

CHAPTER ONE:

LEARNING VENEZUELAN IN 8 DAYS



Day One

4AM, BROOKLYN

AREN'T THERE LIBRARIES
IN THE US? WHY DO YOU ALWAYS
HAVE TO GO TO LATIN AMERICA
TO STUDY?

EVERY YEAR MILLIONS
OF PEOPLE COME
HERE TO STUDY.

COME ON MOM...

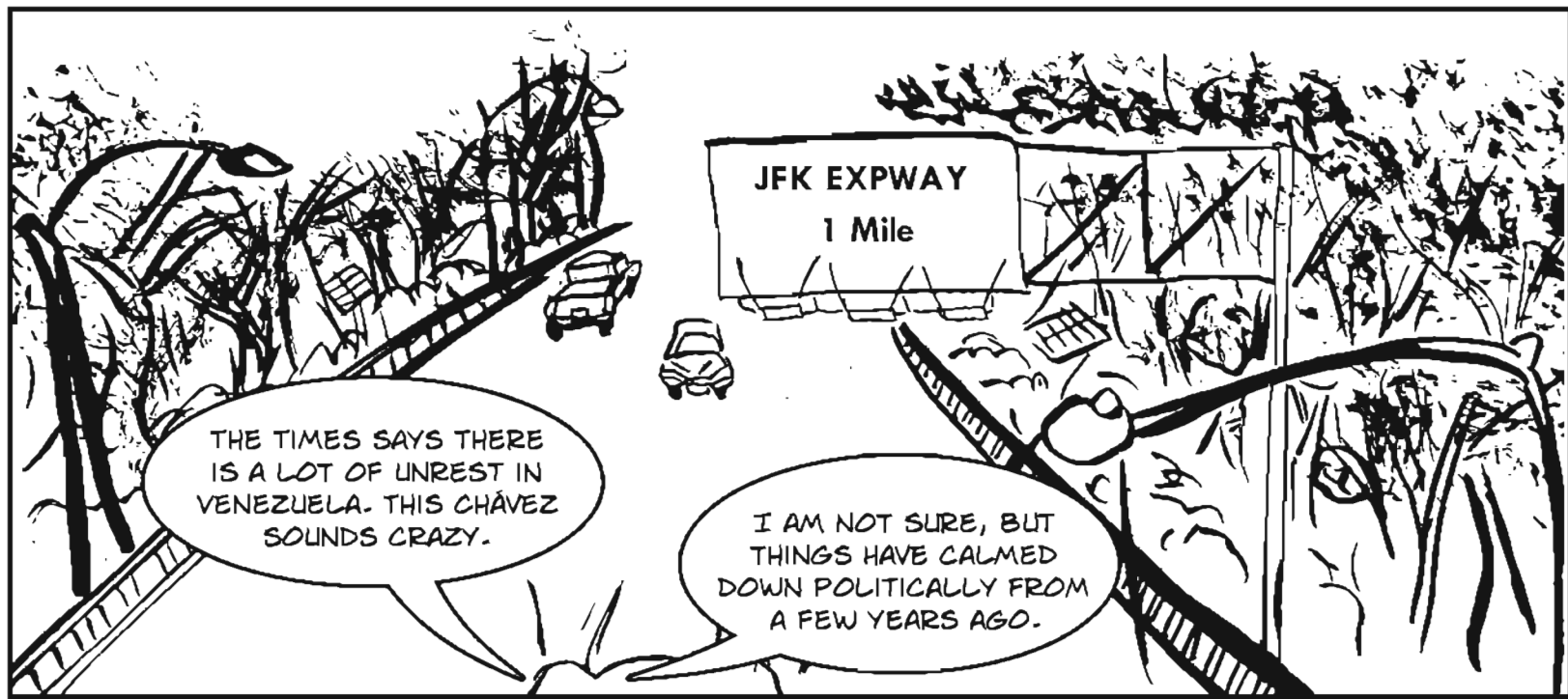
YOU KNOW I AM
DOING FIELD
RESEARCH.



THE TIMES SAYS THERE
IS A LOT OF UNREST IN
VENEZUELA. THIS CHÁVEZ
SOUNDS CRAZY.

I AM NOT SURE, BUT
THINGS HAVE CALMED
DOWN POLITICALLY FROM
A FEW YEARS AGO.

JFK EXPWAY
1 Mile



DO YOU REALLY NEED
TO GO? I KNOW THE
FULBRIGHT IS PRESTIGIOUS
FOR TENURE BUT I NEVER
FEEL COMFORTABLE WITH
YOU GOING TO
THESE COUNTRIES.

I KNOW, I KNOW, I
WILL BE CAREFUL

LIKE WHEN I
WAS IN RIO AND
SÃO PAULO.



SAM, JFK

¿CHÁVEZ?



CHÁVEZ

CHÁVEZ...

CHÁVEZ...

¿CHÁVEZ?

CHÁVEZ

¡CHÁVEZ!



CHÁVEZ... ¿BLAH CHÁVEZ? BLAH BLAH CHÁVEZ, CHÁVEZ #\$\$%! E ¡CHÁVEZ!



CHÁVEZ

CHÁVEZ

CHÁVEZ..)

BLAH CHÁVEZ

CHÁVEZ..

CHÁVEZ

¿CHÁVEZ?

¡CHÁVEZ!

CHÁVEZ



CHÁVEZ... ¿CHÁVEZ? CHÁVEZ, CHÁVEZ...



CHÁVEZ

CHÁVEZ

¡CHÁVEZ!

CHÁVEZ

CHÁVEZ

CHÁVEZ

CHÁVEZ



CHÁVEZ

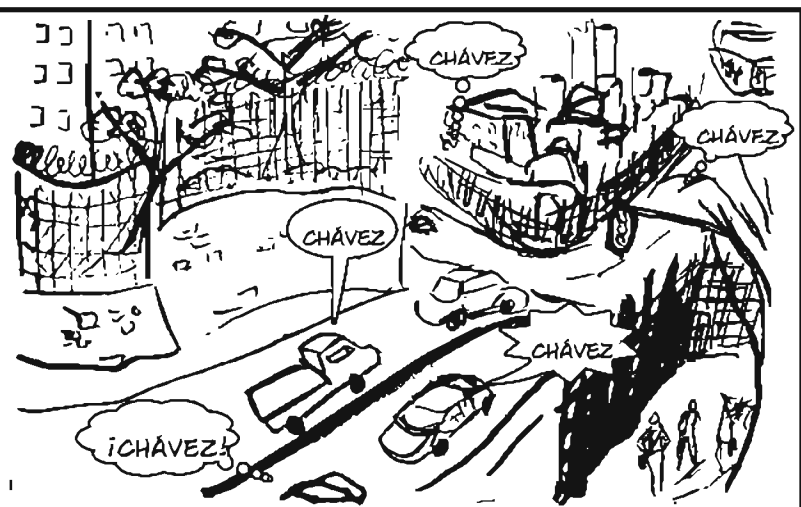
CHÁVEZ

CHÁVEZ

CHÁVEZ

CHÁVEZ

¡CHÁVEZ!



CHÁVEZ... ¿CHÁVEZ? CHÁVEZ, CHÁVEZ

CHÁVEZ... CHÁVEZ

¿CHÁVEZ?



¿DINNER?

LET'S DO IT.

CHÁVEZ,
CHÁVEZ...
CHÁVEZ...

CHÁVEZ, CHÁVEZ...
CHÁVEZ...

CHÁVEZ,
CHÁVEZ...

CHÁVEZ,
CHÁVEZ

CHÁVEZ

CHÁVEZ, CHÁVEZ...
BLAH BLAH CHÁVEZ...
CHÁVEZ, CHÁVEZ...
CHÁVEZ, CHÁVEZ,

CHÁVEZ, CHÁVEZ...
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CHÁVEZ, CHÁVEZ,
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CHÁVEZ... CHÁVEZ...
CHÁVEZ, CHÁVEZ,
CHÁVEZ, CHÁVEZ,
CHÁVEZ...

SUSHI

PERUVIAN JAPANESE FUSION

WE WERE READY TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY IF CHÁVEZ WON THE 2007 REFERENDUM... I'MAGINE PERPETUAL REELECTION, SOCIALISM HERE!

BUT WE WON, AND LEARNED WE HAVE TO VOTE. EVEN IF THE CHOICES STINK, EVEN WITH THE OFFICIAL SABOTAGE, FAVORITISM, CORRUPTION.

¡E! *%#E!
CHÁVEZ!

EVEN IF THE RESULTS OF THE REFERENDUM ARE "NO", HE WILL FIND A WAY...

