

ANCHOR BABY

A comedy in two acts by

D. Richard Tucker

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## ANCHOR BABY

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**SYNOPSIS:** Bobby Anchor holds is a citizen of two countries: the USA and the tiny island nation of Mehlot, where Bobby lives with his wife Alita, a Mehloti native, who is pregnant with the couple's first child. Bobby's parents arrive from Philadelphia after the downturn in the US economy has left them unemployed and homeless, and after moving in with Bobby and his wife, quickly set about "Americanizing" the island nation. Now Bobby is torn between his love for his parents and his commitment to his wife, and their tiny country.

### Cast of Characters

ALITA Anchor, F, (25), Mehloti native, married to Bobby, pregnant

BOBBY Anchor, M, (25), Caucasian, news anchor

JACK Anchor, M, (45+), Caucasian, Bobby's father

PHYLLIS Anchor, (45+), Caucasian, Bobby's mother

CHARLENE Anchor, (17), Caucasian, Bobby's sister

One Male native who plays the following roles:

HANDY MAN, M, any age, native

LONGO, 30+, M, native

STONER, M, 20ish, native

MR. OHNDUI, Alita's father, M, 45+, native

KABOOTAY, a factory worker, M, any age, native

REPORTER, 30+, M, native

One Female native who plays the following roles:

MAIL CARRIER, F, any age, native

MARITA, F, 25-35, native

TEEN girl, F, mid to late teens, native

ELLIE, a maid in training, F, 20 – 30, native

MRS. OHNDUI, Alita's mother, F, 45+, native

MAMOOKI, a factory worker, F, any age, native

ACCUPUNCTURIST, F, any age, native

SUSANNA Hawwaneek, political candidate, F, 45+, native

Tiny island country of Mehlot. City of Berajool.

The year 2011

## ANCHOR BABY

ACT I  
Scene 1

The play takes place in the city of Berajool, on the tiny island nation of Mehlot.

At one side of the stage is a small desk for a newscaster. Behind the desk may be a projection screen to show photographs of the current stories or the station logo. At the designers discretion, this part of the stage can consist only of a large screen and the newscasts in the play can be on video. The rest of the stage is the home of BOBBY and ALITA Anchor, a moderate sized apartment, consisting of a small living room and a small dining area. There is a front entrance door, a hall closet door, a door leading to the kitchen and a hallway entrance that leads to the bedrooms. The furnishings give a mixed feeling of foreign and familiar. Lights up on News Desk. BOBBY is seated at the desk wearing coat and tie.

## BOBBY

And continuing the trend of joblessness across the globe, the United States government announced its unemployment rate has risen 0.3 % from last month's 9.8 %, pushing the country's official unemployment rate over ten percent for the first time in more than seventy years. This is Bobby Anchor with Mehlot's only All English News, right here on Channel Eight.

SOUND: Music denoting end of newscast. Lights out on News Desk. Lights up on family home. SOUND: Doorbell. ALITA enters from the kitchen. She is a Mehlot native, dressed in casual attire, and pregnant - in her second trimester. ALITA opens the door. A HANDY MAN, another island native, sticks in his head.

## HANDY MAN

Anch-or?

ALITA

Marazhabu. Lee cassay.

ALITA directs the HANDY MAN inside and closes the door.

HANDY MAN

Mo reet tu..

ALITA

Es kutah, mawa lotay.

ALITA walks to the kitchen door, followed by the HANDY MAN, who seems a bit reluctant.

HANDY MAN

Zay oko ...Eenglisch?

ALITA stops and responds.

ALITA

Yes, I do.

HANDY MAN

May we then speak English, please? I wish very much my English to practice.

ALITA

If you like. This way, please. The garbage disposal is not working. You understand?

HANDY MAN

Yes. Garbage disposal. Thank you please.

ALITA and the HANDY MAN exit into the kitchen. SOUND: Phone ringing. ALITA enters and answers the phone.

ALITA

Hasoo vey.....Oh, hi, Honey. He just got here.....Right. Will you be home soon? .....No, I'm still feeling nauseous.....No, the doctor said it was normal .....Well, my mom said the same thing. .... No need to worry..... Okay – hurry if you can....I love you, too.

ALITA hangs up. SOUND: Doorbell.  
ALITA answers the door. A female native MAIL CARRIER sticks her head in.

MAIL CARRIER

Hello, Alita. You have much mail today.

MAIL CARRIER hands ALITA a stack of letters.

ALITA

Thanks.

MAIL CARRIER

There is also letter from United States.

ALITA

Oh?

ALITA fumbles through the letters and finds the one in question.

MAIL CARRIER

Philadelphia.

ALITA

Oh, thanks.

MAIL CARRIER

I wonder what it might say.....

ALITA

I don't know.

(pause)

It's addressed to my husband.

MAIL CARRIER

(pause)

Are you going to open it?

ALITA

I'll wait for him.

MAIL CARRIER

(pause)

It might be good to check and see if it is bad news. That way you can make him ready for anything bad.

ALITA

I'll wait.

Are you sure? MAIL CARRIER

Yes. ALITA

(pause) MAIL CARRIER  
You are not going to open it?

No. ALITA

(long pause) MAIL CARRIER  
Okie dokie then. I shall go now.

Many blessings to you. ALITA

MAIL CARRIER  
Many blessings to you.  
(pause, eyeing her stomach)  
And your family.

Mo bittaa. ALITA

ALITA closes the door and places the mail on the table, except for the letter from Philadelphia. ALITA opens this letter and begins to read. Soon, the HANDY MAN enters from the kitchen.

HANDY MAN  
I found the dysfunction of the garbage disposal.

Yes? ALITA

HANDY MAN presents her with a broken plug.

HANDY MAN  
It is a worn cable only, which the electricity prevented not to flow. I have the old plug away taken and then a better plug on the cable placed.

ALITA

Many thanks.

HANDY MAN

I have repaired and done so for very cheaply. Now will it work much handsomely.

ALITA

Many thanks.  
(getting her purse)  
How much is the repair?

HANDY MAN

A very short time.

ALITA

How much does it cost?

HANDY MAN

(still doesn't get it)  
It lasted minutes only.

ALITA

Pratto leekoop?

HANDY MAN

Oh! It is .....  
(slowly and quietly starts counting fingers, trying to remember the number in English)  
One, two, three, four-

ALITA

In Mehlot?

HANDY MAN

(sheepishly)  
Nawa keek.

ALITA

(fishing through purse)  
That would be "twenty."

HANDY MAN

Twunny.

ALITA

Twenty.

Twen-tee? HANDY MAN

Yes. ALITA  
(handing him a few coins)

Many thanks. You speak very well English. HANDY MAN

Many thanks. ALITA

Are you American? HANDY MAN

No, my husband is. ALITA

Oh! Your name – “Anch-or.” Is American, just like the news reporting man. HANDY MAN

Yes. ALITA

And you are Mehloti. HANDY MAN

Yes. ALITA

But your husband not. HANDY MAN

No, I mean, yes – he is a Mehloti, but also American. ALITA

How is... HANDY MAN

(getting impatient) ALITA  
He was born here, but his parents are American so he is both.



HANDY MAN

That is very- so, your husband..  
(making the connection)  
He is the one! On Channel Eight?

ALITA

Yes.

HANDY MAN

He is my favorite news reporting man. I watch him very much – it helps my English.  
(in almost perfect impression)  
“This is Bobby Anchor with Mehlot’s only All English News, right here on Channel Eight.”

ALITA opens the door.

ALITA

Yes, many thanks.

HANDY MAN

I wish I could English speak as good you do.

ALITA

...Thank you. You’re doing very well.

HANDY MAN

Many blessings to you.

ALITA

Many blessings to you.

HANDY MAN

(nodding at her pregnant bulge)  
And many blessings to your family.

ALITA

Mo bittaaan.

HANDY MAN exits and ALITA closes the door. ALITA looks at the letter, displeased, and suddenly feels ill. ALITA drops the letter, grabs her mouth and rushes into the hallway. SOUND: Vomiting. BOBBY enters from the front door, no longer wearing his jacket and tie.

BOBBY

(to off stage HANDY MAN)

Thank you.

HANDY MAN (offstage)

I watch you very much.

BOBBY

Thank you – that’s very kind.

HANDY MAN (offstage)

You are my favorite-

BOBBY

Many blessings to you.

HANDY MAN (offstage)

Many blessings to you.

BOBBY

Mo bittaaan.

BOBBY shuts door quickly.

BOBBY (cont’d)

Hi, Sweetie – I’m home.

BOBBY notices the letter on the floor and picks it up.

BOBBY (cont’d)

Alita? How are you, sweetie?

SOUND: Vomiting.

BOBBY (cont’d)

(feeling squeamish at the sound)

Good.

BOBBY begins reading letter. ALITA enters.

ALITA

Oh, good, you found that.

ALITA goes to BOBBY to kiss him, but as their lips come together, they remember her vomiting and BOBBY turns his head to kiss her on the cheek.

BOBBY

Are you feeling any better?

ALITA

It comes and goes. How about you?

BOBBY

More coming than going. I'm the father – I shouldn't have morning sickness.

ALITA

It's sympathy pain – nature doesn't want you to miss out on anything.

BOBBY

As long as I don't get labor pains -

ALITA

Did you read that?

BOBBY

Not yet.

ALITA (cont'd)

I didn't want to have to tell you.

BOBBY

What?

ALITA

You, know...

BOBBY

(reading, quizzical)  
"It's been unseasonably warm--"

ALITA

Further down.  
(points to paragraph)  
There.

BOBBY reads.

Crap. BOBBY

I know. ALITA

They finally closed that plant. BOBBY

I can't imagine how your Dad's taking it. ALITA

Mom says- BOBBY

But is he really...or is she just saying that? ALITA

(shrugging) BOBBY  
I wish they would've told us earlier. Why can't she use email like everybody else on the planet.

When did it happen? ALITA

Probably a while ago – they would've tried to keep it quiet, hoping things would turn around- BOBBY

SOUND: Phone ringing. ALITA answers.

