

PAVLOV
Two Seconds before the Crime

by
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List of Characters::

MAURICIO
AMADA
PACO
PILI/MADRE/CONSUELO
EDUARDO

"...we mustn't forget that in the greatest number of cases, we don't know the biography of the dog. Who knows what encounters it has had throughout its life, and what temporary relationships may have been previously formed? Besides, if this occurs with the dog in a experimental situation and a rigorously controlled environment, what would the possibilities be for a man in "his" infinitely more complex medium and with an equally more complicated history?"

PAVLOV
Conditioned Reflex
On the function of cerebral hemispheres

PART ONE

Twelve hours after the crime.

Sound of a radio dial moving in search of a station: news, jazz, classical music, salsa, public statements, commercials, sports, jazz, people laughing, a scream, static, news, foreign-language program, classical music, heavy metal rock, laughter, a soprano, news, seductive voice, children's chorus, rock, pop, voices, static, commercial, news. Finally, a station.

Lights up on radio station talk-show booth, stage left. AMADA is seated at the microphones. Someone hangs up a telephone. Click!

AMADA:: (Not turning around) Why me?... .why me?...

(PILI, PACO, EDUARDO, AND MAURICIO APPROACHES WITH KNIVES)

MAURICIO:: I need to kill you.

PILI: I need to kill you.

EDUARDO:: I need to kill you

PACO:: I need to kill you.

THEY ALL pulls out a shiny knife, raises it. Lights out. Dark. Music. The phone rings.

MAURICIO: That's all I can tell you.

PACO: No. You're going to tell me a lot more.

MAURICIO: I don't know anything more.

PACO: Yes, you do. (Lights up)
Miss, get him some water, please.

Police station - interrogation office. PACO: paces back and forth. MAURICIO, sitting handcuffed, faces the audience. PILI enters, gives him a glass of water, and sits at the desk. SHE adjusts her typewriter.

PACO: I want to hear you speak. What's your name?

MAURICIO: ` Mauricio.

PILI:: He said the same thing when we found him prowling around the radio station.

PACO: You answered right away that your name was "Mauricio". And I was looking for a Mauricio. Doesn't that strike you as a coincidence?

MAURICIO: The world's full of Mauricios.

PACO: True, but we found this particular Mauricio at the scene of the crime.

MAURICIO: That doesn't mean that I...

PACO:: What were you doing there? Stealing?

MAURICIO: I'm not a thief...

PACO:: A murderer then.

MAURICIO: I'm not a murderer!

PACO:: No, I'm the murderer. I'm the one making threatening phone calls to radio talk-show hosts I don't happen to like. I'm the one. I'm not a cop. Right? This is merely a disguise.
(HE forcefully lifts MAURICIO: off the chair)
Right, Mauricio? Isn't that right, that I'm the murderer and not you?

MAURICIO: I'm not a...

(PACO strikes him. MAURICIO: falls)

PACO: I'm telling you I'm the murderer! I'm a hero. I'm an angel, and – before I leave my house – I already have the victim's name written on my hand. Why do you like to kill? Why, Mauricio? For the fun of it? Why did you do it, kid? Why did you kill her?

MAURICIO: I didn't!
(More blows fall on MAURICIO:)

PACO: You didn't! Me! Me! Me!
(PACO: presses MAURICIO: against the floor)
I'm gonna tell you why. Because the world sucks.
Isn't that right?

MAURICIO: The world sucks...

PACO: .and in it, there are a lot of people who suck too, am I right?
(Looks at him, Threatens him)
Think carefully before you answer.

MAURICIO: (Scared) Yes.

(PACO lights a cigarette)

PACO: All right, Miss. Have the suspect sign the confession and we're off to dinner. I'm hungry.
(PILI crosses to MAURICIO with a piece of paper)

PILI:: Sign here.

MAURICIO: I.. .would like to say.. .something...

PILI:: Better sign it. Then it'll all be over.

MAURICIO: First I have to say... that...

PILI:: Yeeees?

MAURICIO: I.. mean.. .I haven't confessed anything.

PILI:: Mauricio, really, considering....

PACO: What did he say?

MAURICIO:: That it wasn't...

PACO: Yes?

MAURICIO: That it wasn't me.

PACO: That it wasn't you?

PILI:: The suspect...

MAURICIO: I didn't do it.

PACO: What's this you're telling me? What do you mean, Hero?

MAURICIO: I'm not the one.

PACO: Yes, but — what do you mean...?

MAURICIO: That.. I..I mean.. .it wasn't me.

PACO: It wasn't you?

MAURICIO: I'm not guilty.
(PACO grabs MAURICIO roughly and slams him against the wall)

PACO: Then, will you tell me something?
WHO THE FUCK WAS IT?!
If it wasn't you...

MAURICIO: I don't know!
(PACO throws him down on the floor)
Anyone could have killed her. Those radio people have lots of enemies. You know.

PACO: No, I don't know.

MAURICIO: Jealous husbands, lovers, homosexuals, dopers. There are a lot of unhappy people on the radio.

PILI:: I think he's telling the truth.

PACO: (To PILI::)Did I ask you for your opinion?

PILI:: No, but I think that...

PACO: You like him?

PILI:: Who?

PACO: Him, do you like him?

PILI:: No!

PACO: Is he a friend of yours?
Do you know him?

PILI:: No...

PACO: Then get off the case, all right? Don't play martyr. Stop worrying. If you don't know him, stop worrying. Stay out of trouble. It's none of your business, right?

PILI:: Sorry.

PACO: Always put yourself first. Only yourself. Forget about all the others. It's the best way to keep yourself alive. Forget about pity. Forget about this killer. If you start defending him and he gets off scot-free, tomorrow morning he's going to look for you, he's going to rape you, and he's going to slash your throat from ear to ear. Isn't that right, Mauricio? Isn't that right, that you would do that to the young lady if we let you go?

MAURICIO: No, no I wouldn't.

PACO: You wouldn't? You wouldn't slit her throat?

MAURICIO: I'm not a...

PACO: No, you're not a murderer. No. Then, what are you? A priest?

MAURICIO: I'm.. .I'm a Christian.

PACO: As Christian as Pontius Pilate?

MAURICIO: Pontius Pilate wasn't a Christian.

PACO: Don't correct what I say, Hero. Don't correct what I say because wise guys piss me off. That's the worst thing you could do. Playing smart-ass with me. If I say something, that's a fact. You're not at the university here.

MAURICIO: No.

PACO: So you're a Christian believer.

MAURICIO: Well, of course.

PACO: What is this "Well, of course"?

MAURICIO: Christian and a believer. They're one and

PACO: No, no, they're not one and- the same.. Don't mess with me. Don't correct me.
(Kicks him)
I have no patience for guys like you!
(Kicks him again. Pause)
Look: I'm hungry, Mauricio.
Two hours ago, a crime was committed. My shift was almost over. I was heading home. To watch the game. To watch TV. To have a nice time. And then, the goddamn telephone rang. "A murdered talk-show host". "Investigate." Click! And here I am, wasting my time with you. I'd better warn you that I'm the kind of cop who hates his job; that if I have to kill you in order to catch the end of the second half, I'll do it. Don't you doubt it. Your life isn't worth shit to me. Tomorrow's my day off, so don't complicate my life. For your own good. Answer this question for me as straightforwardly as possible. Could you tell me what on earth was a Christian like you doing with a knife like this?
(HE places the knife up to MAURICIO's throat)
Cutting roses?

MAURICIO: Don't.. .don't kill me...

PACO: I'm a murderer and I feel like killing.

MAURICIO:: ...not yet.. .don't kill me...

PILI: (Stops typing) Not yet? What does that mean?

PACO:: Don't write it down.

MAURICIO: Don't kill me! No, not yet!

PACO: What were you doing with this knife? Tell me.

MAURICIO: ... I was going to kill her.

PACO: All right, Miss, start writing.
(HE puts his knife aside)
You were going to kill her, right?

MAURICIO: Yes.

PACO: (Calmly) Why?

MAURICIO: What?

