

CANCELED

written by
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"Pilot"

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INT. CABLE NEWS STUDIO - DAY

TANYA FINGER-VASQUEZ (40s, blonde, makeup best described as 'Red State Kabuki'), glares into a TV camera.

TANYA

(Southern accent)

Need I remind you that you testified on the stand, right there in front the judge, in front of the American people, in front of *God Himself* that you *never* saw the defendant holding that corkscrew. Am I wrong?

VOICE [O.C.]

But--

TANYA

AM I WRONG. Didn't think so. Know what I *do* think? I think you're a liar, Ma'am. I think you're an accessory to murder. And most of all I think you're trash.

A monitor displays the actual broadcast, where Tanya appears in split-screen with A LITTLE GIRL (7, pigtails).

LITTLE GIRL

AM NOT!

TANYA

Are too and frankly, you sicken me.

LITTLE GIRL

I *didn't* see mommy holding the corkscrew!!

TANYA

But'cha did. You saw her holding it while it was being driven repeatedly into daddy's chest and breast until he died. Didn'tcha?

LITTLE GIRL

I didn't see that!

TANYA

Why are you lying for mommy? Did she ask you to lie for her?

LITTLE GIRL

(tearing up)

I'm not lying! I didn't see mommy kill daddy.

TANYA

Interesting. SHE claimed it was an intruder that killed him. Yet here you are saying that *she* killed him, and you simply didn't see it. Is that correct?

The girl crosses her arms and pouts. Tanya softens.

TANYA (CONT'D)

Little girl, it's me. It's Tanya. You know me. You know I care about justice. I have spent my entire career devoted to putting criminals away. It's ALL I care about. Do you see? Do you understand? If you *did* see something, it's okay to tell the truth. In fact, telling the truth is "lit". Because you'd be helping keep bad people behind bars. Look at me. Come on. Be honest with me now.

The girl thinks long and hard. Then blurts out--

LITTLE GIRL

He was mean to mommy! He deserved it!

Tanya clucks triumphantly, sits back in her chair.

TANYA

Uh-huh.

She leans in and gives the camera her trademark catchphrase.

TANYA (CONT'D)

Little girl... You've just been Finger'd.

CUE TITLES:

FINGERED!

with **Tanya Finger-Vasquez**

CREDITS MONTAGE: To music, clips from Tanya's career.

-Tanya, with crispy perm, addressing a jury in a courtroom with dramatic flair.

-Tanya as a guest on Larry King Live.

-Tanya conducting a sit-down interview with Patsy Ramsey.

-Several BESTSELLER book covers: A FINGER IN THE DARK, THE FINGER OF TRUTH, and FINGER CUFFED!

-Finally, Tanya looking quite at home on her own cable show.

INT. HALLWAY - LATER

LYDIA (20s), bangs say "artist" but frown says "I work in an office", stands agitated beside the door checking her phone.

Tanya emerges with purpose and starts walking. Lydia follows.

TANYA

Another good one today. You see that?

LYDIA

(distracted)

Uh yeah. Great, uh, work.

TANYA

No thanks to the Research Department. Would it have *killed* them to get me something, anything to go on? My instincts may be 100%, but damn, sometimes Mama needs some hard evidence.

Lydia just looks around, wild-eyed.

TANYA (CONT'D)

What? Lydia. You're lookin' like me in a Yoshinoya right now.

LYDIA

It's all bad.

TANYA (CONT'D)

"It's all bad."

TANYA (CONT'D)

What is?

LYDIA

Something's uh, something's happened...

TANYA

Hold on a sec.

Tanya opens the door to another studio: "\$TACK 'EM with BEV DeVOE." Tanya waves at BEV (50s, spiky hair, padded blazer) sitting at a desk in front of a green screen like a boss.

TANYA (CONT'D)

Knock 'em dead, Bev!

BEV
Thanks, hon! Drinks later?

TANYA
If you can wait for me!

BEV
We'll see, bitch!

Tanya chuckles and closes the door, continues up the hallway.

TANYA
Okay sorry, what's happened?

LYDIA
Welll--

Before she can finish, Tanya's already entering the

PRODUCTION OFFICE

Dozens of employees sit or stand around, all glued to their phones. They all slowly look up at Tanya, stricken.

LYDIA
You've gone, like *slightly*, just a little tiny bit, viral.

TANYA
Viral? With what? Some kinda goof or blooper?

