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HACKS

“There Is No Line”
(Pilot)
#101

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HACKS

"There Is No Line (Pilot)"

CAST LIST

AVA
DEBORAH
MARCUS

DAMIEN
DJ
KAYLA
JIMMY
MARTY
JOSEFINA

ANDY
BILL
BMW BRO
CARGO SHORTS GUY
FLIGHT ATTENDANT
JACK
KATIE
MARCY
MONICA
NEWS ANCHOR
TAYLOR
TRENT
VALET
WAITER

HACKS

"There Is No Line (Pilot)"

SET LIST

INTERIORS

Ava's Townhouse

- Bedroom
- Bathroom
- Front Door
- Living Area
- Kitchen

Bellagio – Jasmine Restaurant

Cartier

Deborah's Mansion

- Bathroom
- Bedroom
- Hallway
- Kitchen
- Living Room
- Marcus' Office

Jimmy's Office

Mercedes Maybach

Palmetto Casino

- Dressing Room
- Theater
- Spa Room
- Stage Door

Plane

Rolls Royce Wraith

QVC Studios

EXTERIORS

Deborah's Mansion

- Driveway
- Front Door
- Patio

LA Street

Las Vegas Tarmac

Palmetto Casino

- Valet Circle

Vegas Strip

OVER BLACK:

We hear a WAVE OF LAUGHTER from a crowd.

WOMAN (V.O.)

...So anyway, he's on top of me, T-shirt
still on because his breasts are bigger
than mine and I told him he had to--

More laughter.

WOMAN (V.O.)

What, I was jealous!

101 INT. CASINO - THEATER - NIGHT (N1)

101

We start from behind a WOMAN, center stage, looking out onto the crowd. Her perfectly coiffed hair is silhouetted by the bright spotlight, her sequined coat glinting as she moves.

This is the infamous DEBORAH VANCE (Jean Smart).

DEBORAH

And this dummy, he keeps asking me, "Are
you close? Are you close?" I'm like,
yeah, I'm close -- close to buzzing my
hair, buying some flannel, and responding
to that dinner invite from Melissa
Etheridge!

The audience laughs.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

I'm still Deborah Vance! Good night Las
Vegas!

The curtains fall as the audience cheers and music plays her off. We stay behind Deborah and follow her backstage as she's swarmed by her crew.

GOTH PA

Great show!

A STAGEHAND holds Deborah's hand as she steps into more comfortable shoes.

DEBORAH

Love these. Let's use them for the
weekend shows.

STAGEHAND #2 holds open a JEWELRY BOX as she removes her
GIANT DIAMOND EARRINGS.

(CONTINUED)

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

I told you these would be too heavy and they were!

SNAP! The jewelry box slams shut. Someone offers her a hand towel -- she shakes her head no. Deborah passes a sound mixer, BILL, who's looking at his phone.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

How'd they do, Bill?

BILL

Couldn't cover the fucking spread. I'm out two grand.

DEBORAH

Oof. Good luck with Beverly. You sleep on the couch more than my dogs do.

Deborah steps into:

102 INT. CASINO - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

102

MUSIC CUE: "Evan Finds The Third Room" by Khruangbin.

Two SHOWGIRLS, TATIANA and NIKKI walk towards her.

TATIANA

Hey Deb!

DEBORAH

Looking good girls!

MARCUS, her COO, approaches with energy.

MARCUS

They want us wheels up in 25!

DEBORAH

OK, I'll be quick!

Deborah enters:

103 INT. CASINO - DEBORAH'S DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

103

MARCUS

And after the taping tomorrow, I got QVC to give us some studio space to shoot the Christmas album cover.

DEBORAH

Love it!

(CONTINUED)

Deborah hurries up the stairs. DAMIEN, her personal assistant, approaches from the back dressing area.

MARCUS

Also, Damien has historic news --

Marcus points to Damien.

DAMIEN

(holds up phone)
eBay is my bitch -- the Verdure tapestry
is yours!

DEBORAH

Woo! That's what I like to hear!

Deborah sits at her vanity and starts to take off her lipstick.

VOICE (O.S.)

Great show, Deb!

DEBORAH

(calling off)
Thanks, baby!

Marcus approaches again.

MARCUS

Car's out front.

DEBORAH

Okay, let's party!

A104 EXT. CASINO - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

A104

Deborah, Marcus, and Damien exit. She is greeted by SIX SUPERFANS. In the BG, two or three people notice her.

DEBORAH

Hello, hello! I only have time for a
couple--

Damien hands her a pen. She starts signing autographs.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

Okay, gotta run!

FAN

Love you, Deborah!

DEBORAH

Oh love you too, honey!

(CONTINUED)

She gets in her Maybach.

104 EXT. LAS VEGAS TARMAC - LATER THAT NIGHT 104

Deborah, Marcus, and Damien (carrying Deb's bags) exit the Maybach and walk toward a private jet. The pilot, STAN, stands outside the jet stairs. Deborah points at him.

DEBORAH

Uh oh -- I smell Jack Daniels!
(to Marcus and Damien)
Gonna be bumpy, boys!

Stan laughs as they start to board.

