

so go the ghosts of méxico, part two
by **matthew paul olmos**

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New York Theatre Workshop's Emerging Artists of Color Fellowship,
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the people

important casting note:

*though all these Mexican cartel members are men,
they are to be portrayed by women*

jefe – later 40s, a force

la burra – mid 20's, with compassion

el azul – early 20's, not to be trusted

el chango – late teens, innocent in a dangerous way

narco otro – early 50's, had been a force once

a place

méxico, present day

los capos

in the darkness, an warring of music;
a clashing of violence against beauty;
of male'ness up against its opposite.

a house. once majestic,
now ventilated by bullet holes.

JEFE stands.
with stealth, enters NARCO OTRO (Otro);
he points an automatic to the back of
JEFE's head, who pulls an automatic
and points it back.

music of male'ness.

a tableau of arms drawn.

this is broken by the music of the dead;

they both look up to see where it is
coming from.

black out.

the sky

sounds of a small plane engine fill the
darkness; the music of male'ness in full force.

LA BURRA pilots an airplane; like in the air
he is. a few moments of his checking levels,
switching switches.

walks up, yea, walking up to the airplane
that's in mid'fucking flight, smacking his lips
is EL AZUL.

he sits in the co-pilot.

EL AZUL

Wow. This the nice view from up here, Burra. No wonder you like taking all the
flight trips.

LA BURRA

What're you doing here, Azul?

EL AZUL

Yea, you really took charge of flying from back an forth to forth an back.

(BURRA nervously busies himself with the controls)

As a matter of what, me, I'm going to tell Jefe the control I seen of you today.

LA BURRA

I don't need you to tell Jefe what you seen of—Please, Azul. Just let me do my job.

EL AZUL

Oh, I know you don't need; but me I give; es like what I do.

(AZUL plays with the controls)

So like, wha's this one do? Wuz about all these little switches right along here, wuz
they do, huh? (pause) Oh, lookit tha' one, eh? Oh, tha' one nice. Tell me, Burra, is
this one right here how come you fly?

(AZUL messes with the yoke)

LA BURRA

Azul. What is this, did Jefe tell you to—

(AZUL takes over the yoke)

EL AZUL

Lookit me, I flying.

LA BURRA

We're losing altitude.

EL AZUL

Hey, so wuz like the button for the landing gear an shit? You know, so we don't skid into fucking flames.

(AZUL lowers the yoke, BURRA tries to stop him, but gives up for safety's sake)

LA BURRA

You can't just put it down—Azul, we're in the middle of—

(AZUL lowers the plane harshly; BURRA switches on the landing gear then reaches for the radio; AZUL stops him)

I have to let them know location. We have a shipment.

EL AZUL

Don't you worry about your location, Burra. Everybody already know what direction your ass is headed.

LA BURRA

I haven't done anything. You know me, Azul, I play by every rule—

EL AZUL

Oh, I know, Burra, es just...these little zips you do, these little up an down trips you take...they been took.

(AZUL exits the plane, leaving BURRA with a sharp descent which turns into chaotic landing. BURRA is banged around the cockpit unconscious; blood.

With BURRA's crash still in the background, AZUL walks up to EL CHANGO, who stands looking at the plane wreckage)

EL AZUL

Hey, if anybody ask, there was an engine problem, huh. (pause) Hey, you heard?

CHANGO

Engine problem.

EL AZUL

Oh, that, and I was never here.

CHANGO

That, and you were never—

EL AZUL

So, wuz yer name.

CHANGO

El Chango.

EL AZUL

El Chango, huh? You belong to la familia de Narco Otro, yea?

(CHANGO nods)

CHANGO

He'll be here soon. Narco Otro.

(AZUL puts his arm around CHANGO)

EL AZUL

Don't you worry. Cuz you belong to your Azul now. C'mon.

CHANGO

What about him tho'...

(CHANGO points to BURRA unconscious in the plane)

EL AZUL

You see, mijo, this is part of what I'm calling Free Trade Agreement. An La Burra, he belong to Narco Otro now.

(AZUL leads CHANGO offstage.
BURRA wakes; he looks around lost.)

Enter OTRO, admiring the plane. Music of male'ness. BURRA spots OTRO and gets out of the plane and offers the keys)

OTRO

It's nice, to see one of Jefe's con inteligencia. Didn't know he had any left in his house. So where's Azul, where's mi Chango? The agreement was Azul would be here.

LA BURRA

...

OTRO

You don't know the agreement, or you don't really know Azul?

LA BURRA

Why don't you just take these and do what you're going to.

OTRO

There was a time when a man's word could be counted on. But I guess Azul played both of us. And now you're fucked, and me, I've an airplane that does not belong to me. (pause) But if you want to help me fly it, mijito...

(OTRO offers his hand to BURRA, who doesn't take)

Ay, what is it you think, that your Jefe will just, what, take you back? After you lose all his entire sky to me? You think, what, that your Azul is right now taking the blame???

(BURRA throws the keys to the Earth)

Ah, I understand. For you loyalty is a proud thing. And I am sorry, that your Azul used that against you.

(OTRO forces BURRA into a dance; on the dip OTRO pulls a blade and sticks it into BURRA, then cuts up. BURRA falls to the Earth)

But if this how Azul want to play, then I say thank you, that me, this my sky'way now.

(OTRO picks up the keys and opens the back of the plane; his eyes glow; he sings to the product)

SONG: OTRO'S LOVE

OTRO(cont)

“Ah, lookit you, my love
From the sky to my arms at last,
At last, lookit you, my love
Ohhh...to the America you'll go,
an then America's love back to me, me, and more to me...”

(On the floor, BURRA has begun to hum)

(to BURRA) Is that...are you...*humming*? What're you, a fucking woman?

(Lights out quickly over the plane.

Lights up quickly on JEFE, who is texting. Enter AZUL and CHANGO)

EL AZUL

Jefe. Es La Burra.

JEFE

What mi Burra?

EL AZUL

I were driving along, an there in the sky I watched while his plane went down;
slowly down.

JEFE

Went or shot?

EL AZUL

Went. An when I drive over to see Burra okay, that our shipment still in place—

JEFE

What, say it.

EL AZUL

Narco Otro. Was waiting for him; all expecting. Like they friends. (pause)
But see, look, I took one of his back.

(AZUL presents CHANGO)

JEFE

Azul, what do I care some kid, huh? You've enough kids in this house already.

EL AZUL

You said that the sky didn't matter anymore, you said you had something new, something that—

JEFE

Right now, while you're talking, Otro is in the air; just over the border. An when he land, do you think the Americanos will ask "Wha'happen to Jefe?" Do you??

EL AZUL

...no.

JEFE

They'll say, "Jefe who?" "I don'member no Jefe. All I see is Otro. Narco Otro." An Narco Otro will be the only name up their entire line. ¿Entiendes? ¿;Entiendes!?

EL AZUL

Sí, Jefe. Yo entiendo.

JEFE

Now go. An take yer whatever-this-is with you.

(AZUL motions CHANGO with him downstage. AZUL sings, JEFE does not see or hear. CHANGO watches)

SONG: "ENTIENDO"

EL AZUL

You will entiendo *me*, my Jefe
you will hear me what I say.
What I do is not for stupid,
What I see is for a new day
Oh, you do not entiendo, mi Jefe
You are too dumb blind to even see,
that I am building up my army,
and going to overtake your everything

the last breaths of la burra

Enter BURRA, crawling to JEFE.
AZUL and CHANGO stand by.

LA BURRA

...please, jefe. call somebody for me. i need—

JEFE

What're you, a fucking woman begging, pleading; asking always asking.

LA BURRA

...they can still stitch me up; they can still—

JEFE

So...I'm gonna take a wild'ass guess an *guess* that the delivery didn't go so well.

LA BURRA

...azul, he was—

EL AZUL

Yea, I was there. He already know.

LA BURRA

...please call a doctor...i can make it if you call me a doctor...

JEFE

Doctor.

LA BURRA

...please don't let me just bleed out on the floor like this...

(BURRA begins to lose consciousness. JEFE kneels by him)

JEFE

I am sorry that the Otro trick you, mijo. But thank you for crawling back to me.
That shit mean a lot.

(The music of the dead swells. *With different physicality, BURRA gets up with ease, he is no longer alive, but also not yet dead. BURRA steps away from where his body is laying. All eyes stay on where Burra's body was*)

JEFE(cont)

And I thank you regardless, Burra, for bringing me my sky while it last.
May peace come to you.

(JEFE signs the cross)

LA BURRA

“This is not peace, Jefe, this is nothing of what a dying should be.”

JEFE

Azul, go on, pay your respect. An then get his blood outside.

