

NOBODY'S FLOOD

By Glenn Alterman

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SYNOPSIS: Barry has returned home to Brooklyn be with his family one year after his younger brother's death. His mother is anxious and slightly unbalanced. His father doesn't know how to help his wife. They are all planning on going to the cemetery together. As the play oscillates over several years, the Rosenstein family's life is seen, before and after the death of their youngest son. Winner of the REVA SHINER AWARD (Bloomington Playwrights Project).

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(1 female, 3 males)

VERNICE ROSENSTEIN (f)..... 50s-60s; She is fragile, seems a bit off, and at times can get very emotional. *(194 lines)*

BARRY ROSENSTEIN (m)..... 30s; Slightly overweight A loving son and brother who allows himself to be manipulated by his family at times. *(174 lines)*

MICKY ROSENSTEIN (m)..... 24; Attractive, playful, sensitive, caring. *(157 lines)*

DAVE ROSENSTEIN (m)..... 60s; Vernice's husband. Loving, but sometimes combative. *(149 lines)*

DURATION: 75 minutes

TIME: Oscillates in a period of five years in the late 1980's

SETTING: The Rosenstein kitchen in the Brighton Beach section of Brooklyn, a couple of blocks from the beach.

PROLOGUE

AT START: *It's about 6 A.M. A pool of light comes up on VERNICE. She's wearing a housecoat and fluffy slippers. She's sitting alone in the kitchen, nervously smoking a cigarette. Occasionally she shifts her position in the chair, looking at the floor, then the ceiling, then out the window; lost in thought.*

As the lights come up we see that she's sitting in the Rosenstein kitchen. Early morning light is coming in the window. She's sitting at the table. Three other chairs surround the table. The room is cheerful and homey.

DAVE enters. He's wearing a bathrobe and slippers. He notices her, watches her for a moment. He goes to the refrigerator, opens it. VERNICE is aware that he's there, but ignores him and continues to smoke. The tension between them is obvious. Dave takes a container of juice out, fills a glass and drinks it. The room is quiet, just the sound of some early morning traffic.

DAVE finishes his juice, puts the glass in the sink and leaves. Aware that he's left, VERNICE relaxes a bit. Soon we hear the bedroom door shut. VERNICE continues smoking, looking out the window. The lights come down.

ACT ONE, SCENE 1

AT START: Lights rise. VERNICE and BARRY are in the middle of a heated discussion in the kitchen. VERNICE seems very anxious.

VERNICE: I'm positive Barry, positive!

BARRY: Positive, ma?

VERNICE: Positive, I'm telling you! He does things, does 'em—on purpose!

BARRY: Like what?

VERNICE: Like what? I dunno, —things!

BARRY: What kind of things?

VERNICE: Things Barry, THINGS! Sneaky, spiteful.

BARRY: Like what, what does he do?!

VERNICE: Alright, he turns the water on. Turns the water on in the bathroom sink. Turns it, —leaves it, lets it run. Full force!

BARRY: Full force, ma?

VERNICE: Full force! 'Till it fills up and overflows. And then we gotta flood.

BARRY: You're kidding?

VERNICE: Place fills up with water.

BARRY: Dad does that?

VERNICE: You should see. All the time, I'm telling you.

BARRY: All...?

VERNICE: I wake up and there's water everywhere. S'like living at Niagara Falls.

BARRY: But why?

VERNICE: What?

BARRY: Why would he do that?

VERNICE: Ya wanna know why? Ask him! 'Cause when I do, when I say "Dave, why'cha do that? Why'd you let the water run? He denies it.

BARRY: He does?

VERNICE: Lies like a rug, your father! You want some more coffee?

BARRY: What? No.

VERNICE: Sure?

BARRY: Yeah.

VERNICE: Got a pot, just perked.

BARRY: I don't want any.

VERNICE: (*Bringing the pot over.*) C'mon, a drop. Here, have some.

BARRY: Ma! No! Please!

VERNICE shrugs her shoulder, then unaware, leaves the hot pot of coffee on the table, walks away.

VERNICE: So anyway, I'm standing there Barry, in a foot of water.
And it feels like Gaslight.

BARRY: Ma?

