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Project Murder – The Elimination Challenge

Or

Murder on the Runway

A comedic murder mystery in two acts

By Don Zolidis

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Full-length murder mystery comedy
3w 3m, 2 any gender, up to 20 actors

The police are tipped off that a murder is about to take place on the live TV show Project Design. Detective Carol-Ann Perkins wants a shot to catch the culprit and become a famous star. To do that, she not only has to overcome her own bumbling tendencies; she has to go undercover and compete against some of the top designers around. At the end of the first act audiences are polled to see who they think commited the crime, and with seven different endings, you'll never know who is the real source of the Elimination Challenge.

Cast of Characters

The Detective:

CAROL-ANN PERKINS, middle-aged, a total mess, clumsy, but intense

The Contestants:

ANNIE, good-natured, daffy, a little bit older, 50s-60s

SHIVA (F), goth, vicious, terrifying, 20s-30s,

PRESIDENT GENERAL POPE JOHNSON (M), fabulous, probably wears amazing glasses, he might wear shoes that have wheels in them and roll around the stage, 20-30s,

IFEZ (M), from an indeterminate foreign country, he does his own thing, might wear a boa or heels, probably has exotic facial hair, 20s-40s

LUKE, sweet, kind of dumb, good-looking, 20s

In my mind, President is African-American and Ifez is Hispanic, but any of the roles may be played by an actor of any race or ethnicity.

All other roles may be played by one male and one female actor. Most of the roles below are gender neutral, meaning that they can be played as either male or female – there is absolutely no need for a male actor to be required to make all of the characters male, for example. (In the case of BECKY and VANESSA, the characters should be played as female.)

It should be obvious to the audience that the same two actors are playing every part, so no need for elaborate costumes. Part of the humor of the show comes from the fact that these changes are so outlandish and obvious.

You may also decide to cast separate actors in each role to create a larger cast. Once again, any of these roles may be played as any gender.

CHIEF BAILIHEW, police chief
DETECTIVE MOSLEY, probably female, a high-ranking officer
OFFICER JONES, a police officer (played the actor playing Chief)
OFFICER NIGELA, a police officer (played by the actor playing Mosley)
ALIANA, a supermodel, host of the show (played by the actor playing Mosley)
TOSCA, elegant, immaculately coiffed advisor to the contestants (played by the actor playing Chief)
PIETER, Norwegian fashion designer, judge (played by the actor playing Chief)
SAMANTHA, editor-in-chief of a fashion magazine, judge (played by the actor playing Mosley)
BLAIZE, fashion reporter on E TV (played by the actor playing Chief)
UMA, fashion reporter on E TV (played by the actor playing Mosley)
BECKY, an ordinary woman model (played by the actor playing Mosley)
VANESSA, an ordinary woman model (played by the actor playing Chief)

Alternate Endings: There are six possible endings for this show. At intermission, the audience should be given a ballot listing all six contestants (Carol-Ann, Annie, Shiva, President, Ifez, Luke) as possible killers. Your production may decide to use the ending voted on by the audience, or choose a different one if you wish.

The Costume pieces: These should all be pre-made to make things easier on the actors. Feel free to make this as ridiculous as possible.

Cutting: Some of the jokes in the play may be inappropriate for your community. I have suggested alternate jokes where applicable, but if there is a line that may push things too far, you have my permission to cut it.

Act One

(Lights up on the police commandant's desk. BAILIHEW is sitting, with his hand on the phone. DETECTIVE MOSLEY is standing nearby.)

BAILIHEW

We got this today. Ready?

MOSLEY

Sure.

BAILIHEW

You sure you're ready?

MOSLEY

Yes!

(Lights up slightly on a PERSON IN SHADOW elsewhere on stage. If possible, they use an auto-tune or something similar to disguise their voice.)

PERSON IN SHADOW

New York police department, this is a friendly heads up. I hope you've been tuning in to Project Design, airing on Bravo network Wednesdays at 9:00 p.m. Eastern time.

MOSLEY

What - ?

BAILIHEW

Shhh!

PERSON IN SHADOW

Sponsored by Ulta, Sephora, and Marie Claire magazine. It's a great show. Really fun to watch. And it's going to be even more fun when I kill one of the contestants on live television. Ha ha ha ha.

MOSLEY

Wow.

BAILIHEW

Shh! There's more.

PERSON IN SHADOW

Ha ha ha ha ha. Ha ha ha ha.

(short pause)

Ha ha ha ha.

(short pause)

That's it. I'm killing someone on live television. Peace out.

(Lights out on PERSON IN SHADOW.)

BAILIHEW

Thoughts?

MOSLEY

I don't think you can do a peace out after a death threat. It's so wrong. It violates the entire purpose of the peace out.

BAILIHEW

No what do you think we should do about the death threat!?

MOSLEY

We tune in on Wednesday. It sounds really exciting.

BAILIHEW

You want us to *tune in?*

MOSLEY

Why are you asking me?! You always do this, you have the answer in your own mind, and then you ask me and you *expect* me to come up with the same answer! This is why I have stress headaches, sir.

BAILIHEW

Mosley!

MOSLEY

Sorry sir. I'm having trouble at home. My cat, he's… he's unhappy. He's not using the litter box properly. My life is a nightmare.

BAILIHEW

I'm sorry to hear that.

MOSLEY

We'll get through it. I just need a lot of prayers right now. And Febreeze.

BAILIHEW

All right, look. We've got to get somebody on this – now I think that –
(CAROL-ANN enters.)

CAROL-ANN

Knock knock! Hello.

BAILIHEW

Officer Perkins, I don't believe I called you in here.

CAROL-ANN
That's okay. Because I sensed danger and I am alert. You want to see my preparedness stance? It's like this.

(She does her preparedness stance)

BAILIHEW
Were you listening at the door again?

CAROL-ANN
When you're as finely tuned as I am, you just feel it. Like the Force.

BAILIHEW
So that's a yes?

CAROL-ANN
Yes sir. At the door.

MOSLEY
Perkins –

CAROL-ANN
Call me Carol-Ann.

MOSLEY
Perkins, if you don't mind, we have some very serious business to attend to. And some bonding.

BAILIHEW
There won't be any bonding.

MOSLEY
He says that, but there will probably be bonding.

BAILIHEW
Nope.

MOSLEY
So if you could just wait outside please?

CAROL-ANN
I get it. I got you. It's a guy thing. Like in the restroom.

BAILIHEW
There's nothing going on in the restroom.*

CAROL-ANN
The sauna. No one's wearing any clothes. It's sweaty – *

**These two lines may be cut.*

BAILIHEW

Do you mind?

CAROL-ANN

I'll just be outside using my imagination then.

(She backs out, knocks something over.)

Whoops. Little stumble. Normally I'm like a cat.

(She makes a cat motion, knocks something else over.)

(She's out.)

BAILIHEW

All right, I want to get our best man on this –

MOSLEY

That's going to be Harwick –

BAILIHEW

I thought the same thing.

(CAROL-ANN is back.)

CAROL-ANN

Yo um… I couldn't help but listening in again – you said "best man on this"- and with all due respect, your best man ain't a man. Boom.

(she stands there)

BAILIHEW

You know what, we do have a job for you. The Vice-Presidential motorcade needs a few good cops to accompany him –

CAROL-ANN

What? That dirtbag?

MOSLEY

This is the vice-president you're talking about –

CAROL-ANN

Not doing it. I'm not into politics. So here's what happens: We go full Miss Congeniality up on this thang. I go undercover –

BAILIHEW

No –

CAROL-ANN

I develop a persona – I'm a designer, I'm eccentric, yet sensual – you can't figure me out. Where did she come from? How does she have these skills? My use of color is phenomenal –

BAILIHEW

Are you listening?

CAROL-ANN

A good cop never listens to the wrong people. So then – I dominate the competition – it's stunning, I win the whole the thing – they try to kill me, that's when I strike.

MOSLEY

This is completely unrealistic.

CAROL-ANN

I fill the Sandra Bullock role. I'm amazing. And… here's the kicker… I fall for one of the other designers… romantically.

BAILIHEW

This is actually a real issue, Perkins, you can't –

CAROL-ANN

Oh sure we'll fight it at first. I'll have a bad feeling about it. But I won't be able to contain myself any longer. There's longing. There's fire in our loins. A late night session. He or she looks over at me, I'm not picky*

*(*this line may be changed to "he looks over at me")*

– lets go of the fabric in the Singer sewing machine – the fabric tumbles to the ground as we make out like animals. Hands and feet going everywhere. Kama Sutra stuff.* And you know what? My lover is the killer. Shocking. No one saw it coming. Boom. Case solved. Murder averted. I get a spread in Marie Claire magazine and ten thousand dollars in prize money from an internet fashion company.

(pause)

You're considering it.

BAILIHEW

No we're not.

MOSLEY

The vice-presidential motorcade –

CAROL-ANN

He can wait in traffic like the rest of the scum!

BAILIHEW

Perkins, we need a competent detective on this. Go home. Get psychiatric help. You're not getting this job.