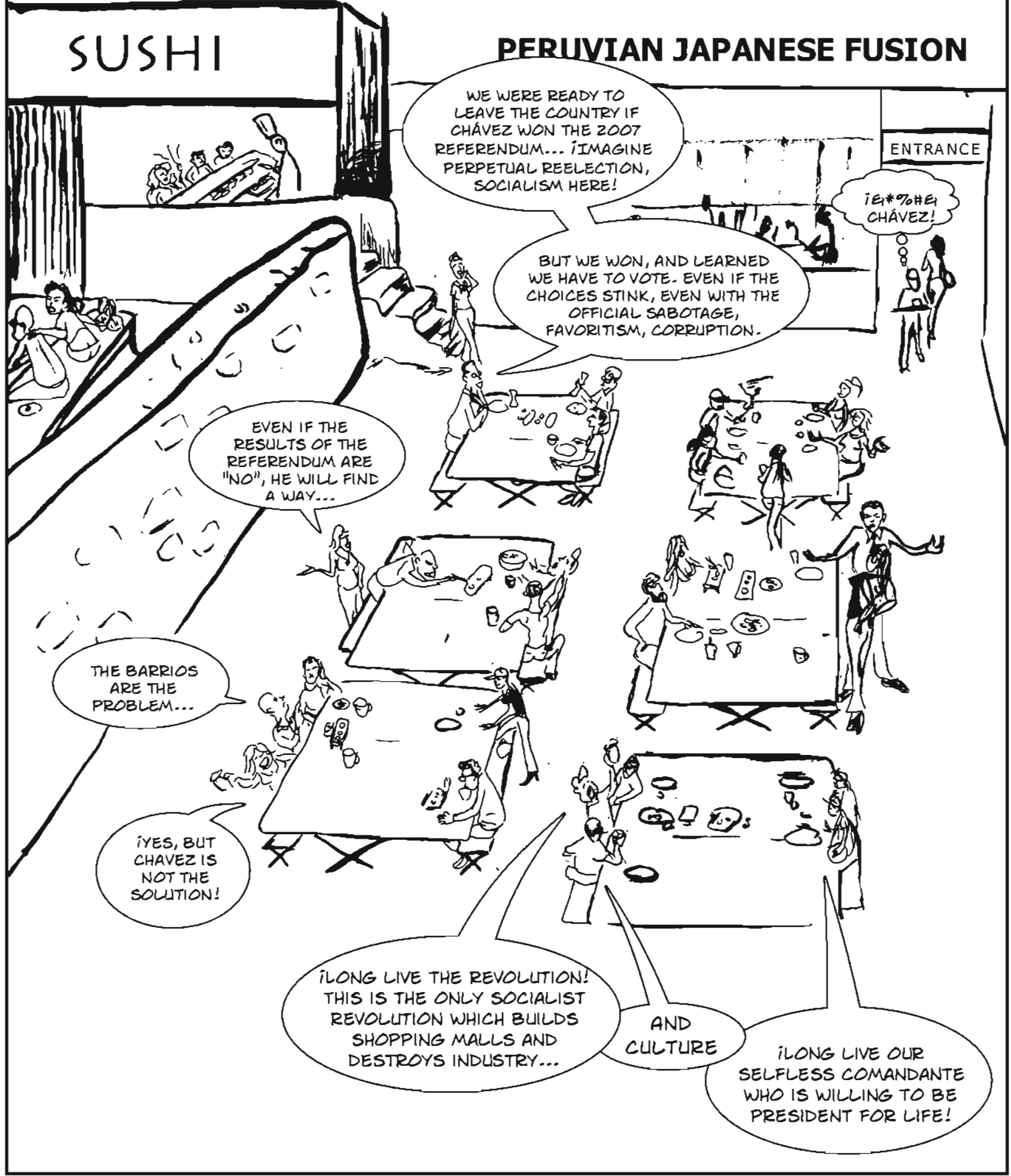
THE BARRIOS ARE THE PROBLEM...

¡YES, BUT CHAVEZ IS NOT THE SOLUTION!

¡LONG LIVE THE REVOLUTION!
THIS IS THE ONLY SOCIALIST
REVOLUTION WHICH BUILDS
SHOPPING MALLS AND
DESTROYS INDUSTRY...

AND
CULTURE

¡LONG LIVE OUR
SELFLESS COMANDANTE
WHO IS WILLING TO BE
PRESIDENT FOR LIFE!



Day Two

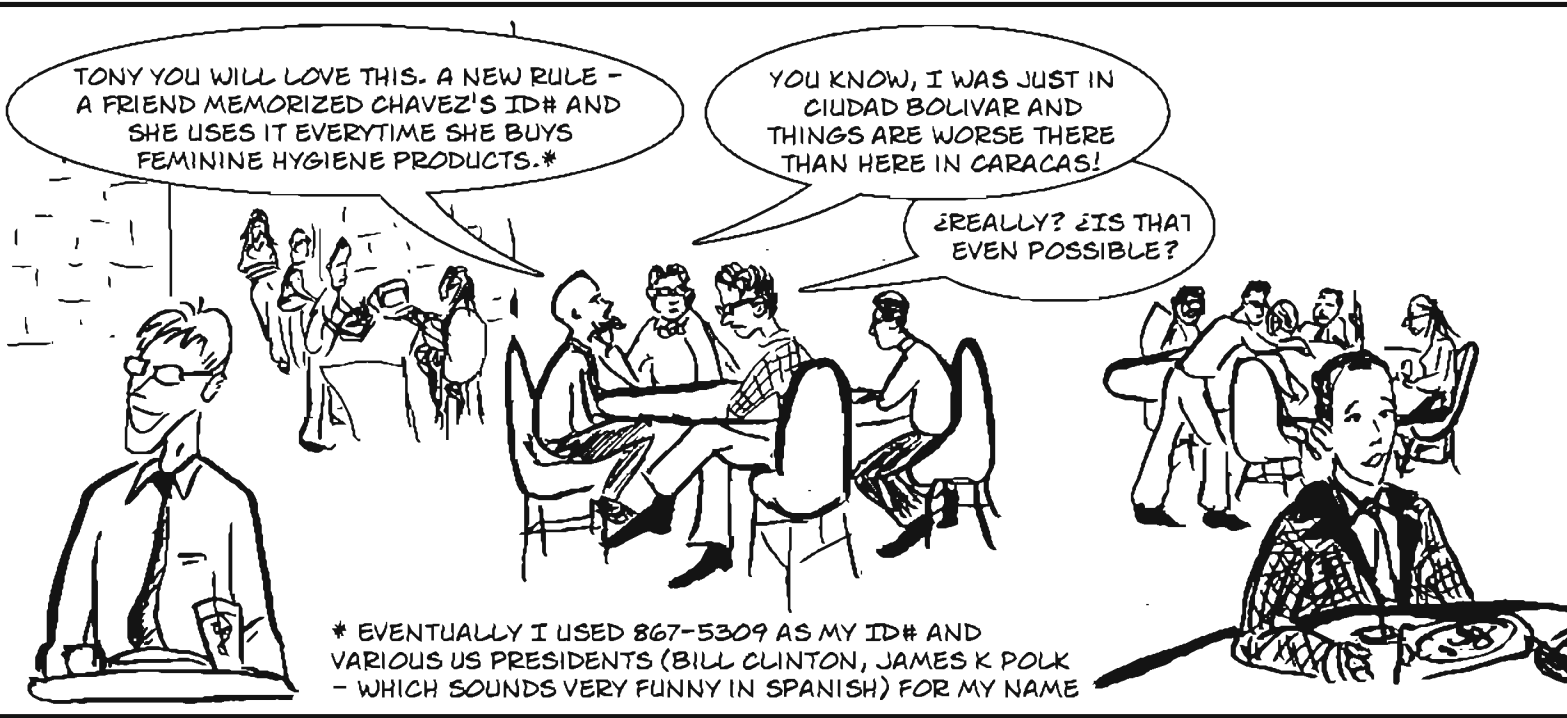
I GO TO THE SCHOOL WHERE I WILL BE BASED. THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST CONCENTRATED SOURCES OF OPPOSITION TO CHAVISMO.



THE GOVERNMENT REQUIRES ALL COMPANIES GIVE RECEIPTS AND CONSUMERS MUST GIVE THEIR NAMES AND ID#S TO PREVENT FRAUD.



YES, IN SOME STORES YOU HAVE TO GIVE YOUR ID# JUST TO BUY A BOTTLE OF WATER



* EVENTUALLY I USED 867-5309 AS MY ID# AND VARIOUS US PRESIDENTS (BILL CLINTON, JAMES K POLK - WHICH SOUNDS VERY FUNNY IN SPANISH) FOR MY NAME



GREAT, WELL I HAVE TO GET TO THE US EMBASSY LATER. I NEED TO CHECK IN, DO SOME SECURITY BRIEFING

COOL... SUPER SECRET CIA STUFF, RIGHT?

YEP.

THEY WANT TO MAKE SURE I KNOW HOW TO TAKE THE CYANIDE PILL IN CASE I GET CAUGHT.

IS REALLY?!!

NO, OF COURSE NOT, SILLY!

HAHA... WITH ALL THE CRAZINESS WITH CHAVEZ ACCUSING THE US OF EVERYTHING... AN ACADEMIC SPY IS NOT SO FAR-FETCHED.

I AM NOT A THREAT AND THIS IS A DEMOCRACY, RIGHT?

HE IS SO CUTE, A 'DEMOCRACY'... BRILLIANT.

THE ONLY WAY IS BY CAB. IT IS THE STORY OF YOUR GOVERNMENT SINCE 9-11. INACCESSIBLE, DISTANT, CARES ONLY ABOUT THE SECURITY OF ITS OWN CITIZENS. FORGET THE REST OF THE WORLD.

THE EMBASSY USED TO BE IN ALTAMIRA, VERY CONVENIENT, NOW IT IS IN VALLE ARRIBA.

GREAT...

HI. CAN I GET A CAB TO THE US EMBASSY? I AM AT IESA, IN SAN BERNADINO. OKAY. TONY. YES. SOUNDS GOOD.



¿US EMBASSY?
¿TONY?



¿GOING TO
GET A VISA?

NO, I'M A
CITIZEN.



¿REALLY? I
WENT TO
BOSTON U.

THE 70S.
IT WAS
GREAT.

¿I TAUGHT AT
TUFTS! ¿WHEN
WERE YOU
THERE?

OH, I WAS
A BABY...



¿SO WHY DON'T
YOU GUYS TAKE
CHAVEZ OUT?

JUST GET RID
OF THE GUY.



... LIKE YOU DID WITH
KENNEDY, MARTIN LUTHER
KING...

AFTER ALL HIS TALK OF
THE US INVADING, WOULDN'T
THAT LOOK BAD?

NO, NO, HE
HAS TO GO.

WELL, WHAT WILL
PEOPLE SAY?

OH, THEY'LL CRY THE FIRST
DAY, BUT AFTER 3 MONTHS NO
ONE WILL REMEMBER HIM.
VENEZUELANAS ARE
LIGHT, MAN.

OKAY, WHO
WILL REPLACE
HIM?

ANYONE, EVEN MY GERMAN
SHEPHERD WOULD BE BETTER.

IS THIS GUY
FOR REAL?

JERK! GET
OUT OF THE
WAY!

BUT A GERMAN SHEPHERD IS A PARTICULARLY SMART DOG... ANYWAY, I AM NOT SURE VIOLENCE IS THE BEST WAY.

NO, NO. THIS GUY WANTS TO STAY IN POWER UNTIL THE AGES OF AGES!

I SEE... BUT WHAT ABOUT THE REFERENDUM RESULTS LAST YEAR? HE DID RECOGNIZE DEFEAT...

NO, DON'T BE FOOLED. HE WILL TRY AGAIN. WAIT AND SEE. I KNOW THINGS. WE HAVE SO MUCH HERE BUT IT IS SO POORLY



I TRIED TO GO BACK TO THE STATES A FEW YEARS AGO... I LOVE IT THERE, MAN. MY FRIENDS SAID 'COME BACK'. THE EMBASSY REJECTED ME THOUGH.

I WENT TO SCHOOL IN THE US FOR FIVE YEARS! I WORKED THERE! I GOT MARRIED THERE! MY DAUGHTER IS AMERICAN!

I SPOKE TO THE GUY IN THE EMBASSY IN ENGLISH BUT HE RESPONDED ONLY IN SPANISH. I SAID, "I WANT TO SEE MY DAUGHTER". HE SAID "WHY DOESN'T SHE COME VISIT YOU HERE?"

YOU GUYS NEED TO TAKE CHAVEZ OUT. ELECTIONS DO NOT MAKE A DEMOCRACY. HITLER CAME TO POWER AND THE MASSES LOVED TO HEAR HIM TALK TOO...



I was denied a visa I was legal



Oh, woe is me!



Very dramatic



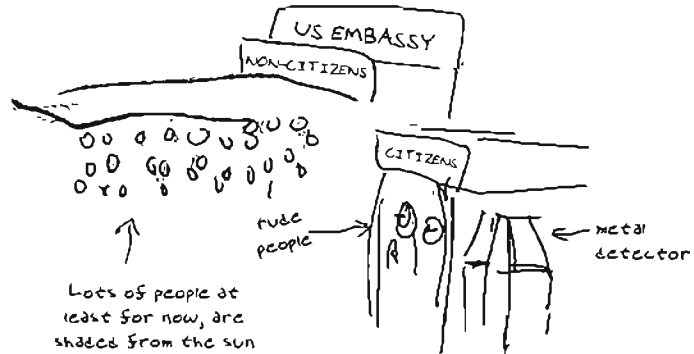
Wagging finger "no"



I am angry at the US but I will forgive if you get rid of Chavez.

He is smiling, performing...

OKAY, HERE YOU ARE



Lots of people at least for now, are shaded from the sun

NOTE: HE IS SMILING, PERFORMING FOR ME... HE IS TELLING A TRUTH, BUT HE IS CERTAINLY MAKING HIS TRUTH MORE DRAMATIC, EXTREME... HE MUST BE AWARE OF THIS...

THERE ARE SOME THINGS ABOUT SECURITY... THERE ARE 50 HOMICIDES A WEEK IN CARACAS. IT IS UNSAFE, ESPECIALLY AT THE AIRPORT, THOSE GUYS THAT CLAIM TO BE TAXIS...



AN AMERICAN TOOK ONE. THEY LEFT HIM NAKED, SOMEWHERE OUTSIDE OF THE CITY.



SOME SUGGESTIONS...

THIS CHAIR IS REALLY COMFY.

THE METRO IS OKAY, BUT THE STATIONS ARE UNSAFE.

THE PUBLIC AND INFORMAL BUSES ARE NOT SAFE

SO, I SHOULD NOT EVEN LEAVE THE HOUSE.

NO, NOT QUITE. YOU HAVE TO LIVE, DO YOUR RESEARCH, BUT YOU NEED TO TAKE PRECAUTIONS.

IT IS ESPECIALLY DANGEROUS AT NIGHT.

FOR EXAMPLE, I DON'T LEAVE WITH ANYTHING I CAN'T REPLACE. JUST THINK "TODAY I COULD GET ROBBED". ALWAYS HAVE THE NUMBER FOR THE EMBASSY SECURITY POST, IT'S 24/7.



GREAT...



Day Three

WHAT TYPE OF REVOLUTION IS THIS? YOU CAN'T FIND MILK, BREAD, SUGAR.

I WENT TO EUROPE FOR A COUPLE OF WEEKS AND WOW THE PRICES WENT OUT OF CONTROL... AND THERE IS NOTHING IN THE STORES!



I COULD NOT FIND A TOOTHBRUSH ANYWHERE! HOW CAN YOU HAVE A REVOLUTION WITHOUT TOOTHBRUSHES?

WE HAVE NO SUGAR TOO! SO WE DO NOT NEED TOOTHBRUSHES...

BESIDES, THIS IS ALL BOURGEOIS AESTHETIC, THE CAPITALISTS CREATED CAVITIES TO INCREASE CONSUMPTION OF TOILETRIES.



REMEMBER WHEN CHAVEZ WAS A CANDIDATE TEN YEARS AGO AND HE TOOK A PHOTO WITH THESE POOR PEOPLE, THEY WERE SMILING, NO TEETH, AND HE SAID...

YES, WE ARE HIS PEOPLE! WE WILL BE BROTHERS IN A TOOTHLESS REVOLUTION! LONG LIVE THE LONG ROAD TO EQUALITY!



I JUST LOVE THAT WE HAVE A NEW CURRENCY. THEY TAKE 3 ZEROS OFF AND OOPS, WE ARE SUPPOSED TO FORGET ABOUT INFLATION... NO CHANGES, NOTHING.

DO YOU REALIZE WE EVEN IMPORT OUR CURRENCY?

DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN THAT REPORTER INTERRUPTED MINISTER CARREÑO... HE WAS DRONING ON ABOUT THAT SOCIALIST-REVOLUTION-BOLIVER-THING-OF-ALWAYS AND THE JOURNALIST ASKED 'HOW CAN YOU SAY THESE THINGS WHEN YOU HAVE GUCCI SHOES, LV TIE...!'

HE SAID, 'UH, WE DON'T HAVE ENOUGH LOCAL PRODUCTION BECAUSE OF THE EMPIRE, SO WE HAVE TO BUY PRODUCTS FROM ABROAD...! YOU CAN SEE IT ON YOUTUBE.'

MEANWHILE, THE ONLY WAY TO BUY MILK AND CHICKEN IS TO BUY THEM ON THE BLACK MARKET, SOLD RIGHT ON THE CORNER OF THE STREET, WITH NO CONCERN FOR THE LAW OR THE REVOLUTION...

AHH, VENEZUELA, WHERE EVEN OUR COWS AND CHICKENS ARE CRIMINALS!



AND THIS IS HOW THE CHAVEZ MONOLOGUES BEGIN...

THE CHAVEZ Monologues

¿WHAT DO WE DO NOW? WE IMPORT CARS FROM THE US IN DROVES ¿RIGHT? AND WE CLAIM TO BE STIMULATING DOMESTIC PRODUCTION.

I KNOW AN EXECUTIVE AT _____ AND HE SAID THEY NEED A LICENSE TO IMPORT EVERY INDIVIDUAL PART OF THE CAR.

THE PROBLEM IS THAT IF DOMESTIC INDUSTRY NEEDS 30 PARTS, THEY NEED 30 LICENSES. WITH ONE LICENSE, THEY CAN BUY THE WHOLE CAR. ¿GUESS WHAT THEY DO?

I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS IS STILL PLAYING.

SHH, THIS IS MY FAVORITE PART.

OH YEA, WE ARE THE COUNTRY WITH THE CHEAPEST GASOLINE IN THE WORLD, JUST ONE MORE OPPORTUNITY FOR CORRUPTION...

MY FRIEND'S PROPERTY, JUST OUTSIDE OF CARACAS, HAS BEEN WAITING FOR 'PERMISSION TO BUILD' FOR 3 YEARS. NOW YOU NEED AN ENVIRONMENTAL STUDY DONE. ¿THAT SOUNDS GOOD RIGHT?

ON MY PROPERTY WE WERE BUILDING SOMETHING SMALL, SO WE WERE TOLD WE DIDN'T NEED A LICENSE. 6 MONTHS IN, WE WERE SHUT DOWN BY THE NATIONAL GUARD.

IMAGINE THAT, ALL THE MURDERS IN CARACAS, THE RISE IN THE DRUG TRADE, AND THEY ARE WORRIED ABOUT MY STUPID LITTLE PROPERTY. MY CONTRACTOR KNEW THE HEAD OF THE GUARD AND ONE LCD FLAT SCREEN LATER WE WERE BACK ON SCHEDULE.

HAHA, YES, YES.

I GOT TO GET THIS ALL DOWN...



LATER THAT NIGHT, WE GO TO A PARTY. SOMEONE WHO WORKS AT AN EMBASSY'S BIRTHDAY. LOTS OF EUROPEANS AND CANADIANS... THEY TEND TO BE MORE SYMPATHETIC TO CHAVEZ AND LESS TO THE PEOPLE IN THE OPPOSITION.

THAT IS, THEY MAY HAVE PROBLEMS WITH CHAVEZ, BUT THEY ARE REALLY TIRED OF LISTENING TO THE OPPOSITION FOLKS.

MY FRIEND BEGINS TALKING TO A WOMAN FROM A EUROPEAN EMBASSY. THEY HAVE JUST MET AND THE CONVERSATION STARTS WELL ENOUGH, BUT WITHIN MINUTES THE INEVITABLE TOPIC OF CHÁVEZ COMES UP.

SUDDENLY, THEY ARE A FEUDING MARRIED COUPLE. EACH ONE SAYS SOMETHING TO TRIGGER THE OTHER.



THOUGH THEY HAVE NEVER MET, EACH ONE SAYS 'THE SAME NONSENSE' THAT THE OTHER HAS HEARD SO MANY TIMES FROM SOMEONE ON THE OTHER SIDE. ONE IS 'NAIVE, SHELTERED', THE OTHER IS 'BRAINWASHED'.

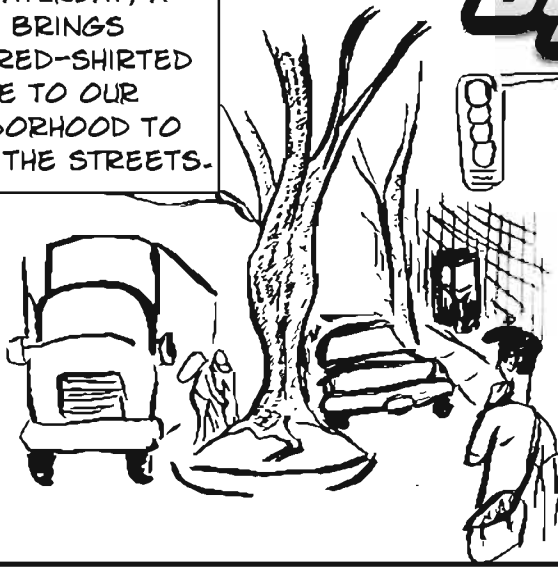
EACH OF THEM HAS 'PROOF' AND THAT 'PROOF' ONLY PROVES HOW HOPELESSLY BRAINWASHED THE OTHER PERSON IS. EACH THINKS THAT HE OR SHE HAS COME TO HIS OR HER CONCLUSIONS RATIONALLY, CONVINCED THE OTHER ACCEPTS HOOK-LINE-AND-SINKER ITS OWN PROPAGANDA.

THIS PROBLEM OF CHAVISMO AND OPPOSITION IS NOT SO MUCH OF ENEMIES OR OF A CONVERSATION OF DEAF PEOPLE. THEY HEAR EACH OTHER, BUT WHAT THEY HEAR TRIGGERS BAD REACTIONS... LIKE SOME UNHAPPY COUPLE WITH EACH ONE UNWILLING TO GIVE IN... ESPECIALLY SINCE EACH IS CONVINCED THEY HAVE GIVEN IN TOO OFTEN ALREADY.



Day Four

IT IS SATURDAY, A MISIÓN BRINGS SOME RED-SHIRTED PEOPLE TO OUR NEIGHBORHOOD TO CLEAN THE STREETS.



THE LOCAL PROSTITUTES ARE A LITTLE MORE DRESSED UP THAN NORMAL.



IN THE AFTERNOON I AM WORKING ON THE COMPUTER.

I OPEN AN EMAIL.



MY COLLEAGUE ANTONIO FRANCÉS WAS KIDNAPPED, TORTURED, AND MURDERED.



WHATEVER CUTE, ROMANTIC, SLIMMING IT, DEVELOPING WORLD CHARM THIS PLACE HAD JUST WENT OUT THE WINDOW.



THE COUNTRY NEEDS TRAINED PEOPLE LIKE HIM TO TEACH OTHERS, TO DEVELOP, TO REDUCE POVERTY.

EVEN CHÁVEZ KNOWS INFLATION IS TOO HIGH AND PEOPLE LIKE ANTONIO ARE NECESSARY TO MANAGE INFLATION.

MISERABLE CREATURE THAT I AM, I AM GRASPING... LOOKING FOR SOMETHING SO I CAN SAY...

¿WHAT AM I THINKING?

¿WHAT MUST HIS FAMILY BE FEELING?

¿DID HE EVER HAVE A CHANCE?

¿HOW MUCH IS LOST BECAUSE OF THIS STUPID VIOLENCE? ¿WHO CARES ABOUT THIS GROUP OR THAT GROUP THEIR POLITICS?

I WONDER HOW MUCH THIS COUNTRY LOSES BECAUSE OF STUPID POLITICS.

¿WAS HE ALONE AT NIGHT?

¿WHAT MISTAKE DID HE MAKE?

AHA! THAT IS WHAT HE DID WRONG. I NEVER DO THAT... (THEREFORE I AM SAFE)

I CANNOT HELP BUT WONDER... ¿WHAT DID HE DO WRONG?

I AM A WRETCHED MAN...

PEOPLE ARE BEING KILLED, OTHERS IMMIGRATE, OTHERS SEE OPPORTUNITIES CLOSE BEFORE THEIR EYES.

HE SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER (THEREFORE IT IS HIS FAULT).

¿FLASHY WATCH?

WAS HE...

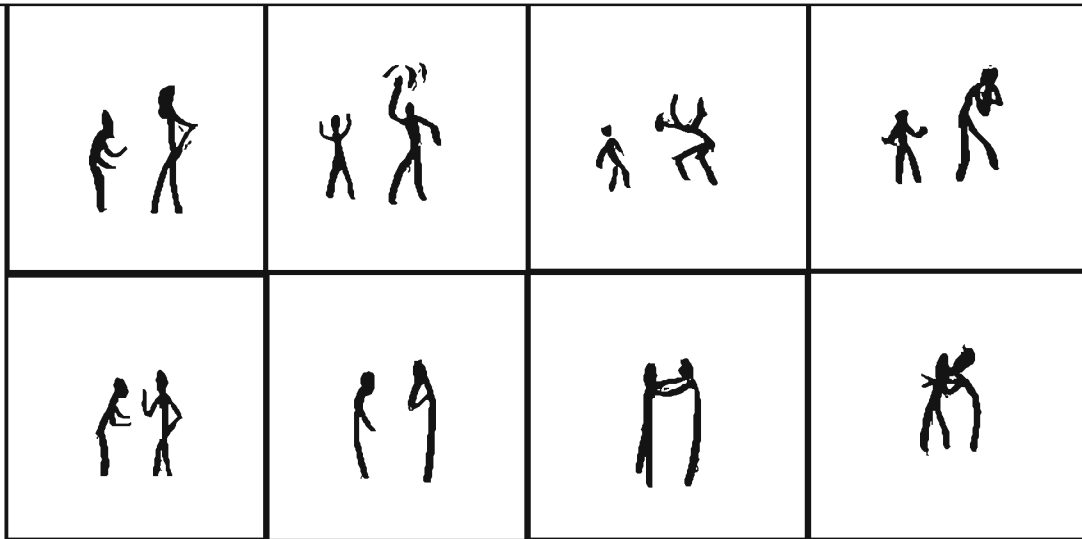
¿WHAT AM I THINKING?



IT IS AS THOUGH SUCH A COWARDLY ACT, SUCH A BRUTAL AND SENSELESS ACT OF VIOLENCE, IS EVER JUSTIFIABLE... BUT THERE IT IS... I HAVE STARTED TO BUY INTO THE LOGIC OF THIS PLACE. I THINK 'THERE ARE RULES, HE MUST HAVE BROKEN THEM, THAT IS WHY THEY BEAT AND KILLED HIM'.

I AM ALREADY GIVING AWAY MY HUMANITY... SO EASILY...

I HAD NOT YET MET ANTONIO... I TELL MY ROOMMATES... THEY KNEW HIM...



YOU KNOW THE FARC IS HERE IN VENEZUELA BECAUSE OF CHÁVEZ... THAT IS WHY THERE ARE SO MANY GUNS, KILLINGS.

¡WHAT AN ABSOLUTE WASTE! THAT MAN DID SO MUCH FOR THIS COUNTRY...

¡10,000 DEATHS A YEAR! ¿DID YOU KNOW THAT? THIS MAN HAS BEEN HERE 10 YEARS.

¡THAT IS 100,000 PEOPLE MURDERED ON HIS WATCH!



THANK GOD TOMORROW IS SUNDAY.



