

PUBLIC SECRETS FROM PERU

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Introduction

In deciding to create a drama about violence in Peru, I have moved away from the usual academic discourse into the arena of performance¹. I have made this move for a number of reasons: foremost is my desire that English-speaking audiences (and readers) hear the words of those whose stories I and my colleagues have recorded because I know that tales of terror engender denial on the part of the listener. Perhaps dramatic form can provide a tolerable means of communication as a product of imagination, a fantasy, and to borrow a phrase that Taussig used in 1993 at a lecture at Cornell -- it captures the 'reality of the really made up' My hope is that by the end of this play, my interlocutor will have a new sense of the complex motivations of victimizers and victims caught in an increasing spiral of violence.

Another reason is more personal, performance is a way to rid myself of the secrets that plague my dreams and sit on the edge of my imagination. I hear the voices of the women of Peru who march demanding the return of their desaparecidos' (their disappeared loved ones) who have stitched images of their loved-ones' names and faces on arpilleras and on the 'quilt of the disappeared.' These Peruvian women share powerful forms of protest with the Mothers and Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina and the women in Chile who daily danced the Cueca to draw attention to their missing partners. All of these women have created performances to dispel the 'public secrets' that are vital to maintain the culture of terror (Taussig 1992). But their compatriots didn't want to hear the women's voices, see their dances, nor display their stitched stories in public spaces. They were the crazy ones (*las locas*), the mad mothers who confronted the hallucinations of patriarchal power and rejected the long-suffering silent roles traditionally assigned to them.

Now for a few mind numbing statistics that readers usually forget immediately: since 1980 at least 30,000 have died in Peru's 'dirty war'; 3,000 have been officially 'disappeared' by the government's forces of order. By 1992 the number of internally displaced reached 600,000. In 1991-92, ten people died every day in politically motivated violence. Moreover, due to Fujimori's economic policies to reduce inflation,

down from 7,650% in 1990 to 57% in 1992, almost half of Peru's 22 million citizens live in poverty, and half of those in extreme poverty. Half of Peru's population (48%), including the 8 million inhabitants of Lima, have lived in emergency zones governed by the military and police without civil liberties nor the right of *habeas corpus* for more than 10 years. Since Abimael Guzmán's capture in 1992, the number of people murdered by the Communist Party of Peru, Sendero Luminoso, (PCP-SL), declined from 958 in 1992 to 516 in 1993, and of these 145 were military personnel. Among civilians, PCP-S.L. especially targeted civil patrols (*rondas campesinas*) and grassroots organizers. The level of killing by government forces declined dramatically in 1992 - 93, with 114 extrajudicial killings in 1992 and 31 in 1993. Among these, 36 university students were killed during detention and questioning: All of the victims' bodies showed signs of torture (1994 State Department, Peru Human Rights Report).

James Brooke reported in The New York Times (Feb. 22, 1993) that new legislation in Peru provides a means of intimating the press with life imprisonment for "apology of terrorism." Four reporters were jailed in 1992 and teachers found guilty of proselytizing for Shining Path will receive life imprisonment. The two lawyers who defended Abimael Guzmán in the military tribunal in October of 1992 were convicted of treason in January, 1993 and sentenced to life in prison. The military tribunals that try most of the cases of terrorism and treason are secret and the three judges hooded. Under international pressure, civil courts tried a few cases in 1993. The military tribunals, made up of officers on active duty with no training in the law, have a 75% conviction rate. The trials are swift and expeditious; judgment must be passed within 10 days. A case can be appealed to the War Council, which has 10 days to make its decision. In 1992, a national referendum instituted the death penalty, but President Fujimori stated that restraint would be exercised to avoid evoking it.

The way I went about creating this piece was to imagine that one of the women interviewed in 1986 worked as the maid and cook in the home of the Cultural Attaché of the American Embassy, who along with his wife, are concerned about human rights abuses in Peru. I call the maid María Vilca. The two women, Agripina Tucno and Carla Quispe, who are visiting María and tell their stories in scene II are modeled after women I interviewed in 1991 after the disappearances of four elected officials in Chuschi, Peru (Isbell 1998). Their stories are 'real' in that the dialogue comes from interviews; however, I have juxtaposed their stories next to the conversations I have heard among Embassy personnel and their wives. The stories the Embassy wives tell are the usual

“have you heard?” stuff of cocktail and dinner parties in Lima during the ‘dirty war’ in the late 80’s and early 90’s. The story told by Juana Pacotaípe, María’s grandmother, in scene IV is derived from an interview taped in 1986. The Embassy Attachés’ conversations are from bits and pieces that have plagued my memory. Of all the dialogue in the play, their conversations are perhaps the most difficult to believe. It is as if the Embassy attachés are creating parodies of themselves. Perhaps they are: I have only fictionalized the specific characters, and the setting, not their speech.

PUBLIC SECRETS FROM PERU

Lima, June of 1993

CAST OF CHARACTERS BY SCENE

Scene I: Charles and Becky Johnson's living room where three couples have adjourned after dinner. Three women are seated to one side of the room and their husbands on the other. Lights go up on the women and the men are in shadow.

Becky Levy-Johnson: The cultural attaché's wife, early thirty's and six months pregnant with her first child. She is the only wife present who speaks Spanish. She and her husband are concerned about human rights and Becky volunteers in a hospital that treats victims of violence and trauma and she distributes aid to *vaso de leche* programs, communal food kitchens of Lima. She is tall and has dark, curly hair and serious, large blue eyes. She and Charles Johnson met at Berkeley.