105 INT. QVC STUDIOS - WEST CHESTER, PA - NEXT MORNING (D2) 105

INSERT: CLOSE ON ridiculously square, shiny French manicured nails, pointing out an iPad holder on a bathtub caddy tray.

CUT WIDE: Deborah and her co-host KATIE (30s, bubbly, bleached-as-fuck teeth) film a live segment. The signage behind them reads: "**EVERYDAY LUXURIES BY DEBORAH VANCE.**"

Deborah moves the tray a little. It glimmers.

DEBORAH

Gorgeous. Like a million little winks.

KATIE

Oh, I'm hearing we've sold out yet again!

106 INT. QVC STUDIO - PHOTO SHOOT - LATER THAT DAY 106

Deborah, wearing a Mrs. Claus lewk, laughs on a STRIPPER SANTA'S lap as a photographer clicks away.

107 INT. PRIVATE JET - NIGHT 107

Deborah, surrounded by several shopping bags, admires her new Cartier necklace. She closes the box and puts it back in the bag. She takes her glass of champagne and she and Marcus cheers.

108 EXT. LAS VEGAS TARMAC - NIGHT 108

Deborah gets off her plane in Vegas and into her Maybach.

109 EXT. DEBORAH'S MANSION - NIGHT 109

The Maybach, driven by her driver, JACK, pulls up to a massive French Normandy-style chateau, with elaborate manicured greens and trees. Deborah exits with her dogs. The slam of the door ends the music.

(CONTINUED)

DEBORAH
'Night Jack.

A110 INT. DEBORAH'S MANSION - MAKEUP ROOM A110

Deborah sits at her vanity and removes her wig.

110 INT. DEBORAH'S MANSION - KITCHEN - NIGHT 110

Deborah takes two pre-made PLATES out of a huge Viking fridge and heats them up. The convection oven DINGS.

DEBORAH
Dinner's ready!

We pause to see who her companion is -- and her dogs come charging in. She places their plates on the floor, and moves to her kitchen island, where she eats her meal all alone. The fork scraping against her plate is the only sound that reverberates through this giant mansion.

111 INT. DEBORAH'S MANSION - BEDROOM - NIGHT 111

Deborah, face fully slathered in La Mer, gets into bed. There are no less than 12 pillows.

We see her, tiny in the frame, in her huge bedroom as she hits a button and blackout curtains close in all around her.

MAIN TITLES

112 OMITTED 112

113 INT. BELLAGIO - JASMINE RESTAURANT TERRACE - DAY 113

Deborah sits with casino owner MARTY. Lots of drinks and laughs -- the mood is light.

MARTY
--I mean, what's the point of having a sauna on a yacht if it's not infrared?

DEBORAH
You might as well be on an inner tube!

They laugh.

MARTY
Fuck it, I'm selling it. It'll never be as fun as my first seventy-footer, anyway. Remember that one?

DEBORAH
Oh yeah, we had some fun on that.

(CONTINUED)

They share a look. Deborah changes the subject.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

So, I got the invite to Ali's Bat Mitzvah. That'll be fun.

MARTY

Get this -- she wants a Birkin bag. What's a kid gonna do with a \$14,000 handbag?

DEBORAH

Well it's her Bat Mitzvah, you gotta get her something good. Oh! I know what I'd want if I were your daughter -- therapy!

Marty points at her like "good one." She points back at him, smiling.

MARTY

(laughing, shaking head)
Oh, man. They grow up too fast.

DEBORAH

Are we talking about your daughter, or your wives?
(off his look)
Oh, just get her the bag! She's your kid, for Chrissakes. You bought Michelle a pontoon boat and you were only married to her for three months.

MARTY

(recalling)
Michelle? Jesus. You remember my exes' names better than I do.

A WAITER re-fills their champagne glasses, then starts to take Deborah's plate.

DEBORAH

Oh, can you wrap that up for me?

The waiter looks down to see an almost-empty plate.

WAITER

...Sure.

MARTY

(raising his glass)
Deb, twenty-five hundred shows. Quite an accomplishment. I think that's a Vegas record.

(CONTINUED)

DEBORAH

It is.

MARTY

Well then cheers!

They clink glasses.

MARTY (CONT'D)

And they're naming a street after you--

DEBORAH

Oh yeah, "Deborah Vance Drive" -- it'll probably be a dead end with an abortion clinic on it.

Marty laughs at this. Deborah takes note -- quickly jots it down in a little notebook and slips it back in her purse.

MARTY

Now that the big show's all planned... maybe it's a good time to talk about the future.

Deborah puts down her drink -- "what's this?" He presses on.

MARTY (CONT'D)

You know you're a part of the Palmetto's history, but maybe it'd be good if you did a few less shows a year.

DEBORAH

Good for who?

MARTY

I need some marquee dates for new acts.
(off her look)
Like Pentatonix.

Beat.

DEBORAH

What the fuck is that?

MARTY

They're a beatbox-forward a cappella group.
(off her blank stare)
They do medleys? They won *The Sing-Off*?

DEBORAH

Medleys? Who gives a shit?

(CONTINUED)

MARTY

I've got two buckets to fill -- families and idiots in their twenties. The families want to see singing and dancing. And the college kids wanna spend a grand to watch a guy in a helmet hit play on an iPod.

