Tough Cookie

Pilot

By

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TEASER

TIGHT ON a glossed MOUTH as an iPhone is brought to the lips. A dictaphone app is running as the lips start to say:

FEMALE VOICE
Keep your mouth shut. It’s my personal philosophy and...

PULL OUT to find the lips belonging to the gorgeous LILLA SPENCER (32), sitting in a hair chair revealing we are:

INT. CHIC SALON – DAY (1)

Lilla is getting her hair highlighted as she takes dictation.

LILLA
...the foundation of my success. Thankfully, most people don’t know when to shut up which is why I’m in business. Ya see, I’m not just a publicist, I’m a master of perception.

The HAIR STYLIST shows Lilla a strand of grey hair. Lilla nods and the stylist takes to the grey with peroxide.

LILLA (CONT’D)
I know how to spin the truth. And while spinning...

As the stylist spins her in her chair we SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. WIRED MAG EVENT- RED CARPET - EVENING (1)

LILLA (V.O.)
...I manipulate the reality of any given situation. Like a magician.

Behind the step and repeat, Lilla steadies a YOUNG MALE NERDY CLIENT (19) (ala Mark Zuckerberg before Facebook went public). As she pulls a flask from the kid’s jacket, he smiles a shit-eating grin and sways.

LILLA (V.O.)
With my magic, I brilliantly take the lemons I’m dealt and don’t just create mere lemonade, but rather, make one helluva lemon martini.

In a series of rapid shots: Lilla puts eye drops in the kid’s eyes, makes him chug water, sprays him with Febreeze. Lilla steadies him, gives him her shit-eating grin then pinches him hard. As he yelps, she sprays him with breath spray.
Suddenly, the blinding flash of a camera takes us to:

EXT. WIRED MAG EVENT – RED CARPET/PRESS LINE (1)

Lilla and the kid are on the red carpet talking to reporters.

    LILLA (V.O.)
    I’m both lifeguard and lifesaver.
    Heroically covering up each mess
    with methodical...

As he starts to sway, Lilla feels his forehead.

    LILLA (V.O.)
    ...spontaneity. It’s an art. And as
    an artist, I deftly paint each lie.

She shakes her head, he’s “sick” and leads him to safety.

EXT. WIRED MAGAZINE EVENT- BACK ENTRANCE (1)

    LILLA (V.O.)
    So the lie becomes the truth.

The kid pukes by a limo as Lilla clocks a HANDSOME DUDE
smoking a cig. She meets the Dude’s suggestive gaze. He
motions her over. She smiles then, declines with a head shake
as she returns her attention to her client and pats his back.

    LILLA (V.O.)
    But my truth is simple: my job is
    my life and my life is my job. And
    I have no regrets.

The kid goes for the limo door, he stumbles and his flask
falls out of his jacket. As it does, a PAPPARAZZO appears
about to take a picture. With ninja like precision, Lilla
shoves the camera into the guy's face making him flail
backward, losing the shot. As he hits the ground, she sprays
the kid with breath spray and safely puts him into the limo.

    PAPPARAZZO
    You're a bitch.

    LILLA
    Thank you. That reminds me--
    (into iPhone)
    I’m also a bitch. The biggest one
    in town. Nothing fazes me.

As Lilla wipes frame...

MATCH CUT TO:
ACT ONE

An ELEVATOR OPENING revealing Lilla, decked out. We are...

INT. EAST MEETS WEST PUBLICITY- LOBBY- SAME

Lilla enters into the lobby.

RECEPTIONIST
Lilla, you have a visitor.

The receptionist nods toward an ATTRACTIVE MAN (35). A Lilla
turns on the charm and flirtation. Before he can say a word:

LILLA
Good morning! I wasn’t expecting
you just yet but if you give me a
few minutes, I’ll have my assistant
transcribe the little bullet points
I dictated last night to make the
article flow in a more streamlined
way.

ATTRACTIVE MAN
Article?

LILLA
The 30 under 30 power players
article. That you’re interviewing
me for.

ATTRACTIVE MAN
But you’re 32.

Lilla turns red. Her sweet demeanor disappears.

LILLA
Excuse me? I’m Lilla Spencer and...

ATTRACTIVE MAN
...the mother of a daughter you
gave up at 20 who is now 12 and in
the system again. That makes you 32
and possibly old enough to
reconsider taking her back?

Lilla silently takes this in. The man extends his hand.

ATTRACTIVE MAN (CONT’D)
Seth Whitfield, San Francisco
Department of Children’s Services
and...
LILLA
Completely off the mark. I thought you were a journalist. I never had a...

SETH
Eleanor.

LILLA
Eleanor?

SETH
The child.

LILLA
It’s awful.

SETH
It is awful for a kid to be...

LILLA
No. Her name. It’s awful. Have you ever thought about changing it? Might make her more desirable.

SETH
She wasn’t undesired. Her adoptive mother was elderly and died.

LILLA
So she’s been in a foster home?

SETH
She’s been in ten.

LILLA
(concerned)
Oh. Is she ugly?

As Seth reacts a flustered gal, AMY, calls to Lilla.

AMY
Lilla, we need you! We have a crisis.

LILLA
Sorry. I gotta go.

As Lilla walks away Seth calls after her.

SETH
I get it. Her dad broke your heart.
   (she stops in her tracks)
   (MORE)
SETH (CONT'D)
So you gave her away thinking if you didn’t have to look at her, you wouldn’t have to think about him. Did it work? Did you stop thinking about him? Or do you now think about both of them?

LILLA
(she turns; wind knocked out of her)
You...you have the wrong person.

SETH
Actually, I’m pretty sure I have the right one. And by the look of it, she’s lying. To me and herself.

LILLA
Well, by the look of it, you’re another example of the incompetency of our government and the lies they spread. Ya know, my driver’s license says I’m 117 pounds but clearly I’m not even a buck ten.

SETH
What’s it list as your birth date?

LILLA
It lists November 18th, in the year of get the hell out of my office.

SETH
Good luck. Maybe someday you’ll acknowledge the truth.

He heads out as she calls after him.

LILLA
The only truth I need to acknowledge is my age. Which is 29!

As he exits, we PUSH IN on Lilla, fazed.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM – DAY (2)

Lilla, dazed, enters into a chaotic meeting as her CO-WORKERS talk over each other. On the TV screen hanging on a wall is a gif of the nerdy kid from the teaser, TYLER, humping the hood of a cop car. Slick and serious, BOB (40’s), panics.

BOB
Tyler was just arrested for a public act of indecency.
AMY
It’s all over the internet and
gaining traction by the hour.

Lilla is traumatized, her mind reeling.

LILLA
(muttering to herself)
What am I gonna do?

BOB
It’s three days before his company
goes public. And he’s gone public.

AMY
This is a nightmare. BOB
How are we gonna spin this?

LILLA
(quietly; to herself)
I can’t. I can’t lie anymore.

BOB
Lilla, get your head in the game!
We need you. What’re you gonna do?!

LILLA
(under her breath)
Quit.

BOB
What?

LILLA
I quit.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. LILLA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - EVENING (4)

Lilla's sobbing as a chyron appears reading: Three days later

LILLA
I quit!

PULL OUT to a disheveled Lilla watching the financial news.

NEWS REPORTER
And Silicon Valley reigns supreme
as newcomer Tyler Preston becomes
the latest member of the
billionaire boys club.

The TV turns off as HEIDI (28, dim-witted dilettante) and
MICKEY (33, neurotic hipster) sit beside her, remote in hand.
MICKEY
Jesus, she’s having a mental break.

HEIDI
In the three years we’ve all lived together she’s never cried. She’s made me cry but she doesn’t cry.
(Lil sobs unintelligibly)
And yet she is. This is bad.
(as if she’s deaf)
Are...you...dying?

Lilla continues her jibberish rant.

MICKEY
When did you last take a shower?

HEIDI
(attempting to translate)
Ba da boo boo. She’s speaking baby.

MICKEY
Have you washed any part of your body? Hands count.

Lilla’s lips start to quiver as she makes sense.

LILLA
I cracked. I made an impulsive, emotional decision because I was fazed. Am I ever fazed?

HEIDI AND MICKEY
No.

LILLA
Exactly. And yet, there I was—fazed—leading me to do what I’ve never done: bailing in a crisis. Now no one’s returning my calls. My career and life are ruined. Know why?
(they shake their heads)
Because I’m a terrible person.

HEIDI
Not all the time.

LILLA
Ya know how I totally made your life by being your friend? Well, I also made a life by being a mother. I have a kid.
(off their shock; rapid)
(MORE)
LILLA (CONT'D)
I got knocked up in college, went abroad and gave up the kid before anyone knew the difference. That’s why I’m a genius at helping other people hide the skeletons in their closets cuz the biggest one... was already hidden in mine.

MICKEY
You procreated?

LILLA
Yeah.

MICKEY
God.

LILLA
God wasn’t involved. It was a guy named Jim.

HEIDI
This is fate intervening.

LILLA
No, it’s called karma and she’s a bitch. Like me.

HEIDI
You’re getting a do-over.

LILLA
Heidi, there are no do overs. Just push overs and I’m not one of them. Unless...this IS a sign.

(Heidi nods)
Giving her away was the defining moment of my life. The moment I became a liar. Maybe this is a chance to redefine my life and become a better, honest person.

(it clicks)
Ya know, I don’t need my old job back. I need my old kid. We have to get her. Getting her will be the first step in righting my wrongs. Even if it takes months...or years. Or...who am I kidding? I can’t raise a kid.

MICKEY
Agreed.
HEIDI
We can do this. Getting a kid is like getting a puppy.

MICKEY
I dunno. Feels hasty.

HEIDI
She’s out of diapers, Mickey, which means no one has to pick up poop.

MICKEY
This is a lot to take in.

LILLA
We can do this.

INT. CHILDREN'S SERVICES - HALLWAY - DAY (5)

Lilla is hyperventilating and overwhelmed.

LILLA
We can’t do this.

Heidi and Mickey hold bags of supplies from Target. They slowly pull her along and boost her up.

HEIDI
Just think about all the fun we’re gonna have getting mani pedis.

MICKEY
And like you’ve promised, we can sleep in on Wednesdays when she takes out the trash.

Suddenly, Lilla picks up the pace and her enthusiasm.

LILLA
Holy shit! I’m about to meet my daughter and change her life like the year-round christmas angel I was always meant to be. She’s gonna be my cutie patootie, my pre-teen mini me who’s gorgeously anorexic and...

They arrive at Seth's office and look in the glass window with elation. ANGLE ON the friends, their excited faces drop.

ANGLE ON their POV through the glass to see ELEANOR (12), a hot mess of adolescence and the cutie they had in mind. In other words, she’s a little jacked. As one, Lilla and friends scoot to the side, to sidebar.
LILLA (CONT'D)
I don’t know about this.

MICKEY
She might have sticky fingers.

HEIDI
I bet they’d give her a flea bath if we asked. We can’t back out now.

LILLA
This is a mistake. That child looks nothing like me and thus, can not be mine.

HEIDI
At first glance, I’d have to agree.

MICKEY
She does look sweet.

LILLA
Exactly. This is a mix-up.

INT. SETH'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER (5)
Lilla knocks as she enters the office with Seth and Eleanor.

LILLA
Excuse me for intruding.
(to Eleanor, saccharine)
Hi, sweetie.
(to Seth)
Can I speak to you in the hall?

EXT. SETH'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER (5)
Outside the office, Lilla talks in hushed tones with Seth.

LILLA
Thank you for your interest in my motherhood but that’s not my kid.

Before Seth can respond, Eleanor opens holding a juice box.

ELEANOR
Douchebag! A warm juice box won’t cut it if you want me to entertain myself while you suck up to a slut.

Lilla looks at Mickey and Heidi. They look at her.

LILLA
That’s my kid.
ACT TWO

INT. SETH'S OFFICE - DAY (5)

Eleanor and Lilla sit face to face. Lilla smiles awkwardly as she rambles. Eleanor gives nothing.

LILLA
...and we live in a good part of town despite some smelly homeless.

ELEANOR
Pass.

LILLA
Pass?

ELEANOR
Pass.

LILLA
You’re only passing on me because I originally passed on you!

ELEANOR
Real mature.

LILLA
I’m just trying to speak your language.

ELEANOR
I don’t speak batshit.

LILLA
This isn’t going to work out.

ELEANOR
Agreed.

They purse their lips in unison. Seth tries not to smile.

SETH
Come on, you’re not even trying.

ELEANOR
She can’t handle me.

SETH
Why can’t she handle you?

ELEANOR
I’m a lot of woman.
LILLA
You’re a lot of something but woman wouldn’t be the first thing that comes to mind.

Eleanor gives Lilla the death stare.

SETH
How about a trial? We’ll keep it short.

ELEANOR
24 hours tops.

SETH
Five days.

LILLA
How about two?

SETH
72 hours.

Mother and daughter groan and shift their hips identically.

ELEANOR/LILLA
Fine.

INT. LILLA’S APARTMENT – EVENING (5)

Back at the apartment, Mickey, Heidi and Lilla give Eleanor a tour. They land in a semi-private, sad little spruced up space with a kid-sized cot next to the treadmill.

MICKEY
And... this is your room slash exercise nook.

She looks next to the nook into Heidi's room.

ELEANOR
I like that room.

HEIDI
Oh sweetie, I would never want you to sleep on my floor.

ELEANOR
Don’t worry, I’ll take the bed.

Heidi is confused as Lilla pulls everyone to the kitchen.

LILLA
Family time! I’m making dinner.
MICKEY
You cook?

LILLA
Never. But since this is a special occasion, I’m making an exception.

They’re now all in the open kitchen. She pulls out random ingredients, multiple cookbooks and box of mac n’cheese.

LILLA (CONT’D)
So, I’ve been thinking.

ELEANOR
A first.

LILLA
We should give Eleanor our own special pet name. Something sweet. Or just more palatable like...‘Cookie.’

ELEANOR
‘Cookie’? I love it. I really do. I love it so much that while you call me ‘Cookie’, I’ll call you ‘Mom’.

Mickey and Heidi try not to laugh but can't help themselves. Off Lilla's death stare we CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM - HOURS LATER (5)

The clock reads almost ten thirty. The roommates and Eleanor sit at the table and stare at what looks like a massive mess.

LILLA
Bon Appetit.

ELEANOR
Pass.

LILLA
I just cooked for hours and you’re not even gonna try it?

ELEANOR
Are you?

LILLA
I don’t eat.

ELEANOR
In this case, neither do I.
HEIDI
I say we all don’t eat.

LILLA
Eat it!

ELEANOR
I don’t eat things that look like they came out of my butt.

MICKEY
I just lost my appetite.

ELEANOR
See no one wants your poo poo platter. Including you.

LILLA
Smartass.

ELEANOR
Skank.

MICKEY
Ladies....

ELEANOR/LILLA
Shut it.

Lilla and Eleanor scowl at Mickey in the same way.

MICKEY
(under his breath)
DNA is crazy.

LILLA
Look at the time. It’s ten thirty. Time for Eleanor to go down.

ELEANOR
I don’t “go down”. I go to sleep. At midnight.

LILLA
Like a Gremlin.

MICKEY
Actually, a Gremlin doesn’t...

LILLA
Kids don’t go to bed at midnight. You’re trying to pull a fast one.
ELEANOR
No, actually that would be you and your poorly constructed nose job.

Lilla GASPS IN HORROR then, impressed:

LILLA
(under her breath)
Touche’.

DING DONG. They’re saved by the bell.

INT. LILLA’S APARTMENT- FRONT DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Lilla opens the door to find ALEJANDRO (35, gorgeous Spanish) who sweeps her up into his arms with a sexy kiss.

ALEJANDRO
Cariño.

Mickey and Heidi pull her aside.

MICKEY
Was dinner a ruse so you could eat and run and abandon us to babysit?

LILLA
Honestly, it wasn’t. With all the life redefining, reclaiming kid and truth telling mumbo-jumbo I forgot Alejandro was in town and didn’t cancel. But I’ll cancel now.

MICKEY
No. Go. Hang with Alejandro.

LILLA
I can’t. I want to make a real effort or at least pretend to. I genuinely don’t want to hurt Cookie’s feelings.

They look at Eleanor giving Lilla a death stare.

HEIDI
Something tells me you won’t.

MICKEY
You need time to warm up to this whole mother thing. Or at least get room temperature on it.

HEIDI
Don’t worry. We gotcha covered.
INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER (5)

HEIDI
Pizza!

Mickey, Heidi and Eleanor sit on the couch a pizza laid out in front of them as Mickey passes out slices.

ELEANOR
Pass.

MICKEY
You don’t like pizza?

ELEANOR
I’m in more of an ice cream mood.

MICKEY
You can have some ice cream but first you gotta eat something healthy.

ELEANOR
Cheese on bread has never been defined as ‘heart smart’.

She reluctantly takes a slice as Mickey wipes around her.

MICKEY
Bet you’re anxious to get to know us.

ELEANOR
Not really.

MICKEY
So, Heidi is pretty and is supported by her parents.

ELEANOR
Are they worried you’ll turn to prostitution if left to your own devices?

HEIDI
No...yes.

MICKEY
And I’m a Scorpio by date but a Virgo by demeanor. I’m single...

ELEANOR
Because you’re weak.
MICKEY
I’m not weak.

ELEANOR
Really? Cuz as I see it you live in an apartment with two hot chicks and you’ve never tried sleeping with either one of them.

MICKEY
We’re just friends.

ELEANOR
Keep telling yourself that.

Heidi laughs as she scarfs her pizza.

ELEANOR (CONT’D)
Don’t laugh, free loader.
(Heidi stops laughing)
You might wanna consider settling down before your parents die or you lose your looks. Which, by my estimation, will happen in the next three to five years based on how fast you’re eating.

HEIDI
(she puts down the pizza)
I’m sorry.

MICKEY
So, uh, do you have a boyfriend?

Mickey reaches across Eleanor to wipe crumbs on the couch.

ELEANOR
Lay off perv. I’m not on the menu.
(off his horrified look)
What? First you ask about my sex life then you inappropriately touched me.

MICKEY
I didn’t touch you.

ELEANOR
I’m a foster kid. I know touching. And you’re a toucher.

MICKEY
I’m not a toucher.
ELEANOR
You are.

MICKEY
How ‘bout some ice cream?!

INT. KITCHEN– LATER (5)
Mickey and Heidi watch Eleanor from afar with intrigue and horror as she finishes her ice-cream by licking out the bowl. As they watch Eleanor touching things with her sticky fingers, Mickey is falling apart. He talks quietly, stressed.

MICKEY
I can’t handle this anymore. She has to take a bath.

ELEANOR
I’ll take a bath but I’m scared of water so I need someone with me.
(she eyes Mickey)
Five bucks says you wanna volunteer.

MICKEY
No I don’t.

Mickey looks at Heidi who then sweetly turns to Eleanor.

HEIDI
I’ll help you.

EXT. BATHROOM– MOMENTS LATER (5)
O.S. water stops running in a bath. Heidi opens the door.

HEIDI
Ready.

Eleanor enters as Heidi gives Mickey a thumbs up before closing the door. Mickey lets out a sigh as he wipes up Eleanor’s mess. It’s quiet...then, a crazy commotion is heard inside the bathroom. A SPLASH. A SCREAM. Mickey runs to the door as Eleanor walks out –untouched by water– followed by a soaking wet Heidi. Eleanor looks at the clock, it’s midnight.

ELEANOR
Time for bed.

Eleanor heads to the nook until she takes a hard left into Heidi’s room and shuts the door. Mickey looks to Heidi.

HEIDI
I’m sorry.
EXT. BATHROOM - MORNING (6)

Eleanor exits Heidi's room past Heidi asleep on the treadmill (the cot's too small). She stops, turns around to Heidi and turns on the treadmill which slides Heidi off and startles her awake. Then, Eleanor heads to the bathroom, opens the door and is met with TWO SCREAMS inside the bathroom with the shower running. One female, one male. Then, Eleanor SCREAMS.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER (6)

Lilla, now in a robe and traumatized, sits across from an equally traumatized Eleanor.

LILLA
So, when you’re a mature woman and you meet a special fella...

ELEANOR
Spare me. You guys were boning.

LILLA
Then why’re you so shocked?

ELEANOR
(whispering; freaked out)
Where’s your hair?
(beat)
And his?!

ANGLE ON Alejandro next to Lilla.

ALEJANDRO
Que?

ELEANOR
(genuinely concerned)
Is pubic balding genetic? Cuz my womanly mane only recently started to sprout.
(to Alejandro)
Eres mi padre?

ALEJANDRO
(in broken English)
Bye-bye.

Alejandro heads out as Eleanor looks to Lilla with sass.

ELEANOR
He’s not comin’ back.
LILLA
(frustrated)
Children should be seen, not heard.

Eleanor flicks her off as Lilla follows Alejandro out.

LILLA (CONT’D)
Don’t go. She’s just being curious and... Should I call you later?

ALEJANDRO
I call you.

Lilla’s CELL RINGS. She picks up as Alejandro exits. Lilla’s starting to reel with exasperation.

LILLA
Jennifer. Hey. Don’t worry, I’ve stopped trying to get my job back.
(beat)
You can get me into Tyler’s party?! That means I can corner Bob, grovel and maybe get my job back! I NEED my job back. It’s cold out here.
(beat)
Tonight? Oh.
(she looks at Eleanor)
No problem. I’ll meet you outside.

Lilla hangs up and rushes to Mickey’s room where Mickey and Heidi are eating breakfast on TV trays.

LILLA (CONT’D)
Why’re you guys holed up in here? Whatever. Doesn’t matter. Because I have a potential answer to my despair. Ya see, a caterer I know can get me into Tyler Preston’s celebration tonight which would give me the opportunity to make good with Bob. Can you guys watch Cookie? Thanks.

MICKEY
I’m afraid that can’t happen.

LILLA
Why?

MICKEY
Because I’m afraid. Cookie is a monster.
LILLA
Oh come on, I know she looks like a little troll but I was with you til ten thirty. Nothing could’ve happened in an hour and a half.

MICKEY
A lot happened.

HEIDI
A lot.

MICKEY
If you need someone to watch her, you should hire someone with a license to taser.

HEIDI
Yeah, you’re gonna need more than a babysitter.

LILLA
But I have more than a babysitter. I have both of you. We’re raising her together, remember?

MICKEY
No can do. I have a date.

HEIDI
And I have a something.

LILLA
Fine. I’ll find somebody else.

INT. LILLA’S BEDROOM- EVENING (6)

LILLA
(begging)
Please... you’re my last resort.

INT. SETH’S APARTMENT - INTERCUT- SAME (6)

SETH
The trial is supposed to be for you to get to know each other, not for me to babysit. Take her with you.

LILLA
It’s not a great option given her limited outfit selection. And also there’s this other thing called “being difficult”. Alejandro ran away in fear this morning.
SETH
Who’s Alejandro?

LILLA
My lover.

SETH
Did he do something to provoke her?

LILLA
No. She just saw us naked.

SETH
A little advice: you might not want to reveal stuff like that to me or anyone from my department. Ever.

LILLA
I didn’t invite her into the shower with us.

SETH
I’m getting off the phone now.

LILLA
(desperate)
I can’t handle her on my own. I need you to bail me out.

SETH
By pretending I never got this call, I just did. Good night.

With that, Seth finally hangs up. Lilla’s annoyed.

INT. LIVING ROOM- EVENING (6)

Mickey and Heidi head out as Eleanor calls out.

ELEANOR
Yo, shortie, heard you had a date.

She hands him a torn off piece of paper.

MICKEY
What’s this?

ELEANOR
My number. You’re gonna need it.

MICKEY
I’m not going to call you.
ELEANOR
Trust me. You will.

Eleanor nods for him to pocket it. He does.

LILLA
(entering; super sweet)
Alright princess, it’s time for a bath and makeover.

ELEANOR
Not happening.

LILLA
Fine. I’ll just wipe you down.

She grabs a CANNISTER OF CLOROX WIPES.

ELEANOR
You wouldn’t dare.

The look in Lilla’s eyes say it all: Try me.

INT. BATHROOM- LATER

Eleanor sits on the side of the tub in an oversized robe next to Lilla as the water runs. Eleanor stares daggers at Lilla.

LILLA
Believe me, I wish I didn’t have to take you either. Wait, can I leave you home alone?

ELEANOR
I’m too young. It’s illegal.

LILLA
We don’t have to tell anyone.
(Eleanor shakes her head)
You’re a buzz kill.

ELEANOR
I know. So what’s the plan?

LILLA
The plan is for me to eat my words with Bob and get my job back.

ELEANOR
So you regret what you said?

LILLA
Nope. I don’t have regrets.
ELEANOR
Then why are you gonna pretend you regret it?

LILLA
’Cause I’ve got mouths to feed and...it’s much easier to lie.

ELEANOR
You’re lazy.

LILLA
And you’re annoying. Can you just pretend to be cute and fun for the next few hours? Please.

ELEANOR
That’s a lot of work.

LILLA
Will this shut you up?

Lilla flashes her a hundie. Eleanor nods.

INT. PARTY - COUCHES- NIGHT (6)

Lilla drops Eleanor off to a couch with some grub while she scans the room for Bob. She spots him across the way.

LILLA
Be good and more of this...
    (she flashes more green)
    ...is coming your way.
    (Eleanor grabs the money but Lilla holds firm)
    Don’t offend anyone. Try.

INT. PARTY - COUCHES - MOMENTS LATER (6)

Eleanor is in convo with a group of women, one who has serious plastic surgery face.

ELEANOR
I got it, it’s a cat. You’re trying to make your face look like a cat.

The woman is insulted. Eleanor’s cell rings. Eleanor puts her finger up to “give her a moment”. INTERCUT WITH:

INT. RESTAURANT - SAME

MICKEY
I think she’s playing hard to get.
ELEANOR
How so?

MICKEY
She left but before she did, she suggestively licked her lips. I just called her but she didn’t pick up so I’m gonna call her again.

ELEANOR
Don’t. You’re a small guy and small guys need to pretend they have balls.

MICKEY
I have balls.

ELEANOR
Then let’s see them.
(silence)
Exactly. Don’t call me back til you grow a pair.
(hangs up; to the women)
My new roomie. He’s totally not getting laid tonight.

INT. PARTY - BAR - LATER (6)

Lilla is almost to the bar when Bob spots her. She smiles. Motions for them to talk just as he motions to TWO BEEFY SECURITY GUARDS and points them in her direction. Shit.

INT. PARTY - COUCHES - MOMENTS LATER (6)

Eleanor’s chatting with a MODEL in a sheer dress.

ELEANOR
You’re really pretty.

MODEL
Thank you.

ELEANOR
But that’s not why everyone’s staring.
(beat)
We can see your coochie.

As Model reacts, Lilla quickly ducks down next to Eleanor.

LILLA
Mission aborted. We gotta skiddatz--
(Bob shows with security)
-- before we get kicked out.
ACT THREE

INT. PARTY - COUCHES- SAME (6)

We pick up directly where we left off. Lilla blathers.

LILLA
I’m not trying to make a scene I just wanted to...

BOB
I don’t want to hear it. You left us with a mess. Escort her out.

ELEANOR
(to the guards)
One sec. Bob, can we talk turkey? (they sidebar)
Listen, Lilla hasn’t been of sound mind these days. Ya see, I was brought into her life unexpectedly and it got her off her game so I’d appreciate if you hear her out and not make that bullshit bath I took go to waste. Cool? (disarmed, Bob nods)
Tell ‘em, Lil.

LILLA
So, I just wanted to say that I regret um... (she whispers to Eleanor)
How do you feel about little white lies? (Eleanor shakes her head)
How ‘bout the itty bitty, teeny weeny, off white variety? (Eleanor shakes her head)
You’re exhausting.

ELEANOR
Thank you.

BOB
I’m losing patience.

ELEANOR
And hair. Settle down, Bobby.

LILLA
Yeah, I’m growing a conscience and it’s telling me that I regret... (she closes her eyes)
...nothing.

(MORE)
LILLA (CONT'D)
I don’t want to lie for a living anymore. It’s no way to live.
(to the guards)
You can take me now.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Wait.

Lilla and Eleanor turn around to find Tyler.

TYLER
You’re right. Lying is no way to live and I’ve been kidding myself thinking I can be irresponsible and still run a billion dollar business. I need a grown up to keep me in line. Especially now that I have so much to lose. I want you back on my team.

Tyler looks at Bob. Bob reluctantly nods.

BOB
You can come back.

LILLA
Eh. No thanks.

TYLER
What about another firm?

ELEANOR
She doesn’t really play well with others. In total candor, she’d be at her best working for herself but she can’t because it’s expensive.

LILLA
Excellent points, Cookie.
(to Tyler; proud)
She’s my kid.

TYLER
I’ll fund your company as long as I’m a client.

LILLA
I don’t know.

ELEANOR
(to Lilla)
Don’t be an asshole.
LILLA
Okay. Fine.

ELEANOR
We’ll be in touch.

As Eleanor shakes hands with Tyler we....

SMASH CUT TO:

A CELEBRATORY MONTAGE on the cue of a kick ass song:

INT. LIQUOR STORE - NIGHT (6)
Lilla and Eleanor bust into the store with tons of swagger. Eleanor throws down a hundie on the counter. Lilla grabs a couple bottles of wine. Eleanor grabs a couple liters of soda. Together they grab gobs of candy.

INT. LILLA’S APARTMENT- LATER (6)
Lilla and Eleanor dance. Lilla and Eleanor chug from bottles of wine and soda. Lilla throws up in the toilet. Eleanor holds back her hair. Lilla and Eleanor dance. Lilla and Eleanor eat gobs of candy. Eleanor throws up in the toilet. Lilla holds back her hair. Lilla and Eleanor jump on Lilla's bed and then both fall back onto it, passing out. END MONTAGE

INT. LILLA'S ROOM - MORNING (7)
It's day break. We BOOM UP from the floor to the edge of the bed to find Lilla spooning Eleanor. Eleanor wakes up and is awkwardly confronted by the mother/daughter “one night stand” of sorts. She slowly moves out from underneath Lilla's arm, waking Lilla who also is totally taken aback by the PDA. They greet each other like lovers who know that the night before got a little dirty and crazy. And they're now sober and mortified.
INT. APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER (7)

Together they make a mutual walk of shame out of Lilla's bedroom to the kitchen in front of Mickey and Heidi, who quietly get out of dodge. They both grab the juice.

ELEANOR
Is there pulp? I don't like pulp.

LILLA
Neither do I.

Lilla smiles and studies her daughter as she pours them each a glass until she catches her reflection in the toaster.

LILLA (CONT'D)
Damn, I look wrecked.

ELEANOR
You did three round offs in a row.

LILLA
Three? I vaguely remember one.

ELEANOR
That's cuz you ate it...

ELEANOR/LILLA
...on the coffee table.

LILLA
(they crack up)
Oh yeah. I blacked out for awhile after I hit my head.

ELEANOR
It's gonna be a night to remember and the best way for us to go out.
(Lilla's caught off guard)
Cuz while last night was fun we're clearly not a match. Right?
(she's testing Lilla)
You don't really want me. Right?

Lilla doesn't get she's being tested and takes Eleanor at her word. Too proud and vulnerable to disagree, Lilla agrees.

LILLA
Right. Right. So tonight will be our last night and I'll have Seth come get you in the morning.

ELEANOR
Thanks.
INT. ELEANOR'S NOOK- EVENING (7)

It’s late. Eleanor is now in her nook, on the cot, looking through an OLD PHOTO ALBUM when Lilla stops by to check in.

LILLA
Have any questions?

ELEANOR
These are your pictures from college?

LILLA
Yeah. Mostly from around the time you were conceived. I thought you might like to get a sense of your roots before we part company.

ELEANOR
Interesting. And I have a question. (off a pic with dudes) Were you a slut?

LILLA
Were. Are. It’s all relative.

ELEANOR
Do you know who my dad was?

LILLA
(offended)
Yes. (beat; reflecting)
He was the love of my life. And you have his eyes.

ELEANOR
Is he in here?

Lilla shakes her head as Eleanor hands the album back along with a small pink blanket. Lilla hands the blanket back.

LILLA
You can have it. (Eleanor looks confused) It’s your first woobie. I kept it.

Eleanor looks at it then gives it back to Lilla.

ELEANOR
You keep it. It doesn’t mean anything to me.
LILLA

O-kay.

Lilla turns to go then stops and turns back.

LILLA (CONT’D)
Remember when I said that I had no regrets? I lied. I regret giving you away.
(she swallows hard)
You’re the only person who knows what my heart sounds like from the inside.

They look at one another. Silent. Then heads to her room.

INT. LIVING ROOM- LATER (7)

Mickey and Heidi watch TV as Eleanor comes into the room. Immediately, they brace themselves.

ELEANOR
Stand down. I come bearing apologies.

MICKEY
What’s the catch?

ELEANOR
No catch. Just truth talk. Since it’s my last night, I want you to know I admired your attempts to make me feel comfortable.
(to Heidi)
I’m sorry I took advantage of your mental shortcomings.

HEIDI
(slight not registering)
Thank you.

ELEANOR
(to Mickey)
And I know you’re not a perv. You just need to grow a pair especially when you ask this hot slice out.
(she hands him a card)
Name’s Tiffany. Met her at the party and she’s a sure thing.

MICKEY
How do you know?
ELEANOR
She wears Egyptian musk.

MICKEY
What’s that?

ELEANOR
The scent of a whore.

Mickey smiles. Nice.

EXT. LILLA’S ROOM- LATER (7)

As Eleanor walks back toward her nook to hit the hay she passes by Lilla’s room- the door slightly ajar and catches Lilla holding Eleanor's woobie and a photo, crying.

ANGLE ON the photo – it's of a Lilla and a dude. Their arms around as she sits on his lap. Could it be Eleanor’s dad?

ANGLE ON Eleanor, still peeking in the crack of the door with a look we haven’t seen on her face before: regret.

EXT. LILLA, MICKEY AND HEIDI 'S APARTMENT – MORNING (8)

Mickey helps Eleanor with her bag and puts it into the trunk as Seth turns to Lilla.

SETH
I appreciate you giving her a chance.

LILLA
And I appreciate you giving me one.
   (holding back tears)
   It was a gift.

Mickey closes the trunk as Eleanor readies to go.

ELEANOR
Thanks for not sucking too hard.

MICKEY
We try.

She puts out her hand to shake hands with Mickey, Heidi and when she gets to Lilla, Lilla smiles. It’s warm, motherly.

LILLA
It was nice to meet you.

ELEANOR
You too.
Lilla puts out her hand but is surprised to get a quick hug in return. Then, Eleanor jumps into the car.

ELEANOR (CONT’D)  
Come on, douchebag. Let’s go.

INT. SETH'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER (8)

Seth starts the car and pulls away as Eleanor watches Lilla and the roomies getting smaller and smaller in the distance.

SETH  
I’m glad you gave it a try. Now you’ll have no regrets.

ELEANOR  
Stop.

SETH  
What?

ELEANOR  
The car. Stop the car.

He stops the car. She turns to him.

ELEANOR (CONT’D)  
I need to stay. Not for me but for them. They’re children and they need an adult around. And that adult is me.

A smile creeps across Seth’s face.

SETH  
You sure?

ELEANOR  
Sure.

Something catches Seth’s attention in the rear view mirror. He turns to look behind him as does Eleanor. And there in the distance is Lilla, running after them, in her heels.

SETH  
Should we back up and save her the trouble?

ELEANOR  
Nah. Make her run to the car.

FADE TO BLACK