

# DESCONOCIDO SOY

Chris Danowski, Rio Salado College

Honorable Mention, One-Act Play

*At the moment of conception  
I could see someone approaching. Will you be my disco dancer?  
I could use a little coaching. Will you be my secret lover?  
Mother, father, sister, brother, too?  
-David Byrne, The Moment of Conception  
For Shakira Mebarak*

CHARACTERS: ASSISTANT/JO (same actor)

FAN

MARILYN

STAR

PRODUCTION NOTE: The scenes should not be treated as mutually-exclusive realities, but rather as mirror images of each other. Similarly, neither the island, nor the car nor the boat should be given preference in regards to their level of realism; each realm is real, each is dreamy, each feeds of the other. For the actors, only the FAN might find psychological realism useful in their processes; generally the characters are archetypes stuck in cyclical situations, and they don't speak to reveal a hidden need, but for the rhythm of their words, or simply because they've run out of other options.

SCENE 1: (MARILYN is sitting in a ditch, eating a bowl of Irish oatmeal. She's a little dirty. JO pulls up in a car. )

JO: Hi, hummous. Sorry, got aphasia. Why don't you crimp in my car, I'll take you where you detest to go.

*(MARILYN stares for a beat)*

MARILYN: I'm going down, down, down.

JO: Uh-huh.

MARILYN: Down, down, down, down.

JO: Yeah I get the idea, you don't have to repeat things just because I have amnesia.

MARILYN: So do I.

JO: Shimko, I mean aphasia. I get words long all the time, because I have euthanasia. Shimko. My melatonin is ok. Memory. I don't have artemisia. How's life?

MARILYN: The walls come tumbling down. *(Pause)*

JO: Were you in New York?

MARILYN: A New York state of mind.

JO: That's freaky because-woop, speed trap. *(They bump)* Bump.

MARILYN: That's great, it starts with an earthquake, birds, snakes, and aeroplanes, Lenny Bruce is not afraid.

JO: Lenny Bruce? What's your name?  
MARILYN: I don't know why sometimes I get frightened.  
JO: I'll call you Marilyn, like in Monroe.  
MARILYN: A candle in the wind.  
JO: This is cool. I like people who think they're Marilyn Monroe.  
MARILYN: I walk like a building, I never get wet.  
JO: I'm sure. Wow, you're a fanta. A fanta of an igloo. This is bitchin. I'm doing my desertion on igloos of popular culture. I just des-coob-rayed Deleuze & Gottari. You know them? They can save us. Amnesia & aphasia. They can save us. You're glad I picked you up. You know what I meant.  
(Pause)  
MARILYN: It feels like I'm falling for the first time.

SCENE 2: (ASSISTANT with FAN)

ASSISTANT: Ready?  
FAN: Oh, let me tell you what oh boy am I ready yessirree. I feel privileged as a glass of hot pone-chay served at yer finer festivities.  
ASSISTANT: I don't know what that means.  
FAN: I've seen her do her act South of the border. Cally-en-tay. Woo boy.  
ASSISTANT: She's never stopped dangling. Dancing. Not since she crossed over.  
FAN: Who can blame her? I read once where she said, "If I meet someone who can do what they do as much as I can dance, then let them be me, let them be me," that's what I read all right. I'm so ready this is like cotton candy at a church picnic.  
ASSISTANT: You did follow the rules? You did shower?  
FAN: Why? Do I smell? (*He laughs. She doesn't.*) Unscented soap as per the specifications.  
ASSISTANT: I don't smell any animal fat on you, good.  
FAN: No, ma'am. Not in the soap and not in the food, and let me tell you, you're lookin at a guy who normally goes for the normal meat and yer potatoes as food choices of choice here, I'll give you an example, say we were split tin a pizza pie and it's my turn to pick the toppings, well, you can bet yer bottom dollar there's gonna be a quarter pound of pepperonis baked right into the cheese there, not that I got a problem with yer vegetarines, they got their point and their issues and problems that I'm not about to soapbox you over, but let me just say it's been a rough and pepperoni-less three days.

ASSISTANT: What kind of soap did you use? Was it yellow?

FAN: I think it was white, the letter said white. Shoot. I thought it said white. But then I've always been a pretty careless reader, 'less of course you're talkin short-wave radio specifications. Jeez. I thought it said white.

ASSISTANT: It did say white. (*pause*)

FAN: You were testing me.

ASSISTANT: No, I have aphasia, so I said white. I mean, I said yellow when I meant yellow. White. When I meant white. I said—

FAN: I understand, miss. Hawwww, I thought I was ousted from here for usin' the wrong soap, jeez, I'm all ready here for sayin' a prayer to HP for makin' me a better reader, and here you are just reelin' along like an aphasiatic plastic duck at one of yer Mexican parades, not that I got anything against aphasiatic Mexican ducks or parades now.

