

THE DANCE TEACHER

By

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Synopsis

Justin Belmar runs a dance studio for kids. He has been arrested and we are introduced to his journey from university to jail.

Cast of Character

Justin Belmar - Mid 20's. Male. Dance instructor. Attractive.

Mr. Taylor - 60's. Male. Former dance teacher.

Detective Spinner - open age, open gender.

Detective Mori - open age, open gender.

Matt Kettel - Mid 30's. Blue collar. Friendly guy. Male. His son is taught by Justin.

Marilyn Kettel - Mid 30's. Female. Her son is taught by Justin. Hard working. Smart. Practical. Has aspirations.

Gail - university aged dancer. Female. First date of Justin. (can be played by same woman as Marilyn)

Maurice - middle aged male. Justin's date. (Can be played by same man as Mr. Taylor)

Angie - mid-twenties, reporter. open gender.

Open ethnicity casting preferred.

Double Casting Suggestions

Mr Taylor and Maurice.

Gail and Angie

Staging

Minimalist staging. Characters can sit in horseshoe around centre stage. Scenes can overlap. Characters are aware of each others dialogue.

Diversity in Casting

Diversity in casting is strongly encouraged.

Props

Chairs

SCENE 1 JUSTIN'S ADDRESS

Justin addresses the audience directly.

JUSTIN

What happened to me should never happen to anyone. My story is a warning to people who are innocent. I was naïve. I admit that. I put my trust in others and I'm guilty of that. I live with the consequences of that. Everyday. My appeal hearing's in two weeks. Six years I've been in a cage waiting. Waiting for someone, anyone, to believe me. I won't give up. My name is Justin Belmar. I'm innocent.

Justin sits.

SCENE 2 DETECTIVE SPINNER AND CAPTAIN MORI LEARN SOMETHING NEW

DETECTIVE SPINNER

Hey Captain you remember the Belmar case?

DETECTIVE MORI

Justin Belmar? Six, eight years ago. Got 25 years. So?

DETECTIVE SPINNER

A career booster of a case for you.

DETECTIVE MORI

What can I do for you detective?

DETECTIVE SPINNER

Belmar, he's dead.

DETECTIVE MORI

Not suicide.

DETECTIVE SPINNER

Head smashed in by his cell mate.

DETECTIVE MORI

Any motive?

DETECTIVE SPINNER
 Love. Roomie was a lifer, says
 little Justin keeps going on about
 being innocent.

DETECTIVE MORI
 So?

DETECTIVE SPINNER
 Appeals about to start in a couple
 of days and Belmar's so convincing,
 lover boy's worried he's gonna get
 out; says he can't live without his
 sweet Justin - so he cracks him on
 the skull. Belmar's dead, they can
 be together forever.

DETECTIVE MORI
 Together forever.

SCENE 3 JUSTIN DATES A CLASSMATE

Justin and Gail are kissing and petting, unbuttoning her
 shirt, she pushes him to the ground and removes his trousers,
 then lowers herself towards his groin. He vomits. She pulls
 away to wipe her hair.

Gail
 You ok?

JUSTIN
 I'm sorry.

GAIL
 Justin, this is the second time.

JUSTIN
 It must be food poisoning.

GAIL
 We ate the same thing.

JUSTIN
 Maybe I've got the flu.

GAIL
 We've been dating for 4 weeks.

JUSTIN
 I like you Gail.

GAIL

Like is good, but I'm hoping for a little more.

JUSTIN

I don't want to force you into something you don't want.

GAIL

Force me? What am I doing that says to you I'm being forced?

JUSTIN

I'm nervous around you.

GAIL

Am I your first?

JUSTIN

What?

GAIL

If you're a virgin...there's no official start date you know.

JUSTIN

I'm not a virgin.

GAIL

It's cool.

JUSTIN

I have a lot of experience.

GAIL

That's good.

JUSTIN

It's food poisoning.

GAIL

(with disbelief) Oh, c'mon.

JUSTIN

(Defensively) I like romance, ok.

GAIL

Romance?

JUSTIN

I just like things a little slower.

GAIL

Fuck you.

JUSTIN
No, I don't mean anything -

GAIL
No, fuck you.

JUSTIN
Calm down. I don't know -

GAIL
You like things slower? You think
I'm too fast for you?

JUSTIN
I didn't say that. I meant I'm
romantic.

GAIL
That's bullshit. We're humping and
you don't get hard...

JUSTIN
I don't want to disrespect you -

GAIL
You throw up whenever I go for your
junk, and you don't want to
disrespect me?

JUSTIN
I ate something..it's not my fault.

GAIL
Are you gay?

JUSTIN
What?

GAIL
This is such a stupid question. Who
hides being gay anymore?

JUSTIN
I'm not gay.

GAIL
You're a dancer, you don't hit on
girls in class; everyone thinks
you're gay.

JUSTIN
I'm not. I've never-

GAIL

It's not a big deal for chrissakes.
Jesus, even the male instructors
hit on you - they're not just
interested in your talent.

JUSTIN

You're a great dancer too.

GAIL

I don't need your approval, ok.

JUSTIN

I don't know what you're talking
about.

GAIL

Why are you dating me?

JUSTIN

I don't understand.

GAIL

You never ask anyone out. You're
like "Mr. Helpful" in class.

JUSTIN

What's wrong with being helpful?

GAIL

Nothing. There's nothing wrong with
being helpful; your kind of
helpful? Always there - always
waiting, watching for when to be
helpful.

JUSTIN

I'm normal. It's normal to help
people.

GAIL

It's creepy. It's like your
expecting something but never say
it.

JUSTIN

I don't ask people for anything.

GAIL

Right, you don't. Ever.

JUSTIN

So what?

GAIL

Look, next year the Masters in Dance only accepts four of us. You and I are the only two who'll get in for sure - Justin and Gail - let's use that to start building ourselves up now.

JUSTIN

You asked me out to make sure you get into the Masters program?

GAIL

I don't need your help getting into any class, I asked you out so we'd bond, start building a-

JUSTIN

It's getting late.

GAIL

Don't be an asshole about this.

JUSTIN

I've got to get up early.

GAIL

You're lonely right, I get it.

JUSTIN

I can give you money for a cab.

GAIL

You piece of shit.

JUSTIN

Get out (screaming)

Justin raises his hand as if to hit her, then hits himself on the head. Sits and rocks back and forth.

GAIL

....fuck...

JUSTIN

Get out, get out, get out, get out, get out, get out.

Justin begins to cry and shake.

GAIL

You are a freak.

SCENE 4 JUSTIN DATES AN ADMINISTRATOR

Justin moves to a sensual pose. Observes Maurice. Maurice is putting on his shoes. He has to put on his shoes, adjust his shirt, put on a necktie, and jacket.

JUSTIN

Thanks.

MAURICE

Seriously? Thanks?

JUSTIN

Did you like it?

MAURICE

Did you like it?

JUSTIN

I'm shy.

MAURICE

Shy? Justin you didn't even get an erection.

JUSTIN

I'm nervous with you.

MAURICE

With me? Why?

JUSTIN

You're good looking, important at school. Powerful.

MAURICE

Oh that's right, I'm the pretty one.

JUSTIN

I look this way cause I'm young, guys your age need something special. Most guys don't have it. You do.

MAURICE

I haven't dated in a while.

JUSTIN

Your job keeps you busy.

MAURICE

I'm guessing you don't understand exactly what I do at school. I can't help you, you know.

JUSTIN

(annoyed) I don't need help.

Justin puts his trousers on.

MAURICE

No you don't. The applications for the masters of dance are in - your teachers have really put you on a pedestal.

JUSTIN

I like you.

MAURICE

I like you too.

JUSTIN

I've never dated anyone before.

MAURICE

Oh.

JUSTIN

I don't have so much experience

MAURICE

Oh...I thought you wanted -

Maurice moves towards Justin.

JUSTIN

I want to spend time with you. I've never asked anyone out before.

MAURICE

Lucky me.

Justin kisses Maurice.

JUSTIN

No, lucky me.

Slow tender kiss. Maurice resumes getting dressed.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

Would you see me again?

Maurice slows down getting dressed and becomes thoughtful.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

If you don't want to it's ok.

MAURICE

Look. You're a student and I'm an administrator, but my position is technically faculty.

JUSTIN

But you don't teach.

MAURICE

I used to. Do I want to see you again? Yes. But...

JUSTIN

I understand.

MAURICE

No you don't. There's no prohibition for admin staff to date students, but I would prefer if we keep it private.

JUSTIN

Forever?

MAURICE

Not forever. Just till we know where we stand with each other.

JUSTIN

I had someone when I was a kid. It was a secret.

Maurice moves toward Justin.

MAURICE

When you were a kid?

JUSTIN

My first dance teacher.

Maurice puts his arm gently around Justin's shoulder.

MAURICE

Oh my god Justin....

JUSTIN

He meant to be kind. He thought he was mentoring me.

MAURICE

Did you tell anyone?

JUSTIN

I'm good at keeping secrets.

MAURICE

Oh, Justin we should contact the police. I could help you.

JUSTIN

You're right. But dance is such a small world. Any connection with something like this...well....I want to build a career.

MAURICE

I understand. I feel responsible.

JUSTIN

It was a long time ago.

MAURICE

You thought of it now because I want to keep our relationship quiet.

JUSTIN

No, I've been thinking about it alot recently because....well.... never mind, I'm happy to be with you.

MAURICE

Something's happened?

JUSTIN

I just want to forget it.

MAURICE

Justin I want to help. It was someone from school?

JUSTIN

I don't want trouble.

MAURICE

Please, trust me.

JUSTIN

I don't even know if it means anything.

MAURICE

Let me give you my opinion.

JUSTIN

I don't want anything to become public.

MAURICE

Strictly between us.

JUSTIN

Reputation in dance is so important.

MAURICE

I understand. Was it a teacher?

JUSTIN

A student.

MAURICE

(Taken aback) What did he do?

JUSTIN

It was a girl. We were friends, hung out. She wanted....well, she wanted sex....I said no..she threatened to report....date rape...I didn't...

MAURICE

You need to report this. Our world is so over-sexualized.

JUSTIN

No one would believe me. She's pretty, she could get any guy, why would she do something like this.

MAURICE

I'll talk to the faculty.

JUSTIN

That would just cause trouble, 'cause then we couldn't be private.

MAURICE

I'm sorry I said that.

JUSTIN

It's what you need, I don't mind. I'm sorry for you 'cause it makes me sensitive about being intimate with you.

MAURICE

That's not important.

JUSTIN

And besides, if she gets into the Masters program, I can transfer, there are good programs in other parts of the country.

MAURICE

Don't think about moving. People like that don't succeed.

JUSTIN

She'll get in; there are two of us everyone's sure are gonna get in...

MAURICE

Gail...?

JUSTIN

It doesn't matter who.

MAURICE

Gail.

Justin doesn't take note of Maurice's comment.

JUSTIN

And just when I'm finally building a normal life...

MAURICE

She hasn't been approved yet. Final decision's are made in a few days.

JUSTIN

I'm sorry this spoiled our time.

MAURICE

You have nothing to worry about.

Justin kisses Maurice and starts to unbutton his own shirt.

JUSTIN

Maybe if you don't have to rush off...

They kiss. Justin leads Maurice to sit down.

SCENE 5 JUSTIN VISITS MR. TAYLOR, HIS FORMER DANCE TEACHER

Mr. Taylor is seated. Justin fixes his clothing then turns towards Mr. Taylor.

MR. TAYLOR

Justin.

JUSTIN

I waited till I thought you were alone.

MR. TAYLOR

Why are you here?

JUSTIN

Do you want me to leave?

MR. TAYLOR

I said 'why are you here', if I want you to leave, then I'll say, 'please leave.'

JUSTIN

Sorry.

MR. TAYLOR

Why are you here?

JUSTIN

Are you still dancing?

MR. TAYLOR

Dancers need to be fit and lithe...it might be obvious I no longer have the stomach for it.

JUSTIN

I drive by your studio.

MR. TAYLOR

Uh huh.

JUSTIN

You have so much to offer.

MR. TAYLOR

I chose to focus on developing my students rather my own career...I put my students first.

JUSTIN

You give so much.

MR. TAYLOR

I'm out of style. The Internet. Children look up things on the Internet, suddenly they're experts on everything.

JUSTIN

You have a lot to offer.

MR. TAYLOR

Dorothy and I take in foster children. I'm a full-time dad while she works. I teach a few adults here at the studio.

JUSTIN

You're busy.

MR. TAYLOR

Are you here to interview me? You're not a child Justin and I'm no longer you're teacher...say what you need to say.

JUSTIN

I've been offered a six month contract as visiting-choreographer with the Steckler company.

MR. TAYLOR

I did a six-week internship at the Steckler right after college.

JUSTIN

Internships are prestigious, too.

MR. TAYLOR

Oh thank you.

JUSTIN

My school's going very well.

MR. TAYLOR

You have a studio, not a school

JUSTIN

Right. The studio's going well.

MR. TAYLOR

You'd abandon your students to advance your own career.

JUSTIN

That's why I'm here...would you take some of my students?

MR. TAYLOR

(Beat) Take some of your students?

JUSTIN
Some show potential.

MR. TAYLOR
I see.

JUSTIN
Not all. You could decide which ones to take. I know you're busy with your foster children. And Dorothy -

MR. TAYLOR
And your other students?

JUSTIN
Parabelle studios are willing to take-

MR. TAYLOR
Parabelle? They're a franchise.

JUSTIN
They don't provide the personal touch.

MR. TAYLOR
Exactly right....corporate greed in the world of dance.

JUSTIN
You're right.

MR. TAYLOR
Of course I'm right. When you first came to me at - fifteen?

JUSTIN
Thirteen.

MR. TAYLOR
Thirteen years old - I didn't let you take the floor did I?

JUSTIN
No.

MR. TAYLOR
You were too fat to be a dancer.

JUSTIN
I know.

MR. TAYLOR

I didn't even charge for classes until you were ready, you did chores around the studio.

JUSTIN

You were fair.

MR. TAYLOR

Fairness has nothing to do with it. Give students what they need, not what they want. Won't make you popular, but it'll make a good dancer.

JUSTIN

I know.

MR. TAYLOR

Your students provide you with a decent income.

JUSTIN

I do private choreography.

MR. TAYLOR

You're so very proud of that. You dispense wisdom for a little fee, but the steady income, that comes from weekly students.

JUSTIN

I know.

MR. TAYLOR

Don't be upset.

JUSTIN

I'm not upset.

MR. TAYLOR

You want this amazing opportunity the Steckler is offering.

JUSTIN

Not if you don't think I should.

MR. TAYLOR

I didn't say that.

JUSTIN

I'm sorry.

MR. TAYLOR
I haven't seen you in five years
and now you are back.

JUSTIN
I'm sorry.

MR. TAYLOR
You remember when you were my
student?

JUSTIN
Yes.

MR. TAYLOR
Open a studio, steal my students,
and sneak around the streets trying
to hide from me.

JUSTIN
I wasn't hiding from you.

MR. TAYLOR
I dedicate myself to my students.

JUSTIN
Yes.

MR. TAYLOR
And now you're offering me
students.

JUSTIN
I'm sorry, if you don't want to -

MR. TAYLOR
Stop putting words in my mouth.

JUSTIN
Sorry.

MR. TAYLOR
I have something to offer special
students.

JUSTIN
I know.

MR. TAYLOR
Good.

JUSTIN
You helped....many boys...helping
them develop.

MR. TAYLOR

Exactly right. Helping them develop. My classes were the model of good behaviour. No gum chewing, or lateness, and no nonsense with the girls.

JUSTIN

Respect.

MR. TAYLOR

Exactly right. Respect. Everyone was shown proper respect. No one has ever been able to point to anything improper in my studio.

JUSTIN

No one has.

MR. TAYLOR

No.

JUSTIN

There is only proof of the good you did.

MR. TAYLOR

You were a very good boy. Always helping, watching, being where you were needed.

JUSTIN

Thank you.

MR. TAYLOR

You were my most dependable boy.

JUSTIN

I liked helping you.

MR. TAYLOR

Parents felt safe knowing you were there....watching...responsible.

JUSTIN

I felt good helping you.

MR. TAYLOR

And here you are again.

JUSTIN

Something's broken inside me.

MR. TAYLOR

Don't say that.

JUSTIN

I thought I could do it
alone....people see weakness.

MR. TAYLOR

An assistant needs someone to
assist.

JUSTIN

I don't like being on my own. I
tried. At school, I dated women,
men, I tried to be strong, normal.
I'm lonely.

Mr. Taylor takes Justin's chin and looks into his eyes.
Justin tries to move his eyes away, but Mr. Taylor holds him
in place.

MR. TAYLOR

Together. Remember? Forever
together.

