

HERE COMES THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Inspired by True Events

Written by

Jim Reynolds

NETWORK
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COLD OPEN

FADE IN:

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - DAY (D1)

ESTABLISHING SHOT OF A HISTORICAL BUT RUN DOWN NEIGHBORHOOD IN PASADENA. UNTENDED LAWNS, PEELING PAINT, AND CHAIN LINK FENCES REFLECT THE ECONOMIC SITUATION OF THE COMMUNITY. A STATION WAGON WITH MICHIGAN PLATES ROLLS DOWN THE BLOCK.

CUT TO:

INT. STATION WAGON - SAME (D1)

DAVE AND GEMMA JOHNSON, A WHITE COUPLE IN THEIR THIRTIES, RIDE IN THE FRONT SEAT. THEIR VERY INQUISITIVE SON, BRADLEY (6) IS IN BACK LOOKING OUT THE WINDOW. THE CAR IS PACKED.

DAVE

This is our street, buddy!

You excited to see our new home?

BRADLEY

(GENUINELY CURIOUS) Why do all the houses have bars on the windows?

DAVE

They don't all have bars.

BRADLEY

(POINTING) That one does, that one does, that one does, that one...

GEMMA

(SIMPLEST ANSWER) They're to keep the windows from getting broken, baby.

BRADLEY

Oh... By all the robbers who live here?

GEMMA

Where did you hear that?!

BRADLEY

Grammy said she checked the internet
and our new neighborhood is full of
robbers. Then she gave me a cookie.

GEMMA

(TO DAVE) Your mother is terrifying.

DAVE

You say that like I don't know. (THEN)
Buddy, I know it may seem different
from Michigan, but that's just how it
looks. Inside all these homes, it's
people and families just like us.

GEMMA

And wait'll you see our new house.
It's big and charming and beautiful
with a yard -- it's our dream home.

DAVE

(PROUD) It's called a Craftsman, it
was built back in nineteen-fifteen.

BRADLEY

So we're moving all this way to live in
some place old? (SIGHS) Sometimes I
just don't get you guys...

DAVE

Southern California is expensive.
Everything else in our price range was
tiny and had no character.

GEMMA

And our place has a swimming pool!

DAVE

(HONKING HORN) With-a-big-ol'-hot-tub!

GEMMA

And in California, it's sunny all the time, which means--

DAVE

(HONKING HORN) No-more-snow-clothes!

(OFF GEMMA'S LOOK) What? It took like an hour just to get his boots on.

BRADLEY

I guess I do like to swim... Too bad we're gonna all die in the earthquake.

GEMMA

What?!

BRADLEY

Grammy says California is going to break off into the ocean and we'll all either drown or get eaten by sharks.

GEMMA

(TO DAVE) The woman is Satan in a cat sweatshirt.

DAVE

Buddy, Grammy just said those things because she's sad we moved away from Michigan. (SOTTO) And because making people afraid is what keeps her alive.

BRADLEY

I'm sad we moved away, too... What if
no one likes me here?

DAVE AND GEMMA SHARE A LOOK. THEIR HEARTS ARE BREAKING.

DAVE

I get it. Moving away's really hard.

BRADLEY

For you, too?

GEMMA

Of course. You know how many friends
Dad had back home. Everyone called
him "the Mayor."

DAVE

And not just because I knew everyone.
Also 'cause, like John Mayer, I shred
on guitar.

GEMMA

(TO BRADLEY) And it's hard for me,
too. I've never been a principal
before. What if nobody likes me?

BRADLEY

But you're the principal, everyone has
to pretend to like you.

DAVE LETS A LAUGH SLIP. GEMMA SHOOTS HIM A LOOK.

DAVE

I didn't say it, he did.

GEMMA

(TO BRADLEY) Trust me, this is a good thing for us -- no more cold weather, an amazing school and more clients for Dad's new company.

DAVE

And we'll make new friends, buddy. We just have to be brave, stay positive and let the bad stuff bounce off us.

BRADLEY

Kinda like bullets off of Superman.

DAVE

Exactly. We're bulletproof.

BRADLEY LETS THIS SINK IN.

BRADLEY

How'd you learn to be so brave, Dad?

DAVE

I guess Grandpa taught me when I was a little boy.

BRADLEY

How?

DAVE

By being scared of Grammy all the time.

AS DAVE THROWS THE CAR INTO PARK, WE...

CUT TO:

COLD OPEN 2

EXT. JOHNSON HOUSE - ESTABLISHING SHOT

A BEAUTIFUL, OLD TWO-STORY CRAFTSMAN HOUSE WITH A RIVER ROCK FRONT PORCH AND CHIMNEY. THE KIND OF HOME THAT EXUDES WARMTH.

EXT. JOHNSON FRONT PORCH - MOMENTS LATER

DAVE, GEMMA AND BRADLEY STEP ONTO THE FRONT PORCH.

DAVE

See? Isn't it beautiful? It's like we live in a Norman Rockwell painting.

BRADLEY

It seems kind of old-fashioned.

GEMMA

It's okay, your Dad does, too.

DAVE

Pew pew pew, insults bouncing off my chest. (NOTICING O.S.) Hey look, it's our new neighbor. Everyone say hi.

DAVE PUTS HIS ARM AROUND GEMMA AND BRADLEY AND THEY ALL WAVE.

DAVE/GEMMA/BRADLEY

(SING SONG) Hi!

CUT TO:

EXT. BARNES FRONT PORCH - SAME (D1)

CALVIN BARNES (50'S) A CANTANKEROUS AFRICAN AMERICAN MAN, SITS ON THE FRONT PORCH OF HIS SMALLER, RUN DOWN CRAFTSMAN. HE LOOKS UP FROM HIS NEWSPAPER, SEES THE JOHNSON FAMILY WAVING, SHAKES HIS HEAD UNHAPPILY AND RETURNS TO HIS READING.

ANGLE ON:

GEMMA TURNS TO DAVE OFF CALVIN'S NOT SO WARM WELCOME.

GEMMA

(JOKING) Maybe he'll be your new friend.

