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The Irish Curse

by Martin Casella

A SAMUEL FRENCH ACTING EDITION



**SAMUEL
FRENCH**
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THE IRISH CURSE had its world premiere in the New York International Fringe Festival at the Linhart Theater in August 2005, where it won the Overall Excellence Award for Playwrighting. The performance was produced by Craig Zehms and Barry Goralnick and directed by Matt Lenz. The cast was as follows:

FATHER KEVIN SHAUNESSYWilliam McCauley
RICK BALDWINBrian Leahy
JOSEPH FLAHERTYEddie Korbich
STEPHEN FITZGERALDHoward Kaye
KEIRAN REILLY Roderick Hill

THE IRISH CURSE received its Off-Broadway premiere at the SoHo Playhouse in New York City on March 28, 2010. The performance was produced by Craig Zehms and Sarahbeth Grossman, in association with Piglet Productions, Anthony George, and Lawrence Lewis, III; directed by Matt Lenz, costumes by Michael McDonald, lights by Traci Klainer, sound by Walter Trarbach, and scenic design by Lauren Helpern. The cast was as follows:

FATHER KEVIN SHAUNESSYScott Jaeck
RICK BALDWINBrian Leahy
JOSEPH FLAHERTYDan Butler
STEPHEN FITZGERALD Austin Peck
KEIRAN REILLY Roderick Hill
UNDERSTUDIESPatrick James Lynch, Bill Timoney

CHARACTERS

RICK BALDWIN – Early twenties. A smart, optimist, fun-loving Staten Island stud who’s studying sports medicine at a local New York college. Rick’s the kind of guy who paints his face green, drinks a lot and hangs with his buds on St. Patrick’s Day.

JOSEPH FLAHERTY – Forties. On the short side, stout and balding. Born in Savannah, Georgia, he’s now an angry, liberal contracts lawyer who lives on the “way Upper West Side.” His wife recently walked out, leaving him with two young daughters.

STEPHEN FITZGERALD – Late thirties. Tall, handsome gay cop from the Bronx. He’s a moody, dark, taciturn smartass. Lives with his father, who’s also a cop. Stephen never ever ever sees the glass as half full, although he would probably like to.

KEVIN SHAUNESSY – Late forties/early fifties. A Catholic priest, originally from Boston. He’s the principal of a parochial school in Brooklyn Heights which donates rooms to various support groups. A sweet, caring guy with acting aspirations. Actually looks like he could play a priest on TV.

KEIRAN RILEY – Late twenties. Nice-looking, middle class guy from Queens who works at a roofing company. Keiran is exuberant, very nervous and very sincere. He’s also really Irish and someone you’d want to be your best friend.

SETTING

A basement meeting hall. St. Sebastian’s Catholic Church in Brooklyn Heights.

TIME

A rainy Wednesday evening. Late September.

AUTHOR’S NOTES

The five guys absolutely should look as if they are of Irish heritage, whether they be redheads, blondes or dark Irish. It is important that Stephen be very good-looking and tall. Joseph needs to be short in stature, balding, and chubby, if possible. Rick should be twenty-two at the very most; he must look as if he runs and plays many sports. Fr. Kevin has to look as if he could play a priest on television: witty, trustworthy, decent, maybe even with steel gray hair. Keiran should be nice-looking, good-humored and sincere.

The play really works when they all look different and are different shapes and sizes.

*THE IRISH CURSE is dedicated to the memory of Patrick Quinn, who
dedicated his life to improving the lives of actors everywhere.*

ACT I

(A small plain meeting hall in Saint Sebastian Catholic Church in Brooklyn Heights. It is about 5:30 on a rainy Wednesday afternoon in late summer. There is a bank of windows on one side of the room and a door on the other.)

(JOSEPH FLAHERTY, an ex-Georgian in his forties, enters the room. He is short, chubby, dressed quite conservatively, and has what under better circumstances would be an Irish choirboy's face. He carries a briefcase. He finds a light switch and turns on the lights. He is followed by RICK BALDWIN. RICK is early twenties, well-built, smart, with an expansive, buoyant personality. He searches his backpack as JOSEPH sets up folding chairs.)

RICK. So I get on the bus – I'm psyched – I had a pretty cool day – I do the Metrocard thing – I say "how ya doin'" to the driver – he grins, he knows me, he's my bud – and I'm like – where's a seat – cause the frigging bus is packed – stuffed – like full – so I glance all the way to the back seat – and sitting there – like a frigging madonna or something – is –

JOSEPH. OUCH!

(JOSEPH squeals and drops a chair. His furiously grabs his finger. There is rage on his face; he looks as if he has just been thrown into a Dante's seventh circle of Hell.)

RICK. What?!

JOSEPH. I caught my finger – in the goddamn chair – !

RICK. You okay? Is it bleeding?

JOSEPH. Great! I just said "goddamn" in church –

RICK. Let me look at it –

JOSEPH. You're not a doctor!

RICK. Sort of!

JOSEPH. “Sort of!” “Sort of!”

RICK. I know enough to help with a pinched finger.

JOSEPH. (*bending his finger*) It’s all right!

RICK. You sure?

JOSEPH. Yes. See!

(*He wiggles his hand, trying to make it better.*)

Ouch! Shit! Now I just said shit!

(*Making a face, JOSEPH goes back to lining up the chairs. He’s making a big show of doing it with a hurt digit. RICK gets a protein bar and a fruit smoothie from his backpack.*)

RICK. So – coming here – on the bus – I’m looking down the aisle – and there, like a frigging mental vision – there’s this babe – this frigging goddess – I mean, hi-ya-momma – Joseph, she is so checking me out – I check her out – she smiles – I smile – I let her know I’m interested – we get off the bus – together – walk through the rain – I chat her up – she’s a bonds trader –

JOSEPH. Rick –

RICK. – taking the frigging the bus–

JOSEPH. – are you gonna – ?

RICK. – we go into Starbucks –

JOSEPH. – let me – ?

RICK. – we chat some more –

JOSEPH. – you’re not gonna – are you – ?

RICK. Huh?

JOSEPH. – are you going to help me?!?

RICK. (*understanding*) Oh.

JOSEPH. Oh!

RICK. Sorry. I’m an “A” hole.

(*unwraps the protein bar and helps JOSEPH with the chairs*)

RICK. Anyway – we have a couple of Frappaccino lattes – they’re good – I go into the john – coffee goes right through me – she follows me – she fricking follows me! – We make out in the john – in the john – with release! – Then she gives her number – get this – get this – her name is Wednesday – swear to God – babe’s name is Wednesday!

JOSEPH. There’s always a babe, isn’t there, Rick?

RICK. Huh?

JOSEPH. I mean – you’re on the bus, you’re on the subway, on your bike, at the gym, at church, Mickey D’s –

RICK. I don’t do Mickey D’s, Joseph. Too greasy. I don’t eat fast food –

JOSEPH. There’s always a babe. Always checking you out. Always asking you home –

RICK. This sounds like a jealousy issue –

JOSEPH. Don’t use that stuff against me!

RICK. You used the stuff about the babes – !

JOSEPH. Because you were talking about babes!

RICK. I was telling you about something that happened.

JOSEPH. Did it, Rick? Did it really happen? Is there really always a babe?

RICK. What’s with you?

JOSEPH. I want to know. Is there always a babe? If there is could you steer one in my direction? Introduce me around? Talk me up? Because I swear, if I don’t get laid soon, I’m going to fuck that folding chair.

RICK. Joseph – you’re in church!

JOSEPH. I already said “shit” and “goddamn.”

(STEPHEN enters, soaking wet and in a lousy mood. He loudly announces to the others:)

STEPHEN. I hate this fucking city.

RICK. Look, Joey, you just need to relax –

JOSEPH. I have told you a million times – do not – on pain of death and disfigurement – do not call me Joey –

RICK. Sorry –

JOSEPH. Italian boys are named Joey. Someone who gets killed by the Mob is named Joey! My name is Joseph. I know it sounds Italian, thereby giving you some tacit permission to shorten it to Joey, but I am Irish and it is Joseph!

RICK. Okay. Joseph. Relax. You'll get laid, bud. It'll happen. Then you'll tell me about it!

JOSEPH. Easy for you to say. You and your "babes."

RICK. Well...I'm a hottie.

JOSEPH. Don't mess up what you got at home. Okay? All that screwing around behind her back. That girl loves you. She doesn't care about your limitations. Or your shortcomings –

RICK. Bite me, choir boy!

JOSEPH. What?!

RICK. My *limitations* – !

JOSEPH. I didn't mean it like that –

RICK. My *shortcomings* – !

JOSEPH. Ricky, come on, it's just a figure of – !

STEPHEN. You two are like a couple of old queens –

RICK. You don't even know what this is all about – !

STEPHEN. I don't give a shit – both of ya – just shut your fucking traps!!

JOSEPH. And what are you gonna do if we don't? Handcuff us? Take us over to the station house? *Shoot* us? Here. Let me go for my wallet so you got an *excuse*!

STEPHEN. (*He sits, takes out an iPhone and taps away on it.*) Know something, Joseph? When I met you – I thought you were a fag –

JOSEPH. You *what*?

RICK. Oh, God –

STEPHEN. I thought you were a big ol' queer –

RICK. We're *never* gone hear the end of this!

STEPHEN. A *major* homo sissy boy –

JOSEPH. And why did you think that, Stephen?

RICK. 'Cause you're a priss ass –

STEPHEN. Naw, that's not it –

RICK. 'Cause he wouldn't screw his wife so she dumped him for another guy?

JOSEPH. You Yankee piece of shit – !

STEPHEN. (*mockingly*) We're in a *church*, for Chrissake!

RICK. Z'at why?!

STEPHEN. No, Staten Island Ferry Boy, that's not why –

RICK. Then *what*?!!

STEPHEN. Queers don't like their names to be shortened. They want to be called by their entire name. Not Joey or Joe. *Joseph*. Not Mike or Mikey. *Michael*.

JOSEPH. Not Steve or Stevie.

(*pointedly*)

Stephen.

STEPHEN. Yeah.

JOSEPH. Well I'm *not* gay.

STEPHEN. Duh.

JOSEPH. What's *that* supposed mean?

STEPHEN. It means “duh.”

JOSEPH. I know it means “duh.” What did you *mean* by “duh.”

RICK. He meant “duh.”

JOSEPH. But what's “duh” supposed to *mean*?

STEPHEN. It means “duh.”

(*grinning at him*)

Duh.

JOSEPH. You think just 'cause you're so handsome – because you are so goddamn good-looking –

STEPHEN. I'm tall, too – don't forget tall –

JOSEPH. Well, you can't talk to me like that!

STEPHEN. Like what, Joseph? I just said “duh.” It meant like, “Obviously you’re not gay.” You have – *had* – a wife. You got two kids. You have terrible taste in clothes, you’re a real estate attorney, you drive a Jetta and you live in Inwood. Duh.

(JOSEPH realizes he has on his suit coat. He removes it and places it over the back of the chair. RICK sees this, he takes off his own rain poncho. JOSEPH sits in a chair. Nobody says anything for a moment.)

JOSEPH. It’s ‘cause I’m from Savannah.

STEPHEN. What?

JOSEPH. That’s why you thought I was gay. Men from Savannah are gentlemen. We speak softly. We use proper English. We’re *genteel*. Genteel men are often mistaken for gay.

STEPHEN. Wasn’t the first time, huh?

JOSEPH. Oh, you are just hateful.

(STEPHEN taps away on his iPhone.)

STEPHEN. You know what, Joseph? I can relate. Big butch cops are often mistaken for *straight*.

JOSEPH. Most of them *are!*

STEPHEN. Not *all*.

JOSEPH. That oughta teach you not to judge a book by –

STEPHEN. *(looking at his phone)* All right!!!

RICK. What?

STEPHEN. I just got a date –

RICK. A “date?”

STEPHEN. What do you want me to say, Rick. “I’m gonna blow some guy after group?”

JOSEPH. Did you hear what I said, Steven? I hope you learned a good lesson today I hope you remember it.

STEPHEN. “Yes, dear.”

JOSEPH. You quit that. I don’t like that gay boy talk.

STEPHEN. That’s not what you said last night. When I was on my knees –

JOSEPH. Stop it. Right now! Rick'll think you're serious.

RICK. Yeah, right. Like Stephen would blow *you*.

JOSEPH. What's *that* supposed to mean?!!

RICK. Whattaya think!

STEPHEN. Oh, no – not again! Don't even start!

RICK. (*after a beat; making it up to him*) Joseph – my girlfriend is thinking about law school. You like being a lawyer?

JOSEPH. It's all right. Wouldn't tell my kids to do it –

RICK. You don't seem like any lawyers I know.

JOSEPH. How many lawyers is *that*?

RICK. Well...I know some law students.

JOSEPH. I mostly just do contracts.

RICK. You just don't seem like the lawyers on tv.

JOSEPH. Because they're on *tv*.

STEPHEN. He's a *real* lawyer –

RICK. You don't seem very arrogant.

JOSEPH. Lawyers aren't arrogant!

STEPHEN. Not on Planet Joseph –

RICK. *All* the lawyers on tv are arrogant – or neurotic.

STEPHEN. (*to JOSEPH*) You're two for two.

JOSEPH. (*to RICK*) Those are actors. They're *acting*. It's not like that in a courtroom.

RICK. I met a babe in a courtroom once –

JOSEPH. Of course you did.

RICK. She was a bailiff. She was hot.

STEPHEN. I met a hot bailiff once.

RICK. Yeah?

STEPHEN. Online. Went to his house. He had one of those little machines they write on –

JOSEPH. He wasn't a bailiff. He was a court *stenographer*.

STEPHEN. Maybe the other guy was a bailiff –

RICK. The "other" guy –

STEPHEN. He had a roommate –

JOSEPH. I don't think I wanna hear this –

STEPHEN. After we all finished, I got up. The bailiff started to laugh. He said I musta been lying on the steno machine. I had the keyboard imprinted over my ass. So I made the stenographer type on me.

(A boyish-looking man of about 50 enters. He is in a priest's collar and uniform. This is FATHER KEVIN SHAUNESSY. Behind KEVIN, in the doorway, is a sexy young Irishman in his late twenties, KEIRAN RILEY.)

KEVIN. These are the other guys – Keiran, come on inside.

RICK. Yeah, we don't bite.

STEPHEN. *(eyeing KEIRAN)* Unless you ask –

KEVIN. Gentlemen, this is Keiran. Stephen. Joseph. And –

RICK. *(extending his hand to KEIRAN)* Rick. Rick Baldwin.

KEIRAN. *(with an Irish lilt)* Are you one of the Baldwins?

RICK. Naw. But I did meet Alec once. You know, like in person, he has chest hair growing up to his chin?

KEIRAN. Does he?

RICK. Yeah, he's a freak.

KEIRAN. I like his performances in the fillums.

STEPHEN. *(shaking KEIRAN's hand)* You really are Irish.

KEIRAN. Reilly on my father's side. Gallagher on me mum's.

STEPHEN. Dad was a Fitzgerald. Ma was a Rice.

KEIRAN. Do you know their counties?

STEPHEN. Naw. We're like fourth generation.

KEIRAN. You're an awfully big lad, Stephen. What do you do? Some sort of sport?

STEPHEN. I'm an undercover cop. We track down illegals. You got a green card?

KEIRAN. Well, I – I – I have it right here – somewhere –

STEPHEN. Kidding, guy! It was a joke!

(pause)

Like I would bust a woof like you.

KEIRAN. A "woof?"

KEVIN. (*knows where this is going*) It's an American expression, Keiran. It means – a –

STEPHEN. (*interrupting, laying on the charm*) A pal. A bud. Like someone you just met.

KEIRAN. Oh. I like that. A woof.

STEPHEN. (*looking at him, like a dog*) Woof!

KEVIN. Stephen –

RICK. Down boy.

KEIRAN. (*shaking hands*) Joseph. Right?

JOSEPH. That's correct.

KEIRAN. Are you – ?

JOSEPH. My daddy's people were Flahertys. My poor mama was a Mulrooney. Oil and water! Oil and water! Mama used to say living with a Flaherty was like living with your own black cloud. She walked right out when I was fourteen. Said it was that or hanging herself and being a good Catholic she just couldn't find it in her heart to commit a mortal sin with no possibility of redemption. I hated her at the time but I have come to see she was acting not out of selfishness but self-preservation. She was an *exceptional* woman.

KEIRAN. (*not expecting that much detail*) I'm sure she was.

KEVIN. Well. I guess that's everybody. We should start. I'll make the speech.

STEPHEN. (*as they all sit*) Do you need to?

KEVIN. It's required when we have someone new.

RICK. Oh you just like making speeches!

(*to KEIRAN*)

Father Kevin does a little acting. On the side.

KEIRAN. Does he now?

STEPHEN. Oh yeah.

KEVIN. Stephen –

STEPHEN. He was on *Law and Order* last week.

RICK. Playing a priest!

JOSEPH. He was *very* good.

KEVIN. It was only a few lines. One scene. We were in the courtroom. I had heard this young hoodlum's confession and they wanted me to break my vows and repeat what he had said but I wouldn't.

(pause)

I got to cry.

KEIRAN. I saw it! You were good!

KEVIN. It's the third time I've been on. Haven't had a top of the show credit yet. There's always next season.

KEIRAN. Do you mind me asking – did you make good money?

KEVIN. Yeah. I'm going to use it to get new pictures. Okay. Here's the speech. I think you'll appreciate hearing it.

KEIRAN. Especially from a film star.

KEVIN. Not really a film star –

KEIRAN. Well a telly star, then!

KEVIN. *(taking a moment, preparing, doing his "speech")* Good evening, everyone. I'm Father Kevin Shaunessy.

RICK, STEPHEN, JOSPEH. Hi, Father Kevin.

KEVIN. I'm the pastor here at Saint Sebastians. And I'd like to welcome you all tonight. This is a *support* group. That's why we're all here. I will be acting as moderator. There's a phone list on the table. My number's there if need it. Add yours if there're any changes. Now. You'll each take a turn. Talk about what's on your mind this week. And oh – please turn off your cellphones. A couple of rules. This is a house of God. No profanity. You can talk about whatever you *need* to but try to exercise a little good taste and discretion –

STEPHEN. That's directed at me.

KEIRAN. Is it?

STEPHEN. I have a sex addiction. I go to *that* group on Tuesdays.

KEIRAN. You have a sex addiction in addition to – ?

STEPHEN. Yeah. Probably *because* of it.

KEVIN. Keiran, I know this is uncomfortable for you but I think you should start. Tell us about how you found us and – uhm – well – just go ahead –

(KEIRAN sits there in silence for a long time. His mouth is dry and he isn't sure what to say.)

KEVIN. Take your time.

KEIRAN. Do I have to say *everything*?

KEVIN. As much as you feel comfortable sharing.

KEIRAN. I mean, you want to know about my – my –

KEVIN. Well – if you – want to – talk about it –

KEIRAN. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph...

(horrificed)

In detail?! Like a description?!

KEVIN. No. NO! Just your feelings *about* it.

KEIRAN. Oh, thank God!

STEPHEN. Damn.

KEVIN. Ste-phen.

STEPHEN. It's what I live for.

(KEVIN takes a moment to get on track.)

KEVIN. Well then. Okay. Keiran.

(like he's on a set)

“Action!”

(Silence. KEIRAN looks at JOSEPH.)

KEIRAN. How do I start?

JOSEPH. You can sit or stand –

KEIRAN. I'll sit.

RICK. Introduce yourself, say why you're here.

KEIRAN. Don't know if I can –

RICK. What?

KEIRAN. Say the words – out loud –

KEVIN. Keiran, that's the point of the group. When you say things out loud, they lose their power.

KEIRAN. Can someone else go first, please? So I can see how it's done.

KEVIN. Well –

KEIRAN. Just this once!

RICK. All right! Look! *I'll* do it! I'll go!

KEIRAN. Thank you, Rick.

RICK. Hi. My name is Rick. Don't do the "Hi, Rick" thing. I'm twenty-two years old. I live on Staten Island. I go to Staten Island College. I'm studying sports medicine. And the reason I'm here is because I got a small dick. I mean really small. *Really*. Small. Like *small*. Like from the children's menu. Growing up, I always heard it called the Irish Curse. It mostly only happens to us full-blooded Irish guys. Not *all* full-blooded Irish guys because my best bud Dylan is full-blooded Irish and he's hung like giraffe.

(to **KEIRAN**)

We take showers together. After b-ball. Trust me. The Curse runs in my family. My father's got it. So do both my bros. One of them actually tried to off himself 'cause of it. Dumb fuck.

(to **KEVIN**)

Sorry.

(back to **KEIRAN**)

He's okay now. The freak. He took pills. Everything I read about guys with small dicks goes on and on about how it's "all in their head" and "it doesn't make a difference" and my personal favorite, that "it ain't the meat it's the motion" bullshit – sorry, Father – I just get really pissed off because those guys writing those columns are obviously walking around with a Happy Meal in their pants. And I would like to have dragged their collective asses down to the hospital where my bro was lying there with a tube down his throat and make them tell him to his face the size of his dick doesn't matter. It matters! It matters to me. It matters to him.

It matters to all us guys who got royally fucked in that department. And Father, I'm not going to apologize for saying fucked. When I was growing up – I only ever saw my dad and my bros – so I never thought I was different from the other guys. Then when I got to middle school – that's when I found out I was a frigging freak –

KEVIN. Rick. Self esteem.

RICK. Yeah. Right. Self esteem. "I am not my penis." I only *think* I am. I have a lot of trouble not going there – to that dark place. I'm working on it. I even got my dad and both my bros working on it. But they're Irish. Optimism is not exactly a word in their dictionary. I love what I do. Studying the sports medicine. I'm a sports nut. B-ball. Hockey. I run. Hanging around with athletes I learned this trick. I thought they were kidding but they all do it. *Wear a jock.* Always. Under your street clothes. Especially under *jeans.* It takes what you got. Shoves it up front and center. And I stuff it. A sock. Nice white sports tube. Loosely rolled. Great basket, huh?

(*modeling for KEIRAN*)

It's an illusion but most of Manhattan's walking around with more than what God gave 'em. Anyway. That's my sad story. Boo-hoo. "A million guys out there like me." "Least I got a penis." "It works, doesn't it?" "Yes it does." Any other comments and questions can be e-mailed to me at "Rick-I-Got-A-Small-Dick".com. *Real* website.

(*making a fist, raising it*)

Self-esteem!

KEVIN. Thank you, Rick.

RICK. Sure. Happy to do it, Father.

KEVIN. You can sit down now.

KEIRAN. Wait.

RICK. Huh?

KEIRAN. You never said *why* you were here?

STEPHEN. Because his schlong is the size of baby corn.

KEIRAN. Really and truly?

RICK. Wanna see it?

KEIRAN. I'll take your word.

RICK. Anything else?

KEIRAN. How'd you find this place?

RICK. There was an article in the Village Voice. Last spring. About self-help support groups. At the end of the article it mentioned Fr. Kevin. In this jokey sorta way – like “Places We Wouldn't Be Caught Dead But For You Poor Freaks Who Need It.”

(pause)

Because of what happened to my brother, I cut the article out and kept it in a drawer next to my bed. I was gonna show it to him, but – I kept it for me. Saved it for a month. Until I could work up the nerve to come by here. Stood across the street for three Wednesday nights. Then I finally – walked in.

KEIRAN. Good for you.

RICK. Can I sit down now?

KEIRAN. I was just wondering – do you have trouble with girls – and they way they respond to you?

JOSEPH. Are you kidding? This one's got “babes” hanging all over him. You should hear the stories he tells.

KEIRAN. The ladies – they don't mind – when they find out – it's a sports sock?

RICK. None of them so far.

KEIRAN. And there's been a great number of them. From what –

JOSEPH. Joseph.

KEIRAN. *Joseph* here says.

RICK. Yeah.

KEIRAN. And your size was never a problem?

RICK. No.

KEIRAN. I'm glad to hear it.

RICK. Now can I –

KEIRAN. Is there one special girl?

RICK. Yep.

KEIRAN. What does she think?

RICK. She's cool.

KEIRAN. And sexually – ?

RICK. We make it work.

KEIRAN. Have you been together long?

RICK. Four years.

KEIRAN. Again. Good for you.

(pause)

Does she know about the other women?

(off RICK's head shake)

I see.

RICK. Finished?

KEIRAN. One last question.

STEPHEN. You from a frigging newspaper?

KEIRAN. I just want to know –

KEVIN. Keiran, maybe we should –

RICK. Let him ask. I mean it's fine. It's why we're here, right?

KEVIN. Go ahead.

KEIRAN. What do you plan to do about it? Your problem?

RICK. We don't call it a problem –

JOSEPH. It's one of Father Kevin's rules –

STEPHEN. It's our "situation."

KEVIN. "Because if you call it a problem – "

STEPHEN, RICK, JOSEPH, KEVIN. " – IT IS ONE!"

KEIRAN. All right. Your situation, then.

RICK. What do you mean? What can I do?

KEIRAN. Have you tried one of those vacuum pump things?

STEPHEN. Oh Jesus –

KEVIN. Stephen –

STEPHEN. This really is your first time, huh, kid?

KEIRAN. I've seen the advertisements – in the magazines –

STEPHEN. Those vacuum things are for shit. Trust me.

KEIRAN. And the stretching exercises – with the weights?

JOSEPH. Lord I tried those once. Couldn't walk for a week.

STEPHEN. Yeah and it obviously gave him a gigantic cock
– otherwise he wouldn't be here –

KEIRAN. And the fat injections?

RICK. They make your dick all lumpy and lopsided. I'll
keep my teeny weeny perfect prick.

KEIRAN. What about the operation? Where they –

STEPHEN. Cut the ligaments at the base of your cock so
that the other eight inches that're supposedly shoved
up inside just drops down, miraculously turning you
into Johnny "Wadd" Holmes? – I don't think so.

KEIRAN. Why not?

STEPHEN. Because if something goes wrong, you can't get
hard. *Ever again*. Or your cock gets twisted all around.
Or you get an infection. Or you bleed to death –

KEIRAN. So what you're saying is there's nothing?

STEPHEN. Not unless you want to spend a king's ransom
and take a chance on permanently disfiguring your-
self.

RICK. Or worse. I'm sitting.

KEVIN. There's this, Keiran. That's why we're here.

KEIRAN. But –

STEPHEN. You did your homework, kid. The questions you
studied for just weren't on the test.

(pause)

All that shit about the truth will set you free. The truth
is just one more kick in the ass.

(KEIRAN is silent. The guys give him a moment, then –)

KEVIN. Who's next?

(STEPHEN, staring at KEIRAN, suddenly stands up.)

STEPHEN. My name is Stephen –

JOSEPH & RICK. *(like an AA meeting)* Hi, Stephen!

STEPHEN. I'm thirty-eight years old, I'm a NYPD cop and I got a dick the size of a cocktail wiener. You know the ones that come in those little cans? I actually bought one of those cans once and tried to fit my dick inside. And I could! I'm fag, too, and a fag with a puny prick is like a bull with tits. "Whattaya do with it?" Heard that in the station house locker room. Said by a brother cop. *And a brother fag.* Who's Polish. You all know what they say about Polacks.

KEVIN. Stephen –

STEPHEN. I'm not ethnic stereotyping or racial profiling or whatever – but when something's true it's true – and I've slept with my share of Polacks – most Polacks got big cocks and most Micks don't. *That's* why they call it the Irish Curse –

KEVIN. Okay – you are way outta line –

STEPHEN. Yeah, well – that's what makes me Stephen.

JOSEPH. Get over yourself!

KEVIN. We're supposed to help Keiran feel better, not worse.

STEPHEN. Right. Right. I forgot. *That's* why we're here!

(It takes a moment – STEPHEN defiantly backs down.)

KEVIN. What was your week like?

STEPHEN. I busted a bunch a Korean guys selling batteries on the A train. That was important. I sent a family of nine, including twin two-year-olds, back to Guatemala where they'll get killed by death squads. Then my partner and I –

(to KEIRAN)

Cop partner, not – you know – well, you don't – I don't have a partner-partner. I live at home. With my father. Who's a cop. That's *another* story. We did surveillance on this East Side couple who have an illegal maid from Thailand whose passport they've taken away and are making live in a closet –

JOSEPH. Oh Stephen, that's just awful –

RICK. You bust 'em?

STEPHEN. Yeah but they'll get off. Maid'll get deported.

Guy's an asshole, a hedge fund manager who's worth about eighty gazillion dollars *and* pals with the Mayor – and he's paying this girl – because she *is* a girl – she is seventeen – only a few years younger than our friend Ricky here – oh, a dollar-fifty an hour for a 24/7 job – *when* they pay her – did I mention that the wife gets off by slapping our Thai friend around?

KEIRAN. Really and truly?

STEPHEN. You say that a lot.

KEIRAN. My mother says it a lot.

STEPHEN. You a mama's boy?

KEIRAN. I respect and honor my mother.

STEPHEN. But are you a mama's boy?

KEIRAN. If you're asking me am I gay. No. I'm not.

STEPHEN. Just wanted to know.

KEVIN. *Something* good must have happened to you this week.

STEPHEN. Yeah but I got more crappy stuff. My father asked me again when am I going to bring home a nice girl? I just keep saying, "Dad, you know what a cop's life is like. When would I have time to meet a nice girl?" Unless she's *Thai*.

(suppresses a wave of anger, then continues)

Dad says that all the other cops he knows – and he knows – oh – thousands of cops – are all married and happy and have kids – and he just wants me to be married and happy and have kids. I hug him and say "Thank you, Dad, I love you, you're my best friend." Then I kiss him goodnight and go upstairs and jerk off to naked pictures of Derek Jeter –

RICK. You have *naked* pictures of Jeter?

STEPHEN. The Internet is an *amazing* thing.

RICK. How do you find this shit?

(*He glances over at KEVIN.*)

Sorry –

STEPHEN. It's all out there. Jeter, A-Rod, Wes Welker –

RICK. Welker?

STEPHEN. Yeah.

RICK. Posed dick shots of Welker?!

STEPHEN. He didn't *pose*. Some whackjob'll sneak a cell-phone camera into the locker room – bam – an hour later – there's Welker's tight end –

JOSEPH. THIS IS NOT WHY WE ARE HERE!

RICK. Yeah, yeah, Joseph, okay, okay – I mean – it's just I know there's porn for guys – straight guys – but gay porn – of *sports* stars – ?!

STEPHEN. Well, it's not like there's a *lot* of it – but what's there is fucking –

KEVIN. Stephen –

STEPHEN. Yeah, okay. So after I lope the mule, I clean up, climb into bed and I lie there, thinking about my life. I'm in good shape. I'm handsome. I'm smart. Most people don't think cops are smart. They *are*. I even have a Master's degree. I never told you guys that before. Police science. But the thing that really makes me nuts – the thing I got going through my head is – *why the fuck did God make me so tall?*

(*to KEIRAN*)

Because the absolute worst thing about being – “an awfully big lad” – is guys expect you to be “awfully big” everywhere. You should see their faces when they finally get a look. I mean, they're expecting Captain Huge, right? That guy must have the Gay Holy Grail in his shorts. Paul Bunyon *and* Babe the Blue Ox. What they get is a *bull with tits*.

KEVIN. (*after an appropriate silence*) So what was the good part of your week?

STEPHEN. I had fantastic sex with four guys. One in the back room of a bar on West Street. Two woofs from Italy that I met in a gay bookstore. And a Catholic priest in Soho who was hearing my confession.

KEIRAN. You had sex with a priest?

STEPHEN. I blew him. Neat, clean – five minutes, it's over.

KEIRAN. You don't let them do anything back?

STEPHEN. Would *you*?

KEIRAN. Do you ever give them a chance?

STEPHEN. To what? Discover that the humpy stud is packing a popgun and not a pistol? That's what sex is for me, okay? They get off – I go home. No names, no numbers –

KEIRAN. No future.

STEPHEN. That's why I go to the other group, Keiran. Okay? We don't talk about *that* part of it here.

KEIRAN. How'd you find the group? *This* one.

STEPHEN. Stroke shots of Jeter aren't the only thing on line. One day I was feeling particularly sorry for myself so I typed in "The Irish Curse." That led me to Saint Sebastian's and Kevin's homepage.

KEIRAN. You don't seem like the type who'd go to a meeting.

STEPHEN. No. I don't.

KEIRAN. Then why –

KEVIN. Keiran –

STEPHEN. Naw, it's okay. I'll tell him.

(*to KEIRAN*)

I came for sex. It's always about sex.

KEVIN. Well thank you, Stephen, for that very illuminating –

KEIRAN. Wait –

STEPHEN. Here he goes again –

RICK. Watch it, Stephen, he's got his pad –

KEIRAN. I just want to know one thing.

JOSEPH. That's what you said before.

KEIRAN. It's a discussion, is it not?

KEVIN. Yes.

KEIRAN. Then why aren't we allowed to *discuss*?

KEVIN. The point is for people to talk about themselves, unburden their feelings, get it all out –

KEIRAN. You sound like the fella on the telly –

KEVIN. (*pleased*) Which one?

KEIRAN. The program where the lads come on and say they've shagged their mums. No offense, Father, but I think what you've just said is a load of crap – this fella here just said he's had sexual relations with a priest and none of you batted an eye. He's had sex with all sorts of strangers whose names he doesn't even know – and no one said a word!

KEVIN. Keiran, we're not here to judge –

KEIRAN. I've said nothing about judging. It's not my place. But you'd think one of you would *challenge* him. Not over being gay, I couldn't give a shyte if he were a gay. But over the fact he's clearly lonely and hurting inside and no one seems to care!

JOSEPH. We've just heard all this before –

KEIRAN. Jesus – if this is what he tells *you* – what does he say to the sex addiction fellas?!!

KEVIN. Look, Keiran, we're just here to listen, okay? It's about listening.

KEIRAN. Really and truly?

STEPHEN. (*mocking him*) "Really and truly."

KEIRAN. (*standing to go*) As I said. It's all a load of shyte. You're all just shyte shovelers.

KEVIN. Keiran –

KEIRAN. I didn't come to sit and listen to a bunch of silly buggers complain about their lives. I thought this was a place I might get some advice. Some help! Not *silence!* (*That's all he gets.*)

Well. There. As I've just said.

(He starts to go. STEPHEN stops him.)

STEPHEN. Sit the fuck down.

KEIRAN. I beg your pardon –

STEPHEN. I said – sit the fuck down.

KEVIN. Stephen, I'm not going to tell you again –

STEPHEN. Oh, Jesus, Father. God doesn't care. It's just a stupid fucking word.

(to KEIRAN, staring him down)

What bothered you so much? About what I said.

KEIRAN. The part about not knowing their names. I can't imagine giving myself to a woman, exposing myself that way, making that sort of *connection* – without at least knowing who she is. What she's like. Where she's from. I couldn't do it. I wasn't judging you, Stephen. It's just something I don't understand. How long does it take to ask someone their name?

(Moments pass.)

STEPHEN. I dated a guy once – it was like our third date – we hadn't done anything but kiss – believe it or not – so we go to his place – we start making out – I'm running my hand over his crotch, you know, like – he started getting all excited – he slipped off his pants – then his bikini briefs – I stopped what I was doing and just stared. The guy was frigging huge – huge – I mean – not like scary huge or anything – good huge – it wasn't just big, it was so beautiful –

(stops, remembering it all)

This guy was so sweet – not like most guys you meet with big cocks – jerks who think they own the world 'cause God decided to Supersize their dick – this guy was funny – and gentle and cute and smart – I should have told him all those things and I really wanted to – but all I could say was how hot his cock was – how it was so sexy – and how lucky he was to have it. He gave me this look – he shrugged – and said, "It's genetics,

Stephen. That's all. Genetics." So I asked him if his father had a killer cock, too, and he said no, it was just average, but what did that matter – it just meant that someone, somewhere in his gene pool had the right DNA code and so he got this big cock – it was like having blue eyes, he said, or a lot of hair in your ears – or being tall. Which he wasn't. I was so intimidated I couldn't take off my pants. He asked why and I said, I'm a big guy, see, and – some big guys got little cocks. I told him about "The Irish Curse" and being a full-blooded Mick.

(to KEIRAN)

It's just a bush, basically. Down there. Shitload of hair and then this stubby little head poking out. Like a fucking troll doll.

KEIRAN. What happened to your date?

STEPHEN. I blew him. He came for like a minute and half. *Buckets.* Guess that's genetic, too.

(*pause*)

Then I went home. That was the last time I had sex with someone whose name I knew.

KEIRAN. Think he cared?

STEPHEN. That I'm not packing?

KEIRAN. That you were simply different from him?

STEPHEN. It was ages ago, kid –

KEIRAN. You didn't answer my question.

STEPHEN. I don't know. Maybe not. In a perfect world.

(*Silence. KEIRAN stares at STEPHEN, then takes off his coat and sits back down.*)

JOSEPH. Stephen, you talk about your penis like it's a gun.

STEPHEN. Give me a fucking break!

JOSEPH. Well, you do!

KEVIN. I noticed that myself, Stephen.

RICK. (*quoting STEPHEN*) "A popgun and not a pistol."

KEVIN. You weren't "packing."

STEPHEN. Well, I am a cop.

KEVIN. Cops carry big guns –

STEPHEN. Give it a rest, Kevin.

KEVIN. I've just wondered why a smart funny gay guy like you wanted to become a cop.

STEPHEN. Don't start picking on cops –

KEVIN. I'm not picking on cops. I'm picking on a *gay* cop.

STEPHEN. There are lots of gay cops.

KEVIN. That wasn't my point.

STEPHEN. You think I'm a cop because I get to carry a *big* gun?

RICK. You know what they say about guys who drive big cars?

(He holds his pinkie out to STEPHEN in the universal sign for "little penis.")

KEVIN. When you think about it, Stephen, there's a hell of a lot of Irish cops in New York City.

STEPHEN. This is insulting to me and my brother officers.

KEVIN. Just something to think about. Next?

STEPHEN. You can't just do that.

KEVIN. What?

STEPHEN. *That!* Imply I became a police officer to make up for the fact I have a small dick!

KEVIN. I never said that.

STEPHEN. I'm insulted. And that remark about the rest of the Irish cops in New York? Well, you just insulted all of them, *too*. And, Kevin, your argument doesn't hold water because there are a lot of *Italian* cops. And we all know about *Italians!!!*

KEVIN. No, Stephen, what we do *all* know about Italians?

STEPHEN. Well, in my experience –

RICK. Here come the ethnic stereotypes!

STEPHEN. It's not a stereotype, Rick, it's *true!* Wops are *all* well-hung!

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