

SCRIPT TITLE

Written by

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A World of Violent Men

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CAST OF CHARACTERS:

Steve.....detective, physically imposing,
mid fifties

Pat.....Steve's wife, late forties, early
fifties, very attractive

Taylor.....Steve and Pat's daughter, mid
twenties, school teacher

Brock.....Taylor's boyfriend, mid to late
twenties

TIME: The present

PLACE: Middle class suburb and CBD of Melbourne

SETTING: The set needs to incorporate the backyard entertainment area of STEVE and PAT'S home as well as their bedroom. On another part of the stage is BROCK'S studio flat. It is sparse. In the one space there is the bed, a desk to the side with a chair. A "kitchen" is offstage and entrance to the bathroom upstage. The entrance to this space is also upstage.

ACT ONE SCENE ONE

LIGHTS on TAYLOR getting dressed in BROCK'S apartment. Her mobile phone rings. She takes it.

TAYLOR

Hi Dad...yes we'll be there within the hour...I can't wait for you to meet him...I'm serious...he's really smart...no he's not a boozier...takes good care of himself....I know you'll approve...no, he wants to come over, meet the family...speaking of which Mum called and told me she was running late...I thought you knew...you know how she is with that job...I'll help with....she's prepared everything anyway, there you go...don't worry I've got dessert.

TAYLOR hangs up, clearly pleased with the prospect of bringing her new boyfriend home. BROCK enters. He is handsome, fit looking and knows it.

LIGHTS on STEVE hanging up his phone. He looks at the setting on the dinner table. A wine bottle is already open. He pours himself a glass.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

You look great.

LIGHTS on PAT hurriedly packing her things at work, putting on her coat while talking on the phone.

PAT

Yes I'm still here...on my way out actually...everything's done...no problem...you don't have to do anything...by the way how did you know I was still here?...oh you just did....look at the time, got to run.

PAT hangs up. LIGHTS.

A dinner party in STEVE'S backyard in well under way. The main course is finished. Seated are PAT, TAYLOR and BROCK. STEVE enters with a bottle of wine. He opens it and offers some to BROCK.

Not sure if I should... BROCK

Why is that? STEVE

I've had one or two. BROCK

Three. STEVE

Another drink might put- BROCK

Christ Almighty son. It's not a TAC ad. If you want another drink just raise your glass. STEVE

I drove here. Would you report me if I was over the limit? BROCK

There's the spare room- PAT

Taylor can drive. Can't ya love... STEVE

For heaven's sakes of course he can stay. PAT

Of course. TAYLOR

Go ahead then. STEVE

He's brought out his special reserve Brock. PAT

Dad loves his wine. TAYLOR

BROCK

I bet he does.

PAT

Taylor said you'd done some work for Erikson...

BROCK

That's right. Couple of years ago now. Paid pretty well.

STEVE

That would be a first.

PAT

Steve.

STEVE

You know it's true.

PAT

(to BROCK)

I don't remember seeing you...

BROCK

None of it was at head office.

STEVE

(to BROCK)

What was that comment supposed to mean?

PAT

What did he say?

STEVE

"I bet he does."

BROCK

Are you serious?

TAYLOR

Christ Dad. Lighten up. Brock's just...

BROCK

It was nothing.

PAT

Steve...

STEVE

No love. It's a fair question.

BROCK

It's just well...police are known to be heavy drinkers...

PAT

(To BROCK)

I wouldn't-

STEVE

No it's all right Pat. Brock has point. A fair few cops do drink often to excess.
Pleasure of the job...

Uncomfortable silence.

STEVE (CONT'D)

(smirking)

Pressure, I mean pressure of the job.

PAT

Cops do have a reputation Steve....

BROCK

It wouldn't matter if he was.

BROCK gives his attention to PAT.

BROCK (CONT'D)

So how was your vacation? Judging by your tan...

PAT

(conscious of what she says in front of
STEVE)

It was relaxing. Just a few days with some girlfriends...

STEVE

Five in fact. But no one's counting.

STEVE pours more wine into BROCK'S glass.

PAT

For God's sake he's had too much to drink already...

STEVE

No he hasn't.

PAT

Brock you don't have to keep up with-

BROCK

I'm fine Pat really.

STEVE

(Ignoring this)

You stand by that comment of yours Brock?

PAT

He was just making an observation Steve.

STEVE

I thought we were supposed to do the observing.

BROCK

A policeman never rests..? Find that hard to believe...

STEVE

No. A parent never stops...

BROCK

Oh come on you can't be that sensitive Steve...

PAT

You'd be surprised.

BROCK

Tell us some stories. You must have a bag of them.

STEVE

What kind of stories?

BROCK

You know, what the police get up to when no one's looking.

PAT and TAYLOR laugh. STEVE looks at them both.

PAT

C'mon Steve.

STEVE

We could be here all night.

BROCK

You're retiring. Thought of writing your memoirs? Someone with your experience...

STEVE

No.

BROCK

I admire people who want to go in the police. But what it does to them after...

STEVE

It makes them policemen.

BROCK

But that's it isn't it? They can't switch off. Always on the job.

STEVE

If that was the case they wouldn't drink would they?

BROCK

Or drink on the job. I mean it is a problem. Then they lecture the public on drink driving.

STEVE

They see the effects of it.

Pause.

BROCK

Maybe the standards for getting in should be higher.

STEVE

They're high enough.

BROCK

Not really, if they were high enough there'd be less problems. You have to add prestige to the job. Make it more desirable.

STEVE

It's about public service.

BROCK

Come on Steve it's really about power. Quickest way to get it without having to scale any ladder.

STEVE

Plenty of ladders in the police force.

PAT

(to STEVE)

So how high do you think you got?

Pause.

TAYLOR

That's not a fair question Mum.

STEVE

You don't need to defend me.

TAYLOR

I'm not.

PAT

Steve's more than capable of answering that one aren't you?.

STEVE

What?

BROCK

I wasn't going to ask that but it's a great question. You're retiring...

STEVE

It's time. Every cop knows it.

BROCK

A lot of cops don't deal with it well. Their whole...

STEVE

What is your whole life wrapped up in?

PAT

Steve, he's just making conversation.

BROCK

I have my own company. It can't be taken away. It's something I created.

STEVE

Well there you have it. We don't create anything. Just pick up the broken pieces and try to make sense of it.

BROCK

The clues.

STEVE

Yeah.

BROCK

Do you have a favourite case?

STEVE

We're talking about murder Brock. I solve murders.

BROCK

From what I've read a lot of them solve themselves.

STEVE

Not all.

BROCK

OK. How about memorable? Cases that won't go away...

STEVE

You solve them. You move on.

PAT

C'mon Steve. There were plenty of cases you couldn't get out of your system. Nightmares for months.

TAYLOR

Is that true Dad?

PAT

What? You never heard them?

STEVE

My wife has an interesting take on things. Not necessarily an accurate one.

BROCK

Could have had symptoms of PTSD.

STEVE

Something you're an expert on?

BROCK

It's topical.

STEVE

I didn't, don't have PTSD.

BROCK

Sorry. Didn't realise the job got to you that much.

STEVE

It doesn't get to me. I love it.

BROCK

Just trying to be open here.

PAT

You've been wanting to get out for years...

BROCK

So why are you leaving?

PAT

Steve's putting his family first. Aren't you Steve?

STEVE

I've had enough. All right? Loving something isn't...

TAYLOR

You never said anything Dad.

STEVE

Everyone reaches their limits. In all things.

BROCK

Oops. I'm sorry. When Taylor told me what you did for a living, it's one of those jobs you only imagine exists on television.

STEVE

And actors solve real murders...

TAYLOR

I know what he's talking about.

STEVE

I'll tell you a case.

BROCK

A special one..?

STEVE

It was memorable.

BROCK

If its going to dig a big black hole...

STEVE

Just listen will ya...

TAYLOR

Dad...

BROCK

No this is great. I want to hear the nitty gritty.

STEVE

Can't displease the guest. So this person of interest, happened to murder his wife and two kids. Stabbed the wife and suffocated the children. Three and five years old. Managed to hide their bodies. Has a solid alibi. Was with his parents that evening. They were lying of course. He moves state. Case is forgotten. Well, not really. He gets married again. Another family. Two more kids. This time the new wife got wind of what hubby was like, or capable of. She goes to the police who weren't going to do anything till one detective who helped catch John Glover, the granny killer, remembers hearing about the case down here. Contacts us, turns out its the same man and by a stroke of luck new evidence had appeared. Told some crony of his where the bodies were buried, a shallow grave in Sherbrooke Forest. We question him once again, he knew the game was up and leads us to the bodies.

BROCK

Someone capable of murdering his family, thought they'd be a tougher nut to crack.

STEVE

You'd be surprised.

BROCK

Maybe he just couldn't help himself.

PAT

Steve was one of the best, handled all the big cases...

BROCK

You're going out on a high then heh?

STEVE doesn't answer.

STEVE

I just realised this whole evening we know hardly anything about you Brock and to be fair, you're the whole point of the evening.

Pause.

STEVE (CONT'D)

So come on. Tell us a bit about yourself. It's a father's prerogative after all.

BROCK

My father's dead.

STEVE

You're deflecting.

TAYLOR

Jesus Dad.

STEVE

Sorry...when did it happen?

BROCK

When I was about thirteen.

STEVE

Oh.

TAYLOR

Happy now?

STEVE

What about your mother?

BROCK

She didn't cope too well after that. Under psychiatric care. Back in England.

PAT

I'm sorry, that must be...

STEVE

Which is why..?

BROCK

I was sent to live with relatives over here. When I turned 18, my uncle and aunt decided to return to England. I stayed on.

STEVE

Better weather at least. So what else...

BROCK

I thought that...

STEVE

Come on Brock. There's got to be more to tell than that...

BROCK

What would you like to know?

TAYLOR

Do you like sport. That's what he really wants to hear...

STEVE

Not really. Do you have a lot of friends or are you a bit of a loner? Watch TV or read?