(AZUL pulls his mobile and takes a photo of where BURRA’s
body would be; JEFE grabs his arm, stopping him)

JEFE

What’d I say, I don’t want you posting that shit. Burra was familia.

LA BURRA

“You’re fucking with death, Azul, bending it to your will. You cheat los muertos and
make us exist just here somewhere in between.”

AZUL

Yo, Chango!

(Enter CHANGO, who can only stare)

Take Burra’s body out to the side of the house. (pause) Hello, are you alive in there?

JEFE

Wow, Azul. Thank you for bringing me this one, huh.

EL AZUL

Chango. March your little legs out with La Burra an try to find yourself a
personality, huh. Go.

(CHANGO drags what would be Burra’s body outside.
BURRA follows)

JEFE

Azul. I know what you’re thinking. But I don’t want *anything* done to Burra’s
family. ¿Entiendes? He was one of us.

EL AZUL

You and me are what they call men, Jefe. Burra was like the *opposite* of us.

(AZUL exits. A moment of JEFE looking at where his Azul went.)

AZUL joins CHANGO outside the house. Both look down at where Burra's body would be. BURRA watches)

EL AZUL

In case it's worth anything, Burra, you weren't going to be flying much longer anyways. This familia...is moving on. And you, you were not meant for the world los narcos live. Hearts that bleed like you, belong someplace else.

LA BURRA

"So, do it already, Azul. Send me someplace else. Please."

(AZUL pulls his piece, he hands it to CHANGO)

EL AZUL

(to CHANGO) C'mon, mi Chango, sometimes you hafta let a personality find *you*.

(AZUL wraps CHANGO's hands around the piece)

LA BURRA

(to AZUL) "How old is he even? How long has he been away from home?"

(CHANGO begins to shake. AZUL places his hands over CHANGO's, together they shoot where LA BURRA's head would be. CHANGO reacts. BURRA feels his death.)

AZUL takes his piece back, then begins to exit; he stops short and tosses a mobile to CHANGO, who doesn't catch it)

EL AZUL

Take the bedroom top of the stairs. An hey, you can call for pussy if you need it.

(CHANGO looks at what he's done. He looks at his mobile. He comforts himself with song, but hasn't the first clue how to sing)

SONG: "CHECK IT"

CHANGO

"Hey, check it, huh
They got me on blood detail
Pussy detail too
But hey, what I hear,
they ain't so different, those two

Got me a room, got me a key
An if I make that call, all the ass in the world just for me
No lies, son, dolla bills,
this shit fo'real
Man, I can't even believe it,
Finally, me, I'm gonna break that seal..."

(BURRA stands in the shadows, he is now dead)

LA BURRA

You have no idea what a woman even is, do you? What blood even means.

CHANGO

...are you...

LA BURRA

Lookit you, lil'Chango, is this really the life you're about to lead?

(BURRA hums, CHANGO runs off like a child)

los capos again

JEFE texts. Enter OTRO; both draw their arms. A moment.

JEFE

So, is this how we are now? Just taking whatever whenever you have no other moves to make?

OTRO

Oh, Jefe, that sky was offered to me. Use your intellgencia.

JEFE

Mi Burra would never have offered.

OTRO

...

JEFE

What, what that's look?

OTRO

No look, Jefe. But what's done is done.

JEFE

I don't even know what yer gonna do with all that sky. You haven't the capacity to even run it.

OTRO

Tha's it? You're not even gonna put up a fight?

JEFE

I only fight with men. Men who still have some respect for this what we do.

OTRO

What did your Azul tell you, Jefe?

JEFE

He tol'me enough. Ay, what it must be like in your house.

OTRO

Yes. And I can only imagine what it is like in yours.

JEFE

At least mine love me. Come home to me. Yours don't give a shit. What's its name? Chango? Your little ones would turn you up while you sleep.

OTRO

I don't sleep, Jefe. I got my eyes on you all through the night. Shit, you the bitch uh my dreams. But you should open *your* eyes, cuz es not *you* who your little ones are coming home to.

JEFE

Yea, they *love* their Azul. He's got children never'ending. So you can keep breaking to our rules, it doesn't matter, my house is regenerations, son.

OTRO

Oh, Jefe, our rules they are no longer ruling cuz your Azul...

(OTRO stops himself)

Well, when death catches up to him, oh Mamacita, your house won't regenerate shit.

(OTRO slips out as easily as he entered. Lights out)