

FAMILY TIES

"I Want One! Me Too!"

written by
Frank MacCrory

Based on
"Family Ties"
created by
Gary David Goldberg

Copyright © 2018. This screenplay may not be used or reproduced for any purpose including educational purposes without the expressed written permission of the authors.

fmaccrory@gmail.com

COLD OPENING

EXT. POLITICAL OFFICE - DAY

Typical shopping-center storefront converted into a local office. Window covered in a graphic of a large grinning picture of SENATOR ALEX KEATON (53), with a caption underneath that reads "Alex P. Keaton, Junior Senator of Ohio."

A small car, inexpensive in the Nineties and worth about nothing today, sports a "Leland University" sticker on the rear window and "Re-elect Keaton" sticker on the bumper. It pulls up into the closest parking space.

INTERN 1 (21), clean-cut white male Young Republican in a suit & tie, gets out of the car, fumbles with keys to open the office, but stops when something catches his eye.

Spray painted across the door: "METOO"

INTERN 1

Oh, man.

ACT I**INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Main room of the Ward family's middle-class home. GAIL (28) - four or five months pregnant, in professional attire and makeup - sits on a wide sofa that dominates the room behind a hefty coffee table. She speaks into her laptop on a conference call.

GAIL

I can't make any promises, but we'll get everyone we can on this one. I think it's gonna work.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

That's what I love about you, Gail, nothing but honesty. I'll check in tomorrow.

GAIL

See you then.

Gail closes the laptop and stands up. From the waist down she's in yoga pants and bunny slippers.

Sounds outside of a bus with bad brakes. Gail turns to the front door.

Moments later, two children burst through the door. The younger one, LYNN (6), a bundle of smiles and energy, wraps herself around Gail's leg. The weight of Lynn's backpack almost pulls both of them over.

LYNN

Hi, Mom!

The older one, ALEX (12), dressed smartly in a suit & tie and carrying a briefcase instead of a backpack, rushes straight upstairs glued to his phone.

ALEX

Hey, Mom.

GAIL

What's the rush--? Oh well. So, Lynn, what'd you do in school today?

LYNN

I fixed Miss Anderson's tablet during art class!

GAIL

Oh, that's nice. Let's see what you have for homework.

Gail pulls a colorful notepad from the backpack.

GAIL

"Find out how to get finger paint off of a touchscreen." Hmmm.

ALEX (O.S.)

All right, it's working!

GAIL

What was that, Alex?

ALEX (O.S.)

Uh, just a project I'm working on, nothing to see yet.

By now Lynn sits on the sofa and works the small collection of remote controls like a pro.

LYNN

Can I watch a show before I do my homework?

GAIL

Fine, I don't think this will take long. One show.

DANNY (29), wearing jeans and an environmentally-themed tee shirt, enters from the kitchen.

DANNY

Now what's this I hear about T.V. before homework?

GAIL

It's okay, Danny. She doesn't really have any today.

Danny plants himself on the sofa and pats the seat next to him for Gail to sit. Instead, Lynn bear-hugs his arm.

DANNY

So what show are we watching?

Lynn turns on the TV, its screen out of view, which picks up in the middle of a news broadcast.

FEMALE REPORTER (V.O.)

-- vandalism has caused quite a stir. I'm here with Senator Alex Keaton.

LYNN

Grandpa!

The younger Alex rushes down the stairs in a flash.

ALEX

What?

FEMALE REPORTER (V.O.)

Senator, did you take this as some sort of threat? Are the police involved?

Young Alex sits. The whole family is glued to the screen.

SENATOR KEATON (V.O.)

Me? I didn't feel threatened. There's a couple points I'd like to make, though, if you don't mind.

DANNY

I wonder what he did this time.

SENATOR KEATON (V.O.)

First, the F.B.I. already found a video of this on social media, so they know who it is.

FEMALE REPORTER (V.O.)

Are you planning to press charges?

Young Alex winds up, ready to cheer whatever comes next.

SENATOR KEATON (V.O.)

You know, I... I don't know how kids live like this. If I had cameras following ME around at that age... well... no, we just want them to help clean it up.

Young Alex deflates, stares in confusion.