PAT

Can't he do both?

BROCK

You want a profile...

STEVE

Why not? I'm almost retired. Give an old man something to think about.

BROCK

Why don't you put one together...

STEVE

I'm not sure you want me to do that.

BROCK

Go ahead. I've got nothing to hide.

STEVE

We've all got that. It's a question of how well we do it.

BROCK

I've made assumptions about you...

STEVE

Yes you have. So. Your dress, neither inconspicuous or individualistic. Unsure more than anything. Hair pretty much the same. Something you'd see in a photo on a barber shop wall. Wanting to fit in but not sure how to do it. Dislocated.

BROCK

You knew that already.

STEVE

Yes but you haven't really adapted. Trying to hide your "Englishness".

TAYLOR

How would you know that?

STEVE

Such an important part of his make up yet he never mentioned it. Accent has virtually no trace of his past. Prefers objects to people. Not a lot of friends. No one really close.

PAT

Steve that's not necessary.

STEVE

I'm not judging him. Never won a popularity contest myself.

TAYLOR

(To BROCK)

Why did you encourage him?

BROCK

He hasn't finished.

STEVE

Tries to appear well read but doesn't have the stamina or attention span for it which is why I am guessing you don't have any university training..?

TAYLOR

Neither do you.

STEVE

Yes but I never wanted it. Left after second year law. Bored me to tears. My sense its something you crave. Most of your previous relationships, and there hasn't been many, were a way of raising yourself up, girls with a better education that sort of thing. You'd try to impress them with your intensity but it's all bluff really.

BROCK

Is that what you think I'm doing with your daughter?

TAYLOR

He's teasing you Brock...really.

BROCK

No he's not.

TAYLOR

Well? Tell him Dad. You can't really mean all that you said...

STEVE

Whatever it is with your parents the marks are all over you.

BROCK

Anything else.

STEVE

Everything about you is a calculation, figured out ahead of time. How to impress others, say what needs to be said at the right moment.

BROCK

It obviously hasn't worked with you.

STEVE

None of this means I've got anything against you. Despite all that, I think you're a pretty brave character.

BROCK

Why would you say that?

STEVE

Because I suspect, there been some pretty terrifying moments in your life. One's that have left an indelible mark and still you do everything to preserve a sense of normality.

TAYLOR

Christ Dad I've never heard so much rubbish in all my life.

PAT

Taylor don't.., Brock he does this to anyone and everyone and I've heard it all before.

STEVE

Is that so?

TAYLOR

How many boyfriends did I bring home who never got treated like this and they were some real winners..

STEVE

Are you talking about the druggie or the bikie?

TAYLOR

How did they get off so easily...

STEVE

They were stupid. Whoever Brock is, in my humble opinion, he is anything but stupid.

BROCK

You obviously don't approve.

STEVE

I never said that.

BROCK

If this wasn't your home you wouldn't be talking to me that way...

STEVE

Ooh that sounds like a threat.

BROCK

I'm just saying, you're taking advantage...

STEVE

No. That's your game mate.

TAYLOR

What are you saying Dad...

PAT

Steve he's done nothing...

BROCK

It's OK.

PAT

Do you want some coffee...

Without taking his eyes off STEVE, BROCK shakes his head.

BROCK

By what you're telling me it's very clear-

STEVE

And another thing. Tendency to become sullen when confronted or made uncomfortable. Could be a mother thing. More wine?

STEVE holds out the bottle.

TAYLOR stands.

TAYLOR

That's it! I've had enough!

STEVE

I gather there won't be dessert.

LIGHTS.

ACT ONE SCENE TWO

LIGHTS on STEVE sitting at the outdoor dinner table nursing the remnants of his last glass of wine. PAT is cleaning up the remaining dishes.

STEVE

Leave it.

PAT

Why don't you give me a hand..?

STEVE holds up his glass. PAT continues the cleaning.

STEVE

You were quite the talker...

PAT

I barely...too much was said by everyone.

STEVE

That's your take on it?

PAT

I don't think it was quite what Taylor was expecting.

STEVE

She cracked it. Not the first time.

PAT

This isn't business as usual Steve.

STEVE

She brings a fella home and we've got to lay out the red carpet.

PAT

At least one with not so many stains on it.

STEVE

What should I have done?

PAT

He's her boyfriend.

STEVE

And?

PAT

It's a bit embarrassing.

STEVE

What do you mean?

PAT

He's no match for you.

STEVE

You're trying too hard Pat.

PAT takes his finished glass. She drops it.

STEVE (CONT'D)

I'll clean it up.

PAT ignores him, grabs the dust pan and starts sweeping up the pieces of glass.

STEVE (CONT'D)

You saw what he was doing...

PAT

Having a conversation.

PAT places the rubbish in the bin.

PAT (CONT'D)

I think you really upset him.

STEVE

He knew his place.

PAT

At one point I thought he was going to leap out of his seat.

STEVE

He wants to impress our daughter at my expense. Sorry.

PAT

Isn't that normal for a young guy..?

STEVE

Share your insights love. I'm all ears.

PAT

You've got a short memory.

STEVE

Something doesn't feel right about him.

PAT

What? He's not like you?

STEVE

You don't pull that kind of stuff the first time...

PAT

He's overconfident maybe.

STEVE

(touch of smugness)

Now maybe a little less.

PAT

Taylor adores you Steve. She just wants your approval.

Pause.

STEVE

So what happened to you tonight?

PAT

I was tired when I got home and then after the first wine...

STEVE

I meant arriving late. You're a personal bloody assistant not the CEO.

PAT

They never come home and I've just had a lot of work to catch up with lately.

STEVE

Of course. A week away with the girlfriends. Must be lots just piling up...

PAT continues cleaning up. STEVE watches.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Erikson works you too hard...

PAT

Please Steve...

STEVE

Maybe if you were here from the start, things would have gotten off on a different foot...

PAT

It's my fault..?

STEVE

My how his eyes lit up when you walked in the room. Not that I blame him of course...

PAT

I'm old enough to be his mother.

STEVE

So you were thinking.

PAT

He's harmless Steve. Just let them be.

STEVE

Not going to give him another thought. It's her life...

PAT

Exactly. Let's go to bed.

STEVE

I'm still enjoying the night air.

PAT

Come soon. I don't want to be woken up.

PAT turns to exit.

STEVE

So how far do *you* think I got?

PAT

What?

STEVE

In the police force. How far does my wife think I got?

PAT is frozen to the floor.

STEVE (CONT'D)

You were tired. A couple of glasses of wine. I get it.

PAT quickly exits. STEVE waits a moment. He pulls out his mobile phone.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Hey...yeah I know it's fucking late...you're on shift so what does it matter?...of course it's important....find out what you can about a Brock Peterson...237 La Trobe St...no reason...routine check...nothing else...I just want to see what an upstanding citizen he is...right.

STEVE hangs up. LIGHTS.

ACT ONE SCENE THREE

LIGHTS on TAYLOR in his apartment. She is in bed. BROCK enters.

TAYLOR

Where have you been?

BROCK

Just had to clear my head...

TAYLOR

OK.

BROCK

I live alone Taylor. Got my own routine.

TAYLOR

Like wandering off in the middle of the night.

BROCK

You're safe in this building.

TAYLOR

I know that. Come to bed.

BROCK undresses. In his underwear lifts a pair of dumbbells sitting in the corner and starts doing some bicep curls.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Isn't it a bit late for that..?

BROCK stops and does some push ups.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

If you want to fuck again..?

BROCK

No. I'm satisfied.

TAYLOR

Glad to hear it.

Pause. BROCK starts doing some sit ups.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Anything you want to talk about?

BROCK

What?

BROCK finishes.

TAYLOR

You haven't said much since the other night.

BROCK

I'm not going to get between you and him. I could see how you two are...

TAYLOR

We walked out.

BROCK

You'll make up again.

TAYLOR

He's my Dad.

BROCK

Yeah. Exactly.

TAYLOR

I'm going to see him tomorrow...

BROCK

He called..?

TAYLOR

Yes.

BROCK

Should have waited a bit longer.

TAYLOR

That's not how-

BROCK

When you see him is none of my business.

TAYLOR

And I think he needs to know he was out of line.

BROCK

You going to set him straight?

TAYLOR

He wouldn't have called if he thought he'd done nothing wrong.

BROCK

Maybe he just had too much to drink.

TAYLOR

I'm glad you see it that way...

BROCK

How do you see it?

TAYLOR

He's a protective father. Maybe more so because of all the things he's witnessed.

BROCK

And you're what...25? Wonder he let's you out of the house.

TAYLOR

I'm serious about us. But don't make me choose.

BROCK

Wouldn't think of it.

TAYLOR gets out of bed and starts changing.

BROCK (CONT'D)

What are you doing..?

TAYLOR

Going home tonight.

BROCK

Why?

TAYLOR

I'm seeing Dad in the morning.

BROCK

Wow. That's telling him you mean business.

TAYLOR

Officially, I still live at home. Doesn't hurt to show my face and this way...I won't have as much traffic.

TAYLOR is just about finished dressing.

BROCK

One of the reasons I went out is I had to do some thinking...

TAYLOR

And?

BROCK

What we were talking about the other day, moving in together...

TAYLOR

You didn't seem too receptive to the idea...

BROCK

Well, maybe this is the time....

TAYLOR

I don't get it. Why the sudden turnaround..?

BROCK

Your father. He doesn't want to accept me so he tries to take me down a peg. Because he thinks I'm not serious about you.

TAYLOR

He was also being an asshole.

BROCK

I could say that too. But I'm not going to hold a grudge.

TAYLOR

Are you sure?

BROCK

It couldn't be any clearer for me. Maybe you should tell him tomorrow...

TAYLOR

I think I'll give it a bit more time before I do that. Get over this hurdle.

TAYLOR gives BROCK a hug. He kisses her.

BROCK

None of what he said was true. You know that...

TAYLOR

Of course.

