

The Good Neighbor
by
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FADE IN:

EXT. QUIET STREET ON OUTSKIRTS OF BOSTON -- AFTERNOON

Sunday afternoon in West Roxbury, a section of Boston that could be considered a highly populated suburb.

Late October. Multicolored leaves fall from the trees onto manicured lawns and city streets.

HELEN KRATSOUS(76) sits on a porch reading a paper and drinking a cup of tea. A cane leans against a door.

In front of the lawn stands STARVOS KRATSOUS (77), a small man built like a bulldog, and as feisty as a Doberman.

He pulls the chord of a lawn mower over and over.

In disgust, STARVOS kicks the mower and curses in Greek.

HELEN looks away from her paper. Her accent extremely heavy.

HELEN

Starvos, give it a break.

STARVOS, bending over and breathing heavy, waves off her comments. Again, he pulls the chord. Not even a cough.

An SUV drives up. It pulls into a driveway across the street.

Helen waves. She turns a page. She shakes her head.

HELEN (to Starvos) (CONT'D)

You're going to give yourself a stroke. Michael will be home soon.

STARVOS (irritated)

I'll start it.

Starvos pulls the chord. Nothing. Starvos is frustrated beyond comprehension. He kicks the mower.

The doors of the SUV open. ROB GIOVINO (38), a relatively handsome man whose girth is starting to grow on his face and stomach. He pulls out a couple of shopping bags.

From the passenger side LEAH GIOVINO(40) gets out, opens the back door, lets out son THOMAS(5), and reaches in to grab daughter SOPHIE (18 months). LEAH could easily pass for a woman in her late 20's, early thirties not 40.

LEAH hears Starvos cursing in Greek.

LEAH

Starvos, Mikey will look at it.

In contempt, Starvos waves her off.

STARVOS (sarcastically)
 Nothing can get done around here
 without Superman coming to the rescue!

LEAH
 You said it, we didn't.

A car, an Infinity, turns the corner and approaches.
 Everyone waves except Starvos who again pulls the chord.
 The car pulls into a driveway next to the Kratsous residence.
 From the car appears MIKE WOLFE(38), a ruggedly handsome man
 who looks as if he just walked out of a tv studio with his
 pressed black suit coat, pants, and wrinkle free white shirt
 sparkling in the afternoon sun gets out.

ROB (to Mike)
 Speak of the devil...

MIKE pops the trunk and walks to the back of the car. He
 turns as he pulls out a garment bag from the trunk.

MIKE
 Close enough!

THOMAS runs towards Mike.

THOMAS
 You're not the devil. You're the...

MIKE (interrupts)
 Wolfeman!

Thomas and Mike growl simultaneously. Mike picks up Thomas
 and spins him around.

MIKE (CONT'D)
 And you're Enzo!

THOMAS
 I'm not Enzo! I'm Thomas.

Mike spins Thomas around again before putting him down.

MIKE
 You're not Enzo Giovino? Then you
 must be Tommy Boy. Did you know
 Friday was a full moon so you're
 safe for this month until...

Mike tosses Thomas in the air and catches him.

MIKE (CONT'D)
 The wolfeman emerges from the dark
 and gets you!

Mike tickles Thomas. Thomas hysterically laughs.

Mike removes a bouquet of flowers from the back seat. He walks over to the Giovino's front stoop.

Leah, still carrying Sophia, comes out of the house.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Hey, moms!

Leah smiles. They hug.

LEAH

Hi Mikey!

Mike pats her belly. She's five months pregnant but no one would hardly notice.

MIKE

How's the bump?

Rob, carrying grocery bags walks up the stoop.

ROB

Growing by the day...

Leah smacks Rob's shoulder.

LEAH

I love you too...

Mike hands Leah the roses. He reaches over and holds Sophia.

MIKE (smiles)

Happy...

(slight pause)

29th birthday.

Leah's grateful for both the roses and the age comment.

LEAH

You're too kind.

ROB

I guess they didn't teach you math at broadcasting school.

LEAH (scowls)

Keep it up and you won't see anything until the bump's gone!

ROB

Like I'm going to see anything anyway!

Rob walks into the hallway. Leah kisses Mike on the cheek.

LEAH

Thank you, Mikey. You are the best!

Leah bumps Rob as he walks back out of the house and down the front stoops to the SUV.

LEAH (CONT'D)

At least someone remembered..

ROB

Unlike you, the night is young.

Rob winks at Leah. Leah shakes her head. He pats her butt.

Mike plays with Sophia's tiny hands.

LEAH

How was your trip?

MIKE

Eventful.

LEAH

I'd say. Double overtime...

LEAH (CONT'D)

Did you party in the City at night?

MIKE

It was a business trip. I did go out for a couple hours Friday night. Saw some old friends. It was relaxing

ROB (grins)

I bet you had fun. I do live my life vicariously through you.

Mike is surprised with the comment.

MIKE

Through me? Be careful with what you watch.

ROB

Why? Look at you. The best sportscaster in college sports. You visit dozens of cities, you're talented, on tv every week, and make a nice paycheck...

MIKE

It's not the money.

ROB

Don't say that to a guy barely getting by on a teacher's salary.

LEAH (interrupts)

Forget about him. And, it's nice to be named named as one of the sexiest men in America.

MIKE
That's over rated..

ROB (interrupts)
Tell that to the girls who throw
their bras to you before games!

Mike shines his pearly whites.

LEAH (sarcastically)
Yeah right, you wouldn't want to
change looks and lives with him?

ROB
Why, give up this life?
(slight pause)
Well, maybe for a day or two.

MIKE
It has its moments.

ROB
Yeah, you're life sucks!
(slight pause)
Any action this weekend?

Leah whacks Rob in the arm.

LEAH
Knock it off! It's his business.

ROB
He's my neighbor. My friend. If I
don't ask...

LEAH (interrupts)
You coming over for dinner tonight?

ROB
There's going to be a few single
hotties stopping by.

Leah's becoming irritated with Rob's antics.

LEAH
What is the matter with you?

ROB
You said a couple of your friends
want to meet him.

Again, Leah whacks Rob on the shoulder. He winces.

ROB (CONT'D)
What? You said your friend Sara...

Rob closes his eyes and exhales. He becomes animated as he
describes Sara's body.

ROB (CONT'D)
Dude, very hot. 36, DD's I mind
you, 24-35 with the hottest butt...

Rob gets the cold stare from Leah.

ROB (CONT'D)
Sorry, second hottest butt in town.
And she's a lawyer who teaches
aerobics twice a week.

Again, he breathes heavy. Mike gets it.

ROB (CONT'D)
Then there's the anesthesiologist,
Yvette. She can put me to sleep
anytime!

LEAH
Excuse the dog, but my friends saw
you on tv and want to meet you. I
also told them you're a good guy.

ROB
I think the word you used was, catch..

LEAH (smiles)
That may have slipped out too!

Leah catches herself giggling. Mike blushes.

MIKE
What time?

ROB
6:30. Damn, I forget beer.

Mike kisses Sophie and Leah on the cheek.

MIKE
Red or white?
(slight pause)
I'll bring both.

Mike smiles. Leah nods. Rob walks to his SUV.

A car speeds down the street. Mike pushes Rob out of the
way.

The car stops in the middle of the road. The DRIVER, a bald
man, 6'4, 235 pounds of muscle and tattoos steps out.

DRIVER
Get out of the way dumb ass!

MIKE
Who's the dumbass? Learn how to
drive..

Starvos waves a rake in the air.

STARVOS

You idiot! You're going to kill someone.

DRIVER

Why don't I start with you old man?

Mike turns to Starvos. He eyes him to relax. He turns back to the driver. He realizes the driver is a true meathead.

MIKE

We don't want any trouble...

DRIVER

I didn't think so.

He gets back in the car, revs the engine and squeals away.

Mike looks at everyone and smirks.

MIKE

Trust me, someday he'll get his.

He steps off the porch and walks past Starvos, who breathes heavily and up the steps to Helen.

HELEN (smiles)

Michael, you looked so handsome and dignified on television last night.

MIKE (surprised)

You watched?

HELEN

I don't like football. I don't understand why they call it football when you don't kick the ball. But I do watch all your games. Michael, you were right, my cancer's gone into remission.

Like a son would do, Mike leans over and tenderly kisses Helen on the cheek. He hands her a cardboard box.

MIKE

That's great. I told you it would.

(pause)

I passed that little Greek bakery in town and couldn't resist stopping.

HELEN

The baklava?

MIKE

You say it's the best.

HELEN

Are you trying to do get me fat?

MIKE

You'll never get fat.

HELEN

You are a saint. Thank you.

Helen hugs Mike tightly. She looks down at Starvos.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Michael, can you please give that stubborn, old goat a hand?

STARVOS

My eyesight might be going but my ear sight is fine.

MIKE

Ear sight?

Helen shakes her head at Starvos. She opens the box.

HELEN

Ignore him.

Starvos pulls the chord. Nothing.

Mike walks down from the porch over to Starvos.

MIKE

How many times have you pulled the chord?

STARVOS

A few.

HELEN

A few dozen! He's going to give himself a heart attack!

STARVOS

Hush, woman!

Mike bends over and hits the primer button and choke.

MIKE

You probably flooded the engine.

STARVOS

I didn't flood anything!

HELEN

You should listen to him.

Starvos waves her off. Mike waits for a moment. He checks the oil. He slowly pulls the chord. The machine coughs.

He pulls it again. It sputters for a few seconds then starts.
Helen waves Starvos off as she bites into a piece of baklava.

MIKE

If you wait a few minutes I'll cut...

STARVOS

Do I look like an invalid to you?

He grabs the mower and begins to cut the lawn.

Mike shrugs his shoulders at Helen. She shakes her head.

HELEN (to Starvos)

Stubborn old goat...

MIKE (smiles)

I'll check on him in ten minutes.

Mike turns, picks up his bags and walks to his house.

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE -- MOMENTS LATER

Mike walks into an immaculate living room. The room is fashionably furnished; a large HD tv on one wall, a small trophy case which is filled with athletic trophies, broadcasting awards, and Emmy awards on another.

He drops his mail on the table. He walks up the stair case.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Mike enters. Everything is organized, neat, and in place.

He drops off his garment bag and jacket on the wrinkle free bed. He walks to a desk on the other side of the room and pushes it over. A door opens to reveal a small 6X9 room.

He walks over to another desk. He pulls out a metal box and opens it. He lights up five candles. He places a upside down matchbox car, a license plate number on a small piece of paper, and a scratch ticket next to a picture of Helen inside a red pentagram etched in the wood of the desk.

He closes his eyes and concentrates. A gust of wind enters the enclosed room. The candles flicker.

EXT. HIGHWAY -- CONTINUOUS

The bald driver speeds down the highway doing 90. He passes in and out of traffic. Other drivers yell out of their cars over his reckless driving. He throws them the middle finger.

He turns the wheel. Something pushes against him. Forcefully, he pushes harder.

DRIVE

What the hell?

The driver brakes. The car accelerates. He suddenly becomes nervous. He can't control the car. The car swerves off the highway. He screams as the car hits a tree and explodes.

EXT. LIQUOR STORE -- CONTINUOUS

Rob walks out of a liquor store carrying a 12 pack of beer. He pulls out a scratch ticket and leans against the door. He scratches the ticket. He drops the bag on the ground.

Dumbfounded, he looks at the ticket again. He screams. The ticket reads; "Grand Prize", Two million dollars.

INT. SPARE BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Mike opens his eyes. He looks at the desk, blows out the candles, removes the trinkets off the desk, and into the metal box. He moves out of the closet and out of the bedroom.

EXT. STREET -- LATER

Mike, now wearing sweats, a Red Sox cap, sweatshirt, and work boots, strolls down his stoop and over to Starvos' lawn. He's refreshed. A new man.

Mike insists he finish the lawn. Starvos declines. Upset, Starvos gives up, throws up his arms and moves away.

Mike pushes the mower as it cuts the lawn and picks up leaves.

Starvos looks up at Helen. She gives him the thumb's up. Starvos, still mad, waves her off as he wipes his face.

EXT. PORCH -- CONTINUOUS

Leah walks out of the house carrying a pot of tea. She refills Helen's cup. She pours herself one. Both ladies stare at Mike with pure affection in their eyes.

LEAH

Isn't he the best.

HELEN

You couldn't ask for a better neighbor.

LEAH

If I wasn't married...

HELEN

If I was forty years younger...

The women look at each other and giggle like school girls. Mike looks up and smiles at the ladies. They smile back and raise their tea cups. Fade Out.

