FLAMIN' HOT

by

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Searchlight Pictures
Franklin Entertainment

1 OVER BLACK 1

A voice penetrates the silence.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Call a Mexican spicy and you're playing with fire...
(beat)
But spicy is how I got here...

2 INT. UPSCALE RESTAURANT - KITCHEN - NIGHT - 2016 2

CLOSE ON a stove burner. The flames ignite and engulf a pan with a WOOSH. We look past the pan to a MEXICAN LINE COOK who arranges an elegant plate of food.

RICHARD (V.O.)
To this moment. Me...

The MEXICAN LINE COOK picks up the plate, places it on a tray of plates, and hands it to a MEXICAN RUNNER--

RICHARD (V.O.)
The most uneducated, successful vato you'll ever meet...

The MEXICAN RUNNER rushes the plate over to a MEXICAN WAITER.

RICHARD (V.O.)
...who helped bring you the most popular snack the world has ever seen.

The MEXICAN WAITER exits into the dining area. We follow him.

3 INT. UPSCALE RESTAURANT - NIGHT - 2016 3

The Mexican Waiter rushes through the dining hall with the piping hot tray of plates.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Yeah, that fine guapo right there?

The Mexican Waiter lays out steak dinners for a pair of PepsiCo executives.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Looking like Sean Connery dipped in abuelita chocolate? That's me. El mero mero--
(beat)
Mr. Richard Montañez--

(CONTINUED)

We focus tighter on the Mexican Waiter.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Not that fool. Over here, mensos.

The camera SHARPLY WHIPS to RICHARD MONTAÑEZ, a spruced up Chicano in a nice suit (58), sitting next to the execs and his wife JUDY (58), a güera (blonde) Chicano veterana draped in jewels.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Yep, that's me. The little gangster that could. The chavo who lit the snack industry on fire with a million dollar idea.

Richard smirks knowingly and winks at camera as a symbol

CLANGS--

CUE "Don't Put Me Down Cause I'm Brown" by El Chicano. The mesmerizing beats of a timbal take us to--

4 EXT. GUASTI WINERY - THE FIELDS - DAY - FLASHBACK - 1966 4

CLOSE-ON YOUNG RICHARD (10), smiling wide. Sun flares envelop his face in dream-like goodness. He runs between the rows of grapevines.

RICHARD (V.O.)
The kid from Guasti who wouldn't take no for an answer.

TITLE: Guasti, California. 1966.

RICHARD (V.O.)
The number one travieso. Son of Vacho and Concha Montañez.

In SLO-MO, a small crowd of BROWN KIDS (5) of various ages come into view. They chase him with the same childlike joy.

RICHARD (V.O.)
One of NINE traviesos.
(laughs)
It was the '60s. We're Mexican. 'Course my parents got down. It's one way to pass the time when the world says you ain't nothing and nobody.

We follow Young Richard running with his siblings. His bliss is suddenly cut off when he runs into VACHO MONTAÑEZ (20s), Richard's father, a gruff and tough-looking pachuco.

RICHARD (V.O.)
By the time I was ten, I knew all I had in life was--

Richard looks up at Vacho, scared. Vacho grabs him by the collar and yanks him away as we CUT TO--

5 INT. GUASTI WINERY - SHED - DAY - 1966 5

Richard's ABUELITO (60s) sits on a crate, wearing a wide-brimmed hat.

ABUELITO	ABUELITO [TRANSLATION]
The Montañez name. Si les puedes enseñar de lo que es capaz un Montañez, no te pueden decir nada, cabrón.	The Montañez name. If you can show 'em what a Montañez can do, they can't tell you nothin', cabrón.

Young Richard nods vigorously.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Except the world in the '60s thought "Montañez", "Martinez," "Romero", "Torres" gave 'em a free pass to--

6 OMITTED 6

7 INSERT FOUND FOOTAGE/PHOTOS FROM THE CHICANO MOVEMENT: 7

The music swells as black and white FOUND FOOTAGE of a police officer beating a young Chicano boy in the streets appears.

RICHARD (V.O.)
--Beat your ass in the streets like a dog.

A SERIES OF PHOTOS of brown soldiers slain in the Vietnam War fly across screen rapid fire. A NEWS HEADLINE reads - Mexican-Americans: 10% of the Population. Highest Soldier Death Toll.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Ship you off to war to drop like flies like you weren't worth a dime.
(beat)
(MORE)

RICHARD (V.O.) (CONT'D)
And let the jura (police)
use ya
for target practice.

BACK TO Chicano Moratorium footage. People protest. Someone screams. A GUN SHOT RINGS OUT--

MATCH CUT TO:

8 INT. MONTAÑEZ QUARTERS - DAY - FLASHBACK - 1966 8

CRASH! A pan hits the floor. A frustrated CONCHA MONTAÑEZ (20s) picks it up. The cramped quarters are smokey.

RICHARD (V.O.)
That's my 'amá, Concha. Looks sweet, but don't let her fool ya. She can twist a chicken's neck and make caldo in the time it takes your mama to make a casserole!

CLOSE ON a transistor radio that's been broken into pieces. Strewn amongst comic books. Children rush around laughing.

Young Richard and YOUNG MARY LOU (11) sit and watch Adam West as BATMAN in a movie on a tiny black and white portable TV.

YOUNG MARY LOU
(whispers aggressively)
Dejalo ahí, Richie.

YOUNG MARY LOU
(whispers aggressively)
Leave it there, Richie.

YOUNG RICHARD
Cuando lo arreglo le vamos a llamar a Batman. Hello?

YOUNG RICHARD
When I fix it, we're gonna call Batman. Hello? Hello?

Hello?

Vacho stumbles in drunk.

RICHARD (V.O.)
My dad. "Vacho" Montañez. Short for borracho (drunk) 'cause, well--

CONCHA
Ya Vacho. Para de tomar.

CONCHA [TRANSLATION]
Enough Vacho. Stop drinking.

Vacho stares her down. Mary Lou pulls on Richard's sleeve.

YOUNG MARY LOU
Richard...

Richard works as fast as possible on his transistor radio.

BATMAN [ON SCREEN]
I'm here to save them all!

Vacho grabs Richard by the collar and scoops up the radio.

VACHO	VACHO [TRANSLATION]
Porque lo quebraste, menso? Que haces tocando mis cosas?!	Why did you break this, idiot? Why are you touching my things?!

Concha tries to intercept but Vacho shoves her away.

YOUNG RICHARD
You wanted to fix it. I fixed it.

Vacho sets him down, turns the knob. The radio shifts between stations, lands on one. He looks at Richard, who smiles.

Richard thinks he's done good until Vacho shoves him and throws the radio at the wall. Concha and Mary Lou scream.

RICHARD (V.O.)
My pops couldn't do right by the Montañez name. And I started to wonder if that leva (coward) mess was in my DNA, too. Maybe I wasn't gonna be no hero. Maybe, instead--

OFF Richard--

9 EXT. GUASTI TOWN - STREET - DAY - FLASHBACK - 1974 9

TEENAGE RICHARD (18), a 1970s cholito, runs down the street, holding a stolen stereo/LP player and a smile on his face.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Yep. That's that firme Pachuco steez everybody was wearing in the seventies. I look good, baby!

A POLICE CAR comes into view behind him, sirens blasting. He looks back over his shoulder.

We FREEZE FRAME on him--

RICHARD (V.O.)
Um, let's fast forward.
(laughs)
Judy don't like me talking 'bout this part...

LUCKY [PRELAP]
'Amaaaaaaá!!!

10 INT. RICHARD'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY - 1982 10

CLOSE-ON JUDY's (29) hands, flipping tortillas she made from scratch. She holds a crying BABY STEVEN (1), pours water into a gallon of milk to make it stretch.

Next to her, Richard lays on his side digging through the gears and wires behind an old fridge.

YOUNG LUCKY (4) is flicking the toe of his old sneaker against the floor. The heel is loose and flapping like a duck's beak.

YOUNG LUCKY
'Amá, look. 'Amá, look. 'Amá, look.

JUDY
Yes Lucky baby, I see it, mijo.
Here. Chew.

She unwraps a piece of gum and pops it in his mouth, pours Lucky a cup of milk, and steps over the now laser-focused Richard to pull plastic bags off the top of the fridge.

JUDY (CONT'D)
(to Richard; frustrated)
Baby, we're gonna be late. Hurry.

YOUNG LUCKY
'Amaaaaaaá.

JUDY
Spit, baby.

Young Lucky spits out the gum. She uses it to seal the loose heel. Judy shoves a bottle in Baby Steven's mouth and stacks tortillas.

Richard opens the fridge door, triumphant. The light works.

RICHARD
Si se pudo, Mejicanos! Fixed it.

Suddenly, the entire fridge short-circuits and goes out. Judy stops in her tracks.

JUDY
Richard, that sounded so bad--

RICHARD
Bad? Nah. The fridge is just taking
a nap, baby. It needs a little rest
and then I'll get back under there--

JUDY
Oh my god, Richard, stop. The food is gonna spoil--

RICHARD
Hey, hey, come here.
(holding her shoulders)
Breathe.

JUDY
What are we supposed to eat--

RICHARD
Breathe.

JUDY
Pero, we don't have the money for--

RICHARD
Three...

JUDY
Two...

RICHARD
One...

RICHARD (CONT'D) JUDY
Breathe. Breathe.

They both take a very deep breath.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Someone's gonna say yes today, bebita. I got this.

Judy nods holding back tears; struggling to believe him.

RICHARD (V.O.)
And I did have this.

CUT TO A SERIES OF JUMP-CUTS, Richard interviews for jobs while Judy and the kids sell tortillas:

11 EXT. STREET - DAY - 1982 11

Richard stares at a LANDSCAPER fiddling with a janky lawnmower next to his truck. He holds Richard's resume.

RICHARD (V.O.)
I even had Judy make me a fancy re-sú-may 'cause who's gonna say no to somethin' that sounds French?

LANDSCAPER
(hands it back)
We don't got no work, bro.

RICHARD
I can mow a lawn faster than my mama can slaughter a pig and make chicharrones.

The Landscaper stares at him.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
That was a joke, man.

The Landscaper shakes his head. Richard bows his head, downtrodden. He walks off holding his stack of resumes, then looks back at the Landscaper.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
It's the discharge chute that's messing up, carnal. And give the cord retainer a look too.

Richard leaves. The Landscaper check. Huh, he's right. He's impressed.

EXT. GROCERY STORE PARKING LOT - DAY - SIMULTANEOUS - 1982 12

OUTSIDE, Judy and Young Lucky run up to a grumpy OLD MEXICAN LADY.

JUDY	JUDY [TRANSLATION]
Mire, señora! Tortillas hechas a mano. Un dolar.	Look, señora! Handmade tortillas. One dollar.

The woman shakes her head. Young Lucky kicks the curb and pouts.

13 INT. BARBERSHOP - DAY - 1982 13

Richard stands across from a BARBER, who stares at Richard's resume.

RICHARD
Some call it juvenile detention, I call it "summer camp".

Richard laughs, then shifts uncomfortably, a timid smile.

14 INT. SALVATION ARMY - DAY - 1982 14

Richard is beaming as the STORE MANAGER, a white man, eyes his Pachuco clothing.

RICHARD
Who needs a high school diploma to sell a bunch of junk, am I right?

The Store Manager hands Richard's resume back. Nope.

15 EXT. STREET - VARIOUS - DAY - 1982 15

Richard makes his way from shop to shop--

AT RENE'S SALON, Richard steps up to the door when a STORE OWNER flips over the "HELP WANTED" sign. No work.

AT THE FLORIST SHOP, an employee arranging flowers for sale outside shakes his head no.

16 INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY - 1982 16

Richard stands across from a GROCERY STORE MANAGER at bagging, fully depressed.

GROCERY STORE MANAGER
Well, obviously I can't hire you.
(fantasy)
You ain't got white skin.

Richard stares at him, stone-faced. Then--

RICHARD
The hell'd you say, fool?

GROCERY STORE MANAGER
I said you're talking into the wind. Looking at you I can tell you haven't got an ounce of initiative.

RICHARD
Oh. What... does that kinda guy look like?

The Grocery Store Manager, annoyed, shoves Richard's resume back at him and leaves. Richard looks out the store window.

OUTSIDE, Judy and Young Lucky rush from person to person trying to sell their tortillas. Richard is heartbroken.

17 EXT. GROCERY STORE - DAY - 1982 17

Judy watches a WOMAN walk away, dejected.

YOUNG LUCKY
Mama, I'm hungry.

Judy hands him a tortilla and comforts a sleeping Baby Steven.

JUDY
Here, baby. Eat this.

Young Lucky eats his tortilla and kicks a car tire with his flapping toe-heel. The gum gets all over the tire.

A WHITE COUPLE walk up. The HUSBAND grabs Young Lucky's shoulder roughly.

HUSBAND
Don't do that! Have respect for other people's property, dang it.

Judy quickly gets up, frustrated, she fumbles with Baby Steven. She rushes to Young Lucky and pulls him away.

JUDY
Hey! Get your hands off my kid! Don't be talking to him like that.

HUSBAND
Good lord, you women pump these little wetbacks out like a factory.
(Alternate)
Good lord, you women pump these little spics out like a factory.

Young Lucky's shocked. Baby's first micro-aggression. Judy pulls Young Lucky away as Richard arrives.

RICHARD
Hey, you touch my kids?!

Richard slams on their hood as they try to drive away.

JUDY
Richard! Leave it alone!

RICHARD
Leave it alone?!

JUDY
Yes! They'll call the police and that ain't good for either of us.

Richard takes a deep breath. Pulls Young Lucky to his hip in a semi-hug. Judy stares at him, hoping for good news, but...

RICHARD
No me lo dieron. (I didn't get it.)

YOUNG LUCKY
What's a wetback...?
(alt)
What's a spic...?

Judy's heart breaks. She pulls Young Lucky into her arms.

JUDY
It's okay, mijo. You didn't do nothin' wrong. Come here.

She hugs Young Lucky who starts to cry, releasing the shock of being reprimanded by the Whites. Tears well in her eyes.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Listen. I've taken a lot in my life, but what I can't ever take is seeing my family cry. Especially my Judy. Been that way since the day I laid eyes on her.

LIGHTBULB FLASH!

18 EXT. SCHOOL POND - DAY - FLASHBACK - 1966 18

We land wide on YOUNG JUDY (10), an adorable muchachita in pigtails sitting for her school portrait.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Sweet as sunshine, I had my heart set on her a long time ago.

We slowly push-in on her. A halo of wisps of light surround her as the song "Earth Angel" rises.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Judy was the smartest girl at school. She knew the biggest words English words in the dictionary como "equator" and "wizard"! Man, I couldn't even speak English. Everyone also knew that Judy--

Judy pulls down her sleeve to cover up a bruise on her arm.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Let's just say us two chiquillos had a lot in common.
(beat)
Even with tears in her eyes, Judy... man, Judy was a dream. It was like I was in the Mexican Wonder Years!

Judy sits at a bench, solemnly eating her lunch. Richard sits at a bench beside hers. He looks over at her. She waves at him shyly. Richard's stunned.

He gets up and walks over to Judy's bench, sits down beside her. She has a poor girl's meal of an apple and crackers.

YOUNG RICHARD	YOUNG RICHARD [TRANSLATION]
Hi, ese es tu lonche?	Hi, is that your lunch?

YOUNG JUDY
Yeah, wish it was a bologna sandwich, or chocolate...

She shrugs solemnly. Richard quickly reaches into his little brown paper sack and pulls out a burrito, unwraps it.

YOUNG RICHARD	YOUNG RICHARD
Tengo un burrito. Si cierras los ojos puedes imaginar que es un chocolate.	I got a burrito. If you close your eyes you can pretend it's chocolate.

She laughs. Richard smiles shyly. She takes the burrito.

KID (O.S.)
What is that? Gross.

A CAFETERIA KID, flanked by WIMPY CAFETERIA KID and ANOTHER CAFETERIA KID, points at the burrito with disgust.

Judy shrinks. Richard speaks up with his heavy accent.

YOUNG RICHARD
Ees a bean burrito...

CAFETERIA KID
(laughs)
Figures. Beans for a dirty beaner!

The kids with him laugh and point. Now Richard shrinks.

CAFETERIA KID (CONT'D)
If you eat those beans you ain't gonna be good at English no more, Judy. You'll sound stupid like him.

18 CONTINUED: (2) 18

Richard stands, fists ready to save the day like Batman.

YOUNG RICHARD
Leeve 'er uh-lone!

RICHARD (V.O.)
I showed that little panzón (fatty) what's what.

The White Kid shoves Richard's forehead. Richard stumbles back. The kids laugh and walk away.

YOUNG JUDY
Estas bien? (You okay?)

Richard rubs his forehead as Judy takes his hand sweetly.

RICHARD (V.O.)
(clears his throat)
Like I said, I showed the menso a Montañez takes the high-road. We're classy like that.

19 INT. MONTAÑEZ QUARTERS - NEXT DAY - FLASHBACK - 1966 19

CLOSE-ON Young Richard, desperate.

