

DON'T DO NOTHING

by

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EXT – DESERT – DAY

Along a road across the desert, with a bar/diner to the side, Some cars and bikes parked in the area in front of the bar/diner.

Through the window, it is clear that the bar/diner is about half full, with groups of people seated at tables, talking.

CUT TO:

INT – BAR/DINER – DAY

A number of customers at tables, and some waiting at the bar, to be served by the busy BARTENDER.

At one of the tables, BRAD, JACK and CRAIG in mid-conversation.

BRAD

“Let Rhett go...”

JACK

That’s what he said - ?

BRAD

That’s what he said...

CRAIG

“Let Rhett go - ?”

BRAD

“Let Rhett go...” Not Rhett Butler...Rhett...

CRAIG

Not “Gone With The Wind”...?

BRAD

Not that Rhett...another Rhett...”Let Rhett go...”

JACK

Then, she said...this was in another film, another character...she said, “A-a-a...Aaron, how can you ask me something like that, at a time like this, when I’m outta my mind ?”

BRAD

That “let Rhett...” I remember that line ‘cause of the rhyme...Let Rhett..go...

JACK

I remember...”A-a-a...Aaron...”, I reckon I remember that ‘cause, “A-a-a...”

CRAIG

It's...

BRAD

Alliteration...

JACK

That's it...alliteration...A-a-a...Aaron...

BRAD

Don't remember much else...some lines just stick in your memory.

CRAIG

Most don't...

JACK

"A-a-a..." - She was hesitating...

CRAIG

She was shocked...

JACK

She was appalled. She didn't reckon Aaron would ask her something like that.

BRAD

What did he ask her ?

JACK

Was she attracted to him - ?

CRAIG

Was she ?

JACK

Nope...

A beat.

BRAD

Rhett...was this guy, in that film...he was a gunslinger...he got shot...then that guy who said "Let Rhett go..." he got shot.

CRAIG

If I remember correctly, that guy was dubbed.

JACK

Uh-huh...

CRAIG

Then, how can you be sure, he said, “Let Rhett go...?”

BRAD

That’s what I heard...

JACK

What if you got it wrong - ?

BRAD

Then, I don’t know shit.

JACK

Well, I’m pretty certain I heard her say,
“A-a-a Aaron...” She was not dubbed.

CRAIG

So, what’re you saying, huh ?

JACK

There are only certain things you can be
sure of. Other things ain’t so...clear.

BRAD

That’s...deep, man.

CRAIG

Yep.

A beat.

They look around, to watch other customers momentarily, then turn back to their own conversation.

CRAIG

I reckon..I wasted my life.

BRAD

Yeah...?

CRAIG

I ain’t young no more. When I was young,
I was an ass-hole.

JACK

You ain’t much better now.

CRAIG

I still am an ass-hole...but I was a worse

CRAIG (cont'd)

ass-hole then...I was a complete ass-hole.
Now, I'm..better. I wasted the whole of
my youth on...nothing...on nothing...and
I regret that.

BRAD

You're only young once.

JACK

You gotta do stuff when you're young, boy,
you wanna be somebody, do something. You
don't do it then, you ain't never gonna do it.

CRAIG

I am so tired of remembering how I screwed
up, and wasted my youth, on nothing.

JACK

You gonna stay here the rest of your life,
lamenting how you wasted your life...?

CRAIG

I hope not. I hope...I can do, something..
anything. Better than doing nothing.

BRAD

Sure is.

JACK

You gotta find something you're good at.

CRAIG

I ain't never been good at nothing.

BRAD

Everyone's good at something...only some
folks don't know what they're good at.

CRAIG

I don't...

BRAD

- You don't know yet.

CRAIG

I don't know, period.

A beat.

JACK

What are you gonna do, then ?

CRAIG

Nothing...I ain't never done nothing...

Craig looks at his glass, which is almost empty. He picks it up and drains down the dregs until all that is left is a little foam in the glass.

Craig sighs.

CUT TO:

INT – KITCHEN – DAY

Craig and his brother, BRETT, seated at a large table, but not directly facing each other, so that they seem to be talking at an angle to each other. Brett is older and better dressed.

BRETT

Face facts..you're nothing..you're nobody.
You ain't never been nothing, and you ain't
never gonna be no-one.

CRAIG

I was happy being no-one, until someone
told me I was no-one.

BRETT

Somebody told you, you were nobody - ?

CRAIG

That is correct.

BRETT

Who told you that ?

CRAIG

You did.

BRETT

When ?

CRAIG

Just now...

BRETT

I said that - ?

CRAIG

Yes, you did.

BRETT

Well, that ain't nice, but that is the truth.

A beat.

BRETT

Look, I am somebody. I have done things, many things, in my life, and I have been successful, very successful, in my field. I am respected. You ain't done nothing, and you are not, respected.

CRAIG

I am..disrespected.

BRETT

I can't help that. I can't help that you're disrespected. I wish I could, but I simply cannot help that...To be respected, you hafta've done something, so people know who you are, what you done. If you ain't done nothing, people don't want to know who you are. Ain't personal...

CRAIG

Seems personal to me...

BRETT

Lemme assure you, it ain't personal...

CRAIG

So, what am I supposed to do, huh ?

BRETT

Do something...

CRAIG

What ?

BRETT

Anything..something.

CRAIG

What ?

BRETT

Don't ask me – you gotta work that out for yourself.

Craig sighs.

CRAIG

I don't know nothing...

BRETT

That's your problem...I wanna give you some advice...You gotta learn self-respect, before you can expect anyone else to respect you. You don't respect yourself, do you ?

CRAIG

I guess not.

BRETT

You don't respect yourself enough..for anyone else to..show you respect.

CRAIG

You're disrespecting me now !

BRETT

You're disrespecting yourself...

CRAIG

Am I ? How ?

BRETT

By being such a God-damn failure.

A beat.

CRAIG

I was never a person of any importance.

BRETT

Why'd'you reckon that ?

CRAIG

It's the truth.

Brett shakes his head.

BRETT

Everyone got importance, in a family.

CRAIG

I don't. I never did...

BRETT

Sure, you did.

CRAIG

That's not what I remember.

BRETT

You got the wrong impression, boy.

CRAIG

I ain't no "boy".

BRETT

Okay, brother mine, what are you ?

CRAIG

I am..a man. I am..a person...

BRETT

- Of some importance...

CRAIG

- Of no importance...

BRETT

You got as much love as anyone else.

Craig shakes his head.

BRETT

You think you were deprived of love ! You didn't get your fair share ?

CRAIG

You got more than your fair share.

BRETT

That's not true.

CRAIG

There was never enough love to go round.

BRETT

There was...

CRAIG

You sucked up all the love, all the attention.

BRETT

I did not...

CRAIG

That's what I remember.

BRETT

Then, you remember wrong. Don't get bitter about the past. The past is past.

CRAIG

It hurts me, when I think about it.

BRETT

Then, don't think about it.

CRAIG

I think about it, all the time.

A beat.

BRETT

You shouldn't...

CRAIG

What - ?

BRETT

...Think about the past...you shouldn't think about it at all.

CRAIG

Well, I do, constantly.

A beat.

BRETT

I'm sorry...

CRAIG

Uh ?

BRETT

...You feel that way...you feel bad...

CRAIG

My past..was not what I needed it to be.

BRETT

You resent your past...?

CRAIG

Yes, I do...

Craig turns further away from Brett to look at the kitchen cabinets.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK. INT – KITCHEN – DAY

Same place, twenty or so years ago.

Craig turns from looking at the kitchen cabinets to speak to his father, known as POP, who is seated where Brett had been in the previous scene. The kitchen looks newer.

POP

Admit the truth; you don't have a God-damn clue.

After a short moment, Craig speaks.

CRAIG

I guess that's true.

A beat.

CRAIG

I guess I ain't never had no aspirations.

POP

You gotta do what I told you to...

CRAIG

I got ta ?

POP

You sure do. You got ta, whether you like it or not. You ain't got no choice in nothing...

CRAIG

It's always been like that, hasn't it ? Do what I say, or...there will be, consequences.

POP

What are you talking about, boy ?

CRAIG

The consequences...

POP

I don't know nothing, like no "consequences" about nothing...boy.

CRAIG

You're, disrespecting me...

Pop sighs.

POP

You ain't worthy o' no respect.

CRAIG

I could say the same about you...

POP

You say that about me, you ain't gonna get no money.

