

POINTING FINGERS

By

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5th & Final Draft

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FADE IN:

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

JAMES PARKER, SR., sixties with a rigid military bearing and wearing a frayed military cap, peeks expectantly through the living room window blinds to the street where cars pass.

Frustrated, James Sr., leaning on his cane, starts to angrily pace around the living room. It's as if he is waiting for someone. He wears a belted bathroom robe, with a white T-shirt underneath, slippers and ankle high socks.

Abruptly James Sr. heads to the back of the living room to the kitchenette nook. He takes the lid off an old cookie jar on a shelf and peers in. He replaces the lid and wearily walks to the small tattered floral sofa and sits, leaning his cane against the battered coffee table. A Bible and a framed photo of a cheerful looking black woman in her late fifties are on the coffee table.

The floral sofa seems out of place in the junky masculine room. Among the piles of yellowing newspapers and old boxes cluttering the room, there is a small American flag on a stick.

In a corner of the room there is a twin size air mattress on the floor, with blankets and a pillow. Beside it is a duffel bag with colorful, youthful clothes spilling out. There is a battered OBAMA poster stuffed behind the duffel bag, a short stack of books, a pile of hand labeled burnt CDs, and a couple of new newspapers opened to the HELP WANTED section.

EXT. STREET - DAY

VOOOOOM! A powerful expensive BMW pulls up in front of James Sr's home.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

FOOTSTEPS are heard approaching the front door.

KNOCK-KNOCK-KNOCK

JAMES SR.
(shouting)

WHO THE HELL IS IT??!!

JANET (O.S.)

It's me Daddy. Open the door.

James Sr. pulls himself to his feet with his cane and walks to the front door. As he starts to open it JANET PARKER aggressively pushes the door open and strides in pass her father.

Janet Parker is in her mid-thirties, intense, confident, and wearing a tailored grey business suit. She jiggles her car keys in her hand.

JANET

I got here as soon as I could.

Well, where is he?

(looking quickly at her watch)

JAMES SR.

I don't know! I wake up he's gone.

My money's gone, and I called you.

JANET

How much money's missing?

JAMES SR.

I had fifty dollars in the cookie jar... (CONT'D)

Janet throws her car keys on the coffee table and goes immediately to the cookie jar and opens it.

JAMES SR. (CONT'D)

...When I woke up, something told me to check my money. I look inside, my money's gone. Jr's gone. After all I've done for him! I'm tired of his shit. I want him out.

With his cane, James Sr. knocks down the stack of CDs by the air mattress, feeling a sharp pain in his hip as he does. He sinks down on the couch as Janet slams the empty cookie jar down on the coffee table next to the Bible.

JANET

Damn it! I knew he couldn't be trusted.

(pointing her finger at her father)

I told you not to take him back in. Once a dusthead, always a dusthead. But can't tell you anything, can I!

JAMES SR.

(livid as he struggles to his feet)

I raised you, Janelle. You didn't raise me!

(pointing his finger)

NO WOMAN tells me what to do!

JANET

(pleadingly)

It's Janet, Daddy, Janet...I apologize. I didn't mean to be disrespectful, but Jr. won't change. He's a loser. Tried college, that failed. A musical career, that failed. A major label interested in signing him! And the one thing your son is successful at -- getting high.

JAMES SR.

(suddenly tired)

I need to go and lay down.

James Sr. picks up the Bible from the coffee table and limps down the hall to his bedroom.

Janet stands awkwardly alone in the room. She starts to sit on the sofa, then stops and takes a handkerchief out of her coat pocket and spreads it out on the cushion before sitting. She shifts uncomfortably and reaches behind her and pulls out an empty medicine bottle from under the cushion. She casually reads the label and then tosses the bottle on the coffee table. She takes out her Blackberry and checks messages.

Janet stares at the duffel bag near the air mattress. She gets up and begins searching through the contents of the bag. She pulls out a small woven bag and takes out a jar that has a powdery white substance in it. She puts her finger into the jar and then puts her lightly powdered fingertip to her tongue. She recoils in surprise and spits.

