

JUST SHOOT ME

"Babies"

(Pilot Episode)

Written by

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MAIN CHARACTERS:

Maya Gallo            Think Janeane Garofalo.  
Jack Gallo            Late fifties, handsome, smooth,  
                          confident, powerful. A force.  
Elliott Di Mauro    Think Jon Lovitz.  
Nina Van Horn        Former high fashion model now in her  
                          forties or fifties and not too happy  
                          about it.  
Julie Zydell          Maya's roommate, the bohemian  
                          playwright.

STANDING SETS:

Maya's Apartment  
Magazine Bullpen  
Magazine Editor's Office

ADDITIONAL SETS FOR PILOT:

Local Independent Television Newsroom  
Hospital Corridor & Nursery

JUST SHOOT ME

"Babies"

(Pilot Episode)

A

FADE IN:

INT. LOCAL TV NEWS ROOM - EVENING

LAST MINUTE PRE-BROADCAST COMMOTION. MAYA TYPES AT A COMPUTER.

SFX: PHONE RINGS. MAYA ANSWERS IT. DURING THE FOLLOWING, SHE NEVER STOPS TYPING:

MAYA

(INTO PHONE, RUSHED) Maya Gallo.

(PAUSE) Hey, Lieutenant, thanks for getting back to me. Just need you to confirm arson in that tenement fire in the Bronx. (PAUSE) It was? That's great! (BEAT) I didn't mean that. It's this job. It screws you up. Thanks, I owe you. (SHE HANGS UP AND

MAYA (CONT'D)

YELLS OUT) Arson confirmed in the  
tenement fire. We should move it up!

SEVERAL PEOPLE AD-LIB RESPONSES SUCH AS "GOT IT," "GOOD JOB,"  
ETC. A VERY YOUNG, VERY PRETTY ANCHOR WOMAN ENTERS THE NEWS  
ROOM.

ANCHOR WOMAN

(MAD) Who wrote this garbage?

MAYA

(STILL TYPING) This is local news,  
you'll have to be more specific.

ANCHOR WOMAN

The war on gangs story.

MAYA

(SARCASTIC) You love it, don't you?

ANCHOR WOMAN

It's totally wrong. And I'm on in two  
minutes.

MAYA

(STOPS TYPING) What's wrong with it?

ANCHOR WOMAN

First of all, (READING) "New York City  
Police officials report a decrease in  
gang violence during the past year?"

MAYA

Yeah?

ANCHOR WOMAN

As I've told you, it should be "New York City Police officials tell me that gang violence is down," so that I'm involved in the story.

MAYA

But they didn't tell you, you went to have your teeth bleached.

ANCHOR WOMAN

I'm sorry if I care about my appearance, but it's part of my job. And I've been doing TV news for more than two years, how about you?

MAYA

Eight years.

A BEAT.

ANCHOR WOMAN

And change this.

MAYA

"Eradication?" What's wrong with it?

ANCHOR WOMAN

You're going to lose people with words like that. If you were speaking to a child, you wouldn't say "Eradication," you'd say "Removal."

MAYA

If I were speaking to a child, I wouldn't be doing a special five-part series on Strippers.

ANCHOR WOMAN

Their story deserves to be told.

(HANDING HER BACK THE SCRIPT) Now kindly make the changes.

MAYA

I won't have time to get it to you.

ANCHOR WOMAN

Then just send it to the TelePrompter.

Please don't make me talk to Bernie about your removal - or should I say, "Eradication."

THE ANCHOR WOMAN EXITS INTO THE STUDIO. MAYA DIALS THE PHONE AND QUICKLY BEGINS TYPING.

MAYA

(AS SHE TYPES, INTO PHONE) Julie, it's me. I hate my job, right? (BEAT) And you yourself said I should stop plotting our anchor woman's death. (BEAT) And I'm not doing humanity any good. (LOOKS AT HER CHECKBOOK) And I can get by for a while on twenty-four hundred dollars?

MAYA (CONT'D)

(PRESSES COMPUTER KEY AND YELLS TO  
NEWS ROOM) Sending to TelePrompTer!  
(BACK INTO PHONE) Because I think I  
just wrote my resignation.

WE PAN OVER TO NEWS ROOM MONITOR.

ANCHOR WOMAN (ON MONITOR)

...Meanwhile, new hope in the city's  
War on Gangs.

INSERT SHOT OF THE ANCHOR WOMAN READING THE TELEPROMPTER.  
THEN BACK TO NEWSROOM.

ANCHOR WOMAN (ON MONITOR) (CONT'D)

Police officials tell me there's been  
a sharp decrease in gang-related  
crimes during the past twelve months.  
They tell me they credit the decrease  
to the removal of the frontal lobe of  
my brain. And this just in: I wet  
myself. Paul...