Pat Cavanaugh: The military attaché's wife, in her mid-fifty's, is a career foreign service wife with 20 years of experience and the mother of two college-age boys. Peru is her husband's first assignment in South America and the daily violence in Lima contributes to her drinking problem. Pat is short and pudgy with nervous hands that are always fluttering. She dyes her hair blond to cover the gray and tells everyone that she is on a diet.

Susan Philips: The political attaché's wife is in her early 40's. She is also a career foreign service wife and is a close friend of Pat's. They have served in two posts together - in Afghanistan and El Salvador. Susan still retains her New England scrubbed look. She is athletic- plays tennis and swims regularly. She contemplated modeling after college but chose marriage to George Philips instead. They were both in the top ten percent of their Yale graduating class.

María Vilca: The maid: A Quechua-speaking woman who has worked for Becky for six months, since her arrival from the south-central highland department of Ayacucho. She has Indian features; dark complexion, almond eyes, short square body. Her long braids are pinned up under her maid's cap. She wears a black uniform, white apron and black shoes. She could be 'anybody's maid in Lima.'

Scene II: In the Kitchen of the Johnson House. Three Andean women sit at the kitchen table, which is covered with neat stacks of small squares of cloth. The women are sewing arpilleras, the stitched stories of attacks on their communities and disappearances of their loved ones.

Agripina Tucno: A young woman from the same village in the department of Ayacucho as María. They both were members of the same *vaso de leche* program in a squatter settlement outside of Lima where they met Becky Johnson when she came to the soup kitchen to distribute surplus food from U.S. AID. The three women learned to make *arpilleras* from a Dutch non-governmental organization that markets them in Europe. The women work on their *arpilleras* as they talk, occasionally choosing from the scraps of brightly colored material, cutting them to fit their stories. Agripina has severe, new burns on the right side of her face. She is dressed in black to indicate that she is in mourning - a long black wool skirt of hand-spun alpaca wool, black satin blouse, and a battered black hat sits on the table beside her. She is such a new arrival to Lima that she has not had time or the money to change her rubber tire sandals.

Carla Quispe: A young woman from Ayacucho in her late 20's. She has two years of college training as a health worker. She fled from a small community in the highlands where she had been working when Shining Path killed her co-worker. She is dressed in black as well, but manufactured clothing, a skirt and blouse, plastic shoes. Her Indian facial features are sprinkled with freckles which gives her a whimsical, yet charming appearance. Agripina and Carla visit María every weekend to work on their *arpilleras* and catch up on gossip from the highlands.

Juana Pacotaípe: María's grandmother, is a short, square, Quechua-speaking woman in her 60's. Her face and hands are weathered and worn; her feet are wide and so calloused that she cannot wear shoes. Her feet are encased in worn rubber tire sandals. She has several wool skirts on and the top one is tucked up in front holding some kind of parcel.

She constantly interrupts her sewing to adjust or pat it. Her hair is jet black and her most notable features are her intelligent and piercing eyes.

Scene III: In the Living Room: Becky, Susan and Pat, continue to chat. María moves about the room serving the guests. The lights go up on the three Embassy staffers who are discussing the situation in Peru.

George Philips: the political attaché: A career state department man in his late forty's. He is a counter-insurgency expert who served in Viet-Nam, Afghanistan and El Salvador with Bill, the military attaché, under the same ambassador who is currently serving in Peru. Like his wife, he is tall, tanned and fit with pleasant brown eyes and graying hair and mustache.

Col. Bill Cavanaugh: the military attaché. A career Army man dressed in his uniform complete with ribbons. He shares the same expertise with George - counter-insurgency- and the two accompanied the new ambassador to Peru. Bill is medium height with a considerable paunch around his middle. His face shows the wear and tear of his long service in difficult posts.

Charles Johnson: the cultural attaché. The youngest of the attachés, he's in his mid-thirty's, has sandy hair and an open pleasant face with clear blue eyes, and is somewhat lanky. He never seems to know what to do with his large square hands. Peru is his second post in the Foreign Service and he won a human rights award from the state department for his work there. He and his wife Becky are returning to the states for the birth of their first child.

Scene IV: María's grandmother, Juana, is sitting at the kitchen table with Carla and Agripina. She takes the opportunity to recount her story to them as they work on their arpilleras. María moves about the kitchen preparing to attend the Johnsons and their guests.

Scene V: María, alone in the kitchen at the end of the evening.

STAGE SETTING

The stage is split into two scenes: The Johnson's' living room and their kitchen: action alternates between the two.

A screen is behind and above the characters and between scenes, images are projected onto the screen along with sound. Many of the images are of the *arpilleras* that the women are stitching or other protest folk art, some are of typical daily activities, or of fiestas in highland communities of Ayacucho. As the play progresses, the images of daily life are replaced by newspaper black and white pictures of: a masked *Sinchi*, a member of the anti-terrorism forces, shots of soldiers marching on a community, or of PCP-SL graffiti. Included are close ups of scenes from *arpilleras*, *retablos*, a folk art from Ayacucho that appears as a three dimensional, multileveled box. They were first created to depict religious scenes. During the 'dirty war', artists turned to depicting scenes of terror. One other folk art is used in the visuals: *tablas*, paintings on wood that served to commemorate life events such as marriage in the community of Sarhua, Department of Ayacucho. These also became a media of protest.

SCENE I

The Johnson living room:

Lights come up on the three wives seated right of center stage. María, the maid, moves about serving coffee and dessert. Susan, the political attaché's wife: **We just extended our stay for another year. I think my husband is crazy but he says the hazard pay is excellent and he's just beginning to get things done with the cooperation of the National Intelligence Agency.**

Becky Johnson, the cultural attaché's wife and hostess of the dinner party: **I wouldn't let my husband extend our duty here, no way! Lima is too dangerous. I don't want to have my baby here.**

She protectively folds her arms across her pregnant belly.

