

RIPE: THE PILOT
a multi-cam half-hour dramedy
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RIPE, a half our comedy
"Pilot" OR "These Friends of Mine"

TITLE CREDITS

EXT/INT. STOCK FOOTAGE - NINETEEN NINETY-SEVEN

Alanis Morissette's "You Learn" plays as STOCK FOOTAGE rolls of happy families shopping at mega-malls, teenagers inserting CDs into their car stereos, and twenty-somethings chilling at coffee houses listening to singer/songwriters. The nostalgia is interspersed with footage of the Clintons looking like a perfect happy family, Tiger Woods winning the Masters, the Spice Girls spreading girl power, and Princess Diana supporting humanitarian efforts. Over the montage, a voice--

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Say what you will about the nineties,
but it was the absolute perfect time
to be a teenager in America. To us the
future was bountiful and anything we
wanted was ripe for the taking.

EXT/INT. THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY - VARIOUS - THE NINETIES

The montage switches to footage of Mexican-American life in a palm tree filled South Texas. Spring Breakers slather on sunscreen at South Padre Island, hard-working Latinas flip tortillas, farm workers pick citrus, and an endless amount of cars wait in line to cross the Mexican border bridge in McAllen/Reynosa.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Especially for South-Texans living on
the border. When Clinton passed NAFTA
our little border towns started
bursting at the seams and all of us in
'em were bursting with dreams.
Including me.

INT. MARCUS' BEDROOM - DAY

MARCOS MARTINEZ, a fourteen year old boy stands in front of his boombox singing in Latin while holding up sheet music.

MARCOS
(singing)
GRATIAS AGIMUS TIBI...

GRACIELA (O.S.)
(screaming)
Marcos!!! Breakfast!!!

MARCOS
(calling off)
I have to practice!!!

GRACIELA (O.S.)
Chingow, Marcos Martinez you better
come to breakfast right now!

Marcos is suddenly hit in the face with a basketball.

MARCOS
Ow!

He turns to see his older brother, JAVIER, shoes and backpack already on. Javier is the most annoying person Marcos knows. He throws the basketball back and turns off his stereo as the narrator continues--

NARRATOR (V.O.)
That clueless singing kid is me, and
the nerd with a stick up his butt is
the most annoying person I know, my
big brother Javier.

JAVIER
(militantly)
Take off time ten minutes!

NARRATOR (V.O.)
He was top of his class and did
everything he could to stay there.

Javier is gone.

MARCOS
We don't have to be at school for
another hour!!

INT. THE MARTINEZ HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

Marcos enters the kitchen where his mother, GRACIELA, is hovering over a large stack of books and papers as she does her makeup. His little brother, ABEL, ten, is giving him the stink eye as he eats breakfast.

MARCOS
Javi! I told you I need time to

practice for my audition! You don't need to be at school an hour early.

JAVIER
(militantly)
Take off time five minutes!

Javier exits.

MARCOS
Does anyone care that I have my big audition today? Anyone?

ABEL
(shouting)
Stop looking at me!!!

MARCOS
Whatever!

ABEL
Mooommm! Marcos is looking at me!

Abel gets up from his seat and finds anything he can, such as cereal boxes and loafs of bread, to build a makeshift wall in front of him. Marcos looks at him as if he's an idiot while the narrator continues--

NARRATOR (V.O.)
That demon spawn is my little brother Abel, who would go on to get a perfect score on his SATs and get a full ride to MIT. He works for Pfizer now.

GRACIELA
There's papa con huevos on the counter.

MARCOS
I don't like papa con huevos.

GRACIELA
You love papa con huevos.

MARCOS
I have never liked papa con huevos.

GRACIELA
Yes you do, callate!

Marcos grabs cereal and milk. Suddenly, a voice from behind a

newspaper; it's the voice of IGNACIO, Marcos' father.

IGNACIO
They've cloned a sheep. A real clone.

ABEL
Stop looking at me!!!

IGNACIO
Jesus y Maria, they're playing God.

Marcos eats his cereal as Abel continues to give him an evil look. They make faces at each other across the table.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
My father was a deacon in the Catholic church. It's a lot like a priest except they can get married. If you ask me, all priests should be able to get married. Though, I'm not sure my dad was so great at it.

IGNACIO
Does a clone even have a soul?

GRACIELA
¿Tiene alma un hombre que engaña a su esposa? [subtitle: Does a man who cheats on his wife have a soul?]

IGNACIO
Tsk. No comiences. [Subtitle: Don't start.]

Graciela and Ignacio give each other weighted looks as Javier enters and crosses towards the front door.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
My parents spoke Spanish when they didn't want us to hear. They never taught us, cause they thought we wouldn't need it. They were so wrong. They were wrong about a lot of things, but I'm getting ahead of myself.

JAVIER
(militantly)
It's take off time! Now!

IGNACIO
Bible study tonight, don't be late!

