

California's Most Wanted: The tragic and glorious tale of the rise and fall of Tiburcio Vasquez, the notorious Californio bandit, as told by the fallen follies of Carmen's Cantina, the most exclusive gentlemen's club of the gold coast

Reparto:

Sara – Carmen, Lady in black (Mantiene la misma personaje en todo la obra)

Ana – Tere, Tiburcio

Natasja – Lupita, Serriff Adams

Nicole – Janet, Empresario(Gillette), Pettigrew

Tenisha – Rita, Mrs. Gillette

Tiarra – Rosario, Jimmy, Photographer, undertaker

Escena 1

Tere baile en la jaula. Rita dirige y hace comentarios y correcciones.

Rita: Aquí, gira. Usa más los brazos. Es mejor cambiar los niveles de los movimientos...

Janet se sienta en el bar leyendo algo muy gringo en ingles. Adam Smith, Alexis de Toqueville o Jane Austen. Está sola.

Lupita y Rosario se sientan en la mesa, jugando con cartas.

Lupita: Estas son Tere y Rita, mi inocente Rosario, son nuestras bailarinas. Tal vez seamos damas de la noche, pero somos mujeres especiales con mucho talento. Rita es la mejor bailarina en todo California, todos le piden su asista a sus funciones o les enseñe. El gobernador de California la pide que enseñe a su hija como bailar y ella fue por un rato. Pero, ella trabaja aquí con Carmen. Y Tere, ella es la mujer más bella de todo el mundo. Ganó muchísimos premios por su belleza. Ya no compite ahora, pero todavía es muy hermosa.

Rosario: ¿Y ésta, Lupita? ¿Quién es ella?

Lupita: Ah, esta es la Gringa. "One smart cookie, that one". Se llama Janet. Es de Buenos Aires, pero siempre dice que es de Boston.

Rosario: ¿Por qué?

Lupita: Es una historia trágica. Siempre era brillante, la hija adorada de una familia riquísima. Pero, se enamoró de un empresario viajero y su familia no le aprobaba. Y la hija prodiga hizo la única decisión estúpida de su vida. Robó algo de plata y huyó con el hombre hasta el oro de California. Entonces descubrió que no era el hombre honorable que imaginaba, sino un mentiroso cabrón que ya tenía una familia gringa y que la usó para sacarle su dinero. Desde entonces, niega su origen hispano y adopta la manera de la gringa para esconder su vergüenza.

Rosario: Ah, pobre mujer... Tal vez...

Lupita: No, no debes revelar que sabes su historia. No quiere lastima.

Rosario: ¿Y tú, que haces aquí, Lupita?

Lupita: Perdiste el juego, mi amor. Debes prestar más atención si quieres ganar

Rosario: ¿Qué haces?

Lupita: Soy cantante, niña.

Carmen entra

Carmen: Chicas, chicas, estamos cerradas hoy. Relájense y bebidas para todas.

Las mujeres andan al bar. Carmen sirve bebidas.

Lupita: Ah, el aniversario...

Rosario: ¿El aniversario de qué?

Tere: El aniversario de la muerte de Tiburcio Vásquez. ¿Qué otro día merece bebidas y vacación?

Carmen: Tere...

Rosario: ¿Quién es Tiburcio Vásquez?

Rita: *(de manera burlona)* ¿Quién es Tiburcio Vásquez?

Tere: ¿Quién es Tiburcio Vásquez?

Lupita: Chiquitita, es solamente el más grande bandido del todo el mundo

Tere: El hombre más adorado por ambas las damas legítimas y las damas de la noche como nosotras.

Rita: Obviamente, es el Robin Hood del Goldrush!

Carmen: ¡Siéntense! Siéntense, todas, y les relataré la historia trágica de Tiburcio Vásquez

Esta es la larga historia de un hombre encendido:
natural, valeroso, su memoria es un hacha de guerra.
Es tiempo de abrir el reposo, el sepulcro del claro bandido
y romper el olvido oxidado que ahora lo entierra.
Tal vez no encontró su destino el soldado, y lamento
no haber conversado con él, y con una botella de vino
haber esperado en la Historia que pasara algún día su gran
regimiento.

Tal vez aquel hombre perdido en el viento hubiera cambiado el
camino.

La sangre caída le puso en las manos un rayo violento,
ahora pasaron cien años y ya no podemos mover su destino:
así es que empezamos sin él y sin vino en esta hora quieta
la historia de mi compatriota, el bandido honorable don Joaquín
Murieta.

Janet: Fertilizing the futile folies of fallen women with your bullshit again, are we Carmen? No, girl, Vasquez was no hero. There are no heroes in men, no knights on shining white steeds to rescue you from the depths of hell, your own peronal...gilded cage. No the sorry sods are jailbait one and all and Vasquez was no different. He deserved his hanging as much as any, even if he didn't kill those men at Tres Pinos. You want the real story? It doesn't have anything to do with this romantic revolutionary crap Carmen spouts. No, it begins in a jail cell in Santa Clara.

Escena 2

ADAMS: Morning, Vásquez.

TIBURCIO: Buenos días, Harry.

ADAMS: You sound cheerful. Had breakfast?

TIBURCIO: Ate like a horse. A full belly, a happy heart, as the saying goes. Any more coffee?

ADAMS: Certainly. (*Calls off.*) Jimmy! More coffee for Vásquez.

