

Chapter 6: Lana  
Turner in South Texas



# All Pianos Have Keys & Other Stories

by José A. Cárdenas, 1994  
IDRA Founder & Director Emeritus

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## Chapter 6: Lana Turner in South Texas

Texas Attorney General John Hill vowed that he would end political corruption in South Texas. I don't know why he decided to address political corruption in South Texas. He could have addressed it in Austin and saved himself a lot of travel money.

But regardless of the reason for targeting the southern part of the state, he did initiate a lot of activity in the area. It can't be said that he eliminated the problem since dead people still comprise a respectable part of the active registered voters, elected public officials tend to financially out-perform other members of the community and the "patron" system is as entrenched as ever.

I am sure that the attorney general was motivated by the right reasons, but I am equally sure that his failure to reform the system stems from a lack of understanding of the system. A friend of mine who is a judge in San Antonio, argues that outsiders do not even realize that political hanky-panky does not even have a moral connotation in South Texas. It is just a way of life. Outsiders not only do not understand the system; they don't even understand the language of the system.

The following illustration took place in an inquiry before the grand jury of a small South Texas community. An assistant attorney general from Austin was questioning a female county official:

"What is your name?"

"Elvira Mascorro."

"Where do live?"

"Eleven Twenty-eight Third street."

"In this town?"

"Yes, sir. In this town."

Up to now everything was going smoothly. Now the communication problem begins.

"You are also known as 'Lana Turner'?"

"Who?"

“Lana Turner.”

“No sir. I’ve never been called ‘Lana Turner.’”

“It says so here in your deposition. Do you know what a deposition is? When I was questioning you a few weeks ago, you said, ‘My name is Elvira Mascorro, but everybody calls me Lana Turner.’ Do you remember saying that?”

“No sir. I never said that.”

The assistant attorney general places the transcript in front of the witness and points to the text.

“See. ‘My name is Elvira Mascorro, but everybody calls me Lana Turner.’ You see?”

“Oh, I see. But that’s not what I said. I said, ‘My name is Elvira Mascorro, but everybody calls me La Ratona.’”