

Crunch Time

"Pilot"

Story By

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Teleplay

by

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COLD OPENINT. "CRUNCH TIME" SET -- DAY (REAL GAME SHOW)

THIS IS THE FIRST ROUND OF A REAL GAME SHOW. SWEEPING SHOTS OF THE ARENA: IMAGINE A SEMI-CIRCULAR OPERATING THEATRE FROM AN OLD MEDICAL SCHOOL CLASS. THE AUDIENCE LOOKS DOWN ON IT AS IF THEY WERE AT A GLADIATOR MATCH. THERE ARE GIANT REAR-SCREEN PROJECTORS: ON ONE WE REVEAL THE CHANGING CATEGORIES AND QUIZ MATERIAL, ON THE OTHER IS THE COUNTDOWN CLOCK. THE CROWD IS LOUD. OUR TWO CONTESTANTS ARE READY TO GO...

TOBY (V.O.)

Tonight, these two people have a chance
to win up to three hundred thousand
dollars. It's a game of brains and
stamina. It's mental! It's physical!
It's Crunch Time!

THE HOST, TOBY DIAMOND (38) ENTERS TO THE ROAR OF THE CROWD. TOBY IS HANDSOME, AFFABLE, WEARS A SUIT.

TOBY

Hi everyone, I'm Toby Diamond, and
tonight we have two new players who are
about to feel The Crunch. Say hello to
Julie and Mike Wollager!

ALTHOUGH TOBY'S DIALOGUE ABOVE IS SCRIPTED, THE CONTESTANTS -- "JULIE" AND "MIKE" -- ARE ACTUALLY REAL PEOPLE, WHO ARE NOT SCRIPTED, WHO WILL PARTICIPATE IN THE REAL GAME SHOW. WE FIND OUT ABOUT THEIR REAL CAREERS AND WHERE THEY LIVE. TOBY GOES ON TO EXPLAIN THE RULES: EACH ROUND YOU MUST COMPLETE A PHYSICAL CHALLENGE AND MENTAL CHALLENGE TO BANK MONEY. THEY LEGITIMATELY PLAY OUT THE GAME, AND TOBY NATURALLY REACTS TO WHATEVER HAPPENS WITH THE CONTESTANTS IN THE GAME. TOBY THEN DOES HIS SEND OFF --

TOBY (CONT'D)

Julie and Mike, let's see how much you
can add to that bank in round two!

(MORE)

TOBY (CONT'D)

So catch your breath and shower,
because you need to be a lot prettier
to be on network TV!

THE AUDIENCE LAUGHS.

INT. CRUNCH TIME STAGE (THE SITCOM) -- CONTINUOUS

WE ARE SEEING THE STAGE FROM A DIFFERENT POINT OF VIEW --
BEHIND THE CAMERAS.

STAGE MANAGER

... and we're out!

WE HEAR A WOMAN'S VOICE COME OVER THE P.A.

EMILY (O.S.)

Thank you, everybody! Great start for
our third episode!

WE PAN UP TO SEE A WOMAN IN THE CONTROL ROOM.

INT. CONTROL ROOM -- SAME

THAT WOMAN IS EMILY GIVENS, 35, CRUNCH TIME'S EXEC PRODUCER.
SHE IS DRIVEN, WELL-LIKED, CAPABLE. SHE TAKES OFF HER
HEADSET. SEATED NEXT TO HER IS JAKE, 33, HEAD WRITER (FLEECE,
SNEAKERS, HIPSTER BEARD) -- ON HIS LAPTOP.

EMILY

The questions played great, Jake --
challenging but gettable. And nice
banter for Toby.

JAKE

Who is also, ironically, challenging
but gettable.

EMILY LAUGHS AND HEADS OUT OF THE BOOTH, DOWN STAIRS, AND ONTO
THE STAGE. SHE MOVES AT A FAST PACE, AD-LIBBING COMPLIMENTS,
COMMENTS, AND CRITICISM TO THE CREW AS SHE PASSES --

EMILY

(TO CAMERAMAN) Ronnie, I want to make sure you're always getting Toby's reactions. I need Toby somewhere all the time.

RON

You got it, Em.

EMILY CONTINUES THROUGH THE STAGE, ON HER WAY TO --

INT./EXT. TOBY'S DRESSING ROOM

TOBY ANSWERS -- AND "OFF CAMERA" HE WEARS A CASHMERE HOODIE, EXPENSIVE JACKET, JEANS, AND BRAND NEW SNEAKERS. HE HOLDS A COCKTAIL IN HIS HAND. IN THE BACKGROUND (IN HIS DRESSING ROOM) ARE SOME BUDDIES PARTYING.

TOBY

Hola!

EMILY

Nice segment today -- (RE: CLOTHES)

Wow, you changed fast. Were you wearing those underneath?

TOBY

I don't know if you noticed, but I think that chick Julie is kind of into me.

EMILY

Maybe wait to break up their marriage until after they're done on our show.

(MORE)

EMILY (CONT'D)

Hey, I know I always ask you, but the crew's going over to El Cholo as usual, and it'd mean a lot to people if you dropped by for a drink after work.

TOBY

Oh, no can do -- I'm actually taking off for Vegas.

EMILY

Wait. What?!

TOBY

Stand-up. I've got offered two shows tonight at the Tropicana! I knew there was something I forgot to tell you!

EMILY

But you can't go to Vegas. Now?! We have a meeting first thing tomorrow with the network!

TOBY

I'll try to get back before that.

EMILY

"Try"? But what if something happens and you can't?

TOBY

Like what?

EMILY

Like weather, or... you killing hooker. A hooker killing you...

(MORE)

EMILY (CONT'D)

Look, we are in a sensitive time here.
Third episode, we're a brand new show --
this is not the time to start blowing
off meetings.

TOBY

(CONDESCENDING) Emily, I've been on
stage and TV a long time, so trust me
when I tell you -- that meeting is just
"blah blah" face time. Plus, do you
know how much I get paid for one of
these gigs? I can't not go.