We are out of here next month. We'd rather be the cultural attaché in the South Bronx. Did you hear about Betty Wright's music teacher?

Pat Cavanaugh, the military attaché's wife: **My God, yes! They say that her music teacher was a member of the revolutionary group, MRTA. She had a one-room prison under her living room, where her pupils were taught their lessons.**

Susan Philips, the political attaché's wife: **Oh my God! Are you kidding? My kids take lessons from her too! When did this happen? She comes to our house for their lessons once a week! My husband will just die! He's been so careful!**

Pat: **You and your family could have been targets. MRTA's game is to finance their revolutionary activities with ransom monies. I can just see the headlines, U.S. Embassy Political Attaché's Children Kidnapped. MRTA Demands Half a Million Dollars in Ransom!**

They say she and her husband had been holding an industrialist for five months.
✓ The negotiations were leaked and ^{that's} ~~that~~ how the intelligence agency caught them.
What better way to secure funds than to snatch Embassy kids?

Becky: **But they've never kidnapped American Embassy children before ... have they?...Surely, Charles would have told me....**

Again she protects her unborn child and looks back and forth at the other two women.

Pat: **No, but did you know that Mary Moreno's son was grabbed while she was stopped for a red light? Right through the window of her car!**

Susan: **Holy Shit! What happened?**

Pat: **She grabbed his legs just as they were about to disappear out the window and held on for dear life!**

Susan: **And??**

Pat: **Well, her kid was screaming bloody murder, he's only three years old, you know. She says she put her feet against the passenger door, braced herself like this**

She demonstrates --putting her feet out straight and grabbing onto an imaginary child with her arms. She shuts her eyes and grimaces

... And just kept holding on. Finally, the kidnapper let go and ran.

She opens her eyes and looks at the other two women.

Becky, be a sweetheart and have your maid bring me a brandy. Will you please?

Becky: **María, serva la señora un coñac, por favor.**

María: **Sí, Señora.**

María leaves the room.

Becky: **Was her son all right? (pause) Was he hurt?**

Pat: **No, not much, he had scraped legs and bruises, but he's all right,.... physically, anyway. Mary claims that he's two inches taller! She laughs and drains her glass.**

Susan: **Do they have any idea who the kidnapper was? It doesn't sound like Shining Path or MRTA.**

Pat: **No, it was probably some of the military: you know some of the officers were *fired* last year during that big scandal. Remember, about 50 military officers were fired by the president. They say that those guys have turned all of their skills into making kidnapping a very lucrative business.**

End of Scene I

SCENE II

Three women are seated at a table in the kitchen. María enters from the living room and begins preparing a tray of drinks for her employers and their guests. All of the women are *serranas*, Quechua-speakers from the department of Ayacucho. The three women are chatting and stitching *arpilleras*.

Agripina: People should know. They're keeping it a secret. They've disappeared our elected officials. What kind of democracy is this?

She touches the burns on her face and continues.

It was in the time of Capitán Gomez. He called everyone together in the plaza and threatened to disappear every one of us if we didn't organize civil patrols. The elected officials said that the patrols are used to march against neighboring communities and besides, our crops and animals would be neglected. Look, I've shown the helicopters arriving to take the officials away. They tied the mayor to a rope from the helicopter and dropped him over the mountains....pause...she shows her stitched story to the other two women. The three women look at the *arpillera* as Agripina smooths it out on the table.

Agripina: Así desaparecido!

(pause)

Clara: María, do you think that your employers can help us?

María turns from the counter where she is working and answers:

I hope so. They've helped many people. I'm so sorry that they're leaving. Who knows what their replacements will be like?

Clara: The new official is due to arrive next month, right?

María: Yes, I hope I can continue to work for her, but she has no family and may not want a cook. She turns back to her work.

Agripina: The officials refused and then it happened. pause

In the night they came wearing black masks and took the officials out of their beds. We knew it was Gomez; he was easy to recognize even with a mask on. His soldiers called him El Largo. His big bigote stuck out of his mask and he is so tall and thin that he is easy to recognize. Besides, none of the soldiers changed their shoes. We recognized their boots.

Juana, the old woman looks up and says:

Yes, you can always tell the soldiers by their boots.

She pats the bundle tucked in her skirts and continues with her work.

María stops and turns and places her hands on the old woman's shoulder.

María: Abuela, don't get excited. You are safe here in Lima. You can stay with me. I am sure the señora will say it's all right. My grandmother even sleeps with that bundle. It never leaves her. I tried to take it away to put it on a shelf in my room and she began to cry. You would think it's her baby.

Juana, the grandmother, looks up and mutters something in Quechua and clutches her bundle.

María return to the counter and resumes her work.

Carla: In the community where I was sent to work, we were more afraid of Sendero. The military scared us too. Women are now so afraid they refuse to nurse their babies. They believe that their nightmares are passed on to their babies in their milk. (pause)

All of the women nod and mutter yes, that's true. Agripina touches her breast.

Carla: What I am going to tell you is true, but it has been kept a secret, there have been no reports, no stories in the newspapers and no investigations. I was a health worker in the seventh annex of San Pedro, a community called Lechemayoq. It was in the time of Sendero. They came a thousand strong and killed young and old. Then they cut off the flesh and carried it off to feed their army. Sendero is the new ñakag, the pistaco. Remember the stories about how the pistacos suck out body fat?

