

DO TURTLES SWIM IN MAPLE SYRUP?
AS PRODUCED

A

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Based on growing up coloured in Canada
and that time I got called a burrito N*****.

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FADE FROM BLACK

OPENING TITLE SEQUENCE (ANIMATED)

We see the wide mountains of the Andes, small markets, a condor flying through the screen, the land masses of the Galapagos and Ecuador. The coloured background changes colours sporadically, an ode to West Side Story.

TONY (V.O.)

To whom it may concern, my name is Tony Tenorio. Or when my mother is very upset with me, Antonio Tenorio Morales Jr. I am the product of the immigrant dream.

We transition to Toronto, Canada, we see streetcars, the C.N. Tower, Vince Carter dunking at the all star game etc. We fade into some B-roll of Toronto as the animations are now super-imposed on top.

TITLE CARD: DO TURTLES SWIM IN MAPLE SYRUP?

TONY (V.O.)

A shot at a better life given to me by my parents when they left everything they knew in Ecuador. So I can be born and raised here in Toronto. The notion that with enough tenacity and hope nothing is impossible.

1

INT. TONY'S BEDROOM-DAY

1

TONY (V.O.)

This lesson and to always do the right is what my mother and late father taught me. This is why I want to attend your university because of I desire to help people and to become more. When I was a young child on the playground, my friends would always make me the villain. Because according to them people like me aren't heroes. However, with a career in medicine I hope...

We open on a photo of a young Latin family at Canadian citizenship ceremony, a five year old son who wears a cape around his shoulders, a father and mother in their mid twenties.

There's another photo the boy checks his father's heartbeat with a stethoscope, finally an army portrait of his father inside the frame is the father's memoriam card.

MEMORIAM CARD
ANTONIO TENORIO SR. , 1973-2010.

ANTONIO (TONY) TENORIO (16, lanky, awkward, wears glasses.) Sits at his desk filled with open text/notebooks and an old toy stethoscope. His room is modest, the walls are covered with posters of soccer teams, superheroes, the human anatomy, the Ecuadorean and Canadian flags. It's a complete mess. He sits on his bed.

TONY(TO THE CAMERA)
to save people...

Tony lets out a sigh and looks at his phone, we see that what he said is actually written on his phone. He scrolls and we see a wall of text. Suddenly his door swings open and **CELIA TENORIO** (42, feisty, tough, caring) and stands there fuming, dressed in her cleaning uniform. She scowls at the state of the room and takes a glance at Tony's calendar the days date says university application due. But also filled to the brim with tests, work shifts, volunteer hours, trivia team competitions.

CELIA	CELIA (SPANISH)
Antonio! What're you doing?	Antonio! Que estas haciendo?

Tony interrupts his mother, he knows this song and dance.

TONY	TONY(SPANISH)
Writing the application.	Escribiendo el aplicacion

CELIA	CELIA
You're still writing it!	sigues escribiendo!

TONY (SPANISH)	TONY
Yeah, I'm making sure it's perfect.	Quiero que se perfecto. Ma!

CELIA (SPANISH)	CELIA
It's the last day! I swear you're so slow! Your first night with your wife she's gonna be sleeping with someone else by the time you have your pants down.	Si hoy es el ultimo dia! Ay Dios, que eres tan lento seguro quando to cases en la primera noche con tu mujer.Elle ya estara dormiendo con otro hombre mientras que tu te vajas los pantalones.

TONY
Jesus!

Tony, upset, gets up and grabs a jacket from his bed and starts to leaves.

TONY (SPANISH) (CONT'D)
I can't finish this here with
you around. You make me
nervous!

TONY (CONT'D)
Sabes que, no puedo terminar
esto contigo alado, Me pones
nervioso.

Tony leaves his room, leaving Celia alone.

CELIA (SPANISH)
Nervous! Always nervous!
Antonio! Where are you
going!...

CELIA
Nervioso? Nervioso! Siempre
estas nervioso! Donde vas!

TONY (O.S.)
Out! Love you! Even though
you drive me crazy!

TONY
Fuera! Te amo! Even though
you drive me crazy!

Celia runs out after him.

2

EXT. KENSINGTON MARKET-AUGUSTA AVE. - DAY

2

Tony walks down the sidewalk, but he stops. He frustratingly looks at a wall of text on his phone. His thumb hovering over a send button. Next to him we see **CINDY**, (17, bubbly, visible minority) she's on her phone having a heated argument in a different language. She's so upset she drops her backpack on the sidewalk.

Tony's phone rings and a picture of him and his mother hugging flashes onto the screen, her name on his phone: CELIA "MOMZILLA" TENORIO. He takes the call and jumps up as she yells. Meanwhile... a shady figure lurks in the background.

CINDY'S MOM(ON THE PHONE/FARSI)
You need to think before you act.

CELIA (SPANISH/ON THE PHONE)
Did you finish the
application!

CELIA
Terminaste el aplicacion!

CINDY'S MOM(ON THE PHONE/FARSI)
You're so ungrateful.

TONY
Jesus mom! I'm just about to
send it ma.

TONY
Jesus ma! Orita le eva
mandar!

CINDY (FARSI)
I told you not to tell him!

CELIA (SPANISH/ON THE PHONE)	CELIA
You take so much time your	Eres tan lento que tus
patients are going to be dead	pacientes van a morir antes
by the time you get gloves	que te pongas los guantes.
on.	

CINDY'S MOM (ON THE PHONE/FARSI)
Don't you raise your voice at me!

Tony and Cindy stop in their tracks and exclaim!

TONY/CINDY (ENGLISH)
Mom!

Tony hangs up, and shares a laugh with Cindy. They take a beat but, Tony is about to say something but Cindy beats him to it, she speaks with a smile.

Tony is about to say something when suddenly the mysterious figure lunges and grabs Cindy's backpack off the floor!

CINDY
Hey! Stop!

Tony gets in front of the mysterious figure, **CONNOR MACKENZIE** (Early 20'S, Caucasian, douchebag, wears obnoxious green headphones, bigger than Tony). Tony lunges for the backpack and is able to rip it away but drops his phone in the process.

Tony scrambles to the floor to try and grab his cell but Connor kicks him square in the guts. Tony reels back, as Connor takes his phone, and the backpack, he gets in Tony's face.

CONNOR
Fucking burrito nigger.

Tony takes a beat, he's confused and angry. He holds his stomach in pain. Things start to sound mumbled and distorted. Tony comes too and pounces back to his feet and gives chase to Connor.

3

EXT. BELLEVUE PARK - DAY

3

Tony runs through the park still holding his stomach. We can see Connor running off in the distance. Tony tries to keep up but bumps into someone and stumbles onto the floor.

MARKET GOER
Oh sorry, are you okay?

MARKET GOER 3 is no longer wearing green headphones or a weird expression. But a hemp sweater, a train operators hat, and jhorts.

TONY
I was born here!

MARKET GOER 3
Okay...

They shuffle off, we concentrate on Tony.

TONY
Gianfranco.

GIANFRANCO (V.O.)
Ayo, tell da mandem!

4

EXT. DAVID CROMBIE PARK - BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

4

We see **GIANFRANCO PROVENZANO** (17, Caucasian), He speaks in the slang and accent of a "Toronto Mans" (subtitled in plain English.) He looks like if Don Corleone was from Scarborough.

He hands a shoe box to someone who hands him a few bills. They share an elaborate handshake and the stranger heads off. We see Gianfranco is accompanied by a posey of other white kids dressed like him.

GIANFRANCO (TO THE CAMERA)
If you tryna cop, Gianfranco
got plug from Scarbs to the
duttu shwa. Ya dun kno.

GIANFRANCO (SUBTITLED)
(For any item you may seek,
Gianfranco has connections
spanning from Scarborough to
Oshawa){Break ends}

We then see Tony bewildered and annoyed by him. Gianfranco turns his attention to Tony adding bills to a ginormous wad of cash he shoves into his backpack. Inside the backpack is an assortment of phones.

GIANFRANCO (CONT'D)
Ai, so Tony Tenorio, da
playground bod bwoy, wagwan?

GIANFRANCO (SUBTITLED)
(CONT'D)
What's up?

Tony looks at the cash longingly, he looks at his beat up sneakers and Gianfranco's that look fresh out the box. Tony is annoyed.

TONY
Stupid green headphones, blonde
hair, blue eyes. He stole my phone.
He one of your boys?

Gianfranco takes a beat, and smacks his lips.

GIANFRANCO
Yo say less(beat) mans name
is Connor Mackenzie. He's a
waste yute. Man owes me 5
bills.

GIANFRANCO (SUBTITLED)
(Seems like Connor Mackenzie,
he owes me five-hundred
dollars.)

TONY
I need to know where he is. He has
my phone. It has my college
application, reference letters and
an application number. It's due
tonight, please.

GIANFRANCO
Yo who needs papers, if ya
got clout ya good (stress)!

GIANFRANCO (SUBTITLED)
(One only needs a reputation
to succeed... In our current
society a degree is no longer
a golden ticket, but a
lottery ticket.)

Tony is getting more and more annoyed. He takes a beat to
compose himself and replies.

TONY
I just really need my phone fam.

GIANFRANCO
Yo my g, don't you have the
find my phone on?

GIANFRANCO (SUBTITLED)
(My friend, is your find your
phone app turned on?)

TONY
It's a really old phone...

GIANFRANCO
Ha ha, ya broke ass!

GIANFRANCO (SUBTITLED)
(You are poor.)

Gianfranco and his boys laugh at Tony, Gianfranco calms down
and points to one of his boys.

GIANFRANCO (CONT'D)
Yo, more times (beat), I got
one of my mans on Connor,
still. (beat) I'll tell you
where he's at if you sauce
this to my plug.

GIANFRANCO (CONT'D)
(I have someone on Connor.
I'll tell you where he is, if
you deliver this package for
me.)

One of Gianfranco's boys holds a box out for Tony. Tony takes
a beat...

TONY
No.

Gianfranco laughs, the tone changes and Gianfranco stops speaking in so much slang. Tony turns and starts to walk away, his head hanging low. Gianfranco yells out as his posey laughs with him.

GIANFRANCO

Ayo! When dat rejection letter
comes in doe (beat, head nod) you
can come clean my house, still!

CELIA

So that's it? There's no back
up? You can't get an
extension?

CELIA

Entences ya esta? No puedes
pedir un extension.

5

INT. APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

5

Celia (wearing her cleaning service uniform) sets a plate of food down aggressively in front of Tony, a telenovela plays in the background.

Tony stays silent playing with his food, he flips a grilled plantain with his fork.

TONY (ENGLISH)

The phone had my application number
and reference numbers, that's it.

CELIA

You've worked so hard. Me,
your dad. And you're just
giving up!

CELIA

Pero haz trabajado muy duro
para llegar hasta aqui. Tu
padre y yo tambien ha
trabajado duro! Te vas rendir
asi de facil?

Tony is silent.

TONY (ENGLISH)

Why don't we eat normal food? Like
mac and cheese?

CELIA

What?

CELIA

Que?

TONY(ENGLISH)

You didn't teach me how to play
hockey, I don't know how to skate,
we don't eat pancakes and maple
syrup, we eat fried plantain. We're
not Canadian-Canadian.

CELIA (SPANISH)

What do you mean?

CELIA

Pero de que estas hablando?

TONY (ENGLISH)

I don't know. Maybe things would be better if you and dad never came here.

Celia's confusion now becomes anger, she gets into her sons.

CELIA

We came here to give you better opportunities. But you're just wasting them all away.

CELIA

Vinimos aqui para que pudieras tener mejores oportunidades pero tu le estas tirando todo por el basura.

TONY (ENGLISH)

I just wanted it to be perfect.

CELIA

Call the phone. (Throw phone to Tony)

CELIA

Poque no llamas! (Throws phone to Tony)

TONY (ENGLISH)

Like he's gonna pick up.

CELIA

Leaving it to the last day...Check online if anyone is selling a phone like yours nearby then!

CELIA

Siempre lo dejas todo por el ultimo... Mira aver si en el Internet alguien esta vendiendo un telefono come el tuyo cerca aqui.

Celia is grabbing onto Tony, his head hangs low, unable to face his mother.

TONY

I'm not!- It's not worth it.

Tony stays silent, Celia reaches out to him and holds his face.

CELIA

My baby, you're a light in this world.

CELIA

Mi bebe, tu eres una luz en este mundo.

Celia holds Tony's face in her hands, they take a beat. Tony tries to say something...

TONY

Pero ma...

A knock on the door interrupts their moment, Celia gets up and rushes to the door.

CELIA (ENGLISH)
I'll be right there! We're gonna
need that for rent.