YOUNG RICHARD
Ay 'Amá, por favor (please)! Make me a bologna sandwich!

CONCHA (PRELAP)	CONCHA [TRANSLATION]
Como que un bologna sandwich? Qué bolgona sandwich ni que nada!	Bologna sandwich? Nobody's making you that!

Young Richard desperately follows Concha around the kitchen.

YOUNG RICHARD	YOUNG RICHARD [TRANSLATION]
I don't want to be different! Tambien hechame un cupcake.	I don't want to be different! Put a cupcake in there too.

Concha looks at him, appalled. Excuse me? She wraps up two burritos and sticks them in a bag. Hands it to him.

CONCHA	CONCHA [TRANSLATION]
Ten. Uno para ti y uno para el menso al que no le gustan los burritos.	Here. One for you and one for the idiot who doesn't like burritos.

Richard groans. Concha gives him a stern look.

(CONTINUED)

20 EXT. CAFETERIA - DAY - FLASHBACK - 1966 20

Richard and Judy share a burrito. The White Kid and his friends march up and Judy cowers. Richard steels himself.

Richard takes a big delicious bite. The Cafeteria Kid eyes him closely. What is this kid doing?

YOUNG RICHARD
Omaigah, sooo good. Delicioso!

Everyone looks confused, including Judy. Finally--

YOUNG RICHARD (CONT'D)
(to Cafeteria Kid)
Want some?

CAFETERIA KID
Ew. I'm not gonna eat that.

He shoves WIMPY CAFETERIA KID forward.

CAFETERIA KID (CONT'D)
You eat it. I dare you.

Richard hands Wimpy Cafeteria Kid the burrito. Wimpy Cafeteria Kid hesitates, then eats it, and smiles from ear to ear, making yum noises--

WIMPY CAFETERIA KID
Oh, wow. It's real good!

ANOTHER CAFETERIA KID
I want some. Give me one.

CAFETERIA KID
I'm first! Hand one over.

Cafeteria Kid makes a swipe for Richard's second burrito, but Richard blocks him.

YOUNG RICHARD
Twenty-five cents.

Cafeteria Kid grumbles. Finally, BAM-- he pulls out a quarter. Hands it over. The kid gobbles it up.

RICHARD (V.O.)
And just like that, I became the burrito hustler of Guasti Elementary, baby!

Judy takes his hand. Richard beams. CUE Barrett Strong's "Money (That's What I Want!)" as we--

CUT TO MONTAGE:

21 INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY - FLASHBACK - 1966 21

Richard dumps a bag of burritos onto a lunch table. Kids swipe them up. He hands one to Judy. She winks. He melts.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Taco Bell didn't introduce the world to burritos. Me and my mama did!

22 INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY - FLASHBACK - 1966 22

CLOSE-ON happy kids' faces munching down on their burritos.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Well, that's what it felt like to me!

23 OMITTED 23

24 INT./EXT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY - FLASHBACK - 1966 24

Richard sells burritos to kids in the hallway.

25 INT. MONTAÑEZ QUARTERS - DAY - FLASHBACK - 1966 25

Richard dumps quarters into a jar.

26 INT. MONTAÑEZ QUARTERS - DAY - FLASHBACK - 1966 26

A waterfall of quarters rain down in SLO-MO over Richard's face. Heaven. We pull out to see him jumping on a bed-pile of quarters. He rolls around in them like it's a million bucks!

27 EXT. QUICKIE MART MURAL - DAY - 1966 27

Richard pockets a wad of cash as he rushes to the Quickie Mart, a giant smile on his face.

RICHARD (V.O.)
I wasn't going to let another day go by where Judy ate nothing but crackers.

28 INT. QUICKIE MART - DAY - FLASHBACK - 1966 28

Young Richard struts in, pocket full of money. Swag strong. Richard snatches up chocolate.

RICHARD (V.O.)
My Jude wanted chocolate and she was gonna get it.

AT THE COUNTER, he lays it all down. QUICKIE MART MANAGER stares at him with scrutiny.

QUICKIE MART POLICE OFFICER (O.S.)
You better have money for that.

Richard shrinks as QUICKIE MART POLICE OFFICER steps up beside him. Richard pulls out some money. He thinks he's safe, but then--

QUICKIE MART POLICE OFFICER (CONT'D)
Where you steal that from, huh boy?

RICHARD (V.O.)
Here's how this bronca coulda gone.

CUT TO FANTASY:

Richard like an upstanding 1950s boy, prim and proper.

YOUNG RICHARD
(pristine English accent)
Gee, Mister. I made that money on my newspaper route! No mischief here. Just a kid with a girl to impress!

Quickie Mart Manager and Quickie Mart Police Officer share a laugh.

QUICKIE MART POLICE OFFICER
Well, look at this fine upstanding young citizen. Get your girl, son!

He hands Richard a 100 dollar bill. Richard's beaming.

RICHARD (V.O.)
But I ain't white.

END FANTASY.

29 EXT. QUICKIE MART - DAY - FLASHBACK - 1966 29

The Police Officer shoves little ten-year-old Richard into the cop car. Slams the door. Richard, handcuffed, shrinks in the backseat.

RICHARD (V.O.)
So just like that, your boy was damaged goods.

The entire neighborhood looks on, shaking their heads.

EXT. VACHO'S HOUSE - RICHARD'S TRUCK - STATIONARY - NIGHT -30

CLOSE ON Young Lucky sleeping and his pathetic little shoe. Richard looks at it, deep in thought. Judy's drained. They're parked outside Vacho's house.

JUDY
We gotta go in at some point, baby.

RICHARD
Jude... not tonight.

Judy closes her eyes and takes a deep breath.

JUDY
They need to eat, Rich. Your mama has food--

RICHARD
We have food at home--

JUDY
No, we don't have food. We can't pay rent. We don't have work--

RICHARD
You think I don't know that?!

JUDY
Tortillas can't pay bills and our kid's got shoes that talk and we... we need help. So please, suck it up and let's go into Vacho's.

Richard looks down at Young Lucky again. Hurt, he buries his pride and turns off the engine, opens his door.

31 INT. VACHO'S HOUSE - KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - 1982 31

CLOSE ON a pot of piping hot spaghetti. Concha pulls the pot off the stove and walks it to the dining table where the family sits, including Vacho.

CONCHA	CONCHA [TRANSLATION]
(to Judy) Mija, no te puede conseguir tu hermana más turnos en la tienda?	(to Judy) Mija, can't your sister get you more shifts at the store?

She scoops spaghetti onto Vacho's plate. Vacho slathers the spaghetti with hot sauce. Other family members do too.

JUDY
She tried 'amá, but there's no more shifts.

Vacho, now older but still pachuco fabulous, pours himself a cup of agua de sandía.

VACHO
Sabes que? It ain't your job to provide for your family. It's this menso's job.
(to Richard)
What's wrong with you, huh? Letting your woman work so much? If you read the bible, tonto, you'd know the man has to provide.

RICHARD (V.O.)
You heard that right. God.
(beat)
Vacho got saved about five years ago. He replaced the gin & juice with some Jesús juice.

Vacho looks to Young Lucky.

VACHO
You gotta be this kid's example--

Richard stares Vacho down. Concha cuts in--

CONCHA	CONCHA [TRANSLATION]
Buscaste trabajo hoy, verdad mijo?	He looked for work today, didn't you mijo?

Judy looks up from her plate at Richard. They lock eyes. He gets up and heads to the fridge. Judy looks to Concha.

JUDY
Of course he looked for work. We both did. There's just no work out there.

VACHO
It's 'cause all they see is a poor, good-for-nothing gangster when they see you. If you gave your life to the Lord, then you'd see how fast the help would come.

RICHARD
That right? Well, last time I checked Jesus was poor, prieto, and powerless like me and he did some pretty gangster shit too--

Richard grabs a beer from the fridge and leans against the wall, annoyed. Vacho shoots him a look.

VACHO
You wanna be a good husband and father or not, huevón (lazy-ass)?

JUDY
Hey, he's both those things.

CONCHA
Mira mija--

Richard seethes. Concha pulls a candle out of the cupboard.

CONCHA (CONT'D)
Prendela y rezale. Vas a ver que funciona.

CONCHA [TRANSLATION]
Light this and say a prayer. It'll help.

JUDY
At this point, I will try anything.

VACHO
(sucks his teeth)
Mira, he needs more than a candle, mujer. God can't do all the work. What's he doing to change himself, huh?

She hands it to Judy who is seriously considering this now. Richard can't take this bullshit any longer.

RICHARD
Or how 'bout you all skip the stupid candle and have faith in me?

31 CONTINUED: (2) 31

JUDY
Baby--

Frustrated, Richard barrels through the front door, and slams it shut behind him.

32 EXT. VACHO'S HOUSE - NIGHT - 1982 32

Richard exits, sees across the street a crew of HOMIES are gathered. Drug deals are being made on the low.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Um, ya know that thing Judy don't like me talkin' 'bout?

They wave him over. He checks his surroundings, heads over.

33 EXT. GANGSTER HOUSE - NIGHT - 1982 33

Richard marches up to his old crew. A grip of guys huddled up. He hits up PABLITO and DIEGO (20s).

PABLITO
Orale, wassup homie. Big Dog! You finally back for business, ese?

RICHARD
Depends.

DIEGO
Oh shit, for reals? We got you, homie.

PABLITO
(to the guys)
Yo! This homie could sell water to a whale, dog. Best salesman on the block.

Pablito reveals a baggie of drugs. ANTONIO "TONY" ROMERO (30s) a behemoth of a vato, rises from the stoop.

TONY
(towering over Richard)
Nah. Richard's good.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Tony Romero. Known in the hood as the Pitbull.
(MORE)

RICHARD (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Even long after he left the gang this vato stayed loyal. Still hung on the block to "look after us", he'd say.

RICHARD
Listen Tony, I know what I'm doing--

TONY
Nah, you don't. 'Cause you got babies. You don't need to slang nothin'--

DIEGO
'Ey man, if he wants to deal let him deal.

PABLITO
Yeah man, we all don't got fancy factory jobs with benefits and stupid hair nets.

Richard eyes Tony.

RICHARD
You working at Frito-Lay?

TONY
Yeah, so what?

RICHARD
Hook me up with a job.

DIEGO
This fool!

RICHARD
What? They hired this Mexican Hulk Hogan looking pendejo. Why not me?

Tony gets right in Richard's face.

TONY
Call me that again, menso!

RICHARD
Which one? Hulk Hogan or Pendejo?

Tony shoves Richard. Richard shoves back, gets up on his tippy-toes to get in Tony's face..

TONY
You really wanna do this, punk? I'm gonna give you a putazo en la madre, fool.

Richard relaxes, looks to him, pleading.

33 CONTINUED: (2) 33

RICHARD
I need a job, man. Help me out.

TONY
Go get an application. Who's stopping you?

RICHARD
Put in a good word for me, man. Like you said, I got kids.

TONY
(beat)
Hmph. I'll see what I can do.

Richard perks up. There's hope.

34 INT. RICHARD'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - 1982 34

Richard, Judy, and Young Lucky get home. Young Lucky runs to the couch and picks up his second-hand superhero toys.

Richard sits beside him and watches Young Lucky play.

RICHARD
Hey, hey... come here.

Lucky crawls over and Richard pulls him into his arms. Judy watches from the kitchen as she unpacks food Concha gave her.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
You know you're a good kid, right?

YOUNG LUCKY
(shrugs)
Yeah, I know.

Richard holds his brown arm out; holds Young Lucky's against his.

RICHARD
Vez? (See?) We're the same. And if I'm good, you're good. No matter what anyone says. Understand?

Young Lucky is taken aback. Not sure what to say, he deflects.

YOUNG LUCKY
Can we watch TV, 'apá?

RICHARD
Sure, mijo...

They cozy up together. Judy pulls the candle from the bag.

RICHARD (V.O.)
There's a reason why poor people always talkin' 'bout God.

Judy places the candle on a mantel nearby that includes photos of the fam and Richard and Judy in their cholo days.

RICHARD (V.O.)
'Cause when you don't got nothin', the guy promising you everything starts to sound pretty good.

Judy strikes a match, turns on the candle, closes her eyes and says a silent prayer. OFF her hopeful face--

35 INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - LOBBY - DAY - 1982 35

Larger-than-life, the Frito Lay plant's sterile, gigantic walls feel like they could reach the sky.

Richard takes a deep breath, he spots a sign that reads "HUMAN RESOURCES". He heads in that direction.

36 INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - PERSONNEL OFFICE - DAY - 1982 36

Richard marches up to the counter and hands over his resume. A FRITO LAY PERSONNEL SECRETARY takes it, gives it a glance, and hands it right back.

She pulls out an application and a pen, hands it over.

FRITO LAY PERSONNEL SECRETARY
You have to fill out an application. And before you ask, no, we don't have it in Spanish.

Richard stares down at the application.

RICHARD
Okay, ma'am. Thank you.

His heart's pounding. He tries not to panic and has a seat.

SMASH TO ONE
HOUR LATER:

Richard sits there, still nervously staring at the application.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Ma'am, can I bring this back later?

Frito Lay Personnel Secretary clocks the sweat on his brow.

FRITO LAY PERSONNEL SECRETARY
Probably a good idea, hon.

Richard makes a bee-line for the door.

37 INT. RICHARD'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY - 1982 37

Judy hustles in through the kitchen excitedly. She drops a bag of groceries on the counter. Starts organizing dinner.

JUDY
Baby! Sofia got fired porque anda de sucia otra vez and guess who gets her shift at the store? This girl. Got us brand name corn flakes to celebrate, guapo--hey, what's up?

But Judy stops mid-step taking in Richard at the dining table. Sweating. Anxious. She tenses up, on the defense.

RICHARD
Jude... what does initiative mean?

JUDY
It means someone that takes charge without being told... why?

RICHARD
Do I look like a guy who's got initiative?

JUDY
You're a guy who loves his family. What's wrong? Tell me.

RICHARD
High school diploma.

Judy looks at the application, takes it, looks it over.

JUDY
You're applying to Frito Lay?

RICHARD
Yeah. But I gotta be a high school graduate. I can barely read the application, but they want me to show them my cap and gown.

JUDY
It's okay, baby, I'll help.

RICHARD
(laughs bitterly)
I need my wife to fill out my application. I'm an idiot--

JUDY
Stop it. Screw the diploma. Can you do the job?

RICHARD
I think so.

JUDY
Can you?!

RICHARD
Yeah, yes. I can.

JUDY
(picks up pen)
Okay then, guess what? You graduated from San Bernardino High School.
(scribbling)
Class of '71!

RICHARD
Yeah, with honors! Wassup!

JUDY
Okay, papi. Don't get crazy now.

RICHARD
(sucks his teeth)
They ain't gonna know!

Judy shakes her head and continues to write happily.

LONNY [PRELAP]
What the hell is this?!

38 INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - PERSONNEL OFFICE - DAY - 1982 38

Richard walks in to find LONNY (50s), a ball of stress and cheeto-dust covered dress shirts, kicking a WORKER out of his office.

LONNY
Come on, Jack! You gon' let the Bakersfield plant beat us out on this shipment? Figure it out!
(alt)
Come on, Jack! Asking for PTO when we're this slammed? This ain't Disneyland. Get out!
(alt)
Come on, Jack! Shipping's backed up and you're asking for PTO? The answer is no. Now get out!

Lonny stares Richard down.

LONNY (CONT'D)
You Montañez?

Richard's worried as he sits across from Lonny who reviews his application. Richard pulls down his sleeve cuffs to hide his tattoos.

LONNY (CONT'D)
You fill this out?

Shit. Richard nods.

LONNY (CONT'D)
You write like a girl.
(reads the application)
San Bernardino High. I went there.

RICHARD
You did?

LONNY
Honor student, huh?
(he eyes Richard)
Hey, you remember Principal Grimaldi? Tough. Annoying--

RICHARD
Heck yeah! I hated that guy.

LONNY
Principal Grimaldi's a woman.

Richard's heart drops. Shit.

RICHARD
Yes, a strapping, fine woman who felt like one of the guys.

38 CONTINUED: (2) 38

Lonny raises a brow. He doesn't have time for this. He shuffles papers. Richard is desperate.

RICHARD
Sir, I'm fast. I'm smart. I know I don't look it, but I promise I'll be the best worker you've ever hired. Maybe I don't got a diploma, but I work hard. I got-- I got a

P.H.D.

Off Lonny's skeptical look. Richard sits in his desperation.

RICHARD
I'm poor. I'm hungry. I'm determined, sir.

Lonny takes a beat to work out the acronym. The smallest glimmer of a smirk creeps onto his lips. He rolls his eyes.

LONNY
Well, that's stupid. Fine. Tony says you're a good guy and honestly, all the Mexicans here work pretty dang hard. It's a janitor gig. What's the worst you can do? Break a mop?
(beat)
Can you start next week?

Richard nods vigorously. He smiles as we float into--

39 INT. RICHARD'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY - 1982 39

Judy irons Richard's Frito Lay work shirt excitedly. She swoops it up onto his shoulders. Richard buttons it up in the mirror. The name tag reads MONTAÑEZ. Richard beams proudly.

Richard leans in and kisses her. He smiles wide.

RICHARD (V.O.)
For the first time in years this chavo had a legit grown-up job. Fools were jealous. Shoot, I was jealous of me. My luck was swinging up!

40 INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - MAIN FLOOR - DAY - 1982 40

Richard still with a smile plastered on his face takes in the factory; a Dorito-pumping futuristic city of machines.

LONNY
You clock in on time. You clock out on time. No excuses. This here's the main pit.

Fans whirl. Levers pump. Workers hustle in sync. Lonny points to the extruder.

LONNY (CONT'D)
Cornmeal goes in the extruder there. You're gonna wanna remember that 'cause that's the junk you're gonna clean out later, got it?

Richard nods, mesmerized by the machines.

LONNY (CONT'D)
Chips cool down in the tumbler. Lotsa grease. Scrub that too.
(points to the fryers)
Fryers need their oil changed every two days. Don't forget the exterior 'cause it'll drip like a son-of-a-gun, muck up the floor, and cause a lawsuit. I don't want no stinkin' lawsuits, got it? Montañez? Got it?

Richard snaps out of it, nods. They walk over to NACHO who is mopping floors.

LONNY (CONT'D)
You and Nacho'll have to cover the whole place. Nacho, this is Richard.

NACHO
Q'vole, amigo? Welcome.

Richard smiles wide. Shakes Nacho's hand.

LONNY
Alright, alright. Keep walking.

Richard follows Lonny to--

41 INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - PACKING ROOM - DAY - 1982 41

Lonny points to the PACKAGING DEPARTMENT where machines shovel chips into bags.

LONNY
Chips are sorted, weighed, and bagged here.

LONNY (CONT'D)
Make sure you get right up under the conveyer belts. Grease makes itself right at home there too.

He points to trash bins.

LONNY (CONT'D)
Empty these bins every hour. Don't get in anyone's way.

RICHARD
Yessir. Every bin, every hour. Best dumper you've ever met.

LONNY
Okay. I see you're gonna be weird.

Richard stays bright, arms akimbo. We launch into a MONTAGE:

INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - MAIN FLOOR - VARIOUS LOCATIONS - DAY42-

- Richard straps on a pair of goggles and meticulously scrubs out a giant, stinky chip fryer. He's fearless. Nacho takes his sweet time, but watches Richard, amused.

- Richard steps out onto the loading dock to help an older janitor dump his overly-stuffed trash can into the dumpster.

RICHARD (V.O.)
It was like Gotham City made of machines up in this mother. It. Was. Firmeeeeee.

- Richard looks up in awe at a giant sorting machine. It looks AMAZING. He scans and studies the machine.

RICHARD (V.O.)
This moreno was finally part of something. Something BIG.

- Richard mops floors in a waiting area where a magazine rack is filled with magazines. On one specific cover, TEAM PEPSI MAGAZINE, is a photo of ROGER ENRICO (40s). Beaming with a smirk, coiffed hair, and a tan that screams "I summer in the Bahamas!"

RICHARD (V.O.)
'Cause that güero right there was birthing the golden age of the food and beverage industry.
(beat)

RICHARD (V.O.)
Roger Enrico. The man. The myth. The Cola Wars legend.

The trumpets of A PACHUCO-HOP BEAT swell as we--

INSERT SERIES OF FOUND FOOTAGE AND PICTURES - (1970S-1980S)43

Enrico holds a Pepsi can proudly and gives camera an enthusiastic thumbs up.

INSERT ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE of 1975 middle-America. A YOUNG WOMAN with Farrah Faucet hair gulps down a can of cola.

RICHARD (V.O.)
The vato helped make the Pepsi Challenge blind taste tests a national marketing sensation...

She smiles brightly.

YOUNG WOMAN
This one! This one's delicious.

The Pepsi challenge proctor reveals it's Pepsi. OMG!

RICHARD (V.O.)
He created the Pepsi Generation, and eventually became PepsiCo's CEO. And the only person to almost single-handedly take down Coca-Cola in one hundred years.

INSERT ARCHIVAL NEWS FOOTAGE (1982) An earnest ANCHORMAN.

ANCHORMAN
In response to Pepsi's rising sales, Coca-Cola released New Coke. But American consumers say they'll wreak havoc if the recipe is not swiftly restored.

He throws to B-ROLL of protesting Coke lovers rushing the Coca-Cola headquarters with signs and angry fists in the air.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Pepsi was at the top of their game thanks to this G who had his pockets full of cash and caviar.

INSERT PHOTO of Enrico living his best life on a yacht surrounded by cases of Pepsi and plenty of caviar.

RICHARD (V.O.)
I didn't have caviar in my pockets, but man I felt like a G, too.

44 INT. RICHARD'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING - 1982 44

Young Lucky watches superhero cartoons while eating corn dogs for dinner.

A Cheetos commercial comes on with a bunch of very suburban white kids singing a song and loving their cheesy Cheetos.

Richard arrives. Young Lucky runs for the door.

YOUNG LUCKY
'Amaaá! Dad's home!

Richard scoops him up as Judy rushes out. He kisses her.

JUDY
How was it? Did they like you? I was praying all day--

YOUNG LUCKY
'Apaaá! They give you free Cheetos?

RICHARD
Mijo, white people don't give no free nothing. Plus, tenemos comida aquí en la casa (we got food here). What we got, baby?

JUDY
Quesadillas con frijoles!

Young Lucky hops out of Richard's arms, annoyed. Marches off.

YOUNG LUCKY
Ugh. We always eat the same thing. Tortillas and beans! Tortillas and cheese! Tortillas and beans!

Richard laughs, grabs Judy, and pulls her into his arms.

RICHARD
You proud of your man?

JUDY
Maybe. Start bringing home some free stuff and I'll think 'bout it.

He kisses her then notices a lit candle on the mantel.

RICHARD
Jude, you can't leave that candle burning twenty-four-seven. You gonna burn the house down?

Richard tries to blow out the candle. Judy smacks him.

JUDY
What you doing, necio?! You tryin'a get fired?!

Richard laughs.

45 INT. FRITO-LAY PLANT - MAIN FLOOR - DAY - 1982 45

Richard sweeps while Nacho cleans a nearby machine. Richard stares at the giant city of machines, whirling and twirling. He walks up to a fellow worker near the machines, WADE (50s, gruff and overworked).

RICHARD
So you telling me cornmeal mixes with water, goes through that machine and just poof, comes out shaped like a Cheeto?

Wade side-eyes him, annoyed. He grunts through a nod.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
(CONT'D)
You know how? Like, is it the heat plus the pressure?

WADE
Don't you got a mop to flirt with instead of me, Paco?

Richard's shocked, pissed really, but he swallows his pride a bit.

RICHARD (V.O.)
You know what they say, walk softly but carry a big stick. Well this mofo was right. I had me a big mop.

CUT TO FANTASY:

Richard starts to rail on Wade with his mop handle.

RICHARD (V.O.)
But it was my first week on the job and I had to mind my gangster.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Porque si no, I'd be the one getting the beating from Judy, and she's got at least two mops at home.

BACK TO REALITY: Richard takes a deep breath, holds back the gangster, and smiles through gritted teeth. Wade walks off.

A heavy-set assembly line worker, ALEJANDRO (30s), and CLARENCE (50s, a Black man, both sharp AND sharply dressed, buff) walk up to discuss the machines.

ALEJANDRO
Colettes look good to you, Baker?

RICHARD
(to Clarence)
Is that what you call the temp levels? Or a part of the machine?

Clarence mad-dogs Richard. Alejandro's annoyed.

ALEJANDRO
The doodles, bro. The Cheeto doodles are colettes.

RICHARD
Nice! Isn't it wild? Like all them gauges and gaskets can make a bunch of colettes? How many cases can get filled in a day, you think?

Clarence eyes Alejandro sternly and paces away with his clipboard. Alejandro ignores him. Richard is still not fazed. He starts counting Cheetos coming down the conveyer belt.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
12345678910--

LONNY
(walking by)
Who's got you counting, Montañez? Extruder machine's caked in nacho cheese dust. Clear it out, kid.

RICHARD
It's Montañez. Not "kid".

Lonny eyes him. Richard smiles smugly and sweeps his way over closer to Clarence.

AT THE CONVEYER BELT Richard wipes things down. He can't take his eyes off the machine. Clarence adjusts the gauges.

45 CONTINUED: (2) 45

RICHARD
You got a cool job, brother.

CLARENCE
(southern accent)
Yes, I do. Brother. I'm a self-made engineer.

From afar, Tony watches Richard chat up Clarence.

RICHARD
For real, man? You're hitting those levers like a superhero like--
(throws air punches)
Pow-pow-pow-pow.
(sticks out his hand)
I'm Richard. Richard Montañez.

Richard points to his name tag. Clarence takes his hand warily.

CLARENCE
Clarence. Clarence C. Baker.

RICHARD
Orale. Good to meet ya, hermano. What's the C stand for?

CLARENCE
(deadpan)
Charisma.

RICHARD
Oh...kay. I had a question. You think there might be like a-- what they called? A diorama or diagrama of the machine I can look at?

CLARENCE
Now why would you wanna learn about a machine that I run, boy?

A hand lands on Richard's shoulder. Tony comes just in time.

TONY
My bad, Clarence, homie. The janitor got a little lost. He was looking for the cafeteria

SMASH CUT TO:

46 INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - CAFETERIA - DAY - 1982 46

SLAM. Tony and Richard slam their trays down at a table where Nacho, Hector, Alejandro, and other brown men sit.

TONY
Fool, you can't just be talkin' to people like that. This here's like high school, menso. Union guys ain't trying to talk to no janitor.

RICHARD
Man! I never showed up to high school. What are you sayin'?

HECTOR
New guy's messing up already?

ALEJANDRO
Yep. Over here just talking to Clarence like he knows the guy.

TONY
This here's Hector and Alejandro.

They grunt their hellos.

RICHARD
Hey.

TONY
You met Nacho, right?

Nacho smiles another hello. He points to Richard's pudding.

NACHO	NACHO [TRANSLATION]
Te vas a comer eso?	Are you going to eat that?

Nacho reaches for Richard's pudding. Tony smacks his hand, shakes his head. He points around the factory to explain.

TONY
Great. Then here's what you need to know if you're gonna survive around here.
(points to a table)
The guys at that table, the plant managers?

We swoop through the mess hall to the Plant Managers table. It's filled with majority white men.

TONY (V.O.)
They got white picket fences, 401Ks...

FROM RICHARD'S BEWILDERED POV, A FANTASY SEQUENCE: The Plant Managers unpack their lovely homemade lunches. They're men out of Pleasantville, adjusting their ties in sync, cutting into their steaks with pristine knives and forks.

TONY (V.O.)
And they manage from the top--

CAMERA SWOOPS US TO--

47 INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - BOX OFFICE - DAY - 1982 47

These same Plant Managers are in a box office overlooking the factory floor, dressed to impress, holding clipboards and observing.

TONY (V.O.)
--From the comfort of their big shot box seats.

CAMERA SWOOPS down from the box office to the main floor where we find the Floor Managers.

TONY (V.O.)
Then you got the Floor Managers.

More white men, putting on their neon vests over their sloppy, stained shirts. They wear hard hats and hold clipboards. The main man in charge is Lonny.

TONY (V.O.)
Poor bastards are bitter they gotta answer to the guy above 'em who makes more money--

Lonny, stressed, puts down his clipboard, grabs a jelly donut and stress eats. It squirts on his shirt. He yells at some low-level workers in his way.

TONY (V.O.)
Y luego you got the machinists.

CAMERA WHIP PANS
BACK TO:

48 INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - CAFETERIA - DAY - 1982 48

The prideful Machinists sit at their lunch table.

TONY (V.O.)
Irreplaceable. They got everyone's respect. Clarence's the best of them all.

Clarence, the only Black man in a sea of white men.

TONY (V.O.)
Homie's been here longer than anybody.

WE LAND BACK at the table where Tony, Richard, Nacho, Hector, and a bunch of other low-level Brown and Black workers sit.

NACHO
Pobre güey, tan trabajador. (Poor bastard. So hardworking.)

Nacho piles salsa onto his bland cafeteria lunch sandwich.

RICHARD
Why is that bad?

TONY
'Cause the compa's been trying to get from his table to that table--
(points to Plant Managers)
--for fifteen years.

Clarence's meal's laid out perfectly before him. He unfolds his napkin and pulls out home cutlery. He buffs his knife.

HECTOR
Half of those cabrones at the top learned everything they know from Clarence.

ALEJANDRO
There's a reason he don't like questions 'bout his machines.

Richard takes this in. Tony throws out his arms around Hector and Alejandro.

TONY
And then there's us. The lowest of the low. Assembly line, packing--

HECTOR
Speak for yourself, man. We truck drivers are elite status--

Hector sucks his teeth and gets back to eating.

48 CONTINUED: (2) 48

TONY
Then there's you two scumscrapers.
(points to Richard and Nacho)
The janitors. Bottom of the barrel. Bottom rung on the ladder.

HECTOR
Gum on my shoe.

NACHO
Callate, cara de papa!

NACHO [TRANSLATION]
Shutup, potato-face!

TONY
Guys like you can't be talking to a guy like Clarence. 'Cause we don't break rank around here, entiendes (understand)?
(OFF Richard)
It's about respect and guys like you and me don't get shots like this. So don't blow it 'cause I ain't trying to go back to that life, are you?

Richard nods slowly, but he's not liking what he's hearing.

49 INT. VACHO'S HOUSE - KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM - DAY - 1982 49

Judy cooks with Concha, while Young Lucky and Baby Steven play in the kitchen. Richard fixes Concha's walkman.

RICHARD
And I get my own little office y todo, 'amá.

CONCHA
Que bueno, mijo.

CONCHA [TRANSLATION]
That's nice, mijo.

Vacho walks in.

VACHO
Como que office? You mean a closet? Where they stuff the cleaning supplies?

RICHARD
Man, it ain't no closet. Both Nacho and I share a desk in there. There's a phone and everything.

VACHO
It's a dead end, sangrón.

RICHARD
It's a job. I'm providing for my family.

VACHO
For how long, eh? Para de ser terco. (Stop being stubborn.) If you don't change your insides you're gonna keep making the same mistakes.

RICHARD
Like you, father of the year?

Pastor Marco enters.

PASTOR MARCO
Hola, buenas tardes a todos.

PASTOR MARCO [TRANSLATION]
Hi, good afternoon everyone.

RICHARD
Great. You live here now or what?

JUDY
Rich!

PASTOR MARCO
No mijo, nomas vine a hablar--

PASTOR MARCO [TRANSLATION]
No son, I just came to talk--

RICHARD
I'm not your son.

VACHO
He's just trying to help you be a better man.

RICHARD
Oh yeah, well God can't fix what you broke, Vacho.

CONCHA
Mijo, por favor...

CONCHA [TRANSLATION]
Mijo, please...

VACHO
(flustered)
God has forgiven me.

RICHARD
Glad someone forgave you 'cause I haven't.

JUDY
Baby, let's just go.

49 CONTINUED: (2) 49

PASTOR MARCO
Es cierto que la salvación viene cuando damos nuestras vidas al señor. Entrega tus pecados a Dios, mijo.

PASTOR MARCO [TRANSLATION]
It's true salvation comes when we give our lives to the Lord. Submit your sins to God, my son.

RICHARD
Hold up, I ain't got no sins.

Judy lets out a laugh. Richard's taken aback.

JUDY
What you mean you ain't got no sins?
(OFF Richard)
What about those cholos you jumped on fourth street? The drugs on Lincoln? And the stolen impala--

The Pastor's eyes widen.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Stop talking, woman!

The sound fades as Judy goes on and we stay on Richard's embarrassed face.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD (V.O.)
Okay, fine. I had some sins. But why I gotta make up for them my whole damn life? 'Cause I mean, there was a lot. Like a lot a lot.

He SLAMS his beer down on the table.

50 EXT. GUASTI TOWN - STREET - DAY - FLASHBACK - 1974 50

BACK TO the earlier scene of Teenage Richard running from the police car holding a stereo, sirens blazing.

He looks back over his shoulder. We FREEZE FRAME on him--

RICHARD (V.O.)
Now, before you start talkin' smack 'bout why Mexicans always gotta be gangsters, don't. 'Cause I didn't make this up. I lived it!
(beat)
When you gotta survive, you survive. And Judy? She was surviving too.

WE UNFREEZE - Judy, a full fledged badass 1970s chola, runs into frame beside him, holding a stack of records/LPs. They lock eyes. She takes his hand as they run toward camera.

RICHARD (V.O.)
We were real good at surviving. Together...

Cue Barrett Strong's "Money (That's What I Want!)" as we CUT

TO MONTAGE:

INT. RICHARD'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK - 197451

Tony, Pablito and Diego hang out at the kitchen table as Judy fills baggies with marijuana and hands them to Richard.

RICHARD (V.O.)
And listen, hood love stories aren't like other love stories.

52 EXT. STREET - DAY - FLASHBACK - 1974 52

Richard and Judy make out. They are utterly in love.

RICHARD (V.O.)
But it's still love...

53 EXT. STREET - DAY - FLASHBACK - 1974 53

Tony drives Richard and Judy around the hood to sell drugs. They pull over as Richard passes out drugs to a trio of neighborhood dudes milling about the street.

RICHARD (V.O.)
And hood love means marrying into the hood family. Like your family, pero like, except sometimes we got guns.

54 EXT. STREET - DAY - FLASHBACK - 1974 54

Surrounded by his HOMIES (Tony, Pablito, Diego, Judy, etc.), Richard stands tough as the leader of the pack.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Judy knew her King always had her back, like our family had each other's back. I showed anyone who messed with us what's what.

Another group of gangsters walk up to throw down. One guys shoves him. Richard shoves him back. Judy gets in between.

JUDY
Baby, don't worry about it. He ain't worth it.

The cholor's girlfriend, a CHOLA, grabs Judy by the hair.

JUDY (CONT'D)
What the-- oh hell no!

Judy lifts her fist and goes for the girl. They fall out of frame. All the guys start hooting and hollering.

RICHARD (V.O.)
(laughs)
Okay, fine. Don't y'all already know by now who the real gangster is?

TONY/PABLITO/DIEGO
Oh daaaaaamn! Get her, Judy!
(noticing the fight getting real)
Oh wait, oh damn, damn, damn!

They all run in to get her out of the bronca.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Better watch yourself if you ever cross Judy on these streets. She don't play.

Judy pops up from the scuffle, looks into frame in beast mode. Her chola eyebrows in full force.

RICHARD (V.O.)
(cracks up)
Oh man, don't tell Judy I showed you her chola brows and hair. She's gonna be maaaad.

INT. JUDY AND RICHARD'S PLACE - BATHROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK 5-5

Judy, mid-20s, holds up a test tube. A 1970s pregnancy test. She looks in a mirror, holds her belly. Her face changes.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Y sabes que? Ignorance is bliss, until one of you wakes up...

INT. JUDY AND RICHARD'S PLACE - LIVING ROOM - DAY - FLASHBA5C6K

- 1978

Judy clears the drugs off the coffee table with a SWISH and dumps them into a trash bin.

57 INT. RICHARD'S CAR - PARKED - DAY - FLASHBACK - 1978 57

Richard and Judy sit at a stoplight. A 6-month pregnant Judy stares out the window, unhappy.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Sabes que, I ain't gon' lie, it's easier to live up to people's expectations when they're low. Judy wanted more...

JUDY
You need to change, Rich. Now. For us. For the baby.

RICHARD
What you talkin' 'bout? Look at this new ride I got us!

JUDY
Exactly. Where'd this come from?

A POLICE SIREN envelops their surroundings. Richard freaks out, stuck in traffic with nowhere to go. Judy clocks this.

JUDY (CONT'D)
Richard, if I'm sitting in a stolen car, I swear--

RICHARD
(sheepish)
It's on a lay-away plan.

JUDY
Richard!

58 INT. COURTHOUSE - COURTROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK - 1978 58

RICHARD (V.O.)
Truth was I didn't know if I could give her more.

A GAVEL slams down. In court, Richard stands in his prison suit and cuffs, scared. The JUDGE eyes him closely.

INTERCUT WITH:

59 EXT. STREET - DAY - FLASHBACK- 1978 59

Judy and Richard sit on Richard's truck. He can't look her in the eye.

JUDY
You're not worthless, Richard. You hear me? Look at me.

60 INT. COURTHOUSE - COURTROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK - 1978 60

JUDGE
(tries to catch his eye)
Look at me, son. You're not stupid. You got a brain between those ears not just that dumb mustache.

61 EXT. STREET - DAY - FLASHBACK - 1978 61

JUDY
You're not your father. But you will be if you don't change.

62 INT. COURTHOUSE - COURTROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK - 1978 62

JUDGE
You're either going to end up in a cell or in the ground if you don't wake up, boy.

EXT. STREET - DAY - FLASHBACK - 1978

Judy holds her pregnant belly.

JUDY
We can't lose you, Rich.

63 INT. COURTHOUSE COURTROOM/EXT. STREET - DAY - FLASHBACK - 63

Richard is quiet, broken. Judy softens. She loves him.

JUDY
I believe in you, Richard.

LATINO JUDGE
I believe in you, son.

The judge slams down his gavel. BAM.

64 EXT. RICHARD'S HOUSE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK - 1978 64

Richard sits on his front porch, deep in thought, staring at the moon. Through the screen door, a pregnant Judy sleeps on the couch.

He looks up as Tony and the guys pull up in a truck.

TONY
Q'vo, let's go, menso! Got a big run tonight.

Richard contemplates, but looks back at Judy lying on the couch, her full belly, their baby, his future. The guys hoot and holler at him.

RICHARD (V.O.)
You see, life's about choices, sabes? Big ones.

He stands up and without a word or a wave, he goes inside to Judy. He's choosing a different life.

RICHARD (V.O.)
And it was time for me to choose something better.

65 INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - CAFETERIA - DAY - 1982 65

Richard sits across from Clarence at the Machinists' table. Clarence eyes him.

RICHARD (V.O.)
To be better I needed to learn from the best. And when it came to Clarence, I couldn't mess around. I needed to pull out the big guns. Los cuetes, baby.

Richard whips out a few burritos, sets them down. Tony shoots daggers at him from across the way.

RICHARD
You want carnitas o asada?

Richard sweats. Clarence picks one, unwraps it, takes a bite.

CLARENCE
Flank steak?

RICHARD
Asada?

Clarence continues to eye him and keeps on munching.

CLARENCE
Go on. What do you want?

RICHARD
(nervous)
Nothing. I just... wanted to say I really respect your work, sir. Respect that you're self-made. An engineer. I wanna learn from you. My dad ain't worth nothing, but he taught me a lot about fixing things as a kid, so I got a thing for machines. When I learn 'em, run 'em, fix 'em, they make me feel like-- like I ain't a nobody. Like maybe I'm a somebody.

Clarence takes this in. He softens. Just a tad.

CLARENCE
A somebody who gives his respect out to people he's barely met before they've even earned it?
(beat)
'Cause I'm not that kinda somebody.

RICHARD
Right...

RICHARD (V.O.)
Dang. If I was gonna learn anything here it was gonna be from this guy, but he was shut up tighter than a jar of chipotles.

Richard starts to walk away.

CLARENCE
You got any salsa or what?

Richard turns around excitedly digs through his bag for the salsa.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)
Car-knee-tus, huh? We talking a braised, slow-cooked pulled pork?

Richard smiles. He's got an in.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Clarence C. Baker was exactly who he said he was. A real man.

65 CONTINUED: (2) 65

CUE a BADASS SONG as we swoop into--

66 INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - MAIN FLOOR - DAY - 1982 66

A SERIES OF BEATS of Richard following Clarence like a puppy. Everywhere Richard goes, he carries a notebook to take notes.

RICHARD (V.O.)
He was born in Tuskegee, Alabama to sharecroppers, and get this, his middle name really was Charisma.

AT CLARENCE'S MACHINE - Richard wipes down the machine. Nacho sweeps nearby. He watches Richard talk to Clarence.

CLARENCE
Because when my mama saw me she said this boy's Charismatic! And darn, if she wasn't right.

Clarence strokes his chin proudly, then adjusts the valves.

RICHARD
Got your machine looking nice and shiny, Mr. Baker. What do you think?

Clarence reviews the work. Nacho shakes his head.

CLARENCE
Missed about a million spots.

Richard gives him a weak smile. He keeps scrubbing.

RICHARD (V.O.)
He'd been working at Frito Lay for more than fifteen years and knew the ins and outs of every job here.

CLARENCE (PRELAP)
There ain't no room here for you.

67 INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - CAFETERIA - DAY - 1982 67

Richard sits down across from Clarence anyway and whips out another dish, chile rellenos.

RICHARD
It's chile rellenos. My wife Judy made them!

Clarence eyes the chile rellenos.

CLARENCE
Spicy?

Richard nods vehemently. Clarence nods agreeably. He sticks his fork in one while Richard pulls out tortillas.

68 INT. FRITO-LAY PLANT - MAIN FLOOR - DAY - 1982 68

Richard mops past Clarence. Nacho empties trash cans. Richard whips out his notebook filled with notes.

RICHARD
Mr. Baker, sir, I was reviewing the extruder protocols and noticed the gauge was off. Should we adjust it maybe?

CLARENCE
There isn't anything off.
(checks the gauge; it's off)
Hmph. Musta been Alejandro touching my dang machine again.

Richard smiles innocently. Nacho watches on, surprised.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)
(grumbles)
Thanks.

He walks away. Richard mops away with a skip in his step.

69 INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - MAIN FLOOR - DAY - 1982 69

Richard dumps trash bins near Clarence's station.

RICHARD
Sir, some chips are coming out kinda overcooked. Should the heat be adjusted--

CLARENCE
Brown ones are separated. Tossed.

RICHARD
They trash 'em?! Daaang.
(nudges him and jokes)
Why people always trying to get rid of the brown ones. Messed up, huh brother?

Clarence takes pause. Wade walks by and knocks over a trash bin. The other guys with him laugh.

WADE
Stop wasting everyone's time, Paco. None of that's helping ya with your plunger career.
(alt)
Don't waste your time on Pepe, Baker. He's got plenty of trash to dig through.
(alt)
(MORE)

WADE (CONT'D)
Get your head out of Baker's behind and get back to wiping the floors, Brown-noser.

Richard furrows his brow, holding back his gangster.

CLARENCE
Watch yourself, Carson.

Wade snickers and walks away with the other guys. Richard quietly picks up the trash. Clarence takes this in.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)
Leave it. Come with me.

70 INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - MAIN FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER - DAY - 70

A CLOSE-UP of Clarence and Richard's feet.

CLARENCE
Now, stand right there.

Richard steps into the spot. We come in CLOSE ON Clarence and Richard's faces. Clarence eyes him.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)
And listen.

Richard listens. Clarence stands beside him also listening as they look out on this giant city of machines.

The factory sounds co-mingle in Clarence's ear like a symphony.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)
Gasket's loose on station seven.

Richard scrunches his brow... how the hell did he know that?

CLARENCE (CONT'D)
That's all I gotta do is listen. I can tell you which machine, belt, drum, valve, or motor is off. All by closing my mouth and listening.

Whoa. Richard tries to listen again.

RICHARD
I can't hear it.

CLARENCE
You will. Once I'm done with ya.

Richard has no words. He looks out on the factory and takes it in. Clarence looks out on the factory too, then--

CLARENCE (CONT'D)
You ain't a nobody... got it, boy?

He nods. Clarence pats him on the back.

MONTAGE:

INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - MAIN FLOOR - PUNCH CARD TIME CLOCK -71

DAY - 1982

Richard clocks into his shift floating on cloud nine. A lovely melody a la Ella Fitzgerald underscores his joy.

72 INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - SEASONING TUMBLER - DAY - 1982 72

Clarence teaches Richard how to adjust the temperature valve. Richard nods vigorously as he takes his turn, fascinated.

73 INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - MAIN FLOOR - DAY - 1982 73

Clarence stands with Richard at the BAGGING MACHINE where a WORKER instructs him on the speed controls. Richard steps in.

INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - MAIN FLOOR - PUNCH CARD TIME CLOCK -74

DAY - 1982

Richard clocks out. A bounce in his step. But Clarence calls him over for a new lesson. Richard heads over without clocking back in.

75 INT. RICHARD'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY - 1982 75

Judy cooks in the kitchen. Richard rushes in to grab a banana.

JUDY
Babe, where you going? Your shift doesn't start 'til later.

RICHARD
Clarence said if I get there early he would teach me about the tumbler.

He kisses her and runs out.

JUDY
(yelling after him)
The what?!

But Richard's out the door.

MONTAGE CONTINUES:

76 INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - MAIN FLOOR - DAY - 1982 76

LIGHTBULB FLASH as we come in on Richard holding an Employee of the Month placard while shaking an executive's hand. AL CAREY (40s, tall, focused and righteous) smiles for the camera.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Mira, I was stunting on everybody. Even stuffy execs couldn't ignore this pachuco swag.

AL CAREY
Al Carey, nice to meet you. Good work, son. Well-deserved.

Al Carey turns to Lonny, matter of fact.

AL CAREY (CONT'D)
Can we continue the tour now?

He walks off clearly ignoring Richard, but Richard follows closely behind trying to get his attention. He pulls out his notebook. It's filled with ideas.

RICHARD
Sir, I got some ideas for how to get more bags outta the machine!

AL CAREY
Bags out of the machine? Do you mean ideas for increasing efficiency?

RICHARD
Yeah, exactly. Those ideas!

Lonny stares Richard down. Al Carey considers this.

AL CAREY
Sure, sure. Keep up now. What's your name again?

RICHARD
Richard Montañez, sir--

The two walk off with the rest of the group, Richard pumped about his new ideas.

77 INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - MAIN FLOOR - DAY - 1982 77

Richard runs up to Clarence going on break.

RICHARD
You going on break, brother? I got you! I'll watch your machine.

Clarence raises a brow.

CLARENCE
Didn't you just clock out?

RICHARD
Yeah, but--

CLARENCE
Let me give ya a little piece of advice, Montañez. Never sell your soul for a steak dinner, boy. 'Cause no matter how hard ya work, in the end, they're still going to pay YOU the same.

OFF Richard--

78 OMITTED 78

79 INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - MAIN FLOOR - DAY - 1982 79

A MOP hits the floor. We pull out to find Richard mopping the

floors quietly. The factory, though full of workers, is eerily silent. The only sound is the whirring of machines.

RICHARD (V.O.)
When you've been poor as a church mouse your whole life you learn to wait for the other shoe to drop.

We stay on him mopping the floor as the workers that fill the factory behind him begin to disappear, dwindling down with every year that passes.

RICHARD (V.O.)
The years passed and lay-offs and shift-cuts got more popular than koosh balls and parachute pants 'round here.

INSERT CHRYON OVER RICHARD MOPPING: 1983, 1984, 1985.. then suddenly rapidly ticking up to 1992.

INT. FRITO LAY HEADQUARTERS - ROGER ENRICO'S OFFICE - DAY - 803

YEARS LATER - 1992

ON SCREEN TITLE - CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS, PLANO TEXAS.

RICHARD (V.O.)
You see, Roger Enrico had become CEO of PepsiCo, Frito-Lay's papi and he didn't mess around. The snack wars were getting serious. Competition was thick and market share was shrinking. So his first order of business? Cut the fat. Cut shifts, shut down factories, and find the money to keep this ship moving.

Roger Enrico, JAMES FINLEY (40s, a pompous rotund man who eats humiliation for breakfast), Al Carey, and other execs sit around Enrico's office. Papers and folders are shuffled around.

RICHARD (V.O.)
The corporate suite at Frito Lay felt like gangsters throwing down in a drug den-- 'Cause let's be real, that's pretty much what C-Suiters are. Gangsters with money.

Richard's voice in the key of Pachuco comes through Enrico's mouth as if it's Enrico speaking.

ROGER ENRICO [RICHARD'S VOICE]
You pendejos are out here telling me little punks like Nabisco and Eagle Snacks are getting more feria than us?

JAMES [RICHARD'S VOICE]
Man, big homie, we still got the good stuff. Cheetos. Fritos. Doritos. People still dishing out their lana for the classics, bro--

AL CAREY[RICHARD'S VOICE]
For how long? Cause we ain't got the time, Lil' Puppet.

James gives Al the death stare. The tension's thick as James and Al circle each other, pace back and forth, trying to hold in their inner gangsters.

RICHARD (V.O.)
What? You need a cholo translator? I got you. Basically, they were running outta time to keep factories open and jobs moving.
(beat)
It was a battle we were all losing. 'Cause one minute I'm Employee of the Month, and the next--

81 INT. GUASTI SOCIAL SERVICES CENTER - DAY - 1992 81

Judy and Richard with Lucky and Steven sit across from a heartless SOCIAL WORKER who shuffles paperwork and jots down notes.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Here I was again.

SOCIAL WORKER
Yes, you qualify for SNAP.
(gestures to kids)
With dependents you can siphon off more than enough food stamps.

She eyes them with judgment. Judy is enraged and goes off on the Social Worker.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Breaking Judy's heart.

82 INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - MAIN FLOOR - DAY - 1992 82

Richard watches on as Lonny addresses WORKERS.

LONNY
(points to Bakersfield)
Frito Lay isn't getting enough orders to keep both our factory and the Bakersfield factory open. And I gotta be brutally honest-- 'cause more of you will be camping out in that welfare line come next week if I'm not brutal--losing bulk orders to Bakersfield is now LETHAL. If we can't outrun 'em then we're the ones who get shut down. Understand? It's us or them.

The Workers in the room look at each other, disturbed.

END MONTAGE

INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - MAIN FLOOR - PUNCH CARD TIME CLOCK -83

DAY - 1992

Richard clocks out. Heads towards shipping. He slaps hands with Hector and helps him lift boxes onto a shipping truck.

