

NEXT CALLER PLEASE

by
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Revised Draft
January 13, 2012

Lionsgate Television
2700 Colorado Ave. Ste. 200
Santa Monica, CA 90404

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COLD OPEN

FADE IN:

EXT. LOWER MANHATTAN STREET - DAY

Meet the life-force that is STELLA HOOBLER, 26. A pretty, spunky, fiercely intelligent, passionate, adventurous know-it-all, Stella is tenacious and bullheaded but in such an honest, cheery, and forthright manner she's hard to fault or defeat; basically, Stella is like a female Pixar character come to life. She walks with a bounce down the street, taking everything in with wide-eyed excitement. She even has a slice of real New York pizza!

Stella comes to a four-story building, the ORBIT SATELLITE RADIO logo on the front. She turns to a waiting BUSINESSMAN. When she starts talking, he pulls out his earbuds and listens politely, occasionally nodding.

STELLA

Hi. First day in New York. I'm actually starting a job in this building. I'm pretty nervous. It's like the first day of school; I just hope the other kids like me. Ha. Actually, school was always hard for me because I wore a Thoraco-Sacral brace twenty-three hours a day for my scoliosis. Sometimes the kids would tease me, but I'd just tell myself, "Buck up, Stella. They're just projecting their own insecurities onto you... by making fun of the giant Sigourney Weaver-in-Aliens exoskeleton you're wearing." I don't know why they say New York is tough and unfriendly. Judging from the few New Yorkers I've met so far, I think I'm really going to like it here.

She looks up at the building with a determined, Mary Tyler Moore, you're-gonna-make-it-after-all smile on her face.

The businessman grabs her slice of pizza and runs away with it.

Welcome to New York, Stella.

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

INT. ORBIT SATELLITE RADIO - LOBBY - DAY

Stella enters the busy modern lobby, a slick industrial space with stairways and catwalks above. Along the rear wall is a GIANT SCREEN listing what currently plays on each channel. Stella rushes up to the receptionist KENT (22, slicked hair, hip suit, Secret Service earpiece).

STELLA
Someone stole my pizza.

KENT
My god. I'll call 9-1-1.

STELLA
Nevermind. Hi, I'm Stella Hoobler.
This is my first day.

KENT
Where's your pass?

STELLA
I don't have one yet.

KENT
Well, you're not in the computer.

STELLA
But you didn't type anything.

KENT
I would have remembered seeing such
a ridiculous name.

STELLA
But. Please. I'm supposed to be
co-hosting a show in an hour.

KENT
Oh no. One show on one of 240
channels won't happen once. We
can't let that happen!

A SCREAM rings out across the lobby. WINNIE HYDE (23, total fan-girl, pigtails, crazy eyes, wearing something weird like a vintage dress over a t-shirt, basically: intense) runs and jumps into Stella's arms, almost knocking her over.

WINNIE
Oh my god, it's you! You look just
like you.

(MORE)

WINNIE (CONT'D)

That made sense in my head. I'm
Winnie! "WinnNYC" on your blog?
I've read you forever.

STELLA

Winnie. Sure. Hi. You work here?

WINNIE

Who'd you think recommended you? I
tried to send you a direct message
on Twitter but you don't follow me -
- sad face -- but you will now
because we're going to be --
(singing it)
-- best friends in the woooooorld!
Let's go, I'll give you a tour.

KENT

She's not allowed back without a --

WINNIE

I WILL MURDER YOUR FACE, KENT!

Kent recoils. Winnie leads Stella past his desk, skipping.

INT. ORBIT HALLWAY/BULLPEN - MOMENTS LATER

Winnie leads Stella through the halls, glass studios on
either side with channel logos, a different type of music or
talk seeping from each room.

WINNIE

The studios and cut booths are all
here on One. That's '50's, '60's,
punk, Catholic talk, prog. rock,
hip-hop, The Gays, hippie crap,
something stupid, MLB, NFL, etc.
I'm your producer. Did I mention
that? Because I totally am!

The hallway opens up to a bullpen, with cubicles on one side,
glass offices on the other, every surface a riot of CD cases,
promotional swag, etc. The walls are covered in signatures
of visiting musicians. Stella struggles to take it all in.

WINNIE (CONT'D)

Programmers in here. Sales,
marketing, admin. on Three and
Four. Floor Two is all Mason and
Syrah's Compound. They're our top-
40 DJs-slash-TV hosts. Jefferson
finally just lured them from
terrestrial radio. Big score.

They come to a giant promo poster featuring a 300-foot tall Mason and Syrah towering above Manhattan, arms folded triumphantly. Someone has drawn two penises on Mason's head.

WINNIE (CONT'D)

Their compound is off-limits to us. Although I sometimes sneak up there if I have to "sitdown" potty.

SYRAH (O.S.)

You do what now?

They turn the corner to find MASON (think Ryan Seacrest) and SYRAH (gorgeous, bossy, wants to be smart) standing next to their poster. Syrah pretends to read The Economist.

WINNIE

Oh, hi, guys. This is Stella. She just came from public radio in --

MASON

(ignoring her)
Look at this! Some cretin defaced my poster with these Jewish peyis.

WINNIE

Um, I think maybe they're wieners.

MASON

This is a blatant anti-Semitic statement.