TAYLOR kisses him on the lips, grabs her bag and keys, then exits. LIGHTS.

ACT ONE SCENE FOUR

LIGHTS. STEVE and TAYLOR are sitting at the table in his backyard.

STEVE

How much do you really know about him?

TAYLOR

Enough to think he should meet my family.

STEVE

C'mon Taylor, if he was the right one for you, we wouldn't be having this conversation. And you know it.

TAYLOR

He was just trying to...I don't know, show he's not intimidated.

STEVE

Oh bullshit.

TAYLOR

What then?

STEVE

Not sure yet. But there's something about it, about *him* that just didn't gel with me.

TAYLOR

So what is it?

STEVE

Like I said on the night, can't get a reading on him.

TAYLOR

It might interest you to know that sometimes you've got to get to know people. It doesn't always happen in one evening.

STEVE

So how well do you know him? His friends? Acquaintances? No family to give you a sounding so they become even more important in his case. What does he like? What's he interested in? Does he read? Like porn? Play war games?

TAYLOR

He knows everything there is to know about computers Dad.

STEVE

They're a dime a dozen.

TAYLOR

He has his own business. Hi end. Quite successful.

STEVE

What are his friends like?

Pause.

STEVE (CONT'D)

You haven't met them have you?

Pause.

TAYLOR

He had a tough childhood.

STEVE

So did most of the people I arrested.

TAYLOR

He's not a criminal...Jesus.

STEVE

I didn't say he was. Look even loners have the odd companion.

TAYLOR

You're enjoying this. Tearing him down so there's no way he can compete with you...

STEVE

You know nothing about this guy. Employees?

TAYLOR

Free lancers. Doesn't have to pay-

STEVE

I know how it works. What about previous girlfriends?

Pause.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Don't tell me you haven't even asked? C'mon Taylor, that's how you find out what this guy is really about.

TAYLOR

He's not a player Dad. That's one of the things that appealed about him. He hasn't been in a relationship for years.

STEVE

If he's never talked about them he's got something to hide!

TAYLOR

It's just not cool to do that sort of thing.

STEVE

Oh right. The social media generation have nothing to say about their past lives or anyone they used to know.

TAYLOR

He doesn't have Facebook.

STEVE

I know.

TAYLOR

You..?

STEVE

Curiosity.

TAYLOR

He hasn't specifically mentioned any girlfriend and I'm not pushing him to...

STEVE

Prostitutes?

TAYLOR

You're disgusting.

STEVE

Men have needs.

TAYLOR

He's too good looking for that sort of thing...

STEVE

Don't be naive.

TAYLOR

If he has in the past that's his business.

STEVE

That's very progressive of you or old fashioned. Not sure which.

TAYLOR

Why does that matter?

STEVE

Because if he has, he's likely to do so again. They're a type.

TAYLOR

Why do I even bother...

STEVE

It's like you've sleepwalked into this relationship. How the hell...

TAYLOR

You don't know what you're talking about. He's my boyfriend not a person of bloody interest.

STEVE

C'mon Taylor, your last boyfriend-

TAYLOR

I thought we were never going to talk about that?

STEVE

I was hoping it wouldn't be necessary.

TAYLOR

Then don't!

STEVE

I had to get involved then.

TAYLOR
This is completely different.

STEVE
Is it? Really?

Pause.

TAYLOR
We're moving in together.

STEVE
What?

TAYLOR
It's something we've been discussing for a couple of months.

Pause.

STEVE
Are you fucking serious..?

TAYLOR
Yes...

STEVE
This is what you called to tell me...

TAYLOR
No. I called so we could straighten out-

STEVE
I don't ever want to see him in this house. Understand? You do what you want, but don't ever bring him here.

TAYLOR is stunned by this ultimatum. She quickly exits.

ACT ONE SCENE FIVE

LIGHTS. Later that evening in the bedroom. STEVE and PAT are getting ready for bed.

STEVE

So where were you this afternoon.

PAT

Out. Nails.

PAT holds them out to STEVE. He barely looks.

STEVE

Didn't do a lot of shopping on that holiday of yours...

PAT

There were other things to do. Sight seeing.

STEVE

Take a lot of photos?

PAT

You know that's not my thing.

STEVE

I bet Sally did. Love's anything with her in it.

PAT

I'll get her to send them over.

STEVE

I'd really like that.

Pause.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Maybe you and I can take a vacation. Once I've retired.

PAT

Sure...wasn't Daniels interested in you working for him, security consultancy that sort of thing?

STEVE

I don't know. Maybe it's not what I really want.

PAT

I'm working all I can Steve.

STEVE

Ask Erikson for a raise.

PAT

He just gave me one.

STEVE

That was a bonus.

PAT

No matter, we've still got bills.

STEVE

Where would you like us to go?

PAT

I have no....Steve I just got back.

STEVE

Should we go there?

PAT

You hate Surfers.

STEVE

Maybe I'll like it this time. Retired. No stress.

PAT

I don't know.

STEVE

You could show us all the places you went to.

PAT

We just...went to restaurants, had facials, that sort of thing.

STEVE

Your girlfriends play up by any chance..?

PAT

Sally's married.

STEVE

To a fuckwit.

PAT

He isn't.

STEVE

Married her.

PAT

I thought you liked Sally?

STEVE

Chiara isn't taken. No cock is safe in her vicinity.

PAT

She's not a slut.

STEVE

I didn't say she was. Only dresses like one.

PAT

It was all perfectly innocent Steve. Come on...

STEVE

Nothing in this fucking world is perfectly innocent. So that brings us back.

PAT

They wanted to stay longer.

STEVE

You should have...

PAT

What? Work would have been OK but I made it clear to you I'd be away for five days. We agreed.

Yes we did.

STEVE

Pause.

How much longer?

STEVE (CONT'D)

I wanted to come home.

PAT

By this stage PAT is in her underwear. STEVE is sitting on the bed in his.

Take your panties off.

STEVE

I need a shower.

PAT

Yes you will.

STEVE

STEVE dims the LIGHTS.

See if it glows in the dark.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Why didn't you just say you want to fuck me?

PAT

PAT walks towards STEVE and sits by the bed.

You're doing all the work tonight.

PAT (CONT'D)

Speak to Taylor. Tell her how it is.

STEVE

She's a grown-

PAT

STEVE

I'm not changing my mind. You need to be on board.

STEVE kisses her.

PAT

Maybe you should give them another chance. You know how upset she was.

STEVE stares intently at PAT.

PAT (CONT'D)

What?

STEVE

Did I mention that Paul's approached me about doing some of that investigation work in Thailand...

PAT

I thought you already told him you couldn't do it.

STEVE

He's being persistent.

PAT

So what did you say?

STEVE

I told him I think it's a good cause...helping young girls get out of the sex trade...of course there's no money in it. All volunteer work.

PAT

Of course.

Pause. PAT realises STEVE has won.

PAT (CONT'D)

I'll talk to her when I can. C'mon, just fuck me then.

STEVE grabs her and places her down on the bed.
LIGHTS.

ACT ONE SCENE SIX

LIGHTS. BROCK and TAYLOR are finishing their lovemaking. They separate, mutually satisfied.

TAYLOR

God I would love a cigarette right about now...

BROCK

Not in this flat. Ever.

TAYLOR

So...what was the name of your last girlfriend?

BROCK

What is this? We just finish fucking and you want to go an ruin the mood..?

TAYLOR

No. I just...you've never really talked about her. Not even sure you've mentioned her name.

BROCK

Justine.

TAYLOR

Oh. Lovely name.

BROCK

Yeah. OK.

TAYLOR

How did it end?

BROCK

Badly.

TAYLOR

Did she leave you or...

BROCK

I tried to make it work but it was never enough. Nothing would satisfy her. Emotionally anyway. Claimed the only way I could prove I loved her would be if we moved in together.

TAYLOR

No wonder you weren't so keen.

BROCK

Hang on. I seriously thought about it but in the end, when I told her I needed more time, she was devastated.

TAYLOR

She didn't...

BROCK

No. But she did threaten to kill me. Trashed my place. Vandalised my car. Phone calls in the middle of the night...

TAYLOR

What about the police?

BROCK

They wouldn't have taken it seriously. So I quickly left where I was staying. No forwarding address.

TAYLOR

Why didn't you ever mention this before?

BROCK

To what end? Anything I would say or do would be overshadowed by that story. As if maybe I brought it upon myself somehow.

TAYLOR

I wouldn't have thought that.

BROCK

Taylor, you've been like this breath of fresh air. Most of the girls who I come across just want to get off or see last year's tax return before they even consider a first date. You're different.

TAYLOR

I like sex as much as the next woman and unemployment in men is not such a good look.

BROCK

I know.

TAYLOR

Well now that I'm here we can invite some of your friends over.

Pause.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Is there any reason I haven't met your friends?

BROCK

A lot of them are away. Overseas. Interstate.

TAYLOR

All of them?

BROCK

People are transient.

TAYLOR

Even friends?

BROCK

The ones that count.

TAYLOR

Don't you want them to meet me?

BROCK

Of course I do. But like I said, those that matter aren't in town.

TAYLOR

What about acquaintances?

BROCK

They're not a priority.

TAYLOR

I've introduced you to my girlfriends...my parents.

BROCK

Look how well that went. C'mon. Let's go to bed.

TAYLOR

I'm glad we're together. Like this...

BROCK

Good.

Pause.

BROCK (CONT'D)

So what did your father say?

TAYLOR

Dad's not gonna change overnight. He thinks...

BROCK

What did he say?

Pause.

TAYLOR

Nothing.

BROCK

Then we should go visit, like a couple. Round Two. This time I'll come out swinging.

TAYLOR

Please don't.

BROCK

Only kidding.

TAYLOR

He's resentful of everything at the moment. Finishing his career...

BROCK

Losing his daughter.

TAYLOR

He hasn't lost me.

BROCK

It's perfectly normal. Father's are replaced by their boyfriends, husbands, that sort of thing. We're the new caretakers.

