

LADY DYNAMITE

#101

"Pilot"

Written by:

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and

Pam Brady

FIRST DRAFT
June 17, 2015

CHARACTER

CAST

MARIA BAMFORD..... MARIA BAMFORD

BRUCE BEN DAVID..... FRED MELAMED

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

DAGMAR

LARISSA

PATTON COP

OSCAR

AUDIO (VO)

WATER POLO COACH

MARK MCGRATH

KAREN GRISHAM (AGENT)

WAITER

REGINA

JANICE

DONNA

DAN

OLD AUDIO (VO)

MARILYN

JOEL

SUSAN

EXTRAS / FEATURED EXTRAS

CREEPY DRIVER

DELIVERY TEAM

RODRIGO

WATER POLO TEAM

STAND-UP AUDIENCE

LITTLE GIRL

RESTAURANT CUSTOMERS

HARBORVIEW OUTPATIENTS

NEIGHBORS (CROWD)

INTERIORS

BANK

RESTAURANT

BRUCE'S OFFICE

JUST FOR THE RECORD

POWER LUNCH

MARIA'S OLD HOUSE- LIVING
ROOM

HARBORVIEW OUTPATIENT

PURPLE VAN

BAMFORD HOME - KITCHEN

MARIA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN

BAMFORD HOME-MARIA'S BEDROOM

EXTERIORS

MARIA'S NEIGHBORHOOD

MARIA'S STREET

YARD

WEIRD PARK NEXT TO CAFE

MARIA'S HOUSE-FRONT CURB

MARIA'S NEIGHB. - FRONT DOOR

PUBLIC POOL

MARIA'S OLD HOUSE-DRIVEWAY

POWER BOULEVARD

MARIA'S FRONT YARD - BENCH

BAMFORD HOME - FRONT YARD

HARBORVIEW OUTPATIENT

MARIA'S BACKYARD

VESPA CRASH (PHOTOS ONLY)

MARIA'S NEIGHBORHOOD

PURPLE VAN

FADE IN:

OPENING MUSICAL NUMBER:

EXT. MARIA'S NEIGHBORHOOD -- DAY (PRESENT)

Maria runs down the road, laughing and dancing at the camera. Her hair is huge and full and gorgeous. Her makeup looks awesome. She wears her normal clothes. She's never felt better about herself. We HEAR A SONG: "Maria sassy sassafras Maria!" Maria turns and flips her hair. Slow mo.

MARIA
It's happening!

INT. BANK -- DAY (PRESENT)

Maria stands at the teller window. She receives a ton of dirty one dollar bills. She scoops up the bills and flips her hair. She luxuriates in the cash, flipping her hair again. Some real speed. Some slow mo. Maria throws the ones in the air, laughing and loving it.

MARIA
Fifty dollars! Per diem! Lunch
money. Rrrrr!

EXT. MARIA'S STREET -- DAY (PRESENT)

Maria runs down the street, jumping and laughing.

INT. RESTAURANT -- DAY (PRESENT)

Maria has a meal with a bicycle, "Lady and the Tramp" style. The noodle hangs from Maria's mouth and is attached to the front wheel of the bicycle. As the front wheel spins the pasta away from Maria, they nibble their way to the middle and kiss. The bicycle's bell RINGS.

EXT. STREET -- DAY (PRESENT)

Maria zooms down the street, driving a convertible 1950's Alfa Romeo BACKWARDS through a residential area. There's a giant white standard poodle riding shotgun. She laughs and checks her hair, which doesn't move. People dive out of the way.

MARIA
Where am I?

EXT. YARD -- DAY (PRESENT)

Maria blows a white fluffy dandelion ball into a baby fawn's face.

EXT. WEIRD PARK NEXT TO CAFE DE LECHE -- DAY (PRESENT)

Maria slides down the snake slide head first, laughing and flipping her hair. She sails off the slide and jumps with a victory fist in the air.

MARIA

First lady on the moon! All thanks
to Latrisse DuVois Hair Products by
Gary!

Maria flips her hair wildly left and right and up and down, all over the place. Finally an A.D. with a headset, utility belt and miniscript intercepts Maria at the bottom of the slide.

A.D.

Maria, hi. Quick heads up. You're
not in a hair commercial right now.

MARIA

(confused)
Oh. I'm not? But my hair.
(flips her hair again)
It's incredible.

A.D.

I know. But this is the other thing.

MARIA

The sports drink thing?

A.D.

No. The other one.

MARIA

String cheese?

A.D.

(whisper hushed)
Maria. The show. This is the show.

MARIA

Oh. MY show? I have a show. I'm
forty-four years old, I'm sun-damaged,
I'm bipolar two and I have a show!

A.D.

I know. It's great. We're all
excited. But you have a scene with
your manager now. That van'll take
you.

Maria flips her hair one last time and gets in a waiting van. A super CREEPY DRIVER smiles a toothless smile.

The A.D. runs in.

A.D. (CONT'D)
Whoa whoa. Not that van.

MARIA
Ah. Very good.
(to creepy driver)
I support you in your journey, sir!

Maria gets in the right van as they ZIP away, her head out the window.

MARIA (CONT'D)
I get why dogs do this!

TITLE CARD --

The words "LADY DYNAMITE" fly out of an explosion.

MARIA (V.O.)
LADY DYNAMITE!

INT. BRUCE'S OFFICE -- DAY (PRESENT)

Bruce sits behind his giant glass desk wearing a giant pair of cowboy boots with huge steel tips. Maria hurries in.

MARIA
Hey, Bruce. I'm back!

BRUCE
The prodigal sun has returned. That's s-u-n. For you are the light of my life.

Bruce quickly gets up and leans against the front of his desk.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
How do you feel? Refreshed? Renewed?

