

DIARY OF AN OXYGEN THIEF

THE PLAY



ACT 1

The set is a shabby-chic East Village apartment crammed with framed pictures, oddities and objet d'arts. There is a widescreen TV and an open laptop which at various points throughout the evening will be used to project images and videos.

A MAN IN HIS LATE THIRTIES IS ALREADY ON STAGE WHEN THE LIGHTS COME UP. HE IS HOLDING A BOOK.

ANONYMOUS “I'm the actor who will be playing the part of Anonymous tonight. Think of me as a stand-in...a stuntman...a body-double. A mouthpiece regurgitating the witticisms and wishes of someone not present. Or at least not present onstage. I might be sitting in front of you or behind you, or yes, I might even be that guy sat beside you... not him...that's a her...the other one...never mind.

I'm here, or not here as the case may be because some people thought it might be a nice idea to make a play out of my book.”

HE PLACES THE BOOK OPEN ON THE KITCHEN WORKTOP

ANONYMOUS “And you're here because you'll decide whether it was a good idea. After all, there isn't going to be any play without an audience and so in this case you're very much part of the story. I wouldn't say I've broken the fourth wall so much as built an extension...”

WHILE ANONYMOUS TALKS HE IS PREPARING SOME SORT OF DOUGH MIXTURE IN A LARGE BOWL, HE ADDS MILK AND STIRS IT WITH A WOODEN SPOON.

ANONYMOUS "And yes... the infamous first line is absolutely true."

HE READS FROM THE BOOK AS IF IT'S A RECIPE, EMPTIES THE MIXTURE INTO A BAKING TRAY AND SLIDES IT INTO THE PREHEATED OVEN. AFTER WIPING HIS HANDS HE LOBS THE CLOTH ONTO THE COUNTERTOP AND PICKING UP HIS COPY OF *DIARY OF AN OXYGEN THIEF* FLOPS INTO HIS LEATHER CLUB CHAIR.

ANONYMOUS "I liked hurting girls..."

HE CLOSSES THE BOOK AND RECITES THE REST BY HEART

ANONYMOUS "...mentally not physically. I never hit a girl in my life. Well once. But that was a mistake. I'll tell you about it later. The thing is I got off on it. I really enjoyed it. It's like when you hear serial killers say they feel no regret no remorse for all the people they killed. I was like that. Loved it. And I didn't care how long it took. I'd wait until they were totally in love with me, till the big saucer eyes were looking at me. I loved the shock on their faces and then the glaze as they tried to hide how much I was hurting them. But the best part of it all?

HE GETS UP AND APPROACHES THE EDGE OF THE STAGE AND PAUSING FOR EFFECT ADDRESSES THE AUDIENCE DIRECTLY

ANONYMOUS "...it was legal."

HE COMPOSES HIMSELF BEFORE CONTINUING AND OPENS THE OVEN TO CHECK ON HIS BREAD...HE GESTURES TOWARDS THE COOKER

ANONYMOUS "By the way...never start a fight in a kitchen. There are just too many utensils. It happened to me in Limerick once...or "Stab City" as it's affectionately known.. I was lucky to get out of that house alive. And while we're at it you should always wear a dark-colored shirt."

IN THE STYLE OF A WASHING POWDER COMMERCIAL HE POURS RED LIQUID OVER A WHITE SHIRT AND HOLDS IT UP FOR INSPECTION. HE THEN POURS THE SAME RED LIQUID OVER A BLACK SHIRT

ANONYMOUS "It's much easier to walk home wearing a blood-stained black-shirt because taxis and cops cars won't slow down to look at you. Anyway the reason the guy

in Limerick lost it and almost killed me was because I took the pith out of hiths listhp. That's why I moved on to girls. More sophisticated, doncha know. And girls didn't hit you. They just stared at you.”

HE SMILES HAPPILY

ANONYMOUS “All the pretense dissolves away. There is just the two of you and the pain. All those intimate moments, every little sigh, those gentle touches, the lovemaking, the confidences, the orgasms, the attempted orgasms, all mere fuel. But they’re not totally stupid you have to lure them in...

HE TAPS A KEY ON HIS COMPUTER AND A SQUARE OF WHITE LIGHT APPEARS ON THE WALL BEHIND HIM. A LIVE WEBCAM IMAGE OF HIS FACE APPEARS IN THE FRAME AS HE MIMICS THE FOLLOWING EMOTIONS:

INTEREST

HE RAISES ONE EYEBROW AND RAISES AND LOWERS THE OTHER

SYMPATHY

HE CRINKLES HIS FOREHEAD AND NODS GENTLY

ATTRACTION

ANONYMOUS “Try to blush. Not easy this (but thoughts of what you’re going to do to her later will help) and a blush usually begot a blush. If you could muster a blush, she was more than likely to blush back.”

CHARM

HE COCKS HIS HEAD TO ONE SIDE AND SMILES APOLOGETICALLY.

ANONYMOUS “I'd supply these masks on cue. It was easy. Enjoyable even. Most guys did it to get laid. I did it to get even. I felt better when I saw someone else in pain. But because they hid how much I was hurting them it became necessary to condense everything into the one demonstrative moment.”

(ON SCREEN) IN CLOSE-UP WE SEE HIS BLUE EYES.

HE TAPS THE COMPUTER AGAIN AND A TOPLESS GIRL APPEARS WITH HER FACE BLURRED TO HIDE HER IDENTITY

ANONYMOUS (flicking through the book) “Let’s see...Sophie was from South London. She was a make-up artist for Angus Brady on the comedy show “Aren’t You Glad To See Me?” I met her at a Camberwell Art School party I crashed. After her, there was that designer girl (whose name I honestly can’t remember... “

(ON SCREEN) ANOTHER PHOTO OF A HALF-DRESSED GIRL

ANONYMOUS “...who I’m sure I hurt very deeply because she never called me back. Funny that because even though I never met her again or even heard her say another word I knew she had it bad. How do I know? I know.“

(ON SCREEN) ANOTHER PHOTO OF A GIRL WITH HER FACE COVERED

ANONYMOUS “There was Jenny. She was the one who threw the beer in my face. I was thrilled to have caused so much rage.”

(ON SCREEN) ANOTHER PHOTO OF A GIRL WITH HER FACE COVERED

ANONYMOUS “Then there was Emily. But she doesn’t really count because she was as good if not better at whatever this is than I was. In fact, I kind of fell for her.”

(ON SCREEN) ANOTHER PHOTO OF A HALF DRESSED GIRL

ANONYMOUS “Laura was somewhere in there. An ex-band-manager with a superb arse that had survived a young son. I woke up one morning and there was an eight-year-old boy looking on as I tried to extricate myself from the freckled tentacles of his comatose mother. After he guilted me into walking him to school I got the feeling that mother and son made full use of the men that passed through their lives. Like the Native American and the Buffalo, The Eskimo and the Seal, The Welfare Mother and Me.”

(ON SCREEN) ANOTHER PHOTO OF A GIRL...THIS ONE IS DRESSED

ANONYMOUS “And then there was the one who started it all. Penelope Arlington. I’d been going out with her for four and a half years. Long time. She’d been nice to me. I began with something like this.“

THE LIGHTS GO DOWN AND WHEN THEY COME BACK UP THERE’S A PRETTY BLONDE GIRL SITTING IN FRONT OF HIM

ANONYMOUS (only slightly drunk) “How can I dismantle four years?”

PENNY “Like my new blouse?”

ANONYMOUS “Looks. Like. A. Table. Cloth.

PENNY Another?

ANONYMOUS “Girlfriend? Yes please.”

PENNY “Let’s go somewhere else.”

ANONYMOUS (to audience) “This would usually work but I’ve decided that tonight it isn’t going to. Not tonight. Tonight we’re going all the way. This was just the perimeter, the initial sandbags of defense. My svelte band of emotional terrorists skipped mischievously over these insults to their training.”

ANONYMOUS (to Penny) “Sure. Let’s go somewhere else.”

ANONYMOUS (to audience) “I resolved to say nothing between this pub and the next. I succeeded. She was trembling now. Unsure. I was trembling, too. From excitement.”

AGAIN WE SEE HIS FACE IN WEBCAM ON THE SCREEN BEHIND.

ANONYMOUS “This is what I look like when I’m pretending to listen to your boring conversation.”

ONSCREEN HE FREEZES HIS SWEETEST EXPRESSION AS HIS EYES WIDE IN MOCK-INTEREST.

AFTER A PAUSE HE TURNS HIS HEAD AWAY LIKE AN IMPRESSIONIST READING HIMSELF FOR HIS NEXT CHARACTER.

ANONYMOUS “This is what I look like when I’m pretending to be in love with you.”

HE GAZES UPWARDS LOVINGLY BUT RESPECTFUL

ANONYMOUS “Here’s what I look like when I’m pretending you are even slightly witty just so I can get laid later on.”

HE THROWS HIS HEAD BACK IN A CONVINCING GUFFAW COMBINED WITH A HEAD TILT AND A SNEAKY LOOK SIDEWAYS OUT OF HIS EYES.

ANONYMOUS “And this is me.”

HIS FACE IS NOW RELAXED AND EXPRESSIONLESS

ANONYMOUS (to Penny) “You think I’m joking. Don’t you?”

PENNY IS SILENT UNSURE WHAT TO SAY

ANONYMOUS (continues) “I’m going to dismantle us tonight. And there’s nothing you can do about it. You’ll have to sit there and listen while I wrench the U from the S. You’ll question your own judgment. Maybe you’ll never really trust yourself again. I hope so. Because if I don’t want you, and believe me I don’t, then I don’t want you being happy with someone else when there’s any doubt that I might get another girl.”

PENNY REMAINS SILENT.

HE PAUSES FOR EFFECT.

ANONYMOUS “Your cunt is loose.”

ANONYMOUS “Let me put it another way. Your vagina is baggy...feels overused.”

ANONYMOUS “Your tits sag.”

HE LEANS BACK IN HIS CHAIR THE BETTER TO VIEW THE EFFECT.

ANONYMOUS “They’re too big and they hang too low.”

ANONYMOUS “To get a hard-on I have to think of some girl I’ve seen on the bus.”

ANONYMOUS “By the way, I had sex with another girl other than the one I told you about.”

ANONYMOUS “Had enough?”

NO HESITATION FROM PENNY. A NOD. DOWN AND UP AGAIN.

ANONYMOUS (to audience) “She was so much in shock now there was no point in continuing.”

PENNY SITS FROZEN IN TIME

ANONYMOUS “So there’s me. My baby’d left me and I was entering a world of pain...not all of it mine. Cue the country music.”

BUT INSTEAD OF COUNTRY MUSIC WE HEAR SOME DISTURBING INDUSTRIAL ELECTRONIC MUSIC. IT'S VERY LOUD AND TUNELESS.

ANONYMOUS NODS TO THE MUSIC AND THEN MAKING A WIPING GESTURE IT STOPS ABRUPTLY AS THE LIGHTS CHANGE AND PENNY EXITS

ANONYMOUS “So now I was ready to pass on my learning to the uninitiated. The unhurt. The innocents. With the girlfriend out of the way I'd be better able to dedicate myself. I was seriously pissed off and all I wanted was for others to feel this too. Especially girls. A girl had caused this so a girl would have to pay.

I wanted to hurt. It was a whole new world to me. I'd never known it was possible to be hurt so much. I'd been beaten up lots of times but it was nothing like this. I hadn't expected physical pain. A burning sensation in my chest as if a large smoldering boulder had somehow lodged there overnight. A kind of drawn-out slowly unfolding panic. The exact opposite of excitement.”

Accompanying this were shooting pains running downward along the back of my arms. What was this? Rejection? Was it really this tangible? If I could be hurt like this then surely I could also cause it in others.”

This consoled me.

I studied and stored away each new flinch of discomfort. I recorded what happened and how it affected me. I called and asked her answering machine to hurt me.

In order to be free I needed to hate her. I knew it was over but I couldn't bear the fact that

I still needed her. So I begged her to hurt me, which she did by refusing to. Meanwhile, I stumbled into the night in search of hearts to stab.”

1) A NAKED SPOT-LIT GIRL LIES FROZEN ON THE COUCH WITH HER BODY ARCHING IN ECSTASY AS ANONYMOUS EXPLAINS:

ANONYMOUS “An English teacher. Twenty-five-ish. A virgin. No, really... she said I had “an enviable command of the English language.” I wasn't sure what I was going to do to her but the answer came to me when I slipped into her bed after cooking my special boned chicken the preparation of which scared even me because it involved so much tearing of flesh from bone. She was engaged to be married (I hated her for that) it emerged in conversation that being a virgin embarrassed her. She didn't want her fiancé to find her still intact on their wedding night.”

ANONYMOUS WALKS AROUND HER AS HE SPEAKS

ANONYMOUS “Should I teach her some filthy tricks that would sow seeds of doubt in the mind of the groom? It seemed obvious that I should leave her virginity intact. It became about him How to hurt him through her. Fuck her in the ass? That would still leave her a virgin. After a huge bottle of wine, most of which I drank straight from the bottle, I agreed to sleep on the couch which I did until 4am when I awoke with a stiffy. Feeling compelled to introduce to her I found only token resistance. She really did want to lose her cherry. But I didn’t like the idea of me as sexual plumber. I wanted to be present on her wedding night. I wanted her body to remember mine in the same way I remembered Penelope’s.”

ANONYMOUS KNEELS DOWN AND POSITIONS HIS HEAD BETWEEN HER LEGS THE GIRL WHO AFTER ARRANGING HERSELF ON HER ELBOWS BEGINS TO LIP SYNCH ANONYMOUS’ MONOLOGUE

NAKED GIRL SPEAKING (ventriloquizing Anonymous’ voice) “I began licking her out. For two hours. When she became too sensitive I waited and started lapping again very gently. I occasionally stopped to tell her how beautiful she looked. I blew cool air on her. I stroked the insides of her thighs and tried to imagine I was in love with her so I could behave accordingly. I pushed a finger in and could feel the stalactite of her hymen. I was careful not to break it. At one point, I had a finger either side of it. Raising her hips she offered her pelvic cup to me and I sipped and drank noisily satisfied that her wedding night would be the first of many nights of sexual frustration as she tried to communicate her sexual needs to hubbykins without inferring a lack of sexual prowess on his part. It would provide an incentive to develop her own “enviable command of the English language.”

THE LIGHTS GO DOWN AND THEN UP AGAIN

WE’RE NOW IN A HOUSE PARTY...THERE ARE YOUNG PEOPLE STANDING AROUND DRINKING AND CHATTING

ANONYMOUS USES A NAPKIN TO WIPE HIS MOUTH BEFORE RESUMING.

ANONYMOUS (picks up the book again) “From the moment I met Jenny, I knew I was going to hurt her. It was just a matter of where and when. I suppose it was no fault of hers that she even looked a little like Pen. It was that fact that seemed to sanction my actions. After being out all night, I was reluctantly heading in the general direction of what I mockingly referred to as home, when I realized I needed more booze. There was never enough of the stuff. I even dreamt about it. One night I was drinking whiskey and even as

it was going down my throat I was thinking, "I want a drink." Tricky one. But by this time I'd become quite adept at gate-crashing parties. I'd press the buzzer and say..."

2) THE DOORBELL SOUNDS...WE HEAR ANONYMOUS'S VOICE THROUGH THE TANNOY:

ANONYMOUS "Sorry I'm late."

THERE IS A BUZZING SOUND AS ANONYMOUS ENTERS STAGES LEFT AND MAKES STRAIGHT FOR THE FRIDGE WHICH UPON OPENING HAS AN UNNATURAL HEAVENLY GLOW

SFX (SOUND OF JOYOUS ANGELS SINGING)

ANONYMOUS "The clink of music as it opened. The glow from within. There. A full and as yet unopened. A bottle of cheap wine with some assorted cans of beer, stragglers from six-packs. Get the wine into a pint glass fast so you're not clutching any bottle that might be recognized by its owner. "

NOTICING A PRETTY GIRL ON THE COUCH HE SITS DOWN BESIDE HER

ANONYMOUS "And there she was. Sitting on a couch all alone. Alone on a couch at 4am at a party where there were only three people standing and I was one of them. Long-legged and elegant and definitely out of place she reminded me of a Vogue photo shoot. Beautiful upmarket girl in dingy surroundings. Turned out she he was the rich and well-read daughter of a local politician."

ANONYMOUS MAKES A BIG SHOW GETTING UP OUT OF THE COUCH

ANONYMOUS "Yes I knew that asking her to dance while not being able to get out of the couch, was endearing. And that dancing with a pint of wine in one hand and a joint in the other was mischievous. Before we knew it we were kissing. Yes we eventually went to her place and fucked I fucked her from every angle I could think of. Yes, including that one. She was so apologetic that she had to go away that following week. How would we manage without seeing each other for all that time. I assured her I'd find something to do. Or someone."

3) THE LIGHTS GO DOWN AND WHEN THEY COME UP AGAIN ANOTHER GIRL (LIZZIE) IS LYING ON THE KITCHEN FLOOR. HER SKIRT IS DOWN AROUND HER ANKLES AND HER SWEATER IS PUSHED UP OVER HER FACE EXPOSING HER HEAVING BREASTS.

ANONYMOUS EXPLAINS

ANONYMOUS “Lizzie owned her own flat. Beautiful hardwood floors and lovely high ceilings. She also had hairs on her arse. That was bad enough but her real crime was that she really liked me. I soon took care of that. We ended up having sex on the kitchen floor in the middle of her making some bullshit vegetarian meal. On the dirty linoleum as the pots boiled symbolically overhead. Her face. Looking up at me in disbelief.

I left her there like that. I never saw her again. Later she left a message on my machine saying I’d raped her. Emotionally speaking maybe I did, but physically she was up for it. No question about it. She was loving it. I could see her already storing away the memories as I fucked her. Her face scanning up and down recording the images like a flesh-covered camera; Close-up of my face... pan down for a wide-shot of the action below...cut...FADE TO BLACK“

LIGHTS GO TO BLACK AND WHEN THEY COME UP WE SEE JENNY AGAIN WITH LUGGAGE FRESH BACK FROM HER TRIP

JENNY “How was your week?”

ANONYMOUS “Not bad. Got laid.”

REACTING TO HIS PROVOKING GRIN SHE EMPTIES HER GLASS INTO HIS FACE

ANONYMOUS (to audience) “I thought she’d slapped me. I’d never had beer thrown in my face before. It was so... ..flattering.”

PENNY WHIPS HER JACKET FROM THE BACK OF THE CHAIR AND EXITS STAGE LEFT. ANONYMOUS LICKS HIS LIPS MISCHIEVOUSLY AND TURNS TO THE AUDIENCE.

ANONYMOUS “Chicks! Mind you, I hadn’t just delivered the line I’d accompanied with the The Smirk. Penny had felt the thrust of its girth and now Jenny knew it’s effect. Speaking of slapping and the art of The Smirk, it had been a long time since I begged to be beaten up. The Swan in South London was the ideal setting for just such a beating.”

ANONYMOUS ARRANGES SOME CHAIRS TO IMITATE A COUNTER IN A PUB AND DONS A COAT AS A TALL RED HAISED MAN JOINS HIM AT THE “COUNTER”

ANONYMOUS “Very Irish, very fist-happy. Many many bouncers. They’d stand on stools, the better to police the goings-on which consisted mostly of heavily drinking Irish exiles like myself. I was deep in conversation with a tall red-haired man from Dublin.

There was much jostling for position as the other exiles attempted to get a little closer to their beloved homeland via Guinness. The spot that the Dub and I occupied was sacred. Right in front of the counter. It was necessary to get there at 3pm in the afternoon to occupy such a position. I'd been there since 1pm. So I turn to the Dub and inform him quite truthfully."

ANONYMOUS (to Dubliner) "I've been listening to your shit all day and I'm fucking sick of it. I wouldn't mind but to top it all off you have to be from Dublin."

WITHOUT HESITATING THE DUBLINER HEAD-BUTTS HIM

ANONYMOUS "I saw blood dollop into my pint glass and I debated whether I should try to strain this blood through my teeth in order to salvage the inch of cider left in the bottom of the glass. I began to see it as important to contain the dripping blood within the glass. Mustn't for some reason get the place all bloody. It had taken me this long to realize I'd been head-butted. There was no pain. Just a dimming of lights. Like someone turning down one of those knobs inside a living-room door."

THE LIGHTS GO DOWN AND UP AGAIN AS IF TO DEMONSTRATE

ANONYMOUS "Yes... thank you. I decided instead to make an announcement."

ANONYMOUS (to bar) "One of us is going to leave this bar and it isn't going to be me."

DUBLINER "No. We'll keep it clean. No glasses."

HORRIFIC PICTURE OF GLASS-VICTIMS APPEAR ONSCREEN

ANONYMOUS (to audience) "To be "glassed" is to receive a pint-glass in the face. The mouth of the glass is positioned around the chin and under the nose and a great deal of force is then applied with the ball of the hand to the base of the glass. The handsome features that hover over the writing of these words can only wince at the thought of what might have occurred that evening."

TWO HEAVY LOOKING BOUNCERS GRAB THE DUBLINER AND BEGIN TO DRAG HIM AWAY JUST AS THE DUBLINER GRABS ANONYMOUS BY THE COAT. BUT ANONYMOUS STEPS GINGERLY OUT OF HIS COAT AND CONTINUES TALKING TO THE AUDIENCE.

ANONYMOUS "And so it transpired that one of us did leave the bar that night, and it wasn't me."

ANONYMOUS “And that was when I met ...let’s see...I still can’t remember her name. She was, or claimed to be, a designer. Wild curly brown hair. Shiny. Attractive. Thirty-three, looked thirty-eight. Old when you’re twenty-nine. But mind you, I felt eighty.”

4) SPOTLIGHT ON A REDHAired GIRL ON A STOOL

ANONYMOUS (to Girl) “You like trees?”

ANONYMOUS (to audience) “That was all I said to her. She told me later that my question enthralled her. She had just broken up with her live-in boyfriend and had a young son. She’d had some emotional problems. Attempts at suicide were touched upon. A mental ward was mentioned. My ears perked up. I heard “Kill me.” I hoped to excel myself here. If I could hurt her enough I might be able to nudge her over the edge. After all I’d only be helping her do what she wanted to do. It’d be assisted suicide. And more to the point it’d be a good test of my powers.”

WE SEE THEM BOTH COMATOSE HALF COVERED BY A SHEET

A YOUNG BOY DRESSED IN A DUFFEL COAT ENTERS AND LOOKS AT THEM.

LITTLE BOY “Mum?”

ANONYMOUS WAKES BUT SHE DOESN’T. ANONYMOUS GETS AN IDEA. HE LIFTS THE SHEET SO THAT HER SON CAN SEE HIS SPREAD-EAGLED MOTHER

LITTLE BOY (ignoring this shocking sight) “I need someone to walk me to school.”

ANONYMOUS RELUCTANTLY GETS OUT OF BED AND TAKES THE BOY’S HAND

ANONYMOUS (to audience) “It thrilled me to think I could cause a death by proxy, but she proved too strong or stupid or both. It was from her that I learned the technique that would later save me. She continued to call and inquire after my well-being. It was the way to win. I had to hand it to her. I couldn’t quite accept her nonchalance, but there it was. In retrospect, I think she just wanted to show how well she was taking it. Otherwise why call?”

HE WAVES GOODBYE TO THE BOY WHO EXITS STAGE LEFT TO GO TO SCHOOL AS ANONYMOUS FLOPS DOWN EXHAUSTED INTO THE COUCH

ANONYMOUS “I could talk about how I was abused by a De La Salle Brother when I was nine...”

A DE LA SALLES BROTHER ENTERS STAGE RIGHT AND SITS BESIDE ANONYMOUS ON THE COUCH...HIS HAND SNEAKS OUT OF HIS HABIT AND TRIES TO PULL DOWN ANONYMOUS’S FLY AS HE SPEAKS.

ANONYMOUS “...how I felt the row of desks shaking behind me as he played with his star pupil in the back. How I’d had to put a safety pin through the fly of my short pants to prevent this young Brother’s religious fervor. And when he went up the leg instead I begged my mother to let me wear long trousers. “I wasn’t old enough,” she said, “and anyway it was summer and surely to God, Brother Eddie was only being friendly.” Yes friendly.”

ANONYMOUS “But It wasn’t serious abuse...I mean, I never took it in the arse...”

THE DE LA SALLE BROTHER EXITS...DISGRUNTLED

ANONYMOUS “Brother Eddie was later prosecuted for his crime and in a way, so was I for mine. And if you like that, here’s another one.”

THE LIGHTS GO DOWN ANONYMOUS IS SPOTLIT. THERE’S AN IMAGE ON THE WALL BEHIND HIM LIKE A MEMORY OVER HIS HEAD

A MAN IN HIS LATE FORTIES IS SHAVING HIS LOWER FACE IS COVERED IN SHAVING FOAM.

ANONYMOUS “It was a cold morning in Deelford. My father is shaving. The light is on above the bathroom mirror, so it must be winter.”

ANONYMOUS (to Father in a little boy’s voice) “If you don’t get me a new set of soldiers, I’ll never speak to you again.”

HIS FATHER LEANS IN UNTIL HIS FACE FILLS THE SCREEN

FATHER “I. Don’t. Care.”

ANONYMOUS “He said it very quietly. As if he wanted to make sure the message was for me only. Or maybe he was afraid my mother would hear. Not much fear of that.”

ANONYMOUS STEPS BACK

ANONYMOUS “ Seeds were sown. Maybe this stuff has links to other stuff that happened later. Maybe not. Maybe I was emulating the only relationship I’d ever had by gaining trust and then breaking it abruptly. But hang on...”

A POSTCARD IMAGE OF A PUB IN DEELFORD APPEARS ON THE SCREEN

ON STAGE - ANONYMOUS AND ANOTHER GUY ARE TRYING TO PUSH THROUGH A CROWD OF PEOPLE. THE GUY IN FRONT REACHES DOWN AND PUTS HIS HAND UNDER THE SKIRT OF AN ATTRACTIVE GIRL AS HE PASSES BY. THE GIRL SEES ANONYMOUS AND SLAPS HIM HARD ACROSS THE FACE. IN A REFLEX ACTION ANONYMOUS PUNCHES HER.

ANONYMOUS “I waited outside the pub for the beating I knew I was about to receive. Didn’t matter what the extenuating circumstances were. I’d hit a girl.”

FIVE GUYS AND THE GIRL ASSEMBLE ON THE STAGE AROUND HIM AFTER MUCH APOLOGIZING AND WRINGING OF HANDS THEY PROCEED TO HALF HEARTEDLY PUNCH AND KICK ANONYMOUS BUT THEIR HEARTS AREN’T IN IT.

ANONYMOUS (to gang) “Jesus Christ I can see up your dresses....What are you doing? Dancing around your handbags? You’re like a gang of faggots..”.

THE MEN ARE RELUCTANT TO START. THEY ARE ALMOST SHY.

ANONYMOUS “..British faggots.”

HEARING THIS THEY ENERGETICALLY POUNCE AND JUST AS THE KICKING BEGINS THE ACTION FREEZES

ANONYMOUS (to audience) “It was over in seconds.”

ANONYMOUS STILL BLEEDING SHAKES HANDS WITH EACH OF THEM. ONE REFUSES BECAUSE HE’S STILL HURT BY WHAT WAS SAID.

ANONYMOUS (picking up the book again) “Ok so ...I began to go to Alcoholics Anonymous and slowly very slowly I got better. I still go to meetings today. I hope I will always go to them. And I stayed away from the dreaded female for the next five years. Five and a half actually.”

MONTAGE OF IMAGES ON THE BACK WALL SHOW BILLBOARDS AND GENERIC TV COMMERCIALS...A BUSINESS CARD WITH THE NAME AND

COMPANY BLANKED OUT....AWARDS....EXOTIC LOCATIONS WITH CAMERA CREWS... AND FAT WADS OF ENGLISH 20 POUND NOTES.

ANONYMOUS “And my career took off. Big time. I got a job in one of London’s most renowned advertising agencies and together with my creative partner we won awards and earned the respect within the business. We were quite famous at one point. You'd probably recognize some of the ads we did. We worked hard during the day and I attended AA meetings at night. I never really found it difficult to come up with ideas.

It was the awful corporate politeness I found so draining. I didn’t know that London’s corporate world was virtually anarchic compared to its American counterpart.

But the more I got sober the more I began to feel my creative wasn’t pulling his weight I began to see myself as the talented one. He was dead weight. We'd been staring at each other across a desk for four years and I couldn’t count the times I’d had to resist diving across and burying my thumbs in his larynx. We ended amicably though. We really did. He ended up with another partner in the same agency and I was approached by a headhunter who represented one of the few very good agencies in the States...well sort of...in the states. They were based in St Lacroix. The moment she said the company's name I knew it was the right thing to do. I was due for two weeks holiday in France with some of my AA friends so I said we'd talk when I got back. But she didn’t want to wait. She was keen that I call from France. So I did. Killallon Fitzpatrick’s creative director was visiting London for a few days, doing interviews.”

DURING THE TELEPHONE CONVERSATION WITH GRAHAM ANONYMOUS PUTS THE PHONE ON HOLD WHEN HE ADDRESSES US

ANONYMOUS “The conversation that started the ball rolling on the events of the following three years took place in the rattling hallway of an old French farm house in the Dordogne with dogs barking and the Mistral shaking the windows trying to get in.

I had no idea what he looked like but his voice sounded hilariously American. Like one of my friends was taking the piss out of me. The smell of cooking surrounded me, and it must have made me feel more homely than I had a right to because I pitched myself to this American as the Irish equivalent of Jimmy Stewart, only half his height and talent. It was exactly what he wanted to hear. He virtually fell in love with me.”

ANONYMOUS “Is that the Graham? Hi Graham so glad you could take my call.”

GRAHAM’S VOICE (Very American accent) “They talk about the cold a lot but I imagine for someone coming from Ireland it shouldn’t be that bad. I mean it’s not LA but then who wants to live in LA? And you can buy a house by the lake... “

ANONYMOUS (to audience) “I had already decided I would take the job before I even spoke to him. All he was doing now was convincing himself that he’d convinced me. Ad people need to feel like they’ve tricked you so that they can feel clever.”

GRAHAM’S VOICE “...and you’re just about the right age for the job...and there are plenty lovely ladies working in the agency we have a policy of hiring the prettiest girls ...and well I can tell you that as a foreigner you’ll be pretty popular.”

ANONYMOUS (to audience) “Pimp. But it was ok I was ripe for it. Of course, I loved London but I was bored. I’d gotten the awards, I’d succeeded. Time for something new. I told him I didn’t care if it was cold because all I ever did was work anyway.”

ANONYMOUS (to Graham)

“Hah...that sounds like a great way to stay warm. And of course you know I don’t drink or smoke so I hope I won’t be too boring for you. And from the sounds of it I might just be in the right place since I’m getting to the age where I’m starting to think about getting married.”

THERE IS A PAUSE

ANONYMOUS (to audience) “There followed a moment of silence, which could only be satisfactorily explained by him punching the air in triumph and straightening his clothes before continuing. He began to talk like someone I’d known for years, dropping all use of the conditional tense in favor of the future...my future.”

ANONYMOUS HANGS UP BUT HE HOLDS THE PHONE EXPECTANTLY

ANONYMOUS “My dad had a rather nasty bubbly cough when he was driving me to the railway station. A month into my new job, in my new country, in my new city, in my new house, I got a call from my mother asking the most ridiculous question.”

THE PHONE RINGS AGAIN

MOTHER “Are you sitting down?”

ANONYMOUS (stands up) “Yes.”

ANONYMOUS (to audience) “I knew immediately that my dad was dead. Only, he wasn’t. She said he was doing very poorly and that I should expect to come back at any moment. My new bosses were very understanding and even helped me book a flight. You only get a cheaper flight if you can prove you have a relative who is seriously ill. You have to give them the hospital phone number. So I flew back and I’m guilty still over the fact that I hoped my father would die within the week I had allotted for my quality time at home.

Ever the gentleman, he obliged. He was dusted, dead and buried with a day to spare and, to my shame, I was back at work the following Monday.”

ANONYMOUS PACKING BAGS

ANONYMOUS “In my office on the thirty-second floor of a green-glass skyscraper looking out on the flatness of the Midwest, which stretched for hundreds of miles in every direction, I might just as well have arrived on the moon. I got myself hooked up with the local AA groups, which were great. I began to feel better. St Lacroix is the capital of rehab. They have more rehab centers than anywhere else in the world. This was one of the reasons I felt so comfortable about moving there. But just outside the grounds of the “Pentagon of Treatment Centers,” (better known as Hazleton) there is a bar. Yes, that’s right, a bar that sells alcoholic beverages. In that bar there is a sign on the wall. For every year you stay sober, you receive a little metallic coin called a chip. This sign offers free booze to any lapsed member of AA willing to exchange his chip. The wall behind the counter glitters with these chips.”

A SIGN APPEARS ON THE SCREEN AA CHIPS EXCHANGED

ANONYMOUS “I was suddenly making \$200k a year, my ego had been fluffed to the point of ejaculation, my favorite pieces of furniture had been carefully packed and shipped, my mother had been sent a huge bouquet of flowers sympathizing with the loss of her husband, my father, and the unspoken, unwritten expectation hung over me.

“Okay, big shot, let's go”

I thought a year would be more than enough and I only bought the house to convince them I was serious. It'd easy to sell and if I played my cards right I' might even make some money on the fucker...and anyway when was I ever going to be able to afford a Victorian house with hardwood floors and a cute swing seat on the verandah like in The Waltons? The agency talked to the bank to help me get it. And I got it. And it was great.... for about a month.

No one else appreciated the irony of a mostly empty house owned by a shaven-headed Irishman who didn't seem responsible enough to have been granted a mortgage. This amused me. It would not have seemed unnatural if someone had kicked in my door I half-expected the bank to knock on my door one day and say, “There's been a mistake. Get out.” And I would have left quietly since I really didn't think I deserved such good fortune.”

WE HEAR A LOUD KNOCK ON THE DOOR AND THE VOICE OF A MINNESOTAN MAN FROM OFF STAGE

MINNESOTAN MAN “I was noticin’ how you were havin’ some trouble with your lawn-care and well I thought you might find this leaflet interestin’”

ANONYMOUS (to audience) “The lazy pronunciation of words like interestin’ is code for informality. Saying "interest- in" instead of "interest-ing" is their way of announcin’ they are just regular guys. I drew on the ten years of Britishness that lay in reserve for moments like these.”

ANONYMOUS (sounding British) “Oh thank you very much that’s really very kind of you.”

ANONYMOUS (to audience) The lawn mower I borrowed from yet another neighbor had a full tank of gas and even I knew that it would need to be returned full. Such a task would entail conversation with a petrol-pump-assistant.

WE HEAR A MINNESOTAN MAN’S VOICE FROM OFF STAGE

MINNESOTAN MAN You’re not from around here, are ya?

ANONYMOUS (to audience) “Every time. I’d change my accent. Flatten it a little. At least I could pretend I was from New York or Los Angeles. This way they wouldn't feel as if they'd landed such a catch. The first job they put me on was a huge project overseeing the commercials for the launch of a new car and motorcycle from BNV which relied on a link-up with the Shane Pond movie Tomorrow Forever Cries. Both products were being featured in the movie and they wanted three commercials and a print campaign to announce this highly attractive association of icons.”

ONSCREEN THERE ARE MOTORBIKES, CAR CHASES, HOT GIRLS AND LOGOS

ANONYMOUS “It was a pain in the arse. You had to feature the car prominently while at the same time showing clips from the movie. Very difficult to get a nice clean idea when you had to include so many separate elements. On top of that there were three different clients to deal with. BNV North America, BNV Germany and DGR Pictures. It took nearly nine months and three times as many flights to get the bastard finished.”

HE LOOKS AT THE AUDIENCE AS IF NOTICING A CHANGE OF MOOD

ANONYMOUS “And yes...I am of course aware that hearing this you could conclude that any unhappiness I experienced was homemade. That my overt suspicion of his good intentions was in itself the problem. But it's what I do. I suspect. It's the other stuff I find hard. Like trusting people. Foreign concept. Just ask any of the billions of girls I haven't dated.”

HE LIES DOWN ON THE COUCH

ANONYMOUS “I only mention all this stuff about advertising to give you a background. The real thrust of what I want to tell you about tonight is how I became purged of my sins against women and against myself. After all we’re not punished for our sins we're punished by them. Also, I'm completely paranoid. I mean, seriously paranoid. Not just mildly interested in the fact that there may be people who don't necessarily have my best interests at heart. No. The word is paranoid. Another word is self-centered. I don't like that one as much, though. Doesn't sound medical enough. The paranoia is worth mentioning because it sometimes fuels my crazy thinking. At one point I thought Pen was paying people to follow me. Why she was doing this was not totally clear. My paranoia only gives broad scenarios. It's too lazy to go into detail. I somehow believed that people, ordinary people on the street, were operatives in her employ. Their mission was to disrupt me psychologically. Every time I left my basement flat a random old lady or a man with his daughter or a passing cyclist became highly trained undercover enemies. In a way THIS is my therapy. And that makes all of you my therapists. I hope you're taking notes.”

IT BEGINS TO SNOW OUTSIDE THE WINDOW

ANONYMOUS (to audience) “Ahh yes, the Winter. If you're smiling, and brimming with fun, and full of lip, some Lutheran type will savor the moment before saying... “

LUTHERN VOICE “You wait.”

ANONYMOUS “ They don't like happiness. Seriously. All that Swedish/Norwegian influence has the same effect as a big wet hairy blanket that freezes hard in The Winter for two thirds of the year. Ten months of snow and two months of bad ice-skating. If you live there, the frozen-ness becomes relative. You feel a sense of elation if you wake up one morning and the asshole on the TV says it's minus 17 degrees instead of the minus 30 it was the day before. You're ready to break out your shorts and sandals. To any sane person, from the real world, it's still fucking freezing.”

A GIRL WEARING A BIKINI IN A TRAVEL AD APPEARS ON THE SCREEN SUDDENLY SHE COMES TO LIFE AND SPEAKS.

GIRL IN AD “You are a fucking idiot.”

ANONYMOUS “You'd cry, but tears would probably freeze and blind you. You don't know what tears do at these temperatures. How could you? You're not from here. You have no experience of this. You train myself to derive a perverse pleasure from the surrealism of the place. Hell in reverse. Instead of fire and brimstone, it's snow and ice. There exists in Minnesotan myth, a phenomenon that at certain temperatures somewhere

in the minus 40s, a cup of coffee thrown into the air will crystallize before hitting the ground. I'd already heard this at least three times before experiencing my first winter. The purpose I suppose, of this little fact was to scare the fucking shit out of newcomers. It has a beautiful disguise built into it. On one level it appeared to be an interesting fact worthy of mentioning. It even had what we call in advertising a mnemonic. That is to say, it has one memorable idea you can take away from it. The story would come under the heading of The One Where Coffee Freezes in the Air. It has that fact as a decoy for the storyteller. The storyteller can impart this tale in the guise of one who is merely sharing knowledge. The truth though, has more to do with the satisfaction wrought from the face of the listener as he realizes just how fucking freezing it must be for a cup of coffee to turn into crystals in mid-air. He has to decide whether to react honestly, blanch and throw-up, or dishonestly, feign interest in the actual physics. On one particular night, my Victorian house had a bed, a table, a hi-fi and a Texan friend in it. I mention what state he was from only because it removes any authority we might attribute to him concerning his knowledge of all things fucking freezing."

BIG TEXAN GUY ENTERS STAGE LEFT

TEXAN "Dude, it's minus 35 outside. Let's try that coffee deal."

ANONYMOUS (to Texan) "It's not cold enough."

ANONYMOUS (to audience) "I was afraid of having to make coffee and demonstrate my ignorance of the coffeemaker, which I had never used and only had because someone had given it to me as a moving-in present."

TEXAN "Dude, with wind-chill it's plenty cold."

ANONYMOUS "Well, I don't want to make coffee. I don't think I have any."

TEXAN "Dude, water'll do fine. Boil some water."

ANONYMOUS (to audience) "What the hell, I was bored listening to how great Texas was anyway. I actually did have some saucepans, believe it or not, and before you could say "Remember The Alamo," we had a pan of water boiling."

TEXAN "Dude, wait till it's bubblin'. It's gotta be bubblin', otherwise it won't work."

TEX WALKS CAREFULLY WITH THE SAUCEPAN OFF-STAGE

ANONYMOUS (to audience) "Well fuck it, if it was true I didn't want to miss it. So he's out on the top step and it looks like there's smoke coming out the saucepan now because of the contrast between hot and cold. He's holding the pan in front of him. He says

“Dude” one more time just because there’s an opportunity to and leaning back, flings the contents into the black sky. There is a little glint amongst all the steam.”

WE HEAR AN ANGUISHED ROAR

ANONYMOUS (to audience) “He’s looking directly ahead. He is shuddering. At first, I thought he was cold. But then I realize it’s the other way. The water, the boiling water, having gone up and then came down and landed on him. Far from crystallizing, it only cooled slightly, and this fact alone saved him a trip to the hospital.”

LIGHTS CHANGE

ANONYMOUS “The house wouldn’t sell. My estate agent advised me was to dress it up a little. Basically give the impression someone lived there. Someone normal. So I rented furniture, the kind of furniture that looked like a middle-aged woman lived there. And I tended the garden, installed flowers, mowed the lawns and yes I even baked bread so that the aroma would exude homeliness. I became the very thing I had until then relished not being, in order to sell that whore of a house. But it wouldn’t budge.”

HE CHECKS ON THE BREAD IN THE OVEN AND WAFTS THE AROMA AT THE AUDIENCE

ANONYMOUS “Makes you wonder what I’m selling you tonight doesn’t it?” By the way, I fully accept that a lot of what I’m saying here is my own paranoia. Everything that follows could well be my own imaginings and totally unfounded. I mean, the actual facts and figures are true. Dates, salaries, locations, awards, etc... But the motivations and emotions of the people surrounding those solids are smoke.”

VARIOUS FIGURES APPEAR FROM EITHER SIDE OF THE STAGE AND ARRANGE THEMSELVES IN A SEMI-CIRCLE IN FRONT OF HIM. WE ONLY SEE THE BACKS OF THEIR HEADS AS THEY SIT FACING HIM ON FOLD-UP CHAIRS.

ANONYMOUS “Ok, I have to tell you about something that happened the first Christmas after my dad died. Remember now, I’ve only been in Minnesota four months. My mother and I were sitting in the kitchen sizing each other up. We were both in shock; her from the fact that her husband of forty years was suddenly missing, (she told me she had a dream where they were on holiday and she couldn't find him) and me from losing my father and being uprooted to live in the Arctic.”

ANONYMOUS TAKES A LEGLESS TUKEY OUT OF THE FRIDGE AND HOLDS IT UP

ANONYMOUS (sits facing the semi circle) “It was the first time my mother had ever bought a turkey on her own and it had seemed like a bargain to buy the one with no legs because it was considerably cheaper than the able-bodied version. After a lifetime of having a man to deal with all financial matters, the cost of living had become urgent. But later during that same visit home I was “doing the chair” at the local AA meeting”Doing the Chair” meant a telling your story; how you drank, how you stopped and what it was like now. At smaller meetings they get tired of hearing the same people over and over so when someone arrived home on holiday they often got asked to speak. It was my turn that Sunday. Amongst the regular attendees, many of whom I'd gotten to know quite well over the years, was a young well-dressed red-haired girl, slender, tall, elegant, She definitely stood out. She could have been a model.”

ONE OF THE ATTENDEES LETS HER HOOD DOWN AND REVEALS A BEAUTIFUL HEAD OF RED HAIR

ANONYMOUS “I tried not to embellish my story too much for her sake. I told how I used to enjoy hurting people, girls in particular. I touched on the pleasure I got from it, the pleasure I felt when they reacted with such abhorrence. The need I had to hurt. Not unlike some of the stuff I’ve already shared with you tonight but in a more general way. I went on to say how I now believed this behavior was linked to my alcoholism and that I didn't feel the need to do it anymore. After I finished my talk, the red-haired girl came up and thanked me. Standard procedure. But she said some things that didn't sink in until a year and much turbulence later.”

REDHEAD “I have friend who likes to do things like you talked about. Only she does it to men. She lives in New York.”

ANONYMOUS (not taking her seriously) “Really?”

ANONYMOUS (to audience) “This girl was obviously out of her tree. This happened a lot in AA, someone came in for one meeting and you never saw them again.”

REDHEAD “She knows about you.”

SHE HANDS HIM A COPY OF THE Deelford PEOPLE THE HEADLINE READS; *Deelford BOY DOES WELL*

ANONYMOUS (to audience) “My dad even got a mention as the parent of the wunderkind along with the school I attended and my hobbies (I put writing and music) and I couldn't help but supply the fact that I was single. Well, why not? There might be a nice Irish girl out there reading it...”

HE PAUSES FOR EFFECT

ANONYMOUS "...apparently not."

REDHEAD "It's her eyes. They just can't believe she would be so... evil."

ANONYMOUS (still to audience) "I remember thinking it's a pity she's so fucked up because she's very tasty. But I also figured that who she was talking about had certainly put the fear of God into her. I thought no more about it. Why would I? There are a lot of people, some of them strange, some of them not, who pass through AA all the time."

THE SEATED ACTORS LEAVE THE STAGE ALONG WITH THE REDHEAD

ANONYMOUS "I never saw her again. I headed back to Minnesota for another four months of frightening winter weather. I ducked behind the big broad sheets of The Observer and warmed myself in the flicker of foreign films until the Summer arrived and transformed everything. Where there was once a white sheet of paper there now began to appear the most delicate crayon flicks of grass. And soon after that, leaves and flowers and then....girls."

BEAUTIFUL SHAPELY GIRLS KITTED OUT IN JOGGING GEAR AND ROLLER BLADES APPEAR ONSTAGE AND STRIKE POSES FOR THE AUDIENCE.

ANONYMOUS "Unbelievable Aryan examples of breast and thigh. Healthy to the point of insulting. Like well-trained troops circumnavigating the lakes on bikes, roller-blades and of course, on foot. The Sexual Infantry. I very quickly learned they were married or about-to-be. Snapped up early by canny investors. Go ahead and leer. They'd scratch their noses or adjust their various straps, sending a clear Morse message with those glinting rings."

THEIR ENGAGEMENT RINGS FLASH ON AN OFF AS WE HEAR BEEPING ON THE SCREEN BEHIND WE SEE THE TRANSLATION OF MORSE CODE

--N--O-- --C--H--A--N--C--E-- --P--E--R--V--E--R--T--

ANONYMOUS "The more beautiful and clear-skinned, the bigger and more blinding the glint. It was their fiancé's voice warning you by proxy. Saving you time. How very Minnesotan. Polite. There also seemed to be a great deal of pride in the bulbous nature of a pregnant belly; a phenomenon I had not yet encountered."

ONE OF THE GIRLS TURN AROUND AND WE SEE SHE IS PREGNANT THE OTHER GIRLS COO AND GIGGLE

ANONYMOUS “In London, pregnancy was associated with failure and social death. Here it was actively encouraged. People got promoted after having a kid. A little fleshy anchor prevented the minds of America's corporate soldiers from straying too far from their assignments. However...None of this prevented me from masturbating furiously over these images in the coolness of my own bath later that same today.”

HEARING THIS, THE GIRLS LEAVE THE STAGE DISGUSTED

ANONYMOUS “And as if that wasn't enough many of them drove away in their BNV. By this time the very sight of one in the street made me wince. Still does. But they'd spent all that money bringing me over to their fine country and they wanted me to work on BNFUCKINV so that was that. I had no leverage so I bit my already scarred tongue and mumbled something about this being the last time I was ever going to work on this silly car account. They knew and I knew they were just nodding at me out of boredom. I set to work on the project with a copywriter and pretty soon we had something not half-bad.”

ON SCREEN: GLOSSY PHOTOS OF SILVERWARE MORPHS INTO A CAR

ANONYMOUS “A still-life photographer would make an interesting change. Still-life guys normally shot knives and forks and shoes and shit. Never or rarely cars. This naturally made BNV nervous, but not for long. I did a sell on them with my Irish/English accent and was soon on a plane to New York with a week of shooting ahead. This was my favorite part of working in advertising. The shoots. All I knew about New York was what I'd gleaned five or six years before during St Patrick's week. I was off my face the entire time I was there, and it struck me as a miserable dark and dangerous place. This however, was not the New York that greeted me now.”

STREET-SCENES OF DOWNTOWN NEW YORK IN THE FALL

ANONYMOUS “I shopped. An unheard of luxury for me. Oh they had shops in Minnesota, but in New York no one asked where you were from. They-just-didn't-give-a-fuck. God, I loved that. I turned up at the studio that first day and was treated like a minor celebrity. Obviously they were just licking my arse, but it was hard not to enjoy it. I ended up criticizing how well they were doing it. As if I had my arse in the air saying; “Excuse me, you missed a bit.” Terrible really. It was an unspoken thing. They knew you knew they knew, etc...recurring to infinity.”

HE'S STILL HOLDING HIS ARSE AT AN ANGLE WHEN A PRETTY YOUNG BLONDE GIRL APPROACHES FROM OFF STAGE:

AISLING (smiling) “What part of Ireland are you from?”

ANONYMOUS (embarrassed) “Deelford”

ANONYMOUS (to audience)

“Yes of course I noticed how pretty she was, if not a little young. I'd seen her around the place earlier, but naturally thought she was one of the many assistants photographers seem to need. She was.”

AISLING “Oh that's gas.”

ANONYMOUS (to audience)

I'd only ever heard Irish people use that expression.

ANONYMOUS You're Irish?

AISLING

I am, yeah, from Dublin.

ANONYMOUS (to audience) “I've retraced these few moments many times since.

Looking for clues. Anything that might help me explain what the fuck happened. If anything I thought she was too young. Dangerously young, if you know what I mean. But after talking to her a little longer, I learned that her mother was actually from Deelford and her uncle turned out to be the same guy I had a lot of money tied up with and who happened to be someone my father used to speak very highly of. She was very pretty. Very innocent looking and the fact that she was Irish and had connections in Deelford and that her uncle was my investment advisor seemed to mean something. I allowed it to mean that she was sent by my dead father as a gift to redress the balance for the suffering I'd endured in St Lacroix. She gave me her number and out of sheer lack of knowledge I booked a booth at the same restaurant Brian Tomkinsin had taken me to as his sociable statement a few nights before. After all what would her uncle think if he heard we'd met and I hadn't even offered to take her out?

Her name was Aisling.

Yeah, I liked it, too. It's Gaelic for dream. It's haunted me since. Aisling left a message on my hotel answering machine agreeing to meet me at the restaurant. “

AISLING'S VOICE

AISLING “See you there.”

FADE TO BLACK

LIGHTS UP AND ANONYMOUS IS WAITING BY THE BAR FOR HER.

ANONYMOUS (to audience) “She was a half hour late, but she looked fucking lovely. Very Prada. Those eyes. This is going to sound awful, but I don't care. I'm way past embarrassment. You can't hurt a man with a pinprick when he's already got a spear in his chest. I swear to you that she looked just like the pictures of the Virgin Mary in Irish Catholic homes.”

SPOTLIGHT ON AISLING LOOKING VERY HIGH FASHION WITH DARK GREY HER HOOD UP AND WHITE COLLAR

ANONYMOUS “I kid you not. The Virgin Fuckin' Mary.”

ANONYMOUS (to Aisling) “You look great.”

AISLING “Thanks, so do you.”

ANONYMOUS (to audience) “That was her first lie. She was not stupid. That much was very clear, very quickly. This was no twenty-two, twenty-three or even twenty-four-year-old inexperienced bimbo. She talked older than she looked. I really was thrown by that. I was expecting to spend the evening deflecting compliments of such enormity that I would find myself hating her for her lack of subtlety. Instead, I ended up kicking myself for mine.”

ANONYMOUS IS VERY UNCOMFORTABLE IN HIS SEAT

ANONYMOUS “It was too late. I couldn't suddenly wake up and say, *Oh, I didn't realize you were Intelligent...I thought you were a stupid fawning child unworthy of my best game.*“

ANONYMOUS (to Aisling)

Yeah I was hoping to catch that Keiwsowski retrospective before I left but I don't think I'll have time now.

AISLING “...well you didn't miss much. I was at the opening. A friend of mind worked with Kislovski... she said he was just a dirty old man.

ANONYMOUS “..that makes me feel better about missing it...what about the Durer at the Met?”

AISLING “...they wheel that out every year. You'll definitely get another chance to see that.”

ANONYMOUS (in basic kindergarden Gaelic) “Ta... an catar an mbord.”

SUBTITLES APPEAR ON THE SCREEN BEHIND

The cat is on the table

AISLING (responds in fluent Gaelic) “Is docha go bhuilt muchail ata anseo!!”

SUBTITLES APPEAR ON THE SCREEN BEHIND

I was rather hoping it was lamb

ANONYMOUS (to audience) “She even spoke Gaelic. This was a sign of a classy artsy Irish chick who came from money. To gain access to Ireland’s cultural elite you need fluent Gaelic. And then she began buttering me up shamelessly. “

AISLING GOES IN AND OUT OF MINI-VIGNETTES

AISLING “Oh really, gosh that's great.”

SHE FREEZES

ANONYMOUS (to audience) “But as she continued to talk I was falling totally and irrevocably in love. She was very attentive. That was it. She knew how to handle a guy. She made you feel like it was okay to be a guy. To be yourself. This it seems to me, is the most devastating weapon of all in a woman's arsenal. If you can encourage a man to be himself, to give you his character, his ways, then you know how to navigate him, and therefore, he will never be able to hide from you. “

SHE UNFREEZES

AISLING “They must think a lot of you.”

SHE FREEZES AGAIN

ANONYMOUS (to audience) “The long hands, the direct look, the gentle head-flicks... “

SHE UNFREEZES

AISLING “I wish I had your problems.”

SHE FREEZES AGAIN

ANONYMOUS (*looking at her*) “....commanding the soft tumbling hair, the clear skin on her neck, the gentle slope of her small breasts. Stop. I suddenly realized I was trying to impress her. I felt tricked into it. I wanted to start the whole evening all over again. I

couldn't help thinking she was bored but feigning interest. She had a Bacardi and Coke during dinner. A big one. I had pork chops. I still have the bill. I do.”

ANONYMOUS POINTS TO A DRAWER

ANONYMOUS “I got it back on expenses, but I kept the bill. You see, that night changed my life. If it hadn't been for that night, I wouldn't be sitting here in the East Village in New York City, writing this fucking thing. She said I'd like the East Village. She was right.”

SOME MIDDLE AGED MEN APPEAR AND BEGIN SINGING A BROADWAY NUMBER IN CHORUS

AISLING UNFREEZES AND SMILES

ANONYMOUS “She took me to a gay bar. I hadn't even been in a bar let alone gay bar for years. It took me about a half hour to figure it out.”

AISLING “I'll be back in a sec.”

AISLING EXITS STAGE LEFT

ONE OF THE MEN EDGES CLOSER AND SMILES BROADLY AT ANONYMOUS

ANONYMOUS “She went to the toilet and left me on my own for longer than what I would have thought necessary. For all I know, she might have popped across the street for a leisurely drink.”

AISLING RE-ENTERS STAGE LEFT BUT SLOWS DOWN TO PROLONG HIS DISCOMFORT

ANONYMOUS (relieved) “I'm very happy to see you.”

SHE TAKES HIM BY THE HAND AND WITHOUT WARNING THEY KISS THE GAY MEN RETREAT AND THE LIGHTS GO DOWN

AS THE KISS BECOMES MORE PASSIONATE THE IMAGE OF THE VIRGIN MARY MORPHS INTO A COME-COVERED WHORE

ANONYMOUS (composing himself) “Want to come back to the hotel room?”

AISLING (reluctant) “We can go back to the hotel room as long as we take it easy.”

ANONYMOUS (to audience) “I prayed the key card would work. I also prayed she was over eighteen. In this country one does not want to be associated even jokingly with pedophilia. And this girl did look young. I satisfied myself that she was at least in her twenties, but I still couldn't get it out of my mind that the police were going to kick in the door at any second. At one point, she turned to me, we were on the bed by now, blinked innocently and said: ”

AISLING (wide eyed) “Tell me a story.”

ANONYMOUS

“I must have gone white. She could have been fourteen. I told her a story about a woman who brought back a rat from India because she thought it was a dog.”

AISLING LOOKS AT HIM STRANGELY

ANONYMOUS “ The light was too bright so I tuned on the tv to use as lighting...it was the same tv I'd used to watch porn the night before.”

THE LIGHTS GO DOWN AND WE SEE ANONYMOUS AND AISLING ON THE TV SCREEN THEY ARE LIT LIKE THEY ARE PERFORMING IN A PORN MOVIE.

ANONYMOUS “I went down on her. Now I don't want to get too graphic here, but I have to say it because it is true and in my experience, rare. Her womanhood tasted better than her mouth. I could have stayed down there all night...no problem. I only came up to see if she was as pretty as I'd suspected. She was. This went on until it began to get light. She said we should take it easy, so easy is what we took. I was adamant that we wouldn't go the whole way. And I was so petrified she wouldn't find me attractive I didn't even take my shirt off so she wouldn't see the hair on my back. I was glad we were taking it easy since it meant I didn't have to get into any performance issues. What if I came too quickly or couldn't get it up? I used an AA maxim which helped. *When in doubt be of service*. So I concentrated on giving her as much pleasure as I could. Pen had trained me to go down on her and now I was glad.”

LIGHTS CHANGE

ANONYMOUS “The next morning, I suggested we go for breakfast. I checked out. Soon we were in another taxi on our way to a café near her place. And soon after that I was in yet another cab and on my way back to That Place. She didn't look around after I got in the cab. I know this.... “

HE LOOKS OVER HIS SHOULDER AT US

ANONYMOUS "...because I did."

AISLING EXITS

ANONYMOUS "In the meantime back in St La Croix I conducted a love affair. The perfect love affair, with no interruptions from another person."

ANONYMOUS MIMICS TALKING TO AN IMAGINED VERSION OF AISLING. HE LEANS FORWARD AND NODS ALMOST RELUCTANTLY BEFORE SEEMING TO CONCEDE A POINT. HE COCKS HIS HEAD IMPRESSED BY HER INTELLIGENCE. THEN HE LAUGHS HAPPILY.

HE PICKS UP HIS PHONE. PUTS IT DOWN AGAIN. PICKS IT UP AGAIN. HE PRACTICES SOME CONVERSATIONAL LINES.

ANONYMOUS CALLS AISLING

ANONYMOUS (into phone) "Oh...ok thanks...yes that would be great ... yes... tell her I called."

ANONYMOUS (to audience) "Not there? At 9.30am on a Saturday morning? Obviously, on her way home from some guy's flat or maybe even still there fucking him. Why not? she slept with me on our first date. But that was different, that was with me. That was love. Wasn't it?"

LIGHTS GO DOWN AND UP AGAIN AS WE SEE AISLING IN VARIOUS SOFT PORN POSES.

ANONYMOUS WALKS AROUND HER STUDYING HER FROM DIFFERENT ANGLES.

SHE'S RECLINING DOWN IN THIGH HIGHS.

ANONYMOUS (narrating) "Aisling McCarthy. Twenty-seven years old. A photographic assistant. She worked as a hostess In Dublin's U2-owned Constance Hotel (We don't like to define the word "hostess" unless we're feeling particularly unkind) She worked as a producer in an ad agency in Dublin. Her boyfriend got her the job. She left Dublin after winning a Green Card in the lottery. The boyfriend wasn't happy about this so she had to leave in a hurry. She went to New Orleans for about a year. Her uncle, Mr. Tom Bannister is an associate of mine highly recommended by my father, now dead. Her mother is actually from Deelford my home town.

WE SEE HER FRONT-ON WITH A HALF-OPEN KIMONO.

ANONYMOUS “She’s fairly patriotic towards Ireland, but not in an unattractive Fenian sort of way. During the period in question, she worked as Peter Freeman’s assistant, big-shot photographer very big-shot photographer, probably one of the best in New York and therefore the world. She shares an apartment in Nolita with an architect friend called Shawn, and a "precious stones" buyer for Macy's called Maurette. Her home in Ireland is in the pretty seaside resort of Whiteheath, South of Dublin.

FROM BEHIND WEARING ONLY A FUR HAT.

ANONYMOUS “Very fucking posh, believe me. Her brother works for The Strategist Magazine in London. Her sister is married to some hotel developer in Florida. She looks very, very young. She's been mistaken for sixteen. Spent time with nuns as a kid, at least that is what she told me. There was nun with whom she was quite close. Oh, yeah? Her grandaunt, I believe. Also, her grandmother died during the time I knew her. She is fascinated with double- exposures. One image being be laid over another. Two-faced? Because she worked as an au pair in France she speaks passable French. All this data retained after one short evening and no more than four phone calls. She could never accuse me of not listening. If anything I listened *too* much. I was trying to soak her up into me. I could have written a book about her... “

AISLING BREAKS OUT OF HER POSE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE IRONY OF WHAT HE JUST SAID

ANONYMOUS “Whoops.”

LYING DOWN IN THIGH HIGHS. (continued) “One night when I did manage to get her on the phone she told me she had a publishing deal.... “

ANONYMOUS TAKES OUT HIS PHONE

ANONYMOUS (to Aisling) “Really? That's interesting. How did you manage to wangle that?”

AISLING “Oh, I have some friends studying publishing in Harvard.”

ANONYMOUS MAKES AN IMPRESSED FACE TO AUDIENCE

AISLING (continued) Maybe you'll be in it.

ANONYMOUS

Maybe I will...I might like that.

AISLING (changing the subject)

So...are you going home for Christmas to see your mammy?

ANONYMOUS "I am yes...I'll be there for a week."

AISLING Maybe "I'll see you there."

ANONYMOUS (huge smile) "Maybe you will."

ANONYMOUS "Oh ok...so you hang up first...or should I ...oh... "

SHE HANGS UP IMMEDIATELY. ONCE HE GETS OVER THE SHOCK AT HOW QUICKLY SHE HUNG UP HE HAS AN IDEA AND BEGINS TO PROD NUMBERS INTO THE PHONE

ANONYMOUS (frantically) "Yes ,hello? I'd like to book a room...what sort of options do you have or the 23rd of Decemberwell how much is the deluxe? Ok, yes, let's do that then. Just for one night that's right. Perfect thank you."

LIGHTS GO DOWN AND FADE UP ON...

ANONYMOUS AND AISLING SITTING AT A CAFÉ TABLE

ANONYMOUS "So do you carry a camera with you everywhere?"

AISLING "Yes but you'd laugh if you saw it.

ANONYMOUS "No I won't."

AISLING "You will"

ANONYMOUS (sincerely) Aisling, I promise ... I won't.

AISLING TAKES OUT A CHEAP DISPOSABLE CAMERA AND ANONYMOUS IMMEDIATELY LAUGHS

CAMERA FLASH ON STAGE AS AISLING TAKES A PICTURE OF HIM THE ANGLE IS NOT FLATTERING FROM UNDER HIS CHIN. HE NOW LOOKS CONFUSED AND HURT.

ANONYMOUS "You got me."

AISLING "Oh, it probably won't even come out."

THERE IS AN UNCOMFORTABLE PAUSE AS SHE DRINKS DOWN A PINT OF GUINNESS IN FRONT OF HIM

ANONYMOUS "It's a pity you can't come back to the hotel."

AISLING (surprised) "Why? Are there rules? Can't you have people back?"

ANONYMOUS "No, I just assumed you wouldn't be able to come back, what with your parents and..."

AISLING "Oh no. I'd like to come back."

LIGHTS SOFTEN AS AISLING UNDRESSES IN EXTREME SLO MO

ANONYMOUS (watching her undress) "Yes, she was very beautiful. Very. I suppose we wouldn't even be talking about this if she hadn't been. It wasn't every day a guy had the chance for unrushed sex with the Virgin Mary... when she was sixteen. She had a beautiful angular back. I had hair on mine."

THEY HUG AND KISS AND BEGIN CARESSING

ANONYMOUS (giggling) Ha ha ha ha!

AISLING "What are you laughing at?"

ANONYMOUS "Just...feels... good."

AISLING GETS ON TOP AND STARTS FUCKING HIM. HER HAIR FALLS FORWARD CASTING HER FACE INTO DARKNESS. THERE ARE TWO RED GLINTS WHERE HER EYES SHOULD BE

LIGHTS DOWN

ANONYMOUS COMING FROM THE BATHROOM AN AISLING TAKING PICTURES OUT THE WINDOW AND OF THE ROOM AND SOME OF HIM HALF DRESSED

AISLING EXITS

AISLING "I look like shit."

ANONYMOUS "You don't look that bad."

ANONYMOUS (to audience) “I was trying not to let her know how just how beautiful she did look.

AISLING “That bad?”

ANONYMOUS (taking out his phone again) “Yes is that the Clarence hotel? I’d like to book a room.”

ANONYMOUS CALLING AISLING.

ANONYMOUS (into phone) “Hello, could I speak to Aisling, please?”

AISLING’S MOTHER “Who shall I say is calling?”

ANONYMOUS (with his hand over phone, to audience) “I told her my name confident that Aisling had already mentioned me to her.”

AISLING’S MOTHER “Sorry who?”

ANONYMOUS LOOKS AT THE AUDIENCE KNOWINGLY.

ANONYMOUS “And when the girl of my dreams did finally fumble sleepily with the phone and say hello, I could only hear disappointment in her croaky voice. And then the “No’s” began to emerge from the receiver in single file. No...she had to spend time with her parents; No...she saw them rarely enough at it was; No...maybe when we're both back in New York. No. No. No. I didn't tell her I'd booked the hotel. At The Clarence Hotel they have a hundred percent cancellation charge. Just in case you're ever thinking about it, this means you don't get your money back. My sister put it best.

A VIDEO OF A WOMAN WALKS OUT ON STAGE TAKES A DEEP BREATH

SISTER “Sounds like an expensive wank.”

HAVING DELIVERED HER LINE THE WOMAN EXITS

ANONYMOUS “Now *she* has an enviable command of the English language. And at 600 Euros a night she had a point.”

**ANONYMOUS STARTS PACING TO AND FRO
HIS PHONE VIBRATES AND HE READS AN EMAIL.**

ANONYMOUS “The house sold!! At last...I immediately texted Aisling that I'd be in New York the following week. I was careful not to mention that I was moving there permanently because if she knew this she might not feel any urgency to meet me. And I

needed to see her. We agreed to meet in Fanelli's on Prince Street. I got there early and sat at a little table."

AISLING ENTERS THE CAFÉ LOOKING A LITTLE TIRED AND UNKEMPT SHE HASN'T MADE ANY EFFORT TO LOOK GOOD. HE TRIES TO KISS HER BUT SHE OFFERS ONLY A RELUCTANT CHEEK.

ANONYMOUS (wary but cheerful) "Thanks for picking such a charming place, I hope I'll be able to find it again."

AISLING "You'll remember it after tonight."

ANONYMOUS (still cheerful)

What do you mean? Am I in for some big surprise tonight?

UNCOMFORTABLE PAUSE

AISLING "Wait."

AISLING (yawning slightly) Ok I think I'll go now.

ANONYMOUS "You mean you want us to be friends? "

AISLING "I want to get to know you better."

UNCOMFORTABLE PAUSE AS ANONYMOUS SHIFTS IN HIS SEAT

AISLING (continued) "You look thoughtful...are you angry?"

ANONYMOUS "Do I? I'm sorry. Angry? No. Why should I be angry? I'm the one who came here."

THERE IS A CAMERA FLASH AS A MAN SITTING AT A NEARBY TABLE APOLOGISES AND INDICATES THAT IT WAS AN ACCIDENT

ANONYMOUS IS SUSPICIOUS

AISLING (indicating her beer) "Don't you want something....else? Something to drink?"

ANONYMOUS (to audience) "And as always, I had my theories."

A TITLE APPEARS: CONSPRIRACY THEORY 1

AISLING GETS UP FROM THE TABLE AND STANDS CENTRE STAGE.

AISLING “Killallon Fitzpatrick don’t like the idea of someone they’ve invested in so heavily leaving them for New York so they hire me to put him off the idea. I’m perfect for the part. Pretty Irish girl with links to his hometown and ambitions of becoming a photographer. Remember I got the assisting job with Peter Freeman only a week after sleeping with him. My mission is to emotionally torture him and break his heart so that the idea of living in New York is abhorrent to him, Humbled by his experience he’ll return to St LaCroix grateful for his understanding employer, find a Minnesotan wife and bury himself in his work.”

ANOTHER TITLE: *CONSPRIRACY THEORY 2*

AISLING “In this version some friends of mine from Harvard have landed a publishing deal for a coffee-table book of photography featuring True Romance-style-photo-essays. Myself and various hand-picked yuppies will feature in each of these romances. The idea is to secretly photograph their real-life angst as I emotionally destroy each one of them until they are incapable of performing their job titles...a PR Director Of British Petroleum, A Merrill Lynch bond trader, a South African Diamond Miner and yes a hot-shot, hot shit creative genius from Killallon Fitzpatrick. Basically these corporate lackeys will get what they deserve.”

THIRD TITLE: *CONSPRIRACY THEORY 3*

AISLING “Theory Three is that Theories One and Two are complete bullshit and that life is random and everything that happens has no meaning or structure and that I and all my machinations are just figments of his paranoia.”

THE LIGHTS GO DOWN AND SHE DISAPPEARS LEAVING ANONYMOUS STANDING THERE INSTEAD

ANONYMOUS “She had already covered the early stages of this "True Romance" scenario and even the beginning of its demise. But she didn't have anything decent. Just moon-faced shots of a man too much in love. No anger, no tears, no anguish. What's a romance without anger, tears and woe? Can't have a book entitled True Friendship can we? Not if you've got a publishing deal which means a deadline and money already spent from a limited budget.”

BIG CAMERA FLASH

ANONYMOUS “Another photo outside Fannelli’s just as I raised my hands ...tilted upward...in what could, I realize, be misconstrued as a pleading gesture and that particular page in her forthcoming book turned over.”

HE HAS ALREADY BEGUN TO WALK AWAY WHEN SHE SPEAKS.

FADE TO BLACK

AISLING “So. Are you coming on Wednesday?”

ANONYMOUS (brightening up) “Oh yeah, I forgot, your exhibition. What's the address?”

WHEN THE LIGHTS COME UP, WE SEE A LARGE BLACK AND WHITE PHOTO (IT LOOKS LIKE MAN RAY MEETS KANDINSKI) HANGING ON THE WALL BEHIND. AISLING AND SOME FRIENDS ARE GATHERED BENEATH IT. ONE OF HER MALE FRIENDS WEARING A BRAZILIAN SOCCER SHIRT STEPS FORWARD WHEN HE SEES ANONYMOUS APPROACH. HE SEEMS PROTECTIVE.

ANONYMOUS “Hi. I’m a friend of Aisling’s.”

BRAZILIAN SHIRT “Oh, another one?”

THE BRAZILIAN-SHIRT GUY LEANS IN VERY CLOSE TO AISLING. TOO CLOSE. AS IF HE’S TRYING TO MAKE ANONYMOUS JEALOUS. HE’S STANDING BETWEEN HER LEGS WHERE SHE’S SITTING ON A STOOL

AISLING LOOKS OVER THE GUYS SHOULDER TO SEE THE EFFECT ON ANONYMOUS

BRAZILIAN SHIRT STEPS BACK AND AISLING HOLDS BOTH HANDS IN FRONT OF HER AS IF DESCRIBING THE LENGTH OF A SMALL FISH.

SHE SNICKERS DELIGHTEDLY

BRAZILIAN LOOKS AT HIM. SMIRKING. ALMOST SYMPATHETIC.

SHE LEANS FORWARD AND AS SHE WHISPERS SOMETHING HIS SMIRK WIDENS. SHE DOES THE “FISH” THING AGAIN. THIS TIME IT’S EVEN SMALLER. SHE LOOKS ANONYMOUS UP AND DOWN. AND THEY LAUGH TOGETHER. THE WHISPERING CONTINUES UNTIL WE CAN HEAR BRAZILIAN SHIRT SAY:

BRAZILIAN SHIRT “I'd tell him he's dead and buried and that there are four others buried over him. How many...?”

AISLING COUNTS HER FINGERS OVER-DRAMATICALLY

BRAZILIAN SHIRT “I'm buried over him... I'd like to be buried over him...or buried in you. “

AISLING “No, I'd be on top.”

ANONYMOUS IS PRETENDING NOT TO UNDERSTAND.

BRAZILIAN SHIRT HAS NOW PUT ON A COMBAT JACKET AND PLACES A CANVAS BAG ON THE FLOOR.

ANONYMOUS (trying to sound casual) “You're leaving already?”

BRAZILIAN SHIRT LAUGHS AT THIS AND TAKES A LIGHT METER FROM THE BAG AND POINTS IT AT ANONYMOUS.

HE THEN TAKES OUT A CAMERA LENS. HE BEGINS SQUINTING INTO IT. HE'S OVERACTING, PERFORMING FOR AISLING AND FRIENDS.

HE PRETENDS TO REMOVE SOME DUST FROM IT. HE HOLDS IT UP TO THE LIGHT.

HIS MOVEMENTS ARE CLOWN-LIKE AND GROTESQUE.

HE BRINGS THE LENS DOWN AGAIN. IT'S POINTING AT ANONYMOUS' GROIN.

ANONYMOUS “You could make it look like I've got a small dick.”

ANONYMOUS TRIES TO LAUGH ALONG.

BRAZILIAN SHIRT SHRUGS HIS SHOULDERS AND MOUTHS THE WORDS “HE KNOWS” HE IS NOW OPENLY POINTING THE LENS AT ANONYMOUS'S GROIN AND STRAINING TO SEE ANYTHING AT ALL

AISLING AND HER FRIENDS ARE IN HYSTERIC LAUGHING. EMBARRASSED GROANING LAUGHTER

BRAZILIAN-SHIRT WINKS AT ANONYMOUS SAVOURING HIS DISCOMFORT.

THE LAUGHTER CONTINUES FOR A WHILE UNTIL IN A SEEMINGLY MERCIFUL GESTURE BRAZILIAN-SHIRT OFFERS THE LENS TO ANONYMOUS.

ANONYMOUS, SUSPICIOUS AT FIRST TAKE STHE LENS FROM HIM AND NOW CAN'T RESIST POINTING IT AT BRAZILIAN SHIRT'S GROIN.

THIS FEELS LIKE REVENGE OF SORTS UNTIL BRAZILLIAN SHIRT

REACHES INTO THE BAG AND TAKES OUT ANOTHER LENS FROM THE BAG...

THIS TIME IT'S A HUGE TELEPHOTO LENS. HE WINKS AT ANONYMOUS AGAIN

A HUGE CAMERA FLASH ILUMINATES THE ENTIRE THEATRE (THIS FLASH IS MUCH BIGGER THAN THE EARLIER ONES)

ANONYMOUS RAISES HIS MIDDLE FINGER IN DEFIANCE. NOT EXACTLY A VICTORY BUT IT SHOWS AT LEAST THAT HE'S AWARE OF WHAT'S GOING ON.

BRAZILIAN SHIRT HAS AN IDEA. HE TAKES CLOSE-UPS OF THE FINGER INSTEAD. ANONYMOUS MORTIFIED LOWERS HIS ARM. BRAZILIAN-SHIRT WANTS HIM TO RAISE IT AGAIN. AISLING APPLAUDS THE FINGER IDEA SOUNDLESSLY AND BRAZILIAN SHIRT TAKES A BOW. SHE GESTURES FOR HIM TO GET MORE SHOTS OF THE FINGER.

BRAZILAIN SHIRT "We didn't get it. Just do that with your hand again and we'll leave you alone."

ANONYMOUS REFUSES AND SEEING THIS BRAZILIAN SHIRT TRIES SOMETHING ELSE.

HE REACHES INTO HIS BAG AGAIN AND TAKES SOMETHING OUT. IT'S A COMB.

HE HOLDS IT HIGH FOR EVERYONE TO SEE. LIKE A MAGICIAN HE HOLDS IT BETWEEN FINGER AND THUMB.

HE DEFTLY BEGINS TO COMB ANONYMOUS'S SHOULDERS. HE REACHES AROUND HIS BACK, COMBING AS HE DOES SO.

ANONYMOUS IS PERPLEXED BY THIS.

AISLING AND HER CREW ARE ESCTATIC, THEIR HEADS THROWN BACK IN HELPLESS LAUGHTER.

SUDDENLY THE SMOKE ALARM IN THE APARTMENT GOES OFF AND LIGHTS COME UP AS ANONYMOUS REMOVES THE BURNT BREAD FROM THE OVEN AND STANDS ON A STOOL TO DISMANTLE THE ALARM ATTACHED TO THE CEILING.

ANONYMOUS TIDIES UP HIS KITCHEN AREA

A STAGE HAND CARRIES A SPOTLIT PINT OF COCA-COLA FROM THE REAR OF THE AUDIENCE

AS ANONYMOUS TAKES THE GLASS FROM THE STAGEHAND HE NOTICES AISLING IS STILL ON THE STAGE AFTER THE SMOKE HAS CLEARED.

SHE HOLDS UP HER GLASS OF GUINNESS TOASTING HIM.

ANONYMOUS RAISES HIS GLASS TO HER.

ANONYMOUS (to audience) “One little trick you learn if you don't want to start drinking again is to get into the habit of smelling everything you drink. Even tea. It's a good habit. Might save your life. Vodka isn't supposed to have a smell. AA is full of people who used to believe this, That was the reason they so vehemently downed the stuff. An alcoholic doesn't want to smell like booze. Funny really, you'd have thought we wouldn't care. “

ANONYMOUS PUTS THE GLASS DOWN GENTLY AND AISLING DISAPPEARS.

ANONYMOUS “So here's the thing...if this play gets produced then the likelihood is they won't publish her book of photo-essays because her methods were exposed. Or if they do, then at least I'll get the first word in and I will have aired all my feelings about what happened. If it doesn't get made, then her book will come out and I'll be humiliated or at least mildly embarrassed and she'll be the victor and I will remain in awe of her forever. On the other hand if you're sitting here watching an actor recite these very words then the play not only got produced but I'm already working on the next one, in which case...congratulate me.”

THE END

This play is a work of fiction. Any references to historical events, real people, or real places are used fictitiously. Other names, characters, places, and events are products of the author's imagination, and any resemblance to actual events or places or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

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If you think you have a problem with alcohol go to aa.org or call Alcoholics Anonymous Intergroup 212 870 3400

