

BIG DEAL

"GottaHaveIt"

Written by

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IN BLACK:

THE SOUND OF dozens of hushed FEMALE VOICES speaking quietly to themselves, rehearsing something... We hear a cacophony of little whispers and inhales but can't make out the words...

CUT TO:

EXTREME CLOSE UP -- JOANNA GOLD (Vanessa Bayer) sits against a white wall in too much makeup with big, overly poofed hair. She is breathing deeply, pushing a nervous Vanessa Bayer smile. Close on her HANDS anxiously bracing into her knees. We hear her HEART BEATING louder... and louder...

MATCH TO:

THE SAME HANDS, 20 years earlier, pushing an IV CART through--

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - CLEVELAND - DUSK

SUPER TITLE: "1997"

We see ADORABLE, 13-YEAR OLD JOANNA in a hospital robe and chemo cap, as she walks past a big sign that says "Cleveland Hough Cancer Center" toward a NURSE'S STATION where a group of NURSES are dividing up a cookie cake. A little banner says "Happy Birthday Shannon." A quiet radio plays Ace of Base.

JOANNA (O.S.)

Mmm. That looks good.

The nurses turn to find Joanna looking up at them.

NURSE LISA

Joanna, sweetie, do you need something? Patients aren't really supposed to be in this area.

JOANNA

Is that a cookie cake?

NURSE LISA

Yeah. It's Shannon's birthday.

JOANNA

Happy birthday Shannon.

NURSE SHANNON

Thanks, hon.

JOANNA

I can't remember the last time I got to eat cookie cake.

(MORE)

JOANNA (CONT'D)

There are so few pleasures I get to
enjoy these days. You know...
leukemia. Oh well.

(beat)

I have leukemia.

NURSE SHANNON

We know.

NURSE ERIC

Would you like a piece?

JOANNA

What? Oh. Okay. Sure. Thank you.

They hand her a slice on a little paper plate, then turn back to each other to continue their little party. After a few seconds they notice she's still standing there.

NURSE LISA

Do you need something else Joanna?

JOANNA

It's just, my mom and dad are in my
room, and...

The nurses share a slightly annoyed look with each other, feeling sympathetic but also a little manipulated.

CUT TO:

Joanna walks down the hallway with the ENTIRE COOKIE CAKE.

TITLES

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - 1997

Joanna is laying in bed eating cookie cake and watching QVC on a mounted TV. She is glued to the screen, watching her idol, QVC host JACKIE STILTON (late-30's, young Geena Davis-type with big 90's "Designing Women" hair and huge shoulder pads.) Joanna is mouthing along a beat behind.

JACKIE (ON TV)

And look at that gold shimmer...
how spectacular is that?

In the corner of the room, Joanna's Mom MARCY (40's, organized, wearing art fair jewelry) and Joanna's dad CHIP (40's, heavy-set, emotional) are having a hushed conversation with a DOCTOR. They approach Joanna's bedside.

DOCTOR

So the last round of chemo wasn't quite as successful as we wanted. We're going to try something new.

The gravity of this sinks in for Joanna and she feels scared.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

But hey, remember the power of positive thinking. That's the part we can control.

Joanna turns back toward the TV.

JACKIE (ON TV)

... And when I'm having a bad day, jewelry has a way of making you feel so much better...

JOANNA

Mom? Can I get that bracelet? It has a lobster claw clasp and that's unheard of at this price point.

Chip and Marcy look at each other.

CHIP

It is very chic.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - 1999

Close on the GOLD BRACELET from QVC around a small wrist...
Reveal it's JOANNA, now 15, with braces and short hair, standing with her friends LIZZY and ERIN. A cute boy, CALEB, approaches, wearing a Goo Goo Dolls concert tee.

CALEB

Lizzy. Erin. Are you foxes coming to my party tonight?

LIZZY / ERIN

(so flirty)
Maybe. / Whatever, dork.

JOANNA

(trying to flirt)
Oh, hey, Caleb.

CALEB

Joanna!
(with gravity)
How are you feeling?

JOANNA
 (deflated)
 Good.

CALEB
 (running off)
 Travis! Wait up bitch!

LIZZY
 I'm sorry he didn't invite you,
 Joanna.

ERIN
 You probably need to stay in and
 focus on your health and stuff
 though, right?

JOANNA
 I'm actually going out already.
 This other guy wants to just like,
 drink and do kissing.

On Joanna, smiling painfully.

INT. JOANNA'S HOUSE - THAT NIGHT

Joanna looks out her living room window to see HIGH SCHOOLERS arriving at CALEB'S PARTY ACROSS THE STREET. She has a phone receiver pressed to her ear.

VOICE (IN PHONE)
*And we have Joanna from Cleveland,
 hi there Joanna!*

Joanna whips her head toward a TV. She's watching QVC. On air is a host, LULAYNE, with a wedge cut and drawn-on eyebrows. Joanna suddenly affects a convincing ADULT-SOUNDING VOICE.

JOANNA
 Hiya there Lulayne! So happy to
 speak with you tonight!

LULAYNE
 Are you loving the pencil skirt?

JOANNA
 I am. I have the oceanic blue, which
 really pops and draws the eye. I wore
 it to dinner with my boyfriend Caleb
 the other night, he's in a very
 successful rock band. He loved my
 skirt so much he actually got down on
 one knee and just proposed.

LULAYNE

Oh my goodness congrats! Well ya can't sell it any better than that. You oughta come down here and do my job for me, Joanna!

On Joanna... she wants to.

