

# KILL THE LIGHTS

Pilot Episode

"Somebody's Watching Me"

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A DARK POP COVER of "**SOMEBODY'S WATCHING ME**" PLAYS OVER a FULL SCREEN OF PULSING RED; a brilliant glow, like a heart pumping. Or police lights. After a beat, we PULL OUT to reveal...

...it's a TINY RED LIGHT from the back of a HOME COMPUTER SERVER, grouped with a dozen other RED AND GREEN LIGHTS UNDER A DESK. The CAMERA MOVES ABOVE to expose we're in...

**INT. GALLAGHER HOUSE - HOME OFFICE - MORNING (THURSDAY)**

In THE PALISADES, surrounded by FAN MAIL and BILLS at her desk is actress **MANDY GALLAGHER**, 40; equally exquisite and complicated.

Mandy autographs a CAST POSTER from her hit '90s teen show, *BRENTWOOD PREP*. As she rolls up the poster, her UNSIGNED DIVORCE PAPERS are exposed below.

She stares at the papers: *nope, not today*. She then opens an ANTIQUE JEWELRY BOX (next to her EMMY). From the box, Mandy pulls out A VIAL OF COCAINE. She looks at herself in the reflection of her DESKTOP SCREEN - her face stares back with judgement. Mandy glances at the divorce papers again...and...*fuck it*:

AMERICA'S SWEETHEART DOES A BUMP.

Mandy unfolds a CREEPY FAN DRAWING as both her phone and synched desktop RING. She feels like she's been caught. Mandy's screens say LIZ NIELSEN.

MANDY (INTO PHONE)  
 Hey, Liz. This early? What are they?  
 (*fuck*)  
 Huh. Okay. Thanks for the heads up.

Mandy hangs up and dials someone named HENRY. A beat, then--

MANDY (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)  
 Henry. It's me. I just got the numbers. We have a big ass problem.

She does another BUMP as the MUSIC CONTINUES OVER--

**INT. RUSSO HOUSE - MODEST HOME GYM - MORNING**

In SHERMAN OAKS, **NIKKI RUSSO**, a socially awkward blonde, finishes her cooldown on the elliptical. Secretly 28, Nikki looks no older than 18.

She takes a swig of COCONUT WATER. As Nikki steps off, her intimidating-yet-devoted momager, **LENA RUSSO**, 40s, enters.

Not only do they share looks, Lena also shares her daughter's youthful wardrobe.

LENA  
Finished already? That hour flew by.

NIKKI  
It was forty-five minutes. But I wanna stretch before heading out.

Lena picks up the bottle of coconut water; reads the label.

LENA  
Ninety calories. Who knew?

Her mother hands back the bottle and exits. A beat. Nikki knows what she has to do. As she gets BACK ON the machine...

**INT. THE PENINSULA - VILLA SUITE - MORNING**

We hear water from the shower RUNNING. With wet hair, former soccer star-turned actor, **JON DIAZ**, 34, grabs his valet ticket. He's in a rush. Jon leaves FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS CASH on the nightstand. As he scribbles "HAD FUN" on hotel stationary, Jon's phone RINGS. On his screen, the name BRIE pops up with an IMAGE of Jon in a tux with...his BEAUTIFUL BRIDE. Jon puts on his jacket and takes the call as he exits into--

**INT. THE PENINSULA - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS**

JON  
Hey, babe. Yeah, just got out of the gym. Now I'm running late for work. Sounds good. Love you more.

He hangs up - a *little* guilty - and we CUT TO:

**INT. NONDESCRIPT ROOM - LATE MORNING**

THE LIGHTS ARE OFF as **TAYLOR MORENO** (19, a dark-haired beauty with a closet full of secrets) and **LUCAS JENSEN** (18, Mormon-adjacent; abs of steel) MAKE OUT AGGRESSIVELY on a couch, HALF-NAKED. Things start to heat up.

As the MUSIC FADES, Lucas pulls away--

TAYLOR  
Why'd you - what's wrong?

LUCAS  
It's just...I don't know...we shouldn't be doing this.

TAYLOR  
You mean here?

LUCAS  
I mean anywhere. But...I like it  
too much to stop.

TAYLOR  
So don't.

More KISSING. More GROPING. Then--

LUCAS  
Do you have a condom?

TAYLOR  
What?

LUCAS  
I'm ready.

TAYLOR  
But you just said...

LUCAS  
I know.

TAYLOR  
Luke. You've waited your - this  
long and you want to...now? Are you  
sure?

LUCAS  
(he's not)  
Yes.

And with that, Taylor smiles, pulls out a CONDOM from her  
purse and hands it over. As she STRADDLES Lucas...

LUCAS (CONT'D)  
(re: condom)  
I'm...gonna need help with this.

TAYLOR  
Sorry. Yeah.

Taylor gets off of Lucas and kisses his chest as she opens  
the wrapper. As soon as the condom's revealed, there's a  
KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK! at the door.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)  
Shit!

LUCAS  
God - uh - are we up?

TAYLOR  
No. Unless they switched stuff  
around without telling us...

LUCAS  
What are we--

KNOCK! KNOCK! She puts her finger to Lucas' lips--

TAYLOR  
(calling out)  
Mary Jo? Erica?

NIKKI (O.S.)  
Nikki. Open up, please.

TAYLOR  
Lucas and I are in the middle of  
rehearsing our scene so...

NIKKI (O.S.)  
It's important. Need both of you.

TAYLOR  
Okay. Okay. Just a sec.

She grabs her dress from the floor and throws Lucas his  
clothes. Taylor TURNS ON THE LIGHTS and we realize we're in a  
STAR WAGON TRAILER. Taylor takes her ENGAGEMENT RING from  
the coffee table and slips it back on. Ready...

LUCAS  
The condom.

Shit! Taylor tosses the unused rubber back into her purse. A  
breath, then she opens the door to find Nikki Russo, our  
elliptical gal. Behind Nikki is a ROW OF TRAILERS. We're on a  
STUDIO LOT.

NIKKI  
Didn't you guys get my texts?

LUCAS  
Phones are on silent.

TAYLOR  
Like I said, we were rehearsing.

NIKKI  
Mandy's waiting in her trailer. She  
wants to talk to all the actors.

LUCAS  
About what?

MANDY (PRELAP)  
A girlfriend at Nielsen gave me a  
sneak peek at last night's ratings.

**INT. MANDY'S TRAILER - MINUTES LATER**

A much larger/nicer space that includes bouquets of fresh flowers. Lucas, Nikki and a worried Taylor sit with the two-timing Jon Diaz. Holding court is Mandy Gallagher. This is our very own "**FAB FIVE.**"

LUCAS  
So-so?

MANDY  
Our premiere had a point five and barely a million in live plus SD.

NIKKI  
No way.

TAYLOR  
That doesn't sound good...

LUCAS  
We lost more than half our audience over the summer? How?

JON  
The ratings system is such bullshit. No one really watches live TV anymore unless it's sports. Or the Oscars. It's all about binging.

MANDY  
Network advertisers don't binge, Jon.  
(then)  
I knew I should've taken that damn Hallmark movie during hiatus.

NIKKI  
So we're cancelled, I guess.  
Wouldn't be the first time for me.

TAYLOR  
Cancelled?

MANDY  
Don't look too shocked. Remember when Variety called us a wannabe *Riverdale*? On horse tranquilizers?  
(MORE)

MANDY (CONT'D)

Henry didn't step up his game when he had the chance. I called him this morning with the bad news.

TAYLOR

It can't be over.

MANDY

Nobody wants this to be the end. Yes, the writing's crap, but--

ERICA (O.S.)

Hey, guys?

Overworked Production Assistant, **ERICA WOODS** (think Hayley Kiyoko; early 20s) pops her head in. Mandy shoots her a look. Oops. Erica then knocks on the door she's already through.

ERICA (CONT'D)

Sorry to interrupt. Cast and crew have been invited to Stage 2 for a chat. With the producers.