ON SCREEN, THE ANCHOR WOMAN REALIZES WHAT SHE JUST SAID AS  
THE MALE ANCHOR SLOWLY TURNS TOWARD HER.

ANCHORMAN

(BARELY CONTAINING HIMSELF) Thank  
you, Christy. On the national  
front...

AS ALL EYES IN THE NEWS ROOM TURN TO MAYA, WE:

DISSOLVE TO:

B

INT. MAYA'S APARTMENT - THREE MONTHS LATER

FUNKY, AFFORDABLE TWO-BEDROOM APARTMENT. MAYA'S ROOMMATE JULIE WORKS WITH JEFFREY, AN ACTOR IN HIS MID-TWENTIES. JEFFREY PERFORMS LINES FROM A SCRIPT.

JEFFREY

(EXTREMELY MOROSE) I can paint the walls something bright. I can rip down the drapes to let in the sun. Yet the room would remain dark. Her memory blocks all light like a velvet cloak. I live in blackness.

JULIE

No, still too happy. Try it again.

MAYA BURSTS IN WEARING WALKMAN HEADPHONES. SHE'S OUT OF BREATH.

MAYA

Quick, quick, quick - the phone!



JULIE

What?

MAYA DIVES ON THE PHONE AND STARTS DIALING. SHE TAKES THE HEADPHONES OUT OF ONE EAR AND LEAVES THEM IN THE OTHER.

MAYA

Fiftieth caller gets five-thousand  
dollars!

THROUGH THE FOLLOWING, SHE DIALS AGAIN, AND AGAIN AND AGAIN.

JULIE

No luck finding a job today?

MAYA

I ran up stairs and actually dove for  
a phone, what do you think? (TO  
PHONE) Come on!

JULIE

Maya, this is Jeffrey from my theater  
group. He's reading my play.

MAYA

(CORDIALLY) Hi, nice to meet you. (TO  
PHONE) Ring, you top-forty hell-hole!

JULIE

Jeffrey's currently on Broadway.

JEFFREY

Beauty and the Beast.

JULIE

He plays a dancing fork. He used to  
be a waiter. Isn't that weird?

MAYA

(TO PHONE) Come on, come on...

JULIE

Oh, and he's got someone to fix you up  
with.

MAYA

Let me guess, a spoon.

JEFFREY

No, the spoon's gay.

MAYA

Isn't that always the case. (TO PHONE)  
Let me through! I listened to Hootie and  
The Blowfish for this! (SHE HEARS  
SOMETHING IN HER HEADPHONES) Wait, wait!  
(DISGUSTED) Great, they have a winner.

SHE SLAMS DOWN THE PHONE.

MAYA (CONT'D)

This is just perfect. Three and a  
half months, fifty-eight resumes and  
still nothing. What is it? I have  
experience, I have skills, but I may  
as well have written on the bottom of  
those fifty-eight resumes, "Don't hire  
me, I'm a total freak!"

SHE TRIES TO WALK AWAY FROM THE PHONE, BUT HER HEADPHONE CORD  
IS NOW THOROUGHLY TANGLED IN THE PHONE CORD. FINALLY, IN  
DISGUST, AFTER GREAT EFFORT, SHE RIPS HERSELF FREE.

JULIE

Would it make you feel better to watch  
the tape of that anchor woman again?

MAYA

Yeah, but I'm trying not to wear it  
out.

JULIE

You want the mail?

MAYA

No.

JULIE

You sure?

MAYA

What is it?

JULIE

We got another rent letter.

MAYA

Oh, God, not today. What'd it say  
this time?

JULIE

Pay up, bitch! (BEAT) I'm  
paraphrasing of course.

MAYA

Julie, I'm really sorry, but I'll find  
something soon. You know I'm trying  
everything.

A BEAT.

JULIE

You haven't called your dad.

MAYA STIFFENS.

JULIE (CONT'D)

(TO JEFFREY, RE: MAYA) Did you see that? How she just freaked out? That's the kind of emotion you need. Look at that pain on her face. You just know there's this deep river of tension and anxiety there.

MAYA

(GETTING ANNOYED) Julie...

JEFFREY NODS, STUDYING HER.

JEFFREY

Make her do it again.

JULIE

No, no. (THEN) Her father was never around. And his third wife is a girl we went to high school with.

MAYA

Julie!

JEFFREY

Okay, I think I see what you're looking for.

JULIE

Then she and her dad got into a huge fight at the wedding and haven't spoken in over a year.

MAYA

Would you stop?!

JULIE

(WHISPERS TO JEFFREY) See the twitch? You should do that. It's really creepy.

JEFFREY

Yeah.

MAYA

If you're done using my pain, I'd like it back!

JULIE

So, you'll ask him for the money?

MAYA

Not as long as there are still places that buy blood.

JULIE

You sold all your blood.

MAYA

Well, as long as I've got two functioning kidneys, I've got options.

JULIE

God, you're just like Deanne in my play. She's so afraid of being rejected by The Sad Clown, that she withholds her love and lets him walk right out of that Big Top. I'm seriously thinking about killing her off.

MAYA

I'll do something, I promise, but my father's the last person I'd ever ask. I paid for college myself. And for grad school. I've gotten by just fine without him.

JULIE

(HANDING IT TO HER) Oh, yeah, your student loan bill came, too.

MAYA KNOWS WHAT SHE HAS TO DO.

JULIE (CONT'D)

When you see your dad, say "Hi." He loves me.

MAYA

He loves all my high school friends.

AS MAYA CROSSES OFF TO A BEDROOM, WE:

DISSOLVE TO:

C

INT. MAGAZINE BULLPEN - THE NEXT MORNING

LARGE OPEN ROOM WITH SEVERAL WORKING AREAS. BY THE DOOR ARE APPROXIMATELY TEN YOUNG, BEAUTIFUL MODELS. SOME ARE DRESSED UP, OTHERS ARE CONSPICUOUSLY DRESSED DOWN. ALL ARE CLUTCHING PHOTOS AND PORTFOLIOS. PHONES ARE RINGING, MUCH COMMOTION WHEN MAYA ENTERS AND TAKES IN THE SCENE. SHE MAKES HER WAY THROUGH THE CROWD. AS SHE GOES:

MAYA

Excuse me. Down here. Nice shoes.

Coming through.

AFTER AWKWARDLY SQUEEZING BETWEEN THE LAST TWO WOMEN, SHE FINALLY REACHES THE RECEPTIONIST.

MAYA (CONT'D)

(TO THE RECEPTIONIST) Hi, I'm Maya-

SFX: THE PHONE RINGS

RECEPTIONIST

Please wait with the others.

MAYA

No, no, I'm here for--

JUST THEN, THE DOOR TO THE INNER-AGENCY OPENS AND NINA VAN HORN, A FORMER TOP MODEL NOW IN HER FORTIES OR FIFTIES, ENTERS.

NINA

(HALF-HEARTED) Hello, girls. Welcome to Moda Magazine. I am, of course, Nina Van Horn. (NO REACTION) My face appeared on more than forty covers. (BLANK STARES) I was the Noxema "Gotcha Girl." You know, "Gotcha." (STILL NOTHING) Yeah, well, ask your parents. (THEN) So, you want to grace the pages of Moda. Well, I want my old ass back, but, chances are, it's not going to happen. (THEN, BIG SMILE) Okay, this is fun, isn't it. As I pass each of you by, if I say "Thank you," it means we're not interested in your unique and timeless beauty. But remember, just the fact that you're here is something to be proud of. You'd be surprised how many girls can't find the building. (THEN) Okay, let's do this.

NINA BEGINS GOING DOWN THE LINE, VERY COOLLY DISMISSING EACH GIRL WITH A...



NINA (CONT'D)

Thank you... Thank you... Thank  
you...

SHE COMES TO MAYA AND STOPS.

NINA (CONT'D)

Honey, I don't know who your agent is,  
but you need to grow six inches, lose  
twenty pounds, and get a hairstylist  
who gave up cocaine with everyone  
else.

MAYA

I'm sorry, do you own this magazine?

NINA

No, that would be Mr. Gallo.

MAYA

And I would be Mr. Gallo's daughter.

A BEAT. NINA IS COMPLETELY THROWN.

MAYA (CONT'D)

"Gotcha."

ELLIOTT ENTERS. HE SCANS THE GROUP.

ELLIOTT

Hel-lo ladies, Elliott Di Mauro.

Don't let Nina scare you, she hasn't  
smiled since Cosmo's March 1968

"Salute to the Hiphugger." (THEN)

Nina, your little Rachel was supposed

ELLIOTT (CONT'D)

to be here in the studio a half hour ago. I won't work with her anymore. She's like a child.

NINA

She's fifteen.

ELLIOTT

Then she should start acting like it.

MAYA

(LOOKING FOR A WAY OUT) My father's probably not here, is he?

NINA

Elliott, this is Jack's daughter...

MAYA

Maya.

ELLIOTT

Oh, my God, all these years, I've heard so much about you! Maya this, Maya that. Of course he's here and I'm sure he'll be thrilled to see you.

MAYA

Thanks for your help.

MAYA CROSSES OFF TOWARDS JACK'S OFFICE.

NINA

I didn't even know Jack had a daughter.

ELLIOTT

Neither did I.

MAYA STOPS AT JACK'S OFFICE DOOR. SHE SEEMS UNABLE TO TAKE THE LAST STEP. NINA APPROACHES.

NINA

Before you go in there, I'm sure you can understand my not realizing that you're Jack's daughter. Even you have to admit, there's virtually no resemblance.

MAYA

You are really annoying.

NINA

Ah, there it is.

MAYA TAKES A DEEP BREATH, KNOCKS ON THE DOOR AND EXITS TO JACK'S OFFICE.

CUT TO:

D

INT. JACK'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

MAYA ENTERS. JACK IS SEATED AT HIS DESK. THE WALLS ARE COVERED WITH SEVERAL PICTURES OF JACK WITH VARIOUS MODELS AND ENTERTAINMENT TYPES. THIS IS THE OFFICE OF A POWERFUL PERSON.

MAYA

(TENTATIVELY) Hi.

JACK IS VERY SURPRISED TO SAY THE LEAST.

JACK

Hey, look at you.

THEY APPROACH EACH OTHER AND DON'T KNOW WHETHER TO KISS OR HUG OR SHAKE HANDS. FINALLY TO AVOID IT, MAYA QUICKLY SITS.

JACK (CONT'D)

It's been a while. You cut your hair.

MAYA

Yeah, yeah I did.

JACK

It looks nice.

MAYA

Thanks.

JACK

It's really short, isn't it?

MAYA

Yes, it's really short. I cut it myself with a razor. So why don't you just say that you hate it and we'll move on?

JACK

I didn't say I hate it. Stop looking for trouble, Maya.

MAYA

I'm sorry. So... how have you been?

JACK

Great. Busy. (THEN) Couldn't you have picked a color that exists in nature?

MAYA

This was a bad idea.

JACK

No, I'm sorry.

MAYA

(PAINED) Listen, I just came here to--

SFX: THE INTERCOM RINGS

RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)

It's your wife.

JACK

(TO MAYA) One sec.

JACK

(PICKS UP THE RECEIVER) Hi, Kara,  
what's up? (BEAT) Well, then, take  
it easy for a little while. (BEAT)  
Honey, uh, Maya's here. (BEAT, THEN TO  
MAYA) Hi, Maya.

MAYA DOESN'T RESPOND.

JACK (CONT'D)

Maya says "Hi" back. (A BEAT) Okay,  
love you too. (HANGS UP, TO MAYA) I  
still don't see why you two can't get  
along.

MAYA

Because if my friends see me in the  
hallway with an underclassman, I'll  
never hear the end of it.

JACK

Can't you just let that high-school  
thing go?

MAYA

I'd like to, but I have this recurring  
nightmare of you winning "Best Fast  
Dancer" at my ten-year reunion.

JACK

You know, I've accepted the choices  
you've made, I think by now you can  
accept mine.

MAYA

No, you haven't and, besides, my  
boyfriends were a lot less psycho than  
your cavalcade of wives.

JACK

Really. How about that guy with the  
nose ring?

MAYA

How about Stephanie?

JACK

The angry poet.

MAYA

Linda.

JACK

The drummer.

MAYA

Mom.

JACK

(A BEAT) Well, you got me there.

(THEN) Have you spoken to her lately?

MAYA

She sends me the occasional thanks-  
for-the-stretch-marks card.

JACK

Is she still in Palm Springs with  
Maury?

MAYA

What's left of Maury. (THEN) She  
plays golf everyday.

JACK

God, with that desert sun, her skin  
must look like a belt. You know what's  
good for the skin? Mango. We just  
did two pages on it.

MAYA

I smell Pulitzer. (THEN) So, anyway,  
I have to ask you something--

SFX: KNOCK AT DOOR

JACK

(CALLING OUT) Yeah.

THE DOOR OPENS AND ELLIOTT ENTERS.

ELLIOTT

Jack, we've got a little problem.

JACK

What?

ELLIOTT

Well, no big deal, but Nina is out of  
her freakin' mind!



JACK

And the problem?

ELLIOTT

The cover. I have these amazing shots of Lorena, but Nina wants Cindy in the men's suit. She looks like Herb in accounting.

NINA ENTERS.

NINA

Jack, don't listen to him. He's making decisions with the bottom half.  
(SUDDENLY NOTICING MAYA) Oh, hi, again. (BACK TO JACK) Your daughter is a total hoot!

ELLIOTT

Jack...

NINA

Why do you think he wants Lorena for the cover?

ELLIOTT

Because I've got a break-through layout.

NINA

And he'd love to pop the big cover news on her just as they're finishing dinner tonight.

ELLIOTT

So we're having dinner. We happen to have a lot in common.

NINA

She's twenty, she comes from a tiny farming village in Romania and the only English word she knows is "Pellegrino."

ELLIOTT

Which just happens to be my favorite water.

JACK

Okay, each of you mock up a cover for tomorrow and I'll decide.

ELLIOTT

Thank you, King Solomon. You won't be disappointed.

NINA

(TO ELLIOTT) Doesn't it bother you that the only reason these women even talk to you is because you're a photographer?

ELLIOTT

(UNFAZED) No.

ELLIOTT EXITS.

NINA

(RE: ELLIOTT) Pig. (TO MAYA, BIG SMILE) But look at you, I know twenty girls who would pay big money for lips like those. What am I talking about?  
-- They did.

NINA EXITS.

MAYA

Where'd you get her?

JACK

Long story.

MAYA

You slept with her when she was young, didn't you?

JACK

She used to be a top model. Two bad marriages wiped her out so I hired her as my Creative Director. She's got a great eye.

MAYA

You slept with her when she was young, didn't you?

JACK

(CHANGING THE SUBJECT) So, what brings you here?

MAYA

Okay, here goes: (DEEP BREATH) I've never taken money from you, right? I mean, I paid for Stanford myself... and still am.

JACK

I wanted to pay.

MAYA

But I wanted to do it myself. Only now, I--

JACK

You haven't worked in three months, you're broke and you can't pay your rent.

MAYA

How did you know?

JACK

Kara heard it through someone from your high school.

MAYA

This is too weird.

JACK

Here's an idea: Why don't you work here?

MAYA

(BIG REACTION) No, no, no, no, no.

(OFF HIS LOOK) No offense.

JACK

None taken. I'm sure you only meant three of those "No's."

MAYA

We've been through this before. It would be a disaster.

JACK

Well, then, at least do this for me. I just had a writer flake out on an assignment for our lead article that's due tomorrow. How about if you write it and I'll pay you?

MAYA

(PICKING UP LATEST ISSUE) But I don't know the first thing about (READING) "Pleasing A Man In Bed." (BEAT) You know what I mean.

JACK

It's a fun piece. It's called, "So, You're In Love With A Nutcase."

MAYA

Well, that I can do, but--

JACK

Thirty-five-hundred words. We need it by noon tomorrow.

MAYA

I don't think so.

JACK

Maya, c'mon, it'll be good for us.  
There's nothing I want more than to  
spend time with you at this point in  
my life.

MAYA

You're just saying that because you  
want an older person to talk to.

HE TOUCHES HER ON THE ARM.

JACK

Please.

MAYA

Can some of the words have two-  
syllables?

THEY SMILE IN AGREEMENT.

SFX: INTERCOM BEEP

RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)

Jack, it's Kara. Meet her at the  
hospital. She's having the baby.

JACK

The baby? Now?

JACK QUICKLY STARTS GATHERING HIS KEYS, COAT, SUNGLASSES, ETC.

MAYA

(COMPLETELY STUNNED) THE BABY?! YOU  
AND KARA ARE HAVING A BABY?! How did  
this happen?

JACK

Maybe you shouldn't be writing this  
article.

MAYA

I mean... when?

JACK

I'm guessing nine months ago.

MAYA

That's cute. I can't believe you  
never told me!

JACK

We never spoke. The last time I saw  
you, you were throwing wedding cake at  
me.

JACK FINISHES GATHERING HIS THINGS AND HEADS OUT THE DOOR.

MAYA

(CALLING AFTER HIM) I knew I  
should've gone with the folding chair.

JACK POKES HIS HEAD BACK IN.

JACK

Thirty-five-hundred words.

MAYA

Oh, I got some beauties already picked  
out.

AS JACK EXITS, MAYA SCRAMBLES FOR SOMETHING TO THROW AT HIM  
AND WE:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE



ACT TWO

E

INT. BULLPEN - SEVERAL HOURS LATER

MAYA IS WORKING AT A COMPUTER. INSTEAD OF CASUALLY TYPING, SHE POUNDS THE KEYS WITH A VENGEANCE. AFTER A BEAT, WE WIDEN TO REVEAL ELLIOTT AND NINA WATCHING HER WITH DISBELIEF.

NINA

She's been typing like that for four hours.

ELLIOTT

I'm surprised she hasn't broken something.

NINA

She's on her third keyboard.