CAROL-ANN

Oh. Aw gee. I do this all the time! I get excited about seeing myself in a Sandra Bullock role. I don't even look good in a bikini. No one wants to see that. That's probably why I'm alone. You know. Without love. That probably explains it. I'll go home now. Get one of those frozen pizzas. Eat the whole thing. Cry during it. I probably deserve this life.

BAILIHEW

Okay.

CAROL-ANN

I'll probably be so sad that I'll call the commissioner and tell him everything I know about the Jenkins case, and how that money that was supposed to be evidence disappeared and how I had no idea who did that, even though you were suddenly able to get that new truck – and I'll be crying while I email him the photos I took of you with the cash.

BAILIHEW

I'm sorry?

CAROL-ANN

What?

BAILIHEW

Are you threatening me?

CAROL-ANN

Do I sound like I'm threatening you? That would be crazy. Like a fox.

BAILIHEW

Um… can I talk to you in private?

CAROL-ANN

Nope. Give me the job. Undercover.

BAILIHEW

I'll have to arrange it with the producers –

CAROL-ANN

Do it.

(Lights change.)
(Theme music for Project Design.)

VOICE OF ALIANA

We took twelve of the greatest and up and coming fashion designers and set them a simple task. Succeed or die. The finalists will have their clothes featured in New York's fashion week, which is awesome. It really is. The winning designer will have their pieces in Marie Claire magazine and many other places on the internet! Ten thousand dollars to start your own private studio, a

Skipping Forward

You think you guys are hot stuff? No. I am the real deal, people. I am a freaking legend. You haven't even heard of me because you haven't been worthy of hearing about me. How did I learn fashion? Um… I am fashion, fools. I started a studio at the age of four. While you creatures were playing dollies and dressing up your barbies I was dominating the playground with my mind-destroying designs! I made my own clothes at six. I started my own Youtube channel at seven. I am awesome. And I'm not here to make friends, I'm here to kick fash. Un.

(short pause)

That's my catchphrase. Kick Fash. Un. Is there a way we can make t-shirts?

ALIANA

Thank you very much, Jezebel.

CAROL-ANN

Thank you! I'm gonna sit now!

ALIANA

Please sit.

CAROL-ANN

We're on the same wavelength. You and me, Aliana. Synchronized. Feels glorious, doesn't it?

ALIANA

Sit.

CAROL-ANN

Yes.

(She sits)

TOSCA

It's time for the QuickSew challenge!

(Sound effect announcing QuickSew challenge. Perhaps an echoing recorded voice says "QUICKSEW!")

When we return to the Project Design studio you will find a pile of garbage we pulled from a dumpster on 37th street. You will have thirty minutes to create a fashion forward accessory, using only yourself as the model. The winning designer will have immunity from elimination this round.

ANNIE

Wow!

PRESIDENT

It's the same thing every round Annie. You don't need to make exclamations.

ANNIE

Okay. Sorry.

PRESIDENT

You're always apologizing for yourself. It's sad.

ANNIE

Sorry.

TOSCA

And three two one… begin!

(Lights up on the Project Design studio, which is divided into tables and a sewing area. There are six mannequins located near the tables.)

(There is also a large pile of garbage in the center of the room.)

(At the beginning, the five designers sprint for the pile of garbage. CAROL-ANN is left in the dust.)

CAROL-ANN

What is happening!?

(SHIVA grabs a hubcap from the pile.)

(She stops and turns to the audience as the others scramble for garbage.)

SHIVA *(to the audience)*

I saw that hubcab first and I knew exactly what I was going to do. Necklace.

(SHIVA runs to her station and starts working.)

CAROL-ANN

Who is she talking to?

ANNIE

The camera. You have to do confessionals to explain your thoughts.

CAROL-ANN

Aren't those recorded afterwards?

ANNIE

Nope.

PRESIDENT *(to the audience)*

At first I went for the Arby's bag, but Ifez grabbed it. I will murder him.

(PRESIDENT runs over to his station.)

ANNIE

When you feel the little electrical shock that means it's your turn.

CAROL-ANN

What?

(ANNIE steps forward to speak to the audience)

ANNIE

I haven't made any friends here. The pile of garbage reminded me of my life. But then I saw a wind chime and I thought about earrings.

(ANNIE goes to her station.)

(CAROL-ANN feels an electric shock.)

CAROL-ANN

Ah! What the heck?!

(she gets shocked again.)

Aah!

(she starts swatting at imaginary bees)

Where the heck is it coming from?

ANNIE

It's under your skin. They implanted it during the interview process.

CAROL-ANN

Are you serious?

(She's shocked again.)

Ah! What! Fine.

(She looks out at the camera.)

The pile of garbage looked like garbage. So I grabbed… this…

(she grabs a plastic bag filled with banana peels)

Bag of crap*. Which I will make into… a hat. Cool? Are we cool?

*(*the line may be changed to "bag of stuff.")*

(She waves at the camera then runs for her station, smashing into a mannequin and knocking it over.)

Whoops. Sorry about that. This guy reminds me of my prom date. No hands.

(Everyone else is working frantically on their objects.)

PRESIDENT

Some of us appreciate silence.

CAROL-ANN

So you can plan. I got ya. Planning. Execution. Planning and execution.

IFEZ

Don't worry about President. He gets testy. He's so talented, he's like if Madonna and Cher had a baby. Like some kind of tremendous alien baby where they combined two eggs and like cosmic rays hit it.

(CAROL-ANN is staring at her bag.)

CAROL-ANN

So.

IFEZ

I love to chat while I work.

ANNIE

Me too!

IFEZ

Shut up Annie! I hate her. So do you sweat? Do you like to sweat? I am like a fountain on camera. It's like Waterworld.

CAROL-ANN

Sure. So…

(she looks at her bag of garbage. Takes out a banana peel.)

(LUKE comes forward)

LUKE *(to the camera)*

I looked over at what Jezebel was doing. It was a nightmare.

CAROL-ANN

What?

(TOSCA enters.)

TOSCA

Five minutes remaining!

CAROL-ANN

Are you kidding me?! We just got in here!

(TOSCA comes over)

TOSCA

I'm looking at your work right now… and I'm concerned.

CAROL-ANN

I know. I know.

TOSCA

I'm not seeing transformation.

CAROL-ANN

Right, well that's why –

TOSCA

And time's up! Please return to the runway.

(Everyone else picks up their pieces, which are finished and look great.)

(Lights switch to the runway. ALIANA and TOSCA are waiting there.)

ALIANA

Designers. You task was to transform garbage into art.

(CAROL-ANN raises her hand.)

CAROL-ANN

Can I make a comment? We were supposed to have thirty minutes there, and I'm not entirely sure that was thirty minutes.

PRESIDENT

I thought you were going to dominate.

CAROL-ANN

I am dominating. Below the surface. But I also need time for domination. To dominate properly. You don't just show up at the dominatrixes place and expect her to be ready for you. She's gotta have time to prepare.

ALIANA

Let's see your work.

(SHIVA steps forward with her necklace.)

(Everyone has completed their task and they look great. Use pre-prepared pieces.)*

SHIVA

I saw a hubcab and I thought about death.

CAROL-ANN

Any specific person's death or just death in general?

(SHIVA stares at CAROL-ANN.)

SHIVA

Death.

CAROL-ANN

Like murder death or just sort of the natural process of aging?

ALIANA

Tell us about it, Shiva.

SHIVA

So when I think about death I think about choking. And strangulation. So I made a choker.

TOSCA

It's marvelous.

ALIANA

I love the story you created. So wonderful.

SHIVA
I would say thank you but I don't believe in thank yous.

TOSCA
I respect that.

ALIANA
Luke, what do you have?

LUKE
Well… At first I thought I saw a dead cat in there and I was like, I can't use a dead cat! No one can use a dead cat. Except Gandhi. Gandhi could probably do anything. But then I spotted some metallic food containers.

ALIANA
Oh!

TOSCA
Wow.

LUKE
So I merged them together, threaded some beads in there, and I made this handbag.
(He shows off a great purse.)

ALIANA
I feel like I've seen this before from you. You need to stretch yourself.

LUKE
Sorry. I'll try harder next time.

TOSCA
Ifez.

IFEZ
Hi.

TOSCA
You seem stressed. Breathe.

IFEZ
Okay. All right. Um… So… I hate this. Before I start.

TOSCA
No. You have to love your failures.

CAROL-ANN

That's what my Mom says.

(They turn to look at her)

About her other children. Probably not me. I didn't think that was about me. Until this moment here.

ALIANA

So what do you have for us?

IFEZ

Okay, so this is a bracelet I made from a used egg carton and French fries.

(It looks fantastic)

I did a little crocheting here and I added these sparkly things to offset the saltiness of the fries.

ALIANA

I'm not feeling it.

IFEZ

I know. I know it's horrible. I'm gonna do better next time, I promise. It's just, you know, my head starts swimming and then I start thinking about the Disney channel and my mind just goes to Miley Cyrus and I'm like, she's wasting her talent! She's wasting her talent! And then this happens. Can I cry now?

ALIANA

No.

IFEZ

I'll cry on the inside then. Like Miley.