TIBURCIO: (VÁSQUEZ *splashes cologne water on his face.*)
What's the day like outside? ¿Mucho sol?

ADAMS: Fair to middlin'. Spring's upon us.

TIBURCIO: I've been quite comfortable in your modern jail, Sheriff. Sure beats the dank dungeons of San Quentin prison. But the sun barely squeezes in through those squint-eyed holes up there. A man can barely read and write in this light, which, for a poet such as yours truly, amounts to cruel and unusual punishment.

ADAMS: Maximum security, Vásquez. That's why we brought you here from Salinas in the first place.

TIBURCIO: (VÁSQUEZ *puts on his gentleman's coat.*) I've got to hand it to you, Harry. You're a good man at eating humble pie. You chase me all over the state for months, but it's the Sheriff of Los Angeles that finally bags me. If I were you, I'd be grievously pissed.

ADAMS: If I were you, Tiburcio, I'd be grievously worried about my upcoming trial for murder. I've seen grown men break down and cry on the gallows.

TIBURCIO: Damned if I don't put on a bravura performance, Harry ... when the time comes. In fact, I'll wager you ten bucks, a bottle of wine and a Havana cigar, I'll hang.

ADAMS: You've got a bet, mister. (ADAMS *exits.* JIMMY, *a young deputy, enters with a coffee pot.*)

JIMMY: Fresh coffee, Mr. Vásquez.

TIBURCIO: Pour. (*He sticks his cup through the bars. JIMMY refills it.*) Hot as hell—perfecto. You're getting to be quite expert at this. Don't forget to brew another pot.

JIMMY: Jesus. I don't know how you sleep at night. All the coffee you drink all day.

TIBURCIO: No rest for the wicked, boy ... As for me, I'm sleeping fit as a well-fed dog. How's the roster today? Lots of lady

visitors?

JIMMY: A mess of 'em. As usual.

TIBURCIO: (VÁSQUEZ checks on his cards.) Caramba, I'm almost out of photographs. Again. Another thousand ought to do it. Maybe two, three ... ¿quién sabe? Would you like one of these?

JIMMY: Sure.

TIBURCIO: Let me autograph it for you. (VÁSQUEZ sits down and arranges his cards, pen and ink with a sense of self-importance.)

JIMMY: Real fine hand ... your penmanship? Most folks don't expect it from a greas—greenhorn. (VÁSQUEZ signs the card and blows on the ink, ignoring the gaff.)

TIBURCIO: Tiburcio Vásquez, presente ... Simpático. The ladies say: he doesn't seem like such a bad fellow. Then they buy my pictures at fifty cents a shot. Here. On the house.

JIMMY: Thanks, Mr. Vásquez. (Points at the basin.) You done with that?

TIBURCIO: She's all yours ... But watch it. The water's a little greasy. (ADAMS returns with SAMUEL P. GILLETTE, a theatrical impresario. JIMMY exits quickly.) That's a fine muchacho, Harry. Won't make much of a Mexican-killer, though. Better send that one to law school ... Like the old Indian, he doesn't kill but he makes the arrows. (VÁSQUEZ pulls a lean cigar from his coat, staring at GILLETTE.)

SHERIFF: Tiburcio, you have a visitor.

TIBURCIO: Well, well. Samuel P. Gillette. What brings you to San Jose?

IMPRESARIO: Show business, sir. The lure of the footlights.

TIBURCIO: Have a chair—partner. (The IMPRESARIO sits outside the cell.)

SHERIFF: Gentlemen, you have five minutes. You may smoke, if you wish, but no drinking or profanity is allowed. I'll be back shortly. (SHERIFF ADAMS exits.)

IMPRESARIO: Can you believe I've turned that pasty-faced sheriff into a genuine western hero? Almost played him myself. You're looking damn good, Vásquez. How are you?

TIBURCIO: (VÁSQUEZ smiles ironically: subdued, calm, realistic.) Awaiting trial without a proper defense, Gillette. I need money for lawyers.

IMPRESARIO: You're a cause célèbre, sir. Catnip to the ladies! You ought to charge them admission.

TIBURCIO: How's the theater business?

IMPRESARIO: Risky, as always.

TIBURCIO: I hear the play was a great success.

IMPRESARIO: Rip-roaring-turn-away business for a fortnight, then nothing. You stole all the magic, sir, when they transferred you from Los Angeles. The public lost interest.

TIBURCIO: The business is all up here now, Gillette. People are hot to see the notorious Tiburcio before the hanging.

IMPRESARIO: Never fear, Vásquez. You'll get due process in court first. Then they'll hang you.

TIBURCIO: *(Pause.)* You violated the terms of our agreement, Gillette. Friends who saw your melodrama tell me you made me look like an ass.

IMPRESARIO: An ass?

TIBURCIO: I don't hide under women's skirts, mister. I'm not a coward. I thought we were partners.

IMPRESARIO: Partners in business, sir, not in crime.

TIBURCIO: Where's my money?

IMPRESARIO: Here. Your share of the profits from Los Angeles. *(The IMPRESARIO pulls out a leather sack and tosses it to VÁSQUEZ, who catches and weighs it with a knowing hand.)*

TIBURCIO: This is only two hundred dollars.

IMPRESARIO: It is indeed.

TIBURCIO: The deal was a thousand.

IMPRESARIO: Or forty percent of the profits. That's it.

