

From Brothers
By Don Zolidis

JACK, 40, a large and intimidating man.
BRANDON, 21, his scrawny, criminal son.

(BRANDON is on parole for stealing a car and attempting to flip it over in a field. His father, JACK, has been having a fight with his wife and decides to hash it out with his son.)

(JACK heads for BRANDON's room loudly. He knocks on the door.)

BRANDON

What.

(JACK opens the door and enters.)

What do you want?

JACK

Come on out in the living room.

BRANDON

You know, the walls in this house are real thin, Dad.

JACK

I want to have a talk with you.

BRANDON

Do ya?

JACK

Yeah.

BRANDON

Well what if I don't want you to talk to me?

JACK

Brandon one of these days you gotta quit acting like an asshole. It wears thin. You walk around here like you're angry all the time—I'm sick of it. You're gonna treat us with respect, you're gonna be nice—

BRANDON

Do you mind not lecturing me?

JACK

What?

BRANDON

I'm just real tired.

(JACK tries very hard to get himself under control. He shuts the door.)

JACK *(calmly)*

You got no right to talk to me like that. I spent five thousand dollars to get you out of jail and I haven't heard so much as a thank you from you. I coulda let you rot. I coulda turned down this whole probation thing—you'd be in prison right now if it weren't for me. So the least you can do, the *least*, is treat me with a little respect. Okay?

BRANDON

Fine.

JACK

Okay?

BRANDON

I said fine.

(Pause. JACK looks at BRANDON.)

JACK

Things have gotta change. You gotta start listening to your P.O.—I don't give a crap what he tells you, you do it. You show up where he wants, you pee when he wants you to pee, you go down and get yourself a job. And when Nicole comes over here you're gonna study what she tells you to study. All right?

BRANDON

You've only told me this about fifty times, Dad.

JACK

Then how come you aren't you doin' it?

BRANDON

I'm getting a job—

JACK

I'm not an idiot, Brandon.

BRANDON

I was down there today.

JACK

I'd appreciate it if you didn't lie to my face.

BRANDON

I went there—

JACK

I called the store. I don't know what you were doing, but you weren't at the damn store.
(*pause*)

All we wanted was for you to be here for dinner. And we had to practically handcuff you to your chair for you to sit long enough to eat. We're not asking a whole lot from you, you understand? I'm not charging you rent—I'm not charging you interest on the money I spent—

BRANDON

Yeah cause you sold all my stuff to pay for it. You sold my truck, you stole everything in my room—

JACK

I *stole* it?! I *paid* for everything in this room!

BRANDON

That doesn't make it yours.

JACK

You know what I got for the crap in your room? You wanna see the receipt, cause I got it. Huh? What do you think was so valuable in here? The Kid Rock poster? I sold half of it bulk to the Salvation Army! I got eight bucks for your boots and that was a gooddamn deal.

BRANDON

How much did you get for my pillow? Huh?

JACK

Two bucks.

BRANDON

You needed the money that much?

(*short pause*)

JACK

Listen, it's not—

BRANDON (*interrupting*)

How much you get for selling my letters? You get anything for my pictures? That photograph of me and Aunt Katie?

(*JACK goes to leave*)

You enjoyed it.

(*JACK stops*)

JACK

You know, Brandon... I love you. You're my son. I don't want to hurt you. And yeah, this is a punishment—and I tell you what, this is the last punishment I will ever give you. Because there is no more after this. Nothing more I can do to you to teach you anything.

(short pause)

Right now you're close to death. You can't even see it. That scares the hell out of me. And I want to save you if I can—everyone is trying—but you won't help us. And I just sit here having the feeling that there's only one person in this room that cares about you.

BRANDON

I care.

JACK

Then do something.

BRANDON

Dad? Remember two years ago when I got arrested for assault? And I called you from the jail... and I asked you to help me out? Remember what you said? Do you?

JACK

No.

BRANDON

You said I got myself in I should get myself out. The thing was, I didn't do it. And I told you that. I didn't even get charged. But you made me sit in jail for the three days anyway. I think you were trying to teach me a lesson. I was innocent, and I sat there for three days cause you didn't bother to try and believe me. Cause you didn't care. You ever been to jail? I was scared out of my mind in there. I'm not a big guy. Somebody wanna take a crack at me I can't really stop `em. You didn't even come and fucking visit me. I sat in there for three days, not knowing what was gonna happen to me, if I was gonna be in there till a trial, if I was gonna sit for six months—every night, in there with these guys who were criminals, real criminals, not just little ones—everybody thrown together, them looking at me like I was a little kid. And that's exactly what I felt like in there. And you let that happen. You wanted that to happen. To scare me. Teach me something. You know what it taught me? That deep down you don't care.

(short pause)

And you come in here and tell me I don't care about me? No, I care about me. I just don't care about you.

(They look at each other. JACK leaves and heads for the living room.)