

Roysh here, Roysh now wth loadsa nu stuf!

The
Teenage
Dirt
-bag
years

Ross O'Carroll-Kelly

O'BRIEN



ROSS O'CARROLL-KELLY

'A man of great taste and sophistication, not unlike myself. Yet he still finds time for the simple pleasures in life – loose cors, fast women ... fast food.'

OISINN

'Stupid, vain and a total orsehole. And certainly not the great lover he pretends to be. Three minutes, if my memory's right. You could boil an egg by him. As long as you like your egg soft.'

ERIKA

'Yeah, the dude stayed in my house in Ocean City. Made shit of the place. Paid the rent though. Knew what'd happen if he didn't. Said to him, "I got a pair of concrete shoes outside. One size fits all. You wanna see are they waterproof, ya leprechaun fock?" Yeah, a good kid. The broads loved him.'

PEASEY PEE

'One of the best rugby players this country has ever produced. Ever, with a capital E. Hennessy agrees with me. If it wasn't for injuries, bad luck and so forth, he'd have played for Ireland.'

CHARLES O'CARROLL-KELLY

'Who?'

EDDIE O'SULLIVAN

The
**Teenage
Dirt
-bag
years**

Ross O'Carroll-Kelly

[As told to Paul Howard]

Illustrated by Alan Clarke



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Dedication

For Karen

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Shit the bed, is it my imagination, roysh, or am I getting better looking every day? Hord believe I've just crawled out of the sack. I stare at myself in the mirror for, like, three or four minutes. There's no doubt that face is going to break a lot of hearts this year.

I hop into the shower. Lash on some of the old Ralph Lauren shower wash that Sorcha, my e who's doing the DBS in Carysfort, brought me back from the States. While I'm rubbing it in, I chee the old abs and pecs. The bod's in pretty good shape considering what I put it through over the summer. I wash my hair using the *Polo Sport* two-in-one daily shampoo that Sorcha bought me for my, like, birthday and shit.

I jump out. Dry myself off. Check myself out again. I run my hand over my face. Need a shave. Lash on the old *Armani Emporio* shaving gel that Sorcha gave me, I can't remember when, and give myself a really good, close shave. I lash on some of the old *Escape for Men* aftershave balm, roysh, and go back to my room.

Can't stop thinking about Nell McAndrew. No time for an old Allied Irish, though. Not this morning. I lash on the *Tommy for Men* deodorant and hop into the old Hilfiger boxers. Only dilemma now is what to wear. My old Castlerock shirt, that goes without saying. The Blackrock goys will be wearing their shirts, so will Clongowes and the Gick. Orseholes. Have to wear your colours, though. Also go for the beige Ralph Lauren chinos, black socks and, like, Dubes.

I pull out my class schedule – 'Sports Management, 2000–2001' – and fock it in the bin. Only thing I'm gonna need this year is a map to the focking bor.

I lash on some sounds. We're talking the old Snoopmeister here. '*Gin and juice up this bitch yaaah.*' I go back to the bathroom. Run my hand through my hair. Needs a cut. My quiff is going curly. Should have got a blade one at the sides as well. Might go later. Gel's gonna be fock-all use. It's a job for the heavy duty wax. I lash on the old Dax Wave and Groom. Check myself out again. Looking-good, no arguments.

'*I'm on Interstate Ten focking with this Creole.*' Go, Snoop.

I grab my mobile, the Nokia 8210 – we're talking dual band, thirty-five ringtones and 210 minutes of battery talk-time – and, like, ring Oisinn. He answers, roysh, with his mouth full. *Always* focking eating. He goes, 'Ross, my man. What's the *scéal*? Ready for your first day at college?' I go, 'Pretty much. Can't make up my mind what aftershave to wear, though.' He's there, 'So you've come to the man who speaks fluent Fragrance.' Oisinn worked in the Duty Free shop at the airport for the summer, roysh, and he has the whole focking spiel off by heart. Of course the birds go mad for it.

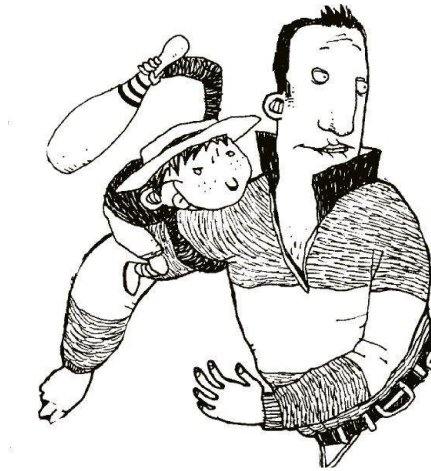
He swallows whatever it is he has in his mouth – probably lard, the fat bastard – and he goes, 'The challenge, as I told Christian only a few moments ago, is to find a scent that's suited to the course you're doing. For instance, he's doing film studies. The birds on that course are going to be your Lillies, star-focker crew who still think they're going to marry Matt Damon. So, what Christian needs is something for an affirmed man who *totally* assumes his virility with the expression of a liberated, frank and provocative personality.'

I go, 'Are we talking *Body Kouros* by Yves Saint Laurent?' He goes, 'We most certainly are, my fast-learning friend.' I've heard this shit a million times before. He goes, 'We're doing sport, roysh. So ask yourself, what's going to push the girls' buttons on our course? Something that captures the fun and energy of an active life, a liberating fragrance that exudes cool. We're talking *Freedom* by Tommy Hilfiger, or *Polo Sport for Men.*' I'm like, 'See you later.'

