

THE PAST AND PENDING:
USING CINEMA AS A DIALOGUE TO BREAK DOWN WALLS IN COMMUNICATION

by

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ABSTRACT

The Past and Pending is a feature-length documentary by Samuel Eliot Torres, made as part of the requirements for earning a Master of Fine Arts in Film & Digital Media from the University of Central Florida. The film focuses on a family torn apart by a major decision to migrate to the U.S. from Puerto Rico. The protagonist, Torres, is now trying to receive closure from the events by asking the questions he could not ask as a child, but feels compelled to ask as an adult.

Filming with only one person in the crew allowed for an intimacy and spontaneity that is prized by entrepreneurial digital cinema makers. Without the financial and scheduling constraints of enlisting a large crew, the film was allowed to thrive with a spontaneous and ongoing shooting schedule, controlled entirely by one person.

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Last, and certainly not least, I must thank my family. I am proud to be a son, a brother, and an uncle. I will forever be humbled that each one of them was willing to participate in my film, even when I could not find the words to fully describe what I was doing. All I had to say was "trust me," and each one of them did—and that very act in itself gave me the confidence to get this story out of my conscience as the strongest form of expression I know of—cinema.

For my family.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

My thesis film was originally conceived as *Puerto Rican (American)*, an extension of a short film I made during my undergraduate years. That film, *Mi Orgullo, My Pride*, is a film about exploring the concept of cultural identity through parody. In a proposal I wrote for *Puerto Rican (American)*, the film was going to focus on the decision my parents made to move the family from Puerto Rico to Florida, for education reasons. The decision to make the move had an effect on my cultural identity, because I lost touch with the Puerto Rican culture and quickly assimilated as an American at age seven. Although the subject matter still lingers in my mind as a possibility for a different project in the future, *Puerto Rican (American)* lost much of its initial luster and promise for me, and I grew impatient with not having a clear creative path or timeline in mind.

At the same time, I was re-adjusting to living with my mother and my brother at my house, after making a decision to move back home for financial reasons. I kept having recurring dreams about the swampy swimming pool in the backyard of my house; and when I wasn't dreaming about it, I was losing sleep obsessing over it. The pool had been neglected for several years at that point, and although I had made several attempts and inventions for cleaning it out in the past, I gave up when I felt that I was the only one who cared. Under the suggestion and insistence of Dr. Lisa Mills, a member of my thesis committee, I started writing about it, and eventually realized that the only way to move forward with the film was to embrace what the pool represented. The truth is, I still didn't know exactly what that was—I just knew that there was promise in the idea of “Lake Torres” and exploring why it was causing me so much turmoil.

Personal Documentary Stigma

From the inception of the project, I had admitted to myself that this was a therapeutic film. It's a film that I knew I would not make myself, without the discipline of academia looming over me with deadlines and such. But I had to ask myself constantly: how would anyone else perceive it? Was I only making the film selfishly, or did it potentially have an audience that would want to see it? It was a question that was posed to me on multiple occasions by faculty members, and the only way I could answer it is by stating that, as an aspiring filmmaker, I automatically edit for an audience. I often think, "Will people understand this?" *especially* when making personal projects, because not everything can be stated clearly on camera. This led to another dilemma I was having with the film.

At the time that I was coming up with the concept, there was a wave of personal short documentaries being made in the undergraduate film program. I really started feeling like personal documentaries were sort of developing a bad reputation as a result of this; because it seemed like it was just a trend, and some of these students didn't stop to ask themselves if it really was a worthy story to tell. Many of these films seemed to fit a very specific formula that made me wonder if my film would inevitably fall into the same trappings, artistically. So, on one hand, I was asking myself if I could feasibly go through with making such an explicit film, and on the other hand, I was doubting my skills as a filmmaker to make it original and unique, and ultimately powerful enough to warrant three years of my life.

Much of the inspiration for the film came from Ross McElwee's *Time Indefinite*, my personal favorite film of his. It is a well-structured and balanced portrayal of a specific chapter of his life that feels more universal and accessible than most personal documentaries I have seen.

His use of voice over was what finally made me feel a little more comfortable with accepting the fact that I would have to incorporate heavy voice over in my film in order for it to be as effective as I wanted it to be. I love the sense of humor that McElwee dabbles in throughout the film in the midst of very heavy drama; it's that sense of humor that made me feel more confident to add a hint of dark humor as an underlying motif throughout my film.

Summer 2009

After devoting the first year of graduate school to writing extensive proposals about what I thought my film would become, I decided that I wanted to shoot much of the footage that summer. At this point, my film was still *Puerto Rican (American)*, but the “Lake Torres” concepts were starting to trickle in. What I knew for certain was that I had to focus on the most complicated and difficult person to interview first—my father. The film, in essence, is about him, and I knew that in order for me to understand the film and what I wanted to do structurally, I needed to unlock some of his mystery. So, I set out to spend two months in Puerto Rico with my father, hoping that would be sufficient time to gain his trust on camera.

The first week I was there, I told him I didn't want to shoot any footage. I wanted to gain an understanding of his life there and his routine, and slowly gain his trust. What I wanted to avoid was jumping in too soon and risking his defensive walls going up. I knew that getting him to open up was the key to the success of the rest of the film. When we finally started rolling, he was extremely calm. We sat on two buckets (normally used to store coffee beans) in the middle of the woods, and I asked him about his life story—something I had never heard about coming directly from him. Once I saw how comfortable he was talking to me, and how much he was willing to open up, I had goose bumps. I immediately realized that it was my responsibility with

my film to explain just how rare it is for my father to open up at all. To see him speak so candidly the way he was, immediately made me feel more confident about my project.

It wasn't until the seventh tape, however, that I really started feeling like I knew the direction my film was heading in. The day before, we had shot a tape that felt aimless and haphazard. But the following morning, my father woke me up and told me that he had been thinking about our conversations and he wanted to get his thoughts about it on camera. As soon as I started rolling, he started talking and hardly ever stopped to give me an opportunity to ask a question. As soon as the tape was finished, I told him there was nothing else I could possibly ask or potentially get him saying on camera. It was my third week there. The next day, I changed my flight and went home a month earlier than I had planned. This is an excerpt from a journal I kept while I was over there:

Just from the conversations we've been having off camera, I have started to feel some themes surfacing—some are very familiar because I had written about it in one of the proposal drafts. “Sacrifice”—what does it really mean w/ my dad and my family, and how much did he realize he was really sacrificing? This film is barely about me anymore, it seems. It's about establishing clear communication and also paying tribute to my father, the misunderstood “prick” (a word he loves to use to describe himself).

Pool Metaphor / Structure

The idea of using the dirty pool in my film was absolutely frightening to me. But, no matter how hard I tried to forget about it, I kept coming back to the realization that it was too perfect for my film; I would have been a coward had I not used it. It was something that I needed to do personally and artistically, to get the point of my film across the best way. The decision was not easy, as it is obviously a delicate issue with my family, and I really felt like I was walking a tight rope of ethical violations. It wasn't until I had a meeting with my friend, Edgar

Jorge, that I realized the full potential of using it as a three-act structure for my film, without feeling completely forced. The idea was to start the film showing the clean pool, then showing the dirty pool during the darker middle segment that deals with my parents' separation and themes of sacrifice. What I kept having problems with was...how would I end the film? Was the pool supposed to be clean? What if it wasn't?

When I was required to write yet another draft of my proposal for my thesis review board meeting in my second year of graduate school, I wrote a draft of a structure that I felt was incredibly cheesy and ridiculous. I felt pressured to write something down, so I wrote that the film would end with Austin swimming in the clean pool and then I lift him up as if he was Simba the lion in *The Lion King* and the film cuts to the credits immediately afterward. I simply hated this idea, but I really could not think of how I was going to structure it. The idea of writing out my film before editing it was a process that I seriously loathed, and felt was incredibly forced. The concept of the "paper edit" never felt right for me, even if it's how documentary filmmakers normally organize their work; it felt so backwards and pedantic to me. That is one formality in my education as a documentary filmmaker that I really, truly despised—and I will do everything in my power to avoid having to write about my future films in such minute detail.

The Long Lost Sister

I cannot have a proper recollection of my process in making this film without writing about a suggestion that was made at my thesis review board meeting. The meeting was very helpful, engaging, and even powerful at times. Many of the people in attendance wanted to just know more about my family and they were trying to make suggestions on what to focus on that would make for a dynamic and important film. I casually let it slip that I have a half sister that I

have never met, who lives in Houston, Texas; but I quickly dismissed the idea of incorporating that into the film, because it simply was not *at all* in line with what I was trying to accomplish. However, a heated argument ensued, and the group of people were quickly divided into the “Pro-Long Lost Sister” route and the “Anti-Long Lost Sister” route. It was a very interesting exchange that I will probably never forget, because it gave me a lot of insight into the influence other people can potentially have on personal films, therefore making them *more* for the audience than for any other reason.

Suddenly, it wasn’t so much about “Am I making this film with an audience in mind?” but more about “Can I really compromise my vision for this project, based on creating what almost sounds like a Lifetime Original movie?” I felt like I was at a studio head meeting that I see portrayed on television and films; where everyone is after expanding audiences, getting more exposure, and creating more revenue. After that debate finally fizzled, I walked away feeling a lot better about my swimming pool metaphor, because it did not feel forced. The project was conceived with the pool metaphor in the back of my mind as an influence, but it took several possible wrong turns to make me realize how powerful and impactful it was going to be.

Procrastination

Over the years, I have come to realize that the only way I can really get things done is to get them done at the last minute. But, this isn’t because I am lazy. For some reason, I can only make something work effectively when I have a lot of pressure on my shoulders. Case in point: 36 hours before I screened the first rough cut of my film, it was only 39 minutes long. By 7AM the next day, it was 58 minutes long. I’m not writing about this to brag, by any means. I am writing about it to show an accounting of my process in making this film. It’s not that I literally

came up with the last 19 minutes the night before—it's that it had been marinating in my head for years, and I've finally come to realize that I cannot control my enthusiasm about a project. I let the deadlines and the pressure do that for me, and then I retain such a sharp focus, that I legitimately frighten myself.

22 hours before I screened my film, I shot the last three shots. My mom was cleaning the pool, and I walked up and asked her if I could get footage of her in the act. She gave me a weird look and was visibly uncomfortable with the idea. I then flat out told her what I hadn't been able to just muster up the courage to proclaim before. I told her I understood that it felt like I was exploiting her, and that it was a really uncomfortable thing for me to shoot, but that I needed her to trust me, because I had an idea of what to do with the footage that could make it a really beautiful gesture. Then, I told her there was a possibility I might not even use the footage at all (but I always knew it was going to be the last shot). So, the last footage you see in *The Past and Pending* was literally all the footage I shot of my mother cleaning the pool, less than a day before I was required to screen it for the first time.

One week prior to that, I was finally able to get an interview with my sister, Jessie. And, just as predicted, it went down to the wire. But I quickly realized that, although it may look like insane procrastination to most—there really was a method to my madness. There's a reason I stayed a month in Puerto Rico to shoot footage of my father, and why I chose to shoot that first and Jessie last. I needed to make sure that by the time I shot Jessie's footage, I knew *exactly* what I wanted to get out of that interview, because I knew her time and her patience for the project were limited. So, when all was said and done—I had almost seven hours of interviews

with my father to pull from, and only 30 minutes of an interview with Jessie to pull from. The difference is that the 30 minutes with Jessie felt like the last tape with my father.

What I've come to finally just accept is that procrastination is what brings out the best in me, creatively. I really do not think I would have been able to edit the third act of *The Past and Pending* without having it go down to the wire. It would not have been the same film; and although it may seem like my process is unprofessional and ridiculous, I really feel proud of my work and I feel like it stands on its own without needing to be judged on how it got to that point.

Maturity

I always knew this film was going to take quite a bit out of me during the three years of working on it. The third and final year was always supposed to be the most difficult, but early on, I found myself dealing with unforeseen personal dilemmas that could have very easily derailed me from my goal to finish this film and graduate. When I confirmed that I was definitely using this premise as my thesis film during my interview to get into the graduate program years ago, I justified it by saying that there was nothing else that I felt I needed to do at this point in my life, other than to make this film. It sounds grandiose and melodramatic, but I really do feel that this film is not only a time capsule for myself, but a way of capturing the essence of who I am at my core. Failure was simply not an option at any point, because we're not talking about an unproduced screenplay, or a film without a real ending or a clear protagonist—this is my soul on film. And although it may seem like my vulnerability was a big gamble or a sign of weakness, I look at it as an act of resilience and confidence.

CHAPTER TWO: PICTURE



Figure 1: My father draws parallels between my childhood and his.



Figure 2: My mother explains the "death of a dream."



Figure 3: My mother and father at their wedding.



Figure 4: Angel, opens up about the transition.



Figure 5: David plays a song he wrote about our grandfather.



Figure 6: Jessie explains her stance as a new mother.



Figure 7: My mother and Austin, pointing at the airplane in the sky.



Figure 8: My obsession with my past, as part of the prologue of the film.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH MATERIALS

Independent Research

For *The Past and Pending*, I conducted research on topics ranging from cultural displacement, to theories on nostalgia. When I first started working on the project, my research was focused more on Puerto Rican culture, because it was basically a different film. Once I decided to make my film more of a family story, it was suggested to me that I conduct research on divorced families and how children cope in such scenarios. It took me a while to figure out exactly what kind of research would benefit my film, but eventually I read books on ethnographic film, family therapy (specifically with Hispanics), coping with becoming your elderly parent's caretaker as an adult, and immigrant identity. But the most important books I read were about nostalgia and how the idea of it affects us as people and adults. That was the only research that actually affected the way that I looked at my film. The following includes excerpts from all my research, however, to demonstrate the variety of materials I read through in an attempt to connect it to my approach to the film.

Cultural Identity

Doing research for this film is complicated and somewhat unorthodox. In the early stages of conception, when I basically only knew that I was going to be making a film about rediscovering my Puerto Rican identity, I did some research on assimilation. My sister, Angel, bought this book for me about Cubans in Miami, City on the Edge, by Alejandro Portes and Alex Stepick. It specifically gives pretty startling statistics about how Cubans really did not assimilate in Southern Florida, and that they basically treat it as an extension of Cuba. There's a specific example of this that stood out for me, in that there was a barbershop that said "Est. 1816" or

something to that extent—which made it impossible for it to have existed in the city of Miami at the time, therefore drawing the conclusion that they were treating it like it was Havana (Portes 22).

For a while, I was really set on doing solid research on my film, and I met with several professors at the University of Central Florida to get their suggestions for what kind of literature or what kinds of music or films I should be watching for the type of film I was making. In speaking to Kristin Congdon about some ideas, she recommended I speak to Cecilia Milanes at the English department. Although she did not have any direct links or literature about Puerto Rico, specifically, she let me borrow some books, and cited several key articles and essays that might inspire me. One of them was Gloria Anzaldua's "How to Tame a Wild Tongue," which right away caught my attention and triggered certain repressed memories with one of the first sentences in the essay:

I remember being caught speaking Spanish at recess—that was good for three licks on the knuckles with a sharp ruler. I remember being sent to the corner of the classroom for "talking back" to the Anglo teacher when all I was trying to do was tell her how to pronounce my name. If you want to be American, speak "American."

This made me remember what it was like to move to Florida, something I have a terrible memory of, until something triggers the thoughts in my head. This specific passage made me remember that when I came to Florida, I did not speak English fluently. It's very strange to think that, because I don't remember ever not speaking English, or maybe the repression is a result of my brain not being able to process a proper translation of the memories? Several things have stuck with me in Spanish. For example, when I lost my password for my online banking recently, I had to give the attendant at the bank my social security number, and I paused and had to translate it from Spanish to English in my head. The lady gave me a puzzled look, and it's understandable

why, but Gloria Anzaldua's essay was able to make me feel at ease, knowing that someone else has gone through similar ordeals.

My sister, Angel, also sent me a very fact-based report on the 2000 Census that had some startling facts about the children of Puerto Rico and just how many are leaving the island, compared to the previous generation. The article, "Children in Puerto Rico: Results from the 2000 Census," by Mark Mather, states that "between 1990 and 2000, the number of children in Puerto Rico decreased by five percent" and also that "in 2000, there were 3.4 million people living in the 50 states...who identified themselves as Puerto Rican." The statistic goes on to explain that there were nine Puerto Ricans living in the United States for every ten people living in Puerto Rico. These facts just put some things in perspective for me, and made me feel more empowered to bring a voice to one of the five percent that left between 1990 and 2000.

Nostalgia

“The special place accorded the ‘beauteous’ past of nostalgia in feeling and action is further attested to by the fact that, in English, at least, there exists no antonym for it, no word to describe feelings of rejection or revulsion toward one’s past or some segment thereof” (Davis 14).

When I decided to do research on nostalgia, a light bulb all of a sudden went off over my head. The very first book I read on the topic, Janelle L. Wilson’s Nostalgia: Sanctuary of Meaning, instantly grabbed my attention with the opening paragraph in the preface:

“While nostalgia can, on occasion, be dysfunctional for an individual (e.g., keeping one from facing the present and doing what is needed for proper functioning in the here and now), it is also possible that nostalgia can be quite beneficial. Placing oneself—in the past, present, and projecting into the future—is vital to each of us. The experience and expression of nostalgia need not be merel an escape, nor does the past need to be viewed as static. Individuals decide—in the present—how to recall the past and, in this process, imbue the past with meaning, which has evolved over time and is relevant to the present (Wilson 7).”

Just from reading that, I finally felt like I found scholarly research that supported my decision to even make this film. It gave me a lot more confidence to then use this research as means for creating the first segment of my film, which I believe, is deep in the roots of nostalgia and my obsession with the past. I find it interesting that in its original sense, nostalgia was considered a disease. I had heard it referred to as “the Irish disease” before, when taking film history courses on John Ford and the nostalgia influence on his westerns, but I never knew it was literally considered a disease at one point. But when Wilson writes, “Nostalgia, in its ability to facilitate continuity of identity, can help to provide a sanctuary of meaning—a place where one feels she knows herself; where identity has safe harbor” (Wilson, 10), that can easily be the thesis statement of my entire film.

The chapter in Wilson’s book on displaced nostalgia—“individuals expressing nostalgia for times not even known to them firsthand” (Vanderbilt 131), made me realize that the nostalgia that I was exploring in my film was not just my own, but also my father’s. His insistence that he did not have too many memories of his past, and the borderline sociopathic stories he *does* remember, make this particular section of the research extremely interesting. Although, ultimately, it’s not something that made the final film; it felt too complicated of a topic to address casually in a voice over. I will say that it did have an indirect influence, especially on the segment of my film where I speak about how I felt like I was doing the same thing my father did when he was my age, only I’m doing it to move on and not to spend the rest of my life retracing my memories and hoping to fix them with my family.

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Memoir Assignment

The following is a non-fiction story I had to write for a college creative writing class in 2007. It works well as a prequel to the film and its treatment; and it just so happens to be titled *The Past and Pending*.

The first time I tried to get my passport photo, I made a conscious decision to look as haphazard and unkempt as possible. The reactions from all the airport desk clerks and terminal attendants had potential as a running joke during what would otherwise be a series of pit-stained tumultuous trips from hell. However, when I proudly showed the photo to my mom, she showed great concern for my stupid little gag.

“Sam, they are going to strip search you. They’re gonna think you’re on drugs, and they are going to strip search you,” she annunciated her words very carefully.

There was an awkward silence, and a small victory by my mom was most likely assumed.

“Besides, you have to get a new picture anyway.”

“Why’s that?” I asked.

“Your ears aren’t lined up with the guidelines on the sides. They’re real strict about that stuff.”

I became irate with all the technical nonsense that came with getting this stupid passport. It was something of a surprise to begin with, something that hadn’t even crossed my mind as a chore before I spontaneously decided to go to Puerto Rico in the summer of 2006. But, apparently the laws had changed since my last visit to my birthplace in 2000. I wanted to go on this trip to see my father, not to smuggle illegal Dominican immigrants back into the U.S., as was apparently assumed by the government.

The trip was hyped in my mind as being this epic quest for answers, something of a spiritual journey that just felt integral to my life at the moment. The past year, in particular, had been an incredible exercise in self-examination, and nothing in my conscience felt more appropriate than to *finally* go back to Puerto Rico.

In May of 1992, my parents decided to take a big gamble and move the family from Puerto Rico to Florida. They didn't approve of the educational system on the island, even after enrolling their four children in several private schools. The plan was to move my mom and the four kids over first, and my dad would join us eventually. He had a really good job managing a factory at the time, but felt its demise was inevitable, as sales were dwindling. My dad, who has always been extremely good with numbers, projected that the factory would close down in a few months, at which time, he would move to Florida and live with us again. He never moved to Florida.

Over the years, there were a few family endeavors back to Puerto Rico, but this trip was particularly important because it was my own undertaking. There was no funeral, no wedding, no family reunion. This was me personally re-treading my past and trying to embrace it all: good, bad, depressing, shallow.

One of my favorite moments in flying to Puerto Rico is actually one I always manage to forget until mid-flight. I open the window and every single time without fail, I get the most intense goose bumps at the sight of the clouds casting shadows on the Atlantic Ocean. I've grown so used to sharing this experience with a family member, that I ecstatically looked over at the adjacent seat, but was suddenly reminded that I was alone this time around. I took the opportunity to stare out the window and allowed the stunning image to really permeate. When the plane landed, I was greeted with another welcome surprise that I had forgotten: Puerto Ricans clap and cheer every time the plane lands on the island. I couldn't help but join in myself.

The San Juan airport is so chaotic in its organization, particularly with the crowds of people outside the arrivals gate. My initial impression was that it looked like a movie premiere. There were security guards holding people back as all the passengers retrieved their baggage and

walked out the doors. The shouting, the shoving, the tears—this could have easily been a pack of rabid fans at the back doors of a venue, reacting to their favorite bands after an incendiary show.

Amidst all the chaos, I made my way through and right away noticed my dad: the bald, white-bearded version of myself, seemingly enjoying his tranquil solitude. The man always had a posture and a way about him that could be interpreted as anti-social or self-righteous. However, once he noticed me coming toward him from the crowd, any kind of mystery to him was immediately shrouded with the smile across his face. I put my bags down and gave him a huge hug. It was the first time I had seen him in almost a year.

During the 2-hour drive back to the apartment, I stared in awe at the mountains on the side of the highway. The bright green giant Chia Pets created this incredible scenery that was unbelievably comforting. I was so used to gawking at silly things in Orlando like the E.T. billboard for the Universal Ride, or the world's biggest McDonalds. I was in a trance now, and it wasn't induced by massive corporations.

“You can put the air on if you want,” my dad said. “It works like it's brand new.”

This was particularly amusing, given that my dad was driving the same Pathfinder he had just bought in 1992, right before we moved away. The wheel was being held with duct tape and the seats were covered with burlap sacks.

“There's a drizzle outside that feels pretty good right now, can I roll the windows down a little more?” I asked.

“Sure, I don't give a shit. I'm just telling you, though, I've never once used that air conditioning for myself. One time, Enid borrowed the car for a long trip and she came back to

the office the next day and said, ‘Torres, the air in that thing is incredible. How is it still running so well after all these years?’ I love sweating my ass off, Sam. It’s as simple as that.”

“Yeah I know dad, we all sweat our fucking asses off when we lived here.”

My dad let out one his trademark laughs: a combination of a cat coughing a hairball and a hyena in heat. Over the years, him and I developed a closer bond through phone and e-mail conversations that allowed us to speak like we were best friends, rather than father and son. I thought it was funny that one time my mom told me, after speaking to him on the phone, that he was concerned with how much vulgarity I was using. My mom quickly pointed out the hypocrisy, given that my brother’s first word was “shit,” and he didn’t necessarily pick that up from TV, either.

“So why did you want to come down here?” my dad asked, after he stopped laughing.

I was taken aback by the immediately dense question.

“It’s really hard to explain, dad.” I had always avoided any real serious conversation with my father, even over the last few years that we had grown closer.

“I told you on the phone that I just wanted to come and see you. I wanted to come down here on my own terms, and really understand what everything really meant to me.”

“So what does it all mean to you?”

“Shit. Are we really having this conversation right now?” I asked.

“Well, I want to know. I mean, do you hate me like Angel does?”

My eldest sister, Angel, had a tumultuous relationship with my father as of late. My mother always claimed that adjusting to life in Florida was hardest on her, because she was just starting high school in a completely different environment. We were all raised bilingually, so the language barrier wasn’t necessarily the problem, but the culture in Florida was entirely different

and she had no friends. She's excelled academically, but personally, she has had a series of pitfalls and has blamed them on the lack of a decent father figure in her life. One night, she called him on the phone and told him to fuck himself, in so many words.

"I don't hate you, dad." I shifted around, uneasy. "But I did go through a phase when I really did, I'm not gonna lie. I never really understood why you weren't there. I didn't know what to say to my friends that would ask if you and mom were divorced. You'd come and visit once a month and then just leave. It was confusing."

"Well, I don't know what your mom has told you about everything, but just keep in mind that it was really hard for me, too. I missed the hell out of you guys."

"Then why didn't you just come live with us when the factory shut down?"

"Sam, I had an opportunity to make money that I knew I wasn't going to be able to make in Florida. When Parker shut down, I saw a chance to give them an offer on the building that they wouldn't be able to refuse. If I hadn't started my own business, you guys would not be able to live as well as you have."

I ran out of steam. There was nothing else for me to say.

"I've always said that I'm not the best husband, I'm not the best father...but I think I'm a damned good provider," my dad stated, proudly.

The uttering of that stupid motto had always frustrated me. When I moved out to college, I had made it a point to form a relationship with my dad that wouldn't be based on occasional bullshit expository summaries of my life. What I eventually learned from this goal was that I was trying too hard to figuratively play catch with my dad. I was focusing too much on the past and what I wanted him to be, rather than the present and what he simply was.

"I always hate it when you say that," I smiled, letting the air out of the tension.

“Shit, it’s the truth. I know I’m a shitty dad. I felt real bad when you told me about the flat tire you got the other day. I wish that-“

“I figured it out. You should be proud of me for that, at least,” I interrupted.

“Yeah but I...I just wish I would have been able to teach you something.”

I wasn’t prepared for such a heartfelt response. This is coming from the man who admitted to me that he didn’t cry when he witnessed his father’s death, and hadn’t shed a tear for him since. It’s not that he had any disdain for him; he just accepted that it was simply his time to go.

“My dad never really showed me how to do shit, Sam. He was an alcoholic. This scar that I have up here,” he pointed above his right eyebrow, “he came after my mom with a pair of scissors and I just so happened to be in the way.”

He looked over at me with a look of combined sorrow and relief. This was the first time I had heard that story.

“I learned how to do everything on my own,” he stated.

Part of me wanted to interject and say, “So did I,” but I didn’t, out of respect for the rare sensitivity of the conversation.

“It wasn’t until I grew older that I actually started liking my dad,” he said. “I would help him out on the field with the coffee trees and it was sort of my time to show off all the shit I learned without him.”

I didn’t know what to say. I wasn’t used to my dad being so candid. The entire situation was so overwhelming, that I could not utter a single word in response. We remained silent for the last half hour of the drive to the apartment. The only soundtrack was the sporadic increase of the rain outside and the splashes from the other cars on the adjacent lanes of traffic.

When we walked through the door to the apartment, the smell of dew and dust was immediately sensed. The temperature in the room, which was normally an unbearable heat due to my dad's hatred of fans, air conditioning, and ventilation, was surprisingly cooler because of the afternoon showers.

I start looking around the apartment for the familiar relics. The painting over the kitchen table that is now bleached with age and humidity. My mom's old piano that is no longer playable with its stiff keys and atrophied wood. The four kids, represented on a mantel through dated framed photographs covered in a thick layer of dust.

"Where's the Locke figure I sent you?" I asked my dad.

"Oh I put that one right over here," he shows me his miniature trophy case of sorts. I recognize some of the Father's Day presents we had all gotten him over the years. The "Best Dad Ever" Oscar trophy was a personal favorite of mine. Then I look over and see the figure I sent him in the mail for Christmas the year prior. It was an action-figure from the TV show *Lost* of a character named John Locke, who reminded me of my father.

"You didn't put batteries in him?" I asked.

"What? He fucking talks?" my dad asked, surprised.

"Yeah, dad. Didn't you read the packaging? It says you need two triple-A batteries."

"Oh I don't think I have those. We'll just go to the store later. Here, let me take your bag."

He took the bag and led me down the hallway to my old room that I used to share with my brother, David. It was now almost completely empty, with an inflatable mattress right in the middle of the room. The wood from the bunk bed that my brother and I used to share was nailed over the windows.

“That’s for the hurricanes,” my dad said, defensively.

“It’s cool, I’m not upset, dad,” I said.

“Well, I don’t know. I know the girls were pissed that I gave away the toy chest they left behind.”

“Yeah, because you were supposed to mail that shit to Florida, don’t you remember?” I asked.

“Sam, I don’t remember anything anymore,” he said, with a half-grin on his face. He noticed that I was looking at the closets. “What’s wrong?”

“Oh, I think I might have a *Simpsons* wallet in there with 20 bucks that I lost when I was 6.”

“No shit? Well, check it out. I’ll go get us something to eat.”

I opened one of the rusted metal closet doors to a piercing, shrieking sound. It wouldn’t have surprised me if I was the first person to open it in years. What I saw was a true portal into another dimension: stacked crates filled with toys, my old “Where’s Waldo?” bed sheets, an Atari with a *Smurfs* game inside. I was stunned that none of this was given away. Then I opened the other closet and found old composition books with my writing and drawings inside, books that I had completely forgotten from my childhood. At this point, I could have cared less about the 20 dollars in the *Simpsons* wallet.

I went on a mission. I was going to look through all the closets in the apartment and completely immerse myself in a labyrinth of nostalgia. There were boxes filled with negatives from my mother’s photography pastime, spelling bee trophies from my sisters, vinyl records, actual family portraits with me as a baby that I never even knew existed. Everything was covered in such a thick layer of dust that I could not help but think that some of the dead skin

cells were mine from my childhood. I was literally leaving my fingerprints on my past, and it started to make me feel very strange.

I started thinking about something that my dad had said earlier on the ride from the airport. “I missed the hell out of you guys.” Throughout my childhood and my life in Florida without my dad, all I ever saw was my mom’s reaction to it all. She was heart broken, severely depressed, and basically incapable of raising four kids on her own. I remember asking her sporadically, “When’s dad coming?” and she would just give me timeline after timeline, up until the moment when I blew up and started rebelling against the family completely in my teens. I had this image of my father painted in my head of a cold-hearted bastard who abandoned his family and felt only monetary obligation to us, when we all needed so much more.

“I missed the hell out of you guys.” It was the first instance where my father actually gave me a glimpse at his take on the entire situation. The relationship that I have with him does not need answers or explanations for the past, though. However, now there’s a little bit of a keener observation of my dad as a unique human being. He leaves his past untouched and unacknowledged in closets, and anything that’s not, like the toy chest and the bunk beds, he either gives away or strips it of its sentimentality.

When he returned later that day with sandwiches and a small bag from Walgreens with triple-A batteries, I looked at him differently.

“Did you find that wallet of yours?” he asked, after chewing his first bite of the sandwich.

“Nah, it wasn’t really all that important, anyway.”

We both continue to eat our sandwiches.

“I got the batteries, if you want to set that thing up right now.”

“Okay, cool.”

I used a tiny Philips-head screwdriver to open the bottom of the toy, inserted the batteries and pressed the little red button.

I looked into the eye of this island, and what I saw...was beautiful.

My dad looked a little surprised, then his face slowly morphed into a blank stare. He then looked over at me and grinned very subtly. And at that moment, I couldn't help but notice the bald, white-bearded version of myself, seemingly enjoying his tranquil solitude.

Treatment

The following pages include a draft of the treatment for *The Past and Pending*, which was reviewed, as a requirement, at a thesis review board.

