



여기 제사할게요
(CHECK PLEASE)

written and directed by
Shane Chung

OVER BLACK: THE SOUND OF WIND WHISTLING.

FADE IN:

We are EXTREMELY CLOSE ON A GLOWERING PAIR OF EYES, like those of a tiger's ready to pounce. They are focused on:

POV SHOT: A PLATE with ONE PIECE OF GALBI (PROD NOTE: a cut of cooked meat with bone on it) on a tabletop.

We linger on the eyes - they stare daggers into our souls. Background ambience SWELLS and ERUPTS right as the eyes TURN AND SUDDENLY BECOME FRIENDLY--

CUT TO:

1 INT. KOREAN BARBECUE RESTAURANT - EVENING

1

JAY (30s, male, Korean-American - whose eyes we saw earlier) clinks SOJU GLASSES with SU-BIN (30s, male, Korean).

The two sit at a table in an unpretentious Korean barbecue restaurant. Most booths are empty and an EMPLOYEE sweeps with a BROOM in the background - it's clearly closing time.

EMPTY BANCHAN DISHES and SOJU BOTTLES are scattered atop their table. Meat residue on the GRILL PAN SIZZLES.

Jay and Su-bin down the shots and - *ahhh* - let out a long, refreshed sigh.

JAY

You don't know how happy I am to see another Korean at the office!

SU-BIN

저도 마찬가지예요. 미국 오고 나서 음식들이 너무 짜고 기름져서 힘들었는데... 이제야 좀 살 것 같네.

(Same here. After I came to the U.S. it was hard adjusting to such greasy and salty food... at last I feel at home.)

JAY

Oh, and please, let's not use 존댓말 *(let's drop the formalities)*.

SU-BIN

아, 그럴까?

(Oh, should we?)

JAY
어때? (*How was it?*) Their 김치찌개's
(*kimchi-jjigae's*) good, huh?

SU-BIN
음식 나쁘지 않네... 미국애들이 만든 것 치고
는!
(*Pretty good... for Americans!*)

Su-bin cackles; Jay doesn't seem to get the joke.

SU-BIN
아 왜 한국 아줌마 손맛 알잖아! You know
"손맛"?
(*What, you know You know "Korean
touch"?*)

JAY
Oh, I've never been, actually. Born
and raised here.

SU-BIN
아... 그래?
(*Ah... I see.*)

An awkward beat; neither guy knows what to say.

SU-BIN
잘먹었다. 갈까?
(*That was good. Shall we?*)

As Jay gets up, Su-bin interrupts:

SU-BIN
그치만 아무리 맛이 비슷해도...
(*Another difference between the U.S.
and Korea...*)

Su-bin leans forward and places a hand on Jay's shoulder. THE LIGHTS IN THE RESTAURANT DIM.

Jay steels himself. He knows what's coming and he's ready.

SU-BIN (CONT'D)
...미국은 너무 비싸.
(*...is that it's pricier here.*)

JAY
Oh, should I treat you tonight then?

SU-BIN
 웃기네.
 (Funny.)

Jay and Su-bin sit as still as statues. A BALLED-UP PLASTIC WRAPPER bounces across the restaurant floor, tumbleweed-style.

JAY
 Aren't you going to finish that?

Without breaking eye contact - or taking his hand off Jay's shoulder - Su-bin SLAMS his fist onto the table, CATAPULTING the GALBI into the air and CATCHING IT IN HIS MOUTH.

He GRIPS the bone and TEARS ALL THE MEAT CLEAN OFF with his teeth in ONE EFFORTLESS MOTION.

Jay watches blankly as Su-bin chews the too-big bite ferociously. He swallows. A beat.

Then BOTH JAY AND SU-BIN RAISE THEIR HANDS AND CRY OUT:

JAY	SU-BIN
Check, please! I'm paying.	계산할게요! 내가 낼게. (Check, please! I'm paying.)

They turn to each other, SNEERING. *IT'S ON.*

FREEZE FRAME. TITLE CARD: CHECK PLEASE (여기 계산할게요)

2 INT. KOREAN BARBECUE RESTAURANT - MOMENTS LATER 2

The employee leaves a LEATHER CHECK HOLDER right between Jay and Su-bin. Jay slowly drags it towards himself with a finger.

JAY
 You're the guest, Su-bin, it's only right.

Su-bin lays a hand on the check holder, overpowering Jay and moving it towards his side of the table.

SU-BIN
 야, 임마. 너 96년생 아니야? 내가 낼게.
 (Hey, aren't I older than you? I'll pay.)

Jay isn't letting him get away so easy - he GRABS the check holder, pulling it closer.

JAY
As the person who's lived here longer,
I *insist*.

Su-bin grips harder. The check holder inches towards him.

SU-BIN
에헤이. 이 사람야. 원래 형이 내는거야.
(*I was raised the Korean way - so
there's no way I can let you pay.*)

Jay doubles down.

JAY
Su-bin, 친구야. If you think I'm
letting you pay a single cent for this
delicious meal, you're a stupid
asshole and I hate you. *I'm paying.*

SU-BIN
나 해병대 1180기 출신이야!
(*I trained in the military. You don't
know what I'm capable of!*)

Jay and Su-bin engage in a vicious tug-of-war. The two PULL
with their whole weight, STRAINING UNDER THE EFFORT, WHEN--

--Su-bin YANKS the check holder out of Jay's grasp-- the
force nearly makes them fall over backwards!

Su-bin looks at the check holder, then back at Jay. Su-bin
smirks.

A dark cloud passes over Jay's face.

Here we go.

Jay makes a couple REACHING GRABS over the table. Su-bin
DODGES artfully, moving side to side. Both remain seated.

Su-bin clutches the check holder to his chest with one hand--
when Jay makes another swipe, Su-bin PARRIES IT AWAY with his
free hand.

Jay starts THROWING RANDOM PUNCHES at Su-bin-- though Jay has
both hands free, Su-bin manages to block ALL of Jay's
uncoordinated attacks with just ONE HAND.

Jay punches again - this time, Su-bin PALMS Jay's fist and
SHOVES it backwards! Jay is THROWN backwards into his chair.

To add insult to injury, Su-bin UNFURLS a ROLLED-UP MOIST TOWELETTE and uses it to WHIP Jay in the FACE! *SMACK!*

Jay clutches his face in pain. Su-bin smirks. *You'll have to try harder than that.*

Jay now reaches OVER the table with both hands. Su-bin reacts, hiding the check holder UNDERNEATH the table.

Jay quickly juts his hands UNDER the table - but Su-bin has already moved the check holder back up OVER the table, where Jay's hands just were. The two alternate positions - up, down, up, down.

Just as Su-bin gets used to the rhythm, when he next moves the check holder up OVER the table he realizes Jay HADN'T MOVED THIS TIME-- fooled by the ol' switcheroo-- Jay's waiting hands easily SNATCH the check holder away!

Jay chuckles-- but Su-bin STOMPS HARD on Jay's foot-- Jay YELPS and he DROPS the check holder ONTO THE SIZZLING GRILL PAN between them.

Both instinctively reach towards the pan - but both pull away, wincing - *ooh, ahh, that's hot!*

Instead... Jay and Su-bin each pick up a PAIR OF TONGS. They attempt to pick the check holder off the pan while fending the other's tongs off. The metal tongs CLASH, WRESTLE, STAB. It's like the world's smallest and lamest fencing match.

Jay picks an empty PLASTIC CUP up with his tongs and JAMS it onto Su-bin's tongs, neutralizing the pincers. Su-bin looks around for another tool, and *he spots--*

Jay plucks the check holder off the grill-- Jay is about to pull it closer to him--

SU-BIN

Stop!

Jay stops. He looks up at Su-bin.

Su-bin has picked up a CHOPSTICK-FUL OF KIMCHI and is leaning over the table, holding it by Jay's WHITE DRESS SHIRT like the Gom Jabbar. A tense tableau; neither moves a muscle.

SU-BIN

Move and I drop the kimchi.

JAY
 (through gritted teeth)
 You bastard. I just dry-cleaned this
 thing.

SU-BIN
 Now.
 (beckoning with free hand)
 천천히.
 (*Hand it over.*)

A beat: Jay takes in his options. Then, in one swift move:

Jay EATS THE KIMCHI straight off Su-bin's chopsticks, PULLS BACK the check holder, GRABS Su-bin's wrist and SLAMS IT ONTO THE PAN.

Su-bin YOWLS IN PAIN! He pulls his arm back, staring at the GRILL LINES now scarring his hand.

3 INT. KOREAN BARBECUE RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

3

Su-bin STANDS UP, FURIOUS. Jay, *slapping the check holder shut*, stands up too, tucking the check holder into the waistband of his pants. (He winces - fresh off the pan, the check holder is still HOT.)

SU-BIN
 Korean-American 치고는 나쁘지 않은데?
 (*Impressive... for a Korean-American.*)

Su-bin walks over to the table and picks up a NEAR-EMPTY SOJU BOTTLE and DOWNS IT.

SU-BIN (CONT'D)
 그치만 네 나와바리에 싸우는 것이랑 네 이기는
 것이 관계없다!
 (*But just because we're fighting on
 your home turf doesn't mean you're
 winning!*)

He SMASHES THE BOTTOM OF THE SOJU BOTTLE on the table! The resulting SHARP EDGE GLEAMS DANGEROUSLY in the light.

Jay swallows hard. He looks past Su-bin - behind him, by the bar, an employee waits (impatiently) by the POINT-OF-SALE SYSTEM. If he can just get past Su-bin...

Mimicking Su-bin, Jay picks up the *other* soju bottle and SMASHES it on the table -- except he smashes it *too hard* and all he's left with is the tiny neck of the bottle. Jay looks

up, dumbfounded. *Oops.*

Su-bin LUNGES AT JAY, JABBING the broken bottle towards him!

Jay backs up madly-- but his back soon hits a WALL. *Nowhere to go!* But out of the corner of his eye he spots:

The BROOM, propped up, just in arm's reach-- Jay grabs it and--

--JAMS THE HANDLE INTO SU-BIN'S FACE, POKING HIM IN THE EYE. Su-bin recoils, cradling his face with both hands-- and DROPPING the soju bottle. It shatters on the ground.

Jay WIELDS the broom like a BO STAFF, showing off his skill with some HAND ROLLS. *The tables have turned!*

Now it's *Su-bin* backing up to avoid Jay's approach. Jay moves towards the bar - Su-bin's losing ground fast.

Thinking quick, Su-bin swipes a METAL GRILL COVERING (PROD NOTE: the circular steel ones with a hole in the middle - the ones Gogi uses) from a nearby table as they pass--

--and starts using it like a SHIELD to BLOCK Jay's broom strikes!

Jay and Su-bin are now locked in EVEN COMBAT - no more huge gains in territory for either of them. Jay STRIKES with his broom, Su-bin BLOCKS, holding his grill covering with one hand and PARRYING with his free hand.

The struggle is fierce. They are TIGER and DRAGON personified; FORCES OF NATURE clashing.

Jay arches backwards, about to strike Su-bin from overhead-- Jay SWINGS his broom downward--

--but Su-bin uses both hands to BLOCK the impact with the grill covering-- *POW!!!*

Neither combatant moves. Su-bin smirks. *Now what?*

Jay blinks. He takes the handle of the broom and...

...JAMS IT THROUGH THE HOLE IN THE GRILL COVERING, POKING SU-BIN IN THE OTHER EYE.

Su-bin cradles his injury with one hand - *that was humiliating.*

Jay celebrates this small victory-- but soon realizes he has trapped his weapon's handle in the grill covering.

With one hand still gripping the grill covering, Su-bin grabs the broom handle jutting out from the hole and YANKS it towards him--

--CRUSHING Jay's hands BETWEEN the grill covering and the head of the broom! Jay is forced to let go lest his fingers get flattened.

Su-bin grips the broom, the grill covering sitting on the handle like a piece of meat on a shish kebab.

Jay stands, deer-in-headlights, with no weapon. *Uh-oh.*

Su-bin flips the broom around, handle-end pointing at Jay--

--he strikes UP WITH THE BROOM, *HARD--*

--THE GRILL COVERING SLIDES UP FROM THE BROOM'S BASE AND FLIES OFF THE HANDLE INTO JAY'S FACE--

CLANG!!! The impact rings out like a GONG. Jay is thrown backward--

--and lands HARD on the floor. The grill covering lands next to him, CLATTERING to a stop.

Su-bin looms over Jay, beaten but smirking. He plucks the check holder out from Jay's pants. *Nice try.*

Su-bin opens the check holder.

Inside is a *NAPKIN*.

Horror dawns on Su-bin. He looks back.

JAY ISN'T THERE.

Laughing to himself, clutching the ACTUAL RECEIPT in his hand, Jay RUNS...

4 INT. KOREAN BARBECUE RESTAURANT - IN FRONT OF BAR AREA - 4
CONTINUOUS

...RIGHT TO the BAR, where the employee waits at the POINT-OF-SERVICE station. Jay SLAPS the receipt onto the counter.

JAY
Ring me up--

Jay SCREAMS, noticing Su-bin, who has seemingly TELEPORTED RIGHT BEHIND Jay. He TACKLES Jay away from the counter.

As Jay and Su-bin TUSSLE, WRITHE, and WRESTLE, the employee sighs like they've seen this a billion times before. They punch in a few numbers.

A CREDIT CARD READER BEEPS TO LIFE.

The sound pierces through Jay and Su-bin's brawl-- they both pause, look at the cashier stand, then back at each other.

Su-bin DIGS into his WALLET, frantically pulling out CASH, COINS, CARDS-- he turns to see--

Jay LUNGING AT SU-BIN, DOLLAR BILL IN HAND-- AND HE PAPER CUTS Su-bin IN THE *FACE!*

Su-bin RECOILS - a small cut bleeds on his cheek.

In retaliation, Su-bin pulls out LOOSE CHANGE from his POCKET-- he FLINGS THE COINS LIKE NINJA STARS AT JAY--

Jay stumbles backwards-- he looks at his arm-- his shirt sleeve has been PINNED by COINS HALF-EMBEDDED INTO THE WALL.

JAY
My shirt!!!

Jay rips his arm free-- the coins scatter everywhere-- and TACKLES Su-bin.

JAY
You'll-- *pay for this!*

SU-BIN
I'm-- trying-- to--!

Su-bin breaks free, coming to a stop a few feet away from Jay. Both lock eyes.

Su-bin brandishes his VISA.

Jay unsheathes his MASTERCARD. THEY LUNGE FOR EACH OTHER--

Their cards clash like two lightsabers as Jay and Su-bin RIPOSTE and PARRY and BLOCK each other's advances towards the credit card reader. Sparks fly.

SU-BIN
 (straining)
 It's just dinner, man! I'm just trying
 to be nice!

JAY
 "Just dinner"?!

Jay, possessed by a new, manic energy, STRIKES HARD against Su-bin with every line:

JAY (CONT'D)
 My white friends know lyrics to more
 K-Pop songs than I do.

BAM!

JAY (CONT'D)
 I have to use a dictionary to talk to
 my grandparents!

BAM!

JAY (CONT'D)
 To you it's paying for dinner! *To me
 this is all I have!*

BAM!!! The force of this last impact THROWS Su-bin to the floor. Su-bin spits blood. He's down for the count.

A resolute Jay watches Su-bin struggle to get up.

JAY
 You don't know how good you have it.

SU-BIN
 너는 안 그런 줄 알지?
(I could say the same for you.)

JAY
 What?

SU-BIN
 내가 왜 미국까지 왔겠어?
*(Why else do you think we immigrated
 to the U.S.?)*
 (coughing, then:)
 네가 이런다고 한국인이 될 것 같애?
*(Do you think this will make you
 Korean?)*

Jay opens his mouth, but can't find any words to say.

Jay steps towards the cashier. He's about to slide his Mastercard into the CHIP READER. It looks like it's over--

--but in a FINAL, HERCULEAN EFFORT, a BATTERED SU-BIN REACHES FOR HIS VISA--

--AND THROWS IT -- IT SAILS THROUGH THE AIR--

--RIGHT INTO THE CHIP SLOT.

THE TRANSACTION PENDS. Jay steps back, stunned. *It can't be.*

Su-bin closes his eyes like a dying man finally at peace.

The reader beeps. "TRANSACTION DECLINED".

Su-bin's eyes shoot open. He gets up like nothing happened and heads to the cashier stand, mouth agape, stuttering.

SU-BIN
 Uh, 잠깐, 나, but I have money on that?
 (beat, he realizes:)
 아 참 하나은행 카드가 여기 안되지.
 (Oh right, Hana Bank credit cards
 don't work here.)

Su-bin turns sheepishly to Jay.

Jay is so happy he could cry. A heavenly choir sings.
 PRE-LAP: The chittering of a receipt being printed.

CUT TO:

5 EXT. STRIP MALL - EVENING

5

Jay and Su-bin exit the restaurant. Though they're beaten and their clothes are tattered, they chat warmly.

SU-BIN
 ...20프로 정상이야?
 (...so 20% is normal?)

JAY
 18%, 20% is fine. Always tip. You don't wanna be "that guy".

SU-BIN
 이해할 수 없네.
 (How weird.)

JAY
Welcome to the US.

They stop walking and face each other. A beat. Jay and Su-bin both pull back their fists... it looks for a moment like they're going to punch each other... BUT--

--SLAP-- they go in for a FIRM HANDSHAKE instead.

SU-BIN
자, 그럼 2차가야지?
(So we're still getting drinks after this, right?)

JAY
My treat.

SU-BIN
어허. 이 사람이!
(This guy!)

Su-bin walks off, passing Jay. Just before he goes offscreen, we see him *slipping a wad of cash out from his pocket*. Jay doesn't notice.

A beat as Jay savors the cool evening air. He turns around, approaches a nearby VALET GUY and presents his CAR TICKET.

VALET GUY
(pocketing a wad of cash)
Oh, you're good, your parking's already been paid for.

JAY
(like someone just killed his entire family)
...what?

VALET GUY
Yeah, by him!

Valet Guy points off camera - Jay turns in disbelief, to see:

SU-BIN STANDING ACROSS THE STREET, staring back. Hands in pockets. Smirking. *He who laughs last...*

A car drives by - *whoosh* - when it passes, SU-BIN IS GONE.

Jay's legs buckle. His knees hit the unforgiving parking lot asphalt.

JAY
No... NO...
(cursing the heavens)
...NO!!!!

THE END...?