

GOING HOME

A ten-minute play by

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[EXCERPT]

AT RISE: Frank, 45, is standing in the hall outside a hospital room.

His mother, Carol, 68, rushes in.

CAROL
What is it? How is he? You said he's taken a turn.

FRANK
In a manner of speaking, yes.

CAROL
In a manner of speaking? Is he worse or not?

FRANK
In my opinion, not.

CAROL
Frank, what are you talking about? Is he better then? Can I see him?

(She starts towards the door of the room, Frank stops her.)

FRANK
I wouldn't go in there just yet.

CAROL
Why not?

FRANK
I need to explain something to you first.

CAROL
I don't understand.

FRANK
Just... let me talk to you, okay?

CAROL
No, you're scaring me. I need to see him!

(She heads into the hospital room. Frank stands there, looking concerned. In a moment, she comes back.)

CAROL
What the hell's going on, Frank?

FRANK
I told you, I needed to--

CAROL
Where's the IV? Where are all the tubes?

FRANK

Look, just let me...

CAROL

I asked him. He didn't answer me!

FRANK

You know how hard it is for him to talk.

CAROL

No he wouldn't look at me. He wouldn't look me in the eye.

FRANK

Mom, sit down.

CAROL

No! They can't leave him like that. The doctor said three more days of treatment at least!

FRANK

Yes. Three more days of intubation. Three more days of sucking that gunk out of his lungs.

CAROL

Yes, yes, but then he gets to go home. Until the 18th.

FRANK

Well, it looks like he'll be going home sooner than planned.

CAROL

What are you talking about?? He can't, he still has the pneumonia. I mean, it didn't suddenly clear up overnight, right?

FRANK

No Mom, it didn't clear up overnight.

CAROL

Then what are you talking about? Who authorized this? His doctor?? I want to speak to him. Are they giving up, is that what they're doing? They told me, they told me---

FRANK

No Mom, listen, listen. Are you listening?

CAROL

Yes, I'm listening.

FRANK

This wasn't the doctor's decision.

CAROL

Then who?

Dad. FRANK

What? CAROL

This was Dad's decision. FRANK

No. No... CAROL

This morning when he woke, he asked them to call me. FRANK

Call *you*? CAROL

Yes. So I came right away. And when I got here, he was just like you saw him. All the tubes and IV's had been pulled out. Apparently he told the nurses and the doctor to unhook him. From everything. FRANK

No, that doesn't make sense. Why would he do that? CAROL

Because he wants to go home. FRANK

Yes, but if he goes home, now, he'll... CAROL
(beat, trying to grasp this)
(she stops abruptly)

He can't!

You want him to go through three more days of this torture? FRANK

He has to get through it. So he can do the surgery, on the 18th. That's what we've been talking about. We have it all set up! CAROL