VERNICE: (*Continuing.*) That film, y'know, with Ing-amar Bergman.
Gaslight, where the husband's trying to drive his wife...

BARRY: Ma, look, you left the coffee pot...

VERNICE: (*Seeing the coffee pot on the table.*) Oh Jesus! (*Gets the pot, puts it back on the stove.*) So anyway, he says he didn't do a thing. Sink musta overflowed by itself. By itself, could ya bust? Sits there in his chair, smug, smiling, reading his paper, like he got one over on me. But I see him, that son of a bitch, from the corner of my eye. I watch him, seeing me, mopping up. And I'm on to him. Far as I'm concerned he can flood this whole house and float right outta here. I wouldn't even wave good bye.

BARRY: Ma!

VERNICE: You wanna Danish?

BARRY: No.

VERNICE: (*Bringing the box of Danish over.*) C'mon, have some.

BARRY: I'm on a diet.

VERNICE: What diet, you look fine.

BARRY: Leave me alone, I don't ...

VERNICE: (*Keeping at it.*) Half, have a half. I got a whole box here.
Here's one with fruit. They tell you to eat fruit on a diet.

BARRY: Ma, I don't want any!

VERNICE gives BARRY a dirty look, takes the Danish and throws it back in the box.

BARRY: So where's he now?

VERNICE: Who? Him? Upstairs. Shaving. Hope he cuts his throat.

BARRY: Ma, why do you say things like that?

VERNICE: Barry, you don't seem to understand.

BARRY: No, I do.

VERNICE: No, you don't! You don't live here anymore. S'not like when you and Mickey were here.

BARRY: *(He's heard it all before.)* Ma, I know.

VERNICE: No, you don't! You keep saying you do, but you don't! How could you, huh? Why, you ever come here anymore? Do I ever see you?

BARRY: Ma...

VERNICE: Let's face it, you got out, escaped, like Mickey. Only wish I had his nerve.

BARRY: Don't talk like...

VERNICE: You hide up there in Boston, with Brenda and the kid.

BARRY: We don't hide, we're not hiding! We talk. I call you almost every...

VERNICE: Yeah, talk, long distance. "How are you, how's the baby?" Nothing with nothing. Where you been Barry, huh?! A year, a whole year! S'always something with you. You have a meeting, the baby's sick, Bullshit! How many colds can a kid have?!

BARRY: Ma, stop.

VERNICE: How many business meetings you have to go to?!

BARRY: *(Losing it.)* Stop already! Rest for a minute.

VERNICE: *(Lighting a cigarette.)* Yeah, I'll rest. I'll rest alright, don't worry.

BARRY: *(Seeing how upset she is. A beat, softly.)* Give me a Danish.

VERNICE: *(Suddenly smiling, going to the box of Danish.)* What kind you want?

BARRY: I don't... You got any cheese or pineapple in there?

VERNICE: *(Bringing the box to him.)* Both, we got either. Which one you want?

BARRY: *(Half looking.)* I don't care. Cheese, half.

VERNICE: You can have half of each, half pineapple, half cheese. Save the other half for later. Look, we got prune here, prunes are good for ya. (*Frantically starts taking the various Danish out, placing them in the plate in front of BARRY.*) There's strawberry, cherry. You always liked cherry, especially when you were a kid. I remember you and Mikey always fighting over the cherry Danish.

BARRY: (*Watching her, concerned, softly.*) Ma, what are doing?

VERNICE: (*Stopping, looking confused.*) Nothing, I'm just showing you...

BARRY: I said half a cheese Danish, ma. Can you give me that, a half?

VERNICE: (*Throwing all of the Danish back in the box.*) You don't have to get sarcastic. (*Puts one on his plate, a whole one.*) Here.

BARRY watches her as she takes the box back to the counter.

BARRY: (*A beat.*) So what time's Aunt Edith coming?

VERNICE: (*Calming down.*) Edith? I dunno. 'Bout eleven. But you know her, she's always late.

The sound of a toilet flushing. The bathroom door opens offstage.

DAVE: (*Offstage voice.*) Okay, I'm out!

They both look up towards the bathroom.

VERNICE: She met a man last month.

