

GRAN TORINO

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FADE IN:

1

INT. CHURCH

1

We're at the funeral of Dorothy Kowalski. In attendance are mostly old folks, their offspring and several bored teenagers.

WALT KOWALSKI stands towards the front of the church. He speaks to an older MAN in a bulky, out-of-date suit.

OLDER MAN

I'm real sorry about Dorothy,
Walt. She was a real peach.

WALT

Thanks for coming, Al.

Walt Kowalski looks young for his age. He has slate blue eyes, physically fit and has had the same buzz cut hairstyle since getting out of the military in 1953.

Walt is also a perfectionist. Nothing escapes his hawklike eyes, eyes that pierce and judge.

Walt looks around at how the young people have dressed at his wife's funeral. His eyes narrow at his GRANDDAUGHTER's belly button ring.

WALT

Jesus Christ.

Walt's two sons, MITCH and STEVE, watch their father from across the pews.

MITCH

Look at the Old Man glaring at
Ashley. He can't even tone it
down at Mom's funeral?

STEVE

What do you expect? Dad's still
living in the '50s. He expects
his granddaughter to dress a
little more modestly.

MITCH

Yeah, well your kid's wearing a
Timberwolves jersey. I'm sure Dad
appreciates that.

STEVE

My point is that there's nothing
anyone can do that won't
disappoint the Old Man.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED:

1

STEVE (CONT'D)

It's inevitable. That's why we stopped doing Thanksgivings; the deal with the boat motor, the broken bird bath, it's always something.

MITCH

What are we going to do with him? Don't you think he'll get in trouble by himself over in the old neighborhood?

STEVE

Why don't you have him move in with you?

MITCH

Ha ha.

2 INT. CHURCH - LATER

2

The choir sings the Beatitudes.

Walt looks around disgustedly at the people gathered as one woman looks through her day planner, an old guy dozes and his Granddaughter Ashley applies nail polish.

FATHER JANOVICH, the very young parish priest, steps up to the altar and delivers the eulogy for Walt's wife.

Walt sits ramrod straight and listens to the thin, weak, unconvincing words of Father Janovich.

FATHER JANOVICH

Death... is often a bittersweet occasion to us Catholics. Bitter in the pain it causes the deceased ... and their families. Sweet to those who know the salvation that awaits them. And some may ask, what is death. Is it the end? Or is it the beginning? And what is life? What is this thing we call life?

WALT

Jesus.

Walt coughs. He takes a handkerchief and wipes his lips. He looks down and notices a speck of BLOOD on the white cloth.

3 INT. WALT'S HOUSE - SAME TIME 3

The house is crammed with people following the service.

Walt doesn't know what to do with himself. He has to keep busy. Steve steps over to his father.

STEVE

A lot of people showed up after the service.

WALT

Yeah, well, I s'pose they knew there'd be plenty of ham. I think I'll go downstairs and get some more chairs.

STEVE

I'll do it, Dad.

WALT

Naw, we need them now, not next week.

4 INT. CELLAR - SAME TIME 4

Grandsons JOSH, DANIEL and DAVID look through boxes in the cellar. A box of old Korea War photos are pawed through.

Josh holds up a black-and-white PHOTO -- a young WALT looks utterly exhausted, behind him six bodies are sprawled dead on the ground.

DAVID

Is that Dad?

DANIEL

No, it's Grandpa Walt.

Josh turns the photo over and reads it...

JOSH

'Third Platoon, E company, March second, 1952, Korea.'

DANIEL

Where's Korea?

JOSH

Hell if I know?

David holds up a MEDAL.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

4

DAVID

Cool, I found a medal.

They hear someone coming downstairs. By the time Walt descends the staircase, the boys sit on the couch, pretending to be doing nothing.

Walt gives them a hard look as he grabs some chairs.

5 UPSTAIRS

5

People eat and chat. Ashley marches over to her parents, KAREN and Mitch.

ASHLEY (GRANDDAUGHTER)

How long do we have to stay, this ghetto is a dead zone for my cell and I'm bored.

Walt stands behind them with an armful of folding chairs, he overheard his Granddaughter. Mitch and Karen are embarrassed.

MITCH

Ashley, honey. Why don't you help Grandpa Walt with the chairs?

ASHLEY

Me?

KAREN

Yes you.

ASHLEY

Grandpa Walt, can I help you with the chairs.

WALT

I'll take care of it, you just painted your nails.

Walt opens the folding chairs and looks out the window. It's snowing. Walt puts on his coat, he almost looks relieved to get out of the house.

WALT

I'd better salt the sidewalk before someone falls and breaks a hip.

Walt taps the floor with his boot and DAISY, his very, very, very old DOG follows him outside.

6 EXT. WALT'S HOUSE - EVENING

6

Walt carefully shovels his sidewalk. He deliberately stops at the boundary of his property.

The reason for this is that Walt's neighbors are now mostly Asians who moved into the house that once belonged to Polish families.

Next door to Walt's house some sort of party is going on. Walt can see through the window that the living room is jammed with at least forty people, all Asians, all Hmong.

And this is a problem for Walt, because Walt is a full-blown, unrepentant racist.

Walt lights a cigarette and speaks to his dog, Daisy.

WALT

Jesus Christ, how many swamp rats
can they cram into a living room?

Walt spits in the snow and walks back to the garage.

7 INT. GARAGE - SAME TIME

7

Walt steps inside and catches Ashley sneaking a cigarette. She has pulled back the canvas tarp that covers his pride and joy, his beloved 1972 GRAN TORINO.

The Gran Torino is in mint condition. It has been babied since the day it rolled off the line.

Ashley tosses her cigarette when she sees Grandpa Walt.

ASHLEY

Wow, Grandpa, when'd you get the
vintage car?

Walt looks at her for a second, then steps on her still burning cigarette before answering.

WALT

1972.

ASHLEY

I never knew you had a cool old
car.

WALT

It's only been in here since
before you were born.

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

7

ASHLEY

So, what are you like going to do
with it like, when... you die?

Walt lights up a smoke --

WALT

Jesus, Joseph and Mary.

Walt pulls the cover back over the Gran Torino.

ASHLEY

Then what about that super cool
retro couch in the den, I'm going
to State next year and I don't
have, like, any furniture?

Walt walks out without commenting.

8 BACK IN WALT'S HOUSE

8

The doorbell rings and Walt opens the door. Standing
there is TAO, a sixteen-year-old HMONG boy. Walt scowls.

TAO is slight, he has long hair, long lashes, but is very
good-looking -- like an Asian Johnny Depp.

WALT

Who the hell are you?

TAO

(very quietly)
I'm Tao, I live next door.

WALT

What?! Speak up, boy, get the
shit out of your mouth. What do
you want?

TAO

Do you have jumper cables? My
uncle's car is old and...

WALT

No. And have some goddamned
respect, zipper head, we're
mourning over here.

Walt slams the door in Tao's face.

Walt turns and is suddenly cornered by Father Janovich.
Walt hates situations like this.

(CONTINUED)

FATHER JANOVICH

How you holding up, Walt?

WALT

Mr. Kowalski.

FATHER JANOVICH

Huh?

WALT

It's Mr. Kowalski, not Walt.

FATHER JANOVICH

Right, Mr. Kowalski. Your wife and I became quite close these last few months. She asked that I watch over you when she passed on. I told her I watch out for my entire flock, but she made me promise I'd keep an extra sharp eye on you.

WALT

I appreciate your kindness to my wife and now that you've spoken your piece, why don't you move on to the next sheep?

Walt starts to step away, but Father Janovich blocks him.

FATHER JANOVICH

Dorothy mentioned specifically that it was her wish for you to go to confession. She said she couldn't remember the last time you went.

WALT

Is that so?

FATHER JANOVICH

It is.

Walt drains his lowball glass.

WALT

Well, I confess I never much liked church and only went because of the wife. And I confess I have no desire to confess to a boy who is fresh out of the seminary.

9 EXT. WALT'S HOUSE - LATER

9

People are leaving Walt's house. A mass of shuffling, stiff-jointed old Pollacks.

Right next door -- walking the opposite direction are more Hmong going up the sidewalk. They laugh and chatter and carry big dishes of food and fruit. They are a happy bunch compared to the dour crowd exiting Walt's home.

The Hmong are going to a birth ceremony. A three-day-old baby is named and three souls are located for the newborn.

CUT TO:

ANOTHER ANGLE

Walt leans over a car that contains two shivering old ladies from the funeral. He hooks up the jumper cables to their dead battery.

Mitch, Karen, Ashley and Josh pull up next to Walt in a brand new Toyota Land Cruiser. Mitch opens the window.

MITCH

I'd really like to help, Dad, but we have to get the kids home, they're getting restless.

Walt just looks at the TOYOTA EMBLEM on the Land Cruiser and then gives Mitch a disgusted glance.

WALT

Fine. Go.

MITCH

I'll call in a few, see how you're doing.

Walt nods and lights a cigarette as they drive off.

WALT

Kill you to buy American.

10 INT. LAND CRUISER - SAME TIME

10

MITCH

Did you see him look at the truck? It's always Rice-Burner this or Jap-Buggy that. Even at Mom's funeral, he can't let it go.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED:

10

KAREN

At least he didn't say anything
this time.

MITCH

He didn't have to.

KAREN

Well, what do you expect? The man
worked at a Ford plant for twenty-
eight years.

MITCH

And I suppose that's my goddamned
fault?

11 BACK ON WALT

11

Walt gets his guests' engine running.

As they drive off, Walt hears faint SINGING. Walt looks
into his neighbor's backyard and can't believe his eyes.

The Hmong all sing and chant as three CHICKENS have their
heads sliced off, right there in the yard.

The chickens are held up and everyone chants louder.
It's a sacrifice. Walt spits in the snow and says to
Daisy.

WALT

Barbarians. Goddamned barbarians.

12 INT. HMONG HOUSE NEXT DOOR - SAME TIME

12

The house is a buzz of activity. The older Hmong speak
their native language, the younger generation speaks both
English and Hmong.

(NOTE: Hmong is subtitled when necessary.)

Tao's Grandmother (PHONG) complains to a MAN.

PHONG

(subtitled)

There's no man in this house,
that's why my daughter should
remarry. Being a second wife is
better than having a woman be the
head of the household. It's not
our way.

(CONTINUED)

MAN

(subtitled)
What about Tao?

PHONG

(subtitled)
What about him?

MAN

(subtitled)
He's the man in the house.

PHONG

(subtitled)
Tao's not a man.
(gestures)
Look at him in the kitchen,
washing dishes like a woman. Even
his sister gives him orders and he
obeys.

The CAMERA PANS TO the kitchen where TAO washes a pile of dishes. An older relative drops dishes in the sink, without acknowledging Tao's presence. It's clearly an insult.

In the LIVING ROOM the Hmong "Soul Calling" ceremony starts its next phase. An elder, the family SHAMAN, is present and begins the ritual.

As the entire Hmong family gathers to watch. Tao slips on his coat and goes out the back door.

13 EXT. TAO'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

13

Tao wobbles as he pedals his bike through the snow.

Tao passes Walt's garage and is startled as Walt appears from a shadow, JUMPER CABLES in his hands. They make eye contact as Tao passes.

Walt spits in the snow and looks down at Daisy.

WALT

I thought these zips were supposed
to be such hard workers. Christ,
I had my own car when I was his
age.

14 EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT

14

Tao exits the store, gets on his bike and rides off.

(CONTINUED)

A few blocks away, Tao rides past a snowbank when --

WHAM! A HOCKEY STICK is thrown through the spokes of his front wheel. Tao flies over the handlebars into the snow.

A chorus of laughter is heard. Three LATINOS stand around the stunned, prone Tao.

HEAD LATINO

Whatta you gonna do, gook? You gonna 'Kung Fu' us?

Tao just lies there as Latino #2 picks up his bike.

LATINO #2

Surprised it ain't a girl's bike.

The Latinos laugh. Tao remains on the ground.

HEAD LATINO

You gonna get up or what?

Tao doesn't move.

HEAD LATINO

Tell you what, I'll let you take the first swing. You drop me and you can have your bike back.

Tao smiles, he can't help it.

HEAD LATINO

What the fuck you smiling at, gook? Something funny?

He grabs Tao by the jacket and pulls him to his feet.

HEAD LATINO

You better get the fuck outta here, bitch.

He pushes Tao backwards. Tao falls back into the snow. This time Tao crab-walks back away from the Latinos.

The Latinos stroll away with Tao's bike.

SUPERIMPOSE: THREE MONTHS LATER

Walt is going about the chores of spring cleaning.

15 CONTINUED:

15

Walt looks around with disdain at his neighbors' houses. Walt's property is perfectly kept, whereas his neighbors' houses are rundown.

Walt's eyes linger on every defect, gutter hangs, ripped screen doors, peeling paint. One neighbor has installed a chicken coop.

Walt looks down at Daisy --

WALT

Damn chinks let their yards go to hell. Polarski would turn over in his grave if he could see what they did to his lawn.

Tao walks past. Walt watches him pass.

WALT

I don't know why these goddamned slopes had to move to my block. This used to be a nice neighborhood.

16 EXT. TAO'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

16

Tao nods to an older woman rocking in a broken rocking chair. PHONG nods back to Tao, then turns her evil eye back on Walt, whom she's been seething at all morning.

PHONG

(subtitled)

Why doesn't that stupid, hairy white man move? He must be too dumb to realize he's not welcome here. All the *Mee-Khah* left in the neighborhood should just move away. Look at him strut like a rooster.

She sees Walt glance at her and spit. Phong glares back and spits beetle juice, which has turned her teeth black.

17 INT. WALT'S HOUSE - DAY

17

Daisy snoozes next to the front door. The doorbell rings; Daisy doesn't even move. Walt walks to the front door holding a roll of duct tape. The doorbell rings again.

Walt looks down at Daisy --

(CONTINUED)

WALT

Jesus Christ, dog, have you gone totally deaf?

Walt opens the door. Standing on his front step is Father Janovich.

FATHER JANOVICH

Hi there, Walt.

WALT

Listen, son, you're not my barber, you're not a friend, so why in the hell do you think you can call me Walt?

FATHER JANOVICH

Sorry... Mr. Kowalski.

WALT

So, what are you peddling now?

FATHER JANOVICH

Oh, nothing. Thought I'd drop by and see how you were doing. Haven't seen you in church in awhile.

WALT

Okay. You've done your good deed, now why don't you run along.

FATHER JANOVICH

I'd really like to talk, Mr. Kowalski.

WALT

I don't think so, kid. Sorry.

FATHER JANOVICH

Why? Do you have a problem with me, Mr. Kowalski?

WALT

You don't want to know.

FATHER JANOVICH

No, I do.

WALT

The problem is I think you're an overeducated, 27-year-old virgin who holds the hands of superstitious old women and promises them eternity.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED: (2)

17

Walt shuts the front door in Father Janovich's face.

18 EXT. STREET - DAY

18

Tao walks down the street, his head in a book. He finally realizes there's a blue Chevy following slowly behind him.

The blue Chevy is now parallel with Tao and keeps pace with his step. Tao looks over to the occupants of the Chevy.

