

SISTER CITIES

Estranged sisters come together after their mother's suicide.

INT. Living Room

AUSTIN

You're a fucking basket case.
Yeah, you're like an exquisite cocktail
of neuroses and hypertension.

CAROLINA

Yeah, well, then I guess I'm
just like Mom.

AUSTIN

Mom wasn't a basket case.

CAROLINA

No, you're right - she was sane,
because that's what all sane people do.
They wake up one morning and they say,
"Oh, today's a delightful day.
I think I'll just off myself."

AUSTIN

No, Carolina.
A basket case is someone who finds
out they have ALS and does nothing
as this disease slowly eats away
at their body until the only
functioning organ left is their brain.

CAROLINA

Mom had ALS?
(taking that in and laughing to herself)
Fuckin' fabulous.

AUSTIN

I'm ready to talk if you want
to talk about it.

CAROLINA

What is there to discuss?
Our mother planned this wonderful
sisterly reunion for her death and
didn't think to talk to us about it.

AUSTIN

She talked to me. It was her choice.

CAROLINA

Austin, use your common sense.
Overrule that choice.

AUSTIN

We are not in court.

CAROLINA

You know what? You should have called me.
And I would have talked to her.
I would have convinced her not to do it.
Suicide is fucking wrong.

AUSTIN

Is that the law or your conscience
speaking?

CAROLINA

You could have done something about
it and you did nothing.

AUSTIN

I did something.
I came home, and I took care of our mother.
I'm sorry that's not enough for you.

CAROLINA

It's not.

CAROLINA storms off up to their mother's body in the tub. AUSTIN sits
crying alone for a minute before CAROLINA returns back to the living
room.

CAROLINA

(rushes in upset/angry)

Why doesn't mom smell?
No really, why doesn't she smell?
That doesn't make any sense.
It's impossible for her body to
not do what dead bodies do.
They decompose.
If mom died last night and I
got in this morning then,
(it clicks)
No...
Oh God, Austin.
Please tell me you didn't.

CAROLINA stares at AUSTIN waiting for a response, AUSTIN begins to break but stays silent.

CAROLINA

Mom was still alive when you
called me last night?
(taking it all in)
So when did she die?

AUSTIN

11:30.

CAROLINA

Last night.

AUSTIN

(shakes her head no)
This morning.

CAROLINA

I got here at 11:30.

AUSTIN

(breaking down crying)
That's why mom doesn't smell.
It was so awful.

Mom's plan was going fine until
Carolina you showed up early.
The sleeping pills hadn't kicked in yet,
so I had to -
I had to help her go under in the tub.

CAROLINA
You murdered her.

AUSTIN
It wasn't like that.
She was -
Carolina, she was so weak.
She couldn't even function
And it was -
It was what she wanted.
She just - She needed my help.

CAROLINA
What you did - It's illegal.

AUSTIN
Turn me in.

CAROLINA
(begins to walk off to grab her phone)
That's the plan then.

AUSTIN
You had a minute to process this.
I had three years.

CAROLINA
You had no right doing what you did.

AUSTIN
Had you been here and seen what was
happening to her, you would have done
the same thing.

CAROLINA

Don't tell me what I would have done.
I would have never killed her.
You just played God.
You sit on some kind of a moral platform -

AUSTIN

(screaming)

- Shut up! Shut up!
Mom was dying.
And she gave me no choice.
I have to live with it!
(hyperventilating)
Oh, God!
You were not involved.
So go, be a judge Carolina.
You are off the hook.

CAROLINA storms off and AUSTIN remains, breaking down.