They all share a knowing look...

PIKE (PRELAP)

The network's okay with a little...

**INT. STAGE 2 - DAY**

*Hot Young Things'* charming executive producer, **ROBERT PIKE**, 40, stands in front of a row of RED LOCKERS on the ARIZONA HIGH SCHOOL SET, holding a PERRIER. Pike is finishing up his pep talk to the CAST and CREW, which includes extra/Lucas' dangerous and handsome older brother, **NOAH JENSEN** (23) and sole female writer **RACHEL**, 30, wearing a dress shirt and tie.

PIKE

...sophomore slump.

RACHEL

(to Taylor)

Slump? More like a nosedive.

PIKE

They didn't publicize Season Two like they should've. Assumed our audience would find their way back to us without the same amount of billboards, bus wrap-arounds and Mandy's talkshow appearances.

MANDY

(to Nikki)

I was fine with no Kelly Ripa this year.

PIKE

Again, do not worry. We have at least eight more episodes to shoot. So...here's to *Hot Young Things*! Now, back to the salt mines.

The crowd claps unenthusiastically. **MARY JO**, the SECOND AD shouts--

SECOND AD MARY JO

Scene 4 is up! We're ready for first team! "Mr. Nelson" and "Becca" at the lockers.

Jon and Nikki make their way to set. ANGLE ON Noah and Lucas.

NOAH

Thank god we got eight more eps, bro. Keep that cash comin'.

LUCAS

Noah, Pike was just attempting to save face. If our ratings drop even lower next week, they'll shut down production. For good.

Lucas clocks TAYLOR WALKING OVER TO ROBERT PIKE--

LUCAS (CONT'D)

So don't count on anything.

TAYLOR

I know the crew appreciates what you said over there. Me too, honestly. Helps.

PIKE

I meant every word. We just need more network support. Which will happen now. So. Your house or mine tonight?

TAYLOR

The beach sounds nice. Could use the calm.

PIKE

Great. Bring a swimsuit. Or don't.

Pike puts his hand lovingly on her back: HE'S TAYLOR'S FIANCÉ. An unhappy Lucas exits, not before locking eyes with Taylor. She focuses back on Pike.

TAYLOR

Anyway, have you seen Henry? I've got a question about scene 27 and Rachel said she couldn't answer it for him.

PIKE

He's probably still reeling from the ratings. Wish Amanda had let *me* fill Henry in. He was already behind on delivering the next script...and now this. Erica's off to see if he's home.

ERICA (PRELAP)

This is total bullshit.

**INT. OLD NISSAN - DAY - MOVING**

Erica talking on the phone via AIRPODS.

ERICA

Trying to hunt down the depressed showrunner? If I wanted to be someone's babysitter, I would've taken that Millie Bobby Brown gig.

She arrives at Henry's HIGH-RISE; notices a CLUSTER OF POLICE ACTIVITY in front.

ERICA (CONT'D)

Mom, I'll call you back.

**EXT. HIGH-RISE - CONTINUOUS**

Erica cautiously walks towards the YELLOW TAPE. A COP stops her as she nears the entrance of the building--

ERICA

What's going on? My boss lives--

COP

Miss, please stay back. This is an active crime scene.

She notices A BODY, limp like a ragdoll, surrounded by a POOL OF BLOOD. It's HENRY RIVERA, 40s, with BROKEN GLASSES...and a BROKEN NECK.

As Erica SCREAMS...

**END OF TEASER**

**ACT ONE**

OVER BLACK, WE HEAR:

HOST (V.O.)  
It's been four days since the  
untimely death of television  
writer, Henry Rivera.

CLOSE ON A TV PLAYING *EXTRA*. The **FEMALE HOST** speaks into  
camera.

HOST (ON TV)  
Rivera's second season of *Hot Young  
Things* premiered to less-than-  
stellar ratings the night before  
his body was discovered.

We MOVE OFF the TV, past a hung-up BLACK GUCCI PANTSUIT, to  
find ourselves in...

**INT. GALLAGHER HOUSE - MASTER BATH - MORNING (SUNDAY)**

...Mandy soaks in her tub, opening fan mail with her TIFFANY  
& CO. LETTER OPENER; her coke vial at the ready.

HOST (O.S.)  
The soap centers around two sexy  
siblings who move to the Arizona  
desert.  
(re: *Hot Young Things* CLIP)  
It stars Lucas Jensen and Taylor  
Moreno. Former teen queen Mandy  
Gallagher of *Brentwood Prep* fame  
plays their mother.

She does a BUMP.

HOST (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
This morning, the LAPD released a  
statement, ruling Henry Rivera's  
death a suicide as he had left a  
written note for his mother. Our  
thoughts are with his family and co-  
workers. So, what does this mean  
for the sophomore drama? The  
producers of *Hot Young Things* did  
not return our calls.

We hear a LOUD NOISE from down the hall. Now ANOTHER - like  
drawers being feverishly opened.

Freaked out, Mandy throws on her KIMONO. She quietly grabs the letter opener and slowly moves into...

**INT. GALLAGHER HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER**

...where the NOISE is coming from. Mandy rounds a corner - her letter opener raised - and finds the BACK OF A MAN, rummaging through her JUNK DRAWER. A tense beat. Then--

MANDY

Greg?!

Her estranged rocker husband, **GREG YOUNG**, 40, turns around. He hasn't shaved for days, but still looks great.

MANDY (CONT'D)

What are you doing here? Where are the girls? My week doesn't start until tomorrow.

GREG

Zoe and Sammi are with Kisha. My girlfriend.

MANDY

Kisha. Okay. What the hell are you looking for? I sent all your shit over with the movers.

GREG

Not everything. I need the keys. To the Mercedes.

MANDY

The convertible is mine, Greg.

GREG

No, your car is the Honda Pilot.

MANDY

That's Ramona's car.

GREG

The nanny doesn't work for you anymore and the Audi is toast. I need something to drive the twins in, and, if you'll recall, I'm entitled to half of what you own. I mean, once you get around to signing the papers.

MANDY

No-fault, my ass. Just take the Honda and leave.

GREG

I'm a music producer. Can't be caught dead in that thing.

MANDY

And I'm a TV star!

GREG

Not for long. Heard a rumor you were the last person to speak to Henry before he went splat. Makes sense.

MANDY

You're a monster, you know that? Get out.

GREG

Look. We can get my lawyer involved if you want. And Jessica would love to chat since she's still waiting on that famous autograph.

Mandy stares at Greg - it's a showdown. Still holding the letter opener, she grabs her purse; pulls out a CAR KEY.

MANDY

(holding up the key)

I will give you this in exchange for the one for the house. I don't want you ever stepping into my home uninvited again. Clear?

Without hesitation, Greg takes off his HOUSE KEY from the RING and replaces it with the Mercedes key. He looks around.

GREG

You know, once alimony kicks in, you're gonna have to sell this place.

MANDY

(raw)

That's never going to happen - no matter what. This house is nine seasons of *Brentwood Prep* blood, sweat and tears. Our kids were born here. A lot of good memories.

(then)

Just go, Greg.

GREG

Enjoy the Honda.

MANDY  
Piece of shit.

GREG  
Me or the car?

He laughs and turns toward the front door. Mandy SLAMS her letter opener down on the counter.

**INT. RUSSO HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING**

With curlers in her hair, Nikki spreads almond butter onto a gluten-free English muffin. Lena enters with a GARMENT BAG. She grabs her daughter's plate of food--

LENA  
Time to get dressed.  
(hands the bag)  
For the funeral.

Nikki unzips the bag to discover a sparkling BLUE DRESS.

LENA (CONT'D)  
Got it at Intermix. Gorgeous,  
right?

NIKKI  
Totally. But I think you need to  
get your eyes checked: it's blue.

