

POTUS BARACK OBAMA VOICE OVER: A topic that comes up between Bruce and I all the time is the message American culture sends to boys about what it means to be a man. It's a message that for all the changes that have taken place in our society hasn't really changed all that much since we were kids: the emphasis on physical toughness and suppressing your feelings, having success defined mainly by what you own and your ability to dominate. Rather than on your ability to love and care for others. The tendency to treat women as objects to possess rather than full fledged partners and fellow citizens.

The more we talked, the more obvious it became how these narrow distorted ideas of masculinity contributed to so many of the damaging trends we continue to see in the country. Whether it is the growing inequality in our economy or our complete unwillingness to compromise on anything in our politics. And maybe, Bruce and I realized, we're more attuned to these issues because of the complicated relationships we both have had with our fathers; flawed role models that we spent much of our lives coming to terms with.

[Soft key chords play]

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: You know, my dad was the kind of guy where I can remember one day I..I brought him a video camera. I said, "Dad, I want you to tell me the story of your life." It lasted for five minutes. *[laughs]*

BOTH: *[laugh]*

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: And... And he said basically nothing, you know. He simply was a... he was an unknowable man and... and... I have to believe with a great pension of secrecy. And I believe he got this from his father, and the only thing I knew about my grandfather was he disappeared for periods of time and returned home.

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: And nobody knew where he went?

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: No, no, no, you know?

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: Or what he was doing?

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: It was..It became a part of his life and my father carried on that tradition of secrecy about his own life. Really, when I think about it, well my father disappeared for a day a week and he was always on his own, and my mother was at home with us and I couldn't tell you where he went or what he did during that particular period of time. And... it was something that was handed down and something I had to work hard not to emulate.

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: You know, the interesting thing for me was not having a... my own father in the house. I have a stepfather for a while. Ah...

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: How long did...did you have the stepfather?

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: Yeah well... you know, I lived with him probably for four years ah from the age of 6 to 10. And he was a kind man, treated me well, taught me how to box and... Ah and then um—

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: What happened, what happened to him?

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: Well, he's Indonesian. We moved to Indonesia. We lived there for four years. At the age of 10, my mom, who's worried about my education, decides, "Okay, I need to send Barry," that was my nickname back then, "I need to send him back to Hawaii so he can get an American education." And so I come back to live with my grandparents in the States, and by that time my mother's marriage to my stepfather is already fraying a little bit. You know, they— they separate amicably. And ah, shortly thereafter, he actually has a liver ailment and dies very young.

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Ohhh...

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: Um and I remember sobbing, you know, when he died.

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Yeah...

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: Even though...

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Well, if you cried when he died—

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: Yeah, he had an impact...

One of the things of not having a... a father in the house was also... not seeing someone who had a craft or a trade or a profession that looked like something that I should emulate or do.

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: How old is your grandfather?

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: You know, he's... he's relatively young. Um I mean he was probably— because my mom was only 18 when she had me so he's probably 45 when I'm born, which means that when I'm 10... ah certainly by the time I'm a teenager he's probably not much older than I am now. Although he looked a whole lot older.

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Yeah.

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: He lived a whole lot older, right? And some of that is generational.

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: And you're having to look towards a 55-year-old white man you know—

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: Yeah, who just doesn't— there's...there's... there was nothing in him, and I loved him deeply and I still see parts of him in me, but there was nothing in him that I said, "Oh, that's what I should be." And he was somebody who at the end of the day wasn't satisfied with his life.

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Mhmm.

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: Because he had big dreams that were never really fulfilled. You know, he was— He was the kind of guy that would um...when I was 10, you know, on the weekends he'd sit down and he...he would've drawn out like the kind of house he would love to build.

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Yeah.

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: And... And he'd make sort of architectural drawings that he had looked up in some magazine on how to do it.

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Mhmm.

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: With great detail but the house never got built.

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Yeah.

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: And my grandmother was a practical one who, you know, she had worked her way up from being a clerk to becoming a— a vice president of the local bank, and ended up being our primary breadwinner in the family, which was – for that generation a source of resentment.

