny capes.

They hulk around the pit, arms folded across their thrust-out chests, their silks shining in many colors, their grotesque masks making a ring of weirdness. It looks like a Mafia Power Rangers party, which is pretty much what it is.

Sol and Lu move through this jolly crew, Sol obviously not liking it one little bit, Lu half-smiling in amused contempt.

The Minions part to reveal a masked wrestler that is obviously Ray, wearing a red and black cape with a raised stingray motif down the back, and a black mask with the horns of a ray.

He nods gravely to Sol and Lu, then points into the ring, where Black Orchid is waiting, wearing her cape and mask.

Sol is busily talking unheard into Lu's ear, but she shrugs him off, gives him a daughterly pat, and slips into the ring.

Black Orchid tosses her cape out of the ring, revealing herself almost nude, but with an S & M leather harness and a huge strap-on dildo. She flexes menacingly and moves towards Lu.

Around the rim, the watchers unfold their arms, allowing their robes to fall open, revealing them all to be naked underneath except for their boots. They stare over the ropes, a rim of expectant evil.

Sol checks this out, grows very grim, seems to shrink as he pulls on a cigarette.

The Orchid moves in on Lu, who is waiting demurely, swishing her cape from side to side like a little miss.

They grapple, the Orchid using her size to cut Lu off into a corner, obviously trying to get Lu bare-assed right off.

The huge black dildo swings between them threateningly.

Suddenly Lu grips the big phallus and heaves up on it, tossing the Orchid off her feet into the Jell-O.

When Orchid starts to spin and rise, Lu almost casually sweep-kicks her head directly into a turnbuckle.

Black Orchid crumples, rolls on her back, sinking slowly into the Jell-O, until only the black dildo protrudes from the bright cherry red surface.

Lu scans the ring of watchers lazily.

LU

Hey, you send out a dyke to do a man's job...

That does it for Ray. He screams an incoherent war cry and leaps.

He lands in the ring, his cape billowing up around his powerful, naked body, the red Jell-O flowering out from the impact of his landing.

He stomps, points at Lu and bellows a deep, hollow roar.

RAY

You!

Lu touches fingertips to chest, wide-eyed

LU

Moi?

Above, Sol pushes through the ring of Minions, agitated to the point of a coronary.

SOL

That's it. It's over Ray. I don't care what you say, Lu, we're out of here now. Or I'm calling the fucking cops.

BLUE MINION

(Laughs explosively)

Excuse me, Señor, but many of us here are the fucking cops.

Sol flips out a cellular phone and starts dialing.

SOL

Then I'll call...

A huge ORANGE MINION looms up in front of Sol and backhands the phone away. Sol looks thoughtful, puts a cigarette in his mouth and reaches into his pocket for a light. Then he spins around and runs towards the stairs. Behind him the Minions roar with laughter.

Then they swarm around Lu in a cloud of flapping capes, like the Vampire Theater fiends in the "Interview" film. A cameraman's dream here of a horde closing around her, capes like wings, colors blocking the action, glimpses of weird masked faces, a Tong funeral of stylized pervo-violence. Lu lashes out with devastating results, but they overwhelm her.

INT. MANSION HALLWAYS -- NIGHT

Sol wheezes up the curved stone stairs of the mansion. When he reaches the first landing, he collides with the huge vaulted chest of Dinamita, followed closely by Godzilla, Sol recoils, then pleads with the huge grapplers.

SOL

Ah shit, help me you guys. Lu, she's... Lu! uh...*Problemas!*
Shit, come on.

Sol grabs Dinamita by the front of his trunks and tries to drag him down the stairs. The big wrestler stares at him, then at Godzilla, then follows Sol down the stairs, Godzilla right behind him.

INT. RAY'S DUNGEON - NIGHT

SAME CREEPY MUSIC: But More Frenetic

Lu is literally on the ropes, pinioned by several demonic Minions, while Ray moves towards her, his intentions pretty apparent.

At the sight of Lu, Dinamita and Godzilla spring into action. They vault into the ring and start tossing Minions out on their asses.

Ray turns to face his two stars and shakes his head sadly. He flexes and motions the big wrestler towards him.

Dinamita moves forward like a secondary tremor, reaching out to grapple his boss. Godzilla moves to cover his back, snarling at the Minions, who are gradually moving out of the ring.

A major wrestle-a-thon ensues, with a lot of aerials and rope-bouncing.

Ray generally whups up on the larger, slower wrestlers, tricking them with complex rope-rebounds and clotheslines.

But Dinamita crosses him up on one pass, and knocks him off his feet. The two opponents fall on him, but Ray wriggles to ringside and holds out his hand for a tag.

The big Orange Minion slaps the tag and leaps into the ring, along with a few other bruisers, and start kicking Dinamita and Godzilla to rubble. Finally, big Minions have the two stalwarts pinned and Ray approaches, as if to slap the mat, but instead, slaps karate chops down on their throats.

The bodies slide out of the ring, dripping red Jell-O.

Sol's cell phone is lying in a corner. His hand moves in to grab it. Sol holds the phone, hunched around it to hide and muffle his talk.

SOL

Yeah, that big mansion down in Las Playas. Shit yeah, get somebody from the embassy, get some cops, get the fucking cavalry.

Unseen by Sol, the huge Orange Minion has approached him from behind. He grips Sol around the throat and lifts him off the ground.

As Sol hangs there, kicking and choking, the Blue Minion steps up, produces an odd, ceremonial-looking knife, and slashes him across the belly, then stabs into his heart. The blue mask has a horribly twisted smile.

BLUE MINION

Your ten percent, Señor.

That galvanizes Lu into action. She shakes off her tormentors and flies out of the ring, launching a flying karate-style kick that slams the Blue Minion's head off.

She aims a punch into the Orange Minion's face, but the Orange guy swings Sol's lolling head in front of the punch.

A Minion at her left gets a flat hand stabbed into his eyes and doubles up, screaming.

On her right a Minion takes a chop across the throat that causes him to spit blood. Lu is going nuts. But so is the peanut gallery.

Again the waves of colored satin sweep over Lu, the struggle moving around and ending up with the Minions surrounding the big table, Lu stretched out on it, still in her cape, but heavily molested and breathing like a volcano.

A PURPLE MINION leans over her face and she snaps at his nose, then spits into his eyes.

He's pissed. Reaching into his boots, he pulls out two knives with elaborate fork blades and stabs her hands simultaneously, nailing her to the table.

Two other Minions spread her legs and pin her feet to the wood with knives.

The Orange Minion steps up and covers her, his tiger cape hunching as he rapes her. Spent, he starts to crawl off.

LU

(Sneering)

Speedy Gonzales, I presume?

The Orange Minion punches Lu in the face. Blood flows out of the mouth slit of her mask.

The Minions swarm over her again in a Felini melee of lust.

Suddenly they part to reveal Ray standing at the table.

He looms up between Lu's raised knees, drawing closer, oozing menace. But instead of jumping on her, he produces a long, triangular-bladed, phallic knife.

RAY

Yeah, Lu, it's going to be like that.

Ray looms over her sexually, stroking her face and breasts with his free hand, his face inches from hers, crushing her with his weight.

Lu speaks so weakly, through bruised lips visible through the slit of the mask, that Ray has to lean very close to gloat over her last words.

LU

(Almost in a whisper)
You've got something stuck on your tooth.

His face turns from pleased and triumphant to enraged.

He stabs the knife into her side, angled up towards her heart. The entry is slow, but as he repeats the stab over and over, the pace increases.

His face mimics sexual response as he stabs the heart wound again and again in a sick parody of sex. Finally he is sated, she is dead.

The effect on Ray is remarkable. He seems energized, high. He leaps around the ring, bouncing off the ropes and turning flips.

He leaps up on the middle ropes at a corner, standing supported by the top ropes across his legs, leaning forward into a spotlight with his arms spread.

RAY

(ala DiCaprio)
I'm the king of the World!

(Twists to address Minions)
*Soy el Rey del Mundo. El Rey de
 todo. El Ray de la vida fucking
 loca.*

He springs down and faces the ring of Minions, who are once again standing with arms folded, draped in their capes.

RAY
 Wow. Whatta rush.