EMILY

(THEN, RE: BUDDIES) Are they vaping?
I'm not sure you can "vape" in here.

TOBY

(PROUD) Sixty grand. I know you were
wondering. Tickets have been sold!
People's nights have been rearranged to
fit seeing me in! My hands are tied.
(TO HIS PALS) Guys, we're out!

EMILY

I just really wish you had asked me
about this earlier. We're partners.
You can't just go off and do your own
thing. What you do affects all of us.

TOBY

Ah. Totes! Then I should tell you
now, I'm off to Chicago on Friday.

EMILY

What?!

TOBY

... And Park City on Tuesday -- (OFF
HER LOOK) what am I supposed to do, not
go to my trainer's bachelor party?
(THEN, RUSHING OFF) You're the best!
Truly, favorite person ever!

HE COMES BACK TO GIVE HER A HUG, SPILLING HIS COCKTAIL ON HER
SHOES, AND AGAIN HE'S OFF.

TOBY (CONT'D)

(CALLING AFTER) And if you Google me,
do not believe the stuff about my
gambling problem, that is all totally
exaggerated!

EMILY'S FACE ERUPTS WITH CONCERN.

INT. EMILY'S OFFICE -- LATER

EMILY IS THERE WITH HER BEST FRIEND AND CO-WORKER, MARCELLE
(36, AFRICAN-AMERICAN, TOUGH, AND PRACTICAL). HER OFFICE IS
LARGE AND NEATLY APPOINTED, BUT STILL HAS THE RENTED, STUDIO-
ISSUED FURNITURE IN IT, SO HOW NICE CAN IT EVER REALLY BE?
MARCELLE SHOWS HER PHOTOS OF POSSIBLE CONTESTANTS.

MARCELLE

So he just took off to Vegas?

EMILY

Yes. This job is hard enough, why does
Toby have to make it harder?!

(MORE)

EMILY (CONT'D)

(THEN, RE: PHOTOS) So these are
contestants for next week?

MARCELLE

They're chemists and tri-athletes!

EMILY

God, our contestants are all such
overachievers. Don't they ever just
get drunk and watch a movie?

MARCELLE

Says the person who works eighty hours
a week.

EMILY

I don't have people to get home to,
like you, so... this is my baby.

MARCELLE

I happen to know your life is not
nearly as sad as you just made it
sound.

EMILY

My life is great! I've finally got my
own show, I got to hire an incredible
team of my favorite people.

MARCELLE

I would say "dream team" if that hadn't
been so overused by basketball teams in
the '90s.

EMILY

Although the other side is -- I'm not going to lie, I feel the pressure, being the boss for the first time, a hundred and thirty-nine people depending on this job to feed their families, plus the challenge of working with... (STRESS SIGH) Toby Diamond.

SHE DROPS HER FACE IN HER HANDS.

MARCELLE

It pisses me off. He should be thanking baby Jesus every day for you and this job. He was doing Jiffy Lube commercials!

EMILY

I know, and he will be again if he keeps doing stuff like this. (THEN)
I'm going to reschedule the network meeting, just in case.

MARCELLE

He acts like he's too good for us. You think he'd be more humble since his wife dumped him last spring for a younger guy.

EMILY

I heard she met him at Soul Cycle.

MARCELLE

I heard he was in a band at Coachella.

EMILY

Either way, it's more humiliating than Jiffy Lube. (THEN, RE: PHOTO) These two are very attractive for chemists.

MARCELLE

And they're ex-boyfriend and girlfriend! Hopefully they will fight like cats and dogs. I'll lock 'em up. Snagging them before "Amazing Race" is a huge coup.

JUST THEN, HER ASSISTANT HAILEY ENTERS AND HANDS SHE AND MARCELLE COFFEES.

EMILY

Can you call Rajit Borah's office and reschedule our meeting tomorrow? And thank you for the coffee.

HAILEY

You're welcome. I would love it if we could transition our relationship into one where you value me for more than that task level. Let's work toward that and I'll find some other options for coffee getters.

SHE EXITS. A BEAT.

MARCELLE

Are we all going to be working for Hailey in three years?

EMILY

Less. Start sending her wine on her birthday.

INT. EMILY'S OFFICE - NEXT DAY

EMILY IS WRAPPING UP A STAFF MEETING WITH KEY PARTS OF HER STAFF: HEAD WRITER JAKE, ART DEPARTMENT GUYS KENNY AND MING (THINK ASIAN "MYTHBUSTERS" HIPSTERS) KENNY IS A HANDSOME, NERDY HIPSTER COWBOY, MING IS TATTOOED, WILD-EYED, AND A LITTLE DANGEROUS.

EMILY

Jake, when am I going to get a script for the second round?

JAKE

Soon. The guys are just finishing the questions. I personally did Toby's patter this time. Maybe this will be the week he learns my name.

EMILY

He knows your name!

JAKE

He calls me "Bro", "Buddy", and once he called me "sneaks" because I wear sneakers. I mean, it's not even clever.

EMILY

(SIGH) No, it's not. Ming -- how are we with the physical challenge?

MING

Ice tank is good to go, ice is being delivered in an hour.

KENNY

We've got three medics and thermal blankets standing by.

EMILY

Wait, is it really that dangerous?

MING

No, no.

KENNY

(BEAT) A little.

MING

It's what makes it exciting!

EMILY

Ming -- we can't kill the contestants.

We've talked about this.

MING

Not dead! Just really, really cold and blue. And in those skimpy little outfits they wear -- it's going to be nipple city.

KENNY

Oh, speaking of nipple city -- have you seen Toby's Instagram feed lately?

MING SHOWS THEM A PHOTO OF TOBY WEARING A SHOWGIRL FEATHER HEADDRESS, SITTING AT A BLACKJACK TABLE WITH DANTE AND THE WHITE-TEETHED PROBABLE OWNER OF SAID FEATHER HEADDRESS.

