

4.

*Semi-darkness*

*Only the hallway light is on, which can be seen from the locker room door.*

*David is sitting on the locker room bench, in the same spot where Brandon was sitting in the previous scene.*

*Anna approaches through the hallway. When she arrives, the locker room light goes on. She is startled to find the man there.*

**David.-** Pardon me.

**Anna.-** What are you doing here?

**David.-** Who are you?

**Anna.-** I think it's you who should be telling me that.

**David.-** My name is David. Who are you?

**Anna.-** The manager of the swimming pool. You can't be here. This place is for staff only.

**David.-** Yes... there's a sign saying that.

**Anna.-** You should leave.

**David.-** My son takes lessons with the seahorses.

**Anna.-** That may be, but still... You can't be here.

**David.-** What's the name of my son's coach?

**Anna.-** You don't know?

**David.-** No.

**Anna.-** Brandon.

**David.-** Is he gay? Homosexual.

*Long pause.*

**Anna.-** Excuse me, but... I don't see how that's anybody's business.

**David.-** Is he?

**Anna.-** I don't know.

**David.-** You don't know?

**Anna.-** No.

**David.-** You don't know what kind of person is coaching a children's group at your pool?

**Anna.-** I think that/

**David.-** You don't know.

**Anna.-** And you don't know the name of your son's coach.

*Pause.*

**David.-** Are you questioning... or suggesting that I don't pay attention to my son?

**Anna.-** I didn't say that. Just that he's been taking lessons for half a year.

**David.-** I know.

**Anna.-** And you don't know the name of his coach.

**David.-** Don't change the subject.

**Anna.-** I'm sure that your son has said his name many times when he's talked to you about the pool.

**David.-** I must have forgotten. My son is very talkative. He talks about a lot of things. He must have mentioned the name, like one of his teachers or friends.

**Anna.-** Uh-huh... What's your son's name?

**David.-** Kevin.

**Anna.-** We have two Kevins in this group.

**David.-** Kevin Barnes.

**Anna.-** A very nice boy.... He says he wants to be a lifeguard and... he talks about his sister a lot. His sister was born recently, isn't that right?

**David.-** Don't make nice with me.

**Anna.-** (...)

**David.-** What are you trying to show me, that you know the children well? I don't doubt that you're good at your job, but you know that I didn't come to talk about that.

**Anna.-** This must be the first time that you've come to the pool.

**David.-** My wife is the one in charge of picking him up and dropping him off.

**Anna.-** And today you've come here, and in between lesson hours...

*Pause.*

**David.-** I've already asked you once. The seahorses' coach... this Brandon. Is he gay?

**Anna.-** I don't know. And I think that even if he is homosexual, that's his business and nobody else's. Not yours, and not mine.

**David.-** He's my son's coach.

**Anna.-** Whatever the case may be, that isn't important.

**David.-** It isn't?

**Anna.-** Would it be a problem for you if he were homosexual?

**David.-** No. I wouldn't have any problem with that. But I would if he were a pervert.

**Anna.-** I've known Brandon for a long time. He is one of our best coaches. He is a good person and very professional.

**David.-** I don't doubt that he is professional, but how do you know that he's a good person?

**Anna.-** I know him.

**David.-** You do?

**Anna.-** Yes.

**David.-** But you just told me yourself that you don't/

**Anna.-** How did you get in here? The pool is closed between lessons.

**David.-** That isn't important either.

**Anna.-** You can't be here.

**David.-** You know what I'm talking about.

**Anna.-** Have you come to look for him?

**David.-** Yes.

**Anna.-** What were you thinking... It's lunchtime. He's not here. And this is not the way to go about it.

**David.-** It's about my son.

**Anna.-** I assure you that there's no problem.

**David.-** You assure me?

**Anna.-** Yes.

**David.-** How can you assure me that he's not a pervert? What is going on in his mind when he grabs one of the children? Like my son, for example. Do you think it's normal for him to hug and kiss them when they're in the water?

**Anna.-** Some movements were interpreted wrong. That's what it seems like.

**David.-** I see you've heard about it.

**Anna.-** Yes.

**David.-** Other children's parents also told you.

**Anna.-** Yes. Brandon/

**David.-** Is a good person and very professional.

**Anna.-** Yes.

**David.-** The other children's parents said the same.

**Anna.-** Yes.

**David.-** Have you spoken to him about it?

**Anna.-** No.

**David.-** And yet you're willing to walk on coals for this guy.

**Anna.-** (...)

**David.-** You don't care to find out/

**Anna.-** I already told you. I have no right to ask him, or any of the staff, about their private lives. I've never done that and I never will.

**David.-** We're worried. My wife saw a comment on Facebook, posted on the group we have for the parents of kids taking lessons.

**Anna.-** On Facebook?

**David.-** Yes.

**Anna.-** Who did that?

**David.-** So what?

**Anna.-** Is that visible to everyone?

**David.-** Only the members of the group.

**Anna.-** This is a very serious accusation.

**David.-** It's normal for parents to worry.

**Anna.-** But to write that, carelessly on Facebook... without knowing for certain...

**David.-** Do you have children?

*Pause.*

**Anna.-** That's setting off a false alarm. Can you delete comments after they've been posted?

**David.-** Is that what you're worried about?

**Anna.-** It seems hasty and...

**David.-** Only parents are members of the group.

**Anna.-** Yes, but...

**David.-** To talk about times, lessons, our children... it's a closed group.

**Anna.-** But all the parents can read it.

**David.-** Do you think it's a bad thing that we parents are connected?

**Anna.-** No, but to write that comment seems a bit irresponsible, to be honest.

**David.-** Do you have children?

*Long pause.*

**David.-** You don't. It's obvious.

**Anna.-** What does that mean?

**David.-** It would be hard for you to understand, then.

**Anna.-** Of course I can understand.

**David.-** Do you watch the news?

**Anna.-** Yes.

**David.-** Just two days ago... Did you see what happened at the Scouts center/

**Anna.-** Yes.

**David.-** That center is twenty minutes from here. It's right nearby.

**Anna.-** I know.

**David.-** It's revolting.

**Anna.-** Yes.

**David.-** It's right nearby.

**Anna.-** But that doesn't mean/

**David.-** What do you know about it?

**Anna.-** (...)

**David.-** It seems that he was also a good person. A magnificent person.

**Anna.-** But that has nothing to do with it.

**David.-** One of your coaches spends his time kissing and touching the children.

**Anna.-** Put that way... That's an exaggeration.

**David.-** He kissed a child on the mouth.

**Anna.-** We don't know that for sure.

**David.-** But with something like that going on, do you really find it so odd that I'm worried about the person who coaches my son and goes with him into the locker room, where all the kids change their clothes?

**Anna.-** (...)

**David.-** Look, you don't have children. It would be hard for you to understand. When you're a parent, you walk down the street or through the park and you don't lose focus for even one second. Your heart leaps when you suddenly feel that you've lost sight of your child, even if just for a brief moment. Just the idea that you could get distracted for a second and that someone could drag or carry him into a car to do God-knows-what to him and you'll never know anything about him ever again... If something like that happened to me, I'd never forgive myself.

**Anna.-** I understand you.

**David.-** You do?

**Anna.-** Of course I do, but it seems to me that you're mixing things up. You're making a mountain out of a molehill.

**David.-** You also saw the news.

**Anna.-** And it turned my stomach. You can be sure of that.

**David.-** It turned your stomach and yet/

**Anna.-** Don't you dare question that. But what I am trying to tell you is that that has nothing to do with it/

**David.-** How can you be sure? That's the first thing you told me: "I don't know anything about the guy." About his life. About his intentions. And it seems that you don't care to find out because for you, respect for your employees' privacy is more important than the children's safety and their parents' concern.

**Anna.-** And what should I do, according to you?

**David.-** This guy cannot work with children. He takes too much/

**Anna.-** It was just... Haven't you considered that maybe there was nothing bad behind it and that it just happened spontaneously?

**David.-** A kiss on the lips.

**Anna.-** We don't even know if that's true. It's what the girl said and... You can't come here like this, in this way. This isn't how things are done.

**David.-** He's my son. You're not a mother.

**Anna.-** It's not fair for you to tell me/

**David.-** And it's not fair for you to treat me like I'm paranoid, either.

**Anna.-** Nobody has treated you that way.

**David.-** You're trying to show that there is no problem about something that worries us.

*(Pause)* At home, I sometimes see a man in one of the windows in the building just across from us. He spends all day on the computer. He must be about my age. By his movements, how he types and laughs... He's clearly chatting with someone. With someone he likes. A few days ago, I caught him more than once standing up, taking off his shirt and even unzipping his pants. He must be using a webcam. He doesn't seem to mind that I can see him, or that my kids or any other neighbor might see him too. So just imagine: if this man is capable of doing this in plain sight... I have kids and I'm worried that they'll see him unzipping his pants, but I'm especially concerned that they'll see what's on the other side of that webcam. That one day one of my children

will be on the other side of it... That someone will be able to trick them and talk them into crossing the street and coming up to their home. You know perfectly well that these things happen. When you have children, you can't ever let your guard down. In the street, at the park, at school... Sometimes you see people looking at your children. Normal people. You never know why they're looking at them. Never. When a child is involved, you can't help but distrust adults. Do you understand me?

*Long pause.*

**Anna.-** I already told you, Mr. Barnes. You can't be here.

**David.-** I'm leaving.

**Anna.-** Thank you.

**David.-** But you still haven't told me what you're thinking of doing with this guy.

**Anna.-** (...)

**David.-** You're not going to say anything?

**Anna.-** You said you were leaving.

**David.-** This guy... The coach/

**Anna.-** His name is Brandon.

**David.-** This Brandon, when does he come back?

**Anna.-** You really ought to go.

**David.-** So, he'll lead lessons this afternoon as if nothing happened.

**Anna.-** Please, don't make me repeat myself. You can't be here.

**David.-** My son will not be back for lessons.

**Anna.-** (...)

**David.-** You can take him off.

**Anna.-** You'll have to that formally at the reception desk.

**David.-** Can I do it over the phone?

**Anna.-** Yes, you can.

**David.-** I'll do it this afternoon.

**Anna.-** That's up to you. You have every right.

**David.-** You're not thinking of doing anything about it. Can I ask you a question?

**Anna.-** You've already asked several and I've told you that the privacy/

**David.-** It's a question about you.

**Anna.-** (...)

**David.-** Why?

**Anna.-** (...)

**David.-** Team loyalty? Why do you believe so strongly in defending the right to privacy? Out of prudence? Lack of awareness? To save time? Or... What's going on in your head right now?

**Anna.-** (...)

*Pause.*

*David makes to leave.*

**Anna.-** Yes. I have a son.

**David.-** Why didn't you tell me that when I asked you?

**Anna.-** My son... *(Pause)*. He'd be twenty-three now.

*Pause.*

**David.-** Excuse me...

**Anna.-** There are some things that shouldn't happen.

**David.-** I didn't want to... Really, I'm sorry, but... Just know that we parents aren't going to just sit on our hands.

*Pause.*

**Anna.-** Go now, please.

*David leaves.*

*Anna remains pensive for a moment.*

*She turns off the lights in the locker room and stands in the darkness, only slightly illuminated by the light coming in through the doorway and the long hallway in the background.*

*She sits down. She starts to cry but quickly tries to overcome it and regain her calm. She picks up the phone and makes a call.*

**Anna.-** Hello, this is Anna. (...) Please make sure that all the doors are closed. (...) Yes. (...) No, there's nothing wrong. (...) Have the coaches arrived yet? (...) Where are they? (...) It really doesn't matter... (...) Yes. (...) Well, have them ring the bell when they arrive for lunch and let them in, but then close the doors. (...) Thanks.

*Matt enters the locker room. He turns on the lights.*

*Anna is sitting in the dark.*

**Matt.-** What are you doing in the dark?

**Anna.-** Nothing. I have a headache. A migraine. It must be a migraine.

**Matt.-** Or are you just trying to scare us?

**Anna.-** I'm not in a joking mood. I told you that I have a headache. When Brandon gets here, tell him I'm looking for him.

**Matt.-** All right.

**Anna.-** It's important.