

THE IRISH EXPRESS

written by

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OVER BLACK the repetitive WHIRRING of an 8MM film camera.

FADE IN:

INT. FLYNN HOUSE - DAY (MID-1960S)

BLACK & WHITE 8MM HOME MOVIE of a young SHAUN FLYNN (5) and his father MATTHEW (30s) sparring, both gloved, both shirtless.

Shaun gives it everything he's got, showing off his boxing prowess to his father. Matthew leans down so Shaun's punches connect. Matthew beams with joy. He counters Shaun's punches with soft punches of his own.

INT. EASTSIDE BOXING CLUB - DAY (LATE-1970S)

A handful of white, black, and Hispanic BOXERS jump rope, hit the speed bag, and spar. The equipment is out-of-date and the ring is shabby, but the boxers are eager.

In the corner, BARRY, a gruff black man in his 50s, holds the mitts for SHAUN FLYNN (18), a shaggy-haired middleweight white kid with sweat dripping from every pore on his body.

Shaun hits the mitts with speed, ducks them with agility. The mitts POP as he throws each punch.

MATTHEW FLYNN, now in his 40s, stands in the wings trying to coach Shaun.

MATTHEW

Hit the mitts! Harder! Hit 'em harder!

His demeanor has changed since we first saw him in the 1960s home movies. He's lost the youthful joy he once had.

MATTHEW

You're slowing down! Hit the fucking mitts! Faster!

Shaun speeds up, hits harder. He finishes with a flurry of punches. Barry puts the mitts down.

BARRY

Hit the showers, boy. You got sweat running down the crack of your ass.

Barry unties Shaun's gloves and takes them off.

BARRY

Good luck tomorrow.

Shaun crosses the gym toward the locker room. On his way he spots "IRISH" BILLY BRODERICK hitting the speed bag. Billy is a lightweight in his late-20s, but looks older, with his busted nose and cauliflower ear.

As Shaun walks by, he taps Billy on the shoulder. Billy hits the speed bag with one final punch and turns to Shaun.

BILLY
Gonna whup some ass tomorrow?

SHAUN
Only if you do.

They bump fists. Shaun walks away and Billy turns back to the speed bag and continues his workout.

Back on the other side of the gym, Barry talks to Matthew.

BARRY
Why you gotta talk to him like that? Ease up.

MATTHEW
That kid ain't gonna motivate himself.

BARRY
There ain't no need to cuss him.

MATTHEW
No one asked your opinion.

BARRY
Maybe not, but I'm gonna give it. Try showing him a little respect.

Matthew glares at him. Barry stares right back. Matthew walks away.

INT. EASTSIDE BOXING CLUB - LOCKER ROOM - LATER

The locker room is dank and mildewy. Shaun comes out of the shower with a towel wrapped around his waist and approaches the lockers. He gets dressed.

LEROY DUNCAN, early-20s, African-American, enters the locker room. He is a thin, but muscular, lightweight. He is sweaty and still catching his breath from a long workout.

LEROY
Looking good out there, Shaun.

SHAUN

Thanks, man. You, too. Looks like you could knock the nose off a rhino.

Leroy smiles. Shaun reaches into his locker and takes out a pair of sweaty trunks.

SHAUN

Thanks for letting me borrow your spare trunks.

He tosses the trunks to Leroy. Leroy catches them and cringes.

LEROY

Sure. Uh, you keep 'em.

Leroy tosses the trunks back to Shaun.

SHAUN

Wanna go out and chase some girls tonight?

LEROY

In your town?

SHAUN

Sure, or in your neighborhood.

LEROY

Naw, I've already got plans.

SHAUN

If you change your mind...

LEROY

Aren't you still with Beth?

SHAUN

You know what Dad says: be happy with what you got, but always be looking for something better.

LEROY

Good luck with that.

(pause)

I'm gonna hit the showers.

SHAUN

All right, take it easy. And see you tomorrow night.

Leroy begins getting undressed. Shaun hesitates.

SHAUN
About tomorrow night...

Leroy turns to face Shaun.

SHAUN
When you turned pro, how did you feel? How are you supposed to feel?

LEROY
Felt good, I guess. Getting paid to hit guys in the mouth ain't bad, if you ask me.

Shaun SIGHS.

LEROY
You think too much. The only way to find out is to climb into that ring and start boxing.

Shaun nods and sits in silence.

INT. SHAUN'S CAR - NIGHT

Shaun's car is parked on a secluded street in an Oklahoma City suburb. He sits in the car making out with his girlfriend BETH, a perky high school senior, who chews bubblegum between smooches. They stop making out every now and then to converse.

SHAUN
Would you give it a rest with that bubblegum?

Beth shakes her head "no" and kisses him again.

BETH
Are you going to get the pulp beat out of you tomorrow?

SHAUN
Naw.

He kisses Beth.

SHAUN
(boastful)
It's my first pro fight. This guy's had twelve or thirteen. But I pack that devastating double hook. And when I step into the ring -

Shaun mimics a double left hook.

SHAUN
BAM! - I'll take him out in the
first round.

BETH
What are you trying to prove?

SHAUN
I've got nothing to prove. I've
already beat a hundred and
nineteen guys as an amateur. He's
just gonna be one more victim.

She's not buying his bravado. Shaun shrugs, then leans in and
kisses her. He takes her hand and brings it down toward his
crotch. She recoils.

BETH
I don't think so.

SHAUN
C'mon.

BETH
Not here.

SHAUN
No one's around. C'mon. For luck.

BETH
Okay. For luck. Sounds like you'll
need it!

She takes out her gum and sticks it on the dashboard.

INT. FLYNN HOUSE - AROUND MIDNIGHT

A modest, middle-class home. The door CREAKS open and Shaun
sneaks through, quietly closing it behind him. He slowly walks
through the house.

He walks past the living room. The TV is on at a LOW VOLUME.
Matthew sits on the couch. Shaun prays he is asleep. He tip-
toes by. His prayer is unanswered.

MATTHEW (O.S.)
Where you been?

Shaun pokes his head into the living room.

SHAUN
Hey, Dad. Been out with Beth.

MATTHEW

You've got a fight tomorrow. You need rest.

SHAUN

I know that.

MATTHEW

You know that? Then why are you doing it? You shouldn't fool around before a fight.

SHAUN

Beth just wanted to wish me luck. And it's Friday night.

MATTHEW

I don't care what night it is. You need to go to bed. Get your priorities straight, boy.

Shaun wants to retort, but holds back.

SHAUN

I'm going.

He starts to walk away.

MATTHEW

And don't wake up your mother.

INT. AUDITORIUM - LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

The sound of the CROWD can be heard faintly through the walls. Matthew stands near the back wall, while Shaun is on his knees in a toilet stall PUKING his guts out.

MATTHEW

Stop that, now.

SHAUN

You're not the one who has to go out there.

MATTHEW

It's all in your head.

Shaun THROWS UP again. He wipes his mouth, FLUSHES the toilet, and walks over toward his father. Shaun shadowboxes for a bit.

The fight PROMOTER enters the locker room.

PROMOTER

You're up, kid.

Shaun stops dead in his tracks. He runs back to the toilet and throws up again.

INT. AUDITORIUM - LATER

The auditorium holds about 300 people. It is mostly sold out. Some people sit on folding chairs near the ring, and others sit in the bleachers. Plumes of cigarette smoke rise to the ceiling.

Shaun is draped in a green robe. He and Matthew walk down the aisle, through the crowd. They reach the ring, where Barry is waiting for them in their corner.

Shaun climbs the steps and Barry holds the ropes for him to enter the ring.

Shaun shadowboxes a little. Barry pats him on the back, then takes off his robe. Matthew puts his arm on Shaun's shoulder and leans in close to his ear.

MATTHEW

Knock his head into the cheap seats.

Shaun stares in his opponent's direction, looking past him with a trace of fear in his eyes. Shaun is fighting "CHIEF" CHARLEY ROSS (20s), a Native American southpaw slugger.

ANNOUNCER

In the red corner, making his professional debut, Shaun Flynn!

The crowd APPLAUDS for Shaun.

ANNOUNCER

And in the blue corner, with a record of seven wins and six losses, Chief Charley Ross!

The crowd CHEERS, much louder than they did for Shaun.

LATER

The BELL RINGS. Round 1 begins. Ross comes out swinging. Most of his punches miss, but a few land hard. Shaun is hesitant to throw. He tries to outbox Ross and feel him out. Shaun throws a few punches, landing a couple, but he takes more than he can throw.

DING! Saved by the bell. The fighters retire to their corners. Barry holds the water bottle up to Shaun's mouth. He takes a sip and spits it into the bucket.

BARRY

You're starting slow, but you look good. Feel him out.

MATTHEW

Stop trying to be a fancy-dan out there and throw some damn punches!

DING! Round 2. The fighters circle each other, each one waiting for an opening. Shaun gets in a couple of decent body shots. Ross comes back at him with several heavy blows of his own.

In the crowd, CONNIE (early-40s), Shaun's mother, SIGHS. Beth, who sits next to her, is captivated and can't look away.

Near the back of the auditorium, Leroy and Billy look on.

BILLY

Let's go!

LEROY

C'mon, man! You got this!

They dance around the ring, each throwing punches that don't connect.

The BELL RINGS. End of Round 2. Shaun sits in the corner. His lip is busted and beginning to bleed.

The BELL! Round 3. Ross's right jab lands directly on Shaun's jaw. Sweat sprays everywhere.

Shaun takes a burst of punches to the stomach. He clinches. The referee breaks them up.

Ross hits Shaun in the face with two consecutive right jabs. Shaun counters with a solid hook to the ribs.

The BELL RINGS, ending Round 3. Again, Shaun sits in his corner on a stool. His energy is beginning to wane.

MATTHEW

After he throws that jab, he lowers his right hand. Look for an opening and you can hook him to the head.

The WHISTLE BLOWS, and the cornermen leave the ring. Shaun stands, cracks his neck, and gets ready for the bell.

DING! Round 4. Ross comes on strong with a burst of shots to Shaun's body. They clinch.

Matthew shakes his head. Connie looks on from the crowd, horrified. Billy and Leroy wince as Shaun takes another punch.

LEROY

This guy's got too much
experience. Shaun shouldn't be in
the ring with him.

The referee breaks them up. Ross throws two right jabs. He lands the first one, but Shaun slips the second. After the second jab, he briefly lowers his right hand. Shaun sees an opening and throws a left hook to the head.

Ross drops to the canvas. Shaun retreats to a neutral corner. The referee counts.

REFEREE

One! Two! Three!

Ross staggers, trying to beat the count.

REFEREE

Ten!

The CROWD GASPS with surprise, but then erupts in APPLAUSE.

Shaun wins! He can't believe it! He throws up his arms in victory. Matthew and Barry rush up into the ring. They both hug Shaun.

Ross is back on his feet and has retired to his corner. Shaun crosses the ring and approaches him. Shaun pats him on the shoulder. He nods at Shaun.

Shaun turns to walk back to his corner.

ROSS'S CORNERMAN

You got lucky, kid.

Shaun pauses for a beat, but keeps walking to his corner - he refuses to look back.

Matthew puts Shaun's robe on him, and Barry takes off his gloves. Barry holds the ropes open so Shaun can exit the ring.

Shaun walks down the steps, out of the ring and into the crowd. Connie and Beth are waiting for him. They both kiss him.

BETH

You did it!

Shaun, Beth, Connie, and Matthew start walking toward the locker room. As they walk, random SPECTATORS congratulate Shaun.

SPECTATORS

Nice job, kid!
(MORE)

SPECTATORS (CONT'D)

Way to go!
You really knocked him on his ass!

SHAUN

(to Beth)

I'm gonna stay and watch Leroy and Billy fight. You want to stick around?

BETH

I promised to babysit Abby after the fight. I just had to be your good luck charm. I can't believe you did it.

SHAUN

I can't either. I'll call you tomorrow.

INT. AUDITORIUM - LOCKER ROOM - LATER

Leroy is in the locker room, pacing around, stretching, getting limber, shadowboxing.

Shaun sits down nearby holding an ice pack to his head. His head is pounding. His lip is beginning to swell.

LEROY

Great job out there.

Shaun shrugs. Billy enters.

LEROY

I mean it, you did great.

SHAUN

I got lucky.

BILLY

Bullshit. There's not a lot of guys out there who can punch as hard as you. You just need to work on your defense so you don't take so many blows to the head.

SHAUN

I think I'll do that.

INT. AUDITORIUM - CONCESSION STAND - LATER

Hungry and thirsty spectators wait in line for refreshments. Shaun is at the front of the line ordering a hot dog and a Dr. Pepper.

Matthew approaches him and taps him on the shoulder. Connie stands nearby, behind Matthew.

MATTHEW

When you're done here, let's go.

SHAUN

I'm gonna stick around and watch the other guys fight.

MATTHEW

Come home and rest up.

SHAUN

No. I'm staying. They're my friends.

MATTHEW

We're going.

SHAUN

I'll catch a ride with somebody.

Matthew leaves. Connie starts to follow, but turns back and hugs Shaun.

CONNIE

I'm proud of you. You take care.

She kisses him on the cheek, then catches up with Matthew.

Shaun takes his snacks and heads toward the main auditorium.

INT. AUDITORIUM - LATER

It's time for the main event. Billy plans to go to town on some over-achieving OPPONENT. He struts around the ring and tries to pump up the crowd.

The audience CHEERS for their hometown favorite. Barry is in Billy's corner, CHEERING him on.

Shaun and Leroy - himself the winner of the previous bout - look on and CHEER for Billy. They look a bit worse for wear, with busted lips, cuts, and bruising. Both are proud of their pugilistic performances, but are happy to be relaxing in the bleachers.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
 In the red corner, weighing in at
 one hundred and thirty four
 pounds, from Oklahoma City...

The APPLAUSE begins.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D.)
 ...Irish Billy Broderick!

The crowd GOES WILD!

CUT TO BLACK

EXT. AUDITORIUM - LATER

Spectators begin to exit the auditorium into the warm night air. Shaun is among them. He steps aside, waiting near the entrance for his friends. He reaches into his pocket and pulls out a coin. He begins to mindlessly flip and catch it.

A Native American girl in a leather jacket approaches him. She is TRACY ROSS (18), who - like Shaun - is about to graduate high school.

TRACY
 Hey.

SHAUN
 Hey...

TRACY
 I didn't think you were gonna put
 him away, but you dropped him like
 a bag of hot garbage.

SHAUN
 Thanks.
 (pause)
 Do I know you?

TRACY
 No.

SHAUN
 Are you a boxing fan?

TRACY
 Not really.

SHAUN
 Then what are you doing here?

TRACY
My brother fought tonight.

SHAUN
Which one is your brother?

TRACY
The guy you knocked out.

Shaun blushes and smiles awkwardly. They stand in silence for a beat.

SHAUN
Don't you think it's a little hot
for a leather jacket?

TRACY
When you're as cool as I am, it
doesn't matter how hot it is.

Shaun LAUGHS.

TRACY
Didn't I see you with a girl
earlier?

SHAUN
She's just a friend.

TRACY
Do you always kiss your friends?

SHAUN
Sometimes. Depends how pretty they
are.

Tracy reaches into her purse and pulls out a pen and piece of paper. She writes something on it and hands it to Shaun.

TRACY
Call me sometime.

Tracy hurries away. Shaun watches and smiles as she fades into the distance. He looks down at the slip of paper with the phone number. Uh oh!

SHAUN
(yelling)
Hey! What's your name?

She's too far away to hear his desperate call. Shaun stuffs the piece of paper into his pocket and begins mindlessly flipping the coin again.

As more of the spectators file out of the auditorium, some recognize Shaun and congratulate him on his victory.

SPECTATORS

Way to go, kid!

Way to knock him on his ass!

Shaun modestly smiles and nods at each accolade, all the while flipping his coin.

Someone else's hand reaches out and grabs the coin. Shaun looks up: Leroy and Billy, the latter with the coin in his hand. Billy has cuts above his right eye and a busted lip. A small price to pay for victory.

BILLY

Heads I win, tails you lose.

SHAUN

Well, which is it?

Billy winks. He puts the coin in his pocket. Leroy throws his arm around Billy.

LEROY

Thirty-two and five!

SHAUN

No draws?

BILLY

No draws. I don't believe in draws.

LEROY

Billy don't even believe in decisions.

BILLY

Sure don't. I'm gonna knock the guy out or he's gonna knock me out. One way or the other.

SHAUN

Let's hit the road.

BILLY

You guys want to get a drink?

LEROY

Not really.

BILLY
 C'mon, there's a place right
 around the corner. And they don't
 check IDs.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

A place with cheap beer, wood-paneled walls, and COUNTRY MUSIC on the jukebox.

Out of place amongst the mostly older, blue collar-types are TWO MEATHEADS, one in a letterman's jacket - college boys. They sit at the bar drinking liquor, itching for trouble.

On the wall is a poster advertising that night's fights, with a picture of Billy prominently displayed and the words "IRISH BILLY BRODERICK" emblazoned across the poster.

Shaun, Billy, and Leroy enter the bar. Billy notices the poster near the door and points to it.

BILLY
 Who's that handsome guy?

They all sit down at the bar. The BARTENDER approaches them.

BILLY
 Whiskey. Neat.

LEROY
 Seltzer.

SHAUN
 I'll have the same.

The bartender nods and starts pouring their drinks.

BILLY
 After a beating like that, you're going to drink water? One of these days you kids will learn that the only way to wash away the pain is with a glass of warm whiskey.

The bartender returns with their drinks. Shaun and Leroy take sips of their seltzers. Billy throws his head back and downs the whiskey with one chug. He slams his hand on the table.

BILLY
 Another. Make it a double.

From the other end of the bar, the two Meatheads - clearly drunk - have taken notice of Billy. One of the Meatheads puts down his drink and approaches.

MEATHEAD 1

Where'd you get those cuts?

Billy doesn't look him in the eye.

MEATHEAD 1

You get your ass beat?

Billy turns his back to him.

MEATHEAD 2

Leave him alone. He's a little
guy.

MEATHEAD 1

(to Billy)

Want to get your ass beat again?

Without a moment's thought, Billy turns and CRACKS him in the jaw with a swift left. He falls to the floor, jaw broken.

Meathead 2 comes at Billy. But he is not ready to take Billy on. Billy floors him with a right cross to the nose.

Billy starts stomping the first guy. He stomps his hand, breaking it. He kicks him in the side multiple times, breaking a rib or two.

The bartender grabs the phone and starts dialing the cops on the rotary.

Shaun and Leroy grab Billy and try to drag him out of the bar. Billy proves harder to drag than they thought, but they manage to get him outside.

As they exit, Meathead 2 manages to stand up. He notices the promotional poster on the wall and recognizes Billy's picture.

EXT. BAR - CONTINUOUS

Shaun and Leroy drag Billy out of the bar. It takes all their strength to pull him out. Once outside, Billy snaps-to and they all take off running.

EXT. STREETS - CONTINUOUS

They run as far as they can as fast as they can, expecting to hear police sirens at any second. They reach

EXT. AUDITORIUM PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

The parking lot. They run through the lot, looking for their cars. Leroy spots his.

LEROY

I can't hang with you white boys.
You're all fucking crazy.

Leroy jumps in his car, FIRES IT UP, and PEELS OUT.

Shaun and Billy run a little farther.

SHAUN

Give me your keys, I'll drive.

Billy reaches into his pocket and tosses Shaun the keys.

They finally reach Billy's car and get in as quickly as possible. They speed off, tires SQUEALING as they burn rubber.

INT. BILLY'S CAR - MINUTES LATER

No sign of the police anywhere. They've escaped, but Shaun still can't believe it. He constantly peeks at the rear-view mirror, paranoid. Billy slumps over in his seat, silent.

SHAUN

You're going to get yourself
killed if you keep doing that.

BILLY

Fuck him. He deserved it. Fucking
prick college boy. He asked for
it.

SHAUN

One of these days you're going to
hit the wrong guy.

BILLY

There is no wrong guy. If he fucks
with me, he's the right guy.

Shaun shakes his head in disbelief.

SHAUN

You gotta stay at my place
tonight. Get yourself together and
go home in the morning.

BILLY

Don't worry about me, kid. I'll be
fine. I always am.

INT. FLYNN HOUSE - SHAUN'S ROOM - EARLY MORNING

The room is filled with sports memorabilia, comic books are piled in the corner next to a stack of Playboys, and last night's clothes are strewn about the room.

A hint of morning light spills into Shaun's bedroom through the blinds, as he lies in bed with his face buried in a pillow, sound asleep.

The door flings open and Matthew enters. Shaun rolls over in bed.

MATTHEW

You need to work out before church.

Shaun YAWNS.

INT. FLYNN HOUSE - GARAGE - LATER

The garage has been turned into a makeshift gym, with a beat-up punching bag wrapped in duct tape, a weight bench, a chin-up bar, etc.

Shaun is dressed in a tank top, shorts, and wears boxing gloves. Matthew holds the bag. Shaun punches it half-heartedly. Between punches, he speaks to Matthew.

SHAUN

I was talking to Billy. I really ought to work on my defense.

MATTHEW

What the fuck does Billy know? The best defense is a good offense. You're not gonna get beat up if you're the man doing the beating.

(pause)

Now hit the bag like you mean it.

Shaun throws heavy blows at the bag. Each punch lands with a CRACK so loud it sounds like a shotgun blast.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY (MONTAGE)

The image is a shaky, 4x3 8MM HOME MOVIE. The only sound is the constant WHIRRING of the camera motor. Quick cuts with light leaks:

A) Shaun, wearing graduation attire, poses with Matthew. Matthew puts his hand on his shoulder. They both smile.

B) Connie, teary-eyed, hugs and kisses Shaun. Shaun puts his hand over the lens, blacking out the screen.

FADE IN:

INT. FLYNN HOUSE - DINING ROOM - EVENING

Dinner time. Shaun, Matthew, and Connie sit at the table. Matthew at the head, Connie at the foot, Shaun in the middle. A full roast beef dinner is laid out on the table.

CONNIE

Have you given any more thought to what you're going to do? Now that you've graduated.

Shaun swallows his food and takes a sip of tea.

SHAUN

Well, I still want to go to college. Maybe start next spring. I'll get a job for now to save up some money if I have to.

MATTHEW

Your job right now is to train. Take some time, stay at home, and focus on the important thing.

CONNIE

And what is the important thing?

Matthew puts down his fork and eyes Shaun.

MATTHEW

Shaun knows. Doesn't he?

Shaun looks Matthew in the eye.

SHAUN

College is important to me.

MATTHEW

Boxing isn't?

SHAUN

Boxing is the most important thing. But I want to use the earnings from my fights to pay for college. Because that's important too.

MATTHEW

There'll be plenty of time for college later.

SHAUN

Who are you to say -

MATTHEW

Enough!

Matthew slams his hand on the table.

MATTHEW

You're not thinking straight. Maybe you got hit in the head too hard the other night. I don't know. But your head's not on right. This is your moment. And if you don't take this opportunity, you're an idiot.

CONNIE

Don't say that.

SHAUN

An idiot?

MATTHEW

It's true. College isn't going anywhere. But you're not getting any younger. Boxing is a young man's sport. And if you want to fight, now's the time to fight.

Shaun stares at his food. He nods.

INT. FLYNN HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

Connie stands at the sink washing dishes. Matthew is nearby, scraping the food scraps off his plate into the garbage can.

CONNIE

You have to stop pushing him so hard. He's an adult now.

MATTHEW

If I don't, who will?

CONNIE

Let him push himself, if he needs to be pushed.

Matthew puts his plate on the counter. He ties up the garbage bag and takes it out of the can.

MATTHEW

I've wanted this for him his entire life.

CONNIE

You want this. But does he want it?

MATTHEW

He wants it. If he doesn't know that, then I'll have to make him want it. If he makes it as big as I think he can, just imagine what it will do for us.

CONNIE

For us? Matthew -

MATTHEW

End of story.

He grabs the garbage bag and takes it out into

INT. FLYNN HOUSE - GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Matthew turns on the light and throws the garbage bag into a dumpster.

He looks around the room, at the speed bag, at the punching bag, at the weight bench. He steps up to the bag and punches it. He punches it again. And again.

He gradually picks up his pace. The last punch hurts. He shakes his hand to ease the pain.

Matthew looks over at a mirror that hangs on the wall. He stares into it. He sucks his gut in and puts his hands up to take an orthodox boxing stance.

He drops his hands and exhales, releasing his middle-aged paunch. He stares at himself in the mirror, disgusted.

INT. FLYNN HOUSE - SHAUN'S ROOM - DAWN

The crack of dawn. The room is still dark. Shaun sleeps soundly in his bed.

Matthew flings the door open. He enters the room and vigorously shakes Shaun awake.

MATTHEW

Let's go for a run.

SHAUN

What time is it? Is it even morning?

MATTHEW

Five o'clock. It's the only time I have before work. Now that you've graduated, you can really focus on training. I took it easy on you when you were still in school. But now it's time to get in shape and stay in shape. Train as hard as you can so you can go far. Now get your sweats on.

SHAUN

Sweats? It's June!

MATTHEW

Get your ass in gear.

SHAUN

Stop telling me what to do! I don't need you running my life like I'm in the infantry. If I want to get up at five o'clock and run, I'll do it myself.

Matthew glares at him. Shaun rubs the crust out of his eyes, gets up, and pulls his sweats out of the drawer.

EXT. STREETS - DAWN

Suburban streets. The neighborhood is still asleep. The sun peeks over the horizon.

Shaun, clad in a full sweatsuit, runs down the street. Matthew follows behind him in his vinyl-roofed Ford.

Shaun is drenched in sweat, head-to-toe. He stops to catch his breath.

Matthew slows down behind him. He HONKS the horn, again and again. Shaun wipes the sweat from his brow and starts running again.

INT. EASTSIDE BOXING CLUB - DAY

The Eastside boxers are training hard. Punching speed bags. Hitting the mitts. Sparring.

In the corner, Shaun jumps rope. Barry approaches him.

BARRY

Shaun.

Shaun stops jumping rope.

BARRY

You see that guy over there?
Pacheco.

Barry points to PACHECO (late-20s), a Hispanic man covered in prison ink, who hits the speed bag.

BARRY

You want to fight him?

SHAUN

In the ring?

BARRY

Where else you gonna fight a guy?
He just got out of prison. Looking
to line up a fight. I can arrange
it if you're interested.

SHAUN

I'm interested. You better talk to
Dad, though.

BARRY

I'll talk to him.

INT. FLYNN HOUSE - SHAUN'S ROOM - DAY

Shaun sits on his bed. The slip of paper with Tracy's phone number rests on the bed next to him. Shaun picks up the phone from the nightstand next to his bed and dials the number.

TRACY

(on phone)
Hello?

SHAUN

Hi. Is this..?

TRACY

This is Tracy.

SHAUN

Hey, Tracy. This is...

TRACY

Shaun?

SHAUN
Yeah. How'd you know?

TRACY
I figured you'd be calling me.

SHAUN
Good guess.
(pause)
The reason I'm calling is...

TRACY
You want to ask me on a date?

SHAUN
How'd you know that?

TRACY
Why else would you be calling?

SHAUN
Good point. So, how about Friday
night?

INT. ICE CREAM SHOP - NIGHT

A small ice cream parlor serving fountain sodas and cheap scoops. Several teenagers hang around the shop, some clearly on dates.

Tracy and Shaun sit in a booth. Tracy eats a sundae, Shaun drinks a malt.

TRACY
You don't talk much.

Shaun shrugs.

SHAUN
I don't have much to say. I'm
always thinking stuff, but none of
it's that interesting.

TRACY
What are you thinking about now?

SHAUN
I don't know. I'm just thinking
about how pretty you are.

TRACY
Is that the best you can come up
with?

Shaun takes a sip of his malt.

SHAUN
Then why don't you ask me a
question?

TRACY
Okay.
(pause)
When was the last time you cried
during a movie?

He smiles.

SHAUN
I don't cry.

Tracy rolls her eyes.

TRACY
Because you're too macho?

SHAUN
Yep.

TRACY
Seriously. When?

SHAUN
Well. I was seven years old and
the movie was The Jungle Book.
Mowgli didn't want to leave the
jungle, but when he saw that girl
filling her water jug, he changed
his mind. I mean, how many women
are there in India? He could find
one any day. But how many talking
animals are there in the world?

TRACY
So you would've stayed in the
jungle?

SHAUN
No question.

She smiles.

TRACY
Now ask me one.

SHAUN
Okay. Hmm. Why did you approach
me? The night we met.

TRACY

I thought you were cute. And anyone who knocks out my brother is okay in my book.

SHAUN

Why's that? There something wrong with him?

TRACY

He's not my favorite person.

SHAUN

But he's family. I wish I had a brother.

TRACY

You wouldn't be saying that if you had my brother.

SHAUN

Did he do something to you? Should I kick his ass again?

TRACY

No, it's nothing like that. He's just always been a jerk to me, treated me like crap. So it was satisfying to see him get knocked on his butt.

SHAUN

Ask me another question.

TRACY

Why do you fight?

The question hits a little close. Shaun sits up straight.

SHAUN

My dad was a boxer. Amateur and pro. My grandpa - well, he wasn't a boxer. But he did a lot of fighting in his day. So I guess it's in my blood. I was thinking about boxing while I was still in the crib.

TRACY

You were predestined to fight.

SHAUN

You could say that.

(MORE)

SHAUN (CONT'D)

My dad got me into it when I was five years old and I've been doing it ever since.

TRACY

Five years old!

SHAUN

Five.

TRACY

Why so young?

SHAUN

My dad wanted me to succeed. So he started me young. I guess he always wanted me to be the man he never got to be. That's why we work so close together. He wants to push me to the top.

TRACY

Do you want to be pushed to the top?

SHAUN

I don't need to be pushed. I'm gonna be the best middleweight in the world. Once I pound my way through a few of these chumps, there's gonna be no stopping me. In a year or two, you're gonna see me wearing a title belt around my waist.

INT. SHAUN'S CAR - NIGHT

Later. Shaun and Tracy sit in his car outside Tracy's house.

TRACY

I had fun. Once I dragged a few words out of you anyway.

SHAUN

I had fun too.

TRACY

Can I go to your next fight?

He hesitates.

SHAUN

Okay. Sure.

TRACY

I'd better be going.

She opens the door. Shaun leans in for a kiss on the lips, but she turns her head away. He kisses her on the cheek. They both smile.

Tracy gets out of the car and quietly closes the door.

SHAUN

See you next Saturday.

INT. ICE CREAM SHOP - DAY

The next day. The same ice cream shop. Kids swarm the ice cream shop, messily eating cones and drinking malts.

Shaun and Beth sit in a booth. Beth drinks a soda. Shaun drinks nothing. He is visibly annoyed, both by the noisy children and his present situation.

BETH

You said on the phone you wanted to talk to me about something.

Shaun hesitates, but then blurts it out.

SHAUN

I don't think we should see each other anymore.

BETH

What! Where's this coming from?

SHAUN

It's been on my mind for a while. I really need to focus on boxing. I can't have any distractions.

BETH

You consider me a distraction? I thought I was your good luck charm.

SHAUN

No. You know what I mean.

Beth looks down into her empty glass of soda. They sit in silence for a moment.

BETH

Is there someone else?

SHAUN
 Of course not.
 (pause)
 We can still be friends, can't we?

BETH
 Sure. Is it weird if I still go to
 your fight next week?

SHAUN
 I don't know if that's a good
 idea. It might be...

BETH
 A distraction?

Shaun shrugs.

SHAUN
 I just want to stay focused.

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

The same auditorium from the first fight. After two dull preliminary fights, the crowd is ready for some action.

In the ring, Shaun and Pacheco stand in opposite corners. They've already been introduced and are ready for the attack. This is Pacheco's first professional fight since before he went to prison, and he is ready.

Connie sits a few rows back from ringside, holding an 8MM camera. She is ready to film the bout. Also near ringside sits a paunchy man in his mid-50s, with combed-over hair - a man we will soon know as PAT FARRELL.

On the opposite side of the ring, a few rows farther back sits Tracy. Somewhere in the crowd, out of Shaun's field of vision, sits Beth.

Barry and Matthew are in Shaun's corner. Matthew rubs Shaun's shoulders. He whispers in Shaun's ear:

MATTHEW
 He's been in a rusty cage for two
 years. Now he's turned into an
 animal. Knock the shit out of him
 and make him wish he could crawl
 back into that cage. Hit him hard.
 Hit him fast.

LATER

The BELL RINGS The two pugilists come at each other. Pacheco throws punches with ferocity, but they don't connect with Shaun. Shaun moves with more agility since his last fight. The strenuous training has paid off.

They dance around the ring. Shaun waits for a good opportunity, while dodging Pacheco's punches.

Connie films the bout from the crowd with the 8MM camera. Beth and Tracy CHEER Shaun on.

Pacheco finally lands a heavy punch to Shaun's chin.

MATTHEW (O.S.)

Wake up, Shaun!

Shaun comes alive. He goes hard to Pacheco's body, landing a series of heavy body blows.

Pacheco fires back, but Shaun again dodges his punches. The BELL RINGS.

Barry and Matthew attend to Shaun.

BARRY

You're looking good out there.
Fast. Mean.

MATTHEW

You've got to land more punches.
Those body blows hurt him. I could
see it in his face. You keep
attacking his body and you can
take him out.

The BELL RINGS: ROUND 2. Shaun throws punch after punch to Pacheco's body, hurting him. Pacheco throws punches at Shaun, most of which he dodges. Shaun hammers him with a left hook combo to the body and head.

The BELL RINGS: ROUND 3. Shaun has Pacheco against the ropes, pounding away. Punches to the head land hard. Hooks to the body land even harder.

Pacheco clinches. The referee separates them. Pacheco is saved by the BELL. Exhausted, he slumps in his corner.

The BELL RINGS: ROUND 4. Pacheco runs from Shaun. Shaun chases him, landing punches at every opportunity.

Shaun lands a brutal uppercut to Pacheco's chin, staggering him.

Pacheco backs away, dazed, leaving Shaun an opportunity to land a crushing left hook to the ribs. Pacheco doubles over in pain. He turns to the referee.

PACHECO

No más.

REFEREE

Box!

Pacheco waves his hand, calling off the fight.

PACHECO

No más.

Pacheco hobbles to his corner and collapses. Shaun is confused at first, but realizes he has won the fight. Shaun retreats to his corner.

Shaun is victorious, but isn't too proud of this victory.

ANNOUNCER

Winner, by technical knockout,
Shaun Flynn!

The crowd ROARS with applause. Connie, Tracy, and Beth - each in their separate locations in the auditorium - CHEER for Shaun.

Matthew whispers in Shaun's ear:

MATTHEW

Great job.

SHAUN

(dismissive)

He was out of shape. Hasn't fought
in two years.

He puts on his robe and gets out of the ring. Shaun and Matthew walk through the crowd. Connie puts the 8MM camera in her purse and walks over to them. She kisses Shaun on the cheek.

Tracy runs over to them. She hugs Shaun.

TRACY

Nice job.

Shaun shrugs.

As they walk through the crowd toward the dressing room, the occasional SPECTATOR CONGRATULATES Shaun.

CONNIE

We'll be waiting for you.

Connie and Matthew walk away.

Beth rushes at Shaun and Tracy angrily.

BETH
Asshole!

She slaps Shaun in the face.

SHAUN
Oww! What the hell?

BETH
You said there was no other girl!
Who's this?

SHAUN
Beth! Calm down!

They all pause for a moment, waiting for Shaun to explain himself.

SHAUN
I lied.

BETH
You son of a bitch!

She storms out.

Shaun turns to Tracy. She has a look of disbelief on her face but Shaun can detect a slight smile.

TRACY
I guess she wins by technical
knockout, too.

EXT. STREETS OUTSIDE EASTSIDE GYM - MORNING

Early morning, when most people are going to work. The August weather is sticky.

Shaun and Leroy jog through the street, on their way to the gym. Their shirts cling to their sweaty bodies.

As they approach the parking lot, Shaun sees Matthew's car parked. They stop when they reach his car. The two fighters breathe heavily, trying to catch their breath.

MATTHEW
You through already?

Shaun nods.

MATTHEW
What time'd you start?

SHAUN
Six.

MATTHEW
How far did you run?

SHAUN
Five miles.

MATTHEW
Tomorrow you better do six.

Shaun nods.

MATTHEW
And I want you to wear some combat
boots instead of those sissy
shoes.

Matthew gets in his car and drives off.

LEROY
He didn't say "good morning."

SHAUN
Why should today be any different?

They catch their breath.

LEROY
I got me a new ring name: Sandman.

SHAUN
Leroy Sandman Duncan?

LEROY
No. Sandman Leroy Duncan.

SHAUN
Why "Sandman?"

LEROY
Cause I put them to sleep.

SHAUN
It's got a ring to it.

They start walking toward the entrance.

SHAUN
You having much luck lining up fights?

LEROY
No luck for me. Haven't fought in weeks. What about you?

SHAUN
I've got one lined up for three weeks from now.

LEROY
Damn. You're getting fights left and right.

SHAUN
That's just because Dad's pushy. If I hear of anyone looking for a fighter, I'll mention your name.

LEROY
Thanks, man. Things come so easy for you.

SHAUN
You think I got it easy? Shit. You know my dad. I don't got it easy at all. I gotta run six miles in combat boots!

INT. AUDITORIUM - LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Shaun sits on a bench resting his head in his hand. His eyes are barely open. Yellow snot drips from his nose. He speaks in a stuffy voice.

SHAUN
I don't know how many blows to the head I can take. This sinus infection...

MATTHEW
So don't get hit. Hit him first.

SHAUN
Can't we cancel this fight?

MATTHEW
It's too late for that. You should've thought about that before we laced up your gloves.

Shaun wipes the snot from his nose with the back of his glove. He wipes it on his leg.

MATTHEW

I'll be outside. Come out when you're ready.

INT. AUDITORIUM - HALLWAY - LATER

The dark corridor between the locker rooms and the main auditorium.

HAGGERTY (30), Shaun's opponent, and his CORNERMEN stand in the hallway. Matthew and Barry stand nearby. Matthew watches the opponents from the corner of his eye.

HAGGERTY

I'll knock this kid out real quick, then we can get an early start down to Houston.

MATTHEW

What'd you say?

HAGGERTY

What, that I'm gonna knock this kid out quick?

MATTHEW

You want to say that again?

HAGGERTY

What the fuck do you care?

Matthew lunges at him. Haggerty lunges back.

HAGGERTY

Hit me, old man! I'll knock you out too!

Barry pulls Matthew back and holds his arms down. Haggerty's cornermen hold him back as well.

BARRY

(in Matthew's ear)

Let Shaun do the fighting.

The locker room door opens and Shaun comes out. He looks at Matthew, Barry, and Haggerty, who all stand in awkward silence.

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Another near-sold out crowd.

The BELL RINGS. Shaun and Haggerty come out of their corners raring to go.

Haggerty has the reach on Shaun. He works the jab and dodges Shaun's punches. Shaun looks more sluggish than his last fight.

They dance around the ring. Shaun seems unable to punch with any authority. Haggerty lands a vicious punch to Shaun's head.

Haggerty forces Shaun into the corner. Shaun tries to fight his way out. Haggerty connects a brutal blow to Shaun's chin, and he goes down face-first.

The referee counts Shaun out. A first round knockout loss.

Shaun is still on the canvas after the count. Matthew and Barry help him up. They prop him up as they exit the ring.

INT. AUDITORIUM - LATER

Haggerty, in his civilian clothes, stands outside the locker room smoking a cigarette. Matthew sidles up to him.

HAGGERTY

I told you I was gonna knock him out.

MATTHEW

You beat a sick man.

HAGGERTY

I'll take it. A win is a win.

MATTHEW

I should've slipped you an extra hundred bucks to take a dive.

HAGGERTY

I wish you had. I could use the money.

EXT. AUDITORIUM PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Shaun and Tracy are walking home from the fight. The auditorium can be seen in the distance. He's visibly in pain, head throbbing and a giant bruise forming on his chin.

Tracy puts her arm around him. Shaun puts his arm around her and holds her close.

TRACY

I can't believe you fought sick.

SHAUN

I had to fight.

TRACY

You chose to step in the ring. No one can force you to fight.

SHAUN

You know what? Maybe I should just quit then. You know how embarrassing that was? To get knocked out in the first round? I looked pathetic.

TRACY

How many fights has that guy had?

SHAUN

About thirty.

TRACY

He shouldn't be putting you in the ring with guys like that. He's had so many fights.

SHAUN

Your brother had a whole lot of fights too, but I kicked his ass. Look, I'm trying to work my way up. I'm gonna fight whoever they put in front of me. I'll train harder for the next one. I'm just sick. Can't think straight.

TRACY

That's not -

He stops walking. She turns to face him.

SHAUN

I really don't want to talk about it now. I just want to go home. Okay?

TRACY

First you want to quit because you're embarrassed. Now you're going to train harder for the next fight. Which is it?

SHAUN

Just drop it. I'm going home now.

INT. FLYNN HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The curtains are closed, blocking out the daylight. A white bed sheet hangs on the wall, a makeshift movie screen. An 8MM projector WHIRS. Matthew plays the film of Shaun's last fight.

ON SCREEN

Shaun falls hard to the canvas. Light leaks fill the frame and the film flickers out.

BACK TO LIVING ROOM

Shaun looks embarrassed. Matthew plays the film again. The light from the projector flickers in their faces as they watch the film again.

MATTHEW

Now look at that. That left he keeps throwing. You should've picked up on that. It's his dominant punch.

Shaun sinks into his seat.

MATTHEW

Pay attention.

SHAUN

Do we have to do this?

MATTHEW

Goddamn right we're doing this. Now sit up and watch. Maybe you'll learn something.

INT. EASTSIDE BOXING CLUB - DAY

Everyone's working out today. Shaun and Billy spar. Shaun's looking good, but Billy can't seem to keep up with him. Matthew watches from the sidelines.

Pat Farrell enters, wearing polyester pants and a jacket that barely conceals his snubnosed Smith & Wesson revolver. He was one of the ringside spectators at Shaun's fight with Pacheco.

Everyone seems to recognize Pat. Barry goes over to him and shakes his hand. Pat approaches the ring.

PAT

Flynn!

Shaun and Billy stop sparring. Shaun walks over to the edge of the ring.

PAT

Can I talk to you a minute?

Shaun takes off his gloves and headgear and slides out of the ring. Billy exits the ring behind him. Shaun approaches Pat. They shake hands.

PAT

Pat Farrell.

SHAUN

Shaun Flynn.

PAT

I've been following you since you turned pro. You remind me of Joe Frazier with that left hook. A white kid like you who can punch like that could go places.

SHAUN

I got knocked out my last fight.

PAT

I saw. You gotta work on your defense. Don't eat so many punches or you're gonna get yourself hurt.

SHAUN

I'm working on it.

PAT

When I see you fight, I see something. I see the power in your fists. You made that Pacheco guy quit.

SHAUN

It was just ring rust. He hadn't fought pro in a couple years.

PAT

Naw. It was more than that. You've got something special. It's like you've got sledgehammers at the end of your arms.

Shaun hides an embarrassed smile.

SHAUN

A two and one pro record is not that great.

PAT

What's your amateur record?

SHAUN

One nineteen and nine.

PAT

I can work with that. You need some room to grow and I can provide that for you.

Matthew takes notice of them and walks over.

MATTHEW

Can I help you?

PAT

I'm Pat Farrell -

MATTHEW

I know who you are. This is my son.

PAT

I was just talking to Shaun about what I do. I can get him as many fights as he wants. I've got a whole roster of fighters that we package together. I'm not saying I can take him to the top, but I can take him somewhere.

SHAUN

Sounds good to me.

MATTHEW

We'll think about it.

PAT

Think about it. Get back to me.

Pat hands Shaun a business card and walks away. Matthew grabs the card from Shaun's hand.

SHAUN

Think about it? That guy's huge!

MATTHEW

I've heard things about him.

(MORE)

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

You won't make any money fighting for him.

SHAUN

If he can get me fights, who cares? Isn't that what we want?

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE GYM

Billy is resting and drinking water. Pat approaches him.

PAT

Can I talk to you?

Billy nods.

PAT

Outside?

EXT. EASTSIDE BOXING CLUB - LATER

Pat and Billy stand in the gym parking lot.

PAT

I know just about everyone in the boxing scene around here. I hear things, even about fighters I'm not contracted with. I heard an interesting story about you.

BILLY

Yeah? What?

PAT

I heard you got into a bar fight recently with a couple guys.

BILLY

So what? I get in lots of bar fights.

PAT

You broke one guy's jaw and two of his ribs. Busted him up so bad he's eating through a straw.

BILLY

He had it coming.

PAT

Maybe so.

(MORE)

PAT (CONT'D)

But he was going to be starting fullback at OU next year. Now he's out the whole season.

BILLY

Good. Great. Fuck him.

PAT

Listen to me now. His father is the assistant D.A.

(pause)

Do you like boxing?

BILLY

Yes.

PAT

Do you want to keep boxing?

BILLY

Yes.

PAT

I want you to keep boxing too. But this guy, he don't want you to box no more. He wants to have your hands broke.

(pause)

I can talk to him and smooth things out. But you better lay low for a while. You train, you work, then you go home. You got that?

BILLY

Yeah, got it.

PAT

I'm not trying to tell you what to do or anything. Just save the fighting for the ring.

BILLY

Why are you helping me? You're not even my promoter.

PAT

I hate to see a good fighter get his career ended while he's still in his prime. You're the best lightweight in the Midwest. You may be the hometown favorite, but your career is stuck.

(MORE)

PAT (CONT'D)

You're fighting here in town once a month. I can get you fights all over, with top opponents. Come talk to me later in the week at my office. I think we can work out a deal that's good for both of us.

Pat hands Billy his business card.

INT. PAT'S OFFICE - DAY

Pat Farrell Sports Promotions. A small office on the second floor of a downtown building. The office is decorated with pictures of the great boxers: Joe Louis, Rocky Marciano, Jack Dempsey, Ray Robinson. An American flag stands in the corner.

