

Los Tamales
by
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El Guero Films
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INT. KITCHEN - DAY

PAQUITO, 8, this is the adorable kid against the world in all of us, sits at the table.

His feet dangle from the chair as he maneuvers two Hotwheels cars through a salt shaker, ketchup bottle, and toothpick holder. This car chase puts Steve McQueen's Bullet to shame.

LOLA, 40s, his mother, is the supreme multi-tasker. She's on the phone, watching her son, and preparing a meal.

LOLA (INTO THE PHONE)

I don't know how many boyfriends
Gracie's had, but this is the first
one we don't hate.

(beat)

Look, if he wants to marry her and
get her out of the house, better
for us.

(beat)

That's what I was thinking. We got
to do this before he changes his
mind, god forbid.

(beat)

I'll call with the details. Bye.

TONIO, 40s, working class family guy, walks in and kisses Paquito on the head -- he loves this kid.

LOLA

(hanging up the phone)

Look at you. How could you not be
ready? They'll be here in less than
half-an-hour. That yard should of
been cleaned yesterday. You think
we want Gracie's future in-laws
seeing how we live? They'll never
take her, and then what? Get out of
here. And make sure you water those
plants!

Tonio puts his head down and walks outside.

GRACIE, early 20s, too hot to handle, has curlers in her hair and wears a bathrobe. She looks into the pot.

GRACIE

Oooh, tamales.

Lola smacks her hand and then pinches her side.

LOLA

Not until your married. You gotta
stay thin until you're out of here.
My god, when I was your age.

Lola continues multi-tasking. Gracie looks in the fridge.

GRACIE

(mimicking)
--all the guys.

Gracie looks in the grocery bags on the counter. Then she:

GRACIE

Mom?

Tonio sticks his head in the door. Smiles at his daughter.

GRACIE

There's no crema for the tamales. I
told you. Martin's dad loves crema
and won't have tamales without it.

Lola looks in the fridge. Looks around the counter. In the
bags. Tonio comes in and looks in all the same places, just
in case Lola missed anything.

GRACIE

(frantic)

What are we gonna do?

TONIO

I'll go.

LOLA

(shocked by this offer)
Valgame dios? Look at that yard.
You want these people to think we
live like farm animals. You get out
of my face.

GRACIE

But who?

They all turn. SILENCE.

Paquito's toy cars weave in and out of condiments. Suddenly,
the two cars smash into each other in a spectacular crash.
But the room is SILENT? He looks up.

Mom, Dad, and big sister are staring down at him.

Lola digs into her pocket and pulls out a five dollar bill. She holds up an empty container of yellow Knudsen Sour Cream.

LOLA
Mijo...

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Paquito stands at the door. Puts on a baseball cap. Looks down at his watch. 24:00 minutes and counting. He starts the timer, 24:59.

He pulls out the five dollar bill from his pocket, stares at it, then puts it back in his pocket. In the yard he sees a Razor scooter, a bike, and a skateboard. He bends over and tightens up his laces.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

He decides on the scooter and is out the front yard. The scooter cruises along. Paquito's a big kid now on a big kid mission. He even looks older.

As he cruises along, he slows down and looks at a house overflowing with vegetation. This is a wild place.

EXT. HOUSE WITH VEGETATION - DAY

He looks up to a sign that reads, "Beware of Dog." There is a low RUMBLE and a GRINDING of a chain on a poll.

Paquito rides his scooter down the driveway to the gutter at the edge of the street. Can he cross this street on his own? He looks both ways but as he is about to cross, a mysterious car with THUMPING music zooms passed and HONKS its horn. Paquito backs up.

But as he catches his breath, a MASSIVE PIT BULL, BARKS through the gate. All we see are fangs and fur. It tries to tear through the gate.

Paquito frantically rides his scooter across the street.

Just as he clears the wide chasm of the street, another car zooms passed. He looks back across the street and eyes the pit bull which glares at him.

Paquito takes in a deep breath and pushes along.

As he hums along, a kid jumps from behind a bush and stops Paquito by gripping the handle bars.

EXT. VICTOR'S HOUSE - DAY

Paquito looks at the hands, then looks up. VICTOR, 10, is a wannabe gangster, and stares Paquito down.

VICTOR

Nice scooter Paquito, I thought you weren't allowed to cross onto our side of the street.

PAQUITO

(trembling)

I've got to get crema for the tamales.

Paquito stares at Victor. He looks up at Victor's porch and sees LAURA, 9, she holds a doll and looks at Paquito.

VICTOR

You going to cry. I kind of want to go for a ride myself.

Victor pushes Paquito off the scooter. Paquito falls to the ground. He looks at his pants. They are torn. He looks up and sees Victor laughing as he circles him.

Paquito looks at Laura, then his watch, 21:03 left. Victor attempts a bunny hop.

Paquito eyes a branch on the ground. He grabs it and jams it in front of the scooter. Victor flies off.

Paquito runs onto the scooter and pushes for dear life. Victor sits on the curb, SOBBING.

He gets to the end of the street and is relieved to see that Victor is not chasing him.

EXT. BUSY STREET INTERSECTION - DAY

Paquito arrives at the corner and looks up at the crosswalk signal. He stares at the heavy traffic as it passes by. He pushes the crosswalk button and sees that the light is still red.

Down the block there is a dirty, HOMELESS MAN who is mumbling something and holding out his hand.

He's ambling towards Paquito. Paquito stares at the light and then at the homeless man.

The man gets closer and closer. He's just feet away, towering over Paquito. Paquito taps on the crosswalk button. Finally, the light turns green and Paquito crosses the street.

EXT. LITTLE GROCERY STORE - DAY

Paquito leans his bike on the wall outside the grocery store. He looks across the street and sees the man stare at him. Paquito enters the store.

INT. LITTLE GROCERY STORE - CONTINUOUS

Paquito approaches the dairy section and notices dozens of varieties of crema. An OLDER WOMAN takes some cheese and dumps it in her cart. She eyes Paquito suspiciously, and goes about her business.

His eye lands on the yellow Knudsen Cream container.

CHECKOUT COUNTER

The CASHIER looks down at him, then down the aisle. Is this kid alone?

WOMAN
This it mijo?

PAQUITO
For the tamales.

The woman nods her head. Of course, the tamales.

WOMAN
Hey, it's your lucky day, this
crema is half off today. That'll be
2.49.

Paquito looks down at his five dollar bill. He counts with his fingers. He leans over the counter and grabs a Rocky Road candy bar. He puts it on the counter.

PAQUITO
For my sister.

The woman smiles and takes Paquito's money.

EXT. LITTLE GROCERY STORE - DAY

Paquito has the crema in a bag, and opens the Rocky Road as he walks out. He takes a bite, nothing ever tasted so good. He looks down at his watch, 12:03 remaining.

He turns to the wall, the scooter is gone. SHIT! He gets frantic. Looks behind the alley, back at the wall, into the gutter drain. Nothing. Paquito crosses the street.

CORNER

He approaches the corner dragging his feet. He looks up and sees a GIRL, 9, hell on wheels, riding his scooter.

Paquito takes the last bite from his candy bar and forcibly tosses it in his bag. He marches towards the girl.

PAQUITO
That's my scooter.

GIRL
I found it. It was in the alley.
It's not yours. If it was yours it
would be locked. Who leaves a
scooter in the alley?

PAQUITO
It was on the wall.

GIRL
No it wasn't.

Paquito has had it. He takes the handle bars into his hands and they wrestle for the scooter.

As he pulls it away from her, the bag snaps towards him and the crema falls out onto the floor, all over Paquito and the girl.

The girl rushes away crying. Paquito stands there holding his scooter. He looks into his pockets, he has 1 dollar. He pulls out the Rocky Road wrapper from the bag.

Paquito stands there. What will he do now?

The homeless man approaches Paquito, but Paquito stares the man down. Paquito doesn't budge. The man grabs the crema from the ground and scampers away.

Paquito looks up and across the street at the grocery store. He looks at his watch, 6:43 remaining.

Paquito kicks his heels into the ground, he crouches at a ready position, and pushes on his scooter across the street.

EXT. LITTLE GROCERY STORE - DAY

He rushes from across the street and into the store on the scooter.

MOMENTS LATER

He rides the scooter out of the store with a new container of crema.

The CASHIER chases after him waving her hands.

CORNER

Paquito crosses the street while the light is red. Once on the other side, he puts the crema in his bag. Paquito wipes the crema from his pants. He brushes his face. Nothing will get in the way now. Not even the law.

He zooms past Victor and sticks his tongue out at him. He smiles at Laura who smiles back.

As he coasts, Paquito smiles to himself.

He pushes harder and goes faster. His body tenses and his face grimaces at the pit bull in the yard. The dog barks and scratches at the gate, but Paquito just leans closer to his handle bars as he flies by the rabid dog.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

He rides into the yard and lets the scooter fall to the grass. He looks at his watch, 1:37 remaining. He rushes towards the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

No one is there. All is SILENT. He walks out the door towards the backyard.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

Gracie's BOYFRIEND and HIS PARENTS sit on the patio table with Lola and Tonio.

Everyone has tamales on their plate.

The father serves himself a generous scoop of crema on his tamale. He takes a big bite and laughs forcibly, crema and tamale crumbs all over his face.

Gracie rushes by Paquito on her way into the house.

GRACIE
(whispering)
Martin's dad brought his own.

Paquito gets to the table and Lola only half turning:

LOLA
Put it back in the fridge Paquito,
we'll use it for late...

Lola turns around to see her son.

LOLA
--look at you! What happened? Can't
you see we have company. Go inside
right now and change. You're
embarrassing us.
(turning back to her
guests)
Kids. They're so clueless.

Paquito stands there, looks at his dad who shrugs his shoulders, sneaks a smile at his son.

As he turns to head back in, Gracie rushes out with more tamales.

GRACIE
(whispering)
Go change stupid.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Paquito puts down his crema on the table. He looks outside to see the adults laughing.

Paquito grimaces.

He pulls a chair so he can reach into the tamale pot. He takes out two. They're hot, he almost drops them.

He puts them down on a plate and sits at the table. He pushes his two little cars away from him. He's in a man's world now. He opens the crema while looking out at the adults. Shakes his head.

PAQUITO
Get a clue.

He serves a generous scoop of crema on the tamale.

He bites into the tamale and smiles. Crema all over his face.
Pure heaven.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END.