

WELCOME TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD

"Pilot"

Written by

Jim Reynolds

SCENE A

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

DAVE AND GEMMA JOHNSON (30'S) AND THEIR SON, BRADLEY (6) RIDE
IN THE PACKED CAR.

BRADLEY

Are we almost there? I have to pee.

DAVE

Yep. Just a few more blocks.

BRADLEY

This is our new neighborhood?

GEMMA

That's right.

BRADLEY

(LOOKING OUTSIDE) Why do all the
houses have bars on the windows?

DAVE

They don't all have bars.

BRADLEY

That one does, that one does, that one
does...

GEMMA

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

BRADLEY

Oh. By all the robbers who live here?

GEMMA

What? 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.

BRADLEY

(SQUIRMING) Dad, I really have to go.

GEMMA

Just a couple more minutes, baby.

DAVE

Buddy, I know it looks a lot different from Michigan, but inside these homes it's people and families just like us.

GEMMA

And wait'll you see our new house.

DAVE

It's a Craftsman, built back in
nineteen-fifteen.

GEMMA

With a swimming pool!

DAVE

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

GEMMA

Plus, 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

Uh oh.

DAVE

What, is it happening?!

BRADLEY

No. But I really wish you hadn't
talked about our swimming pool.

DAVE SEES BRADLEY'S ABOUT TO LOSE IT AND HITS THE GAS!

CUT TO:

SCENE B

EXT. BARNES FRONT PORCH/INT. STATION WAGON - SAME TIME

CALVIN BARNES (50'S) STEPS OUT ON THE PORCH OF HIS CRAFTSMAN BUNGALOW. HE HAS A SMALL RADIO, THE SUNDAY PAPER AND A CUP OF COFFEE AND LOOKS DELIGHTED TO BE EXACTLY WHERE HE IS. HE SETS DOWN THE RADIO AND TURNS IT ON. STEVIE WONDER'S "WE CAN WORK IT OUT" PLAYS AND CALVIN HAPPILY GROOVES A LITTLE AND SINGS ALONG TO HIMSELF BEFORE SETTLING DOWN INTO HIS CHAIR.

INTERCUT:

INT. STATION WAGON - SAME

IN CONTRAST, THE JOHNSONS ARE AT DEFCON 1.

BRADLEY

I'm not gonna make it!

GEMMA

Think about something else!

DAVE

Yeah, like how fun it'll be to walk to your new school every day with Mom!

GEMMA

Right! And since I'm the new principal, everyone's gonna think you're the coolest kid in school.

BRADLEY

I'd laugh at that but I'm afraid I'll start to leak. (THEN) Here it comes.

DAVE

No no no! We're here!

GEMMA

Watch out for the trash cans!

CUT TO:

SCENE C

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - CONTINUOUS

THE STATION WAGON'S BRAKES SCREECH AS IT SLAMS INTO A LINE OF TRASH CANS ON THE CURB.

INTERCUT:

EXT. BARNES FRONT PORCH - CONTINUOUS

CALVIN STARING O.S. AT HIS TRASH CANS IN DISBELIEF.

CALVIN

What the--?!

CUT TO:

SCENE D

EXT. JOHNSON FRONT PORCH - CONTINUOUS

THE JOHNSONS RUN ONTO THE RIVER ROCK FRONT PORCH OF THEIR CRAFTSMAN HOME. DAVE FUMBLES TO FIND THE KEY TO GET INSIDE.

BRADLEY

Dad, hurry!

DAVE

I know, I know, I know. I just have to find the key...

DAVE HURRIEDLY SEARCHES HIS MASSIVE KEYCHAIN.

GEMMA

What are all those keys to?

DAVE

Our old neighbors' houses.

GEMMA

But we don't live there anymore.

DAVE

I know but I wasn't ready to let go!

BRADLEY

That's it. This is happening whether we like it to or not.

BRADLEY STARTS TO UNDO HIS PANTS.

DAVE

No no! Not on the river rock porch!

DAVE QUICKLY SCOOPS BRADLEY UP AND SWINGS HIM OVER THE SIDE WALL OF THE PORCH AND HOLDS HIM THERE AS HE PEES BELOW FRAME.

DAVE/BRADLEY

(RELIEVED SIGH)

DAVE NOTICES SOMETHING O.S.

*

ANGLE ON:

*

CALVIN SITTING IN HIS PORCH SIX FEET AWAY, STARING AT DAVE
AND THE STILL URINATING BRADLEY.

*

*

DAVE

*

Hi. We're your new neighbors.

*

CALVIN GETS UP SHAKING HEAD AND GOES INSIDE.

*

CALVIN

*

(SOTTO) There goes the neighborhood.

*

AND WE...

*

FADE OUT.

*

END OF COLD OPEN

*

SCENE E

FADE IN:

INT. BARNES LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

CALVIN STOMPS INSIDE WITH HIS NEWSPAPER. HIS SON, MALCOLM (25), IS AT THE TABLE EATING A BOWL OF CEREAL.

MALCOLM

What was that noise outside?

CALVIN

Our new neighbors showing up to ruin my day.

MALCOLM

Why? What're they like?

CALVIN

Like the marshmallows in your cereal -- white and soft.

MALCOLM

These are actually rainbow. The colors make me happy. (THEN) Besides, why do you care if they're white?

CALVIN

I don't. I just know their kind.

MALCOLM

What kind is that?

CALVIN

The kind that don't know what they don't know but think they do.

MALCOLM

So... white?

CALVIN

What I'm saying is this has been a black neighborhood for generations. A community of people bonded by a common experience. And the whole time we've been here, the only white folks who ever bothered coming around were the police and the Mormons, and I don't know which of them scared me worse.

MALCOLM

Definitely the Mormons. They act like the people in "Get Out."

CALVIN

But y'see, that's all gonna change now. Once one white family moves in, more are definitely going to follow and soon our kind will be squeezed out by folks who have no idea what it's like to live in the minority.

MALCOLM

Y'know, that actually makes sense... Too bad you said the same thing when the first Mexican family moved in.

CALVIN

They are not a minority! Look around,
you 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

(PUTTING FOOT ON CHAIR AND PULLING UP
PANT LEG) Tell that to my beak marks!

MALCOLM REACTS TO HIS FATHER'S LEG AND GETS UP WITH HIS FOOD.

MALCOLM

Think what you want to think, but you
can't stop change. You've got to
adapt or die like the dinosaurs.

CALVIN

Who are you calling a dinosaur?

MALCOLM

You. And if you don't believe me, put
some lotion on that nasty ass scaly
leg.

AS CALVIN CHECKS HIS LEG AND MALCOLM EXITS, WE...

CUT TO:

SCENE H

INT. JOHNSON LIVING AREA - DAY (D1)

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

GEMMA

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

GEMMA HANGS UP.

DAVE

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

GEMMA

They pulled off the road in Vegas!

DAVE

Why?

GEMMA

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

DAVE

So technically someone was making it rain.

GEMMA

I'm serious. All our stuff's on that truck, where are we supposed to sleep?

DAVE

We could go to Vegas, see if the
movers got comped a suite. (OFF HER
LOOK) Okay, I know it sucks. But
they'll be here tomorrow and until
then we'll put up the camping gear.
It'll be fun, Bradley'll love it.

GEMMA

You just want to sleep in a tent.

DAVE

Totally, it's like having a fort!

BRADLEY ENTERS FROM THE BATHROOM.

BRADLEY

I tried to wash my hands but the sink
doesn't work. Looks like Grammy was
right about California and the drought.

DAVE

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

DAVE CROSSES DOWN THE HALLWAY TO THE BASEMENT DOOR.

GEMMA

Sweetie, the weekend Dad and I came
out to look for a house, what else did
Grammy tell you?

BRADLEY

That nobody likes a snitch.

DAVE COMES UP FROM THE BASEMENT.

DAVE

It's rusted. I can't get it to turn.

*

GEMMA

What about a wrench?

DAVE

Yeah. Too bad ours is in the parking
lot of a Nevada strip club.

*

*

GEMMA

You wanna go to the store and get one?

*

DAVE

No, I'll just go over and ask our
neighbor if I can borrow his.

*

*

GEMMA

*

The guy next door? The one whose lawn
you just watered with our child?

*

*

DAVE

It'll be fine. I bet we'll wind up
laughing about it.