HECTOR
You sure you don't want to go home?

RICHARD
Nope.

HECTOR
Man, you're crazy. I don't work for free-ninety-nine.

RICHARD
Yeah, well when anyone in this factory needs a shift covered, who they gonna call?

HECTOR
(smirks)
Ghostbusters?

RICHARD
You got jokes. Nah. The vato loco who knows how to do everything.

84 INT. BOYLE HEIGHTS MARKET - DAY - 1992 84

Richard and Hector restock the snack shelves.

HECTOR
All you gotta know, "vato loco", is rotation's the key. Out with the old, in with the new.

Richard looks at all of the old product on the shelf.

RICHARD
But... it's all old.

HECTOR
Yeah, well, brown neighborhood, white flavors. Do the math, bro.

RICHARD
Ranch plus Barbecue equals God bless America? Just need that hot dog flavor and we good, homie.

They laugh as a rogue White Woman squeezes between them.

BOOP. She grabs the Ranch-flavored Doritos. Richard and Hector exchange a look and smirk.

85 EXT. FRITO LAY PLANT - PARKING LOT - NIGHT - 1992 85

Richard, Clarence, Tony, Nacho shoot the shit over beers. Sloshed and broken, Richard buries his insecurities in beer.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Anywhere I'd seen trucks pulling in, anywhere I could get a shift, I'd go. I'd apply. But nothing.

MOMENTS LATER Drunk, Richard says his goodbyes to the guys.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Going home felt like a ritual in self-torture.

86 INT. RICHARD'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT - 1992 86

In the dark of the night, Richard stumbles to the bed. Judy wakes, looks over at him, angry and completely defeated.

JUDY
It's late, baby.

He unbuttons his work shirt. Angle on his name tag: Montañez. The patch is now drab and faded, exhausted like Richard.

RICHARD
I had a double-shift.

JUDY
No, you didn't. They cut your shifts. They keep cutting them and you keep showing up and giving them your time, your energy, your life, all for free.

Frustrated, Richard tears off his shirt.

JUDY (CONT'D)
RICHARD

Go ahead, keep going. Tell me what a loser I am.

JUDY (CONT'D)
That's not what I'm saying. When did I say that? Rich, we can't survive on part-time.

RICHARD
I got a future there. I just have to hold out.

JUDY
Hold out? Until when? Every day they're threatening to cut your hours. The water is about to be cut off. We have no gas money. We're months behind on the mortgage. What's it going to take for you to put us first?

RICHARD
I do put you all first. I'm putting you first. I'm thinking about the future.

JUDY
What future, Richard? We need to survive!

Richard looks at her, hurt.

86 CONTINUED: (2) 86

RICHARD
I can't start all over again, Jude. I got more in me than mopping floors and shining pulpits. I thought you believed that too.

JUDY
Of course, I do...

She reaches for him gently but he tears away and leaves.

87 INT. RICHARD'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT - 1992 87

Richard pours himself a bowl of cereal at the kitchen table. As he does, something catches his attention.

Judy's lit candles. One of them is out. He tries to ignore it, but something about it bugs him.

MOMENTS LATER, he's there, staring down at the candle. Deeply considering lighting it. He fidgets with the matches.

Finally, he strikes a match and lights the candle.

LUCKY (O.S.)
'Apá...?

Richard jumps. He finds a sleepy THIRTEEN-YEAR-OLD LUCKY staring at him.

LUCKY (CONT'D)
Can't sleep.

Richard relaxes. He walks over to the cupboards, pulls another bowl out, and tells Lucky to sit. He quietly pours him a bowl of cereal. They sit there, munching in silence.

Richard notices a scratch on Lucky's forehead.

RICHARD
What happened?

Lucky shrugs. It's late, so Richard lets it go. Lucky eats. Richard stares at the lit candle.

RICHARD (V.O.)
I had nothing left to give. So I tried Judy's way. I tried a little bit of faith.

INT. FRITO LAY HEADQUARTERS - ROGER ENRICO'S OFFICE - DAY -88

We land on Roger Enrico looking epic, sitting before CAMERAS and LIGHTS to record a video. Carey and Finley argue as they walk a script over to Enrico.

AL CAREY
No. It's our regional managers who need the words to turn this ship around--

Carey hands the script to Enrico.

JAMES FINLEY
And our stock holders are chopped liver? They need answers. This video should give it to them--

ROGER ENRICO
I don't need stockholders, regional managers, or scripts.
(tosses script)
We're going to speak from the heart today. To the people who matter.

OFF Enrico looking straight into camera.

ALEJANDRO (PRELAP)
It don't matter!

89 INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - CAFETERIA - DAY - 1992 89

Richard and Nacho clean tables as Tony and Hector make fun of Alejandro.

HECTOR
It matters! You ate both our lunches, fool. No mames.

ALEJANDRO
I didn't eat your stupid sandwich.

TONY
He didn't eat your nasty sandwich with that fu-fu Dijon mustard. That junk's basura. Why you always tryna' be fancy?

NACHO
Andale! Comete una salsa brava como un Mexicano verdadero!

NACHO [TRANSLATION]
Come on! Eat some hot sauce like a real Mexican!

Nacho hands him a taco with salsa. Hector shoves it away and throws his napkin at Tony. They start a small food fight.

RICHARD
Hey man! You think I'm y'alls maid?

TONY/HECTOR/ALEJANDRO

YEEEEEP!

They throw food and balled-up napkins at him. Richard shakes his head. Lonny wheels in a TV and VCR.

HECTOR
That's my cue to get back on the road. Later, bro.

The guys all say wave goodbyes and leave as Lonny pops in a VHS tape. Lonny tosses the sleeve aside.

RICHARD
'Ey, what's that?

LONNY
Corporate nonsense. They make me play this crap all the time. Watch it, ignore it, I don't care just make sure to get the ketchup stains off this linoleum.

He walks away.

ON THE TV SCREEN, video of Enrico plays, friendly and sincere. Camera slowly pulls out on the TV as he speaks.

ROGER ENRICO
Hello. I'm Roger Enrico, Chairman of Frito Lay. I'm sure you're wondering why I'm here, speaking directly to you. Our workforce.

The video plays and from Richard's POV, we push in on the television as workers stand and clear their trays.

ROGER ENRICO (CONT'D)
Well you, my friend, are the heart and soul of this company. The force of light that keeps the machines running and the product moving.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Huh. Turns out Enrico sounded more like Mr. Rogers than American Me.

89 CONTINUED: (2) 89

It might as well be God speaking to Richard. He's entranced.

ROGER ENRICO
The world, the economy, the factory is going through a hard time. I know you've felt it like we all have and I am truly sorry. But with every challenge comes opportunity. This is your opportunity to rise to the occasion, Richard.

Richard looks around. Is Enrico talking to him?

ROGER ENRICO (CONT'D)
Yep. You with the mop. You see anyone else listening?

Richard takes in the room. He's definitely the only one listening.

RICHARD
Me? Sir, I'm just the janitor.

ROGER ENRICO
And? Show the world what a janitor can do, Richard. Every person can be the difference between failure and success. I want you to think like a CEO.

We PUSH IN on Richard in slo-mo as workers clear frame.

RICHARD
Think like a CEO...

OFF Richard's determined eyes, we SMASH CUT TO:

90 EXT. RANCHO CUCAMONGA BUS STOP - DAY - 1992 90

Richard paces excitedly at the school bus stop, deep in thought about Enrico and scribbling ideas in his weathered notebook.

The bus arrives. SEVEN-YEAR-OLD STEVEN rushes to Richard who scoops him up and swings him around. They wait for Lucky.

STEVEN
Hi, papi!

Richard suddenly spots Lucky whose face is slightly beat up. He rushes over to him.

RICHARD
What in the-- what happened? Who did this? Tell me right now.

LUCKY
Let's just go home.

RICHARD
Not before I beat these lil' punks up--

LUCKY
Let's go home!

STEVEN
Can we get some elote (corn) first?

LUCKY
No! Why we always gotta do stupid Mexican stuff?

Richard's appalled, looks to Steven.

STEVEN
Don't look at me. I love elote. I love beans. I love rice. Tamales--
(matter of fact)
Maybe it's 'cause the kids call him a beaner 'cause he's a Mexican--

LUCKY
(shoves Steven)
Man, shut up!

RICHARD
Hey! Hey! Stop it.

Lucky covers his eyes with his arms, hiding tears. Emotional but trying hard to be a "man".

RICHARD (CONT'D)
That true? Some little shitheads been picking on you?

Lucky covers his sobs. Richard's eyes grow red as he holds back his own tears. He bends down to talk to Lucky.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Mijo, there's a lot we can be embarrassed 'bout, but being Mexican-- nah, mijo. That ain't one of 'em.

90 CONTINUED: (2) 90

LUCKY
You're embarrassed.

Richard's shocked.

RICHARD
No, I'm not. You know why they don't want you to be Mexican?

Lucky shakes his head, wiping away tears. He doesn't know.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Because they know it's a superpower. They know if you really were proud of who you are they couldn't stop you. They couldn't make you feel like you're less than them. Because you're not, mijo.

Lucky starts to calm. He's taking this in. So is Richard. He's feeling this in his bones as if he's talking to himself.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
They know that superpower could knock them out. Like you're Superman. They think it's your kryptonite, but they don't know it's the thing that makes you fly.

(ALT.)
They know that superpower could knock them out. They think it's what'll keep you down, but they don't know it's the thing that makes you unstoppable.

LUCKY
I ain't four no more, dad.
(beat)
Plus, nobody shits on Superman the way they shit on us.

Richard is gutted. He stares at his boy, deep in thought.

RICHARD
Come on. We're getting some elote.
Right now.

91 EXT. PARK - MOMENTS LATER - DAY - 1992 91

Richard and his boys sit on a picnic table near the elotero chowing down on their elotes, enjoying it. Delicious as hell.

STEVEN
OW! OW! OW!

RICHARD
What is it?

STEVEN
It burns!

Lucky, still serious, can't help but laugh a little.

RICHARD
Pues, stop eating it, dummy.

STEVEN
No, I like it! It burns good!

Steven happily digs in even harder.

The mood quiets until something dawns on Richard. He holds up the elote. He stares at it until it's surrounded by the same dreamlike wisps we saw around Young Judy long ago. Magic.

Richard looks to the elotero dreamily brushing each ear of roasted corn with copious amounts of chile powder. He follows it as he hands one to a child.

Richard looks over to another nearby street vendor, the FRUTERO. He covers a bowl of fruit with chile tajín. The flakes raining down on the fruit in SLO-MO like morsels of heaven.

Richard's gaze lands on yet another nearby STREET VENDOR who sells chicharrones. He pours Valentina hot sauce on them. A spicy waterfall of sauce showers the chicharrones in SLO-MO.

We WHIP-PAN back to Richard who looks down at the elote in his own hand. Holy shit. Richard smiles. The idea's right in front of him--

92 INT. RICHARD'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT - 1992 92

Richard and the boys rush in with determination. He blows past Judy who's cooking. Richard clears the kitchen table.

RICHARD
Enrico sent me a video, honey!
(plants a kiss on her)
Your candle was out. But I fixed it and then Enrico sent me a video.

Richard clears out plates and condiments. Judy grasps for them, trying to stop the chaos in her confusion.

JUDY
My candle sent you a video? Oh my god, Lucky! Papa, what happened?!

Judy rushes to Lucky. Richard protects Lucky's fragile ego while spreading out his notebooks and bags of the elote, fruit with chile, and the chicharrones.

RICHARD
He's alright, Jude. He's not four anymore. Plus, we talked 'bout it. We're working on our superpowers, right mijo?

Lucky fidgets with a notebook, shrugs.

LUCKY
I guess.

STEVEN
Mami, we're gonna make chile chips and save everybody's jobs.

RICHARD
I just need time. You. And a recipe.

Judy's face turns white. She can't take this.

JUDY
And while you do that, how do we pay the rent? How do we buy food? HOW do we survive, mi amor?

The boys are quiet.

JUDY (CONT'D)
(whispers)
Baby, I can't do this anymore.

RICHARD
Hey, hey, hey... three...

JUDY
Two...

RICHARD / KIDS
One...

Judy can't help but smile a bit.

RICHARD JUDY
Breathe.
CONTINUED: (2)
They both take a very deep breath. Baby, Vacho said he found a job for

BREATHE. JUDY

you. A job that's full time. Why can't you just talk to him about it, please? Do that for me, and maybe--

(looks at the samples on the table)

I'll do this for you.

Richard thinks on this seriously.

RICHARD
Yeah, okay.

Judy's relived, but Richard's wheels are turning.

93 INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - MAIN FLOOR - DAY - 1992 93

Richard marches side by side with Clarence, holding his notebook, energized.

RICHARD
You know as well as I do our production lines aren't operating at full capacity. We got machines that could be working seven days a week, but they're not. They've got potential. We gotta innovate, 'member? We can cover every Dorito, Frito, and Cheeto with this and get more orders. More orders means more shifts--

CLARENCE
And Frito Lay's just gonna make 'em 'cause the janitor said so?

Richard's face falls. Low blow.

RICHARD
Roger Enrico said--

CLARENCE
Roger Enrico was talking to guys at the top. You ain't at the top, kid. I ain't at the top. Those guys over there are.

Clarence points to the Plant Managers. Richard is determined.

RICHARD
Well, sometimes you gotta show people what the burrito's worth.

CLARENCE
What does that mean, boy?

RICHARD
It may look like it's worthless. But if people just took a bite, they'd see! Someone took a chance on you, didn't they? You got on that machine somehow. And if they took a chance on you again you'd run this whole damn place.

CLARENCE
(jaw clenched)
'Course I would.

RICHARD
Because you believe it. I believe in this. I know it sounds crazy, but man... I believe in it.
(beat)
What else is there to do, huh? Lose our jobs and go hungry?

OFF Clarence's sober look--

94 INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - MAIN FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER - DAY - 94

Richard and Clarence unroll a huge plastic trash bag. They scoop un-dusted Cheeto puffs into it when Tony steps in.

Tony looks at them, baffled. Richard smirks unabashedly...

RICHARD
Sooo, I have an idea, carnal--

OFF Tony's face we JUMP CUT TO SECONDS LATER:

Tony and Nacho now helping Richard and Clarence determinedly scoop undusted Doritos into the trash bags.

RICHARD (V.O.)
We had it all to gain and nothin' to lose. 'Cause we were just a bunch of brown chips on the conveyer belt waiting to be tossed.

95 EXT. FRITO LAY PLANT - PARKING LOT - NIGHT - 1992 95

The men put the last of the bags into the cab of Richard's truck. Clarence says his goodbyes.

Tony tosses in a bag of undusted Fritos, turns to Richard.

TONY
Almost forgot them Fritos.
(eyes Richard)
Hey, don't get your hopes up too high, 'kay fool?

Richard nods but his attention lands on a nearby car. In the front seats are Pablito, Diego and a few other of the barrio cholos.

RICHARD
You kickin' it with them again?

The silence reveals everything. He's dealing drugs again.

TONY
You take care of your family, bro. I'm going to take care of mine.

He walks away. Richard looks after him, thinking on his words "take care of your family".

VACHO (PRELAP)
It's a full-time job, mijo.

96 EXT. VACHO'S HOUSE - BACK YARD - DAY - 1992 96

Richard leans back in a lawn chair. He takes a heavy swig of his beer. Judy sits beside him, encouragingly.

JUDY
That's good. Full time's good, baby!

Concha walks out with some snacks. She places them at the table where Richard, Judy, Vacho, and Pastor Marco all sit.

VACHO
And in a year you could move up, like Pastor Marco said. Right, Pastor?

PASTOR MARCO
Exacto. Y es posible que pague mas.

PASTOR MARCO [TRANSLATION]
Exactly. And it might pay even more.

CONCHA
Ves, mijo? En un año serás jefe de mantenimiento.

CONCHA [TRANSLATION]
See, mijo? In a year, you could be the head of maintenance.

Richard does not look pleased.

RICHARD
So I would go from being a janitor to being a janitor? And hopefully, si me pongo las pilas and I'm lucky, I'll be the janitor-in-chief? President of the janitors?

Judy's face falls. Richard delicately places his beer on the table.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Nah, you know what? I think I'll stick to Frito Lay. Where I got a real future. Better the devil you know than the devil you don't know, right Vacho?

He gives Vacho a wink. Vacho wants to strangle him.

VACHO
Sí pero your devil's taking your shifts and trying to fire you. Don't be stupid. They don't care about you or believe in you.

RICHARD
And you do? All that ever comes out of your mouth is what an idiot I am.
(MORE)

RICHARD (CONT'D)
That I ain't worth shit and can't do nothing right, but I'm supposed to trust you when you say God believes in me?

VACHO
Well, he does--

RICHARD
Oh okay, is that according to the Book of Vacho?

VACHO
Hey, show me some respect!

RICHARD
Show you some respect?
(to Pasto Marco)
RICHARD (CONT'D)
Hey Pastor, you know he beat the shit out of me my whole life? But that didn't bother me 'cause I got thick skin and a hard skull.
(swigs his beer; laughs)
What really sucks, 'apá, is I got your voice in my head beating up my brain every day, and for some reason, that's the beating I can't get up from. Congratulations! You won at keeping me down.

VACHO
(genuine)
Mijo... I'm trying to help you. It's so bad even your wife's looking for help behind your back. She's lost faith in you--

JUDY
Hey, hey! Don't you speak for me. And you sure as hell don't speak for God.
(to Richard)
I never said I didn't have faith.

Richard is hurt. Judy takes his hand in hers.

JUDY (CONT'D)
I know what Richard is and I know what he isn't. Not educated. Sure.

RICHARD
Okay amor, where's this going?

JUDY
But he's the smartest person I know. He's already been blessed. He just has to figure out what to do with it.
(to Vacho)
You wanna save someone? Save yourself. And then come to him when you're the father he needs.
(looks at Richard)
'Come on, let's go put my voice in your head. 'Cause I believe in you.

Richard's whole heart is full, looking at his Judy. Vacho doesn't know what to say.

JUDY (CONT'D)
(CONT'D)
(to Richard)
Come on.

96 CONTINUED: (3) 96

Richard punks Vacho like "that's right" as he and Judy leave.

97 EXT. VACHO'S HOUSE - DAY - 1992 97

Moments later, walking to Richard's truck, Richard's all smiles looking at his wife and kids.

Lucky and Steven pile into the truck. Judy stops at the door, smiles, and looks at him point blank.

JUDY
If we're going to make those güeritos sweat, we gotta find the good stuff. Let's go.

Richard laughs. They climb into the truck as Black Sheep's "The Choice Is Yours" bumps a dope '90s beat as we go to--

98 INT. MEXICO LINDO MARKET - DAY - 1992 98

Judy, Richard, and the kids rush through the Mexican market full of stalls with Mexican knickknacks and delicacies.

Judy and Richard run up to a stall full of Mexican spices and chiles. They tear packets of dried chiles off the shelves.

99 INT. RICHARD'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY - 1992 99

CLOSE-ON a sack being dumped onto a table. Out fly the dozens of little packets of chiles. They get to work.

On the table, a spread of undusted Doritos, Fritos, Cheetos. Judy toasts chiles and tomatoes on a comal. She wipes sweat from her brow. Lucky and Steven cough as the chile spice fills the air.

Richard strips the chiles of their skins. Lucky's eyes tear up like crazy from chopping garlic and onions.

CUT TO: Judy sets down a first batch of slurry, chile mixed with cheese powder. They all dip undusted Doritos, Fritos, and Cheetos in. Steven takes a big bite. They watch him...

STEVEN
Hot, hot, hot, hot, hot!!!

RICHARD
Hot like elote hot? Like good?

STEVEN
No! Bad, bad, bad, bad, bad--

Steven chugs milk. Richard takes a bite. He shrugs. The chile sudden hits him.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Chále, man. That slurry woulda made the devil sweat.

He chugs Steven's milk. Judy gathers up the slurry reject.

RICHARD (V.O.)
While we were trying to remember everything our abuelitas taught us about chile, the midwest had already been spicing things up for a while.

A99 INT. FRITO-LAY MIDWEST LAB - DAY - 1991 A99

A group of mostly white SCIENTISTS in white lab coats surround a batch of their own spicy slurry.

The Scientists dig in. But it's spicy! They anxiously blow their tongues.

SCIENTISTS
Hot, hot, hot. / Too hot! Too hot!

One SCIENTIST rushes back to the test tubes and chemical ingredients on the table. She mixes new ingredients.

B99 INT. RICHARD'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - ANOTHER DAY B99

Judy flings ingredients into a bowl with ninja-like precision, swooping in and out with the master chef skill.

RICHARD (V.O.)
I don't know what was going down over there. All I knew was me and Judy had that spice in our DNA, na-mean?

JUDY
Cilantro, Comino, ajo...

RICHARD
(to the boys)
Two teaspoons cilantro, one teaspoon of cumin, garlic--

Lucky writes the ingredients Richard's notebook.

C99 INT. FRITO-LAY MIDWEST LAB - DAY - 1991 C99

CLOSE-ON the Scientist mixing chemical ingredients.

SCIENTIST
Maltodextrin, Monosodium glutamate, Disodium Inosinate.

He holds up vials and eyes them closely.

100 OMITTED 100

101 INT. RICHARD'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAYS LATER - DAY - 1992 101

Judy's on the phone rushing back and forth so much the phone cord's wrapped up around her. She's speaking to Concha.

JUDY
Sí, señora. Sí, ya use cebolla. Chile de pasilla? Uh-huh, uh-huh--

Richard and Lucky work on a SUPER amateur makeshift slurry machine to coat the different chips (Doritos, Fritos, Cheetos, etc.). A plastic bag filled with air and a stick.

LUCKY
It's not sticking, 'apá.

Richard looks at his dilapidated slurry machine. Thinks hard.

RICHARD
Porque this slurry machine is trash. We need something better.

OFF their faces.

102 INT. RICHARD'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - ANOTHER DAY - 1992 102

We PULL BACK to reveal a bingo machine being used as a slurry machine. Richard beams proudly as the boys spray the chips. Judy comes over with another bowl of spices and kisses Richard.

103 OMITTED 103

104 OMITTED 104

105 INT. RICHARD'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT - 1992 105

All eyes are on Richard swirling the latest batch.

RICHARD (V.O.)
We tried every chile in every store in town, until finally--

He pulls a few colettes out and hands one to Steven and Lucky.

STEVEN
Ow, ow, ow, ow! It burns!

Lucky takes a bite. He fans his mouth with his hand.

RICHARD/JUDY
Burns bad or burns good?

LUCKY/STEVEN
(smiling wide)
Burns good!!!

RICHARD (V.O.)
We did it.

They all dip Cheetos as we cut from these two cuties to--

106 INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - MAIN FLOOR - DAY - 1992 106

Richard arrives to find the floor in complete chaos.

Workers are gathered around all yelling at Lonny who tries to answer questions. Richard pushes his way toward Clarence.

RICHARD
What happened?!

CLARENCE
Lay offs. Lots of 'em, kid.

RICHARD
(searching; frantic)
Where's Tony? Where's Nacho?

Clarence, gives Richard a knowing look. They've been laid off. Richard's heart drops. Lonny disperses the crowd.

LONNY
Now, that's it. That's all I got for you all. Back to work now.

As Lonny marches away Richard pushes through the crowd. He rushes up to Lonny's side. They walk along hurriedly.

RICHARD
Lonny! Lonny, you gotta listen to me. I got an idea you wanna hear. An idea you'll want Enrico to hear--

Lonny stops in his tracks. Richard bumps into him. Lonny slowly turns on his heel. He stares at Richard in disbelief.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
It's a new line of products. It's gonna change everything. It's...
(off Lonny's stoned face)
You see, it's spicy chips. Spicy Doritos, Fritos, Cheetos, everything!

Lonny's silent, stewing. Richard is self-conscious.

LONNY
Spicy Cheetos. You're stopping me after I just laid off another slew of hardworking guys. Some of 'em your friends to tell me you have an idea for spicy Cheetos?

RICHARD
I just--

LONNY
No wait, let me get this straight, you want me to ring up Roger Enrico and tell him how my janitor, the guy who cleans our toilets, has a bright idea.

RICHARD
Lonny, you know I got more in me than a fucking toilet.

Lonny clenches his jaw, out for blood.

LONNY
New products get developed over years, cost millions to launch, and don't get created by blue-collar hoodlums who probably can't even spell the word "hoodlum".

Lonny walks away. Richard is crushed...

106 CONTINUED: (2) 106

RICHARD (V.O.)
When I was seven these white ladies would come to our school to tutor us in reading.

107 INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - LONNY'S OFFICE - NIGHT - 1992 107

Richard stares at Lonny's empty office, mop in hand. He's got a look in his eyes of pure determination.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Except, there were two trailers. One for white kids and one for everybody else. The Brown kids.

He looks around and pulls out his giant set of janitorial keys. He quickly unlocks and opens the door.

RICHARD (V.O.)
The kids that came out of the white trailer always came out with cookies.

INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - LONNY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT10-8

Richard mops the floors, checking his surroundings. He digs into Lonny's desk drawer searching for the company directory.

RICHARD (V.O.)
I was a Brown kid and I really wanted one of those cookies. One day...

He finds it and searches through the book determinedly and finds the number for FRITO LAY CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS, TEXAS.

RICHARD (V.O.)
I got in the line. The white kids spit at me. Shoved me. And I didn't care. I went into that trailer.

Richard takes a breath.

CUT TO:

109 INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - JANITOR'S OFFICE - DAY - 1992 109

MOMENTS LATER, Richard reaches for his phone. He quickly dials the number. The line rings, and rings, and rings...

RICHARD (V.O.)
And when I came out, I came out with my dang cookies.

Enrico's secretary, Patti, answers.

PATTI [FILTERED]
Office of President Roger Enrico.

RICHARD
Hello. Yes... I'd like to speak to Mr. Roger Enrico, please. This is Richard Montañez.

INTERCUT WITH:

110 INT. FRITO LAY HEADQUARTERS - FRONT DESK - DAY - 1992 110

Roger Enrico's all-business-looking secretary is at her desk.

PATTI
Montañez? What country are you calling from, Mr. Montañez?

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD
The United States.

PATTI
Well, you're not the President of American Corporate 'cause that's not his name--

RICHARD
I work in California--

PATTI
Oh! You're the VP of California.

RICHARD
No. I work in the Rancho Cucamonga plant.

PATTI
Okay, so you're the Plant Director?

RICHARD
No, I work inside-inside the plant... I'm the maintenance technician.
(he waits)
Hello...?

PATTI
(beat)
The janitor? You're the janitor?

RICHARD
Please don't hang up. I have an idea that's going to revolutionize Frito Lay. That will save our factory. Save jobs. Save hardworking people who are trying to survive. If he cares about his people, his people on the line, Mr. Enrico needs to hear this.

Silence. Richard is sweating bullets. Then--

PATTI
Please hold.

Richard's heart races, hoping Lonny doesn't walk in. Finally--

ENRICO [FILTERED]
Hello, Richard, this is Roger.

INTERCUT RICHARD

ON THE PHONE
WITH:

INT. FRITO LAY HEADQUARTERS - ROGER ENRICO'S OFFICE - DAY 1-11

Roger Enrico sits in his office.

RICHARD
Mr. Enrico, thank you for taking my call. I-- I have an idea to share with you...

ENRICO
I'm listening...

RICHARD
Sir, I'm Mexican. Proud of it too. There's a lot of us in this country and we spend money on snacks just like you guys do. We eat Doritos, but not before covering those suckers in Tapatio. The more it burns, the more we'll spend on it. So I thought, screw it, why not make my own spicy slurry, sir?

ENRICO
(beat)
A spicy slurry?

RICHARD
Oh. Okay, sir. So I did! You can slather it on everything-- Doritos, Fritos, popcorn, Cheetos. And the best part, sir? This thing is one-hundred percent Mexican-approved. And I got a plan, Mr. Enrico, to get it to the streets, to my people. I think it'll save our factory. Save our jobs.

ENRICO
Save jobs, huh? That's a lot of confidence there, Richard.

RICHARD
Yessir. You said in the video to think like a CEO, so I did.

Enrico hugs the receiver close to his face, slowly smiles.

ROGER ENRICO
You saw my video?

RICHARD
Yes, sir.

ROGER ENRICO
And you're the janitor?

RICHARD
Maintenance crew, sir. Yes. And sir, if it's okay with you, I'd like to send you some samples.

ROGER ENRICO
Richard, that's more than okay with me. More than okay.

Richard can't believe his ears. In shock, he smiles wide.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Chaaaaaaaooooooooo!!!

112 INT. POST OFFICE - DAY - 1992 112

POST OFFICE CLERK
Next!

ANGLE ON a box full of spicy products being closed, taped up, and stamped on the counter. It's addressed to Enrico.

POST OFFICE CLERK (CONT'D)
First class? Priority?

Reveal Richard and Judy standing there, nervous. The clerk's about to take the box when Richard slams his hand down on it.

RICHARD
Wait a second, please...
(to Judy)
We should say a prayer.

JUDY
(stunned)
We should?

RICHARD
Yeah. God did this, right? Well, we should let God bring it home.

Judy smiles. He places his hands on the box, closes his eyes.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Dear God, Jesus, señor... I mean, you know who you are. Listen man, we both know I've made some mistakes in my life, like you know, the gangs, the guns, the drugs--

The Clerk's eyes grow wide. Judy smiles at him sweetly.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
But I'm a good man now, Lord. Maybe I wasn't never bad, just lost. But I'm doing good things now, so...

The POST OFFICE CUSTOMER behind them gets impatient and interrupts:

POST OFFICE CUSTOMER
The heck, man! Let's move it!--

JUDY
Hey! He's praying, pendejo! Have some respect.
(to Richard)
Keep going, baby...

RICHARD
Lord... please, forgive my past sins and pour all your blessings right here, on this box. Amen.

He lets the box go. Judy smiles wide.

112 CONTINUED: (2) 112

We PAN to the box on the conveyer belt making its way to--

INT. FRITO LAY HEADQUARTERS - ROGER ENRICO'S OFFICE - DAY 1-13

The box of Richard's samples slams down onto Enrico's desk. Enrico pulls out bag after bag of spicy products. He pulls out the bag of Hot Cheetos and admires it.

RICHARD (V.O.)
That Italian jefe (boss) was about to have his mind blown!

He opens it, pulls out a Cheeto, and takes a bite. His eyes grow wide.

ROGER ENRICO
Holy-- hot. Hot, hot, hot.

He settles and then digs in for another with a grin.

114 INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - JANITOR'S ROOM - DAY - 1992 114

Richard gathers cleaning supplies when the phone rings. He looks at it curiously, then picks it up.

RICHARD
Hello, maintenance.

ROGER ENRICO [FILTERED]
Richard. It's Roger. Roger Enrico.

The color leaves Richard's face. He's frozen.

ROGER ENRICO [FILTERED] (CONT'D)
Richard?

RICHARD
Yes, sir.

INTERCUT WITH:

115 INT. FRITO LAY HEADQUARTERS - ROGER ENRICO'S OFFICE - 115

SIMULTANEOUS - DAY - 1992

We're close on Enrico holding the phone to his ear. His fingertips are fire-red. Yes, he hit those Cheetos hard.

ENRICO
Richard, I can't stop thinking about your initiative.

ENRICO (CONT'D)
I'm coming to Rancho Cucamonga for a plant tour. What do you say you meet me there and tell me more about your ideas? In about two weeks. Is that okay with you?

RICHARD
Yes, sir. More than okay.

Richard can barely contain his excitement.

RICHARD (V.O.)
It was finally happening!

(CONTINUED)

INT. FRITO LAY HEADQUARTERS - JAMES FINLEY'S OFFICE - DAY 1-16

IN A FLURRY OF PHONE CALLS, the PRESIDENT of Frito Lay America calls the Head of Marketing, James Finely--

JAMES FINLEY
Who the heck is Richard Montañez?!

INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - OPERATIONS VP'S OFFICE - DAY - 1992117

The FRITO LAY VP OF OPERATIONS calls the FRITO LAY PLANT DIRECTOR.

FRITO LAY VP OF OPERATIONS
And who let him call Roger freaking Enrico?!

INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - PLANT DIRECTOR'S OFFICE - DAY - 1991218

The Frito Lay Plant Director calls the Plant Manager. Yep, he's talking to Lonny.

FRITO LAY PLANT DIRECTOR
What do you mean you don't know the guy? He works in your plant. Find out!

119 INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - LONNY'S OFFICE - DAY - 1992 119

We're CLOSE ON Lonny's angry, red face.

LONNY
MONTAÑEEEEEZ!!!

RICHARD (V.O.)
Turns out I messed up. I broke rank and went straight to the top and wasn't nobody happy with this chavalo talking to the top dog.

when we CUT TO--

120 INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - MAIN FLOOR - DAY - 1992 120

Lonny rails on Richard as workers gather to watch.

RICHARD
It ain't even like that--

LONNY
You're gonna paint. You're going to fix all the machines. You're going to clean every particle of dust until every code violation in here is gone. Good luck with that--

RICHARD
Enrico's coming to hear about my product--

LONNY
And when they're done listening and it's all nonsense to them? Then what? They'll remember that they don't need you. That they need to stop hemorrhaging money. And they'll start by shutting us down!

The other workers all stare, terrified and confused.

LONNY (CONT'D)
You better pray for a miracle. Because when this is done, one way or another you won't have a job.

Lonny walks away. Richard stands there, emotions swirling.

121 OMITTED 121

122 INT. RICHARD'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - 1992 122

Richard sits on the couch drinking a beer, still in uniform. Judy comes out, half-asleep.

JUDY
Baby, what are you doing up so late? Come to bed...

RICHARD
I really thought I could do this...
(laughs bitterly)
Que menso, man. I gotta find a way to stop Enrico from coming...

JUDY
Stop him?

She stares at him, frustrated. She yanks him to his feet.

RICHARD
Baby, chill--

Judy pulls Richard towards a standing mirror.

JUDY
You see that guy right there?

RICHARD
(shy, deflecting)
Who? That guapo (cutie)
right
there? Yeah, I see him.

JUDY
You see a good man? A special man?

Richard stares. He doesn't. Judy's fiercely passionate.

JUDY (CONT'D)
Because, honey, that's what I see.
I see a chingón! A Montañez.
(Richard takes this in)
You want the truth? They're scared.
Scared of what you can do for them.
Scared they've been begging for
help and got a broke Mexican kid
from Guasti as their hero. They
don't know what to do with that.
(beat)
Do you know what I've been praying
for all these years?

Richard listens earnestly, holds back emotion. He doesn't.

JUDY (CONT'D)
That you would see the gifts and
talents you have.
(feels it in her soul)
Use your gifts, baby. BE GREAT. 122

JUDY (CONT'D)
Don't let these sin-vergüenzas stop
you. Enrico's coming to hear you
speak.

RICHARD
But I don't even know how to do a
sales presentation.

JUDY
Well, you're gonna find out.

RICHARD (V.O.)
You wanna survive this crazy world?
Get yourself a Judy.

OFF Judy's determined face.

123 INT. LIBRARY - DAY - 1992 123

RICHARD (V.O.)
She took me to Biz church those next few weeks.

Judy pulls books off the shelves and stacks them in Richard's arms. The pile rises as Richard tries to balance them.

124 INT. RICHARD'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY - 1992 124

Judy slams down a stack of sales books on the table.

TIME JUMP to Judy sitting across from Richard. She reads from one of the books.

JUDY
Present a solution to their challenges.

Richard reads from another book.

RICHARD
(struggling to read)
C-connect prospects to p-profits.

Judy nods adamantly.

JUDY [PRELAP]
Tell a story! Be animated!

125 OMITTED 125

126 INT. RICHARD'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY - 1992 126

Markers and construction paper roll onto the kitchen table.

RICHARD
Like Bugs Bunny?

Lucky and Steven help piece together presentation boards.

JUDY
No! Excited. Big.

Judy gesticulates wildly as an example. Richard mimics her, reading from a book of facts.

RICHARD
Over one-third of the U.S. Hispanic population resides in California.
(looks closer at the book)
That's what I've been saying!

JUDY
You have! You have been saying that, baby!
(beat)
Okay alright. Keep going. Keep going!

RICHARD
The Hispanic market will listen to--

127 INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - JANITOR'S ROOM - DAY - 1992 127

Richard paces before Clarence, gesticulating wildly.

RICHARD
--someone with whom they can identify, relate to, and respect!

CLARENCE
(holding Richard's speech)
Like you?

Richard turns red, insecure.

RICHARD
Um, yeah.

CLARENCE
Then act like you believe it. Say it with your chest, boy.

RICHARD
(gesticulating too wildly)
Someone with whom they can identify with and respect!

Clarence shakes his head. Too much. He tosses Richard his speech, walks away.

128 INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - JANITOR'S ROOM - NIGHT - 1992 128

Richard, under the soft light of his desk lamp and surrounded by cleaning supplies, pours over his marketing book. He studies intensely late at night in the quiet factory.

129 INT. SALVATION ARMY - DAY - 1992 129

Richard, in a cheap suit, stands staring at his reflection in the mirror. Judy approaches with a stack of cheap ties.

JUDY
Found Versace for three dollars!
(looks at tag closely)
Oh. Wait. Hmmm, it's Vermachee.

She looks up at him staring in the mirror.

JUDY (CONT'D)
Uy-uy, miralo! Que guapo!

She kisses him, gets to work tying the tie.

RICHARD
(looks at her lovingly)
You're the best person I know.

Judy looks up at him, smiles gently, feeling his love.

JUDY
(flushed)
Who me? I'm just a poor cholita
that got smart about God.

RICHARD
Pretty sure God got smart about
you. Jude, I'm here because of you.
You know that. There's no Richard
Montañez without Judy. Thank you
for believing in me, mi reina.

She smiles through her feelings.

JUDY
Yeah, well...

She faces him to the mirror. They turn their heads sideways. The tie is horribly tied.

JUDY (CONT'D)
Your reina don't know jack 'bout
tying a tie.

They laugh. She grabs his blazer lapels, sheepishly.

JUDY (CONT'D)
I know someone who does...

Richard stares at her until it dawns on him who she means.

RICHARD
Naaah. No way--

JUDY
I know he's a lot, baby. Pero, he's been calling every day. Don't think he's gonna go away.
(she kisses him)
He does love you...

Richard looks at her skeptically, but considers this.

130 INT. RICHARD'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY - 1992 130

Vacho stands uncomfortably close to Richard. Richard leans back as far as possible as Vacho ties his three-dollar tie.

RICHARD (V.O.)
When you've had as many court dates as Vacho, you master tying a tie.

Vacho is stiff, but also nervous.

VACHO
Mijo, I know I don't have a right to be...

Richard stiffens up. He starts to pull away--

VACHO (CONT'D)
(CONT'D)
No. Listen, please.

Richard doesn't move. He won't admit it, but he needs this.

VACHO (CONT'D)
But I'm proud of you.
(beat)
And I'm gonna always regret I'm not the man who made you the man you are today. Always.

Richard's heart sinks. This is Vacho's form of apology. Vacho finishes the tie, squeezes Richard's shoulder, looks him in the eye.

VACHO (CONT'D)
Chingatelos, mijo. Remind them what a Montañez can do.

Richard breathes deep.

131 EXT. FRITO LAY PLANT - FRONT PARKING LOT - DAY - 1992 131

Black stretch limos with tinted windows pull into the factory parking lot. Roger Enrico and his team get out of the limos.

132 EXT. FRITO LAY PLANT - PARKING LOT - DAY - 1992 132

Richard parks his old, beat up truck. He's sweating bullets. Richard holds his head in his hands, whispers frantically.

RICHARD
There are now more Latinos in the U.S. than there are--

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK. Richard jumps. He looks. It's Clarence.

CLARENCE
Come on out, Montañez. It's time.

Richard freezes, but then gathers his courage.

RICHARD (V.O.)
I'd never done nothing like this before. Felt like my heart was a bomb about to go BOOM.

133 INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - MAIN FLOOR - DAY - 1992 133

Lonny is crouched down at a machine, pointing at the machinery gracefully. He looks up with a huge grin.

LONNY
And as you can see, Mr. Enrico, sir, we quality check every twenty minutes--

ROGER ENRICO
Right. Okay.

We REVERSE to Roger Enrico, James Finley, Al Carey, and his posse. A crowd of factory workers gathered behind them.

ROGER ENRICO (CONT'D)
Uh-huh, thank you for the tour, Mr. Mason. Now, where's Richard? My time's limited so I'd like to speak to him.

LONNY
Sure. Right.

CUT TO FANTASY:

RICHARD (O.S.)
I'm here.

Roger Enrico turns around. The sea of workers (some annoyed, some worried) slowly part. At the very back stands Richard.

ROGER ENRICO
The infamous Richard Montañez.

Richard's nervous as Mr. Enrico walks towards him. As they come face to face with each other, Enrico smiles big and wide for the first time. He holds out his hand.

ROGER ENRICO (CONT'D)
What an honor to meet you, Richard. Are you ready?

Richard smiles. He nods vigorously.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Alright, Judy says stop acting like I was Prince walking out on stage at the Forum. Fine. Guess it was a little more like this--

FLASH TO REALITY:

Richard pushes his way through the crowd of loud workers trying to reach Enrico.

133 CONTINUED: (2) 133

RICHARD
Sir, sir. I'm right here!

He finally squeezes through. He smiles wide at Enrico who has no idea who he is.

ROGER ENRICO
(smiles)
It's so nice to meet you. Are you ready, Richard?

134 INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - PRESENTATION ROOM - DAY - 1992 134

DEAD SILENCE as Richard fucks with a squeaky transparency projector. His transparency sheets flipped the wrong way.

ENRICO
Anytime you're ready.

Enrico sits looking up at Richard, a room full of suits surround him. Some factory managers and directors stand in the back, including Lonny. Clarence and Hector have snuck in to watch.

RICHARD
Gentlemen, Mr. Enrico--

RICHARD (V.O.)
I know some fools say he wasn't there--

CUT TO: Enrico suddenly disappears. BOOP. Richard gets more nervous.

RICHARD (V.O.)
But on my life he was there. Because there was no one I wanted to impress more than Roger Enrico.

Enrico suddenly reappears. He smiles. Richard takes a deep breath, holding his notecards.

ENRICO
Any time you're ready, Richard.

RICHARD
(voice trembling)
Thank you, Gentlemen... The growing number of Latinos in America represents a vast untapped market for Frito Lay. Did you know that there are more Latinos in the United States than Australians?

Richard got it wrong, and they're all buzzing.

JAMES
Of course there are--

RICHARD
I mean there are more Latinos in the United States than there are Australians in Australia...

They nod, satisfied. They're waiting for him to continue.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
And I'm pretty sure there's more Mexicans in this room than there are in Australia.

They laugh. Enrico laughs the loudest. Richard lowers his notes, something tells him to just speak from the heart.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Listen. Gentlemen. No offense but our shelves are boring. People, my people, are tired of the same old flavors. I grew up with a lot of flavor. And I've been searching for that taste in everything I buy ever since. I want food that tastes like home.

Enrico, Carey, and other execs grin. Richard holds up a tray of products. Doritos, Fritos, Popcorn, etc.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
(CONT'D)
This is it. Everything we grew up with. In a bag. Chile Chips.
(he lets it sink in)
And if you got this out there, you'd find the market no one has been paying attention to. Us. La gente. We've got money. And if you noticed us, cared about us, we'd pack your pockets with that money.

JAMES
What about market share? How much would your "product" yield, according to you?

Richard freezes. Time seems to slow down as we JUMP straight to a single bead of sweat rolling down his forehead.

134 CONTINUED: (2) 134

RICHARD (V.O.)
What the EFF is "market share"? That wasn't in the books. Or maybe it was. There were a lot of books.

ENRICO
Richard...?

RICHARD
(stammering)
Yes, sir. Market share is really important too.

Richard shuts his eyes tight.

135 INT. BOYLE HEIGHTS MARKET - DAY - FLASHBACK - 1992 135

Richard is at the market with Hector. They're stocking shelves. He looks down the shelf that feels like it goes as far as the eye can see. Filled with all brands of chips.

136 INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - PRESENTATION ROOM - DAY - 1992 136

Richard flings open his arms as wide as they'll stretch, as wide as the shelves in the market. He blurts out--

RICHARD
This much! This much market share.

DEAD. SILENCE. James smirks. People snicker. Richard snaps.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
You know what? I don't know what market share is because I don't sit up in no corporate office wearing s suit. I'm down here. Con mi gente. And here's what I know about them. If they love something, they'll do anything to buy it. Nintendo? Cabbage Patch doll? They'll sell tamales in a lot to get it.
(beat)
But more than anything, sir, they're looking for themselves on those shelves. They're looking for their homecooked meals. They wanna know that the food they eat at home is valued by you. That we matter.
(beat)
I want to know I matter when I pick up our products. To you, to this company, to this world.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
So put this chile slurry on Doritos, Fritos, popcorn, hell anything. At the end of the day, it's about how we make them feel.
(beat)
If we knew there was a company out there putting us at the center of their product's story, we'd say "Take all our money, cabrónes!"

Some of the execs are thrown, some impressed, others smile.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Um... sorry. I got a little hood there at the end, but--

Enrico stands confidently.

ENRICO
Gentlemen, did you know we could get this much more market share?

Enrico holds his arms out wide. Richard looks around.

ENRICO (CONT'D)
Thank you, Richard. You've given us a lot to think about here.

The meeting breaks. Clarence and the guys pull him aside and congratulate him, while James pulls Enrico aside.

JAMES FINLEY
Sir, R&D already has a similar product in the Midwest and it's testing just fine--

ROGER ENRICO
Just fine? I aim to do better than "just fine", James.
(beat)
Have McCormick's send it here. I have a good feeling about this man. He may not know about market trends, but he knows about people, and that's where I always put my money. Let's see what he can do with it.

James scowls. Enrico and Al Carey smile.

INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - MAIN FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER - DAY - 137

Richard walks out of the conference room with the execs. Lonny and all of the workers have been holding their breath.

Enrico steps forward. He clasps his hands together.

ROGER ENRICO
We're putting you to work, gentlemen. We're going to need 5,000 cases, starting with Cheetos. If it works, we'll expand it.
(turns to Richard)
Richard, let's go make some heroes.

Richard smiles and it's as if the entire work force can breathe for the first time in weeks. RICHARD. HAS. DONE IT.

Clarence and a few other workers slap Richard on the back. They're here for this big win.

138 EXT. RICHARD'S HOUSE - DAY - 1992 138

Judy rushes out of the house as Richard hops out of his truck. She jumps into his arms as he spins her around.

Lucky and Steven follow. They all hug tightly.

RICHARD (V.O.)
The next few weeks were a blur.

139 INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - LOADING DOCK - DAY - 1992 139

BOOM. A fifty pound bag of McCormick spices land on the loading deck. Workers hustle to unload the bags from trucks.

140 INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - MAIN FLOOR - ANOTHER DAY - 1992 140

Hundreds of bright RED FLAMIN' HOT CHEETOS come down a conveyer belt. Richard walks by the line, his heart full. He takes a cheeto off the line, takes a bite.

RICHARD
(to himself)
Alright, well. It's not as good as Judy's, but guess it'll do.

Workers give him a thumbs up. Richard can't believe it.

The Cheetos are being bagged, boxed, and prepared for shipping. Clarence walks up to Richard and hands him a bag.

CLARENCE
First one off the line. Go on. Take it.

Richard holds up the bag and takes in his creation. HE DID THAT. And it taste like victory.

141 OMITTED 141

142 INT. BOYLE HEIGHTS MARKET - DAY - 1992 142

Richard and Hector are back at this market stocking shelves. Richard places a line of Hot Cheetos on a shelf. He smiles, fully satisfied with himself.

143 INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - LONNY'S OFFICE - DAY - 1992 143

TITLE: 3 MONTHS LATER

Richard paces, completely frazzled. Lonny sits nearby. On speaker phone is James Finley.

RICHARD
But they haven't been out on the market long enough!

WE INTERCUT WITH James Finley in his office.

INT. FRITO LAY HEADQUARTERS - JAMES FINLEY'S OFFICE - DAY 1-44

James holds the phone to his ear.

JAMES
Mr. Montañez, I believe I'm the expert at knowing if a product has had its fair share out on the market. Product's not moving. Simple as that.

Richard could scream. Lonny holds a hand up. He'll take this.

LONNY
Now, Mr. Finley, sir. Can I ask ya how many cases have moved?

JAMES
I don't have that information in front of me, but we can't continue to invest in Richard's strategies at this rate.

RICHARD
What strategy? You haven't even let me do anything. Are you even targeting all the Hispanic cities? We're everywhere, from Montebello to Pacoima--

JAMES
Of course, Mr. Montañez. And no one in your market is responding to it.

LONNY
Mr. Finley, sir, can ya just give us another week? That's all we're asking for.

JAMES
(beat)
Fine. One week. But then we'll be taking it from there.

CLICK. He hangs up on Richard. Richard is silent. Lonny has no words. They sit in the shock of this.

EXT. FRITO LAY PLANT - PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER - DAY -145

Richard rushes out of the factory. Clarence close behind him.

CLARENCE
What is it? What happened?

RICHARD
The product's not moving. They're killing it. They're gonna shut us down. These fools at headquarters are executives with degrees, man. And what am I? Nobody. Pretending like I could do anything was stupid.

CLARENCE
You find out the product's not moving and decide you're an idiot who can't do nothing? Suck it up and figure out the next step.

RICHARD
Man, what next step? You know there ain't no next step for people like us. If there were, you woulda had Lonny's job a long time ago.

CLARENCE
You ain't wrong. But I didn't let that stop me from being the best damn worker here, did I? And this place didn't stop you from having the balls to pick up the phone and call Roger Enrico.
(MORE)

CLARENCE (CONT'D)
To convince him to invest in you, the guy who scrubs the floors.

RICHARD
Yes, and I embarrassed myself--

CLARENCE
Boy, embarrassment's never stopped you before. Ask questions. You wore me down with them. The person I met ten years ago wouldn't blink. He'd find a way, any way to get it done.

Richard quiets.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)
Richard, I don't wanna look you up twenty years from now just to find out you're still at the bottom.

Clarence walks away. OFF Richard--

146 EXT. RICHARD'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT - 1992 146

Richard sits at the table, searching through a pile of scraps of paper, all of his strategies over the past few months.

JUDY
Can't you just call Enrico?

RICHARD
Calling Enrico's what got me in this mess to begin with, baby. Clarence's right. I have to figure this out.

Suddenly the electricity cuts out. Silence. Darkness.

CLOSE ON A MATCH sparking to life in the dark. Judy lights the candle holding space between her and Richard. The light flickers on Richard's sad face and Judy's hopeful eyes.

JUDY
Last Sunday, Pastor Marco said God always provides. He said look at the birds. They have a home. Food. Water. They have everything they need because God always provides.

Richard looks at Judy. He's trying to be kind, but--

RICHARD
We ain't birds, chula.

Judy reaches a hand to his cheek. She shrugs and smiles.

JUDY
We're love birds.

Richard chuckles. Shakes his head sweetly. Okay, okay...

STEVEN (O.S.)
'Apá?

Richard sits up straight, puts on a fake smile for his boys. Steven and Lucky are standing there.

LUCKY
He's scared.

Richard pulls him into his arms.

RICHARD
Hey, mijo, the power went out, but don't worry 'cause your Pop's got it--

LUCKY
'Apá, I know why they're not selling. The cheetos. They didn't tell anyone they exist. There were no commercials. There's always commercials. For everything. Cookie Crisp. Sega. But none for Hot Cheetos.

STEVEN
I didn't see none.

Richard and Judy exchange a look. Steven runs to his toy box and pulls out a tin piggy bank. He runs over with it.

146 CONTINUED: (2) 146

STEVEN
Let's buy a commercial, 'apá.

Judy's emotional. Richard looks to her.

RICHARD (V.O.)
This little mocoso was giving me his lunch money, his can-recycling money. Everything.

Richard looks at his son with renewed energy.

RICHARD
You're a genius. You know that, mijo?

OFF Lucky's smile.

147 EXT. GANGSTER HOUSE - DAY - 1992 147

Richard marches up to the old crew, Tony, Pablo, and Diego among them. Tony is helping his elderly MOTHER into her car. Pablo and Diego carry her bags.

RICHARD
I'm getting your job back, big dog. But I'm gonna need your help.

TONY
Little busy here, bro.

Diego steps in to help Tony's mom.

RICHARD
Hola, Doña Gloria.
(to Tony)
I got an idea.

I need you guys to do what you do best.

PABLITO
Oh yeah?

What's that?

RICHARD
A little guerrilla marketing, baby.

Tony and the guys all smirk.

RICHARD (V.O.)
These guys didn't have no degrees in marketing, but they could sell condoms to a nun. They could close a hundred sales in a day. They moved product like G's.

148 INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - MAIN FLOOR - DAY - 1992 148

Richard jumps onto one of the machine. Tony and the other homies stand nearby.

He stands tall overlooking the entire factory. He whistles to get their attention. Clarence steps out to witness this.

RICHARD
Oigan! Listen up. I am Richard Montañez, and I'm here to tell you this isn't the end for us.

Lonny comes running out, annoyed.

LONNY
Montañez! What are you doing?!

Tony puffs up and maddogs Lonny. Lonny shuts up, scared, and unsure what the hell is going on. Richard gets louder.

RICHARD
Corporate's killing the product. But not because people don't love 'em. If people knew the product existed, it'd be huge. We can let it die, we can let the factory shut down, or we can pick ourselves up and show 'em who we are. I ain't got no fancy degrees, you ain't go no fancy degrees, and we don't need 'em. Because guys like us, you and me, we make this whole thing run. None of this exists--
(points around factory)
--if we don't exist. Let's show them we won't be buried.

Clarence listens intently. Pride growing in his chest.

WADE
Shut up, Montañez! You trying to get us all fired?!

CLARENCE
Let him speak.

RICHARD
I'm asking you to save your job. Now. Because if we don't, that's it for all of us. This product doesn't only have the Montañez name on it.
(points to Tony)
It's got the Romero name.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
(CONT'D)
(points to Hector and Clarence)
Morales. Baker.

WADE
Listen--

RICHARD
And Carson.
(Off Wade's silence)
Enrico believes we're what makes this company great. So we can sit around and be a bunch of huevones or we can stand up and BE GREAT.

LONNY
What are you asking for, Montañez?

RICHARD
I need the product that didn't sell loaded up in our trucks. I need whoever's got the time to help me distribute it. Before, after your shift, whatever it takes!

A silence falls across the factory. The sound of the machines whirring builds. Richard waits with bated breath.

CLARENCE
You heard the man. Get up, line up, and get that product on those trucks. Why you wasting time?!

All these low-level workers get brave. They respect Clarence. He may not have the title, but he's the real boss.

They get to work. Lonny looks at Clarence. Clarence stands his ground. Lonny sighs and reluctantly helps too.

And as a badass song (THINK the clean version of Public Enemy's "Fight the Power") comes on, we FOLLOW RICHARD TO--

EXT. FRITO LAY PLANT - LOADING DOCK - MOMENTS LATER - DAY 1-49

Worker after worker piles case after case into Tony and the homies' trucks. Last truck filled is Richard's old junker.

ONE TRUCK zips out. Then ANOTHER TRUCK. And ANOTHER TRUCK.

150 EXT. RICHARD'S HOUSE - DAY - CONTINUOUS - 1992 150

Judy, Vacho, Concha, the boys, Tony and the other cholitos pass Cheetos out to people in the neighborhood. Señoras, señores, neighborhood kids, a hood distribution line.

Richard spots Nacho and his family.

RICHARD	RICHARD [TRANSLATION]
Compa, no mames! Que pasa, güey? Quien te dijo?	You kidding me! What's up, fool? Who told you?

NACHO	NACHO [TRANSLATION]
Que? Creias que me la iba perder? 'Amonos, amigo! A la batalla!	You thought I was gonna miss this? Let's fight the power, buddy!

Richard smacks him on the back and hands him a box.

151 EXT. MURAL - DAY - 1992 151

Richard and Lucky rush past a mural toward a Quickie Mart.

152 INT. QUICKIE MART - DAY - 1992 152

Richard and Lucky are in the snack aisle filling their cart with nearly every bag of Flamin' Hot Cheetos on the shelf.

MOMENTS LATER AT THE COUNTER: Richard and Lucky check out. The MEXICAN CASHIER rings up the bags, stares at the cart.

RICHARD
(re: Lucky)
He's obsessed. Hit one bag of 'em at a party and he can't get enough.

LUCKY
They burn REAL GOOD!

QUICKIE MART CUSTOMER (O.S.)
Qué son? (What are they?)

Richard turns to the QUICKIE MART CUSTOMER in line behind him and smiles.

RICHARD
Cheetos con chile. Flamin' Hots.
(to Cashier)
Better order more 'cause they're about to sell out, compa!

153 EXT. PARK - DAY - 1992 153

Judy, Richard, and Steven pass Cheetos out at a family birthday party. The whole family is gathered around a picnic table. Judy talks to the MOM.

JUDY
Mira, saben a chile. Te van a gustar!

JUDY [TRANSLATION]
Look, they taste like chile. You'll love them!

Steven talks to her DAUGHTER.

STEVEN
I dunno if you've heard, but like, chile gives you superpowers.
(hand her a bag)
Better tell all your homegirls.

The girl giggles. Judy laughs.

154 EXT. PARK - VARIOUS - DAY - 1992 154

- Steven and Lucky pass snacks out to soccer players who are playing a pick-up game.

- Judy hands Cheetos to a mother pushing a stroller on the street.

- Richard passes Cheetos to basketball players.

- Nacho and Hector handing out cheetos to kids.

155 EXT. CITY ALLEY - DAY - 1992 155

Tony, Pablito, and Diego roll up to some kids in a low-rider.

PABLITO
'Ey, 'ey lil' homies. Come here!

Scared, the kids inch towards the guys.

DIEGO
You wanna taste of heaven? Wanna light a fire on your tongue?

The kids all look at each other like WTF? He holds out a handful of Hot Cheeto bags.

TONY
Take the damn bags, fools.

Scared, the kids take the bags.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Yeah, maybe it looked like a bunch of Mexicans hustling the streets to move a few bags, but truth was, we were mobilizing the Hispanic market before we even knew what it was. And that was pissing some people off.

156 OMITTED 156

INT. FRITO LAY HEADQUARTERS - ROGER ENRICO'S OFFICE - DAY 1-57

Enrico, Carey, Finley, and Patti are gathered around. Enrico's looking down at a map of California with a hot spot over Los Angeles.

RICHARD (V.O.)
It's alright, pissing people off had kinda become my forté.
(beat)
Enrico handled it like any G would.

Like our previous gangster den scene, Richard's voice comes blazing out of Enrico, Carey, and Finley's mouths.

ENRICO [RICHARD'S VOICE]
How you gon' explain this, foo'? How's Hot Cheetos got more love on it than your ruca's got vatos on her, huh?

JAMES FINLEY [RICHARD'S VOICE]
(sucks his teeth)
Man, I dunno what you talkin' 'bout. I ain't never heard none of these tonterías (stupidities).

Enrico grabs Finley by the collar.

AL CAREY [RICHARD'S VOICE]
Oh yeah, you little punk?
(to Patti)
Yo Patti, how much lana did this fool put into the product?

Patti's chewing gum and filing her nails.

PATTI [RICHARD'S VOICE]
O sea casi nada, ni para una muela.

Enrico's livid. He hurls folders and papers at Finley. Finley tries to get up, but Carey sits his ass back down. Enrico is riled up. Finley's terrified.

ROGER ENRICO [RICHARD'S VOICE]
You ain't never gonna eat another Cheeto in your life, fool. If you know what I mean.

RICHARD (V.O.)
(cracking up)
Naaah, they didn't get all crazy like that. You think these foos had that in them? Chaaaale!!!

CUT TO:

They're all suddenly proper, composed executives again. They're back to their normal selves again. Enrico puts his hands on the table, leans into Finley.

JAMES FINLEY
Sir, why on earth are we wasting money on this janitor's crazy ideas? What could you possibly--

ROGER ENRICO
You still think I'm investing in a janitor, Finley? I'm investing in a vision. The Hispanic market is the future and this man is going to lead us there.

Finley furrows his brow, angry. OFF Finley's red face--

INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - JANITOR SUPPLY CLOSET - DAY - 1992 158

Richard's phone rings. He picks up.

RICHARD
Maintenance. Can I help you?

ROGER ENRICO [FILTERED]
Richard... it's Roger Enrico.

RICHARD
Yes, sir...

Richard holds his breath.

ROGER ENRICO [FILTERED]
We're going to need more cases.

Richard silently pumps the air. Heck yeah!

RICHARD
Yes, sir. Five-thousand, sir?

Silence on the other end. Richard grows concerned. Then--

ROGER ENRICO [FILTERED]
No, Richard. One million. We're gonna need one million.

Richard's eyes grow wide. CUT TO MONTAGE:

159 INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - MAIN FLOOR - DAY 159

The factory is at full force. Every line operates at full efficiency and spits out BRIGHT RED Hot Cheetos as far as the eye can see.

Workers bag, pack, and walk the Cheetos to loading.

160 EXT. FRITO LAY PLANT - LOADING - DAY - CONTINUOUS 160

Workers load some semi-trucks with boxes. Each truck pulls out, one by one, carrying this precious red gold.

END MONTAGE

161 INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - MAIN FLOOR - DAY - 1992 161

TITLE: THREE MONTHS LATER...

Richard tinkers with a lever on the chip frying machine. Clarence walks up, stares at him. Richard grows nervous.

CLARENCE
They called.

RICHARD
They called. ...And?

CLARENCE
And... you're looking at the new Plant Manager in Bakersfield.

Richard yelps, slaps Clarence on the back. Clarence laughs.

RICHARD
Hell yeah! You should be the damn president, brother! About time!
(beat)
So? They say anything about me?

Clarence's smile fades, shakes his head.

CLARENCE
But they will, you'll see--

Richard smiles weakly, picks up his bucket and mop. Lonny walks by, also looking forlorn.

LONNY
Montañez, can you head to room CM6. Need it cleaned out ASAP before you clock out.

Richard nods. Starts to wheel over, then stops. Angry.

RICHARD
Actually, no. I'm not doing it, Lonny. I won't do another thing until I get that machinist gig--

LONNY
(sighs)
Look, just do this last thing and I'll see what I can do...

Richard, clenched jaw, stomps off. He's gonna do it. He's a good worker and can't say no.

162 OMITTED 162

INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - MAIN FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER - DAY - 163

His head still lowered, Richard nears office CM6. As he arrives, he looks up and stops in his tracks.

Standing there near the office is Roger Enrico.

ROGER ENRICO
Hello, Richard.

Richard is speechless. Shocked, he barely waves a hello.

ROGER ENRICO (CONT'D)
I was in town. At a conference where I told them about your story.

ROGER ENRICO (CONT'D)
(beat)
It's a story I know very well, Richard. I ran around the mines of small-town Chisholm, Minnesota when I was a snot-nosed Italian kid who had dreams bigger than what that place could contain. Thing is, Richard, visionaries can't be contained. And a smart person doesn't try to contain them. Smart guys like us invest in vision.

Richard still has no words. He's taking this in.

ROGER ENRICO (CONT'D)
So I'm thinking it's a good idea to invest in yours. Whaddaya say? You want to join us and show us the big plans you got for marketing to your community?

Enrico steps aside REVEALING A NAMEPLATE ON THE DOOR THAT READS: Richard Montañez, Director of Multicultural Marketing.

Richard's shocked as we hear a single CLAP behind him. The clap turns into two, three, four -- HUNDREDS.

As Richard slowly turns we open into a SWEEPING WIDE of the plant floor. Every worker's gathered behind him. Clarence smiles at him. He knew all along.

Richard's overwhelmed as the applause thunders around him.

INT. FRITO LAY PLANT - RICHARD'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER - 1D6A4Y

- 1992

Richard is on the phone. It RINGS and RINGS until--

JUDY [FILTERED]
Hello, you've reached Target Warehouse. This is Judy. How can I help you?

RICHARD
Hey baby, it's me.

INTERCUT:

165 INT. TARGET STORE - SAME - DAY - 1992 165

Judy's on a store phone. She steps away from customers.

JUDY
Richard? What is it?

Richard is overcome with emotion. He savors this moment...

RICHARD
Baby, we're gonna need more ties.

Richard holds back his tears as we--

CUT TO BLACK.

RICHARD (V.O.)
You see, there ain't no such thing as just a janitor.

A165 INT. UPSCALE RESTAURANT - KITCHEN - NIGHT - 2016 A165

We're back in our restaurant. It's closing down for the night, and in an epic one-er Richard rises from his table, says goodbye to the other execs. He pulls on his overcoat.

RICHARD (V.O.)
No such thing as just a waiter.

Richard smiles at the Mexican Waiter and shakes his hand, slips him a hundred-dollar bill. The waiter looks down, shocked. He looks after Richard who keeps walking, grinning big.

He makes his way toward the restaurant's exit, passing by a few BUS BOYS walking to the break room.

RICHARD (V.O.)
No such thing as just a bus boy.

Richard shakes both their hands, leaving them each with a hundred-dollar bill. They're shocked. Richard spins around, grin still lighting up the lobby as he EXITS--

B165 EXT. UPSCALE RESTAURANT - KITCHEN - NIGHT - 2016 B165

Richard bursts out onto the sidewalk, swag strong. A BMW pulls up to the curb. The VALET hops out. He hands Richard his keys.

RICHARD (V.O.)
No such thing as just a valet.

Richard hands this kid a hundred-dollar bill too. The valet is over the moon.

Richard climbs into his car, revs up the engine.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Because we all write our own stories. We create our own destinies. You think I was gonna let someone steal mine? Nah. Never.

Richard looks to camera, winks, and speeds off.

OVER END CREDITS:

166 OMITTED 166

167 MUSIC OVER A SERIES OF FOUND FOOTAGE IMAGES AND VIDEOS: 167

- Pictures of a young Richard in a hair net with Hot Cheetos.

- Pictures of Richard slanging Flamin' Hot products at a flea market.

- Pics of Richard with Enrico and Carey receiving awards and at various PepsiCo events.

TITLE OVER PHOTOS: Richard rose through the Frito-Lay ranks to become a top executive and ambassador for PepsiCo and Frito-Lay.

- Rows and rows of Flamin' Hot products spawned by Richard's marketing over the years.

TITLE OVER PHOTOS: Called the godfather of Latino Marketing, Richard was instrumental in leading Frito-Lay and Pepsi to capturing the Latino market.

- Rapid-fire photos of the many products that Hot Cheetos has spawned.

- Rapid-fire photos of the many spicy products other companies have created thanks to Hot Cheetos.

TITLE OVER PHOTO: Flamin' Hot Cheetos has reached nearly $1 billion in sales thanks to Richard's marketing prowess. It has spawned [X AMOUNT] of spicy products across the company. Richard's genius brought spicy snacks to the entire snack industry.

- A series of pictures of Richard with his gorgeous family. Judy and him hugging tight at various events; a huge family photo with Lucky, Steven, and their third son Michael are all grown up. All of Richard's grandkids surrounding them.

- Richard in various magazines.

TITLE OVER PHOTO: Montañez retired in 2019 after working for PepsiCo for 42 years.

TITLE OVER PHOTO: He's recognized by Newsweek and Fortune 500 as one of The Most Influential Latino Leaders in America.

CUT TO BLACK.