DAVE, GEMMA AND BRADLEY GO INSIDE.

ANGLE ON:

CALVIN CONTINUES TO READ AS HIS SON, MALCOLM (26) CHILL AND DRYLY SARCASTIC, STEPS OUTSIDE EATING A BOWL OF CEREAL.

MALCOLM

New neighbors here?

CALVIN

Looks that way.

MALCOLM

What are they like?

CALVIN

Like the marshmallows in your cereal -
white and soft.

MALCOLM

These are actually all rainbow.
(JOKING) The colors make me happy.

CALVIN

What kind of grown man eats
marshmallow cereal at lunchtime?

MALCOLM

I saw you eat a whole bag of
marshmallows the other day.

CALVIN

You keep that from your mother or I'll
put my foot in your ass.

MALCOLM

With your diabetes, it'll break off
when you do.

CALVIN

(RE: THE JOHNSON FAMILY) Why do these people gotta move here? Don't they know this is our neighborhood?

MALCOLM

What do you mean "our neighborhood?" You hate everybody around here.

CALVIN

That's not true. I love my neighbors!

MALCOLM

Only if they "get off your lawn," "stay away from your car" and "get the hell outta your way!" (THEN) You just never like any kind of change.

CALVIN

I'll tell you what I don't like -- black people built this community, a place for ourselves and our children, somewhere we knew each other and watched out for one another. And the whole time we were doing it, the only outsiders who came around here were the police and Mormons, and I don't know which of them scare me worse. But you watch, now that a white family moved here, more are on their way. And if we don't watch out, we're gonna get squeezed out of a good thing we made.

MALCOLM

You know you made the same speech when
the first Mexican family moved in.

CALVIN

Back when it was safe! Now I can't
walk down the street without getting
hit by a soccer ball or attacked by a
vicious animal.

MALCOLM

A rooster is not a vicious animal.

CALVIN

(RE: LEG) Tell that to my beak marks!

MALCOLM

(NODDING O.S.) I dunno, Dad, he
doesn't look too dangerous to me.

ANGLE ON: DAVE STRUGGLING TO UNLOAD CAMPING EQUIPMENT FROM
THE CAR. HE NOTICES CALVIN AND MALCOLM WATCHING AND CALLS
OVER TO THEM.

DAVE

We hit four national parks on the way!

AS HE WAVES HE FUMBLES SOME OF THE EQUIPMENT AWKWARDLY.

ANGLE ON: MALCOLM NODS TO DAVE, CALVIN SHAKES HIS HEAD.

CALVIN

Pfft. There goes the neighborhood!

AS CALVIN RETURNS TO HIS NEWSPAPER, WE...

FADE OUT.

END COLD OPEN

ACT ONESCENE A

FADE IN:

INT. JOHNSON LIVING AREA - DAY (D1)

WE ARE IN THE BEAUTIFUL LIVING/DINING ROOM OF THE JOHNSON'S HOME. GEMMA'S ON THE PHONE AS DAVE ENTERS FROM THE CAR.

GEMMA

(INTO PHONE) Fine! But if you're not here first thing tomorrow, I'm ripping you a new star-hole on Yelp! (HANGS UP)

DAVE

I'm gonna go out on a limb here and say the movers are running late.

GEMMA

They had to get off the road in Vegas.

DAVE

(DISAPPOINTED) Seriously? Why?

GEMMA

They said bad weather. But in the background I heard slot machines and "Pour Some Sugar on Me."

DAVE

So technically, it sounds like someone was making it rain.

GEMMA

All our furniture's on that truck - where are we gonna sleep tonight?

DAVE

We could go back to Vegas, see if the casino comped them a suite. (OFF HER LOOK) Okay, it sucks. But they'll be here tomorrow and we can just set up the camping gear in our bedroom. It'll be fun, Bradley will love it.

GEMMA

You just like sleeping in a tent.

DAVE

Hell yeah, it's like having a fort!

GEMMA LAUGHS AND KISSES HIM. HIS GOOFY HUMOR ALWAYS MAKES HER SMILE. BRADLEY ENTERS FROM THE BATHROOM DOWN THE HALLWAY.

BRADLEY

The toilet and sink aren't working. Maybe because Grammy says California's always in the middle of a drought.

DAVE

The water valve probably just needs to be turned on. It's in the basement.

DAVE CROSSES TO THE BASEMENT DOOR IN THE HALLWAY.

GEMMA

The weekend Dad and I came out to look for a house, what else did Grammy say?

BRADLEY

(SHRUGS) That nobody likes a snitch.

DAVE COMES UP FROM THE BASEMENT.

DAVE

I can't turn it, it's rusted shut.

GEMMA

What about a wrench?

DAVE

Sure. Too bad mine's currently in the parking lot of a Nevada strip club.

GEMMA

You wanna go to the store to get one?

DAVE

No, I'll just go next door, see if I can borrow one from our neighbor.

GEMMA

You mean the one who shook his head at us like this (IMITATES CALVIN)?

DAVE

Trust me, it's gonna be fine.
Everyone wants to be friends with a guy with a ("PLAYER") big-ol'-hot-tub!

DAVE EXITS.

BRADLEY

I think he should've gone to the store.

CUT TO:

SCENE BEXT. BARNES FRONT PORCH - MOMENTS LATER

DAVE KNOCKS ON THE FRONT DOOR. MARTY (28) A DELIGHTFULLY CHIPPER BLACK MAN WITH GLASSES AND A COLLARED SHIRT TUCKED INTO KHAKIS, ANSWERS. (THINK SAM RICHARDSON FROM VEEP)

DAVE

Hi there. I just moved in next door
and we're having a bit of a problem.

MARTY

(LOOKING PAST DAVE) Oh no, did that
horrible rooster get someone again?

DAVE

No. I just need a wrench. I'm Dave.

DAVE STICKS HIS HAND OUT BUT MARTY DOESN'T TAKE IT.

MARTY

Nice to meet you, I'm Marty. No
offense, I'm not much of hand shaker.

DAVE

I totally understand. My uncle is a
germaphobe, too.

