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*Gran Torino*

Clint Eastwood is the director, producer, and main actor of this film. His character is named, Walt Kowalski, a Korean War veteran, who lives with his dog Daisy, and has a 1972 Gran Torino car in mint condition, his most prized possession. He once lived among a heavily populated, working-class neighborhood consisting mostly of white families; yet, today, the neighborhood is populated mostly by Asians: Hmong immigrants and some Hmong gangs.

The movie starts out with the passing of Walt's wife Dorothy. Walt remarks that he thinks that the local clergyman, Father Janovich's eulogy is shallow, and he doesn't really care for his two sons and their families. Throughout the movie, he thinks his grand kids are spoiled and rude. The only time they paid any attention to Walt's existence is when they want or need something from him. His sons constantly quote that they are a disappointment to their father. Father Janovich tells Walt that his wife's dying wish is for Walt to go to confession. Walt writes him off and tells the father "I think you're an over educated twenty-seven-year-old virgin, who likes to hold hands of ladies who are superstitious and promises them eternity."

One of Walts' neighbors is the Vang Lot family. Consisting of a widow, grandma, and two teenagers, named Sue and Thao. A Hispanic gang is harassing Thao, and Thao's cousin Spider, and gang frighten off the Hispanic gang. Spiders' gang convinces Thao to join them so his initiation before acceptance into the gang is to steal Walts Gran Torino. Walt spoils the robbery; but Thao gets away and fails his initiation. A few days later Spider and his gang show back up again. Sue and Thao are on the porch, they grab Thao and a brawl breaks out. The fight rolls over into Walt's yard, and there standing is Walt with his rifle. Walt tells them to "get off my lawn" and the gang tells him "to watch his back" and leaves. The next day the Hmong

leave food and plants on his doorsteps for saving Thao. Walt, the grumpy old man that he is, doesn't like it. Then, he finds out that Thao was the one that tried to steal his car. Walt tells him to stay off his property.

On Walt's Birthday, his son, Mitch, and his wife come to visit him. They bring him cake and a phone with large numbers on it. They also try to get Walt to move into a retirement home so they can get their hands on the house. Walt growling in anger proceeds to kick them out of his house, where upon Mitch and his wife wished they would have stayed home with the kids. Later that day, Walt is driving home from work and sees that Sue is being harassed by three black guys, but Sue having a strong personality doesn't take it from them. Walt confronts them and pulls a gun on them and saves Sue. Sue and Walt get to know each other and Sue invites Walt over for a barbecue. Sue tells him about the Hmong culture and Walt feels like he is closer to them than he is with his own family. The next day Sue, Thao, and the mother tell Walt that Thao needs to own up for trying to steal his car.

Thao has to work for Walt. Walt has him clean up a run-down house. As Walt is watching him for this time, he comes to like Thao; he knows that Thao is a hard worker. Walt and Thao become best friends. Walt teaches Thao to become a man. He teaches him how to talk like man. Walt gets Thao a job at a construction site. Walt gives him tools to go to work with. He also tries to get Thao to ask out a beautiful Hmong girl, named Youa.

After every time Walt coughs, blood comes up. Walt decides to see a doctor. He gets the results back and he is not in good health. Walt decides to call up his son, he tries to tell his son but he doesn't listen to Walt. Also, his son seemed too busy to talk to him. During this Spider and his gang find Thao walking home from work. They trash his tools and they burn his face with a cigarette. Once Walt sees this, he hunts down where the gang lives. In retaliation Walt beats Smokey, the second guy in charge. Walt tells him to stay away from Thao you and all of your other buddies.

One night Spider and his gang do a drive-by and shoot up the Vang Lors house. Thao gets wounded in the neck. Walt runs over to there house and tries to find out where Sue is. She was suppose to go to her aunt's house but never made it. As they are waiting at the house they finally hear a car pull up. Sue walks through the door. She had been raped and beaten badly. In anger, Walt goes back to his house and punches his cupboards and bloodies up his knuckles. Father Janovick comes to visit Walt. Father tells him that the Hmong people won't tell so Spider and his gang get off without justice. Walt gives the Father a beer, and Walt and the Father have had an open discussion. The next day Thao comes over to Walt's house and in anger wants Walt to go and kill the gang for what they did to Sue. Walt tells the boy to come back at four. Walt tells him you need to plan before you go get yourself killed. During this time, Walt knowing he's in bad health and this will be his last few hours to live pursues a variety of luxurious things. He goes to his bartender and tips him good. He purchases a new nicely tailored suite, he takes a bubble bath and lights up a cigarette. The first time he has ever smoked inside the house. He goes to the chapel and tells the Father he is there for confession. He confesses little things at first but the last thing he said was that he wished he had a better relationship with his family. He says regretfully, "I didn't know them. I didn't know how."

Thao returns back to Mr. Kowalski house at the time Walt told him too. Walt then gives his silver star award to Thao. Right after this Walt locks him in the basement. Walt tells him that he doesn't want the consequences for killing someone on his soul. Thao asks, "What's is it like to kill a man?" Walt replies back, "Well, its goddamn awful, that's what it is. The only thing worse is getting a medal for killing some poor kid that wanted to just give up, that's all." Walt leaves the house and takes his dog daisy to the Hmong family. At the bar, Walt calls Sue to let her know where his keys are to let Thao out of the basement.

Meanwhile, Father Janovick and two police officers are at the gang's house waiting for something to happen. After a while the sergeant calls it off saying that we can't hold a unit down to one location and are ordered to take the Father with them. Walt appears at the gang

members' house later that night. With the gang watching and the whole neighborhood watching too. Walt takes out a cigarette, and asks the gang if anybody has got a light? Then, Walt reaches into his jacket and before he could pull his hand out all the gang members riddles him up with bullets Walt falls to the ground, in his hand was his 1st Calvary Division lighter. Thao and Sue finally arrive and are told by policeman that the gang members are being arrested for killing Walt and that this time they have witnesses.

In the end, a service is held for Walt. The Vang Lor family shows up in their traditional Hmong clothes and his immediate family is there too. Father Janovick gave the eulogy and told stories of how he learned from Walt that he was a twenty-seven-year-old virgin. "Walt definitely had no problem calling it like he saw it."

Afterwards they are reading his will. Thao and Walt's family are there. He left his house to the church and then says "I'd like to leave my 1972 Gran Torino... to my friend... Thao Vang Lor. On the condition that you don't chop-top the roof like one of those beaners. Don't paint any idiotic flames on it like some white trash hillbilly, and don't put a big, gay spoiler on the rear end like you see on the other zipper-heads' cars. It just looks like hell."

The final scene shows Thao driving the Gran Torino off into the sunset with Daisy right by his side.

Work Cited

*Gran Torino*. Dir. Clint Eastwood. Matten Productions, 2008. DVD.