

"The Melting Pot"
Pilot episode

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COLD OPEN

FADE IN:

INT. RESTAURANT DINING AREA- DAY

A middle-class, family restaurant. Well lit. Upbeat atmosphere.

The Camera FOLLOWS--

TINA(early-20's), super-energetic but a little naive, as she WALKS(almost skips) through the restaurant-- suddenly interrupted--

MALE VOICE(O.S.)

Excuse me, waitress...

Camera PANS to a TABLE OF FOUR. A family. A Father, Mother, Boy, and Girl.

FATHER

Yea--I'm sorry but...

(pointing at his food)

This isn't what I ordered. I ordered the Porter House steak. This is...lasagna...

BOY

(pouting)

And I got a salad. But I wanted nachos.

TINA

(energized)

Surprise! Today is "Out of Order" day! See, basically, we take whatever you originally ordered and switch it around with somebody else's order. That way, when your food comes out, it's something completely unexpected! Sort of spices up the experience, wouldn't you say?

A beat. The family STARES at Tina--confused.

FATHER

But...what if I don't want lasagna?

TINA

(lost)

...I don't understand. Who wouldn't
want lasagna?

GIRL

(sniffing her drink)

...My soda smells funny.

The Mother takes the cup-- sniffs it.

MOTHER

(appalled)

This is beer.

TINA

Surprise again! We switch drinks too.

(to the Girl)

That's Bud Light, but, if you want, I
can get you a Guinness.

Off the Family, very confused.

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

EXT. RESTAURANT PARKING LOT- DAY

A black SUDAN pulls into a "RESERVED" spot. A MAN emerges. He is--

SIMON(early-40's), handsome, confident, but he can be a little awkward. He wears a spiffy collard shirt and tie.

Simon looks at the camera--a huge smile. Then he looks up towards the restaurant. The camera follows his gaze.

ANGLE ON the title of the resturant: **The Melting Pot**

SIMON TALKING HEAD:

In the Parking lot.

SIMON

Welcome to the Melting Pot!

(awkward beat, awkward smile)

Home of... the melting pot--no we don't actually have a melting pot dish... Or anything like it. Actually, it's called the "Melting Pot" because we serve foods of all kinds. Mexican, Italian, Asian... Soul food.

(jump cut)

My name is Simon and I am the General Manager here. I've worked for this company for over 10 years. Started back in '03. ...Good year. Good good year. ...I think that was right around the time George Bush started his downfall, but hey, great year for the restaurant business.

(jump cut)

Anyway, It's my job to make sure that every customer has a great experience from start to finish.

BACK TO SCENE

An OLDER COUPLE approaches the entrance of the resturant. Simon JOGS in front of them. Holds open the door.

The Woman enters first.

WOMAN
Thank-you, kind sir.

SIMON
My pleasure.

Just as the Man is about to enter, Simon CUTS him off -- entering behind the Woman in his place. The Man is left standing there for a beat--confused and offended.

INT. RESTAURANT KITCHEN- DAY

The entire resturant CREW has been assembled in the kitchen. The camera PANS ACROSS the several faces of the EMPLOYEES. Tina, along with other VARIOUS FACES that we will get to know later.

We get a good look at the servers UNIFORMS. Blue jeans. And a variation of different colored T-shirts-- all of which have the logo "The Melting Pot" on the front and back. Small, black waist aprons hold their order-books and money. The Kitchen crew wear the same thing except for their full-body aprons.

Simon STANDS at the front of the assembly. He holds a clip-board.

SIMON
Alright guys, lets settle down. We have a lot to go over so let's get started. Okay. First on the list: Out of Order Day. Big success. Real good turn out. A lot of positive feedback. Uh...just a few...dozen complaints. No big deal. Other than that, big big success.

ALAN(early-20's), smooth. Lay-back. A real ladies man.

ALAN
I'm sorry--did you say a few dozen?

SIMON
Great ideas are typically criticized at first, Alan. That goes without saying.

ALAN
So I'm guessing it was your idea...

SIMON

No...yes--look it doesn't matter because we're a team and my ideas automatically become your ideas. That's called teamwork.

ALAN

I really don't think that's how that works...

SIMON

(pressing on)

Anyway, it doesn't matter because we probably won't be doing it again. Not my doing. Those orders come from up top.

KATTY(early-20's), sarcastic and unmotivated.

KATTY

(quietly)

Thank God. It was starting to drive me nuts.

SIMON

Hmmm? You say something, Katty?

KATTY

(sarcastic)

I said: Oh darn! No more Out of Order Day!? I think I'm gonna cry.

Katty COVERS her face with her hands. Let's out a couple fake SNIFFLES. There's only one person who's falling for these fake tears--

SIMON

(concerned)

Katty, I understand your frustration. If you need to step outside for a moment to gather yourself, then I won't stop you.

KATTY

(sucker)

Thank-you.

Katty EXITS.

SIMON

Alright, heavy emotions in the room. No problem. Lets lighten the mood with our next order of business.

(MORE)

SIMON (CONT'D)

We've added three new members to our elite server staff. Three very promising additions. Carmen, Steven, and Riley!