Craig sighs.

CRAIG

I'm sorry, Pop. I did not mean to, upset you.

POP

Good. Maybe we can be friends.

CRAIG

I sure hope so, Pop.

POP

You show me respect, I'll show you, respect.

Pop goes to the fridge, opens it up and takes out two cool beers.

He picks up a bottle-opener from the counter and opens a bottle, gives it to Craig. Pop opens the other bottle for himself, and drinks from it.

Craig drinks from his bottle. He shudders a little from the taste, but holds it in as he sees Pop looking at him.

POP

Too strong for you ?

CRAIG

A little.

Pop drinks from his bottle.

Craig follows his lead and drinks from his bottle, trying hard not to shudder, smiling at Pop.

POP

That's polite. You are a polite boy.

CRAIG

I hope I am, Pop.

POP

You sure are.

Pop drinks from his bottle once more.

Pop goes over towards the counter and leans against it. He takes another swig from his bottle.

POP

Well, ain't this nice, huh ?

CRAIG

Sure is, Pop.

POP

Man and his son, getting along nicely...
How it should be...

Craig looks down at his bottle, shrugs and drinks.

POP

I reckon, a man's gotta look after himself,
he wants to get on in this world.

Craig sighs.

CRAIG

I ain't got much control over my life.

POP

Sure, ya do. Everyone's got some control
over their lives.

CRAIG

"Some" is not enough. I need more control,
more of a say, over my life.

Pop half laughs and smiles at Craig.

POP

Boy, you gotta realise, you make your life
what it is, no-one else...

CRAIG

Somehow, I don't seem to have a say over
anything...

POP

Boy, you gotta make it happen...no-one else
will.

Pop goes to sit down at the table, again not directly opposite to Craig.

POP

Life is full o' lessons. The best lesson
you can learn for yourself is, not to learn
life's lesson too late.

CRAIG

I never get ahead o' the curve. I always
get behind it.

POP

You're looking for someone else to do
things for you...?

CRAIG

I guess I am.

POP

You can't do that in this world. You gotta
do things for yourself.

CRAIG

I feel, prevented...

POP

"Prevented - ?" What in hell is that ?

CRAIG

Things stop me doing things...

POP

"Things ?!" What things - ?

CRAIG

People...

POP

"People...?" People stop you doing things - ?

CRAIG

They do...

POP

What people ? Me ? Your brother ? Your
mother ? What people ?

CRAIG (exasperated)

People...

POP

Ain't no-one preventing you doing nothing,
except yourself.

Pop points his fore-finger at Craig.

Craig shakes his head.

CRAIG

S' Not like that in real life, you know that.

POP

I don't know nothing, except you're a
lousy lazy son-of-a-bitch...

CRAIG

Pop, don't insult my mother...

POP (ironically)

I do apologise...I didn't know you were
so sensitive...

CRAIG

I am, I am..sensitive.

A beat.

CRAIG

I used ta have, self-confidence. People
used ta think, I was cocky, arrogant...

(shakes his head)

No...I was never arrogant, just self-
confident enough, to..get by. I did not
have any pride whatsoever..absolutely
none. Anyone thought I was proud, was
much mistaken.

POP

Boy, you gotta have some pride...not
too much...

CRAIG

That's what I had..what I used ta have.

POP

What about now ?

Craig sighs.

CRAIG

Ain't got none...

POP

None ?

CRAIG

No pride whatsoever, absolutely none.

POP

God-damn it, boy, you gotta have some...

CRAIG

I ain't got none; and that's the truth.

Pop shakes his head in despair and sighs.

POP

What am I gonna do with you, boy ?

CRAIG

Don't do nothing...

POP

You gonna drift through life like that,
without a purpose, without a plan ?

CRAIG

I might do just that. Trust to luck...

POP

You ain't been lucky...

CRAIG

Ain't been so far...

POP

You cannot rely on luck. You gotta have
a plan.

CRAIG

A plan ! I ain't never had no plan.

POP

- And look where that's got you – nowhere.

Craig looks around the kitchen.

CRAIG

This ain't nowhere...

POP

As good as...

A beat.

POP

You had so much bad luck so far in your life, why should your luck change now ? Huh ? You think about that ? “Trust to luck...” You ain’t never had no luck.

CRAIG

Luck’s gotta change sometime.

POP

No...

(shakes his head)

Why should your luck change now ? Huh ?

CRAIG

What is the cause of my misfortune ?

POP

You’re the cause of your bad luck. It’s who you are, your character.

Craig shakes his head.

CRAIG

No; you’re the cause of my misfortune...

Craig points his fore-finger at Pop.

POP

Me ?! How am I the cause of your misfortune ? Explain that, boy...

CRAIG

Your...influence...

POP

My “influence...?!”

CRAIG

...on me...

POP

My influence on you...?

CRAIG
Your adverse influence..on me.

Pop shakes his head and looks puzzled.

POP
I don't understand..any o' that...

CRAIG
You wouldn't...you're perfect...

POP
I didn't say that.

CRAIG
You don't have to say it; it's your attitude,
all over...

POP
My "attitude...?" What in hell is that ?

CRAIG
You're too negative toward me.

POP
"Negative ?" When have I been that ?

CRAIG
Just now – all the time. You've always
been negative toward me...

POP
I'm not so sure that has been the case.

CRAIG
Oh, you're so reasonable...

POP
I hope I am...

CRAIG
Well, you're not..not to me !

Pop stands.

POP
Son, you have disrespected me...

CRAIG
I have told the truth...

POP

...As you see it...

CRAIG

As I see it...You closed the door on me,
you bastard.

Pop shakes his head.

POP

That ain't true; you know that...

CRAIG

I don't know nothing, except you're
seriously bad news...for me.

Pop shakes his head again.

POP

Don't blame me...

CRAIG

Why not ? If you're to blame, I should
be able to blame you...

POP

I'm not to blame for the mess you made
of your life...

CRAIG

I hate my life. Other people have better.
I've seen it. They got friends, they got
money; they got, decent living conditions;
they got better standard of living...life style.
They got it all...some got it all...

POP

Not everyone...

CRAIG

Okay, not everyone...but some got it better,
much better than me.

POP

Whose fault is that, then ?

CRAIG

Not mine...

Pop sighs.

POP

Not yours...? Take some responsibility,
boy.

CRAIG

Why should I ? You never did.

Pop leans forwards, his hand on the table, looking at Craig.

POP

This is..unfair.

CRAIG

Life is unfair. I know that, well enough.

POP

Life is what you make of it...

CRAIG

Only if life gives you a chance.

Pop stands back up straight, his hands off the table.

POP

What are you saying...?

CRAIG

What I'm saying is, I ain't never had no
chance, because life..has been unfair to
me..that's how it is...

POP

You hafta have a more positive attitude,
boy...

CRAIG (exasperated)

"Positive...? Positive...?" I ain't never
felt good about myself...

POP

You should do...

CRAIG

How is that possible ? Huh ? How ?

POP

You need ta..believe in yourself...

CRAIG

Ha !

Craig points his fore-finger at Pop.

CRAIG

You are the main reason I screwed up,
why it all went wrong for me. You are
the cause of my misfortune, my bad luck.
You did this me...you caused me to doubt
myself...you caused my crisis in confidence.
It's your fault.

POP

Too easy to blame someone else. Too easy
to blame me.

CRAIG

That's because, you are to blame.

Pop sighs and turns around, away from Craig.

They hear the sound of Brett coming down the stairs.

A short delay, then the younger Brett comes into the kitchen.

BRETT

What's going on ? I heard raised voices.

CRAIG

We were having a discussion, Pop and me.

BRETT

Sounded like an argument, a row.

POP (to Brett)

He made it like that. I was not in the mood
for arguing.

BRETT

Okay, Pop, sit down. Let's see if we can
sort this out.

Pop goes to sit at the table, where he had been before.

Brett goes to the top of the table and sits down. He looks down the table at Pop and Craig.

BRETT

Okay, children, let's see if we can have
a little peace, now.

POP

Okay by me...

CRAIG (slight nod)

...And me...

BRETT

Okay, then. Now, what was this all about ?

Pop, Craig...?

POP (mumbling, very quiet)

I...don't know...

CRAIG

He...disrespected me...

BRETT

When ? How ?

CRAIG

Just now. He always did...disrespect me.

POP

I..did not...

CRAIG

Yes, you did. You always did. You always have...

