

HOT-BUTTON ISSUES

Written by

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FADE IN.

EXT. MEXICALI, MEXICO - NIGHT

Five Mexican cartel soldiers in a truck make a hard stop in front of a house and get out brandishing firearms.

INT. CHAVELA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

They force their way inside and find no one there. After searching the house, they come together in the middle of the living room floor and strike up a conversation in Spanish.

CARTEL SOLDIER #1

The house is clear. There's no one here.

CARTEL SOLDIER #2

Someone must have tipped her off.

CARTEL SOLDIER #1

She must be some chick, this girl.

CARTEL SOLDIER #2

She's not a girl, she's a whole lot of woman, body like Salma Hayek.

CARTEL SOLDIER #1

Really? Then what are we standing here for? We can't let a woman like that get away. She couldn't have gotten far.

CARTEL SOLDIER #2

Let's get out of here.

The soldiers holster their guns and file out.

EXT. THE MEXICALI SIDE OF THE UNITED STATES-MEXICO BARRIER - NIGHT

CHAVELA, 25, and her friend, PAPO, 25, two close friends having a conversation in Spanish, while waiting for smugglers on the United States side of the border fence to show up and help them cross over.

CHAVELA

I think you've been taken, Papo. We've been waiting on your smuggler friend for a while. I don't think he's coming.

PAPO

No, he's coming, Chavela. This guy's reliable. Not only did this guy help my cousin enter the United States, but he also got his connections in New York to hook him up with a job.

CHAVELA

Where did you get the five hundred dollars he asked for, anyway?

PAPO

Remember the clinical trial studies I participated in?

CHAVELA

Oh yeah.

PAPO

There you go.

CHAVELA

Well, whatever happens, I wanna thank you for helping me out of my situation with the cartel.

PAPO

I'm glad you finally accepted my help. It sure took you long enough to realize that you weren't going to get anywhere by waiting for the United States to grant you permission to enter the country.

A truck pulls up to the United States side of the border fence, and headlights go on and off to signal Chavela and Papo.

CHAVELA

Is that him?

PAPO

Yeah, that's him. Let's go.

A rope ladder is thrown over the fence for Papo and Chavela to climb over to United States side.

EXT. THE UNITED STATES SIDE OF THE BORDER FENCE - NIGHT

Papo and Chavela give a couple of El Centro BORDER PATROL AGENTS the slip through the Alfalfa Fields.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - COLUMBUS CIRCLE - DAY

A huge PRO-IMMIGRATION RALLY is underway and thousands of DACA recipients are in attendance. MS. BOGART, 38, a horse-carriage driver, stands by her horse, BONNIE, and watches the demonstration from across the street. A couple of OUT OF TOWNERS want to do business with Ms. Bogart.

OUT OF TOWNER #1
My, what a pretty horse.

MS. BOGART
Thank you.

OUT OF TOWNER #1
What's her name?

MS. BOGART
Her name is Bonnie.

OUT OF TOWNER #1
Hi Bonnie. Nice to meet you.

MS. BOGART
Are you guys from out of town?

OUT OF TOWNER #1
We sure are. We're from
Huntsville, TX.

MS. BOGART
Really? Well, welcome to New York.
Would you guys like to take a ride
around the park?

OUT OF TOWNER #1
We would love that, wouldn't we,
Hon?

OUT OF TOWNER #2
Yeah, sure, why not? I think that
would be cool.

MS. BOGART

Great. I usually charge sixty dollars for thirty minutes, but for you guys, I'll only charge you fifty.

OUT OF TOWNER #1

Okay, that sounds good.

Out of towners #1 looks in her purse for money to give Ms. Bogart.

MS. BOGART

Climb aboard. Okay, Bonnie break time's over. It's time to go to work.

A couple of ANIMAL RIGHTS ADVOCATES step in to stop the out of towners from climbing into the carriage.

ANIMAL RIGHTS ADVOCATE #1

Excuse me! We couldn't help but over hear the driver charge you fifty dollars for a thirty minute jaunt through the park, is that right?

OUT OF TOWNER #1

Yes, that's right.

ANIMAL RIGHTS ADVOCATE #1

Well, according to rates set by the city, the standard rate for a thirty minute jaunt through the park is thirty four dollars, and that's without a tip.

OUT OF TOWNER #2

Is that right?

ANIMAL RIGHTS ADVOCATE #2

That is right, Mr. You gotta be careful with these horse-drawn carriage drivers. They'll cheat you every time.

OUT OF TOWNER #1

Thank you. May God bless the two of you.

(to Ms. Bogart)

You should be ashamed of yourself, lady, for trying to take advantage of us.

Out of town #1 closes up her purse and walks off with her husband.

MS. BOGART

Don't you Animal Rights assholes have anything better to do than to hang around here and mess with my livelihood?

ANIMAL RIGHTS ADVOCATE #1

You might as well get this through your head. We're going to make life miserable for you horse-drawn carriage drivers, until every last one of these horses are off New York City streets for good.

Ms. Bogart looks across the street and is surprised to see her nanny, Chavela, and her young SON amongst the Pro-Immigration crowd. She leaves her horse and goes across the street to confront Chavela.

MS. BOGART

Chavela!

CHAVELA

Ms. Bogart!

MS. BOGART

Ms. Bogart, yes. What are you doing here with my son?!

Ms. Bogart kneels down to greet her son in the stroller.

MS. BOGART (CONT'D)

Hi baby, you doing okay?

(to Chavela)

Well, Chavela, I'm waiting.

CHAVELA

Well, you said it was okay for me to get your son out of the house for an hour or so whenever it was nice out.

MS. BOGART

Yes, but I meant it was okay for you to take him to a park, where there are swings and stuff, not a Pro-Immigration rally.

CHAVELA

Well, it's a peaceful demonstration. I really didn't see any harm in bringing him here.

MS. BOGART

You didn't see any harm in bringing a three-year-old to a pro-immigration rally?

CHAVELA

I just thought you're never too young to learn about some of the hot button issues that are polarizing the country these days.

MS. BOGART

Well, it just so happens that I am dead set against illegal immigration, and I don't want my son growing up with any distorted, leftist views. Why can't these people get in line and come to this country the right way?

CHAVELA

Take it from me, a lot of these people are coming here from places where they don't have the luxury of waiting in line to come to this country the right way.

MS. BOGART

I don't know anything about that, Chavela. All I know is that if you want to continue to have a job as my nanny, you'll take my son home right now.

CHAVELA

Yes, Ms. Bogart.

Ms. Bogart shakes her head as she watches Chavela leave the rally with her son. Meanwhile, Bonnie is across the street collapsing due to heat exhaustion, and Ms. Bogart runs across the street to check on her.

MS. BOGART

Bonnie! What's wrong, girl?

Ms. Bogart addresses the crowd gathering around her.

MS. BOGART (CONT'D)

Okay, there's nothing to see here,
people! Why don't you guys just
back off?! I'll take care of this!

Tourists get their phones out to video the whole thing.
Fellow horse-drawn carriage drivers parked nearby come over
to help Ms. Bogart with her horse.

ANIMAL RIGHTS ADVOCATE #1

You're going to take care of it all
by yourself, huh?! Are you
qualified to do that? Are you a
vet?

POLICE OFFICER arrives on the scene to investigate.

POLICE OFFICER

Okay, which one of you horse-
carriage drivers are responsible
for this horse?

Animal rights advocate #1 points Ms. Bogart out to the police
officer.

ANIMAL RIGHTS ADVOCATE #1

There she is, Officer!

POLICE OFFICER

Are you the one responsible for
this horse?

MS. BOGART

Yes, I am.

ANIMAL RIGHTS ADVOCATE #2

Yeah, now let's hear more lies
about how well these horses are
being taken care of!

Ms. Bogart is at a loss for words.

EXT. CITY HALL - DAY

The MAYOR of New York is stopped on the steps leading up to
the building by REPORTERS with lots of questions for him.

REPORTER

Mayor Dixon, I'm Nancy Drew with
NY1.

(MORE)

REPORTER (CONT'D)

What do you make of the latest horse-drawn carriage to break down on a New York City street? The video of the incident has gone viral.

MAYOR OF NEW YORK

Yes, I'm aware of it. The viral video has been brought to my attention. It's very frustrating. I believe it's the eighth incident in two months involving horse-drawn carriages.

REPORTER

What do you say to the Animal rights groups who are calling for you to do something about it?

MAYOR OF NEW YORK

I think the Animal rights people will be happy to know that by tomorrow no horse-carriage driver will be allowed to operate on New York City streets until further notice.

REPORTER

How do you think the Horse and Carriage Association of New York is going to take this news?

MAYOR OF NEW YORK

I'm an Animal lover myself, and I can't stand idly by and watch when these poor animals are being overworked, some have already been overworked to their deaths.

REPORTER

Is there anything else you'd like to say?

The Mayor looks at the camera.

MAYOR OF NEW YORK

To the Horse and Carriage drivers, I say that the business you're in is an antiquated one, and that it's time to learn a new skill and get into a new line of work. I'll have more for you later.

The Mayor waves to the reporters and continues to go up the steps of the building.

INT. MS. BOGART'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ms. Bogart shouts at her television from the couch.

MS. BOGART

Hello?! I'm a thirty-eight-year-old single woman in New York with a kid to take care of, Mr. Mayor! I can't afford to learn a new skill and get into new line of work!

Chavela is on her way out of the apartment and stops in her tracks when Ms. Bogart makes her comment.

CHAVELA

That's exactly the point I was making about the immigrants you criticized for not coming into this country the right way.

Ms. Bogart looks at Chavela with her mouth open.

CHAVELA (CONT'D)

It doesn't feel good to hear your own words thrown back at you, does it?

MS. BOGART

Why are you still here, Chavela? I already paid you for today. You could go home now.

Chavela leaves Ms. Bogart alone in the living room.

FADE OUT.