SYRAH

You're not Jewish.

MASON

Do you know how many subscribers we've pulled in for this company?

WINNIE

Actually, that's an impossible metric to quantify --

MASON

That's right, Winnie. A lot.

Meanwhile, Stella notices Syrah's magazine.

STELLA

Oh my god, wasn't that piece on Mubarak's manipulation of Egypt's bond market a real eye-opener?

Syrah has no idea what she's talking about. Beat.

SYRAH
You're soooo pretty.

STELLA
Wow. Thanks.

SYRAH
I mean, not right now. But you
could be. You're my new project!
(touches Stella's nose)
Boop.

STELLA SYRAH
I'd really rather not be. Good. We'll start tomorrow.

MASON
And tell Cam and your little
friends on One that if we continue
to get this type of disrespect,
we're going back to terrestrial
radio and Orbit can suck a giant --
(looking at the poster)
Okay, I see it now.

SYRAH
Bring me all of your bras.

STELLA
Why do you need my -- ?

Mason and Syrah are already gone.

INT. JEFFERSON'S OFFICE - DAY

Head Program Director JEFFERSON (50s, Brooklyn native, sharp, old-school radio exec., ethically flexible, too-hip clothing for his age) presides over a meeting of the PROGRAMMERS for different groups of Orbit channels: Rock, Instrumental, Country, Urban, Talk, etc. INTERNS, including CODY (20's, eager) stand in back. The wall behind Jefferson's desk is taken up by a CHANNEL SCHEDULE with the various shows hour by hour. On the other wall is a SATELLITE MONITOR, green lights indicating all satellites are operational.

JEFFERSON
Most of you have no idea what radio
was like back in the day. Every
night, "Hey Jefferson. Pat
Benatar's throwing an underpants
party at Studio 54." "Hey,
Jefferson, the Go-Gos have a bag of
cocaine the size of a Fender
Twinolux." But I remained focused.

FEMALE PROGRAM DIRECTOR
So you didn't do those things?

JEFFERSON
Of course I did! If Belinda Carlisle wants you to blow rails off her jugs, you do it. The point is, if I wasn't willing to do whatever it took to convince bands to be on my station, to play my Jingle Ball over Z-100's, the world may never have heard of "The Friday Night Hits Countdown" or "The Original Morning Zoo With Cooper And The Dillhole."

One of the YOUNGER PROGRAMMERS turns to another and mouths "what?" The other shrugs. No idea.

JEFFERSON (CONT'D)
Satellite may be new but we face the old industry problems: money, ratings, consolidation. So start doing whatever you have to do to make some noise or I cut channels.

CODY THE INTERN
Yeah.

JEFFERSON
Zip it, Cody. Anything else?

People grumble. Programmer KEITH CALHOUN, (25, black, hipster, music geek, not at all hip-hop) raises his hand.

KEITH
I'd like to revisit the idea of changing the name of my division.

JEFFERSON
What's wrong with "Urban?"

KEITH
Nothing. Except how racist it is.

JEFFERSON
Fine. We'll go back to calling it "Black Music."

KEITH
Urban it is.

The programmers quickly disperse. Jefferson grabs a stress ball as Winnie leads Stella in.

WINNIE

Jefferson. This is --

JEFFERSON

Stella Hoobler. Blogger and minor feminist public radio personality in one of the rectangle states.

STELLA

Colorado. Thank you so much for the opportunity. I was wondering if you got any of my emails about changing the name of the show?

JEFFERSON

What's wrong with "Booty Calls?" It's about sex. You take calls. It's worked for Cam so far.

STELLA

Well, in the emails I explained my content goals of broadening the -- I'll just re-send them.

JEFFERSON

Welcome to Orbit, Stella. Now go make good radio.

STELLA

Okay. Yes. Thank you, sir.

Stella and Winnie leave. Jefferson notices his interns sitting around chatting, and whips the stress ball at them. They dive out of the way.

INT. "ORBIT LIFESTYLE" STUDIO - DAY

A glass studio with the name and logo visible outside. Within the main studio is an attached PRODUCER'S BOOTH with a sliding glass window from which Winnie runs the show. Stella sits at the console (mic, buttons, a monitor) with her laptop and papers and research spread out like a good student.

STEVEN CONSTANTINE (27, wildly-effeminate; bear with the stereotype -- there is a twist!) pokes his head in.

STEVEN

Heey! I'm Steven. Channel eighty-six, "Orbit Queer." Just down the hall. Fierce blouse! Can I feel? (rubbing her shoulders)
Ooh, what is all this? What's happening up here? Yoga? Pilates?

STELLA

I don't know. I come from sturdy Norwegian stock. My ancestors were barley threshers...

STEVEN

You're funny. We'll connect later, bitch.

STELLA

(wanting to be liked)

I'm sorry, none of the fun gays in Boulder ever liked me. "Bitch" is good, right?

Steven laughs uproarious and exits. Winnie enters.

STELLA (CONT'D)

Where's Cam? It's almost showtime.

WINNIE

He'll be here.

STELLA

If we're going to make the show a more serious forum for debate and discussion, maybe we should make some sort of announcement --

(realizes Winnie is avoiding her gaze)

Winnie? What's going on?