He looks down at the crumpled body of Lu, pokes her with his foot. Slowly he straightens up, looks around the ring of Minions

RAY
 Well, I guess I just blew off a big pile of money.

ORANGE MINION
 There's always more of them where she came from.

RAY
 No, not like that one. She was very special. And very valuable.
 (To himself)
 And I never got to find out if she could have taken Dinamita.

ORANGE MINION
 But you put the demands of your manhood above that.

RAY
 (Semi-disgusted)
 Yeah. Obviously.

PURPLE MINION
 You see why we admire you? You are a lesson to us all.

RAY
 Yeah, I guess. The main thing is to follow the Instincts.

ORANGE MINION
 Not the main thing, the only thing.

EXT. HIGHWAY BRIDGE -- NIGHT

MUSIC OVER, an instrumental dirge

A black Suburban with tinted windows moves ominously by until it stops with its rear doors filling the screen. The taillights come on, throwing a lurid light on the scene.

Doors slam, two of Ray's Thugs enter from opposite sides, look around, open the rear doors and pull out Lu's defiled body; limp, bloody, and trailing the shreds of her costume and cape.

They carry her between them to the bridge rail. They stop at the rail and alley oop--she flies out, trailing her cape, then plummets downward into the night.

The Suburban patches out of view. The license plate reads "D-RAY"

EXT. GAMINES SHRINE -- NIGHT

Amparo is the last kid at the shrine. She is walking around blowing out the candles, Momo toddling behind her. All done, she takes a last look back at the poster of the Virgin, bows and crosses herself.

She turns to exit through the narrow slot, Momo taking a lingering look around while she shimmies into the slot.

Suddenly Lu's body plummets into the scene, glowing satin white in the highway lights, trailing her cape like white wings. She lands in a heap right in front of the altar.

Momo laughs and claps his hands.

MOMO

Angel. Fell down.

Amparo shoots him a glance and looks where he is pointing, but can't see Lu's body.

AMPARO

Shh, don't say that, Momo. She's our mother, the Virgin.

MOMO

(Nodding judiciously)
Angel. Fell.

AMPARO

You hush. And come on, will you?

Momo toddles forward, towards Lu's body.

Amparo, exasperated, comes back for him, suddenly sees the body and freezes, her hand going to her mouth.

MOMO

Angel. Fell. Broke.

EXT. GAMINES SHRINE -- DAY

The GAMINES are gathered in a semi-circle around Lu's sprawled body, listening rapt to the words of the Virgin.

Momo is sitting right beside Lu, stroking her hair. He looks at Amparo.

MOMO

See? Angel broke.

VIRGIN

This woman is your new friend, your champion. You must take care of her, so she can take care of you.

PEPITO

But *Madonna mia*, she is dead.

VIRGIN

And so you must bury her, Pepe. For me. Right there, where she is. And please plant a yucca plant on her grave. And water it with holy water for nine days.

AMPARO

(Wonderingly)

Mother, she is so beautiful. And so big, like the statue.

VIRGIN

Yes, my dear, like the Huntress. Care for her, my children. I love you all very, very much.

The eyes close, she becomes a faded poster. The Gamines stare at each other, at the body in front of them.

Chuco stands up abruptly and plods over to the walls of junk, returning with an old automobile bumper. Stolidly, without expression, he begins to dig.

EXT. GAMINES SHRINE -- DAY

The Gamines are completing their task of filling in the grave where Lu's body lay, smoothing the heaped dirt.

Pepito appears, sliding down the ramp with a yucca plant.

Amparo takes it, cradles it to her breast. She carries it to the mound and plants it. Kneeling, looking down at the plant, she begins to cry. She leans forward and her tears fall onto the yucca.

INT. PADRE MELO'S CHURCH -- DAY

A rather humble church, clean but threadbare. There are dusty candles, crucifix, and a rather large image of the Virgin of Guadeloupe above the altar.

Padre Melo is attending to some obscure matter in front of the altar. A door slams open and we hear the thunder of young feet. The Padre turns, squinting into the light.

AMPARO (OS)

Padre Melo! Padre Melo!

PADRE MELO

Yes, yes, what? Why are you screaming, my child? And running in the sanctuary?

The crowd of filthy kids swarms around him, all chattering at once.

CHUCO

She needs water! We have to...

PEPITO

Holy water. The Virgin says we...

AMPARO

So she will grow up and take care of us. Like the Virgin Mother said.

MOMO

Water. Lots.
 (Pause)
 Please.

The good Father's agitation disappears and he draws a breath, then sits down on a pew, eye to eye with the Gamines. He takes off his glasses and looks at them searchingly.

PADRE MELO

Let's take it one at a time. From
 the beginning.
 (Holds up cautionary finger)
 And I don't want to hear anything
 that sounds like blasphemy, is that
 clear?

MUSIC OVER, a MADRIGAL, drowns the conversation.

The Gamines yammer excitedly to the Padre: his expression is stern and concerned.

He begins to speak, and it is obvious from his movements and face that he is poo-pooing their reports of seeing the Virgin. He gestures behind him to the Virgin's image as he speaks.

Suddenly, behind them, the Virgin's eyes open.

Her lips part, she speaks a single, three-syllable word.

MUSIC STOPS ABRUPTLY

PADRE MELO

...so you see, children. Your
 devotion is worthy, but it is
 impossible to actually...

He breaks off as Chuco stands up and points at the Virgin, slowly mouthing the word.

Padre Melo turns, but there is nothing to see. He turns back to Chuco, who looks from the face of the image right into the Padre's eyes. He speaks very carefully and clearly.

CHUCO

Fatima.

Reacting to the kid's look, the Father glances up at the image again.

KIDS (IN CHORUS)

What is Fatima?

CHUCO

Yeah. What's Fatima?

PADRE MELO

(Sighing)

There was a time, long ago, far across the sea, when the Blessed Virgin appeared to the children of a village. She spoke of Peace, but only the children could hear her. They told people, including the priest, but nobody believed them.

AMPARO

(Shaking a handful of roses)

Until they showed them the roses!

KIDS (CHORUS)

The robe was full of roses!

PADRE MELO

No that was The Virgin at Guadeloupe. And that time it wasn't children, it was Juan Diego...

KIDS CHORUS

An Indio!

AMPARO

And nobody believed him either.

CHUCO

Because he was an Indio.

PEPITO

Because they were children.

AMPARO

(Insistently)

But it really was Our Mother, wasn't it?

The priest, obviously conflicted, looks from the children to the image, weighing things while toying with the beads at his waist.

PADRE MELO

Chuco. Where did you hear about Fatima?

CHUCO

Our Mother told me. Well, she told me to say it.

Padre Melo turns and examines the Virgin behind him. He looks at the kids again, takes a deep breath, squares his shoulders.

PADRE MELO

All right. You show me.

EXT. THE SHRINE -- DAY

Padre Melo has made a valiant attempt to get into the shrine, but is finally blocked by an impassable mass of wrecked cars and cement.

From where he sweats, trying to force his way through tiny openings, he can catch glimpses of the children inside, kneeling in a ring around the yucca mound and staring fixedly at the poster of the Virgin. He can hear them talking to it, a low, indistinguishable murmur.

His expression changes as he watches: he is affected by something he couldn't name.

PADRE MELO

(Under breath)

If I could only get in to...

His words are cut off by a crash as a huge wrecked truck suddenly falls over, allowing him to walk into the presence of the altar.

The kids were not fazed by the crash, but now examine him timidly, shooting glances at the image on the pylon, obviously taking their cues from the gaze of the Virgin.

The Padre looks around, noting the children's posture and the yucca plant. He starts to step over to the image, but suddenly stops.

Casting his eyes around the shrine he sees a big rusty barrel of rainwater and walks over to it. Quickly blessing the water, he turns to the gamines, who are all staring at him.

PADRE MELO

This is holy water, now.

The Gamines move forward, looking wonderingly into the barrel.

PADRE MELO

Listen to me, you mutts.

(Softening)

Whatever this was before, however filthy or discarded the vessel, it is holy now. Treat it accordingly, and not in sacrilege or profanation.