CUT TO:

YOUTUBE CLIP

Watermarked "WORLDSTARHIPHOP.COM" the caption reads "TANYA FINGER-VASQUEZ YELLS AT BLACK PEOPLE" and it's a super-cut of Tanya berating a series of black guests:

- "While you were fixin' mac n' cheese, your daughter was in the garage smokin' dope. What kind of parent are you?"

- "So was it babymama or babydaddy who visited babydumpster?"

- "A beautiful lil' girl, strangled to death by her grandma in a Sizzler. Happy Kwanzaa indeed."

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE - SAME

The clip continues playing on a big screen as Tanya watches, infuriated. Sitting across from her at a large desk is MARTIN BEALE (70s, enormous), still as a sphinx.

The clip keeps going. Each quote is debatably innocuous, but taken as a whole, it all looks bad.

TANYA

Every one of these is taken out of context--

-"Ma'am I trust you about as much as I trust Whitney Houston in an evidence locker."

TANYA (CONT'D)

To be fair, she was still alive when I said that. I *cried* the day she breathed in a bath bomb, you've got to believe me, Martin.

Martin turns the TV off and glares at Tanya.

MARTIN

It doesn't look good, Tanya...

TANYA

But that's a bad edit!

MARTIN

It doesn't look good.. *To a certain demographic*. But you know who watches our network: Older and conservative.

TANYA

(proudly)

I like to think I attract viewers from all walks of life.

MARTIN

The only walks of life you attract are around luxury nursing homes.

Tanya sits back and crosses her arms.

TANYA

So what happens now?

MARTIN

You be more careful. I'll be fielding calls from advertisers and praying your show stays profitable.

(MORE)

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Too many bail and you'll be in the shallow grave next to Megyn Kelly.

TANYA

Sir, I don't know whether to thank you or pray for your next stroke.

MARTIN

I welcome both.

INT. PRODUCTION OFFICE - LATER

Tanya marches angrily into her production office and clears her throat to get everyone's attention.

TANYA

Everybody, listen up!

Dozens of put-upon employees look up warily. We get the impression she does this regularly.

TANYA (CONT'D)

What happened today was wrong, it was offensive, and quite frankly hurtful! But unlike what you've been led to believe today, I will NOT be blaming the black community for what happened. That's right. Black people are not to blame. That's because y'all are. Y'all did this.

The employees look at each other in blank confusion.

TANYA (CONT'D)

Every day I wake up with ONE job: To grab justice by the ass and shake it out into the light. And you wake up with one job: To help me do *my* job. So if the perception is that I've fallen short, the reality is that YOU'VE fallen short. Pure and simple!

Lydia rolls her eyes. Tanya catches it.

TANYA (CONT'D)

Oh, you don't agree? You think you're doing a bang up job, here?

LYDIA

But Tanya, those clips are actual things you've said. I don't see how that's our fault.

Employees murmur in silent agreement.

TANYA

It's *your* fault because you're here to support me! When the researchers don't provide enough info, I gotta wing it. When YOU don't run my errands on time, I lose sleep. Yes, I am the head of this family, but when none of y'all are doin' your chores not even the good Lord will see fit to bless this mess!

Lydia just sighs.

TANYA (CONT'D)

And for the record, I'm VERY woke! I love black people!

LYDIA

(under her breath)
Then why don't any work here?

TANYA

What was that?

A chill descends upon the room.

LYDIA

Nothing.

TANYA

No, please. Share with us. What beautiful thoughts are frolicking through the forest of your feels?

LYDIA

I guess I said... If you love black people so much, why aren't there any in this room?

Aghast, Tanya looks around and realizes it's true.

TANYA

Because-- Well, I don't do the hiring! Ask network HR, not me! And also, I'm guessing, black people haven't been applying?

LYDIA

Yeah that must be it.

Tanya looks around the room again. Only cold stares. She's lost them. Fuming, Tanya turns to exit.

TANYA

Everybody get back to work! But do
GOOD work this time.

(to Lydia)

You, follow me.

INT. TANYA'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Tanya marches toward her desk which is surrounded by huge posters of her own face and plastic-looking trophies from unheard-of awards bodies. She slams her purse onto her desk as Lydia shuts the office door behind her.

LYDIA

You wanted to talk to me...

TANYA

Why are you doing this to me?

LYDIA

Do what to you?

TANYA

You're trying to *destroy* me. You're supposed to be my assistant, but you're behaving like a devil from hell.

LYDIA

I think I'm just tired of being treated badly for no reason. I think a lot of us are. And that video really opened our eyes that, well, you kinda suck sometimes.

