



Ronald Tavel making up in the dressing room of The Play-House of The Ridiculous for his role as the Director in *THE LIFE OF JUANITA CASTRO*, February 1967.

THE LIFE OF JUANITA CASTRO

a one act play by Ronald Tavel

characters:

Juanita
Fidel
Che
Raul
Extras
The Director

props:

Juanita's gun
Juanita's fan
Fidel's cigar
Fidel's cord
Che's handkerchief



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THE LIFE OF JUANITA CASTRO

(The Director and Juanita are to be played by male actors. The others, including any extras that are used, by females.

Upon the curtain's rise, or after their entrance, JUANITA should be seated. FIDEL may stand or sit to JUANITA's left. CHE may stand or sit to JUANITA's right. RAUL should stand behind and between JUANITA and CHE. The DIRECTOR may sit where he pleases, either above and behind the group, or in front of it, but at some distance from and facing it.

JUANITA should be dressed in an attractive, perhaps flamboyant dress, gay Latin colors. A wig is not necessary, a tiara or dark mantilla will do. FIDEL, RAUL, and CHE may appear in ordinary every day women's wear, or they may be dressed in white army fatigues. The DIRECTOR should be wearing ordinary rehearsal clothes.

When FIDEL is called upon for her long speech, it is preferred that she improvise one in Spanish, touching upon the subjects in the speech included in the text. Should the actress not be able to improvise in Spanish, she should use the prepared speech, being careful to pick and choose different parts from it at each performance in order to maintain a certain amount of freshness and immediacy. She might even add, in English, comments that occur to her at the moment.

The DIRECTOR is advised that a certain amount of improvisation on his part is expected. It is his duty to surprise the group from time to time and to maintain a growing level of tension between himself and the others. Should their responses not satisfy him, he will ask them to repeat themselves.

This play should never be rehearsed.)

The Director holds and reads from the script at all times.

DIRECTOR: Fidel, Juanita, Che, Raul, please smile into the camera: you are posing for a family portrait. Hold it.

(They all smile into the camera for a while, CHE very effeminate, FIDEL tough.)

DIRECTOR: Fidel, take out your cigar and light it.

Smoke it a while with great satisfaction.

Now, blow some smoke in Juanita's face.

Juanita say, "Estupido!" and cough violently.

Fidel, laugh uproariously.

Now, Fidel, offer Juanita your cigar.

Juanita, say very annoyed, "Estupido! Estupido!!"

Fidel, offer Juanita your cigar.....

Juanita, take it graciously - graciously Juanita - and smoke it. Continue smoking it peacefully. Juanita, and everybody else smile into the camera.

Juanita, return the cigar to Fidel.

Fidel, say to Juanita, "I discover you apathetic."

Juanita, say, "I am apathetic."

"No soy excitado par el revolucion."

Che, put your arm around Juanita.

Che, say, "You're not excited?"

Juanita: "I said I'm not excited by the revolution."

Che, "Oh, siento."

Juanita, "The revolution has not turned out good for me."

Fidel, "Silencio!"

Juanita, "Shut up yourself. You always were a spoiled brat."

Now, Fidel, pinch Juanita's cheek affectionately.

Juanita, giggle like a little girl.

Now, everyone laugh out loud together: laugh and laugh and laugh.

Stop!!!

(They all laugh wildly and stop suddenly at the command.)

DIRECTOR: Juanita, say to Fidel, "You never really cared for the poor peasants." Get very emotional.
Say again, "You never really cared for the poor, starving, freezing peasants."
Now think about the poor peasants.
It makes you sad to think about the peasants.
Juanita, start crying.

Now, everyone cry with her.

Stop!!!

(They all cry out loud and cry and cry and stop suddenly at the command. They compose themselves and smile into the camera, as before, as if for a family portrait.)

Fidel, say, "Si, the guajiros on Padre's finca always got too much money. Padre was too generous with them."

Juanita, "Si, the guajiros got too much dinero."

Che, "The filthy guajiros. Bastante dinero!"

Everyone think hard now about the fate of the guajiros, and stare solemnly into the camera.

(They all stare solemnly into the camera for a long time.)

Now, Juanita, say very cheerfully, "I always felt much closer to my brother Raul than I did to Fidel."

Juanita, "I always loved Raul more than Fidel."

Raul, bend down now and say, "Si, Juanita, I always feel same way about you....."

Juanita, look very sexy.

