

"Altered Truths"

by

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FADE IN:

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OPENING CREDITS

TELEVISION NEWS

NEWS ANCHOR

On Thursday, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, ended her two-day visit to Mexico by touring a state-of-the-art police facility. Afterwards she met with students from the University of Monterrey where she condemned drug violence.

MONTAGE - CLINTON'S MEXICO VISIT

- A) Clinton in Hi-Tech police facility
- B) Clinton with School Children
- C) University of Monterey, Clinton Speaking

END OF MONTAGE - BACK TO NEWS ANCHOR

NEWS ANCHOR

"Bilateral matters stretch far beyond crime," Clinton said to the students. She also talked about economic and family ties, trade, energy and the world's financial meltdown. But the conversation kept returning to the drug war, which has killed more than 7,000 people in Mexico since the beginning of 2008.

MONTAGE - DRUG VIOLENCE

- A) Mexican swat team breaking down a door.
- B) Bricks of Cocaine.
- C) Stacks of seized Weapons.
- D) Footage of headless corpses.

END OF MONTAGE - BACK TO NEWS ANCHOR

NEWS ANCHOR (CONT'D)

Clinton said again "The battle against Mexican drug traffickers was a shared burden between Mexico and the United States." On Wednesday, she bluntly acknowledged that the United States bears some blame for the crisis because of its "insatiable" appetite for illicit drugs and its role as a supplier of weapons that are smuggled into Mexico to arm the cartels' hit men.

MONTAGE - President Calderon

- A) Calderon in his office signing papers
- B) Helicopter gunships at the border.
- C) Obama signing papers.
- D) Border agents checking trucks in Texas.

END OF MONTAGE - BACK TO NEWS ANCHOR

NEWS ANCHOR (CONT'D)

President Felipe Calderon's government applauded an Obama administration plan, announced Tuesday, that will target the cartels by placing more U.S. agents and other personnel along the border. And the news media and Mexican politicians lauded Clinton's frank declaration of blame, 'as long overdue.'

END OF OPENING CREDITS

SUPER: ELECTION DAY - OAXACA MEXICO

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY

A Rickety Old School bus navigates a narrow mountain road. Loudspeakers are mounted on it's roof. Painted on it's side are Colorful Murals shouting the words:

"SANCHEZ FOR GOVERNOR, VOTE APPO"

A man on a donkey raises his Machete -- CHEERING as the bus passes. Dozens more raise their fists in solidarity.

EXT. JUNGLE VILLAGE - CONTINUOUS

A banner with the words, 'VOTE HERE' hangs over the entrance of an Ancient Spanish church dominating the town square.

Hundreds of short, dark-skinned peasants pack the square, waiting for their turn to vote.

EXCITED VOICES fill the air as the bus enters this small humble village.

CROWD
SANCHEZ! SANCHEZ!

The crowd PUSHES IN - surrounding the bus fighting to get a glimpse of...THE SAVIOR -- FELIPE SANCHEZ -- SAINT -- HOPE of the people.

BODYGUARDS, flank his side as he descends off the bus and into the crowd. Shaking hands, kissing babies, hugging the poorest of the poor -- SANCHEZ is the people's candidate, loved by all.

A PEASANT, (later identified as COBRA) tall...menacing...watches from a balcony across the square. He lifts his arm to shield the sunlight revealing --

A COBRA TATTOO.

Sanchez is ushered to steps of the church waving to the chanting crowd.

CROWD
Oaxaca Unida!
(echoing)
Nunca sera Ventida!
(continued chanting)
Oaxaca Unida!
(echoing)
Nunca sera Ventida! Speech! Speech!

Sanchez is handed a microphone. SILENCE.

FELIPE SANCHEZ
Thank you...
(long pause)
I come back...here...to my village,
my home -- a man humbled by God.
(he makes the sign of
the cross)
I am awed by your support -- your
affection -- your love. The time
for change...has come...A
revolution...

The crowd EXPLODES, machetes waving like a field of wheat.