LENA  
The color's called midnight. Just  
Jared's *still* obsessed with Mandy  
Gallagher so the stalkerazzi will  
definitely be there, clicking away.  
You need to pop. This will help.

NIKKI  
Pop? At a funeral? It's not a movie  
premiere, Mom. You're supposed to  
dress in black. I can't  
wear...blue.

LENA  
*Midnight*. Nik. If *Hot Young Things*  
is finished - which is looking more  
and more likely - you might as well  
get some press out of it, right?

NIKKI  
(getting the courage)  
I don't wanna wear it. Period.  
(then)  
Okay?

LENA

(relents; zips up the bag)  
Yes, sorry. Wear black. It's your  
career - I'm just the hired help. I  
forget that sometimes.

TAYLOR (PRELAP)

It's a real gift...

**INT. CHURCH - DAY**

A teary-eyed Taylor stands at the podium, READING FROM HER  
PHONE to the grieving AUDIENCE. Near her: the **PRIEST**, HENRY  
RIVERA'S PORTRAIT and CLOSED CASKET.

TAYLOR

...to go from running Saturday  
morning cartoons, to creating two  
fan-favorite sitcoms, to then  
finding - I believe - a fresh take  
on the teen drama. Henry was truly  
a powerhouse.

During the above, we SCAN THE AUDIENCE and find our *HYT* gang  
in a row: Mandy Gallagher, Jon Diaz, Lucas Jensen, Robert  
Pike and, in THE MIDNIGHT BLUE DRESS, Nikki Russo. Sitting  
with them is Lucas' brother Noah, PA Erica, **THE WRITERS**  
(including Rachel) and Lena Russo (wearing NAVY). Holding  
Jon's hand is his stylish wife, **BRIE DIAZ**, 32.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

He also thought out of the box.  
Like with casting. If Henry hadn't  
convinced the network to take a  
huge risk on a no-name college  
freshman from Jersey, I would've  
never booked the job of a lifetime.  
Or met the man of my dreams.

Taylor smiles, acknowledging Pike. Lucas' heart sinks. Mandy  
blinks away an eye roll.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Henry changed my life for the  
better. And I know he did the same  
for all of you, too.  
(re: portrait)  
We will miss, love and honor you  
forever, Henry.

**INT. CHURCH - HALLWAY - LATER**

As the memorial starts to let out, we find Nikki and Mandy.

NIKKI

Taylor's speech was super touching.

MANDY

She was reading it from her phone, Nikki. She's an actress - couldn't bother to remember the damn thing? The lazy generation. No offense.

If she only knew...

MANDY (CONT'D)

And why didn't Robert ask me to speak?

Taylor emerges.

TAYLOR

How did I do?

MANDY

It was very touching.

TAYLOR

Thanks. I was so nervous. Oh, Pike said he wanted five minutes with the cast before we take off.

MANDY

Probably to give us the official pink slip.

NIKKI

Here we go again...

TAYLOR

No. Pike would've told me.

MANDY

You're right. Of course he would've.

Nikki clocks **PILAR RIVERA** (70s) sitting alone on a bench.

NIKKI

Hey, that's Henry's mom, right? Awful. Your own child dying before...you know. You.

MANDY

I'd give my condolences, but she doesn't seem to speak any English.

TAYLOR  
I'll be right back.

MANDY  
(to Nikki)  
Is your dress...blue?

Taylor approaches Pilar. Something about this woman instantly brings tears to Taylor's eyes. To our surprise, Taylor begins speaking rapid-fire SPANISH (we see the English translation via SUBTITLES)--

TAYLOR (IN SPANISH)  
Mrs. Rivera? I just wanted to say that even though I only knew Henry for a short time, I'm so grateful--

PILAR RIVERA (IN SPANISH)  
My son would never do this to me. To our family. He's a good Catholic boy.

TAYLOR (IN SPANISH)  
I'm sorry? I don't--

PILAR RIVERA (IN SPANISH)  
(grabbing her)  
Henry didn't kill himself - he was murdered! By the devil. Satan pushed Henry to his death!

Mandy pulls a shocked Taylor away from Pilar.

MANDY  
We gotta go, Taylor.

The three women exit...

**EXT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS**

MANDY  
Mrs. Rivera seemed intense.

NIKKI  
She's allowed to be. Her only son just died.  
(to Taylor)  
And you're fluent in Spanish?

TAYLOR  
It's close enough to Italian.

LUCAS (O.S.)  
We're not cancelled!

TAYLOR

What?

Jon Diaz and Lucas Jensen are with Taylor's fiancé, Pike.  
Lucas' brother Noah smokes a cigarette nearby.

JON

Tell 'em, Pike.

PIKE

Erica will email you tonight. But, since we're all here...a table read's happening. Tomorrow. I've found an exciting replacement that the network's on board with. Not that we can really replace Henry. Ever.

NIKKI

You hired a new showrunner? Henry's been dead less than a week.

MANDY

Is Rachel going to take over? Her scripts were the strongest by far. I mean, she's no Shonda, but better than nothing.

PIKE

No, a new guy. Name's J. David Coburn.

MANDY

Sounds like a serial killer.

PIKE

Coburn's a young playwright from the UK. His agents in London pitched me him. Yesterday, Coburn and I Skyped for two hours - he's got some wild stories up his sleeve. And he's fast. He said he'll write the entire flight here so the script's ready for the read. Shooting will resume Tuesday.

TAYLOR

(hopeful)

A new boss.

NIKKI

I know it sounds weird - being what today is - but the five of us should celebrate. Taylor's famous watermelon punch at her apartment?

LUCAS

Don't intrude or anything, Nik.

NIKKI

What? The show must go on, right? Just double the vodka your recipe calls for.

TAYLOR

A party? Okay. In memory of Henry.

PIKE

Malibu will miss you. Congrats again, guys.

Pike kisses Taylor and walks off. Noah puts out his cig and arrives at the group.

NOAH

Did I hear there's a party somewhere?

LUCAS

Sorry, bro. Cast only.

TAYLOR

Of course your brother is invited. He's part of the show.

LUCAS

He's an extra.

MANDY

Lucas, don't be a brat...

Mandy hears a CLICK - CLICK - CLICK. She notices **PAPARAZZI** (THREE GUYS) across the parking lot, taking photos.

MANDY (CONT'D)

Shit. Paparazzi. By the church van. Turn the other way so they can't get the shot.

TAYLOR

(as they turn)  
We're at a funeral. They can't be here right now.

Nikki moves closer to Mandy.

MANDY

Sure they can. It's not against the law.

NIKKI

(looking at Paps)  
Even though it should be.

JON

But the service wasn't announced publicly. Someone must've tipped them off.

TAYLOR

Who would do that?

Nikki smooths her dress as pleased mom LENA watches by the church doors. CLICK - CLICK - CLICK. Noah storms over to **PAPARAZZO 1--**

MANDY

Noah, don't--

NOAH

Hey, asshole! Have some respect!

PAP 1

Just doin' my job, man. And back up.

NOAH

(inches from his face)  
You better back the fuck outta here before I break that camera and your jaw--

Jon PULLS Noah off the guy as the Paps continue to click away.

JON

Not today, Noah. Not worth it.  
(to Paps)  
Sorry, guys. Just a tough time for all of us.

They arrive back at the group. Lucas can't even look at his brother.

TAYLOR

Uh, so, who's ready for that punch?

**INT. TAYLOR'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

WEST HOLLYWOOD. Lucas, Mandy and Jon nurse spiked punch; Noah drinks a Coke.

JON  
(buzzed, texting)  
Where the hell's Nikki? Wasn't this party her idea?

MANDY  
We're meeting the new showrunner tomorrow. Hundred bucks says Mommie Dearest didn't want her meal ticket bloated.

JON  
Man, I'm glad Pike banned Lena's ass from set. She creeps me out.

LUCAS  
And she's gonna ruin Nikki's career if she keeps meddling. The leash is too tight.

