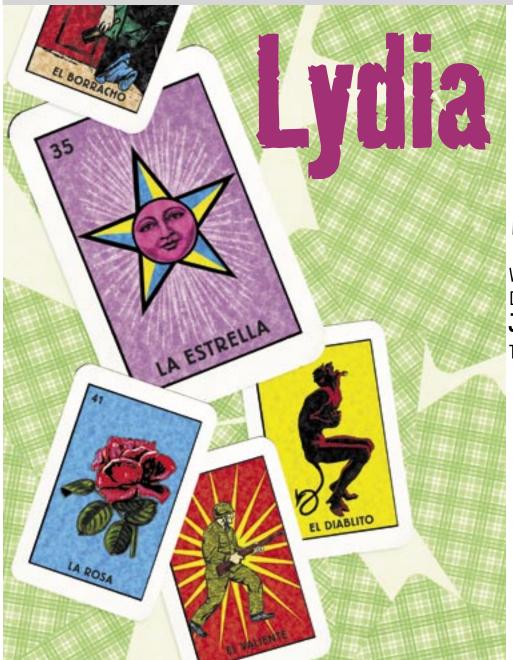
# InsideoUT

PRODUCED BY THE DENVER CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

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Kent Thompson, Artistic Director

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#### World Premiere!

Written by Octavio Solis
Directed by Juliette Carrilo

Jan 18 - March 8, 2008

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THE DENVER POST

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## Synopsis

eci Flores introduces her family: her father Claudio, a Mexican immigrant working as a cook in El Paso, Texas; her mother Rosa, whose dream brought her family to America; her tough-acting elder brother René; and her more serious younger brother Misha. Ceci herself has brain damage, and although the audience understands her, she cannot communicate with her family or anyone else around her—until the new maid Lydia arrives, fresh from Mexico. Ceci's cousin Alvaro has recently returned from Vietnam; his appearance, along with Lydia's knack for interpreting for Ceci, dredges up secrets from the past and reveals the desires that could bring the family together or tear them apart.

## <u>The Playwright</u>

Playwright Octavio Solis grew up in El Paso, where his parents, both native Mexicans, worked as short-order cooks. He took acting classes in school, initially as a way to avoid playing team sports; he later turned to playwriting. Solis's plays include Bethlehem, Dreamlandia, Man of the Flesh, El Otro, El Paso Blue, La Posada Magica, Prospect, Santos & Santos and The Seven Voices of Encarnation. He also collaborated on the creation of Burning Dreams and Shiner. Lydia was commissioned by the Denver Center Theatre Company.

His collaborative works include *Burning Dreams*, written with Erik Ehn, and *Great Highway*, written with Wendy Weiner. Solis received a 1995-97 Playwriting Fellowship from the National

Endowment for the Arts (NEA), the Roger L. Stevens Award from the Kennedy Center, the Will Glickman Playwright Award, a production grant from the Kennedy Center Fund for New American Plays, the 1998 TCG/NEA Theatre Artists in Residency Grant, the 1998 McKnight Fellowship grant from the Playwrights Center in Minneapolis, and the National Latino Playwriting Award for 2003. He is the recipient of the 2000-2001 National Theatre Artists Residency Grant from TCG and the Pew Charitable Trust for *Gibraltar*, which was staged at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival.

Solis is a member of the Dramatists Guild and New Dramatists. He has just completed his first independent feature film, *Prospect*.

# A Brief History of Border Patrol and Illegal Immigration

he Immigration Service was founded in 1891, first as part of the Treasury Department but then in the Department of Commerce and Labor; IS's first station opened on Ellis Island January 21, 1892. New laws implemented a head tax of fifty cents for each immigrant and banned prostitutes, idiots, lunatics, criminals, and people with dangerous or contagious diseases from entering the country. Due to the heavy inflow of Chinese immigrants working on railroads in the West, Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882. Instead of sailing to California, new ships carrying hopeful immigrants from Asia went to ports in Mexico, from which many people crossed the border into the U.S. To combat the entry via Mexico of Chinese workers, President Teddy Roosevelt in 1904 appointed Jefferson D. Milton the Mounted Chinese Inspector. The first border patrolman was sent to work with his own horse and gun; he earned \$24 a month, on which he also had to feed his horse.