DANNY

That was unexpected.

GAIL

Told you he's not that bad.

FEMALE REPORTER (V.O.)

So the investigation is already over and no charges will be filed?

SENATOR KEATON (V.O.)

That's my second point. I want to state for the record there is no harassment in this office. None.

The whole family watching the TV smiles again.

FEMALE REPORTER (V.O.)

How --

SENATOR KEATON (V.O.)

Look, I might have the lowest rating in history from the National Organization for Women, but there just wasn't any harassment. By some statistical fluke, every woman on my staff... and I mean literally both of them... are black belts.

FEMALE REPORTER (V.O.)

(with DANNY)

That doesn't prove anything.

SENATOR KEATON (V.O.)

Which is why my office is bringing in an outside investigator to make sure everyone's complying with all the rules.

Danny goes stonefaced at the word "complying."

FEMALE REPORTER (V.O.)

Some crony to rubber-stamp--

SENATOR KEATON (V.O.)

No, no, no. We're reaching out to someone known for getting companies in line with all the *pointless*... I mean *legal* regulations Washington can throw at them.

Cell phone RINGS. Danny jumps like he's seen a snake.

FEMALE REPORTER (V.O.)
Thank you, Senator. There you --

LYNN
(waves)
Bye, Grandpa.

Lynn switches the TV channel to a cartoon.

DANNY
No...

Cell phone continues to ring. Alex moves to high-five Danny.

ALEX
Dad, you're gonna be working with
Grandpa!

Danny's head sinks into his hands. He reluctantly answers the cell phone.

INT. ALEX'S BEDROOM - DAY

Fairly Spartan except for a Gordon Gekko poster on the open door. Alex sits at a computer, its dual monitors out of view, and an electronic stock ticker runs along the top of one wall.

Alex looks concerned at whatever is on the screens.

Lynn passes by in the hallway.

ALEX
Hey, Lynn, come here for a sec. I
got a techie question for you.

Lynn bounds over while Alex points at the screens.

ALEX
See, this company I'm working with
is showing me revenue, but there
aren't any real financial
statements. There's no cost-of-
goods-sold, no shipping charges, no
nothing.

Lynn taps at the keyboard.

LYNN
What are they supposed to be doing?

ALEX

I figured if these treehuggers are gonna spend a fortune on tee shirts made of organic cotton woven by nuns and washed in unicorn tears, they might as well buy 'em from me.

LYNN

I just see stuff here about hosting the store. You need to talk to them.

Alex steadies himself, dials his cell phone, and speaks in a deeper "grown up" voice.

ALEX

Hello, this is Alex Ward and I-- Oh, you can tell by my phone number. Good. Hey, this isn't some offshore call center is it? No? You should look into that. As long as you have good quality metrics, it can be a lot cheaper.

Alex winces, cups his hand over the phone, and turns to Lynn.

ALEX

He doesn't seem friendly.
(into phone)
Anyway, I'm having trouble tracking down all the services I contracted for. ... Okay, P.H.P. stack... image hosting... You know what, let me hand you over to my Chief Technical Officer and she'll sort the technical from business services.

Alex hands the phone to Lynn.

LYNN

Hi. Let's see, P.H.P. on an Apache instance; C.S.S. for people who like that kinda thing; C.D.N. package; P.G.P. and P.K.E. well of course; P.C.I.D.S.S.; yeah, that all sounds pretty standard. What about shipping?

Lynn giggles.

LYNN

Oh! Okay, got it. Thanks, bye-bye.

ALEX
What'd he say?

LYNN
They're a website company. They
make websites. They don't make or
ship tee shirts. That's YOUR job.

Alex looks at the monitors, eyes wide with fear.

ALEX
How am I going to come up with two
thousand eight hundred and seventy
tee shirts?

Alex wipes his brow.

ALEX
Alright, keep it together, Alex.
You need to order a bunch of custom
tee shirts and ship them, that's
all. The saying goes "Fast, cheap
or good, you can pick two." Gotta
go with fast and good, so it's not
gonna be cheap.

GAIL (O.S.)
Oh, Danny's going to love this.

Computer BEEPS.

LYNN
Two thousand eight hundred and
seventy-one.

INT. POLITICAL OFFICE - DAY

Converted storefront filled with half a dozen cubicles. The walls show a large map of Ohio plus memorabilia from campaigns in 1998, 2004, 2010 and 2016.

Office STAFF dressed in an almost-uniform of white dress shirts, dark gray slacks & solid ties look up when Danny enters with office manager Mr. WHITFIELD (55). Whitfield wears a dark gray suit with a solid tie over a white shirt.

Danny's tan suit and striped tie stick out like a sore thumb.

WHITFIELD
Listen up, everybody. Mister Ward
here will be here for a few days.
Let me make this simple.
(MORE)

WHITFIELD (CONT'D)

You WILL make time to meet with him, and you WILL answer his questions.

Danny stoically scans the staffers' faces. One staffer, chief pollster Mr. HARRIS (49), averts his gaze.

Whitfield leads Danny to the back of the office into...

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Danny sits at the table so as to face the door, takes out a notepad and pen. This seats him under a large portrait of Senator Keaton striking a majestic pose.

Whitfield sits opposite Danny.

DANNY

Before we get started, Mister Whitfield, I noticed a lot of printers in this office, but no recycle bins.

WHITFIELD

That's 'cause anything on paper gets incinerated.

DANNY

Paranoid, much?

WHITFIELD

No, not at all. It costs money to have paper hauled away. This way we sell the ash to a sheetrock plant just outside of town.

DANNY

That... doesn't surprise me. So, Mister Whitfield, are any of the employees here romantically involved with each other?

WHITFIELD

The staff? No. The interns? If they had a spare minute they'd spend it sleeping.

Danny scribbles some notes.

DANNY

I think I'll start with interviewing the interns.

WHITFIELD

I'll have 'em here waiting for you
first thing tomorrow.

DANNY

No, I mean now. Where are they now?

WHITFIELD

Okay... come with me.

Both men get up, walk into...

INT. POLITICAL OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The office looks exactly as it did before, except Harris
cowers under his desk.

Danny and Whitfield exchange glances.

EXT/INT. CHASING INTERNS MONTAGE - DAY

Danny rushes to keep up with INTERNS during their assigned
tasks. Each is a young man in rolled-up white sleeves, dark
gray slacks & a solid tie.

- Intern 1 washes someone's luxury car behind the office.
Danny hands him a sponge.

- INTERN 2 lugs a double-armful of dry cleaning down the
street.

- INTERN 3 delivers about a dozen cups of take-out coffee to
various desks in the office.

- INTERN 4, drenched in sweat but still wearing his tie,
shovels paper into a roaring incinerator.

INT. MALL ATRIUM - DAY

Danny stands next to INTERN 5, dressed in a camo-print dress
shirt and slacks with an olive-green tie, with the intern's
skin covered in camouflage paint. They hide behind potted
bushes as Intern 5 spies on a gathering of young adults
eating fast food at a food court table. Some of them wear
"College Democrats" hats or tee shirts.

Danny and Intern 5 whisper in hushed tones.

DANNY

Have you noticed anyone trying to get a date with their coworkers at the office?

INTERN 5

Don't have time for that. I've got a career plan, and it doesn't include dating right now.

The intern lifts binoculars to his face.

DANNY

Maybe not you, but anyone else?

INTERN 5

Don't think so, sir.

DANNY

Anyone acting strangely?

INTERN 5

Well, there is one...

DANNY

The pollster, Mister Harris?

INTERN 5

Yeah, I guess someone else said something, too?

Intern 5 scribbles notes about what the College Democrats are doing.

DANNY

It was more the weird way I saw him act this morning.

INTERN 5

Ah. Hey, isn't that him over there?

Danny looks and sees Harris sitting alone in a food court booth with his lunch and a newspaper, his jacket folded up on the seat next to him.

DANNY

Yes. Yes, it is. You want to see a grown man have a panic attack?

Danny adjusts his tie, smooths down his jacket, and walks off calmly.

INT. MALL FOOD COURT - DAY

Danny calmly strolls up to Harris's booth.

By now, Harris has the newspaper up to hide his face.

DANNY
Mister Harris?

No reaction.

DANNY
Come now, Mister Harris. Let's not
make a scene.

Still no reaction.

Danny uses his finger to push the newspaper down.

REVEAL: It's a completely different YOUNG MAN who happens to also be wearing a white shirt and dark gray slacks.

Danny looks to and fro, but no one else nearby looks anything like Harris.

DANNY
What?

YOUNG MAN
The guy sitting here gave me twenty
bucks to hold his seat for him and
check the sports page.

A nearby exit door SLAMS shut. The only obvious path is if Harris had hopped over the back of the booth.

DANNY
It took me all of thirty seconds to
walk here! Anyway, sorry for the
intrusion.

Danny notices that the lunch has not been touched.

DANNY
I don't think he's coming back for
that.

Danny scans the food court with a very determined face.

ACT II**INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Alex pokes his head in from the front door.

ALEX

Okay, the coast is clear.

Alex carries three boxes labeled "500 Custom Tee Shirts" up the stairs.

Lynn follows lugging one box up a couple stairs at a time.

Alex runs downstairs before Lynn reaches the top and comes back with two more boxes. Both children disappear upstairs.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Alex sneaks downstairs with an armful of stuffed manila envelopes, but turns around to reassure Lynn.

ALEX

No one will find them in the garage. They park the car out front so everyone can see it's a hybrid.

He moves into the...

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Alex carries the envelopes to a door with a child's hand-made sign saying "Garage". He struggles to keep a hold of all the envelopes as he turns the doorknob.

ALEX

(muttering to himself)
Next up will be a minivan that runs on rainbows and happy thoughts.

The door opens. Alex steps quietly inside, returns a moment later empty-handed, and gingerly closes the door.

GAIL (O.S.)
It's an inventory, Liz. You go
there and make sure the warehouse
isn't empty.

Alex freezes momentarily, then quickly gets himself a glass of water.

Gail enters talking on her cellphone.

GAIL
Only wrinkle is it HAS to be this
weekend.

Alex waves. Gail holds up one finger to say "Hold on a second."

GAIL
Great, I'll send you the details.
Bye.

Gail lowers her finger.

ALEX
Hey, Mom. Water?

GAIL
No, just getting a box of bigger
maternity outfits from the garage.
You know, while I still can.

Alex swallows a sudden panic attack.

ALEX
Oh... you... don't want to get up
on a ladder. Wait here, and I'll
get it for you.

Alex rushes out to the garage.

Danny steps in from the living room and immediately collapses against a wall.

GAIL
Hey, didn't hear you come home.

DANNY
I can't stand those people!

GAIL

Oh, a company dumping lead paint into a river doesn't get under your skin, but people doing a Senator's paperwork does?

DANNY

It's an army of right-wing... clones.

GAIL

It can't be that bad.

DANNY

Clones except the one who's downright nuts. But you know the worst part is that --

Alex re-enters the kitchen with a cardboard box.

DANNY

-- they ACTUALLY believe that stuff they say on television.

(sees ALEX)

Which is, uh, more honesty than I really expected to see from people in politics. Hey, Alex.

Alex puts the box on the table and eyes the door to the living room.

ALEX

Hi, Dad.

DANNY

Here's those labels you needed for your project.

ALEX

Thanks, Dad! This makes things a lot easier.

Danny takes from his briefcase a package of Dunder Mifflin brand address labels and hands it to Alex.

ALEX

This wasn't expensive, was it?

DANNY

I just grabbed one at work.

ALEX

I appreciate it. Was it just the one box, Mom?

GAIL

Thanks Alex, that was it.

Alex exits through the living room, failing to look nonchalant about it.

DANNY

I think he's handling this whole baby thing pretty well.

GAIL

Last time he was expecting Lynn to be a puppy.

Danny and Gail share a laugh.

DANNY

He figured it out... eventually.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Under the Senator Keaton portrait, Danny sits stoically in a medium-gray suit & solid red tie... in other words his best impersonation of what everyone else was wearing yesterday.

Series of shots of male staffers each in a dark blue suit & light striped tie as he sits across from Danny. They range in age from their 20s to their 50s, but look somewhat similar.

The last interviewee is a very intense Ms. WHEELER (42) in a dark blue skirt-style suit and white blouse.

DANNY

Thank you for your time, Mizz Wheeler.

WHEELER

I don't understand why they have to drag this office through the mud just because some juvenile delinquents spray-painted our door.

DANNY

The Senator doesn't think anything wrong happened here. He just wants to prove it.

Ms. Wheeler gazes directly at the portrait.

WHEELER

He is such a great man.

She stands and exits, an almost glazed expression on her face.

Danny rolls his eyes.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Alex quietly closes a cabinet and turns to leave, but halts when Gail enters from the living room. She wears pajamas and the bunny slippers and has just hung up a cell phone call.

ALEX
Hey, would you like some, uh, water
or something?

GAIL
I was going to get some grape
juice, but I can get it myself.

ALEX
No, no, you just sit down right
there --

Alex guides Gail into a seat at the table facing away from him.

ALEX
-- and relax. I'll get it for you.

GAIL
(over shoulder)
That's nice of you, Alex, but I'm
not bed-ridden.

Alex opens the cabinet and takes out a glass. Every spare nook and cranny of the interior is stuffed with manila envelopes.

ALEX
No problem, Mom.

Alex puts the glass on the counter. He opens the fridge just enough to get the bottle of organic grape juice. The interior is also stuffed with manila envelopes, a few of which almost fall out.

GAIL
I'm not having this baby for
another four months, you know.

Alex pours the juice, carefully puts the bottle away, and places the glass before Gail.

ALEX

Please, Mom. I know. I've been through this before.

GAIL

You were Lynn's age.

Alex looks toward Gail, and the glass is already empty.

ALEX

Which reminds me, you should keep an eye on her. Kids that age can have some pretty strange ideas.

Gail smiles and gets up.

Alex plants himself in front of the dishwasher.

ALEX

Here, I can hand-wash that. It's just the one.

GAIL

Thanks, Alex. Good night.

Gail makes her way out.

Alex brings the glass to the sink and turns on the water.

The dishwasher falls open and many envelopes pour out.

INT. ALEX'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Open cardboard boxes, piles of cellophane-wrapped tee shirts and stacks of manila envelopes everywhere.

Lynn lays asleep using several of the wrapped Size Small tee shirts as a pillow and a much larger one labeled Size XXXXL as a blanket.

Alex blinks to stay awake, peels a pre-printed address label, and puts it on an envelope.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK on the door.

GAIL (O.S.)

Alex, is Lynn in there?

Alex panics. He hides the one envelope he's preparing behind the chair.

ALEX

Uh...

He scoops up Lynn and tries to hand her to Gail without opening the door very wide.

ALEX

Here you go, Mom. Turns out she...
uh... wasn't excited by my
documentary on "The History of the
Dime." Sorry, I was just too
engrossed to notice her nod off.

Gail slowly pushes the door open.

GAIL

What is going on in here?

Alex hangs his head.

ALEX

I need to package one thousand two
hundred and fifteen more orders
then get them in the mail by
tomorrow.

Gail stands wide-eyed and scans the entirety of the mess in Alex's room.

GAIL

What? Even if you could pack them
all, just how were you going to get
them all to the post office?

ALEX

I... I was going to pile them all
up next to the mailbox and push up
that little red flag.

GAIL

Brilliant. Now tell me what's going
on here.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Danny sits stoically under the Senator Keaton portrait in a blue pin-stripe suit and green striped tie.

Harris, fidgety in a brown suit & pin-dotted burgundy tie, sits across from Danny. Each man has his briefcase laying closed on the table.

Danny looks through the door and sees everyone else is also wearing brown with pin-dotted ties.

HARRIS

Good morning, Mister Ward. N-Nice weather we're having.

DANNY

Thank you for seeing me, Mister Harris. You seemed very hard to find lately. I suppose you've just been very busy.

HARRIS

Well, you know politics.

DANNY

Not really. I mostly deal with people who cut corners... people figure they'll save some time or money and never get caught.

Harris starts sweating, and his eyes dart to his briefcase then up to the portrait of Senator Keaton. Harris startles as the portrait is now scowling at him.

