

# *This American Housewife*

PILOT EPISODE

by

Erik Jendresen

Story by

Antonio Banderas & Erik Jendresen

9.16.11

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

Antonio Banderas, Melanie Griffith, Erik Jendresen

**PILOTHOUSE PICTURES** Inc

Copyright © 2011

## ACT ONE

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

SMASH CUT TO:

### SUNRISE

and the stunning opening strains of "*Follie! Delirio 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

Lee. Did you call him? You'd better call him. Remind him.

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.*

KATE  
Brilliant.

LEILA  
Stanford...

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.

LEILA  
(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  
(Into phone)  
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.



STANFORD

No. Honey - *seriously* -

LEILA

A hundred percent.

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.

RON

3 hours to Snow Valley.

LEILA

Breakfast?

HARPER

It's "all-American" French food!

RON

No time. Just fruit.

DAN

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

Because it can only get better -

DAN

Wait a minute - *gruesome?*

HARPER

It's a vocabulary word.

...and Dan notices that Leila is pouring coffee into:



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**

**ACT TWO**

We open right where we left off - ON LEILA'S FACE  
staring at something OFF SCREEN.

**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:

HAPPY NEW YEAR! PROGRESS IS SWIFT / 2013!

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 looks up at her through the smoke.

DOROTHY

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

LEILA

Would you at least...

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

DOROTHY

Why is Stanford bringing that ancient thing to me?

Leila looks to see Stanford easing Mr. Bartlett into the chair, handing him a PARTY HAT and a glass of champagne. Leila pulls a small ashtray from a side-table.

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

Serious rigor...

VOICE

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

Oh, I'll bet you take  
longer than that...

LEILA

(To Officers)  
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

Uh...thank you.

VOICE

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 -

VOICE

He was a war hero.

OFFICER LONG

Age?

LEILA

87. Would you like some coffee?

OFFICER LONG

Address?

OFFICER SHORT

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 an it!*

LEILA

You're done?

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...*

SMASH CUT TO:

**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.



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.

VOICE

*For the love of God, will you  
people please take care! You  
incompetent morons!*

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

Harper?

VOICE

*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

What happened?

VOICE

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 HARPER  
But Stanford will. 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 VOICE  
Uh...no. 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 VOICE  
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.

LEILA

Have everybody dropped off, then  
come home. I'll pay for the cab  
when you get here.

Nelle - red-eyed and still stoned to the gills - enters.

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  
Yes! 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 careens 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...*awesome*. 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

Yup!

VOICE

Nope!

STANFORD/PHONE

Nelle make it?

LEILA

She sure did!

VOICE

That remains to be seen.

STANFORD/PHONE

Is Harper back?

LEILA

Any time now.

VOICE

But you'll never see your car again.

STANFORD/PHONE

What about Lee?

LEILA VOICE  
On his way. He'll never make it.

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

LEILA VOICE  
Oh. *Really?*

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

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

STANFORD/PHONE  
You're amazing, Lei.

VOICE  
*Water* is amazing.

STANFORD/PHONE  
Leila? Are you there?

LEILA VOICE  
Yes. Where are you, exactly?

STANFORD/PHONE  
I'm sending Declan ahead of us. To  
help.

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

STANFORD/PHONE  
At the office.

LEILA VOICE  
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.

VOICE

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!

She makes her selection and inserts the earbuds.

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 sì. / 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-oo! / 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**

**ACT FIVE**

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)  
I'll be back later!

VOICE  
With a shotgun.

LEILA (CONT'D)  
I'll make it up to you!

VOICE  
Why are we even *talking* to them?

LEILA (CONT'D)  
We'll go for a walk!

VOICE  
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!

CUT TO:

**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!

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

Hey.

DECLAN

Hi.

HARPER

Dad's campaign manager's...uh...

DECLAN

Aide.

HARPER

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!

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.

STANFORD  
 Hi!

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  
(Appreciatively)  
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**