PACO:: Why were you going to kill her?

MAURICIO: What?

PACO: Can't you hear me?

MAURICIO: Yes.But...

PACO: Why did you want to kill him, goddamnit?!
Look, it's not that I care or anything like that. It doesn't matter to me. But they're going to ask me about it.: "Why did the idiot kill her? What was - his motive?" And if I don't know, then for sure I might as well kiss the national championship final good-bye, because I'm going to have to make up a motive for you, and I'm not good at making up things. I have no imagination. It doesn't come easy. So it'll be better if you tell me. Why did you want to kill her?

MAURICIO: It's obvious. Isn't it?

PACO: No, it's not obvious.

MAURICIO: There are people who deserve to be killed.

PACO: (HE turns on the radio. Looks for a station)
There, that's something we agree on, you and I. I think you're right. There are many people who deserve to get knifed. I can think of a few.

PILI:: Do I write that down, Inspector?

PACO: Don't be an idiot, Pili! Don't write anything down.

PILI:: Sorry.

RADIO SPORTS ANNOUNCER (V.0.)
"... of the opposing team. The play was a bit messy and goalkeeper Gimenez was out of position.. .The truth is, I'd have to say the... forward was very clearly offside..."

PACO: ...they pay them millions so they stay in their position and stop a ball, and they don't do it. It's people like that that deserve a stab in the back, Mauricio.
Let's see, Angel. Why kill a talk-show host and not a goalie who's out of position?

MAURICIO: That radio woman was a worm and a scumbag.

PACO;; Whatever did she do to you?

MAURICIO: (Stuttering)She. ..I was with my mother.. .and then... she mentioned dinner and I wasn't hungry. On top of that.. .that dream about flying. Then, my mother said I shouldn't come home late.

PACO: What does the radio woman have to do with your mother?

MAURICIO: What does She have to do?

PACO: Yes. What does She have to do?

MAURICIO:: No, nothing. They have nothing to do with one another. They don't know each other. No. No way.

PACO: (Lights another cigarette)
Then, I don't understand.

MAURICIO:: It's very simple. I dream of flying. I like to dream I have wings and I can soar above the houses and buildings and skirt the highest clouds. I dream I can see my friends from up above and I see them as ants, all of them doing the same thing, apathetically, all together. And meanwhile, I'm flying, I cross paths with birds and even airplanes. I can see them, but they can't see me.

PACO: Are you trying to play crazy? I'd better warn you, that trick is...

MAURICIO: Don't you understand me?

PACO: No.

MAURICIO: I've always believed that we dream we can fly because we're divine creatures. Because we're the Children of God.

PACO: Uh-huh. Then what's the point of this little story? Do you take me for an idiot?

MAURICIO: No, officer. Please...

PACO: Then tell me something: Did you kill the woman because you dream of flying, you stupid moron?

MAURICIO: She was one of those who.. ..

PACO: (Pressing MAURICIO against the floor)
By now they must have scored another goal. And here I am, wasting my time with you. Don't you think that's a shame, Mauricio? That a man like me has to miss the game just because he has to be with a fruitcake like you?
Look: I'm not a bad guy. The problem is, I'm hungry.

MAURICIO: I understand.

PACO: Good. I like people to understand me. Not many people do. Not many. So look, let's do something here. I'm going to be perfectly honest with you. Behind that mirror, there's a man. Were you aware that mirror is actually a window?
(MAURICIO: nods)
Everybody knows. I don't know what the fuck we have that for, if everybody knows. This profession is full of assholes. You're aware of that too, aren't you?
(MAURICIO: nods)
As I was saying, behind that window, there's a man. A witness. He wants to hear your story because he's not sure. So start telling me right from the beginning, from the moment you went into the station.

MAURICIO: I..uh..let's see..When I went in, She was already there.

PACO: Who?

MAURICIO: The talk-show host.

PACO: Go on.

MAURICIO: ... She was very scared.

PACO: What about you?

MAURICIO: Not I.

PACO: Go on.

MAURICIO: ...when I saw her, I thought: "Come on, Mauricio, kill her already".. .But then I thought about it again and said to myself: "No, don't be a fool. That woman is a scum bag. Remember what she says. Remember she deserves something worse. She deserves you grabbing her by the throat and cutting her up into little ribbons.

She deserves you making her pray until she begs the Almighty for mercy for all her sins." Because in this shitty world we're all people, and no one's better than the next. Nobody can tell anybody what he ought to do with his life, because God has given us freedom of choice. Am I right?

PACO: Yes. Everyone does what he wants. With premeditation and treachery.

MAURICIO: With premeditation and treachery. That's right. Nobody can elect himself to be God. "Thou shalt not believe in false gods." That's one of the commandments. Did you know that?

PACO:; Yes, of course. Go on.

MAURICIO: When I saw her there, sitting down, scared to death, I thought there were a lot of people who probably wanted to do what I was about to do. I thought of the many out there who are skulking about, with a knife tucked away under their arm, just waiting for someone to prohibit flying.

PACO: The talk-show host told you you couldn't fly?

MAURICIO: No, no, no, not exactly. Not to me. I have no doubt about myself. I'm very sure of myself. But the rest.. .there are many people in this city who look up to the sky and also seek it out. Do you understand?

PACO: No, but go on.

MAURICIO: You don't understand me?

PACO: Every loonie has his tune.

MAURICIO: I'm not crazy.

PACO: No, I've already told you I'm the one who's crazy. I like to fly, and I keep a pair of fiberglass wings in the closet at home, with which I go bat-hunting at night.

PILI:: Sir...

PACO: Don't write that last thing down, of course.

PILI:: No, of course not.

PACO: This job ain't what it used to be. In the old days, you'd grab a suspect, the man would confess, and everybody would go home. "Because he owed money; because the Mafia put Out a contract; because the world of drugs doesn't believe in credit cards" Sometimes, the dumbest ones got killed out of jealousy. That's how it used to be, and nobody ever complained.

Everybody happy: one crime, one motive.

But this morning, before daybreak, you - or someone else - killed a radio show host. Why?

"Because I dream!'"...

"Because of my mother and dinner.".. .

"Because I wanted to fly"...

"Because I'm really a canary."

f anybody ever kills me just because they think they're the Green Hornet, I'll roll over and die again. This city's full of nuts. And I'm the nuttiest of all the nuts, 'cause here I am, talking with this flying angel, instead of watching the second half of the match. Come on, birdie:

(HE grabs MAURICIO: very roughly again)

Finish your story.

(Presses him against the floor)

And I don't want to hear you say another word about flying. You were inside the station, you had a knife, you were going to kill her: What happened?

MAURICIO:: When I was about to kill her, a man came in.

(PILI types.

Lights up on radio station. AMANDA, immobile, surrounded by telephones)

PACO: Would you be able to recognize that man?

MAURICIO: Yes, he remained silent. Then that man said something that chilled me to the bone.

(THE SHADOW appears behind ARMANDO)

SHADOW I need to kill you.

PACO: What happened then?

MAURICIO: The shadow pulled out the knife and...

 (The SHADOW pulls out the gleaming knife: Raises it. Lights go out in the booth)

PACO: Then?

MAURICIO: Then what?

PACO: Then, what did you do?

MAURICIO: Run.

PACO: You ran?

MAURICIO: Yes, of course.

PACO: Are you trying to make me think a hero like you took of running like a five-year-old girl?

MAURICIO: I was scared to death.
(PACO: laughs)

PACO: So you ran!

MAURICIO:: I ran for my life. So he wouldn't kill me too.

PACO: Some murderer you turned out to be!

MAURICIO: I've never been so frightened before.

PACO: So what happened to that whole thing about mothers, canaries and flying?

MAURICIO:: I forgot all about it right there ..

PACO: Amazing!

MAURICIO: I'd never seen a corpse before.

PACO: Very well, Mauricio. You have touched me. Your entire story is extremely entertaining. But I can't believe you. Let's just say I don't feel like believing you.

MAURICIO:: It's the truth.

PACO: Yes, but the truth is not enough.

MAURICIO: Then...?

PACO: Then, then, then.. .then I want you to take a look at someone.

(PACO turns off the lamp shining on MAURICIO's face. EDUARDO becomes brightly visible. MAURICIO and EDUARDO look at each other.)

PACO: I'd like you to meet Eduardo. He is the witness. Eduardo saw a man, he saw him pull out this knife and take the talk-show-host's life.

(EDUARDO: and MAURICIO: stare at each other)

MAURICIO::He's the one.

EDUARDO: What?

MAURICIO: You killed her.

EDUARDO:: What are you saying?

MAURICIO:: You killed her!

EDUARDO: (To PACO:)
What's this all about?

PACO: I don't know. Come on, Moran!

PILI::Who's Moran?

PACO:Come on! What's wrong with you guys today?

RADIO SPORTS ANNOUNCER
(V.0.)

... the right flank moves in, Mateo cuts right through it, he, dances around Gómez, jukes Martinez, Martinez stalls with the ball, Orestes makes a sliding tackle, the referee is out hunting butterflies, the yellow team takes the ball. Now a low-liner pass to Benitez, Martinez takes it back, counterattacking from the left, the defense doesn't see him. Martinez sends a ball to Moran, Moran spins past an opponent, sidesteps another, moves in on the right now.Moran is all alone, goalkeeper

MAURICIO: You're the murderer. You're really cold-blooded. I saw how you plunged the knife into her. I wouldn't have done it, because he was scared to death.

(THEY BOTH lunges toward EACH OTHER. EDUARDO HAS A KNIFE. MAURICIO grabs the other knife)

PACO: Moran! What are you doing, Moran?!

PILI: Is MORAN the murderer?
(EDUARDO stabs MAURICIO
MAURICIO falls)

PILI: He's dead.

(Lights out)

Jimenez comes out to challenge him. Moran kicks...

IT BOUNCES OFF THE GOAL POST! MORAN GETS IT BACK, Orestes recoups now, drills a long pass to Anguila. ANGUILA ALL ALONE IN MIDFIELD, passes to BY HIMSELF, NO DEFENSE ANYWHERE NEARGOAL! GOAL! GOAL! GOAL! GOAL FROM PALMA!

And the visitors clinch the match.

Nine hours after the crime.

Lights up. Police station. EDUARDO, alone, facing the audience. Enter PILI. SHE sees him. THEY both smile.

PILI:: Are you here because of the radio host's murder?

EDUARDO: Yes. I'm a witness.

PILI:: I'm the secretary, Pili

EDUARDO: How long will I have to stay here?

PILI:: Don't worry, the inspector will be here any minute.

EDUARDO: Your voice sounds familiar.

PILI:: Really?

EDUARDO: Really.

PILI:: (WITH ANOTHER VOICE) Don't worry, the inspector's a nice guy. (Enter PACO:)

PACO: Good afternoon, everybody.
(HE hangs his coat)
Is everybody aware of the fact that today is the championship game? And that I have two free tickets to watch it on my TV, with a friend and two bottles of rum? What a job!
(HE sees EDUARDO:)
All right. You're the witness.
(HE lights a cigarette)
Talk.

EDUARDO: Excuse me?

PACO: Look, I want to get this over with before the game starts. So tell me the whole thing.

EDUARDO: (coughs) The cigarette...

PACO:: Sorry.
 (HE doesn't extinguish it)
 Tell me the whole thing.
 (EDUARDO takes a clean breath)

EDUARDO: I have to admit I already knew beforehand what was going to happen to Amada. Sure, easy to say now, after everybody else knows, after people have found out. But I knew.

PACO:; How come you knew?

EDUARDO: Because I had dreamt about it. I dreamed it exactly the way it happened.

PACO:: And you didn't tell her?

EDUARDO: ... Dreams are a very important part of our program. Everything we dream has a meaning. Everybody says so. In my case, my dreams had warned me that Amada was going to be murdered.

PACO:: And you didn't tell her?

EDUARDO: No, I didn't tell her. I didn't tell her because when I was about to, at that very moment, her murderer phoned in.

PACO:: Can you remember his voice?

EDUARDO: None of us will ever forget the tone of that voice. I've dreamt that too. I have dreamt that no one will ever forget what's happened.
 (HE coughs)
 My premonitions have warned me that passions will be unleashed and we will not be able to control our actions. What I'm really trying to say is that everything takes place inside of me like a stage play that begins at the end.
 The ending is superfluous.
 Maybe that's the reason why we end up killing each other. There are no surprises left.
 (Coughs)
 Anything that might happen has already been thought out. (Coughs twice)
 Would you mind putting out that cigarette?

PACO: Oh! Sorry.
 (HE doesn't extinguish it)

EDUARDO:: ...The cigarette.

PACO: (HE doesn't extinguish it)
Eduardo: it's very important that you tell me the truth. I want you to give me all your personal data: age, profession, address, etc. I want to hear you. I want to hear you speak because I need to believe you. You need me to believe you.

EDUARDO: You mean.. .still. . .somehow.— I'm under suspicion?

PACO: Exactly nine hours ago, a murder was committed. I'm on duty, so it falls on my shoulders. And when a murder is committed and I have to investigate it, then everybody's in trouble, because I suspect you all, because I don't believe there are any good guys, and because I need to find a guilty party as soon as possible so I can go home. Come on, Eduardo. You are a suspect and I want you to tell me the whole thing.

EDUARDO: Very well. My name is Eduardo Gomez and I live in this city.

PACO:: Miss...
(PILI:: types)
Good.

EDUARDO:: I work in a radio station.

PACO:; What is it you do there?

EDUARDO: I produce audience-participation programming.

PACO: Explain that.

EDUARDO: We get phone calls from people who have one problem or another, and we try to solve them. We forecast the future, we clarify dreams, etc.

PACO: Do you get many calls?

EDUARDO: Usually, yes. At night there's always someone desperate who can't sleep, some suicidal looking for understanding, some confused young lady who might decide to put her life in our hands.

PILI:: (Catching up on her writing)
"...her life in our hands."
(THEY look at her. She's scared)

PACO: Tell me something, Eduardo: Do you like your job?

EDUARDO: Yes, of course.
(Coughs)
I've been a radio pro all my life. I've been doing this sort of programming for thirty years. I've saved many lives. At home, I have a whole wall covered with cards and thank-you notes. Occultism, tea-leaves, astrology, clairvoyance, parapsychology, tarot, religion, precognitive systems. I can read dreams. Do you ever dream, Inspector?

PACO: Never.

EDUARDO: I could offer you a free session. I can read your palm... (Coughs)
.and even your cigarette. I can read a smoker's ashes.

PILI:: Maybe you could read mine.

EDUARDO: I'd be glad to...

PACO: Do you know who's going to win tonight's match?

EDUARDO:: (AFTER A FAKE PAUSE) The visiting team.

PACO:; (HIS mood changes)
Eduardo:come back here.

EDUARDO: Yes?

PACO: You'd better sit down. This is a police station.

EDUARDO: I was hoping to break the ice and I wanted...

PACO: Yes, I know what you wanted.

EDUARDO: The smell of things to come permeates this room. A lot of bottled-up energy. As if a battle were about to begin, as if someone were going to die here.

PILI:: (Frightened) Here?

EDUARDO: No doubt about it. It's easy to read, right on the walls.

PILI:: And what are the walls saying?

PACO: Nothing. How can a wall say anything?

EDUARDO: I wouldn't be surprised at all to see extra-sensory phenomena taking place in this room.

PILI:: Honestly?

EDUARDO: No doubt about it.

PILI:: I.. .I mean.. .sometimes.. .this typewriter.. .writes all by itself, without my laying a finger on it.

EDUARDO: You see!

PACO: That's because it's electric, sweetie. Eduardo, tell me something.. Are you married?

EDUARDO: No. I never got married.

PACO: And yet, you give advice to couples.

EDUARDO:; It's not me. They do it themselves. I simply serve as a mediator.

PACO: Mediator? Drugs?

EDUARDO: No. Between them and their id.