BARRY: Aunt Edith?

VERNICE: Yeah, over at the senior citizens. S'name's Harris, a widower. Wife just died. He's head over heels for her. She says he wants to give her the world.

BARRY: Really?

VERNICE: Takes her out all the time, dinner, this, that. It's nice, a new man, at her age. (*Then looking into the box of Danish.*) You said cheese, right? You wanted a cheese Danish?

BARRY: Ma, you already gave it to me.

VERNICE: *(Continuing her story.)* Comes from old money, Edith said. Russian, retired. Could be a wonderful thing for her. She's been alone for...

BARRY: Ma?

VERNICE: Hm?

BARRY: *(Softly.)* Why don't you go get dressed?

VERNICE: I will.

BARRY: S'nearly eleven. Aunt Edith will be here soon.

VERNICE: So? She can wait, what's a rush?

BARRY: No rush. But he's out of the bathroom. Go take a bath, go ahead, get dressed.

VERNICE: *(Grounding out her cigarette in the ashtray.)* What's the rush?!

BARRY: No rush, but why keep her waiting once she gets here?

VERNICE: *(Anxiously.)* Everyone's rushing me, all morning long. Go to the bakery, grocery, the cleaners!

BARRY: *(Softly.)* Ma, no one's rushing you.

VERNICE: Haven't stopped since I got up. Go, go, go! Do this, do that. Like no one here got hands but me!

BARRY: Ma, relax.

VERNICE: I'm tired of always...! *(Stopping herself.)* Forget about it. What the hell am I...?

VERNICE lights another cigarette. The room is quiet for a moment. She goes over to the counter by the window, smokes her cigarette. BARRY looks at her for a moment.

BARRY: *(Softly.)* What? What is it, ma?

VERNICE doesn't look at him.

BARRY: What went wrong, how'd it happen? Tell me. You okay?

VERNICE: *(Softly.)* Leave me alone.

VERNICE continues smoking. BARRY gets up, stands next to her, and gently touches her hand.

BARRY: Are you okay?

VERNICE: *(Half smiling.)* Me? Sure, Rock a Gibraltar. Soon as I take a bath, put my face on; be fine.

BARRY: I know.

VERNICE: All the excitement. *(Putting on a smile.)* See? All better.

BARRY: S'gonna be alright. Nobody's rushing you. Take all the time you want. We'll get there when we get there.

VERNICE: A whole year, Barry. So much time.

BARRY: Yeah.

VERNICE: Feels like yesterday. Still can't go in his room, I just walk by.

BARRY: Takes time.

VERNICE: He was so...!

BARRY: I know.

VERNICE: Barry, I miss him so much.

BARRY: I know. I know.... Me too.

The lights fade.

ACT ONE, SCENE 2

AT START: *A few years earlier. VERNICE is leaning over the kitchen sink. She's cut her finger. She's in pain, holding it under the running water.*

VERNICE: *(Yelling.)* Mick-eeeeee!

MICKEY: *(Offstage.)* What, ma?

VERNICE: Come down here, hurry!

MICKEY: *(Offstage.)* I'm getting dressed!

VERNICE: MICK-EEEE!

MICKEY: *(Offstage.)* I'll be late for work!

VERNICE: I cut myself, I'm bleeding!

MICKEY: *(Offstage.)* WHAT?!

VERNICE: My finger, I'm bleeding – bad!

We hear a door opening, some footsteps.

VERNICE: MICK-EEE!

MICKEY: (*Enters. He's wearing suit pants with the belt buckle still opened, and an opened shirt. He's carrying Band-Aids.*) Okay, I'm here! Let's see!

VERNICE: (*Holding her finger up, in pain.*) See?

MICKEY: Which one?!

VERNICE: (*Showing him.*) Here, this one!

MICKEY: Where, which one?

VERNICE: (*Showing him.*) THIS ONE, HERE! I was polishing the cake knife.

MICKEY: Ma, I don't see...

VERNICE: (*Holding her finger up to him.*) For Christ's... THIS ONE! It stings!

MICKEY: (*Looking at it.*) That one?

VERNICE: Yeah. (*Looking away.*)

MICKEY: (*Looking at it.*) Ma?

VERNICE: (*Looking at him, fearful.*) What, how bad?

MICKEY: (*Looking more carefully, then softly.*) S'just a scratch. S'barely even cut.

VERNICE: (*Pulling her hand back.*) What are you talking about?!

MICKEY: (*As if to a child.*) It's a small cut, ma.

VERNICE: Don't tell me!

MICKEY: (*Gently.*) You hardly broke the skin.

They both look at her finger.

MICKEY: See? It's nothing.

VERNICE: Well it hurt, was a lot of blood in the sink.

MICKEY: From where?

VERNICE: MY FINGER!

MICKEY: Look, I don't know how it feels.... You really don't even need a Band-Aid.

VERNICE: (*Grabs the box of Band-Aids from him.*) Thank you, Dr. Kildare! Gimme that! (*Takes out a Band-Aid, annoyed.*) Sorry I wasn't bleeding enough for you. Next time I'll chop the whole thing off!

MICKEY: (*Smiling.*) Well maybe then there'd be some blood.

VERNICE: Shut up.

MICKEY: (*Playful.*) Want me to kiss it?

VERNICE: What?

MICKEY: (*Playing with her.*) Kiss mommy's boo-boo, make it alllllll better.

VERNICE: (*Trying not to smile.*) Get outta here. Thought you're late for work.

MICKEY: (*Having fun.*) I am, but my mommy had an emergency. She cut her little finger, blood was everywhere. Was a blood bath in my house, boss. Was just *terrible!* Sorry I'm late, but it was life or death!

VERNICE: (*Deadpan.*) You through?

MICKEY: (*Cuddling up to her.*) Let me kiss your boo-boo, mommy.

VERNICE walks away. MICKEY follows her, in a Groucho Marx walk.

MICKEY: Let me at it, let me at that finger. Let me give it a big kiss

VERNICE: (*Trying not to enjoy the attention.*) Go to work, get dressed! Go to your room.

MICKEY: (*Stops, plays the bad boy.*) Alright mommy, I'll go to my room and I'll get all dressed.

VERNICE: (*Takes the cake knife out of the sink.*) I told Edith that knife was too sharp. She got it for your father and me for our anniversary last year

MICKEY: Looks expensive.

VERNICE: She splurged. Was before she heard of fixed incomes and livin' alone on a budget.

MICKEY: (*Looks at his watch, starts to leave.*) Jeez, I'm gonna be late.

VERNICE: You're coming home after work, right?

MICKEY: (*Stopping.*) I got a date.

VERNICE: A date? Don't you know what today is?

MICKEY: (*Realizing.*) Oh my God, it's your birthday. I'm sorry.

VERNICE looks disappointed.

MICKEY: C'mon, don't be mad. I'll take you out tomorrow, I promise.

'Sides dad always takes you out on your birthday. S'not like you're gonna be alone.

VERNICE: Thought we'd all be together tonight, the whole family. Be the last time before Barry moves out next month. Can't you break your date?

MICKEY: I can't.

VERNICE: She Jewish at least?

MICKEY: *(Smiling.)* Just got in from Israel, hot off the kibbutz.

VERNICE: Don't be so smart. Once in a while you could bring some of your girlfriends around. You ashamed of us?

MICKEY: Gimme a hug, c'mon birthday girl. *(Hugs VERNICE.)*

VERNICE: I love you Mickey. *(Then, playfully teasing.)* You know what your father got me?

MICKEY: What?

VERNICE: He didn't tell you.

MICKEY: Haven't seen him much lately. What'd he get you?

VERNICE: *(Playing coy.)* Oh, nothing.

MICKEY: *(Has played this game.)* What'd he get you?

VERNICE: You want a cup of coffee?

MICKEY: *(A bit annoyed.)* Just tell me.

VERNICE: Got a pot just perked.

MICKEY: You gonna tell me or not?

VERNICE: First sit, you gotta sit for this.

MICKEY begrudgingly sits.

VERNICE: He, your father, got me a coat.

MICKEY: A coat. What kind?

VERNICE: There's only one kina coat that counts. Mickey, your father bought me a *mink*.

MICKEY: Mink, you're kidding?

