

Neighbors

by

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Characters:

Ron, 40-60

Craig, 40-60

Setting:

A neighborhood.

Lights rise on two lawns divided by a small hedge. Peaceful morning. Birds chirp happily. On one side is CRAIG, sitting in a lawn chair. His hair is wild, his glasses up on his head, his clothes look like he's worn them for weeks, which he has. He's looking through binoculars, which hang around his neck. On the other side of the hedge enters RON in an old robe that's open, revealing only loose, once-white, now coming apart, underwear. He has chest hair that is as thick as crabgrass. He's disgusting. Strapped to his back is a gasoline powered leaf blower, which he uses like the erect penis he longs for but will never have again. The sound of it blasts into the serene morning. CRAIG pays no mind. RON notices CRAIG and slowly works his way over to him. RON looks where CRAIG is looking. He's suspicious. RON stops the blower and he and CRAIG stand on opposite sides of the hedge looking out.

Craig.

RON

Ron.

CRAIG

What you do think?

RON
(gesturing)

CRAIG looks through the binoculars.

It's suspicious.

CRAIG

I'd say so.

RON

Who needs two moving trucks?

CRAIG

Exactly. It's just a three bedroom house.

RON

Unless it isn't just a three bedroom house.

CRAIG

RON

What are you saying?

CRAIG

I'm saying, what if it's a three bedroom house with a large, underground bunker?

RON

Did you ever go inside when Bob and his family lived there?

CRAIG

No. Never got an invite.

RON

I never trusted Bob and his wife, I gotta tell you.

CRAIG

Nope. The way they "kept to themselves."

RON

And all those kids?

CRAIG

Who needs seven kids?

RON

Nobody. Overbreeding is disgusting.

CRAIG

And now look. Who did they sell their place to? More breeders? Why can't people just have sex and be done with it? Do we need to see evidence of it?

RON

I agree. Makes me want to puke.

CRAIG

Exactly. Having lots of kids is no different than putting up a sign in your yard that says "We Like to Get It On."

RON

Worse, it's irresponsible. Resources are finite.

CRAIG

It's criminal.

RON

An overly-aggressive display of power.

CRAIG

Let's face it. Excessive reproduction is the first step to world domination.

RON

Exactly. It's Art of War shit. It's Nazi shit.

CRAIG

(putting his binoculars back
on)

Look at all those brown shirts running around. Do you think they're really movers?

RON

I don't know. Good question.

CRAIG

I mean, they look like movers. But what if they aren't? What if they're something else?

RON

Government?

CRAIG

You're goddamn fucking right government. And people call *me* crazy? Here is the proof right here. Cops are always saying to me, show me the proof, Craig. Well, here it is, guys. What else do you want? Blood rushing down the gutters in the street? Spaceships landing on the roof of the house? Look at the name of the moving company. Zerksaw. What the hell kind of name is Zerksaw?

RON

You think it's code?

CRAIG

I know it's code.

RON

What for do you think?

CRAIG

I have ideas. Trust me. I have lots of ideas. And I know just where to go to get confirmation.

RON

The internet.

CRAIG

That's right.

Suddenly, both men wave to an unseen person.

RON

Hello, Mrs. Cattleman.

CRAIG

How are you? Good to see you. Hi, Muffy!

A small yappy dog goes insane. Stops.
Beat.

RON

You see the performance Mrs. Cattleman put on at Mickey's Halloween party?

CRAIG

I heard.

RON

Apparently, took off her top and screamed "these are real!"

CRAIG

Trust me, they're not real. I know real. Those are not real.

RON

I heard she went to Moscow to get them.

CRAIG

Call me not surprised. The woman can't be trusted.

RON

You see the way she was looking at us just now? Squinty-eyed. Like it's us, you know? It's *us*.

CRAIG

It ain't us, Miss Mail Order Bride, Miss Kompromat, it's you.

RON

You and your mentally impaired commie dachshund bitch.

CRAIG

The neighborhood is going to hell in a psychotic handbasket.

RON

People going in your mailbox.

CRAIG

Stealing your wifi.

RON

Kids making mysterious chalk drawings in the street.

CRAIG

Sewer and Water digging random holes. I mean, how dumb do they think we are? Drink out of the faucet now? I don't even bathe anymore!

RON

Me, either!

CRAIG

Oh, but me with a telescope, in my own house, oh, call the cops! He's spying again! I'm spying because you're building bombs in your living room, Mr. Wilson, you fascist piece of shit.

RON

The situation in this neighborhood is frightening.

CRAIG

One day I'm going to wake up with moving company brown shirts inserting a microchip up my ass.

They wave again to an unseen person.

RON

Johnny.

CRAIG

Hey, John.

Beat.

RON

Always running.

CRAIG

Yes.

RON

Does he ever stop?

CRAIG

It's like he's running not for exercise, but *from* something. You know what I mean?

RON

I do.

CRAIG

You ever notice how he's always looking over his shoulder at us when he goes by?

RON

He's paranoid.

CRAIG

But why is he paranoid? What's he up to that makes him so paranoid?

RON

Good question.

CRAIG

What is he hiding?

RON

He claims to be divorced. But have you seen his wife since the divorce?

CRAIG

No.

RON

There you go.

CRAIG

You think he killed her?

RON

He's a town councilman. Those guys know how to bury bodies.

CRAIG

Like it never happened.

RON

Poor woman. I'll bet she never saw it coming.

CRAIG

She came on to me once.

RON

No shit?

CRAIG

Did this Wella Balsam thing with her hair.

RON

What a slut.

CRAIG

She'd come over because her Fed Ex package was "accidentally" delivered to my house. I left it on my porch for her.

RON

What was in the package?

CRAIG

That's what I'd like to know.

RON

Blue prints? Some sick manifesto?

CRAIG
I should have looked. But, you know, a strange box shows up
on your doorstep?

RON
Would make me nervous.

CRAIG
She slid her tongue at me, across her upper lip.

RON
What a whore.

CRAIG
She pretended like she didn't see me. "Oh, I didn't see
you." I'm, like, oh, really?

RON
I hate liars.

CRAIG
I was right there, hiding behind my mulberry tree.

RON
How could she not see you?

CRAIG
Exactly.

RON
No wonder John killed her.

A car drives by. They both wave. Drop
their hands.

CRAIG
Mr. Patterson. One of those denier types.

RON
Like history means nothing. Like science is a fraud.

CRAIG
How can a grown man deny that our mailman is part of the
Illuminati? He's a mailman!

Just then, in the distance, they hear
piano playing, angry piano playing.

RON
Ah, shit. There it is again. Angry piano.

CRAIG
Angry piano.

RON

Sometimes I wonder if Old Man Barnes isn't sending out signals.

CRAIG

I don't wonder. He is.

RON

If the calvary comes one day and wipes us all out, we'll know why.

CRAIG

Dude has major issues.

RON

One time, I went to grab some of his pine straw that was piling up in the street, and he comes running out, "what are you doing?!"

CRAIG

People flip out over the stupidest shit.

RON

I thought he was going to attack me. I had to lift the pitch fork up to hold him off.

CRAIG

I would have done the same thing.

RON

I wanted to drive it into his chest.

CRAIG

I don't blame you.

RON

The world is total lunacy, Craig.

CRAIG

That it is, that it is. I see it all the time online. The shit people spew. It's madness.

RON

People act like they can say whatever they want now and it's OK.

CRAIG

And it's not OK. Calling someone a crazy, pencil-dicked Momma's boy is not OK.

RON

At some point, you know, people fight back.

CRAIG

They do. There is only so much shit a person can take.

RON

I agree.

CRAIG

One of these days, I'm gonna lose it on somebody and I'm gonna say "You're goddamn lucky it didn't happen sooner."

RON

I'll be right there with you, Craig. Someone is going to get on my wrong side and I'm gonna carve "stop bugging my phone" into their forehead with a power drill.

CRAIG

You don't think when I'm out mowing my lawn I don't dream about mowing down that ugly Olson kid? He lingers!

RON

I hear you. A bicyclist goes by two or three times, you don't think I want to clock him in the back of the head with a shovel?

CRAIG

Who wouldn't?

RON

Exactly.

CRAIG

I mean, goddammit, can't people just be good fucking neighbors?

RON

How hard is it to be a good fucking neighbor?

Just then, CRAIG notices something in the bush between them. He grabs it. It's a drone.

CRAIG

What is this?

RON

Looks like a drone.

CRAIG

It's on.

RON

How did it get in the bush?

CRAIG
I don't know. (beat) You have a drone, don't you, Ron?

RON
So do you, Craig. You're the only neighbor I know who has one.

CRAIG
You're the only neighbor I know period.

RON
It's not mine.

CRAIG
It's not mine, either.

Silence. CRAIG tosses the drone back into the bush. They look at each other suspiciously.

Beat.

CRAIG (cont'd)
Anyway. Let me know if you see anything weird with those movers.

RON
You, too.

CRAIG and RON back away from each other, slowly. RON turns on the leaf blower and points it at CRAIG. CRAIG looks at RON through his binoculars. They both exit the stage, in reverse, never taking their eyes off the other.

Lights fade.

THE END