Now, Raul, kiss Juanita.

Che, you kiss Juanita.

Juanita, turn and smack Fidel's face.

Fidel, squint your eyes, smoke your cigar thoughtfully and stare into the camera.

Juanita, stand up and come forward for a close up.
Say, very mysteriously, "...One day I found a note in my house."

"It said, Pablo went to a baptism with Juanita...."

"He is often seen with her....."

"She is often seen with him....."

"I knew the G-2 men were after me....."

"I was very scared."

"But I know how to protect myself!"

Juanita, aim your pistol at the camera. Meaningfully!!

Now, Juanita, please take your seat.

(JUANITA goes back to her seat. Everyone stares at the camera. FIDEL smokes.)

Fidel, say with disgust, "What paranoia!"

Juanita, "What you mean, paranoia?"

"How about when povresita Angelita, our good sister was thrown in prison?"

Fidel, "What paranoia."

Che, "What paranoia."

Fidel, "Pure paranoia."

Juanita, "Claro, paranoia."

Che, "Bitch!"

Fidel, "Mierda."

Juanita, "Tu hermana tambien!"

Fidel, "D'accuerdo."

Now, everyone, smile for the camera. Hold it.

Juanita, you are getting an idea in your head. Think very hard..... think hard.....

Now, Juanita, say, "You know, Fidel, you are really very lucky."

Fidel: "Poota!"

Juanita, scream: "If this whole audience wasn't watching, I would empty this pistol into your belly!!"

Fidel, give your cigar to Juanita.

Juanita, smoke the cigar with great satisfaction.

Juanita, give the cigar back to Fidel.

Raul, massage Juanita's neck.

Juanita, look sexy..... you are enjoying it.

Raul, bend down and kiss Juanita.

Now, Raul, kiss Che.....

Juanita, scream out: "All of you are a bunch of dirty filthy communists!"

"You can not get away with this, you pigs!"

Raul, straighten up again.

Che, take out your handkerchief and wipe your lips.

Che, give the handkerchief to Juanita.

Juanita, smile and say, "Gracias!"

Juanita, wipe your lips with the handkerchief.

Juanita, give the handkerchief to Fidel.

Fidel, give your cigar to Juanita.

Fidel, wipe your lips with the handkerchief and Juanita, you smoke the cigar.

Now, Fidel, (stand up and) walk over to Che and give him back his handkerchief, say, "Gracias, Che!", and give him a big kiss.

Now, Fidel, come forward for a close-up. Say, "Esta poota accuses our government of being communist

"Que poota grande!"

Juanita, say, "No es mentira! Es verdad!"

Fidel, "Shut your face!"

"When we were little kids and used to play together....."

Fidel, look evil. Smack your lips.

Fidel, "The U.S. has some reason of its own for pushing us. To make us an example to the rest of Latin America."

Everyone scream and yell, "Censored! Censored!! Censored!!" so that we can not hear Fidel.

Fidel, continue talking.

Everyone continue screaming.

(FIDEL talks quickly into the camera, but can not be heard because all the others keep screaming "censored!!!")

Now, Fidel, go back (to your seat).

(When FIDEL returns to his position, we see JUANITA and CHE locked in a mad embrace.)

Juanita, say lovingly, "Che, you are the most beautiful hombre in Cuba."

Che, "Ah! Que linda!"

Juanita, "Ah! Que lindo!"

Che, "Ah! Que mujer!"

Juanita, "Aie! Que afeminado! Que maricon!"

Juanita, now rest back, sigh with joy and fan yourself.

Juanita, say, "Aie, it leaves me speechless!!"

Fidel, "Speechless?????????"

Juanita, swooning, "Aie! It leaves me speechless!!"

Fidel, take out your little paper and sniff it.
That's it.

Now come forward and start your speech.

(FIDEL sniffs from the paper his speech is written on and then comes forward and reads or improvises the following. The DIRECTOR and JUANITA fall asleep during the speech. RAUL and CHE kiss madly during the speech.)