WINNIE

(a terrible liar)

What? Nothing. Ha ha. I have to go to my booth now.

Stella watches, confused, as Winnie sprints out into the hall, heading around to her producer's booth.

CAM DOHERTY (32, disheveled, unshaven, hung-over; a purposefully detached, magnetic grouch) enters in sunglasses, hood up. Stella immediately stands and thrusts out her hand.

STELLA

Hi, Cam. I'm Stella. We don't have much time before the show but I gathered some possible topics and segments -- I put it all in this binder -- warning: it's a little long, I can't sleep on planes, heh.

CAM

Who are you?

STELLA
 (sits back down)
 Stella Hoobler. Your new co-host.

CAM
 I don't have a co-host.

WINNIE
 (pokes her head in through
 her window)
 Fifteen seconds!

STELLA
 Oh. I assumed Jefferson would have
 discussed it with you. But maybe
 it all happened too fast for...

Cam rolls Stella's chair out of the studio as she talks.

STELLA (CONT'D)
 ...management to present the
 changes to you, where am I going?

Cam shuts the door and locks it. Intro music starts. Cam
 sits and adjusts the mic. Hits buttons. Music lowers.

CAM
 Booty Calls on Orbit Lifestyle.
 One rule: be interesting. Go.

MALE CALLER 1 (V.O.)	CAM
Hey, Cam. Jeez, you sound a	(hits mute, to Winnie)
little hostile. How hung-	Call Jefferson right now!
over are you today?	

CAM (CONT'D)
 You've been on for ten seconds and
 you've yet to make a point.

During the following: through the glass, Stella bangs on the
 door, stomps around looking for a way in, then disappears.
 She reappears in Winnie's booth, climbs on the desk, slides
 open the little window, and crawls through into the studio.

MALE CALLER 1 (V.O.)
 So I met this chick last night at a
 bar. We go back to my place and
 suddenly she tells me to punch her.
 I'm like, no thanks, freak!

Stella flips on her mic. Cam is too stunned to stop her.

STELLA

Har har. Cam locked me out of the studio. Hazing accomplished. I'm part of the team! Hi, everybody.

MALE CALLER 1 (V.O.)

Who's talking?

STELLA

Stella Hoobler. Hi, caller. If you're not comfortable with something sexually, don't do it, but you shouldn't shame a lover for revealing a private desire.

MALE CALLER 1 (V.O.)

Um, can I talk to Cam?

STELLA

Also, you referred to this woman as a "chick," which is on the surface harmless, but there's this great article I have somewhere...

(digs through papers)

...from the Atlantic about how linguistically, the identifiers we use can subtly affect our --

Cam hangs up on him.

CAM

Next caller.

STELLA

Oh. Okay.

CAM

(into mic)
Go.

STELLA

(into mic)
Hello, caller!

MALE CALLER 2 (V.O.)

Hey, Cam. Who is this chick?

CAM

I honestly have no idea.

STELLA

Stella Hoobler. I'm the co-host.

MALE CALLER 2 (V.O.)

Bangable?

STELLA

Pardon me?

CAM
Next caller.

MALE CALLER 3 (V.O.)
Cam, bro, you're the best, bro!

CAM
Next caller.

MALE CALLER 4 (V.O.)
Cam. You'll never guess what I'm
looking at right now. This woman
in the park is fully breast-feeding
in front of everyone!

CAM
Take a photo. Send it in.

MALE CALLER 4 (V.O.)
Done.

CAM
Next caller.

STELLA
Wait. You'd sexualize a woman
breast-feeding in public?

CAM
Next caller.

STELLA
I'm sorry, but that's not okay. A
woman, a mother, should have the
right to feed her child anywhere.

CAM
I totally support that right. And
she also has to acknowledge the
fact that men's eyes are going to
be drawn to the sight of a boob
regardless of what it's up to.

STELLA
But they shouldn't.

CAM
But they do.

STELLA
But they shouldn't.

CAM
But they do.

STELLA
But they shouldn't.

CAM
Any woman exposing her breasts in public for any reason is going to draw the eyes of men. That's just A Fact Of The World. Next!

STELLA
But no. We can do better than that. That's the whole reason I do this. Because as a society, as a people, I think we can do better.

CAM
But we can't.

STELLA
But we should.

CAM
But we can't.

STELLA
But we should.

CAM
Moving on!

STELLA
Do we have any female listeners who would like to take part in this --

CAM
Caller, go.

MALE CALLER 5 (V.O.)
Cam, baby! This chick sounds hot. Describe her. How's the rack?

CAM
No way. You heard her. Breasts are "not to be looked at."

STELLA
That's not what I'm -- You know what, go ahead. I'm not ashamed. I'm also not using my breasts to sustain a life right now, so.

MALE CALLER 5 (V.O.)
Yeah! Do it, Cam. Rate her rack.

CAM
 Seriously?

Stella shrugs, up for the challenge.

CAM (CONT'D)
 Okay...

Stella leans away for him to see. She leans back to the mic.

STELLA
 See, what you should know about me
 is that I can be super-fun, too.

She leans away. Quickly leans back in.

STELLA (CONT'D)
 I just think there are more
 interesting nuances of sex that can
 stimulate larger discussion of the
 human condition, but go ahead this
 is nothing to be ashamed of.

