

A POSITIVE OUTCOME

by
Robert L. McBride

Robert McBride
I_write_films@aol.com
310-219-6888

FADE IN:

EXT. PARK - AFTERNOON

In the play area, BRENDEN (8), a well-mannered mamma's boy, runs around with some kids. The game of choice is freeze-tag, and Brenden's "it."

Perched under a tree, his parents, DENISE and JAMES FRAZIER (30's), lie on a blanket. Denise is absorbed in a book while James plays a game of chess on his phone.

DENISE

Oh my God. Ummm... wow... ummm...

She closes the book, her thumb keeping her place.

DENISE

Babe, if you ever did some of this stuff to me... I'd have to castrate you.

JAMES

Wouldn't bother me none. We barely screw anyway.

Denise rolls her eyes.

DENISE

Must you always take it there? It's a lot being a new wife, a mother, a cook, a maid --

JAMES

It is what it is.

DENISE

You know I'm going to write a book one day. I might put you in it, I might not.

James fakes excitement.

JAMES

That's great, Denise.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Denise and James are in bed. James flips through TV channels. Brenden bursts into the room, hops on the bed, and gives them both a kiss.

DENISE

Love you.

JAMES

It's bed time, boy. You know that.

ZZZZZZ, Brenden fakes being sleep.

BRENDEN

Can I sleep in here?

DENISE

No!

BRENDEN

But I always do.

Out the corner of her eye, Denise catches James' sarcastic, "Yeah, I know," look.

DENISE

And that's going to stop because
you're a big boy, right?

Brenden hops off the bed and saunters to the door.

DENISE

Hey Bren, can you do mommy a favor?

He stops, grunts -- he knows what's coming. He mouths these words along with her...

DENISE

Bring me a Snapple. Cran-apple
please. Thank you, baby.

A SHORT WHILE LATER

James and Denise lie in bed with enough space between them for another person to fit. They share laughs as an old episode of "Seinfeld" plays.

DENISE

Did he forget my drink?

Denise slides down to the edge of the bed. James stops her, gently grabs her arm. They lock eyes.

JAMES

Wait, come here...

Denise is hesitant but obliges. James leans in for a kiss.

And right before his lips touch hers --

DENISE
Babe, I'm thirsty.

JAMES
Me too...

He leans in more but she turns her cheek.

DENISE
James, I'm really not in the mood tonight. Tomorrow I promise. I'm feeling sick. And you know I'm cranky when I don't have my Snapple.

James is vexed. His grip around her arm tightens. A beat. He shakes his head -- lets her go.

INT. BRENDEN'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Denise flips on the light in Brenden's room. His bed's still military neat. Untouched.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Denise enters. Just as she switches on the light, she stumbles. Denise gazes down...

Brenden's out cold, face down, on his stomach. She nudges him with her foot.

DENISE
(annoyed)
C'mon, Bren. Get up.
(she nudges some more)
Not tonight. Mama doesn't have enough strength.

Denise waves her big toe by his face.

DENISE
I'm gonna put my toes in your mouth.

He doesn't budge. Odd. She's a bit more nervous. She bends down.

DENISE
Bren! Bren... babe! Get up.

Now panicked, Denise shakes him, but he won't budge.

DENISE (CONT'D)
James! Bren! Baby...

She tugs some more. No luck. Fears rising by the moment. Denise turn him onto his back. Dried up foam around his mouth.

INT. BEDROOM - SAME

DENISE (V.O.)
James! James!

James, not in the mood to be bothered, sticks his headphones in his ears.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Brenden's on a stretcher being rolled into the ER by Doctors.

Denise tries to accompany him, but is stopped by SECURITY.

SECURITY
MA'AM YOU HAVE TO WAIT HERE.

DENISE
That's my son!

SECURITY
I know ma'am, but you have to wait.

James reaches for her hand but Denise won't shift.

JAMES
Denise, come on. Let the doctors work.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING AREA - LATER

James sitting, shaking, nervous as hell but doing all he can to show strength.

Denise paces back and forth. STRESSED.

DR. MATHIS approaches them. Take's his face mask off. Hard to read him.

DR. MATHIS
Mr. and Mrs. Frazier?

Denise turns hoping for the best. James stands beside her.

JAMES
How is he doing?

DR. MATHIS

We're going to need to keep him.
Run more test.

DENISE

What's wrong?

DR. MATHIS

Kidney failure. The seizure saved his life. One kidney completely gone. The other isn't well enough to survive on.

JAMES

He's going to need a donor? That's what you're saying?

DR. MATHIS

Yes. That's what I was getting to --

DENISE

That could take months. We don't -- he doesn't have months!

JAMES

He needs to be on the list NOW!

DR. MATHIS

Mr. Frasier, there's more to it than that. Brenden's blood type is AB negative. Only 1 in every 170 people have that blood type. So we would need a kidney from a donor with that exact blood type.

CUT TO:

A needle piercing flesh -- it's being filled with blood.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY

James rolling down his sleeve. Head hung low as he drifts down the hall.

At the end of the hall, Denise looks into Brenden's room. Her eyes well up with tears.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Brenden, hooked up to a dialysis machine.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - LATER

James has dozed off, snoring. Denise sleeps lightly on his chest.

DR. MATHIS (O.S.)
Mr. Frazier.

Denise awakes first. Hope in her eyes.

DENISE
Are we a match? Please tell us
we're a match.

No smile, no frown. Nothing -- Dr. Mathis shows no sign of emotion.

DR. MATHIS
Mrs. Frazier, I'd like to speak
with Mr. Frazier alone, if
possible.

Denise knocks James in the chest -- he jerks erect.

DR. MATHIS
May I see you in my office?

James goes to get up when --

DENISE
No. No! Our son is dying. We don't
have time for private --

JAMES
Calm down. Let him do his job.

DENISE
His job is to save our son's life!

DR. MATHIS
And I assure you both, we're doing
all we can --

DENISE
Then why are --

JAMES
Denise, shut the HELL UP!

Silence. We could hear cotton drop.

JAMES (CONT'D)
(less aggressive)
Let the man do his job.

DENISE

I'd be damned if I let him speak to you without me present. Not at a time like this.

Dr. Mathis shoots James a look. James shrugs. He just wants this over. Denise has a blank look on her face.

INT. DR.MATHIS' OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Cascade clean.

Not too grand. Just the basics: a desk, some books, a few plaques and pictures.

Dr. Mathis sits behind his desk. The couple sits in front of him. Optimistic.

DR. MATHIS

Well, this one of those extremely rare occasions where both parents have a matching blood type.

The couple exhales in relief. A weight has been lifted.

DR. MATHIS

But --

JAMES

So he can take mine. I can survive with one.

DR. MATHIS

Well, Mr. Frazier, it's not that simple.

DENISE

(angered)

YOU JUST SAID IT WAS! YOU STOOD RIGHT OUT THERE AND TOLD US IF OUR BLOOD WAS A MATCH THEN HE COULD HAVE ONE OF OUR KIDNEYS. THAT'S WHAT YOU SAID!

DR. MATHIS

Mrs. Frazier, under normal circumstances it would, be but this case is different. Whenever we take blood or do a transplant, we have to run test. Unfortunately, the blood that we took from both of you came back HIV positive. It's important to know...

AS Dr. Mathis continues, his voice fades under the chaos we hear going on inside Denise's head. We hear a bunch of voices talking at high speed -- like a tape recorder being played back super fast.

Dr. Mathis stares at them. For the first time we see emotion on his face.

Denise makes a confused attempt at words but none come out.

Webs of spit... snot bubbles... red eyes -- all in a matter of moments. This is UGLY.

James is heartbroken but too afraid to console her or even utter a word. His head hangs low. He dares not to even look her way.

Denise tries to push the confusion away. She stares at him. Second by second her sorrow turns to madness... THEN to fury - - and for a moment Brenden slips her mind. And that lapse of memory turns into a fit of Rage --

And with NECK BREAKING SPEED -- she pounces onto James!

Her hands around his throat, fingernails in his neck, over powering him like a lion would a lamb.

It happens so fast that it takes a moment for it to sink in. Mathis is afraid. He cautiously runs to her, does his best to pull her away, but neither man is as strong as Denise right now.

DR. MATHIS
Mrs. Frazier! Mrs. Frazier!

INT. HALLWAY - LATER

Security escorts a bloody James into a hospital room.

INT. DR. MATHIS' OFFICE - SAME

Denise shakes like leaf in the wind and, for the next few minutes TIME STANDS STILL...

DENISE (V.O.)
I really thought I had the perfect life -- well as perfect as God wanted it. Ten years with the same man. Never thought I needed routine test, at least not for STDs. We had loyalty, love, trust, the things relationships are built on. You know... I questioned God, why at that time? Why now?
(MORE)

DENISE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Not when my baby needs a kidney. He shouldn't have to suffer. At least let him live. Fortunately, he answered me. Brenden got a donor. Had Brenden not been sick, how many more years before I would have known?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - DAY

Full of high school STUDENTS and TEACHERS all moved and inspired, some even crying.

Denise stands behind a podium.

DENISE

Needless to say I've never forgotten that day. I've spent my life since then sharing my story, raising awareness and praying that this would never happen to anyone else. You may meet someone that says they're clean. Don't feel like you don't have the right to see the test. If unprotected sex is something you feel comfortable doing, then going to get tested together shouldn't bring you any discomfort. And a test may be as recent as two months ago, but who knows what's went on since the last time they were tested. I don't want any of you to be victims. You can live a good live with HIV, but live the best life you can WITHOUT IT.

A roar of APPLAUSE...

FADE TO BLACK.