ALIANA

You do that.

TOSCA

Annie.

ANNIE

Hi! I just want to say that I am grateful to be –

ALIANA

Whatever. What have you made?

ANNIE

Earrings! I found an old wind chime in the bag and I thought, I can do this! I'm a single Mom, I can do anything! I raised three children and they are doing so well, so -

ALIANA

Are they?

ANNIE

Yes?

ALIANA

Are you sure?

ANNIE

I think so.

ALIANA

Well after I've seen those earrings I question your judgment.

ANNIE

Oh.

ALIANA

Someone call Child Protective Services! Ha ha ha. A little joke. I'm sure you're an adequate mother. And remember that your children's failings are not entirely your fault. Okay moving on.

ANNIE

So um…

PRESIDENT

Hi.

TOSCA

President.

(PRESIDENT has an incredible furry jacket.)

PRESIDENT

So I created this jacket, which isn't exactly an accessory, but my work is all about expanding pre-conceived notions. I reject the entire idea of a separation between accessories and pieces.

ALIANA

Wow.

TOSCA

What is this made out of?

PRESIDENT

Pain. And the skin of a dead cat I found in the bag.

LUKE

You didn't!

PRESIDENT

I did.

ALIANA

I love it. And I love the history it has.

TOSCA

It's really fashion forward.

ALIANA

I feel like it's recycled material, and that's big right now.

PRESIDENT

Completely organic.

TOSCA

Nice work.

ALIANA

And finally… Jezebel.

CAROL-ANN

So… um… I made a hat.

(She puts the plastic bag of banana peels on her head.)

As you can see… it's very avant-garde. If you don't like it you probably just don't understand it.

TOSCA

I feel like this is a summer piece.

ALIANA

I understand what you're trying to do.

CAROL-ANN

Do you?

ALIANA

And I applaud your risk-taking. It's kind of awful though.

CAROL-ANN

That's what I was going for.

ALIANA

I can see JC Penny's selling this.

TOSCA

Thank you designers! We will return in just a few moments with our decision.

ALIANA

I think I've got it.

TOSCA

Never mind.

ALIANA

Two pieces stood out for me today. Shiva. I enjoyed your choker.

(SHIVA nods.)

And President – that dead cat jacket is winsome and macabre at the same time. And that's hard to make work. But there can be only one winner… and the person safe from elimination is… President.

SHIVA

What!

CAROL-ANN

ARE YOU KIDDING ME?! I WAS ROBBED!

ALIANA

You have the rest of the day to plot and engage in ill-advised romance. We'll see you tomorrow for the elimination challenge, when one of you… will be cut.

(Lights change.)

(Lights up on CAROL-ANN talking into her phone.)

CAROL-ANN

Day one. No one suspects me. I've narrowed the list of suspects to everyone in the room. And maybe the cameramen. They look shifty. Also, I was a little disappointed with my performance in the quicksew – I'm gonna nail the next one. But it's time to go back to the hotel and do some major investigating. And that means the sensuous art… of seduction.

(IFEZ is right behind her.)

IFEZ

Who are you talking to?

CAROL-ANN

Siri. She's my only friend.

IFEZ

Oh.

CAROL-ANN

Do you have any friends, Ifez?

IFEZ

Well – I don't know –

CAROL-ANN

Would you like to be my friend?

IFEZ

Um… I'm sure you think you're a fantastic person –

CAROL-ANN

Oh I do think that.

IFEZ

But uh… I'm not interested.

CAROL-ANN

Your mouth says no but your funny little glasses say yes.

IFEZ

No they don't.

CAROL-ANN

They might.

IFEZ

I'm sorry but I've got a lot to work on for tomorrow.

CAROL-ANN

Tomorrow's a big day, huh?

IFEZ

It's the elimination challenge.

CAROL-ANN

Just like Hunger Games. Twelve people enter. One person lives. Somebody gets poisoned.

IFEZ

What do you mean, poisoned?

CAROL-ANN

Oh I don't know. Don't you think that's a way someone could die?

IFEZ

Why would anyone die?

CAROL-ANN

You seem nervous.

IFEZ

I'm always nervous.

CAROL-ANN

Why is that Ifez? You mind if I call you Fezzy? Fezzy Bear?

(She plays with his boa.)

I love your boa by the way. Most men aren't confident enough to wear boas. But I find it… fabulous.

IFEZ

Look, Jezebel -

CAROL-ANN

That's right, say my name.

IFEZ

Um…

CAROL-ANN

It's mysterious, isn't it? Jezebel. Kind of Biblical. Something about her in the Bible. Probably about disguises. But we all have our disguises, don't we, Ifez? How about we take those disguises off?

IFEZ

Nope! Nope. Look – you seem very nice, you need to be careful.

CAROL-ANN

Oh I'm always…

(she stats wrapping his boa around her own neck. She has a lot of trouble with it. It is very unsexy.)

Careful.

IFEZ

There are people who would stop at nothing to win Project Design. That's all I'm gonna say. Nothing. I can't talk anymore! There's a lot of emotions swirling!

(He skitters off, crying.)

CAROL-ANN

I still got it.

(Into her phone)

Chief Bailihew? Are you in?

(OFFICER JONES and OFFICER NIGELA enter on the opposite side of the room, on speaker phone.)

Skipping Forward

You got your music. Listening to your tunes. Your itunes. Or not itunes if you're doing Spotify or whatever. That's cool. I'm not into judgments.

(CAROL-ANN sits next to Shiva.)

I really liked your choker thing today. Way sexy. Like in a disturbing kind of violent way. But still, you know, hot. Smoking.

*(She decides to try seduction.)**

I don't know which way your boat floats, but let me tell you, I'm all over the ocean. Any which way. So… maybe sometime… just the two of us – we could listen to music together – in some kind of industrial complex. That's probably your scene. Like an open furnace or something. Machinery. Probably a conveyor belt of some kind.

(She makes a conveyor belt sound)

And we could just… you know… get industrial.

**(ALTERNATE lines to the above two paragraphs below)*

(I don't know if you're looking for friends here, but let me tell you, I am loyal. Supremely loyal. So… maybe sometime… just the two of us – we could listen to some tunes together – in some kind of industrial complex. That's probably your scene. Like an open furnace or something. Machinery. Probably a conveyor belt of some kind.

-makes a conveyor belt sound.

(And we could just play hopscotch or whatever… scandalize some Barbies.)

SHIVA

Are you talking to me?

CAROL-ANN *(seductive)*

Do you want me to be talking to you?

SHIVA

I had my headphones in. I was ignoring you.

CAROL-ANN

Oh.

SHIVA

So I'm gonna go back to ignoring you.

CAROL-ANN

You can try, but I am a wide load of stimulation.*

(CAROL-ANN plays with Shiva's hair. Makes sound effects.)

*(*this line may be changed to "you can try, but I'm gonna friend you on facebook.)*

SHIVA

Do you have some kind of problem?

CAROL-ANN

Not anymore. Medication.

(SHIVA removes CAROL-ANN's hand from her hair.)

Right.

(CAROL-ANN steps away.)

I'm just gonna do some yoga poses over here if you don't mind. I'm in a continuous state of yoga.

(she starts doing some yoga)

(SHIVA takes her headphones out.)

SHIVA

I'm trying to do my sketching, okay? Tomorrow's going to be insane and I'm not getting cut. So go do your horrible yoga somewhere else.

CAROL-ANN

Sure. Sure. Can I ask you one question though? If you could kill one of the other competitors, which one would you kill and why? And please be specific in your answer.

SHIVA

All of them. Now get out.

CAROL-ANN

No doubt. But of course you'd probably want to eliminate the toughest competition, right? So that would be… President?

SHIVA

Ha. President is not who he says he is.

CAROL-ANN

His name's not President?

SHIVA

Let's just say I've known him for a long time. You'll find out.

CAROL-ANN

Bingo. And if you change your mind about an awkward seduction, you'll find I am a bountiful lover.*

*(*This line may be changed to "if you change your mind about friendship, you'll find I am a glorious companion.)*

(Lights up on PRESIDETN and LUKE talking.)

LUKE

He's totally imploding. It's sad to watch.

PRESIDENT

I used to like him. When we first got here I was like, `oh, he's adorable, like a homeless puppy.' But then like, he started designing and I was like, `oh no, the puppy's got like one leg and eats its own vomit.'

LUKE

Stop it!

PRESIDENT

I love talent, okay? Talent. Not whatever he's got. Logorrhea.

LUKE

What is that?

PRESIDENT

I don't know. Like diarrhea with legos.

LUKE

That sounds painful.
(They laugh)

PRESIDENT

I thought you liked him.

LUKE

OMG no. Can you imagine that? Like meeting our friends? They'd be like, where did you get the garden gnome? Did you steal that off somebody's lawn?

PRESIDENT

You are awful! He's done some good work.

LUKE

Ugh. The bacon hat? That's all I have to say. Bacon. Hat. Like what is that? Who gets the food challenge and thinks, oh, this needs to go on my head?