MING

Look at this one, he's drinking a bottle of bourbon with a straw.

EMILY

Oh, he's going to be a disaster. Thank
god I rescheduled that meeting. Is he
wearing a bra?

KENNY

Perhaps he borrowed it from the topless
lady.

MING

Talk about nipple city...

EMILY'S ASSISTANT HAILEY ENTERS WITH SHANE, 20. SHE GESTURES
FOR SHANE TO HAND OVER THE COFFEES. EMILY AND JAKE TAKE THEM,
CONFUSED. WHO THE HELL IS THIS GUY?

EMILY

Thank you...?

HAILEY

This is Shane, he's my new intern.
He'll be getting coffees from now on.
Oh, and Rajit Borah's office called.
They can't reschedule, so your meeting
is in twenty minutes.

SHE EXITS WITH SHANE IN TOW.

EMILY

What?! No, no! This is terrible.
Toby's not back yet! This is bad.

JAKE

Although it might have been worse if he
went. He might still be drunk.

JUST THEN, TOBY COMES BARRELING IN, SMELLING LIKE SMALL BATCH
BOURBON, AND PLOPS ON EMILY'S COUCH.

TOBY

Hey, hey -- look who made it back?!

See? Are you happy?

EMILY

I think so. I'm not sure. Are you still up from last night?

TOBY

Yep, and I had honey roasted peanuts for breakfast. Do you guys ever fly coach? 'Cause it suuuucks. Why are the "Stews" so mad at me all the time?

EMILY

It can't possibly be because you call them "Stews".

JAKE

No, they love that. My Mom was a "Stew". Having passengers like you was her greatest reward.

TOBY

(TO EMILY) This guy -- (TO JAKE)

Hilarious, Bro!

TOBY GOES TO DRUNKENLY HIGH-FIVE JAKE. JAKE SMILES AT EMILY.

TOBY (CONT'D)

(TO EMILY) So -- let's get to that meeting, partner!

EMILY LOOKS AT TOBY AND WONDERS FOR A MOMENT, "IS THIS A GOOD IDEA?". HE GETS UP AND WALKS OUT, AND SHE PICKS UP A BOTTLE OF THAT TRADER JOE'S AIR FRESHENER, SPRAYING IT IN HIS DIRECTION.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM -- TWENTY MINUTES LATER

EMILY AND TOBY SIT ACROSS FROM RAJIT BORAH, 33, "THE NETWORK GUY". HE IS INDIAN, AFFABLE, WELL-LIKED.

RAJIT

So as you know, we do focus group testing to get feedback on the show, like a job review, and we wanted to share those results.

TOBY

Oh, yeah? Whatcha got? I'm too handsome? I can't help it!

THEY ALL LAUGH, IN NO SMALL PART FORCED.

RAJIT

And obviously, these are just people's first impressions, but -- the feedback we're getting tells us that this is a great opportunity for America to get to know a "new" Toby.

EMILY

Okay.

TOBY

(BEAT) What does that mean? (SMILE
FADING) What's wrong with the old Toby?

RAJIT

Nothing! We love you. It's just, it's your first hosting gig, and America hasn't seen you in a while -- other than the Jiffy Lube commercials.

HE HANDS EMILY SOME SHEETS OF PAPER WITH GRAPHS ON THEM.

EMILY

So what are you saying, Rajit?

RAJIT

We feel like there's a chance to reinvent Toby a little. Young up his "look". And maybe give him some... fresher material. Edgier. A different persona from his old stand-up.

TOBY

(BEAT) So you think I'm not funny?

RAJIT

(BACKTRACKING) No, you're hilarious. This is research. I'm just the messenger.

EMILY LOOKS TO TOBY, WHO SEEMS BOTHERED.

EMILY

Well, we appreciate the feedback. As you said -- "food for thought". So we will... chew on it. Come on, Toby.

TOBY

Yes, great, this is... great.

TOBY STANDS AND NOTICES SOME PAPERS IN FRONT OF RAJIT, AND GRABS THE TOP ONE. HE READS IT.

TOBY (CONT'D)

(RE: PAPER) Wow, someone said, "I thought he was dead and then after watching him, I wished I was right."

EMILY

That's insane. The grammar isn't even correct, the person's clearly an idiot.

TOBY

A person said "I don't like his face."

EMILY TAKES THE PAPERS OUT OF HIS HANDS.

EMILY

I'll take those!

INT. CRUNCH TIME SET -- LATER

EMILY IS ON SET WHILE THEY FINISH FILLING THE ICE TANK WITH WATER WHEN HAILEY RUNS UP TO HER, FRANTICALLY --

HAILEY

Hi, sorry -- you have to get up to the offices now.

INT. CRUNCH TIME OFFICES -- WRITER'S ROOM -- MINUTES LATER

EMILY ENTERS TO FIND TOBY, HOLDING A SCRIPT. HE HAS HAD HIS HAIR CUT AND RESTYLED "YOUNGER" (THINK BIEBS), WEARS SKINNY, ANKLE-LENGTH PANTS, NO SOCKS, AND A SHIRT WITH A VERY STRANGE LITTLE COLLAR. THE SHIRT IS LIKE A SHIRT YOU SEE AT BARNEY'S AND WONDER WHO THE HELL WEARS THAT OTHER THAN THE GUYS WHO WORK AT BARNEY'S.

TOBY

I want more jokes! That guy Mike has a huge head -- I have at least six big head jokes in my stand-up.

JAKE

"Big head jokes"? We can't make fun of the contestants, Toby.

TOBY

Oh, grow some balls, Sneaks!

EMILY

What is going on here?

TOBY

Oh, good -- you're here. (SNIFFING)

Do you smell something? (SNIFF, SNIFF)

That old, stale smell...? (POINTEDLY

AT JAKE) Oh, it's the script.

JAKE

(TO EMILY) He can't talk to me that

way. (TO TOBY) What's my name?!