I lash on the old *Polo Sport*, then wonder whether I've overdone it. Fock it, it's Kool and the Gang. Better skedaddle. There's ten thousand birds in UCD and I don't want to disappoint them. Couldn't live with that on my conscience. Head into the bathroom on the way downstairs to check myself out

one last time. Looking great. Smelling great. Feeling great. There's gonna be a lot of broken hearts this year. And mine's not going to be one of them.

Ross O'Carroll-Kelly, you handsome fucking bastard.



CHAPTER ONE

'Ross is, like, SUCH an arrogant bastard.'

Discuss

Orlaith with an i, t and h Bracken. Fock me, haven't seen that bird since ... must be three years. She played hockey for Alex. and tonsil hockey for Ireland. I was with her once or twice. She was pure quality then, but now she's an absolute cracker, roysh, we're talking Natalie Imbruglia but with bigger baps, and none of the goys in the class can, like, take their eyes off her. I catch her eye roysh, and I mouth the word, 'Later,' to her, and I'm wondering whether she remembers that party in her gaff when I puked my ring up all over her old dear's off-white Hampshire sofa and, like, focked off without saying anything. And she makes a L-sign with her thumb and her finger, as in 'Lo-ser' and I take it she remembers it alroysh.

Her loss. It's no skin off my nose, and anyway, roysh, she's small change compared to some of the other birds in this class. Me and Oisinn struck gold when we got on this course. This bird walks in blonde hair, amazing bod, you'd swear it was Nicola Willoughby, we're talking perma-horn material here – and she sits roysh in front of us and storts, like, fanning her face with her hand. Then she takes off her tracksuit top, roysh, and when she turns around to put it on the back of her chair, she goes to me, 'It's hot, isn't it?' and quick as a flash, roysh, I go, 'It is from where I'm sitting,' and I'm just there hoping it didn't sound too, like, sleazy and shit, but she smiles at me, roysh, and turns back around and I'm thinking, that one's in the bag anyway.

Oisinn goes, 'We are going to have some fun working our way through this lot,' and I'm there, 'I'm hearing you, big goy. I'm hearing you.' This lecturer dude comes in, don't know who the fock he is, don't care either, and he storts, like, telling us the Jackanory, what the course is about, the lectures we have, exams and loads of other boring shite, but of course I'm not listening to a word. There's another bird up the front, roysh, wearing a baby blue airtex and a dark blue baseball cap and I wish she'd turn around because I think it's, like, Samantha what's-her-name, went to Loreto Foxrock, amazing athletics, alroysh looking, incredible pins, kicked Sorcha's orse in an Irish debate a few years ago even though Sorcha was in sixth year and Samantha was in, like, transition year. I had to crack on, of course, that I thought Sorcha's speech was better, but then she copped me basically trying to chat to Samantha bird up afterwards and she cracked the shits. I think she might be my first port of call because being with her would so piss Sorcha off.

The next thing, roysh, everyone's suddenly standing up to go and the lecturer's giving it, 'Everyone enjoy Freshers' Day. And don't drink too much,' and this big roar goes up, as if to say, Yeah roysh, *if!* Me and Oisinn head out and meet Christian and Fionn, who's blabbing away to some moonpig – bogger by the sounds of her – about the connection between psychology and the biological and sociological sciences. Kathleen, he says her name is. Red hair, the whole lot. He goes, 'Goys, this Kathleen,' and straight away I'm like, 'Fionn, we said this was gonna be just the lads,' and I turn around to this *thing* and go, 'Why don't you fock off back to Ballycabbage-and-potatoes, or wherever the fock you're from? You're not wanted,' and of course Fionn leaps straight to her defence, that's how desperate for his bit he is, the ugly bastard. He goes, 'I'm sorry about him, Kathleen. Somewhat lacking in the social graces is our Ross. I think a certain Swiss psychologist and contemporary Freud would have a word for him,' and the two of them crack their holes laughing, roysh, basically trying to make me feel like a tit, which I do.

They're, like, saying their goodbyes, roysh, and I feel like I'm about to vom, so I head off toward

the bor and Oisinn and Christian follow a few steps behind me. I can hear Oisinn asking Christian whether he wore *Fahrenheit* instead of *Body Kouros*, like he recommended, and Christian saying yeah and Oisinn telling him that live florals mixed with balsamic notes are a bit 1997 and frankly I wouldn't use the stuff as paint-stripper. Then Oisinn puts his arm around him and asks what his course is like, some film shite he's doing, and Christian goes, 'I feel just like George Lucas did on his first day at USC,' and Oisinn goes, 'Should see our class. I feel just like Hugh Hefner does every time he gets up in the morning.'

I get to the bar first, order four pints of Ken. I turn around to the boys and I go, 'College life, huh? Freedom from school,' and the next thing Fionn's beside me and he's giving it, 'What the *fock* is your problem?' I'm like, 'What the *fock* is *my* problem? Who's the *focking* kipper?' He goes, 'She happened to be part of an experiment I'm conducting,' and I'm there, 'What, see can you finally lose your virginity?' He goes, 'Oh, someone bring me a corset, I think my sides have split. I'm investigating Freud's theory actually,' and I'm like, 'This should be good,' him and his *focking* theories, and Christian goes like, 'What is it, Fionn?' encouraging the boy. He goes, 'My theory is, redheads who come from a whole family of redheads are invariably bet-down,' and we all go, 'Agreed.' He's like, '*But ...* when you get one redhead in a family of non-redheads, she's usually a cracker.'