Stella leans back. Cam studies her. She leans back to mic.

STELLA (CONT'D)
 I do feel obliged to add, however,
 that this is Breast Cancer
 Awareness Month, and over two
 hundred thousand new cases are
 reported in this country alone each
 year. Talk to your doctor about
 your breast health. Okay. Let's
 do this. "Rate my rack."

She sticks out her chest. It's weirdly unsexy.

MALE CALLER 5 (V.O.)
 Actually, I don't care anymore.

The caller hangs up.

CAM
 Music break. We'll be back.

Winnie starts some music. They move away from their mics.

STELLA
 Well. I think we're off to a
 lively start, don't you?

Cam gets up and walks out.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. JEFFERSON'S OFFICE - DAY

Jefferson sits behind his desk, surrounded by cardboard boxes overflowing with jalapeño peppers. In the background the interns open more boxes of jalapeños. Cam storms in.

CAM

You hired a co-host?

JEFFERSON

Yes. Want some jalapeños?

CAM

A girl. You hired a girl without even asking me. For my show! And not even a hot girl.

JEFFERSON

Aren't you back on the air in -- ?

CODY THE INTERN

Ten minutes.

JEFFERSON

No one was talking to you, Cody.

CAM

She never stops talking. She's a 6, generously. Total snob.

JEFFERSON

You're a snob.

CAM

I'm a snob because most people are morons. She's a snob because she thinks she knows everything.

JEFFERSON

You gotta take some jalapeños. Ever since I cancelled the salsa channel people have been mailing them in protest.

CAM

Why?

CODY THE INTERN

Probably because jalapeños are a key ingredient in salsa.

JEFFERSON

Cody, I swear to god.

CAM

Why did you hire a co-host?

JEFFERSON

Because your ratings are garbage and your show sucks.

CAM

What if I refuse?

JEFFERSON

(studies the board)

Let me check my current openings... you can go play Christian Metal on "Gibraltar," Canadian Jam Music on "The Icefloe," or Smooth Jazz on "Pastels." Or I fire you.

Cam slumps onto the couch, defeated.

JEFFERSON (CONT'D)

Cam, we've been together for almost a decade. You were the first person I hired when I came here.

CAM

No, you hired Cooper and The Dillhole first.

JEFFERSON

But I let them go. You know why?

CAM

Because Cooper smoked crack and stole a cop's horse.

JEFFERSON

Because they lost their fire. You used to have something to say, man. Rude and socially unacceptable as it was, you had a point. The show you're doing now -- you just fart around on the air, you're drunk half the time, you hang up on callers. You know when you stopped caring?

JEFFERSON (CONT'D)

It's when Francesca backed out of the wedding.

CAM

It has nothing to -- I asked you never to bring it up!

JEFFERSON (CONT'D)

Don't tell me it has nothing to do with it. I was there.

CAM

You were there the night before our wedding? Because I don't remember you in the fancy hotel bathtub with us when she called it off. And the only thing it did to me is turn me off baths forever.

JEFFERSON

It made you afraid to try. You stopped trying after that.

CAM

Well, then, see, I was right! You're taking my show away from me.

JEFFERSON

Then go in there and fight for it. That is if you still want it.

Jefferson holds out a box of peppers. Cam angrily takes it.

INT. ORBIT HALLWAY - DAY

Stella sits on the floor making piles of papers. Two RAPPERS smoke pot outside the rap channel. Winnie speeds past.

WINNIE

(yelling down the hall)
We're back in five! Someone find Cam!
(seeing Stella)
What are you doing?

STELLA

Reorganizing my material. I had this great article to cite but I had to dig around for it like an amateur. That can't happen again.

WINNIE

Don't worry. You were great!

STELLA

Why didn't Cam know I was coming?

WINNIE

Please don't be mad. He wouldn't have shown up if we told him.

STELLA

But even so, I don't understand.
I... I...

(turns to the rappers)

Guys, I would really appreciate it
if you didn't do drugs right here.
Thanks.

The rappers look at her and go back to smoking.

STELLA (CONT'D)

Why doesn't he like me? Everybody
likes me. I mean, I can be a
little "much" sometimes, but my dad
always says you can win anyone over
by just being yourself.

WINNIE

Aw, I wish I had your dad. I wish
I had a dad.

STELLA

I'll win him over. Watch.

Stella gets up, grabbing her papers, and walks over to the
rappers and takes the joints away from them, stubbing them
out in a potted plant.

STELLA (CONT'D)

You can have them back at the end
of the day. Go do your show. Go
on.

The astonished rappers obediently turn and go into their
studio. Winnie stares at Stella like a superhero.

INT. EMPLOYEE LOUNGE - DAY

Microwave, coffee, fridge, table, couches. Band stickers on
everything. Keith texts furiously. A handful of other DJs
and employees mill about. Cam enters, pissed, dropping the
box of jalapeños. Everyone stops and applauds.

CAM

Shut up. You were listening?

KEITH

We've started a pool to see how
long she lasts. Ten bucks. Sister
Marcie started a side-pool on how
long before you two do it.

A nun from the Catholic Channel, SISTER MARCIE (60's, Bostonian, rude, bawdy, kinda racist), pours coffee.

SISTER MARCIE
By end of day, Friday, no question.

CAM
Sorry, sister, but: Hell no.

Sister Marcie makes a rude gesture indicating sex will happen. Keith's phone beeps. He texts back.

CAM (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

KEITH
Trying to organize a live performance from The Money Makin' CEO's but G Dub Napoleon is in a beef with Da Franklin Mintz.

CAM
I have no idea what you just said.

KEITH
Me neither. I don't even like hip-hop. I don't know why Jefferson put me in charge of it.

Sister Marcie sits down next to them with her coffee.

SISTER MARCIE
Probably because you're black. I don't know. Maybe that's it. What do you think? Think that's it? 'Cause you're black.

KEITH
(ignoring her, to Cam)
What are you going to do about the girl?

Cam stands up and hands Keith ten dollars.

CAM
Put me down for "today."

INT. "ORBIT LIFESTYLE" STUDIO - DAY

Stella is already in place. Cam enters.

WINNIE (O.S.)
One minute!

STELLA

I'm starting to think maybe we got off on the wrong foot. Of course it was disorienting for you.

CAM

Yeah, it really was. Hey, why don't I just do the next hour alone so you can observe. Then we'll find the best way to work you in.

STELLA

Oh. Um. Okay --

CAM

Great. Winnie: let's go!

Cam flips on some rockin' music. He kicks his chair away and stands up to do the show. Stella watches, taken aback.

CUT TO:

Cam is as energized as we've seen him.

MALE CALLER 6 (V.O.)

Oh my god they never shut uuuuup.

CAM

Yes! Next caller. What's your most annoying thing about women?

Stella listens, frowning.

FLIP TO:

Cam makes a phony phone call. Winnie stands by the mic.

CATHOLIC WOMAN (V.O.)

Hello, Midtown Catholic Center.

CAM

Yeah, hi. My wife won't do something in bed because she thinks it's not Christian.

WINNIE

Yeah, you tell me which Bible verse is about (*bleeped*) or doing a (*long bleep*) on your (*bleeped*)!

Cam laughs. Winnie gives Stella an apologetic smile.

FLIP TO:

New caller. Stella is crawling out of her skin.

MALE CALLER 7 (V.O.)

Next time she asks, I'm just gonna say, "Yes, because you are!"

STELLA

Okay, can I just jump in here --

Stella can't help herself; she lunges for the mic. Cam holds it above her head. She jumps but can't reach. She realizes how incredibly silly she looks and sits back down, fuming.

CAM

Okay, that's one more vote for "does this make me look fat?" And that makes the final tally...
(a drum roll plays)
Third place is "shop too much."
Second place "use sex as a weapon."
And the number one most annoying thing about women... "They are too emotional."

Cam plays a "woman crying" sound effect. Stella realizes how upset she looks and tries to quickly relax her face.

FLIP TO:

Cam now has a guest, BEAU (30), super-cocky despite being a schlub. Stella is no longer trying to hide her displeasure.

CAM (CONT'D)

Beau Cunningham has written a book called, "Hooked," a guidebook on how to pick up girls by exploiting their insecurities.

BEAU

Yes, even hot girls still feel like the ugly, or gawky, or chubby girl they once were. You have to tap into that in order to tap that.

CAM

What are some things to look for?

BEAU

Daddy issues: Look for divorce, or, even better, the early death of a father. Acne scars mean a puberty spent in hiding.

(MORE)

BEAU (CONT'D)

And if they even mention their weight, they were once a fatty, or, best case, body dysmorphia, which is a slow pitch down the middle of the plate, you know what I'm saying?

Cam and Beau bump fists. Stella screams into her arm.

BEAU (CONT'D)

Look, Cam. I'm no Brad Pitt, but using this stuff, I've pulled more tail than a retarded kid at a petting zoo.

A loud, derisive laugh escapes Stella's mouth; the steam had to eventually escape. Cam and Beau both look over.

STELLA

Sorry, I just can't.
(grabs a mic)
Beau, hi. Don't you feel that teaching men they have to manipulate to find love is ultimately self-damaging?

CAM

Who said anything about love? Now let's continue --

Stella doesn't relinquish the mic. She remains calm here, directing her frustration with smiles and eye contact.

STELLA

When you tell a man, "You're not good enough for any woman to like you for you," are you not doing him a great injustice? Especially if he's cute and charming and interesting. Like you. I mean, what are you looking for, Beau?

Beau shifts, nervous. He tries to keep up the front.

BEAU

What do you got?

STELLA

You probably have the same insecurities you talk about exploiting, right?

CAM

Alright. Let's move on.

STELLA

(leaning in, softer)

These techniques work because it's not hard to dupe those in pain. But this isn't you, Beau. Not really. I'm right, aren't I?

BEAU

I mean... I.

STELLA

Don't look at Cam. Look at me. There is someone, isn't there? Someone you like?

BEAU

(beat)

There is this girl at my gym.

STELLA

Have you talked to her?

Beat. He shakes his head no.

STELLA (CONT'D)

Well, do it! Ask her for coffee. What's the worst that happens? She says no? But you will have put yourself out there. The real you, the you I see today. Not this lie.

She holds up his book. Beau looks like he might cry. He nods. Stella hands him back his book.

STELLA (CONT'D)

Great. Let us know how it goes.

Beau walks out, bewildered. Stella hits a button.

STELLA (CONT'D)

Caller, you're on. Hi.

FEMALE CALLER 1 (V.O.)

Stella! I read your blog all the time. My boyfriend always listens to this show but now that you're here we can listen together.

STELLA

Thanks, that's so sweet! Alright, we'll be back. You're listening to *Booty Calls With Stella and Cam*.

Winnie plays music. Stella turns to Cam, excited.

STELLA (CONT'D)

Who saw that coming? TWIST ENDING!

CAM

You derailed my show. If you were a guy I would punch you right now.

STELLA

(with a laugh)

Oh, I don't think so. My dad and I took Krav Maga together. I can deflect a frontal attack four different ways.

Cam gets up and walks out.

STELLA (CONT'D)

C'mon, Cam, don't -- Hey!

INT. ORBIT HALLWAY/BULLPEN - CONTINUOUS

Cam walks down the hall, Stella scurries to keep up. Curious DJs watch, including Keith and Sister Marcie. Cam tries to ignore her but Stella is relentless.

STELLA

Cam. I'm talking to you. Cam.
Cam. Cam. Cam. Cam. Caaaaaa --

CAM

(stops, wheeling on her)
Stop it! My show is not for...
that. Whatever that was.

STELLA

What's it for? Crank calls and polls about how annoying women are?

CAM

Sometimes, yes! It's a place for guys to talk honestly, where we admit what actually is, the dirty truth. Not your fantasy world where everyone is nice to each other.

STELLA

Why can't we be nice to each other?

CAM

-- AND YES, it'll be crass and unkind but it's what guys feel.

STELLA

And that's what I got Beau in there to admit. His feelings. I mean, why can't the show be a place for debate and dissent?

CAM

I just want to do my show! I don't want to work that hard.

STELLA

But hard work means you're doing it right. My dad taught me to end each day asking yourself, "Did I work as hard as I could today?"

CAM

You would come from a tight family.

STELLA

I love my family. Don't you?

CAM

Ew, no. And no one interesting ever came from a "good" family.

STELLA

That's not true. Jimmy Stewart, Bill Cosby, Hillary Clinton --

CAM

Oh my god, what are you?! You have your preparation material and your answer for everything and your stupid upright posture --

STELLA

That's because of the scoliosis brace.

CAM

-- and that twinkle in your eye and that's it? You have no darkness?

STELLA

Tell me why your fiancée left you.

CAM

Who told you that?

STELLA

You think my eyes twinkle?

Keith laughs. Cam grows serious. Hard.

CAM

You and me, we can't work together.

STELLA

(laughs)

Too late.

CAM

If it were just that I don't like you, that would be one thing. But much worse: you're not ready. You have a bad voice. You're not relatable and you're not funny. I'm sure you're perfect for NPR, but this is real radio where we try to entertain, not lecture. You are so far in over your head you can't even see it. You gotta suspect it -
- that you're not ready.

Stella's already-wavering smile dissolves completely. She looks down. Then back up at him, her body deflating.

STELLA

I just wanted to do well. I...

CAM

I know. But we just don't fit.

Stella sighs, nods.

WINNIE

No!

Winnie runs over and hugs Stella.

CAM

C'mon. Let's go tell Jefferson.

Stella exits. As he leaves, Cam stops and holds out his hand to Keith. Keith hands him the cash from the betting pool.

INT. JEFFERSON'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Stella and Cam enter Jefferson's office. Jefferson is sitting with a couple executives in suits.

JEFFERSON

I'm in a meeting. Cody!

CAM

This will just take a second.
Stella has something to tell you.

JEFFERSON

What is it?

Stella raises her chin. Her eyes narrow.

STELLA

Cam wants off the show.

Cam looks over, startled.

CAM

WHAT?! That's not what we said --

STELLA

He doesn't want to work with me,
that's fine, but that's his issue.
You hired me and I'm here. So I'll
do the show alone.

Whoa. Stella. Cam is left sputtering.

CAM

This is ridiculous. Fire her!

JEFFERSON

I'm not firing anyone. You either
do the show together or not at all.

Stella stares at Cam, challengingly, her body seemingly getting taller. Cam looks from Stella to Jefferson back to Stella. All at once, the fight leaves his body.

CAM

Then I chose not at all. Let her
take the show. But you forced
this, Jefferson. I didn't give up.
You forced this.

(starts to leave, turns
back to Jefferson)

Oh, and by the way: those skinny
jeans look RIDICULOUS on you.

Cam walks past Keith and Sister Marcie and Winnie, who have come in to watch. Cam hands Keith the money and exits.

Jefferson studies his jeans in the mirror, upset now. Cody gives him an encouraging thumbs-up.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. "PASTELS" STUDIO - THE NEXT DAY

In a studio covered in watercolors and fabrics, Cam sleeps. He wakes with a start as a piece of smooth jazz ends.

CAM

(into mic)

You're listening to Pastels on Orbit Radio. That was --

(reads monitor)

Mystic Alignment with "Celestial Murmurs." Next up, The Jeff Trebequeois Nonet off their latest CD, "The Nomenclature Of The Heart," this is "Dactylioglyph," which, it says here is another word for an engraver of gems. Wow, not only is it music, it's learning. Did you know The Jeff Trebequeois Nonet shares a bassoon player with Acoustic Alchemy? No, you did not. Because it is a fact that not one person in the world cares about.

He starts the track then puts his head back down. Keith enters, marvelling at the decor.

KEITH

Wow. This place looks like Enya's menstruation tent. How's it going?

CAM

No, it's great. Do you know how many different sounds windchimes can make? One.

Cam pours some booze from a flask into his coffee mug.

KEITH

Okay... I'm just gonna back out of here slowly before I ovulate.

CAM

How's Stella's first show going? Forget it, I don't want to know.

INT. "ORBIT LIFESTYLE" STUDIO - DAY

Stella does the show alone, documents and computer open. Her delivery is very dry and NPR-ish.

STELLA

...and so while the earnings gap has closed steadily over the last decade, research shows problems still arise in a relationship when the woman makes more than a man. Let's discuss. Hello caller?

MALE CALLER 8 (V.O.)

Where the hell is Cam?

STELLA

I've explained. I'm doing the show alone from now on. Did you want to contribute to our discussion of money in relationships?

The caller hangs up.

STELLA (CONT'D)

I guess not. Next caller. Hello?

MALE CALLER 9 (V.O.)

OH MY GOD YOU'RE SO BORING!

STELLA

Well. Pretty brave to shout something rude and hang up.

MALE CALLER 9 (V.O.)

I'm still here.

STELLA

Oh. Then why don't you go out on a limb and talk about something real? When I was at NPR, I got to visit a women's fjord in Romsdal --

MALE CALLER 9 (V.O.)

Now I'm hanging up.

He hangs up.

STELLA

Fine, then I won't tell you about my trip to Norway. Next caller.

FEMALE CALLER 2 (V.O.)

Hi, Stella. Interesting topic.

STELLA

Isn't it? Adult relationships are very complicated and not enough people discuss money beforehand.

FEMALE CALLER 2 (V.O.)
 I know that when my husband and I
 got married, we really only agreed
 on one thing.

STELLA
 What's that?

FEMALE CALLER 2 (V.O.)
 That you suck giant donkey nuts.
 (now joined by a MAN)
 GIANT DONKEY NUTS GIANT DONKEY NUTS
 GIANT DONKEY NUTS GIANT DONKEY -- !

Stella's head drops to the desk.

INT. MEN'S ROOM - DAY

Cam's feet are visible under a stall door. Winnie enters.

WINNIE
 Cam?

CAM (O.S.)
 Winnie? Get the hell out of here.

WINNIE
 No. I need to talk to you.

Cam stands up. The toilet flushes. He emerges.

CAM
 What?

WINNIE
 Were you just pooping?

CAM
 No! What do you want?

WINNIE
 Then why were you sitting down? Do
 you sit to pee!?

CAM
 No. Not usually, but sometimes you
 just want to -- What is it?!

WINNIE
 Please don't tell Stella I came to
 you. Her show, it was a disaster.
 You have to come back.

CAM

It's one show. She'll figure it out.

He tries to leave. She blocks the door.

WINNIE

Cam, yesterday's show was awesome. She pissed you off and you kicked that chair away. You stood up like you used to and it was vintage Cam. You looked like you again. And I know I'm just "Winnie," but you know what's going to happen if you stay at Pastels. You'll disappear. All the way this time. And hey, I doubt there are many smooth jazz groupies, huh? Please, Cam. Come back.

Cam is clearly affected by Winnie's words, but he says...

CAM

You're a great producer, Win. A complete weirdo, but a great producer. I'll see you around.

INT. EMPLOYEE LOUNGE - LATER

Cam enters to find Stella and Steven sitting on the couch, talking animatedly, giving each other foot rubs. Stella and Cam make eye contact. An awkward beat.

STELLA

Hi.

CAM

Hi. I was just gonna get coffee.

STEVEN

Guess what, Cam? Stella's going to stay at my place until she finds her own apartment. We're going to have so much fun. Right, bitch?

STELLA

(still getting the hang of it)
You, bitch!

CAM

I'll get coffee later. Have fun.

Cam starts to leave but stops, fighting something internally. He sighs wearily then walks back to Steven and yanks him away from Stella by the lapels.

STELLA
What are you doing?!

CAM
Steven's not gay, you dodo.

STELLA
What?

CAM
I thought you were supposed to be perceptive. He's just subbing on the gay channel this week. Steven's a floater. Fills in wherever's necessary. Tell her.

Steven switches to his regular voice. Total bro.

STEVEN
I go real deep in character. You know John Belushi? I studied with his drama coach. Jim. I meant Jim Belushi. Anyhoo. No harm. Sleepover's still on, right?

Stella pulls pepper spray from her purse.

STELLA
You've seen those "Occupy Wall Street" videos?

Steven quickly exits the lounge. Stella puts away her spray.

STELLA (CONT'D)
Blech, I rubbed his feet. God I'm gullible. Thanks.

CAM
Sure. So, how was your first show?

STELLA
Great. The callers were... well, they hate me. They were so mean.
(she shakes it off)
But I'm just going to keep plugging away and working hard. Just like --

CAM
-- your father used to say?

STELLA

You got me pegged already, don't
you. Bye, Cam.

Stella smiles wearily and exits. Cam watches her go. Winnie
enters the lounge. Cam sighs.

CAM

Fine, let's go talk to Jefferson...

Winnie smiles and runs to hug Cam. He ducks her hug. She
keeps coming, and he keeps dodging, until she gets it.

INT. JEFFERSON'S OFFICE - DAY

Winnie leads Stella in. Cam and Jefferson are waiting.

STELLA

What's going on? Winnie?

JEFFERSON

Before I got into radio, me and
Billy Idol got into a fight over
the tambourine player from
Jefferson Starship and he fired me
as his manager. Two years later he
had the 45th most popular record in
America and I had Hepatitis B. My
point is, I don't give a crap about
"feelings," hurt or otherwise. All
I care about is that call volume
for the show yesterday was up 63%.

STELLA

But it's my show now. Alone.

JEFFERSON

Today was your test and you failed.

STELLA

I thought it went really well.

JEFFERSON

Then you're an idiot. But Cam was
worse. He called "Chai Tummy" by X
Equals Y "worse than AIDS."

CAM

It is. It is worse than AIDS.

JEFFERSON

But, Cam has agreed to give working
with you another shot.

STELLA

No. No!

CAM

Forget it! I knew this was a dumb idea.

STELLA

He can't just decide and then un-decide. It's not fair!

Jefferson wings jalapeños at both of them, smacking them both hard. It shuts them up. Jefferson stands, gesturing towards the satellite monitoring screen behind him, all lights green.

JEFFERSON

We have nine Chinese- and Hungarian-made satellites up there broadcasting your voices across the country. A long-haul trucker, or a kid heading off to college can put us on in San Diego and listen uninterrupted all the way to Boston. I think that's something. We have to make this work because radio has nothing left. I have nothing left. In fact, this is pretty much the last shot for everyone in this building. So, what do you say, put your crap aside and let's make good radio?

Beat. Cam and Stella both reluctantly nod/shrug.

JEFFERSON (CONT'D)

Good. Together, we'll keep those nine satellites up there for a long time.

One of the green lights turns red behind Jefferson. Cam points. Jefferson turns and looks.

JEFFERSON (CONT'D)

Oh, those (*bleeped*) Hungarians!

He immediately runs out, Cody following.

INT. ORBIT SATELLITE RADIO - LOBBY - LATER

End of day. Cam exits, putting his earbuds in. Stella comes running out into the lobby.

STELLA

Cam, wait. I just wanted to say, I know you don't like me.

(before he can protest)

No, it's okay.

(MORE)

STELLA (CONT'D)
 But here's the thing: you will.
 Everyone does eventually. They
 have no choice.

CAM
 Okay.

STELLA
 I'm glad we're gonna try this.
 That's it. I'll see you tomorrow.

CAM
 Okay. See you tomorrow.

STELLA
 See you tomorrow.

CAM
 Do you always have to have the last
 word?

STELLA
 No.

CAM
 Just... See you tomorrow.

STELLA
 Why did your fiancée leave you?

Cam makes a beeline for the door.

STELLA (CONT'D)
 You can tell me about it some other
 time. Okay. See you tomorrow!

Cam growls in frustration as he exits out to the street.

Syrah comes out, trailed by her posse. She sees Stella.

SYRAH
 Tomorrow. All your bras. We're
 going to fix you!
 (touches Stella's nose)
 Boop.
 (does it again)
 Boop.

Syrah and posse exit. Off Stella...

END OF ACT THREE

TAG

INT. "ORBIT LIFESTYLE" STUDIO - DAY

Stella sits in the studio, her usual laptop and research material at the ready. Cam enters.

STELLA

Good morning. So, I spent last night augmenting my list of topics and I also wrote down some suggestions to broaden our gender --

Cam shuts his eyes in pain.

CAM

Please. I'll give you a million dollars to just, not right now.

STELLA

Okay, sure. We can discuss it at the break.

Cam sighs. She's relentless.

WINNIE (O.S.)

Ten seconds!

Stella and Cam put on their headphones. The music starts.

STELLA

How should we handle the whole --

CAM

(into the mic)

It's Booty Calls. I'm back. Stella's here too. Stella, did you want to say anything?

STELLA

Yes. Just that we hope you stick with us while we try to evolve the show into a forum where we really delve into the issues humans face when navigating the thorny avenues of love. We'll have fun, sure, but we'll also treat that journey with seriousness and dignity.

CAM

Now let's talk about porkin'.

Cam hits a button.

CAM (CONT'D)
First caller. Speak.

STELLA
Hello caller! How are you?

FEMALE CALLER 3 (V.O.)
I just wanted to know what you guys
thought about monogamy?

STELLA
While monogamy has been used to
repress women at times,
theoretically it represents the
triumph of our higher selves over
the baseness of our --

CAM
Yeah. Look. While it may have had
some validity back when group
survival was individual survival,
that's ancient history. But it's
been proven time and time again:
monogamy doesn't work anymore.

STELLA
But it should.

CAM
But it doesn't.

STELLA
But it should.

CAM
But it doesn't.

STELLA
But it should. Ooh, I actually
have a study here somewhere...

Stella starts to search her papers for it. Cam groans.

FADE OUT.

END OF PILOT