TANYA

So why haven't you quit yet?

Lydia freezes up.

TANYA (CONT'D)

Ohhh right. Because then you can't get Unemployment, and you can't paint your little paintings all day on government dime! Well guess what? You *also* won't get unemployment if I fire you! Brilliant plan, Lydia.

LYDIA

Whatever. Fine. I don't care. Are we done here? I'll pack up my desk.

TANYA

No we are not done here! I have a point to make.

LYDIA

Which is?

TANYA

You're a bad assistant and always have been. But I've kept you around because I care about you. You're a lot like my triplets--

LYDIA

None of whom are speaking to you--

TANYA

Someone's feeling emboldened today! My point is, you're my kids' age--

LYDIA

I'm ten years older than them.

TANYA

You're 'bout their age so I understand the way y'all's minds work. Fortunately, when DJ, Jasmine, or Jeff do something wrong, which is daily, I have the patience of a saint and the temperament of a teacher. And this right here, young lady? This here is what's known as a teachable moment. Come with me.

INT. STARBUCKS - MOMENTS LATER

Tanya leads Lydia into a Starbucks and cuts the line. PETE (20s, awkward) looks up at Tanya starstruck.

PETE

Ms. Finger-Vasquez.

TANYA

You're the cute boy who makes my coffee, am I right?
(off name tag)
Pete, every time I've dealt with you, my order's been perfection. But Lydia here, who you also know, seems to get it wrong constantly.

(MORE)

TANYA (CONT'D)

As though she's doing it on purpose to bring me a little taste of torment every morning.

Lydia rolls her eyes.

PETE

Sorry?

TANYA

I do love hearing that word, but in this case there's nothing for you to be sorry about. It's just in this here game of telephone--this *two steps* game of telephone--the order I place just doesn't seem to translate when I go through Lydia. Isn't that ridiculous?

Pete just looks at Lydia, unsure of what to say.

PETE

Can I fix you anything right now?

TANYA

Pete how much do you make here at the Starbucks? Forty, fifty dollars an hour?

PETE

Eleven.

TANYA

(aghast)

Is that legal? Anyway, are you interested in a job in showbiz? You seem good and diligent and I can do you better than eleven an hour.

Pete just stares at her.

PETE

Okay.

LYDIA

Wait, what is happening?

TANYA

What's happening is, Pete is your replacement. You have a week to train him, and if you do a good job I'll "lay you off" and you can get Unemployment. Got it? Come on, Pete.

Pete looks to his supervisor apologetically then takes off his apron.

TANYA (CONT'D)
Oh, and quick question. You aren't, by any chance, black are you?

PETE
I'm a quarter black, yeah.

TANYA
Oh, thank God.

She turns to exit. Pete's smile fades.

PETE
Wait. How do you mean that?

Tanya pauses, looks back.

TANYA
How do I mean *what*?

PETE
Did you say "Thank God" because I'm black, or because I'm *only* a quarter black?

Tanya's stern face melts into a smile.

TANYA
Asking the provocative questions. I like your style.

Lydia and Pete exchange a confused look.

INT. PRODUCTION OFFICE - EVENING

Pete sits beside Lydia at her computer. It's after hours in an otherwise empty office.

LYDIA
So, Tanya refuses to learn how to email, so you'll usually be typing while she hovers. Let's pretend...

Pete takes the keyboard.

LYDIA (CONT'D)
(as Tanya)
Wendy, can we talk? How's the Graves Disease? Anywho, I'm in a real jam, girl.
(MORE)

LYDIA (CONT'D)

My personal trainer has gone off the grid and I'm thinking it's drugs, so now I need yours. Last time I watched your show you looked like a skeleton in a wig and I want in. Sincerely, yo' girl T-Finger. And in parentheses put "Tanya".

Pete dutifully types this.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

(as Tanya)

Hold up, Pete. You got every other word wrong, I did not say that Graves Disease thing. Why did you add that? You're torturing me, Pete. Let's start over, but less failure this time.

He flashes Lydia a look.

PETE

That bad?

LYDIA

Get ready.

PETE

How long you been doing this?

LYDIA

(disbelief)

Almost five years.

PETE

You got a backup plan?

LYDIA

Yes an even worse hell. The Art World.

PETE

Oh for real? What kind of stuff do you do?

LYDIA

Painting. And occasionally performance art when I'm feeling like a true asshole.

PETE

Any shows coming up?

LYDIA

Next week. My first solo show. I only need to finish, like, all of my paintings before then.