FELIPE SANCHEZ
 ...a peaceful revolution is
 spreading throughout
 Oaxaca!..Governor Reyes has done
 everything to discredit us and to
 alter the truth...I work...
 (points his finger at
 the crowd)
 ...for you, I am your servant...I
 am your voice and your VOICE WILL
 BE HEARD!

THE CROWD CHEERS

A little boy waves a sign--

INSERT - THE SIGN

"Juan 'Papi' Silvestre, Loving father and husband - murdered,
 January, 15, 1998. Case unsolved."

BACK TO SCENE

Sanchez descends the steps and hugs the little boy.

SANCHEZ
 (choking up)
 Many -- Many of you have lost
 loved ones -- I too lost my
 father...

Holding the little boy's hand -- leads him up the steps.

SANCHEZ
 ...and I scream!...I scream for
 revenge!

MACHETES RATTLE -- VOICES YELL -- CROWD FUELED -- READY TO
 EXPLODE.

Sanchez raises his hands.

SANCHEZ (CONT'D)
 Ghandi...Ghandi said many years
 ago, 'What difference does it
 make to the dead...
 (MORE)

SANCHEZ (CONT'D)
 the orphans...the homeless,
 whether this mad destruction is
 wrought under the name of
 totalitarianism or under the holy
 name of liberty and democracy?'...I
 will NOT...and I implore you
 also...DO NOT become like those
 who wish to destroy us...This
 time the truth will shine like a
 blinding light in the eyes of
 those who bring injustice upon us!
 We will overcome...evil with good!

The crowd EXPLODES!

SANCHEZ
 It's time to Vote! This
 election...our votes will count!

He RAISES the little boy's hand in victory.

INT. TELEVISION STATION - SAME

MARCO TORRES, station chief of XHOXO-TV10 walks into the
 control room holding up a piece of paper.

TORRES
 These exit polls can not be right?

HECTOR VILLA, thin, glasses sliding down his nose, looks up
 from his computer and holds his hands up in defeat.

TORRES (CONT'D)
 Don't these peasants watch the
 news. The APPO is part of the
 fucking cartel...
 (paces the room)
 Our job was to insure that Reyes
 is re-elected.

HECTOR
 We did everything boss -- the
 people...don't want Reyes...they
 want change.

TORRES
 (screaming -- in his
 face)
 The people! What people? The
 fucking Indians? They are not the
 People -- what do I tell Reyes?

EXT. OCEAN BAY - NIGHT

SUPER: PUERTO ANGELITO, OAXACA - THREE DAYS LATER

The moon reflects off a peaceful bay. Coconut palms dance in the breeze. Fishing boats lie anchored. One glides out to sea.

A Pick-up truck, lights off, rolls down the beach and stops at

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - LATER

The campaign bus snakes it's way back up the narrow mountain road away from the village.

The 'Tall Peasant, Cobra' walks with a burro, texting a message. His phone beeps.

INSERT - CELL PHONE SCREEN

The words, 'IT'S A GO' appear.

BACK TO SCENE

He guides the burro to the center of the road. Sanchez's bus appears, Cobra raises his hands in apology as the bus screeches to a stop inches from the burro.

Cobra drags the stubborn burro to the side waving as the bus passes.

Obscured in a cloud of dust, A PACKAGE is slapped on the rim of the back tire.

The bus crosses an old stone bridge.

AN EXPLOSION!

The bus rolls into the abyss below...Sanchez...hope of the people...GONE...

A CRUDE JUNGLE CANTINA

TWO FIGURES, faces covered in black ski masks, jump out. RICARDO, the leader, stares for a moment at the ocean.

LIGHTS FLICKER IN THE DISTANCE

He grabs binoculars from the truck.

BINOCULAR POV: A Whale? -- no a MINI SUBMARINE. A Figure on top flashes a light at a fishing boat gliding towards it.

RICARDO
(looks at his watch)
Right on time.

They walk toward the cantina, hidden amongst the coconut palms... 100 feet from the water.

INT. CANTINA - CONTINUOUS

Ricardo enters the small thatched hut cantina followed by ALBERTO, stocky, tough, an AK47 slung over his shoulder. A silver brief case in hand.

