

CUT AND DRIED

FADE IN:

INT. BARBER SHOP - DAY

A cheap plasma screen TV hangs from the wall. A music video flashes silently on it. A CLOCK reads 11:50 AM.

Two old lads, JIM and BOB (70's) sit at the window, wait. Jim flips through an outdated copy of FHM, occasionally smiles. Bob enjoys last months GQ.

At the counter, FRANK (40's) holds a mirror up to the back of a CUSTOMERS head.

FRANK
Now, that do you?

The customer nods, smiles, goes to stand.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Oh, one second...

Frank takes a small scissors from the breast pocket of his white jacket, examines the back of the customers head. One little SNIP--

FRANK (CONT'D)
A rogue. Got him. Now you can hop up there.

Frank undoes the black cover, releases the customer from underneath.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Seven euro, please, when you're ready.

He's handed a twenty, turns towards the back room --

FRANK (CONT'D)
Joanne! Need change!

JOANNE, (17) moves like a typical teenager doing something she doesn't want to -- slowly. She plucks the note from Franks hand, returns to the back room.

FRANK (CONT'D)
(to the customer)
You got any teenagers?
(a shake of the head)
Want one?

Joanne skulks out to the floor, drops a wad of change in the customers hand. She twists on her heel...

FRANK (CONT'D)

Hey hey! Start sweeping. You've a long week ahead, little miss lash-out. Start as you mean to go on.

She struts off.

JOANNE

I have.

The customer tries to hand Frank a TWO EURO coin. Frank pushes it away. His eyes track Joanne into the back room.

FRANK

No, no! You're very kind, but no. Wouldn't feel right.

The customer walks out, nods at Jim and Bob as he goes.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Right, who's next?

Bob stands on creaking legs as the door swings wide open--

CHOPS, (20's) a well dressed thug, shaved head, strides in, phone shoved against his ear.

CHOPS

I'm goin' to get me hair cut, home to take a shower -- then I'm goin' to break his little neck!

Bob glances at Jim.

BOB

Cut? He's bald.

FRANK

Take a seat, be with you shortly.

Chops pockets the phone, stares at Frank.

CHOPS

I've no time to be quein'! This pair of aul lads are only waiting for the reaper, they'll be happy to read the glad rags a bit longer. Won't ye lads?

Bob gives a resigned nod to Frank. Nobody wants trouble. He eases himself back onto the seat. Chops makes himself at home in the chair.

FRANK

Now you do know I'm in the business of taking hair off, not putting it on? Special clinics for that.

CHOPS
You've a much smarter mouth than
the last bloke who ran this place.
You do birthdays too?

FRANK
What can I do for you?

CHOPS
I want it skimmed -- microns now.
Just smooth her out.

FRANK
Microns? This look like a science
lab?

CHOPS
Throw on the foam, peel it off with
one of them Sweeney Todd yokes, be
grand. Just don't bleed me.

FRANK
A cut throat?

CHOPS
That the name?

FRANK
It is.

CHOPS
That what Sweeney used?

FRANK
It is.

CHOPS
Let's have it so.

In a flurry of black nylon, Frank drapes a cover over Chops.

FRANK
Joanne! Will you bring out that
aloe-foam stuff, green can. If
you've stopped sulking.

Chops admires his head in the mirror. Joanne appears, BLUE
CAN in hand. Chops gives her the once over, grins wickedly,
one thing on his mind.

CHOPS
Howya.

FRANK
Green, Joanne. Green. That's blue.

JOANNE
It's a can. With foam in it.

Frank plucks the can from her hand, disappears into the back.
Bob and Jim watch the show silently.

CHOPS
You work here?

JOANNE
Me dads idea of purgatory. Slave
labour. I'm grounded til I learn
stuff.

CHOPS
Learn wha'?

JOANNE
To do what I'm told. So I'm told.

CHOPS
You in college?

JOANNE
Nearly.

FRANK
(returning)
She's seventeen. Leaving cert.

Chops turns back to the mirror, whistles silently. Close
call.

JOANNE
I'm not a child.

FRANK
Clearly. A child would know her
greens from blues.

Frank sprays a dollop of FOAM from a GREEN can onto his palm.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Go finish that stock count.

JOANNE
It's like, two shelves.

FRANK
Count them again.

She traipses off. Frank holds his palm upside down, the foam
over Chops head.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Right.

EXT. BARBER SHOP - DAY

Chops steps out onto the pavement, sticks a couple of EAR PHONES into his ears, leans back in at Bob and Jim.

CHOPS
You's boys should get scalped,
feels bleedin' great!

He runs a hand over his shiny dome.

CHOPS (CONT'D)
Like silk it is. Water repellent.

He strolls off down the street, music POUNDS in his ears.
From inside --

FRANK (O.S.)
Right Bob, let's get you sorted.

INT. BARBER SHOP - DAY

Joanne sweeps hair of various colours into vague pile in a corner, rests the brush nearby.

JOANNE
Can I be released to find food,
forage?

Frank wipes a scissors, places it back in a jar.

FRANK
You need some cash?

She raises her eyes to the ceiling, hands go to hips.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Be back by three. Get's busy then --
need your help.

Joanne is already at the door.

JOANNE
Fine.

She's gone. The TV blinks out a news report. Frank silently blinks his concerns away.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Joanne kicks at the pavement, hands in pockets. She turns a corner --

CHOPS

Sits on a wall, across the street, his head bobs to the beat in his ears. Joanne approaches coyly.

She watches him, oblivious to her presence. She taps his leg. Chops looks up, grins, pops one earphone out.

CHOPS

This isn't how I remember being grounded.

JOANNE

Have to eat, don't I? Only thing in there is hair. And moussey shite.

CHOPS

Chipper down the way.

JOANNE

I know.

She steps away. Chops follows, intrigued.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY

Joanne and Chops dawdle along the footpath. Chops still listens to music.

JOANNE

Do you always have those things in your ears?

CHOPS

Nearly. Nothing really worth listening to outside. Sure don't I have me own soundtrack?

JOANNE

'Spose. Not get annoyin'? Like someone nagging at you all the time?

CHOPS

What's annoyin' is all the bleedin' questions.

(holding out an earphone)
Here. Have a go.

She takes it, wipes it, pops it in. Chops takes out his phone, writes a text. They walk on.

INT. BARBER SHOP - DAY

Frank seats a MAN on the chair, smiles. The new customer drops his tabloid PAPER on the counter in front. Frank checks his watch, confirms it with the clock on the wall.

He begins the routine -- Cover, towel, comb.

FRANK
Now, what can I do for you?

EXT. CHIPPER - DAY

Joanne pushes out through the door, two steaming bags in hand, passes one to Chops. Without a word, he digs in.

Inside, behind the counter, the CHIPPIE catches sight of Chops, watches him closely. He comes around the counter, rushes through the door, stares intently at Joanne.

CHIPPIE
He with you?

CHOPS
She's with me.

CHIPPIE
You be careful, now. You've some balls coming back here.

CHOPS
Go fuck yourself, stupid *Dago*.

The Chippie lunges at Chops, but he twists out of the way, slams the Chippie back against his own window. The customers inside wear looks of shock. But none show the will to act.

CHOPS (CONT'D)
Fuck off before I break your whole shop. How about that? Won't leave it at one window this time.

The Chippie spits blood at Chops feet.

CHIPPIE
Prick.

Chops grabs Joanne's arm, her bag spills from her hand. Chips and ketchup splatter the pavement.

CHOPS
C'mon.

INT. BARBER SHOP - EVENING

Frank is on the phone, the cord trails from the back room. He's alone, no customers.

The wall clock reads 4:12 PM.

FRANK

I said three. Not busy now. Maybe
I'll finish up, drive around a bit.
(listening)
Call me if she turns up.

He hangs the phone back on the wall, removes his coat, drapes it over the back of the chair. His eyes drift to the tabloid paper left on the counter.

Frank picks it up, slowly unfolds it, glances at the front page --

GANG MEMBER RELEASED AS GARDA WITNESS FAILS TO SHOW

Words jump out at him from the article --

KIDNAPPING -- ASSAULT -- SUSPECTED MURDER.

And a face accompanies them; a face he saw only recently.

Chops.

A grinning mug, uncaring, taunts Frank from the bottom of the page.

The paper hits the tiles, blowing hair across the floor.

EXT. LANEWAY - EVENING

Joanne and Chops lean against the wall a few feet inside the opening. They still share the ear phones.

CHOPS

What did you do to get the aul lad
in a spin?

JOANNE

Got me tongue pierced.

Chops hand drops to his crotch.

CHOPS

I love those things on a bird. The
feel of them on me... mouth.

Joanne flinches a little, leans away.

CHOPS (CONT'D)

Go on, show me.

She leans back in, purses her lips, sticks out her tongue.

It's immaculate. No damage. No bruises. No piercing.

CHOPS (CONT'D)
You were ripped off.

JOANNE
I was caught wasn't I? Had me
tongue in the grippers and all, and
me dad flies in, screaming the riot
act at yer man with the needle.

CHOPS
It's still a lovely tongue.

He moves in, wraps his arms around her, goes to kiss her.

JOANNE
I dunno...

CHOPS
I do.

He kisses her hard, pushes her against the granite wall of
the lane. She moans in pain, not pleasure.

An engine GROWLS, gets near very fast --

At the end of the lane, a souped up HONDA, brakes hard,
engine idling.

SAMMY, (22), sticks his head out the drivers window.

SAMMY
Chops! You coming? You bringing
her?

Chops pulls away from Joanne, holds her against the wall.

CHOPS
Open the back, you dozy tool!

INT. FORD MONDEO - EVENING

Frank steers his car through the streets, past a row of shops
that house the chipper. He scans the terrace -- no Joanne.

Frank drives on.

EXT. LANEWAY - EVENING

Joanne's heels drag across the pavement, Chops holds her
tightly under the arms. She squirms, twists, gets a smack for
her troubles.

CHOPS
Grab her legs! C'mon!

Sammy grabs her shoes, gets a kick in the face.

SAMMY

Bitch!

He tries again -- another kick.

CHOPS

Will ya-- fuck sake Sammy!

Sammy pulls away, holds his nose. Blood pumps from it. Joanne wriggles again, frees an arm, claws at Chops face.

CHOPS (CONT'D)

Jesus!

JOANNE

LEMME GO!

Chops drops her. She hits the ground hard. He bends down, grabs hair and slaps her.

CHOPS

Get in the fucking car!

Joanne screams, kicks out at his shin, connects. Chops flinches, just enough to release his grip.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - CONTINUOUS

Joanne sprints across the road, trips on the kerb, hits the ground with her face. She's down.

EXT. STREET - EVENING

The Mondeo moves past houses, shops, kids on bikes. It takes a corner into an estate.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - EVENING

Chops stands to his full height, catches his breath, stares across the road at Joanne, moaning on the far side. A few people have stopped, look on. One spectator takes out a phone, dials.

CHOPS

(to Sammy)

Turn the car.

He steps out onto the street --

The Mondeo brakes hard, tyres SCREECH. Joanne watches, horrified, through a bloodied face.

THUMP! Metal hitting flesh. A fixed fight, with one inevitable outcome.

Up the street, Chops body hits the tarmac with a sickening THUD. His eyes wide open, music still pumps through an earphone in one ear.

Blood slowly rolls down his shiny dome.

Frank races from the car, slides down beside Joanne, takes her in his arms. She shakes, cries into his shoulder, tears mingle with young blood.

Franks own tears well, form, fall.

Blue light FLASH nearby. People move in, surround the father and daughter, finally offer her help.

FADE OUT.

THE END