

MAY 1, 2023
PRODUCTION DRAFT

MONSTER(S)

ERIK AND LYLE MENENDEZ

"THE HURT MAN"

EPISODE FIVE

WRITTEN BY
IAN BRENNAN

RYAN MURPHY TELEVISION

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. COPYRIGHT © 2023 NETFLIX

CORPORATION. NO PORTION OF THIS SCRIPT MAY BE PERFORMED, PUBLISHED, REPRODUCED, SOLD, OR
DISTRIBUTED BY ANY MEANS OR QUOTED OR PUBLISHED IN ANY MEDIUM, INCLUDING ANY WEB SITE,

WITHOUT PRIOR WRITTEN CONSENT OF NETFLIX. DISPOSAL OF THIS
SCRIPT COPY DOES NOT ALTER ANY OF THE RESTRICTIONS SET FORTH ABOVE.

ERIK sits in a chair, staring.

He seems to be by himself.

He stares into middle distance. He is definitely in a memory, but we don't know when or where or what.

This episode will play in a SINGLE TAKE of a SINGLE SHOT, camera making one imperceptibly slow dolly in from a COWBOY to a very tight CLOSE UP.

We never reverse, we are always on Erik.

Erik breaks from his fugue as someone enters the room. In a huff, we hear heels click across the linoleum as LESLIE ABRAMSON, makes her way to the chair across from him.

Leslie sits into frame. We will feel her back and the muss of her hair for a while.

LESLIE

Hi Erik. Sorry.

ERIK

That's okay. Nothing else to do.

LESLIE

RIGHT?? I know -- it's *awful* you're locked up in here, but that's what I'm here for, right?

She smacks a pack of Parliaments against the heel of her palm. Unwraps it.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

You don't smoke, do you?

ERIK

No. Never.

LESLIE

Good. It's a *HORRIFIC* habit. I will never kick it, either, I know it. Wish I never started.

ERIK

Yeah my. My dad smoked and it. Just always disgusted me.

LESLIE

GOOD!

ERIK

Just the. The smell of it in his
mouth.

There's a hitch in her thought process. She dials down the
chipper.

LESLIE

Yeah well I always chew a piece of
Big Red after --

ERIK

No not you. Doesn't bother me with
you.

LESLIE

Okay good. BUT DON'T EVER START,
'kay?

ERIK

Yeah. Promise.

LESLIE

Good.
(then, an exhale)
SO.

ERIK

Yeah. So.

A moment. Awkward, or maybe just too casual because she
should know the answer but what else do you ask? How else do
you start?

LESLIE

How are you doin' in here?

ERIK

Um. Not ah. Not great.

LESLIE

(concerned)
Sure but you're eating, now, yeah?

ERIK

Yeah. It's more that, um...
(then)
Since they found that letter and
Lyle got moved, I'm here in 7000 by
myself now kinda, but I found a
friend that has. Um. Just made
being here easier and on Saturday,
he was just gone.

(CONTINUED)

LESLIE

Oh no --

ERIK

Yeah, I don't know whether they moved him, or where he went.

LESLIE

Oh, I'm sorry.

ERIK

Yeah, just, outta nowhere. So I just feel...

LESLIE

Lonesome?

ERIK

Yeah.

LESLIE

Well, I'm. Sorry about that.

Eric stares at her. Not angry, just elsewhere. Trying to get back into the room with her.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Erik, I'm sorry about what we have to talk about now.

ERIK

Mkay.

LESLIE

Because, you know I spoke to Lyle.

ERIK

Yeah I know.

LESLIE

Lyle's lawyer Jill was there, too, and I actually asked Jill if I could just talk to you today.

ERIK

Okay.

LESLIE

And she was okay with that.

ERIK

I think I prefer this.

LESLIE

Okay good. Because Erik, I spoke to Lyle about the stuff you told Dr. Vicary.

ERIK

Yeah.

LESLIE

And. Um.

(then)

You know, *rough stuff*.

(then)

With Lyle, too, but with your dad.

(a beat)

About the objects --

ERIK

Uh-huh --

LESLIE

The things LYLE did to you, the things he said he knew were going on with you and your *DAD*.

ERIK

Yeah.

LESLIE

And how he thought it stopped and when he found out it *HADN'T* --

ERIK

Yeah all that. Yeah.

LESLIE

And Lyle told you about *HIS* experience with your dad, with the abuse, yes?

ERIK

Oh yeah. That's what we -- in the days leading up to that night, that's what we talked about. Kinda for the first time. Like we were comparing notes I guess you could say.

LESLIE

Sure.

ERIK

Not like. Not like in a *happy* way.
You know, it was good to finally
talk about it. To be out in the
open.

LESLIE

So. Okay. And --

She shifts in her seat a bit.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

-- and I just wanna ask, just to
say it out loud, you believe him,
yeah?

Erik stares at her. A death stare.

ERIK

Yes. I know he's telling the truth.

She picks up the ball she feels she may have dropped.

LESLIE

Yeah me too. I just want to keep
underlining that for us is all.
That however much you loved him,
this man was a *MONSTER*. And that
what he did was real. And so.

Erik is still staring at her. Why would she have said that?

LESLIE (CONT'D)

And so I guess, you know, I think
Lyle's point of view is that.
However bad he had it, and I really
do get this feeling from him, that
he feels you had it worse.

ERIK

Yeah.

Leslie waits for this to subtly prompt him. It doesn't.

LESLIE

Uh-huh.

Still doesn't.

ERIK

Yeah, much worse.

She scoots forward an inch in her seat.

LESLIE
Okay can you --

ERIK
Sure.

LESLIE
I just need you -- right now, if
you can -- to just tell me
everything.

ERIK
Yeah okay.

LESLIE
Can you do that?

ERIK
Yeah I can.
(then)
Um.

With an awkward/wry half-chuckle:

ERIK (CONT'D)
Like where do you want me start?

LESLIE
(with a similar laugh,
kind)
I know, right? Horrible. But. I
guess I'd ask...
(shrug and sigh)
Do you remember when it started?

Then another shrug, almost an apology:

ERIK
Yeah.

He shifts, uncomfortable.

ERIK (CONT'D)
It kinda seems like it was always
happening.
(then)
Cuz. I was always afraid of him.

LESLIE
Your dad or Lyle?

ERIK

My dad. I was never afraid of Lyle.
I always felt like he was my
protector.

LESLIE

Even when Lyle abused you?

ERIK

Yeah.
(then)
Yeah.

He cocks his head, his eyes narrow a bit. Deep memory.

ERIK (CONT'D)

But like. I mean -- my first
memories are of running away. I was
like, two or something? And I
wouldn't get far. I'd get to my
aunt's house a few blocks down. And
it was like a --

(a tangent strikes)

-- that's what Lyle said when he
found out it was still -- he was
like, *MAD?* Right? Like, how could
you let it happen? Do you *like* it
or something? Because you could
just run away and *I* was like --
because they'll always come FIND
me!

(then)

Every time I *tried*, they find me
and it gets *worse*, so.

A beat. He notices how that series of thoughts spooled out of
his head. Hadn't thought about them ever in that sequence.

LESLIE

So running away never helped.

ERIK

No. My dad, my mom, all our *family*
were like this OCTOPUS you could
never escape from.

LESLIE

Cuz their tentacles would grab you.

ERIK

Yeah.
(then)
Something like that.
(then)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

1

ERIK (CONT'D)

But as far as when it, you know.
Started. Lyle thinks I was six and
that seems right.

LESLIE

That's when your father started
with him.

ERIK

Right.

LESLIE

So that makes some sense.

ERIK

Yeah and I --

He's gone for a second.

ERIK (CONT'D)

-- that was when I had Coach
Wadlington. Like I was six when I
started with him and I remember it
was happening around then. Or the
massages did.

He's gone again.

LESLIE

Erik? What.

ERIK

Well that...

(a deep breath)

It didn't start out bad, you know?

LESLIE

Yeah.

ERIK

It'd be after swimming, or after
tennis.

A beat.

LESLIE

Mm-hmm?

ERIK

I knew my dad didn't like me.

LESLIE

How do you mean?

(CONTINUED)

ERIK

Just. He was always mean. He loved Lyle, and he didn't love me. I could tell. But also he would SAY it. He'd call me names, just stuff you shouldn't say to a kid --

LESLIE

What kind of names.

ERIK

Just like. Stupid.

LESLIE

Mmhmm.

ERIK

(quieter)
Faggot.

LESLIE

Okay.