HARD CUT TO:

EXTREME CLOSE UP ON JOANNA, now 33 -- PRESENT DAY. She is looking into the camera selling us a product.

JOANNA

It's almost an escape to old Morocco or the Turkish coast, an exotic delicacy that transports you to an ancient land. And it really has that crunch you want!

OLD LADY

That what?

REVEAL WE'RE IN:

INT. SAMS CLUB - SALES FLOOR

Joanna is wearing a Sams Club apron and standing at a dinky table, selling PITA CHIP SAMPLES to gathering shoppers.

JOANNA

(screaming)

That crunch! That crunch you want!

OLD LADY

Oh, it does? Oh, good. Thank you!

Several shoppers add bags of pita chips to their cart as Joanna's boss RICK PLUFF (40's, balding) passes by.

RICK

Jesus, good job. I don't know how you do that, Joanna.

LIZZY GOUDY (30's, upscale, Kate Berlant type) approaches.

LIZZY

Joanna? It's Elizabeth! Lizzy Goudy, from high school!

JOANNA

Ohmigod, hi Lizzy!

LIZZY

I heard you selling stuff and I knew it was you because you always used to like pretend to be on QVC!

JOANNA

Yeah! I'm actually still kinda hoping to do the QVC thing one day.

LIZZY

Hahahaha!
(realizes she's serious)
Oh, sorry, no that's great.

JOANNA

Yeah, I used to send in audition tapes but the last few years have sort of gotten away from me, but it's nice to be in Cleveland just, doin' my thang.

LIZZY

Well, you look so great! I feel like everybody was worried that even after you beat cancer you'd turn out a little like "Erghh."
(makes face)
Sorry -- I just mean, you went through a lot and... look at you! You look totally normal, you have like a fine job, and it's... great!

JOANNA

(hiding her pain)
Thank you! So what's been up with you, queen?!

LIZZY

I work for Lucia Pundi? It's a design firm based in Milan.

JOANNA

Oh, so gorge! I love their clothes.

LIZZY

It's interior design.

JOANNA

I know, I was joking. Anyway. Do you like it there?

LIZZY

Ech, it's fine. I'm back and forth to Italy all the time.

JOANNA

Uch. Me too.

LIZZY

For Sams club?

JOANNA

Mm hmm.

LIZZY

Hunh. Well, my fiance is coming to Milan next time, so if you know any romantic restaurants...

JOANNA

Uch, there's this cute little place, it's really hard to find, it's called Mama... Mama Giano? Or Mama Reginia? They serve this one really big fish, kind of an oiled fish? I'll ask my serious boyfriend, he'll remember.

LIZZY

Great! Well, so fun to see you, maybe I'll catch you in Milan!

JOANNA

Oh I would love that! Tres Bella!

Lizzy walks away as Joanna feels a sadness sinking in.

INT. SAMS CLUB STOCK ROOM - LATER

Joanna sits at a drab, cluttered desk looking at a web page that reads "QVC.COM - CASTING THIS WEEK." Rick knocks.

RICK

Joanna? Holy shit. Regional visited last week and saw you crushing it on the demos. They just called to offer you VP of floor sales for all of Ohio! Full bennys, you're frigging set for life, the last guy had it for 25 years! He just died! Congrats!

He pops a tiny, cheap single-serve champagne.

JOANNA

Wow! Thank you, Rick.

RICK

I hope you don't mind but I already told your dad. Woo!

Joanna smiles but feels conflicted.

INT. CALIFORNIA PIZZA KITCHEN - LATER THAT DAY

Joanna sits with MARCY and CHIP having lunch. They are each having the same spinach salad and iced tea.

CHIP

I want to make a toast.

MARCY

Jojo don't have too much iced tea
or you won't sleep.

CHIP

To my amazing daughter...
(choking up)
A top executive at a major retailer!

MARCY

I've already texted the Brenners,
Donna and Mike, and I told Nan on
her Instagram. Are you cold,
Joanna? You look cold to me.

JOANNA

No, I'm fine.

A server approaches.

MARCY

Excuse me. Would you mind turning
down the ceiling fan? Also we're
celebrating a wonderful new chapter
in our daughter's life, and we'd
love if the restaurant would
provide a dessert?

SERVER

Oh. Do you want a dessert menu?

MARCY

We were hoping a dessert would
be... *provided*? And we're testing
to see if she has celiac, so maybe
the flourless torte? I think two
pieces of that?

SERVER

O-kay.

The server walks away, unsure.

CHIP
Already getting the VIP treatment!

Marcy notices Joanna's demeanor.

MARCY
What's wrong?

JOANNA
Nothing. I guess I just had this weird thought, like, what if I don't take the job?

CHIP
What?

MARCY
Why wouldn't you take it?

JOANNA
No I know, it's just... I saw that QVC is casting this week, and... I still kinda... I just know I could do it.

Marcy glances at Chip and puts her fork down.

MARCY
Honey, as I've said before, it's very hard to break into tv. I don't want that stress for you. You're making your dream come true in a way that's realistic for you, and that's amazing!

CHIP
I know what this is about. I didn't get that promotion for you, you did that all by yourself. The only time I ever called Rick was to get you in the door after college. So you'd have a job where they understand your needs and wouldn't limit your sick days. You did the rest, honey!
(tearing up)
And now look at you. A major big shot with a fancy job offer! You've got to take it.

JOANNA
Thanks dad. You're right.

INT. SAMS CLUB AISLES - AFTER LUNCH

Joanna walks through the aisles as various COWORKERS congratulate her. She looks around at the endless aisles of products, hyper aware in a new way... something changing in her. Rick appears.