DANNY

A lot of them honestly believe they're not hurting anyone, Mister Harris.

HARRIS

Terrible. You deal with terrible people, M-Mister Ward.

Harris's eyes keep switching between Danny and the portrait.

DANNY

I imagine someone making unwanted advanced might think they're not hurting anyone.

HARRIS

That person needs to smarten up.

DANNY

I've spoken with everyone else here, and not one of them says he or she has been harassed. And I believe them.

HARRIS

Of course, we run a good place here. Good people.

DANNY

And they say they've never harassed anyone. And I believe them.

HARRIS

Really good people.

DANNY

But then we have the messengers, delivery people, lawyers, vendors, constituents, volunteers... A lot more people to speak to. This could go on for a very long time, Mister Harris.

Harris absentmindedly reaches to cover his briefcase with his hand.

DANNY

Is there someone in particular I should speak to, Mister Harris?

HARRIS

N-N-No.

Danny calmly puts a hand on Harris's briefcase, and Harris grabs it with both arms.

DANNY

What's inside here?

After a moment of childish tug-of-war, Harris surrenders the case. Danny releases both latches and opens the lid with the case's contents out of view.

Danny's face shifts from stoic to disappointed. He sighs, pulls a stapler from the case and puts it on the table. Then a ream of printer paper. Then packs of sticky notes.

DANNY

You were stealing office supplies?

Danny removes boxes of staples, a set of whiteboard markers, and a wall clock. Now he's annoyed.

Harris looks up, sees the portrait looks sad.

DANNY

Seriously? That's it?

Danny pulls out a stack of mouse pads.

DANNY

So the graffiti was just a prank,
and you act suspicious so we turn
the office upside down for...
for... simple theft?

FLASHBACK - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Danny takes from his briefcase a package of Dunder Mifflin
brand address labels and hands it to Alex.

ALEX

This wasn't expensive, was it?

DANNY

I just grabbed one at work.

END FLASHBACK

The portrait's sad look is now fixed on Danny.

INT. MOVING PRIUS - DAY

Gail drives, and Alex sits in the front passenger seat
tapping on his cell phone.

GAIL

You know, Alex, if you overheard
your Dad and I saying we had it
rough when you were young, it's not
your fault.

ALEX

I --

GAIL

We had help. My Aunt Mallory
watched you a lot when you were a
toddler. She really appreciated it
when you showed her how to balance
her checkbook.

ALEX

Well...

GAIL

We're doing okay now. You don't
have to try to support the family
or pay us back or anything, you
understand?

ALEX

You're selfless and a lifesaver, Mom, but fair is fair. So after hourly wages and reimbursement for using your personal vehicle, you keep this much when you cash the check.

He holds the phone up to Gail, but she's busy driving.

ALEX

And Lynn... I'm docking her twenty minutes for sneaking a cookie break during the packing. So after she's paid... there's still some left!

GAIL

Congratulations, Alex.

ALEX

I mean, it's not much, but... wow. A profit.

INT. ALEX'S BEDROOM - DAY

Alex slides the backing into a picture frame.

INSERT: ALEX'S COMPUTER SCREEN

FAVOR a long column of numbers, ending at a green "\$1.00".

RETURN TO SCENE

Alex hangs a framed one dollar bill over the head of his bed.

FADE OUT.

TEASER

INT. MOVING PRIUS - NIGHT

Gail, five months pregnant, drives and talks into a hands-free phone. A couple plastic bags sit in the passenger seat.

GAIL

Danny, this inventory thing has me all backed up. I couldn't do the regular shopping, so I just picked up a couple things on the way home.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Danny holds a bottle of dish detergent at arm's length like it's radioactive.

DANNY

You bought this from Cloud Nine? Do you have any idea how they treat their employees?

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

Students sit at lab benches in a biology classroom with a no-nonsense FEMALE TEACHER (50s) at the front.

FEMALE TEACHER

Today we will be learning about human reproduction.

INT. SCHOOL NURSE'S OFFICE - DAY

The same teacher speaks on a landline phone.

FEMALE TEACHER

I've never seen anything quite like this, Missus Ward. At some point during today's biology class he just went... catatonic.

FADE OUT.