PACO: Between them and their id. I see. Anybody can call in?

EDUARDO: Yes.

PACO: Who answers the calls?

EDUARDO: The talk-show host.

PACO: There's no system for screening the calls?

EDUARDO: Precisely.

PACO: All the calls can get through?

EDUARDO: Anyone who has a phone can get through to us.

PILI:: Even though it's not easy getting through sometimes.

PACO: Do you listen to this program?

PILI:: Sometimes I have trouble falling asleep and I tune into it on my radio. It's an interesting program. I don't care about the advice, I just like hearing the people who call in. I enjoy picturing the ones who are shaking from nerves, the ones who are desperate. I can hear their halting, sniveling voices...

PACO:: And that amuses you?

PILI:: (Baffled)
Yeah, sure.

PACO: Were you tuned in the night of the murder?

PILI:: (Lying) No.

EDUARDO: The thing is, sometimes the program lacks interest. The calls are low in density.

PACO: What do you mean "low in density"?

EDUARDO: Well, you. know, uh...people who don't want their fortune told, for instance. People who have no personal problems, people who don't want to talk about sex. Boring people.

PACO: So why do they call in?

EDUARDO: Silly stuff. Politics, arguments, divorces. A lot of divorced folks out there. They all want to know how to destroy their "ex". Splitting up the goods, custody of the kids, alimony. Couples who've been together a couple of years and in the end, all they want is to tear each other's skin apart.

PACO: That's what you make a living out of, isn't that right?

EDUARDO: I make a living from everyday problems.

PACO: You exploit problems...

EDUARDO: (Coldly)

Don't be ridiculous. The same things happen to the neighbor, the butcher, your best friend, the politician, the cop. Especially the cop. Don't you think so?

PACO: Sure. But I wasn't referring to that.

EDUARDO: I don't understand.

PACO: I mean that it's possible, I mean, could be that sometimes, you folks - whether because you might be tired or sleepy or distracted...

EDUARDO: I'm a professional.

PACO: ...or incredulous...

EDUARDO: Our listeners are—

PACO: Or for any other reason - you folks, at some point or other...

EDUARDO: What?

PACO: ...you simply don't know what you're talking about.
(PACO extinguishes the cigarette)
Tell me about that strange phone call.

EDUARDO: Phone call?

PACO: You said something about a strange phone call.

EDUARDO: I said something?

PACO: Didn't you?

EDUARDO: No.

PACO: Well, somebody mentioned it.

EDUARDO: It wasn't me.

PACO: Do you know which call I'm referring to?

EDUARDO: A phone call...

PACO: Yes. A phone threat. A voice that called the victim to tell her he was going to kill her. The murderer's phone call. Do you remember it now?

EDUARDO: Yes, it was him. The murderer.

PACO: Were you able to recognize the voice? Had he ever called in before?

EDUARDO: No.

PACO: Don't you tape the program?

EDUARDO: Sorry.

PACO:; Doesn't matter. Go on.

EDUARDO: That voice called again and again, all night long. Finally, he asked that his cards be read.

PACO: Then.. .what happened?

EDUARDO: That man was very rude.

PACO: And then...

EDUARDO: And then Amada asked him his name...

PACO: Yes.

EDUARDO: And that man said his name was Mauricio.

PACO: What?

EDUARDO: He said his name was Mauricio.

PACO: Are you sure? That's the name he said?

EDUARDO:: Mauricio.

PACO: Mauricio, go on.

EDUARDO: Then Amada read his cards to him.

PACO: Where were you, exactly?

EDUARDO: In the control booth. In the archives room.

PACO: In both places?

EDUARDO: No. First in one, then in the other.

PACO: What were you doing there?

EDUARDO: (Coughs) I was looking for some material...

PACO: Records?

EDUARDO: Records.. .music..

PACO: Then what happened?

EDUARDO: I went down to the archives and left Amada reading the cards. I couldn't hear what they were saying. Until Amada raised her voice. She was yelling "murderer" or "criminal". Then I rushed up to the booth.

PACO: Didn't you hear anything else?

(Lights up on the radio booth where Amada lies, dead, the knife in her back)

EDUARDO: When I reached the door, I bumped into a man.
(The phone rings)
The phone was ringing. Exactly the way I had dreamed it. I took one look at Amada and, without seeing the knife, I already knew she was dead. At that moment, I recalled perfectly the face of the man I'd bumped into at the door.

PACO: What did you do then?

EDUARDO: I answered the phone.

PACO:; You answered the phone?
Why?

EDUARDO: I don't know.

PACO: Who was it?

EDUARDO: A woman's voice.

PACO: And what did it say?

EDUARDO: It said "Pavlov".

PACO:: Pavlov? What the hell is that?

EDUARDO:: It said "Pavlov did the-experiment of the dog and the bell."

PACO:: The dog and the bell?

PILI:: It's an experiment. The dog salivates when the bell rings. They call it "conditioned reflex"...

PACO:: So what's that got to do with it?

PILI:: I don't know.

EDUARDO: It has nothing to do with it.

PACO: Okay. Eduardo, there's something I want you to see.
(Lights up on MAURICIO pacing back and forth)
Do you know him?
Do you recognize him?

EDUARDO: Yes. That's him.

PACO: That's the murderer?

EDUARDO:: Yes, I'm positive.

PACO: Do you know his name?

EDUARDO: Pavlov?

PACO: His name is Mauricio, and we found him scared to death right behind the radio station at the time of the murder.
(To MAURICIO:)
You're under arrest, Hero.

(Blackout)

PART TWO

Two hours before the crime.

MAURICIO:, standing on a chair.

MAURICIO:: (Overacting)
 ..I want you all to understand that this thing we call 'society is nothing. It is not a reliable association; it is not a safe place. It is not the result of any task, any evolution, any plan. It is not the product of our labor, or of our imagination; it s not even a transition toward a better future.

"The end of this era is the preamble to a worse one. There is nothing good looming ahead. Forget it. We're up to our necks in this, and no one will be able to pull us out. God is furious with us. That's why He's sending us human and natural disasters: to tell us that He's very upset; that He's losing His patience and that – sooner or later – He shall unleash His power over all of us who have chosen to live in sin. Is there anyone here who doesn't live in sin? Is there?

(Back lighting on MAURICIO:)

"Earthquakes, plagues, new illnesses, accidents, sloth, lasciviousness, war, death, incest, patricide, death, death, lots of death. Everyone is saying so and nobody doubts it. Nobody doubts. Does anybody doubt it? Does anybody think it isn't so?

(Full lights up. We are in MAURICIO'S home. Impoverished decor. A wooden table, plain tablecloth. Framed biblical pictures. Upstage, a small radio, black-and-white photos of long-gone relatives.)

"No, nobody thinks so.

"Because that's how we are: 'Mea culpa' and off to Heaven. "No, brothers and sisters. Heaven is hard to reach. You have to earn Heaven. God is no idiot. He may be merciful, but He's no moron. God is going to collect His dues from you. Prepare ye...Prepare ye!"

(Changes his tone)

Mother, notice what I said to them:

(Again:) "You all must do something because God is angry and He has decided to leave us."

That's what I said to them, and I wrapped it up with:
"Hallelujah! He has left because of us."
No, Mother, I didn't really say "Hallelujah!", I said "Amen", and they all stood up and applauded me.

(MOTHER enters.
SHE is carrying a plate of food)

MOTHER I'm very proud of you, son.

MAURICIO:: Tomorrow, I'm giving another speech at the reform school, and another at the jail.

MOTHER Very good. Now, eat.

MAURICIO: Every time I'm about to say something, I come up with twenty thousand different ways of saying the same thing. And I always end up saying it the best way possible. I have a great deal of imagination, Mother, a great deal.

MOTHER Do you want some bread with your dinner, or not?

MAURICIO:: I think I'm an angel.

MOTHER Will you be having some soup?

MAURICIO: Because every single day, I dream I'm flying.

MOTHER Only rich people eat without bread, son. So have some bread.

