

EXT. FRONT PORCH - MORNING

VALDEZ (60's) a stout, hirsute Latino man, sits on the steps of his front porch. His house is on the corner.

He has a - scratch that. He is a total slob. Stained tank top, ratty sweat-pant-shorts. Gruff demeanor.

His white beard, however, is perfectly groomed and trimmed. His eyes completely sharp and alert.

A BROWN BAG holds an open STEEL RESERVE TALL BOY. He sips on it and watches the morning unfold.

His house and lawn are run down. The lawn is mostly a patch of dirt. The white fence that circles it is rotten.

He SWIGS. A bus pulls up to the curb in front of his fence. It's a really shallow bus stop. There's no bench.

The bus pulls off. An ELDERLY MEXICAN WOMAN trots up the sidewalk with an armful of bags.

She waves after the bus. Only Valdez notices. When it's out of sight she sets her bags on the ground. And stands.

He watches her shift her weight and stare at the bus stop across the street. People sit on a wall. Waiting.

She rubs her legs. He SWIGS.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - LATER

The sun sits in a different position in the sky. Valdez sits in the same position on the steps.

CRACK. He opens another brown-bagged tall boy and watches the street. A WOMAN WITH A STROLLER stands at the bus stop.

She has an infant in her arms and a diaper bag slowly sliding off her shoulder.

She shuffles her feet back and forth to keep the baby from crying. The shoulder bag hits the ground.

He SWIGS.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - LATER

The afternoon is in full swing. So is Valdez's boozing. He drops a cigarette and sways forward to pick it up.

SMITH (30) a sinewy, scrubby guy in a tie-dye tank top and almost Amish beard, shuffles along the sidewalk.

He has a SMALL DOG on a leash. It sniffs around the broken gate to Valdez's fence. Smith looks up at the porch.

SMITH
Hey, man. Morning.

Valdez stares at the dog. He speaks entirely in SPANISH.

VALDEZ
(Spanish)
If that dog pisses on my fence, so
help me god.

Smith mildly tugs the dog away from the fence.

SMITH
Chill, dude. Just being neighborly,
is all. How's your day drinking? Is
it awesome? I bet it's awesome.

VALDEZ
(Spanish)
Go back to Silverlake, you bum.
You've pissed on enough fences around
here. You and your well fed dogs.

Smith smiles and waves as he walks away. Valdez CRACKS open a new tall boy in his direction.

EXT. LIQUOR STORE - DAY

Valdez walks out of a grungy liquor store with a fresh bag of tall boys. He looks down the street.

A line of HIP YOUNG THINGS runs out the door of an upscale cafe. He stares at it a while.

New Hip Young Things pass by without noticing him. He overhears snippets of conversations about art and politics.

He rubs his face and walks away from the cafe.

EXT. SYCAMORE GROVE PARK - PICNIC TABLE - DAY

Valdez sits across a picnic table from ALDO (70) a handsome black man with a salt and pepper growth of stubble.

They play a game of chess.

ALDO

Boy, you should have seen the look on my girls face when she saw I sold some of them records. She was equal parts irked and confused. It made my day, let me tell you.

VALDEZ

(Spanish)

At least she comes by. I haven't seen mine in months. She says the house gives her allergies.

ALDO

English, you old fart. English.

CRACK. Valdez opens a brown-bagged tall boy. He grins at Aldo and moves a piece across the board.

VALDEZ

(English)

Check. You old so and so.

Aldo studies the board.

ALDO

And mate in two. When the hell did you start paying attention?

He shakes his tall boy.

VALDEZ

(Spanish)

Magic elixir.

Aldo SQUEEZES HIS EYES SHUT. He droops forward. The lit cigarello in his hand falls on the bench.

Valdez reaches over the table and touches Aldo's arm.

VALDEZ

(English)

Aldo. Hey, Aldo. You OK?

Aldo shakes once and opens his eyes. They have a glassy, far off look to them. His voice is slower.

ALDO

Yeah, OK, I hear you. Your move.

He looks down at the board. The cigarello goes out. Valdez rubs his beard with a concerned look on his face.

EXT. VALDEZ'S YARD - NIGHT

Valdez staggers up the street. He stops in front of a tree and rips a cheap "We Buy Houses" sign off a branch.

He carries it through the back gate and tosses it on the dirt-lawn. He aims a cigarette at his mouth.

It falls in the dirt. It takes him a second of figuring out how to bend over to pick it up properly.

It's out when he does. He stands in the center of his yard. Stained sheets blow on the clothes line.

He puts the unlit cigarette in the corner of his mouth and fumbles for a light.

A crowd of HIP YOUNG THINGS carrying signs with some kind of protest message on them turn the corner.

He GROWLS at them. A couple jump a little. They hadn't seen him. He grins.

The Crowd turns the corner and runs smack in to the Elderly Mexican Woman. She drops a grocery bag.

Not one of the Hip Young Things stops to help her pick it up. Valdez moves to the fence.

When she sees him move, the Elderly Mexican Woman grabs her bag and rushes away from him.

He swivels around and lumbers across the yard. He plops down with the unlit cigarette still dangling from his lips.

CRACK.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - MORNING

Valdez sits in the same spot. Same clothes. Same tall boy. His beard looks MORE GROOMED, though.

Smith's Dog runs for his fence at the end of an extendeelash. The owner is pretty far behind it.

Valdez watches the dog. ANGELA (30's) a short, sweaty woman with newly dyed hair, trots after it.

She's in fashionable work out clothes. Smith follows after her. He smokes an E-CIGARETTE.

ANGELA
Stinky. Come on, dog.

SMITH
Yeah, you might want to tighten up on
the leash. This guys not to friendly.

Angela looks at Valdez, then down at the dog.

ANGELA
So you're not such a hit with the
neighbors? Why am I not surprised.

She looks at Valdez again and does a double take. They make
eye contact. They stare. He chugs his tall boy and gets up.

The door to his apartment CLANGS behind him.

SMITH
He likes to think of himself as Mayor
of the block, but he's just an ol'
Mexican cranky pants.

Smith walks on. Angela stares at the house.

ANGELA
(To herself)
He's not Mexican. He's Dominican.

INT. VALDEZ'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Valdez dozes in a puffy chair in the middle of a crowded
room. It's in total disarray.

A lit cigarette burns in a full ashtray next to him. His
massive hands hold a tallboy between his legs.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK. He stirs in his sleep. KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK.
His eyes shoot open. He brings the tallboy to his lips.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - DAY

Angela stands in front of the door. She wears somewhat
casual business attire. She chews her cuticles.

Valdez throws open the second door to his apartment. He
makes no move to open the metal screen door.

Angela is back-lit. He squints at her silhouette.

VALDEZ

(Spanish)

I told you bums a thousand times. I don't care how much cash you have. I'm not letting you buy me out of my own home. Get lost.

He moves to slam the door. Angela steps in front of the light behind her. He recognizes her.

VALDEZ

(Spanish)

Oh. It's you.

ANGELA

I'm sorry. I don't speak any Spanish.

VALDEZ

(English)

Student?

ANGELA

No. Um. I work at a gallery.

He swigs from his beer. CLINK. He opens the door.

INT. VALDEZ'S HOUSE - STUDIO - DAY

Valdez stands in the doorway. CRACK. He opens a tallboy. Smoke drifts through the small, dingy room.

It's filled almost to capacity with oil paintings. Angela squats in front of a stack and looks through them.

She slides one out and chews her cuticles as she stares at it. It's a beautiful desert landscape.

ANGELA

Um. Wow. I thought this one was in the Whitney.

VALDEZ

(Spanish)

Don't chew your fingers like that.

ANGELA

Sorry?

VALDEZ

(English)

Stop chewing on your fingers.

Her hand shoots away from her mouth.

ANGELA

Oh. Um. So. Yeah. You're one of my
all time favorite painters. You know?
I kind of can't believe you live -

VALDEZ

(English)
- like a human pig?

ANGELA

No. This close to me. My dad. He
painted a little before he had me. He
claimed he met you once. In New York?

Valdez shrugs.

ANGELA

He said you were the next Ensor.

Valdez GRUNTS to hide that he's flattered.

VALDEZ

(Spanish)
Did he catch the Ensor show at MOMA
last year?

She shakes her head a little.

ANGELA

I'm so sorry. I really don't speak a
word of Spanish.

VALDEZ

(English)
He see the MOMA show last year?

ANGELA

Oh. Um. No. He died a few years ago.

Valdez only swigs his tallboy in response.

ANGELA

Are any of these new? I mean. Are you
still painting?

VALDEZ

(English)
You want a drink?

INT. VALDEZ'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Valdez sits in his puffy chair. Angela sits on the edge of a rickety wooden chair. They both have tallboys.

They're both pretty lit.

VALDEZ
(Half Spanish/Half
English)

It's wild that so many of you Silverlake bums come here. My kid couldn't wait to get as far away as possible. And fast. If she could see it now. BOOM. Her head would explode all over a canvas. And another thing. What's with all these shitty beards around here? Like your boyfriends. What, you want spiders living in there? Trim it. Shape it. Oil it. It's a beard. It's the one thing a man can do with his face that a woman can't. Savor it. Enjoy it.

ANGELA

That dude is not my boyfriend. We had one blind date and he spent most of it talking about how awesome his ex was in bed. Which. You know. I hope she was. If she was good enough maybe she could have found a way to enjoy herself. Dead fish, you know?

Valdez bursts out laughing. It's contagious. She joins in. Slowly at first. Then full force.

It fades into a melancholy moment. Angela clears her throat.

ANGELA
So you're not painting?

VALDEZ
(English)
Not for a long time.

He shifts his weight in the chair.

VALDEZ
(Spanish)
I did all that. I did all that.

He slides his empty tallboy out of the brown bag and slips another one into it. Something lands on his expression.

Like a ton of bricks. She doesn't notice. A chipper bearing returns to her posture and face.

ANGELA

Anyway. I'd love to talk to my bosses
and see about maybe setting something
up. You're local. We're local.

VALDEZ

(Spanish)

Get out.

ANGELA

Dude, I told you a dozen times I
don't speak Spanish.

He leaps forward out of his chair.

VALDEZ

(English)

Get out of my fucking house you bum.
Get out get out get out.

He stands in front of the chair, breathing heavy. Angela sets her tallboy on the floor and gets up.

She wants to say something before she leaves. But she doesn't. She walks out. Valdez swigs half his tallboy.

He takes two quick steps to the door and stops. He finishes the rest of his tallboy and plops into the puffy chair.

He rubs sweats from his face with his hand. His eyes shine. Could be with tears. Could be with booze.

CRACK.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - DAY

Valdez sits on the steps. It's early. There are no morning pedestrians at the bus stop.

He drinks. Smith walks up the street. He carries a bench over his shoulder. It's painted in a few festive colors.

SMITH

Hey, man. Morning.

VALDEZ

(Spanish)

You bum. You Silverlake bum. You get the hell away from my house. You dead fish. You bum.

Smith sets the bench down at the bus stop.

SMITH

(Fluent Spanish)

I'm doing something nice for my neighborhood, you dick. Is that such a big deal? I love living here. Don't you love living here too?

Valdez leans back. Smith stares him down. Valdez drinks. Smith arranges the bench and walks off shaking his head.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - LATER

Valdez sits and drinks. He takes out his beaten up wallet and flips to the plastic picture windows.

There's only one picture. He slips it out. It's of a beautiful oil painting of a young child. He stares at it.

When he looks up the Elderly Mexican Woman approaches the bus stop and sits on the bench.

Valdez stares at the bench. His eyes move over the places where the different colors swirl and blend.

He drinks.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - MORNING

Valdez stands on his porch. He leans against one of the columns. His hands are covered in paint. He drinks.

Smith's dog runs forward on the extended-leash to sniff his broken gate. Smith follows not long after.

He stops dead in his tracks. The bench is different. It's covered in an incredibly detailed painting.

Smith's dog is on it. As is the Elderly Mexican Lady. And Angela. And the young girl from the painting in his wallet.

Smith looks up at Valdez. Valdez swigs.

VALDEZ

(Spanish)

If that dog pisses on my bench, so
help me god. It's not even dry yet.

Smith tugs the dog away from the bench.

CUT TO BLACK: