

Hacks

#301

Written by

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CAST LIST

DEBORAH
AVA
MARCUS
DAMIEN
DJ
JIMMY
KAYLA

MARTY
TAYLOR
ELAINE
JOSEFINA
WILSON
PIZ WEAK
ADEN

BENNY
STEPHEN
LISA
PRODUCER
RAY
SCOTT
BARRY (NETWORK GUY 1)
NETWORK GUY 2
STAGEHAND

SET LIST

INTERIORS

Edit Suite

Writers Room

Sound Stage

- Theatre
- Dressing Room

Production Office

Deborah's Mansion

- Deborah's Office
- Deborah's Living Room

Jimmy's Apartment

Wilson's Apartment

DJ's Apartment

Network

- Boardroom
- Elevator Lobby

EXTERIORS

Deborah's Mansion

- Driveway
- Front Door
- Patio

Jimmy's Apartment

Wilson's Apartment

Production Office

A TITLE SEQUENCE for "The Deborah Vance Show" fills the screen starting with a shot of the Vegas Strip at night.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
Live, from Las Vegas...

A DEALER gets blackjack and takes a PLAYER'S entire pile of chips.

ANNOUNCER
Where what happens at the pawn
shop, stays at the pawn shop...

Deborah pulls the handle on a slot machine.

ANNOUNCER
It's The Deborah Vance Show! With
tonight's special guest, Benny the
Ben-Meister!

Insert a Polaroid photo graphic of BENNY THE BEN-MEISTER, 30's, dorky, ponytail, mugging for the camera.

ANNOUNCER
And musical guests, The Benanigans!

Insert a publicity shot of a heavy metal band dressed in black leather. Benny the Ben-Meister is the lead singer.

ANNOUNCER
Please welcome your hostess with
the winning hand, Deborah Vance!

The title sequence ends on a photo collage of Deborah flanked by two shirtless firemen holding their hoses suggestively. Deb has a box of matches in one hand and an animated flaming matchstick in the other.

TITLE GRAPHIC: THE DEBORAH VANCE SHOW

REVEAL: ELAINE, MARCUS, and DAMIEN looking over the shoulder of a VIDEO EDITOR at his monitor. The Editor turns around to reveal that he is Benny.

VIDEO EDITOR/BENNY
Obviously still needs some work
but...

ELAINE
Obviously.

DAMIEN

I don't hate it though.

ELAINE

I do. I hope you're a better singer than you are an editor Benmeister because this is a bigger turd than the ones De Niro's dog used to drop all over Tribeca.

MARCUS

Yeah, the whole fire thing is really not in line with where we want to take her brand.

Elaine puts a finger in her mouth and pretends to gag.

DAMIEN

I do hate it.

MARCUS

We cannot show this to her.

VIDEO EDITOR/BENNY

The network guys love it!

302 INT. REHEARSAL SOUND STAGE - DAY

302

Two NETWORK GUYS in suits sit apart from a small STUDIO AUDIENCE watching Deborah perform. It's a closed set still under construction. On stage, a typical late-night show set up: a desk and chair, a two-person couch, a small dais for a band, and a backdrop of the Las Vegas skyline.

DEBORAH

And that's the real reason why Michael Jackson's monkey ran away from Neverland.

The audience laughs, but something's off. Deb notices.

DEBORAH

And why I never went back.

More laughter. It sounds forced.

Deborah steps off stage to see what the audience sees.

ANGLE ON: A giant "Laughter/Applause" light.

DEBORAH

(to audience)

Well that's new. Are you guys paying attention to that?

AUDIENCE
(in unison)
Yes!

DEBORAH
(to the network suits)
This your handiwork?

Guilty looks.

DEBORAH
(not happy)
Okay. That's all folks. We're all
done for today.

AUDIENCE
(in unison, disappointed)
Aww!

Audience members start to leave. MARCUS steps on stage.

MARCUS
Thank you everyone for coming to
our test taping. You can collect
your phones at the door. And
remember you all signed NDA's so...

Marcus makes a "zip your lips" gesture.

The network suits try to slink away.

DEBORAH
(to the network suits)
Hey! You two. Shame on you. I've
been getting laughter and applause
for longer than you've both been
alive, and you can't fake it in
here the way you fake it in the
boardroom.
(pointing at one of them)
What's your name?

NETWORK SUIT
Barry.

DEBORAH
Barry what?

NETWORK SUIT
Chezelnik.

DEBORAH
Are we making the Barry Chezelnik
show?

Barry shakes his head "no." Deb points at the other suit, he puts his hands up -- "Okay, okay," before she can start.

