

# **BROKE & BONES**

## **RED BOOK**

### **‘JOAN IS AWFUL’**

by

**CHARLIE BROOKER**

Shooting Script

16/09/2022

**INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING REVISIONS:**

**\*\*GREEN REVISIONS – DATED 10/10/2022\*\***

**\*\*YELLOW REVISIONS – DATED 03/10/2022\*\***

**\*\*PINK REVISIONS – DATED 28/09/2022\*\***

**\*\*BLUE REVISIONS – DATED 21/09/2022\*\***

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# **BROKE & BONES**

## **RED BOOK**

### **M E M O**

To: ALL CREW

From: PRODUCTION

Date: 10/10/2022

This script follows on from the Yellow Script (04/10/22)

<b>SCRIPT MEMO (10.10.22)</b>				
<b>EPISODE NAME</b>		<b>“JOAN IS AWFUL”</b>		
<b>SCENE</b>	<b>PAGE</b>	<b>CHANGE</b>	<b>CAST</b>	<b>SCHEDULED SHOOT DATE</b>
41	29	DIALOGUE TWEAKED	SKILLANE (JOAN)	11/10/2022

**AUTHOR'S NOTE:**

*When picturing JOAN, picture ANNIE MURPHY - but with a very distinctive HAIRSTYLE. Got that? Great! Here we go:*

1       **INT. BEDROOM. JOAN'S HOUSE - MORNING**

*Dingle tingle dingle* -- a SMARTPHONE ALARM singing on a bedside table wakes a woman named JOAN from her slumber.

Beside her, in bed, is her fiancée, KRISH.

2       **INT. BATHROOM. JOAN'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER**

JOAN brushes her teeth with AQUADENT toothpaste

3       **INT. KITCHEN. JOAN'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER**

JOAN sits at the table sipping a coffee while KRISH, at the stove, fixes the pair of them some eggs.

*Ting!* She gets a text. She glances at it - it's from someone called MAC and it reads I MISS YOU -- then she hurriedly slides the phone into her pocket, out of Krish's view.

4       **INT./EXT. JOAN'S CAR. DRIVEWAY. JOAN'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER**

Joan's car rolls off the driveway of her home.

As she does so, a neighbourhood JOGGER runs by.

JOGGER

Hey Joan!

JOAN

Mike!

5       **INT. JOAN'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER**

- Moments later she's driving and nodding gently to *HUMBLE* by *KENDRICK LAMAR*

6       **EXT. SONICLE HQ - LATER**

We're looking at an impressive building - the headquarters of streaming music platform Sonicle.

7       **INT. JOAN'S OFFICE. SONICLE HQ - MOMENTS LATER**

JOAN sits behind a desk in a glass-fronted room - her office. A sign on her desk reads JOAN TAIT - ORANGE SQUAD LEADER.

Her PA, ERIC, sticks his head round the door. He points at the coffee she's drinking.

ERIC  
How's the coffee?

JOAN  
If I'm honest? Could be better...

ERIC  
I'll get them to look at the machine. Also...  
(hushed, a little apologetic)  
... Sandy's outside, waiting for that 10.15--

Joan groans. This is something she's not been looking forward to.

JOAN  
Oh God.

ERIC  
(sympathy)  
I know.

Joan exhales.

JOAN  
Gimme five. Just gotta... psych up.

Eric nods and exits. Joan stands and psyches herself up for this 10.15 with Sandy - shaking her hands loosely, doing breathing exercises...

Then *ting!* Another text from MAC. It reads *I'm in town.*

Then another:

*Be good to see you.*

She looks at it. Does nothing.

8 **INT. JOAN'S OFFICE. SONICLE HQ - LATER**

SANDY is sitting opposite JOAN, her face a melting cake of sorrow.

SANDY  
You're letting me go?  
(beat)  
- but I'm still working on my audio compression algorithm-

Joan winces. She hates having to do this.

JOAN

I'm afraid the board feels your  
compression algo isn't... a thing  
they want to pursue.

SANDY

- but without it we'll need more  
data servers-

Joan feels compromised. She agrees with Sandy.

JOAN

I know, I --

SANDY

-- and that means a bigger carbon  
footprint - we'll breach all our  
environmental pledges --

JOAN

It's how the board feel.

Joan pulls a "what can I do" face. Sandy looks totally lost.

SANDY

I just put a deposit down on an  
apartment -

JOAN

I'm sure this has *not* been an easy  
decision for them but --

SANDY

Please don't do this.

JOAN

Sandy --

Sandy starts to cry.

SANDY

Please not now.

She dissolves into blubbing, weeping into her own lap. Joan  
looks on helplessly.

JOAN

Okay. Uh...

She looks up, to see ERIC looking at her through the glass.  
Mouthing "I'll deal with it", miming for Joan to leave...

Joan nods -- then says to Sandy:

JOAN (CONT'D)

How about I give you a moment to --  
collect yourself...?

Joan stands awkwardly and heads for the door as Sandy sobs.

She slides out of the door. ERIC is standing beside a hulking SECURITY GUARD named Brutus.

Eric whispers to Joan:

ERIC  
I've asked Brutus to escort her  
out.

Joan nods and squeezes his arm.

9 **INT./EXT. BALCONY. SONICLE HQ - MOMENTS LATER**

JOAN stands on a balcony, vaping. She's looking at her phone. At the text from Mac: *Be good to see you.*

She starts to type a reply...

BUT. Her fingers stop typing.

And she's about to put the phone away when *TING* -- another flurry of texts from Mac.

*I'm only here for three days*

*Can we meet?*

She flicks her vape stick away like a cigarette -- and then realises what she's done. *Shit.* She glances over.

Down below, SANDY, walking with a slouch, holding a cardboard box of her belongings, is being helped out into the car lot by Brutus.

The VAPESTICK hits Sandy on the head, lands at her feet and rolls across her path. Sandy stops and looks up.

Joan ducks out of view, a beat too late. Sandy looks up.

SANDY  
I know you're there!  
(beat)  
Coward! You're a coward!

10 **INT. THERAPIST'S WAITING ROOM. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - LATER**

JOAN sits in the waiting room of DR ATKINSON, her therapist, holding a coffee cup and looking at a framed painting opposite -- a soothing abstract work.

Then Atkinson opens her door and nods for Joan to come in, with a graceful smile.

ATKINSON  
Please. Enter.

11        **INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - LATER**

The two women are now sitting opposite each other, at a slight distance. ATKINSON in a chair, JOAN on a couch (Atkinson sometimes does couples therapy too).

ATKINSON  
So where are we at?

Joan takes a sip of her coffee and grimaces.

ATKINSON (CONT'D)  
Not good?

JOAN  
Not at all. *Ugh.*  
(beat)  
You know it used to be my dream to run my own coffee house. *Ha!*  
(beat)  
This would *not* have gone out with our name on it.

ATKINSON  
How *is* your job?

JOAN  
Oh it's --

She sighs.

JOAN (CONT'D)  
On paper it's highfalutin', but I'm basically a middleman between the board up in the clouds and the staff 'down below'. I'm just following orders, going through the motions.

ATKINSON  
Do you feel that way about the rest of your life?  
(beat)  
How are things at home?

JOAN  
It's -- y'know I'm engaged to Krish. It's good. He's good.

Joan looks at Atkinson, who is just pulling an 'intensive non-judgmental listening' face... So she goes further.

JOAN (CONT'D)

(sigh)

I don't know that it's *right*. Krish is a great guy, he's smart, he cares, but... He's maybe a little... vanilla? Like even the food he cooks is a little bland.

(beat)

God I feel ungrateful saying this.

Atkinson looks on, wisely.

JOAN (CONT'D)

When I was with Mac - my ex? - it was constant sex and craziness and my God the fights... But I never got over him.

ATKINSON

And then you met Krish -

JOAN

-- and *Krish* was so keen and so *safe* that I...

(wincing somewhat)

... went with the flow. I don't feel like I ever actively "chose" this, you know?

Atkinson nods sagely, and calmly. She's about to open her mouth when Joan continues:

JOAN (CONT'D)

And that's me all over. My whole *life* feels like a compromise. Looks good from the outside but...

(beat)

In my own 'life story' I should be the main character, right? But it's like I'm a bystander, watching myself getting stuck in these ruts...

(beat)

Maybe I'm just on autopilot because I'm scared of standing out or -- I don't know, people won't like me.

(beat)

Or maybe I'm just chickenshit. I don't know.

A long pause.

ATKINSON

And would you like that to change?

Joan contemplates that. She looks at Atkinson. She doesn't know how to answer.

12       **INT. THERAPIST'S WAITING ROOM - LATER**

As JOAN exits, she gets another message from Mac.