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Yeah, that was like my mom—

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: But it was unspoken. But I— But I say all this just because to get back to what we were talking about earlier, there wasn't really any obvious role models out there for me to follow. And the fact that I was in Hawaii where there were almost no African American ahh men you know, meant that you really had to piece this thing together on your own.

So now as.. As..as a teenager, I'm trying to figure out, "Alright, what does this mean...ah to be a man?" It means you got to be an athlete. Right? And so, basketball becomes my obsession. It means you got to chase girls, successfully or not. *[laughs]*

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: I'm not doing good so far but go ahead keep going. *[laughs]*

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: Right? You got— You got to do that. Um... how much beer you could consume?

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Oh man.

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: How... You know, how high you could you get?

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Yeah.

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: How were you in a scrap?

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Yeah.

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: Right? And that was sort of what the culture told you was how you became manly. Right? And..and and if you didn't have a father in the house, then a lot of it you're picking up just from popular culture. Right? So you're watching James Bond movies or you're watching, in my case, you're watching Shaft and Superfly and, especially, athletes. That becomes the model of cool and strength—

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Yeah. All of those things I think you're right. I mean, if I could've done any of those things you listed I would never have become a rockstar!

BOTH: *[laughs]*

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Never! People in my line of work were people who couldn't do any of those things, so they had to find an alternate route.

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: *[laughs]* To getting girls—

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: To do those things! To get the girls. To get loaded. To dominate. I mean, you know, and really, you know ... I had a...I had... the arc of my work life was a little funny because I was at my most popular, I feel, when I had an image that was least like myself, you know?

[Concert Footage of Bruce Springsteen & E Street Band performing 'Stand On It': "So you think you can take us, huh?]

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: I had a very alpha-male image...

[Concert Footage of Bruce Springsteen & E Street Band performing 'Stand On It': "So you think you're tough out here in California, huh?" (cheers)]

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Right in the middle of the Reagan-era '80s.

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: The Boss.

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Right. And that view of the United States as something powerful and domineering was resurgent...

[Concert Footage of Bruce Springsteen & E Street Band performing 'Stand On It': "Well Jimmy Lee was hookin' 'round the far turn of a funky southern Florida dirt track... He had mud caked on his goggles and a screamin' 350 stacked up on his back...]

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: So, it's funny how I look and see, in my own way, I f—pursued that archetype myself. I mean what's more domineering than coming out in front of a stadium of 50,000 people. It's...it's gla—

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: With some drums and some... smoke. *[laughs]*

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: That's—It's gladiatorial, alright? *[laughs]* It's a gladiatorial experience on some level.

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: Yeah.

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: So, I can't deny the aspect of that...that played upon me and that I took satisfaction in.

[Concert Footage of Bruce Springsteen & E Street Band performing 'Stand On It': "Come on boy.... Stand on it..." fades out]

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: The interesting thing is the degree to which that hasn't changed that much. Um...

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: No...

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: You read articles, I talk to my daughter's friends about boys growing up, and so much of popular culture tells them that the only clear, defining thing about being a man, being masculine, is you excel in sports and...and sexual conquest. And and that—

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: And violence.

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: And violence, right? Those are the three things, and— and and violence, if it's healthy at least, is subsumed into sports.

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Mhmm.

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: Later, you add to that definition: making money. Right? How much money can you make? And... there were some qualities of the traditional American male... that are absolutely worthy of praise and worthy of emulating. That sense of responsibility, meaning you're willing to do hard things and s—make some sacrifices for your family or for future generations, right?. The Greatest Generation showed that again and again. And that handling your business... that sense of responsibility... of being an adult.

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Mhmm.

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: Alright. Um...But there is...there is a bunch of stuff in there that we did not reckon with and— and now you're seeing with MeToo... part of what we're dealing with in terms of ah you know...women ah still seeking equal pay, part of what we're still dealing with ah in terms of domestic abuse and violence. Um... There was never a full reckoning—

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: No...

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: Of what our dads... who our dads were, what they had in them...

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Yeah...

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: How we have to understand that and talk about that. What lessons we should learn from it. All that kind of got buried.

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Yeah, but we sort of ended up being just '60s—

BOTH: versions...

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Of our dads.. *[laughs]*

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: Right? And—

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Carrying all the same— sexism.