MAURICIO:: I dream of flying, and I dream that the Holy Spirit is flying right beside me.

MOTHER The Holy Spirit? So what does he look like? He's white, Mother. my eyes.

MAURICIO A mass of white that stares right into

MOTHER Into your eyes...

MAURICIO: Yes. Only a year ago I was a confused man, and now the Holy Spirit stares right into my eyes.

MAURICIO: I've attained a mission in life.

MOTHER The meat is boiled, just the way you like it.

MAURICIO: There was a time when I was a nobody, but now I too have a mission in this world. Before, I didn't exist, I was nothing. I was dead. Do you understand, Mother?

MOTHER Are you going to eat today.

MAURICIO: I'm not hungry.

MOTHER Well, why didn't you say so?

MAURICIO: Because I was telling you about the Holy Spirit and my faith.

MOTHER But you could have told me you weren't going to eat anything.

MAURICIO: I didn't know you were...

MOTHER: I'd like you to tell me things before the fact. I'd like you to tell me when you're hungry and when you're not. Because if I knew, I wouldn't have to waste my time cooking this goddamn meat and this fucking soup so you can let it sit and get cold.

MAURICIO: Mother, don't curse.

MOTHER I'll do whatever I want. You're too young to be telling me what to do. Do you think I'm a maid, a slave? Do you think I'm here only to wait for you to get hungry?

MAURICIO I didn't want any soup...

MOTHER Or meat, or salad, or dessert...
Then what is it you want? Tell me, what is it you want? It's obvious you don't want anything. And to think of all the people who are starving to death.. Yesterday, the radio said all the little children in Africa are going blind strictly because they have no food. Poor people. Very unfortunate people, truly unfortunate indeed. Dead. Dead from starvation, all of them. Literally. Not able to eat.
(Looks right at him)
I hope someday you feel hungry.. .I hope someday you won't be able to eat and you will remember this day, and then — instead of dying from lack of food — you die from shame and repentance.

MAURICIO: All right, Mother. I'll eat. Hand me that plate...

MOTHER If you don't want it, don't eat it. Don't be stupid.

MAURICIO: I don't want to hurt you.

MOTHER You're not hurting me, you're making me very angry!

MAURICIO:: Then I apologize. Forgive me?

MOTHER (Blows up)
Look, Mauricio, don't give me any of that "forgive me" crap. Don't you come to me with that fake humility. I know you, and I know how arrogant you are.

Don't think you're better than me just because you gave a sermon and a few idiots believed you. Being God is one thing, but presuming to be Him is a whole other one. Don't come to me begging for forgiveness, Angel. Don't be a fool.
(MOTHER, turns on the radio. Make a call)

AMADA:; Very well. Let's read your children's fortune. Tell me their birthrates, their ages, and their favorite numbers and colors.

MOTHER: The son was born eighteen years ago. His color is pink, his name is Mauricio, and his number is three.

AMADA: All right. The cards are down. Your son will be very happy, although his life will be short and full of turmoil. He will have a short life, that's why he will be happy. He won't have to grow up to be anything. That's reason enough for happiness. He will never have a wife, which is always a relief to the mother, but not to the man. He will never leave you.

MAURICIO:: Turn off that radio.

MOTHER: Then my son have come into this world for nothing?

AMADA: Exactly.

MOTHER All right. That's all I wanted to know. Thank you.
(Hangs up)

AMADA: And I thank you for calling in.

MOTHER A man without a woman is an angel like you.

MAURICIO: Mother...

MOTHER If anyone ever guarantees a mother that her children have come to this world for nothing, the best thing for her to do is to drown him in the toilet. Throw him over the balcony. Strangle him with a very narrow string.

MAURICIO:: You want to pass me the food?

MOTHER If anyone had ever told me how you would turn out in life, I think I would have murdered you. I would have slit your throat with a meat hook.

MAURICIO:: You shouldn't talk like that...

MOTHER: Yes, I would have- sucked your blood out, because your blood is mine. It's a shame you were ever born, my son.

MAURICIO:: Mother, please...

MOTHER If anyone had read my future when I was fifteen, I think I would have put myself to sleep with tranquilizers. I would have taken my life, after taking the lives of those I love most.

MAURICIO:: I'm eating.. .Mother. . .see how much I like it...

MOTHER A mother has all the right to kill, if she so desires. have every right to kill you, If I want to.
(Pause.
THEY stare at each other)
I hope you won't be home late tonight.

MAURICIO:: No.

(SHE exits. MAURICIO: doesn't eat anything. Long pause. AMADA's voice is heard on the radio.MAURICIO stares at the food, as if looking for some creature crawling in it)

AMADA: ...to reach us, just dial one of our telephone numbers:
491-7414 and 491-7154. This is your favorite talk-show host, Amada-at-Night. And today, as usual, we're going to be talking on the subject of dreams. Eduardo, our producer, is a dreamer. We all dream,

and most of us dream of flying. We like to dream we have wings, that we're like airplanes, like birds, that we can liftoff and fly.

(MAURICIO stands)

And that means that we're on the ground; that we're nailed to the floor more and more each day, and that's why we dream of the sky. What I mean is that people who dream of flying want to change, want to stop being what they are. And they don't dare. That's why they dream. That's why they do stupid things; that's why they kill or let themselves be killed.

(MAURICIO crosses to the telephone.

HE dials)

People commit crimes because they dream. They want to rise above it all and leave this life behind, because life sucks. We can dream if we want, but dreaming is one thing...(The phone rings)
 .and reality is something else altogether.

Hello, you're on the air. Go ahead. Who's calling?

MAURICIO:: I...

AMADA: Who is it?

MAURICIO: I want to tell you that you are...
 I wanted to tell you that you're a bitch.

(MAURICIO: crosses to the table, grabs the knife. HE exits out the door.)

AMADA: ... as I was saying, our program is dedicated to all of you who wish you could fly, but can't because you're lost.

(Sound of commercials, news, background music, and voices from beyond as lights fade to black.

Minutes before the crime.

Lights up on AMADA:in the radio station sound booth, surrounded by microphones. Next to him, EDUARDO: controls the music and other details.

AMADA:: All right. We're here to please you and advise you as clearly as possible. It's not easy to be precise; it's not easy to be clear. In today's world, people are not able to be clear.. They don't let themselves be understood, they're not capable of saying what they think. Many of the people I know are incapable of saying "no". Me? If I don't like something, I say "no" and that's that. This makes me happy. And, in today's world, being happy is the only thing that sets us apart from the rest. The world is divided into those who are happy and those who are not. Obviously, I'm with the happy ones, with those who know what they want and those who try to help others. That's why my phone is always right there, waiting for your call to give you guidance, advice, or insight, so we can brighten up a small particle of this great ocean we call "life". All right, Eduardo, let the calls through.
(The phone rings)
Hello, you're on the air.
(Lights up stage right. The home of CONSUELO:)

CONSUELO: Hello, Amada..

AMADA: Hello, night dove. What's your name?

CONSUELO:: Consuelo.

AMADA: Consuelo, my dear, your name also means joy, delight. What would a woman who goes by such a name want with a program such as this?

CONSUELO: I want to know.

AMADA: You want to know! We all want to know. But.. .to know what? That's what we don't know. We don't know what we want. Do you know, Consuelo?

CONSUELO:: I want to know the future.

AMADA: Yes. And you're not the first. That's something we've always wanted to know, ever since I can remember. Let's see, Consuelo, in that case, give me a number between and: ten: a number which keeps repeating itself in your life, a number you might consider as being you.

CONSUELO:: Five.

AMADA: Oh! You're a five! By any chance, you wouldn't happen to be a Taurus, now would you, gorgeous?

CONSUELO:: Yes!

AMADA:: It never fails.
(AMADA: takes out his deck of cards.)
I have your cards right here in front of me, Consuelo. But first, you have to give me a few more facts about yourself and your mate - that is, you want to know about your mate too, right?

CONSUELO:: Yes, of course.

AMADA: We're all insecure couples. Our mates...who could possibly understand them? Okay, Consuelito, now tell me the date of your birthday: you don't have to mention the year, the date alone will be enough. Yours and his.