Tony's left alone at the table he turns the phone on, his mother's wallpaper is the one of them at the citizenship ceremony. He stares at the photo, opens the phone and starts typing.

TONY/TEXT ON PHONE
Yo Connor, I'll give you 500\$ cash,
just tell me where you at. Enough
to square up you and Gianfranco
right?

FADE TO:

6 **INT. TONY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

6

We see Tony sit impatiently at his bed, he's dressed differently. He checks the calendar we see the application is due at 11:59, he checks the phone the time it's 11:20. He looks at an old toy stethoscope laying on his desk. Suddenly it buzzes Tony takes a look. He grabs a jacket and takes a beat before he silently opens his door, to reveal a blacked out apartment.

CONNOR/TEXT ON PHONE
Behind 214 Augusta Ave. ASAP.

7 **EXT. KENSINGTON MARKET - NIGHT**

7

We see Tony running through Kensington Market fast as he can.

CONNOR (O.S.)
Help!

Tony steps stutters as he follows the voice down an alleyway.

8 **EXT. BEHIND 214 AUGUSTA AVE. - NIGHT**

8

Tony arrives to see **MIGUEL** (20's, Latin, tough) kicking Connor, he looks terrible, near death even. Tony looks on, shocked as Connor cries out. Miguel holds a baseball bat in his hands.

CONNOR (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, I'm sorry! Please!

More thwacks and screams are heard, Tony still stands there Connor sees him and yells.

CONNOR (CONT'D)
You! Please! Please help!

Miguel looks over to Tony and recognizes him. We see it's actually the same guy Gianfranco gestured too earlier.

MIGUEL	MIGUEL
This is your guy right? You	Estes es quien te robo no?
want a shot?	Quires?

Tony walks over to the two of them, nervous. Miguel holds the bat out, Tony takes it.

TONY	TONY
You are? You speak? I don't,	Tu eres? Tu hablas? No se, no
I don't.	se.

Connor hears the Spanish coming out of Tony's mouth, his fear becomes disgust.

CONNOR
Why don't you two fucking speak
English?

Tony's nerves start to turn to anger after being insulted, Miguel sees this.

MIGUEL (IN SPANISH)
Yo bash his head in.

We see Connor grimace in fear.

MIGUEL (IN SPANISH) (CONT'D)
Do it!

Miguel grabs the bat out of Tony's hands. Connor looks on in horror. Tony can't believe it. Miguel lifts the bat over his head, Connor screams the bat comes down, fast. But Tony moves and grabs Miguel's hands. Connor screams! The bat breaks. We see Tony's face deadpan, Miguel looks confused.

Tony has the broken bat which looks more like a stake now. Tony pulls his mom's phone out, and holds the broken bat in front of himself, ready to use it.

TONY
Leave or I'll call the cops. You
can try to kick my ass, but not
before they get here. Especially
if I mention the white dude
bleeding out.

Miguel and Tony have a stand off, Tony looks wild and deranged. He looks like a man willing to do anything.

MIGUEL
Te vas a arrepentir de tu
fantasia de chapulin
colorado.

MIGUEL
You're going to regret the
superhero act.

Tony shakes the phone with 911 dialed, Miguel leaves, Tony searches for his phone and pulls it out of Connor's pocket, the time is 11:57am.

Tony is quiet and starts going through his phone, getting into his email and is about to hit send.

CONNOR
Come back here spick!

Tony pays him no mind, he hits send on the email, time, 11:58am. Tony starts to walk away.

CONNOR (CONT'D)
I'm gonna fuck you up next time I
see you!

Tony keeps walking, and throws the bat away.

CONNOR (CONT'D)
Go back to where you came from!

Tony looks back at Connor.

TONY
That's the thing man, I'm Already
here.

TITLE CARD: DO TURTLES SWIM IN MAPLE SYRUP? FADES TO "TURTLES
SWIM IN MAPLE SYRUP"

CREDIT ROLL

AFTER CREDIT SCENE

9

INT. APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

9

We see Celia holding an envelope, reading it carefully.

TONY
What does it say mom? I'm really
nervous.

TONY (IN SPANISH) (CONT'D)
Que dice ma? Estoy nervioso.

Celia takes a beat... She smiles.

TONY (CONT'D)
OH MY GOD!

CELIA
You did it!

FADE OUT.

THE END.