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: Yeah— Yeah, carrying all the same baggage. All the same. All the same anger, all the same pent up frustrations—

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Yeah.

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: All the same messages. And there was one other thing that I know you can relate to that was part of it... was... you don't show weakness—

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: That's right.

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: You don't show emotion, you don't talk too much about how you're feeling.

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Right.

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: You know? "I'm handling my business."

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Now, I had that tempered by having a father who was pretty seriously mentally ill, and so in high school I began to become very aware of his weaknesses even though his outward presentation he was kind of a bulky guy, he was kind of bullish and...and totally confirmed, you know, to that archetype.

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: Right.

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Alright? But... things went pretty wrong in the last years of high school and in the last years that I lived with him at our house. And uh... my father was a funny guy. There was something in...in his illness or in who he was that involved a tremendous denying of..of of his family ties. And this created enormous problems for me as I got older because I couldn't make a family connection.

I always remember him complaining that if he hadn't had a family he would've been able to take a certain job and gone on the road, but it... it was a missed opportunity. And he sat there over that six-pack of beers night after night after night after night and that was his answer to it all, you know? So... we felt guilt. You know... And that was my entire picture of masculinity until I was way into my 30s where I began to sort it out myself because I couldn't establish and hold a relationship, I was embarrassed simply having a...a...a woman at my side.

[Soft keys build and play]

I just... I just couldn't... I couldn't find a life with the information that he'd left me, and I had..I was trying to over and over again.

[Soft keys play and fade out]

[AD BREAK]

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: All the early years I was with Patti, ahhh er if we were in public I had a... I was very, very anxious. And... I could never sort...sort that through and I realized, "Well, yeah, these are the signals I got when I was very young that a family doesn't strengthen you, it weakens you. It takes away your opportunity. It takes away your manhood."

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: "It... it it neuters you."

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: "It neuters you." Exactly.

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: "Constrains you."

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: And this is— this is what I carried with me for a long, long time. And I lived in fear of that neutering and so that meant you live without... without the...the love, without the companionship, without a home. And you have your little bag of clothes and you get on that road and you just go from one place to the next.

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: “And you’re free.”

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: You think you are.

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: That’s the notion.

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Right. You think you are. And I thought I was.

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: Mhmm.

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: For a long time I thought I was until I tried to have something... *[laughs]* beyond what was allowed. You know...Beyond what I was allowing myself. And... you don’t notice it when you’re in your 20s. Right around 30, something didn’t feel quite right. Did you have to deal with that at all?

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: You know.... So, there’s some stuff that’s in common and...and then there’s stuff that tracks a little differently. So, my father leaves when I’m 2.

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Yeah.

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: And I don’t meet him until I’m 10 years old when he comes to visit in a month in Hawaii.

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: What brought him to visit you eight years after he left? And then for—

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: So— So the story is...

[Soft piano chord plays]

My father grows up in a small village in the west... northwestern corner of Kenya. And my father goes from herding goats to gettin' on a jet plane and flying to Hawaii and traveling to Harvard and suddenly he's an economist—

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Right, right. Unbelieve— unbelievable.

[Soft piano chord plays underneath]

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: And... in that gap, in that leap from a...a really rural, agricultural society to suddenly him trying to pretend he's sophisticated, man-about-town, ah you know, I think something was lost there. Something slipped. And so... Although, he was extraordinarily confident and charismatic and, by all accounts, could sort of run circles around people intellectually...

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Right.

[Soft piano chord plays underneath and fades out]

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: Emotionally, he was scarred and damaged in all kinds of ways that...I... Er ah I can only retrace from the stories that I heard later because I didn't really know him. Anyway, when he's a student in Hawaii, he meets my mother. I am conceived. I think the marriage comes after the conception.

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Okay.

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: But then he gets a scholarship to go to Harvard and he decides, "Well, that's where I need to go." He's willing to have my mother and me go with him, but I think there's cost issues involved and they separate. But they stay in touch. He goes back to Kenya, gets a government job and he has ah another marriage and another set of kids.

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: When he comes back to visit you, he has another family—

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: He's got another family. You know, I think he and his wife are in a bad spot.

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: I see.