ERIK

So then you're always trying to impress him, or to not make him mad, and my mom would do it, too, they'd gang up on me. If I said I was scared of the closet they'd lock me in the closet until I stopped screaming and they were *laughing* so I knew I wasn't gonna DIE but still, I was like, *why would you do that?* Or the basement.

LESLIE

-- they'd lock you in the basement?

ERIK

Yeah. Cuz I was scared of it --

LESLIE

How long -- ?

ERIK

Well, just like.

(then)

All *afternoon* or until I stopped *crying*, but it was always like to toughen me up and she did it too but it was mostly my dad.

LESLIE

That's awful.

(CONTINUED)

ERIK

Yeah and so when you know your dad thinks you're -- I dunno, weak? Too scared? SOMETHING. Like like not tough enough and you think, I guess I'm *NOT* tough enough and he's always *mad* at you --

(a breath, his point now)

-- then the time that he's *NOT*, the times he takes you -- *upstairs*, or says let's take a shower and he was -- at *first* -- like, he was --

(a deep breath)

-- like he was finally NICE.

(hearing that land)

You know?

(then)

To see that side of him? Where he was, you know --

LESLIE

Tender.

ERIK

Yeah. Because it was *THEN* it was like he could. Like he could stop being mad. Like when no one else was there -- cuz around everyone else, even when family was over, he would just call you names or hit you and everyone saw it. But when it was just you and him, he...

A long beat. Erik just stares through the floor across the room. Elsewhere.

LESLIE

Go on.

ERIK

That's when he would say that he loved me.

A beat.

LESLIE

When he was abusing you.

ERIK

Yeah. At first it was just. The massages, with oil, or. And his shirt was off and I'd just be in shorts or something.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

1

ERIK (CONT'D)

But the -- the other stuff hadn't started, and it was just....

(a shrug, emotional)

Time being with my dad. Where I felt like he cared about me. And it was just me and him. And that was good. Like...

(then)

Like those are my favorite memories.

A long beat.

LESLIE

Uh-huh.

He's staring off again.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

And then, the massages changed.

ERIK

Yeah.

(distant now)

He'd say turn over and then he'd do my front.

LESLIE

And by front...

ERIK

He'd massage my penis.

LESLIE

Okay.

ERIK

And then. So we'd fondle each other. But it still wasn't --

A beat.

LESLIE

What.

ERIK

It wasn't scary yet. What we were doing.

Erik's face screws up, searching:

ERIK (CONT'D)

But except I would try *not* to. I think I *DIDN'T* want to do it.

(CONTINUED)

LESLIE
The front part.

ERIK
Yeah. Because he'd be lying on his back and I'd try to skip that part and he'd be like, no you have to do that.

A beat. Something in his face sours.

ERIK (CONT'D)
And then the mouth massages. Just as I got older. Like Lyle said. The objects, the toothbrush --

LESLIE
How old?

ERIK
I mean like --
(thinking)
-- definitely second grade, with the toothbrush? I just remember the day at school after because there was a picture of a toothbrush. On the bulletin board or whatever? About like how you should go to the dentist and I remember thinking, the toothbrush in the picture wouldn't have hurt as much.

This knocks the wind out of her. She can just manage a voiced "whoof" of an exhale.

ERIK (CONT'D)
And. And then -- so there were three different kinds of.
(a deep breath)
Sex. With my dad. There was. *Nice*, which was the. I mean the massaging was before. And then, when he made me use my mouth. It was just too big. I didn't like that.

A beat.

ERIK (CONT'D)
It seemed really dirty. Doing that to him. When he did it to *me*, that was...
(halting the thought)
(MORE)

1

ERIK (CONT'D)

But to *him*, the naked -- he called them naked mouth massages -- that felt dirty. Every time. And he'd rub my head and say you did good, good boy. And it was just the only time I felt I had a relationship with my dad.

LESLIE

Sure.

ERIK

And that he loved me.

(then)

And it would go on for a long time, these -- the nice sex sessions.

(occurring to him)

Sometimes I'd wonder where everyone was because it just took a long time. But in lots of ways -- and even though it felt -- *dirty*, it was also....

(with difficulty)

I was the center of the world for once. It also felt...

Erik shrugs.

LESLIE

Nice.

Erik gives a quick set of small nods. Then silence, as he stares at that admission floating there in middle distance.

A long moment Leslie allows to emerge.

He's still staring at nothing, but staring at it.

Then, Erik stiffens. He begins to speak a little faster.

ERIK

Because the objects were to get me ready. Lyle and I realized that when we finally --

LESLIE

-- when you talked about it --

ERIK

Yeah that. He was. You know, preparing our bodies for. Something bigger.

(then)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

1

ERIK (CONT'D)

And at first he made me do it to
him.

LESLIE

Do...?

ERIK

Sex.

(then)

To penetrate him. Cuz he wanted to
-- he always said he wanted to
teach me how to use my penis.

This knocks the wind out of her.

ERIK (CONT'D)

And that felt REALLY dirty.

LESLIE

Yeah.

ERIK

And I didn't like it.

A beat. Then a shrug.

ERIK (CONT'D)

You know to do that, you have to
be.

LESLIE

Erect.

ERIK

Right. I mean, that's what's weird
about it. And that I could ever,
like --

His eyes suddenly well, but with anger.

LESLIE

What.

ERIK

(then)

Orgasm.

Silence.

ERIK (CONT'D)

That was confusing to me, at that
age.

Leslie holds the moment, kind.

(CONTINUED)

LESLIE

Right. Of course that would be.

Erik gives a contrite nod, appreciative. He looks down, the anger reversing inward into sorrow.

ERIK

And then he started to rape me.
(then)
He took a slat from the bed and
he...put it under the doorknob.

LESLIE

Oh my god

ERIK

And it hurt and I would cry and
he'd say why couldn't you be more
like Lyle and be a Menendez and get
used to it.

Silence.

ERIK (CONT'D)

(then)
I felt like so disappointed because
he was like *comparing* us again!
Lyle and me. Like I wasn't *good*
enough again! Like all the stuff
about *loving* me, that was all *gone*
now or like that had never
happened!

A moment as Leslie shifts. We just barely still feel her in
frame now.

LESLIE

How often did this happen, Erik?

ERIK

The just sex? Um.
(after a beat)
2, 3 times a month?

LESLIE

From the time you were.

ERIK

Junior high?

LESLIE

So 11.

(CONTINUED)

1

ERIK

Right.

LESLIE

Until.

ERIK

Right before.

LESLIE

Right before they died?

ERIK

Yeah just a few weeks before.

LESLIE

Was the last time?

ERIK

Yeah.

Leslie shifts. We're in a close-ish shot of Erik by now.

LESLIE

Erik, you were raped *hundreds* of times by your father?

ERIK

Yeah.

A long beat.

Erik shrugs.

ERIK (CONT'D)

That was just...what life was like.

LESLIE

I am so sorry, Erik.

ERIK

Yeah. But you kinda.

LESLIE

You get through it.

ERIK

Yeah. You just survive I guess.

(then, spilling out)

And you live for the times it *doesn't* happen, right?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

1

ERIK (CONT'D)

Or when you get through it and then you're like -- it's almost like Christmas morning you think, okay, I got through that, that's not gonna happen now for a while. Or maybe cuz it was knees this time maybe next time it'll be nice sex --

LESLIE

-- sorry, 'knees' -- ?

ERIK

I had different names for things. But knees was. It wasn't my favorite, it was when. It would be the mouth massages and he would. Um. Finish I guess. In my mouth. And I. I just hated the taste of it. I would try to sneak cinnamon into his coffee. Put lemon on everything.

Leslie tries to cover but she is flabbergasted.

LESLIE

Hold on -- what was the cinnamon for?

ERIK

(with a shrug)

I just heard it made it...made it taste better. But so if that had happened, then I'd think -- okay maybe next time he'll just want to do a mouth massage to ME or he'll -- (nailing it down)
Just not be *rough* sex. I didn't want it to ever be *rough* sex.

A beat. Every muscle in her tightens just asking.

LESLIE

And what was rough sex like.

ERIK

Just.

(distant)

Hitting.

(then)

And really *painful*. He would get mean and *punch*. He was *strong*.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

1

ERIK (CONT'D)

You couldn't -- you couldn't hit him *back* for some reason and I don't know why but I could never hit him *back* and it's like when I was little running away it just doesn't *work!!* He will not STOP. You have to *do* it. You cannot get out of it. You just try to.

(then)

Just get through it.

A moment.

ERIK (CONT'D)

But the rough sex was....

Silence. He disappears.

LESLIE

What.

ERIK

I'd have to kneel on the headboard but at the end of the bed, like the foot of the bed. But like, into my shin -- it would be stuff to make it *hurt*. He kept saying that this is what the *Greeks* did, it's how they toughened themselves *up* to make things NOT hurt, so if it hurt you had to try to get through it. So I'd be. It would be inserting objects that hurt into my...

(then)

Or with my penis, like pins or. Or he'd cut my leg, like I've got a scar there -- like while I was massaging him with my mouth he'd be doing this stuff he'd be. It was like to *toughen* me he said.

Leslie is stunned.

ERIK (CONT'D)

But like. When he's tying something around your penis, like a rope, that's not --

LESLIE

No, it's not --

ERIK

-- that's not making someone tough.

(CONTINUED)

LESLIE

No, Erik.

ERIK

That's kinda torturing someone.

LESLIE

Yeah.

A beat. Erik BURSTS INTO TEARS.

ERIK

Yeah, it's like. That's not being a father...

LESLIE

No it is not.

ERIK

That's not what you. It's what you do to someone you hate!

LESLIE

Erik you did not deserve that.

ERIK

And he'd call me these -- it's like what he SAID sometimes was. Somehow hurt MORE even --

LESLIE

Like what.

ERIK

Well just. I wanted to say to him, if I'm such a faggot, why are you asking me to fuck you in the ass??? You know???

Erik is sobbing.

ERIK (CONT'D)

And I just. You know --

He stops. She clocks it.

LESLIE

What.

ERIK

I don't know.

LESLIE

No what were you going to --

(CONTINUED)

ERIK

I don't know!
(then)
I don't know.

The thought forming has escaped him, spooling away in the wind.

A moment. The crying subsiding:

ERIK (CONT'D)

And you're s'posed to.
(a deep breath)
I mean, this is a man who did such amazing stuff, he was like, my dad was an *amazing* man. And I loved him so much. I still love him. SO much.

He darkens. A moment.

ERIK (CONT'D)

And that's what you're. Um.
(then)
That's why I don't want to be in here for the rest of my life --

LESLIE

You won't --

ERIK

-- like I really don't --

LESLIE

ERIK I PROMISE YOU --

ERIK

You know? Because -- to have that. That *thought*, you know. Laying alone in here in a cell at night. You know all cooped up. In here. And to have that be the thought you're left thinking -- ?

LESLIE

What thought.

ERIK

That. *That I love my dad???*
(then)
THAT'S like --
(stinging)
(MORE)

1

ERIK (CONT'D)

-- like it wasn't the rough sex and the *pins* and the *rope* that were torture -- THAT would be the torture.

(then)

To. To still love him.

This slams Leslie in the gut so hard she makes a noise.

ERIK (CONT'D)

And that's why --

A kind of laugh leaps from his throat.

ERIK (CONT'D)

-- that's why Lyle used to say, "you know, Erik, dad would be proud of us for doing it" and I'd always agree but then later I'd think, "well, but they're not proud we *KILLED* them!" But then just the last few days, I --

-- his voice catches but he pushes on --

ERIK (CONT'D)

-- just since Saturday in here, just thinking a lot, it just occurred to me --

LESLIE

What did.

ERIK

That he probably *would*, you know? In heaven right now? Be looking down and saying, 'You know what???' *Thank you Erik and Lyle, I do love you and you did what you had to do to me.'*

(then, with difficulty)

'Because what I did to you was really *wrong* and you --'

He tries to wrap his head around the weirdness of this thought --

ERIK (CONT'D)

-- 'and you like, took that off my shoulders. You took that off my soul...'

(then)

...or whatever.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

1

ERIK (CONT'D)

(then)

If that makes sense.

A beat. She is completely there with him.

LESLIE

It does.

ERIK

'You made me into someone who
doesn't do that anymore.'

(then)

Is what I mean. And what Lyle
meant. So that now I could. Now we
can love him again. For the first
time.

(then)

Because he's not DOING that
anymore.

LESLIE

Wow.

A long beat. Erik shifts again, discomfited again by it.

ERIK

I just don't want to be in here,
all alone, with that thought
banging around my head.

(then)

Not with Lyle not here now and my.
My friend gone.

She comes back into his focus. He notices her look.

ERIK (CONT'D)

What.

Nothing. From his look she must be smiling, because a small
confused smile bubbles up.

ERIK (CONT'D)

What.

LESLIE

No I'm just. I am blown away by
you, Erik Menendez.

ERIK

-- no you don't have to --

LESLIE

I mean it. I really do I really
really do. I know a lot of people.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

1

LESLIE (CONT'D)

I've met a lot of impressive people and you're right at the top. With what you've been through and what you had to do and who you are right now, telling me all this, the BRAVERY??? You are just. You are an incredible person, Erik, I just have to say it.

ERIK

(a scoff)
-- thanks --

LESLIE

Because. Not gonna make this about ME, but.

Her voice cracks. She clears her voice.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

MY father?
(then)
MY father was a fucking SONofabitch, okay?

ERIK

Really?

LESLIE

Yep.

She wrestles back a sadness she will not give the satisfaction.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Abandoned my *brother* and I, my *mom*
-- it *KILLED* my mom. Just *completely* destroyed her. *NEVER* recovered. And I never recovered. He walked out the door, just *LEFT* us. Made a whole other family.
(then)
CRUSHED. My whole world. Crushed.

ERIK

I'm sorry.

LESLIE

Well. Thank you. NOTHING like you -- my point is. I just SAY it by way of.

(then)
Hearing what you just told me, which is. Just MIND boggling.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

1

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Hearing all that and *THANK YOU* but hearing that, just --

(then)

You don't HAVE to forgive him. Your father. My father wasn't one tenth of one millionth of a percent as bad as yours, okay? Just. NO comparison. And my brother??? He's forgiven him! He TALKS to him! But Erik???

(leaning in)

NO FUCKING WAY. Will I forgive my father. For what he did. No way, not ever.

Erik just stares at her. Not impolite, just -- staring.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

And I just say that cuz.

(then)

Cuz you have that option, too.

ERIK

Right.

LESLIE

(a fire lit)

Because, you know, listening to all this, I just have to keep asking myself, and asking you --

Nailing it down, her point:

LESLIE (CONT'D)

-- where was your mother in all this???

ERIK

Well, see --

LESLIE

(not letting up)

But okay but let's not make excuses--

ERIK

Cuz he cheated on her! Lyle said he walked in on them one time and my dad was. My dad was raping her -- !

LESLIE

Ohokay well --

(CONTINUED)

ERIK

My dad ruined her *life* I think! And she used to say. Which wasn't even--

This thought spools out quickly -- it's a fast series of memories that are running ahead of him.

ERIK (CONT'D)

-- with Lyle she would sometimes get naked --

LESLIE

This is your mother -- ?

ERIK

Yeah, but it wasn't the same as with my dad. She wanted us to think she had a nice body. And she liked ours but it was just looking. Or like. Yeah, just looking.

Leslie is trying to follow this and can't.

ERIK (CONT'D)

She *would* when I was --
(then)

Like 16 and I think it's because. Because by then the stuff with my dad was. Intense. So my mom did this thing where she would...she would inspect my.

A beat.

LESLIE

Penis.

ERIK

Yeah. And she'd be like, why do you shave it all and I'm like, no dad did that, but I couldn't say that cuz -- !

(then)

Because it was weird because we were close but then dad had these *girlfriends*, but then also I think she knew that I was, too --

LESLIE

Was what.

ERIK

Like.

(a shrug, then)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

1

ERIK (CONT'D)

That I was sleeping with dad.

(then)

So she was. *I was like coming between them.* But that wasn't ever something we talked about, like she would have never said anything, it was just something you knew but you didn't talk about because that was just our family but I knew how she felt and her feeling that way, it's why she like MADE me get a girlfriend but --

(remembering his point)

-- but then she would do these *inspections, right?* These inspections.

Leslie is confused at all of this.

LESLIE

Of your.

ERIK

Yeah of my. And she was terrified of AIDS and so she would always check me for blisters. Like on my penis.

Leslie is stunned.

ERIK (CONT'D)

And I think it was because it was a way to see if like -- because I think she knew dad and I were -- so that maybe like one of Dad's girlfriends had something and then I got it which means SHE could get it.

LESLIE

Hold on I don't. I want to go back for a sec --

ERIK

(backing off)

No it's.

LESLIE

What.

ERIK

It's just.

(then)

Forget that. It's not important.

(CONTINUED)

LESLIE

Why did she think you'd have AIDS?

ERIK

Just forget it it's not important.

LESLIE

But why would she think that --

ERIK

(brushing it off, fast)
*She just wanted to make sure so
she'd do the inspections --*

LESLIE

(trying to pin it down)
No but ERIK. What I mean is. Why
would she think that you would get
AIDS?

Nothing. He disappears. She tries to get him back.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

And just before you answer that.
I'm just gonna say --

(then)

I am not your mother.

(then)

*And I don't like your mother. I'm
sorry.*

ERIK

Yeah but she was. I feel like my
dad just ruined her *life* --

LESLIE

(frantic almost)

No but Erik *that's not a mother.*
Just from what you've said today I
think -- and I *am* a mother, Erik.
Wasn't the *perfect* one I'm sure,
maybe that's why I want another
shot at it! You know?! But for YOU
to -- like, I *know* you loved her --

ERIK

Yeah we were close. Lyle and her
weren't at all but she and I, we
were --

LESLIE

-- I KNOW. And a mother is --
everyone's gonna love their mother--

(CONTINUED)

ERIK

Yeah and I do --

LESLIE

(steam-rolling)

-- but for her to have *KNOWN* and not *INTERVENED???* Not taken you both and *LEFT???*

ERIK

I think cuz she --

LESLIE

No but let me -- sorry, just let me and then you can -- *because there were a lot of avenues there.* Where she could have gone to *authorities???* To have just said, NO. NOT to my sons. You will NOT abuse my sons. Right??

ERIK

Yeah.

LESLIE

You know that's a *LOW BAR.* Okay? And she *didn't!* She *didn't do ANY of that.* And so for you to -- *YES* you can love her. *YES* you can *SYMPATHIZE* with her. But Erik --
(pulling it together)
-- and then I want to ask you something -- but Erik I have to say this to you, and I'd say it to Lyle: *YOU DESERVED BETTER THAN HER.*

A moment.

Erik nods.

This seems to land with him. She presses the point forward, not letting up.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Won't even *mention* your father, that goes without saying. That man is.

(catches herself)

Well. I think he's. *He's in a place.* Is all I'll say.

(then)

But your mom, too.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

1

LESLIE (CONT'D)

If what you're saying is true and
what *Lyle* is saying is true, you
deserved better than her.

Erik nods.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Okay? So that's where I'm coming
from.

He nods.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

But Erik.
(then, pointed)
Why did she think you had AIDS.
(then)
Can you just *tell* me.

A beat. Something roils in him.

ERIK

Well.
(shifting)
You know, this is what's so hard.

A beat.

LESLIE

What.

ERIK

About.
(exasperated)
Because I don't know.
(then)
What way you *are* and what way
you're *supposed* to be? When, you
know, *that's your childhood.* When
that's what your dad's doing to
you. Like.

He stops.

LESLIE

What.

ERIK

Well, like one time my mom called
Lyle and me and I don't think she
meant it but she screamed at us,
'you're sociopaths!' and part of me
was like --
(suddenly emotional)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

1

ERIK (CONT'D)

-- *well, maybe we ARE but can you blame us???* If we are???

Like, when you know what's happening to us???

A beat. Leslie wants to lean in and say something but his look says he's trying to get to it --

ERIK (CONT'D)

SO.

(then)

The *feelings* I have of like.

(then)

Sex...

(then)

Stuff or.

LESLIE

Orientation.

ERIK

Yeah or of that. Like, whatever *feelings* I have, or which WAY I -- ???

(then)

-- *JUST* --

(bursting)

-- *I DON'T KNOW IF IT'S ME! Or how I was SUPPOSED to be -- !!*

LESLIE

Uh-huh

ERIK

Because -- and this is why she -- !

(a breath, then)

With the *inspections*, when I was *sixteen*, and I don't want to say who it *WAS*, but. Um.

(then)

I was kind of in love with a boy.

(then)

Or a. Like a teenager like me. Who was a boy.

LESLIE

Okay.

ERIK

But I'm also like --

(then)

-- *cuz I was HAVING SEX WITH MY DAD!!! YOU KNOW???*

He starts a kind of panicky, hurried breathing.

(CONTINUED)

ERIK (CONT'D)

Like, that's not a normal thing and that MADE me not normal because -- and HE wasn't, he didn't -- this guy -- he didn't have a dad who did this to him, he was just always that way but, you know? I'm not sure I was and I'm not sure I *am*, but I have these feelings!!!

(strangely halting)

I was. In. Love with. Someone.

(then)

And then this boy -- my *boyfriend* -- we would call each other that and I don't want to say his name we said we never would and I won't but when we had sex then, it wasn't like it was with my dad.

LESLIE

Nice.

ERIK

Yeah it was really NICE. It was REALLY nice.

(suddenly elsewhere)

In HERE it was really nice. Like until Saturday it was nice and now.

(a shrug)

Whatever doesn't matter but.

He clams up but he's still roiling. Like he's going to burst.

LESLIE

Okay.

She doesn't calm him. Tries again.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Okay.

ERIK

(roiling again)

No I don't think you --

LESLIE

No, Erik, I understand --

ERIK

No I think you think I'm saying something different than I am, that like, yes I've DONE certain things and so you're gonna say I'm one way and you're gonna TELL everyone I'm one way --

LESLIE

-- no I'm not --

ERIK

-- okay but what I'm SAYING --

LESLIE

Erik, I'm not gonna tell anyone --

Erik explodes.

ERIK

FINE I'm just saying I DON'T KNOW!!

(then)

I won't EVER know!!

(then)

I can't TELL what I am!! I will NEVER be able to tell!! And maybe I AM a sociopath and maybe I SHOULDA got AIDS and maybe I'll only ever want it that way because with girls? All the GIRLS they would make me go out with, I was like, HOW COULD I EVEN KNOW??? WHEN HE'S DONE THIS TO ME??? When it's been happening so long I CAN'T REMEMBER WHEN IT STARTED???

(sobbing)

WHEN I DON'T REMEMBER A TIME WHEN MY DAD WASN'T FUCKING ME???

Leslie sits, stunned.

ERIK (CONT'D)

HE BROKE ME!! I AM A BROKEN PERSON!!

LESLIE

-- no you're not --

ERIK

I AM A BROKEN PERSON! I AM BROKEN IN TWO HE JUST CRACKED ME IN HALF AND I AM NOT A REAL PERSON!! YOU CAN'T BE WHEN --

(stinging)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

1

ERIK (CONT'D)

-- WHEN THE ONLY MAN YOU WANT TO
LOVE DOES **THAT** TO YOU???? YOU STOP
BEING REAL!!!

LESLIE

-- no, Erik, you are --

ERIK

STOP SAYING THAT.

A beat.

ERIK (CONT'D)

I'M THE HURT MAN.

A beat.

LESLIE

What is -- what's the Hurt Man.

ERIK

It's ME.

LESLIE

That's the name for yourself.

ERIK

Yeah. Since...

LESLIE

When you were little.

With a stinging shrug:

ERIK

AS LONG AS I CAN REMEMBER.

(then)

THAT'S WHAT I CALLED MYSELF.

(then)

Since *FOREVER*.

(then)

That's ALWAYS BEEN MY NAME.

Leslie sits in stunned, dumbstruck silence. She has never in her life seen this kind of pain.

ERIK (CONT'D)

AND IT'S NEVER GONNA END.

Silence.

ERIK (CONT'D)

AND IT'S NEVER GONNA NOT HURT.

(CONTINUED)

1

Silence.

ERIK (CONT'D)
I SHOT MY MOTHER IN THE FACE. AND
MY DAD I THINK.

He laughs almost, a single sharp, stinging chortle of deep, cruel irony.

ERIK (CONT'D)
THAT'S NOT A...
(then)
THAT'S NOT A NORMAL THING YOU DO.

He gathers a bit of himself somehow, missing a million pieces but complete. We are so close on him now.

ERIK (CONT'D)
So I don't know what I am.

Silence.

ERIK (CONT'D)
I DON'T KNOW WHAT I AM. AND I DON'T
THINK I'LL EVER KNOW. IS WHAT I
REALIZE. SINCE SATURDAY.
(then)
IF I DON'T GET OUT OF HERE.

LESLIE
-- I will get you out of here --

ERIK
(loathing)
STOP SAYING THAT.

Silence.

Nailing it down, a confession, a plea, an embrace of himself:

ERIK (CONT'D)
I JUST NEVER WILL KNOW WHO I REALLY
AM. IF I DON'T GET OUT OF HERE.

Silence.

ERIK (CONT'D)
I NEVER WILL KNOW.

A moment. Erik just looks at her. SMASH TO BLACK.

END EPISODE