TIBURCIO: *(Smiling cynically.)* Gillette, you cheap swindler.

IMPRESARIO: Are you questioning my honesty?

TIBURCIO: You have the nerve to try to rob me?

IMPRESARIO: You and I can still do a lot of business together, Vásquez. What would you say to a San Francisco production of the play? The public is attracted to your villainy, sir.

TIBURCIO: Get your thespian ass out of here, Gillette.

IMPRESARIO: Think of the money we could make, Vásquez. Between now and the trial? We ran for two solid weeks to packed houses in Los Angeles. But San Francisco? Think of it ... the populace is eager to slake their thirst, sir, drinking at the dark well of your notoriety. We'd make a fortune!

TIBURCIO: Am I really so notorious?

IMPRESARIO: You vain popinjay, you know you are!

TIBURCIO: A hundred years ago, my great grandfather founded San Francisco with De Anza. Fifty years ago José Tiburcio Vásquez was the law in San José. But today I, his namesake and grandson, cannot even walk the wooden side-walks of either city without a leash.

IMPRESARIO: Oh, come on, Vásquez. You're an outlaw, man. A bad man. The history of the West is replete with villains of your type. You're in every dime novel.

TIBURCIO: My life is not a cheap dime novel.

IMPRESARIO: Your criminal life is public domain, sir. I can always do the production without you.

TIBURCIO: Then, why come to me?

IMPRESARIO: As you so aptly reminded me in L.A., theaters have been known to burn down. I assume the warning is still in effect?

TIBURCIO: I'd find a way to kill you, if I had to.

IMPRESARIO: *(Pause.)* You know, that's the first honest thing you've said to me. Rather in character, wouldn't you say?

TIBURCIO: I'll agree to the deal on two conditions, Gillette. I want fifty percent of the profits ...

IMPRESARIO: Fifty percent!

TIBURCIO: ... before the trial. And I want it in cash. Moreover

IMPRESARIO: Moreover?

TIBURCIO: If I'm to be hanged for murder, I want the public to know I'm not guilty. *(He picks up a hand-written manuscript from his bedstand.)* Here's a few scenes I jotted down from memory. I want you to use them in your melodrama.

IMPRESARIO: That's preposterous.

TIBURCIO: How can you know until you read them?

IMPRESARIO: They're lies, and you know it. You're only trying to save your own neck.

TIBURCIO: Do you expect me to hang myself?

IMPRESARIO: Twenty years as a vicious desperado and never a single, solitary slaying? It won't wash Vásquez. Your entire career is full of too many dubious moral questions. We're talking about melodrama here. What's right is right, what's wrong is wrong. The public will only buy tickets to savour the evil in your soul.

TIBURCIO: *(VÁSQUEZ suddenly grabs the IMPRESARIO menacingly by the collar.)* Don't make me prove I'm a mur-

hearing this last remark. VÁSQUEZ stuffs his manuscript into the IMPRESARIO's pocket and releases him.)

SHERIFF: Time is up, gentlemen.

TIBURCIO: The Impresario was just leaving.

IMPRESARIO: Good luck at your trial, Vásquez. May the best liar win. Adieu! *(The IMPRESARIO leaves, trying to regain his dignity.)*

TIBURCIO: Sheriff, I hope you weren't deceived by my little melodramatic aside to Gillette? It was just an act.

SHERIFF: Save your act for the court, Tiburcio. It's the jury you have to convince. Not me.

TIBURCIO: The bad weed never dies, Harry. I'll give them the performance of my life.

Lights down. The set is transformed to the melodrama stage.

Song here – Sara and Natasja

Escena 3

Rita: Janet tiene algo correcto. Tiburcio era un ejecutante, un artista de la escenografía. Mira, mira su refinamiento en el robo. Se transforma en un arte sublime de mejor cualidad.

Canción: dueño y asistente, mientras arreglan la tienda. Asistente es guardaespaldas. Entra cliente.

Lupita: un kilo de café, dos de tortillas, manteca...

Carmen: no sin antes pagar su deuda.

Lupita: ¿Deuda? le pagué lo debido la semana pasada.

Rita: No recuerdo ningún pago. ¿Tú te acuerdas?

A niega con la cabeza, se pone amenazante.

Carmen: Te comunico que desde el día de hoy no te doy más provisiones. Lo que es más: tienes hasta mañana por la mañana para pagar tu deuda o...

Lupita: Pero señor, Usted bien se acuerda, lo pagué la semana pasada.

Carmen: ¿y dónde está su recibo?

Lupita: ¿pero de qué recibo me habla? Acuérdense que me dijo que 16 por 6 más 36 y el recibo después porque en ese momento no tenía punta su lápiz, que el recibo no podía ser dado...

Carmen: Pues, como yo no recuerdo que hayas pagado, vas a tener que volver a pagar.

Lupita: Pero si no tengo dinero, si Usted me ha arruinado, solo me queda este reloj heredado de mi querido bisabuelo que en paz descanse.

Carmen: Canalla! ¿Y con esa porquería me ibas a pagar lo de hoy? Y ¿no tienes dinero? Pues, a buscarlo, ya lo sabes. 24 horas para pagar o al otro día te vendo a las minas.

