

BUCKTOWN

Pilot

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CASTING DRAFT
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BUCKTOWN

CAST

AMY (She is quick to want to show how capable she is but even quicker to pop off or fall apart. Ambitious, feisty, afraid to embarrass herself but does it constantly. Wants to appear like a put-together, polished woman but her personality is like those women whose hair looks perfect from the front and like it's been ravaged by a snake in the back. There is a lack of refinement to her that she can't shake, that's core to her being. Like every woman in her family she feels compelled to tell you exactly what's on her mind. It's a compulsion she tries to resist though, unlike her mom. She has an almost burdensome love and fierce loyalty to her family. Desperate to have her own life but occasionally guilt-ridden about it.)

BETTY (Rough around the edges, salty as hell. Paranoid, suspicious, too quick with a back-handed compliment - or just a flat-out insult - but the most loyal woman you will ever meet.)

JODECI (Wise for her years but not precocious. A people pleasing peacekeeper, quirky, curious, unfiltered - not in a cruel way but in an innocent "why wouldn't I say or ask exactly what's on my mind" way. Obsessed with the human body, particularly hers and is tracking her puberty and development like a forensics expert for the FBI. Has had some knocks in life but is optimistic and loves in such an open way you would never know.)

JAN (Beautiful and knows it. And wants you to know it too. A force to be reckoned with but also sucks up all the energy in the room. She is very professional, except when it comes to the wildly unprofessional partnership she has with her husband - Finn. She is strong, opinionated, ambitious, and the type of person who doesn't get to know people's names and doesn't have female friends.)

FINN (Jan's husband. Very sweet and kind, naïve almost. The kind of grown man who still puts sprinkles on his frozen yogurt. He's the one person who can call Jan out and loves to do so. He fights constantly with his wife, but no-one loves and admires her more.)

JESSIE (A big, loud, boisterous, Latinx woman - Amy's larger than life best friend. She loves Amy, hooking up with weird guys and talking shit - in that order. The two of them work side by side as assistants at the ad agency.)

ADDITIONAL CHARACTERS IN THE PILOT...

BEN (Amy's boyfriend/soon-to-be ex. Good-looking and seemingly capable but ultimately can be totally bull-dozed by his ex-wife. The kind of man who always needs to have a woman in his life.)

KATE (Ben's ex-wife. Gorgeous, self-possessed, the kind of woman who eats raw and tells everyone who will listen that exercise is her favorite drug. A true nightmare. Likes to tell others how to be and how to live, especially her ex-husband.)

GAIL (Fischer-Deli Selects Client. No nonsense, dry. Loves a sensible pantsuit. Absolutely cannot handle small-talk or even normal conversation.)

COLD OPEN

FADE IN:

INT. BEN AND AMY'S BUCKTOWN CONDO - CHICAGO - (N1)
(AMY, BEN, KATE)

AMY, FRAZZLED AND RUMPLED FROM A LONG DAY AT WORK, STRUGGLES TO GET THROUGH THE DOOR WITH A WORK BAG AND SEVERAL BAGS OF THAI FOOD. SHE OPENS A DOOR TO A BEAUTIFUL, INDUSTRIAL LOFT-STYLE CONDO, MARCHES TO THE KITCHEN, AND STARTS OPENING BAGS OF FOOD, TAKING OFF HER COAT, PULLING OFF HER BRA THROUGH HER ARM SLEEVE, CALLING OUT WHILE SHE WORKS:

AMY

Hey, babe. Sorry. I got stuck at work.

I wanted to practice my pitch for the meeting tomorrow and the night

housekeeping staff was there, so I

asked for their feedback. They were

harsh but fair. Jerry really hammered

me but I think that's mostly because I

put a full, opened Coke in my trash

can and he was pissed. Anyway, the

good news is, I picked up some Thai

food. I got some Tom Yum and, for

dessert, I got a little *Amy Yum*. Yeah.

No. I can't do the sexy talk. It's

just very bad--

KATE

Amy...?

AMY STOPS SUDDENLY. SHE WALKS OUT OF THE KITCHEN AND SEES BEN, HER BOYFRIEND, HANDSOME, WEARING HIS WORK SUIT, SITTING ON THE COUCH. NEXT TO HIM IS KATE, GORGEOUS, EVERYTHING AMY IS NOT: TALL TO HER SHORT, LONG, GLOSSY HAIR, TO HER SHORT, FRIZZY MESS. SHE'S WEARING SKIMPY PILATES GEAR.

AMY

What's going on?

KATE

Why don't you sit down?

AMY WALKS STIFFLY TO A CHAIR, HER EYES NEVER LEAVING BEN.

KATE (CONT'D)

Amy, Ben and I have decided that we're going to try to make it work.

AMY

Wait... what? Make *what* work? You're divorced.

KATE

Separated.

AMY

But... separation is just divorce for cheapskates.

KATE

Look, we know this is a shock but we've been going to therapy...

AMY

We? When? (SHE LOOKS AT BEN) While you were with me?

KATE

We think we can get past our differences and give our marriage a real shot.

AMY

(LOOKING AT BEN) Why aren't you
talking?

KATE

Ben's never been great with conflict.
It's something we're working on.

AMY

No, no, no. This isn't how this is
supposed to happen. We were going to
eat Thai food and I was going to
practice my pitch and post pics of you
on the 'gram being supportive and the
Doug to my Kamala and everyone would
be jealous. And we were going to kiss
and laugh and you were going to get a
handy...

