

EXT./INT. OPEN AIR BUS DEPOT - NIGHT

A sprawling open-air bus depot sits alone against an otherwise black desert setting. Rows of migrants sit on the ground, waiting to be processed and put onto buses.

JOSE (late 30s, rugged and endearing) sits quietly on the pavement and carefully processes his surroundings.

Towards the edge of the room is a lineup of TATTOOED MEXICAN MEN - a rougher crowd than the men sitting in lines.

ONE MAN yells at AN OFFICER walking by him, then spits in his face. A BORDER PATROL AGENT hits him with the butt of his gun.

A fight breaks out, and officers rush over to the commotion.

Jose looks around and notices that none of the officers are near him.

He looks at the expanse of desert just behind him before slowly backing away from the line.

A MAN sitting on the ground watches Jose silently.

Jose's heartbeat is loud in his ears. He continues backing away, watching the border patrol agents carefully.

Right then, he locks eyes AN AGENT who sees him moving.

Jose takes off running.

BORDER AGENT
(into radio)
We got a runner!

After a moment, Jose disappears into the blackness of the desert.

EXT. BUS DEPOT - CONTINUOUS

Jose, now in an all-out sprint, looks back briefly.

THREE BORDER AGENTS chase him, shining their flashlights in every direction, until one finally sees him in the distance and raises his gun.

BORDER AGENT 1
Stop!

He has Jose in his sights.

BORDER AGENT 2

Fuck him. He'll either die out there, or the heli will pick him up.

BORDER AGENT 3

(to radio)

Requesting air support for an escaped Hispanic male heading north from the Cameno border holding facility.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT - LATER

Jose, out of breath and well away from the facility, begins to slow down.

In the distance, lights from helicopters and vehicles sweep the open terrain, showing how vast the desert he is traveling in is.

Exhausted, Jose stumbles across a stash of nearly empty water jugs.

Still handcuffed, he drinks water from the jug as fast as he can before collapsing right down next to them and falling asleep.

EXT. DESERT - THE NEXT MORNING

Sunlight beats down on Jose's face. He wakes up, throat dry, gasping for water. He drinks the few drops left before continuing.

Jose walks through the desert alone - no one in sight.

EXT. CAR MECHANIC SHOP, SIDE OF THE ROAD - DAY

A group of FIVE HISPANIC MEN, wearing worn clothes, sit on the side of the road, talking amongst themselves. WORKER 1 stops talking when he notices Jose approaching. Jose is in bad shape; his lips are chapped, his clothes are dusty, and he is limping.

WORKER 1

(Spanish; subtitled)

Are you okay, man?

JOSE

(Spanish; subtitled)

I'm ok.

They notice his handcuffs but are unfazed.

After a moment, one of them offers Jose a half-drunk Gatorade. Jose takes it and drinks but is careful not to finish it. He hands it back with some left.

WORKER 1
(Spanish; subtitled)
Go ahead.

Jose finishes the rest. Worker 1 kneels and takes what looks like a bobby pin out of his toolbox.

WORKER 1 (CONT'D)
(Spanish; subtitled)
Come here.

Jose approaches him. Worker 1 unlocks Jose's handcuffs, and they drop to the floor. He rubs his wrists.

JOSE
(Spanish; subtitled)
Done that before?

WORKER 1
(Spanish; subtitled)
Maybe.

Some of the other workers chuckle.

JOSE
(Spanish; subtitled)
Are you waiting for a ride?

WORKER 1
(Spanish; subtitled)
Yes.

JOSE
(Spanish; subtitled)
Where to?

WORKER 1
(Spanish; subtitled)
Dorothy

JOSE
Which direction is that?

WORKER 1
West.

JOSE
(Spanish; subtitled)
Can I join you? I can pay you back.

INT. BACK OF COVERED PICKUP TRUCK - MOMENTS LATER

Jose leans his head against the wall of a canvas-covered pickup truck. The wind of the fabric blowing overhead is deafening.

Jose looks wholly defeated. He almost begins to cry, then holds it back after noticing the worker across from him watching.

WORKER 1
(Spanish; subtitled)
Are you sure you're okay?

His concern catches Jose off-guard, and he regains his composure.

JOSE
(Spanish; subtitled)
I'm ok.

WORKER 1
(Spanish; subtitled)
Do you have family here?

Jose nods.

JOSE
(Spanish; subtitled)
We couldn't leave together.

The worker looks at Jose's arm, where a tattoo is around his elbow.

WORKER 1
(Spanish; subtitled)
Ex-Police?

Jose nods.

JOSE
(Spanish; subtitled)
Juarez.

WORKER 1
(Spanish; subtitled)
I hope you find what you're looking
for here.

JOSE
(Spanish; subtitled)
Me too.

EXT. TRAILER HOME - FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

As Jose arrives at a mobile home, tired and disheveled.

He knocks.

After a moment, the door opens cautiously, and we see MARIA (early 30s, homely and beautiful) lock eyes with Jose.

She swings the door open and hugs him as hard as she can.

MARIA
(Spanish; subtitled)
Oh my god.

In the doorway is Jose's brother, RAMON (40s, a kind and friendly face), who welcomes Jose in an understated way, sensing what Jose might have overcome.

DIEGO
(Spanish; subtitled)
Good to see you, brother.

MARIA
(almost in tears)
My god. You're here. Come in. Come in.

INT. TRAILER HOME - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

As Jose steps into the dimly lit interior of the trailer home, a warm and familiar ambiance greets him.

ANA (8, with innocent energy) spies her father and squeals, darting across the room to leap into his arms.

MIGUEL (16, restrained, a shadow of cynicism lining his features) eyes his father wearily before extending a one-armed, reluctant hug.

Ramon waves towards the dining room, gesturing at the simple meal on the table.

RAMON
Let's eat.