

SHAMELESS

by
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In Association with
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SHAMELESS

FADE IN:

EXT. CHICAGO UPTOWN - NIGHT

Blazing fire. Public bonfire. POPS and BANGS of fireworks. A MALE VOICE begins over luminous faces - adults and kids - that the CAMERA picks out of the crowd in the bonding glow.

FRANK (V.O.)

Nobody's saying this neighborhood's the Garden of Eden, hell some people say God avoids this place altogether, but it's been a good home to us, to me and my kids, who I'm proud of; 'cause every single one of them reminds me a little bit of me. Fiona, my rock, a huge help.

FIONA, attractive, but not gorgeous, eighteen, laughing.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Has all the best qualities of her mother -- except she's not a raging psycho bitch.

QUICK-CUT to Fiona with two Kleenexs and two kids, put's a tissue to each kid's nose and orders "Blow!". They do.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Lip, smart as a whip. Straight A's and the honor roll. And people thought when I dropped him on his head it was a bad thing.

LIP, sixteen, handsome, athletic, drinking a brown-bagged Pabst tallboy, no doubt lifted from some 7-11.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Boy's definitely going somewhere --

QUICK-CUT of Lip, charging STRAIGHT AT and over us, followed by two Chicago cops, in heated, sweaty pursuit.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Ian, industrious, conscientious, ambitious, *incredible* work ethic.

IAN, fifteen, smiling, a little goofy, instantly likeable.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Don't have a *clue* where he got that from. I'm no biologist, but he looks a bit like my brother, he and the ex were close. Wants to be a paratrooper.

QUICK-CUT of Ian in ROTC uniform, seriously working a wooden rifle in close-order drills on a weedy playground.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Girls are going to love this guy. Carl... Carl...

CARL, eleven. Shaved head, also drinking from a brown bag -- here's hoping there's a Fanta Orange hiding in there.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I don't really know that much about Carl... Oh, he's got *beautiful* hair, fetches top dollar at the wig shop. We don't tell the wig lady he's a magnet for lice. Debbie! Sent by God, a total angel, don't know what we'd do without her.

DEBBIE, ten. Hooting and hollering at the fire, holding her toddler brother, LIAM, in her arms.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Raises money for UNICEF year-round, some of which she turns in.

QUICK-CUT of Debbie, sitting on her bed, shaking change out of an upside down, much-used, orange UNICEF box.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Liam, gonna be a *star* --

QUICK-CUT to the toddler Liam, wearing a diaper and nothing else, coming straight at us down a hallway, in the midst of a SCREAMING, head-banging TANTRUM.

FRANK (CONT'D)

-- once Medicare agrees to cover the Ritalin.

(and)

Kev and Veronica, *fantastic* neighbors!

KEV, thirty, handsome, none too bright, arms wrapped tightly around VERONICA. Thirty-four, black, sexy, vivacious, tank top at least two sizes too small.

FRANK (CONT'D)

There's nothing they won't do for
each other...or too each other.

QUICK-CUT to Kev pulling a red ball out of his mouth,
Veronica behind him in leather Catwoman mask. He grins.

KEV

Didn't hurt half as much as I
thought it would... Your turn.

FRANK (VO)

Love to fuck. I never realized how
little sex I was having 'til V and
Kev moved in next door. And me...

Finally, a face to go with the voice. Forties, glassy-eyed.
Long, unkempt hair, Army surplus jacket, tattered Van Halen
World Tour '84 T-shirt. Hoisting his sixth or seventh 40 of
the night as SIRENS build in the distance.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Frank Gallagher, father, teacher,
mentor. Captain of our ship. We may
not have much, but the kids can all
think for ourselves, for which they
have me to thank, and all of us, to
a man, know first and foremost the
most vital necessity in this life --
we know how to party!

The SIRENS are closer now. The crowd finally begins to
disperse, Frank among the last to go. As the CAMERA pulls
away from him, we SLOWLY REVEAL - not a bonfire - but a
burning abandoned car! And they weren't fireworks but
exploding spray cans kids have been tossing into the blaze.

Fire engines and Chicago PD cars speed onto the scene as the
local community scatters to avoid arrest leave, flipping the
finger and yelling obscenities at the killjoy cops as we --

CUT TO:

INT. GALLAGHER HOUSE - MORNING

Fiona, in the mirror of the one cramped bathroom. T-shirt,
underwear, no make-up. She runs a quick brush through her
hair, stares at herself in the mirror, not great, but it's
gonna have to do. Shoves her way out into the narrow hall --

BANGS on a door covered with *Machine Head* and *Seether*
posters, shoves it open to REVEAL her three sleeping brothers
packed into a room the size of a large closet --

FIONA

7:15 monkeys!

Doesn't wait for a response, but the boys are stirring. On to the next door, this one covered in Zac Efron and Jonas Brothers. BANGS again, pushes it open to REVEAL --

Debbie, already up and dressed, pulling Liam from the crib that butts up against Debbie's small bed and neat, tidy desk.

FIONA (CONT'D)

7:15!

On to the next door, doesn't bother to knock, it's her room, the smallest yet, barely big enough for her bed. No closet, only an overflowing, makeshift clothes rack. Wiggles into jeans, digs around on the floor for boots as we --

CUT TO:

INT. GALLAGHER KITCHEN - MORNING

Fiona puts king-size Costco boxes of Kix and Corn Flakes on the table, a stack of bowls, a fistful of spoons. Moves to the fridge for the milk as she checks the calendar on the door -- it's covered in notes and reminders of what needs doing, chores, school events, bills. Her finger finds today and a scrawled "*Electric*" emphatically underlined.

FIONA

Shit...

Puts the milk carton on the table as Lip wanders in, half-asleep. Pulls a small box out of a cupboard, grabs a bill off the fridge and tosses it in the box along with some money.

Deftly retrieves the nearly empty milk carton from Lip before he can pour it on his cereal, drops the box in front of him.

FIONA (CONT'D)

Electric...

She heads for the sink fills the plastic milk carton with water from the tap as Ian wanders in, takes his seat next to Lip. Lip drops cash into the box, passes it on to Ian.

LIP

Electric...

Carl appears sleepily as Fiona plops the now nearly full carton of watered-down milk back onto the table. Lip takes it without missing a beat, pours it on his cereal, hands the milk to Ian, as Ian hands the box to Carl.

IAN
Electric...

Carl stares at the box as Debbie arrives, Liam on her hip. Debbie straps Liam into a beat-up highchair and heads for the coffee on the counter, pouring herself a big mug. Carl hands Debbie the box without having put anything in.

CARL
Electric...

Debbie studies the bill, checks the money in the box, pulls a few carefully folded dollars from her small purse. Fiona moves to Carl, a quick perusal of his Foo Fighters T-shirt --

FIONA
No.

She snaps her fingers at him, motions for the shirt.

FIONA (CONT'D)
You've got a Happy Meal on the front of that shirt.

Food stains. Carl pulls it off reluctantly as Ian pulls a slip of paper from his pocket.

IAN
Field trip, I need Dad's signature.

Debbie takes it. The boys are shoving cereal into their mouths as if it's their last meal. Fiona turns Carl's dirty T-shirt inside out.

FIONA
Arms up...

Slips the now inside-out T-shirt back onto Carl as Debbie pushes the permission slip back to Ian, signed. Lip notices the signature as it passes, is impressed.

LIP
That's really getting good...

DEBBIE
I need something for show and tell.

LIP
Mr. Yublonski left his prosthetic leg out in his yard again.

IAN
I've got some spunky boxer shorts
in my room.

Fiona WHACKS Ian on the back of the head, throws a load into the washer, tosses in detergent, then inexplicably jams a chair under the washer door handle and starts the machine.

FIONA
How much are we short?

She means the box. Debbie's already figured it out.

DEBBIE
Eighteen dollars and thirty cents.

LIP
I'm tutoring after school, should
be able to kick in ten more.

IAN
Pay day at the store is Friday.
(grins)
Carl put in anything?

DEBBIE
No.

IAN
(to Carl)
You're almost twelve, you're gonna
have to start chippin' in.

LIP
A real job, not just dipping into
the collection plate at St. Tim's.

Fiona gathers up the cereal, milk. It's almost time to go.

FIONA
I'm filling in for Candi again
today, I can cover the rest.

LIP
Extra kraut on mine.

IAN
No onions, only relish.

FIONA
It's a day game, someone's going to
have to stay home with Liam.

The boys stand, head for the sink with their bowls, pulling on jackets, grabbing backpacks.

LIP
Calculus test and tutoring.

IAN
I'm working after school.

Fiona looks to Carl, he stares back blankly. That isn't going to work. A frustrated Debbie's the last one standing.

DEBBIE
Show and tell?

Fiona thinks, then reaches across, pulls Liam from the highchair, STICKS him in Debbie's arms.

FIONA
Show them the birthmark on his back. It looks like Latvia.

CUT TO:

EXT. GALLAGHER'S HOUSE - DAY

Lip, Ian, Carl and finally Debbie with Liam jammed into a baby backpack, legs and arms flapping as she runs, all bombing out of the house, scattering in different directions.

CUT TO:

INT/EXT. US CELLULAR FIELD - DAY

Fiona walks briskly along the concourse of the White Sox's home field passing legions of fans filing in, makes her way to an *All Star Stand* - beer, nachos, and of course, hot dogs. Swings under the counter, smiles at one of the women already working as she grabs an apron and Sox cap from the rack.

WOMAN
No Candi again?

FIONA
Bobby's got a bail hearing.

WOMAN
That kid's going to be the death of her. What is it this time?

FIONA
Tried tagging a cop car, with the cops still in it.

Fiona steps up to the counter, smiles at a customer. A middle-aged man in an A-Rod jersey and NY cap.

FIONA (CONT'D)
Yankees, huh? No need to buy a beer, you'll be wearing one soon enough. What can I get ya, sir?

CUT TO:

EXT. SHEILA'S HOUSE - DAY

Lip approaches a small house. A middle aged woman, SHEILA, opens the door microscopically. The outside world scares her. But she's happy enough at the moment.

LIP
I'm here to help Karen study for her mid-term.

SHEILA
Okay. Take your shoes off.

LIP
What?

KAREN'S MUM
I'll get you a plastic bag.

Which is a bit baffling for him, but what the hell.

INT. SHEILA'S DINING ROOM - DAY

We start on Lip's white tube socks, shoes in a plastic A&P bag hanging on the back of his chair next to his backpack. He's seated at a small dining room table drawing a diagram. KAREN sits opposite. Sheila in the attached kitchen. Karen whispers to Lip.

KAREN
She's got a thing about people bringing dirt into the house.

LIP
Right.

KAREN
Agoraphobia.

LIP
Oh, right.

The whole room is invested with clown-motif objects - tablemats, clocks, ornaments - clowns everywhere. Karen studies Lip as he confidently completes a mnemonic diagram.

LIP (CONT'D)

If you remember it like this, the formula's visible.

(turns it around to her)

Midget naked witch bending over and she's crying 'cuz she's lost one ear and she can't find it.

It's a tiny 'm' with a big 'V' in it's own box to denote 'squared'. He's clever. She looks grateful.

KAREN

How come you know all this?

LIP

Just something I like to fool around with.

KAREN

Like a hobby?

LIP

More like a plan.

KAREN

Physics?

LIP

Sure.

(takes the paper back)

Have you done Newton's First? I've got a great one for that.

He starts another diagram. He loves this, the science but showing-off for her too. She's smitten, physics excites her.

LIP (CONT'D)

'Every Body Continues In A State Of Rest Or Uniform Motion Unless Acted Upon By An External...

He lifts his head to address her...

LIP (CONT'D)

...Force'.

She's not there. Lip's horror when he finds Karen rummaging around his crotch under the table. Quietly:

LIP (CONT'D)

Hang on. Karen, come on, I'm not...

Urgent thought - where's her mom? Right there, visible on the other side of the kitchen island, making dinner, TV on.

LIP (CONT'D)

Karen, I... I'm still going to have to charge you.

Her head peeps curiously from under the table cloth.

KAREN

Charge me?

LIP

This isn't charity - I get paid for tutoring.

KAREN

(smiles/then)

I know, science just turns me on.

A beat. Considers it for a moment, then:

LIP

Okay.

She vanishes under the table cloth again. He fidgets in fits of bliss, keeping an eye on her mom's whereabouts.

SHEILA IN THE KITCHEN, obliviously, ritually following instructions from Rachel Ray on the counter-top TV.

Lip stifles squeaks and grunts as he heads towards orgasm.

CUT TO:

INT. GALLAGHER HOUSE BOYS' BEDROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Lip drops his spunky undies, drags on a clean pair, slips his jeans back on. The second he stuffs his soiled shorts down to the bottom of a laundry sack. The --

Door flings open. Fiona in a new dress, price tag still dangling from the back, her hair in a towel, prowling the boys' bedroom for -

FIONA

Lip, can I borrow your deodorant?

LIP

I'm using Ian's.

She's about to leave then reaches for the laundry sack.

FIONA
If I stick this in the washer
before I go out, will you keep an
eye on it?

He snatches the laundry sack back.

LIP
Do it tomorrow.

FIONA
God, it stinks in here.

LIP
There's a T-shirt I need.

FIONA
You're like chimps, you three!

VERONICA
Fiona!

Veronica appears in the doorway. She looks great, short skirt, boots, low-cut blouse -- way too small, of course.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
We need to go if we're gonna get a
ride to the club.

FIONA
Five minutes.

Lip deftly retrieves his spunky undies, only seconds before Fiona turns back to reclaim the laundry sack. Veronica spies the price tag still hanging off the back of Fiona's dress. Goes to yank it off.

FIONA (CONT'D)
No...This has to go back tomorrow.

Veronica tears it off anyway.

VERONICA
I have a tag gun, we can put it
back on later.
(a tag gun?)
From when I worked at TJMaxx.

FIONA
(to Lip)
Hot dogs downstairs. Nachos too.

And they're gone. Lip sags with relief. Scouts the room for a hiding place for the undies - then shoves the shorts behind the dresser. But dislodges something that drops to the floor. He curses, fishes under the dresser to retrieve -- a study folder, decorated with an (obviously) teenage male's collage of Fergie's butt, Keira Knightly, pouting, etc. Somebody's secret porn stash? One of his brothers' secret cache of...

Lip's face freezes as he unveils the contents -- naked cowboys kissing?! Each OTHER?! Then cops! Sailors! -- plus every other staple fantasy of your gay porn stash. He barely has time to cope with the horror of it all, before...

Footsteps coming upstairs. Lip panics, conceals the study folder behind his back. Then - PING! -- in bolts his brother, Ian - a year younger, less 'worldy' than Lip... or so Lip had always thought... until he's suddenly watching Ian hurriedly strip out of school clothes, (shirt, shoes), into sneakers and a ratty, favorite T-shirt.

IAN

Hey...

LIP

Hey...

As Ian stretches his arms through the sleeves, Lip, across the room, is suddenly framing the guy against the huge posters over Ian's bed - a horny Fergie poster and a Marine recruiting poster, three incredibly handsome Marines in dress blues with shiny phallic sabers, rigidly at attention.

Lip's shock. His brother's GAY?!!!

CUT TO:

INT. DOWNTOWN NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Fiona, revelling in the heat and chaos, having a fantastic time dancing with her friends.

STEVE, a young guy (23), standing on the balcony above, looking down at her. He's conspicuous in these surroundings because he's alone. All around him, groups of friends are making the most of it. He's just a silent observer. Not lonely, not unhappy. Just one of those guys who can look happy in his own company.

His eyes focus on a GIRL dancing next to Fiona. Red hair, big tits, obvious. Then watches Fiona herself, who doesn't see him. Her eyes are anywhere but on Steve. She's actually eyeballing a cruising SUITOR, who's dancing closer and closer to her. The Suitor approaches, is now dancing with her.

ANGLE - Steve smiling nevertheless. Then something goes wrong. We hear an almighty YELL. Fiona's yell --

FIONA

Hey!

Steve sees Fiona hit the deck, on her ass. Her 'suitor' is actually a thief who does this often - swoons a girl with his dancing eyes, then takes off with her purse. Which is where we see the last of the guy - bolting towards a fire exit, where an associate waits to jam the door open for him.

FIONA (CONT'D)

My purse! Bastard has my purse!!

Steve reacts like a true film hero. Spectacular dive across the dance floor, skids on his belly, misses the thief by an inch and ploughs into a table of drinks. This stuns onlookers for all the wrong reasons - how CRAPPY was that!?

EXT. DOWNTOWN NIGHTCLUB PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Fiona chases the suitor outside, but the thief and his cronies escape in an anonymous sedan, only illuminating their headlights once the license plate's too distant to read.

FIONA

Assholes!

Other clubbers have emerged to witness this, Steve too - eventually. He's brushing glass and debris off his clothes.

STEVE

Sorry.

Veronica pushes through the crowd, glowing with admiration for Steve's stunt.

VERONICA

That was fucking incredible. Truly, honestly, one of the most heroic things I've ever seen.

Steve beams with gratitude. She turns to Fiona.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

You see him?

(to Steve)

Stupid. But, man...! Heroic!

Fiona smiles, she saw it.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

My god, you're bleeding.

She's right, his forehead. He touches it. Smiles, his intro:

STEVE

Steve. I was gonna offer to buy you
a drink anyway.

Veronica's nodding consent on Fiona's behalf, which somehow communicates how much she'd like her friend to find a guy this nice. Which is also occurring to Fiona as a decent compensation for this shitty night out. And, in the magic of this moment, they turn back towards the club, until --

BOUNCER

(blocking them)

Where do you think you're going?

VERONICA

Are you serious?

BOUNCER

Where's his stamp?

VERONICA

His what?

(to Fiona, outraged)

Can you believe this fucking joker?

(to Bouncer)

If you were doing your job, he
wouldn't have had to.

BOUNCER

No stamp, no re-entry.

VERONICA

Is he for real?

(to Bouncer)

Fat useless prick!

BOUNCER

Fine. You're all barred.

FIONA

For what?

BOUNCER

(trumps up a charge)

Drugs.

FIONA
He probably let 'em get away
because he knows 'em.

BOUNCER
(alarmed/it's true)
Hey, shut up, skank.

STEVE
Watch your mouth.

BOUNCER
Or you'll be doing - what?

Bouncer looks ready to deck Steve, who is no match, not in a million years. Fiona steps in.

FIONA
Forget it.
(to Veronica)
Lets get a cab.
(to Steve)
Thanks. Thanks anyway.

Steve stands down, waves delicately to the girls. The Bouncer at ease. Then Steve suddenly spins and whacks the fat prick. One hard punch, taking us and the Bouncer by surprise.

Then runs like the wind across traffic. The Bouncer takes off after Steve but doesn't stand a chance, Steve's fast.

ANGLE - Veronica and Fiona, shocked and amused, cheering Steve on. The Bouncer won't risk the traffic. Gives up.