KATE

BEN

(UNCOMFORTABLE) Okay, Amy... That's it?

KATE (CONT'D)

Amy, it's perfectly natural to feel
overwhelmed right now.

AMY

Oh, is it Kate? Thanks so much. I can
see the full outline of your labia
right now in those pants so forgive me
if I'm not quite listening to you. You
should leave, so Ben and I can talk.

BEN

Amy... Kate... uh...

KATE

Use your words, honey.

BEN

Uh... um...

AMY

Is he having a seizure?

KATE

Be gentle, Amy. This is hard for him.

AMY

For *him*?

KATE

I'll say it, baby. Amy, I'm not going anywhere. I'm moving back in. This is our condo, that we purchased when we were married.

KATE LEANS IN, TRYING TO BE HELPFUL.

KATE (CONT'D)

I can give you a couple days to find a place. I've heard there are lots of people on Craigslist, looking for roommates?

AMY

Good call, Kate. Maybe I'll get lucky and find someone who's quiet and tidy and just wants to lock me in a dog cage under their house.

AMY LOOKS AT BEN.

AMY (CONT'D)

Aren't you going to say anything?

BEN

I'm sorry.

AMY

Why are you doing this? I have the biggest meeting of my career tomorrow.

KATE

That's great, Amy.

AMY

I'm not talking to you, camel toe.
You know how long I have been waiting for this, Ben. I am finally getting my chance to move up from assistant to copywriter and now is when you decide to blow up my life?

BEN PUTS HIS HEAD IN HIS HANDS. KATE RUBS HIS BACK.

AMY (CONT'D)

You're pathetic.

AMY STANDS UP AND STARTS TO PUT ON HER COAT.

KATE

Do you have a place to stay?

AMY

Don't worry about it. I know Ben's not concerned.

AMY GOES TO THE DOOR AND STARTS TO WALK OUT.

AMY (CONT'D)

Help yourself to the Thai food, Kate.

KATE

That's really generous of you, Amy.

AMY

No problem. I hope it gives you
generous amounts of diarrhea.

AMY STORMS OUT.

RESET TO:

INT. BEN AND AMY'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS (N1)
(AMY, BETTY)

AMY PULLS OUT HER CELLPHONE, AND FINDS THE NAME "BETTY." SHE
STARTS TO PRESS THE CALL BUTTON AND STOPS HERSELF.

AMY

No. Don't do it, Amy.

JUST THEN, SHE HEARS KATE IN THE APARTMENT.

KATE (O.S.)

Baby? I'm just going to throw out this
greasy Thai food, okay? She got like
three orders of Crab Rangoon. Who does
that?

AMY GLARES AT THE DOOR.

AMY

(SOTTO) I do that, bitch.

AMY GRABS HER PHONE AGAIN AND PRESSES "CALL" ON "BETTY".

AMY (CONT'D)

I can't believe I'm doing this. (THEN)
Mom? Sorry it's late.

(MORE)

AMY (CONT'D)

Could I come home? Just for the night?

I have a big presentation tomorrow.

BETTY (O.S.)

Honey, you always have a place here.

AMY SMILES, THEN...

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. BETTY'S HOUSE - SAME TIME (N1)
(BETTY)

AMY'S MOM, BETTY (SALTY AS HELL) SITS ON THE COUCH, SMOKING,
SURROUNDED BY DOGS.

BETTY

Of course your sister's back in rehab
so your niece is sleeping in your bed.
But I got the couch. I just have to
clean up the dog puke and you're good
to go.

AMY GRIMACES.

BETTY (CONT'D)

Be careful taking the train out here.
Meth heads have nothing to lose. All
they care about is rapin' and getting
high.

AMY HANGS UP, DEFEATED. AS SHE EXITS THE HALLWAY, WE...

CUT TO MAIN TITLES:

ACT ONE

SCENE A

FADE IN:

INT. BETTY'S HOUSE - CHICAGO SUBURBS - LATER (N1)
(AMY, BETTY)

AMY ENTERS HER MOM'S TINY, DARKENED HOME. BETTY SITS ON THE COUCH, LISTENING TO A POLICE SCANNER. AMY PLOPS DOWN IN A CHAIR, LOOKING LOST AND EXHAUSTED.

AMY

Thanks for letting me come over, Mom.

BETTY

Where else were you gonna go when you were thrown out in the middle of the night like a sack of garbage?

AMY

I appreciate your trademark sensitivity in this moment, but he didn't "throw me out". I left.

BETTY

Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't know you had the option of staying and sleeping between him and his wife. Maybe you guys could have made Mickey Mouse pancakes together in the morning.

AMY

Mom, I can't okay? He broke my heart.

BETTY

Well, that just makes me want to set his ass on fire even more but what you need from me is love. So...I would love to kick that guy's ass.

AMY

Well, you tried. I don't want to talk about this anymore, okay? I just need to get some sleep.

BETTY

Okay. But make sure to hose down before you hit the sack. Those train seats have lice on 'em.

AMY SHAKES HER HEAD AND WALKS TO HER CHILDHOOD ROOM AND OPENS THE DOOR.