*

*

GEMMA

*

He didn't look like a big "laugher" to me.

*

DAVE

*

Trust me, everyone wants to be friends
with the guy with a big-ol'-hot-tub!

*

*

DAVE EXITS.

BRADLEY

I think he should've gone to the
store.

CUT TO:

*

SCENE J

EXT. BARNES FRONT YARD - MOMENTS LATER

CALVIN IS IN THE DRIVEWAY WASHING HIS TRUCK, A LOVINGLY MAINTAINED VINTAGE FORD PICK UP WITH TOOL RACKS AND A STORAGE BOX IN THE BED AND "CALVIN'S APPLIANCE REPAIR" PAINTED ON THE DOOR. DAVE APPROACHES AS CALVIN CAREFULLY POLISHES CHROME.

DAVE

Wow, what a beautiful truck.

CALVIN

(FLAT) Thank you.

DAVE RUNS HIS HAND ALONG THE SIDE, ADMIRING THE LINES. CALVIN DOES NOT LIKE IT.

DAVE

What year is it?

CALVIN

Ninety-six.

CALVIN IMMEDIATELY WIPES DOWN WHERE DAVE TOUCHED THE TRUCK.

DAVE

It's in amazing shape.

CALVIN

Yeah, well, I take care of my things,
they take care of me.

DAVE

I hear you. I'm Dave.

DAVE STICKS HIS HAND OUT TO SHAKE. CALVIN HOLDS HIS UP.

CALVIN

Calvin. I've got stuff on my hands.

DAVE

Oh I don't care.

DAVE GRABS HIS HAND AND SHAKES IT. CALVIN DOES NOT LIKE IT. *

DAVE (CONT'D) *

Hey, sorry about earlier. My son had *
an emergency. (RE: TRUCK) Hey, you do *
repairs -- maybe you can fix his leak. *

CALVIN *

Maybe. Right after I fix my trash *
cans. *

DAVE *

Oh, yeah, sorry about that, too. *
Moving has been quite an ordeal. *

CALVIN BEGINS CLEANING UP AS DAVE STARTS TO PRATTLE. *

DAVE (CONT'D) *

I mean, it took us a week to drive *
here from Michigan and now our stuff *
isn't here. Not to mention the whole *
having to move away from all our *
friends and family back home. But my *
wife got a new job here she's excited *
about and I needed clients for my new *
company, so you do what you have to *
do, right? Wow, do people ever tell *
you you're really easy to talk to? *

CALVIN *

No. *

DAVE

Well, I guess that's what neighbors
are for! Hey, speaking of, I was
wondering if you have a wrench I could
borrow? My water valve is rusted shut.

CALVIN

I got one in my toolbox.

CALVIN INDICATES HIS TOOLBOX ON THE GROUND NEARBY.

DAVE

Fantastic! I don't want to interrupt
so I'll just grab it myself.

AS DAVE REACHES FOR THE TOOLBOX, CALVIN SPRAYS THE HOSE IN
FRONT OF HIM, STOPPING HIM IN HIS TRACKS.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Whoa!

CALVIN

Sorry. My finger slipped.

DAVE

Sure... Probably 'cause of the wax.

CALVIN

Look, I don't know what it's like
where you're from--

DAVE

Oh it's beautiful. There are trees
everywhere and everyone's so frien--

CALVIN HOLDS HIS HAND UP, THAT'S NOT WHAT HE MEANT.

CALVIN

But around here you don't just walk up
and start touching other peoples'
things like they're your own. Those
tools, those were my father's tools.
And this truck? Nobody touches this
truck. So please, do me a favor and
just keep your hands to yourself.

DAVE PLAYFULLY BENDS OVER THE BUCKET OF SOAPY WATER.

DAVE

Okay, but what if I wash them first--

CALVIN SPRAYS THE BUCKET. SOAPY FOAM STICKS ON DAVE'S FACE.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Okay, I hear you. Sorry to interrupt.

I'll just go to the store and buy one.

DAVE TURNS TO LEAVE WHEN ON THE FRONT PORCH, CALVIN'S
GRACIOUS BUT FIRM WIFE, LORETTA, OPENS THE FRONT DOOR.

LORETTA

Calvin -- why do you keep spraying
that man with a hose?