TAYLOR

I don't need taking care of.

BROCK

It's a scary world out there. Parents can't protect their children once they get old...

TAYLOR

Don't go trying to explain that to him...

BROCK

I'm not afraid of your Dad.

TAYLOR

No one said you should be but...

BROCK

But what?

TAYLOR

He's been a police detective for nearly twenty years.

BROCK

I don't frighten easily Taylor. If he can't accept me that's his problem.

TAYLOR

You're just - that's exactly the kind of attitude he wants you to have. Confrontational. Something to prove.

BROCK

Maybe I should talk to your father. Man to man. Set him straight about us...

TAYLOR

Are you...no Brock. Just leave it. He's not about to come over here and interfere in our lives.

BROCK

How do you know that?

TAYLOR

Mum knows just how to handle him.

BROCK

I like her.

TAYLOR

Of course you do.

BROCK

Why do you say that?

TAYLOR

All my boyfriends liked her.

BROCK

I don't care what they said. My standards are pretty high.

TAYLOR

What are we talking about here?

BROCK

(backtracking)

I like who she is. She's a good person.

TAYLOR

Well if it's any consolation she likes you too. Thinks you're quite handsome.

BROCK

That's all that matters.

BROCK takes off his shorts then heads offstage for the shower. His computer remains open on the bed. As TAYLOR finishes off her unpacking, she eyes off the laptop.

BROCK (CONT'D)

(offstage)

I got pulled over the other day.

TAYLOR

Not by my father?

LIGHTS on STEVE in the backyard. It is late in the evening. He is on his mobile phone.

STEVE

Hi. The surveillance was fine.

Pause.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Yeah I know he had no idea he was being followed.

BROCK

(offstage)

Very funny. Patrol car. Said I had a busted tail light.

TAYLOR

You park in the street that's what's going to happen.

BROCK

(offstage)

I don't think so...

STEVE

Thinks the police are watching him.

TAYLOR

That's what they do. Part of their job.

STEVE

No mate. Can't do that. It's a new world. They got cameras everywhere if you know what I mean.

BROCK

(offstage)

It was like he was waiting for me.

TAYLOR

Sure..

STEVE

I want you to go as far back as you can...everything. Family, jobs, friends...then I want you to find anything you can...that' right his digital footprint...don't worry I know your fees...

BROCK

(offstage)

I got in the car, could see him waiting up the street, once I pulled out from the kerb he cruises on down and slaps me with a fine.

TAYLOR

Just pay it.

STEVE

I don't care how much it costs...sooner the better...appreciate it.

PAT

(Offstage)

Steve? What are you doing on the phone so late.

BROCK

Not only that, there's been a police car up and down this street since....

TAYLOR

Since when?

BROCK

Our dinner.

TAYLOR

That should make you feel a lot safer.

PAT is about to enter the backyard. She stops for second to listen in on STEVE'S conversation.

STEVE

Yes I know that means cash...for Christ's sakes...expect to hear from you soon...and mate, remember what I did for you when your licence was...no you haven't paid that one off...thanks.

STEVE puts the phone down.

TAYLOR gets closer to the laptop. She is about to start pressing a few buttons.

BROCK exits the bathroom just. He is wearing a towel around his waist. TAYLOR picks up the laptop.

TAYLOR

Where do you want this?

BROCK

Put it over on the desk.

TAYLOR takes the laptop to the desk. She quickly returns. PAT enters the backyard.

PAT

Pretty late to be on the phone...

STEVE

Something to do with a case.

PAT

That wasn't work was it..?

And? STEVE

It's about Brock... PAT

It's not something you need to be concerned about. STEVE

What if he finds out? PAT

What's he going to do? Heh? And he won't find out if nobody says anything. STEVE

STEVE heads inside and exits upstage. PAT pauses for a second before following him.

BROCK goes up to TAYLOR and kisses her sensually.

You thought about what we discussed... BROCK

I'll need more time to think about it. TAYLOR

BROCK holds TAYLOR'S face in both hands.

Next time you want to see what's on my computer, all you need to do is ask. BROCK

LIGHTS.

End of Act One

ACT TWO

ACT TWO SCENE ONE

Weeks later. LIGHTS on PAT and TAYLOR sitting at a table outside a cafe. SOUND of traffic, noise of the city. There are two coffees sitting on the table. TAYLOR lights a cigarette.

PAT

I thought you'd given up.

TAYLOR

Not with conviction.

PAT

Obviously.

Pause.

TAYLOR

It was nice of you to call.

PAT

You're still my daughter. And your Dad hasn't forbidden you from coming to visit.

TAYLOR

Brock's my partner. We're living together.

PAT

And how's all that going?

TAYLOR

Great. You've seen his place.

PAT

Wonderful.

TAYLOR

Did you tell Dad you've been over to visit?

PAT

I'm not getting between you two on this one. Or taking sides.

TAYLOR

Then what are you doing...?

PAT

Making my own decisions. Just like you.

PAT reaches her hand out to TAYLOR'S packet of cigarettes.

PAT (CONT'D)

Give me one of those...

TAYLOR hands over the packet. PAT takes out a cigarette and lights up.

PAT (CONT'D)

That's more like it. Wrinkles be damned.

TAYLOR

At least for today.

PAT

Exactly.

They smile at each other. It is a nice moment.

PAT (CONT'D)

So besides moving into the city, how are things between you two..?

TAYLOR

You're asking me if he's good-

PAT

I'm asking if he looks after you. In all ways.

TAYLOR

We're finding our own space living together. Neither of us are experts at it.

PAT

Oh please. Either you feel like you've made the right decision or you don't.

TAYLOR

It's only been a month.

PAT

So?

TAYLOR

Brock's attentive. Pays for everything.

PAT

On your salary that's no surprise.

Pause.

TAYLOR

He thinks Dad's having him followed.

PAT

Your boyfriend didn't say anything the other night...

TAYLOR

A police car's been up and down the street on a daily basis. Got him for a busted tail light.

PAT

Your father's a detective, not the police commissioner.

TAYLOR

I'm sure he still has some influence.

PAT

You want me to ask him?

TAYLOR

No. Brock doesn't want to make a big deal of it. I was thinking of calling Dad...

PAT

Look, best thing right now is to give it more time.

TAYLOR removes her sunglasses revealing a black eye.

PAT (CONT'D)

What the hell happened to you? Are you all right...? Please don't tell me...

TAYLOR

Relax. Two girls at school were fighting. I tried to separate them. One of them punched me in the eye by mistake.

PAT

You're OK...

TAYLOR

Yeah.

PAT

So what happened to them?

TAYLOR

Who?

PAT

The girls.

TAYLOR

Oh. They were given a detention.

PAT

For assaulting you? A detention?

TAYLOR

It was an accident. The kid was beside herself when she realised what happened.

PAT

Your Dad could make some calls...

TAYLOR

(With great finality)

No.

Pause.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Look, it doesn't matter. I'm thinking of quitting teaching anyway. Brock's offered to support me for a while, till I re-establish myself.

PAT

If he's willing to give you the breathing room to figure things out...it's an opportunity I wish I had.

TAYLOR

You like your job, what you do...

PAT

Your Dad had opportunities outside the force...could have made double the salary, changed things for all of us.

TAYLOR

What about all those murders he solved...

PAT

And what did he get for it? Passed over for promotion I don't know how many times...

TAYLOR

It's his job.

PAT

He could have been more...we all could have.

PAT stubs out her cigarette in the ashtray.

PAT (CONT'D)

You've lost weight...

TAYLOR

All the moving.

PAT

A couple of suitcases..?

TAYLOR

You always had something to say when I put it on.

PAT

That was different.

TAYLOR

You said on the phone there was something you wanted to talk to me about. Well?

Pause.

PAT

(taking a deep breath)

If I was to leave your father, how would you feel..?

Pause.

TAYLOR

Why are you saying this now, just as I'm getting my life together...

PAT

Maybe seeing you...I don't know. Things haven't been great for quite a while.

TAYLOR

Why didn't you leave then...once you knew?

PAT

When you were finishing high school or struggling with first year at uni..?

TAYLOR

If you've been so miserable all these years...

PAT

He's been a good father to you. Done whatever it takes to make sure you were safe.

TAYLOR

I know Mum.

PAT

I worked with your Dad once, before getting the job with Erikson. It's how we met.

TAYLOR

A lot of couples meet at the same workplace.

PAT

True. But your Dad had some competition, one up and comer who was a few years junior. Quite handsome. Certainly not lacking in confidence. But I could see your father wasn't going to have any of it. He has him transferred to his department, working directly under him. His interest waned considerably after that, wouldn't dare get on the wrong side of his new boss. Soon after, we were engaged.

TAYLOR

And the other guy? How did he take it?

PAT

No idea. Once that ring was on, Steve had him transferred somewhere else. But everyone knew who I was, who I was important to.

TAYLOR

And now he's about to retire. I thought...

PAT

There's so much he keeps from me. So much I can't say to him.

TAYLOR

He's never hit you. At least I never...

PAT

Sometimes we just know what lines not to cross...

TAYLOR

Seems to me your family just loves keeping secrets.

PAT

We promised we would never...

TAYLOR

Don't worry Mum, I hardly ever think about it.

PAT

I did it to protect your father. The both of you. Your grandparents wouldn't have stood by if he did anything to Uncle Rob.

TAYLOR

My uncle. You think I should still call him that?

PAT

Of course not.

TAYLOR

Funny how he just dropped off the face of the earth...

PAT

Your father can never know.

TAYLOR

It's too late for me to be saved...

PAT

(Her voice almost breaking with emotion)

Please Taylor...enough.

Pause.

TAYLOR

I don't have an answer for you Mum. You asking me whether you should leave Dad is the last thing I expected...

PAT

I'm not asking you if I should. (PAT stops herself from getting more agitated). Forget I even said anything. It was wrong for me to bring it up. I just...your father and I are going through a rough patch. It's not like we can't sort it out.

TAYLOR

You sure?

PAT

Absolutely.

TAYLOR

I've got to go. Doctor's appointment...

PAT

What's wrong?

TAYLOR

Nothing.

PAT

Don't lie to me.

TAYLOR

It's fine.

PAT

You cannot say *anything* to Dad.

TAYLOR

I wouldn't betray you like that...

TAYLOR gets up.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

I'll call you.

She kisses PAT on the cheek and exits.

ACT TWO SCENE TWO

LIGHTS on STEVE in the backyard. He is on the phone. Some empty beer bottles are on the table. He is agitated.

STEVE

You can't stop it now...whatever there is to know about this guy I want it...Greater Manchester Police can go and...I'll find the money...no, I've done enough favours...all right, but this is it...

SOUND of door closing inside the house.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Got to go.

STEVE hangs up and puts his phone away. He grabs a half empty bottle of beer. PAT enters.

So?

PAT

What are you doing at home?

STEVE

Thought I'd take a day off. Get used to retirement...

PAT notices the bottles.

PAT

How many have you had?

STEVE

Three.

PAT

Over how long?

STEVE

No idea.

PAT

I'll check the empties.

STEVE

Already disposed of them.

PAT

There's enough to be done around this house.

STEVE

You're home early.

PAT

Wasn't feeling well. Took the afternoon off.

STEVE

And the Boss didn't mind?

PAT

I've been his PA for almost twenty years.

STEVE

He's always had his eye on you that one.

PAT

Isn't my type.

STEVE

He's got money. He's every women's type.

PAT

You don't really believe that?

STEVE does not answer.

PAT (CONT'D)

Anyway he's frightened to death of you.

STEVE

Bullshit. Guys like that know they can hire a phalanx of lawyers to give them all the protection they need.

PAT

He's always been nice to you Steve. Has a lot of respect for what you do.

STEVE

(not buying a word of it)

Sure. Does he like your tan?

PAT

I had lunch with Taylor.

STEVE

Wondered when you were going to tell me...

PAT

How did you know?

STEVE

Your phone.

PAT

You checked it?

STEVE

It was sitting on the table. There was a message. "Thanks for the call. See you at 12.00. Love T." You were in the shower, thought it might have been urgent.

PAT

When did this start?

STEVE

You've never checked mine?

PAT

I wouldn't dare.

STEVE

Want to check my phone. There it is. Go right ahead. I've got nothing to hide.

STEVE points to his phone sitting on the table. PAT doesn't move.

STEVE (CONT'D)

So...what did you talk about?

PAT

Taylor feels you humiliated her boyfriend and that he deserves an apology.

STEVE

No need for apologies. I told her I didn't want him here. Ever.

PAT

If you want to see Taylor...

STEVE

She said that...

PAT

In so many words.

STEVE

What did you tell her?

PAT

Nothing. Don't you think I know you better?

STEVE

Yeah. But you think I'm in the wrong don't you? That I've got supplicate myself to this pissant just to make my daughter feel better.

PAT

No I don't. You'd grow more resentful and...

STEVE

What?

PAT

It wouldn't solve anything.

STEVE

Maybe I should call her. Take her out.

PAT

She's not interested Steve. Let things settle down.

STEVE

I can't fucking believe this. All because I took up his challenge and shoved it down his throat. Who the hell did he think he was talking too?

PAT

A middle aged Dad who would humour him on some level. Instead he got-

I know what he got. STEVE

Pause.

How was Taylor? STEVE (CONT'D)

She's smoking again. PAT

Great. I'm telling you this guy... STEVE

It was always on the cards. PAT

Why? STEVE

She's under a lot of stress at work. PAT

What kind of stress? STEVE

The usual. PAT

Something's happened. What is it? STEVE

She was breaking up a fight between two girls. One of the students smacked her in the eye. PAT

Is she all right? STEVE

Gave her a black eye. PAT

STEVE
What happened to them?

PAT
Just leave it alone.

Pause.
STEVE
This is what she's told you?

PAT
It's a rough school. These sort of things happen.

STEVE
Easy enough to check.

PAT
He didn't do it.

STEVE is stonily silent.

PAT (CONT'D)
C'mon. Say something.

STEVE
What? A perfectly reasonable explanation. Did you bother to call the school?

PAT
Of course not. She's a member of staff who doesn't need her mother checking up on her.

STEVE
Do you think she's covering up for him?

PAT
They've just moved in together. I can't believe she'd tolerate that sort of thing.

STEVE
Depends on how much you know about somebody doesn't it..?

PAT
What have you found...?

STEVE is silent.

PAT (CONT'D)

Steve if your contacts, whoever the bloody hell they are have found something then I have a right to know...

STEVE

This I have discovered. Brock Peterson is not his birth name.

PAT

Well what was it?

STEVE

That's not important. But it was changed just before he arrived in Australia...

PAT

When he was about what...twelve?

STEVE

Pat, that doesn't happen for any good reason.

PAT

What could he have done at that age..?

STEVE

I don't know. But now, at twice that age, he's living with our daughter.

Pause.

PAT

If you were to check with her school, how would you do it?

STEVE

So Taylor wouldn't suspect...

PAT

Of course.

STEVE

There are ways. Let the school know there's been a report of an assault against a teacher. Anonymous. Police are just following up.

PAT

What if the school tries to hide it.

STEVE

They won't.

PAT

Then maybe you should do it.

STEVE

I thought he was above suspicion.

PAT

I didn't say that. Nor am I saying he's responsible.

STEVE

You just don't want to take any chances...

PAT

He's not like the others Steve. The longer this one continues, the more deeply involved she'll become. Got to make sure he's right.

STEVE

I couldn't agree more.

LIGHTS.

ACT TWO SCENE THREE

LIGHTS on BROCK and TAYLOR entering the apartment.

BROCK

It wasn't such a big deal. You saw her attitude.

TAYLOR

I saw her fear.

BROCK
Don't exaggerate.

TAYLOR
She brought out the wrong order.

BROCK
And didn't even apologise.

TAYLOR
It's a waitressing job.

BROCK
Exactly. Customer service.

TAYLOR
I don't...there are more important things to get upset about.

Pause. BROCK goes to the window downstage and looks out.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

BROCK
They're still there.

TAYLOR
What?

BROCK
The police.

TAYLOR
Don't tell me. There's a waitress in the back seat.

BROCK
You making fun of me?

BROCK levels his gaze at TAYLOR. It is vaguely menacing.

TAYLOR

Don't look at me like that. I'm joking. Christ...

BROCK goes back to the window.

BROCK

Up and down. One gets out, looks around. Circles the block. Then the other one does the same.

TAYLOR

You really don't think...

BROCK

Thought it wouldn't be this complicated. After your mother came over, maybe that would have broken down his resistance.

TAYLOR

I don't think she told him.

BROCK

How do you know?

TAYLOR

I had lunch with Mum yesterday.

BROCK

I knew that already.

TAYLOR

That's a problem?

BROCK

You could have told me.

TAYLOR

You mean ask your permission.

BROCK

It's about transparency in relationships.

TAYLOR
She was here the other night.

BROCK
So?

TAYLOR
I don't need to know all your movements Brock.

BROCK
Got nothing to hide.

TAYLOR
I'm sure we've all got a few secrets which doesn't mean we have to share them.

BROCK
So what are yours?

TAYLOR
Did you not just hear what I said?

BROCK
Tell me one.

TAYLOR
You and Dad should get together. Two inquiring minds.

BROCK
Have a good chat with Mum?

TAYLOR
She did most of the talking.

BROCK
About?

TAYLOR
Dad of course.

BROCK
Making excuses for him you mean.

TAYLOR

Brock the more I think about it...

BROCK

I'm not stopping you. But if that's where you're at...

Pause.

BROCK (CONT'D)

We got a visit from one of those guys down there the other night when you were out.

TAYLOR

What for?

BROCK

Noise violation. Can you believe that shit...

TAYLOR

Doesn't make sense. We hardly ever-

BROCK

I know. Said there had been numerous complaints within the building, across the street. I've been here three years. Not a peep from anyone in this building, or across the street.

TAYLOR

What are you thinking...?

BROCK

I'm thinking it's not just a coincidence. And then the other day someone's trying to hack my computer. Nearly broke through every firewall I had.

TAYLOR

That could be anyone.

BROCK

Like your father wouldn't have any connections outside of police..?

TAYLOR

That's a pretty serious accusation to make against my father...

BROCK

C'mon Taylor. That story the other night...getting that guy to confess to murdering his family. How do you think he did it? Mind control?

Pause.

TAYLOR

Mum was using me as a crutch, telling me about all her disappointments, particularly in relation to Dad.

BROCK

She's a pretty smart woman, would have thought...

TAYLOR

What?

BROCK

Nothing. What were you going to say...

TAYLOR

This cannot go beyond the walls of this room.

BROCK

You have my word.

TAYLOR

Mum was sounding me out...what would I think if she left Dad.

BROCK

Oh. Trouble in paradise heh?

TAYLOR

They're my parents.

BROCK

It's obviously been pretty difficult for her.

TAYLOR

Why is she bringing me into it...

BROCK

She cares about what you think. Without your Dad, who else has she got?

TAYLOR

He's been loyal.

BROCK

How do you know?

TAYLOR

I just do.

BROCK

And your mother?

TAYLOR

Between looking after the family and her job...

Pause. They look at each other.

BROCK

As you said, she spends a lot of time there.

TAYLOR

Dad would freak.

BROCK

More reason to be really careful about it.

TAYLOR

She's been married for over 25 years...

BROCK

And people don't walk after that long to go to nothing.

TAYLOR

He can never know.

BROCK

I wouldn't do anything to hurt you. But maybe you should talk to your mother.

TAYLOR

About what...

BROCK

Having some plan of action in case she goes through with it. Let the police know she's worried he might hurt her. They take this domestic abuse stuff seriously now, especially if it's coming from one of their own.

TAYLOR

He's not an abuser. And she's not likely to go through with it.