*Can we meet?*

She thinks. Seizes the day. Types a reply - hits *send*.

A frisson of exhilaration shivers through her.

13       **EXT. MAC'S HOTEL - LATER**

Quick establishing shot of an upscale downtown hotel...

14       **INT. HOTEL BAR. MAC'S HOTEL - CONTINUOUS**

The bar is fairly anonymous and quiet. Bland music playing as JOAN enters and looks around.

She spots MAC sitting at the bar. He glances up and smiles.

MOMENTS LATER:

She's in a booth seat beside him - they both have drinks.

MAC

So good to see you. *Love* this hair. Little streak things... Yowza.

JOAN

It's not too much? Phyllis at the salon kinda talked me into it...

He leans in, conspiratorially.

MAC

(hushed)

Then Phyllis at the salon needs a high five because you look hot as shit.

(beat)

I mean it.

Mac leans in closer, to push her hair behind her ear - an old familiar gesture - but she leans back.

Mac leans back, a little confused and deflated.

MAC (CONT'D)

Okay.

Joan fidgets, scooches back on the seat a little.

JOAN

You can't just touch my hair-

MAC

- but you came to see me.

JOAN

To talk. Because you asked me.

MAC

How's - uh -- ?

(pretending to forget  
Krish's name)

JOAN

Krish. He's good.

Mac looks at her. A loaded glance. A conversation they've had before... *He wants her.*

MAC

"Good".

(beat)

Sure sound *crazy* about this guy.

Joan looks down at her drink.

JOAN

*Mac* --

MAC

You don't love him -

JOAN

Mac, you and I tried "us" for  
like two years -

Mac gives her a look that asks "well *do you?*" again.

JOAN (CONT'D)

(firmly)

I am marrying Krish.

Mac just looks at her as if to say "oh yeah".

Joan buries her head in her hands for a moment.

JOAN (CONT'D)

God you're so --- *gahhhhh*

(exasperated beat)

You broke us up. You cut me  
loose. *Broke my fucking heart.*

(beat)

- then just when I put my  
whole... jigsaw back together you  
pop back up like a -- like a --

MAC

- an unflushed turd?

JOAN

- *not what I was going for*, but  
yes.

(beat)

You expect me to *trust* you?

MAC

You're right. I get it; look it  
took me a while to understand how  
I felt...

(he leans in)

... with us it's real. You *know*  
it.

A beat.

JOAN

(lying)

I don't know it.

Mac looks at her. He can read her like a listicle.

MAC

I wanna be with you.

(beat)

I'm serious. I'm here three days,  
then I'm back to San Jose. Come  
with me --

Joan is open-mouthed.

MAC (CONT'D)

Your work's got an office there,  
you can get a transfer. My  
apartment's *amazing*-

JOAN

I can't --

MAC

- there's a sushi place one block  
away that is *stellar* -- does an  
amazing green dragon roll.

Joan is tempted, but fighting it off.

JOAN

I can't just leave Krish.

MAC

No I know. You can't just leave  
Krish...

He touches her arm. It's electric. He leans in. They kiss  
for the briefest of moments. But then... No. She pulls  
back.

She stands.

JOAN

I shouldn't have come here --

Mac touches her arm.

MAC

Joan.

She looks back at him. She's torn.

MAC (CONT'D)

I'm in my usual suite.  
Three days.

Joan nods, nervously, and exits. Mac swirls the tiny straw around his cocktail. Like he's already won.

15 **INT. HALLWAY./KITCHEN. JOAN'S HOUSE - LATER**

Evening is setting in. JOAN enters, throws her keys in a bowl by the door and starts taking off her shoes. KRISH calls from the kitchen.

KRISH

That you baby?

JOAN

Uh-huh.

16 **INT. KITCHEN. JOAN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS**

She enters the kitchen and Krish gives her a kiss. He smells something on her breath.

KRISH

Woah. Froggy's been-a-drinkin'?

JOAN

There was a farewell party.

Krish nods -- and holds out a forkful of food for her to try.

She tastes it. It's bland. Clearly underwhelming. But he looks so expectant and keen she says:

JOAN (CONT'D)

Mmm! Amazing.

17 **INT. LOUNGE. JOAN'S HOUSE. - MOMENTS LATER**

They scooch up on the couch, bowls on their laps, holding a fork each. KRISH pours a glass of white wine each while JOAN picks up the TV remote and navigates to the HOME SCREEN - it's a smart TV.

JOAN  
What do you wanna watch?

KRISH  
I'm easy.

JOAN  
I'll see what's on Streamberry.

She fires up the Streamberry app. It's like a Netflix / Disney hybrid. A front page with lots of options on it. She starts scrolling down.

KRISH  
Hey, what about Sea of Tranquility?

Joan wrinkles her nose.

JOAN  
Eric said it blows -

KRISH  
Well if *Eric said...*

She nudges him playfully. Points out another show on the front page.

JOAN  
Loch Henry? Scottish murder thing.

KRISH  
Can't do another true crime. Not after Gacy.

Joan scrolls down...

JOAN  
Okay so what about...

... And then they both see it. There, in the cover flow.

A show whose thumbnail cover shows a woman with the same haircut as Joan.

But this isn't Joan. It's a famous prestigious actress. Specifically it is SALMA HAYEK.

And she *really IS styled like Joan - distinctive hairstyle and all.*

What's more -- the show is called JOAN IS AWFUL.

They're both silent for a moment. Then Krish LAUGHS.

KRISH  
Oh my God!





*TV Joan is driving to work, listening to HUMBLE by KENDRICK LAMAR. But TV Joan is getting into it, rapping along, throwing hand gestures -- the works.*

By now, real Joan is sitting alert, watching what's going on, speechless.

*And then TV Joan's car pulls up outside a building with the SONICLE logo outside it!*

A ten megaton bomb explodes inside Joan's head -

The blood drains from her face -

Cold existential horror roaring up within -

JOAN

I -  
I don't -  
Is --  
(beat)  
How. *How?*  
How is...

She looks at KRISH, almost dizzy. And then:

JOAN (CONT'D)

How did you do this?

KRISH

How did I do this?

JOAN

This is like a prank --

KRISH

I didn't do anything...

JOAN

But -- but -- wh -- how [etc]

*While they bicker, on the screen, TV Joan is sitting at her desk - in a room that looks a bit cooler than her real office - when her assistant, TV ERIC - who is also more handsome than his real life equivalent - sticks his head round the door.*

TV ERIC

*How's the coffee?*

TV JOAN

*Dogshit.*

TV ERIC

*I'll... get the machine replaced.*

Then we CUT to:

21        **INT. ERIC'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS**

ERIC is now watching JOAN IS AWFUL. Except he's not watching. He can't stand to see TV ERIC. He's burying his face in a pillow as he sits alongside his husband JULIAN.

ERIC  
Is he still there?

Julian, eyes fixed on TV Eric...

JULIAN  
Still there.

ERIC  
They made me like the gayest man on Earth.

JULIAN  
I like what he's wearing.

ERIC  
(muffled, into pillow)  
What the fuck is this? *How* the fuck is this? Do I really sound like him?

JULIAN  
(engrossed)  
Shhh --

ERIC  
- would you say he's better looking than me or-?

JULIAN  
- I'm watching this!

*On screen, TV Eric is talking to TV Joan:*

TV ERIC  
(a little apologetic)  
*Also Sandy's waiting for that 1015--*

*Joan groans a little.*

TV JOAN  
*Ugh her. Gimme five okay.*

22        **INT. LOUNGE. JOAN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS**

JOAN is pacing up and down, totally wiggling out, as the show continues to play in the background.

JOAN  
(gulping for air)  
Having -- panic -- attack --

KRISH is on his feet, trying to stop her hyperventilating.

KRISH  
Okay - slow your breathing. Slow  
your breathing honey -- feel the  
carpet beneath your feet...

This is preoccupying them so much they don't notice -  
fortunately for Joan - that *ON SCREEN TV Joan is receiving  
texts from MAC.*

JOAN  
(gasping, panicking)  
Shut up about the carpet -

KRISH  
Just feel the floor -

JOAN  
*FUCK THE FLOOR!*

*Now on screen, it's the scene where TV JOAN is in the middle  
of firing TV SANDY -- and it's around here we realise TV JOAN  
is COLDER than real Joan.*

TV SANDY  
*You're firing me?*

TV JOAN  
*That's correct.*

We jump to:

23 **INT. BAR - CONTINUOUS**

SANDY is hunkered down in front of the show with Pal

TV JOAN  
*Your audio algorithm's not gonna  
happen. Board says it's vaporware -*

TV SANDY  
*But our carbon footprint --*

TV JOAN  
*Isn't their concern...*

TV SANDY  
*I just put a deposit down on an  
apartment.*

TV JOAN  
*Also not their concern.*

Sandy is vindicated.