FIDEL:

"I feel that those who know and don't squeal are just as guilty as the real finks. Yo pienso que los que saben y no digen son tan malos como los cochones verdaderas. Todos los cochones son rosa clarados. Todo el mundo con barbas es rosa clarado. Los Ruskies piensan que escapan con algo. Los Americanos nos usan como ejemplo. Estamos el mejor ejemplo. Frank Sinatra. Onu y onu son dos, dos y dos son cuatro, cinco le ganaras diez. Con las abejas yo comparo los hombres. Son siempre bussando las muchachitas. Pero algunas de la flores tienen tornas, y le imponen algunos. Mirala, por donde viene la reina del cielos. Ella descenda en Playa Giron. Muchas personas departan cada noche por el Miami Beach. Los afeitores se suspenden comercios. Hemos cogido todas los maricons y les enseñan a las campas trabajar. Nuestra policia es puritanisma, modestidad, verdad, inocencia y cha cha cha, a menos los jefes. Hay senorita cuanta le quiero. La

noche fria y la mujer caliente. Nuestra especialidad son los que vivan in caves. Cuantos angeles caben sobre una spinata. Yankee Si! El politico, y el religio son subjetes interesantes. China Si! Albania, No! No se olviden el alamo. Cien anos Pasados..... Pienso quie el Miami Beach es la cudad mas hermosa del todo el mundo. Tan proximo y luego tan lejo. Hoy Europa, manana el mundo. Russia va a casa! Un hombre tiene que ser politico inteligente. Tiene que ser eso, no como la gente. Liberamos las playas. Tod el mundo tiene que nadar. Todo el mundo tiene que comer un libre de asucar cada dia. Que son los botas estrajeros que yo ve in Habana. Me llama Cecilia Valdez. Jose Marti se invento por los Ruskies. Permita mi gente libertad. Nos quiten el papel. Despues de este asunto, yo voy a tomar un "job" al UN. Algo ahora sobre los demostradores contra la iglesia. Numero uno: Nosotros vamos a debuncar los santos. El Santo Francis es para los aviones. Eso va a obtener una risa de los que hablan espanol - ellos tienen un sensa de humor adolescente. La rebellion de los adolescentes! El cine mas sensacional en la historia del cinema, toda sexy. Ann Margret. Le falta exactamente ochos minutas de las nueve. Los productos "Goya" son los mejores. Cultivo una rosa blanca. Compa el cafe Bustello - not Rhiengold Beer! We must be doing something right! Patronesa los establisimentos del lower east side. Verde, verde, te quiero verde. Verde como el viento. Es que el home me dijo escribir lo que quiso. Pero estoy seguro que yo no puede comprender lo que he escrito en el primer sito. Por esa razon, no voy a escribir nada solo los palabros, o las palabras - nunce me olvido las destinciones entre gendres. Luego: Matan a nadie mas que los jefes de todas gobiernamentos. Es necessario solamente hacer eso para tomar la gente un estado ejitante. Bueno, hagamos lo que necesitamos hacer. Si yo muero in la rebellion viene, no llueve para mi, porque cuatros muchachas me llevan al centario, cada con una lagrima en el ojo. Curse sobre Columbus! Americo Vespucci era hombre bueno. Dios benedicta al America. Hay dos cosas permenantes, El Caballiero de Paris y los sharks en los aguas de Habana. Negro, negro, negro es el clon de mi amor. Candy me gustan mucho de los libros. Vive Lupe Valez! Uno, dos, tres, cuatro, cinco, seis, siete, ocho, nueve, diez!!!! Blanco, negro, rojo, azul, verde, amarillo!!!!!! We must use these people. We must be real smart politicians. A man must have a left hand, etc. etc. "

(The DIRECTOR wakes up or JUANITA begins to shriek with impatience.)

DIRECTOR: Juanita, wake up!

Juanita, say, "After a while, it seem as if my hermanos Fidel y Raul are chilly to me."

"But me hermana, Enima, is caliente with me."

Fidel, say, "Gusana!"

Juanita, "You want to divide la eglesia!"

Fidel, "Gusana!"

Che, say, "Raul want to divide my legs."

Raul say, "I want to divide Che's legs. Mmmmmmmmm!"

Juanita, "My blood boils - only Enima loves me still."

Fidel, "I'll take your temperature."

Fidel, take out your cigar and try to take Juanita's temperature.

Juanita, scream and smack Fidel's face.

Juanita, say, "Mira, Chico, I am getting pretty sick and tired of all of this!!"

Fidel, "Gusana! Puñetta!"

Juanita, come forward for a close-up.

Juanita, say, "By the end of 1960, I begin to help the underground."

Juanita, "I hear mucho bolas -- but some of them is true!!"

"Mens are landing at Playa Girón!"