MARIA
Yes. And a little sleepy. Thanks to one thousand milligrams of a prominent mood stabilizer. Plus I had a spaghetti burger for lunch. I'm back in LA. And back on carbs.

BRUCE
That's because you're a gluten for punishment. Ah! I'm back, too! And I've also made some big changes.

Bruce crosses back behind his desk. (We want the blocking to feel deliberately bad.) He puts his giant boots up on the desk with a thud.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Plunk. Sexy boots. Move over Carrie Bradshaw. "Sex and the City" reference.

Bruce gets up and crosses in front of the desk. He kicks the metal trash can, getting his steel tip stuck in it. He then gets his other tip stuck on Maria's purse strap. He shakes them loose.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Hah hah! Look at us. Manager and client. Mother and baby bear. Now that you're back in town, tell me exactly what you want and I'll take a real shot at it. You want a TV show? I'll get you a million TV shows. You want a movie? I'll get you the biggest movie this world has ever seen.

MARIA

Bruce, none of those things are really interesting to me after my little personal detour.

BRUCE

Say no more. Understood. Obliquely phrased reference to past personal problems received.

MARIA

I just want to do stand-up in small intimate locales. I want to reconnect with my community. I want to make things right with the people I may have hurt before I left town.

BRUCE

Hah, good luck with that. You'll never be able to make things right with a certain Mr. Mark "Sugar Ray" McGrath. And the boat fire? Forget about it.

MARIA

Wait, what did I do to Mark McGrath? What boat fire?

BRUCE

All in the past, Sweet Dragonfly.
Like a cow facing up a set of stairs,
you must keep moooooooving forward.
Cows!

Bruce sits down behind his desk. As he crosses his legs, his boot tip hits the underside of the glass table, shattering it into a million pieces. Bruce reacts, super casually.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

It's fine.

(then)

Now Maria, don't worry about Mark "Sugar Ray" McGrath. You do you. I will get you that intimate, undesirable stand-up gig. And all will be well.

(off table)

Well, not all. This desk cost me seventy-two dollars. I just put my foot through my own nest egg. It is hand-blown Murano glass and it's a total loss. It's fine.

(then)

It's not fine.

MARIA

Bruce, you're bleeding.

BRUCE

I am. With passion. To reestablish your career. Now be a doll and shove my wallet in my mouth, everything's going grey.

EXT. MARIA'S HOUSE -- FRONT CURB -- DAY (PRESENT)

Maria supervises a DELIVERY TEAM as they install a park bench in the grass strip between the sidewalk and curb.

MARIA

Thanks, guys. Great work. I'm doing this to create a community around here. I want to reengage with my world. White lady can't sit on the floor! Hah! Life. Could I get your emails and maybe we could stay in touch?

One guy hands her a receipt and they all walk away.

MARIA (CONT'D)

(off receipt)

Thank you. This is a much better way to stay in touch. Plus now I have your work address! Rodrigo!

Maria writes down "Rodrigo" in a tiny adorable notebook with pugs on it.

MARIA (CONT'D)

(to herself)

Rodrigo, Rodrigo.

Maria's best friends, LARISSA and DAGMAR, walk up as Maria places a handmade sign on the bench that says "HAVE A SEAT!"

DAGMAR

Hey dipshit, what's with the bench?

MARIA

Well hello, Dagmar. My beloved friend. You just missed my new friend, Rodrigo. And as to your query, I bought this bench for the neighborhood. It's a bird feeder for people's bottoms.

DAGMAR

Also known as a blight.

LARISSA

Wow. So this thing is yours?

MARIA

Ha hah! Actually this thing is YOURS, Larissa.

(to Dagmar)

And yours, Dagmar.

(calling off to neighbors)

And yours, sir!

We see a guy across the street. He flips Maria off.

MARIA (CONT'D)

That guy really needs a bench.

Maria writes something in her notebook.

MARIA (CONT'D)

(writing)

Yelling man. Crocs. Learn name.

(MORE)

MARIA (CONT'D)

(then)

I skimmed an article in the New York Times that said the more names you know, the happier you are.

DAGMAR

Really? Because ever since I learned Larissa's name...

(makes farty noises
and points at her
rear)

LARISSA

Dagmar, all I try to do is be your friend and be close to you and all you do is push me away.

DAGMAR

(more farty noises
right at Larissa)

Well that's because you're a shitty friend. You didn't even visit Maria in her time of need.

MARIA

Oh that's okay. Nobody wants to go to those places. Plus I'm sure Larissa was busy.

LARISSA

Not really. I was just feeling like your energy was going to be way too intense for me. I'm an empath. When I feel negative emotions from other people, they stick to me hardcore. And then I start hurting. It's like I cared too much to show up.

DAGMAR

(more melodic fart
noises)

A Cop (PATTON COP) walks in, played by Patton Oswalt.

PATTON COP

Evening ladies. This bench here. Is it a community thing?

MARIA

Hopefully, Officer.

PATTON COP

Well, you got a permit for it?

MARIA

Why no, Officer. Is that required?

PATTON COP

Yes. By law. Of which I am a steward. If you don't have a permit now, you'll have to get one and bring it down to city hall first thing in the morning.

MARIA

But Officer, that's impossible. I'm doing stand-up tonight.

PATTON COP

(breaking character)

Wait, you're doing stand-up? In this thing?

MARIA

(breaks character)

Yeah, why? Is that bad?

PATTON COP

It's just not what I thought this was going to be.

MARIA

What did you think this was going to be?

PATTON COP

Original.

MARIA

Jesus. Can we talk about this later?
(getting it back on track)

Officer? And I'll do my best to get that permit.

PATTON COP

Okay.

MARIA

Okay! Bye, Officer!

Patton walks away, confused, looking around. Maria turns to Larissa and Dagmar.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Well, looks like it's time to meet the neighbors!

EXT. MARIA'S NEIGHBOR'S FRONT DOOR -- DAY (PRESENT)

Maria walks up to a front door with Larissa and Dagmar. An alarm goes off on Maria's phone.

MARIA

Oh, shoot. I forgot to renew my Ms. Magazine subscription.

DAGMAR

Wait, so you set a reminder for when it would be too late?

MARIA

I know. I need to make some changes with my systems.

LARISSA

Maria, I didn't visit you in your time of trouble. Let me be your personal assistant. I guess the best way to know I'll always be there for you is if you pay me.

DAGMAR

No.

LARISSA

I'll need thirty-five dollars an hour. And music in the house has to be my choice.

DAGMAR

No.

LARISSA

I don't work Wednesdays. It's a religious thing so you're not allowed to ask. And six weeks off in the summer like the Italians.

MARIA

You know what? I do need help. And it's okay to admit that. Larissa, I accept your offer with love and gratitude. You're hired.

DAGMAR

Huge mistake.

LARISSA

Great. I have a dentist appointment tomorrow so I'll be four hours late.

MARIA
Totally understood.

Maria rings the doorbell. A Mexican guy, OSCAR, answers.

MARIA (CONT'D)
Hi. And you are?

OSCAR
What?

MARIA
And your name is please, sir?

OSCAR
Uh, Oscar.

MARIA
Hello Oscar, I'm your neighbor and friend to be, Maria. I just installed a bench in front of my casa to foster a sense of community. And I wanted to invite you to come and enjoy it. How does that sound to you...
(pointedly)
Oscar?

OSCAR
Go fuck yourself.

Oscar slams the door in her face.

DAGMAR
Hey! This is a sweet lady with a heart of gold, ya fucking creep!

MARIA
It's okay, Dagmar. This is a process. And I got a name.

Maria pulls out a grid of the neighborhood and writes Oscar's name on his house as they all walk away from the house.

MARIA (CONT'D)
(victoriously)
"Oscar." Future pal.

EXT. PUBLIC POOL -- DAY (PRESENT)

Maria is in the pool with her notebook, a hat, listening to an iPod shuffle. The wires and shuffle unit are stuffed up inside the hat. We HEAR the audio as she swims.

AUDIO (V.O.)

Life is all about connections. We're
all in this world together.
Connected. Walking each other home.

Maria drift-swims into a water polo game. The WATER POLO
COACH goes crazy and BLOWS his whistle at her.

WATER POLO COACH (O.S.)

Hey, dipshit stupid! You're in the
middle of our game!

MARIA

What? Oh sorry, sir!

Maria gets NAILED in the head by a ball.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Ahhh!

(then)

I'm leaving! Good game. Play hard,
boys! Water polo is definitely a
real sport.

Maria lunge-swims to the edge of the pool where MARK MCGRATH
towels off.

MARK MCGRATH

Maria Bamford causing trouble. Big
surprise. Parentheses sarcasm.

MARIA

Sugar Ray's Mark McGrath! I'm so
sorry about what I did to you. Which
was what again? Did we, you know,
do it?

She makes sex symbols with her hands and thrusting hip
movements in the pool with her water noodle. She lightly
taps her cheeks with the noodle during the following:

MARIA (CONT'D)

Did I disappoint you sexually?

MARK MCGRATH

Please. I'm Mark McGrath. Like
that would ever happen? I could
fuck any one of these water polo
players right now if I wanted to.
Don't bullshit a bullshitter, alright?
You know what you did.

MARIA

You know what? You're right. It
doesn't matter what I did.

MARK MCGRATH
That's not what I'm saying.

MARIA
What matters is, I hurt you. And I
want to make this right. I guess
what I'm saying is...
(singing, not "I Just
Want to Fly")
I apologize...

MARK MCGRATH
Fuck you, Maria. That's not even
the real melody.

MARIA
I know. We can't afford it. Mark,
I'm going to make this right between
us.

MARK MCGRATH
Please don't.

MARIA
I heard "please." And the classic
answer back? You're welcome.

Mark McGrath just shakes his head and walks away.

INT. JUST FOR THE RECORD -- NIGHT (PRESENT)

Maria is on stage doing her act.

MARIA
(to audience)
I was thinking about getting plastic
surgery. I'm going to get the part
of my brain removed that cares about
what other people think. And have
my hands replaced with suction cups.
Because they are good for gripping.

Patton, in his cop outfit, comes onstage from the wings and
quietly approaches Maria.

PATTON COP
Maria, can I talk to you for a second?

MARIA
Oh hello, Officer.
(a little confused)
I thought I was going to run into
you later when it looked like I wasn't
going to get that bench permit but
at the last second I do.

PATTON COP
 Look, Maria, friend to friend. You
 can't do stand-up in your show.
 It's been done. You're dealing with
 a tired trope.

MARIA
 (trying to get the
 crowd into it)
 HOW TIRED IS IT?

PATTON COP
 Don't.

MARIA
 I'm sorry. Who are you? The comedy
 police?

PATTON COP
 Yes. As a matter of fact I am.

Patton points to his badge. It says "COMEDY COP."

PATTON COP (CONT'D)
 Comedy is subjective. Enforcing it,
 is not.

MARIA
 But Patton, come on. I need to talk
 directly to my audience. I'm going
 to jump around in time with my stories
 and I want to make sure everybody
 can follow it.

PATTON COP
 Well how about giving your audience
 some credit? Today's viewers can
 handle form-breaking narrative
 structure. We've all seen "Breaking
 Bad." They're smart enough to handle
 a time jump.

MARIA
 I think they're smart enough to get
 it in the middle of a sentence because--

INT. POWER LUNCH -- DAY (LA PAST)

CLOSE UP -- on a pink teddy bear floating in a water feature.
 It has one eye missing a la "Breaking Bad." Maria pulls the
 teddy bear out of the fountain and hands it to a little girl.

MARIA
 You should have your mom sew that
 eye back on. It's unsettling.

Maria sees KAREN GRISHAM (TALENT AGENT) waving to her from a power table. Maria walks up as Karen Grisham holds out her arms. Karen Grisham is a force of nature. All business. All the time.

KAREN GRISHAM
Karen Grisham. Congratulations,
Maria. You made the Grish list.

Karen smothers her in a hug that almost seems like a headlock or breastfeeding. Either way it goes on way too long. Karen releases Maria and smacks her on the ass.

KAREN GRISHAM (CONT'D)
Every time I walk into a room, I
know exactly how I would kill each
person I see.

The WAITER walks up.

WAITER
Arnold Palmer?

KAREN GRISHAM
Elbow to the forehead and golf pencil
through the heart.
(then)
Ah, you meant the beverage. Fuck
off, I'm in a meeting.

Maria and Karen both sit down.

KAREN GRISHAM (CONT'D)
Maria, I'm the most powerful talent
agent in this city or galaxy. If I
was repping Shakespeare, he would
have never had to suck so much dick.

MARIA
Oh. Ohhh. Okay.

KAREN GRISHAM
Look, open kimono time. I asked you
to lunch today because I'm a fan.
This is a fan lunch. I love you.
I'm in love with you. I want to be
your best friend.

MARIA
Oh so you want to represent me?

KAREN GRISHAM
Are you kidding?

(MORE)

KAREN GRISHAM (CONT'D)

I'd murder that waiter by snapping his gay neck and jamming an oyster fork in his eyes to rep you. But Karen Grisham has a full boat. Too many goddamn clients. No room in the manger. But you're in good hands. What's your manager's name again? Tim?

MARIA

It's Bruce Ben-David.

KAREN GRISHAM

Right. Did his AIDS clear up?

MARIA

He doesn't have AIDS.

KAREN GRISHAM

I'm kidding.
(to no one)
And this one's the comedian.

Karen puts her attention back on Maria, who is totally thrown by this exchange but tries to act casual.

KAREN GRISHAM (CONT'D)

If you ever need advice on how to handle your coke-fueled fame, you give my dingle a ringle. When paparazzi chase you around the Trevi fountain to get a shot of your filthy snapper, I will airlift you one of those Italian scooter things. What are they called again? Vvvvvuh-vuh-vuh...."

MARIA

Vespas?

KAREN GRISHAM

Ah hahahahahah! THAT'S SO FUNNY. You on a vespa is now my favorite image of all time! That's our inside joke. That's ours! That's OUR joke!

MARIA

Okay cool.

KAREN GRISHAM

I just hope while you're scooting away from your legion of psychotic stalkers, there'll be room for your

(MORE)

KAREN GRISHAM (CONT'D)
 best friend, ME, in your vespa's
 ssss-ssss-ide-cca--

MARIA
 Sidecar?

KAREN GRISHAM
 AHAHAHAH! You are a riot. Sidecar?!
 Are you even kidding me right now?!
 That's ours. Vespa sidecar is you
 and me! HAH! I adore you! I wish
 I could rep you! No. Stop. We're
 getting carried away. I'd rather be
 your best friend. What are you doing
 for breakfast tomorrow? Don't answer
 that. You're coming over for mangos
 and...

(exaggerated Spanish)
 Empanadathss. This has been a joy.

MARIA
 It's really fun getting to know you.

KAREN GRISHAM
 Great. Okay. Gotta go. I have a
 lunch.

Karen Grisham gets up and goes to the table right next to
 Maria. Maria looks around awkwardly and then leaves.

EXT. POWER LUNCH -- VALET STAND -- MOMENTS LATER (LA PAST)

Maria goes outside and sees a shiny RED VESPA SCOOTER with a
 sidecar. It has a huge bow on it and a giant sign that says
 "Precious Maria."

There's a TAP on the window. Maria looks over and sees Karen
 Grisham smiling and pointing.

KAREN GRISHAM
 (screaming through
 glass)
 It's for you! From before! Our
 private joke!

MARIA
 What?

Maria opens the note. CLOSE ON NOTE: It says, "Vespa, Hah!
 Best Friend Sidecar, Hah Hah Hah!" Maria stares at the note
 and Vespa super confused. Karen taps again and motions for
 Maria to get on the Vespa.

Maria looks at the Vespa. She really doesn't want to ride it. Karen keeps tapping on the window and smiling, gesturing for her to go. Maria gets on the Vespa and unsurely rides off.

INT. MARIA'S OLD HOUSE -- LIVING ROOM -- LATER (LA PAST)

Bruce lays on the couch on his stomach, legs in the air, like a teenage girl at a sleepover. (His hand is bandaged.) Maria works on her vision board.

BRUCE

So what else did she say? And don't leave out a thing.

MARIA

Well, she said we're BFFs.

BRUCE

(screams into the pillow)

Bruce flips up, now sitting Indian style on the couch, clutching a pillow.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Oh my god. She wants to represent you.

MARIA

No, she doesn't. She was really clear about just wanting to be best friends. And that sounds pretty good to me. I mean, all I need is you as my manager.

BRUCE

Are you crazy? Karen Grisham's our only chance at making some real money.

MARIA

Well she doesn't want to sign me. I can't force her to.

BRUCE

That's right. You can't. That's why I'm on the team. To beg someone else to be on the team.

(then)

She's a shark. Let me be the chum to send her into a frenzy of interest.

MARIA

Doesn't chum get devoured?

BRUCE
 God willing. Speaking of which, I
 have a surprise for you.

EXT. MARIA'S OLD HOUSE -- DRIVEWAY -- LATER (LA PAST)

Bruce gestures grandly to Maria's vespa which now has a sidecar sloppily soldered onto the original sidecar. There's a crappy bow on it. On the side of the new sloppy sidecar, we see the words: "CHUM BUCKET."

MARIA
 Bruce, what did you do?

BRUCE
 I chummed it up! What do you think?

MARIA
 I was going to return this thing.
 Now it's all messed up. There's
 solder all over everything.

BRUCE
 Oh, that's not solder. That's pieces
 of flesh from my hand. I got very
 confused by the blowtorch. Come on,
 let's make this kitten purr.

Bruce climbs into the rickety Chum Bucket sidecar. He barely fits. The sidecar groans with his mass.

MARIA
 Bruce, I really don't think this is
 a good idea.

BRUCE
 You're right. It's a GREAT idea.

MARIA
 (worried, pointing to
 the not-shitty sidecar)
 Maybe you should ride in this one.

BRUCE
 No, ma'am. That's for Karen.
 (prayer hands)
 Maximum respect. Fly pegasus!
 Victoriously to the heavens of Mount
 Grisham!

Maria hits the gas and herky jerks out of frame.

EXT. POWER BOULEVARD -- LATER (LA PAST)

Maria drives as Bruce rides in the chum bucket. He smiles, the wind in his face. (Use a combo of a really obvious STUNT DOUBLE driving the scooter, with FRONT FACING shots of Maria and Bruce against greenscreen, with a tiny sliver of real Maria and real Bruce just starting out)

BRUCE

I'm going to live forever!!!

Maria hits a pothole, the sidecar's sidecar disengages and shoots Bruce and the chum bucket into the side of a building.

(Catapult a doll at the building Super Dave style)

INT. BRUCE'S OFFICE -- DAY (PRESENT)

Maria stands looking at Bruce who is sitting behind his desk which is now a wooden board supported by two trashcans. His giant cowboy boots now have foam attached to his steel tips.

BRUCE

My Queen. I called Mark McGrath as you requested and I think we have a solution for you. Messer McGrath is on the phone. On mute. I hope.

(into phone)

Mark! Mark! I'm on fire!

(then)

Yes. It's on mute. Now watch me conduct the symphony that is show business.

(he hits unmute, into phone)

Mark, you old such and such.

MARK MCGRATH (O.S.)

Fuck off, Bruce.

BRUCE

Burned by the master. The new Rickles! Well, Mark, I have the one and only Maria Bamford here with me here.

MARK MCGRATH (O.S.)

Oh god.

MARIA

Hey Mark!

BRUCE

Great news.

(MORE)

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Maria has agreed to perform a stand-up benefit for your charity, Open Arms!

MARK MCGRATH (O.S.)

Really?

MARIA

Yes, Mark, super really. I really want to make things right with us.

MARK MCGRATH (O.S.)

Wow, Maria. I don't know what to say. This is huge. None of these liberal Hollywood jagbags have the stones to support open carry laws and gun rights.

MARIA

What's that now?

BRUCE

(wrapping it up)
And finis!

Bruce hits a bunch of buttons trying to hang up. The plywood desk almost tips over.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

(into phone)
We're all pleased as punch. And a good day to you, Master Ray.

Bruce hangs up and punctuates his excitement by playing a song on his nearby snare drum.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Everything's coming up Bamford for us!

MARIA

Gun rights? I don't feel good about this. I am very anti-gun.

BRUCE

I know. That's why I'm drumming. So we can't talk about it.
(then)
Drumming and not talking. No one's ever been fired while they're drumming!

EXT. MARIA'S FRONT YARD -- BENCH -- DAY (PRESENT)

Maria and Larissa check out the bench. It's covered in vulgar graffiti. And there are drug vials under it. Someone added to Maria's "HAVE A SEAT" sign the words: "ON MY DICK!" There are cock drawings all over it. Each one better than the next.

MARIA

This is rough.

LARISSA

Jesus, who was here? Gay Banksy?

Dagmar walks up.

DAGMAR

Told you. Blight.

MARIA

No, this is wonderful. This is the process. People are coming out of the woodwork. And they are expressing themselves. And to that I say bravo.

Maria reveals cushions and puts them on the bench, covering the graffiti.

MARIA (CONT'D)

See? Problem solved.

DAGMAR

No, definitely. I'm sure that's the end of it.

MARIA

Well great news. You know how I agreed to do that open carry benefit? Well I decided to turn it into a block party for the neighborhood. How great is that? I can kill two birds with one stone. Not a stone that comes out of a gun barrel. Which I don't support. But it's going to be for a group of people speaking their minds, which I do support.

LARISSA

Actually if you put a stone in a gun barrel you'll jam the mechanism. It won't go off. Renders it useless. Larissa fun fact: I'm a Civil War reenactor.

DAGMAR

Maria, how can you possibly justify supporting open carry laws?

MARIA

Well, being open is good. That's my thing now. Not hiding things. Wouldn't you rather know who in your pottery class has the assault rifle? Everybody should be open and direct and communicate. That's what brings a community together.

A neighbor, REGINA, comes up to Maria and yells at her.

REGINA

Hey, super cunt! Get rid of this fucking bench!

MARIA

Ah, hello. Thank you for directness. And your name is?

Maria pulls out her grid.

REGINA

Regina.

MARIA

"Regina."
(writing it down)
That's a beautiful name. Did you know Regina was the capitol of Saskatchewan.

REGINA

You can jam this bench up YOUR regine-a. That's right, I went after my own name. That's how crazy this bench is making me!

Regina STORMS off.

MARIA

Great talking with you, REGINA. Do you think there are two "n's" in Regina?