DEBORAH

You're forgetting about your third bucket: people from Florida. And they love me. My numbers are solid! And the pre-sales for my holiday shows are on par with last year!

MARTY

You'll still be doing shows -- just not Fridays and Saturdays!

DEBORAH

Oh, just the most important nights?! Unbelievable!

MARTY

(leveling with her)
Deb, why do you still want to do a hundred plus dates a year? It doesn't even look like you're having fun. I mean, you're on cruise control up there.

This hits Deborah, then she explodes:

DEBORAH

(hitting table, getting loud)
I fucking WISH! I wish I could be on cruise control! But because of assholes like you, I'm always playing defense!

MARTY

Deborah. Please, calm down.

DEBORAH

(still loud)
Oh, what are you worried about?! You own the place! And your service sucks!
(standing up)
Where's my fucking doggy bag?!

The waiter runs up. Deborah aggressively snatches the DOGGY BAG. Deborah looks at Marty's plate.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

You know what, I'll take his too--

(CONTINUED)

JIMMY

...No, for your hair. It's dripping on the leather.

Ava buries her head in her hands and whimpers.

AVA

Fuck.

JIMMY

Look, what's happening to you is unfair. And you know I love your strong female POV! Obsessed.

(off her look)

But in the future, maybe you don't have to say exactly how you're feeling about everything, at all times.

AVA

Sorry if I was "unfiltered and honest" or whatever, but that's literally what people like about my writing. Now all of a sudden it's a problem? I mean, where's the line?

SFX: A Gchat ALERT chimes. Jimmy ignores it.

JIMMY

...I don't know. All I do know is you just need to lay low for a bit. You know how these things are -- it'll blow over... eventually.

AVA

Yeah, I deleted my Twitter, but I need to work. You know I send money to my parents. Plus I just bought a house.

JIMMY

...I thought it was a townhouse?

AVA

Yeah, but it cost as much as a house-house!

JIMMY

Okay, maybe you should consider selling it.

AVA

I have. My realtor says if I immediately re-list it I'll lose a shit ton of money. Even she told me she got me a bad deal!

(then)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

AVA (CONT'D)

Ugh. This is probably residual Catholic guilt bullshit, but I can't help feeling like this is all punishment for getting fingered at my uncle Rocco's wake.

Ava takes out a vape and deeply inhales.

JIMMY

Okay, great example of what I was talking about. I don't ever need to know where you've been fingered.

AVA

(joking)

You don't know where a woman gets fingered?

JIMMY

Ava. Listen. I'm really trying -- I've called everyone, but no one is interested in helping you out right now.

AVA

This is so unfair.

Ava starts to get more emotional. Jimmy's uncomfortable.

JIMMY

Would a hug make you feel better? I can't technically touch you without another person present, but I can call someone? You can choose the gender--

There's a KNOCK at the door. Jimmy's assistant KAYLA pops her head in.

KAYLA

Deborah Vance is on the line.

Jimmy's eyes widen as he throws on his HEADSET.

JIMMY

Ava! Could you please excuse me for just one second? Kayla can you set her up somewhere comfortable?

KAYLA

(obliviously cheery)
Absolutely. Follow me chica!

AVA

We're in the middle of--

Ava is ushered out the door by Kayla.

(CONTINUED)

JIMMY
 (into headset)
 Deborah! Perfect timing!

115 EXT. DEBORAH'S MANSION - POOLSIDE/INT. JIMMY'S OFFICE - 115
INTERCUT

Deborah (wearing a LARGE VISOR) is on the phone. Damien refills her drink.

DEBORAH
 Pentatonix?! Did you know about this?

JIMMY
 ...Do I know about Pentatonix? Yeah,
 love 'em! I watched them on *The Sing-Off*-

DEBORAH
 Marty wants to cut my dates! Blindsided
 me at lunch, the dickless snake.
 Apparently he needs to appeal to a
 "younger crowd." You better do something
 about this.

Jimmy paces, sweating. Then he sees Ava through the glass wall, blowing her nose. Yes.

JIMMY
 Well, okay. I'll call Morty--

DEBORAH
Marty.

JIMMY
 Yes, Marty. But also -- I have a pitch.
 What if you hire a writer? To help
 freshen up the act? I actually represent
 this one very in-demand young woman--

ANGLE ON: Ava, inspecting the contents of her tissue.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
 She was the #2 on a hit show, she was
 actually almost nominated for an Emmy,
 and uh -- everybody is talking about her.

DEBORAH
 I write my own material. I don't need a
 "writer" -- I need a manager. Your
 father would've handled this. He
 promised you'd take care of me, so don't
 make your dead father a liar, Jimmy.

(CONTINUED)

Deborah hangs up on him. We stay with Jimmy, who exhales. He waves Ava back in -- she now has a fistful of M&Ms. He switches right back into manager mode.

JIMMY

So, that was Deborah Vance. And I have incredible news: she is... *intrigued* by the idea of you writing jokes for her.

AVA

(mouth full)
The QVC muumuu lady?

JIMMY

They're caftans.

AVA

Didn't she like burn her husband's house down? Yeah, no fucking way.