Agripina: Yes, The ñakag walk at night, especially in the high places; they can cut you open and extract your body fat without you even knowing it.

Juana crosses herself.

Carla: They say that when the Spanish arrived, they collected the body fat to cast bells for churches. And during Garcia's presidency...they say he made a deal with the ñakaq to bring all the body fat they collected to Lima so the president could send it to foreign banks to pay the national debt! Imagine! Es la verdad? Quien sabe?

María turns and laughs and says:

María: DIOS MIO, NO PUEDE SER!

Juana mumbles a short prayer and crosses herself again.

Agripina: It is true, I know people who have been ñakueado. They dried up like a mummy and died.

Carla: But now the Nakaq are different.... Sendero takes our flesh and we are left with rivers of bones. Thousands of bones are flowing out of the highlands into the selva. I stayed in hiding for months and when I finally came out...people showed me the river of bones. I have nightmares about them.

She covers her eyes with her hands and sighs. She turns to Agripina and says:

What happened to your face?

Agripina gently places her right hand over the right side of her face and says:

Agripina: t happened like this ...my husband and two other elected officials from my village were taken by the commander of the guardia post, El Largo, and his men. pause, she continues stitching.

I saw my own husband being dragged out... he was tortured and beaten. when he and the other were taken from guardia post. In all we were about fifteen women who waited all night outside. We saw every thing. The helicopter arrived and the guardia put them in and carried them off like a condor.

Carla: Que terrible!

The old woman clutches her bundle and mutters something in Quechua. She reaches over and pats Agripina's arm.

María steps over with a cup and tea and places it in front of Agripina and stands by the table.

Agripina: We ran over the hills and arrived at the barracks in Cangallo. Look I've shown the barracks with its radio tower that calls the helicopters. The Guardia kept us away by shooting at us. All we could do was watch from the hills. See, I've shown that too. A man told us that three men were taken inside before we arrived... the fourth was probably killed along the way. Three days and finally the Capitán came out to talk to us. We demanded to see our loved ones and he said they had not been brought to his barracks. When we said people saw them enter! He began to shout: Indios brutos, vayan de aqui! If you don't leave, I'll have you shot! We knew that he would too!

She stops and puts sugar in her tea then she covers her burned face with her hands.

Carla: Did you return to your village?

Agripina: Yes, I was afraid. I felt guilty leaving but I had to return to my children. I left them in my mother's care. My store had been closed for five days. Things could be stolen. I returned on the third day and I got home that night. It was a long walk back, and after checking on my children and my mother, I fell sound asleep on the floor of the store, which is in the front of my house. I woke up to hear my mother banging on the door, shouting: 'Fire, Fire!!'..... My house and store were on fire! I ran to the back room to get my children. The two older ones were awake but the baby was in my bed and it was enveloped in smoke. I couldn't get to her.

María: Oh no, did your baby die? Is that how you were burned?

Agripina: Yes, she died, and I'm sure El Largo and his men set the fire. I want everyone to know it! I want them sent to jail, animales, brutos, salvajes!

María: Sh-sh, calmete, they will hear you in the living room.

Agripina: I want them to know! I want everyone to know! El Largo, that's the name Gomez uses. We know who he is, even with his mask on. He disappeared our elected officials. They can't keep it a secret any longer!

Carla: Didn't your village request a Guardia post to protect you from Sendero?

Agripina: Yes, and now we need protection from the Guardia! Who's going to protect us? Fujimori? Los Gringos! Vaya, ni hablar!

Carla: Que barbaridad! Why did he do it? Are you sure it was Capitán Gomez?

Agripina: Of course we're sure. Two days before he disappeared my husband and the other officials, he gathered everyone in the plaza and said: 'If you don't form the civil patrol like I order, I'll disappear the whole lot of you!' he was so angry that his big bigote, his mustache shook.

She draws his mustache in the air with her two hands in front of her lips and wiggles her fingers. Then places her right hand over her burns.

My husband, the gobernador, refused to give in. He tried to explain that the community had voted against the civil patrol. The patrols have attacked neighboring villages all over the region and besides. Sendero has been wiped out, haven't they? We don't need patrols.

María: DIOS MIO!! You said the elected officials were disappeared in five villages? How many in all? When?

Agripina: Last year. Seventeen, including all of the candidates for election in one community. And just because they all voted against the civil patrols. What kind of democracy is this?

Carla: Verdad. Has there been an investigation?

Agripina: No, our case appeared on the international urgent action list of human rights organizations but after Fujimori's autogolpe ...remember he then disbanded

Congress, so nothing was ever done, except that Gomez was transferred and God's only knows what the next Capitán will be like.

Carla: We are between the sword and the fire.

Agripina covers her burns with her hand and shakes her head affirmatively.

A bell can be heard ringing from the living room and María says:

María: please serve the señores.

She leaves the room and the lights dim. The screen above the stage is illuminated with the visuals of the *arpilleras*.

End of Scene II

SCENE III

This scene switches back to the living room and the lights come up on the three chatting women. The audience can just see their husbands talking on the far side of the room. María enters with a tray of liquor bottles and glasses.

Susan: Becky, finish the story about our favorite music teacher.

Susan turns to Becky, the cultural attaché's wife, who continues her story. As she talks she nervously protects her unborn child with her arms.

Becky: Well, I guess the intelligence agencies had suspected her for some time. She was using her music profession as a cover to case possible kidnap victims. A perfect cover. Just picture it. While little Johnny is playing Mozart, she's making a mental map of how to break in and snatch someone! How bizarre!

Susan: My God! Aren't people checked out before we get their names as possible teachers for our children?