Janet recaps the jar. As she stuffs it back into the woven bag two small paint brushes tumble out. Janet then notices in the duffel bag the edge of a small frame, mostly covered with a cloth, sticking out from under clothing. She undoes the cloth cover and sees that it is a small beautifully painted picture of a young boy.

Suddenly there is the sound of FOOTSTEPS outside the front door and the JINGLE OF KEYS.

Janet hurriedly stuffs things back into the duffel bag and flops down on the sofa, just as the front door opens.

JAMES PARKER, JR. walks in. He is in his 20s and dressed casually but artistically, having a strong sense of personal style. He listens to an I-Pod and carries a small plastic bag from a pharmacy. He looks surprised to see Janet. He slips the plastic bag into his pants pocket.

JAMES JR.
Hey Janet, whut'sup?

JANET
(angrily)
You tell me, "what'sup"?!

JAMES JR.
Whut'sup? I don't know. How's your job? Is that your BMW outside? Nice. (CONT'D)

He picking up Janet's car keys from the coffee table and tosses them in his hand.

JAMES JR. (CONT'D)
You got what makes you happy?

Janet grabs at her keys in James Jr.'s hand and they fall to the floor, near the duffel bag. James Jr. eyes the tangle of cloths pushed into his duffel bag. Janet steps into his line of vision.

JANET
What would make me happy is you gone!

JAMES JR.
Yeah, long time no see. But I guess we're both happy 'bout that. What are you doing here?

JANET
(irritated)
What did you do with Daddy's money, huh? Were you out there "hooking up"?

JAMES JR.
Say what?

JANET
Daddy's missing money. Do you respect anyone's needs?!

JAMES JR
What are you talkin' bout?

JANET
(pointing her finger)
Everything just goes up your nose. Daddy has given you everything and you wasted it! He gave you money for college. He didn't give me anything! I had to do it all on my own.

JAMES JR.
Sure, Pops gave me stuff. But he wanted me to be someone I wasn't.

JANET
At least he cared about your future!

JAMES JR.
Ok, that's all in the past. It's not what's important now.

James Jr. takes his coat off and drops it on a chair. He starts to walk pass Janet towards the kitchenette. Janet steps in his path. James Jr. side steps to the other side of her, but Janet steps into his path again.

JANET
(enraged)
Not what's important?! You took everything! YOU THIEF!!!

JAMES JR
What are you talking about?

JANET
Today it was the money you stole from the cookie jar. But that's nothing compared to what you stole from me, you punk.

JAMES JR.
Sis, what are you talking 'bout?

JANET
How much?! How much did you get for it?

JAMES JR.
For what?

JANET

The brooch!

JAMES JR.

The brooch? Which brooch? You mean that old pin that Momma had?

JANET

That "old pin" was passed down from Grandma. And Grandma told Mom it was suppose to be mine.

JAMES JR.

Yours? You just took it after Momma died! You and Pops, you didn't give a shit about her at the end.

JANET

It was suppose to be mine! Grandma was the only one who thought I was special.

JAMES JR.

Look, I didn't know it meant so much to you. I'm sorry. I was what, 19, and I was stupid then, OK. I'm better now. Let's move on.

James Jr. puts his hand on Janet's shoulder to move her so he can pass.

JAMES JR.

And the pin wasn't even worth that much. I think I got like \$50 for it.

Janet grabs James Jr.'s neck with both her hands and starts to choke him. James Jr. grabs Janet's hands in his and plies them from his neck and holds her hands up in the air as she struggles to shake free. They struggle, Janet desperately trying to hit out at her brother, but is unable to free herself from his hold. Exhausted, she goes slack.

James Jr. drops his sister's hands and walks around her to the kitchenette area. He takes the pharmacy bag from his pocket and removes two prescription bottles.

JAMES JR.

Janet, when was the last time you came by to see Pops?

James Jr. shakes out a couple of pills on a napkin.

JANET

(defiantly)

Me? You disappeared for almost two years! Now you're back stealing his money. I want you to know that's my money too. He wouldn't have heat if it wasn't for me! I've got every right to kick you out of this house!

JAMES JR.

(pointing his finger at Janet)

You! Kick me out of the house! Wow! You know you're something.

JAMES SR (O.S.)

JR., CAN YOU PLEASE KEEP IT DOWN OUT THERE!.... Who are you talking to anyway?

Confused, Janet looks at James Jr..

JAMES SR. (O.S.)

Jr., is that Brenda with you?
Brenda! When's dinner gonna be?!

JAMES JR.

(loud voice)

Pop, Momma's not here. I've got your medicine!

James Jr. fills a Dixie cup with water. Janet watches, confused. James Jr. gives his sister a hard look, then takes the pills and walks down the hall towards his father's bedroom and out of view.

Janet stands, not knowing what to do. She starts to follow her brother down the hall but freezes, unable to move, as though waiting for an invitation to join her father and brother.

Janet abruptly turns and goes to pick up her car keys from the floor. She looks at the cookie jar on the coffee table, next to the picture of her mother. Janet takes out her billfold and removes all the bills in it and places them underneath the cookie jar.

Janet starts to walk away, then stops. She takes the money from under the cookie jar and rolls it up and puts it inside the cookie jar. Then she returns the cookie jar to the shelf in the kitchenette.

Janet softly closes the front door behind herself as she exits.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

James Parker Sr. sits at the foot of the bed, still wearing the military cap, his eyes closed, sobbing.

His bathrobe has fallen open, revealing food stains on his T-shirt and his boxer shorts. The Bible lays on the bed beside him. There is a full size American flag hanging on the wall. Gripped in James Sr.'s hands is a framed Medal of Honor that is matted on a patriotic background with the words "Vietnam War" across the top.

JAMES SR.

(sobbing)

His blood is all over me...what is that?...His brains...Why, God, Why?!!!.....God....God....

JAMES JR.

Wake up Pops. It's OK now.

James Sr. continues sobbing, lost in another world. James Jr. puts the pills down on the nightstand and kneels beside his father. He carefully removes the military cap from his father's head. Gently he pulls the framed medal out of his father's hands.

JAMES JR.

(softly)

Dear God, wherever you are, whoever you are.....

James Jr. puts his fingers under his father's chin and gently tilts his father's face towards him.

JAMES JR.

It's ok, Pops. They're all chillin' with the stars.

James Sr. opens his eyes and looks at his son.

JAMES SR.

My boy.

James Jr. holds out the pills to his father.

JAMES JR.

Pops, you need to take your medicine.

James Sr.'s hand makes a fist around Jr.'s hand holding the pills.

JAMES SR.
 (panicking)
 You're going to stay with me,
 always?!

JAMES JR.
 I'm gonna stay with you always, if
 you take your medicine.

James Jr. shakes the pills into his father's hand and James Sr. swallows them with sips of water. James Jr. uses the napkin to wipe his father's sweaty brow. Then he carefully closes up his father's robe and ties the belt.

James Jr. steps back, behind his father, and with exhaustion sits down on the side of the bed and stares off into space.

James Sr. turns to his son. He cups the top of his son's head into his hand and pulls his son's head down into his chest, embracing Jr. in his arms. Jr. is stiff in the embrace for a moment before melting into it. His arms slowly coming up under his father's to return the embrace.

JAMES SR.
 (happy)
 Sing me your song!

JAMES JR.
 (rap style) **
 Dear God, wherever you are,
 whoever you are -- My mind is stuck
 in one place, as if cemented. And
 when I try to escape I'm just
 prevented. Feels like the thoughts
 I think about be demented. Angry
 with people close to me, never
 ending. If it's a message I'm a
 send it N defend it. But only you
 can recommend it. Dear God....
 wherever you are, whoever you are,
 you probably chill with the stars
 Dear God....

FADE OUT

The song "DEAR GOD" continues as the credits roll.

** "DEAR GOD", Copyright - Ashanti Baptiste