



by Rolando Zee

TREATMENT

(rated PG-13, copyright 2023)

LGBTQ Romance / Drama:

Los Angeles, CA – early 1960s. Young Jesse is in awe of his mother Veronica. So graceful, so independent. Veronica is a 27 yr old, slim, stylish, African-American lady getting ready to start her day. She pulls on stockings over what appears to be an old scar on her leg. Skirt, blouse, sweater, pearls, makeup — perfect.

Jesse, is a playful 8 yr old African-American boy with dreadlocks. He peeks out at mom getting ready in the morning. "I see you boo boo!", Veronica calls. She exhorts the young boy to get ready for his school day.

Later that evening Veronica tucks Jesse into bed. The young boy is nervous about his big day tomorrow. Veronica reminds him that it's just a simple show-and-tell at school. But Jesse's got bigger things planned, "I want to do the song." Little Jesse convinces mom to sing it with him one more time before bed. The two of them sing "*Lookin' 4 Somethin'*" by Don L. Castor.

*"Searching and looking / for something out of reach /
trying and fighting / but never able to find what I need /*

Lookin' 4 somethin' / when I have everything /

Lookin' 4 somethin' / in all the wrong places /

Lookin' 4 somethin' / but I don't know what it is..."

After the song, Jesse asks to hear a story about his dad, but Veronica refuses. She never speaks about that sad period of her life. Veronica leaves the room and closes the door.

A flashback reveals the fiance Harry – a large African American in his 30s, and Veronica at just 19. They are in a car, and in the middle of a heated argument. It seems Veronica's friend caught Harry in an intimate encounter with another woman. As the argument escalates Harry screams, "That bitch wasn't the first... and when I'm horny I'm the only one who gets to pick where I put my dick!" Harry screeches to a stop and shoves Veronica out the passenger door. Veronica tries desperately to hold onto the door handle as it pulls away, injuring her leg. Then she instinctively curls up on the side of the road and holds her belly. End of flashback.

The next night Veronica has fallen asleep just before bedtime. Jesse lies next to her on the bed and examines the old scar on his sleeping mother's leg. When Veronica awakes Jesse asks her how she got the scar. He suspects that it has something to do with his father. Veronica doesn't want to relive that painful story, but Jesse insists on knowing the truth.

Veronica smiles when Jesse reminds her about their favorite saying, and the two recite together, "*When you're honest, the world is your oyster.*" It's a familiar saying that Jesse and Veronica recite often. Veronica finally relents and tells the story, "Your father and I were very much in love at first. He proposed to me. We were getting married. But a few weeks later we got into a huge fight in his car."

Flashback - Veronica's mother Akila picks her up by the roadside and drives her home. Akila cleans up her daughter's wound while expressing her disapproval of Harry. Akila suspects that Harry has been unfaithful, and Veronica cannot deny it. While Veronica removes her

engagement ring, mom Akila has only one question, "Did ya tell him you're pregnant?" Veronica did not. End of flashback.

"That was me?", Jesse asks about the pregnancy. Veronica nods tearfully. Jesse agrees never to ask about his dad anymore. TRIGGER: an event or circumstance that is the cause of a particular action, process, or situation. Learning about that painful event was a trigger, It was the moment when young Jesse knew that he was never ever getting married.

Flash forward 30 years. We're at a gay country dance bar. Men sip drinks, shoot pool, and crowd the dance floor -- with a smattering of lesbians there to give the place some flavor. Jesse would say that being gay can be traced back to the adoration he had for his mother growing up. Today Jesse is groomed and dressed to a T just like his mom. Jesse, 38, trim and toned, still sports dreadlocks. But right now Jesse looks a bit out of place at the country bar with his novice line dance moves and preppy attire.

Also on the dance floor is Ryan, 30, a tall handsome blond with broad shoulders and a narrow waist. Ryan speaks with a country twang to his boyfriend Keith at the bar. Keith's already had one too many drinks - he didn't even want to be here in the first place. Keith lets Ryan know of his irritation with a burst of bad attitude, "You know I hate this shit. The guys here are pretty much all trolls." Ryan becomes exasperated. He escorts Keith out of the bar - with the help of some bar regulars. Jesse takes notice of the commotion.

A few days later, at the tennis courts, it's the first day of the gay tennis league. Jesse's been trying out new things, like country line dancing. But this sports activity is more familiar to him because Jesse played tennis in high school. And this is where Jesse meets Florio – the 34 yr old Caucasian, fast-talking, friendly, one-man welcoming committee of the tennis league. Florio is attracted to his new doubles partner Jesse and chats him up from the get go. (Note: Florio is also the film narrator).

But Jesse quickly lets Florio know that he's not interested in him romantically. After a devilish smile Florio decides he now has a new mission, "Alright, have no fear! Florio chief match-maker

is on the case!" Jesse protests the matchmaker idea. But it falls on deaf ears. So when Jesse comments on the pretty eyes of another player, Florio sets his match-maker plans in motion.

A few days later Jesse joins Florio and the rest of the tennis players at a local Italian restaurant for a regular get-together. It's there that Florio puts into motion his master plan to pair up Jesse and Ben, the slightly older, slightly overweight tennis player with pretty eyes. But Jesse resists Florio's matchmaking efforts at the dinner table. Afterward, while walking to the parking lot Jesse confesses to Florio that he's never been on a gay date.

Jesse tells Florio about the first time he knew he was gay — an attraction to a boy on the school bus. But this boy was an asshole and a prankster. A fight between them led to the boy spitting in Jesse's face and calling him a faggot. That drove Jesse to a fit of insanity, and he beat the kid senseless. "I was enraged when he called me a faggot because I was afraid everyone would find out." Florio now realizes that Jesse joined the tennis league and started going to the country dance bar in order to officially come out of the closet.

Jesse also fills Florio in on his mother's past experiences with his dad – which led Jesse to decide he is never, ever getting married. But Florio concludes that Jesse just needs some dating encouragement, "If Ben asks you out just remember it's not marriage. It's just a gay date. And you always say yes to a gay date." Just then, Ben appears unexpectedly to ask Jesse on a one-on-one date. After a strong kick from Florio, Jesse agrees.

The date winds up being dinner at Ben's place. Homemade penne pasta with chicken, broccoli and carrots — the very same dish that Jesse ordered at the Italian restaurant. Ben was paying close attention. It is an observant and sweet gesture that Jesse appreciates. The date goes well, and the scene ends with both Jesse and Ben grabbing the salt shaker – first physical contact.

Over the next several weeks Jesse becomes more at ease with country dancing, and now he's even dressing the western cowboy part. Jesse stands with Ben at the bar. Ryan walks up and asks Jesse to dance, right under Ben's nose. It turns out that Ben doesn't dance, and neither does

Ryan's partner Keith. So that leaves Ryan and Jesse to get acquainted while the other two drink to excess.

Three months pass. Florio exits the gym singing "*I Need A Hero*" and walking to his car. Ben ambushes him. Ben is insecure about how things are going with Jesse. Ben says, "I asked Jesse to move in with me last night. He didn't give me an answer." Florio advises Ben to slow down, knowing how Jesse feels about commitment. He also advises Ben to get to know Jesse on a deeper level first.

During their next date, Ben and Jesse cuddle on the couch, watching the news. Reporters say that there's a killer on the loose. Two young married men, killed right in their West Hollywood neighborhood. Ben growls at Jesse to turn the TV volume down - which he does. Instead of TV, the two discuss shocking secrets about their past. It turns out that Ben once robbed a fast food joint. Compared to that, what Ben knows about Jesse is tame.

Ben challenges Jesse to share about something shocking he did this year. Jesse admits that earlier this year he searched for Harry his biological father – using a private investigator. His biological father, it turns out, had died a couple of years earlier. Ben is saddened by this news, and thanks Jesse for sharing such a personal story. They kiss. And out of the blue Jesse tells Ben, "Yes, I'll move in with you."

All goes well with the move, and Jesse seems happy at first. But over time Jesse realizes that Ben has a severe drinking problem. More than once Jesse finds Ben passed out drunk, dead to the world. During one of Ben's drunken stupors Jesse hears an update on the TV news – the anchor announces, "And for the first time, today police are admitting that the murders may be linked. We have a serial killer."

Days later Ben accompanies Jesse to the country dance bar mainly to enjoy the drinks. Jesse and Ryan dance a two-step together, while their other halves nurse beers. When Ben and Jesse return home at the end of the night Jesse tries to help inebriated Ben into their apartment, but Ben wants to stay outside to vomit first. He doesn't have the strength or balance to make it up the stairs,

“Go! Damn! I'll be up in a minute. I don't need any help tossing my cookies. Just go!” He shoves and hits Jesse to make him go upstairs into the apartment alone.

By morning, Jesse's made a decision. He's had enough. Jesse asks Ben, “Do you have any idea what it feels like to lie next to someone you love while the alcohol and sweat are seeping out of their pores?” No answer. "It's disgusting," Jesse says. "And I think I've put up with it way too long." Jesse says he's moving out. And not just because of this one incident — a whole string of drunken incidents over a two year period, and a whole string of broken promises to clean up and dry out. Ben goes quickly on the defensive, and the situation deteriorates. Ben even threatens suicide. But Jesse's made up his mind.

Jesse's new apartment is a beautiful one-bedroom luxury apartment in a high rise of Downtown L.A. A fresh start, and a move up in the world. And what fresh start would be complete without a new look? Jesse glances at himself in the bathroom mirror, gathers his dreadlocks in one hand, and prudently calls Florio first, "I'm thinking of chopping off my hair."

Florio is at the recording studio. He hasn't heard from Jesse in some time — but takes the call and advises caution. Jesse, who's never had short hair before, has to understand that the shape of his head is all-important. "If ya shave your head and then realize it's all lopsided, there's no goin' back.", says Florio. Jesse figures that Florio's just goofing around, but it doesn't matter. Jesse's had dreadlocks all his life, and it's time for a change. Snip!

Without his dreadlocks Jesse's got a clean, sleek new look. And he doesn't have time for his ex Ben's increasingly sad and desperate answering machine messages — he grabs his overcoat, lab coat, keys, and coffee, and heads to work without answering.

A few days later Jesse reconnects with Florio on the tennis courts. Florio wants to get right back into match-making for Jesse. But Jesse just wants to chill. He's worried about Ben. Florio assures Jesse that all gay breakups involve talk of suicide. But Jesse has real reason to worry. He relates a story that Ben told him about coming home as a teenager and finding his father Marvin hanging from the ceiling fan. It was ruled a suicide.

Teen Ben was so shocked that he froze, staring up at his dead father for six hours before the police arrived. So, even though Jesse cannot handle taking adult Ben's desperate phone calls, he has been driving by Ben's office during the day to see if his car is in the parking lot. And in the evening Jesse occasionally calls from a pay-phone to check if Ben is home and picks up.

One night at the country dance bar, Jesse gets hit on by Tomi, an attractive Asian man. Florio can't help pushing the two together, "Why don't you two cowboys dance?" Tomi likes the idea and takes the lead in a two step partner dance. He continues flirting with Jesse while Florio watches, smiling. Tomi says he wants to go on a date, but Jesse refuses - he's not ready. However Jesse can't deny the persistent Tomi a workout together at the local gym - not a date.

Over the next few weeks Tomi and Jesse meet to workout, country dance, and hike together. Hanging out with Tomi takes a lot out of Jesse who turns every event into a competition – especially the workout and the hike. Jesse is exhausted after trying to keep up with Tomi on a long hike. Jesse thinks a good soak in the tub should help relax his sore muscles. Tomi waits outside the bathroom door. Jesse yells, "Thanks for helping me get in! I'll be fine! You can let yourself out! Ahhhh!"

Tomi replies, "You know, I can help with that. I've been told I have great hands". While still wearing his hiking shorts, Tomi climbs into the tub behind Jesse, and massages his shoulders. Things seem to be going nicely, slowly, and safely enough for Jesse to feel comfortable and relaxed in the tub. Then Tomi wraps his strong hiking legs around Jesse's waist. Tomi's tongue wets the back of Jesse's neck and caresses an ear lobe. Jesse moans in pleasure. And the two enjoy an intimate encounter.

The next day at the gym Florio hears about how well things are going with Tomi. Florio thinks that he's found Jesse the perfect match. Florio sings the song "*Lean On Me*" to Jesse.

*"Lean on me / when you're not strong /
and I'll be your friend / I'll help you carry on /*

*'Cuz, it won't be long /
till I'm gonna need / somebody to lean on."*

One night at the country dance bar, Ryan asks Jesse to step outside to talk. They go to the park behind the bar. Ryan says that he is glad things are going well with Jesse and Tomi. But he also wants to know how Jesse finally broke up with Ben? Ryan has a good reason for asking. He tells Jesse that his lover Keith got drunk at home last night, and an argument turned physically violent.

Ryan shows Jesse his back, covered with bruises. Jesse is sympathetic and hugs Ryan who appreciates the warm hug and gives Jesse a friendly peck on the lips. But then Ryan gets carried away, grabs Jesse by the shoulders and plants a seductive kiss. At first Jesse is surprised, but he soon gives in to the passion. When Jesse comes to his senses he abruptly breaks off the kiss, and the two walk back to the bar in silence and guilt.

The next night at Jesse's apartment Tomi surprises Jesse with a beautiful oil painting that he created, "Back in Jr. High I used to dabble a bit. But I guess lately I've just been inspired - by you." Tomi says he's celebrating the 6 month anniversary of their first date.

And Tomi has another surprise for Jesse — a shiny silver key to his apartment, "I want us to move in together." Jesse is stumped. This is happening way too fast. Ryan notices the hesitation and asks, "You're not dating anyone else are you?". Jesse answers "No", but his mind flashes back to that passionate kiss with Ryan. Tomi becomes impatient, "If you're not sure you wanna be with me, tell me now." Jesse is still stumped. No answer. Resenting the silence Tomi breaks up with Jesse and stalks off. He has his answer.

The next day at the gym, Florio can't believe it, "I matched you up with the perfect guy. Honey, you know I love ya. But what the hell is wrong with you? You've gotta fix this. Fix it!"

The next day Jesse calls Ryan and asks him to meet again at the park behind the country dance bar to talk . He has already told Ryan about the breakup with Tomi, but Jesse also has a

confession, "When Tomi asked me to move in, the first thought that came to my mind was you. Your face. That kiss." Ryan smiles and grabs Jesse for another kiss. The passion is definitely still there. Jesse tells Ryan that he's not in a hurry, "I know that you and Keith haven't officially broken up yet. But I just want you to know that I can wait."

Ryan's expression suddenly turns serious, and he decides to tell Jesse the whole truth, "I never said I was leaving Keith... I can't leave Keith - no sir. 'cause he's HIV positive. He's HIV positive 'cause I think I gave it to him." Jesse is devastated by the revelation. Apparently Keith knew that Ryan was HIV positive when they first started dating. The two practiced monogamy and safe sex, but eventually Keith still got infected. Ryan harbors the guilt and says it's just easier now for them to stay together because now they're both HIV positive. Jesse is left shocked and confused.

Next day at the gym Jesse breaks down into tears in front of his best friend Florio, "Tomi was a good man. Why the hell did I choose Ryan. Why did Ryan have to kiss me? And confuse me?" Florio tries to console, but Jesse is numb, "Maybe I just don't really know what I want. God I'm so done with dating!"

A year passes and Jesse stays busy with no desire to date. So when Florio calls to play tennis, Jesse's response is a big surprise, "No. I'm sorry. Believe it or not I kinda have a date. And I'm already late." Before Jesse can hang up Florio gleans some vital information about Jesse's new date. His name is Osvaldo, 34, 6'2", and Mexican. The biggest shock is that Jesse found Osvaldo without Florio's help. "Wow. I'm so proud of you. The trainee is surpassing the master", says Florio.

Outside of a hardware store, Jesse is dressed in old painting clothes and a hoodie, with several days of stubble. He is pretending to be a day labor worker. Jesse sits on a curb with a sack lunch. Osvaldo joins him, with a sack lunch of his own. Osvaldo talks about the job he had today - painting a baby's nursery room pink. Osvaldo speaks a mix of Spanish and English with a thick accent. Jesse pretends to understand everything said.

Before the end of lunch Osvaldo tosses Jesse some wrapped sweet bread and says, “My granny made me promise not to eat it myself. I think she likes you”. Jesse smiles and replies, “Ya? She betta not be the only one.” Both men look around to ensure that no one is watching. When the coast is clear, the two hold hands and smile.

At Jesse's apartment, Florio is dressed very sharp and sitting on Jesse's bed. Florio has been invited to have dinner and meet the Osvaldo family at their home in Tijuana Mexico. But Florio feels overdressed when he sees that Jesse is putting on torn jeans and a hoodie. Florio asks, "Tell me again. How did you meet this Osvaldo?" Jesse answers, "I was getting paint at the handyman store. And we just sort of bumped into each other." Florio replies, “I just wish I had a chance to meet this Ozzy character without dining with the whole Ozzy clan. It feels kinda weird.” But Florio relents when Jesse tells him that Osvaldo wants to meet Jesse's invisible best friend.

A happy Mexican family gathers at the backyard dining table of a poor Tijuana neighborhood home. Osvaldo sits next to Florio. And Jesse sits on the other side next to Mama Gloria, the family's 70-year-old matriarch. Mama Gloria asks Florio what it's like living in the east side projects? Florio corrects her. He lives in North Hollywood, "Jesse and me met playing tennis at one of the clubs..." Jesse quickly jumps in, "Ah! Ya! That's right! Florio was help'n out at the public rec center on the EAST side. In my hood."

Florio whispers to Osvaldo, “And you think that Jesse and his mom live together – in the projects?” Osvaldo replies, “Yes. Is everything OK?”

Florio now realizes that Jesse's been less than truthful about his life. Uncomfortable with the situation, Florio excuses himself from the dinner table, “I'm so sorry. I just realized that I have to go.” Jesse catches up with Florio at the front door. Jesse accuses Florio of being rude to leave so suddenly, but Florio stands his ground and confronts Jesse about the deception.

Forced to come clean, Jesse explains that he didn't really meet Osvaldo inside the hardware store. Jesse went there to get paint, sure, but in tattered clothes Jesse was mistaken for a day laborer as

he was walking in the parking lot. Osvaldo's uncle yelled at Jesse for poaching on their potential business. Osvaldo came to Jesse's defense and assumed that Jesse, like him, was also a day laborer looking for work. Jesse never corrected him over the next few months. And their friendship eventually blossomed into romance.

However, Florio is not pacified by Jesse's explanation, "And you've kept this whole fake life going with the entire family?" Jesse retaliates, "You're such a judgmental prick! You're just pissed because you had nothing to do with this match-up. I found Ozzy without you." But no, Florio's just embarrassed for Jesse. He thought Jesse had more integrity. And Florio doesn't want to be around when it all blows up in Jesse's face. Unbeknownst to Jesse and Florio, Osvaldo has overheard this conversation at the front door.

But when Jesse returns to the backyard Osvaldo pretends that all is well – he has his own plan. At the end of the evening Osvaldo secretly follows Jesse back to his luxury apartment. Osvaldo knows that Jesse's whole story is a lie! Osvaldo barges in and snarls, "You really fooled us. The poor dumb Mexicans. God! I am so stupid!" Jesse tries to explain and asks Osvaldo to forgive him. But Osvaldo has heard enough, and marches out of the apartment, "Don't call me!"

Jesse is all alone once again. He spends several weeks lamenting over his past decisions. And he's still not talking to Florio. For advice, Jesse breaks down and visits Mama Gloria, who's seen too much of life to be surprised about what happened. Mama Gloria says that her grandson Osvaldo may never be able to forgive Jesse. The men in her family are hard-headed and stubborn. The women in her family never forget. And Osvaldo has the qualities of both genders.

Wise Mama Gloria gives Jesse some friendly advice, "Joven, I cannot tell you what to do. But I can tell you that whatever you decide, it must come from a place of Honesty." Jesse remembers the motto he and his mother used to say together — *When you're honest, the world is your oyster.*

Mama Gloria leaves Jesse with a final thought, "You know, as much as Osvaldo feels betrayed by you, there is someone else who has known you much longer. And he must feel even more

betrayed. If you want to learn how to mend a romance, you might want to practice on mending a friendship first."

Jesse takes Mama Gloria's advice to heart. But Florio proves to be a tougher nut to crack than Jesse thought. The sad puppy-dog eyes at the gym don't work. The beautiful flowers on Florio's car don't work. In desperation Jesse shows up on Florio's doorstep and apologizes profusely, "You're not a judgmental prick. I am." Florio agrees, "Don't ever call me that again."

But Florio doesn't let Jesse off the hook that easily, "Ya lost ya damn mind! Why'd you really do it?" In that moment Jesse remembers the advice he received from both his mom and Mama Gloria about honesty. And for the first time he is brutally honest with Florio about his dating woes, "I liked Ben. But I was never in love with him. I was afraid of falling in love with Tomi so I ended it when things got too serious. And when I finally opened my heart to Ryan, I got burned. I didn't like it. So... with Ozzy, it was just easier to pretend to be someone else."

Florio says, "Now it's my turn to be honest. I have always loved you. I knew from that first day at tennis. And I will always think the world of you." Jesse isn't surprised by this. Instead he is touched by the honesty. Jesse pushes Florio against the open door jam... and they kiss, finally. At long last the two who were meant to be together are together. Florio says, "I expect to be wearing a beautiful white flowing gown when you walk me down the aisle," But Jesse replies playfully, "Don't hold your breath." The scene ends with the two new lovers locked in a kiss.

Forty-five years later. Jesse and Florio have stayed together the whole time, and now are both in their 80s. Elderly Jesse sits at the dining table typing on his computer. Elderly Florio is in the kitchen banging pots and pans like a madman preparing dinner. The TV is blaring the news anchor's voice, "In other news, today marks the 30th anniversary of the historic Supreme Court decision in June of 2015 making same-sex marriage legal throughout the United States."

Suddenly Elderly Florio screams after burning his finger, "Shit! Shit! Shit!" Jesse comes over to cuddle his lover Florio from behind. Jesse grabs the spoon and stirs the sauce, "Look, your

problem is that you try to cook everything on high. Sometimes things are better off just simmering.” Florio replies, “I’m gonna simmer you if ya don’t get out my kitchen”

Instead Elderly Jesse drops to one knee, “I have nervously been trying to find the right time to do this. But I don’t care anymore about finding the perfect moment. Because I don’t want to wait. I can’t. Will you marry me?” Jesse opens a ring box and holds it up for Florio to see. Florio replies angrily “You wait 30 years after it’s legal to pop the damn question!!”

It took a lifetime for Elderly Jesse to finally get past his fear of marriage. It was a fear triggered by Jesse’s childhood event - when he learned how his mom got the scar on her leg. But Jesse certainly isn’t the only person who has experienced a traumatic childhood event. One of the guys that Jesse dated, Ben, also had a childhood trigger that affected the course of his life.

We flashback to the childhood home of 8-year-old Ben. His unemployed dad Marvin is in the messy living room watching football with the guys. When his working wife Gretta comes home early she is upset to see the mess, “Can I come home once and not have the house look like a tornado ran through it? Marvin please. Where’s Ben?”

Young Ben has a very sweet, curious spirit. He stumbles down the stairs wearing a scarf around his head, a skirt, and mom’s high heel shoes. He’s also wearing makeup. Young Ben starts dancing, “Hi mom! I was playing in your room. Look at the dance I made up.” The room freezes in total silence. Marvin sprints forward and grabs Young Ben, “No! This is not happening. God damned pansy. You are not gonna embarrass me in front of my buddies!” Marvin rushes upstairs holding Young Ben and tosses him in the closet with one hand.

Gretta rushes past her husband and now stands between Marvin and Young Ben. Gretta vigorously defends her son, “Ben sweetie are you all right?” Young Ben cries, “I hate him! I just wanted to show you my dance. Why is he so mad at me?” Gretta takes charge of the situation, berates her unemployed husband, and sends him downstairs with his tail between his legs.

Eight years later teenage Ben comes home to find his father drunk and fooling around with a noose — apparently ready to commit suicide. But this time we see the whole scene. Marvin is drunkenly standing on a chair, Gretta's voice echoes in his head, “You're nothing but a worthless piece of shit!”

When Marvin notices Teen Ben he tries to minimize the situation, “It's just a stupid game Ben. See?” Marvin puts his head through the noose. Teen Ben notices that his dad had to tip-toe to reach his head through the noose. Marvin yells, “Just get out! And close the door! I'll be down in a...” Suddenly Teen Ben kicks the chair out from under his dad's toes. The noose snaps tightly around Marvin's neck. He struggles to speak, “You stupid piece of shit! Gimme that chair back!” Marvin hangs from the ceiling fan. Teen Ben backs away and huddles in the open closet. Marvin was Ben's first kill. End of Flashback.

Then we flash forward to a dark office with papers strewn everywhere. Newspaper clippings are taped to the wall. Adult Ben rushes in, quickly snatches newspaper clippings off the wall and tosses them in the trash can. He nervously peers through the window blinds. The police gather outside. Then suddenly multiple footsteps and noises are heard just outside the door, “This is the police! Open up!” No answer. “Break it down!” The door explodes open And several police officers rush in. “Hands up! Now!” Adult Ben is handcuffed, “Ben Anthony Lyons you are being arrested on suspicion of multiple murders.” End of flashback.

Ben's arrest was all over the news. Even Jesse was brought in for questioning. But he didn't know much aside from the childhood stories of trauma that Ben told him. Ben was eventually convicted of killing 7 men. One of them just two weeks after breaking up with Jesse. But not all childhood triggers have tragic future outcomes. Like Ben Jesse also experienced negative triggers, but Jesse ultimately turned one particular childhood trigger into a positive career choice.

Remember that moment when Veronica told Young Jesse how she got her scar? That moment of wanting to fix his mother's scar fueled a desire in Young Jesse to help others. That moment was Young Jesse's trigger. And it prompted him to become a Doctor.

Flashback to the scene when Adult Jesse grabs his overcoat, lab coat, keys, and coffee – and ignores the answering machine message from Ben on his way to work. After arriving at work the scene continues. Dr Jesse enters the doctors office with his lab coat on. An elderly woman sits on the doctors table with her arm loosely bandaged. Dr Jesse does a gentle examination, “Let's take a look. Ooo! OK. That's gonna require a few stitches. I'm gonna get the nurse in here to get you all cleaned up. And we'll take it from there. OK?” Dr Jesse treats each patient as though he is treating his own mother. End of flashback.

Back to the present, we are about to hear Elderly Florio's answer to Jesse's marriage proposal, "You wait 30 years after it's legal to pop the damn question! What took you so long?" Jesse is still waiting for the answer, but the answer, of course, is yes. It has always been yes. Florio reminisces, “I still remember the first moment when I knew I wanted to marry you. You were having a mid-life crisis. And I was in the middle of a studio recording session.

Flashback to the scene where Jesse calls Florio before cutting his dreadlocks. This time we watch the scene from Florio's perspective. Florio is inside the recording booth when his cell phone rings. The Studio Manager says, “Hey No phones in the recording booth.” Florio apologizes but still takes the call. Jesse's voice, “I'm thinking of chopping off my hair.” End of flashback.

Elderly Florio remarks, “In that moment I felt so special – because I was the first person that you thought to call.” Florio and Jesse continue talking. Florio makes a comment that the only bad thing about getting engaged is that he feels so old now. Everything is aching. And sometimes Florio has a hard time catching his breath. Dr Jesse comforts his new fiance. They kiss vigorously to celebrate their engagement – maybe too vigorously for octogenarians who are now a little dizzy.

The two waste no time getting married. The wedding hall has a beautiful spiral staircase covered with flowers. Elderly Jesse is standing at the bottom of the staircase below a stunning crystal chandelier. Jesse glances up to watch Florio beaming with pride as he makes his way down the staircase wearing an all white tuxedo. The wedding is perfect.

Wedding song plays: *"Like I Do"* - Don L. Castor – Journey album.

*"How many times do I gotta say it / How many times before you believe it's true /
There ain't no one whose gonna love ya like I doooo...
I know you said you heard it all before / But ya gotta believe me when I tell you /
Ain't no way, no how, no one nooo / that's gonna love ya like I doooo..."*

Four years later, Elderly Florio is in a hospital bed. He doesn't have much longer. A young nurse pushes Elderly Jesse's wheelchair through the hospital room door – time for his visit. Jesse does most of the talking now.

Jesse despairs that even as a doctor he can't fix Florio. But Florio responds, "How many times do I have to say it? I'm old. You can't fix old." Jesse rues that he waited too long to pop the question. But Florio chimes in, "Don't say that! Our relationship was just simmering for a while. It's been the best 4 married years of my life."

Elderly Jesse and Florio both laugh, hold hands, and then cough uncontrollably. They have overexerted again. Florio whispers, "I can't." Jesse replies, "I know Flo. Just rest."

(THE END)