SANDY  
See? You see what she's like?

PAL  
Oh my God she is COLD...

*On screen, TV SANDY starts to weep.*

TV SANDY  
*Please not now.*

TV JOAN  
*If not now - when?*

*TV Joan rises and glides out of her office.*

PAL  
She did NOT say that?!

24      **INT. LOUNGE. JOAN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS**

JOAN is aghast at that --

JOAN  
I did NOT say that!

KRISH has his palms out, trying to placate a now panicking Joan...

KRISH  
I believe you

JOAN  
I did NOT!

25      **INT. ERIC'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS**

*TV JOAN walks out of her office toward TV ERIC, and nods coldly in the direction of TV SANDY, who is weeping in the seat behind her.*

TV JOAN  
*Call Brutus.  
(nods at Sandy)  
She's making me feel bad. Can he  
escort her out?*

TV ERIC touches Joan on the arm understandingly (a little "poor you").

Eric turns to JULIAN.

JULIAN  
Why are you consoling Joan?

ERIC  
Why am I consoling Joan?  
(beat)  
She was upset!

JULIAN  
She's being a bitch.

26      **INT. LOUNGE. JOAN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS**

JOAN is still freaking out at the depiction on screen:

JOAN  
They're making out I'm a monster.

KRISH  
(struggling to find  
something positive)  
Look - people love Salma Hayek,  
maybe it's not so -

JOAN  
(interrupting)  
Not so *WHAT?*

KRISH can't answer that.

JOAN (CONT'D)  
Not so BAD? Not so FUCKING INSANE?  
This is BAD and FUCKING INSANE  
Krish -

KRISH  
I know, I'm just trying to --  
You're right. I...

*On screen, TV Joan is vaping on the balcony.*

There's a terrible silence.

Joan's phone goes TING.

JOAN  
Oh God mom's seen it.  
(beat; realisation)  
Other people can see this!?! *Anyone  
with Streamberry can just watch  
this?!?*

TING

JOAN (CONT'D)  
Dad's seen it too.

TING

JOAN (CONT'D)

And Marianne - oh Jesus CHRIST --

She puts her head in her hands. But Krish's attention is caught by the scene on TV.

*TV JOAN is receiving a flurry of texts from MAC.*

*I'm only in town for a few days?*

*Can we meet?*

Krish's face darkens. What the fuck?

27 **INT. BAR - CONTINUOUS**

As SANDY and PAL watch...

*Onscreen, TV JOAN leans over the balcony, spots TV SANDY being escorted out by TV BRUTUS - and deliberately hurls her VAPESTICK at her head.*

*It hits TV Sandy -- who spins around, and just misses seeing TV Joan, who ducks out of view.*

SANDY

I knew it was her!

28 **INT. LOUNGE. JOAN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS**

KRISH turns to look at JOAN, who still has her head in her hands, melting down, almost rocking back and forth.

KRISH

Honey?

JOAN

(to self)

*Not happening not happening --*

KRISH

(firmly)

Honey.

Joan looks up.

JOAN

*What?*

KRISH

Has Mac been texting you?

Joan insta-lies:

JOAN

What? No!

Krish turns to look at the screen.

*TV Joan is sitting in her therapist's waiting room, when a TV version of Atkinson sticks her head round the door.*

*TV ATKINSON*  
(gesturing to enter)  
*Please. Enter.*

In the real world, Joan's eyes widen -- she knows what's coming -- she stammers - hunting for the remote

JOAN  
Let's turn this off.

Krish is transfixed.

KRISH  
No let's keep watching -

Joan spots the remote on the couch --

JOAN  
I want it off -

-- but Krish grabs it first.

KRISH  
NO.

*By now, on TV, the therapy session is in full swing:*

*TV ATKINSON*  
*You don't feel you have agency?*

*TV JOAN*  
*Not enough!*

*TV ATKINSON*  
*And how's life at home?*

*TV JOAN*  
*With Krish?*  
(beat)  
*He doesn't... thrill me. He's smart, kind, caring... But kind of vanilla. Like even the food he cooks is so bland.*

Krish glances down at the pasta bowl.

*TV ATKINSON*  
*How is he in bed?*

*TV JOAN*  
*Technically okay.*

TV ATKINSON  
*Technically?*

Real Krish, watching this, dies inside. Joan is crushed for him, and cringing for herself.

TV JOAN  
*With my ex-boyfriend, Mac, there was so much passion, so much sex, I mean really so much crazy wild constant sex...*  
(she smiles at the memory)

Joan looks sadly at Krish, whose reason for being has just drained out of him.

TV JOAN (CONT'D)  
*But then it ended... and I met Krish and he was so 'safe' I guess I just 'settled' with him... But the truth is I never got over Mac. And I think maybe I never want to.*  
(beat)  
*Feels good to say this out loud.*

During this: Joan's looking at Krish now.

JOAN  
Krish.

Krish is silent. She points at the TV.

JOAN (CONT'D)  
This is not real.

Krish looks at her in silence. Then back at the screen.

*TV Joan is now standing outside the therapist's office -- texting Mac.*

Krish quietly walks out of the room.

JOAN (CONT'D)  
Krish!

She runs off to follow him, as on TV...

*TV Joan walks into the hotel bar to meet TV Mac. They lock eyes and smile.*

28A **INT. MAC'S HOTEL BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Meanwhile, Mac is watching JOAN is AWFUL even though his legs have gone to sleep. He watches TV Joan meeting TV Mac.

MAC  
Jesus.



And meanwhile behind her on TV, TV JOAN *is home, settling in to watch TV with TV KRISH.*

TV JOAN  
*What do you wanna watch?*

TV KRISH  
*Sea of Tranquility?*

31 **INT. ERIC'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS**

ERIC and JULIAN are still watching at home.

*TV Joan wrinkles her nose.*

TV JOAN  
*Eric said it blows -*

TV KRISH  
(sarcastically)  
*Well if Eric said...*

Eric's not happy.

ERIC  
I never liked Krish.

*On TV: The in-Salma-Hayek-universe cover image for Joan is Awful shows CATE BLANCHETT playing Joan.*

TV KRISH  
*"Joan is Awful"! She's even got your hair.*

TV JOAN  
*Is that Cate Blanchett?*

32 **EXT. DRIVEWAY. JOAN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS**

Outside, KRISH gets in the driver's seat of his car and starts the engine.

JOAN  
It's a show - it's not real -- I don't know what it is, but that's not what happened -

He starts reversing out of the drive -- JOAN slams her palms on the window. He pauses and winds it down.

JOAN (CONT'D)  
I haven't even seen Mac in so long -  
- I don't even --

KRISH  
So show me your phone.

Joan has the wind knocked out of her. For a moment she can't respond. Then.

JOAN

What?

KRISH

In the show, Mac texted you, and you texted him back. So show me your phone.

Joan thinks fast.

JOAN

It's in the house.

KRISH

(not buying it)  
Is it Joan?

A long pause.

And then Joan looks down at the ground.

Krish winds the window up, rolls off the driveway and roars away in a rage.

33 **INT. LOUNGE. JOAN'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER**

Joan, tearful, messed up, walks back indoors, all the way into the lounge.

Just in time to see *TV KRISH storming out of the house.*

TV KRISH

*So show me your phone.*

TV JOAN

(cold, accusingly)  
*You never trusted me.*

TV KRISH

*They're right about you Joan.  
You're awful.*

He roars off. And the end credits appear.

Joan's phone rings. It's Mac.

She looks at it. Doesn't answer, but she grips it.

And then she HURLS it across the room, smashing it.

34 **EXT. JOAN'S HOUSE - NEXT MORNING**

Morning is breaking over the house.



ERIC

Joan --

JOAN

Krish has walked out - he's so mad  
with me - I just --

ERIC

JOAN!

That shuts her up. Eric looks at her like he's about to say  
goodbye to an animal that's going to be put down.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Try and keep it together for the  
next few minutes.

Joan stares at him -- *why?*

Just then, someone RAPS at the door. She glances round.  
BRUTUS the security guard is standing there, glaring at her  
sternly.

JOAN

What's Brutus doing here?

Eric looks at her with sympathy.

ERIC

You let slip about that whole  
algorithm... data server... carbon  
footprint... "thing". In the scene  
where you fired Sandy.

(beat)

Technically you broke your NDA.

JOAN

Wuh -

(beat)

But. That's not fair.

He indicates a CARDBOARD BOX on the floor by Joan's desk.