Tiburcio: *(Entra, espada en mano, al dueño y su asistente)* Distinguido público, si tiene joyas o dinero, ahora verán este sombrero de caballero que es el mío, y está vacío. Para llenarlo quiero dinerito, joyas, relojes exquisitos, y con eso me despediré agradecido y seguiré de largo. Veán Ustedes; entreguen aquí sus relojes, o si no, una monedita no está mal, con tal que sea de oro.

(dueño echa dinero en sombrero, C saca reloj, lo mira con tristeza)

Lupita: Es lo único de valor que tengo, lo iba a usar para comprar un poco de comida para mis hijitos hambrientos y mi esposa enferma. Le ruego que no me lo robe.

Tiburcio: Me malentiendes, joven. Guarde su reloj, y aquí, tome esta moneda para comprarle medicina a su señora.

Lupita; gracias, gracias, señor

Tiburcio: *(al dueño)* Pero está todavía muy ligero el sombrero y veo que tú tienes un reloj muy bello. Mételo acá.

Rita: Eres un malvado y un cobarde (*amenaza con espada*).

Tiburcio: A ti te conozco de niño y todavía andas en mala compañía. Y no se te quita lo ladrón.

¡Pendejo! Se me hace que necesitas ejercicio.
(*Esgrima, dueño se esconde*)

Tiburcio: (*con espada en el corazón de Rita*) No te la meto porque no quiero ensuciar mi espada con tu sangre. Jura que no volverás a molestar a los campesinos. ¡Júralo! ¡A lo macho!

Rita: Se lo juro, señor.

Tiburcio: Recuerden bien este día. Todos hablan de Joaquín Murrieta. La verdad es que en esta tierra han habido muchos Joaquines. Quizás, ahora, por dondequiera que miren, habrán muchos Tiburcios.

Groupie song – stop abruptly

Joking about making babies

Escena 4

The Courthouse Jail. San Jose, California, 1875.

DEPUTY PETTIGREW *unlocks* TIBURCIO's cell, while a PHOTOGRAPHER *sets up* outside the bars. The DEPUTY escorts VÁSQUEZ to a chair downstage, where he cuffs one of his ankles to a ball and chain. As this happens, SHERIFF ADAMS escorts in some LADIES, excitedly agog at seeing VÁSQUEZ in person.

LADIES: Oh, my ... Oh, Lord ... There he is. (VÁSQUEZ sits before the PHOTOGRAPHER's daguerreotype camera, watched by the armed DEPUTY. The LADIES sit behind the barred wall.)

SHERIFF ADAMS: Ladies, may I remind you that Vásquez is a convicted felon, legally tried in a court of law, found guilty of murder, and sentenced to be executed on March 16, which, of course, is just two weeks away. You may observe the prisoner, but please refrain from speaking to him ... unless he speaks to you. You have five minutes. (ADAMS exits.)

TIBURCIO: (*Studies his female observers.*) Ladies. Thank you for coming to see me. It takes a strong stomach to meet thieves, cut-throats and libertines—but as I am none of the sort—welcome and be at ease. Tiburcio Vásquez is at your eternal loving service. (*The deputy snorts and chuckles.*)

LADY IN BLACK: Monsieur Vásquez?

TIBURCIO: Caramba. A lady in black? (THE LADY IN BLACK, wearing a veil, steps up to the bars.)

LADY IN BLACK: Parlez vous français?

TIBURCIO: (*Mystified.*) Desgraciadamente, madame, ni un peu. ¿Habla usted español?

FRENCH LADY: Con toda seguridad, mon Capitain.

PETTIGREW: Speak English, you two! That's the rules.

TIBURCIO: Some men achieve English, madame, and some have it thrust upon them. You are French?

LADY IN BLACK: Québécois, monsieur. I am a journalist from Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

TIBURCIO: Have we met? Yes, you were in the courtroom during the trial. Weren't you?

LADY BLACK: Señor Vásquez, I am curious as to the motives for your way of life. Could you explain, please?

TIBURCIO: You mean my career?

LADY BLACK: Your crimes, yes.

TIBURCIO: The roots of banditry in California run deep, madame. God made us all alike, and some even worse. However, I continue to protest my innocence of the killings at Tres Pinos. I have never spilled the blood of another human being, and that's the God's truth.

PHOTOGRAPHER: Freeze! (VÁSQUEZ turns toward the camera and freezes in heroic position. Flash! Then he turns toward the LADIES again, charmingly sincere.)

TIBURCIO: In fact, my case is on appeal before the State Supreme Court ... and as I am so regrettably short of funds ... (VÁSQUEZ stands and reaches into his coat pocket to extract some of his photographic cards.) If any of you ladies are interested, I am offering this professionally printed photo card, with a complete chronological listing of my exploits, from my escape from San Quentin prison to the raid on Firebaugh's Ferry. And as an added bonus, on the opposite side, you will find a personally autographed photographic portrait of your humble servant. Yours, for only fifty cents. Two bits. A half dollar for my defense.

LADIES: I'll take one ... Me too! ... I want one ... etc.

TIBURCIO: (Picks up his ball and chain, and begins to hustle his cards.) Ladies, I cannot tell you what this support means to me. I do not deny my twenty years as a horse thief and stage robber, but my career grew out of the circumstances by which I was surrounded. I was thirteen when gold was discovered. As I grew to manhood, a spirit of hatred and revenge took possession of me. I had many fights in defense of what I believed to be my rights and those of my countrymen ...

