

Cold Turkey

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DUSK

Two giggling kids, DONNIE (13) and JACK (11), slowly tiptoe out the front door of their house and carry a large, festively wrapped package to doorstep of the house directly across the street.

JACK

Shh! Leave it, Donnie. Leave it.

Donnie places the package on the doorstep and sticks on a card that says: HAPPY THANKSGIVING. Jack rings the doorbell.

INT. CALLOWAY RESIDENCE

In the kitchen, BEVERLY (50's), wearing an apron, struggles mightily to pull a massive turkey out of the oven.

TERRY (50's), muscular in a stocky, bulldog-ish sort of way, is in the next room, sitting on the couch watching football. As the doorbell rings, he takes a long sip from his beer, keeping his other hand tucked into the crotch of his pants.

TERRY

Bev, the door. Get the door.

BEVERLY

Just a bit busy!

Terry sighs as the doorbell keeps ringing, repeatedly.

TERRY

Would you hold your horses? I'll be there in a minute.. Christ.

Terry gets up slowly, taking a moment to stretch his back, and reluctantly makes his way across the room.

EXT. CALLOWAY RESIDENCE

Jack pounds the doorbell, then retreats with Donnie back across the street to the safety of their own house.

Through their window, Jack and Donnie watch as Terry emerges from his house, grabs the box and peers at it quizzically.

TERRY

(muttering)

What'd she do, order dinner off of Amazon?

Terry tears through the wrapping paper, opens the box and finds a tall pile of dog shit perfectly swirled into a cupcake wrapper.

TERRY  
FUCK, UGH!!

Terry notices Donnie and Jack illuminated in the window both pointing and laughing at him.

TERRY  
OH FUCK YOU!!

Terry throws the shit-cake at the Henderson window, but it only makes it halfway across the street. The kids laugh even harder.

BEVERLY (O.S)  
What's going on?? What's  
happening??

TERRY  
Beverly, its the damn Hendersons  
again! They're trying to shit on  
our Thanksgiving!

BEVERLY (O.S)  
Terry, would you calm down? They're  
just kids. Come back inside, quit  
scaring the neighbors.

Terry slams the door shut.

INT. CALLOWAY KITCHEN

Beverly sets the Thanksgiving turkey onto a table already covered with dishes of delicious looking food. Terry returns, fuming, and washes his hands in the sink.

TERRY  
They're not just kids Bev, they're  
damn juvenile delinquents. Little  
bastards are so hopped up on ADHD  
they don't know what's good for  
them. Forget ritalin, what they  
need is a damn exorcism!

BEVERLY  
Oh, boys will be boys.

Terry heads to the fridge and retrieves a cold beer. He takes a seat at the table, but just as he's about to crack open his drink, a kitchen timer starts ringing. Startled, beer fizzes all over his hands. He grits his teeth.

BEVERLY  
 (calling upstairs)  
 Rachel, Mikey, turkey time in  
 t-minus five!

TERRY  
 Mikey..? When the hell did he get  
 home?

INT. MIKEY'S BEDROOM

Laptop speakers fill the room with the tranquil sounds of rushing water and elegant windchimes. Mikey (22), a little too slim and unshaven, rests his feet on his desk and holds a pen and notepad in his lap.

MIKEY  
 Okay. Okay. This is the one.  
 (begins writing)  
 "Dear Mom and Dad". No, so stupid.  
 Too formal.

He emphatically scratches it out.

MIKEY  
 "Attention loved ones.." Fuck, too  
 dramatic.

Letting out a sigh, Mikey tears off the sheet of paper, crumples it up, and throws it at a waste basket already overflowing with similarly discarded paper balls.

He takes a long, contemplative glance at a framed portrait on his desk of him and his family. He swallows, painfully.

MIKEY  
 Come on.. It's not so bad. Just  
 tell them. They won't care, they'll  
 still love you. All you've gotta do  
 is be calm, be honest, and tear  
 their fucking hearts out.

Behind him, Terry quietly opens the bedroom door and enters the room, unnoticed.

MIKEY

What's the big deal, anyways? It doesn't change who you are. Just man up, look 'em in the face and say, "Guys, I'm an add-"

Terry clears his throat. Mikey turns to face him, shocked, and scrambles to find the remote for his speakers. He quickly shuts off his Sounds of Nature audio-tape.

MIKEY

D-d-dad! Hey, uh, when did you get home?

TERRY

When did I get home? When did YOU get home? Thinking you can sneak back from college without saying anything to your old man..

Terry cracks a wide smile and embraces Mikey in a burly hug. Mikey looks like he's in pain, but accepts it, reluctantly.

MIKEY

Yeah, I meant to call, but my cell-

TERRY

Doesn't matter, you're home now, that's what counts. Gotta go grab your sister, but your mother says dinner's ready in five. Be there or be late. But remember, if you're late, I'll kill you.

Terry turns to leave, about to close the door.

MIKEY

Dad? Hold on, can you wait up for a sec? Can I talk to you about something?

TERRY

Absolutely. Any time you want.

Terry shoots him a quick thumbs up, then immediately leaves, closing the door behind him. Mikey sighs, defeated.

INT. CALLOWAY KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Descending the stairs, Mikey sees Terry at the table, casually nursing his beer, sitting across from Mikey's sister Rachel (13), who's seated with her head buried in her phone. Beverly brandishes a bottle of white wine.

MIKEY  
 (to himself)  
 Come on Mikey.. Don't be such a  
 pussy.

Taking a deep breath, Mikey enters the kitchen.

MIKEY  
 Happy Thanksgiving everybod-

BEVERLY  
 Oh Mikey, just in time. Come, come  
 on, sit right here by the turkey.  
 You look so thin lately.

Beverly grabs Mikey's arm and ushers him to a chair directly in front of the MASSIVE Thanksgiving turkey.

MIKEY  
 Wow, courtside seats. Awesome.

Beverly pours herself a generous glass of wine, then retreats back to the kitchen.

BEVERLY (O.S)  
 Just one more minute!

Mikey stares at Rachel, who still hasn't lifted her head from her phone.

MIKEY  
 Hey Rach, how's it going? Still  
 keeping up that A average?

RACHEL  
 (looking at her phone)  
 A+, actually. How is.. What exactly  
 is it that you're doing again?

MIKEY  
 Community college. I go to  
 community college.

RACHEL  
 Right. How is that?

MIKEY

You know.. It's pretty communal..  
Also very collegiate..

TERRY

It better be, for what I'm paying  
for it.

Beverly emerges from the kitchen with a large carving knife and takes a seat beside Terry, who immediately reaches for the knife, ready to cut the Turkey. Beverly slaps his hand.

BEVERLY

I was thinking, before we eat,  
wouldn't it be nice if we all went  
around the table and shared  
something that we're thankful for  
this year?

TERRY

Sure. Why not.

Beverly clasps her hands together in prayer. The rest of the family does the same.

BEVERLY

Dear lord, thank you for bringing  
us together in our beautiful home,  
thank you for my wonderful husband,  
my loving kids, this delicious  
turkey, but most importantly, thank  
you for the sauce!

Beverly takes a large swig from her wine glass.

BEVERLY

Terry?

TERRY

Dear pilgrims, thank you for my  
football, my job, my health, and  
the mysterious fire that's gonna  
burn the Henderson house to the  
ground. Amen.

Beverly kicks him under the table.

TERRY

And for my family. Rachel?

RACHEL

I'm thankful for fiscal  
responsibility and my tireless work  
ethic.

Terry nods his head in agreement. Distracted, Mikey's gaze remains transfixed on the turkey in front of him.

BEVERLY

Mikey..?

MIKEY

Hmm?

BEVERLY

What about you? What are you thankful for this year?

MIKEY

Oh, um.. Right. I'm thankful for my.. Uh.. Health.. My friends.. Uh.. But mostly.. Mostly I'm thankful for this moment right here.

Terry and Beverly stare at him, concerned. Rachel is still focused on her phone.

MIKEY

The thing is.. Today isn't just Thanksgiving. It's also the one month anniversary of something really important to me.

BEVERLY

Mikey, what are you talking about? Are you alright?

MIKEY

Yeah, I'm fine, but while I was away at school I started seeing someone and-

BEVERLY

Michael Joseph Calloway, do you have yourself a girlfriend?

MIKEY

Not a girl, Ma. A guy. A therapist.

TERRY

Mikey, am I understanding you correctly? Are you saying you're queer.. for your therapist?

MIKEY

What? No! I'm not gay.. I'm an addict.

Terry and Beverly stare at him in silence, confused.

MIKEY  
(continued)  
A drug addict.

Beverly gasps, covering her mouth.

MIKEY  
(continued)  
Or at least I was.. Until I got help. You know, admitting it, admitting that I had a problem, was one of the greatest feelings I've ever felt. Being honest, coming clean and owning my mistakes was so.. Liberating. It made me feel whole again. It takes a lot of energy to hide who you are, and it got to the point where if I had to spend one more day hiding this from you, I thought my head was gonna explode. I just want you to know that I'm a month into quitting cold turkey, and I've never been more thankful for anything in my life. For the first time in years, you have your son back. So.. uh.. now I guess we have two things to celebrate. Let's dig in, huh? I'm starving!

Mikey grabs the carving knife and starts cutting the Turkey. Rachel begins typing furiously on her phone.

MIKEY  
Ma, this looks delicious. Where's it from, Hartman's?

BEVERLY  
My baby.. A drug addict?

Beverly breaks down into sobbing hysterics. Terry stares intensely at Mikey, unflinching.

MIKEY  
Wait, Ma.. Why are you crying? This is a good thing, this is supposed to be happy. I'm sober now, I'm not using anymore.

BEVERLY

How could I let this happen??

RACHEL

(reading off her phone)

Drug addiction is the most common form of mental illness. Drug addicts are 60% more likely to commit suicide than the general population.

BEVERLY

Oh, my little suicidal baby boy!  
Mentally ill!

MIKEY

What?! Where did you hear that?

RACHEL

I Googled it.

MIKEY

Don't do that, don't Google things.

Beverly lets out a wailing sob.

BEVERLY

What kind of mother am I?? Where did I go wrong???

RACHEL

Dad, may I please be excused? I have a geology midterm to prepare for.

MIKEY

Thirteen years old and she's already a geologist..

TERRY

No, you stay right there with your mother. Mikey, you, outside, now.

Terry gets up, leaves the table, and opens the kitchen door leading to the backyard porch. Mikey stands, about to follow Terry outside.

RACHEL

Mikey, wait. This could be the last time I see you alive. You should know something.

MIKEY

Ya? What's that?

RACHEL

You've always been such a great disappointment to me.

MIKEY

Awesome. Thanks. Always a pleasure seeing you again, Rach.

Mikey walks out of the kitchen and onto the backyard porch.

EXT. CALLOWAY RESIDENCE

Terry stands, leaning against the porch railing, looking up at a sky full of bright stars. Mikey walks up beside him.

TERRY

Mikey, Mikey, Mikey... How did you get yourself into this mess?

MIKEY

Just get it over with, okay? Lay it on thick. Tell me I'm a fuck-up, that I'm an embarrassment, the sorriest excuse for a disappointment you've ever seen.

Terry scoffs.

TERRY

Disappointment? Hell no. I always knew someone in this house would end up sucking dick for crack, I'm just glad you stepped up to the plate before I got the chance.

MIKEY

Funny.. Very funny..

Terry shrugs, then fumbles through his pockets and pulls out a pack of cigarettes. He lights one and takes a long, deep drag. He offers it to Mikey.

MIKEY

No, I'm fine.

TERRY

You sure? Could help you grow some balls.

MIKEY

Really, I'm alright.

TERRY

Suit yourself. So.. Mikey the drug addict. What got you hooked? Coke? Pills? Pussy?

MIKEY

Pot actually. Just.. Pot.

Terry smirks, unable to stifle his laughter.

TERRY

Just pot? Christ. You really are an embarrassment.

MIKEY

Come on..

TERRY

Jesus, I'm just fucking around. Would you relax?

MIKEY

This is serious.

Chuckling, Terry throws his arm over Mikey's shoulders.

TERRY

Of course it is.. Everyone fucks up, everyone has their vices. I get that. You know, when the internet first came out, your old man had to battle with addiction issues of his own.

MIKEY

Gambling?

TERRY

Pornography, mostly. Got so bad I pretty much stopped sleeping with your mother altogether. Took a lot of conditioning before I was able to get hard for her again. Even with the Cialis.

MIKEY

Disgusting..

TERRY

Ya, well, that's life. But why wait so long, why didn't you tell us earlier?

MIKEY

I don't know.. I was scared of disappointing you. I didn't want to say anything until I fixed things first. I just.. I felt like such an idiot. It happened so quickly I didn't realize what I was doing.

TERRY

Mikey, remember what I told you back when you quit playing football?

MIKEY

You said that if I kept quitting it'd turn into a habit and I'd be a quitter for life. You said it would ruin me. What's your point?

TERRY

My point is, I was wrong. What you did took a lot of courage, especially doing it alone. Quitting is.. I guess going against your old man and becoming a quitter wasn't such a bad thing after all. I'm proud of you, Mikey.

MIKEY

(blinking back tears)  
Aww.. Dad..

TERRY

Now, would you fuck off and go take care of your mother, already? You really upset her back there.

MIKEY

Right, uh, what should I tell her?

TERRY

You're the pussy, I'm sure you'll think of something.

MIKEY

(laughing)  
You know what, Dad? I can't remember the last time we talked like this. This was nice.

Mikey pauses to think, then gives Terry a big, burly hug. Terry looks uncomfortable, but accepts it, reluctantly. As Mikey embraces him, Terry takes a drag from his cigarette, blowing out the smoke. Mikey winces at the smell.

MIKEY

You know Dad, with quitting.. It's never too late to start.

TERRY

Never too early, either.

Mikey glares at him, disappointed.

TERRY

Hell, maybe you're right.

Terry flicks the butt away and pulls out his cigarette pack.

TERRY

But what do I do with these?

MIKEY

You're the asshole. You'll think of something.

EXT. HENDERSON RESIDENCE

Terry stands on the doorstep, clears his throat, and presses the doorbell. The door opens and MRS. HENDERSON appears.

TERRY

Sorry to interrupt your dinner Mrs. Henderson, but I saw Donnie finish these off and stash them into my garden on his way home from school today.

Terry hands her the cigarette pack.

TERRY

Anyways, I just thought you should know before the cancer shows up. Also, smells like someone took a shit in your mailbox. Happy Thanksgiving!

Terry shoots her a quick thumbs up, then immediately leaves. Left holding the pack of cigarettes, Mrs. Henderson sniffs her mailbox and wretches, clearly about to vomit.

The screen cuts to black.