Hasoo vey.....Oh, hi! How are you? Yes....yes.....we just got your letter. ALITA

Mom? BOBBY

(nodding) ALITA  
Right. Well, ...um....of course. ....Umm yes, well, we'd love to have you .....Sure.

They're coming for a visit? BOBBY

ALITA

I guess it just depends on when the baby comes, I mean right now the nursery is empty – that’s what we call the spare bedroom, the nursery – but it won’t be long and the room will have a little occupant. Oh, yes....Charlene can stay in the study - we can get an air mattress.

BOBBY

Charlene, too?

ALITA

Oh, no....it won’t be any trouble.....No, that’s fine. We’ll be happy to have you – just let us know what you’re planning....What’s that? .....Sure.

ALITA hands the phone to BOBBY.

BOBBY

Hi, Mom.....yes.....

ALITA

(talking to herself)

Okay, let’s make some plans?

BOBBY

Yeah, that’s...um....that’s great ....

ALITA

Marita will lend me her air mattress – I’m sure Charlene would like that – teenagers always think that sleeping on the floor is fun.

BOBBY

Okay.....

ALITA

We can put your parents in the nursery, it may be a little crowded, but it will only be for a week or so.

BOBBY

Umm, sure....

ALITA

I mean I’m assuming it’s only -

(directly to BOBBY)

How long do you think they’ll stay?

BOBBY  
Mom, how long are-

ALITA  
(back to talking to herself)  
Maybe we should move into the nursery and give our room to your parents.

BOBBY  
That would be...um...sure..

ALITA  
I wish they weren't coming so soon. That doesn't give us much time to get ready.

BOBBY  
Well...I think that-

ALITA  
Maybe they could wait a few months, maybe in the summer.

BOBBY  
Mom, when were you planning on-

ALITA  
Of course then we'll have the baby to deal with – it might be crowded.

BOBBY  
We, you know, just wanted to make arrange-

ALITA  
Though they might be able to help out – feedings and diapers and stuff.

BOBBY  
Because of, you know, the baby-

ALITA  
Do you think they'd mind helping out with the baby?

BOBBY  
Oh. Well, that solves that problem.

ALITA  
What?

BOBBY  
Sure.....We can't wait.

ALITA  
 What solves the problem?

BOBBY  
 Love you, too, Mom.

BOBBY hangs up, now completely  
 horrified.

ALITA  
 When are they coming?

BOBBY  
 Sooner than expected.

ALITA  
 Next month?

BOBBY  
 They're in the parking lot.

ALITA  
 What?

BOBBY  
 I am so sorry.

ALITA, runs to the door and opens it.

PHYLLIS (offstage)  
 Hello, there. We're just unpacking the cab.

ALITA exits out front door. BOBBY  
 suddenly feels sick, grabs his mouth and  
 quickly exits down the hall. Blackout.

#### ACT I, Scene 2

Later that day. JACK, PHYLLIS, and  
 BOBBY are seated in the living room while  
 ALITA serves them coffee. BOBBY is not  
 enjoying his parents' company.

JACK  
 Thanks for all the accommodations, you two.

PHYLLIS

It's very nice of you to make room.

BOBBY

Well, after all, we're family

ALITA

In Mehlot we have a tradition of close families - it's called "rahbu."

BOBBY

That means ... "love of family."

PHYLLIS

That's very nice. It looks like the baby is coming along.

ALITA

Yes, I'm not used to having a pot belly.

JACK

You should have seen Phyllis when she was expecting.

PHYLLIS

Jack.

JACK

When she was pregnant with Charlene, Bobby walked up to her - he was only about eight years old - and he asked Phyllis why she was so fat.

PHYLLIS

Jack.

JACK

Phyllis thought she'd play it off, she said "Now, honey, remember, Mommy has a baby growing in her tummy." And Bobby looks up at her and says "Oh. Well what do you have growing in your butt?"

PHYLLIS

That's not funny, Jack.

JACK

Oh, it's funny - I know funny, Phyllis.

PHYLLIS

That was a great meal, Alita.



ALITA

Thank you.

PHYLLIS

And so fresh.

BOBBY

She's a great cook.

JACK

Good stuff – you don't get fish that fresh back in Philly.

PHYLLIS

No, not at all. You'd think we would, you know, being so close to the water and all, but never as fresh as yours.

JACK

The last time I saw a fresh fish, it was walking across the Delaware River.

JACK laughs.

PHYLLIS

That's not funny, Jack.

JACK

I thought it was.

PHYLLIS

Well, it wasn't.

JACK

Sure, it's funny. I know funny, Phyllis. I mean, think about it – “it was walking across the Delaware River.” See, that not only says something about how fresh the fish was – he was still alive, you know – but it also says a lot about the Delaware, right Alita?

ALITA

I'm sorry. I'm from Mehlol, remember? Sometimes your humor escapes me.

PHYLLIS

Lucky you.

JACK

See, it's saying that the Delaware River is so polluted, that you can walk across it, whereas most rivers, you'd have to swim across. That's funny, right?

ALITA

Actually, I find it very sad.

JACK

Plus, fish don't walk – so it puts a funny image in your head, making it even more memorable.

PHYLLIS

Though we'd like to forget.

JACK

Stop it, Phyllis. I know funny.

PHYLLIS

If you have to explain it, Jack, it's not funny.

JACK

I thought it was funny. Don't you think it was funny, Bobby?

BOBBY

Oh, sure.... So what happened at the plant, anyhow?

JACK

Oh, I don't even want to talk about it.

PHYLLIS

They threw them out – closed up shop, laid off everybody.

BOBBY

Just like that?

PHYLLIS

Filed for bankruptcy – he probably won't even get his pension.

JACK

Twenty-one years I worked for that company.

ALITA

And your house, you had to leave it?

PHYLLIS

We rented it out –

JACK

Couldn't afford the mortgage.

PHYLLIS

There's this nice Mexican family that moved in, Fernando is the father's name.

JACK

I don't think you can say that.

PHYLLIS

Say what?

JACK

"Mexican." I don't think you can say that.

PHYLLIS

Why not?

JACK

You have to say something else, like "Latino" or "Hispanic" or something.

PHYLLIS

Why can't you say "Mexican?"

JACK

Because they might not be from Mexico - they might be from Guatemala or somewhere.

PHYLLIS

What's the difference?

JACK

I don't know – probably 'cause they speak different languages. In Mexico they speak Mexican and in Guatemala they speak ...Guatelmian.

PHYLLIS

Well, what does Fernando speak?

JACK

(shrugs)

All sounds like jibber-jabber to me.

BOBBY

That's hard to believe – some one else is living in our house.

ALITA

Well, I'm sure you'll be comfortable here.

BOBBY

How long is the lease?

JACK

The what?

BOBBY

The lease. On the house?

PHYLLIS

Oh, just a year – we were advised to lease for one year at a time.

BOBBY

So Fernando and his family will be there for....

JACK

For about ..eleven more months.

PHYLLIS

We were staying with your Aunt Christine - you remember her, right Bobby?

JACK

But after a while, you know we felt like we were, you know, imposing.

PHYLLIS

It was very uncomfortable.

JACK

So I got this idea, hey – let's move – out of the country.

ALITA

And you decided to come here.

JACK

Yeah, makes perfect since – we just leave the country – I mean it happens all the time in the US – some guy, some guy from another country – he comes to the States, gets a job, settles down, and then the next thing you know he brings his whole family over and you got like thirty-seven people living in a two bedroom apartment.

BOBBY

Good thing you didn't bring thirty-seven-

JACK

I mean that's the new way. If there aren't any jobs in Philly, why not move?

ALITA

Did you get visas?

JACK

Oh, don't need to worry about that.

PHYLLIS

We've got family here, remember, that whole dual citizenship thing.

BOBBY

Oh. Well, yeah.

JACK

Good thing we got off that cruise ship at just the right time.

ALITA

And how long will you stay?

JACK

Oh, who knows?

PHYLLIS

Who knows?

JACK

We might retire here.

BOBBY

What about a job?

JACK

I'll find something. They can probably use me in upper management. I mean, I'm not the white collar type, but hey, what kind of competition can they have here? You know what they say – on an island of blind people, the one-eyed man is king.

BOBBY

Dad, you might find it a little different.

ALITA

Are you planning on learning the language? You can enroll in some classes.

JACK

Oh, no need for that – it takes too long. Besides, people won't expect that from us.

PHYLLIS

I can pick it up, I'm good with languages. I once went to Atlanta – in Georgia - and I could understand almost everything they said...well, kind of.

CHARLENE enters from the front door and slams it shut.

CHARLENE  
God, this place is a dump.

PHYLLIS  
Charlene, don't slam the door.

CHARLENE  
There is like so nothing to do here.

CHARLENE exits into hallway.  
ALITA  
What about school for Charlene?

CHARLENE enters quickly.  
CHARLENE  
No school!

JACK  
You're going to school.

CHARLENE  
No way! I am not going to school with a bunch of pygmies.

CHARLENE exits down the hallway  
PHYLLIS  
She hasn't adjusted yet.

JACK  
We thought we could enroll her in the local high school. I mean she's only a junior, but these kids aren't ...well, you know, she should be able to graduate pretty quick, right?

CHARLENE (offstage)  
No way!

PHYLLIS  
(yelling)  
Think about it, Charlene, you'd be going to school with a bunch of island kids. Wouldn't you like to be the smart one for once?

CHARLENE sticks her head out.

CHARLENE

How do you figure?

PHYLLIS

It wouldn't matter that you'd been put back a grade, you'll automatically be at the top of the class.

CHARLENE

So I could be the brainiac? This might work.

CHARLENE exits.

BOBBY

Hasn't changed a bit, has she?

JACK

She totally hates school.

PHYLLIS

We were hoping a new school system might help.

SOUND: Doorbell. BOBBY answers door and MARITA enters, carrying a deflated air mattress.

MARITA

(without a trace of accent)

Hi, Bobby. Hi, Alita. I brought over the mattress.

ALITA

Oh, thank you Marita.

ALITA goes to her and takes the mattress.

ALITA (cont'd)

This is my mother-in-law Phyllis, and my father-in-law, Jack. This is my neighbor, Marita.

They shake hands.

PHYLLIS

Nice to meet you.

