

The Wall isn't for Bad Hombres

The guard assigned to accompany the cameraman, the landscape designer, and the talk show host to the site of the Mexican Wall kept his eyes on the road. He made no effort to talk to them. The Jeep Wrangler was fully open to the Southwest Texas sun and dust, as they sped at more than ninety miles an hour. The day was getting long, and they were delayed. He knew better than to be out in the desert after twilight.

"You need to slow down," the host ordered. "I said slow down before you get into a wreck."

For the first time, he looked over to consider his passenger: a sullen young woman who could be a traffic bunny on a local morning show, or a talentless popstar in a manufactured girl's group. But here she was a pouty, grouchy, bitch behind her Chanel sunglasses.

"If you wreck and I'm hurt, there will be hell to pay. You don't know who I am do you?"

The stare from behind his mirrored flight glasses would have cut her down. His face was a serious block of granite with a grizzled shadow beard, and his neck was pitbull-thick with a tattoo that stopped just below his ear. Then he cracked a grin.

"Should I know who you are?" He turned his eyes back to the road.

"Tomi," said the cameraman, "Can you maybe not piss him off? He's the only one who knows where we are and our only way out of this damn desert."

She sighed and rolled her eyes. "Whatever." She took a drink from her water bottle. "Gross, warm water."

"I can make it where you don't have any water at all, if you like." The driver said.

"Is that some kind of threat?" Tomi asked. "You work for me out here." The cameraman shook his head in a pleading way with her. "What? He does. You all do."

The landscape designer tried to diffuse the tense pall. "Hey, so let's go over this once more. When we arrive at the first section of the Mexican Wall, we're supposed to set up a shot and film Tomi touting it. Then I am supposed to say what my design idea is. The President wants the wall facing America to be attractive. I don't know who is going to see it way out here, but whatever he wants..."

"Yeah, whatever he wants," The driver laughed.

"What's that supposed to mean?" Tomi snapped. "Don't you know that the wall is going to keep us safe. Terrorists. Drug dealers."

The driver laughed like he knew the best joke in the world. "God, you are stupid. Do you really think that is what the wall is for?"

"Did you just call me stupid?"

"Oh, so you're hard of hearing too?"

"God, you are so fired when this is done."

The driver laughed again. "You think you can make someone fire me? I'm the only one keeping you snowflakes safe out here." He patted the large pistol bulging on his waist.

"Come on," the cameraman said. "Can we just get this done? How far are we from the site?"

"About ten minutes. We got a late start because my partner got sick. I think he was too afraid to come, but I told them I could handle it alone."

"Afraid?" The designer asked. "Of what?"

"Don't worry about it. As long as we're out before the sun starts to go down, we're good."

"Jesus, he is just fucking with us," Tomi said. "I bet he's an illegal immigrant. Isn't that right...I'm sorry I didn't catch your name? Sanchez, Rodriguez, something like that?" The she smiled brightly. "Hey, I can use my new invention to tell if you are illegal or not." She dug through her bag and pulled out a stack of paint sample chips from Lowe's strung together on a large key ring."

"No, Tomi. Put it away. It's not funny." The cameraman said.

"I'm not trying to be funny, It's a legitimate invention. The darker the skin, the better the chance that he is illegal or a terrorist." She started fumbling through the paint chips looking for a match to the driver's skin.

"Get than near me, and I'll break your arm." He kept his eyes on the road. "And if you want to know, I am an immigrant. I'm legal. I'm from Denmark."

"Oh, that's okay then. I don't have a swatch for western Europe. You're white so it's okay." She sighed, "So when will be there?"

He pulled off the road into a rocky area with a broad brushy desert beyond. "We're here."

They all got out of the Wrangler. The designer lugged a satchel full of supplies, the cameraman had his camera, and Tomi had her designer water bottle holder and bag. None of them realized how tall and broad the driver was until he got out. He just stood like a rock as the others fumbled around in confusion.

"Where is the wall?" the cameraman asked.

The designer pointed to a manmade structure a few hundred yards away. "There it is. It's not a wall. It's only a prop. Shit. We have to make it look like a full wall, I bet."

"Can we get this over with?" Tomi started to walk and the others followed – except for the driver. "Aren't you coming?"

"I'm going to stay with the vehicle," he replied. "Just do your work. Remember you don't have much time before the sun starts to set."

"What happens then?" she asked. "Maybe we got off on the wrong foot and we can get dinner when we get back?"

"I'm gay."

She huffed, "Come on. Let's finish this."

The cameraman and the designer took nearly an hour to discuss the shot, block it, and when they were ready they spoke to Tomi. She had already been briefed on what she had to say. The powers in Washington DC wanted her to emphasize safety, American superiority, keeping out the bad Hombres. However, when it came time to speak, she strayed off-script.

The cameraman readied for her. "And we're rolling."

"Hi America, you all know who I am and I wanted to show you how the Wall is going to literally save the American way of life. Not only will it stop terrorists and illegals, it will keep our Christian country safe."

"Cut." The cameraman said. "Tomi, that's not what you're supposed to say."

"Why not, it's true. The greatest thing that is at risk is white culture. Our country is white. Our country is Christian. We own it. We won it fair and square. We are in charge again."

"Woah, wait..." The designer said. "No, no, no. I don't want to have any part of this."

"Fine, then why don't you get your gay ass in the Jeep and go back with our Tonsil-hockey goalie of a driver."

"I hope he didn't hear that," the cameraman said. "He's our only way out of here."

"And he isn't gay, Tomi." The designer added. "I already tried. He is totally straight. He told you he was gay, because he hates you."

"Hates me?" She was aghast. "How can anyone hate me? I'm blonde. I'm skinny. I'm rich." The cameraman and the designer traded disgusted expressions. "Shut the fuck up, both of you." The cameraman looked towards the horizon. The sun was descending. "We need to get this done. You heard what he said about being here after sundown."

"That's bullshit, too." Tomi said. "He is just trying to piss me off."

"You know, not everything is about you." The designer said. "Who made you the center of the universe?"

"Conservative media," she grinned. "And White Rage. And White privilege. And I'm not ugly."

"Maybe not on the outside..." The cameraman mumbled.

"What was that?" She got in his face. "I don't think I heard that."

"Yeah, you did." He laughed. "Let's try this again so I don't have to see your face any longer than I have to." They all took their places. "And we are taping..."

"Hi America, this is Tomi..." The cameraman didn't seem to be paying attention to her. "...hello? What are you looking at?"

"What is that?" he pointed to the desert beyond. "You guys see it, right?"

They all looked beyond the fake wall at the scrabbly desert. There were shapes moving in it. Dark little creatures not much bigger than a goat. There were about six of them.

"Are they coyotes?" the designer asked.

"I've never seen a coyote, but I don't think that's what they are." Tomi looked up to where the driver was at the Jeep. He had taken his gun out. "What are those!" She yelled.

"You have about 10 minutes before they catch the smell of your blood," he said.

"I'm not finishing this," the designer said. "You guys are on your own." He started to walk back towards the Jeep.

Suddenly, though, the driver took aim and brought him down with one bullet to the head. "Nope, you don't get to go home."

"Jesus!" Tomi screamed. "You just killed him! What the fuck!" She pulled out her phone, but there were no bars. "Look, I don't know what you want. Take my money. Take whatever you want. Just don't kill me."

"I'm not going to kill you," he said. Then he aimed at the cameraman and took him out with one shot to the head. "I liked them. I'm showing them mercy."

Tomi broke down into heaving sobs on the dirt. "Please, please don't shoot me."

"I'm not going to shoot you, babe." He smiled. "I'm going to let the chupacabras have you. Don't you know that's what the wall is really for?" He gestured out to the desert. "Look at them. They're all coming now that there is blood."

She turned to watch the desert. It was alive with dozens and dozens of the shadowy creatures. They were coming closer and closer. Only now could she see one clearly: mangy hair, wrinkled splotched skin, dog-like features, and rows of spikey spines running from the crown down to a gnarled bony tail. A rancorous odor filled the hot dry air.

"I will pay you anything you want. Don't leave me here. Please. They stink." She got up off the ground.

"I have my orders, babe."

"Orders?" she wiped the tears from her eyes. "What orders?"

"From all those folks you just said that made you who you are."
He turned towards the Jeep. "I guess this is goodbye."

She ran up behind him, pulling at him. "Please..."

Violently, he pushed her off and cocked the gun at her. "Stop."
She froze in place. "Now walk back to the wall."

"no...no...no..."

He discharged the 9 mm just in front of her feet. "Walk..."

"Just shoot me, then. Please."

"No, you don't deserve mercy like that. Remember when I said I didn't know who you are? I knew. I volunteered for this." He backed up, not turning away from her. "You don't have to walk back, you can stay there. But you aren't leaving this desert alive. The wall isn't for bad hombres."

That is the last he saw of her – when the chupacabras descended. The driver got in the Jeep and took one last glance of the massing creatures on the bodies left for them. Her shrieks couldn't be heard over the hyena-like laughing, as he put the Wrangler in gear and got on the road back to civilization.