

After a few beats, Ronnie and Emilia enter. Ronnie hugs Meg.

EMILIA

Sorry about the haz mat guys. It's like an obstacle course out there.

MEG

What are they doing?

RONNIE

Disaster restoration. Our regular handyman can manage the plastering and painting, but we needed someone to come through and...clean up.

MEG

I hadn't even thought of that.

RONNIE

Police gave me their number. I wouldn't have been able to... I wasn't even sure I could walk through the door this morning.

EMILIA

Ronnie wants to do a grand re-opening after the repairs are done. Let the community know we're not going anywhere.

START

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RONNIE

Thanks for coming in to talk with Jennifer.

MEG

I don't think I was much of a comfort. She told me about her plan for the funeral. I tried to discourage her but...

RONNIE

I get where she's coming from. The hardest thing to change is peoples' hearts. Sometimes you have to disrupt complacency for that to happen. Maybe it's what the Towsons need.

MEG

While they're burying their daughter?

RONNIE

Plenty of activists would say that's the perfect time.

MEG

Sure, if you want to be like the Westboro Baptist Church.

RONNIE

35 years ago I was part of a die in at the White House to protest Reagan's response to AIDS. Mitterrand was visiting at the time and a photographer from *Le Monde* took a picture

(MORE)

RONNIE (cont'd)

of me being hauled off by the cops. People said our behavior was disgraceful. We'd created an international incident. Embarrassed the President.

MEG

That's not the same--

RONNIE

Two weeks later Reagan said the word AIDS in public for the first time. I'd like to think we were a small part of making that happen.

EMILIA

Hell yes you were.

RONNIE

But now that I'm a bureaucrat? Now that I need donations and good PR to keep our doors open? I'd never take that kind of risk.

MEG

First of all, bureaucrats don't wear Birkenstocks. And second of all, you can't fix every problem with the same tool. Sometimes marching through the streets is the way to make change. Other times a calm, measured conversation is more effective.

RONNIE

Maybe. But most of those conversations would never happen unless a whole lot of marching happened first.

(beat)

I've got some paperwork to get to.

END

MEG

Ronnie, I'm not trying to--

RONNIE

Don't be a stranger, Meg.

Ronnie exits.

Meg begins to follow Ronnie but Emilia catches her hand, draws her back.

MEG

I didn't mean to upset her.

EMILIA

It's not you.