

The Saint

by

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## The Saint

Cast:

POPS: Male, 60, dressed in a sweat suit.

BRIAN: Male, 30, dressed casually. He is Pops' son.

*Setting: An office in a sporting goods store. There are many certificates and pictures on the walls. Only set pieces are a desk with a computer and phone on it, and a couple of chairs.*

*Scene opens with knocking at the door of the study. Lights slowly come on. Pops is looking out of the window, stage right, not responding. Repeated knocking.*

BRIAN

*Off stage*

Pops, are you there? Pops? *(louder)* Pops? If you don't answer, I'm gonna knock the door down. Pops?

POPS

Leave me alone.

BRIAN

*Off stage*

I just want to make sure you're O.K.

POPS

You can hear my voice, can't you? I'm fine. Now leave me the hell alone.

BRIAN

*Off stage*

You haven't been answering your phone. Mom's worried. Let me in just for a minute.

POPS

*Slowly crosses to door*

All right. *(more knocking)*. Just a minute, Goddammit!

*Opens door*

BRIAN

You haven't left your office in two days. Come home with me.

POPS

I have everything I need right here. Bathroom, shower ... I even have the internet. Everything a man needs for survival.

BRIAN

You have to eat. Mom said she'd make French toast – you can't pass that up. Besides you need to be around people; family.

POPS

*Crosses to desk*

Told you I got the internet. And Twitter. Who needs people when you have Twitter ... I have tons of friends there.

BRIAN

You shouldn't be reading those. Those people are crazy.

POPS

Nah, they're great. Tell funny jokes. "How do you tell its bedtime at Pops' sports camp? When the big hand touches the little one."

BRIAN

Stop reading that crap.

POPS

*Picks up newspaper*

It's not just the tweets. The newspapers – they're even worse. "In these times there's nothing notable about a pedophile being indicted – It's a daily occurrence. But when the slime is a long-time employee of Pops Sporting Goods – the largest chain in the city – the reverberations will be everlasting. One can't imagine any decent citizen buying so much as a golf tee there for several years." (Throws newspaper across the room.) Goddammit. They're ruining my business!

BRIAN

It'll blow over. It's only been a couple of days since he was arrested.

POPS

Why are they us into it? We can't be responsible for all of our staff.

BRIAN

He did run the sports camps for you – you made him the face of the store.

POPS

Are you on their side now, Brian?

BRIAN

No! I'm just explaining why there's --

POPS

*Crosses to a framed certificate and points to it*

Just last year the city council made the opening of the camp "Pops sports camp day." We never turned away a kid who couldn't pay – hell, we lost money on the camps.

BRIAN

I know, but –

POPS

And now those same council members are making me a punching bag. Particularly that bastard Tomlinson -- saying the free tuition was bait for sexual prey. At the reception last year, he came up to me, and called me the Saint! But he said it like *(in a derogatory, mocking manner)* "The Saint." That's one thing that's killing me ... a scum sucking politician who never did anything unselfishly in his life, and he's laughing at me now.

BRIAN

That won't last forever. *(Long pause)* Um ... I know you said you didn't want to talk about it, but I really want to –

POPS

And I still don't. What's done is done.

BRIAN

But –

POPS

*Holds up his hands and glares*

How's Mom?

BRIAN

You know her – she’s a rock. But she’s worried about you. And, she’s upset that the press is still hovering outside the house.

POPS

Why are they there?

BRIAN

I guess they figure they’ll get some photos of you when you go home.

POPS

Those hypocrites. Last year they wrote about Mom – they said the highlight of the reception was the chocolate chip cookies she made.

BRIAN

Yeah, she was talking about making a huge batch of cookies and handing them out to the reporters outside.

POPS

Why the hell would she do that?

BRIAN

She was gonna lace ‘em with Ex-Lax.

POPS

*Laughs*

Sounds like Mom.

BRIAN

It’s really important to me – can’t I just ask you a couple of questions.

POPS

Why are the details so damn important?

BRIAN

They just ... are. PLEASE. I just need to know. (*Pops slowly nods*) The thing I don’t get ... when you fired him last summer, I mean, you must have known.

POPS

So what's your question?

BRIAN

Why didn't you turn him in to the police?

POPS

There were lots of things to consider. And, I just thought he was horsing around with those boys.

BRIAN

Did you read the transcripts of the things he did?

POPS

Lawyer told me not to – that I should just remember what I knew back then.

BRIAN

The boys said he'd shower with them, and then in the shower he would walk behind them, and –

POPS

I don't want to hear it. Why are you telling me this now? You said to stop reading those types of things.

BRIAN

He chained one boy around the ankle in his basement. That boy says he still has nightmares, weird tics, ... sometimes weeps uncontrollably.

POPS

What do you mean, weird tics?

BRIAN

Like anytime he feels stressed, he reaches down and scratches at his ankle, like the chain's still there.

POPS

Sounds like bull shit! You know how people embellish stuff. And a lot of those boys are now men – men with a potential lawsuit against me.

BRIAN

You had to know it was more than just horsing around!

POPS

The things he did ... I mean, the things they said he did to those boys ... he was never like that around his friends ... And he was my BEST friend. You were on little league teams he coached. And all that time together, we never saw anything.

BRIAN

You had some kind of information – or you wouldn't have fired him.

POPS

Before last year, it was all rumor (*Brian shakes his head*). If I fired people because of rumors, without proof, what kind of person would I be. (*beat*) Look, remember when you were 10 and you were playing at Donnie Marino's house – old man Marino came by after and claimed you stole that Cal Ripken baseball card from Donnie's dresser. He had no proof; just that the card was missing. He wanted to search your room – to interrogate you. Remember what I told him? I told him you were my son, and my son wouldn't do something like that. That's what loyalty is about.

BRIAN

That was only a baseball card.

POPS

Principle's the same. Stick by family; stick by friends. Turning him into the police, if he was innocent, would have destroyed everything – him, his family, and the business.

BRIAN

Instead he destroyed the lives of all of those boys!

POPS

How could I know whether he was guilty or not? Why didn't those boys go to the cops? They had the proof – I didn't. If you were ever molested as a boy, you'd have come to Mom or me. And then we would have gone to the cops. That's the way these things should be handled.

BRIAN

I don't know ... it's probably harder than that ... I mean, it must be hard, or they'd have gone to their parents. Maybe they tried, but couldn't ... But, YOU could have done something.

POPS

What about that Duke Lacrosse team a few years ago? Nancy Grace declares them guilty on national TV. Turned out it was all bullshit. But the team was destroyed, and the accused boys – THEY are scarred for life. And Nancy fucking Grace is still on the air.

BRIAN

But Dad, in this case, something did happen.

POPS

I KNOW THAT! I think about those kids every minute! It's easy to second guess now. And since when did you start calling me Dad. I'm "Pops" – to my employees, to mom, to you! Not dad. Don't you forget it.

BRIAN

How could I?

POPS

What does that mean?

BRIAN

Where were you when ... *(pause)* never mind.

POPS

Look Brian, don't think I don't appreciate all you've been doing – supporting mom, supporting me. I know it's not been easy.

BRIAN

You need to get out of this store – come home.

POPS

I just don't want to face anyone – even Mom. I feel like ... I feel like I let everyone down.

*Sobs*

BRIAN

*Long pause*

I don't remember ever seeing you cry before. Look, we all –

POPS

I wish I could go back in time. I didn't know. I DIDN'T KNOW! I couldn't believe a man, A FRIEND, could do anything like that. I couldn't turn him in, and I couldn't confront him. It took everything I had to fire him.

BRIAN

*Slowly crosses to Pops as if to hug him, but backs off*

It'll be O.K.; just give it time. *(Pause)* Can I tell you something?

POPS

Yeah.

BRIAN

I should have told you about this a long time ago, but I really didn't know how. It's hard to talk about.

POPS

What is it? *(crosses to Brian.)* Brian, tell me, what is it?

BRIAN

I did it.

POPS

Did what? What are you talking about?

BRIAN

When you were talking about Donnie's dad coming over here. I did it. I stole Donnie's baseball card.

POPS

What? Why'd you do that?

BRIAN

Donnie was talking about his collection – how his dad loved him because he bought him all those cards, and I saw the Ripken card, and ... I just took it. Then,

after what you said to his dad, I couldn't admit it. So the next day, I went down to the river and threw it in.

POPS

*Laughs*

I guess there's a statute of limitations on baseball card theft. Why'd you wait so long to tell me.

BRIAN

There were a few times I wanted to, but I figured it really didn't matter.

POPS

*Crosses to Brian, hugs him, Brian is resistant*

Thanks.

BRIAN

Thanks for?

POPS

Talking it out with me. You're right. I need to get out of this store – it's becoming a prison. Guess I'll go home and get some breakfast

*Crosses to exit*

BRIAN

Pops?

POPS

Yeah?

BRIAN

I *(pause)* ... Tell mom I'll be home in a few minutes.

*Pops exits. Brian walks over to the certificates, looking at them for a few seconds. Lights slowly fade, Brian starts weeping, while he reaches down and scratches his ankle.*

END OF PLAY