

BAD VIGILANTES

"Pilot"

Written by

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COLD OPEN

EXT. DAMIEN AND MAX'S APARTMENT - FRONT STEPS - DAY

DAMIEN, mid-twenties, entitled narcissist, sits on the curb nursing a beer and enjoying the sunshine.

MAX, early-twenties, lovable idiot, comes home.

MAX

I got your text. Everything okay?

DAMIEN

Yeah, I was just bored.

MAX

Oh, okay. Why aren't you at work?

DAMIEN

Didn't feel like going. Did you know that with this new job, I get eight sick days a year?

MAX

Isn't this like the fifth time you've called in sick this month?

DAMIEN

What are they gonna say: "you're not sick?" Plus, on the days I have gone in, I haven't even gotten a thank you. Why work if you're not gonna get the recognition?

MAX

Makes sense.

Max sits down next to him. Damien hands him a beer.

MAX (CONT'D)

Soooo... I got into the academy.

DAMIEN

Holy crap! Congrats, man!

MAX

Yeah, I dunno. I've just never seen myself as a police officer. My dad's pressuring me into it.

DAMIEN

I've always wanted a friend in the force to help get me out of trouble.

MAX

What trouble?

DAMIEN

You know. Just in case...

They see ERIKA, strong-minded, social justice warrior, walk toward them.

DAMIEN (CONT'D)

Plus, you never know. Erika might like a man in uniform!

MAX

You think?!

DAMIEN

Sure...

Erika joins them.

ERIKA

What was so important that I had to leave work early?

DAMIEN

Max got into Police Academy!

MAX

But I just told you that -

ERIKA

Really? That's awesome! I didn't even know you wanted to be a cop.

MAX

(smiling sheepishly)  
It's no big deal, really.

ERIKA

Seriously, congrats! That's huge. Hey, a man in uniform? The ladies are going to be all over you!

Max lights up for a second.

ERIKA (CONT'D)

Not me. Other girls, though.

She pats him on the shoulder. Damien hands Erika a beer.

DAMIEN  
Cheers to knowing someone in the  
force.

The three raise their beers. A police car drives by and pulls  
over beside them. OFFICER CHAN rolls down the window.

OFFICER CHAN  
You guys know it's against the law  
to drink on the street?

MAX  
Sorry, officer. We don't want any  
trouble.

DAMIEN  
This is my apartment. We're just  
getting some air.

OFFICER CHAN  
You can't have open alcohol in  
public. You'll have to go back  
inside or dispose of the alcohol.

The cop seems very reasonable. Damien looks to Max and Erika.

DAMIEN  
You heard the man. Let's dispose.

Damien starts chugging his beer. Max follows.

OFFICER CHAN  
HEY, STOP! That's not what I meant.

Officer Chan gets out of his car. Damien and Max stop  
chugging. Erika shakes her head at them.

DAMIEN  
(immediately post-gulp)  
I'm disposing the alcohol?

OFFICER CHAN  
Either go inside, or pour them out.  
Otherwise, I'll have to fine you.

ERIKA  
Why are you being so uptight?

DAMIEN  
Yeah, what a power trip. This is  
supposed to be a free country.

Officer Chan takes out his ticket pad and starts writing.

DAMIEN (CONT'D)  
Hey! What are you writing? Stop writing!

MAX  
Guys, it's fine. Let's go inside.

Officer Chan hands Damien a ticket.

DAMIEN  
\$150? Are you kidding?

Officer Chan rips off a second ticket and hands it to Max, who takes it without complaint. He then turns to Erika.

OFFICER CHAN  
I'll turn a blind-eye for you just this once.

ERIKA  
Why?! Because I'm a woman?

OFFICER CHAN  
No. Because you didn't drink.

ERIKA  
I had open alcohol. Am I not entitled to the same treatment?

Officer Chan is baffled.

DAMIEN  
This is typical police brutality. We're just out here celebrating our friend getting into the academy, and you had to ruin everything!

MAX  
Damien, c'mon. Let's just go.

DAMIEN  
(gesturing to Max)  
Do you know who this is?! This is the chief's son!

Max facepalms.

DAMIEN (CONT'D)  
But it's not like you care! "Oh, look! People are having a good time. Let's go ruin their day!"

ERIKA

"Oh, look. It's a woman. Let's not treat her equally because she must be a damsel!"

DAMIEN

"Is that a black guy? Let's arrest him... Oh, what's that? He's surrendering? Let's shoot him!"

MAX

Too far, man...

OFFICER CHAN

This is my last warning. Go inside before I arrest you.

DAMIEN

C'mon, guys. Let's go. This won't be the last you hear from us.

OFFICER CHAN

No, it's not. Because you'll have to pay the ticket...

Damien and Erika go inside. Max shrugs apologetically to the officer and follows them inside.

INT. LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

DAMIEN

Can you believe that guy?

MAX

Calm down, man. It's fine.

DAMIEN

It's not fine. This isn't the first time a cop abused their power. We need to teach them a lesson. And now we have a man on the inside to help.

Max is instantly filled with regret. Erika is intrigued.

ERIKA

What are you thinking?

DAMIEN

(beat)

We're going to make a statement.

MAIN TITLES

ACT ONEINT. DAMIEN AND MAX'S APARTMENT - LATER

Max, Erika, and Damien wait anxiously on the couch. A flip chart sits in front of them that reads "Operation Justice."

DAMIEN

So how exactly is your cousin involved in the media?

MAX

I'm not sure, but I know she works in the field. Listen, you have to promise I'll stay anonymous. I can get in serious trouble if the academy finds out I'm involved.

DAMIEN

Yeah, yeah. Don't worry. Can you steal uniforms for us?

MAX

NO!

DAMIEN

You're right. It'd be risky since you haven't started yet. We'll utilize your position later.

Max worries his concerns are being ignored.

ERIKA

Why do we even need someone else in the media? Are we forgetting that I'm a journalist?

DAMIEN

You write for a food blog that nobody cares about.

ERIKA

My following at Buzzfood has grown exponentially. When I eventually tackle real issues, people will listen. Plus, all it takes is for one article to go viral.

DAMIEN

I'm not risking putting this story in the hands of someone whose most recent article was...

(MORE)

DAMIEN (CONT'D)  
(takes out his phone)  
"Why shawarma is overrated."

Erika folds her arms, unimpressed.

MAX  
(to Erika)  
I think it's overrated, too.  
Turnips are weird.

Erika rolls her eyes. They hear a knock on the door. Damien gets up to open it. SYDNEY, dead-pan, sarcastic, enters.

DAMIEN  
You must be Sydney!

SYDNEY  
Hi.

MAX  
Hey, Syd.

DAMIEN  
I'm Damien. That's Erika. You already know Max. Thanks for coming. Make yourself at home.

Sydney walks to the couch and sits beside Max. Damien begins his presentation in front of the group.

DAMIEN (CONT'D)  
So, let's just jump right into it. First off, I'm sorry to have you here under such unfortunate circumstances. I'm sure Max filled you in.

Max shakes his head. Sydney looks confused. Damien sighs.

DAMIEN (CONT'D)  
We were severely mistreated by the police recently and our story needs to be heard. Normally, I like to be the bigger man, but at some point, we have a societal obligation to say when enough is enough.

Still confused. She stares at him with a deadpan expression.

DAMIEN (CONT'D)  
We need you to circulate our story.

SYDNEY  
How?

DAMIEN  
You work in the media, correct?

SYDNEY  
I'm a film student.

Damien is stumped. Max has an "ah-ha!" moment.

MAX  
Oh, right... But didn't you make those documentaries that were on the news?

SYDNEY  
We made a documentary as an assignment once and we posted it on Facebook...It was never on the news.

Damien glares at Max, appalled by his stupidity. Max shrugs. Damien frustratedly tries to make the best of it.

DAMIEN  
Okay, that's... that's fine...  
(beat)  
Actually, this could be better. We can make a documentary!

SYDNEY  
About what?

DAMIEN  
About how the police mistreated us!

She waits for an explanation.

DAMIEN (CONT'D)  
The three of us were minding our own business, when a cop showed up and told us to pull down our pants and bend over. When we refused, we were ticketed.

SYDNEY  
A cop tried to have sex with you?

DAMIEN  
Take advantage of us. Yes.

EXT. DAMIEN AND MAX'S APARTMENT - FRONT STEPS - FLASHBACK

Max feeds a homeless man by the curb. Erika prays the rosary. Damien finishes helping an old lady cross the street.

DAMIEN (V.O.)

The cop drove by and asked what we were up to. When we said we were just hanging out, he got out of his car and pulled out his gun!

Officer Chan frantically gets out of his car, pushes the old lady out of his way, and pulls out his gun, pointing it at the group.

OFFICER CHAN

GET DOWN ON THE GROUND, NOW!

All three of them lie face-down on the floor with their hands on their heads. Officer Chan puts his boot on Damien's face.

DAMIEN (V.O.)

When I asked him why he was being so hostile, he responded:

OFFICER CHAN

BECAUSE I DON'T LIKE YOUR FACE.

(to Erika)

And I'm not giving you a ticket because you're a woman and you make less money than men do, so you definitely can't afford it.  
HAHAHAHA.

INT. DAMIEN AND MAX'S APARTMENT - BACK TO PRESENT DAY

Damien waits anxiously for Sydney's reaction. Max is confused, not remembering any of that. Sydney is unconvinced.

SYDNEY

So that's what happened...

DAMIEN

Word for word.

Max is about to interrupt. Erika stops him.

SYDNEY

Okay... Well, I'm gonna go.

DAMIEN

What? Why?

SYDNEY

This isn't really my kind of thing.

DAMIEN

What about the injustice?!

SYDNEY

Yeah, it's a real tragedy.

She gets up and walks to the door. Damien yells out to her.

DAMIEN

This is a good filmmaking opportunity! It's real, practical experience, which I know you barely get in school.

She stops and lingers, interested. He walks over to her.

DAMIEN (CONT'D)

That's an injustice we can tackle another time. Anyway -

Damien pulls out his wallet and counts his money.

DAMIEN (CONT'D)

I'll even throw in... \$200.

He hands her all the cash in his wallet. She debates it.

DAMIEN (CONT'D)

This is how you become the next James Cameron, or whatever.

SYDNEY

Nora Ephron? Nancy Meyers? Sofia Coppola?

DAMIEN

Sure.

She deeply debates it, then finally caves. She takes the money, regretfully.

SYDNEY

Fine. Tell me about "Operation Justice."

DAMIEN

Get your equipment and meet back here in an hour.

She hesitates for a second. Damien gives her a "what are you waiting for" look.

SYDNEY

Oh, you're serious...

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