

Home: Hospitality, Belonging and the Nation (performance script)

Karma R. Chávez, Sara L. McKinnon, Lucas Messer and Marjorie Hazeltine

Introduction

Arizona is known for its hospitality to outsiders—“snowbirds,” Californians, and Midwestern transplants. At the same time, Arizona, like the rest of the United States, has long attempted to erect strict borders around who can and cannot comfortably belong. In 2006, residents in Arizona were asked to vote on a ballot referendum, Proposition 107, that sought to limit the rights of queer people through an amendment that not only would have banned “gay marriage,” but also would have prevented the state from offering benefits to any domestic partners—gay or straight. Arizonans defeated this measure at the same time that seven other states passed similar ones.¹ Simultaneously, Arizonans voted upon four referenda that sought to severely restrict the rights of undocumented migrants in the state, and these measures passed with an overwhelming majority. Though the outcomes were different, and the levels of severity not comparable, the authors of this performance understood both of these events as crises of hospitality and belonging. The authors also saw an inextricable link between the exclusion of queers and the exclusion of migrants, one that demanded a response.

Out of the need for a response, emerged Home. Through some of the authors’ readings of Derrida and Dufourmantelle on hospitality², and through others’ consistent engagement with queer, migrant and queer migrant communities, we began to question who gets to call the places and spaces they find themselves in, home. How might our thinking of immigration in particular, be influenced by the fact that we think of the nation as a home, and as a result, we want to have a say in who gets to be present there? Arizona is merely a microcosm that represents the larger situation in the United States, and in our experiences, people’s desire to “have a say” in what is

Karma R. Chávez is an Assistant Professor at the University of New Mexico. **Sara L. McKinnon** is a Visiting Assistant Professor at the University of New Mexico. **Lucas Messer** is a doctoral candidate at Arizona State University. **Marjorie Hazeltine** is a graduate student at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

¹ Arizona voters approved a constitutional amendment that defines marriage as between one man and one woman in 2008

² Derrida, Jacques and Anne Dufourmantelle. *Of Hospitality*. Trans. Rachel Bowbly. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000.

happening in their home, leads to a lot of saying, or talk, opinions, beliefs about the people (who are not “us”) who supposedly want to call the U.S. nation home. This is talk that many of us have experienced in the various spaces we call home. Sometimes in the car as a scan of radio stations stops on an interview with the governor who proffers border fences and National Guard forces as the solution to “securing our nation.” Often in classrooms as student voices dissonantly rise with conviction as to the proper ways to deal with “them,” or “those people.” And certainly in intimate spaces—apartments, single family homes, gated communities, high rise condos, townhouses and farms—where people we call family, friends, acquaintances and strangers are invited in (or not) and profess opinions about “them,” “those people,” the others. Sometimes the words spoken are expected, comfortable, in accordance; yet other times they are alienating, disruptive and even violating. Sometimes such words figure people as strangers in what should be their own homes. Just as the variances in the reaction to the words, there is also a range of options that we have to respond—to retort sarcastically, to argue, to call someone out for their racism/sexism/ xenophobia/heterosexism, to remain silent or to silence. These responses come from our different positionalities.

As performers, scholars and activists we wanted to create the kind of response that could invite audiences to think about the nature of home and belonging, especially in relation to home’s exclusions, (in)securities, and contingencies. By providing what we envisioned as a familiar scenario for many “middle Americans,” we wanted Home to trigger audiences to see parts of themselves in the characters, in the conversations, in the silences, in the tensions. We also wanted audiences to think about their immigration politics and their social politics generally within the frame of hospitality. Who do we invite into our homes? Who is a good guest? What does it mean to be a good host? How do these values translate to our beliefs about belonging on a broader scale? In the spirit of Levinas, we believe in the political value of ethical accountability and response-ability.³ We hope Home reflects and enacts our beliefs.



³ Levinas, Emmanuel. *Ethics and Infinity*. Trans. R. A. Cohen. Pittsburgh, PA: Dusquesne University Press, 1985.

Script of *Home: Hospitality, Belonging and the Nation*

Characters:

Jill: The hostess, a social-climbing middle class woman who lives in Phoenix, Arizona with her husband, Bob.

Bob: The host, a professional man who likes to watch sports and is generally emotionally distant from his family.

Jaime: Jill and Bob's college-aged son who is effeminate and has trouble relating to his parents.

Charlene: Friend of Jill and professional woman who comes from an old-moneyed Arizona family.

Roxanne: Friend of Jill who lives with Charlene and is a middle class woman with generally liberal beliefs.

Natalie: Jaime's friend from college who is an independent and progressive young woman.

Marla: Jill and Bob's part-time housekeeper who is relatively the same age as her employers, and has recently come upon financial problems.