Pat: Sure, she was from a good family, a graduate from Catholic University with a master's degree in anthropology. She was a concert pianist and had toured all over Latin America. It's too much isn't it? Where's my drink?

Becky: And Mary Albright says she found a machine gun under her maid's bed. Just imagine, under her bed, for God's sake!

María steps over with the tray of drinks and serves Pat, who downs her drink and extends her glass for another. María moves to Susan's side with the tray.

**Susan: MY GOD!! WE HAVE A NEW MAID AND A NEW WACHI - MAN !!!
I'd better check under their beds when I get home!**

She looks María up and down carefully as she serves herself a drink.

Pat: No, just check under your maid's bed. She's more likely a senderista than your wachi - man. Sendero recruits young girls from the highlands to work in our homes. It's scary.

The lights shift to the three men on the other side of the room.

George, the political attaché: You've heard that I've extended my tour for another year? I think that we're really getting somewhere now that Guzmán has been captured.

Charles, the cultural attaché and host of the dinner party: I think you're nuts. I am so glad to be out of here. I wish the new cultural attaché one hell of a lot the luck. When I remember that I discussed the possibility of a cultural exchange tour with a Peruvian prima ballerina who later turns out to be a high-ranking member of Shining Path! Jesus H. Christ! That really caps my career! I'll probably be sent to Haiti!

George: No, you're wife's pregnant, you'll probably be sent to someplace like Honduras. Nothing's happening there any more.

Bill, the military attaché, stands up and paces back and forth with his hands behind his back:

You know, Peruvian intelligence is doing a damn good job. They've developed the best intelligence on the continent, with the help from the Southern command and our satellites, of course.

George: That's true, maybe we'll win this damn war after all, now that Guzmán has been captured. Imagine he was right here in Lima.

Bill: Hopefully, but we've still got a tough insurgency going here. And, do you know something? These little brown folks don't care who rules them (pause)..... as long as they've got full bowls of rice.

The other two men look at him somewhat puzzled and laugh.

Charles: Bill, you're not in Viet Nam, ... these little brown folks don't eat rice; (pause...) they eat potatoes, you stupid bastard.

Bill: Well, whatever they eat, it's damn difficult to tell who's a friend and who's a foe. (pause...) Just like Nam. Jesus, even children are gun-toting terrorists.

George: Do you remember cartoons in El Comercio when Miraflores was bombed? People were fed up. But now Limeños are finally supporting the government's anti-terrorist efforts. With the new constitution and new congress Peru's moving toward democracy. I wish we could implement the "Three D" policy that is so successful in Bolivia: Drugs, Democracy.... and Development. (pause)....he lifts his glass and downs his drink. Doesn't that have a nice ring to it? But first, we need the funding from congress to professionalize the Peruvian military and the national police.

Charles: Drugs, Democracy and Development, my ass! What kind of democracy is this? Suspended civil liberties, hooded military judges, life imprisonment for lawyers who defend those charged with terrorism...long pause...and the jails are full of people who haven't been charged. Charles wrings his hands and stares at the floor. The he looks up at George and asks:

Is professionalization enough? Even with the human dignity campaign of the armed forces, abuses are still occurring. What about the disappearances of the professor and nine students from La Cantuta University? The army and the National Intelligence Service were implicated.

Bill: Charles, you're a good sort ... everyone knows you've won a human rights award and all that ... but for Christ's sake do you have to be such a bleeding heart? Both a civilian and military court indicted 13, including 8 officers. What more do you want?

George: Our counterinsurgency program has really worked well. We've really brought Peruvian intelligence up to speed. Just think, not only that fanatic Guzmán has been captured, but also 200 top level Shining Path from the central committee on down. Fantastic!

Bill: What do you think of so many women belonging to Shining Path? And, at the highest level too.

George: Yes, and they're not Indians either. They're educated..... school teachers, university professors, ballerinas, music teachers. He laughs and points an accusing finger at Charles.

Charles: Please don't remind me. Who would ever expect that such women would be revolutionaries?

Bill: The law of repentance is working well. Over 2000 Senderistas have turned themselves in. We're winning this God Damned war. Foreign investment is pouring in. Privatization is on schedule. Soon, real democracy will be established.

Charles: Real democracy! What are you talking about? Each time a member of Shining Path 'repents' he or she has to name five, maybe, ten insurgents. How many innocent people are in jail waiting for their trial with those nameless, hooded, military judges?

George: Damnit Charlie, we have explained this to you over and over again. The judges have to be hooded to protect their identity.

Charles: And they're the judges who are going to try the officers indicted for human rights abuses. There is not a chance in hell they will be convicted. I want those bastards convicted! In the ten years of this war there's been only one

conviction of military personnel for abuse of power. And he is rumored to back on active duty.

He stands up and begins to pace back and forth.

Charles: And what about the radio journalist that sponsored the human rights program? He's receiving death threats. And what about the woman organizer, Santosa Layme Bejar, who spoke out against Sendero from her 'vaso de leche' program; she's been picked up as a Sendero sympathizer. She's probably being tortured and raped right now! Not one soldier or policeman has been charged with rape!

Bill: Charlie, get a hold of yourself. We're fighting a war here. And after all ... (pause...) ...as Bill stands up and spreads his arms..... It's the only war we've got.

George: Yes, that's right, the policy we need toward Peru is not absolute human rights. That'll never work. What we need is a policy of (...pause) balanced human rights.

Charles: What in the hell does that mean? A weekly quota on disappearances?

María comes over to their chairs with the tray of drinks. The three men turn to look at her and as they do, the lights fade until only their faces are lit. As they look at María, the phrases:

'These little brown folks', 'The only war we've got' and 'balanced human rights' reverberate back and forth until they become noises and then rhythms. Visuals are flashed quickly on the screen above the stage.

End of Scene III

SCENE IV

The scene takes place in the kitchen. María has returned with the tray and the three other women are still seated at the table. María sits down across the table from her grandmother, reaches and brushed a strand of hair out of her face. Juana stops sewing and begins to finger her battered, black felt hat that sits on the table. Strands of unkempt,

black hair frame her wrinkled face. Her long thin braids hang down her back and are tied together with a black, wool, hand-woven ribbon with balls of yarn at the end.

She opens the folds of her skirt and takes out a board about a foot long and holds it in her right hand and then she places it on the table. She then takes a folded, somewhat tattered, sheet of paper from the folds of her skirt and holds it up for María to see

Juana: Ay y, María, DIOS MIO, I don't think I have slept since the ronderos, the civil patrol, took your uncle, José, and my son-in-law, Juan, away in the middle of the night. Remember?" They tied my son's wife, Marta, up with her own chumpi and threw her on the floor and kicked her in the stomach. She was pregnant. We found her unconscious and her baby came early but thank God, she and the baby survived.

long pause, Agripina reaches over and pat the old woman's hand.
Clara puts down her *arpillera* and leans over to look at Juana's bundle.

Juana: The world is upside down, no cierto??

María comes over and kneels next to her grandmother's side. She puts her arms around her and strokes her hair.

Long pause as María speaks softly in Quechua to her grandmother.

Juana: The ronderos said they had an order to arrest José and Juan. How could they? They're not the military. They could be anyone, terrucos, Senderistas, or even from the next village. They were hooded so we couldn't see their faces. They took six men away and we haven't seen them since. They must have had enemies who were envious of them. My son had been threatened by the ronderos because he refused to join their patrols.

María: Abuelita, it's all right, you're safe here. We'll do something. We'll find them.

Agripina touches the burned side of her face and says: **No you won't. You'll never see them again.**

Clara shakes her head affirmatively: **That's right. They've been disappeared.**

Juana: Remember?? Josefina was up in the pastures with the animals, so she didn't see her husband snatched right out of his bed.

María: Yes, abuelita, I remember.

Juana: When Marta, recovered enough to travel, she and Josefina and I walked to Cangallo to file a denuncia with the capitán at the barracks. We waited several days and then we were told that he had gone to Ayacucho.... we should have returned home but instead we went to Ayacucho and filed our denuncia with a lawyer. He gave us this paper and told us to present it to the capitán.

She holds the paper up. It is dingy, limp and frayed around the edges.

María takes the paper gingerly from her grandmother's hands and smooths it out on the table. Agripina and Clara each pick it up in turn.

Juana: I don't know how to read this, but I know that this is a habeas corpus. Josefina knows how to read. She explained everything to me. This paper goes everywhere with me. I even sleep with it. We made five trips before the capitán of the barracks in Cangallo would see us. He looked at the paper and said, 'Old woman, this is useless. You have to name the attackers. How can we find your son and son-in-law without knowing who kidnapped them?'

I said I told everything to the lawyer in Ayacucho. They were kidnapped by ronderos. Their faces were covered and they called each other by nicknames like: lobo, condor, coyote. Animal names. How could we know their identities?

María: Yes, grandmother, I know the whole story.

Juana: Then the capitán said: 'Go home! You foolish old woman. The law says that you have to be able to identify your attackers. We don't know anything about your son and son-in-law. Sendero probably took them.'

Agripina: They always say that. How can we identify the attackers when they are hooded, except for el bigote! She laughs and almost become hysterical. Clara goes to her side, kneels and butts her arms around her. They both rock back and forth, sobbing.

María: Finish your tea Abuela; it's time for bed.

Juana: I told that capitán: The ronderos told us they had an order for the arrest of men in our village. If there was an order it had to come from you! I shook the paper in his face like this.

Juana picks up the paper and shakes it in the air.

Juana: He shouted: 'Get out, Get out!'!!!. .. 'Animales, brutos, Indios de mierda. Afuera de aqui!' I hate these uncivilized savages. Don't they know we are fighting a war here?'

María: Calmate, Abuelita, calmate.

Juana: As we left he was kicking chairs over and still shouting insults. Ha! He calls us uncivilized! We're the original civilization! We are the Incas!

A long pause and then Juana smooths the paper out on the table and then she runs the index finger of her right hand along the lines of type as if she could read every word.

Agripina and Clara look up at her.

Juana: He knows. He knows what happened to my son and son-in-law, but he's keeping it secret. That's his job ... to keep secrets.

She slowly and carefully folds the paper up and tucks it back into her skirt. She reaches across the table and lifts up the stick she had tucked in her bundle and points to an outline of a boot that she has scratched onto the stick. She shows the board to María, and then to Agripina and Clara, who each traces the outline of the boot with her index finger.

Juana: I want justice. We will not stand for any more abuse!

María looks at her grandmother tenderly and says:

Yes, grandmother, I know.

Juana: This is my other piece of proof!

(María whispers after her grandmother: **This is my other piece of proof.**)

Juana takes the board and holds it up.

Juana: We filed our denuncia last year with the judge and he said: ‘don’t worry little abuelita, I’ll write a memo to the barracks. A memo! Since then the soldiers from Cangallo have not let us alone. They have stolen everything -- our radio, a lamb I had tied in back of my house, even chickens and eggs. But this is el colmo !! I brought my only cow down from the high pasture to feed in my fields over there near Rangra Cruz and they crept in like thieves in the night and carried her off! My last cow! What am I do to? No cheese to sell in the market! My only source of cash!

She looks at the audience:

Juana: Now, I’ll tell you MY secret. I went to the barracks to denounce the soldiers. Carajo! They were all drunk and asleep, even the capitán. No one stopped me as I tiptoed into the barracks and measured the feet of each sleeping soldier. Like this.

She holds up the stick as if she were measuring various feet. And then displays the scratch marks on the stick to the audience.

Juana: After several tries, I found him! I found the culprit! His foot fit exactly! Then I started looking for my cow. (long pause....)

But all I found were bones and a smoldering fire. They disappeared my little cow. They ate it.

María: Come grandmother, it’s time for bed.

Lights fade slowly.

End of Scene IV

SCENE V

María is resting her head on her arms on the kitchen table. Her workday has ended her grandmother is asleep in her room. She is alone in the kitchen. The audience cannot see her face. A battered, black hat sits on the table beside her. When she raises her head slowly and looks directly at the audience, a single light illuminates her features: she is short, about 25, dark-skinned with Andean features. She could be 'anybody's maid in Lima.' Her black eyes look deep set and hollow. Her hair is braided in two braids that are tied together and hang about half way down her back. She has taken off her maid's uniform and she is dressed in a black cardigan sweater, black blouse and black pleated skirt. She has taken off her black hat and turns it nervously in her lap as she talks. She often looks down at her rubber shoes (Siete Vidas), which appear to be too narrow for her feet. They make her feet sweat and she lifts her feet in and out of her shoes, often resting her bare feet on top of the shoes. She also repeatedly wipes her hands on her skirt as she speaks. As she slowly raises her head, she places her index finger of her right hand to her lips and turns her head to slowly sweep the audience with her eyes. Her left hand clutches her hat. As she gazes at the audience, she says in a low voice.

--Sh-sh-sh, I have a secret to tell you. I am so ashamed that I don't want people to know.

My name is María Quispe Huamán and I'm from Vilcas and I've always lived there, until now ... when I fled here, to Lima, after, after... itit... happened.

She nods slowly and looks past the audience as if to read her own past somewhere on the wall of the sparse room. She shifts her feet in and out of her shoes and wipes her right hand on her skirt, then she clutches her hat with both hands and says:

It was about two in the afternoon when the Navy came to get me. I was working in the restaurant and I had my baby, Justa, on my back..

....pause.....

You know, in my lliqla. My other child, Joselito, was sitting on the floor in the kitchen. They told me to leave my children and come with them. Joselito, he's two, began to cry and that woke up the baby. They began crying: mamay! Mamay!!

She pauses and looks over her shoulder nervously and continues in a confidential tone,

My husband had escaped to the selva..

On Thursday, they took me away and on Saturday they were going to kill me along with the others....

....long pause...

At seven in the evening ----- that's when,..... they Five, there were five men with me.

She covers her face with her hands and then looks up and continues slowly.

There were five men in the same tent with me. Los marineros ordered us to undress. We were all embarrassed and protested. The Navy men shouted and cursed at us so we took off our clothes. They tied our hands behind our backs and made us sit on the cold ground. Then they left with our clothes. We were there all night but we were so ashamed that we didn't speak or look at each another. The men just stared at the ground and I kept my eyes shut and tried to cover myself by hugging my knees.

The next morning one of marineros came back and shouted: 'Carajo terrucos!! Now you'll tell us where your comrades are hiding!' I peeked out from under my arms and saw him dragging an old man out of the tent. The poor man pleaded in Runasimi that his son was not a terrucos, he had gone to Lima to find work, but the marine kicked him and shouted: 'You miserable piece of cholo shit, you'll tell us where your son is hiding!'

With my head down, I stole a glance at the man sitting across from me. He looked about my age. A nice looking fellow. Probably, married, with two or three kids, like me. He just stared at the floor. But, when they took him away, he looked at me and said, 'May Tayta Razuwillka keep you safe and return you to your children.'

(long pause as she buries her face in her hands)

Tayta Razuwillka!

He must wake up every morning and give an offering to the great mountain, Tayta Razuwilla, just like me! We're llaqtamasi! Díos Mío, llaqtamasikuna todavía!

One by one, they took the men away and ... I was saved for last.

I remember that when I looked at the ground there were little broken pieces of teeth near my big toe.

She marks a spot on the floor with her bare toe and bends down and picks up an imaginary piece of tooth and looks at it.

I picked one of them up and held it in my hand. For some reason that little tooth reminded of my baby, Justa she was just beginning to get her first tooth. As I stared at that tiny piece of tooth, I realized that I would never see my baby again. A great pain shot through my breasts and milk began to flow, dripping down my stomach, down my legs and onto the dirt floor.

I opened my eyes because el Capitán was shouting something at me. He came this close to my face

She puts her hand a few inches away from her nose and lowers her voice to imitate the officer:

'Wake up little terruca, we've saved you for dessert.'" Two of his men entered the tent after him; they all seemed drunk.

The youngest one said:

'Capitán, mire, we have a little vaquita with us. Anyone, want a drink of leche fresca? '

MY GOD!! I thought: These men have to be foreigners! They couldn't be Peruvians!

The milk wouldn't stop coming. Que verguenza, I was so scared that,that.... I I...wet myself.

They all laughed... I covered my breasts but the milk just kept dripping through my hands. Ayee-e-e-e- Díos mío, Madre santissima!

She covers her face with her hands and sobs.

El Capitán pushed one of his men on top of me and I fell over backwards. This marinero grabbed my hands and forced my arms out like this...

She spreads her arms out, palms up.

...My God! He sat on me and sucked on my breasts! Then he bit me so hard that I bled. I screamed. I tried to get away but I couldn't move because he was still sitting on me.

He turned his head to his compañeros and began to sing:

A male voice off stage sings in a strong loud voice:

' Arroz con leche, yo quiero casar (pause)....

María continues: **He stopped and put his thumbs in his belt... like this....**

The off stage voice cuts in, almost screaming:

con una muchacha....'

María: The other navy men, the marines, they laughed and slapped him on the back. None of my llaqtamasikuna were with me. (long pause)... She covers her face with her hands and then slowly looks up as if an idea just occurred to her.

I wish I had asked their names. They were Serranos like me. I wonder if their families are still looking for them? How strange, we never even spoke.

She begins to rock back and forth in her chair and her eyes become wide with some frightful scene from her memory. She hugs her own shoulders, then she stuffs her hat between her knees and holds it tightly there while continuing to rock back and forth as she speaks:

They drug me off to a building and hung me up by my feet. The blood rushed to my head and I felt sick.

They kicked me and kept asking: "Who are they?" Carajo! Puta terruca de mierda!! Quienes son!!

But I don't know any terrucos, I said. All I do is cook and serve food and go home and take care of my children.

"You give Sendero food. We know you do!' they shouted. Then they started to cut me with knives. Just little cuts but see??? Here....(she points to her legs) and there (she points to her breasts) They cut my breasts.....

But I didn't know anything. How could I know anything?

She begins to sob softly. Then, she leans forward as if to listen to an unspoken question from the audience.

Why did they come to arrest me?

She shrugs her shoulders and laughs sardonically

I don't know. I swear to God, I don't know. Perhaps it's a Serrano divorce. My husband ran off with his lover to the selva and his mother wanted to get rid of me and take my children. What better way?? She told the Navy Capitán that I gave

food from the restaurant to the Senderistas. I don't even know any Senderistas! My mother-in-law has always hated me. She had picked out another girl for her son to marry.

My children?

She leans forward again and listens.

My mother has hidden them. I hope they are safe.

I haven't seen them for almost a year, since I came to Lima.

She shifts in her chair and leans across the table and look at the audience and says:

You ask what happened to me after that? Are you sure that you want to know? Most people don't want to know. They want to stay inocentes.

.....pause---

They want to keep these things secret. But, everyone knows.

You want to know? ... You're sure?

All right, I'll tell you. On the second day they hung me up by my feet again and brought in a huge bucket of filthy water. Really filthy. It had all kinds of shit in it. Human, llama, donkey.....even pig shit. Then they lowered the rope.

--pause-- She leans forward and looks directly at the audience:

And el Capitán said:

'Listen terruca, we're going to kill you if you don't tell us who they are.'

When my head was forced into that bucket of shit, I thought I was dying because that filth went into my mouth and I couldn't breath. Finally they hauled on the rope and my head was raised out of that mess. Then they laid me on a table. I kept quiet and kept my eyes closed. But then, and then,

She covers her face with her hands....

I guess I passed out.

I, I,

She pauses, starts rocking back and forth again and twists her hat in her lap and stuffs it between her legs. She looks skyward and wails,

Why has God punished me so? What have I done to deserve this?

Then she returns her gaze to the audience and continues,

Later, as if from a long way off, I could hear them say.

'She's dead, you might as well dump her with the rest of those cholos de mierda.'

They threw me on the ground like a sack of potatoes. When I was on the ground one of them kicked me in the stomach and said:

'You mean that our little vaquita is dead, que lastima, no more leche fresca. He gave me another kick in the stomach.'

All of the water came out and I began to cough.

El capitán said: 'Well look at that, you're one lucky puta terruca. We thought you were done for. I guess you're not a terrorist after all.'

One of his men grabbed me by my hair and pulled me up, but I couldn't move my arms or legs, they were numb. I tried to stand, but I couldn't. I fell to the floor.

El capitán threw a bundle of clothes at me and I crawled out the door like a dog on all fours, clutching the clothes.

'Leave Vilcas and don't come back,' el capitán shouted. 'If you do, we **Will kill you next time, carajo!'**

That man, you know the one who had sat on me started laughing, he called out: MO--OO, MO...OO. GO HOME LITTLE VAQUITA!! You need milking again! *Carajo*, stupid Indians!'

When I got outside I tried to stand up; I couldn't. Then I realized that I was bloody and all bruised down here

She covers her crotch with her hat. She begins to rock again and sob. She stops, leans forward again, looks at the audience and listens for a moment.

What did my torturers look like?

You know?...Casi Peruano

Long pause)

El capitán, he was blonde, had blue eyes and wore glasses. Yes, almost Peruvian. But you know something?

She leans forward and looks at the audience. Pauses, and says in a quiet voice.

He looked just like you.

End of Scene V

As she says her last line, a sound montage begins to play and visuals are projected onto the screen above the stage.

¹ Richard Schechner has written three volumes: Between Theater and Anthropology (1985), The End of Humanism (1982) and, Performance Theory (1988). In Schechner (1982) he concluded that the energy of experimental theater has been shattered. But, I agree with Emigh (1996) that dramatic forms offer a great deal of experimental ground for anthropology (see especially Emigh's expanded model (pgs-172-187) of Schechner's (1988:72) domains of drama. Drama is especially relevant for the representation of dialogue, motivations, and portrayals of characters that play parts in the cultures of violence (for discussions of experimental ways to represent dialogue (see Tedlock and Mannheim (1995). My first attempt to use drama to represent the complexities of intergenerational dialogue is in that volume (pgs.54-74).