In 1917, a new law required immigrants to be literate in their native languages, and a new flood of unskilled European laborers now banned from entry through Ellis Island attempted to cross into the United States via the Mexican border. When World War I took many American men abroad, American employers turned to Mexico for cheap labor; only beginning in 1917 did the influx of Mexican immigrants rival the former wave of Chinese workers and the current flood of European illiterates.

In 1920, the 18th Amendment enacted prohibition, and smugglers soon developed a prosperous business sneaking alcohol into the U.S. from Mexico. On May 8, 1924, Immigration Services created the United States Border Patrol and soon 450 men (all bachelors, as required) began their official training. Emmanuel A. Wright joined in 1925 and later recalled of Prohibition, "This was one of the most dangerous times in the history of the border. [...] We lost a lot of men

- we killed a lot of smugglers."

With the Great Depression's high unemployment rates, Americans wanted Mexicans and other immigrants offering cheap labor out of the country. On March 4, 1929, the Deportation Act, which authorized the rounding up and shipping back to Mexico of Mexican workers, spread across the U.S.

In June 1933 the Immigration and Naturalization Service (today's INS) was formed. In 1940, with the concern less about immigrant workers and more about people intending America harm, President Franklin D. Roosevelt moved INS from the Department of Labor to the Department of Justice.

Once more, world war depleted the American work force, and in 1942 the Border Patrol desperately needed recruits; ads promised \$1,800 annual salary.<sup>2</sup> American employers again needed Mexican workers to replace the American men who'd gone to war, and Congress soon approved the *Bracero* (Laborer) Program which allowed Mexican immigrants to enter the U.S. and work lawfully. However, many Mexicans who didn't qualify for the *Bracero* Program crossed the border illegally; employers were happy to hire these illegal immigrants for lesser wages than those required by *Bracero* participants.

In 1953, the Texas State Federation of Labor with the American G.I. Forum published *What Price Wetbacks?* about illegal workers' effect on the economy and their threat to national security. Beginning in July 1954, Operation Wetback swept the Southwest; INS agents chased illegal workers back to Mexico, or captured and deported them. In El Paso, thousands of illegal aliens were captured and returned to Mexico daily.

The 1950s saw a change in the tide of immigrants crossing the U.S.-Mexico border. Formerly, Mexican farm-workers had formed the bulk of immigrants; however, new immigrants included entire families and many people from other parts of Central America, who were completely unfamiliar with the terrain surrounding the border. Human smugglers called *coyotes* charged a fee per immigrant guided across the border.

Illegal immigrants caught by the U.S. Border Patrol were put in old military barracks and detention centers, but as these filled up (due to the lengthy and time-consuming process of giving each illegal alien a hearing) the INS implemented the Voluntary Departure System, in which apprehended illegals could waive their rights to a hearing and be deported immediately. Often, the same immigrants would reattempt their trek north within days, or even hours.

On September 19, 1993, Operation Blockade entailed four hundred Border Patrol agents who formed a deterrent line twenty-five miles long on the north side the of Rio Grande around El Paso. El Paso residents were thrilled: no longer were patrolmen chasing down illegal immigrants in the streets, because there weren't any there. Operation Blockade's name was later changed to Hold the Line. Its creator, Silvestre Reyes, was elected to Congress after his retirement.

In June 1998, the INS Border Safety Initiative ran ads in Mexico warning of the dangers of crossing. The Border Patrol's BORSTAR, an elite search-and-rescue team, worked the border area, especially before and during storms, to find and rescue groups of illegal immigrants attempting to cross the dangerous terrain.

After September 11, 2001, the Department of Homeland Security was created, combining 22 agencies (including U.S. Border Patrol, Customs, and Coast Guard) to collectively protect America from terrorism, drug smuggling, and other threats. In the years since the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, enforcement of immigration laws and border security have once again become topics of national debate.

#### The El Paso-Juárez Border

he forces arrayed on the border represent striking opposites. On the North, the opulent United States; to the South, under-developed Mexico. At no other place in the world is the income gap between two countries so pronounced, and the resulting clash feels like the kind that creates tornados, or hurricanes."