ERIC

(doesn't want to say this)

The board wants you out. Now.

Joan is totally stunned. She gazes at him.

ERIC (CONT'D)

(compassionately)

I'm here to help you pack.

She glances up at the balcony to see several former N/S CO-WORKERS looking at her from the vaping balcony. They duck out of sight as she glances at them.

39 **INT. LOUNGE. JOAN'S HOUSE - EVENING**

Later, she sits on her empty couch, the cardboard box beside her and a bottle of whiskey on the go, watching Episode Two of *Joan Is Awful* -- specifically retelling the scene where she's led out of the building.

*TV Joan is leaving the workplace -- she turns and defiantly flips the bird at the co-workers on the balcony -- they're sneering at her.*

*TV ERIC watches her leave from the balcony.*

*TV ERIC*  
(hushed, to self)  
*Sayonara my awful Empress.*

JOAN turns and looks at a NEWSPAPER on the couch beside her.

It shows MONA JAVADI, CEO of STREAMBERRY, INC, smiling in front of a big launch graphic for JOAN IS AWFUL.

The headline reads: STREAMBERRY CEO MONA JAVADI HAILS HOT NEW SHOW 'JOAN IS AWFUL'.

Joan GLARES at it.

40 **INT. SKILLANE LEGAL / LOBBY - MORNING**

The next day, Joan is entering a BUILDING -- a couple of people spot her and whisper. She tries to hide from shame.

41 **INT. SKILLANE LEGAL - CONTINUOUS**

She sits opposite her lawyer, SKILLANE. On the table, documentation and the NEWSPAPER PROFILE on MONA JAVADI, the CEO of Streamberry.

SKILLANE  
Well. I've checked it over. And I  
have to say that actually,  
legally... The Streamberry  
Corporation *can* do this.

JOAN is outraged.

JOAN  
*What? How?*

SKILLANE

Trust me, I'm as shocked as you are.

JOAN

But this show... it's using MY life! My name, my career -- *me* -- *it's using me!*

SKILLANE

- and you assigned them the right to exploit all of that -

JOAN

I did not! When?

Skillane slides a 78-page document across the table.

SKILLANE

Terms and conditions.

JOAN

I've never seen this.

SKILLANE

You have - you just haven't seen it printed out before. All *that* woulda popped up on your phone or whatever when you first signed up to Streamberry. And you clicked 'accept'.

Joan is leafing through the 78 pages in disbelief.

JOAN

I didn't *know* any of this was -- I mean how could (I)--

SKILLANE

I know - but you did accept it - so they're in the clear.

Joan closes the document, feeling sick.

JOAN

They can *not* do this to me.

SKILLANE

There are only so many ways for me to tell you they absolutely can.

Joan fumes. She looks at the newspaper article. At Javadi.

And then she looks at the screenshot from *Joan is Awful* showing Salma Hayek. A penny drops.

JOAN

Salma Hayek. I can sue Salma Hayek.

SKILLANE

For what?

JOAN

(puffing herself up)  
For... passing herself off as me.  
She has no right to do that.

SKILLANE

It's not really Salma Hayek.

JOAN

Yes it is.

Skillane reaches for the newspaper article and nudges her glasses up her nose.

SKILLANE

Technically no, the show just..  
(reading from newspaper  
article)  
"deploys a digital likeness of Ms  
Hayek".

She tosses the article back down.

SKILLANE (CONT'D)

They don't film her. She licensed  
her image to them. The entire show  
is CGI. It's generated by some kind  
of super-advanced deep-fake-quantum-  
computer hokey-pokey.

(beat)

They could make Salma Hayek blow a  
orangutan if they wanted to.

(beat; hurriedly)

I'm guessing the REAL Salma Hayek  
might object to that but - you get  
my point.

\*

Joan is dazed.

JOAN

It's all computers.

SKILLANE

That's how they get it on their  
service so fast.

Joan mouths air for a bit more...

JOAN

But -- I don't understand how they  
even know what I'm doing?

SKILLANE

You know how sometimes you got your phone face down on the table, you're in your kitchen talking to a friend about, I dunno, shoe deodorizers? But then an hour later you're emailed offers on shoe deodorizing, and every website you visit has a shoe deodorizing ad on it?

(beat)

That's how they know.

Skillane nods at the article.

SKILLANE (CONT'D)

According to that, they scrape the surveil data from phones, computers, smart TVs, all the information from anything and everything all around you...

She tosses another hefty document onto the table -

SKILLANE (CONT'D)

- information which you also signed over.

Joan looks at the document. *Gah*. And then aha! She has a thought:

JOAN

But - but but the show makes stuff up. Embellishes things. Makes me look worse than I am. Defamation!

Skillane shakes her head and taps the document.

SKILLANE

Page 53, paragraph 12. Something about creating dialogue and characters for dramatic purposes.

Joan looks defeated. She stands up. Walks around. Finally:

JOAN

FUCK.

SKILLANE

I agree.

Joan buries her head in her hands.

SKILLANE (CONT'D)

Hate to say it, but this thing is watertight. They got you every which way and then some.

(MORE)

SKILLANE (CONT'D)

(beat)

My advice is to try and ignore it.

Joan's eyes flash with angry disbelief.

JOAN

*Ignore it?* What the fuck kind of advice is that?

SKILLANE

(indicating documents)

Only kind I got.

Joan stands, fuming. Skillane exhales as she leaves.

42 **INT. SKILLANE LEGAL / LOBBY - LATER**

Joan exits, down the steps. As she does, a GUY spots her.

GUY

Sorry, do I know you?

JOAN

(abruptly and loudly)

GAAAAH

He backs off, alarmed and mystified.

43 **INT. HOTEL SUITE. MAC'S HOTEL - LATER**

MAC is in his suite, horrified, watching JOAN IS AWFUL. On screen, TV JOAN is listening to TV Skillane explain she's signed her life away.

Tap tap tap. It's the door.

He opens the door to find JOAN standing there, looking broken.

MAC

Oh! Hey.

JOAN

Can I come in?

MAC

Uh - sure. Yeah.

Joan shuffles past him, toward the lounge. Mac has a suite.

She stops. There on the TV today's episode of *Joan is Awful* is playing.

*The screen shows TV Joan standing in her lawyer's office, looking furious with TV SKILLANE.*

Mac fumbles for the remote.

MAC (CONT'D)  
Sorry - look - I --

He pauses it.

MAC (CONT'D)  
There.

Joan, crying, collapses into his arms.

MAC (CONT'D)  
Hey. Hey.

He strokes her hair. She puts her arms around him. Holds him tightly. Starts to kiss him.

44 **INT. BEDROOM. HOTEL SUITE. MAC'S HOTEL - MOMENTS LATER**

They're in bed, beneath the sheets, making out. But just as MAC is about to roll on top of her... He stops.

JOAN  
What's wrong.

MAC  
(hushed)  
I can't get hard.

JOAN  
Sure you can --

She reaches down with her hand -- starts manipulating him under the sheets. But Mac just sits there awkwardly.

Nothing's happening down there.

After a few moments JOAN leans in with a sultry whisper:

JOAN (CONT'D)  
Want me to do that horrible *thing*  
you like?

Mac leans away.

MAC  
This is too public.

JOAN  
It's just you and me.

MAC  
- it'll be *in the show* -

JOAN

But that's not us, that's...  
computer people - Salma Hayek and -

MAC

Great! I'll be the guy who can't  
get it up for Salma Hayek. I mean  
it's one thing not getting it up  
for say, you. But for Salma Hayek?  
(a bit whiny)  
Baby, people will laugh at me -

Joan is annoyed by his narcissism.

JOAN

At you? The show is called fucking  
*Joan Is Awful*. How do you think it  
is for me?

MAC

Okay look I know I said I wanted to  
be with you -

JOAN

You almost begged me --

MAC

- but I did not agree to be a  
public figure.

JOAN

Neither did I!

Wrapping herself in the sheets, she storms out of the room,  
catching the sheets on the door handle and getting  
frustrated.

MAC

(calling after)  
You did. Terms and conditions, page  
58.  
(raising voice to be  
heard)  
They just said so on your show!

45

**INT. LOUNGE. HOTEL SUITE. MAC'S HOTEL - CONTINUOUS**

She sits down in front of the TV, where *Joan is Awful* is  
still frozen on the scene in the lawyer's office.

JOAN miserably looks at the remote. Picks it up and points it  
at the TV. *Tap. The show unpauses.*

*TV Joan is in the middle of yelling.*

TV JOAN

*Paragraph this, paragraph that!*  
*Godammit!*

(beat)

*Wait a minute, I can sue Cate*  
*Blanchett!*

TV SKILLANE

*It's just her image. Whole thing's*  
*generated by some kind of deep-fake-*  
*quantum-computer hokey-pokey. They*  
*could make her blow a orangutan if*  
*they wanted to.*

(beat; hurriedly)

*I'm guessing Ms Blanchett might*  
*object to that but - you get my*  
*point.*

Joan sits up -- a seedling of inspiration forming.

46       **INT. JOAN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER**

Joan walks into the house, carrying some bags -- a large brown takeout bag, a small pharmacy bag, and a bag containing an AIRHORN.

In a series of *very quick cuts* -- a bit like a 'tooling up' montage from a Schwarzenegger movie -- she:

GRABS a cheerleader outfit from the dark recesses of a wardrobe.

Plonks the takeout bag on the kitchen counter -- removes a WHOPPER from the bag and eats it. Then another. And another. And another.

From the pharmacy bag she grabs a 500ml plastic bottle of a liquid called *Rapid Action MAX LAX* ("Caution: Strong Stuff" and "*Full Evacuation within 20m*").

She unscrews it, pours in a shot of WHISKEY. Shakes it up. Drinks it down in one.

Grabs the AIRHORN. Checks her watch - her stomach already churning.

47       **EXT. CHURCH - LATER**

Joan's car swerves to an urgent halt outside a CHURCH.

She's now got hair in bunches and is wearing a HOODIE.

She takes out a bright red lipstick, flips the rearview mirror...

... is about to put it on her lips when she stops.

And thinks.

48 **INT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS**

Inside the church, an N/S COUPLE are getting MARRIED.

PASTOR

If anyone knows a reason why these  
two may not be wed, let him speak  
now or forever --

JOAN bursts in at the rear, dressed in cheerleader gear,  
unsteady on her feet. She now has a PENIS drawn on her  
forehead in lipstick.

She does a LONG HONK on the airhorn. Everyone looks round.

JOAN

Merry Christmas One and All!

And with that she yanks down her skirt, squats and starts to  
SHIT copiously and spectacularly on the stone floor

*I mean -- we infer that she does. We don't really see it.*

Appalled N/S WEDDING GUESTS cower, vomit and run.

49 **INT. POLICE STATION - LATER**

JOAN laughs madly as she is photographed by police. With the  
penis still drawn on her forehead.

COP

What's so funny?

JOAN

Salma Hayek is gonna *hate this*.

The cop is utterly nonplussed.

COP

Why?

JOAN

Don't you watch *Joan is Awful*?

COP

No but it's on my list.

JOAN

Just you wait. I hear Episode 4's  
gonna be a *blast*.

Just then a FEMALE COP pokes their head round the door. Looks  
at Joan like she's a bad smell made flesh.

FEMALE COP  
Her lawyer's here. Posted bail.  
(beat)  
You're free to go. For now.

Joan salutes and starts walking out.

FEMALE COP (CONT'D)  
You're disgusting.

JOAN  
Thank you.

50 **INT. LOUNGE. JOAN'S HOUSE - LATER**

JOAN sits at home, triumphantly watching the scene in Joan is Awful Episode 4 in which *Salma Hayek bursts into a church with a penis drawn on her forehead.*

TV JOAN  
*Merry Christmas One and All!*

Joan, watching this, is cackling with delight and pouring herself a glass of wine.

51 **EXT. GAINSBOROUGH LEGAL OFFICE - DAY**

The following morning -- and it's a shot of a very upscale lawyer's office.

52 **INT. GAINSBOROUGH LEGAL OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

The 'church defecation' scene is playing on a laptop in Salma Hayek's management's office, as SALMA HAYEK, styled as HERSELF not JOAN, sits pointing at it in dismay.

SALMA HAYEK  
You see what they're showing me doing? Taking a dump in a *church*?

She looks at Gainsborough, who's terrified of her.

GAINSBOROUGH  
Well technically that's the 'Joan' character, not y(ou)--

Salma angrily spins the laptop round so Gainsborough can watch the scene play out -- we can't see it, but we can hear foul shitting noises and general church-shit mayhem.

SALMA HAYEK  
- So this 'character' here, whose face do they have? Do they have your face? Or my face?

She looks at Gainsborough - *answer the question*

GAINSBOROUGH

Your face.

SALMA HAYEK

*Salma Hayek's face.* And whose asshole is that doing the shitting? Hmm?

Gainsborough looks at the screen, and at Salma, and back at the screen. She's glaring at him. He's too scared to reply, but must anyway:

GAINSBOROUGH

(utter terror)

Uh... Salma Hayek's... asshole?

She SLAMS the laptop shut, making him jump.

SALMA HAYEK

I'm Roman Catholic, motherfucker! My grandmother, Rosa, was going to be a NUN!

(pointing at laptop)

What gives them the right to do this deep fake heretic abomination?

Gainsborough slides a DOCUMENT across the table toward her.

GAINSBOROUGH

Page 39, paragraph 8.

Salma looks at the document with disdain.

SALMA HAYEK

What's this?

GAINSBOROUGH

Your image rights agreement with Streamberry. Page 39, paragraph 8 specifically covers any acts or behaviors Joan may exhibit - up to, including and *beyond* defecation.

SALMA HAYEK

*Beyond* defecation?

GAINSBOROUGH

That's what it says.

Salma goes back to the paperwork, lost.

SALMA HAYEK

I'm dyslexic motherfucker. I pay you people to read this bullshit for me and make sure I'm protected. Don't I have rights?

GAINSBOROUGH

Only the ones you signed away.

Salma stops reading the document. Furious.

SALMA HAYEK

*[Rants in Spanish, then:]* What can we do to erase this from every machine?

GAINSBOROUGH

Nothing.

SALMA HAYEK

I'll sue them -

GAINSBOROUGH

- I've examined it exhaustively and there's no legal path at all. You can't sue them.

SALMA HAYEK

*Bullshit* - I'm gonna sue you, you useless expensive *maggot* --

Salma stands and tosses the document toward him.

SALMA HAYEK (CONT'D)

Here. Wipe your ass on this. I hope you get a paper cut on your *anus*.

He looks at the documents, contemplating that, as she exits.

53

**INT. LOUNGE. JOAN'S HOUSE - LATER**

JOAN'S asleep on the couch, surrounded by empty chip packets and a bottle of wine.

*Ding dong* -- the doorbell wakes her from her half-slumber.

MOMENTS LATER: she opens the door to find SALMA HAYEK standing there, holding an expensive handbag.

JOAN

What the *fuck*-

She starts talking nervously.

JOAN (CONT'D)

Okay. Hi. Hello. Yes. I wasn't expecting you to actually -

Salma says nothing - just stares at her. Looks her up and down, with disdain.

JOAN (CONT'D)

- but but you're here -

Joan backs away as Salma approaches, instantly intimidated.

JOAN (CONT'D)  
Uh - welcome to my home.

Salma walks closer -- Joan walks backwards - scared - like the Terminator is slowly stepping toward her.

JOAN (CONT'D)  
Look - I understand you're mad -

SALMA HAYEK  
Oh do you?

Salma is advancing. They're on the threshold of the living room now.

JOAN  
Please don't kill me Salma Hayek.

Salma watches Joan for a moment. Lets her squirm. Takes in the carnage of the room. Then:

SALMA HAYEK  
You're lucky I'm a humanitarian.

She steps back. Regards her with contempt.

SALMA HAYEK (CONT'D)  
What's wrong with you? Hmm? This behaviour of yours. Do you have no dignity? No shame?

JOAN  
- look the last few days have been pretty rough--

SALMA HAYEK  
(interrupting, angry)  
- so rough you had to go dump in the house of God?

Before Joan can answer, Salma escalates:

SALMA HAYEK (CONT'D)  
You wanna disrespect yourself, that's one thing - but you disrespected the church -

Joan opens her mouth but Salma won't be stopped-

SALMA HAYEK (CONT'D)  
- and you disrespected me! I do not want to be linked to your image!!

Wow. That's a bridge too far for Joan.

JOAN

I don't want to be linked to my image either! But they take my life, turn it into a CGI fucking drama - I lose my fiancée, lose my job... - my whole *existence* gets put out there, for everyone to watch -

Salma looks at her as she speaks. Joan is broken.

JOAN (CONT'D)

- you sign up to be the face of that. You're a fucking enabler! I should be yelling at you!

SALMA HAYEK

You are yelling at me!

JOAN

(losing it)

Well I gotta yell at SOMEBODY!

Joan slumps onto the couch.

JOAN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I just... had to do *something* you'd notice... so you'd call up Streamberry and tell them to pull the plug on the show.