MARITA

Nice to meet you, too.

JACK  
Hello.

ALITA  
They just arrived today.

MARITA  
Well, I hope you enjoy your stay.

PHYLLIS  
Thank you very much. Your English is very good.

MARITA  
Thank you.

PHYLLIS  
Did you learn to speak English from listening to Alita and Bobby?

MARITA  
Well, no...actually I took English classes when I was a child and then, of course more classes at boarding school in Australia. My professors at Stanford felt I would make a good language instructor, but once I got tenure at the University, I decided to concentrate on European History.

JACK  
Well, you seemed to have picked it up pretty good.

MARITA  
Thanks.  
(to ALITA)  
I'd better get going.

MARITA (cont'd)  
(to JACK and PHYLLIS)  
Enjoy your stay.

PHYLLIS  
Thank you.

MARITA  
Mo bittaaan

ALITA and BOBBY  
Mo bittaaan.

MARITA exits.



JACK  
She's very nice.

BOBBY  
Yes.

PHYLLIS  
What does that mean "Mo bittaa.?"

ALITA  
"Good bye."

JACK  
You know, I'm beat. This jet lag really takes its toll on me.

PHYLLIS  
It's horrible. I feel like I've been up for a full week.

JACK  
I'm going to unpack in the morning. I just need to get my machine out.

BOBBY  
Machine?

JACK  
My breathing machine. "Mo bittaa."

JACK exits down hallway.

PHYLLIS  
His doctor gave him this breathing apparatus – a CPAP machine. Your father has the sleep apnea, so he stops breathing when he sleeps.

JACK (offstage)  
Which bag is it in?

PHYLLIS  
(yelling)  
The big one I think.  
(to BOBBY and ALITA)  
He used to snore something terrible and he was always cranky, but now he wears a mask when he sleeps and it breathes for him so he's much more rested in the morning.

JACK (offstage)  
I can't find it.

PHYLLIS

I'd better go help him look. Thanks for a lovely dinner, Alita.

ALITA

You're welcome.

PHYLLIS

We'll see you two in the morning. Sleep tight.

PHYLLIS kisses BOBBY on the forehead  
and exits.

BOBBY

(pause)

I am so sorry.

ALITA

What for?

BOBBY does a head jerk toward the  
hallway.

ALITA (cont'd)

Oh, no, they're fine.

BOBBY

No, they're not.

ALITA

Yes, they are, they're just...a little...quaint.

(pause)

Why aren't you happy to see them?

BOBBY

Remember the wedding? Remember the weekend we spent at the house? You've forgotten what they're like.

ALITA

It wasn't that bad.

BOBBY

Just wait. You'll be begging them to leave.

ALITA

I don't think-

JACK enters, brushing his teeth.

JACK

Hey, Bobby! Tomorrow I want to go down to the harbor – get some of that fresh shrimp.

BOBBY

Is that my toothbrush?

JACK

Mine is still packed up somewhere. You don't mind do you?

BOBBY reluctantly shakes his head.

JACK (cont'd)

'Night.

JACK exits, brushing. BOBBY and ALITA exchange looks. Black out.

ACT I, scene 3

Lights up on News Desk. BOBBY is seated at the desk wearing a sports coat.

BOBBY

And lastly, city officials are alarmed at the increasing rate of graffiti appearing in the Berajool suburbs. Neighborhoods which previously had little or no issues with vandalism are experiencing the marking of signs and structures with aerosol spray paint. Citizens are asked to alert the authorities if they witness any such acts. This is Bobby Anchor with Mehlot's only All English News, right here on Channel Eight

SOUND: Music denoting end of newscast. Lights out on News Desk. Lights up on family home a week later. JACK, very tired, sits at the dining room table sipping a cup of coffee. ALITA enters with coffee pot.

ALITA

Should I save some coffee for Phyllis?

JACK

No, I don't know when she'll get back.

ALITA

You seem tired, Jack. Are you sleeping all right?

JACK

No, I'm not sleeping at all. My CPAP machine broke.

ALITA

I'm sorry. I guess that's why you were snoring so loudly.

JACK

Oh, was it noticeable?

ALITA

Oh, hardly, just ...a little bit.

JACK

I'm sorry. I just ...can't get to sleep without that blasted machine. I told Phyllis we should have carried it on.

ALITA

You know, there's a little appliance shop down at the corner. Do you think they might be able to fix it?

JACK

I don't know - it's a pretty sensitive piece of machinery.

ALITA

Well, I'm sure they'd look at it if you took it down. If they fix it, you could get some rest.

JACK

Yeah, I feel like crap.

ALITA

And you wouldn't have to worry about snoring anymore and waking up any one in the house.

JACK

Am I doing that?

ALITA

Oh, no. I just thought it ...might, you know, get worse.

JACK

I don't know.

ALITA

If you like, I'll take it down to the shop for you? It's not very heavy, is it?

JACK

Umm...no it's not – you know, that's okay. I can take it down.

ALITA

I mean, you don't have to, it's just...

JACK

No, that's probably a good idea. I should probably do that.

JACK exits into hallway. BOBBY enters from hallway.

ALITA

(quietly)  
Are you?

BOBBY

What?

ALITA

Going to tell them?

BOBBY

Oh, yeah, I just.....

PHYLLIS enters from front door.

BOBBY (cont'd)

Hi, Mom.

PHYLLIS reaches into her purse, pulls out a wad of local currency, and holds it out to ALITA.

PHYLLIS

Alita, how much is this?

ALITA takes the money and counts.

ALITA

It's a total of –

Like, in American.

PHYLLIS

It's about ....two hundred dollars.

ALITA

Holy crap.

PHYLLIS

Where'd you get that?

BOBBY

Is that good?

ALITA

PHYLLIS

Two hundred dollars is a lot of money. I mean, maybe not in Philly, but in this place you could live for a month on two hundred dollars.

JACK enters with CPAP machine in its case.

Yes, that's probably-

ALITA

Where'd you get all the money?

JACK

I got a job.

PHYLLIS

Really. What kind of work can you do?

JACK

I'm a housekeeper.

PHYLLIS

You're a maid?

JACK

Housekeeper. For a very rich lady.

PHYLLIS

Who, Phyllis?

ALITA

PHYLLIS

This lady. I was walking down the street and I saw this giant house – absolutely gorgeous – and I stopped to look at it when this lady pulled up in a limousine, and so I made a little chit-chat, you know, asked her about the place and all, and I said something like “It must be difficult to keep the dust out in this climate.” And she said “Yes, it is, the maid I have is never able to keep things dusted well.” And I said “Well, I would fire her, because a maid who can’t dust like having no help at all.” And she said that she had already fired three maids, but nobody knows how to dust on this island. And I explained to her how you should use the static cling dryer sheets on your lamp shades because it picks up the dust but the chemical won’t hurt your shades, and how you should dust every day because a little comes up easily, but if you wait too long, you’ve got a mess on your hands.

JACK

(to ALITA)

Phyllis would know. She runs a very tight household.

PHYLLIS

I’m talking, Jack. And so the next thing you know, she’s offering me a job – five days a week for this much money.

ALITA

That much - every week?

PHYLLIS

She paid me a week in advance because she was afraid I wouldn’t come back. Four hours a day, five days a week, for this much money.

JACK

That’s great stuff.

BOBBY

Were you able to get a worker’s permit?

PHYLLIS

No, she said she’d pay me in cash, so I don’t think I have to worry about it.

ALITA

But you have to have a worker’s permit to accept a job in Mehlot.

PHYLLIS

I’m sure it’s okay.

JACK

Here, give me some of that. I have to take my CPAP down and get it fixed.

JACK takes half of the cash.

PHYLLIS

Here, take it all if it'll keep you from snoring.

PHYLLIS gives him the rest of the cash.  
JACK takes the money. ALITA nudges  
BOBBY, egging him on.

BOBBY

Um, Mom, Dad....I was thinking.

PHYLLIS

What about?

BOBBY

It just seems that, you know, now that you're living here....in this country....that you should get to know it....you know, the culture. That you should get out and get involved...with the people here.

PHYLLIS

I just got a job, Bobby, what more do you want?

BOBBY

Well, I just think it's important to assimilate. Into the community.

JACK and PHYLLIS exchange looks.

JACK

Sure, whatever. Hey can you give me a ride down to the appliance store? Alita said there was one on the corner.

BOBBY and ALITA exchange looks.

BOBBY

Umm.. sure.

JACK

Later.

JACK exits with his CPAP machine.  
BOBBY kisses ALITA goodbye and follows  
JACK out.

ALITA

That's very fortunate that you found work so quickly.



PHYLLIS

It's perfect. I know housework.

ALITA

Don't you think you should get your worker's permit, though?

PHYLLIS

Well, I suppose that - Do you have taxes in this country?

ALITA

Yes.

PHYLLIS

Oh. Well, we'll see. I'm going to take a nap while he's gone. Maybe I can sleep without that snoring.

PHYLLIS exits into hallway. ALITA exits into kitchen. The front door slowly opens part way and CHARLENE's head appears, looking around. Now that the coast is clear, CHARLENE and TEEN enter. The TEEN wears baggy clothes, a hat, and sunglasses. CHARLENE is carrying a bag. From the bag CHARLENE takes out two cans of spray paint and hands one to TEEN. CHARLENE begins shaking the can.

CHARLENE

Okay, shake it up really good.

TEEN

Like this?

TEEN shakes the can.

CHARLENE

Pretty much. You've got to mix it up or it'll come out in splooges.

TEEN

Okay.

CHARLENE

Now, pop the cap.

CHARLENE takes off the cap from her can of paint. TEEN struggles with hers.

TEEN

Like this?

CHARLENE

No, not really. Here.

CHARLENE trades paint cans with the TEEN and takes the cap off the other one. CHARLENE throws the paint cap on the floor. TEEN throws her paint cap on the floor.

CHARLENE (cont'd)

Okay, now put your finger on the top, and then as you press down with your finger, the paint comes out. Watch.

CHARLENE paints a streak on the wall.

CHARLENE (cont'd)

You try.

TEEN points at the wall, but because her can is facing the wrong direction, she sprays her own hand.

TEEN

Oh! Shoo-BAH-koo!