Fiona and V circumnavigate the Bouncer's return to continue in Steve's direction, howling abuse at the Bouncer from a safe distance. Steve taunts the guy and flashes his ass for the howling amusement of his newfound allies as we --

CUT TO:

INT. GALLAGHER BOYS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ian and Lip tucked in adjacent beds for the night. Lip is quietly struggling with a task he's dreading to complete. But he knows Ian's not quite asleep yet, so --

LIP
I got a hummer today.

Ian spools back that statement, hinges up on one arm, smiles with amusement at this bullshit.

IAN
What's the law on sex with pets?

LIP
From Karen Jackson.

IAN
No way!

LIP
She got a C in Physics. Needs a B.

Lip slips out of bed and swaggers to the dresser by the window to get away from the sleeping Carl in the bed closest to the door. Carl's growling sinusitis and the soundproof earplugs he wears as a routine, have protected him from dozens of conversations this revealing. It's Carl's choice - eavesdropping on the real world is a hobby he tends to avoid.

Ian joins Lip at the window, starts rolling a joint, studying Lip to gauge the truth.

IAN
You wouldn't have waited this long to tell me.

LIP
Five hours?

IAN
You're full of shit.

Lip shrugs a 'couldn't care less'. Strategic pause.

LIP
You ever had a knob-job?

IAN
(can't help a chuckle)
Once or twice...

LIP
Didn't hear you rushing to tell me.

Ian shoots a tantalizing grin. His secret.

LIP (CONT'D)
If we tell each other everything...

Only now does Ian realize he's been expertly ambushed by this conversation. Lip stares hard.

LIP (CONT'D)
 'less you got it sucked by a guy?
 (malevolent smile)
 ...for instance?

Ian is suddenly over-exposed. Lip reaches behind the dresser for the porn, throws it to Ian. They hold a stare, until Ian shrinks back to his bed, tucks the porn pointlessly under his mattress. Tries crying quietly, but squeaks muffled distress.

Lip pans the room back to their third male sibling, Carl, to make sure he's still sound asleep in his bed.

Lip envies Carl's ignorance. UNTIL... raucous noise from downstairs, voice, cackling, music --

INT. GALLAGHER LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Music pumping out at indecent volume from the stereo. Fiona comes from the kitchen with a bowl of hot water.

FIONA
 No kidding, Steve. You're dead if
 he ever lays eyes on you. And I
 mean...DEAD.

Veronica handles a sterile trauma kit used in ERs - swabs, tweezers, saline, removes bits of glass from Steve's scalp.

VERONICA
 I nearly peed myself when you hit
 him... well I did a little.

She and Fiona laugh hysterically at this indiscretion. Steve adjusts as Gallagher kids start appearing from upstairs - Debbie, then Lip, then Carl. All here to investigate the din.

STEVE
 How many of you live here?!

VERONICA
 Not me, I'm one-down. But the old
 guy next door died in March, which
 I guess technically makes us next
 door neighbors.

CARL
 (droll)
 Died March, found August.

Steve grimaces at the image, which somehow leads him to --

STEVE
So you're a nurse, Veronica?

VERONICA
Used to be.

FIONA
(amused)
Lying bitch!

LIP
She worked in housekeeping at Cook
County. Bedpans and shit sheets.

VERONICA
Fine! But I was offered a place in
the Nursing School.

FIONA
Fine, but it never happened.
(to Steve)
They fired her for selling medical
supplies on eBay.

VERONICA
Will you shut up! We don't even
know him.
(to Steve)
Sit still.

STEVE
I will. If you quit sticking your
tits in my back.

Veronica jabs him with tweezers. Steve does a cartoon yelp,
making the kids laugh. Steve turns to Carl.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Steve, by the way.

CARL
Carl.

LIP
Lip.

Debbie's too shy.

FIONA
Debbie.

STEVE
How you doin, Debbie?

Ian slides into the room, pointedly avoiding Lip's gaze.

FIONA

Plus Ian.

Ian nods, subdued.

STEVE

Hey Debbie, why do they call him Lip?

Debbie doesn't respond, so Lip does.

LIP

A) You smell like a drunk. B) You're not as funny as you think you are, and C) you decked a bouncer so your days are numbered, which is probably why - D) I've already forgotten your name.

STEVE

So...Lip?

DEBBIE

His real name's Phillip.

A GUST OF COLD AIR as Kev (Veronica's husband) arrives from outdoors, just finished work, carrying his jacket.

KEV

(to Veronica, irritated)
You've got my keys.

Kev clocks the semi-naked stranger.

KEV (CONT'D)

What's goin' on in here?

VERONICA

This is Steve. Decked the bouncer at Purgatory to defend my honor...

FIONA

My honor.

Kev skeptically scans Steve's under-whelming physique.

KEV

He decked a bouncer with that?

VERONICA

Steve's a fully-fledged taxpayer so we're taking good care of him.

KEV

Which bouncer?

FIONA

Ready for this...? Jimmy Clifton.

KEV

(impressed)

Jimmy Cl... Jesus, put it there!

(shakes Steve's hand)

Respect and congratulations, man!

STEVE

(bravado shrug)

Kind of guy just stands there...

KEV

You'll be his third conviction...

(to Veronica)

...third or fourth?

(back to Steve)

After that much practice, he shoulda got the hang of Murder One. No more fuck-ups - like, leaving his Pops still breathin'!

STEVE

His own father?

KEV

(cackling)

Five YEARS, over an '87 Chrysler with two-hundred thousand miles on the dash! Fuckin' CHRYSLER!

(cackles again)

Re - SPECT!

Steve's blood pressure is sliding at his prospects as Fiona claps efficiently toward the kids.

FIONA

Okay, come on guys, time for bed!

Up the wooden hill.

Veronica starts collecting her medical supplies as the Gallagher kids peel off for the stairs.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHICAGO STREET - NIGHT

Veronica and Kev stroll the short journey home, sharing the weight of her hefty bag of medical supplies. Kev spots Steve's BMW in the street.

KEV
That's his?

VERONICA
Yeah. Well, company car.

KEV
Kinda company?

VERONICA
Internet start-up?

KEV
Earning - what?

She finds the question annoying, checking Kev's envy as competitive male.

VERONICA
Coupla mil a year. Lost both parents by the age of ten, high school drop-out. Got a job as a janitor at a small tech firm. Within a year he owned it, made his first billion by twenty. Two jets, controlling interest in the Red Wings... ten thousand employees kissing his ass. Yes boss, no boss!

Kev's feeling belittled by the story she's conjured up.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
So why shouldn't he ride around in style?

Kev catches her smirking to herself.

KEV
You just made that up?

She chuckles at his rank gullibility.

KEV (CONT'D)
Why do you DO that?

VERONICA
 (cackling now)
 Your face!

KEV
 How's that f... It's not funny!

She's laughing all the more.

VERONICA
 How the fuck would I know what he
 earns, you twisted dumb prick!?

Kev stops dead.

KEV
 I am NOT a dumb prick.

VERONICA
 Kevin, I met the guy an hour ago!

KEV
 Take BACK dumb prick!

VERONICA
 (princess-speak)
 Hi, nice to meet you, I'm Veronica.
 What's your pre-tax income?

KEV
 Didn't mind watching the guy take
 his shirt off, though, did you?

So there it is - amoebic, homosapien jealousy.

VERONICA
 Not one bit! `fact, if you hadn't
 walked in, Fiona and I were gonna
 knock him down and tag-team him.

With which, she grabs Kev's butt with hardcore affection -
 she's flattered by his jealousy.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
 Now I guess I'm stuck with you.

Kev grins back with a horny glint as they push through their
 gate towards their house.

KEV
 Fiona tag-team? Is that an option?

As she slaps his ass again, HARD, we --

CUT TO:

INT. GALLAGHER KITCHEN - NIGHT

Steve alone, checking handwritten messages on scraps of paper stuck to the fridge door: 'Lip, DENTIST Monday!' 'Debbie, bring your jacket home from school'. Plus stuff like: 'Who's eating all the Frosted Flakes?' 'Not me!' 'Yes you are Ian' 'Fuck off, Debbie' 'Quit swearing!' 'She started it!' etc.

On the table are several carry-out trays of still wrapped hot dogs from the ballpark and a few mostly eaten piles of congealing nachos. Fiona arrives from upstairs.

STEVE

All quiet up the 'wooden hill?'

FIONA

As quiet as it ever gets.

She's more self-conscious now it's just the two of them. Starts cleaning up the hot dog mess, which looks incongruous in her nightclub outfit. Steve watches her.

STEVE

Straight answer -- if I hadn't busted my skull for you, would you have looked at me twice?

FIONA

Who's saying I looked twice?

He shrugs this off with a grin. She looks back.

STEVE

You did then!

He catches her passing him. Goes in for a kiss. She lets him. His hands roam under her blouse. She likes it.

FIONA

(off the window)

We can't.

He reaches for the lightswitch, turns it off. She chuckles at his decisiveness, so Steve knows he's not way off-base here.

STEVE

Ninety percent of the world's problems are caused by tiny words that come in pairs.

Opens his belt. Starts undoing his jeans. One button.

STEVE (CONT'D)
We're healthy and happy but when
anybody asks, we say 'not bad'.

Two buttons.

STEVE (CONT'D)
When I saw you dancing the first
time - about a month back at the
Hard Rock - I was desperate to buy
you a drink. Normally, I'm shy, so
I told myself 'I can't'.

Three buttons.

STEVE (CONT'D)
'She wouldn't', 'We won't'. Then
tonight, you're there again. All
the indications being that I'm
getting a second chance to make a
good impression.
(the last button)
Say 'stop', I'll stop.

Moves slowly in. She glances back to check they can't be seen
from the window. Then returns the kiss. Gently, gently...
then ferociously. He's amused, whispers --

STEVE (CONT'D)
Slower.

She tries.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Slower.

She calms down. They kiss more tenderly as we HARD CUT TO:

INT. GALLAGHER KITCHEN - NIGHT

Steve and Fiona in half-removed clothing, screwing on the
kitchen floor like famished wildlife. She's steering the show
- unwittingly slamming his head against the kitchen cupboards
as she lurches to orgasm. Steve see-saws between the pleasure
of the sex and the pain of head injury as he also nears...

FIONA
Almost. Almost. Almo...

LOUD KNOCK on the kitchen door. They freeze.

FIONA (CONT'D)

Shit!

Another KNOCK, louder. They scramble for clothes. She bolts out of the kitchen, leaving Steve to untangle his jeans.

STEVE

Fuck!

Steve kicks socks, underwear and debris into a corner. Flicks the lights on before opening the door to a young neighborhood Chicago cop, TONY. Tony instantly spots Steve's bare feet.

TONY

(curt)

Is Fiona in?

STEVE

She's...upstairs. I'll...get her.

INT. GALLAGHER STAIRCASE/LANDING - NIGHT

Steve bombs up the stairs as Fiona appears from a bedroom, looking vaguely decent.

STEVE

Cops. Looking for you.

She's more embarrassed than disturbed by this. Brushes past him to the stairs.

FIONA

Stay here.

Steve flounders for a sec or two. Then spots young Liam emerging from a bedroom. Debbie behind him in pursuit.

DEBBIE

Liam! Back to bed or I'm showing you *The Hills Have Eyes* again.

Liam yells fearfully, obeys. Steve stares at the disappearing kid, tries deciphering the voices from downstairs.

INT. GALLAGHER KITCHEN - NIGHT

Tony and his partner COP struggle to heave the dead weight of a paralytic middle-aged drunk (Frank, unconscious) through the Gallagher's door as Steve comes back down the stairs.

Fiona's holding the door wide as the cops dump Frank in the middle of floor. They efficiently turn him into recovery position as they must have done a hundred times before.

TONY
I wouldn't put him anywhere near a
carpet til his pants dry a bit.

FIONA
Thanks, Tony.

TONY
See ya, Fiona.

Tony throws one final, wary, glance to Steve and off he goes,
as if from a casual event. Fiona turns to see Steve's shock.

STEVE
Who the fuck's THAT?

By now, Fiona's way beyond apology - not to a stranger.

FIONA
My dad.

INT. GALLAGHER LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (A FEW MOMENTS LATER)

Fiona's stuffing Steve's blood-stained shirt into a plastic
grocery bag. Steve comes in, pulling his shoes and socks on.

STEVE
You leave him there all night?

FIONA
He's never there when I get up.

STEVE
Right.
(pause, of upstairs)
So who's the little guy? 'Liam'?

Inference being - is he hers? She resents the question.

FIONA
Liam's my brother.

She hands him the bag. He takes the cue to leave.

EXT. CHICAGO STREET - NIGHT

Steve ZAPS his car open, looks back towards the house. Can't
believe the night he's just had.

Sees Lip, Debbie, Ian and Carl watching his departure.
They're sorry he's leaving. He seemed nice.

CUT TO:

EXT/INT. HEART OF CHICAGO MOTEL - DAY

Fiona climbs the metal stairs of a clean but inexpensive, two-story motel, Liam on her hip. Finds a maid's cart parked outside an open door, KNOCKS.

FIONA

Rita?

A Hispanic woman appears from the bathroom, yellow Playtex gloves, toilet brush in hand, thirty, harried.

RITA

Anne's school called, she's sick.

She's peeling off the gloves, handing the brush to Fiona.

RITA (CONT'D)

Everything up to 204's clean. I should be back in a couple hours.

FIONA

Raul won't care?

RITA

Smoked his lunch again. He won't even know.

Rita grabs her jacket off the maid's cart, pulls it on.

RITA (CONT'D)

Thanks for this. I'm making tamales tonight, I'll drop off a dozen.

(already out the door)

Oh, and take all the toilet paper and soap you need.

And she's gone. Fiona looks into the room, sighs, plops Liam down on the bed. Turns on the TV for him to watch. As she pulls on the yellow gloves and starts for the bathroom, we --

CUT TO:

INT. THE ELBOW ROOM BAR - AFTERNOON

A neighborhood joint, small kitchen in the back, a pool table, lots of local sports memorabilia on the walls. A small crowd is gathered around a battered arcade game (X-Men? Terminator?), a man focused on the controls. Every so often, a YELL goes up and the excitement builds. A regular, TOMMY, saunters over to the bar where Kev, for his sins, is the regular barman.

TOMMY
Worried?

KEV
(yes)
...Where is he?

TOMMY
Level 9.

KEV
He won't get past the beast master.

Another rowdy YELL goes up. Kev sneaks an anxious look.

TOMMY
How long's your record held?

KEV
Four and a half years.

TOMMY
Well, that's something...

Another yell, it's clear the guy's getting close.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
I could sneak out back, flip the
breaker, say it's a power outage.

KEV
(considers it, then)
Nah...

A huge GROAN from the crowd, the guy throws his hands up in frustration and defeat. The crowd begins to disperse.

TOMMY
The beast master?

KEV
(grins)
Yep.

Frank enters, heads for the bar, in a magnanimous mood.

FRANK
Schlitz and a Makers. And...
(yells across the bar)
Billy, having one? Have one!

Whoever 'Billy' is, the guy ignores him. No reason. Just out of Frank's league. Kev isn't too happy to see Frank.

KEV
Go away, Frank.

Frank pulls out an envelope, and with a flourish, the check that's inside.

FRANK
A pen, barkeep. Disability day!

Kevin smirks, finds a pen by the register, hands it to Frank.

KEV
The disability people haven't caught up to you yet? I thought they had a guy following you around with a camera?

FRANK
They can follow me around all they want, but they'll have to catch me actually doing something.

He hands the check over to Kevin. Frank notices how full the joint is.

FRANK (CONT'D)
What's with the crowd?

KEV
Layoff at the carburetor plant.

FRANK
That's the problem with working. Too much instability. Stress.

Kevin returns from the register, hands Frank a few dollars.

FRANK (CONT'D)
What's this?

KEV
That's what's left after I settled out last month's tab.

FRANK
(grins)
Better start a new one then.
(loudly)
Hey, a round for my friends from the UAW!

A few heads turn, what?

KEV
Really?

FRANK
(scoffing)
Nah...

As Frank downs his shot and starts on his Schlitz we --

CUT TO:

INT. GALLAGHER KITCHEN - DAY

Fiona reads an ancient, crumpled US Weekly, killing time as she keeps her foot wedged against the washer door. Washing machine churns away happily, until... KNOCK at the back door. As she abandons the washer, it grinds instantly to a stop.

She opens the back door, surprised to see Steve.

STEVE
Hiya!

She returns to the washer, jams her foot against the door, to jump start the machine. Steve saunters in.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Wondering what your schedule's like
Friday?

FIONA
I've got a party.

STEVE
Want a chaperone?

Steve clocks the small pyramid of toilet paper rolls and pile of tiny bars of wrapped motel soap on the kitchen table.

FIONA
You're not eligible.

STEVE
Right. Pre-nup chick thing?

No reply. She just stares at him cynically.

FIONA
Steve, you're not that desperate.

STEVE

(thrown)

Wanting to see you again's
desperate?

FIONA

Feeling like you have to. That's
desperate. You could get laid
anywhere.

STEVE

(scoffs)

So I'm only here for a fuck?

FIONA

Never crossed your mind?

She coldly dismisses him by moving to the freezer, removing ingredients for a family meal.

STEVE

This is all a bit Hans Christian
Anderson. Just when you think you
collared your dream girl... her
incontinent, alcoholic father
appears, wrecks everything... And
she's blaming you!

FIONA

Dream girl? Please, we had drunken
sex on my kitchen floor.

STEVE

Stop pretending you don't even know
me. You weren't that drunk.

(which gets her attention)

If the only reason last night
happened was because it happened,
so what? At least something did.
It did for me.

Pause. They hold a look. She's genuinely thrown by his choice of words. Or guts to use them. He's off her radar for the kind of guys she's used to dealing with. Lip barges in from the living room, dumping a lunch plate in the sink.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Hey, it's Phillip!

LIP

Hey, it's dead man walking! Jimmy
Clifton called looking for you.

STEVE
No school?

LIP
Couple teeth pulled this morning.

STEVE
Wisdom teeth?

LIP
Sugar rot.

STEVE
Little known fact: make sure you don't just chew your food on one side. It can buckle your jaw, which can buckle your hips and affect your posture.

LIP
That a fact?

STEVE
Skeletal fact.

Fiona moves back to her stork position against the washing machine. It hums back into action. Steve clocks this small mechanical blip.

FIONA
(sideglance)
Lip.

Mimes "fuck off". Lip respects her privacy. As he exits --

LIP
(to Steve)
Talk out of your ass with that much conviction, you end up needing a much bigger toothbrush. Anal fact.

Exits grinning. Steve registers the variable intellects of this neighborhood.

FIONA
Listen, thanks for trying to get my purse back, and... stuff. But -

STEVE
'Stuff'?

FIONA
I'm not looking. Not right now.

STEVE
 (pause)
 Okay if I leave my number for when
 you might be?

She shrugs indifferently. Steve finds a pen, scrap of paper.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHICAGO STREET - DAY

Lip pulls a reluctant Ian past houses, people and local stores. He's on a mission.

LIP
 Just keep talking about science.

IAN
 I don't know anything about
 science!

LIP
 So, just read from the table of
 elements!

INT. SHEILA'S HOUSE - DAY

Karen's mom Sheila widening the door for Lip and Ian.

LIP
 Mrs. Jackson!

SHEILA
 Oh Karen's thrilled with you! Got
 an A on her Physics mid-term.
 (yells upstairs)
 Karen! It's your little helper!
 (to the boys)
 I'm out of grocery bags. Why don't
 you leave your shoes out here where
 they can breathe.

Ian bemused. Lip's already inured by the crazy Mrs. J.

INT. SHEILA'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Looking to kitchen where Sheila sits on a bar stool, peeling potatoes, lost in *The Food Network* on her counter top TV. To Sheila, the hosts are like lifelong buddies.

CAMERA pans round to the table in the living room. Lip diligently doing Karen's homework.

Ian reads from the table of elements with increasing difficulty and, of course, Karen is nowhere to be seen.

IAN
Erbium...Cerium...Praseodymium..

SHEILA
(still watching the TV)
You kids want some Hot Pockets?

LIP
Ah...no thank you, we're good...

Ian reacts to his dick being mauled beneath the table by the industrious Karen.

At which point, Eddie Jackson, patriarch, arrives from upstairs in his CTA uniform. Lip and Ian surprised. They hadn't counted on a second parent, two parents are rare around heren.

EDDIE
Right. I'm off to work.
(nods to the boys)
How's it goin' fellas? Where's
Karen?

Ian has a little freaked-out convulsion.

LIP
Her room, I think. Google Earth -
for a GPS reference for the house
Isaac Newton was born in.

Eddie's pleased that Karen's showing an interest these days. He proceeds to kitchen, where we can see him and Sheila thru' the hatch. Sheila is merrily preparing his lunchpail.

SHEILA
Guess what I've made for you!

EDDIE
(irritated, so wilfully
inaccurate)
Cornish game hen and Asian pear?

SHEILA
No!

EDDIE
Wild salmon with honey glazed baby
carrots?

SHEILA
 (thrill mounting)
 Nope! Kiss and I'll tell.

She awaits physical contact - little kiss, that's all.
 Please. But no. Miserable Eddie snatches up the lunch pail.

EDDIE
 I'll find out what I've got when I
 open the damn box, alright?

He doesn't kiss, won't kiss. Sheila sags with disappointment.
 His forensic lack of affection baffles her.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
 (yells upstairs)
 Karen! I'm late, honey so - see you
 in the morning!

Then, as he turns to leave for work, his lunch pail clips a
 vegetable strainer on the counter. A peeled potato drops
 into the living room. The potato rolls dangerously close to
 the dining table where Lip and Ian are sitting.

The predictability of what happens next, registers with
 abject panic on Lip's face and shatters his smile.

Eddie goes to pick up the potato... Sees his daughter's shoes
 sticking out from under the table on Ian's side.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
 (amused)
 What's she hiding for?
 (then puzzled)
 What ya' hiding for?

He then clocks the terror on both boys' faces and the sordid
 reality dawns on him. He screams with outrage.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
 Oh, sweet Jesus!

Karen's face appears from under the tablecloth, and Ian doing
 up his zipper, confirms the very worst.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
 No?!

And, in a mighty, single sweep, Eddie yanks the table back.

Ian scrambles to avoid the assault. Lip darts the other way.
 Karen bolts for the safety of her mom as Eddie lunges
 manically for either intruder. He'll kill 'em.

Lip just avoids being caught. Ian darts behind Eddie and into the kitchen, slamming out the back door. Lip darts into the hall, stumbles over a bicycle, bolts upstairs.

ANGLE - EDDIE trying to decide who to go after.

SHEILA

What's set him off now?

Karen scurries behind Sheila. Eddie takes off after Lip.

SHEILA (CONT'D)

It's just a study group, honey!

After all the mayhem, there's suddenly an eerie silence. Followed by a loud THUMP from upstairs.

KAREN

He's caught Lip!

EXT. SHEILA'S HOUSE - DAY

Lip falls from the sky into the front yard. Landing with a crippling THUD. Ouch! Was he pushed? No, his eyes dart up to a bedroom window, Eddie looking down, growling rage.

EDDIE (OS)

Further you go, more I'll kill you.

Lip leaps to his feet, races to catch up with Ian in the distance, who's carrying both their sneakers, urgently rescued from the doorstep. Lip limping all the way.

CUT TO:

INT. GALLAGHER BOYS' BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Lip's writhing in agony on his bed. Ian watches Fiona conduct standard triage on the ankle. Fiona's incredulous:

FIONA

An old lady on the train?

IAN

The door was closing on her walker,
Lip barely got his foot in the door
in time to stop it --

She rattles Lip's toes. Lip YELPS in pain.

FIONA

I've forgotten whether that's good
or bad.

(MORE)

FIONA (CONT'D)

(their unbelievable story)
More like you two jumped the
turnstiles again and he twisted it
trying to outrun the transit cops.

Veronica arrives like a field surgeon, but empty-handed, no
medical supplies.

VERONICA

No-no! Always elevate extremities!
(nudging Fiona aside)
Move! ...Before you give him a
fucking embolism!
(to Lip)
You okay Lip? Sweetheart?

LIP

Don't touch it! Please...

He yelps as she yanks off his sock in a professional SWOOSH.
Scrutinizes the foot with all the intensity of an orthopod.

VERONICA

Wiggle your toes?

He tries. Fraction of movement. She doesn't look hopeful.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

(instantly to Ian)
Go to my house. Top of the freezer?

IAN

Yeah.

VERONICA

Two ice packs.

IAN

Okay.

VERONICA

Second cupboard above the sink?

IAN

Yeah.

VERONICA

Liquid ibuprofen, freeze spray, ace
bandages.

FIONA

Shouldn't we get it X-rayed?

VERONICA

Please. No insurance? You'll be in the ER forever, and for what?

(mimics gay ER doc)

'Sub-metatarsal hematoma' Thanks!

Tell us something we didn't know five hours ago! Fuck off!

(blocks Ian's departure)

My bedroom?

(he nods)

Top of the TV?

IAN

Yeah.

VERONICA

Pack of smokes and a lighter.

Ian dives out. Veronica rolls her sleeves up, moving towards Lip like an expert. Until there's --

A LOUD KNOCK AT THE FRONT DOOR.

Lip bounces up scurries to hide under the bed.

LIP

I'm not here! I'm not HERE!!

Ian scrambles back into the room from the stairs.

IAN

You've never heard of us, Fiona!

Fiona suddenly rails against being lied to about all this.

FIONA

What. Have. You. DONE?! WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

No time to wait for reply. Another LOUD KNOCK. Fiona has to venture downstairs.

INT. GALLAGHER FRONT DOOR - AFTERNOON

Carl skulking at safe distance behind Fiona, who approaches the front door with trepidation. Finally opens it to...

A smiling DELIVERY MAN with a huge 'Sears' logo'ed carton.

DELIVERY MAN

Can I get it through here, or is it better coming around the back?

(MORE)

DELIVERY MAN (CONT'D)

(off her stumped
expression)
Washer-dryer?

FIONA

Not me.

DELIVERY MAN

Gallagher? Number 2?

FIONA

Yeah, but it's not ours.

DELIVERY MAN

It's paid for. You want me to hook
it up or not?

CUT TO:

INT. VERONICA'S HOUSE BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Ian with accumulated handful of medical supplies. He dives into the bedroom, seeking Veronica's smokes and lighter on top of the big flatscreen.

But - Kev's in bed asleep. Kev stirs and kicks the duvet off, crotch exhibited.

Ian spots this reflected in the TV screen. He knows looking is forbidden. Knows he shouldn't, shouldn't... So, finally he grabs the smokes and makes to exit... when --

KEV

Where you goin' with those?

IAN

Veronica wants 'em.

We think for a second that Ian's been caught looking. But no.

KEV

Throw me one.

Ian has to hand Kev a smoke and light it for him, and resist the compulsion to stare at a grown-guy's dick as Kev lets his legs spread nonachalantly across the leopard sheets. Kev takes a big drag and then melts back into his sleepy nest. Ian bolts without explanation.

C/U Kev for a second longer and then his 5pm radio-alarm clicks on, Kev sleepily whacks the 'snooze' button. Does a half-hearted sing-a-long to whichever Karen Carpenter song he just silenced.

INT. GALLAGHER KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

Veronica arrives from upstairs with her hallmark medical bag, chaperoning Lip to the ground floor, both perplexed by the Sears guy installing a brand-spanking washing machine.

The Sears guy looks unduly pressurized by the expanding audience - Ian, Fiona, Carl, Debbie, Liam, now Lip and Veronica, like this is a rare event. Which it is.

VERONICA
(to Fiona)
I thought you were broke?

IAN
That's what I said!

Fiona, equally baffled, reaches into the basin where she's put a bouquet of flowers.

FIONA
These were inside the washer.

She shows Veronica the message tag. 'XOXO STEVE'

VERONICA
(flabbergasted)
Steve? No!!

FIONA
Yeah!

VERONICA
(beat: puzzled)
Who's 'Steve'?

FIONA
Other night!

VERONICA
(it dawning)
No!!!?

FIONA
I know!

But the sheer thrill of romantic novelty on Fiona's face says the strategy has worked.

CUT TO:

INT. SHEILA'S LIVING/DINING ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Eddie is leaving the family - for good. Aggressively boxing-up every clown motif object in the house - clocks, ornaments, paintings, etc., they belong to him, not mad Sheila. Sheila is beside herself with the distress of desertion.

EDDIE

(outraged)

Fifteen years, I've done everything
in my power to...

(to Sheila)

What did I say? What did I tell
you?

(to Karen)

Sow and thou shalt reap.

(to Sheila)

Well she didn't reap that from ME,
did she?

SHEILA

Reap WHAT? What you reaping NOW?

Karen's hovering in the kitchen door, upset.

SHEILA (CONT'D)

Eddie, whatever it is, I'll try.
I'll try... really TRY.

But he continues packing without forgiveness.

KAREN

Mom, don't beg him! If he can do
this, the bastard's not worth it.

EXT. SHEILA'S STREET - LATE AFTERNOON

Eddie has just stepped outside with a box as he hears that last line, spinning on the expletive --

EDDIE

Hey, you watch your mouth!

KAREN

GET! FUCKED!

He races for the front door.

EDDIE

Don't try blaming me for this!

But Karen kicks the door shut in his face. Locks it.

Eddie dives to the front window, where a new testament sign proclaims '*JESUS SAID: I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIGHT*'

EDDIE (CONT'D)

You are your own worst enemies, you two! They say bad things come in threes. They don't. Twos! YOU two!

He ducks suddenly as a clown lamp comes flying through the window, demolishing the new testament sentiment.

Eddie rescues the clown, packs it with finality into his rental car, parked outside.

CUT TO:

EXT. GALLAGHER'S STREET - LATE AFTERNOON

Veronica and Kev hand-carry the heavy old washing machine from the Gallaghers to their house two doors up the street. both smoking, yelling garbled instructions to each other.

VERONICA

Steve.

KEV

Kitchen floor Steve?

VERONICA

Yeah.

KEV

Hey, maybe you could do him, we need a new microwave.

NOTE: The house immediately next to the GALLAGHERS' is plywooded with a hand-painted sign '**Grandad's dead. There is nothing else to steal from this house. So FUCK OFF!**'

CUT TO:

INT. KASH AND KARRY STORE - LATE AFTERNOON

Ian works at the corner store. Right now he's re-stocking the refrigerator case in the back with cheap beer. KASH (owner) is at the register, generally despising his lifestyle. A gigantic American flag hangs behind the counter.

Kash's wife, LINDA, (white by way of Wisconsin) blasts into frame, wearing a Muslim head-scarf and floor length skirt.

LINDA

Let me smell your breath.

He breathes into her face. She looks dubious.

LINDA (CONT'D)
Pork Rinds.

KASH
No.

Linda produces a near empty bag of pork rinds from behind the counter. Exhibit-A.

IAN
Those are mine.

KASH
See! And hey, since when did Pork Rinds actually come from a pig?

LINDA
Ian, I'm the one who signs your check. What's bad for him, is really bad for you if you're stupid enough to start lying for him.

IAN
They're just corn chips with fake hair. Fake corn, even.

LINDA
Last warning - get yourself to that mosque so your Dad stops blaming ME for the fact that we're all going to hell. And talk to your mother.

KASH
She won't talk to me. I can't force her to take her meds.

LINDA
I don't want the cops dragging me out of bed again at 4am because she's in the alley yelling about the CIA stealing her trash.

IAN
But... that happened, didn't it?

LINDA
(concedes a nod, sardonic)
Once. Four years ago. But now she's locked in the basement building a helmet out of tinfoil. Enough's enough.

She gathers up their two immaculate, cherished blonde kids and starts for the door.

LINDA (CONT'D)

I have to get the boys to Cub Scouts at the mosque before all the carpets are taken.

(exiting)

She's your mother, get her to take her Thorazin!

They climb into the Toyota flatbed truck at the curb outside. Kash sighs in relief in the aftermath. Sees Ian chuckling at Kash's expense. Kash holds a stare.

KASH

Least my family registers as human protein on a DNA test.

Not offensive. Ian laughs. Just banter between the two of them as Ian resumes his beer-stacking task.

CUT TO:

INT. THE CORNER BAR - EVENING

ANGLE - FIONA on the payphone, clutching that scrap of paper with Steve's name on it.

FIONA

How much did you pay for it?

We INTERCUT with Steve on his cellphone, in some kind of grimy auto shop, sparks from a grinder fly in the background.

STEVE

I'm not telling you that. It's a gift. So you'd remember the phone number. Which obviously worked.

FIONA

Your washer-dry's in the backyard. We don't need it, I don't want it. So you need to come get it before it starts rusting.

Pause.

STEVE

Is it?

Pause.

FIONA

No.

STEVE

Did the guy connect it?

FIONA

(reluctantly)

Yes.

STEVE

It's working okay?

FIONA

Not my favorite color...

STEVE

(more to the point)

So you've tried it?

She's put herself on the spot. Pause. Hangs up. Off Steve, closing his cellphone, smiling.

CUT TO:

INT. GALLAGHER HOUSE - NIGHT

Dead of night. Fiona heads for the kitchen. Peers into the refrigerator. A chicken that's all bone, what's left of Rita's tamales. A case of beer and big bottle of Vodka next to Liam's sippy cup and boxes of juice. Grabs the sippy cup.

Spots Ian sitting in the dark with a box of tissues. Has he been crying? Joins him in the shadows, sensing trouble.

FIONA

Just tell me you haven't gone and gotten some girl pregnant.

IAN

No worries!

He glances across the floor to where Frank's unconscious, flat on his back, mouth open. Ian is (and has been) trying to flick small balls of tissue into Frank's gaping mouth.

IAN (CONT'D)

(beat)

He hates me.

She studies Ian, decides to throw him a line.

FIONA
 You look more like mom than any of
 the rest of us.

Which suddenly makes sense to Ian. Too late, and nowhere near
 justifying the shit he gets for this.

FIONA (CONT'D)
 You probably scare him.

IAN
 Yeah?
 (perverse smile)
 He ain't seen nothin yet.

FIONA
 Did he give you money for the field
 trip?

IAN
 (truculent)
 I'll pay my own way.

FIONA
 No you won't.

Fiona crawls over to horizontal Frank, raises one of his legs
 until coins rolls out of his pocket. It's an essential form
 of mugging she's perfected over years. Frank remains
 oblivious. Ian takes the cash, amused by her talents.

IAN
 You must be sick of having to think
 for everybody.

FIONA
 Least I can. Proves I'm wanted.

IAN
 (shrugs it off)
 If all you want is being needed,
 congratulations, Fiona...

He finally gets a ball of Kleenex into Frank's gaping mouth.

IAN (CONT'D)
 ...you got yourself a job for life
 with this joker.

Ian quietly heads back to bed, leaving Fiona to dwell on that
 prospect, Frank still unconscious across the room.

CUT TO:

INT. CARWASH - DAY

C/U STEVE, but framed against what appear to be 'clouds'. Guy with big things on his mind. His cellphone goes off to pull him back from his reverie.

INT. THE CORNER BAR - DAY

Fiona back at the bar's payphone, almost exactly positioned as she was the last time she rang Steve. Different clothes. But this is more or less how she postures for outgoing calls, because she always makes them from here.

FIONA

If that wasn't a pile of bull...
What was I wearing?

STEVE

Huh?

This is way out of the blue for him.

FIONA

The first time you saw me?
(beat)
If that wasn't a lie?

NOTE: ONCE WE START INTERCUTTING WITH STEVE IN THE CARWASH, IT'LL BECOME OBVIOUS THAT THE 'CLOUDS' ARE DETERGENT FOAM ON HIS WINDSHIELD. BUT HOPEFULLY NO LESS MAGICAL AN EFFECT FOR THIS CONVERSATION.

STEVE

Pink shirt, black trousers, thin shoes... straps... sandals! With your hair pinned high. Dangly 'O'-shaped earrings that made me smile.

BRIEF FLASHBACK to Fiona dancing in the nightclub that night, exactly as he's describing her.

When we flit back to Fiona, FADE OUT SOUND on the bustle from the bar. Her ears now tuned to Steve's voice. Probably the nicest, most special thing anyone's ever said to her --

STEVE (CONT'D)

A big watch - too big, so it slid up your arm, looked great. You were dancing next to a red-haired girl in a green dress.

FIONA

Jenna. It was Jenna's birthday. So you're watching her, who's a lot better looking than me...

STEVE

Think so? Really?

FIONA

So how come you're not stalking Jenna?

STEVE

Because you... you think like that, and Jenna doesn't. She dances for an audience and you dance like there's nobody else in the room.

As if someone just crashed through the doors of the bar, a non-naturalistic breeze wafts her hair. She's soaking up the flattery.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Your life's not simple Fiona. And you can't stop it from showing. 'Cuz you're no fake, you're not vain. You're not lost, so you don't need finding. This whole fucking city belongs to the Jennas of this world, but I'm sick of them. I swear, Fiona, you're nothing like anyone I ever met. You make me want to enjoy my life.

(makes himself smile at
this realization)

You still there? Hello? Fiona?

EXT. EL STATION PLATFORM - DAY

Steve sprints up the stairs and out onto the platform. He gasps for breath as he looks around, but it's empty. He's late. Thinks he's missed her. Curses himself.

Then a train on the opposite track clears. And there she is, smiling, just as he remembered her. He jogs down the stairs onto the elevated walkway that leads to the other platform.

Halfway across, she appears. He slows, walks to her. Kisses her gently. She returns it carefully, but with increasingly rare and satisfying confidence. Such a big first for Fiona.

CUT TO:

INT. CHARLIE TROTTERS - EVENING

By now, they're clearing dessert. Fiona and Steve's faces inches apart across their table. Her scepticism about men is already commencing its 'self-fulfilling-prophecy' pattern.

STEVE

What have I ever done... to anybody, nevermind you... to look 'unreliable'... Unreliable?

She nods. That's her word.

FIONA

People like you are way-too-used to getting your own way.

STEVE

'People like me' being people like... what?

She shrugs, tries putting a finger on it.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Okay, wait. Yes-No. All you have to do is, agree or disagree:

(mimics the 'ping' of a quiz show bell)

'He thinks the sun shines out of his own ass.'

She laughs.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Agree, or d...

FIONA

Agree.

STEVE

'He's overly-generous and that bugs me.'

FIONA

Agree.

STEVE

'Cuz I'm not...

FIONA

Actually, very agree.

STEVE
'Cuz I'm not used to being
spoiled?'

Beat. Fine.

FIONA
Agree.

STEVE
'So I lose respect for people like
Steve, cuz people UNLIKE Steve...
or, people diametrically opposite
to Steve, have always let me down?'

She's frowning, resents his smart-ass phrasing.

STEVE (CONT'D)
'So, deciding the guy's over-
educated, with more money than
sense... is somehow more socially
acceptable than asking, for
instance, why the men I always meet
treat me like shit?'

Bang on the nerve.

FIONA
Fuck you!

STEVE
It's a question.

FIONA
Fuck YOU!

STEVE
Either-Or.

She's grabbing her purse, about to flee... Stops. Turns.

FIONA
Agree.

STEVE
'He's had an easy life.'

FIONA
Definitely.

STEVE
And you prefer a guy who's been
around the block a few times?

FIONA
What if I did?

STEVE
Say, D-Block of a maximum security
prison? With a name you'd know
from the news?

FIONA
(truculent smirk)
If they knew how to have fun, sure!

He melts into his chair hopelessly.

STEVE
Fiona. I can't help my upbringing.

FIONA
So how come it's me again, having
to apologize for MINE?

STEVE
Who's ASKING you too?

His volume turns heads in the restaurant. She absentmindedly
perches back onto her seat. The destructive power of her
'self-fulfilling-prophecy' ritual suddenly dawns on her.

WAITRESS
We finished here, guys?

Steve looks up to a WAITRESS hovering.

STEVE
(of Fiona)
We're working on it.

Waitress begins to clear plates.

STEVE (CONT'D)
You wanna wait outside while I pay
the bill?

FIONA
Sure.

She collects her purse, leaves. Steve manipulates the
waitress's wrist to check the time. A very intimate thing to
do to someone he doesn't know but she doesn't flinch.

STEVE
He's on break?

WAITRESS

Any second now.

He winks, pulls a fat envelope out of his pocket, slips it to her. She smiles. Do they know each other?

INT. CHARLIE TROTTERS COAT CHECK - EVENING

Steve waits by the bathrooms, watches as an older man in a green parking valet's waistcoat walks past him, disappears into the men's room. Steve turns to the coat check window, where the waitress quickly hands him a green valet jacket.

As he pulls it on --

EXT. CHARLIE TROTTERS RESTAURANT - EVENING

Fiona waits alone, smoking self-consciously.

Steve appears from inside, now wearing the green valet's waistcoat. Name tag, everything.

Nods to the young remaining valet who quickly jogs off as if to get another car just as a sleek ASTON MARTIN pulls up. An elegant couple leave their car door open for valet parking.

Steve boldly slings his own jacket over the arm of a shocked Fiona, greets the couple with a beaming, servile smile.

STEVE

Welcome to Charlie Trotters.

The gent hands over his keys, shepherds his wife into the restaurant. Steve hops in behind the wheel and spins off leaving Fiona watching, breathless.

Now what? Silence. She waits. And waits.

A CELLPHONE starts ringing in Steve's jacket. Rings and rings. Eventually, Fiona realizes, answers it.

STEVE (VO) (CONT'D)

I've confused you. I'm sorry. I don't 'buy and sell' cars. I just sell 'em. But the cars I sell are mainly... not mine.

Pause. She urgently calculates the reality of who and what Steve is. The Aston Martin backs up into frame beside her.

STEVE (CONT'D)
 Coming or not?
 (ups the revs)
 Still looking for fun, Fiona?

She legs it to climb into the car. Steve shoves his own CD into the player and they're gone.

CUT TO:

INT. SHEILA'S LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

A contrite Lip's been transformed into a handyman, ankle wrapped by Veronica.

He's helpfully replacing the broken front window with a sheet of plyboard. He's currently sawing the plywood to the window's dimensions. Karen steadies the wood.

REVEAL Sheila on the couch, mortified that they're wearing outdoor footwear, inside the house.

KAREN
 (radar on red alert)
 Mom, we have to wear shoes. There's bits of glass all over the floor.

Sheila nods rare concession.

Lip finally slots the ply sheet up to window aperture. Only now do we see that he's pilfered from the derelict house adjacent to the Gallaghers'... **'Granddad's dead. There is nothing else to steal from this house. So please FUCK OFF!**

KAREN (CONT'D)
 Maybe Lip could do with a drink?

Sheila bounces to her feet, glad of a task.

SHEILA
 Sorry, yeah... Sorry, Lip, I'm a... bit off today, aren't I, Karen? So! Vodka, some tonic... plenty of tequila but I'm out of lime, gin definitely...

KAREN
 Just a couple of Cokes, mom.

SHEILA
 ...and a few beers.

LIP
Beer's great, Sheila, thanks.

Sheila disappears into the kitchen. Sotto to Karen:

LIP (CONT'D)
What if your dad comes back and
sees me here?

KAREN
He won't.

LIP
That's my fault?

KAREN
He's been looking for an excuse for
months.

Lip lifts the plywood up to the window, struggling with his
bad ankle. Karen helpfully assists, handing him nails etc.

LIP
Thanks.
(he builds awkwardly to
asking)
What kind of impression did you get
of my brother?

KAREN
Ian? Seems nice.

LIP
But... did he get hard?

KAREN
Huh?

LIP
Did you MAKE him... hard?

Karen has to think back.

KAREN
Ever try to play pool with a rope?

Lip wilts.

CUT TO:

INT. GALLAGHER KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

Frank stands at the end of the kitchen like he just had a stroke. Gawking.

ANGLE - on the new washing machine. Alien presence.

INT. GALLAGHER LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Frank on the sofa. Still catatonic. Cigarette going. TV is on but his head's at right-angles. To the vase of flowers. No, not a vase - they've stuck the bouquet in the fish bowl. One solitary goldfish in a shrunken homestead.

FRANK

Now you know what I feel like!

CUT TO:

EXT. KASH'S SHOP - LATE AFTERNOON

Lip's returning the saw and hammer. Shop's door locked. Clocks a hand-scribbled sign: 'CLOSED FOR INVENTORY'

Lip checks his watch. That doesn't sound right. Plus the lights are on but there's no-one to be seen. He knocks. Nothing. Walks round the block.

INT. KASH'S SHOP - LATE AFTERNOON

Looking into the empty shop to the counter. Sounds of sex. Back door slams. Sex stops abruptly.

Lip comes in from the back with the hammer and saw. No signs of life. Odd. He walks around to check.

Ian and Kash emerge from the stockroom with a sweat on, carting boxes.

KASH

(bossy)

You stack the sodas, I'll do the snacks...

(then feigns shock at the sight of)

Jeez! Lip! Christ!

LIP

Sorry, I just...

(of the tools)

Thanks for the tools, Kash.

KASH
Anytime, long as I get 'em back.

But something's wrong. Lip knows something's wrong. Ian and Kash go through the pantomime of counting stock.

Then it strikes Lip like a thunderbolt.

LIP
You must be joking!

Ian looks up, like a social X-ray.

LIP (CONT'D)
You're fucking him?! HIM?!

Kash shrivels. How could Lip know? How?

Lip glances to their feet. They're each wearing odd sneakers, one of each other's.

CUT TO:

INT. GALLAGHER BOYS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lip on his bed, seething. Ian bounds upstairs and bounces in. Sits on his bed. Nervous. Lip looks at Ian's new sneakers.

LIP
He bought them for you. Didn't he?

Ian reluctantly nods.

LIP (CONT'D)
He's married. With kids! What else does he buy you, Ian?

IAN
Stuff. Now and again.

LIP
And you're happy with that?
(off Ian's shrug)
What's that make you?
(another shrug)
Fucking kept boy, at best.

Ian flies for Lip's throat. They've fought before but this intensity from Ian is unprecedented.

IAN

Listen to me, stupid! You think you know everything, and you don't know shit. Ask me what I've bought him. Ask me!

Lip's going blue. They're both tugging at each other's throats and clothes.

IAN (CONT'D)

CDs, dozens of CDs, stuff he's never heard of, stuff I think he'll like, because I want him to like stuff that I like. Plus - two Sox tickets for his birthday. Limited-edition team posters for Christmas. So what's that make you, Lip? Eh? Makes you WRONG, you smart asshole!

(and with a final dig)

Go back there now. Promise Kash you'll keep your mouth shut. Cuz he's shitting himself. And he's done nothing... understand? Absolutely nothing to be sorry for.

A chastised Lip gets to his feet, nurses his throat and indignantly straightens his clothing. Long pause as he absorbs that this is a fully consenting relationship.

LIP

(a newspaper headline)

Fake Muslim cheats on white fundamentalist wife with gutless gayboy.

(even more tragic)

Says more about White Sox fans than it does the rest of us.

Lip dodges a lunge from Ian, heads out.

CUT TO:

INT. KASH'S SHOP - NIGHT

Shop lights out, only light comes from the stockroom. Through a half open door, we see Kash, Ian and Lip - questions and answers. Kash is devastated, crying, confessing. Ian is volubly explaining to Lip that Kash is as stuck with the bigotry of being round here, but worse. Much worse. As Lip digests this --

CUT TO:

INT. GALLAGHER KITCHEN - NIGHT

Fiona leads Steve into the kitchen, starts to kiss him.

FIONA
Sounds like they're all in bed.

With which, Frank swooshes in from the living room, in a fairly flowery mood.

FRANK
Gotcha!
(grins, then cryptically)
Who's been eating my porridge?

Fiona skillfully scans Frank's mood. Senses instinctively that tonight he's harmless.

FIONA
Hiya dad. This's Steve.

STEVE
We've met before, but you weren't exactly...

Fiona silences Steve with a nudge, Frank goes to shake hands.

FRANK
How much do you weigh?

STEVE
I don't know.

FRANK
(Steve's jacket)
That'd fit me.

FIONA
Ignore him.
(to Frank)
Move!

She nudges him out of the way to reach the fridge.

STEVE
Listen, I should leave you to get to bed.
(to Fiona)
Thanks. That was really nice.

FIONA
You too.

And really means that.

She's walking him to the door. Despite Frank, they go in for a kiss but Frank comes charging over, slams the kitchen door, locking them in and hanging on to the key. Skips to the washing machine, pats it like a dog,

FRANK

I want to know who paid for this?

Then into the living room waving the key.

STEVE

What the hell's he on?

FIONA

(shrugs hopelessly)

He'll think he bought X. But the only dealer he gets credit from is a schizophrenic.

They dare a giggle.

INT. GALLAGHER LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The B-52's, *Love Shack*, thumping away on the stereo. It's half-an-hour later and Frank's coming down, smoothing out. Steve now has his jacket off, Frank's topping their glasses off. It's developed the verve of an after-hours party. You'd never guess there were kids in the house.

FRANK

Not a case of whether I agree.
It's a fact. If I was a single parent, we'd be on...

Fiona walks in with a packet of rolling papers.

STEVE

Aren't you a single parent?

FIONA

(heard it all before)

'yeah, but if I had a pair of tits...'

FRANK

(oblivious)

Yeah, but if I had tits, Steve, they'd double the money. With a guy, they don't wanna fucking know.

STEVE
 (encouraging him)
 I get it, Frank, so it's...
 (gestures yak yak yak)
 'Prove you're looking for work?'

FIONA
 He's on disability.

STEVE
 Yeah? For what?

FRANK
 A tragedy really, I gave my life to
 that company.

FIONA
 You worked there a week.

STEVE
 What happened?

FRANK
 Dangerous workplace, doing my job,
 unsuspecting, when out of nowhere,
 I'm smashed in the ribs by a flying
 chicken. I was lucky, it almost
 missed me. And what do I get for my
 pain and suffering? Followed around
 by a video camera. Where's the
 trust, Steve? The sacred covenant
 between employer and employee.
 (a beat)
 Gone, Steve. It's gone.

Steve's nodding, even though he can't find a link. Fiona's
 smiling, water off a duck's back, reaches into Steve's pocket
 for a lump of dope, rolling papers. Steve eggs Frank on.

STEVE
 Not, 'How's a guy supposed to work,
 hurt, with kids this age?'

FRANK
 Correct! Hello?!
 (seeing the dope)
 Excellent!
 (to Steve)
 Cuz her mom, God rest her soul...

FIONA
 Dad, don't start!

FRANK
 'cuz she'd better be dead, the
 bitch.

Fiona whacks him, hard, and means it.

FIONA
 Cut it out!

It has no impact. Frank amused, holds Fiona at bay.

FRANK
 Four month old baby... 14 year old
 girl just had her appendix out, 11
 year old Lip, 10 year old Ian.

And all the while, Fiona's punching his arm.

FRANK (CONT'D)
 ..seven year old and a five year
 old. Oh, and a Dodge Astro van.
 Calypso blue. What's the thing we
 needed most? One word? One thing?

STEVE
 Sterilization?

Fiona laughs, concentrates on rolling the joint.

FRANK
 Continuity. Contin-uity. One
 Tuesday, we're out of bread. So I
 send her down to the corner. She
 grabs the van keys.
 (throws his hands up)
 Not seen it since. And we haven't a
 fucking clue where she is.
 (to Fiona)
 Have we? So, what...
 (of the song)
 Oh, I love this...

Turns the music UP, Aerosmith, relishing the chorus. Steve
 turns to find Fiona studying him, like all this is still part
 of a test.

FRANK (CONT'D)
 I mean, what could I do, Steve?

FIONA
 Disappear for three weeks?

FRANK
 (ignoring her)
 I had a breakdown.

FIONA
 You moved in with Tommy and went on
 a bender.

FRANK
 Fuck off! Nervous - BREAKDOWN.

LOUD BANGING on front window. Steve spins, alarmed.

FIONA
 (unruffled)
 Dad. Key.

Frank chucks the key to Steve, who deducts that he should get the door, then.

INT. GALLAGHER KITCHEN - NIGHT

Steve lets in an angry Kev, in only a T-shirt and boxers.

KEV
 Know what time it is?!

STEVE
 Sorry, Kev, it's Frank, he's...

Kev bounces past him into the living room carrying a CD case. Steve goes to shut the door but it gets pushed open by Veronica -dressing gown, bare feet. She's carrying a bottle of vodka. Grabs a few glasses from one of the cupboards and follows Kev into the living room.

KEV
 (aggressive to Frank)
 What've I told you?

Kev turns the music OFF. Steve returns, expecting trouble.

FRANK
 Here we go. Neighbors of Satan!

Kev proceeds to pull the Aerosmith CD from the player and toss it across the room, replacing it with one of his own.

KEV
 The day you pay rent like the rest
 of us Frank, you can play whatever
 shit you want.
 (MORE)

KEV (CONT'D)

Til then, if you're pumping it out
at this time of night, you pump out
stuff that we like. 'Kay?

Fergie. Kev's music. Turned up loud. Frank loves being abused
by Kev. It flatters him. The evening becomes a messy
impromptu party, with Veronica circulating the vodka.
BOOM BOOM BOOM. Off Steve, smiling at the madness --

INT. FIONA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Fiona and Steve rigidly next to each other in bed. Music
still thumping from downstairs.

STEVE

He made me follow you up.

FIONA

Well he's right. You can't drive
now, but...

Fiona raises her duvet to release a muffled snoring sound.

FIONA (CONT'D)

Liam's in here somewhere.

STEVE

Don't the kids wake up?

FIONA

Would you?

He laughs. He takes her hand, plays with her fingers, wraps
his fingers around hers. She lets her eyes shut. She's safe.

INT. GALLAGHER BOYS' BEDROOM - MORNING

Carl reluctantly drags his school clothes on. Lip comes up
from downstairs.

LIP

Seen Ian?

CARL

Gone when I woke up.

Lip puzzled, goes to the window. His POV: Smoke rising from
the Astrován window.

BACK ON Lip, checking that Carl's distracted before reaching
under Ian's mattress for that porn file.

INT. VAN - MORNING

Ian's struggling with his own thoughts when there's a RAP on the window. Lip climbs in. Ian throws him a hard look. Lip slaps an open gay porn mag down between them.

LIP

How can that be good for you?

Ian won't dignify it with a response. Lip turns a page.

LIP (CONT'D)

Or that?

Ian aggressively snatches the mag.

IAN

Know what's not funny? You. Ever.

Lip takes seconds on Ian's cigarette.

LIP

Anybody before Kash?

IAN

One.

LIP

Who?

IAN

I'm not telling you.

LIP

Name a single time I've let you down.

Ian's reaction. Lip hasn't, ever.

IAN

Kid at school.

(then, second thoughts)

Well it's no big deal any more.

He's long gone. Roger Spikey.

LIP

The original beef meister? Donkey dick? Or did he start that rumor?

IAN

(twitch of the eyebrows)

Not a rumor.

LIP
 Hey that looked a bit gay.
 (does the eyebrows)
 Wanna watch yourself with that.
 (more intrigued about)
 And actually? Up the ass?

Ian refuses to get drawn.

LIP (CONT'D)
 Do you get used to that? Can you?
 Whole point of the digestive
 system's one-way traffic.
 (drags hard on cigarette)
 Just is.

Ian smiles ironically, then a laugh erupts.

LIP (CONT'D)
 What?
 (lets the smoke go)
 What!?

IAN
 (mimics)
 'Just is!' Like we're only given a
 pair of fuckin' lungs to smoke!

They both laugh too loud, then quiet, and finally, smile.

INT. GALLAGHER STAIRS/KITCHEN - DAY

Fiona makes her way down the stairs in her robe, following the sound of the usual tribal breakfast chaos. Steps into the kitchen, surprised to see all the kids carrying food to the table - eggs, toast, juice.

FIONA
 What's all this?

Steve at the stove, frying up a skillet full of bacon.

STEVE
 Debbie's the only person I know
 wakes up earlier than I do. I told
 her I never eat breakfast but she
 said it's her favorite meal. And
 since it's her birthday, I thought
 we should...

The others all swing a look to Debbie.

FIONA
No, it's not!

DEBBIE
(bare-faced lie)
I never said it was. I said I
wished it was!

STEVE
Ah, right! She 'wished it was!'.
Sorry, Debs, totally misheard that.
Perforated eardrum on the right.

Fiona's loving all this, but --

FIONA
You've got 15 minutes before
school, tops. Ian, Lip, your turn
to do the dishes soon as you're
done. Debbie, Carl, you need to
take the trash out.

So, fine then. The most hectic part of Fiona's day's been rendered manageable by Steve's apparently effortless contribution. Steve goes to sit down to eat, but his chair's obstructed.

ANGLE - Frank flat out on the floor from the night before. People walking round him all morning, like a carpet tumor.

Steve without making a fuss, delicately crosses Frank's legs to make him look like a sunbather. As Steve finally tucks in his own chair and starts to eat, the family happily digging into the breakfast feast, talking, yelling, laughing as we --

FADE OUT.

THE END