NOAH  
Sometimes tight isn't a bad thing. Look at me. If it weren't for Mom and Dad staying on my butt all the time, I'd be an even bigger mess.

Taylor emerges from the kitchen with a fresh pitcher.

TAYLOR  
Noah, don't sell yourself short. You're doing really good. You're sober - what - six months?

NOAH  
I've been clean seven.

LUCAS  
But still bullying people...

TAYLOR  
(zip it, Luke)  
And you have a job.

NOAH  
Yeah. All thanks to this dude.

He grabs Lucas' shoulder. Maybe a little *too* hard.

TAYLOR

Can I top anyone off?

MANDY

I'm actually pretty beat. Been an emotional day. Gonna take advantage of having the house daughter-free for eight more hours.

(gets up; woozy)

Taylor, those drinks! Probably a good thing my car's in the shop.

(pulling out a phone)

Just gonna grab an Uber.

NOAH

I can take you. Designated driver.

(to Lucas)

For life.

MANDY

Really? Are you sure? That would be great.

TAYLOR

What about you, Jon?

Jon is texting someone - under the table - named "CLEANERS":  
DRUNK & HORNY. GOT A SLOT OPEN? SAME PLACE. ASAP.

JON

Uh...

He gets a TEXT back: "THUMBS UP" EMOJI.

JON (CONT'D)

Nah, I should go home, too. The wife, ya know.

Mandy, Noah and Jon start to gather their things.

TAYLOR

Luke?

LUCAS

I'll hang for a sec. Sure.

NOAH

What a good "brother."

Taylor looks at Lucas - does Noah know about them? She shakes it off.

JON

See you all tomorrow.

As soon as the group exits, Taylor shuts the door and grabs Lucas.

TAYLOR

Oh my god, those couple days felt like a year. I've missed you.

She PUSHES Lucas onto the couch and gets on top of him. They start to KISS. Lucas takes off his shirt. In between KISSING--

LUCAS

Take off my pants. Grab a condom.  
(then)  
We're not stopping for anyone this time.

Taylor smiles as she UNDOES HIS BELT. Clothes come off. They finally start to MAKE LOVE on the couch as we...

**END OF ACT ONE**

ACT TWO**INT. GALLAGHER HOUSE - MASTER - THE NEXT MORNING (MONDAY)**

CLOSE ON Mandy in bed. Suddenly, we hear the jarring SOUND of an IPHONE ALARM.

MANDY  
 (hitting snooze)  
*Fuck.*  
 (then)  
 You gotta go.

We then HEAR her bed partner.

GUY'S VOICE (O.S.)  
 What? It's still dark out.

We GO WIDER to reveal Lucas' naked brother, NOAH.

MANDY  
 Just blackout shades. Greg will be dropping off the girls in an hour and I have to get ready for the table read before mom duties commence.  
 (as he gets up)  
 But. Will you leave me some more...stuff?

Noah takes a SWIG OF LEFTOVER BEER from last night's rendezvous. NOT sober.

NOAH  
*Cocaine?* What, if you don't say the word, does it make you feel less guilty?

MANDY  
 Don't be a dick, Noah. Of course I can say it. Just...please?

NOAH  
 (zipping up his pants)  
 I'm having fun and all, but at some point, I'll need money for my services. The coke, I mean.

MANDY  
 Didn't you have a poster of me on your wall as a kid?

NOAH

Mandy. I can't cover your drugs.  
You know how little extras make in  
a day.

MANDY

And you know I'm prepping for  
divorce, so money's tight right  
now. What do you think the stuff's  
for? Because I'm happy? I promise,  
I'm keeping track.

A reluctant Noah pulls out a vial from his pants.

MANDY (CONT'D)

*Thank you.*

She pulls the shade up to reveal the DAYLIGHT.

**INT. DIAZ HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MORNING**

CULVER CITY. RACKS OF CLOTHING line the room. On the couch,  
Brie sketches a red jumpsuit on her IPAD. Jon, in his workout  
gear, enters from their bedroom.

JON

You're up early.

BRIE

Got inspired to do one more look  
for before the shoot next week.  
(as Jon throws on sneakers)  
Are you off to the gym? I thought  
you were just there last night.

JON

*Hot Young Things* didn't hire me for  
my acting abilities, Brie. Gotta  
keep up the body or I'm screwed.

BRIE

I get it. But you're a much better  
actor than you think. And. I wish I  
saw you around the house more.

JON

Babe, when you married me, you knew  
my hours were crazy.

BRIE

But when you're not working, you're  
at Equinox. Or out for a run. We  
need time to be with each other.

(MORE)

BRIE (CONT'D)  
 (puts down iPad)  
 Be...intimate. I miss you.

Jon can see Brie's frustration; sits on the couch next to her.

JON  
 Tonight after the read. Okay?

Jon kisses her on the head and is out the door.

BRIE  
 (to herself)  
 Okay.

**INT. RUSSO HOUSE - NIKKI'S BEDROOM - MORNING**

Cxloe's "**TOUGH LOVE**" PLAYS. At her VANITY, Nikki blows on WET RED NAILS while skimming *Just Jared* on an IPAD. She stops: there's a post about Mandy Gallagher at Henry's funeral. Nikki lights up.

NIKKI  
 Mom. Mom! I made *Just Jared*!

Her elbow slips and hits the iPad, knocking the bottle of red polish over.

NIKKI (CONT'D)  
 Oh, shit...

She attempts to quickly clean up the red mess with nail polish remover/cotton balls as Lena enters--

LENA  
 You did?!

Nikki shows a dozen thumbnails of Mandy Gallagher.

NIKKI  
 Yeah. Only Mandy and me.

LENA  
 See? The blue popped. Midnight.

Lena clicks on a PROFILE SHOT OF NIKKI talking to Mandy outside the church. She reads the caption.

LENA (CONT'D)  
 Mandy Gallagher and "mourner."  
 Mourner? Fuckers. I'll email them.  
 Wait.  
 (zooms in on Nikki)  
 (MORE)

LENA (CONT'D)

What's going on with your face? Are those crow's feet?

NIKKI

No. No. I'm squinting. The sun was right in my eyes. You told me not to wear sunglasses, remember?

LENA

Maybe we'll just keep you as "mourner."

(re: red polish on table)

Make sure that doesn't stain.

She hands back the iPad to Nikki and exits.

**EXT. STUDIO LOT - DAY**

Taylor gets out of her PRIUS and passes a HOVERING DRONE, which only mildly irritates her. She heads into the *HYT* OFFICES. As Taylor opens the building's doors, she runs into Rachel, the writer, holding a BANKERS BOX.

TAYLOR

Hey, Rachel. You coming to the--  
(re: box)  
--what's that?

RACHEL

J. David Whatever just fired the entire writing staff. Via your boyfriend.

TAYLOR

Are you serious?

RACHEL

The asshole can apparently handle the rest of the season alllll by himself. Pike says he's "really prolific." Fuck Pike, too. Sorry. Anyway, I enjoyed writing for you.

Taylor watches Rachel leave before slowly heading into...

**INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

...where Erica passes out WATERMARKED SCRIPTS to Lucas, Jon, Nikki, and Mandy as they settle into their swivel chairs around the long table. Taylor takes a script and sits next to Lucas. He gives her a "last night was amazing" nod. She smiles. As Mandy grabs a HIGHLIGHTER, she whispers to Nikki--

MANDY

They're watermarking our scripts now? What are we, *Game of Thrones*?

NIKKI

God, I hope so.

Pike enters the room and shuts the door.

PIKE

Welcome everyone to *Hot Young Things*, Episode 206: "New Beginnings," written by our *new* fearless leader, J. David Coburn.

The cast claps, but the seat with Coburn's namecard is EMPTY. Erica rushes to remove the card.

PIKE (CONT'D)

Unfortunately, J. David came down with a nasty flu and was unable to travel across the pond. But! He sent us a lovely message.