CHARLENE

Point the hole in the can where you want to paint – that's where the paint comes out.

TEEN sprays a spot on the wall.

CHARLENE (cont'd)

Better. Now try this.

CHARLENE sprays a line. TEEN sprays a line. CHARLENE sprays a curving line. TEEN sprays a curving line.

CHARLENE (cont'd)

You're getting' the hang of it.

ALITA enters and sees the spray paint on the wall.

ALITA  
 What are you doing?!

CHARLENE  
 Practicing.

ALITA  
 You can't paint my walls.

CHARLENE  
 Looks like we did.

TEEN  
 It's not hard.

TEEN sprays another line.

ALITA  
 Stop that!

ALITA snatches the can from TEEN.

CHARLENE  
 Hey! Chill out, lady. Give us back the paint.

ALITA  
 You can't do this!

CHARLENE  
 (to TEEN)  
 She's like that 'cause she's pregnant – her hormones make her all wooby wooby.

ALITA  
 Give me the paint, Charlene.

CHARLENE  
 No, bitch!

TEEN  
 (to CHARLENE)  
 Is she really pregnant?

CHARLENE  
 (to TEEN)  
 Sure, right there.

CHARLENE sprays a circle of paint on ALITA's midsection denoting her pregnant bulge.

ALITA

Charlene! You are...you are.....

ALITA drops the paint and breaks down crying and exits into kitchen.

CHARLENE

(picking up the paint)

It's hormones. Don't ever get knocked up – it'll screw up your head.

TEEN

Word.

CHARLENE

Don't say that – it's so yesterday.

CHARLENE and TEEN exit out front door. Blackout.

ACT I, scene 4

Lights up on News Desk. BOBBY is seated at the desk wearing coat and tie.

BOBBY

Unemployment has hit hard across the globe and is even finding its way to Mehlot. Berajool mayor, Kun Lawatooshinno is concerned that crime rates may increase as employment becomes harder to find. He strongly recommends job applicants get additional training, and hopes to establish a community training center to increase occupational skills and opportunities. This is Bobby Anchor with Mehlot's only All English News, right here on Channel Eight

SOUND: Music denoting end of newscast. Lights out on News Desk. Lights up on family home. JACK is putting a fresh coat of paint over the graffiti. LONGO is sitting thumbing through a document. PHYLLIS is sitting on the sofa with her feet up, drinking a beverage. There is a stack of coasters on the coffee table and a vacuum cleaner standing in one corner of the room.

PHYLLIS

I think it's a very wise choice, Mr. Longo. It's an investment. Ellie has great potential.

LONGO

You think it's a good idea, huh?

PHYLLIS

Oh, yes. You see how much improvement she's already made – in just one hour of instruction.

LONGO

She does seem to be a lot better.

PHYLLIS

Consider how much better she'll be once she graduates.

LONGO

But will it help her get a better job?

PHYLLIS

I guarantee it. All graduates of the Phyllis Anchor Housekeeping Academy go on to much better positions in the domestic care industry, and Ellie shows amazing progress. Just sign that, and I'll get Ellie into the next available class. She'll have a new, better paying job in just three weeks.

LONGO continues reading the contract  
while JACK speaks with PHYLLIS.

JACK

I'm going down to appliance repair to pick up my machine.

PHYLLIS

Make sure you put away that paint.

JACK grabs the paint can and roller and  
exits out the front door.

LONGO

That's a lot of money.

PHYLLIS

It's an investment, Mr. Longo. Or, you can just continue with your current path, that's always an option.

LONGO

Well, I-

PHYLLIS

Ellie!

ELLIE enters from the kitchen wearing maid's attire.

ELLIE

Yes, Mrs. Phyllis?

PHYLLIS

Did you finish the silver?

ELLIE

Almost. I still have the soup spoons.

PHYLLIS

Let's show your husband what you've learned.

ELLIE moves over to PHYLLIS's side.

ELLIE

Yes, Mrs. Phyllis?

PHYLLIS

Ellie, what is Excellent Housekeeping Rule number four?

ELLIE

Always dust from top to bottom. That way the dust that falls will not soil the surface that has already been dusted.

PHYLLIS

Impressive, isn't she?

LONGO

Well .....

PHYLLIS

Ellie, what is Excellent Housekeeping Rule number five?

ELLIE

Take out the trash daily to prevent unwanted odors in your living space.

PHYLLIS

You hear that, Mr. Longo? That's the sound of a qualified professional.

LONGO

I don't know.

PHYLLIS

Mr. Longo. I am the personal housekeeper for Susanna Hawwaneek – do you know who she is?

LONGO

Oh, yes.

PHYLLIS

And you've seen her house?

LONGO

Yes.

PHYLLIS

Do you know how many housekeepers she's fired?

LONGO shakes his head "no."

PHYLLIS (cont'd)

Too may to count. Now, if she's happy with my abilities, don't you think I might help your Ellie learn a thing or two?

LONGO

Okay, I'll sign.

LONGO picks up the thick contract and starts to sign. PHYLLIS stands and places her drink on the table.

PHYLLIS

Now what do you do, Ellie?

ELLIE quickly picks up the glass, wipes the condensation off the coaster, places it on the table. LONGO hands over the signed contract.

LONGO (to ELLIE)

I'll be out by the car. I need a smoke.

LONGO exits.

ELLIE  
Is that right, Mrs. Phyllis?

PHYLLIS  
Not quite. What did we forget?

ELLIE warily looks around the room.

ELLIE  
I forgot to ..... smooth out the sofa?

ELLIE smooths out the sofa where  
PHYLLIS has been sitting.

PHYLLIS  
That's one.

ELLIE continues looking around the room.

ELLIE  
I forgot to ..... put away the coaster?

ELLIE places the coaster in the stack with  
the others.

PHYLLIS  
That's two.

ELLIE  
How many more?

PHYLLIS  
Just one.

ELLIE canvases the room looking for the  
third offense, but can't find it.

ELLIE  
I give up.

PHYLLIS  
The vacuum cleaner....you should have taken that with you into the kitchen.....  
remember? What is Excellent Housekeeping Rule number seven?



ELLIE

(slapping her forehead)

When moving from room to room, always take something with you for the next task. Never make two trips when one is sufficient.

PHYLLIS

Exactly.

ELLIE

Oh, Mrs. Phyllis I have so much to learn.

PHYLLIS

Don't beat yourself up about it. It takes lots of hard work, but here at the Anchor Housekeeping Academy, we promise to stand by you until you meet our standards in excellence.

ELLIE

What next, Mrs. Phyllis?

PHYLLIS

That's all for today, Ellie. We don't want to overwhelm your little mind. Come back on Tuesday and don't forget – payment is due at that time.

ELLIE

Many blessings to your family.

PHYLLIS

Many blessings.

ELLIE

Mo bittaaan.

ELLIE exits. BOBBY enters from the hallway.

BOBBY

Mom, can we talk for a second?

PHYLLIS

If it's quick, honey, I have to go to work soon.

BOBBY

Well, I was just thinking....you guys have been here – how long now?

PHYLLIS

Oh, the time just flies by.

BOBBY

Well, I was wondering – I mean Alita and I were wondering-

PHYLLIS

Oh, she is just the sweetest thing, Bobby. You two are so great together.

BOBBY

Well, we wondered if you – and Dad and Charlene...um, if you were going to stay much longer, I mean-

PHYLLIS

Bobby, what are we supposed to do? We can't go back to Philly – we have no home. I'm trying to get your father a job. We want to pull our weight, but I think you should be a little more considerate in these trying times.

BOBBY

Oh, Mom, it's just –

PHYLLIS

Look, Bobby, I'm even assimilating into the community, just like you wanted. I already have seven students.

BOBBY

I know, Mom, I was just –

PHYLLIS

Family is family, Bobby – never forget that. What was that word? “Rahbu?” We never turn our back on family. Your father and I appreciate those work permits - I just wish you'd asked first, because we now have to figure out how to avoid the taxes.

PHYLLIS grabs her purse, kisses BOBBY on the cheek and exits out front door. BOBBY stares at the closed door for a second and then retreats through the hallway. Seconds later, the front door opens and CHARLENE enters. STONER looks in hesitantly.

CHARLENE

C'mon. We don't have all day.

STONER enters.

CHARLENE (cont'd)

And close the door. Geez, dude, were you born in a grass hut?

STONER closes door. CHARLENE and STONER sit at the table. CHARLENE produces a small pack.

	CHARLENE (cont'd)
You got the cash?	
	STONER
...yes?	
	CHARLENE
The cash?	
	STONER gives CHARLENE quizzical look.
	CHARLENE (cont'd)
The bucks – moolah.	
	STONER
Moo...	
	CHARLENE
Dollars, you know – money.	
	STONER
Money...yes.	
	Awkward pause.
	CHARLENE
Okay, look here, Jackie Chan. This is the part where you show me the money....so I will know if you really have it - that you're serious, and that you're on the up and up.	
	STONER
Up? Where?	
	CHARLENE
Put the money on the table! (pointing)	
Here!	
	STONER
Yes ...yes.	

STONER places money on table.  
 CHARLENE opens fanny pack and takes  
 out a small bag of dried leaves.

CHARLENE

Okay, this stuff is the best. Medicinal grade, nurtured under artificial light in a controlled climate, with a mean temperature of seventy-four degrees, grown under government control.

STONER

Your government grows-

CHARLENE

It's medicinal, okay. This will cost you...  
 (looking through STONER's money)  
 hmm, pretty much everything you've got here.

STONER gives her a blank stare.

CHARLENE

Not sure, huh? Okay, this  
 (producing another bag)  
 Is a high grade specimen, grown in the wild. It comes from a larger leaf, but it's grown in arid conditions to increase potency. Not exactly as strong as the premium government batch, but a great high, all the same. It will cost you....

CHARLENE picks up money, removes a few bills, places them on the table, and places the rest in a pile in front of the bag.

CHARLENE (cont'd)

This much.

CHARLENE waits in anticipation as STONER stares at it blankly.

