

KAREN

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I/E. SMALL TOWN - DAY

RON, A SLIM MAN IN HIS EARLY 30'S KNOCKS AT AN APARTMENT DOOR. THE WOMAN OPENING THE DOOR DOESN'T RECOGNISE HIM. THEY EXCHANGE A FEW WORDS, SHE SHAKES HER HEAD -- NO--. RON THANKS HER, LEAVES.

ANOTHER APARTMENT, A FAMILIAR FACE. SMILES AND SOME SMALL TALK. THE MAN AT THE DOOR MOVES INSIDE. RON LOOKS AROUND, NOTICING (FOR THE FIRST TIME?) A SMALL HOLE IN HIS DENIM JACKET. HE GIVES IT MORE ATTENTION THAN IT DESERVES. THE MAN RETURNS WITH A SMALL SLIP OF PAPER AND GIVES IT TO RON.

RON WALKS.

RON FINDS HIMSELF AT A HOUSE. HE CHECKS THE SLIP OF PAPER, THE ADDRESS MATCHES. HE WALKS UP THE PATH TO THE DOOR, KNOCKS.

BOBBY, ABOUT 5, ANSWERS THE DOOR. HE LOOKS UP AT RON, WHO WAS CLEARLY NOT EXPECTING A CHILD TO ANSWER THE DOOR.

RON
(a mixture of confusion,
anxiety, shock)
Uhh... Yeah.

TITLES:

EXT. KAREN'S HOUSE - DAY

The little boy steps back from the door, RON cranes his neck trying to get a look inside the cramped house. He takes a small step toward the doorway but stops in his tracks as the doorway is blocked by KAREN.

KAREN
(to the little boy)
Run on in there Bobby.

The little boy moves back into the house, his eyes fixed on RON. RON watches him go.

RON
(to Karen)
Bobby?

KAREN
You shouldn't have come here, Ron.

RON has a far away look in his eyes. KAREN steps into the doorway and closes the door behind her.

KAREN (CONT'D)

And don't get any ideas about what you *think* you just saw.

RON

Think I just saw? Karen he's got my face, I've got pictures from when I was a kid...

KAREN

Not *your* face, Ron. *His* face, his beautiful face and God knows he doesn't have a lot to call his own.
(beat)

So why'd you come anyway?

RON

So he must be almost, what six?

KAREN

Uh, huh come June.

(beat)

So anyway what do you want Ron?

RON steps back.

RON

(to himself)

I can't believe it, I'm a father, a Dad...

KAREN raises her finger to silence him.

KAREN

Whoa there, Nuh uh. I'm that boy's Daddy and Mommy. I'm his nurse and his playpal, so don't think you can just walk back into town and sit right down to dinner like some TV show or something.

RON

Look, I didn't expect this, this... I didn't know about Bobby, don't just brush over this Karen, I got some questions...

KAREN waits for a question. He runs a hand through his hair.

RON (CONT'D)

Can I come in for a minute?

KAREN begins to refuse.

RON (CONT'D)

Just a minute Karen, I just want to... think, for one second. I mean, I don't know what to say here. This is all, y'know, all a shock and all.

KAREN glances inside the house before moving closer to RON.

KAREN

When you left you said you'd never be back, you promised me Ron. I took you at your word and let you go. I 'been all the family Bobby's ever had and all he needed.

RON

(hurt)

You knew, you knew when I left. You must've right?

KAREN

I was two months already when you left.

RON

I wanted you to go with me.

KAREN

I know, but I didn't want to go...
(beat)

Hell, Ronnie, you and me were just about done. You couldn't've left if it wasn't that way. Maybe I couldn't've let you if it wasn't.

RON says nothing.

KAREN (CONT'D)

Bobby's all I have that's mine, I can't risk losing him, I can't share him with anyone else.

(suddenly stronger)

And I won't.

Her face shows her determination. Ron turns starting to move away, he takes a few steps, stops and turns his face to KAREN.

RON

'Bout three years ago I got word that my Dad was losing to the Cancer.

KAREN'S face turns to shock.

RON (CONT'D)

I found him in Phoenix. You know how I am Karen. I was ready for the fight and everything, 'thought I was anyway.

KAREN

Ron, don't...

RON

(coming apart)

He didn't want to see me, of course. But I wasn't goin' without saying my peace, I pushed my way in there... found him in a bed, all hooked up to machines and stuff. He was so small, Karen, shrunk up, all skin.

KAREN

Look, Ron...

RON raises his hand to quiet her.

RON

I don't want that Karen. I don't want to meet my son again when its too late, you understand that? Walk out on him like this and have him hate me his whole life then have to face him like that. Not like that Karen, please I can't...

KAREN goes to RON, he rests his head on her shoulder.

KAREN

You never walked out on him Ron, you never did. I would never let anyone hurt him like that, that's why I never let you know.

RON

(teary)

My son, my own son...

KAREN

No Ron, not yours... one day, maybe. But not right now.

She props him up, fixes his collar.

RON

Were you ever gonna tell me? I mean, if I hadn't found out? Would you have ever let me know?

(whisper)

You ever gonna tell him about me?

KAREN

(nodding her reply)

But only if that's what he wants, Ron. Y'understand? If he wants to know sometime, then he will. And he'll know all the why's and why-nots. I promise you that, 'kay?

RON

I guess so. Seems fair.

KAREN

(trying to be comforting)

That's good, 'cause you got no choice.

RON

Can I come in, say hello or something?

KAREN

I don't think so. I think it'd probably make more of mess than anything else.

RON looks around.

RON

So, I should just go then?

KAREN is standing at the door, resting against it. She puts her hand behind her, resting on the knob.

KAREN

Best if you do.

RON begins to leave.

RON

(turning)

I could send you my address or something when I get home?

KAREN nods.

RON (CONT'D)
You might need something.

KAREN is nodding, it is clear that she wants RON gone.

KAREN
You never know.

RON
It was good seeing you Karen, you
look real good. Its really great to
see you.

KAREN
Good to see you Ron. You take care
now.

RON disappears into the street, KAREN puts her hand to her
chest and SIGHS.

A moment passes, she turns the knob behind her and slides
back into the house, closing the door once she inside. The
lock CLICKS.

BOBBY (O.S.)
Who was that man, Momma?

KAREN (O.S.)
Never you mind. What am I gonna
fix for Dinner?

FADE OUT