

MAEDE'S HOUSE

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love thy neighbor as thyself

Jesus said that

ALL DIALOGUE INSIDE <THESE> ARE SPOKEN IN SPANISH

EXT. STREET, MISSION TEXAS - NIGHT

Welcome to SUBURBIA.

Rows of white craftsman-style homes. Picket fences.
Meticulously cut lawns. Perfectly manicured hedges.

There's affluence here. Conformity.

SUPER: MISSION TEXAS, 2024

Everything's neat. Everything's right. Except for one house.

Hedges wild. Grass overgrown. A smear on a white canvas.

Somewhere underneath layers of dirt, there's a white home in
desperate need of a power wash.

EXT. BACKYARD - NIGHT

Equally uncared for. Full of wild crabgrass and weeds.

Even wilder than the crabgrass, the end of the property is
marked by the--

UNITED STATES BORDER WALL

Thick steel beams. Twenty feet high. Endlessly spanning in
either direction.

Spaced just close enough to prevent a child from slipping
through.

Studded on the beam, a metal sign reads:

*THIS AIR RAID WARNING SYSTEM IS GOVERNMENT PROPERTY.
ANYONE FOUND GUILTY OF DAMAGING OR TAMPERING WITH IT
WILL BE PROSECUTED TO THE FULL EXTENT OF THE LAW.*

Electrical wiring leads up the beam and connects to--

A STEEL AIR HORN

It's quiet.

Beyond the wall, the RIO GRANDE RIVER gently flows.

The sun pokes over the horizon, illuminating miles of dried,
cracked earth. Life is scarce over there.

SUPER: REYNOSA TAMAULIPAS, MEXICO

The peace breaks as the air horn booms a PAINFUL WAIL.

OVER BLACK:

Labored BREATHING. Footsteps CRUNCH over dirt.

FADE IN:

EXT. SOUTH OF THE WALL - DAY

A BOY sprints through an empty field. No older than eighteen.

Beneath a layer of filth: sunburnt skin and panicked eyes.

THREE possessions on him:

-- An empty plastic jug loops through his belt.

-- A gold watch, too big for his wrists, thrashes as he runs.

-- A backpack, almost empty, flops on his back.

He DIVES behind some dried brush. Looks around wildly.

SIRENS ring out from every conceivable angle. Approaching.

He opens his hand to reveal a half-smudged phone number.

BOY

<Seven, seven, four...>

Commits it to memory, then spits on his hand. Wipes it off.

The SIRENS grow louder. The hunt is on.

The boy looks ahead. The border wall. Tall. Brutal.

He gathers his courage, stands, and sprints--

EXT. MISSION, TEXAS - SAME

The airhorn wails incessantly.

Weary RESIDENTS emerge from their homes. Some look through binoculars. Others come out ARMED.

INT. MAEDE'S HOUSE - DAY

Modest. Blue Collar. Texas flag hangs above the Mantle.

The air horn outside softens through the walls of the house.

The doorbell RINGS.

MAEDE, fifties, begrudgingly approaches the front door.

She's got Texas panache. Blue jean wearing, take no bullshit, all American spirit--usually at least.

Today she's in a teal ROBE.

She opens the door to find--

AGENT BARRETT, fifties, a cowboy-esque patrol agent. Bulletproof vest. Heavy stache. Strapped with an M4A1.

Maede pulls orange earplugs out from her ears.

MAEDE

I'm tired of that horn.

BARRETT

Let's start over.

He steps back, does a 180 spin on his heel like a Texas line dancer, and revisits Maede.

BARRETT (CONT'D)

Morning Maede, great to see you!

MAEDE

Let me rephrase. I'm tired of you coming around every time that thing goes off.

BARRETT

Very kind of you to say. How're you doing?

MAEDE

Fine. What's the action?

BARRETT

Curious?

MAEDE

The faster I get you to say what you came here to say, the faster you leave.

BARRETT

Four Bucks. Two in custody. One dead. One still missing.

MAEDE

Cartel?

BARRETT

Low-ranked boys. Mules. Still looking for the calf.

MAEDE

Why are you doing that?

BARRETT

My job?

MAEDE

No. I mean the hunting terms.

BARRETT

Hunter oughta use the right terminology.

MAEDE

Hunter oughta have the safety on when they ain't hunting.

Maede flicks the safety on Barrett's Rifle. He bristles as she closes the door.

Barrett stops it from shutting.

BARRETT

Buck's proximity is somewhere in Vista Point. I just stopped by to see if you'd done what you do best and spotted--

MAEDE

Flattered. But I was sleeping.

BARRETT

Well then before I give you these--

Barrett flashes a Manilla folder.

BARRETT (CONT'D)

I'd like to take this opportunity to invite you back to the border patrol.

MAEDE

I've got a patrol.

BARRETT

(scoffing)
The neighborhood watch?

MAEDE

Correct. I'll be watching from the comfort of my living room. Now let me shut that goddamn horn out.

BARRETT

Fine. Here.

He finally hands over the manilla folder.

BARRETT (CONT'D)

Exit interview forms. If you ain't joining back up, you're signing out. Today.

Fine. Maede snatches the folder. Closes the door.

But to her dismay, someone pushes back.

CARRIE (O.S)

Neighborhood watch, reporting for duty.

Maede's irritation almost consumes her. Almost.

CARRIE, fifties, stands next to Barrett.

A white woman on a mission: thick coat of sunscreen, wool socks, brown bucket hat. And a holster with a 9MM GLOCK.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

We got a loose one.

MAEDE

Your husband streaking again?

CARRIE

That was once. I'll have you know, my hubs quit hard alcohol since.

BARRETT

It's true.

Carrie appraises Maede's fit.

CARRIE

Where's you're Glock?

MAEDE

No use for it.

CARRIE

Everybody's got use for a gun this close to the border.

Maede dreads this company. It's showing.

MAEDE

Remind me, when was the last time
you had to use yours?

CARRIE

I pray to God every night so I
don't have to.

MAEDE

Every night?

Beat. Carrie sours.

CARRIE

I came over here to rally the
neighborhood girls so we could do
our part and help find this kid.
Not to catch an ear beating about
how you left the church when you
needed it most.

Maede's blood boils.

BARRETT

You chose to lead this hunting
party.

MAEDE

Court-ordered community service
ain't exactly a choice. And it's
not a hunting party.

Maede inspects Carrie for a moment. Reaches out and brushes
lint off her shirt.

MAEDE (CONT'D)

Want to take point today?

Carrie's listening.

MAEDE (CONT'D)

The watch could use a refresh.
Someone as motivated as you--I
can't think of a better fit.

CARRIE

You'd do that?

Maede eyes Carrie's pistol.

MAEDE

About time to break this thing in.

Carrie can't read sarcasm if it punched her in the face. She's delighted.

CARRIE

I have been picking up a lot of your slack.

MAEDE

Then it's settled.

Maede slowly shuts the door. Drew tips his hat.

BARRETT

Don't forget the forms.

Maede half smiles. The door finally SHUTS.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Maede busies herself with a pile of dishes.

The horn finally cuts out--

Relieved, Maede removes the orange earplugs. She opens a junk drawer and dumps them.

Inside, a dusty holster is buried beneath random items.

Maede pulls it out. Studies the embroidery. TEXAS MAEDE is beautifully stitched on the side.

-- Maede straps the holster on for old-time's sake. Too tight. She settles for the next, less worn loop.

Then reaches into the drawer again. Pulls out handcuffs.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Handcuffs dangle off Maede's belt loop. She peers through blinds at her backyard. Beat.

Maede draws a finger gun from the holster. Aims. Re-holsters.

Then draws again with impressive speed. Still got it.

A soccer ball rolls into her yard. Maede tracks it with her finger gun.

A CHILD runs in from the neighbor's yard and retrieves it.

Maede sheepishly folds her finger gun.

INT. GARAGE - DAY

Dark. Probably musty. Maede hits the clicker on the wall--

The garage door rolls up. Daylight floods inside.

Maede moves a set of dumbbells. Then a box. Behind it--

A steel safe.

She spins the dial. Enters the combination.

CLICK. The safe unlocks.

SMASH.

Startled, Maede turns. The dumbbells have rolled away, bumped into a shelf, and knocked something off it--

A shattered frame sits in pieces on the ground.

Maede approaches the photo. Squats down and looks:

Maede, presumably her HUSBAND, and their SON. Smiling. Happy.

Not wanting more of the memory, she leaves it where it is.

-- **BACK AT THE SAFE**, the door is half-open. Maede looks inside.

Empty.

She racks her brain. Wondering where--

SOMETHING STIRS behind her. Beat. Maede anticipates.

SOMEONE steps forward--

MAEDE

Shit.

Maede's shoulders slump forward. *How could I let this happen?*

MAEDE (CONT'D)

Easy.

No reply. Just another creepy FOOTSTEP--

MAEDE (CONT'D)

Tranquillo.

Maede raises her hands in the air. Turns slowly to find:

FRANCISCO, eighteen, standing before her. Mexican. Rail thin. Sweat rolls down his dirty face and leaves dark streaks.

Backpack slung over his shoulder. Gold watch on his wrist. A .45 caliber pistol trembles in his hand.

FRANCISCO
(raspy)
<Water.>

He violently COUGHS, lowering his guard for a moment--

Maede creeps forward, perhaps intending to disarm.

But Francisco straightens out. Gets serious.

FRANCISCO (CONT'D)
<Water.>

He COUGHS again.

AND AGAIN. Until it evolves into a painful HACK.

Maede watches closely. *Something's wrong.*

She looks over Francisco's shoulder--the open garage door.

Sensing Maede's courage, Francisco steps towards her, pistol raised, and backs her down against the wall.

He reaches up with his free hand and pokes the garage button.

--**FROM OUTSIDE**, Francisco watches the street as an ELDERLY WOMAN saunters along the sidewalk with the help of a walker.

The garage door creaks as it leisurely shuts.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Maede fills a cup of water from the tap. Still at gunpoint.

She hands it over. He chugs it down.

FRANCISCO
<Again.>

He hands it back, now smudged with dirt.

She fills again. He chugs again.

FRANCISCO (CONT'D)
<Again.>

He hands her the cup. This time Maede intentionally drops it.
The glass SHATTERS by their feet.

MAEDE

Oops.

Francisco struggles with the safety. He's familiar with guns but far from an expert. Maede clocks his gun handling.

Steps forward.

Francisco back-peddles, trying to flick the safety off while RECITING the lord's prayer.

Like an answer to his prayer--

The air horn WAILS.

Serendipity. Even Maede rolls her eyes.

With the safety off, Francisco FIRES a warning shot by Maede's feet--the gun blast masked by the air horn.

Maede winces. Feels her mortality as shattered tiles fly.

She collects herself. Masks her fear.

FRANCISCO

<Water.>

Maede reaches into the cabinet. Grabs a new glass. Turns on the tap and fills.

INT. GARAGE - DAY

Francisco snags the handcuffs strung on Maede's holster. He cuffs one hand, loops it around the structural beam, then cuffs her other hand.

With Maede trapped, he scans the space. Spots duct tape. Tapes Maede's mouth shut.

-- Francisco pries open a lawn chair. Sits. Takes another big chug of water, this time forcing it down.

-- **ACROSS THE ROOM**, Maede, cuffed to the beam, plots quietly.

TITLE CREDITS: MAEDE'S HOUSE

EXT. DESERT, MEXICO - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Vast and wild Mexican desert. A sodium vapor lantern paints the dried earth a nasty shade of orange.

Francisco walks behind THREE BOYS. He's easily the runt of the litter. Smaller and younger.

All the boys carry backpacks and a jug of water. And all the boys are exhausted.

Francisco focuses on the weathered shoes in front of him. They belong to--

RAOUL, eighteen, just one notch higher on the pecking order.

Raoul wobbles. Drags his feet. Collapses.

The oldest boys JESUS and SANTIAGO turn around.

JESUS

<Get up.>

Raoul doesn't. He's too damn tired.

Santiago violently grabs his collar.

SANTIAGO

(re: Francisco)

<You're gonna let the new guy pass you by? Get up, coward.>

Santiago releases Raoul. Spits in the dirt in front of him then takes off. Jesus follows.

Francisco squats down. Hands Raoul his water jug.

Raoul drinks.

FRANCISCO

<Ready?>

He slides an arm under Raoul and helps him to his feet.

INT. KITCHEN, MAEDE'S HOUSE - DAY (PRESENT)

Francisco slides sheers over french doors.

INT. LIVING ROOM, MAEDE'S HOUSE - DAY

Francisco locks the front door.

Notices a large map on an office desk.

Tracks the red line representing the wall with his finger.

INT. GARAGE, MAEDE'S HOUSE - DAY

Maede, alone, scans her garage.

A hatchet sits atop a neat pile of chopped wood.

She stretches out. Tries to reach the saw with her toes.

INT. KITCHEN, MAEDE'S HOUSE - DAY

Francisco opens the fridge. Almost GAGS.

He looks deeper. A birthday cake ROTS. The candles forty-nine lay half tipped over. Last year's birthday cake.

He quickly shuts the fridge.

Tries the pantry. Pockets two Twinkies. Then looks for something--

A landline phone hangs from the wall.

He dials the number he recited to memory--

FRANCISCO
<Seven, seven, four...>

After a RING, SOMEONE answers--but they don't say anything.

FRANCISCO (CONT'D)
<Alberto?>

A deep voice returns. All business.

ALBERTO (PHONE)
<Whose this?>

FRANCISCO
Francisco.

Beat. Alberto relays the message to someone else, then--

ALBERTO (PHONE)
<Where's Jesus and Santiago?>

FRANCISCO
<They got caught.>