DAGMAR

I do not.

Patton shows up dressed like a cop again, acting badly.

PATTON COP

Afternoon, ladies. Maria. I'm going to need to see that bench permit now. Or I'll have to issue a bench warrant.

Patton notices a stage set up on Maria's front yard.

PATTON COP (CONT'D)

(breaking character,
off stage)

What is that? Is that a stage? With a brick wall behind it? Look, it's not just me. I've talked to Louie and some other people. Basically comedy's supreme court. And we aren't comfortable with you doing stand-up.

MARIA

I would argue that it's not even stand-up. I perform long-winded word salads that many would argue would not even qualify as comedy.

PATTON COP

I call bullshit. You are not getting off on a technicality. You just performed at Go Bananas. People went bananas!

MARIA

(then, worried)

Patton, what am I going to do? We're going to Duluth. We're going to my life in LA before things fell apart. How's the audience going to keep track of all that?

PATTON COP

Come on, Maria, you're better than this. Why don't you do something with color? Give the audience visual cues. Off the top of my head, in Duluth you're really depressed so you can use muted cool blues and greys. The way you showed the LA past before was so good. It was a hyperactive time. You had lots of oversaturated punchy colors. Lots of reds.

MARIA

That's just because we didn't color correct it yet.

PATTON COP

Well leave it. It's great. Happy accident.

MARIA

Thanks, Patton. You really think it's going to work?

PATTON COP

I honestly don't give a fuck. I read for the boyfriend part. Didn't get it. Now I'm a fucking cop. That's bullshit. You know what? Just don't do stand-up!

Patton storms off. He looks back over his shoulder.

PATTON COP (CONT'D)

(in character, sort of)

And get a permit for that bench!

INT. HARBORVIEW OUTPATIENT -- DAY (DULUTH)

Maria sits at a table surrounded by her therapy group. She looks all around, especially over her head.

MARIA

Too grey. Too yellow. More blue. Less blue. Split the difference.

(NOTE: As she says colors, the tint of the screen changes.)

MARIA (CONT'D)

That's it. Perfect.

JANICE, the psych therapist, hands Maria a blue posterboard.

JANICE

You want blue? Here's a blue one. Let's hear it for Maria who's lapping everyone with her vision boarding. She's on new meds so that gives her an advantage. Okay.

Maria gets to work on her fourth vision board. Janice hands out magazines. DONNA, a group member, raises her hand.

DONNA

Excuse me, I brought in the People mag Oscar issue and someone cut all the Oscars out and now I have no Oscars for my vision board. We should all not hog the Oscars. Dan!

Maria's vision board has vegetables, a microwave and a park bench. We see DAN's vision board. He has all the Oscars.

DAN

Sorry my dreams are inconvenient for you, DONNA.

MARIA

Whoa, hey, there's enough Oscars for everybody.

JANICE

Maria, that's okay. Let them experience their emotions. And there's not enough Oscars for everyone, as we tragically learn every year.

DAN

She took all the ice augers!

MARIA

Donna, Dan. We're all here to get along.

JANICE

Actually, Maria, we're not. We're here to make ourselves better. And sometimes that means expressing negative emotions constructively. So, what annoys you, Maria?

MARIA

Nothing.

JANICE

Come on. Does anyone here in group get you riled up? Really put a bee in your bonnet? Chap your heiney something nasty?

MARIA

No. Everyone here's real nice.

JANICE

Well maybe that's something we need to work on. Because Donna here is not very nice. See how easy that was to say?

Janice looks around. People are either catatonic or pissed.

JANICE (CONT'D)

Boy, did we do good work here today. Right, guys?

INT. PURPLE VAN -- DAY (DULUTH)

Maria sits in the back of the van looking out the window. Over bleak shots of town, We HEAR OLD AUDIO from the 60's.

OLD AUDIO

Duluth. The shining jewel of the Gopher State. The second largest city on Lake Superior's shores. Home of the longest freshwater sandbar in the world. But you can't get a drink here. It's made of sand. Duluth!

EXT. BAMFORD HOME -- FRONT YARD -- DAY (DULUTH)

Maria gets out of the purple van and is now played by a THIRD GRADE MARIA. (Like she's getting dropped off from school.) Third Grade Maria walks inside the house.

INT. BAMFORD HOME -- KITCHEN -- MOMENTS LATER (DULUTH)

Maria walks into the kitchen (now played by Maria). Her backpack is way too small. She wrestles with it, confused. Marilyn is there, eagerly greeting her with a juice box.

MARILYN

How was your day, honey?

MARIA

I don't want to go back there, Mom. Everyone's really angry and I'm not.

MARILYN

Just give it a little more time.

Marilyn hands Maria a catalogue.

MARILYN (CONT'D)

Ooh, look what I got for your vision board. It's a catalogue of furs. Your friends are going to go mad for this. In the fun 1930's way. Laughters laughed and flappers flapped. And then came the Fuhrer. He had his ideas. History repeats itself. Keep an eye out for it.

JOEL, Maria's Dad, walks in, grabbing his keys.

JOEL

Well, I gotta go see a man about a burrito.

MARILYN

Joel, you can't go out now. Maria just got home.

JOEL

I thought we weren't going to treat her differently because of the you-know-what koo koo roo?

MARILYN

Joel, use your noodle. She's teetering on the edge and you're going to hog down a big fat burrito?

JOEL

I'm just doing what I thought the game plan was, Marilyn. Jesus Christ, you can't keep changing the rules on me. Women. Right, Maria? You're like this too.

We HEAR the door open and Maria's sister, SUSAN, call out.

SUSAN

Yoo hoo! Everybody decent?

Susan walks in holding Maria's pug, BERT.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Special delivery. One USDA prime choice PUG. And yes, you're welcome that I took such good care of him while you were in the loony bin.

