This American Housewife

PILOT EPISODE

by

Erik Jendresen

Story by

Antonio Banderas & Erik Jendresen

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EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

Antonio Banderas, Melanie Griffith, Erik Jendresen

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ACT ONE

The SOUND of a WOMAN’S THROAT CLEARING...

SMASH CUT TO:

SUNRISE

and the stunning opening strains of “Follie! Delerio vano è questo!” (“Madness! This is vain delirium!”) from VERDI’S LA TRAVIATA. We are

EXT. A SEASIDE CALIFORNIA TOWN – ESTABLISHING

Perched on the Pacific coast somewhere near the fantasy border between Northern and Southern California.

We PUSH IN on a neighborhood of idyllic HOMES separated only by the tree-serviced pines and poplars bordering the 4 or 5 acres upon which each of the houses stand.

We might notice a MOVING VAN parked before one of these Architectural Digest cover-story residences. But that’s not the home for which we are destined (at least, not yet). Rather, we CONTINUE to PUSH IN...

And, as the virtuosic high soprano aria resolves into its familiar melody of the lighthearted “Sempre libera” (“Always free”)...we enter the second-floor window of:

INT. SWIFT HOME – CONTINUOUS

And the CAMERA CONTINUES to move through a tastefully appointed BEDROOM...over wrinkled SHEETS...past discarded CLOTHES...and out along a HALLWAY...down a set of STAIRS...through a LIVING ROOM & DINING ROOM littered with the detritus of a raucous New Year's Eve party...and into...

INT. SWIFT HOME – KITCHEN – CONTINUOUS

Because all great TV tales of American families begin with breakfast.

LEILA SWIFT (MELANIE GRIFFITH) is preparing and serving crêpes, bacon and fresh fruit in real time. Seated around a large butcher-block “island” in the middle of the kitchen are: STANFORD - her chiseled 55-year-old husband; KATE - his zealous and too-attractive 40-year-old campaign manager; and DECLAN - Kate’s peculiarly good-looking 30-year-old aide & savant.
NOTE: This entire first act will be captured in one continuous, unedited shot. Thus, the CAMERA will CONTINUE to move fluidly throughout the scene as breakfast is prepared in real time and the dialogue is overlapping and quite literally wall-to-wall.

STANFORD
Can we just run through the schedule? What are we doing?

Declan touches something on an iPad and hands it to Kate.

KATE
9AM we’ve got California Coast Journal - that’s live at the Conference Center. 10:30 we’ve got a taping for Channel 6 news at the office - that’s b-roll for your live interview on the morning show tomorrow. Channel 3 at noon. A print interview with the Santa Barbara News-Press. Then 2PM is Channel 12 news. 3PM Pacific Coast Business Times. Then 4PM is the sit-down for Good Morning America.

STANFORD
Where?

KATE
At the office.

STANFORD
Okay. Leila?

LEILA
Irma’s coming at noon to clean. Harper is going to Ventura. I’m picking up Nelle at the airport at 1:15. Lee’s driving up from L.A. He’ll be here at 2:00. We’ll have dinner at 7.

STANFORD

LEILA
(Serving Kate & Declan)
I will.

DECLAN
Thank you! So...Nelle’s flying in from New York?
LEILA
Yup.

STANFORD
It’s a thing. We...have this thing...a tradition about being together on the first day of every year.

DECLAN
Really? That’s...great.

LEILA
Yes. It is.
KATE
And it’s a talking point.

DECLAN
Not Christmas?

STANFORD
If possible, but it’s not as important as January 1st.
(To Kate)
A talking point?

KATE
The family. It’s a major talking point. How do we define the Swift family? What’s the Swift family adjective? Are you close-knit?

STANFORD
(To Leila)
Are we a close-knit family?

LEILA
I don’t know what that means.

DECLAN
These crêpes are amazing!

LEILA
Thank you, Declan. They’re Virginia ham and Vermont sharp cheddar.

STANFORD
Do we really need an adjective?

KATE
Voters - and consumers - need adjectives - to define the candidate - to sell the product.

STANFORD
So...you’d be...my “tightly-wound” campaign manager?
LEILA
(Serving Stanford)
“Tightly-wound” sounds a lot like “close-knit”...

DECLAN
But do we sell the Swifts? Or do we just let the voters experience them?

KATE
What?

DECLAN
Maybe we don’t define the Swift family, because no single adjective would do them justice.

STANFORD
(To Kate)
Virginia ham and Vermont cheddar. You’d sell these as “all-American” crêpes. But “all-American” doesn’t say anything about how good they taste.

DECLAN
Right! Maybe the only thing we sell is policy -

STANFORD
Policy. Tax reform, immigration reform, clean energy, American-made new-technology-based employment-through-innovation -

DECLAN
And we just let the family speak for itself.

STANFORD
(A sudden inspiration)
And we do it here.

LEILA
Do what here?

STANFORD
Everybody’s gonna be here, right? Harper, Nelle, Lee, Leila...and me. Good Morning America. The 4:00 interview. Forget the office. I’ll announce my candidacy - on national television - from my home. And my family...will speak for itself.
Leila’s mind is reeling. *A national television interview? Here? After last night? With 8 hours to prepare?* And Kate is running off at the mouth:

**KATE**

Every congressional candidate tries to sell their image. *We let the family speak for itself.* People will ask questions...and the answers are...well...*perfect.*

Kate flourishes her iPad and scrolls to a document; Leila sits down to her own breakfast; the PHONE RINGS. Stanford moves to answer it -

**LEILA**

No. Eat.  
(Into phone)

Hello?

**KATE**

Married for 25 years to a... beautiful wife. Father of three: Lee - a graduate of the Chicago Art Institute; Nelle, an adopted daughter in her second year at Columbia University; Harper, a high school junior National Honor Student.

(Into phone)

Oh...oh, no. *I’m so sorry...*

**KATE**

A cholesterol level that’s exactly twice his golf score? Who came up with that?

**DECLAN**

I did.

**STANFORD**

Funny.

**LEILA**

No, no...please. Don’t worry about a thing...

**KATE**

No. It’s elitist. You’re wealthy, and voters don’t trust the rich elite.

**STANFORD**

So maybe we *shouldn’t* do it at the house -
KATE
No! I wanna use your wealth as an example – an object lesson. Former public defender turned entrepreneur. The way you made your money is the key here – and this is important: Jumpstarter.com – the first crowd-funding website – “Inspiring people to support and create what’s next.”
(Pause for emphasis)
You made your money by helping people to realize their dreams.

DECLAN
Idealism works.

STANFORD
Yes, it does.

LEILA
(Into phone)
I completely understand.

KATE
It’s a positive message. And what did you do with your money?
Invested in green technology, community development, humanitarian causes at home and abroad –

DECLAN
– raised your children and purchased a beautiful home for your domestic genius wife and partner.

LEILA
(Into phone)
Feel better. Get well. Espero que te mejores pronto.

Leila hangs up the phone, and Declan sums up:

DECLAN
You guys...are the apotheosis of The American Dream.

LEILA
Apotheosis?

STANFORD
Who was on the phone?

HARPER (OC)
Apotheosis. The highest point in the development of something.

ALL (including our CAMERA) turn to see HARPER (17) – Leila & Stanford’s blonde, beautiful, uncomfortably smart over-achiever. She jumps up on a stool. Leila starts to prepare her plate.
HARPER
Wow! Crêpes?

