

INT. ASCEND MANAGEMENT - JIMMY'S OFFICE - DAY

AVA DANIELS (mid-20s, young Lizzy Caplan vibes, a bit raw, hair still a little wet from a poorly timed shower) sits with her head in her hands.

ANGLE ON: the uncomfortable expression of JIMMY LESAK, JR. (Paul W. Downs in a Tom Ford suit that he gets to keep), Ava's manager who sits across from her. There's an awkward silent beat. He's about to speak when:

SCENE 1
START

→ AVA

I should just jump out the window.

JIMMY

Well, you'd probably just break your legs 'cause of the fifth floor terrace. But if you're seriously thinking of hurting yourself--

AVA

I'm not. Plus I've told you how I would kill myself a million times. I'd wear a--

AVA (CONT'D)

Suicide vest on "Watch What Happens Live."

JIMMY

Suicide vest on "Watch What Happens Live," yeah.

AVA (CONT'D)

You can't get me a meeting to write on anything? I'm seriously done because of one mistake?

JIMMY

Well, it was one mistake, then a couple of replies, and a few articles that compiled some other things that you've apparently said in the past, so--

AVA

I didn't do anything wrong!

Ava starts to cry. Jimmy, sympathetic, hands her a FEW TISSUES, which she takes. Then he grabs a BUNCH MORE.

JIMMY

For your hair. You're dripping on the leather.

Ava buries her head in her hands and whimpers.

AVA

Fuck.

JIMMY

Look, what's happening to you is unfair.
And you know I love your strong female
POV! Obsessed.

(off her look)

But in the future, maybe you don't have
to say exactly how you're feeling about
everything, at all times.

AVA

Sorry if I was "unfiltered and honest" or
whatever, but that's literally what
people like about my writing. It's why
I'm successful! Now all of a sudden it's
a problem? I mean, where's the line?

SFX: A gchat ALERT chimes. Jimmy ignores it.

JIMMY

...I don't know. All I do know is you
just need to lay low for a bit. You know
how these things are -- it'll blow over.

AVA

I can't lay low -- I need to work. I
just bought a house.

JIMMY

Well maybe you should consider selling
it.

AVA

I have. My realtor says if I immediately
re-list it I'll lose a shit ton of money.
She told me she got me a bad deal!

(then)

Ugh. This is probably residual Catholic
guilt bullshit, but I can't help feeling
like this is all punishment for getting
fingered at my uncle's wake.

JIMMY

Okay, great example of what I was talking
about. I don't ever need to know where
you've been fingered.

AVA

(joking)

You don't know where a woman gets
fingered?

JIMMY

Ava. Listen. I'm really trying, and I'm
not gonna bail on you.

(MORE)

JIMMY (CONT'D)

There's just nothing I can do right now.
I've called everyone, but no one is
interested in helping you out right now.

AVA

Why not?

JIMMY

I don't know. If I'm reading between the
lines, I'd say you rose up really
quickly, and maybe there's a little bit
of resentment out there.

AVA

This is so unfair.

Ava starts to get more emotional. Jimmy's uncomfortable.

JIMMY

Would a hug make you feel better? I
can't technically touch you without
another person present, but I can call
someone? You can choose the gender--

There's a KNOCK at the door. Jimmy's assistant KAYLA (think
Meg Stalter) pops her head in.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Oh, great, I was just about to comfort--

KAYLA

Deborah Vance is on the line.

Jimmy's eyes widen as he throws on his HEADSET.

JIMMY

Ava! Could you please excuse me for just
one second, Kayla can you set her up
somewhere comfortable?

KAYLA

(obliviously cheery)
Absolutely.

AVA

We're in the middle of--

Ava is ushered out the door by Kayla.

JIMMY

(into headset)
Deborah! Perfect timing!

END

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INT. DEBORAH'S VEGAS MANSION - LIVING ROOM

SCENE 2 START

→ DEBORAH
...You'll have to excuse her. She has a UTI. Oh and her father just died.

AVA
Oh my god, I'm so sorry. About both. Are you... are you okay?

DEBORAH
Of course, I'm not the one who's dead.

Ava is taken aback.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
So: why are you here?

AVA
Um, to... interview for the job?

DEBORAH
And why are you interested in this particular job?

AVA
Oh! Um, well, it would obviously be an honor to work with someone like you, who's been working so, uh, successfully for so long. I mean, you're a legend!

DEBORAH
Wow. A legend. So you're a fan?

AVA
I mean, of course! Would I be here if I wasn't?

DEBORAH
What's your favorite joke of mine?
That hangs a second too long. You can hear a pin drop.

AVA
Well... that's SO hard...

DEBORAH
It shouldn't be. I've written over 30,000, so just pick one.

AVA
Um... well I would say your TV show is probably my favorite thing you've ever done.

DEBORAH
My "TV show"? My sitcom from 1973?
You've seen it?

AVA
I've... seen clips.

DEBORAH
Clips. Wonderful.

A tense beat. Ava tries to push through...

AVA
So on my last show, a lot of the actors
started as stand ups, so I actually have
a good amount of experience writing for--

DEBORAH
--I'm going to stop you right there. I'm
sorry but the position no longer exists.

AVA
Oh. Did that just happen? Because I got
a call this morning saying you wanted to
meet.

DEBORAH
It did just happen. I may be doing less
dates, so I'm not sure I should take on
new staff.

AVA
Uh, okay. That... sucks?

DEBORAH
Yes, well, luckily you didn't waste too
much time researching me.

AVA
...I'm sorry, did I do something to
offend you?

DEBORAH
Other than walking those chimney sweep
boots on my silk rug? No.

AVA
(thrown off)
Oh, sorry -- I didn't realize it was a
shoes-off situation.