Rationale / Thesis

My parents have always been very private people who were reluctant to even show affection in front of their four children. About twenty years ago, they decided they were going to try to move the family to Florida in hopes of giving my siblings and me better opportunities. The ultimate decision in separating the family—my father staying behind in Puerto Rico as the “bread winner,” while the rest of us started anew in Florida—was not made very clear to my siblings and myself. This is where I started to think there were communication issues in my family.

As the youngest of the four children, I’ve grown accustomed to being left out of important conversations and decisions in the past, and I find myself wanting to go back and revisit specific topics and moments in my childhood that I never officially received explanation for. In my transition to adulthood, I believe it’s important to clarify past events in my life with my family—in order to maintain a healthier relationship with the people I love most. The biggest issue with the film, however, becomes a haunting question—Am I selfishly dwelling on the past, or am I really doing something constructive?

The Content

One of the biggest challenges in conceptualizing the film, was trying to find a way to sum up my vague ambitions in a more accessible manner for others who would eventually be watching the final product. How was I supposed to turn such a personal goal into something that fits the structure of a film? The solution did not come to me right away, although it was something that had been lingering with me for quite a while. Through many sleepless nights over the last few years, I have thought incessantly about the pool in my mother’s backyard that has not been cleaned in years. I have made several attempts at motivating her and my older brother,

David, to help me jump-start new campaigns every few months, with new ideas and techniques that are “sure to work.” The pool, in turn, becomes symbolic and integral in my film all of a sudden, and gives it a little bit more support than just a series of interviews with my family members. It was just something that I was not sure I was ready to address in a film yet, and even now—I still feel there are ethical reasons (e.g. “Am I exploiting my family?”) that keep me awake at night more than the idea of just getting the pool clean to begin with.

The film will primarily take place within the confines of my mother’s home in Lake Mary, Florida. Years ago, I made a decision to move out of the house to attend college, because I wanted the experience and the challenge of living “on my own,” even though the school I attended was only forty-five minutes away. One of the reasons I made this decision was because I had seen my brother attempt to go to college, only to drop out after his first year. I was convinced that this was because he was “too comfortable” at home and did not feel pressure to finish his degree. When I was accepted into Grad School at the same college, I decided to move back home, primarily for economical reasons. What I did not realize right away, however, was my subconscious reasons for “going back home.”

When I first started the process of conceiving this film, it was almost an entirely different beast. It was supposed to document my struggles with finding my personal identity as either American or Puerto-Rican, and the basis of my film was supposed to be gathering interviews with family members I had lost touch with in Puerto Rico. However, my obsession with the pool in my mother’s backyard soon started to take a forefront when interviewing my father in Puerto Rico in June 2009. Throughout the eight hours of interviews, I realized the extent of psychological turmoil that was going on with my father. It’s amazing how the interview footage so quickly jumps from my father telling me about his childhood that I knew so little about—to

him making incredibly vulnerable statements like “Do you know what it feels like to have someone tell you they stopped loving you?” This is where one of the film’s themes was finally born outside of my brain and in front of the camera—abandonment. Suddenly, the sleepless nights were starting to become more legitimate and in-line with my film’s themes and purpose.

My intent is to record interviews with every one in my immediate family, in a variety of different locations. Of course, there are my mother and my brother, David, who live in Lake Mary, FL with me. There is my sister, Jessie, who lives in North Carolina with her husband and her baby. Then there is Angel, the eldest (and the one most willing to speak out), who lives in Branford, Connecticut. Finally, there’s my father in Puerto Rico, who I plan to revisit for more interviews in the near future. What’s really interesting is that the hardest location to shoot in is the one I live in currently. It’s difficult to detach myself from the location and consider it a set, and it’s something I’m working toward resolving.

The interviews and the footage I plan on capturing with my mother will be very revealing and uncomfortable to shoot for me, as well as to watch for the audience. I am very happy with my decision to start shooting my film in the summer of 2009 with my father, because I was able to get a lot of material to shape what kind of questions to ask my mother. Another irony is that I feel I am closer, emotionally, with my father than I am with my mother—the woman who raised me. In speaking to my mother during preliminary interviews/research before rolling the camera, I was surprised to hear her reaction to my reluctance to pursue the project due to its intrusive nature. Just like my father did with his footage, she is willing to open up old wounds and attempt to clean them out and heal them a little better with my cooperation and the eye of my lens. I am intentionally focusing on my parents early in the process of the film, because their thoughts and

anecdotes will shape much of what I propose to other family members down the road with my camera rolling.

My eldest sister, Angel, is the outspoken child of the family. We're both very close with one another, but it's been a tumultuous relationship that we've both been very patient with. There's this mutual idea we both have of making our family work better, but we have different methods and interpretations of how to go about doing this. She just graduated from Yale with a Ph.D. in Anthropology. She has done a lot of research on child development and is the only one out of the entire family who has frequently visited a psychologist. I think it's fairly evident, that she has invested much of her education in finding out the psychological impact her childhood has had on her adulthood and her personality, and she'd be someone very interesting to speak to about our past. However, in the past, she has dealt with her frustrations with anger, bitterness, and isolation. She told my father off in her early 20s and cut him off for years. My father blames her for ruining his marriage with my mother (something that I consider ridiculous). Angel is Malcom X to my Martin Luther King, Jr. Although the comparison might seem ridiculous, it's actually very apt in that we both want to make a difference in the family dynamic and we both want answers. But I have been doing it patiently throughout the years with a dialogue that finally led to me making this film; she has dealt with her issues spontaneously and violently. Her interviews will be absolutely integral to the film, because she, arguably, has the most time invested in the obsession of making sense of our dysfunctional family.

Jessie was born right after Angel. When they were growing up before my brother and I came along, my dad had no problem proclaiming Jessie to be his favorite. According to my mother, she repeatedly told him that was a bad idea. Although he may have not said it as much, his favoritism was evident even to me in my childhood. I don't have too many memories of how

Jessie was when we lived in Puerto Rico, but I know that she's always been very protective of my brother and myself. When we moved to Florida and Angel went through a sociological crisis, my mother tended to her more than the rest of us. While my mother was at work and Angel was depressed and locked in her room, Jessie became "mother-hen." And yet, somehow, I don't think that I really know her that well. She and my brother David are very close because they are the detached members of the family. Jessie puts up a front that she can handle anything and everything that is dished out to her; she refuses to show any kind of vulnerability. She absolutely detests Angel and has cut her out of her life entirely, for reasons unbeknownst to anyone, really. When my father told her that he thought my mother stopped loving him—16 years after we moved to Florida and he stayed behind—she responded with "Duh, Dad. It took you that long to figure it out?" I am both really excited and really nervous for what kind of footage I get with Jessie. I don't know how willing she will be to sit down and have a conversation about the nature of our family at this point. Although, one key difference that has been factored into her life in the past year is her marriage and the birth of her son (the first grandchild of my parents). I expect this to become a big chapter of my film—the significance and the importance of the first grandchild in the family.

For a long time, I considered my relationship with my brother David to be the strongest of the family. Him and I were inseparable when we were younger, and even going on to high school; we *got* each other. I owe much of my personality and my artistic taste in music and film to him. There's a very poignant bit of home movie footage where my mother is "interviewing" the two of us—when I am two and he is five—and she asks me what I want to be when I grow up. I respond with "como David" (like David). But my older brother David is going through a big crisis with his life right now, and he is in denial. He dropped out of college twice (majoring

in Philosophy), and he's been jumping back and forth to miscellaneous restaurant jobs over the years. During high school, he was in several bands and he eventually ended up in a group that toured America and Europe. He now lives with my mom, not by choice, but because he has a \$25,000 credit card debt. Although we still enjoy similar films and kinds of music, the dynamic has changed and our relationship has suffered as a result. I feel more like the older brother lately, something I've never been to anyone before. He's detached from reality and emotion and he's very thick headed and cannot take criticism or direction from his manager at work, his mother at home, and his new older brother. His story is important because I think he remembers a lot more of our childhood than I do, and he is the essence of the film, embodied in a person. He is the personification of what was already the metaphor of the filthy pool in the backyard. What's very interesting is that in the interviews with my father, he reveals that the reason he bought the house with the pool in Florida was because David "went nuts" for it. Regardless of how accurate this statement is, it's interesting that it's how my father remembered it.

The Approach

The film will all be hand-held and shot on my Mini-DV camera. I am the only member of my crew during interviews with my family, because I cannot see them opening up about difficult subject matter with anyone else but me holding the camera. Throughout 90% of the film, I will be behind the camera. There is some resistance so far from some family members who do not feel comfortable to help me with the project. They want to know why I am recording these thoughts and feelings on tape, and they're very paranoid about what its purpose is supposed to be, in the end. My justification for this is that I have heard many different versions of stories in the past, and many times it becomes a "he said, she said" situation. So, in some ways, what I am

doing is gathering concrete evidence and testimonials, if I were to look at it from a completely detached point of view.

One of the biggest challenges in my approach to the material is finding that line between being *too* attached to the material and then being too subjective. I plan on editing the material all myself, and one of the most valuable assets I have for “evidence,” are my mother’s home movies of her four children. I am also being very cautious with the use of this footage, however, because I don’t want it to become a crutch, or something that is used with empty or shallow purpose. I don’t want to just show off this footage because I have it—I want to contextualize it and find ways of making it extremely powerful, especially to people who are completely foreign to the material. Like I said, it’s a very valuable asset, but it can very easily become a cliché.

Structure

Prologue

The film will start off with a shot of me watching home movie footage that my mother shot of her four children. I will explain how my obsession with my past and my mother’s documentation of it through stills and video, has made me a very nostalgic person. There’s an innocence that’s captured in the footage that makes me wish I could go back and look at everything as an adult to receive some kind of closure on what was really going on, but no one ever felt the need to explain to me. The shot of me watching the footage will have my reflection on one side of the screen (on Final Cut Pro), while the home movie footage plays on the other side of the screen. The back of my head will be in frame, and at certain points of the footage, it will look like I am making eye contact with myself or with my father. Right before it cuts to the

titles, I would like for the footage of me as a child to sync up with my reflection so that me as a three year old is pouting and making eye contact with the reflection of me as a 25 year old.

CUT TO TITLE: THE PAST AND PENDING.

Rough Version of Narration (read slowly):

A few years ago, I made a DVD of all the videos my mother shot of her four children. This was supposed to be a present, but I soon realized it meant a lot more. It was the beginning of my obsession with my past and my family that has finally led to me making this film.

This is an excerpt from what little footage exists of my father in my family's home movies.

In May of 1992, my parents decided to move the family from Puerto Rico to Florida. The plan was to first move my mom and the four kids—Angel, Jessie, David, and myself--and my dad would join us shortly after. He had a really good job managing a factory at the time, but he was convinced he would soon lose it. He was wrong.

Act I: Nostalgia

This segment of the film deals mostly with clarifying a few things about my childhood that I never knew, through my father. This is also where I go over how important it is for me to revisit my past and make more sense out of what was confusing as a child. There will be shots of my old room I used to share with my brother, and shots of the view from the outside of the balcony of the 14th floor, where we lived in Ponce, Puerto Rico. There's a really raw sense of longing in this act. Then it shifts slightly to a segment that goes into my relationship with David and how similar he is to my father as someone almost entirely void of emotion and vulnerability. In this segment, an attempt is made to get him to open up more, even if it's through his lyrics as a musician. The nostalgia segment will rely heavily on home movie footage to emphasize the past and how different things were and how everything seemed to be so much more romanticized.

Act II: The Death of a Dream

This segment deals with my parents' separation and the effect it had on the family, mainly Angel. "The Death of a Dream" comes from a story my mother tells about my father selling a plot of land that we all loved as children and she loved as well. The land was supposed to be used to eventually build a house and start a new life out by the mountains and the ocean. It was sold because my father assumed my mother didn't like it anymore, and she didn't tell him or show him otherwise until the day he was selling it. She told him "it was the death of a dream." A couple of years later, he pitched the idea of moving the family to Florida as "the new dream." This is the segment of the film where the dirty pool is first introduced. When it's first shown, it's not spoken about directly, only referenced by my father as one of the aspects of the house that we were most excited about when shopping around. Later in the segment, after Angel speaks candidly about her difficulties in making the transition from Puerto Rico to Florida, it cuts to my father explaining that he can never leave Puerto Rico, because it is his paradise. Right after that, it shows the pool, and the metaphor is explained through my father and through a shot of me cleaning the pool. The segment ends with a glimmer of hope that maybe my parents can resolve their issues, with my mom explaining that she's open to the possibility of my father moving back and possibly "dating" again. This idea is quickly shut down when my father explains that although he thought about making a special tape for my mother to explain certain things more thoroughly, he dismissed the idea and decided to keep his walls up.

Act III: The Promise

The third act introduces my nephew, Austin. Jessie is finally introduced in this act, and speaks about what she plans on doing differently as a parent with Austin, versus how our parents raised

us. She explains that she never wants anyone to feel sorry for Austin, because his father is in Afghanistan, the same way she never wanted to feel sorry for herself when we were going through the transition from Puerto Rico to Florida. In this segment, it's also revealed that my father did not attend Jessie's wedding, because he could not emotionally handle seeing my mother there and pretending that they were happily married. This is emphasized in this segment to juxtapose the new concepts and insistence on Jessie's part to move forward and not be crippled by self-pity, with my father's regressive approach to life.

Austin is shown as a very happy and energetic little boy, who has a close bond with my mother. The film cuts back to my father who, when asked about a letter I heard he wrote to Austin, relating to the walls he's built around himself over the years, he quickly shuns the question and tells me "that's not for you, that's for Austin," giving some hope for the man to one day be comfortable enough with himself to have a closer relationship with the children in his family. My sister then explains that there's no reason to feel sorry for yourself, and that if you don't like something, you should do something about it. The film then cuts to a shot of my mother cleaning the swimming pool; then it cuts to the credits.

Tape Logs

The following pages include logs of all the footage that was shot for *The Past and Pending*. This does not include home movie footage, which, as mentioned in the film, was already segmented prior to production as a Mother's Day present.

Tape 1 Total: 59:43 Puerto Rico [Lares Farm, Ponce]			
0:01:48	0:02:57	Dad explains his upbringing in Ohio and clarifies his birthplace.	Dad is sitting outside, in the middle of the woods. You can hear all the bugs and birds as ambient sound.
0:04:01	0:06:13	Always feeling second to Mimi, but being okay with it.	
0:07:02	0:09:45	Parallels between his father's decisions as the provider and his own.	
0:10:12	0:11:49	Dads not pulling their weight, but sons being okay in the end.	
0:11:57	0:13:01	Sacrifices to be bilingual: like father, like son.	
0:14:01	0:15:57	Flipping the coin in the air: to be a priest, or a manager.	
0:17:45	0:19:03	Getting the job in PR, asking to see all the people who laughed at him during the interview.	
0:19:25	0:20:59	Meeting his future wife, starting a new life.	
0:21:06	0:22:17	The Catholic University of PR: serendipity.	
0:23:49	0:25:54	"This is my paradise, I'm comfortable here."	
0:26:24	0:28:25	Working the farm with a machete. Slow zooming out of a mountain.	
0:28:15	0:30:02	How Dad coped with us being gone.	Dad is sitting on the couch in the old apartment in Ponce. You can hear the outside traffic as ambient sound.
0:31:09	0:32:13	Sacrifices, what he put up with when he was growing up poor.	
0:35:06	0:38:39	Being judged as an outsider because he was American	
0:40:00	0:43:19	Building his own dream, starting his own business	
0:43:30	0:44:16	We we raised biligually?	
0:44:48	0:46:40	When abuelo died, dividing everything down the middle	
0:47:07	0:49:29	People taking advantage of his generosity	
0:50:58	0:51:40	Getting to know his father as an adult	
0:52:00	0:53:37	Christmas 1991: a religious experience at the hospital	
0:53:56	0:54:06	"I don't need to go see a psychoanalyst to tell me I'm an asshole"	
0:54:49	0:56:09	"I don't have all the answers, God has all the answers."	
0:57:19	0:59:33	"...Angel comes along, I'm number 2..."	

Tape 2 Total: 45:33 Puerto Rico [Ponce]			
0:00:23	0:07:19	The poor education system in PR, reasons for going to FL	Dad is sitting on the couch in the old apartment in Ponce. You can hear the outside traffic as ambient sound.
0:07:49	0:08:49	His parents were sick, what was he supposed to do?	
0:09:15	0:16:20	His plan RE: David. Defining support and what it means to him.	
0:16:21	0:21:06	"You tend to judge, Sam..." (RE: standards of living, etc.)	
0:22:47	0:25:22	"I want to get to know you, not just take your money."	
0:25:24	0:26:57	"Don't think of it as just money..."	
0:28:09	0:32:11	"I don't put too much emphasis on parenting during your childhood."	
0:32:23	0:35:38	The family united through in laws, not through new generation like Austin	
0:36:19	0:39:00	When they say I don't love you, it's over.	zoomed in ECU on his eyes.
0:39:14	0:40:30	"Don't be taping this shit, Sam...take this shit off of me."	taking microphone off.
0:41:20	0:45:23	MISC Shots around the apartment: "Sammy" written on the wall, the door, the light bulb, the light switch	

Tape 3 Total: 57:17 Puerto Rico [Ponce]			
0:00:00	0:00:33	Shot of the outside of the porch at the 14th floor Apt	
0:01:03	0:03:19	Talking more about the decision to move the family, his job in PR.	
0:03:57	0:05:01	The story behind the farm, his rebellion against his father.	
0:06:17	0:07:06	Sacrificing for the farm, eventually turning it over to have the \$\$\$ for FL	
0:08:59	0:10:09	There are no pictures of the family together as one unit.	
0:12:31	0:13:02	My expectations for what I am doing with the video	
0:14:00	0:16:44	Last day of judgement with Catholic faith, and Dad being okay with his life	
0:17:09	0:18:13	His opinion of Angel's choice word of "abandonment"	
0:22:10	0:24:29	Acknowledging that all he did was lie down on the couch and watch football	
0:27:17	0:29:21	The same routine for the last 17 motherfucking years	
0:32:08	0:35:40	Routine in Lares; Prison without bars.	
0:37:18	0:37:53	Lost everything...but "you still have me" (abuela)	
0:41:26	0:44:17	Mom's a hell of a mom.	
0:49:51	0:56:45	Dissappointment with David	

Tape 4 Total: 39:12 Puerto Rico [Lares, Patio Area]			
0:00:10	0:04:40	Misc. Shots of Dad with the trimmer on the farm	Dad is wearing a pink shirt in the patio area of the house in Lares.
0:05:16	0:08:19	Trying to understand living conditions with Abuela; the prison	
0:09:44	0:12:12	Abuela's negativity rubbing off on Dad.	
0:14:10	0:17:04	Military training helps him with Abuela	
0:20:32	0:22:41	"The better I take care of her, the longer I'll stay in this prison"	
0:26:00	0:28:11	Hard labor in prison settings; his recreation time is in the farm	
0:30:19	0:32:45	Letter to Austin; the walls, RE: Angel	
0:32:50	0:33:27	Special tape for Mom; "Fuck it, I'll just keep the fucking walls up."	

Tape 5 Total: 53:09 Puerto Rico [Ponce]			
0:00:06	0:02:05	Shots of Dad driving to Ponce	
0:03:12	0:06:29	Psychoanalysis, he doesn't think there's any chemical imbalance in him	
0:08:01	0:09:13	Is it really a prison?	
0:10:33	0:12:26	How was he supposed to know that Mom wasn't doing okay?	
0:15:39	0:16:59	9-11 and how it affected his company and his plans	
0:17:43	0:19:01	No incentive to go to Orlando, everything's been over since 1998	
0:19:20	0:23:55	The Parker lawsuit that changed his life	
0:24:45	0:30:37	I thought the farm meant more	
0:35:01	0:43:56	Goes over routine...in detail.	
0:50:16	0:52:28	"Your Mom is deathly afraid of me."	

Tape 6 Total: 57:14 Puerto Rico [Ponce]			
0:01:53	0:05:54	Not having to explain himself to anyone.	Dad is lying down on the sofa
0:06:12	0:10:12	Feeling like he's not going to heaven.	
0:13:36	0:15:56	Talking about Jesus Christ and what he had to put up with.	
0:16:30	0:21:03	Multiple choice destiny; but God always knows.	
0:26:45	0:30:19	His memory isn't as good as it used to be	
0:31:06	0:33:07	Hercules the pigeon, bye cat.	
			(rest of the tape was damaged)

Tape 7 Total: 57:20 Puerto Rico [Ponce]			
0:00:04	0:03:09	Father's Day Present	Dad is lying down on the sofa
0:04:01	0:06:13	Angel vs. Jessie: Dad's thoughts	
0:06:56	0:09:45	The swimming pool metaphor	
0:10:12	0:11:49	Stopped being the provider, swamp coincides	
0:11:57	0:13:01	You couldn't do it on your own, as much as you tried	
0:14:01	0:15:57	David tangent about responsibility and finances	
0:17:29	0:19:03	Taking pride in the way the farm looks in Lares	
0:19:25	0:20:59	Freedom, versus the prison in Lares	
0:21:06	0:22:17	Taking the initiative, he's proud of me	
0:23:49	0:25:54	Austin being a reason to clean the pool now	
0:26:24	0:39:06	David tangent...again	
0:40:00	0:43:19	Mom and David being thick headed, stubborn people	
0:43:30	0:44:16	Not feeling sorry for yourself, I'm not a jinx	
0:44:48	0:46:40	Talking about David again	
0:47:07	0:49:29	If you can't see the forest for the trees, fuck you	
0:54:49	0:56:09	Shut down, Sam.	

Tape 8 Total: 58:13 Connecticut [2009]			
0:02:02	0:07:05	What the transition was like from PR to FL for Angel	Angel is sitting outside her house with red brick in the background.
0:07:11	0:10:43	The cultural confusion; she was the only one raised bilingually	
0:11:47	0:15:51	Goofy Puerto Rican names	
0:17:11	0:21:01	We all dealt with the move and the change in our own ways	

0:23:19	0:26:22	The factor of Mom and Dad and that uncertainty.	
0:31:09	0:33:59	Angel missed her 8th grade graduation because of the move to FL	
0:35:00	0:36:43	Rosie and her husband: the reason for why we moved to FL and their divorce	
0:37:06	0:39:19	Americanized offspring of Rosie and Baldo; how that impacted us	
0:43:58	0:46:11	Puerto Rican politics	
0:47:17	0:49:57	What she knows about how Dad grew up	
0:51:46	0:53:16	Mom is weird and all about the U.S.	
0:54:03	0:55:17	Angel's feelings about Jessie/Austin	
0:56:01	0:57:47	Story about seeing Mom and Dad kiss	

Tape 9 Total: 59:26 Connecticut [2010]			
0:00:15	0:04:59	What it was like living with Mom and Dad pre and post FL move	Angel is sitting in her room, her hair is straight.
0:05:27	0:07:44	Her and Jessie were like little witches	
0:08:49	0:10:03	Mom didn't make an effort to look pretty	
0:10:23	0:11:55	Why were they so cheap; the annoyance of feeling poor	
0:13:01	0:13:50	A specific toy Angel really wanted	
0:13:58	0:15:16	Angel felt like she made everyone's life harder	
0:15:44	0:17:08	Felt like an adult, when she was just a child	
0:18:09	0:21:19	Angel's room being taken away and justified by Mom	
0:24:58	0:26:47	Favoritism for Jessie	
0:27:44	0:30:54	Acting for Dad...Acted like she was a better older sibling	
0:34:29	0:36:23	Feeling punished for asking questions when no one else was	
0:38:07	0:42:29	Feeling afraid of Dad, but also being his servants as children	
0:43:51	0:46:06	"To God, We're just Barbies and he moves us around the way he wants"	
0:47:33	0:49:54	Good traits about Dad, him helping with Math homework	
0:53:22	0:57:37	Dad's lack of presence in home movies.	

Tape 10 Total: 57:37 Connecticut [2010]			
0:01:45	0:03:15	It benefitted Mom to have us be afraid of Dad	Angel is sitting in her room, her hair is straight
0:05:45	0:07:44	Dad's lack of a relationship with Mimi	
0:08:19	0:10:06	The impact skipping grades had on Angel	
0:12:22	0:14:49	How much she loved Puerto Rico and misses it still	
0:16:49	0:18:26	She had a reputation for being really smart	
0:19:04	0:23:00	Angel didn't know anyone, didn't play an instrument, felt out of place in FL	
0:24:14	0:28:23	Turmoil with Jessie in FL	
0:29:31	0:35:05	Jessie resenting Angel for being "the star" in our home movies	

0:38:20	0:40:30	Puerto Rican culture, revisited, new languages	
0:41:09	0:43:29	Expectations, lost?	
0:44:10	0:45:57	Relationship with Jessie, Angel thinks there's jealousy	
0:47:00	0:50:38	Blaming a lot of how Jessie is on Mom and Dad	
0:51:38	0:53:55	Jessie wasn't that shy when she was little, maybe got inhibited when older	
0:55:22	0:57:23	Angel was shy, Jessie thought she was brave when they were little	

Tape 11 Total: 49:15 Florida [Mom, 2009]			
0:00:03	0:02:08	Austin water color with Jessie and Mom	
0:05:09	0:08:49	Mom talking about her upbringing, her life in Ponce	Mom sits in her room with Chanel on her lap
0:11:23	0:13:56	Learning English in college	
0:17:24	0:19:47	Meeting Dad through her sister	
0:24:07	0:28:09	The good times had with Dad during the early years	
0:34:00	0:39:13	"He's afraid of being vulnerable"	
0:40:33	0:43:11	Dad's anger issues	
0:46:22	0:48:20	The trip to Sea World and the emotional toll	

Tape 12 Total: 44:49 Florida [Pool, 2009]			
0:00:09	0:00:26	CU of the algae on the steps	
0:00:26	0:03:47	LS of Sam brushing the pool	
0:04:15	0:06:46	OS of Sam brushing the pool	
0:09:43	0:11:47	CU of skimmer flapping	
0:13:08	0:16:35	LS/CU of Sam manually skimming	
0:21:54	0:23:32	LS Reflection of Sam brushing algae from the steps	
			(rest of the tape was damaged)

Tape 13 Total: 60:42 Florida [Mom, 2009]			
0:12:14	0:19:47	Austin runs around the house with Scully chasing him	
0:20:08	0:23:46	Austin and Mom outside by the sprinkler	
0:25:43	0:28:10	Angel and the way she dealt with the move, according to my mother	Mom sits in the kitchen with a brown backdrop and the screen door.
0:33:39	0:36:56	Mom's guilt over the way she handled the situation	
0:42:19	0:44:23	Admitting that she was an enabler	
0:47:53	0:50:01	Dad was not supportive, very stubborn and upset	
0:53:31	0:56:19	He never changed a diaper, etc.	
0:57:32	1:00:30	Mom's response to why she thinks I'm making the film	Scully pants and slobbers in the background during an otherwise poignant moment.

Tape 14 Total: 60:36 Florida [Mom, 2010]			
0:00:56	0:05:43	Being afraid of Dad, why was it necessary? Her fear.	Mom sits in the living room with the clock and the kitchen in the background.
0:07:15	0:09:31	Admitting that she should have taken more of a stand	
0:12:33	0:14:51	Insisting that Dad has good traits	
0:16:09	0:19:49	Starting over, like dating again	
0:23:22	0:25:13	The farm, being upset over him wanting to sell it	
0:25:27	0:31:44	The death of a dream	
0:36:09	0:39:43	Unresolved personal issues with Dad may have had an effect on his parenting	
0:45:32	0:51:16	More details on the move to FL	
0:51:46	0:58:43	The negativity of Abuela, her unhappiness and how that has affected Dad	
0:59:43	1:00:19	Dad's paranoia, lack of trust with his "walls"	

Tape 15 Total: 59:53 Florida [David, 2010]			
0:00:04	0:11:15	David plays several songs on his piano	
0:11:23	0:12:03	MS of Scully dosing off on his couch	
0:12:17	0:14:57	David talks about Dad and Abuelo after playing a song about them	
0:14:58	0:18:26	David smokes outside while we talk about our childhood together	
0:18:27	0:21:14	David is visibly uncomfortable with the camera	
0:25:46	0:29:47	We talk about the meaning behind his cryptic lyrics	
0:30:56	0:37:26	Memories of what it was like living with Dad	
0:39:21	0:43:32	His thoughts on Mom and Dad	
0:44:15	0:44:57	He briefly mentions Annie and Corbin	
0:47:56	0:53:02	What's the point in dwelling on the past?	
0:54:13	0:58:56	Chimes McGavern and Dad's reaction to a song	

Tape 16 Total: 31:06 Florida [Jessie, 2011]			
0:01:36	0:04:56	Jessie's initial reaction to finding out she was going to have Austin	
0:06:16	0:09:01	Figuring out that her and Brian needed to trust each other's judgement on issues with Austin, more than other people's	
0:10:07	0:16:09	Austin having to go to the hospital, not feeling sorry for him	
0:17:33	0:21:23	What her and Brian spoke about doing differently as parents	
0:23:55	0:26:44	Dad not going to her wedding, but how she expected it	
0:27:44	0:29:11	Not feeling sorry for yourself	
0:29:56	0:31:00	Austin knows about Brian being in Afghanistan, because she speaks to him like an adult, not a 2 year old	

Transcripts

The following pages include full transcripts from five out of the 18 tapes shot for *The Past and Pending* over the course of 18 months.

PR Tape 1 (2009)

SAM: Hm. I wrote this down. I wrote a...

DAD: Script.

SAM: I think you and I might have some more experiences growing up in the states, but I've never really known for sure how things worked for you in Ohio. How far do you remember living in Ohio? And do any specific memories stand out that made you feel unsure of what you were: Puerto Rican or American.

DAD: I never had anyone question whether I was Puerto Rican or whether I was Italian or Jewish or anything like that. Eh... Basically where we were at, it was like... I was raised in the ghetto so people knew that we were poor. It wasn't a matter of a racial, eh, difference or prejudice. We were just simply poorer than the rest of the people. Eh... What I most remember is, eh, as far back as maybe is when I was 12 years old. And on the block you had to make friends to survive. Who you hung around with depended on how well you survived. So I had a lot of really good black friends when I was growing up. Eh... We had to be very... In my family, we had to be very protective of my sister. Eh... So she barely left the house except maybe to go to school. And I always accompanied her to school, which was not very nice because as I grew older, people thought that that was my girlfriend. So people, the girls stayed away from me which wasn't really nice. Ahm. Cut off there, Sam.

SAM: But you were...

DAD: My throat.

SAM: Yeah. So you were born here.

DAD: I was born in Arecibo. And for the first two years of my life, I lived just down the road. In a wooden shanty with my mom and my dad and my sister. My dad went to the States. Eh. Because it was supposedly the land of opportunity, like a lot of immigrants do. And then they sent for us. So when I was two years old, eh, we all went off to Lorain, Ohio, where my dad had found a job with Fruehauf Trailer Company. And... I don't know what else to tell you there.

SAM: It's interesting 'cause it's sort of like the opposite of the situation with us. So that he went to the States and then he sent for you. And then we went to the States and you stayed because... And that's ironic because it's sort of... You found a way to make Puerto Rico the land of opportunity.

DAD: What happens there is when my dad went, it was an economic need. And in Puerto Rico, I had a very good job when you guys were born. But we weren't satisfied with the education in Puerto Rico. We were very disappointed with the education. All of you bounced around from school to school, eh, for us to try to find out... to give you the best education. And when I was in Ohio, my dad put us in private school. He sacrificed, even though we were very poor, to put us in private school because he realized how difficult it was with the language barrier. OK? And to eliminate the

language barrier for you, I made the sacrifice to put you in private schools in Puerto Rico. Eh... So that you could speak English fluently. And you wouldn't have any problem. Eh... So it's, it's... education was at the base of both of them. My father put me in good schools so that I would be able to compete with the other American kids because when he came up, he had the language barrier. OK? You guys didn't have the language barrier because you were in private schools learning the language. OK? So that worked out pretty neat.