RICK

Joanna. Why don't you swing by my office and we'll call corporate together. Woo!

JOANNA

Oh absolutely! I just have to stop by my car real quick.

EXT. PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Joanna's shitty Toyota Yaris REVS as it peels out of the parking lot. She sideswipes a row of SHOPPING CARTS being collected by a TEEN EMPLOYEE. The carts fly everywhere.

EXT. HIGHWAY - MOMENTS LATER

She makes a sudden merge toward an on-ramp for PENNSYLVANIA.

INT. QVC RECEPTION DESK - DAY

Joanna stands in a line of MADE-UP WOMEN, her heart pounding. She has on way too much makeup and overly poofed hair. She steps up to a RECEPTIONIST.

RECEPTIONIST

Name?

JOANNA

Joanna Gold.

RECEPTIONIST

I don't have you here.

JOANNA

(with Erika Jayne confidence)
That's funny because I received several communications in the form of phone communications confirming my appointment. Would you prefer I speak to your boss instead?

The receptionist shrinks as Joanna stares her down.

RECEPTIONIST

Go ahead.

Joanna passes through a turnstyle and we go CLOSE ON HER FACE -- Holy shit that worked.

INT. QVC STUDIOS - TALENT HOLDING AREA - DAY

EXTREME CLOSE UP of Joanna sitting against a white wall, her heart beating. [This is the SAME SHOT from the cold open.] She rolls back her sleeve and glances at HER QVC BRACELET FROM CHILDHOOD.

PULL OUT TO REVEAL an audition waiting room full of what feels like 50 different versions of Kelly Ripa, all quietly practicing their smiles and whispering to themselves. On a wall-mounted TV, a CHEESY REEL explains the history of QVC.

VOICE IN REEL

... billion dollar industry with channels all over the world...

Joanna accidentally meets eyes with a woman next to her clutching a rosary. Joanna politely smiles, trying to focus.

INT. QVC LIVING ROOM SET - JUMP CUTS

QUICK CUTS of several WOMEN auditioning, each with their own distinctly thirsty look. They are all looking in the camera while caressing a NUMBER 2 PENCIL.

AUDITIONERS

...Look. At. That. Wood! That beautiful canary yellow, almost a jewel tone. / Such solid wood! / One of the best erasers you'll find. / Will look absolutely gorgeous with your other office supplies...

INT. STUDIO CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

A STAGE MANAGER walks Joanna through a backstage hallway, along with THREE OTHER AUDITIONERS. They stop and wait in front of big doors emblazoned with a QVC logo and a wall-sized photo of JACKIE STILTON (Joanna's favorite QVC host from childhood) under a red "on air" bulb.

STAGE MANAGER (O.S.)

Joanna? Stand by... And... go.

Big DOUBLE DOORS fly open and Joanna steps forward into --

INT. QVC LIVING ROOM SET - CONTINUOUS

She steps toward the blaring lights.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

So just go ahead and sell us that pencil. Whenever you're ready.

Joanna takes a deep breath and picks up the pencil.

JOANNA

Today, I have something really special for you.

We see a table of POLISHED EXECUTIVES, bored and over it from an endless day of this.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

It may look like a basic office supply to you, but actually it's so much more than that. This right here is one of the most amazing tools in the world because it's the one you use to build your dreams.

A few of the executives perk up.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

An architect uses a pencil to build a house, an astronaut uses a pencil to plan a journey to the moon, a poet uses a pencil to capture the beauty of a sunset. And when was the last time you wrote a letter to someone you love? What I have for you today is not just a piece of wood with some rubber on the end. If that's all you want, go buy a plunger. This, this is a portal to the person you're meant to become, the life you're meant to live, with this pencil, you can dream... until your dreams come true.

The air in the room has changed. They loved it.

FEMALE VOICE

Thank you.

Joanna turns to go, when she hears --

JACKIE (O.S.)

Good job, kid.

Joanna steps forward to see who she's auditioning for: A few EXECUTIVES, QVC CEO PATRICIA KUNKEN and JACKIE STILTON.

JOANNA

Oh my god, thank you. Oh my god.
You're so pretty.

PATRICIA

How did you learn to do that?

JOANNA

Oh, um, I've been watching QVC since I was 10 years old. I just know the way you sell a product is to give people a story around it. That's what QVC always did for me.
(looking to Jackie)
The women on screen always made me feel like I was gonna be okay. They gave me a good story to believe in.

They whisper to each other again.

PATRICIA

(to an executive)
Okay. I think it plays.

A STAGE HAND furiously motions for Joanna to walk off. Joanna nods and exits, on cloud nine but a little confused.

JOANNA

(to Stagehand)
What does that mean?

STAGE HAND

She means you got it, you bitch! Yay!

Joanna hears this and immediately walks into a ladder.

INT. MARCY AND CHIP'S CONDO - CLEVELAND - THE NEXT DAY

They are eating snap peas and hummus in tense silence.

CHIP

What are the benefits like?

JOANNA

I don't know.

CHIP

And they guaranteed you a contract?

JOANNA

I'm still finding out the details.

Marcy and Chip look at each other.

CHIP

Joanna, we know how excited you are, but we just want to make sure you're thinking this through.

MARCY

I mean god forbid something should go wrong, we're not just a phone call away anymore. And I googled some of the hospitals there and they're just not as highly rated.

JOANNA

I'm not sick anymore.

This hits them.

MARCY

I know.

CHIP

We know.

JOANNA

I just feel like everywhere I go, my whole life, it's just "Nice to meet you I had cancer," "Did you know she had cancer," and "Ohmigod cancer hashtag I had cancer" I've finally accomplished something that has nothing to do with that. And...
(starting to cry)
Are you guys... not happy for me?

Chip and Marcy instantly break down and cry too.

MARCY

No we are!

CHIP

We're bursting our buttons!

JOANNA

I'm sorry if I'm being -- I mean, I love you both so much and I'll never forget how you took care of me.

(MORE)

JOANNA (CONT'D)

You even made it feel like being sick made me special, like when you found out Scott Wolf was on our plane and you got them to give me that lady's first class seat next to him. And I know you just want to protect me, but I'm healthy. And now I'm going to be on TV. And I'm going to be a huge star. Now I'm going to be Scott Wolf.

Marcy and Chip take a deep breath, seeming to accept this.

CHIP

Well, what are you going to tell your boyfriend?

INT. WINE BAR - LATER THAT NIGHT

Joanna and RAHAV (30's, handsome, relaxed) sip wine. She has that vibe of delicately trying to break up with someone.

JOANNA

So first of all, I just want to say I think you're an amazing person.

RAHAV

Thank you?

JOANNA

And you did everything right, which makes this really hard. So I'm moving. Away from Cleveland. And I can't really get into the details, but sufficing to say...

RAHAV

It's "suffice it to say."

JOANNA

But the point is, we're gonna have to end this.

RAHAV

End what? This is like our third date?

JOANNA

I know, but I think we both were feeling that this could kinda be "it" for us.

RAHAV

I'm confused. It's not like we're exclusive. I mean I'm dating other people.

JOANNA

Hm? Oh.

RAHAV

Did you think we were exclusive?

JOANNA

(lying)

Nope.

RAHAV

So, we don't need to "break up" because there's nothing to break up.

JOANNA

Yep.

RAHAV

Have you... done much dating before?

JOANNA

Yah!

RAHAV

Okay. I'm gonna go, I think? Sorry. I mean, good luck to you.

JOANNA

Mm Hm.

He goes. We stay on her as she tries to keep it together.

EXT. QVC HEADQUARTERS - A FEW DAYS LATER

A sprawling movie-lot style campus in the suburbs of Philly. Joanna drives through a huge shiny gate emblazoned with a QVC logo. She is speechless. It's like Dorothy arriving at Oz.

INT. QVC CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Joanna enters a huge meeting room with colorful couches and chairs, filled with dozens of STAGE MANAGERS, PRODUCTION STAFF and ON-AIR HOSTS. She crosses paths with DARCY LEEDS (30's, Patricia's upbeat right-hand man, suspiciously nice, wears fitted suits with pants that are short on purpose.)

DARCY

Joanna! Welcome! Find a seat.

Joanna looks around the room for a place to sit, feeling vulnerable. People are congregating in little cliques. Joanna approaches a CLUSTER OF CHAIRS with one open seat.

JOANNA

Hi, is this seat taken?

WOMAN

Oh, honey I'm sorry I think Deloris is sitting here! Hey, Deloris!

The woman flags down Deloris, who's clear across the room. Joanna finds a BIG COUCH with several WOMEN spread out on it.

JOANNA

Hey! Is it okay if I grab a seat?

WOMAN # 2

Ohmigod of course!!!

None of the women move to make room for Joanna. They resume their conversation. With nowhere to go, Joanna leans on a stack of shipping boxes in a weird corner of the room.

DARCY

Okay let's start. New Special Value for this week. We just closed on an exclusive lash line from Tres Beau Beauty. Deloris will launch it 4pm Monday, so Jenny you're bumping to 8am with So Healthy So Fresh, but we're pulling the egg poachers.

JENNY, a host, looks disappointed while DELORIS, next to her, looks delighted. Darcy gestures to PERRY ST. JAMES (A big southern man with heavy makeup - one of QVC's stars.)

DARCY (CONT'D)

And for Kitchen Corner we're going back out with the Non Stick Nesting Pans because, Perry, drum roll...

PERRY

(sing-song like Oprah)
We're gettin' em in red, bitch!

Everybody applauds as Perry does a little dance in his seat.

DARCY

Oh, and we have a new on-camera family member! This is Joanna Gold.
(MORE)

DARCY (CONT'D)

To welcome her, we have a little
spread from Brownies by Mail. Yay!
Welcome Joanna!

Everyone applauds but we sense they are sizing her up through their smiles. One woman is trying so hard to open a shrink-wrapped brownie with her teeth. Joanna stands.

JOANNA

Thanks so much! I'm so excited. I can't
even believe I'm in this room right
now! So... thanks and...thank you!

This lands with a weird thud in the room. A smattering of half-assed applause as Joanna sits back down on her boxes.

DARCY

So, we're price-cutting the Playa
del Fun Margarita Makers and the
Tandy-Fit Booty Blasters. Let's --

Suddenly we can feel the entire room hush as they are joined by PATRICIA KUNKEN (60's, QVC founder, a Jane Fonda type, cold as ice). She studies a big white board in the front of the room and whispers to Darcy. He removes the name NANCY from the board - we see NANCY's face fall.

Patricia plants herself at the front of the room, slowly makes direct eye contact with each person, one by one, for a long and silent minute.

PATRICIA

Have a great week.

Everyone applauds. As Joanna claps, the boxes she is sitting on suddenly cave in.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Everyone pours out of the meeting. Joanna is left standing in the hallway. She spots JORDAN WAHL (Mid 30's stage manager, sexy, down to earth.)

JOANNA

Excuse me. Hi. I'm sorry to bother
you. I was just wondering...

JORDAN

You're wondering what to do and
where to go? Yeah. Nobody tells
you. I'm Jordan.

JOANNA

Thank you. I'm Joanna.

JORDAN

(looking at his clipboard)
 Okay, you're in dressing room H.
 I'll take you. You have a meeting
 with Patricia in an hour and then
 you'll start training. It usually
 takes a week and then you're...
 "part of the family."

They pass NEIL PATRICK HARRIS (as himself), talking to a
 STAGEHAND carrying Neil Patrick Harris branded tupperware.

JOANNA

Oh my god that's Neil Patrick Harris!

JORDAN

He's a lunatic.

NEIL PATRICK HARRIS

... Then fucking go into the
 inventory closet and fucking find a
 fucking steamer, Bradley...

JOANNA

God. I feel like I'm in a dream
 right now.

JORDAN

You're adorable.

His phone rings. He ignores the call.

JOANNA

Who's that?

JORDAN

Um. My ex wife.

JOANNA

(flirty)
 Is she black?

JORDAN

What?

JOANNA

No, I'm just. Do you date... whites?

JORDAN

Do I date whites?

JOANNA

Cause you said I was adorable.
Sorry, I'm just -- nevermind.

JORDAN

Okay. Great. Excited to work with you.

They arrive at a plush, well-appointed dressing room.

JOANNA

LOL. Sorry I said that. It's my first
day and I'm just being a fuckface.
Anyway, thank you. I'll just get
settled in here.

JORDAN

(slightly amused)
This isn't your dressing room.
Yours is over there.

He points across the hall to a shitty closet-sized room, as
Beth Ann appears from the nice dressing room, playfully
slapping Jordan on the arm.

BETH ANN

(to Joanna)
Is this one giving you a hard time?
Hi, I'm Beth Ann!

JOANNA

I've seen you on air! You're so great!

BETH ANN

(insecure)
Really?
(then)
Well, welcome to the fam. The last
time they hired someone was over a
year ago! It was me. Guess I'm not
the shiny new object anymore, ha.

JORDAN

Go for Jordan.

He walks away speaking into his headset.

BETH ANN

Are you faking that?
(to Joanna)
God, don't you just want him to
break you in half? He's almost as
hot as my husband. Are you married?

JOANNA

No.

BETH ANN

Uch, my husband and my kids?
They're my whole world.

JOANNA

Well, I just got out of a pretty
serious relationship.

BETH ANN

Oh god, my husband just sent me a
sext. It's his dick.
(she mouths the word "huge")
Okay! Good luck with Patricia!
Don't worry that you talked out of
turn in the product meeting. Just
keep it casual! Bring her a coffee!
Bye new friend!

Beth Ann leaves. On Joanna, sizing her up --

INT. PATRICIA'S OFFICE - LATER

Joanna enters Patricia's office holding two coffees. It's a sprawling, crisp office with a huge desk, shelves of awards, and monitors with live broadcasts from QVC Japan, UK, and Italy. Overlaid graphs update sales by the minute. Dozens of holiday cookie tins are spread out in front of Patricia. She nibbles each cookie before throwing it away.

JOANNA

Hi... I brought you a coffee!

PATRICIA

I don't drink that.

JOANNA

Oh. Okay.

A long beat as Patricia just stares at her. Then --

PATRICIA

Does this taste like shit to you?

She offers Joanna a cookie. Joanna takes a bite.

JOANNA

I don't... love it?

Patricia gives a look that's impossible to read.

PATRICIA

You know, when I started this network in the 80's, they said people would never shop on TV. They said people liked going to stores.

JOANNA

Oh, of course.

PATRICIA

I said, when you go to the store, there are all these other people around. When you shop with us, it's just you. You're buying from a friend, who cares about you. And who you care about.

Patricia's iphone vibrates and she presses "ignore."

PATRICIA (CONT'D)

Uch. My son.

(then)

So what's your hook? What makes us care about you?

JOANNA

Oh, um... well, I'm from Cleveland. And I've been watching QVC since I was a kid.

PATRICIA

(rolling her eyes)

Okay. What else?

JOANNA

I'm one of those people you meet and I light up a room, and...

PATRICIA

In your audition I saw something. But I'm not really seeing it right now.

Joanna shifts, feeling compelled to get real.

JOANNA

My hook is I'm a person no one expected would ever become anything. And now I'm going to become the biggest QVC star that ever existed.

Patricia perks up.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

I want my own product lines, my own books, I want a driver who says to me every morning...um... "Ms. Gold?!"

(getting emotional)

I want everyone I've ever met who said I couldn't be great, to die. I mean, not to die, but you know, to see me on TV. And to be like, "Oh that's who she is."

PATRICIA

I'm starting you on the Janeane by Janeane tablescapes. 4am Monday.

JOANNA

Oh. Great. Thank you.

Joanna looks to her left and we see that DARCY has been sitting in a chair silently observing this whole time. Joanna goes, beaming. We stay with Darcy and Patricia, who share a strange intimate energy.

PATRICIA

She still needs a hook.

(then)

Did you work out this morning?

DARCY

Yes.

PATRICIA

Just elliptical doesn't count.

INT. QVC STUDIOS / TRAINING MONTAGE - VARIOUS LOCATIONS

Set to music.

- IN A MAKEUP CHAIR, Joanna spins around and her makeup looks truly insane.

JOANNA

(genuine)

I love it.

- IN A PRACTICE STUDIO, Joanna stands on a set displaying different "Janeane by Janeane" placemats, table runners, etc. as PERRY coaches from the side.

PERRY

Camera 1, camera 2, 4, close-up, show me 1, show me 4, you're late, don't stop selling precious.

Joanna is overwhelmed. Holy shit this is a lot.

- IN THE CONTROL ROOM, which is abuzz with a live broadcast, Darcy walks Joanna in and leaves her with TAMI (A sweet and kind producer, think Tami Sagher) who gives her a big hug.

TAMI

Joanna! I'm Tami, I'm so excited to work with you.

JOANNA

Wow, it's like NASA in here.

TAMI

Oh, these are just monitors showing the sales, updated every second. But don't even pay attention to it, but it is really important. Ooh, we're coming back from the tape. Just make yourself comfortable!

DIRECTOR

... 3, 2, take it.

On screen, JACKIE is doing a broadcast. We hear TAMI speak into her ear simultaneously. Jackie is selling a jacket and she's amazing at processing Tami's information seamlessly.

TAMI

... Okay hon, midnight orchid is down to 150 but we're out of small and extra small...

standby for the pocket closeup...

Barley is gone, push the coral...

JACKIE

Welcome back and you're just in time because I have have a few of the midnight orchid left if you're doing medium or large, how much do you love these pockets, look at that, but we are completely sold out of the barley but I want to show you my coral --

Joanna watches, extremely impressed.

- CUT TO JOANNA IN THE STUDIO, trying to sell a makeup kit with Tami in her ear. She is not nearly as good as Jackie.

TAMI (CONT'D)

... No more sandstone. Tell them we're out. Not "low." They're done...

Don't say "got it." Don't talk to me!

Standby for closeup. Not yet, I said "standby."

JOANNA

And it's looking like we are running pretty low in the sandstone neutrals, but, got it, okay, we still have the tuscan reds. Actually, okay, got it, I'm being told we are out of the sandstone now. Got it. Oops. So take a look at my closeup here, er.

- LATER IN THE STUDIO, QUICK CUTS of Beth Ann showing Joanna how to sell various products. Shoes, a necklace, a candle... Jackie walks by and approaches Joanna.

JACKIE

(to Joanna)

You're doing great. Here look, the more you stroke the product, the more it sells. Don't ask me why.

JOANNA

Ohmygod, thank you so much.

Jackie winks and walks away.

BETH ANN

Thanks Jackie!

(to Joanna, threatened)

She came over here. That means she likes you.

JOANNA

I'm shaking from that. She's like my idol.

BETH ANN

(fake)

Yay!

- TAMI greets Joanna on the floor, they walk together.

TAMI

So, I just have to go through a few standards and practices guidelines, you know since it's live, we don't want to get a fine from the FCC.

(paging through notes)

You know, don't say shit, fuck, um, cunt, don't use the n-word, don't say faggot, even if it's clear as day, you know any kind of slur, wetback, kike, etc. And don't call someone a dyke. Even if a "woman" walks in here with two dobermans and a blazer. Don't talk about your period. Anything, sexual acts, don't talk about masturbating. If you masturbate, that's your business, just don't do it here, or at least don't talk about it and ya know, wash your hands.

Darcy approaches.

DARCY

Tami, I need her on set.

TAMI

(snapping)

Darcy. I let you do your job, now let me do mine.

(to Joanna, sweet again)

Okay, so you can say "jew," but you can't *call* someone a jew, even if they're acting like one. Oh, and don't say "At least he had clear goals" if it's about Hitler.

They pass a group of TOURISTS taking a QVC STUDIO TOUR, who heard all this.

- Joanna sells a Janeane by Janeane decorative table runner to camera. She is starting to hit her stride.

JOANNA

...When you think about the times in life that really mattered, it's grandpa helping the kids with homework, it's sharing a hot cocoa with a friend who's having a tough time. The table is the most sacred space in the home. Now, if you love the evergreen sapling I want you to jump on that right now because I'm down to 50 units --

Reveal Joanna has been looking in the wrong camera. She quickly corrects.

- Joanna and Perry are now on a KITCHEN SET. Joanna is selling a microwaveable meal plan.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

And just look that tender salmon --

PERRY

You gotta actually taste it, doll. And make it look good. The Diet Fiesta Bowls are a best-seller, but here's a lil' secret, they taste like a cat's ass. Watch how I do.

He takes a bite and looks like it's the best thing he's ever tasted. He hops up and down like he is in heaven.

PERRY (CONT'D)

Oh my guuuud. Mm mm mmmmm! Honey, that is, oh my gourd that is guud.

(MORE)

PERRY (CONT'D)

(spits it out)

If you learn nothing else, sweetie, learn this. The golden rule is you never, ever, make a product seem bad in any way. This is the best salmon you've ever had. Show me.

Joanna takes a bite and smiles. She is genuinely convincing.

JOANNA

Mmm! Oh my god, so moist, so flaky! With that little bit of kick from the cilantro? Just divine!

PERRY

Okay, the bitch can act!

Joanna awkwardly smiles, salmon sitting in her closed mouth. In the darkness beyond the cameras, she notices that Patricia has strolled onto the floor to watch. END MONTAGE.

INT. STUDIO HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Joanna hurries to a craft service table. She spits the salmon in a trash can and looks up, surprised to find Jackie.

JOANNA

Oh, I'm sorry, I was just --

JACKIE

Oh honey we've all tried that diet. It doesn't work. I just started this one from the 80's called the three hour binge.

Jackie sets down her huge stack of pastries and hands Joanna a glass of water.

JOANNA

Thank you so much. I've actually been meaning to just say hi and thank you for, I grew up watching you, so it's, sorry if this is weird to like... anyway. Um. I hope to be half as good as you someday.

JACKIE

I saw your audition. You're great.

JOANNA

What???? NO!!! That's -- You're great!!!

(then)

(MORE)

JOANNA (CONT'D)

Actually, you sold me this bracelet when I was... it got me through some hard times.

JACKIE

Yeah. We sell a lot of bracelets that look like that.

JOANNA

(lightly crushed)
Riiight. Right.

JACKIE

So are you feeling good?

JOANNA

Yeah! I mean, it's a little harder than I thought it would be...

JACKIE

Just remember this job is 50% selling the product and 50% selling yourself. You gotta distinguish yourself. On camera and off. I swear, there are so many thirsty little bitches running around this place -- you've got to stand out. When I first got here, I was just a girl from Queens with the face of a supermodel and the body of the girl next door. But I used it to my advantage. You've got to find a way to tell your story. You didn't buy that bracelet, you bought me. Guess how many people invited me to thanksgiving last year. I'm asking you to guess.

JOANNA

Five?

JACKIE

That's right.

She eats an absolutely gigantic piece of cake.

JACKIE (CONT'D)

Have fun tomorrow, kid. You're gonna be great.

INT. JOANNA'S BEDROOM - MONDAY PRE-DAWN

Joanna lies awake, too excited to sleep.

INT. JOANNA'S DRESSING ROOM - 3AM

Joanna quietly rehearses selling a placemat in the mirror. She looks at her bracelet from childhood. Then, she takes a deep breath and puts it in a drawer. Suddenly, Jordan enters.

JORDAN
They changed your product.

JOANNA
(holy shit)
What? Oh, okay. Wait, what?

JORDAN
Rundown just changed. It happens.
Come on.

INT. SOUND STAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Lights thunk on. The studio powers up as several STAGEHANDS ready the set. Joanna enters with Jordan as Tami appears.

TAMI
It's a line of nighttime products from GottaHaveIt. There's a Pillow Mist, a body tonic, a lotion, an eye mask. I'll feed you everything.

JORDAN
Two minutes to live. You'll be fine.

JOANNA
Great. Let's do it.

The guest vendor SUZANNE (40's, stiff, all-business, wearing a jacket that's too small with gold trim) approaches.

SUZANNE
Suzanne.

JOANNA
What? Oh, hi, I'm Joanna.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)
Oh no. Are you new? Uch.

Joanna takes a deep breath, focusing, studying her notecards. In the CONTROL ROOM, Tami speaks into Joanna's earpiece.

TAMI
Joanna, I'm here. Can you hear me?

JOANNA
Yes.

TAMI
Fucking cunt!
(to Joanna)
Not you, hon. I spilled my chai.

DIRECTOR
60 seconds. Hit the pre-roll.

CUT TO FULL SCREEN GRAPHICS with QVC LOGO --

RELAXING WOMAN (V.O.)
Quality. Value. Convenience. Next
on QVC, it's an hour of fabulous
products to enhance your home. Stay
tuned, for "A La Maison."

IN THE STUDIO, Joanna's face goes from serious into a big,
relaxed smile.

JORDAN (O.S.)
Five... Four...

ON A TELEVISION SCREEN the graphics clear to reveal JOANNA
smiling, now live.

JOANNA
Well hello there and thanks for
joining me!

IN CLEVELAND, CHIP and MARCY watch in their bathrobes, nervous.

IN THE STUDIO --

JOANNA (CONT'D)
I'm Joanna Gold and this is my very
first broadcast with QVC and wow did
I get lucky because I'm joined by our
amazing guest, founder of the
GottaHaveIt Deep Sleep line, which,
omg is this phenomenal. Hello there
Suzanne DuNaysh, how are you my love?

SUZANNE
Great! So happy to bring this here.

JOANNA
So I love this. Because we live in
such a busy world. It's work,
family, go go go. For a lot of us,
when we crawl into bed, that's
actually the only "me time" we get.
What if you could turn that into a
time to replenish and pamper.

Occasionally, we INTERCUT to Tami in the booth.

TAMI

You're doing great. Give the name and product number, toss to Suzanne.

JOANNA

We're kicking it off with the Deep Sleep Pillow Mist, this is H-42383. Now tell me what we've got here, Suzanne, because I just love this.

SUZANNE

This is a fragrant pillow mist, and we've worked with some of the best olfactory specialists in the Western world, using essential oils that are specifically designed to prepare the body for sleep.

JOANNA

How great that it's actually been developed in a science way? Now how do we use it, because I love it.

SUZANNE

You just spritz a little on your pillow. We've blended vetiver, lavender, and white musk. Smell!

She spritzes it toward Joanna's face. Joanna was not expecting this. For a millisecond, Joanna instinctively makes a little stinky "uch" face, realizing the product smells like shit. She immediately tries to cover with a smile.

JOANNA

Oh, I love that!

In the CONTROL ROOM, everyone looks stunned.

TECH

Whoa! What was that?

DIRECTOR

Close up. Close up. She just made it look like it stinks.

INT. PATRICIA'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Patricia watches from a lavish bed wearing a skincare sheet mask. She slowly peels the mask off, eyes locked on the TV.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - RESUME

TAMI

Okay, Joanna? You kind of made a face like it smelled bad? So just... don't do that again?

Tami looks at a sales graph, worried. There's a visible dip.

CUT TO:

INT. STUDIO - AN HOUR LATER, END OF BROADCAST

JOANNA

Well thank you so much! What a fun night. Stay right here for Foot Fancy with Kikland Hubbard. Buh-bye!

Promo music kicks in as the camera's red light turns off.

JORDAN

Clear.

Joanna looks worried. Suzanne storms off, pissed. Tami appears.

TAMI

Great job! Don't worry about the face. I'm sure nobody noticed.

Jordan appears, listening to his headset.

JORDAN

Patricia wants to see you at 7am.

TAMI

Oooh that's not good.

INT. PATRICIA'S OFFICE - 7AM

Joanna stands in front of Patricia, who is at her desk drinking a green juice, surrounded by Jackie, Darcy, Beth Ann and some upper level STAFFERS. All eyes are on Joanna, who looks like she hasn't slept in a year. Nobody speaks, until --

PATRICIA

Take a seat.

JOANNA

Oh, um, I don't see a chair.

PATRICIA

Suit yourself. Your sales from last night were about 100,000 units below our projection.

DARCY

One of the worst selling broadcasts we've had all year.

Patricia gestures to the pillow mist bottle on her desk.

PATRICIA

You know it's hard to want to buy this product if you watch someone on TV smell it and react like this.

Darcy pulls up a freeze frame of Joanna's stink face. It shows up on every monitor in the room.

PATRICIA (CONT'D)

Darcy, pull up the timecode on that. Show me the sales.

Darcy overlays a sales graph on Joanna's face, showing a decline at 4:06AM. Patricia turns to Joanna.

PATRICIA (CONT'D)

How do you think you did, Joanna?

JOANNA

Well... Given that the product changed...

PATRICIA

So you think you did well?

JOANNA

No, I mean... I can do better.

PATRICIA

Then why didn't you?

Joanna's stomach is in her throat.

JOANNA

I'm sorry. Um. Can I ask why I got taken off Janeane by Janeane?

PATRICIA

Beth Ann wanted it. So what. Products change.

Joanna makes eye contact with Beth Ann, who is leaning against the wall.

PATRICIA (CONT'D)

You know we really only have one rule.
Make the product look good. You're
talented, but you broke the rule.

(then)

Okay, I think we're done.

JOANNA

So. Oh. Okay. So should I...?

DARCY

She means you're fired.

JOANNA

Wait. What? You're gonna fire me
after one mistake?

PATRICIA

I fire people all the time.

JACKIE

Pat.

JOANNA

(hyperventilating)

What? No. You can't -- That's not
gonna work for us. I made a mistake,
but I'm a... great at this! Look!

She picks up the pillow mist and sprays a ton of it in her
own face, smiling like it's the best thing ever.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

Mmm! Wow, mmm! That is divine!

(spraying Beth Ann)

Isn't that absolute heaven?

She rummages through the trash and pulls out Patricia's old
partially-eaten cookies from before. She starts eating them.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

And speaking of heaven... have y'all
tried these? Mmmm don't ya love that?!

DARCY

Okay. That's enough.

Joanna takes a deep breath and composes herself.

JOANNA

I'm a star. And you know it or you
wouldn't have hired me. If you let me
go, you'll lose the best host that
will ever walk through this door.

Everyone looks to Patricia, wondering what she'll say.

PATRICIA
Sorry it didn't work out.

Joanna is frozen and devastated. Patricia turns to Darcy as if Joanna's not even in the room anymore. Joanna catches eye contact with Jackie, the only person still looking at her.

PATRICIA (CONT'D)
So are we all set for Pizza Week?

DARCY
Yes, Beth Ann is going to --

JOANNA
(shouting)
I have cancer!

The room hushes. All eyes turn back to Joanna, who is shocked by what just came out of her mouth.

PATRICIA
What's that?

JOANNA
Hm?

PATRICIA
Did you say you have cancer?

Joanna doubles down on her lie.

JOANNA
Yeah. I did. Yep. I had leukemia and... it's back. And now you're firing me. I guess that's what you do here. You fire people with cancer. And then you go home and you sleep at night.

Nobody says anything. Joanna is shocked by herself, but she keeps going.

JOANNA (CONT'D)
Well unfortunately for you, you can't break me. Because I'm a fighter.

SLOW PUSH on PATRICIA, taking this in, her wheels turning.

JOANNA (CONT'D)
And I know that obstacles just make us stronger. They make us better.
(MORE)

JOANNA (CONT'D)

Make us appreciate the little things. The details. Like this beautiful cross-stitch hem...

As her speech continues seamlessly, we REVEAL Joanna is now IN A STUDIO, LIVE ON AIR, selling a blouse.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

...do you love that contrast stitching? And these accent buttons, which have almost a mother of pearl quality. And as someone who is battling cancer, I'm telling you when you put this blouse on you will feel beautiful, you will feel powerful, and you will feel elegant. Look, we're all going through something, and we deserve a garment that says "Here I am, and not only am I gonna be okay, I'm gonna be fabulous."

CLOSE UP ON a SALES MONITOR. Sales are rising.

INT. PATRICIA'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Patricia watches from bed with a jade roller on her cheek. She glances at sales figures on an ipad and smiles wryly.

INT. STUDIO - RESUME

JOANNA

And that's our time and thank ya so much for staying up late with me! Keep it right here for Dazzling Decor Du Jour by Lannabelle!

The studio lights dim, as the Vendor turns to Joanna.

VENDOR

You are so inspiring.

JOANNA

(uneasy)
Thank you.

Joanna looks out into the lights, wondering what she's gotten herself into.

END OF PILOT