TOBY

(MAYBE COVERING, MAYBE NOT) Are you

kidding? You think I don't know your

name?!

EMILY

Jake, don't make this --

JAKE

Oh, don't help him!

TOBY

Jake, how am I supposed to be funny

with (READING) "Julie, Mike -- in this

challenge, you have to withstand the

Ice Bath..."

JAKE

We have to explain the games --

TOBY

We have to entertain, Jake! How about,
"This ice bath is about as frigid as
Julie is when Mike's family's in town."

EMILY/JAKE/WRITERS

No. / Oh, God. / Jesus Christ!

TOBY

Edgy! It's edgy!!

EMILY

Toby, what are you wearing?!

TOBY

They want young and hip? I am young
and hip! Toby Diamond is very much
alive and relevant, and the world is
going to know!

HE STARTS TO STORM OUT, THROWING THE SCRIPT ON THE TABLE.

EMILY

You're going to need the script.

TOBY

No, I'm not! They want funny -- and if
he is not going to provide it? I will
have to make it all up as I go along!

HE STORMS OUT, AND EMILY AND JAKE LOOK AT EACH OTHER IN PANIC.

JAKE

Does this mean we can all go home?

ON EMILY'S CONCERNED LOOK:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWOINT. CRUNCH TIME SET - LATER (REAL GAME SHOW)

THIS IS THE SECOND ROUND IN THE REAL GAME SHOW. AS THE GAME IS PLAYED - WITH THE CONTESTANTS FLIPPING ROLES IN THE MENTAL/PHYSICAL -- TOBY IS OOZING CHARM, TRYING TO BE HIP, IMPROVISING HIS LINES.

TOBY

Hey, guys -- should have told you, you didn't need to shower, because you're about to take -- an Ice Bath.

(AUDIENCE APPLAUDS.)

TOBY (CONT'D)

Here's the deal: You guys are gonna go in this thing... which has ice in it, so it's really cold. Like really, really cold. Like, freeze your ass off cold. Maybe we should stick some beer in there, huh? I bet Mike knows his way around a kegger, am I right?

MIKE AND JULIE REACT (HOWEVER THEY DO -- THEY'RE REAL!) WE PAN AROUND TOBY AND PUSH IN TO SEE THE EAR PIECE IN HIS EAR, WHICH IS CONNECTED TO:

ANGLE ON: CONTROL ROOM

UP IN THE CONTROL ROOM, WHERE THERE ARE A LOT OF MONITORS AND PEOPLE WITH HEADSETS, EMILY SITS WITH JAKE.

EMILY

(IN TOBY'S EAR) No, no, don't do it!

JAKE

He wouldn't...

BACK TO: CRUNCH TIME STAGE (REAL GAME SHOW)

TOBY

Whoa. This ice bath looks about as
frigid as Julie is when Mike's family
is in town...

**JULIE AND MIKE WILL PROBABLY LOOK SURPRISED AND HORRIFIED, AS
AN UNCOMFORTABLE TITTER SPREADS THROUGH THE CROWD.**

ANGLE ON: THE BOOTH

EMILY HAS HER FINGER ON A BUTTON WHICH CONTROLS TOBY'S
EARPIECE. SHE DEPRESSES IT:

EMILY

Way to read the room, Biebs.

ANGLE ON: THE STAGE (REAL GAME SHOW)

*THE GAME PLAYS OUT, WHERE THE CONTESTANTS HAVE TO SWIM
UNDERWATER IN THE ICE BATH. WHEN THEY EMERGE, THEY UNLOCK A
PUZZLE WHICH APPEARS ON THEIR SCREENS THAT THEY HAVE TO SOLVE.
THEY BANK WHAT THEY BANK, AND TOBY TOTALS WHAT THEY EARNED IN
ROUND TWO AND OVERALL.*

TOBY

Okay, when we come back, the final
round -- and the real "Crunch Time" for
Julie and Mike! You guys towel off and
warm up, 'k?

TOBY GETS A LITTLE GLINT IN HIS EYE TOWARD JULIE...

ANGLE ON: THE BOOTH

EMILY

(IN HEADSET, ANTICIPATING) Don't go
there --

TOBY

(ON TV) (FLIRTY) Julie, you let me know
if you need a hand with any of that...

HE LAUGHS. SOME AUDIENCE LAUGH, BUT IT'S NOT APPROPRIATE.
JULIE AND MIKE WILL UNDOUBTEDLY REACT ALSO.

EMILY

(LETS GO OF BUTTON) Ugh. Asshole.

BACK TO STAGE: WHERE EVERYONE'S UNCOMFORTABLE.

TOBY

Come back and find out what happens
 with these guys! And if they are still
 married!

BACK IN BOOTH:

EMILY

Oh my god. (TO BOOTH TECHS) Just cut!
 Cut!

EXT. TOBY'S DRESSING ROOM - MINUTES LATER

EMILY KNOCKS ON THE DOOR AND IT OPENS A COUPLE MINUTES LATER --
 AND STANDING THERE IS ONE OF HIS PALS, DANTE, "THE VAPER".

EMILY

Is Toby -- (SEEING TOBY) Can I talk to
 you? (TO DANTE) Would you excuse us,
 Vaping Guy?

DANTE

Dante. It's cool, I've got no cell
 reception anyway and your WiFi sucks.

HE WALKS OUT.

EMILY

My apologies. I'm sure that's
 crippling your ability to run your
 financial empire.

SHE SHUTS THE DOOR.

TOBY

Wow, that dude Mike really took offense to my frigid joke. Why is everybody such chicks about everything?

EMILY

(WITH A HEAD OF STEAM) Toby, what the hell?! You can't go changing things without consulting me. This isn't stand-up -- you are not a one-man show. The crew that works on this show -- we're all like a big family, a family that works, who look out for each other, who like each other -- (REALIZING) we're like a made-up family. So when you take a crap on that stage, we've all taken a crap on that stage.

TOBY

Yuck... (THEN) Do you think I'm not trying to do a good job? Because I am. I don't want to suck out there!

EMILY

Then you need to take this job more seriously. Be on time. Learn people's names. And no more Vegas, or Chicago, or wherever.

TOBY

Hey, traveling, being on the road -- I have a life outside of this!

EMILY

(HOW DARE HE) Toby, this show is going to go away if you don't commit yourself more to it. There's a huge life for you right here -- I wish you could see that!

TOBY CONSIDERS THIS. HE FLOPS ON THE SOFA DRAMATICALLY.

TOBY

Fine. I just don't know how be part of a... (BREAKING DOWN) I've never had a family that didn't implode...

EMILY

Well, that's... super sad. I'm sorry about that.

TOBY

(ALMOST TEARY) And I will recommit to the show. I really will. (BOLTS UP, PERKY) Hey, I have an idea! Will you do me a favor? As a "sister"?

EMILY

Well, I'm really more of the "mother" in this family. Or the "father". I mean, I'm for sure a "parent", just to be clear.

TOBY

So that's a Yes?

EMILY

Sure.

TOBY

Great. I have a writer I want you to hire. Jake and those guys are ok, but this guy is hilarious. He's got a ton of Twitter followers. He's edgy, he totally gets me and my voice. I think he's just that extra something that the show needs.

EMILY

Ok, great -- who is he?

CUT TO:

EXT. STAGE -- MINUTES LATER

TOBY AND EMILY ROUND THE CORNER TO FIND DANTE STANDING IN A SMOKING AREA, VAPING AND ON HIS PHONE.

TOBY

Ah, there you are.

DANTE

Dude, my fantasy team killed it this week. How psyched am I that they never put Adrian Peterson in jail?

TOBY

Dude -- you got a job! Emily wants you to join the writing staff!

DANTE

Really?!

EMILY

(LONG BEAT) Yeah.

DANTE

Oh my god, awesome! I am super broke!

HE GOES TO HIGH FIVE EMILY, BUT INSTEAD PULLS HER IN FOR A HUG, THAT IS NOT AT ALL APPROPRIATE EITHER. SHE TRIES TO PLAY ALONG WISHING EVERYTHING THAT WAS HAPPENING WOULD STOP.

DANTE (CONT'D)

I gotta call my mom and tell her I'm

working on "Deal or No Deal"!

EMILY SMILES. THIS IS GOING TO BE TOUGH.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREEINT. CRUNCH TIME STAGE - NEXT MORNING

EMILY IS ON THE SET WITH KENNY AND MING, TRYING OUT THE PHYSICAL GAME FOR THE LAST SEGMENT: SHE IS HANGING FROM A BAR HIGH ABOVE THE STAGE.

KENNY

I don't know why you always insist on trying everything. We have a whole team of people who can do this.

EMILY

I'm not putting a contestant through anything I can't do myself.

MING

You didn't do the ice bath.

EMILY

I'm detail-oriented, not insane! Plus, I won the monkey bars challenge in third grade, so I'm kind of a pro.

SHE SLIDES AND STOPS, THEN HAS TO ANSWER TRIVIA QUESTIONS AND DO MATH. SHE GETS IT RIGHT AND SLIDES ONE MORE AND STOPS, BUT HER BODY SWAYS. SHE STRUGGLES TO KEEP HER GRIP.

EMILY (CONT'D)

(WINDED, STRUGGLING) This was a lot easier when I weighed sixty-five pounds.

TOBY BOUNDS UP.

EMILY (CONT'D)

(TO TOBY) Oh my god, you're on time?!

TOBY

(MANIC) I came in early, actually. I thought about what you said, and to show you how committed I am, I've been up all night thinking of ideas!

SHE LOOKS CONCERNED. HE SEEMS CRAZY, ALTHOUGH HE LOOKS MORE NORMAL. HIS ENERGY IS WEIRD, THOUGH.

TOBY (CONT'D)

Hey, I was thinking what if I had a chair, like a hovercraft-y thing, that I sat in and moved around the stage, kind of futuristic?

EMILY

Uh...

TOBY

Or... Or... I'm thinking I should walk through the audience -- maybe do some one-on-one chats? Like man of the people -- Oooh! Or maybe even some little sketches, or like those songs Andy Samberg used to do?! I'll go talk to the writers, get them started...

EMILY

Wait -- what?! Toby! Stop!

TOBY IS GONE. SHE LETS GO AND FALLS TO THE GROUND, OUT OF FRAME. HER ASSISTANT, HAILEY, COMES UP TO HER, AS SHE IS FLAT ON HER BACK:

HAILEY

There are a few people waiting in your
office..?

MONTAGE: INT. EMILY'S OFFICE

EMILY IS LEANING BACK IN HER CHAIR, HER FINGERS FOLDED ON HER
CHEST. MARCELLE IS THERE.

MARCELLE

Who the hell does he think he is? He
wants to screen the contestants
himself! Says we need "hotter ones".
You tell that jack-ass I'm not running
an escort service!

INT. EMILY'S OFFICE -- MOMENTS LATER

EMILY RUBS HER TEMPLES.

EMILY

Yes, Chris -- what's up?

CLOSE UP ON CHRIS, THE STAGE MANAGER, 38, WIRY THIN AND
PERPETUALLY STRESSED, BUT EXTRAORDINARILY PATIENT AND POLITE,
IS STANDING THERE.

CHRIS

Were you aware that Mr. Diamond is
making some changes to the show?

EMILY

This is what I've been hearing.

CHRIS

Okay. Well, then -- have you met
Darlene?

HE POINTS TO THE WOMAN STANDING NEXT TO HIM -- A YOUNG, HOT,
BEAUTY-QUEEN-ISH MODEL-PERSON, WHO GESTURES LIKE VANNA WHITE.

DARLENE

I do boxing matches a lot, so I'm very
good with stuff over my head, too.