A couple of shoddy tables adorn the open air room. Gas lanterns give off the only light. A generator hums.

JESUS, the owner, greets them with a nod. LUPITO, his son salutes Ricardo.

LUPITO
El Tigre...Mi General.

RICARDO
Hey Lupito...What's up my little brother?

Ricardo salutes back.

Alberto takes a seat -- flips opens the brief case -- a satellite laptop. Powers it up.

Jesus brings coffee, his WIFE enters with two plates of food in hand. Places them on the table.

Ricardo walks toward a television in the corner.

RICARDO
TV work?

Jesus grabs the remote. Turns it on.

ALBERTO
(staring at his computer)
What the fuck!
(waving Ricardo over)
Ricky! You gotta see this.

Ricardo walks over. Stares at the computer.

INSERT - COMPUTER MONITOR

A photo of a smoking bus with the headline - SANCHEZ DEATH -- MURDER?

BACK TO SCENE

ALBERTO (CONT'D)
They're saying a witness saw an
explosion...

They look up at

THE TELEVISION

VOICE
We interrupt this program for
BREAKING NEWS.

ON THE TELEVISION

An anchor sits facing the camera.

ANCHOR
At the request of Governor Reyes ,
federal troops are heading into
Oaxaca City to help protect the
citizens against the escalating
violence that has been building
since the death of APPO leader
Felipe Sanchez. A Narco Terrorist
Group, Los Tigres Negros known
for their black ski masks and
black clothing have been linked
to much of the violence, including
an oil refinery explosion earlier
this month. For more on this
breaking story we go to Betty
Comacho who is standing by at the
Governor's mansion.

BACK TO CANTINA

RICARDO
Narco Terrorist! They call us
Narco Terrorists?

ON THE TELEVISION

REPORTER
This is Betty Comacho -- I am
here in the Governor's mansion
where Governor Reyes has scheduled
press conference at any moment.

ANCHOR
Can you tell us anything Betty?

REPORTER

We have received word that leaders of the APPO are calling for a state wide protest tomorrow. They claim Felipe Sanchez would have won and are demanding new elections.

ANCHOR

Betty we all sympathize with the supporters of Sanchez but do they really believe that he would have won? Every poll showed him behind -- some polls by 20 points.

REPORTER

Most of the people I've spoken to support Governor Reyes and believe that the protesters represent a small faction of the APPO mostly teachers and students. I might add, Carolina, that a spokesman from the Governor's office stated earlier that they have evidence that much of the financial support for the APPO comes from the Colombian drug cartel and is funneled through Los Tigres Negro.

RICARDO (OS)

What bullshit! Obvious who signs their paychecks...

BACK TO CANTINA

ALBERTO

(taps his computer screen)

It says here Felipe was leading in every poll.

Ricardo leans over Alberto's shoulder and peers at the screen.

RICARDO

THAT BASTARD Reyes!

REPORTER (OS)

It looks like the Governor -- is ready -- the Governor of Oaxaca will now address the media.

ON THE TELEVISION

Governor Reyes sits at his desk, his eyes moist with sadness.

GOVERNOR REYES

As you know, my colleague and friend Felipe Sanchez died three days ago in a tragic bus accident. No words can express the loss I feel for this great man, this man of peace and...

He pretends to choke up.

BACK TO CANTINA

RICARDO

Fucking bad actor.

He pulls out his pistol and levels it at the screen.

ON THE TELEVISION

GOVERNOR REYES

Felipe and I worked together to help improve the quality of health care, education, and tourism here in Oaxaca...and as you know we made great strides...I promise you, People of Oaxaca, that his work will continue and I insure you that we will become the greatest -- the most prosperous -- the most educated state in Mexico. I promise I will work to bring order back to Oaxaca. President Caulderon has agreed to send 10,000 troop to keep you, the people of Oaxaca safe. Under the command of Captain Heiberto Ortiz, I have set up a special Narcotics task force to deal specifically with the growing drug violence...

BACK TO CANTINA

ALBERTO

DRUG VIOLENCE! -- Try POLICE VIOLENCE!...you fucking dick...FUCKIN' PROPAGANDA...

GOVERNOR REYES (OS)

This narco terrorist group 'Los Tigres Negros'...

All eyes turn back to the TELEVISION.

ON THE TELEVISION

GOVERNOR REYES
will be the rooted out and...

BAM! BAM!

Ricardo fires two shots into the Television.

RICARDO
 Let's go, we got work to do...
 Vamanos!

They sling their rifles over their shoulders and slide out the door.

Little Lupe runs after them and raises his fist.

LUPE
 VIVA EL TIGRE!

EXT. CANTINA - CONTINUOUS

A fishing boat slides up on the beach.

With the help of Alberto they move crates of weapons from the boat to the truck. The Boat Captain hands Ricardo a square crate.

RICARDO
 The C4?

He smiles and winks.

INT. COTTAGE - DAY

A needle marked arm is stretched out over a night stand. A syringe sits next to a small brown bottle.

The arm moves knocks the bottle to the tile floor -- IT SHATTERS.

A door flies open. Light streams in. We are in a bedroom, where MAMA sleeps peacefully.

BEATRIZ 30's, petite, a natural beauty, enters wearing a night gown.

She is angry -- frustrated.

BEATRIZ
 Oh mama!

Mama stirs, her eyes part.

MAMA

Bea, you're up early.

Bea picks of pieces of the broken bottle.

BEATRIZ

Mama! This was a full bottle of insulin --

MAMA

(ignoring her)
Where's Ricky?

BEATRIZ

Ricky! You're precious Ricky hasn't been home for three days.

MAMA

Must be working -- he's such a good boy.

Bea shakes her head.

BEATRIZ

Now I have to go the pharmacy...ahhh...MAMA!

Bea composes herself and throws on jeans and sweatshirt.

BEATRIZ (CONT'D)

Try not -- just...go back to sleep -- I'll be right back.

She exits.

INT. POST OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

A wiry postal clerk sits at a desk -- drinks coffee -- stamps letters.

CAPTAIN ORTIZ, tall, handsome impeccably dressed officer wanders around a sorting room -- picks up a thick letter -- holds it to the light, then gently opens it with a knife.

Out slides out a two page letter wrapped around five one hundred dollar bills. Pocketing the money he carefully unfolds the letter, reads out loud.

CAPTAIN ORTIZ

My dear Sofia, Not a day goes by without thoughts of you or Ponchito. Words will never be able to express how much I miss and love you. I have great news! I have a job! I am a meat packer for Brooklyn Meats. I'm making \$6.50 hour -- I was paid today...

(turns to the clerk)

Don't you love a guy like this...someone who cares about his family -- those fucking teachers they don't give a shit about their families -- always protesting -- Now this man...

He takes a hundred out of his pocket and neatly wraps the letter back around it.

CAPTAIN ORTIZ

This man -- where ever the fuck he is...Brooklyn? This man cares about his family -- Sofia should be very proud of him.

Hands the letter and a twenty to the clerk who pockets the money, re-seals the letter and tosses it back into a bin.

Ortiz spots another letter he holds it up to the light.

INSERT - CLOSE UP OF LETTER

The Letter is official 'California State Prison' stationary. It is addressed to Beatriz Guerrero.

BACK TO SCENE

CAPTAIN ORTIZ (CONT'D)

Hmmm...looks like a check inside...

DISTANT EXPLOSION!

The building shakes. Ortiz drops the letter.

CAPTAIN ORTIZ

What the fuck was that?

Ortiz opens the door. We see a soldier, SARGENT DERAS, in a military hummer on the radio.

SARGENT DERAS

Captain! A bomb just exploded at the television station.

CAPTAIN ORTIZ
A BOMB?

SARGENT DERAS
Channel 10 is off the air.

CAPTAIN ORTIZ
Let's go.

Ortiz jumps in the Hummer. Gravel flies as they peel out.

TO BE CONTINUED CONTINUED