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: I think... I think what he's probably coming back for is to see my mother who still sees him when he was at that point in his life where everything was a possibility. And I think he was probably trying to court my mother to come back and have her grab me and all of us move back to Kenya, and my mother, who still loved him, was wise enough to realize that's probably a bad idea.

But I did see him then for a month. And... I don't know what to make of him.

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Mhmm.

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: Because he's very foreign. *[laughs]* Right? He's got a British accent and he's got this booming voice and he takes up a lot of space. And everybody kind of defers to him because he was just a big personality.

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Yeah.

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: And um... He's tryin' to sort of tell me what to do.

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Oh... ho ho.

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: You know? He's like, "Ana," that's what he'd call my mother. Her name was Anne. He—"Ana, I think that boy...He's watching too much t–television. He should be doing his studies." And... you know so, I wasn't that happy that he had showed up.

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Right.

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: And I was kind of eager for him to go.

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Ah.

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: Because I...I had no way to connect to the guy. You know, the guy is... you know, he's ... the guy is a stranger who's suddenly in our house. So, he leaves. I...I dont...I never see him again. We...we..we write. When I'm in college and I decide, "If I'm going to understand myself better, I need to know him better." So I write to him and I say, "Listen, I'm going to come to Kenya. I'd like to, you know, spend some time with you." He says, "Ah yes. I think that's a very wise decision you come here." And um... And then I get a phone call probably about six months before I was planning to go... or a year before... planning to go and ah he's been killed by a car accident.

But two— two— two things that I...I discovered later or or understood later. The the first was just how much influence that one month that he was there had on me—

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Amazing...

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: In ways that I didn't realize. Right?

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Yeah...

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: So, he actually gave me my first basketball. So...So—

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: WOW...

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: I'm suddenly obsessed with basketball but—

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: *[laughs]*

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: How'd that happen, right?

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Yeah...

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: Um, I remember that he... the...one thing we did together he decided to take me to a Dave Brubeck concert.

[Take Five by Dave Brubeck plays under]

Now, this is an example of why I didn't have much use of the guy because, you know, you're a 10-year-old American kid—

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: *[laughs]*

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: And some guy wants to take you to a Jazz concert.

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Take Five— you're not goin'—*[laughs]*

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: Take Five! So I'm sitting there and... I kind of don't know what I'm doing there.

[Take Five by Dave Brubeck continues to plays under]

It's not till later that I look back and say, "Huh. I become one of the few kids in..in my school who becomes interested in Jazz."

[Take Five by Dave Brubeck fades out]

And... when I got older my mother would look at how I crossed my legs or gestures—

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Right.

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: And she'd say, "It's kind of spooky."

But...but the second... The..the second thing that I learned was... in watching his... his other male children – who I got to know later when I traveled to Kenya and met some of them. I realized that, in some ways, it was probably good that I had not lived in his home. Because much in the same way that your dad had...was struggling with a bunch of stuff, he was struggling with a bunch of stuff and... it created chaos and destruction and anger and hurt and...and longstanding wounds in them that I just did not have to deal with.

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Well I think what's fascinating is the impact he had on you in one month. That's in one month.

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: Yeah.

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: The thing that happens is... when we can't get the love we want... from the parent we want it from... how do you... how do you create—

How do you get the intimacy you need? I can't... I can't get to him and I can't have him. I'll be him. That's what I'll do. I'll be him... I'm way into my 30s before I even have any idea that that's... that's my...my method of operations. I'm on stage. I'm in workman's clothes. I never worked a job in my life.

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: *[laughs]*

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Played freaking guitar my whole life *[laughs]*. I got twenty or thirty extra pounds on me from hitting the gym. My dad was a beefy— a beefy guy. Where'd that come from? You know... Why do I spend hours lifting up and putting down heavy things with no particular, for no particular reason whatsoever? Right? *[laughs]*

[Guitar picking plays under]

My entire body of work, everything that I've cared about, everything that I've written about draws from his life story. Not necessarily my own, secondarily. Primarily from his. You know, I thought I went down a lot of roads that did not lead me where I wanted to be. I don't think I got to where I wanted to be as a man until Patti was in my life and schooled me on some things I needed serious schooling on, *[laughs]* you know?

[Guitar picking fades]

[AD BREAK]

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Here is where I was lucky. 32, I go into a hardcore analysis. I don't have my children until I'm 40, so I'm eight years into looking into a lot of these things because what I found out about that archetype was it was fucking destructive in my life.

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: *[Laughs]*

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: You know? It drove away people I cared about. It kept me from knowing my true self. And... I realized, "Well, if you wanna..wanna to follow this road, go ahead. But you're going to end up, you're gonna end up on your own, my friend. You know? And if you want to invite some people into your life, you better learn how to do that."

And there's only one way you do that. You've got to open the doors and that archetype doesn't leave a lot of room for those doors to be open because that archetype is a closed-man. Your inner self is forever secretive and unknown, you know stoic, ah silent, ah not revealing your feelings. Well, you got to get rid of all of that stuff if you want something. If you want something... if you want a partnership. If you want a full family who you are going to allow and give the kind of sustenance and nurture and room to grow and be themselves and find their own full lives. You better be ready to let a lot of that go, my friend.

Let me add to the pain of that with this— *[laughs]*

[Springsteen strums guitar and blows harmonica]

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: [singing] Last night I dreamed that I was a child... Out where the pines grow wild and tall... I was trying to... make it home through the forest... Before the darkness... darkness falls...

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: There was a point where...

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: [singing] I heard the wind rustling...

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: I started to realize... you know...

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: [singing] through the trees...

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: That you wear a cross to bear, you know, my dad...

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: [singing] And ghostly voices...

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: You know, never really spoke to me through until the day he died. You know, he truly didn't know how.

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: [singing] I ran with my heart pounding...

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: He truly did not... He didn't have... He just didn't have the skills at all it seemed...

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: [singing] calling me in the night...

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: And once I understood how ill he was it... it— you know, it makes up for a lot of it... But it doesn't matter so much to a 6-year-old boy or a 8-year-old boy or a 9-year-old boy...

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: [singing] Shining 'cross this dark highway...

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: You're not going to have an understanding of what your father is suffering with...

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: [singing] where our sins lie unatoned...

[Springsteen strums guitar and blows harmonica]

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: You end up wrestling with ghosts. Um—

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: I guess that's... that's what we all do.

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: And... ghosts are tricky because if... if— if you are measuring yourself against someone who is not there then... you know, in some cases I think people uh

whose fathers aren't there and their mothers are feeling really bitter about their fathers not being there... Ah what they absorb is just... how terrible that guy was and you don't want to be like that guy.

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Right.

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: In my mother's case, she took a different tact, which was she only presented his best qualities—

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: That's interesting—

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: And not his worst. And... in some ways that was beneficial because I never felt as if I had some... flawed inheritance—

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Mhmm.

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: Some kind of something in me that would lead me to become an alcoholic or an abusive husband or—

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Right.

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: Any of that. Instead what happened was...I... I kept on thinking, "Man, I got to live up to this." Right?

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Yeah.

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: And so as I got older I think part of what happens to me— You know, Michelle always wonders sometimes, "Why is it that you just feel so compelled to just do all this hard stuff? I mean, why don't you— what's this hole in you that just makes you just feel so driven?"

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: *[laughs]* Yeah.

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: And... I think part of it was kind of early on feeling as if, "Man, I got to live up to this. I got to prove this. Maybe the reason he leaves is because he didn't think it was worth staying for me and no— I will show him that... you know, he made a mistake not hanging around cause...cause I was... I was worth investing in."

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: You're always trying to prove your worth.

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: Yeah...

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: A lifetime journey of trying to prove your worth to...

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: Somebody that's not there.

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Somebody that's not there anymore.

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: And— And and who may not have been thinking about you, not because anything to do with you, but because he's confused and he's lost and he's damaged in various ways, right?

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: But like you say, "We end up wrestling with ghosts." The trick is... you have to turn your ghosts into ancestors.

POTUS BARACK OBAMA: *[laughs]*

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: Ghosts haunt you. Ancestors walk alongside of you and provide you with comfort and a vision of life that's going to be your own. My father walks alongside of me as my ancestor now. It took a long time for that to happen.

[Electric guitar plays and fades out]

[Credits music fades in]

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This is Renegades: Born in the USA.

[Credits music fades out]

– End of Episode –