Pat sits behind his desk, across from Shaun and Matthew.

PAT

I've already got the perfect fight lined up for you: Alvin Masterson.

SHAUN

Never heard of him.

PAT

He's hamburger. You know what I'm saying? He's hamburger, you're prime rib.

MATTHEW

So he's a professional opponent?

PAT

Sure. And Shaun'll knock him out by the fourth round.

SHAUN

Is he taking a dive?

PAT

He'll come at you with all he's got for a few rounds. He'll just gas out after that.

SHAUN

I don't want to fight a guy like that. I want a challenge.

PAT

He's a warm body that you can beat up for a few rounds.

(MORE)

PAT (CONT'D)

After that last fight, you need to pad your numbers a little. Take on some guys like this and beef up your record. Hell, my son's fifty-three and three and he's only twenty-two years old. He didn't get a record like that fighting contenders. But some day he'll be a contender. And maybe you can too. I'll get you fights outside of Oklahoma: Memphis, Kansas City, St. Louis. You'll see the country, fight at every stop, and make a little money doing it. How's that sound?

Pat slides a contract across the desk to Shaun and hands him a pen.

Shaun looks over at Matthew. Matthew nods and Shaun signs the contract.

INT. FLYNN HOUSE - SHAUN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tracy sits cross-legged on Shaun's bed. Shaun sits on the edge of the bed.

TRACY

That other girl...

SHAUN

Beth.

TRACY

Do you still see her?

SHAUN

No.

TRACY

Are you sure?

SHAUN

I'm sure.

TRACY

I didn't mean to get in the way of anything. I saw you two together, but I didn't know if you were serious.

SHAUN

She's not a serious girlfriend.
Not the kind of girl I can get
serious with anyway.

TRACY

What kind of girl could you get
serious with?

SHAUN

A girl like you.

TRACY

A girl like me?

Shaun leans in toward her and they start kissing. Shaun
abruptly stops.

TRACY

Why'd you stop?

SHAUN

I don't know.

TRACY

Is something wrong?

SHAUN

I don't know.

They sit in silence for a moment.

SHAUN

I mean, what's the point?

TRACY

What are you talking about?

SHAUN

Well, we're going to fool around
some. Then eventually you're going
to go out on me. Or I'm going to
go out on you. And when you think
about it, what's the point of it
all? We both know what's going to
happen in the end, so why bother?

TRACY

We don't know what's going to
happen in the end. And so what if
that does happen? Can't you just
enjoy the moment?

Shaun pauses to think.

SHAUN

I guess you're right.

They look into each other's eyes, then lean in again to kiss each other. They fall back onto Shaun's bed.

INT. EASTSIDE BOXING CLUB - LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Shaun and Leroy are the lone occupants of the locker room. They are freshly-showered and dressed in civilian clothes. As Shaun ties his shoes, Leroy begins talking to him.

LEROY

How's it going with Farrell?

SHAUN

So far, so good. He's got some fights lined up for me already.

LEROY

Man, I wish I could get in with a guy like that.

(pause)

You know, they say he don't like black fighters. Can you believe that shit?

SHAUN

I don't think that's true.

LEROY

Does he have any black fighters on his roster?

SHAUN

Not that I know of.

LEROY

C'mon, man. You know he doesn't.

SHAUN

So what?

LEROY

I can't get a contract with a guy like him. I'm struggling to pick up fights.

SHAUN

Tell you what. I'll talk to him about you. You get a fight lined up and I'll try to convince him to go see you.

(MORE)

SHAUN (CONT'D)
Then he's bound to sign you.
You're the Sandman!

LEROY
We'll see.

EXT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

A poster hangs outside the auditorium door advertising that night's fights. The poster reads, from top to bottom:

Pat Farrell Sports Promotions Presents:
"Irish" Billy Broderick vs. Martin Spencer
Luke Farrell vs. Dennis Williams
Shaun Flynn vs. Easton Harris
Leroy Duncan vs. Phil Greene

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT (MONTAGE)

QUICK FLASHES of each of our boys in the ring, fighting their hearts out.

- A) Leroy, with something to prove, wins by knockout.
- B) Shaun throws a heavy overhand right and knocks out his opponent.
- C) Billy wins by unanimous decision.

INT. AUDITORIUM - LOCKER ROOM - LATER

At the end of the night, Shaun, Matthew, Leroy, Billy, Pat, and Pat's son LUKE, a heavyweight, stand in the locker room. Billy is slightly separated from the rest of the bunch, standing in the far corner.

Pat holds a giant wad of cash. He settles up financially with his fighters. Pat looks over to Shaun and hands him his share of the cash.

PAT
I can't believe you knocked that
guy out so fast.

SHAUN
He broke real easy. It was like
fighting Humpty Dumpty.

LEROY

Man, you ran over him like a freight train.

PAT

We oughta call you The Irish Express.

LEROY

Irish Billy Broderick. The Irish Express. How come all you white fighters go around calling yourselves "Irish?"

PAT

Start calling yourself Irish Leroy Duncan and see if you don't get twice as many fights.

LEROY

I think I'll do that.

In the corner, Billy takes out a flask and sneaks a swig of whiskey. Only Pat notices.

INT. FLYNN HOUSE - DINING ROOM - EVENING

A delicious fried chicken dinner is spread out on the table. Tracy has joined the Flynn family for dinner.

CONNIE

Let's say grace.

All bow their heads and close their eyes. As soon as Matthew begins praying, Shaun opens his eyes and looks at Tracy. Her eyes are already open and she is looking at him. They smile at each other.

MATTHEW

Lord, thank you for this meal which we are about to eat. Thank you for watching over us and protecting us. In Jesus' name, amen.

Matthew takes a fork and grabs a chicken leg. The others begin to dig in.

CONNIE

It's great to have you here, Tracy.

TRACY

Thank you for having me over.
Shaun has told me a lot about you.

CONNIE

Oh?

TRACY

Don't worry. All good things.

MATTHEW

We're not worried about that.

They sit in silence a moment, enjoying the meal.

MATTHEW

(to Shaun)

What happened to the other girl?

CONNIE

Beth.

SHAUN

Dad...

MATTHEW

I liked her.

SHAUN

Well, I like Tracy more. A lot
more.

Tracy is embarrassed. She looks down at her plate.

SHAUN

That was a rude thing to say.

MATTHEW

Rude? It's a question.

CONNIE

Matthew...

MATTHEW

You went with that girl for a
while. Now, suddenly there's
someone else.

SHAUN

What difference does it make?

MATTHEW

Only curious.

Shaun SIGHS heavily and slumps down in his seat, frustrated. They sit in awkward silence for a moment. Tracy looks up from her meal.

TRACY

Shaun says you used to box too,
Mr. Flynn.

MATTHEW

I did. Years ago when I was
younger. I did okay at it. Nothing
like Shaun here. I had some
knockout power, but I was slow on
my feet.

TRACY

I guess it runs in the family.

MATTHEW

Slow feet?

TRACY

Boxing.

CONNIE

Your brother boxes too, I hear.

TRACY

He does. He's pretty good.

Shaun sits up tall.

SHAUN

I knocked him out though. My first
pro fight, even.

TRACY

You wear that like a badge of
honor, don't you?

Shaun smiles.

MATTHEW

A knockout's a knockout. I don't
care who it is.

Tracy turns to Connie.

TRACY

What do you think of the boxing,
Mrs. Flynn?

CONNIE

Oh, I never cared for it much.

(MORE)

CONNIE (CONT'D)

I didn't know Matthew when he was boxing.

MATTHEW

If she had, she probably would have stayed away from me.

CONNIE

And I always thought Shaun should use his brains instead of his fists.

MATTHEW

A good boxer uses both.

Now Shaun is starting to feel a little embarrassed.

SHAUN

Let's talk about something else.

MATTHEW

What would you rather talk about?

Shaun shrugs.

MATTHEW

(to Connie)

Pass me the mashed potatoes.

Shaun picks at his food with a fork. He looks up to see Tracy looking back at him. She smiles. Shaun hesitates, but smiles back. They recognize each other's frustration.

INT. MEMPHIS MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

A dingy, shag-carpeted motel room with two beds. SOUL MUSIC plays on a small radio. Shaun and Leroy sit on one of the beds playing cards.

LEROY

We should make this interesting. Want to put some money down?

SHAUN

No, man. You've won the last five hands. I'm starting to think this is rigged.

There is a KNOCK at the door.

SHAUN

Come in!

The door opens and Pat enters, visibly perturbed.

PAT
You guys seen Billy anywhere?

SHAUN
He's not in his room?

PAT
If he was in his room, I wouldn't be asking you. I got a little information about his opponent from another promoter. Wanted to tell him what I found out.

LEROY
Haven't seen him since dinner.

PAT
That bastard better not be out drinking. We've got a big fight tomorrow. I don't have time for this shit.

SHAUN
What makes you think he'd be out drinking?

Pat shoots Shaun an "Are you serious?" look.

SHAUN
Me and Leroy will go look for him. I'm sure we can find him.

EXT. MEMPHIS STREETS - NIGHT

A chilly November night. Shaun and Leroy walk down the sidewalk, their hands balled up in jacket pockets. They enter the first bar they see.

SHAUN
My guess is he's in here. The closest bar to the motel.

Leroy opens the door and they enter.

INT. MEMPHIS BAR - CONTINUOUS

A rough and tumble bar, sparsely populated with a few men and a few women. They serve cheap whiskey, cheaper beer, and not much else. Shaun waves at the BARKEEP and he walks over to them.

BARKEEP

What can I get for you fellas?

LEROY

Nothing to drink for us.

BARKEEP

Then why you here?

SHAUN

We're looking for a friend. Name's Billy. He's a small guy, but real muscular. He - How would you describe him?

LEROY

I don't know, but I bet he was drunk off his ass.

BARKEEP

There was a guy here, slamming shots of whiskey all night. He had too much to drink and started in with some of the women. Had to throw his ass out.

SHAUN

When was this?

BARKEEP

Threw him out maybe twenty minutes ago.

LEROY

Thanks, man.

EXT. MEMPHIS STREETS - NIGHT

They continue down the street, looking in every direction for Billy or for an establishment that Billy might be in.

They pass a building with a large window and neon signs. Leroy stops in his tracks and grabs Shaun by the shoulder.

LEROY

Look at this.

INT. MEMPHIS TATTOO PARLOR - NIGHT

CLOSE on a man's hairy chest, partially covered with shaving cream. A razor shaves upward, exposing a strip of smooth skin. The razor shaves another part of the chest.

Billy sits in the tattooing chair, while the ARTIST, clad in motorcycle leather shaves his chest. Shaun and Leroy look on, bemused.

SHAUN
What are you doing?

BILLY
Getting a tattoo.

LEROY
We can see that. Why?

BILLY
I want everyone to know where my heart is.

Having finished shaving a bare patch on Billy's chest, the tattoo artist picks up the needle and begins inking.

INT. MEMPHIS TATTOO PARLOR - LATER

The tattoo artist blots away excess ink and blood from Billy's chest. He rolls his chair away from Billy.

BILLY
What do you guys think?

Shaun and Leroy take a good look at Billy's new tattoo: the state of Oklahoma outlined in black ink.

LEROY
You just put a target on your chest.

SHAUN
That dude's going to aim to hit you right there.

BILLY
If I let him hit me.

INT. MEMPHIS AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

The next night, in the middle of the big fight. A hungover Billy, in front of 2,000 bloodthirsty fans, gets pummeled into submission by his OPPONENT. Another couple of punches and Billy will be knocked out, but he's saved by the BELL.

Billy sits in his corner on the stool while Pat and Matthew attend to him. Billy spits out his mouth guard.

PAT
You really look like shit.

BILLY
I'm not going back out there.

PAT
The hell you're not.

BILLY
Why should I?

PAT
At least go down swinging like a man.

BILLY
I ain't gonna get knocked out.
Call the fight. I'm done.

Pat turns and walks over to the referee.

PAT
My guy can't go on. Stop the fight.

The referee nods and walks over to the opponent's corner.

Billy immediately gets up and leaves the ring, without even putting on his robe.

EXT. COMMUNITY COLLEGE - AFTERNOON

A small campus with a fountain as the centerpiece.

A used, but pristine, 1974 Pontiac GTO, windows rolled down, pulls into the parking lot. The door opens and Shaun gets out.

Shaun walks through the campus, looking around for Tracy. He spots her sitting on a bench near the fountain. He quietly approaches her from behind and puts his hands over her eyes. She elbows him in the stomach.

SHAUN
Oww!

Tracy turns around and realizes that it's Shaun.

TRACY
Sorry!

SHAUN
That hurt.
(MORE)

SHAUN (CONT'D)

Thank God you weren't six inches lower.

TRACY

You shouldn't sneak up on me like that.

SHAUN

My mistake.

TRACY

What are you doing here?

Before Shaun can answer, a HANDSOME STUDENT walks by.

HANDSOME STUDENT

Hey Tracy!

TRACY

Hey!

He walks away. Shaun eyes him suspiciously as he goes.

TRACY

So why are you here?

SHAUN

I knew you were getting out of class around now. Wanted to surprise you.

TRACY

You definitely surprised me.

SHAUN

Come with me.

He takes her by the hand and pulls her off the bench.

SHAUN

C'mon.

Shaun leads her to the parking lot. He points out the GTO.

SHAUN

It's my new car. Well, not new-new. But new to me.

(pause)

What do you think?

TRACY

It's nice.

SHAUN
I saved up the money from my last
few fights.

TRACY
You spent all your money on a car?

SHAUN
Want to go for a ride?

TRACY
Sure.

INT. SHAUN'S CAR - AFTERNOON

Shaun and Tracy cruise down the streets in his new GTO.

SHAUN
It's really something, isn't it?

TRACY
It's fine.

SHAUN
You don't seem too impressed.

TRACY
Your last car was fine. I thought
you might be saving up for...

SHAUN
For what?

TRACY
I don't know. College, maybe.
Something else.

SHAUN
College will still be here when
I'm ready.

TRACY
Well, some things might not be.

They drive in silence for a moment.

SHAUN
Let me ask you something.

TRACY
Okay.

SHAUN
Have you been faithful to me?

TRACY

You're asking me that? I should be asking you.

SHAUN

Why me?

TRACY

You're the one who goes all over the place for fights. How do I know what you're doing when you go?

SHAUN

Well, maybe you have some college sweetheart that you see every day.

TRACY

That's just plain stupid.

SHAUN

Probably.

(pause)

I'm saying I have been faithful.

TRACY

I've been faithful too.

SHAUN

So we've both been faithful to each other.

TRACY

Looks like it.

SHAUN

Good. Because if you haven't noticed, I really like you. I'd hate to have something stupid like that split us up.

Tracy nods.

SHAUN

Actually, I'd say that I love you.

Tracy smiles at him.

TRACY

I love you too.

Shaun pulls her close and they kiss for longer than they should.

TRACY

Watch out!

Shaun swerves to miss an oncoming car. The other driver angrily, repeatedly, HONKS his horn as he passes by.

INT. VARIOUS AUDITORIUMS - NIGHT (MONTAGE)

"RAW POWER" by Iggy and the Stooges blasts on the soundtrack. We see a series knockout victories by Shaun, some filmed from the audience with an 8MM camera with occasional light leaks and flashes. Highlights include:

A) Shaun walks into the ring wearing green trunks with a shamrock and a robe with "The Irish Express" embroidered on it.

B) Shaun has a guy against the ropes, mercilessly beating him until he falls.

C) Shaun dodges a series of punches, then knocks his opponent on his ass with a left hook.

D) Shaun hits a guy with one punch to the temple. He falls head-first onto the canvas.

E) A brutal exchange of punches between Shaun and an opponent. Shaun finally backs him into the ropes and knocks him out with his trademark left hook.

F) Shaun knocks an opponent out cold. The ring doctor and trainers attend to him as he's unconscious.

In all, there are twelve knockout victories.

INT. PAT'S OFFICE - DAY

Shaun and Matthew sit in Pat's office. A TOILET FLUSHES offscreen and Pat enters, adjusting his waistband. Pat sits down.

PAT

Good to see you fellas.

MATTHEW

What have you got for us?

PAT

I can line up a fight for you next month with Ruben Bardot.

SHAUN

I don't want to fight him.

PAT

Why not?

SHAUN

There's something I want to talk to you about.

PAT

What's that?

SHAUN

I've had a lot of fights recently, which is good.

PAT

Twelve knockouts in a row. I'd say that's great.

SHAUN

There's been some stiff competition here and there -

PAT

Gonzalez was the fifth-ranked middleweight in Mexico.

SHAUN

- But I've been fighting a lot of chumps too.

PAT

So what? You've got to build up your record.

SHAUN

They're human punching bags. I want to fight somebody who can really challenge me.

PAT

You're not ready to be a contender.

SHAUN

I'm not saying I'm a contender. I just want to fight someone who's really going to push me to my limit.

PAT

I admit I've brought you some pussycats. But I know every manager in the Midwest and South.

(MORE)

PAT (CONT'D)

I can bring you World War III if you think you can handle it. You just tell me what you want.

Shaun thinks.

SHAUN

Maybe something in between.

Pat smiles.

PAT

I'll make some calls.

MATTHEW

There's something I want to talk to you about as well.

PAT

Okay.

MATTHEW

Shaun, can you leave for a minute?

SHAUN

If this concerns me, I want to hear about it.

MATTHEW

(to Pat)

I want to talk about our contract. We're not making enough money.

PAT

I'm paying you guys more than I pay the majority of my fighters.

MATTHEW

But now Shaun's really coming along, and he's starting to draw crowds. He's on the top of the card. We deserve a cut of the gate.

PAT

That's asking a lot.

MATTHEW

I don't think it is asking a lot. We could pack up and go elsewhere. We're making you a lot of money, goddammit. I want what's coming to us.

(MORE)

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

Do you know how many promoters would kill to have a fighter like Shaun on their roster?

PAT

Do you know how many promoters there are in Oklahoma City? Huh? I'm the only show in town. You're gonna take your show somewhere else? Maybe you'd be better off in Tulsa, or some hick town. I can rip your contract in half and hand it right back to you if that's what you want.

MATTHEW

Now hold on. I'm not going that far. I just think we're owed our fair share.

Pat smiles.

PAT

I decide what's a fair share. Do you understand? You're in no position to negotiate. I decide. Think about what you want, and next time we get together we'll see if we can work something out. But don't forget that you're working for me, understand?

INT. FLYNN HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Matthew sits on the couch with a rotary phone in front of him. He dials the rotary and waits a moment for an answer. He hangs up the phone, picks it up again, and dials again.

INT. FLYNN HOUSE - SHAUN'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A small suitcase is open on the bed. Shaun goes through his dresser drawers picking out some clothes to pack. His boxing trunks and robe are already packed.

MATTHEW (O.S.)

That son of a bitch!

Shaun rolls his eyes.

Matthew enters Shaun's room.

MATTHEW

I've tried calling him five times. He's dodging me. Doesn't want to talk about the money.

SHAUN

Stop hounding him about the money. We'll straighten things out later. If you keep bothering him you're going to screw this whole thing up for us.

MATTHEW

Screw it up?

SHAUN

We've got a good thing going. He's the top promoter in Oklahoma.

MATTHEW

How am I going to screw it up?

SHAUN

You're making everything about money.

MATTHEW

Money's important.

SHAUN

It's not about money!

MATTHEW

Do you want to work in a factory all day like me? Or do you want to make a living fighting? It's up to you. But if you tell me it's not about money, then you better go out tomorrow and look for a fucking job.

SHAUN

You're really starting to piss me off. You better get out of my room before -

MATTHEW

Before what? You think you're man enough to hit me? Go ahead and take a shot.

Matthew sticks out his chin. Shaun turns away from him and goes back to packing his bag.

INT. PHOENIX ARENA - NIGHT

About 5,000 people are waiting for the main event fight.

In the ring, Shaun is taking it all in. It's the biggest arena he's ever fought in. It's the biggest fight of his career. He's petrified. He barely notices his OPPONENT in the opposite corner.

As Shaun tries to focus, the announcer steps into the ring.

ANNOUNCER

In the red corner, with a record of twenty-two wins and four losses, from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. It's The Irish Express... Shaun Flynn!

The audience APPLAUDS, but Shaun can barely hear it. He's giving his all just to focus, to not let the crowd get to him. His face is overwhelmed with anxiety.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. PHOENIX FAST FOOD JOINT - NIGHT

Shaun sits in a fast food restaurant booth with a black eye. Matthew and Pat sit across from him. They all have burgers and fries, and shakes or sodas.

The restaurant is sparsely occupied. Besides Pat and the Flynn's, only four or five people are in the restaurant.

SHAUN

There were so many people out there.

MATTHEW

Do you want to fight at Madison Square Garden? Do you want to fight on TV? Then you better get used to fighting in front of that many people.

SHAUN

I just couldn't hit that guy. He was so fast.

PAT

You didn't win the fight? So what? Can't win them all.

MATTHEW

So what?

SHAUN

He fought in the Olympics.

PAT

That's my point. He's good. You gave the crowd a good fight. Look at it this way: you went the distance. Didn't get knocked out. What more do you want?

MATTHEW

A win.

SHAUN

This was his pro debut. I have twenty-six fights under my belt and I couldn't beat him. Makes me look like a chump.

PAT

This is what you asked for.

MATTHEW

To lose?

PAT

A tough fight.

Right then a DRUNK COWBOY swaggers into the restaurant with a confidence only alcohol can supply. He wears the full cowboy get-up. He walks up to the counter and leans on it.

COWBOY

(yelling)

Two cheeseburgers!

He swaggers around the room. He walks up to a table and takes a french fry from someone's plate.

PAT

Who's the nut?

The Cowboy saunters up to their table. He takes a couple of fries from Shaun's plate.

MATTHEW

Leave us alone.

Cowboy smirks. He takes another fry. Shaun looks up at him.

SHAUN

I'm trying to eat here.

Cowboy notices Shaun's black eye.

COWBOY

Aww, looks like someone got hurt.
How you feeling, partner?

PAT

He's a boxer. I'd leave him alone.

COWBOY

He won't mess with me. I'll kill
him.

Shaun slowly puts down his burger and slides out of the booth, simultaneously uppercutting the Cowboy.

His body goes limp and he goes down hard, smashing into the empty table behind him. He's out cold.

Matthew gets up and puts the shoe leather to him, stomping his ribs and face. Blood splatters everywhere.

MANAGER (O.S.)

Susie, call the law! Call the law!

Shaun, Matthew, and Pat start to run out of the place. Matthew turns back and gets one final stomp on the Cowboy's ribs. Shaun runs back and drags Matthew out of the restaurant.

EXT. PHOENIX STREETS - CONTINUOUS

Shaun, Matthew, and Pat run down the sidewalk as far away from the restaurant as possible. They pass by some bewildered PEDESTRIANS.

Pat HUFFS and PUFFS, barely able to continue running.

PAT

Hail a cab! Hail a cab!

SHAUN

It's just three or four blocks to
the motel.

PAT

It might as well be three or four
hundred miles!

They stop for a moment to hail an approaching cab.

INT. CAB ON PHOENIX STREETS - LATER

All three are crammed into the back of a taxi. Pat is still trying to catch his breath.

PAT

I can't do this anymore.

MATTHEW

Why'd we have to stomp that guy? I thought you carried a Smith & Wesson.

PAT

I just carry it around for show. That thing's not loaded!

Shaun SIGHS and stares out the window. The night's events weigh heavy on his mind.

EXT. PHOENIX MOTEL - MORNING

The parking lot of a cheap motel. Shaun and Pat load suitcases into the trunk of the car. Matthew stands next to the car reading the crime blotter in the newspaper.

MATTHEW

Well, he's not dead. At least as far as I can tell.

Pat slams the trunk.

SHAUN

We should stop at that restaurant in Texas where you can get a seventy-two ounce steak, and if you eat the whole thing it's free.

PAT

Let's hit the road.

SHAUN

I'm gonna call Tracy before we take off.

INT. FLYNN HOUSE - DAY

Back in OKC. Shaun looks at a piece of mail addressed to him. The "Pat Farrell Sports Promotions" logo adorns the envelope. He opens it and reads it to himself.

Shaun throws the letter on a nearby table. Matthew picks it up and reads it.

MATTHEW

That motherfucker. That goddamn bastard. We don't need him.

(MORE)

MATTHEW (CONT'D)
 He wasn't looking out for us.
 We'll find our own way.

SHAUN
 It doesn't matter anyway. I'm
 done.

MATTHEW
 What do you mean you're done?

SHAUN
 It's over. I quit.

MATTHEW
 Over? You're not even in your
 prime yet, and you're quitting?

SHAUN
 Hanging up the gloves.

MATTHEW
 Let's talk about this.

SHAUN
 There's nothing to talk about. You
 screwed up the biggest opportunity
 I'll ever have. Got my contract
 with Pat cancelled.

MATTHEW
 I screwed up? I'm not the one who
 froze up during the biggest fight
 of my life. You looked like a
 statue out there. Maybe if you put
 a little effort in, we wouldn't be
 in this situation.

SHAUN
 We're not in any situation. I'm in
 this situation. And this situation
 is me quitting boxing. I won't do
 it anymore.

Shaun walks off toward his room.

INT. FLYNN HOUSE - SHAUN'S ROOM - EVENING

Shaun sits on his bed holding his telephone to his ear. It
 RINGS a couple of times.

TRACY
 (on phone)
 Hello?

SHAUN
Tracy. It's me.

TRACY
Shaun.

SHAUN
Listen. I'm going to have to
cancel tonight.

TRACY
Why?

SHAUN
Family stuff.

TRACY
Okay...

SHAUN
Bye.

He hangs up on her before she can even say goodbye.

Shaun gets up and goes over to his window. He draws the curtains closed, darkening the room. He falls into bed and pulls the covers over his head.

INT. FLYNN HOUSE - SHAUN'S ROOM - LATER

The blankets still cover Shaun's head, but he is now asleep.

The door opens and Connie sticks her head in.

CONNIE
Dinner's ready.

Shaun wakes up and lowers the covers to expose his face.

SHAUN
I'm not hungry.

CONNIE
You have to eat something.

SHAUN
Maybe later.

Connie turns and starts to walk away, but hesitates.

CONNIE
He means well.

SHAUN

What?

CONNIE

Your father. He has good intentions.

SHAUN

Yeah, well his good intentions fucked me.

(pause)

Sorry for the language. But it's true.

She turns back and sits on the edge of his bed.

CONNIE

Whatever you do, you have to do it for yourself. You can't do it for your father. You can't do it for me. You can't do it for Tracy. You can only do it for you. I'm glad you stopped boxing. I don't want you to get hurt. But if you box, if you go to school, if you get a job, you have to do it on your own terms. Now come have some dinner.

SHAUN

I'll be in there in a little bit. I need some time to myself.

INT. FLYNN HOUSE - DINING ROOM - MORNING

Shaun, Matthew, and Connie sit at the table. Shaun's hair is matted from sleeping and he still wears pajamas. He drinks a cup of black coffee. Matthew has finished breakfast and reads the newspaper, while Connie finishes her breakfast.

There is a loud KNOCK at the door.

MATTHEW

Shaun, get the door.

Connie starts to stand.

CONNIE

I'll get it.

MATTHEW

No. Shaun needs to get off his ass. Get the door.

The is another KNOCK at the door. Shaun gets up, goes to the door, and looks through the peephole.

TRACY (O.S.)
Is anybody there? Shaun, are you home?

MATTHEW
Let the girl in for God's sake!

Shaun opens the door and lets Tracy in. She stands awkwardly for a moment, waiting for Shaun to say something. When he doesn't, she leans in and kisses him on the cheek.

TRACY
Hello, Mr. and Mrs. Flynn.

CONNIE
Hi, Tracy.

MATTHEW
Hello.

TRACY
(to Shaun)
Can we talk?

INT. FLYNN HOUSE - SHAUN'S BEDROOM - LATER

Shaun and Tracy sit on the edge of his bed. Shaun looks at the floor, downcast.

TRACY
I've tried calling you the past few days. What's going on?

SHAUN
Didn't want to talk.

TRACY
Why?

SHAUN
Didn't feel like it.

TRACY
Is something wrong?

SHAUN
I just don't feel right.

TRACY
You should see a doctor.

SHAUN
It's not like that.

TRACY
Then what's wrong?

SHAUN
It's in my head.

TRACY
They have doctors for that too,
you know.

SHAUN
What's the point?

TRACY
You need help. When was the last
time you went outside?

SHAUN
Last week.

TRACY
Have you just been holed up in
here?

Shaun nods.

TRACY
Put your jacket on. We're going
for a walk.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREETS - DAY

A cool day in early Spring. Shaun and Tracy walk slowly down the street. Shaun still looks downcast, trying to avoid eye contact with Tracy.

TRACY
Are you depressed because you lost
your fight? When did this start?

SHAUN
No, it's not like that. Been like
this for a while. It's just been
building up. And I've done a
pretty good job of hiding it. It
felt like the more fights I won,
the less confidence I had. When I
was fighting in Phoenix, I walked
out into the ring, in front of
five thousand people.

(MORE)

SHAUN (CONT'D)

The most people I've ever seen in my life. I stood there, and I just froze up. I wanted to run back into the locker room and hide. But I fought anyway. Had to. I lost every round of that fight. He wasn't even that tough. Could barely hit. His punches felt like nothing.

Shaun stops and turns to Tracy.

SHAUN

I lost to myself that night. We had a good thing going, too. My career was starting to really take off, but Dad's meddling wrecked it. So I'm done with this. I can't make it with Dad interfering with my career, but I don't know if I have what it takes to make it on my own.

TRACY

So no more boxing?

SHAUN

No more.

TRACY

That's probably for the best. You don't want to get brain damage.

SHAUN

I feel like I'm slowing down. Like my head ain't on straight anymore.

TRACY

Isn't there a word for that? When a boxer gets hurt?

SHAUN

Punch drunk.

TRACY

Yeah.

SHAUN

I'm not punchy. I haven't had enough fights for that.

TRACY

But -

SHAUN
I'm not punchy! I just don't feel well.

They walk in silence for a moment.

TRACY
What are you going to do now?

SHAUN
Get a job, I guess. Or go to school.

TRACY
What would you study?

SHAUN
I dunno. I always wanted to be a veterinarian.

TRACY
Really? You don't even have a pet.

SHAUN
Dad never would let me have one.

TRACY
I know you're feeling bad, Shaun. But please don't push me away again. We can do this together.

SHAUN
It's just a hard thing to get over. Something I've worked toward my whole life just slipped through my fingers.

They keep walking together, in silence.

EXT. SLAUGHTERHOUSE - DAY

A cold winter's day at a slaughterhouse. Several WORKERS carry sides of beef and load them onto a truck, two men to a side.

Shaun comes out of the building carrying a side of beef by himself. He drops it off with the workers who are inside the back of the truck.

WORKER
Damn, Flynn. How can you carry that by yourself? You're not that big.

SHAUN
I pump iron.

Shaun jokingly flexes his muscles like a bodybuilder.

Shaun's SUPERVISOR walks over.

SUPERVISOR
Didn't you guys know? Our Champ
Flynn here was a boxer. A good
one, too. I seen him fight.

SHAUN
(reluctant)
Thanks.

He starts toward the main building.

SUPERVISOR
Keep up the good work, Champ.

Shaun stops in his tracks and turns toward his supervisor.

SHAUN
Don't call me "Champ." I don't
like that.

SUPERVISOR
I'm just having fun with you.
Don't sweat it, Champ.

INT. FLYNN HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Matthew sits in the living room watching a WESTERN on TV. The front door opens and Shaun enters. His clothes are dirty and covered with cattle blood stains. Matthew grimaces.

MATTHEW
You smell like shit.

SHAUN
I work at a slaughterhouse.

MATTHEW
You having dinner tonight?

SHAUN
I'm going out with Tracy after I
get cleaned up.

MATTHEW
Why don't you go hit the bag a
while?

Shaun rolls his eyes and walks away.

INT. ATHLETIC COMMISSION - DAY

A small room with two scales and not much else. Billy and his OPPONENT stand in their underwear. Pat stands next to Billy, and his opponent's TRAINERS stand nearby. FIGHT OFFICIALS are in the room for the weigh-in.

Billy's opponent steps up on the scale: 135 pounds. The officials make note of it.

Billy steps up on his scale: 144 pounds. Nine pounds overweight.

There is some WHISPERED CHATTER amongst the fight officials. Pat grabs Billy by the arm and takes him out into the hallway.

INT. ATHLETIC COMMISSION - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Pat pulls Billy over to a quiet area in the hallway.

PAT

What the fuck is wrong with you?
What have you been doing all
month? I thought you were
training.

BILLY

I was.

PAT

And drinking like a fish.

BILLY

I may have imbibed.

PAT

You stupid fucker. You were the
main draw, and you can't make
weight. Now I have to shuffle the
whole card.

BILLY

Call up Shaun. I'm sure he'd like
a fight.

PAT

He's not a lightweight. And I'm no
longer working with the Flynns. I
cancelled his contract. Consider
yours cancelled, too. Get the hell
out of my sight!

INT. BAR - NIGHT

A country and western joint. Billy sits alone at a table in the back drinking a double whiskey, one of many he's had tonight. Although he sticks out amongst the hat-and-boot-wearing clientele, this is Billy's favorite bar.

Shaun and Tracy enter. They scan the bar, looking for Billy. Tracy spots him. They walk over and sit down with him.

SHAUN

I thought you were fighting tonight.

BILLY

I was.

Billy grabs his stomach.

BILLY

But I guess I've gotten too flabby to be a lightweight. Maybe I should keep packing on the pounds and move up to middleweight. Then we could fight.

(to Tracy)

Who do you think would win?

TRACY

I think he'd whip your ass.

He nods in agreement, then takes a drink.

BILLY

How'd you know I'd be here?

SHAUN

Call it a good guess.

Billy downs the rest of his whiskey.

SHAUN

Why don't you get out of this joint? You've had enough to drink.

BILLY

You know, I just missed out on the biggest payday of my life. I was going to fight this guy from Germany, this tough son of a bitch. I was going to beat him. I was going to crack the top ten.

SHAUN

You can still do all those things.

BILLY
I don't know if I have it in me
anymore.

Billy gets up and walks over to the bar. He tosses a few bucks to the BARKEEP and heads toward the door.

Tracy and Shaun look at each other. She is confused. Shaun shrugs. They follow him out.

EXT. BAR PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Billy stands near the entrance of the bar, lighting up a cigarette. He starts to walk away, but Shaun and Tracy catch up to him.

SHAUN
No wonder you can't make weight.
Drinking. Smoking. I used to look
up to you. We all did. Me. Leroy.
Everybody. You were the guy we all
wanted to be. What happened to
you?

BILLY
What happened to me? At least I'm
still in it. I'm not a fucking
quitter. You can't win a fight, so
you sit in your room and cry.

Shaun stops in his tracks and stares Billy down.

SHAUN
What'd you say?

BILLY
You heard me.

SHAUN
You don't know anything about me.
You don't know what it's like in
my head.

BILLY
Try being inside my head for a
day. I don't think you'd like what
you see.

SHAUN
I don't like what I see now.

BILLY
Go fuck yourself. I don't need a
lecture from a kid.

SHAUN

We're friends. I thought maybe you'd listen to me.

BILLY

Well, I won't. I'm going home.

Tracy cuts in, trying to ease the tension.

TRACY

Need a ride somewhere?

BILLY

Nope.

Billy walks off. Shaun chases after him and grabs him by the shoulder. Billy turns and takes a drunken swing at him, missing wildly. Shaun puts up his fists.

BILLY

Get the fuck out of my face.

Billy shoves him to the ground and dashes off into the distance. Tracy helps Shaun up.

TRACY

What's his problem?

SHAUN

I don't know. I think that thing with the college kids spooked him. He hasn't been the same since.

(pause)

Promise you won't let me turn out like that.

TRACY

Promise.

She puts her arm around him as they head toward Shaun's car.

EXT. SLAUGHTERHOUSE - DAY

Another day, more hard labor. Shaun heads toward the main building, having just dropped off a side of beef. As he approaches the building, he passes his supervisor.

SUPERVISOR

Looking good out there, Champ.

Shaun stops.

SHAUN

What'd I tell you about calling me
"Champ?"

SUPERVISOR

What's the big deal?

SHAUN

I don't like it. Just don't call
me that anymore.

SUPERVISOR

Sorry. Won't do it again, Champ.

The supervisor smirks.

Shaun turns and knocks him out with a single punch.

His coworkers look on - astonished and shocked.

Shaun stares at his balled fist. It shakes violently.

EXT. COMMUNITY COLLEGE - AFTERNOON

Shaun, well-dressed with freshly-cut hair, stands in the middle of the campus, looking around. He glances at his watch. He sees Tracy leaving class with a couple of FRIENDS.

SHAUN

Tracy!

He runs over to her. Tracy waves goodbye to her friends as they walk away. Shaun reaches into his pocket and pulls out an engagement ring.

SHAUN

Tracy -

She kisses him.

SHAUN

Is that a "yes?"

TRACY

Yes, it's a "yes!"

SHAUN

I sold my car to buy this.

TRACY

How'd you get here?

SHAUN

Dad drove me.

Tracy is taken aback.

TRACY

We're not going to live with your parents, are we?

SHAUN

No. We'll get an apartment. I'll make enough money from my fights to pay our rent.

TRACY

What fights?

SHAUN

I'm going to start fighting again.

TRACY

What about your job? I thought you were -

SHAUN

Fired. Don't worry about it.

TRACY

Fired?

SHAUN

I knocked out my supervisor.

TRACY

Oh, God...

SHAUN

It was a rush.

TRACY

Shaun, if you hit your supervisor you could get arrested...

A look of surprise and confusion crosses Shaun's face.

SHAUN

Naw, that prick will be too embarrassed to report me. But I hit him good. I made the decision right then and there to start fighting again. After the wedding, of course.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

A tacky mixture of shag carpeting and stained glass.

8MM FILM images of the happy couple, Shaun and Tracy, getting married. Leroy, Billy, and Charley are best men. They all wear white suits with brown lining.

INT. RECEPTION ROOM - NIGHT (MONTAGE)

8MM IMAGES of the wedding reception:

- A) Shaun and Tracy cut the cake
- B) GUESTS in dress clothes congratulate the couple
- C) Shaun, Tracy, and guests take to the dance floor
- D) Someone offers Billy a can of beer, but he declines
- E) The family poses for a portrait. Shaun smiles broadly

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Shaun's face. He takes a haymaker to the chin.

We are in the ring for Shaun's comeback fight. His opponent, DENNIS CAMPBELL, is black, strong, and thirsty for a knockout. Shaun is taking a beating. Punch after punch to the body and head. A right to the temple sends Shaun crashing to the canvas.

The referee begins the count. Shaun is up by five. The RINGING in his ears is deafening, overpowering all other sounds. Shaun is dazed.

The referee says something to him, but he doesn't understand. The referee says it again. Shaun still can't understand him, but nods as if he does. The referee brushes his gloves and Shaun puts his hands up to fight.

The boxers come together. Shaun is barely there. Campbell hammers him to the body.

Barry looks on with anger and concern.

Shaun clinches. The referee breaks them up. Shaun takes more punishment. He's against the ropes now, receiving several blows to the head.

Barry throws in the towel and climbs through the ropes, into the ring.

BARRY
Stop the fight! Stop the fight!

The referee puts himself between the fighters and stops the fight.

Barry glares at the referee as he walks by.

BARRY
You just going to stand there and
watch the kid get his soul beat
out of him?

He goes over to Shaun and props him up. Shaun's face is bloodied and swollen. Barry leads him over to his corner.

SHAUN
Why'd you stop the fight?

BARRY
I didn't want you to get hurt,
son.

Shaun collapses in the corner. Barry lifts him up and props him up with the ropes.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
Winner, by technical knockout in
the fifth round, Dennis Campbell!

INT. AUDITORIUM - LOCKER ROOM - LATER

Shaun sits on a bench. His head is in his hand. Barry and Matthew look on with concern.

BARRY
How you feel, kid?

SHAUN
My head hurts.

MATTHEW
Hit the showers. You'll feel
better.
(to Barry)
Can I talk to you?

INT. AUDITORIUM - OUTSIDE LOCKER ROOM - LATER

Matthew and Barry stand in a quiet spot outside the locker room.

MATTHEW
What was that?

BARRY
I had to stop it.

MATTHEW
That's not your decision.

BARRY
Your fighter was getting hurt.
He's your son.

MATTHEW
That's right. He's my son. And
it's my fight.

BARRY
Do you hear yourself?

MATTHEW
It's my fight to stop. If I want
the fight stopped, I'll do it
myself.

BARRY
As long as I'm in the corner, that
kind of fight gets stopped.

MATTHEW
Maybe you shouldn't be in my
corner.

BARRY
I don't think you understand.
That's the kind of fight that does
things to a fighter. Bad things.
Permanent things. And you don't
seem to appreciate that. So maybe
we shouldn't work together. If you
want someone who'll sit quietly
while your son gets massacred like
that, then find someone else.

Matthew weighs his options. He reaches into his pocket, grabs his wallet, and pulls out some cash. He hands it to Barry.

MATTHEW
Here's your pay for the night. Get
lost.

BARRY
Gladly.

Barry walks away. Matthew opens the door to the locker room and looks in. Shaun is passed out on the bench.

INT. MATTHEW'S CAR - NIGHT

Matthew and Shaun drive home after the fight. Shaun is slumped in the passenger seat.

MATTHEW

How you feel?

SHAUN

Like shit.

MATTHEW

You don't have to do this. Do you want to keep fighting? Because you don't have to. But if you stop now, you'll never get another chance. This is it. So what is it?

SHAUN

I'll fight.

MATTHEW

Good. I've been talking to people the whole time you were laying off. A guy in San Antonio, a guy in Omaha, a guy in Indianapolis, a guy in Memphis. You wouldn't believe the fights I can line up.

SHAUN

Why were you talking to people?

MATTHEW

I knew it wouldn't last. You don't quit boxing. Boxing quits you.

SHAUN

Why would you do that? When I quit, I quit. It's my choice. Why would second guess me?

MATTHEW

You can't take the fight out of the fighter. I raised you from birth to do this.

SHAUN

I'm fighting for myself now, on my own terms. I choose when I fight, and who I fight. Understand? I'm in charge. It's not about you anymore.

MATTHEW

I'm just trying to help.

SHAUN

Help? You fired Barry. He's the best trainer in Oklahoma.

MATTHEW

He wasn't looking out for us.

SHAUN

Us? It's not about you!

MATTHEW

I can get you fights. That's all. I can line up great fights for you. I want you to go to the top. But we need to take it slow and get some tune up fights. You hear what I'm saying? Slow.

Shaun SIGHS.

SHAUN

Yeah. Slow.

He slumps down even farther into his seat and closes his eyes.

Matthew takes his eyes off the road and looks over at Shaun, who is clearly suffering. He takes a deep breath.

MATTHEW

I'm doing this because I love you. Because I know what kind of man you are. And what kind of man you can be.

He reaches out and awkwardly places his hand on Shaun's shoulder.

INT. PAT'S OFFICE - DAY

Billy sits across the desk from Pat. He looks penitent. He can barely make eye contact with Pat.

PAT

I just can't work with you anymore.

BILLY

Give me another chance.

PAT

You're just not marketable. You haven't won a fight in months. You drink all night before the fight.

(MORE)

PAT (CONT'D)
 You can't make weight. You're washed up.

BILLY
 Just one more fight. I'll stop drinking, I swear to God. I swear to God, I'll train hard. Just let me fight one more good opponent.

PAT
 Fine. I'll give you one more chance. Because I like you so much.

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

A sold out crowd. Billy stands in his corner, getting psyched up for the fight. Barry and another CORNERMAN stand nearby.

PAT (OVERLAP)
 I've got the perfect opponent for you. He's a veteran. You beat him, you'll have a victory over a seasoned opponent. You lose, you've put up a tough fight against a good fighter. It's a win-win.

WHIP PAN TO:

Leroy stands in his corner, eyeing Billy at the other end. He is nervous but tries not to let it show.

LEROY (OVERLAP)
 Sounds great to me.

Shaun and Tracy sit near ringside.

TRACY
 I can't believe they're going through with this.

SHAUN
 This is going to get ugly.

INT. AUDITORIUM - LATER

The fight has begun. He may be washed up, but the crowd still loves Billy, the hometown favorite.

Billy starts out strong, but quickly fades. Leroy takes the fight to him, pummeling him with body blows.

OVER THE COURSE OF A FEW ROUNDS, Leroy pounds Billy into submission. Billy is hurt, barely hanging on. He is bloodied and beaten. He clinches Leroy, his arms around his neck like a slow dance. The referee breaks them up.

They dance around the ring. Leroy doesn't want to hurt Billy, but knows he needs to end the fight quick. He throws a combination to Billy's head, then hits him hard with a hook to the jaw. Billy flies across the canvas.

The referee begins the count. Billy is done.

REFEREE

Ten!

Leroy runs over to him and helps him off the canvas. Blood drips out of Billy's mouth. His jaw is broken.

LEROY

Are you okay?

Billy can't speak. He pats Leroy on the shoulder.

LEROY

I broke your jaw. Shit! I didn't mean to break your jaw!

Billy pulls him in and embraces him tight.

Shaun and Tracy both look dejected.

SHAUN

I don't know if I should congratulate Leroy, or console Billy.

INT. SHAUN AND TRACY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A small, one bedroom apartment with old appliances and hand-me-down furniture. Shaun and Tracy sit at a small kitchen table eating dinner.

TRACY

You're really going to go through with this again?

SHAUN

Have to.

TRACY

Why? After that last fight...

SHAUN

That was a fluke.

TRACY

I don't want you to end up like Billy.

SHAUN

I won't. That last fight was a fluke. If I train like I used to, there will be no stopping me.

TRACY

You have unrealistic expectations.

SHAUN

I have to do this. I have to give it my best. Dad says -

TRACY

You're just doing this to impress your father.

SHAUN

Fuck him! I'm doing this for us!

TRACY

I never asked you to do this! Why don't you just get a normal job like a normal person?

Shaun can't answer. They sit in silence.

TRACY

I'm just concerned about your safety. And our future. You can box at most, what? Ten more years? And after that?

SHAUN

I haven't thought that far.

TRACY

You need to.

SHAUN

Get off my back about this. I'm going to train. I'm going to fight. I'm going to give it everything I have. And we'll see how far I can go.

Shaun turns back to his dinner and takes a bite. They eat dinner in silence.

CUT TO:

QUICK FLASHES of Shaun's gloved fists hitting OPPONENTS, as a
TRANSITION TO

INT. SHAUN AND TRACY'S APARTMENT - DAY

A RADIO plays in the background. Tracy sits at the table eating
a stack of pancakes.

The door opens and Shaun enters, wearing a cheap suit.

SHAUN

Pretty late for breakfast.

TRACY

Where'd you go so early? And why
are you so dressed up?

SHAUN

Went to church.

TRACY

When was the last time you were in
a church?

SHAUN

Our wedding.

TRACY

Why now?

SHAUN

I'm trying to be more... What's
that word?

TRACY

Religious?

SHAUN

No. Like when you're holy. Maybe
not quite holy, but spiritual.

TRACY

Pious?

SHAUN

Yeah.

TRACY

What's with the new-found piety?

SHAUN

I'm just hoping the Man Upstairs
will show me some favor.

Shaun takes a bite of Tracy's pancakes.

TRACY
Were your parents there?

SHAUN
I don't know.

TRACY
You didn't sit with them?

SHAUN
I don't know. I can't remember.

Shaun looks embarrassed. He breaks eye contact with Tracy.

SHAUN
I'm gonna go change clothes.

He starts to go.

TRACY
Wait. What do you mean you can't remember?

SHAUN
Nothing. I didn't mean it.

TRACY
How do you not remember?

SHAUN
I'm gonna go change.

He yanks off his tie and storms out of the room.

INT. ICE CREAM SHOP - DAY

The same ice cream shop from Shaun and Tracy's first date. They sit in a booth. Tracy drinks a malt. Shaun eats a banana split. He puts down his spoon.

SHAUN
Look at this.

He starts wiggling a loose tooth.

TRACY
Stop doing that!

SHAUN
Got it at my last fight.

TRACY
So go to the dentist.

SHAUN
It'll heal up.

Tracy takes a sip of her malt.

TRACY
Did you call your mom back?

SHAUN
When did she call?

TRACY
Yesterday.

SHAUN
I didn't know.

TRACY
I told you about three times to
call her.

SHAUN
I'd remember if you said that.

TRACY
Would you?

SHAUN
What does that mean?

TRACY
You've changed. Your memory is
slipping. Your mind's not where it
used to be.

SHAUN
Bullshit.

TRACY
You have to face it. These fights
are taking a toll on you.

Shaun stares at his banana split.

SHAUN
I always heard about those old
fighters. They say they get punch
drunk and can't talk or think
straight. But those are guys who
spend their whole lives in the
sport.

(MORE)

SHAUN (CONT'D)

It's not going to happen to me.
I'm going to win the title, maybe
defend it a couple times, then
retire. I'm not going to be some
forty-year-old with bad knees
hobbling into the ring. I won't
get hurt.

TRACY

You're hurting now. I can see it.

Shaun pauses. He pushes his ice cream away.

SHAUN

I'm done.

INT. FLYNN HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY

A crowd has gathered at the Flynn house for Shaun's 50th victory party. Tracy, Billy, Leroy, and Shaun's parents are there, as well as several FRIENDS and FAMILY MEMBERS.

After fifty-plus pro fights, Shaun is looking worse, with a slightly flattened nose and a permanent scar under his eye.

The guests, save for Billy, drink beer or champagne while Shaun poses for a photo. He stands behind a large cake crudely decorated with a boxing glove. Written in frosting on the cake: "Shaun Flynn 50 Victories."

Connie SNAPS a photo. Everyone APPLAUDS.

BILLY

How come you didn't put your
losses on there too?

Everyone LAUGHS. Shaun raises his fist and shakes it at Billy jokingly.

CONNIE

Let me cut the cake.

Shaun grabs a beer and walks over to Leroy and Billy. Leroy drinks a beer, while Billy swigs a Dr. Pepper.

SHAUN

How you guys doing?

LEROY

Pretty good.

SHAUN
(to Billy)
How's your jaw?

BILLY
It's been a long time since that
fight, Shaun. It's all healed up.

SHAUN
Oh, yeah.

Billy motions toward Leroy.

BILLY
Didn't realize this guy could
punch that hard though.

LEROY
How are you doing, Shaun? Fifty
victories. That's a lot of fights.

SHAUN
Seven losses. That's, what, fifty-
seven fights?

Leroy nods.

SHAUN
So, how are you guys doing?

LEROY
Uh, good, man.

SHAUN
(to Billy)
How's your jaw?

BILLY
It's fine.

Matthew walks over to them.

MATTHEW
(to Shaun)
Can I talk to you a minute?

He grabs Shaun's arm and pulls him away.

LEROY
You notice anything weird with
Shaun these days?

BILLY

I think he's taken too many punches to the head.

On the other side of the room, Matthew and Shaun stand near the corner, away from the rest of the guests.

MATTHEW

I've got something big. Something real big.

SHAUN

What is it?

MATTHEW

Next month. We can get a fight in Las Vegas, a preliminary for a Thomas Hearn's fight. This guy's tough, real tough, and if you beat him... Well, the sky's the limit.

SHAUN

Sounds good. Where's the fight?

MATTHEW

Vegas, like I said.

Shaun nods.

SHAUN

Take it. We can't turn down a chance like this.

Matthew smiles.

MATTHEW

I already took it.

He pats Shaun on the shoulder and walks away. Tracy approaches Shaun.

TRACY

What's that all about?

SHAUN

Dad got me a fight in Vegas.

TRACY

That's good... I guess.

SHAUN

Of course it is. This is a big deal.

TRACY
How much longer -

SHAUN
Not much longer now. Next month.

TRACY
How much longer can you do this?

SHAUN
I'm only twenty-three years old.
My best years are ahead of me.
(pause)
Did I tell you about this fight?

TRACY
You should go mingle.

Tracy gives him a hug and a peck on the cheek and walks away.

As Shaun walks through the house, friends and family congratulate him, pat him on the back, shake his hand.

Shaun walks into the living room.

He is alone. He stares at framed photos on the wall, photos from his youth. There is a photo of a seven-year-old Shaun holding a trophy. His first tournament win.

Connie walks up behind him.

CONNIE
I remember that day.

Shaun turns to face her. She moves close to him and looks at the photo.

CONNIE
We couldn't have been more proud.
You were seven years old.
Remember?

SHAUN
I remember. I beat that kid from Dallas. No one thought I could do it.

CONNIE
We all believed in you. We knew you'd get that trophy. Your dad especially.

Tracy peers at them from the far side of the room.

SHAUN
Dad got me this fight in Vegas.

CONNIE
I heard. I don't think you should
take it.

SHAUN
We already took it.

CONNIE
No one can force you to fight.
Shaun, I think it's time you move
on.

SHAUN
First Tracy, now you?

Tracy walks over to them.

SHAUN
How come you guys don't support
me?

CONNIE
We do support you.

TRACY
I support you. No one supports you
more than we do. That's why we're
asking you to stop.

SHAUN
You don't support me. You don't
support me at all.

TRACY
We don't want you to get hurt.

SHAUN
I'm not going to get hurt.

CONNIE
You've already been hurt.

TRACY
You can't remember anything.
You're repeating yourself. You
have to stop before it's too late.

SHAUN
It's too late to stop. I've got
this fight coming up. It's the
biggest opportunity I've ever had.
(MORE)

SHAUN (CONT'D)

And you guys want me to walk away from it. I can't understand you. I can't understand why you don't have my back.

TRACY

We do have your back! That's why we're telling you to stop.

CONNIE

Shaun, please.

Tears are welling up in Shaun's eyes. He wipes them away.

SHAUN

I'm going to go hang out with the guys.

Shaun hurries away.

Connie puts her arm around Tracy.

Back in the dining room, one of the guests is talking to Billy and Leroy.

GUEST

Now, you two fought a while back.

They nod.

GUEST

I was there. That was brutal.

BILLY

You're telling me. I was the one with the broken jaw.

GUEST

You still fighting?

BILLY

I'm taking a break for a while.

Shaun quietly joins them.

BILLY

You know who's not taking a break? This guy.

He points to Shaun.

BILLY
He's fighting in Las Vegas next month.

SHAUN
How'd you hear about that?

LEROY
Your dad must've told someone. Now everyone's talking about it.

SHAUN
Well, it's true.

GUEST
You'll do great.

He pats Shaun on the back and leaves the group.

BILLY
I fought in Vegas a while back. Town's not all it's cracked up to be.

SHAUN
I've never been. So I'm excited. After I whup some ass in the ring, I'm going to hit the slots.

BILLY
No, you really want to play the table games.

SHAUN
I don't know how.

LEROY
You've got a month to learn.

SHAUN
Guys. I really want you there with me. I want you in my corner. You can ride up there with us. We'll get you a room. What do you think?

LEROY
I'm in.

BILLY
Wouldn't miss it.

They clink their beer and soda bottles together.

INT. SHAUN AND TRACY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Later that night. Shaun and Tracy are snuggled up in bed, but they are wide awake.

TRACY

If we ever have a kid, what should we name them?

SHAUN

If it's a boy, how about Shaun Jr.?

TRACY

I don't think so.

SHAUN

What about Clarence? That was my grandpa's name.

TRACY

Like the cross-eyed lion? No.

SHAUN

Well, what names do you like?

TRACY

Joseph.

SHAUN

Too biblical.

TRACY

Julian.

SHAUN

Too fruity.

TRACY

Okay. Then Aidan.

SHAUN

Not bad.

TRACY

Or Alexander.

SHAUN

What about Clarence?

TRACY

You already said that.

There is a pause in the conversation. Tracy SIGHS.

TRACY

Are you really going to take this fight?

SHAUN

Why?

TRACY

I love you. I really think you should stop boxing. It's taking its toll on you.

SHAUN

It's not even a choice. I have to take this fight.

TRACY

When I married you, I thought you'd get over this. You're never home. You're always on the road fighting.

SHAUN

I have to fight on the road. You know how hard it is to fight in Oklahoma ever since Pat cut ties with me.

TRACY

I just thought you'd settle down by now.

SHAUN

I have to go to Las Vegas. This guy's one of the top middleweights in the country. If I beat him, I can crack the top ten. Then I'm on track to fight Hagler for the title. This is the best chance I've had in my whole career.

TRACY

If you have to fight, then I guess you have to fight. But don't expect me to be there.

SHAUN

You're not coming to the fight? You really don't support me.

TRACY

I'm supposed to sit there and watch you get killed?

SHAUN

You think I'm going to get killed?
Is that it? You don't think I can
get the job done?

TRACY

That's not what I'm saying.

SHAUN

You just said it.

TRACY

I'm saying you could get killed.
And I'm the only one who seems
concerned about that. Me and your
mother. I can't let this happen to
you. You have to know how I feel.
How this makes your mother feel.

Shaun jumps out of bed and paces the room. His anger is visibly rising.

SHAUN

The only one who really cares is
Dad. He's the only one looking out
for me. He's the only one thinking
of my best interests. He's always
been the one looking out for me.

Tracy gets out of bed and faces him.

TRACY

He looks at you and he sees dollar
signs. He doesn't care about your
safety. He lets you get hurt.
Think about all the fights he
could've stopped. Think about all
the times he put you in the ring
and left you in there like a
punching bag.

SHAUN

I think I did just fine.

TRACY

I love you. Stop hurting yourself.

SHAUN

It doesn't even hurt anymore. I've
got a head like a brick now.

TRACY

Look in the mirror, Shaun.

SHAUN

I'm taking this fight. End of story.

TRACY

Then I hope you have fun in Vegas without me. And I hope to God you don't get hurt any more than you already have. But don't expect me to be here when you get back.

SHAUN

What does that mean?

TRACY

If you take this fight, we're through. We're over. Done. I'm leaving you. I can't sit here any longer and watch you hurt yourself like this. This is not the life I wanted. Do you have any idea how it feels to see the person you love more than anything in the world damage his brain and body to chase some foolish dream?

SHAUN

Foolish?

TRACY

Foolish. You've had fifty seven fights. How many more can you take? I know I can't take any more. You have to make a choice. Between me and this fight. So what will it be?

SHAUN

I don't care what you say. I'm taking this fight. Period.

Tracy storms out of the room and SLAMS the door.

INT. CASINO AUDITORIUM - DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

The dressing room in a Las Vegas casino auditorium. Much cleaner and brighter than the dank locker rooms Shaun is used to.

Shaun sits on a bench lacing up his shoes. Matthew, Leroy, Billy, and Connie stand nearby.

LEROY

How you feeling, Shaun?

SHAUN
I feel good.

LEROY
After you win this fight, we hit
the buffet. Then we hit the slots.

Shaun smiles.

BILLY
You should've learned the table
games like I told you.

SHAUN
I won't have any luck. There's
only enough luck for one thing:
either the fight or the games. And
the fight is the important thing.

Connie moves closer to Shaun.

CONNIE
You don't need luck.

SHAUN
I wish Tracy was here.

Connie kisses him on the cheek. Shaun reaches out and takes her
hand.

CONNIE
I'm going to go find my seat.

Connie exits the dressing room. As she exits, a FIGHT PROMOTER
enters.

PROMOTER
Flynn. The first two fights
tonight went the distance. We're
concerned that the Hearn's fight
won't start on time. We'd like to
cut your fight to four rounds so
the TV fight can stay on schedule.

MATTHEW
We're not dropping any rounds.

SHAUN
I need four rounds just to get
warmed up. I need the ten-rounder.

PROMOTER
We can give you six. But you'll
need to change your trunks.
Washington is wearing green.

SHAUN
I'm the Irish Express. I always
wear green trunks.

PROMOTER
Not tonight.

MATTHEW
We're not changing trunks. You
tell him to change.

PROMOTER
Do you want to fight tonight? If
so, you'll find another pair of
trunks.

MATTHEW
Where are we supposed to get new
trunks? The fight is about to
start.

PROMOTER
I don't care. Ask one of the other
fighters.

The promoter leaves.

MATTHEW
I'll go talk to one of the other
trainers and see if I can scrounge
up some trunks.

Matthew exits.

LEROY
They're playing mind games with
you, man.

BILLY
Don't let it psych you out.

SHAUN
I'm fine. Green trunks, not green
trunks. It doesn't really matter.

INT. CASINO AUDITORIUM - DRESSING ROOM - LATER

Matthew enters. He tosses a pair of yellow trunks to Shaun.

MATTHEW
Put these on.

SHAUN
Where'd you find them?

MATTHEW

One of the other trainers. They charged me thirty bucks for them, too. Can you believe that?

LEROY

Let's hope they fit.

Shaun quickly pops off his green trunks and slides on the yellow trunks. He tosses the green trunks into an open locker.

The promoter enters again.

PROMOTER

Flynn. It's time.

Leroy and Billy grab the bucket, the water bottles, and other gear and lead the way out of the dressing room.

Matthew stops Shaun. He pulls Shaun in close and embraces him. When Matthew lets go of the embrace, they exit the dressing room.

INT. CASINO AUDITORIUM - CONTINUOUS

The quartet walks down the aisle toward the boxing ring. Matthew, Leroy, and Billy flank Shaun, who has his hood pulled over his head.

The auditorium is nearly full. There are 7,000 spectators ready for a fight.

They finally reach the ring. Matthew holds the ropes as Shaun enters into the ring.

Shaun feels exalted, triumphant. This is the biggest moment of his career. He paces the ring, shadowboxing a little.

Shaun's opponent, TITUS WASHINGTON, enters the ring. He is black and has a face of stone. Titus shadowboxes in his corner.

Shaun kneels down in his corner and prays.

The ANNOUNCER steps into the ring with his microphone.

ANNOUNCER

In the red corner, with a record of fifty wins and seven losses, with forty-six wins coming by way of knockout. From Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, it's the Irish Express. Shaun Flynn!

Shaun turns to the crowd and throws his arms in the air. There is plenty of APPLAUSE for Shaun.

ANNOUNCER

And in the blue corner, with a record of nineteen wins and zero losses, with ten wins coming by way of knockout. From Detroit, Michigan, Titus Washington!

There is much APPLAUSE and CHEERING for Titus.

The REFEREE calls the two men to the center of the ring. They stare each other down. Titus's demeanor is ice cold, while Shaun tries to hide his feelings of elation.

REFEREE

You've been given the rules in your dressing room before the fight. I expect a clean fight. Watch the rabbit punches and low blows. Obey my commands. Protect yourself at all times. Touch gloves.

Shaun and Titus touch gloves and walk toward their respective corners.

Matthew, Leroy, Billy, and Titus's CORNERMEN leave the ring.

The BELL SOUNDS. Round 1. The fight starts slow. Shaun and Titus pace around the ring, throwing occasional punches that don't connect.

Titus is slowly backing up toward the ropes. Shaun sees an opportunity. He starts swinging and backs Titus into the ropes with his punches.

They clinch. Titus pushes Shaun down, trying to disguise it as a punch.

The referee starts the count, but Shaun is up by four. The referee continues counting, giving Shaun a mandatory eight count.

SHAUN

I'm fine. He pushed me down.

The referee finishes the eight count.

SHAUN

He pushed me.

REFEREE

Do you want to continue?

SHAUN

Yes!

The referee brushes Shaun's gloves. Titus and Shaun come together in the middle of the ring. Shaun is pissed. He swings hard at Titus. A couple of strong blows land on Titus's body.

Titus backs away. Shaun throws a left hook to his head. Titus is in trouble.

Shaun throws another hook, which Titus dodges. Shaun is caught off-guard. Titus throws an uppercut and knocks Shaun down.

As Shaun is getting up, the referee stops the fight. Titus wins. He throws his arms into the air.

Matthew climbs into the ring, in Shaun's corner.

MATTHEW

What the fuck? He's not hurt!

Shaun walks over to the referee.

SHAUN

What's the deal?

REFEREE

You were knocked down twice. We just can't take a chance.

SHAUN

What, a chance that I win?

Shaun storms over to his corner. Billy and Leroy are in the corner with him now.

SHAUN

Let's get the hell out of here.

Shaun puts on his robe. Billy holds the ropes for the rest of the crew and they all leave the ring.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Winner by technical knockout in the first round, and still undefeated, Titus Washington!

The quartet walks through the crowd, down the aisle. The occasional SPECTATOR HECKLES Shaun, but many say sympathetic things to him.

SPECTATORS

You got screwed!
That was bullshit!

INT. SHAUN'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

A modestly-priced Las Vegas casino hotel room.

Shaun sits on the edge of his bed, SOBBING. Connie sits on the bed with him, trying to console him.

But he is inconsolable.

Matthew paces around the room.

MATTHEW

They really screwed us over. Those Detroit bastards had everyone in their pockets. It was Detroit versus the other guys, and we're the other guy.

SHAUN

Give it a rest.

MATTHEW

I'm not giving it a rest.

CONNIE

Matthew...

Matthew is now irate.

MATTHEW

Those promoters knew this would happen. They fucked us!

Matthew kicks a chair over.

SHAUN

Stop, Dad! Just fucking stop.

(pause)

It's over. This was it. Now it's over. We're done.

MATTHEW

What do you mean? What's over?

SHAUN

Just move on. It's over. Forget about all this.

Shaun stops sobbing and wipes the snot from his nose and the tears from his eyes.

SHAUN

I just want to go home.

FADE TO:

INT. SHAUN AND TRACY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The door swings open and Shaun walks into a darkened apartment. He turns on the light and stares at the emptiness.

SHAUN
Tracy? You home?

No response. Shaun walks into the

BEDROOM

And puts his duffel bag and suitcase on the bed. He unzips the duffel. His boxing gloves stare back at him from inside the bag. Shaun grabs them and throws them at the wall with all the force he can muster.

EXT. CHARLEY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Shaun stands on Charley Ross's porch pounding on the door. His brother-in-law opens it.

CHARLEY
What do you want?

SHAUN
I need to talk to Tracy.

CHARLEY
What makes you think she's here?

SHAUN
Come on, man. I know she's here.
Just let me in.

Shaun tries to push past him, into the house. Charley gives him a hard shove.

CHARLEY
Get the fuck off my property!

Shaun puts his fists up.

SHAUN
I knocked you out once before!

Shaun SIGHS. He puts his fists down and straightens up.

SHAUN
Sorry, Charley. It would mean a lot to me if I could just talk to Tracy for a few minutes.

Charley closes the door. When the door reopens, Tracy is standing there.

TRACY

I guess you lost the fight.

SHAUN

Yeah. It got stopped in the first round. I thought it was an unfair stoppage, but... You don't want to hear it.

She stares at him.

SHAUN

I don't really want to talk about it. To be honest, I don't even want to think about it.

Shaun is too embarrassed to look Tracy in the eyes.

SHAUN

You were right. It's over. I'll never get a title shot. Maybe it took this loss to convince me. But I should've listened to you. It's just hard to admit that I'm already washed up. I'm twenty-four-years-old and I'm washed up. What's left for me now?

TRACY

Do you know how insulting that is? I thought you came here to apologize.

SHAUN

I didn't mean it like that. It's just - how am I supposed to look in the mirror? How am I supposed to walk around town? I'm a failure.

TRACY

There are more important things in life than boxing. You've failed your family. You let this go on too long. You've hurt yourself. You've hurt your mother. You've hurt me. You're not the same person I fell in love with.

SHAUN

Whether you come back home with or not, I just want you to know that you were right about everything. I should've quit a long time ago, before too much damage was done. I'm sorry. I don't know what else to say.

TRACY

You're an idiot, Shaun. You put your life on the line to every time you stepped into the ring, just to chase a dream. Part of me can't help but admire that. But my God, most of me knows how stupid that was.

Shaun nods in agreement.

TRACY

I don't think I'm ready to accept your apology.

SHAUN

I need you, Tracy. Come home with me.

Tracy starts to close the door.

TRACY

I'll think about it.

Shaun blocks the door.

SHAUN

I can't accept that. Please, Tracy!

She forces the door closed. Shaun rests his head on the door.

EXT. OKLAHOMA CITY STREET - DAY

A large moving truck pulls up in front of a house in a quiet residential neighborhood.

A MOVER jumps out of the cab and opens the back of the truck. It is full of furniture and boxes.

Shaun jumps out of the driver's side of the cab and walks to the back. They start unloading the truck.

INT. EASTSIDE BOXING CLUB - DAY

Peak hours for the gym, after the work day. Billy stands in a corner holding the mitts for a YOUNG FIGHTER. Nearby, Leroy jumps rope.

Shaun quietly enters the gym. He looks around, scanning for his friends.

Leroy notices him and stops jumping rope.

LEROY
My main man!

Shaun walks over. Billy notices him.

BILLY
(to fighter)
That's good for now. Go hit the
speed bag a while.

The fighter walks away. Billy joins Shaun and Leroy.

BILLY
How you been?

Shaun shrugs.

LEROY
How's the new job?

SHAUN
It's a job. Pays the bills.

LEROY
Can't complain about that.

SHAUN
You still with Pat?

LEROY
Yeah.

SHAUN
He treating you all right?

LEROY
Yeah. Been getting lots of fights.
My record is twenty-six and three
now. You should come to my next
fight. I think you'd enjoy it.

Shaun pats him on the shoulder.

SHAUN

Let me know when it is. I'll see what I can do.

LEROY

What are you doing here, man?

SHAUN

I don't know. I've just been thinking. It feels like years since I boxed. It hasn't been that long, but it feels like it. And I can't shake this feeling. You know? I can't get the taste of that last fight out of my mouth. And it's a bad taste. If I had been given a fair shot and still lost, that's one thing. But to not know? It kills me. How far could I have gone? I just need closure. I can't talk to Tracy about this. Her taking me back after all my bullshit... This is the last thing she'd ever want to hear. But I need to know. I need to know what would happen. I look around at these guys hitting the bag. Hitting the mitts. Sparring. And my head starts spinning. How can I just walk away?

LEROY

Just walk away, Shaun.

BILLY

You have to walk away.

SHAUN

It's easy for you to say. I used to have a name. I was The Irish Express. Everybody knew me. Now I'm just a meathead who lugs furniture around. Lugs boxes.

BILLY

Maybe you forget, but I had a name too. Everybody knew me. And everybody loved me. But I knew when to quit. And you have to quit, Shaun.

SHAUN

I can't just quit.

BILLY

Move on and forget about it. If you think about it today, you'll think about it tomorrow. And if you think about it tomorrow, you'll think about it for the rest of your life. It's going to eat you alive. Just forget about it.

SHAUN

How can I just forget about it? From the moment I was born, until this moment right now where I'm standing in front of you, this has been my entire life. I've never known anything else. And you want me to forget about it? Can you forget about it?

BILLY

No. But I've made peace with myself. And my mistakes. I went as far as I could and I accept that. You need to do the same.

SHAUN

I can't accept it that easy.

BILLY

I've been training some young fighters. Why don't you help out sometime? They'd love your help.

SHAUN

Yeah, maybe sometime.

They stand in silence, not making eye contact.

LEROY

Shaun. You came here last week and said the same thing to us.

SHAUN

I did?

LEROY

Almost word-for-word, man.

SHAUN

Oh. Maybe I did.

Shaun takes one last look around the gym.

SHAUN

I think I'm going to take off and eat some dinner. Good seeing you guys.

LEROY

Take it easy.

Shaun starts to walk away.

BILLY

Don't be a stranger!

Shaun turns back and nods.

INT. SHAUN AND TRACY'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Tracy sits at the kitchen table with a stack of papers in front of her. She is grading homework for one of her classes.

The door opens and Shaun enters. He holds a bag full of fast food. Tracy looks up from the papers.

TRACY

Hey.

SHAUN

Brought home some food.

TRACY

Good. I'm starving.

Tracy moves the papers aside and Shaun places the food on the table.

SHAUN

What you working on?

TRACY

Just grading papers.

SHAUN

Sounds fun.

Shaun sits down at the table and starts to take the food out of the bag.

TRACY

Wait. Before we eat, there's something I want to talk to you about.

SHAUN

What is it?

TRACY

Well. There's something I want to show you.

Tracy gets up and leaves the room.

TRACY (O.S.)

Close your eyes.

Shaun closes his eyes. Tracy comes back into the room.

TRACY

Put out your hand.

Shaun complies. She places an empty baby bottle in his hand.

TRACY

Open them.

Shaun looks at the bottle for a second, confused.

SHAUN

What's this?

TRACY

What does it look like? You're going to be needing it pretty soon.

SHAUN

Does this mean...

Tracy nods. Shaun jumps up and embraces her tightly.

SHAUN

We're going to need a bigger house.

INT. FLYNN HOUSE - DAY

The doorbell RINGS. Matthew answers it. Shaun stands in the doorway.

MATTHEW

Shaun. Come in.

Shaun enters.

SHAUN

You wanted to talk to me?

MATTHEW

Come. Sit down.

They walk into the living room and sit on the couch.

SHAUN
So what'd you want to talk about?

MATTHEW
Boxing.

Shaun SIGHS and starts to get up. Matthew pulls him back down.

SHAUN
That's the last thing I want to talk about.

MATTHEW
Hear me out. Why don't you give it one more shot? I'll help you.

SHAUN
I can't.

MATTHEW
What do you mean "can't?"

SHAUN
Can't. Won't. What difference does it make?

MATTHEW
You're only twenty-four. Rocky Marciano was twenty-four when he started boxing pro.

SHAUN
The WBC says I'll have to win thirty fights to get my rating back. That'll take three years. At least.

MATTHEW
You can do it. Easily.

SHAUN
I don't want to. Face it. Was I even that good?

MATTHEW
You never lived up to your potential.

SHAUN
You pushed me too far, too fast.
(MORE)

SHAUN (CONT'D)

You had me fighting guys ten years older than me, with dozens of fights under their belt, when I was just a rookie. I can't do this anymore.

MATTHEW

I pushed you because you wouldn't push yourself. I only wanted what's best for you.

SHAUN

Who are you to say what's best for me?

MATTHEW

I only did it because I love you.

SHAUN

If you loved me, you would've protected me.

MATTHEW

Just one more try, Shaun.

SHAUN

It's easy for you to say. You're not the one whose body is getting pummeled from the left and right. You're not the one whose value as a human being is tied to the number of knockouts under his belt. You're not the one whose brain is being turned to hamburger meat with each blow to the head. It's over, Dad. Give it up.

MATTHEW

Shaun...

Shaun sits in silence for a moment. He has to muster the courage to say what he needs to say.

SHAUN

All my life, I looked up to you. I listened to you. I did every goddamn thing you told me to do. And look where it got me. I'm nothing. I'm fucking nothing. I followed you, and you broke me. Every time I look at your face, all I can see is the years of my life that I lost thanks to you.

(MORE)

SHAUN (CONT'D)

So don't expect to see me here
ever again.

MATTHEW

Please...

SHAUN

And don't expect to see your
grandson.

MATTHEW

Grandson?

SHAUN

Yeah.

MATTHEW

When were you going to tell me?

SHAUN

I wasn't.

Matthew stands and faces him head on.

MATTHEW

You owe it to your kid. You owe it
to him to try one more time to
make it. One more fight, just to
test the waters. Just one more
fight.

SHAUN

One more fight?

Shaun stands up and looks squarely into Matthew's eyes.

SHAUN

You want one more fight?

Shaun's left hand starts to ball up into a knockout fist.

SHAUN

You got it.

His fist is so tight that his hand is shaking. His face is red.
Tears begin to well up in Shaun's eyes.

Suddenly, it all stops. Shaun releases the fist. He turns away
and storms out of the house.

EXT. FLYNN HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - LATER

Shaun sits in his car staring at the floor. His face is red with rage and tears are still welling up in his eyes.

He punches the steering wheel softly. He punches again. Again and again, harder each time. With the last punch, his hand slips and hits the HORN.

Shaun looks up at the window of the house. Connie peers out the window at him.

Shaun wipes the tears from his eyes. He starts up his car and drives away.

INT. SHAUN AND TRACY'S HOUSE - BABY'S ROOM - NIGHT

A small room. The lights are dim. Only a single lamp and a nightlight are lit.

Near the window, Shaun and Tracy stand over a crib. They look on, smiling at their BABY SON, who sleeps soundly. Tracy gives Shaun a peck on the cheek and walks out of the room. Shaun continues to watch his child.

He looks around for a second, making sure Tracy isn't nearby. He reaches into his pocket and pulls out a pair of miniature boxing gloves tied together by the laces.

He hangs the gloves from the crib's mobile.

Shaun smiles again. He leaves the room, turning off the light on his way out.

CUT TO BLACK

THE END