

Film Review: Mexicans in America Keep Striving in ‘A Better Life’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on July 8, 2011 - 6:39pm

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CHICAGO – One of the most contentious issues in America now is the handling of “illegal” immigrants from Mexico. They, like anyone else, want a better circumstance for themselves and their families, as director Chris Weitz explores in the new film “A Better Life.”



Essentially a modern re-telling of Victorio De Sica’s “The Bicycle Thief,” A Better Life mines the emotional journey of its protagonists, a father and son trying to get somewhere, anywhere in the midst of the slave wages and substandard living conditions for the illegal immigrant in this country. Surrounding the father is a cloak of pressure-filled fear, and even when a sliver of hope appears on the horizon it comes with consequences.

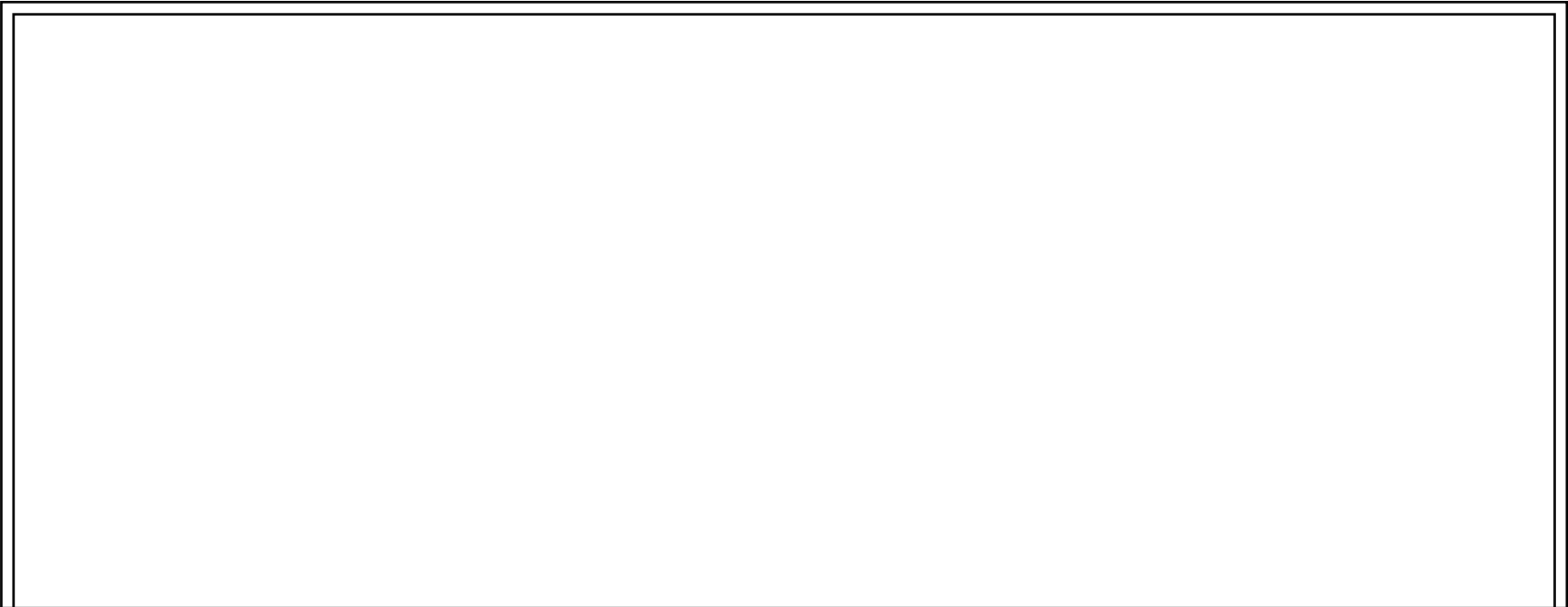
Carlos (Demi  n Bichir) life is one of redundant hard labor, earning a living sub contracting through a friend’s landscaping business. He has been in America illegally since he and his wife escaped from Mexico years before. After his wife passes away, he is left to raise his son Luis (Jos   Juli  n), now a teenager, who views his father as weak. Luis doesn’t even share Carlos illegal status since he was born in the U.S. The son is also being challenged in high school, as the gangs loom as an alternative to his poverty-stricken existence.

The tide turns somewhat when the owner of the landscaping business decides to move back to Mexico. He offers Carlos the business for a seemingly insurmountable sum, but a good deed Carlos had done years before miraculously secures the proper amount. He proudly buys the truck and equipment, then sets out to find that elusive “better life” for himself and his son.

When an unthinkable turn of events takes away the business opportunity, it is up to Luis to help his father recover what it his. This takes the pair toward a path of self-discovery, both through their relationship and their approach to solving the situation of the loss. What results from this challenge has the potential to change both their lives forever.

“A Better Life” has a limited release, including Chicago, on July 8th. See local listings for theaters and show times. Featuring Demi  n Bichir, Jos   Juli  n, Joaqu  n Cosio and Carlos Linares. Written by Eric Eason and Roger L. Simon, directed by Chris Weitz. Rated “PG-13”

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Hard Knocks: Carlos (Demián Bichir) Keeps Going in ‘A Better Life’
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