VERNICE: You don't kid about mink, Mickey. Full length, almost to the floor. It's at the tailor's being altered. Cost him plenty, don't worry.

MICKEY: He loves you ma, money doesn't matter.

VERNICE: He's a good man, your father.

MICKEY: I know.

VERNICE: *(Looks at MICKEY.)* I really wish you two...

MICKEY: *(Starting to leave.)* I gotta go. Wear it in the best of health.

MICKEY exits. VERNICE watches him go for a moment, then goes back to doing the dishes. After a moment MICKEY tip toes back in with a bunch of flowers. He stands behind her.

MICKEY: *(Softly.)* Happy Birthday, ma.

VERNICE: *(She turns around, surprised.)* You son of a bitch, you didn't forget!

MICKEY: 'Course not, you're my girl. Gotta keep our girls in minks and flowers. Got up early this morning and ran to the florists.

VERNICE: *(Smiling.)* I'm gonna put 'em right on the bureau next to our bed. Wait'll your father sees 'em.

MICKEY: Glad you like 'em.

VERNICE: Most beautiful flowers I've ever seen.

MICKEY takes her hand, the one with the bandaged finger, lifts it to his lips.

VERNICE: What?

MICKEY: *(Kisses VERNICE'S bandaged finger, smiles.)* See? Just took one kiss. One kiss and now it's all better.

Blackout.

ACT ONE, SCENE 3

AT START: *One year after the previous scene.*

MICKEY: I'm positive Barry, positive!

BARRY: Positive, Mickey? You sure?

MICKEY: I took the test.

BARRY: When?

MICKEY: Last week.

BARRY: Why didn't you tell me?

MICKEY: Got the results last night.

BARRY: Jesus!

MICKEY: I kept hoping y'know? Kept... For months. But I knew, y'know? Losing weight, tired all the time, night sweats. Mom kept saying, "You're getting so thin Mickey. Telling her "It's just stress, ma, don't worry." Telling myself it's this or that. Any excuse, one after another. But then I ran outta things. No reasons left. So I went to the doctor, took the test. Then last night, sitting there in his waiting room – forever. Making all kinds of deals with myself. Promises, y'know? If only! I'll be a better person! But when he came in, was walking towards me, look in his eyes, Barry, I'll never forget. Game was over. Doctor didn't have to say a thing... I knew.

BARRY: Mickey, you can take the test again.

MICKEY: For what?

BARRY: They make mistakes.

MICKEY: It's no...

BARRY: They got some drugs now, Mickey!

MICKEY: I know.

BARRY: There's been some breakthroughs. Got new treatments! You just gotta take care of yourself till they find.... See another doctor!

MICKEY: It's AIDS, Barry! Almost full blown he said. Said I waited too long to take the test. So, second, third opinions, they don't matter now. All comes down to one thing, how fast or how slow.

BARRY: Don't...

MICKEY: C'mon, Barry, I've been around this a long time. I'm no novice. Lost a lot of friends, you know that. Guys are dying all over the place. I'll take whatever medicine they give me, do whatever... I just don't wanna pretend anymore.

BARRY goes over to him, holds him.

BARRY: Jesus.

MICKEY: How am I gonna tell them, huh? You know mom. I get a cough and she's....

BARRY: I know

MICKEY: And him, he'll have a field day.

BARRY: What? Don't start that again.

MICKEY: C'mon, any chance he gets he puts the knife in.

BARRY: S'just his way. He's like that with everyone, you know that.

MICKEY: Bullshit, Barry! S'always between favorites, you know that. Mom, me, him, you. But when you moved to Brenda's last year, apple cart got upset. Things changed around here. Now him and me, we hardly ever talk. Masks are off. He avoids me and I avoid him.

BARRY: Mickey, c'mon, everybody's been a little crazy lately with the wedding coming up next month. And between the caterers, the shopping, all the expenses. Nobody's got their heads screwed on right. Talk to him. Listen to me, for once. Just talk to him. Give him a chance.

MICKEY: Stop playing the big brother. Doesn't work, never did.

BARRY: Give him a god-damned chance!

MICKEY: He's had a million! –Ya hungry?

BARRY: What? No.

MICKEY: How about some breakfast.

BARRY: I ate.

MICKEY: (*Going over to the counter.*) Here, she's got a whole box of cupcakes.

BARRY: I'm on a diet.

MICKEY: What for? You look fine.

BARRY: Don't change the subject! You gonna talk to him or not? He'll find out sooner or later.

MICKEY: Then later, after your wedding.

BARRY: You're gonna need things, Mickey. Money for doctors...

MICKEY: Sorry I even told you.

BARRY: You do this all the time.

MICKEY: What?

BARRY: Ask me for my help and then tie my hands up so I can't!

MICKEY: I don't need your help!

BARRY: You and him are so alike!

MICKEY: (*Firm and final.*) Just leave me alone, okay?! I'll handle this my own way.

BARRY: If you need anything, you call me, understand? (*MICKEY doesn't say anything.*) YOU UNDERSTAND?!

MICKEY: (*Begrudgingly.*) Yes. Yes!

BARRY: S'just a hop, skip, and jump from Boston. I can be here in no time.

MICKEY: (*Exhausted by all this.*) I'll call, I swear, okay?

BARRY: Collect if you have to.

MICKEY: Collect, person to person—leave me alone already! You're getting more and more like her every day! Look, I appreciate your wanting to help. I do, thank you. Now c'mon, let's get outta here.

BARRY: Where you wanna go?

MICKEY: I don't know, let's go for a walk on the beach, clear our heads. We haven't been down there in forever.

BARRY: I'm supposed to go shopping with Brenda.

MICKEY: C'mon, be like when we were kids. Our walks on the beach. Remember the fun we use to have? Walk along the water, tell dirty jokes, go over to Nathan's for a hot dog.

BARRY: Hot dog, just what I need. Can't fit into my tux now.

MICKEY: Barry, this might be the last time we get together before your wedding. (*BARRY looks at him.*) C'mon!

BARRY: (*Smiling.*) Shit, she can go shopping without me.

MICKEY: (*Smiling.*) Good for you. Big balls, I'm impressed. (*As he leaves.*) I'll go get my jacket.

BARRY watches MICKEY go. After he's gone, BARRY'S expression changes, his concern shows. He takes the dishes from the table places them in the sink. He sees the box of cupcakes, goes over, takes one out, and takes a huge bite of it. He continues eating, as the lights fade.

ACT ONE, SCENE 4

AT START: *Late afternoon, that same day. It's almost sundown. MICKEY is looking out the window, lost in thought. DAVE enters carrying a half filled trash bag. He stops, looks at MICKEY. MICKEY sees him, awkwardly smiles.*

MICKEY: That's so funny.

DAVE: What?

MICKEY: I was just thinking about you.

DAVE: Yeah? Thought you went shopping with your mother.

MICKEY: Eh, I was too tired. Then Barry came over a little while ago, and we went for a walk on the beach. Went all the way down to Coney Island.

DAVE: Coney Island? Thought you were tired.

MICKEY: I was, but.... Went down to Nathan's, got some hot dogs. Just got in.

DAVE: Hm. Said you were thinking about me. So what were you thinking?

MICKEY: I dunno, how I haven't seen you lately. How we... I dunno. You hungry, want something?

DAVE: Maybe some juice.

MICKEY: Sit, I'll get it.

DAVE sits, puts the trash bag by his chair.

MICKEY: *(As he gets the juice.)* Boy, Barry's so nervous. The wedding and all. Ate FOUR hot dogs!

DAVE: Hm.

MICKEY: Him and his diets, huh? Shoulda heard him. Will this be ready, will that be ready? Did I think he's doing the right thing marrying Brenda? Talked my head off.

DAVE: Your mother's excited too.

MICKEY: *(Bringing the juice over.)* Here ya go.

DAVE: Thanks. *(MICKEY goes over to the window, looks out.)*

MICKEY: Turned out to be a nice day after all. Barry was so worried it would rain. When I got up this morning thought it might rain too, didn't you?

DAVE: No.

MICKEY: No, how'd you know?

DAVE: *(Looking at him.)* I don't know, sometimes you just know things, Mickey. It's like a feeling.

MICKEY: Yeah, well I thought...

DAVE: *(Interrupting.)* So you and your brother had a nice walk?

MICKEY: Yeah, I miss him being around.

DAVE: Tell me something, Mickey.

MICKEY: What?

DAVE: When *you* gonna get married?

MICKEY: Me? I dunno, why?

DAVE: No one special on the horizon?

MICKEY: Nah, I'm a one-man band, you know that?

DAVE: All that dating you do?

MICKEY: Playing the field.

DAVE: How old are you?

MICKEY: Twenty-four, you know how old I am. *(Looking at him.)*
What is it dad?

DAVE: Hm?

MICKEY: Something wrong?

DAVE: What could be wrong?

MICKEY: I dunno, you just.... Ya seem...

DAVE: *(Interrupting.)* Barry asked me if I had his cufflinks.

MICKEY: What?

DAVE: Thought he leant them to me. So I looked and looked, couldn't find them. Then I remembered, he leant them to you, for one of your dates.

MICKEY: That's right, I got 'em upstairs.

DAVE: I know, I looked.

MICKEY: You looked, you went into my room?

DAVE: Told you, I didn't know you were here. So I went in your room, looked in your drawer.

MICKEY: You went looking through my drawers?

DAVE: That's right.

MICKEY: Did'cha find what you were looking for?

DAVE: *(Lifts up the garbage bag, softly.)* What is this?

MICKEY takes the bag, looks inside, looks back at DAVE. He doesn't say anything.

DAVE: What is that filth?!

MICKEY: Isn't that what you were really looking for, Dad?

DAVE: *(Loudly.)* I'm talking to you!

MICKEY: Barry's not getting married for a month. Why'd you really go into my room?

DAVE: What is this shit?!

MICKEY: *(Very direct.)* They're magazines. Photographs of naked men having sex.

DAVE: What is this doing in my house?!

MICKEY: They're mine, were in my drawer, underneath. Didn't know I hadda hide 'em. That you'd go sneaking...

DAVE: I told you, I was looking for cufflinks!

MICKEY: Well I guess you found something else.

DAVE: What are you some sick kid that needs that shit to get yourself excited?

MICKEY: If they were pictures of women....?

DAVE: GET RID OF IT, I DON'T WANT IT IN MY HOUSE!

MICKEY: Why?

DAVE: If your mother found them...

MICKEY: She doesn't go through my drawers.

DAVE: What if she did?!

MICKEY: She respects my privacy!

DAVE: You're a grown man. What you do outside of this house, on the street, is your business. I don't wanna know anything about it. But don't bring that crap into my house!

MICKEY: They're just pictures, dad, what are you so afraid of?

DAVE: Afraid?!

MICKEY: *(A little more in his face.)* Something about the pictures frighten you?!

DAVE hits MICKEY in the face.

DAVE: I'm not afraid, -I'M DISGUSTED, OKAY?! It turns my stomach!

MICKEY: *(Softly.)* They're just pictures.

DAVE: They're perverted!

MICKEY: Hey, you want me outta here?

DAVE: What?

MICKEY: That what you're really trying to say, that you want me to leave?

DAVE: That's not...

MICKEY: You said disgusting, perverted. That what you meant about me?

DAVE: Don't bend my words. I was talking about the magazines.

MICKEY: You sure?

DAVE: *(Holding the trash bag. Ending it.)* Just get this out of here before your mother gets back.

MICKEY: This isn't about magazines.

DAVE: No?

MICKEY: It's about how we never talk, how we never have. How you don't know anything about me, never wanted too. How we never really say anything to say to each other, just small talk. How we always pass each other...

DAVE: It's about the magazines!

MICKEY: *(A plea.)* Dad I'm talking to you.

DAVE: *(Starting to leave.)* I don't wanna hear anymore! I'm going upstairs.

MICKEY: DAD?!

DAVE: *(Stopping, looking at him.)* I'M-NOT-INTERESTED, OKAY?!
(Starts to leave again. Not turning back, as he goes.) Tell Barry I found his cufflinks.

MICKEY watches him leave, sits down, exhausted, looks out the window. As the lights slowly come down.

INTERMISSION

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