PETE

Where at?

LYDIA

It's this new, uh, mixed use experimental space sort of near Chinatown.

PETE

Is it a Chinese restaurant?

LYDIA

(beat)

It's a *banquet room*. Yes in a Chinese restaurant, but they said the walls will be white by then.

PETE

Oh cool. Well, I hope you sell some paintings.

LYDIA

Me too.

(beat)

Never pay out-of-state tuition for an art degree. It's like getting kicked in the vagina by a loan shark every month.

PETE

K.

LYDIA

So I've just spent three hours warning you away from this job and you're still here?

PETE

I get why you hate it. But I was working at Starbucks, remember? This shit is like a major step up.

LYDIA

(nods sadly)

The apron's always greener I guess.

PETE

Good one.

INT. SIOUXSIE'S CANTINA - SAME

Tanya and Bev sit at the bar in an 80s New Wave themed Mexican restaurant. They sip purple margaritas, clearly four or five deep.

BEV

Girl, you need to lighten up. You and I get on the air every day and yap and yap, it's guaranteed we'll occasionally say things that can be taken the wrong way. In fact, if you didn't, I'd be worried as hell that you were a goddamn robot.

TANYA

But Bev, when you misspeak it's probably about Bitcoin or whatever--

BEV

Don't even say that fuckin' word.

TANYA

Yet when I misspeak I'm accused of being anti-feminist or a racist or guilty of something called "bi-erasure"? I may not trust my words but I trust my heart, and my heart just can't seem to catch a break.

BEV

Tanya, look at me. I've known you since your prosecutor days and you aren't those things. You aren't racist, you married a *Mexican*--

TANYA

He's Chilean but go on.

BEV

And you're best friends with a big ol' flag-waving pinko dyke who busts your balls every time you admit to having a sex dream about a Republican.

TANYA

I never *once* invited Eye Patch Senator into my dreams, he just barges right in...

BEV

And *nobody* can say you aren't a straight-up LEGEND of the American justice system. You've flushed more pieces of shit than the colonic tent at a Goop convention.

TANYA

(brightening)
You think?

BEV

Bitch, *you* are the one who put Terry DiFarco behind bars. Not twitter, not social media, YOU did that. The most famous murderer in America is serving a life sentence because of one badass motherfucker. You're famous for a reason, Tanya. Don't you forget that.

She raises a margarita. Tanya raises hers.

TANYA

Thanks, Bev. You're right. At least I'll always have that.

CUT TO:

TELEVISION SCREEN

"FILE FOOTAGE" of young Tanya (with perm) delivering a tour-de-force closing statement in a packed courtroom as a dire voiceover intones.

ANCHOR [V.O.]

In what was the highest profile celebrity murder case of the 1990s, then-District Attorney Tanya Finger-Vasquez convinced a jury beyond a shadow of a doubt that professional wrestler Terry DiFarco had indeed murdered his wife and brother in cold blood...

FOOTAGE of TERRY DIFARCO (40s, devilishly handsome) in an orange jumpsuit doing a handcuffed perp walk through throngs of reporters and fans.

ANCHOR [V.O.] (CONT'D)
 Or so everybody *thought*. Just today, in a shocking turn of events, authorities are now reporting that recently unearthed DNA evidence has vindicated DiFarco of having committed the murders.

FOOTAGE of a beleaguered POLICE CHIEF at a podium.

POLICE CHIEF
 At this time we are able to say with certainty that Mr. DiFarco did not, in fact, commit these crimes, and on behalf of the City I offer a sincere apology for this miscarriage of justice.

FOOTAGE of Terry DiFarco, 20 years grayer, leaving the jailhouse in plainclothes and hugging family members.

ANCHOR [V.O.]
 In the wake of this revelation, the spotlight now turns back to Tanya Finger-Vasquez. How could she have been so wrong? Critics are already calling for re-testing of all cases she's ever prosecuted, and are questioning whether Finger-Vasquez was corrupt or merely incompetent--

TELEVISION POWERS OFF.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Tanya, in bathrobe and no makeup, sits at the edge of her sectional staring shocked into the middle distance.

TANYA
Fuck.

EXT. AMERICAN NEWS NETWORK BUILDING - LATER

Tanya does a "perp walk" of her own. She exits a towncar and attempts to navigate a frenzy of reporters and haters.

REPORTER #1
 Tanya, have you personally apologized to Terry yet?

REPORTER #2
 Tanya, are you ashamed of yourself?