The CAMERA PANS to each of the THREE INDIVIDUALS.

CARMEN(early-20's), Steven(late-20's), and Riley(early-20's). All three of them seem a little nervous to have the spotlight on them.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Riley! My main man. How ya liking the job so far?

RILEY TALKING HEAD:

RILEY

So... I've been here for about a week or so and... I gotta be honest, it's kinda crazy here. And I don't mean "roller coaster, theme park fun" crazy. I mean "come home, shoot your wife and kids, then shoot yourself" crazy.

(a beat)

I'm not exaggerating. However, the tips are pretty good so... I guess I'll stick around a little longer.

BACK TO SCENE

RILEY (CONT'D)

Uh, it's...good. Everything is...good.

SIMON

(mimicking Riley)

Well that's...good. That's very...good.

(then)

Carmen San Diego! What about you?

CARMEN TALKING HEAD:

A long beat as Carmen STARES at the camera. Then--

CARMEN

Why are we being recorded?...

BACK TO SCENE

CARMEN (CONT'D)

It's alright, I guess.

SIMON

Good enough! And Steven--

STEVEN

Uh, Simon, I'm not...new.

SIMON

What?

STEVEN

Yea, I'm not one of the new guys. I've been here for six months now.

SIMON

(as if)

Six months? No way! You must be a weekend-only guy...

STEVEN

Uh--no. Actually, I'm full time.

SIMON

Full time? ...Seriously?

STEVEN

(slowly nodding)

...Yea.

A beat. Simon looks to his crew. They all NOD in agreement with Steven.

SIMON

Oh. Well okay then...

(ghetto voice)

My bad, Steven. Won't happen again.

STEVEN

Yea, see that's the thing, Simon. We actually went over this last week.

...And the week before that. ...And the week before that...

An awkward beat.

SIMON

Oh...

(baffled)

Really?

STEVEN

Simon, do you not acknowledge my employment here?

SIMON

What? Are you kidding? Of course I do. Your part of the family, Steven. Steve. Steve-o. Steve Harvey!

STEVEN

Then how come you keep--

SIMON

(cutting him off)

Okay! Moving on! So, as you all know, our First Assistant, Jamie, has been working here for five years as of today. It's her five year anniversary! She's one of the finest managers we've ever had and she's an invaluable member of the team. So, when she comes in today, we gotta surprise her with something awesome. I need ideas!

Tina quickly RAISES her hand. She's so enthusiastic that she's bouncing up and down.

SIMON (CONT'D)

(pointing)

Tina!

TINA

A cake!

SIMON

A cake. Good. But I said "Anniversary". Not "Birthday". Try to keep up.

Tina's enthusiastic smile quickly FADES.

RANDOM EMPLOYEE #1

Chocolate and roses!

SIMON

It's not that kind of anniversary, but you're on the right track. ...Actually no. You're not on the right track at all. What's wrong with you?

RANDOM EMPLOYEE #2(O.S.)
Let's fire her!

SIMON
Hey, who said that?!

ALAN
How bout a free dinner.
(light bulb)
Yeah. At closing time we can sit her
down and we can all pitch in to give
her the best dining experience of her
life. We can play instruments. Maybe
sing for her...

The SOUND of agreement RIPPLES through the crowd.

SIMON
Hey, there ya go! Finally! Awesome
idea, Alan. You get a gold star for
today.

ALAN
What the hell's a gold star?

SIMON
Something that I'm starting today.

TINA
Ooooo! Ooooo! Can I have one?!

SIMON
No, Tina. You have to earn it. ...And
your idea sucked.

Tina's enthusiasm FADES yet again.

ALAN
If I get enough gold stars, can I get a
raise?

SIMON
(stuck)
Uh...

RANDOM EMPLOYEE #3
If Alan gets a raise, I want a raise
too. How do I get one of these gold
stars?

SIMON
(regretting)
You know what, screw the stars.

(MORE)

SIMON (CONT'D)

I'm done with it.

Alan looks at the camera. ROLLS his eyes. Just then--

CUSTOMER(O.S.)

Um excuse me!

The camera PANS OVER to the kitchen entrance. REVEAL a CUSTOMER.

CUSTOMER

For God's sake, my wife and I have been waiting to get served for thirty-minutes now. And we're not the only ones. We're hungry out here. Can we please get some service?

A beat of dead silence. Simon looks at the camera with a blank expression--speechless. As is the rest of the crew.

EXT. RESTAURANT PARKING LOT- DAY

A dark blue SUDAN pulls up--parks. A WOMAN emerges. She is: JAMIE(39), hard-working. Dedicated. All work and no play.

She STOPS. Looks at the camera for a beat. Then SIGHS. Clearly annoyed at the thought of being filmed.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT LOBBY- CONTINUOUS

Jamie ENTERS the restaurant. She is immediately greeted by one of the restaurants HOSTESSES--

ELLE(mid 20's), gorgeous. Polite. A warm, welcoming girl(which makes her perfect for her job).

ELLE

Good afternoon, Ms. Jamie.

JAMIE

(abrupt)

The doors are filthy. Clean them.

ELLE

Yes ma'am. I'll get right on it.