SAM: But did you have the language barrier?

DAD: No, because I was taken up when I was two years old.

SAM: So why did you go to private school?

DAD: Because my dad wanted me to get a good education. OK? So that, you know, because it was the land of opportunity. And he only got to go to eighth grade in school. So he wanted to make the sacrifice for the two of us so that we would go very far in school and compete, you know, with the other kids on an even cue.

SAM: And you did?

DAD: Oh no. We did better than the average kid, my sister and I. You know. I think my dad knew that. I think my dad knew that if he had parents that would have worried about him, and given him the opportunity to go to school, that he would have excelled. My father easily could have been a lawyer. OK? But he didn't get that opportunity. And not too many people at that time did. But my dad was a very intelligent person, OK? And I guess we have that in our genes. Of course, you know, I was not able to pass that on to you, Sam. [laugh]

SAM: [laugh] What was it like growing up with parents who didn't know English. 'Cause Abuelo and Abuela didn't really speak English. Right?

DAD: No. Everything in the house was Spanish, which was good because we kept our heritage. Eh... We spoke both languages. And things like that. But they got us a TV set. OK? And watching TV and listening to the music, it made it easier for us to learn the English language. So that... He put all the things in place for us to be successful. OK? Eh... The only thing is he was like, much like myself, (maybe that's where I picked it up) he was the provider. OK? He didn't teach me how to play baseball. He didn't teach me how to tie my shoe. He didn't teach me basically how to do anything. He figured, I should figure that out on my own. OK? Which is OK with me because I did. You know? And my not being around for your childhood and stuff like that more or less made you fend for yourself and find out how to do things for yourself. And you're not doing too bad, as far as I can see. At least you learned how to shave.

SAM: [laugh]

DAD: On your own. I cut up my lip; I didn't know how to shave. I was 12 years old and I took the razor and cut myself to shreds. Because the nuns said... Public school said that my face was too hairy. And they needed me to shave. And I didn't want my dad to shave me, so... I cut myself to ribbons.

SAM: What did ah... What did your mom and dad do in Ohio for a living? Or what did your dad do?

DAD: Well, my dad was always a laborer at the... He had gotten a job with Fruehauf trailer company. So he ran a press or something for... for parts that they made for the trailer. And my mom was a stay-at-home mom. But after a while, my dad had purchased a house that had several rooms to rent, and they would rent out to other Hispanics that would come from Puerto Rico to the land of opportunity. And then my mom would be the one to cook for them, and change the sheets, and wash clothes for them. And she would make money doing that to help my dad out.

SAM: Hm. When you had friends and that come over, was it weird with your parents? Was it ever weird to have friends come over?

DAD: No. No. Because my parents wanted us to be exposed to as much as possible. Eh... So, you know, I... All my black friends would come over. And there were hillbillies in the area too. And Mexicans. So, as a matter of fact, Lorain was known as an international city. Eh... I didn't get to meet and rub elbows with the white kids until I went to high school basically.

SAM: And it was still private school?

DAD: No. That was... We finally got to go to public school because my dad realized, we were dominating the language. We were doing very well, as far as the grades that we were getting in school. And he couldn't keep, you know, the amount of money for private school for high school was a lot more. So... Eh... We went to public school, which was good because the public schools [clears throat] in the States are awesome. We went to a school that you got to choose whether you wanted to... basic course, regular courses, college-bound course or honor courses. And my sister and I got to pick and choose what courses we wanted, depending on, you know, if I wanted to take tougher math courses, I took tougher math courses. And because I had that experience of going through that high school, I knew that if I sent my family to the States, they were going to get to pick and choose. And, you know, the girls were highly intelligent. And then there were you and Dave.

SAM: [laugh] Thanks, Dad.

DAD: [laugh] You get to edit. Remember.

SAM: Ahm. So when did you decide or when did your family... I don't know how you ended up back here. You know. How did you...?

DAD: OK. Eh... When I came back to... from the army, to the States, to... to... civilian life, I was guaranteed a job at the steel plant. And I went there, but, eh... eh... And I did an apprenticeship in electronics and all of that at the steel plant. But I always figured: "I could do something bigger than this." And at one point in my life, I had thought about being a priest. So I took a coin and I flipped a coin in the air. And... I took two courses: management course and sociology. And I says to myself, "OK. Whatever course I come out best in, that's the direction I'm going." And I got an "A" in management, and a "B" in sociology. So I took management courses. In a management course... and it

was because at the steel plant they were offering supervisory positions, “token” positions for black people and Hispanic and stuff like that. And I knew that sooner or later, my name was going to come up for a supervisory position. So I thought I would enhance my chances by taking management courses and not having to settle for the fact that I was merely Hispanic and that’s why I got the job. But at... as, as... as things went on, I learned about some companies going to Puerto Rico to get tax exemptions. And I asked my economics professor if he knew of any company locally that was doing that. And he told me about a company called Van Sickle Industries on Route 86. So I went by. Of course, at that time, I had long hair and a leather strap in my hair, like a hippie, and flannel shirt and sandals, jeans. And I went by to apply for the job, and the people were, eh, really stuck up kind of people, well dressed, suits and everything like that. And when I came to the door to ask for the job, five or six of them came over and just laughed at me, and they called more people over to laugh at me because I dared to apply for a job at their ritzy company. So I just forgot about it. Then a year later, from that company, ‘cause I filled out an application, they called me and, ah, I went for an interview. And, ah, I got the job. As part of the requirements for my signing the dotted line with them, I asked to see all those people that were laughing at me when I came a year before. And I laughed in their face when I got the job. And my boss, my new boss, turned around and shook my hand, and said “I’m gonna like you, boy.” Because he liked the fact that I wanted to get even with those people. And then that’s why I came down to Puerto Rico. And I liked it because I could prove to myself that I could work in Puerto Rico, where the Puerto Rican was in the majority, in a management position, and I didn’t get the job because my last name was Hispanic. I got the job because I qualified for it. OK? I was good.

SAM: And then when was the house built that your parents live in?

DAD: Well...

SAM: When did they decide to move back?

DAD: Eh... Basically my sister had already gotten married. And ah... I think I had been in Puerto Rico a year. And my dad was having problems with his health. And he got early retirement from Social Security and they came back to Puerto Rico, and they built a house. Eh... The property that we’re sitting on right now belonged to my grandfather, and my dad inherited seven acres. So he knew he had property that he could build this house on. And he couldn’t see () in that cold weather in Ohio for the rest of his life, so he came back and he built the house. And it helped to know that I was here.

SAM: What year was that?

DAD: 1975, I believe. Something like that.

SAM: Did you help them built it and everything?

DAD: No, no, no. That... My dad was very, eh, independent. As a matter of fact when I came down to Puerto Rico, I wrote out a check for him for \$100 or whatever to help him out, and he ripped it up in my face. He said “I don’t need your money.” You know? ‘Cause he’d always been that way. You know. Just very independent and he did the floor plan for the house himself and he did everything himself.

SAM: And where did you live?

DAD: In Ponce. The company, “este,” eh... put me up in a hotel for a whole week and then I rented an apartment at University Suites, a building right in front of where I currently own an apartment. And, ah, that was it.

SAM: And how did you, how did you ever meet Mom and all that? I never knew how you guys met.

DAD: Apparently [clear throat], eh, my sister, eh, when she decided to go to college, eh, she decided she wanted to come to Catholic University of Puerto Rico. So at the Catholic University of Puerto Rico, she met, eh, Nilda Borrero.

SAM: Is that in... That’s in Ponce, right?

DAD: Yeah.

SAM: That’s right across.

DAD: Yeah. That’s close to where I have the apartment now. And, eh, my dad always had this thing about that my sister and I should have equal of everything. If there was going to be an inheritance, it was going to be divided 50/50. So my sister decides she wants to start studying in Puerto Rico. And I says “There’s no way in hell that I’ll ever study in Puerto Rico.” ‘Cause she decided to study way before I came to Puerto Rico. So she met this young lady called Nilda Borrero and they became really good friends. And she met her husband in Puerto Rico, and stuff like that. And... Nilda had a sister that was sort of a rebel, kind of hippie, and stuff like that, and her name was Vickie. OK? And when I came down to Puerto Rico, I was here about six months, and had the apartment, starving to death—I never learned how to cook. My dad was very adamant about “men don’t cook.” You know. The women cook. The women do the clothes, the wash. The women clean the house. The men just bring the bread home and, and... clean the yard, shovel the snow, rake the leaves, and stuff like that. So... eh... Basically through my sister, I met Vickie. And it was perfect. She was a highly intelligent girl. And... Of course, I didn’t have too many choices. I hadn’t met too many people, so. You know, she looked really good.

SAM: And then... jumping ahead a few years, you had told me before that you named me... that you gave me a name that didn’t sound Spanish, and I didn’t really understand. I thought I understood, but now I understand a little more. It’s that you wanted us to not have any kind of special treatment.

DAD: First of all, you’re always... Torres is always going to be a Hispanic name.

SAM: Yeah.

DAD: OK. Of course, there’s a version of “Joe Torre,” you know. He was the manager of the Yankees and you only take the S’s out of his name and last name and his name would be “Jose Torres,” the same as mine. And they call him “Joe Torre.” But I wanted you to have... First of all, never have my name. I didn’t want to name any of my kids “Jose.” ‘Cause when I was a kid, they had a cereal that instead of Tony, the Tiger, they had Jose, the Cocoloso Monkey.

SAM: [laugh]

DAD: OK? And I didn't want to give that name. Or the old flag thing with the "Jose, can you see?" And all that making fun of my name and stuff. So I wanted to name you, all of you, names that when you would read them in English, yeah, they sounded like Jessica, Angelica, David, Samuel. You know, you actually see them written in English that way. And in Spanish, they're pronounced differently, OK? Angelica, Jessica, David y Samuel (Spanish pronunciation). So it was kind of like the perfect names. OK? But I also wanted to play with the initials. You know? That's why David, we weren't expecting him and I came up with the initials D.E.T. which were actually my sister's initials too. My sister's name is Delia Elvira. I want to make sure that comes out on tape. Delia Elvira Torres. I mean, what a name. Anyway, Dave is David Eric Torres, which initials are D.E.T., same as my sister's. But it sounds like debt. And that's what he ran me into. Then when you came along, it was S.E.T. because I figured I had my set of kids, my set of boys, and I was set for life. I didn't want any more children. And that's why S.E.T. was important to me.

SAM: Had you ever... going back to you moving back and everything, had you ever visited Puerto Rico before when you were living in Ohio and how often did you...?

DAD: Oh, yeah. Every now and then, I would come back. It was a... As a matter of fact, two years before I came down, I met a young lady and... that had been my pen pal when I was in the army. And ah, I went to visit her and see her personally. There was no chemistry there but, you know, at least I made the visit and I made the...

SAM: What did people... you had like cousins and stuff over here? Right?

DAD: Yeah, but I never sought out the family. Eh... Eh... I mean, when we were growing up in Ohio, if they wanted to know about us, they would have written. They would have done something. So if you don't seek me out, I don't seek you out.

SAM: Did you live with any family in Ohio? Or was it just you?

DAD: No, it was our family. I had cousins there. But much like it is here. Eh... I stayed on my side of the road and they stayed on their side of the road. We don't seek each other out. You know. We barely get phone calls here. And my mom blames me. She says it's because I'm a prick. And that's why no one ever calls or people are afraid of me. And it's not that. Eh... Here people just have their own lives and they don't really give a dam about other people's lives. You know?

SAM: Do you think it's interesting... Why do you think that it is that you sort of... You and your cousins ended up moving back over here like every single one of them, right? Is there anybody that is still living in Ohio?

DAD: Well, a lot of them, they just followed their mom and dad. I didn't necessarily follow my mom and dad. I followed my dream. You know? And now that I'm in a position to go back, I don't want to go back because of what happened with 9/11. And stuff like that. And, and, and... You know, I look a little bit Arabic and stuff like that. And I don't like, you know, looking like the enemy. You know. Like when I was growing up, I was mistaken for a Greek or Italian person and now I'm mistaken for a terrorist. And

I don't like that 'cause that's not the way I am. It makes me feel very uncomfortable. And in Puerto Rico, even though some people will mention that I look like "El Taliban," or whatever, they realize that I'm not. And even though I still have an accent in Spanish, they still know that I'm not... I wasn't born here or I wasn't raised here, I feel more comfortable here than I do in the States. When I go back, I don't feel comfortable. You know. I don't feel... I don't feel right. I don't feel like I'm in my element. Here, I'm on this property and I shut out the rest of the world. I don't... I don't... I feel complete here. You know? I... I... This is like the wooded area that I used to play around when I was a kid. OK? That was my, my, my paradise. You know. And I love to cut grass, I love to... you know, just hang out here. You know. Like where I am right now, under the shade tree.

SAM: Did you, ahm, I think Angel had told me. I always assumed that we were all bilingual, raised bilingually, and Angel is the one that told me that you had tried with her, and then you gave up after that because it was too hard or something. And that the rest of us were raised with just Spanish. But we had English in school.

DAD: I don't... I don't remember any of that, Sam, but basically who was responsible for a lot of your education and helping you out was Mom. You know. Like I... Mom is the one that would take you guys to, ah, eh... girls scout camps with the girls, and stuff like that. She was the one who took you guys for your first haircut. And stuff like that. I... I was not involved a lot on how you guys were raised. OK? That was basically Mom's job.

SAM: ()

DAD: Let's call it a day.

SAM: Alright.

DAD: [clears throat] Are you happy with that, Sam?

SAM: Yeah. It was good. I wished I had more to talk about.

DAD: That's why... That's why I want to stop.

[recording interrupted and restarted]

[sounds of working in the farm]

[recording interrupted and restarted]

DAD: Why are you laughing at me, Sam?

SAM: Because you said that you were trying to be bright eyed and bushy tailed.

DAD: Mm.

SAM: Ahm.

DAD: Are you going to start taping now?

SAM: Yeah.

DAD: Alright.

SAM: You had talked a little bit about sacrifice... sacrifices that you make and everything. And you talked a little bit about titi Mimi and... I never really knew... I heard different things about how you lived with titi Mimi and your family when you were growing up. And we talked a little bit the other day about favoritism and how you...

DAD: Eh... We lived on a... the address was 1529 East 29th Street. And my dad had bought this big house with a lot of rooms so that it could be rented out. And we had a small apartment downstairs. The small apartment had two bedrooms. Eh... A living room. And one room that was dining room/kitchen. Of course, Mimi got a bedroom and Mom and Dad got a bedroom, and I used to have a, one of these metal eh... beds with wheels on it. Over the mattress and that was kept in Mimi's room. And at night, when I had to go to bed, I would wheel this thing over to the living room, open it up, and it was like a cot. And that was my bed. Later on, eh... the cot was replaced by a sofa bed that you would open up the bed and it turned into a double bed. But had no privacy because if we had company, in the middle of the night, there I was sleeping in the living room. You know. And then... people all around me and stuff like that. Eh... But Mimi got, you know, the bedroom. Eh... and Mimi was always forgiven everything. I remember one time, eh, the ice-cream truck came by, Mr. Softee, and my dad gave us money to go buy ice-cream cones for all of us. So Mimi came with me to help me carry the ice-cream cones. And I was always... you know, I always bought stuff for my mom and Mimi carried stuff for my dad. She was always sucking up to him. And when she was coming, one of her ice-creams fell out of her hand. And she says, "Dad, yours fell." And my mom... my dad starts laughing like "Oh, she's so cute and so intelligent." You know. "She keeps her ice-cream, you know. It was my ice-cream that fell." And I always felt if it had been me, I'd been crucified. But, you know, that's just the way, you know, things were. She always came out on top because she was Mimi. And that's OK. You know. It didn't... It didn't really bother me 'cause I always felt that the girl was going to be the favorite and stuff like that. I never really felt that I was being treated so badly until I got bigger and I realized "Dam! Things aren't really equal." Especially when later on, my dad and I are sitting on the porch in Lares and he said that if it hadn't been for Mimi, he would have divorced my mom a long time ago that he didn't give a shit about me. So... That's when I kind of woke up and said "Dam. Then all this shit that I have been feeling over the years, you know, when I was saying 'Well, Mimi is the girl and that's just the way it is' It was a little bit more than that." You know. There was actually a lot of favoritism there. But to be honest at one time, titi Mimi asked Abuelo [clears throat] if she could have all the property that was on the main road in Lares because she wanted to build, eh, homes. One house every year. And lease out the houses. And that I would administer. Because I tend to administer property pretty good and stuff, she wanted me to rent out the property and send her the money. And my dad told her to go to hell, that he was not going to give me... giver her all the good property on the edge of the road, and then I would have the crap that was back in the farm. You know, sort of in the jungle. So, you know, I gotta admit, my dad, este, was very fair when it came to that. He pulled that one out.

SAM: Hm. But you definitely... You definitely think that you were kind of treated unfairly when you were growing up or...

DAD: Oh, yeah, Sam. Eh... My parents were very poor and they were saving money for college. And Mimi got whatever they had, eh, whatever they had saved, they gave to Mimi. And... You know I didn't say anything. What I did was, I worked at the Park Department for a while trying to make some money. And I started college. I did a semester with the money... I quarter with the semester that I got from my summer work. But I realized that was it. I didn't have anything else. And my only out was to join the army where the G.I. bill would pay for my education. But if you hear Mimi tell it, eh, Mom and Dad didn't give her anything, basically. Eh... Because she had to get loans to finish and stuff like that. And my contention is it doesn't matter how much they gave her, they gave her everything we had. There was nothing there for me. OK? And then Mimi came and she studied at the University of Puerto Rico, and my dad had this thing where he always wanted us to have the same things. You know. The same amount of money. Stuff like when he passed away, he left each of us \$100,000. And I never thought I would come back to Puerto Rico. I thought it was such poetic justice that I got to come back to Puerto Rico and I got a bachelor's degree, a four-year degree in management from the Catholic University of Puerto Rico where my sister studied. So I thought that was... I evened out the thing for my dad. You know, where he didn't do it for us, but I evened it out because Mimi got her four-year degree from the Catholic University of Puerto Rico, and so did I. So it kind of balanced the scales a little bit. So that my dad... And I, I made a point to show him the diploma. I says, "Dad, we both have a college education from the same university." So, you know, the scales are balanced. And he didn't even really understand what the hell I was talking about.

SAM: Do you think that you coming back to Puerto Rico, spending more time with your parents and everything, do you think that it helped with figuring out what your relationship was with them and sort of like evening out... Like you're talking about evening things out when you went to the same university, do you think that by being closer to them, when you lived here, you think that you sort of evened out the favoritism?

DAD: Mm.

SAM: And made it more fair?

DAD: No. Not really. Because, eh, when I was in Ohio, I was always the one that shoveled the snow, raked the leaves, planted the garden, you know, threw out the garbage, and did all the stuff. And I just kept doing more or less the same old functions, I kept doing. When I came back to Puerto Rico, it was "OK: Now you cut the grass. You pick the coffee. You do these kinds of things." You know. That I simply kept being a farm hand for them or someone to help around the house for them. And Mimi is not there. OK. Eh... Mimi's role now is to support her husband, support her son... And I have nothing against that. They have a life. OK? You know. But she can actually live her life. OK? Whereas when I came back, I started my life. I started my family. I tried to get my own farm. Because I had asked my dad to give me part of the farm so that I could work it. And he told me to go to hell. The same way that he told Mimi that he was not going to give her any of the property. Eh... He was going to leave everything until he died. And then divide it up after he died. Eh... which pushed me away because when I bought the

farm in Juana Díaz, eh, I stayed away from Lares. I would go once a month. So he lost out on the farm hand that was giving him all this help. But, ah... No, Mimi, eh, Mimi can call once a week and they will be more happy from receiving that phone call from Mimi than my being there all the time. OK? That's just the way it is. And I accept it. I don't... You know, like, eh... Mom can receive a phone call from Jessie and she can be tickled pink more with a telephone call from Jessie than receiving one from let's say you or David or Angel. You know what I'm saying? There's definitely some kind of inclination in the family, you know, towards one person or another.

SAM: And you don't... Hm.

DAD: You look... You look at Mamma and Pappa. Nilda and Sugui, eh, are here in Ponce. And they have their own lives and stuff like that, but they touch base with Mamma and Pappa all the time for going to church and different social events and things like that. Versus Eli, who is—let's say—in California and doing his own thing with his music and stuff like that. And doesn't have a lot of the same things as common, in common let's say Nilda, Sugui and Mamma and Pappa. And I have no problem with that. You know. I can't see myself going to church. I can't see myself... When we were in Connecticut, they were talking about... Two or three times they mentioned their wedding anniversary. OK? And I didn't go to their, I don't know if it was sixtieth wedding anniversary or what it was but...

SAM: Yeah, it was sixtieth.

DAD: I didn't go to it, but they... Not don Eliseo, pero María Victoria mentioned it on two occasions that I remember, OK? And I simply dismissed it because that's not the kind of thing that I do. Right now you were with me this morning, Sam, and we went to doña Enid's house. And she's tickled pink about the activity, the wedding that... ceremony for her daughter, her only daughter and stuff like that. And I would look at the picture, but that's not my thing. I don't... You know because I just think of all the sacrifices, and all the expense that went through, you know, for that one moment. And in the marquesina they have a lot of stuff that's left over from the wedding and... and a year from now, who's gonna care? You know. What does it mean? How important was it? You know what I'm saying?

SAM: Yeah. But... I mean, yesterday you were talking... You said something about that you don't think that anybody would miss you when you die.

DAD: I, I think, eh, what people would miss, eh, would be where I tend to make people's life a little bit easier by giving them financial help every now and then. You know. Being considerate and, and just being there to talk to them and stuff like that. But to actually say, eh, "there is a big gap in my life. There is a big whole in my life." You know. Let's take Mimi. If something happened to Mimi, definitely they would feel it because a lot of things revolve around Mimi in their office. Eh... Giovanna seeks Mimi out and stuff like that. OK? Right now, Mom [clears throat] is playing a key role in Jessie's life. She's helping with Austin and things like that. Robin for whatever reason is fading out of Jessie's life. Jessie could probably stop thinking about Robin and David, and not even blink an eye because she already has an alternative: she has Mom. Because Jessie is the kind of person that's going to find solutions. OK? When I closed the factory a lot

of people say “What am I going to do? What am I going to do now? What am I going to do now?” And it was because they had me as a crutch for so many years. But they’re still alive. And they found an alternative. They found another way. OK? And I’m the kind of person that, eh, when people that knew me before get together, they’ll say “What a prick!” OK? “Remember when he did this to us? Remember?” And they just remember all the bad things. OK? And after a while, you don’t miss a person like that, Sam. You know what I’m saying?

SAM: But, you know, just combining the sacrifice and what you had told me yesterday too, do you think that making the sacrifice to send us to Florida and everything and having us... have our education over there, do you think that we found a replacement for you?

DAD: Eh... I don’t know if so much you found a replacement for me because obviously you seek me out and you call me and things like that. And... But I think each one of the children, and even Mom, have found something to fill the void if there was a void. You know? Angel is with Jay. And she’s starting to put her life together with Jay. Jessie has Austin and Brian. And, and... And Mom has Jessie and, and... For the longest time, Mom replaced the void with work because the hours at work consume your time and you don’t have time to think about other things. OK? And you have Audra and you have your education, and stuff like that. And... What I try to do is I try to keep people from forgetting Abuelo. OK? That’s why I started the thing with the coffee harvest. OK? Because if I didn’t do that, how many people would actually remember Abuelo? I mean, Mimi was shocked when she wanted to do something special at the church, you know, that Abuelo’s friends would show up and stuff like that. And it was sad that not too many people showed up at the church because my dad was not that kind of person. My dad was a lot like I am now. Or I am a lot like my dad was. OK? In the sense that if Luis needed a loan, he went to my dad and asked for money and my dad would get him out of jam and stuff like that. And my dad, who never drove, would ask “Luis, drive me here to the barbershop. Ride me here.” And Luis would do those things. Now, well, Luis doesn’t have to drive Abuelo, but now he does things for my uncle Juan. OK? So Luis has found someone to replace my dad. OK? And I try not to forget my dad. Every time we’re on the farm, I even named a hill after him. OK? And stuff like that. Because even though [clears throat] we weren’t close, he gave me life. And sometimes I would sit with him in the marquesina, like you’re sitting with me now, and he would talk to me about when he was in the army, when he was in Ecuador, when he was in Panama. I never knew he was at those places. I never knew, you know, some of the things he did. That he would get lost in the States and somehow would make it home. You know, that they dropped him off in the wrong place or he missed his ride from the airport and from Cleveland airport, he made it to Lorain, just sticking his thumb out. OK? And... He was a survivor. Even though he had the language barrier, he knew when to smile. He knew when to say please. He knew, you know, how to get things done. And I picked up a lot of those things from him. And he also liked to screw with people.

SAM: [laugh]

DAD: You know? He, he would stick a stake in the ground in the middle of a path, and I would ask him “What the hell is that for?” He says “Oh, it was just waiting for some

asshole to come by and ask what the fuck is that for?” And I happen to be the asshole. OK? And he would do shit like that. You know? And then he would... Like I try to be different with you. You’re working with me on the farm, my big concern is for you not to get hurt because, you know, some thorn can pop into your eye; some poisonous liquid can jump up from one of the plants that you’re cutting and get into your eye and do something. Some bush can smack you in the face and knock out your teeth or do something like that. I tell you these things because all those things have happened to me. OK? On the farm. You know, I lost my two front teeth in the farm in Juana Díaz. I’m sorry that was in Lares. In Juana Díaz, I had the thorn in my eye that I spent ten days in a trauma center in San Juan.

SAM: Wasn’t that during Christmas?

DAD: It was a Christmas season and I was stuck there. And I told Mom not to worry about me. You know, to just go ahead and celebrate Christmas with you guys. And when I was there in the hospital, I just kept asking God—I’m a very religious person even though I don’t go to church—I kept asking God “Why the hell did you do this to me?” You know. “I don’t get any time off. And then when I take my vacation, I get a thorn in my eye? Come on! Give me a break here.” OK? So then I was sharing the room with an old man and he lost his eyesight. The nurse comes in and give us... Or the service people give us our lunch and the old man says to me, “I can’t see. Where’s the food?” I says, “It’s...” And I stood up and I went over to his... And I looked at his tray and I says “Do you remember the clock? Where is twelve o’clock?” He says “At the top.” I says “Where’s six o’clock?” “At the bottom.” I says “Where’s three o’clock?” He says “To the right.” And I says, “And where’s nine o’clock?” And he says, “To the left.” I says “OK. You’re tray is like the clock. OK? At twelve o’clock, you have your coffee. OK? At six o’clock, you have your food. OK? At nine o’clock...” And then he says “Well, stay with me for a little while.” And I says, “OK.” And I would give him his utensils and I said “Now go to, to, to six o’clock and eat your dam food.” And then he would do that and shit like that. So after a couple of days because I was there ten days, he actually learned how to eat his food out of the tray. Then I would hear him moaning... pissing and moaning at night. “My feet are cold. My feet are cold.” And then I always wore very heavy socks so I gave him a pair of my socks. OK? And I put him on his feet and stuff like that. “I gotta go take a piss. I gotta go take a piss.” And I says, “I ain’t holding that son of a bitch for you.” OK? I says, “Scooch your butt out of bed. I’m watching you.” I says “Turn to your left.” And he turned the wrong way. And I says “Your other left, asshole.” And then I marched him over to the bathroom, and I says “Now with your feet, try to feel where the commode is. Lean over and lift up the lid. You don’t want to get piss all over the lid.” And then I says, “Now, pull your weewee out. And start squirting. If you hear water, you hit the toilet. If you don’t hear water, you’re pissing on the floor, asshole.” OK? And then I could hear... [laugh] I could hear the water and I knew he made it. And he would just jump up for joy and stuff like that. But then the shit hit the fan. I didn’t realize the asshole was religious. OK? And... Jehova Witness type people and stuff. And then the curtain was closed between the two of us. And he tells the people that came to visit, “Tell me how that guy looks. Tell me how my neighbor looks that’s sharing—you know—this room with me. He’s been so

nice to me.” And they came over and they started trying to pray over me. And I had to tell them all to go to hell.

SAM: [laugh]

DAD: OK? You know. And the thing is it was Christmas time, and the doctors and the nurses were like coo-coo-cooing each other and kissing and grabbing each other’s asses and stuff like that. And I was supposed to get this drop in my eye every hour. So Mom had bought me a watch, ‘cause I don’t wear watches. And she bought me something like a Mickey Mouse watch, something for \$3. And I was putting the drop in myself in my eye. Come time to go, [clears throat] they couldn’t believe that I was ready to go that my eye had been doing so well. I says, “It’s doing so well because I didn’t let any nurse or any fucking doctor touch me. OK. I put the drop in myself.” OK? “Because if I had been counting on you, the way you guys are celebrating and shit, I’d be blind right now.” OK? So I got out of that one, Sam.

SAM: But what... ‘Cause you brought that up by saying that you asked God why the hell he would do that to you. So..

DAD: Yeah, but one thing is me and God. And one thing is a whole bunch of assholes.

SAM: [laugh]

DAD: OK?

SAM: [laugh]

DAD: They think God is this way or that way. God to me is a very personal being. OK? It isn’t a whole bunch of people trying to shove some other kind of believes up my ass. I don’t go for that.

SAM: So why were you in the hospital? On Christmas. Why do you think?

DAD: To help the old man. To help that old fart. And to get a break from you guys.

SAM: [laugh]

DAD: [laugh] How the hell do I know? Shit happens, Sam.

SAM: I thought you were going to have an answer or something, Dad. You said “Why the hell... Why the hell...”

DAD: I don’t have all the answers, Sam. God has all the answers. You know, I just kind of, you know, OK. You know. You know. I’ve been dealt this card; let me play it out; let me see what the hell it is. You know. I don’t... I don’t be... eh... Psychoanalyzing like my daughter up there in Connecticut.

SAM: [laugh]

DAD: You know? That has to go to a psychoanalyst to have someone tell her that she’s an asshole.

SAM: [laugh]

DAD: You know? I know I’m an asshole. [laugh] I don’t need someone to tell me.

SAM: So...

DAD: This is good footage, Sam.

SAM: What was it like for you when we left? Because I remember... I remember the night that we left. I remember very few things. I remember seeing you, ahm, drive away after you dropped us off at the airport. And I remember looking in the back and Pebbles was in the back. And I looked, and I touched her nose. And it was really cold and wet. And I never knew what that meant. And someone told me recently that it means that they're OK. And I sort of had that comfort, 'cause I was really scared and I was really nervous. I didn't know what was going on.

DAD: My nose was not cold and wet.

SAM: [laugh]

DAD: I... I... No. Sam, I don't know if it was the army or whatever, but I learned to be detached. You know. I learned that there are times that, you know, you just have to suck it up. Like when I was in the army and I was going through basic training, I would write to my mom and say: "We're going on a picnic tomorrow." OK? "We're going to be strolling along the side of the road." And I'm carrying 60 pounds of field gear on my back, going up a slope that's like this. OK? And then when you get there, and you have to go on a rifle range, then you have your, your mess kit out that you're eating, it's raining so hard that your food is floating around in rain water and everything's all soggy. And you tell your mom, "Yeah, I had a juicy steak about this thick. And everything was so much fun." And it's sort of like they don't need to know. You know. Like... Like Jessie went through a lot of shit in Iraq, and it's probably some shit that she would probably never even like to remember. OK? But the thing is you learn to detach. And then what you keep thinking about is "I signed up for two fucking years. And only two months have gone by. And I feel like crap. I'm going to have to make some necessary adjustments if I'm gonna get through this." You know. And my adjustment was: "Yeah, they're gone, but in a month I'll be going to see them." OK? So the, the distance is only like a month away. OK? Because I tried to go on a monthly basis—you know—to visit you guys, to keep that thing going. Of course, you know, the people at work would say, "Ah, he's probably marked on a calendar what day his wife is on the rag. And he makes sure he goes up there when she's not on the rag." And shit like that. You know.