SHE PICKS UP A SMALL SIDE-TABLE AND HOISTS IT OVER HER HEAD,
LIKE THOSE WOMEN WHO CARRY THE "ROUND" CARDS IN BOXING
MATCHES.

INT. EMILY'S OFFICE -- MOMENTS LATER

EMILY'S HEAD IS NOW ON THE DESK.

EMILY

Oh, lord...

JAKE ENTERS WITH A HEAD OF STEAM.

JAKE

I quit.

EMILY

What are you talking about?!

JAKE

I quit, Emily! I quit. Toby insulted
me, he treats us writers like crap, and
Dante is just the final straw. He told
me that we no longer need "real"
answers, just joke ones.

EMILY

Well, that's completely not true!

JAKE

I love you, but I can't work with Toby
Diamond and his SnapChat half-wit.

EMILY

Jake, we've done four shows together,
you can't leave! What would I do?

(MORE)

EMILY (CONT'D)

And Toby's trying, I mean, he really does mean well, although I know it doesn't seem like it --

JAKE

No, forcing me to take on Dante is just too humiliating! Do you realize one of my plays was nominated for a Stage award in London?!

EMILY

(SURPRISED, IMPRESSED) It was?

JAKE

(INDIGNANT) Yes! (THEN) For the lighting design, but still -- I should be spending the weekends in Wales with Benedict Cumberbatch and the hot maids from Downton Abbey! Not stuck in a windowless room with Dante the Vaper, as he destroys the last shreds of my faith in art and humanity.

EMILY

Look, I got backed into a corner --

HE STORMS OUT.

EMILY (CONT'D)

(CALLING AFTER) Jake, come on -- you can't leave!

HAILEY POPS IN HER OFFICE --

HAILEY

Rajit is calling...

EMILY

(ON SPEAKER) Rajit?

RAJIT (O.S.)

Hey! Look, I've gotta jump on another call, but we're very concerned by what we saw of last night's taping. My bosses want all of us get on the phone to talk about the direction things are moving.

EMILY

(SIGH) Okay.

RAJIT (O.S.)

So I'll have my office call to arrange a call, and let's talk later pre-call for a head's-up for the call.

EMILY HANGS UP AND SINKS INTO HER CHAIR.

INT. EMILY'S OFFICE -- LATER THAT NIGHT

EVERYONE IS GONE FOR THE NIGHT BUT EMILY AND MARCELLE. EMILY SITS ON THE SOFA, TIRED. MARCELLE HANDS HER A GLASS OF WINE.

EMILY

Marcelle, I'm blowing it. I've put off relationships, kids, vacations, everything -- so I could work my way up to this, and it turns out -- maybe I don't know what I'm doing.

MARCELLE

You've just run into a snag. A giant,
crazy, bad hair-cutted snag.

EMILY

But I'm a mess. I know this looks
glamorous --

MARCELLE

Not really, you actually look a little
homeless.

EMILY

Because I wake up at two a.m. every
night and can't fall back to sleep,
wondering what fire Toby will set that
I have to put out. I have no life, I
haven't had sex in six months. Maybe I
should have just stayed in Columbus.

MARCELLE

Who are you going to have sex with in
Columbus?

EMILY

(FINDING IT) Some guy named Greg, who
teaches high school history and is a
great guy and brews beer at home. I
could be happy. A nice, peaceful life.
You know, when you run a JoAnn Fabrics,
your hair doesn't fall out from stress.

MARCELLE

You would be miserable talking about
fabrics all day.

EMILY

Fine, then -- the Hobby Lobby. I would
crush it at the Hobby Lobby.

EMILY TURNS UPSIDE DOWN ON THE SOFA, WITH HER HEAD HANGING.

EMILY (CONT'D)

I don't think any blood is getting to
my head.

MARCELLE

Look, why don't you just have a talk
with Toby? Maybe if you get to know
each other better, he might settle
down. Do a little bonding.

EMILY

Bond? I don't want to "bond"! Why
does everyone in L.A. need to "bond"?
In Ohio, we didn't "bond". Unless it
was about the Browns sucking.

MARCELLE

It's like my kids. When I need them to
do something, they don't listen.

(MORE)

MARCELLE (CONT'D)

"Put on your shoes, baby." "No!" But
if they feel like we're on the same
team, we're doing it together --
they're a thousand times more likely to
put on their goddam shoes they fought
me so hard about. (CAN'T LET IT GO)
Infuriating little tyrants...

EMILY

(SITTING UP) Well, I'll give you this -
- Toby is a child.

MARCELLE

Yes, and although you have not wanted
kids, you have one now. And
unfortunately you need him. We all
need him.

EMILY

(WHINING) Don't make me "bond" with
him!

MARCELLE

Maybe this is a good time to face some
of your fears.

EMILY

What fears?

MARCELLE

Hun, intimacy is not your... "thing".

EMILY

(BEAT, THEN DEFENDING) I had my heart broken.

MARCELLE

I know, eight years ago. (THEN) It's time to move on and let people know you again.

EMILY KNOWS SHE'S RIGHT. SHE ROLLS HER EYES AND LETS OUT A BREATH.

EMILY

You know, my fictional husband Greg loves me just the way I am. Of course he's hammered on bathtub IPA's...

MARCELLE LAUGHS, AND GETS UP TO HUG EMILY BEFORE SHE GOES.

EMILY (CONT'D)

If I didn't work all the time, I would have more friends and wouldn't have to listen to you.

MARCELLE

(EXITING) You're gonna miss me when you get a personal life, you watch!

CUT TO:

EXT. TOBY DIAMOND'S HOUSE -- LATER THAT NIGHT

EMILY WALKS UP TO THE FRONT DOOR OF A MODERN ARCHITECTURAL HOUSE. SHE IS ABOUT TO KNOCK WHEN SHE HEARS THE SQUEAL OF A CHILD. SHE PEEKS THROUGH THE SIDE-LIGHT WINDOW AND SEES TWO BOYS (TEDDY (7) AND TREVOR (9)) GLEEFULLY BEING CHASED BY TOBY. TOBY CATCHES THE OLDER ONE AND PICKS HIM UP, "WRESTLING" HIM, WHILE THE OTHER ONE JUMPS ON TOBY. TOBY IS LAUGHING, PLAYING. A GROWN KID SO HAPPILY PLAYING WITH HIS OWN.

TEDDY

Daddy, throw me! Throw me!

TOBY PICKS UP TEDDY, PRETENDING HE'S A HUGE, HEAVY MONSTER, AND THROWS HIM ON THE SOFA. TEDDY SQUEALS WITH JOY. TREVOR JUMPS ON TOBY'S BACK, AND THEY ALL END UP IN A HUGE PILE. JUST THEN, HEADLIGHTS APPEAR IN THE DRIVEWAY, AS A BLACK RANGE ROVER PULLS UP. EMILY RINGS THE DOORBELL. TOBY ANSWERS.

TOBY

(TO EMILY) Hey! (THEN, RE: CAR)

Boys, your mom's here! Let's go.

TOBY GESTURES FOR EMILY TO COME IN, WHILE THE BOYS GET THEIR BACKPACKS. TOBY HUGS TREVOR AND TEDDY.

TOBY (CONT'D)

Have fun with Mom and Chad, ok? I love
you.

THEY HUG HIM HARD AND AD-LIB, "I LOVE YOU", "I'LL MISS YOU". TEDDY AND TREVOR RUN OUT. EMILY STANDS THERE, FEELING A LITTLE VOYEURISTIC, WATCHING SOMETHING INTIMATE SHE SHOULDN'T BE WATCHING. TOBY'S EX-WIFE, TABITHA (36, BLOND, PERFECT) HELPS THE BOYS INTO THE CAR. SHE WAVES TO TOBY POLITELY. IN THE PASSENGER SEAT IS A YOUNG HANDSOME GUY, CHAD, WHO GIVES A LITTLE WAVE TO TOBY, TOO. TOBY SHUTS THE DOOR AND TRIES TO PULL IT TOGETHER.

INT. TOBY DIAMOND'S KITCHEN -- A FEW MINUTES LATER

TOBY'S KITCHEN IS SLEEK AND WELL-APPOINTED, BUT STILL IS LITTERED WITH STAR WARS LEGOS, HOT WHEELS, AND BALLED-UP, DIRTY KIDS' SOCKS. TOBY POURS HER A GLASS OF WINE AS SHE SITS AT THE ISLAND.

EMILY

Your kids are really cute.

TOBY

Thanks. I hate Thursdays. (THEN) So,
did you come here to fire me?

EMILY

What? Uh, no. I don't think I can fire you.

TOBY

But did you check into it?

EMILY

No. (THEN) Maybe. (OFF HIS LOOK)
Look, I came here because I realized, the only way we have a chance of this show really working is if you and I trust each other. Which means we both have to start being totally honest. And I apologize, I have not always been totally honest with you.

TOBY

Really? Well, I've never had a lot of success with honesty.

EMILY

Well, I have. And I know a lot of people who have. (OFF HIS LOOK) I'm from Ohio.

TOBY

God, that explains so much about you. (THEN) So then what have you not been honest about?

EMILY

A lot. Like today? Today sucked. I mean, it sucked bad.

(MORE)

EMILY (CONT'D)

The show sucked, we all sucked. But
you were a... disaster.

TOBY

Okay, easy, Ohio -- I still have
feelings.

LOOKS OUT THE WINDOW ON HIS BEAUTIFUL VIEW OF L.A. HE TURNS
BACK TO HER.

TOBY (CONT'D)

Emily... do you think I'm done? You
know, I'm old and... hacky, and...
tired?

EMILY

No, that's ridiculous. (THEN) But...
I do think you are better than that old
material you still do.

TOBY

(BEAT) I'm not sure this honesty thing
is bringing us closer.

EMILY LAUGHS. HE POURS A DASH MORE WINE IN THEIR GLASSES.

EMILY

Okay, your turn to be honest.

TOBY

You mean harsh?

EMILY

Sure. So, do you really like working
with me?

TOBY

(THINKS) Yeah. Although I do think you could relax a little.

EMILY

You've mentioned that.

TOBY

And you're a little controlling. Your job's your whole life. You don't have a boyfriend or anything, right?

EMILY

Why do you assume I want a boyfriend?

TOBY

You don't seem cool enough to be gay.

EMILY

(OUCH) Wow. Okay. And maybe I'm not. Point taken, sure.

TOBY

You're just all work and no play. It's not healthy.

EMILY

Well, I carry this whole show on my shoulders! You know, when I was a little girl, I used to play "Price is Right". I was Bob Barker, and I used the cord from the electric skillet as my microphone, and my stuffed animals won big prizes, including campers and trips for two to Tahiti.

TOBY

(SMILES) Really?

EMILY

Yeah, this is my dream. And on top of it, I'm responsible for a lot of people's jobs. Like, Ron's wife has cancer, he needs this health insurance, and Marcelle's got kids, and Ming just bought a house -- that all weighs on me, Toby. So, yes -- maybe I do need more of a life. But it sure feels like there are a lot of people depending on me.

TOBY

Well, I get that for sure. I'm supporting my ex-wife, Tabitha, my kids, her idiot boyfriend Chad, my sister, her idiot boyfriend Wade, my Mom's retirement condo, two dogs, a manager, and my Dad's vanity hot dog stand in San Diego. I'm exhausted.

EMILY

Toby, you can be great. Trust me. Trust us. You can leave all that stuff behind and just go out there and shine. I got your back. We all do.

TOBY

(MEANINGFULLY) Okay. (THEN) One more honest thing? Was I your first choice?

EMILY

(BEAT) No.

TOBY

I know.