CONSUELO:: Well, I was born on May 5th, and he on April 21st.

AMADA:: So he's a Taurus too. Love of my life, what do you have in that house? A bullring? Let's see now.
(SHE counts the cards)
Fifth of May, two, three, four and five. Six. There. Consuelo, that you are a very noble woman. Twenty-one. Ready. And last but not least, Consuelo, my dear, give-me a number between one and five, as long as it's not five.

CONSUELO:: Three.

AMADA: Three, that makes sense. Coming from a woman like you, I'm not surprised. Okay. I'm ready, Eduardo. Let's read Consuelo her cards.
(Sound of extremely fake, gloomy music)
Your cards are truly phenomenal. You've got incredibly good luck. You hadn't told me that mate of yours happens to be your husband, among other

things. Right or wrong?

CONSUELO:: Right.

AMADA: See? You can't hide anything from me. You've been married twenty years. And your husband has brown hair, right?

CONSUELO:: Yes.

AMADA: Very good. I see success in your undertakings, in whatever you plan, and the same thing applies to him. I don't see a great deal of money, but enough to keep your head-above water, so to speak. Perhaps you'll have a bit of trouble with your health, something related to your eyesight. I don't know. Do you wear glasses, Consuelo?

CONSUELO:: Yes, and as a matter of fact, next week...

AMADA:: ...you have an appointment with the eye doctor. Right?

CONSUELO:: How do you know?!

AMADA: The thing is, I know everything, my child. That's why I get paid by this station: so that I know everything and nobody gets gypped. Don't worry about that upcoming appointment with the doctor. He's going to tell you your illness is getting worse. That's all. You already know you're going to have to live with that for the rest of your life, so don't pay any attention to it.

CONSUELO:: And what about the family?

AMADA: The family's fine. More or less.. .The only thing I see here is a dark-haired young man. Do you know him?

CONSUELO:: My son.

AMADA: You son. Yes. It's very clear.

CONSUELO:: What's the matter with him?

AMADA:: Don't get upset. Don't get upset, Consuelo, there's nothing bad in your cards. Do you want to give me a number for your husband, between one and ten, not including five or three?

CONSUELO:: Eight.

AMADA: One, two, three, four, five, six, seven and eight.
Here it is.
I was afraid of that.

CONSUELO:: What's wrong.

AMADA: Well, Consuelo, I have to warn you that your husband
is seeing – or has already seen – another woman.

CONSUELO:: What?

AMADA: Yes, but don't worry, it's nothing serious. That
girl – because we're dealing with a young lady here
– doesn't yet have the necessary strength to be
dangerous. She's just a little whim of your
husband's. I advise you not to give it too much
thought.

CONSUELO:: (In a different tone of voice)
Who is she? What's her name?

AMADA: That, I don't know. How would I know it? I'm telling
you she's just a girl, and this girl is very close
to him.

CONSUELO: A relative?

AMADA: Oh, God!

CONSUELO:: Could it be?

AMADA: Yes.

CONSUELO:: That bitch.

AMADA: remind you that we're on the air,

CONSUELO:: Since when?

AMADA: What?

CONSUELO:: Since when have they been going at it?

AMADA;; That, I can tell you, because it's right here on the
same card. It's a twelve. But I don't think it means
twelve years. We're dealing with twelve days.

CONSUELO:: Or twelve months...

AMADA: No, it's not that involved.

CONSUELO:: So what's going to happen?

AMADA: That lover.. .that girl.. .it's strange... because I didn't want to tell you, but the truth is that this girl isn't even old enough to be anybody's lover.

CONSUELO:: She isn't?

AMADA: She.. .she's just a kid.. .and she's very sad.

CONSUELO:: Who could it be?

AMADA: Tell me a color your husband doesn't like

CONSUELO:: Blue.

AMADA:: Now tell me his favorite color.

CONSUELO:: That's easy: He loves red.Bright red.

AMADA:: Consuelo. . .Could you call the microphone?

CONSUELO:: Oh! Dear God! What is wrong? Tell me, please!
Tell me now!

AMADA: Consuelo., calm down.. .Eduardo.. .get her off the air...

CONSUELO:: I want to know! Don't cut me off!

AMADA: Ma'am, I'd rather...

CONSUELO:: I had a hunch! Tell me, please! Tell me!

AMADA: Consuelo. . .Do you have a daughter?
Yes.. .yes, you do have one. I can see her here.

CONSUELO:: Are we talking about incest?

AMADA: Yes. Something awful.

(Click. Lights out on CONSUELO..Music)

AMADA:: Eduardo.. .please. Hold the calls for one minute. I want to talk to my radio listeners.

I need to clarify that this is the first time something like this has ever happened on this program. That the usual thing is good news, to be later confirmed by life itself. Cards don't always tell the truth. Sometimes, we misread the numbers, the colors. Red could actually mean green. But we're unable to see it. And "three" could actually be "nine", and that way, everything changes. Therefore, Consuelo, if you're still out there listening, I have to tell you that what the cards have said doesn't have to be true. Your husband isn't necessarily a monster.

(AMADA: picks up the card. SHE observes it)
Even though everything was quite clear, clarity proves nothing.

I don't like being clear.. .clarity is confusing.
Understood? Eduardo, let's go on with the show. Send another call through. (The phone rings)
Hello? You're on the air.

(Lights up in a phone booth. Inside, MAURICIO)

MAURICIO:: I want to talk to Amada

AMADA: This is Amada

MAURICIO: You're Amada-at-Night?

AMADA: Yes, I'm Amada-at-Night.

MAURICIO:: All right. I want to tell you you're a bastard and a son-of-a-bitch
(Click. Lights out in the phone booth)

AMADA: Well. That was polite. There are some really polite people in this city.
(The phone rings)
Hello? Yes?
(Lights up in the phone booth. Inside, MAURICIO:)

MAURICIO:: Someone ought to snap your neck and you'd better pray to Our Lord Jesus Christ that that someone isn't me.
(Click. Lights out on MAURICIO:)

AMADA: I hope someone else is listening to this program.
(The phone rings)
Again?

(Lights up on PILI::, seated on a couch. SHE's

wearing a very revealing bathrobe.)

PILI:: Am I speaking with AMADA-at-Night?

AMADA:: The one and only.

PILI:: This is Pili.

AMADA;; Pili, Pili, Pili. Yes. I remember your voice. You call in every Friday.

PILI:: (Giggles) That's because I like your show very much.

AMADA: And why do you like it so much?

PILI:: Because you always have all these pathetic people calling in... (Giggles)

AMADA:: What can I do for you, Pili?

PILI:: That one time I talked to you about my...It 's so embarrassing!

AMADA:: Come on, Pili, be brave!

PILI:: Some time ago, you read my fortune.. .you said my life spun around myself.

AMADA: You'll never be dependent on others.
A self-sufficient ,modern girl.

PILI:: Yes.. .of course... (Giggles) and another time, you talked about. masturbation...

AMADA: Yes. Masturbation. I've said it many times, and I'll say it again: It's good to masturbate. It's very natural. Even cats do it. It's natural that young people come to a sexual awakening by masturbatory means...

PILI:: Yes, because...
(Giggles)

AMADA: What is it?

PILI:: (Giggles)
The thing is, I have a problem...

AMADA: Yes. But why are you laughing?

PILI:: Me? Am I laughing?

AMADA: Yes. It sounds like it.

PILI:: No, I'm not laughing.. .uuuh...
(Giggles again)
Excuse me. It's just that I.. .One day you talked
about masturbation, and I said that I.. .I mean..
.I.. .before calling you.. .I'd already been at
this.. .at that, for a year...

AMADA: You had been masturbating for a year.

PILI:: .Yes...(Giggles)
,,,exactly...Everyday, or almost everyday...

AMADA: All right: Don't worry about it. You're not
abnormal. We all go through that stage. I'm sure
your girlfriends do it too. Maybe they don't dare
mention it, as you do. But there's no problem at
all. The thing is, masturbation as a topic is rarely
touched. People don't like to talk about such
things. I don't know why. But they don't. Man has
been masturbating since the Ice Ages, my dear...

PILI: But, how about women...?

AMADA: I'm referring to both, men, women. Women too. They
have every right, dear

PILI:: But.. .I do it with the finger...

AMADA: Naturally.. .It has no negative side-effects.

PILI:: And the.. .I mean.That was what you told me the
first time we spoke.

AMADA: Exactly.

PILI:: And I had damaged myself...

AMADA: Damaged?

PILI:: With the finger. Masturbating myself. You'd told me
not to worry, that I had nothing to fear. And then,
I lost my virginity.

AMADA: But...

PILI:: You assured me that wouldn't happen to me.

AMADA:: Never.. .no.. .I mean, normally it doesn't...

PILI:: You said it was impossible for me to lose my virginity. You said so and still, it happened to me. A few months ago...

AMADA:: Well, yes, of course, maybe you got a little carried away...

PILI:: ... that nothing would happen to me...

AMADA:: I...

P IL I ...and I stopped being a virgin.

AMADA: Well, I have to say your case is very special. Are you sure you're no longer a virgin?

PILI:: (Gaily)
Of course...

AMADA: How?

PILI:: Because, ever since that day, I've had many sexual relations.

AMADA: So.. .then...

PILI:: (Giggles)So then nothing.. .I wasn't a-virgin and the boys thought that I had already.. .you know...

AMADA: I honestly think your case is unique and it's something that hadn't happened before. I recommend to you that you don't give it so much importance...
(PILI laughs loudly)
Pili?

PILI:: (Laughing) Who said anything about it being important?

AMADA: You don't. care?

PILI:: Of course not! Listen to you, Amada-at-Night!

AMADA: Then why did you call me?

PILI:: It's no big deal if I'm a virgin or not.

AMADA: I agree with you, Pili. Virginity is a fossil from last century. Nobody cares about that theme nowadays.

PILI:: Amada, I don't care about virginity, that's not my problem.

AMADA: No, fine, it's not a...

PILI::... It turns out that you told me masturbation was very good...

AMADA: Yes...

PILI:: And having sexual relations is also very good..
.Right?

AMADA: Nobody doubts it.

PILI:: That's my problem.
I don't feel anything with men.
(From this moment on, her excitement will build to a climax)
I've already tried it several times, and they stink. Nothing beats what I feel with my finger, with myself, with my thoughts. Nothing gets me as excited as my own body. A thousand times, I'd rather touch myself than be touched by anyone else. Only this way do I know pleasure. And it is very fruitful, readily at hand and.. .1.. .1.. .feel. I feel...Ah!...Ah!...Ah!
(Deep sigh. End of excitement)

AMADA: Pili! What's the matter with you?

PILI:: (PILI::, suddenly hysterical)
That's my problem, damn you! I'm not normal! You said I could do it all I wanted. .But now I can't break away.. .What should I do, Amada, what should I do?
You have to help me!
(Lights out on PILI:: Music. The phone rings)

AMADA: Pili, listen...
(Lights up in the phone booth and on MAURICIO:)

MAURICIO: You are nothing but shit. .pure shit, that's what you are... (CLICK)

AMADA: Don't call again!
I really must tell all you radio listeners out there that this situation is. I mean that cases such as Pili are medical cases. They need to be treated by specialists.
I'm only here to offer some advice.. .not on every subject... only on certain.. .on certain things.

(The Phone rings. Lights up on PACO:)

PACO: Yes...good evening...good evening...

AMADA:: Who is it?

PACO: Paco

AMADA:: What do you want, Paco?

PACO: It's just that.. .you know.. .my problem...

AMADA: Yes., I – as well as all the radio listeners – remember it.

PACO: .and your advice.. .you gave me some advice...

AMADA:: Yes, that's right, that's what we do in this program...

PACO: Fine.. .I mean.. .that is.. .now. I don't know who I am.

AMADA: Well, Let's see if we understand each other. You don't know who you are. Fine. That's a problem, no doubt about it, but it's nothing special, Paco. None of us have any idea of who we are. Some less than others, to be sure. Some folks think they know what they're about, but they don't show it, which reveals the fact that they don't know a thing. Others think they're somebody else. Some folks swear they're not who they are, and the majority swear that we are nothing. That's the way society is...
(PACO: explodes)

PACO Don't give me that speech all over again! I don't care about other people. – I care about me. You hear? I care about me and no one else. Don't; please, don't. I'm not a betrayed wife. Don't give me those speeches...

AMADA: But Paco, one man's truth is another man's...

PACO: No, that's not true. What's mine is mine and to hell with everyone else. I don't care -about them. I'm telling them right here. Sons-of-bitches. Turn off that machine and let other people have their say. Gossipy old women!... lizards...

AMADA: Paco, I have to warn you that kind of language is not...

PACO: I called you because I want to indict you, because I want everyone to find out what you've done...

AMADA: Me?

PACO: Everyone knows about my problem, and everyone knows the advice you gave me. Everyone knows that my best buddy, my lifelong pal once caressed my back and I blushed and got goose bumps all over. Everyone knows this because every Friday night, I say it in your program. That was the first time in my life something like that had ever happened to me: my friend touching me and me blushing. Like a teen debutante. I'm a grown man. I have two sons. I told you the whole thing and you said to me that was normal, not to worry, that you had gone through it too, and that every man goes through it. You said every man feels attracted to another man at some point in his life. Didn't you say that? Huh?

AMADA:: Paco. Yes, but I'd like to amend it.

P AC 0 I didn't tell you to speak. I'm speaking now. Because if a man happens to blush at the touch of another, that doesn't mean that they're.. .you know, that word.. .the way you know, they are.

AMADA:: Gays.

PACO: Gays, fags, queers, that sort...

AMADA: They're not all t-he same...

PACO: They're the same to me. I look at myself in the mirror and I see myself as very masculine. I feel macho and my wife has no complaints. Lord knows she has a terrific time in bed with me. Ask her, if you want. She's right here, next to me, she, she, she's-very nervous...

AMADA:: It's not necessary for her to...

PACO: (Loudly) Come here and tell them what a great time you have in bed! Come here, tell them! Slut! You advised me to let my friend touch me, that it was normal...

AMADA: Paco, you're the one who's making something out of that. Really, it means nothing...

PACO: You said I should let him do it...

AMADA: Yes, of course.

PACO: And that's my problem.

AMADA: What did you want? To break up with your lifetime friend? A friend is not an easy thing to find.

PACO: You said the same thing last time.

AMADA: And I repeat it...

PACO:: But now...

AMADA:: Yes...?

PACO:: Now, we...
(Very softly)
We've been involved.

AMADA;; Excuse me, I didn't hear

PACO:: (Louder) We went to bed together.. .he and I.

AMADA:: But...

PACO: Three times a week. And I can't stop him anymore. All we think about is having each other...

AMADA: But.. .it 's not usual.. .that...

P AC 0 You said I should go for it...

AMADA: Well, not exactly...

P AC 0 That's what I understood you to say.

AMADA:: But I didn't, I didn't say that...

PACO: That I should let him touch me anytime he felt like it.

AMADA: I was referring to...

PACO: .And now I can't keep him from kissing me and doing anything he wants to me. And I'm not happy.. .I'm not happy...I... I don't know who I am. I'm finished.. .you told me to let him.. .and now I can't stop it.

AMADA: Don't hang up!
(Click. Lights out on PACO:)
The phone rings)

AMADA:: Yes?

MAURICIO: God will pulverize you for what you're doing.

AMADA: Do not call again!
(Click. The Phone Rings)

VOICE I (V.0.) Hello? Is Teresa there?

AMADA:: Teresa? What Teresa?

VOICE I (V.0.) Is this 491-7614?

AMADA: No!
(Click.)

EDUARDO I know what you're thinking. I wouldn't want to go back to...

AMADA: Could you believe Paco?

EDUARDO You don't do anything. Just talk. That's your job. not forcing them to call in. Or are you?

AMADA:: I just sit here, mention a phone number, and then they call. I answer them...

EDUARDO But you're not the Red Cross or the Salvation Army. This is a business, like any other. It's better that you don't take it to heart, because if you do, you're really screwed. Both of us are. Screwed and

out on the street...

AMADA: Eduardo.. .You know a lot about things...
Why don't they count people?.. .I mean.. . We know
how many inhabitants are in the world; how many
atomic warheads aiming at each other; how many
Muslims; .how many Christians or Jews; how many
miles there are from here to the end of the universe
.But no one, no country, no organization has ever
figured out how many unhappy people there are on
this planet.

EDUARDO: Come on, go on with the show. Let's earn our bread.
(EDUARDO:, before returning to his spot, turns)
Amada...

AMADA: Yes?

EDUARDO: Remember you have a microphone in front of you.
Don't say anything dumb that could cost us.. .you
know.. .Remember you're facing a mic and there are
people out there, listening... If there's something
you want to talk about, talk to me.

AMADA:: Don't worry. I'm an old pro.

EDUARDO Just the same.
(The phone rings. On the air:)

AMADA:: ...the answer is always contained within the problem
itself. We need to listen to our mind when it tells
us what to do. And that's what dreams are for.
I think I have a headache.
Can somebody get me a couple of aspirins?
Aspirin is an entire philosophy of life. Folks:
Don't you think so? I think I have greater faith in
aspirin than in anything else. Although, I really
should say it, this is diminishing on a daily basis.
Maybe it's because of the market glut: There are too
many different brands of aspirin, there didn't use
to be so many. It s as if, suddenly, someone were to
say to you: "Yes, there is a God, but He comes in
pills, caps, spray, roll-on, three shades of colors,
antacid, frizzy zeltzer, contraceptive, and
children's formula."
(SHE takes out a vial of cocaine.
EDUARDO: sees her)
Eduardo, our producer, is staring at me. He doesn't
like what I do. And he's right. Everyone
congratulates me for this show, and it turns out

that he's the one who does it.

(AMADA: inhales the dust mechanically

It's imperative that you all hear this: Folks, we don't have any answers.

Eduardo is going to kill me.

People listen to the radio because they 're seeking companionship.

For that or some other reason. How the hell do I know?!

I'm here to keep company. Not seeking anything.

We're like monks, like angels.

Why isn't lt the phone ringing? Nobody feels like calling? What time is it?

Nobody knows. The city is strewn out there, terrified, and nobody knows what fucking time it is. Tomorrow, I'll bring in some sociologists so they can explain to me some of the cases we've gotten on this program. We're sending the cards to hell, and reinforcing ourselves with specialists. I'll call a sociologist...

(Laughs)

I mean, a psychologist.

A psychologist who will explain to me why.. .at school I never understood one fucking explanation. All I ever understood were facts, I mean, if somebody said to me: 'The dog salivates when the bell rings", I understood that. Bell plus Dog equals salivate.!! But when the time came to explain why that happened, then I didn't understand anything. Does anybody know? Did anybody understand why the dog barked?

What was the name of the scientist who did that experiment? Does anybody know? The first one who calls in and tells me the name will win a prize. Who did the experiment of the dog and the bell and why does the dog bark? I'm waiting for your calls.

(The phone rings)

There, someone has the answer to the question about the dog and the bell.

(AMADA: answers the phone)

Go ahead, you're on the air.

(Lights up on MAURICIO. A flashing sign spells out the word "RADIO")

AMADA: A desperate citizen of the night. A man who walks down the street and stops suddenly to learn his-:fortune. I remember once someone asked me what his future would be and Eduardo told him he had none.

At that very moment, a truck hit him and decapitated him. What's your name?

MAURICIO: Mauricio.

AMADA: Haven't you called before?

MAURICIO:: No. Never.

MAURICIO: I want you to tell me my fortune.

AMADA: And an impatient man.. .You want today's future. But it's already the wee hours of the morning. What else do you think you could possibly do today? The best thing you can do is go home to bed. Find yourself a woman and have the time of your life.

MAURICIO:: I don't need a woman.

AMADA: You don't? A man, perhaps?

MAURICIO I have God.

AMADA:: Marvelous. I don't know anyone who has Him. Tell me another number, Mauricio.

MAURICIO: Three.

AMADA: I see that your thoughts are very quick. That you walk staring up at the sky; that you go so fast, you often crash into the pavement. Is that right? You're a Capricorn.

MAURICIO: Same as Him

AMADA: Same as who?

MAURICIO:: Jesus

AMADA: A friend of yours?

MAURICIO: The Son of God.

AMADA:: I would tell you He shows up in your cards, but it's not true. No one shows up next to you. Shall we go on with your fortune?

- MAURICIO: Up to now, all you've talked about is the past and not the future. I need to know what's going to happen tonight.
- AMADA: We don't need any cards or precognition systems for that. What could possibly happen to you on a night like this? Nothing, -Mauricio. Nothing ever happens here. We live in the most boring of all countries, and in one of the most boring cities in the whole world.
- MAURICIO: I don't like your sermons.
- AMADA: What do you think is out there? Criminals? Booze? Drugs? Those things don't mean anything anymore. They used to be a novelty, but not anymore. What? You saw a hooker standing on your doorstep? So what? I saw a cat. And a trashcar. And a Mercedes convertible. What's the difference? None. What's the fun? None. My fifteen-year-old son's life is wiped out because he overdosed on crack. He can't speak and he barely understands what people say to him. That hurt me at the time it happened. But now? Now, I don't care. He decided to kill himself? Okay, fine. Let him die. One less mouth to feed, and that's that. Are you catching my drift, Mauricio? Why do you want to know what's going to happen to you? I'm telling you without resorting to tricks: Nothing is going to happen to you!
- MAURICIO: You still haven't told me about the future. a bunch of nonsense you memorized by heart.
- AMADA: I see, at your side, a child who has grown up breathing very deeply, who has grown up by way of deep sighs, of great moments of respiration and therefore, of great moments of exhalation. He will expire today. An asphyxiated child on a day in March. Do you know this child?
- MAURICIO: It's me.
- AMADA: Very well. This causes the ascendancy of astral cards 4 and especially 3. Then, here, here is a woman A woman you hate. A tired woman dressed in dark clothes.

MAURICIO:: What happens with this woman?

AMADA:: You encounter her
And you speak to him full of hatred.

MAURICIO: What do I say to him?

AMADA:: My God!
(The music grows louder)
Let's put an end to this.

MAURICIO: Say it!

AMADA: Eduardo. . .come here, look..

MAURICIO:: What do the cards say? ...

AMADA:: That woman you hate is me!

MAURICIO:: Yes, it's you.. .What else?

AMADA;; But what have I got to do with your life?

MAURICIO:: Turn the other cards!

AMADA: I don't want to!

MAURICIO:: Do it!

AMADA:: (AMADA:turns the card over. SHE stands)
You...Tonight, you're going to commit a crime.

MAURICIO: I know.

AMADA:: You Are going to kill a woman

MAURICIO: Yes.

AMADA:: And that woman is me.

MAURICIO:: Yes

AMADA: Holy Mother of God. Why?

MAURICIO: What else do the cards say?

AMADA: I... I 've never laid eyes on you... in my whole

life.. .the cards..

(AMADA: picks up the last card)

They say that you too will die tomorrow. Before the day is through.

MAURICIO:: That's what I didn't know.

AMADA: But.. .but. . .but. . .are you going to kill me?

MAURICIO: That's what's in the cards.

AMADA: But.. .are you going to do it?

MAURICIO: Yes.

AMADA: why me?.. .why me?.. .

(PILI:, PACO: EDUARDO: AND MAURICIO: APPROACHES WITH KNIVES)

MAURICIO:: I need to kill you.

PILI: I need to kill you.

EDUARDO:: I need to kill you

PACO:: I need to kill you.

THEY ALL pulls out a shiny knife, raises it. Lights out. Dark. Music. The phone rings.

End of Play