

Back of the Yards

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. THE STREET - DAY

JULIA FRANKLIN, a fairly plain and not particularly stylish or pretty Caucasian woman in her late-twenties, walks down an inner-city street, carrying several bags. One, a canvas tote emblazoned with the words "Teach for America" is slung over her shoulder.

The Hispanic neighborhood is run-down, but not dirty. Mexican food vendors push carts overflowing with *elotes*, *helados*, and *chicarrones*, girls skip and play on the sidewalks, boys kick around a soccer ball in an empty lot. Julia passes a gangway and shoots a quick glance.

JULIA'S POV - SCENE DOWN A GANGWAY

THREE Hispanic teenaged GANG BANGERS skulk in the gangway. All three are wearing varying "uniforms" of black and tan: GANG BANGER #1, a small, thin boy about 14 years old, wears baggy pants and an oversized hooded sweatshirt, with the hood pulled up over his head. GANG BANGER #2 is about 17 years old, short and husky. His shaved head is partially covered by a tan and white baseball cap that is cocked to one side. GANG BANGER #3 sports cornrows and an oversized tan and white jersey that hangs to his knees.

CAMERA PANS TO REVEAL Julia averting her gaze and quickening her pace.

Julia walks past a small neighborhood bakery and waves to the owner, SENOR GONZALES, a chubby, red faced Hispanic man in his 50s who is standing in the doorway. He is wearing a white apron over a dress shirt with the sleeves rolled up and black dress pants dusted with flour. He smiles and returns the wave.

As she passes an alley, Julia sees TWO young Hispanic MEN detailing an SUV in the alley. She continues walking but acknowledges them with an upward jerk of her chin.

As she clears the alley, a black, unmarked police car passes her, turns down the alley, and glides toward the two men like a shark stalking its prey. She keeps walking.

CAMERA DOLLIES WITH JULIA as she walks down the street. A NEIGHBOR MAN is out mowing his lawn, while his WIFE sweeps the steps.

Julia arrives at her apartment, digs her keys out of her purse, unlocks the iron gate, walks up the three steps, and sticks her keys into the front door of her building.

INT. JULIA'S APARTMENT/FOYER - AFTERNOON

Julia locks two deadbolts and heads up a steep flight of stairs. When she arrives at the top landing, she unlocks two more locks and walks inside.

INT. JULIA'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

The living room looks like it was decorated by bizarre interior decorating team consisting of someone's old, unfashionable grandmother and a Pier One sales person. It is clean but cluttered.

The walls are a dingy beige, and the hardwood floor looks like it needs to be polished. A crocheted afghan is fanned out on one side of a tired, busily patterned couch. Untidy piles of papers cover almost every surface that isn't occupied by kitschy knickknacks and ethnic art pieces. Several stacks of books sit on the floor within arm's reach of the couch. Plants adorn the window sills. A dirty dinner plate sits on the coffee table, alongside a half-filled glass.

The room is quiet except for the sound of a WINDOW FAN set up in an open window and distant noises from the street: cars driving by, beer bottles breaking, latino music thumping, an occasional shout, sirens in the far distance.

Julia looks warm; her hair is in a ponytail, and she is dressed in pajama bottoms and a cotton camisole. The fan blows directly on her as she sits on the couch surrounded by papers and books. She reads intently, seemingly oblivious to the noise on the street.

Suddenly a loud CRASH is heard, followed by more CRASHES and the sound of GLASS BREAKING.

Julia jumps from the couch and leans out the window.

JULIA'S POV - SCENE ON THE STREET - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

A smashed in car stumbles toward the corner, slowly rolling to a complete stop. In the opposite direction, multiple vehicles have been damaged.

Then she quickly slides on a pair of flip flops and grabs a cotton button-down shirt as she races out the door, down the stairs, and onto the sidewalk.

EXT. STREET - AFTERNOON

Julia runs to the corner to find the car parked sloppily, it's front passenger side wheel is up on the curb. She stops and recoils as she takes in the sight of the driver,

MIGUEL LOPEZ a man in his early forties, slumped over the wheel. He appears uninjured, but unconscious.

JULIA
(breathlessly)
Oh, Jesus. Miguel. What the hell happened?

Miguel groans and mumbles incoherently.

JULIA
(struggling
not to panic)
Miguel! You ok? Miguel, *que paso? Estas* ok? Oh, my God. I'm calling an ambulance.

She whips her cell phone out of her pocket and dials dialing, then stops when Miguel reaches out and grabs for her hand.

MIGUEL
(GROGGILY)
No. *La policia...*
(beat)
No call...

JULIA
Not *la policia*. An ambulance.

Miguel slumps over.

JULIA
(to Miguel,
panic rising)
Miguel! Did you take your insulin? Oh, God. Did you take your insulin?

Julia continues dialing her cell phone.

JULIA
(into the phone)
Yeah, it's an emergency. We need an ambulance.
(beat)
My friend was in a car accident and he's diabetic.
(beat)
Ok. Thanks

Neighbors begin emerging from buildings and gathering on the sidewalk. Julia spots a CECILIA, a short, chubby girl who appears to be about 10 years old, and calls out to her.

JULIA

Cecilia, quick. Run to the *panaderia*
and get a can of coke. Hurry.

CECILIA

Ok, Teacher.

Cecelia takes off quickly in the direction of the bakery.
Julia continues trying to speak to a non-responsive Miguel.
Neighbors come out of their houses to see what is going on.

Rogelio, a short Hispanic man in his mid-thirties starts
toward Julia and Miguel, but hears a SIREN and quickly turns
around and steps into his shadowed doorway. The people on
the street head for their respective homes or into the
shadows of buildings. Other people can be seen leaning out
of second story windows, looking out onto the scene on the
street. Curtains are drawn aside and shades are pulled up
to reveal the inhabitants inside ground-floor apartments.

A Chicago Police car squeals onto the scene, sirens blaring
and lights flashing. An African American cop, OFFICER
WILSON, slides from the squad. He is young, about 24 years
old, and seems a bit self-conscious unsure of himself.
Wilson adjusts his hat as he approaches Miguel, who is now
semi-conscious. Julia steps to the side.

WILSON

(to Miguel)

Sir, are you ok? I need your license
and registration.

Miguel groans and his head rolls to the side.

WILSON

Hey, you hurt? What happened.

Miguel does not respond.

JULIA

I called an ambulance.

WILSON

You know this guy?

JULIA

Yeah. He's diabetic. He needs an
ambulance.

WILSON

Ok, hang on a sec.

Wilson jogs back to the squad and approaches the driver's
side to speak with OFFICER LASKY, an older (maybe 40 years

old or so), hot shot, mustachioed Caucasian cop who is smoking a cigarette. Lasky is solid and husky, but not fat.

Wilson can be seen speaking to Lasky, who becomes agitated. Their conversation can be heard from a distance.

LASKY
(to Wilson)
Christ. What now?

WILSON
The guy's a diabetic. He needs an ambulance.

LASKY
(agitated)
Ambulance my ass. Get outta my way.

Lasky shoves open his car door, pushing Wilson out of the way, tosses his cigarette to the ground, and strides over to Miguel's car. Wilson follows uncertainly and at a distance.

LASKY
(aggressively)
Get outta the car.

Miguel looks at him blearily, but doesn't respond.

Lasky's anger escalates. His face flushes as he puffs out his chest and reaches back to push his escaping shirt back into his pants.

LASKY
You got ears? I said get outta the car, you fuckin' spic.

Lasky moves toward the door as if to open it. Before he can reach it, Julia interrupts.

JULIA
Officer, he needs an ambulance. He's diabetic.

LASKY
(to Julia)
Who the hell are you? Get the hell outta the way.

Lasky shoves Julia out of the way and moves toward the car door again. Julia again interrupts.

JULIA
(panicky and desperate)
Wait, he's diabetic.

LASKY
(furious)

Lady, I'm not gonna tell you again. Get out of the way.

Julia backs away and pulls her cell phone from her pocket and begins to dial.

Seeing her, Lasky turns from Miguel and whips around to face Julia. He approaches her in three steps, rips the cell phone from her hands and hurls it across the street. The phone lands in the grass next to some beer cans. He smiles meanly.

While Lasky interacts with Julia, Wilson glances toward his back and sidles up to Miguel who is looking around confusedly.

LASKY
(to Julia)

Now you gonna get outta the way?

Julia nods emphatically.

LASKY
Good. I wouldn't want to have to arrest you for interfering in police business.

Julia recoils and stumbles back to lean against a building. Lasky looks up at the small crowd of people gathered in the shadows.

LASKY
(yelling to the crowd)
And get outta here before I call *la migra* on all your beaner asses.

The crowd quickly disperses, but those in the windows continue to observe. Lasky turns menacingly to Miguel.

LASKY
Now, amigo, license and registration.

MIGUEL
Donde estoy? Que paso? (GROANS) Maria? Maria!

LASKY
Oh, great. The fuckin' beaner doesn't speak English. Beautiful.

WILSON
(to Lasky)

I'll call for a translator.

LASKY

For what? So he can tell us that this piece of shit doesn't have a license or insurance? Don't bother.

WILSON

Should we bring him in?

LASKY

Yeah, like we need another fuckin' spic in the tank.

Lasky and Wilson turn to see that Miguel staggering out of his car. He's unsteady on his feet and looks sick and confused.

MIGUEL

(looking around)

Maria? Maria?

JULIA

(calling to Miguel)

Miguel, get back in the car.

Lasky shoots her a threatening look and she shuts up. She looks as if she wants to defy him, but then changes her mind. Lasky moves toward Miguel.

LASKY

Oh, look. Sleeping Beauty is up. Turn around and put your hands on the car.

Miguel, standing swaying in the middle of the street, just looks at him and doesn't move. Then, he drops face first onto the asphalt. Blood pools around his face.

Lasky shakes his head in disgust and begins to walk away, then turns back and calls to Wilson.

LASKY

Wilson, help me get this piece of shit outta the street.

Wilson approaches and they carry/drag Miguel to the curb, dragging his arm across the asphalt. At Lasky's signal, they fling him onto the grass. Miguel GROANS but doesn't stir.

Lasky turns toward the squad. Wilson sneaks a guilty look at Julia as if he wants to say something, but then follows Lasky.

The two cops get into their car and their police radio SQUAWKS out a call just as they close their doors.

LASKY

Here we go again.

As Lasky peals out, he flips on the lights and blares the siren. Wilson looks back at Julia.

When they are out of sight, Julia runs across the street to pick up her cell phone. Then, looking dazed, she crosses back over to Miguel and sits on the little patch of grass next to him. His face is bloody and swollen, his arm looks like minced meat, and he is semi-conscious.

MIGUEL

(croaking)

No *policia*.

JULIA

(to Miguel)

No *policia*.

Julia checks her phone and, realizing it is broken, drops it into the grass. Cecilia shows up with the can of coke and presents it to Julia, who takes it but does nothing. Rogelio emerges from the shadows and begin speaking to Miguel. He takes the can of coke from Julia and brings it to Miguel's lips so he can drink.

Another MAN gets into Miguel's car and turns the key. After carefully parallel parking it, he rolls up the windows, locks the doors, and returns to Miguel. The man put's the key's into Miguel's jacket pocket. Then, the two men pull Miguel to his feet and support him as they walk toward an apartment.

A Hispanic WOMAN in her late-fifties approaches Julia. She puts her arm around Julia and helps her up out of the grass. Julia stands, looking dazed, shakes her head and appears distraught.

WOMAN

(gently)

Venga, lindita. Let's get you home.

Julia allows the woman to walk her home.

Distant noises from the street can be heard: CARS DRIVING BY, BEER BOTTLES BREAKING, REGETONE MUSIC. The sounds fade. An approaching AMBULANCE SIREN gets louder and louder.

FADE OUT