DAVE

(SOAPY FOAM STILL ON HIS FACE) It was
an accident. (WAVES) Hi, I'm Dave.

LORETTA

Loretta. How can I help you?

DAVE

We just got here, our things haven't
arrived. I need to borrow a wrench.

LORETTA

Well, Calvin, give him one. He's our
neighbor.

CALVIN GLARES AT DAVE, "SNITCH," THEN GRUDGINGLY OPENS HIS
TOOLBOX AND GETS DAVE A WRENCH.

CALVIN

Bring it back. I know where you live.

DAVE

Yep! Right next door!

AS DAVE LEAVES, WE...

CUT TO:

*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*

SCENE K

*

INT. 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 reeeeeeally 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)
How about you? You doing okay?

DAVE

I'll be fine. I just have to adjust.

SHE PUTS HER ARMS AROUND HIM.

GEMMA

Thank you again for saying yes to all
this. I know none of it was your idea.

DAVE

Well, I could never 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 AND KISSES HIM. THEN HER EYES GO WIDE AS SHE
SEEMS SOMETHING OVER HIS SHOULDER OUT THE FRONT 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,
RE: POLICE) Why do they need guns?

*

*

GEMMA

Maybe there was a murder or something.

DAVE

A murder?! Who are you, 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) Hi, I'm Marty! My
mother told me you just moved in!

DAVE COMES OFF THE WALL 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 just went in next door with
their guns out!

MARTY

Ohhh. They're just arresting Victor.

DAVE

Who's Victor?

MARTY

The crackhead who lives there.

GEMMA

A crackhead lives next door?!

MARTY

Only recently. He was living here
before it 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 there were some issues here,
but nothing like this!

*
*
*

DAVE

Yeah! None of the websites we looked
at mentioned anything about shootouts!

MARTY

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

DAVE

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

MARTY

True, but as a mathematician I can
tell you the 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

("HMMM") 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

Oh, that reminds me -- since your
things haven't arrived, my mom wants
to invite you over 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 tries
to escape through your backyard, keep
him out of the pool. He's not a
swimmer.

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

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

SCENE L

*

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, STILL A LITTLE RATTLED FROM THE POLICE. 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) I think 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

These are funny looking bananas.

*

NITA

They're plantains. 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 WITH HIS GROCERIES.

*

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 pale enough as it is.

*

DAVE

Twice in one year? That's terrible!

NITA

(SHRUGS) It happens when you have a
business anywhere in gang territory.

*

DAVE

This is a gang territory?!

*

ABUELA

*

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

DAVE

(STUNNED) 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.

NITA

*

(OFF DAVE'S CONFUSED LOOK) She says
it's going to be fun having you here.

*

*

AS SHE HANDS DAVE HIS BAG OF GROCERIES, WE...

*

CUT TO:

SCENE M

*

EXT. 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. They told

*

me plantains are sweeter than bananas!

*

DAVE TURNS A CORNER AND FINDS HIMSELF BEING FOLLOWED BY MALCOLM, WHO IS WALKING HOME, TOO. MALCOLM'S WEARING HEADPHONES AND IS LOOKING AT HIS PHONE SO HE DOESN'T NOTICE DAVE NERVOUSLY CHECKING OVER HIS SHOULDER AS THEY WALK. SUDDENLY A PACK OF CHIHUAHUAS ATTACKS THE FENCE NEXT TO DAVE CAUSING HIM TO DROP HIS GROCERIES. HE BENDS TO PICK THEM UP BUT STANDS AND STICKS HIS HAND OUT AS MALCOLM APPROACHES.

*

*

*

*

*

*

*

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) Boy, 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 live next door to you.

DAVE

You do?! Oh geez, that's a relief!

MALCOLM

Why is that "a relief?"

DAVE

Not a clue. (THEN) I'm sorry I'm
acting so weird. Things have been
crazy stressful since we got here.

MALCOLM

Wasn't that like an hour ago?

DAVE

It seems like so much more.

MALCOLM

Well, you need to chill. Being jumpy
around here is gonna scare people.

DAVE

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

MALCOLM

Why?

DAVE

I don't know.

MALCOLM SHAKES HIS HEAD AND CONTINUES PAST DAVE, AS WE...