LADY IN BLACK: Pardon, monsieur, but I heard all that during the trial. That is not what I was asking about.

TIBURCIO: (Puzzled.) So sorry ... What was the question again?

LADY IN BLACK: To be blunt . . . is free love your philosophy of life?

TIBURCIO: (*Surprised but maintaining.*) Hardly, my lady . . . but a life without love is like a wheel without axle grease.

PETTIGREW: And you've greased many a wheel in your day, no, Vásquez?

TIBURCIO: There are ladies here, Pettigrew. Don't be impertinent. (*The DEPUTY snorts angrily.*)

LADY IN BLACK: (*The LADY presses on.*) And don't you be a hypocrite, monsieur. Did you not seduce a true lady in Abdón Leiva's wife?

TIBURCIO: (*Pause.*) The perfect wife never marries, madame.

LADY IN BLACK: Why did she testify against you in the trial, monsieur? Did you really steal her from her husband, then leave her to die, pregnant, in the wilderness?

TIBURCIO: That . . . is a pair of pregnant questions.

LADY IN BLACK: Could you answer please? (*Pause.*) Or is your silence an admission of guilt?

TIBURCIO: I was tried and convicted for the murder of three men in the Tres Pinos hold-up, madame. But my only guilt was the love of a beautiful woman. (*There is a sorrowful pause.*)

Escena 5

Tiburcio está en una cama. Carmen le trae un plato con comida

CARMEN Hora de comer.

TIBURCIO No. No tiene caso vivir sin amor. Entre amor y vida elijo amor. Prefiero morir a estar alejado de mi bomboncito.

CARMEN: No seas dramático. Come, que en un par de días te vas a olvidar de "tu bomboncito" y vas a encontrar a otra mujer.

TIBURCIO ¿Cómo voy a olvidar a mi mujer?

CARMEN Come.

TIBURCIO No.

CARMEN (Le da el plato a Tiburcio) Te dije que comas.

TIBURCIO: Bueno.

CARMEN: ¿Me vas a contar como fue que acabaste detrás de la cantina, casi desangrado? Tienes suerte que te encontré rápido porque si no estarías muerto.

TIBURCIO (Toma la mano de Carmen y la besa) Eres mi ángel de la guarda.

CARMEN: ¿Qué pasó?

TIBURCIO: Al gobernador no le gusto que su hija se casara con un bandido.

CARMEN: ¿Te casaste con la hija del gobernador? ¿Cuándo?

TIBURCIO: Hace ya cinco días

CARMEN: Pero explícame como.

TIBURCIO: El gobernador contrato a Rita como maestra de baile para su hija. Pero necesitaba una pareja de baile así que Rita me pidió como favor que la ayudara.

CARMEN: Entonces el hombre más buscado de California se fue a meter a casa del gobernador. ¿En qué estabas pensando Tiburcio?

TIBURCIO: Al principio dije que no, pero después vi a María Mercedes Ibarbengioitia con su padre en inauguración del nuevo banco, antes de que lo asaltáramos. Era la mujer más hermosa que había visto en mi vida. (Carmen está visiblemente celosa pero trata de ocultarlo).

No me pude rehusar, la tenía que conocer. Entonces acepte la oferta de Rita. Todos los días iba a casa del gobernador y bailaba con Meche. Nos enamoramos y nos casamos en secreto pero su padre descubrió nuestros planes de escape y nos siguió hasta donde yo la estoy esperando...logré escaparme antes de que me matará y sabía que podía confiar en ti.

CARMEN: ¡Qué idiota! Siempre perdiendo la cabeza por una mujer. Primero te metas en la boca del lobo, metiéndote en casa de gobernador. Después te casas con su hija. Haces que Rita pierda su trabajo y regresa a la cantina, y para cerrar con broche de oro, casi te matan y por una cualquiera

TIBURCIO: ¡No es una cualquiera! Es diferente, inocente. Tierna pero con espíritu aventurero...

CARMEN (Interrumpiendo) Tienes que comer algo. Te voy a traer agua. (Carmen empieza a caminar hacia la cocina)

TIBURCIO: Carmen...Gracias. ¿Qué haría sin ti?

Love triangle song

Escena 6

.....
The jail. Daytime. The IMPRESARIO enters with SHERIFF ADAMS.

IMPRESARIO: Vásquez, I'll never understand all the maudlin sympathy lavished on you by hundreds of weak-headed women, but I must say I continue to admire your perspicacity.

TIBURCIO: It's the charm of the condemned man, Gillette.

IMPRESARIO: At fifty cents a shot, your photo cards must have turned quite a handsome little profit by now.

SHERIFF: You know the rule, gentlemen. Five minutes. (ADAMS exits. *The IMPRESARIO sits outside the cell.*)

IMPRESARIO: I got word you wanted to see me. What's on your reptilian mind?

TIBURCIO: The scales of blind justice, Gillette. A noose in one hand; a bag of gold in the other. I'm still prepared to sell you all the rights to my story for a small advance and a couple of minor conditions. Are you interested?

IMPRESARIO: Hell, no! They're going to hang you in two weeks. What kind of an offer is that? Goddamn your eyes, Vásquez, we could have had a deal months ago. You've squandered a fortune, sir. There's no time to launch a play now. Not in San Francisco.

TIBURCIO: Last time you opened in ten days.

IMPRESARIO: You'll be in your grave before opening night, Vásquez. Public interest will be deader than you are.

TIBURCIO: The State Supreme Court has yet to rule on my appeal, Gillette. All hope's not lost.

IMPRESARIO: Are you kidding me or yourself?
TIBURCIO: Do you really think I'll be forgotten so quickly?
IMPRESARIO: We're entering an industrial age, Vásquez. The persistence of public memory is rapidly being determined by the speed of machinery. Railroads, steam engines, the telegraph.
TIBURCIO: Have one of my signed daguerreotypes. The science of photography has already granted me immortality. (ABDÓN LEIVA enters, behind the wall of bars.) Hello, Abdón. How did you get out of your cell?
LEIVA: It's never locked.
TIBURCIO: What do you want?
LEIVA: Just to see you . . . I have nothing to say.
TIBURCIO: I'm not surprised. You said it all in court. No matter what you do for the rest of your natural life, Abdón, you'll know the truth about Tres Pinos.
LEIVA: That's not true, Vásquez . . . you killed my son. May your soul be damned in the fires of hell! (LEIVA exits.)
IMPRESARIO: What does that mean, you killed his son?
TIBURCIO: The death of an illusion, Gillette. Nothing more.
IMPRESARIO: (Suddenly intrigued.) How much more of an advance do you require?
TIBURCIO: One thousand, like before.
IMPRESARIO: I'll give you two hundred, like before.
TIBURCIO: Make it seven-fifty.
IMPRESARIO: Five hundred.
TIBURCIO: Sold!
IMPRESARIO: Not so fast, Vásquez. I'll only make the deal on one condition. I want the full story, warts and all, including the dirt on your illicit affair with Mrs. Leiva.
TIBURCIO: Don't worry. I'll set the record straight.
IMPRESARIO: And none of this Liberator of California horseshit either. I'd be laughed out of the state if I tried to stage that. That's the tallest story I've ever heard. Shame on you. It's not in character.
TIBURCIO: (Sardonically.) What do you know about my character? Did you ever read the manuscript I gave you?
IMPRESARIO: (Scoffing.) Poppycock, sir. Bunk! The dramaturgy was turgid, and your self-aggrandizement, more than even bad melodrama can sustain. Not worth a damn or a dime.
TIBURCIO: (Angering.) Like your dime-novel "History of the American West?"

IMPRESARIO: (*Bristling.*) You're a convicted killer, Vásquez. What good is it to white-wash the gallows? Nobody will buy it. The gringos are the victors of this land, sir. Mexicans and Indians are the vanquished. That's the only history that matters.

TIBURCIO: (*Laughs bitterly, as he takes control of his emotions again.*) A hundred years from now, my friend, people will still speak of Tiburcio Vásquez the bandit.

IMPRESARIO: We needn't waste any words extolling your modesty, I can see that.

TIBURCIO: What part of my story are you willing to believe?

IMPRESARIO: Your capture. Or are you going to deny that happened as well?

TIBURCIO: Why should I? Where would our story be without a fitting dramatic climax?

Revolution Song

Escena 7

Lupita: No es tan sencillo. Hoy los gringos roban y matan a indios que antes fueron mexicanos. Tiburcio es un héroe de la patria, de nuestro querido México mutilado por la agresión de los gringos. Es el único que les disputa el abuso y de los reta frente.

Janet: As John O’Sullivan said: “it is our manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions. It is our right to possess the whole of the continent which Providence has given us for the development of the great experiment of liberty”

Lupita: perfecto ejemplo de la soberbia gringa.

Canción de la revolución mientras reorganizan el espacio

Lupita: resume revolutionary song

Tiburcio llega riéndose

Lupita: Tiburcio! ¿Tu por acá? ¿Y de que te ríes? Los gringos te quieren matar, ya tienen una recompensa de ocho mil dólares por tu cabeza.

Tiburcio: me rio de tu fatalismo, mi amiga. Al fin y al cabo, si los gringos se apoderan de mi cabeza, que hagan lo que quieran con ella, mientras siga la revolución.

Rosario: ¿por qué no te escapas a México? Estamos en otra época. Hoy en día podríamos dialogar, y en el peor de los casos, llevar a los gringos a la corte, a reclamar nuestros derechos.

Tiburcio: tu inspiración y tu amistad siempre han sido importantes para mí, pero esto no es un juego, y no es tan sencillo como sentarte a conversar. Esto es la revolución, la rebelión contra los gringos para mantener unida nuestra patria, para acabar con los abusos contra nuestra gente, contra el robo de tierra y violación de las mujeres. Así son las cosas, mi amiga, y es bueno aprender y que todos sepan y conozcan sus derechos.

Lo que digo ahora me sale del corazón. Con palabras no se rectifica lo que hicieron con nuestro país. No pagan los insultos ni los muertos. No sacan a nuestros padres de sus tumbas. Las palabras no pagan nuestras tierras robadas ni el ganado que los gringos nos quitaron. Las buenas palabras no devuelvan seguridad y buena salud a nuestras familias. ¿No has visto a nuestros hermanos heridos? ¿La sangre caída por todas partes? ¿No has escuchado el llanto de los niños sin consuelo? ¿De las mujeres ultrajadas? ¡Es nuestra sangre! ¡Son nuestras hermanas, madres, hijos! La sangre caída de nuestros hermanos desdichados me sacude, me recuerda a los amantes caídos y amigos heridos, se extiende con furia acompañando nuestros pasos. Es la furia de los que reclaman venganza y victoria. Con unos pocos hombres valientes acabaremos con esta imposición injusta y contraria a la ley humana. ¡Victoria o muerte!

Martial song – fade to instrumental

Escena 8:

The jail. Night. SHERIFF ADAMS enters and goes to VÁSQUEZ's cell. TIBURCIO sits up, waiting for the news.

ADAMS: Tiburcio, it is my sad duty to inform you that the Governor has denied to grant a stay of execution. He upheld the decision of the State Supreme Court to execute your sentence tomorrow.

TIBURCIO: So ... looks like I win the bet, doesn't it?

ADAMS: I'm sorry.

TIBURCIO: Better luck next time, Harry. You owe me ten bucks, a bottle of wine and a Havana cigar. (ADAMS hands him a stogie, then lights a match for him.)

ADAMS: Lots of people are worried about tomorrow, Tiburcio. Chávez has threatened to attack Hollister.

TIBURCIO: So I hear.

SHERIFF: The whole town is running scared. Even San Jose is like an armed camp tonight. Many innocent lives could be lost.

TIBURCIO: Only one that I know of. Mind if I collect that bet? You know how it is. Here today, gone tomorrow. (SHERIFF ADAMS *pays him.*)

SHERIFF: Sam Gillette is here to pay his last respects.

IMPRESARIO: (*Enters.*) I'm here to settle our final accounts, sir. I've decided to stage your play in San Francisco.

TIBURCIO: Well, hallelujah. That calls for a drink. Sheriff?

ADAMS: My pleasure. (*Uncorks a bottle.*) Some wine, gentlemen?

IMPRESARIO: Well, I'll be damned.

ADAMS: We bend the rules occasionally. (ADAMS *pours the drinks.*)

TIBURCIO: Here's to love. The only antidote to death known to man. (*They toast and drink.*)

IMPRESARIO: Your thoughts must be on the hereafter, sir, on this your last night on earth.

TIBURCIO: Actually, I was counting the days since I last made love to a woman. Sages and wise men say there is an afterlife. For my part, I don't know.

ADAMS: Rest assured, Tiburcio. There is a Heaven and a Hell.

TIBURCIO: In that case, Harry, tomorrow I shall be dancing again with all my old sweethearts.

IMPRESARIO: What about Rosario Leiva, Vásquez? Has she been to see you? Seems to me that if that love story you told was true ...

TIBURCIO: It was as true as you make it, Gillette. Did you bring my five hundred dollars?

IMPRESARIO: (*Pulls out his billfold.*) Caveat emptor, sir. I want to be certain that I'm buying the right to portray you as I see fit. Can you guarantee your friends won't burn down my theater?

TIBURCIO: You have my word as a gentleman.

IMPRESARIO: How do I know I can trust you?

TIBURCIO: I could ask you the same question.

IMPRESARIO: And I still wouldn't know how to answer you. The moral vagaries of your life confound the melodrama, sir. Are you comic or tragic, a good man or a bad man?

TIBURCIO: All of them.

IMPRESARIO: Reality and theater don't mix, sir. That's your problem. You're too damned real, like those photographs

of your face. If you were less familiar, like that murderer fellow, I'd turn your life into a genuine California romance. Your legend needs a little more grandeur.

TIBURCIO: You'll have it tomorrow, my friend.

IMPRESARIO: Tiburcio, my wife has been asking to meet you for months. I would be honored if you would say hello to her.

TIBURCIO: The honor would be mine.

IMPRESARIO: (*Escorts in MRS. GILLETTE. She is ROSARIO.*)

In that case, may I present my lady, the lovely Spanish actress, Carlota Montez de . . . Gillette. My dear, this is the notorious Tiburcio Vásquez.

MRS. GILLETTE: How do you do? Meeting you, I feel as though I already know you.

TIBURCIO: Madame, you are as beautiful as someone I once knew. (*VÁSQUEZ tenderly kisses her hand.*)

MRS. GILLETTE: (*With tears.*) We shall treasure your memory forever, señor. May God bless you.

TIBURCIO: Hello and goodbye.

IMPRESARIO: Goodbye, my friend.

TIBURCIO: So long, Sam. Take care of my melodrama. (*The IMPRESARIO exits with MRS. GILLETTE. TIBURCIO is somber. Picking up letters.*) Do me a favor, will you, Sheriff? See that Rosario gets this letter and this money. There's a small fortune in here for her . . . and my daughter. Give her this other letter and the gold watch, as well—they're for Chávez.

SHERIFF: Chávez?

TIBURCIO: She'll know how to get in touch with him. He once promised to give me his life, if I ever needed it. The letter tells him that I accept—not to get himself and a lot of innocent people killed—and that through this gold watch I bequeath him the rest of my lifetime.

ADAMS: (*Takes the letters, money and watch.*) Listen, Tiburcio, about tomorrow . . . knowing you and Leiva after all these months, well, I just want you to know I think his testimony in court was always suspect. I just wish there was something more I could do.

TIBURCIO: (*Pause.*) How about letting me see my coffin?

SHERIFF: You want to see your coffin?

TIBURCIO: My pine box. Where is it?

SHERIFF: Right in there. You have one final visitor. (*SHERIFF ADAMS opens the cell. VÁSQUEZ steps out. The LADY IN BLACK emerges from the shadows.*)

TIBURCIO: ¡Caramba! The Lady in black again? This must be the end.