Maria takes Bert, hugging and kissing him.

MARIA

Oh, Bert!
 (kissing him, then
 listening)
 What's that? Susan was mean to you?

SUSAN

Is she being funny or mean? I can never tell.
 (then)
 So how's the lollipop factory, Sylvia Plath Jr.? What do they have you on? How many milligrams? Or do they not tell you that in ding dong day care?

MARILYN

Is Janice still operating the groups over there? She's a bit of a mess herself. You know her sister, Dolores, ran off with her husband. She caught them having sex right square in the middle of the living room in front of their shih tzus. Or were they Havanese? Either way. They were innocents. They didn't deserve that. But we all fall short of the glory of god. Great therapist though.

JOEL

What do they got going over there food wise, Maria? They let you have tacos or they afraid you're gonna cut your wrists with the hard shells? Heh heh heh.

Marilyn slaps his arm.

JOEL (CONT'D)

What? Now I can't talk about tacos? Come on, woman!

EXT. HARBORVIEW OUTPATIENT -- DAY (DULUTH)

Maria holds a badminton racquet. A net is strung in the outpatient care room. Donna is on the other side of the net. The other patients watch as Janice introduces the game.

JANICE

This is called truth badminton. Each player has to say something honest everytime they hit the birdie. Or shuttlecock. Now remember, no filters. And Maria, keep your wrist straight or you'll be hitting wide all day.

Donna serves.

DONNA

(to Maria)

Your face makes me want to punch you. Stop stealing my Chobani.

Maria hits it back. (This continues throughout.)

MARIA

Thank you for the feedback. Sorry about the yogurt and my face.

DONNA
Your voice is like an old baby.

MARIA
That's very observant.

DONNA
You'll never find love.

MARIA
I like your teeth.

Janice takes the racket from Donna.

JANICE
Donna, I'm gonna tap in.

Janice nails the birdie back at Maria.

JANICE (CONT'D)
You're weak.

MARIA
I like your bangs!

Maria hits it back harder but it goes into the ground. She picks it up and hits it over.

JANICE
What's it like to have no one like you?

MARIA
I saw your car. It's nice.

JANICE
Everyone likes your sister more than you.

Maria finally snaps.

MARIA
At least my sister didn't suck my ex-husband's wang in front of my underaged dogs!

The shuttlecock lands at Janice's feet. She's shattered.

MARIA (CONT'D)
Yeah. One zero.

Everyone looks at Maria. She feels horrible.

INT. MARIA'S HOUSE -- KITCHEN -- MORNING (PRESENT)

Maria enters on the phone. On the wall we see the grid of her neighborhood with names on houses.

MARIA
 (into phone)
 Bruce, it's Maria again. I really
 need to talk to you. Call me.

She starts to make coffee, looks outside and sees Bruce with a white hard hat directing some workmen who set up a huge set of bleachers.

MARIA (CONT'D)
 What the hey hey?

Maria hurries outside in her pajamas.

EXT. MARIA'S FRONT YARD -- MORNING -- CONT. (PRESENT)

Maria approaches Bruce, who is setting up near Maria's bench.

MARIA
 Bruce! What are you doing?

BRUCE
 Producing. Set dec. Construction.
 Lighting. Everything! Comedy
 festivals don't appear out of thin
 air, m'lady. If I have a flaw, it's
 my inability to delegate.

MARIA
 It's not a comedy festival. It's a
 block party. You can't rip up my
 neighbors' lawns. This is not your
 personal property.

BRUCE
 Agreed. Step into my office.

Bruce leads Maria into his makeshift office in her backyard.

EXT. MARIA'S BACKYARD -- MOMENTS LATER (PRESENT)

Bruce walks to a fridge, accidentally kicking the shit out of Maria's planters with his giant steel toes boots.

BRUCE
 Maria, I'm sensing agitation. Talk
 to me. Unload into my ears.

MARIA

Oh. Bruce. Look, I can't do this.
I can't do stand-up. Patton really
freaked me out.

BRUCE

To Satan's sweet hell with that guy.

MARIA

I think he may be right.

BRUCE

As do I. He's a wonderful comedian
with a good head on his shoulders.

MARIA

If I listen to Patton and don't do
the stand-up, I let down my community
and Mark McGrath. And if I do do
the stand-up then Patton, the crown
prince of ha ha's, will banish me
forever from the alt comedy community.
So what do I do?

BRUCE

I support whatever you decide.
(then, begging)
But please do it, please please
please. Or else I'll have to refund
the tickets to all of your neighbors.

MARIA

You sold tickets to my neighbors?

BRUCE

It was a square deal. The VIP
wristband comes with an orange drink.
Please, Maria. For your chum?

Off of the word "chum"...

QUICK FLASH OF JANE MANSFIELD-STYLE PHOTOS --

Quick scary flashes of the aftermath of the Vespa crash.
Bruce's body mangled in the Chum Bucket. Weege style photos
and screams. In a split second, it's over.

EXT. MARIA'S BACKYARD -- CONTINUOUS (PRESENT)

Bruce stares off, haunted.

MARIA

You know what, Bruce? I'm being
selfish. If my neighbors bought
tickets, I owe them a goddamn show.

BRUCE
And one complimentary orange drink.

MARIA
Let's do this. For community!

BRUCE
For salvation!

Bruce jumps up, getting his steel toes stuck in a planter.

EXT. MARIA'S NEIGHBORHOOD -- THAT NIGHT (PRESENT)

The NEIGHBORS are all gathered for the block party. The bleachers and stage are way bigger than anyone wants. There are tequila ads and gun manufacturer banners all over the place. The microphone is shaped like a gun. Mark McGrath is on stage.

MARK MCGRATH
Ladies and gentlemen, I'd like to introduce you to a friend of mine but instead, here's Maria Bamford.

Maria looks at a pissed Patton. Then to a happy Mark McGrath. Then to the angry crowd. She smiles and walks up onstage with a kick clap. She takes the gun mic.

MARIA
Whoop! Thank you, Mark McGrath! How great is he, everybody?

A low scatter of applause. Bruce claps SUPER HARD.

MARIA (CONT'D)
Hi. I'm your neighbor, Maria Bamford. I hope everybody's enjoying their orange drink. Welcome to our first annual neighborhood block party and--
(under her breath)
Open Arms benefit.

A GUN GOES OFF. Maria ducks.

MARIA (CONT'D)
I'm pretty sure that was on purpose. Ha ha! Or not. Make sure to put your business cards in the fish bowl for the drawing of the duel pump action urban shotgun from L'il Slaughters! Whoooo!

Another SHOT rings out. Maria ducks again.

MARIA (CONT'D)

So anyway, I'm so glad to be back in town. I just want so very much to be part of this community. You mean everything to me. I love you.

(then)

Little while back, I made a vision board to manifest my need for community. It had a park bench on it.

ANGLE ON: OSCAR --

OSCAR

Fuck that fuck bench!

MARIA

Thanks, Oscar! Oscar, everybody!
He's a pistol!

More GUNSHOTS.

MARIA (CONT'D)

(goes into her act)

So... what's going on in the world. Let's see. Well, I'm a little worried about celebrity chef Paula Deen. Her recipes are starting to sound like a suicide note.

(mumbling)

Oooh let me get some sweet little balls. Butter, Crisco, fat, crackling, blubber, margereeeene, mayonaisse. Everyday I wake to a fresh nightmare. The pain is too great. Gonna roll out some granulated sugar, candy, candy corn, Gummie snakes, Mentos, cookies, some nerds...

ANGLE ON: REGINA --

She screams out.

REGINA

Sit down! You're not funny!

MARIA

Oh hey, Regina. It's Regina everybody!

CROWD

Shut up, sit down!

The crowd turns on Maria hardcore. Patton comes up on stage in his police uniform.

PATTON COP

Drop the mic, Maria! Drop it! Don't make me do this.

Maria looks around, trapped.

MARIA

Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Patton Oswald!

The crowd goes crazy! Patton can't help himself. He takes the gun mic and goes right into his stand-up act.

PATTON

Hey guys. I can tell you're pissed off here. I've been pissed off all week. But here's the thing about being pissed off and having people pissed off at you.

INT. BAMFORD HOME -- MARIA'S BEDROOM -- MORNING (DULUTH)

Marilyn wakes Maria up.

MARILYN

Wake up, honey. Your purple van is going to be here soon.

MARIA

No, it's not. They're never coming for me, Mom. Not after what I did yesterday. I'm a monster.

MARILYN

More like a cuddlemonster.

Marilyn tickles her.

MARIA

Mom! Do not touch me around the waist.

Marilyn laughs and walks out. Maria gets out of bed.

PATTON (V.O.)

Doesn't matter if you piss people off. What matters is, the people who show up after you piss them off. Those are the people to hang on to.

Maria goes to the window and sees the purple van pulling up at the front curb. The DRIVER sees her and HONKS. Thrilled, Maria waves back and grabs her tiny backpack.

EXT. PURPLE VAN -- LATER -- THAT MORNING (DULUTH)

Maria gets in the van and rides to the Psychiatric Hospital.

PATTON (V.O.)
You can't be afraid of making
mistakes.

INT. PURPLE VAN -- CONTINUOUS -- THAT MORNING (DULUTH)

Maria sits in the van with her backpack and looks out the window, smiling.

PATTON (V.O.)
The cure for polio was a mistake.

EXT. MARIA'S NEIGHBORHOOD -- CONTINUOUS (PRESENT)

Maria talks to camera as Patton does his act behind her.

PATTON (V.O.)
...so was White-Out. Or was it Post-
it's? Doesn't matter. Just the
next time you make a mistake, don't
just let it hang there. Make
something out of it.

ANGLE ON: MARIA --

In the crowd. Mark McGrath shoots her an enthusiastic thumbs up. She smiles and waves back. She turns to camera as Patton continues.

MARIA
This is actually working out pretty
great.

Maria walks over to...

THE BENCH --

Where a group of Neighbors (Oscar, Regina) gather with sledgehammers and pickaxes and mallets.

OSCAR
Let's take down this wooden abortion!

CROWD
Ahhhh!!!

They all go hard at the bench, hammering, pickaxing -- generally demolishing it. Maria sees neighbors in SLOW MO high fiving and hugging as they smash the bench to pieces. She smiles, touched, her heart swelling.

MARIA
My bench brought people together!
(to camera)
Vision board. Boom. Manifested.

Maria takes a sledge hammer and joins in the destruction.

MARIA (CONT'D)
You're all my friends!!! I'm a part
of something!

FADE OUT:

TITLE CARD: ON THE NEXT EPISODE OF LADY DYNAMITE!

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
On the next episode of Lady Dynamite!

Stock footage of a tiger EXPLODING!

FADE IN:

INT. MARIA'S HOUSE -- KITCHEN -- DAY (PRESENT)

Larissa walks up to Maria, holding a day planner.

LARISSA
Hey Maria, I want to set you up with
a guy I know.

MARIA
Okay. What's he like?

LARISSA
Well, he's bisexual. But hear me
out. He also has a crippling meth
problem.

MARIA
(thinks, then)
Sounds good.

Maria smiles and stares into the middle distance.

CUE MUSIC: "I don't know what I'm doing more than half of
the time!!!!!"

FADE OUT:

THE END