JIMMY

She's a legend! And one of the biggest earners at this company. You just said you "need to work."

AVA

I do, but come on. I'm not gonna go write knock-knock jokes about how men don't put the toilet seat down. I'm not that desperate.

JIMMY

Respectfully, as your manager, you are that desperate.

AVA

...I know you think you've "called everyone," but I have lots of friends who will help me, so I guess I'll just handle this on my own.

Ava exits, taking another fist full of M&Ms from Kayla's desk on the way out. Kayla holds out an envelope.

KAYLA

Oh! If you're on your way out, can you drop this in the mail for me? The box outside the building -- has to be outside!

Ava snatches the letter and storms out.

116 EXT. DEBORAH'S MANSION - POOLSIDE - DAY 116

Deborah sits on a chaise sipping wine, watching her iPad Pro.

ANGLE ON IPAD: A clip of Pentatonix -- an a cappella group covered in glitter with matching neon blue contact lenses. They're singing a cover of "Uptown Funk." It cuts to a CROWD OF PEOPLE absolutely losing their shit.

Disgusted, Deborah frisbees her iPad into the pool. She calmly walks back inside.

DEBORAH (O.S.)
(calling out)
Damien? I need you to go to the iPad store.

ANGLE ON: The iPad floating to the bottom of the pool, still playing Pentatonix until it fritzes out.

117 EXT. LA STREET - DAY 117

Ava drives, eating out of a greasy bag of Jack in the Box. Then she sees a woman, TAYLOR, at an outdoor cafe. Ava gasps.

118 EXT. OUTDOOR CAFE - CONTINUOUS 118

Taylor sits with an OLDER WOMAN.

TAYLOR
--He's an actor. He says he's been shooting this Richard Linklater movie but I guess I won't know if that's true for like, 20 years--

AVA (O.S.)
Oh my gosh, hey!

Taylor's face drops when she sees it's Ava.

TAYLOR
Ava. Heeey.

AVA
How are you? It's been forever.
How's...
(can't remember)
The husband?

TAYLOR
Mark? He's actually my ex-husband now.

(CONTINUED)

AVA
Fuck... him, then!

Ava pops a squat at the table. Taylor's like, "oh no."

TAYLOR
...Ava, this is my mom, we're actually just eating before she heads to the airport.

AVA
Oh my god, your mom? Yeah right! She could be your sister! Look at that skin! Get this bitch on Raya!

Taylor's mom smiles, a little afraid. In the BG, we hear a CAR HONKING. Taylor and her mom react, but Ava plows ahead.

AVA (CONT'D)
So congrats on season two! So cool. Are you hiring?

TAYLOR
Oh, I'm not even thinking about it yet--

AVA
Really? 'Cause I heard you're taking meetings, and I would love to work with you. Obviously, I've been going through a lot... and I could really use a job.

The honking is now almost constant. Other diners are turning to look. A VALET approaches Ava.

VALET
Ma'am? Your car is blocking the driveway to Tommy Hilfiger.

ANGLE ON: Ava's car, blocking a driveway, where an ANGRY BMW BRO is leaning on the horn, yelling.

AVA
Oh, that's... no. That's not mine. I don't drive.

VALET
I saw you do it. You're holding the keys.

TAYLOR
Listen, why don't we just talk next week--

(CONTINUED)

AVA

Well I'd love to but you haven't responded to any of my texts or e-mails so I think we should just talk now!

Taylor's mom sips her smoothie.

TAYLOR

Okay, look: I can't hire you. I'm sorry, but I have to protect the show.

The valet tries to pull the keys out of Ava's hand.

AVA

I got it! I'm going!
(to Taylor)
So I make one stupid joke, and everyone turns on me? This is so fucked up.

TAYLOR

Ava, I'm sorry -- but this is a lot, even for you, and we're just trying to eat.

AVA

I thought we were friends.

TAYLOR

Did you? 'Cause you barely talked to me until I got a show.

AVA

(taken aback)
...I don't remember it that way.

An awkward beat. Ava is genuinely ashamed.

TAYLOR

(annoyed)
Listen, I know this seems like the worst thing in the world, but it's really not.

BMW BRO

Move your shit box car bitch or I'll fuckin' kill you!

AVA

I'm sorry.
(to Taylor's mom, tearing up)
You really do have amazing skin.

JOSEFINA ("Ho-se-fina," the house manager) appears at Marcus' doorway.

JOSEFINA

There's a phone call for Deborah.

MARCUS

(confused)

Okay? So bring it to her...?

JOSEFINA

Mmm but the thing is, I don't want to.

(off his look)

It's her sister.

Marcus' face falls.

120 INT. DEBORAH'S MANSION - BATHROOM - LATER

120

Deborah is in the bathtub -- LOTS of bubbles. She's using her Deborah Vance bathtub caddy tray to sign books. There's a KNOCK at the door.

MARCUS (O.S.)

Deborah?

DEBORAH

("what the fuck")

...Yes?

121 INT. DEBORAH'S MANSION - BATHROOM/BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

121

Marcus stands at the door. He looks nervous.

MARCUS

I'm sorry to bother you, but... Kathy's on the phone.

DEBORAH

(beat, then)

How the hell did she get my number?

