

DOG MOM

PILOT EPISODE:

"TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE"

6/28/22

Inspired by true events.

(You'd be surprised by how much of this is true.)

CONTACT:
Jon Brown
Ensemble Entertainment
Jbrown@ensembleent.com
310-386-7800

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

LISA OLAFSSON, 49-and-holding, mercurial farmer's daughter meets Marilyn Monroe, stands in a navy suit behind a podium labeled *DEFENDANT*. A stern JUDGE glares down at her from a mahogany bench.

JUDGE
...And it's illegal to liquidate
community property.

LISA
--Your Honor, he never wanted any--

PLAINTIFF
--You had no idea what I wanted.

Lisa stares at the PLAINTIFF, an arrogant man in a \$5,000 suit. At his condescending look, she SNAPS into a PTSD psychotic break, like a coked-up attorney facing disbarment.

LISA
Let me finish!
(to Judge)
He never let me finish...Ever. I gave 25
years of my life to that narcissist! I
raised our kids, moved all over kingdom
come for his career. It's my turn!

The Judge, taken aback, looks down at her notes, pounds her gavel.

JUDGE
Order!

LISA
"You left," he said, "You're on your own.
Go get a job."

She grabs the podium, leans in, white-knuckled.

LISA (CONT'D)
I did my job! I earned that money as much
as he did!

The Judge, confused by Lisa's outburst, pounds her gavel again.

JUDGE
This court will come to order! Bailiff?

The GALLERY is in an uproar. The BAILIFF stands, frozen.

INT. COURTROOM SET - TV SOUND STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Off-set, near the TV CAMERA, the DIRECTOR gawks at Lisa.

DIRECTOR
What the fu--? Cut...CUT!

LISA
 All my sacrifices! Cook, maid, room mom,
 soccer mom, dance mom...

DIRECTOR
 Somebody get Crazy Karen off my set!

Groans abound on *JUDGE JANE'S DIVORCE COURT*.

A SECURITY GUARD and SECOND A.D. make a beeline toward Lisa.

Lisa has a death-grip on the podium. The Security Guard picks her up in a bear hug, the Second AD grabs Lisa's legs, they carry her off set, past gaping BACKGROUND ACTORS.

LISA
 He never even asked what he could do to
 change my mind.

They round a corner, Lisa grabs on for dear life.

LISA (CONT'D)
 I'm the mother of his children! That
 controlling, selfish, pig-headed...rat
 bastard!

The Security Guard holds Lisa's legs with one arm, grabs his walkie-talkie, as the Second AD pries Lisa's fingers loose.

SECURITY GUARD
 (into walkie-talkie)
 I need backup, stat. We got a 5150.

DISPATCHER (O.S.)
 (through walkie-talkie)
 Psycho on set, copy. Does suspect have a
 weapon?

They pass a snack table, Lisa reaches out and nabs a bagel.

SECURITY GUARD
 (into walkie-talkie)
 Negative, just unauthorized crafty.

Pull back to reveal this is on a--

TV SCREEN

END CREDITS roll: *JUDGE JANE'S DIVORCE COURT*.

INT. LISA & ZACH'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The TV is against one wall of a cramped apartment filled with shabby-chic thrift store furniture. Every surface is covered in knickknacks, geegaws, and tchotchkes.

Flickering candles, a wine bottle, two red plastic cups and In 'N Out bags cover a small coffee table.

Lisa huddles on the sofa clutching a pillow, stares at the screen, horrified.

Her son, ZACHARY TJELMELAND (21) a blond, lanky empath in a long sleeved t-shirt, is sprawled next to her, mesmerized by Lisa's meltdown. The only sound is TRAFFIC NOISE outside.

ZACH

Damn, mom--you wanted a speaking role,
and you were the star!

LISA

They banned me from set--for life!

ZACH

Maybe a bit too soon after the divorce?

LISA

I waited my whole life for this...and my
career's over before it started.

She pours wine into her cup, takes a big gulp, watches Zach polish off his huge four-by-four burger.

LISA (CONT'D)

How can you eat? Your mother crashed and
burned before your eyes.

ZACH

Fame, infamy...it's all the same in
Tinseltown.

LISA

At least my public humiliation gave you
back your appetite.

There's a KNOCK at the door. Lisa jumps up to answer.

Zach reaches for the fries, his sleeve rides up, reveals THIN,
FADED CRISS-CROSSED SCARS all along his arm.

INT. APARTMENT ENTRYWAY

At the door, Lisa peers through the peephole, rolls her eyes,
pastes on a smile and opens the door.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

BUILDING MANAGER, MR. TWINING, 70's, is a balding Indian Brit,
with a paunch and a perma-sowl.

LISA

Mr. Twining, hello--

He holds a small brass key up in front of her face.

MR. TWINING

--Your new mail key. The charge will be on next month's rent. Try to keep track.

LISA

Oh, thanks.

She reaches for the key, he pulls it back, cranes his neck to get a glimpse in the apartment.

MR. TWINING

You don't have any pets, do you? No pets allowed, it's in the lease.

LISA

No, just my son. He's on the lease. Thanks for the key.

She starts to close the door. Mr. Twining leans forward, sniffs.

MR. TWINING

You've got candles burning.

LISA

That's not in the lease.

MR. TWINING

Open flames are a fire hazard.

LISA

Ah, good point. We'll limit them to birthdays. Buh-bye!

Lisa slams the door, puts the chain and deadbolt on.

LISA (CONT'D)

Surprised he didn't ask for your ID.

MR. TWINING (O.S.)

And no underage drinking!

Lisa rolls her eyes, returns to the sofa, holds up her cup in a toast.

LISA

Here's to a fresh start, new friends--

Zach flashes a mischievous smile, raises his cup.

ZACHARY

--And strippers for the housewarming.

Lisa doesn't miss a beat.

LISA
As long as one is over 40, named Enrique.

ZACH
(suddenly serious)
Hey, mom? You're gonna be OK. We both
are.

Lisa sighs, pensive, then shakes it off.

LISA
"To thine own self be true and it must
follow as the night the day, thou canst
not then be false to any man."

Zach plants a kiss on his mom's head. Lisa waves him off.

LISA (CONT'D)
Oh, stop your gushing. You still have to
get a job.

INT. NEIGHBORHOOD THEATRE - DAY

Lisa's on a small stage with a quirky cross-section of actors:
BOB MARLEY LOOK-ALIKE, KARDASHIAN CLONE, a WAL-MART MOM.

A COFFEE HOUSE HIPSTER with a bushy beard and man-bun leads them
in acting warm-up exercises. Everyone rolls their heads, waves
their arms, vocalizing like audible roller coasters.

HIPSTER
OK, now...your dog just got run over.

The group transforms: fake weeping and gnashing of teeth. The
Kardashian Clone falls to her knees, reaches out with one hand,
the other hand over her heart, wailing loudly.

KARDASHIAN CLONE
Muffy!!!!

Lisa looks around, hands on hips. She shrugs.

LISA
I'm a cat person.

EXT. THE CATHEDRAL, WEST HOLLYWOOD - SAME

A downcast Zach exits a shop with a HELP WANTED sign in the
window.

He scrolls through JOB LISTINGS on his phone as he shuffles past
a huge stone building behind a high-walled courtyard, toward--

Punk rocker ARI ESPINOSA (21) black cat-eye eyeliner, black
fishnets under cut-offs, tank top and backwards baseball cap, a
large backpack slung over one shoulder.

She sets her guitar case down in the middle of the sidewalk, takes a swig from a black leather flask with silver studs.

Zach STUMBLES over her guitar case, and runs into Ari.

ARI
Hey, watch it!

ZACH
Sorry! I was just...

Ari cradles the case in her arms, eases open the case to reveal a red vintage Fender electric bass guitar.

ZACH (CONT'D)
(reverently)
A '67 Fiesta Red?!?

Ari, surprised, hides that she's impressed, closes the case.

ARI
Sixty-six.

ZACH
(bug-eyed)
That's worth twelve thous--

ARI
(jumps up)
Shut up! I know. Nobody else needs to.
And here I was thinking you're smarter
than you look.

ZACH
I've just never seen someone walking
around with one before--

In a flash, Ari's got a switchblade at Zach's throat.

ARI
You still haven't.

Zach recoils, puts his hands up.

ZACH
Hey, I don't have any money. I'm looking
for a job--

Ari laughs, puts the blade away.

ARI
Relax, just messin' with ya.

She sizes up his khakis and button-down shirt.

ARI (CONT'D)
 You're from out of town, aren't you.
 Like, way out of town.

ZACH
 Wisconsin.

ARI
 How'd a Cheesehead end up here?

ZACH
 My mom--

She puts her hand up to stop him.

ARI
 Never mind. Good thing I found you,
 instead of someone sketchy--

ZACH
 Like someone with a semi-automatic
 instead of a pocket knife?

ARI
 (laughs)
 All right. You got a backbone.

She gives him the once over.

ARI (CONT'D)
 You seem fairly normal. Clumsy, but
 honest face...

She gestures toward the stone building behind her.

ARI (CONT'D)
 They're hiring.

INT. THE CATHEDRAL, WEST HOLLYWOOD - MOMENTS LATER

Loud techno music. A smattering of people sit at tables surrounding a large dance floor. Several older men watch Zach make his way to the bar. A BARTENDER nods at him.

ZACH
 Is the Manager, um...Schmittty around?
 I'm here about the job opening. Ari
 sent me.

The flirty bartender, DOMINIC, 30's, is a buff Adonis, impeccably put together. He looks Zach up and down, winks.

DOMINIC
 Dancer? You'll make bank.

Zach ducks his head, embarrassed. Dominic motions to a BUSBOY at the end of the bar.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)
Take Bambi here back to see Schmitty.

INT. CASTING OFFICE HALLWAY - DAY

Lisa, dejected, stands at the front of a group of people scanning a bulletin board listing *OPEN AUDITIONS*.

LISA
Too white, too old, too young, send demo.
How am I supposed to get experience?

MYRINA (O.S.)
(British accent)
Central Casting, background work. Low-pay
and all that bollocks, but at least you
get on set.

Lisa turns. Towering over her is MYRINA FITZROY, ageless, ebony Amazon warrior princess in a red dress and stilettos.

Next to her is a PERFECT GUY (30's), a Beverly Hills plastic surgeon's *AFTER* photo. He nods, gives Lisa an appraising look.

PERFECT GUY
You won't have a problem getting on
camera.

Lisa's caught off-guard by his dazzling smile, but it's like riding a bike...

LISA
Thanks! If I'd known everyone in LA is
so good-looking, I'd have moved here
sooner.
(flirtatious smile)
Is your dad single?

PERFECT GUY
No, but I am.

Her smile widens, she flips her hair. Right back in the game.

INT. LISA & ZACH'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Lisa unpacks a box, dances around and belts out a "free at last" anthem, her singing worthy of *Carpool Karaoke*.

She stops to look at a SCRAPBOOK with playbills and photos from lead acting roles. A framed 1996 article from UW-Madison *The Badger Herald*, a photo of her at 18, headlined: *BADGER FRESHMAN HEADS TO HOLLYWOOD*.

Lisa flips through a newer album, the kids through the years: holding huge Easter baskets, carving pumpkins, decorating a Christmas tree.

The last page: a recent FAMILY WEDDING PHOTO. Lisa's next to her EX-HUSBAND JEFF. He has a big red X over his face. Zach, in a tux, hugs his sister KAYLA, mid-20's--Lisa's mini-me in a wedding dress.

Lisa's cell phone RINGS. On the screen: *RAT BASTARD*. She takes a breath.

LISA

Hi. Why didn't you call Zach's phone?
He'd love to hear from you.

JEFF (O.S.)

(through phone)
He can call me. Later. You and I need
to talk.

LISA

Oh...OK--

JEFF (O.S.)

(through phone)
--I just got laid off, so I can't
swing alimony for the foreseeable
future.

Lisa's frozen, her mouth opens and closes like a dying fish.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD - EVENING

Zach weaves around people through a tourist trap that runs for blocks: Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum, souvenir shops, stars on the sidewalk, tourists, panhandlers, off-brand super heroes.

Up ahead is a DOG RESCUE event in a vacant parking lot next to an alley. Two VOLUNTEERS pack up and load boxes into a large van as several FAMILIES finish paperwork, fuss over their dogs.

As Zach walks by, he hears a YIP. A small bedraggled mutt, so ugly it's cute, sits in a small pen by itself.

ZACH

Aww! Hi, little guy.

The pup stares forlornly up at him. Zach glances over at the other dogs with their new families, then back at the lonely stray.

ZACH (CONT'D)

Yeah, I know how you feel.

He puts out his hand. The dog sniffs it, licks Zach's fingers.

Zach picks it up, smiles when it snuggles into his arms.

He startles when the little dog climbs up and encircles his neck, like a stole. Zach's smitten.

EXT. LISA & ZACH'S APARTMENT BUILDING, WEST HOLLYWOOD - NIGHT

A tired, squat brick apartment building that overlooks a bustling, traffic-jammed street.

INT. LISA & ZACH'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Lisa, on a step stool, stretches to put a fake plant in the bookcase. Zach enters with a backpack and ROLLING PET CARRIER.

ZACH

I got a job!

Lisa, her back to Zach, climbs down.

LISA

That's awesome, we really need the--

She turns, sees Zach with the dog around his neck.

LISA (CONT'D)

What's that?

The mutt lifts its head, looks at her.

LISA (CONT'D)

(screams)

Ohmigod, it's alive?

Zach lifts the dog from his neck, cradles it in his arms.

LISA (CONT'D)

It's a dog? Why do you have a live, mangy dog? You better have gotten a job as a dog walker.

Zach gives his mom puppy dog eyes to match the dog's.

ZACH

His name's Larry.

LISA

NO.

ZACH

(beat)

How about Roger?

LISA

Zachary, you can NOT have a dog. You heard the crypt keeper.

ZACH

They said they were going to put him to sleep if he wasn't adopted today.

LISA

And I just saw Bigfoot at Trader Joe's. We've barely unpacked, and you're going to get us evicted!

She climbs off the step stool, points at the plant.

LISA (CONT'D)

Look. I don't even have real plants. You know why? Because I don't want to take care of anything anymore.

ZACH

I'll take care of him.

LISA

You couldn't keep a hermit crab alive.

ZACH

I was five.

LISA

How can you take care of a dog? You have to work.

ZACH

I'm working nights. He'll be sleeping. You won't even know he's here.

As Lisa rants, Zach sits on the floor, cuddles Larry.

LISA

Dogs bark, and poop. You have to feed them, walk them, and clean up their poop--

Larry sits up, gives Lisa an irresistibly cute begging look. She looks at her fragile son, dark smudges under his eyes, but with an adoring grin as he watches Larry. She sighs in defeat.

LISA (CONT'D)

He can not be on the furniture. He sleeps in the kitchen, until we're sure he's housebroken. I am not feeding him, or walking him. He's your responsibility.

ZACH

Yes! You won't have to do a thing.

Zach beams, pulls bowls, food, and toys from his backpack.

LISA

And if Mr. Twining finds out, you'll have to find a nice homeless person who wants company--and I don't mean just the dog.

ZACH

Don't worry, Larry's super quiet. That's why I picked him.

Zach hugs Larry. The dog licks his face.

ZACH (CONT'D)

Actually, he picked me.

LISA

(softens)

Huh, smarter than he looks.

She eyes the bedraggled mutt.

LISA (CONT'D)

Which isn't saying a whole lot. But Zach, why a dog...now?

ZACH

How do you say no to someone who needs you?

INT. ZACH'S BEDROOM - LATER

Zach's on his bed, playing a game on his cell phone, Larry curled up against him. Zach's phone RINGS. On the screen: DAD.

Zach jumps up, tosses his phone on the bed as it continues RINGING. He puts on headphones, cranks up head-banger music. He paces back and forth, then bolts out the door.