Jamie makes her way towards the kitchen. She's greeted by several EMPLOYEES on the way--

EMPLOYEE #1
How's it going, Jamie?

JAMIE
Tuck your shirt in.

JUMP CUT.

EMPLOYEE #2
Hey there, Ms. Jamie.

JAMIE
Business is slow. Clock out and go home.

ANGLE ON Employee #2--seriously?

ELLE TALKING HEAD:

ELLE
Ms. Jamie Douglass. A.K.A, the "Worker-naut". There are two things in this world that Ms. Jamie just can't stand. One, musicals. And two, an employee that's not working.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT KITCHEN- DAY

A group of EMPLOYEES lounge around near the entrance to the kitchen--having leisure conversation. Just then--

Jamie ENTERS. Upon seeing her, the Employees SCATTER-- like cock roaches when the lights come on. In the confusion, two of the employees BUMP into each other. Desperate to get away.

ANGLE ON Jamie--disgusted.

ELLE(V.O.)
That's why you have two options when you see Jamie coming. Start working...or run.

ELLE'S TALKING HEAD:

ELLE
...As far as things that she enjoys, all I can think of is the Nancy Grace show.

(MORE)

ELLE (CONT'D)

Honestly, I think she just enjoys hearing about the misfortune of children.

INT. RESTAURANT OFFICE- DAY

Jamie SITS at a desk--typing on the office computer. Simon's head POKES in through the open doorway.

SIMON

Knock knock!
(enters the office)
How are you, Ms. Jamie?

JAMIE

(without looking)
Tie your shoes.

Simon looks down. Sure enough, they're untied. Simon looks at the camera--amazing.

SIMON

Anyway...what'cha'doin'?

JAMIE

The paperwork that should've been done this morning.

SIMON

Oh thank God. I was hoping you'd do it for me. I hate doing that nerd work--

Jamie STOPS typing. Simon realizes what he said--

SIMON (CONT'D)

(changing the subject)
Uh--so anyway, Ms. Jamie. As you know, today is your five year anniversary. Therefore, I'd like to formally thank you for your five years of excellent service here at the Melting Pot. And I'd also like to present you with this--

Simon PULLS out a CHECK. Hands it to Jamie.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Your anniversary bonus check.

Jamie examines it.

JAMIE
Simon, the seal on this check is broken. Did you...?

SIMON
Yea. I kinda wanted to see how much you got.

JAMIE
Isn't that illegal?...

Just then, Tina ENTERS.

TINA
Happy fifth anniversary, Ms. Jamie!!

JAMIE
Oh God, Simon, no. You told her?

SIMON
Of course I told her, silly. I told everyone.

Jamie SIGHS--rubbing her forehead. Tina suddenly HITS Jamie in the arm with a QUICK JAB.

JAMIE
Ow!! Tina, what the hell!?

TINA
(bully voice)
Gotta give you your anniversary licks. That was one. You got four more.

SIMON
Dammit, Tina. Your still getting anniversary and birthday confused. There's no such thing as "anniversary licks".

TINA
Of course there is. My mom slaps my dad every year on their anniversary. ...And sometimes my dad slaps her back.

ANGLE ON Simon--disturbed.

JAMIE
(kill-joy)
Okay, look.

(MORE)

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Yes, today is my anniversary and I'm touched that you all care so much. But I don't. As far as I'm concerned, it's just another painful reminder of how long I've been in this hell-whole of a restaurant.

Tina GASPS--shocked by Jamie's negative outlook.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Now hopefully this violated check is the one and only gift you have in store for me. Seriously Simon, I don't want to deal with any of your wacky surprises.

TINA

You mean like last year?

A beat. Both Simon and Jamie become very quiet. They both look off into the distance--reminiscing.

JAMIE

(quietly)

Never again...

Tina--confused.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

No wacky surprises, Simon. Our we on the same page?

SIMON

Um...define "wacky"...

JAMIE

Simon!

SIMON

--Nope. Nope. No wacky surprises. Just your usually...boring day at work. Isn't that right, Tina?

TINA

(playing along)

Oh yea, sure. A typical lame, boring day at work. A total snooze-fest. It's gonna be like a congress meeting in here. Like a slumber party with no boys. Like sex with a condom. Did somebody turn on the fishing channel or what?

(MORE)

TINA (CONT'D)

Doesn't get much lamer than that,
right? It's gonna be like--

SIMON

(snapping)

Okay, Tina, enough. We get it. You know
what, get out. Go--go find something
to do. Go.

Off Tina, a defeated look.

INT. DINING AREA- DAY

Katty tends to a TABLE OF TWO. A couple. They examine the
menu.

WOMAN

(unsure)

Well...the Chicken Marsala looks very
appetizing but...so does the chili.
...Oh I don't know.

(then)

Honey, what do you think?

MAN

(also unsure)

I'm leaning towards the lobster dish
but...hmmm...

KATTY

(just kill me)

Any day now, people. It's a menu, not a
TV Guide.

The couple stare at Katty. Just then, Alan APPROACHES.

ALAN

Hey, Katty, ya busy?

KATTY

(relieved)

Not at all. What's up?

ALAN

Okay, it's about tonight...