> I NEVER WANTED YOU THERE.

>> I KNOW.

> YOU CAN ALWAYS LEAVE.

>> I KNOW.



Day Five

> YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE THERE.

>> I KNOW.

> YOU DON'T OWE THEM ANYTHING.

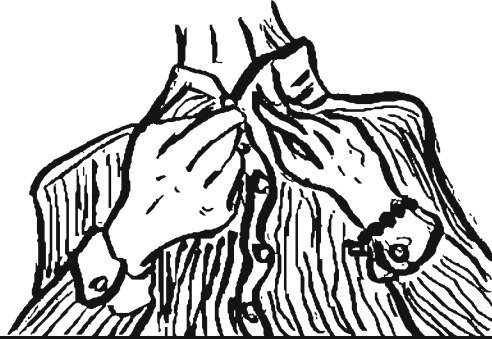
>> I KNOW.



> YOU HAVE NO STAKE THERE.



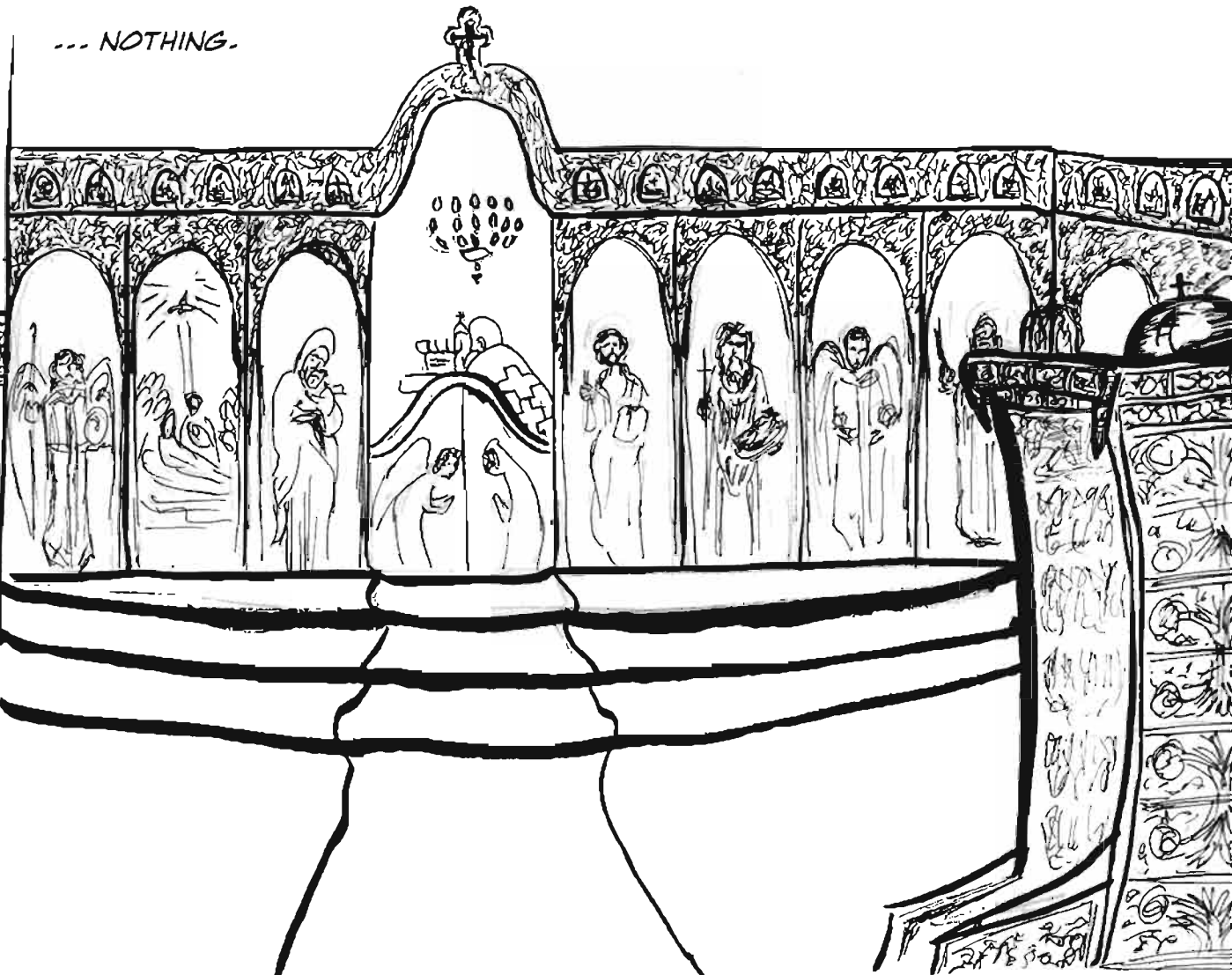
> YOU CAN GO BACK HOME.



>> I KNOW...



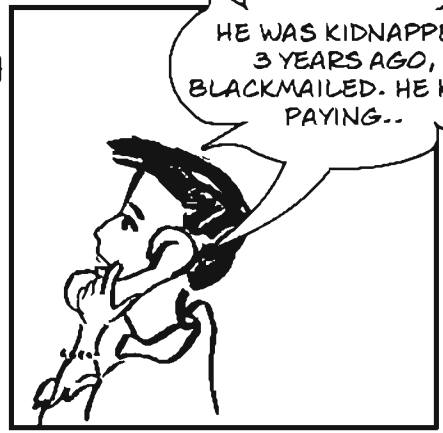
... NOTHING.



LATER...



I WAS SUPPOSED TO TEACH A SEMINAR WITH HIM... WE WERE CLOSE...
THEY PUT TWO BULLETS INTO HIM AND KILLED HIM LIKE A DOG!



HE WAS KIDNAPPED 3 YEARS AGO, BLACKMAILED. HE KEPT PAYING...



FINALLY, HE WENT TO THE POLICE, THEY GOT THE GUYS... BUT NOW THEY'RE OUT OF JAIL.

IT IS HERESAY... BUT IT IS POSSIBLE...

GOOD ENOUGH FOR THE TRUTH...

TOO MUCH IMPUNITY.



FUNERAL TOMORROW.

WORM THAT I AM...

IT MAKES ME FEEL A LITTLE BETTER...

THIS WAS NOT AN ACT OF RANDOM VIOLENCE.

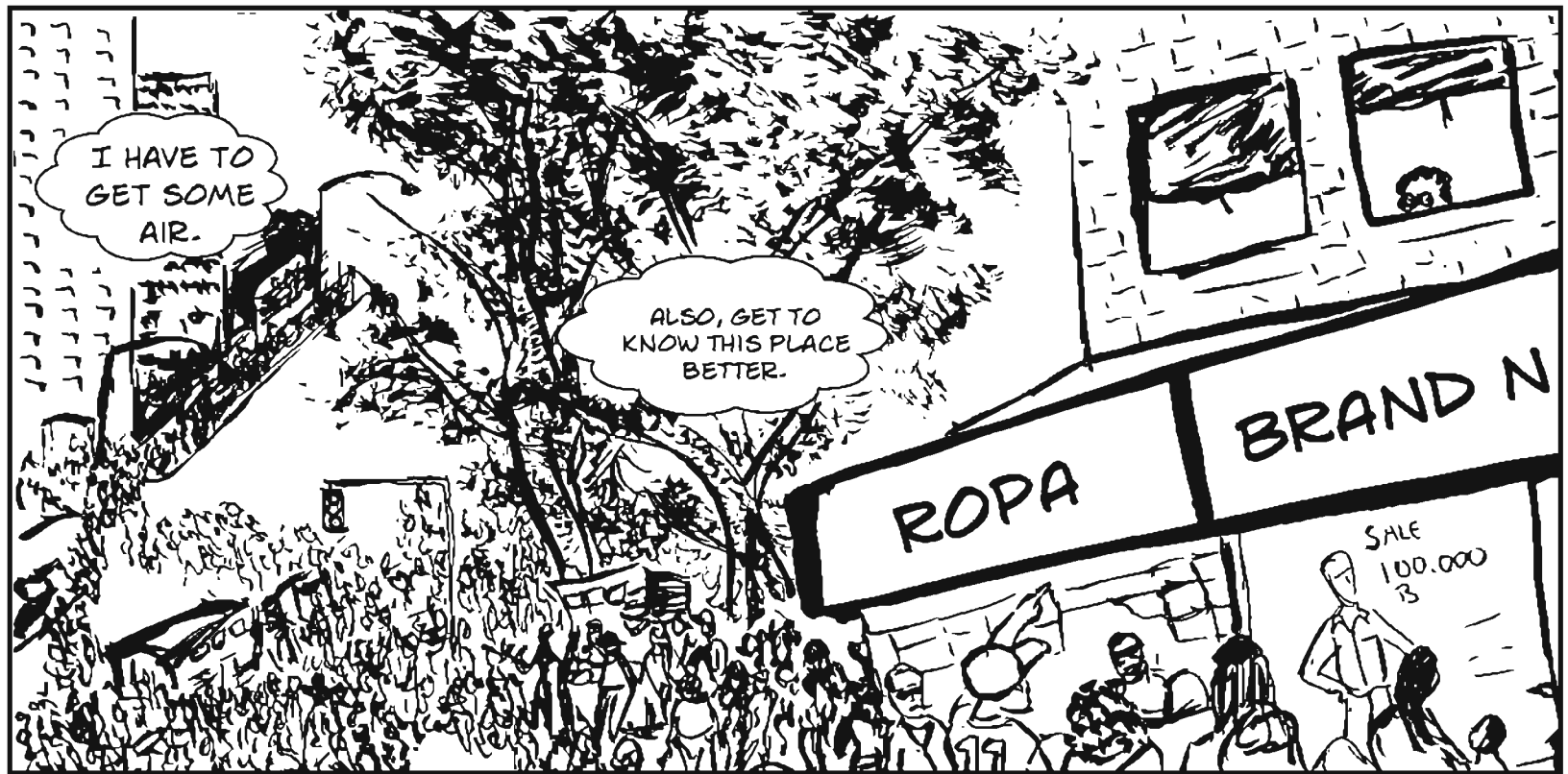
I NEED TO BUY GROCERIES...