REPORTER #3

Tanya, how much do you weigh?

REPORTER #4

Tanya, have you used the criminal justice system as your own personal bidet?

HATER

You're canceled, pig tits!

Tanya wheels around, hurt.

TANYA

Pig tits? That's not necessary, y'all. Now look. I've seen the reports, just like you. But I'm not gonna make any comments until I learn the facts. Because right now I have questions too. And you better believe that as long as I have my show, I WILL get to the bottom of what's happening. K?

CUT TO:

INT. PRODUCTION OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Martin addresses Tanya while flanked by SECURITY GUARDS.

MARTIN

What's happening is you don't have a show anymore. You're finished.

TANYA

Martin, you can't--!

MARTIN

No, *you can't*. Not anymore.

TANYA

I'm telling you, something's fishy! "Newly uncovered" DNA evidence? How does that even work? You can't just *cancel* me now, there's a mystery to solve here!

MARTIN

There's no mystery: ALL your advertisers pulled out. Your brand is tarnished, Tanya. Nobody wants to touch this.

(MORE)

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Go dry your tears with all the
hundred dollar bills you've made
off the back of an innocent man.

(to security)

Please show Ms. Finger-Vasquez off
the premises.

Standing nearby, Lydia and Pete just stare speechless. The
guards move to lead Tanya away, but she shirks free.

TANYA

Everybody! What's happening to me
right now is a miscarriage of
justice!

The employees look at each other like, for real?

TANYA (CONT'D)

Maybe "miscarriage of justice" is
not the right phrase to use at this
point in time. But I am telling
you, something is not sitting right
with me about this, y'all! I stand
by my track record, and I demand to
find out the truth of what's going
on! Are y'all with me on that?

Nobody responds.

TANYA (CONT'D)

If this network wants to cancel my
show, well believe you me, I'll
take this dog and pony show to
another petting zoo! Who's coming
with me?

Again, no takers. She looks to Lydia and Pete.

TANYA (CONT'D)

Lydia? You with me?

LYDIA

Oh uh, I gotta, uh, like stretch a
canvas or something.

TANYA

Starbucks boy?

PETE

Am I with you? I mean I'm in this
room with you.

TANYA

All right, well, clearly all y'all think you can do better than work with me on my next chapter and that's fine. That's real fine. But I hope the best for you, I really do. And don't forget to do your vocal warmups before you spend eternity screaming in hell.

She finally relents and allows the guards to lead her away.

TANYA (CONT'D)

Enjoy it, you buncha glass-dick smoking, babyfucking scumbags!
(sweetly)
And I mean that with all of my heart, y'all.

Tense silence until she's out the door. Then the room BURSTS into applause and cheers. Lydia frowns disapprovingly.

LYDIA

So chill. Gonna miss this place.

PETE

So, uh. Now what?

LYDIA

For me, probably just unfathomable struggle followed by some form of ocean drowning. How about you?

PETE

Frappucino lung.

LYDIA

Well, I hope you enjoyed your 18 hours in showbiz. Trust me, it wouldn't have gotten better.

She picks up her bag and goes.

Cue title: **FOUR DAYS LATER**

EXT. TANYA'S HOME - DAY

A sprawling property surrounds a RUSTIC yet OBNOXIOUS McMANSION. Like if the *Fixer Upper* couple got into meth.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME

Bev enters a darkened, empty living room holding a magnum bottle of Barefoot chardonnay. She sees the huge flatscreen playing cable news, muted, with half a splattered sheet-cake dripping down the front.

BEV

Uh. Tanya? You in here?

TANYA [O.C.]

Mmrmp.

Bev freezes. Looks around.

BEV

I hear you but I don't see you.

TANYA [O.C.]

Wuzza...

Bev turns on a lamp, revealing Tanya sprawled on the floor. She's wearing a silk bathrobe and a fur coat.

BEV

Girl, you need get up off the floor.

TANYA

I *can't* get up off the floor. I'm floor trash. Waiting for the Roomba to come run over my head.

BEV

Oh, you'd *hate* the mess.

Tanya looks up at Bev's bottle.

TANYA

Barefoot? Was there a sale at the gas station?

(beat)

Bring it here--

BEV

Maybe you've had enough.

Bev pulls Tanya up from the floor and sets her on the couch.

TANYA

You're damn right, I've had enough. Of *all* this horseshit. The show. Social media. The American

(MORE)

TANYA (CONT'D)
 (slurring)
 Jerhdhisul System. I am DONE.

BEV
 Tanya, I haven't seen you this bad
 since the triplets were born.

TANYA
 (bellowing)
 DJ! JASMINE! JEFFREY! JEFFREY!
 JEFFREY! JASMINE! JEFFREY! DJ!

THREE TEENS appear in the doorway: JASMINE (17, Influencer),
 JEFFREY (17, Instagram hunk), and DJ (17, male witch.)

JASMINE
 What, Mom? God.

TANYA
 Jazzy. Can't you see we have
 company? It's Bev, guys. Bev!

ALL THREE
 (disinterested)
 Hey.

BEV
 My three angels. DJ, how you likin'
 that Tarot deck I got you in
 Sedona?

DJ
 It accurately predicted mother's
 downfall.

TANYA
 Jeffrey, show Aunt Bev what you've
 been up to.

Bored, he just lifts his shirt, there's too many abs.

BEV
 Looks like a painful exoskeleton!
 Way to go, Jeff.

TANYA
 (leaning in)
 Bev, as a gay, you've got that
 "gaydar" right?
 (pointing at her kids)
 Which ones of 'em are gay? Be honest.

Bev frowns at her, then looks up at the three teens.

BEV

I'm sorry, kids. Your mom's not in a great state today.

TANYA

Kids, tell Bev what you told me! Bev, did you know "canceled" means more than one thing now? See, I thought just my show was canceled but it turns out I, as a person, am canceled in general!

(covers face)

God damn it.

JASMINE

(looking at phone)

Yeah. About that. I was thinking--

Everybody just waits.

BEV

You were thinking what?

JASMINE

(looking up)

Huh?

BEV

What were you thinking about?

JASMINE

Oh. Like, you do crime stuff right?

TANYA

Is that some kind of *joke*?

Jasmine looks to her brothers for an answer. They shrug.

JASMINE

I don't think.

TANYA

(looking around)

What is happening?

JASMINE

Oh. Just like, I mean like, if you do crime stuff, do a podcast. All the good podcasts are crime stuff.

Tanya looks aghast.

BEV
 (chuckling)
 You look like somebody just cussed
 you out in Vietnamese. Jazzy, I for
 one think that's a FAB idea. Do you
 agree, boys? Fingered: The Podcast.

Sure. DJ I guess. JEFFREY

Tanya closes her eyes, sinks into the couch.

TANYA
 I'm gonna fuckin' kill myself.

INT. GALLERY - NIGHT

In a (newly painted) white room, SEVERAL PEOPLE with intense
 bangs or graying ponytails examine Lydia's paintings.

Lydia stands to the back nervously sipping a Tecate (the
 official free beer of art openings). She watches the people
 shrug and shake their heads, then move toward the exit.

LYDIA
 (meekly)
 We'll be showing all week.

None acknowledge her. She tries to keep it together.

PETE [O.S.]
 Is that who I think it is?

She turns to see Pete standing there. He's pointing at a huge
 abstract portrait of TANYA mid-shout. (A brutal caricature
 but actually pretty good.)

LYDIA
 I guess I felt inspired.
 (beat)
 You actually came to this?

PETE
 Duh, dude. Always wanted to be
 friends with an artist.

She brightens.

LYDIA
 I can't call myself an artist until
 I put it on my tax returns.

PETE

Naw, look at this stuff, it's so good. And to think you've had an office job this whole time.

LYDIA

Wanna hear something funny? I've been unemployed for a week and I got basically no work done.

PETE

Yeah?

LYDIA

When I had the day job I was always tired and stressed... But I *still* painted more.

PETE

Is that true?

LYDIA

I guess doing a lot is good for...
Doing a lot.

(beat)

Was that seriously my epiphany? I should be wearing a helmet.

PETE

No, no, I get it. But I'm still impressed. Your work is good as hell, it's out in the world, and people are buying it.

LYDIA

Ha I wish.

PETE

Isn't that what the red dot means?

She looks to where he's pointing. The title card beneath the Tanya painting. There's a red dot.

LYDIA

Exfuckingscuse me?

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - MOMENTS LATER

Lydia emerges from the gallery space into a traditional Chinese restaurant full of diners. She makes a bee-line to the ELDERLY HOSTESS.

LYDIA

Excuse me, did somebody purchase a painting?

HOSTESS

Ohhh I meant to tell you, yes. Sorry, very busy tonight. Crab buns.

LYDIA

Wait, when?

HOSTESS

Earlier, when you left to feed your meter. Dinner guest went in to look at your paintings. They liked the one.

LYDIA

Are they still here?

The Hostess gestures across the room to the corner booth where Tanya sits alone. She's signing the check and gathering her things to leave.

Lydia crosses the room and intercepts her.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

Tanya?

TANYA

(startled)

Oh Lydia, my word. It's you. I thought I was in a haunted house all of a sudden...

LYDIA

How-- How are you doing?

TANYA

Oh y'know. Not great.

Lydia nods sadly. Tanya forces a smile.

TANYA (CONT'D)

Nothin' like having the foundation of your life, heart, career, and integrity dynamited to hell by the same system you swore to honor and uphold.

(beat)

On the upside I have more free time to spend with my kids who don't want to hang out with me.

(beat)

How 'bout you?

LYDIA

You bought a painting.

TANYA

Well, I was sitting in my green house just tendin' to m'orchids and this feeling came over me. There was something going on tonight. Something important. Something I couldn't miss. And then I remembered-- It's crab bun night.

LYDIA

(laughing)

It surely is.

TANYA

J.K. I'm just J.K.-in'.

(beat)

Although *I* gravitate more toward impressionistic or representational imagery, there's something about your technique, it's sort of a naive de Kooning or outsider Picasso, and it speaks to me.

LYDIA

(guiltily)

The one you bought...

TANYA

Oh, I figured maybe it'll be a Dorian Gray type of deal. If I put it on the wall, the real me will stay lookin' cute.

LYDIA

That is how that works, yeah.

Tanya nods and steps toward the door.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

Thank you, Tanya. It means a lot.

Tanya pauses, turns back.

TANYA

You know, the fact that you worked for me for so long, and the whole time you had all this talent... Part of me wants to say that hurts my feelings that I didn't know about it.

(MORE)

TANYA (CONT'D)

But then I remember that *I'm* the one who could've asked, I'm the one who could've cared. I'm the asshole, Lydia. And I'm sorry about that. I am.

LYDIA

You are an asshole, Tanya. But I put up with it because, and here's the thing--

Lydia looks around to see who's listening. Just Pete.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

You're always right.

Tanya's eyes tear up.

TANYA

Hardly.

LYDIA

In my experience--as frequently unpleasant as said experience had been--it's true.

TANYA

Ha. Tell that to Terry DiFarco.

Pete clears his throat, ready to finally step in.

PETE

Terry DiFarco sucks. He was a shitty wrestler and a bad actor and my step-dad once met him in prison and said he was *bragging* about those murders. Extreme piece of shit.

Tanya's jaw drops.

TANYA

Your *step-dad* says Terry DiFranco *confessed* to him *personally*?

PETE

Yeah. It's all common knowledge in my neighborhood. Rumor has it the dude knows people in high places--the media, city hall--and that's how this "new DNA" thing happened.

Tanya stares at Pete long and hard, a smile forming.

LYDIA

Tanya? You're looking like me in an
ironic chain restaurant right now.

TANYA

This is amazing.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

"This is amazing."

PETE

What is?

TANYA

Y'all know about podcasts?

LYDIA

Oh no. Tanya, no.

TANYA

I knew deep in my heart I got this
case right. And now I know I can
prove it!

LYDIA

I think you're forgetting
something. Nobody wants to work for
you anymore.

TANYA

So don't work for me! Work *with* me.

Lydia and Pete exchange a look.

TANYA (CONT'D)

I'll make you both producers.
Lydia, you run the studio and
design the logo, obviously. Pete,
you help me find sources.

LYDIA

I respect you, Tanya, I really do.
But this whole thing has been a
wake-up call.

Tanya's face falls. She turns to Pete hopefully.

PETE

I'm in.

TANYA

Well alright, then. It's a start.
And Lydia, I respect that. Just
promise me you'll work as hard on
your art as you did for me. That'll
take you places, I know it will.

Lydia nods sadly as Tanya goes.

INT. TANYA'S POOL HOUSE - DAY

Tanya gazes out the window at her swimming pool, where Jeffrey does handstand push-ups at the end of a diving board.

TANYA

Those genes, y'all! He looks like a barely sentient flesh golem!

JASMINE [O.C.]

Mom, you ready?

Tanya turns to the room, where Jasmine stands in front of a ring light and a camera. DJ adjusts the settings.

JASMINE

We're going live, like, now.

TANYA

And how many "followers" did you say you have these days?

JASMINE

Only, like, 600K but I'm working on it.

TANYA

(wide-eyed)

'K' as in *thousand*?

JASMINE

Jeffrey has 400K but only because he shows his butt every few weeks.

TANYA

How did I not know about this? DJ, how many followers do you have?

DJ

My account was deleted for harassment.

TANYA

Of whom?

DJ

(guiltily)

Joy Behar.

TANYA

She owes me \$3500.

DJ

I know.

Tanya smiles, touched.

Jasmine presses 'RECORD' on the camera, which also activates her personality.

JASMINE

Hey guys! We're going live today because I wanted to make a special announcement.

She grabs Tanya, pulls her into frame.

JASMINE (CONT'D)

As you might or might not know, my mom does, like, crime stuff. She did cases, she made books, she even had a show on a cable channel, which, like, huh? What even.

Tanya beams proudly.

JASMINE (CONT'D)

Anyway, I know everyone's like "Oh, Tanya Finger-Vasquez, she's like, totally canceled"--

Tanya frowns.

JASMINE (CONT'D)

Well, listen up haters! Because guess what? She's *not* canceled. She's about to start a new **podcast**. Mom, tell everyone what it's gonna be about, K.

TANYA

Thanks, Jazzy. First off, we're going to re-investigate the Terry DiFarco case in-depth. Some of y'all weren't even born in the 90s, but let me tell you, it was a big ol' deal. Some people say he's innocent, some say he's guilty. We're gonna find out who's right.

JASMINE

So it'll be like *Serial* except you won't be all horny for the subject.

TANYA

Something like that, yeah. But we're also going to look into other crime, other cases, and explore the American Criminal Justice System as a whole. Where does it succeed, where does it fail, and how can it be used and abused by those in power?

JASMINE

That sounds dope.

TANYA

I think it sounds dope as well.

(beat)

Because I gotta be honest with y'all. I've made some mistakes in my career. I have. I'm not too proud to admit that. But I've also gotten a lot right, and I am proud enough to say *that*. But trust me when I say that I'm gonna be honest with you either way. Even when it's painful--

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE - SAME

ON A TELEVISION SCREEN: The live stream continues playing. Thousands of emoji and comments (negative, then increasingly positive) fly across the screen as viewers react in realtime.

TANYA

--Because when it comes to this world, I'm always gonna do what my momma told me to do: Leave this campground just a little bit cleaner than how I found it. Let's do this, y'all.

JASMINE

All right, guys. Thanks for watching. Jazzy Finger, out!

She flashes a peace sign.

TANYA

And shout-out to black people, I love y'all so much--

Jasmine's eyes go wide, she quickly turns off the feed.

Martin switches off the television and turns to face TERRY DIFARCO, sitting across from his desk.

MARTIN
Something tells me Tanya won't be giving up easily.

TERRY
That could be very bad for you.

MARTIN
What else do you want from me, Terry? I gave into your blackmail. I got rid of her.

TERRY
Not well enough. You need to snuff out this podcast before you get snuffed yourself.

Martin gasps. Suddenly the door swings open and Bev leans in.

BEV
Marty, the A/C's too strong in the studio again-- Are my nips testing well in the midwest or something?

That's when she notices Terry DiFarco sitting there.

BEV (CONT'D)
Oh... Sorry, I--

Wide-eyed, she slowly shuts the door.

INT. TANYA'S POOL HOUSE - LATER

Tanya stands at a desk with two microphones both wired to a nearby mixing board. DJ sages the whole area.

TANYA
Please don't get ash in my wig.

DJ
That's a wig? You paid money for that?

JASMINE
DJ, be nice. We're here to help Mom with her new career, not make fun of her struggle-wig.

TANYA
I appreciate that.

Pete enters through a sliding glass door. Tanya lights up.

PETE

There is some kind of child
bodybuilder taking a selfie on the
hood of your car right now.

(beat)

Also, hope you don't mind, I
brought a friend...

Lydia enters behind him.

TANYA

Well, well, well.

LYDIA

(looking around)

Is this the recording studio?

TANYA

The triplets helped me set it up.
I'm hoping one of y'all knows how
to use this stuff.

LYDIA

I can't believe I'm doing this.

TANYA

Lydia, I promise. I will maintain a
positive working environment based on
mutual respect and a shared vision.

Pete and Lydia exchange a skeptical look.

LYDIA

Mm-hmm.

TANYA

Now all y'all bitches better buckle
the fuck up! The Criminal Justice
System is about to get Finger'd!

They all just stare at her.

LYDIA

You had to, huh.

TANYA

It's sort of my thing.

END OF PILOT