SAM: But I don't even... I, I barely remember you coming. I know that you came to visit a lot. But I remember also... I don't know why I remember these things. Not... Like positive things. I know that you recently said "Oh, why do you think so negatively?" And stuff. And I remember you leaving and me like clinging on to your leg. Like a koala. [laugh] And then just being like "Don't leave. Don't leave." And, and... ahm.

DAD: I probably shook you off like I shake the bugs off in Lares.

SAM: [laugh]

DAD: I don't know, Sam. I don't remember none of that.

SAM: I just... I just never knew what it was like here. Did you... It was so...

DAD: Sam...

SAM: It was so noisy over here when we were around.

DAD: No, no.

SAM: No?

DAD: It had nothing to do with that. What happened, Sam, is the first three years of our marriage, your mom and I are alone. OK? Because, you know, everything starts a little rough because we didn't do everything like Nilda and Sugui did, you know. We didn't have the big wedding. You know, I simply picked up Mom, in San Juan, we got married in... at the judge's apartment in San Juan, and stuff like that. In jeans and whatever. And the first three years, I was the man. OK? You know. Mom was looking after me. She was still studying. I think she was doing her Master's degree in Linguistics. So she was traveling back and forth. So she decided that she didn't want to have children. Then Angel come along. OK? And Angel was number 1. Now I'm number 2. Jessie comes along. Now I'm number 3. David comes along. Now I'm number 4. All of the children come ahead. Sammy comes along and there I am, number 5. Pebbles comes along.

SAM: [laugh]

DAD: I'm number 6. Chanel comes along. I'm number 7. OK? And that's the way I felt. It was OK. OK? And the reason it was OK, Sam, is for the most part of my life, someone else had the top position and I was number 2. Again, the case with Mimi. OK? So I always felt like if I wasn't around, I wouldn't be missed that much. OK? Because Mom had so many of you to love. And so many of you to return the love. OK? That, you know, there was no room for me. Or didn't need me. You know? And I always felt that I was the one who was alone. I mean, I didn't have anyone here. I had my workers. I have Pagan. OK? And Alvin... But it's not the same thing, Sam. OK? It's not the same thing. But they kept me, you know, I... Even though I yelled at them and made fun of them and shit like that, I loved the hell out of them. You know? And they were my family. You know what I'm saying? And then my mom and dad decided to come down to Puerto Rico, so, you know, they filled that void too. You know. That I would go up there. But I was kind of like... When were talking the last time, I was kind of like disappointed in the sense that I look at Jessie now. And Jessie to me, is a lot like Mom. And Jessie right now is going to go through some training. She's gonna figure out what the hell she's going to do to get someone to cut the grass while she's away. You know. She's already got the bases covered with Austin. OK? She'll probably look for a way for her bills to be sent for some place so she probably paid her bills in advance. You know, like she probably paid the rent in advance. Like she does a lot of planning, and shit like that. And the way Mom, her intelligence, and all that kind of shit, I thought it was like a no-brainer for her to be with you guys in Orlando receiving income from me, you know, to pay for the house, to pay for the food, to pay for everything. That all she had to worry about was making sure you guys got off to school; take a look at your homework--you know--cook meals for you; look after you; and shit like that. Everything else was in place. OK? Now the only thing that could have made it a little more difficult is if she couldn't make ends meet with the amount of money that I was

sending her. OK? Like right now you and I are staying together for a couple of days and right now we had breakfast at Enid's house and we saved some money. And stuff like that. And then we look at the different things and see how much they cost. You yourself told me, how many times have you gone with Mom grocery shopping and said "We don't really need this." You're old enough now to be able to say that to her. But when you were younger, how many things...? I remember going shopping with Abuela in Lares. OK. And pushing the cart. And I would be putting things back. And she'd say, "What are you doing?" "I'm saving some of my inheritance. The way you're spending money, this not going to be anything there for me."

SAM: I gotta stop this tape.

DAD: OK. This is good, Sam. We did... Alright?

PR Tape 4 (2009)

[sound of trimmer cutting grass 0 to 4:41]

[recording stopped and restarted]

SAM: That wasn't recorded, Dad. What did you say? So you think that I should get that pink flower and put it next to you?

DAD: No! Just () you off.

SAM: Alright. Well, let's just keep talking about what we were talking about.

DAD: Well, no. You... It's your tape, your project. You just go ahead and...

SAM: Well, we were talking about, like, taking care of Abuela here and how it has been over the years and stuff. And I've just been here for a few days and I'm already...

DAD: Climbing the walls. Can't take it.

SAM: When you've been here for how many years now?

DAD: Oh, since you guys left in 1992. Of course, you know, I was working at the factory; I wasn't here full time. But I've been here full time the last six years since Abuelo died.

SAM: And you had help at that point, right? When did you stop having help?

DAD: No. Once Abuelo died. That was it. You know. Titi Mimi would come in 1 or 2 weeks a year and help clean up around the house. And... But most of the time, she was gone running around with her cousins and going out to dinner and meeting people and socializing. And... you know. Use Abuela as an excuse to come to Puerto Rico, but... And then Mimi [clears throat] kept herself busy cleaning the house.

SAM: What the hell is that?

[loudspeaker announcement]

SAM: What the hell was that, Dad?

DAD: They're... They're inviting some people to some kind of activity. I don't listen to that shit. Yeah. They're saying it's the National Banana Festival in Lares. Can't miss it, Sam. It's a gotta... you know, you gotta go to that event. [clear throat] They have every variety of banana.

SAM: Have you tried every variety of banana, Dad?

DAD: Hell, no. I don't give a shit about that stuff.

SAM: Why do you think that living here has become...? You know. Why is it so negative? Why do you think that Abuela is so negative?

DAD: Well, she feels that no one loves her. I mean, there's just my sister and I. No one comes over. And she has—like—she has lost touch, eh, with people, and stuff like that and she blurts out anything that comes to her mind. You know. She sees you “Oh, you're skinny. You're fat. You're crossed eyed.” You know. Or whatever. And... You know.

She just says what's on her mind. She doesn't care if she hurts people or not and stuff like that.

SAM: But what... 'Cause that's what I was expecting from coming here. And I think what I've seen this time around is something a little bit, for lack of a...

DAD: Grosser?

SAM: No, no. Grosser, but that's not really what I was getting at. It sounds insensitive, but it's more pathetic...

DAD: Yeah.

SAM: ...than I thought. And I wasn't prepared for that. That I was prepared... You know I know that people have been saying that when they come and visit her that she might say "Oh, you're so fat." or "Oh, you're too skinny." And this and that. But I wasn't prepared for her to get choked up like anytime she talks to me. And to, to turn everything about... like everything is turned around to be about her and how depressing her life is. Like when she saw Audra last summer, and she said that "You're so skinny and pretty. I used to be that way and now look at me, I'm fat and old in a wheelchair," And I don't know why she has to be so down on herself and so negative. And that's... You know, when you talk about this place being a prison, I know that you're referring to the... the routine. But I think it's a prison of negativity.

DAD: Eh... [sigh] I don't know if it's because I'm used to it already [clears throat] but I think it's... it's more overwhelming for people that come from the outside. But I'm... I've always been a person of routine. Like get up at a certain hour; eat at a certain hour; go to bed at a certain hour. And I just keep myself busy on the farm, and let her do her thing. Her thing is she'll wake up in the morning; she'll go to the bathroom; wash up; take a bath; eat her breakfast; and at 8:30 she's already preparing lunch. So lunch is ready at 9:30. You know. And it's... A lot of times it's better for me to be out on the farm so I don't see some of the things you've seen here where she gets close to the stove and almost has an accident, almost spilled something over, and stuff like that, I rather not be around. I rather, you know, be out on the farm and come and have her tell me "Oh, I burned myself," or "I had a minor accident." But I don't want to be every five minutes, "Oh, look out! Watch out for this! Watch out for that!" Although when I am in the house when I come in, I always have to look over my shoulder because she sneaks up on me with that wheelchair. I never know when she's going to be right behind me and I have to tell her to be really careful when she does stuff like that. But—like I told you—it's just one big baby. She's going back and it's... You can't expect a baby to reason, to have any kind of logic, and stuff like that. And that's what Abuela's doing. She is going back and back and back mentally. Yet every now and then, you see that sneaky, conniving planning and... and... When it comes to money, you know, she's always, you know, looking at the change and whenever she had a girl working here, she would take the list—the grocery list—and then, you know, check the items on the list and she would say "Hey—you know—you bought some candy; you bought this." when she had Elizabeth 'cause Elizabeth was like a petty thief and she would buy a pack of rice for her house and put it on Abuela's account. And it wasn't adding up and Abuela started catching on and was bringing that stuff to her attention. And I told her

“Look, what does a pack of rice cost?” You know. “When she’s spending her own gasoline to go there.” “I don’t care. She’s not supposed to do that.” [sound of people talking] Cut off, Sam. Cut off.

SAM: Why?

DAD: Did you cut off?

SAM: Why?

DAD: That’s the girl that I was telling you. Film it. Film it.

SAM: What the hell is going on?

DAD: No, Carlitos would laugh, laugh his ass off.

SAM: So why is your shirt pink?

DAD: Because I had taken some red pajamas to Connecticut in case I had to wear pajamas if I was going to stay with Mamma and Pappa and like that... And I forgot that I had those fucking red pajamas. And they were at the bottom of the laundry bag, and I simply dumped the laundry bag into the washing machine. And I forgot it was there and I guess it was relatively new because I don’t wear the dam pajamas, and then I guess they... the dye from the pajamas turned my new white t-shirt pink. And if you think I’m going to throw these t-shirts away, you’re full of shit. I’ll wear these pink t-shirts... I even wore it to go to Subway with you today. I don’t give a shit. I know who I am. And I think pink highlights my face. Fuck you, Sam.

SAM: [laugh] Well, I made fun of you when we went to get the new TV. ‘Cause there was a princess TV that I asked you “If it was \$50, would you have gotten that you.” And you said “Yeah.”

DAD: Well, yeah. I’m not looking at the frame. I’m looking at the picture screen. I don’t give a shit if... if it’s some faggot on the fucking frame. You know.

SAM: But I was... You know, when I was talking about before, I was saying that it wasn’t so much the routine that I was talking about, but just how everything has to turn into a pity negative comment.

DAD: Yeah, but that’s... That’s where my military training comes in, Sam. You know. And... And Sergeant Hodges, eh, whenever... my first girl friend dumped me when I was in the army. And I was all sad and... all, you know, eh... down in the dumps, and Sergeant Hodges brought a dictionary over and he says, “T, if you’re looking for sympathy, look in the dictionary. It’s right in there. Right in there: between shit and syphilis.”

SAM: [laugh]

DAD: And I says, “OK.” So I had learned never to feel sorry for myself. You know?

SAM: Why do you think that she does?

DAD: This is like... What is that they call it? The... the Jewish mother. Where the, the... “Oh, my God. No one loves me. No one cares.” And Abuela is not even Jewish and she’s got that down path. You know, where she wants people to feel sorry for her and shit

like that. Perfect strangers have come here, Sam, and she has lifted up her dress to show the scar that she has when she broke her hip. OK? I get so fucking embarrassed when she does shit like that. OK? Imagine what she does when I'm not around—you know—and people come to visit and stuff. That's why I'm always watching for little signs of how the gate is closed or whatever to know if someone came here or not. And then I'll ask her. And sometimes she'll deny it. "No. No one has come here." I hear the phone ringing when I'm in the farm, and say "Who did just call?" "Oh, you're hearing things. No one called." [clears throat] You know, and stuff like that. And it's this need to... to cover up, to hide, to not tell the whole truth. You know? Eh... Because she's afraid I'm gonna get mad or... 'Cause my father was that way. He could... He wouldn't take the crap from her. You know. All this nitpicking and this... and boohooing and stuff like that. And even when I had the shop, if some girl would ask me "Torres, can I take the day off?" and she was crying and stuff like that, I says, "You might as well turn off the tears 'cause that doesn't affect me at all." OK? I learned to get very insensitive, you know, with tears. Tears don't affect me in the least. OK? You just tell me what it is and be serious about it and tell me how you plan to recover production that you're gonna miss that day, and you're gone. You know. That's it. But crying and stuff like they do on "Caso Cerrado" and do all that kind of bullshit, I don't go for that theatrics. You know, just tell me what it is and that's it. You know? Even now, we discovered that you're trying to, you know, blend in and eat what we eat and drink what we drink. And shit like that. And you turned to a piece of shit today. OK? You know. Eh... I don't know if it's the water. I don't know if it's the aspirin. I don't know what it is, but I gotta get you as soon as possible back to routine that your body has adapted to. You know, that, that... Most of us, you know, have a routine. You know. Whether it's exercising or not exercising; eating candy or not eating candy. And when we deviate from the norm, what is normal for us, you know, we're gonna get the headaches and we're gonna have the fucking problems and shit like that. You know. And I'm thinking "Oh, my God. 'Cause when I talked to Ismael about it, that you had this terrific headache and shit, he told me to keep an eye on you because there's a dengue eh... epidemic that's some kind of sickness that's transmitted by mosquitoes and shit like that. And since you've been sitting out here fighting the fucking mosquitoes, like you are right now, I felt "Oh, my God. That's all I fucking need." You know. For my son Sam to have dengue.

SAM: I don't even know what the hell it is.

DAD: No, but it's some kind of a... a virus and it's sort of like a malaria type effect and shit. [clears throat] And I don't want you getting sick on me here. When you get back home, you can get sick all you want, but don't get sick on me.

SAM: I don't know. I can't begin to think what it would feel like, but what do you...? You talk about her going to like a home, like a retirement home and stuff like... When do you know that it's time for her to go to one of those places?

DAD: When I can't take it anymore. You know, like I told you. There is this place that's going to give assistance to the elderly in Ponce and if they help me with bathing her, and doing stuff like that, you know, it makes it a lot easier. But a lot of these places if

you have money in the bank, or have so much income, eh... they don't do it. It has to be like for poor people. That in Puerto Rico is like... who's really well off are the really, really poor and the really, really rich. The people in the middle get screwed. OK? Because the really, really poor even get socialized medicine where they don't pay for visits to doctors, hospital, medication, and shit like that. And the least little thing that happens to me, I have to pay through the nose for everything that I get. And Abuela is more or less, you know, eh... considered that she's pretty well off and stuff like that. So... You know, we have to pay. And a lot of times, I can't tell her, you know, what I'm paying for medicine and stuff like that because she would go through the roof. You know. That I try to control everything. That's why I like to buy some things at Sam's so that she doesn't know exactly how much is going because I want her to be able to eat well and eat, you know, the things that she likes to eat, even though it's not the things that you like to eat. Because today we had those pork chops and "Oh, wow, they're good." And they were good. But you don't like pork chops that much. OK? And I'm also concerned sometimes too of like when she fries something, that she doesn't throw the oil away. [clears throat] You know, that she puts the oil in a little glass jar and keeps using the same oil. And that can't be too healthy. You know. So it's little things like that. But, you know, I don't know. Eh... If she was in an old age home, she would have to be forced to eat whatever meals they prepare. You know, like... It isn't we prepare special meals for you. OK? And whenever she has like... One time she visited Mimi because she was taking care of Patxi. And it was like two weeks and she lost about ten pounds because she was afraid to get anything out of the refrigerator. She was afraid, you know, to eat the way she normally eats. Since she had to eat the food they like and... And she lost a lot of weight. When she goes to the hospital, she... And at this stage in her life, I want her to eat whatever the hell she wants, as much as she wants of it. OK? And stuff like that. You know. And the thing is, it's just like the factory. The factory, you know, could have been shut down at any time and stuff. But I kept it going because I made it productive. I kept... And the same thing happens with Abuela. If I didn't take care of her, she'd probably die sooner. OK? From depression, and, and... and whatever. OK? And because I take this kind of care of her, she'll probably last forever. So what happens is the better I take care of her, the longer I'm gonna be in this prison. OK?

SAM: But it's also not just a prison for you because you have what you almost consider your paradise over here.

DAD: Yeah. That's... That's what keeps me going. That's like whenever they let the prisoners go out in the yard to exercise and stuff like that. You know. But, eh... What happens is if I keep Abuela going, let's say, and she's 95, OK? That's like—what?—ten years from now, eleven years from now, I'll be 71. Not necessarily a spring chicken. You know that it's not like I'm frozen in time with my strength that I have now and the health that I have now. My health is going to be deteriorating. And then what happens, Sam? Today you feel like crap. You stay in bed and stuff like that. The last couple of weeks that I've been sick, I've been trying to stay in bed. She will not stay in bed and she won't let me sleep. She'll start knocking on the door, "When are you going to get up? When are you going to do this? And when are you going to do that?" So, you

know, it's really bad when I keep her going because if I should get sick, she doesn't understand that. OK. It doesn't even cross her mind that something could happen to me, OK, and it's all over. OK? She thinks like I'm eternal that, that I'm always going to be there for her and stuff like that. OK? That's why when recently I've been telling her that it's getting really close to that time when I think she may have to go to an old age home, she thinks she can do things on her own. I mean, I'm happy for her. But she thinks that she doesn't need me at all. Doesn't that sound familiar? You know. That people help and then they feel, "Oh, I really didn't need her help."

SAM: But then... I mean, part of your routine is also you told me that when you get sick of one place, you go to the other. You're... You don't have to stay here because this isn't your home. Your home is in Ponce. When you kind of get sick of here, you go to Ponce. You get sick of Ponce, you come here.

DAD: Yeah, but what happens is like right now, I was accepted to do the administration for that condominium that I was doing on a temporary basis. Now the people want me to meet with them on Wednesday evening, and Wednesday evening throws a wrench into my routine because I wanted to go Saturday so you could be with your grandparents. Sunday we could watch the game because there is going to be a game on Sunday. And we would come back on Monday. I was thinking about "Well, let's just go Sunday but then you wouldn't get to see your grandparents and then I'm the big bad wolf. So, you know, I have to go Saturday. Do the routine that I have told you Saturday, Sunday, Monday. And then I have to go back by myself on Wednesday to go to that meeting and come back that same night. OK? Just to fulfill that responsibility and that's exactly the reason that I didn't want to get accepted to that job because I'm a very responsible person. But I'm gonna tell them outright Wednesday night that I'll do it that one time and that's it. You know. 'Cause my contract is going to say I'm only gonna be there on Mondays. And starting in July... I told them specifically: starting in July because I wanted to have this quality time with you and, and, some little fart named Audra that's gonna be coming up soon or down.

SAM: And well you never... You kind of... You haven't talked too much about having your paradise and your prison in the same property and we need to talk more about what it's like for you to have...

DAD: Sam, this is... this is like in the olden days when they had prisons, [clears throat] they would take people out to do hard labor.

SAM: ()

DAD: Yeah, something like that. And, you know, you weren't necessarily in the prison all the time. And I'm doing hard labor out on the farm. What happens is I really enjoy, you know, doing the work and stuff like that. But there's gonna come a time, just like it happened with my Tio Juan, where it is just overwhelming. Seven acres is too much for an old man. OK? I mean, it's not a tractor. It's a machete; it's a beat-up lawn mower; and it's a trimmer. OK?

SAM: Yeah. But that beat-up lawn mower is pretty bad ass, Dad.

DAD: Oh, just like his owner. I mean. Shit. You know. I had to build a machine that was like my equal. You know?

SAM: What's the name of it?

DAD: Alacrán. Scorpion. One bad ass machine. You will be using it tomorrow probably if I get gasoline. But Sam, it's just like, eh, when I say prison, most of the time it's not that bad here because I'm used to it. You, you caught me at a bad time in the sense that I hadn't been sick in five years. OK? And I haven't been able to shake this cold that I have. OK? And it's bad enough, Sam, for you to go to school and go through your routine and study and stuff like that. Imagine if you had to do it dragging ass and you were sick and there's not excuse. You have to, you know... I had to go see Brian. I had to go to Angel's graduation. And I was, you know, reaching deep down inside of me for the strength to be able to do what I did. You know? But at Angel's, I passed out on the floor. I couldn't take it. I'm not going to impress anybody that I'm a He Man because I'm not, never have been. I need my sleep; I need my rest; I need to recharge my batteries and stuff. But I've never been that sick. And what happens Sam, like yourself right now, you don't have a medical plan. If you got really, really sick, what the hell would happen to you, to Dave, to Mom, to myself. None of us has a medical plan. You know what I'm saying? Where on the flip side, Jessie has the best medical plan that... that, you know, that you could possible think of, you know? That she basically doesn't have to pay for anything; everything is paid for. No deductible; no nothing. OK? But the thing is I always felt that I could keep myself healthy enough where I wouldn't need, you know, to be spending \$400, \$500 a month on a medical plan that I was gonna maybe use \$100 a year. OK? I couldn't see it. People do that as a insurance. Let's say cancer and shit like that. And if I get cancer, well, so be it, you know. I get cancer and I die. You know. I won't be the first person to die of cancer. But I can't see trying to prolong a miserable life, OK, with machinery, and, and, and all kinds of shit. If I get it, you know, I just let it take its course and I'll die. You know? But I'm not gonna try to prolong my life because what kind of life is it going to be anyway? You know? I'll just let it go. That's the way I feel.

SAM: What do you mean what kind of life is it going to be anyway?

DAD: Well, I mean, you know, eh... If I can't work the farm, if I can't move around, if I have to be stuck to a machine, or a routine...

SAM: OK. I thought when you said "machines," I thought you were talking about Alacrán and stuff.

DAD: No, no, no. No. The life support or dialysis and shit like... I rather just fucking die. I'm not gonna kill myself. But I'm not gonna do anything to pr... you know... to try to prolong my life. You know?

SAM: You had told me a few months ago about a letter that you wrote Austin that said that you had built walls around yourself.

DAD: Yeah.

SAM: That one day you would show him the... a canal or something: the secret passage to get through. What did you mean by that?

DAD: You think I'm gonna tell you now? You're full of shit. I like you but no. That's for Austin. That's not for you. Sam, don't... don't... eh... walls are just a defense mechanism because you get tired of being hurt. And the only people that can hurt me are the people that I love. OK? You know. All these people in these condominiums that piss and moan about their problems, I wipe my ass with those things. You know. I don't give a shit about that. Eh... But if I love someone, that person can hurt me. You know. Because I don't... I don't... put up walls around, you know, the people that I love. But sometimes, like years ago in Angel's case when she was coming down on my case, I had to put walls up around myself to protect myself from Angel. OK? Right now, I have walls to protect myself from Mom. OK? Eh... I'm putting up walls to protect myself from David. I don't have any walls with you. OK?

SAM: What do you protect? But what do you mean in each of those cases, like the walls with Angel, the walls with Mom and the walls with David.

DAD: Angel... Angel had this opinion of me that I abandoned you guys and... and... she had no problems repeating that to family members and stuff like that. And I couldn't trust her, you know, to... to sit down and spill my guts with her because when I had the sexual harassment problem, she turned around and said "It's probably all true—you know—what they are accusing you of." And stuff like that. She was kind of really, really against me. OK? So that's it. You know. The walls go up. You know. If that's the attitude that you're gonna have with me—OK?—the walls go up. If... In Mom's case, you know, if she's not gonna communicate... I think it was last night that I was thinking about her 'cause I do a lot of thinking at night, este, when I go to bed. I was thinking about making a special tape for Mom, eh, you know, and telling her about how you and I have talked and I felt that I should clarify some things and shit like that. And quickly, you know, I dismissed the idea. I said: "No, fuck it." OK? I'll just keep the fucking walls up. You know? But I was trying to do that to prepare for what might be coming in December when she runs out of the unemployment. You know? Because, you know, you were able to sit down with me today and say "Dad, I can't take the shit." You know. "I gotta get some other food. I tried to—you know—do it your way. It's not working out." But Mom would probably die than to accept help from me. OK? And I was... I was gonna try to, you know, tear down the wall, and, and make her feel comfortable that it's not, you know, demeaning to accept help from me and stuff like that. But then, you know, I... I was confused about Angel's comment about "Don't give Mom your pension." You know. "Fuck Mom." And I don't know if it's just lashing out, eh, because Mom's with Jessie and shit like that. And I... I have to kind of filter all this crap out. You know? And I just rather go with my gut. And my gut was always, you know, have that Parker pension for Mom. And, you know, I, I put like \$77,000 in her IRA account or that's what it's up to now—not that I put that in—but it's up to that now. And that should tie her over until she gets her Social Security and stuff, you know?

SAM: But I'm confused. Like you said that you were gonna try to make a special tape or something like to break the walls down?

DAD: Yeah, but then...

SAM: But why were you gonna do that?

DAD: Because, ah, right now, Sam, you talked to Mom yesterday. I asked "Did Mom receive my message that I left her?" Because I wanted to talk to her about, you know, what she's doing with Jessie that I think that's really cool even if Jessie feels that she could have done it without her. And stuff like that. Just to, you know, open up the... the... the lines of communication. OK? Because she had... You know, when she lost her job, she told me about it. And then I, I put a plan together that she could live on for \$2,000 a month or something. And then all of the sudden, everything shuts down. [clears throat] You know. And I don't understand how to take that. You know. If "Fuck you. I'm not gonna follow your plan. Or use it as a guideline. Or I'll do things on my own. Or I think that I'll find another job and I don't need your help." And shit like that. And I said "Fuck it then." [clears throat] And that's when I decided to wait until the unemployment is up. You know. And then see what the hell she does. But I have my fingers crossed that David will find a job, you know, and keep the job. But I don't know if that's gonna happen. You know, some other alternative. Because, you know, if I don't help Mom, actually... I'm actually looking at Dave, and Mom, and you for the time being. Although you can say "Look, I can fend for myself." Or shit like that. But if I don't keep Mom afloat—OK?—Dave's gonna go to shit and then what's gonna happen to you? That you're gonna have some other hardships that you don't see coming right now. And you still have two more years to go for your Master's. OK? And [clears throat] before you hit that two-year mark, the shit's gonna hit the fan. [clears throat] And I have to keep... Even if it's going through you, I have to send money. Let's say... Call it a \$1,000 a month or something for you to pay for electricity, water, the bills—you know—utilities and stuff like that. And then let you guys fend for yourselves as far as food goes. You know. Keep the property taxes up. Pay for the insurance. You know. Do all that kind of shit. You know. But if Mom is going to be stubborn and doesn't want any of my money, I'm gonna have to do it through you. OK? Or... I don't want to do it through Dave because I don't know. You know, when I hear the shit that Brian sends money to his mom and dad and they don't pay for the mortgage and then the shit hits the fan, you know, what's all that shit?

SAM: What's... What are the walls for David?

DAD: Eh... I, I'm concerned about going to bat for him and helping him with his debts. And then three years later, he'll say "Guess what, Dad? I have another \$25,000 in debt." And I have to fight myself, my instinct to help. OK? Until he shows... shows me something. You know. Shows me that he's gonna have a job. Shows me that he wants to study something else, you know, that's gonna be employable. You know. And the mean time, I don't want to get all chummy chummy and then every now and then, he'll spring on me "Hey, Dad—you know—eh... the, the creditors are on top of me. You know. They're gonna take me to court. They're gonna do this. They're gonna do that."

I wanna see how much he settles on his own. You know. And that's why I, I, I can't be completely open with him. You know. I have to be very careful there. You know?

SAM: I can't think of something.

DAD: You can what?

SAM: I said I can't think of anything else. I lost my train of thought again.

DAD: That's 'cause you're hungry again.

SAM: I'm not that hungry. Oh, well.

DAD: Shut off, Sam.

SAM: Yeah.

PR Tape 7 (2009)

SAM: I don't even remember what we were talking about, Dad.

DAD: Oh, were going to start taping about the... Well, first of all, let me just make a comment. Today I received a... a Father's Day Card from Angel. And the inside, you know, it had like a little screwdriver, and the inside it said, eh, something about your toughest job. You know? And I've been thinking about that, you know? And, it really... I don't think any one of you was like... For instance, for me, 'cause I wasn't there, you know, tough on me that maybe she was the toughest to handle for Mom, I don't know. You know, because we discussed how Jessie at one point ran away. And, you know, you had the incident when we bought you the car and... and, you know, they had to tackle you in the front yard, and all kinds of shit like that. And then, like, Angel, well, you know, always pissing and moaning about attention and all that kind of stuff. So, you know, the thing about the toughest job wouldn't be something... That should have been on a Mother's Day card. OK? Because Mom was the one that was dealing with all of you. And if you asked Mom, she would probably say that David was the easiest one to handle because he's a lot like her, and very neutral, and stuff like that. You tend to be very opinionated and point out, you know, different things and stuff like that. And Jessie has always been very independent, you know, and... And Angel has always been like: "I'm the oldest so you're all supposed to respect me and do what I tell you to do and stuff like that. And she wasn't necessarily the one with the best head on her shoulders because I think we have already discussed maybe Jessie was the one that helped Mom the most by sometimes balancing, balancing the checkbook and, you know, taking a look at other things, helping around the house, and stuff like that.

SAM: Yeah. I mean, it's not necessarily anything bad to say about Angel. It's just sort of she had a rougher time adjusting over there. And Jessie fit right in. So then Jessie was more eager to help Mom out and everything.

DAD: More confident.

SAM: Angel was just sort of like "Oh, I don't want to be here. What's this shit?" So she didn't really have too much confidence or too much energy to really even, like, ah, to be like, like some of the things that Jessie was doing was "Make sure that everything's clean when Mom gets here. Make sure that you pick up all your stuff and have your homework done." And that. Jessie would do like motherly things like that.

DAD: Um hum.

SAM: Ahm... I, you know, once again, I... Just like you, I don't remember a lot of things. So I don't know if, ah, Angel did a lot of the things and I just don't remember. So I don't want to be unfair and say...

DAD: The thing is you... You would, ah... If you see some of the video tape, the early ones where Angel had her curly hair and she's with Jessie, and... She seems to correct Jessie like I'm the older sister, and, you know, stuff like that, it seems like Angel and Jessie got along really well when you look at those early video tapes and shit like that. But then it got to a point where, like Jessie was sort of like resentful. I th... I don't know,

high school, Jessie liked the boys a lot, and stuff like that and Angel would make comments, you know, to that effect. You know, that she should be more reserved and not be, you know, the way she is with boys, and stuff like that. Eh... You know, and crap like that. But I want to ask you, Sam, when... When we first went down, we rented... We didn't rent. We stayed at Nilda and Sugui's house in Orlando. And you said that David made friends right away in the neighborhood. And stuff like that. And then, I gave Mom the green light to buy a house. And that's when she looked around because this apartment that we live in here, who chose it was Mom. OK? She wanted... I don't know, the shit that women look at: where the sun comes in the window, and the kitchen, and, you know, a Southern exposure, and all this kind of crap. Mom also was the one that chose the farm in Cayabo. That she went and saw it and she said: "Dad, you gotta see this. I think you're gonna love this farm." And the house in Orlando was the same way. She was the one that found it and said: "The kids are crazy about and, you know, when I saw the enthusiasm on David's face, especially the main attraction was the swimming pool. OK? Now, when you were a little kid, do you remember using the pool a lot? You know.

SAM: Yep.

DAD: You know, up to... Let's say, you know, I think we've in that house for sixteen years. You know, you guys have been in Florida for seventeen years. But one year was at Nilda and Sugui's house.

SAM: No. We were in Kissimmee, that's the house that titi Nilda had, for a few months.

DAD: OK.

SAM: And then we went to Lake Mary because we didn't stay in Kissimmee to go to school or anything. We were... rented a house that was in the neighborhood where we ended up buying.

DAD: OK. It was...

SAM: 470

DAD: North Sundance Drive.

SAM: North instead of South Sundance.

DAD: Yeah. OK. That makes sense. But then when you were in the area, that's when Mom spotted the house. On South... That makes sense, Sam. See, I didn't remember that detail. But the thing is, with the way David reacted to the swimming pool, and you try to remember, were there like a lot of years that you guys used the pool that was...