PRESIDENT

At least it wasn't another tank top dress.
(LUKE titters)
How many more half-naked women can he send down the runway? Like, tape is not a replacement for fabric, my friend. If you have to tape your tank top dress on, you have made terrible mistakes in your life.
(LUKE titters again)

LUKE

I can't believe he's still here.

PRESIDENT

Can I be totally serious with you right now?

LUKE

Yes! I love it when you're totally serious.

PRESIDENT

You know who's the biggest threat?

LUKE

Me?

PRESIDENT

Shiva. She is fearsome.

LUKE

Don't worry about Shiva.

PRESIDENT

Why do you say that?

LUKE

She might be in for… an accident.
(CAROL-ANN blunders in.)

CAROL-ANN

What's up Homies?
(They look at her, offended.)
Homies. Homepeople.

PRESIDENT

Hi.
(short pause)

LUKE

Hi.

CAROL-ANN

So what's going on over here? Plotting? Right?

LUKE

Okay. I am feeling the need to not be here. Just because the vibe changed in a very unfortunate way. Also, I don't want to be photographed with you.

PRESIDENT

You don't need to announce your positions, Luke. We understand.

LUKE

Right. Okay.

CAROL-ANN

I'll catch up with you later.

LUKE

Oh. Honey no.

CAROL-ANN

But I'm gonna. You can't stop me. I'm like a tiger. I'm just gonna bust in places and wreck stuff.

LUKE

Tigers don't do that.

CAROL-ANN

They do.

LUKE

That's a misconception.

CAROL-ANN

It is not.

LUKE

You're stereotyping tigers. I know tigers. Okay? You're just using one for a wild metaphor and you don't know anything about them. It's offensive.

CAROL-ANN

I like you. I like your spirit.

LUKE

I have to leave. Okay. President. You're an inspiration.

PRESIDENT

Thank you.

LUKE

I mean it. You're my light in the darkness.

PRESIDENT

Great.

CAROL-ANN

He's like a tiger.

LUKE

Shut up about tigers!

(LUKE leaves.)

CAROL-ANN

He seems tense.

PRESIDENT

Luke's like that. He doesn't trust himself so he lashes out.

CAROL-ANN

What about you, President? Is that your actual name?

PRESIDENT

My Mom was seeing all these people naming their babies Prince and Captain and whatever, so she was like, "screw that, my baby's gonna be President."

CAROL-ANN

Wow.

PRESIDENT

My middle name's General. My second middle name's Pope. So I could be like General General Johnson or Pope Pope Johnson. If I choose that career path.

CAROL-ANN

I don't think Pope's a career path.

PRESIDENT

I don't limit my dreams. I'm just exploring right now. And then I'll choose one of those roles.

CAROL-ANN

Fashion designer's a good experience for Pope, probably. He wears that hat.

PRESIDENT

Can I tell you something? I love what you were doing with the banana peel garbage bag hat, but I just feel like you needed to iterate it one more time. Know what I'm saying?

CAROL-ANN

Definitely. I totally wanted to iterate it, but I ran out of time. For the iterating.

PRESIDENT

Yeah. That's sad.

(he steps out to talk to the audience)

So Jezasmell or whatever just came to my room and was like talking to me, right? Like, what are you doing here? She is a trainwreck. I can't believe they let her on the show.

CAROL-ANN

I'm right here.

PRESIDENT

What?

CAROL-ANN

You just did a confessional and I'm right here.

PRESIDENT

We don't stop doing confessionals just because we're in the apartment.

CAROL-ANN

Yeah, but I'm right here. It's kind of rude.

PRESIDENT

It's kind of rude to point out somebody being rude.

CAROL-ANN

All right.

(PRESIDENT steps out)

PRESIDENT *(to the audience)*

Why is she arguing with me? Like, what do you want? And why is she wearing that? That rayon died for your sins.

(CAROL-ANN takes a deep breath.)

CAROL-ANN

So… um… I really liked your work today.

PRESIDENT

I'm sure.

CAROL-ANN

It was like really… real, like it had a realness to it.

PRESIDENT

I try.

CAROL-ANN

So…

(CAROL-ANN feels the electric shock.)

Ow. So I was thinking…

(She feels the shock again)

Ow – all right – ow –

(to the cameras)

All right look I'm not going to do a confessional in the middle of a conversation! I'm not doing it! So just quit shocking me all right? We're talking here!

(she waits for it. No shock.)

So I was –

(she gets shocked.)

Fine. Fine!

(she jumps up and talks into the confessional.)

I love talking with President. He's so amazing and talented. Can I express my feelings for him? I sure hope so cause I need to get some loving! There! Are you happy? Satisfied?! Thank you.

(she walks back to PRESIDENT)

Where were we? I was trying to seduce you.

PRESIDENT

Um… I don't know if you're picking up on my vibe or not, but –

CAROL-ANN

I don't care.

PRESIDENT

Right. And I respect that. But I think you might be barking up the wrong tree.

CAROL-ANN

I'll bark up your tree all night long.*

*(*this line may be cut)*

PRESIDENT

Eww.

(CAROL-ANN makes like dog noises.)

CAROL-ANN

Grr. Ruff.

(PRESIDENT steps out)

PRESIDENT *(to the audience)*

I'm having flashbacks to prom of my junior year. It is not going well. The whole time I was like daffodil is not a color, it's an unfortunate accident of nature. Jezasmell is like a nightmare I had when I was six.

(He steps back in.)

(CAROL-ANN gets shocked.)

CAROL-ANN

What? Oh come on.

(She gets shocked again)

(She steps out.)

President is a tough nut to crack. But I will crack him. I will crack him so good. Over and over again. There! You like that? You like that, do you? I'm trying to work my magic here, people!

(she gets back into it)
So I've got an idea. We go in the closet.

PRESIDENT
I'm so done with the closet. I haven't been in the closet since –

CAROL-ANN
No I mean. You and me. Animal creatures. We go in the dark. Nobody can see each other. The cameras aren't watching. And you just tell Mama all your secrets.

PRESIDENT
Nope.

CAROL-ANN
I feel something between us. You feel it? There's a hunger between us.

PRESIDENT
Not really.

CAROL-ANN
Oh yeah. This. This heat. You feel it. Underneath this exterior I am molten lava. I am a volcano. And I'm about to blow.*
*(*these lines may be cut)*
(short pause)
That came out wrong. That's what he said.

PRESIDENT
Okay I'm just gonna back away now. You've loosed one too many double entendres.

CAROL-ANN
Oh I'm just started loosing the entendres.

PRESIDENT
Stop it. You are damaging my respect for the English language. Please. Please. I will get a hose.

CAROL-ANN
That's all right. I can take a hint. No need to get wet and wild.

PRESIDENT
Don't even finish your thought.

CAROL-ANN
I never do. Can I ask you a question though?

PRESIDENT
No I am not interested. I would rather make out with a duck.

CAROL-ANN

That was not my question.

PRESIDENT

Fine.

CAROL-ANN

How do you know Shiva?

PRESIDENT

What did she say?

CAROL-ANN

I'm just wondering. You two seem like you've got a history.

PRESIDENT

Lots of people have history. It's a small world.

CAROL-ANN

I got you. I know where you're coming from. Lots of people aren't what they seem. Right?

PRESIDENT

What do you want?

CAROL-ANN

I want to win. Okay honey? Rarr.

PRESIDENT

I gotta go.

(He runs off.)

CAROL-ANN *(into her phone)*

Two suspects remain.

(LUKE walks across the stage.)

LUKE

Don't even come near me devil woman!

(LUKE makes the sign of the cross at her and skitters away.)

CAROL-ANN *(into phone)*

One. Last. Seduction.*

(This may be changed to "One. Last. Encounter.")

(Lights up on ANNIE talking in the confessional.)

ANNIE

Really tough day with the Quicksew challenge. I'm trying to stay positive. It's tough though! All the other designers are really talented. I'm not sure what I think of the new girl.

(CAROL-ANN sidles up behind her.)

She's um… she seems nice.

CAROL-ANN

Really.

(ANNIE laughs.)

ANNIE

I didn't see you there!

CAROL-ANN

I'm everywhere. And I'm nowhere.

ANNIE

Wow.

CAROL-ANN

Yeah. Yeah wow. So what's your story, sweetheart?

ANNIE

Did you see my intro?

CAROL-ANN

I did, but I don't put a lot of stock in intros. Sometimes there's dark secrets just beneath the surface. You're a mom. You got three kids. You make clothes. I got that. But what I want to know is, why does everywhere hate you?

ANNIE

I think they're just really catty.

CAROL-ANN

Uh huh. That would be the easiest explanation. But the easiest explanation is never the one I choose. But it looks like you could use a friend in a platonic relationship that might have sensual overtones?*

*(*This line may be changed to "you could use a friend in a disturbingly co-dependent relationship)*

ANNIE

What?

(CAROL-ANN gets buzzed and steps out.)

CAROL-ANN

I was feeling something from Annie I haven't felt in a long time. Passion. Curiosity. Baked goods. I think we might have a winner in the Jezebel sweepstakes.

(She steps back.)
I'm gonna say something to you right now, and it's going to scare you. It's going to scare you like crazy. But underneath that fear there's going to be something cool as all get out – and it's an image of you and me and –
(High-pitched shriek from off-stage.)
Dang it.
(Lights up elsewhere on stage.)
(IFEZ is standing and shaking, pointing at a pair of fabric shears that have lodged into a wall.)
(Everyone else, including CAROL-ANN and ANNIE, rushes in.)

IFEZ
I was just standing here and the shears flew past my head! Like someone was throwing them at me! I was so close to death! It was horrible! There were little stars and I saw my life pass in front of my eyes and it was kind of great because I've lived fabulously but at the same time I'm really really frustrated with where I am right now and –

SHIVA
Shut up!

IFEZ
That is hurtful! I am undergoing trauma. Please respect my process.
(He starts hyperventilating again.)
I'm reliving it. Aaah.
(SHIVA heads over to the shears.)

SHIVA
There's a note attached.

IFEZ
It's a bomb!

SHIVA
It's a note.
(She takes it down and unfolds it and shows it to everyone.)
"Your next."

LUKE
Me?!

SHIVA
It's not really assigned to anyone specifically.

PRESIDENT
Wait a minute, honey. Let me see that. Whoever wrote this didn't use an apostrophe. So I'm thinking this is a possessive. Your next something?

ANNIE

Your next what?

PRESIDENT

Your contribution is not appreciated, honey.

IFEZ

Can I have some comforting please?

LUKE

What if they meant you were going to be next? Like, you're the next one to die?

PRESIDENT

If they meant that, then they should've used an apostrophe to show a contraction. Come on.

IFEZ

What if they didn't know that rule?

(Everyone looks at IFEZ)

When they wrote it? And tried to kill me with it?

SHIVA

Whoever wrote this wasn't concerned with proper grammar or clarity. We know that much. Bastard.*

(This line may be replaced with "jerk")

LUKE

You don't know it was a man. It could've been a woman.

SHIVA

Look at this handwriting! You think a woman writes like this! You think a woman can't use an apostrophe correctly!

LUKE

Well you're just full of stereotypes tonight aren't you!? And isn't it convenient that you were the person to pull the shears out of the wall!

SHIVA

You're saying I did this?

LUKE

You think about death all the time!

SHIVA

That's because I'm stuck in this competition with you people! A nun would think about death all the time!

IFEZ

This is re-traumatizing me!

ANNIE

Can I make a suggestion?

IFEZ, SHIVA, LUKE, and PRESIDENT

NO!

CAROL-ANN

All right muchachos. Let's all just simmer down a notch. Sure, someone just tried to kill Ifez, but even if the scissors had hit him, they probably would have just wounded him. I mean, there might be blood. I guess if they lodged right here in his back.

(She demonstrates on his back.)

I suppose they could have punctured the skin here, and then slid through his ribs and pierced his lungs. That would cause a jet of blood to erupt from his back – spurting like a little geyser, right? Like blaaaah. And then Ifez would scream and probably be in excruciating pain – and that would only cause the scissors to wiggle back and forth –

IFEZ

I'm not feeling well.

CAROL-ANN

But the point is he missed.

LUKE

He! Again with the he! You're sexist! You are a sexist person!

CAROL-ANN

Fine! He or she or they! Happy?

LUKE

They?! Are you saying more than one person threw the scissors!

IFEZ

It's a conspiracy!

PRESIDENT

Luke, you're pretty, but you're also pretty dumb, so stop talking.

CAROL-ANN

I was using they as a singular gender neutral pronoun.

SHIVA

I don't think you can do that.

Skipping Forward

SHIVA
If we call the police, they'll cancel the show. No one will win. And besides they only tried to kill Ifez, it's not they committed an actual crime.

IFEZ
That's *attempted* murder! That's a crime.

SHIVA
I don't see how you can be charged with you a crime you didn't even succeed in committing.

IFEZ
It's a crime!

CAROL-ANN
It's really just an attempted stabbing.

IFEZ
That's still a crime!

CAROL-ANN
Eh. Maybe. All right let me feel your butts.

LUKE
This is ridiculous. Why are you the one doing this anyway?

SHIVA
Yeah!

CAROL-ANN
I took a class, all right? In design school. They had a crime-solving class. And I did well! And I have an alibi so you know I'm not the potential killer.

LUKE
Fine. But I don't like it.

CAROL-ANN
You don't have to like it. But right now I'm the only hope you've got. Bend over.
(LUKE complies.)
(CAROL-ANN moves behind each person and squeezes their butt.)

CAROL-ANN *(at SHIVA)*
Surprising.
(She moves on to PRESIDENT)
Wow. This is extraordinary.

PRESIDENT

I feel awkward.
(She's still squeezing him)
Are you done?

CAROL-ANN

I'll let you know when I'm done. Oh yeah there are some nice things going on here.

PRESIDENT

Are you done?

CAROL-ANN

Hold on!
(she finishes, moves on to LUKE.)

LUKE

This is under protest.

CAROL-ANN

That's what they all say, honey.
(She squeezes him)
Eh.

LUKE

What?

CAROL-ANN

I mean it looks nice but when you get down to it…

LUKE

I wasn't flexing. I should be done again.

CAROL-ANN

Nope.
(She moves on to IFEZ)

IFEZ

What? I'm the one they tried to kill!

CAROL-ANN

How do we know that?

IFEZ

Because the scissors went past my head!

SHIVA

So you say.

CAROL-ANN

Come to Mama.

(IFEZ reluctantly lets CAROL-ANN squeeze him.)

Oh yeah.

IFEZ

Stop it!

CAROL-ANN

Annie?

ANNIE

I was next to you! I'm not dangerous!

PRESIDENT

That's a lie! She's a mother! That means she's capable of evil!

IFEZ

Yep.

ANNIE

Fine. Fine. Whatever.

(CAROL-ANN gives her a squeeze.)

CAROL-ANN

Just as I thought.

PRESIDENT

What? What does that prove?

CAROL-ANN

Inconclusive. I'm gonna have to do it again.

(Everyone erupts in protest)

THIS IS SCIENTIFIC!

(More protests from everyone)

(PRESIDENT steps out to do a confessional)

PRESIDENT

This was getting us nowhere. Yes, someone tried to kill Ifez, but -

CAROL-ANN *(overlapping)*

Are you serious? Right now you're doing this?

PRESIDENT *(overlapping)*

But we have an elimination challenge tomorrow. And if someone's gonna feel my butt all night long, he better be cute.*

(This line may be cut)

LUKE

Holla!

CAROL-ANN

Oh shut up Luke.

LUKE

You are hurtful. And not in a good way.

SHIVA

President's right. The best thing to do is wait until the killer strikes again.

ANNIE

What? That's crazy!

PRESIDENT

Says the psychopath.

ANNIE

I'm not a psychopath!

PRESIDENT

THAT'S WHAT PSYCHOPATHS SAY!

CAROL-ANN

All right. We're not getting anywhere. Let's all go to bed and we'll meet tomorrow for the elimination challenge.

IFEZ

That sounds kind of bad. Elimination challenge.

SHIVA

Well, someone's getting eliminated, aren't they?

(Thunder.)

(Lights change.)

(Lights up on the runway.)

LUKE *(to the camera)*

So we were all a bit nervous from the attempted murder last night, but I was really excited for the elimination challenge, because OMG, we have special guest judges. And they are literally gods.

(PIETER and SAMANTHA step in.)

SAMANTHA

Once again, I will be judging the elimination round, and I'd like to introduce our special guest judge –

PRESIDENT

Oh please. Like we don't know who this.

SHIVA

You are amazing. You're everything.

IFEZ

I am like dying right now. Dying.

CAROL-ANN

Yep. Word.

(PIETER waves his hand slightly.)

PIETER

Ya. Hello.

SAMANTHA

Pieter Van Omtrabben.

(PRESIDENT, SHIVA, and IFEZ give him a standing ovation.)

PIETER

Ya. Again. I am… happy to be being here.

PRESIDENT

Oh my gosh yes. YES!

IFEZ

Can I touch you?

PIETER

No. I reserve that for the winner.

IFEZ

Okay.

SAMANTHA

So the elimination challenge today –

(Sound effect, a deep echoing voice "ELMINATION CHALLENGE," followed by the sound of a slash and scream.)

CAROL-ANN

Um, hey, maybe we should change that sound effect so it doesn't sound like someone being murdered? Just throwing that out there.

SAMANTHA

So the elimination challenge today –

(The same sound effect plays again, followed by the slash and scream)

Is the Lock-In challenge!

(sound effect of a prison door being slammed shut)

PIETER

Ya.

SAMANTHA

Pieter, could you explain the challenge?

PIETER

You think I am monkey? You say hop little monkey and I hop? No. I am Pieter. I do not hop.

SAMANTHA

It's on the teleprompter that you're supposed to introduce the challenge.

PIETER

Does the teleprompter own me? No.

SAMANTHA

Okay I guess I will take your lines then.

(she reads off the teleprompter)

Thank you Samantha I will introduce challenge now. Ya. The Lock-In Challenege! You have 24 hours to create an evening look for an ordinary woman.

PRESIDENT

Oh no. Ordinary women are horrible.

SAMANTHA

You will have twenty minutes to work with your ordinary models, and then you will be locked into the Project Design studios for twenty-four hours straight! Your only sustenance will be an unlimited supply of coffee! No one will be allowed in. No one will be allowed out. There will be no escape. Even in emergencies.

(CAROL-ANN raises her hand)

No phones will work.

(CAROL-ANN raises her hand more insistently)

We will periodically turn off the power and make you work in the dark to make things interesting.

(CAROL-ANN starts jumping up and down with her hand up.)

What?

CAROL-ANN

Are you sure this is a good idea?

PIETER

What is good? What is bad? There is only greatness.

PRESIDENT

That's so deep.

IFEZ

Can I steal that?

PIETER

No.

IFEZ

Okay. Really excited by the way. Really excited. Nervous. Way too nervous. Probably going to have a stroke but I am ready for this. So ready.

SAMANTHA

You're shaking again.

IFEZ

I know. And if I could stop I would. But sometimes I just gotta keep going – you see the cliff and you're driving the car and you're like hit the brake, hit the brake, but the brake doesn't work for you, you're just accelerating and you're going to die. Can we cut that part out in editing? We can cut that out right? You're gonna cut that?

SAMANTHA

If you don't make the cut, one of you… will be cut. And go!

(Lights up on the Project Design studio. There are six mannequins and tables again. Everyone rushes to their spot. ANNIE speaks directly to the camera.)

ANNIE

I so appreciate the opportunity to work with ordinary women. I mean, don't get me wrong, I love the models. It must be awesome to be a model and six feet tall and be able to look down on everyone and be like, "worship me!" I'm sure they don't do that. I'm sure they have problems like everyone else. I don't know what they are, but they're probably worse than having three kids under the age of five and being broke and wondering where the child support went. I love my life. I really do. Love it. Sometimes I want to kill everyone and run away. Ha ha ha ha. I don't mean that. I have a sign in my kitchen. It's very inspirational. It says, "don't kill everyone and run away."

(LUKE steps forward)

LUKE

I immediately starting thinking about color. And colors. Like a rainbow. That's like all the colors. So all I had to do was pick one and go with it. But then I thought about metallics. And I was like, "are those even colors?" Because if they're not colors, then what are they? And I thought about that for a while. And then I thought, maybe someone gets murdered today. And then I decided to go with green.

(He goes back to his table)

(CAROL-ANN steps forward)

CAROL-ANN

So um… I'm freaking out a little bit. I decided on a full-coverage dress. Kind of like a tarp. You know, with uh… like straps and stuff. Because it's awesome and I'm awesome. So… my design is less of a plan than a mission statement. Pretty sure when the lights go out someone's going to end up dead.

(She steps back to her work station.)

IFEZ *(to the audience)*

I love my design. Really great sketching. Usually I'm like, I hate it I hate it I hate it I hate it I kind of like it I love it I hate it. But today I love it right from the start! Probably cause someone is trying to kill me. Or this dress will kill me. Ha ha ha. Oh God.*

**This line may be cut.*

(He goes back to his workstation, shaking.)

PRESIDENT

Can I borrow someone's shears?

(Everyone looks at him.)

What?

CAROL-ANN

Where are your shears?

PRESIDENT

…I don't know. Can I borrow some?

(No one offers anything.)

IFEZ

Why do you want them?

PRESIDENT

To cut some fabric. People. Are you serious right now? I didn't throw them at Ifez, if that's what you're worried about. And even if I did try to kill Ifez, I would use a different murder weapon with my second attempt. Like a needle.

(He holds one up.)

SHIVA

Fine. I don't care. Here.

(SHIVA gives him her shears.)

PREISDENT

Thank you. You are brilliant.

SHIVA

You're welcome.
(She returns to her station.)
(Pause.)

CAROL-ANN

I'm just gonna circulate. Like the water cycle. Don't mind me.
(She picks up her mannequin and holds it like a shield between her and PRESIDENT.)

PRESIDENT

Oh please. Any of us could have thrown those shears.
(CAROL-ANN considers it. She now keeps the mannequin between her and everyone. Moves over to see what IFEZ is doing.)

CAROL-ANN

Cool. That looks like an alien.

IFEZ

Do you mind?

CAROL-ANN

Nope.
(CAROL-ANN takes IFEZ's mannequin and holds it to her back.)

IFEZ

Hey.

CAROL-ANN

You're not using it!

IFEZ

I'm going to use it!
(CAROL-ANN moves across the room with both mannequins. IFEZ scoots after her and snatches his mannequin back. He realizes he's away from his workstation, and holds his mannequin in front of him like a shield in order to get to her seat.)

CAROL-ANN

Everyone just be cool okay!
(A mannequin falls over.)
(Everyone jumps. IFEZ shrieks.)

SHIVA

Sorry!

ANNIE

This is crazy, guys. It's just a competition. There's no need for murder.

LUKE

That's what Hitler said.

ANNIE

No it's not!

LUKE

I'm pretty sure he said that.

CAROL-ANN

Let's all just do our designs and –

(A BUZZING sound interrupts her.)

(The VOICE OF TOSCA comes over a speaker.)

VOICE OF TOSCA

Designers. You now have five minutes to work with your models.

(BECKY and VANESSA enter awkwardly.)

BECKY

Hi.

VANESSA

What's up?

(The designers stare at them. SHIVA, PRESIDENT, LUKE, and IFEZ all step forward to do a confessional. They take a moment, then get in line.)

SHIVA

So there are two models. Two. For six of us. We have to share them.

(SHIVA goes back to her spot.)

LUKE

I don't know much about ordinary women, but if these are ordinary women, I don't want to know anything more.

IFEZ

Mine is built like a hippopotamus. Seriously.

PRESIDENT

Like, don't you have any respect for yourself? You're like a size four. That's disgusting. And she's not even six feet tall. I don't know what to do.

(PRESIDENT goes to his table with BECKY.)
(VANESSA stops in at the other tables.)

BECKY

I've never been a model before.

PRESIDENT

I know. So these are the designs I made before I saw you, and now I'm just going to throw all that out the window, okay?

(He viciously crumples up his drawings and throws them over his shoulder.)

And we're gonna start fresh. Like, when you go to Kohl's what is it you're looking for?

BECKY

Um… mostly just something that looks good.

PRESIDENT

Uh huh. And do you think you're succeeding with that? Don't answer. I'll just look at you for a moment. Drink you in, okay?

BECKY

Okay.

PRESIDENT

Just stand there and don't say anything. And if I start crying, they're inspirational tears. I always cry when I design.

(PRESIDENT looks at her. Thinks.)

I'm just going to brainstorm now. So don't say anything. I'm going to throw out some emotions and images that occur to me, and I'll edit them later.

BECKY

That's a little weird but okay.

PRESIDENT

I didn't ask for comment. Okay…

(He looks at her)

Apocalypse. Mad Max. Cannibals. Peach. Like a light tan. Murder.

(VANESSA is at CAROL-ANN's table.)

VANESSA

I think I belong to you.

CAROL-ANN

Wow. Yeah. I'm digging this.

VANESSA

Thanks.

CAROL-ANN
So we are going to create something just mind-blowing for you.

VANESSA
Well I'm trying to find something tasteful –

CAROL-ANN
Don't even use that word. Someone says tasteful and you know what think? Snooze. Snoozefest. No. We are not going to be tasteful. We are going to be… amazing. Like, how do you feel about Wonder Woman?

VANESSA
I don't know.

CAROL-ANN
That's okay. Cause I know how I feel about her. She's a personal hero of mine. Whenever anything happens I think, WWWWWD. What would Wonder Woman do? WWWWD. Just four Ws. I get that messed up sometimes. It makes me go crazy! All right. You know what Wonder Woman does most times?

VANESSA
She fights?

CAROL-ANN
She ties people up. With ropes. How about it?

VANESSA
I'm a little scared.

CAROL-ANN
Me too. But that's what fashion is about. Being afraid. All right let's Kick Fash! Un.
(CAROL-ANN steps out.)

CAROL-ANN
No idea what I'm going to do. Making stuff up.
(BECKY approaches SHIVA's table.)

BECKY
I think I'm supposed to be assigned to you too.

SHIVA
You know sometimes you think the universe hates you? I was right.
(LUKE comes over)

LUKE

Actually I think you're supposed to be with me.

VANESSA

I think I'm with you.

LUKE

Let's switch.

SHIVA

I'm fine actually.

LUKE

I really think my style would work better with a more attractive woman.

VANESSA

What?

LUKE

Honey. This is not about self-deception. This is about fashion. You're perfect for Shiva. She makes beautiful women look hideous, so she might do the opposite for you.

SHIVA

Luke, use your own model.

LUKE

I hate this one.

SHIVA

Tough.

LUKE

You are always like this! You just want to see me fail!

IFEZ

Guys, we're running out of time.

ANNIE

Yeah can we speed it up?