KATE: The end, my ass, you bounder. It's me! Parlez vous? (KATE throws off her black veil.)

TIBURCIO: (Embraces her.) Kate!

KATE: (Wincing with pain.) Careful with the love stuff, honey. I'm feeling a little fragile down there these days. I just came to pay my last respects, before we both rendezvous up at them pearly gates.

TIBURCIO: Both?

KATE: I told you they were gonna hang you, didn't I? Well, I should have been a mite more careful myself. The wages of sin, my dear. And the grim reaper is comin' to collect his due. I thought you might feel better knowin' you'll have my company up there in about six months.

TIBURCIO: How did it happen, Kate?

KATE: Hell, you know how it happened. He was such a gentleman, too. You know me, always a sucker for gentlemen. God almighty, somewhere's along the line there's gotta be a big payoff for all of us workin' girls. But it was worth it, wasn't it?

TIBURCIO: More than worth it, Kate. It was a glorious mortal fandango while it lasted.

KATE: I hear you've been askin' for your coffin? Well you flea-bitten bandit, I wasn't about to let you go out in a pine box, so I had one specially made for you. Compliments of the girls at the house. Bring it on in, Mister Daver. (The UNDERTAKER enters with a coffin.) Ain't it a beauty?

UNDERTAKER: Craftsmanship of the highest quality, Mister Vásquez. The pride of the undertaking art, all for you. (TIBURCIO frowns.)

KATE: What's the matter? You don't like it.

TIBURCIO: It's too short.

KATE: Too short? Vásquez, that's impossible. I gave Mr. Daver your exact measurements, and I oughta know'em. Measure it—go on. (TIBURCIO steps into the coffin and brings himself to full height. It fits perfectly.)

UNDERTAKER: Does everything meet with your satisfaction, sir?

TIBURCIO: (Smiles.) Perfectly.

UNDERTAKER: Of course.

TIBURCIO: I shall sleep well here ... forever. (The UNDERTAKER starts to close coffin lid. TIBURCIO stops him.) Hold it, amigo. I still have a bit of unfinished business.

Sheriff, would you please call a priest? I think I'm ready now.

KATE: Om'god! Vásquez calling for a priest? Now I know this is the end.

TIBURCIO: (*Heroically.*) On the contrary, mi querida Kate. The American Melodrama of Tiburcio Vásquez, Notorious California Bandit, could never be complete without it's climactic, obligatory finale. Thus ... let it be!

Death sound effect

Escena 9 - Epílogo

Carmen: Y Tiburcio fue colgado esta noche hace un año, exactamente. Estamos cerradas en su memoria, nuestra forma de protestar la infamia de su muerte y asegurar que todos sepan la trágica y gloriosa historia de la vida y muerte de Tiburcio Vásquez, el notorio revolucionario, que en paz descanse.

Lupita: Carmen, Janet dice que estás enferma. ¿Es verdad?

Carmen: Lupita, no te preocupes. Estoy bien.

Janet: No, Carmen, you're not. How many times have I picked you up off the floor after all the clients have gone and the girls gone to bed because you insisted on cleaning even though you're exhausted? How many times have I disguised your cough with the sound of my own voice until I could get you outside and then dried bloody spittle off your lips so no one will know? How often tonight, during the telling of this story, have you had to stop and breathe when once you could have danced for hours without resting? No, Carmen, it's time to come clean.

Carmen: Janet, déjalo. Es mi decisión. Y yo, quiero continuar con la vida. Esta noche es para recordar a un hombre fino, un buen amigo. No es para discutir mi condición o cuestionar mis decisiones.

Janet: Carmen, no. The girls deserve better. If tonight is Tiburcio's night, then it is a night about telling the truth and being honest about yourself, all of it; just as he was in the end. Just as he was all along, I suppose, never hiding. Bandit, womanizer and whatever else Vasquez was, he was always honest about it. So remember him and come clean. Por favor, Carmen, las chicas merecen saber la verdad; y tú, necesitas compartir.

Carmen: Tiburcio siempre decía, "Esa Janet. Watchale, es one smart cookie." Bien, Janet. Sí, estoy enferma. Lo he sabido desde hace más que un año y le di las noticias a Tiburcio en la cárcel. Voy a reunirme con él muy pronto, como Janet me recuerda, y por eso quiero decir dos cosas: uno, después de que muera, Janet será la dueña de la casa y dos, las quiero mucho y quiero que la vida continúe como siempre. No quiero una atmosfera de tristeza. Muy bien, Rosario, ¿Qué opinas de la historia de Tiburcio?

Rosario: Pienso que él era un romántico y que Janet está equivocada. Sí, hay héroes. Tal vez, no lleven armadura o montan en caballos blancos, pero existen. Y Tiburcio era uno de ellos...

Todas las chicas ríen y empiezan a jugar y hacer burlas de Janet. Carmen se queda en la esquina y empieza a toser. Cae al suelo. El divertido para abruptamente.

Janet: Don't you dare die on me now, Carmen! I've worked too hard to keep you alive this long. You die on me and I'll kill you!

Carmen: Tiburcio está aquí, esperándome con un carruaje guapísimo. Siempre era un caballero.

Carmen muere

Janet: Tiburcio, gracias por esperar. Esa mujer te ama mucho.