LEILA
“All-American” crêpes.

HARPER
Yum!

LEILA
Irma.

STANFORD
Who called?

LEILA
“All-American,” what’s that mean?

HARPER
What’s wrong with Irma?

KATE
“All-American.” Does it make you want to try it?

STANFORD
Oh, Christ -

HARPER
No. Mom’s cooking makes me want to try it.

STANFORD
Bingo! So who needs adjectives, Kate? “All-American” doesn’t say anything about what’s inside - the substance.

Stanford locks eyes with Leila. They hold each other’s gaze for a moment, then:

STANFORD
(To Kate)
But, forget it. We’ll do Good Morning America at the office.

Leila smiles, appreciating Stanford’s complete understanding of the impossibility of her task.

KATE
What? Why -

STANFORD
The cleaning lady’s sick. We can’t get the house in shape by 4. The place is a friggin’ disaster -

Then Leila does what she always does:

LEILA
No. It’s okay. I’ll take care of it.

And Stanford does what he always does:
And Leila & Stanford holds each other’s gaze for a long moment of mutual understanding...then:

HARPER
What’s an “all-American” crêpe? Wouldn’t it be, like, divided? Into two flavors that just can’t work together to make ‘em taste good? Or maybe...“all-American” just means...they cost more than you can sell them for.

DECLAN
Wow.

STANFORD
You want a job? Political analyst?

HARPER
Nope. I got one.

STANFORD
Which is helping your mom clean up and get ready for the TV cameras?

LEILA
She can’t.

HARPER
I can’t. I’m going to the prison - I’m sorry.

DECLAN
Prison?

HARPER
Ventura Youth Correctional facility. I’m with a volunteer group.

STANFORD
Oh. Right. Shit. You’re picking up Nelle at 1:15? Maybe she can help?

DECLAN
Bringing New Year’s cheer to the inmates?

LEILA
It’ll be fine.

HARPER
(Cocking her head) Kinda, yeah.

STANFORD
And the TV crew would be here at, what 4:00?

KATE
On the dot. I’ll text the producer right now -

Kate holds out her hand and Declan gives her an iPhone.
STANFORD
Wait. Leila, there were 30 people here last night -

HARPER
Thirty people getting hammered.

KATE
Should we call a cleaning service?

LEILA
No. But it’s up to the kids if they want to be on camera.

Pause. Kate peers at Leila as though trying to discern the source of her calm.

KATE
If you’re on anti-anxiety meds... could I have your prescription?

Leila just smiles...and serves Harper’s breakfast. Kate starts texting on her iPhone:

KATE (CONT’D)
I’m texting the producer right now.

LEILA
(To Harper)
Apotheosis. You were awful quick with that one.

HARPER
Winter break vocabulary list.

STANFORD
Vocabulary list? Did we have vocab in high school?

LEILA
Mrs. Delacorte.

STANFORD
Oh. Yeah. Right.

Declan looks admiringly at Stanford...and Leila, topping off everyone’s coffee and juice.

DECLAN
And high school sweethearts. Do you guys...ever...fight?

HARPER
Oh, yeah.
Leila and Stanford shoot Harper a unified look. Kate’s outgoing text message makes a BLOOP! SOUND. Harper grins at Declan and, with a hint of irony:

HARPER (CONT’D)
But...you know...that’s healthy too, right? And...uh...
(Playfully “proper”)
..."father"? May I borrow our new hybrid SUV to drive to my volunteer job and back?

Declan can’t stifle his LAUGH as the BACK DOOR opens and RON & DAN (40s) - a scrubbed and fit couple from next door - enter. They’re dressed in pre-ski apparel.

RON
We’re late!

STANFORD
Were you invited?

DAN
Late to be on the road. 3 hours to Snow Valley.

LEILA
Breakfast?

HARPER
It’s “all-American” French food!

RON  DAN
No time. Just fruit. God, it smells good.

RON
I’m so friggin’ hung-over -

They accept plates from Leila and start scooping up fruit while Leila pours them coffee...

HARPER
Why do people start the New Year feeling gruesome?

RON  DAN
Because it can only get worse -

HARPER
It’s a vocabulary word.

...and Dan notices that Leila is pouring coffee into:
Travel mugs? Really? Oh my God, that’s so Leila!

Jesus...

So are you sure you don’t mind? It’s five days -

‘Course not.

Mind what?

Leila’s looking after LaVerne, Maxine and Patricia Marie.

You are?

Declan shoots Harper a confused look. Harper explains:

The Andrews Sisters. She promised last night -

That’s not fair. She’d been drinking.

What?

A singing group from the 40s.

(Tapping her watch)
It’s 7:30. We gotta go.

Dad?

What? Oh. The car. I don’t know...

I’ve gotta take, like, 4 other kids. You promised me last night that if I asked you in the morning -

(To Leila)
Do you need it to pick up Nelle?
LEILA
I’ll take the Prius.

STANFORD
And you’re gonna call Lee to make sure he gets on the road?

LEILA
Yes.

STANFORD
And clean the entire house -

DING! ALL look to Kate as she reads the incoming text message.

KATE
We’re confirmed. The TV crew’ll be here at 4 o’clock. Sharp.

Kate and Stanford look to Leila - for confirmation that she’s really okay with this. She nods. Smiles. Ron taps his watch in what might be a mimicry of Kate:

RON
We have got to go.

DAN
The keys are under the hydrangea. Remember - 8AM, noon, and 8PM. You’re sure you don’t mind?

LEILA
I know. And I’m sure.

STANFORD
Can’t believe you’re doin’ that, too. We’ll be back by 3:30. I’m sorry.

LEILA
Don’t be.

HARPER
Dad? The car?

STANFORD
Will you agree to be yourself on Good Morning America?

HARPER
Sure.

STANFORD
Take it.
He lifts a KEY from a key-hook on the wall by the back door and hands it to Harper who kisses him on the cheek.

HARPER
I’m gone!

She kisses her mom on the cheek.

HARPER (CONT’D)
Breakfast was awesome!

And she’s gone - out the back door. Stanford turns to Leila.

STANFORD
Sweetie...

LEILA
Candidate...

Stanford kisses Leila on the mouth and heads out the door. Kate moves to follow -

DECLAN
Thanks, Mrs. Swift. It was delicious. And your daughter’s...

LEILA
Seventeen.

DECLAN
(Grinning)
Yeah. Amazing.

KATE
See you at 3:30?

Leila nods.

KATE (CONT’D)
Thanks!

Kate gives a little wave...and they’re gone - out the back door. Leila looks at the door.

LEILA
‘Bye, Kate.

PAUSE. Then:

DAN
You want some help cleaning up?

Leila turns to Ron & Dan. Cocks her head.
RON
Uh...that’s a “no.” We’re outta here. We’re gone.

Ron, and then Dan, kiss Leila on the cheek.

DAN
Thanks so much.

RON
Seriously.

Ron exits. Dan pauses.

DAN
You’ve got my cell number if there’s a problem with -

Of course she does. Of course she will. He grins, then mimics Kate’s little wave.

And they’re gone - out the back door.

Leila smiles as the door CLICKS closed.

SILENCE.

Leila closes her eyes for a moment and lifts her chin - savoring the silence.

She takes a deep breath and lets it go.

Then she turns to look at the breakfast dishes...at her own untasted crêpe.