RESET TO:

INT. AMY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS (N1)
(AMY, JODECI)

AMY ENTERS AND SITTING ON HER BED, WATCHING TV, IS HER TEENAGE NIECE, JODECI "JODI".

JODECI

Hi Aunty Amy! I'm sleeping over!

JODECI JUMPS UP, HUGS HER AND THEY DO "THEIR" ELABORATE HANDSHAKE. AMY OPENS A DRAWER IN THE DRESSER SEARCHING FOR PAJAMAS.

AMY

(NOTICING TV) What are you watching?

JODECI

Botched. This woman got implants and they forgot to put her nipples back on. So now she's getting fake ones. They blur her boobs but you can totally see them.

AMY

They should hide an extra nipple on her that she doesn't know about. Then one day at the pool someone will say: "Hey, you have a nipple on your back!" And she'll start reaching for it and moving in circles like a dog, trying to find it and everyone will laugh and laugh.

JODECI JUST STARES AT HER.

AMY (CONT'D)

I had a bad night.

AMY PULLS OUT AN 'NSYNC NIGHTGOWN, CLEARLY FROM HIGH SCHOOL.

JODECI

Hey, Aunty Amy? I'm really sorry that S.O.B. gave you the run around.

AMY

Clearly you've spoken to your grandmother.

JODECI

He's a jerk. But just so you know? I posted your picture on my Insta and every guy in my class liked it and said you were "smokin' hot."

AMY

Well, a bunch of thirteen-year-old boys thinking I'm hot is illegal. And sadly, very flattering to me right now. So thank you.

AMY KISSES JODECI'S HEAD AND WALKS BACK INTO THE LIVING ROOM.

RESET TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS (N1)
(AMY, BETTY)

AMY WALKS INTO THE LIVING ROOM.

AMY

So what happened with my sister this time?

BETTY

She fell off the wagon. This time was a real doozy. She literally fell off a wagon at Jodi's school's Harvest Hayride. She was trashed. I told Jodi she could stay with me while her mom was in rehab.

AMY

When did this happen? I had no idea.

BETTY

I tried to call you but I always go right to voicemail. I think something's wrong with your phone.

AMY

Yeah ... I gotta look into that.
(THEN) Taking care of a teenager might be a lot to handle. Even for a short time.

BETTY

Nah. Kids are just like dogs. Feed 'em, walk 'em, don't let 'em drag their butts on your rug - you're fine.

AMY

That explains a lot of my childhood trauma.

BETTY

Goodnight, honey.

BETTY LOOKS AT HER, KINDLY AND STARTS TO EXIT. AMY LOOKS AT THE COUCH COVERED IN DOG HAIR, DISMAYED.

BETTY (CONT'D)

Keep the blinds drawn while you sleep. The guy across the street's been peeping in here.

AMY

He's like twenty five years old. And married.

BETTY

That doesn't stop "the urge." I've
always been a pervert magnet.

THE TWO DOGS JUMP UP ON THE SMALL COUCH WITH HER. SHE PULLS
THE BLANKET OVER HER HEAD. AND WE...

CUT TO:

ACT ONE

SCENE B

INT. HOWARD AND DISALVO ADVERTISING - NEXT MORNING (D2)
(AMY, JAN, FINN, JESSIE)

AMY IS TRYING TO HIDE UNDER HER DESK. ONLY HER HEAD POPS OUT. SHE IS TALKING TO JESSIE, HER BIG, BOISTEROUS LATINX CO-WORKER WHO SHARES A CUBICLE WITH HER.

JESSIE

I'm sorry, sweetie. That sounds like an awful night and your mom sounds crazy as hell - which is my favorite kind of old, white lady. Okay, let's go. Come on out.

SLOWLY AMY PULLS HERSELF OUT FROM UNDER HER DESK AND STANDS. HER BLACK DRESS IS ENTIRELY COVERED IN DOG HAIR.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

Wow.

JUST THEN, JAN (GORGEOUS AND KNOWS IT, UNFILTERED) AND FINN (KIND OF A DOPE) - AMY'S MARRIED AND WILDLY UNPROFESSIONAL BOSSES, YELL OUT FROM THEIR OFFICE (THEY YELL A LOT):

JAN (O.S.)

Amy, can you come in here?

FINN (O.S.)

Meeting is in ten minutes and I want to meditate before it.

JAN (O.S.)

You don't "meditate."

FINN (O.S.)

You don't know everything about me.

JAN (O.S.)

God, I wish that were true.

JESSIE GIVES AMY A CONSOLING LOOK.

JESSIE

Why did you wear a black dress?

AMY

I didn't have any clothes with me.

It's my mom's.

JESSIE

Oh, right. For a brief second I forgot
what a dick Ben is.

AMY

You're lucky you can forget. (A BEAT)
How could I not know?

JESSIE

Because he was lying to you.

AMY

Right. God, I can't believe I'm back
at my mom's house. It's not even a
house. It's a web, where you get stuck
forever. And now Jodeci is there-

JESSIE

"Jodeci?"

AMY

My niece. My sister was nineteen when
she got pregnant and loved 90's R and
B, so she named her daughter Jodeci.

JESSIE

Oh. Well, I actually get that. If I had a baby at nineteen I would have named her Nachos Bell Grande.

JAN CALLS OUT AGAIN:

JAN (O.S)

Amy?

JESSIE

Look, you got this! It's not about your clothes, it's about your work.

AMY

Really?

JESSIE

No. You look like an old man's armpit.

I'm just trying to be supportive.

AMY SLOWLY WALKS INTO JAN AND FINN'S OFFICE AND WE...

CUT TO:

ACT ONE

SCENE C

INT. JAN AND FINN'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER (D2)
(AMY, JAN, FINN)

JAN AND FINN, CREATIVE DIRECTORS, HAVE A LARGE, WINDOW OFFICE. FINN IS AT HIS DESK, WATCHING A YOUTUBE VIDEO ON HIS COMPUTER. JAN'S LOOKING INTO A MAGNIFYING MIRROR ON HER DESK.

JAN

(WITHOUT LOOKING UP) Amy, is this a chin hair?

AMY

FINN

No!

Yes.

FINN (CONT'D)

Wiry too. I could play guitar on that.

JAN

It's true. It's awful, Amy. I'm getting older. Who will want to be with me when I leave Finn?

FINN

Nobody, baby. And that's why you stay.

(THEN, TEARING UP) Amy, have you seen this? The kid from the *other* team passes the ball to the weird fat kid with the buck-teeth and he makes the basket. Life is beautiful, huh?

JAN

(STRAINING TO PLUCK THE HAIR) You're not supposed to say "fat", Finn.

FINN

What can I say? Amy?

AMY

None of those things.

FINN

(WITH HANDS IN A PRAYER POSE) Thank
you for the correction. I am still
learning.

THEY BOTH LOOK UP AND STARE IN AWE AT AMY.

AMY

Sorry about the dress. It's just a
little dog hair. Or...a lot of dog
hair. Kinda looks like I had an orgy
with a pile of Golden Retrievers.

AMY LAUGHS, NERVOUSLY.

JAN

Let's talk about this pitch. Finn,
come on over.

FINN TRIES TO ROLL HIS CHAIR OVER, ACROSS THE LARGE OFFICE,
SCOOTING AWKWARDLY AT AN EPICALLY SLOW PACE. THEY ALL STOP TO
WATCH HIM. IT TAKES FOREVER. FINALLY:

JAN (CONT'D)

Amy, I took another look at your
ideas. You spent how many hours
working on these?

AMY

Um... many.

JAN

Jesus. What a waste. Writing about ham. We could be curing cancer. What the hell are we doing with our lives?

AMY

I don't understand. I thought you guys were happy with my ideas.

JAN

God, yes. They're great. I was just thinking out loud. Here's the thing, we have to win this pitch and we're putting that in your hands. We're trusting you. Can we trust you?

AMY

Absolutely.

JAN

Good. Because this is huge.

FINN

You're making her nervous, Jan. What my wife and partner is trying to say is: don't mess this up. Because if you do, we can't promote you and then it'll be all weird between us and I can't take that. I'm conflict avoidant, Amy. Please don't do that to me.

AMY

(NERVOUS) Got it.

FINN

Great. Just go in there and be
confident.

JAN STARTS TO WRAP SCOTCH TAPE AROUND HER HAND.

JAN

It'll be hard to feel confident when
you look like a bikini wax strip, but
too late to worry about that now.

JAN APPROACHES AMY, PRESSING HER "TAPE HAND" AGAINST AMY'S
BODY AND PUSHING HER OUT THE DOOR.

JAN (CONT'D)

Grab your work, Amy. It's show time.

AS THEY START TO EXIT, AMY'S PHONE BUZZES. IT'S A TEXT FROM
BEN: "CAN WE TALK?" SHE TURNS HER PHONE OFF AND WE...

CUT TO:

ACT ONE

SCENE D

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER (D2)
(AMY, JAN, FINN, GAIL)

THE ROOM IS FILLED WITH FISCHER DELI SELECTS CLIENTS. JAN IS STANDING, PRESENTING TO THE CLIENTS BUT PARTICULARLY TO THE VP OF MARKETING, GAIL (DRY, CONSERVATIVE, WEARING A SENSIBLE CHICOS PANTSUIT).

JAN

Finally, one of the key issues in the brief was that you felt that ham was being largely ignored by young people in the 18-25 demo. So we wanted to execute some out-of-the-box thinking for social media. Amy?

AMY STANDS UP AND NERVOUSLY WALKS TO THE FRONT OF THE ROOM.

AMY

(LAUGHING NERVOUSLY, RE: DRESS) It's just dog hair.

THERE IS AN AWKWARD SILENCE.

GAIL

(STIFFLY) I have a Husky.

AN EVEN LONGER, MORE PAINFUL BEAT OF SILENCE.

AMY

That's... neat, Gail.

JAN

Dive in, Amy.

AMY

Right. So, using the tag: "Ham it Up"
we came up with an app, where people
can take selfies "hamming it up." I
did that here, this morning.

AMY, PRESSING A BUTTON ON A LAPTOP, PROJECTS HER "SELFIE"
ONTO A LARGE SCREEN AT THE FRONT OF THE ROOM. SHE LOOKS
CRAZY: SMILING WILDLY, TOO MUCH MAKE-UP, AND FRAMED BY HAM
WITH THE HASHTAG #HAMITUP. AFTER A BEAT, GAIL SPEAKS.

GAIL

You don't look like you're "hamming it
up." You look like a homeless teen,
high on cocaine.

JAN

(JUMPING IN) I assure you, Gail. Amy
is not on cocaine. First of all, she
can't afford it.

AMY

Gail, I'm not on coke in this photo
but what I am high on, is revenge.

JAN

(TO HERSELF) Oh Jesus.

AMY, MORE CHARGED AND EMOTIONAL NOW, CONTINUES.

AMY

What you see is a girl who was just
blind-sided by the man she loves.

(MORE)

AMY (CONT'D)

Next thing you know, I'm crashing at my mom's with my niece because my idiot addict sister pulled the rug out from under her too. (AMY'S THROAT CATCHES) Except my niece has been through it way more than I have and I hate that. And I hate that I'm back in my childhood home, back in all the crap and chaos of it. And unless I get it together quick, I could end up there forever and I can't, Gail. I can't--

JAN

(SOTTO TO AMY) Gonna need you to make your point or I'm shooting you with a tranq dart.

AMY

When you can't fall apart, your only option is to pull it together- with ham.

EVERYONE LOOKS CONFUSED. JAN PUTS HER HEAD IN HER HANDS.

AMY (CONT'D)

So, I "hammed it up". I took a selfie, looking extra hot, to make my ex jealous, to make myself feel better... empowered. Recent studies...

FINN

(SOTTO TO JAN) Recent studies?

AMY

...have shown that 9 out of 10 people take to social media to "prove something." Maybe it's how well they're moving on. Or how they're "nailing life" in general.

THE ROOM IS INTRIGUED. AMY PLOWS FORWARD.

AMY (CONT'D)

It's the former losers, the burnouts, the pear-shaped nerd who recently dropped a few and wants you to see him half-naked in a gay club "hamming it up". Because it's not just ham, it's... redemption! Everyone craves that. And Fischer Deli Selects Ham is going to give it to them.

THE ROOM IS SILENT AND THEN A SLOW CLAP STARTS. SOON, EVERYONE JOINS IN, INCLUDING GAIL. EVERYONE EXPECTS IT TO GET FASTER BUT THESE CLIENTS ARE JUST SLOW CLAPPERS. IT GOES ON FOR AN AWKWARDLY LENGTHY AMOUNT OF TIME AS JAN AND FINN RISE FROM THEIR SEATS SMILING AT AMY AND WE...

SMASH CUT TO:

ACT ONE

SCENE E

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER (D2)
(AMY, JAN, FINN)

JAN AND FINN BURST OUT OF THE CONFERENCE ROOM. AMY FOLLOWS.

FINN

I can't believe you sold that in the
room!

JAN

I guess you're officially a
Copywriter.

AMY

Oh my God!

AMY SMILES AND HUGS JAN, WHO VERY AWKWARDLY RECEIVES IT.

AMY (CONT'D)

You have no idea what this means to
me. This promotion, especially the
raise- it's saving me. Seriously.

JAN AND FINN LOOK AT EACH OTHER FOR A BEAT, THEN START TO
TALK OVER ONE ANOTHER.

JAN

Look, there's been a hiring freeze...

FINN

Which makes no sense because there's
more work than there are people...

JAN

...No-one has gotten raises for five years, so we can't just throw money at someone new...

FINN

...And I don't know why I always reach for a second donut, even when I'm not hungry. I get so mad at myself...

AMY

Wait. What?

AMY LOOKS AT THEM, SHOCKED.

JAN

We can't give you a raise, Amy. Not right now. But you will be regarded as a writer, NOT an assistant.

AMY

Is that true?

FINN

Not really. We can't hire a new assistant quite yet, so we'll still need some help. But just with our expenses. And timesheets. And our computers. OH! And the copier. I have no idea how to use that thing.

JAN AND FINN EXIT AS AMY WATCHES THEM GO, CRESTFALLEN. HER PHONE BUZZES. ANOTHER TEXT FROM BEN: "CAN WE PLEASE TALK?" AMY LOOKS AT IT FOR A BEAT THEN, SHAKING HER HEAD, SHUTS OFF HER PHONE AND WE...

CUT TO:

ACT ONE

SCENE H

INT. BETTY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER (N2)
(AMY, BETTY, JODECI)

AMY ENTERS THE KITCHEN. HER PHONE BUZZES AGAIN. ANOTHER TEXT FROM BEN. BEN: "PLEASE. CALL ME." SHE IGNORES IT AND PULLS A BEER FROM THE FRIDGE, OPENS IT AND TAKES A LONG PULL. AMY NOTICES JODECI LOOKING AT HER PHONE, INTENTLY.

AMY

What are you looking at?

JODECI

Seeing if I missed a call from my mom.
Usually after twenty four hours, the
rehab lets her call me.

AMY

She'll call.

JODECI

(NOT SO SURE) Yeah. I know. Hey, do
you think I need a bra?

JODECI STANDS UP AND PULLS HER SHIRT TIGHT AGAINST HER CHEST.
AMY EXAMINES IT CLOSELY.

AMY

I don't think it's an urgent
situation, but those things tend to
spring up overnight so you should be
prepared to tamp them down at any
moment.

JODECI

That's what I thought. I stole a sports bra from the Lost and Found today at school. Tomorrow is "Strap Day" and I gotta have something.

AMY

"Strap Day"?

JODECI

Every girl in seventh grade is going to wear a bra tomorrow and a white shirt that shows off their straps so the boys will see it and know you're a woman.

AMY

But you're not a woman. And...gross.

JODECI

I know but it's something everyone is doing and I want to do it too. My mom was supposed to take me shopping for a bra but...it never happened. I guess it wasn't important to her.

AMY

Or, maybe she wanted you to challenge the systemic sexism that makes women think they have to compromise their own self-worth to garner the attention of men or, in your case, boys who think they're men because they have tiny dusty little mustaches.

JODECI

My mom isn't really a feminist. She showed a guy her boob for a beer once. In a Walmart parking lot. At nine in the morning.

AMY

Do you ever say anything that isn't sad?

JODECI

Nope. But, maybe you're right. Maybe it's a little stupid.

AMY

Also, you don't want to rush into wearing a bra! One day you'll be counting the seconds until you can get home and fling that thing across the room like a slingshot. (THEN) Hey, where's Grandy?

JODECI

She's in the attic. She's been up
there a long time.

AMY

The attic?

OFF AMY'S CONFUSED LOOK, WE...

CUT TO:

ACT ONE

SCENE J

INT. BETTY'S ATTIC - CONTINUOUS - (N2)

AMY CLIMBS THE STAIRS UP INTO A SCARY, OLD ATTIC. SHE SEES THAT BETTY HAS MADE A MAKESHIFT BEDROOM.

AMY

Mom, what are you doing up here?

BETTY, WITH A CIGARETTE HANGING OUT OF HER MOUTH, IS MAKING A PULL-OUT BED. SHE'S A LITTLE MANIC.

BETTY

Giving you your own, cozy space. It can get cold, so I put some extra blankets on the bed. And there's a small, very small, rat problem up here but you could befriend them, you know, like Michael Jackson did in that song?

AMY

What are you talking about? I'm not sleeping up here.

BETTY CONTINUES TO FUSS AND FIDGET.

BETTY

Why not? You can pretend you're staying at a quaint bed and breakfast.

AMY LOOKS AROUND THE ROOM.

AMY

A serial killer would be scared to sleep here. What's going on?

BETTY SITS ON THE BED.

BETTY

Your sister left rehab early. She relapsed and it's not just alcohol this time. So Jodi will have to stay with me, permanently. I haven't even told her yet, poor kid.

AMY

Oh my God, that's awful. Not the living with you part. But the...well, yeah. The living with you part. I'm too overwhelmed to sugarcoat it.

AMY SITS NEXT TO BETTY.

BETTY

I gotta be honest, I wasn't expecting this curveball. Parenting again. I was kinda planning on doing the whole grandma thing - you know, with the cookies, and the knitting blankets.

AMY

You don't do any of those things.

BETTY

Fine. I was planning on making shit on a shingle and sitting in the dark, listening to my police scanner completely alone until I died and the dogs ate my face. But God had other plans.

AMY

Sure if "God" was my sister and the
"plan" was to go pro in opioids.

BETTY IS QUIET FOR A MOMENT.

BETTY

I just feel kind of old for this, you
know? I don't really know how to talk
to kids. (THEN) But you do. Jodi loves
talking to you.

AMY

So?

BETTY

So, she feels at ease when you're
around, comfortable...happier.

AMY

What are you saying, Mom? That you
want me to move into your rat-filled
attic and raise a teenager with you?

BETTY

I didn't say that! But now that you
said it, it's actually a pretty great
idea, you know, in terms of what's
best for Jodeci. I'm glad you thought
of it!

BETTY PATS AMY'S LEG. OFF AMY'S STUNNED LOOK WE...

CUT TO:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

SCENE K

INT. BETTY'S ATTIC - CONTINUOUS - (N2)
(AMY, BETTY)

AMY STANDS UP.

AMY

No! I am not moving in here!

BETTY

But, Jodi missed the bus today and needed me to pick her up and I didn't see the text because first of all, I don't even know how to text and I don't use my cell phone. I leave it unplugged because when you charge it, that's how they get you.

AMY

Who's "they" and what do they "get"?

BETTY

Exactly. Another mom brought her home, thank God, but what if it happens again? Or something worse?

AMY

Then another mom will help again.

BETTY

But what if they don't? And what about the emotional stuff? I was more easy-going when you were kids.

AMY

You were?

BETTY

Aw, "easy-going" means something different now. When you were a kid, it just meant I didn't beat you with a hairbrush when you spilled something.

AMY

I am not staying here, Mom.

BETTY

Just think about it.

AMY

No! I'll help you find sitters. There are people who can help, people who can drive her places if you're nervous.

BETTY

I'm not nervous about that. (THEN)
What if I mess up again? Mess Jodi up, like I messed up her mom? I don't think I could live with myself if I did that.

BETTY EXITS. AMY GRABS A PILLOW AND SCREAMS INTO IT. HER PHONE BUZZES. SHE LOOKS AT IT FOR A LONG TIME. THEN DIALS.

AMY

Hey, it's me. I got your texts. Where are you?

AND WE...

CUT TO:

ACT TWO

SCENE L

INT. THE HOTDOG DEPOT - LATER (N2)
(AMY, BEN)

AMY ENTERS A BRIGHTLY LIT, SMALL AND GRIMY HOT DOG JOINT. BEN SITS AT A TABLE, DRINKING A BEER. AMY CROSSES TO HIM AND SITS DOWN, LOOKING CONFUSED. BEN SLIDES A BEER TOWARD HER.

AMY

Why did you ask me to come here?

BEN

Don't you remember? This is where I met you. Three years ago. You were at that table, all alone, eating what looked like a bunch of wet garbage out of a plastic bag.

AMY

Oh, yeah. And you walked over and gave me five dollars because you thought I was down on my luck.

BEN

Oh, no. I thought you were mentally ill. But then you told me you were eating alone because you had just been out with your friends and you stopped to get some food on your way home--

AMY

And, I ordered a "Chili Buster Supreme" because apparently I wanted to die that night.

BEN STARTS LAUGHING.

BEN

A double cheeseburger, a hotdog and
fries all covered in chili and you got
it "to go"--

AMY

Because it's not the kind of thing you
eat in public. You eat it on the floor
of your dark closet, sitting on a
towel.

BEN CAN'T STOP LAUGHING. AMY IS NOW LAUGHING TOO.

BEN

But when you grabbed it, the bag broke
and the chili tipped over and spilled
everywhere inside the bag--

AMY

And I wasn't going to waste it.

BEN

So I hung out with you while you
finished it. And we talked until they
shut the place down. And then we
walked around the city until the sun
came up.

AMY

And then I wanted to eat again.

THEY LAUGH.

BEN

You did! So we went to a diner and you got eggs. Covered in chili.

AMY

Okay, what's the point of this trip down humiliation lane?

BEN

I wanted you to meet me here because the horrible, stupid thing I did makes you think our whole relationship was a lie, that it didn't matter to me - but meeting you was the best thing that ever happened to me. And I can't stand that I screwed that up.

AMY

Well, you did.

BEN

I know. I was an idiot, a complete jackass --

AMY

Ooh, me! Me! I've got some!

BEN TAKES HER HAND.

BEN

I made a HUGE mistake and I don't
deserve your forgiveness but if you
give me another chance I will spend
every minute of every day trying to
earn your trust again, showing you how
much you mean to me, how much I love
you. Because I do love you.

AMY

What about Kate?

BEN

Kate's gone. I knew the second you
left what a huge mistake that was.
(A BEAT) I will never hurt you again.
Please come home.

AMY'S PHONE BUZZES, STARTLING HER OUT OF THE MOMENT. AMY
LOOKS AT HER PHONE, CONFUSED.

AMY

My mom sent me a text.

AS AMY READS IT, HER FACE FILLS WITH FEAR. SHE JUMPS UP.

AMY (CONT'D)

I gotta go.

AS AMY RUSHES OUT WE....

CUT TO:

ACT TWO

SCENE M

INT. BETTY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT (N2)
(AMY, BETTY, JODECI)

BETTY IS SITTING ON THE COUCH WITH JODECI, WATCHING TV. SHE'S MESSING WITH A CELLPHONE. AMY RUSHES IN.

AMY

Mom, what's wrong? I got your text.

BETTY

What? What text?

AMY

Your text!

AMY PULLS OUT HER PHONE AND READS IT.

AMY (CONT'D)

"Help me. What's happening? Please.

This heart, this damn heart, what do I do...I don't know what to do. Please!"

JODECI

Grandy, I think you hit the little microphone and it texted what you were saying when I was trying to help you get rid of the heart emoji.

BETTY

Oh, okay. Jodi's helping me figure out how to use this damn thing. (TO AMY)

Did you think I was dying or something?

AMY

Yes!

BETTY HOWLS WITH LAUGHTER.

BETTY

Oh, that's funny.

AMY

No it's not! It was terrifying!

BETTY

Well, it's nice to know the thought of
me croaking upsets you.

AMY SITS DOWN, FUMING.

JODECI

Sorry we scared you, Aunty Amy. Want
to watch *Gunsmoke* with us? Somehow the
only channel Grandy gets is MeTV.

BETTY

I tipped the cable guy to rig it like
that. Best five bucks I ever spent.
It's late. I was getting worried about
you. There's a guy that's been
decapitating women and throwing their
heads in the Chicago River.

AMY

Well, unfortunately, he didn't get me
tonight.

JODECI

(TO BETTY) Okay if we take a break? I
want to take another shower.

JODECI JUMPS UP AND EXITS. BETTY CALLS AFTER HER.

BETTY

Ten minutes, kid! That's it! I've
never seen a person use so much damn
hot water. I take a three minute
shower so cold I can see my own
breath.

AMY

That's quite an accomplishment. Why is
Jodi showering "again"?

BETTY

I told her I saw some pit hair.

AMY

Did you?

BETTY

No. But I wanted to throw her a bone
after telling her about her mom. She's
been shaving it over and over again
all night, so I think it was a welcome
distraction. Where did you run off to?

AMY

I went to meet Ben.

BETTY

I bet his wife didn't like that.

AMY

She moved out. He begged me to forgive him and move back in. He said he made a huge mistake.

BETTY

And you believe him?

AMY

(TEARING UP) I want to. I miss him. I miss my life.

BETTY

Honey, that wasn't a life, that was a lie. But here's some truth. Tonight Jodi said to me: "I wish Aunty Amy had been my mom instead."

AMY

Really?

BETTY

Sure. Her mom is so caught up in her own crap that Jodi has to spend more time being a caretaker than a kid. But you care about what's going on with her, you know what she needs before she has to ask. She said you're "amazing."

AMY

Wow.

BETTY

Don't be too flattered, your
competition is a floundering drunk,
but you get my point. We love you. And
what you have here is real, even if
you don't want it.

AMY

If I stay here, I feel like I'm going
backwards. No matter what I do, I
can't seem to push my life in the
direction I want it to go.

AMY SEES BETTY STRUGGLING TO FIGURE OUT HER CELLPHONE.

AMY (CONT'D)

I bet this isn't how you saw your life
going either?

BETTY

Not exactly. I'm scared to death. But
Jodi needs me. That's all that
matters. It matters more than what I
"thought" my life would be or even
what I want. I love her and she's
family and that's all there is to it.

AMY

But it's not that simple.

BETTY

No, it's not. It's complicated and
it's sacrifice.

(MORE)

BETTY (CONT'D)

But it's also worth it. Because I look at you and I feel so much pride. It makes me think maybe I didn't screw everything up.

AMY

Well, then really you're proud of you. But I'll allow it.

BETTY

I can't take credit for you, Amy. You're everything you are in spite of me.

AMY

No, I'm everything I am because of you. Your constant criticism made me work for your love, turned me into quite the go-getter.

BETTY AND AMY LAUGH.

BETTY

Well, you know you can stay here. Or you can go. But I'll tell you one thing about us, about family. We're solid. Something you can depend on when you need it. Unlike with your boyfriend, you're never going to walk in here and find yourself "replaced."

AMY, LOOKS AT BETTY AND TOUCHED, STANDS UP AND GOES TO SIT NEXT TO HER MOM. ONE OF THE DOGS JUMPS UP IN THE EMPTY SPACE.

BUCKTOWN
PILOT

Casting Draft

2/12/21

46.
II/L

AMY

Seriously?

BETTY

Dogs got the couch tonight. Find a
place to sleep.

OFF AMY'S FRUSTRATION WE...

CUT TO:

ACT TWO

SCENE N

INT. JODECI'S SCHOOL - THE NEXT DAY - MORNING (D3)
(AMY, JODECI)

JODECI RUNS UP TO AMY'S CAR AND GETS IN THE PASSENGER SIDE.

JODECI

Is everything okay? My principal
pulled me out of homeroom and said it
was an emergency.

AMY

It is an emergency. It's "Strap Day"
and you have no straps!

AMY PLACES A BRA ON JODECI'S LAP.

AMY (CONT'D)

I wasn't sure of your size but it
should work for today until we can go
shopping for one together. It has a
little padding too. Not fake but more
subtle and surprising like - "hey,
when did these little guys pop up?"
Put it on.

JODECI

Here?

AMY

Yeah. Just unzip your jacket. Clip it
around your waist and shimmy it up.

JODECI STARTS TO PUT THE BRA ON UNDER HER JACKET.

JODECI

I can't believe you did this. I
thought you thought it was stupid.

AMY

It's not stupid. It's important to
you. And therefore, it's important to
me.

JODECI OPENS HER JACKET AND SHOWS OFF HER CHEST.

JODECI

What do you think?

AMY

I think stop shaking those huge bongos
at me and get in there and get your
bra snapped.

JODECI HUGS AMY AND HOPS OUT OF THE CAR. AMY WATCHES HER GO.
HER PHONE BUZZES. IT'S A TEXT. BEN: "ARE YOU COMING HOME?" A
BEAT. AMY TYPES: "I AM HOME." SHE SHUTS OFF HER PHONE AND A
SMILE CROSSES HER FACE AS SHE DRIVES AWAY AND WE...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

TAG

INT. BEN AND AMY'S BUCKTOWN CONDO - NIGHT (N4)
(AMY, BETTY, JODECI, KATE)

AMY, BETTY AND JODECI ARE AT BEN'S APARTMENT, PUTTING AMY'S THINGS IN GARBAGE BAGS.

AMY

Ben will be home soon. Hurry up!

JODECI ENTERS FROM THE BEDROOM.

JODECI

I got most of your clothes. (HOLDING UP BOTTLE) I also peed in his shampoo bottle.

AMY

That's disgusting.

JODECI SHRUGS AND PUTS THE SHAMPOO ON THE COUNTER.

BETTY

Is this your toaster?

AMY

No, it's Ben's.

BETTY

Well, I need a toaster.

BETTY THROWS THE TOASTER INTO A GARBAGE BAG. JUST THEN, KATE OPENS THE DOOR.

KATE

What are you doing here?

AMY

Getting my stuff. What are you doing here? I thought you and Ben broke up?

KATE

What? No.

AMY

Unbelievable. He was begging me to come back and keeping you on hold, in case I didn't want to.

KATE

I don't know what you're talking about. Are you done ransacking our home?

JODECI

Hey! We only took what belongs to my aunt. I left all your depression pills and your sad gratitude journal. The day you only wrote that you were happy that "grapes are a thing?" Woof. That was rough.

KATE NOTICES THE SHAMPOO ON THE COUNTER.

KATE

Stealing our shampoo? That's pathetic.

AMY

You're right. That was wrong of me.

AMY, BETTY AND JODECI GRAB THEIR BAGS AND START TO WALK OUT.

BETTY

That was fun. Is this his iPad?

BETTY THROWS IT IN A GARBAGE BAG, THE WOMEN EXIT AND WE...

FADE OUT:

END OF SHOW