I go, 'Well, your friend obviously has a lot of brothers and sisters with the old peach fuzz. Now can we drop the subject? I want Freshers' Day to be a day to remember,' and Oisinn goes, 'No, no, no, mate. Freshers' Day should be a day you're *not* able to remember,' and we all go, 'Yyyeeeahhh' and high-five each other.

And then ... Fock it, I'll go into it another time.

Women have peripheral vision, Emer goes, which is why they always know when a boy is, like, checking them out and why boys never know when they're actually being, like, checked out by themselves. She can't remember where she read this, might have been *Red*, or *Marie Claire*, or some other shit. I'm not really listening. I'm waiting for my food to arrive and throwing the odd sly look at Sorcha, who's looking *totally* amazing, just back from Montauk, the pink Ralph Lauren shirt I bought her for her birthday showing off her, like, tan. Aoife asks her if she thinks Starbucks will ever open a place in Dublin, roysh, and Sorcha says OH! MY! GOD! she hopes they do because she so misses the white chocolate mochas, and Aoife says she so misses their caramel macchiatos, and they both carry on naming different types of coffee, roysh, both in American accents, which is weird because they were only in the States for, like, the summer and shit.

The food takes ages to arrive, roysh, and when the total creamer of a waitress we've been given finally brings it she forgets the *focking* cutlery, and Oisinn turns around to her and goes, 'I suppose the fork is out of the question?' The waitress, roysh, we're talking complete *focking* CHV here, she's like 'Wha'?' and I just go, 'Are we supposed to eat this with our *focking* hands?' and she stands there trying to give me a filthy, roysh, but then she just, like, scuttles off to the kitchen and Oisinn high-fives me, and Christian high-fives Fionn, and Emer and Aoife shake their heads, and Zoey, who's like, second year commerce with German in UCD, so like Mena Suvari it's unbelievable, she throws her eyes up to heaven and goes, 'Children.'

Emer knocks back a mouthful of Ballygowan and goes, 'OH! MY! GOD! I am SO going to have to give my finger out this year,' and I start asking her about her course, we're talking morkeshing, advertising and public relations in LSB, *totally* flirting my orse off with her and watching Sorcha out of the corner of my eye going, like, ballistic.

Then, completely out of the blue, roysh, Fionn launches into this new theory he has about wh

public toilets are so, like, gross. He goes, 'You have to be pretty desperate for a shit to use a public toilet in the first place. And let's face it, a desperate shit is never a pretty shit,' and Zoey, roysh, she holds up her bottle of Panna and goes, 'Hello? Some of us are trying to *eat* here.'

Erika arrives then, roysh, total babe, the spit of Denise Richards, and she throws her shopping bag onto the chair beside me and goes, 'Is it my imagination or have the shops in town started hiring the biggest knackers in Ireland as security guards?' Emer says something about the Celtic Tiger, roysh, about them not being able to get, like, staff because of it, and Erika goes, 'I'm sorry, I will *not* be looked up and down by men with fucking buckles on their shoes,' and then she orders a Diet Coke and starts texting Jenny to find out what she's doing for Hallowe'en weekend and I basically can't take my eyes off the bird, roysh, and I make a promise to myself that if I'm going to score anyone between now and Christmas, it's going to be her.

Sorcha takes off her scrunchy, slips it onto her wrist, shakes her hair free and then smooths it back into a low ponytail again, puts it back in the scrunchy and then pulls, like, five or six strands of hair loose again. It's been two-and-a-half years, but there's no doubt the girl still has feelings for me, the fucking sap. I ask her how college is going and she goes, 'Amazing. Fiona and Grace are on the same course.' I'm like, 'Cool. Are you still thinking of going into Human Resources?' playing it - *totally* Kool and the Gang, and she gives it, 'I don't know. Me and Fiona are thinking of maybe going to Australia for the year. When we're, like, finished.' She's checking me out for a reaction, roysh, but I don't say anything and she eventually goes, 'I heard you got into UCD,' and I'm like, 'Yeah, the old dear said she met you,' and she goes, 'A sports scholarship, Ross. Congrats.' I can't make out whether she's being, like, a bitch or not. I'm just there, 'Yeah, it's the Sports Management course,' and she goes, 'That's supposed to be a *really* good course. It's only, like, one day of lectures a week, or something.' She's being a bitch aloysh. I pick up my tuna melt and I'm like, 'I don't give a fuck what the course is like. I'm just looking forward to getting back playing good rugby again,' which, like, she impresses her.

Erika finishes texting Jenny, roysh, takes a sip out of her Coke and, like, pulls this face. She pushes it over to me and goes, 'Taste that. That's not Diet Coke, is it?' I take a sip, roysh, but she doesn't wait for my answer, just grabs the waitress by the elbow as she's passing by and goes, 'I *asked* for a Diet Coke.' The waitress is basically having none of it, she's there going, 'That *is* Diet Coke.' And Erika goes, like, 'Hello? I think I *know* what Diet Coke tastes like.' The bird picks it up and says she'll, like, change it, but Erika, roysh, she grabs her by the arm, looks her up and down and goes, 'If I was earning two pounds an hour, I'd probably have an attitude problem as well.' I'm like, 'Well said Erika,' trying to make Sorcha jealous and, like, *totally* succeeding.

Zoey's talking about some goy called Jamie from second year Orts who is so like Richard Fish it's unbelievable, roysh, and Sorcha and Emer start having this, like, debate about whether Richard Fish is actually sexy, or whether it's just because he's a bastard to women, when all of a sudden the manager comes over and tells us he wants us to leave. We're all there, 'You needn't think we're paying,' and as we're going out the door the waitress goes, 'Snobby bastards,' under her breath, roysh, and Erika gives her this, like, total filthy and goes, 'Being working class is nothing to be proud of, Dear.'

It's, like, two o'clock on Sunday afternoon, roysh, and the traffic on the Stillorgan dualler is unbelievably fucking-believable, we're talking bumper to bumper here. I mean, *what* is the point of having a car that can do seventy if forty is the fastest you're allowed to go? Mind you, roysh, get above seventy and this thing – the old dear's fucking Micra – and bits start to fall off, not that there's much danger of that happening with this bitch in front of me. She is so trying to fuck me over, roysh, driving real

slowly and then, like, speeding up when she sees the traffic lights on orange, trying to make me miss the lights. I turn on the radio and flick through the presets but there's, like, fock-all on. Samanth Mumba is actually on three different stations at the same time and I'm wondering if this is, like, world record or something, and Helen Vaughan says that 'raidworks continue to operate on the Road Raid saithbaind between the Tara Hotel and the Punchbowl, and the Old Belgord Raid is claised traffic immediately saith of the junction with Embankment Raid.' And three goys in a silver Peugeot 206 pass me and they all have a good scope into the cor, roysh, obviously thinking it's a bird driving because it's, like, a bird's cor – I have to admit, I get that all the time – and when they see it's a go they all, like, crack their shites laughing, roysh, so I just give them the finger.

What the fock sociology has to do with sport I don't know, but Oisinn says it's on the course, roysh, and if it's on the course it means we probably should check it out, suss out the talent again and let the birds see what's on offer. As it turns out, roysh, my mind wasn't playing tricks on me on the first day. The talent's focking incredible, and I'm just thinking, roysh, I might actually come back to a few more of these lecture things, when all of a sudden who walks in only Aisling Hehir, as in former-Holy Child-Killiney-head-girl Aisling, as in plays-hockey-for-Three-Rock-Rovers Aisling, as in here's-my-tits-my-orse-will-be-along-in-fifteen-minutes Aisling, and we're all there, 'Oooh, baby!'

I've never actually been with her before, roysh – despite her best efforts, it has to be said – always thought of her as a bit of a BOBFOC, the old Body Off 'Baywatch', Face Off 'Crimewatch' sort. I don't know where the fock she was last summer, roysh, but she's got the Peter Pan and she's, I don't know, done something with her hair, highlights or some shit, and she looks focking amazing, it has to be said: white Nike top, pink Juicy tracksuit top tied around her waist, Louis Vuitton gym bag over her shoulder. Everyone's eyes are, like, out on stalks when they see her and – unbelievable, roysh – I don't know how I missed her on Freshers' Day, but she gives a little wave to me and Oisinn, the two of us, up the back playing Jack the Lad.

Of course this doesn't go down too well with the Blackrock goys, roysh, who've been giving us a bit of a like, filthies since we got in, especially that dickhead Matthew Path who can't handle the fact that he scored his bird during the summer while he was off in Ibiza on a post-Leaving Cert party, roysh, getting his jollies off a load of ugly English slappers while I'm rattling his stunner of a girlfriend, Kate I think her name was. The word is he's taken her back, which to me lacks dignity, roysh, and the next time he turns around and tries to stare me out of it, I give him the L-sign.

Goes without saying, roysh, that the lecture is one big focking bore, the goy's up there blabbing on about Emile Durkheim, whoever the fock she is, and I turn to Oisinn's cousin, Kellser – he's a Mary boy, but still sound – and I'm like, 'Are we really in the roysh lecture hall?' and he goes, 'Amazingly, yes. Can't see myself coming back, though. Hey, check out Aisling Hehir's rack.' I'm like, 'One step ahead of you, my man, one step ahead.'

Of course what happens then, roysh, but the lecturer, I don't even know what his focking name is, he totally snares Kellser and he's like, 'You up there. No, not you. Behind you. The boy with the blue shirt, white star on it.' Kellser's there, 'Me?' and the goy's like, 'Yes, you. Would you like to come down and talk to us about dialectical materialism?' Of course Kellser goes, 'Eh, no,' and the goy's there, 'Okay, we'll cut a deal then, I'll stay down here talking to the class about Emile Durkheim and you stay up there with your mouth shut.' I turn around to Kellser and I'm like, 'Sorry, man,' and he goes, 'It's cool.'

Don't know what Oisinn's at, he's saying fock-all, just sitting there with his head down and for a minute, roysh, I think he's actually listening to the lecture, but then my mobile beeps twice and

realise he was sending me a text message and it's, like, a Limerick, roysh, and it's:

THERE WAS A YOUNG ROCK BOY NAMED ROSS, WHOSE LIFE WAS A BIT OF A DOSS, UNMATCHED WAS HIS DIZZINESS, BUT HIS DAD OWNS A BUSINESS, AND ONE DAY HE'LL MAKE ROSS THE BOSS!

I'm about to send him one back, roysh, but he's, like, really good at them, the fat bastard, and can't think of any words that rhyme with Oisinn, so I just send him back a message and it's like **RETORD!** Pretty happy with that.

So there we are afterwards, roysh, arranged to meet Christian at the Blob, when all of a sudden the goy comes up to me – glasses, real nerdy head on him, I'm thinking, He's got to be a mate of Fionn – and he goes, 'Didn't see you at the meeting, Ross.' I'm like, 'And what meeting is that?' He goes 'Young Fine Gael. You joined up on Freshers' Day.' Freshers' Day, that's a story in itself. I go 'Listen, I said and did a lot of things on Freshers' Day. If I joined whatever focking club it is you're talking about, I did it to take the piss. Now fock off,' and he calls me an intellectual pygmy or some shit, then does as he's told and focks off, and Oisinn high-fives me and tells me I'm the man.

Christian eventually comes along and he's talking to this total honey, who's apparently on his course, and he's telling her that General Carlist Rieekan was one of the best commanders the Rebel Alliance ever had and that, far from a defeat, the abandoning of the rebel base at Hoth was an inspired tactical retreat that didn't receive the recognition it deserved until he became Leia Organa's second-in-command on the New Republic Council, and the bird's nodding her head, roysh, but looking at him as though she's just walked into her bedroom and caught him trying on her best dress.

She focks off – no introductions, Christian lives in his own little world – and Fionn goes, 'What the *scéal*? Looks like the *Fahrenheit* is working after all,' and Christian goes, 'Thanks, your Skywalker,' then he turns to me and he's like, 'What did you goys have?' I'm like, 'Sociology. It's like, the mind and shit. I need a pint.'

We decide to hit the bor, roysh. I get the first round in and we bump into Fionn, who's doing Orts we're talking psychology and Arabic and we're basically talking brains to burn here – and he's sitting up at the bor with these two birds who are in his class and he's telling them that, personally, he thinks Starbucks is far from the benign face of corporate imperialism that it pretends to be, that the company so beloved by liberal sophisticates for the cosy, aromatic, comfy-cushioned, *ennui*-inducing 'Friends'-style world it has created is actually no different from McDonalds in its corporate structure and ideals, and is a major player in corporate America's plan to culturally homogenise the world. The birds are nodding their heads and telling him he is so roysh, and there's pretty much nothing I can contribute to this conversation, so I change the subject, roysh, and say I bought the new U2 album, *All That You Can't Leave Behind*, and I tell them it's way better than, like, their first album. One of the birds – she looks a bit like Elize du Toit except with longer hair – she looks at me funny and goes 'Their *first* album? Which was their first, Ross?' I'm like, '*Pop*. It's way better than *Pop*,' and everyone in the group just breaks their shites laughing, roysh, including Christian, who's supposed to be my best friend, and Fionn goes, 'Anyone with information on the whereabouts of Ross O'Carroll Kelly's brain, please contact Gardaí at Cabinteely,' and I haven't a clue what's so funny and it's only later that I remember about *Zooropa*.

I get home from town at, like, four o'clock in the afternoon, roysh, and the old man's standing in the hallway, white as a sheet, and we're talking *totally* here, and he's just there, 'Ross, you're home.' C

course I'm like, 'No shit, Sherlock,' and he goes, 'Come into the kitchen and sit down. I've got some bad news.' I'm there, '*What* are you crapping on about?' and he goes, 'They're moving the Irish rugby team, Ross. They're moving them to ... God, I can't even say it ... the *northside*. The northside, Ross. I'm sorry.' Don't know what he's bullshitting on about, roysh, but there's a stink of whiskey off his breath and a huge whack gone out of the bottle of Jameson he got off his golfing mates for his fiftieth birthday. He always tries to be real palsy-walsy with me when he's locked. I'm, like, '*totally* storving and I'm there, 'Where's that stupid wagon?' He's like, 'Your mother's out. She has coffee every Thursday afternoon with the girls. You know that,' and I'm like, 'What's the focking story with dinner?' but he totally ignores me, just goes, 'I've been trying to catch her on her mobile since two o'clock, but of course she's in the National Gallery, she's not going to have it on. She's a strong woman, your mother. Heaven knows I need her now ...'

He pours himself another drink, roysh, sits down at the table and puts his head in his hands, so I get up, grab a pack of Kettle Chips and a handful of, like, funsize Mars bars out of the cupboard and start moseying up to my room. Then I hear him, like, crying. *Hello?* I should have just ignored the attention-seeking bastard, but, of course, I'm too much of a nice goy for that. I'm like, 'What the *fock* is your problem?' and he goes, 'Lansdowne Road, Ross. It's over. They're building a new stadium. In ... Abbotstown.' I'm like, 'Where the *fock* is Abbotstown?' Don't know why I'm actually bothering to sound interested. He's there, 'A million miles away from the Berkeley Court, that's where. Two million miles from Kiely's.' I'm like, 'So what? The Dorsh goes there, doesn't it?' He just, like, shakes his head and goes, 'Think again, Ross,' knocks back his drink, pours himself another and carries on blubbering to himself, the total sap.

There's a David Gray CD on the table, we're talking *White Ladder*, which Sorcha lent to the old dear. She is so trying to get back with me, roysh, it's pretty much embarrassing. The old man is blabbing away again, going, 'It's all about votes, of course. Oh yes. Oh yes indeed thank you very much. Oh you should have heard that blasted Bertie Ahern on the one o'clock news, so bloody smug. A national stadium. Quote-unquote. And all to boost his popularity out in, what's this you and your pals call it ... Knackeragua?'

He goes, 'Some of the guys are coming around tonight. Hennessy's four-square behind me. Going to set up a pressure group. KISS. Stands for Keep It South Side. And I am going to put myself forward as chairman. Or maybe president sounds better.' Then, next thing I know, roysh, the stupid bastard's up on his feet, practicing the speech he's planning to make tonight, going, 'Think of the northside and you immediately think of unmarried mothers, council houses, coal sheds and curry sauce. You think of cannabis, lycra tracksuits and football jerseys worn as fashion garments. You think of men with little moustaches selling *An Phoblacht* outside these wretched dole offices, mothers and fathers in the pub from morning till night, 'Fair City', entire families existing off welfare and – sadly – the two scourges of drugs and satellite dishes.' I'm like, 'Sit down, you're making a *total* dick of yourself' but he just carries on, giving it, 'There are some people in this country who want our community to become a mirror of that. And that is why every white, Anglo-Saxon one of us has to stand up and treat this northside stadium nonsense for what it is: an all-out attack on our way of life. You can mark my words, this is just the thin end of the wedge. What's next? A methadone clinic in Foxrock?'

I hear the front door opening, roysh, and it's, like, the old dear, and for the first time in my life I'm happy to see the bitch. Or I am until she bursts into the kitchen and starts going, 'Charles, oh darling, I came as soon as I heard,' and the two of them start, like, hugging each other, complete knobs the two of them, him pissed off his face on whiskey, her doped off her head on, like, cappuccino. And the two of them both totally blank me, roysh. And we are talking **TOTALLY** here. She's like, 'What are you going to do about Charles?' He goes, 'We, Fionnuala. What are *we* going to do?' and she's there, 'Yes, of course. I'm going to fight it with you, you know that,' and he goes, 'I'm going to fight it. Tooth and nail. Some of the chaps are

coming over here tonight.’ She goes, ‘Oh I’m so proud of you. And because I knew you’d need cheering up, guess what I bought?’ and she, like, pulls out this fucking Gloria Jean’s bag, roysh, and just, like, dances it up and down in front of his eyes, going, ‘Colombia Narino Supreme,’ and he’s like ‘My favourite. I’ll fill the percolator,’ and she goes, ‘*And* I went to Thornton’s,’ and she pulls out the box, and I’m about to borf my ring up listening to this shit. He’s got this, like, dopey fucking smile on his face and he’s there, ‘Are they cherry almond charlottes, perchance?’ and she nods and goes, ‘And ... walnut kirsch marzipan.’

He gets out the cups. *Two* cups. He’s like, ‘I’ve cheered right up now. I thought I was losing my mind before you came home.’ Not a mention, of course, of me trying to cheer him up. He takes a filter from the packet and then stops all of a sudden and he goes, ‘Why didn’t I think of it before? You are *such* an inspiration, Darling,’ and the old dear goes, ‘I know that look ... you’re going to write a letter to *The Irish Times*, aren’t you?’ and he’s like, ‘You’re damn right I am,’ and she goes, ‘I’ll go get your pen.’

I’m standing at the kitchen door, roysh, still being completely ignored. The old dear brushes straight past me to go into the study and doesn’t, like, say a word to me. The old man goes, ‘Get me a good one, Darling. The Mont Blanc.’ The old dear comes back, roysh, and puts the pen and some of the good writing paper on the table. He hands her a cup of coffee and he goes, ‘*The Irish Times* will be behind me. Hell, I might even get in touch with Gerry Thornley,’ and she’s like, ‘Remember what the judge said, Charles. Two miles.’ He goes, ‘No, no, no. That’ll all be forgotten about by now ... How was the gallery by the way?’ and she goes, ‘Oh, we went to the Westbury in the end. Change of scenery.’

And they both sit down at the table, roysh, and I just give them a total filthy and I go, ‘You two are as sad as each other,’ and I head up to my room and the old dear shouts after me, ‘Don’t go far, Ros. Dinner will be an hour. It’s soba noodles with chicken and ginger.’

We’re in town, roysh, standing in some fucking nightclub queue, so horrendified I don’t even know the name of it, and the birds are giving out yords to me and Christian, roysh, telling us to sober up by 11:30 or we’re so not going to, like, get in. Emer says that if we don’t get in here we should head to Lillies, and Sophie says she was there last night and OH! MY! GOD! Jason Sherlock was there and so was Liz what’s-her-name from ‘Off the Rails’. Emer says she was there with Alyson with a y and *Oh My God!* she’s thinking of going to Australia for the year, and Sophie goes, ‘Yeah, after she, like, finishes in Mountjoy Square, Carol told me.’

Erika shoots Sophie a filthy, roysh, why I don’t know, but then again Erika never needs a reason, not a proper one. She’d pretty much take offence at anything when the mood takes her. But she’s looking mighty fine, it has to be said, wearing a black Donna Karan dress that looks like it’s been shrink-wrapped onto her, roysh, shows off the old melons really well.

We get up to the door, roysh, and there’s no way the bouncers are going to let us in, me and Christian are so struggling to hold it together, we’re totally hanging, especially Christian who was really knocking back the sauce in SamSara, but suddenly Sophie goes, ‘*Oh my God!* I think I know one of the goys on the door,’ and when we get up to the front of the queue she, like, flashes a smile at the big fucking gorilla, roysh, and goes, ‘OH! MY! GOD! Hi-how-or-ya?’ as though they’re, like, long-lost friends, and she gives him a peck on the cheek and a hug, and the goy hasn’t a clue who she is, but he goes along with it, roysh, he’s getting his jollies, the old sly-hand-on-the-orse routine. He goes ‘Lookin’ lovely tonight, ladies,’ the total fucking howiya that he is.

Sophie goes, ‘*Oh my God!* I’ve put make-up on your shirt,’ and she storts, like, rubbing his collar

roysh, but the goy goes, 'Don't worry about it. You can put make-up on me any time you like, love and all the girls laugh, roysh, all except Erika, who is so not impressed, she's got, like, her arms folded, really pissed off at being kept waiting.

Of course the bouncer, roysh, he pushes it too far, tries to get a bit of physical contact going with the rest of the birds, and he goes to hug Erika next – I so want to deck the focker at this stage – but course she doesn't respond, roysh, just stands there stiff as a fucking tree. And when he picks up on the vibe, roysh, he pulls away and Erika asks him what the fock he thinks he's doing, and he says he's just being friendly. He goes, 'Ine just tryin' to be your friend, love,' and she looks him up and down and goes, 'You're sexually frustrated. Why don't you get a dirty magazine, take it to the men's room and stop making a nuisance of yourself out here.'

I'm falling in love with the girl.

Most of Freshers' Day is a total blur. And we're talking TOTALLY here. I remember bits, roysh, but I was basically off my tits by about four o'clock in the afternoon, so I don't know what was, like, real and what I, like, imagined. I remember millions of people milling about the place. All these tossers standing up on stages trying to get you to, like, join stupid societies. And freebies. They gave us, like, tubes of toothpaste, roysh, and we ended up having fights with them, covering each other with the fucking stuff. Blue shit. And someone else was handing out packets of johnnies. The old love zeppelins. Packets of six, yeah they're goinna last a long time, I *don't* think!

Join Fianna Fáil. Join the World Wildlife Fund. Join the Drama Society. Join the dots to reveal a good-looking goy who's only here for the beer and the birds and thinks you Society wankers should get a fucking life. Big time. And we're talking TOTALLY.



~~Another double vodka and Red Bull. And then ... Pretty much the only part I can remember after that, roysh, is chatting up these two Mounties in some fucking marquee or other, don't have a clue how we all ended up there. I remember the birds coming up to us, we're talking me, Christian, Oisinn and Fionn, and one of them, roysh, I think she's first year Social Science, she goes, 'OH! MY! GOD! do you hear about Becky?' and I'm like, 'No, what's the story?' obviously not cracking on that I don't have a fucking clue who Becky is. She goes, 'OH! MY! GOD! She drank half a bottle of vodka straight' had to be brought home in an ambulance. Her mum is so going to have a knicker-fit.'~~

I don't actually remember when these two birds fucked off, roysh, but I'm sort of, like, vaguely aware that Oisinn said something totally out of order to one of them. I think he pointed at one of the and went, 'Halle Berry,' then pointed at the other and went, 'Halle Tosis,' and then the next hour is like, a blur. I fell asleep at one stage, with my feet up on the chair opposite me, and then I woke up maybe half an hour later with all, like, spit dribbling down my chin, and this other bird, who I've never laid eyes on before, roysh, is sitting beside me, boring the ears off me about some bullshit or other. She has my mobile, roysh, and she's, like, flicking through my numbers, going, 'Keyser. Is that Dermot Keyes? *Oh my God!* I can't believe you know Dermot Keyes. I was going to bring him to meet the debs,' and then it's like, '*Oh my God!* You know Eanna Fallon. I kissed his best friend in Westmeath when I was, like, fourteen. OH! MY! GOD! That's, like, so embarrassing.' This goes on for quite a while, roysh, although I completely conk out again after about, like, five minutes. I don't know what the fuck happens then because the next thing I know she's bawling her eyes out and asking me if I think she's fat, but all I can see is Christian across the far side of the bar and he's, like, calling me over, and he reminds me about this plan we had – didn't think we were being serious at the time, roysh – to rent this, like, ten-foot-tall inflatable Heino can from outside the student bar and hang it off the bridge over the main road.

So I just, like, get up and leave the bird there, roysh, the stupid, sappy bitch, and the next thing I know, me, Christian, Oisinn, Eanna, and I'm pretty sure Fionn as well, are trying to smuggle this, like, big fuck-off can out of UCD, trying to avoid the security goys who were, like, driving around in jeeps. I remember Christian saying it was just like the time Princess Leia tried to sneak Han Solo out of Jabba's Palace dressed as the Ubese bounty hunter, Boussh, then getting totally, like, paranoid and going, 'I'm not gonna be no dancing girl in your court, you slimey Hutt,' and we have to calm the man down, roysh, before we can cross the road over the bridge with the thing.