She lifts Stanford’s breakfast plate and, all of a sudden, a -

VOICE (WHISPERING)
Don’t look behind you.

- causes her to startle and drop the plate. It SHATTERS on the tiled floor.

And Leila turns around.

She looks behind her...

And ON LEILA’S STUNNED EXPRESSION we

END ACT ONE
We open right where we left off - ON LEILA’S FACE staring at something OFF SCREEN.

ACT TWO

BULLET TIME 3D EFFECT

Time stands still as the CAMERA arcs around 180 degrees to REVEAL what Leila sees:

THE KITCHEN FAUCET

A pendant drop of water breaks free and falls...in SLOW MOTION...PLIP!  Then, after a moment:

VOICE
(WHISPERING)
Don’t be afraid.  There’s nothing to fear here.  Nothing to see.  Don’t stop.  Keep doing exactly what you’re doing.  It’s gonna be a bitch of a day.  But I’ve got our back.  Hear that?  Listen...

NOTE:  Although the VOICE doesn’t have exactly the same timbre or tone, it is unmistakably Leila’s.  It might be her unconscious.  It might be her soul.  It might be that she’s losing her mind.  It might simply defy definition.

Leila bites her lip.  She turns a full 360.  Nothing.

VOICE (CONT’D)
Just...tighten the faucet...and get on with it.

Slowly...tentatively...Leila moves to the faucet and tightens the valve.  The drip stops.  She grips the counter edge, closes her eyes, draws a deep breath and exhales.

But her eyes snap open as:

VOICE (CONT’D)
Good.  Conscious breathing is always calming.  We’re gonna do a lot of it.  We’ll remind us...to breathe.

Slowly, Leila puts her hands on either side of her head...

VOICE (CONT’D)
Uh-oh...

...and runs out of the kitchen.
INT. DOWNSTAIRS BATHROOM - A MOMENT LATER

Leila bursts in to face herself in the mirror, but immediately recoils from something terrible (that we cannot see) in and around the toilet.

VOICE
(Quickly reasoning)
Oh, that’s nasty. Was it Margot?
No. A woman wouldn’t blow chow and just leave it like that. It must be a guy. But not a friend. A new guest. And it couldn’t’ve been ‘til late, because somebody would’ve reported it.

CUT TO:

INT. SWIFT HOME - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

as Leila (in a gown) and Stanford (black bow-tie loose at the collar) say good night to COURTNEY - a 50-year-old MILF - who kisses Stanford drunkenly on both cheeks.

COURTNEY
Happy New Year, you guys...it’s...gotta be, right?

LEILA
Good night, Courtney.

COURTNEY
Where the heh...hell...is my whatsisname?

STANFORD
Yeah, what do you call him?

COURTNEY
I call him young.

And the door to the DOWNSTAIRS BATHROOM opens, and DOUG - a 30-year-old lifeguard-type - emerges, looking somewhat guilty and wiping the corners of his mouth.

COURTNEY
C’mon, Douglas! Take me home and start...my...year!

And COURTNEY’S LAUGHTER ECHOES and PRE-LAPS our CUT BACK TO:
INT. DOWNSTAIRS BATHROOM - SAME

Leila flushes the toilet and backs out of the room.

VOICE
It’s clogged.

LEILA
What...?

The fetid water rises, and Leila fights a gag reflex as she turns off the valve at the base of the filthy thing.

VOICE
BioSan disinfectant and some EnviroSmart paper towels...

LEILA
I know!

VOICE
That’s the whole point.

CUT TO:

INT. SWIFT HOME - DOWNSTAIRS BATHROOM - LATER

Leila - a bucket in one hand, cleaning solution in the other and plunger under her arm, stands staring at the pristine and clean bathroom.

VOICE
Grab an ECOSAFE trash bag and start in the living room.

INT. SWIFT HOME - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Leila is at the butcher block island - the dirty breakfast dishes untouched. The phone is pressed to her face and she’s listening to its outgoing RING. Then:

STANFORD/PHONE
Leila?

LEILA
Stan -

STANFORD/PHONE
Everything okay?

LEILA
Why?
STANFORD/PHONE

What?

LEILA
Do you...feel all right?

VOICE
Are you hearing voices?

STANFORD/PHONE
(Uncertainly)
Yeah. Fine. I’m...we’re in the middle of this planning session - do you need something?

VOICE
Because I am! I think there’s something wrong with me. We? Oh, Kate’s right there, isn’t she? Is her hand on your arm?

LEILA
No. Just checking-in...

VOICE
You can’t talk to me...

STANFORD/PHONE
Okay...

VOICE
And you’re annoyed.

LEILA
I love you.

VOICE
I’m scared.

STANFORD
Me too.

VOICE
And you love you, too.

And Leila disconnects. She’s breathing heavily.

VOICE
Breathe.

LEILA
Stop it.

VOICE
The living room...

LEILA
Stop it. STOP IT. STOP IT!

A moment’s SILENCE. Then:

VOICE
No.

INT. SWIFT HOME - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Leila stands holding an ECOSAFE trash bag and staring at the disaster: Half-eaten HORS-D’OEUVRES...empty CHAMPAGNE BOTTLES...GLASSES...BALLOONS...PARTY HATS...

And, above the SOFA, a BANNER proclaiming:
VOICE
Schizophrenia? What the hell is that, really? Menopausal incident? We’ll look it up. But not now...

CUT TO:

A CHAMPAGNE GLASS

as Leila lifts it from the ORIENTAL RUG. She looks at the LIPSTICK STAIN...

VOICE
Margot...

CUT TO:

INT. SWIFT HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

as MARGOT - a 50-year old cropped-haired, big-breasted beauty who looks a lot like Jamie Lee Curtis - LAUGHS at something Leila has just said. With them is ROBIN - a pretty and slightly naive 35-year-old newlywed.

The party is in full swing. The MUSIC is loud and UPBEAT.

In the BACKGROUND we glimpse everyone we know so far: Declan...Ron...Dan...Harper...Courtney...Doug.

Stanford and Kate are coming down the stairs...

MARGOT
So...listen to me...a "resolution" - as in "New Year’s resolution" - is just what it says, right? A re-solution. It’s solving something again. Something that’s been solved once - the original solution - and is now being solved a second time - the re-solution. And my re-solution for this year...

LEILA
No...

MARGOT
Yeah. I’m going back to being gay.

She winks at Leila and drains her champagne glass...
ROBIN (LAUGHING)
What? Oh my god, what?

MARGOT (CONT’D)
My friends, I’m 50. I’m hot. And I’ve had it. So I am fully embracing the lesbian lifestyle.

ROBIN
Have you told Courtney?

They all look to see Courtney taking Doug’s hand and placing it around her waist.

MARGOT
She’ll just be relieved. That I won’t be poaching anymore.

BACK TO:

INT. SWIFT HOME – LIVING ROOM – SAME

Leila has filled the ECOSAFE trash bag with bottles and trash. Already the living room has been transformed.

She heads for the banner...

VOICE
Leave it up, it’s obnoxious; take it down, you might hurt his feelings.

Leila clenches her jaw and makes the silent decision to ignore the VOICE.

VOICE (CONT’D)
Okay. Try it. Ignore what you hear. See how that works for you...

And she steps up onto the SOFA and carefully unhooks the banner. Stepping down, she notices something on the arm of the sofa. A red lipstick-stained CIGARETTE snubbed into a small ASHTRAY.

VOICE (CONT’D)
Mom!

Leila turns as though the VOICE is calling her.

VOICE (CONT’D)
No. Ours...

CUT TO:
INT. SWIFT HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

DOROTHY - Leila’s 80-year-old smoking-hot mother, who looks a lot like Tippi Hedron - is sitting alone on the sofa beneath the banner.

She draws a cigarette and lighter from her purse as she watches Stanford guiding MR. BARTLETT - an 87-year-old WWII veteran - to a nearby chair. She lights it.

LEILA
Mom - really? Do you really need to do that.

DOROTHY
I need to do...what I want to do. So you answer the question.

LEILA
Would you at least...

Leila looks up at her through the smoke.

DOROTHY
Why is Stanford bringing that ancient thing to me?

Leila leans over the back of the sofa and opens the window. Dorothy takes advantage of her closeness to ask:

LEILA
He’s not. It’s Mr. Bartlett. He’s 87. He’s a good neighbor. He’s taught your grandson everything he knows about World War Two.

DOROTHY
He doesn’t have his own family?

LEILA
No. As a matter of fact, he lost his family.

DOROTHY
Really? He just...misplaced them?

VOICE (VO PRE-LAP)
Bitch!

BACK TO:
INT. SWIFT HOME - KITCHEN - SAME

as Leila enters, dumps the ECOSAFE trash bag by the back door and SHOUTS:

LEILA
Yes! Yes she is! But she talked to him all night -

VOICE
She got him drunk. When did he go home?

LEILA
I don’t know - I...don’t...I don’t understand...

Leila slumps against the wall and buries her face in her hands. She is on the verge of tears.

VOICE
Breathe.

(Pause)
Breathe. Let’s pee. It’s 10:30. We gotta keep moving. Let’s go to our bathroom, then straighten the bedroom. Pick up the pieces of last night. When he kissed our neck, there was New Year’s Eve on his breath.

(Pause)
And then...he turned us on our stomach...and what did he want to do?

LEILA
Shut...up. SHUT...THE FUCK...UP!

INT. SWIFT HOME - LIVING ROOM - A MOMENT LATER

Leila heads for the stairs -

VOICE
Anger will just lead to frustration - because there’s no real outlet for it - and frustration leads to anxiety because it’s hard to calm the frustration. We just...don’t want...to be scared. We don’t need to be. Trust that... - and as she passes by the little DOOR to a WEDGE-SHAPED SPACE under the stairs...
VOICE (CONT’D)
...and slow down. Look. How long’s it been since we unlocked that door?

But Leila pays no attention to it. She’s already headed up the stairs.

VOICE (CONT’D)
Seventeen years?

LEILA
So what?

As Leila marches up the stairs:

VOICE
So what? So why? We don’t wanna look at it? Really? What would happen if we did?

LEILA
We? There is no we!

VOICE
Denial is really stupid. That’s just...dumb. Seriously, what would happen if we just -

LEILA
I don’t know! I don’t care!

VOICE
Lying...is really not gonna work. Don’t even start. Accept what’s happening here -

LEILA
I DON’T KNOW WHAT’S HAPPENING HERE!

And she is passing by the UPSTAIRS HALL BATHROOM when:

VOICE
Stop. Hall bathroom. We’ve got a feeling. Better check it...for toilet paper...

And Leila stops.

LEILA
I don’t...have time...for this...

But she cannot deny that the Voice is right. And so it is that she opens the door.
INT. SWIFT HOME - UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - SAME

And there's old Mr. Bartlett.

He's sitting on the toilet, leaning to his left, his face pressed against the wall.

And he's stone cold dead from a heart attack - his New Year's Eve party hat still cocked at a rakish angle.

END OF ACT TWO
ACT THREE

We open to the OFFSCREEN SOUNDS of a POLICE RADIO and on the back of a PARAMEDIC (30) momentarily blocking our view of old Mr. Bartlett with the party hat on his head.

PARAMEDIC
Yeah, we can definitely call this. He’s got serious rigor.

And the Paramedic turns to reveal the body (as we left it) and the fact that this is one fine-looking Paramedic.

LEILA

VOICE

Serious rigor... You’re the second handsomest man we’ve ever seen in our entire life.

PARAMEDIC
(Smiling at Leila)

Stiff. Really...stiff.

Reluctantly, he pulls his gaze from Leila and looks to POLICE OFFICERS SHORT (and he is) & LONG (ditto).

PARAMEDIC (CONT’D)

Call the coroner. My job is done.

VOICE

LEILA

Oh, I’ll bet you take (To Officers) longer than that... What happens now?

OFFICER SHORT

We’re gonna call the county coroner, but there are some questions we need to ask first.

Officer Long pulls a SPIRAL NOTEBOOK from a pocket and flips through it. And the Paramedic nods to Leila:

PARAMEDIC

Sorry for your loss.

LEILA

VOICE

Uh...thank you. Please don’t go...

PARAMEDIC

Your...uh...husband. Is it true he’s gonna run for congress?

LEILA

Yes.

He gives her a quick up and down look and a grin.
PARAMEDIC
Well, you got my vote.

And he heads down the stairs.

VOICE
Oh, my god, what a tool...

OFFICER LONG
The decedent’s full name?

LEILA
Ernest Bartlett. I don’t know his middle name –

OFFICER LONG
Age?

LEILA
87. Would you like some coffee?

OFFICER LONG
OFFICER SHORT
Address?
That’d be great.

INT. SWIFT HOME – KITCHEN – MOMENTS LATER

As a second cup of coffee fills from a Keurig coffee maker and Leila serves the Officers at the butcher block island and continues to clear the morning’s breakfast dishes and clean the kitchen:

LEILA
He lost his family in that Air Alaska crash – what...12 years ago? His wife died the next year. He...I guess he sort of adopted my son, Lee as a surrogate grandson, you know? And Stanford – my husband – would take him golfing, oh, at least twice a month. He was a wonderful, gentle...man...a gentleman...

OFFICER LONG
Right. Was he on any medications?

LEILA
I don’t know. I could – I have keys to his house. We could look...

VOICE
We’re going over there, anyway. As soon as we can. As soon as this friggin’ day is over...
OFFICER LONG
That’s not necessary. We’ll call the coroner. He might wanna come take a look.

LEILA
All right.

VOICE
How soon?

OFFICER SHORT
I’ll just...I’ll call it in.

VOICE
Could you at least take the party hat off his head?

LEILA
Uhm...could you...at least...take the party hat off his head?

OFFICER LONG
(Exchanging a glance with Short)
Uh...sorry, Mrs. Swift. We’re...not allowed to do that.

FLASH!

INT. SWIFT HOME - UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - LATER

The CORONER (60s with a comb-over) - uses a digital camera with a flash to take multiple photographs of the scene.

CORONER
All right. Let’s move it.

VOICE
It? That’s not an it. You’re done?
You’re an it!

CORONER
No. It’s gonna take a while longer, Mrs. Swift. Is there someplace you gotta be?

VOICE
There sure is...

Leila looks at her watch and draws a sharp breath.

LEILA
Oh, no...Nelle...
EXT. SANTA BARBARA AIRPORT – DAY

as the Swift family PRIUS brakes to a halt at the
ARRIVALS CURB of this red-tile-roofed, wood-beamed old
mission-style airport and Leila jumps out and starts
scanning the passengers emerging from the BAGGAGE CLAIM –

TRAFFIC OFFICER (OC)
You need to stay with your car.

VOICE
Piss off!

Leila turns to the TRAFFIC OFFICER – a short, round
African-American woman with corn-rows and a bright
ORANGE VEST.

LEILA
Oh, I’m sorry. I’m...late to pick
up my daughter.

TRAFFIC OFFICER
You need to man your vehicle.

Leila stares at the self-important little uniformed woman
and blinks as:

VOICE
If we’re late to pick her up, then
she’s already here somewhere and
how long d’you think it’ll take
before we’re out of your corn-rows
and out of your life? Less than
sixty seconds? Probably.

LEILA
Uhm...I don’t understand why - oh!
There she is!

Leila points over the woman’s shoulder, but the officer
doesn’t look. She continues to stare at Leila –

TRAFFIC OFFICER
You need...to get in your car.

LEILA
But...my daughter is right there!

VOICE
Why won’t you look, you overfed,
officious little -

TRAFFIC OFFICER
I’m not gonna tell ya again.
And Leila walks past the Traffic Officer and approaches a young girl, sitting with her back to us on her suitcase at the end of the arrivals area.

TRAFFIC OFFICER
Ma’am!

LEILA
Nelle?

NELLE - Leila & Stanford’s 20-year-old stunningly beautiful ebony-skinned adopted Ethiopian daughter — turns her red-rimmed, tear-streaked eyes to her mother.

NELLE
Mom...

Nelle rises and throws her arms around Leila.

LEILA
Honey, what’s wrong? I’m sorry I’m late —

Leila takes Nelle’s face in hand and studies her eyes.

VOICE
She’s baked.

LEILA
Nelle?

NELLE
Mom. You gotta take your hands away from my face. It’s too intense.

LEILA
Honey... are you... stoned?

NELLE
Why is that woman... mom, are you getting a ticket?

Leila turns to look and we

CUT TO:

INT. PRIUS - DRIVING - MOMENT LATER

The PARKING VIOLATION is on the dashboard and Nelle is in the passenger seat. And she’s crying.
NELLE
I can’t stop crying...I am so freaked out...

LEILA
I understand. No need to be freaked out. Just...take your time...and tell me what happened...

VOICE
That’s because you have major control issues and getting loaded is too threatening to your uptight sense of self -

NELLE
We played Fordham. And we won. I even scored on a rolling maul.

LEILA
That’s...that’s great!

VOICE
Why rugby, Nell? Women’s rugby? Margot played women’s rugby, too...

NELLE
It was amazing. We got together with some of the girls from the Fordham team - at the tavern. And their wing forward is really nice. And...this morning when I was packing she stopped by the dorm... with...uhm...

LEILA
What?

NELLE
Cookies...

LEILA
Oh, no.

NELLE
She said they were for my trip. And she laughed.

VOICE
I’ll bet she did, the little twat.

NELLE
I ate three on the plane. I’ve never felt like this before. What am I gonna do? Everything is so bright...

LEILA
Breathe. Everything will be fine, sweetie. I promise. Just breathe...
NELLE
Okay.

And Nelle lowers the electric window and the PARKING VIOLATION blows off the dashboard and out of the car.

CUT TO:

EXT. SWIFT HOME - DRIVEWAY - MOMENTS LATER

as Leila drives the Prius into the driveway to the sight of a SHERIFF’S CAR, a POLICE CAR and a FUNERAL HOME PANEL TRUCK. The Coroner and Officers Short and Long are conferring by their vehicles.

NELLE
Oh...my...God...mom? Police? What the hell is going on?

LEILA
It’s okay. Just maintain...

VOICE
She might be right. She might lose it.

LEILA
Shut up.

NELLE
Shut up?

LEILA
No. Not you...not...there’s been an accident - no. Look. Just get out of the car. Leave your bag, and go straight up to your room.

Leila & Nelle get out of the car as the FRONT DOOR opens and TWO MEN IN BLACK SUITS wheel out a GURNEY bearing something bulky under a sheet.

Nelle freezes.

NELLE
Mom?

VOICE
Oh, shit. Get her in the house!

LEILA
Just - get - go in the house, Nelle!

And Nelle runs into the house just as the sheet catches in one of the gurney wheels and falls away to reveal old Mr. Bartlett - still frozen in his sitting position.
And Leila grabs the fallen sheet and covers him herself.

LEILA
Please. Be careful with him. Be respectful -

And Leila hears the PHONE RINGING in the kitchen...

INT. SWIFT HOME - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

No sign of Nelle.

VOICE
Where the hell did she go?

LEILA
(Answering the phone)
Hello?

HARPER/PHONE
Mom?

LEILA VOICE
Harper? Something’s wrong.

HARPER/PHONE
Mom, I’ve had an accident.

Leila’s knuckles go white around the phone as Harper blurts out:

HARPER/PHONE (CONT’D)
I’m totally fine. Everyone’s totally fine. The airbags deployed. Seriously. I’ve already called the police and the insurance company -

LEILA VOICE
What happened? We’re gonna throw up...breathe...

HARPER/PHONE
I was on the 101 and this idiot in a truck swerved into my lane and I went off the road and sorta sideways into a tree. Mom, he was texting...
(Pause)

Mom?
LEILA
Yes, sweetie - I’m right here -

HARPER/PHONE
The car’s totalled, mom.

And the CALL WAITING BEEPS.

LEILA
Harper, I don’t care about the car -

VOICE
But Stanford will.

HARPER
But dad will.

BEEP.

LEILA
Harper, hang on -
(Switching to the other line)
Hello?

STANFORD/PHONE
Hey, sweetie. Just checkin’ in.
It’s 2:00. Is Lee there?

LEILA
Uh...no.
(VOICE)
We forgot to call Lee.

STANFORD/PHONE
You called him, right?

VOICE
Is the truth going to help here, or hurt?

LEILA
No.

STANFORD/PHONE
Oh, Jesus. You know he’s not out of bed before noon, and it’s 2:00 now and it’s over an hour’s drive -

LEILA
I know. If you know that I know, why are you telling me?

STANFORD/PHONE
Should I ask why you forgot?

VOICE
That’s a really shitty idea.

Suddenly, from upstairs:
NELLE (OC)
MOM? MOM!

LEILA
(To Stanford)
Honey, I’ve got to go. See you at 3:30 -

STANFORD/PHONE
I might be late -

LEILA
(Clicking back to Harper)
Honey?

HARPER/PHONE
I’m here.

NELLE (OC)
MOM!

LEILA
Call a Ventura Taxi Company cab. Leave the car where it is. Just take everything out of the glove compartment and the center console. How many kids?

HARPER/PHONE
There are four of us.

NELLE
Was somebody - you know - doing the nasty in my bedroom?

LEILA
Harper, hang on -
(To Nelle)
What are you talking about?

NELLE
My bed’s a mess and...La Perla panties?

And Nelle holds up a pair of BLACK LACE LA PERLA PANTIES - hanging like forensic evidence at the end of a pencil.

END OF ACT THREE
ACT FOUR

We open on a FRESH SHEET as it floats down onto a bed and the SOUND of a PHONE’S OUTGOING RING.

INT. NELLE’S BEDROOM – DAY

Leila - the phone cradled in her shoulder - makes the bed in real time (with razor-sharp hospital corners, fluffed comforter and pillows) while Nelle showers in the BATHROOM and they converse through the open door:

NELLE (OC)
WATER...IS AMAZING...

LEILA
We should get high again...

NELLE (OC)
WHAT?

LEILA
YES! WATER IS AMAZING!

LEE/PHONE
Hello?

LEILA
Lee?

LEE/PHONE
Ma...?

LEILA
You’re on your bike – and you just stopped for gas, right?

LEE/PHONE
What?

LEILA
It’s 2:15. You...were gonna be here at 2:00, yes?

LEE/PHONE
Uh...yeah.

LEILA
So how close are you? He hasn’t left yet.

LEE/PHONE
I’ll be there.
Leila clenches her jaw.

LEE/PHONE (CONT’D)
Ma? The opening was awesome. I sold a painting - I think it was one you wanted, but I’m not sure - and I got a commission to do a mural -

LEILA
You’re just now getting dressed, aren’t you.

LEE/PHONE
I was so stoked, I started working on it - you know, preliminary...uh...sketches...when I got back and...it got kinda late.

VOICE
Tell him what’s going on and he’s gonna drive too fast to get here.

LEE/PHONE
...I’m sorry.

VOICE
Don’t go there...

But Leila closes her eyes and we

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. COAST HIGHWAY - DAY (LEILA’S FANTASY)

as a HELMETED RIDER on an OLD BMW R75/5 carreens around a corner and skids out of control and the bike flies off the edge of the road and out over the PACIFIC OCEAN.

BACK TO:

INT. NELLE’S BEDROOM - SAME

as Leila opens her eyes -

NELLE (OC)
Mom?

- and turns to see Nelle, standing - still stoned - in the open bathroom door with a towel around her.

LEE/PHONE
Ma...?
NELLE
I can literally feel the water drying on my skin.

LEILA
(Into phone)
Honey...listen. If you leave now, you might get here by 4:00.

LEE/PHONE
Totally. Is something goin’ on?

VOICE
Don’t tell him. He’ll die on the road.

And Leila is momentarily shaken by the Voice’s intensity—its certainty. And she makes a choice.

LEILA
No. Nothing. Just get here when you can. Take your time, and...

LEE/PHONE
I’ll drive carefully.

LEILA
I love you.

Leila disconnects and turns to face Nelle, still standing there, fascinated by the water glistening on her skin. Leila takes a deep breath and explains:

LEILA
Good Morning America is coming to tape an interview with your father. And the family. Here. In about an hour and a half.

NELLE
Good Morning America? The morning show? That’s...awesom... Oh...my...God. That will be so...much... fun. So who do you think was, like, fornicating in my bed? Do we have any, like, visine?

VOICE
Stoned out of her mind. On national television. Perfect.

CUT TO:
INT. BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Leila stuffs the soiled bedsheets into the WASHING MACHINE, adds BIOSAFE LAUNDRY DETERGENT, turns it on, then turns her attention to the La Perla panties. Gingerly, she lifts them between thumb and forefinger...

VOICE

Ew.

...then hesitantly brings her nose as close to the panties as she dares...

VOICE (CONT’D)

Perfume. Eau de Skank? Bouquet de Bimbo? Cologne de Cooch...?

Leila pulls a ZIPLOC EVOLVE 1 GALLON STORAGE BAG from the shelf, drops the panties inside and seals it. She looks at her watch.

VOICE (CONT’D)

Water...is amazing...

CUT TO:

INT. SWIFT HOME - LEILA’S BATHROOM - SHOWER - MOMENTS LATER

Leila raises her face to the shower stream. Yes, water is amazing, but not quite as amazing as what we can see of her taut, fit, 50-year-old body...

INT. SWIFT HOME - MASTER BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Leila ENTERS THE FRAME of her VANITY MIRROR as she sits to stare at herself.

VOICE

2:45 and look at us.

And Leila stares at her face – at the evidence of the age-defying surgical attempts to maintain her God-given beauty.

VOICE (CONT’D)

Promises...assurances...guarantees...mistakes...?

ECU LEILA’S FACE / MAKEUP MONTAGE

Leila applies makeup to her skin...eyes...lips.
And as the pads and pencils and brushes and lipstick and gloss touch her flesh, the VOICE reflects on all of the things that have touched this remarkable face:

VOICE (CONT’D)
Rain...lotions...snow...pillows...
wind...sheets...sand...sun...oils
... earth...scrapes...bandages...
knives...fingertips...soaps...masks
...lips...one slap in half a century

Her makeup complete, Leila SCREAMS at the top of her lungs -

LEILA

THAT’S ENOUGH!

- and stares - defiantly beautiful - back at her own reflection. After a moment:

NELLE (OC)
Mom?

LEILA
NOTHING! NO PROBLEM!

VOICE
Shouting never works.

The PHONE RINGS. Leila snatches it from the bedstand.

LEILA
Yes?

STANFORD/PHONE
Yes? Are you okay?

LEILA          VOICE
Yup!          Nope!

STANFORD/PHONE
Nelle make it?

LEILA          VOICE
She sure did! That remains to be seen.

STANFORD/PHONE
Is Harper back?

LEILA          VOICE
Any time now. But you’ll never see your car again.

STANFORD/PHONE
What about Lee?
LEILA
On his way. He’ll never make it.

VOICE
He’ll never make it.

STANFORD/PHONE
Great. Great! We’re running a little late.

LEILA
Oh. Really?

STANFORD/PHONE
We should be there right at 4:00.

VOICE
I’m sure it’ll take them some time to set up. Oh, we’ll entertain them until you get here!

STANFORD/PHONE
You’re amazing, Lei.

VOICE
Water is amazing.

STANFORD/PHONE
Leila? Are you there?

LEILA
Yes. Where are you, exactly?

VOICE
Okay. Where are you? Us? Ahead of us?

STANFORD/PHONE
At the office.

LEILA
Right. I’m not gonna ask why.

STANFORD/PHONE
I’m really sorry about all this. New Year’s Day...it’s crazy.

VOICE
Do you really think I’m one of those women who tell you it’s okay when it really isn’t?

STANFORD/PHONE
Leila?
LEILA
Stan - it's fine. This isn’t gonna be the last inconvenience.

STANFORD/PHONE
(LAUGH)
No. No I guess not.

LEILA
You're running for Congress - as a Third Party candidate.

VOICE
You’re having a mid-life crisis - at age 55.

STANFORD/PHONE
Right. You’re right.

LEILA
I love you. Hurry home. Suddenly, I don’t know if I trust you.

And Leila disconnects - and immediately yanks an iPod and earbuds from the bedstead.

VOICE
Now what are we doing? Trying to drown us out? Good idea. Give that a try!

And “Là ci darem la mano” (“There we’ll be, hand in hand”) - the duet from MOZART’S DON GIOVANNI floods her ears.

And Leila starts to make the mussed-up bed she shares with her husband as:

DON GIOVANNI
Là ci darem la mano,/ Là mi dirai di si./ Vedi, non è lontano;/ Partiam, ben mio, da qui.

She smiles - the VOICE silenced for a moment...then:

ZERLINA
Vorrei e non vorrei, / Mi trema un poco il cor. / Felice, è ver, sarei, / Ma può burlarmi ancor.

VOICE
Don Giovanni, really? Do you really want to go there? Go ahead. Close your eyes and watch...

And Leila closes her eyes and we

CUT TO:
INT. STANFORD’S OFFICE – DAY (LEILA’S FANTASY)

The offices of Jumpstarter.com. Stanford and Kate are in a close clutch — their faces inches apart. They’re both shirtless.

And they’re singing:

STANFORD
Vieni, mio bel diletto!

KATE
Mi fa pietà Masetto.

STANFORD
Io cangierò tua sorte.

And Stanford turns Kate around and pushes her — belly-down — onto his desk...

KATE
Presto...non son più forte!

...and...evidently...and frankly...fucks her.

STANFORD
Andiam!

KATE
Andiam!

STANFORD & KATE
Andiam, andiam, mio bene. / A ristorar le pene / D’un innocente amor!

It’s comical, it’s absurd. It’s fantastic. And altogether too disturbing.

BACK TO:

INT. SWIFT HOME – MASTER BEDROOM – SAME

Leila snaps open her eyes and yanks out the earbuds — but there is still music coming from somewhere...

And Leila moves to the BEDROOM WINDOW — the one we entered at the beginning of the episode — and looks out —

EXT. SWIFT HOME – BACKYARD – DAY (LEILA’S POV)

— across her landscaped backyard...to:
EXT. HOUSE-ACROSS-THE-BACKYARD - SAME

The home in front of which the MOVING VAN is still parked. It’s a deluxe sort of Mission-style place. And there is EXTRAORDINARY MUSIC coming from the open SLIDING GLASS PANELS at the back of the house.

ORCHESTRA, CHOIR...A SOLOIST? The music is stupendous, soaring...and then it stops...and a THREE-WOMAN VOCAL starts singing DOO-WOP SCALES...then:

THREE-WOMAN VOCAL
Sing, sing, sing, sing! / Everybody’s
got to sing! / Oo-oh! / Wha-ooh! / Now
you’re singin’ with a swing!

VOICE
The Andrews Sisters?

Leila GASPS.

LEILA
Oh, my God!

EXT. SWIFT HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Leila bursts out of the kitchen door and heads toward -

EXT. RON & DAN’S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The house next door.

VOICE
LaVerne...Maxine...and Patricia
Marie...keys under the hydrangea...
8AM, noon, and 8PM...

Leila grabs the KEY from under a rock beneath a
HYDRANGEA BUSH...pushes herself through a BACK GATE and
inserts the key in Ron & Dan’s BACK DOOR.

And, with “SING, SING, SING” still playing from the
distant sound system of whoever’s moved in across the
backyard, Leila opens the door...

And she startles - reflexively repulsed by the sight
that greets her.

VOICE
Oh...sweet Jesus...

END OF ACT FOUR
We open right where we left off - ON LEILA’S FACE staring at something OFF SCREEN as she defines the moment with the only appropriate expletive:

LEILA

Shit!

VOICE

Seriously.

**BULLET TIME 3D EFFECT**

Time stands still as the CAMERA arcs around 180 degrees to REVEAL what Leila sees:

**THREE PUGS** – their stubby little tails wagging – have relieved themselves in spectacular fashion by the back door of

**INT. RON & DAN’S HOUSE – KITCHEN – DAY**

Dog shit is everywhere.

LEILA

C’mon! LaVerne...Maxine...Patricia Marie...

And she steps aside for the snorting, snuffling little mashed-faced dogs to run out into the fenced backyard.

**SNAP!**  Leila gloves-up like a Playtex surgeon. She considers a PLASTIC SPATULA...

VOICE

We could disinfect it, and they’d never know the difference, but really?

She grabs a roll of TOILET PAPER...a bottle of CLOROX SPRAY...and a **FLUSH!**

**PRE-LAPS:**

**INT. RON & DAN’S HOUSE – BATHROOM – MOMENTS LATER**

The worst of it is down the TOILET. Leila grimaces at **AN AUTOGRAPHED PHOTO OF THE ANDREWS SISTERS CIRCA 1943** – hanging above the toilet. Laverne, Maxine and Patricia Marie, dressed in U.S.O uniforms and **winking** at the camera.
INT. RON & DAN’S HOUSE – KITCHEN – MOMENTS LATER

Leila is on her hands and knees, cleaning up the skid-marks with disinfectant and toilet paper. Another Flush! PRE-LAPS:

INT. RON & DAN’S HOUSE – BATHROOM – MOMENTS LATER

The last of it. Leila watches the whirlpool in the toilet. She looks back at the autographed photo...and the SOUND of HOWLING DOGS PRE-LAPS:

EXT. RON & DAN’S HOUSE – BACKYARD – MOMENTS LATER

An ARIA is coming from the sound system of the house across the backyard. And the dogs are HOWLING. Leila checks her watch.

LEILA
Come on, girls! Back inside!
Let’s go!

She herds the dogs toward the kitchen door.

LEILA (CONT’D)          VOICE
I’ll be back later!        With a shotgun.

LEILA (CONT’D)          VOICE
I’ll make it up to you!    Why are we even talking to them?

LEILA (CONT’D)          VOICE
We’ll go for a walk!      Right off a cliff.

She closes the kitchen door...

VOICE
We need to look. It’s really loud.
It’s too loud for the neighborhood.
Take a peak...

...and heads for the LOW STONE WALL separating Ron & Dan’s backyard from the new neighbor’s.

LOW STONE WALL

Leila peers between the leaves and branches of a ROW OF TREES on the neighbor’s side. The MUSIC is SOARING.
VOICE
What is it? Who is it? It’s wonderful...

JAVIER (OC)
Is it too loud? It is!

Leila startles at the Spanish-accented voice and the sight of JAVIER CEDILLA - a ridiculously handsome 50-year-old Spaniard - standing with his back to the row of trees and facing the house from which the music is pouring.

JAVIER
(Smiling)
Yes?

LEILA
Yes...but...

JAVIER (CONT’D)
I must do something with...the acoustics - the glass...

LEILA
...it’s wonderful...

JAVIER
I am afraid your dogs do not agree.

LEILA
They’re not my dogs.

JAVIER
Ah...then you are the dog-sitter? A trespasser? A thief?

LEILA
Neighbor. I live next door.

JAVIER
So, you are tortured by my music as well.

LEILA
Your music?

JAVIER
Well, yes and no. I am a conductor, but that is Giuseppe Verdi. La Traviata.

LEILA
I love opera.
JAVIER
You do? Then you know this?

LEILA
No. I don’t. And I don’t understand it. But I love listening to it.

Javier cocks his head at this. He lifts a BANG & OLUFSEN REMOTE CONTROL, points it at the house and pushes a button and “Follie! Delerio vano è questo!” - the famous virtuosic high soprano aria from VERDI’S LA TRAVIATA -begins again. And as they listen, Javier translates the Italian:

JAVIER
What madness! This dream is hopeless...

(Pause for music)
Poor woman - alone, abandoned - in this...populous desert...called Paris.

(Pause for music)
Where should I turn?

(Pause)
To pleasure! To perish in the whirlpool of earthly desires!

And the soprano trills a HIGH COLORATURA...and the dogs start HOWLING again from inside Ron & Dan’s house. Leila and Javier share a LAUGH and he pushes PAUSE.

LEILA
I have to go.

JAVIER
(Holding out his hand)
Javier. Cedilla.

LEILA
(Taking it)
Leila. Swift. You’re...a conductor? Really?

JAVIER
Yes! Really! And...I compose a little - here and there. I am working on an oratorio. Do you know what that is?

LEILA
No...but you...must come...and have dinner with us - with my husband and me...and tell us.
JAVIER
I would love to.

LEILA
The dogs...I’m just...taking care of them for the week.

JAVIER
Ah.

LEILA
Welcome.

JAVIER
Thank you. And thank you for being honest.

LEILA
About what?

JAVIER
About the volume. And about not understanding the words...

LEILA
(Awkwardly)
Oh! You’re...welcome!

INT. RON & DAN’S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

as Leila enters, shuts the door behind her and leans back against it. And, as the dogs snuffle and scuffle around her feet, she looks down at the blouse that she’s wearing - at the fabric at the neckline.

It’s moving almost imperceptibly to the RAPID BEATING OF HER HEART.

And she realizes that the VOICE is SILENT. She speaks to the room.

LEILA
Hello? Where did you go?
(Pause)
Nothing to say? Why? What happened to you?

She listens for a moment. Nothing. She takes a deep breath, lets it go, and smiles.

CUT TO:
EXT. SWIFT HOME - DRIVEWAY - MOMENTS LATER

As Leila walks toward her front door, a VENTURA TAXI CAB pulls up and Harper jumps out.

And Leila throws her arms around her little girl.

HARPER
What am I gonna tell dad?

LEILA
What do you think?

Harper nods.

CUT TO:

INT. SWIFT HOME - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

As Leila and Harper enter. Nelle - on her way to the kitchen - stops at the sight of her little sister.

NELLE
Hi, blondie!

HARPER
Nelle?

The sisters throw their arms around one another.

NELLE
Oh, you feel so good.

Harper pulls back slightly.

HARPER
Are you okay?

NELLE
Nope! Mom, is there anything to eat?

The DOORBELL RINGS. And Leila opens it on Declan - Kate's aide.

DECLAN
I’m here to help!

LEILA
Oh...well...there’s really nothing left to do.

Declan enters and surveys the immaculate living room.
DECLAN

How...did you do it?

Leila smiles.

NELLE

(To Declan)

Who are you?

(To Harper)

Oh! Did you know there was a dead guy here? And that we’re gonna be on TV?

CUT TO:

INT. SWIFT HOME - MASTER BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Leila smooths the front of her trim and simple rich-charcoal-toned Calvin Klein blouse and skirt, and considers herself in the FULL LENGTH MIRROR.

Then, quietly – almost tentatively – she asks her reflection:

LEILA

What happened to me?

And she holds her breath, expecting a response from the VOICE that’s haunted her since just after breakfast.

But all is quiet.

The insanity is over.

She looks to the open bedroom window. She crosses to it...and listens...

But there is no music coming from the home of Javier Cedilla.

Good. Satisfied, she closes the window. And closes her eyes. And, in the blessed silence, the SOUND of the FRONT DOOR CLOSING downstairs just manages to reach her.

She checks her watch. 3:55.

And she runs out of the room.

INT. SWIFT HOME - LIVING ROOM A MOMENT LATER

Leila descends the stairs and her face is transformed by an expression of utter delight.
A HELMETED MOTORCYCLE RIDER is standing in the entryway and removing his helmet to reveal LEE - Leila & Stanford’s 22-year-old son. And he’s beautiful. Long hair in helmet-head disarray and a scraggly goatee frame a simple, open and impossibly kind face.

Leila Swift loves her children with every fibre of her being, but Lee is her son...and there’s something about mothers and sons...

LEILA
Lee?

LEE
Hi, ma!

But Harper and Nelle emerge from the kitchen and get to him first:

HARPER
Glad you could make it!

NELLE
Hey, big bro!

LEE
Whoa! Nelle! Are you, like -

NELLE
Yup!

NELLE
We is!

HARPER
Toasted.

LEE
Right on!

NELLE
And we’re gonna be on TV!

LEE
Who is?

NELLE
We is!

Lee half-laughs at his extra-crispy sister, then turns to his mother, smiles genuinely and hugs her.

LEE
Is she really -

LEILA
Yeah.

LEE
- serious?
LEILA
It’s a thing...for your dad. You don’t have to do it. None of you do.

LEE
Why didn’t you tell me?

LEILA
Something told me not to.

Lee grins/squints at his mom - trying to figure her out. Leila looks down at his oil-paint-stained jeans.

LEE
Should I, like, change?

LEILA
(Smile)
No.

DECLAN
Hi!

Lee turns to Declan and shakes the hand he’s offering. Harper is suddenly, uncharacteristically awkward:

HARPER
Declan, this - Lee, this is Declan.

LEE                  DECLAN
Hey.                Hi.

HARPER
Dad’s campaign manager’s...uh...

DECLAN                HARPER
Aide.               Assistant.

LEE
Cool.

Lee looks at Harper...looks at Declan...and back to Harper.

HARPER
(Innocently)
What?

LEE
(Grinning)
What, yourself!

And then the door opens, and Stanford & Kate enter.
STANFORD
(Genuinely thrilled)
Whoa! It’s a miracle!

It's hugs and kisses all around as the Swift family is reunited at the last minute for an event that will launch Stanford's new career and change everyone's life.

LEE
Hey, dad!

STANFORD
Nice pants, pal.
(To Nelle)
Nella-bella! This is Kate, my campaign manager.

NELLE
(To Kate)
You’re so beautiful.

KATE
Thank you!  (To Harper)
Where’s the car?

STANFORD
(To Harper)
Where’s the car?

The DOORBELL RINGS.

LEILA
(To Stanford)
Uhm, could you answer that?

Stanford opens the door on a CATERER - a young, indie-style, SuicideGirl-type bearing BAKERY BOXES.

CATERER
Hey. I’ve got pastries, coffee & tea service catering for Mrs. Swift?

LEILA
Yes! Can you bring it around to the kitchen door?

CATERER
Totally.

DECLAN
(Eagerly)
I’ll help!

HARPER
Me too!
And Declan and Harper exit. Stanford closes the front door and looks at Leila. She shrugs.

LEILA
I...didn’t have time to prepare something myself.

STANFORD
(Apppreciatively)
Incredible.

Kate CLAPS her hands:

KATE
Okay! Let’s get set up! We’re starting in the living room, right? We might want to rearrange some furniture -

And she leads the way into the room.

STANFORD
The crew’ll probably have some ideas about that.

KATE
Well, let’s get a jump on it, no?

STANFORD
Let’s wait.

The DOORBELL RINGS.

KATE
Too late! There they are!

Kate starts toward the door, but Leila intercepts her:

LEILA
I’ll get it.

And Leila heads for the door. Suddenly:

VOICE
Did we recognize her perfume?

LEILA
No!

Leila freezes. Stanford, Kate, Nelle & Lee look at her...

VOICE
Whoops.
And Leila smiles at them as though nothing has happened ...and continues toward the door.

VOICE (CONT’D)
Nelle’s never gonna get through this. Harper’s got a crush on Declan. Lee looks like he slept in a refrigerator box. And if Stanford’s sleeping with Kate...

Leila opens the door on a NETWORK PRODUCER, a REPORTER and TV CREW.

REPORTER
Mrs. Swift?

Leila opens her mouth, but before she can utter a word:

VOICE
Welcome to our life!

END OF PILOT EPISODE