SAFE.

ALL MY PRECAUTIONS WERE SUFFICIENT.

WHY DID I THINK OF THAT?

HOW CAN YOU LIVE LIKE THIS??



I HAVE TO GET SOME AIR.

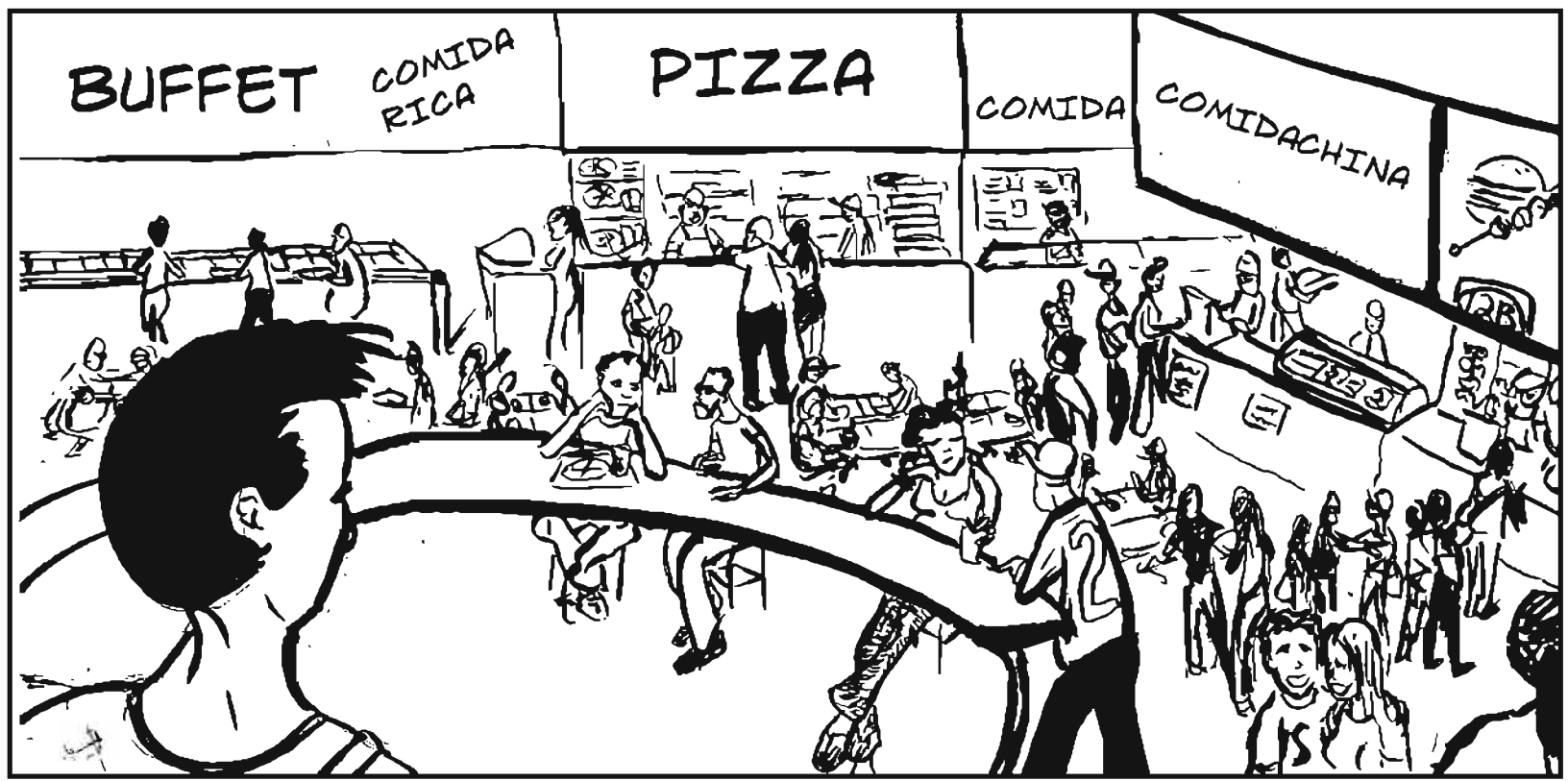
ALSO, GET TO KNOW THIS PLACE BETTER.

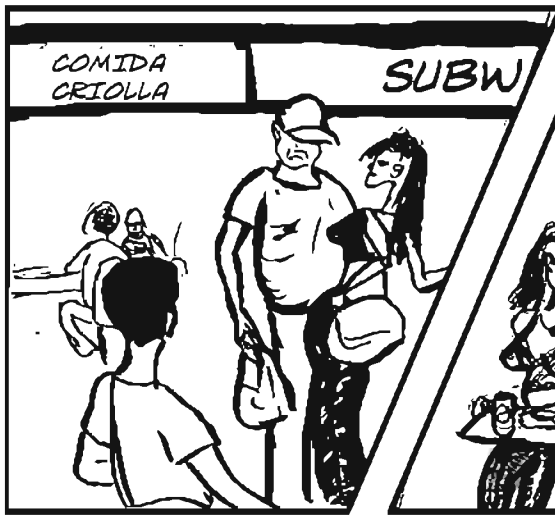


¿YOU WANT EL UNIVERSAL AND VEA?



THE ECONOMIST KEEPS AN INDEX OF THE COST OF BIG MACS IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES TO SEE HOW OVER OR UNDERVALUED CURRENCIES ARE. IF WE USE THE OFFICIAL EXCHANGE RATE, A BIG MAC MEAL IS ALMOST NINE DOLLARS. AT THE UNOFFICIAL RATE IT IS CLOSER TO THREE DOLLARS. THINGS ARE NOT CHEAP HERE...





draw people crowded mall try not to look like pervert
 no one will believe "field research"
 Welcome to Venezuela
 Costs
 black market rate 1/2008 \$1 = 5.5 B
 cannot even discuss this black market rate will become illegal to even speak of it
 Stupid
 Thank you Mr. Political So far, so good!



Reality ?
 Best of times
 Worst of times
 Reality better
 Class war
 dictatorship
 Socialism
 Capitalism
 Myth ?
 Pure Fiction ?
 wise has not changed ?



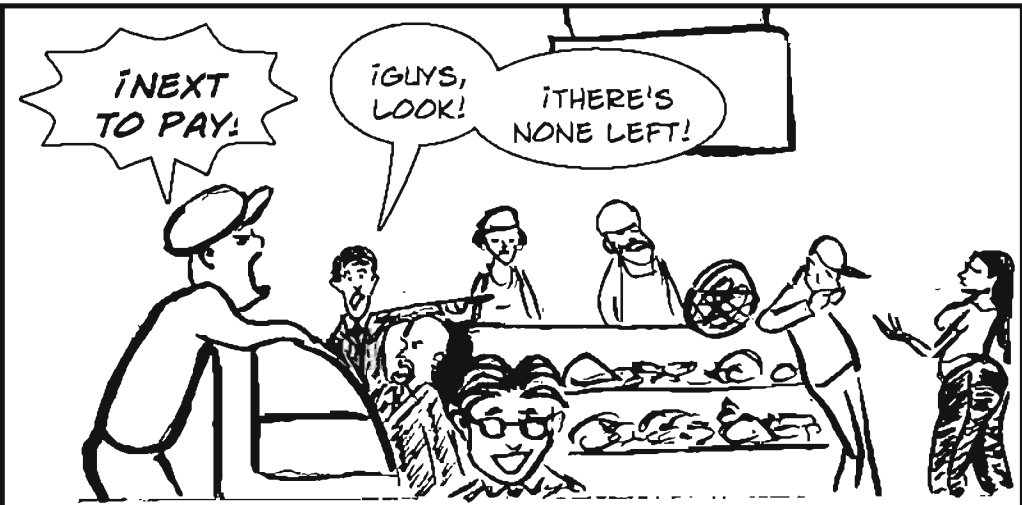
Day Six

HIS LIFE INVOLVED TRAINING GOVERNMENT MANAGERS. HIS DEATH, THE INABILITY OF THE GOVERNMENT TO MANAGE VIOLENCE.

ANTONIO FRANCÉS, A SPANISH NATIONAL, LIVING IN VENEZUELA FOR SOME 40 YEARS. A QUIET MAN, HARDWORKING, ONE OF THE LAST TO LEAVE IESA EVERY NIGHT.



WE STOP FOR A BITE ON THE WAY TO THE FUNERAL.



HE HAS A SON.

HE HEAVES SO LOUDLY.

I DO NOT BELONG HERE.



ONE DEATH MEANS SO MUCH.
YET WE TALK ABOUT THOUSANDS,
EVEN MILLIONS OF DEATHS
EVERYDAY WITHOUT SO MUCH
AS A TEAR.



I LEARNED A NEW
WORD TODAY -
'CHANTAJEAR', TO
BLACKMAIL.

STRANGE THE WORDS WE LEARN IN
FOREIGN LANGUAGES. WHEN I WAS
LIVING IN RIO IN 1998, I LEARNED THE
PORTUGUESE WORD FOR 'CIGAR'.



THIS IS NOT AS FUNNY.

IT IS HARD TO DO ANYTHING TODAY.

MY OFFICE IS NOT SET UP YET ANYWAY.

STILL, HOW MUCH IS A HUMAN LIFE WORTH?

I THINK ABOUT SO MANY OF MY STUDENTS WHO SAY...

"HOW DOES THIS AFFECT ME?"

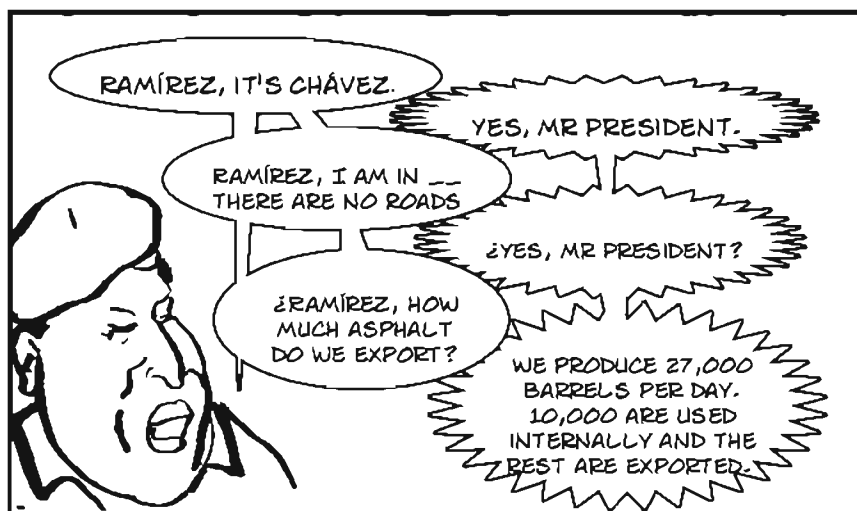
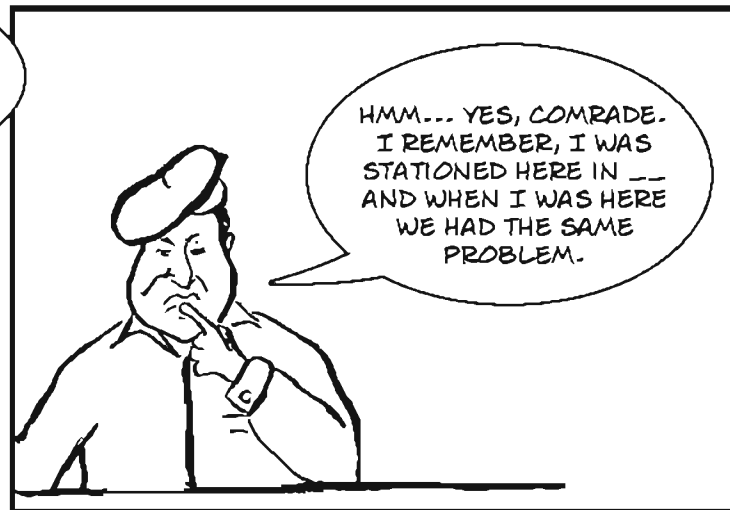
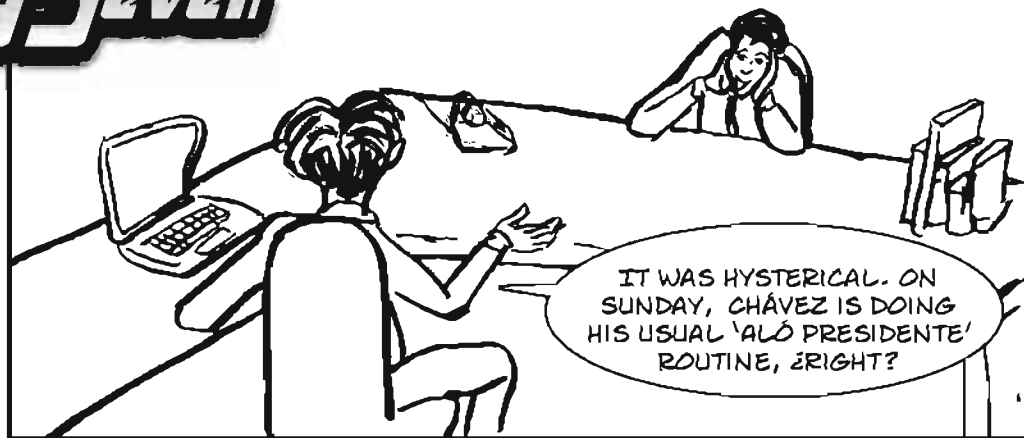
"THEY ARE ALL THE SAME."

"POLITICS DOES NOT MATTER."

TODAY I WISH THEY WERE RIGHT



Day Seven



I IMAGINE A CONVERSATION IN CARACAS...

ISO JUST LIKE THAT?

YEP, NO MORE EXPORTING ASPHALT.

IREALLY?

YEAH. IRWHY THE SURPRISE?

I SEE... IRNOTHING ABOUT HAVING TO EVENTUALLY PASS IT THROUGH TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY?

IRWHY BOTHER? HE CONTROLS THE ASSEMBLY BECAUSE THE OPPOSITION STUPIDLY ABSTAINED IN 2005.

BUT JUST FOR APPEARANCE, IT WOULD LOOK MORE LEGITIMATE WITH THE ASSEMBLY.

IRAPPEARANCE OF WHAT? IRRATIONALITY? I THIS IS SO CHÁVEZ!

IRYOU THINK HE IS IRRATIONAL?

THE SUN SHINES EVEN ON A DOG'S BUM SOMETIMES.

IRWHY IS THAT?

I AM JUST IMPRESSED RAMÍREZ SAID SOMETHING WORTHWHILE.

I SUPPOSE. STILL I AM SURPRISED.

AFTER THE LOSS IN THE 2ND DECEMBER REFERENDUM, I THOUGHT HE MIGHT MODERATE... A LITTLE, AT LEAST.

IRCHÁVEZ? IROUR CHÁVEZ? IRFIDEL'S BASTARD CHILD?

HE DID START OFF THE YEAR SAYING HE WOULD CUT INFLATION TO 11%, MORE THAN HALF... HE LIFTED SOME OF THE PRICE CONTROLS ON SOME FOOD PRODUCTS...

IT IS STILL THE HIGHEST INFLATION IN LATIN AMERICA. I THINK SECOND TO ZIMBABWE IN THE WORLD. IRHOW ABOUT THAT? IRAND WE ARE IN THE MIDDLE OF AN OIL BOOM! THE OTHER DAY I WENT TO THE MARKET... NO MIL, NO RICE, NO MEAT, NO CHICKEN, NO SUGAR... JUST EMPTY SHELVES...



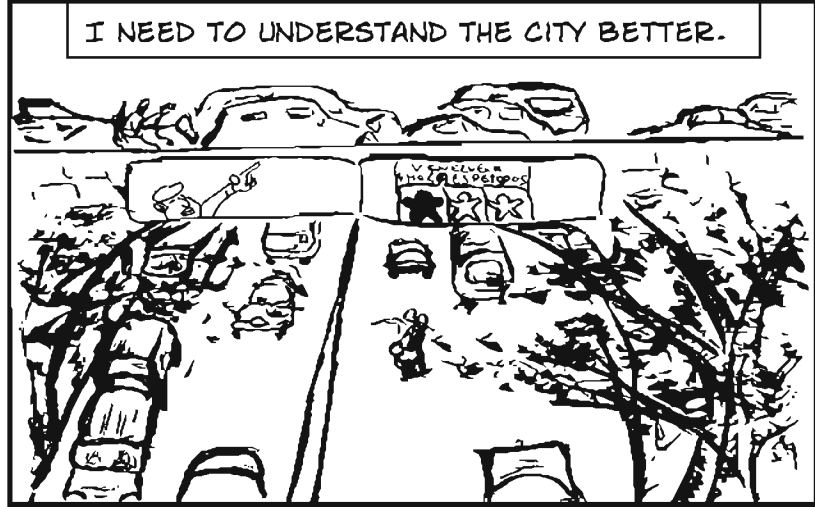
MY MIND IS WANDERING AND I AM NOT GETTING ANYTHING DONE IN THE OFFICE... SO I DECIDE TO HEAD BACK HOME.



