

SELF-DEFENSE

Written by

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EXT. SUBURBAN SIDEWALK - AFTERNOON

The kind of neighborhood that's still safe - but its best days are long past. Two TEENS stride over cracked sidewalks:

GARY: 17, white, with a crew cut that screams Military Dad. His eyes not quite as cold as Gary might wish them to be.

HECTOR: 17, glasses. Brown, gangly frame. Hector puffs an ASTHMA INHALER, struggles to match Gary's stride.

HECTOR
Slow down, Homes!

GARY
Can't. Your mom's waiting for me.

Hector jabs Gary's ribs. Gary cuffs him genially back.

GARY
Her *cooking's* waiting. Pabellon
Crisco. Yum!

HECTOR
Pabellon CRIOLLO, White Boy.

GARY
Whatever. Venezuelan beef n' beans
hits the spot!

HECTOR
Have it a million times like me,
and you'd be "yumming" Poppa Johns.

GARY
Welcome to America, Hector
Rodriguez.

Behind them, the SQUEAL of tires. Hector turns - eyes a VAN. MEN in camo and masks peer through the window. **ICE AGENTS.**

Hector reflexively ducks behind Gary's bulk.

Gary salutes the DRIVER as it cruises by. They share a subtle nod. The vehicle rounds the corner... is quickly gone.

HECTOR
What the fuck was that?

Gary shrugs, continues walking. Hector hustles to catch up.

HECTOR
Gary, they're grabbing folks off
the street.
(MORE)

HECTOR (CONT'D)

People who look like *me*! You wanna welcome Nazis like that to our neighborhood?

GARY

Chill. They're only netting ILLEGALS.

HECTOR

Bullshit! They cold executed that nurse in Minneapolis!

GARY

Don't get so dramatic. You see the news? Dude had a gun.

HECTOR

Didn't use it, Homes. Even when they were pepper spraying him in the face. Thought you were such a 2nd Amendment guy. Y'know, that whole "stay armed to resist tyranny" thing? And that woman in her car didn't have a gun. ICE shot *her* three whole times!

GARY

She tried to run him over.

HECTOR

You see the videos? Her wheels weren't even turned towards him.

GARY

If she wanted to "resist", she shoulda blown those weak ass whistles the blue haired libs hand out. ICE wouldn't 'a touched her. But get behind the wheel of a car, that's stupid on *your* part. Do that, all bets are off.

HECTOR

She had a right to resist. So did he. People got a right to live!

GARY

They fucked around and found out.

Gary glances back. Sees Hector standing, mouth agape.

HECTOR

I thought you were my friend.

GARY

I am. But illegals are turning this place into a shithole.

HECTOR

You sound just like them.

Gary sighs, frustrated his point isn't getting through.

GARY

We gotta enforce the law.

HECTOR

Not every law is RIGHT. Would you deport me, if they told you to?

GARY

You and your Mom's got here the RIGHT way. You're... different.
(suddenly defiant)
Would you want ME to get run over?

Hector puzzles - then it all clicks.

HECTOR

Fuck me. You tried to join?

GARY

Can you blame me?

HECTOR

Hells yeah!

GARY

Man, I don't got no smart boy scholarship like you. They're offerin' a fifty thousand dollar bonus. Healthcare and a pension. If I'd been accepted, you think I'd be shootin' soccer moms? I like your Mom. You too.

(beat)

Even when you're an asshole.

Hector glares at Gary, fishes for any "out."

HECTOR

So you decided not to join. Good.

GARY

I didn't *decide*. They said no. Over stupid shit. I coulda run rings around most a' the guys they pick. But twenty one's the minimum.

HECTOR
 Gotta be legal before you can shoot
 "illegals". That's the standard?
 Oh, so cool.

Hector starts to storm off. Gary reaches the corner first.
 Closing his eyes, the teen sniffs deep -

GARY
 Look, man. Fuck this fighting. I
 can smell your Mom's cookin' from
 here. And you know how she hates it
 when we're late for-

A SIREN CHIRPS. Gary's eyes snap open on a chilling sight.

One block away, ICE AGENTS hold a GROWING CROWD at bay.

A HULKING ICE AGENT yanks a cuffed, MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN out of
 an apartment, onto the street. Hector freaks.

HECTOR
 Mom!!

Mom Rodriguez's eyes widen in horror.

MOM RODRIGUEZ
 Hector. No!

The ICE Agent shoves her towards a van. Hector charges.

HECTOR
 Let her go!

Gary runs after him - grabs for Hector's collar. Nets air.

GARY
 Don't. It's not safe!

A SECOND ICE AGENT with a BULLSEYE BANDANA tackles Hector,
 proves Gary right. In seconds, Hector's pinned. Face in the
 dirt - the agent's knee crushing down on his neck.

Hector gasps, can barely breathe.

HECTOR
 Mom? I... Help?!?

Gary watches - frozen. A slow motion nightmare unfolds:

Mom Rodriguez screams. Her arresting agent forces her -
 sobbing - to her knees.

The crowd is shoved back. ICE AGENT guns drawn.

Hector struggles to breathe - lip split, face red. Inhaler smashed feet away.

He gags more as AGENTS pepper-spray the crowd. Hector locks eyes with Gary, tries to call out. Can only CROAK.

No more. Gary walks towards Hector and the Agent. Growls.

GARY
You're killing him.

ICE AGENT
Don't be stupid, kid. Get back!

In Gary's mind, recent words echo:

GARY
"They're only netting ILLEGALS."
(to the Agent)
He's a Citizen.

ICE AGENT
None of your business!

GARY
Yes, it fucking is. Let him go!

Hector GURGLES, falls limp.

Gary eyes the GUN at the Agent's belt. Hesitates.

Bystanders blow WHISTLES. More words sear Gary's mind.

GARY (V.O.)
If she had to "resist" n' stuff,
she shoulda blown those weak ass
whistles...

HECTOR (V.O.)
People got a right to live!

The Agent whips out cuffs. The opportunity can't be missed.

Gary LUNGES; pile-drives the Agent off Hector.

Hector remains limp, face planted in mud.

Gary and the Agent roll in a heated clinch. But the teen's younger. Faster. He ELBOWS the agent; dead center on the man's bandana's bullseye.

The agent topples forward, out cold. Trembling, Gary aims the gun at the man's body. Checks himself last second.

GARY
That ain't self-defense. No more
risk from you.

A SCREECH of tires. Gary's head snaps up to see:
Another ICE VAN slides to a stop. Broadside, door facing him.
Gary makes a show of pointing the gun towards the ground.

GARY
Or me.

A GASP from Hector. Gary glances over, relieved. Nearby, Mrs.
Rodriguez weeps - cuffed and crumbled on the ground.

Van locks CLICK. AGENTS pour out. Weapons drawn at Gary now.

More memories fill Gary's mind:

HECTOR (V.O.)
Shot her three whole times!

GARY (V.O.)
Get behind the wheel of a car,
that's stupid on *your* part. Do
that, all bets are off.

HECTOR (V.O.)
Thought you were such a 2nd
Amendment guy. Y'know, that whole
"stay armed to resist tyranny"
thing?

Gary raises the gun, aims it at the van. Growls.

GARY
You weaponized your vehicle. Almost
killed my friend. Who's acting in
self-defense now?

He cocks the gun.

GARY
Fuck around n' find out.

SMASH TO BLACK:

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Sirens WAIL. Mingling with more WHISTLES and screams of pain.

FINAL FADE OUT: