

THE LAUNDRY CHANNEL

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SCENE FIVE

CLAY AND MARK'S APARTMENT

The living room. Time Lapse: Pool and Mark sit ignoring each other. During the scene change they slowly come around to staring at each other. The stare becomes smile, then a competitive dare. Finally Pool and Mark pick up joysticks and are playing a video game.

MARK
You are totally toast.

POOL
No way.

MARK
Take that.

POOL
Ouch.

Clay enters, exhausted from work. They don't notice him.

MARK
Toast.

POOL
Nuh uh.

MARK
Yup.

POOL
There.

MARK
Missed.

POOL
No way.

MARK
Totally. Ooo - ooo!

POOL
Hey!

MARK
Bam. Game over dude.

Ouch. POOL

Duh! Exactly: "Ouch!" MARK

Men? CLAY

Hey Dad - I'm wiping the floor with him. MARK

Not exactly wiping - POOL

Looks like wiping from here. CLAY

It was "ouch". MARK

OK, OK. POOL

Pay up. MARK

Mark holds out a hand. Clay is horrified. Pool looks undone for a moment, then furiously tickles Mark who collapses in hysterics.

Stop. Stop. Stop! MARK

Pool lets him go.

Game over, dude. POOL

Dad, you gonna let him do me like that? MARK

I think I am, seeing that it's way past your bedtime. CLAY

That's so wrong. Come on Dad. Don't you wanna hear about how I beat him in checkers, chess and Stratego? MARK

Go brush your teeth. You can tell me tomorrow. CLAY

Dad!

MARK

Clay comes over to him and plays with Mark's hair.

CLAY

I'll tuck you in and you can tell me about one game.

MARK

Yes.

CLAY

Brush!

He goes.

POOL

Smart kid.

CLAY

You sound surprised.

POOL

He is your son -

CLAY

Don't make me tickle you. (Beat) You're bonding.

POOL

Maybe.

Beat.

CLAY

You can't let him stay up this late.

POOL

He wouldn't go. What am I supposed to do?

CLAY

Call me.

POOL

He finally sorta likes me and you want me to rat him out?

CLAY

It's three hours past his bedtime -

POOL

We're having fun.

CLAY

I'm serious. You start letting him change the rules and it's going to be hard to change them back. Especially during the school year.

POOL

This is why Josephine should be the one to deal with him.

CLAY

To deal with him? He's not a puppy.

POOL

I didn't mean that, I just - (beat. Clay gives him a look.) Sorry. (Beat.) Alright, his bedtime whatever.

CLAY

Not whatever.

POOL

Alright. Write it down for me next time.

Pool and Clay sit down on the couch. Clay offers his legs to be rubbed. Pool starts to massage them. Beat.

CLAY

We were so crowded tonight it was unbelievable. The Mayor was in again. He loves the Chocolate Decadence. It's a good thing we made extra.

Mark appears in the doorway.

MARK

Coming?

CLAY

Sorry bud. Yeah.

POOL

Goodnight Mark.

MARK

See ya.

Clay and Mark exit. Pool goes to the TV and checks a videotape. He grabs the VCR remote and rewinds. When it's finished rewinding. He hits a button. Lights up on The Laundress, in her space, tied up and blindfolded as before, in black and white. She's not folding laundry this time.

LAUNDRESS

Hint: Test new clothes first to see if they'll bleed. Use a mild detergent and cold water and see what happens. If it bleeds, be sure to wash it separately or with items that are the same color. Some vinegar in the water will prevent your clothing from bleeding.

Pool stops the tape. He rewinds. Clay re-enters.

CLAY

He's out.

POOL

That was quick.

CLAY

He goes out fast when he's bushed. (Beat) What?

POOL

I found it. The channel. I was looking for it all day, Clay. In between sort of unpacking and losing at games. And last night too, I kept flipping and flipping and nothing - like it wasn't ever there - nothing. Then suddenly somewhere around three o'clock. There it was again - there she was again. Channel 59.

CLAY

The creepy June Cleaver.

POOL

Tied up and spouting laundry secrets. Actually I think I know her. The actress that plays her - I think I went to grade school with her. I bet its Rynda. She's been in things here and there. And I think it's her - I'm going to have to track her down to be sure. See how she got this - maybe she can tell me what it all means.

CLAY

I'm sure, like most television, it means "watch me."

POOL

Check this out. I taped it.

Pool presses the button. Lights up on The Laundress, still in black and white.

LAUNDRESS

Never rinse in hot water. Never rinse in warm water. Always rinse in cold water. Never rinse in hot water. Never rinse in warm water. Always rinse in cold.

Pool hits 'pause'

That's weird. POOL

It is. CLAY

She didn't say that before. I mean, I just looked at it and she said something else. POOL

Who? CLAY

That woman - Rynda, I think - POOL

You're kidding, right? CLAY

About what? POOL

The woman - CLAY

Why would I be kidding - it's right there. POOL

He hits 'pause' again.

Never rinse in hot water. Never rinse in warm water. LAUNDRESS

Honey. This isn't funny. CLAY

Pool hits 'pause'.

Maybe it's not supposed to be funny. I don't know what it is. POOL
Is this comedy? Somebody's idea of satire?

Yeah, yours. CLAY

He hits 'pause' again.

Never rinse. LAUNDRESS

Pool hits 'pause'.

Huh? POOL

CLAY
Pool, there's nothing there.

POOL
I guess it's sort of a thin idea, but -

CLAY
No - there's NOTHING there.

He hits 'pause' again.

LAUNDRESS
Never.

Pool pauses the tape.

POOL
It's - you don't see her?

CLAY
We're watching a blank tape. Come on Pool -

POOL
Are you serious? You're serious. You don't see -

CLAY
Anything.

Pool turns off the VCR and flips to a local channel.

POOL
You see that?

CLAY
Yeah.

POOL
What is it?

CLAY
Car commercial.

POOL
Cute guy.

CLAY
Yeah - Wife. Kids.

He turns the tape back on.

POOL
But this?

LAUNDRESS

Hint: An iron at its highest setting can burn the skin so severely -

Pool stops it.

POOL

She wasn't saying that before.

CLAY

I don't see anything.

POOL

Clay - how can you not see that. It's her - in her dress - spouting "Hint. An iron can burn the skin - "

CLAY

Are you all right?

POOL

I'm fine. I'm not the one going blind.

CLAY

I'm not going blind.

He turns it off. Lights down on The Laundress. Pool grabs the other remote and turns to the channel.

POOL

Forget the tape. It's channel 59.

Lights up on the Laundress. She's there, not moving or speaking but sleeping.

POOL

Look - she's asleep.

(beat)

CLAY

Honey. (beat) I - see - snow - just - fuzz.

POOL

Snow. That's it?

CLAY

Yeah.

POOL

No sleeping laundress.

CLAY

No.

POOL

Shit.

BLACKOUT