

## PARA QUE ESCARMIENTEN (SO THAT THEY LEARN): LA TURBA

This one act, multi-media play is a retrogressive study of the forces that lead to the sudden growth of a crowd and an examination of a situation that demonstrates the potential violent manifestation of unaddressed public opinion.

Characters (best performed with a rep company, where each actor can play a number of roles):

Saul Diaz, journalist, 43  
Victor Mireles, PFP\* officer, 38  
Cristobel Bonilla, PFP officer, 25  
Edgar Moreno, PFP officer, 29  
Alejandro Hernandez, drug dealer, 32  
Juan Diego, punk Zapatista, 15  
Dona Juana, aka La Madre, head of the local drug ring, 66  
Padre Antonio  
Jose Luis, owner of deli, 56  
Ana Juarez, daughter of Jose Luis, 8  
Ebrad, Director of PFP  
Eduardo Obredor, Mayor of Mexico City  
Vicente Fox, President of Mexico  
Other local people (old people, young et al)

\* Federal Police

*A darkened stage. The rising sound of a crowd. Shouts, anger, screams—general chaos. Lights come up abruptly. A cameraman wearing a turquoise blue TV Azteca leather jacket moves athletically around the stage capturing the action, which we can hear, but cannot yet see.*

Voice 1: (seething rage) Beat them more.

Voice 2: Show them what happens to kidnapppers here.

Voice 3: (pleading) Why are you doing this?

*More shouts swell until the cameraman turns to face the audience, then silence as he begins, his camera now resting on his right shoulder:*

Saul (solemnly): It was the most horrible scene I've witnessed in my 11 years as a journalist. The explosive anarchy, the smells of burning flesh and hair, the sheer barbarity of the crowd, and the laughter.

*Cries can be heard off stage right. Slow motion images of the crowd's behavior, CU of laughing faces and of children being lifted up to see the violence appear on various TV screens scattered about the stage.*

Saul: Why? What fuels such extreme behavior?

*Sound of church bells interrupt Saul and the video fades away as the light on the stage fades up to reveal the Zocalo of a traditional small Mexican town, Tlahuac, situated in a valley with a snow-capped volcano in the backdrop, La Mujer Dormida. The cathedral dominates the center of town. A sense of isolation—the end of the road—even though it is part of Mexico City, which is only 40 minutes away. [NB\* The entire set is constructed out of images on scrims or tv-type monitors, not materials, and perhaps the audience will be seated on all 4 sides, so they become the crowd in a sense.]*

*Angry men & women rush past Saul brandishing metal pipes and sticks directly off stage right. As they exit, lights come up in the back of the stage to reveal a grey sedan parked outside a school—Popul Vuh. One cop, Victor Mireles, is videotaping in the direction of the school. The other two are outside; one, Cristóbal Bonilla, is leaning on the car smoking a cigarette. The other, Eduardo Moreno, is a few yards away snapping photos. Soon an angry mob of people surround them. The apparent leader, Alejandro Gonzalez, a drug dealer, grabs Victor out of the car.*

Alejandro: What are you doing here? Pervert.

*Grabs video camera, smashes it.*

Victor (attempting to pull out his badge): What the fuck are you doing; we're from the PFP.

Alejandro: I don't care who you are, pendajo, but there are two young boys missing. And he saw you put them in a taxi (points to a young boy in the

crowd looking downward in shame. He rips the badge from his hands.)  
Maricon.

Crowd (chanting): Maricon, maricon.

*Victor is brought to the center of the stage as members of the mob chase the two remaining officers, shouting:*

*Aggarenlos! (catch them).*

*Once they are corralled, the mob begins beating the three men, who disappear beneath the onslaught of fists.*

Saul (standing aside observing the action via camera): The contagion of such behavior amidst a crowd is a phenomenon. The figurative imagination is powerful and the conviction of the crowd assumes the character of blind submission and the fierce intolerance which carries religious sentiments.

*A group of teenagers resembling Zapatista-type insurgents with punk hairdos, dressed in black start rocking the car until they succeed in turning it over. Meanwhile the 3 cops are stripped of their clothes, guns and beaten until they are almost unconscious as the crowd, Greek chorus-like, continues to shout insults and slanderous comments:*

Crowd: Hijos la chingada, cabronas... Fucking policia; you're all the same... corrupt bastards. Now you'll learn. Madreenlos mas (Beat them more)!

*We see the beating, therefore, through the lens of Saul's camera. Since the audience's sight is obscured by the crowd, images of the brutality appear on various TV monitors as people would have watched it live on TV.*

Edgar (with his bloodied face in CU, dials cellphone): We need help. People here are attacking us! Please send reinforcements fast!

Saul: After a period of excitement, crowds enter into a purely automatic and unconscious state, in which they are guided by suggestion and possess a rudimentary conception of justice, which they act upon immediately without reflection.

*Dusk falls... dozens of bullhorn alarms go off... helicopters begin to sound overhead. The crowd tries to electrocute the officers with live wires from a utility pole, but discovers the wires weren't long enough.*

Crowd (tribal abandon): Matarlos los probachicos... Matarlos ahora. Zero Tolerancia!

*A teenager, Juan Diego, wearing a T-shirt of Che Guevara with a spikey Mohawk, jumps on top of the highest point on the car and raises his right arm into the sky, which holds paint thinner.*

Juan: Quemenlos, quemenlos...

*Crowd joins in the chant as Juan works his way through the people, he douses two of the cops with the paint thinner, another person lights a match. Lights fade out on background. Lights up on Saul stage left. Behind him the set changes into a humble living room with TV and a well-worn chair.*

Saul: But often members of the crowd when alone bare little resemblance to their collective inhumanity. The public mind is often shaped before they enter the crowd.

*Begins rolling camera.*

Dona Juana (to audience): We are not a violent people with these brown faces that are wrinkled with the intensity of the sun of the area, but no one in the delegation paid attention to us, so when we heard that they caught the probarchicos we got out of our houses. They were policemen, but no one knew. The teenagers said they were kidnappers, and this was the only way they were going to learn. And the next time they will do the right thing; send more policemen. That's the lesson.

*Light dims, focus shifts to TV, which reruns the evening news. A montage of footage from the onslaught of kidnappings over the past year—1,200 alone in the past year. Images of children and adults disappearing as well graphics revealing that 70% involve police or ex-police rings. Show that people live with this permanent fear, in part due to the infiltration of the media.*

Saul: Sometimes the sentiments suggested by images are so strong that they tend, like habitual suggestions, to transform themselves into acts. The way to lead a crowd effectively is to work upon their imagination, because the power of words is bound up in the images they evoke... a crowd thinks in images.

*Moving back in time to Monday. TVs go static before they fade out as the backstage simultaneously changes to the inside of the tortillera of Jose Luis Juarez. Saul looks on...*

Dona Juana (entering, looking over her shoulder): Have you seen those three men hanging around the Popul Voh?

Jose Luis: No?

Dona Juana: You're daughter goes to that school, doesn't she? And she hasn't mentioned anything? They've been taking lots of pictures, and they look kind of dirty, like the kidnapers they show on the tv.

Ana Juarez (comes into shop and kisses her father on the cheek): Hola Dona Juana.

Jose Luis: Dona Juana just told me there have been some strange men watching over your school. Is that true?

Ana: Si, papa. ...And Miquel says they followed him home the other day.

Jose Luis: Why didn't you say anything to me? Did they approach him?

Ana: No se. I don't think so.

Dona Juana (mischievously): Oh, no. That must mean they are figuring out where the best place is to grab them.

Ana Maria (Jose's wife, walking in): grab who?

Dona Juana: The kidnapers at Ana's school.

*It's noon. A long line forms outside; the rush for warm lunchtime tortillas.*

*A chorus of whispers and distinct gossiping phrases disseminate Dona Juana's accusations. This activity spreads out into the Zocalo, where small groups coalesce scattered about the stage. Lights dim, but silhouettes can still be seen in the background passing on messages, while on the edge of the stage Saul once again addresses the audience:*

Saul: Now there are two sides of San Juan Ixtoyopan, the local people and los ritos. During the past 5 years, several gangs of drug dealers from Guerrero have moved to the area and created a permanent market that is directed mostly to teenagers. To get more addicts they give away drugs for free outside schools, parties and discoteques.

*Crossfade. Backdrop now shows Dona Juana's "club house" (where drugs are distributed for the various 1,000 plus delis\* in the area). Goods are being passed around and a heated discussion ensues. Dona Juana sits above on a table expressing violent hand gestures. The sound of a camera snapping shots as a series of revealing photographs is simultaneously pulsed onto a scrim.*

Saul (cont.): These gangs have organized a structure of production, distribution and protection of the shipment as well as the laundering of money. These associations have build protection between the police department and local government agencies through kickbacks. Therefore, the local people are left with no strategy to fight, so they peaceably accept the paternal protective function of los ritos.

*Light in background fades up on a small group of drug dealers, some teenagers sit in the shadow, Juan being one of them, conspiring to kill off cops.*

Dona Juana (plotting to kill off cops): I think they're on to us.

Alejandro: Well, what do you propose we do, La Madre?

Dona Juana: We need to get rid of them.

Paco: You mean off them?

Dona Juana: This town is a breeding ground where there is already mistrust or negative feelings towards the police... So, we just need to incite the people, and they'll take care of the rest.

Saul: When a leader wants to stir up a crowd for a short space in time, to induce it to commit an act of any nature, the crowd must be acted upon by rapid suggestion. To attain this end, it is necessary that the crowd should have been previously prepared by previous circumstance and a few set phrases, which are repeatedly drummed into their ears.

*Set restored to school yard. It's 6 pm. The evening schedule has ended, kids pour out of school. Having passed by the scene outside their playground, some kids come running towards their mothers in tears; they are scared by the violence and confusion.*

Young boy: Mama, Help, help... they're police men..

Young girl: They are kicking the men and beating them with metal pipes... there's blood everywhere.

*A group of the parents, along with their children in uniform still, rush over and join the mob. They are mostly observers, but some feed into the cheering. People tug Saul into the center:*

Crowd: Get this, get this...

*And then the assailants are pushed directly in front, practically on top, of Saul's camera. We witness the proceedings up close again on the tv monitors. Alejandro grills them with questions:*

Alejandro (Stalinistic interrogatory tone): Talk them. Tell the people. Which federal agency are you from? Who sent you here? Why are you stalking us? What are you looking for?

*The pummeled officers respond with non intelligible one word answers. Again the Juan Diego comes out of nowhere and douses them with paint thinner, then another person sets the bodies ablaze. This scene continues to play out in the background without sounds...*

Saul: What were the police doing during all of this...

*Sound of voice recordings from various phone calls, which came into the PFP that day from 6:10 pm on asking for police aid. We see the 120 officers preparing: putting on riot gear, loading up with grenades, strategizing et al. We witness the deliberation of the Director of the PFP and the agonized wait for Vincente Fox's go ahead. This is intended to reveal that they delay was a political move to make Obrador look bad.*

*Then we hear the litany of excuses in the media at a press conference, which Saul shoots:*

Ebrad: It was impossible for us to arrive on time, because of the traffic on the only road in and there were not enough police to manage the crowd. I was afraid to use helicopters, because it might be taken down with a stone. It was an unusual and unpredictable situation... odd because that community had so few problems.”

Saul: Lack of attention creates psychology in local people—a mental deformation. Impotency leads to aggressivity. We respond in a brutal way to a circumstance. We are living in a barbarity. And consequently, the image were are giving to the exterior is pathetic.

*Sounds of the crowd begin to swell again. The crowd now carries the third officer over their heads, marching to the center of the Zocalo. They proceed to tie him up to a kiosk outside the Cathedral, so he will be on public display. At that moment, a few PFP agents finally arrive, dressed in blue riot gear with machine guns. They throw tear gas into the crowd to disperse them. Eduardo is untied and lifted into an ambulance whose sounds whisk him away as the charred bodies are snuffed out. Lights cross fade to reveal a pair of crosses now on the site of the lynchings behind Saul who walks through schoolyard of Popul Vuh.*

Saul: Now no one seems to know anything about it. They all heard something outside or watched something on their televisions, but no one bore witness to the actual event. Criminal nature of a crowd is rarely prosecuted, and many of these towns have traditions that date back hundreds of years. They enforce community justice and independent constitutional law. But here everyone is guilty: the crowd, witnesses, police and the government. My image were used to arrest those involved. One question still remains; who rang the bell?



Post script:

The next day 1,000 Federal Police stormed the town making mass arrests, pulling out even women and under aged teenagers from houses and stores. They were all taken to the PGR building and on TV Vicente Fox declared: He is waging the mother of battles against crime.

Documentary footage of the June 2004 protest where a quarter million people in Mexico City marched with banners urging the death penalty for kidnapers, rapists and murders (organized by Mexico United Against Crime) singing the Mexican National Anthem.

EXTRA STUFF:

People are tired of feeling as though the police are corrupt and that nothing gets done. "We are afraid. We can't go out on the street and the police do absolutely nothing to protect us..."

People in White marched with BANNERS urging the death penalty for kidnapers, rapists and murders and singing the Mexican National Anthem. MEXICO UNITED AGAINST CRIME. Show these moments on TV screen. DOCO STYLE

The loss of human worth.

TO RESOLVE THIS CRISIS: police need to take a decision... dissolve the collusion between the police and drug dealers, so citizens of society can trust authorities again.

Images revealed that not all participated, but it was mostly young guys who instigated it... therefore, the theory is that the drug dealers instigated the local crowd to kill the cops, once they discovered that they were discovered (part of a 10,000 deli ring). Cannot underestimate this possibility.

4 witnesses. need back knowledge on there initially instigation as a tool for mind control during Zedilla election. ALSO need to give back story on the recent quarter million people protest in Mexico City over the authorities failure to control lawlessness.

Also, note that after the event; the 10 guys (from the drug ring) ran away from town that night. They have not been caught. It was planned. Intentionally staged. The cops were sacrificed for a political point. To heightened the polarity between Obrador & Fox. To make Obrador look bad (he's a contender for the presidency). Local cops were in collusion with the drug dealers... and wanted to make Federal police look bad, so they didn't do anything.

(videotape is never discovered until later; it turns up... in investigation... reveals drug deals... same folks seen on the tape inciting the lynching)

The police do nothing here. They don't protect us; they are corrupt. Always looking out for their own interest. They just sit back and get fat on kickbacks... So, we must teach them.

John Medina, a farmer. "this is a horrible tragedy, which will be difficult to forget. No one has the right to take the life of anyone else. It was the local drug dealers that roused the crowd through false rumors..."

Can go into FOOTAGE OF PROTESTs... or kidnappings from TV... also, mention that this is a town that is in support of Marcos and where 2 insurgency groups from Guerrero hide out.

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