

EXT. BACKYARD -- DAY

GARDENIA BLADE pushes a gas mower.

HUXLEY, 20s, walks into view. He wears a Greenspace Compliance Office t-shirt.

Huxley waves. Gardenia keeps mowing. Huxley signals that he'd like her to kill the motor. She ignores him. They've been through this before.

HUXLEY

We need to talk. Mrs. Blade? I need you to turn that off, please. Mrs. Blade, please don't make me call for backup.

Gardenia releases the safety and the mower sputters out.

HUXLEY

I really appreciate --

GARDENIA

Get off my property.

HUXLEY

Mrs. Blade --

GARDENIA

I do not recognize your organization, get off my property.

HUXLEY

I have to confiscate the mower, ma'am. This is your third strike.

GARDENIA

Try it and you'll be sorry.

HUXLEY

My mom can get you an electric one at cost.

GARDENIA

That's wasteful, this one is perfectly fine.

HUXLEY

It's not, it's poisoning the air. You have to comply, Mrs. Blade, you don't have a choice.

GARDENIA

Try me.

Huxley is at a loss. He tries another tactic.

HUXLEY

Hear about the fires? They've crossed the river. It's half a mile wide where it crossed. A half a mile. How'd it do that?

GARDENIA

Spotting. Embers in the wind.

HUXLEY

Flying fire. Scary stuff.

GARDENIA

Unless somebody started it and blamed it on the wind.

HUXLEY

Why would somebody do that?

GARDENIA

Compliance.

HUXLEY

Oh here we go.

GARDENIA

Maybe it's the air purification manufacturers in collusion with the government to generate demand. They know they'll get the air purifiers to work eventually, but until they do they need people to buy into them and comply with the regulations. To get people to comply they start fires to make more smoke to create the illusion that we need air purification. People see the smoke, panic and bingo, compliance.

HUXLEY

Maybe they wouldn't have to do that if people thought rationally about the problem.

GARDENIA

Let me tell you what I think is rational. My little gas mower is not the source of climate change.

(MORE)

GARDENIA (CONT'D)

My little gas mower, in the end,
will leave a smaller carbon
footprint or ecological impact or
whatever you want to call it on
the planet than your electric one.

HUXLEY

You're wrong.

GARDENIA

How in the world do you know that?

HUXLEY

They've done studies.

GARDENIA

Oh, my goodness, studies! Well...

HUXLEY

Sarcasm is no defense, you taught
me that.

GARDENIA

Facts then. Let me see if I
remember from our last visit. Lawn
mowers use 800 million gallons of
gas a year. We spill another 90 or
so million gallons on the ground
in the process. In an hour a gas
mower spews the equivalent of a
car traveling 500 miles. How am I
doing?

HUXLEY

Good. Let me know when you've
convinced yourself.

GARDENIA

So if we get rid of mowers and
other gas powered lawn equipment,
we get rid of five percent of the
emissions in the United States.
Seems like a lot for a little.

HUXLEY

What seems like a little is a lot
if you add all the little lots
together.

GARDENIA

Clever. How do you know we're not
trading evil for evil?

HUXLEY

No. You're not changing the agenda.

GARDENIA

I thought the agenda was to save the world.

HUXLEY

I am confiscating your mower, Mrs. Blade. My mom is going to help you get an electric mower, and that's how we're going to save the world.

GARDENIA

Okay, but let me ask, if I may.

HUXLEY

You said okay.

GARDENIA

How is the mower charged?

HUXLEY

It just plugs into the wall, it has a charger.

GARDENIA

And where is the power coming from to power the charger?

HUXLEY

I know where you're going with this and you're wrong. That power could be coming from wind energy or solar energy --

GARDENIA

Or geothermal or biomass or?

HUXLEY

Fossil fuels, but the likelihood--

GARDENIA

Another question. Can you explain the battery, it's made from lithium, correct?

HUXLEY

Correct.

GARDENIA

Do you know how the lithium is extracted from the ground?

HUXLEY

It's mined.

GARDENIA

Do you know how it's mined?

HUXLEY

Vaguely. Okay, no, not really.

GARDENIA

Miners drill holes in salt flats all over the world. They pump brine to the surface and leave it there to evaporate into a corrosive mineral mess that if it spills can kill a lot of fish and poison the water supply, but that's not the point, the point is the process uses a lot of water. A LOT of water, in places that are running out of water. So while you talk about the fires, I think about the rivers. What happens when we've achieved our goal and have ended our dependence on fossil fuels. What are we addicted to then? Lithium ion batteries that are destroying the planet we worked so hard to save. Do you know what scares me? That for some people climate change is desirable. That some people out there think the end of earth could lead to a profitable outcome. That space travel isn't aspirational, it's a business projection. Tell your mom I'll be in sometime next week to pick out a new one.

HUXLEY

I will. I like our conversations.

GARDENIA

Come over next Saturday and help me set up the new one?

Huxley nods. He walks over and pulls the starter cord on the mower. As he mows and Gardenia watches him, pan up to the sky.

TITLE: The 2051 Project is at www.the2051project.com

CREDITS ROLL