EXT. MARTINEZ HOUSE - DAY

Marcos and Javier exit a small red brick house that was obviously constructed in the seventies, sitting in a row of perfectly looking similar brick houses on a perfect street.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

See, I grew up in the All-American city of Edinburg, Texas, a Mexican-American utopia where almost everyone I knew was Mexican; the doctors, the lawyers, the politicians.

INT. NISSAN SENTRA - DAY

As Javi and Marcos drive to school we see business after business with Spanish surnames.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

It wasn't even 'til Selena died that I found out the rest of the country didn't listen to Tejano music.

EXT. NORTH HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Javi parks the car and rushes to meet his group of friends as Marcos tries to keep up - but Javi pays him no mind.

MARCOS

Javi! Hey! I'm riding to CCD with you right? Javi!?

INT. NORTH HIGH SCHOOL, HALLWAY - DAY

As our narrator continues, Marcos walks past the band kids, the cheerleaders, an entire group of cowboys in boots and hats, the kids that worship Marilyn Manson, and the hot jock boys, until he meets up with OSCAR, a shy kid flipping anxiously through a magazine.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Between my mom constantly studying for grad school, my father busy with the church, and my two brothers being geniuses, no one really paid much attention to me. Except my best friend Oscar, who ironically hated attention. I'd begged him to join choir with me in middle school, but he said he preferred to stay behind the camera. He shoots for all kinds of National

publications now.

OSCAR

They found someone to play Selena in
the movie and she's not even Mexican!

MARCOS

She looks Mexican to me.

OSCAR

Yeah, but she's not Mexican-Mexican,
she's Puerto Rican (anglo-
pronunciation).

MARCOS

There's different types of Mexican?

OSCAR

Duh!

MARCOS

What are we?

OSCAR

We're just Mexican.

INT. NORTH HIGH SCHOOL, HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

We follow them down the crowded halls as they turn a corner
where an athletic senior in a letterman jacket suddenly
towers over them.

J.D.

Awww it's the Olsen twins crying over
their gay magazine.

J.D. grabs the magazine from their hands, looking through the
pages mockingly, and ripping some out as he does.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

J.D. Lopez; the star senior, first
chair, tenor section leader, and my
friend Evelyn's older brother.

MARCOS

Leave us alone J.D.!

J.D.

Why? Are you gonna kiss your joto
boyfriend?

MARCOS
He's not a joto!!!

J.D.
So just you then?

A voice from behind interrupts, this is EVELYN.

EVELYN
Maybe you should stop projecting your sexual insecurities J.D.

J.D.
(beat)
Shut up!

The bell rings. J.D. tosses the magazine back at them and struts off, pretending not to be annoyed as Marcos puts his books in his locker and Evelyn picks up the torn out pages.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Evelyn Lopez had all the confidence of Buffy the Vampire Slayer with all the fashion sense of Gwen Stefani!

EVELYN
See you at CCD tonight Marcos!

OSCAR
(sincerely)
Good luck with your audition.

Off of Oscar's adorable smile--

INT. NORTH HIGH SCHOOL, CHOIR ROOM - DAY

There are trophies everywhere you look in this grandiose choir room. They line the walls, the shelves, the cabinets, the pianos. Marcos stands on the front row of the risers surrounded by eighty other students singing Beethoven's Mass in C. Everyone is hyper-focused on MR. SAENZ, a handsome man in his early thirties waving a baton.

MR. SAENZ
Good, except basses you're going flat at the ends of phrases. Remember to think upward. Alright. Let's hear the tenor solos, who's auditioning?

J.D. raises his hand proudly at the top of the risers, as his buddies egg him on. Marcos looks at J.D. timidly then back at

Mr. Saenz who he is shocked to find is staring straight at him with an encouraging smirk. Marcos slowly raises his hand.

MR. SAENZ

Wow! A freshmen challenger, you better watch out J.D. - Marcos let's hear you first.

J.D. gives Marcos a death stare as the music starts and Marcos begins. He's mostly nailing it for a freshmen.

MARCOS

Gratias agimus tibi...

Off of J.D.'s annoyed face--

INT. NORTH HIGH SCHOOL, CHOIR ROOM - DAY

As the class disperses Mr. Saenz stares at Marcos who notices the attention.

MR. SAENZ

Marcos?

MARCOS

Um. Yes, Mr. Saenz?

MR. SAENZ

Look at you, trying out for a solo.
Your voice could really settle into
a mature tenor with some work.

MARCOS

I've been practicing sir.

MR. SAENZ

You know I give private lessons to
select students with the most
potential. I'd be happy to work with
you - free of charge.

MARCOS

You think I have potential?

MR. SAENZ

How about Saturday afternoon? I live
in Citrus estates.

MARCOS

Oh, um... I would love that, but...
I'm not sure my Mom would let me.

MR. SAENZ

Your mom doesn't want you to become a
better singer?

MARCOS

Right... I'll ask.

On the other side of the choir room, J.D. watches; his face covered with jealous rage.

EXT. ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC CHURCH & SCHOOL - NIGHT

Javier parks the car outside of an old Catholic church. He slams the door leaving Marcos inside, before rushing off quickly.