JUSTIN

I want to be near you. I want
to help you. I don't know
what to do. I'm lonely. I
can't feel anything....I can
hear their breathing, the
boys felt love. I want that.

MR. TAYLOR (CONT'D)

'Forever together'. Remember?
When you were confused. When
you had doubts. I promised.
I'll be your family. You are
a very special little boy. I
love you Justin. You're safe,
now. Always a good boy. You
make me so proud as a
teacher.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

I don't want to be alone....can I
help you again?

Mr. Taylor kisses Justin, Justin keeps his mouth firmly
closed.

MR. TAYLOR

Ah, still a little shy. I don't
mind. You don't need to change,
don't have to do anything.

Mr. Taylor pulls Justin in for a hug and caresses his back,
rubbing his hand on his buttocks, pulls Justin's head to rest
onto his shoulder.

MR. TAYLOR (CONT'D)

You really have a dancers body now. You were so chubby. Legs like big hams, you were so fat. Here you are, a strong man. You love me don't you? Uhmm? Don't you love me even a little bit?

Justin nods his head in agreement. Mr Taylor turns Justin around and stands behind him, unbuckles Justin's belt.

MR. TAYLOR (CONT'D)

That makes me feel so good. I know you love me. We're going to spend time together. Going to be together Justin. We can help your students, mentor them, together. Make our own little family. You can be my secret helper. Just like before. You keep your studio, when you find a boy who can join our little family, I'll help them be a good dancer, like you. Don't worry, I won't ask you to do something. I know you don't like that.

Mr. Taylor pushes his groin against Justin.

MR. TAYLOR (CONT'D)

You can feel how much I love you. I care about you and love you, and you love me, and our love will keep us forever together.

SCENE 6 A CHILD'S PARENTS TALK

This scene can begin as Mr Taylor pulls away from Justin, and they resume their seats. Matt and Marilyn can be seated at the start and stand when appropriate.

MATT

I'm not against them taking dance classes.

MARILYN

Then you better explain what you mean, cause I'm getting tired of hearing this.

MATT

I'm just saying, maybe we should consider sports. At least for Frankie.

MARILYN

You've been trying to get the kids outta dance classes from the start.

MATT

No I haven't.

MARILYN

You never say what you think. You always got something sneaky going on.

MATT

That's not true.

MARILYN

It is true, and you know it. I'm telling you Matt, Robbie's enjoying dancing, and it gives him and Frankie something to do Saturdays and a lot of afternoons every week.

MATT

That's what I mean, it ain't normal for a 14 year old boy to be spending so much time dancing?

MARILYN

There. I knew it. You got some bug up your ass about this and I'm telling you right now I'm not putting up with it.

MATT

They should be playing sports, baseball or soccer even.

MARILYN

Oh yeah, who's going to be draggin' them to the practices? Huh? You gonna be super dad all of a sudden? You're always ok with adding to my day, but do you ever help out, lift a goddam finger?

MATT

I'm not talking about that. The boys should be doing something to help them prepare for the real world; team work, leadership kinda stuff.

MARILYN

Is that how you get ahead in this world? Like you ya mean? Always coming in late, and for what?

MATT

I'm trying. The new job is breaking my neck. We agreed when I took it that it was gonna be harder.

MARILYN

Which is why I'm saying why move the boys to something that's gonna eat up more time.

MATT

But-

MARILYN

Not to mention, Justin's not asking us to pay more for the extra classes.

MATT

The money's coming in. My pay'll go up once I prove myself a little more. Not everything's about the money.

MARILYN

Well, that's a tune I haven't heard before.

MATT

I want to make sure the boys are alright.

MARILYN

Why wouldn't they be alright?

MATT

I dunno know. You're sure they're alright?

MARILYN

Oh here you go. If you got something to say, just say it, cause I'm about ready to kick you out.

MATT

When Robbie and Frankie were over the other day I saw Frankie giving Robbie a massage.

MARILYN

There better be something more to it than that, cause I'm not sure whether you're plain stupid or a special kinda stupid.

MATT

He was massaging his butt.

MARILYN

So what? Matt, when you and the guys play baseball, you're slapping butts so much we girls call it a homo-run.

MATT

That's different.

MAR

Not from where I'm sitting.

MATT

It's in public.

MARILYN

Well, was Robbie and Frank hiding when they were doing that?

MATT

No, but, they were -

MARILYN

No, but you just gotta make a thing out of it, so you can get them outta dance and into baseball.

MATT

It was so friggin close.

MARILYN

I know what you're suggesting and I think it's disgusting you'd try and get me to think something just to get the boys into sports.

MATT

I'm just looking out for the boys.

MARILYN

The worst part of this is you're talking about Justin

MATT

I didn't-

MARILYN
He's our friend.

MATT
I'm not saying Justin.

MARILYN
Then what are you saying?

MATT
You know I'm just thinking what's
good for the boys. C'mon, you gotta
believe that.

MARILYN
What I know is you've never really
liked the boys at dancing class.

MATT
This isn't about that.

MARILYN
Then it better be about something
more than a massage - and it's not
really a massage, I don't like that
word - it's just a muscle rub.

MATT
Ok, fine, but you gotta believe me
when I tell you I got real
concerns.

MARILYN
I'll tell you what, I'll listen to
what you gotta say if you agree
that the boys can stay in Dance. No
more trying to get 'em into sports,
no hints, no little games, no more
bullshit.

MATT
Ok.

MARILYN
Agree to that and I'll listen.

MATT
I said ok. They can dance, ok?

MARILYN
I'm gonna hold you to that.

MATT
Now listen to what I got to say?

MARILYN

I'm always listening.

MATT

Ok. Good. So, Robbie's been taking these extra classes, right. With this older guy.

MARILYN

Mr. Taylor. Justin told me about that.

MATT

Right. So, after I catch Frank giving Robbie a massage, I had a little talk with Robbie.

MARILYN

(Sarcastic) I bet that went well.

MATT

Just shut up and give me a minute. I'm trying with the boys you know. I know it's tough on them, they don't like us being separated. It's tough on me too.

MARILYN

(Grudgingly) Ok. You were saying?

MATT

So, I was talking to Robbie. I asked him where he learned that massage - muscle rub stuff, and he tells me that this Mr. Taylor was teaching him that. So, then I asked him what else Mr. Taylor was teaching him. I was showing an interest, you know, trying to be interested in what he was interested in.

MARILYN

Oh yeah.

MATT

Anyway. So he starts telling me about his special classes. And he tells me he's dancing naked.

MARILYN

He didn't?

MATT

I swear. He says that he's supposed to be in training for not being shy or something, and I don't care what you think, this is not normal.

MARILYN

Ok, calm down. You got a point with this one. I've never heard of nothing like that from Justin.

MATT

See, I told you there was something.

MARILYN

Did he say anything else?

MATT

He was pretty excited, you know. And, he -

MARILYN

Excited like he likes his dance classes, or excited like he's nervous, cause you know how he can be.

MATT

Well, ok, like he's happy I'm taking an interest.

MARILYN

I'm not criticizing, I'm just asking.

MATT

Anyway, he asks if I want a massage too - muscle rub too.

MARILYN

You didn't get your kid to massage your butt.

MATT

This isn't a joke.

MARILYN

Relax.

MATT

This is serious.

MARILYN

Go on.

MATT

So, anyway, Robbie starts giving me a muscle rub. And he gets really focused you know. Well, he starts moving up my leg you know, like up my leg...

MARILYN

Oh my god.

MATT

Right. Like right up my leg...and boys aren't supposed to be comfortable doing this you, you know, with other guys.

MARILYN

Did you stop him?

MATT

I didn't know what was going on, but I wanted proof you know, like how could I be sure, know for a fact, till I know how far he'd go.

MARILYN

I'll tell you what's going on.

MATT

What?

MARILYN

If you ever, and I mean ever, have your son give you a massage again we're through.

MATT

What're you saying?

MARILYN

That's your problem. You don't hear so good. Let me say it more plain. If a little boy is taking something too far you - the adult - you, have the responsibility to guide him. He's learning new stuff, he's getting comfortable with his body; don't you see these are good things. You don't let him go too far.

MATT

But what about the touching?

MARILYN

Then you talk to Justin. Or come to me, but you don't let your son touch you. Are you a child? Do you really need to be told this?

MATT

I thought you wouldn't believe me.

MARILYN

Matt, we've got our troubles. I'm still here with you trying to work them out, but this is what I've been telling you for months, you don't communicate.

MATT

I'm trying.