CUT TO:

SCENE P

EXT. BARNES FRONT PORCH - LATER THAT EVENING

DAVE, GEMMA AND BRADLEY STEP ONTO THE PORCH. THEY'VE CLEANED UP AS BEST THEY CAN AND DAVE IS HOLDING A BOTTLE OF CHAMPAGNE. HE'S VISIBLY WORRIED AS HE KNOCKS ON THE DOOR.

GEMMA

Honey, relax, if you're nervous you just make it worse.

DAVE

How can it get worse? Two of the four people who live here already hate me.

GEMMA

You don't know that.

BRADLEY

Yeah. Maybe all of them do.

MARTY OPENS THE DOOR.

MARTY

Hello, hello! Come in...

RESET TO:

INT. BARNES LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

MARTY HOLDS THE DOOR AS DAVE, GEMMA AND BRADLEY ENTER.

GEMMA

You have a lovely home.

MARTY

Thank you but I don't actually live here. I just come over on Sundays.

DAVE

Where do you live?

MARTY

In a gated community in Altadena.
After growing up here it was important
to me to live somewhere with a guard.

DAVE

So you grew up here?

MARTY

Born and raised.

BRADLEY

Did you like it?

MARTY

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

BRADLEY

I like those things, too.

MARTY

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

DAVE AND GEMMA REACT AS LORETTA ENTERS FROM THE KITCHEN.

LORETTA

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

GEMMA

Thank you so much for having us. I'm
Gemma 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

Oh, that's so nice. But I didn't think Mormons were allowed to drink.

DAVE AND GEMMA SHARE A CONFUSED LOOK.

GEMMA

We're not Mormon.

LORETTA

You're not?

DAVE

No.

LORETTA

Hm. You're just so friendly and polite, and I figured you'd only move here if you thought Jesus was keeping you safe.

DAVE

(RE: CHAMPAGNE) Can I open this? I feel like I could use a drink.

LORETTA

I'm sorry, we actually don't drink alcohol in this house either.

BRADLEY

Why? Are you Mormon?

LORETTA LAUGHS.

LORETTA

No, sweetie, we're black. We're the
real kind of Christian. (THEN) 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 ANOTHER ROOM. DAVE VISIBLY TENSES UP.

MALCOLM

Smells good, Mom.

DAVE

Hey, Malcolm.

MALCOLM

(PISSSED) What are you doing here?

DAVE

Your mom invited me!

MALCOLM BREAKS INTO BIG, GENUINE SMILE. *

MALCOLM *

Man, I'm just messin' with you. *

Seriously, you need to relax. *

HE CLAPS DAVE ON THE SHOULDER. DAVE SMILES, EMBARRASSED. *

DAVE *

Sorry, I'm not usually this uncool. I *

don't know what's wrong with me. *

CALVIN ENTERS BEHIND HIM. *

CALVIN *

(SHARP) You bring back my wrench? *

DAVE SPINS AROUND, STARTLED AGAIN. *

MALCOLM *

I think I got an idea. *

LORETTA *

Calvin, where are your manners? *

That's no way to welcome a guest. *

CALVIN ROLLS HIS EYES AND TURNS TO GEMMA AND BRADLEY. *

CALVIN *

Hello, my name's Calvin. Welcome to *

our home. (TO DAVE) Now 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 before *

the food gets cold. *

THEY ALL MAKE THEIR WAY TO THE TABLE AND SIT.

DAVE

What about you, Malcolm, do you work?

MALCOLM

Why?! Just because I'm a young black man you don't think I have a job?!

DAVE

No, that's not what I meant at all.

MALCOLM

(BIG SMILE) Man, I can't help myself. Messin' with you is just too much fun!

LORETTA

What do you do for a living, Dave?

DAVE

Um, I'm an independent conflict mediator -- which means when two parties have a disagreement, they bring me in to see if I can help.

LORETTA

And how exactly do you do that?

DAVE

The first thing I do is sit down with everyone and listen to both sides.

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 positive attitude.

CALVIN

At least what I do is honest work.

GEMMA

You're calling him dishonest?

CALVIN

I'm saying you both are.

LORETTA

Calvin...

GEMMA

What's that supposed to mean?!

CALVIN

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

DAVE

Loretta, these potatoes are amazing!

What is this, goat cheese?

GEMMA

Okay, Calvin. I hear you. I see you.

But now it's my turn to talk.

MALCOLM

Oh dang, did she just do a finger wag?

BRADLEY

She does it when she's mad.

GEMMA

You may think you know us, but you
don't. 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 eight years, he told
them they could kiss his ass.

DAVE

I just politely declined their offer.

GEMMA

So when I got a job here that gave us
benefits, at a school my son and I can
walk to together from a house that we
love and could afford, 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.

GEMMA

Thank you.

LORETTA

But you gotta lot of nerve coming here,
yelling at my table about respect.

GEMMA

(WILTING, RE: CALVIN) He started it.

LORETTA

Then let me end it. You think your
husband is a good man? Well so is
mine. And yes, he may need to work on
his manners, but the reason he's tough
is because he has to be to make it in
a world that hasn't given him a thing.

CALVIN

You tell her, baby--

LORETTA

Don't interrupt me, Calvin. (TO
GEMMA) So before you come in here
waving your finger and craning your
neck, just know, if you mess with the
lion, you deal with the lioness.

CALVIN

You're my Nala, Queen!

AS GEMMA STARTS TO RESPOND, SHE, CALVIN AND LORETTA START
TALKING OVER EACH OTHER. DAVE TRIES TO GET THEIR ATTENTION.

DAVE

Guys... Guys... (SLAMS TABLE) GUYS!

EVERYONE TURNS AND LOOKS AT HIM, "DID HE JUST DO THAT?!"

DAVE (CONT'D)

Sorry, that came out louder than I
thought. (THEN) But as a licensed
conflict mediator, I think I can help.

MARTY

The odds of that seem extremely low.

DAVE

Calvin, you are clearly a proud man,
with a business and a home and a
family you've worked very hard for.
And all your old friends you grew up
with and knew your whole life are
moving away and you don't recognize
the people around you anymore. I get
that, because everything I just said,
describes how I'm feeling, too.
And Gemma, you are an amazing woman.
You are fearless and powerful and you
will do anything it takes to care for
your family. And if someone comes
after a person you love, watch out,
because that love makes you fierce.
Sound like anyone else at this table?

LORETTA RAISES HER HAND.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Exactly, you know what I'm talking
about!

TO HER SURPRISE, DAVE HIGH FIVES HER RAISED HAND.

DAVE (CONT'D)

So, I think if we all can take a biiig
step back, we'll see that we have more
in common than it might seem.

(MORE)

DAVE (CONT'D)

And if we have things in common, I
feel like -- can we all get along?

A BEAT. DAVE'S DONE IT. CONFLICT MEDIATED. OR...

MALCOLM

Did you seriously just quote Rodney
King to a room full of black folks?

DAVE

Uh, yes... But not intentionally.

CALVIN THROWS UP HIS HANDS, LORETTA ROLLS HER EYES, MALCOLM
LAUGHS AND GEMMA COVERS HER EYES...

BRADLEY

(TO MARTY) You said the odds were low.

AND WE...

FADE OUT.

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 SITTING BY THE SIDE OF HIS HOUSE, SMOKING.

DAVE

(COUGHING) That's okay. You keep
saying I need to chill out.

MALCOLM SMILES AND NODS.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Sorry about what I said at dinner
tonight. I swear I mean well, but it
seems like every time I do something
here it comes out the wrong way.

MALCOLM

Yeah well, it's hard when people don't
see you the way you see yourself.

DAVE

Yeah... Speaking of which, the real
reason I was so weird walking home
today is because I was scared of you.

MALCOLM

(HE KNOWS) Is that right?

DAVE

Yeah. I thought you were following
me. Gonna do 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

Hey man, I owe you an apology, too.

DAVE

You do?

MALCOLM

Yeah. (BIG GOTCHA SMILE) I drank your
champagne.

MALCOLM HOLDS UP THE BOTTLE. DAVE LAUGHS.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

You better not tell my mom.

DAVE

Don't worry. My mother taught me
nobody likes a snitch.

MALCOLM LAUGHS.

DAVE (CONT'D)

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.

END OF EPISODE

*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*