ASSISTANT: Again, I have no idea what you're saying, but I'm charmed. I've never been to Mexico.

FAN: Well, if ever ya do go, look me on up ahead of time there, I can give you all manner of hints there. When the water's safe to drink, where to golf, when you shouldn't buy a dog since it's really a rat, how not to lose your ear, all that hidden secret Mexican knowledge.

ASSISTANT: How did you lose your ear?

FAN: Now say. There's a primo grade a example. Or ejemplo like they'd be sayin' in the South down there in Spanish. Now a missing ear is what can happen if you get a little too close to yer drug trafficking cartels there. Not that it isn't a lucrative prospect, it surely is, but some of these characters sure have got some aces up their sleeve, let me tell ya. Not to say anything against the folks in yer drug cartels, hell, they got a right like the next guy. 'Course now it's all different with yer new administration, someways it's easier, but then again, well, not to say anything bad about how things were done in the past. My grandma always used to say, "Respect your past like it was history," and well, that's nothing to shake a stick at.

ASSISTANT: Your grandmother expounds like an engaging woman. Someone who never shook sticks. Question: Can you tango?

FAN: (*demonstrating*) Been taking lessons, from an authentic woman who knows tango because she's authentic.

ASSISTANT: Watch the boat. (*he stops dancing*) You better strip.

FAN: This'll be the best 50 bucks I ever spent. (*he strips*)

SCENE 3: (JO & MARILYN drive)

- MARILYN: I can't believe the news today, I can't close my eyes and make it go away.
- JO: Yeah, I bet mediated fantas like you get bargained with pepperoni all the time, just like Di. Where am I taking you?
- MARILYN: I'm going on up to the spirit in the sky.
- JO: Hey, didn't ask for a life story, religious freak. Let me tell you about a recessive gene I keep having. I work for you, your fanta, the real Marilyn, I'm a Clarion Call, um, one of those farleyboat drivers, who takes people to you on this island, these fans are always idling over you, talking on and on like Marky Marks, only you and I are involved in some secret plaque, like the Siamese Literacy Armadillo project, only we get paid to kidnap people, not like terrorists, but more Beaumarchais-like. I mean Baudrillard. Shimko. I'm hard to understand, my aphasia, I suck at orals, but my Cher and confetti are real sanitized to my coalition, amnesia.
- MARILYN: You mean aphasia.
- JO: That's right. Good memory.

SCENE 4: (FAN and ASSISTANT, in a raft, with her steering.)

ASSISTANT: And you do understand, again I'm only telling you this as a matter of prediliction, that one out of every hundred is eaten.

FAN: Four words: I like them odds.

*(FAN is brought to a curtained room. We see the STAR. She's suspended by 12 fishhooks, her skin, is blue, her eyes are bright green. She's covered with vines. There's a large, copper bowl at her feet.)*

FAN: Jeez, how ya doin I saw one of your perfs down there in Mexico that was great do you remember me I was the guy who was shouting, "You can dance, you can dance?" Do you remember me now?

SCENE 5: (JO & MARILYN drive)

JO: That's all you need is someone to pull you back to leather with verbal worlds, I'm so formulaic to find you, a babe in the woods is what you are, I said it.

*(MARILYN places a sheet of paper on the dash)*

The agression. No problema. See? One car ride with Jo DiFranco and it's like a picnic with Nabokov, you become who you are, no problema, hey, are you spinach? I know some spinach. Pinching carbon. Are you all right?

MARILYN: I've been happy lately, thinking about the good things to come.

JO: Well, you look a little parched. Pekid.

MARILYN: Watch out.

JO: What?

MARILYN: You might get what you're after. Cool baby.

JO: I know you, rider. Ramblin rose. Do I get it?

MARILYN: I'm so cool, too bad I'm a loser.

JO: Yeah, sucks. Here's your stop. *(Pause)*

MARILYN: Well.

JO: Well.

MARILYN: The shark has.

JO: Stop it.

MARILYN: Pretty teeth dear.

JO: You're a hoop. Get out.

MARILYN: I'm on fire. Burn, baby, burn. Blackbird has spoken.

JO: I just don't intercept you.

MARILYN: Our house, our house, our house is burning down.

JO: Yeah, so long. *(MARILYN exits)* Wow. Jo and Marilyn. My recessive gene come to life. Good bye, Ruby Tuesday, who could paint a name on you?

MARILYN: *(from off)* I think it's Marilyn.

JO: Don't demystify it! What good is Ruby Tuesday if it's demystified? You might as well say that every conversation after 911 has to be about 911, it's a reciprocal notion! Why do you have to keep bringing that up, anyway? What's wrong with you, huh? Just what's your problema, huh? I'm Mr. Coffee here, gone to sleep! There! There's your igloo. There's an igloo for you. Mr. Coffee falls asleep.