(reading from phone)

*"To my HYT family: I'm so excited to begin this journey with you all and apologize for not being there in person. I'll be watching. Cheers. J. David Coburn."*

(then)

We'll film the read for Coburn to review.

The actors seem confused and annoyed.

PIKE (CONT'D)

Okay, Erica. Showtime.

Erica presses record on her CAMERA as Pike begins to READ--

PIKE (CONT'D)

*Interior - Cassie's Bedroom - Morning. Cassie and her brother, Chris, sit on the bed. They're kissing. And no, not the "hello" kind. The French kind. After a few hot beats, Chris pulls back.*

During the above, we're on Taylor. She looks at Lucas: WHAT. THE. FUCK. Mandy also seems displeased.

PIKE (CONT'D)

And then Cassie says...Taylor?  
Cassie says.

TAYLOR

Sorry.  
 (then, reading)  
*Why'd you - what's wrong?*

LUCAS

*It's just...I don't know...we  
 shouldn't be doing this.*

TAYLOR

*You mean here?*

LUCAS

*I mean anywhere. But...I like it  
 too much to stop.*

TAYLOR

*So don't.*

LUCAS

*Do you have a condom?*

Jon gives a little cat-call. Mandy shoots him a look.

TAYLOR

*What?*

LUCAS

*I'm ready.*

TAYLOR

*But you just said...*

LUCAS

*I know.*

TAYLOR

*Chris. You've waited your - this  
 long and you want to...now? Are you  
 sure?*

LUCAS

*Yes.*

PIKE

*And as the siblings start to  
 undress, we cut to...*

Off Taylor, SHAKEN that art is now imitating her life...

**END OF ACT TWO**

ACT THREE**INT. TAYLOR'S TRAILER - DAY**

QUICK CUTS of Taylor, frantically pulling pictures off the walls, searching her vents, opening drawers, etc., like her life depends on it. She can't find what she's looking for.

LUCAS (O.S.)

What are you doing?

Lucas is at her door. Taylor pulls him inside. She keeps her voice at low volume.

TAYLOR

Looking for cameras. Microphones. Something. But I can't find shit.

LUCAS

You think you were bugged?

TAYLOR

All I know is that there are some seriously blatant similarities to our situation in the script, Luke. And things I'm pretty sure I said in real life. Having total fucking *deja vu* right now.

LUCAS

Yeah. It can't be a coincidence.

TAYLOR

Did you tell Noah about us? He was looking at me last night like he knew--

LUCAS

What? No - I told no one. I wouldn't. I'm just as shocked as you are.

(then)

But, Tay, have you thought about...what if Pike had the new writer put that stuff in the script?

TAYLOR

You think my fiancé is onto our...thing or whatever?

(Lucas re: *thing*)

(MORE)

TAYLOR (CONT'D)  
And wrote it into the show - to  
what - fuck with us?

LUCAS  
It's possible. I mean, who is this  
J. David Coburn dude, anyway?

TAYLOR  
(getting on her phone)  
Let's see.

She does a GOOGLE SEARCH of J. DAVID COBURN.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)  
Lots of random hits but nothing on  
a person with that specific name.

LUCAS  
Try using quotes.

She does and--

TAYLOR  
Zero results.

LUCAS  
Nothing?  
(then)  
Why would Pike and the network let  
some rookie writer take over the  
whole show?

MANDY (PRELAP)  
I can't believe you got rid of  
Rachel.

**INT. PIKE'S OFFICE - DAY**

Mandy sets down her script as she sits across from Pike.

MANDY  
She was our only female writer. One  
was bad enough. But now, none?

PIKE  
It wasn't my choice.

MANDY  
It was J. David Coburn's. Right.  
(then)  
Maybe this guy doesn't know my  
work. Although *Brentwood Prep* still  
reruns like crazy all over  
Europe...

PIKE

Oh, no. Coburn said he's a huge fan of yours. It's one of the reasons he's doing the show.

MANDY

(finds page)

Then why at the top of Act Three am I just standing there, without any lines, listening to Taylor's character go on and on as I bake her an apple pie?

(laughs)

A fucking apple pie, Robert! I have been dodging mom roles left and right since the day I turned twenty-five. But "Laurie" wasn't just a mom. She was complicated. Had her own scenes - her own arc. Now? Apple pie. I desperately miss Henry's words.

PIKE

Really? Because Taylor said you called his writing "crap."

MANDY

Your fiancée must've misheard me.

(hardens)

While my "children" are taking up precious pages to secretly bang, please remember that this show would've never been given a green light without me. You needed Mandy Gallagher. Still do.

PIKE

What do you want me to say to that, Amanda?

MANDY

Nothing. Just stating facts.

TAYLOR (O.S.)

Is this a bad time?

Taylor is here.

PIKE

Yes...

MANDY

(gets up)

No, no. He's all yours, sweetie. We can finish this later.

Mandy exits; Taylor shuts the door.

PIKE

Hi.

TAYLOR

What the hell's up with this incest shit?

PIKE

"Hi to you, too."

TAYLOR

It doesn't feel very *TV-14* to me.

PIKE

Well, the network called before Mandy barged in here. They love the script. Especially the new Cassie/Chris storyline. Said it was, quote, "*Netflixy*."

Taylor studies him.

TAYLOR

Did you...do you...love it?

PIKE

Of course I don't like watching you kiss anyone else, but it's daring and what audiences expect in today's shows. Most actors would kill to have something this juicy to chew on. Including the Wicked Witch of the Westside.

TAYLOR

When you Skyped with Coburn, what did he look like?

PIKE

I don't know, a white guy. British. A little timid? Why?

TAYLOR

He's got no bio online. No Twitter or Instagram. Not even private accounts. It's...super weird.

(MORE)

TAYLOR (CONT'D)  
(Pike laughs)  
You find this funny?

PIKE  
Just ironic. When we got your casting tape two years ago, I tried to look you up for...my own selfish reasons, and you were nowhere to be found.

TAYLOR  
(quickly)  
P, I told you, I have a psycho ex back in Hoboken. Needed to keep the guy away. Now he can't touch me.  
(then)  
I want to meet with Coburn, okay? When he's not "under the weather."

PIKE  
Why?

TAYLOR  
Do I need a reason? How about I'm number two on the call sheet and should be able to communicate with the person that's writing my dialogue. Like I used to with Henry. Not to mention, I'm engaged to our executive producer?

PIKE  
Okay, okay. If he feels better enough to travel next week, I'll try to set up a one-on-one.

TAYLOR  
Do better than try.

PIKE  
Jesus. You're starting to sound a little too much like Mandy Gallagher. You know that?

**EXT. STUDIO LOT - MINUTES LATER**

A drone hovers nearby as Taylor heads to her Prius. She lights up an AMERICAN SPIRIT. Mandy approaches with her phone out.

MANDY  
You smoke?

TAYLOR

Used to. Kinda falling back on bad habits.

MANDY

It's your body.

(then)

I think I've been a pretty good coworker to you, Taylor. Some may even say...a friend. When you were cast, I showed you the ropes, right? Was patient with all your questions? Introduced you to my managers?

TAYLOR

Totally. I've learned a ton from you.

MANDY

But there's one thing I think you missed: respecting the cone of silence. Being part of a cast is like being part of a family. A private one. So, I'd really appreciate if you'd keep what I say to you, to yourself. Hopefully, you and our boss have more interesting things to do in bed than discuss my opinions about the show.

TAYLOR

*Noted.*

(off Mandy)

Sorry, just a lot going on right now. I will respect the cone of silence.

MANDY

That's all I needed to hear.

(DING!)

My Uber. See you tomorrow. Can't wait to bake you that pie.

Mandy walks through the gates; Taylor watches on as her cigarette burns...

LENA (PRELAP)

In the kitchen, honey.

**INT. RUSSO HOUSE - KITCHEN - SUNSET**

Nikki enters with her purse and keys to find Lena drinking white wine with a **WOMAN IN A WHITE LAB COAT**. Her nametag says "Jill."