ELLIOTT

I meant like a wrist.

NINA APPROACHES MAYA.

NINA

Maya dear!

NINA SCANS MAYA'S OUTFIT.

NINA (CONT'D)

Look at you, your disregard for trend... well, it's just so damn ballsy.

MAYA

(STILL TYPING) Hey, you order pants through the mail, this is what happens.

NINA

You do realize you have until tomorrow to finish that? No extra credit for finishing early.

MAYA

I just want to get it done.

NINA

Is that the real reason, or are you just trying to prove to everyone that you're not riding daddy's coattails, so that people will take you seriously? I know, I was the same way. And look at me now, after many, many years of hard work, second-in-command, pretty much in charge whenever your father's gone.

ELLIOTT

(AS HE PASSES BY) Which explains why  
he never leaves.

NINA

(TO ELLIOTT) You're an annoying  
little man. (TO MAYA) But, you see  
my point?

MAYA

The one at the top of your hat or at the  
end of your broom? (THEN) Let me put  
your fears to rest. I'm just trying to  
get out of here as soon as possible.  
After that, if I never see my father  
again, that's just fine with me.

NINA

(SWEETLY) Oh, well, in that case, if  
you need anything, Sweetie, you just let  
me know.

NINA CROSSES OFF. MAYA TYPES ONE LAST SENTENCE, THEN SENDS  
THE ARTICLE TO THE PRINTER. AFTER A BEAT, JULIE ENTERS.

JULIE

Hi, I just got your message about the  
baby, I came to see if you were okay.

MAYA

Thanks, that was really nice of you.  
I'll be fine.

MAYA HEADS TO THE COMPUTER PRINTER.

JULIE

So you're writing an article?

SHE PICKS UP THE PAGES BY THEIR UPPERMOST CORNER USING THE VERY TIPS OF HER THUMB AND FOREFINGER AND HOLDS IT OUT AT ARMS LENGTH.

MAYA

I just finished. I'm going to turn it in and run out of here before the stench sets off the smoke alarm.

JULIE PICKS UP A COPY OF THE MAGAZINE.

JULIE

God, I can't believe people actually read this. It's so... (READING WITH GENUINE INTEREST) "The Seven Minute Sex Secret." Hmmm.

MAYA

Hey, I don't want to use my real name on this. I need a good fake one. Julie... (NO RESPONSE) Julie!

JULIE

What? Oh. Use your drag name. Remember my friend Harold, the drag queen? The one who was a stewardess for a while until they found out? You take the name of your childhood pet and combine it with your mother's maiden name.

MAYA TAKES A BEAT. SHE WRITES:

MAYA

Written by Bootsie Ginsburg.

ELLIOTT CROSSES OVER.

ELLIOTT

It looked safe to approach. These are  
the photos for your piece.

SHE LOOKS AT THEM.

MAYA

God, could her dress get any higher?

ELLIOTT EXAMINES THE PHOTO.

ELLIOTT

Not without technically becoming a  
tube top. (TO JULIE) Hi, how are  
you?

JULIE

Huh? Oh, apparently I'm "Only Seven  
Minutes Away From An Explosive  
Orgasm."

ELLIOTT

You and me both.

MAYA

Julie, if you want, you can take that  
and meet me downstairs in the bar.

(NO RESPONSE) Julie!

JULIE

If it's okay, I'll just meet you  
downstairs in the bar.

JULIE TAKES THE MAGAZINE AND EXITS. MAYA GATHERS HER THINGS.

MAYA

Can I ask you a question? Don't you ever worry about the message you're sending?

ELLIOTT

Oh, no, you're one of those.

MAYA

Seriously, do you have any idea what it does to a fat, little thirteen-year-old girl with bad skin to be bombarded by false images of flawless women? In real life, people aren't air-brushed. No one is perfect.

A TALL, THIN, GORGEOUS MODEL, LORENA ENTERS. SHE IS PERFECT.

LORENA

(THICK EASTERN EUROPEAN ACCENT)

Hallo, Elliott.

MAYA JUST STARES.

ELLIOTT

(TO MAYA) You were saying? (THEN)

Lorena! (SLOWLY) Ready... for...

(PANTOMIMES EATING) dinner?

SHE LOOKS AT HIM CONFUSED.

ELLIOTT (CONT'D)

(TRYING AGAIN) Dinner? (GIVING UP)

Pellegrino?

LORENA

(BRIGHTENING) Yes, yes, Pellegrino.

ELLIOTT

(POINTING TO THE KITCHEN, SLOWLY)

In... there.

LORENA SMILES AND EXITS INTO THE KITCHEN.

ELLIOTT (CONT'D)

(TO MAYA) Isn't she great?

MAYA

She's got big boobs if that's what you mean.

ELLIOTT PUTS ON HIS COAT.

ELLIOTT

You know, I'll never understand what's so terrible about taking a picture of a beautiful woman.

MAYA

Because who decides what's beautiful?

ELLIOTT

I do. That's the best part.

MAYA

And what if I want to take a picture of someone who I think is beautiful? Someone who's maybe short and heavy, but who teaches inner-city school children?

ELLIOTT

I'd say avoid horizontal stripes and bright colors and place her next to something large, like a tree.

MAYA

Would it kill you to devote a couple of pages every month to a woman who's not conventionally beautiful?

ELLIOTT

We do, they're called make-overs.

MAYA

Here's my article, I'm out. Please ask my dad to send me a check.

ELLIOTT

(GLANCING AT THE PAGE) You know, "Bootsie," a lot of people live for this stuff. Maybe because there's so much ugliness in their lives, they just need something beautiful.

MAYA

I'm sorry, but idolizing physical beauty is wrong.

ELLIOTT

Oh, really? Tell me what you thought, honestly, the first time you saw Michelangelo's David?



MAYA

I thought it was an incredible  
sculpture.

ELLIOTT

Because you found David physically  
attractive.

MAYA

That's not true. It's an amazing work  
regardless.

ELLIOTT

Because David is the perfect male form.

MAYA

No, because Michelangelo was a genius.

ELLIOTT

Okay then, now picture it if Michelangelo  
had sculpted it, with the same artistry,  
to look like... say... me.

MAYA THINKS FOR A BEAT.

MAYA

Wow, you're right. He does lose all  
of his appeal.

ELLIOTT

(WEAKLY) Told you.

MAYA STARTS TO LEAVE. NINA RE-ENTERS.

NINA

Attention, I have great news! I just  
heard from Jack, who wanted me to tell  
everyone that... they had the baby.  
It's a happy, healthy little girl!

EVERYONE AD-LIBS REACTIONS SUCH AS "ALL RIGHT," "THAT'S  
GREAT," ETC. BUT MAYA IS TAKEN ABACK BY THE NEWS. IT HITS  
HER HARDER THAN SHE EVER IMAGINED. LORENA RE-ENTERS.

ELLIOTT

(TO MAYA) Congratulations, you have a  
sister. (WITH GENUINE CONCERN) Maya,  
are you okay?

A BEAT.

MAYA

Uh... I just need to sit down.

LORENA

(OFFERING) Pellegrino?

AND WE:

DISSOLVE TO:

J

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - AN HOUR OR SO LATER

MAYA ENTERS AND STOPS AT THE NURSERY WINDOW. SHE SCANS THE BASSINETS FOR THE NAME GALLO AND FINALLY SPOTS HER LITTLE HALF-SISTER. SHE SMILES. A VOICE STARTLES HER:

JACK

Gorgeous, isn't she?

SHE TURNS TO SEE THAT JACK IS SITTING IN THE WAITING AREA. HE LOOKS TIRED AND DISHEVELED.

MAYA

She's just beautiful. (BEAT) How's Kara?

JACK

Amazing. She was only in labor for two hours - and no drugs.

MAYA

How about you?

JACK

Just a Valium during the pushing.

MAYA NOTICES THAT JACK LOOKS TROUBLED.

MAYA

Are you all right?

A BEAT.

JACK

You know, the day I found out Kara was pregnant, you were the first person I called. I wanted to say something to you, I don't remember what. Actually, I don't think I even knew then. I guess I hoped that, when I heard your voice, something would come to me, that I'd find the right words to tell you I was having this baby because I just wanted things to be okay with us. But you never called me back.

MAYA

Look, I didn't know--

JACK

I'm not blaming you. It's my fault. I was never there for you, why should you suddenly be there for me? So, to answer your question, no, I'm not all

JACK (CONT'D)

right. I'm sitting here having trouble catching my breath because, frankly, I'm terrified I'm going to make the same mistakes all over again.

MAYA

(MAD) Then don't. Just don't. There's nothing magic about, it's nowhere near as hard as running a magazine, you just have to want to do it. That's a person in there. She takes all precedence over everything. So when she holds out her arms, pick her up. When she has a dance recital, don't be at a meeting. And, most of all, when she tries to push you away, don't let her - that's not what she really wants. (A BEAT) You make yourself a part of her life and the rest of it will fall into place.

JACK

If it's so easy, why am I sitting here having a panic attack?

MAYA

I'm sure every father panics.

A YOUNG FATHER ENTERS. HE'S ECSTATIC.

YOUNG FATHER

Hi, I just had a little girl! I'm a  
dad. Isn't this great?! Have a  
cigar.

JACK AND MAYA EACH TAKE ONE.

MAYA

Congratulations.

JACK

Yeah, congratulations. Me, too. A  
girl.

YOUNG FATHER

(GENUINE) All right, way to go,  
Grandpa!

THE YOUNG FATHER EXITS.

JACK

I've got a feeling that's going to  
happen to me a lot.

MAYA

God, I hope so.

A BEAT.

JACK

Maya, I can't do this alone.

MAYA

Yes, you can.

JACK

Well, maybe I don't want to. What would you say to coming aboard and running the magazine together? You and me.

MAYA

Run it? I don't even want to read it.

JACK

You'd have a major voice in all editorial decisions.

MAYA

We'd never get along.

JACK

You could write the kind of articles you want to write.

MAYA

We'd fight everyday.

JACK

You could boss Nina around.

MAYA

I'll take it.

THEY EXCHANGE A LOOK. AGAIN, THEY DON'T KNOW WHETHER TO KISS OR HUG OR SHAKE HANDS.

MAYA (CONT'D)

Well, I'd better get going. I've got an article to write.

JACK

I thought you'd be finished with it by  
now.

MAYA

No, I haven't even started.

WE GO INSIDE THE GLASS OF THE NURSERY AND SEE THEIR TWO FACES  
LOOKING IN ON THE BABY.

MAYA

So, have you picked a name?

JACK

We're in negotiations. I want  
"Jennifer" after your grandmother.  
Kara wants "Morgan."

MAYA

Morgan was the quarterback of our high  
school football team. Kara dated him  
for two years.

JACK

You were right, this is too weird.

A LONG BEAT. THEY WATCH THE BABY.

JACK (CONT'D)

Here's something scary. I'm going to  
be seventy-eight years old at her high  
school graduation.

MAYA

Well, at my high school graduation,  
you were, let's see... in Paris.



K

INT. MAYA'S APARTMENT - TWO DAYS LATER

MAYA READS AS JULIE ENTERS WITH A SHOPPING BAG.

JULIE

Oh, good, you're home. Listen, I remember when I was three and my little brother was born, I got really jealous that everyone kept coming over to the house bringing him stuffed animals, while I got left out... so, here.

MAYA

(AMUSED) You got me a stuffed animal?

JULIE

No, a bottle of vodka. Grow up.

MAYA TAKES PULLS OUT A FIFTH OF ABSOLUT FROM THE BAG.

SFX: DOORBELL

MAYA

Thanks, it's adorable.

MAYA CROSSES TO THE DOOR AND OPENS IT TO FIND A MESSENGER. HE'S YOUNG, WIRED AND WEARING RED LEATHER MOTORCYCLE GARB WITH MATCHING HELMET. HE'S CARRYING A LARGE ENVELOPE.

MESSENGER

Package for Maya Gallo.

MAYA

Look no further, Oh Mighty Red Power  
Ranger.

MESSENGER

That's cute. Sign quick, my Ninja's  
parked on the sidewalk.

MAYA SIGNS. AS SHE DOES, THE MESSENGER CHECKS HER OUT.

MAYA

Thanks.

MESSENGER

Hey, this is my last run of the night.  
If you want, we can go for a ride.

MAYA

(DEADPAN) As attracted as I am to you  
right now, I'll have to take a pass.

MESSENGER

I'll be outside for five minutes in  
case you change your mind.

SHE CLOSSES THE DOOR.

MESSENGER (CONT'D) (O.S.)

Then I'll be at the Monkey Bar in the  
Village.

JULIE

What is it?

MAYA

It's from my dad. (READING A NOTE)  
Maya, here's an advance copy of next  
month's issue with your first piece in  
print. It's perfect. I didn't change  
a word. See you Monday. Love, Dad.

(THEN) Let's see.

MAYA FLIPS TO THE TABLE OF CONTENTS. JULIE LOOKS OVER HER  
SHOULDER.

MAYA

Here it is, "Fathers and Daughters"  
written by Maya Gallo.

JULIE

Page twenty four. This is so cool.

THEY FLIP THROUGH, REACH PAGE TWENTY FOUR AND LOOK AGHAST.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Whoa, check out the cleavage on those  
daughters.

ON MAYA'S REACTION, WE:

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT TWO

JACK

Sorry about that.

MAYA

The only thing that will matter to her  
is that you're there. No, wait,  
she'll be a teenager. She'll want  
nothing to do with you.

AS JACK CONTEMPLATES THE FUTURE, WE:

DISSOLVE TO: