

**From Mammoth**

By Don Zolidis

MATT, 40  
BRENT, 42

*Two brothers have returned to the home they've grown up in to move their mother into a nursing home. In the scene, they're in the basement, packing up boxes of mementos.*

Check this out: report cards. BRENT

Jesus. MATT

Mrs. Armstrong. Second grade. Matt is very smart but seems a bit unfocused at times. BRENT

Nailed it. MATT

I know. BRENT

Find yours. MATT

Let's see – I'm in the Matt section. BRENT

She probably burned the Brent section. MATT

Yeah, right. BRENT

That would be bizarre, right? She's gone through and destroyed everything of yours. Just out of like spite. MATT

No here it is. BRENT

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MATT  
Did you have Armstrong for second grade?

BRENT  
Like I know. You remember second grade?

MATT  
No.

BRENT  
Is that normal?

MATT  
To forget second grade? I think so.

BRENT  
You remember third grade?

MATT  
I had um... I had the weird guy for third grade.

BRENT  
That's clear.

MATT  
Peterson or something.

BRENT  
Patterson.

MATT  
Right.

*(Pause.)*  
You think that's a symptom?

BRENT  
I don't know. Do you forget a lot of shit? Other than my kids' birthday?

MATT  
I don't think so.

BRENT  
You don't remember?

MATT

What did your second grade teacher say about you? Brent seems smart but he's really an asshole?

BRENT

That's actually what it says here. I have trouble following school rules.

MATT

Ha.

BRENT

She's got all of `em, you know. Every single one.

MATT

Someday Riley will be going through my shit and find it all too – Naomi keeps all that stuff. It's like – if Riley scribbled on a piece of toilet paper when she was two, it's vacuum sealed and kept in a lead-lined box. We literally have crates of her artwork from Pre-K – like – I secretly have to go around the house and toss things out.

BRENT

That's ridiculously sad, dude. You have to secretly throw things away.

MATT

If Naomi sees me doing it she goes ballistic.

BRENT

That's hilarious. So you sneak/ around -

MATT

Do you have any idea how much art a kindergartener generates in a week?

BRENT

Yes I do actually.

MATT

You save it?

BRENT

The good stuff. There's some that makes the cut and gets on the refrigerator, the rest sits around for a while before it disappears. Kelly isn't a saver.

MATT

That must be great.

BRENT

We don't have room for it anyway. You know what their school does though? They have the kids make stuff together – like class projects and everything – and then they force the parents to bid on it.

MATT

Seriously?

BRENT

Fund-raiser. But it's really blackmail. How much do you love your children? Do you love your children more than the other parents? I literally spent five hundred dollars on a plaster cow statue that they all put handprints on. Took `em like four minutes, Amy never thought about it again I'm sure, and now I've got it in my bedroom.

MATT

Damn.

BRENT

It's a racket. Actually I got a bargain. There were two parents in the fifth grade class that fought the bidding up to two grand for a mosaic tile thing.

MATT

Why buy real art when you can force your kids to make it for you?

BRENT

Exactly.

MATT

Aren't you paying through the nose for tuition?

BRENT

You'd think they'd have enough money.

MATT

We just got the public school here. I figured it was fine for the two of us.

BRENT

Have to have private school in San Francisco. The public schools are shit.

MATT

I don't think we could find a private school if we wanted to. Course we couldn't really afford it so...

BRENT

--

MATT

So um... I did kinda want to talk to you about something.

BRENT

What?

MATT

Uh... I was wondering if you could – I mean you know I've been having a hard time finding a job –

BRENT

Right – sure –

MATT

So uh...

BRENT

I mean I don't really know anybody around here/ who's like –

MATT

No I'm not really – it just seems like we can't really sell any of this –

BRENT

I wouldn't think so –

MATT

So there's just um –

BRENT

Just say what you want.

MATT

Well –

BRENT

Say it. Say it. Just ask.

MATT

I've been spending a lot of time up here helping Mom, and so that, you know, there's a lot of expense involved with that – and I haven't been able to get a job/ during that time

BRENT

Have you been applying for jobs?

MATT

Yeah. Yeah. Of course. You know since I got laid off there's been like nothing –

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Are you looking out of state? BRENT

No/, but um... anyway MATT

Well that's your problem. BRENT

I was wondering if you could help us with a little bit of money. MATT

Do you want to be reimbursed/ for like gas money? BRENT

No like a loan. MATT

Oh. BRENT

I hate to ask, but... it's either get the money from you or... or I don't know. MATT

How much do you want? BRENT

Uh... I'm thinking like five thousand. MATT

-- BRENT

That would probably keep us going until I find something. MATT

I thought Naomi was working – BRENT

She is. MATT

And she's not making enough? BRENT

MATT

We're like treading water and – you know I got credit cards/ and...

BRENT

Right.

MATT

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BRENT

So this is like to reimburse you for the time you spent with Mom? And the money that she was giving you doesn't count?

MATT

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BRENT

You know when I got the financial power of attorney I had to look through her accounts. There were a lot of checks to you in there.

MATT

Yes – she was helping us out –

BRENT

So that bit about how much expense/ you were incurring from –

MATT

All right don't be a dick about it.

BRENT

I'm sorry am I being a dick?

MATT

A little bit, yeah.

BRENT

Oh.

MATT

Forget it.

BRENT

Did Mom actually know how much money you were taking? I mean was she aware that she was writing checks to you about every two weeks?

MATT

She was giving it to me.

BRENT

If you don't ask for it, it's not giving.

MATT

Forget it. Forget I asked.

BRENT

Can I ask you a question: Did you even ask Mom for money, or did you just write/ the checks yourself?

MATT

Are you like the police/ now?

BRENT

Answer the question.

MATT

I asked her for the money.

BRENT

I thought it was a little weird actually that she would ask me to take over her accounts since you were so much closer and you'd been here, but it makes a lot more sense if she thought you were stealing/ from her.

MATT

I didn't steal from her.

BRENT

Sometimes there are two checks in one day.

MATT

--

BRENT

Is that you asking her for money – and then she forgets about it – and then you ask her again? Is that what that is? Or do you just write `em yourself? I can get a digital image of the checks online, you know that, right?

MATT

Great.

BRENT

So –

MATT

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So yes I wrote out some of the checks.

BRENT

That's spectacular, man. That must make you feel great. You're forty years old and you're stealing/ your mother's money.

MATT

I'm the one who takes care of her –

BRENT

I can see why –

MATT

All right fuck off –

BRENT

No don't tell me to fuck off – you're the one who's stealing from a 73 year old woman with Alzheimer's –

MATT

I was taking care of her/ I care about her –

BRENT

Because she's –

MATT

Where the fuck have you been?

BRENT

I've been taking care of my own family, dickwipe.

MATT

Dickwipe? What are you, twelve?

BRENT

I have a job.

MATT

Are you going to give me five thousand or not?

BRENT

What do you think?

MATT

Forget it.

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BRENT

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MATT

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*(MATT goes back to making a box.)*

BRENT

So I'm the asshole, huh?

MATT

--

BRENT

I'm the asshole? Cause I'm not just going to fork over five grand when you ask for it? Even after you've been stealing from Mom –

MATT

I said forget it, all right? Forget it. Obviously you don't give a shit.

BRENT

You just come up to me and ask for five thousand dollars? What the hell is that? Oh hey – sorry I didn't call you on your birthday or give two fucks about you the rest of the year – by the way, can I have a car?

*(MATT tosses a completed box at BRENT fairly hard.)*

MATT

Sorry I asked.