MARCOS

Hey! Hey! You locked me in! Javier!
Sheesh!

The narrator continues as people enter the church. Marcos sees his parents silently fighting while holding bibles and book bags, then spots his friend Evelyn and is relieved.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

My family believed that every good Catholic is indoctrinated weekly at CCD, where you allegedly learned how to be a better person.

INT. ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC CHURCH & SCHOOL - NIGHT

A few dozen high school aged students sit inattentively in a Catholic School classroom as a middle age bald man preaches.

CCD TEACHER

(lovingly)

We should always be kind to even the worst of sinners, because we're all sinners. Even when we know someone is the worst of sinners we should pray for them, like we do for the homosexuals dying of AIDS...

Evelyn and Marcos look bored out of their minds.

INT. THE MARTINEZ HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A massive pile of steaming beef fajitas sit atop mounds and mounds of melty American cheese, grilled peppers, refried beans, and freshly fried tortilla chips on a giant tray

that's sitting on the coffee table. Marcos and the family gather their plates, pour Dr. Pepper into vintage glasses, and dig into the nacho-like tower before finding a seat around their TV. Their chihuahua, Tito, runs back and forth between them begging for a share amid the chaos of a family fighting over where to sit as we hear--

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The only good thing about going to CCD was that my mom was too busy to cook, so we'd always order a giant fajita botana platter and feast like Tejano Kings as we sat around the TV watching our favorite Wednesday night show: Ellen. My parents loved Ellen. They'd go on and on about how funny she was without being dirty or inappropriate; the perfect comedian for a good Christian family. But on the evening of April 30th, 1997 they watched in horror as Ellen did this.

FOOTAGE OF ELLEN DEGENERES KISSING LAURA DERN.

Ignacio's jaw hangs in horrific astonishment, Javier is turned on, Marcos becomes nervously tense, and Abel cluelessly continues eating. But when Graciela looks up from her pile of guacamole she goes completely white, releasing a blood curdling scream.

GRACIELA
Arrrrggggggghhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!

The scream sends a shock through everyone. Graciela, being so frustrated that she doesn't know how to contain herself, turns over the coffee table causing the massive botana platter to fall onto the carpet while Javier, Marcos, and Abel jump out of their seats, screaming.

JAVIER, MARCOS, & ABEL
Arrrrggggggghhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!

The family chihuahua rushes over and delights in the mess as Ignacio, jaw still hanging, pulls himself together.

IGNACIO
Turn that filth off right now!

Ignacio exits sternly as Graciela tries to clean up quickly and keep the family dog from making it worse all while sobbing uncontrollably. Abel is confused. Javier is pissed.

GRACIELA
(to chihuahua)
Tito! No! Stop it Tito! Ya! Stop!

Off of Marcos' panicked face--

INT. MARCUS' BEDROOM - DAY

Marcos slams the door, jumps onto his bed, and picks up a translucent green plastic phone with a glittery purple chord and light-up buttons; dialing as fast as he can. He waits for an answer as we hear--

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Anytime anything crazy happened in my life I called my besties.

MARCOS
Evelyn? I'm dialing Oscar in.

INT. MARCUS, EVELYN, & OSCAR'S BEDROOMS - NIGHT

Split screen between Marcos, Evelyn, and Oscar's bedrooms as they talk on a "three-way" phone call. Jill Sobule's "I Kissed a Girl" plays in the background.

MARCOS
How could she do that? On TV!?

EVELYN
I think it's kind of badass!

MARCOS
Bad A? My little brother was watching!

OSCAR
It's just a kiss right?

MARCOS
A homosexual kiss! Homosexuals go to hell.

OSCAR
How do you know that for sure?

MARCOS
Oh my gosh, how can you ask that? It's in the bible!

EVELYN
Is it though?

MARCOS
Don't you even pay attention at CCD?
Homosexuals burn in sulfur for all
eternity. Everyone knows they're
doomed if they choose that life!

OSCAR
What if it's not a choice?

MARCOS
God would never make someone something
that causes them to burn in hell
automatically!

EVELYN
Yeah, that's what Oscar's saying.

OSCAR
What if I were gay, do you think I'd
go to hell?

MARCOS
You're not gay so it doesn't matter.

OSCAR
What if I am?

EVELYN
(beat)
Are you trying to tell us something?

MARCOS
(whispering)
You're not gay.

Oscar looks scared; he's confessing. Evelyn's eyes tear up,
after a moment of awkward silence...

EVELYN
Oscar. I accept you no matter what.

Marcos gets up out of bed as if offended. He paces.

MARCOS
(hushed)
Oscar? Tell me you're joking.

OSCAR
I'm gay Marcos. I'm gay.

Oscar looks apologetic. Marcos hangs up the phone in shock.

INT. MARCUS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Marcos panics. Wait, is he having a panic attack? He grabs his rosary and starts praying.