SAM: Yeah. And then... There's a video of me swimming in the pool and I think I'm avoiding Fernando because he's a baby. And he's naked. And they put him in the pool when he's swimming towards me.

DAD: And you're afraid he's going to piss all over you.

SAM: I was... Yeah. I didn't want some naked baby swimming towards me. So I think there's a video of that. Ahm... There's a painting that Mamma and Pappa had made of Pebbles and Chanel that Mom took not too long ago. I mean, it was maybe a year before

Pebbles died, I'm thinking. Maybe I'm wrong. Ah... And in the background, you see a blue pool. I'm just trying to think back of...

DAD: OK. The thing is that the pool has been there like for you guys to... for entertainment, for you guys to swim, and stuff like that. And I think Mom used to even at night go dip in the pool when it was really hot. When the day was really hot, she...

SAM: I remember. Yeah. I remember there was a time when we stopped using it less and Mom would just go in and relax. And go swimming and stuff. And I think it was even clean when David was dating Annie. And then David and Annie would go swimming.

DAD: Corbin and...

SAM: Yeah.

DAD: And that kind of stuff. Yeah because, eh, now, eh, Jessie's going to bring Austin down and they're talking about cleaning the pool so that Angel can maybe teach him how to swim. And all this kind of stuff. But what I was getting at is, basically, for whatever long whether it was 15, 16 years, that you have been living in that house, only the last two years has it really been getting really bad. OK? Like whenever I visited, it would be like misty. You know, it wasn't clear, but you couldn't honestly say, it was a swamp. You know? That it was a matter of a couple of gallons of that chlorine and stuff like that and it would clear up. And shit like that. And then, I was thinking, you know, 'cause it... Thinking of maybe it was like two years ago, well, it's been exactly two years since I closed down the factory. And when I closed down the factory, I had no income. You know, that basically I had the amount of money that I told you that I used to live on, so I couldn't be sending Mom, eh, \$1,300, \$1,400, \$1,500 or whatever. But, you know, she was making her good money. Mom may have been at \$75,000 and at the end, she got up to \$80,000. So those two years, I stopped being what I had always been over the years. I stopped being the provider. OK? Like I've always said, I don't consider myself a good Dad; I don't consider myself a good husband; but I have always been... had always been a good provider. I anticipated, you know, 'cause Mom kept saying that...

SAM: What the hell is that sound?

DAD: It ain't my stomach.

SAM: [laugh]

DAD: Mom kept saying that at one point in time, 'cause she was training the people en Costa Rica to do the translation, that she was afraid that she was going to be without a job. So... In 2005, two years before the company closed, I paid off the house in Orlando. OK? So there's no monthly payment. But I kept paying the property tax. I remember paying insurance too, but I don't remember if at one time Mom paid it and I reimbursed her or she paid and didn't say anything to me about it. Because a lot of times, she would do things like that, like she would pay for your car insurance and not say anything to me. And stuff like that. Or fix something and not say anything to me. So, I'm not very clear on that. But I am clear that when I closed the factory in 2007, more or less, for this time of the year, I stopped sending money to her. I stopped being

the provider. And it kind of coincides with about the time that I stopped going to Orlando. Eh... I think I stopped going like six months before that because since I knew the factory was going to shut down, I tried to save as much as possible because I already knew more or less what the situation, eh, was between Mom and myself, and I said "Why should I spend money going over there? To only come back, you know, depressed or hurt or feeling bad. So, it's probably been like two and a half years since I've seen David, since I've been to Orlando, except for this last trip when I went up to see Jessie that, you know, you drove me past the house, then we went there and I saw what was going on. But the key thing is that I stopped being the provider two years ago. And it coincides with my not visiting the house anymore, my not providing anymore, and all of the sudden, the pool turns to shit. OK? It becomes a swamp. OK? I don't know if you can still say that your metaphor of... the dirty pool or the swamp is a metaphor for lack of communication. I'm thinking anymore because of the coincidence with the fact that I stopped being a provider, that I stopped visiting, that it's more of... eh... what used to be a gray area between Mom and myself, has now become darker. You know, that it's... it's... Before you wondered and asked, you know, the kids would ask "What's going on between Mom and Dad?" And shit like that. And now, it's like... obvious. OK? That something's really wrong. Where before, let's say, [clears throat] there were certain deficiencies inside the house. Let's say, the stove was dirty. the bathrooms were dirty, there was a lot of dirty laundry all over the floor in her bathroom. And spilling over into the bedroom, into the closet, that we had discussed that before. But it's not something that neighbors see. OK? That it's something that it's still, you're not airing dirty laundry. It's still in the house. The pool—OK?—it's something now that the neighbors have picked up on. The little girl on the swing set looks over and "Oogh!" OK? You know? Now definitely something is wrong. OK? And it's obvious to other people that are not within our family unit. OK? When I get a letter from the homeowners association bringing to my attention that the grass has not been cut. OK. And I have to tell Mom. Why the hell should I be receiving letters about the, the landscaping. I hadn't received anything like that in all the years that Mom had been living there. OK? And now it's becoming more and more obvious that the deficiencies, let's say in Mom and David as a duo, handling the things around the house because only recently, this year you came back. There was a whole year where you were still away from the house. It's only this year, when you started your Master's that you went back to the house, but already the pool was showing the signs of becoming the swamp. OK? And, as much as you tried, and you made your inventions and stuff like that, you could not do it on your own. OK? That the problem that is spilling over into the yard, into the public eye, you cannot rectify on your own, Sam. It's something that needs a concerted effort from you, Mom and David, and stuff like that because you are the ones that are there. I never plan to go back to the States. I go back, like I told you, to see Brian before he shipped off; this thing with Angel, you know, to go to Connecticut. Eh... If Mom decided she wanted to sell the house, I would probably go to find someone who's really going to put that pool in shape, so that you get more money for the house, and stuff. You know. Eh... Do what has to be done. You know. Stop dicking around and well, let's see if Mom and David are going to clean it then shit, like I told you. I'll take Alvin with me with his diving gear. One week tops,

you know, we'll get that thing running. If we have to put in a new pump, a new filter, and do all the shit. It's better to spend \$4,000 or \$5,000, you know, to do that because it's going to bring in \$10,000 on the sale of the house. You know. And then because you are going to sell it, you don't have to worry whether you're going to keep it up or not. You know, it's to sell the house. I would rather, you know, the house gets fixed. And you can live there in harmony. You know, that, eh... that people don't see, you know, the deficiencies within our house spilling out into the yard. That the deficiencies inside the house, can be corrected too because now that Mom is without a job, you know, and David is only working 15 hours a week, I think the two of them ought to team up because you may not realize it, but studying the way you're studying, is a full time job, Sam. OK? You cannot be expected to come home after a, a grinding day at school, where I don't even call you on your cell phone or when I have called you to let you know that I'm in Ponce. Sometimes, late at night, you're doing something. You know? That you're really busy. And Mom and Dad... Mom and Dave can actually team up because, you know, the hours that they have available and make an effort. You know. And like I told you, once you keep it up, say "What did we do wrong in the past? Let's rectify this." OK? Let's take the steps that need to be taken to keep this from happening again. OK? In other words, you know, you have to analyze the problem. OK? And say what we can do about this, counting on each other. OK? Not counting on the provider. I'm not there anymore. I've done my job. My only responsibility; my only obvious responsibility at this time is with you. OK? Jessie's on her course; Angel's on her course. OK? I am just taking a wait and see attitude with Mom and Dave to see what they're gonna do, to see if I need to come back in as a provider. OK? That I tried to, to wash my hands of that role as a provider because of the money that Mom was making and stuff like that. What makes it difficult is they have become accustomed to a certain way of life. OK? David has not been asked... or... been held to a higher standard. No one has raised the bar on him. I haven't been there to do that. But I haven't been there to that for you. You raised the bar for yourself. OK? Angel raised the bar for herself. Jessie raised the bar for herself. David is not going to raise the bar. That's what he has to learn. No one is going to raise the bar for him. He has to decide: "This is what I have to do." OK? "I can't keep blaming Dad. I can't keep blaming this situation or that situation. I can't keep blaming Annie. I can't..." You know. You have to suck it up. OK? And say "Dam. I better get my head out of my ass because the clock is ticking." When I say the clock is ticking, David is not getting any younger. And tick, tick, tick, tick, unemployment is going to be running out. OK? Things are getting worse in the economy. OK? It's getting tougher and tougher to get a job. You have to be more creative. OK? But I think that seeing that pool, seeing the condition around the house, depresses them more. I think they need to change their environment around them to motivate themselves. OK? To do things in a better way. OK? You know. They can't count on Sammy coming in. And what happens is, until they realize it, they resent you pointing it out to them. OK? You that, that... in that sense, it can be a lack of communication, but the communication is within themselves that they have to accept "Dam. Look at the position that I'm in. I'm fucked." OK? "How much longer can I hold out like this?" OK? It isn't David "Mom, Mom, you got \$3,800. They deposited \$3,800 in your bank account." \$3,800 the way they spend

money is gonna go like this, Sam. You know? Like you say, when you go to the grocery store, I don't want to get this. I don't want to get this. Look at the detail, Sam. You go to Lares; you go the Subway. OK? You see what the fucking sandwiches cost. You say "Dam." I say "I don't give a fuck, Sam. I don't want you to get sick. I want you to eat well." We're down here in Ponce. We go in together. We're gonna both eat together because in Lares, I have to eat Abuela's food so she doesn't feel that I don't want to eat her food, too. And shit like that. But when we're here, we look at that fucking door, \$11.99 for three fucking sandwiches, which way do you think we're gonna go, Sam? OK? And this is the kind of thing that Mom and Dave have to do. They have to communicate with each other and say "I'm not going to drink anymore. I'm not gonna smoke anymore. I'm not going to sports bars to see the fucking game when I got the game at home." OK? Eh... Can we give the dogs leftovers instead of buying dog food? You know? Or is that a big no-no? OK? Can we somehow keep the dogs bathed and stuff so we don't send them out to have their nails painted and their hair combed and shit like that? You know. Can we do some of that stuff internally? You know, like wow. When was the last time I saw a barber? You know. Noticed how I trimmed my beard today? You know. Left it a little fuzzy. But I fixed it up a little bit. Why do I have to go to a barbershop? Why do I have to...? You know. And even when I was making good money, I was doing this because it was practical; it was sensible. You know, that I do things. The communication isn't so much, Sam, communication between me and Dave and me and Mom. OK? I'm out of the picture for all practical purposes, like when I stopped being the provider. OK? Now the communication is between the two of them. Basically even though I wasn't there, eh, when you were young, to be a dad and all that kind of stuff, I'm here for you now. OK? And I've been here for your education. I try to be there, you know, for what I considered were important things. OK? Now Mom and David have to take a look at each other; take a look at the position that they're in. Like you see the teamwork that I have with Abuela. OK? That's one of the reasons that you're here. OK? That's one of the things the spins off your visit. OK? When I'm telling you about David and Mom communicating, you see the kind of communication that I have with Abuela. You see that I buy her soups for her. I buy her the chocolate chip cookies. I buy her her sugar wafers. OK? I buy her the tortillas so that we can make the ham and cheese and roll the thing up for her. OK? I make sure that everything is within her grasp so that when she opens up the refrigerator, she doesn't have to reach all the way in. Everything is at her fingertips. OK? You see how I tied up her wheelchair because the door to the bathroom is too narrow, and with the way I tied up the wheelchair, I narrowed the wheelchair so it fits through the door. Little details. OK? Where she's on a schedule. OK? I tell you "Don't come out of your room before 7:30 in the morning." Because Abuela gets up at 6:00; 10 minutes to 6. She has her breakfast. She takes a bath. She rolls down the isle naked. I wouldn't want you to see that. It's not a pretty site. OK? When you come out, she's already dressed. She changed her clothes. You see how I wash her clothes on a specific day. I fucked up when I threw your clothes in with hers, her clothes because your clothes started smelling like piss. You know? And stuff like that, but you see the routine. OK? I just brought up with me \$1,200 to deposit in Abuela's savings account here in Ponce. The check is by the computer. Because she saves \$17,000 a year

between what she gets out of Social Security and the certificates of deposit. Sam, we have hot water if we want hot water; we're not starving to death. I mean, it's not the kind of stuff you like to eat, obviously. You know, you have a specific diet and stuff like that, but you see our routine. You see how it works for us. You see how the outside of the house; the yard, the farm looks like someone is working at it. It doesn't look like it's abandoned. Oh, at times, you'll see some spots that the grass hasn't been cut yet, that this is... But you see a concerted effort, you know, to try to keep things up. You know. So that the place doesn't look run down. OK? And this is the kind of thing that I think that Mom and Dave have to get going. They have to start communicating with each other, and being very honest with each other and saying "Look at what the fuck is going on. What are we gonna do? You know. We only have each other." Because, Sam, you're only two years away. You know? For you taking that big step the way Angel and Jessie. You know? And move out of the nest. Like for ever and ever amen. But apparently, with the kind of debt that David has generated for himself, his gonna have to stay in that situation with Mom, unlike me with Abuela, that I have this apartment fully furnished, that I don't need to be with her. OK? I choose to help her. I choose to be up there confined to that environment because I am grateful to her for the life that she gave me. OK? It's like a prison in certain aspects, but I chose that. OK? Here, I have all this freedom. You and I... You know. I can take you to Mamma and Pappa's and I'm here. And I'm doing other things. It's not like I'm sitting here with my thumb up my ass wondering "When is Sammy coming home? Is he gonna call me soon? I miss him." No. I don't do that, Sammy. While you're here, I love the hell out of you, Sam. When you're not here, I don't really think about you all the time. You know, there are certain things that remind me like, you know, eh... if I'm out on the farm, and, eh, something happens. I'll say "That fucking jinx." Then I remember that it happened to you. I don't remember exactly what happened now, Sam. Can you remind me?

SAM: Oh... The lawnmower...

DAD: It was the string broke on the lawnmower?

SAM: The lawnmower stopped on me or something. And then also the clips on the... when we were hanging up the clothes...

DAD: Yeah, the, the, the...

SAM: That those things broke.

DAD: Yeah. But is it... Stop to think, Sam. Something as simple as hanging up clothes to dry. You had never done that in your fucking life because all the time, you have the convenience of... the luxury of having a drier in the house. OK? Most of my life growing up, it was hanging out the clothes. In, in the basement in the winter, obviously. You know. And in the summer time, outside. And you're 24 years old, Sam, and you had never hung up clothes to dry. OK? To give you an idea of how "abandoned" you were. You know. How... My poor baby was suffering—you know—washing clothes in the river, like that river that I showed you when we went that you might... Oh, well, Audra may not go up to Lares, so she's not gonna see that river. So whenever we go back up there, we're gonna have to film that, Sam. Unless you change

your mind and just go off for a couple of hours or something like that. You know. Course, Jedge doesn't take too long to say "Look how skinny you are." [laugh] You know. [laugh] She'll shoot that one, right off her hip. You know? But you stop to think, Sam. You know. Even though I'm in this "prison" so to speak with Abuela, it's very well coordinated. You know. Of course, Mom a couple of years ago, when the... eh... the thought of my going to Orlando, eh, came up, you know that the company was going to shut down and I didn't know whether I was going to open up my own business or not. She said "You can't be the same controlling son of bitch." OK? And even though I have things organized in Lares, I don't consider that it is so fucking controlling because if you notice, Abuela has her time when she watches her novelas and she does her thing. And she eats. She decides what meals is going to cook. You never see me telling her: "I wan this. I want that." Whatever she prepares, I eat. You know. But, of course, when I make the groceries, I try to have a variety so that, you know, she doesn't make the same thing. But when I saw how greasy the ground meat was, I decided not to bring it, and we threw out the rest of it that she had left there. So you know, it's like a learning experience. OK? All the time. Like right now you decided that you might stay Wednesday when I come down for the meeting. If we go up Thursday, we'll get her her ribs because on Thursday, they sell the ribs. OK? And then she had asked, you know, on Monday or Tuesday, if we run the ribs up. So all these little details where you're showing consideration for the person; you're showing that person that you care; and stuff like that. When Mom was away and she came back, and David had the house relatively clean, that you were surprised, this is what they have to do more of together. It isn't "Now, Mom's home. So David leans... lays back; says "Fuck it. Mom's home. Now I don't have to keep trying to keep things clean and stuff like that because she doesn't give a fuck because she leaves the shit thrown around, and does it. Mom has to set the example. Mom has to say "Look, we're gonna have to do this together." OK? Why? An opportunity... Right now, Mom is going to be taking care of Austin. Sometimes God presents different a... things to you, for you to take advantage. Jessie was going to pay \$700 or is paying \$700 a month for daycare in North Carolina. Mom is taking care of Austin. These maternal instincts, these grandmother instincts are coming out. I don't think that she can, ah, take care of... do babysitting in Lake Mary. I think they have like rules that you can't have business and shit like that. But if Mom could do some babysitting, you know, have a friend. 'Cause she has made friends and stuff that have kids. Why if all of the sudden, she could do some babysitting? Stay home; do the babysitting; and pick up a translation every now and then for a filler. You know? You never know. You have to take advantage of situations. I keep thinking of the example of when you started working at Moe's that apparently they were putting up a new shopping center close to the university, and you saw that "Opening soon. Moe's" And you went on the internet and you asked them "Hey, if you're looking for people, I'm the man for you." Or something... I remember something like that, Sam.

SAM: It was a franchise.

DAD: And I thought it was...

SAM: And I found out that the, the person who had the franchise had a store that was opening in Winter Park, so I drove to Winter Park and I interviewed for it there.

DAD: What... This is what I mean. That you saw something and something clicked in your head. And you're supposed to be the dumbest of my kids. OK? 'Cause you were the last and apparently you didn't get as much brains as the others, OK? But you have a lot of common sense. You know. That you picked up on that and you got the fucking job. And like... It seems like you make the right friends. OK? Like you say that you don't make very many friends, yet you make the right friends. Because Mike is your friend. And, son of a bitch, if he didn't hire Audra. And he even told you. "I hired her for you. I got the other babe for me. I hired Audra for you." And he knows you so well that you're still with Audra. Ain't that a bitch? You know? And then when we were talking about the pool, you told me that Mike would even come over and help you. You know? That's the kind of friend David should have. Not guys who come over and play the Wii and go into the video games and drink with him. You know? He gotta have friends who come over and say "Hey, let's get this done." You know? You know like when I said, ah, to you "Look who cut the grass for us here in Giada's paradise." Yeah, right. No one is going to help me in Lares. I would help other people, but no one helps me. You know? And this is, this is the kind of shit, Sam, that I see that you have a lot of the right ingredients, but you need... Like this is the best time for you not to be around, for you not to be in Lake Mary, you know, to a certain degree. So that Mom and David are forced to look at each other. OK? Because when you're around, you're always going to be cleaning. You're always going to be cleaning after them. You know? You're always going to be doing. And they actually need to wallow in their shit, you know, until they realize "Dam. We got it bad." You know? You know. "Look at how we're living." You know. "We have to do something about this." OK? I'm not saying that it can't be done with you there. OK? Because I think it can. But I think you have to take like, ah, stand back and leave them alone type attitude. OK? Or kind of guide them in certain directions.

SAM: But that's what I did when I stopped working on the pool and they weren't helping me. I said "Fuck it. It's not my responsibility."

DAD: Aha.

SAM: "And I'm just not going to worry about it." Because I had plenty of other shit. So I'm not going to worry about something that nobody is going to help me with.

DAD: But did they continue?

SAM: No.

DAD: Well.

SAM: Well, they did, but it was like a sporadic thing. And a lot of money went wasted because they really thought that throwing some gallons of chlorine was going to fix it.

DAD: OK. Aha.

SAM: And it takes a lot more work than they know.

DAD: OK. What happens now, Sam, is... And this is where certain things come into play. Right now, Austin is coming down. Austin is going to be there for three months. I think that if you went through the same fucking motions that you did before, the effort to clean the pool, and they saw certain improvement within a week or two, and they saw the possibility of Austin getting into the pool, OK? I think Austin will be the motivating factor. OK? Because if something like that doesn't happen, Austin is going to be the reason why Mom lets the shit go to hell in the house worse than it is. Mom can take two attitudes as far as Austin being in the house. One attitude is "Let me keep things really, really clean." Disinfected. OK? Because I'm gonna have Austin on the floor. OK. I can't have poop and piss from the dogs all over the fucking place. So Austin is going to be key—OK?—to Mom taking some kind of attitude, and the idea is if she can do it for three months—OK?—it's a matter of you're over the hump, you know, now you know that it doesn't kill you to keep the place up or David. And then Dave is going to feel better about bringing young ladies over and guys—you know—to party and shit because the place looks decent, Sam, looks... OK? Because who was it... David wanted to rent out rooms in the house? Or who's... who's gonna go and, and lease the master bedroom for \$200, \$400 a month—OK?—because it comes with a private bath and shit like that if it's going to be in the condition that it's in? What happens? You can lease the master bedroom with the master... you know, with the bath, access to the pool for \$700 a month. Is almost like an efficiency apartment. You know? If you want to go that route. You know, because I don't... dismiss ideas, you know, it doesn't matter how outrageous they are. Sometimes, este, like Angel and Jay got together as a convenience, roommates, to help pay for the... 'cause it's expensive to live in Connecticut. OK? And like I could have here some law student lease a room or two rooms. I could lease two rooms out. And I would keep the master bedroom or vice versa. But I would have to, naturally, improve the bathrooms and the kitchen and stuff like that. And it would be like, eh, most of the time I'm not gonna be here. So basically you have the run of the house. I would put Internet and stuff like that because they would want to go into the law library on the Internet and stuff like that. And I would charge them \$300 for a room. If I needed to have an income, let's say, things got really bad. Or lease the entire... You know, that's why I throw those ideas out, Sam. That Mom and Dave are going to have to be more creative and you have to sort of slowly... You know, you have to be... I was a provider. You have to be a facilitator. You have to like throw things out there, and make them think it's their fucking idea. OK? And then just step back, and let things take their course to see what the fuck happens. You know? That you might have to go that extra mile. Like, you got the job for David at Moe's. OK? And you've talked to different friends of yours and stuff. That you might have to, you know, do that again, you know, to kind of help Mom out. "Mike, do you think that we can..." 'Cause Mike knows David and shit like that. To say "We really need to help my brother 'cause, you know, my Mom's without a job." And Mike's gonna say "Look, I know of something for him but, you know, he better not fuck up." And, and something I'm thinking about is that Dave could be a... a guard. You know, like some guards don't have to be policemen, like the guards here in the building. They don't have to carry a weapon or something, you know. Like the one you saw watering the lawn down there, at Taco Maker. That's why you're seeing different things, Sam,

and I look at them differently than you do. You know, like here in Puerto Rico, when you can't find anything else, you become a guard. OK? When Alicia, Migdalia's husband, couldn't find a job, I got him a job pumping gas. And then all of the sudden, you know, he went to guard. Because it's an easy fucking job, you're just walking around. You have a fucking uniform. And a lot of times companies, eh, have guards in, in hospitals, security guards, and stuff like that, that use the walkie-talkie; they have... And I think that Dave could probably do something like that. You know? Like even in Moe's, you know, course I don't see David doing that slide that that fat fucker does with the Moe cup. You know? And maybe just because he sees the Moe cup, "Oh, you're not gonna be making fun of me. I'm not gonna be no Moe cup." But a lot of times, guards meet a lot of chicks, and shit like that. Because sometimes something happens and they have to be there, you know, for the dames in distress and shit like that. But it's, it's... like ideas that maybe Dave hasn't even thought about.

SAM: No. David thought about being a security guard, but it wasn't an original thought. It was a thought that his friend threw at him. That his friend who, I think, was in the army came back. Joel is this guy. He was going to come back and David said that he was going to start his own security guard business.

DAD: Um hum.

SAM: Or I think it was bouncer even. You know what a bouncer is?

DAD: Yeah. In, in, in drinking joints that you have to throw the people out. I wouldn't want to be doing that.

SAM: Well, or just the guy in the front that just...

DAD: Makes sure...

SAM: ...checks IDs.

DAD: ...checks IDs. Yeah.

SAM: Yeah. Ah... And I guess that's what's David's friend was gonna do. But this isn't a friend that's a very reliable person. This a friend who was in the police academy with Mike; that's how David met him 'cause Mike got him a job at Moe's.

DAD: Um hum.

SAM: He went through the police academy and he didn't get a job. Very few people go through the police academy and then don't go straight into working as a cop. But he was... He was that unreliable, like he was at... irresponsible.

DAD: Well, that's what we talked about once that, ah, and we just mentioned now that your friends seem to be a different caliber. You know, like when you and Mike had the apartment and you had one asshole there, you guys got rid of him. You know? And stuff.... You know that you're not going to allow yourselves, you know, to get a bad reputation, and to, you know, just because of one fuck up. You know. You got rid of the guy and... even though it cost you more, that you had to divide up between the two of you, but... You know, Mike has the great job and he'll go and sit at a Burger King, you know, to be there eon guard duty and stuff. But everyone of these places. You saw

Wendy's has a guard. You know? And stuff. They have security guards on campus, Sam. And all you have to do is look at the fucking uniform and you know the name of the secure... the security company. And a lot of times, they'll put you through, like some small training, you know, to say, you know, you can't be disrespectful, or you can't... And sometime legal things that you have to do and what to do in case of emergencies. And shit like that. But it's a small price to pay to have, you know, a forty-hour job. And... And a lot of times, a guard gets sick and he can't show up for a job, and they can call David to fill in. And stuff like that. You know. Ah, ah, ah. I think it's the way to go for now. You know. But, just because it's (), it doesn't mean that there aren't other reputable companies out there. For instance, eh, the young kid that's downstairs, the company that was here before, I know the lady that's the human resources manager. If Dave came to Puerto Rico, I would talk to doña Lourdes and say "My son can't find anything, can you help him?" And she would put him through this mini-course, and he would have a fucking job. I can take him to that bakery that was next to me in El Tuque, and say "Don Juan, he's my son. He doesn't have his shit together it should be, but I think he has all the qualifications, you know, to be a really good person that initiates the batter." You know, they only have one person that mixes up all the batter that comes in at 4 o'clock in the morning. OK? And if he can get next to Henry and learn what Henry knows, he would be invaluable. You know. And, and they would give him, you know... He would have a steady job. And the kind of things that I mention to you here, are the kind of things he has to look for over there. But he has to get away from losers. He has to get away from partiers, from guys who are just smoking and having a good time. () And shit like that. I'm not saying not to have a good time, Sam. But there's a time and a place for that. You know. You and Audra can go dancing. We went to a movie. OK? And shit like that. It can't be all the time, every time a boxing match comes up, "Let's go to the boxing match." And you spend, you know, couple of hundred dollars in drinks and getting in and the fight is over in two minutes. [clears throat] You know. So what the fuck did you do? You know, that you have to set priorities. You now. But a lot of times, I think that your role should be a facilitator. A facilitator is more or less pointing people in a direction, and actually opening up some kind of line of communication, but also some lines of thought, trains of thought. You know. Instead of being channeled "This is the only thing I know how to do." OK? Throw construction out there. You know. There are some guys that are just hauling stuff around in a wheelbarrow and stuff like that. There are some guys that are just holding a sign up on the road. OK?

SAM: But Mom and David are both very thick headed people where you can't tell them anything. If I told David that I knew of a place where he could work, he could get 40 hours, and they paid him \$10 an hour. He probably wouldn't follow through with it. He would probably... I mean, what, what did he do when I told him about the postal office?

DAD: That was stupid. That would have been a great things.

SAM: Well, you know what... You know exactly what he did? I mean... I think what he did... He told me that he drove by the place, and that it didn't look right or something. Like he didn't even... He tried to go inside and I guess he went to the wrong place. And they

said “You gotta go here.” And he couldn’t find the place. And he just said “Fuck it.” And went home. And instead of just... You know, something so simple. You just find the place. You apply. And if you don’t get the job, you don’t get the job. But at least you applied.

DAD: You have to... You have to go through the motions. You know like... When I was running the factory, Sam, sometimes there were people that were walking factory to factory looking for jobs. And the guy would come up to my door and I would say “I don’t have any vacancies. What can you do? What do you know how to do?” He says “Well, I just came from New York City and over there, I did this, this, this.” I’d say, “You’re wasting your time here. Go to the other side of town that there is this factory that can hire you that they make mattresses and they have the kind of machine that you were used to working in New York. See if you can get a job over there.” And they were so fucking grateful. They were “No one even takes the time to, to steer us in the right direction or to guide us.” You know. “To say anything to us.” You know?

SAM: You... You know, the first few days that I was here and I was saying “Oh, I’m a jinx.” And I was tripping over shit and stuff and you told me not to be so hard on myself, I think David’s really hard on himself. I think David, ahm, will apply at one... like... will apply at one place a day and then he feels like he didn’t get the job and he’s down on himself for a while. Like, like this situation with Harley. Harley ended up getting a job before quitting Moe’s. He got a job working at... as a manager at Tijuana Flats, which is like another Mexican place. But it’s going up. Just like David went from Tropical Smoothie to Moe’s, the next step up is Tijuana Flats. The next step up after that would be Chili’s. You know? But then, he got really down on himself because he said this was an ad that was posted on a website that David kept looking at for employment opportunities. He said “Just so happens to be the day that I don’t look, and then Harley finds it, and applies and gets the job right away.”

DAD: Then it wasn’t meant for him, Sam.

SAM: But he wallows in that shit.

DAD: Yeah, but you cannot, you cannot do that, Sam. And even if I was there, Sam, he’s not gonna do anything differently. Sam, I remember when, ah, Alicio, eh, left the shop, he couldn’t find a fucking job. I saw Moe on her lunch hour taking him from factory to factory by the hand, and practically begging managers to give her husband a job. You know, there are some guys that are just, you know, I don’t know, Sam. But Dave, you know, he should even go to a place like Careers or Manpower or the employment agency, the unemployment agency. First of all, he may even qualify for unemployment benefits. And if he doesn’t, the unemployment agency has like jobs posted and they say “Look.” Because when you go for unemployment benefits, they have you take a sheet of paper where you’re supposed to go visiting different places where you show that you applied for a job, and they have to sign that you actually interviewed with them, that you actually knocked on their door. If you don’t do that, if you don’t hand that paper in, they stop your benefits. You know, you have to be in an active search for unemployment [clears throat], for employment when you’re unemployed. But sometimes when you go in, they say “Hey, here’s a job for a dishwasher.” Because

Ismael told me that when he was in New York City, he always found a job as a dish washer. You know. That those jobs were always available. You know. Busing tables, dish washing, you know, cleaning up, and stuff like that. The thing is it doesn't matter whether you think you're intelligent or that's demeaning, you need to make money for food and a roof over your head and to pay your fucking bills. Now is not the time to say, "Now is when I want to open up my restaurant because I got these fucking ideas in Chicago. And I want to do this. I want..." I'm not gonna put up the capital. You know? For someone who hasn't shown me that he can run a business. OK? And shit like that. You know, that when I tried to sit down and explain certain things to him, you know... It's just like you, when I try to explain numbers, pwk! You shut down. OK? Dave does the same fucking thing to me. OK? And if you don't understand those numbers, and shit like that... You know, you could make the best films in the world, but if you don't know how to market it, you don't know how to do it within a certain budget, and shit like that, you're gonna be losing money. You're not gonna be making money. You know. Like this marketing thing that David is doing now, you know. He's spending a lot of money in gasoline going back and forth. So what is he doing? Well, he's keeping himself busy. He's not at home. But he's not bringing any money home. Everything's going out. You know. Does that make sense? You know what I'm saying, Sam? That he... You know. And if they're both thick headed and shit like that, sorry about that. You know. I'm sorry about that.

SAM: Why are you sorry?

DAD: You know. Eh... They're... They're grown ups. You know. I, I, I... If you can't see the forest for the trees, fuck you. You know? Like when I asked Mom, can you live on \$2,000, and I never get a fucking answer. Because I was trying to work something out, where she would have \$2,000 until she got Social Security. And then Social Security would kick in and help her out, and stuff like that. But if I don't get no fucking answer... You know. Why should I worry about it? Then I take the attitude: OK. I'll wait 'till unemployment runs out. And then I get another notice that the grass is high. And I get another notice from the health department that, you know, the, the, their putting hazardous something tape around the house because of, you know, all the shit that's growing in the () pool. And stuff like that. And then, you know, \$10,000 a day fine for an unsafe environment. You know. Shit like that can happen, Sam. Shit like that can happen. You know. And until it happens, they don't realize that it can. You know. And then Mom, "No, no, I cut the grass. I don't know why they keep sending you that. I paid for that. I don't know why they're..." And then she looks, and she forgot to send out the check. You know. And shit like... What the hell am I supposed to do, Sam? Shut down, Sam. It's almost at the end anyway.

SAM: Yeah, I have five minutes left.

DAD: I know, I was watching the time.

SAM: I have to piss really bad. I've been having... I've been having to piss since like 35 minutes ago. I just ()

DAD: Well, go piss, Sam.

SAM: I know. I'm just...

DAD: There's no communication with Dad. You know, like, you know, "We have to call Dad up and talk to Dad." You know. "Find out his version of things." And stuff like that. And I'm saying to you "It's over, Sam." OK? What I do as a manager... Oh, shit, this is five minutes that you could have been taping. OK? No, but I'll get back on track, Sam. Let me take this thing off, Sam. Let's take a break. Let's go get those free sandwiches.

CT Tape 1 (2009)

SAM: Where did that even come from, anyway?

ANGEL: Because I had a volleyball that Che gave me. And I put my name on it. But there was like “m” period. And it looked like an “i”. And I didn’t finish “Torres.” So it was like “Topi.”

SAM: [laugh]

ANGEL: I think I didn’t know how to make an “r”.

SAM: It’s sort like my... Did you know that my nickname now is “Sam Torr”?

ANGEL: “Sam Torr”? That’s cool.

SAM: Yeah. Do you know why?

ANGEL: No.

SAM: Because I had this little notebook and I tried to write my full name. [laugh]

ANGEL: [laugh]

SAM: [laugh]

ANGEL: So it was a similar thing.

SAM: [laugh] And then I looked at it, and I was like “Wow! That’s... That’s really funny.” But... Aee! OK. So... Basically what I’m trying to do is I’m trying to figure out how things were when we were living in Puerto Rico with everybody. I don’t remember a lot of it. ‘Cause I was the youngest.

ANGEL: Um hum.

SAM: I know that you have a better idea of what it was like to live there and also to make the transition...

ANGEL: Um hum.

SAM: ...to Florida. So... I just () what are your overall feelings like of... just first of all living in Puerto Rico with the family and everything. What was it like being 13 over there?

ANGEL: Well, it was tough because I was kind of a nerd. [laugh] So I may not have had like a typical 13-year-old experience when I was in Puerto Rico, which is part of the reason I was upset about leaving. ‘Cause I hadn’t had a boyfriend yet. Um... I really wanted to have a Puerto Rican boyfriend. And ah... Yeah. I don’t know what to say.

SAM: That’s funny. You said before... I thought that all of us were raised bilingually and you said that you were the only one who was really raised...

ANGEL: Yeah. Supposedly ‘cause I don’t remember but Mom says that they tried to teach me both languages at the same time and then when I was 3 nobody could understand me. So they decided to just teach me Spanish and then I started learning English when I

went to Caribbean in kindergarten. I remember having to learn English 'cause I had forgotten it.

SAM: Do you think...? I don't even remember how our English was when we came to Florida.

ANGEL: Yeah. We had a... We had accents. And some of our American teachers in Puerto Rico weren't that nice about it. They would make fun of our English saying it was like "sing songy."

SAM: What does that... What does that mean?

ANGEL: Like Caribbean kind of... Like it sounded like you were speaking Spanish but in English. You know. Like the intonation.

SAM: Oh, so they were making fun of our Spanish?

ANGEL: Yeah. Of our English. When we were... Like we had American teachers in Caribbean.

SAM: Um hum.

ANGEL: They were like "I don't understand your English. You talk so sing songy."

SAM: And they all used that term? Like "sing songy"?

ANGEL: It was one specific teacher who was kind of nasty, but... Yeah. And I had a... I watched that video... There was a video of me like in eighth grade or something. We were doing a play. And I saw it and I could hear it. A very different accent. It sounded like... Not quite like Penelope Cruz, but... you know, something like that. Maybe () you know that she has an accent.

SAM: Hum.

ANGEL: So it's changed a lot. I got made fun of a lot when I moved to the US. And I got rid of it for a long time. And I kind of talk English more like Mom does. Where I think that Mom really tries to minimize her accent. And then when I got to college I started to miss being recognized as Puerto Rican. And so I think sometimes I put it on or off depending on the context. Like there's something like the word "zero," for example. I don't like to say "zero." Because that sound doesn't exist in Spanish. So I often say "cero." And people know what I'm talking about.

SAM: And then... Why... I mean, I don't know when to say "Puerto Rico" or when to say "Porto Rico."

ANGEL: I know.

SAM: So I actually feel a little bit awkward saying "Puerto Rico" when I'm speaking English because it seems so weird to all of the sudden...

ANGEL: Right.

SAM: ...flip into a different accent.

ANGEL: Or even our names. ‘Cause I still... One of the ones I... In high school when we first moved I was “Anjelica.” And I hated it so much ‘cause there was that Rug Rats character, Anjelica, And then people also... If they knew Anjelica Houston, they would misspell it with a “j”, and that kind of stuff. So I just didn’t like that name. My name is “Angelica” (pronounced in Spanish) and then when I tell Americans to say it, they say “Anelica.” [laugh] So I just... I always had a nickname. But not call me Angelica anymore. So at Yale, I’m “Angie.” And I had even tried to get some people to say it “Angie” (in Spanish). So it was always Spanish, but then they say “Aungie.” And it’s really... [laugh] So I just switched to “Angie.” And then when I know people speak Spanish, I say “Angelica.” And it’s kind of cool because I have met, you know, a handful of Latin people. At this level, they’re used to saying “I’m Carlos.” (pronounced in English). And then when they meet me, they say “Ah, Carlos” (pronounced in Spanish). “Mucho gusto, Angélica.” You know.

SAM: It’s interesting for my name because I can’t really... If I want someone to call me... Say my name in like a Spanish accent, it has to be my full name, which I don’t even like it.

ANGEL: “Samuel” (pronounced in Spanish)

SAM: So someone has to call me “Samuel” or “Sammy.” (pronounced in Spanish) And “Sammy” is just the family. They can’t really call me “Sam” (pronounced in Spanish). That’s weird.

ANGEL: Yeah. Yes. ()

SAM: What was it that you had said that when you have kids, they’re going to call me “Checho” or something.

ANGEL: [laugh]

SAM: Something like that [laugh].

ANGEL: Yeah. Tío Checho. [laugh]

SAM: Why? Why Tío Checho?

ANGEL: Because we never got our totally don’t make sense Latin names. [laugh] Like nickname.

SAM: Well, Dad’s isn’t really a not make sense Latin name. Dad’s more of the typical “Oh, you know, like your sister or your brother when they were little called you whatever.”

ANGEL: Yeah. But that’s how they get names. And then like even Giada calls titi Mimi “Tin.”

SAM: Yeah.

ANGEL: Instead of like “Grandma” or “Abuela.”

SAM: [laugh]

ANGEL: But like, even our grandmother, she’s... Her cousins call her “Toyin.”

SAM: And Dad calls her “Jedge.” Why does Dad call her “Jedge.”

ANGEL: Oh, Abuela.

SAM: Yeah. That's right.

ANGEL: No, Toyin is Mamma. Abuela es "Jedge" because she couldn't say "judge." In English. And she would say "jedge." I don't know why she was saying the word "judge." But this probably when they lived in Lorain. And so Dad made fun of her and calls her "jedge."

SAM: [laugh]

ANGEL: But there are names like that. Like we had a friend that was "Turubano" because he couldn't say "traje de baño" when he was little. So even though his name was Alejandro, which is like a really pretty name, they always called him "Turubano."

SAM: Weird. So if I... If we would have stayed, you think that we would have developed those nicknames and like... [laugh]

ANGEL: I don't think so. I think we were past that age a little bit. And like our parents weren't really... like that.

SAM: Oh, and how did the... How did tío Sugui get that name? I know that his name is Jesus, pero...

ANGEL: Yeah. I don't know Sugui's nickname. I don't know how he got that.

SAM: Probably the same way that everybody else got their weird name.

ANGEL: Yeah. In his case, it's nicer because Jesus is kind of awkward. Like I know... I know a couple of Jesus. Like I know a Jesus that goes by... He's Carlos Jesus. But I think it's one of those things where everybody is names Carlos in his family. It's just the middle name that's different.

SAM: Yeah.

ANGEL: So they call him Carlos Chus. And then Carlos... Chuíto. And that kind of stuff. Just Chuíto. Chuíto. Out of Carlos Jesus, they got Chuíto. [laugh]

SAM: [laugh]

ANGEL: So I just kind of feel that we missed out on that. [laugh] 'Cause there's an Angelica in the family, and hers is "Gelín." They call her "Gelín" (Helene). She's on Dad's side of the family. She's like his aunt or something.

SAM: So going back to what we were talking about before, like we all had accents when we moved to Florida?

ANGEL: Um hum. Yeah.

SAM: The only thing I remember from moving to Florida... I remember two things. I remember when we were... When Mom was going around and showing me like a tour of the school with my second grade teacher. And she was asking like what I wanted to be called. And I remember... I, I... I consider that like a turning point in my life in a lot of ways because I had to... That's when "I don't anybody to call me Sammy." 'Cause that was the first time... She was like "Oh, your name... What's your name." And then

Mom said “Oh, we call him Sammy.” And it was like “Sammy?” No, I hate that. I don’t want to be called “Sammy.”

ANGEL: Yeah.

SAM: And then, that’s when I decided that I wanted to be called “Sam.” And I thought that was so... I mean, I remember that very well. And then I also remember that there... hearing the teacher calling attendance. Like calling the role. And she said... There was a student who was Christian Rosado. And I remember being like “Oh, that sounds familiar.” Although... Like I remember names like that when we were going to school...

ANGEL: Hum.

SAM: ...in Puerto Rico and I went up to him during break, like during recess or something. And I’m like “¿Hablas español?” And he was just like “No, I’m from New York. I don’t really know how to speak Spanish.” And I was just like “OK.”

ANGEL: Yeah. When we were in Lake Mary, there were a lot of people who were from New York. So they were Newyoricans. They weren’t really... But they were still be in ESOL and stuff sometimes. [laugh]

SAM: They would still be in what?

ANGEL: ESOL. Like English for Speakers of Other Languages. Or whatever.

SAM: Oh, yeah.

ANGEL: But they dressed differently. They acted differently. Like they were New Yorkers. They weren’t really... I met one girl: Nomaris Roman. From Arecibo. And she was in my personal fitness class in ninth grade. And she was... just as out of water as I was, but her family realized that she was suffering too much, and she went back to Puerto Rico. I was really like... That should have been me. [laugh] Like we should have all gone back. Like... Because we just didn’t fit in. She didn’t like it. And she didn’t try to like it. She was just like... “I want to go back.”

SAM: But do you think... Obviously it was a lot harder for you than for the rest of us. And... I don’t know. I feel like I was at an age where I just adapted no matter what. Like I barely even remember having problems. I just remember for that first day. And I always felt really bad because obviously you had it a lot worse because you were older and you knew... Like you were more... In a way, you’re more... you were more Puerto Rican than I was. And I don’t know if that’s like... It’s technically not accurate, because we’re both 100% Puerto Rican, but... You know. I remember growing up and you asked me like why I didn’t have a flag on my wall. I was just like “I don’t know. I just don’t... I don’t feel like...” I think you went through a period that you were just really, really... I think that was around the time you were talking about earlier. You went to college and you wanted to be more Puerto Rican.

ANGEL: Yeah.

SAM: And you were coming back and like “Why don’t you want to be more Puerto Rican?” And “What’s going on?” And I don’t know the answer to that. That’s sort of what I’m

trying to figure out now. Why do I not really care? Like what I am. Does it really matter what I am?

ANGEL: Yeah. And I don't really... I can't totally... I think that it impacted us—all of us—at different levels. I think that my particular stuff just because I was older maybe I was able to reflect more on it. 'Cause it definitely has an impact for you to be young and to be used to a certain environment and to change. That's part of what I study. But I think with me, I just... I felt like an adult 'cause you kind of do at that age. And I was just really angry. 'Cause I had always really liked Puerto Rico. And I wanted a... You know, like I felt like I had worked really hard to establish myself in school and all of that was questioned when I moved. I couldn't just be the smartest kid or whatever anymore. And plus they kind of thought I was stupid and irresponsible. And ugh... And I internalized a lot of that instead of thinking "Oh, these teachers are just racist and... Or just ignorant in general." Like I kind of thought that there might be something wrong with me and I felt I spent a lot of high school just trying to be... trying to be American. [pause] I was watching a bird making a nest. [laugh]

SAM: [laugh]

ANGEL: [laugh] He () like a bunch of hay and flew into that tree.

SAM: But do you think... I don't know. I mean I just don't... I don't remember. Do you remember what it was like for me? Do you remember seeing me and thinking "Oh, he's getting... He's getting used to it a lot." Like quicker. Or "he doesn't really seem to care." Like did you ever resent like...

ANGEL: We were all so separate because of all us were going through our stuff and then there was the factor of Mom and Dad. And that uncertainty. So I actually feel really guilty that... that I was still a kid then. You know? I wasn't completely grown up. And so a lot of the things that happened, I don't remember. Even in my own life. 'Cause I was just... You know, when you're going through something that intense, you don't have time to... So I mean, there were moments when I was like aware of my feelings, then how much everything sucked. But then there were other moments when I was just miserable and I didn't really realize I was miserable. I was just miserable. And so it was hard for me to like... You know, see what else. I know that... I think Jessie was the one that was doing the best. You know. She came in at a good age. 'Cause she was able to start middle school. And they realized she was smart, so they even tested her for gifted, which she didn't qualify for, but they recognized that she was really smart. And... They let her... ahm... take up an instrument. And Mom put her in flute classes. So that she could get really, really good. I don't remember if she decided to take a language. 'Cause you could also do that in middle school. So she had like a bunch of opportunities. And she didn't really like Puerto Rico. I think she was entering that age that's really awkward that I had been in for a couple of years [laugh] more than she had. So she was just really happy. I remember that. And... That was part of the reason it was like "We can't go back to Puerto Rico 'cause Jessie is doing really well." Ahm... David, he's just always David. You know?

SAM: He's just neutral.

ANGEL: [laugh]

SAM: About everything.

ANGEL: I mean, he seemed to make friends pretty quickly, I guess. But I don't know how soon that happened. That first summer we were there, we didn't have any friends. We were just like making movies together.

SAM: We had friends when we lived in titi Nilda's house. Don't you remember that David had friends like right away?

ANGEL: Oh, I don't remember that.

SAM: Yeah. He would hang out with all these kids. I remember... I'm trying to remember what their names are. I remember what he looked like. But I remember trying to hang out with David because he made friends right away.

ANGEL: Yeah. He just hangs out with people. I think that's why it doesn't really take much. But that's the summer I went to take Geometry. At Lake Mary. I took summer school. So I wasn't around.

SAM: I didn't know that.

ANGEL: Yeah.

SAM: Like. So we moved in May of 1992. And then just like a month later or less than a month later, you were taking Geometry?

ANGEL: Yeah. I missed my, ah, eighth grade graduation. Because of the time table that we were trying to accomplish. You know. So I missed my eighth grade graduation. I sometimes wished that I had been more... strict. You know, like insist to go to that, you know? But part of the thing was: OK, we're going to move, but then you'll be able to start summer school. And I wanted to take Geometry because I was really good in math in Puerto Rico. Like I was Math Counts captain and like I won a couple of prizes, you know, like competitions and stuff. So I thought that was like something I wanted to continue. I didn't know what I was going to do with that, but I knew I was good in math and I wanted to continue it. So I wanted to take Geometry so that I could start Algebra II as a freshman.

SAM: Did they not have summer school in Caribbean?

ANGEL: No: I think they only had summer school if you failed or something. But it didn't matter in Caribbean because the teachers would just let me go ahead. But since like everything is so like... You know, public school. Like they wouldn't... The teachers wouldn't just be like "Oh, OK." You know. So I knew I was going to have to prove myself somewhat. And I thought if I took Geometry, I would be where I wanted to be in Caribbean. 'Cause I didn't think... it was going to be hard to just jump a couple of levels at Caribbean. I just... I really liked it. And I was really good at Geometry. But I had Coach Gibson. [laugh]

SAM: Oh, yeah.

ANGEL: The track coach.

SAM: I remember him.

ANGEL: So it's not like it was that hard, anyway.

SAM: He used to write the answer to the quiz on the board. And then walk away. And then people wouldn't "Be like, the answers are on the board. Maybe we should tell him." And everybody else "Just shut up."

ANGEL: Yeah. A lot of kids used to copy off of me and he never seemed to care. And I didn't really know... I didn't know anyone and I didn't have any friends. I tried to hang out with Lourdes and stuff, but she was going through her own stuff. And we were never really that close. Lourdes lives in Branford now. [laugh]

SAM: I didn't know that.

ANGEL: Yeah.

SAM: But... so do you think that it was less about [pause]

ANGEL: [laugh]

SAM: Do you think it was less about adapting from... I guess I'll wait till this FedEx...

ANGEL: Hum.

SAM: ...truck drives away. [pause] Maybe we'll go inside for a little bit. [laugh]

ANGEL: Maybe, yeah. I guess they're delivering here.

SAM: I'll just stop it.

ANGEL: Whatever.

SAM: But was it... Did they move here when Rosi got divorced?

ANGEL: No.

SAM: Or did they get divorced when they were here.

ANGEL: They got divorced when they were in Florida. And that was part of the reason that they were doing what Mom and Dad were doing. Like... Are you filming this?

SAM: Yeah.

ANGEL: OK. So they were doing what Mom and Dad were doing like living apart for the kids so that they could go to school or whatever. He was in Jacksonville, I think. And... So it was like "Oh, I think that allowed them to think that that was normal to live apart like that for the kids education or whatever. And then, you know, later it came out that like...

SAM: He had an affair or something.

ANGEL: ...he had been cheating on her for like 30 years or something ridiculous like that. A long time. I don't know how long it was then. So they had like this terrible divorce. But then it's like Mom and Dad were still together. [laugh] () And it was tough for the girls, you know, to go through that. Marisabel and Lourdes. Yeah. That was kind of weird too because it's one of those situations where Lourdes and I were never friends.

It's like... When we lived in Puerto Rico, she used to hang out with "the clics." And, you know, I didn't like those girls that were kind of nasty and would all hang out together. And... I don't know. I didn't like those girls. So that's who Lourdes used to hang out with. She wasn't one of them, but she used to hang out with them because she's kind of a little bit of a follower, that personality. At least she was when she was younger. And I was just... On my own doing my own thing being a nerd, but... So she wasn't really my friend when I came to the US either. 'Cause she was also hanging out with some people that were kind of... And she americanized. She'd been here for a couple of years so I asked her things like "Do people here give kisses or hugs or what's the protocol?" You know. "Cause, you know, in Puerto Rico, we give kisses like when we see people, you give them a little kiss on the cheek. And I wasn't sure that was... I didn't know. Can you believe that? I didn't know what they did, what they did here. So I asked her. And she was like "Oh, they give kisses; they give hugs; it's just whatever." And that's not true. [laugh] That's not this culture. But she just wasn't really aware of anything. She just had her American friends that were kind of crazy, but... So I didn't hang out with her. Even though that was kind of expected I guess.

SAM: So you were sort of the same age. And...

ANGEL: Yeah. We're the same age.

SAM: And how old was Marisabel?

ANGEL: Marisabel is like two years older. So she was in high school, but then she graduated. 'Cause I came in ninth, so I guess she was in eleventh. And then... And then she graduated. And Marisabel did drama, so I had more in common with her, but Lourdes was my age, so it was always like tricky. So I kind of always wanted to be more friends with Marisabel, but... But ah... But I had to hang out with Lourdes. And Lourdes didn't really want to hang out with me.

SAM: When we were at the house growing up, like... Did we speak Spanglish? I know that basically now it's purely English.

ANGEL: No. I think... I think it was a lot of English. For a lot of time.

SAM: Like when we were back in Puerto Rico with Dad and stuff, it was all English too?

ANGEL: Dad always spoke to us in English.

SAM: Really?

ANGEL: Yeah.

SAM: I don't even remember that.

ANGEL: Yeah, he always spoke to us in English. I kind of would hide that because in Caribbean, it was like we all had to go to school there and it was in English, you know. You remember that, right? That Caribbean was in English?

SAM: Yeah. And we only had one Spanish class.

ANGEL: Yeah. Although a couple of our teacher were not that good at English, so they would just be like... "Aquí todo el mundo habla español, ¿verdad?"

SAM: [laugh]

ANGEL: [laugh] And they would teach in Spanish. But they were supposed to be teaching in English. So I think there was this culture, especially in middle school. It was kind of you're a fool if you come out to recess and speak in English. You know? So you kind of like... You spoke English because you were "required" to in school. But as soon as we were in the playground, we would talk in Spanish. And anybody who spoke English was kind of like a loser. So, I didn't like that Dad spoke to us in English. I didn't understand that. I thought it was like it went against like what was cool and against what I thought our relationship should be with the United States. 'Cause even at that age, I was just like "This is crap." Like we're a colony. We shouldn't have to speak this language that like oppressed us. You know?

SAM: See, I never... I never knew anything about, about that. Like my exposure... You know, I was telling Audra the other day that, that I, when we moved to Florida and I took an art class and we were doing ceramics, that I made [laugh]... I made a vacuum cleaner, an upright vacuum cleaner and a TV with a smiley face on it. And I think that's pretty symbolic of two very important things: one being, we didn't have an upright vacuum cleaner. I remember seeing it on TV in commercials and then like sitcoms and stuff that families had upright vacuum cleaners. And I always wanted one. So I made a mold or whatever of what I always wanted. And then... Ah... The TV is basically... I mean, I still tell people that I think that I was raised by TV and by Pebbles.

ANGEL: Yeah.

SAM: Our dog. So... I just put a smiley face on it 'cause I think that was the only thing that I thought was ever like nurturing to me. So it's just like smiling at me like "It's OK. Don't worry about it."

ANGEL: Yeah.

SAM: But... All I ever saw was TV. I never had anybody to really explain to me... what being part of Puerto Rico was about. Other than the songs and being exposed to like the songs that Mom played in the piano or on guitar or... You know, when we'd go door to door and like I played the guiro. [laugh] Like with the little fork and stuff. I did that stuff, but I never knew what any of it meant. And... I still don't really understand it. And I don't understand why, you know, I was so confused with not knowing what I was as a kid. People would say that I wasn't American, but... I mean, you were... Wasn't it in the 1950s that they made so that if you were born in Puerto Rico, you were an American citizen?

ANGEL: It was earlier than that. 'Cause it was... They did it so that they could draft Puerto Ricans for the war.

SAM: Oh, and that's why Pappa and Abuelo...

ANGEL: Yeah. They were drafted into World War II.

SAM: So they just did it to use them, basically.

ANGEL: Yeah. There was no reason for the US to give some little territory citizenship. Other than like the UN would require it, or they needed some people to fight their war. Or both. I think the UN had been putting pressure on them 'cause of our colony status or whatever. But I'm not even sure where I got that conscience. I don't know... Because I seem to be the only one in the family who like cares about that. I'm not sure where it comes from.

SAM: Yeah. I don't... I mean, I remember you just being... It's funny 'cause you were talking about you not being grown up when you were little, but I remember we would hang out with the family and then you would call Tío Danny "Danny" and you would call... asking Mom "Can I do that? Is that what we're supposed to call him? I don't understand." And so... I... I think it's also... It's not just... You know. This whole thing is not just about one issue. It's not just about like not feeling Puerto Rican enough. It's also like being the youngest and not knowing like...

ANGEL: Yeah.

SAM: ...where I stand with the family and not being able to like speak up and everything. And then there's also obviously the issue of Mom and Dad like I still don't know... Part of the reason why I want to go is because I don't even know anything about Dad's past. The first thing that I even heard about Dad's past was when we found a bunch of old photographs in abuela's closet.

ANGEL: Yeah.

SAM: And it was all of those old photos of Dad. I was like wow: Dad with hair. Never seen this before. But I don't know if he represses it; I don't know if like... he's ashamed of it because I know that shame seems to be a big part of our family. Or what, but just on the surface, I would think that we... there's like a parallel there with me and Dad. It's that he was raised in Ohio. And then I'm curious as to why he went back. I have my theory. That I think it's pretty obvious. You know. But, I'm not sure.

ANGEL: He went back at your age.

SAM: Yeah. Which, I mean, I thought he did.

ANGEL: Yeah.

SAM: I wasn't sure. Something told me that he did. And ah... I guess I just want to know for sure like what it was.

ANGEL: Well, the part I know is that his... his, ah, his company was based in Cleveland, but they were opening up a place in Puerto Rico. Back then they considered Puerto Rico almost like opening a factory in Mexico or something. 'Cause it was cheap. I don't know if they didn't have to pay minimum wage. I don't know what the thing was. But I guess Dad was like an immediate person for that. And he wanted to do it.

SAM: Do you have any idea what it was like for him growing up? Like his parents didn't speak any English at all, right?

ANGEL: No, they didn't.

SAM: And they lived in Ohio for like 20 years?

ANGEL: Yeah. I think longer. ‘Cause Dad was 25 when he left and they lived there. And they had moved right when he was born. So it may have been more like 30. And then they moved back. But, I don’t know. He doesn’t like to talk about because like, ahm, Abuela was... Ah... She had to clean houses, you know. Like he doesn’t like that. That she cleaned houses. And Abuelo was gone a lot of times. Like I’ve obviously got some of this from Abuela, also. Abuela has told me. I don’t think Dad has very much. That Abuelo would drink every day. You know, he’d go down to the bar. Or... They would fight a lot. I guess.

SAM: I heard the story about a scar that Dad has in his forehead, which was him standing in the way of... like in between Abuela and Abuelo because he was launching at her with like scissors or a knife or something when he got really drunk.

ANGEL: Yeah. Dad also—I think I’ve told you this—that Dad has, ahm, fake teeth. His two front teeth are fake.

SAM: I knew he had fake teeth. I never knew why.

ANGEL: I don’t really know why. I was told when I was little that he was in the farm with Abuelo and, you know, a branch hit him and knocked out his teeth. And I’ve gotten older, I’ve questioned that. ‘Cause it doesn’t really... It doesn’t really sound like... So I don’t know. That’s worth finding out about because his... It might have been something... significant that happened.

SAM: And what do you think of... Do you think it’s really weird... In a way, when we were growing up over there, Dad seemed to be like the American and Mom was like the Puerto Rican.

ANGEL: Yeah.

SAM: And it seems now they’ve switched roles in a way. Or...

ANGEL: Yeah. But Mom is like... Mom is kind of weird because she’s like... You know. I don’t like sometimes that she even when we lived in Puerto Rico like she has this thing about the United States and I think that’s one of the things that attracted her to Dad because he was Puerto Rican but he actually was American. Like she loves speaking English. And she always had like American friends in Puerto Rico. And I thought they were nice people but that also annoyed me because I was just like... Why do we have to speak English all the time? You know. Why does everything have to be about the United States? You know? So Mom really buys into that. And that’s one of the reasons I don’t like her English ‘cause she talks like that, she’s like “Well, I’m in Puerto Rico. My favorite color is white.” You know. She does like all...

SAM: “White.”

ANGEL: “White. Where are we going?” And that’s how you speak English properly, but I don’t care. As long as I’m understood, I think that I’m American enough. I mean, I’m a citizen. I should be able to talk the way that I want to and people should be able to understand. So I don’t understand her. And some of my friends have even said, “Your mom speaks better English than you.” And what the hell is that supposed to mean?

SAM: And why did Mom?

ANGEL: She's just a suck up. [laugh]

SAM: Did Mom grew up with English? Or did she...?

ANGEL: She went to school where she took English. It wasn't a school in English. She went to San Conrado.

SAM: But when you say school, is it like college?

ANGEL: No. She went to private school when she was younger, Catholic school.

SAM: At that school that is right next to where our condo was, right?

ANGEL: No. That's... That's Academia Santa Maria. That's where Nildita and Cyanela went. She went to San Conrado, which is like behind... I can't really explain it. It's on the other side of that avenue. Like close to Mamma y Pappa's house. So that's where she went to school. She went to school with nuns from the US. They were New Yorkers. It was like before they reformed the Vatican. They kind of had like these nuns that they had to almost do kind of like "mission" work like going to teach in schools. And that's where a lot of those stereotypes of the nuns being really mean come from because they were people who didn't really want to do that but they were forced to do that under the Catholic church. So they were really mean, you know. They would hit with rulers and all that stuff you hear about. But they were mostly from New York. And so Mom started to learn English from them. And then she says she took it in high school, but she went to public high school. 'Cause she wanted to go to la Ponce High, which is close to El Liceo downtown.

SAM: Um hum.

ANGEL: So she went there and she graduated when she was a junior. 'Cause she just like took all the credits or something.

SAM: But see, I don't understand why we don't all... Like we don't know a lot of this stuff. Or at least, I don't know a lot of this stuff. I don't know if David knows any of this stuff. David... We've already established that David is just neutral and doesn't really care either way. I don't know if Jessie knows any of this stuff. So how come you and I are the only ones that seem to be inquisitive about anything? Like we want to know more about stuff. Everybody else seems to be OK with letting it go. It's private. Whatever. Like it's in the past. Like I want to know more about... I didn't even know until a few years ago that Pappa went to Columbia.

ANGEL: Yeah.

SAM: I had no idea. So I don't know any of these things. And I think part of it has to do with being the youngest and also not being able, like I don't speak to them because I'm embarrassed because I don't feel like I know enough Spanish to really... I understand what they're saying but I don't feel like I can really connect. And it's really sad.

ANGEL: Yeah. I don't know. But some of the information, you just don't get it from the person directly. You get it from Tio Danny or Tio Eli or Titi Nilda. You know. Like they sometimes are telling... I've gotten a lot of information from Titi Nilda 'cause

she's the oldest. So she knows stuff that Mom doesn't know about Mamma y Pappa, you know? And...

SAM: It's also weird because of, you know, a lot of barriers were created in our family with Dad. Because it seems like that part of the family doesn't really like Dad. And when we hung out with them and we went over to their houses and we went to swim at their pool and so, Dad would never go. So like I almost feel like they like to gossip about us. They like to talk behind our back about how fucked up we are or whatever. And I'm almost like a little bit reluctant to even start to talk to them because I feel like I don't know if I can even trust them. And I know it sounds kind of stupid but it's like... I just... It makes me feel a little bit raw about it.

ANGEL: But I don't think it's what you think because it's like... for example, there's a situation now where Jessie has this kid, Austin, and Jessie has something against me and she doesn't want me to meet Austin. And she wants to cut all contact with me. So I might have something to say about that but it's not exactly the way you think. Because I don't think there's anything wrong with Austin, you know. Like... And... If Austin wanted to contact me, he'd probably feel really awkward, as he's getting older. But, you know, I would just... say "Your mom just didn't want to talk to me." I stayed out of the way because she didn't want me to be in the way. You know. And I think that's a lot like how titi Nilda and, ahm, Mamma and Pappa have felt. They just felt excluded, but they would have liked to be more a part of our lives. And they were even when we lived in Puerto Rico. They tried to allow us... You know. To, to have contact with us without, you know, making Dad mad or something. But Dad's the one who had the problem. Not necessarily anybody else. You know?

SAM: I guess I also feel weird if I go over there and I see them and they... I think I'm getting along with them and then they say "Oh, you look..." "Se parece tanto a Tato." "Ay, que se parece tanto a Tato." And then I start to think like... I'm sort like reminded "Oh, crap, this is kind of weird. Afterall, I thought I was getting along with everybody and now they're kind of bringing Dad into the picture and... I don't know how to feel about it." Like I don't know how they feel about Dad anymore. I don't know how Dad really feels about them. Maybe it's gotten better since they've all gotten older, but...

ANGEL: Yeah. But you can see it in other ways because everybody hates Papote.

SAM: [laugh]

ANGEL: And they let him come to the house and drink all their alcohol and whatever. I mean, I think that they are a little different than I am. I mean, maybe not. Because maybe I just haven't experienced it. But... I mean. I don't really like Brian. I don't think he's a bad guy, you know. But I don't really like him. I would have thought that Jessie could have done better or just someone different that was more like her. But it doesn't mean that I'm just going to be like "Ey! I don't want to be around Brian." Or "I'm not going to support that." You know what I mean?

SAM: Yeah.

ANGEL: So I think in the end you just kind of think "Well..." You know, there's a lot of suffering 'cause I think that with Brian, "OK. You know. Look at this mess." You

know. If Jessie would have picked someone else, well maybe she would be able to spend more time with the baby or whatever whatever. You know. But that's what she chose. And so I support it and you don't want to see people you love suffer. But you also support their autonomy and decisions. You know? When I think it's hard as a parent as an older sibling, you know, when you kind of feel partially responsible for people's outcomes, then it's harder to let go and say "This is what they chose." You know. 'Cause Mom was like 21 when she married Dad. You know? So I think it was really tough.

SAM: Whoa and what was it like... I don't remember the two of them living in the same house together. I told Dad before that I don't remember the two of them ever kissing.

ANGEL: Oh, I remember them kissing.

SAM: Oh, I said... I said that and Dad said: "That's the way it should be." He said, "You shouldn't... You shouldn't know..." You know. Like that's private: your parents. You shouldn't see what your parents do or... whatever like... Like... But... I feel like that has also affected me quite a bit to not have any kind of like affection like that around me when I was growing up.

ANGEL: Yeah.

SAM: I feel like I'm a lot more, ahm, ah, standoffish, maybe. I don't trust people as much because I feel really strange about it. And I don't know. You say that you actually remember them kissing and stuff.

ANGEL: Um hum.

SAM: I wished that I had those memories.

ANGEL: I mean, I just remember once that Dad was leaving for work, 'cause he used to come in for lunch. And it was weird 'cause it was kind of like I don't know if it's a memory that's not accurate 'cause I was little. I was really little. It was just me and Jessie. Maybe David was a baby or something. But like Dad came over for lunch and Mom made him lunch and then he was leaving, and then Mom went to the door and was like "Hey, a little kiss." Whatever. And Jessie and I were like "Yeah!"

SAM: [laugh]

ANGEL: [laugh] Like cheering. Like... you know. 'Cause we were little. So like... like they did a little kiss at the door on the lips, you know. Dad was just like "Oh." You know. But Mom was like... And we were just like "Oh, our parents love each other so much." But that was one of the only times I ever thought that. [laugh]

SAM: Even when you were living there?

ANGEL: Yeah.

SAM: You can tell before we even left.

ANGEL: Yeah. I mean, there were a couple of times... This is one of those memories I've discussed with you that you guys don't remember. That time that Mom was breaking plates. They were fighting and Mom was breaking plates. She broke "a" plate. But I

remember it like as more traumatic than that. You know? 'Cause they were yelling at each other. And she just grabbed the plate and she like broke it on the... Like on her knee or something. 'Cause when I've said that before, she's just like "It was just a plate." [laugh] You know, like, it was one plate too many. [laugh]

SAM: When they fought, were they fighting in Spanish or English?

ANGEL: I don't remember. I think in English 'cause Dad didn't speak in Spanish. So... I don't know. They were yelling. You know the way Mom gets. She got the same way with Dad. And that one time was really bad and then we hid in the... Well, we didn't hid. We didn't hide, but we went over to like... we were on the bunk beds in my room. And I just remember that. Like... And you guys were all looking at me like what's going on? And I don't remember how old I was. But I was just like... So at that point, I remember telling... And I guess it was mostly Jessie asking questions like I said "I think they're going to get a divorce." I think that's when you do when they fight like that, you get a divorce. But I didn't know what that meant or anything. It was just like that's what the kids on our class... You know, it was very rare for people to be divorced, but you did hear about it. But then, you know, Mom never talked about it with us or anything. Like "Your Dad and I were just really mad at each other." You know. She just kind of was "No, everything's fine. No, we're not gonna get a divorce." And I was like "Why were you breaking a plate?" [laugh] And why do you put me in that situation where I have to be the one to explain to the younger kids what's going on. When I don't know what's going on. You know. Sometimes I think Jessie's anger comes from maybe she was asking me the questions and I had no answers. And that's why she gets angry because she didn't get any answers. It's because she was asking the wrong person. I didn't know what was going on.

SAM: I just remember being more afraid of Dad than anything when we were growing up there.

ANGEL: Yeah.

SAM: I remember we would be playing and then I at around like 3 o'clock, we had to stop playing and put all of our stuff away. We had to...

ANGEL: Dad came home.

SAM: ...hide basically. And we... And then I remember if we so much as left a lego outside, and he stepped on it, we would hear, you know, like all these cursing and we would hear him flip out and... I remember when he was peeling a mango and then I walked over and I'm so clumsy like I tipped... He was peeling it into the trash can and I tipped the trash can over and he just got so pissed at me. And I was... I was... All I remember is being afraid of Dad.

ANGEL: Yeah, but I remember that he once yelled at you to tell you to stay away from the mangos. Like he was peeling mangos and he had like this pile of mango peels in the garbage and he said "Stay away 'cause you're fucking clumsy." Or whatever. Then to you. And then [laugh]... And then he was going to go to the bathroom... [laugh] And he stood up and he goes "Way!" And the thing goes "plup." [laugh] So... It was really hard 'cause Dad would make all kinds of mistakes that he would yell at us for, but you

couldn't say anything. And you couldn't laugh, and you couldn't... He did that that time. And then I remember another time that he called Lares because we were running late and he was yelling at us like all morning because we weren't leaving on time. And we were all scared and like trying to get ready. And then he called Abuela to let her know that we were running late. And he is like "Jedge!" and it was the wrong number. And he was like "Carajo!" And he like... [laugh] So there are some memories like that. But you couldn't say anything about it. You couldn't... He couldn't laugh at himself, so he couldn't see the humor in like a hamster getting out of the cage for like the third time. And they're running around behind the VCR in the living room. [laugh] 'Cause that happened a couple of times. You remember that?

SAM: Yeah. And I remember, ahm...

ANGEL: [laugh]

SAM: Pebbles getting out. And Pebbles going over and Dad was taking a nap on the couch, as he always did. And she licked his bald spot.

ANGEL: Yeah. He was on the floor, though. He wasn't on the couch.

SAM: OK. So he was on the floor and Pebbles went over and licked his bald spot and he got so pissed that he was like "I'm going to take her to the pound." Or whatever. And we were crying. And Mom sat with us in the living room and like we were praying and hoping that Pebbles would come back or something. And that was the extent... Like that was the "Oh, my God. I have to be afraid of Dad all the time. We can't have the dog go anywhere near him. We can't do anything fun around him ever." And ah... And then he [laugh] just comes back up and he opens the door and says: "I couldn't find the pound." He said "I forgot where it was." And I'll never really know for sure. Especially now 'cause if I bring it up to him now, he'll say he doesn't even remember it. But I'll never really know for sure if he really couldn't find it or if all of the sudden he just calmed down and realized like "I'm being a buffoon. I'm being really crazy right now. And I don't want to do this to my family." And then he turned around.

ANGEL: Yeah. But there was never any debriefing. And we used to go to the balcony and look for his car. Remember that? For his pathfinder.

SAM: Yeah.

ANGEL: 'Cause you could see it on the avenue. So we'd be like "Ah, he's coming." [laugh]

SAM: [laugh]

ANGEL: But there were so many things. There was that incident. There was the incident where somebody had clogged the toilet and he thought it was one of us. And he like interrogated us for like hours until Mom came home from the supermarket, 'cause she would always take like a bunch of hours. Do you remember that?

SAM: Yeah. But Mom still does that. If she says she's going to get a gallon of milk, she will come back with a full...

ANGEL: Oh yeah. But do you remember how he yelled at us because the toilet was clogged?

SAM: No, I don't remember that.

ANGEL: It was like... So like...

SAM: Did it end up being him or something?

ANGEL: It was Mom.

SAM: [laugh]

ANGEL: [laugh] But he interrogated us for like... you know, like...

SAM: Like this was all four of us? This was when I was...?

ANGEL: Yeah. And I remember it being so painful. We all thought it was David and we were trying to get David to confess. [laugh]

SAM: [laugh]

ANGEL: 'Cause he's like "I can't believe that my own children won't tell me who did this." Just like...

SAM: And we never got an apology or anything like that when...

ANGEL: No.

SAM: ...when it ended up being Mom? Or...

ANGEL: There was that. There are so many things like that that happened.

SAM: It's... it's... It's such a shame because I feel like so much of it is about communication because you hear... Even if you talk to Dad now. If you talk to Mom, Mom says that we... the plan was for us to move to Florida and that Dad would come in a year. Or six months. I think it was.

ANGEL: No. A year. It was a year.

SAM: So it was a year. And he would come over. And then it kept being postponed and we never knew what was happening. So we have this... You know, I felt really bad. I felt like Dad really had abandoned us. I felt like "Oh, my God. Why isn't he coming? This is really weird." And no one ever gave us a clear answer.

ANGEL: No.

SAM: No one ever really knew. And... It was so frustrating. Even when I talk to Dad now. It's like "I don't know why your Mom says that. I don't remember saying that. I don't remember... But maybe I'm... I might be crazy; I might be losing my memory, but I don't remember saying that, Sam. The plan was for you guys to just go over there and then... and, and... ahm..." I mean, I don't know if he thought all along that it was... he wasn't going to come. I don't know. I really have no idea. I think it was that he thought that we would stay there and then when we finish school and everything, that Mom would go back.

ANGEL: Yeah, but that wasn't it. I mean. 'Cause that was part of the problem. I used to ask all the questions 'cause you know how I am. And then I would get into trouble all the time for being out of my place as a child or whatever. To ask the question.

SAM: Well, but I mean like... How are we out of place? No one really has an answer. I don't think they knew. Obviously they didn't, 'cause...

ANGEL: No, but that's what they told me. They said that it was going to be a year. And it was because Dad's company... The big thing was Dad's company. Dad always thought that he was going to lose his job. He was sure that he was going to lose his job within a year. So it's possible that because he didn't lose his job, Dad kind of forgot that that was the plan. That he had been sure that he was going to lose his job. And that's why he was going to stay until the company closed to then get a job in Florida.

SAM: Yeah, but... It was always... I remember Mom, you know, telling me a year. And eventually she just started... She said "By the time you get to high school, he'll be here." And I think that she was just saying that and I don't think she ever talked to him about it. And I don't know if it was that she was afraid of him because they would get into these arguments and it was crazy. Maybe the same way that she sort of raised us to be afraid of him too.

ANGEL: Yeah.

SAM: And... I was fifteen and we didn't... He wasn't there. And I think... Fifteen was when I really started to like spiral downward. I was just kind of not there because I felt like I was let down so much like nobody had given me any solid answers. I didn't know what the hell was going on. I knew that I had just gotten like my first C and nobody really cared. So then I was just like "OK. I can do badly in school and nobody cares." Just like nobody seemed to care to give me any solid answer on what's going on.

ANGEL: Yeah.

SAM: And that was when I wanted to talk to Dad. And Mom told me... I've talked to you about this so many times. But...

ANGEL: Yeah.

SAM: You know, Mom told me that I, ah, that I shouldn't talk to Dad. That I risked... That I would be risking him never talking to me again. Or something.

ANGEL: Yeah.

SAM: And... I see that in the last few years, I've been talking to Dad a lot more and I'm not afraid of him anymore because like I call him and maybe it's a combination of several things again. Maybe it's that like you said he's retired now and...

ANGEL: He ()

SAM: He's a lot more mellowed out since he's retired because he doesn't have... He was a workaholic.

ANGEL: He's changed a lot because even just his attitude towards me. Like he just didn't... I mean, I don't know, it was just so weird. Because he just had these expectations and standards And it was like... It's a little bit of cliché, but, you know, when you are the one who experiences it, it's how you get used to viewing yourself that you get 98 on the test, you miss a question or two points somewhere. What did you do wrong? You know. And so that's was kind of how Dad was. And then if I got 100, it was "Oh, this

is too easy. There not challenging you enough. If you were in school in the United States, it'd be a lot harder. Oh, well, you could do well in a States school, but you probably couldn't make it in the real world." You know. All these kinds of like things about "You suck." Even when you succeed, it's not... It doesn't mean anything. You know. So that was a very different message than what he says these days, which is "I'm proud of you." Like, you know.

SAM: I wonder what I would even be doing if we had just stayed there. Mom disagrees, like... Dad says that we were a lot better off coming here. And that it was a sacrifice that's his glad that he made. And Mom says that... Mom disagrees. Mom says that we could have done what we wanted to do had we stayed in Puerto Rico.

ANGEL: My biggest concern is that... like... for you guys. Especially maybe David. I think that the way that drugs are in Puerto Rico, that one of us would be a drug addict. Because it's an easy coping mechanism for that kind of a household where you can't express anything and everything is so tightly controlled. Like... You know. You have to find some escape. And I think that would have been... That would have... I feel like one of us would have done that. I don't know. Maybe it could have been me. It could have been me. I could have started doing drugs to stay up or something. You know. Because I put all this pressure on myself and... you know. So I'm just... I'm just happy that we had other outlets in the US that maybe we wouldn't have had. Because I couldn't take ballet because Mom and Dad wouldn't pay for it. You know. I couldn't do a lot of things because Mom and Dad would not pay for it. They wouldn't be driving us there and driving us back. Or whatever, you know. So I think... In that sense we had a lot of other ways. You wouldn't have been able to take TV Production. You know.

SAM: Yeah. And me doing this whole thing isn't so much to be like "My life could have been so different!" I'm glad to be where I am, doing what I'm doing like even with all the shit that we went through.

ANGEL: Yeah. Hm.

SAM: It obviously like makes us better people but I just want to figure out what it all really means to really understand the situation more so that I can like really get closure from it.

ANGEL: Yeah.

SAM: And not just closure, but also just like... Is it bad that I want to know more about my Dad?

ANGEL: Yeah. ()

SAM: Or my Mom? I don't know anything about them. I didn't know they got married in a courtroom until I saw the photos. [laugh]

ANGEL: Yeah. After six months.

SAM: Seven months.

ANGEL: Yeah.

David Tape 1 (2010)

[song]

DAVID: Are you recording?

SAM: Yeah.

DAVID: Fuck. [laugh]

SAM: [laugh]

DAVID: Does it sound good?

SAM: I don't have the headphones on. Sounds fine. It's calibrated this way to perfection.

DAVID: Let's see if my voice is low enough to play this one. [clears throat]

[song 2 I am, I said.]

DAVID: What now?

[laughter]

DAVID: I gotta figure...

[piano playing]

DAVID: I might have to do a couple of takes on this one because I don't know it that well.

[piano playing]

DAVID: Let me try it.

[song 3]

DAVID: I already fucked it up.

[song 3] *[It was the only time, I'd see the old man cry. Woah. Go to sleep. As if a pressure fell his everlasting pride. Woah. We're in too deep. Your story's come to an end, my friend. But you'll see me shed not a tear. () has never been in my character. I'll close the door and have no fear. The color show from his antique soul. Woah. Please take him soon. I've never seen a creature take so much as him. Woah...]*

DAVID: [laugh] Sorry.

[restarts song]

DAVID: What the hell? Alright. One more time. I'm nervous. I don't like doing things in front of cameras.

SAM: It doesn't even matter, David. It's not even like all of this is gonna be in the ().

DAVID: Let me move the condom out of the way. [laugh]

SAM: [laugh] I'll never forget when I went into the kitchen and I was just like: "Hey, David..."

DAVID: [laugh]

SAM: "...these are probably yours."

DAVID: Yeah. Yeah.

[restarts song]

SAM: You wrote that song?

DAVID: Yeah.

SAM: Do you ever talk about why you wrote songs or is that too...? You like to keep them mysterious and ambiguous.

DAVID: I just right songs. I don't really... I never write them about anything. I just kind of write it.

SAM: What was the context? Like when did you write that song? And if you were to guess why you wrote it.

DAVID: Uhm. It was, ah, I don't even remember when I wrote that song. It was a while ago. I think I was living in Deltona when I wrote that song. And, ah, I wrote it probably about the death of Abuelo. Like now that I think about it. But I don't know... I wouldn't be able to verify that for a fact.

SAM: That happened that long ago?

DAVID: Hum?

SAM: I didn't realize that you were living in Deltona when that happened.

DAVID: Ah... I don't remember if I was or not. I honestly don't... I honestly don't remember where that song came from or anything like that.

SAM: [laugh]

DAVID: Why?

SAM: So you're saying you don't like to be on camera because you don't like to have your every move recorded and that's exactly what I'm doing right now.

DAVID: It's OK, though.

SAM: But what do you remember about the videos that you used to make and stuff?

DAVID: I don't...

SAM: All the stupid stuff with you doing some ().

DAVID: It was just stupid shit. Like I... I don't know. You do different things when you're a child.

SAM: And now it sucks, 'cause there are people driving by and shit. Ahm...

DAVID: Let's go to the driveway then.

SAM: [laugh] You... You always asked me, though, where... If I had found the master mind?

DAVID: Oh, shit!

SAM: It's OK.

DAVID: The master mind. Oh, the master mind. Oh, that was the one where I fall?

SAM: The one where there's a shot of the board game master mind and then () walk and knock it over and you OH!

DAVID: [laugh] Yeah. But that was like... I don't know. This is real.

SAM: This is real?

DAVID: This is real. This is like... It's not scripted.

SAM: But it can be goofy and stuff at the same time.

DAVID: Yeah.

SAM: Would you be open to doing more of those videos again? [laugh]

DAVID: Probably not.

SAM: Why not?

DAVID: I'm an old man.

SAM: What does that have to do with anything?

DAVID: I don't know. I just don't have the drive to do things like that anymore.

SAM: But it doesn't... I think that's what the funny thing about it was. 'Cause we were wasting time. That it didn't require much effort. We were just coming up with stupid stuff...

DAVID: OK. We'll do another master mind with you.

SAM: [laugh]

DAVID: You talked me into it. This is just so weird. We should just set it on a tripod and just talk.

SAM: I don't like tripods though.

DAVID: You don't like it?

SAM: No.

DAVID: Just set up on a recliner.

SAM: So you don't like that I'm behind the camera.

DAVID: Um hum.

SAM: So I'm basically... It's like my eye.

DAVID: Yeah. It's OK, though.

SAM: That's part of the reason I like doing handhelds because it feels more personal. And because it doesn't feel like I'm propping it up and then setting it...

DAVID: Yeah.

SAM: Even if it's a real conversation and I have a tripod, and it's you and me talking, it feels like there's someone behind that camera.

DAVID: Yeah.

SAM: Because it's... so much more formal. And with this, like... It's not even like I don't... It's not like I want to avoid being on camera or anything like that... It's just... Since it's a film about me talking to you guys and everything, I like that it's basically treating the camera like it's my eyes.

DAVID: Um hum.

SAM: I'm sorry that it's uncomfortable.

DAVID: No. It's not. It... It... It's whatever.

SAM: I don't mean to be too like inquisitive and stuff. I was just trying to...

DAVID: This wire coming out of my dick is kind of... [laugh] kind of uncomfortable.

SAM: [laugh] Yeah. I should probably find a way to get a wireless () mic. But that stuff doesn't...

DAVID: You wanna play basketball? You wanna go play basketball? [laugh]

SAM: Where?

DAVID: The courts on ah... Country Club. But then, I'm talking to you.

SAM: Yeah.

DAVID: I make eye contact with the people I talk to.

SAM: Yeah.

DAVID: [laugh]

SAM: So?

DAVID: So now I have to look at the camera.

SAM: You don't have to look at the camera.

DAVID: I have to look at...

SAM: () I'll just hold the camera like this.

DAVID: [laugh]

SAM: That's why it feels weird because you're looking at the camera.

DAVID: Yeah.

SAM: OK. So then just look at me now.

DAVID: OK. [laugh] *Carajo*.

SAM: How old is Scully now?

DAVID: Two. Two something.

SAM: Two something? Scully! [sigh] So.

DAVID: So.

SAM: So.

DAVID: So.

SAM: What do you remember from our childhood? Do you remember very much? What's the first thing that came into your head when I asked that question? What do you remember from your childhood?

DAVID: [laugh]

SAM: What? You're not gonna answer it?

DAVID: The first thing that came to my mind?

SAM: Yeah. What was the first thing that came to your mind?

DAVID: Uhm. Disney World.

SAM: Why Disney World?

DAVID: 'Cause I remember going to Disney when we were kids.

SAM: Like that photo when we went to Tom Sawyer Island with Dad and stuff? Or do you mean...?

DAVID: No. Like before we moved here. Like when I went with... I think you might have been a baby baby if you were even born. But we went with a bunch of people. And we stayed at a hotel that Mom didn't like 'cause there were a bunch of black people there. [laugh]

SAM: What the hell? Didn't she say that's when she was pregnant with me and that's why I can't stand the smell of black people? Sweat?

DAVID: I... That's so stupid. I don't like when people say stuff like you inherited in the womb. That's so stupid.

SAM: Like...

DAVID: The reason you don't like the smell of black people is because black people smell bad. [laugh]

SAM: Everybody smells bad.

DAVID: Yeah. But it's the fair amounts. [laugh]

SAM: So what do you remember about living with Dad and when all of us were together in Twin Towers and stuff? 'Cause I barely remember.

DAVID: It was rough! I mean, it was such a small space. It was really small space, four kids; we were sharing rooms. Each one had, you know... And then we had Pebbles. And she was locked in her room all the time. We'd let her out and she would just run like crazy across the whole house.

SAM: I was telling... I was talking to Angel about how funny it was when she escaped and licked Dad's bald spot.

DAVID: [laugh]

SAM: 'Cause she was so excited to get out and she turned the doorknob herself.

DAVID: Yeah.

SAM: But... I mean, I don't... I don't remember what it was like to live with Dad aside from having to stop playing at a certain time. And that we had to put everything away. And then we had to like behave.

DAVID: Well, I remember when I was kid, like baby, Dad would come home for lunch sometimes. And Mom would have like French fries and stuff ready for him. I don't really remember what Mom used to cook back then. Mostly rice and beans.

SAM: I remember when Mom had something I didn't like... I remember at least one time that I did this. When there was a twelve pack of Coke in the kitchen.

DAVID: Um hum.

SAM: And I dumped my food into it 'cause I was stupid and I thought I could hide it in there and nobody would ever want to get a can of Coke.

DAVID: Um. Yeah. I mean, I used to flush it down the toilet sometimes.

SAM: Did you really?

DAVID: Yeah. But I don't... like... I don't... Because we never used to sit at the dinner table for dinner. Dad would be watching TV from the couch and we'd have to sit on the outside of the carpet and watch TV. We'd sit Indian style on the floor and eat on the floor. Do you remember that?

SAM: No. I remember...

DAVID: We used to have our own plate. Each person had their own plate. I forget what the colors were. I think mine was green; Jessie's was orange; and Angel's was yellow or something. And we used to have our own plate where Mom would put our food. And then we'd go sit on the floor like on the tile and... and watch TV while eating. That's how we would eat our dinner every day.

SAM: () watch.

DAVID: I... Most of the time, I'd be in my underwear. [laugh]

SAM: But do you remember that stuff that we'd watch?

DAVID: Ahm...

SAM: MacGyver?

DAVID: No, no, no. It wasn't like that. It was mostly like basketball or... I never watched football with Dad. But basketball, like that was our thing. Like we would watch Michael Jordan get to the NBA finals. And... and beat the Blazers or beat the... I think

we... The first time we watched together as a family was when they were playing the Lakers when Magic Johnson was playing against Michael Jordan.

SAM: Was that the first championship? Or the second one?

DAVID: I can't remember. But it was... It was awesome. And what was the one...? I think they were playing the Suns. Was it the Suns?

SAM: The Suns was '93. That was...

DAVID: Where Grant blocked the last shot.

SAM: Is that what happened? I don't remember it now. I thought... The last play from '93 with the Suns that I remember was when Paxson made that 3.

DAVID: Who was it that they played, 'cause they had a... Whatever team they were playing had called a time out. And they got the ball mid court. And ah... And Horace Grant blocked the shot. They didn't call a foul. And it looked like an obvious foul, but... We were Bulls' fans so it wasn't like...[laugh]

SAM: Yeah. It was the same thing... You know. Like Michael Jordan's last play with the Chicago Bulls was a foul.

DAVID: Yeah.

SAM: And they played it so many times that people have... have analyzed the shit out of it and they say that it was totally a foul.

DAVID: It's the same with Maradona when he scored that goal with his hand.

SAM: I don't know who Maradona is.

DAVID: The called... Maradona is one of the best soccer players. It's like... There's Pele and there's Maradona. And I think Argentina was playing England in the World Cup finals or something and Maradona scored a goal and this is before replay. So... He had scored the goal with his hand. And England has called that "the hand of God" forever. And they... they hate Maradona because of it. They call the hand of God. [laugh]

SAM: But... Did you ever think it was weird when we were kids and we would hang out with like Mom's family and Dad would never go with us?

DAVID: No.

SAM: Really?

DAVID: Yeah. It's just... I mean, you just...

SAM: You kind of like accept it.

DAVID: Yeah.

SAM: That's how Dad was.

DAVID: Yeah.

SAM: Did he ever seem like he was like affectionate at all?

DAVID: Uhm... Yeah. I mean. Like ah... I remember we used to [laugh]... We used to be lying on his back.

SAM: Playing?

DAVID: And you would run across the entire house and just jump on his legs. And he [laugh]... And he was always tickling us. And always, you know... He would throw the football with me once in a while. A lot actually. He used to get mad at me for closing my eyes before I caught the ball.

SAM: Why would you close your eyes when you caught the ball?

DAVID: I was afraid of the ball hitting my face. So reflexes teach you to close your eyes. Or... They don't teach you. Reflex is to close your eyes when you catch the ball. Dad used to get mad at me.

SAM: Did you ever... Were you ever afraid of Dad?

DAVID: [pause] No.

SAM: But I remember there was a time when he beat you up pretty badly.

DAVID: Yeah, but I wasn't afraid of him. I just knew not to do the things [laugh] to get beat up.

SAM: What was it that you did?

DAVID: I forged Mom's signature on a test that I had failed.

SAM: And you were how old?

DAVID: I don't remember.

SAM: Like eight or something.

DAVID: Like he only... He only... He only really beat me up like twice. And one of them was because I was spinning a dreidel. And ah... he... ah... He spun the dreidel. I kept spinning the dreidel and he told me to shut up that it was too loud. And I dropped it. And he thought that I had spun it again. He just got up and beat the crap out of me. But... And then there was the forging of Mom's signature. Those are the only two that I remember. Mom used to beat me up like every day. [laugh]

SAM: I don't remember Mom ever hitting me. I just remember the whip of the belt.

DAVID: Oh, yeah. She used to beat me up all the time. I don't know. And... Maybe I was a bad kid.

SAM: Why do you think that you act... Why do you think that you acted out or do you think that you acted out?

DAVID: I never... I don't know. I don't remember. Like I think it was mostly like grades in nature. Like getting bad grades and not doing my homework that kind of thing. I never did anything wrong. Well... yeah but...

SAM: [laugh] Yeah but that was then. Do you think that if Dad would have been here when you did that he would have beat the shit out of you?

DAVID: I don't know. I think Dad would have understood.

SAM: Did you ever here the crazy stories about stuff that Dad had done in his childhood?

DAVID: No.

SAM: Like throwing a hatchet at this () pitbull?

DAVID: No.

SAM: You never heard that story?

DAVID: No. [laugh]

SAM: That he was running away from a pitbull that was locked up... It was like... It was chained and it broke out of the chain and it started chasing him through the woods and Dad fell on the ground and found a hatchet that was on the ground.

DAVID: Um hum.

SAM: And just threw it and hit like right in between the eyes. And then he just took the body and left it in the doorstep of the owner. And then just walked away.

DAVID: Wow. See I've never done anything like that.

SAM: And there was also...

DAVID: I just lit a public bathroom on fire.

SAM: And I don't know... [laugh]

DAVID: [laugh]

SAM: I don't know... [laugh]

DAVID: [laugh]

SAM: I don't know if this is true. I remember him telling me the story, but I kind of want to ask him about it again that... This is the most fucked up story.

DAVID: OK.

SAM: He had a pigeon, a pet pigeon, that he named Hercules.

DAVID: Um hum.

SAM: And he loved that pigeon. And I think that the pigeon had like saved them because there was some kind of a leak or something, you know, it was just... And which I don't understand because I thought that the only way that they would be helpful was if they're dead, and then you would realize that there was a gas leak.

DAVID: Yeah.

SAM: But I guess... Dad said that this pigeon like helped them or something. And that Abuela had a cat that Dad hated. And the cat ate the pigeon. And Dad took the cat to the shop class, that he had...

DAVID: Um hum.

SAM: After hours or whatever, and he sawed the cat in half and took the pigeon out and buried it. And told Abuela that the cat ran away.

DAVID: [laugh] You think this is true?

SAM: Why would Dad make that up? Why would he want me to think that that he did that if he hadn't actually...

DAVID: That's disgusting. [laugh]

SAM: I thought you might appreciate it because it sounded like something that you might write in one of your blogs.

DAVID: That's disgusting. That's hilarious.

SAM: Why, I mean...

DAVID: Wow.

SAM: Didn't he used to stand by the windows in Twin Towers?

DAVID: Just break pigeons' necks? Throw them down. That's what he says, though. Nobody's ever seen him do it.

SAM: Do you...? But, but I asked him about it and he said that Pagan was complaining about it because the pigeons were landing in the playground. And there were little kids who would see like dead pigeons like on the slides and stuff.

DAVID: [laugh] But...

SAM: I tell people stories like that about Dad and they say "Is your Dad a serial killer?" Because I guess serial killers in their past... when... in their childhood they torment animals.

DAVID: Some of them. But... No. It's not like... I don't know. He...

SAM: () as extreme as that behavior is, I see that you and I had some behaviors. Like we used fireworks and all that kind of stuff when we were little and lighting stuff on fire.

DAVID: But all kids do that. Especially when you're raised outside. There's nothing like... You just have fun. You know. And most of the time it's at the expense of poor little animals. [laugh]

SAM: When we moved here. Or when it was first... Do you remember hearing that we were going to move?

DAVID: I remember the conversations that led to it. But... I don't really remember what was said or anything.

SAM: You just remember that they sat us down and talked about it?

DAVID: Um hum.

SAM: And what did you feel? Were you like "Oh, cool!" Or...

DAVID: Yeah. I didn't really like living in Twin Towers.

SAM: But was it just Twin Towers? Or was it Puerto Rico in general?

DAVID: Just Twin Towers. But... Like I don't know. Mostly... because it was so small. And we were going to a private school. Everybody has mansions. Everybody...

SAM: And how did you feel about...? You know, being... We were never really invited. Did you ever have a friend who came up and saw your room or saw the apartment?

DAVID: No.

SAM: How did you feel about that when you were growing up? Like we were supposed to feel ashamed or something?

DAVID: No. I just didn't know how to feel 'cause that's how... That's how I lived. So... When... when you live a certain way, you feel like there's nothing else.

SAM: But you acknowledged that there was something else 'cause there were kids that had mansions and stuff.

DAVID: Yeah, but I look back at it. It was like that. But... I didn't...

SAM: ()

DAVID: I never made the connection that we might have been a little bit more poor than the other kids. I never made that connection. I was a child.

SAM: When did you realize that we were actually poor?

DAVID: When we moved to this house.

SAM: Then you... But...

DAVID: Like...

SAM: So...

DAVID: That we had been poor and now we...

SAM: We had been living like we were poor.

DAVID: Yeah.

SAM: See, to me, the first time I really realized it was when Angel got a car. I thought "I thought we were poor."

DAVID: Yeah.

SAM: But... Ahm... Do you remember anything about that night leaving? Leaving Puerto Rico and coming to Florida? Do you remember anything about that whole transition?

DAVID: Not really. I just remember being at the airport and I remember coming here. And driving from Miami to Titi Nilda's house.

SAM: What do you remember from—is it Cayabo? Or where did we have that...

DAVID: Cayabo, yeah. The farm.

SAM: What do you remember from that?

DAVID: Uhm... I remember really liking it out there. Playing and there was like a little swing set out there. But now looking back at it, it was just a ().

SAM: But when you're a kid.

DAVID: Yeah.

SAM: You really ()

DAVID: Yeah. It was a plot of land. But like, well, and then I went through a stage that I was like "I can't believe that I liked playing in a plot of land." And now that sounds cool having a plot of land with nothing on it.

SAM: Did you know that there was supposed to be something on it?

DAVID: No.

SAM: Do you know that now?

DAVID: Yeah.

SAM: I didn't know that until recently. That they had bought it...

DAVID: To build a house on it.

SAM: Yeah.

DAVID: Yeah.

SAM: And that Dad decided to sell it because he thought that we stopped giving a shit about it.

DAVID: I don't know.

SAM: But... Yeah. 'Cause I thought that Dad had sold it so that we could move here. For the money. But apparently it was because he thought that we just didn't care. And he never sat down and talked to us about it. He just sold it. But... How do you feel about... It's funny how you talk about how Twin Towers was so small. And I... I have gone back and noticed that our room was bigger than the two rooms that we share here.

DAVID: Um hum.

SAM: Did you notice that? Were you pissed off like... did you hate me when we were living together and stuff?

DAVID: No.

SAM: Did you notice that the rooms were smaller here than they were over there?

DAVID: No. But it felt more... It felt more like a home. Like it was almost like... Twin Towers was more like a warehouse almost, it seemed like. Like all the cold floor and... Our rooms just had a bed and a dresser. That's all they had.

SAM: And do you remember our mattresses what they were made out of?

DAVID: Like canvas or some shit. It was...

SAM: It was just a big rectangle of foam. I don't think that they even had like...

DAVID: Yeah.

SAM: ()

DAVID: I don't know. Do you remember building hammocks on the bunk beds?

SAM: Yes.

DAVID: Do you remember jumping from the top bunk?

SAM: I remember you falling from the top bunk.

DAVID: No. You fell from the top bunk.

SAM: What?

DAVID: Yes. Yes. You did not want to jump. And we would jump [laugh] all the time. We would just jump on to the... We would put a mattress on the floor and we would just jump. [laugh] And you... [laugh] You were really afraid to jump. And we were trying to get you to jump for the longest time. And you were just dangling from the side. [laugh] And you dropped... [laugh] And you dropped and you fell between the mattress.

SAM: I remember that.

DAVID: Your legs were under the bed. [laugh]

SAM: But wait. So you don't remember when you did the summersault on the top bunk and you fell on the ground on top...

DAVID: On top of legs. Yeah, I do remember that now.

SAM: () down there for a while. We were just like... [laughter] We were scared shitless. We thought you were dead.

DAVID: But I used to jump from shit. I've been jumping from shit since I was a kid.

SAM: I'll never forget when Dad came over and picked you up and you weren't wearing a shirt. And you had legos that were still stuck to your back. And Dad like dusted them off and then you had like the imprint...

DAVID: [laugh]

SAM: ...of legos. Just like... [laugh]

DAVID: [laugh]

SAM: Ahm... What do you think about how Mom and Dad were? Did you ever... When was the first that you thought that things were weird with them?

DAVID: I don't really think that things are weird with them.

SAM: Really?

DAVID: Yeah. It's just... That kind of stuff happens all the time.

SAM: What kind of stuff?

DAVID: Like just... People separating. People...

SAM: But did you know that they separated?

DAVID: Yes and no. I just... Like when, when Dad just didn't come... I just accepted the fact that he was not going to come.

SAM: You never wanted to know like what happened or anything?

DAVID: Not really.

SAM: Did you feel bad for Mom?

DAVID: Yeah. Of course. And I felt bad for Dad, too. But... People are what they are. You know. They're not gonna change. It's very... I mean... At the point that they're at, it's going to take a heavy revelation for things to get changed. You know?

SAM: Yeah, but when did you...

DAVID: We can't just put on a talent show and... like in *The Parent Trap*. [laughter]

SAM: Is that what they did in *The Parent Trap*?

DAVID: I think... No, they put on like a show when they were like "Let's get together, yeah, yeah, yeah."

SAM: I'm not... talking by any means about Mom and Dad getting back together. That's not gonna happen. I'm just talking more about... ah... when did you realize that... When did you... Actually before like Mom and Dad, when did you realize that our family was like really strange?

DAVID: I'm... I don't think it's strange.

SAM: Even when you think back and think like all the kids had mansions and stuff. ()

DAVID: It's just... I mean. People... All families are different. They're all dysfunctional in their own way.

SAM: Yeah.

DAVID: And I just don't... You know. I accept it for what it is. We've never... We've never had like ah... certain privileges that other people have, but... You know. We don't live in the projects.

SAM: Yeah. That's mostly how I feel. I don't... I don't feel like there was anything...

DAVID: People are better off; people are worse off. Like we're right... We're middle class.

SAM: But not so much like economically but just like... with the whole family dynamic and everything.

DAVID: I... It actually almost gives me a sense of pride the fact that Dad is blue collar.

SAM: But that's not what I'm talking about. I'm talking more about how we were... Like... as a family. It felt pretty strange to me. It felt like Dad was very detached. And like Dad only saw us like numbers. You know? Like I never thought that he really saw us like his actual kids and everything was just kind of...

DAVID: I think he did. I think he did.

SAM: I think he does... I think he wants to be closer with us now that we're adults because he can really talk to adults. But I feel like he never really knew like how to be a Dad. He knew how to make sure that we had a roof over our heads and we had food and stuff, and like he played with us at times, but like Mom did... Mom raised us.

DAVID: Yeah.

SAM: And do you ever feel... You never feel like you wished that Dad would have been around more? Especially when we were here and everything.

DAVID: N...Not really. 'Cause it would probably change who we are. We're...

SAM: I mean, obviously now, you know... I'm not one to think like "Oh, I wished that things would have been different."

DAVID: Um hum.

SAM: Like I'm glad that I'm the person that I am today.

DAVID: Yeah.

SAM: And everything, but did you ever think that when you were growing up? Like did you ever want Dad to be...?

DAVID: Only... Only in school sometimes when they would ask you to write papers about your parents would I think about that kind of stuff. But other than that, I just stayed busy. There's no reason for me to think about stuff like that. But that's the only time like in school, you know, sometimes you have to write papers about what your Dad does and what your Mom does.

SAM: Yeah.

DAVID: Then I'd be like... "Oh, I wished my Dad were here." But other than that... I'm not saying that I don't love him. I'm not saying that I don't want to see him more. It's just I never thought about it. I never had time to.

SAM: What do you mean you never had time?

DAVID: I was always busy with school, with music, with all kinds of other stuff. I never really had time to think about it.

SAM: So how do you feel about... you know, when you () the album that you recorded for Dad? That you wanted him to hear it.

DAVID: Yeah, of course.

SAM: And what was his reaction?

DAVID: He liked it.

SAM: Didn't you say that he like got all choked up or something?

DAVID: He got choked up when I played him a song I had written, the one that I just played. It made me... It made me proud. It made me proud that I could make my father emotional like that. Not sadistically. Like just...

SAM: Was it because he doesn't... He mean, he's flat out said before that he hates music.
[laugh]

DAVID: He doesn't hate music. He's flat out said that he hates church too. How many times has he told you "God bless you" when you get off the phone with him?

SAM: He hates organized religion. He hates church but then he's still religious and spiritual.

DAVID: Mm.

SAM: But he... he has said that he just doesn't like music.

DAVID: Yeah.

SAM: Which is the most ridiculous thing to say. It's a very stubborn thing to say.

DAVID: Um hum.

SAM: But... Yeah. It's a... I think it's just a... How do you feel about him now? Do you feel any differently about him now than you did before?

DAVID: No. I mean. I still love him. I still... I still think the world of him. He's always... He's always been like... He's been my hero my whole life. You know? Like when we would do those things where you would list your hero or whatever, Dad was it like three or four years in a row.

SAM: What happened in that fifth year? Michael Jordan won the championship?

DAVID: John McClane in Diehard. [laugh]

SAM: No, but... So you... Why you... Why... Why was he your hero?

DAVID: 'Cause he was... I just liked his strength, physical strength. I liked... I don't know. He was... I liked Dad. [laugh] I like him. I love him. It's... He's a great guy.

SAM: He was such a good guy from what I remember in my childhood. He was always giving people things.

DAVID: Um hum.

SAM: To... To a fault.

DAVID: Yeah.

SAM: I remember being annoyed.

DAVID: Um hum.

SAM: That he like gave away all of our toys.

DAVID: Um hum.

SAM: Did you ever feel like that? Did you ever notice all those things that he did for other people and then wonder why he didn't...

DAVID: Oh, I'd be pissed but I understand now. I give my shit away all the time. I mean, he bought it, so he felt it was his. He didn't know any better. When he gave away our Tetris game.

SAM: Do you specifically remember the Tetris game?

DAVID: I do remember the Tetris game.

SAM: Because we used to play it together as a family and stuff?

DAVID: Um hum.

SAM: He gave it away?

DAVID: Yeah. He gave it away.

SAM: Why do you think he gave it away?

DAVID: Wait. No. I don't remember. Shit. Maybe he didn't give it... I think we borrowed Tetris. Never mind. Never mind. Edit it out. 'Cause we borrowed a Tetris game from Yaya. And we had to give it back because we had traded a game or whatever and then, ah, he went out and bought a Tetris game for us because he liked it so much.

SAM: I remember him and Angel used to ().

DAVID: [laugh]

SAM: Him and Angel were obsessed with it.

DAVID: I never really liked Tetris. I just liked the fact that it was something that we were doing together but I didn't like Tetris. I still don't like Tetris.

SAM: How did you feel...? Did you ever feel like Dad... that Jessie was Dad's favorite?

DAVID: No.

SAM: You never felt that?

DAVID: No. No. And actually when I heard that he would say that, it was kind of weird.

SAM: Why?

DAVID: I didn't... I never realized it.

SAM: Not even over here?

DAVID: I don't think about stuff like that. You don't understand. I don't think about stuff like that.

SAM: Like I don't know...

DAVID: I honestly don't.

SAM: I don't know why I do.

DAVID: It's just over analytical. Ahm... I think... It's not that you're trying to make excuses. I think you're trying to make sense out of things but sometimes it's just not even worth trying to figure it out. You just have to keep pushing forward. You know?

SAM: Yeah.

DAVID: Like bygones be bygones. Stuff happened in the past. Whatever.

SAM: But I guess I just feel like...

DAVID: And I never even realized it. I honestly didn't even realize it. Maybe I'm just apathetic. But... I just didn't... ever see it.

SAM: Not even in... Because I remember specifically picking up the phone and being excited that it was Dad and wanting to talk to him. And then he just goes "Put Jessie on the phone." And I remember being really hurt that he just didn't want to talk to me. And I felt that he didn't give a shit. And I let those feelings kind of build up and I felt like I didn't really have a dad as a kid and I really wanted a dad.

DAVID: Um hum.

SAM: And you talk about how he threw the football with you and stuff and like it felt like... I think he felt like he could never do that with me. And I'm not sure why. Maybe it was because I was just too young. And maybe I'm overanalyzing everything. But I can't help but feel like it didn't feel like he really wanted to like be my dad. And he has this motto where he says "I'm not the greatest husband. I'm not the greatest father. But I consider myself..."

DAVID: "The Provider." [laugh]

SAM: You think that's an excuse?

DAVID: What?

SAM: Do you think that's an excuse?

DAVID: That he's just making up excuses?

SAM: Yeah.

DAVID: Probably. I wonder what episode of Quantum Leap he got that from.

SAM: So you really don't think about the songs that you write and why you write them? And what inspired you to write them?

DAVID: You know what? I had this conversation with somebody yesterday. I don't. I don't even know who I write about or why. There's a very, very few songs that I've written about somebody. But I just... I just put lyrics in the song that sound good. To be honest with you.

SAM: But that... You went through a phase there where I was really scared, like you were really down and you were losing patches of your hair. And you grew out your hair and you... And I remember feeling like I wanted to help you and I wanted to like be a good brother.

DAVID: Um hum.

SAM: And I didn't know like what to do. And, ah, when you finished that album, I felt like you got a lot of shit out of your system.

DAVID: Well, I mean... It doesn't necessarily... When I write songs, I don't necessarily vent through lyrics. You hear what I'm saying? It's just venting emotions. It's just, ah, like... lyrically I've never been much of a person to reveal anything about myself through my music. Ahm... I let the music do that. If I want to write a sad song, I don't

necessarily write the lyrics in particular, I try to be cryptic with the lyrics just because I'm... I don't want to be that revealing. I think it's kind of... just... I just don't... I don't like that. I'm not gonna sit there and write a song called after a girl that broke my heart and... You know, that's embarrassing to me. I don't want to do that. I'm not gonna write a song called "Oh, Yoko." You know? [laugh] And I mean, there's people that do it and they do it well and I... I...

SAM: But you think that...?

DAVID: It's just not me, though. That's not how I do art.

SAM: You think that me being the over analytical asshole that I am [laugh]...

DAVID: [laugh]

SAM: ...that... that I could look through your lyrics and see what you were trying to say? And not... I mean, if I would tell you, or asked you, you'd probably say "Oh, I guess. I don't know."

DAVID: Yeah.

SAM: You think that other people would be able to decipher what you're trying to say through it? Do you thin that's...

DAVID: Yeah. Absolutely. Yeah. And if you get something out of my lyrics that don't... awesome!

SAM: It's just... It's funny because I felt like when you made... when you recorded that album, ahm, I actually felt the opposite of how you said that you felt, which, I actually thought that you were making yourself really vulnerable because you were in such a... like because you had just...

DAVID: Really?

SAM: ...gone through something so traumatic.

DAVID: You got that out of the... out of the lyrics?

SAM: I mean, I didn't actually think that you were gonna hang yourself on a noose or something.

DAVID: Yeah. Oh, that was... That's actually a dark humor all along. I really never meant to... for it to be depressing. It was just funny to me. Like I thought it was funny that somebody would decorate themselves like a Christmas tree. [laugh]

SAM: You () but you were going through a lot of shit, I mean.

DAVID: Oh, of course.

SAM: You were losing your hair.

DAVID: Of course. I lost my fiancée and my son at the same time. It was horrible. I mean now I'm like I'm glad I'm not a dad. But... I'm a provider. [laugh]

SAM: [laugh] So why do you think that I'm... What do you think of this whole project that I'm about to end doing? And how do you feel about it?

DAVID: I think it's a great thing. You're... You're... It's a very... Ah... You're trying to answer questions that have never been answered for closure or for whatever, for whatever reason that you need to do that you need to do this. You need to finish this. Ahm... The results might shock you. The results might inspire you to do more work. But, ahm, I think you need to do this.

SAM: But why do you think that I need...? I mean. You said before that you, you didn't understand... Maybe I'm taking apart your words. You said something about like, ah, vulnerability and over analytical.

DAVID: But what I said was like some people do it that way. And that doesn't... I'm not... I'm not saying that people shouldn't do it that way.

SAM: What do you mean?

DAVID: It just doesn't work for me. Like I have never been one to do... preach. If I decide I don't want to drink anymore, I don't expect my friends to put down the beer.

SAM: Yeah.

DAVID: You know. I've never been one like that. Just because I don't write music that's like emotionally feeling doesn't mean that other people can't. And it doesn't mean that it's not going to be good. There's a lot of people that are extremely talented and they are brutally honest in their lyrics.

SAM: Yeah. Ah.

DAVID: [clears throat]

SAM: You ever... Do you ever feel like... Does part of you ever feel like going back to Puerto Rico?

DAVID: Like to move?

SAM: Ah. Not to move. But to go back and... and spend time with family and revisit...

DAVID: Yeah, of course.

SAM: ...your childhood and stuff.

DAVID: Of course.

SAM: Do you think that any part of you is nostalgic or sentimental? Or do you try to...

DAVID: For Twin Towers?

SAM: For... In general.

DAVID: Hold on a second. No. I'd love to... I'd love to go back and visit and see all my friends and hang out with them 'cause they're... I had a lot of friends over there, but I lost touch. But... with this new Facebook craze, it's ridiculous. Kids that I used to be friends with in fifth grade and shit, fourth grade, should I say. But, ahm, yeah. I'd love to go back and get reacquainted with all those people to see what they're like but... I don't have the money or the time right now.

SAM: What about going to see Dad?

DAVID: Yeah, of course. I'd love to see Dad.

SAM: When was the last time you saw Dad?

DAVID: It's been a while. Years. I told him to come and, you know, 'cause football season's still...still going strong and I wanted for him to come and maybe spend two weeks, two Sundays watching football. But he said he's never coming back here.

SAM: But he's made statements like that before.

DAVID: I know.

SAM: Do you ever feel we were unrealistically expected to kind of like wait for him? Not wait. Not wait for him, but like serve him.

DAVID: Serve him?

SAM: And do things for him. Yeah. You have to make him iced tea and stuff all the time. You have to do everything for him.

DAVID: I remember one time he asked me for a drink and I went to the kitchen and got a little clear cup filled it with water from the tap [laugh] and brought it to him. [laugh] And actually he wasn't mad. Mom was mad. It was Mom that was mad. Dad just looks at me and smiles like "I can't believe you just did that." [laugh]

SAM: Alright. I think I'll probably go ahead and stop it here 'cause this tape is about to run out. We don't need to record anything else today.

CHAPTER FOUR: MARKETING PLAN

Overview

Intended Audience

The Past and Pending is a personal documentary that will probably fit in well with the film festival crowd. More specifically, the film could be marketed to Hispanics, family psychologists, and college documentary professors. A possibility for a marketing strategy includes a college tour, where the film would be screened and the filmmaker would do a Q & A with Psychology and Latin American Studies faculty and students.

Distribution Outlets

A theatrical release for the film does not seem very likely or realistic. I could sell the film on the SAMTOR FILM website as a digital download, with the option to buy a DVD with special features. Pricing could probably be around \$5 for the download and \$15 for the DVD. Research on distribution outlets such as Netflix (DVD and streaming) shows that making a profit from such alternatives is not common. However, I'm really not sure if profit is of my biggest concern.

After screening the film, in rough form, for several people, I've come to realize that it's barely even a film anymore. It seems to be a way for people to start a dialogue about their own lives and how they thought about themselves when watching my family's story. I never once thought to profit, financially, off of this film. This was always supposed to be a film that I would use as my "calling card" to then make subsequent films, funded by people who believed in me based on *The Past and Pending*. But now that I see how much potential the film has to become more of an event and not even so much of a film anymore, I want to just find the best way to get

it exposed to more people. This doesn't mean making the best financial deals; I'm not going to be like Lance Hammer, the director of *Ballast*, and insist on waiting for the best deal.

The more feasible and realistic option is to hit the festival circuit first, see if I can make any kind of distribution deal for On Demand, and if I cannot do that, then I will book college tours across the country through Psychology Departments and sell DVDs. After the tour, if I do not have an On Demand deal yet, I will put my film online and try to get exposure for it through Vimeo groups and documentary blogs.

Sample Poster

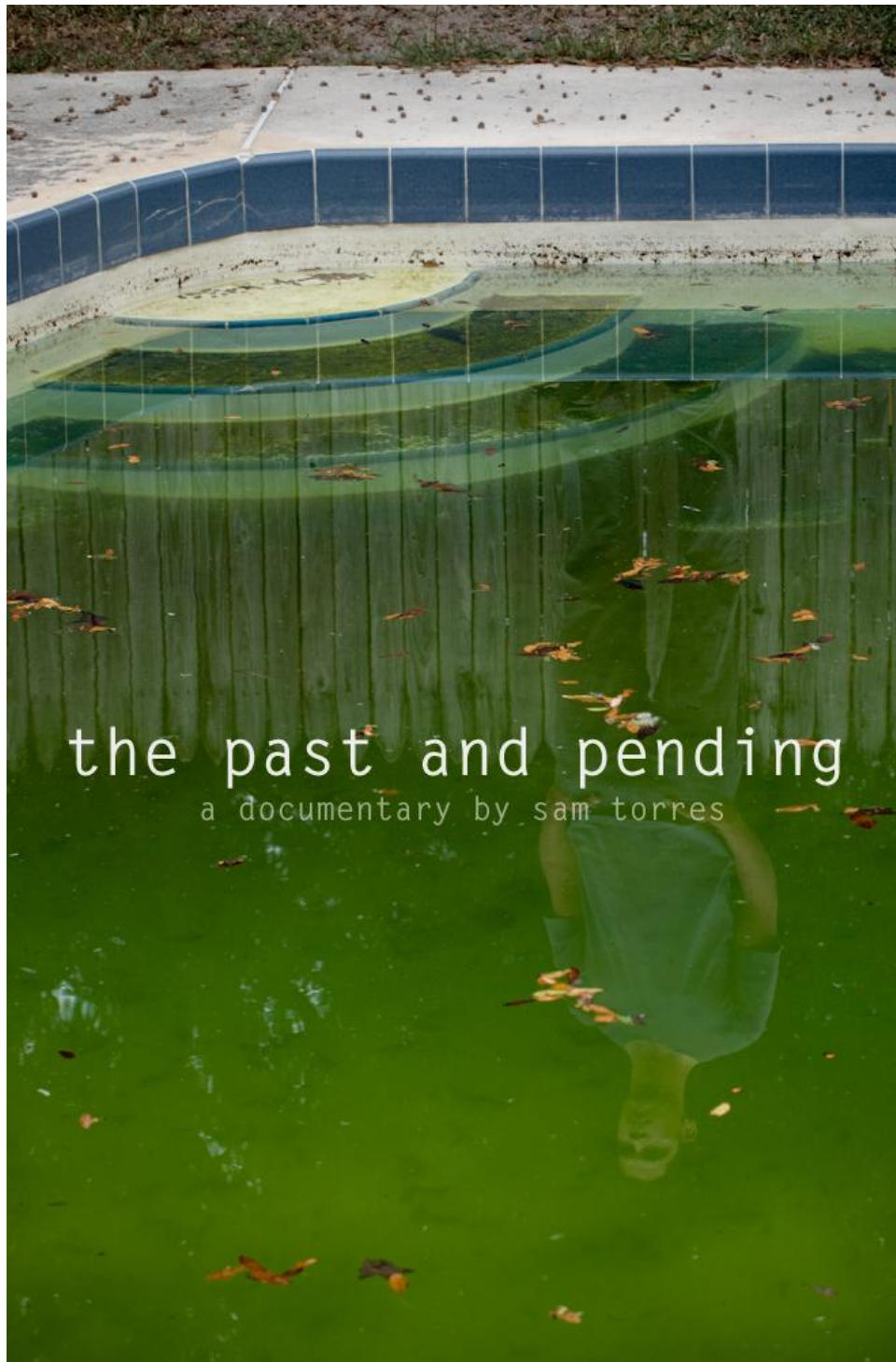


Figure 9: Poster Image for *The Past and Pending*

APPENDIX A: BUDGET

Budget Title : Sam Torres MFA Documentary

Budget Draft Dated : 12 October, 2009
 Start Date : June 2009
 Finish Date : March 2011
 Travel Days : 37

Director : Sam Torres
 Location(s) :
 Ponce, PR
 Lake Mary, FL
 Branford, CT
 Clinton, NC

Prepared By : Sam Torres

Acct N°	Category Description	Page	Total
500	PRODUCER	1	1,200
Total Above-The-Line			1,200
600	EQUIPMENT	2	1,390
620	AIRFARE	2	996
630	LIVING EXPENSES	2	600
Total Below-The-Line Production			2,986
710	MUSIC	3	2,700
Total Below-The-Line Post			2,700
720	FESTIVAL MARKETING	4	2,415
730	INSURANCE / LEGAL	4	1,235
Total Below-The-Line Other			3,650
Total Above-The-Line			1,200
Total Below-The-Line			9,336
Total Above and Below-The-Line			10,536
Total Fringes			0
Grand Total			10,536

Acct No	Description	Amount	Units	X	Curr Rate	Subtotal	Total
500 PRODUCER							
501	Contingency						
		1		1	1,200	1,200	
	Total						1,200
Account Total for 500							1,200
Total Above-The-Line							1,200

Acct No	Description	Amount	Units	X	Curr Rate	Subtotal	Total
600 EQUIPMENT							
601	FlipHD Camera						
	Shipping	1		1	199	199	
	Total						199
602	Mini DV Tapes						
	Sony DVC-60 Premium MiniDV (10 Pack)	6		1	18.99	114	
	Shipping	1	Allow	1	59.94	60	
	Total						174
603	Additional Camera Batteries						
	Shipping	1		1	14.75	15	
	Total	1	Allow	1	6.98	7	22
604	Microphones						
	Sony ECM-77B Lavalier	1		2	34.95	670	
	AT897 Shotgun Mic Kit	1		1	34.85	285	
	Shipping	1	Allow	1	40.2	40	
	Total						995
Account Total for 600							1,390
620 AIRFARE							
621	to Puerto Rico						
	Ticket (roundtrip)	2		1	279.7	559	
	Additional Baggage	1		1	50	50	
	Trip Altertations	1	Allow	1	120	120	
	Flight Insurance	1	Allow	1	16.5	17	
	Total						746
622	to Connecticut						
	Total	1		1	250	250	250
Account Total for 620							996
630 LIVING EXPENSES							
631	Food						
	Total	3		1	200	600	600
Account Total for 630							600
Total Below-The-Line Production							2,986

Acct No	Description	Amount	Units	X	Curr Rate	Subtotal	Total
710 MUSIC							
711	Original Composition						
		1	Allow	1		200	200
	Total						200
712	Copyrighted Music						
	Licensed Song	1		1		1,000	1,000
	Total						1,000
713	Attorney Retainer						
		1	Flat	1		1,500	1,500
	Total						1,500
Account Total for 710							2,700
Total Below-The-Line Post							2,700

Acct No	Description	Amount	Units	X	Curr Rate	Subtotal	Total
720	FESTIVAL MARKETING						
721	MARKETING MATERIALS						
	Postcards (2000)	1	allow	1		165	165
	PressKits (40)	1	allow	1		300	300
	Total						465
722	FESTIVAL FEES						
		30		1		36	1,050
	Total						1,050
723	DVD CASES AND COVERS						
		150		1		5,5	825
	Total						825
724	POSTAGE/SHIPPING						
		30		1		2,5	75
	Total						75
Account Total for 720							2,415
730	INSURANCE / LEGAL						
731	Liability						0
732	Errors & Omissions						
	National Association of Personnel Services	1	Flat	1		1,200	1,200
	Membership Fee	1	Flat	1		36	36
	Total						1,236
Account Total for 730							1,236
Total Below-The-Line Other							3,650

Acct No	Description	Amount	Units	X	Curr Rate	Subtotal	Total
	Total Above-The-Line						1,200
	Total Below-The-Line						9,336
	Total Above and Below-The-Line						10,536
	Total Fringes						0
	Grand Total						10,536

APPENDIX B: MUSIC SYNCHRONIZATION LICENSES

The Past and Pending includes several copyrighted songs in its fine cut. All uses can be argued to fall in line under “Fair Use” with current copyright law in the United States.

Sync License

- Ricky Zahnd and the Blue Jeaners – (I’m Getting) Nottin’ for Christmas; ©2010 Master Classics Records
- R.E.M. – Losing My Religion; © R.E.M. / Athens Ltd

Master & Sync License

- U2 – Numb; ©1993 Universal-Island Ltd

APPENDIX C: CREDIT LIST

A Film By: Sam Torres

Additional Photography By: Marco Cordero

Music:

- “I’m Getting Nottin’ for Christmas,” by Ricky Zahnd and the Blue Jeaners; © Master Classics Records
- “The Only Time,” by Chimes McGavern; © Acorn Records
- “Last Christmas,” by Chimes McGavernl © Acorn Records
- “Numb” by U2; © Universal-Island Ltd
- “Losing My Religion,” by R.E.M. © R.E.M. / Athens Ltd

Thanks:

- Steve Schlow, Randy Finch, Lisa Mills, Ula Stoeckl, Patty Hurter, Jon Bowen, Alex Bowser, Chase Conner, Marcos Casilli, Mary Johnson, Chris Harris, Barry Sandler, Lori Ingle, Henry Maldonado, Suzy Spang, Rich Gula, Edgar Jorge, Melissa Ford, Jen Campbell, Jon Perez

Dedicated to Mom, Dad, Angel, Jessie, David, and Austin

APPENDIX D: CONTRACTS & AGREEMENTS

List of Release Form Signatories

Borrero-Torres, Maria

Shirodkar, Jason

Torres, Angelica

Torres, David

Torres, Jose

Wheeler, Brian

Wheeler, Jessica

Wheeler, Austin (minor, Jessica signed on his behalf)

Sample Release Form

Samtor Film, LLC

Motion Picture Release

Lake Mary, FL 32746
(407) 619-9467•
samtorres@samtorfilm.com

Date: _____

I, the undersigned, hereby irrevocably grant to Samtor Film, LLC (herein "Sam Torres") and any parent, subsidiary and affiliated corporations and their respective successors, assigns, licensees, employees and agents, the right in perpetuity throughout the universe, and in all now known and hereafter existing media, and in any language, to use my name (including any fictitious names created by Producer or heretofore or hereafter used by me), physical likeness, life story and/or voice in and in connection with the production, exhibition, exploitation, merchandising, advertising and promotion of the motion picture(s) tentatively entitled Untitled Doc Project(s) (herein "Past and Pending"). I agree that the foregoing grant includes the right to use my physical likeness, voice and/or life story in any form, including, without limitation, remixed or re-contextualized in any version or length of motion picture(s).

I represent to the best of my knowledge that the consent of no other persons, firm, corporation or labor organization is required to enable Producer to use my name, likeness, voice and/or life story as described herein and that such use will not violate the rights of any third parties. All rights, title and interest in and to the results of the services and performances rendered by me in connection with the production of Picture or any portion thereof shall, from its inception, be the sole property of Producer, free from any claim whatsoever by me or any other person. I indemnify Producer and the owners of any locations used against any claims and demands of personal injury, damage to property, and death resulting from my work on Picture. I agree that I will not assert or maintain against Producer or its agents, successors, assigns and licensees, any claim, action, suit or demand of any kind or nature whatsoever, including but not limited to, those grounded upon invasion of privacy, rights of publicity or other civil rights, or for any other reason in connection with the use of my physical likeness, sound, or life story in Picture as herein provided. I hereby release Producer its agents, successors, assigns and licensees, from and against any and all claims, liabilities, demands, actions, causes of action(s), costs and expenses whatsoever, at law or in equity, known or unknown, anticipated or unanticipated, which I ever had, now have, or may, shall or hereafter have by reason, matter, cause or thing arising out of Producer's use as herein provided. I hereby certify and represent that I am over 18 years of age and I have read the foregoing and fully understand the meaning and effect thereof and, intending to be legally bound, I have signed this release.

Dated _____

SIGN HERE: _____

PRINT NAME HERE: _____

AGREED AND ACCEPTED TO

If a minor, Guardian's Signature

Address

By _____

PHONE NUMBER HERE: