

HERSELF

Written by

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1

INT. BEDROOM. RENTED HOUSE. DUBLIN - DAY

1

FACE of a working-class woman from Dublin: SANDRA KELLY (29).

Decent looking if she bothered; young, but tired - a Mother.

She has a BIRTHMARK on one of her eyes. Both are now closed: she's being "styled" by her daughters -

EMMA, 8, vivacious, chatty, and MOLLY, 6, old soul, quieter. They wear party-dresses, lip-gloss, glitter on their cheeks.

EMMA plaits Sandra's hair, perfectly. MOLLY dusts her brush in the eye-shadow palette, and whispers -

MOLLY

I'm gonna do your eyes now.

SANDRA

Okay. Cool.

MOLLY pauses, delicately touches her birthmark.

MOLLY

What d'ya call that again?

SANDRA's smile belies the amount of times she's been asked.

EMMA

Molly, you know it's her birthmark.
Why d'you always ask?

MOLLY

Why do you have it and nobody else,
Mam?

SANDRA

I've already told you love, I was
just born with it.
(indulges her)
I was in God's pocket -

EMMA, here we go, again. MOLLY, never tiring of this story.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

He had me in his Art Shop, and He
said, "In case I need to find you,
I'm giving you a special mark..."

She peeks an eye open, to see EMMA mouthing along.

SANDRA AND EMMA

"Because there's loadsa Sandra's in
Dublin!"

MOLLY

Yeah well, we won't cover it then.

SANDRA smiles and takes in her beautiful, clever girls, in their bright, accessorized room.

Emma and *Molly* on bunting above their bunk-beds, glow-in-the-dark stars on the ceiling, and a FAIRY-DOOR on the skirting-board. Hold on this, then MUSIC -

1A

INT. DOWNSTAIRS. RENTED HOUSE - DAY

1A

"Chandelier" by Sia blaring out of a portable speaker on the worktop, beside popcorn and crisps, a jug of juice and party make-up from Penneys.

SANDRA, EMMA and MOLLY dance like mad and sing, uninhibited.

SANDRA/EMMA/MOLLY

I'm gonna fly like a bird through
the night / Feel my tears as they
dry.

SANDRA links hands with her girls, twirls them round, until their feet lift, and they're flying, and squealing...

SANDRA/EMMA/MOLLY (CONT'D)

I'm gonna swing from the...

The music suddenly stops, and heads turn.

EMMA/MOLLY

Daddy!

GARY MULLEN, 30, handsome, construction-gear, stands by the speaker.

*

EMMA/MOLLY (CONT'D)

Dance with us, Dad! Dance! Spin us!

GARY

Jays, will ya let us in the door.

He embraces them, coolly taking in their mother. SANDRA sees he's clutching a ROLL OF CASH, bound with a bobbin. Stiffens.

GARY (CONT'D)

Go play outside, let me talk to
your Mam.

EMMA

Aw.

MOLLY

I don't want to go out.

SANDRA

Gary, it's cold.

GARY

They've coats. Go on now. Out.

Masking fear, SANDRA grabs coats off the back of a chair and bundles the girls towards the rear patio-doors.

However, when she wraps EMMA's coat around her, SANDRA leans close, hushed -

SANDRA

Black Widow.

EMMA looks at her, really?

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Black Widow, Emma. Hurry.

Letting them out, SANDRA sees EMMA dart to the big, plastic WENDY HOUSE.

Beat, then SANDRA turns back to GARY, who's in her face now, brandishing that roll of cash.

GARY

Taped under the car-seat - are you planning your escape, or something Sandra?

2 **EXT. STREET. SANDRA'S ESTATE - DAY (MOMENTS LATER)** 2

EMMA runs, fast as she can, gripping a TOY-BOX, both hands.

3 **INT. SHOP. SANDRA'S ESTATE - DAY** 3

SHOPKEEPER, 40s, a Pakistani-Dub, watches something on his phone, when the toy-box is suddenly slammed on the counter.

EMMA

Call the Guards!

He's thrown, by the toy-box, by the breathless little girl opening it and demanding.

Inside is spare keys, birth-certs, welfare documents, piece of paper with important phone numbers written on it - and hand-written instructions taped to the lid.

*CALL 999. MY LIFE IS IN DANGER. SANDRA KELLY. 14 HAZELWOOD
RD.*

The alarmed SHOPKEEPER glances up at EMMA, tapping the box.

EMMA (CONT'D)
It's me Mammy. Hurry up!

4 OMITTED

4

4A **INT. DOWNSTAIRS. RENTED HOUSE - DAY**

4A

Dazed SANDRA crawls across the carpet, determined, rigorous, vision-blurred, face bloodied.

She pushes one of the patio-doors open, just slightly - too late - GARY grabs a handful of hair and hauls her back. Sandra's LEFT HAND, reaching out, clawing for the door-frame.

She's dragged back until SLAM.

GARY's steel cap boot rages down. A sickening crunch. Her hand under, his boot. Crushing it. An agonized howl. Silence.

5 **INT. CORRIDOR. HOTEL - DAY**

5

That wrecked HAND, in a tube-grip, trembling, struggling to insert a hotel key-card.

(Sandra's other, good hand is carrying shopping and laundry, and schoolbags dangle from her shoulders. She's like a mule)

Caption: Three months later

EMMA routinely takes the key-card, and inserts it for SANDRA.

The light blinks Green, and EMMA and MOLLY bicker over whose shot it is to turn the handle, enter first. It's my go, Emma!

On SANDRA - tired, frail, fed-up.

6 **INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY**

6

A 2 star Basic Family Room with a business man's tears on the pillow. Modern, but stale. Cramped but tidy, now made homely.

That same Fairy Door on the skirting-board. Teddies tucked under duvets. Toys in boxes labelled Emma/Molly. Family photos tacked round the mirror. *NB: There are none of Gary.*

SANDRA discreetly swallows a Solpadeine, swigs water, and continues stripping a Spar-roasted chicken on the desk.

She fills three wraps with chopped cucumbers, peppers, meat on the desk beside the TOYBOX - and MOLLY picks at it.

EMMA does homework on the bed, pencils scattered around her.

SANDRA
Move over love, let's see?

She trades, food for copy-book, and takes in Emma's work, a beautiful drawing.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
Emma, that's amazing. Shading and everything!

EMMA
Would you take a picture and send it to Dad?

Beat.

SANDRA
Show him Saturday.

She returns the copy-book, hugs her.

EMMA
Where will our new house be, Mam?

SANDRA
(hesitates)
I don't know, love.

EMMA
How much longer will we be here?

SANDRA
I don't know.

Aware Emma's fed up of "don't know's", she fishes a chain from under her vest. There's a ring attached.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
Here, kiss Granny Michelle's ring and wish for one.

EMMA shuts her eyes and kisses the ring.

MOLLY (O.S.)
How long is Granny Michelle in heaven now, Mam?

SANDRA sees MOLLY kneeling by the skirting-board, leaving a bit of her wrap at the Fairy Door, for the fairies.

SANDRA

Going on six months, love.

Beat.

MOLLY

I left my bobbin in her flat.

EMMA mimes, she's away with the fairies! SANDRA smiles. Out on the Fairy Door.

7

EXT. HOTEL CAR PARK - DAY (EARLY MORNING)

7

Airport hotel. Shuttle bus outside Reception. Quiet, dark. Pre-dawn.

SANDRA exits the side-door, cradling MOLLY, hurrying EMMA. Both are dressed in school-uniforms and still half-asleep.

SANDRA unlocks her old, banger estate-car, bundling MOLLY inside.

8

EXT. THE QUAYS. DUBLIN - DAY (LATER THAT MORNING)

8

Sandra's CAR in heavy traffic, queuing-up to cross the Liffey River, beside the Financial District.

Observe MOLLY sleeping, EMMA eating a banana, SANDRA willing the lights to change.

The sun's started to rise, but the iconic Beckett Bridge and Convention Centre are still illuminated, brilliant-white and neon.

9

EXT. SCHOOL GATES - DAY

9

It's daylight when Sandra's car pulls up, late. There's a few CHILD-MINDERS and PARENTS with prams still yapping.

ROSA, 30s, Brazilian, stands slightly apart from the group not quite included in the chatter, but smiles when...

EMMA rushes in, waving to Lucia, Rosa's daughter.

SANDRA follows with MOLLY, who mopes. She's tired, her hair's tangled and there's toothpaste all over her face.

MOLLY

Emma ate my banana.

Sandra sighs, fishes in her bag, finds a little pack of biscuits they leave beside hotel kettles. Gives them to her.

SANDRA

Here. Quick while I fix your hair.

SANDRA brushes her hair with fingers, tying it up, rapidly.

MOLLY

Ow. THAT HURTS.

SANDRA

Nearly done. Now. Gorgeous.

(hugs her, wipes crumbs)

Be good. Love you.

MOLLY takes her (as big as she is) schoolbag, and trudges in.

SANDRA sees ROSA smiling comradely, only for another MOTHER to click that and side-mouth, something to Rosa. Rosa listens, now included in the gang, while looking at Sandra.

SANDRA averts the gaze of the women, dashes back to her car.

10 OMITTED

10

10A **EXT. DUBLIN 4 - DAY**

10A

Georgian townhouses. Embassies. Luxury hotels/apartments. The tree-lined Grand Canal. We might glimpse TENTS pitched on the grass verge beside the tow-path.

Traffic is still heavy. Observe Sandra's beaten-up car, stuck at a red-light, surrounded by brand-new 4x4s.

11 OMITTED

11

12 **EXT. FRONT OF PEGGY'S HOUSE. DUBLIN - DAY** 12

Wide street. Large redbrick houses. Mature gardens. Sandra's car parks in a driveway.

SANDRA bolts out, sorting through a bundle of coloured-coded keys.

13 **INT. HALLWAY. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY** 13

Tasteful. Characterful. Original art and African ornaments.

SANDRA

(calls out)

Only me Dr O'Toole, sorry I'm late.
The traffic this morning.

Grabbing a cleaning bag from a cupboard under the stairs, she habitually runs a finger along the dado rail, only to hear -

PEGGY (O.S.)

Oh, fuck off!

14 **INT. LOUNGE. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY** 14

Living room, converted into a bedroom. Single-bed. A desk by the window. Commode-chair. Walking-frame.

PEGGY is Dr Margaret O'Toole, a young 70, and until recently a practicing GP.

She has a fractured hip, she's achy and grouchy first thing - and she can't get her bloody jeans on!

SANDRA (O.S.)

Need a hand?

PEGGY sees SANDRA at the door, and reluctantly nods.

SANDRA helps her dress, quiet at first, aware PEGGY's proud, and tetchy today.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Did your one turn up last night?

PEGGY

They sent a replacement. He tried
to put me to bed at half-past six.

SANDRA, imagining how *that* went. PEGGY winces trying to get
into the jeans.

SANDRA

Sorry. Have you taken your tablets?

PEGGY

Just help me through. I've already
wasted half the morning.

SANDRA

Okay.
(positions walking-frame)
Now, grip and up you go. Deadly.
Nice and steady. Take your time.

PEGGY halts, cuts her a look.

PEGGY

I broke my hip in a field hospital
Sandra, not tripping in Marks and
Spencers - in the jungle. Stop
making me feel like an old woman.

SANDRA, noted.

15

INT. KITCHEN. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY

15

SANDRA rigorously mops the floorboards, the kind of cleaner
who lifts rugs, pulls out furniture to clean under - though
activity requiring both hands is harder for her now.

PEGGY, now dressed, sits on a foam-cushion in a garden-room,
looking out onto a large lawn. She's on her laptop, writing,
when she hears a wince.

SANDRA clasps her sore, spasming hand. Careful to mask this,
she goes to the sink, swallows a Solpadeine, washes it down
with water. A beat, then -

SANDRA

That's me Dr O'Toole, just mind
yourself on the floor, it's still
wet. 'Talk to you.

PEGGY watches SANDRA go. Sees that she's massaging her hand.

Front door closes and PEGGY takes in the house. Spotless as
always.

16 **INT. STAIRCASE. ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN RESIDENCE - DAY** 16

SANDRA, on her knees, polishing the balusters, under the watchful eye of a HOUSEKEEPER, late-70s, female, austere.

A door opens O.S and SANDRA hears barking, a man's voice.

HOUSEKEEPER moves off, leaving the kitchen door slightly ajar.

SANDRA cranes to see a big, flinty man in wellies and wax-jacket, with an equally imposing DOG.

SANDRA sees the man remove his jacket to reveal a clerical collar. She averts her gaze when he looks her way, afraid that he saw her staring, slacking.

HOUSEKEEPER

The new Nora, your Grace.

ARCHBISHOP

Ah, very good. Big shoes to fill there.

SANDRA smiles, unsure and buffs harder, intimidated.

17 **EXT. ARCHBISHOP'S RESIDENCE. DUBLIN - DAY** 17

Stately house. An adjacent Chancellory. Ash-lined drive, and extensive, well-kept grounds.

SANDRA speeds off, always rushing, only to stop the car and roll down the window, to take in the (10-acre) "field", and the high perimeter wall beyond. A beat, then she drives off.

18 **INT. PUB - DAY** 18

Traditional boozer. SANDRA cleans the fire-grate; polishes wood-panels; dusts stoneware flagons on a shelf above optics -

While JOHN, 40s, the landlord, tucks into a fried breakfast and a pint of stout... and eyes her.

SANDRA feels him looking, and catches the eye of the barmaid.

AMY, 22, funky inner city girl with the mouth of a Meath St market trader, sympathizes, well-used to John's ways.

JOHN leaves his empty plate/glass for them, belches, orders -

JOHN

Sandra, give the Mens' a good clean
- young fella left them in an awful
state last night.

SANDRA

Right. It's just, you said I could
leave a bit (earlier) -

JOHN

If you finished. You're nowhere-
near done.

When he waddles off -

AMY

Prick. Tell him to get fucked,
Sandra.

SANDRA

I wish, Amy. Don't have the luxury.

Hurriedly wheels the mop to the Gents, only to turn back -

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Where are you living these days?

AMY

Squat. Rathmines. Shit-hole like,
but the humans are sound so.

19

EXT. HOUSING ESTATE. DUBLIN - DAY

19

A viewing. Queue around the block to see it. SANDRA at the
mid-point, with a house-spec, hopeful. Behind her, moaning -

GRUMPY WOMAN IN QUEUE

Don't know why I bothered.

(beat)

None of us are gonna get to see
this gaff.

Beat, then an ESTATE AGENT exits, shaking on a deal with a
young, professional COUPLE avoiding the 'queue's eyes'.

SANDRA, downcast, returning to her car. Waste of her time.

20

INT. OFFICE. WOMEN'S AID - DAY

20

Messy. Desk's covered in piles of paper, folders, case files.

JO, 54, hippy edge to her office look, searches in vain for a "post-it". Needle in a haystack-stuff.

SANDRA paces, wound-up, clock-watching.

JO

How's himself? Behaving, Access
Visits going okay?

SANDRA

Grand. Well...he's been kicked out
of the house - landlord's selling.
He's back at his Mam and Dad's now.
He wouldn't do anything there.

JO

Well, if he does, remember you've a
3-year Safety Order. He lays a hand
on you it goes straight to criminal
court.

SANDRA

Jo, we can't go on being this far
from school. I'm getting the girls
up in the dark. It's 3 hours there
and back, every day -

JO

You need to keep on to the Council
about that -

SANDRA

I *am* Jo but it's costing me over
thirty Euro a week in petrol -

JO

Just keep telling yourself "it's
temporary". Only temporary. Now!
(finds the post-it)
I got a tip-off. Kimmage. Fully-
furnished and the Landlord takes
Rent Supplement. Give him a buzz.

SANDRA grabs the note, and mouths thanks as she rushes out -

JO (CONT'D)

Sandra, I've forms for you (here
somewhere) -

SANDRA
I'm late for the girls.

JO
Go, I'll drop them round to you.
(mutters to self)
If I ever find them.

21

EXT. SCHOOL GATES - DAY

21

Everybody has gone, apart from ROSA and her daughter, LUCIA, 8 (Emma's classmate). They're waiting with EMMA and MOLLY.

Sandra's car pulls up, and she gets out, thrown, annoyed.

ROSA
I told the Teacher I'd wait with them.

SANDRA
Yeah I called to say I was running late. Thanks.

MOLLY
Mammy look, we made Saint Brigid crosses.

SANDRA
Aw, deadly. Show me in the car.

Tries to lead the girls away -

EMMA
Rosa's taking Lucia to the park, can we go?

SANDRA
Not today, ok?

EMMA
Oh, we never get to!

SANDRA
Another time Emma. We need to run.

ROSA
Maybe we could have a playdate?

EMMA/MOLLY
Yay. Playdate. Playdate.

ROSA
Will I take your number?

SANDRA

Er...

She hesitates, evasive. EMMA rolls her eyes, and reels off -

EMMA

089-966-4062.

*

Get out of that. SANDRA smiles weakly as ROSA enters it in her phone, and texts her number in return. Ping.

ROSA

Now, you have mine. No excuses.

22 OMITTED

22

23 **INT. ATTIC - DAY**

23

A once-grand townhouse, that has been neglected and chopped into poky bedsits.

LANDLORD is a heavy-set man from the country, 50s, wheezy.

He shows SANDRA, EMMA and MOLLY into the loft-studio. Low ceilings. Exposed wiring. Tiny Velux-window. Small galley-kitchen, with a stove and oven, that doesn't have a door. Four stained mattresses on the floor. Mould all over the walls.

SANDRA sees EMMA tentatively touching the wall, brushing the mould off.

SANDRA
Don't touch that.
(aside, to Landlord)
You're asking a thousand, for this?

LANDLORD
It's cheap for the area, I'll take
Rent Allowance, and it's available -

SANDRA
(hushed)
'Course it's... fucking available.

LANDLORD
You can move in tomorrow. I can't
be any fairer than that.

SANDRA
I'd rather stick my head in there.

The oven. Grabbing the girls' hands to go, she mutters -

SANDRA (CONT'D)
Bleeding disgrace.

24

EXT. HOTEL CAR PARK - DAY

24

Planes take off nearby. Flight crew arrive with wheely-cases.

SANDRA and EMMA sit against the wall, watching MOLLY roller-skate. She's a novice. Clings onto cars to balance. A beat.

EMMA
"Bleeding disgrace".

SANDRA
You're a bleeding disgrace.

EMMA
Sorry, you're the disgrace!

SANDRA notices a young family, DAD, MUM, two kids under four, pulling bin-bags out of a car that holds everything they own.

SANDRA
Go mind Molly, watch the cars.

EMMA goes, reluctantly, and SANDRA gives the DAD a comradely nod, recognizing their situation.

DAD
How long ya's here?

SANDRA

Oh, eh...a month, coming up? This is our third hotel.

DAD

This is our sixteenth. Been at this the guts of two years.

SANDRA, Jesus.

MUM

Yeah, "temporary" my arse. See ya's around.

SANDRA watches them trudge in, tired of this life, unable to imagine theirs, when -

MOLLY skates into her, hugging her. SANDRA laughs, then lies down, plays 'dead'. MOLLY messes with her hair and face, but SANDRA stays still.

MOLLY

Ah Mammy don't be dead, we need you for chips!

EMMA joins in. Lifts SANDRA's arm to tickle under it, and whispers -

EMMA

Molly, grab her, will ya.

SANDRA suddenly wakes with Zombie arms! The girls squeal as she stalks and grabs and tickles them to death.

SANDRA

Come here you two, ya messers! Only need me "for chips" do ya?

25

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

25

SANDRA and EMMA, curled-up on the big bed, in pyjamas. MOLLY plays with Lego on the floor, in her own world.

EMMA holds the St Brigid Cross, retelling the myth, her way.

EMMA

So Brigid prays to God and says God will you make the King of Ireland's heart all soft, 'cos it's gone icy and like a rock or something, and God did and she smiled and said to the King, Will you give me as much land as this cloak will cover?

SANDRA pricks up, and is drawn in by the story.

EMMA (CONT'D)

'Cos she was wearing this cloak just normal size, and he starts laughing his head off 'cos he thinks she's mad... But she bends down and the cloak is magic with the Holy God spirit in it and she tells her four sisters with her - they're like her sidekicks, right? - they take a corner each and spread it out over the land they're on, and they do, and it goes out for miles and he can't believe it... it's a mirkle - a mir-a-cle. And he goes, 'Brigid, what's the story, how did you do that?' And she says, 'It's 'cos you're being so stingy and all to the poor people in your land' and then he says 'Alright, ya can have loads of me land.'

SANDRA, moved and soothed by this bedtime tale.

EMMA (CONT'D)

And she gets it, and starts a convent and helps all the people in the town, and they start a farm where they make jam with the berries on the land and then everyone was grand.

SANDRA

(applauds)

Bualadh bos! How'd ya remember all that?

EMMA

I don't like the way me teacher says it, so I remember it my own way. She's got a real moany voice.

SANDRA smiles, proudly cradling EMMA, reflecting on the St Brigid myth, only to see Molly's lego-build. It's a house.

26 OMITTED

26

27 **INT. BATHROOM. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT**

27

Napkin-full of ICE, being tipped into a sink.

SANDRA fills it with water and plunges her aching hand into it. Hold, as the shock gives way to (temporary) pain relief.

She takes in her body in the mirror. She's skinny, pinched, her eyes are dark and sunken, and her eyebrows are a state.

O.S - laughter, a couple, joking.

SANDRA shuts her eyes. Lowers her head. Lets Gary into her thoughts, the room. His smell. His touch. His body against hers.

Then GARY is there behind her, tender, comforting, kissing her neck, moving his hands over her body -

MOLLY (O.S.)

No Emma... stop it... not fair.

SANDRA opens her eyes. Molly's babbling in her sleep. Back to reality. Alone again.

28

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

28

SANDRA turns off the bathroom light off, and goes to check on MOLLY, only to tread on something.

Feeling round her bare feet, SANDRA finds a piece of Molly's lego.

SANDRA gets into bed, holding and taking in the LEGO BRICK.

Beat, then she lifts her phone, and Googles: *Build your own house... cheap.*

On SANDRA, illuminated by the display.

TIME CUT TO:

Hours later. First flights of the day are starting to land. Jumbos. The noise causes the windows to shudder.

But SANDRA's awake anyway, still on her phone, researching.

29

INT. BATHROOM. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY

29

SANDRA hangs a towel on the walking-frame and positions it outside the frosted-glass cubicle, in which PEGGY showers.

Beat, then SANDRA steals out, stifling a yawn, and scheming.

30	INT. KITCHEN. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY	30
	SANDRA opens Peggy's laptop on the counter. Browses. Clicks. Scrolls. Something takes her breath away. <i>Ciaran Crowley Architect... 35K Self Build Home... Ireland.</i> SANDRA feverishly scans the architect's site, studying the basic design for a - she mouths it - 50 square-metre house.	
31	EXT. FRONT OF PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY	31
	SANDRA, on the front drive. She drops her keys by her feet and takes seven strides, counting aloud. She drops her purse, turns right, takes another seven steps, and lays down her hotel key-card. Hangs another right, counts seven more paces, then takes in the space between her markers (50 square-metres), imagining. Seeing PEGGY at the window, SANDRA snaps out of her reverie, makes out she's retrieving stuff that has fallen out of her bag.	
32	OMITTED - moved to Scene 37B	32
33	OMITTED - moved to Scene 37C	33
34	OMITTED - moved to Scene 37D	34

35

INT. CAR (PARKED) - DAY

35

SANDRA, parked up across from the school. She doesn't notice the KIDS IN UNIFORM being allowed out. She's too absorbed by a nearby house renovation.

SANDRA watches a YOUNG BRICKIE scooping mortar with a trowel, spreading it, laying a brick, repeating the process.

A knock at the passenger window startles SANDRA. EMMA, what gives? As both girls clamber in the back -

EMMA

Why are you in the car? It's not even raining.

SANDRA

(sarky)

"Hi Mam, how was your day?" "Grand, thank you Emma."

MOLLY

How was your day Mammy grand thank you.

She drapes her arms round SANDRA, giving her a kiss. EMMA rolls her eyes, such a lick!

36

EXT. CITY-CENTRE - DAY

36

Sandra's CAR, parked on a pavement. EMMA and MOLLY, faces pressed to the window, bemusedly watching -

SANDRA, peering through a palisade fence at a vacant plot of land, in the middle of the city.

SANDRA types on her phone as she returns to the car.

36A **INT. LIBRARY - DAY (PREVIOUSLY SC40)**

36A

SANDRA, EMMA and MOLLY, all doing homework of sorts. While the girls colour and write on worksheets, SANDRA is on the PC. The webpage is a Credit Union Loan Calculator.

She fills out the required fields, only to see EMMA on her shoulder clinging a leaflet, peering at the screen. A beat -

EMMA

Mam, what's a "Guarantor"?

SANDRA's heart sinks. Nods to the "Reference" shelf.

SANDRA

Look it up.

Emma leaves the leaflet in Sandra's hand and goes to the shelf. Sandra scans the leaflet: **TIRED OF BEING HOMELESS? CRISIS MEETING MALBOROUGH HOTEL** Date and time are listed but obscured.

37 **INT. OFFICE. REUSING DUBLIN - DAY**

37

Small, noisy public meeting. Half a dozen PANELISTS behind a table, fighting to be heard.

SANDRA's at the back of the room, with Emma and Molly, craning to see an ACTIVIST, 23, Trinity PHD student.

ACTIVIST

There are hundreds of privately-owned properties lying empty, and the Council, and the Church, are sitting on acres of unused land - we need to occupy -

DISSENTER ON PANEL

Occupying gets you nowhere. Stop taxing Google and Facebook at one per-cent and you'd fix the housing crisis overnight -

WOMAN IN AUDIENCE

There's already enough money to build homes for people.

(MORE)

Herself (April 26 - Yellow)

21aA.

WOMAN IN AUDIENCE (CONT'D)

It's this government! Busy building
hotels and keeping house prices sky-
high -

ACTIVIST

Lads, if this was France they'd be rioting. Let's take back our city!

YOUNG MOTHER beside SANDRA, toddler in arms chunters, sotto -

GIRL

Aw and *this* is really gonna sort it out is it? No wonder we're all fucked.

On SANDRA, couldn't agree more, mind racing, fired-up.

37A **INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR - DAY**

37A

OVERLAY: SHOT OF SANDRA CARRYING SEVERAL BAGS OF SHOPPING DOWN HOTEL CORRIDOR.

37B **INT. APARTMENT - DAY**

37B

Fold-out bed. Bundles of separated sheets/towels. Discarded bags from souvenir shops. Remnants of a short-stay rental.

SANDRA sponges floor to ceiling picture-windows. As she wipes away the soapy solution, reveal that she's in a flat, looking out onto Grand Canal Docks.

She pauses, mid-smear, and takes in this corporate cityscape.

Shiny office-blocks. Executive apartments. Cranes as far as she can see. She counts them. Ten. Eleven. Twelve.

37C **EXT. APARTMENT BLOCK - DAY**

37C

The familiar click-clack of wheely-cases being dragged along.

SANDRA exits and passes TOURISTS on their phones, navigating, bickering, trying to find their AirBnB apartment.

SANDRA throws rubbish bags into the allotted bins, only to glimpse a bail of yesterday's broadsheet papers beside the Recycling.

An idea takes hold, and she grabs the bail. Up to something.

37D **INT. PUB - DAY**

37D

SANDRA pushes tables together; measures a sheet of newspaper; jots figures in the margins. AMY witters in the background -

AMY

So this guru fella said I was gonna end up in the Amazon some day, that I'm an old soul that needs to like, reconnect to me shamanic qualities, which is grand, because I kind of always knew that about myself, ya know what I mean? But Tomo. Oh my God. He told Tomo he was gonna be an economist. Tomo. Tomo doesn't even have a bank account!

JOHN enters with boxes of crisps, only to take in the joined tables, SANDRA with her sheets of The Irish Times. Busted.

JOHN

'The fuck are you up to, ya loolah?

38

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

38

SANDRA tapes together sheets of The Irish Times as EMMA and MOLLY watch telly. MOLLY, what's she up to? EMMA, no idea!

39 OMITTED 39

40 OMITTED (MOVED TO SC36A) 40

41 EXT. ARCHBISHOP'S RESIDENCE. DUBLIN - DAY 41

SANDRA, alone in the corner of a huge expanse of land (the same spot at which she was absently staring from her car).

She lays down the large bail of newspaper that she has taped together and begins to unfold it - only for the house dog to dart towards her, barking ferociously.

ARCHBISHOP (O.S.)
Hector, stop that! Hector. Away.

SANDRA sees the ARCHBISHOP in the middle-distance, staring at her; the large dog bounding back to him.

The ARCHBISHOP puts the dog on the lead and takes in SANDRA, clutching her parcel of newspaper, small in this vast space looking back at him.

42

INT. HOUSING OFFICE - DAY

42

Partitioned cubicles. Rows of plastic seating. SANDRA clasps a folder, watching the monitor, waiting for her number.

Her number flashes up. Deep breath, and she takes a seat in front of a FEMALE COUNCIL-WORKER, 40s, thick Dublin accent.

COUNCIL-WORKER

What can I do for you?

SANDRA

I want to build a house.

The woman looks up from her screen. SANDRA opens her folder and shows photos of unused land in the city.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Eh...These are some of the vacant sites you have, going spare?

Removes a sheet, with her calculations, a circled figure.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

And this is how much I'd need, for the materials, and a bit of help.

The woman takes in the photos, the sums.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

I cost you 33 thousand euro in rent and welfare in one year alone.

(beat)

And at number 653 on the housing list, that could mean keeping us in hotels for the next three, four years at least...costing you 120 grand, maybe more. But, if you let me use a site, I could have this built by Christmas - and then just be paying you rent for the house. Do you see what I mean?

The COUNCIL-WORKER, speechless, overwhelmed. It's a no.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

(attempting lightness)

You'd even make a profit.

43

EXT. HOUSING ESTATE. DUBLIN - (NEXT) DAY

43

Sandra's CAR, parked outside a semi-detached council house.

SANDRA walks MOLLY to the gate only. EMMA runs ahead, and rings the bell. GARY opens the door all smiles and charm.

GARY

Howya, beautiful? Oh, that's a hug!
Did ya miss me? Daddy's missed you.

SANDRA averts her gaze, and peels clingy MOLLY off her leg.

SANDRA

Go on, I'll see ya in the morning.
Molly, come on sweetheart, please?

MOLLY very reluctantly goes. SANDRA offers GARY a rucksack.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

She's got a cold. There's cough-
bottle inside. Five mills'll do.

GARY

Oh yeah, because I've never
actually been a Dad before.

She's stung by that, and lowers her gaze when Gary's Dad,
MICHAEL MULLEN, 55, appears behind his son, cautioning -

*

MICHAEL

Don't be making a scene. I don't
want the neighbours thinking my
son's any more of a fuck-up ya
hear?

He goes back in. Doesn't once look at SANDRA. A beat, then
SANDRA glimpses a face at the window, behind the curtains.

TINA MULLEN, 52, Gary's mother. As she withdraws -

*

GARY

Home sweet home, what?

SANDRA doesn't answer. Leaves the bag, and turns to go, only -

GARY (CONT'D)

What are we doing, Sandra? D'you
think this is good for the girls?

She tenses. His hand on her arm.

She pulls away and hurries to the car, shaken but trying to
hide it.

The car drives off, and rounds the corner. Only to abruptly
pull over.

SANDRA grips the wheel, head swirling, chest tightening. She swallows hard, shuts her eyes, trying to calm down. However -

SANDRA, cowering. GARY, gripping the cash he found in a fist.

You think your money and running away is gonna solve what's going on inside your toxic little head? Aw that's a great idea Sandra. End up some lonely fuck-up like your Ma.

SANDRA opens her eyes, gulping, panicking. She takes shallow breaths, but can't shake the memories -

*

48 OMITTED 48

49

INT. CAR (PARKED) - DAY

49

SANDRA grips the steering-wheel with that hand, controls her breathing, willing this episode away.

A long beat, then she lifts her head, dries her eyes, drives off, switches the radio on. Numb the pain with noise.

50 **INT. RECEPTION. HOTEL - DAY**

50

SANDRA lumbers through the nice foyer, past the front desk.

A Receptionist, LAZLO, 30, Bulgarian, shirt and tie, slick, dashes out from behind the desk, and tries to be discreet.

LAZLO

Miss. Excuse me, Miss, hello? May I
remind you of the rules. You can't
come through here.

Fuck's sake. SANDRA turns, trudges out.

51 **INT. STAIRWELL. HOTEL - DAY**

51

Grotty, neglected. For staff, tradesmen.

SANDRA slogs up the fag-butt littered, concrete stairs.

52 **INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT**

52

SANDRA lights a candle, and sits on the edge of her bed, watching the flame.

Fishing her mother's ring out from beneath her top, SANDRA clasps it, Her eyes land on a picture of her and her mother, so young, Michelle cuddling Sandra in her arms. She closes her eyes, mutters quietly. 'Help me Ma. Please, I can't... just help. Please.'

A plane takes off nearby. Its lights arc across the window.

FADE TO BLACK.

53 **INT. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY**

53

SANDRA trudges down the hallway with a tray of tea - at half the pace she normally operates.

SANDRA

Dr O'Toole?

She knocks at the lounge-door. Nothing. Opens the door, only Peggy's not in bed. Strange. Her walking-frame is there.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Dr O'Toole?

Panic. She dumps the tray. Dashes back into the hallway, and tries the bathroom door.

It opens 6 inches, then jams. There's something behind it.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
Bollocks. Dr O'Toole?

54 **INT. DOWNSTAIRS BATHROOM. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY (CONTINUOUS)** 54

SANDRA squeezes in, and steps over PEGGY, who's lying still, face-down on the floor, a cut on her temple.

SANDRA
Oh Jesus.

She grabs a towel, folds and puts it under Peggy's head.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
Dr O'Toole? Hello? Can you hear me?

Carefully turns PEGGY onto her side.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
Dr O'Toole it's Sandra, your cleaner. Wake up. Come on. Peggy?

A twitch of recognition. PEGGY opens her eyes, confused.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
Oh thank God. Dr O'Toole, it's me.
Will I call an ambulance?

PEGGY
No.

SANDRA
I probably should. Just to be -

PEGGY

I'm fine. Stop fussing.

(beat)

I must've fainted. I've not been able to eat.

SANDRA

Are you sure now? You've a cut.

PEGGY

Yes and if I was horse they'd shoot me, but I'm a Doctor, I'd know if I needed to go to the hospital - give me a hand.

SANDRA smiles, she's fine. Hooking her forearms under Peggy's arm-pits, she very gently hoists.

PEGGY drapes her arms around SANDRA's neck. They're virtually cheek-to-cheek, locked in an awkward embrace.

SANDRA

I'm just gonna walk you over. Easy now. I'm just gonna sit you down. That's it.

She gently places PEGGY down on the loo, unaware that she is taking her in.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

How's that? Do ya feel dizzy?

PEGGY

Why didn't you ask me?

SANDRA

Ask you? Ask you what?

55

INT. KITCHEN. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY

55

CIARAN CROWLEY, 40s, Architect, on a stage, doing a talk.

CIARAN CROWLEY

I've designed a house that costs just thirty five thousand euro to build.

Reveal PEGGY and SANDRA, watching this on Peggy's laptop.

CIARAN CROWLEY (ON SCREEN) (CONT'D)
It's a Self Build. You can
literally DIY a permanent home.

PEGGY hits Pause. SANDRA, busted.

SANDRA
I didn't mean for you to see that.

PEGGY
Well I did, so here's my proposal.

55A **EXT. BACK OF PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY**

55A

SANDRA, alongside PEGGY on her walking-frame. They walk away from the back of the house, down a long, well-kept lawn.

CIARAN CROWLEY (V.O.)
We built mine in 54 days on site.
With basic woodwork skills, the odd
hand from your friends and a bit of
professional help, within 6 months
you could have a home of your own.

56 **EXT. GARDEN. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY**

56

PEGGY, on her walking-frame, leading SANDRA to a whole other part of the property. It's massive.

SANDRA takes in the stretch of lawn, and the ruined potting-shed with its smashed panes at the far end.

PEGGY (O.S.)
Picture it.

SANDRA
Here?

She turns to PEGGY, overwhelmed and confused.

PEGGY
(looking towards shed)
It's land, Sandra, going to waste.
Use it. I can't. Build a house for
you and your girls.
(MORE)

PEGGY (CONT'D)

I can't watch you live between the car and the hotel any more. It's a crime.

Sandra looks at her, taken aback.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

Your mother was far more than a cleaner to me, she was a friend. And she helped me through some bloody awful times. You're looking for a way out.

(beat)

I want to lend you the money to do this.

SANDRA

Dr. O'Toole, This is mad you can't -

PEGGY

I can. And you can pay me back, over as many years as we decide. I want to help you. So. What do you say?

SANDRA's eyes fill with tears taking in the plot.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

Is that a yes?

SANDRA nods. PEGGY taps her shoulder, once. There. Come on.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

Now, back to work. Good woman.

57

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

57

SANDRA on a PC, glasses on, earphones in... oblivious to the OAPs behind her, griping to the LIBRARIAN, female, 40s sound.

SANDRA feverishly scans Ciaran Crowley, Architect's website. Lists Materials Required. Saves a Step-by-Step guide, "Build your own house".

Whipping out her memory-stick, she hands it to the LIBRARIAN.

SANDRA

Could you print something for me?

LIBRARIAN

There's a self-service printer-scanner...

(MORE)

LIBRARIAN (CONT'D)

(don't worry)

I'll show you.

Comes out from behind her desk, and takes the memory-stick.

LIBRARIAN (CONT'D)

This goes here. And Select. Print.

Just the one copy?

SANDRA
(sees the price - shit)
Wow, the price! It's mad, isn't it?

LIBRARIAN glances round. Anybody watching? Then types.

LIBRARIAN
One nine three four.
(as the machine prints)
The year this place was built.

SANDRA, touched, and heartened.

58 **INT. CAR (PARKED) - DAY**

58

SANDRA, parked outside Goodwins, a large Builders Merchants' on an industrial estate.

She's scoffing chips, watching a web-tutorial on her phone, by Ciaran Crowley, the self-build guru.

CIARAN CROWLEY (ON SCREEN)
These costs are approximate - you
should carefully price everything
before committing.

SANDRA reaches for her notepad - it contains her print-outs, cost breakdown, the house-design - and scribbles something.

59 OMITTED

59

60 **INT. CUSTOMER SERVICE DESK. BUILDERS' MERCHANTS - DAY**

60

SANDRA at the counter, with DAVE, 40s, terse, a Cork man. He looks at her, her cost-breakdown, long enough to unnerve her.

DAVE
Where'd you get this?

SANDRA
Online.

DAVE
(mouths a sarky "online")
'These costs inclusive of VAT?
"Value Added Tax" - are these
prices plus or including..?

SANDRA
Yeah, I think... I'd say so.

DAVE
'Cos there's a big difference.

SANDRA
Yeah... I know.

She doesn't know. Feels patronized, out of her depth. Becomes aware of a customer behind her, breathing a bit too heavily.

AIDO DEVENNEY, late-50s. He stands a six-foot chimney flue against the desk. Towers over it.

DAVE
Be with you in a sec there.

AIDO says "work away", but it sounds more like a grunt.

DAVE reads Sandra's list to himself. Waste of time.

DAVE (CONT'D)
Onduline? Dunno what that is. D'ya
know what thickness of insulation?
'Cos there's loads of sizes, like.

SANDRA
Yeah, no, I'll ask.

DAVE
Biobase? Never heard of it.

SANDRA
What about like, basic concrete?
Can you give me a price for that?

DAVE
That's actual ready mix.

SANDRA
Not bags?

DAVE

No. Concrete would have to come in a truck, in cubic-metres. You'd have to go to Roadstone.

(refers to Aido)

'Mind if I serve this young fella? Yes my friend, what can I get you?

AIDO

Some manners. A bit of courtesy.

DAVE

What?

AIDO

What? You're Customer Services. Serve the customer. She's only after a price check. It's not rocket science.

He slaps down cash on the counter, takes the flue, and goes. SANDRA, watchful. DAVE bristles.

61

EXT. CAR PARK. BUILDERS MERCHANTS - DAY

61

SANDRA, printouts clutched in hand, walking back to her car when she notices AIDO in a van (faded remnants of name 'AIDAN DEVENNEY, BUILDING AND CIVIL ENGINEERING CONTRACTORS' emblazoned on the side). The name makes her stall.

She thinks about approaching him, but is intimidated - only to see him open a lunch-box, fussily remove lettuce from his cheese and ham sandwich and wind down the window to fling it.

Fuck it, SANDRA walks over, as if on the way by, calls out -

SANDRA

You're throwing away the good stuff.

He takes her in, then takes a big bite of his sandwich. She bites her lip but goes for it. Walks up to his window.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Can I ask your advice on something?

He looks at her...has another bite. Fuck it she keeps going.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

I'm building a house, well - a self-build?

AIDO

Right.

SANDRA

(print outs)

I'm only getting started - but I dunno...where to start I suppose?

Aido impatient, gestures, let's have a look.

She passes her cost-breakdown through the window. He scans the pages - and talks - whilst devouring his sandwich.

AIDO

Where's the site, have you a field?

SANDRA

A back garden. Woman I work for is giving me the land.

AIDO

Giving you? Why is she doing that?

SANDRA

Eh... trying not to think about it too much.

AIDO

I would. Nobody does anything for nothing, not in this country.

(returns the plans)

Well...I wouldn't live there, but it's a roof and four walls, what more do you need?

She's kind of assured. Smiles, and shapes to go, but -

SANDRA

You wouldn't come and have a look would you?

AIDO

No love. I've a flue to install, on a job that's grown arms and legs -

SANDRA

It's only around the corner -

AIDO

I can't help you, can't afford to.

Turns on ignition, Sandra's last try.

SANDRA

Look, you don't know me, but I
think you worked with my ex, Gary.
Gary Mullen?

*

Aido freezes. This stops him in his tracks. Looks at her.

AIDO

Gary Mullen? Michael Mullen's young
fella?

*

SANDRA

Yeah.

He spits that out before he thinks. Sandra has an in.

*

SANDRA (CONT'D)

I know. That's why he's me ex.

Beat. He looks out front, takes a deep breath. CUT TO:

62

EXT. GARDEN. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY

62

AIDO surveys the proposed plot. Paces. Bellows. Refers to the plans. Rubs his head. Gets his tape-measure out. Sighs. Takes in neighbouring properties. Pulls a face.

PEGGY leans on her walking-frame measuring this man.

SANDRA measures her expectations. Just sees AIDO padding the earth, prodding the potting-shed. It's a complete shock when -

AIDO
It's possible.

PEGGY's optimistic, but SANDRA knows he's niggled.

SANDRA
Why the face then?

AIDO
You're gonna need somebody knows
what they're doing -

PEGGY
He means a man?

AIDO
I mean a person who's qualified to
handle the compliances, put in for
planning.

PEGGY
Could you be that person?

He looks back at the land, almost nervous.

PEGGY (CONT'D)
Your van says "Building and Civil
Engineering Contractor".

He looks to SANDRA, no flies on that one, shakes his head.

AIDO

I don't do contracts anymore,
haven't had one in years.

PEGGY

We could pay a Consultancy fee, for
an agreed amount of days.

Aido strokes his jaw reluctantly thinking it through.

AIDO

Look say you do get Planning, I'm
guessing you need somebody to work
weekends, for next to nothing?
(beat, to Sandra)
Well then I'm no use to you.
And I've just had a scare, okay?

He pads off, only for PEGGY to call out -

PEGGY

There'd be a doctor on site.

SANDRA points, her. AIDO takes in PEGGY, on her frame.

AIDO

S'that meant to reassure me?
(to Sandra)
Talk to your man the architect, he
might have some ideas. I can't help
you, ok?

He pads off, past an elegantly-dressed, professional woman
who's come through the house.

GRAINNE, 46, Peggy's daughter.

GRAINNE

There you are - aren't you meant to
be convalescing? What are you
doing?

63

INT. KITCHEN. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY

63

SANDRA, in the middle of a tense mother-daughter discussion.

GRAINNE

Talk me through this again, Mum -
I'm obviously being thick - you
want to build a house, at the
bottom of the garden?

PEGGY
For Sandra and her girls.

GRAINNE
Whose idea was this?
(off her pointed look)
(MORE)

GRAINNE (CONT'D)

Sorry, but do you know each other well enough to do this?

PEGGY

I knew her mother.

GRAINNE

Yes, and Michelle was lovely, and a really good cleaner, but -

PEGGY

But what?

GRAINNE

(regrets)

She used to help herself to Daddy's whiskey.

PEGGY

Well she did us all a favour there.

A tense beat. Peggy and Sandra's eyes meet a second.

GRAINNE

I'm sorry Sandra, I shouldn't have said... (actually) Can I just have a moment with Mum?

PEGGY

Sandra, stay.

SANDRA, paralyzed against a wall. Grainne shakes her head to herself. No privacy. Fine.

GRAINNE

Look - at the end of the day, it's none of my business. I get it. It's your house, your choice - you can be very hard to help Mum.

(halts, suddenly tearful)

What are you gonna do about Aisling's Den?

SANDRA, thrown. She really shouldn't be here.

SANDRA
I'll let you... I shouldn't be...
See you tomorrow, Dr O'Toole.

PEGGY
Sandra, wait. Sandra -

SANDRA hurries out. Rues not leaving sooner.

64

EXT. HOUSING ESTATE. DUBLIN - DAY

64

SANDRA, in her car, outside Gary's parents'. She rolls down the window when EMMA and MOLLY run out.

Gary's mum TINA (50's) gentle in manner, almost expressionless, but sad to see her grandchildren go.

SANDRA
Hiya, did you have a nice time?

EMMA
Daddy got us new runners. Mine
flash!

She stamps her feet, and the soles light up.

SANDRA
Cool.

Smiles stiffly when she sees GARY, out to wave them 'bye.

GARY
They were so good for Nannie and
Granda I thought they deserved a
little treat.

SANDRA sees MOLLY get straight into the car, quiet.

GARY (CONT'D)
(calls out)
Need a hand with the belt there,
Molls?

MOLLY
No.

GARY
Big girl now.

He shares a look with SANDRA, then pulls out a twenty Euro.

GARY (CONT'D)

Here, I got a little bonus. There's so much work out there for joiners now, you can take your pick. It's like back in the day.

That note, between their hands. As she takes it, he blurts -

GARY (CONT'D)

I'm getting help.

(beat, quieter)

I've seen a Counsellor. Jesus it was a bit...I don't know. I didn't walk out - which is... I mean, I wanted to, but... I stayed.

She meets his gaze, softening slightly.

GARY (CONT'D)

Anyway, it's a start.

SANDRA

(deflects)

Emma, come on.

She starts the engine, only for GARY to lean closer. Hushed.

GARY

Mam says you can stay, if we want to try again, y'know, try to make it work, for them.

SANDRA clocks TINA looking at Sandra in the doorway, avoids her eyes and then hurries EMMA -

SANDRA

Are you in?

EMMA

(teenager-like)

Yes.

SANDRA winds her window, and drives away, conflicted. Hold on her, mulling her options.

64A

INT. DOWNSTAIRS. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY

64A

PEGGY, doing (gentle) exercises, earphones in, listening to a podcast. She startles when she glimpses SANDRA in the dining-room, tentatively waving, apologizing.

When PEGGY unhooks her earphones -

SANDRA

I rang the bell... I wasn't sure...

(blurts)

I can't accept your gift. The only way I could do this is by building it myself and paying you rent, like I said to the Council.

Beat.

PEGGY

Sandra, I know Grainne's upset and maybe rightly so.. this place would have been shared between her and her sister.. But here we are..

(Half joking)

And I'd hardly be improving her deal by landing her with a tenant, would I? I want to see that plot go into something.. good, that's all. I want to split the land cleanly. Give you enough space for the girls to play in. How much do you want this?

SANDRA

More than anything, obviously.

PEGGY

Then let me talk to Grainne. And you, contact that architect, make him help you.

SANDRA cautiously nods. Ok. Let's try.

66	OMITTED	66
67	OMITTED	67
68	OMITTED	68
69	OMITTED	69
70	OMITTED	70
71	OMITTED	71

72 OMITTED 72

73 **INT. BATHROOM. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT** 73

3am. SANDRA, in her PJs, Face-timing CIARAN CROWLEY, the architect whose story inspired her. He's in America, in a noisy bar, after-work his time.

CIARAN CROWLEY (ON SCREEN)
You've only gotta say "Self-Build"
to a Builder and he'll run a mile,
but you are gonna need an expert...
Honestly, the only person who'd do
this for nothing is me and I'm not
back till next year - can you wait?

SANDRA smiles, despondent. What's her next move?

74 **OMITTED** 74

74A **INT. CAR (MOVING) - DAY** 74A

An (unseen) child's POV of the window. Sunlight. Trees. Sky.

MOLLY (O.S.)
Where are we going Mummy?

SANDRA (O.S.)
To see a man about a job.

75 OMITTED 75

75A **EXT. COUNTRYSIDE. AIDO'S FARM - DAY** 75A

Spectacular. Lush. Sandra's car winds up a curling, woodland track, towards a farmhouse, with cattle-sheds and a workshop.

Closer. There are two figures inside the workshop, in a boiler-suits, goggles, ear-defenders, using a circular-saw. *

The din drowns out the car's arrival and SANDRA's footsteps as she tentatively approaches. *

One of the carpenters halts as if sensing a visitor. Turns off the saw, removes the googles/ear-defenders and turns to SANDRA. *

FRANCIS DEVENNEY, 30s, has a learning-disability. *

The other carpenter sees him stop, takes off his goggles.

*

A beat -

AIDO (O.S.)

It's okay Francis, I know the girl.

SANDRA sees a casually-dressed AIDO exiting the house.

SANDRA

Look, I tried your man the architect. He's in America, on a job and he's not back till next year. He says I need an expert I can trust -

Beat. Aido sighs. Sandra lowers her voice.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Look we've been in temporary accommodation for months already. I can't do this anymore. This is a chance for us to -

EMMA (O.S.)

Mam - Molly needs a wee.

Jesus. SANDRA looks to AIDO.

AIDO

Francis, show them inside.

FRANCIS shows EMMA and MOLLY into the house. When they're out of earshot -

AIDO (CONT'D)

You've nobody else who could help?

SANDRA

I don't know anyone with your skills ...I barely know anyone at all now to be honest, living with Gary the last 10 years.

(admitting)

But, we had no choice. We had to get away from him.

AIDO

Well, you did well to get away from them. I crossed his father once. I'd never do that again.

Sandra nods. Then... She attempts lightness.

SANDRA

Look I'm just asking. And the one
good thing my Ma always used to say
was 'Don't pray for miracles, just
...ask for them.'

She smiles at him, unsure but genuine. He sighs.

AIDO

I don't know. Gifts of land, plans
off the internet, everything on the
cheap, off your own back - it's
nearly asking to go wrong... and if
I wasn't on site? It's too much of
a risk Sandra ...for everyone.

She nods. Gets that. Beat, then the girls exit the house.

MOLLY

Mam the house is really messy. I
think it's too big a job.

SANDRA, crimson. AIDO can't resist joking to Molly.

AIDO

When my wife's back from milking
the cows, I'll be sure to convey
your remarks, Madam.

Grim smiles, then FRANCIS comes back with a pair of old
safety-boots, assuming Dad's agreed to help.

FRANCIS

Are you Size 6? These are my old
ones.

SANDRA

You're very good Francis, but -

FRANCIS

Take them.

He insists, only to suddenly, without reserve, point to
SANDRA's birthmark, and laugh, Dad, look.

SANDRA smiles, touched. AIDO's awkward, but moved. A beat,
then he submits.

AIDO

Let's see where we get to with the
Planning.

SANDRA

(no way?!)
Seriously?

AIDO

Get your one, the Doctor to give me
a call, to talk money. I can't work
for nothing, but ...I'll do what I
can.

Understood. On SANDRA, relieved, grateful.

76

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

76

SANDRA types 1934 into the printer-scanner, sharing a furtive look with the same female LIBRARIAN. Beat, then she collects her Planning Application.

77

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY (EVENING)

77

Clothes, drying everywhere - on hangers, vents, lamp-shades.

The girls are just out of the bath. EMMA brushes/untangles MOLLY's hair (to cries of "Ow... Careful... That hurts!").

SANDRA has the house-plans, architect notes, planning forms laid out on the bed.

She addresses an A4 envelope to Aido Deveney, when there's a knock at the door. Odd. A beat, then another knock.

JO (O.S.)

Sandra, it's Jo, from Women's Aid.

Shit.

SANDRA

Jo - one second.

She frantically gathers up all her paperwork, shoves it in a bag for life, and sticks that in the bottom of the wardrobe.

EMMA and MOLLY watch, puzzled.

SANDRA goes to the door, gathers herself, and opens it to JO.

JO

Hi. Just a drive-by.

(breezes in, handing her)

Council is carrying out *another*
assessment of housing needs. As if
they don't know already - houses
are needed, Christ almighty.

(waves)

Hey Emma, hey Molly, have you just
had a bath? You look squeaky-clean!

SANDRA, noticing the wardrobe door's swung open.

JO (CONT'D)

You're still one parent, he's been keeping up the maintenance, has he?

SANDRA

Eh, right, he has, no difference.

JO

It's grand, just the maintenance affects how your rent allowance gets calculated.

SANDRA

Sure. Yeah, no, I remember.

She casually heels the wardrobe door shut.

JO

It's red-tape, but once it's done, it's done. It's not going to change much - unless you won the lotto and you're not telling me!

SANDRA laughs nervously.

JO (CONT'D)

Ring me if you need help with the forms. 'Night girls.

And she's out as quick as she came in. A beat, then -

EMMA

Okay, why are you being weird?

SANDRA

(deflects)

Do you's want to get milkshakes?

77A **EXT. BULL ISLAND - DAY (EVENING)**

77A

Sunset. Sandra's car in silhouette, rattling over the narrow wooden bridge linking the coastal road to a low lying, sand spit.

78 OMITTED

78

78A

EXT. DOLLYMOUNT STRAND - DAY (EVENING)

78A

Dublin Bay. The soaring statue of the Virgin Mary. The city.
The lighthouse on the East Wall. Poolbeg Towers.

Sandra's car, parked on the beach. SANDRA watches EMMA and MOLLY (coats over pyjamas) giddily running to the water's edge, retreating, giggling and repeating.

TIME CUT TO:

SANDRA, EMMA and MOLLY, sitting on the car-bonnet/the rocks, slurping milkshakes - and trying to process big news.

EMMA

A house?! We're building our own house, at the bottom of a garden?

MOLLY

Like a fairy-house?

SANDRA

I suppose, yeah.

EMMA

Can we help?

MOLLY

Can I wear a hat?

SANDRA

We'll see. The only thing is girls - and this is really important - we can't tell anyone. Not anyone in school. Not Nanny, not Granda, and especially not your Dad, okay?

EMMA

Why?

SANDRA

I'm just going by what Aido told me, the builder. And you've seen him, ya don't wanna cross him. So we'll keep this to ourselves, yeah? Our special secret?

They nod, then -

EMMA

Like Black Widow?

SANDRA

Eh. Sort of.

MOLLY

What's that?

EMMA

It's a code-word. It's better ya don't know.

SANDRA

Come on. Home.

They finish their 'shakes, and play "tag" back to the car.

Music plays over the following scenes.

79

INT. HOTEL ROOM/BATHROOM - NIGHT (MONTAGE)

79

EMMA and MOLLY are asleep. The only light comes from the ensuite, where we might hear:

CIARAN CROWLEY'S VOICE

It's simply empowering for people to build their own house.

SANDRA sits on the floor with her phone propped against the bath. It plays a Ciaran Crowley interview.

CIARAN CROWLEY'S VOICE (CONT'D)

It allows them to influence the world they want to live in.

She absently looks at the Assessment Forms that Jo dropped round. There's a section asking if she has LOANS / CREDIT.

She puts the form aside. Maybe not right now.

80

INT. KITCHEN. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY (MONTAGE)

80

SANDRA looks over a contract, with a map of Peggy's garden. PEGGY and GRAINNE flank her.

GRAINNE

We asked a friend of the family to draw it up. It sets out the boundary between the properties and just protects everybody - should circumstances change.

PEGGY

'Means when I kick the bucket she
can't take it off you.

Grainne bristles. Sandra tries to decipher the contract.

81 **EXT. FRONT OF PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY (MONTAGE)**

81

SANDRA accompanies PEGGY on her maiden trip outside the front door on her walking-frame.

PEGGY takes in the PLANNING NOTICE on her front wall. Smiles.

Progress is slow, frustratingly, but SANDRA offers support.

A neighbour, NATHAN, 38, waves -

NATHAN

Great to see you out and about,
Peggy.

PEGGY

Sure, I don't know myself!

82 **INT. KITCHEN. PEGGY'S FRONT HALL - DAY (MONTAGE)**

82

SANDRA and PEGGY, nervously looking at an envelope. There's a Dublin City Council logo. Planning Department.

SANDRA gives her Mum's ring a squeeze for luck, while PEGGY opens it.

APPROVED. Shock. Delight. Then anxiety. It's happening.

83 **INT. PUB - DAY (MONTAGE)**

83

SANDRA, on her hands and knees, trying to scrub a stain off the carpet, flexing her hand when it gives her grief.

JOHN the landlord sits at the bar, reading the paper, eyeing her, half-listening to AMY wittering while she polishes wine-glasses. Actor to improvise, until -

SANDRA

Amy - how are you fixed for
weekends these days?

AMY gets the significance. Really, me?!

85 **INT. BUILDERS' MERCHANTS. DUBLIN - DAY (MONTAGE)** 85

SANDRA confidently reels off items, to condescending DAVE.

SANDRA
... metal brackets, spirit-level,
sledge-hammer - oh, and a bag of
lime.

She slaps a wad of cash on the counter, Aido-style.

86 **INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY (MONTAGE)** 86

SANDRA pulls on extra pairs of socks, and takes in the boots Francis gave her.

They have steel toe-caps, thick soles. Like Gary's boots.

Beat, then she shakes the memory that was blocking her, and defiantly pulls them on, laces them up... ignoring the pain caused by two-handed activities.

87 **OMIITTED - ACTION/DIALOGUE MOVED TO SC92** 87

88

OMITTED

88

89 **MERGED WITH SC87**

89

90 **MOVED - MERGED WITH SC96A**

90

91 **INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY (MONTAGE)**

91

EMMA and MOLLY work synchronously, folding laundry, while SANDRA looks at the Social Welfare forms she's been avoiding.

She pauses, takes in the girls, then ticks "N/A" in the LOANS / CREDIT box. Signing the form, she shoves it in an envelope, and joins the girls' activity.

92 **EXT. GARDEN. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY**

92

Camera pans across SANDRA, AMY, PEGGY, MOLLY and EMMA - a mixture of excitement and fear. No going back now.

AIDO aware of his unprofessional crew is talking them through some basics before starting.

AIDO

Health and Safety is number one on this site. It's all about the hat and the boots, and knowing where not to be.

(to Molly and Emma)

You see over there behind the Ash Tree? That's Command and Control - your work-area. Don't be coming down here - builders don't like their clients watching over them.

He winks at them. They nod, got that, and he plonks toy hard-hats in their heads. Both light up, and trot off to "Command and Control".

Aido looks over at Aisling's den.

AIDO (CONT'D)

(to Peggy)

Ok with this?

Peggy watched by Sandra gives a thumbs up.

AIDO (CONT'D)

Sure even I get a wee bit nervous Day One. But just... day by day, brick by brick ok?

A nervous nod from Amy and Sandra. His eyes land on one of the pick axes. He picks it up and holds it out to Sandra.

AIDO (CONT'D)

We'll let herself start.

Sandra daunted momentarily.

AIDO (CONT'D)

It's your home. So... You break
ground.

Ok, she takes the handle, looks to Peggy, then Amy who is
beaming at her now. He watches her warily but she meets his
gaze, bites her lip, and swings. It cuts the soil. It begins.

TIME CUT TO:

Later. SANDRA and AMY hold sledge hammers and begin to destroy Aisling's den.

A MONTAGE of hands and builders boots, measuring and marking the ground.

AIDO scrapes the ground with his mini-digger.

We watch PEGGY, EMMA and MOLLY in the background. The girls are playing, running - enjoying the space.

TIME CUT TO:

A bedraggled MY LITTLE PONY DOLL from the 1980s amongst a pile of timber. A hand reaches to pick it up. PEGGY stands, examining it, watched by an exhausted AMY and SANDRA.

AIDO with EMMA standing beside him, oversees MOLLY 'driving' the stationary digger.

As SANDRA, EMMA and MOLLY trudge home, SANDRA looks back and sees PEGGY standing alone in the middle of the now barren site.

93

EXT. HOTEL - DAY (EVENING)

93

Worn-out SANDRA and a mud-caked EMMA and MOLLY trudge onto the forecourt.

SANDRA
Bath first, then ya can watch
Frozen.

Only to see GARY, waiting for them, holding a bag for life.

SANDRA stiffens. Looks round, for a way out, help? EMMA is happy to see him, and goes for a hug. MOLLY stays put.

EMMA
Dad.

GARY
(laughs)
The state of you. Where've you's
been playing, in the bog?!

SANDRA
(urgent)
Emma. Take your sister in.

SANDRA offers the hotel key-card, imploring EMMA to take it (and say nothing). EMMA huffs, grabs it - and MOLLY.

As the girls go -

GARY

Sandra, I just wanted to -

SANDRA

What are you doing, Gary?

GARY

... here, I made you dinner.

Reveals a large thermos-flask.

SANDRA

You shouldn't be here Gary.

GARY

I'm not asking to come in and eat
with ya's Sandra, Jesus.
I want them to have a hot meal. You
could use one, too. 'Wasting away.

He's almost affectionate. He offers the flask, and against
her better judgement, all she has been told, she takes it.

GARY (CONT'D)

It's mad isn't it? We could all
just get in that car now. Together.
We could just go back.

SANDRA

(into his eyes for once)
To what, Gary?

He hears her. But looks away, trying to hold in everything.

GARY

I don't know what's happened.

The honesty stalls her. A beat. She has to walk away. She
hangs on to the flask.

93 A

EXT. HOTEL, EVENING

93 A

Sandra leans against the wall, breathes deep steadying
herself ...her fingers clutching the thermos silver flask
trembling ...which becomes....

93B

EXT. GARDEN. RENTED HOUSE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

93B

ACTION COMBINED AND MOVED FROM SC103/105

Silver cocktail shaker, rattling with ice, Gary making cocktails. Last year. Summer's evening. Kids are in bed. SANDRA and GARY have their mates, SHANNON and ROB, 20s, over for a barbecue.

We might see GARY posturing, explaining how to cook a perfect steak. SANDRA's showing SHANNON a College Brochure.

SHANNON

That's deadly Sandra, fair play.

GARY

"Monte-fucking-ssori" Teacher, her?
She can't even look after our two!
(nudges laughing ROB)
Ya mad yoke. Mad Sandra Kelly isn't
that what they used to call ya?!

GARY brings over drinks for everyone but SANDRA, who's like, Where's mine?

GARY (CONT'D)

You've had enough.

He cuts her a look, then lobs a lime in the air, catches it behind his back, like no words were exchanged. Mr Charisma.

93 C

EXT. HOTEL, EVENING

93 C

Sandra shakes off the memory, opens her eyes. Onwards. She heads through the side entrance door of the hotel.

94

EXT. SITE. DAY

94

A CEMENT MIXER turning. SANDRA scoops cement into a barrow, and AIDO wheels it to the foundation hole. As AIDO tips it into the hole SANDRA stands ready with a piece of wood to scrape off any excess.

AIDO

Grand, grand. Skim it nice and
flat.

SANDRA focuses hard, supporting all her weight on the wooden bar as she skims. Suddenly she notices AMY documenting the action on her phone.

SANDRA

What are you doing?

AMY

Getting an "action-shot", for me
Instagram. Here hold it like you
were -

SANDRA

NO! No photos Amy. Not of me, or
the kids, or the site, alright?
Don't be putting anything online!

AMY

Jesus. Okay. Relax. Just thought
you'd wanna track the progress,
like Grand Designs..? No?

Emphatically, No. AMY makes a show of pocketing the phone, to
lighten the mood, and SANDRA continues scraping the wood over
the frame.

AIDO

Just smooth and gentle - you don't
want to let any dips happen in the
middle, d'ya see? You want the rain
to run off the edges. Okay? Got it?

SANDRA

Yeah.

However, now having her full weight on her bad hand causes it
to shake uncontrollably.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

No!

Coming up from the frame, steadying her shaking hand which is
now in spasm. She tries to hide it from AIDO as he grabs her
wooden scraper and continues flattening the concrete.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

I just need.. back in a sec.

95

INT. KITCHEN. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY

95

PEGGY, is poking some chicken nuggets round a tray just out of the oven, looking at them warily.

Emma and Molly sit at the table, Emma doing homework, Molly 'doing homework' and gazing round at Peggy's kitchen.

PEGGY

I'm not sure this counts as one of
your "five a day".

She sees SANDRA entering, downcast and flexing her sore hand.
Watches her run the tap, gulp a tablet.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

That won't do anything for nerve
damage.

*

SANDRA

Yeah well... it helps.

She washes it down with water, and notices MOLLY's restless.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Molly, go for a wee.

MOLLY

I don't need.

SANDRA

I can see you holding it in. Go on.

MOLLY stomps away, clearly desperate. AIDO opens the French
windows and calls inside -

AIDO

Sandra, you all right? Yeah?

A tight smile belies how tense she's feeling.

AIDO (CONT'D)

(hates saying it but..)

We're gonna need more hands next
Saturday.

She nods, turns, mind racing, washes out her glass.

96 OMITTED

96

96A **EXT. SCHOOL GATES - DAY (MERGED FROM SC90)**

96A

SANDRA collects EMMA and MOLLY. It is the last day of term, which means no-uniform and a term-full of art to take home.

The girls skip back to their car, giddy and high on sweets.

EMMA

And we got to play games and watch Moana!

SANDRA

Deadly - and now every day is a..?

MOLLY

"Mammy Day"!

Delight. SANDRA sees ROSA waiting nearby, who half smiles, putting stuff in her boot. Sandra thinking fast, gestures to the girls go on, I'll be with you in a sec.

She wills herself to walk over, stalls Rosa getting in.

SANDRA

Rosa, are you free at weekends?

ROSA

Sorry?

SANDRA

This is a bit mad. I'm building a house, like a self-build thing, and I need a hand, for a few weekends over the summer. And I was just wondering, now only if it suits, if you were around and wanted to help?

(sees she's thrown)

Hang on - I should write it down -

She can only find a receipt in her handbag, continues to gabble while scribbling with her absurdly large, blunt Carpenter's pencil -

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Sorry I know I've not been, we've not talked much, like, but you're always saying hi and I thought...

Holds out the scribbled receipt.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Look. There's the address. There's
no pressure. You're probably busy
or going away.

ROSA, speechless. This woman rejects all offers of playdates,
but wants help building a house?!

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Sure I'll leave it with you.
Thanks!

SANDRA returns to the girls, why did I think that was a good
idea?!

98

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

98

EMMA readies her little 'travel' bag. We hear whimpering O.S.
SANDRA talks to a closed wardrobe door.

SANDRA

Come outta the wardrobe Molly. We need to go.

MOLLY (O.S.)

I. Don't. Want. To. Go.

EMMA

Dad won't let her watch Frozen.

SANDRA

(Jesus)

Molly, come on -

She tugs the wardrobe door, only for MOLLY to grip tight and scream.

MOLLY (O.S.)

Leave. Me. Alone.

SANDRA

Let go of the handle. Molly. You could trap your finger. Enough.

She yanks open the door, only to see MOLLY, rigid, quaking.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Molly, what's going on?

She sees Molly's tights are soaked. She's wet herself.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Did you..?

MOLLY

Noooooo!

Molly scared, embarrassed. SANDRA, thrown.

SANDRA

Come here pet. It's ok. Come here to me, I'm sorry. What's wrong?

Holds MOLLY in her piss-soaked clothes, kisses her head.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

D'you want to stay with me today?

MOLLY's face is buried, but she nods. EMMA steps over, with the My Little Pony PEGGY took off the site, all cleaned up.

EMMA

Here, Molly. Would you like to play with Pony?

MOLLY nods.

SANDRA

Did you take that from Peggy's?

EMMA

No, she gave it to us. It's
Aisling's.

MOLLY

(recovering)

She's in heaven with Granny
Michelle.

EMMA

(solemn and grown up)

She had leukemia.

SANDRA

She did.

EMMA joins the family hug, only at a distance - doesn't want
wee on her.

99

EXT. FRONT DOOR. HOUSING ESTATE - DAY

99

SANDRA, with GARY. He takes in MOLLY, in the car, calm now
and playing with the My Little Pony.

SANDRA

She's not herself. Could be a
kidney infection. She wants to stay
with me.

Cutting her a look, GARY brushes past, and goes to the car.

GARY

Hey Molly, d'you know what Grannie
Tina's made? Your favourite, eggy-
bread. There's gonna be none left.

MOLLY starts to cry. Fuck's sake. GARY opens the back door.

GARY (CONT'D)

Alright, come on, out, let's go.

He tries to lift her out. MOLLY screams, kicks, No!

GARY (CONT'D)

Molly, stop it... Jesus, will ya
calm down... you're being a baby!

SANDRA

Gary, don't hurt her.

She reaches in to shield MOLLY. She ends up close to him so he stops trying and snaps at Sandra. That look.

GARY

She's only acting up because she
knows she can get what she wants.
She's messing us both about here.

Beat. He takes a deep breath. Calls out.

GARY (CONT'D)

Your sister's just gonna get all
the treats then.

He goes, cutting SANDRA a look, muttering -

GARY (CONT'D)

Cunt.

We see Emma and Tina waiting to see if Molly is coming in.

100

EXT. GARDEN. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY

100

SANDRA and MOLLY walk hand-in-hand down the lawn, when they hear - chatter? They round the hedge and enter the site, to see...

AIDO being introduced new faces on site - acquaintances of AMY.

TOMO, 17, Dublin-jersey, wiry, hyper - he repeatedly tosses and catches an Energy-drink bottle, unable to keep still;

DARIUSZ 30s, Polish, ripped, rat-tail haircut, laid back;

YEWANDE, 30s, African origin, highly-educated, handy.

SANDRA sees AIDO measuring them. And MOLLY clings to her, shy, scared.

AMY

Sandra - I rounded-up some heads
from the squat. One of them even
knows what they're doing!

She indicates DARIUSZ. He shakes her hand.

DARIUSZ

Dariusz.

AIDO

What's your trade Dariusz?

DARIUSZ

Construction and eh, Deliveroo?

Tomo holds in laughing. Aido clicks him.

AMY

This is Yewande from -

YEWANDE

(matter of fact)

Sligo. Cameroon, originally. Nice
to meet you.

Yewande shakes firmly, meets her eyes. Amy elbows Tomo.

TOMO

Tomo. From eh, down the road...
What's the story? -

He drops the bottle - 'ah shite.' , more reason to laugh. She warily shakes hands with him. AIDO looks on, bemused.

SANDRA feels MOLLY tugging at her joggers, look who's here.

FRANCIS. Boiler-suit. Kick-ass tool-belt. A warrior.

AIDO

I brought an extra hand, too. This
is Francis.

He sees SANDRA's tense, worried about the additions, the day
ahead...

AIDO (CONT'D)

Right so, are we all here? Will we
give Sandra a dig out?

TIME CUT TO:

The Crew at work: carrying lengths of wood to the workbench, measuring, sawing, drilling bolts into the cross-pieces to make the five frames (the structure of the house).

Aido impressed with YEWANDE who is thorough, strong and learning fast on the go - real team player.

DARIUSZ impresses with his technique and know-how, evidently the one who "knows what they're doing". We might glimpse him consulting the plans with AIDO, able to read/execute them.

AMY realizes she has made something completely backwards and has to re-do it. TOMO teases her. But he's slack, freestyles. Invokes AIDO's wrath. Behave. Be safe. Though the moment his back's turned, TOMO gestures wanker, and returns to his ways.

SANDRA works with AIDO. She holds a measuring stick, and he looks through a THEODOLITE, surveying the land. MOLLY is on hand to note down the measurements.

TIME CUT TO:

The gang, carrying the first frame (of five - the others are stacked in a pile) FLAT onto site.

SANDRA and FRANCIS at one side; DARIUSZ and YEWANDE at another; TOMO and AMY take the other side and AIDO lifts on his own.

SANDRA spots someone poking her head round the back-gate -

SANDRA

Rosa!

ROSA

(this set-up - wow)
Oh my God, Sandra.

AIDO

(in, beckoning Rosa)
Come here darling, grab hold.

ROSA makes a funny face at SANDRA, I better jump to it, and instantly gets involved.

SANDRA smiles, so touched that she came.

SANDRA

This is Rosa everyone. Rosa -

AIDO

Get the names after. Let's put this
up first.

He's tense, but the others banter while they balance, feet
dancing beneath the frames as they move to and fro.

AIDO (CONT'D)

Left. Bit more. Left. Left ya's,
Jesus. Now forward. That's it.

Fixing a rope to the frame, AIDO hoists it up with help from
the gang, and braces it into position. DARIUSZ checks the
spirit-level.

A second frame, soaring up from the ground, to be braced to
the first.

TIME CUT TO:

A fortnight later. All the frames, upright. A lot of banging.

AIDO, SANDRA, ROSA, DARIUSZ, FRANCIS, TOMO and AMY hammer
floor beams into position (Aido's blood-pressure spikes each
time Tomo swings!). PEGGY looks on, sitting on a box.

MOLLY and EMMA play in their 'Command and Control' area.

SANDRA sees NATHAN the neighbour peering over the fence. He
looks tired, tense and appeals to PEGGY -

NATHAN

Before 9, on a Saturday, again?

PEGGY

Ah now, do I complain about your
little one waking three times a
night? Earlier they start, the
sooner it'll be finished.

NATHAN

Is this gonna be every weekend?

PEGGY

Ear-plugs, Nathan. Works for me.

He smiles insipidly. SANDRA winces, but PEGGY gestures, it'll
be grand.

TIME CUT TO:

SANDRA, on the ground, watching AIDO and DARIUSZ working on the roof-beams.

TIME CUT TO:

Evening. Dusky light. The skeleton of the house, printed against the sky.

The crew stand back to take it in. Exhausted, but satisfied, proud, bonded.

AIDO
Where's herself?

A beat, then SANDRA rounds the corner, carrying MOLLY... and beer in a bulging carrier-bag. Cheers.

SANDRA
It's just a little something to say
thanks for today.

As she hands out cans -

YEWANDE
Sandra, you shouldn't have.

TOMO
No fucking complaints here!

Grabs a can, only to wince, sorry for cursing in front of the little one. AMY playfully thwacks him and opens a can.

AMY
This won't even touch the sides!

AIDO
(asking permission)
Doctor?

PEGGY
Sure, one won't kill you. 'May even
have one myself, for the day that's
in it.

Cheering. SANDRA distributes the rest and lifts her tracksuit top off the floor to head home.

ROSA
You're not having one, Sandra?

TOMO
It's a bag of cans Boss, not a bag
of can'ts!

SANDRA
(laughs, but...)
I need to get this one back. 'Been
a long day hasn't it, sweetheart?

MOLLY nods, barely awake. SANDRA stands by Rosa takes in the basic grid-work of the house, still can't quite believe.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Nothing there few weeks ago. It's
mad isn't it?

Sandra smiles at Rosa. Rosa winks. A silent thank you, you're welcome. Sandra lifts Molly in her arms.

As she goes, we might hear TOMO howling, getting lively.

101

INT. RECEPTION. HOTEL - EVENING

101

*

SANDRA carries a fast-asleep Molly towards the lifts. LAZLO calls after her, Miss -

LAZLO

Miss Kelly, come on -

SANDRA

'You want me to carry her all the way upstairs? It's just this once.

He walks alongside her to the lifts.

LAZLO

They have cameras everywhere. I get in trouble too.

Lift opens. A COUPLE stagger out, a bit pissed, laughing, - only to hush themselves when they see sleeping MOLLY.

PARTY GIRL

Aw look, ah isn't she gorgeous.

She has short shorts on and her arse cheeks hang out. SANDRA catches LAZLO checking it out as she enters the lift -

SANDRA

I wonder, do they have a camera on your face following her arse?

Lift doors close on his face.

- | | | |
|-----|--|-----|
| 102 | INT. BUILDERS' MERCHANTS. DUBLIN - DAY | 102 |
| | SANDRA strides round with her list, looking at the prices of tools, selecting screws, when she hears a familiar laugh and freezes. | |
| 103 | OMITTED, MERGED WITH SC105 AND MOVED TO 93B | 103 |
| 104 | INT. BUILDERS' MERCHANTS. DUBLIN - (PRESENT) DAY | 104 |
| | SANDRA peers round the aisle to see GARY at the Customer Service Desk, bantering with DAVE. Hail fellow, well met. | |
| 105 | OMITTED, MERGED WITH SC103 AND MOVED TO 93B | 105 |

106 **INT. BUILDERS' MERCHANTS. DUBLIN - (PRESENT) DAY** 106

SANDRA dumps the screws, backs out of the aisle and finds the exit, breathing fast.

Intercut with jagged images from 6 months ago: SANDRA, busted by an affronted GARY; viciously beaten; her hand, pulverized.

107 **INT. CAR (PARKED/MOVING) - (PRESENT) DAY** 107

SANDRA jumps in her car, locks the doors and rests her head on the steering-wheel - dizzy, dry-mouthed, swallowing hard.

Anxious that Gary's going to walk out and spot her car, she starts the engine and wheel-spins away.

108 **INT. PUB - DAY** 108

JOHN the landlord admonishes SANDRA in private.

JOHN

Late three times, and you've your kids here. I won't have it Sandra, 'tis a pub, not a fucking nursery!

SANDRA

It's the holidays. They're being good. John, please, I need this job.

JOHN

Well, make it your priority then. Cos there's plenty of people out there would love to take your place.

It takes all her strength not to react. She nods, understood, and paces away, bristling. Observe EMMA and MOLLY in the b.g, playing/colouring quietly.

A wrecked-looking AMY is at the other end of the bar. She's overheard the bollocking. Snorts, sotto -

AMY

Fuck him. Wait 'till he hears
Dariusz scored us tickets for
Longitude this weekend!

SANDRA

(us?!)

Does that mean nobody's around to
help?! I've the insulation coming,
Amy. We're meant to be installing
it Saturday.

AMY

Yewande'll be there, I'd say. And
Tomo'll be back if you keep paying
him in cans. Ya should've seen the
state of him, he was off his face!

SANDRA, worrying about that, whether anyone will be there.

109

INT. KITCHEN. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY

109

SANDRA enters, only to see PEGGY at the sink, Marigolds on, scrubbing a massive pile of dirty dishes.

GRAINNE (O.S.)

Stay where you are.

SANDRA stiffens. Glimpses GRAINNE, under the dining-table, with a dustpan and brush.

GRAINNE (CONT'D)

There's bits of glass everywhere.

There are also muddy footprints on the carpet, mugs full of ciggie-butts, empty beer-cans and pizza-boxes on the worktop.

SANDRA

Dr O'Toole, don't you be doing
those. I'll see to them.

She gathers the cans/boxes, as GRAINNE hotly wraps the glass in a sheet of newspaper and takes it the outside bin.

SANDRA, feeling like they're both against her. A beat.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry. How late did they stay?

PEGGY

How well do you know Amy's friends?

SANDRA

(ashamed)

Look, if you don't want them here, you won't see them again.

PEGGY

It's fine, just, maybe give the house a good clean this week.

SANDRA

I'll do that for you now. Get the place back to normal.

She runs the tap, and goes to pop a Solpadeine, only for PEGGY to swipe the packet, fix a look, no more.

She removes her marigolds and hobbles away on her stick, past GRAINNE, who's come back for her coat and bag.

GRAINNE looks to SANDRA, and shapes to leave without venting, only can't let this go. When her mother's out of earshot -

GRAINNE

I know I should be cool with this but I'm not. My father and I spent years trying to persuade my mother to let us do something with that piece of ground so.. well Mum has always done her own thing but you can imagine.. Look, I don't know you, what kind of person you are... I mean...

She trails off, confused, hurting.

SANDRA says nothing, feeling cornered, mortified.

A beat, then GRAINNE grabs her car-keys and goes.

110

EXT. BACK GARDEN. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY

110

PEGGY sits on the bench, doing leg-raises. EMMA and MOLLY sit at her feet, customizing a leftover cardboard box, turning it into their "house".

On site, a reduced crew. SANDRA, FRANCIS, ROSA and YEWANDE hold up green plywood, the first layer of covering for the house on the outside. AIDO assists, straining, doing the work of two people.

AIDO

Just the A-Team today then?

No response. He grabs screws to fasten it down, only -

AIDO (CONT'D)

I thought I said Goodwins with the big boxes of screws.

SANDRA

Are they the wrong ones?

AIDO

No, but they're dearer. You get big boxes half the price in Goodwins. You need to think of your budget, Sandra. You should've rang me.

EMMA

(in)

Here Mam, I was meant to give you -

SANDRA

Emma - don't be coming down here. You know better.

(to Aido)

I thought this was a self build?
Not a call-your-builder-every-2-
minutes -

AIDO

I said to you, "Goodwins".

SANDRA

Well, I couldn't go there, alright?

AIDO

Fine. We'll just use these.

Tense beat, then SANDRA calls over to -

SANDRA

Emma pet, what did you want?

EMMA

(retreats)

Nothing.

TIME CUT TO:

Later. SANDRA waves goodbye to YEWANDE AND ROSA

SANDRA

Thanks a mill. See ya next week.

She continues putting up the green plywood using an electric-screwdriver. FRANCIS holds up the heavy panels for her. AIDO works round the back, by himself.

A screw goes in wonky and SANDRA tries to remove it with the electric-screwdriver, only for the battery to run out. Damn.

She automatically lifts a claw-hammer to pull it out, when EMMA pushes in, trying again -

EMMA

Mam, can I show you now -

SANDRA yanks... and the hammer and screw scrape Emma's arm.

EMMA (CONT'D)

AAAAHHHHHHHH. Maammmmm!

SANDRA

Jesus love, I'm sorry -

EMMA

Bloooooood! Make it stop!

FRANCIS freezes, unsure what to do. There's enough blood to freak out EMMA, and her frazzled Mammy -

SANDRA

Come here to me. Dr O'Toole!
Peggy!!!

112

INT. KITCHEN. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

112

SANDRA cradles/hushes tearful EMMA, while PEGGY examines her.

SANDRA

It's okay chicken, it's okay.

MOLLY looks on, clutching that cleaned, restored My Little Pony. FRANCIS stands further back, shaken by the accident.

PEGGY

Let me see, pet. Oh, that's a nasty
little cut. Hold your arm up nice
and high for me Emma, good girl.

Pulls a hanky from her pocket to stem the trickle of blood.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

Molly, there's a brown leather bag
under the stairs, fetch it for me?
And a bowl of water please, Mammy.

SANDRA acts on that, as MOLLY returns with the medical bag.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

Think we need the special plasters,
nurse.

As MOLLY roots inside, SANDRA brings over water and kitchen-
roll. PEGGY assures Mammy, it's okay, and cleans the wound.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

Now, I'm just going to give this a
wipe and a clean, tape and bandage
you all up, and you just need to
decide -

Gestures to MOLLY, the plasters (Frozen-themed).

PEGGY (CONT'D)

Elsa or Anna?

EMMA

(weak smile)

Elsa.

PEGGY

'Course it is.

SANDRA smiles gratitude, and squeezes EMMA.

SANDRA

Sweetheart, what were you doing,
why were you there?

EMMA

Doesn't matter.

SANDRA

(persists)

Emma?

EMMA sheepishly removes something from her pocket. A photo.
It's of her and Gary on a night-out, young, happy, in love.

EMMA

Daddy told me to give it you.

This stings. SANDRA looks to PEGGY, tears in her eyes, and darts away, so the girls don't see her upset.

112A **INT. LIVING ROOM. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY**

112A

SANDRA, sitting on Peggy's bed, looking at that photo of Gary and crying.

PEGGY (O.S.)

Why don't you watch a bit of telly.

Beat, then PEGGY knocks and limps in, and sits beside Sandra.

SANDRA

Sorry. I shouldn't let them see me like this.

PEGGY

Why not? ...

SANDRA

(pours, almost admitting)

I miss him, Peggy. Gary... I mean,
I don't ...I miss who he was?

Peggy puts her arms around her, holds her through it.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

It's like it's all the wrong way
round. I wish I could bring it
back. I wanted to fix it, ya know?

PEGGY

I know. I know. No matter how much
you might want to, there are some
people you just can't...

(trails off, deflects)

Why don't you all stay here tonight
- have a proper feed, and a sleep?

SANDRA

I can't do that.

PEGGY

Sandra, you're exhausted. At this stage you should probably move in, while the build is happening.

SANDRA

I can't. I can't risk Gary finding out about this. I can't.

A knock at the door. AIDO looks in, checking on SANDRA.
PEGGY, she's grand. Good, however -

AIDO

Sandra, I'm sorry, we have to draw a line. I can't have children -

SANDRA

I know.

AIDO

If the Inspectors came -

SANDRA

Alright, Aido. I know.

A long beat.

AIDO

Look, I can't make the next couple of weekends. Leave everything till I'm back, okay? It can wait.

SANDRA, takes that in, bracing fury. On PEGGY, concerned.

113

INT. CAR (PARKED) - DAY

113

Outside Gary's parents' house.

SANDRA

It's the same as the safety box, Emma. Now, what do you say?

EMMA

(reluctant)

'I hurt it playing in the hotel.'

SANDRA

It's only a white lie, love. White lies are harmless, yeah?

EMMA nods. SANDRA squeezes her hand, and kisses it.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Love you.

EMMA

(small voice)

Love you.

EMMA gets out of the car, and runs up the path. SANDRA hates having to make her do this. Beat, then she turns, sees MOLLY clinging to the seat. Refusing to move. Really, again?

114

EXT. HOUSING-ESTATE. DAY

114

Front door of Gary's parents' house. SANDRA and GARY, heated.

GARY

Bullshit "kidney infection". For the last month? Are you grooming her or something?

SANDRA

No. Obviously not.

GARY

(a bit cheeky from her)

Well you *obviously* aren't fucking taking care of them are ya? If she's getting sick that much?

She shapes to go, only for GARY to grip her wrist.

GARY (CONT'D)

Keep her... But I know when you're lying to me, Sandra. I always know.

She pulls away, and dashes to the car, breathing hard, knowing she was right to be scared of him.

115

EXT. GARDEN. PEGGY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

115

The heavens have opened. The wind is up.

SANDRA, alone on the site, up on a scaffolding-tower with a staple-gun - defying Aido, only struggling to put the blue breathable membrane (the layer that goes over that green plywood) up by herself. She is a woman possessed.

The covering is sloppy and messy, but SANDRA staples away, determined to seal the structure.

Crinkling plastic. Creaking timber. Then a voice, faint -

SANDRA (V.O.)
Black Widow... Black Widow, Emma.

The cover flaps. The rain teems down. SANDRA keeps stapling.

FLASH: SANDRA sees EMMA crawling into the Wendy House. Turns to GARY in her face, accusing her, wielding that wad of cash.

Back to SANDRA, contending with the insulation, the elements, her trauma.

FLASH: SANDRA reaches for the door-frame, despite having her hair pulled out. She grips on, for dear life, only for the door to slam shut. Her hand. The pain. The Wendy House.

Back to SANDRA, stapling with all the energy she has left, only -

FLASH: The Wendy House. The door is ajar. And a little girl is cowering inside, watching her Dad beating the shit out of her Mam behind closed patio-doors. MOLLY. She was there.

Back to SANDRA, agonizing, realizing, she has been blocking out this memory. It now feels vivid, devastating. Her hand suddenly spasms, and she drops the staple-gun.

SANDRA
FUUUUUUCK. AAAAGGGGGHHHHH!!!

She curls forward, full panic attack, clasping her arm to her chest.

GRAINNE is suddenly there, at the foot of the scaffolding and yelling -

GRAINNE
Sandra, will you come down!

116

INT. LIVING ROOM. PEGGY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

116

SANDRA cradles MOLLY in front of a roaring fire.

GRAINNE drapes a blanket around them, and PEGGY brings in hot whiskeys. She takes in SANDRA, holding her daughter close and gazing at the flames. GRAINNE distributes the hot toddies and the women sit in front of the fire, in silence.

117 **EXT. GARDEN. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY (MONTAGE)** 117

The blue breathable membrane cover has been tacked on, and the battening has been started.

AIDO and FRANCIS return to see TOMO, DARIUSZ, AMY, YEWANDE and ROSA helping SANDRA.

He takes in the progress, then SANDRA, grudgingly impressed.

TOMO can't help but quip -

TOMO
While you were on your holidays,
the grafters been grafting.

SANDRA and AIDO see the funny side.

118 OMITTED 118

119 **EXT. GARDEN. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY (MONTAGE)** 119

8 corrugated onduline panels move across the site like battle shields. SANDRA instructs ROSA and YEWANDE where to put them.

SANDRA notices AIDO having a quiet word with TOMO, who peels away, chuntering -

TOMO
I didn't realize you could get
fired from Voluntary Work.

AIDO sighs, only to hear a whistle, check this out.

DARIUSZ arrives, carrying a big old Belfast sink.

DARIUSZ
I found it, in a fucking skip!

Amazement - at the chances of it, and him carrying it back!

120 OMITTED 120

121 **EXT. GARDEN. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY (MONTAGE)** 121

SANDRA watches AIDO and YEWANDE up on the roof, attaching the corrugated panels onto the roof-ridge. It's precarious work.

122 **EXT. GARDEN. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY (MONTAGE)** 122

SANDRA, working on the inside insulation. Her focus shifts to an ELECTRICIAN wiring the interior. She watches, learning.

123 OMITTED 123

124 **EXT. GARDEN. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY (MONTAGE)** 124

YEWANDE displays a farmhouse table that she has made from a reclaimed front door. It's ingenious. SANDRA is speechless.

124A OMITTED 124A

125 **EXT. GARDEN. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY (MONTAGE)** 125

SANDRA and the GANG eat lunch. YEWANDE's made a dish for everyone. PEGGY stands with her helping serve with rice and Okra. TOMO sits wolfing his, plate nearly empty already.

TOMO
(getting seconds)
Gorgeous Yewande.

YEWANDE
My mother's recipe. Thank god -
didn't have to leave that behind.

Peggy and her share a knowing nod. Tomo oblivious.

TOMO
You're missing out Aido telling ya.

Peggy offers AIDO some, but he's grand with his cheese and ham sandwich - which he routinely dismantles.

PEGGY
Aido it's Kondre - it's basically a
stew with a few plantains thrown in
..

YEWANDE
And a bit of goat.

Tomo's mouth drops open, 'goat?!' - appetite ruined, and YEWANDE teases, making bleating sounds. Laughter.

MOLLY feels similar about the goat ...tries to copy Aido taking apart a sandwich. EMMA raises her eyes, eating some... very sophisticated trying something new.

SANDRA teetering at the edge of the gang unable to sit down. Can't help it, gets back to work, screwing, hammering. The GANG take her in. She is relentless. A force of nature. Yewande catches Peggy's eye. She puts some food onto a plate, and covers it.

YEWANDE (CONT'D)
I'll put this inside for her ...for
later.

Peggy winks. 'Good thinking.'

126 **EXT. CAR PARK. HOTEL - DAY**

126

A tired SANDRA trudges towards the side entrance with EMMA
and MOLLY, when -

LAZLO
Miss Kelly, I had to sign for this.

He hands her an official-looking envelope. Recorded Delivery.

127 **INT. WOMEN'S AID OFFICE - DAY**

127

SANDRA paces furiously, COURT ORDER in her wrecked hand. JO
tries to calm her - but could wring her neck, too.

SANDRA

BREACH of access? That prick's lucky to see those kids at all. Now he's taking ME to court!

JO

Sandra, "breach of access" is an offence. You have to attend. You have to give your side of -

SANDRA

Aw well that's great. Wait till I get me A4 pad now and we'll get started will we?

JO

Well if you fight this, with that kind of attitude, he'll win. I've seen it. I've seen men get barring orders back against the women they hit, I'm telling you.

(beat)

Now, we can either calmly put forward your side of the story, or you can go into mediation ranting and raving and risk losing custody of the kids altogether.

SANDRA, incredulous. JO clings to her professionalism.

JO (CONT'D)

How many visits did Molly miss?

SANDRA

I dunno. Seven, eight?

JO

Sandra.

SANDRA

She wouldn't get out of the car Jo. What was I meant to do?

JO

You can't let Molly dictate terms.

SANDRA

Is that what you say to a crying child?

JO

I'm sorry, but he has a right to do this. I know it's frustrating.

SANDRA shakes her head, raging, mind racing. A long beat.

JO (CONT'D)

Any more news on the house front?

SANDRA turns to JO. She pauses, looks away, shakes her head.

128

INT. HOUSE SITE - DAY

128

View from above. The layout of the house. Workers inside.

A PLUMBER is in the "bathroom".

FRANCIS, TOMO, DARIUSZ, AMY ROSA and YEWANDE work in the "living-room", on the inner insulation.

SANDRA stands by the entrance, outside the house.

Closer. Sandra's holding a measuring tape, but a load of tape's spooled down, she's staring into space, distracted.

AIDO enters, with an interior door.

AIDO

How's herself?.. Hellooo -

SANDRA

I want one of them Banham locks,
for the front door.

(grabs a catalogue)

This one. D'you see? They flick
open easy on the inside - but
they're real secure?

AIDO

No, I know them. Just. I thought
you were on a budget.

SANDRA

Well I want one. Jesus, you ask me
for a million decisions a day, and
when I give you a freebie it's why
why why or too much - fuck-sake!

Silence. She realises everybody inside has stopped work. And they're staring. Rosa watches her concerned.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

What?! Stop looking at me, will ya!
Just... get on with it. Bleeding
gaff'll never get finished!

Beat, then she sees next-door NATHAN peering over the fence.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

And you can stop staring me out of
it as well, ya prick!

Awkwardness. The gang exchange looks, before resuming their tasks.

ROSA exits, non-judgmental, but firm. Gestures, aside.

ROSA
Sandra - what's going on?

SANDRA
What's the point of this house, if
I've no kids to put in it?

On ROSA, thrown... 'what?'

129

INT. BATHROOM. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

129

A dress hangs on the shower-rail, to steam out the creases.

SANDRA smears the clouded mirror, and takes a look at her reflection. She looks beaten. Feral. Doesn't know herself.

Uncapping a concealer-pen, she furiously jabs dots on her face. Angry she has let herself go. Angry with the world.

ROSA (O.S.)
"OK Kelly girls, are we ready? I
think Park, first? Then ice-creams?"

Reveal ROSA in the doorway, teasing the girls (unseen, responding 'Yeah!' or 'I'm just getting my skooter!'). She takes in SANDRA, feeling for her. A beat -

ROSA (CONT'D)
Sandra - we should go.

130

OMITTED

130

131

EXT. FAMILY COURTS. DUBLIN - DAY

131

Grainne's BMW pulls up outside, and SANDRA and PEGGY alight. As GRAINNE finds a parking space, SANDRA and PEGGY wait at the bottom of the steps.

SANDRA is smartly-dressed, wears thick make-up. It conceals her birthmark, everything.

SANDRA
Maybe I should ring the girls -

PEGGY
The girls are fine. I just spoke to
Rosa they're happy out. Relax.

GARY arrives, Conor McGregor-style three-piece suit, flanked by his parents.

Looks are exchanged, and they go in - only we might see TINA glancing back, briefly meeting SANDRA's gaze before going in.

A beat, then PEGGY hands her a dented cigarette-tin. SANDRA, puzzled. She opens it and finds a couple of rollies.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

From Amy. I hope it's only tobacco.

SANDRA thaws and looks round for a light, only for GRAINNE to arrive and offer one - then spark-up herself. PEGGY, stunned. Since when?

GRAINNE

Since I was 16, mother. Let it go.

SANDRA lets out a little laugh, and they smoke together, only to glimpse -

132

INT. COURT ROOM - DAY

132

JUDGE MCBRIDE, 54, female, peruses the case-work, flanked by the COURT CLERK and the JUDICIAL ASSISTANT.

*

SANDRA sits in the witness-box.

GARY and his SOLICITOR, female, 30s, ironed into her suit, sit across from SANDRA'S SOLICITOR. JO from Women's Aid sits behind.

*

*

JUDGE MCBRIDE

I see there were a few years of this "ongoing threatening behaviour", Ms Kelly.

*

*

SANDRA

Yes Judge.

JUDGE MCBRIDE

Was there a reason you didn't leave sooner?

SANDRA

I... did try to. I wanted to, loads of times - I made a safety-box. I just had nowhere to go.

*

*

The JUDGE weighs this, and looks to GARY.

JUDGE MCBRIDE

Mr Mullen - you claim that Molly
hasn't attended access on eight
occasions?

*

GARY

Yes judge.

JUDGE MCBRIDE

You've been keeping up maintenance?

GARY

Yes judge.

JUDGE MCBRIDE

Okay. Ms Breen.

SOLICITOR

Thank you Judge. Ms Kelly, last
time we spoke, you described
suffering "psychological and
physical abuse throughout your
relationship", is that correct?

*

SANDRA

Yes.

SOLICITOR

And when I specifically asked you
whether Mr Mullen had ever harmed
your children, you said "no". Is
that correct?

*

SANDRA

Yes.

SOLICITOR

Do you believe he's harmed them on
access visits?

SANDRA

No.

SOLICITOR

Your honour, we have new evidence
to bring to court.

(as it's presented)

Articles 1, A to C are photos of
the Mr Mullen's eldest child, Emma.

*

SANDRA looks to JO, who's just as surprised.

SOLICITOR (CONT'D)

On Sunday August 7th, Emma was dropped at her father's place of residence with a bandage on her left arm, as you can see. When questioned about this Emma said she hurt it "making something in the garden with mammy". This didn't match what Mr Mullen was told by Ms Kelly, who claimed it happened in the "hotel", where they temporarily reside.

*

SANDRA's now looking at the photo, and feeling sick.

SOLICITOR (CONT'D)

We have evidence that suggests Emma was indeed "making something in the garden"... of a Dr Margaret O'Toole - who is in fact allowing Ms Kelly to build a house at her property.

SANDRA

Judge, I... I can...

JUDGE MCBRIDE

Please wait, Ms Kelly... Ms Breen, what relevance does that have to this hearing? The matter is for another courtroom.

SOLICITOR

Judge, if this hearing is about the character of these parents, and which one is a more suitable guardian to the children, it's certainly worth noting that Ms Kelly did not inform Dublin City Council about this build, or her change of circumstances -

SANDRA

Dr O'Toole got planning, it's her property -

SOLICITOR

And Miss Kelly lied on an Assessment form.

SOLICITOR submits evidence to the JUDGE, and a stunned JO.

SOLICITOR (CONT'D)

When asked in June of this year if you'd received a Loan or had Other Housing options you wrote N/A, Not Applicable, did you not?

SANDRA

I didn't lie -

SOLICITOR

(deliberately informal)

Well it's on that form Sandra. I mean.. it's hard not to think you're trying to get two houses instead of one.

SANDRA

(don't go there)

Oh, fuck off.

JO, wincing.

SOLICITOR

Judge - is this a fit mother?

SANDRA looks to JO, rattled, disbelieving.

SANDRA

No. No way.

(stands, roars)

You're not doing this... YOU ARE NOT TAKING MY KIDS!

JUDGE MCBRIDE

Alright. ALRIGHT! Twenty minute break, while I go over this new evidence. And your client calms herself.

SANDRA sees JO nodding, masking anger.

*

133

INT. FOYER. FAMILY COURT - DAY

133

SANDRA on a bench, shaking, stroking her fingers straight.

Beside her, hushed, exasperated chat -

GRAINNE

They might take the girls because she fudged some bloody form?!

JO

Yes. YES they might! Because when it comes to legally binding forms, you're supposed to tell the truth.

SANDRA

(in)

Truth in the right tone of voice though, isn't it? Tell the truth? Don't tempt me. I'll be here all fucking week.

She storms away, and eyeballs GARY, sitting with his parents across the hall. On PEGGY, watching this, feeling for her.

134

INT. TOILETS. FAMILY COURT - DAY

134

SANDRA clutches the sheets of paper preparation with one hand - she runs water on her other... puts the water down the back of her neck.

PEGGY enters, on her walking-stick. A beat -

PEGGY

Come here to me.

SANDRA takes the hug.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

Of course you were going to stay on the bloody Housing List. Anything could've happened.

SANDRA

Look what I've done.

PEGGY

Sandra, you're building a house for your girls, from nothing. Working day and night for them to have the childhood they've been denied, and every weekend you've to drop them round to that fucker?!

(refers to the Court)

Do they know what it takes to do that? Do they?

SANDRA

I can't. I can't lose them Peggy.

PEGGY

I know. I know.

(beat)

(MORE)

PEGGY (CONT'D)

Christ, after Aisling died, I buried myself in work, trying to save other people's daughters... I missed so much of Grainne's life I ended up losing her, too. I wasn't a good mother, Sandra. Not like you.

(grips her shoulders)

I know you didn't stop Molly going to her father's, she just didn't want to, and you listened to her. You were trying to do what was best for your child. They have to see that.

(beat)

Jo's right, tell the truth. Put an end to this.

SANDRA's like a little girl looking at PEGGY.

PEGGY gets out some Wet Wipes, removes the concealer from Sandra's eye, exposing her birthmark. Then hobbles to the door, and holds it open.

135

INT. COURT ROOM - DAY

135

Tense room.

JUDGE MCBRIDE

Mr Mullen, has Emma recovered from her injury, in your opinion?

*

GARY

Yes judge, but I don't want my kids in an unsafe environment.

SANDRA

Unsafe?

JUDGE MCBRIDE

Miss Kelly -

SANDRA

It was a scrape, Gary. How many times has she done that coming off her scooter..?

JUDGE MCBRIDE

Okay. Let's just for a moment, look at the facts here. The report says Molly missed eight access visits. Mr Mullen hasn't missed one. He's paid child maintenance.

*

(MORE)

JUDGE MCBRIDE (CONT'D)

He's done everything that was
legally required -

SANDRA

Yeah, 'cause that's what he does,
he does what's required but it's
not real it's -

JUDGE MCBRIDE

No it's fact, Miss Kelly. Whereas
you have not. Why is that?

A beat. She looks at GARY, then the JUDGE, steely-eyed.

SANDRA

Ask me better questions.

JUDGE MCBRIDE

I beg your pardon?

SANDRA

Ask me why he's using the children
as pawns in front of us all, while
you's all wondering why I didn't
fill in a form?!

Directs this at GARY, with conviction, until she's done.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

You wanna know why I didn't let
Molly go? Because she was so scared
of seeing you. She saw, Gary. That
day. She saw you punch my head and
pull my hair and wreck my hand. And
you didn't see her, but she saw
you. And you're calling me to court
because she didn't want to visit?!
I can't make her un-see all that,
but Christ I'm her mother and I'll
listen. I'd do it again. I'd do it
a million times over. Making out
I'm the bad Mam, a bad person? I
put her first. I always put our
kids first.

He's inscrutable. Doesn't give her the reward of a reaction.
Sandra turns on the court, almost realising in the moment.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

They're the reason I finally left.
I'm done saying sorry. I'm done.
You all knew what he did to me -
from the Medical and Garda reports,
"facts", Judge - and you still put
me through this, still asking me
"Why didn't you leave him?" You
never asked "why didn't he stop?"

Silence. Awkward coughing.

The JUDGE surveys those pictures of Emma's arms. The Frozen plasters. Then looks over at Sandra, and displays the photo of "the scrape".

*

JUDGE MCBRIDE

This type of injury could have come from a playground, a tumble on the street... But it didn't, Ms Kelly. It happened in your care.

SANDRA tenses. Sees GARY thinking this is in the bag.

*

JUDGE MCBRIDE (CONT'D)

... albeit while you were in the process of building a house, to secure their future.

*

She takes in SANDRA and GARY, and closes the case-file.

JUDGE MCBRIDE (CONT'D)

I order the children to be assessed in the coming months, to establish their needs, what they truly want. But for now, no custody to Mr Mullen. The terms of access remain.

*

A beat to process, then SANDRA exhales relief. JO taps her hand, yes. GARY shakes his head.

JUDGE MCBRIDE (CONT'D)

However, Ms Kelly...

SANDRA

Yes Judge.

JUDGE MCBRIDE

You want to build yourself a house, you must take full responsibility for that. You must inform Dublin City Council that you wish to be taken off the Housing List. Your right to Rent Allowance will cease when you and the girls move in to this new house. Understood?

SANDRA

Yes Judge.

JUDGE MCBRIDE

Very well. You may step down.

She nods. This is a win, despite the financial implications.

CLERK (O.S.)

Court is adjourned. All rise.

SANDRA sees JO trying to stay dignified, but wanting to yell yes!

135A **INT. FOYER. FAMILY COURT - DAY**

135A

Moments later, SANDRA embraces PEGGY, scarcely able to believe the verdict, and squeezing her tight as GRAINNE and JO watch, beaming.

SANDRA

Shit. Your hip.

PEGGY

Hip's fine.

SANDRA

I'm keeping my girls.

PEGGY

I'm delighted for you, Sandra.

They laugh/cry with relief.

SANDRA sees GARY across the foyer with his parents. A look between them. She can't read him. Is he sore, hurting, humiliated, or is that resigned acceptance?

136 OMITTED

136

137 OMITTED

137

138 OMITTED

138

139 **INT. GRAINNE'S CAR (MOVING) - DAY**

139

GRAINNE drives. PEGGY's in the passenger-seat.

SANDRA snuggles up to EMMA and MOLLY on the back-seat, squeezing them that bit tighter today. Beat.

EMMA

Did you see Dad?

Quick glance to PEGGY. Then SANDRA levels with her. No more white lies -

SANDRA

I did. We went to the court, and we talked, and the Judge said we're to go back to how things were with the visits, but in a little while they wanna ask how you feel about it and how it's going. You okay with that?

EMMA nods. Then SANDRA kisses MOLLY.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

It's grand. You can go and see Daddy. You don't have to worry about me anymore. Okay?

MOLLY

(nods, then...)
Rosa just got a puppy.

EMMA

It's SO cute.

PEGGY

(in, mischievous)
Maybe Mummy should get one for the new house.

GRAINNE

Says the woman who never let us have a hamster!

Laughter. SANDRA finally allows herself to smile.

140 **EXT. GARDEN. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY**

140

SANDRA, back in her work-gear, returns to the site with EMMA, MOLLY and PEGGY. Nobody's about.

She takes in the house. It's almost done. Looks habitable.

SANDRA

D'you wanna see your room, girls?

EMMA/MOLLY

Yeah!

141 **INT. HOUSE SITE - DAY**

141

SANDRA shifts aside the temporary-door, only to startle -

ALL

Surprise!

The gang are all there: AMY, TOMO, YEWANDE, FRANCIS -

SANDRA

Jesus, me heart.

AMY

Congratulations, ya ledge!

SANDRA

You laid the floor!

AMY

Team effort.

TOMO

Mainly me.

AMY

Me hole was it - Yewande's been at
it all day.

(beat)

Here. From all of us.

She hands SANDRA a gift, beautifully-presented.

SANDRA

Aw lads - girls, look at the
wrapping.

TOMO

Fuck "the wrapping", open it!

SANDRA carefully unwraps. It's a Gold Knocker for a door.

SANDRA

Oh my God. Me own door KNOB! It's
gorgeous! The weight of it, feel.

AMY

Just don't you be letting anymore
knob-ends in the door, ya hear?

Laughter, playful joshing, then heads turn when a BICYCLE
makes its way down the garden, rode by DARIUSZ.

DARIUSZ

Somebody order a lot of pizza?

Cheers. As pizza-trays get handed through the window-frame -

TOMO

Here will we have a photo?

Awkwardness. AMY knows she has issues with that. Only -

SANDRA

Go on. Yewande, lads, get in -

AMY

So we're allowed photos now?

SANDRA

(ha-ha)

Come on smart-arse, group-shot.

The gang gather, goof around, pose, only for SANDRA to see FRANCIS, and realize his old man's missing. As it flashes -

141A **EXT. GARDEN. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY**

141A

SANDRA goes round the back of the house with a pizza-tray, Prosecco.

We might hear TOMO, "The Boss is on the lash!" There's a party happening inside the house. Music blares out of a phone.

AIDO's at work, on all fours, checking the drainage system.

SANDRA

Hungry?

AIDO

Always.

Wiping his hands on his boiler-suit, he takes a slice, and proceeds to pick half the toppings off it.

SANDRA

Aido, what's the deal with all the picking? You're the same with your lunch.

AIDO

(mouth full of pizza)

I like things simple. I can't be doing with fuss.

SANDRA

Fuss?

AIDO

Stop. The wife gets on to me to have vegetables and salad, "eat healthy".

SANDRA

Since the scare?

AIDO

Since we wed. Every day for thirty-years the same sandwich, and every day I give the lettuce to the birds.

SANDRA

Would you not just tell her you don't like lettuce?

AIDO

And let the birds starve?
(then, tentatively)
So the Mullens didn't get their way this time?

*

SANDRA

They didn't.

AIDO

(exhales a ton of relief)
Thank FUCKING Christ - sorry!...

He nearly punches the air. Sandra laughs. They share a smile.

SANDRA

Everything's okay?

AIDO

Everything's okay.

He puts a hand on her shoulder. It's awkward but well meant.
Common soldiers. Battle won.

AIDO (CONT'D)

I'd say three more days, you could be in.

SANDRA

Seriously?

AIDO

Then you can settle up. You think
I'm getting paid in pizza?

He winks, and goes looking for more. She smiles, then sees a
familiar face coming down the garden path with a large pot -

ROSA

Heard about the session. I made
Feijoadá.

Aido already grimacing at the idea of that dish.

SANDRA

Brilliant! Come on I get you a
drink!

142 OMITTED 142

143 **EXT. GARDEN. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY** 143

The new-build house, at dusk. Music plays within. Hold this,
longer than we might expect. It's almost unsettling.

Then laughter.

SANDRA piggy-backs EMMA out (Emma's a bit more hyper than
usual, have sipped some bubbles), DARIUSZ cradles sleepy
MOLLY, and the others follow, cans in hand, deep in chat,
keen to carry on.

Light's fading, kids are wrecked, the party's moving inside.

144 **INT. LIVING ROOM. PEGGY'S HOUSE - NIGHT** 144

PEGGY "hosts", ensuring glasses are full, and people are fed.
Then Peggy pulls the blinds on the windows onto the garden.

AIDO tunes a guitar. FRANCIS takes in Peggy's oriental art,
and cracks up (finds it very bold!).

TOMO, DARIUSZ and YEWANDE lounge on a sofa, tipsy already.

JO holding a tray of sandwiches, chatting to AMY who is

embracing her into the fold. Chat and banter in full flow.
We hear:

YEWANDE

I never did stuff like this when I
was younger. I've got so used to
having it to look forward to now.

SANDRA

(in)

Same.

She's perched on a nearby stool, formal jacket from court
off, hair down, and for once chilling. SANDRA sees ROSA
coming downstairs, miming, 'fast asleep'. Sandra nods.

AIDO lifts his can for toast.

AIDO

Listen...eh...I just wanted to say.
It's been a long time since I did
anything more than an odd job. And
what's been done here makes me very
proud -

(cups Francis' ears)

And puts me in mind of an old Irish
term: a Meitheal.

TOMO

A meth-head?!

AIDO gets him in a playful headlock.

AIDO

A Meitheal. Francis, explain to the
young ones what it is, while I put
some manners on this eejit!

FRANCIS

A Meitheal is when people come
together to help their own.

AIDO

And are helped in return. Sláinte.

All raise a glass, united and changed by this experience.

TIME CUT TO:

Later. It's turned into a lively session.

AIDO plays guitar, FRANCIS the bodhran, YEWANDE claps along,
TOMO gently twirls PEGGY, DARIUSZ jigs with AMY and ROSA.

While SANDRA watches, smiling, feeling like she can breathe
again. Closing her eyes, she starts to sing a *cappella*.

As SANDRA cuts loose, the others stop dancing and playing to
listen, and take her in.

This is the real Sandra Kelly.

She closes her eyes, and sings her heart out, uninhibited.

Eventually she opens her eyes, and sees MOLLY at the door, quivering, trying to get the words out. Finally -

MOLLY

Black Widow. Black Widow, Mam.

SANDRA stops. All eyes are on MOLLY, repeating Black Widow.

144A **INT. HALLWAY/KITCHEN - NIGHT**

144A

SANDRA bolts down the corridor and bursts into the kitchen, only to tense.

The light from the flames glows through the linen curtains, colouring her face, orange, red.

Her darkest fears. The house she built is on fire. Falling apart.

SANDRA

No. NO!

144B **OMITTED**

144B

145 **EXT. GARDEN. PEGGY'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

145

Flames.

Huge, gushing flames.

And the cruel, crashing sound of walls tumbling.

SANDRA dashes out, screaming, crying, animal-like.

AIDO rushes after her. FRANCIS is not far behind, his minder.

PEGGY watches, distressed, faint. YEWANDE sees this, steadies her.

ROSA's on her phone, pleading, hurry.

AMY's in tears, yelling at Sandra to get back.

SANDRA tries to get to the house, only to recoil, the heat is intense.

AIDO grabs her, and tries to haul her away. She clings to his shirt. Begs. Screams.

Until FRANCIS, TOMO and DARIUSZ pull them both back.

SANDRA kneels as the house goes up, heart breaking, sobbing.

All look on, aghast, as the burning house folds in on itself.

BLACK

SILENCE

WHITE

146 **EXT. GARDEN. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY** 146

Ash. Ruin. A wasteland.

The only thing left of the house is a portion of the frame where the front door was.

147 **INT. BEDROOM. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY/NIGHT** 147

Ashen-faced SANDRA, lying on her side, sedated.

At various points, food appears, but gets left.

EMMA and MOLLY cuddle-up, but they are ignored.

Her belongings (from the hotel) are brought in and neatly stacked below the window, but she's oblivious.

PEGGY, ROSA, JO and AMY sit with her, update her, offer condoling words, but she doesn't hear them.

YEWANDE, TOMO and DARIUSZ check in with PEGGY, respectful, inquiring, nodding etc... but not disrupting Sandra.

AIDO and FRANCIS stand in the doorway, looking in. FRANCIS has brought flowers. AIDO pale with grief and tired anger, almost in it with her.

Day turns to night.

SANDRA groans in her sleep, twitching, only to wake, thrown, scared and soaked with sweat. She curls into a ball, trying to shake the dream.

148 **INT. STAIRCASE. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY** 148

Stairs. The upstairs landing, leading to Peggy's spare room.

A beat, then the sound of loss. Low, anguished, a howl from the pit of the stomach.

149 **INT. BEDROOM. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY** 149

SANDRA, sobbing, quaking with grief, at the loss of Gary, her house, hope of a new start.

FADE TO BLACK.

150

EXT. DUBLIN - DAY

150

Buildings, and building work, all over town.

New hotels, luxury-apartment blocks, swanky offices, gated-estates, renovations, restorations.

So much construction. But so little housing.

151 **INT. BEDROOM. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY**

151

Sunlight streams through the windows. SANDRA stirs, hollowed and cried out, only to see a silhouette of a small woman in the armchair. Her eyes adjust to see -

TINA, Gary's Mum, sitting beside her. Nervous. Heartbroken.

TINA

He's been arrested, Sandra - Gary.
He's in custody. He'll go down for
a long time... You're safe.

(fills up, regrets)

What he did to you...there's no
excuse. When he was a child, he
learnt well what could be done
inside four walls with no one
watching but...I knew. I just
didn't want to believe... and when
I heard you were building that
house - and god bless him he's my
only son - but I thought... Thank
God.

(beat)

I have to stay with my one.

(beat)

You don't.

(looks at her)

He's set himself on fire, not you.
It doesn't matter what walls you're
between now. It's over.
You're free.

Beat, then she gets up, and goes.

SANDRA, a flicker of something. Then her eyes close again.

FADE TO BLACK.

152 **INT. BEDROOM. PEGGY'S HOUSE - (NEXT) DAY**

152

PEGGY opens the curtains, and the September sun warms SANDRA.

PEGGY

Time to get up, Sandra.

SANDRA won't. Can't. So PEGGY levers an arm under her, and raises her up.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

I made you tea. Have a little sip.

SANDRA doesn't react. So PEGGY puts the cup to her lips and encourages her to drink.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

Good woman. Can you stand?

SANDRA is too weak. So PEGGY pulls back the duvet, swings her legs out, and fixes a look.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

Now, grip. And up we go. Deadly.

Flicker of recognition. Then PEGGY walks SANDRA very slowly out.

153

INT. HALLWAY/KITCHEN. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY

153

PEGGY follows SANDRA downstairs, through the hallway, into the kitchen.

GRAINNE's preparing tea. She smiles at SANDRA.

SANDRA sits in a chair staring out into the garden. Peggy puts Sandra's blackened safety boots down in front of her feet.

154

EXT. GARDEN. PEGGY'S HOUSE - DAY

154

Sandra walks down the lawn, PEGGY at her side.

Steeling herself, SANDRA walks round the hedge, to the rear garden, where her house was, only to halt.

Reveal two little girls in hard-hats sinking tools into a heap of ash. MOLLY has a trowel, EMMA shovels ash into a wheelbarrow.

But from where SANDRA's standing, it looks like they're digging.

She takes in her beautiful, inspiring daughters. Smiles.

PEGGY stays put, and watches SANDRA wander over to them.

EMMA and MOLLY, thrilled to see her, but unsure if she's better.

SANDRA looks for a shovel, only to take in her bare hand,
realise there's no support on it.

She grips a spade, both hands. Meets her daughters' gazes.

Out on SANDRA, EMMA and MOLLY, shovelling the ashes away.

END