ALAN'S TALKING HEAD:

ALAN (CONT'D)

Ladies and gentlemen. Allow me to
reveal unto you my master plan. Also
known as, Project P.

(MORE)

ALAN (CONT'D)

Step one, wait for the day to come when Simon ask us for ideas for some kind of random, stupid event. Believe it or not, it happens a lot. In this case, it was Jamie's anniversary. Step two, suggest a mild, warm-hearted dinner for one of our most hated managers. In this case, Jamie. Step three, use my previous suggestion as an excuse to throw one of the hottest parties this restaurant has ever seen! I'm talking about the party of the year! ...Yeah, I know it sounds underhanded, but hey, I'm under a lot of pressure here. I mean, I have a reputation to uphold. People expect me throw hot parties. ...It's like high school all over again. Anyway, there is a step four. But I'll reveal that step a little later.

BACK TO SCENE

MAN

Excuse me ma'am, I actually had a question about something.

KATTY

(to the Man--hand to his face)

You had your chance, Mr. Tortoise.
(back to Alan)

You're seriously gonna throw this party?

ALAN

You know it. It's gonna be insane.

KATTY

I can't believe it's Jamie's five year anniversary.

ALAN

I know, right. Five years?

KATTY

Just shoot me in the face.

ALAN

I'm surprised Jamie hasn't done it already.

WOMAN

Excuse me, waitress. I think I've made my decision.

KATTY

(to Woman--sarcastic)

Well, will wonders never cease!!

(then)

Now do me a favor and pipe down for a sec. I'm having a conversation.

ANGLE ON the Woman, highly offended.

KATTY (CONT'D)

(back to Alan)

I'm totally in. Sounds like fun.

ALAN

Alright. Awesome.

Just then, Simon APPROACHES.

SIMON

Hey, are you guys talking about the "Jamie thing."

ALAN

Yea. Katty's totally in.

KATTY

I'm totally in.

SIMON

Katty, you're totally out. Alan, you're out too.

ALAN

What?...

SIMON

It's off. Everything is off. The whole thing. Jamie's in a bad mood. We got into an argument. Heated words were exchanged. Tina punched her--

KATTY

Tina punched Jamie?!

SIMON

It's cool. It's cool. They squashed it...

WOMAN

Excuse me, sir. Are you the manager? I have a complaint--

SIMON

(quickly)

Pipe down for a sec, lady. I'm having a conversation.

ANGLE ON the Woman--I give up.

ALAN

Hold on, Simon. Jamie's always in a bad mood. That's just her personality. Doesn't mean we can't still do it. That's why they call it a surprise.

KATTY

(agreeing)

He's right, Simon. In fact, I think she wants to be surprised. She's practically begging for it.

SIMON

What?

KATTY

It's a woman thing, Simon. Sometimes we say "no" and act like we don't want things. But in reality, we just want more attention. If you're out shopping with a woman and she says she doesn't want that pair of shoes, she's really saying: You better buy me those freaking shoes!

SIMON

That actually sounds...accurate.

KATTY

Trust me, she wants this.

(sexy voice)

She wants it bad.

Just then, the couple STAND. Begin walking to the exit.

KATTY (CONT'D)

Hey! Where ya going? I'm not done taking your orders.

MAN

We're leaving. The service here sucks!

WOMAN

Yea. And you're a bunch of weirdos.
But she's right about this Jamie girl.
She probably does want it. And for the
record, I was going to get the chicken
marsala.

They EXIT.

KATTY

(to the couple,
sarcastic)

Thanks! Have a nice day! See ya next
time!

SIMON

(re: the couple)

Geez, what's up with those two?

KATTY

Who knows. They're total freaks. I
think I heard them say something about
worshipping the devil.

ALAN

Yea, I heard it too.

SIMON

(sold)

Aww. That explains it.

ALAN

(moving on)

C'mon, Simon, you can't call it off
now. Not with the whole crew as
excited as they are.

SIMON

Really? The crew is excited?

SIMON'S TALKING HEAD:

SIMON (CONT'D)

I guess you could say I have a knack
for keeping things lively here. I've
always been know for being the life of
the party. ...It's like, this
restaurant is a rap album and I'm Lil
John...

(a beat)

(MORE)

SIMON (CONT'D)

I keep it hype!!

BACK TO SCENE

ALAN

Look, I promise I'll keep it small and civilized. Jamie can't be mad about that, right?

A beat. Simon thinks. Then--

SIMON

Okay fine. It's still on, but lets keep it small, Alan. Nothing too extreme. Otherwise, Jamie will hunt me down. I think she's still mad about the incident last year.

KATTY

I heard about that. Weren't there wild animals involved?...

Simon LOOKS a the camera--a painful, reminiscing expression.

SIMON

(dark)

Everything changed that day...

Off Alan--confused.

INT. DINING AREA- HALLWAY- DAY

Carmen and Riley chat--

CARMEN

So the Wiz concert is this weekend...

RILEY

Yea, I heard it's gonna be crazy.

CARMEN

Hell yea. And crazy just happens to be right up my ally. You should totally take me.

RILEY

But...don't you have a boyfriend?

CARMEN

...Maybe.