The Gamines nod, crossing themselves, as he turns to leave. Pepito immediately grabs a dirty plastic Donald Duck mug and dips it into the filthy water.

As the Padre leaves the area a huge chunk of concrete works loose from the top of the dump and plunges loudly into the gap he used to enter, once more sealing the area off from adult intervention.

Outside of the concrete chunk the Padre, shaken and dusty, tentatively touches the block of cement, drops to a knee, crosses himself, then catches himself at it, crams his hand in his pocket and hurries away.

INT. PRESENCE OF THE VIRGIN -- "DAY"

MUSIC OVER--THE BEATLES' "LET IT BE"

A soft white unfocused background shows points of gold, swirls slowly as it resolves into dozens of white calla lilies, like a flower landscape.

Emerging from them is the face of Lu, eyes closed, rapt. The lilies recede like a sea, leaving her framed in white flowers from the cleavage up.

She is sitting on her heels, holding the flowers, ala Rivera painting of Frida Kahlo. She kneels on worn stone floors in what looks like an old mission or convent, thick plaster walls washed in light blue.

In front of her is a niche in which glows the Virgin Of Guadalupe in the classic pose and wrapped in a robe of gold-starred sacred blue.

MUSIC CONTINUES, but FADES DOWN under speech

VIRGIN

Welcome home, my daughter.

Lu's eyes open languorously, are suddenly wide and focused. She glances around, licks her lips.

LU

So. I'm thinking I'm probably dead, right?

VIRGIN

Yes you are.

LU

Aw, man...

VIRGIN

But look, it has brought us together.

LU

(Under her breath)

Whoa!

(Aloud)

So you're the Virgin Mary?

VIRGIN

I am the Virgin of Guadalupe. Your namesake, my child.

LU

Sorry if I don't know how to act. I never met a saint before.

VIRGIN

I'm not really a saint. I am a goddess. I am your patroness.

LU

Cool, a real goddess. You don't know how much... Hey, wait a minute. Catholics don't have goddesses.

VIRGIN

I am not a Catholic, my dear. I am a vision of the people of this country. A vision made real by faith...and by longing of the heart.

LU

I'm afraid you're over my head, uh..

VIRGIN

Please call me Mother. I came to visit the Native people because they longed for me. I revealed myself to children. Nobody else can ever know me until the children can see me and believe. Now, there are people who cry out for me, so I show myself to the children again.

LU

And to me?

VIRGIN

You are here because I brought you here. Or rather, your heart brought you to me.

LU

(Blown away by now)

But...why?

VIRGIN

Because I need you. I have created you to serve the needs of those who need me.

LU

I'm here because you need me. You made me and brought me here.

VIRGIN

You could just as easily say that you are here because you need me. You created me and brought me here for the needs of your own heart. These are not things you know you do, my daughter. You are of very pure Indian blood. On your mother's side--which is the side that matters to me. Because I am a goddess. Now you understand.

LU

In a really vague way. But what do you need me for?

VIRGIN

To serve me. To save my dear ones from their sorrow.

LU

Okaaaay. And why do I need you?

VIRGIN

Because you are dead, my daughter. Don't you see what has happened to your body?

LU

You can fix that? Holy... Sorry, I mean...Well, if you're a goddess, I guess you can. Okay, overhaul the bod and it's all yours.

VIRGIN

Your body is dead. It must be buried. What you are to me, what I love in you, has nothing to do with your flesh.

LU

You're kidding. What else am I? I mean, I'm no dummy, but I've never been anything more than a world class body. It's all I care about, the only thing anybody respects.

VIRGIN

To me, your flesh is nothing. I love you for what you really are. You will learn what I mean. Your first lesson is this one. You will die, your body will be buried and cease to exist. But you will still live, better than before. Do you believe me when I promise you this?

LU

Yes I do. Oh, man, I really do. I must be out of my mind.

VIRGIN

Your mind is also irrelevant to who you are. Now...sleep, my child. We will talk again, soon.

(Pause)

Yes. Go ahead, say it.

LU

Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake...

MUSIC COMES BACK UP

As she drowns off, the room slowly fills with the white lilies, surrounding her deep and wide as she lolls off into sleep.

FADE TO WHITE

EXT. GAMINES SHRINE -- DAY/NIGHT

FADE IN FROM WHITE

MUSIC CONTINUES OVER FROM LAST SCENE

TIME LAPSE of the yucca plant shows shadows flitting as night and day alternate. We see ghostlike appearances of Gamines watering the grave, or simply kneeling watchfully like flickering movie apparitions. The yucca grows very large very quickly.

Intercut with the yucca growing sequence are flashes of big badness elsewhere. We see quick nightmare takes of kids being exploited on the streets, sexually abused in their homes, sold drugs, lured by promise of food, beaten, used as guinea pigs in Ray's lab, robbed of their vital fluids with hypodermics, handed over to lecherous old men.

The center of yucca is a mass of spiked leaves. As it opens each leaf leaves its hook-toothed imprint on the thick leaves below.

Then we see Lu's face starting to emerge at the center of the plant, marked with the same hooktooth imprint from the leaf thorns impressed into her skin.

When her entire, uplifted face is revealed, at the center of the rosette of spiked leaves her eyes suddenly open, and wow are they a sight.

IN REAL TIME the Gamines start to gather as the new Lu slowly emerges from the ground, rising like an ear of corn from the swirling leaves. She rises, nude and pale with a halo of light.

The children stare in transfixed awe. She has arisen facing the poster of the Virgin, whose eyes also open to meet her gaze.

Glowing piles of shiny white fabric are draped on the altar. Slowly the fabric floats up and over to Lu, wafting around her and settling down on her. It's a wrestler's outfit; cape, tights, and mask in white with trim the same sky blue as the Virgin's robe.

The mask settles over her face and fuses with it, turning her scarred green yucca face into an ethereal silver sculpture. Once the costume is in place, the glow diminishes and Lu snaps into flesh and blood.

Her pose looks very much like the standard Virgin, but when she spreads her arms, there is a resemblance to the crucified Christ. The cape barely conceals her otherwise bare breasts, she has a white loin cloth.

Her wound is visible in her side, the other stigmata on her hands and feet, where she was stabbed.

Slowly, a thorny tiara of silver filigree floats down to crown her.

Lu stares down at her resurrected body and immaculate togs. Then at the Gamines crouched around her in absolute awe.

She turns slowly, scanning them, towering over them like an instrument of power and unholy beauty.

Suddenly she kneels, facing Amparo. She spreads her arms, speaking in a refined and enhanced version of her previous voice.

LU

Ah, come here you poor things. You brought me water, didn't you? Come here. *Pobrecitos, ven aca con tu hermana.*

The kids edge in, but Amparo breaks away and runs into her arms.

AMPARO

You came! You came! The Virgin Mother sent you to us.

(To Pepito)

You see? Just like we prayed for. She can protect us and love us. I told you!

VIRGIN

(From wall)

Tell her where to find Blanquita, my children.

PEPITO

In the bordello, where the...

His words are lost in a chatter as the kids swarm in around Lu, all talking and pointing at once, all trying to touch her.

INT. WHOREHOUSE -- NIGHT

MUSIC OVER, ROWDY RANCHERO

Two beautiful fighting cocks in an SLO MO aerial ballet, their colors and moves beautiful as they try to kill each other.

A ring of excited gamblers bets on the cocks: it's the same whorehouse-bar where Blanquita was imprisoned and menaced. The same Whores are at the bar with a raffish bunch of Johns. Magón is leaning at the bar comparing tough poses with another HEAVY.

A blue-white glow lights the scene up, subtly at first, then growing into a blaze of exposure. The barflies turn to look, squinting into the light.

It's Lu, with celestial backlighting for her new wrestling duds. She stands like a statue, cape flared wide behind her, glaring at the two pimps.

She slowly raises her hands, each holding a side-handled police baton made of bright chromed steel, until they touch in a double fencer's salute. The protruding handles make a gleaming crucifix in front of her bosom, over which she eyes the assholes implacably.

Magón and the Heavy don't want to show fear, but they are freaked out. As Lu approaches them, the Heavy surreptitiously crosses himself, fading behind Magón.

Too late. She's right on top of them. Magón curses, pulls out some very brutal studded nunchuks.

The Heavy, trapped, grabs a baseball bat from behind the bar. They jump her in tandem, met by twin blocks from the shimmering nightsticks.

The "Juans" evaporate and the Whores shrink back, squealing and cowering, as the three pitch into a major battle.

The two pimps are unskilled, but big, powerful and scared shitless as they batter away at her with whatever comes to hand.

Lu is serene, staring straightforward in a Zen-like detachment as she effortlessly parries and slaps hurts on the two.

Finally she blocks a chair the Heavy slings at her and puts him down for the count with a scissors blow to his neck from the twin batons.

Magón snatches up the bat and runs at her in desperation, slamming it down murderously.

Lu blocks it overhead with one baton inclined so that the blow slides off to the side, then gives a spinning round house with the other, catching Magón a crunching blow at the base of the skull. He slides on home.

Lu turns without a word or gesture and walks towards the stairs that lead to the crib doors upstairs.

Behind her, the Whores swoop down on the two Pimps, yelling and pounding them with makeshift weapons and broken whiskey bottles. Although Magón is hidden behind a great fluff of moving petticoats and ho-rags, it's obvious they are cutting him to pieces.

The First Whore grabs a huge bull's horns from the wall behind the bar and starts stabbing him with it, not without sodomy overtones. His screams choke off as the Whores laugh and howl.

INT. WHOREHOUSE CRIB -- NIGHT

Blanquita is on the same bed, in the same fearful praying pose as before.

The door opens, also echoing the earlier scene. But this time the hand that reaches for her is beautiful and graceful, in a skintight white glove with silver piping.

She looks up stricken, then amazed, then rapt, as Lu lifts her into her arms, wraps her cape around her like the wings of a mother bird, and carries her out of that place, leaving the door gaping behind them.

INT. WHOREHOUSE -- NIGHT

Magón is a bloody mess. A familiar boot moves in to flip him over. Ick.

The boot is on a leg that belongs to Ray, who surveys the wreckage of his cathouse. He takes in the bodies, the total destruction of the bar, the absence of hookers, the open door upstairs.

His face says one thing: boy, is he pissed.

INT. ABANDONED FACTORY -- NIGHT

MUSIC OVER -- INDUSTRIAL/RANCHERO "NOR-TEC"

The same warehouse for beggars we saw earlier. Bundles of Gamines and Indian Women line the walls and corners, a Zapotec Woman is warming tortillas on a fire in an oil drum.

The patrol car sits halfway inside the doors, lights twirling, while a Henchman chats with the two corrupt Cops.

The Gloved Cop has his arms out the car window, holding one of the Gas Huffers by the head as he examines the child's teeth.

Two burly Henchmen are locking long leg chains that keep the beggars from escaping at night.

A Henchmen fumbles the irons around the spindly legs of a Gamine Girl, tugging the chains roughly against her skin as he locks her in.

Suddenly the steel chains seem to glow with a blue light. The Henchman looks up, following the amazed gazes of the Beggars, just in time to take a white wrestling boot square in his face, bowling him over.

Lu, owner/operator of the boot, stalks towards the two Henchmen, one helping the other to his feet. She stoops in mid-stride to pick up a length of chain.

The Henchmen aren't even set when she wades into them, swinging the manacles around her like a steel cat-o-nine. They get pulverized, their faces seriously re-arranged.

Lu moves on, approaching the patrol car from the blind side.

When the chains snap across the windshield, shattering it, the Cops take notice. The Gloved Cop on the passenger side tries to get out the door, going for his gun, but Lu does a flying karate leap, cape swirling behind her, to slam it on his legs.

She lashes with the chain, shattering the passenger side red roof light, leaving only the blue light flashing.

The Driver Cop points his gun over the door, but a wad of chains comes down on it, breaking his arm and sending the pistol spinning away.

The Gloved Cop has pulled a shotgun out, and is throwing down over the roof.

Lu ducks a blast of buckshot, dodging like quicksilver in the stuttering blue light, then pops up and cracks the chains like a whip, snagging the gun and yanking it out of his hands.

He goes for his sidearm, but she bullwhips the chain again, hitting him around the neck and pulling him over the hood towards her.

He tries a punch, but she grabs his arm and hurls him into the fire barrel.

Chato is on her by now, massive and swinging two machetes. She holds up the chain stretched between her hands, taking the machetes' one-two in a shower of sparks.

She swings a whirling kick to his face, followed by the scourge of the chains raking across Chato's head. He fights desperately, but is battered down in the strobing blue light.

EXT. OUTSIDE ABANDONED FACTORY -- NIGHT

NOR-TEC MUSIC CONTINUES

The Patrol Car has been turned around and rolled out into the yard.

Lu finishes chaining the five men, who are now crammed into the trunk. Her face is still furious, even with the freed Gamines frolicking around her.

She tamps the last asshole into the trunk, then slams the lid, with a few flat-footed hops to engage the latch.

Two little boy Gamines, wearing the Cops' hats and belts, pile out of the front seat of the car, then reach back in to release the brake.

The car starts ahead, joyous Gamines pushing it and beating on the trunk lid, then gains speed as it rolls out of the yard and over the edge of a deep gulch.

There are cheers and hugs all around, the kids and women swarming around Lu, who stands staring after the car, chains draped in her hands like the statue of Lincoln.

INT. ABANDONED FACTORY -- DAY

A black Suburban with Devil Ray's logo is pulled inside the factory, which is obviously empty. Ray is looking around the place, and doesn't much care for what he doesn't see.

His Henchmen look nervous, but one tall henchman approaches him, holding up a placating hand. Ray punches the guy right off his feet.

He seems about to kick the Tall Henchman while down, but turns and kicks the tires of the Suburban. He then slams both fists down on the hood, denting it.

He is not a happy camper.

INT. RAY'S DRUG LAB -- NIGHT

The lab is all white, stainless steel and glass, with a bluish Bunsen burner light catching the metal and glassware. Shelves hold stacks of hermetically sealed plastic bags full of white powder.

The Workers all wear white "clean room" coveralls and white hairnets. At one end of the room a dozen Naked Gamines sit around a stainless steel table packing the powder into bags.

At the first glow of the special radiance Lu emanates, the Workers scramble into defensive positions. The Gamines stare, confused, then incredulously joyous.

Lu is standing next to a rack with all their guns. She casually tips a reagent bottle over them, pulls out a blue plastic lighter, and fires it up.

The Workers start to move towards her, but she hits a pose, producing a sword from under her cape (ala "Highlander") and presenting it in a Joan of Arc manner. It's a matador's sword, but without hilt ring--a simple cross.

The Workers all back off, except for the huge foreman, who we recognize as the Purple Minion from the stag party as soon as he pulls the knives out of his boots. They square off. In the bluish light he looks sickly, she looks perfect.

MUSIC--TRUMPET FANFARE FROM "LONELY BULL" again, this time isolated, hanging menacingly on the air as the Foreman charges Lu. This time the *corrida* is for real blood.

They fight in silent, jerky SLOW MOTION. The foreman tries to overwhelm Lu, but she swirls her cape in his face and spins away.

A CHORUS OF SURREALISTIC "OLE'S" greets her veronica and all her passes as they fight, otherwise there is no sound. They sweep around the room in a ballet of blades and swirling white cape. The blades pierce the cape at times, a rake across her belly draws blood. Her passes infuriate him. He draws himself up for the ultimate attack.

RETURN TO REAL TIME SPEED

LU

Ready for the "Moment of Truth"?

Again in the dream-like, choppy SLO MOTION, the Foreman charges in a panic, the knives held in front of his bulk, hooking treacherously at her gut.

Lu flirts the cape in his face, then lays the sword right on the spot, between the shoulder blades, as he charges into it.

He collapses, lying motionless at the foot of the dope shelves, the sword protruding from between his huge shoulders.

Behind him we see the Workers running like hell, the Naked Gamines jumping up and running towards Lu.

RETURN TO REAL TIME SPEED

LU

Truth is, you're dead.

She picks up one of his knives and slashes furiously at the bags on the shelves. The dope splashes out in a white sparkling cascade, drifting up over the body.

When she turns at the door to look back, we see a white plain of glistening pure powder with a mounded grave marked by the sword creating an unmistakable cross.

LU

P.S., R.I.P.

The Naked Gamines reach her and flock around her adoringly. She bends to kiss them, sweeping them up in her cape and whisking them away.

INT. OUTSIDE DRUG LAB -- NIGHT

Outside the lab door, but still inside the warehouse, Lu and the Gamines pass three henchmen's bodies, one nailed to the wall as if crucified, two slumped bleeding on either side in identical kneeling positions.

She walks over to two big tanks of propane, passing boxes with Spanish signs "ESTEROIDES ANABOLICOS". She slashes the hoses. At the outside door, the knob and lock obviously burned out, she kneels.

She places the blue Bic against the wall, carefully aligning it with the door. Lu stands up, steps outside into the dark, the door closes behind her.

She stalks off into the night, the Naked Gamines flowing along with her in a scene suggesting a Masters painting-- Faerie Queen with Naked Cherubs.

EXT. OUTSIDE WAREHOUSE -- NIGHT

Two petrified WORKERS, still in white coveralls, are showing several Gunmen the door, gesticulating and babbling in Spanish.

The Gunmen look at Ray, who is extremely grim. He nods, gestures at the door with a heavy automatic pistol. Two Gunmen edge tiwards the door cautiously from the side.

Ray, impatient and insolent, stalks over pointing his gun forward with both hands to kick in the door.

The door's lower corner swings in to hit the Bic right on the button. There is a tiny spark, then KA WHOOMP! Nothing explodes quite as pretty as a chem lab.

Ray, lying on his back on the pavement bloodied and dazed, gets it together enough to raise his head and survey the remains of his lovely dope factory.

Boy, now he's really pissed. He slams his head back down on the cement, clenching his fists at his side in a broiling fury.

INT. WHOREHOUSE CRIB -- NIGHT

The narrow empty cot sets a scene identical to the earlier scene with Blanquita. Suddenly the door bursts inward and light streaks the bed.

A badly bruised Chato slams into the room, carrying Chuco under one arm. He tosses the kid on the bed like a sack of potatoes. Holding him with one hand, he pulls out a hypodermic with the other and shoots Chuco in the arm. Chuco goes wild-eyed.

Chato stomps out the door, slamming it behind him. Chuco sits on the bed, rocking wildly.

INT. WHOREHOUSE CRIB -- LATER THAT NIGHT

Chuco is lying on the bed in a fetal position, obviously jonesing. Again the door opens, again the light slices across the child on the bed.

This time Ray rolls menacingly into the room, flanked by some very uptight henchmen.

Chuco scrabbles around on the bed, but the torpedoes snatch him up into a sitting position on the crummy mattress while Ray looms over him.

Ray sinks into a squat, his face intimidatingly close to Chuco's.

RAY

(In menacing rasp)

Okay. Who is she? What's she doing? Where do I find her?

Chuco looks up at him puzzled, then horrified. He hadn't realized this wasn't about him. He sticks his jaw out.

CHUCO

Go ahead, beat me up. I'm not going to rat on her. Just kill me. Who the hell cares?

The thugs move ugly, but Ray holds up his hand.

RAY
("Reasonable" tone)
Like they say in horse racing, it
costs two bucks to care.

Ray reaches into his jacket.

Chuco's bruised eyes widen, then tear up, as Ray's blunt fingers dangle a bag of white powder in front of them

RAY
Of course, the price keeps going up.

At the sight of the bag of gleaming dope, Chuco sobs and spins out of the chair. He falls to the floor on his knees, his arms stretched out in front of him across the bed in supplication.

His eyes are closed tight, but we know the bag is still right there in front of them.

Two of Ray's goons clamp down on his thin outstretched arms.

Ray pulls a device out of his pocket.

Ray sits down on the bed by Chuco and ruffles his hair. The boy moans.

Ray holds the device, a gleaming, complex pipe married to a transparent plastic respirator cup. Ray drops some rocks from the bag into the pipe, then tenderly presses the mask onto the boy's teary, sweat-streaked face.

With his other hand, he reaches in and grabs the skinny throat, choking Chuco, while impassively holding the mask over his nose and mouth.

When Chuco starts to twitch and struggle, Ray snaps his fingers and an arm moves in holding a lighter. Ray releases Chuco's throat just as the lighter snaps.

The dragon gets chased around the pipe and reflects on the mask.

Ray removes the crack pipe and crosses his arms, waiting.

Chuco eyes the bag and starts shivering and licking his lips.

INT. RAY'S CLINIC -- NIGHT

The clinic is quiet and mostly dark, highlights on the smooth white surfaces. There is enough ambient light to see a child strapped down on an operating table, connected to various tubes, wires, and winking digital displays.

LU'S BLUE GLOW appears and deepens, with a rising swell of CHURCH ORGAN MUSIC. By that light, we can see that the figure on the table is Chuco. The glow deepens and whitens as Lu strides in, attired in her new Sacred Mask and Robe.

Lu heads straight for Chuco, looks down at his battered face, then starts unfastening him.

RAY (OS)

So. I see the Virgin Slut practices recycling.

Lu spins to see Ray leaning against a wall, wearing his wrestling boots, mask and robe.

Lu stalks grimly toward Ray, who moves towards a double doorway.

Lu moves with superhuman quickness to cut him off. Ray laughs.

RAY

You should watch more movies, you dumb bitch. Then you'd know that the evil asshole always has...
(Flashing remote control)
...a secret trapdoor!

Ray punches the button and a section of floor opens under Lu, plunging her out of view.

Ray quickly steps to the double doors and throws them open. The doors block the view, but he is lit up in a ruddy glow from inside them.

Behind Ray, Lu's hands emerge from the pit, grabbing the edge, then she vaults into sight, her grim look turning to amazement as she looks through the doors.

Ray is standing in the room behind the doors, a black-walled shrine lit by red flames. The walls and doors inside are covered with grim bric-a-brac, from Kali to human skulls, to satanic depictions.

The main event is a huge goat's head, with a horns spread almost as wide as a bull's. The head looks evil and medallion of an inverted pentagram.

Lu bobs, uncertain, as Ray steps up to the altar, grips the horns, and throws his head back in ecstasy of supplication. A hint of red light runs across him, weird growling sounds emanate, sparks fly and what have you.

He releases the altar horns and turns to face Lu. His cape snaps back from around him like the costumes in "Stargate", revealing some major modifications.

Ray has morphed into something not particularly human. His new look retains the general manta ray configuration, but with elements of vampire and insect: all red, black and chrome. His horned mask now has stainless steel teeth and red lamps for eyes.

His torso is enclosed in a molded red carapace, like Batman, except that extending up between the chiseled abdominals is a large penis, somewhat disguised by design, with centipede-like curved barbs on the side of it blending into the grooves between the abs.

His legs bulge like hydraulic mantis limbs and end in heavy black metal hooves. On his chest is the pentagram medallion.

RAY

You think you get a little of the supernatural working for you and you're big shit. Well, get in line sister. I've been here for years, playing the "soul food" game. Jesus Saves, but ol' Brother Ray doubles down and wins.

He moves out towards Lu, each step vibrating the room a little. He is a looming evil, totally enjoying himself.

RAY

You realize this Virgin of Lupe Lu thing is a total crock, don't you? The Church cooked it up to sell their scam to the Indians so they could enslave them. You think I'm a scumbag promoter? I wouldn't even make the taxi squad at the Vatican.

LU

It's not a scam. I saw her myself.

RAY

You see what you want to see. That's how all this shit works, you dum twat.

LU

Good. 'Cause what I want to see is your ass on a barbecue.

RAY

That's it, think happy thoughts.

Ray moves leisurely to the attack.

Lu punches and kicks furiously, but he is just as fast, his arts just as martial, his strength unlimited. She is getting crushingly blocked, slammed into walls, kicked in the guts, pounded down.

Ray gets her down and on top of her, slamming the life out of her in an overtly sexual victory, as though ramming into her and tearing her apart.

Then, as he poses over her triumphant and she is spits and struggles, furiously fighting death, he leans down to savor her dying flutter and winks grotesquely.

RAY

You fucked up, girlie. This time you are dying the real death, the death of the soul. You're going to be mine forever, an eternity of degradation and pain.

(ala melodrama villain)

Nyaaah hah ahhhhhhhhhhh.

LU

What are you? How did you become
such a thing? Why?

RAY

You know exactly what I am. And
why. I was created to serve, to be
second best, to always lose the
fight. And I can't fucking stand
it. Better to rule in hell than
serve in heaven, huh baby? So I cut
me a deal. I live to win, dominate,
destroy my opponent. That's what I
do, what I am. But you wouldn't
know anything about that, would you?

Lu nods weakly, closes her eyes, sinking.

RAY

(Singing)

If I only had a heart.

Ray slaps her face until she opens her eyes, then holds his
hands up in front of them. Wicked nails, chisels as sharp
and triangular as can openers, snick out like switchblades.

He plunges them between her breasts, pries her ribcage
open, reaches in, and pulls out her heart. The bluish,
thorn-wreathed sacred bleeding heart, an FX almost like
blue neon. He shows it to her, laughing, then bites a big
chunk out of it.

Lu screams.

Ray continues eating the heart, visibly swelling and
ecstatic as she diminishes, as though he is pumping her
life out.

RAY

You should have stayed dead while
you had the chance, bitch.

INT. THE ARMS OF MARY -- "DAY"

MUSIC OVER, ETHEREAL MARIACHI "AVE MARIA"

A sort of Renaissance Heaven, a vast sky backdrops
everything, white arches trimmed with gold framing blue
domes. The ceilings are painted like the Vatican, and
almost too high to see, the floor is white marble.

The Virgin is in the center of the whole nave, in the pose of the Pieta. In her arms, broken and battered in bloody rags, is the body of Lu.

MUSIC DOWN as Virgin speaks

VIRGIN

Look at me, *mi hija*.

Lu's eyes open, and fill with tears as she looks up at the Virgin.

VIRGIN

Why are you crying, my daughter? I am here.

LU

I got wiped out again, Mother. I wasn't up to it and I lost.

(With more heat)

Damn it! He killed me *again!*

VIRGIN

Calmate, Lucha. The light is on your side. I am bringing you a message of joy and victory.

LU

A message. From?

VIRGIN

From God. From the Universe. From who you will be when you know who you are.

LU

OK, what's the message?

VIRGIN

That you are nothing if you can't care about others besides yourself.

LU

Well, I care about those kids

VIRGIN

And that is very good, but they are really only reflections of yourself, you know. Symbols of your inside self.

LU

But, it's my nature to care about myself. My self is all I've got, what I am.

VIRGIN

Your nature is exactly what you need to conquer, to control. You still think you are your body, don't you? Let me show you what your body is.

Suddenly Lu is standing erect on the marble floor, facing the Virgin. Her ruined clothing strips away from her as if by a high wind. She stands naked in the gaze of the Virgin, then stigmata appear on her hands and side. The bleeding areas spread, her flesh starts to decay into wounds and rot, to worms, to a creepy pile of dust.

VIRGIN

That is all your body is, organized dirt, dust in the wind. If that is all you want to be, then there you are.

LU (OS)

How about my soul? Oh, he killed that, too, didn't he?

VIRGIN

I will show you what your soul is, also.

The floor opens into a pit, the pile of dust sifting down into bottomless space. Lu's soul, an idealized crystal nude with wings of shimmering stained glass colors, falls into a foul, H.R. Giger pit that churns with vile, sickening images of decay.

Just before the soul splashes into that evil lake, which swarms up to grasp at it, it stops, everything freezing.

VIRGIN (OS)

This is the fate of the sinning human soul. You have seen your own heart by now. Maybe you know why this is.

Close up, the soul is suspended in a silvery glass sphere that extends at top into a white glowing thread, pulsing and scintillating up into a clear blue sky winged with round forms of a Vatican cupola ceiling.

VIRGIN (OS)

If I didn't love you, you would be tormented in that hell, *hi ja*. A lone soul plunges into meaningless void. It is only love that brings life and there is nothing to love but other souls, and spirit itself. If you can't learn to love others as much as yourself, you will be there anyway. Hell is nothing more than a world without love.

The "Heaven Cathedral" forms again, and Lu again kneels, chastely clad in flowing white, in front of the Virgin.

VIRGIN

Or maybe you think that you are your mind, your personality, your emotions? They are just as dead, as crippled, as chaotic, as poisoned. That is why you have called out to me. I can't show you your mind and feelings, though. The only way you learn is to see those for yourself.

LU

All I am is because of you, then?
I'm nothing without you?

VIRGIN

What do you think Gods and Goddesses do? You are a creation, child. Created by love. You only exist to the extent that love is present and felt and returned. It's the oldest story in the world, told over and over by different faces and different masks. You are an idea in my mind. You live because I love you.

LU

(A pensive pause, then...)
Thank you mother.

VIRGIN

And I only exist for you. In order
to create you, my love.

LU

I guess that's harder to understand.

VIRGIN

Understanding isn't important.
What's important is to believe.

LU

Ray said I just see you because I
want to.

VIRGIN

That's true. These spiritual
matters all work from the true
desires of the heart.

LU

Ray said you were just part of a
scam, a myth to enslave Indians to
the Church.

VIRGIN

But it's true.

That shocks Lu.

VIRGIN

And I am truer yet, truer than any
human dream. I don't represent the
Church, or even Mexico: I am a
symbol for the Indians of the
Americas. I existed before the
Europeans came here, before this
continent was formed. I am not what
men think I am: I am part of what
the earth that you stand on is made
of. They only lend me the name and
face needed to survive in the hearts
of my people, the fruits of my
earth. Inside, where you know who
you are, you know who I am and it
terrifies you, but also fills you
with the consuming joy of the purest
love there can ever be.

LU

So, if the way you appear is a mask,
what is your true face, your real
name?

VIRGIN

I have a thousand names, a million
faces.

MONTAGE

A flickering SHOT SEQUENCE traces a tachistoscopic evolution from nameless abyss, through primitive drawings, Willendorf Venus, scary tooth mother Goddess, mezo-american idols, Aztec friezes, faster flickers into a swirling, pulsing ball like Arguello's evolution mandala, Aztec calendar, finally a "nuclear" blast of light that fades down to show a double heart with red and blue blood, like the Frida Kahlo painting, but 3-D, stylized and bleeding, like a Low Rider version of the Sacred Heart.

VIRGIN (OS)

That is who I am, my child. All of
that and more.

(With a regal emphasis)

I am the mother of God.

(Long pause, then softer)

Whatever you know or adore was
pulled bloody and screaming and
unformed from out of my body. I
bore all men, all women, forth from
nothingness by myself. You and all
your kind live only because I suckle
you at my breast. My darlings, I am
the earth.

LU

Then where do I fit in?

VIRGIN

You are me, *mi vida*, my right arm.
It is difficult for a civilization
like this one to worship something
like what you just saw, so once
again I am taking on a new face for
these people and these times. That
new face is you.

LU

So I'm nothing but another mask for
you to wear?

VIRGIN

No, my heart. You are me wearing a mask I have created to be terrible and beautiful. We are one name, one face, one flesh, one heart. Do you doubt that?

LU

(Staunch, confident)

No, Mother, I don't. Just when you said it, I knew it was true.

VIRGIN

Then I will show you the truth of what you already know. Be still and rest, mi'ija. The light is on your side.

Lu dreamily stands up, shedding her white robe as she stands. As she rises out of the shining robe, the background fades out to a featureless glow of cloud white and sky blue.

The Virgin appears before her, toe to toe. A wind blows out from between the two figures, blowing their hair back from their faces.

The wind dissolves the Virgin's robe and rainments, which scud away like wisps of fog. She faces Lu eye to eye, her white, honeyed body a contrast to the Chicana's dark skin and hair.

Their gazes are locked as they move together, their images in their eyes revealing the nearness of the other, the camera catching them from different angles.

Their breasts come together until the nipples touch, a rainbow light spreading across their breasts and shoulders. At this point they interpenetrate, fusing together into one vibrant woman from whom rays of light gradually WHITE OUT.