INT. THE MARTINEZ HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

As Marcos enters the kitchen, Graciela leans against the counter reading from an enormous textbook and flipping a tortilla with her hand. Abel, eats a pop-tart by tearing it open and scraping the jelly with a spoon. Marcos looks at him with disgust. Ignacio reads the paper.

IGNACIO

(to no one in particular)

How could ABC even air that kind of content during prime time?!

JAVIER (O.S.)

(militantly)

Take off time five minutes!

GRACIELA

It's disgusting. Don't you get any ideas Marcos.

MARCOS

Ideas?

GRACIELA

There's papa con huevos on the counter.

MARCOS

No thanks.

IGNACIO

I wanna know if they approved it, or if Ellen tricked them into it. I bet she tricked them.

GRACIELA

You need to eat breakfast.

MARCOS

I don't like papa con huevos.

IGNACIO

The Catholic church will not stand for this!

GRACIELA
You love papa con huevos.

MARCOS
Mom? Can I take private voice lessons
from Mr. Saenz?

GRACIELA
Voice lessons? What do you need voice
lessons for?

MARCOS
To get better at singing?

GRACIELA
We don't have all this extra money to
throw away on lessons. Tell him
Ignacio.

Ignacio puts down his newspaper.

IGNACIO
How much are these lessons?

MARCOS
They're free.

GRACIELA
Free?!

MARCOS
Mr. Saenz gives private voice lessons
to students with the most potential.

IGNACIO
Suddenly you have potential?

MARCOS
Um... he thinks I could.

GRACIELA
Aw no! Why would he give free lessons?

MARCOS
Mr. Saenz just wants everyone to be
better. Our choir is really good, they
were state champs a couple years ago!

GRACIELA
No. Nobody gives away free lessons to
a little boy. This isn't right.

MARCOS

I'm not a little boy.

GRACIELA

Exactly! Teenage boys are even worse.
Why would anyone want to spend time
with them unless they're not right?

MARCOS

Who's not right? What does that even
mean? Dad!?!?

GRACIELA

It sounds fishy.

IGNACIO

Listen to your mother.

Marcos storms out. Off of Graciela's worried face--

INT. NORTH HIGH SCHOOL, HALLWAY - DAY

As Marcos enters the School rotunda he notices that there seems to be something going on. A large group has gathered and are buzzing around each other. Marcos tries to see what is happening but can't seem to catch a glimpse. Evelyn approaches him as we hear...

NARRATOR (V.O.)

When I got to school that morning
there was a confusing buzz in the air
that I didn't quite understand.

MARCOS

What's going on?

EVELYN

All anyone is talking about is Ellen
and of course, now, Oscar.

MARCOS

Oh no! Who told everyone?! They're
going to destroy him.

EVELYN

Destroy him? They adore him.

MARCOS

What?

The sea of students part and Oscar is laughing and smiling

around a crowd of cheerleaders. Is he suddenly popular?

EVELYN

Seems like the best thing anyone can
ever be is really just... themselves.
Isn't this great?

MARCOS

I gotta get to choir.

Marcos turns around quickly and heads in the other direction,
but Oscar sees him.

OSCAR

Marcos! Hey Marcos! Marcos!

Oscar can't seem to catch up to Marcos. Oscar looks
heartbroken.

EVELYN

He had to get to choir.

Off of Oscar's disappointed face--

INT. NORTH HIGH SCHOOL, CHOIR ROOM - DAY

Silence as Mr. Saenz looks back and forth between J.D. and
Marcos with a contemplative face. Tension builds around the
choir room as the students shift their weight holding their
sheet music up. We hear the squeaking of the risers under
their feet.

MR. SAENZ

Hmmmm. This is a really hard choice.

J.D. rolls his eyes. He's pissed.

MR. SAENZ (CONT.)

I'm gonna have to go with J.D.

J.D. lets out a sigh of relief as all his buddies gas him up
with "whoops" and clapping. Marcos wishes he could vanish
into the floor.

MR. SAENZ (CONT.)

But don't get too cocky J.D. There's a
lesson to learn from this. There's
always someone a little younger and a
little more eager than you, ready to
take your spot. Remember that next
year in college. Which reminds me,

solo and ensemble competition is coming up quickly. Rehearsals for that start Monday if you're interested.

The bell rings. Nobody moves. Mr. Saenz looks at them as if he is a dog trainer who will scold them if they move without permission. After a moment--

MR. SAENZ
You're dismissed.

The students disperse. Amid the chaos, J.D. shoves Marcos.

MARCOS
Hey!

J.D.
So I guess I was right huh? Your boyfriend's a homo.

J.D. grabs Marcos' chin. Marcos freezes.

J.D. (CONT.)
When's the wedding?

Mr. Saenz approaches and grabs Marcos by the shoulder pulling him away from J.D.

MR. SAENZ
Cool it J.D.! Jealousy is not a good look.

J.D.
Whatever.

J.D. rolls his eyes and exits. Mr. Saenz' hand does not move.

MR. SAENZ
You okay?

MARCOS
Thank you. Um.

MR. SAENZ
Don't mind him, he's scared to death of his own future and worried about his legacy. Oh by the way, when you come on Saturday we can pick you out a nice song for the competition. I normally don't let freshmen sing Division One arias, but I thought I

might make an exception.

MARCOS

Really? So I'd qualify for state?

MR. SAENZ

If you get a gold rating at regionals.
But, to be blunt you've got a lot of
work to do. You're far from a gold
rating right now.

Off of Marcos' excited face--

INT. THE MARTINEZ HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

The entire house is filled with the sounds of Graciela's cooking as she stands in front of the stove making dinner. She looks exhausted. Marcos gets dishes out of the cabinet as Abel runs by with his Power Ranger toys.

GRACIELA

Hey, hey! Take those to your room
Abel! Now! Ayayay!

The phone rings. Ignacio answers it.

IGNACIO

Martinez residence. Yes, hi Evelyn.

Marcos motions to his father that he does not want to take the call. His father looks confused. This gets Graciela's attention who makes a judgmental face.

IGNACIO (CONT.)

Uhh... I'm sorry Evelyn, Marcos isn't available right now can I take a message?

(beat)

Uh-huh. Okay, have a blessed night.

Ignacio hangs up. Marcos looks worried.

GRACIELA

What was that about?

IGNACIO

She says she'll talk to you at school tomorrow. She said it's very important.

They all stare at Marcos curiously.

GRACIELA
Dinner's ready! Javier!! Abel!!!

INT. THE MARTINEZ HOUSE, DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The entire family sits around a dinner table in a semi-formal dining room that looks like it was decorated in the early eighties. Marcos looks around at his family shoving rice and beans in their mouths. The chihuahua runs around their feet under the table. When no one is watching Abel sneaks him scraps, as we hear...

NARRATOR (V.O.)
This was it. My last chance to
convince my mother that I needed these
voice lessons to become the state
recognized singer that I deserved to
be.

MARCOS
So... Mom...

GRACIELA
Mmm?

MARCOS
There's a big singing competition
coming up really soon... and if I do
well I could qualify for the state
competition.

JAVIER
You can qualify to state for stupid
singing?

MARCOS
Shut up!

IGNACIO
Don't say shut up.

MARCOS
Dad, you qualified for state right?

GRACIELA
He didn't just qualify, he was the
cross-country state champ, 1972!

MARCOS
Right, so it would be...

GRACIELA
(cutting him off)
The only reason he went to college was
cause of his track scholarship.

MARCOS
Right, so anyway, it would be...

GRACIELA
(cutting him off again)
Maybe you should join track.

JAVIER
Or ROTC so we can make a man out of
you.

GRACIELA
I went to college on a migrant
scholarship. You boys have it so easy,
I was picking cotton at your age.

IGNACIO
If you wanna be good at anything son,
you have to practice a lot. I
practiced a lot.

MARCOS
Exactly. Which is why I think you
should let me take those lessons with
Mr. Saenz. It's like extra coaching.

Ignacio is silent. He looks at Graciela as if to say "he has a point." Javier is busy stuffing his face.

GRACIELA
(melodramatically)
Ay Marcos why do you disobey me?

MARCOS
I'm not.

GRACIELA
It's not appropriate to be going to an
older man's house. Ya!

IGNACIO
Would his wife be there?

GRACIELA
Ignacio!

MARCOS
I don't think he's married.

GRACIELA
¿Mira, qué te dije?! I knew it. See!

MARCOS
But all the other kids go over there.
Why is it such a big deal?!

GRACIELA
Silencio! Ya! Why are you questioning
me? The answer is no!

MARCOS
God Mom! Don't you care about my
future at all!? Cheese and rice!

Everyone at the table is stunned to silence.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
But I didn't say cheese and rice, I
took the Lord's name in vain.

IGNACIO
(Suddenly powerful)
Don't you ever take the Lord's name in
vain, in this house!

Marcos gets up from dinner in a huff and storms off.

GRACIELA (CONT.)
Marcos! Marcos get back here! Marcos!

INT. MARCUS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Marcos runs up to his room and slams the door in protest. He jumps on his bed and picks up his green phone. He's about to dial when he remembers... he's ignoring his two best friends. He has no one to call. He hangs up the receiver and rolls over onto his back staring up at his ceiling. His life is ruined.

INT. NORTH HIGH SCHOOL, CAFETERIA - DAY

Marcos stands in a cafeteria snack bar line. He looks across the cafeteria where he sees Evelyn and Oscar sitting at a table with several other students. They're laughing and enjoying themselves. He's jealous of that. Maybe he should go sit with them? No. He can't be seen with Oscar.

LUNCH LADY
Hello!? Keep the line moving. What do you want?

MARCOS
Um, can I get a hotdog please, with relish and mayonnaise.

RAUL
So you want a weiner with white sauce, weiner boy?

People in line start laughing at Marcos, and repeating the nickname "weiner boy." Marcos waits for his lunch order in humiliation. He looks across the cafeteria where Evelyn is waving him over. He ignores her, as we hear...