Just then, Jamie ENTERS from the kitchen doors. Carmen

and Riley spot her. They SCATTER. But before they can get away--

JAMIE
(parent voice)
Hold it!

Carmen and Riley FREEZE simultaneously.

JAMIE (CONT'D)
Turn.

They both TURN to face Jamie. Jamie approaches.

CARMEN
I wasn't slacking off, Ms. Jamie. Riley kept flirting with me and he wouldn't let me walk away.

ANGLE ON Riley--really?

JAMIE
Don't get your panties in a bunch. You two aren't in trouble. ...I need your help.

RILEY
With what?

A beat. Jamie LOOKS around--searching for ease-droppers. None in sight.

JAMIE
(conspiracy)
I think Simon is up to something. Him and his constituents... they're plotting against me. I hear whispers. There's deception in the air.

ON Carmen and Riley--confused. A beat.

CARMEN
You mean...they're trying to get you fired?

JAMIE
What?--No. Of course not. But I think they're planning some kind of wacky surprise for my anniversary.

RILEY
I'm sorry--did you say "wacky"?

JAMIE

Yes, wacky! That's what they are. Look, I wouldn't expect you to know. Your both still new here. You haven't yet grasped the depth of your hopeless employment here...

Riley looks at the camera--disturbed.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

But the fact that you're new is precisely why I've come to you.

RILEY

...Okay, I'm not quite following you...

JAMIE

If the five years I've spent here has taught me anything, it's that Simon's surprises always turn ugly. Always. Last year on my anniversary, he got me kicked out of my apartment complex. Banned for life. Innocent people got hurt. But we don't speak about that day.

CARMEN

Oh my gosh--

JAMIE

So it goes without saying that I don't intend on a repeat. That's where you two come in. Since I can't be in all places at all times, I'll use you two as my eyes and ears. I want you to find out whatever you can about what Simon is planning. Then report it back to me. Since you're new, you have no real loyalty to Simon yet. So this assignment shouldn't be a problem, should it?

CARMEN

Depends. what's in it for us?

JAMIE

Nothing.

CARMEN

Can we get raises?

JAMIE

No.

CARMEN

Free food for a week?

JAMIE

Hell no.

CARMEN

Can we have this weekend off to go see the Wiz concert?

JAMIE

Fine, whatever.

CARMEN

Deal.

(to Riley)

You're gonna buy my ticket, right?

RILEY

(ignoring her)

What makes you so sure that they're planning something?

A beat. Jamie STARES at Riley with cold eyes. It's uncomfortable.

JAMIE

Trust me, they're planning something.

(suspicious)

You two haven't already heard something, have you?

RILEY

Nope. Haven't heard a thing.

CARMEN

Not a word. Guess your not as important to them as you thought.

ANGLE ON Jamie--ouch. She walks away, flustered.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. RESTURANT PARTY ROOM- DAY

An excluded dining area--meant for parties. Balloons and steamers decorate the room. In the corner, a DJ BOTH is being set-up. Two scarcely dressed WOMEN talk with Alan.

Simon ENTERS. Pauses. A beat. He looks around in shock and disbelief. Then--
He APPROACHES Alan--

ALAN

(to the women)

Actually, me and a friend were looking for a couple of actresses for this low budget film we're making. Interested?

...

SIMON

Alan!

ALAN

(turning)

Hey! There he is. Where you been, man? You're just in time to choose the music for the DJ...

SIMON

(re: the room)

Alan, for God's sake, what is all of this?

ALAN

(duh)

Anniversary preparations. What does it look like?

(then)

Hey, I was thinking about bringing in a karaoke machine. You think that'd be something Jamie could get in to? I mean, I know she hates musicals, but this is different, right?

SIMON

Alan, I thought you said this was gonna be small and civilized. But all of this is starting to look...a little urban.

ANGLE ON the African American DJ--overhearing what

Simon just said.

ALAN

No way. This isn't even a lot.

SIMON

Maybe not. But if Jamie finds out about that DJ both, she's gonna lynch me.

ANGLE ON the DJ again--starting to get upset.0

ALAN

Geez, Simon, relax. You said nothing too extreme, right? A couple decorations, a little music...that's not extreme at all.

SIMON

(nervous)

I don't know about this, Alan. I'm think I'm just gonna play it safe and call the whole thing off--

ALAN

Whoa whoa! Simon, easy! Don't say stuff like that. You're killing my high. Besides, we're way too deep in to call it quits now.

SIMON

What do you mean "too deep in"?

ALAN

Well, for starters, we've already paid the DJ.

SIMON

Paid him with what?...

ALAN

I just borrowed a little bit of money out of the restaurants safe. No big deal, right?

DJ

No refunds.

Simon looks at the camera--unbelievable.

ALAN

And we've also already paid the girls.

SIMON
 ...The girls?
 (re: the women)
 Alan, who--who are these women?

ALAN
 (to Simon)
 Simon, girls.
 (to women)
 Girls, Simon.
 (then)
 They're the cage dancers.

SIMON
 (what!?)
 The...cage dan--what?