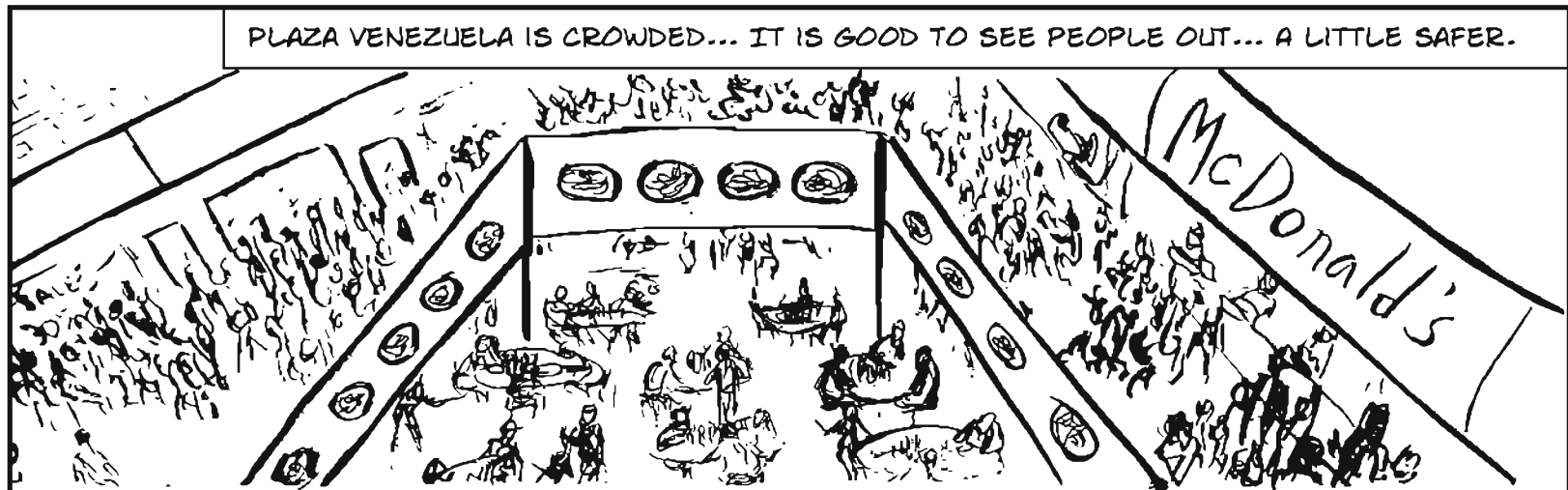
I KEEP WALKING...



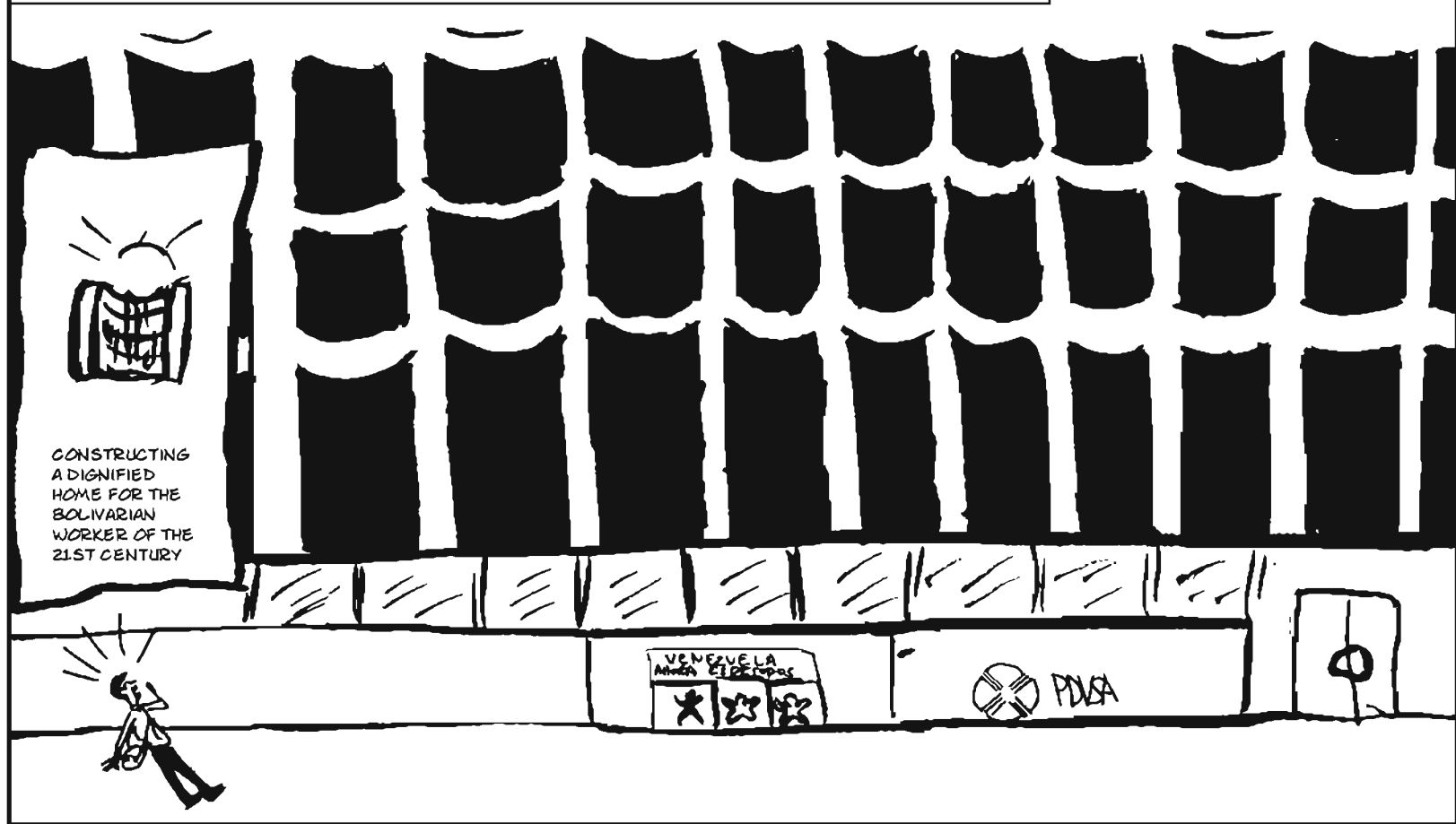
I NEED TO UNDERSTAND THE CITY BETTER.



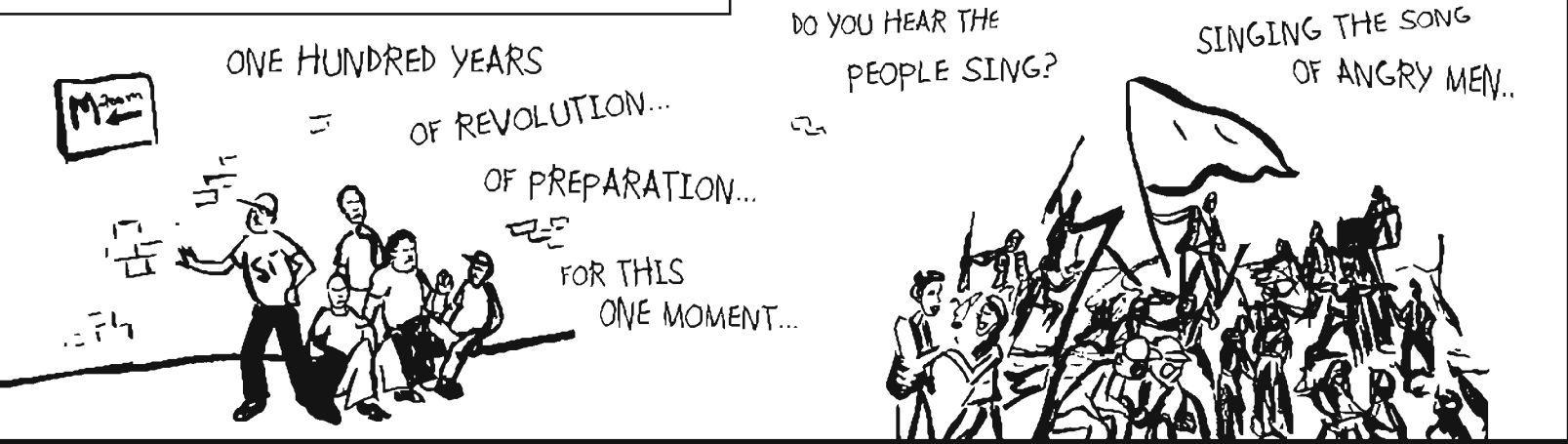
PLAZA VENEZUELA IS CROWDED... IT IS GOOD TO SEE PEOPLE OUT... A LITTLE SAFER.



UNDER CONSTRUCTION IS WHAT WILL HOUSE A LOT OF STREET HAWKERS, BUHONEROS... IT IS, OF COURSE, COVERED IN SOCIALISM.



THE CONSTRUCTION WORKERS ARE ON BREAK.



FIRST ONE COMRADE
... THEN ANOTHER
... A THIRD
... FOURTH

WILL YOU JOIN OUR CRUSADE?

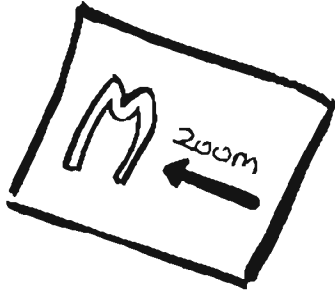
WHO WILL BE STRONG
AND STAND WITH ME?

THEN JOIN IN THE FIGHT THAT WILL GIVE YOU THE RIGHT TO BE **FREE!**

Tony
Sketchbook

First Week

The Revolution
is here



Are these
guys also
revolutionaries?