CHARLENE (cont'd)

And last, and definitely least,  
 (producing another bag)  
 Is this batch of rooftop pot, directly from the inner city of Franklinville, watered with acid rain and fertilized with an occasional shower of cat piss. It's not a good high, but it beats being sober. It will cost you....

CHARLENE takes two bills and returns the rest to STONER, throwing the two

remaining bills in front of the bag on the table.

CHARLENE

This much.

STONER

(nodding)

Okay.

CHARLENE

That figures - lowest common denominator.

STONER takes the bag and money, leaving the two bills. CHARLENE grabs the two bills and pockets them as ALITA enters from the kitchen.

ALITA

What's going on here?

CHARLENE

Nothing! Nothing at all. Now get your ass back in that kitchen.

ALITA

What?

CHARLENE produces a switchblade and flicks it open.

CHARLENE

Don't give me any mouth, bitch. Get back in there and mind your pots and pans – I'm doing business here.

ALITA

I'm not –

CHARLENE

I will cut you! Understand? I will slice you. I will dice you. I will make you crinkle cut waffle fries. Do not mess with me while I'm doing business!

ALITA

(pause)

You are a very angry child.

ALITA exits into kitchen. CHARLENE  
puts away knife.

CHARLENE  
Okay, dude. You know where to get it. You need any more, call me.

STONER  
I,...umm..

CHARLENE  
What?

STONER  
Do you have a light?

CHARLENE  
You're not smoking it here! Now get out.

CHARLENE escorts STONER to front door  
and opens it.

STONER  
You have a least.....matches?

CHARLENE  
Do I look like a Quickie Mart? .....Okay...

CHARLENE produces a book of matches  
and hands it to STONER.

CHARLENE (cont'd)  
Here, but that's it - you're cutting into my profit margin. Now, get out.

CHARLENE pushes STONER out the door  
as JACK enters from front door carrying a  
cardboard box.

JACK  
Who was that?

CHARLENE  
(shrugging)  
Some foreigner.

JACK  
I smell pot. You doing drugs?

CHARLENE  
No, not really.

JACK  
You're selling drugs aren't you? Where did you get the pot?

CHARLENE  
Dad.

JACK  
Where from?

CHARLENE  
Russell.

JACK  
Who?

CHARLENE  
Russell Gray, in Omaha.

JACK  
How did you know him?

CHARLENE  
We're friends on Facebook.

JACK  
(not sure what to do, then yelling)  
Phyllis, your kid is selling drugs.

CHARLENE exits out front door.  
ALITA enters from hallway.

ALITA  
Phyllis isn't here.

JACK pulls a mechanical apparatus from the  
cardboard box.

JACK  
Look at this, Alita. You know what this is?

No. ALITA

It's a CPAP machine. JACK

Did they fix your- ALITA

JACK  
No it was toast, but they looked over the design and created one in the shop. It has everything – adjustable pressure gage, adjustable ramp time, humidifier, the works. You know how much this thing costs on the open market? MSRP is eighteen hundred dollars. Sometimes you can find them for as little as eight maybe nine hundred. You know how much this cost me?

I'm guessing less. ALITA

Thirty-five bucks. Thirty-five. Can you believe that? JACK

That's less. ALITA

JACK  
No kidding. If I put these on the market, I could make a fortune. I could build a whole plant. Jack's CPAP factory. I could bring industrialization to this island. Imagine that – huge warehouses, giant smoke stacks, it would be just like home.

Smokestacks? ALITA

JACK  
This little baby is going to make us rich. Maybe we should call Aunt Christine. She could quit her job at the doughnut shop and move over here.

ALITA exits into kitchen. BOBBY enters from the front door.

BOBBY  
Dad, have you been barbecuing?

Huh? JACK



BOBBY  
Have you?

JACK  
Whatta you mean?

BOBBY  
Mr. Ahtroki said he had an issue with smoke on the balcony yesterday.

JACK  
Who is...Ahtroki?

BOBBY  
The landlord.

JACK  
Oh, well ... you'll have to introduce me to him sometime. Look, I was thinking-

BOBBY  
Dad, were you grilling on the balcony?

JACK  
(caught)  
Aw, Bobby....

BOBBY  
You know we've talked about this.

JACK  
I just wanted a couple of pork chops. I got some beauties down at the market, that guy with the hair lip-

BOBBY  
You're not in Philly anymore, Dorothy. You don't grill on the balcony.

JACK  
It was just a couple of chops-

BOBBY  
Not pork chops, not ribs, not even kielbasa – if you want to barbecue, how are you supposed to do it?

JACK  
Bobby –

BOBBY

I've asked you to try and assimilate into the culture. What did I tell you?

JACK

(sheepishly)

No grilling on the balcony.

BOBBY

And why is that?

JACK

Because ....the people of Mehlot ,,,,don't grill on the balcony.

BOBBY

And that's important because....?

JACK

Because ....we need to ....fit into the local culture.

BOBBY

And why?

JACK

So the frickin' natives don't think we're some kind of savages.

BOBBY

I think you're catching on.

(a little more assertive)

So Dad, how are you supposed to grill your pork chops?

JACK

Bobby-

BOBBY

Dad.

JACK

I ...go down to the end of the block.

BOBBY

And?

JACK

Dig a hole.

And?  
BOBBY

Build a fire.  
JACK

And?  
BOBBY

Wrap the chops in ... some kind of frickin' leaf.  
JACK

Ebuki leaves, Dad.  
BOBBY

Yeah, those.  
JACK

ALITA enters.

And why didn't you?  
BOBBY

Because....because.....because I'm a lazy American fat ass and I cook on a grill not in a hole.  
JACK

I've told you, Dad, when in Rome, do as the-  
BOBBY

I'm pretty sure the Romans would be okay with a hibachi on the balcony.  
JACK

(snapping)  
Listen, Mister –As long as you are under my roof, you play by my rules. Got it?  
BOBBY

Yeah, okay.  
JACK

Now go to your room!  
BOBBY

JACK nods and exits submissively.

ALITA

Are you okay?

BOBBY

I...um...I just ....Mr. Atrohki mentioned...you know....smoke.

ALITA

Honey, I think you're losing your cool.

BOBBY

It's been like this my whole life. They have been involved in everything I did, and everything they touched they screwed up. It was like this in Cub Scouts, Little League, High School – why do you think I suggested we move to Mehlot after college?

ALITA

I thought you liked the lifestyle.

BOBBY

I do! It's quiet, it's relaxing, and it's seventy-three hundred miles away from my parents. Or it used to be.

ALITA

I think you need to be a little more patient.

BOBBY

What's wrong with you? Why aren't you upset? – I mean, Charlene actually spray painted you!

ALITA

She's going through a tough time right now. She's had a lot of change in her life and it's not easy adapting to a new culture. And your dad – the poor guy lost his job, he had to give up his home. He's just trying to fit in, you know, he's trying to make himself at home here, and that's the only way he knows.

BOBBY

They're not adapting at all.

ALITA

Look, it's okay. I'll put together a little ...lesson or something, to teach them about our culture.

BOBBY

A class?

ALITA

They're just not familiar with -

The front door swings open and CHARLENE, brandishing a hand gun, enters, spins quickly and fires three shots out the door. CHARLENE then slams the door closed, and leaning against the door notices ALITA and BOBBY, and slips the gun back into her waistband behind her back. There is an awkward pause.

CHARLENE

You .....might not want to go out there.

CHARLENE exits into hallway. BOBBY and ALITA exchange looks. SOUND: Police siren in distance. Feeling sick, ALITA and BOBBY put their hands to their mouths and simultaneously exit, ALITA through the kitchen door and BOBBY down the hallway. Lights fade out.

End of Act I.

ANCHOR BABY  
ACT II, scene 1

*An alternate version of this scene is available at the end of the script, which the producer may use in the event that this scene is determined too controversial for the audience.*

Lights up on News Desk. BOBBY is seated at the desk wearing coat and tie.

BOBBY

And in the United States, nearly two hundred thousand Americans turned out for a rally at the Capitol in front of the Lincoln Memorial, for the last day of Black History Month, a time when Americans celebrate decades of advancement in American civil rights and the end of family oppression ... I mean, racial oppression... um... This is Bobby Anchor with Mehlot's only All English News, right here on Channel Eight.

SOUND: Music denoting end of newscast. Lights out on News Desk. Lights up on family home. MR. OHNDUI, MRS. OHNDUI, JACK, and PHYLLIS are sitting in the living room drinking coffee.

PHYLLIS

So, Mr. and Mrs. Ohndui-

MR. OHNDUI

Please, we are in-laws. Call us by our first names: Mahbekotto and Shariteesey

PHYLLIS

Right, Mah...be...

(giving up on the names)

It was very nice of you to join us.

MR. OHNDUI

It was our pleasure. We have not seen you since Bobby and Alita got married.

MRS. OHNDUI

It has been far too long.

PHYLLIS

I just love your stories about life here on the island.

JACK

It's a lot different than the first time we were here.

PHYLLIS

That was a while back.

MR. OHNDUI

Oh, yes, I had forgotten you have been here before.

MRS. OHNDUI

When Mr. Jack was in the Air Force.

PHYLLIS

On our way back from Okinawa. We had to take a ship because I was pregnant with Bobby and the Air Force doctors discouraged flying.

JACK

Phyllis was getting really sick on the boat – throwing up everywhere - so we got off to see a doctor and Bobby showed up – six weeks early.

PHYLLIS

Quite a coincidence – the whole dual citizenship thing.

MR. OHNDUI

We do not believe in coincidences.

JACK

It paid off pretty well. Bobby's happy here. Of course it's a lot different than Philly.

MR. OHNDUI

We wish to go to the States again someday.

BOBBY enters with a coffee pot.

BOBBY

More coffee anyone?

BOBBY tops of coffee cups.

MRS. OHNDUI

I want to go to the US to see the Grand Canyon.

PHYLLIS

Have you never been?

MR. OHNDUI

To the Grand Canyon, no. To the States, yes, but only when Alita was graduated at Rutgers.

MRS. OHNDUI

Rutgers University.

MR. OHNDUI

Yes, Rutgers University.

JACK

That must have been a surprise for you, sending your daughter to college, and she comes back with a husband.

MR. OHNDUI

We are very proud of her. And proud of Bobby as a son-in-law, too.

MRS. OHNDUI

Many times I tell people, my daughter is married to the newscaster on Channel Eight.

PHYLLIS

We were surprised when Bobby took the job here – he had offers in Newark and Cleveland and several other places, I can't remember them all. He could have gone any where he wanted.

MRS. OHNDUI

Well, we are fortunate he came here.

ALITA enters with a cup of coffee and sits.

PHYLLIS

And we think Bobby is quite lucky to have such a lovely wife and such charming in-laws. Look how she's grown.

MRS. OHNDUI feels ALITA's stomach.

MRS. OHNDUI

It's so exciting to see the baby coming along.

PHYLLIS

When my sister Evelyn was pregnant with Bobby's cousin Jennifer, Bobby wanted to see the baby – he was only about four at the time - so Evelyn held up her blouse and showed him her pregnant tummy. He looked at it for a minute and then said, "Turn on the light. I can't see the baby."

ALL laugh.



MRS. OHNDUI

We're very excited about a grandchild.

ALITA

Yes, I can't wait til the baby arrives. At least by then, I'll be through with my morning sickness.

MRS. OHNDUI

Maybe you should try acupuncture - I've heard that works.

JACK

I don't know - I'd rather vomit than have needles stuck in my body.

ALITA

It's not painful, Jack. Thanks, Mom, I'll check on that.

MR. OHNDUI

(to JACK)

I understand you wish to build a factory here. I am always impressed with the enterprising American spirit.

JACK

No, I had to drop that idea – too much trouble with funding. You have no idea how much capital that takes.

MR. OHNDUI

That is unfortunate.

JACK

Oh, it's okay. I'm thinking I'll jump to the other side of the fence – you, know, organized labor. Rather than rake in profits from the consumers, I can just skim the cream off the top with union dues – there's money to be made either way.

MR. OHNDUI

You Americans are so very industrious.

MRS. OHNDUI

Bobby has been very good at teaching us many things about American culture.

MR. OHNDUI

He has given me many insights about American literature – Hawthorne, Melville, Sinclair Lewis.

JACK

Well, it's good those college classes came to some use.

MRS. OHNDUI

And he lent me some rap music – my favorite is J.J. Badcatt.

MR. OHNDUI

Do your rap song.

MRS. OHNDUI

No.

ALITA

Come on, Mother, do your rap song.

MRS. OHNDUI

No.

ALITA

My mother wrote her own rap song

PHYLLIS

Oh, that's wonderful – please do it.

MRS. OHNDUI

Well –

ALITA

Please, mother.

MRS. OHNDUI

All right. It goes like this.

(makes beat box sounds and then raps)

Get this crackin'

Stop your jackin'

A bad mamma jamma

You know that I'm packin'.

Gonna cut the fat.

Gonna tell you where it's at

I'm a mean cheeky freaky and I'll give you all of that.

Everyone applauds, though JACK and  
PHYLLIS seem to be less impressed.

PHYLLIS

That's..um...wonderful.

MR. OHNDUI

My wife is the musical talent in the family. I prefer to read. My favorite American writer is Mark Twain.

JACK

Yeah, sure, he's a good one.

MRS. OHNDUI

We are both reading "Huckleberry Finn."

JACK

Great.

(changing the subject)

So, it's good you'll be close enough to help when the baby comes – babies can be a handful.

MRS. OHNDUI

Yes.

PHYLLIS

Of course, with us here now, we'll be able to help, too.

JACK

Do you know if it's a boy or girl, yet?

ALITA

No, we want a surprise.

PHYLLIS

So you haven't picked out a name?

BOBBY

We decided if it's a girl, she'll have a Mehloti name.

ALITA

And if it's a boy, he'll have an American name.

PHYLLIS

Well, how international.

MR. OHNDUI

I am hoping for a boy, and that he be named from one of the great American novels.

JACK

Um, ..okay.

MR. OHNDUI  
 Maybe Ishmael. Or Hawkeye.

MRS. OHNDUI  
 Or Nigger Jim.

MR. OHNDUI  
 Oh yes, that would be good name – Nigger Jim.

JACK  
 I'm sorry.

MR. OHNDUI  
 From "Huckleberry Finn." He is our favorite character, Jim the Nigger.

JACK  
 Whoa. Hold on, ummm...you can't say that word.

MR. OHNDUI  
 What – "Jim?"

PHYLLIS  
 No, he means the other one.

MR. OHNDUI  
 You mean "Nigger?"

JACK  
 You can't say that.

MRS. OHNDUI  
 Oh, yes, we can.

MR. OHNDUI  
 Some American words are difficult, but-

MRS. OHNDUI  
 Yes, like "legislature."

MR. OHNDUI  
 Yes, that is difficult. And "catastrophic."

MRS. OHNDUI  
 Also very hard.

But “Nigger” is easy.

MR. OHNDUI

JACK grimaces every time the word is used.

I just remember that it rhymes with “bigger.”

MRS. OHNDUI

And “jigger.”

MR. OHNDUI

And also “trigger.”

MRS. OHNDUI

It is not hard to say. See? “Nigger.”

MR. OHNDUI

No! That’s not what I mean. I’m saying that that word...is...that word is...

JACK

Can’t you say it?

MRS. OHNDUI

No!

JACK

It is easy, here – say after me - “nig-ger.”

MRS. OHNDUI

No! No. I can’t say-

JACK

Can you say “bigger?”

MR. OHNDUI

Of course, I can say “bigger- “

JACK

Then just change the first letter: big-ger, nig-ger, bigger, nigger. See?

MR. OHNDUI

You don’t understand! For the love of god, Bobby! Would you tell these people-

JACK

You see...in America we ...don’t consider that a very good name.

BOBBY

Really? MR. OHNDUI

But Nigger Jim is such a nice man. MRS. OHNDUI

He is a very affable character. MR. OHNDUI

Yes, I like him very much. If I were American, I would like to be a nigger. MRS. OHNDUI

Oh, for cryin' out loud! JACK

It's just that ...that word brings back memories of a time when black Americans were not treated properly in our country, so out of respect we don't say it. BOBBY

Why not? MR. OHNDUI

Because it's not a good name for a person – it's very derogatory. BOBBY

Derogatory – that is another difficult word. Much easier to say “nigger.” MRS. OHNDUI

Please don't say that again! JACK

Surely there must be Mehlotti words that aren't very nice. BOBBY

Umm...yes. I suppose. MR. OHNDUI

Like “shoo- BAH-koo.” MRS. OHNDUI

Yes, “shoobakoo.” That is not a pleasant word. MR. OHNDUI

What does it mean? BOBBY

ALITA

“Shoobakoo?” Loosely translated ....”knucklehead.”

MR. OHNDUI

But we still say it. We just don’t call anybody “shoobakoo”

MRS. OHNDUI

Unless he’s really a shoobakoo.

BOBBY

Look, I don’t know any other way to say this- we just don’t say that word in America.

MRS. OHNDUI

Oh, yes, the rappers all say it. Nasir Jones, Tupac, Snoopy Dog - they all say “nigger -”

JACK

Oh my god.

MRS. OHNDUI

Only they say it different – they say “nigguh.”

JACK

But they’re allowed to because they’re black!

MR. OHNDUI

I’m sorry?

JACK

Black Americans can say it, but white Americans can’t.

MRS. OHNDUI

Why not?

BOBBY

Because it’s an insult to black Americans.

MR. OHNDUI

But I do not mean it as an insult – I am just saying the word.

JACK

But it’s a bad word!

PHYLLIS

Watch it, Jack, your blood pressure.

MR. OHNDUI

I don't understand. There are many bad words – cancer.... pedophilia.... racism – these are all bad words, and yet when I say them, I am not calling you a disease, or a child molester, or a bigot. I am just saying words.

JACK

(snapping)

But it's wrong! You can't say the N-word, you stupid gook!

There is a long silent awkward pause.

MR. OHNDUI

Then I shall not say it.

(pause)

I .... I feel that I have caused some tension in your home, Bobby. It was not my intention, and for this I am very sorry.

BOBBY

It's quite all right.

MRS. OHNDUI

Perhaps we should go now.

PHYLLIS

Oh, please stay.

MR. OHNDUI

No, it is late.

(to JACK and PHYLLIS)

We had a wonderful time with you, but now we should go.

MR. OHNDUI and MRS. OHNDUI get up to go. ALITA kisses them goodbye and opens the door.

MRS. OHNDUI

Many blessings to you.

MR. OHNDUI

Many blessings to you.

ALITA and BOBBY

Many blessings.

MR. OHNDUI

Next time, I promise we shall not say any of these forbidden words.



PHYLLIS

Well, it's probably a good thing you know that, so when you go to the States...it won't be an issue.

MR. OHNDUI

Perhaps so. Or perhaps we should postpone our visit to America until such time as the white people gain their civil rights.

MRS. OHNDUI

Good night.

PHYLLIS

Goodnight.

MR. OHNDUI and MRS. OHNDUI exit and ALITA closes the door behind them.

JACK

What did he say? Was that supposed to be an insult?

PHYLLIS

What is the matter with you?

JACK

Nothing! I was just – they kept saying that word.

PHYLLIS

Well, they don't know any better. And you shouldn't call him names.

JACK

But the N-word -

PHYLLIS

How are they supposed to know? They're not black, they're not white – it's an honest mistake! I'll start the dishes, Alita.

PHYLLIS exits into the kitchen. JACK and BOBBY exchange looks.

JACK

I think I'll turn in.

JACK exits. BOBY and ALITA exchange looks, but BOBBY doesn't know what to say.

I'm really sorry.

BOBBY

They just don't understand.

ALITA

After what he said to your dad –

BOBBY

Bobby, it's difficult to adapt to a new culture.

ALITA

By the time they get through with it, there won't be any culture left.

BOBBY

BOBBY exits down the hallway. ALITA pauses, takes a deep breath, and exits into the kitchen. Blackout.

## ACT II, scene 2

Lights up on family home. CHARLENE is on the phone.

CHARLENE

Look, If you don't believe me, fine – I've got lots of customers.....yeah, it's good stuff. Actually it's great stuff. ....Believe me, dude, I know my stuff..... Do you know what a hallucinogen is?.....You will see things you've never seen before..... Oh, more than that – like colored animals and monsters and stuff.....Oh, yeah.....Okay, I'll call you when it arrives....but you have to get over here fast – no delays. ....No way. It's flying in on a jet from the States. It could be any day now, or even today, so be ready..... Right.

CHARLENE exits down the hall. SOUND: Doorbell. JACK enters from hallway and answers the door.

Come on in.

JACK

KABOOTAY and MAMOOKI enter.

This is Union Hall?

KABOOTAY

JACK

It is for now – we're still raising funds for the new building.

MAMOOKI

Isn't this the same place as the Housekeeping Academy?

JACK

Yeah, we've got a sub-lease. Go ahead, sit down.

All sit.

JACK (cont'd)

Okay, so  
(can't remember the names)  
um....

KABOOTAY

Kabootay

MAMOOKI

Mamooki.

JACK

Right. The purpose of this meeting is to strategize ways to increase membership-

KABOOTAY

Why do we need more members?

JACK

Well, that's the key – the more members we have, the stronger we are. Plus we can't exactly bargain with management if we only have a half dozen members in the union.

MAMOOKI

Right, and we want to bargain with management.

JACK

Yes.

MAMOOKI

Why?

JACK

To get a better labor agreement. Isn't that why you're here?

MAMOOKI

... I forgot.

KABOOTAY  
Something about a pension.

JACK  
Right, pensions are a very important part of that.

MAMOOKI  
What's a pension?

JACK  
Okay, let's say that your current salary is – okay, that won't work because I don't understand your damn money. Okay, when you retire from your job, how are you going to pay your bills?

KABOOTAY  
...with my savings.

JACK  
Well, see, this is a better way. A pension is what the company pays you after you retire.

KABOOTAY  
But I don't want to work after I retire.

JACK  
You don't have to – the company pays you, anyhow.

MAMOOKI  
I get paid, even though I'm not working?

JACK  
Yeah.

KABOOTAY  
We should have no trouble getting members for this.

JACK  
See, it all makes sense now.

MAMOOKI  
Well, why do we need to be members now, can't we wait until we retire?

JACK  
Oh, no, there are a lot of things that the union does for you right now – it's called collective bargaining.

MAMOOKI

What's that?

JACK

Well, this way you don't have to go to your boss when you want a raise – the union does that. It ensures that you're on the proper pay scale and that you get step increases, raises and bonuses according to how long you've been working.

KABOOTAY

I like bonuses.

JACK

And even more important – it sets rules for what management can and can't do to you.

KABOOTAY

What do you mean?

JACK

Well, has management ever given you any trouble on the job?

KABOOTAY

What is management?

JACK

You know – the boss.

KABOOTAY

Oh, the boss, yes,....um...no, no trouble.

JACK

You've never been harassed by the boss?

KABOOTAY

Well sometimes he comes to my house and says "Kobootay, today is a working day. Please come to work."

JACK

You mean the boss tells you when to work?

KABOOTAY

Yes

JACK

See, you won't have to deal with that anymore. Under collective bargaining, management has to make a schedule and post it in advance so you can plan when you go to work.

Oh, they do that.

MAMOOKI

They make a schedule?

JACK

Oh, yes.

MAMOOKI

And they post it for you?

JACK

Yes, and they give us each a copy.

MAMOOKI

Then why does the boss come to your house to call you to work?

JACK

Sometimes I forget.

KABOOTAY

And sometimes I want to go fishing instead of work.

MAMOOKI

And what happens?

JACK

The boss comes down to the lagoon where I fish and says “Mamooki, today is good day for fishing, but we have many things to do at the factory, so I would ask you to please come to work today.”

MAMOOKI

Then what?

JACK

I go to work. The boss is a nice guy and I do not want him to get in trouble.

MAMOOKI

Yeah, see - that’s the kind of behavior we want to prevent. No reason to be oppressed by management.

JACK

This is very serious stuff.

KABOOTAY

JACK

Oh, yeah. We don't want Mehlot to be behind the rest of the industrial world. Okay, I'm thinking that the easiest way to do this is for you to go talk to all your co-workers. Tell them about the benefits of union membership – just like I explained to you. Then give them these cards.

(produces a stack of colored index cards)

These are their ballots. They just have to sign here and check “yes” on the union side, okay?

MAMOOKI and KABBOTAY

Right, Mr. Jack.

To read the full script, please contact the author at [dave@drichardtucker.com](mailto:dave@drichardtucker.com), and he will send you a copy free of charge.

ALTERNATE VERSION

ACT II, scene 1

Lights up on News Desk. BOBBY is seated at the desk wearing coat and tie.

BOBBY

And in the United States, nearly two hundred thousand Americans turned out for a rally at the Capitol in front of the Lincoln Memorial, for the First Annual Day of Diversity, celebrating the advancement in American civil rights, multicultural unity, and the end of family oppression ... I mean, racial oppression... um... This is Bobby Anchor with Mehlot's only All English News, right here on Channel Eight.

SOUND: Music denoting end of newscast.  
Lights out on News Desk. Lights up on family home. MR. OHNDUI, MRS. OHNDUI, JACK, and PHYLLIS are sitting in the living room drinking coffee.

PHYLLIS

So, Mr. and Mrs. Ohndui-

MRS. OHNDUI

Please, we are in-laws. Call us by our first names: Mahbekotto and Shariteesey

PHYLLIS

Right, Mah...be...

(giving up on the names)

It was very nice of you to join us.

MR. OHNDUI

It was our pleasure. We have not seen you since Bobby and Alita got married.

MRS. OHNDUI

It has been far too long.

PHYLLIS

I just love your stories about life here on the island.

JACK

It's a lot different than the first time we were here.

PHYLLIS

That was a while back.

MR. OHNDUI

Oh, yes, I had forgotten you have been here before.

MRS. OHNDUI

When Mr. Jack was in the Air Force.

PHYLLIS

Yes, we were on our way back from Okinawa and we had to take a ship because I was pregnant with Bobby and the Air Force doctors discouraged flying.

JACK

Phyllis was getting really sick on the boat – throwing up everywhere - so we got off to see a doctor and Bobby showed up – six weeks early.

PHYLLIS

Quite a coincidence – the whole dual citizenship thing.

MR. OHNDUI

We do not believe in coincidences.

JACK

It paid off pretty well. Bobby's happy here. Of course it's a lot different than Philly.

MR. OHNDUI

We wish to go to the States again someday.

BOBBY enters with a coffee pot.

BOBBY

More coffee anyone?



BOBBY tops of coffee cups.

MRS. OHNDUI

I want to go to the US to see the Grand Canyon.

PHYLLIS

Have you never been?

MR. OHNDUI

To the Grand Canyon, no. To the States, yes, but only when Alita was graduated at Rutgers.

MRS. OHNDUI

Rutgers University.

MR. OHNDUI

Yes, Rutgers University.

JACK

That must have been quite a surprise for you, sending your daughter to college, and she comes back with a husband.

MR. OHNDUI

We are very proud of her. And proud of Bobby as a son-in-law, too.

MRS. OHNDUI

Many times I tell people, my daughter is married to the newscaster on Channel Eight.

PHYLLIS

Yes, well, were pretty surprised when Bobby took the job here – he had offers in Newark and Cleveland and several other places, I can't remember them all. He could have gone any where he wanted.

MRS. OHNDUI

We are fortunate he came here.

ALITA enters with a cup of coffee and sits.

PHYLLIS

And we think Bobby is pretty lucky to have such charming in-laws. And such a lovely wife - look how she's grown.

MRS. OHNDUI feels ALITA's stomach.

MRS. OHNDUI

It's so exciting to see the baby coming along.

PHYLLIS

When my sister Evelyn was pregnant with Bobby's cousin Jennifer, Bobby wanted to see the baby – he was only about four at the time - so Evelyn held up her blouse and showed him her pregnant tummy. He looked at it for a minute and then said, "Turn on the light. I can't see the baby."

ALL laugh.

MRS. OHNDUI

We're very excited about a grandchild.

ALITA

Yes, I can't wait til the baby arrives. At least by then, I'll be through with my morning sickness.

MRS. OHNDUI

Maybe you should try acupuncture - I've heard that works.

JACK

I don't know - I'd rather vomit than have needles stuck in my body.

ALITA

It's not painful at all. Thanks, Mother, I'll check on that.

MR. OHNDUI

(to JACK)

I understand you wish to build a factory here. I am always impressed with the enterprising American spirit.

JACK

No, I had to drop that idea – too much trouble with funding. You have no idea how much capital that takes.

MR. OHNDUI

That is unfortunate.

JACK

Ah, it's okay. I'm thinking I'll jump to the other side of the fence – you, know, organized labor. Rather than rake in profits from the consumers, I can just skim the cream off the top with union dues – there's money to be made either way.

MR. OHNDUI

You Americans are so very industrious.

MRS. OHNDUI

Bobby has been very good at teaching us many things about American culture.

MR. OHNDUI

He has given me many insights about American literature – Hawthorne, Melville, Mark Twain.

JACK

Well, it's good those college classes came to some use.

MRS. OHNDUI

And we have many discussions about foreign films.

JACK

Oh, I like foreign movies, too.

MR. OHNDUI

Yes? What is your favorite foreign film?

JACK

Umm, I forget the name. It's about a stewardess, a really hot stewardess who lives with three other stewardess roommates. I think it's from Sweden.

MR. OHNDUI

I don't think we've seen that one.

MRS. OHNDUI

It doesn't sound familiar. My favorite foreign film is "Casablanca."

MR. OHNDUI

Yes, that's very good. My favorite is "Sunset Boulevard."

JACK

Those aren't foreign movies – they're American.

MR. OHNDUI

Well, to us, American movies are foreign.

MRS. OHNDUI

Yes. Actually, all movies are foreign for us. We've never had a movie made in Mehlol.

JACK

You know some movies you should see? "Smokey and the Bandit." That's a great flick.

MR. OHNDUI produces a pad and pen from his pocket and begins to write.

MR. OHNDUI

Smokey and...?

JACK

“Smokey and the Bandit.” The first one. Not the sequels – those were crap.

MR. OHNDUI

Thank you.

JACK

And “Reservoir Dogs.” Really good one. And “The Longest Yard.” In fact, anything with Burt Reynolds is sure to be good.

MR. OHNDUI

(writing)

Burt Reynolds.

JACK

Yeah.

PHYLLIS

(changing the subject)

So, it’s good you’ll be close enough to help when the baby comes – babies can be a handful.

MRS. OHNDUI

Yes.

PHYLLIS

Of course, with us here now, we’ll be able to help, too. Do you know if it’s a boy or girl, yet?

ALITA

No, we want a surprise.

PHYLLIS

So you haven’t picked out a name?

BOBBY

We decided if it’s a girl, she’ll have a Mehloti name.

ALITA

And if it’s a boy, he’ll have an American name.

PHYLLIS

Well, how international.

MR. OHNDUI

I think the child should have an American name, whether boy or girl.

PHYLLIS

Really?

MR. OHNDUI

Yes, I think that is important.

MRS. OHNDUI

Because the child will be biracial.

MR. OHNDUI

And certainly, when the baby grows up, he, or she, will want to go to America, but people may be confused by his, or her, appearance.

MRS. OHNDUI

It would be good for people to know the child is at least half American, and not just another Slant Eye.

JACK

I'm sorry.

MRS. OHNDUI

You know, "Slant Eye," like the Japs and the Nips.

MR. OHNDUI

And the Chinks.

JACK

Whoa. Hold on, ummm...you can't -

MR. OHNDUI

Oh, it's okay, we know much about American culture.

MRS. OHNDUI

Yes, we watch many American television shows. Especially "Comedy Central."

MR. OHNDUI

We think it's best to learn about Americans from the Americans themselves.

MRS. OHNDUI

And that American diversity is a cornerstone of your culture.

JACK

Sure, it's a melting pot, but you can't just say...you know...

MRS. OHNDUI

Can't say what?

MR. OHNDUI

You mean "Jap?" Or "Nip?"

MRS. OHNDUI

Or "Chink?"

JACK

You can't say that.

MRS. OHNDUI

Oh, yes, we can.

MR. OHNDUI

Some American words are difficult, but-

MRS. OHNDUI

Yes, like "legislature."

MR. OHNDUI

Yes, that is difficult. And "catastrophic."

MRS. OHNDUI

Also very hard.

MR. OHNDUI

But "Chink" is easy.

JACK grimaces every time the word is used.

MRS. OHNDUI

I just remember that it rhymes with "pink."

MR. OHNDUI

And "think."

MRS. OHNDUI

And also "sink."

MR. OHNDUI

Oh, yes. It is not hard to say.

JACK

No! That's not what I mean. I'm saying that that word...is...that word is...

MRS. OHNDUI

Can't you say it?

JACK

No!

MRS. OHNDUI

It is easy, here – say after me -

JACK

No! That's not what I mean! I can say it - I just can't say it! For the love of god, Bobby! Would you tell these people-

BOBBY

(to ALITA)

You want to help out a little here?

ALITA

(shaking her head)

I'm not an expert in American culture.

BOBBY

You see....in America we ...don't consider that a very good name.

MR. OHNDUI

Really?

MRS. OHNDUI

But Americans say it all the time.

JACK

No they don't!

MRS. OHNDUI

Oh, yes. Sarah Silverman said she wanted to get out of jury duty, so on her application, she wrote "I love Chinks."

PHYLLIS

Why would she do that?

MR. OHNDUI

She first wrote "I hate Chinks," but changed it because she didn't want to appear hateful..

MRS. OHNDUI

So she changed it to "I love Chinks." It's nice that she has such passion for Slant Eyes.

JACK

You can't-

MRS. OHNDUI

Yes, here in Mehlot, most women wish to marry those of their own race.

JACK

Oh, for cryin' out loud!

BOBBY

It's just that ...that word ... it's not a good name for a person – it's very derogatory.

MRS. OHNDUI

Derogatory – that is another difficult word. Much easier to say -

JACK

Please don't say that again!

BOBBY

Surely there must be Mehlotti words that aren't very nice.

MR. OHNDUI

Umm...yes. I suppose.

MRS. OHNDUI

Like "shoo- BAH-koo."

MR. OHNDUI

Yes, "shoobakoo." That is not a pleasant word.

BOBBY

What does it mean?

ALITA

"Shoobakoo?" Loosely translated ..."knucklehead."

MR. OHNDUI

But we still say it. We just don't call anybody "shoobakoo"

MRS. OHNDUI

Unless he's really a shoobakoo.

BOBBY

Look, I don't know any other way to say this- there are words we just don't say in America.

MRS. OHNDUI

I don't understand.



ALITA

Mother, perhaps you could tell us what you've learned about American culture.

BOBBY

Yes, perhaps that would help.

PHYLLIS

Are you sure this is a good idea?

MRS. OHNDUI

All right, well first we learned that there are many racial groups in America. The first group is the Whiteys. People like you, Mr. Jack.

MR. OHNDUI

And our son-in-law, Bobby,

MRS. OHNDUI

Yes, the Whiteys were at one time a majority, though now they aren't so much. There isn't much to know about Whiteys, they are pretty boring as racial groups go. We know that we're not supposed to trust Whiteys, but we're not sure why.

MR. OHNDUI

You seem like very nice people.

JACK

Oh my god.

MRS. OHNDUI

And then there are the Slant Eyes.

JACK

I think we've heard enough about them.

MR. OHNDUI

And the Mexicans, who come from Mexico and Ecuador and Puerto Rico and Cuba and Compton, California.

MRS. OHNDUI

They're called "Beaners."

JACK

Bobby?!

MRS. OHNDUI

And the Arab Americans, who are called towel heads – though I don't know why.

PHYLLIS

It's because they wear turbans.

MRS. OHNDUI

Oh! That makes sense now.

MR. OHNDUI

Yes, we did not think of that. I thought it was because they showered frequently.

MRS. OHNDUI

And the Indians.

MR. OHNDUI

Two kinds – Casino Indians and Help Desk Indians.

JACK

Bobby, I'm dying here.

MRS. OHNDUI

And then there are the black Americans-

JACK

Oh, God, no, not this!

MRS. OHNDUI

I forget what they're called.

MR. OHNDUI

Homeys.

MRS. OHNDUI

Yes, homeys. And brothers.

MR. OHNDUI

And sisters.

MRS. OHNDUI

There was one other name, I forget. Who was that comic that we heard?

MR. OHNDUI

Bill Cosby?

MRS. OHNDUI

No.

Eddie Murphy? MR. OHNDUI

No. MRS. OHNDUI

Richard Pryor? MR. OHNDUI

Yes, Richard Pryor, that's the one. He used the word. It started with an "N." MRS. OHNDUI

That's right, he called them – MR. OHNDUI

NO! JACK

I'm sorry? MR. OHNDUI

Don't say that word! JACK

You mean- MR. OHNDUI

Don't say it! JACK

Why not? MR. OHNDUI

Because it's an insult to black Americans. BOBBY

But I do not mean it as an insult – I am just saying the word. MR. OHNDUI

But it's a bad word! JACK

Watch it, Jack, your blood pressure. PHYLLIS

BOBBY

It reminds us of a time when things were not very good for black people in America.

PHYLLIS

It's a very bad word. Probably the worst word you can say.

MR. OHNDUI

I don't understand. There are many bad words – cancer... pedophilia... racism – these are all bad words, and yet when I say them, I am not calling you a disease, or a child molester, or a bigot. I am just saying words.

JACK

(snapping)

But it's wrong!

MR. OHNDUI

It's just a word.

JACK

It's a bad word!

MR. OHNDUI

But I do not mean any-

JACK

It doesn't matter what you mean. It's a bad word. We don't say it!

MR. OHNDUI

But the black people say it all the time.

JACK

No they don't!

MRS. OHNDUI

Oh, yes, the rappers all say it. And Dave Chappelle says it every time he talks about R. Kelly.

JACK

But you don't! You got that? You can't say that word

MR. OHNDUI

Please, we don't mean-

JACK

You can't say the N-word, you stupid gook!

There is a long silent awkward pause.

MR. OHNDUI

Then I shall not say it.

(pause)

I ... I feel that I have caused some tension in your home, Bobby. It was not my intention, and for this I am very sorry.

BOBBY

It's...umm... quite all right.

MRS. OHNDUI

Perhaps we should go now.

PHYLLIS

Oh, please stay.

MR. OHNDUI

No, it is late.

(to JACK and PHYLLIS)

We had a wonderful time with you, but now we should go.

MR. OHNDUI and MRS. OHNDUI get up to go. ALITA kisses them goodbye and opens the door.

MRS. OHNDUI

Many blessings to you.

MR. OHNDUI

Many blessings to you.

ALITA and BOBBY

Many blessings.

MR. OHNDUI

Next time, I promise we shall not say any of these forbidden words.

PHYLLIS

Well, it's probably a good thing you know that, so when you go to the States...it won't be an issue.

MR. OHNDUI

Perhaps so.

Good night.  
MRS. OHNDUI

Good night.  
PHYLLIS

MR. OHNDUI and MRS. OHNDUI exit and  
ALITA closes the door behind them.

What is the matter with you?  
PHYLLIS

Nothing! I was just – they kept saying all those -  
JACK

They don't know any better. And you shouldn't call him names.  
PHYLLIS

But the N-word -  
JACK

How are they supposed to know? They're not black, they're not white – it's an honest  
mistake! I'll start the dishes, Alita.  
PHYLLIS

PHYLLIS exits into the kitchen. JACK and  
BOBBY exchange looks.

I think I'll turn in.  
JACK

JACK exits. BOBY and ALITA exchange  
looks, but BOBBY doesn't know what to  
say.

I'm really sorry.  
BOBBY

They just don't understand.  
ALITA

After what he said to your dad –  
BOBBY

Bobby, it's difficult to adapt to a new culture.  
ALITA

**BOBBY**

By the time they get through with it, there won't be any culture left.

**BOBBY** exits down the hallway. **ALITA** pauses, takes a deep breath, and exits into the kitchen. Blackout.