

LUCIA. Thanks. Me too. (*Quick beat.*) Okay, so... Jail time?

(*He "aah's" trying to figure out how to even start this whole thing, then:*)

ABEL. Yeah. No, pos my wife, um, ex-wife, she's from El Salvador. She didn't have papers when I met her. But I fell for her hard so then I didn't care about that shit. Nobody thinks that it might be a problem later on down the line. Cuz I was all empelotado so we did

everything real fast, the wedding, todo shotgun. And like six months later Melita came. That's my baby girl's name, Melanie, but we call her Melita. But like with all of these situations I'm convinced, it was doomed from the start.

LUCIA. The marriage?

ABEL. Yeah. My ex is real jealous and very passionate. Who knew that Central Americans are so feisty? I always thought they were the calm ones.

LUCIA. Well...they're always having wars and coups down there, so...

ABEL. Yeah, but the women? Aren't they supposed to be all mansitas? That's why I never dealt with a Caribbean or a Columbian, cuz I hear they can be fieras. But I had always heard Central Americans were supposed to be the –

LUCIA. The submissive ones? Well maybe that's what you get for being a macho then.

ABEL. That is true. Joke was on me.

LUCIA. What about Mexican girls? What are they like?

ABEL. Oh, they just trouble.

(LUCIA breaks into a smile. Shoot, they both kind of do.)

Anyway, I didn't know she would turn out to be a liona. She was on her best behavior right up until we moved into our own place in Boyle Heights. Then she turned into a real –

LUCIA. Is that a nice place? I'm still looking to rent something permanent.

ABEL. Ha. You're never going to live in Boyle Heights. You wouldn't last. But it was okay for us and for like around six months everything was good. Pretty nice actually. And then, I don't know what happened but she started – truth be told is I think she was sniffing, but I still can't prove that. She had this aunt that came to live with us and she would always start drama with us. And

the thing is, it was like affecting the baby. She'd leave with her aunt God-knows-where and I'd come home and the baby would be all alone, crying in the crib.

LUCIA. That's no good.

ABEL. Yeah. But if I would say anything, the both of them would pounce on me. Para no hacértela larga we split up and then it got, just, it got bad. La tia, she came to my job, not here, I used to be a fireman, actually, so she came to the firehouse, / y armo un desmadre saying that "this and that," that now that she had her citizenship she was going to take the baby back to El Salvador and not tell me where.

LUCIA. You were a fireman?

ABEL. So I run over there and all her cousins – well, that's who she says they are, but I never met no cousins of hers before – there're like six of them in the front yard. And something didn't look right. The whole thing – God, I've played it back in my mind, over and over. Drove me nuts while I was locked up. Something just wasn't right that day.