

FADE IN:

EXT. LOS ANGELES CITY STREETS - PRESENT DAY

A Mexican laborer walks the streets, looking very out of place amid the rushing cars and well-heeled pedestrians.

This is Javier, a decent older guy just trying to take a shot at his Mexican-American dream.

He glances up at towering skyscrapers.

A rich lady's tiny dog barks at him, he leaps out of the way.

Walking on and on.

He stops and asks directions from a group of Mexican day-laborers standing around.

They point up the street. He keeps walking.

EXT. CITY LANDSCAPE SUPPLY - LATER

He pauses outside and matches the address to a pathetic scrap of paper he's holding.

INT. CITY LANDSCAPE SUPPLY - CONTINUOUS

The showroom is crammed with gleaming new yard machines. Mowers, trimmers, and blowers are smartly displayed on the floor and walls.

Javier jealously runs a hand over the merchandise.

Another customer points out items to a salesman.

CUSTOMER

And I'll take three of those.

Salesman excitedly scribbles an item number.

Javier waits patiently to be noticed.

He caresses the leather seat of a riding mower.

INT. CITY LANDSCAPE SUPPLY - LATER

The rush has cleared out and a salesman finally approaches Javier.

We don't hear the conversation, but we see Javier pointing around and the salesman shaking his head.

Javier pulls out a crumpled wad of bills. The salesman shakes his head, shrugs.

Salesman gets an idea, leads Javier out back.

INT. REPAIR SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Grease, garbage, and hulking wrecks of the lawn wars.

The salesman points out an over-used machine. A tag reads, "AS IS."

Javier checks the price tag, shakes his head.

Salesman throws up his hands.

Javier notices another machine, but we don't see it.

Salesman just laughs.

SALESMAN

That is not a 'pro' machine.

Javier nods excitedly.

SALESMAN

Fine, fine. You want it? You got it.
How much do you have again?

Javier produces his modest wad again.

SALESMAN

Forget it. Just take it. Get it outta
here.

EXT. CITY LANDSCAPE SUPPLY - LATER

Javier happily pushes his old-fashioned REEL MOWER out of the shop and down the street. It's old and heavy, from an era when machines were built to last.

EXT. JUNKYARD - LATER

Javier pauses by the chain link fence surrounding a junkyard. He peers inside.

EXT. JUNKYARD - LATER

Javier leaves the junkyard pulling his mower on a child's red wagon.

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS - LATER

Swimming pools, movie stars.

Javier admires the tony residences.

Across the street, a landscape crew pulls up to a house. Matching BLUE uniforms, new modern equipment and vehicles. Like an Indy 500 pit crew, they pile out and get to work.

Javier watches them. He bucks up his shoulders with pride.

The guys notice his ancient contraption. They laugh and jeer.

Javier walks on.

EXT. JOHNSON'S HOUSE, FRONT GATE - LATER

Javier peers through the bars. The sprawling front lawn is overgrown and weedy.

Suddenly, the gate starts to swing open. Frightened, Javier jumps out of the way.

A MOVING TRUCK pulls into the drive behind him. The truck lumbers to a stop on the drive, followed by a couple of luxury cars.

Mr. and Mrs. Johnson get out of their respective cars and start directing movers.

Javier pulls his wagon onto the drive. MICHELLE JOHNSON, 30's, super-hot, super-rich, and at the moment super-busy, notices him.

MICHELLE

You must be the gardener. You certainly have good timing.

JAVIER

Si.

MICHELLE

Okay, just do whatever you usually do and we can sign up when you're done.

JAVIER

Si.

Michelle notices his mower and wagon.

MICHELLE

What in the world? You use that?

JAVIER

Machina bien.

MICHELLE

Good machine?

JAVIER

Si.

MICHELLE

(to her husband)

Honey, come look at this.

PAUL JOHNSON, 30's, probably some Hollywood mogul.

PAUL

(to a mover)

Bedroom four. No, put it in the den.
The den.

(to his wife)

What?

MICHELLE

(indicating Javier's mower)

Check out this bad boy.

PAUL

Hah, just like Grandpa's. I bet it's one of those eco-earth-friendly things. Probably costs a fortune.

MICHELLE

That's how they all do it here.

(to Javier)

Do you do more houses around here?

JAVIER

Mas casas?

MICHELLE

Yeah...si. More houses. Do you do more houses around the...barrio?

JAVIER

Barrio? Si, bien barrio.

MICHELLE

Okay, great. Get started and come see me when you're done. What's your name? Se llama?

JAVIER

Javier.

MICHELLE

Javier? I'm Michelle Johnson, and that's my husband, Paul.

JAVIER

Encantado de conocerte.

Michelle shrugs. Her Spanish at its limit.

EXT. JOHNSON'S HOUSE, FRONT YARD - LATER

Javier starts pushing the mower across the lawn. The clippings accumulate in the catcher basket rapidly.

He's not sure what to do with them. Thinks. Looks around. He unhooks the catcher and makes his way around the far side of the property.

EXT. JOHNSON'S HOUSE, BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Javier locates a small area behind some trees and dumps the clippings there. Guilty, he looks around.

EXT. JOHNSON'S HOUSE, POOLSIDE - DAY

When Javier emerges from behind the trees, Michelle notices him. She's sunning in a bikini. She's not an unpacking kind of gal.

MICHELLE

Is that the compost?

JAVIER

Si.

MICHELLE

Cool.

EXT. JOHNSON'S HOUSE, FRONT YARD - LATER

Javier is finishing the lawn work. It looks like Dodger Stadium on opening day.

The moving truck is pulling away.

Paul watches the truck leave with his checkbook in hand.

He waves Javier over.

Javier approaches.

PAUL

Looks great. What do I owe you.

JAVIER

No se.

PAUL

No se? You don't know? What do you usually charge?

JAVIER

Dieciocho.

PAUL

(calling to Michelle)
He's speaking Spanish.

MICHELLE (O.S.)

It's eighteen moron. He means for the month.

She comes to the door, dressed for a night out.

MICHELLE

We can't be late.

PAUL

Si, para...month?

MICHELLE

Mes.

PAUL

Para mes? What do you do? Come every week? Twice a week?

MICHELLE
Trabajo aqui todo semanas?

JAVIER
Si, si. Todo semanas. Trabajando bien.

MICHELLE
They're going to be waiting.

PAUL
Okay, can I write you a check?

JAVIER
Cheque?

Paul scribbles a check.

PAUL
Here. This'll be good for this month.
And let us know, okay?
(to Michelle)
Ready?

She gestures at Paul. The gesture says, "Tip him, idiot."

PAUL
Oh, yeah, okay.

He hands Javier a couple of twenties.

JAVIER
Gracias, gracias.

PAUL
Yeah, sure thanks.

Javier pulls his wagon down the driveway.

INT. JAVIER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A rude little hovel.

Javier has his decrepit machine pulled apart. A bag from the hardware store sits nearby.

He carefully begins to sharpen the blades with a file. Tests the edge with his thumb. Nods, satisfied.

He uses some sandpaper on the rust.

He drizzles oil on the gears and other moving parts.

He tightens some loose screws.

Tests the movement on the living room floor. It WHIRRS pleasantly.

He eyes the wagon.

The wagon gets the same loving care.

The back of the wagon is so rusty it has a hole through the frame. Javier sticks a finger through it, thinking.

Javier pulls Johnson's check out of his shirt pocket. Looks at it. Smooths it out and lays it on the table. Pondering.

Close-up on the check. It is made out for \$1800.00.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Javier trundles his wagon and mower down a busy street. The wagon sports a new coat of red paint.

He passes a group of activists demonstrating with signs, "HONK IF YOU LOVE THE ENVIRONMENT," "CELEBRATE EARTH DAY," and "PLANT A TREE." Etc. They're handing out pamphlets.

Javier watches them for a second.

EXT. CITY STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Javier trundles away. He's placed a "GO GREEN" sticker over the hole in his wagon.

EXT. ANTIQUE SHOP - LATER

Something in the shop catches Javier's attention.

EXT. ANTIQUE SHOP - MOMENTS LATER

He leaves the shop with an old-fashioned fireplace bellows. It's used to blow air on a sputtering fire.

EXT. JOHNSON'S HOUSE, FRONT YARD - DAY

Javier is using the bellows to blow grass clippings off the driveway.

A fancy car pulls up and an older couple, RAYMOND and BARBARA TRUSK, gets out.

Paul and Michelle come down the walk to greet them.

RAYMOND
So, how you liking the new place?

PAUL
Good to see you, Ray.

They shake hands.

PAUL
Hard to get used to November without a coat on.

MICHELLE
I'm used to it.

BARBARA
That didn't take long. How are you, dear?

MICHELLE
Warm. For a change. You guys want coffee?

RAYMOND
Can't stay. I just brought those contracts.

BARBARA
(to Michelle)
Let's get together for lunch tomorrow. I'll introduce you to Antonio. He's the only place for hair and nails.

PAUL
How about a pool guy? We really need help back there.

RAYMOND
Yeah, it's Scott or Steve or some such thing. I'll text you.

BARBARA
No, it's Stuart. And I'll text you.

Barbara and Raymond notice Javier and his bellows.

RAYMOND
Send them the landscaper, too.

MICHELLE

Oh, no, Javier is fine.

BARBARA

What is he doing?

MICHELLE

I think it's some kind of 'green' company. You know, carbon footprint, that whole thing.

RAYMOND

Oh yeah, I read about it in the Journal. Didn't think people actually did it.

He laughs.

PAUL

Pretty good so far. Little pricey, maybe.

Raymond hands Paul some documents.

RAYMOND

Now look these over and if you have a problem with anything just let me know. Anything. The studio will try to tie us in knots if we don't put our foot down right away.

Raymond and Barbara get back in the car and start backing down the drive.

BARBARA

(out the window to Michelle)
Twelve-thirty tomorrow. I'll pick you up.

Paul and Michelle go back to the house.

INT. TRUSK'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

BARBARA

Didn't you give a speech last year to Action Environmental?

RAYMOND

Hmm?

BARBARA

It was an awards banquet, remember? You gave a speech about how everybody should just do their part, or something.

RAYMOND

I don't write the crap, you know.

BARBARA

What I'm saying is that it's out there. On the internet?

RAYMOND

So what?

BARBARA

Well, how would it look if somebody saw our landscapers spewing their toxic agents all over the place?

RAYMOND

What? You want to hire him too? Go ahead. What do I care?

EXT. TRUSK'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

The car stops. A window slides down. Barbara waves Javier over.

She places a business card in his hand. Points up the block.

Javier nods enthusiastically.

EXT. BANK OF BEVERLY HILLS - DAY

Javier's wagon now has holders for a broom and a rake and other implements.

He stops in front of the bank.

Attaches the wagon to a streetlight with a bike lock.

Goes in.

INT. BANK OF BEVERLY HILLS - CONTINUOUS

The TELLER is surprised by her scruffy-looking customer.

Javier produces a check from his pocket. Slides it to her.

She examines it closely.

Javier produces another check from another pocket.

Then a few more from another pocket.

She puts them in a stack.

TELLER

Can you wait for a second? Uno momento?

JAVIER

Si.

She scurries over to a personal banker, MARTIN MIDWEIL.

She puts the checks in front of him and starts pointing at Javier.

Martin checks his computer screen then picks up the phone and starts dialing. Eyeing Javier suspiciously.

Javier waits patiently.

Martin nods and smiles on the phone.

MARTIN

Okay, okay. I'm glad to hear that. I just wanted to make sure because you know that here at B.H.B. your security is something we pride ourselves...hello?

His smile evaporates.

INT. BANK OF BEVERLY HILLS - LATER

Javier sits across from the personal banker.

He's drinking orange soda from a can.

MARTIN

And if you could just sign here.

He slides him a piece of paper.

Javier signs. Martin extends his hand. They shake.

INT. CITY LANDSCAPE SUPPLY - DAY

Javier walks the showroom. The salesman approaches.

SALESMAN

How'd that piece work out? Ready to trade up?

JAVIER

Si.

He looks around trying to decide. Finally points to the one nearest him.

He slides into the driver's seat. Grips the controls.

Nods and smiles. Then grows serious.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

JOHNSON HOUSE

Javier leads a crew of landscapers wearing RED shirts.

They tackle the job with military precision.

Pull start on a mower. ROAR.

Pull start on a trimmer. ROAR.

Pull start on a blower. ROAR.

GAS PUMP.

The display shows dollars and gallons flying.

JOHNSON HOUSE

Exhaust from a mower.

Exhaust from a trimmer.

Exhaust from a big truck.

JAVIER'S APARTMENT

A mountain of cash on the table as Javier smokes a cigar and pulls the money toward him, cackling.

A MOWER

Rip, start, exhaust.

A TRIMMER

Rip, start, exhaust.

A BLOWER

Rip, start, exhaust.

GAS PUMP

The numbers whiz by at dizzying speed.

INT. CITY LANDSCAPE SUPPLY - DAY

Javier lets go of the controls. Slides off.

Walks out shaking his head.

JAVIER

No, no, no, no.

EXT. JOHNSON'S HOUSE, FRONT YARD - DAY

Javier pulls up driving a tiny electric car, and towing a small trailer.

He and his crew all wear GREEN shirts.

In the trailer is a gleaming row of new REEL MOWERS, and some bags of "ALL NATURAL FERTILIZER."

He gets out and starts directing his young crew.

Michelle waves from the front patio.

FADE OUT.