Scene 1: Preparing the Home

VIDEO CUE (as audience enters):

Audience members have been entering the performance space, scanned in by the HOA security officer and then greeted and seated by one of the several "hostesses" who are making the audience feel at home. Seated on stage while guests arrive is Bob, the host, who is flipping through the channels on the television watching the news, sports, etc. By sheer proximity audience members are "invited" to watch the television too.

During this pre-show time Jaime and his friend from college Natalie enter the space, greet his parents (Jill and Bob) and go sit down with Bob on the couch watching TV. While

Bob, Jaime and Natalie watch TV, we see the hostess (Jill) come on stage and prepare the space. She works in the kitchen area preparing food and drinks; she straightens up the space, turns lights on, etc. Her task in this is to make the space feel “homey” and warm.

As Jill finishes her little tasks, we see the lights come up on the space as she turns on lamps that are scattered throughout the space.

LIGHT CUE:

Jill: Bob, will you please take the trash out before our guests arrive?

Bob: (*Watching TV*) Ahhh, what’s that hon’?

Jill: I said (*coming into the room*) please take the trash out before the guests arrive. It’s getting quite full and I don’t want to have to deal with it later on.

Bob: Just a minute dear

Jill: And Jaime, while he’s doing that can you walk through the house and make sure everything is in its place.

Jaime: Sure mom, no problem. (*exits stage, takes a vacuum with him*)

Jill: Natalie, you just sit there and relax. We’ll let the men work for once (*with a wink*).

Natalie: Ok Mrs. Reeves. But I really don’t mind helping.

SOUND CUE: *Doorbell rings*

Jill: (*Turning back to the kitchen*) That must be Marla. Thank god. Darling, can you let Marla in?

Bob: (*Distractingly moving to open the door*) Good evening Marla. Thank you for coming to help us out tonight.

Marla: It’s not a problem--what can I do first?

Bob: Go ask the boss (*Bob points toward the kitchen and then returns to his chair*)

Marla: (*Walks into the kitchen*) Good evening, Jill. Where can I start?

Jill: Marla, I’ve needed your help all day. Can you first go make sure that there is toilet paper in the bathrooms? Ha, that would be embarrassing!

Marla: No problem. After that?

Jill: After that you can finish preparing the food so I can go get dressed. After dinner you can clean up and then be on your way. It should be an easy night.

Marla: That's fine, no problem. *(goes to kitchen area and puts on her apron)*

Jill: Thank you. I really don't know what I would do without you.

(Jill turns and moves offstage to dress while we see Bob and Natalie watching TV and Marla fixing up around the house and finishing the food).

SOUND CUE: *Doorbell rings*

Jill: *(offstage yelling)* Bob, can you get the door? I'm not ready yet.

(There is an awkward silence. Natalie, who is also watching TV looks uncomfortably at the door)

SOUND CUE: *Doorbell rings*

(Bob is too busily watching the game and he ignores the doorbell. Natalie is about to get up, just as Marla hurriedly takes her apron off and goes to the door.)

Marla: *(Opening the door—tentatively)* Good evening, please come in!

Charlene: *(walking right in like she owns the place and pushing Marla backwards)* Hi there, you must be Jaime's friend Natalie. It's so nice to meet you.

Marla: Well, ah...

Charlene: Here is a little bottle of wine for the family. Can I put my coat somewhere?

Marla: I'll take your coat. Take a seat in the living room and I'll bring you something to drink. What would you like?

Charlene: Oh, you're so sweet! Ummm, what about some *vino blanco*?

Marla: Ahh, sure. No problem. I'll be right back. *(Marla exits stage left)*

(Charlene moves to the living room where she finds Bob and Natalie. Bob realizes unexpectedly that guests have arrived, and quickly he turns the television sound off and begins to make small talk.)

Bob: Oh hi Charlene, how are you? I thought Roxanne was coming too.

Charlene: She is, just runnin' a little late. How's work goin'?

Bob: Oh fine, you know same old, same old. (*Jaime re-enters from stage right and sits on the couch*). Charlene, you remember our kid Jaime from college, and this is his friend Natalie.

Charlene: Oh, *you're* Natalie. So, Natalie, Jaime, how's school, what are you studying?

Jaime: Well, I've taken lots of different classes, but my favs are the justice studies courses. Actually, that's where Natalie and I met. It's her major.

Charlene: Hmm. So what exactly is justice studies—I mean are you studying to be cops?

Natalie: Not exactly, although criminal justice is a part of what we do. It's more about looking at the social injustices in our world like racism or xenophobia and understanding why they exist and how they work.

Jaime: Yeah, that.

Charlene: Xenophobia? Man you learn big words in school. What in the world is that?

Natalie: It means, umm, hatred of people who are from different countries or cultures than your own.

Bob: Jaime, I'm not cultured or anything, but I don't know how you are going to get a job with a major like that.

Jaime: Dad, I didn't say I was majoring in it, just taking classes.

(*As they continue talking, Jill walks into the living room dressed for the party and perches on the corner of the couch.*)

Jill: Home five minutes and already in an argument!

Jaime: Mom, we were just talking about school.

Jill: Well, (*turning to Natalie*) what I want to know is about you, Natalie.

Natalie: Oh Mrs. Reeves there is really nothing interesting to know. I'm just a normal girl.

Jill: Don't be silly. Natalie. That's a beautiful name. What's your last name dear?

Natalie: Jones.

Jill: Natalie Jones. How simple. So, how did you meet my son?

Natalie: We'll, we were just talking about that actually. We met in a class—

SOUND CUE: *Doorbell Rings*

Jill: *(to Natalie)* Just a sec' dear. I must get that.

Jill: *(Moving to open the door)* Well hello there! God, it's been forever.

Roxanne: Good evening Jill. I know. And I promise that the next party will be at my house. Here's a special dessert for later on in the evening *(handing her a tinnwrapped tray)*.

Jill: Roxanne, you are too good to us. What is it this time, something with chocolate, or maybe meringue? *(Roxanne hands Jill her coat)*

Roxanne: You'll just have to wait to find out!

Jill: OK, I promise not to peek. Let me take your coat and you should go find a seat with the others in the living room. Charlene's already here.

Roxanne: Ok

Jill: I'll be right in and then we can get started with dinner.

VIDEO CUE: *Bob turns the TV back on, and a UFO special happens to be on.*

(Roxanne moves to the living room to find the rest of the guests watching TV with Bob.

She introduces herself. The group is watching TV and joking around. After a few moments, Jill comes back into the living room.)

VIDEO CUE: *Off*

Scene 2: The Dinner Party

LIGHT CUE *(as guests are moving to dining room):*

Jill: Dinner's ready! Let's all make our way to the table—now who needs drinks?

Roxanne: I do!

Jill: I know what you like! I'll be right back.

(Everyone moves to the table as Jill gets the drink. As people sit down, Marla begins to bring out the plates.)

Jill: Here you go *(handing a drink Roxanne)*. Now everyone sit down and prepare yourself for a treat!

Jaime: Wow Mom, I didn't realize we had hired a maid. When did that happen?

Roxanne: No kidding, when did we get so fancy? (*winks*)

(*Marla continues to bring plates out during this conversation. Jill is clearly feeling awkward about having the conversation in Marla's presence. Marla also clearly feels a little awkward*)

Jill: Marla is not a maid, and it's nothing different than our usual parties, she's just here to help out so I can enjoy the company of my favorite guests.

Jaime: Does she come often?

Bob: Jaime.

Jaime: I'm serious, how often does she come? I mean, I kind of feel strange about my parents having a maid—I mean, don't you feel like you are using her? And it's really just the two of you here now—can't you clean up after your own selves?

Jill: Jaime, that is enough. Marla comes twice a month and just does the things that I don't get to often enough—like waxing and dusting. It's really nothing.

Jaime: Waxing? (*said sarcastically*) Well you better pay her well. (*Roxanne and Natalie laugh at the joke*).

Bob: That is enough.

(*At this point, Marla is done delivering plates and so exits to the kitchen, stage left*)

Charlene: (*Changing the conversation*) So Jill, when is your sister getting into town?

Jill: Well, she told me that she's getting here before Mom & Dad's anniversary party to help me out, which I *could* use the help, but you know, I don't know how much help *she'll* be—

Roxanne: What are you saying about your sister? (*sarcastically*)

Jill: Oh, you know I would never say anything bad about my sister, but—why do you have to push me like that (*laughs*)—you've been around my sister.

Jaime: What's wrong with her? Aunt Lisa has always been *my* favorite.

Bob: That's because she doesn't stay with us when she visits.

(*Jill shoots Bob a look*)

Charlene: Wow—a bit of tension I see.

Jill: (*clearly uncomfortable*). My sister is a good house guest. She is also a gracious woman. We just have very different perspectives on things, and sometimes that gets in the way of trying to accomplish different tasks.

Roxanne: That's coded. What do you really think about her? (*winks*)

Charlene: Yeah c'mon Jill, she's your sister.

Jill: Oh geez, it's well, you know I am particular. Like, I like my coffee a certain way in the morning, and my sister always gets up earlier than me and she makes coffee, which is so sweet of her. But she drinks really weak coffee, and so for the week I end up drinking that coffee and feeling groggy all the time. And you know-- (*a bell dings from the kitchen*) Ah, it's the oven. I'll be right back. (*Jill exits to kitchen*).

Charlene: I tell you what, I am glad she's not my sister. My brother is bad enough.

Natalie: I like my family generally, at least now that I'm out of the house.

Roxanne: Me too. I don't really have any problems with my family. My father can be endlessly boring, but I think that's just one of those things. As long as we don't get him started on certain political issues, he's generally fine.

Natalie: Well, I think that's most people's parents. I think parents get more conservative with age anyway, and I know that's true for mine. I mean, they still refuse to admit that GW is an idiot.

Roxanne: Mine aren't even that bad. My mom and step dad did vote for Bush, and my step brother bought my mom a key chain that has her name and under that it says, "republican" and "Bush lover." It's hilarious.

Charlene: It is pretty funny. It keeps her honest.

Jaime: At least she's reflexive about her vote.

Roxanne: Well, yea, but anymore, you don't want to get her started on other issues.

Charlene: We don't want to get you started about other issues either!

Jaime: Do you have pet issues or something? Why is she teasing you?

Roxanne: Oh, it's not me with the issues. (*shifts her body*) Hey Charlene, whatever happened to that situation with the undocumented kid from Arizona State who got pulled over?

Charlene: What do you mean?

Bob: You mean that kid who was driving home in Mesa or something?

Roxanne: Yea, that's the one. The reason I was asking is because I know that that kid was over on your side of town when he got pulled over and I wonder if they might deport him now.

Jaime: I don't think they can deport him can they?

Roxanne: Of course they can deport him, and they probably will.

Charlene: You know what I think about this situation already...

Roxanne: (*shoots her a look*) Yea, I do know—

Jill: (*comes back in with a basket of bread*) —if you know then, why do you have to bring it up? (*smiles and laughs*) You know can't we have an apolitical dinner for once!

Roxanne: Of course Jill (*jokingly*). But you know how she is, and I like to get her riled up.

Jaime: Wait a minute, so you two have had this conversation before?

Jill: They haven't had this conversation per se, but they have been having this kind of conversation for years. Do you remember when it used to be that you didn't talk about religion and politics in polite conversation?

Charlene: Who says this is polite?

Roxanne: Yea, who says?

Jill: I am not so subtly changing the subject-Natalie, how are classes this semester?

Natalie: They're good. I am actually looking to take a trip to Europe this summer to do some research.

(*Charlene gestures to Roxanne to go refill their drinks. The two excuse themselves and exit the stage.*)

Jill: Really? That sounds fascinating. What are you hoping to research there?

Natalie: Well, I'm interested in a number of things, but most of them pertain to performance and social justice. I am interested in protest theatre in Eastern European countries, like former communist countries.

Jill: Really? I love theatre! I work at the local theatre here, did Jaime tell you?

Karma Chávez et al

(Natalie looks at Jaime who rolls his eyes)

Natalie: No, he didn't but that's terrific.

Jill: Anyway, we can talk about that later, but I didn't know that there was protest theatre during communist times. I mean, it seems so dangerous.

Natalie: I suppose.

Jill: So Communist, like what, like China?

Natalie: No more like Eastern European countries, like Romania.

Jill: I see, are there still remnants of protest theater there today?

Natalie: Yes, I believe there are. That's why I want to go and research. Getting into the countries over there is pretty easy for Americans, but some of the places where the old documents are housed are not so easy to access. I am sure it will take some finessing.

Jill: Well, I suppose that's the nice thing about being a woman.

Jaime: Yea, that can be very helpful. And it doesn't hurt being a researcher I bet too.

Natalie: Yea, I mean, when you are affiliated with a university you definitely are able to jump through some hoops, but on the other hand, some people remain suspicious of researchers. That's why I also travel as an artist. I do performances and readings whenever I go. That way, I just use whichever identity will help me get what I need to get.

Jill: I think it sounds fascinating.

(Roxanne and Charlene re-enter the space and the table conversation drops again.)

They pause at the onstage kitchen area, but make their way back to the table)

Roxanne: I'm serious, what do you think they're going to do with that kid?

Charlene: They'll probably deport him and they probably should. I mean, I am sure he is a perfectly nice guy, and I am also sure he is a good student, but you know, you can't cross an international border without permission and just decide to make a life for yourself.

Roxanne: What do you mean you can't? It's not as if that border has always been there or been policed in the way it is now. Plus, it's our ridiculous economic policies that are forcing people north. And if these people weren't brown—

Charlene: It's not a race thing—

Roxanne: Not a race thing? You and I both know that's not entirely true. People have migrated from Mexico to the United States since that border was created no matter the economic situation.

Charlene: Sure, people have migrated, but not like today. And who do you think is coming here—doctors and professionals? No, it's the poor and unskilled. (*pause to take a drink*). And you know, I understand that the poor and unskilled don't have a lot of options. I get that. But they can also get in line for a visa.

Roxanne: Are you serious? They don't just give visas, people without connections wait decades sometimes—

(They sit back down at the table)

Jill: Are you two still having that awful conversation? How's your dinner?

Charlene: The dinner is fabulous, as are all dinners that you prepare.

Roxanne: Yes, this was absolutely delicious. I am almost too full for dessert.

Charlene: Not me. No matter how much we disagree, I'll always eat your desserts!

Jill: Oh good!

Natalie: Mrs. Reeves, do you need any help in the kitchen getting these plates cleared and dessert ready?

Jill: Actually, yea, I could use some help. Bob, why don't you get the slide projector ready so that Charlene can show us pictures from her trip?

(Jill and Natalie move to the onstage kitchen and Marla re-enters to help. Bob, Jaime, Charlene and Roxanne move to the living room area and begin setting up the slide show.)

Jill: *(standing behind the island preparing desserts)* So Natalie, we never got to finish our conversation. Where did you meet my son again?

Natalie: We met in class. We were actually put together for a group project. The other group members did nothing, Jaime and I did everything, and bonded over a few all-nighters.

Marla: *(doing most of the cleaning up, moving plates from the table to the island)* God, I remember all-nighters. This science class I took was a killer.

Jill: Do you live on campus?

Natalie: No, actually I live alone in an apartment.

Jill & Marla: Oh.

Natalie: Actually that's not true. I now live with my mom and grandma.

Marla: You sound bitter about that...

Natalie: *(moving toward the table and directing her speech more to Marla than Jill)* Well, leave it to my mom, who is not the most responsible person in the world. Short story: She was living with this guy—her fiancé I guess—they broke up and he kicked her out.

Jill: Wow

Natalie: Yeah, I guess he came home one night, got pissed about somethin' and kicked them out. He just started throwing their stuff out of the house at midnight. They showed up and didn't have anywhere else to go. I wasn't about to turn them away—I mean it's my mom and grandma. It's not like I could say, "Oh hi Granny why don't you go sleep on that cozy bus stop bench there while I stretch out on this fine leather sofa."

Marla: How long will they be with you?

Natalie: Like I said, my mom's not the most responsible person. She jumps around in jobs. Grandma has the beginning stages of dementia so she needs a lot of attention.

Marla: So it sounds like you support them too?

Natalie: Yeah, but I don't complain. I mean they supported me all my life!

Marla: *(moving back to the island)* I had the same sort of situation happen to me—my Dad just couldn't take care of himself anymore after his stroke. My brother claimed he had no time. He also claimed he was broke, and then went along and bought a new boat. My husband and I willingly welcomed my dad into our home, but the medical expenses have been more than he can pay with his retirement. I had to take up this job.

Jill: *(uncomfortable. She hands a tray of desserts to Natalie)* Oh the things we do for family! Natalie, shall we go see what the rest of them are up to?

Natalie: Sure Mrs. Reeves. *(turning to Marla)* It was nice talking to you.

(Marla exits stage left. Jill and Natalie move to the living room where the rest of the group is chatting and waiting for them to arrive before beginning the slide show. Bob is in his chair, Roxanne sits on a chair near him running the slide show, Charlene is at the

front of the room, Jaime and Natalie end up on the couch, and Jill sits on a stool beside the couch.)

LIGHT CUE:

Scene 3: The Slideshow

Jaime: Where did you go in France? Paris?

Charlene: No. I mean, we went to Paris before, a few years ago. But the people there—

Roxanne: Yea, the Americans there are so rude! Expecting the French to speak English—

Charlene: That's not what I meant. The French have a reputation for being rude for a reason. We were not treated very well.

Natalie: I know what you mean, Charlene. I've spent a good bit of time there, but I think that they are simply responding to English being spoken everywhere and the cultural insensitivity of American tourists in particular.

(Roxanne shoots Charlene an "I told you so" look.)

Jill: So, where did the two of you go? What was it like?

Charlene: Well, after some discussion we decided to go to the South of France. We heard the people were much nicer there—for whatever reason. The first place we went was Provence—Aix en Provence and Avignon. Lots of artists were inspired by this region of France—Van Gogh, Cezanne, you can really feel the influence of artists. Also, cafes are really important (**VIDEO CUE – SLIDE 1**). One of the most famous cafés in all of France that we got to hang out in was Les Deux Garçons. This café is on Le Cours Mirabeau in Aix en Provence.

Roxanne: It's a really famous street for sitting at cafes and shopping, and this place has been around since 1792. And so many people have gone there to sit, drink coffee or beers, and watch people. Apparently, Cézanne, Zola, Churchill, Picasso, Sartre, Piaf, and Truffaut and many others all used to hang out there.

Jaime: How very chic. (*Said sarcastically. He gets up to go refill his drink in the onstage kitchen*)

Charlene: I know! This place is The Palace of the Popes in Avignon (*VIDEO CUE – SLIDE 2*). Did you know that popes used to live in France? It was really only used by the popes in the 1300's. The palace was used off and on again. But most famously, Napoleon used the palace as a military barrack and prison. In 1906 it turned into a museum. The thing that I loved best about this place in Avignon was the gardens. It was a lovely day and people came with families and friends to have picnics. There was this sense of happiness in the air—it's what I picture when I think of France.

Roxanne: So, when we were here, the train workers went on strike, so we had to rent a car and drive to Nice. Of course, I don't speak French, and Charlene doesn't drive stick.

Jaime: (*standing back by the bookshelf*) So you got stuck driving in France?

Roxanne: You got it. The landscape is stunning, but we planned really poorly because when we got to Nice it was rush hour.

Natalie: And the French are crazy drivers!! (*jokingly*)

Roxanne: You said it!

Jill: Are they really?

Charlene: Well, they're no worse than say New York City, but if you can't read the signs and you're not used to the driving culture... (*Natalie is motioned by Jaime to get up and leave to get a drink. They walk to the kitchen together and return after Jill shoots them a look*)

Roxanne: It's freaking nuts. So, by the time we got there, I needed a cigarette like you wouldn't believe!

Charlene: Despite all that, it's beautiful in Nice (*VIDEO CUE – SLIDE 3*). There must have been something with parks because I took lots of pictures of people doing everyday things in the park area. One thing that you always see is men playing games of les boules. I know the sport has different names and I'm not exactly sure what the point is. But no matter where you go, men are always playing, though hardly any women. At this one park there was a boules competition. I think I liken it to a bowling league in the U.S. (*VIDEO CUE – SLIDE 4*).

(Natalie and Jaime return to the living room and sit on the couch but on opposite sides so that Jaime is closer to Charlene)

Roxanne: Apparently, a popular pastime, for old women, is bird feeding. I couldn't believe how this old lady would let the birds land on her hand.

Charlene: It kind of made me squeamish. Birds carry all sorts of weird diseases.

Roxanne: Anyway, when it is a nice day people come out in droves in the parks. Another thing we got to experience is the markets (*VIDEO CUE – SLIDE 5*). There were all sorts of yummy treasures at the market in Nice.

Natalie: Oh I loved the markets in the south! Everything from fruit and vegetable sellers to cheeses, sausages, spices and clothes. I bought some of the best bras and skirts at the markets. I also picked up some herbs that I didn't know existed.

Charlene: Us too! In Nice the market is behind the "promenade des Anglais." (*VIDEO CUE – SLIDE 6*) I asked people why it was called this. Apparently rich English tourists in the 18th century took to vacationing in Nice and started building a walkway along the sea that they could enjoy while on vacation in the sun. Thus the name "Walk of the English."

Jill: What a neat story! Speaking of markets, how are we all doing on dessert?

Jaime: I'm good.

Roxanne: You also see the intersections between rich and poor a lot in Nice (*VIDEO CUE – SLIDE 7*). You have this harbor with enormous yachts of the French elite and jetsetters crunched right up against streets with the apartments of the poor.

Charlene: It'd be nice if they'd separate it out a little more.

Natalie: What do you mean?

Charlene: You know, I mean, it's just nice when tourists can have their own areas and they don't have to be confronted with the underbelly of a city--

Roxanne: Anyway, what I liked about Nice is all the bright colors everywhere (*VIDEO CUE – SLIDE 8*). I'm not sure if this is a colonial influence or just an influence from the colors around the south of France, but it is not strange to see a pink building with blue shutters or a green house with yellow shutters. It makes for a vibrant landscape.

Natalie: I think that's one of the things I liked the most about the South—the colors and the landscape. It's so beautiful.

Charlene: And it's a big contrast to Marseille (*VIDEO CUE – SLIDE 9*). You arrive in Marseille by train, step out of the train station and this is the image that you see—this really long street that eventually gets to the port. This was the best view of anything, I felt.

Roxanne: I mean, Marseille feels like a working class city. There aren't many areas in the city proper that feel elite, shiny or new.

Charlene: I was warned not to walk alone in Marseille by French people, especially at night. I guess the city has a long history of criminal activity.

Roxanne: That's changed a lot over the last several years (*VIDEO CUE – FINAL SLIDE*). One of the exciting things is that Marseille also has many immigrant communities. Its history involves being a Greek city, a Roman city and then a French city. As you can see here, the city has always been important for trade. So, the cultural landscape is very different from other French cities that might be organized into suburbs, like Paris. There are ethnic groups all over Marseille—many Italians, Corsicans, Tunisians, Moroccans, Algerians, and Armenians.

Charlene: (*Smugly sitting back in her chair*) Yea, and frankly, it makes it feel not very French. It was kinda like when you go down to Guadalupe in Tempe. You know, that feeling that the space just isn't very American. This space just isn't very French. (*Clearly frustrated, Roxanne gets up to go refill her drink in the onstage kitchen*).

Jaime: (*Leaning in*) What do you mean when you say Guadalupe isn't very American, Charlene? I mean, after all, many of the Native peoples and people of Mexican descent who live there have been there a lot longer than all the white transplants.