EMILY

But now that you are? I wouldn't have anyone else. Truly. Maybe Wink Martindale in his prime.

HE LAUGHS. SHE GETS UP TO GO, HE WALKS HER TO THE DOOR.

TOBY

If we're still being honest -- when you calm down and take the time to talk to people, you're not that horrible.

EMILY

Wow, king of compliments -- stop already.

SHE GETS TO THE DOOR, BUT STOPS, PULLING OUT HER PHONE.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Also, it'd be great if you could clean up some of the messes from today.

TOBY

Uh, sure. Yeah, like --

SHE HANDS HIM HER PHONE.

TOBY (CONT'D)

(INTO PHONE) Hello? Oh, hey, Jake...

SHE MOUTHS TO TOBY, "SAY I'M SORRY".

TOBY (CONT'D)

Look, dude -- I am so sorry...

SHE SMILES, HE ROLLS HIS EYES.

CUT TO:

INT. CRUNCH TIME STAGE - DAY (REAL GAME SHOW)

THE THIRD ROUND OF OUR REAL GAME SHOW BEGINS. OUR CONTESTANTS ARE STANDING ON TOP OF THE RAIL SLIDE, 30 FEET ABOVE THE STAGE.

TOBY

Welcome back to Crunch Time. Julie and Mike, so far, you're still alive -- no one's hurt, no one's getting sued, and you're still together --

ANGLE ON: THE BOOTH

EMILY

(IN HIS EAR) Despite me doing my best Richard Dawson impression...

BACK ON STAGE:

TOBY

Despite me doing my best Richard Dawson impression...

THE AUDIENCE LAUGHS. TOBY SMILES AND GIVES A TINY LOOK UP TO THE BOOTH, ACKNOWLEDGING...

IN THE BOOTH, EMILY SMILES BACK AT HIM.

TOBY EXPLAINS THE FINAL ROUND, WHERE THE CONTESTANTS WILL BE EACH DOING A MENTAL AND PHYSICAL CHALLENGE, ONE PERSON AT A TIME. IN THIS CASE -- THE RAIL SLIDE CHALLENGE WE SAW EMILY DOING EARLIER. THE WHOLE TIME TOBY IS COMMENTING ON THE ACTION, AND WE ARE INTERCUTTING BETWEEN THE BOOTH WHERE EMILY IS FEEDING HIM LINES AND THE STAGE, WHERE HE IS SAYING THEM. HE'S ON HIS GAME, SHE IS ON HERS -- THEY ARE TRULY WORKING AS A TEAM. MIKE AND JULIE FINISH THE CHALLENGE AS TIME IS UP.

TOBY VERY PROFESSIONALLY AND CHARMINGLY DOES A WRAP UP AND A SEND OFF, THE AUDIENCE APPLAUDS ENTHUSIASTICALLY, AND THE SHOW ENDS.

EMILY LOOKS OVER AND SEES JAKE, WHO HAS APPEARED.

EMILY

You're here!

JAKE

Yeah. Well... Toby sent me a Whiskey Basket. I didn't even know they made those.

EMILY

So what'd you do on your half-day off?

JAKE

I hung out at the Chipotle across the street. I didn't want to go home and tell Molly I'd quit unless it was really gonna stick. Although, I did fill out an application.

EMILY

What if they call you?

JAKE

I can't work there. Do you know what they pay? Plus that's a place where I don't want to know how the sausage is made. I eat there, like, five times a week.

EMILY LAUGHS AS HE RETAKES THE SEAT NEXT TO HER.

END OF ACT THREE

TAGINT. EL CHOLO RESTAURANT -- LATER

POST-SHOW, THE CREW/OFFICE GANG ALL CELEBRATE WITH MARGARITAS. JUST THEN, THEY NOTICE TOBY COME THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR.

KENNY

Oh my god, I can't believe he showed
up!

JAKE

Maybe he's lost.

EMILY

Nope. I invite him every week, and he
never comes, but -- (SMILES) I guess
this week he changed his mind.

TOBY

(TO EVERYONE, WITH FLOURISH) Is this
where the party is?

THE CREW EATS IT UP, AND TOBY WORKS THE CROWD WONDERFULLY, PATTING PEOPLE ON THE BACK, THANKING THEM, KISSES MARCELLE ON THE CHEEK, HUGS THE WARDROBE LADIES AS HE WALKS BY. EMILY WATCHES, SMILING. HE GETS TO EMILY --

EMILY

Glad you could make it.

TOBY

How could I miss it?

HE PULLS THE WAITER OVER TO HIM, AND SAYS LOUDLY TO THE CROWD.

TOBY (CONT'D)

Hey, great show everyone, truly. I'm the
luckiest guy in town. Drinks on me!

HE MAKES A GRAND GESTURE OF PULLING OUT HIS CREDIT CARD AND GIVING IT TO THE WAITER. EVERYONE CELEBRATES. THEN HE PULLS THE WAITER IN CLOSER OUT OF EARSHOT TO EVERYONE BUT US.

TOBY (CONT'D)

But only for just a half hour. And
nothing top shelf.

HE GOES OVER TO EMILY, WHO TALKS WITH JAKE.

TOBY (CONT'D)

Jake -- I've got some bad news.
Dante's leaving the show. He really
didn't feel like this job was his
"thing".

JAKE CAN BARELY CONTAIN HIS GLEE.

JAKE

That's a huge bummer. Well, whatever's
best for the big D.

HE RUNS OVER TO ROB AND THE OTHER WRITERS TO SHARE THE
PHENOMENAL NEWS. EMILY TURNS TO TOBY --

EMILY

Ahh... I see what you did. You can be
honest with me.

TOBY

(INNOCENT) What?

EMILY

You let Dante go to make Jake happy.

TOBY

No. Truth is, Dante just got a six-
figure book deal, so he's taking off.
Sad to lose him.

EMILY'S FACE DROPS. TOBY SMILES. IS HE KIDDING OR SERIOUS?

END OF SHOW