FAMILY TIES

"I Want One! Me Too!"

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Based on

"Family Ties"

created by

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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.
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


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.
(see 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.