BATHROOM

Zach enters and locks the door, intense. He grabs his toiletry bag, dumps it on the counter. He spots a BOX CUTTER...

INT. LISA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

The TRAFFIC NOISE is a dull roar. Lisa's head is buried under a pillow, she tosses and turns, finally climbs out of bed.

INT. LISA AND ZACH'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Lisa wanders in, half-asleep, in a ratty robe. She stumbles into boxes that barricade the kitchen doorway. Zach's in a sleeping bag on the floor, Larry's on the pillow, next to Zach's head.

Lisa makes coffee. Zach's phone alarm RINGS, his eyes pop open.

ZACH
What time is it?!

He grabs his phone while Larry jumps on him and licks his face.

LISA
I think you meant to say: Good morning, dear mother. Please, go relax, I'll bring you breakfast in bed to show my deep appreciation for your temporary insanity in letting me keep this flea-bitten mutt.

Zach hops around in a panic, peels off his sleeping bag. She notices a large BANDAGE on Zach's left forearm.

LISA (CONT'D)
What happened to your arm?

ZACH
Just a scrape. It's my first day of work!

LISA
You said you work nights.

ZACH
Training is during the day.

LISA
You didn't mention that little detail.

ZACH
I booked a dog sitter online yesterday. But I have to leave soon. Can you just do the hand off for me?

LISA
I have a casting call. We both have to work, if we're going to make rent. And you can't always count on me to bail you out. You have to live with the consequences of your actions.

ZACH
(mutters)
I have to live with yours, too.

LISA
What?

ZACH
Nothing. I'm sorry, I forgot you had that thing today.

LISA
 Thing?! It's my first audition since
 I crashed and burned on Judge Jane.
 (terrible realization)
 Maybe I'm blackballed...

ZACH
 If you're half as dramatic in your
 audition, you'll nail it for sure.

Lisa stares at Zach, hurt.

LISA
 I never thought I'd say this, but
 you sound like your fath--

Zach's cell phone RINGS.

ZACH
 (into phone)
 Hello? Yeah, he was supposed to be
 here by now...What?! Nobody else?

His eyes dart to Lisa's, his face tells the bad news.

ZACH (CONT'D)
 (into phone)
 Thanks anyway, bye.

LISA
 No. No way, Zach.

ZACH
 Just for today, I promise. It's my
 first day, what else can I do?

Zach looks at his mom in despair.

ZACH (CONT'D)
 I don't know anyone else.

They're both silent. Larry just looks at them, cute and quiet.

ZACH (CONT'D)
 He'll probably sleep all day, I'm
 sure he'll be fine penned up here--

LISA
 --Until he gets bored and a neighbor
 hears him barking. We can't risk it.

Zach looks at her with pleading eyes.

LISA (CONT'D)
 Damn!...All right! Feed him and
 throw his stuff in his carrier.

(MORE)

LISA (CONT'D)

I'll have to take him with. He better be as quiet as he was when you snuck him in here.

ZACH

Thanks, Mom! I owe you!

Zach heads to the door, Lisa calls after him.

LISA

Believe me, I'm keeping tabs. You'll feed me and take me for walks someday!

She looks at Larry, lounging on the pillow.

LISA (CONT'D)

And you better hope there's no animal shelter between here and my audition.

Lisa's cell phone RINGS. Lisa groans.

LISA (CONT'D)

Now what?!?

She looks at her phone, brightens, answers the VIDEO CALL.

ON THE SCREEN:

It's Kayla, Sporty Spice doppelgänger with a drama queen vibe. Right now, she looks like someone died.

LISA

Hey, Kayla. Sorry, not a good time--

KAYLA

--Mom, I need to talk to you. But it's...hard to talk about on the phone.

Lisa grabs Larry with her other hand, carries the dog to the front door, sets him down, and reaches for his harness.

LISA

Yeah, it's hard for me to talk now, too. Your brother brought home a stray dog, and I have an audition...

Larry runs and hides under a chair. Lisa pulls a dog treat from the carrier, dangles it, Larry lunges for it.

LISA (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Sorry, I'm trying to get out the door.

Lisa snatches Larry up, carries him to the door, his short legs stick straight out.

KAYLA

But I really need to--

LISA

--I promise I'll call you tonight, as soon as I get back. Love you!

Lisa drops her phone, shoves Larry's legs through the harness, snaps it closed with a triumphant flourish.

LISA (CONT'D)

Hah! I'm a mom, with a college degree. You have the intellect of a toddler.

Lisa kneels down, stares Larry in the eye.

LISA (CONT'D)

It's my way or the highway. Got it?

Larry licks her nose.

LISA (CONT'D)

Yuck! What's Zach feeding you?!?

EXT. OFFICE PARK SIDEWALK - DAY

Lisa eyes are glued to the map on her phone, she juggles a large purse and the rolling pet carrier in one hand, Larry's extendable leash with the other as he darts around pedestrians like a bloodhound on a trail.

Larry trots ahead, then doubles back, wrapping the leash around her legs. She turns in circles, unwinding, like a cowgirl twirls a lasso.

Lisa sighs, relieved, when they near a building entrance. A sign taped on the door: *OPEN CASTING TODAY*.

Larry stops, sniffs a bush, and lifts his leg.

LISA

Good timing.

TWO PEDESTRIANS stop when they see Lisa.

PEDESTRIAN #1

Hey! You're that lady who had a meltdown on divorce court!

Lisa hunches over, hides her face, pulls on Larry's leash.

LISA

C'mon, let's go!

She hurries Larry away from the gawkers, but the dog suddenly squats.

LISA (CONT'D)

Wait, no, no, no...

Larry takes a dump in the middle of the sidewalk. Lisa digs through her purse as a CASTING ASSISTANT approaches the building, gives her the stink eye.

LISA (CONT'D)

I'm picking it up!

Lisa gives up her search and grabs a couple large leaves. She grimaces as she picks up the poop.

LISA (CONT'D)

Eeewww. Glad you're not a St. Bernard.

The Casting Assistant shakes her head in disgust and enters the building. Lisa looks around, tosses the dog poop under a bush. She picks up Larry, stuffs him in the carrier, and zips it up.

LISA (CONT'D)

In you go. Behave, or you may get lost on the way home.

INT. THE CATHEDRAL NIGHT CLUB - DAY

Zach walks in, past the empty dance floor. Dominic, in a perfect crisp linen shirt, stocks the bar.

DOMINIC

Hey, Bambi. Ready for your big debut?

ZACH

I'm a bar back.

DOMINIC

Gotta start somewhere.

Zach smiles, shakes his head, heads toward the back room, almost runs into INÁCIO, 20's. Zach's flustered by Inácio's chocolate-brown eyes, ripped gymnast physique, and dark, exotic intensity.

ZACH

Oh, sorry.

Inácio is equally infatuated with Zach's blond, blue-eyed wholesomeness. Inácio appraises him.

INÁCIO

I have competition...
(seductive smile)
Or a new partner.

ZACH

No! I'm just...I'm not a dancer.

Inácio flashes a smile to melt the heart of any gender.

INÁCIO

We shall see...

Zach, speechless, ducks into the office. Inácio saunters past the bar, Dominic watches him.

DOMINIC

I saw him first.

INÁCIO

He saw me last.

INT. CASTING OFFICE - DAY

The room is filled with rows of folding chairs, all occupied by a rainbow of humanity. Everyone has a sheet of white paper with a handwritten number pinned to their shirts.

Lisa slips through the door, puts Larry's pet carrier strap on her shoulder and covers it with a jacket, as she heads to the sign-in table.

Lisa freezes--it's the frazzled CASTING ASSISTANT who saw her outside, seated at a folding table near the door. Lisa turns her head away as the CA hands Lisa a packet, barely glancing up.

CASTING ASSISTANT

Read, sign and date, turn it in, and wait for your number to be called.

Lisa heads to the back, sets the carrier in a corner, huddles down to peek in on Larry. The irritated CA rushes over with a sheet of paper with #40 on it, a large safety pin attached.

CASTING ASSISTANT (CONT'D)

You forgot your number.

Lisa bolts upright.

LISA

Uh, sorry. Thanks.

The Casting Assistant studies Lisa.

CASTING ASSISTANT

Weren't you just outside with a--

MYRINA (O.S.)

(posh British accent)

--Pardon me, where's the bog?

The CA turns, looks up at a towering ebony-skinned woman in a psychedelic dress, platform sandals, and #18 pinned to her chest. It's Myrina.

MYRINA (CONT'D)
 (sotto)
 I'm going to spend a penny.

At the CA's blank look:

MYRINA (CONT'D)
 Where's the loo?

CASTING ASSISTANT
 Restrooms are down the hall, first door
 on the left.

The CA shoves the numbered paper at Lisa and rushes off.

MYRINA
 Hello again, I remember you. She's quite
 the giddy kipper.

LISA
 Hi, sorry, I don't speak British.

MYRINA
 Myrina Fitzroy, of the Duke of Grafton.
 Pleasure.

LISA
 Lisa Olafsson, of the...Wisconsin Dells.

Myrina watches, bemused, as Lisa shakes out her arms, rotates
 her head, does vocal exercises, eyes wide.

MYRINA
 You're not having a fit are you? Looking
 a bit barmy there.

Lisa stops, embarrassed.

LISA
 Just warming up.

CASTING ASSISTANT
 Number 17!

MYRINA
 I'll be gutted if I don't get this. I'm
 skint.

LISA
 Oh, I'm...sorry?

The dog carrier wobbles. Lisa glances around, pulls a dog treat
 bag from her purse, and grabs a handful.

MYRINANMMKILJM

I've a granola bar, if you're that peckish.

LISA

(whispers)

No, I have--

The Casting Assistant walks by again, eyes Lisa, who hides the bag behind her back, shoves the dog treats into her mouth.

LISA (CONT'D)

(mumbles through the mouthful)

--Low blood sugar.

CASTING ASSISTANT

Number 17, last call, 18 on deck.

Lisa starts to gag. The CA gives her a searching look, then strides off.

Myrina watches Lisa quickly unzip the carrier and spit the dog biscuits into it. The bag goes still.

MYRINA

Mum's the word. I had to take my Yorkie, Mary Poppins, to an audition once. Dropped a clanger there. Really cocked it up.

Lisa gags, wipes her tongue off with her sleeve. She digs a water bottle from her bag, takes a big mouthful, swishes and gulps it down with a wince.

MYRINA (CONT'D)

But I'm sure you'll pull a blinder.

CASTING ASSISTANT (O.S.)

Number 18!

MYRINA

Ta-ta for now, thanks for the chin wag!

Myrina waves and flounces off. Lisa coughs, still grossed out from the taste of dog biscuits.

LISA

Hope that's all I choke on today.

INT. HALLWAY - LATER

Lisa swigs water, sets Larry's carrier down. It lurches again.

LISA
 (whispers)
 OK, OK!

She fumbles for the treat bag, can't get the zip-lock top open.

VICTOR (O.S.)
 Number 40...Lisa Olafsson?

Finally, she rips it open with her teeth, unzips the carrier, empties the bag inside.

INT. SMALL OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Lisa puts her purse and the dog carrier against the wall.

The HEAD CASTING DIRECTOR, VICTOR, smiles at her expectantly.

VICTOR
 Ready when you are.

LISA
 Yes, ready!

As Lisa hurries over to face THREE CASTING DIRECTORS seated behind a long table, there's YIP from the carrier.

Lisa does a quick FAKE SNEEZE.

LISA (CONT'D)
 Sorry, hay fever.

But they're looking past her at the CARRIER, which has begun to rock back and forth.

VICTOR
 Is there...an animal in there?

LISA
 Excuse me? An animal?!
 (titters nervously)
 That's crazy, why would I--

BARKING from the carrier. Lisa starts COUGHING and HACKING, desperate to cover the sound.

VICTOR
 So you do have a dog--

LISA
 (panicked)
 --I'm sorry, OK?! I didn't know what else to do. My son had to work and we just moved here and I was afraid we'd get evicted--

TIFFANY

--I wish I had Tinkerbell here!

JAMAL

Let's see!

LISA

I'm sorry, you want to...?

VICTOR

We all have dogs.

The other two nod, smile, hold up DOG PHOTOS on their phones.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

C'mon, we want to meet him!

Lisa brings the carrier to the table, unzips the top, Larry's head pops out. All three Casting Directors are taken aback by the bedraggled mutt--then they melt.

TIFFANY

He's precious!

JAMAL

What's his name?

LISA

Uh, Larry.

VICTOR

Does he do any tricks?

LISA

Like...sit?

Larry sits up, like a meerkat.

CASTING DIRECTORS

(in unison)

AAAWWWWWW!

Lisa thinks, points to the ground.

LISA

Lie down?

Larry drops flat to the floor. Lisa's as surprised and impressed as the Casting Directors.

LISA (CONT'D)

Umm, roll over?

The dog quickly rolls over and sits up again.

VICTOR
OK, that's it.

LISA
What?! No! Please, I thought you wanted--

VICTOR
--You're in the wrong place.

Victor scribbles on a piece of paper.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
Go to this address, right now, ask for
Chantal. Tell her Victor is submitting
you for *Real Dog Food*.

Victor hands her the paper.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
Here's your line.

LISA
(ecstatic)
My line...?!

INT. OFFICE HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Lisa exits the casting office, drags Larry toward the exit.

LISA
(sotto)
...The only food my dog will--

She sees Myrina talking on her cell phone. Lisa grins and waves at her on the way out the door.

LISA (CONT'D)
Thanks for the pep talk!

Myrina smiles, gives Lisa an English royalty wave.

A MAN hurries by, texting on his cell phone, and runs SMACK into Myrina. Her refined BRITISH ACCENT disappears, replaced by her real SOUTHERN OHIO DRAWL:

MYRINA
Hey! Watch where you're goin' asshole!

INT. THE CATHEDRAL NIGHT CLUB - DAY

Zach hunches down, stacks clean glasses behind the bar.

ARI
Do they know a total klutz is handling
their glassware?

Zach startles, hits his head on the edge of the bar as he straightens, drops a glass but catches it just before it hits the floor. Ari stands with her guitar case, amused.

ZACH
You work here too?

ARI
Not yet. A friend's hooking me up.

Ari slaps a flyer on the bar: a photo of her rocking out on stage, with her phone number and social media handles.

She eyes Zach as he hefts a tub of dirty dishes, flashes him a sardonic smile.

ARI (CONT'D)
Looks like you could use a better friend.

Ari turns on her heel and heads to the exit.

ARI (CONT'D)
Later, Cheesehead.

INT. CASTING OFFICE - LATER

Lisa takes Larry out of the carrier, holds up a bowl of dog food. He immediately sits up, looking hopeful.

LISA
Real Dog Food is the only food my dog
will eat--for real!
(beat)
Wait, one more time? To give it a bit
more energy...

CHANTAL, the Casting Director, smiles at Larry.

CHANTAL
No. It's perfect.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD STREET - DAY

Lisa walks Larry along a sidewalk crowded with tourists, she pulls the rolling dog carrier behind her, tripping people.

LISA
I can't believe it, a national
commercial! I'll be a household name,
like Mr. Clean, only a less annoying
jingle.

Lisa smiles at Larry for the first time.

LISA (CONT'D)
 Guess you're worth the cost of dog food
 after all.

EXT. LISA & ZACH'S APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Lisa stops and digs around in her large purse.

LISA
 Shoot, where's my key?!

Larry pulls, Lisa stumbles, falls to the apartment steps,
 searching frantically through her purse.

HUGO
 I could hold the leash for you.

Lisa looks up, her mouth drops open. She's drowning in big green
 eyes. HUGO RUSHIDI, 40's, is an Iranian James Bond. He flashes a
 dazzling smile, holds out a manicured hand.

LISA
 (sotto)
 "If I could write the beauty of your
 eyes..."

Hugo looks puzzled. Lisa quickly hands him the leash.

LISA (CONT'D)
 Thank you...?

HUGO
 Hugo Rushidi.

LISA
 Lisa Olafsson. He's unpredictable, don't
 let him jump up on your beautiful suit.

She looks at Larry, who's sitting up, gazing up at Hugo with
 adoration. Hugo scratches Larry's ears.

HUGO
 Cute pup.

Lisa glares at Larry, resumes her frenzied search.

LISA
 Sorry, I'm a mess--just moved in.
 Unpacking, auditions, my son brings home
 a stray. I know it's in here somewhere...

HUGO
 The stray?

LISA
 My key.

Hugo unlocks the front security door, extends his hand.

HUGO
Let me walk you to your apartment.

Lisa scrambles to her feet, unnerved by the tall, dark, handsome--and nice--stranger.

LISA
I'm not going in with the dog. I'm waiting for my son, it's his dog, I just watched him this once. Outside. He doesn't live here. The dog, or my son--

HUGO
(leans in, whispers)
I have a dog too. Your secret's safe. You can both wait at my place.

He smiles at Lisa's hesitation.

HUGO (CONT'D)
Don't worry, you're safe as well. I'm happily married.

He holds the door open for her, Lisa slumps in disappointment.

INT. HUGO & EMIL'S APARTMENT - DAY

An elevator door opens. Lisa gasps when she sees the stunning marble foyer leading into a penthouse.

LISA
I can't believe this is in the same building as my dumpy little apartment!

HUGO
Long-term lease and rent-control.

Lisa studies a portrait of Hugo and another gorgeous man.

HUGO (CONT'D)
My husband, Emil. He works nights.

LISA
"How bitter a thing, to look into happiness through another man's eyes."

Hugo looks at her quizzically. Lisa shrugs, embarrassed.

LISA (CONT'D)
All the plays I've done, characters emerge when I'm stressed...like Sybil. No one says it better than Shakespeare.
(re: the portrait)
(MORE)

LISA (CONT'D)

"Down on your knees and thank heaven, for a good man's love."

Hugo, smiles, fills the awkward moment by petting a fluffy little dog curled up on a red velvet cushion.

HUGO

This is RuPaul.

Larry comes over, sniffs RuPaul, starts licking her. Lisa and Hugo both "Awwww."

HUGO (CONT'D)

That's what I love about dogs, you always know exactly how they feel.

INT. HUGO & EMIL'S APARTMENT - LATER

Hugo and Lisa sit on the sofa, drink wine, chat like old friends. The two dogs snuggle between them.

LISA

...I don't expect to be famous, but I'm too old to just have good potential. So I decided to finally take my shot--and give Zach a fresh start, be himself. Once he figures it out.

The doorbell RINGS. Larry BARKS, both dogs run to the door.

LISA (CONT'D)

Larry, quiet! Hugo, you have a doorbell? So civilized!

Hugo opens the door. It's Zach, looking confused.

ZACH

Um, hi, are you Hugo? I got a text from my mom, Lisa. She said she lost her key, so she's waiting here?

Hugo smiles and reaches out to shake Zach's hand.

HUGO

Hello, Zach, nice to meet you.

Lisa goes on tiptoe, kisses Zach on the cheek.

LISA

Zee-man! I have a friend!

Zach looks down at Larry, who's licking RuPaul.

ZACH

(smiles)

Looks like everyone does.

INT. THE CATHEDRAL NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT

The nightclub is packed with an assortment of people, from burly bearded guys in flannel shirts to gaggles of barely-21 girls in skimpy Vegas dresses and platform pumps.

Lisa sits at the bar with Hugo, sips a martini, notices a SEXY GUY, late-30's, with scruff and brooding bedroom eyes look over.

She raises her glass to her lips suggestively, then realizes he's focused on whomever is behind her.

ZACH
Hey, you made it!

Lisa spins around, and is mortified to see the object of the hottie's lust: her son, carrying a dish tub.

LISA
You're gainfully employed, I had to see for myself.

Zach checks out his mom's fitted jeans, high boots and low-backed top as she throws back the rest of her martini.

ZACH
Wow, mom, you look hot!

HUGO
(to Lisa)
Told you.

LISA
Not hot enough, evidently.

Zach notices a WELL-DRESSED WOMAN eyeing Lisa.

ZACH
Uh, mom--you do remember this is a gay bar, right?

LISA
I'm rusty! Haven't been to a bar in over a decade. And I haven't been single in a bar since Reagan was President.

ZACH
Who?

LISA
Private school tuition, well-spent.

Zach goes back to work. Hugo gestures to Lisa's empty glass.

HUGO
Ready for another one?

She eyes two other good-looking men at the bar.

LISA
Maybe I'll have a double.

The two men ignore her come-hither look.

LISA (CONT'D)
So much for a practice run.
(sighs)
I'm a divorced, middle-aged, broke,
unemployed actor with no marketable
skills--trying to meet men in a gay bar.

HUGO
I'm sure it's a bit different since you
were in the dating scene.

LISA
A bit? Zach showed me *Urban Dictionary* so
he wouldn't have to explain...a term.

HUGO
What term?

Lisa hesitates, then leans over.

LISA
(whispers)
Dirty Sanchez.

Hugo chokes on his drink.

LISA (CONT'D)
Seriously? That's a thing? I feel like
Columbus, if he'd discovered GPS in the
New World. Still in the wrong place, but
knowing exactly how lost he really was.