I remember hearing Fionn go, 'Is that noise what I think it is?' but I'm basically too busy trying to decide the best way to, like, attach this thing to the railings, but then, all of a sudden, roysh, I notice that the goys are gone. They've fucking pegged it, I can see them in the distance and they're halfway to fucking Stillorgan. Of course, in my shock, roysh, I end up letting go of the fucking Heino can and it just, like, falls over the side of the bridge and lands on the road, and this black Fiat Punto has to, like, swerve to avoid it. That's when I hear the siren, and I'm instantly fucking sober.

So the next thing I know is the Feds are asking me for my name, my address and my phone number. Obviously, roysh, I don't want my old pair to know that I fucked this thing onto the dualler – still hoping the old man will give me the shekels to go skiing at Christmas – so I give them my name and Sorcha's address and number because I know she's actually the only one in her house at the moment, roysh, because her parents and her sister are in, like, the south of France for a couple of weeks.

I try to play it cool like Fonzie, roysh. I go, 'Is there a problem, Ossifer?' but the cop who's arrested me, roysh, he's on the radio, all delighted with himself for having lifted someone, and it's then that I start thinking about basically pegging it, which isn't a good idea because I don't know if I can trust my legs, but I chance it anyway and I get about ten yards before the cop grabs me – must play fucking bogball – and slams me up against the railings. And he's back on the radio, roysh, going, 'Assistance'

assistance,' and he snaps the old bracelets on me and makes me lean over the railings, looking down onto the dualler, a mistake because I feel like I'm going to borf my ring up, and I'm made to stay like that until the van arrives and I'm thrown into the back of that.

Seems I'm not the only person who's been a naughty boy tonight either. There's this cream crack in the back as well, roysh, who insists on trying to talk to me. He's going, 'What are you in for, Bud' and straight away, roysh, I'm like, 'Let's get one thing focking straight: I'm *not* your *Bud*, roys. We've both been arrested on the same night. That's all we have in common. I live in Foxrock. You live at rock bottom. I'm wearing *Polo Sport*. You're wearing the same clothes for a week. I was holding a giant, blow-up Heino can over the edge of a bridge. You were holding up someone with a syringe.' He looks at me like I'm talking in a foreign language, which I suppose I am to him. He goes 'I hit a bouncer a dig,' and I'm there thinking, He's not all bad then, and for two seconds I'm almost sorry for giving the creamer such a hord time.

I go, 'Please don't breathe near me. I hate the smell of turpentine,' and he smiles then, roysh – for focking teeth in his mouth – and he goes, 'You have to watch out for me, I'm a bit of a character.' I go, 'Why did you hit the bouncer?' and he's there, 'Wouldn't let me in. Said he didn't know me face.' Says I, "You'll remember it de next toyim." I go, 'I suspect it had nothing to do with not knowing your face. You were turned away because you're a skobie. You dress like a scarecrow and you smell like piss. You are one hundred percent creamer. I'm no fan of bouncers myself, but us regulars have to go to a nightclub without having to be deloused afterwards.' He's sitting there with his mouth open. With the language barrier, you could say anything to him. I go, 'You piece of vermin.'

He goes, 'D'ya tink you'll end up insoyid?' and I'm there, 'I *se-riously* doubt it. I don't make a habit of being arrested, you know.' He goes, 'Don't worry, Bud, just tell the judge you're going back to do yisser Junior Cert. Dee love dat. Improving yisser self. Mustard.' I'm like, 'I *don't* think so. My old man's solicitor will get me off.' The goy goes, 'Ah, I'm on dee oul' free legal ayid meself,' and I'm there, 'No shit.'

We get to the cop shop, roysh – think it's Donnybrook – and we're brought in and this total focking bogger takes my details again, while the one who arrested me is, like, muttering under his breath with all his 'endangering the lives of road-users' bullshit, roysh, and I'm just there, 'Spare me the lecture will you?'

So the next thing is, roysh, the copper who takes my details, he tells me to, like, turn out my pockets and hand over my belt and shoelaces and I'm like, 'Why do you need those?' and he goes, 'In case you try to hang yourself.' I'm like, '*Hang myself?* Whoah, who the fock owns that Heino can? Is there something I should know here?' and he tells me I have a big mouth and it's going to get me in trouble one day and I'm like, 'Spare me.'

The reason I can afford to be so Jack the Lad about it is that I know the old man's dickhead of a mate will have me out of here in ten seconds flat. So before they stick me in the cell, roysh, I tell them I want to make a call and they give me a phone and I ring his number. He answers pretty much straight away. He's like, 'Hennessy Coghlan-O'Hara,' and I'm like, 'Hennessy, it's Ross. I've been arrested. I'll tell you the old man, I'll tell your wife about that time I saw you in Angels. Where are you?' and he goes, 'Outside Donnybrook Garda Station.' I'm there, 'Holy fock, that was quick. Who told you?' He goes, 'No, I've been arrested myself. It seems you can't even hold a conversation with a prostitute these days without being accused of kerb-crawling.'

The Gardaí have had to take stern action to stem the tide of people being civil to those less fortunate than themselves.' The next thing the door swings open, roysh, and there he is, a cop either side of him and he marches straight up to the counter and goes, 'Can you explain to me why the criminal justice system is squandering vital resources that could be used in the war on crime?' One of the Feds beside him goes, 'You have been charged with performing a lewd act in a public place. Do you understand?'

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