"Some mens are in Teatro Blanquita."

"I jomp in me coche and drive down theres."

"When I get theres, a soldata revolucionario stops me."

"Get out of my way, I scream, or I keel you!!!!"

"He say, I hope a tree fall on your coche and crush you to death."

"I say to him, The curses of pigs and communists like you are not heard in paradisio."

"Then I find out that Fidel say, This time I am going to liquidate Juanita!!!!!!"

Fidel, say, "And I am going to liquidate you, Juanita!!"

Fidel, come running up to Juanita and start strangling her with your chord.

(FIDEL rushes up to JUANITA and begins to strangle her with his chord. She screams "Fidel, remember Mama!" and struggles

to free herself. In the background, CHE and RAUL are seen seizing this opportunity to kiss madly. FIDEL and JUANITA move off-stage.)

Che, tell Raul, very effeminately, "Fidel has really won over the rabble with his charisma."

Raul, say, "Si, he has sown the seedlings of loathing contra la eglisia with his winsome demagoguery."

Che: "The youth of la Habana carry him on their shoulders."

Raul: "Si, pero eso es pelagroso!"

Che: "Oh, si, some thugs and roughs usually try to break up the processionists! Oh, querida!"

"They use black jacks and lead pipes!"

"Oh, si, querida!"

"They use tambien brass knuckles and big stick!"

"And they shove and push and kick and elbow and pinch the processionists!!"

Raul: "Do they really pinch the processionists?"

Che: "Oh, si, querida! It scares me to death half the time!"

Raul: "I'll protect you, Che."

Raul and Che, hug each other for comfort.

Juanita, come back please!

(JUANITA re-enters warily and takes her seat. She is very tired and her hair and dress are disordered.)

Juanita, say, "He nearly keeled me!"

"But I defended myself with my .32 automatic."

"An I haf three other guns at home."

"Also, a .45 Thompson submachine gun."

"That I stole from one of me hermano's guards when he wasn't looking."

"I will give all these guns to the underground."

Che, kiss Juanita and call her "Laura."

Juanita, call Che, "Toto."

Kiss again.

Che, call Juanita, "Emilia."

Juanita, call Che, "Dodo."

Kiss again.

Fidel, come back and tell us: "I was born on August 13th."

(FIDEL re-enters calmly smoking his cigar and says his line.)

Juanita, say, "Who are all these blond foreigners who are coming into our country?"

Fidel: "They are friends of ours."

Fidel, laugh evilly.

Juanita, say, "Listen, the G-2 men are trying to frame me."

Che: "Don't worry, Juanita."

Juanita: "It's a frame-up, I tell you!"

Raul: "No es importante."

Juanita: "It's a frame-up, I tell you!"

Raul, bend over and kiss Juanita and tell her: "I urge you to forget it."

Juanita: "Afeminado!"

Fidel: "Gusana!!"

Juanita: "My phone is tapped!"

Fidel: "I urge you to forget it."

Juanita, say soulfully, "Oh, forgive me, but I am devoted to me hermano's destruction."

Fidel: "Poota!"

Che, tell Juanita, "Tu save, I think that you are really Puerto Rican....."

Juanita: "Maricon!!"

Raul: "Si, and you are doing all this just for the publicity."

Juanita: "But what do I need the publicity for?"

Fidel: "Because you want to become a famous singer and dancer!"

Juanita: "Bien seguro, claro --- I am a great singer and dancer. Olay!"

Now do your act for us, Juanita.

(JUANITA gets up and sings while dancing to little Latin steps:)

Olay! Olay! Olay! OH! lay! -
Soy contra la revolucion
Y si muerta manana
No es importante
Porque, porque
Soy contra la revolucion!

Olay! Olay! Olay! Oh! lay me!

Adios me patria!
Saluto Mexico!
Gringos americanos!
Girons todos!
Girons, girons todos, excepto meo!

Olay! Olay! Olay! Oh! lay!

(JUANITA dances with CHE and finishes by smacking FIDEL's face.

Then JUANITA dances with RAUL and finishes by smacking FIDEL's face again. Then the entire group joins in the dance and fist-fight.

Finally, JUANITA dances alone, wildly, magnificently, and when she is finished, she comes forward to the camera and says:)

"Good bye, Adios! my lovely audience!!
I love you all! I love you all!
Adios! Adios! Adios! Adios! Adios!

C U R T A I N.