Charlene: Oh yeah, I know. It was a bad comparison. In Marseille, there's just all sorts of ethnic tensions because of the immigrants. I mean, and there are certainly lots of legal immigrants. The President of France is the son of a Hungarian immigrant, but you know, there are a lot of illegals there too. And with illegal immigration into that city, it's a hotbed of crime, and I didn't feel very safe there. Frankly, I don't think a lot of French people feel very safe there either, and it's their home.

Jaime: (*clearly getting upset*) Well, yes, but my friend Abbad from college is French, from Marseille actually, and his parents are Moroccan immigrants. They've since become citizens, and they're still not considered French. Abbad was born there, and he is always considered a

foreigner by supposed “real” French people. And they’re not criminals, nor are the people they associate with.

Charlene: Yes, but they were legal immigrants, Jaime.

Jaime: (*Becoming increasingly agitated*) Not all of them. I mean, some of them had no choice but to come illegally from North Africa because of the tightening of immigration laws against unskilled laborers.

Jill: Who wants coffee? Marla?

Marla comes out

Marla: Yes?

Jill: I think we’re ready for some coffee.

Roxanne: (*standing by the bookshelf*) I’m not so sure we’re ready for coffee actually.

(*Roxanne moves back to her seat, and Jill goes to get coffee anyway*).

Bob: I’m going to step out for a smoke. (*exits stage left*)

Jaime: I understand what you’re saying, I guess, but I just don’t think it’s fair to depict immigrants in the way I see you depicting them. And I think if you would do some research on the lack of choices that immigrants have, maybe you’d see the situation a little differently.

Charlene: Jaime, I don’t want to fight with you. All I’m saying is that when I took a vacation to Southern France, Marseille was not my favorite place. There’s lots of crime and the people that I talked to, French people, who have lots of first hand experience, say that it’s because of immigrant communities.

Jaime: (*Slamming glass down on coffee table*) Well, you could talk to my friend Abbad, he’s a French person too.

Roxanne: Jaime, just to let you know, there is no use in trying to persuade her. I’ve been trying for years.

Charlene: Don’t talk about me like I’m not here, Roxanne. My opinion on this stuff is valid, and my family has lived in Arizona longer than any of your families, and so I too have first hand experience with this immigration problem.

Roxanne: Really, like what? Like the people who built your grandparents’ home in Scottsdale? Or maybe the gardener who your mom has had for

more than 20 years? Or maybe, it's that guy you always try your Spanish on in the drive thru at that little Mexican joint by your work?

Charlene: That is really insulting. I have lots of experience with immigrants moving to this state—

Jaime: (*sarcastic*) Charlene, I am sure you do. I'd love to hear about the experience you have or the research you've done that forms your opinion on immigration.

Jill: (*stepping in abruptly with coffee*) Ok, ok, ok. Friends, we're all friends, right? Let's have coffee, shall we?

Roxanne: You're right Jill, this kind of conversation is not going to go anywhere anyway. (*pause*) Though, Jill, I'd sure like to hear your opinion on this stuff once in awhile.

Jaime: Yea mom. What do you think? I mean, when you were in Marseille, how did you feel about the atmosphere there.

Jill (*sighing and sitting on the edge of the couch*) Well, you know. It was a long time ago when Bob and I went to Marseille. (*Bob comes back in the room*). And, you know, it was very different from other places in France. I don't think it was the immigrants per se. But you know, anytime too many diverse peoples find themselves in the same living space, there are bound to be problems. That's my general sense about Marseille.

Bob: I would agree with that, hon. (*moves to sit back in his chair*)

Jaime: (*Outraged*) Are you serious? Actually, you know what, maybe you're right. Look at us! Couldn't get more diverse than us could you? You can't always choose who you make a home with.

Jill: Oh Jaime.

Jaime: No, it's true. Some homes don't feel like home, even when those people should belong there or have been invited there. So, yea. Maybe you're right. Too much diversity in one living space causes problems.

Roxanne: Jaime, I don't think there's any reason to be overly cynical here or to make this personal. You belong here, right? It's your home.

Jill: Of course he does!

(*Natalie reaches out to calm him down*)

Jaime: Don't.

(Awkward pause where no one knows what to say).

Natalie: *(clearly annoyed)* Mrs. Reeves, if it's cool with you, you look really tired and so I am going to go help Marla clean up so she can get home. *(already exiting with the tray of coffees stage left)*

Jill: You know what, Natalie, I am going to let you do that. You're a peach.

(Another awkward pause)

Roxanne: Well, I tell you where I belong. In the bed! It's getting late, and I should get home and tuck myself in. I have a lot to do tomorrow.

Jill: Oh Roxanne, don't go. We still have lots of pie.

Charlene: You know Jill, I should probably get on too then. That way I can follow her home since she's had a little *vino*.

Roxanne: This has been really great, Jill. Thanks a lot for having us.

(They collect their coats and hug Jill. Jill apologizes to Charlene for Jaime's behavior).

Charlene: It was really good to meet you Jaime. Good night, friends.

Roxanne: Yes, all, take care, and let's do this again soon. Keep studying, Jaime! I like the way you think. *(winks at him)*

(They all say their good-byes and Bob shows Roxanne and Charlene out the front door. Jill moves to sit by Jaime on the couch. They have a moment where they sort of touch hands and it is clear this functions as a kind of apology. Jill visibly shows relief).

Scene 4: After-dinner coffee

Jill: Guys, you want to go to the dining room and have some coffee?

Jaime and Bob: Sure.

LIGHT CUE:

(Exit to kitchen table. Jill pours them each a cup of coffee. Lights are dark except for a spot on the table.)

Jaime: I can't believe Marla is still here cleaning up for this.

Jill: Jaime, your dad and I hosted 60 people tonight for dinner. *(Jill points around to the entire audience.)*

Jaime: You did. Dad, what did you do?

Bob: Jaime, I helped your mom—

Jill: It's true, Bob, I could use some more help from you with stuff around the house, but Jaime, your father works long days, and I only work part-time.

Jaime: I know mom, but it still bothers me, I guess.

Jill: It bothers me too. No woman likes to admit that she can't take care of her own home.

Jaime: I can see that. In any case, your friends are interesting, mom. Good party.

Jill: (*Moving closer to Jaime*) Your "friend" is interesting too, Jaime. I like her.

Jaime: Mom, you know Natalie and I are not together.

Jill: Ok, ok, you kids and your labels. Whatever, I'm not questioning.

Jaime: No, mom. I mean, you know that we are not together.

Jill: Jaime, do you have to bring this up now, it's been a long night.

Jaime: Dad?

Bob: Ok son, we get it.

Jaime: Well, aren't Roxanne and Charlene together?

Bob: Jaime.

Jill: We don't ask them questions like that about their personal lives.

Jaime: Well, they seem together to me. It's strange to me that two of *your* closest friends are lesbians, and you don't even know or ask about their relationship.

Bob: Jaime.

Jaime: All right, I'll drop it.

Jill: You were sure getting them riled up tonight. (*gets up to go to the island and cut some pie*) Not that it takes much with them. I should know better than to think we'll have polite conversation.

Jaime: Mom, I don't understand what wasn't polite about it. I mean, it's really no longer a social taboo to talk about politics in public. Plus, Charlene was saying some really problematic things. Didn't that bother you?

Jill: I don't invite people to have dinner in my home based on whether or not we agree on political issues.

Jaime: So it doesn't bother you then to have bigots in your home.

Jill: Jaime, Charlene is not a bigot. (*returns to the table*) She just has clear ideas about these issues, and I don't think she hates anyone.

Jaime: Yea, but mom, she was saying essentially that crime is all the fault of immigrants.

Bob: Son, I know you've been away at college, but a lot of people feel that way.

Jaime: Do you feel that way?

Bob: I don't know. A lot's changed around here with the influx of immigrants.

Jill: I think that's all that Charlene was getting at—both here and in Marseille.

Jaime: But, both Marseille and here have always been really diverse. I just got the sense that she was targeting brown people as the problem.

Jill: Well, I don't know much about that. Can we talk about something else? Natalie's trip to Europe sounds really exciting.

Jaime: Can we never finish a conversation here? I just feel like here, in this house, I can't have a real conversation. I feel like a foreigner so much around here. It's like I'm a perpetual guest in what should be my home.

Jill: Jaime, we don't want you to feel that way.

Jaime: But I do.

Bob: Jaime, it's true. You are different in a lot of ways from your mom and me. We don't always understand where you're coming from or why you have to be so antagonistic all the time. Sometimes son, I don't know how you were raised in this home. I really don't.

Jill: Bob, that's not fair.

Jaime: No, mom. It's true. I don't know how I was raised here either. Hospitality is a funny thing.

Jill: What are you talking about?

Jaime: I mean have either of you *ever* though about who you invite or don't invite into your home? You let your bigoted friend run her mouth, and

Karma Chávez et al

apparently you spend a lot of time together, but I'm your son and yet I can't speak my mind or be myself here. I, who I am, isn't welcome here.

Jill: That's not true.

Jaime: Look, I love you guys, and this was a fun night, and I appreciate you having a welcome home dinner for Natalie and me, I really do. But this place doesn't feel like home to me. *(long pause)* I'm going to bed.

(Jaime exits stage left. There is a long pause.)

Jill: *(leans in to Bob. He doesn't respond)* Well, thanks for your support on this one, Bob.

(Jill gets up from the table and also exits stage left. Bob is left by himself. The light fades.)

LIGHT CUE:

SOUND CUE:

End.



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>; or, (b) send a letter to Creative Commons, 171 2nd Street, Suite 300, San Francisco, California, 94105, USA.