SALMA HAYEK

You think I didn't already call them and say that?

Joan is surprised.

JOAN

And?

SALMA HAYEK

And they told me to go fuck myself.

Instant deflation for Joan.

JOAN

They did?

SALMA HAYEK

Yeah.

JOAN

You can't stop them?

Salma scoffs at that.

SALMA HAYEK

I thought for once I'd have control of **my** image. But no.

(beat)

Strawberry lied about everything. They said it would be prestige. Like my movie *Frida*? Okay maybe not that prestige - but still, not this.

(beat)

They even lied about the money. I thought they'd close the pay gap - - so I'd be getting the same as the "guys". But no. I got one tenth what they paid George Clooney.

JOAN

George Clooney's going to be in the show?

SALMA HAYEK

No, they're using his face for a Thomas the Tank Engine reboot. One tenth of that!

(realising something)

How much did they pay *you*?

JOAN

For what?

SALMA HAYEK

Your life rights!

JOAN

Nothing.

Salma simply can't believe that.

SALMA HAYEK

Nothing!?

JOAN

Not a thing.

Salma looks at how broken Joan is - how vulnerable and pathetic - and softens a little.

SALMA HAYEK

Jesus. They screwed us both. I'm sorry.

A beat.

JOAN

Do you know how Cate Blanchett feels about it?

SALMA HAYEK

Oh fuck her...

Salma snatches up the NEWSPAPER, open to the article about MONA JAVADI and the Streamberry 'Computer'.

SALMA HAYEK (CONT'D)

Look. This is the bad guy here. Mona Javadi. And fucking Strawberry-

JOAN

Streamberry...

SALMA HAYEK

Whatever.

Salma hands the newspaper to Joan, sighs and sits beside her.

Joan looks at the article -- at Mona and the Quomputer -- a thought forming while Salma grumbles, almost to herself:

SALMA HAYEK (CONT'D)

They don't even shoot it properly, it's all generated by their *machine*. 100 years of cinema reduced to a fucking app. I'd like to get their computer, rip its wires out and shove them up its algorithmic ass.

Joan looks up from the article.

JOAN

So what if we do that? What if we take down their system? This 'Quomputer' thing.

SALMA HAYEK

(scoffing)

Do I look like a hacker to you?

JOAN

No I mean *physically*, like you said. What have we got to lose?

Salma weighs this up -- yes, good point

JOAN (CONT'D)

(checking article)

Says here the server's just outside this Mona Javadi's office. We just get in there and --

SALMA HAYEK

- *just get in there?* That's on the top floor. We can't crawl up the side of the building like Spidermans -

JOAN

We don't have to. You're gonna walk in  
the front door.

SALMA HAYEK

We can't just walk in the front  
door.

JOAN

Yes we can.

SALMA HAYEK

They're not going to let us in.

JOAN

They'll let *you* in. Because you're  
*Salma Fucking Hayek*.

Salma thinks about that for a moment. *Yes. Yes she is!*

SALMA HAYEK

I am Salma fucking Hayek.

54       **EXT. STREAMBERRY HQ - LATER**

Wearing a YELLOW DRESS, SALMA HAYEK rides the escalator up in to the lobby. Someone going the other way almost swallows their own brain because it's *Salma Fucking Hayek*.

55       **INT. LOBBY. STREAMBERRY HQ - CONTINUOUS**

SALMA approaches the desk. The receptionist looks up and double-takes. She sits up as though royalty is upon her.

RECEPTIONIST  
Hey. Hello. Miss Hayek.

SALMA HAYEK  
I have a meeting with Mona Javadi.

The receptionist, flustered, looks at her system.

RECEPTIONIST  
Uh - of course - uh -- let me -- I  
can't -- it should be in the  
system... Do excuse me -- uh --

Salma leans in.

SALMA HAYEK  
There a restroom I can use?

RECEPTIONIST  
Sure - over there.

She points at a restroom in the lobby. Salma leans in,  
surreptitious:

SALMA HAYEK  
Too public. Thanks to your stupid  
show, everybody thinks I got  
diarrhea falling out my ass like  
hot *birria*. I just need to pee.

RECEPTIONIST  
Oh! Of course - uh -

She nods at a SECURITY GUARD by the entry system.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)  
Could you let Ms Hayek through?

He nods.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)  
Private restroom's down the  
corridor, on the right.

SALMA HAYEK  
Thank you.

Salma clears security, passes round the corner and RUNS. Just  
then the receptionist calls up to Ms Javadi.

56 **INT. MONA JAVADI'S OFFICE. STREAMBERRY HQ - CONTINUOUS**

MONA JAVADI, CEO of Streamberry, has a luxurious office on  
the top floor of Streamberry HQ.

She's sitting in the couch area being interviewed by a  
reporter we'll call FATIMA KLAAS from WIRED MAGAZINE.

Mona points at Fatima's Dictaphone.

MONA JAVADI  
You rolling? Great.

FATIMA  
So -- Ms Javadi -- a lot going on.  
Lot of heat around your new show-

Just then, Mona's assistant, LUCY, appears a distance away, clearing her throat politely. Mona ignores her.

MONA JAVADI  
I know right! I imagine you've got  
a *heap* of questions-

Lucy coughs again, more urgently. Mona is annoyed but being professional.

MONA JAVADI (CONT'D)  
Lucy, I'm in the middle of  
something here --

LUCY  
I think it might be important.

Mona makes a face to excuse herself, and sidles over to Lucy - the pair share a hushed conversation out of Fatima's earshot.

LUCY (CONT'D)  
Apparently Salma Hayek is  
downstairs asking to see you.

MONA JAVADI  
Didn't we tell her to go fuck  
herself this morning?

LUCY  
Maybe that's why?

Mona thinks for a moment.

MONA JAVADI  
Tell security to throw her out.

Lucy nods meekly. Mona goes back to her interview.

57 **INT. REAR. STREAMBERRY HQ - CONTINUOUS**

SALMA opens a FIRE EXIT at the back, letting JOAN into the building.

SALMA HAYEK  
They'll be wondering where I am.

JOAN  
So let's be quick.

They slide into a stairwell and jog up the steps.

58 **INT. LOBBY. STREAMBERRY HQ - CONTINUOUS**

In the lobby area, a couple of N/S SECURITY GUARDS are quizzing the RECEPTIONIST about where Salma Hayek is...

59 **INT. MONA JAVADI'S FLOOR. STREAMBERRY HQ - MOMENTS LATER**

JOAN and SALMA emerge from a door and immediately duck down behind a shelving unit and some seating.

Not far away, MONA JAVADI is standing in front of a gigantic multi-screen on one wall of her office, talking to FATIMA.

Currently it's showing feeds from CCTV cameras all around this floor -- showing computers, staff etc...

MONA JAVADI  
So this whole floor is content generation R&D. Experimental entertainment, computer-generated material...

FATIMA  
Like *Joan is Awful*?

Behind the shelving unit, Joan's ears perk up. She and Salma steal glances.

MONA JAVADI  
Exactly. And that's made *by this*.

Mona clicks a button. The screen shows an ominous looking device called the QUOMPUTER. It's a dark, humming cylindrical thing, about the size of a trashcan. It stands alone in the middle of a Perspex box in a darkened room surrounded by blinking lights.

MONA JAVADI (CONT'D)  
The Quomputer.

FATIMA  
A kind of Quantum Computer?

MONA JAVADI

Hence the name. An infinite content generator capable of willing entire multiverses into existence, and within those rendered worlds, shooting, editing and packaging fully edited programs which would normally take *months* to make... New possibilities. Such as...

FATIMA

*Joan is Awful.*

*Behind the shelving, Joan hisses to Salma:*

JOAN

*I wish they'd stop saying that.*

Mona smiles at Fatima.

MONA JAVADI

Correct.

She taps a button. JOAN IS AWFUL appears on the screen.

FATIMA

And Salma Hayek agreed to assign her image rights?

MONA JAVADI

Her team signed her right up.

FATIMA

Must've charged a lot of money.

MONA JAVADI

You'd think so but they said she wanted to be paid in NFTs... so it's only "Streamberry Bucks" pfff. Go figure.

Salma joins in the *scowling* from the hiding place.

SALMA HAYEK

*- mierda fucking manager --*

FATIMA

And the role Salma's depicting is based on a real Joan right?

MONA

Mm-hmm.

FATIMA

Why this particular woman? What's so special about her?

*In her hiding place, Joan is on tenterhooks to find out.*

MONA JAVADI  
Absolutely nothing.

Joan is deflated...

MONA JAVADI (CONT'D)  
The guys got a robot to throw a  
dart at random names on the  
subscriber roll. We needed a  
*totally average nobody-person* to  
test the system.

Fatima nods as though that's reasonable. Meanwhile, in her  
hiding place, Joan is appalled.

MONA JAVADI (CONT'D)  
The point is *Joan is Awful* is just  
the beginning. The aim is to launch  
unique content tailored to each  
individual user in our database -  
all 800 million of them --  
generated on the fly by our system.  
The most relatable content  
imaginable. A prestige drama  
retelling of your own life.

She taps a button. Up pops cover art for a whole GALAXY of  
user-targeted 'IS AWFUL' shows. GORDON IS AWFUL. MIGUEL IS  
AWFUL. SHRUTI IS AWFUL. And so on. Many star Salma Hayek.

MONA JAVADI (CONT'D)  
There's even one for you!

She taps something. FATIMA IS AWFUL suddenly appears.

MONA JAVADI (CONT'D)  
Couldn't resist!  
(beat; sotto:)  
That is actually real and will be  
available to stream from Friday.

Fatima looks at it, slightly horrified but having to smile.

FATIMA  
Why 'Awful'? Why is it all so  
*negative*?

Mona's glad she asked.

MONA JAVADI  
Great question. Truth is, we tried  
creating more affirmative content  
in a test cell --

She brings up an image showing a cover image for something  
called *BRIAN IS AWESOME* in which people are cheering a guy  
named Brian. Brian is absolutely delighted.

MONA JAVADI (CONT'D)

... but none of the subjects would buy it. Just doesn't chime with their neurotic view of themselves.

She clicks the remote -- an infographic shows a viewer watching an IS AWFUL show -- sad face emojis spinning out of the screen and into their soul.

MONA JAVADI (CONT'D)

What we found is if instead we focus on the user's *weak* or *selfish* or *craven* moments, it *confirms* their innermost fears, placing them in a state of mesmerized horror... which *really* drives engagement.

(beat)

They literally can't look away!

Joan and Salma, listening to this behind the shelving, are *incensed*

SALMA HAYEK

(hushed)

Let's *kill* that Quom-putata.

Joan nods grimly. The two women sneak away.

60

**INT. COMPUTER AREA. STREAMBERRY HQ - MOMENTS LATER**

JOAN and SALMA have snuck their way through to the R&D computer area. Servers with blinking lights, cables hither and thither... a warren of ominous humming boxes.

And then they spot a door with QUOMPUTER ROOM written on it. They slink in.

It's a big area, a bit like an auditorium. The QUOMPUTER is there, behind a BIG GLASS PARTITION at the back.

Nearer the door, sitting at a bunch of controls, is a TECH GEEK we'll call BEPPE. He has a SECURITY CARD round his neck.

There is a bank of MONITORS in front of him, like a bank of screens in a security centre, except all of them are showing scenes from different episodes of *JOAN IS AWFUL*...

Beppe's eating ramen, which he spills all down his front when he sees them enter the room.

BEPPE

Jesus Christ! Hey no-one's allowed in here-

BEPPE (CONT'D)

- even when they're Salma Hayek.

SALMA HAYEK

Call security and I break your arm.  
Don't think I won't. I do my own  
stunts. I will.

BEPPE

Yes Ms Hayek.

Salma looks at the Quomputer.

SALMA HAYEK

What's that?

Salma strides toward the Quomputer. She places her hands on  
the glass. THERE IT IS. She looks for a way in.

Meanwhile JOAN glances at the monitors. And double-takes.

Something has caught her eye. She steps nearer...

She's staring at one particular monitor... because on it, she  
can see HERSELF -- talking to MAC -- in the hotel bedroom  
scene we saw earlier.

It's confusing for Joan because on the screen -- yep, that is  
her. Not Salma Hayek playing her. It's *her*...

Joan turns to Beppe - and points at the monitor on which she  
can see herself in the hotel scene talking to Mac.

JOAN

What's that?

Beppe looks at his screen.

BEPPE

(like it's obvious)  
*Joan is Awful.*

Joan points at *herself* in the scene on the monitor.

JOAN

But that's *me*. It should be --  
(indicating Salma)  
-- her.

*Meanwhile SALMA tries the door of the QUOMPUTER  
compartment. No dice. There's a security lock above the  
door handle. She yanks on it -- nothing... she scowls.*

Beppe shrugs like it's obvious.

BEPPE

That's because that's the variant  
of *Joan is Awful* the Joan below you  
sees when she watches the show.

He may as well have said that in Mandarin.

JOAN  
The Joan 'below me' -- what?

BEPPE  
You're not the original Joan.  
That's source Joan.

SALMA HAYEK  
(calling over)  
Jane, we need a code for this  
thing.

Joan waves Salma off.

JOAN  
Source Joan?

BEPPE  
You're just 'a' Joan.

JOAN  
Who's Source Joan?

BEPPE  
The real Joan.

Beppe sighs. He taps a button on his keyboard. Two monitors side-by-side show two scenes. The right hand one is one we've seen -- it's Joan talking to ERIC in the office.

The other shows SOURCE JOAN - that is a REAL JOAN we've NEVER PREVIOUSLY SEEN talking to a REAL ERIC in her office.

Beppe points at SOURCE JOAN.

BEPPE (CONT'D)  
There. Source Joan.

JOAN  
I'm not *real* Joan?

(Meanwhile SALMA is looking for another way in to the QUOMPUTER compartment. She spots a FIRE CUPBOARD on the wall and strides toward it)

BEPPE  
No! You're a *version* of Joan played by a digital likeness of Annie Murphy.

JOAN  
Who's "Annie Murphy"?

Beppe quickly taps a key -- up pops footage of Annie Murphy on one of the screens. At junkets. In Schitt's Creek.

I told you so at the very start -- but yes it's true -- JOAN has indeed been played all along by ANNIE MURPHY.

*(From hereon in, for clarity, I'll refer to 'our' version of  
Joan as JOAN/AM - CB)*

SALMA HAYEK

Yeah, I knew you reminded me of  
someone. I didn't recognise you  
with a skunk on your head.

BEPPE

The actress? Look familiar?  
Schitt's Creek?

SALMA HAYEK

Yes, yes. I love that show.

BEPPE

You're playing an *adaptation* of Joan.

JOAN/AM

What the fuck are you guys talking about?

SALMA HAYEK

Now that's method acting.

He *again* taps the monitor with REAL JOAN on the TV. And JOAN/AM embarks upon the world's biggest existential crisis...

BEPPE

Look. Source Joan lives in reality. When Source Joan watches *Joan is Awful* on TV, she sees you playing her. That show is the fictive level we're on right now, here.

*Salma, meanwhile, opens the FIRE BOX and retrieves a FIRE AXE. Delighted, she starts heading for the Quomputer cabinet.*

*(Author's note: the following dialogue is of escalating logical complexity AND pace -- a bit like having the plot of a time travel anomaly movie explained to you at increasing speed. This is deliberate!)*

JOAN/AM

"Fictive level"?

BEPPE

(nodding)

Fictive level one, like I said, this is an *adaptation* of Joan's life. You're in a show right now.

He gesticulates around the room.

JOAN/AM

This is a show?

BEPPE

C'mon. Have you *seen* where you live? Who can afford that? It's a TV show house. Look at me. Michael Cera *licensed this face*- just like Annie Murphy licensed your face for Joan on level one, and Salma Hayek licensed her face for Joan on level two, and to play *herself* on this level-

*At the mention of her name Salma strides over, still holding the axe - much to Beppe's alarm.*

SALMA HAYEK  
I'm not playing myself. I am  
myself.

BEPPE  
Uh, no.

SALMA HAYEK  
Yes I am because I have real  
feelings. I feel the pain of my  
shoes and real anger. Me and Annie  
are angry.

BEPPE  
(nervous of the axe)  
- sure, it tracks you believe that  
because you're *coded to play*  
*yourself* on this level. You're a  
CGi likeness of you, playing you.

Salma looks at Beppe for a very long time. Totally blank  
face. Far too long. Eventually:

SALMA HAYEK  
What?

BEPPE  
(exasperated)  
*We're not in reality, we're on*  
*fictive level one.*

He gestures at the screen.

BEPPE (CONT'D)  
See this guy chose me as an avatar.  
And you're just echoing what Annie  
Murphy did in reality.

During that, he taps the keyboard again -- the REAL WORLD  
monitor zips forward to THIS SCENE, playing out at the  
'SOURCE LEVEL'. On the screen, CCTV style, REAL JOAN stands  
in the same room, talking to a REAL BEPPE, accompanied by a  
REAL ANNIE MURPHY who has her OWN HAIR and is wearing *the*  
*same DISTINCTIVE YELLOW DRESS* and standing in place of  
Salma Hayek in 'our' level...

*Dialogue speeds up:*

SALMA HAYEK  
(looking at 'reality'  
monitor)  
I am not an echo of Annie Murphy.  
Fuck Annie Murphy and fuck you.  
Where am I in reality?

BEPPE

In reality pfff I guess Ms. Hayek's  
in the world *somewhere*, in Zurich  
or on a beach or wherever Salma  
Hayek hangs out. But she's not in  
this story.

(nods at Joan)

By which I mean her story.

(nods at actual Joan)

I mean the real her's story. Not  
Annie Murphy. Source Joan. The  
source Joan who's on le--

Suddenly and without warning Joan PUNCHES BEPPE OUT --  
causing him to spin like a pinwheel in his chair. As he  
flies around she snaps the SECURITY PASS from his neck and  
takes the AXE from Salma -- who looks at her with newfound  
respect.

SALMA HAYEK

Oh thank you, that was so boring.  
You're my hero Annie Murphy.

JOAN/AM  
You guard the door, I'll kill  
that fucking computer.

Salma nods, pushes Beppe on his chair and uses it to start  
barricading the door.

61 **INT. STAIRWELL. STREAMBERRY HQ - CONTINUOUS**

Meanwhile the N/S SECURITY GUARDS are racing upstairs...

62 **INT. COMPUTER AREA. STREAMBERRY HQ - CONTINUOUS**

JOAN/AM enters the glass box and raises the axe when suddenly  
-- she pauses.

SALMA HAYEK  
Just kill it.

JOAN/AM  
Wait a moment.

Joan is troubled.

JOAN/AM (CONT'D)  
So inside this computer there's a  
version of you playing me, who  
thinks she's real...

Salma wants no more conceptual bullshit

SALMA HAYEK  
So what?

Suddenly - the voice of MONA JAVADI. Together with some  
guards, armed with NIGHTSTICKS. She eyes what's going on with  
alarm. Cautioning JOAN/AM to step back.

MONA JAVADI  
So if you destroy that, you destroy  
everybody inside every fictive  
universe above this one. Billions  
of simulated souls, all of whom  
believe themselves real, will die -  
instantly. Do you really want all  
that blood on your hands?

A beat. Joan screws up her face, thinking.

JOAN/AM  
Can you define "blood" for me here?

SALMA HAYEK  
*Fucking kill it already!*

MONA JAVADI

... And that's a Quantum computer.  
We don't even know how it works,  
it's basically magic. Smash it and  
the ripples of your actions could  
cascade down, causing Source Joan  
herself to copy you -

She points to the monitor showing the REALITY LEVEL of the  
JOAN-I-VERSE--

*On that screen, SOURCE JOAN is standing in the glass box  
before the QUOMPUTER, while REAL ANNIE MURPHY looks on  
(standing in the position Salma Hayek is in now).*

SALMA HAYEK

What are you saying?

MONA JAVADI

... I'm saying the level we exist  
in *now* will *also* cease to exist.

SALMA HAYEK

So I would die?

MONA JAVADI

Instantly.

SALMA HAYEK

(to Joan)  
Put that fucking axe down.

MONA JAVADI

She's right Joan.

Joan holds the axe, weighing up her options.

MONA JAVADI (CONT'D)

Do as you're told.

JOAN/AM looks at the axe. And thinks. A beat.

JOAN/AM

I can't.

She screws up her eyes - performing calculations that make  
her head hurt --

JOAN/AM (CONT'D)

- the fact I'm standing *here* at all  
means Source Joan's *already* stood  
here in reality --

[Salma Hayek is holding her head]

JOAN/AM (CONT'D)

- no matter what I wanna do, the events this is based on have already happened... It's not my decision... It's Joan's.

(beat; realization)

I'm just a supporting character in the story of her life.

Salma is revolted by the thought of that.

SALMA HAYEK

Chop your own head off-

JOAN/AM's arms start to move without her permission - her fingers gripping the axe --

JOAN/AM

Woah! - She's doing it -- Joan's doing it -- here she goes --

Like Jack Nicholson attacking a door in *The Shining*, she reaches back and swings the axe HEAVILY at the server.

As she does so, sparks fly.

And the world glitches -

We jump into the *Joan is Awful* TV show level --

For the next blow, Joan is played by SALMA HAYEK as CATE BLANCHETT looks on.

*FUTZ* - the world glitches again on this impact.

Then *another* blow -- and it's JOAN/AM again --

SALMA HAYEK looks at her own hands -- which are fritzing out -

SALMA HAYEK

If this is death I'm gonna sue you.

And then with an almighty *heave*, JOAN/AM delivers a DEATH BLOW with the axe.

And in that instant, we cut to the REALITY LEVEL.

The aspect ratio changes a little. Camerawork becomes more verite. It's all just a little more *grounded*.

And now Joan -- that is SOURCE JOAN (real JOAN, *actual JOAN*), is wiping sweat from her forehead.

ANNIE MURPHY - the real ANNIE MURPHY, the actor - is standing outside the glass where Salma Hayek was in the fictive level above.

They share a glance as Source Joan gets her breath back.

SOURCE JOAN  
I think we're done.

REAL ANNIE MURPHY  
Let's get out of-

*THWACK* -- she is wiped off-screen as she's tackled by an N/S SECURITY GUARD.

Further N/S ARMED GUARDS surround the glass walls. Source Joan puts her hands up.

And we cut to black for a moment and then --

63 **INT. STREAMBERRY HQ LOBBY - LATER**

Shortly afterward, SOURCE JOAN, her arms cuffed behind her, is being led away by a pair of cops. She glances over at reception, where ANNIE MURPHY -- the actor - is being quizzed by cops too.

They haul Joan down the escalator and out of view.

We cut to BLACK again briefly.

64 **INT. THERAPIST'S WAITING ROOM. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - DAY**

One year later, SOURCE JOAN sits in the waiting room serenely holding a paper coffee cup and looking at the framed abstract painting opposite.

She glances at a copy of VARIETY which says SALMA HAYEK FIRES AGENT.

Her therapist, SOURCE ATKINSON, opens the door. Atkinson looks a little like the 'Joan is Awful' version of Atkinson.

She gestures her in, with a smile.

SOURCE ATKINSON  
Please. Enter.

Source Joan stands up.

65 **INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER**

They've both taken their seats.

SOURCE ATKINSON  
So. Where are we at?

SOURCE JOAN  
Well I'm dating again. Three guys actually.

Source Atkinson raises an eyebrow with an impish smile.

SOURCE JOAN (CONT'D)  
Playing the field. Wanna be sure.  
(beat)  
Everyone involved knows, I've been  
upfront, they're cool with it -

SOURCE ATKINSON  
... And you are...?

SOURCE JOAN  
(chuckle)  
I'm *more* than cool with it.

They chuckle slightly.

SOURCE ATKINSON  
Great. And work?

SOURCE JOAN  
Well... my job now is far less  
uh... 'corporate'... but I'm my own  
boss, I treat the staff well and  
I'm *proud* of my work.

SOURCE ATKINSON  
Good for you.  
(beat)  
So maybe *now* do you feel like --

SOURCE JOAN  
- like the main character in my own  
life?  
(beat)  
I believe I do.

She smiles. And crosses her legs. As she does so -- we see she's wearing an ANKLE TRACKER on her right leg.

66 **EXT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - LATER**

SOURCE JOAN steps out of the building, confident, fresh.

A MAN stops for a moment as he spots her.

MAN  
Sorry -- do I know you?

SOURCE JOAN  
(smiling)  
I don't think so.

MAN  
Oh. You seem familiar... your hair  
maybe?

He gets self conscious.

MAN (CONT'D)

Maybe I've mistaken you for someone else.

SOURCE JOAN

Maybe.

MAN

I'm sorry. Have a good day.

SOURCE JOAN

I will!

And as he leaves, Joan walks off confidently, away and up the street, back in business.

67 **INT. JOAN'S COFFEE SHOP - DAY**

Joan is behind a counter, handing a latte to a customer.  
(NB *Someone who looks a heck of a lot like ERIC also seems to work there.*)

SOURCE JOAN

There you go - have a great day.

She turns to wipe the pipes of the coffee machine thing which I don't know what the fuck it's called when she hears the voice of the next customer.

ANNIE MURPHY

Hey Joan.

SOURCE JOAN

Hey Annie! The usual?

ANNIE MURPHY

(nodding)

The usual.

They smile - we cut wider to see Annie is also wearing an ANKLE TRACKER -- and then...

68 **EXT. JOAN'S COFFEE SHOP - DAY**

- we cut outside, to reveal this place is JOAN'S COFFEE.