

Violence, *The Handout*

From "A Serious Talk" by Raymond Carver

Suggested Violence

A small wax and sawdust log burned on the grate. A carton of five more sat ready on the hearth. He got up from the sofa and put them all in the fireplace. He watched until they flamed. Then he finished his soda and made for the patio door. On the way, he saw the pies lined up on the sideboard. He stacked them in his arms, all six, one for every ten times she had ever betrayed him.

In the driveway in the dark, he'd let one fall as he fumbled with the door. (163)

He considered her robe catching fire, him jumping up from the table, throwing her down onto the floor and rolling her over and over into the living room, where he would cover her with his body. Or should he run to the bedroom for a blanket? (165)

He took the receiver. She left the kitchen. He held the receiver to his ear and listened. He heard nothing. Then he heard a man clear his throat. Then he heard Vera pick up the other phone. She shouted, "Okay, Burt! I have it now, Burt!" (168)

He put down the receiver and stood looking at it. He opened the silverware drawer and pushed things around inside. He opened another

drawer. He looked in the sink. He went into the dining room and got the carving knife. He held it under hot water until the grease broke and ran off. He wiped the blade on his sleeve. He moved to the phone, doubled the cord, and sawed through without any trouble at all. He examined the ends of the cord. Then he shoved the phone back into its corner behind the roasting pan. (168)

From “Ysrael” by Junot Díaz

Characterization and Violence

I didn't mind these summers, wouldn't forget them the way Rafa would. Back home in the Capital, Rafa had his own friends, a bunch of tígueres who liked to knock down our neighbors and who scrawled chocha and toto on walls and curbs. Back in the Capital he rarely said anything to me except Shut up, pendejo. Unless, of course, he was mad and then he had about five hundred routines he liked to lay on me. Most of them had to with my complexion, my hair, the size of my lips. It's the Haitian, he'd say to his buddies. Hey Señor Haitian, Mami found you on the border and only took you in because she felt sorry of you.

If I was stupid enough to mouth off to him—about the hair that was growing on his back or the time the tip of his pinga had swollen to the size of a lemon—he pounded the hell out of me and then I would run as far as I could. In the Capital Rafa and I fought so much that our

neighbors took to smashing broomsticks over us to break it up, but in the campo it wasn't like that. In the campo we were friends. (5)

The summer before, I pegged Ysrael with a rock and the way it bounced off his back I knew I'd clocked a shoulder blade.

You did it! You fucking did it! the boys yelled.

He'd been running from us and he arched in pain and one of the other boys nearly caught him but he recovered and took off. He's faster than a mongoose, someone said, but in truth he was even faster than that.

We laughed and went back to our baseball games and forgot him until he came to town again and then we dropped what we were doing and chased him. Show us your face, we cried. Let's see it just once. (15)

Are you still into wrestling? I asked.

He turned to me and something rippled under the mask. How did you know that?

I heard, I said. Do they have wrestling in the States?

Are you a wrestler?

I'm a great wrestler. I almost went to fight in the Capital.

My brother laughed, swigging on the bottle.

You want to try it, pendejo?

Not right now.

I didn't think so.

I tapped his arm. The planes haven't dropped anything this year.

It's still too early. The first Sunday of August is when it starts.

How do you know?

I'm from around here, he said. The mask twitched. I realized he was smiling and then my brother brought his arm around and smashed the bottle on top of his head. It exploded, the thick bottom spinning away like a crazed eyeglass and I said, Holy fucking shit. Ysrael stumbled once and slammed into a fence post that had been sunk into the side of the road. Glass crumbled off his mask. He spun towards me, then fell down on his stomach. Rafa kicked him in the side. Ysrael seemed not to notice. He had his hands flat in the dirt and was concentrating on pushing himself up. Roll him on his back, my brother said and we did, pushing like crazy. Rafa took off his mask and threw it spinning in into the grass. (18)

His left ear was a nub and you could see the thick veined slab of his tongue through a hole in his cheek. He had no lips. His head was tipped back and his eyes had gone white and the cords were out on his neck. He'd been an infant when the pig had come into the house. The damage looked old but I still jumped back and said, Please Rafa, let's go! Rafa crouched and using only two of his fingers, turned Ysrael's head from side to side. (19)

Ysrael will be OK, I said.

Don't bet on it.

They're going to fix him.

A muscle fluttered between his jawbone and his ear. Yunior, he said tiredly. They aren't going to do shit to him.

How do you know?

I know, he said. (19)

From "Comadre Hill" by Juan Rulfo

-Violence in Scene / Characterization

When the land was divided, most of Comadre Hill was given in equal shares to the sixty of us living there, and they, the Torricos, only got a part of the land, with just a maguey field, but where most of the houses were scattered. In spite of that, Comadre Hill belonged to the Torricos. The plot of ground I worked belonged to them as well: to Odilón and Remigio Torrico, and the dozen and a half green hills one could see below belonged jointly to them. There was no need to confirm that. Everyone knew that's the way it was. (6)

The thing is, even after the Torricos died, no one came back here. I kept on waiting. But nobody returned. First I took care of their houses; I fixed the roofs and I put branches in the holes in their walls; but realizing that they were taking their time in returning, I left them in peace. The only thing that never failed to appear was the midyear rainstorms, and those heavy winds that blow in February and make your bed covers fly up all the time. Every so often, the crows would come, too, flying very low and cawing loudly as if they thought they were in some uninhabited place. (7)

Then the Torricos would return. It was always like that: the fear the late Torricos generated each time they returned to Comadre Hill. But I

was never afraid of them I was a good friend of both of them and sometimes I would have liked to be a bit less old so I could get involved in the jobs they were getting up to. Nevertheless, I was not much use anymore. I realized it the night I helped them robe a mule driver. Then I realized something was lacking in me. As if the life I had had had already been used up and couldn't bear to stretch any more. (9)

But when we reached the Half-Moon road, it began to get dark, and when we got to where the mule driver was, it was already far into the night.

The mule driver didn't stop to see who was coming. Surely he had been waiting for the Torricos and that's why seeing us didn't surprise him That's what I thought. But all the while we were carting the sugar sacks back and forth, the mule driver was still, sprawled out in the grass. So I told that to the Torricos. I said to them:

"That guy lying there. He seems to be dead or something."

"No, he's probably only sleeping," they said to me. "We left him here to watch, but he probably got tired of waiting and fell asleep."

I went over and gave him a kick in the ribs to wake him up; but the man didn't budge.

"He's dead," I told them again.

"No, don't believe it, he's just a little out of it because Odilón hit him in the head with a piece of wood, but he'll get up later. You'll see that when the sun comes out and he feels a little warmth, he'll wake up in a

hurry and go right back to his house. Grab that sack over there and let's go!" was all they told me.

Finally, I gave the dead man one last kick and it sounded just as if I had kicked a dry tree trunk. (10)

"My mouth goes dry just talking to you after what you did," he said.

"But my brother was as good a friend of mine as you are and that's the only reason I came to see you, to see how you can explain Odilón's death."

I could hear him really well now. I realized he was blaming me for having killed his brother. But it hadn't been me. I remembered who had done it, and I would have told him, although it looked as if he wouldn't give me any space to tell him how things had happened. (11)

The large October moon was shining full above the corral and cast Remigio's long shadow far onto the wall of my house. I saw him moving in the direction of a hawthorn and that he grabbed the machete I always kept there. Then I saw him coming back with the machete in hand. (11)

But when he moved away from in front of me, the moonlight shone brightly on the harness needle I had stuck in the sack. And I don't know why, but suddenly I began to put great faith in that needle. That's why, when Remigio Torrico walked over to me, I pulled out the needle

and without waiting for anything else I stabbed him with it near his navel. I plunged it in as far as it would go. And I left it there.

He immediately twisted up like when you have colic and began to cramp up, until little by little he folded over and his knees buckled and he ended up sitting on the floor, all weak and with fear coming from his eyes. (12)

For a moment it appeared as if he would straighten himself up to hit me with the machete; but he must have changed his mind or didn't know what to do, and he dropped the machete and bent over again. That's all he did.

Then I saw his face grow sad as if he had started to feel sick. I hadn't seen such a sorrowful look for a long time and I felt pity. That's why I decided to take the harness needle out of his navel and stick it in a little higher, where I thought his heart would be. And yes, it was there, because he only gave two or three jerks like a decapitated chicken and then became still. (12)

From "Tell Them Not To Kill Me!" by Juan Rulfo

-Violence and Summary / Characterization

The ten cows I gave the judge did me no good, nor did the bond I paid on my house to get out of jail. And they still paid themselves out of what was left so they wouldn't keep after me, but they kept after me all

the same. That's why I came to live with my son on this other little piece of land I had named Palo de Venado. (62)

Hadn't he even gone so far that his wife left him, as well? That day when he woke up to the news she had left him it didn't even enter his head to go out looking for her. He let her go without even trying to find out anything, whom she had left with or where, as long as he didn't have to go down to the village. He let her go the way he had let everything else go, without bothering to put up a fight. The only thing left was to take care of his life, which he would protect no matter what. He couldn't let them kill him. He couldn't. Even less now. (63)

He slung him on top of the donkey. He cinched him up tight against the rigging so he wouldn't fall on the way. He put a sack over his head so he wouldn't give a bad impression. And then he prodded the donkey and they hurriedly left, in order to reach Palo de Venado still with time to arrange a wake for the dead man.

Your daughter-in-law and grandkids will miss you," he was telling him. "They'll see your face and think it's not you. They'll think coyotes gnawed on you when they see you with that face full of holes, so many more gunshots than they needed." (66)