DEBORAH

Then get out of here and leave the laughter and applause to me.

303 INT. WRITERS ROOM - DAY

303

Ava is staffed on the series she helped write in 208.

Ava and Taylor contemplate an array of unhealthy snacks. Other WRITERS sit around a table behind them.

AVA

You know diabetes is basically curable now, so...

TAYLOR

Sugar!

Ava rips open a Pop-Tart. Doesn't bother toasting it.

AVA

I just wish it went to my boobs instead of my butt.

TAYLOR

I hear you sister.

AVA

This coffee though. Ugh. Would it kill them to have some nice teas?

The showrunner, SCOTT (white, male, 30's, bearded) storms in.

SCOTT

You assholes solve my second act?

AVA

(mouth full)

I might have something.

SCOTT

Might? I don't have time for might. Anyone else?

Everyone looks around uncomfortably. Scott smacks the Pop-Tart out of Ava's hand.

SCOTT

You're new here so let me hip you to reality. No writey. No snacky.

TAYLOR

Hey, dude.

SCOTT

Oh don't get your panties in a wad missy.

(to everyone)

I got stacks of scripts from people who would kill to work here. So fix this mess. Otherwise we'll be tossed on the shit heap with all the other two-season shows and you'll be back at The Coffee Bean working on a wobbly table with very, very fucking intermittent Wi-Fi. And paying for snacks!

Scott leaves. Taylor hands Ava a fresh Pop-Tart.

TAYLOR

I think he likes you.

AVA

He's so dreamy.

304

INT. JIMMY'S APARTMENT - DAY

304

KAYLA

Hey partner, guess who kicked dick and signed up a new client?

JIMMY

Kayla. You can't sign--

KAYLA

Don't even. I know you're still sore from how hard Janet Stone, bitch, ass raped us. This is how we get back on top.

Kayla shows Jimmy her phone. A famous TikToker, PIZWEAK, 20's, wannabe gangster, is doing some stupid shit. Ten-million views and counting.

JIMMY

Ugh. Kayla. What am I even looking at?

KAYLA

PizWeak! He's TikTok famous as fuck!

JIMMY

He looks like a douche-bag.

KAYLA
Oh he totally is. But he's our
douche-bag.

Kayla FaceTimes PizWeak.

PIZWEAK
Shafe-a-nator! Wazzup girl? Still
wreckin' that D?

KAYLA
Night and day boyee! Meet your new
agent!

Kayla adjusts the phone to include Jimmy on the call.

PIZWEAK
Yo yo yo my man. What's good?

JIMMY
Hi. Mister... Weak?

PIZWEAK
Let's make that money bro! For
real.

KAYLA
You know it motherfucker. Sign the
papers. You owe me for Cabo.

Kayla hangs up and smiles proudly.

KAYLA
(off Jimmy's look)
What? I paid his bail. He could
be great on Deb's new show you
know. People under fifty might
actually watch it.

JIMMY
I'll have you know Deborah Vance
has lots of younger fans.

KAYLA
Who? You, yourself, and you?

JIMMY
That's so sweet. I never think of
myself as young anymore.

KAYLA
See! She's for old people!

305 INT. TV SOUND STAGE DRESSING ROOM - DAY

305

DEBORAH

I want that sign gone.

MARCUS

Already on it.

DEBORAH

I don't want people laughing and applauding because they're being told to. I want them laughing and applauding because they can't control themselves.

ELAINE

Unfortunately, this is how live TV works.

DEBORAH

Not my TV. I've worked too hard for too long to get here and I'm not about to let those network nitwits tell me what to do.

(beat, then)

How's the intro look?

Marcus and Elaine shake their heads.

DEBORAH

That bad?

Deborah's phone rings, it's Marty. She hesitates and misses the call.

306 INT. WRITERS ROOM - NIGHT

306

Ava is alone, asleep on a couch. Index cards are scattered on the floor.

Taylor walks past, about to head home, and sees Ava. She picks up the cards and sits on the edge of the couch to read.

AVA

(groggy)

Hey. What time is it?

TAYLOR

I know you have an apartment. You've shown me pictures.

AVA

Why didn't you wake me up?

TAYLOR
You looked so tired.

AVA
I looked tired when I was sleeping?

TAYLOR
(holds up the cards)
This is good.

AVA
Thanks. I wasn't really asleep.
More like passed out. You know,
because, I'm not allowed to eat.
This body requires high-fructose
corn syrup based fuel to operate at
maximum capacity.

Taylor looks around to see if anyone is watching even though they're the only people still there. She grabs a handful of snacks and slyly hands them to Ava.

TAYLOR
Dinner's on me. Now go home.

307 INT. NETWORK BOARDROOM - DAY

307

Deborah, Jimmy, Kayla, Barry and a bunch of network suits sit around the table.

BARRY
Let me just say how excited we all
are about the show. And once we
iron out the kinks we think it will
be a perfect fit for our new
programming strategy. We want "The
Deborah Vance Show" to be a
signature program for the network.

DEBORAH
You say that, but every time I try
to do something new, you go behind
my back and put up a sign or
something.

BARRY
Well, we can certainly talk about
that.
(beat)
So. Sidekick. Who are we
thinking?

DEBORAH

We're not. I'm a one woman show
and I think history has proven I'm
not funnier with a man next to me.

JIMMY

Does it have to be a man?

BARRY

We think adding some masculine
energy to the show might help
balance out the demo, and ideally
help attract a younger--

DEBORAH

Careful Barry.

BARRY

Different audience. Is there
anyone on your shortlist?

JIMMY

Well, we can start putting one
together, but--

KAYLA

PizWeak!

BARRY

Pardon me?

JIMMY

What? No, Kayla. Sorry, he's a
new client, an influencer who does
silly dances and has a bunch of
followers.

KAYLA

Try eighty million followers. He's
huge on TikTok! He will totes
bring in younger viewers.

BARRY

He sounds perfect. Set up a
meeting.

DEBORAH

Hold it! As long as this show has
my name on it, I'll decide who I
meet with and who's a part of it.

BARRY

Of course you will. One-hundred
percent. But set up a meeting.
(MORE)

BARRY (CONT'D)
Maybe this guy will bring that
"something new" you're looking for.

Barry and the the network suits stand up, meeting over.
Jimmy gives Kayla a look -- "What the fuck did you just do?"

308

EXT. LOBBY - DAY

308

Deborah, Jimmy, and Kayla wait for the elevator.

KAYLA
That was awesome.

JIMMY
That was definitely not awesome.
Now please stop talking.

KAYLA
But--

JIMMY
Stop. Just wait over there.

Kayla pouts and slinks away.

DEBORAH
Your father would never have let
this shit happen. Did you see the
way cheese dick spoke to me in
there?

JIMMY
Deborah I swear I will fix this.

DEBORAH
I don't need some Ed McMahon, Andy
Richter, fucking Guillermo type
taking up space on my stage. If I
can't get the laughs on my own I
don't deserve to be up there.

JIMMY
That... is not true. But it has
been a long time since you first
tried to do television. A lot has
changed. Social media is a thing--

DEBORAH
What are you saying?

JIMMY

Let's just have you meet this guy
so we can get them off our backs
and in the meantime, who knows?
Maybe having someone internet
famous could be interesting if they
were less of a sidekick and more
like a correspondent. Someone to--

DEBORAH

Jimmy...

The elevator doors open. Deborah holds Jimmy back, gets on
alone, turns around and gives him the evil eye.

DEBORAH

You're on shaky ground mister.
Very shaky.

Kayla looks up from her phone and rushes over to get on the
elevator. Jimmy stops her with an aggressive arm bar as the
doors close.

JIMMY

We'll get the next one.

309 EXT. LOS ANGELES - ESTABLISHING SHOT - NIGHT 309

The city sparkles at night.

310 EXT. WILSON'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 310

A door opens to reveal Marcus holding a bottle of wine.

MARCUS

Hi.

We see it's WILSON who's just opened the door. Behind him a
house party is in full swing with MUSIC and people dancing.

WILSON

Hi. I'm surprised you decided to
come.

MARCUS

Deciding to come was easy. But you
have no idea how long it took me to
choose between this Vouvray and a
very tempting Mersault.

WILSON

I don't even know what those words
mean, but come in.

RAY, a super handsome guy in a casual suit, walks over and puts his arm around Wilson.

RAY
Ooh. Who do we have here? Is this
the ex?
(excited)
And is that a Domaine du Clos
Naudin Vouvray I see in your big
strong hand?

311 INT. WILSON'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS 311

Ray grabs the bottle, examines the label.

RAY
Twenty-seventeen! You're coming
with me.

Ray takes Marcus by the hand and drags him away through a crowd of dancing PARTY GUESTS. Wilson watches them go, a bit jealous. Ray waves the bottle in the air.

RAY
(shouting over music)
Corkscrew! Corkscrew! I need a
corkscrew stat!

312 EXT. DEBORAH'S MANSION - DRIVEWAY - NEXT DAY 312

A gold Hummer skids to a stop. PizWeak and his two-person ENTOURAGE step out and immediately start taking selfies.

313 EXT. DEBORAH'S MANSION - FRONT DOOR - DAY 313

JOSEFINA opens the door to reveal PizWeak & Co. looking ridiculous.

JOSEFINA
(disapprovingly)
Which one of you is PizWeak?

PizWeak raises his hand.

PIZWEAK
Guilty, señorita.

JOSEFINA
You two stay out here.

314 INT. DEBORAH'S MANSION - LIVING ROOM - DAY 314

Josefina escorts PizWeak in to meet Deborah and Marcus.

PIZWEAK
Yo yo yo, D.V. and P-Dub inna
house!

PizWeak tries to slap hands with Deborah.

DEBORAH
(waving him off)
Sit, sit. Please.

PIZWEAK
(looking around)
Yo we can shoot all kinds of shit
up in here one-hunny.

DEBORAH
So. "PizWeak." What kind of name
is that?

PIZWEAK
The kinda name that got over eighty
mill folls on the T.T. baby.

DEBORAH
Is that what your mother calls you?

PIZWEAK
Nah, she calls me the ATM cuz I be
slinging her that paper.

DEBORAH
Okay. Great. Well... Jimmy asked
me to meet you and now that I have,
I would like to invite you to
return to wherever you came from
and consider investing in a mirror
when you get there.

Marcus stands up and indicates it's time to go.

PIZWEAK
(dropping the act)
Yo, let me get real for a minute.
This chain? Fake. This accent?
Fake. Grill? Fake. Tatts? Some
of them I wish were fake, but
still, this... what we can do?
Together? That could be real.
(off her look)
Hear me out. Every late show is
the same right? Monologue, guest
interview parts one-two-three,
musical guest, the end. It's a
tired format.

DEBORAH

Well you're right about that.

PIZWEAK

And it's ripe for disruption. And with my followers and your fans we could double the eyeballs we both get.

DEBORAH

As much as it pains me, I'll admit, adding some youthfulness to my show may not be a horrible idea.

PIZWEAK

Right?

DEBORAH

But you and me? That's never going to happen. And for the record, I knew that rope around your neck was fake the second you waltzed in here. I can spot the real thing at a hundred yards. And honey, you ain't it.

MARCUS

Shall we?

PIZWEAK

(back in character)

Alright. Alright. Don't get nasty now. Miss Thing got an eye for the bling. Respect.

PizWeak stands up, pulls out his phone.

PIZWEAK

At least lemme shoot some vids up in this hashtag celebrity, hashtag mansion.

Josefina appears, armed with a broom.

DEBORAH

Goodbye Mr. Weak.

315

EXT. DEBORAH'S MANSION - DRIVEWAY - DAY

315

PizWeak and his entourage film themselves doing a TikTok dance using Deborah's mansion as a backdrop.

He grabs cards from STEPHEN, 40's, balding hipster, and flips through them, then tosses those too.

SCOTT

Trash!

Taylor nods at Ava, encouraging her to share. Instead, Ava pulls a few of her cards closer, trying to hide them. Scott notices, lunges, and snatches them away.

AVA

Oh, okay. I was still working on those.

SCOTT

(reading)

Fuck. Fuck! This!

Scott jumps up and pins Ava's cards to the board.

SCOTT

She just got here and she gets it. The rest of you shit sticks need to step up.

AVA

Does this mean I'm back on the snacks? Because my blood sugar is a bit low and I feel like I could be hallucinating this whole thing.

Scott stares at Ava intensely.

SCOTT

You used to work for Vance-y pants right?

AVA

Deborah Vance, yeah. We worked together on--

SCOTT

She's blowing up right now on TikTok.

AVA

Wait, what? She can barely unlock her phone. She's making TikToks?

SCOTT

Not her. Check it out. My guy PizWeak is hilarious.

STEPHEN
 (checking phone)
 TMZ picked it up too.

Scott leaves. Everyone searches for the PizWeak post.

AVA
 Piz Weak?

STEPHEN
 Some TikTok guy. Does stupid
 pranks and cringe ass dances, but
 he's kinda funny.

Ava searches for the video, puts in earbuds, and clicks play.

INSERT: PizWeak's TikTok video, already over a half a million views.

319 EXT. DEBORAH'S MANSION - DAY (PIZWEAK'S VIDEO) 319

PizWeak and Co. do their dumb dance routine, Deborah's mansion in the background. Deborah comes running towards them with the hose followed by Josefina and her broom.

DEBORAH
 Hey! PizWeak!

PizWeak turns around, gets hosed, his crotch area is completely soaked.

DEBORAH
 Looks like you pissed your pants.

PIZWEAK (O.C.)
 Yo watch the phone lady!

PizWeak grabs the phone, the camera shakes wildly as he jumps in the car.

320 INT. PIZWEAK'S HUMMER - DAY (PIZWEAK'S VIDEO) - CONTINUOUS 320

One of PizWeak's friends takes the phone, still filming.

PIZWEAK
 Yo QVC lady done lost her mind!

The phone camera angles down to show PizWeak's wet crotch. We hear a LAUGH.

PIZWEAK
 Nah man. Up here.

Camera angles back up on PizWeak as he drives.

PIZWEAK

Yo who she foolin'? Tryna do an old school late night show. Do people even watch TV anymore? Sheeeit. I bet this post gets more views than her tired ass ever will. If you with me people, hit that heart yo. T.T. fam represent! Let's show that crazy ass beeyotch where da future at! PizWeak out.

BACK IN THE WRITERS ROOM:

STEPHEN

(defiant)

People still watch TV.

TAYLOR

On their computers.

Ava stares at her laptop, processing what she just saw.

STEPHEN

She ever do stuff like that to you?

AVA

(shaking her head "no.")

Way worse.

321 INT. VEGAS RESTAURANT - DAY

321

Marty and Deborah sit for lunch at a fancy restaurant.

MARTY

You know, for a minute there I thought you might be avoiding me.

DEBORAH

Maybe I was. This show is going to turn me into an old woman yet. Oh wait, I forgot, you like those now.

Marty chuckles.

DEBORAH

How is le fiancé français?

MARTY

She turned out to be just a little too French.

DEBORAH

Any woman who'd choose a painting over a diamond was always going to be a bit too cultured for you.

MARTY

Well she definitely doesn't want the Kandinsky anymore.

DEBORAH

What happened? Not allowed to put picture hooks on the walls at the old folks home?

Marty shakes his head and laughs.

DEBORAH

Did she get Alzheimer's and forget why she liked it? The mobility scooter dealer wouldn't accept it as a trade-in? Stop me when I get it. I could do this all day.

MARTY

She had some concerns about it's provenance.

DEBORAH

I'm sure Sotheby's did their due diligence.

MARTY

More about how it came into my possession.

DEBORAH

(beat)
I see.

Marty looks away, takes a deep breath.

MARTY

I *could* give it to you.

DEBORAH

Oh no. I don't want that thing in my house. It would clash with... everything. Besides we had a deal.

MARTY

Might I remind you that you did pay a lot for it.

DEBORAH

And I got exactly what I wanted.
It's not my fault if you didn't.

Marty winces and quickly regains his composure.

MARTY

Touché.

Deborah stands up to go, puts some money on the table.

DEBORAH

Give it to a museum. I'm sure they
won't have a problem with our
provenance.

322 INT. DJ'S APARTMENT - DAY

322

DJ watches TV and folds laundry. She is startled by a KNOCK at the door.

She peers through the peephole and sees LISA, 30's, cute.

DJ

(shouting through door)
Whatever you're selling, we don't
want it!

LISA

Is Aden here?

DJ opens the door to reveal Lisa is very pregnant.

DJ

Yes my husband Aden is here.

LISA

I'm sorry. I swear I'm not here
for money or anything.

Aden runs over, pure panic in his eyes.

ADEN

Lisa? I thought we said tomorrow.

DJ

You know her?

ADEN

I was trying to find a time to tell
you.

LISA

You haven't told her?

DJ
Are you kidding me right now?! You mean all this time I've been stabbing needles into my stomach twice a day so we can start a family, you've been out banging this bitch with your tiny ass dick and somehow magically got her pregnant?!

ADEN
It's not what you think. We know each other from the gym.

DJ
Oh great!

LISA
And we are definitely not banging.

DJ
It fucking doesn't look that way!

LISA
It's not his!

ADEN
It's not mine!

DJ takes this in.

ADEN
(soothing)
But it could be ours.

DJ
What the fuck are you talking about? I need you to make sense right now.

LISA
I'm not really ready to be a Mom, and the father? Let's just say tequila is no longer my drink of choice. And Aden told me how hard IVF has been for you--

DJ
You told her we're doing IVF?

ADEN
We're gym bros.

Lisa and Aden fist bump.

DJ
(WTF)
Gym bros?

Lisa shrugs -- "Yeah, I know it's stupid."

ADEN
We're friends okay? That's it.
This could be good baby.

DJ
Don't you dare call me baby. In
what world could this possibly be
good?

ADEN
I'm just saying the IVF hasn't been
working and its super expensive,
the shots suck balls and they're
making you gain weight.

DJ
Oh, sorry I can't just shred ten
pounds overnight like you.

LISA
I think you look great.

DJ
Thank you. You're just radiant
actually.

LISA
I feel like fat pig. Can't work
out like I used to. Fried chicken
and Halo Top are the only things
that taste good anymore, and don't
even get me started on my feet.

Lisa runs her hands over her belly.

LISA
But thanks.

DJ
So the baby is definitely not his?

Lisa shakes her head "no."

ADEN
Baby.
(catching himself)
Honey. I love you so much. I
would never cheat on you.

DJ
(incredulous)
And so you guys thought we could
what? Adopt?

ADEN
I don't know... Yeah? Maybe.
(off DJ's look)
Darn it. This was a bad idea.
Sorry Lisa. Maybe you should go
and give us some time to work this
out.

DJ
No, no, no. You're coming in. I
need to hear everything that's
terrible about being pregnant.

323 INT. PRODUCER'S OFFICE - DAY

323

Taylor sits across from a PRODUCER at her desk. Ava taps on
the open door as she enters.

AVA
Hey. You wanted to see me?

PRODUCER
Have a seat Ava.

AVA
Is this about the snacks because I
swear I have been writing, but I
can totally bring my own--

TAYLOR
Scott's gone.

AVA
Oh. Wow. Like, gone, gone?

PRODUCER
We want you to take his spot.

AVA
(laughs this off)
What, like be showrunner? No way.
I just got here. I'm still
learning the world. I don't have
the experience. Taylor! You
should totally do it.

TAYLOR

I'm just a lowly director darling.
And besides, they'll make anyone a
showrunner these days. No
disrespect.

AVA

Wait. I get it. This is like a
haze the new writer type thing,
right? Ha ha. Got me.

PRODUCER

You've got great ideas. And as
much of a toxic ass as he was,
Scott thought you were good. And
that's saying something. Anyway,
the gig is yours if you want it.
Let me know by tomorrow morning.

AVA

(still not believing)
You guys.

TAYLOR

This is real.

AVA

Uh-huh. So we're good on the
snacks?

PRODUCER

You can stock the kitchen with
whatever you want.

AVA

Can we have a tea station?

PRODUCER

I don't know what that is, but
sure.

(waving them off)

Now get out.

324

INT. JIMMY'S APARTMENT - DAY

324

Jimmy and Kayla watch TMZ's coverage of the PizWeak video on
his phone.

HARVEY LEVIN (V.O.)

TikTok sensation, PizWeak lived up
to his name when veteran comedienne
Deborah Vance cooled off his crotch
and chased him off her estate with
her garden hose.

(MORE)

HARVEY LEVIN (CONT'D)
 But it looks like the last laugh is
 on her with his video of the
 escapade already going viral with
 over a million views.

Jimmy's phone rings, it's Ava.

JIMMY
 (on speaker)
 Hey show runner! Congratulations!

325 EXT. PRODUCTION OFFICE PARKING LOT - DAY

325

Ava is outside a fire exit, leaning against a railing.

AVA
 I can't do it Jimmy.

INTERCUT JIMMY/AVA

Jimmy has Ava on speaker.

KAYLA
 Yeah you can. You a boss bitch!

JIMMY
 Of course you can. This is a great
 opportunity for you. Besides, I
 already told them you'd do it.

AVA
 Well that was dumb. I can barely
 manage being a decent landlord. I
 am so much more the tenant type.
 That's an analogy by the way.

JIMMY
 Actually, I think it might be a
 metaphor.

AVA
 It's ridiculous is what it is. How
 am I going to run a whole show?

KAYLA
 You can do it queen!

JIMMY
 Kayla please.
 (to Ava)
 I'm sorry, can I call you later? I
 have to go sort out a little
 emergency for Deborah.

AVA
Yeah, I saw that.

KAYLA
We're gonna pimp slap TMZ in the
dick hole!

JIMMY
Ugh. She'll be fine. You'll be
fine. Say yes!

Jimmy hangs up. Ava tries to go back inside, but the fire
door is locked.

AVA
No!

326 INT. REHEARSAL SOUND STAGE - DAY

326

Deborah, Elaine, and Marcus sit in the front row watching two
STAGEHANDS on ladders take down the "Laughter/Applause" sign.

DEBORAH
I need a new structure. New ideas.
This can't be the same old
formulaic late-night show people
have been watching since TV was
invented.

ELAINE
Well we could start with that set.
What they're putting together up
there could just as well be for
anyone. Carson, Letterman, Kimmel,
Fallon.

MARCUS
Conan.

ELAINE
Fucking Conan. This is The Deborah
Vance Show! We're here to make
history. Not repeat it!

Jimmy arrives and checks out the set.

JIMMY
Hey! So this is cool.

ELAINE
About as cool as menopause.

DEBORAH
We're making a few changes.

JIMMY

Right. So I was going to ask how it went with PizWeak, but I saw.

DEBORAH

What ever made you think that could possibly work? You can't even say his name without wanting to vomit.

JIMMY

(hopeful)
Or laugh.

DEBORAH

Sure, but at him. Not with him.

JIMMY

I'm sorry if it got weird. I was going to get him and TMZ to take the video down, but the network is losing their minds over it. They can't decide if they love him or hate him but either way he'll clearly be good for ratings.

DEBORAH

That idiot is never getting anywhere near my stage.

JIMMY

Technically it's their stage.
(off her look)
I know, I know. It's your show and I absolutely support you one-hundred percent, but if we don't start playing ball they could pull the plug on this whole deal.

A stagehand loses his grip and the "Laughter/Applause" sign CRASHES to the floor. Jimmy is horrified. Marcus starts a slow clap. Deborah and Elaine erupt in laughter.

327 INT. WRITERS ROOM - DAY

327

Ava stands in the kitchen area about to give a talk to the other writers. It's dead quiet.

AVA

Okay. So, I just want to say I am equally thrilled and terrified to be your new captain. I want this to be an efficient ship and also one that you are proud to be serving on.

(MORE)

AVA (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, I don't know why I'm
talking like a sailor.

Crickets.

AVA
You're wondering why I got this
gig. Honestly, I am too.

STEPHEN
Anyone's better than Not-Great-
Scott.

Nods and agreement from everyone.

AVA
Well, I can promise that I probably
won't ever shout at you. And you
can have all the snacks you want
anytime. Even if you no writey.

Awkward laughter from the room.

AVA
But you better be writing! Anyway.
let's not make this any weirder
than it already is and see how much
damage we can do together. Cool?

Taylor and the Producer give Ava a thumbs-up. Ava steps
aside to reveal a display of teas in various boxes, tins, and
jars along with an expensive pour over electric tea kettle.

AVA
Also, in case you haven't noticed,
we now have a wide variety of teas
on offer.
(proudly)
There's mint, herbal, lots of
herbal, decaffeinated--

PFFT! Stephen opens a can of Red Bull.

STEPHEN
Sorry.

AVA
And caffeinated. We have English
Breakfast, Earl Grey, who doesn't
love waking up with the Earl?

Nobody cares about the tea. Ava picks up a fancy jar.

AVA
Ooh! And this is a delicious
Genmaicha which is a green tea that
has puffed rice in it.

SCRUNCH! Stephen rips open a bag of potato chips.

STEPHEN
Sorry.

AVA
It's supposed to help with your
cholesterol.
(realizing she's lost
them)
Anyway, we basically have all the
teas.

TAYLOR
What about chai?

AVA
(relieved to end this
moment)
Yes! I'll make you one!

328 INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

328

Ava hands Taylor a steaming mug.

AVA
Well that went terrible. I feel
like maybe they all hate me.

TAYLOR
You did fine. Just focus on the
work. Nothing else matters.

Taylor takes a sip of her chai.

AVA
How's that chai though?

TAYLOR
Oh my god. So good. Thanks
Captain.

329 INT. DEBORAH'S MANSION - PATIO - DAY

329

DJ slurps a bowl of soup.

DEBORAH
Hi honey. To what do I owe the
pleasure?

DJ
I just needed to get away for a
minute.

Deborah crosses her arms -- "What is it this time?"

DJ
(exasperated)
Aden's "gym bro" who isn't even a
bro wants to give us her baby and
he says he's not the father, but he
could be and the IVF has been
making me crazy, and my womb is
obviously completely uninhabitable,
and I now know just how much being
pregnant sucks so maybe we should
just do it you know?
(off Deb's confused look)
Adopt!

DEBORAH
Weh. There's certainly a lot to
unpack there. Adoption?

DJ
At least she's from here. Can you
imagine if we had to go to China?
God! I don't know what to do. Do
you regret any of your choices?

DEBORAH
Constantly!
(off DJ's hurt look)
But not you honey.

Awkward beat. Deborah does not want to talk about this.

DEBORAH
Is that Josefina's menudo?

DJ
It's so good!

DJ tilts the bowl to slurp the last bit of broth.

DEBORAH
You know that made with cow's
stomach right?

DJ drops the bowl.

DJ
What? No! Eww!

DJ starts gagging and runs off.

DJ
I knew I should have asked for the
chicken pot pie!

330 INT. DEBORAH'S MANSION LIVING ROOM - LATER

330

Josefina waves Deborah into the living room.

JOSEFINA
This came for you.

A large wooden crate leans against the wall.

JOSEFINA
It's heavy.

DEBORAH
Was there a note?

Josefina hands Deborah an envelope. She opens it and reads.
Marcus enters.

MARCUS
That's not--

DEBORAH
The Kandinsky.

MARCUS
I have to say I didn't see that one
coming.

DEBORAH
Well, normally I don't accept
returns or exchanges after thirty
days, but it looks like I'm stuck
with this one.

MARCUS
There could be a tax benefit if you
consider it as "office decoration."

DEBORAH
Great! Hang it in the Christmas
room and call my accountant.

331 INT. WRITERS ROOM - NIGHT

331

High energy and laughter as people pack up to go home.

AVA
Thanks everyone. Great stuff
today.

STEPHEN
Hey. You too.
(holding up a mug)
And that vanilla rooibos is insane.

AVA
Have you tried it with the
pistachio milk?

Ava makes a "chef's kiss" gesture.

STEPHEN
Tomorrow.

Taylor comes over to Ava as everyone leaves.

TAYLOR
I knew you could do this girl!
Today was awesome.

AVA
(proud of herself)
Yeah. It kinda was.

TAYLOR
Don't stay too late. Remember, you
don't have to solve everything on
your own. We're a team.

Ava's phone rings. It's Deborah.

AVA
Sorry. I better take this.

Ava turns away and heads out a fire exit.

AVA
Hey! I see you're big on social
media now.

332 INT. DEBORAH'S OFFICE - NIGHT

332

DEBORAH
Well you know me, I'll take fame
wherever I can find it.

333 EXT. PRODUCTION OFFICE PARKING LOT - DAY

333

Ava is back outside the fire exit, leaning against a railing.

AVA

You know, if social media was an actual place you'd never go there.

INTERCUT DEBORAH/AVA

DEBORAH

Never! It'd be like the worst shopping mall in the world.

AVA

All the stores would have perfect window displays--

DEBORAH

--But as soon as you went inside everything would be fake.

AVA

Yeah, and the salespeople would be zombie narcissists you knew in high-school.

DEBORAH

And they'd all be just begging you to like them.

AVA

There are some pretty great cat videos though.

DEBORAH

It's never not amazing to me that they put a person on the moon with less computing power than we have in our pockets, and everybody just uses it to make cat videos.

AVA

Have you seen the one where the cat tries to jump up on a cabinet and misses--

AVA

--And the dog starts laughing!

DEBORAH

--And the dog starts laughing!

They realize how much they miss each other.

DEBORAH

How's the show going?

AVA

I'm pretty convinced they could change their minds about me at any moment, but I suppose if things don't work out I could always be an Instagram butt model and hashtag live my best life. How's yours?

DEBORAH

There's a few influencers at the network I'd like to cancel, but we're getting there.

(beat)

So listen. I'm going to make you an offer that you should refuse.

AVA

Okay...

DEBORAH

The network wants me to bring my "aggressive and saucy" voice to TV's late-night arena and be one of the few programs led by a female point-of-view. For that to happen I need good ideas, good writing, and good jokes.

AVA

And you need my help to do that?

DEBORAH

No. I want your help to do that. So we can do a show to please ourselves and say the things we want in the exact way I want to say them.

AVA

Well, if I was to come work with you, I'd have to have a tea station because I just had one installed and now I don't think I can ever live without one.

DEBORAH

I don't know what that is, but it sounds ridiculous.

AVA

Oh because having seventeen kinds of bottled water and a soda fountain in your kitchen isn't?

DEBORAH

No. That makes perfect sense.

AVA

Wait. Are you seriously asking me to come work with you again? Because you did sorta fire me for no good reason.

DEBORAH

I was looking out for you.

AVA

And now?

DEBORAH

Now I am strongly suggesting that you don't accept my offer. But if I know you, you'll probably make the wrong decision.

Ava leans back against the wall.

AVA

Yeah. I'm pretty good at that.

Taylor opens the door, beckons Ava, and disappears back inside. Ava catches the door just as it's about to close.

AVA

Sorry. I gotta go, but I'll think about it.

Ava slides down the wall and sits on the ground, awkwardly keeping the door open with her hand. She looks up, feels the sun on her face...

And smiles.

END OF EPISODE 301