El Paso, Texas, lies across the Rio Grande (*Río Bravo* to the Mexicans) from Juárez in the Mexican state of Chihuahua. "Juárez, on the south side of the U.S.-Mexican border about 30 feet from El Paso, has over a million people, twice as many as 15 years ago," Debbie Nathan wrote in 1986.<sup>5</sup> She further explained that "Out-of-towners are always shocked when they see what separates the United States from Mexico at El Paso: nothing worth mentioning. No fence for many stretches, no desert – just a slip of a river and its concrete beaches. In some parts you can almost hop across, or pay some guy a nickel and walk to America on his old two-by-four."

In describing the geography of the border, Robert Maril explained, "Separating the richest and most powerful country in the world from an exploding third-world population with little on its plate but hope, the Rio Grande becomes an international border as it leaves southern New Mexico. Mexicans named this same river *Río Bravo*, Fierce River." Despite being in such a powerful country, El Paso

itself is, according to Debbie Nathan, "the poorest large city in the U.S. There are half a million people here and a quarter of them are eating courtesy of food stamps and emergency pantries." But the promise of the American dream beckons, and people continue to come to Juárez hoping to cross the border to El Paso and points beyond.

With many factories and industries on both sides of the border, "The Rio Grande/Río Bravo is slam dunked by the effluvia of both El Paso and Juárez, each city transforming a roaring Colorado mountain river into a sluggish, gray stream, rated one of the most toxic rivers in the United States."9 The U.S.-Mexico border at El Paso-Juárez is also a site of organized crime. Alex Pacheco revealed, "The Juárez drug cartel, grossing an estimated \$200 million dollars a week from narcotic smuggling, supplied their runners with state-of-the-art weapons and surveillance equipment." They also "offered a \$200,000 reward for anyone who could put a U.S. border patrolman in the grave." Author Charles Bowden declared of Juárez's crime and poverty, "In the academies they have sessions bemoaning this reality. In the streets, they are simply lived. I believe that Juárez is one of the most exciting places in the world. I am struck by the electricity that snaps through the air in a city saturated with grief."11

#### Mexican Americans in the Border Patrol

he U.S. Border Patrol agents working the U.S.-Mexico border are primarily a mix of Anglos and Mexican Americans. Marta, an illegal immigrant working as a maid in El Paso, told writer Debbie Nathan, "But the Mexican" – i.e. Hispanic – "migras are the meanest." Upon hearing Nathan would be interviewing a Mexican American Border Patrol agent, she said, "Ask her please, why does she do this to her own people?" Border Patrol agent Estella Henderson responded, "Oh, they ask me that all the time. If it's a man who asks, I say 'It's your job to build rock walls.' If it's a woman I say 'It's your job to take care of other people's children. And it's my job to catch you." 13

Chicano activist Cesar Caballero revealed, "A lot of us in the late'60s and early'70s pushed for Hispanic representation in all jobs, including in the border patrol. In the *barrio* when I was a kid we used to play *migra* instead of cowboys and Indians. The border patrol would be the bad guys and the illegal aliens were the heroes. The object of the game was to run fast and find real good places to hide. Now Chicanos are the biggest *cabrones* – the

biggest bastards – in the *migra*. Sometimes I think we've created a monster."<sup>14</sup>

A Mexican American Border Patrol agent interviewed by Robert Lee Maril revealed, "At first I was worried about what my father would think when I joined the Border Patrol. Him being from Mexico."15 The agent's father had entered the United States legally through the *Bracero* Program. "Like many former citizens of Mexico who were now American citizens, [his] father despised the Border Patrol. In the 'old days,' [...] some agents would as soon beat undocumented workers on the head as look at them. Some agents then boasted about the aliens they had humiliated."16 However, this agent's father told him, "Being in the Border Patrol is a federal job that is reliable. Something you can raise a family on. It's nothing to be ashamed of."17 As opposed to his own generation, who'd had to move with the seasons to work on farms in various parts of the United States, agents of the Border Patrol were secure in their jobs and had a steady paycheck, and he respected that opportunity for his son.

#### <u>Spanglish</u>

Professor Ilan Stavans began studying Spanglish academically with a Special Topics seminar at Amherst College. He explained, "I've learned to admire Spanglish over time. Yes, it is the tongue of the uneducated. Yes, it's a hodgepodge . . . But its creativity astonished me. In many ways, I see it in the beauties and achievements of jazz, a musical style that sprung up among African-Americans as a result of improvisation and lack of education. Eventually,

panglish, n. The verbal encounter between Anglo and

though, it became a major force in America, a state of mind breaching out of the ghetto into the middle class and beyond. Will Spanglish follow a similar route?"<sup>19</sup>

As Bobby Byrd explained in *Puro Border*, "On the border we talk about language all the time because our words cross back and forth of the line as if there were no fences and armed guards and military helicopters and no drug laws and no such thing as 'illegal immigration.' No Washington, D.C. No Mexico, D.F. No rules. Linguistic adultery takes place every day of our lives."<sup>20</sup>

#### **Translations**

abrazo: embrace abuela: grandmother amantes: lovers baboso: fool

bailamos: let's dance botica: pharmacy cabrón: bastard

campo santo: cemetery cantos perdidos: lost songs

cerveza: beer

cholos: dark-skinned

como que si fuera una flor: as if she

were a flower

cómo se dice: how do you say

contestame: answer me

corazón: heart

corralón: corral, detention center for

illegal immigrants

corte tus pedos: cut the crap

cosita: little thing criada: maid

cuántos años tiene su hija: how old is

your daughter curandera: healer

*dios*: god *dónde*: where

el otro lado: the other side

espera: waitesposa: wifeguapo: handsome

hace dos años: it's been two years

inútil: uselessjefe: bosslabio: lip

lo dudo: I doubt it lo siento: I'm sorry mesero: waiter mierda: shit

migra/migración: migration, i.e.

Border Patrol

mijo/mija: my son/daughter

mira: look

mojado: wetback, illegal immigrant

*muerto:* death *nada*: nothing

no hables así: don't talk like that

no te apures: don't worry

no tienes hambre: aren't you hungry

novelas: soap operas
novio: boyfriend
oye: listen

pajarita: little bird
para siempre: forever
pendejos: idiots

pero ahora, pobre mija: but now, my

poor daughter pinche: damn placer: pleasure prima/primo: cousin puta: prostitute

qué dices: what did you say

que Dios te cuide: may God take care

of you

qué es esto: what's this

qué has hecho: what have you done

*qué más*: what more *querida*: darling

qué te dije: what did I tell youquinceañera: 15<sup>th</sup> birthday party /coming-of-age celebration

raza unida: united race

*reina*: queen *río*: river

sabes: you know

si tienes tiempo: if you have time

sobrino: nephew

te quiero: I love you, I want you te voy a matar: I'm going to kill you

tía/tío: aunt/uncle

todo: all

tranquilo: quiet

tres veces te lo pedí: three times I

asked you for it vamanos: let's go vas a ver: you'll see verdad: true

verdad: true vestido: dress vida: life viejo: old man vuelo: flight

ya son las ocho y media: it's already

8:30

#### LOTERÍA

he game *lotería* is sometimes called Mexican bingo. Each player has a game board with 16 pictures. The caller has a deck of 54 cards, each with a different picture. The caller draws a card and either announces what is pictured or tells a riddle, whose answer reveals to participants what is on the card. As each card is called, any player with that picture on her game board covers that picture with a bean, coin, or token. The first player to cover all the pictures on her board (or to create some predetermined pattern, such as four-in-a-row) and yell "*lotería*!" is the winner.

Lotería has a long history in Mexico. Well over 200 years ago, Mexico City streets featured stands where people could play lotería. Lotería has also spread north of the border and is a common feature at fairs in many parts of the United States, especially those areas with a sizable population of Hispanic residents or Mexican migratory workers. The man who had the most influence on the history of the game is the French businessman Don Clemente Jacques, who manufactured ammunitions and canned food. During the Mexican Revolution, he included lotería cards in his shipments of products to the soldiers; after the war returning soldiers provided a surge in the sales of the game. It is Don Jacques's company's 1887 design that is still commonly sold and used today, although various Mexican artists have more recently created new versions of the game, sometimes with themes from history or geography.

#### Cards included in the traditional *lotería* set:

el alacrán: the scorpion el apache: the Apache la araña: the spider el árbol: the tree el arpa: the harp la bandara: the flag

el bandolón: the citar el barril: the barrel el borracho: the drunk

la bota: the boot la botella: the bottle la calavera: the skull el camarón: the shrimp la campana: the bell el cantarito: the pitcher

el cazo: the ladle la chalupa: the canoe el corazón: the heart la corona: the crown el cotorro: the parrot

el catrín: the dandy

la dama: the lady
el diablito: the little devil
la escalera: the ladder
la estrella: the star
el gallo: the rooster
la garza: the heron

el gorrito: the bonnet las jaras: the arrows la luna: the moon

la maceta: the flowerpot la mano: the hand

el melón: the melon la muerte: death el mundo: the world el músico: the musician

el negrito: the little black man

el nopal: the cactus el pájaro: the bird la palma: the palm tree el paragüas: the umbrella

la pera: the pear el pescado: the fish el pino: the pine tree la rana: the frog la rosa: the rose

*la sandía*: the watermelon *la sirena*: the mermaid

el sol: the sun

el soldado: the soldier el tambor: the drum el valiente: the brave one el venado: the deer el violoncello: the cello

#### Hispanic Conversion to Pentecostalism

Both in the United States and in Latin America, evangelical Christian churches are growing rapidly; in fact, Pentecostalism is the fastest growing Christian movement in the world. Around the turn of the century, the Latin American Catholic Bishops Conference estimated that 8,000 Latin Americans converted to evangelical Christianity every day.<sup>21</sup> In Latin America and among Latinos in the United States, most new Pentecostals are converts from the Catholic Church. In 2006, Sonya Geis reported, "Thirty years ago, about 90% of Latinos in the United States were Catholic, sociologists estimate.

Today that number is about 70% and it remains steady only because of high birth rates and new immigrants filling the pews."<sup>22</sup>

Pentecostal churches present very active worship services, in which worshippers commonly fall to the ground, speak in tongues, or prophesy. The churches also target poor communities and reach out to the underprivileged, in many cases offering social services such as drug recovery programs, daycare, and help finding work. Overall, Catholic converts seem to be drawn to Pentecostalism by the sense of belonging and community that they may not have felt in Catholic mass services.

#### Brain Trau<u>ma</u>

"In the eleven years between 1981 and 1993, more Americans lost their lives to brain trauma than had died in all wars combined. And like war, it takes a disproportionate toll among the young."

William J. Winslade in *Confronting Traumatic*Brain Injury. <sup>23</sup>

Statistics from the Brain Injury Association of America:

- 1.4 million people a year suffer traumatic brain injuries in the United States:
- 50,000 of these die from their injury
- 235,000 are hospitalized
- 1.1 million are treated and released from the emergency room

Leading causes of traumatic brain injuries:

- falls 28%
- motor vehicle accidents 20%
- Blasts are the leading cause among active military in war zones.
- Highest at risk for traumatic brain injury are those aged 0-4 or aged 15-19.
- 5.3 million Americans currently live with disabilities from traumatic brain injury.<sup>24</sup>

very 23 seconds, someone in the United States suffers a traumatic brain injury. Results of such an injury range from full recovery to death, with a wide spectrum of possible

disabilities in between. Traumatic brain injury often causes epileptic seizures and other medical complications requiring months or years of care. Some patients achieve only a persistent vegetative state, dependent on constant medical care, while others after a long and determined recovery period attain a relatively independent life.

William J. Winslade explores the effects of brain injury on the families of the patients: "Most traumatic brain injuries shatter more than one life. Although one victim feels the physical impact of the fall, the blow, or the bullet, friends, colleagues, and especially family members feel its psychological impact. Tragedy ripples out to touch husbands and wives, parents and children."25 The family of course hopes for their loved one's recovery and does their best to care for him or her. However, "eventually, the family members become discouraged. They may become overwhelmed with guilt, blaming themselves for what they might or might not have done to prevent the injury. They may become depressed, feel trapped, or even fear that they might go crazy. The religious faith that brought them comfort and courage in the days immediately following the accident may become obsessive, or they may lose it altogether if they don't see the progress for which they've prayed so hard."26

#### Domestic Violence

#### Statistics on Domestic Violence:

- Of all women's emergency-room visits, 30 to 40 percent are for injuries due to domestic violence.
- Fifty percent of men who assault their female partners also assault their children.
- Each year, 3.3 million children witness acts of domestic violence.<sup>27</sup>

Here in Denver, SafeHouse offers help to victims of domestic violence. SafeHouse was established in 1977, and the shelter now houses 26 beds plus cribs and serves more than 340 women and children annually; nonresident programs reach hundreds more. SafeHouse offers shelter, counseling, education, advocacy, support groups, legal assistance, referrals, empowerment, and increased community awareness. SafeHouse accepts donations and volunteers. For more information, or to give or receive help, visit www. safehouse-denver.org.

# Survivor Guilt & Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

raumatic events in people's lives often produce psychological effects far more lasting than any physical damage. Those unaffected, or less affected, by a trauma may experience survivor's guilt, including the wish to exchange places with the dead or with the person who suffered more, or the feeling that the survivor should have died or suffered in that other person's place.<sup>28</sup> Dr. Aphrodite Matsakis explains in *Survivor Guilt: A Self-Help Guide*, "As illogical as it might sound, feeling guilty and acting in a self-punishing manner can help you maintain the illusion that if only you suffer hard enough or long enough, you can change or atone for the past."<sup>29</sup>

Survivor guilt can be exacerbated by feelings of responsibility if the survivor was at the time of the trauma in a position of authority, such as a squad leader in combat, or the driver of an automobile in a car wreck.<sup>30</sup> Also, survivor guilt can hit especially hard when the person who died or suffered is a loved one or family member: "Human beings, both male and female, are biologically wired to respond to the helplessness and dependency of their young, and when a child dies or is injured, regardless of the cause, the survivor guilt can be enormous."<sup>31</sup>

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder was first brought to media attention by its prevalence among Vietnam War veterans, but PTSD is not solely the province of those who've endured combat. In the general population, motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause. Nearly 10% of the survivors of serious car accidents develop PTSD, and young people may be at even higher risk.<sup>32</sup> Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder may manifest itself in self-injury, either directly or by reckless behavior and the wish for others to hurt and punish the sufferer.

### <u>Mikhail Baryshnikov</u>

Mikhail (nickname Misha) Baryshnikov trained in classical ballet at the Vaganova School in Saint Petersberg, Russia; upon his graduation in 1967 the Kirov Ballet hired him as a soloist, bypassing the usual *corps de ballet* entry position. In 1973 the Soviet Union declared him an Honored Artist of the Republic. He found financial success but not artistic freedom in his native country. While on a Kirov Ballet tour of Canada in 1974, the 26-year-old Baryshnikov defected, forever leaving his home country to live in the West. He found a professional home at New York City's American Ballet Theatre (ABT), later serving as their artistic director. Continually learning new roles and exploring new forms of dance, Baryshnikov collaborated with modern dance choreographers while at the American Ballet Company; he later founded the White Oak Modern Dance Company, which offered him complete freedom to create and tour programs to his liking – exactly the freedom of artistic expression he did not have in the Soviet Union.

#### Endnotes

1 Krauss 18.

2 Krauss 26.

4 Nathan 11.

5 Nathan 18.

6 Nathan 26.

7 Maril 6.

8 Nathan 19.

9 Maril 7.

10 Krauss xv.

11 Bowden 41.

12 Nathan 29.

13 Nathan 29.

14 Nathan 29-30.

15 Maril 73.

16 Maril 73-74.

17 Maril 74.

18 Stavans 5.

19 Stavans 3.

20 Crosthwaite 13.

21 Orozco.

22 Geis.

23 Winslade 106.

24 Brain.

25 Winslade 92.

26 Winslade 100.

27 From the National Center for Posttraumatic

Stress Disorder, quoted in Goulston 16.

28 Matsakis 41.

29 Matsakis 43.

30 Matsakis 51.

31 Matsakis 53.

32 Goulston 17.

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