Pop turns to look at Craig.

POP

Craig, let me assure you, I am on your side.

Craig laughs, sarcastically.

CRAIG (to Pop)

You have never given me..confidence.

POP

I tried...

CRAIG

You failed !

POP

That was not my intention...

CRAIG

I'm not too sure about that...I think your intention was to harm me.

Pop shakes his head.

POP

You should think that...

CRAIG

It's what I believe...

BRETT

Pop...?

POP

He's got the wrong idea...

BRETT

Has he ?

POP (to Craig)

You got it all wrong...I care for you...
I want you to do well...

CRAIG

You didn't in the past...

POP

The past...Who cares about the past ?

CRAIG

I do...

BRETT

- Too much...

CRAIG

I can't help that. I get reminders all the
time, of my past, and how it has shaped
my present, and my future.

BRETT

The future is not fixed yet; only the past
is...

CRAIG

What about the present ?

BRETT

The present is what you make of it. The
present starts now. The future is tomorrow.

CRAIG

Yesterday...

BRETT

- Was yesterday. Today is today.

CRAIG

I don't think like that.

BRETT

You should do...

A beat.

BRETT

Life is precious...life is a gift. Don't waste your life thinking about the past. It's gone...

CRAIG

- But not forgotten...

BRETT

It should be...

CRAIG

It ain't...not for me. I need ta change the past.

BRETT

You can't do that...no-one can...the past is fixed...

CRAIG

- Then it's not gone !

Brett points to his own forehead.

BRETT

It's up here...

CRAIG

I'm stuck...

BRETT

The past is an elephant trap...if you get stuck, you can't get out...you'll slowly sink into the mire...you get sucked into a slow painful death...and you're conscious of why you're there..a mistake you made caused you to get stuck, and you can't get out...

Craig nods.

CRAIG

...That's my past...that's what my memory of the past is like...it drags me down all the time...it's not an easy death...I suffocate and drown..slowly, slowly, in the murky water...

BRETT

...In the mud...

POP

The past has precious memories...

CRAIG

Not for me, it don't...

BRETT

It does for some people...

POP

It does for most people...

CRAIG

I ain't "most people"...

POP

That's your problem – you're too much of an individual...you don't see the bigger picture...

CRAIG

I need ta change my past...

BRETT

You can't do that – no-one can...the past is the past...it's gone..done and dusted...

CRAIG

It dominates my life...

BRETT

That's your problem...don't try to make it mine, or his...your problem...

CRAIG

Thanks a bunch...

BRETT

Listen, we got our own lives to live... we can't be dragged down with you, into that mire you call your past...

CRAIG

I got as much help from you as I always have...

BRETT

Craig, don't blame us for your mistakes.

CRAIG

If I can't blame you, I gotta blame myself, and that becomes, uncomfortable. I don't get peace of mind through blaming myself.

BRETT

There's only so much of this we can put up with...

CRAIG

Then, don't ! You never cared much about me anyhow...

POP

That's not true...

CRAIG

Pop, you always told me I was crap..at everything...

POP

I don't recall that...

CRAIG

You wouldn't – you have a selective memory...I don't have that capacity... I remember everything...specifically things I wish I could forget, but I can't... I just can't...You, Pop, you always put me down...

Pop shakes his head.

POP

No...no...

CRAIG

You're trying to rewrite the past..in your memory...make it seem better than it was...

BRETT (to Craig)

Why don't you try that ?

CRAIG
I would if I could, but I can't...

BRETT
- And why is that ?

CRAIG
Because I'm too honest !

Brett laughs.

BRETT
Ha !

CRAIG
It's the truth. I cannot distort the past...
not my past...

BRETT
...Which is part of our shared past...

CRAIG
I cannot lie about the past, our past...

(to Pop)

I bet you can...

BRETT
The past only lives in our memory...

CRAIG
...Which we own...

BRETT
Then, disown your past...let it go...

CRAIG
I can't...

BRETT (casually)
Why not ?

CRAIG
I'm too damaged.

A beat.

CRAIG
Life has not been kind to me.

BRETT

Life is what you make of it...

CRAIG

That's a load o' crap.

BRETT

You have not engaged with life.

CRAIG

Life has not engaged with me.

BRETT

You never gave life a chance.

CRAIG

Life never gave me a chance.

Brett sighs.

BRETT

How can we help you if you're like that ?

Craig looks nonplussed.

CRAIG

You..help me...the idea is..ludicrous...

BRETT

I have helped people..in the past.

CRAIG

"In the past..." you didn't help me...

BRETT

Maybe, I can help you now...

CRAIG

I do not think so...

BRETT

You don't want my help...?

CRAIG

You are not capable of helping me.

BRETT

Is anyone ?

CRAIG

I need the right type of help for me,
not the help you give me...

Pop sighs.

POP

We want you to do well..in life...

CRAIG

Since when ?

POP

Since...

CRAIG (earnestly)

...When ?

Craig looks at Brett.

Brett looks at Pop.

POP

Since...recently...

CRAIG (insistently)

Since when ?

POP

A few years ago...

CRAIG

What happened then ?

POP

I found..love.

CRAIG (ironically)

You're a better person now...

POP

I am...

CRAIG

So, all the damage you did in the past,
before you found love, before you became
a better person, all the harm you did then,
don't matter no more ?

Pop shrugs.

POP

If I did you harm, I sincerely ask you
to..forgive me...

CRAIG

You want me to forgive you, for ruining
my life, just because you found love...?

POP (pleading)

Please...

CRAIG

Why should I ?

POP

Because...because..the way I am now,
the person I am now..would never have
done to you..what I did...I would never
have behaved like that...I would never
have said..what I said...

CRAIG

...Your nasty comments...

POP

...My nasty comments...

CRAIG

...That did so much harm...

POP

...That did so much harm...I would never
have done that...

CRAIG

...But the damage has already been done.
The damage is..irreversible.

POP

I know. I can still ask forgiveness...

CRAIG

For whose benefit ?

POP

Mine...not yours...

CRAIG

Then, why should I forgive you ?

POP
Because I asked you to...

A beat.

CRAIG
That is not, a good enough reason.

POP
It's good enough for me.

Craig looks at Brett.

CRAIG (to Brett)
Should I forgive him ?

BRETT
It's up to you.

CRAIG
You have no opinion on the matter ?

BRETT
I guess not.

POP (to Craig)
You were too vulnerable, too sensitive.

Craig looks aghast.

CRAIG
You can't repair the damage done to me...so, why should I forgive you ?

POP
It would be nice...

CRAIG
"Nice..." Why should I be nice to you ?

POP
One day, if you don't forgive me, you will regret it...

CRAIG
I do not think so...

POP
Forgive and forget...

CRAIG

I can't forgive, because I can't forget.

BRETT

If you could forget...

CRAIG

I can't...I just can't...

Craig bends his head down, to look at the table.

CUT TO:

INT – KITCHEN – DAY

As before, but more untidy and looking more worn than twenty years before.

The older Craig and Brett.

Craig tips his head up from the kitchen table, to look at Brett.

CRAIG

It's all his fault...

BRETT

What ?

CRAIG

Our father...

BRETT

...Him...

CRAIG

It's all his fault...

BRETT

His fault ?

CRAIG

He did this to me. He damaged me.
I never recovered from what he did.
He is the reason I am such a failure.
His, nasty comments. His disturbed
behaviour..caused such psychological
harm..to me...If he hadn't have said
what he said...if he hadn't have done
what he did...if he hadn't have behaved
the way he did, I would've been okay;
I would've had a decent life...I'm sure,
I'm absolutely certain, I would've been

CRAIG (cont'd)

okay...I blame him for..everything.

BRETT

Is that completely fair ?

CRAIG

It is fair. It is..the truth. No point trying to pretend the past was better than it was. That would be a complete lie. I am not prepared to lie about my past, which is part of our shared past...with you..and Pop. I will not romanticise the past.

BRETT

You're not the only person that suffered, you know...

CRAIG

I know...I was particularly badly affected by his behaviour...it had an adverse effect on me...he..influenced me...

Craig gets up from the table and goes over to the sink. He opens a cupboard and takes out a glass. He turns on the taps and gets himself a half-glass of water. He drinks some water and then carries the glass (still containing a little water) over to the table, and sits down again. He looks down at the glass, then up at Brett.

CRAIG

You know, the thing that really gets to me, is how little I meant, to anyone... to you, to Pop, to..everyone.