She eyes the men around her.

LISA (CONT'D)
The only difference is, I'm not attacking
the natives.

Lisa, anxious to change the subject, scans the crowd.

LISA (CONT'D)
Speaking of lost, where's your handsome
hubby?

HUGO
Meeting us here after work.

Lisa notices a tall, SULTRY WOMAN with big platinum hair and a
slinky dress glide through the crowd.

LISA
 Wow, I need to up my game, the
 competition is stiff here!

To Lisa's chagrin, the Sultry Woman is actually EMIL NORRIS, 40,
 who sashays over, gives Hugo a passionate kiss.

HUGO
 Lisa, my better halves, Emil and Emilia.

EMIL
 Depending on the time of day. So happy to
 finally meet you, neighbor...and fellow
 dog smuggler.

Emilia busses Lisa on both cheeks, European-style. Lisa smiles
 shyly as Emilia takes her hand, looks her over.

EMIL (CONT'D)
 You're adorable! Let's see what ya got.

Emilia pulls Lisa and Hugo toward the dance floor, they dance
 through the crowd to a space. The music changes to a Latin beat.

A HOT LATIN GUY grabs Lisa's hand, starts dancing salsa. He's
 delighted when she follows his lead like a pro.

LISA
 Ten years of ballroom dance lessons
 finally pay off!

A crowd forms as they tear up the dance floor.

Things dissolve in a slow-motion blur of lights, music, and
 tequila shots.

Lisa gets up on the bar, dances *Coyote Ugly* style, as the crowd
 cheers...then boos an embarrassed Zach as he pulls her down.

37 **INT. THE CATHEDRAL NIGHT CLUB - LATER**

37

The lights come up. Hot Latin Guy holds Lisa tight, nuzzles her
 neck. Lisa giggles and stumbles, Emil and Hugo appear on either
 side of them.

HUGO
 OK Lothario, we'll take it from here.

LISA
 His name is Humberrrto.

EMILIA
 Potato, po-tah-to. Later, lover boy.

The thwarted would-be lover stalks off.

LISA
I haven't danced like that since my
wedding.

She throws her arms around Hugo and Emil's shoulders.

LISA (CONT'D)
I didn't even dance like that at my
wedding! That was hot! He was hot!

She looks over her shoulder, stumbles.

LISA (CONT'D)
Wasn't he hot?!

Zachary hurries over.

ZACHARY
Hey, Mom, I have to close--

He stops, at a loss when he sees Lisa is incoherent.

HUGO
We'll get her home safely, no worries.

EMILIA
I think it was the switch from martinis
to tequila--

LISA
--Tequila! Woo-hoo!

She shakes her booty, humming *Tequila*, dances out the door.

INT. LISA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Hugo and Emil half-carry Lisa to her bed. Larry is thrilled to see her, jumps up, licks her face as Hugo pulls off Lisa's boots and Emil hands her three Tylenol and a glass of water.

EMIL
Hydrate, *chica*.

LISA
(slurred)
Thanks...so fun. "Parting's such sweet
sorrow, say goodnight till it be morrow."

Lisa chugs the water, falls back on the bed. Larry snuggles next to her. Hugo and Emil pull the covers up and tiptoe out.

Lisa puts her arm around Larry.

LISA (CONT'D)
Nice kitty.

INT. LISA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Lisa's spread-eagle on the bed, still in last night's clothes, a pillow over her head. Larry snoozes beside her. Her cell phone alarm RINGS. She turns it off with a groan, struggles upright-- mascara-smudged raccoon eyes, Albert Einstein hair.

Her phone DINGS. She squints at it: Many TEXTS from KAYLA.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Lisa shuffles down the hall, tries to open a bottle of Tylenol, Larry trots at her heels.

LIVING ROOM

Lisa sleepwalks toward the kitchen. Larry scratches at the door.

LISA
Sorry, not my job.

She hears a YIP. Larry's sitting up, his leash in his mouth.

LISA (CONT'D)
Seriously?! I haven't had my coffee yet.

He resumes his desperate scratching. She sighs, gives up on opening the Tylenol, slips on Zach's size 14 shoes by the door.

LISA (CONT'D)
Just this once.

BUILDING HALLWAY

Lisa ties her robe, stumbles trying to clip the tangled leash to Larry's collar as the dog runs toward the ELEVATOR.

LISA
Larry, wait!

She trips over the too-big shoes, does a skidding face-plant just as the ELEVATOR DOOR opens. Larry makes a run for it.

LISA (CONT'D)
No, Larry, wait. Sit! Stay!

Zach pops his head out into the hallway.

ZACH
Mom! Your computer's ringing--

LISA
My callback! Come get Larry!

Lisa picks up Zach's shoes and bolts back into the apartment.

Zach sprints after Larry--too late. The dog disappears into the elevator, the DOORS CLOSE. Zach runs to the STAIRS exit.

INT. LISA'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lisa's laptop is open on the coffee table, RINGING, as she runs in, chucks the shoes, and hurdles the sofa. She plops down, takes a breath, pastes on a smile, and connects the call.

LISA

Hello there!

CHANTAL

Hey! Just wanted the Director to get a quick peek at Larry. Then we'd like to see him this afternoon.

LISA

Thank you! Yes, I'm so excited to be--
(the words sink in)

Wait. You want the dog? Just the dog?!

SMASH TO BLACK

END OF PILOT