An empty background of shifting color patterns and glory drifts up out of the white, with Lu in the foreground wrapped in diaphanous, pearly white and suffused with awe, peace and power, rocking slowly back and forth in a silk hammock of pure white light.

Her eyes close, her head lolls into sleep.

Behind her the color patterns form a huge face of the Virgin, watching over Lu's sleep.

EXT. GAMINES SHRINE -- NIGHT

The Gamines are all here, kneeling in a semicircle before the "altar", where the Virgin is appearing in an ethereal pieta scene, holding Lu to her body in exactly the same pose as before.

She speaks softly to the Gamines, who are subdued, staring at the bloodied corpse in her lap.

VIRGIN

She gave her life for you, the only life that means anything, to try to save you. Her heart, her sacred heart, was taken from her. But each of you also has within you a sacred heart. The only thing you have really, the only thing you will ever have. How many of you would give their heart so that she can live?

CELESTINE MUSIC BEGINS, a frail, tinkling air that builds slowly to an anthem as the scene progresses.

The Gamines look at each other, eyes lowered, then back at the Virgin, at Lu's body. They look downward, stunned and abashed.

Amparo, her lip trembling with fear, slowly holds up her hand.

Pepito staunchly follows suit. One by one the Gamines raise their grubby hands.

A misty glow grows around them, growing focused in their chests, where tiny golden fireflies are forming. These sparks of light buzz out from the transfixed children, flitting over to float above the still body of Lu.

The motes of light coalesce, and gradually become a heart-shaped form that sinks down into her body, illuminating it from within and animating it with an unmistakable aura of life.

Amparo looks down at her own body in surprise.

AMPARO
 (Incredulous)
 But we're still alive!

VIRGIN
 Yes you are, my child. And you have just learned the Greatest Mystery of All. The only way to live is to give your life, the only way to keep your heart is to give it away.

The Gamines stare at each other, their expressions joyful. Excitedly, they press forward to look at Lu.

VIRGIN
 With your help and your love, I have restored her soul. But what about her body?

Pepito perks up

PEPITO
 Mother, my cousin works in a body shop.

EXT. "REBUILD MONTAGE" -- DAY

BRIGHT MUSIC OVER, HERB ALPERT'S "AND THE ANGELS SING"

A speechless SEQUENCE OF SHOTS, alternating between the Gamines' bizarre scavenger hunt throughout Tijuana's border culture and sweaty auto shop workers sipping beer and toiling over The Rebuild: forming sheet metal, installing powerful engines, riveting, painting, chroming, tucking and rolling.

We never get a full view of what they are creating, but it looks like it's going to be bitchin'.

The Gamines are scrambling over junkyard fences, running down slum alleyways with metal parts.

In the Market, Amparo reaches from under a pile of baskets to swipe a few chiles from a gleaming pile. Across the aisle, Gamine Boy #1 swipes a jar of honey from a Cart Vendor.

The jar gleams golden with honeycomb inside, then dirty fingers snatching it away.

Pepito and Gamine Boy #2, in the temple, look over their shoulders as they fill desert water bags with holy water from the font, Father Melo appears, chasing them, but they are long gone.

On the Boulevard, Blanquita sweet-talks a Stoplight Vendor out of an armful of roses.

Pepito stands in front of a pile of chrome bumpers, showing a Plating Worker an old leaf spring. The Worker takes it, looks at it dubiously.

In Plaza Sta. Cecelia, a sidewalk Table Customer orders a bottle of tequila, but as the Waiter carries it over, Gamine Boy #2 lassos it from above and goes over the roof with it. The Waiter presents the empty tray and does a double take. The Customer gives him a dirty eye.

Gamine Girl #1 checks bottles of Clairol shampoo in a drugstore, selects a bottle with a label featuring a glorious, angel-looking picture, grabs it and bails.

A Mariachi nods over a beer at a plaza table, his *guitarrón* beside him. A tiny hand with scissors reaches out from under the tablecloth, clips off two of the ornate silver fighting cocks from the side slit of his pants.

Gamine Girl #2 comes out of a medicinal/spiritualist shop and sprints around the corner. She pulls out three candles with elaborate pictures of the Virgin, a fighting Michael, and a dragon-slaying St. George--and several plastic bags of weird-looking herbs with religious seals.

In the bullring, the crowd roars as the matador plants long, paper-flowered *banderillas* in the bull. On the sidelines an open case of *banderillas* stands in front of a rack of capes. Another furtive hand snakes out, grabs all the *banderillas*, and disappears.

The sign through the *Farmacia* window advertises bottles of Zumba, a major aphrodisiac. Amparo appears in the window, snatches some bottles and makes a run for it.

EXT. GAMINES SHRINE -- NIGHT

TINNY RANCHERO MUSIC FROM BOOMBOX

Where Lu's body lay there is now a battered piece of plywood supported on crates. On top of it is a body-sized object shrouded in dirty blue cloth. In front of the improvised table the Gamines are bunched around a motorcycle gas tank on the ground.

Everybody crosses themselves as Pepito and Boy #2 pour the holy water into the tank. Blanquita is dreamily picking off rose petals and dropping them into the filler hole.

The golden honey pours into the tank, then a slinky gold flow of Clairol. Girl #3 takes a quick taste of one of the chiles. Oooo, it's a hot one. She wipes her eyes, drops them into the tank.

A Small Gamine is sneaking a sip of the Tequila, but Amparo catches him and raps his head and he quickly pours it into the tank. Another set of hands squeezes in a lime on top of it, a third hand shakes in some salt.

Hands dump things into the tank: the Zumba, a bull's ear, a handful of shiny *milagros*, the gamecock buttons, some hot sauce, finally a rosary. A silvery smoke starts to drift out of the tank.

Girl #2 places the candles around the veils on the table and lights them.

Pepito lays his new chrome crossbow and sheaf of banderilla arrows beside the shrouded object.

The kids lift the tank, which is now smoking like a Saturn rocket. Underneath it on the ground is an old silver coin, glowing in the dirt. Wonderingly, Amparo picks it up.

The coin has a depiction of Diana the Huntress. The Gamines all kiss the coin, then drop it into the tank and approach the table.

Pepito, across the table, tugs the shroud aside to reveal part of the new Lu, including two beautiful chromed breasts.

He touches one lightly and it springs open, revealing a filler cap. He opens the cap.

Amparo rolls up a Lucha comic for a funnel and they pour in the silvery, fogging brew.

Pepito replaces the cap and closes the breast back into place. Almost immediately the object under the shroud begins a vibration. A sound begins, like a burner.

MUSIC UP, THE VENTURES' "TELSTAR"

Slowly the shining object starts to levitate, rising above the table and Gamines' heads. The shroud slips away to reveal the new Lu in all her space tech/low-rider Kustom glory.

She is now metallic: chromed, Kandy Apple painted and pinstriped. She is sleek as a fighter, coweled like a jet. Her calves terminate in blued steel pipes, her hands end in sleek oxy-acetylene jets, giving her blue flame nails. Her mask is blue chrome, the eyes inside it points of violet laser glow.

Her cape is now a wrap-around cowl, painted inside with blue roses like hotrod flames, accented by glow from hidden blue neon tubes.

Her thorny crown is now just a chrome logo on her mask. The chrome crossbow is slung over her shoulder.

MUSIC UP as Lu hovers, then slowly moves into fully upright position in mid-air. Her cowl spreads open like an angel's wings, her arms visible inside it, spread like a crucifixion.

The blue jets at her fingertips flare, blue flame plays around her leg jets, then with a rising rocket roar and MUSIC CRESCENDO she blasts off, up into the night.

INT. RAY'S CLINIC -- NIGHT

MUSIC OVER More creepy stuff

Ray again entertains his Minions, who are again all attired in bizarro masks and capes. They are standing around a restraint bed, which slowly rises to a vertical position, revealing Chuco strapped in a crucified position and scared green. And with good reason: the Minions are crowding around below him, carrying sharp knives and ritual vessels. It looks very much like the kid is going to get stuck for the drinks.

A very faint echo of the "LONELY BULL" TRUMPET FLOURISH sounds, causing a few Minions to look around. But they are more interested in watching a flow of blood from Chuco's thigh into a grotesque goblet made out of some horned skull.

The flourish sounds again, this time loud enough to freeze activity. At the same time, there is the unmistakable flash of Lu Blue. The Minions turn to face big frosted windows and are startled to see a blue glow coming toward them, diffused by the glass.

They're a lot more startled when the glass shatters, driven inward by the crashing impact of Lu ala cruise missile barging through it into the room. A sleet of blue-tinted glass shards explodes through the room, causing the Minions to throw their arms and capes over their faces.

Lu surges in, her jets pulsing, her very presence throbbing. She lands at one end of the room facing the Minions, Ray front and center among them.

They gird themselves for combat, brandishing eldritch knives and tucking up robes to reveal signs of subhuman morphing in many of them.

Lu is holding up what appears, in the clinic's odd lighting, to be a shining cross. There is a snicker from the minions, then general laughter. Then the cross tips down towards them, becomes more obviously the chrome crossbow.

Lu easily pulls it, nocks up a colorful banderilla, and pulls the trigger. The banderilla blossoms from the throat of a Purple Minion, who falls over on his back, gargling and spewing.

Two other Minions turn to look at him and one of them, a Furry Minion, takes a banderilla right at the base of the skull.

Chuco's stares at all of this, goggle-eyed.

These guys are not wimps. They charge Lu, waving their weapons, their capes flowing out behind them, their masks a cohort of evil.

Lu keeps gunning them down, each target getting a flowered shaft to show for it all. When they get within reach, Lu lays the crossbow down and spreads her cowl into wings like a jet fighter. Her fingernails spout fountains of blue flame, she waves them in front of her and Minions scream.

Then her jets ignite, twin pulses of multi-colored flame, and she takes off into them, plowing a swath of death through them, spinning in flight, rolling over like an F-16 to come in for more runs, demolishing the Legion of Darkness.

Within minutes there is nobody standing but Ray. Give him credit for one thing, he's got guts. He has totally morphed by now, and stands ready to mix it up with her, one post-human, spirit-fueled machine against another. He flexes, draws himself up, radiates evil, power and confidence. He steps toward her with a gloating grin.

LU

You don't have to die.

RAY

(Disgusted)

Yeah, right.

LU

Hey, look at me. I'm not dead.

RAY

Well, paint a rose on your ass. I gave it my best shot, so don't rub it in.

LU

I don't want to kill you. Even The Mother doesn't want you dead.

RAY

Yeah, I noticed. Well, what the hell does she want?

LU

What she wants is this:

(Quoting)

Stop harming my lambs.

(Earnestly)

Is that so hard?

RAY

As a matter of fact, yes. It's my nature. It's what I do.

LU

I can understand that. But I also understand that people can change.

RAY

And how many sacred virgin zombie flying nuns does it take to change my light bulb? I yam what I yam.

LU

Then you are already dead, inside yourself.

A flicker reanimates Ray, he sneers.

RAY

And how about you? You don't mind whacking a few working souls for a night's entertainment, do you? Well come and get me, bitch. Win the big one.

LU

I didn't come here to defeat you, I came to save the kids.

RAY

Well, step right up, little lady. Win yourself a mustache ride.

LU

You don't have to die, Ray.

RAY

Don't intend to, Miss Thing.

Lu accelerates right into Ray, who is knocked backwards, but bounces off the walls and swipes at her on the rebound, catching the outstretched cowl and causing her to tumble in flight, hit a wall of laboratory equipment, which shatters.

Their battle is titanic, a *mano-a-mano* slugfest very reminiscent of WWF wrestling, with a lot of back and forth, off the ropes impact.

But finally, Lu gets a full shot and jams Ray up bad, smashing him into a solid wall and denting him fierce. He lies on a counter, broken, seeping, and obviously on the way out.

Lu lands at his side, looking down at the damage.

RAY

(Feeble but nasty)

Well, goody for you. You get the belt, bitch. Now could you just finish me off? This is humiliating. Not to mention painful.

LU

You don't have to die, Ray.

RAY

Don't give me that shit. You fucking hate me, so fucking kill me.

LU

No, I understand you now, Ray.

RAY

How can that whole virginal piece of shit possibly understand this?

LU

You think you can fight time and age and fate and God and win, stay beautiful and strongest of all forever, don't you? Even if you have to cheat. Even if somebody else has to lose all they have. I understand that very well. And I forgive you.

As she says those words, Ray dissolves into a glossy smoke that hovers up and forms into an image, as if projected on to it, of her bluish sacred thorny heart, then of his red and black spiky evil heart. She inhales the smoke, trails of it swirling into her nostrils. Both hearts are snorted right up into her, filling her up and making her even more gleaming and groovy.

All that's left of Ray is his pectoral medallion, the inverted pentagram. She picks it up from the floor and turns to rescue Chuco, who has passed out.

Lu reclines Chuco's bed and ties a towel around his thigh wound. She starts loosening the restraints from his outstretched arms, as he mumbles and flinches. When she unsnaps the strap at his chest he mutters deliriously.

CHUCO

Go ahead, kill me. Who cares?

LU

(Whispering)

I care, Chuco.

Chuco's battered eyes open. They widen at the sight of Lu bending over him. He smiles and passes out again.

EXT. GAMINES SHRINE -- NIGHT

The shrine is full of Gamines, tidying up the area, but mostly just waiting.

Outside, straining to reach over a tangle of scrap that bars his entry to the shrine, Padre Melo is handing a large gold candlestick to Pepito, who stretches for it, then sags under its weight. Amparo is already lugging the other into its place flanking the altar.

MUSIC UP -- "TELSTAR"

The blue radiance associated with Lu starts to flood the area, lighting up the Gamines' below. The kids start waking up, staring upward and pointing, clearing a circular area in the middle of the shrine.

The new, improved model of Lu hovers overhead, slowly settling down on a blue glow of jet exhaust. She touches down directly in front of the altar, as the kids watch expectantly and Padre Melo goggles.

The jets flicker out, there is a pregnant pause, then the cowl slowly slides back, revealing Chuco nestled protectively inside.

He steps out into the clearing and the other kids mob him. He gets awkward, pushing them off grouchily, but allows Amparo and Blanquita to smother him with kisses.

Behind him, Lu moves in front of the altar, performs a maneuver that could be taken as a curtsy or bow, then reaches up to carefully place the medallion she took off Ray in the center of the bull's skull. It stays there, now right side up, fitting perfectly, superimposed on the crucifix to create a logo.

Lu is now the main event, dominating the space and covering the view of the poster. It has become an altar to her, she has become a metal sculpture.

Lu turns, and the kids quiet down and circle up, all eyes on her. Padre Melo is frozen in position, still holding the heavy candlestick as he stares in total amazement.

LU

(Very softly)

We are all back now. But there are others out there alone in the dark. Bring them to me. I give you the Virgin Mother's promise that I will love and protect you all, forever.

Her eyes slowly close, completing the effect of a static metal statue.

AMPARO

(Glowing with joy)

Did you hear that Padre? We don't have to be afraid any more.

PADRE MELO

(Slowly)

I heard nothing. But...

Confused, the good Father relinquishes the candlestick to Pepito and Chuco and slides back down to the ground. He drops to his knees and starts telling his beads and praying. Lu opens her eyes, winks once at the kids, then closes them again.

EXT. - REDZONE ALLEY - NIGHT

MUSIC OVER, SOUNDTRACK ANTHEM over speechless scene.

Amparo and Momo are selling roses with Blanquita in the mouth of an alley when a drunken Ruffian gets weird with them, throwing a flower on the ground, demanding money, groping at them. He backs them up against a wall with a fading wrestling poster peeling off it.

Suddenly the poster glows with a blue light and pops into dimensionality.

The Ruffian sees it and freaks out. He grabs Amparo, as though for a shield.

The poster warps out to become the arm and profile of Lu, scintillating with power and supernatural juice.

The white-gloved fingertip stretches out, approaches the bridge of his nose, he sweats and mutters unintelligible incantations. A skein of blue spark knocks him right on his butt. He gets up running.

The kids cheer and look at the poster which has flattened back to its original form. Except that now it's an old poster of Lu in her white and silver get-up. The image winks at the kids, who laugh and kiss the poster, pressing roses towards it.

FADE OUT: