

Are You Okay?

By

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INT. KITCHEN - DAY

The jumbled mess of pots and pans litter what little counter space is left in this galley style kitchen. Dated, dusty pictures line the walls, and dinged manila tile on hide dust bunnies on the floor.

The sound of clanking and crashing can be heard in the next room, as MIKE, 32, stands at the counter, writing in a small composition book, with a phone to his ear.

MIKE

Hi yes, Martha? Hi this is Mike
Condon, I got your number from my
neighbor Susan Smith?

A pause as Martha speaks on the other line.

MIKE

I'm OK... well, actually I've been
having trouble keeping up with
things over here, But Susan speaks
very highly of you.. Told me to
call.

Another pause. The faint voice on the other line can barely be heard over the crashing and clanking in the next room.

Mike furrows his brow and brings his other hand to his open ear, in an attempt to muffle the background noise.

MIKE

I'll need a full clean over here.
Dishes, mopping, the works. Mhmm.

He rests his hand on his head.

MIKE

Yes, the bathroom will need extra
care. I'd really like you to come
tomorrow, will that do?

pause.

MIKE

Perfect. I'll be unreachable then,
but I'm leaving you a note as we
speak. OK. Thank you so much. Bye.

Mike hangs up the phone. Just then, a loud THUD can be heard in the next room, followed by a childish yelp.

A little voice calls out from the next room.

MAGGIE

Are you okay?

Aggravated, Mike lowers his head, and rests his pen on the paper. A sad look of defeat overcomes him. His deep wrinkles and noticeably sunken eyes shadow that of a man twice his age.

MIKE (VO)

She's always done that. It's the only sign of affection she's ever shown. Truthfully, I doubt that's even a sign of affection. More likely, she's just never quite understood what "are you okay?" even means. How can you communicate with someone who doesn't even understand what communicating is?

Mike sluggishly slides off the counter and slowly rounds the corner to the living room as the sound of crying grows louder.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Maggie, 10, stringy brown hair, sits on the ground, rocking, wailing, and holding her ankle. A bowl next to her lay on it's side, milk and cereal dripping down and soaking the carpet floor.

By the sound of her crying, you would have assumed she had a bone sticking out.

Mike calmly walks over to her and attempts to console her, and assess the damage.

MIKE

Let Daddy take a look.

Maggie wildly screams, lashes out, and slaps Mike on the face, cutting his cheek.

MIKE

Dammit!

He quickly pulls back and grabs his wound as Maggie returns to her huddled position on the floor.

He charges out of the room.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Mike quickly bolts through the bathroom door and turns on the lights. Boiling with anger, he tends to his wound in the mirror.

MIKE (VO)

I didn't sign up for this. All I wanted was a happy, healthy baby.. 10 years, 3 months, and 7 days ago, on a day reserved as a time of celebration, that dream suddenly became a nightmare. Maggie Jo Condon entered this world three and a half minutes before her mother left it. I've never felt such a loss in my life. But in the midst of all that sadness, all that sorrow, I had my Maggie.. My little, happy, healthy girl.

He opens the medicine cabinet and pulls out a band aide from the little cardboard box sitting on the top shelf.

MIKE (VO)

By her first birthday, Maggie had already been diagnosed with a severe form of autism. She's never been able to bathe herself, feed herself, or even dress herself... The only words she knows, "are you okay," She repeats like a parrot. Like a broken record. Those three little words, forever ingrained in my brain, for all eternity.

Mike closes the medicine cabinet.

MIKE (VO)

I hate to say it, but I've had enough.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Mike sits at the table, buried underneath mountains of bills. He sighs, leans back in his chair, and rubs his brow.

MIKE (VO)

I'm done with the doctors, done with the experimental medications, done with the unmanageable debt, I can't handle it anymore. I'm just... done.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Mike stands in the kitchen, in front of the stove, as Maggie stairs quietly at the table.

Mike looks up from his cooking, to his daughter.

MIKE (VO)

Some will call me a coward. Some will question how a Father could ever do that to his only child. A sick child, at that. But NONE of you will ever understand how hard it's been, or how hard I've tried.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mike tucks a now pajama wearing Maggie under her covers.

He opens a full bottle of medication from the bedside table, and fishes out a pill. Almost instantly, Maggie snatches the pill from his hand, and pops it in her mouth.

Mike leans over and attempts to kiss Maggie on her forehead. Maggie quickly turns over.

Mike sighs, turns off her light, and exits the room.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Mike stumbles through the doorway, bottle of whiskey in tow. He shuts the door behind him, and turns the lock.

After a few sloppy steps, Mike plops down on the toilet. He pulls out his composition pad from earlier and rests it in his lap.

Mike flips over to the page titled "For the cleaning lady." With tears in his eyes, he furiously continues to write.

MIKE (VO)

People will ask, how I could do this to Maggie, leave her as her mother did.. But Maggie doesn't love me, she doesn't love anything for that matter. In a brain as complicated and troubled as hers, there is no room for love... And if I had just one ounce of reason to believe otherwise, I wouldn't have done this.

He stops and takes a swig of his whiskey. Tears fall from his eyes, and stain the page.

MIKE (VO)

Tomorrow's Tuesday, and I know you will be by to clean the house. I will be unreachable by then, but please use extra care with me in the bathroom. I apologize for making what I assume will be, such a mess. Please make sure Maggie doesn't see me. I have left the number for child services on the fridge. Thank you. Goodbye.

Mike lowers his pen, and rips the note from the pad. He folds the note horizontally and scribbles "Mrs. Martha" on the front with a smiley face.

Then, he reaches for the handgun laying on the other side of the toilet.

Mike pulls back the hammer and sticks the cold metal barrell in his mouth. He closes his eyes.

Suddenly, a little hand reaches out from in front of him and tugs on his shirt.

Mike instantly opens his eyes to find Maggie, standing right in front of him, eye to eye. She whispers.

MAGGIE

are you okay?

Startled, Mike gasps, and jerks backwards. Maggie disappears. He quickly rubs his eyes, trying to make sense of what just happened. He scans the tiny bathroom, but Maggie is nowhere to be seen.

Mike quickly stands to his feet as the top of a pill bottle falls out of his coat pocket.

The little white plastic lid bounces on the ground as Mike looks down in horror.. He forgot to put the cap back on Maggie's pills.

furiously, Mike dashes out of the bathroom door.

MIKE

Maggie!

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mike rounds the corner of his daughters room, and flips on the light switch. His eye's instantly meet the now empty bottle of pills from earlier laying on it's side.

Then he see's his daughter.

White foam oozes out of Maggie's mouth as her eyes roll in the back of her head. Her entire body violently convulses, as Mike runs to her aid.

MIKE

Oh God, Maggie!

He pulls out his cell phone and with trembling hands, dials 911.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

Mark paces the small waiting room, hands interlocked behind his head.

Tears well in his eyes, when he see's the doctor round the corner. He blurts out.

MIKE

How is she?!

The doctor calmly speaks.

DOCTOR

She ingested the whole bottle, but the ambulance was just lucky enough to get here in time for us to pump her stomach. We're going to keep her here a couple days for observation, but it looks like she's going to be ok.

Feeling the biggest relief of his life, Mike exhales.

MIKE

Thank God. Can I see her?

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

A dim bedside lamp lights the room in a calm still light. Sitting next to his sleeping daughter, Mike whispers.

MIKE

I thought I'd lost you baby girl. I never thought about how horrible it would be to lose you.

He reaches out, and grabs hold of Maggie's still hand.

MIKE

I've been so selfish dear. I'm sorry. I'm not going anywhere sweetheart. You saved me.

Maggie's hand grips her fathers, this gesture catches Mike off guard. Surprised, Mike smiles and embraces his daughter as he cries.

A nurse from outside hears the crying from the hallway and pokes her head in the room.

NURSE

Excuse me sir, did you need anything from me? Are you okay?

Mike can't help but laugh through his tears. He nods.

MIKE

I'm okay, I'm okay.

FADE TO BLACK.