MARTY

Oh I'm not a germaphobe, I just
believe in numbers. Did you know as
many as fifty-six thousand people die
each year in the U.S. from influenza?
That's twenty thousand more than
automobile accidents, and ten thousand
more than from drug overdose.

DAVE

Wow. You know a lot of fun facts about how people die.

MARTY

It's a hobby. Makes me feel safe.

DAVE

Okay, well, I was wondering if you have a wrench I could borrow?

MARTY

You know, I'm not actually much of a tool guy. But my father is. I'll ask him. (CALLING INSIDE) Hey Dad, can our new neighbor borrow your wrench?

CALVIN IMMEDIATELY APPEARS IN THE DOORWAY, GLOWERING AT DAVE.

CALVIN

(SHARP) What do you need a wrench for?

DAVE

(TAKEN ABACK) Uh, my water valve is rusted shut and I need to turn it on.

CALVIN

And you don't have any tools?

DAVE

I do, but they're in Vegas right now.

MARTY

Ooh, too bad. The chances of property theft are higher in Las Vegas than in ninety-six percent of the country.

DAVE

(A BEAT, THEN TO CALVIN) So is that a
"no" on having a wrench?

CALVIN

You see that truck over there that
says Calvin's Appliance Repair?

DAVE

Yes.

CALVIN

I'm Calvin. What kind of repairman
would I be if I didn't have a wrench?

DAVE

...A bad one?

CALVIN

Damn right! But I'm the best there
is. There's nothing I can't fix.

DAVE

How about a rusty water valve?

CALVIN

Do I look like a plumber to you?!

MARTY

Dad, just let him borrow your wrench.

CALVIN

Why? I don't know this guy. What if
he steals it? Then I wouldn't be able
to fix a damn thing. You gonna start
paying the bills around here?

MARTY

I pay half the mortgage and utilities.

CALVIN

Sounds like you can afford a wrench.

Go buy one and loan it to this guy.

DAVE

Y'know what, it's okay. I'll just go

to the store and buy one instead.

AS DAVE TURNS AND GOES, CALVIN SIGHS AND SHAKES HIS HEAD.

CALVIN

Fine. I'll get one out of my truck.

DAVE

Really?

MARTY

(SURPRISED) Yeah, really? (THEN) I

would have said the odds of that were

very low.

CALVIN

If my wife found out I didn't help you

on a Sunday she'd tell me I was going

to hell. And I get that enough.

AS CALVIN CROSSES OFF TO HIS TRUCK, DAVE FOLLOWS.

CUT TO:

SCENE CINT. JOHNSON LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

GEMMA IS THERE WITH BRADLEY WHEN DAVE ENTERS WITH A WRENCH.

GEMMA

Hey, you got a wrench!

DAVE

(UPBEAT) I got a wrench!

GEMMA

(PLAYFUL) Is that man your friend now?

DAVE

(UPBEAT) I got a wrench!

BRADLEY

Do any kids live there?

DAVE

I didn't see any, buddy.

BRADLEY

Can we go back over and ask?

DAVE

Maybe later. Right now that man seems like he needs a reeeeeally long nap.

BRADLEY

So our neighbor is cranky and there are no kids next door. Guess I'll go to my room and play with my toys. Oh wait, that's right, I don't have any.

BRADLEY SULKS UPSTAIRS.

DAVE

Aren't kids his age supposed to be
full of wonder?

GEMMA

He is. Half the time. The other half
he's an emotional terrorist. (THEN)
But he'll be fine. How about you?

DAVE

You know me, as soon as we get settled
in and meet some people, I'll be good.

SHE PUTS HER ARMS AROUND HIM.

GEMMA

Thank you for saying yes to all this.
Moving here, me going back to work,
you working from home -- it's a lot.

DAVE

Well, I never could say no to you.

GEMMA

Because you love me so much?

DAVE

Yes. And because next to my mother
and our new neighbor, you're the
scariest person I know.

SHE LAUGHS. MAKING HER LAUGH ALWAYS MAKES HIM FEEL BETTER.

DAVE (CONT'D)

It's gonna be great. I'll set up our tent, our stuff will get here, we'll start making friends and before you know it, it'll feel just like home.

GEMMA'S EYES GO WIDE AS SHE SEES SOMETHING OUT THE WINDOW.

GEMMA

Four policemen just pulled their guns out and went into the house next door.

DAVE

Should we get down?

GEMMA

I think so!

THEY QUICKLY LET GO OF EACH OTHER AND DROP TO THE FLOOR.

DAVE

Ow!

GEMMA

What happened?! Are you okay?!

DAVE

Yeah. The keys to the station wagon just stabbed me in the groin. (THEN)
Which house was it? The vacant one or where Captain Friendly lives?

GEMMA

The vacant one.

DAVE

I wonder why they pulled their guns?

GEMMA

Maybe there was a murder or something.

DAVE

A murder?! Who have you been hanging
out with, my mom?!

GEMMA

What do we do?!

DAVE

You stay here. I'll look out the window.

GEMMA

Okay, but be careful.

DAVE STARTS TO ARMY CRAWL TO THE FRONT WINDOW. AFTER A CRAWL
OR TWO HE STOPS, FISHES THE CAR KEYS OUT OF HIS POCKET, AND
RESUMES. WHEN HE GETS THERE, HE SITS UP WITH HIS BACK PRESSED
AGAINST THE WALL AND SHOULDER SHIMMIES UP NEXT TO THE WINDOW.

GEMMA (CONT'D)

Just a quick peek, okay?

DAVE

(DEEP BREATH) Here I go...

DAVE QUICKLY PEEKS AROUND THE EDGE OF THE WINDOW.

GEMMA

What'd you see?

DAVE

Nothing, I kind of pulled back at the
last second. (THEN) I'll try again.

DAVE TAKES A DEEP BREATH AND SETTLES HIMSELF. MUSTERING HIS
COURAGE HE SLOWLY PEEKS AROUND THE WINDOW WHEN "BAM BAM BAM" -
THERE'S A KNOCK AT THE DOOR. DAVE ALMOST SHITS HIS PANTS.

MARTY

(THROUGH DOOR) It's me, Marty! Dad
sent me over to check on his wrench!

DAVE ROLLS HIS EYES AND QUICKLY OPENS THE DOOR.

DAVE

Quick, quick, come in.

MARTY

What's going on?

DAVE CLOSES AND DEADBOLTS THE DOOR, TERRIFIED.

DAVE

The police went in next door with
their guns out!

MARTY

Oh. They're just arresting Victor.

DAVE

Who's Victor?

MARTY

The crackhead who's squatting there.

GEMMA

There's a crackhead next door?!

MARTY

Only recently. He stayed here before
this place got renovated. (LOOKING
AROUND) Beautiful job by the way!

DAVE

This was a crackhouse?!

MARTY

No, the crackhouse is a block over.
This is where its customers lived.
(NOTICING) I can't believe the stains
they got out of this floor!

GEMMA

The Realtor didn't tell us that!

DAVE

She said it was an "up and coming" neighborhood!

MARTY

Well, now that you're here, I guess she's right!

GEMMA

We knew coming in there were some issues here, but nothing like this.

DAVE

There were zero mentions of shootouts on any of the websites we looked at.

MARTY

Oh there won't be a shootout.
Victor's not a violent individual.

DAVE

Okay, sure, but doesn't crack have a way of making people... unpredictable?

MARTY

True, but even if shots were fired, the mathematical odds of a bullet traveling from next door at an angle through both sets of walls and hitting someone in here are incredibly small.

DAVE

Well, I guess that's a relief.

MARTY

Although Uncle Earl did lose an ear on
New Year's Eve when that bullet fell
out of the sky.

GEMMA

I'm going to the back of the house!

MARTY

Good idea! I can't wait to see what
they did with the kitchen!

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

DAVE, GEMMA AND MARTY ENTER. DAVE AND GEMMA ARE ON EDGE.

MARTY

Marble countertops! Historically
inaccurate but beautiful nonetheless.

GEMMA

So how often does this sort of thing
happen around here?!

MARTY

Not very, but certainly more than in
nicer parts of town. Of course in
those areas a house with cabinets like
these would cost twice as much!

DAVE

I need a glass of water. Except we
don't have any glasses. Or any water.

MARTY

That reminds me, since none of your things have arrived -- and fingers crossed they do -- my mom wants you to come to our house tonight for Sunday supper.

GEMMA

Uh, that's very nice, but we just got here and we wouldn't want to intrude.

DAVE

(QUICKLY) Especially on your dad.

MARTY

Oh when it comes to socializing he doesn't have much say. Mostly because he hates everyone.

DAVE AND GEMMA EXCHANGE A LOOK, THEY'RE KIND OF STUCK.

GEMMA

Well, I guess a home-cooked meal would be nice after a week on the road.

MARTY

Then it's settled. Come over at five.
(STARTS TO GO) Oh, and if Victor makes a run for it through your backyard, keep him out of the pool. He's not really a very good swimmer.

MARTY EXITS AND ON DAVE AND GEMMA'S OVERWHELMED FACES, WE...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWOSCENE D

FADE IN:

INT. BODEGA - LATER (DAY 1)

A SMALL, LATINO CORNER MARKET - THE KIND OF PLACE YOU CAN GET SOFT DRINKS, BASIC GROCERIES, CIGARETTES AND LOTTO TICKETS. NITA (40'S, LATINA) AND HER MOTHER, ABUELA (OLDER THAN TIME) ARE BEHIND THE COUNTER WATCHING A TELENUELA ON A SMALL TV.

DAVE ENTERS, LOOKING A LITTLE RATTLED STILL. HE TAKES A HAND BASKET AND BEGINS SHOPPING FOR MILK, EGGS, ETC.

WHEN NITA SPEAKS WITH CUSTOMERS, IT WILL BE ENGLISH. WHEN SHE SPEAKS WITH ABUELA IT WILL BE SPANISH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES.

NITA

Hola.

DAVE

Hello.

ABUELA

(SPANISH) This gringo is lost.

NITA

(TO DAVE) Can I help you?

DAVE

No thanks. Just grabbing a couple things for breakfast tomorrow.

NITA

(SPANISH, TO ABUELA) He says he doesn't need help.

ABUELA

(LOOKS AT HIM, IN SPANISH) He's wrong.

DAVE HOLDS UP A SMALL BUNCH OF BLACK AND YELLOW PLANTAINS.

DAVE

Excuse me, are these bananas?

NITA

They're like bananas only sweeter.

DAVE

Oh. Well, who doesn't like sweeter?

ABUELA

(SPANISH) No one is this stupid -- I
smell a cop.

DAVE ARRIVES AT THE REGISTER.

NITA

(TO DAVE) Do you need anything else?

DAVE

No, this will do it. Actually, can I
ask you a question -- my family and I
just moved in around the corner and we
had an incident with the police today.

ABUELA

(SPANISH) Don't believe him. He's
trying to throw you off his scent.

DAVE

(RE: ABUELA) Is she talking about me?

NITA

She says you have a nice face.

DAVE

Oh. (TO ABUELA) Well, tell her I
think she has one, too.

ABUELA

(SPANISH) I will cut you and cook you,
you lying pig.

DAVE

Boy, I wish I knew another language...
Anyway, we knew coming in it was going
to be rougher than our neighborhood
back home, but do you think it's safe?

NITA

Oh yes. I raised my daughters here.

DAVE

Well, that's a relief.

NITA

And I only got robbed twice last year.

DAVE REACTS, HORRIFIED.

ABUELA

(SPANISH) We got robbed five times.

NITA

(SPANISH) Have mercy on him, Mama.
He's already white enough.

DAVE

Twice in one year? That's terrible!

NITA

(SHRUGS) It happens when you have a
business anywhere there are gangs.

DAVE

There are gangs in this neighborhood?!

NITA

Just one.

ABUELA

(SPANISH) The Crazy Lanes Devil
Bloods. They are going to love you.

DAVE

(STUNNED) I-- I don't know what to
say...

NITA

It's okay, mister.

DAVE

Dave, call me Dave.

NITA

Okay mister Dave. You don't need to
worry. You seem like a very nice man.

DAVE

That's nice of you to say, but what
does it have to do with being safe?

ABUELA

(SPANISH) Nothing but many will come
to your funeral.

DAVE

What did she say?

NITA

It's going to be fun having you here.

AS SHE RINGS UP DAVE'S GROCERIES, WE...

CUT TO:

SCENE EEXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - CONTINUOUS

DAVE EXITS THE BODEGA, NERVOUS AS HELL. AS HE MAKES HIS WAY HOME, HE PASSES A GROUP OF YOUNG BLACK MEN CHILLING BY A CAR.

DAVE

(OVERLY FRIENDLY) Hi. (HOLDING UP BAG)

Just buying some groceries. Did you

know these are sweeter than bananas?

THEY LOOK AT HIM STRANGELY AND RETURN TO THEIR CONVERSATION.

DAVE TURNS A CORNER AND FINDS HIMSELF BEING FOLLOWED BY A BLACK MAN WEARING EARBUDS AND LOOKING AT HIS PHONE. DAVE'S NERVOUS AND DOESN'T RECOGNIZE THAT IT'S MALCOLM. HE KEEPS CHECKING OVER HIS SHOULDER UNTIL A PACK OF CHIHUAHUAS ATTACKS THE FENCE NEXT TO HIM AND HE DROPS HIS GROCERIES. HE BENDS DOWN TO PICK THEM UP BUT QUICKLY SHOOTS UP AS MALCOLM NEARS.

DAVE (CONT'D)

MALCOLM

Hi, I'm--

Whoa, what the--?!

DAVE'S HOLDING A PLANTAIN LIKE A GUN. HE DROPS IT IN HORROR.

DAVE

Oh my God! I'm so sorry!

MALCOLM

Man you almost gave me a heart attack!

DAVE

I know, sorry. (JOKING) That'd be a bad way to go, huh? Not a lot of street cred from a drive by fruiting.

MALCOLM

What do you mean, "street cred?"

DAVE

I have no idea. (EXTENDING HAND) I'm Dave, I just moved here.

MALCOLM

Malcolm. I saw you earlier next door.

DAVE

That was you? Oh geez, that's great!

MALCOLM

Why's that great?

DAVE

Not a clue. (THEN) Sorry, I'm being so weird. Things have just been super stressful since we got here.

MALCOLM

Wasn't that like an hour ago?

DAVE

(DEEP BREATH) Is that all?

MALCOLM

Well you need to chill out. Being all jumpy's gonna scare people 'round here.

DAVE

(CHUCKLES) Kind of ironic, isn't it?

MALCOLM

Why?

DAVE

I don't know.

MALCOLM SHAKES HIS HEAD AND CONTINUES. DAVE CALLS AFTER:

DAVE (CONT'D)

See you at dinner!

ON DAVE'S PAINFUL AWKWARDNESS, WE...

CUT TO:

SCENE H

EXT. BARNES FRONT PORCH - LATER

DAVE, GEMMA AND BRADLEY STEP ONTO THE FRONT PORCH. DAVE IS HOLDING A BOTTLE OF CHAMPAGNE AND LOOKS VERY UNCOMFORTABLE.

GEMMA

Honey, relax, it's going to be fine.

DAVE

How can you say that? Two of the people who live here already hate me.

BRADLEY

And you haven't even met the mom, yet.

MARTY OPENS THE DOOR.

MARTY

Hello, hello! Welcome! Come on in...

RESET TO:

INT. BARNES LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

DAVE, GEMMA AND BRADLEY ENTER THE BARNES LIVING ROOM. IT HAS CHARACTER, TOO, BUT IS SIMPLER AND MUCH MORE WORN WITH TIME.

GEMMA

Mmm, smells delicious.

MARTY

Mom's an exceptional cook. It's why I have a weight problem. I see her food and can't "wait" to eat it. (THEN TO BRADLEY) And who do we have here?

BRADLEY

My name's Bradley.

MARTY

I'm Marty. When I was a little boy I grew up in this neighborhood, too.

BRADLEY

Did you like it?

MARTY

No, it was terrible. (THEN) I wasn't like most children so I got picked on for doing things like homework and reading and going to school.

BRADLEY

I'm gonna do those things, too.

MARTY

Oh. Well... hopefully you're a faster runner than I was.

DAVE AND GEMMA REACT AS LORETTA (50S) A PROUD, GRACIOUS WOMAN WHO DOESN'T SUFFER FOOLS, ENTERS WITH FOOD FROM THE KITCHEN.

LORETTA

Hello everyone, I'm Loretta. Welcome to my home.

GEMMA

Thank you so much for having us. I'm Gemma and this is my husband, Dave, and this is our son, Bradley.

THEY ADLIB HELLOS. DAVE OFFERS HER THE BOTTLE OF CHAMPAGNE.

DAVE

We brought this. We were going to open it on our first night in the house but since you invited us over, we thought we would share it with you.

LORETTA

Isn't that thoughtful? Unfortunately, I do not allow alcohol inside my home.

DAVE

Oh, I'm sorry, we didn't know.

LORETTA

It's fine. You can just take it home with you. But until then, leave it on the porch, okay?

DAVE

Really? Outside?

LORETTA

"Keep on watch and pray so that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is eager, but the flesh is weak." Matthew 26:41.

MARTY

Mom's very religious.

DAVE

You don't say.

LORETTA

It's so nice to have a new family here. Especially one who goes to church.

DAVE AND GEMMA EXCHANGE A LOOK.

DAVE

It's actually been a little while since we've been.

BRADLEY

I've never gone.

LORETTA LOOKS AT DAVE AND GEMMA.

DAVE

(CROSSING TO DOOR, RE: CHAMPAGNE) So just outside is good?

BRADLEY

(TO LORETTA) Why'd you think our family goes to church?

LORETTA

I dunno, I guess 'cause the only people like you who come around here think Jesus is keeping them safe.

BRADLEY

Dad says we're bulletproof.

MARTY

Well clearly you're in the right neighborhood for that!

LORETTA

Marty, go tell your brother and father
it's time to come to the table.

MARTY

(YELLING O.S.) Dad, Malcolm, it's time
to come to the table!

LORETTA

(ANNOYED) I could've done that. You
know I don't like yelling in my home.

CALVIN (O.S.)

(YELLING) Is it on the table?

LORETTA

(YELLING) Yes!

MALCOLM ENTERS FROM THE BACK OF THE HOUSE AND GOES DIRECTLY
TO THE TABLE.

MALCOLM

Smells good, Mom.

CALVIN ENTERS BEHIND DAVE.

CALVIN

(SHARP) You bring back my wrench?

DAVE SPINS AROUND, SURPRISED.

LORETTA

Calvin! Where are your manners?
That's no way to greet a guest.

CALVIN

(ROLLS HIS EYES, THEN TO DAVE) Hello,
welcome to our home. Won't you please
introduce me to my wrench?

DAVE TAKES THE WRENCH OUT OF HIS POCKET AND HANDS IT OVER.

LORETTA

Alright everyone, take a seat, food's
getting cold.

THEY DO.

LORETTA (CONT'D)

Now, everybody hold hands for grace.

BRADLEY

Who's Grace?

LORETTA

(SHAKING HER HEAD) Looks like I'm
gonna be praying for your family for a
whole lotta reasons.

AS THEY ALL TAKE HANDS, WE...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BARNES DINING ROOM - LATER

EVERYONE IS STARING AT THEIR PLATES, EATING IN AWKWARD
SILENCE. GEMMA NODS TO DAVE TO START THE CONVERSATION.

DAVE

...So, Calvin you do appliance repair.
Marty, what do you do for a living?

MARTY

I'm an engineer at Jet Propulsion
Laboratory.

DAVE

Oh, wow, that's cool. Did you work on
the Mars Rover Project?

MARTY

I'm actually working on something much more important -- a small, extremely stable device for measuring interval durations in outer orbits.

MALCOLM

That's a fancy way of saying "space clock."

DAVE

How about you, Malcolm, what do you do?

MALCOLM

I work for myself.

DAVE

Hey, so do I! Guess that makes us a couple of independent businessmen.

MALCOLM

Independent businessman, I like that.

DAVE

So what kind of business are you in?

MALCOLM

None of yours.

DAVE

Okay!

LORETTA

Tell us what it is that you do, Dave?

DAVE

I'm an independent conflict mediator --
which means when two parties have some
sort of disagreement, they bring me in
to see if I can help resolve it.

CALVIN

(TO DAVE) So you make enough money to
buy that big ol' house by sticking
your nose in other people's business?

GEMMA

He doesn't stick his nose in. They
hire him to help solve their problems.

CALVIN

Hmph, sounds like a made up job to me.

GEMMA

What do you mean "made up job?"

CALVIN

I mean the kind of job where rich
people pay other rich people to fix
problems that aren't really problems,
because all of them are already rich.

LORETTA

Calvin, not in front of the child.

BRADLEY

It's okay. Grammy says the same thing.

GEMMA

(TO CALVIN) So what, fixing things
only counts if you use a toolbox?

DAVE

I always say the most important thing
in my toolbox is a good attitude.

CALVIN

At least what I do is honest work.

GEMMA

You're calling him dishonest?

CALVIN

I'm saying you all are.

LORETTA

(STOP) Calvin...

GEMMA

What's that supposed to mean?!

DAVE

(PLEASE STOP) Gemma...

CALVIN

It means that you're lying to
yourselves that you belong here.

DAVE

Loretta, these potatoes are amazing!
What is this, cheddar cheese?

GEMMA

(TO CALVIN) Okay. I hear you. I see
you. But now it's my turn to talk.

MALCOLM

Oh dang, she's doing a finger wag.

BRADLEY

She does it when she's mad.

GEMMA

You don't know anything about us. We are nice people and my husband is good at his job. So good that when the company he worked for said they were cutting his pay and benefits after he'd mediated more disputes than anyone for the last eight years, he told them they could kiss his ass.

DAVE

I just politely declined their offer.

GEMMA

So when I got a job out here that gave us benefits, at a school my son and I can walk to together from a house that we love, he said "Okay, let's do it." And do you know why?

MALCOLM

Did you see that? Her neck just moved.

MARTY

Like that rooster down the street!

GEMMA

(TO CALVIN) Because he's a good man. And he puts his family and other people first, and he deserves respect.

A BEAT.

LORETTA

I like you.

CALVIN

Respect? You wanna talk about respect?!

DAVE

Guys--

CALVIN

This is my house! This is my
neighborhood! And you come in here
like you people always do and you--

DAVE

Guys, please! Can we all get along?!

EVERYONE IMMEDIATELY STOPS AND LOOKS AT DAVE IN SHOCK.

MALCOLM

(AMUSED) Did you just quote Rodney
King to a room full of black folks?

DAVE

Uh... Yes. But not intentionally.

CALVIN

(STANDING) You see?! I told you!
This fool's even stealing our words!

LORETTA

Calvin, sit down! We will enjoy the
rest of this meal in peace! Do you
understand me?

A BEAT WHILE CALVIN LOOKS AT LORETTA, THEN SITS DOWN, PICKS
UP HIS SILVERWARE AND GRUDGINGLY GOES BACK TO HIS FOOD.

LORETTA (CONT'D)

(TO BRADLEY) Now that's respect.

AS BRADLEY, WIDE-EYED, NODS, IN AGREEMENT WE...

CUT TO:

SCENE KINT. DAVE AND GEMMA'S BEDROOM - LATER

A TENT IS SET UP IN THE MIDDLE OF THE OTHERWISE EMPTY, DARK ROOM. GEMMA ENTERS FROM THE BATHROOM IN PAJAMAS.

GEMMA

(WHISPERING TO TENT) Dave? Are you in
there?

DAVE TURNS ON A HEADLAMP HE'S WEARING, REVEALING HE'S SITTING AGAINST THE WALL.

DAVE

Over here.

GEMMA

What are you doing?

DAVE

Just thinking about today. And I
always like wearing one of these.

SHE CROSSES AND SITS NEXT TO HIM. HE TURNS OFF THE HEADLAMP.

GEMMA

Not the smoothest first day, huh?

DAVE

I don't know if it's our stuff not
showing up, the near shootout next
door or getting off to a truly
horrific start with our neighbors, but
I feel like today kinda sucked.

GEMMA

But you get to sleep in a tent.

DAVE

That's true. So it could be worse.

(THEN) Was moving here a mistake?

GEMMA

Well, I'm not crazy about the risk of stray gunfire - but the truth is that was a problem in rural Michigan, too.

DAVE

You know what I mean...

GEMMA

Okay, I admit, tonight wasn't great. But what about being Superman -- letting the bad stuff bounce off you?

DAVE

Maybe I'm not Superman. Maybe I'm Clark Kent -- dorky and uncool.

GEMMA

C'mon, you know that's not true. You just care about people, and you care about what they think. And just because bullets bounce off of Superman doesn't mean they don't hurt. It just wouldn't be as cool a movie if he kept saying, "Ow ow ow, guys, please stop."

DAVE LAUGHS A LITTLE.

GEMMA (CONT'D)

Give it time. People love you, they always do. I mean, you're "the Mayor," you throw the best barbecues.

DAVE

People do like my sauce...

GEMMA

Not to mention your block parties.

DAVE

Fourth of July wet sponge dodgeball did become "a thing."

GEMMA

And you're the nicest guy on Earth. We just drove across country and I saw you wave to every person and cow we passed.

DAVE

They have such nice eyes. And I've eaten so many of them.

GEMMA

You're gonna be fine. You may not be bulletproof, but you see the good in people. That's your real superpower.

DAVE

I love you.

GEMMA

I love you, too.

THEY KISS.

DAVE

(JOKING, TURNS HEADLAMP BACK ON) I

also have laser vision.

AS HE MOVES HIS HEAD LASER BEAM AROUND SHE LAUGHS. SUDDENLY
"BOOM BOOM BOOM," INSANELY LOUD RAP STARTS THUMPING OUTSIDE.

GEMMA

What the hell is that?

DAVE

It's either music or we're falling

into the ocean like my mom said.

THEY GET UP AND CROSS TO THE WINDOW OVERLOOKING THE STREET.

GEMMA

Someone's having a party down the block.

DAVE

Who has a party at (CHECKS WATCH) nine

o'clock on a Sunday night? (THEN)

Wow, I've never sounded more like my

father in my entire life.

GEMMA

It's going to wake Bradley up.

(CROSSING) I'm calling the cops.

DAVE

Don't call the police. I'll handle it.

DAVE CROSSES AND STARTS PUTTING ON HIS SHOES.

GEMMA

What? Why can't I call the cops?

DAVE

Because we just moved in and they've already been here once. We don't want a bad reputation with our neighbors.

BOOM BOOM BOOM.

GEMMA

Oh yeah, I'd hate to not get invited to their next affair. (THEN) Besides, we didn't call about the crackhead.

DAVE

Nobody knows that. To people around here it'll look like we showed up and just started ratting everyone out.

GEMMA

"Ratting everyone out?" Why are you talking like an old gangster movie?

DAVE

Because when I say current gangster things like "street cred" and "drive by fruiting" it sounds stupid!

DAVE EXITS, LEAVING GEMMA WORRIED. BRADLEY UNZIPS THE TENT.

BRADLEY

Mom, where's Dad going?

GEMMA

To make some friends. Or possibly die trying.

ON GEMMA'S CONCERN, WE...

CUT TO:

SCENE LEXT. FRONT YARD - DOWN THE STREET - MOMENTS LATER

DAVE MAKES HIS WAY ALONG A LOW CHAIN LINK FENCE TOWARDS A YARDECUE - A BBQ PARTY IN THE FRONT YARD OF AN OLD, RUN DOWN HOUSE. THERE ARE A LOT OF PEOPLE THERE DRINKING, SMOKING AND HANGING OUT AS BASS HEAVY RAP BLASTS OUT OF A CAR PARKED ON THE LAWN. DAVE ARRIVES AT THE GATE AND POLITELY HOLDS IT OPEN FOR SOME OTHER GUESTS, NODDING HELLO AS THEY ENTER AHEAD OF HIM, UNTIL ONE FINALLY GESTURES POLITELY FOR HIM TO GO FIRST.

DAVE

(YELLING OVER MUSIC) Thank you!

DAVE WALKS INTO THE PARTY. PEOPLE NOTICE BUT NOBODY MAKES A BIG DEAL, JUST CURIOUS LOOKS. HE SCANS THE CROWD, NODDING AND WAVING TO PEOPLE AS HE LOOKS FOR SOMEONE IN CHARGE. HE FINALLY SPOTS MALCOLM ON THE FRONT PORCH HAVING A BEER WITH SOME FRIENDS. DAVE WAVES AND YELLS TO GET HIS ATTENTION.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Malcolm! Malcolm! Over here!

THE MUSIC SUDDENLY CUTS OUT AS DAVE CONTINUES TO SHOUT.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Malcolm it's me, Dave!!!

EVERYONE STOPS AND LOOKS AT THE GUY YELLING HIS HEAD OFF.

DAVE (CONT'D)

(SMALL) Hey everybody... Cool party.

MALCOLM CROSSES OVER FROM THE FRONT PORCH.

MALCOLM

Man, what are you doing here?

DAVE

I came to see if I could get the music
turned down, but now that it's off...

ANGLE ON: THE FRONT PORCH WHERE GREEDY, A GIANT SAMOAN
LOOKING GANGSTER IN BAGGY CLOTHES AND SUNGLASSES, STEPS OUT.

GREEDY

Who the hell turned off my jam?!

THE MUSIC STARTS BACK UP. MALCOLM AND DAVE SHOUT OVER IT.

MALCOLM

(SHOUTING) It's his birthday.

DAVE

(SHOUTING) Fun for him. (DEEP BREATH,
THEN) Well, see you later.

MALCOLM

Where are you going?

DAVE

To ask him to turn it down.

THEY LOOK OVER AT GREEDY COMING DOWN THE PORCH STEPS. A
LARGE PITBULL JUMPS UP ON HIM AND HE PUSHES IT OFF EASILY.

GREEDY

(TO PITBULL) Get off me!

ANGLE BACK ON MALCOLM AND DAVE.

MALCOLM

Seriously?!

DAVE

Sure. He seems like a reasonable guy.

DAVE CROSSES OFF LEAVING MALCOLM STUNNED.

MALCOLM

...Oh I gotta see this.

MALCOLM QUICKLY FOLLOWS.

ANGLE ON GREEDY WITH SOME FRIENDS BY THE BBQ. DAVE APPROACHES
AND SHOUTS OVER THE MUSIC AS MALCOLM ARRIVES CLOSE BEHIND.

DAVE

Hi, I'm Dave. What's your name?

GREEDY TURNS AROUND TO SEE A WEIRDLY FRIENDLY WHITE GUY WITH HIS HAND OUT. HE LOOKS AT HIM FOR A BEAT THEN PUTS OUT HIS.

GREEDY

Greedy.

DAVE

Grady?

GREEDY

Greedy.

DAVE

Greenie?

MALCOLM/GREEDY

Greedy!

DAVE

Oh, Greedy! Happy Birthday, Greedy!

GREEDY

(CONFUSED) Thanks, man.

DAVE

Hey, I wanted to ask you... (NOTICING BBQ) do you know you're drying your meat out?

GREEDY

(TO MALCOLM) Who the hell is this?

MALCOLM

His name's Dave. Beyond that, I seriously can't tell.

AS GREEDY GLARES AT DAVE MENACINGLY, WE...

DISSOLVE TO:

SCENE PEXT. YARDECUE - MINUTES LATER

GEMMA MARCHES DOWN THE SIDEWALK DRAGGING BRADLEY WITH HER. SHE'S IN HER ROBE AND HAS A DETERMINED LOOK ON HER FACE. WHEN SHE GETS TO THE YARDECUE SHE APPROACHES A GROUP OF PARTYGOERS JUST INSIDE THE GATE.

GEMMA

Excuse me, have you seen my husband?

White guy, yea tall, really friendly?

PARTYGOER

You mean Dave? He's over there.

THE PARTYGOER POINTS ACROSS THE YARD AND GEMMA LOOKS OVER TO SEE DAVE, MALCOLM AND GREEDY BY THE BBQ. DAVE IS TENDING THE GRILL AND DRINKING A BEER WHILE MALCOLM AND GREEDY LOOK ON.

DAVE

Now when my smoker gets here I'll show
you how to get a nice thick bark on
your meat. But in the meantime...

DAVE CUTS OFF A PIECE OF MEAT AND FEEDS IT TO GREEDY.

GREEDY

Damn, Dave, that's a birthday treat!

GEMMA STOMPS UP, A MIXTURE OF FRUSTRATION AND RELIEF.

GEMMA

Dave! Where have you been?!

DAVE

Oh, hey, I was just showing the guys
how to do a reverse sear on their
meat.

MALCOLM

Your man is straight fire on the grill.

GEMMA

Yes, we're all very proud. (TO DAVE)

Can I talk to you?

DAVE

Sure, babe, what's up?

GEMMA

(POINTED) At home?

AS GEMMA STALKS OFF WITH BRADLEY:

MALCOLM/GREEDY

(BUSTED) Ooooooooooh!

DAVE

Okay, okay, very funny. Hey, Greedy,

do me a favor? We're still on

Michigan time and need some sleep.

Would you mind turning the music down

a little, please?

GREEDY PULLS OUT A REMOTE AND LOWERS THE VOLUME -- BARELY.

GREEDY

How's that?

DAVE

Perfect.

AS DAVE CROSSES OFF, WE...

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT TWO

TAG

FADE IN:

EXT. JOHNSON/BARNES' FRONT PORCH - LATER THAT NIGHT

ALL IS QUIET WHEN DAVE STEPS OUT FOR SOME NIGHT AIR. HE TAKES A DEEP BREATH AND COUGHS AS A CLOUD OF SMOKE FLOATS BY.

MALCOLM (O.S.)

Sorry, man, my bad.

REVEAL MALCOLM ON HIS FRONT PORCH IN THE DARK, SMOKING WEED.

DAVE

(COUGHING) That's okay. You told me I
need to chill out.

MALCOLM SMILES AND NODS.

MALCOLM

You have fun at the yardecue tonight?

DAVE

Yeah, actually. Although I was a
little scared when that dog took
Greedy's ribs. I wasn't sure who was
going to eat who.

MALCOLM

Nah, that dog's as sweet as can be.

DAVE

What's his name?

MALCOLM

Killer.

DAVE NODS, HUH.

DAVE

Hey... I owe you an apology. The real reason I was so weird walking home today is because I was scared.

MALCOLM

(HE KNOWS) Is that right?

DAVE

I thought you were following me.

Gonna hurt me or something... Sorry.

MALCOLM TAKES A DRAG OFF HIS SMOKE AND LOOKS INTO THE NIGHT.

MALCOLM

Yeah well, every time I walk into a store someone follows me, too, so I know how it feels.

DAVE

Not good, huh?

MALCOLM

Not good at all...

THERE'S A QUIET BEAT.

DAVE

Alright, well, I better get to bed.

DAVE STARTS TO GO INSIDE.

MALCOLM

By the way -- Greedy says thank you.

DAVE

For what?

MALCOLM

(SMILING) The champagne.

DAVE

Did you tell him it was from both of
us?

MALCOLM

(JOKING, SARCASTIC) Oh yeah. I wrote
both our names on the card.

DAVE AND MALCOLM LAUGH TOGETHER.

DAVE

Night, man.

MALCOLM

Night... Welcome to the neighborhood.

DAVE GOES INSIDE, SMILING LIKE HE JUST MADE HIS FIRST FRIEND.

DAVE

(SOTTO, SWAGGERY) I can't believe I
thought I was uncool.

AND WE...

FADE TO BLACK.