NARRATOR (V.O.)
That idiot is Raul Hinojosa. He called me weiner boy till we graduated. He's an assistant manager now at a Chili's.

Marcos embarrassingly exits the cafeteria with his lunch.

INT. NORTH HIGH SCHOOL, HALLWAY OUTSIDE CHOIR ROOM - DAY

Marcos walks up to a secluded hallway where the entrance to the choir room is. He looks down the hall to make sure no one sees him and sits on the floor to eat his lunch in solitude. He's taking a bite of his hotdog when Mr. Saenz approaches the door with a bag of "El Pato," local Tex-Mex fast food.

MR. SAENZ
Well, well, well, what are you eating out here for?

MARCOS
Um...

MR. SAENZ
Come on in.

INT. NORTH HIGH SCHOOL, CHOIR OFFICE - DAY

Mr. Saenz shares his desk space with Marcos as they eat.

MR. SAENZ
You know, I really think you've got what it takes, Marcos. Singing could be your meal ticket?

MARCOS
Oh, the hotdog's plenty.

MR. SAENZ
You know J.D. got a music scholarship.

MARCOS
So, you can go to college for music?

MR. SAENZ
Of course! What do you think I went to school for?

MARCOS
Teaching?

MR. SAENZ
(earnestly)
You're hilarious. You know what? You can borrow these, but you gotta bring 'em back.

Mr. Saenz reaches for several recordings he has nearby. Chorus recordings, opera recordings, musicals. Marcos is honored. He hands them over to Marcos.

MARCOS
Wow. I'll listen to them tonight!

INT. NORTH HIGH SCHOOL, HALLWAY - DAY

Marcos walks down the crowded hall when Evelyn catches up to him unknowingly.

EVELYN
Hey, where were you? We waited for you at lunch.

MARCOS
I ate in the choir room.

EVELYN
That is pathetic! Why are you so offended that Oscar is gay?

MARCOS
Because it's... because... I dunno.

EVELYN
You can't be that small minded. Are you mad he didn't tell you earlier or

something?

MARCOS

He was supposed to be my best friend.
We used to have sleepovers every
Friday.

EVELYN

So?

MARCOS

So? So we were sleeping in the same
bed.

EVELYN

God, you're such an idiot!!!

Suddenly a voice from behind them.

OSCAR (O.S.)

He's not an idiot!

Oscar approaches them flanked by a crew of new friends he
seems to have just made.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

But I *was* an idiot.

EVELYN

Let's just talk about this later
tonight y'all.

OSCAR

Marcos, what's going on? You've been
acting weird all day.

MARCOS

I am *not* acting weird.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

But I *was* acting *very* weird.

A few of Oscar's new friends start to giggle and point at
Marcos' shirt. Raul passes by and calls out--

RAUL

Omigod, look at weiner boy, with
weiner sauce all over his shirt!

MARCOS

What?!

OSCAR

Oh! Don't move, you've got something
on your shirt. Is that mayo?

Oscar grabs a tissue from his bag and tries to remove it.

MARCOS

Get away from me. I don't hang out
with freaking foofoos!

The crowd around them gasps. Marcos can't believe what he just said, but he tries to own it as Oscar looks him dead in the eye with disappointment. Silence in the hallway as we hear--

NARRATOR (V.O.)

But I didn't call him a foofoo, I
called him something much, much worse.

Oscar lifts his head defiantly, discovering his "gay defense mechanism."

OSCAR

(comedic bravery)

Yeah, I'm a foofoo, obviously. So
what? Vaginas absolutely terrify me!
They're disgusting, but go ahead and
enjoy them all you want you *ignorant
breeder*.

MARCOS

You're not my friend anymore!

EVELYN

Marcos!

OSCAR

I've got news for you. I wouldn't even
want to be.

Oscar sashays away with all the sass of a drag queen. Marcos is humiliated and confused. Off of Evelyn's horrified face--

EXT. MARTINEZ HOUSE - DAY

It's a peaceful yet extremely hot day in this perfect suburban neighborhood. Ignacio trims the bushes with a sweatband over his forehead while Javier mows the lawn shirtless. The neighbors fan themselves as they take care of their gardens.

INT. MARCUS' BEDROOM - DAY

Marcos nervously gets ready to disobey his mother. He is playing a CD of Miss Saigon which he borrowed from Mr. Saenz. He looks at the other CDs he borrowed, then hides them in a drawer behind his sweaters. He crosses to the mirror to talk himself up.

MARCOS

(assuring himself)

You're just going to Evelyn's. No big deal. It's not a big deal as long as you don't make it a big deal.

Off of his unsure face--

INT. THE MARTINEZ HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

Marcos enters the kitchen nervously, where his mother is once again studying.

MARCOS

Bye Mom.

GRACIELA

Wait, wait, wait, you better not be going to Oscar's... I ran into Mrs. Benavides at H-E-B this morning and she said that your friend Oscar is going around telling people he's gay?

MARCOS

He's not my friend.

GRACIELA

(with disbelief)

Marcos, it's true? Pobrecita. His poor mother must be beside herself.

MARCOS

I dunno, I don't talk to him anymore okay?

GRACIELA

Well good, I don't want you hanging out with anyone like that. This is all Ellen's fault. Giving little boys and girls perverted ideas. You better not be going over there!

MARCOS

I'm not.

GRACIELA

You better not! Where are you going?

MARCOS

I'm just going to Evelyn's.

GRACIELA

(gossipy)

Is she your girlfriend?

MARCOS

No!

GRACIELA

Cause you can tell me if she's your
girlfriend.

MARCOS

She's not my girlfriend okay? Leave me
alone.

GRACIELA

Because it would be so cute if she
was.

MARCOS

Mom! Stop! I gotta go.

GRACIELA

Hey, keep your rocket in your pocket.

MARCOS

Mom!

GRACIELA

No sex until marriage!

Off of Marcos' annoyed face--

EXT. MARTINEZ HOUSE - DAY

The sun is reflecting off of every surface. It's almost impossible to see. Marcos looks around nervously as he bikes away, sweat already dripping off his brow.

EXT. MR. SAENZ' HOUSE - DAY

Marcos pulls up to Mr. Saenz' house on his bike. He stares at

it nervously as if upon entering he might befall all the terrors of a horror movie. He hides his bike on the side of Mr. Saenz' house behind a bush and wipes away the sweat on his shirt.

EXT. MR. SAENZ' HOUSE - DAY

Marcos knocks on Mr. Saenz' front door and is soon met by his casually dressed choir teacher, rocking a welcoming smile.

MR. SAENZ

Whoa, it's hot out here today, come on in and cool off.

INT. MR. SAENZ' HOUSE - DAY

Marcos is in awe of everything inside Mr. Saenz' house. He never thought that anyone could live such an interesting life. The walls are covered with posters of musicals, operas, and concerts, instead of the normal "Home Interior" decorations he is used to. On every shelf is a picture of Mr. Saenz in some exotic location around the globe.

MR. SAENZ

You're very sweaty. Let me turn down the air.

Mr. Saenz exits to the hall. Marcos wipes his seat and sniffs his pits as he continues to examine Mr. Saenz' collections as if in a museum.

MARCOS

Woah. You went to Asia?

MR. SAENZ (O.S.)

Oh yeah, I spent a summer backpacking through Thailand.

MARCOS

You've been to Broadway?

MR. SAENZ (O.S.)

(laughing)

Yes. I have. I spend my winter breaks singing with the Robert Shaw Chorale at Carnegie Hall.

Marcos has no idea what that means. Mr. Saenz reenters.

MARCOS

Wowwww...
wwwwww...

MR. SAENZ
Oh, you'd love New York.

MARCOS
I dunno...

MR. SAENZ
Trust me Marcos, the world is a lot
bigger than South Texas. You've gotta
get out of the Rio Grande Valley and
see it one day.

MARCOS
(can I really?)
Yeah.

MR. SAENZ
Now let's find you a song for Solo &
Ensemble competition.

MARCOS
Sure.

Mr. Saenz crosses towards a bookshelf filled with sheet music
as Marcos continues to look around in wonder. Mr. Saenz finds
a yellow book on the shelf and takes it to his piano.

MR. SAENZ
Come on over here, I don't bite.

Marcos laughs and crosses towards him as Mr. Saenz starts
playing the song on the piano.

EXT. MR. SAENZ' HOUSE - DAY

Marcos leaves Mr. Saenz' house; the front door slowly closes
behind him.

MR. SAENZ (O.S.)
Rehearsal starts Monday!

MARCOS
Okay!

EXT. MR. SAENZ' HOUSE - DAY

As Marcos walks towards his bike which he hid on the side of
Mr. Saenz' lawn, he notices J.D. pulling up in a Jeep. He's
soon panicked that J.D. will only pick on him more if he sees
him there. He quickly hides behind a bush until J.D. gets off
his Jeep and enters the house.

When the coast is clear, Marcos grabs his bike and starts walking towards the street. Until... suddenly he hears music. It couldn't hurt anything to listen to a bit of J.D.'s lesson could it? He leaves his bike and crosses toward the side of Mr. Saenz' house where he looks through the window.

INT. MR. SAENZ' HOUSE - DAY

Through the window Marcos sees J.D. singing. It's gorgeous. He has the most angelic voice. Soon the music stops and Mr. Saenz approaches J.D.. Marcos can't make out what they're saying, but he's not sure he understands what he sees next. J.D. seems to be... taking off his pants?

EXT. MR. SAENZ' HOUSE - DAY

Marcos can't believe what he's seeing. Is he really seeing this? He's shocked. He's confused. He's baffled. He's curious? He's questioning everything he's ever been told. Is J.D. gay? Is Mr. Saenz gay? Is being in choir actually just as gay as everyone has always said? Why else would J.D. and Mr. Saenz be doing whatever they're doing? What are they doing? What is he doing standing here watching?