It's two LATINOS. Tao quickens his pace, but the Chevy easily keeps up with Tao.

LATINO DRIVER

Is you a boy or a girl, I can't tell?

LATINO #2

What you reading, gook, Jackass
And The Rice Stalk?

Tao laughs, but keeps walking.

LATINO DRIVER

That's right, you keep walking.
Fucking slopes everywhere you
look, man. Why gooks come up in
here and fuck up our neighborhood?

Down the street -- is a suped-up HONDA CIVIC with a big SPOILER on the back. Inside are five Hmong gangbangers.

The Hmong gangbangers notice Tao being followed by the Latinos. SPIDER, the driver, squints and then points at Tao.

SPIDER

Dude, that's my little cousin,
Tao.

SMOKIE

You sure about that, Spider?

SPIDER

I'm sure. Do we do something...
or what?

Smokie is the gang leader. He looks at Tao for a second.

SMOKIE

Your cousin tight with anyone?

(CONTINUED)

SPIDER

No, he flies solo, Smokie.

SMOKIE

Okay. Let's go help out our
little cousin.

Smokie nods to Spider, they roar up and stop right across
from Tao and the Latinos' car.

SMOKIE

You better not be giving my bro
here a hard time or you're gonna
wish you never been born.

LATINO DRIVER

Oh goody, more Rice Niggers.

The Latino Driver smiles and flashes a PISTOL.

A Hmong kid in the back seat opens the door and displays
a sub-machine gun. The Latinos are way out-gunned.

LATINO #2

Fucking Viet Cong swamp rats. Go
back to your fucking rice paddy.

The Latinos screech their tires and are gone. The Hmong
in the car smile and congratulate themselves.

Tao simply keeps walking down the street!

SMOKIE

Where the fuck does he think he's
going? Turn us around and go
after that cousin of yours.

They swing a U-turn and pull up to Tao, keeping pace with
him as he walks.

SPIDER

Hey, cuz, slow down, where you
going? You should really think
about hanging with us, man. If we
all stick together, shit like that
won't happen, with those Spicks.

Tao nods as he walks, but doesn't answer.

SPIDER

You can't be such a little girl.
You join up with us, we'll keep
you out of trouble, cuz.

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED: (2)

18

Tao looks at the sub-machine gun cradled by the Hmong gangbanger in the back seat.

Smokie takes this all in. He looks down the street and sees that in a half block, Tao will have to pass a group of Latino gangbanger types.

SMOKIE

You think about it and we'll see you tomorrow.

19 EXT. TAO'S HOUSE - DAY

19

Tao digs in the garden. Tao's younger sister SUE sits and reads JANE magazine on the porch.

The tricked-out Honda with Blue Neon lights pulls up. Spider, Smokie and two other Hmong gangbangers get out.

SPIDER

Hey, cuz. Hey, Sue.

SUE

What do you want?

SPIDER

Came to talk to my cousin Tao.

Smokie looks over to Sue.

SMOKIE

Spider, who's the *other* cousin?

SUE laughs at the name "Spider." Sue is seventeen, has long straight hair with red highlights.

SUE

'Spider'? Is that what he just called you, Fong?

SPIDER

This is my *little* cousin, Sue.

Smokie takes off his sunglasses and smiles at Sue.

SMOKIE

Hey, Sue... how old are you, girl?

SUE

Mentally, I'm way too old for you. I'm going inside.

(CONTINUED)

SPIDER

That's right, go inside while the men talk.

SUE

Yeah, that's exactly what I'm doing, *Fong*.

Sue rolls her eyes and goes inside. Smokie stares at Tao.

SPIDER

You think about what we talked about?

A PAUSE. Smokie watches Tao carefully, offers him a cigarette. Tao shakes his head "no" and looks at the ground.

SMOKIE

That's exactly the point, Tao. Spider told me how everyone thinks you're a pushover, how everybody walks all over you and shit. I mean, look at you, out here working in the garden like a woman.

Tao nods silently, but still looks at the ground.

SMOKIE

It ain't no big thing. You just need a little guidance.

Tao looks up at Smokie. Tao looks a little skeptical.

SMOKIE

It's true, man. Shit, I used to be kind of a quiet little punk like you, everybody fucking with me. But finally I said 'no more.' You, you're lucky, Tao, we got your back. Me? I didn't have nobody. Had to mold my own tribe.

SPIDER

Smokie's right. We're family, right? You with us or what?

SMOKIE

I swear, brother, we're the best friends you'll ever have. And anyone fucks with you, they're fucked.

(CONTINUED)

SPIDER

Come on, man.

Tao clears his throat and speaks for the first time.

TAO

What do I have to do?

Smokie points to Walt's open garage.

SMOKIE

Spider mentioned that neighbor of yours.

CUT TO:

INT. GARAGE

ZOOM IN -- There it sits with the tarp rolled back, Walt's gorgeous, shining GRAN TORINO.

SMOKIE (O.S.)

Now that's a car.

SPIDER (O.S.)

Shit ya. 1972 Gran Torino fastback. Cobra jet engine. Mint.

Next to the garage, Walt is bent over planting tomatoes. Walt notices the Hmong punks looking at him.

INT. VFW

Walt sits at the bar in the VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars) drinking with the old buddies and cracking off-color jokes.

WALT

I got one. A Mexican, a Jew and a colored guy walk into a bar, the bartender looks up at them and says -- *'get the fuck out.'*

The gang laughs, until they see Father Janovich step up to the bar. He smiles as he recognizes several faces.

FATHER JANOVICH

So, here's where my flock congregates when they're not in church.

(CONTINUED)

MEL

Hiya, Father J.

FATHER JANOVICH

Hi, Mel. Hey there, Darrel.

DARREL

Hello, Father.

FATHER JANOVICH

Hi, Walt.

Walt says nothing. He just sips his beer.

DARREL

What brings you in here, Father?
The meat raffle?

FATHER JANOVICH

No. I came down to talk to Walt,
if that's okay.

Mel and Darrel look at Walt. It puts him on the spot.

WALT

I have to hand it to you, Padre.
You are persistent.

FATHER JANOVICH

I promised your wife.

Walt looks over at Mel and Darrel and then back at Father Janovich.

WALT

Oh Jesus Christ, let's grab a
booth.

The waitress comes over.

WALT

I'll have a Pabst and a shot.
What are you having, Father?

FATHER JANOVICH

I'll have a Diet Coke.

WALT

Bullshit, this is a bar, what do
you want to *drink*?

FATHER JANOVICH
Ummmm... I'll have a gin and
tonic.

WALT
Attaboy.

The waitress leaves.

WALT
So, what do you want?

FATHER JANOVICH
I promised your wife I'd get you
to go to confession.

WALT
Jesus Christ, why'd you do that?

FATHER JANOVICH
She was very insistent. She made
me.

WALT
You sure are fond of promising
people stuff you can't deliver on.

FATHER JANOVICH
Let's talk about something else.

WALT
Like what?

FATHER JANOVICH
Life and death.

WALT
What would you know about it?

FATHER JANOVICH
I'd like to think I know a lot.
I'm a priest.

WALT
You stand at the altar and preach
on and on about life and death
without knowing anything other
than what you learned in priest
school. Everything you say sounds
like it's out of the Rookie
Preachers Handbook.

FATHER JANOVICH
I don't know about that...

(CONTINUED)

Walt waves his hand and cuts him off.

WALT

'Death is bittersweet? Bitter in the pain, sweet in the salvation.'
That's what you know of life and death? Good God, it's pathetic.

FATHER JANOVICH

What do you know, Mr. Kowalski?

WALT

Plenty. I lived with death for three years in Korea. We shot people, we stabbed them with bayonets, we hacked seventeen-year-old kids to death with shovels, for Christ's sake. I did things that won't leave me till the day I die, horrible things, things I have to live with.

FATHER JANOVICH

And what about life?

Walt has to think for a second. He struggles with his answer.

WALT

Well... I survived the war... got married... and raised a family.

FATHER JANOVICH

Sounds like you know more about death than you do living.

Walt downs a shot.

WALT

Maybe so.

Walt hears a sound and wakes up. He's very groggy, he had plenty to drink at the VFW.

WALT

Daisy?

The dog sleeps in her bed in the corner. Walt looks at the clock; it's 3:48 am.

Walt looks out his bedroom window. He sees the faint beam of a flashlight in his garage.

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED:

22

WALT

Son of a bitch.

Walt pulls on his robe, opens the closet and pulls out the big, 30-06 M1 Garand Rifle he took home from Korea.

Walt slides a magazine into the top of the M1 and chambers a round with a loud SNAP.

23 INT. GARAGE - SECONDS LATER

23

The light flips on and before he can blink, Tao is face to face with the barrel of Walt's M1 RIFLE.

Walt is silent, he has one eye closed so he can better aim at Tao's forehead -- which is nine inches away. Tao drops the tool he was holding, it bounces with a loud metallic clang.

Tao backs away, his eyes wide with terror. As Tao backs up, Walt advances, step for step.

Tao trips over a garden hose, which causes Walt to trip. They both start to fall. The lightbulb is bumped with the rifle barrel and swings back and forth.

As Walt hits the garage floor, he accidentally FIRES THE RIFLE. The bullet goes through a big, metal Hamm's Beer sign on the wall.

Tao scrambles to his feet and jumps like a deer over Walt. Tao runs out of the garage and into the night.

Walt lies on the floor for a second, stunned. Sweat runs down his forehead. He coughs up blood. The lightbulb still swings, casting odd shadows in the garage.

WALT

Shit.

24 EXT. ALLEY - SAME TIME

24

Tao scrambles down the alley. Parked off to the side is Spider's Honda. Spider opens the door.

SPIDER

Get in, get in!

Tao runs right past him. Spider guns the motor and pulls in front of Tao. Smokie, Spider and another gangbanger get out.

(CONTINUED)

SMOKIE

Get in, Tao.

TAO

No way. No fucking way. Leave me alone!

Smokie, Spider and the other gangbanger grab Tao.

SPIDER

I vouched for you, Tao, because you're family and you're with us now.

Tao struggles.

TAO

He shot at me! I'm out! I'm out!!!

Tao squirms out of Smokie's grasp. Smokie yells at Tao as he runs away...

SMOKIE

Don't fool yourself, Tao. You don't join us and bail. Dumb motherfucker.

SPIDER

Should we go after him?

SMOKIE

Naw, he's got nowhere to go. Let's get out of here.

Walt drills heavy-gauge screen mesh over the windows on the garage. The phone rings and Walt answers.

WALT

Hello?

MITCH (V.O.)

Morning, Dad, it's your number one son, Mitch.

WALT

It's *one* in the afternoon.

The CAMERA now INTERCUTS BETWEEN Walt and Mitch in the kitchen of his huge, modern suburban house.

MITCH

Right, good afternoon, then.

WALT

So, what do you want?

MITCH

Me? Nothing. What would I want?

WALT

I don't know. Your wife already went through all of your mother's jewelry.

MITCH

No. I was just wondering how you are, what's going on, anything new in the old neighborhood?

Walt looks at the bullet hole in his Hamm's Beer sign.

WALT

Nope.

MITCH

Great. Smooth sailing then?

WALT

Yup.

There's a very painful pause in the conversation.

MITCH

Well good... Say, Dad?

WALT

Uh-huh.

MITCH

Do you still know that guy from the plant who has Viking season tickets?

26 EXT. WALT'S DRIVEWAY - DAY

26

Walt has parked the Gran Torino at an angle across his driveway. Walt mutters as he rubs Turtle Wax on his car.

27 EXT. DRIVEWAY - THAT AFTERNOON

27

Walt fishes out a soft pack of cigarettes and lights one. He exhales as he looks at his car.

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED:

27

It's stunning. It absolutely sparkles. The chrome shines, the tires look new and the paint is waxed and polished.

Walt looks up again and his eyes sweep the neighborhood in defiance. A couple of Hmong teenagers look at the car.

WALT

(mutters)

That's right, *ain't she pretty.*

Walt drops down heavily into an old lawn chair and pops open a can of Pabst.

DISSOLVE TO:

28 EXT. WALT'S DRIVEWAY - EVENING

28

Dusk is falling. Walt finally gets up, folds up his lawn chair and walks stiffly back into the garage.

Walt flips on the outdoor light, highlighting the Gran Torino still sitting at an angle in the driveway. The whole scene looks like a mid-sixties car ad in Popular Mechanics.

Walt goes in the back door and a moment later the kitchen light comes on. The Gran Torino remains in the driveway.

It's a challenge, an invitation. Walt is daring the thief to come back. And Walt's ready this time.

29 EXT. WALT'S STREET - LATER THAT NIGHT

29

The tricked-out Honda drives up, but doesn't stop at Walt's. It pulls up in front of Tao's house. Tao and Sue exchange looks out on the front step.

Smokie, Spider and two others get out, walking confidently up the sidewalk towards them. They grin, they're cocky.

SPIDER

Hey, cuz. What's up?

TAO

What are you doing here?

SPIDER

Be happy. We've got good news.

(CONTINUED)

SUE

Oh really? What's that?

SMOKIE

We're giving you another shot.

TAO

I don't think so.

SMOKIE

You blew it the first time. We've got another little inauguration planned for you. This time there'll be no mistakes.

SUE

Another big, tough gangbanger with 'little-man' complex.

Smokie leers at Sue. It makes her uncomfortable.

SMOKIE

I got my eye on you too, little girl.

SUE

Whatever.

SMOKIE

Come on, Tao. Let's go.

Tao says nothing. He looks at the ground.

SPIDER

He said, let's go.

SMOKIE

Come on, man. Nobody's gonna get hurt. We'll take care of you.

SUE

Don't go, Tao.

SMOKIE

You mind your own business, girl.

Two Hmong gangbangers grab Tao by the arms.

The front door swings open and there stands a glaring Phong.

PHONG

(subtitled)

Leave my grandson alone!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PHONG (CONT'D)

I know what you are. Go away and don't come back.

SMOKIE

That old woman's got bigger balls than you. You always let little girls and old ladies fight for you?

Tao tries to squirm away. Smokie grabs him by the hair and opens his coat to reveal the PISTOL in his belt.

SMOKIE

I'm not gonna say it again. Let's go. Now.

Tao is shoved towards the car.

Suddenly -- Sue jumps on the back of one of the gangbangers and knocks him to the ground. Tao breaks free.

SUE

Run, Tao, run!

Sue is slapped to the ground.

SUE

RUN!!

Tao is tackled by Smokie and punched in the face. Tao's mother comes out the front door.

Smokie and Spider pull Tao towards the car as the other gangbangers keep Mom, Grandma and Sue at bay.

A middle-aged Hmong Man from across the street comes into the yard. All the gangbangers overreact and pull their pistols. The middle-aged Hmong Man gets in Spider's face and is cracked across the jaw with a pistol barrel.

Tao back-pedals away from Spider and Smokie. It becomes a pushing, rolling, surging melee.

This mess boils over and spills into Walt's front yard.

The gangbangers, Tao, his mother, grandmother and Sue all struggle on Walt's painstakingly maintained lawn.

A ceramic Lawn Gnome is knocked over and breaks.