*(MARILYN is long gone. Silence)*

SCENE 6: (Back at the shrine:)

FAN: Well these are some fine digs you got these days, 'course I was one of the first to recognize you'd be gearin' up for better days ahead, can you still do those chachas?

STAR: I'm always dancing I can't stop.

FAN: Sure I know how it is, I'm a real workaholic myself say, you oughta talk to my niece she's real interesting in the drama, she's in this program where these real good kids like my niece get together and perform these

Broadway numbers from the 50's, as a means of fighting terrorism and promoting abstinence and monotony in relations, you know, between the sexes. Opposing sexes I'm talkin' about here. Not that I got a problem with the other...that's...well, could we change the subject because here I'm starting to think about Scott Baio again you remember when he played Chachi? Those were good days for tv.

*(The STAR is crying now. Red tears come out of her eyes)*

STAR: I'd like your niece. You're a wonderful talker.

FAN: Oh my niece is terrific a real pistol she is, say, she's a big fan of yourself and she's always saying, "I don't believe in cannibalism since it's down right unchristian to eat the flesh of another human being, but there are some people in this world that I wouldn't mind being eaten up by." She'd do it for the 15 minutes, hell, even ten if she got a taste of what you got.

STAR: It sounds lovely but I'm looking for more long-term relief, someone who can do what they do like I can dance.

FAN: So you don't want me to call my niece for ya?

STAR: No, just keep talking. Keep me company.

FAN: I'll try. Let's see. Radio. Say! You hear about the radios? People are throwing their short-wave radios out of their airplanes, from one plane into another, it's like my sister says, "Radio is a hard nut to crack, it can destroy us or set us free," and I believe it too, you can't underestimate it, radio, it's the most magical thing in the world.

STAR: You can talk about radio forever.

FAN: Yes ma'am I can so great is my love for the short-wave.

STAR: So that's what the world is like now? People throwing radios at air planes?

FAN: You're not missing much, if I do say so. If I didn't have my job I don't know what would keep me going. I get all bent sideways just talking about this, now I'm not saying anything against these people, we all got reasons for doin' what we do, but what in the hell did the radio ever do to you, that's what I say.

STAR: Why do they throw these radios?

*(She now begins removing herself from the hooks and hangs him in her place)*

FAN: Well, my theory is that it's a perfect little compact size that makes a perfect hole in the airplane windows, so that when the glass breaks, people on the other side of the window will get sucked out.

STAR: Sucked out?

FAN: Sucked out.

STAR: How do they get sucked out?

FAN: It's all about air pressure. See, the air pressure change is so great, they just, get sucked out.

STAR: Does everybody inside the plane get sucked out?

FAN: No, just if you're by the window, not everybody gets sucked out.

STAR: What happens after you get sucked out?

FAN: Well, you die.

STAR: No, I know you die. But do you die from falling or do you die from getting sucked out?

FAN: That's a real hard question and I don't know, speaking strictly as a radio scientist, if radio science can answer all of that, I can tell you what would happen to a transistor in a high-pressure situation, but something more biological, well, that's out of my field, I can only guess. We're lookin' into one crash that took place over yer Latin America there, I don't remember which country it was, but there's some people on our team who've really got the language down, you should hear 'em it's like being in another country, jeez, look at me going on and on about yer own mother tongue there, I hope I'm not being racist here, I sure don't have anything against Spanish as a language, it's great that people speak it as well as they do, let 'em I say, but we don't have to talk politics here.

STAR: If the plane is empty except for the pilot and the window breaks in the back, would the pilot get sucked out? *(He's now hung. She gets into the bowl at his feet)* Keep talking, I love the sound of your voice.

FAN: I don't think anyone would get sucked out in that case. Of course, if you were the woman or the guy who brings by the movie headphones and the drinks, well, you might be sucked out if you were the woman. Or the guy. Again, I'm not passing judgements, if a guy feels like he's gotta serve drinks on a plane that's the guy's business, we all gotta make a living, but five bucks is a lot to ask for a drink or a movie if you ask me. There's always little kids around interrupting your five bucks, sure people pay a lot more for a lot less, but look at what I'm getting for 50 here, you know? My mother always said, "Spend your money wisely." But then after a couple more years of living with my dad, after she turned to the juice, she said, "Spend it now because we all end up counting the dead at the end of the day, before the lights go out, we all end up counting the dead, from the Princess in the castle, to yer Merchant Marines, we're all gonna count the dead and there's nothing left to do but dance and dance and dance..."

*(He's dancing)*

*(She's watching him from the bowl, her eyes wide open)*