BROCK

But if she does? Telling you was a pretty brave step. She may be closer than you think.

TAYLOR lights up a cigarette.

BROCK (CONT'D)

You could do it.

TAYLOR

You know what you're asking..?

BROCK

Yeah. To do something that could protect the one person in your life who really needs it.

TAYLOR goes over to the dresser and starts putting on some make up over her black eye.

TAYLOR

I'll have to think about it.

BROCK comes up behind her.

BROCK

It's still a bit...

TAYLOR

I know.

BROCK gives her a kiss on the mouth, then a gentle one on her bruised eye.

BROCK

It's healing well.

TAYLOR

I saw the doctor.

BROCK

What?

TAYLOR

Relax. About the pill.

BROCK

What did he say?

TAYLOR

Wasn't my usual GP.

BROCK

If there's any problems like the last time, you get off it.

TAYLOR

The last time nearly put me in hospital.

BROCK

I thought you wanted this too...

TAYLOR

I do. Really. Just a bit nervous.

BROCK

Any symptoms reappear, that's it. I promise.

LIGHTS.

ACT TWO SCENE FOUR

LIGHTS on STEVE sitting down at an outdoor table of a coffee shop. BROCK sits opposite him.

BROCK

You obviously invited me here for a reason.

STEVE

It's very simple. I want you to leave Taylor.

BROCK

That would break her heart Steve. Surely you don't want that.

STEVE

You need to get out of my daughter's life.

BROCK

Or..?

STEVE doesn't answer. BROCK strains his head mockingly towards STEVE.

BROCK (CONT'D)

You're going to have to speak up.

STEVE slaps BROCK across the face. He sits there momentarily stunned.

BROCK (CONT'D)

I wouldn't try that again.

STEVE slaps him again. BROCK stands up and grabs STEVE with both hands, lifting him out of his seat. STEVE punches BROCK in the kidneys. BROCK does not let go. STEVE hits him even harder. BROCK collapses to his seat.

STEVE

Are you listening now Brock? You will stop seeing my daughter.

In a burst of aggression, BROCK leans forward and attempts to grab STEVE'S lapel. STEVE grabs BROCK'S wrist and holds it firmly to the table.

STEVE (CONT'D)

You don't want me to slap you again?

BROCK freezes. He stares at STEVE with an undisguised hatred.

STEVE (CONT'D)

That's good. You're starting to realise that this is actually happening.

STEVE pulls out an A4 size document holder from his briefcase. He places it on the table.

STEVE (CONT'D)

In there is all the information I need to destroy you. Everything about your life you've kept hidden from the world. And with little to no effort, anyone connected to you, every client, every acquaintance, every lost soul, will know who you really are.

BROCK

Taylor will never speak to you again.

STEVE

Why? For finding out what a piece of shit you are? She's used to me cleaning up her mistakes. And you're the biggest one yet.

BROCK

There's no way you could have gotten this legally.

STEVE

This is the only hard copy. It will mysteriously disappear. Can't be traced back to me. And the people who found who you really are, well you could do some digging, but I wouldn't want to get on the wrong side of them either.

BROCK looks at the document.

STEVE (CONT'D)

You can take a look.

BROCK takes out the first page.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Pretty impressive huh? Everything but your birth certificate in there.

STEVE takes the page from BROCK and places it in document holder.

BROCK

I give you till the end of the week. Go away somewhere. Leave her alone for a few days, a week, no contact. She'll get the picture.

STEVE gets up and exits. BROCK, in a fit of rage, grabs his chair and smashes it over the table.
LIGHTS.

ACT TWO SCENE FIVE

LIGHTS. PAT and STEVE are about to eat dinner. STEVE is seated at the outdoor table. PAT is bringing out two plates of food. She sits.

STEVE

Nice change to find you home before me.

PAT

It's going to be different from now on.

STEVE

Hmm?

PAT

I had a word with Erikson. Told him I needed to spend more time at home. If there was work that needed doing I'd take it with me or it would have to wait.

STEVE

And he was fine with that?

PAT

Talked about a pay increase as well. He agreed.

STEVE

What did you promise him?

PAT

Nothing. I've become "indispensable to the operation."

STEVE is about to say something.

PAT (CONT'D)

I know but it was just nice that he said it.

STEVE

Maybe we should celebrate. There's a bottle in the kitchen I just opened, wasn't sure...

STEVE is about to get up.

PAT

I'll get it. Oh there's some mail for you on the table.

LIGHTS. BROCK is seated at his desk. He takes some documents and carefully places them inside an A4 envelope.

PAT returns with the bottle and two glasses. She sits and pours.

PAT (CONT'D)

Taylor called. Apparently she hasn't heard from Brock in over three days. She's quite worried.

STEVE

Really.

PAT

You wouldn't have had anything to do with that by any chance?

STEVE can't help but grin at this suggestion.

STEVE takes the mail and sorts through it, finally coming to an A4 envelope.

BROCK carefully seals the envelope as STEVE tears it open. STEVE pulls out the contents as BROCK takes the envelope, places it in a carry holder and exits the flat.

STEVE reads the documents.

PAT (CONT'D)

Did you find out anything from the school?

STEVE just looks at her with utter contempt.

PAT (CONT'D)

What's the matter?

With a volcanic fury, STEVE stands and leaps at PAT, grabbing her by the throat with both hands.

STEVE

YOU FUCKING CUNT!

LIGHTS.

ACT TWO SCENE SIX

LIGHTS on STEVE and TAYLOR sitting on a park bench.

TAYLOR

I can't stay long.

STEVE

You haven't seen me in eight...

TAYLOR

Six weeks.

STEVE

Six weeks and that's all you've got to say? Have you missed me at least?

TAYLOR

Why is that so important?

STEVE

Because you're my daughter. Not to mention my only child.

TAYLOR

OK. I've missed you. But there are more important issues here.

STEVE

There certainly are.

TAYLOR

So we agree on something.

STEVE

No point in prolonging this. What have you discovered about your new partner since moving in together?

TAYLOR

He doesn't visit prostitutes.

STEVE

Didn't think so.

TAYLOR

Changed your tune?

STEVE

Keep going.

TAYLOR

Porn, frankly I don't know and I don't care.

STEVE

So where did he disappear to for three days?

TAYLOR

Did you have something to do with that?

STEVE

Wouldn't he tell you...

TAYLOR gets up to leave.

TAYLOR

Right. I thought you wanted to make things better-

STEVE

Don't. Look at this first before you do anything.

STEVE pulls out the document holder.

TAYLOR

What the hell is that?

STEVE hands it to TAYLOR. She refuses to take it.

STEVE

What I showed to your boyfriend and hoped would keep him away longer than three days.

TAYLOR

You met with him?

STEVE

I wanted an explanation for everything that's in this document. Man to man. Frankly I thought he would have said something to you.

TAYLOR

I don't believe this. What have you gone and done?

STEVE

Take a good look.

TAYLOR

No. You'll do anything to sabotage our relationship.

STEVE

It's a police report. You tell me whether it's worth reading or not. You want me to bury it, I'll never bring this up again.

TAYLOR

You promise.

STEVE

If you can live with what's in there...

TAYLOR grabs it and quickly scans it.

TAYLOR

Who the hell is Michael Overland?

STEVE

Brock's real name. Before starting a new life here.

TAYLOR continues to read.

TAYLOR

How in God's name did you find this? I'm not going to finish it.

TAYLOR closes it and hands it back to STEVE.

STEVE

All right then. Listen. Michael had a younger brother growing up in England.. Aidan was three years younger. When Michael was about 12 Aidan started having a lot of accidents. Inside the home. Eventually it was figured out that Michael was the cause. They shared a room so the parents moved house so just to have the extra room and keep the boys apart. Michael would visit at night. Sometimes they would just talk and then one time he tried to suffocate his younger brother with a pillow. Other times they'd find the younger brother covered in bruises, especially around the face. So at this point the parents decide to lock them in their respective bedrooms. But Michael manages to find a spare key and gets a copy made. One night while his parents are out, Michael sneaks into his brother's room and sets him alight then calls the fire brigade. By the time the parents come back their youngest son is dying of third degree burns and after a few days he's gone. The parents were suspicious but mentioned nothing to the police about Michael's history. Not long after they take him to see a few psychologists. No one knows what they told the parents but no respite or lifeline was offered as far as what to do. After six months of this the father's left. Not a word. Just upped and went. The mother is on the verge of a complete breakdown. Her husband's gone, she dare not report what she think happened to Aidan if she doesn't want to lose her other son yet she's got the murderer right under her roof.

TAYLOR

You can't know that. If it was proven he wouldn't...

STEVE

Let me finish. After a year or so it all becomes too much and she takes an overdose of sleeping pills. Husband reappears long enough to bury his wife, change his son's name and pack him off to his wife's brother here in Australia. No children of their own, not by choice, they welcomed him with open arms.

TAYLOR

How would the police know all this?

STEVE

The mother left a note before she killed herself, a final act of contrition telling the world everything she believed to be the truth surrounding her youngest son's death. Words she couldn't bring herself to utter while still alive. When the police found it her husband completely disavowed it, swore she was unstable, which of course she was by the time she decided to end it. Michael comes to Melbourne, now Brock Peterson.

TAYLOR

You haven't proven a thing.

STEVE

Does he ever mention his brother?

TAYLOR

Why would he? After going through something like that? Losing both parents, sent off to another country to live with strangers..

STEVE grabs TAYLOR forcefully by the shoulders.

STEVE

Are you listening to a fucking word I'm saying?!

TAYLOR

Let me go.

STEVE lets go.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

And who has he killed here? Any bodies show up?

STEVE

Have you ever met his uncle and aunt?

TAYLOR

They're dead.

STEVE

Oh really.

TAYLOR

After he left home. A car accident.

STEVE

Well they've made a remarkable recovery.

TAYLOR

Where are they?

STEVE

Can't tell you that. They made me promise. After he left they sold up and moved state. Brock was tossed out minute he turned eighteen. They described bringing him up as five years of hell.