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT HALLWAY- DAY

Camera FOLLOWS Riley. He walks past the Party Room doorway.
 Stops. Noticing the decorations. Just then--

Camera PANS OVER to Jamie. She's headed towards Riley.

RILEY (V.O.)
 And at that moment, I had to make a
 choice...

RILEY TALKING HEAD:

RILEY
 Sure, I could've easily called out to
 Jamie. Let her catch Simon in the act.
 Scored a date with Carmen this
 weekend. ...But to betray my co-
 workers. My boss. To soil my hands
 with their blood. How would I be able
 to sleep at night?
 (a beat)
 Ya know, I'd probably sleep just fine.
 On the other hand, I can definitely use
 this whole situation to my advantage.
 Pay attention.

BACK TO SCENE

Riley APPROACHES Jamie--stopping her before she reaches the
 Party Room.

RILEY (CONT'D)
Hey, Jamie, just who I was looking for.

JAMIE
What is it? Have you heard anything?...

RILEY
(lying)
As a matter of fact, I have. Everyone's been real "hush-hush" so it hasn't been easy. But I think I heard something about a surprise on the roof. Sounds like Simon's kind of thing, right?

JAMIE
The roof? Of course!
(bolting in the
opposite direction)
I've got him now!

Simon ENTERS upon hearing Jamie's voice--just in time to see her leaving.

SIMON
Holy crap, that was close. Riley, you saved me--

RILEY
(heartless)
Yea, lemme stop you right there. I didn't do it out of the goodness of my heart.

A beat. Simon SIGHS.

SIMON
(submissive)
What is it? What do you want?

Riley looks at the camera, an ear-to-ear smile.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT DINING AREA- DAY

Simon tends to a table--ONE MAN.

MAN #1
(quickly)
Alright, I'm gonna need the large serving Rack of Ribs.

(MORE)

MAN #1 (CONT'D)

I want it well cooked. Light on the rib sauce, but make sure they spread it evenly. For the side dishes, I want the cold slaw and mashed potatoes. Extra gravy on the potatoes, but make sure the gravy doesn't touch the cold slaw. For my drink I'll take a mango-lemon tea, very light ice because I have a condition. And instead of a lemon, I'll take a lime. Now, lets talk about how I want the ribs positioned on the plate...

As the man continues to order, the camera ANGLES ON Simon--slow down.

INT. RESTAURANT OFFICE- DAY

Riley SITS at the desk. Leaning back, feet kicked up. Just then--

Tina ENTERS.

TINA

...Riley?

RILEY

(cocky)

Well hello there, Tina. What brings you to my office?

TINA

Since when is this your office? And why are you just sitting around? Don't you have tables?

RILEY

I did have tables. ...Once upon a time. But I got somebody to cover them for me. Oh, and did I mention I still keep my table's tips.

TINA

(skeptical)

Who would agree to cover your tables and let you keep the tips?

(half-beat)

Wait, are you blackmailing someone?

Just then, Jamie ENTERS. Riley QUICKLY pulls his feet off of the desk--sits up. Alert. Scared.

JAMIE

Riley!

RILEY

(uh-oh)

Jamie, I can explain. Ya see--

JAMIE

(ignoring him)

There was nothing on the roof. Do you think they found out I was coming and changed locations...?

A beat. ANGLE ON Riley--I wasn't expecting that.

RILEY

(improvising)

Uh--yea. That's exactly what happened. Not surprising. There's eyes everywhere. If you're gonna catch Simon, you gotta be a step ahead of him.

JAMIE

One step ahead. You're right. But how?

RILEY

Uh...um--oh, the freezer!

JAMIE

The freezer...?

RILEY

Yea. Uh--I heard that's where Simon has his secret meetings to plan your surprise. All you gotta do is hide in the freezer and wait for Simon to come in. Then you'll catch him red-handed. In the very midst of his plotting.

JAMIE

Are you sure? I mean...rooftop surprises? Secret meetings in the freezer? This all sounds a little...

A beat. Jamie STARES at Riley, wide eyes, open mouth. She's had a revelation.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

(whisper)

...Wacky.

RILEY
 (whisper)
 Hurry.

Just as Jamie prepares to leave, Tina HITS her in the arm.
 Another quick jab.

JAMIE
 Ow! Dammit Tina!

TINA
 That's two. You got three more.

Jamie looks at the camera, rolls her eyes. Then she EXITS.

A beat. Tina STARES at Riley with judgmental eyes.

RILEY
 I can explain...

JAMIE
 No need. You're a double agent. Playing
 both sides of the field. Reaping all
 the possible benefits, at the cost of
 your dignity and morale. Sound about
 right?

A beat.

RILEY
 (ashamed)
 Yes.

INT. RESTAURANT DINING AREA- DAY

Simon tends to a table of TWO--a date. In the b.g. is the
 faint sound of MUSIC playing. The constant thump of the base.

SIMON
 (reading)
 Okay, so for you, I have the triple
 stack double cheeseburger with extra--

MALE DATE
 Hey, I'm sorry but, is there some kind
 of party going on?

A beat. ANGLE ON Simon--annoyed.

SIMON
 Uh...no. Nope. No party here.

MALE DATE

Are you sure?... Cause I hear music...

FEMALE DATE

(pointing)

Yea. And where are they going?

Camera PANS over to a group of young INDIVIDUALS--dressed for a party. They walk towards the back of the restaurant. Laughing and horse-playing.

MALE DATE

My girlfriend and I love crashing parties. We do it all the time.

FEMALE DATE

We just crashed this party the other night...I almost got into a cat-fight. It was such a rush!

MALE DATE

Is there any way we can move to the party section.

Off Simon--very annoyed.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT HALLWAY- DAY

The doors to Party Room are wide open. However, they're blocked off by velvet red ropes. Two large CLUB Bouncers stand on either side of entrance.

Simon APPROACHES. He attempts to enter but is quickly stopped by one of the Bouncers.

BOUNCER #1

Whoa--hey. Where you goin, flash?

SIMON

It's cool. I'm Simon. The general manager.

Simon tries to enter again--he is stopped again.

BOUNCER #1

Nice try. But the real general manager is already inside.

SIMON

Huh?...

BOUNCER #2

You heard him. Mr. Alan is already in attendance. So who are you suppose to be?

ANGLE ON Simon--why me?

SIMON

Look, I'm the real general manager. So if you'll just let me in, I can clear up this whole mess...

BOUNCER #1

Not unless your on the list.

SIMON

List? What list?

BOUNCER #2

Name?

SIMON

...Simon.

Bouncer #2 looks over a clipboard. Then--

BOUNCER #2

Nope. You're not on the list.

Simon looks at the camera--unbelievable. Just then--

A group of WOMEN--dressed to impress--approach. They walk right pass Simon. Bouncer #1 removes the red velvet rope. The women enter the Party Room.

BOUNCER #1

Enjoy the party, ladies.

SIMON

Hey, c'mon! What was that? You didn't check the list for them.

BOUNCER #1

You've obviously never been to a night club.

Just then, Alan comes out of the Party Room--stops at the red velvet rope.

ALAN

Hey! Simon!

(MORE)

ALAN (CONT'D)

(re:Bouncers)

The bouncers were a good touch, don't ya think? Makes us seem more exclusive.

SIMON

Alan, I swear to God! This whole thing has gotten way out of hand. These men think you're the general manager.

A beat. Alan briefly exchanges looks with both Bouncers. Skeptical looks.

SIMON (CONT'D)

...Well, go ahead and tell them.
...That I'm the real general manager...

ALAN

I would...if it were true. But I am
the general manager, Simon.

(pointing at his name
tag)

See.

CLOSE ON Alan's name tag. It reads: **Alan. General Manager.**

SIMON

What the hell...Alan, where did you...

Simon checks his own name tag. It's gone. Simon looks at the camera--a blank expression.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Alan, have you lost it?!

ALAN

Look, simon, with all do respect, you put me in charge of this anniversary surprise. now, i have a duty--no, an obligation, to carry-out this party--i mean, this dinner, to the best of my abilities. i'm sorry but, i just can't let anyone, not even you, get in the way. it's all for Jamie.

ALAN'S TALKING HEAD:

ALAN (CONT'D)
 In short, I'm throwing this party no
 matter what.

A beat. Simon--a blank expression. Then--

Simon suddenly LUNGES at Alan! With clear intent to do harm.
 The Bouncers RESTRAIN. Simon before he can get close enough.

SIMON
 You son of-- I'll kill you! If I go
 down for this, you're coming with me.

ALAN
 Okay, that's enough.
 (to Bouncers)
 Hey, this guy is bad for business. Why
 don't you go ahead and take him out
 back. Maybe...rough him up a bit. Just
 so he doesn't come back.

Simon STOPS struggling.

SIMON
 Wait a minute. Now just hold on...

The Bouncers drag Simon o.s.

SIMON(O.S.)(CONT'D)
 Alan!!!

INT. RESTAURANT KITCHEN- DAY

Camera FOLLOWS an EMPLOYEE. She walks through the kitchen--
 towards the back. She reaches the freezer. Enters--

CUT TO:

INT. FREEZER- CONTINUOUS

Just as the Employee enters, Jamie SUDDENLY burst out from
 behind a box.

JAMIE
 Got ya!!

The Employee SCREAMS. Runs out of the freezer--almost bumping
 into the camera on her way out. A beat. Jamie is left
 standing there. An apologetic, regretful expression on her
 face.

JAMIE'S TALKING HEAD:

In the freezer.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

I know what you're thinking. I'm pathetic. I mean look at me. Hiding behind a box of braised steak in this disgusting freezer...

(a beat)

But I don't give a damn what you think. I know what I'm doing.

(jump cut, Jamie shivers)

It's...really cold in here...

(jump cut)

Dammit!

CUT TO:

EXT. RESTAURANT BACK LOT- DAY

Jamie BURST out from the restaurant. Shivering. A beat. She pulls out a cigarette. Lights it.

Just then, Simon POPS out from the DUMPSTER near Jamie. He's covered in trash.

JAMIE

(shocked)

Oh my God!...Simon?...

SIMON

(crawling out)

Oh...hey. Jamie. How's it going?

JAMIE

Simon...what were you doing in the dumpster?