MARILYN

I know you are, and I love you. But the boys aren't you, and this isn't 1998. Time's are changing and we gotta be open to opportunities for the boys.

MATT

I love you too.

MARILYN

I know you hate the separation, but we need time so we can put things back together again.

MATT

I hate living apart from you and the kids.

MARILYN

Let's try and find our way back to each other, but you gotta start listening. I'm not going to keep having one sided conversations.

MATT

What about Robbie?

MARILYN

If you're worried, talk to Justin, but I swear, if you ruin what he's doing for our kids.

MATT

He's a good guy.

MARILYN

He is. Just remember to listen to what he tells you.

SCENE 7 JUSTIN TALKS TO HIS STUDENTS

Justin is speaking directly to the audience as though they are a small group of dance students, ranging in age from about 12 to 15.

JUSTIN

I want to tell you how lucky you are to be chosen to work with Mr. Taylor. He was my teacher when I was your age, and I know what a great opportunity it is. You're really special. But, I expect you to work hard, because we need to work together. You're an important piece of a large team now. Mr. Taylor's going to be the leader of our team. I've heard some of you make comments - jokes about Mr. Taylor and his age. Of course he's older, so he's got a lot of experience and we should respect that. Making jokes about someone's age is the kind of thing kids at school do, right? We're better than the kids at school, am I right? Kids that don't dance, don't take care of their bodies, don't have respect. You're special because you have respect, respect for others and for yourselves. A positive and professional attitude, here, right now. You're my champions and I'm so proud of you. Mr. Taylor's an expert on attitude and body movement, he taught me, and you respect me right? You guys are smart. You know it's important to use your mind to control your body. Mr. Taylor'll bring your body and mind together; make you the perfect dancer. Some of his techniques will be...a little old fashioned, that's ok. Trust him, he's a real expert. Mr. Taylor and I've talked about each one of you.

(MORE)

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

He knows a lot about each of you, and he's made a training plan that's just for you. Some of you've had problems, I know; being teased at school; problems at home. I know. But from today, I'm here for you; I'll be here for you forever. If you want to talk in the middle of the night, or ten years from now, I'll be right here. I'll be your friend, your family. Together right? Being together with someone makes us stronger. I'll be with you forever. We can be stronger together. I want to stay your friend, forever, We can stay forever together. Like a family. I love you so much.

SCENE 8 JUSTIN TALKS TO A DAD

Justin continues looking at the audience and is aware of Matt approaching. Justin speaks while still observing the audience. He can stand when appropriate.

JUSTIN

Hey Matt. Long time.

MATT

I was just in the neighbourhood.

JUSTIN

Marilyn with you?

MATT

No...she's....we..?

JUSTIN

Not divorce? Oh man, I'm sorry I've kinda lost touch with you guys since I did that internship.

MATT

Not divorce, separation. We're working on it...I'm over there alot...

JUSTIN

If there's anything I can do.

MATT

Yeah.

JUSTIN

We should grab a coffee sometime.
Today I've got classes all day, but
another time?

MATT

Justin, this is kinda awkward....

JUSTIN

What's going on?

MATT

It's about Robbie.

JUSTIN

I was afraid of this.

MATT

You were?

JUSTIN

You're thinking of pulling him out
of class. Matt, he shows real
promise...if it's about money...

MATT

No...it's... well, it's these
special classes he's taking. With
the old guy.

JUSTIN

Mr. Taylor?

MATT

Robbie was telling me stuff, and,
well, I don't know this dance stuff
you know, and...how well do you
know this Taylor guy?

JUSTIN

What did Robbie say?

MATT

Nothing specific. And he really
likes the classes, so if I'm wrong,
you know, no harm no foul.

JUSTIN

Matt, as a parent if you have any
concern it's important that we
address this right away. What
exactly did Robbie say?

MATT

Well...he dances in the nude....privately...just him and the old guy? Like, what is that? Jesus.

JUSTIN

Ok. Was there anything else? Did Robbie say anything about touching? Did you check him for bruises, like he's being held down?

MATT

Oh my god, no, nothing. He's in great shape actually.

JUSTIN

Good muscle tone?

MATT

Great muscle tone. The kid's really filling out.

JUSTIN

Dancer's are fit. Is there anything else. Tell me anything that's bothering you.

MATT

Well, I saw him teaching Frankie how to give a massage.

JUSTIN

Ok, for the younger kids, Franks age, we teach stretching, for the older kids we teach massage, you know, targeting specific muscle groups. But, you're talking about something else?

MATT

Robbie was teaching him to massage his butt. Like, really...

JUSTIN

Intimate?

MATT

Intimate. Real intimate.

JUSTIN

Did you say anything?

MATT

I asked Robbie what he was doing, and he got super excited, talking about this Taylor guy, and he wanted to show me what he's learning, you know, massage and he was just not shy about where he was touching and, like, he's right up my leg - he's my kid for crissakes, I don't know Justin...he was talking about the Taylor guy, and being special, and dancing naked. Jesus man, it freaked me out.

JUSTIN

We need to get to the bottom of this.

MATT

It feels so freaky. I mean, I didn't want the boys to be in dance in the first place. No offense, but first Robbie, now you got Frank here too right?

JUSTIN

You've talked to Marilyn about this, of course.

MATT

She thinks I'm trying to get the kids to play baseball.

JUSTIN

You have real concerns here Matt

MATT

I'm glad you're saying that. I mean I only see the boys weekends - I feel like I'm losing touch with them.

JUSTIN

How do Robbie and Frank feel; about dance class?

MATT

They like it. Especially Robbie.

JUSTIN

So Marilyn doesn't see what you see, regarding Robbie and your concerns.

MATT

She doesn't see anything, she's happy they're active; we both are.

JUSTIN

Look, it doesn't matter if other people believe you or not. I might be able to explain some things, but if you feel uncomfortable about anything, come to me right away - no secrets. The boys safety comes first, am I right?

MATT

Right, yeah, for sure.

JUSTIN

Ok, first off, I'm required by law to report this to the police. Any allegation of sexual assault. I'm happy to do that if that's what you're doing, reporting a sexual assault?

MATT

The police... Sexual assault? I mean, they're not girls, right, this isn't rape...I mean, what happens if the police get involved?

JUSTIN

Their first priority's protecting the boys - which is what we want, right?

MATT

Right, yeah.

JUSTIN

So, they'll look at the boys life, make sure they aren't in any danger. They'll investigate Mr. Taylor - fully - look at the videos he takes of all his classes, see if what you're saying makes sense.

MATT

He records all his classes?

JUSTIN

Working with kids nowadays? Anyone'd be a fool not to make recordings. 99.99% of all my classes are recorded.

(MORE)

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

Parents are more than welcome to look through them, any time.

MATT

That's standard?

JUSTIN

Whenever you want to watch hours of 12 year olds' popping 'n locking let me know.

MATT

Yeah, I could find better things to do.

JUSTIN

I get you. The police'll check the boys teachers, neighbours...Make sure everything's good at home. Once we start talking sexual abuse they'll be thorough, and that's a good thing right?

MATT

Yeah...thorough....since the separation I've been living in this crappy apartment...we need to save money, running two households. Till we get back together. My neighbourhood is...Christ I live in a shit hole, I don't even let Robbie go to the corner store.

JUSTIN

Marilyn'll be relieved your showing concern for the boys by getting the police involved.

MATT

Yeah...I don't know....sometimes when they stay with me I get home late....the kids are alone...Marilyn doesn't know that.

JUSTIN

That's tough. You guys seem like a forever couple.

MATT

It's funny, I thought you knew what was going on with Marilyn and me.

JUSTIN

If I'd known I would have tried to help.

MATT

Those extra classes gave us a little more free-time - and no extra charge - being separated really costs, you know, I thought we were going to lose the house.

JUSTIN

Robbie's got real potential, so when my former teacher offered special mentoring, well, sometimes things just work out, am I right?

MATT

He was your teacher.

JUSTIN

Exactly right. I started with him when I was thirteen. And boy do I remember those nude-suits.

MATT

Nude-suit? Robbie didn't say nude-suit, he said naked.

JUSTIN

You and Marilyn don't talk everyday?

MATT

No....we talked last weekend....have you talked to Marilyn?

JUSTIN

She called me ... Sunday night?

MATT

After I left I guess.

JUSTIN

Matt, if you got a concern for the boys safety, call me right away.

MATT

Ok.

JUSTIN

You have to be ok - if you've got concerns, then we get the police to investigate, ok?

MATT

If we can avoid making a big thing out of this.

JUSTIN

You're in charge here. That clear?

MATT

I get it, yeah.

JUSTIN

So, a nude suit's a full-body leotard it's pale beige....if a kid has the right colouring they look naked...

MATT

I've never seen kids in your classes use those.

JUSTIN

Right, you've never **seen** me use it...privacy for the kid...kids can be self-conscious about their bodies, so, we use the suit to get kids - boys - comfortable with their whole body...in preparation for more professional, public performances.

MATT

Professional performances? Are you talking money?

JUSTIN

The local opera company, ballets, touring musicals, lots of opportunities for kids who can dance.

MATT

Robbie could make money by dancing?

JUSTIN

No promises. But, well, Mr. Taylor's trying to move Robbie to the next level, and I bet you're seeing other changes in Robbie too, am I right?

MATT

He's gotten a lot more quiet.

JUSTIN

Exactly right. The artists temperament. A little more withdrawn? Spends a little more time alone? Seems emotional?

MATT

Marilyn and I thought it was because of us, from the separation.

JUSTIN

C'mon Matt, give yourself a break, not everything's your fault. You and Marilyn focus on yourselves get back on track, and if you ever need a weekend break or anything, I'd be happy to step in, spend time with the boys.

MATT

You're really a good friend....I don't know how to thank you.

JUSTIN

Well, since Robbie's already taught you, I never say no to a massage as long as you don't get too close to my junk yard.

MATT

(Laughing). Geez, you're sick.

JUSTIN

Oh yeah, and you know what the cops'd think if they find out your kid gives you a massage that rubs your little super man? You wouldn't be named dad of the year that's for sure.

MATT

Oh man, I never thought of that.

JUSTIN

You're a great dad Matt, but from the outside, things can look a little....

MATT

I get it. We don't need the police. You know Mr. Taylor, Robbie's getting good training, it'd just waste everybody's time.

JUSTIN

As long as you're sure. I have an obligation to report any allegations I hear, so...?

MATT

You're not hearing anything from me.

JUSTIN

Your call, buddy.

MATT

Marilyn'd flip out.

JUSTIN

Police looking at your home life adds stress you guys don't need, am I right?

MATT

You've always been a good friend to my family.

JUSTIN

If there's anything I can do. And I'm serious about the offer to babysit one weekend.

MATT

You'd do that for us?

JUSTIN

Friends forever. Am I right?

SCENE 9 JUSTIN TALKS TO ROBBIE

Justin resumes his position talking to the audience. He is soft and gentle and talking to one child.

JUSTIN

Robbie you haven't done anything wrong, you're a very special guy. Your dad was just asking about your training, he was a little confused. I talked to him, he understands now. He's so proud of you.

(MORE)

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

Do you think your parents might get back together because of your hard work with Mr. Taylor? Your mom is happier isn't she? Maybe because you're doing such great work? You're dad told me how proud he is of you. Everyone's so proud of what you're doing. Mr. Taylor told me that you're the best boy he's ever worked with. The best ever, that's what he said. Your parents see that, don't you think. Maybe that's why they sent you and Frank to stay with me this weekend? Mr. Taylor was really happy to get a chance to spend time with Frank, too. He thinks Frank's special, not as special as you, so, maybe you can help Frank understand the training. Why it's so good. You like it don't you? I know Mr. Taylor loves you so much, I love you, too. Maybe you can mentor Frank a little bit, you know, the same way Mr. Taylor mentors you. Just a little though. When you're together. I love you so much. Do you love me?

SCENE 10. JUSTIN HELPS THE POLICE

Spinner and Mori begin the scene, and Justin stands and joins them.

Throughout the scene Det. Mori is observing Justin. He is aware of her, but uncertain as to her role.

DETECTIVE SPINNER (O.S.)

We're going to use an interrogation room. That's ok?

Spinner put Justin's chair at Centre Stage.

DETECTIVE SPINNER (CONT'D)

Just take a seat there, Mr. Belmar

JUSTIN

Please, call me Justin

DETECTIVE SPINNER

It's ok I'm going to record this, I hope. For our records. Taking notes sometimes slows us down, you know. We want to be accurate.

(MORE)

DETECTIVE SPINNER (CONT'D)

Your offer of information is appreciated, we don't want to get anything wrong.

JUSTIN

Whatever I can do. It's a little bizarre with the camera. I'm having a little Princess Diana moment

DETECTIVE SPINNER

That's funny. You're a funny guy. You'll get used to it, I mean, I hope you don't mind, it's not a problem right?

JUSTIN

No, no not at all. Anything that'll help.

DETECTIVE SPINNER

(to Detective Mori) Isn't that a great attitude? Nice if everybody had that attitude, right. (To Justin) Ok, then, so, just for the record, you know, you're here to offer help about the investigation into Mr. Samuel Taylor, is that right?

JUSTIN

That's right.

DETECTIVE SPINNER

Our investigation into the sexual abuse of minors.

JUSTIN

Um huh, yes. That's what it's saying in the papers.

DETECTIVE SPINNER

Good. So, Detective Mori and I are all ears Justin. Whenever you're ready.

JUSTIN

I heard Mr. Taylor was arrested - men saying he molested them or something - from years ago?

DETECTIVE SPINNER

That's what's in the papers

JUSTIN

I was his student back then, and, well, I don't know everything, of course, but as soon as I heard, well, I thought, I should call you and offer my help.

DETECTIVE SPINNER

You run a dance school is that right? Same as Mr. Taylor.

JUSTIN

Yes. I have a studio. I teach kids, and I do choreography for solo artists. Mr. Taylor's strictly a dance teacher. I thought I might have some insight. I do know that the dance world can be...unusual when looked at from the outside.

DETECTIVE SPINNER

Unusual, yeah.

JUSTIN

I know, everyone thinks all male dancers are gay.

DETECTIVE SPINNER

Men who sexually engage children are statistically not homosexual, Justin. Do you have personal knowledge of Mr. Taylor being ...having a boyfriend?

JUSTIN

What? No. I mean, I assume he's married....to a woman.

DETECTIVE SPINNER

(Smiles at Justin) Well, some men are.

JUSTIN

(Smiles at Det. Spinner) Yes some are. But not all....

DETECTIVE SPINNER

Right, not all. (pause) Let's get back to the information that brought you here. You've got an "insiders perspective" sort of view?

JUSTIN

Exactly. A professional perspective. Some dance movements can seem...overly familiar to the uninitiated.

Justin uses his hands to explain the movement.

DETECTIVE SPINNER

Oh yeah, I get that. You're saying context right, like touching in one context is ok, and someplace else it's not ok?

JUSTIN

Exactly, exactly right. What's important is that it isn't personal touching, it's professional touching.

DETECTIVE SPINNER

Mr. Taylor's touching? No personal touching? When you were a student with him I mean.

JUSTIN

Of course not. I mean, I don't think so. That's what he's accused of isn't it. I just wanted to give you some perspective. From the world of dance. That's why I'm here.

DETECTIVE SPINNER

Dance with kids. Yeah, we appreciate that. Professional touching only.....would you like a coffee, a soda or something?

JUSTIN

What? No. Thank you. I don't drink coffee or sugary drinks. I take care of my body. When I was a child, at Mr. Taylor's, I was fat. Baby fat as it turns out.

DETECTIVE SPINNER

Must have been tough for a dancer.

JUSTIN

Mr. Taylor was kind to me, about it. The other boys were so fit, much more suitable to dance. I keep a strict diet now.

DETECTIVE SPINNER

You're a better guy than me, my wife's always telling me I should be careful like you, you look like you're in shape.

JUSTIN

It takes constant will power detective. Mr. Taylor used to call me 'potato', he was trying to be funny of course, to encourage me, the other boys would laugh. It was all in good fun.

DETECTIVE SPINNER

So, Mr. Taylor's a funny guy. Like you too, you're a funny guy, too right. Those kids, then, any of them dancers like you?

JUSTIN

Those boys are the men making the accusations now. The victims. I recognize many of them from the newspaper.

DETECTIVE SPINNER

You remember them from when you were a kid? The men making the accusations?

JUSTIN

You mean the victims? That's what the newspapers are calling them. It was so long ago. We were just children. I'm really sorry for what happened to them, or what "allegedly" happened to them, that's the right thing to say isn't it? Allegedly?

DETECTIVE MORI

Do you want a lawyer?

JUSTIN

What? No. Why would you say that? I'm here offering you my advice. I called you.

DETECTIVE SPINNER

Hey Mori, Justin's offering us help, a professional perspective, show a little respect. Sorry for that...interrupting you.

JUSTIN

That's fine. Not all police officers are created equal, apparently.

DETECTIVE SPINNER

(To Mori) Justin's sure got your number, Mori. (To Justin) We've got to ask that - if you want a lawyer. I should've mentioned it when we started, but you don't want one, right, so... What'd you think when you first heard that Mr. Taylor'd been arrested?

Det. Mori moves to Mr. Taylor and observes him.

JUSTIN

I was shocked, naturally. I mean I know him, well, knew him. I had his name on my web page as an early influence. Removed now of course.

DETECTIVE SPINNER

Worried about how it looked.

JUSTIN

Exactly. I'm not saying I think he's guilty, "innocent until proven", right? But, dance is such a small world. Luckily my classes haven't been affected.

DETECTIVE SPINNER

No one's been accusing you of anything have they?

JUSTIN

A few imbeciles have whispered...all my intelligent parents are reacting like mature adults....a student or two has missed a class.

DETECTIVE SPINNER

Overreacting, right?

JUSTIN

That's why I thought I should offer my help. I saw that reference to a suspected "accomplice" - what does that even mean?

(MORE)

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

I was 13 years old at the time....the other boys were older than me. If anyone could claim innocence it's me, isn't it.

DETECTIVE SPINNER

I didn't see your name mentioned in the papers. Why would parents pull their kids from your class.

JUSTIN

Exactly. It's utterly ludicrous. Mr. Taylor knew I was keen on dancing, but because of my being fat - he made allowances, he'd let me help out around the studio.

DETECTIVE SPINNER

Like clean up or something?

JUSTIN

I'd clean up after classes, put things away, do small errands. That's what makes me suspicious about the accusations the boys...the victims, are making.

DETECTIVE SPINNER

Your 'insiders perspective', right.

JUSTIN

Exactly. I was there and I never saw anything those boys are talking about.

DETECTIVE SPINNER

He was good to you?

JUSTIN

He was good to everyone. Always helping boys free of charge. I can remember many, many times him going over a rehearsal tape with a boy in his office. Giving advice. Boosting his confidence.

DETECTIVE SPINNER

He'd encourage them?

JUSTIN

Exactly right, he'd encourage them. I'd often hear him telling the boys what they could become, offering private lessons to help them improve.

DETECTIVE SPINNER

You'd listen.

JUSTIN

I'd be vacuuming, or putting on a piece of music, but when there was a pause in the noise I'd hear plain as day, and I can tell you, he's a decent man.

DETECTIVE SPINNER

You could hear everything?

JUSTIN

That's what I'm saying, and that's why I'm surprised about what the boys are saying. After all his help not one ever showed an ounce of gratitude. Just sullen and rude.

DETECTIVE SPINNER

No gratitude.

Detective Mori makes a decision and turns towards Justin.

JUSTIN

If he had taken that kind of time with me I would have been very grateful. A private tutor in dance - that's not something money can buy. It's priceless and should be appreciated.

DETECTIVE MORI

You mentor students?

JUSTIN

Excuse me?

DETECTIVE MORI

Do you mentor your students?

JUSTIN

No. I mean, yes, of course. All teachers do. But -

DETECTIVE MORI
 Matisse Geoffreys? 14. Your
 student for 2 years. You mentor
 him?

JUSTIN
 Matisse?

DETECTIVE MORI
 You mentor him in your office and
 at your home.

JUSTIN
 (To Detective Spinner) What is she
 talking about? (To Detective Mori)
 Matisse? I'm here to talk about Mr
 Taylor.

DETECTIVE MORI
 Matisse Geoffreys? 14. Aiden
 Sloane? 14. Amir Batik? 13. Robbie
 Kettel? 15.

JUSTIN
 (To Detective Spinner) Why is she
 saying those names? Explain to her -
 (To Detective Mori) I'm here
 voluntarily. I'm here to help. I'm
 giving information about Mr.
 Taylor.

DETECTIVE SPINNER
 Those names, see, we got'em from
 Mr. Taylor. You and Mr. Taylor, you
 mentor together?

JUSTIN
 What - I'd like a lawyer, now
 please.

SCENE 11. JUSTIN TALKS TO A REPORTER

Det. Spinner resume her seats, while Det. Mori remains
 standing watching the next scene. Angie initially speaks from
 her seat, then movement takes place as needed.

ANGIE
 Mr Belmar, I'm Angie Wu.

JUSTIN
 I'm not sure why I'm meeting you Ms
 Wu.

ANGIE

The only information anyone has about you comes from the prosecution. Your lawyer contacted me because it's time for your voice to be heard.

JUSTIN

I have faith in the justice system and no interest in being tried in the media.

ANGIE

Very commendable, however, the media isn't your jury.

JUSTIN

I don't see your point.

ANGIE

Potential jurors only know one thing right now; you are a pedophile.

JUSTIN

Editorials are calling for me to be castrated.

ANGIE

Should you be?

JUSTIN

What kind of thing is-

ANGIE

It's the question everyone's asking because no one's heard anything else. The rumours are you're not speaking because you're the mastermind of an international pedophile ring; you traffic in children from Tokyo to Tunis?

JUSTIN

That's ridiculous.

ANGIE

How would anyone know? The airwaves need to be filled with something, and if you're not talking, people are happy to talk about you.

JUSTIN

They'll hear from me; at trial.

ANGIE

Trials are about facts, not truth. You use facts to show you're innocent, the prosecution uses them to show you're guilty. It's a game to see who's better at manipulation.

JUSTIN

A newspaper story's going to report truth?

ANGIE

Not a single story, a series of stories. Three stories, showing who you are. This is the only platform you have to speak directly to people; your alleged victims, their families, potential jurors

JUSTIN

Not alleged.

ANGIE

What?

JUSTIN

Not "alleged victims". Victims. I did things that were wrong and I need to be punished.

ANGIE

At Mr. Taylor's trial the video shows you clearly involved in what happened to some of the boys.

JUSTIN

How are the boys?

ANGIE

The boys?

JUSTIN

The boys who had to testify at Mr. Taylor's trial.

ANGIE

Why are you asking?

JUSTIN

It must have been horrible for them.

ANGIE

I imagine it was.

JUSTIN

Mr. Taylor's very persuasive. He had a hold over those boys; why didn't they complain to anyone.

ANGIE

Mr. Taylor's defense said you were the persuasive one.

JUSTIN

I have no defense to that.

ANGIE

You're saying your guilty?

JUSTIN

When I first met Mr. Taylor, I was ecstatic to have found someone, a father figure; finally someone, who was interested in me.

ANGIE

You were 15 when you first met him?

JUSTIN

13. I was 13 when my mother dropped me off at his school for the first time.

ANGIE

You had an early interest in dance.

JUSTIN

My mother, I think, she knew Mr. Taylor. She believed he would be a good role model.

ANGIE

Mr. Taylor and your mother were friends?

JUSTIN

Well, a small town...everyone sees what's behind pulled down blinds, am I right?

ANGIE

Are you still in contact with your mother?

JUSTIN

She passed. When I was fifteen.
There, then, not there.

ANGIE

I can't find any record of her,
marriage, death...her drivers
license expired years ago.

JUSTIN

She never talked about herself. She
was, uhm, often distracted.

ANGIE

What did you do after she died?

JUSTIN

I...

ANGIE

Justin, at what age did Mr. Taylor
begin molesting you?

JUSTIN

My mother...

ANGIE

Your mother knew?

JUSTIN

(Defensively) I was never.....why
do you think I was...?

ANGIE

I've written a lot about survivors
of abuse, and you show a lot of
compassion for the victims; abusers
usually don't. You understand what
they're going through.

JUSTIN

Exactly right. I do understand it.

ANGIE

Mr. Taylor. He touched you?

JUSTIN

Not the first...

ANGIE

Take your time, there's -
(realizing) not the first? He
wasn't the first adult to touch
you?

JUSTIN

There're really no such things as secrets are there.

ANGIE

Like you said, no secrets behind the blinds.

JUSTIN

I've never talked about this before.

ANGIE

So many people will benefit hearing this from you.

JUSTIN

Just be kind to her. She was lonely.

ANGIE

She?

JUSTIN

My mother.

ANGIE

Because she knew?

JUSTIN

She had friends. Men friends. It was a different time. People didn't jump to conclusions like they do now. When her men friends tucked me in at night.

ANGIE

She let men into your room.

JUSTIN

My father. I don't think even she knew who that was, she drank. I look back now, and I think, did she know....the day she dropped me off at Mr. Taylor's. They shared a look. I don't know, but...

ANGIE

Were they lovers? Your mother and Mr. Taylor?

JUSTIN

No. I mean, I don't know, I never thought of that before.

(MORE)

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

That might make sense why it was so easy for her to give me to him... once a week, twice, more.

ANGIE

She knowingly gave you to Mr. Taylor to be abused?

JUSTIN

It's the "why", I don't understand. I was just a kid. Children never know what their parents are really like. I've had time since being trapped in here; wondering why I let Mr. Taylor make me do those things on the tape, with those boys. I'm not saying I'm not responsible, I'm not avoiding anything. I want to be clear about that. I don't blame anyone but myself. It's important to put blame where blame is due. Take responsibility, too many people avoid responsibility.

ANGIE

Your story's going to shine a light on under-reported abuse. This directly attacks the systems failure of our children. What you're doing is courageous.

Justin takes Angie's hand and squeezes it.

JUSTIN

Thank you for that. I try every day to be strong. It's important to be strong. That's why I hate myself for what I was like so long ago. I was weak, and Mr. Taylor saw the weakness and just howled inside himself - another victim, what a lucky day for him. Probably saw it in my mother as well. Knew he could manipulate her, get her to deliver me to him.

ANGIE

Mr. Taylor arranged with your mother to abuse you?

JUSTIN

Children don't question their parents.

(MORE)

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

Her friends were tucking me in, maybe Mr. Taylor heard about a child, an available child, available to be tucked in while his mother sat in the living room and drank her vodka 'n rocks. Vodka 'n rocks - every night just one more vodka 'n rocks, just one more before bed.

ANGIE

Why did your mother do that? Let the men into your room? Gave you to Mr. Taylor?

JUSTIN

Children don't know the "why" of adults; they're innocent victims because they trust. I don't even know if it's true, I've spent my life running away from trust; I don't know what's true anymore. I remember, men did give her presents.

ANGIE

Money.

JUSTIN

Not money. Gifts. Sometimes jewelry. One day I remember new tires in the garage. Four brand new tires just sitting there in the garage.

ANGIE

Tires?

JUSTIN

Tires to touch a child. New steel belted radials in exchange for your sons innocence...She never even put them on the car. I donated them to a women's shelter after she died.

ANGIE

This is difficult for you. Do you need to take a break?

JUSTIN

No. I...I feel lighter telling you, anyone, for the first time.

ANGIE

You're a victim yourself.

JUSTIN

Don't say that. If I call myself a victim I'm hiding the guilt for what I've done to others. I know what Mr. Taylor did to me as a child, and I know, truly know, what I helped him do to those children today. I want to stop the cycle of abuse, if I don't, then those children will grow up and be abusers. I need to take responsibility for what I've done to finally put a stop to the abuse caused by Mr. Taylor.

ANGIE

You're right, you're not a victim; you're a hero, and this story is going to let people finally hear the truth, the truth about you.

Angie Wu resumes her seat.

SCENE 11. DETECTIVE MORI WANTS TO LISTEN

DETECTIVE MORI

You enjoying your stay with us?

JUSTIN

I asked to speak with Detective Spinner.

DETECTIVE MORI

(Amused) You think your girlfriend's gonna save you?

JUSTIN

I'm not stupid.

DETECTIVE MORI

I believe you.

JUSTIN

I have information about Mr. Taylor that could help you.

DETECTIVE MORI

Have you talked to your lawyer Justin?

JUSTIN
He's waiting outside.....

Detective Mori chuckles.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)
Why is that funny?

DETECTIVE MORI
He's sitting outside working on
another case, all while he's
billing you....I shoulda been a
lawyer.

Justin contemplates what he will say.

JUSTIN
I never touched the boys.

DETECTIVE MORI
Oh gee, sorry for the
misunderstanding, we'll get someone
to drive you home, right away, Mr.
Belmar.

JUSTIN
You're mean.

DETECTIVE MORI
I'm not interested in the way you
play with people.

JUSTIN
I never touched those kids.

DETECTIVE MORI
Partially true.

JUSTIN
(Suspicious) What part's true?

DETECTIVE MORI
You touched the kids. The video's
pretty clear. But it's not your
thing.

Justin begins to see Detective Mori as someone to trust.

JUSTIN
That's right. You see that.

DETECTIVE MORI
You're not a pedophile.

JUSTIN

I'm not. We can talk to the judge,
get a mistrial....

DETECTIVE MORI

We?

JUSTIN

I thought Detective Spinner was
understanding, but now I see,
you're the one who can help me.

DETECTIVE MORI

Oh.

JUSTIN

People have been using me my whole
life. I need people I can trust.
People like you.

DETECTIVE MORI

Justin. Thank you.

Justin grabs Detective Mori's hand. Justin leans in closer to
Detective Mori. Mori doesn't back away.

JUSTIN

Society works if people work
together. We can work together. We
can be a team. We can be better
together, forever.

DETECTIVE MORI

You're good.

JUSTIN

(Growing suspicious) I don't
understand.

DETECTIVE MORI

Pedophiles are sexually attracted
to children. You're not sexually
attracted to children.

JUSTIN

Mr. Taylor forced me, threatened me
if I didn't do what he said.

DETECTIVE MORI

You don't like sex.

JUSTIN

What?

DETECTIVE MORI
You have no interest in sex.

Justin considers how to reply.

JUSTIN
My mother had men friends when I was a child. Men who were always kind and generous to her, but always wanted to tuck me in at night. She'd use me to find men; trade me so she could get some comfort. It never lasted. She hated that they were more interested in me than her. I've been victimized my whole life.

Detective Mori begins to laugh during the above speech and cuts Justin off.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)
That isn't funny.

DETECTIVE MORI
You're convincing.

Justin considers Detective Mori.

JUSTIN
Why're you here?

DETECTIVE MORI
Why did you do it?

JUSTIN
What?

DETECTIVE MORI
Trial's over. Sentencing's tomorrow, you'll get a lowball sentence - six years maybe - your lawyer did a good job tearing those kids apart, and that series in the paper - even I felt sorry for you.

JUSTIN
I'll be appealing. I was just a child when Mr. Taylor began grooming me as his accomplice. I was repeatedly raped as a child by my mothers men friends. I was taught my behaviour.

(MORE)

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

(Begins crying) I always knew it was wrong, I just wanted love, I was so lonely.

Detective Mori laughs.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

Stop that. (Yells loudly and sharply) Stop laughing at me.

DETECTIVE MORI

Your mother lives about 35 miles from here. Works at a dry cleaners. Married to a nice fellow, drives a delivery truck, so I guess you have a new daddy.

JUSTIN

You found her?

DETECTIVE MORI

You're not real clear on what a detective is are you. I'm not a reporter - I found her. She hasn't seen you since you were fifteen.

JUSTIN

She abandoned me.

DETECTIVE MORI

First time I ever heard of a parent kicking themselves out of their own house.

JUSTIN

She gave the house to me.

DETECTIVE MORI

She says it wasn't her boyfriends that were tucking you in at night; it was her. She admits she was pretty drunk the first time, but then it sort of became a habit.

JUSTIN

I was abused.

DETECTIVE MORI

Around the time you got cozy with Mr. Taylor you threatened to report her, unless she left.

JUSTIN

I begged her to stop. You should arrest her.

DETECTIVE MORI

She's afraid of you. Figures you're wiring's screwed up somewhere - calls you "a dangerous freak".

JUSTIN

Why am I talking to you?

DETECTIVE MORI

Why are you talking to me?

JUSTIN

Can help with my appeal? My lawyer says I have a good chance.

DETECTIVE MORI

Your lawyer.

JUSTIN

What about him?

DETECTIVE MORI

I'm not as smart as you, but here's my prediction for the future. Pretty soon he's gonna bring up his bill, have some papers ready to sign so the money can be transferred

JUSTIN

Why do you say that?

DETECTIVE MORI

Oh...done already?

JUSTIN

He said it's routine.

DETECTIVE MORI

He's good. In a couple of weeks he'll send you a letter telling you to get another lawyer for your appeal cause he'll be too busy.

JUSTIN

He wouldn't do that.

DETECTIVE MORI

Yeah, lawyers are famous for ethical behavior.

(MORE)

DETECTIVE MORI (CONT'D)

Around the same time your gonna get served papers on a civil suit.

JUSTIN

A civil suit?

DETECTIVE MORI

Word is a group of parents have gotten together to file a civil suit against you. Your assets'll be frozen.

JUSTIN

Why would parents do that -

DETECTIVE MORI

Cause they trust you and you're their friend.

JUSTIN

I'm a victim.

DETECTIVE MORI

Well, victim, you'll be happy to know you can add arson to your Victim Resume.

JUSTIN

What?

DETECTIVE MORI

Your house burned down last night.

JUSTIN

My house?

DETECTIVE MORI

Funny thing, Matt Kettel was picked up in the area smelling like gasoline.

JUSTIN

Matt wouldn't do that.

DETECTIVE MORI

That's what Marilyn his wife, said - tough lady, by the way, I like her. Hubby spills gas while trying to fix the mower and Marilyn gives him a solid alibi.

JUSTIN

Marilyn and Matt are friends. I look after their kids.

DETECTIVE MORI

People can be funny. The other thing that's gonna happen is that someone you met since you got arrested - someone you probably felt like you trusted; maybe that reporter who wrote that very sympathetic article about you; but more'n likely it'll be Detective Spinner - she's got a literary bent - Anyway, whoever'll approach you and tell you they think you got a raw deal, want to write a book about your case. They're gonna tell you about justice, you're rights, unfairness of the system.

JUSTIN

I'm going to appeal.

DETECTIVE MORI

Good for you.

JUSTIN

You're enjoying this. You're enjoying bringing me bad news, you're trying to make me lose hope. I'm going to appeal and people are going to believe me and I'm going to make a new life. I'm not going to lose hope, I'm going to show people that I was coerced by Mr. Taylor. And by my mother. I am a victim of abuse.

Pause

DETECTIVE MORI

Your life is over.

JUSTIN

(Angry) Why are you here? To hurt me? Easy pickings detective; I'm in prison and everyone's attacking me, so you thought you'd come by and indulge your cruel side a little?

DETECTIVE MORI

I want to make a deal.

JUSTIN

A deal? You ridicule me, then say you want to make a deal? What've you got to offer me?

(MORE)

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

You keep saying I'll have nothing, so what can you offer me? My freedom?

DETECTIVE MORI

No one cares about you Justin. You asked what I've got to offer. I can offer you the one thing you can't get anywhere else.

JUSTIN

What're you talking about?

DETECTIVE MORI

You lie. To everyone. People believe you, you're persuasive.

JUSTIN

I don't know what your talking about.

DETECTIVE MORI

I've watched you. People want to believe you, even now, the parents, it's like they are all hoping you're not really guilty - like if it was just Mr. Taylor then they could still be your friend.

JUSTIN

I am a victim.

DETECTIVE MORI

The thing is, no one, and I mean no one, will ever know how good you are. Your talent, your skill...it'll never be shared, always something you do alone.

JUSTIN

I don't know what you're talking about.

DETECTIVE MORI

I've seen lots of scum bags, guys who like infants, guys pimping out a little sister. No matter how smooth these sickos are, and they are always smooth, no one is as a good as you.

JUSTIN

I'm not deceiving anyone about anything.

DETECTIVE MORI

Other guys always fuck-up because emotion clouds their judgement. You have control.

JUSTIN

You like watching me?

DETECTIVE MORI

(Laughing) Don't play me, Justin.

JUSTIN

So what are you saying?

DETECTIVE MORI

I'm saying I'm the only audience you'll ever have for your show. I hate what you do, but it's exciting seeing how you do it. You're going to jail, get out on parole first time around - maybe three years. None of that matters to me. My job is done, and I'm good at my job, people say excellent. Most people are not excellent at anything. I appreciate people who are excellent. On my desk I got a new case file on some high school teacher who's screwing her fifteen year old student. She thinks she's being careful, and he's sharing pics of her spread eagle on his Star wars sheets.

JUSTIN

People can be careless.

DETECTIVE MORI

You know it.

JUSTIN

Married?

DETECTIVE MORI

I was. Now, I work.

JUSTIN

Married to your job.

DETECTIVE MORI

I'm not a cliché, but you know that.

JUSTIN

Birds of a feather?

DETECTIVE MORI

People are puzzles; most are simple, boring. Sex crimes, there's real work. Complex. A lot of cops don't like working sex crimes.

JUSTIN

You don't mind?

DETECTIVE MORI

People are afraid of looking at things in case they see a reflection of themselves. They see a fourteen year old fucked by their football coach and then go home and try out something new in bed....scare their partner, scare themselves. They're afraid of the dark and nasty that lives in their mind.

JUSTIN

You're not afraid of what's inside you.

DETECTIVE MORI

Never.

JUSTIN

Sex is weakness. (pause). A guy wants to have sex, but if he shows it too much then that makes him immature. Guys fantasize about being powerful, then feel bad if they don't feel love. "I want to cum on your face, but tell me you love me." (pause). Mr. Taylor used to make the boys say they loved him. (laugh). Can you believe that? He rapes a kid then needs to be told he was loved. (pause). The first time I had sex with my mother, she was drunk; and weak. I knew immediately, I could get anything I wanted. I was smart, and I was patient. She was easy.

DETECTIVE MORI

Mr. Taylor? That was planned?

JUSTIN

You said it: they think they're covering their tracks. I'd heard rumours that Mr. Taylor'd blow you if you he liked you; give you money. He was surprised when I came to his classes, I mean I was fat right. I made myself useful, helping out - he thought I was just in the way till one day a parent arrived unexpectedly. I made a lot of noise. Gave him time to stop whatever. He was grateful. People believe what they want. I took my time, he started to trust me. I even helped sell some of the kids on why this was good for them. I got Mr. Taylor to target a couple jerks at school just to see how much I could get away with. He sent their parents coupons for free dance lessons, the kids showed up. (laugh).

DETECTIVE MORI

Mr. Taylor ever suspect you were playing him?

JUSTIN

After I came back from college, I guess. Why else would he have made that tape of me with the kids.

DETECTIVE MORI

Good point.

JUSTIN

He must've covered the red light on the camera with tape. Simple.

DETECTIVE MORI

Simple works. Why did you go back to him, after you set up your own school? You coulda done anything.

JUSTIN

Right, I could have.

DETECTIVE MORI

Not because you loved him?

Justin laughs.

DETECTIVE MORI (CONT'D)
Now you're laughing at me.

JUSTIN
"Love." The word people use instead
of feeling something.

DETECTIVE MORI
So not love...?

JUSTIN
Power detective. You want it, I
want it, that's what we have in
common, what everyone craves. A
child learns to walk to gain power
over it's environment. A meek
whiney guy gets behind the wheel of
a car and is suddenly equal to
every piece of shit they hate.
Power.

DETECTIVE MORI
And Taylor? You gave him power?

JUSTIN
You have room to learn. I did give
him power, (*slight contempt*) power
over children. He'd do anything to
get his hands on a kid. Watching
him go from this bastard control
freak to a whimpering idiot just
because he's groping a whimpering
fifteen year old....Worthless piece
of shit.

DETECTIVE MORI
He got power from abusing kids....

JUSTIN
...And I got power from controlling
him. Now you get it. Most men, and
women, they're easy, give them a
hint of sex, make a fantasy come to
life and - easy asbut Taylor,
watching him fuck up those kids,
then watching him get totally
fucked up. Like having fireworks
explode behind your eyes.

DETECTIVE MORI
Incredible.

JUSTIN

Exactly. Power detective. Power and self-control. The most dangerous of us have self-control. You've got that. When I'm out of prison, we could share a lot together.

DETECTIVE MORI

Together...you're appeal, there's something about the video

JUSTIN

The video from Mr. Taylor

DETECTIVE MORI

Your lawyer doesn't know about, for your appeal, there's one thing-

Spinner enters.

DETECTIVE SPINNER

It's time.

JUSTIN

(To Spinner) Get out.

Mori gets up and heads away.

DETECTIVE MORI

Wait Justin.

JUSTIN

Come back.

Detective Mori gives Justin a nod, then exits with Spinner.

SCENE 12 JUSTIN IS ALONE

DETECTIVE MORI

Did you get it?

DETECTIVE SPINNER

Loud and clear. Tape's already on its way to the judge.

DETECTIVE MORI

That'll get him the 'dangerous offender' label.

DETECTIVE SPINNER

No parole?

DETECTIVE MORI
He'll die in jail.

DETECTIVE SPINNER
How did you know he'd open up?

DETECTIVE MORI
He's a freak, a lonely freak.
Freak's are always looking for
someone to be together with; hate
being alone.

DETECTIVE SPINNER
You gonna go back in and tell him?

DETECTIVE MORI
No. Leave the freak alone. Forever.

End.