TAYLOR

What was he supposed to have done?

STEVE

They wouldn't tell me.

TAYLOR

Maybe because there's nothing to tell. How do I know you're not making all this up?

STEVE

You know I wouldn't do that.

TAYLOR

Brock has done nothing to give me any indication that he would hurt me, hurt anyone.

STEVE

That's what his uncle said. Months could go by and he would be perfectly normal and then this other side would emerge.

TAYLOR

I'm not upending my life on the basis of all this...speculation.

STEVE

Just think for a second Taylor, what if I'm right about all this and not just being an over protective father? I've been a detective long enough. You develop sense about people who are capable of...I'm trying to protect you. That's all.

Pause.

STEVE (CONT'D)

I won't let anyone hurt you Taylor.

TAYLOR looks at her father, touched by his sincerity and love. She begins to cry.

STEVE (CONT'D)

C'mon. It's not too late. You're not married to the guy...

TAYLOR

I can't listen to anymore of this.

TAYLOR prepares to walk off. STEVE stops her.

STEVE

No? Who stepped in when the parents of that boy threatened to file charges heh? What was the school going to do? Let you hang out to dry. Criminal charges, de-registration but I made it all go away didn't I? Want to know what I had to do, what it cost me..?

TAYLOR

I'm sorry Dad...

STEVE

You asked for my help then.

TAYLOR

Where's Mum? I need to speak to her...

STEVE

(evasively)

She's gone away for a few days. See family.

TAYLOR

She never had this suspicion against him.

STEVE

Are you kidding? It was your mother who suggested I call the school after you showed up with that black eye.

TAYLOR

You went behind my back..?!

STEVE

They have no record of any assault taking place in your classroom.

TAYLOR

I didn't report it all right! Fuck. Stay out of my life. I just want to be left alone.

TAYLOR runs off.

ACT TWO SCENE SEVEN

LIGHTS. BROCK'S flat. BROCK walks out of the bathroom offstage. He is wearing a towel around his waist and is drying his hair with another one. TAYLOR enters. She sits on the bed.

BROCK

Not even an hello?

TAYLOR

You're early.

BROCK

Couple of cancellations. Thought I'd come home and surprise you.

TAYLOR

Oh? What kind of surprise?

BROCK

It's a figure of speech. A break or something different from our routine.

BROCK admires himself in the mirror as he continues to dry himself. He takes off his towel and puts on some underwear. He turns to look at TAYLOR.

BROCK (CONT'D)

I've had a shower but if you're up to it...

TAYLOR

No. That's the last thing on my mind...

BROCK

That kind of day huh? Don't know how you do it, dealing with kids 24/7. Well, you won't have to for much longer...

TAYLOR

Sometimes the students are the least of it.

BROCK

OK. You want to talk about it...

TAYLOR

Don't know.

BROCK

It's got to do with your parents again hasn't it? Or your father more like it.

TAYLOR is silent.

BROCK (CONT'D)

You've spoken to him..

TAYLOR

Yes.

BROCK

So...

TAYLOR

He told me things.

BROCK

Of course he has. The man's an expert at twisting people's minds. Didn't think he'd do it to his own daughter-

TAYLOR

Why didn't you tell me you met with him?

BROCK

What do you think?

TAYLOR

I don't know.

BROCK

Your father is doing everything he can to split us up. Even I underestimated how far he would go.

TAYLOR

That's why you disappeared for three days.

BROCK

I needed time to gather my thoughts.

TAYLOR

Have you been lying to me?

BROCK

To even ask such a question...

TAYLOR

I'm asking all right...

BROCK

Have you told me the truth about everything in your life?

TAYLOR

I want to know. What have you lied to me about?

BROCK

You might want to be more specific.

TAYLOR

How about your name.

BROCK

My name..?

TAYLOR

You weren't always Brock Peterson were you...

Pause.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Michael Overland. Actually like that one better.

BROCK

Look it wasn't my choice. Please do we have to discuss this its very-

TAYLOR

What? Unattractive? Unbelievable?

BROCK

My father changed it.

TAYLOR

I know that already.

BROCK

Something really bad happened.

TAYLOR

Yes it did.

BROCK

What have you been told?

TAYLOR

(Takes a deep breath)

That you burned your brother to death, destroyed your own family, mother loses her marbles then kills herself, father then disappears and palms you off to relatives...God what kind of a fucked up life have you led?!

BROCK

I thought you were less naive.

TAYLOR

Don't call me that.

BROCK

None of it is true.

TAYLOR

Then explain it to me. Please...

BROCK

My father tried to save the family after Aidan died but it wasn't me who set the fire. She, my mother tried to kill us both. Dad left after Aidan died, it broke him. He then returned when he realised I was in danger. Mum then killed herself. We tried to start anew so Dad changed our names, it was all over the papers people would recognise my parents in the street...

TAYLOR

Then why did he try to get rid of you and send you to Australia..?

BROCK

He didn't get rid of me. All of this it has nothing to do with the Australian police...

TAYLOR

What was your father doing then heh? Your mother tries to kill you so the father sends you to live with her relatives?

BROCK

This is what he's told you huh? A police detective not involved in the case, not even from the same country, no idea what actually happened...brilliant.

TAYLOR

He found something...

BROCK

That suits what he's looking for. Him I'm not so surprised Taylor...your father never really struck me as an original thinker but you...

TAYLOR

(undeterred)

What was it?

BROCK

My Dad was broken by what happened, when Aidan died, and the way it happened. He knew he couldn't look after me. It was heartbreaking Taylor. I loved him so much but there was no way...

TAYLOR

And the letter your mother wrote..?

BROCK

She killed herself. Not from grief, but because she went...Dad tried to shield us from it but in the end it overwhelmed him. Aidan's death was simply the final straw.

TAYLOR

You said she died of cancer.

BROCK

What do you want me to say? My mother was crazy enough to kill her own son? It humiliated all of us. We had to move towns, leave behind whatever friends we had left...

TAYLOR

Why did you tell me your uncle and aunt were dead? Your only living relatives in Australia...

BROCK

They are dead to me. Look I won't pretend I was a perfect child but they never showed any warmth or love. I was taken out of obligation and that's how it felt every day I lived under their roof. Then there were the beatings, it was easier just to think of them as really dead than to try and explain why we have nothing to do with each other.

Pause.

TAYLOR

(Almost challenging BROCK)

How could my father be so wrong?

BROCK

If I was responsible the courts would have done to me what they did with the Jamie Bulger killers. But all there was is that letter which they weren't sure if it damned her or me.

TAYLOR

How can I be sure?

BROCK

My mothers's letter was the work of a madwomen. Aidan's death was real but I had nothing to do with it.

TAYLOR

I didn't want to know about any of this...

BROCK

But now you do.

He stares at her intently.

TAYLOR

Why are you looking at me like that?

BROCK

Just wondering if your father will ever stop till he's succeeded in driving us apart.

BROCK quickly gets changed.

TAYLOR

What are you doing?

BROCK

You need to figure out what you want. I'll leave now and never bother you again if that's what you want. Am I any different because of what your father told you?

TAYLOR

The letter...

BROCK

I didn't kill my brother. I was twelve. Dad's still alive somewhere. Find him and you'll have all your answers...

Pause.

BROCK (CONT'D)

Have you spoken to your mother? She could bring some sense into all this...

TAYLOR

They called the school. According to Dad it was her idea.

BROCK

Really.

TAYLOR

She's just not capable of standing up to him...

BROCK grabs his keys.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Don't leave. I believe you.

BROCK

You sure? Cos I can't live with all this hanging over us...

TAYLOR

Just hold me will you.

BROCK walks towards TAYLOR. LIGHTS.

ACT TWO SCENE EIGHT

LIGHTS. BROCK is sitting at his computer in the bedroom. The doorbell rings. BROCK goes over to the door. He doesn't open it. The doorbell rings again. Cautiously he opens the door with the safety latch still on. BROCK is suddenly thrown back onto the floor as STEVE bursts through the door, busting the latch. He is wearing gloves.

STEVE

You should get that lock fixed.

BROCK gets up walks in front of STEVE.

STEVE takes in the apartment.

BROCK

You really have no idea what you're doing anymore do you?

STEVE

Shut up.

STEVE pulls out his hand gun in one swift move and sticks it to the face of BROCK. BROCK freezes. STEVE goes behind him with the gun still pressing against his head, grabs BROCK from behind the neck, knees him in the back. BROCK drops to his knees winded. STEVE now has the gun pressed down on the top of BROCK'S head. STEVE pulls out some plastic cuffs and throws them to BROCK.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Put them on. Now.

BROCK complies.

STEVE (CONT'D)

I told you to stay away.

STEVE presses the gun harder against BROCK'S head. He presses the trigger. Nothing. STEVE presses it again. Nothing.

STEVE (CONT'D)

What do you know, an empty clip. Now how about I put in a full one.

Deftly, STEVE removes the empty clip and places in a full one. He cocks the weapon.

STEVE (CONT'D)

These Glock's have a very sensitive trigger...

BROCK

All right. You've proved your point.

STEVE

Not yet.

STEVE goes to the bed and grabs one of BROCK'S pillows and places it behind BROCK'S head. He then sticks the pistol into the pillow. BROCK'S whole body tenses. STEVE fires again. Nothing. BROCK collapses onto the ground. STEVE laughs.

STEVE (CONT'D)

You think I'd shoot you in your own apartment? Better places to kill someone...

STEVE begins to look around the apartment.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Where's your wallet?

BROCK

What?

STEVE

Your wallet. Where is it?

BROCK

On the desk.

STEVE goes over to the desk, sees the wallet, empties it of it's cash then discards it back on the desk. He goes back to BROCK.

STEVE

OK. Lift your arms up.

BROCK doesn't move. STEVE kicks him in the stomach. BROCK recoils in pain. He lifts his arms up. STEVE removes his watch and an expensive looking ring. He places them in his pocket. STEVE grabs a chain around BROCK'S neck and yanks it off.

BROCK

Are you going to take my computer too?

STEVE walks over to the laptop and picks it up. He comes back over to BROCK.

STEVE

No. I've got a better use for it than that.

STEVE swings the laptop with full force against the side of BROCK'S head. BLACKOUT.

LIGHTS. Hours later. TAYLOR enters the bedroom. She sees BROCK who has not moved. TAYLOR goes to him.

TAYLOR

Oh my God...what happened...

BROCK is semi conscious.

BROCK

Get these off me...there's some scissors in the desk drawer...

TAYLOR goes over to the drawer and pulls out the scissors. She comes back and cuts off the plastic handcuffs.

BROCK (CONT'D)

We had a visitor...

TAYLOR

You're bleeding...

BROCK

Don't worry...I'm all right.

TAYLOR

I'm calling the police.

TAYLOR reaches for her mobile phone.

BROCK

No. That will only make it worse.

TAYLOR

How could it be worse than this..?

BROCK

He threatened to kill me if I don't leave...

TAYLOR

What did you tell him..?

BROCK

I'm not going anywhere.

LIGHTS.

ACT TWO SCENE NINE

LIGHTS. PAT is on her phone. She is leaving a message. A small suitcase is next to her.

PAT

Hello Taylor, it's your mother. I'm sorry I haven't been around these last few days but...it has to do with your father. He was the reason I haven't called... wouldn't let me after what happened...after what he did. I'll write when I have more time. Please forgive me...

PAT hangs up her phone. A few days later. LIGHTS on PAT inside BROCK'S apartment. BROCK has a bandage on the side of his head.

PAT (CONT'D)

Sorry to drop by unannounced.

She notices the bandage.

PAT (CONT'D)

What's happened to you?

BROCK

Tripped over...at the gym.

PAT

It looks nasty.

BROCK

Look, Taylor won't be home for a while yet.

PAT

Actually it's you I wanted to see.

BROCK

If you're here to interrogate me-

PAT

No. Taylor may have told you already. I'm leaving my husband.

BROCK

Yes.

PAT

I'd thought about it for a while now but didn't have the guts till...

BROCK

No need to explain.

Pause.

PAT

Brock, I need you to answer a question for me. Please don't be offended by it but I need to know.

BROCK

Go ahead.

PAT

Did you send the copies of those emails to my husband, between me and Erikson. I know it's an awkward...

BROCK

I gather these emails were...intimate?

PAT

Yes.

BROCK

Why would you think I'd do something like that?

PAT

I don't know anyone else who would have reason...our affair if you want to call it that, was brief.

BROCK

I'm not judging you. It's none of my business.

PAT

You did some work for Erikson, said so yourself and Taylor's told me how good you are with computers. Could get into anything she said...

BROCK

And therefore it would have to be me who hacked into a company's computer system and retrieved these emails that you're talking about..?

PAT

You and Steve have never got along...

BROCK

Have you asked your Boss?

PAT

There's no reason for him to do such a thing...

BROCK

Or find out your affair is no longer secret...

Pause.

PAT

Yes.

BROCK

I'm sorry Pat. I can't help you.

PAT

All right. Thanks for being patient at least.

BROCK

What did your husband do?

PAT

Sorry?

BROCK

When he found out, what was his reaction?

PAT reaches for her neck. BROCK leans in and touches her neck.

PAT

Please...

BROCK

I see.

PAT

He'd never done that before...

BROCK

All it takes is once.

PAT starts to tear up.

PAT

I'm sorry.

BROCK

Don't be. (Gesturing to the side of the bed). Have a seat. Forgive my manners, can I get you something?

PAT

Just a glass of water.

BROCK

Sure.

BROCK goes to the kitchen which is offstage right. Seconds later he returns. He sits next to PAT.

BROCK (CONT'D)

If you don't mind me asking, where are you going to stay?

PAT

My parents till I can sort out the next step, get a lawyer that sort of thing.

BROCK

Taylor's been really worried about you.

PAT

Promise me you'll look after her Brock. I know Steve hasn't made it easy but she's a good girl.

BROCK

I know.

PAT hands BROCK the glass of water.

PAT

Thank you.

BROCK

Pleasure.

BROCK goes and places the glass on the desk.

BROCK (CONT'D)

Just out of curiosity, does anyone know you're here?

PAT

Not a soul. And please don't say anything to Taylor. She'll just think I'm meddling.

BROCK goes and sits back next to PAT.

BROCK

I won't say a word.

PAT

And if Steve ever knew...

BROCK

This will be our secret.

PAT

Yes.

BROCK

You're really quite beautiful you know that..?

PAT

For someone my age...

BROCK

No. Not at all.

PAT realises that BROCK is staring at her intently.

PAT

I enjoy being complimented as much as the next woman, but under the circumstances, it's really not necessary.

BROCK places a hand on her leg. PAT tries to remove it. BROCK keeps it there.

PAT (CONT'D)

Brock, please. You're my daughter's boyfriend...

BROCK

She doesn't have to know.

PAT

What?

BROCK

I've had women your age.

BROCK places his hand inside her crotch. PAT closes her legs.

BROCK (CONT'D)

Always wanted to do that...

PAT

Let me go.

BROCK places his hand behind her neck.

BROCK

Lot's of nerves back there. Squeeze them too hard...

BROCK squeezes. PAT arches her back in pain.

BROCK (CONT'D)

Once you fuck around on your husband, the fall from grace is complete. He'll never believe you. And Taylor would disown you. First you cover up her being molested by your brother when she was what,,twelve? And what do you do...say nothing to her father, the only man who could protect her, or...get revenge. A life of secrets to protect your family. Fucked with her head didn't it? Allowed someone like me to come along...

PAT

Oh God please...what kind of monster are you...

BROCK

The kind that should have been left alone.

He forces her down onto the bed and straddles her body. As the LIGHTS fade his fist comes up and down repeatedly as PAT groans in pain.

LIGHTS on STEVE in the backyard. He finds a letter on the table. He reads it. He tears it apart and starts breathing heavily.

STEVE

How dare you leave me! How dare you fucking leave me! I sacrificed everything for this family...you owe me...you fucking owe me! .

STEVE breaks down and sobs.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Where have you gone Pat, where the hell have you gone..?

LIGHTS on BROCK in his bedroom. He is on the phone.

BROCK

Yes...I live in Dorking Road Box Hill...a neighbour of ours a few doors down at 125...well there's been a lot of shouting and arguing recently and a few days ago it was really bad...I heard a woman's voice which I think is his wife...maybe I'm jumping the gun but after what's been in the news lately...she sounded really scared...I don't want to be one of those neighbours that does nothing...I did see her the next day and spoke to her briefly...no I didn't ask but her neck was severely bruised...I'm quite positive...all black and blue like someone had tried to strangle her...look I'd prefer not...if he was to find out...I didn't want to say it but he's a policeman...that's right...she looked in fear for her life...there's no other way to describe it...I just hope she's not in any danger...thanks.

BROCK hangs up.

ACT TWO SCENE TEN

Several weeks later. LIGHTS on STEVE sitting on the same park bench as before. He is a broken man. TAYLOR enters. She walks up to the bench but does not sit.

STEVE

I'm glad you came.

TAYLOR

Where's Mum?

STEVE

Not even hello..?

TAYLOR

I came to see if you'd be honest with your own daughter.

STEVE

I don't know where your mother is. She hasn't contacted me.

TAYLOR

Well why would she after what you did...

STEVE

If she wants a divorce we will have to speak at some point.

TAYLOR

She's not with Nan.

STEVE

She'd never go there. They barely talked. That was just...

TAYLOR

It's been nearly three weeks. Her friends haven't heard from her, she hasn't left the country...

STEVE

You went to the police.

TAYLOR

They wanted to question me.

STEVE

What did you say?

TAYLOR

I can't tell you that Dad.

STEVE

They've suspended me. I'm under investigation. Complaints had been made to the police before she disappeared.

TAYLOR

That wasn't me.

STEVE

Who then?

TAYLOR

You tried to strangle her.

STEVE

I lost control for a minute that's all. If I wanted to...

TAYLOR

Yes..?

STEVE

She had an affair with her boss.

TAYLOR

And that gives you the right..?

Pause.

STEVE

No. It doesn't.

TAYLOR

I think you should know we're moving.

STEVE

What? Moving where?

TAYLOR

Not sure yet.

STEVE

(flash of anger)

Don't lie to me.

Pause.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Will you tell me when you've decided?

TAYLOR

At this stage it's best you don't know.

STEVE

Are you joking?

TAYLOR

Dad don't...

STEVE

There will be no one to protect you.

TAYLOR

Like you protected Mum?

STEVE

What if Brock had something to-

TAYLOR

Don't you dare say it. He has no reason to hurt Mum.

STEVE

I always made sure you were safe...

TAYLOR

Not always Dad. That's not really possible.

STEVE

What are you saying..?

TAYLOR

I've got to go.

STEVE

Was it his idea to move?

TAYLOR

What does that have to do with anything?

STEVE gives her a piece of paper.

STEVE

That's the address of his uncle. I tracked him down. Only about an hour out of the city. Promised there would be no-one to come around and ask questions but I've called and told him the situation. He's willing to talk...

TAYLOR

I don't want it.

STEVE

Please. Just take it.

TAYLOR takes the piece of paper;

STEVE (CONT'D)

I know it wasn't any kid at school who gave you that black eye.

TAYLOR turns on STEVE.

TAYLOR

You want to talk about violence Dad? You assaulted him in his own home, our home, threatened to kill him...that's right the police know it wasn't a "random" breaking and entering...

Pause. TAYLOR attempts to control her feelings.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

I'm late as it is...

STEVE

Will I see you...

TAYLOR

Don't ask Dad. Please...

TAYLOR walks away. STEVE is in darkness. She opens the piece of paper and considers it for a moment. Purposefully, she rips it up and throws the pieces to the ground. TAYLOR exits.

Lights fade.

The End