BRETT

You know that's not true...

CRAIG

It is true...I did not endear myself to other people, but, I was still his son, I was still your brother...

BRETT

We didn't like you much; but that don't mean, we didn't love you...

CRAIG

Why was I so, unpopular ?

BRETT

You can love and hate someone at

BRETT (cont'd)

the same time.

CRAIG

That don't make no sense: if you love someone, you love them; if you hate someone, you hate them. You can't love and hate someone at the same time.

BRETT

Yes, you can. That just shows how limited your understanding of human nature is. You don't have a clue.

CRAIG

Well, I hate Pop; so, does that mean I gotta love him as well ?

BRETT

You need to, understand him.

CRAIG

I don't need to understand him at all. He damaged me...I can hate him for that.

BRETT

That was because you were too sensitive.

CRAIG

I can't help that...it's the way I am.

BRETT

You're not tolerant of other people's minor misdemeanours...

CRAIG

Other people aren't tolerant of mine.

BRETT

You gotta give love, to receive love.

CRAIG

I have not received love...

BRETT

That's because you gave none.

CRAIG

I was too damaged to show love, to anyone.

BRETT

You could pretend...

CRAIG

I'm too damaged to pretend...

BRETT

Then, you're not gonna improve...

CRAIG

Improve what ?

BRETT

Your mental state.

CRAIG

I am a mental case. Pop made me one.

BRETT

You should improve...

CRAIG

How can I ? Huh ? Not in the state I'm in...I need ta, question my purpose in life.

BRETT

You ain't got none.

CRAIG

Maybe so; but I can find a purpose in life.

BRETT

How you gonna do that ?

CRAIG

I do not know..at present.

BRETT

God-damn it, I don't like to say this to anyone, let alone my brother; but you are a complete waste of space, and a waste of my precious time.

CRAIG

I'm your brother...

BRETT

I know...

Brett sighs.

CRAIG

Is time so important to you.

BRETT

When you get to my age, you realise
how much time you've wasted on nonsense.
I cannot afford to waste any more.

CRAIG

Not on your brother...?

A slight shake of the head from Brett.

CRAIG

Shows, I don't mean nothing to you.

BRETT

Anything worthwhile, you gotta work
at it...

CRAIG

What's worthwhile ?

BRETT

Our relationship...

CRAIG

We don't have a relationship...

BRETT

I tried...

CRAIG

- Not hard enough...

BRETT

You are so tedious...

CRAIG

Thanks a bunch...

BRETT

You're like a record stuck in a groove.
The same tedious drivel all the time.
You are so boring !

Brett gets up and goes towards the door of the kitchen. He stops and turns back to look at Craig.

Craig looks up at him.

BRETT

You are seriously in need of some help.

CRAIG

Not gonna get it from you.

BRETT

I am not a professional carer...

CRAIG

You're not even an amateur carer. You couldn't care less about me.

BRETT

I do care...

CRAIG

...Not enough...

BRETT

...about you...

CRAIG

Then, do something to help me.

BRETT

Like what ?

CRAIG

Show me you care.

BRETT

What do you want me to do ?

CRAIG

Support me...take my side...

BRETT

Take your side - ?

CRAIG

Yes...take my side...

BRETT

It's not about, taking sides...

CRAIG

It is...it always has been about, taking sides...

BRETT

I like to remain impartial. I act on..
evidence...it's about fairness...

CRAIG

It's about whose side you're on...

BRETT

I'm not on anyone's side...

CRAIG

You're certainly not on mine...

Craig returns to the table and sits down.

BRETT

I examine who is in the right, and who
is in the wrong...

CRAIG

This is not a court of law...it's about
favouritism, not evidence...not whose
side you should be on...whose side you
you actually are on...the public display
of whose side you say you're on...from
the start, from the very beginning...the
creation of our family unit, the hierarchy
you're a part of...the establishment of the
principle of exclusion...who is preferred
above anyone else, no matter what the
rights and wrongs of any particular set
of circumstances...that determines whose
side you're on...not the truth, not anything
like that...families are no better than packs
of animals...they dominate by bullying...

BRETT

I always weigh the rights and wrongs -

CRAIG

No, you don't ! You are controlled in your
judgements by the hierarchy established
many years ago, even when we were kids,
innocent children...except, we weren't that
innocent...we had already been corrupted by
favouritism...there was no justice in our play
when we were young; who is to be the leader,
who has to follow him, and if we complain,
we're spoil-sports and cry-babies...bullying
when we were so young...we learned who is

CRAIG (cont'd)

dominant, that's you, and who has to be subservient, that's me...

BRETT

You resent your childhood, when we were kids, playing games !

CRAIG

Yes, I do !

BRETT

That's ridiculous ! We were children, then.

CRAIG

Our roles were pre-determined. We were following a set of rules, not to my benefit, to yours...

BRETT

We were..children...

CRAIG

You had ta be the boss...you had ta be in control...

BRETT

In the games we played – I'm surprised you even remember – I took the lead because I was the most competent...

CRAIG

You assumed the lead...

BRETT

It meant nothing..absolutely nothing,

CRAIG

It pre-figured the whole of the rest of our lives...you were the success, and I was the failure...

BRETT

I have made something of my life – you never will.

CRAIG

I was never given a chance.

Brett sighs.

BRETT

You know what your problem is - ?

CRAIG

What ?

BRETT

You're immature; you always have been;
you always will be.

CRAIG

That's what Ma used ta say...

BRETT

She was right.

CRAIG

I was immature because the powers-that-be,
you, and Pop, put me in my place, and I
didn't like it...

BRETT

She said you were immature, because you
were immature...you're still immature...

CRAIG

- Because I protested, because I complained,
I did not like the set-up...

BRETT

For God's sake, we were children...the way
we played meant nothing...it did not dictate
our future, yours and mine...I did well because
I was competent, and intelligent. You didn't
do so well because you were less competent
and less intelligent...

CRAIG

- Because I was weak...you ran rings around
me; you bullied me !

BRETT

I did not !

CRAIG

Yes, you did.

BRETT

Don't call me, a bully.

CRAIG

Why not ?

BRETT

It's not true.

A beat.

BRETT

Why are you digging up such ancient
crap ?

CRAIG

I remember it...

BRETT

Sometimes, you're better off not remembering
things...

CRAIG

Well, I do remember...you bullied me...

Brett shakes his head.

BRETT

No...

CRAIG

You mocked me...

BRETT

Did I ? When ?

CRAIG

When...I made mistakes...

BRETT

Such as - ?

CRAIG

I said, "On yourself," instead of, "in
yourself."

BRETT

That was a mistake...

CRAIG

Did you have to mock me ?

Brett sighs.

BRETT

I was, correcting you...

CRAIG

You mocked me ! You bullied me !

BRETT

Mocking someone is not bullying...

CRAIG

Yes, it is...

BRETT

No, it is not ! I was correcting your mistake. I was trying to help you.

CRAIG

I was..upset...

BRETT

You were, too sensitive.

CRAIG

Maybe I was.

BRETT

No wonder you were such a failure.
You can't afford to be sensitive, in
this world.

CRAIG

- Better than being, insensitive.

BRETT

Is it ? Look where it's got you – nowhere.

CRAIG

I have my integrity...

BRETT

- Which ain't worth Jack Shit. Bro, face
facts...you are seriously screwed up.

CRAIG

Who made me like that ? Huh ? You did !
You and Pop...

BRETT

What about Ma ? You wanna blame her as
well ?

CRAIG

Why not ? She didn't help me...

BRETT

You didn't help her ! All you could do was complain all the time, and criticise other people...You were too censorious.

CRAIG

I'm not allowed to complain, but other people are ?

BRETT

You complain, too much.

CRAIG

You know what ? I would never mock someone with an impairment.

BRETT

You would if you weren't impaired...

CRAIG

In your book, it's okay to mock someone who's impaired ?

BRETT

I guess not...

CRAIG

You should be ashamed of yourself.

BRETT

Maybe, I should.

CRAIG

You hurt me...you upset me.

BRETT

I apologise for that.

CRAIG

Apology..not accepted.

Silence.

Brett looks glum.

BRETT

Maybe, you should speak to Ma.

CRAIG

Why ?

BRETT

She might help you to understand your childhood better.

CRAIG

I understand it, well enough.

BRETT

I think you got the wrong idea about some things.

CRAIG

I don't think I did. - Another thing... when I got on that bus to go to school, the driver asked me something; I don't know what it was, I don't remember... the question; but I said, very quietly, "No, I didn't," and you mocked me...

BRETT

So what if I did...?

CRAIG

You remember that ?

BRETT

I guess I do.

CRAIG

That was mockery...

BRETT

Maybe it was.

CRAIG

You should not have done that.

BRETT

I apologise for that.

CRAIG

You're insincere...

BRETT

Am I ?

Craig looks at Brett.

CRAIG

Yes, you are...

BRETT

Sorry...

A beat.

BRETT

Our formative years...

CRAIG

They ruined me. They ruined my future.

BRETT

You know what you should be ?

CRAIG

What ?

BRETT

Meek and humble.

CRAIG

I'm..bitter and resentful.

BRETT

You're pathetic... You're just trying to blame other people for your own mistakes. That is, very immature.

CRAIG

I blame them because they were and are actually to blame.

Brett sighs.

BRETT

You need, another perspective on life.

CRAIG

How am I gonna get that ?

BRETT

Have a word with Ma.

CRAIG

Ma ? Speak to Ma ?

Craig

BRETT

Yes...She might talk some sense into you...

CRAIG

About the past ?

BRETT

Yes...She probably remembers better than you...

CRAIG

I remember it well enough, and it wasn't too nice.

BRETT

I had a happy childhood.

CRAIG

You would, because it was okay for you. You were always Number One in anyone's affections.

BRETT

If you weren't loved enough, it was because there was something wrong with you.

CRAIG

A-ha ! You admit that...

BRETT

You weren't right in the head...

CRAIG

Then I deserved more love...

BRETT

You didn't deserve nothing.

CRAIG

That's what I got – nothing.

BRETT

That was your own fault.

CRAIG

That was everybody else's fault, not mine.

Brett sighs.

BRETT

I'm getting nowhere with you. Maybe
Ma can do better...

CRAIG

There's no point sympathising with me
now. I needed sympathy then, and I didn't
get it.

BRETT

Well, brother, maybe things can improve
in retrospect.

CRAIG

I doubt it.

BRETT

It's worth a try...

Brett gets up and goes to the kitchen door into the living room.

Craig looks at the kitchen, then down at the table.

CUT TO:

INT – KITCHEN – DAY

The kitchen of Craig and Brett's mother's house. MA, Brett and Craig seated at the table.
The kitchen is more modern and better kept than the kitchen seen previously at the other
place. Ma is about seventy.

BRETT

Your kitchen looks nice...

MA

Thanks...

CRAIG

Better than the one at our place...

MA

Had it installed last year...So, what
brings you to my place ?

BRETT

We wanted to see you.

MA

That's nice.

Ma looks at Craig, who is prompted to speak.

CRAIG
You're looking good, Ma.

MA
Thanks.

A beat.

BRETT
Craig had some concerns about his
childhood...

MA
Uh-huh...

BRETT
He's not happy with his recollections
of, childhood...

MA
A time of great joy and happiness, of
innocence and freedom from the cares
of adult life...

BRETT
Indeed, it is...

CRAIG
It should be...

BRETT
It was for me...

MA
Good...

Ma looks at Craig.

MA
How about you ?

Craig delays before answering.

CRAIG
It was okay...for the most part...

MA
Uh-huh...

Craig dips his head down to avoid looking directly at Ma.

CRAIG

I have some reservations...

MA

I see...

CRAIG

I reckon, from what I remember, I don't think I had my fair share of love and attention, from you, and Pop.

Ma laughs a little, then points with her fore-finger at Craig.

MA

You got more than enough, more than your fair share...You were a sensitive boy, too easily upset, too vulnerable. Maybe, you needed more affection, more love than we gave you, because you were sensitive; but, we certainly gave you enough time and attention... and love.

CRAIG

Maybe I should've been a girl...then, I would've gotten more.

MA

I always wanted a daughter; I didn't get one. I got you instead...

CRAIG

You were disappointed...

MA

Maybe, I was; but I didn't show it.

CRAIG

I think you did.

MA

What ?

CRAIG

You had a son; you wanted a daughter, but you got another son...

MA

...Then your father got involved with his fancy-woman; she got all the love and

MA (cont'd)

affection due to me...so, don't talk to me about being deprived of love...

CRAIG

You still loved Pop after he ran off with her ?

MA

Of course I did.

BRETT

You still love him ?

MA

No. I'd gotten over that years ago. I hated him, and I loved him...but now, I don't hate him no more, and I certainly don't love him. His fancy-woman can have all his love and hate. I am, indifferent to him.

BRETT

When was the last time you saw him ?

MA

Years ago. You thinking of going up to see him ?

CRAIG

We could do.

MA

You're not gonna get any enlightenment from him, regarding your childhood.

CRAIG

I guess not.

MA

You see, Craig, we gave you as much love and attention as any kid got...but, we did not recognise you had special needs...

CRAIG

I'm not a retard...

MA

You're halfway there. You needed more time and attention than the average child.

CRAIG

I am not average.

MA

We know that now; we didn't know that then. We made mistakes, but I assure you, we treated you according to your behaviour and speech...What did not have, was any resilience. You were weak, emotionally.

CRAIG

Is that a crime ?

MA

No, but it was a weakness. You were emotionally fragile.

CRAIG

You mocked me, when I was upset.

MA

You got upset, too easily...I only mocked you when your speech was, incoherent. I can't stand people who can't speak well; you know that...Nothing personal. I would mock anyone with poor speech. I detest people who mutter. If you had behaved properly; if you spoke properly, I would've treated you better.

CRAIG

I remember instances when Brett, your precious son, the apple of your eye, here, when he was badly behaved, but you didn't tell him off, you didn't punish him -

BRETT

- That was because I could speak clearly.

CRAIG

He mocked me, and you took his side.

BRETT

She'll take the side of whoever speaks best...

CRAIG

I couldn't compete with that.

Ma sighs.

MA

Clear articulate speech. You, Craig, you were, incoherent, inarticulate...

CRAIG

- So you took his side.

MA

Is that so surprising ? Huh ?

CRAIG

No matter what the rights and wrongs of any situation; any, any situation, you would always take the other person's side, not me.

MA

That was because they could speak better than you.

CRAIG

I couldn't help my speech...

MA

You speak better now; so, I will pay some attention to what you have to say.

CRAIG

I remember, when I hurt my finger...it was bleeding...I was crying...you showed me no sympathy whatsoever...I was a kid...I think I deserved some sympathy.

MA

You deserved none. You were moaning, and your speech was so, incoherent, inarticulate, mumbling, muttering...you're not gonna get any sympathy outta me, unless you can speak properly.

CRAIG

That hurt me more...I was more upset...So, if I was in a fight with someone and they hurt me bad, and I went to you, you'd take the side of the bully with better articulation ?

MA

I probably would.

CRAIG

So, if a kid got bullied, you would take

CRAIG (cont'd)
his side only if he was better spoken ?

MA
That is correct.

CRAIG
So much for the poor kid who suffers
in silence.

A beat.

MA
No-one knows of the suffering of the
inarticulate, because no-one takes notice
of them.

CRAIG
That is harsh.

MA
Don't come to me with your problems
if you can't speak properly.

CRAIG
No wonder I'm so screwed up. When
my problems started, I lost my speech.

MA
Your behaviour was deplorable.

CRAIG
But what was causing my "deplorable"
behaviour ?

MA
How would I know ? You never told me.

CRAIG
I wouldn't tell anything. I knew what
reception I would get if I went to you,
mumbling and incoherent.

MA
You admit it's a problem ? Inarticulate
lack of speech - ?

CRAIG
It might be a problem for some people.

MA

For most people...

CRAIG

For some...

A beat.

CRAIG

I did have some problems, you know,
at the time.

MA

You didn't tell me, anything.

CRAIG

Is that a surprise, huh ? What did you
expect ?

MA

Clear, articulate speech. There's no point
telling me you had problems, thirty, forty
years ago...you needed to tell me that at the
time, so I could do something...If you don't
ask, you don't get.

CRAIG

I was incapable of asking.

MA

That's your problem, not mine. Don't try
to make me feel guilty now, because I didn't
help you then...

CRAIG

No-one helped me then; I had ta help myself.

MA

That should teach you, independence...

CRAIG

It did...

A beat.

BRETT

There's no point complaining now, if
didn't complain at the time, how you
were treated.

CRAIG

I couldn't complain at the time; no-one would listen to me...

MA

- Because you couldn't talk properly. Your speech was slow and incoherent.

CRAIG

Surely, what I had to say mattered more than how I said it...?

MA

The simple answer to that is, no.

Craig looks at Brett.

CRAIG

No wonder you were always the favourite -

BRETT

I could talk better: nah na, na nah nah...

CRAIG

How mature...

BRETT

You're immature, not me...

CRAIG

You rigged the game, in your favour, again.

Brett looks nonplussed.

CRAIG

It was always rigged, from the very beginning.

BRETT

I was chosen as favourite, because of my superior intellect and speech...

CRAIG

I lost out...

BRETT

That's your problem, not mine.

Craig sighs.

MA

You were the second son; the second unnecessary son. I wanted a daughter, not you; not another son.

CRAIG

I'm sorry to have disappointed you.

MA

You were very immature. You still are. You always were.

CRAIG

But what does that mean ?

MA

You should be more resilient, if people don't like you.

A slight delay before Craig answers.

CRAIG

You don't like me ?

BRETT

No.

CRAIG

Why not ?

BRETT

You're not very likeable. You moan, you complain about a load of old drivel no-one cares about any more...

CRAIG

You didn't like me before; you never liked me...

MA

Moan, moan, moan, moan. You're very tedious...

CRAIG

I got something to say...

BRETT

We've heard it all before, so many times.

Craig shrugs.

CRAIG

I needed emotional support. I got none.

BRETT

You were always a bit player; a person of no importance.

CRAIG

That's what I thought...

BRETT

Now, you know; it was rigged against you from the very beginning. We mocked you, when you complained, to get you to shut up. We were in control then, and we still are now. You can't win; so, learn to lose graciously, without complaint.

CRAIG

I'm a loser...

BRETT

You sure are.

CRAIG

You made me a loser. You pre-programmed me to fail.

MA

If you like...

CRAIG

I never liked it !

BRETT

It was our system of government, within the family.

CRAIG

Families should be about relationships, not systems.

BRETT

It gave us a structure...It worked for us

CRAIG

Didn't work for me.

MA

That's your problem; not mine, or his.

CRAIG

It seemed like I was rebelling against
some established order...

MA

But you did it in such an inappropriate
way. You swore, you spoke badly, you
mumbled; you were, ill behaved and
incoherent.

CRAIG

I had a cause...

BRETT

- Which nobody was interested in...

MA

You were basically immature.

A beat.

CRAIG

You allowed Pop to, verbally abuse me.
It was a type of bullying...He used to make,
nasty comments...

MA

He always made stupid comments...

CRAIG

- Nasty comments...

MA

Nasty comments...He abused everyone...

BRETT

...Until he found love...and now he's a reformed
character and wants your forgiveness for any harm
he did to you, so's he can bask in another woman's
love, like the past didn't matter...

CRAIG

He turned me into the person I am today, a failure.
He destroyed my self-esteem.

BRETT

But he's much better now, much more considerate.

CRAIG

He did this to me.

BRETT

He wants you to forgive him...

CRAIG

Why should I ? That's to his benefit, not mine.

BRETT

The spirit of forgiveness, is a blessing...

CRAIG

...to those that receive...I would derive no benefit whatsoever from forgiving him.

Craig turns to Ma.

CRAIG

Why did you allow his abuse ?

MA

I couldn't do anything to stop it.

BRETT

But he's different now...

MA

I suppose he is. He betrayed me with his fancy-woman, the love of his life, the slut who was transformative...I could never get him to behave himself...but somehow, she has. He's a proper gentleman now, and wants to pretend he never was a malicious bastard. How convenient that is for him, to forget the damage he's done to other people. You got damaged...

CRAIG

You didn't prevent it...

MA

I couldn't...prevent his..abuse. I guess I was weak. You couldn't tell him off, not when he got nasty. You just grin and bear it, and pretend not to hear. He had the money, so he could say whatever he wanted...he had a license to offend. He was the only one who could be upset.

CRAIG

It's no good if no-one takes your side, ever.

Ma shrugs.

MA

He was exempt from criticism. He could cut the money off. Go and see Pop; try to make him feel guilty. Blame him for all your woes. Tell him it's all his fault. He won't like that. I never told him all our family's misfortunes were down to him. I couldn't tell him that; he would cut off the money; so I could be moral but broke. He always blamed everyone else for things going wrong; so, it about time someone had the guts to tell him to his face, it's all his fault.

CRAIG

Why don't you do that ?

MA

It's no longer a matter that concerns me; and when it was, I couldn't do it, because he had all the money.

A slight delay before Craig speaks.

CRAIG

I'll tell him; I'll go there and tell him now, it's all his fault, all our misfortunes, all our disasters and mistakes were due to his nasty comments and adverse influence. I'll tell him.

BRETT

Go and do it, then.

CRAIG

I will.

Craig gets up. Brett gets up.

CRAIG

Ma, thank you for your time.

Ma nods slightly.

Craig and Brett go out.

Ma looks towards the door.

CUT TO:

INT – KITCHEN – DAY

The kitchen in Pop's place. Not as tidy or modern as Ma's kitchen.

Pop seated at the table.

Brett and Craig come into the kitchen through the living room door.

Pop gets up and stands, holding onto his chair.

BRETT

Pop...

POP

Brett...

CRAIG (quietly)

Pop...

POP

Craig...Come on in...Sit down...

Craig and Pop sit down at the table.

POP

So nice of you to come to see me.

Pop sits down carefully.

Pop looks at Craig, then at Brett.

Pop smiles.

BRETT

Well, Pop, you're looking good...

POP

Thanks.

CRAIG

Pop, I need you to help me..understand myself a little better...

POP

How ?

CRAIG

I need ta go back, into my past, to find myself, before it all went wrong for me. I hope to find another version of myself ...to imagine my life might've followed a different path, where I might've been more successful, less of a failure...where I could've been more satisfied with life,

CRAIG (cont'd)

less bitter and resentful, because it all went wrong...When did it start to go wrong ? Why..it all..went wrong...

POP

You had bad luck...

CRAIG

Is it as simple as that ?

BRETT

It could be...

CRAIG

I need ta find out, I need ta..discover, if I might've had some alternative to what happened to me...

BRETT

What alternative ? You're here, now, with us..This is your life...

CRAIG

I wish it wasn't..my life...I hate my life. I needed, a better life.

POP

Life is what you make of it...everybody's got choices -

CRAIG

I got none...

POP

Everybody makes mistakes...Everybody got some regret...

CRAIG

I got..so much regret...

A beat.

CRAIG

Was the damage done to me, avoidable ?

POP

I am not a perfect father...

Brett half laughs.

BRETT

Far from it...

POP

I admit..I got faults...but I'm better now.
I was given a second chance in life when
I met Linda...

BRETT (ironically)

The wonder woman who changed his soul...

POP

She did; she did save me from myself...
If you had bad luck in the past...and I was
part of that bad luck...you gotta believe in
the future...one day something will happen,
something, or someone, will redeem you
from the shackles of the past...will transform
you into, a better person, despite all your bad
luck in the past...someone will give you hope,
some day...in the future...

CRAIG

Who ? How ?

POP

You won't know till it happens, but it will
happen...

CRAIG

How do you know...?

POP

It happened for me, and I was a malevolent
person...I was nasty...I was mean...I'm much
better now...

CRAIG

But all the harm you did to me with your
verbal abuse, that was back then, before
your transformation...

POP

And being the person I am now, I humbly
ask your forgiveness...It would help my
conscience...

CRAIG

Your conscience ? So this is for your benefit,
not mine...

POP

It is; but it should also help you.

BRETT

You're too obsessed with your unfortunate past...

CRAIG

You're okay, Brett...You're a success.

BRETT

I was subjected to the same abuse, but it didn't harm me...not so much, anyway...

CRAIG

It harmed me...

BRETT

You should've been stronger, less easy to, abuse...less likely to suffer long term effects...

CRAIG

I am what I am. I was what I was.

BRETT

You're too sensitive...you always were...

CRAIG

I can't help that; it's my nature.

POP

You need ta meet a nice sensitive sweet woman, like my Linda...

BRETT

Oh, she's so much better than our Ma...

POP

Your mother did not understand me...
Linda does...

CRAIG

It's that simple ?

POP

Offer someone a chance for redemption,
and they will take it.

Craig sighs.

CRAIG

No-one ever offered me a chance...
for redemption.

POP

I'm giving you one now...If you can
forgive me, you're on the road to some
redemption...

CRAIG

Never gonna reach my destination...

POP

You might do; you never know...

CRAIG

Is that the way to my redemption ?
Forgiving you ?

POP

It might be; give it a chance. Say, you
will forgive me.

A beat.

Craig looks at Pop.

Pop look at Brett.

Brett looks at Craig.

CRAIG

Why should I ? This is a trick, a trap.
This is verbal manipulation, twisting
and turning...you're trying to trick me
into doing something against my best
interests...

POP

It is, in your best interests, to forgive
me.

CRAIG

It's in your best interests, to be forgiven
by me.

POP

Maybe it is...

Craig sighs.

CRAIG

My life is precarious...

POP

Life is a fiction, until you actually live it.

CRAIG

I feel so emotionally insecure...You're confusing me now...

POP

I do apologise...

CRAIG

I need ta know why I was chosen to have such bad luck...why was too sensitive to withstand your abuse...

BRETT

Just the way you are. I used ta consider you..to be a pain...

CRAIG

What d'you think now ?

BRETT

I still consider you, to be a pain.

CRAIG

That shows a lack of understanding...

BRETT

We can't all be as sensitive and precious as you...

CRAIG

Is that a defect in my character ?

BRETT

Yes, it is.

CRAIG

How can I change ?

POP

I reckon, you can only find redemption through a female...women, some woman are the windows of redemption for, some men...not all women, not all men...special women...they have this aura about them...

CRAIG

An aura...?

POP

You can tell...they have such empathy...
my Linda has that...your mother did not.

BRETT

How many women have this aura ?

POP

One in a hundred, maybe more...but they
are very special...

BRETT

And you found one...

POP

Yes, I did; I am so lucky.

CRAIG

Good for you...

POP

Craig, you mustn't be bitter. You gotta
learn to forgive and forget.

CRAIG

I can't forgive, because I can't forget.
The memory is too strong...

BRETT

Let it go, boy; let it go...like a balloon
without a tether; let it go and float off
into the sky, never to be seen again...

CRAIG

I can't; I just can't.

A beat.

BRETT

Detach yourself from your memory of
that time. Allow yourself some freedom
from misery.

CRAIG

I'm so used to misery. I don't think I have
had one day from that time, when I didn't
remember it all.

POP

Let it go...

CRAIG

Ain't easy...

POP

It would mean so much to me, if you could forgive me, somehow.

CRAIG

I don't think I can...

BRETT

Why not ?

CRAIG

The damage done to me was permanent. I had a lousy life because of you. When I remember what you said, the adverse influence you had on me, the mistakes I made due to that influence; I just feel so bad...then, I feel sad, so sad...

BRETT

Bad and sad...

POP

You don't seem to realise, I got feelings too...

BRETT

Since when ?

POP

Since I met Linda...before that -

CRAIG

- You had none...

POP

No real feelings...I was emotionally impaired...

CRAIG

You damaged me at a time when you had no feelings for me...

POP

That is correct...

CRAIG

No feelings whatsoever...

POP

That was the heartless person I was back then...

CRAIG

...When all the damage was done.

POP

I'm a totally different person now.

BRETT (ironically)

Good for you.

POP

I am a reformed character. The only thing preventing me from living a full and rewarding life is the lack of your forgiveness...

CRAIG

So, I gotta forgive you, so's you can feel better ?

POP

That's about it.

CRAIG

What about me ? What about what I might feel ? Huh ? You ever thought about that ?

POP

I did...

BRETT

Pop's so earnest.

POP

I can't change the past. All I can do is, regret what I did...

CRAIG

You don't regret it as much as I do...

POP

I'm sorry...I ask your forgiveness...

CRAIG

My health suffered...my mental health...

Craig looks at Brett.

BRETT

Well, you never talk about other people; you always talk about yourself, or Ma, or Pop, or me; never anyone else. Your world is so small...

CRAIG

...Confined to the time of my psychological imprisonment...caused by you, Pop; by your crazy behaviour and your nasty comments... I am so tired now, by the whole damn thing.

BRETT

You're looking for someone to blame...

CRAIG

Of course I am. I feel so bad when I hafta blame myself...it's so painful...

BRETT

Just tell the truth. Be honest with yourself.

CRAIG

The things he said, made me make the wrong decision, which led to my major misfortune... that dreadful mistake..I made...I wasn't thinking straight...

BRETT

But you were the person who made the mistake...

CRAIG

Yes, I made the mistake...I wasn't thinking straight at all...I did the opposite of what I needed to do. Pop, you did this to me; you turned me into a complete failure.

A beat.

POP

I need you to forgive me...

CRAIG

Why is my forgiveness so important to you ?

POP

It is; for my peace of mind...

CRAIG

For your peace of mind...?

POP

For closure; for both of us.

Craig sighs.

CRAIG

I doubt your sincerity.

POP

You shouldn't do that. I am sincere, now.

BRETT

You weren't in the past.

POP

Er...

Pop cannot think of a reply to that and trails off.

A beat.

CRAIG

I was naive...

BRETT

You sure were.

CRAIG

Ma took Pop's side, as if his nastiness was justified, by my behaviour...

BRETT

She didn't really; but she had to be careful what she said in front of Pop, at that time.

CRAIG

She said, I was as bad as him in my own way...How could I be as bad as him, if he made, nasty comments...?

BRETT

She wanted you to appear to be unaffected by him...

CRAIG

But I was...I could not appear to be upset
...that was taking his side...as if his nasty
comments meant nothing...so he could get
away with it.

BRETT

She wasn't on his side; she had to appear
to be. That's what you didn't understand,
because you were naive, and immature.

CRAIG

I was upset...

BRETT

He enjoyed making nasty comments, at
that time...

POP

Not any more; I am ashamed of my behaviour,
then...

BRETT

You weren't at the time...

POP

I am now.

CRAIG

What can be done with me now, that I'm in
such a state ? What is my future gonna be ?

BRETT

You gotta make something out-ta the rest of
your life...

CRAIG

What ? What can I make out-ta the disaster
that is my life ?

POP

You can be a better person.

CRAIG

How can I do that ?

POP

You can start by forgiving me.

Craig sighs.

CRAIG

What good would that do me ?

BRETT

None; none whatsoever.

POP

You might hate me less...

CRAIG

I hate you as much as you deserve to be hated, by me.

POP

If you hate me less, you might be able to move on...

CRAIG

I can't move on; I'm stuck, in my past.

POP

Forgiving me might -

BRETT

- Help you, not him.

POP

My life is almost perfect now. The one defect in the fragile globe of my happiness is this fragment from the past. Remove that, and I can live the perfect life, free from any memory of the past.

CRAIG

A cure for you, might not be a cure for me.

POP

It might help...

BRETT

It might not help him...it would help you.

POP

What are you implying ?

BRETT

You're selfish, Pop. You want the perfect life with your wonderful companion, Linda, washing your hands of your evil past/

POP

I don't think I'm being selfish...

BRETT

Yes, you are..being selfish...You don't really care about Craig, do you ? You never did.

POP

I didn't in the past. I do now...

BRETT (ironically)

- Because you're a reformed character...

POP

Yes, I am. People need a second chance in life. People need other people to give them the benefit of the doubt. Craig, I'm an old man now. I wanna live the rest of my life in the knowledge any harm I did in the past, is forgiven. I ask you, in all sincerity, to forgive me...

Craig thinks for a while.

CRAIG

I would hafta be really dumb to forgive you, really thick...

POP

Well, maybe you're not as intelligent as you used ta be, and maybe I'm less nasty...

CRAIG

So, me being dumb means you can manipulate me into saying anything ?

POP

It's not like that.

CRAIG

Does a person live for himself, or for other people ?

BRETT

That is the question.

POP

Surely, it has to be a bit of both...?

BRETT

A compromise...?

POP

Yes; a bit of, give and take...

BRETT

Sounds like it's all give on his part, and all take on yours...

POP

Not entirely...

BRETT

This whole thing is for your benefit, Pop, not his.

POP

He could still get something out of it...

CRAIG

What ?!

POP

A sense of well-being from, forgiving someone...

BRETT

...Of a serious misdemeanour...

POP

...From the past...

CRAIG

You wanna be free from blame...

POP

I did wrong...

CRAIG

You don't want any guilt...

POP

I might still have some blame, and guilt, but forgiveness is a blessing...to he that gives, and he who receives...

BRETT

...Which is you...

POP

Yes...It's true...I would happily receive forgiveness...

BRETT (to Craig)

He would...

Silence, as Craig considers his decision.

CRAIG

I'm not certain...

POP

What...?

CRAIG

...If I can forgive you...I'm just not sure I can...

POP

What's the problem ?

BRETT

Is it such a big deal, if he forgives you or not ?

POP

It matters to me...

BRETT

Why ?

POP

Because it's the one remaining obstacle to me leading a decent life...

BRETT

You hafta be a decent person, if you wanna lead a decent life...And what about him; does he lead a decent life ?

CRAIG

My life is awful; I got a lousy life.

POP

I wanna help you...

CRAIG

You can't help me...

POP

You need ta let go of your anger and
resentment...for your peace of mind.
I don't wanna be held responsible for
your suffering.

CRAIG

You were the cause of my suffering.

POP

That's why you need ta forgive me, for
your peace of mind. Once that's done,
you'll feel better...

CRAIG

Will I ?

POP

Sure, ya will...

CRAIG

I can't be certain...

BRETT

- You can't be certain of nothing, until
you try...

Craig sighs.

CRAIG

Will I feel better if I forgive you, or if
I don't ?

BRETT

Try something...anything...This is getting
tedious now.

CRAIG

It's not about my suffering; it's not about
what's good for me. It's all about other
people, what's good for them...not me...
it was never about me...Who cares what
I think ? Who cares what I feel ? My life
was compacted, crushed, then thrown away
like trash, like garbage...I was not treated
as human...and now you say, you care...

BRETT

I don't think Pop will be happy until you
say you forgive him.

CRAIG

It's not easy for me...I resent the life I've had since it all went wrong...So many bad memories haunt about me...You know, Pop, when you were misbehaving, no-one told you off, because you had all the money; so you could get away with it. But I was exposed to your behaviour, and I copied it, subconsciously, like it was involuntary, like I was compelled to copy you. But I got told off; I got criticised; I got put in my place, not you, me, for misbehaviour. The sins of the father were visited on me. I got so mixed up, not understanding why no-one told you off. I was naive and stupid. I was ignorant. Young people copy, mimic the behaviour they see; and if no-one says it's wrong, you believe it's okay to swear, be nasty, have moods. Then, you get told off...it is so confusing...It takes away your moral compass. Other people censure you for behaviour they don't criticise in the man who sets the example for his son...

BRETT

I didn't copy his behaviour; I knew it was wrong. You, brother, you were too much of a sponge. You had no idea how to behave properly.

CRAIG

I followed the example set by my father...

BRETT

- Which was all wrong.

A beat.

POP

I'm sorry I set such a bad example.

CRAIG

You really messed with my head, Pop.

POP

I..apologise...I am, sincerely sorry.

CRAIG

I always got told off for my behaviour, and I always wondered why. You weren't

told off. I was so confused. Why did I get told off for the same behaviour.

BRETT

Ma disapproved of your behaviour, not you. It was not personal.

CRAIG

I thought it was...You can understand why I got that idea.

Brett sighs and yawns.

BRETT

Yeah, I understand.

CRAIG

Why didn't you put me right at the time ?

BRETT

I don't remember. Maybe, that's what I should've done... You let the past wash over you like waves on a shore, lapping the sand... Yesterday might float away on the tide, never to be seen again.

CRAIG

How come I got blamed for everything went wrong ?

BRETT

We knew, if you got blamed, your response would be typically immature, so we could tell you off again...you dug yourself a hole, and you kept digging. You got upset too easily, so we could call you a Cry-baby. Ma thought you were, "very immature". Then, there were times when you had to have something someone else had, or it was, "unfair".

CRAIG

There was this trick you played, Pop, where as children we had the choice of our standard pocket money, or half a heap of coins you put on the table...and I asked for my standard pocket money; then, you counted up the coins and half amounted to more than my pocket money; so you gave Brett half...he got more than me; so, I asked to give back my pocket and get half of

CRAIG (cont'd)

the loose coins. But, Pop, you said I had already turned that down, and you were prepared to go back on your word. When I said that was unfair, you dismissed me, and I was upset and started to cry; and you, Pop, you were annoyed and angry at my tears; and you, Brett, you called me a Cry-baby and mocked my tears.

BRETT

You were immature and stupid.

CRAIG

I didn't like people playing games with my expectations of life...

POP

I was a man of my word.

CRAIG

That was cruel...

BRETT

Was it ? We could play such games with you, and when you complained about not being treated properly, we just laughed, and said, you were immature. You made it too easy for us, to put you down. We disrespected you, because you couldn't stand up for yourself in an intelligent, mature fashion. We really had a very low opinion of you, Ma, me, and Pop. We never considered you an equal. Then, there was the time Pop bought me a book: it was, "Wuthering Heights" by Emily Bronte, and you wanted him to buy you the same book, or it wasn't "fair". That was so immature. You wanted attention. You really made us look down on you as an easily-manipulated idiot.

CRAIG

I guess I was. I did myself no favours, the way I behaved.

BRETT

We ran rings around you...

CRAIG

I was sensitive.

BRETT

You were dumb, and stupid, and young,
and, immature.

CRAIG

You didn't have any feeling for me.

BRETT

That's not surprising, the way you behaved.

CRAIG

It was natural, for me to believe like that.

BRETT

We were poor, and you were a pain. If we'd
been better off, we might've had a little more
patience with you.

CRAIG

We're better off now. We ain't poor no more.

BRETT

So, maybe we can afford you more scope now,
for your over-sensitive immature drivell.

CRAIG

It's about feeling; it's about emotion.

BRETT

Money has to come first; then, we can have
more feeling.

CRAIG

You played a lot-ta tricks on me, at the time.

BRETT

And you fell for it, every time. I guess I enjoyed
putting you down.

CRAIG

Thanks, bro.

BRETT

Someone had to assume authority in the moral
vacuum left by Pop.

POP

I wasn't right until I met my Linda. She made
me a much better person.

CRAIG

So, it's all nice and hunky-dory now...

POP

I still need you to forgive me...

CRAIG

How about you, Brett ? Do you want me to forgive you ?

BRETT

I have no psychological need, for forgiveness.

CRAIG

You bullied me...

BRETT

I don't think I did.

CRAIG

You mocked me...

BRETT

It was for your benefit, to get you to behave better. My treatment of you was necessary for the cohesion of our family. We didn't have the luxury of sensitivity at that time, because we were poor. You didn't understand that, did you ?

CRAIG

I guess not.

BRETT

Everything I did, was to keep you under control.

CRAIG

I guess I should be grateful.

BRETT

You can thank me later.

CRAIG

Hmm...

A beat.

POP

So, how about it, Craig ? Can you forgive me ?

CRAIG

Do I have to ?

POP

You sure do; for my peace of mind.

CRAIG

Like, pretend it never happened ?

POP

No; it happened, but I'm a different person now. I don't want the baggage of my past dragging me down, not now I'm together with my Linda.

CRAIG (to Brett)

Do I have to ?

BRETT

Do it.

A beat.

CRAIG

Okay, Pop, I am prepared to say, I forgive you...

Pop smiles a broad beaming smile.

POP

Ha ! You forgave me. That makes me so happy...

Craig looks down at the table.

CUT TO:

INT – CAR – NIGHT

Brett and Craig have just got into Brett's car.

CRAIG

Of course I didn't mean it...I was insincere...
I didn't really forgive him...

BRETT

I know that.

CRAIG

I can't forgive him for ruining me life, just because he's a reformed character, now.

BRETT
You said you forgave him...

CRAIG
- And I didn't mean it...

BRETT
It's good enough for him. You made him
happy...Let him be satisfied with your
gesture of forgiveness, even if it was
insincere, even if you didn't mean it...
it was good enough for him.

CRAIG
Do you think he thought I was sincere ?

BRETT
He's old now. He ain't so sharp no more
He might well believe in the sincerity of
your forgiveness.

A beat.

BRETT
I'll drive you home.

CRAIG
Thanks.

Craig looks ahead.

Brett turns on the ignition and starts the car.

CUT TO:

EXT – DRIVEWAY – NIGHT

The car drives out of the driveway of Pop's house.

THE END