Marcus is unsure how to respond.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

No.

Marcus starts to say something, then thinks better of it. He sadly walks off. Off Deborah's look of concern...

122 INT. DEBORAH'S MANSION - BEDROOM - LATER

122

Deborah, now in a bathrobe, sits on her bed watching TV. Marcus stands behind her.

ANGLE ON TV: A NEWS ANCHOR speaks to camera.

(CONTINUED)

NEWS ANCHOR

Veteran entertainer and producer Frank Vance has died at the age of 72, after suffering a heart attack in his Monterey home.

ON TV: Footage of an OLD SITCOM plays. A YOUNG DEBORAH and YOUNG FRANK in a still photo on a living room set.

NEWS ANCHOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Vance's career began in 1973, with the CBS sitcom "Who's Making Dinner?," which he co-created and starred in with his then-wife Deborah Vance.

Deborah's eyes narrow at this...

NEWS ANCHOR (CONT'D)

The two made headlines in 1976, when they divorced after Deborah Vance--

CLICK. Deborah has turned the TV off. A tense beat. Then:

DEBORAH

I cannot believe they used that photo.

MARCUS

...Do you want to maybe take tonight off?

Deborah slowly turns her head to face Marcus.

DEBORAH

Why would I do that?

Marcus nods. Got it.

123 INT. CASINO - THEATER - NIGHT

123

Deborah is onstage, mid-show. Going through the motions.

DEBORAH

My ex-husband always thought he was entitled to sex on his birthday. No thanks. I'm going to make sure the next guy I marry was born on Leap Day.

The crowd LAUGHS -- but not raucously. Deborah clocks this, then pauses for a beat. The sound cuts out and we move in on Deborah's face. Marty was right -- she's not having fun.

124 INT. CASINO - DEBORAH'S DRESSING ROOM - LATER 124

Deborah sits at her mirror, defeated. Marcus is on a couch behind her, on his iPad. Deborah sighs deeply. Maybe something has to change. Marcus clocks her discontent.

125 INT. AVA'S TOWNHOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER THAT NIGHT 125

A big, empty modern townhouse. Lots of unopened MOVING BOXES, a couple pieces of furniture, and some tape on the floor outlining a spot for a couch. Ava mixes a glass of tequila -- the spoon hitting the glass is the only sound that reverberates through the entire house. She's a little drunk.

She scrolls through Instagram on her phone -- she looks at a picture of her and a HOT ACTRESS. It looks intimate. Then a text comes in -- it's from MOM. It reads: **"Did you get my voicemail?"** Ava types back: **"Yeah, sorry. Been on a deadline for a script. Money should be in your account Monday."**

Ava tosses her phone down, defeated. An intercom BUZZER goes off. Ava walks over to it.

AVA

Hello?

MAN'S VOICE

Postmates.

126 EXT. AVA'S TOWNHOUSE - FRONT DOOR - MOMENTS LATER 126

Ava opens the door. Ava's Postmate, TRENT, is standing there with a fast food bag (Jack in the Box again). He hands it to her and starts to exit. Then:

AVA

Hey...

127 INT. AVA'S TOWNHOUSE - BEDROOM - LATER 127

Ava's hooking up with Trent on her mattress (on the floor).

TRENT

Do you have a condom?

AVA

I think so...

Ava gets up off the mattress and crouches over a moving box.

TRENT

You look so hot--

(CONTINUED)

PFFFFFF! That horrible sound of packing tape being ripped off of cardboard. Trent is like, "yikes."

AVA

Ugh! Fuck. I have one somewhere.

She moves to another box. PFFFFFF!

ANGLE ON: Trent, trying to stay hard.

Ava tears into another box: "PFFFFFF!" -- not this one either. She moves to another box. It's desperate and sad.

TRENT

You should really use those reusable moving boxes. It's better for the environment.

AVA

Yeah, I know! They were booked!

PFFFFFF! Another box is opened.

AVA (CONT'D)

Why would they put the kitchen shit up here?!

Ava pulls out kitchen utensils. They clang on the floor.

TRENT

Yo, is that a Vitamix?

128 INT. AVA'S TOWNHOUSE - BEDROOM - THE NEXT MORNING (D4) 128

Ava is sleeping when her PHONE RINGS. It wakes her up -- the call is from "JIMMY MANAGER." She looks over to Trent, who's still asleep. She's... not thrilled. She heads to the ensuite bathroom (walking over the discarded boxes from last night) and sits down on the toilet.

AVA

Hello?

She immediately starts peeing.

129 EXT. CAFE (AT PARAMOUNT)/INT. AVA'S TOWNHOUSE - INTERCUT 129

Jimmy sips on coffee (ignoring the sound of pee).

JIMMY

Hey! I tried you a few times last night--

AVA

Ugh, sorry, I was fucking my Postmate--

(CONTINUED)

JIMMY

Wow! So -- Deborah wants to meet you. I know you don't think she's "cool," but--

ANGLE ON: Trent, sitting up in bed, smiles at her.

TRENT

(sleepy)
Hey, mama.

Ava slowly closes the door between them.

AVA

I'll do it.

JIMMY

Oh! Great! Can you meet her today?