Marcos backs away from the window and trips over himself onto the grass. He's panicking again. He has to do something. He has to tell Evelyn! He gets up and, forgetting his bike, starts running as fast as he can down the street.

EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - DAY

Marcos runs as fast as he can as the unforgivable South Texas sun seems to melt his skin off. He's dripping wet as his tan skin shines under the cloudless sky causing the concrete to glimmer and glow.

INT. EVELYN'S HOUSE - DAY

Marcos breathlessly pounds on Evelyn's front door until she answers annoyed. He storms into her foyer.

EVELYN
What do you want?

MARCOS
Evelyn, thank God you're here. Um, I was at my voice lesson with Mr. Saenz and then I... um... I saw your brother... and he... I... um...

EVELYN

Yeah?

MARCOS

I...

EVELYN

You felt bad for treating our best friend like a total jerk?

MARCOS

Um. Evelyn.

EVELYN

God, you're dripping in sweat! Did you run all the way here?

Marcos wipes his forehead and sniffs his pits.

MARCOS

Um...

EVELYN

I'll get you some water.

Evelyn exits as Marcos realizes that he left his bike at Mr. Saenz' house. He wonders what he's going to do for a second, but is soon distracted by a picture on the credenza. It's a picture of J.D. in a nicely fitted soccer uniform. He stares at it intently. Evelyn returns, catching Marcos off guard.

EVELYN (CONT.)

Here you go.

MARCOS

Thanks. Can I use your phone?

INT. EVELYN'S HOUSE - DAY

Marcos stares out the living room window, as Evelyn watches confusedly.

EVELYN

So are we gonna talk about how big of a jerk you are?

MARCOS

I can't be friends with Oscar. I'm sorry.

EVELYN
Just because he's gay?

MARCOS
Yes.

EVELYN
That is so mean. How can you call
yourself a Christian?

MARCOS
I'm not gay Evelyn. If I hang out with
Oscar I'll... what if he...?

EVELYN
Oh my God. You can't be serious.

Through the window we see Javier's car pull up in front of
the house.

EVELYN (CONT.)
Just go.

INT. NISSAN SENTRA - DAY

As Marcos gets into Javier's car, Javier is hit by Marcos'
body odor.

JAVIER
Good Lord, you smell ripe! Are you not
wearing deodorant?

MARCOS
Leave me alone!

Marcos sniffs his pits as Javier drives through a suburban
street shaking his head with Marcos in the passenger seat.

JAVIER
I just don't understand why Mom
couldn't have driven you. I have an
officers meeting right now.

MARCOS
Because I didn't have permission to
bike over there, and you can't tell
her. Okay?

JAVIER
I don't care. Veronica Sepulveda is
gonna be there and Calvin has a pool.

MARCOS
This will take all of two minutes so
just shut up okay?

EXT. MR. SAENZ' HOUSE - DAY

They pull up to Mr. Saenz' house and Marcos gets on his bike.

JAVIER
Ah man, is this Mr. Saenz' house? This
is this some gay choir stuff, isn't
it?

MARCOS
I'm not gay Javier!!!

JAVIER
I didn't say you were gay, Stupid! I'm
saying that everyone's gonna keep
thinking you are cause you loooove
doing all this stupid gay stuff.

MARCOS
I do not!

Javier looks Marcos directly in the eye.

JAVIER
Then why do you do it, Stupid?

MARCOS
Why do you do all the stupid stuff you
do, Stupid?

JAVIER
Because I know what I like, Stupid.

MARCOS
Shut up, I hate you!

JAVIER
I hate you too stupid! Have fun being
gay!

He puts the car into drive and speeds off, leaving Marcos
puzzled and pissed.

EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - DAY

Alanis Morissette's "You Learn" begins playing once more as
Marcos pedals as fast as he can. His heart beating out of his

chest as he rides past the blocks of perfectly manicured middle-class lawns.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

I didn't hate my brother, but I'm not sure I ever understood him, unlike me, he always seemed to have everything figured out. I wish I'd spent a little more time getting to know him in those years leading up to Y2K. Before I knew it he went away to school, Westpoint Academy on a congressional recommendation. After graduation he was one of the first two-hundred soldiers killed in Iraq.

INT. MARCUS' BEDROOM - DAY

Marcos runs into his room, slams the door, and kneels by his bed to pray.

MARCOS

Dear God, please, please, please, please, whatever you do, please don't make me gay. Please God! Please!

As Marcos gets off his knees and crawls into his bed he pulls a picture out of his pocket; it's the picture of J.D. in his soccer uniform. He stares at it longingly, yet inwardly convincing himself that he isn't gay as we float above him...

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Before Clinton was the enemy, before we were carefully curated versions of ourselves, before the towers fell and the American Dream seemed to vanish like the body of Christ... there was a small window in time, where the best thing to be was a kid with a future... even if that future seemed unclear.

ROLL CREDITS

END OF EPISODE