NIKKI

Oh. Hi. I didn't know you had company.

LENA

This is Jill, from Burbank Med Spa.

NIKKI

(okay...)  
Nice to meet you.

Nikki goes to the fridge.

NIKKI (CONT'D)

I'm starving. There wasn't anything somewhat healthy at the table read.

LENA

You can eat in a bit. Jill is here to freshen you up.

NIKKI

A facial? But I got one last week--

LENA

No, honey. Fillers. Jill just did me. Says I look ten years younger.

JILL

She does, right?

Nikki sees Jill's KIT: it includes a selection of SYRINGES.

NIKKI

But I'm not even thirty.

LENA

Exactly.  
(then)  
Your little production assistant friend slipped me Coburn's first script.

NIKKI

What? No, Erica's not supposed to do that anymore. They're watermarked now.

LENA

It was incredible. For Taylor. Too bad you can't screw the producer like that child bride.

Jill awkwardly shifts around.

NIKKI

Because Pike's taken? Or because I'm a lesbian?

LENA

*Nikki*. She's joking, Jill.  
(then)  
Tell her you're joking.

Jill stares at the counter...

NIKKI

Maybe this Coburn guy thinks I suck or something.

LENA

We both saw those pictures on Just Jared. You're starting to look your age, which is a problem. Right, Jill?

JILL

Um. I mean, youth equals power. Especially in this town.

NIKKI

Mom, I've told you, I can't play seventeen forever. And. I don't want anything injected into my face. I'm serious.

(then)

Sorry you had to come all this way, Jill. Please be sure to bill me for both treatments.

The woman gathers her stuff.

JILL

No worries. You're on my way home. Here's my card, in case you change your mind.

Jill attempts to hand Nikki a BUSINESS CARD.

NIKKI

I won't.

LENA  
 (taking the card)  
 She will.

JILL  
 Goodnight.

Jill exits the kitchen door leading to the side yard.

LENA  
 That was incredibly unprofessional.

NIKKI  
 Me? You were the one talking trash  
 about Taylor in front of a total  
 stranger.

LENA  
 (not listening)  
 What if Jill tells her friends that  
 Nikki Russo from *Hot Young Things*  
 likes, you know, women *and* is a  
 total bitch?

NIKKI  
 Mom. This isn't the 1980s. And I  
 wasn't a bitch. I've got low blood  
 sugar and don't want some shady  
 door-to-door Botox dealer--

Lena PUSHES Nikki HARD towards the counter, her back SLAMMING  
 against the marble corner. Nikki yelps as she catches  
 herself.

LENA  
 Don't ever pull a stunt like that  
 again. I need to fix this.

Lena grabs a WAD OF CASH from Nikki's wallet and chases after  
 Jill.

Off Nikki, still in pain...

**END OF ACT THREE**

**ACT FOUR****EXT. STUDIO LOT - THE NEXT MORNING (TUESDAY)**

Mandy parks the HONDA PILOT in her spot. She opens the door to find Noah, waiting for her.

NOAH

Mercedes still in the shop?

MANDY

Truth? It never was. And I can't keep taking Ubers everywhere. Greg thought he deserved the car. Probably showing it off to his new college-aged girlfriend "Kisha" who he met at Park La Brea. He's making my life beyond miserable. Him and that new Brit dick writer.

(looking around)

I went a little overboard last night medicating myself. So. You...got any more coke for me? See? I can say it.

NOAH

No, Mandy. I don't. Not until you pay me. This shit is getting old.

MANDY

You know what? I don't need it. I'm fine. And I don't think we should hang out anymore. Excuse me.

Mandy heads to her trailer as Noah watches. Pissed.

**INT. NIKKI'S TRAILER - DAY**

At the makeup mirror, a turned Nikki pulls up her shirt to look at the BRUISE on her lower back: it's pretty bad.

She carefully sits down at her table and stares at her face in the mirror, looking for wrinkles. Nikki then picks up the Botox woman's card. PA Erica knocks and pops her head in--

ERICA

Hey, Nikki. Hair and makeup's ready for you.

NIKKI

Do you think I look old?

ERICA

What?

NIKKI

You know...should I get fillers? Or Botox?

ERICA

No way. That's - that's just wrong. You're so young.

NIKKI

I'm twenty-eight, Erica. Twenty-nine in November.

ERICA

Really? I thought we were the same age.

NIKKI

My mom wants you and the rest of the world to believe that. But I've been playing teenagers on TV for over a decade. I just worry...that's why Coburn isn't giving me good scenes. Because I'm not as *hot and young* as Taylor Moreno - who has these crazy-fun new things to play. "Becca" is still just the stock rich bitch blonde. But with less lines. On paper.

ERICA

Nik, seriously? You're the most beautiful girl in Los Angeles. Maybe the Universe. Taylor's got nothing on you.

(then)

And I wouldn't change a single hair on your head.

Nikki touches her hair as she looks again in the mirror.

NIKKI

You're just saying that.

ERICA

Have I ever lied to you? Ever?

Erica puts her hand over Nikki's. There's history and chemistry here.

NIKKI

Never.

Real chemistry. Erica lets go of Nikki's hand.

ERICA

We better get going.

NIKKI

Yeah. We should.

LENA (PRELAP)

Don't feed me this crap.

**INT. INTERMIX - DAY**

ROBERTSON BLVD. Lena is chewing out the hip **SALESGIRL**, who holds onto Nikki's blue funeral dress.

LENA

You can - and will - absolutely give me a refund. It's still got the tag on it.

SALESGIRL

I understand that, ma'am, but the dress has been worn. We have a policy about--

LENA

This is ridiculous - no it hasn't.

SALESGIRL

There are white deodorant stains...under the arms.

LENA

Thirty women could've tried this on before we purchased.

Lena's phone RINGS: BLOCKED CALLER.

SALESGIRL

And I can still smell the perfume. Tom Ford Velvet Orchid?

RING.

LENA

Forget it.  
(GRABS dress)  
Loser.

RING. Lena stuffs the dress back into the bag, turns and answers the call.

LENA (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)  
 This is Lena. No, Nikki Russo is unavailable. She's shooting. How can I help you? No, I'm pretty sure she *doesn't* have an appointment set with you, lady. Sorry. Goodbye.

Lena HANGS UP the phone, steamed.

**INT. JON DIAZ'S PORSCHE - NIGHT - MOVING**

Jon, on Wilshire, talks to his wife via FACETIME.

JON  
 Pike is plowing through these scenes, so they called me in last minute. Will be home by midnight.

BRIE  
 You're on call 24-7 now like a freakin' doctor.

JON  
 Not saving any lives over here.

BRIE  
 Well, I'm still proud of ya, babe. Will wait up.

JON  
 You don't have to.

BRIE  
 But I'm gonna. Love you.

JON  
 Love you more.

Brie kisses the camera. Click. Jon turns into...

**EXT. PENINSULA HOTEL - CONTINUOUS**

...and parks his car in front of the valet stand. He gets a TEXT from "CLEANERS": ROOM 207. READY FOR U. A private moment. How long can he keep this up?

**EXT. PARK LA BREA - NIGHT**

Mandy's soon-to-be ex, Greg, parks the MERCEDES-AMG S65. Next to him is R&B singer **KISHA** (19, effervescent). As Greg puts up the convertible top...

KISHA

All that CGI made my head hurt.  
But, whatever, I'd watch The Rock  
watch paint dry...

She stops talking; stares at something.

GREG

Kisha? What?

Greg sees, in his headlights, Noah, holding a METAL BAT.

GREG (CONT'D)

Uh...can we help you?

NOAH

You Greg Young?

GREG

Yeah? And you are...?

NOAH

A friend of your wife.

KISHA

Wife? Greg, you said you were  
divorced.

GREG

I will be. Soon.

Noah TAPS the bat with his hand. Ready for a fight.