AVA

Ugh, okay. Do I have to go all the way to Beverly Hills or something?

JIMMY

Ummm... no.

SMASH CUT TO:

130 INT. PLANE - DAY

130

Ava is squished in the middle seat on a Southwest flight.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT (O.S.)

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to Las Vegas. The local time is 1:14 pm. The current temperature is 111 degrees.

The man in the window seat opens up the window, blinding Ava.

131 INT. MCCARRAN AIRPORT - DAY

131

Ava exits her gate. She takes in the scene: tons of LOUD SLOT MACHINES and TOURISTS playing them. What the fuck?

She keeps walking and passes by a SMOKER'S LOUNGE, just as the door opens. A GIANT PLUME OF SMOKE envelopes her. Ava coughs hard. Gross.

Ava passes a newsstand. Her eyes drift to a TACKY TABLOID with an unflattering photo of Deborah staring right back at her.

A GUY IN CARGO SHORTS is laughing with friends off screen.

(CONTINUED)

CARGO SHORTS GUY (O.S.)
Bro, you stuck your dick in some crazy!

Ava is so sad.

132 INT. JIMMY'S OFFICE - DAY/INT. MARCUS' OFFICE - INTERCUT 132

Jimmy calls Marcus (from office or wherever.)

JIMMY
Marcus! My favorite CEO--

MARCUS
COO.

JIMMY
Right! COO -- chief operating officer.
Listen, I need a favor.

MARCUS
How scared should I be?

JIMMY
Uh, depends -- is Deborah in one of her
bad moods, or one of her very bad moods?

133 INT. DEBORAH'S DRESSING ROOM - DAY 133

Deborah sits across from a reporter, ANDY. He has his
recorder out as he jots notes down.

ANDY
Twenty-five hundred shows is an
incredible accomplishment. What do you
have to say?

DEBORAH
I'll tell you what I have to say: eat
your heart out, Celine!

He smiles as he jots down a note.

ANDY
So what's kept you going this long?

DEBORAH
I'm addicted to it. I can't not be
working and I'm not qualified for
anything else - imagine me changing your
oil??

ANDY
And they're dedicating a street to you, I
hear.

(CONTINUED)

DEBORAH

Yeah, "Deborah Vance Drive" -- it'll probably be a dead end with an abortion clinic.

She delivers it as if new. Andy laughs, checks his notes.

ANDY

...So, I did want to ask about Frank's passing.

Deborah shifts in her seat, forces a small smile.

DEBORAH

I have no comment.

ANDY

Are you planning on attending the funeral?

DEBORAH

I don't go to funerals.

ANDY

I mean, your ex-husband, the father of your only child, your complicated history -- there must be a lot going through your mind.

DEBORAH

Wow, that's such ancient history -- you must have been researching me on microfiche.

ANDY

Sorry, I just thought it was related since he started your career and all.

Deborah's eyes narrow. Uh oh. Shouldn't have said that. Deborah reaches across the table.

DEBORAH

He didn't start anything. And do yourself a favor and get some dandruff shampoo. Your shoulders look like James Woods' coffee table. Now get out.

Deborah hits STOP on his recorder.

SMASH CUT TO:

135 INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

135

Deborah drives. She's rattled. She stops at a red light and stares out the window, shaking her head.

DEBORAH
(to herself)
Why do I bother? They're just going to write whatever they want anyway.

MARCUS
...I'll set Jack up with the standard severance.

DEBORAH
Sure.

A136 EXT. LAS VEGAS - DAY

A136

B-ROLL OF DOWN AND DIRTY VEGAS!

136 EXT. DEBORAH'S MANSION - DAY

136

Ava pulls her rented Toyota Yaris up to the circle in front of Deborah's giant house -- a verdant oasis with the Vegas desert behind it. Ava takes it all in.

A137 INT. DEBORAH'S VEGAS MANSION -- HALLWAY

A137

Josefina opens the front door to reveal Ava. She smiles.

137 INT. DEBORAH'S MANSION - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

137

Josefina leads Ava into a formal sitting room.

JOSEFINA
You can wait in here.

Ava enters, takes in the ostentatious room with many seating areas, and sits in a chair.

JOSEFINA (CONT'D)
Oh! Not that chair.

Ava goes to a Louis XIV sofa.

AVA
This okay?

JOSEFINA
Great. Can I get you something to drink while you wait? We have coffee, tea, iced tea, lemonade, Diet Coke, Regular Coke, Coke Zero--

(CONTINUED)

AVA

Oh, I'll just take a water.

JOSEFINA

Okay. We have Pellegrino, Perrier, Acqua
Panna, Voss--

AVA

I'll just take tap.

JOSEFINA

...The Acqua Panna is the best.

AVA

Okay, I'll have that.

Josefina gives a thumbs up and leaves. Ava sighs.

138 INT. DEBORAH'S MANSION - LIVING ROOM - LATER

138

AN ACQUA PANNA BOTTLE now empty -- Ava's been there a while.
She's bored and annoyed. Ava gets up, starts peeking around.

She sees a TABLE with lots of FRAMED PHOTOS: Deborah with
Jimmy Carter, Tina Turner, and other notable figures. Many
images of Deborah performing in various locations over the
years -- Madison Square Garden, overseas on a a USO tour,
etc.

There's a framed comedy album that went platinum -- the cover
is Deborah lying on a hospital bed, legs open, "giving birth"
to a GIANT PILE OF MONEY. Ava chuckles to herself.

Ava pauses at an OLD BLACK AND WHITE PHOTO of Deborah,
testifying in front of Congress. She's looking at this when
she hears a FRONT DOOR SLAM -- shit, someone's back. Ava
scrambles back to her seat.

139 OMITTED

139

140 INT. DEBORAH'S MANSION - FRONT DOOR - SAME TIME

140

Deborah enters in a huff, trailed by Marcus. She starts to
walk up her stairs when Josefina stops her.

JOSEFINA

Deborah, a girl is here? She's a
redhead.

Josefina points to the living room. Deborah stops, confused.

DEBORAH

What?

(CONTINUED)

MARCUS

So. Jimmy did send that writer--

DEBORAH

That little shit.

MARCUS

I know. But listen -- we might be able to use this to stall Marty on the dates.

(off her look)

It's just for optics.

(shrugging)

Sit down with her.

He gives her a pleading look. Deborah sighs: fine.

141 INT. DEBORAH'S MANSION - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

141

Deborah enters the room and Ava immediately hops to her feet.

AVA

Hi! I'm Ava, it's so nice to meet you--

DEBORAH

(waving her off)

Sit, sit. Please.

Deborah does a once-over of Ava's interview "look." A silk shirt (one button too many undone), tucked into black jeans, with Frye boots. Hmm. She sits down. It's tense.

AVA

You know, I've actually never been to Vegas! Do you ever get used to the heat?

DEBORAH

Yes.

(immediately)

So, Jimmy tells me you're--

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Let it go!!!

DJ (carrying a Monster Energy Drink) comes into the room. Josefina and Marcus chase in after her.

DJ

Mooooom! They're being in-SANE and won't let me leave!

MARCUS

Sorry. Apparently she won't let Josefina see.

(CONTINUED)

Deborah holds out her hand, like, "give it to me."

DJ

Oh my God. There's nothing in there!
(off Deborah's icy stare)
Ugh! Fine.

DJ hands over her purse for Deborah. Deborah inspects its contents.

DJ (CONT'D)

(to Ava, a stranger)
Can you believe the shit I put up with?!

Deborah finds a BOTTLE OF PILLS and rattles it.

DJ (CONT'D)

They're antibiotics, okay?! I have a fucking UTI! Sorry I didn't want to explain my pills to the whole world. But yeah! I need relief from my excruciating urethra pain! You all happy now?!

MARCUS

Not happy, no.

DEBORAH

(re: Monster Energy drink)
Well I'm just glad you're getting your fluids, sweetheart.

Deborah hands the bag back, then leans out her cheek for DJ to kiss it. DJ begrudgingly does, and then clomps out the door. Marcus rolls his eyes and exits too. Deborah slowly turns back to Ava.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

...You'll have to excuse her. She has a UTI. Oh and her father just died.

AVA

Oh my god, I'm so sorry. Are you... are you okay?

DEBORAH

Me? Thrilled.

Ava is taken aback.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

So: why are you here?

(CONTINUED)

AVA

Oh! Um, well, it would obviously be an honor to work with someone like you, who's been working so, uh, successfully for so long. I mean, you're a legend!

DEBORAH

Wow. A legend. So you're a fan?

AVA

I mean, of course! Would I be here if I wasn't?

DEBORAH

What's your favorite joke of mine?

That hangs a second too long. You can hear a pin drop.

AVA

Well... that's SO hard...

DEBORAH

It shouldn't be. I've written over 30,000, so just pick one.

AVA

Um... well I would say your TV show is probably my favorite thing you've ever done.

DEBORAH

My "TV show"? My sitcom from 1973? You've seen it?

AVA

I've... seen clips.

DEBORAH

Clips. Wonderful.

A tense beat. Ava tries to push through...

AVA

So obviously I'm not a stand-up, I actually came up on Twitter--

DEBORAH

Huh. I wouldn't admit that.

AVA

Um, well a lot of the actors on the show I worked on were stand-ups, so I actually have a good amount of experience writing for--

(CONTINUED)

DEBORAH

--I'm going to stop you right there. I don't work with writers.

AVA

Uh, you don't? Cause I got a call this morning saying you wanted to meet.

DEBORAH

Jimmy actually sent you against my wishes.

AVA

...I'm gonna kill him.

DEBORAH

No I'm gonna kill him -- but feel free to kick the corpse.

AVA

Okay well, this sucks.

DEBORAH

Yeah, "sucks." But at least you didn't waste too much time researching me.

AVA

...I'm sorry, did I do something to offend you?

DEBORAH

Other than walking those chimney sweep boots on my silk rug? No.

AVA

(thrown off)

Oh, sorry -- I didn't realize it was a shoes-off situation.

DEBORAH

Well, it's shoe dependent.

(then)

Thank you for your time.

Ava, not sure what else to do, starts to exit.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

(patronizing)

Good luck with your career, honey.

Ava's back is to Deborah, to herself:

AVA

Fucking bitch.

(CONTINUED)

DEBORAH

Do you have something to say?

Ava turns around.

AVA

Yeah, you've just been pretty rude, and I dropped everything to come here.

DEBORAH

Oh Christ, did you want a gold star for showing up?

AVA

(exploding)

Kinda, yeah! Because you're right -- I'm not a fan of yours! You caught me! This is all just a little annoying because I flew all the way here on Spirit fucking Airlines even though I didn't want this job in the first place! The last thing on Earth I want to do is move to the desert to write lame jokes for an old hack!

DEBORAH

I think it's time for you to leave. Should I show you to the door, or would you prefer to go back up the chimney?

Ava shakes her head in disbelief, starts to go--

AVA

Oh, don't worry I know my way out. So cool they let you move into this Cheesecake Factory!

DEBORAH

Oh is that where you wait tables? That seems like a better fit.

AVA

Yeah, I agree you classist monster. I'd rather sling Bang Bang Chicken and Shrimp all day than work here. Jesus. Twelve tassels on one couch? Even Liberace would think it's a bit much.

DEBORAH

Well you're incorrect, he actually loved it. He did poppers on that couch in '85.

AVA

Is that a brag?

(CONTINUED)

DEBORAH
(shrugging)
It's a fact.

AVA
Cool! Glad Liberace's butthole was nice
and loose in your house. Maybe you
should have joined him since yours is
obviously tight as fuck!
(turning around, then back)
Oh hey, before I leave, did you wanna
inspect my bag? Maybe I could pee in a
cup -- or is that just a beloved family
tradition? You know what? I'll just
leave a stool sample on your lawn.

A beat -- Deborah is shocked by this. And then she laughs.
Ava storms out of the room.

INT. DEBORAH MANSION - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Ava heads down the hallway to the front door. Deborah enters
the hall and calls out after her:

DEBORAH
Why are you really here?

Ava turns around.

AVA
What?

DEBORAH
If you're so "in demand," why are you
meeting with me? They don't send "It
Girls" to the desert.

AVA
Because I can't get any other job, okay?
I tweeted a joke about that closeted
Senator who's sending his son to
conversion therapy camp or whatever and
everyone freaked out and then some
asshole dug up other stupid shit I said
when I was like, 20, and I lost my deal
and now no one will hire me. Including
you, apparently. So my life is pretty
much ruined.

DEBORAH
Your life is ruined? Please. Sounds
like a Tuesday for me. Besides, you're
just a writer. No one cares.

(CONTINUED)

AVA

Well actually, they really do care, it's been a huge fucking problem for me.

Deborah smiles.

DEBORAH

So what was it?

(off Ava's look)

This joke that supposedly ruined your life. I must hear it.

Ava sighs deeply.

AVA

"Senator Rogers is upset because he found out his kid's gay. Apparently he heard it from one of the guys he was sucking off in the Senate cloakroom."

Deborah winces.

AVA (CONT'D)

I don't even do jokes like that -- I was just trying to call him out for being a hypocrite since he's the one who got caught with a male escort. Didn't help that it was a slow news day but I guess I crossed a line or whatever.

DEBORAH

Oh, honey, there is no "line." It's just not funny. You should be blacklisted for how bad the joke is.

AVA

...Cool! Thanks! Kinda getting why your husband left you for your own sister! Buh bye!

Ava storms out the front door, leaving Deborah contemplative.

142 EXT. DEBORAH'S MANSION - DRIVEWAY - DAY

142

Ava drives down Deborah's incredibly long driveway in her rental car. Just as she nears the gate, a ROLLS ROYCE WRAITH comes barreling down the driveway -- it's Deborah. Deborah starts HONKING THE HORN wildly. Ava accelerates.

The Wraith drives OFF ROAD, clipping BUSHES and violently screeching in front of Ava's car, nearly hitting it. Deborah hops out of the car, on a high.

(CONTINUED)

DEBORAH
(yelling out)
"Sending your son to the woods with a bunch of other horny gay teens? The only thing he's gonna be converted to is from a top to a bottom!"

AVA
...O-kay?

Deborah quickly approaches. Ava locks her car doors.

DEBORAH
That's a better joke.
(snapping fingers, wheels turning)
No, no, keep it on the dad. "Senator Rogers has been in the closet for so long, his wife keeps trying to donate him to Goodwill!"

AVA
K just to be clear, these are all problematic, but maybe: "he's been in the closet so long, he sweats mothballs."

DEBORAH
(punching up)
"He's been in the closet so long, he shits mothballs." Yup. That's it.

Ava nods in agreement. That was pretty good.

AVA
Okay, can I go now?

DEBORAH
No. You're hired.

AVA
What?! I said I didn't want the job?

DEBORAH
Yeah well, you need it! Write me twenty jokes by tomorrow morning.
(opening car door)
Nothing about pantyhose or the Challenger explosion -- I've done 'em all!

143 Deborah gets back in her car, jerks it into reverse and screeches up the driveway. Ava sits in stunned silence. What the hell just happened? Deborah drives back, a small smile on her face. 143

(CONTINUED)

HACKS

"There Is No Line (Pilot)"

34.

MUSIC KICKS IN - "Fire" by Etta James.

END OF PILOT