

NO WAY OF KNOWING

by

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INT. LIVING ROOM - ANYTIME

TRISHA and SAM discuss the problems of their eldest son MANNY.

SAM

I try. I try to talk him out of it but he won't listen.

TRISHA

Something needs to be done. You said you have control over him. Where is this great control?

SAM

Take it easy, before you---

TRISHA

Don't tell me to take it easy. I'm always taking it so damn easy. If I take it any more damn easy I think everything will come right to its end.

SAM

You need to relax. You always get yourself worked up more than necessary.

TRISHA

Really? I wonder why that is? When I 'take it easy' nothing gets done.

SAM

Trisha, please, don't work me up. I told you I would speak to him and that's what I did. He's a grown man, I can't be responsible for every decision he makes.

TRISHA

We should have done a better job. We put all our attention on Lana. We neglected our boy...

SAM

That's not your fault, it's mine.

TRISHA

It is my fault! It's my oldest son. Look at him! Look what's he's become.

SAM

He's not a bad young man.

TRISHA

He's bad to himself. He's destructive. He doesn't come to family gatherings. He's outcast himself, like he despises all of us. Who does that? He's not normal.

SAM

There's got to be some reason.

TRISHA

Attention. He never gets attention. I'm telling you. He's been ignored and he probably feels that his absence won't even be noticed. But it is, it's deeply felt.

SAM

Why don't you ever tell him.  
Try---

TRISHA

God knows how I've reasoned with that boy.

SAM

He's not a boy.

TRISHA

What?

SAM

He's not a boy. Maybe we should both stop calling him that.

Trisha sighs.

SAM (CONT'D)

There was a time when Manny was in the palm of my hands. He would stick to me like glue...whichever way I walked, he'd walk, whichever way I talked, he talked. We were close...we were good friends. He got involved with them boys, the Kranes, they changed our son and I didn't know how to manage it. That's where I went wrong with it...I should have intervened.

(MORE)

SAM (CONT'D)

I had no way of knowing how Manny could go from what he was to what he is now...no way of knowing.

TRISHA

You don't get changed so easily unless something is already ticking inside of you. Manny always seemed to have that streak in him. Always walked with that fine edge, never knowing what to expect at times. (beat) What did you end up telling him?

SAM

I took my hat off to him and asked him to find himself. He laughed in my face like I wasn't even standing before him...he said, "Dad, we don't see each other anymore."

TRISHA

And what did you say next?

SAM

My mouth, got all dry in the back of my throat...I lost my breath for a second or two...but I put my hand on his shoulder and squeezed him. I just wanted to touch my son...

Trisha wipes her eyes.

TRISHA

Well now, I made turkey for dinner. It's warm in the stove.

SAM

Yeah, well, food isn't really rubbing me right this moment.

TRISHA

Yes, yes, yes....another meal spoiled by that rotten boy.

SAM

Now I asked you to stop calling him boy.

TRISHA

He acts like a child and he is my boy so deal with it!

SAM

I'm fed up with you shouting.

TRISHA

Where are you going?

SAM

I'm going for a Goddamn drive.

TRISHA

Why don't you drive back to the city and tell your son what you should have told him? Stop being so weak all the time.

SAM

You just call me weak?

TRISHA

Let's be honest.

SAM

I try to do things in a calm fashion. I don't need to always strike out and hit everyone like you do. I try to connect.

TRISHA

That's worked wonders for Manny.

SAM

You know woman, you bring me to my edge.

TRISHA

Go! Go for your drive and waste more time doing nothing for this family.

SAM

Trisha. Don't speak to me that way. I've done everything a man is supposed to do to care, love and take care of his family. Don't you lose yourself with me.

TRISHA

When you get back I'll make tea.

Sam leaves.

Phone rings.

Hello? Manny? Manny, what's...

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

your father just stepped  
out...call his  
cellphone...wait...hold on...let  
me see if I can catch him...

Trisha runs to front door.

Sam?! Sammy?! Samuel?! It's  
Manny...it's Manny, Manny is on  
the phone...

To phone.

Hold on, he's coming back. Give  
him a minute, he was just pulling  
out the driveway.

Trisha listens in on the phone.

Sam enters.

SAM

He's on the phone?

Trisha extends her arm with the phone towards Sam.

Sam takes phone.

SAM (CONT'D)

Manuel? What's up son? (pause.)  
(Sam breaks down) I hear you.  
That's all I ask son. I'll come  
get you now and we can go straight  
to the clinic. Together. I'm on  
my way. Give me an hour, maybe  
sooner. Call my cellphone.  
Actually, I'll call you from the  
road. Just hang in there. I'm on  
my way now. On my way!

Sam hangs up phone, makes his way to front door.

Going to pick Manny up and take him to get treatment. He  
needs our help Trisha. He's worse than we thought. He  
needs to get clean.

TRISHA

Dear God...let me come.

SAM

No, no, he asked for you not to  
come. We don't have time to wait.  
I gotta go get him now while I  
can. I heard him Trisha. I knew  
he was in there somewhere.

TRISHA

Hurry.

SAM

Call you from the road....

Sam exits.