GREG (CONT'D)

Go inside, Kisha.

Kisha gets out of the car and runs into Greg's nearby  
APARTMENT UNIT. Noah checks her out as she goes.

NOAH

She's a sweet piece of ass. But a  
little young for you, don't ya  
think?

Greg exits the car, clutching his keys.

GREG

Look - I don't know who you are or  
what you want, but you need to  
leave. Now.

NOAH

I will. After you give me those keys. This is Mandy's car and she wants it back.

GREG

Well, let Mandy know she can talk to my lawy--

WHAP! Noah SWINGS THE BAT at Greg's STOMACH! He WHAPS him again. Greg FALLS to the ground, HITTING HIS HEAD. Kisha dashes out.

KISHA

Greg! Oh my god--

NOAH

Stay back, bitch.  
(to Greg)  
Give. Me. The. Keys.

GREG

I - I'm calling the police.

Greg reaches for his phone and Noah returns to hitting him--

KISHA

Stop it!!

GREG

(losing consciousness)  
Please. Please...just...here.

Greg weakly SLIDES HIS KEYS along the pavement.

NOAH

See? That wasn't so hard.  
(gets in Mercedes)  
Pussy.

As Noah drives away and Kisha rushes over to a BLOODY AND BARELY MOVING GREG...

**INT. CASSIE'S BEDROOM SET - NIGHT**

CLOSED SET. Taylor ("Cassie") and Lucas ("Chris") are about to film their love scene. You can smell the awkwardness in the air. As they're being MIC'D, Pike walks over.

PIKE

Okay, time for some incest, people!

TAYLOR

Come on, P. Not now.

He can tell Taylor's nervous. So is Lucas.

PIKE

Look. I know it's weird. But Cassie and Chris love each other. On a different level. They want this more than anything. It's Romeo and Juliet - forbidden yet tragic. True. Ready?

TAYLOR

Sure.

The actors get into position on the bed as Pike makes his way back to VIDEO VILLAGE. Taylor takes a deep breath and shakes out her arms. Lucas gives her an encouraging smile. She smiles back. Pike settles into his chair--

PIKE

...and, action!

A beat then, Taylor goes in for the KISS. Slowly, she starts to bring her REAL LIFE PASSION FOR LUCAS into it. It's getting HOT. Too hot, maybe. Lucas pulls out of the embrace--

TAYLOR-AS-CASSIE

Why'd you - what's wrong?

LUCAS-AS-CHRIS

It's just...I don't know...we shouldn't be doing this.

TAYLOR-AS-CASSIE

You mean here?

LUCAS-AS-CHRIS

I mean anywhere. But...I like it too much to stop.

TAYLOR-AS-CASSIE

So don't.

They kiss again. Things intensify.

LUCAS-AS-CHRIS

Do you have a condom?

TAYLOR-AS-CASSIE

What?

LUCAS-AS-CHRIS

I'm ready.

TAYLOR-AS-CASSIE  
But you just said...

LUCAS-AS-CHRIS  
I know.

TAYLOR-AS-CASSIE  
Luke. You've waited your - this  
long and you want to--

PIKE (O.S.)  
Cut!

Pike rushes over.

TAYLOR  
What's wrong?

PIKE  
Nothing. Except you just called  
"Chris" Luke.

TAYLOR  
No. I - I don't think so.

PIKE  
You did.

She looks at Lucas.

TAYLOR  
I didn't mean to. Obviously.

LUCAS  
It happens to all of us.

PIKE  
Other than that, really beautiful  
work, guys. The forbidden love is  
palpable. Let's try it again.  
Remember, Taylor, "*Chris!*"

Pike kisses Taylor on the head before running back to his  
chair.

PIKE (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
...and, action!

Off a haunted Taylor, her realities blurring...

**END OF ACT FOUR**

**ACT FIVE****EXT. STUDIO LOT - TIME CUT**

An emotional Taylor rushes to her car. Erica tries to catch up.

ERICA

Taylor, where are you going?

TAYLOR

Home. That was my last scene today.  
Mary Jo already wrapped me so...

ERICA

I know. But. You're still mic'd.  
And you're not really supposed to  
bring the costumes home...

TAYLOR

I won't tell if you don't. Please?  
I gotta get out of here.

ERICA

Okay, just the mic then. Here, let  
me help you.

As Taylor and Erica awkwardly take off the mic, A LOUD NOISE whirls over their heads. Taylor looks up: the DRONE is back, hovering. A beat. Taylor stares at the drone; wonders if this is how J. David Coburn's spying on her.

She GRABS the drone. It's a struggle to get it to the ground.

ERICA (CONT'D)

Taylor!

Once she does, Taylor, with a few tears, STOMPS ON THE DRONE until it's in pieces.

MAN (O.S.)

What the hell are you doing?!

Taylor looks up to find a **MAN** and his **CRYING DISNEY SON** (8, holding a REMOTE).

BOY

Daaaaadddddyyyyyy!

MAN

That was a wrap gift from Zendaya!

TAYLOR

Sorry. I thought...we'll get you a  
new one, okay?  
(gets in the car)  
Talk to her.

And with that, Taylor quickly backs out of her space, driving off the studio lot.

**INT. THE PENINSULA HALLWAY - NIGHT**

Of Methodist's "**DEAD TO ME**" PLAYS as Jon walks down the hall. With his card key out, he opens the suite...

**INT. THE PENINSULA - VILLA SUITE - CONTINUOUS**

...as we're TIGHT on Jon.

JON

Hey. So. How was your shower?

The CAMERA PANS over to the bed to reveal...

...RENT BOY, "**DALLAS**" (20, tattoos and piercings). He's almost posed on top of the sheets, wearing only a pair of skimpy Andrew Christians. Yes, Jon's having an affair with A GUY. A *hot young guy*.

DALLAS

Shut up and get over here.

Jon takes off his jacket and crawls on top of Dallas. They KISS.

DALLAS (CONT'D)

I'm glad you wanted to see me  
again, dude.

JON

Why stop a good thing?

DALLAS

(kissing his neck)  
I agree completely. Now take this  
shit off.

And as Jon undresses and Dallas helps...

MANDY (PRELAP)

Hope you're hungry!

**INT. GALLAGHER HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT**

In her kimono acting cheery on the outside, jonesing on the inside, Mandy sets down plates of overcooked pancakes, eggs and bacon for spoiled twin first graders, **SAMMI** and **ZOE**. They're glued to their IPADS.

MANDY

Here ya go! Pancakes for dinner, as requested.

SAMMI

But we said we wanted chocolate chips in 'em. Ramona used to always make 'em with chocolate chips.

MANDY

Sorry, sweetie - we're out.  
(really trying)  
But. I promise I'll go to the store in the morning. We can have chocolate chip pancakes tomorrow night! Deal?

As she pours two glasses of orange juice, Zoe dismissively pushes her plate back toward her mother.

ZOE

Ramona *never* ran out of chocolate chips.

Losing it, Mandy SLAMS DOWN the juice.

MANDY

Mommy needs a minute.

Her daughters watch as she turns the corner...

**INT. GALLAGHER HOUSE - HOME OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

Mandy's goes to her desk and sits down; opens up the jewelry box. Her coke vial is empty but furiously attempts to get any "crumbs" out.

She stops, drops the vial and puts her hands over her face. A moment of vulnerability; the REAL Mandy Gallagher.

MANDY

What the fuck am I doing?

Over it, Mandy throws the bottle into the trash. We hear a muffled doorbell RING...

**EXT. GALLAGHER HOUSE - SAME TIME**

A MAN'S FIST KNOCKS on the door. Mandy's twin daughters answer the door. They look up at--

NOAH  
Hi there. Is your mom home?

Noah has some blood splatter on his shirt. Zoe sizes him up then calls into the house--

ZOE  
*Mooooom!*

MANDY (O.S.)  
Zoe, Sammi! We've talked about this. You don't open the door unless Mommy says you can. What if it's a...

Mandy arrives at the door.

MANDY (CONT'D)  
...Noah? Go back to breakfast, girls.

NOAH  
Breakfast?

The twins exit. Mandy steps outside and shuts the door.

MANDY  
What are you doing here? My kids don't know about you and, anyway, I said...  
(re: shirt)  
...is that blood?

NOAH  
You're welcome.

He tosses her a KEY, which she catches. Mandy looks beyond Noah and sees parked behind the Honda Pilot is her MERCEDES.

MANDY  
(dumbfounded)  
How did you...?

NOAH  
Sell the Honda so you can pay me back for all that coke.

MANDY

Oh my god. What did you do to him,  
Noah? What did you do?

NOAH

(as he walks away)  
Sell that car, Mandy.

Mandy watches him go, horrified...

**INT. TAYLOR'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Taylor's house has been TOSSED (by her). An agitated Taylor paces as she GOOGLES "J. David Coburn." Again. Zero results. Again. The door UNLOCKS. A tense beat until...

...Lucas enters with to-go boxes from Sugarfish.

LUCAS

You ran off pretty fast after our scene.

(re: tossed house)

Are you okay?

TAYLOR

Do I look okay? I just broke a poor kid's drone because I thought it was how Coburn's spying on me. Nothing here, either.

(then)

He knows our truth, Luke. He wants something from us. I don't know what it is yet. But he does.

LUCAS

Why? What the hell did we do to him? A person we've never met? A person who, by the way, only Pike has ever talked to.

TAYLOR

I know. I don't know!

(then)

This is gonna sound crazy. But I've been going over and over Henry's funeral. What his mother, Pilar, said to me. She doesn't think he killed himself. I agree with her.

LUCAS

Are you saying this Coburn guy...did something to Henry? Like pushed him off the roof? *Before* he got the job from Pike?

TAYLOR

It's possible. Or do you think Coburn is really back in London, trying to kick a cold? He's here. Watching us somehow.

(then)

We have to find out who this J. David Coburn asshole is...and get rid of him. You and me.

LUCAS

"You and me."

(then)

Do you love him?

TAYLOR

Coburn? Oh, yeah. Head over heels.

LUCAS

Come on. Please tell me you don't love Pike. So I can stop worrying that this is gonna go away.

TAYLOR

Luke. Don't do this to me right now.

LUCAS

Do this to *you*?

TAYLOR

Life isn't that black and white.

LUCAS

Mine is. So you still love him? Even after this Coburn weirdness?  
(off her silence)  
But we slept together! I lost my--

TAYLOR

And it was amazing. I wanna be...I don't want anything to change with us. But - but you don't understand. I met him before you. I didn't have anything until Pike and Henry. This show...this show is my first priority. It has to be. And no one - especially Coburn - is taking it away from me.

LUCAS

I'm gonna go.

TAYLOR

Luke, come on--

LUCAS

No, I'm sick of the secrets. And I can't keep watching you be with some other guy - that you're supposed to be marrying while I...

He stops himself, turns and SLAMS the door.

TAYLOR

Luke!

**INT. RUSSO HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT**

Nikki enters with her keys and purse. She undoes her ponytail. At the island, a silent Lena CHOPS VEGGIES; an empty bottle of white wine next to her.

NIKKI

God, today was long as *f*. Plus, they put my hair in this hideous high pony, which made my fivehead look like a six on camera.

(then, softly)

I've been thinking about it, Mom. You were right. About the fillers. We should call that Burbank lady.

(then)

Uh. Hello? Anyone?

LENA

(finishes glass of wine)

When were you going to tell me?

NIKKI

About...?

LENA

I got a very interesting call today on my cell. I had the home line forwarded to it while I attempted to return your pit-stained dress.

NIKKI

Okay. So who called?

LENA

PKS Management. They were confirming your appointment. You looking for a new manager behind your current one's back?

NIKKI

What? No. There must be some mix-up. Maybe another actress named Nikki? Nikki Reed probably.

LENA

You e-mailed them! Requesting a meeting!

NIKKI

I didn't. I would never do that to you, Mom.

LENA

Show me your phone.

NIKKI

You're drunk. I'm gonna go to bed.

LENA

Show me!

NIKKI

Fine.  
(hands over phone)  
But you're not going to...

LENA

Two emails! You sent two!

NIKKI

Let me see.

There are TWO SENT EMAILS from Nikki to PKS.

NIKKI (CONT'D)

No...I swear, I didn't reach out to them. I can't explain it but--

LENA

Of course you can't.

NIKKI

Somebody must've hacked into my phone. Something.

LENA

And why the hell would they do that?

NIKKI

I don't know.

LENA  
Stop lying to me!

NIKKI  
Cross my heart, Mom. Seriously.  
But...would it be such a terrible  
idea? To maybe...I dunno...go back  
to just being mom and daughter? And  
not...business partners?

LENA  
And cut me out of the pot after  
everything I've done for you?

NIKKI  
I'm not saying that--

LENA  
I built your career, Nikki. No one  
else did. Not you. Not your agent.  
It was all me. I got you braces -  
the best pictures. I packaged you!

NIKKI  
Right, like my talent had nothing  
to do with it.

LENA  
Your talent is passable at best.

NIKKI  
But. You've always said I'm a great  
actress...

LENA  
Guess I don't have to lie anymore.

NIKKI  
Go to hell, Mom.

A beat, then: WHAM! Lena smacks Nikki in the face.

NIKKI (CONT'D)  
I'm not a teenager - you - you  
can't do that kind of shit anymore.  
You live in my house.

Lena picks up the KNIFE from the counter and holds it up to  
Nikki's throat--

LENA  
I'm the reason we have this goddam  
house, you selfish bitch!

NIKKI  
 Mom...please. What are  
 you...stop...

As the knife gets closer to Nikki's skin...

LENA  
 I've always put you first! Always!

NIKKI  
 Mom! Mom!!!

LENA  
 Do you understand what I've  
 sacrificed for you?

NIKKI  
 (tears in her eyes)  
 Don't...please...

LENA  
 Do you?! You ungrateful, disgusting  
 dyke!

That ugly word. Nikki GRABS the knife from Lena, and, almost like she's in a trance, SCREAMS. She starts STABBING HER MOTHER. AGAIN. AND AGAIN. AND AGAIN. Taking out all the PAIN. All the CRITICISM. All the PRESSURE. All the NAMES. All the ABUSE.

The next thing Nikki realizes, her mom is DEAD ON THE KITCHEN FLOOR. Nikki drops the knife and slams herself against a cabinet. She begins to sob. A long beat. Then...

...RING! Nikki JUMPS as her cell continues. Not sure what else to do, she picks up.

NIKKI  
 H-hello?

ERICA (V.O.)  
 Holy shit! Check your email. You  
 kill her! Your mother!

NIKKI  
 What?

ERICA (V.O.)  
 Coburn just sent me blue pages for  
 206. This is it! Becca's big  
 moment. Your big moment. J. David  
 must've been reading your mind--

Nikki hangs up and checks her email; shakily skims the PDF:

**INT. BECCA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT**

An upset **BECCA** enters the kitchen to find her **MOM** chopping vegetables with a **KNIFE**...

...Becca's mom picks up the **KNIFE** from the counter and holds it up to Becca's throat--

*BECCA*

Mom...please. What are you...stop...

As the knife gets closer to Nikki's skin...

*BECCA'S MOM*

I've always put you first! Always!

The next thing Becca realizes, her mom is **DEAD ON THE KITCHEN FLOOR**. Becca drops the knife and slams herself against a cabinet. She begins to sob.

Completely terrified, Nikki **THROWS** her phone down and the screen **CRACKS**. Nikki Russo stares at her busted phone and then back at her mother's body. She's so confused. And so alone now.

*Or is she?*

And, as "**SOMEBODY'S WATCHING ME**" **REPRISES**, we...

**END OF PILOT**