(CONTINUED)

And before anyone can blink, WALT has the muzzle of his big 30-06 M1 Garand Rifle pointing at Smokie's face.

WALT

Get off my lawn.

SMOKIE

Listen, old man, you don't want...

WALT

I said get off my lawn. Now.

Walt's calm demeanor is unnerving to the gangbangers. The guns in their hands seem tiny compared to the big military rifle Walt holds.

SMOKIE

Are you fucking crazy? Go back in your house, old man.

WALT

Get off my lawn.

SMOKIE

I'm not fucking around, Gramps.

Walt spits out the side of his mouth. He grins.

WALT

Don't think for a second I won't blow a big hole in your face *and* it won't bother me a bit, not any more than if I shot a deer. Now get off my goddamned lawn.

Two of the Hmong gangbangers take a step back. Walt senses their fear. Only Smokie holds his ground.

WALT

Believe me, kid, I'll blow your damn head off, go back to bed and sleep like a baby. I couldn't care less.

SMOKIE

I'm not gonna warn you again!

Walt laughs...

WALT

You're nothing to me. In Korea, we stacked fucks like you five feet high and used you as sandbags.

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED: (2)

30

Complete silence, there's no sound anywhere in the neighborhood. All eyes are on Walt.

Walt CLICKS OFF the safety on the M1 Garand Rifle.

Smokie and the gangbangers give Walt fierce looks, but melt back towards their car.

As they get into the car -- Smokie has to say something.

SMOKIE

You better watch yourself, old man.

The Honda screeches its tires and goes off down the street.

Walt looks at Tao, Sue, Mom and Grandma who stand in stunned silence in his front yard.

A PAUSE. Finally, Sue speaks up...

SUE

Thank you.

Walt lowers his rifle and spits on the ground.

WALT

I *said* get off my lawn.

31 INT. WALT'S HOUSE - NEXT MORNING

31

We hear a sound outside. Walt grabs his rifle, swings open the front door and leads with the barrel.

CUT TO:

32 EXT. WALT'S FRONT PORCH - SAME TIME

32

Walt looks around and slowly lowers his rifle.

His front porch is covered with FLOWERS and FRUIT and GIFTS of food. There must be a dozen different gifts piled there.

Daisy comes out and stretches on the porch, before putting her nose in a food basket.

WALT

Bad dog. Bad deaf, dumb, blind dog.

33

EXT. WALT'S HOUSE - DAY

33

Walt carries three big bouquets of flowers to the trash. He dumps them on top of other gifts he received from the Hmongs. His garbage is overflowing.

Coming down the alley is another Hmong couple, they smile carrying a basket filled with Asian vegetables.

Walt holds up his hand like a traffic cop.

WALT

No. No more.

The Hmong couple nod, say something with a smile and turn around.

NEXT DOOR

Tao, his mother and Sue argue in the yard. They gesture towards Walt's house. The women buzz around Tao, all speaking in his ear at the same time.

Phong yells at them from the porch, but they ignore her.

Walt watches as the mother and Sue march Tao towards his house. Tao looks like a whipped dog.

WALT

Why won't these people leave me alone?

Walt walks out to meet them at his property line and puts up his hands, indicating they've come far enough.

Sue holds up a plant.

SUE

We brought you some shallots to plant in your garden.

WALT

I don't want them.

SUE

They're perennials, they come back every year.

WALT

No. You keep them. Why do you people keep giving me all this garbage?

Sue is a little taken aback.

(CONTINUED)

SUE

Because... because you saved Tao.

WALT

No, I didn't. All I did was get a bunch of jabbering gooks off my lawn.

SUE

Well, you're a hero to the neighborhood.

WALT

No, I'm not.

SUE

Too bad, they think you are and that's why they're bringing you the gifts.

WALT

Just take your plant and leave me alone.

Walt turns and starts to walk away.

Tao's mother speaks rapidly in Hmong to Sue. They look at Tao and then to Walt.

SUE

There's another thing.

WALT

What?

SUE

This is my mother, Vu, I'm Sue and this is my brother, Tao. We live next door.

WALT

So?

SUE

Tao is here to apologize.

Sue shoots a hard look at Tao, who shifts uncomfortably.

TAO

I'm sorry.

WALT

For what?

(CONTINUED)

TAO

For trying to steal your car.

Walt's eyes go wide in recognition. He turns white with rage.

WALT

Get this straight, I see you on my property again, you're done.

Walt turns on his heels and storms into his house.

The doorbell rings. Walt opens it to find Father Janovich standing on his front step.

FATHER JANOVICH

Good afternoon, Walt.

Walt's eyes narrow.

FATHER JANOVICH

I mean, Mr. Kowalski.

WALT

I already told you I'm not going to confession.

FATHER JANOVICH

Why didn't you just call the police?

WALT

Pardon?

FATHER JANOVICH

I do work with some of the Hmong gangs and I heard there was some trouble in the neighborhood. Why didn't you call the police?

WALT

Oh, I prayed for them to show up, but guess what? No answer.

FATHER JANOVICH

What were you thinking? Someone could have been killed. We're talking life and death here.

WALT

Not that it's any of your goddamned business, but when things happen quickly like that, you have to react. In Korea, we never '*called the police*' when a swarm of screaming gooks came pouring into our lines. We reacted.

FATHER JANOVICH

We're not in Korea, Mr. Kowalski.

Walt says nothing.

FATHER JANOVICH

I've been thinking about our discussion on life and death. About what you said. About how you carry around the horrible things you were forced to do. Horrible things that won't leave you. It seems that it would do you good to unload some of that burden. Things done during war are terrible, being ordered to kill, killing to save others, killing to save yourself. You're right, those are things I don't know anything about. But I do know about forgiveness. And I've seen a lot of men who have confessed their sins, admitted their guilt and left their burdens behind them. Stronger men than you. Men at war who were ordered to do appalling things and are now at peace.

Walt nods. Father Janovich threw a bull's-eye. Almost.

WALT

I'm impressed. You came with your guns loaded, for once.

FATHER JANOVICH

Thank you.

WALT

You have balls, Father. *And what you said*, you're right. I'm sure stronger men than me have found their salvation. *Hallelujah*. But there's one thing you're way wrong about.

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED: (2)

34

FATHER JANOVICH

What's that, Mr. Kowalski?

WALT

The thing that haunts a guy is the stuff he *wasn't* ordered to do.

35 INT. OLD SCHOOL BARBERSHOP

35

The old, balding BARBER finishes cutting Walt's hair.

BARBER

There, you look like a human being again. You shouldn't wait so long between haircuts, you cheap bastard.

WALT

I'm just amazed that you're still alive. I keep hoping you'll die and they'll get someone good in here, but you just hang in there, you dumb, Italian-Wop-Dago, you.

BARBER

That'll be ten dollars, Walt.

WALT

Ten dollars? Jesus Christ, Martin, you keep raising the price. You sure you're not part Jew?

Martin the Barber laughs at Walt.

BARBER

It's been ten bucks for the last five years and you know it, you thick-skulled, old Pollack son of a bitch.

WALT

Here's ten, keep the change.

BARBER

See you in three weeks, you prick.

WALT

If you live that long, dipshit.

Walt and Martin shake hands and Walt walks out.

36 EXT. BARBERSHOP - SAME TIME 36

Walt gets in his old Ford pickup and drives off. This is a very bad, rundown neighborhood.

37 EXT. SIDEWALK - SAME TIME 37

Sue walks with her ridiculous Wigger (urban white kid) boyfriend, TREY. Trey wears big baggy pants, a sports jersey and an Oakland Raiders visor upside-down and backwards.

They walk past three BLACK GUYS leaning against a building. The TALL BLACK GUY spots Sue and smiles.

TALL BLACK GUY

Hey, girl, you come over here and talk to me. Come on, baby, don't be shy.

Trey and Sue move as far over on the sidewalk as they can to avoid the black guys. They try to ignore them.

TALL BLACK GUY

Come on, sweetie, don't be like that. You talk to me, don't be all stuck up and shit.

ACROSS THE STREET

Walt waits at a stoplight. He watches Sue and Trey and the three black guys who block their path.

One black guy flips Trey's VISOR onto the ground. The Tall Guy makes "kissy faces" at Sue as he touches his crotch.

Walt sits there for a second; he shouldn't help, but Walt solves every situation by being aggressive.

Walt drives off, then makes a U-turn.

The Tall Black Guy now focuses on Trey.

TALL BLACK GUY

What are you 'sposed to be?

Trey puts up his hand to "hi-five." The Tall Black Guy just looks at him.

TREY

Yo, it's cool, dog.

(CONTINUED)

TALL BLACK GUY

What the fuck are you doing in my neighborhood, boy?

TREY

Nothing. We're going to Red Roost to get some CDs. That place is trippin', bro.

TALL BLACK GUY

What you call me, you fucking with me, bitch? You think you're funny?

TREY

Nothing. No.

TALL BLACK GUY

I'm warning you, boy. What you all come up in here for? You here to bring me this present?

TREY

Huh?

TALL BLACK GUY

This Oriental yummy for me? Don't worry, I'll take good care of her.

SUE

Great, another asshole with a fetish for Asian girls. God, it gets *so* old.

TALL BLACK GUY

What's your name, girl?

SUE

My name? It's *'take your crude, overly obvious come-on to every woman who walks past and cram it.'* That's my name.

TALL BLACK GUY

You should keep your bitch on a leash, put a choke chain on this whore and yank.

SUE

Oh, of course, right to the stereotype thesaurus. Call me 'whore' and 'bitch' in the same sentence.

(CONTINUED)

The Tall Black Guy grabs Sue by the arm. Trey moves slightly towards Sue and is pushed down into a pile of garbage.

TALL BLACK GUY

You think you're pretty funny,
don't you?

SUE

What, are you gonna hit me now?
That'd pretty much complete the
picture.

The Tall Black Guy pushes Sue hard against the wall.

TALL BLACK GUY

You don't know when to quit.

The old, black pickup pulls up and stops next to them. Sue, Trey and the black guys look over.

Walt sits behind the wheel, he looks right through the Tall Black Guy.

TALL BLACK GUY

What the fuck you looking at, old
man?

WALT

You... and your buddies. What's
the matter with you? Don't any of
you work? I see you lazy show-
offs in the middle of the day,
slowly walking across the street
or harassing women. Nobody owes
you bastards anything so go out
and get a job instead of pushing
little girls around, for Christ's
sake.

TALL BLACK GUY

Why don't you get the fuck out of
here, while I'll still let you.

BLACK GUY #2

That's right, bitch.

WALT

What makes you spooks think you
can bully a couple kids with
impunity?

TALL BLACK GUY

What?! Are you fucking crazy?

(CONTINUED)

WALT

Look at me, Slick. *You're* crazy
if you thinking I'm fooling
around.

TALL BLACK GUY

You *are* fucking crazy.

WALT

You have to be pretty goddamned
dumb to think you can push people
around without running into
someone who will push back.

The black guys are a bit dumbfounded. Walt stares them
down.

WALT

But you might just be dumb enough
not to recognize that your luck
just ran out.

All bravado drains away from the black guys. Walt is a
rock.

Walt grins slightly and spits on the ground.

TALL BLACK GUY

Fuck this guy. He ain't worth it.

The trio walks slowly across the street, forcing a car to
miss a green light.

Trey puts his hand out to shake Walt's...

TREY

Man, thanks a lot, mister.

Walt doesn't extend a hand, he lets Trey stand there like
an idiot. Trey slowly lowers his arm.

Walt looks at Trey's outfit.

WALT

Go home, clown... and pull up your
goddamned pants.

Walt turns to Sue.

WALT

Come on, I'll give you a ride.

38 INT. WALT'S TRUCK - DRIVING

38

Walt and Sue drive in silence. Finally Sue speaks up.

SUE

So, what's with you, you have some sort of savior complex or something?

WALT

What in the hell's the matter with you? I thought all you Asian girls were supposed to be so smart. What are you doing walking around in that neighborhood? That's how you end up in the obituaries, that is, if they can identify your body once they pull it out of the goddamned river.

SUE

I know, I know. Take it easy.

Walt looks at her for a second. She's not ruffled at all.

They drive.

WALT

So, that goofball back there. He's your boyfriend?

SUE

Yeah, kind of, his name is Trey.

WALT

Why in the hell would you go out with a clown like that. Why don't you date one of your... own...one of those other... Hu-mungs.

SUE

You mean, Hmong? We're Hmong, not *Hu-mung*.

WALT

Right. *Hmong*. What is a... where is Hmong or whatever?

Sue laughs.

SUE

Wow! You're so enlightened. Hmong isn't a place, it's a people.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SUE (CONT'D)

Hmong people come from different parts of Laos and Thailand and China.

WALT

Then why are you in my neighborhood, instead of back there?

SUE

It's a Vietnam thing. We fought on your side and when America quit, the Communists starting killing the Hmong, so we came over here.

Walt is quiet for few seconds.

WALT

Why'd you pick the Midwest, for Christ's sake? There's snow on the ground near half the year. Jungle people on the frozen tundra?

SUE

Hill people. We were *hill* people, not jungle people. *Boo-ga, boo-ga, boo-ga.*

WALT

Whatever.

SUE

Blame the Lutherans. They brought us here.

WALT

Still, you'd think the cold would keep all the assholes away.

Sue laughs again at Walt's conscienceless racism.

SUE

Thanks for the ride.

WALT

Sure... You know, you seem okay. What the hell's the matter with your half-wit brother? He a little slow or something?

SUE

Tao is actually really bright, he just doesn't know which direction to go in.

WALT

Oh, poor Toad.

SUE

It's really common. Among girls over here fit in better, we adjust. The girls go to college, the boys go to jail.

Walt drinks coffee and reads the newspaper. He flips from section to section. Daisy's at his feet.

Next door, Phong sits watching Walt. He can see her mumbling under her breath.

WALT

Old hag, giving me the evil eye?

Walt opens the paper to the TV guide section and lingers at the HOROSCOPES for a second.

WALT

Aw, what the hell...

Walt reads aloud to himself.

WALT

Your birthday today; This year you have to make a choice between two life paths. Second chances come your way. Extraordinary events culminate in what might seem to be an anti-climax. Your lucky numbers are: 84, 23, 11, 78 and 99.

Walt drains his coffee and tosses the paper onto the porch.

WALT

What a load of crap.

Walt lights up a cigarette and exhales.

Walt watches as the only white woman on the block struggles to unload her groceries from her car. One of her bags rips.

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED:

39

Three teenagers walk past and laugh at her spilled groceries. One of them makes a crude gesture behind her back.

WALT

Christ all Friday. What's wrong with kids today?

Walt gets up to go help, but before he can get to the sidewalk, another neighbor has gone over to help...

It's TAO. Tao bends down and carries her bags up to her door.

WALT

Well, I'll be damned.

40 INT. WALT'S KITCHEN

40

Mitch and Karen sit across from Walt. A small store-bought birthday cake sits in front of Walt.

Walt reads his birthday card. It's signed; Love Mitch, Karen, Ashley and Josh. ALL the signatures have been written in a woman's cursive style and with the same pen.

Mitch slides a wrapped gift across the table to Walt.

MITCH

Go ahead, Dad. Open it.

WALT

What is it?

MITCH

Just open it.

Walt opens the package, it's a Gopher Reaching Tool -- the kind that has an alligator clamp so you can pick up objects that have fallen behind the stove, etc.

Walt looks at his son and daughter-in-law.

MITCH

It's a Gopher. It's so you can reach stuff. You know, it makes things easier.

KAREN

Here's one from me.

KAREN slides over a another wrapped gift. Walt opens it. It's a PHONE with really big numbers for old people.

(CONTINUED)

KAREN

It's a phone.

WALT

(emotionlessly)

Thank you, Karen.

KAREN

I just thought... we thought that it would... make things easier.

WALT

Yeah, I see that.

KAREN

There's nothing wrong with making things less hard on yourself.

MITCH

Karen's right, Dad. You've worked hard your whole life. Maybe you should think about taking it a little easier?

Walt lights up a cigarette.

MITCH

And that's another thing, Dad. You should get rid of the coffin nails.

Walt says nothing.

MITCH

And the house, now that Mom's gone, it's got to be a lot to maintain, let alone clean... and you're all alone in here.

It's worse than Walt thought. He puffs smoke.

KAREN

There's these great places now, these communities where you don't have to worry about mowing the lawn or shoveling snow. People who are like you, alert, active, but are alone and would benefit by being with other folks their own age.

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED: (2)

40

MITCH

Dad, take a look. We brought some pamphlets.

CUT TO:

41 EXT. WALT'S HOUSE - SECONDS LATER

41

Mitch and Karen storm out to their Land Cruiser. Mitch carries the Gopher Grabber Tool and Karen has the big numbered phone in her hand.

MITCH

I told you, I told you this was a bad idea.

KAREN

I know, you were right.

MITCH

Son of a bitch! He just won't let anyone help him.

KAREN

Well, we tried. Now we can just drop it. No one can say we didn't try.

MITCH

To hell with him, kicking us out on his birthday?! We should've stayed home with Ashley and Josh. They knew better, they wouldn't even come. The goddamned kids are smarter than we are!

Mitch screeches the tires as they take off. Walt waits for them to clear out, before coming out on the porch with a can of Pabst.

Daisy comes out and lies at his feet.

Walt covers his mouth as he coughs. A dime-sized circle of dark, red blood is left in the palm of his hand.

Walt looks at the blood as he takes another sip of beer.

42 EXT. WALT'S PORCH - EVENING

42

Walt continues to sit on his porch, a long row of empty Pabst beer cans are lined up on the railing.

(CONTINUED)

Walt looks at a photo in his wallet, his and Dorothy's wedding photo. Walt looks down at Daisy --

WALT

We miss Momma, don't we, Daisy.

A vehicle pulls up to Tao's house. A party is in full swing.

Sue comes out and helps the Hmong women unload big platters of food and carry them to the house.

Sue catches Walt's gaze and steps over to his porch.

SUE

Hey, Walt, what are you up to?

Walt points his index finger at the can of Pabst in his hand.

SUE

We're having a barbecue. You want to come over?

WALT

What do you think?

SUE

There's tons of food.

WALT

I'll bet. Just keep your paws off my dog.

SUE

No worries, we only eat cats.

WALT

Really?

SUE

No, I'm kidding, you moron. Come on, come on over. You can be my special guest.

WALT

I'm fine right here.

Walt reaches into the cooler for another beer. It's empty, just water and ice.

WALT

Son of a bitch.

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED: (2)

42

SUE

What have you had to eat today,
Walt?

WALT

A piece of cake and some beef
jerky.

SUE

Come on over and get something to
eat. We've got beer, too.

Walt exhales loudly --

WALT

Oh, what the hell. It's my
birthday, I may as well drink with
strangers instead of myself.

Walt gets up and walks with Sue towards her house.

SUE

Happy Birthday, Wally.

WALT

Don't call me Wally.

43 INT. TAO'S HOUSE - KITCHEN

43

Inside are thirty Hmong and Walt, who sticks out like a
sore thumb. Total fish out of water.

Walt looks in the refrigerator, Sue looks over his
shoulder.

WALT

You do have a lot of beer, but no
Pabst.

SUE

As they say, *When in Hmong.*

WALT

Ha ha. Are you sure it's okay I'm
here? Everyone keeps looking at
me and when I look back, they look
at the ground.

SUE

It's fine.

Phong appears from the crowd and points at Walt.

(CONTINUED)

PHONG

(subtitled)

You, get out. Out of our house!

(to Sue)

What is *he* doing here?

Walt cringes at her presence.

WALT

What'd she say?

SUE

She said welcome to our home.

WALT

No she didn't.

SUE

No, she didn't.

PHONG

(subtitled)

Why is this white man in our home?

A man like him brings nothing,

nothing but sorrow and death.

Several relatives usher Phong away from Walt. The relatives are embarrassed at the outburst.

WALT

She hates me.

SUE

Yes, she hates you.

WALT

What did I do?

A little Hmong girl walks past and Walt pats her on the head. Everyone in the room looks in horror at Walt.

WALT

What?! What the hell are all you fish heads looking at?!

Sue looks around and then pulls Walt out of the room.

SUE

Maybe we should go in the other room.

Sue explains a few facts to Walt.

(CONTINUED)

SUE

A lot of the people in this house are very traditional. Number one, never touch a Hmong person on the head, not even a child. Hmong people believe that the soul resides in the head, so don't do that.

WALT

That's dumb, but fine.

SUE

Hmong people also consider looking someone in the eye to be rude. That's why everyone looks away when you look at them.

WALT

Swell. Anything else?

SUE

Yeah, some Hmong smile or grin when they're yelled at or get into a confrontation. It's a cultural thing. It expresses embarrassment or insecurity, not that they're laughing at you.

WALT

Good God, you people are all nuts.

Walt opens another beer, as Sue speaks Hmong to a relative. Walt notices an Old Hmong Man staring at him.

Walt interrupts Sue.

WALT

Hey, Sue.

SUE

What?

WALT

You said you guys don't look you in the eye, but that guy keeps staring at me.

Sue laughs and gestures to the Old Hmong Man. The Old Hmong Man steps over and nods to Walt.

SUE

This is Kor Khue. He's the Lor family shaman.

WALT

Witch doctor?

Sue smiles and nods.

SUE

Something like that. The Hmong hold their clan Shaman in very high regards.

WALT

Boo-ga, boo-ga.

Kor Khue says something to Sue in Hmong. She turns and translates to Walt.

SUE

Kor Khue is interested in you, he heard what you did. He says he would like to read you.

WALT

Huh?

SUE

He wants to read you. Tell you your soul. It'd be rude not to allow him this, it's a great honor.

WALT

Tell Kor to be my guest, fire away.

Sue speaks Hmong to the Shaman. The Shaman responds and sits down across from Walt. He looks at Walt for a long time.

Walt stares straight back at him. The Shaman mumbles to himself.

Finally the Shaman turns to Sue and speaks very rapidly. As Sue translates, the Shaman watches Walt's reaction.

SUE

Kor Khue says that you think you've been disrespected. You do not live your life. Your food has no flavor. You are scared of your past.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED: (2)

45

SUE (CONT'D)

You stopped living years and years ago. Kor Khue says you're not at peace.

Walt looks like he's been hit by a truck. The Shaman watches Walt closely, he knows he hit the nail on the head.

Walt looks pale. He's been spooked good. He wipes sweat from his forehead.

WALT

Excuse me.

Walt gets up and steps into the kitchen. He takes several deep breaths. He's pretty shook up.

WALT

Je -- zuz -- Christ.

Walt looks around at all the Hmongs eating and carrying on.

Walt sees a young man give up his seat to an Elder.

Walt sees a young woman go to each of the older folks and offer tea and cookies from a tray.

Walt sees a child help an old man out of the bathroom.

Walt coughs hard. He wipes blood from his lips. Sue comes in and looks at Walt.

SUE

Are you okay?

Walt brushes past her and goes into the bathroom.

46 INT. BATHROOM - SAME TIME

46

EPIPHANY.

Walt washes his face in the sink and dries his hands. He's still pale. He looks long and hard in the mirror.

Walt is stunned, it all adds up. Walt hasn't really lived in 50 years, he hasn't relaxed or exhaled or let his guard down since he got back from Korea in 1953.

WALT

(to himself)

Son of a bitch. I've got more in common with these goddamned gooks than my own spoiled-rotten family.

(CONTINUED)

46 CONTINUED:

46

Walt looks at himself.

WALT

Happy birthday.

Walt opens the bathroom door. Sue stands there with a concerned look on her face.

SUE

Are you okay?

WALT

Me? I'm fine.

SUE

You were bleeding?

Walt smiles disarmingly.

WALT

I just bit my tongue. I'm fine.
I'm great. Let's get some of that
gook food, I'm starving.

47 INT. KITCHEN

47

Walt sits amongst several old Hmong Women, who take great delight in feeding him different Hmong dishes which he's obviously never tasted before.

Walt reacts with great enthusiasm to the food, occasionally making jokes like he's choking, etc. This corny stuff goes over like gangbusters with the Hmong ladies.

Sue comes in and rolls her eyes at Walt.

SUE

Come on, you glutton, let's go downstairs.

WALT

Why?

SUE

To mingle.

WALT

I'm fine right here. I'm mingling.

SUE

Come on, you said 'not to leave you alone.'

48

INT. BASEMENT - SAME TIME

48

Walt and Sue descend the stairway. Walt is really out of his element down with all the Hmong teenagers.

And the first person he sees across the room is Tao.

WALT

Oh great.

SUE

Well, look who's over there.

WALT

What's-his-name who tried to steal my Gran Torino.

SUE

My brother Tao.

WALT

Yeah, Toad.

Tao is in the corner, he avoids Walt's gaze. Sue walks over to a group of boys, leaving Walt alone.

Walt doesn't know what to do with himself. He leans against the DRYER. The DRYER wobbles.

Walt gets on his hands and knees. He looks under the dryer. He adjusts the short leg to balance out the machine.

He just can't help it.

All the Hmong kids watch Walt, trying not to laugh at this strange white man on his hands and knees fixing a dryer during a party. Walt looks up -- deer in the headlights.

WALT

It was wobbly, but I fixed it.
It's fine now, shouldn't wobble anymore.

The Hmong kids look away, covering their mouths with their hands.

Walt glares at Tao, who immediately wipes the smile from his face. Sue walks over and hands Walt a drink.

WALT

What's this?

(CONTINUED)

SUE
Rice liquor. Try it.

WALT
Alright.

Sue walks off. Walt sips his rice liquor and watches the interaction between the boys and girls.

One particularly gorgeous young willow-wisp of a GIRL stares across the room at Tao. Tao looks back at her, but then looks away.

The Girl keeps looking at Tao, smiling and twisting her hair.

Tao doesn't approach her, but three other young men do. They do their best to charm her. She's polite, but not interested, she keeps looking at Tao.

Walt laughs at Tao's ineptitude, shakes his head at this wasted opportunity. Suddenly the Girl steps over to Walt.

She smiles --

WA XAM (GIRL)
My friends and I were just
wondering what you're doing here?

WALT
Good question. What *am* I doing
here? Anyways, I'm Walt.

WA XAM
Hi, Walt. I'm Wa Xam.

WALT
Wa Yum?

WA XAM
No, Wa Xam. So... what do you do?

WALT
Me? Not too much... I fix stuff I
guess.

WA XAM
Like what?

WALT
Well, I fixed my wife's friend's
sink yesterday.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

WALT (CONT'D)

I drove my aunt to the doctor to straighten out her prescription. Even fixed my screen door before it was broke.

WA XAM

You're funny.

WALT

That's one thing I've never been accused of. A bastard, yes. Funny, no.

Wa Xam laughs.

WA XAM

Well, have fun. I'm going to take off.

WALT

A pleasure to meet you, Yum Yum.

She laughs at Walt butchering her name and goes upstairs. The three young suitors follow her up. Tao watches her.

Walt comes over to Tao, who is startled. Walt laughs.

WALT

Relax, zipper head, whatta you think I'm gonna do, shoot you?

Tao looks like he wants to run away.

WALT

I wouldn't say anything either, if I was you.

Walt sips his rice liquor. Walt can't help but rib Tao.

WALT

You know, I knew you were a dipshit even before the *whole garage deal*, but I have to say you're even worse with women than you are stealing cars, Toad.

TAO

It's Tao.

WALT

What's that?

TAO

It's Tao, not Toad. My name is Tao.

(CONTINUED)

WALT

Good for you. Anyways, you're blowing it with that girl. Not that I give two shits about a Toad like you.

TAO

You don't know what you're talking about.

WALT

Wrong, egg roll. I completely know what I'm talking about. I know I'm not always the most pleasant person to be around, but I got the greatest woman who ever lived to marry me. I had to work at it, but I got her and it was the best thing that ever happened to me. Hands down.

Walt points across the room. He sways slightly.

WALT

But you? You just sit there and watch as Ding Dong and Click Clack and Charlie Chan walk away with what's-her-face. She likes you, you know.

TAO

Who?

WALT

She was standing over there, orange dress, twisting her hair and smiling at you.

TAO

You mean Wa Xam?

Walt takes a long swig off his drink and nods.

WALT

Yeah, yeah. Anyways, she likes you, I know, I talked to her. Great girl, charming girl. Love her. I love Yum Yum. But you? You just watch her walk out the door with the Three Stooges. Why? Because you're a big fat pussy!

Walt drains his drink.

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED: (4)

48

WALT

I gotta go home. Good luck, puss-
cake. You need it.

49 EXT. WALT'S YARD - DAY

49

Walt empties the lawnmower bag as two elderly Hmong Women
come over, each carrying a FLOWER BOUQUET.

WALT

No. No thanks. No more flowers.

The elderly Hmong Women nod and speak rapid sentences in
Hmong to Walt. He has no idea what they are saying.

WALT

No more. Please, keep your
flowers.

The Hmong women nod, smile and chatter away, ignoring
Walt. They walk past him and set the BOUQUETS on his
porch.

WALT

(defeated)

Okay, just put them on the porch.
But that's it. No more.

50 INT. WALT'S ENTRYWAY - MORNING

50

The doorbell rings. Walt answers, a Skillsaw in one
hand.

Standing on his doorstep are three Hmong women.

WALT

What now, Gee?

Gee holds up a plate covered with tinfoil.

WALT

No. Forget it. Stop bringing me
stuff.

Gee scolds Walt in Hmong.

WALT

No. I've had it.

Gee opens the corner of the tinfoil. Walt looks at the
food.

(CONTINUED)

50 CONTINUED:

50

WALT

I can't. You have to stop.

Gee pulls the tinfoil off. Walt gazes at the food.

WALT

Is that the chicken dumpling thing
you brought the other day?

51 EXT. WALT'S HOUSE - EVENING

51

Walt pulls up in his pickup truck. Sue and Vu wait on
Walt's porch. Tao stands out on the sidewalk.

Walt gets out of his pickup.

WALT

What now? What?

Vu rambles on in Hmong. Walt looks at his watch. He
looks at Sue for the translation.

SUE

Tao is here to make amends, he's
here to work for you.

WALT

No he's not.

SUE

Mother says that Tao dishonored
the family and now he has to work
off his debt. He'll start
tomorrow morning.

WALT

No. The kid is useless, I don't
even want him on my property. I
thought we already went over that.

SUE

It's very important to my mother
that you accept. It'd be an
insult to refuse.

WALT

How is this all of a sudden turned
around on me? The goddamned kid
tries to steal my car and somehow
I'm the bad guy if I don't accept?

(CONTINUED)

SUE

My family is very traditional and
it will very much upset them if
you don't let Tao repay...

Tao interrupts from the sidewalk...

TAO

Come on, Sue. If he doesn't want
to, let's just go.

Sue and Vu yell at Tao to shut up at the same time; Sue
in English, Vu in Hmong.

SUE/VU

Shut up. Shut up! Shut up!!

Tao looks at the ground.

A PAUSE. Walt sees the earnest looks on the Hmong
women's faces. Their expression "begs" Walt.

Walt gazes back at Tao. Walt looks disgusted, he exhales
loudly...

WALT

Fine. Great. Tomorrow.

Walt walks past them and into his house.

WALT

Jesus, Joseph and Mary. These
Hmong broads are like badgers.

Walt sits drinking coffee and reading the newspaper. Tao
walks sheepishly over to the property line.

WALT

Son of a bitch, I didn't think
he'd show.

Walt waves Tao over. Tao barely looks at Walt.

WALT

Okay. What are you good at?

TAO

Like what?

WALT

That's what I'm asking. What are
you good at?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

WALT (CONT'D)

If you're gonna work for me, I
have to know what you can do.

TAO

I don't know.

WALT

That's about what I expected.
Okay, why don't you go over by the
spruce tree and count how many
birds feed at the bird feeder.

TAO

Count the birds?

WALT

Yeah, you *can* count? You slopes
are supposed to be good at math,
right?

TAO

Yes, I can count.

Tao stands in Walt's garden with his arms folded. Walt
walks over to trim weeds around the garden fence.

Walt doesn't even look at Tao. Finally...

TAO

You want *me* to do that?

WALT

No.

TAO

Why not?

WALT

I want it done right, that's why.

TAO

But you've got me just standing
here. What am I supposed to be
doing, anyway?

WALT

Scaring away crows.

Tao shoots Walt a dirty look.

53 CONTINUED:

53

WALT

It's a perfect job for you, plus
you people don't seem to mind
squinting in the sun all day.

54 EXT. WALT'S HOUSE - MORNING

54

Walt waters a flower bed. Tao comes over and stands
there. Walt finishes watering before even looking at
Tao.

TAO

What do you have for me today?
You want me to watch paint dry or
maybe count the clouds that pass
by?

WALT

Don't get flip with me, zipper
head. I ain't the one who tried
to steal and don't forget it.

TAO

Go ahead. I don't care if you
insult me and say racist things.
I'll take it.

WALT

That I know. You have no teeth,
kid. That's your problem. You
have no balls.

TAO

Look, I'm stuck here. Why don't
you give me something useful to
do.

WALT

Because unlike you I'm not
useless. I maintain my property,
whereas you swamp rats let your
houses go to hell.

Walt looks across the street at one very dilapidated
house.

WALT

Wait a minute... How long do I
have you for?

Tao pauses... he doesn't want to answer.

WALT

How long, Toad?

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED:

54

TAO
(quietly)
Till next Friday.

Walt laughs out loud. It makes Tao cringe.

WALT
Go get my ladder out of the
garage.

CUT TO:

55 EXT. NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE - SAME DAY

55

Tao is at the top of the LADDER. Walt and the Hmong neighbor grin at him from the bottom.

WALT
When you're done caulking the
siding, nail that gutter back up,
I can see it right out my kitchen
window, it's been bugging me for
three years.

The neighbor says something in Hmong to Walt.

WALT
You said it, brother.

56 EXT. HOUSE ACROSS THE STREET - RAINY MORNING

56

Tao digs up a big TREE STUMP out in the rain. It's hard, draining labor and Tao is covered with mud.

Tao's shovel hits rocks and roots and clay. Misery.

57 EXT. NEIGHBORING HOUSES - DAY

57

We see Tao do various chores; scrape paint, hang screen doors, reattach house numbers, trim bushes, etc.

Walt scrutinizes his every move. Tao is a virtual slave.

58 EXT. WALT'S PORCH - MORNING

58

Walt watches with great satisfaction as Tao paints one of the neighboring houses. The neighborhood is really shaping up.

Walt sips his coffee with a slight grin. He is really, really, really enjoying this.

(CONTINUED)

58 CONTINUED:

58

A very old Hmong man and his very young GRANDSON walk up Walt's driveway. The Grandson translates for grandpa.

GRANDSON

Grandpa says he want to know if
you can have Tao clear out the big
wasp nest under our porch?

Walt reaches in his pocket and studies a small note pad.

WALT

I don't see why not.
(grins)
Tell him sometime after lunch.

59 EXT. WALT'S HOUSE - MORNING

59

Tao walks up the sidewalk. Before ringing the doorbell, Tao looks down at his hands which have several CALLOUSES on them.

Tao rubs his hands with a smile. This has been the first time Tao has really risen to a task presented to him.

Tao reaches for the doorbell...

60 INT. WALT'S BATHROOM - SAME TIME

60

Walt stands over the sink, coughing. In the b.g. the doorbell rings.

Walt coughs up a big spot of blood, it's thick with fibers. The doorbell rings again.

Walt wipes his mouth and runs the water in the sink.

61 INT. WALT'S ENTRYWAY - SECONDS LATER

61

Walt answers the door, just as Tao rings the doorbell a third time. Walt looks angry.

WALT

Jesus Lord almighty, knock it off.

TAO

It's my last day, whatta you want
me to do?

WALT

Take the day off, you've done
enough.

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED:

61

Tao looks disappointed, but says nothing. He nods and starts to walk away. Walt calls after him...

WALT

Toad.

Tao turns around. Walt wants to say something, but stops.

WALT

Nothing, never mind.

Walt shuts the door.

62 INT. DOCTOR'S WAITING ROOM

62

Walt sits in the crowded waiting room. He looks around. He's the only WHITE PERSON in the room. Even most of the STAFF is African or from India.

As Walt waits, names are called out such as Alvarez, Ngaima, Yang and Abdalla.

Finally when the name "Kowalski" is called, the Muslim woman can't pronounce it correctly. Walt winces.

63 INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE

63

Walt sits in a chair, his hands folded in his lap.

A short Asian man in a doctor's smock comes in with a chart.

ASIAN DOCTOR

Mr. Kowalski?

WALT

That's right.

ASIAN DOCTOR

Good afternoon. I looked over your paperwork and I think we should immediately start on a full battery of tests. I feel that this...

WALT

Wait a minute. Where's my regular doctor, where's Dr. Fellman?

(CONTINUED)

ASIAN DOCTOR

Dr. Fellman retired three years ago. I'm his replacement, Dr. Chang.

WALT

Jesus Christ.

Mitch, Karen and Ashley are in the kitchen. The phone rings and Ashley looks at the caller ID.

ASHLEY

It's Grandpa Walt.

KAREN

Well, pick it up.

ASHLEY

You talk to him.

KAREN

Mitch?

MITCH

I'm doing bills here.

KAREN

He's *your* father.

Ashley hands him the phone and he pushes the TALK button.

MITCH

Hello, Dad.

WALT (V.O.)

Hello? It's me... Dad.

MITCH

I know. What's up?

The CAMERA INTERCUTS BETWEEN Mitch in his huge kitchen and Walt sitting on the edge of his bed.

WALT

Um... not much, how about you?

MITCH

I'm fine, fine.

WALT

Fine. That's fine... How about the kids and Karen?

(CONTINUED)

MITCH

Everyone is fine.

WALT

Good.

There is a long, uncomfortable pause. Walt looks at some Xeroxed medical pamphlets scattered on his bed.

MITCH

Good.

WALT

Well, that's good... How's... work?

MITCH

Busy.

WALT

Right. I s'pose.

MITCH

Speaking of busy, I have a lot on my plate right now, unless there's something pressing.

Walt looks at a pale, blue pamphlet. Mitch looks at his housekeeping bill.

WALT

No. Nope.

Another pause.

WALT

Okay then.

MITCH

Okay. Yeah, so it's not a good time right now. Why don't you call me over the weekend.

WALT

Sure.

MITCH

Okay, it was nice talking to you, bye, Dad.

Walt hangs up. He lies down on his bed.

65 EXT. WALT'S FRONT YARD - DAY

65

While Walt fills a bird feeder, he notices Tao next door.

Tao stands, tiptoed on the top of a six-foot ladder, trying to cut a high branch with a pole saw.

Walt shakes his head and walks over to Tao.

WALT

Hey, moron.

Tao is startled and almost falls off the ladder.

TAO

What?

WALT

I appreciate you're doing something on your own, but you're the only person I know dumb enough to get himself killed trimming tree branches.

TAO

What now?

WALT

You don't stand on the top step of a ladder *and* if you cut through that branch you're hacking away at, you'll end up kaput.

Tao looks and sure enough -- a thick, black POWER LINE is five feet below the branch he's almost severed.

WALT

Go grab the extension ladder from my garage and I'll show you how to do it right, zipper head.

CUT TO:

66 EXT. TAO'S YARD - LATER

66

Tao ties up bundles of branches and twigs. Walt lights a cigarette, looks up in the tree and nods.

WALT

Looks good. Good job.

Tao nods.

(CONTINUED)

WALT

Make sure you put the ladder back
when you're done raking up the
leaves.

TAO

I know. I will.

Walt walks back over to his porch, grabs a Pabst from the cooler and watches Tao rake.

A white Honda turns the corner and drives slowly past Tao.

Smokie and Spider smile menacingly at Tao as they pass.

WALT

This kid doesn't have a chance.

The Honda now slowly passes Walt's house. Walt just stands there, sipping his beer.

The Honda slows to a stop and the gangbangers glare at Walt.

The REAR WINDOW of the Honda opens.

Walt holds out his RIGHT HAND like a GUN. He closes one eye to better "aim" his imaginary gun and moves his thumb several times as if firing. Bang -- bang -- bang.

The Honda takes off. Walt watches it drive off and lights another cigarette.

Walt doesn't notice, but Tao witnessed this whole interaction from his yard.

The doorbell rings.

Walt opens his door. Tao stands there with his hands in his pockets. He's a bit apprehensive.

TAO

What do you know about faucets?

Walt stares at him for a second and then laughs.

CUT TO:

68 INT. TAO'S KITCHEN - A MINUTE LATER

68

Tao looks on as Walt turns the faucet on and off, it drips water at its base. Walt looks under the sink.

WALT

For the love of Pete.

TAO

What?

WALT

It must be a hundred degrees in here, turn on the fan.

Tao flips the switch on the CEILING FAN, the fan wobbles and shakes, it looks like it's about to fly off.

Walt stares up at the fan and shakes his head.

69 INT. WALT'S GARAGE

69

The CEILING FAN and FAUCET are taken apart on the workbench. Walt reinstalls the diverter valve. Tao looks at all of Walt's tools.

TAO

Man, where did you get all this stuff?

WALT

What are you talking about?

TAO

All the tools and stuff.

WALT

Where the hell do you think I got them, Toad? This may come as a shock to a thief, but I actually *bought* the things I have with money I earned.

TAO

Yeah, yeah, yeah, that's not what I meant. There's just so much shit packed in here.

WALT

You need the right tool for the right job. Every single thing here has a purpose.

(CONTINUED)

TAO

Okay, what's this?

Tao points to a tool.

WALT

Post hole digger.

Tao starts pointing at things on the workbench in quick succession, questioning Walt with his expression.

WALT

Hand spade. Tin snips. Nail punch. Tack hammer. Putty knife. Wire stripper. Drywall saw. Tile spacers.

Silence. Walt can see something is bothering Tao, but he's too uncomfortable to speak up --

WALT

What?

TAO

I can't afford to buy *all* this stuff.

WALT

I didn't buy all this stuff at once, blockhead. I've lived here for fifty years. A man stays in one place long enough he tends to attract a decent set of tools.

TAO

Yeah, but...

WALT

Look, kid, I *think* I know where you're going with this. You don't need *everything* to maintain a house. I'm going to let you in on a little secret.

Walt rattles around his tool bench and slaps down THREE items in quick succession.

WALT

This is for you. Roll of duct tape, can of WD-40 and a pair of vise-grips. Any man who's worth a shit can do half his household jobs with these three things. In the odd chance that doesn't work out, you can borrow something.

(CONTINUED)

TAO

Okay. Cool.

Walt coughs and covers his mouth. Both Tao and Walt see the spot of BLOOD in his hand.

TAO

What's with that?

WALT

What's with what?

TAO

The blood you just coughed up.
That's not good, you should see a
doctor.

Walt quickly changes the subject -- while tightening the screws that hold the fan blade to the motor hub.

WALT

So... what exactly was the deal
with those guys out on my lawn
that night? Who are they?

TAO

A gang. Hmong gangbangers.

WALT

I gathered that. What did they
want with you?

TAO

They wanted to take me away
because I blew my first
initiation.

WALT

You joined up with those pukes?
Damn, you are a pussy. Why in the
hell did you do that?

TAO

I don't know. They were
persuasive. My cousin's in the
gang. They just talked me into it
I guess.

WALT

Well, at least you're honest about
it.

A LONG SILENCE. Walt finishes fixing the ceiling fan.

(CONTINUED)

69 CONTINUED: (3)

69

WALT

So how'd you blow your first initiation?

Tao nods towards the GRAN TORINO.

WALT

The Gran Torino?

Tao nods. Walt laughs.

WALT

Christ all Friday.

70 INT. WALT'S BASEMENT

70

Walt straps an old WESTINGHOUSE FREEZER onto a two-wheeled DOLLY. Walt attempts to pull the freezer upstairs.

Walt strains with the heavy appliance. It's too much weight for Walt, but this doesn't stop him from heaving and pulling.

Walt could have done this by himself when he was younger. Walt sits down on the step and breathes hard.

71 INT. MITCH'S MASSIVE DEN

71

Mitch watches afternoon baseball, drinking an imported, bottled beer. KAREN pokes her head into the room.

KAREN

See you later, I'm taking the kids to the mall.

Mitch never looks up from the TV.

MITCH

Yeah, fine. Just don't spend too much goddamned money.

KAREN

I will.

We hear Karen and the kids exit.

MITCH

Thank God. Finally get the house to myself for once.

The PHONE RINGS. Mitch looks at the Caller ID. It says; "Dad." Mitch almost doesn't pick it up...

(CONTINUED)

MITCH

Hello.

WALT (V.O.)

Hello? It's me, Dad... Walt.

MITCH

Hey, Dad. What's up?

The CAMERA INTERCUTS BETWEEN Walt in his small kitchen and Mitch in his huge den.

WALT

Well... I... um... I'm getting the old Westinghouse up out of the basement.

Mitch mouths the word "Shit."

MITCH

Uh-huh.

WALT

So... I got it on the dolly.

MITCH

Yeah, that'll help.

WALT

Yeah... And it's a bit heavy... for one guy.

MITCH

Uh-huh.

WALT

Yeah... I need a hand.

MITCH

Oh.

WALT

So are you busy?

MITCH

Does it have to be done right this second? It's been down there for years.

WALT

Well... Yeah, I'd like to get on it.

(CONTINUED)

MITCH

Does it work? We were thinking about getting a freezer. What are you going to do with it?

WALT

Giving it to Aunt Mary.

MITCH

Oh... Can't she give you a hand?

WALT

She's eighty-one.

MITCH

I know, I was joking... What does *she* need it for?

WALT

To freeze food.

Mitch opens another beer.

MITCH

Yeah, well, I'd love to help you out, Dad, but I'm just walking out the door. I have to bring the kids to the mall. Sorry.

WALT

Uh-huh.

MITCH

Why don't you call Stevie?

WALT

Your brother lives out of state.

MITCH

Well, I don't know what to tell you, I'm on my way out. Keys in my hand.

WALT

Okay then.

MITCH

If you can't find anyone by next week, give me a call.

Walt nods and hangs up.

Mitch hangs up and takes a sip of beer.

(CONTINUED)

71 CONTINUED: (3)

71

MITCH

Aunt Mary. Like she needs a
freezer.

72 INT. TAO'S HOUSE

72

The doorbell rings and Tao opens the door. There stands
Walt. Tao is a little shocked.

WALT

You got a minute, Toad?

CUT TO:

73 INT. WALT'S BASEMENT - A MINUTE LATER

73

Walt and Tao look at the freezer strapped to the dolly.

WALT

I just need a little push. All
the weight is up top, so you stay
down and give me a little shove at
each step.

TAO

Let me take the top.

WALT

Naw, I got it.

TAO

No really, I'll take the top. It
looks pretty heavy.

WALT

I'm not crippled. I got it.

TAO

If you don't let me take the top,
I ain't helping. I'll go home.

WALT

Listen, zipper head, now's not the
time to go and...

TAO

You listen, old man. You came and
got me because you needed help, so
let me help you. Either it's top
or I'm out of here.

Walt studies Tao for a second. Tao doesn't blink, he
holds his ground. Walt nods, trying not to grin.

(CONTINUED)

73 CONTINUED:

73

WALT

Okay then, be my guest. Just don't let it slip out of your little girl hands and crush me.

Tao laughs.

TAO

Don't give me any ideas.

74 EXT. WALT'S BACKYARD - MINUTES LATER

74

Tao and Walt ease the freezer down the back steps and pause to take a break. They both breathe hard.

TAO

That thing weighs a ton.

WALT

Yeah, but it runs like new. They don't make them like that anymore.

TAO

What are you going to do with it?

WALT

Sell it. I haven't used it in years and it was always in the way down there.

TAO

How much?

WALT

Oh, I don't know. Sixty bucks, maybe. Why, you need a freezer?

TAO

(nods)

Our downstairs one died.

Walt thinks for a second.

WALT

Twenty-five and it's yours.

TAO

Twenty-five? You just said sixty?

WALT

Save me from wasting money on putting an ad in the paper.

75

EXT. WALT'S PORCH - DAY

75

Walt and Sue sit eating Laab as they watch Tao, who washes and waxes the Gran Torino in Walt's driveway.

Sue laughs and shakes her head.

SUE

Kind of ironic, huh?

WALT

What?

SUE

What the hell do you think I'm referring to? Toad washing the car he tried to steal from you.

WALT

It seems like justice to me. And if he misses a spot, he's doing it all over.

SUE

It's nice of you to kind of look after him like this. He doesn't have any real role models in his life.

WALT

I ain't a role model.

SUE

You're a good man, Wally. I wish our dad would have been more like you.

WALT

Don't call me Wally.

SUE

No, I'm serious. He was hard on us, really traditional, really old school.

WALT

I'm old school.

SUE

Yeah, but you're American.

WALT

What's that supposed to mean?

Sue shrugs him off. They look at Tao for awhile.

(CONTINUED)

SUE

You like him, don't you?

WALT

Him? Don't be crazy. He tried to steal my car.

SUE

And you spend time with him and you teach him how to fix things and you saved him from that *fuck* cousin of ours and...

WALT

Hey. Watch the language.

SUE

And you're a good man.

WALT

Hand me a beer, Dragon Lady.

Sue hands him a beer and Walt pops the top.

WALT

So tell me the problem with Hmong boys again. I'm not completely clear.

SUE

Hmong girls slip in and out of the culture more easily. Date who we want, stay close to our mothers, but are able to keep a foot on each side of the fence. The boys fall through the cracks.

WALT

Why?

SUE

It's tough. The boys float around. The fathers belong in a totally different world and the boys have no one to turn to. Does that make sense?

WALT

Not sure. No.

SUE

The boys don't ask their fathers for advice, because over here, their fathers no longer have the answers.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

75 CONTINUED: (2)

75

SUE (CONT'D)

Hmong boys become almost invisible, they end up banding together and it all goes to hell from there.

WALT

The girls go to college and the boys go to jail.

SUE

It's more common than not.

Walt reflects on this for awhile, then changes the subject.

WALT

You still going out with that clown?

SUE

No. I dumped him. He was a dim-wit.

Walt nods.

WALT

Good girl.

76 EXT. WALT'S GARDEN - DAY

76

Walt and Tao spread mulch around Walt's vegetable plants.

TAO

You know, the Hmong consider gardening to be women's work.

WALT

Is that why I see you out in your garden all the time? Besides, zipper head, we ain't in Hu-Mong.

TAO

Funny.

Walt lights a cigarette.

TAO

You should quit those. It's bad for you.

WALT

So is joining a gang, you dipshit.

(CONTINUED)

TAO

Seriously, you should quit, I saw you cough up *blood*.

WALT

So, you ever think about what you want to do with your life?

TAO

I don't know.

WALT

You've *never* thought about it?

TAO

Of course I have.

WALT

Well, while you're thinking about it, try not to stomp all over my chives, you dipshit.

Tao looks down; sure enough, he's standing on Walt's chives.

TAO

Sorry.

WALT

Put some mulch around the cucumbers.

Tao spreads more mulch.

TAO

I was thinking about sales, maybe.

WALT

My oldest son's a salesman. He sells cars.

TAO

Does he do well?

WALT

License to steal. I worked in a Ford plant for thirty years and my son sells goddamned Japanese cars.

TAO

You made cars?

(CONTINUED)

WALT

That's right. And I put the steering column in the Gran Torino when it rolled down the line in 1972.

TAO

Wow, that's cool.

WALT

It is, isn't it?

TAO

Does your son come over much?

WALT

How are you going about getting into sales? You thinking about school?

TAO

Kinda.

WALT

Well, you should.

TAO

School costs money.

WALT

Maybe you should get a job and save instead of spreading mulch in my garden.

TAO

Maybe you could just pay me.

WALT

That's funny.

TAO

What kind of job could I get?

WALT

Good question. Who the hell would hire you?

TAO

(deflated)
Yeah, I know.

WALT

Aw, go on. I'm kidding. You could get a job, easy.

(CONTINUED)

TAO

Like what?

WALT

I'd think about construction.

TAO

Me? Construction? What, do you have Alzheimer's or something?

WALT

Naw, you could hack it. You just need a little adjustment.

TAO

You said yourself I'm worthless and I have soft little girl hands.

WALT

That's exactly the point. I know some guys in the trades, but you have to get your shit together. We have to man you up a bit.

TAO

Man me up?

WALT

Yes. *And* you should ask out Yum Yum too.

Walt and Tao walk up to the barbershop.

WALT

You have to learn how guys talk. Now watch how me and Martin communicate. We just throw it back and forth. You ready?

TAO

Sure.

WALT

Okay, let's go in.

Walt holds the door for Tao and they enter. The Barber has his feet up reading a Playboy.

BARBER

Oh great, a Pollack and a chink.

WALT

Afternoon, Martin, you dumb
Italian prick.

BARBER

Walt, you cheap asshole, I should
have known you'd come in, I *was*
having such a pleasant day.

WALT

Why, did you jew some blind man
out of a few bucks, give him the
wrong change?

Walt and the Barber shake hands warmly. Tao is wide-
eyed.

BARBER

Who's the Nip?

WALT

This is Tao. He's a pussy kid who
lives next door and I'm trying to
man him up a little.

Walt points at Tao.

WALT

Did you see? That's how *men* talk
to each other.

TAO

They do?

BARBER

What, do you have shit in your
ears?

WALT

Okay. You go out, come back in
and give it a try.

TAO

Come on, Walt.

WALT

I said go out there, come back in
and talk to the barber like a man.
Do it.

Tao shrugs, goes outside, lets the door shut then comes
back in. The Barber stands there with a sneer on his
face.

(CONTINUED)

TAO

Wus up, you old Italian prick?

The Barber levels a sawed-off SHOTGUN at Tao.

BARBER

Get outta my shop before I blow
your head off, you long-haired
faggy little gook!

Tao is terrified, frozen stiff.

Walt and the Barber throw their heads back and laugh.

The Barber lowers the shotgun.

WALT

Jesus Christ, Toad, you don't walk
in and insult a guy. What are
you, an idiot?

TAO

But... but that's what *you* said.
That's what you said men say.

WALT

Not if you never met the guy. If
you say that shit to the wrong
stranger, they'll blow your
goddamned gook head off!

Walt and the Barber laugh again.

TAO

What should I have said?

WALT

Anything but that.

BARBER

Kid, you shoulda just started with
'Hi' or 'Hello.'

WALT

Right. You should have said,
'Excuse me, I'm looking for a
haircut if you have time.'

BARBER

Yeah. Be polite, but don't kiss
ass.

WALT

Or, even better is act like you
just got off a construction job.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

WALT (CONT'D)

Or bitch about your girlfriend or getting your car fixed.

BARBER

Right. *Son of a bitch, I just got my brakes fixed and those sons a bitches really nailed me. Screwed me right in the ass.*

WALT

Exactly. Don't swear at the guy you're talking to, swear about another guy who ain't there. *My son of a bitch prick fucking boss made me work overtime and he knew I had bowling tonight.*

BARBER

Or, my old lady bitches to me for two fucking hours about how they don't take expired coupons at the grocery store and the minute I turn on the goddamned game, she starts crying how we never talk.

WALT

See? You come back in, Toad. Be polite and then you bring up something you can both talk about. It ain't rocket science.

TAO

Yeah, but I don't have a job or a car or a girlfriend.

Walt and the Barber laugh.

BARBER

Sweet Jesus, I shoulda blown his head off when I had the chance.

WALT

Just go back outside and try it again. And don't mention you're a pussy with no car, girl, job, future or whatever. Come in and act like a man, Toad.

Tao goes out, turns around and comes back in.

TAO

Excuse me, sir, I need a haircut, if you ain't too busy... you Italian son-of-a-bitch prick barber.

(CONTINUED)

77 CONTINUED: (4)

77

Walt and the Barber laugh...

TAO

Boy does my ass hurt from all the
guys at my construction job.

Walt and the Barber laugh harder.

78 INT. WALT'S OLD PICKUP TRUCK - MORNING

78

WALT

If you do this, you're going to
follow through, right?

TAO

Yeah, yeah.

WALT

No, not *yeah, yeah*. Yes, as in
yes, sir, I'll do my best.

TAO

Yes, I'll do my best.

WALT

You better, because when I vouch
for someone, it's my word and I
don't want *anyone* making me look
bad.

TAO

No, I'm good. I'm totally into
this.

WALT

And don't lay down to people all
the time. Always look a person in
the eye. When you shake a man's
hand, you can usually tell where
you stand with him.

Walt hands a pair of beat-up WORK GLOVES to Tao.

WALT

Here, stuff these in your back
pocket.

TAO

Cool.

WALT

Just don't blow this.

(CONTINUED)

78 CONTINUED:

78

Walt and Tao walk up to the Superintendent's Office Trailer on a construction job site.

79 INT. JOB TRAILER - SAME TIME

79

Walt and Tao come in. Walt shakes hands with TIM KENNEDY, the job super.

WALT

Kennedy, you drunken Irish goon,
how the hell are ya?

KENNEDY

Shitty, but who's gonna listen?

WALT

Not me.

Walt pours himself a cup of the bad job-site coffee.

KENNEDY

Help yourself, Walt, you dumb
Pollack.

WALT

I already did. This is the kid I
told you about. Tao, this is Tim
Kennedy, he's the super on the
job.

Kennedy looks Tao up and down. Tao looks him in the eye.

KENNEDY

What do we got, Walt?

WALT

He's done construction here and
there. Whatever you need, he'll
pick it up quick.

KENNEDY

You sure?

WALT

Sure.

KENNEDY

You speak English?

TAO

Yes, sir.

KENNEDY

You born here?

(CONTINUED)

TAO

You bet.

KENNEDY

You got a vehicle? I see Walt
drove you here.

TAO

Not at the moment. I'm taking the
bus for now.

KENNEDY

The bus? Jesus Christ, you don't
have a car?

TAO

My headgasket cracked and the
goddamned prick at the shop wants
to bend me over for \$2100.

KENNEDY

I just replaced the tranny in my
Tahoe and the sons a bitches
fucked me hard, just under \$3200.

TAO

Goddamned thieves. It ain't
right.

KENNEDY

You got that right. Come on in on
Monday and we'll find something
for you to do.

Tao puts out his hand to shake.

TAO

Thanks, Mr. Kennedy.

Tim Kennedy shakes Tao's hand.

KENNEDY

It's Tim. What's your name again?

TAO

Tao.

KENNEDY

Okay. You owe me one, Walt.

WALT

I'll send you a fucking fruitcake
at Christmas.

(CONTINUED)

KENNEDY

Fuck the fruitcake, why don't you hand over the keys to that Gran Torino.

WALT

Yeah, everybody seems to want that car.

KENNEDY

I bet.

WALT

You don't know the half of it. Come on, zipper head, let's let this big Mick get back to screwing off.

Walt and Tao exit and walk back to the truck.

80 INT. TRUCK - DRIVING - SAME MORNING

80

Walt pulls into a Home Depot parking lot.

TAO

What are we doing?

WALT

What are you gonna put all your tools in, an empty rice bag?

81 INT. HOME DEPOT

81

Walt and Tao walk the aisles. Walt grabs a tool belt and tosses it to Tao.

WALT

You'll need this.

Walt then tosses Tao a utility knife holder.

WALT

And you'll need that. Now where the hell do they hide the hardware holders?

TAO

I can't afford any of this.

WALT

I'll get it, but you're paying me back with your first check.

(CONTINUED)

TAO

Cool.

Walt pitches a hardware pouch at Tao.

WALT

And you need this too. That should about do it.

TAO

Not to bitch, but won't I be needing some tools?

WALT

Tools I got, but I ain't loaning you my tool belt. You can buy tools as you go.

TAO

I appreciate all this.

WALT

Aw, forget it.

TAO

No, I really do. Thank you.

Walt sticks out his jaw and looks Tao straight in the eye. Tao doesn't know what to expect.

A PAUSE. Walt puts out his HAND to Tao. Tao extends his and they SHAKE HANDS.

It's really quite a moment for both of them.

Tao gets off the bus, his tool belt over his shoulder. Tao looks tired after working, but content. He walks past an abandoned lot.

The tricked-out Honda pulls up and stops. Smokie, Spider and company get out. Tao looks nervous, but remains calm.

TAO

What now?

SPIDER

Just seeing what you're up to, cuz.

TAO

I'm getting home from work, not that you guys would know much about that.

SPIDER

So it's true? You got a job.

TAO

Come on, what do you guys want with me?

SMOKIE

Jesus Christ, Tao. What do *you* think? I've been *sooooo* easy on you, but I can't just go on like nothing happened.

TAO

You can't just leave me alone?

SMOKIE

Afraid not.

The gangbangers grab Tao. Tao kicks and struggles as they yank away his tool belt.

TAO

Keep your hands off my stuff.

SMOKIE

Your stuff? You and everything you have is mine. I own you.

Smokie pulls the tape measure off the belt and smashes it against the pavement. Whatever tools Smokie can't destroy, he tosses onto the roof of the closest building.

SMOKIE

You can't just walk away from us, Tao. It looks bad. It makes *me* look bad.

Smokie lights a CIGARETTE and exhales...

SMOKIE

What's the phrase I'm looking for? Oh yeah, I need to '*save face.*'

Smokie grabs Tao by the neck and presses the lit CIGARETTE into Tao's cheek.

Tao screams as his flesh burns.

83

EXT. WALT'S ALLEY - MORNING

83

Walt spots Tao as he takes out the trash.

WALT

Hey there.

Tao looks to the ground and heads in the other direction.

TAO

Hey, I gotta run.

WALT

Wait a minute. Where have you been, I haven't seen you in days?

TAO

Busy.

Walt squints at Tao. He steps closer. Tao looks away.

Walt tilts Tao's head up, he sees the burn.

WALT

What in the hell happened to you?

TAO

Don't worry about it.

WALT

Don't worry about it? Look at your goddamned face!

TAO

I said don't worry about it. It's not your problem.

Walt looks at the ground and spits.

WALT

When?

TAO

Couple days ago. Grabbed me after I got off the bus coming home from work.

WALT

Cowards.

TAO

I did everything I could possibly do. They broke some of your tools. I'll replace them.

(CONTINUED)

83 CONTINUED:

83

WALT

Forget the tools. Where does your
cousin live?

TAO

No, Walt, I can manage. I don't
want you doing anything.

Walt is angry, but eventually nods at Tao.

WALT

Alright. You need any other tools
for work?

TAO

I could use a roofing hammer.

WALT

Go in the garage and get whatever
you need.

84 INT. TAO'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

84

Tao leans over his desk with a black Sharpie marker. He carefully writes "Tao Vang Lor" in black ink on the face of his smashed-up tape measure. He puts it back into the tool belt and grabs another tool to label.

85 INT./EXT. WALT'S TRUCK - NIGHT

85

Walt sits in the dark, the only light is from the radio tuned to baseball. Daisy lies in the front seat. Next to Daisy is the M1 RIFLE.

Walt watches as Spider and another Hmong gangbanger step out of the rundown duplex, get in their Honda and drive off.

WALT

That's the last of them.

Walt pulls out his Colt .45 automatic and chambers a round.

86 EXT. DUPLEX - SAME TIME

86

Walt pounds loudly on the door. A moment later the door starts to swing open and a voice is heard...

SMOKIE (O.S.)

What the hell did...

(CONTINUED)

Walt kicks open the door and grabs Smokie by the collar.

Walt drags the 105 pound Smokie out of his house and tosses him off the front porch onto the front sidewalk.

Smokie is stunned. Walt kicks him hard in the ribs.

SMOKIE

How the fuck did you get here?!

WALT

You aren't that hard to track down.

Walt boots him again. Smokie curls up in the fetal position.

SMOKIE

What do you want?

Walt kicks him a second time.

WALT

I came to give you a chance.

SOMETHING comes out of the shadows under the porch.

Walt swings the barrel of the big Colt .45 at the movement.

It's a cat. Walt puts his pistol away. Smokie exhales.

WALT

It's just you and me. Nobody knows or has to know I was here. You lay off Tao. Tell your guys he ain't worth it or whatever the hell you want. You don't talk to him, you don't go near him. This is your *one* chance. You lay off and no one will ever be the wiser.

Smokie says nothing.

WALT

I'll take that as a yes. I don't want to come back here. But if I do, believe me, it'll be goddamned ugly.

Walt kicks Smokie again and stalks off into the dark.

87 EXT. WALT'S HOUSE - SAME EVENING 87

Walt pulls up his driveway and parks. Daisy jumps out and Walt carries his rifle into the house. Walt walks stiffly.

Walt gets to the door and drops his keys. When he bends down to pick them up, you can really tell he's sore and hurting.

Walt groans as he goes inside. He's feeling his age.

88 EXT. WALT'S BACKYARD - DAY 88

Vu, Sue, Tao and Wa Xam all sit in lawn chairs, talking and laughing. Walt flips the inch-thick STEAKS on his Weber.

WALT

How do you want your dog... I mean *steaks* cooked? Medium, medium well?

TAO

Funny.

Walt pops open a beer and grabs an appetizer that Vu made.

WALT

Is this *Hmoog* or *Laab*?

SUE

Laab.

WALT

Isn't it usually a little spicier?

Tao, Wa Xam and Sue laugh.

SUE

Oh whatever, Wally.

WALT

It does. Usually it's got more *zing*.

SUE

Jesus Christ, look at you. I've never seen you like this.

WALT

What?

(CONTINUED)

SUE

Look at you smile, old man.
Kicking back, having a good old
time. You're sure pleased with
yourself today.

TAO

And it's a little unnerving if you
ask me.

WALT

Aw, go on.

SUE

No, admit it. You are. You're
feeling pretty good, aren't you?

WALT

Well, who wouldn't? I'm
surrounded by beautiful women,
it's a beautiful day. Great food,
good friends. Hell, even Toad
isn't driving me nuts for once.

TAO

It never ends.

WALT

I'm just kidding. Let me tell you
something, Yum-Yum. If Tao
doesn't ask you out soon, I will.

SUE

Don't listen to him, Wa Xam. He's
a white devil.

WA XAM

(laughs)

I'd love to, Walt, but he beat you
to it.

WALT

I'll be damned. Movie? Dinner?

Wa Xam and Tao nod. They're a bit embarrassed.

SUE

Yeah, they're taking the bus.

WALT

*The bus?! That's no good. A
charming young lady like this
deserves to go in style.*

(CONTINUED)

TAO

Like what? Take a limo?

Walt nods towards the GRAN TORINO.

TAO

The Gran Torino? You'd let me drive it?

WALT

Sure. Why not.

TAO

Really?

Walt smiles.

WALT

Really.

They shake hands.

89 INT. WALT'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

89

Walt watches baseball. He hears a car outside. Shouts are heard and glass breaks.

Walt gets up and looks out the shades...

TAO'S HOUSE is raked with GUNFIRE coming from a VAN! Windows shatter and the siding splinters.

FIFTY BULLETS shake the house before the VAN peels off.

90 EXT. TAO'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

90

Walt is up their front steps and in the house in seconds. Walt goes from room to room, from Vu to Phong finally to Tao -- making sure no one's been hit.

WALT

Is everyone okay? Is anyone hit?
Sue? Vu? Tao, where's Tao?

Tao sits up from behind the couch. Blood pours down his neck. He's stunned.

WALT

Oh no.

Walt lays Tao down and rips open the collar of his shirt. Walt probes around Tao's neck.

(CONTINUED)

TAO

What... what is it?

WALT

Hang on... you're just cut, is all.

TAO

Is everybody else okay?

WALT

Yeah.

Walt looks around at the BULLET HOLES in the walls. Tao follows his gaze.

TAO

It's a miracle no one was killed.

WALT

They aimed high.

Sure enough -- most of the bullet holes are above head level on the walls.

WALT

Where's Sue?

TAO

She went to our aunt's.

WALT

Call her.

TAO

What?

WALT

I said call her. Get the goddamned phone and call and see if she's there.

Tao scrambles for the phone and dials.

Tao speaks Hmong to whomever answered. Tao starts to speak faster. He looks at Walt and shakes his head "no."

For once -- Vu and Phong understand what Walt was talking about. There is anguish on every face in the room.

CUT TO:

91 INT. TAO'S HOUSE - LATER

91

Walt sits across from Tao, drinking rice liquor. Walt speaks loudly, without any consideration for Phong who shoots him dirty looks.

WALT

This is exactly what I didn't want. Damn gooks. Why the hell am I even here?

TAO

Maybe one of her friends called and she just changed plans.

Walt sips the rice liquor. Walt now speaks quietly to Tao.

WALT

In Korea I learned not to care. The best friends of my life are still missing somewhere in Korea. You harden yourself. Don't let anything get to you.

Phong looks out the window and screams. She runs over and swings open the door.

Everyone expects the worst...

And it comes like a cold wind -- SUE WALKS IN LIKE A ZOMBIE. She has been brutally beaten. Her clothes are dirty and torn.

BLOOD runs down SUE'S legs from under her shirt.

Walt looks at her and the glass falls from his hand.

Sue staggers into Vu's arms. Vu weeps. Sue hugs her mother and sobs.

Tao reaches to hug his sister, but Phong screeches at him, pointing at Walt and back to Tao.

Walt is destroyed. He steps outside into the dark.

92 EXT./INT. WALT'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

92

Walt staggers across the yard to his house.

WALT

No, no, no, no, no.

(CONTINUED)

92 CONTINUED:

92

Walt bursts in the door, throws himself in an easy chair and CRIES. He tries to stop and cries harder.

It's the first time Walt has cried in fifty years. He wails, crying for Tao, Sue, his wife, kids and himself.

He lets it all out. Daisy jumps in his lap and he hugs his old dog as he bawls.

CUT TO:

93 INT. WALT'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

93

Walt sits, red-eyed. He's done crying. Family photo albums are scattered around.

Father Janovich knocks and eases open the front door.

FATHER JANOVICH

Mr. Kowalski, are you in here?

WALT

Come on in.

Father Janovich comes in and sits down across from Walt.

FATHER JANOVICH

Are you okay?

Walt nods.

FATHER JANOVICH

The police finally left. No one is talking. One thing about the Hmong, they keep their mouths shut.

WALT

I've noticed that.

Father Janovich picks up a photo album and flips through it. Pictures of Mitch and Steve as babies.

WALT

You know, there's no way that Tao or Sue are gonna have any peace if these gang guys don't go away. Go away forever. You know it as well as I do.

FATHER JANOVICH

What are you saying?

(CONTINUED)

WALT

You heard what I said.

FATHER JANOVICH

They took Sue to the hospital.
She's scared. They're all scared.

WALT

I'm not.

FATHER JANOVICH

I know that. Believe me, they all
know that. Tao especially. He's
sitting out there staring at your
front door. You *know* what he
expects, Mr. Kowalski.

WALT

Yeah, well what would you do if
you were me? If you were Tao?
What would you do?

Father Janovich shakes his head.

FATHER JANOVICH

I know what I'd do if I was you,
or at least what you think you
should do. If I was Tao I guess
I'd want vengeance. I'd want to
stand shoulder to shoulder with
you and kill those guys.

WALT

And you?

FATHER JANOVICH

What would I do? I'd come over
here and talk to you I guess. I
know you're close with these
people, but this pisses me off
too, Mr. Kowalski.

Walt nods.

WALT

Wanna beer?

FATHER JANOVICH

I'd love one.

WALT

They're in the cooler, grab me one
too.

(CONTINUED)

93 CONTINUED: (2)

93

Father Janovich grabs four beers, two for each of them.
He opens a Pabst and takes a big swig.

FATHER JANOVICH

Damn all this. It just isn't
fair.

WALT

Nothing's fair, Father.

Father Janovich and Walt sit for awhile.

FATHER JANOVICH

So, what are you going to do, Mr.
Kowalski?

WALT

Call me Walt.

Father Janovich nods.

FATHER JANOVICH

Alright, what are you going to do,
Walt?

WALT

Not sure yet. All I do know is
they don't have a goddamned
chance.

94 INT. WALT'S KITCHEN - MORNING

94

Walt sits at the kitchen table in his robe, drinking
coffee. Tao comes in without even knocking on the door.

TAO

What are you doing?

WALT

I'm thinking.

TAO

Thinking time is over. Now it's
time to knock the ass out of those
pricks.

WALT

I know you don't want to hear
this, but you have to calm down.

TAO

What?!

(CONTINUED)

WALT

You have to have a clear head,
otherwise mistakes get made. Back
away from what's happened, Tao.

TAO

No. Don't let me down, Walt. Not
you. This is going to end, today.

Walt stands up and pulls out a chair for Tao to sit in.

WALT

Sit down.

TAO

I don't want to sit.

WALT

I SAID SIT DOWN! Just listen up
for a second and don't say
anything.

Tao sits down. Walt rubs his hands together.

WALT

I know what needs to be done. I
need to prepare, this needs to be
carefully planned. You know I'm
the right man for this. So cool
down for a little while and meet
me back here at 4 P.M. I promise
you, what needs to be done, *will*
be done.

TAO

I say we go now. Right now.

WALT

And do what? You want to go kill
your cousin and those other Zips.
Mr. Tough-Guy-All-Of-A-Sudden is
out for blood. What do you even
know about it?

Tao is furious, but says nothing.

WALT

Trust me, Tao. Cool down and
we'll meet back here at four.
Okay?

Tao doesn't answer.

(CONTINUED)

94 CONTINUED: (2)

94

WALT

I said 'okay?' You won't do anything without me. You meet me back here at four? Say 'okay.'

TAO

Okay.

Tao storms out the back door. Walt pours more coffee.

95 INT. BATHROOM

95

Walt soaks in the tub. It's filled with bubbles. Walt looks over at Daisy who rests on a towel in the corner.

Walt lights a CIGARETTE and exhales. Daisy curls up her lips at the smoke.

WALT

I know, I know. Give me a break, it's the first time I've ever smoked in the house.

96 EXT. WALT'S YARD - DAY

96

Walt meticulously mows his lawn. He carefully trims around the fence and birdbath.

97 INT. OLD SCHOOL BARBERSHOP

97

Martin finishes cutting Walt's hair.

BARBER

There, all done. Ten bucks American.

WALT

I don't suppose you still have steady enough hands to give a guy a *straight shave*, you withered, old Italian mummy?

BARBER

You? A straight shave? You've never ordered a straight shave, ever.

WALT

That's right. I always wondered what they were like. Unless you're too goddamned busy?

(CONTINUED)

97 CONTINUED:

97

BARBER

No, no. That's fine. Let me heat up a towel.

Walt hands Martin the Barber a twenty.

WALT

Here's a twenty. Keep the change in case you slip and hit my jugular.

98 INT. OLD SCHOOL MEN'S CLOTHING STORE

98

Walt gets fitted for a new suit. The OLD TAILOR carefully measures Walt's shoulders.

WALT

So you can take it in right here?

TAILOR

Yes, sir. Take about an hour.

WALT

That's great. Thank you.

TAILOR

Yes, sir.

WALT

Never had a fitted suit.

99 INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH OFFICE

99

Walt comes in and Father Janovich looks up.

FATHER JANOVICH

Mr. Kowalski, what can I do for you?

WALT

I've come for confession.

FATHER JANOVICH

Oh Lord Jesus, what have you done?

WALT

Nothing. Take it easy.

FATHER JANOVICH

What are you up to?

(CONTINUED)

WALT

Are you going to let me confess or not?

CUT TO:

100 INT. CONFESSIONAL BOOTH

100

Walt calmly sits on one side and a very nervous, sweating Father Janovich sits on the other.

FATHER JANOVICH

How long has it been since your last confession?

WALT

Forever. Bless me, Father, for I have sinned.

FATHER JANOVICH

What are your sins, my son.

WALT

In 1968, I kissed Betty Jablonski at the work Christmas party. Dorothy was talking with the other wives and it just happened.

FATHER JANOVICH

Yes. Go on.

WALT

I made nine hundred dollars profit selling a boat and motor and never reported the taxes which is the same as stealing.

FATHER JANOVICH

Yes. Fine.

WALT

And lastly, I was never close to my two sons. I don't know them. I didn't know how.

FATHER JANOVICH

That's it?

WALT

Whatta you mean, 'That's it?' It's bothered me for years.

(CONTINUED)

FATHER JANOVICH

God loves and forgives you. Say ten 'Hail Marys' and five 'Our Fathers.' Are you going to retaliate for what happened to Sue?

Walt says nothing. Father Janovich looks hard at Walt.

FATHER JANOVICH

I'm going over to that house today, Mr. Kowalski.

WALT

Is that so?

FATHER JANOVICH

It is. And every other day until you see the folly in what you are planning.

WALT

I gotta go, Padre. Busy day ahead.

FATHER JANOVICH

Go in peace.

WALT

I am at peace.

Walt and Father Janovich shake hands. Walt exits.

Father Janovich exhales loudly and drops into his chair.

FATHER JANOVICH

Je -- zuz -- Christ.

Walt carefully reassembles the two weapons he just cleaned and oiled. Tao comes in and looks down at the two weapons --

The 30-06 M1 GARAND RIFLE and the COLT .45 PISTOL.

Tao picks up the heavy RIFLE.

TAO

Which one do I get?

WALT

You ever fire a weapon?

TAO

No.

Tao aims the rifle at an imaginary target.

WALT

Put that down. I got something for you.

TAO

What?

WALT

In Korea, October, 1952. We were sent up to sweep a Chink machine gun nest that had carved us up pretty bad. I was the only one who came back... I received the Silver Star. I want you to have it.

TAO

Why?

WALT

When we went up that hill, we knew it was ten to one against us, but we went anyway. This trouble now, it's similar. We're walking right into it. We might not be coming home tonight.

TAO

The hell we won't. We're going to roll in there and tear ass.

WALT

Don't be a fool, these guys are waiting for that exact reaction.

Tao is quiet for a minute.

TAO

How many?

WALT

How many what?

TAO

How many men did you kill in Korea?

WALT

Thirteen for sure. Probably more.

(CONTINUED)

TAO

What was it like to kill a man?

WALT

You don't want to know.

TAO

Why not?

WALT

Go get the Silver Star. It's in a blue wooden box in the cellar.

Tao goes downstairs. He turns on the light and goes into the cellar. Tao locates a BLUE WOODEN BOX and opens it.

Tao holds up the MEDAL. He looks at it closely.

AND WHAM -- Walt slams the heavy cellar DOOR shut behind him. Walt slides the BOLT LOCK into place with a loud CLICK.

Tao couldn't kick his way out of there in ten years. Of course he tries anyway. Tao is furious. He throws things.

TAO

What the hell are you doing?! Let me out of here, you goddamned son-of-a-bitch!!

WALT

Quit smashing everything. You'll never get out of there, so just relax.

TAO

You let me out, you crazy old fuck, or I will *kill* you when I get out of here.

Tao pounds on the door. Walt pounds back with a strength and authority which startles Tao.

WALT

You want to know how it feels to kill a man? It feels goddamned lousy. And it feels even worse when you get a medal for bravery right after you mowed down some scared kid when he tries to give up. A dumb, scared, little gook, just about your age. I shot him with the same rifle you just held upstairs.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

101 CONTINUED: (3)

101

WALT (CONT'D)

I've thought about that kid for fifty years. And I promise you, boy, you want no part of it. Me, I've got blood on my hands. I'm soiled. Forgive me for tricking you like a dope. I'll call someone and have them let you out later.

TAO

No! Let me out!!

Tao pounds on the door.

WALT

You've come a long way. I'm proud to call you a friend. You have your whole life ahead of you, whereas *this* is what I do. I finish things. You'd just get in the way. Sorry.

Walt goes back upstairs, leaving Tao locked up in his cellar.

Tao howls to be let out.

102 EXT. WALT'S HOUSE

102

Walt walks out his front door with Daisy on her leash. He walks over to Tao's house.

Phong sits in a lawnchair and glares at Walt. She yells in Hmong as Walt walks straight up to her.

WALT

Aw, pipe down, you hag.

PHONG

(subtitled)

You're an evil man. I've seen your kind before. Back home, white soldiers came to our villages and filled our young men's minds with ideas of glory. Then you'd lead them away to their deaths.

Walt, of course, has no idea what she said.

WALT

Fine, I hate you too.

(CONTINUED)

102 CONTINUED:

102

Walt holds out the DOG LEASH to Phong. She looks down at Daisy and back at Walt. She lashes out again in Hmong.

WALT

I need you to watch my dog.

Walt holds the leash closer. Phong folds her arms in defiance. Walt exhales loudly.

Walt lifts up one of the LEGS OF HER LAWNCHAIR and slips the loop of the leash underneath it so Daisy can't follow him.

WALT

Her name is Daisy.

Walt bends down on one knee and lovingly pets Daisy. He scratches her belly.

WALT

You take it easy, old gal. You good old girl.

Walt gets up and walks away without looking back.

Phong is stunned; she is silent for once.

103 INT. VFW

103

Walt walks in and sits down. He nods to the regulars.

WALT

Good afternoon, gentlemen.

DARREL

Walter, how are you doing?

WALTER

Never been better.

BARTENDER

Beer and a shot, Walt?

WALT

I think I'll have something different.

Walt looks at the liquor display. At the pinnacle of bottles sits a bottle of Johnnie Walker Blue.

WALT

Think I'll try that Johnnie Walker *Blue Label*.

(CONTINUED)

103 CONTINUED:

103

The regulars all "Oooooo" and "Ahhhhhhh" at Walt's order.

MEL

Whatta ya win the lottery, Wally?

WALT

Naw, just having something special.

Walt sips his Scotch and nods. It's good.

WALT

Why don't you get all the guys the same.

BARTENDER

You sure?

WALT

I'm sure. This is too good not to be shared.

Walt finishes his Scotch and points for one more. Several regulars hold up their drinks towards Walt.

104 INT. VFW PHONE BOOTH

104

Walt slips into the phone booth. He puts in change and dials.

CUT TO:

105 INT. TAO'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

105

Sue weakly answers the phone next to her bed.

SUE

Hello?

WALT (V.O.)

It's Walt. The key to my front door is under the ceramic turtle. Open the door and go let your brother out of the cellar. I have to go.

The line goes dead as Walt hangs up. Sue jumps up out of bed, pulls on some clothes and runs downstairs.

Phong blocks her path. Phong grabs Sue by the arms.

(CONTINUED)

105 CONTINUED:

105

PHONG

(subtitled)

Who was that? Where are you going? You tell me what's going on?!

Sue squirms away from Phong and runs outside. On her way over to Walt's house, she sees Daisy leashed to Phong's chair. It scares Sue even more.

106 EXT. SMOKIE'S DUPLEX - AFTERNOON

106

Father Janovich paces back and forth. The SQUAD CAR pulls up to him, which is exactly what he's been afraid of all day.

OFFICER

Sorry, Father, we have to go.

FATHER JANOVICH

I'm telling you. If we're not here, there will be bloodshed.

OFFICER

We've been here for hours. We can't afford to anchor a unit to one location.

FATHER JANOVICH

I'm begging you to stay.

OFFICER

I just got word from my Sergeant, we're pulling the plug.

FATHER JANOVICH

I'm staying.

OFFICER

No you aren't. My orders are specific. You came with us, you're leaving with us.

Father Janovich looks hard at the duplex before getting into the SQUAD CAR. The SQUAD CAR drives off.

Walt pulls up in front, gets out of his pickup and slams the door. He looks at the duplex. It's a total eyesore.

WALT

(muttering)

What a goddamned mess. You slopes should be ashamed of yourselves.

(CONTINUED)

Walt walks up the sidewalk and stops twenty feet from the duplex.

Six very scared, very jittery Hmong gangbangers look out at Walt from various doorways and windows.

WALT

Is that all you swamp rats or is there more vermin scurrying in the shadows?

Smokie and Spider step out and stand on the porch. Smokie smiles at Walt. Walt spits on the ground.

SMOKIE

I wasn't sure that you'd...

WALT

Shut up, gook. I'm not here to listen to one goddamned syllable of what a shrimp-dicked little baby midget like you has to say.

Spider pulls his PISTOL.

WALT

That's right, boy. Defend your boyfriend after *he* or *you* or whoever rapes a member of your family. Your own blood, for Christ's sake. Go ahead, pull your pistols, just like a bunch of ridiculous miniature toy cowboys.

Smokie and several other Hmong gangbangers pull their guns.

WALT

You have no honor. You're the scum of the earth and when you're gone, do you think anyone will care? No one will mourn. You won't be missed.

All the Hmong are spooked at Walt's absolute lack of fear.

SMOKIE

Where's Tao, old man? He too scared to come and stick up for himself?

(CONTINUED)

WALT

No. Tao is too good for this.
You pukes aren't worth one second
of his time.

Walt slowly puts a CIGARETTE in his mouth. Even this slight movement has the gangbangers waving their PISTOLS around.

Walt laughs.

WALT

You boys are a little bit jumpy.

SPIDER

You watch it, old man.

WALT

No, I think you'd better watch it.

Walt looks around. Other than the gangbangers, a small group of people have gathered to watch this showdown.

CUT TO:

Sue opens the front door, runs to the stairwell and pounds down the stairs.

SUE

Tao? Tao, are you alright?

TAO (O.S.)

I'M DOWN HERE! LET ME OUT!!

She unlocks the CELLAR DOOR. Tao comes out in a rage.

TAO

Goddamn it!

SUE

What's going on?

TAO

He left without me!

SUE

Where? Where'd he go?!

TAO

He went to Smokie's without me.

Tao takes the stairs two steps at a time.

(CONTINUED)

SUE

No! No, Tao!

Sue grabs Tao's legs and hangs on.

SUE

No! Don't you dare! Stay away
from them, Tao! I don't want
anyone else getting hurt.

TAO

Leave me alone.

SUE

NO, TAO. NO!

They struggle at the top of the stairs and spill into the
kitchen floor. Tao runs for the door when something
catches his eye...

The kitchen table.

The RIFLE and PISTOL are still there.

Walt purposely left the guns at home.

TAO

Oh God! NO!!

QUICK CUT BACK TO:

WALT AND COMPANY...

WALT

Anybody got a light? No? I got
one.

Walt's slight grin fades. He mutters to himself...

WALT

Hail Mary, full of grace.

Walt reaches into his coat pocket. Six Hmong gangbangers
simultaneously level their PISTOLS and FIRE.

BULLETS FLY. Walt is struck down. People scream.

Walt falls dead. A ZIPPO lighter clutched in his hand.
Walt never intended to kill anyone. Self-sacrifice.

109 EXT. SMOKIE'S DUPLEX - LATER

109

Tao and Sue arrive just as Smokie, Spider and company are being driven away in Police cars.

Tao looks at Smokie in the squad car. Smokie no longer looks tough or hard, he just looks scared.

On the street, Walt is being bagged by the ambulance crew. Father Janovich prays over him.

Tao steps up to a POLICE OFFICER.

TAO

What happened?

POLICE OFFICER

You have to step back.

TAO

He was a friend of mine.

POLICE OFFICER

I said step back.

Tao turns to the HMONG POLICE OFFICER.

TAO

What happened, man?

The Hmong Police Officer looks at the WHITE POLICE OFFICER and then to Tao.

HMONG POLICE OFFICER

You heard him, step back.

Tao speaks to the HMONG OFFICER in their native language.

TAO

(subtitled)

Please, man, it's important. He's my friend. Tell me what happened?

HMONG POLICE OFFICER

(subtitled)

The old guy reaches for a lighter and they gunned him down. The gang said the old guy was here to kill them, but he didn't have a weapon.

TAO

(subtitled)

What's going to happen?

(CONTINUED)

109 CONTINUED:

109

HMONG POLICE OFFICER

(subtitled)

We actually have witnesses for once. These guys are going away big time.

The WHITE OFFICER yells at the HMONG OFFICER.

POLICE OFFICER

Officer Chang, get those people back.

HMONG POLICE OFFICER

Yes, sir. You have to step back now.

Tao hugs his sister. Sue openly weeps. Tao holds it in. He looks at his friend Walt as the bag is zipped over him.

110 EXT. TAO'S HOUSE - DAY

110

Tao and Sue wait in front. Tao wears a suit, Sue is in a traditional Hmong dress. A TAXI pulls up and they get in.

Sitting on the porch is Phong who rocks back and forth in her rocking chair. Phong holds Daisy in her arms, gently petting the old dog.

111 INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH

111

We're at the funeral of Walter Kowalski. Walt is dressed in his new suit.

Along with the crowd you'd expect, Tao and Sue are seated near the front.

Walt's sons and family are there. Mitch gives Tao a dirty look. Tao looks back at him, his gaze bores right through Mitch. Mitch looks away.

Father Janovich steps up to the pulpit and speaks.

(CONTINUED)

FATHER JANOVICH

Walt Kowalski once said to me I didn't know anything about life or death because 'I was an overeducated, 27-year-old virgin who held the hands of superstitious old women and promised them eternity.' Walt definitely had no problem 'calling it like he saw it.' But Walt was right. I knew really nothing about life or death until I got to know Walt. And boy, did I learn.

All of Walt's family are seated in an office as a LAWYER reads Walt Kowalski's will.

Tao is present along with Walt's family.

LAWYER

Which brings us to our last item. And again, please forgive the language used in Mr. Kowalski's will. I'm simply reading it as it was written.

The LAWYER takes a sip of water before reading...

LAWYER

'And to my friend, Tao Vang Lor, I leave my 1972 Gran Torino on the condition that you don't choptop the roof like a damned spick, don't paint any idiotic flames on it like some white-trash hillbilly and don't put a big gay spoiler on the rear-end like you see on all the other zipper heads' cars. It just looks like hell. If you can refrain from doing any of that, it's yours.

FADE OUT.

THE END

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