SIMON

Oh...nothing much. I was just...ya know...doing a little...treasure diving.

JAMIE

Treasure diving?

SIMON

Hey, it's a hobby--don't judge me.

JAMIE

And just what kind of treasure did you expect to find in the dumpster of a restaurant?

SIMON

I don't know. ...Secret recipes.

JAMIE

(ignoring his lies)

Simon, it kinda looks like... somebody threw you in there.

Just then--

Carmen APPROACHES from the door.

CARMEN

(abrupt)

Hey, there you are Jamie. Just wanted to let you know that Simon is planning a surprise dinner for you in the Party Room. Can I have the weekend off now?

(noticing Simon)

Oh, hey Simon.

A beat. Jamie STARES at Simon--anger building.

SIMON

(terrified)

Now just hold on one second, Jamie. I can explain...

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT HALLWAY- DAY

Jamie QUICKLY approaches the Party Room doors. Simon is right behind her.

SIMON

Jamie! Remember your blood pressure!

JAMIE

Simon, I've never had a problem with my blood pressure.

Jamie is STOPPED by the Bouncers.

BOUNCER #1

Whoa, hey. No one gets in unless they're on the list.

JAMIE

Now you listen to me, you overgrown brute. I don't know how much you were supposed to get paid to do this, but I can tell you right now that it won't be coming out of this restaurants budget.

(poking him)

So why don't you and your buddy do yourselves a favor and step aside--

SIMON

Jamie, I don't think that's a good idea...

BOUNCER #1

Wait, did he say your name is Jamie?

(reading the clipboard)

Okay, you're on the list. You can go.

A beat. Simon and Jamie exchange glances.

JAMIE

(flattered)

I'm on the list?... I've never been on any list...in my entire life.

BOUNCER #1

This isn't even a real list. It's just a piece of paper with the name "Jamie" scribbled at the top. ...Then at the bottom is a side note that says: "Don't let Simon in".

ANGLE ON Simon--seriously?

Just then, Alan and Katty EMERGE.

ALAN

Surprise! Welcome to your anniversary dinner, Ms.Jamie! Your reserved, V.I.P table awaits.

JAMIE

V.I.P?...

KATTY

Of course.

(MORE)

KATTY (CONT'D)

You're the guest of honor. This is all for you. Duh.

JAMIE

(very flattered)

I...I don't know what to say.

(to Simon)

Simon, you really put all of this together? For me?...

SIMON

(stuck)

Uh--

ALAN

Of course he did. He suggested it at our meeting this morning. Then he spent the whole day getting things ready.

KATTY

He even hid in the dumpster, waiting for you to take your smoke break so him and Carmen could do their little routine. Isn't that right, Simon?

A beat. Simon catches on.

SIMON

Yup! That's right. It's...all for you. Happy anniversary, Jamie!

Jamie HUGS Simon--overjoyed.

ALAN'S TALKING HEAD:

ALAN

Ladies and gentlemen, the final step of my master plan. Act like I did the party for Jamie and give all the credit to Simon. Now they're happy, I keep my job, and...

Camera WIDENS to reveal one of the cage dancers sitting next to Alan.

ALAN (CONT'D)

(re: cage dancer)

I get to go home with her.

BACK TO SCENE

SIMON

But wait a minute, Jamie. I thought you said you didn't want any surprises on your anniversary.

JAMIE

Oh, please. Of course I said that. I'm a woman. We always say stuff we don't mean. Truth is, I wanted it bad.

Simon looks at the camera--wow!

ALAN

(ushering)

Jamie, if you'll follow me.

Alan, Jamie, and Katty enter the Party Room.

SIMON

Alright! Now we're talking. It's time to par-tay!

Simon attempts to enter--the Bouncers stop him.

BOUNCER #2

Hey, you're still not on the list.

SIMON

You can't be serious! Did you not just see what happened?!

(re: Party Room)

Alan!! Jamie!! Hey, c'mon. Somebody come tell these guys to move.

Just then, Tina EMERGES. She wears a birthday hat. In her hands, a plate with a slice of cake on it.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Tina?...

TINA

(spiteful)

Guess what, Simon. We got Jamie a cake. Just like I said we should this morning. And guess what else. Everyone loves it! Everyone! Now who's got anniversary and birthdays confused?

SIMON

Tina, you're wearing a birthday hat...

TINA

It's an anniversary hat!!!

Tina THROWS the cake at Simon's face--a direct hit.

TINA (CONT'D)

(to the Bouncers)

Now take him out back. You know what
to do.

Off Simon--holy crap!

END OF ACT TWO

TAG

ALAN'S TALKING HEAD:

In the Party Room.

ALAN

So at the end of the day, everything worked out. I got my party. Jamie got her anniversary surprise. Riley and carmen got their date. And as for Simon...well...

CUT TO:

EXT. RESTAURANT BACK LOT- DAY

SPY SHOT: The two Bouncers carry Simon to the dumpster. Toss him in. Then walk away. A beat.

SIMON(O.S.)

Ow...

ALAN(V.O.)

Let's just say he got to spend the afternoon doing his favorite hobby.

A beat. Off Alan--a huge smile.

END OF SHOW