

MISSED BEHAVIOR

Written by

Alexander Hill

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

A desk takes up most of the space with a children's office chair in front and a large leather bound chair in back.

JOYCE, 20s, long blonde hair, swivels in the larger chair. She reads through a mental health pamphlet over stacks of loose papers.

A KNOCK at the door.

Joyce stuffs the pamphlet into a folder, and lays it on the pile. She stands and heads to the door.

MIKE, 30s, Dickies work suit, opens the door before she reaches it. Joyce puts out her hand, but it's rejected.

JOYCE

Thanks for coming, sir. I am --

Mike presses past Joyce and drops into the chair behind the desk.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

-- Ms. Joyce, your son's teacher.

Joyce shakes her head, smiles politely, and sits in the smaller chair in front of the desk.

MIKE

I'm Mike, the boy's father. What's so important that I'm here instead of at work.

Mike slides the chair forward, maintaining eye contact with Joyce.

JOYCE

I apologize, Mr. Miller, I mean Mike. I just wanted to speak to you about your son. Do you mind if I have my folder?

Mike sighs and slaps at the stacks of paper. He looks over at Joyce, holding stacks in his hands.

MIKE

Which one? You really need to get a maid to organize this --

JOYCE

(agitated)
Not mine.

MIKE
Excuse me.

JOYCE
(withdrawn)
I'm sorry. It's not my office.

Mike snickers and leans back in the chair.

JOYCE (CONT'D)
I'm concerned about your son. That
is why you're here.

Mike rises from the chair.

MIKE
Concerns? I'm confused. Are you a
guidance counselor or kindergarten
teacher?

JOYCE
I've just noticed some things and
have a few concerns.

Mike stands over Joyce. She scoots back in the chair.

MIKE
So voice them!

Joyce grabs folder from the desk and removes a drawing from
it.

INSERT - DRAWING #1

A hand-drawn picture of a skull-faced boy lighting matches
under a crudely drawn bed of fire.

BACK TO SCENE

JOYCE
We had a class assignment to draw
what you like to do at home. This
is your son's drawing.

Mike inspects the drawing.

MIKE
It's hot foot.

JOYCE
Hot foot? What is that?

MIKE

It's a game. The boy loves watching tv and playing games. Want me to beat him for it?

JOYCE

Your son brought matches to school. I think he attempted to play hot foot during nap time.

Mike shrugs his shoulders.

MIKE

He's five. It's matches not an assault rifle. I smoke. He must've grabbed a box. So what?

JOYCE

He tried to reenact this drawing. Are you the least bit curious why?

Mike balls up the drawing and chucks it over Joyce's head.

MIKE

Shit. Not really.

Mike heads for the door.

JOYCE

We should really discuss this.

MIKE

We did. I'm concerned about what Pyro Picasso might be up to at home while I'm out.

Joyce meets Mike at the door. She hands him the pamphlet. He looks through it quickly, then discards it.

MIKE (CONT'D)

What is this crap?

Joyce steps back.

JOYCE

It's a counseling program that assists with youth development. Your son is a good kid --

MIKE

You don't have to tell me that. A drawing means he needs special schooling?

Joyce moves further away from Mike.

JOYCE

No, sir. It's not special schooling. He is at a young age and may not be able to fully grasp his emotions.

MIKE

My son is staying right here and just because you're too frail to watch him doesn't mean he needs a fucking shrink!

Mike crumbles the pamphlet and tosses it at Joyce.

JOYCE

Sir, please calm down!

Mike stands over Joyce, balls his fist, and shakes it in Joyce's face.

MIKE

What do you think I need help too?

Mike moves closer then brushes by Joyce; moving back to the chair.

Joyce's hands tremble as she takes her seat.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Calm down, teach. My son acts out ever since his mother left us, but I assure you he's harmless.

JOYCE

It's not about causing harm. This wasn't the first time that your son has shown this type of behavior.

MIKE

Give me another example.

JOYCE

Your son screamed in a girl's face and threaten to hit her when she said he looked nice.

MIKE

Well, that makes sense.

JOYCE

How does that make sense?

MIKE

My son lives in an all-male household. He doesn't cuddle or sing show tunes. He is a man.

Joyce rubs her hands through her hair. She takes a deep breath, then pulls another piece of paper out of the folder.

MIKE (CONT'D)

What's this another painting by baby Hitler?

Joyce lays Drawing #2 on the desk.

INSERT - DRAWING #2

A hand-drawn picture of a man punching a woman while a boy watches tv.

BACK TO SCENE

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Mike notices the drawing and reaches for it. Joyce snatches it away before he can.

JOYCE

(stern)

I am concerned about your son if this is what he thinks of when he thinks about home.

MIKE

I take care of my son. What do you do? You provide daycare for a bunch of brats while playing pretend and doing arts and crafts.

Joyce removes all the papers from her folder. A stack full of drawings lay on top of the desk.

Mike jumps to his feet.

MIKE (CONT'D)

What is the matter with you?

JOYCE

People who can't see when their child is drowning. You are the matter with me!

Joyce rises out of the chair; clutches a group of drawings and puts them in front of Mike's face.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

I am daycare. I am arts and crafts.
I am also someone who knows what it
feels like to feel like this.

Mike tries to stand, but Joyce blocks him. He looks away from her, but his eyes find its way to a drawing on the floor.

MIKE

He has issues. No mother. Barely a
father. He doesn't talk much or
maybe I don't listen.

Joyce backs away and clenches her chest, breathing heavily.

JOYCE

I can't help him here. He needs to
get help there. You may hate me for
suggesting, but I would hate me if
I didn't.

Mike gets out of her office chair; he offers her a seat.
Joyce grabs the drawing on the floor and places it face up on
the desk.

Mike scoops up the drawing and sits in the children's chair.
He stares at it.

INSERT - DRAWING #3

The hand-drawn picture has a father sitting in a room alone
with Xs over his eyes and a boy watching television alone.
The caption reads over the television "Me and Dad".

BACK TO SCENE

Mike places his hands over his face.

JOYCE

Your son is a wonderful kid. I know
it's not my job or place, but he
needs this.

Mike looks back at Joyce and nods his head.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

You care for your son. You wouldn't
be here if you didn't. He is trying
to tell you something here.

Mike nods.

Joyce sits down in her chair. She organizes the papers on the desk and sits up tall.

MIKE
Special schooling? If he needs it.

Mike hands the drawing to Joyce. He smiles.

JOYCE
It's not special schooling. These
counseling services for children
are free.

Mike snickers.

MIKE
How much for adults?

Joyce chuckles. Mike offers Joyce his hand, and she accepts.

THE END.