LUKE

Why are you being combative, Annie? This isn't about you. Go ahead and stay at your table and work on your puritan dress!

ANNIE

I'm not making a puritan dress! I was thinking about –

LUKE

No one cares!

SHIVA

Use your own model, Luke!

LUKE

This is so not fair! This is a tragedy! She's got gorilla shoulders! How am I supposed to design for gorilla shoulders!

VANESSA

I don't have gorilla shoulders!

LUKE

I could put one regular model on each of your shoulders! It's insane!

IFEZ

Hurry up we're almost out of time!

LUKE

OMG Ifez deal with it!

IFEZ

You deal with it!

LUKE

Give her to me!

SHIVA

I will cut you, Luke. I have knives and I will cut you!

CAROL-ANN

Okay, well maybe let's not threaten to –

LUKE

I'm not scared of you! I do Pilates! Bring it on!

IFEZ

Come on!

(PRESIDENT sees the design on LUKE's table.)

PRESIDENT

Wait a minute, did you copy my design?

LUKE

No!

PRESIDENT

This is my design!

LUKE

I'm adapting it!

PRESIDENT

You can't take my design!

SHIVA

You are a dumpster fire of a human being!

IFEZ

I hate you!

LUKE

None of you understand me! I'm a misunderstood genius!

(A timer rings.)

VANESSA

So that means we need to go.

BECKY

This was really um… offensive. So I'll see you later.

ANNIE

What!

IFEZ

No!

(BECKY and VANESSA leave.)

I didn't even get a chance to work with her!

LUKE

She didn't seem all that cooperative.

IFEZ

Now I'm not going to get a chance to see what looks good on her and I'm going to end up with something horrible and everything is going to fall apart –

LUKE

Someone's overreacting.

IFEZ

You. You did this. I will destroy you.

LUKE

You're just jealous because I'm prettier than you.

IFEZ

Argh.

LUKE

I can't help it if you look like a troll hobbit.

(IFEZ attacks LUKE with a mannequin. – PRESIDENT tries to hold him back.)

(LUKE gets his own mannequin and starts swinging back.)

You think you can take me! I do Tae Bo!

(CAROL-ANN gets between them.)

CAROL-ANN

STOP THE MADNESS! Someone's gonna get –

(LUKE smacks her with a mannequin.)

Hurt.

LUKE

Sorry. I just can't stand it when you talk.

IFEZ

I'll kill you!

LUKE

Not if I kill you first!

ANNIE

I'LL KILL ALL OF YOU!

(everyone stops and looks at Annie.)

Metaphorically. Probably.

(The lights go out.)

SHIVA

AAAAAH!

LUKE

WHAT IS HAPPENING?!

PRESIDENT

THEY TURNED OUT THE LIGHTS!

CAROL-ANN

NOBODY MOVE!

(Everybody moves.)

Skipping Forward

Act Two

(Sound effect of a cheesy Television show, Fashion Assault. Lights up on BLAIZE and UMA, the two hosts.)

BLAIZE

Welcome back to the Fashion Assault! Where we rate the developments in the fashion universe for the week with military precision!

UMA

Ten-hut!

BLAIZE

And I'm here as always with my partner in crime, Uma. I love you, Uma. Really do.

UMA

Thanks.

BLAIZE

Totally over our last fight.

UMA

Me too. I am not harboring any resentments for you even though I don't think you're talented.

BLAIZE

Great. So what's new this week?

UMA

Well, we're all tuning in to Project Design this week. And we had this look from President. What do you think?

BLAIZE

I don't know what I'm supposed to think.

UMA

I never know what I'm supposed to think. With this, though, I'm like… this reminds me of death.

BLAIZE

Yeah.

UMA

Like my dog could wear this and pull it off, you know?

BLAIZE

I'm sure. Your dog can pull off a lot of looks.

UMA

He totally can. He's brilliant.

BLAIZE

Absolutely. He's an inspiration to other dogs.

UMA

I think he is. I really do.

BLAIZE

Sure. Except he's a loser.

UMA

What.

BLAIZE

You have a totally unrealistic opinion of your dog. I've met him. I was not impressed.

UMA

Don't talk about my dog.

BLAIZE

He should just give up. Go in his little doghouse and turn on the car and kill himself, right? Who's with me, studio audience? Do you know Uma's dog?

UMA

The studio audience hates you and everything you stand for.

BLAIZE

The producers are whispering in my ear that we need to talk about Project Design again.

UMA

Holla!

BLAIZE

You sound old when you do that. That was like four years ago.

UMA

It was not.

BLAIZE

That was like a zombie comment. You raised that comment from the dead and now it's wandering around trying to eat the living.

UMA
Your mother must be really proud of you. Part-time host on a fashion show.

BLAIZE
Thank you, she is.

UMA
I mean, most normal mothers would probably be pretending you died in a fire or something, but your Mom probably has a photo of you in her house.

BLAIZE
How many husbands have you gone through?

UMA
One less than you.

BLAIZE
So… Project Design, what do you think of the other designers?

UMA
Normally I hate watch it. But this season is delicious.

BLAIZE
I know.

UMA
Don't agree with me. I didn't ask you to agree with me.

BLAIZE
I'm just making a comment.

UMA
All right. Make your comments.

BLAIZE
I did.

UMA
Okay. Great. The world is a better place now. Are you happy? Did you bring peace on earth?

BLAIZE
Let's talk about Ifez.

UMA
He's adorable. He's like a stray puppy. I just want to take him home.

BLAIZE

He'd probably jump off a cliff if he came to your house. He'd meet your dog and be like, "I have to die."

UMA

New Girl. Jezebel.

BLAIZE

Yes.

UMA

How did you feel about her garbage bag hat?

BLAIZE

Honestly, it excited me. I want to see what direction she's going in.

UMA

Yeah. That sounds like something you would say.

BLAIZE

It was. Because I said it.

UMA

I know you said it. I'm not surprised you said it.

BLAIZE

And that's all the time we have for today!

UMA

You screwed that up.

BLAIZE

No I didn't.

UMA

Yes you did. I can read the teleprompter too. It's not like a special skillset you have, you know.

BLAIZE

All right fine.

UMA

Can I do my tag? Cause it's written on my teleprompter.

BLAIZE

Do it. It's like what your ex-husband said when you were taking all those pills.*
*(*this line may be cut)*

UMA

All right then. Well I can't wait to see what happens on Project Design next! There's gonna be fireworks! I'm ready for the elimination!

(Lights out.)

(The actor playing Blaize runs over and becomes the dead Tosca.)

(Lights up suddenly on the Project Design studio.)

(IFEZ is in mid freak-out.)

IFEZ

AAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHH!

ANNIE

Are you sure he's dead?

IFEZ

I DON'T KNOW! AAAAAAAAH!

CAROL-ANN

CHILL OUT! CHILL THE HECK OUT! STOP IT! STOP IT! STOP SCREAMING! I'LL KILL YOU!

IFEZ

AAAAAAAAAAH!

CAROL-ANN

I DIDN'T MEAN IT!

LUKE

Think happy thoughts!

IFEZ

What?!

LUKE

Happy thoughts! Think happy thoughts!

IFEZ

Okay…

(IFEZ thinks happy thoughts)

Oh that is better.

PRESIDENT

All right everybody quit freaking out. There's a logical explanation for this.

SHIVA

Someone killed him.

PRESIDENT

No. Maybe it's a coincidence. Maybe he had a heart attack.
(SHIVA approaches the body. She kicks it.)

SHIVA

He seems dead.

PRESIDENT

I know that! But we don't know what caused him to die!

IFEZ

He was *murdered!*

CAROL-ANN

All right back off! Let me look at him.
(She looks at the body closely.)
I can't tell.
(Everyone groans.)

SHIVA

Wait!
(SHIVA finds something on the body.)
Hot glue. There's hot glue on his skin.

PRESIDENT

Is it hot?

LUKE

Why does everything have to be hot with you?

PRESIDENT

No is the glue still hot?

SHIVA

Why would it still be hot?

CAROL-ANN

All right back off! I'm gonna sniff it! I have a brilliant nose.
(Everyone watches as she sniffs the hot glue.)
Poison.

LUKE

Whoah.

CAROL-ANN

Hold on. I've got the scent.

(she tracks the hot glue to one of the stations, where she finds a hot glue gun.)

Lookee here. Boom.

ANNIE

So he touched it here? And then it killed him?

SHIVA

Poisoned hot glue.

PRESIDENT

Who was using the hot glue?

(EVERYONE looks at IFEZ.)

IFEZ

Don't look at me! All right fine I was using it, but why would I poison my own glue?

CAROL-ANN

Why do you do anything? No one knows!

IFEZ

Someone poisoned my glue to kill me, idiot!

CAROL-ANN

Just like someone supposedly "threw" the shears at you?

IFEZ

Yes!

ANNIE

Okay, I have a good idea.

PRESIDENT

You haven't had a good idea since you've been here.

(LUKE high-fives PRESIDENT.)

LUKE

Good one!

PRESIDENT

I know. Zing.

CAROL-ANN

What's your idea?

ANNIE

No one else touch the hot glue.

SHIVA

And?

ANNIE

That's it. No one else touch it. Because it's poisoned.

LUKE

That is a good idea.

(PRESIDENT groans.)

IFEZ

So who had access to my glue?

PRESIDENT

Honey, everyone's had access to your glue. Just no one wanted it.*

LUKE

Oh!

(LUKE high-fives PRESIDENT again.)

That was like a double entendre.

CAROL-ANN

All right shut up with your clever wordplay! Ifez has a good question. Who had access to his glue and wanted access to his glue because he or she didn't have standards?

(no one laughs)

Oh come on you laughed for him.

LUKE

It was already played.

SHIVA

I'm already disappointed by you.

CAROL-ANN

Ifez, where did you get the glue gun?

IFEZ

It was in my station.

CAROL-ANN

Okay.

ANNIE

Should we like tell someone about this?

CAROL-ANN

Is your phone working?

ANNIE

No.

CAROL-ANN

Can you open the doors?

ANNIE

No.

CAROL-ANN

Do you think the producers are watching right now?

ANNIE

No.

CAROL-ANN

There you go.

(ANNIE steps out.)

ANNIE

So um… hello producers. If you're paying attention and haven't just automated this show… we've got a bit of a situation – Tosca is dead, and there's someone in here trying to kill us. So um… if it's not too much trouble, maybe you could let us out and call the police or whatever. Okay? Anyone listening? Call the police maybe? People in here are going to die. Most of us. Most of us will probably be dead soon.

(no response)

SHIVA

They don't care. It'll probably increase ratings.

LUKE

Maybe this is part of the show. Anyone ever seen Hunger Games? Like, only one of us is getting out of here alive.

(pause)

IFEZ

That's crazy.

LUKE

And they've like, hypnotized us into thinking that we're actually fashion designers and implanted false memories in our brains, but we're really we're just tribute children engineered for their amusement?

IFEZ

Ha ha.

(IFEZ picks up a sewing needle and holds it in front of him.)
(Everyone else slowly picks up weapons.)

CAROL-ANN

People! This is insane!

PRESIDENT

It's what Tosca would have wanted. A fight to the death. The real elimination challenge.

SHIVA

I'm game.

ANNIE

Bring it.

(They start circling each other)

PRESIDENT

Hold on. If we're really gonna do this, I still have immunity.

SHIVA

No way!

PRESIDENT

I don't think that's fair. I won immunity – no one should be able to kill me. Let's vote on it.

CAROL-ANN

Whoah. No! No. Stop the madness.

(she gets in the middle of the circle)

I know I'm new to this game, but you know what I see from all of you? Love. Mostly of yourselves, but also of other people.

ANNIE

Thank you.

PRESIDENT

Must you open your mouth?

CAROL-ANN

There's a better way. We don't have to all kill each other.

IFEZ

Ooh! I know. We keep doing the 24-hour challenge and pretend nothing happened.

LUKE

I like that. I like that a lot. We use our imagination.

CAROL-ANN

What? Tosca is dead!

LUKE

I don't know that. I'm wishing it away with my imagination.

(ANNIE steps forward)

ANNIE

At first I thought Ifez's idea was crazy. Someone just died. We should the stop the competition and go home to our families and our beautiful children screaming and hitting each other in our tiny houses with our student loan debt and never be on television again. And then I thought, we still have twenty-two hours left in this contest.

(She steps back in.)

Okay.

SHIVA

Deal.

PRESIDENT

Awesomeness.

(everyone looks at CAROL-ANN.)

IFEZ

What do you say? We just imagine this didn't happen and keep going? Please?

ANNIE

It would mean a lot to me.

CAROL-ANN

I'm staring at a dead body.

IFEZ

We can fix that!

(IFEZ and LUKE take TOSCA's body and drag him into the closet.)

There! Tosca who?

(The body falls out of the closet. IFEZ shoves him back in.)

CAROL-ANN

Whoever killed him is still in this room.

(Everyone looks around.)

And they probably didn't kill the person they wanted to kill. So we have an incompetent murderer in our midst, who will most likely strike again. And I will be ready to stop him or her with my mad judo skills when he or she strikes again. Boom.

IFEZ

So you're in?

CAROL-ANN

Heck yes!

(PRESIDENT steps out)

PRESIDENT

Of course we could stop the competition and figure out who the murderer is. We could do that. And then the whole show will be over and no one will win the award and no one will prove that they're the best designer. We could do that. But then again, is that what Tosca would have wanted? I can imagine him now, in his little Tosca voice, "make it work." I figure that means, "even if I'm killed by poison, make it work."

(Lights change)

(IFEZ steps out.)

(Lights fade a bit upstage.)

IFEZ

The hardest part about the twenty-four challenge is staying awake. I found the fear of death was really helpful in that. And also the free coffee. Which I supplemented with my secret supply of RockStar.

(He produces a can of RockStar.)

So much caffeine in this. I like Rockstar because I feel like I'm a Rockstar when I'm on it, you know? Like the kind of Rockstar that's going to trash a hotel room and throw a television out the window. That kind. So we all settled in with our coffee coffee coffee and it was so… sparkly.

(Lights back up to full.)

(Everyone is working really fast.)

ANNIE

Ten hours left!

LUKE

You already said that three minutes ago!

ANNIE

I jumped the gun. Now I mean it.

SHIVA

I cannot work like this. I can't. Who cares how much time is left? I don't care. I'm working here – I HAVE WORK TO DO.

(She downs her coffee in one gulp.)

IFEZ

Bi bi bi bi bi bi bi bi –

SHIA

Stop it stop it. Stop the noises. Stop it.

IFEZ

Bi bi bi bi bi bi bi –

CAROL-ANN

Hey does anyone know how to sew? I'm not really a sewer. I'm more of a conceptual artist thing. This is like waking dreams, right? Okay. Nobody? Anyone want to help me with the sewing machine? Anyone? Cause I just keep talking until someone comes over here. I got all night people. My vocal cords are lubricated and I can talk for hours. Anyone? That's cool.

(CAROL-ANN stares at the sewing machine.)

Does anyone know where the power switch is?

(IFEZ comes over and points to her power switch.)

Sweet.

(SHIVA has made her way to the coffee machine.)

SHIVA

Who didn't refill the coffee?

(No one answers.)

Someone didn't refill the coffee. I REPEAT: SOMEONE DID NOT REFILL THE COFFEE MAKER. Do we have videotape? Can we find out who did this? WHO HAD THE LAST COFFEE? WHEN YOU EMPTY THE COFFEE IT IS YOUR OBLIGATION TO REFILL THE COFFEE. THOSE ARE THE RULES OF HUMANITY.

(SHIVA starts making more coffee.)

PRESIDENT

I'm pretty sure it was Ifez.

IFEZ

What?

SHIVA

You think I won't kill you? You think you're going to live through this night? I will murder you, Ifez, I will split you open and I will suck the sweet caffeine from your blood. You understand me? I will kill you.

ANNIE

I think maybe it was President who didn't refill the coffee.

SHIVA

What?

LUKE

Word.

CAROL-ANN

So how do you make the thread go in the fabric? It doesn't seem like it wants to do that.

SHIVA

I will get to the bottom of this. And when I discover who it was, watch your back. I'm not above going to prison. I'll do fine there.

(She goes back to the coffee)

Whoah.

CAROL-ANN

What?

(SHIVA pulls a dead scorpion out of the coffee pot)

SHIVA

Look.

PRESIDENT

What is that?

SHIVA

A scorpion. Someone put a dead scorpion in the coffee.

IFEZ

AAAAAAAAH!

CAROL-ANN

Oh come on that wasn't even close to killing you! How does a dead scorpion hurt anyone?

LUKE

Poison.

CAROL-ANN

It's dead! You can't poison someone with a dead scorpion! At least I don't think so.

IFEZ

Maybe it was a live scorpion and the coffee killed it.

LUKE

Ohhhh. Yeah. Huh.

ANNIE

Ooh I know! The killer is trying to kill again! Wow.

CAROL-ANN

So we're dealing with a killer who can't use an apostrophe correctly, who poisoned the wrong hot glue, and who thinks a scorpion can survive in coffee. We're dealing with a stupid, stupid person.

(short pause)

ANNIE

It could be any of us.

(BECKY and VANESSA enter.)

BECKY

Hi there!

IFEZ

AAAH!

PRESIDENT

Stop it!

CAROL-ANN

Whoah. Are the doors open?

VANESSA

They said we had fifteen minutes to meet with the designers –

IFEZ

Who did? Who's they?

VANESSA

The producers?

IFEZ

We're trapped in here. This is a deathtrap. People are trying to kill us.

BECKY

What? Should we leave?!

IFEZ

Um… well maybe after the competition's over cause we're running out of time.

VANESSA

You could probably get out now.

IFEZ

Nah I'm cool. Just repressing some things. And besides I didn't even get to work with you last time!

Skipping Forward

ANNIE

Maybe I could talk to Vanessa?

LUKE

Nope! Mine mine mine.

(LUKE takes VANESSA away from IFEZ.)

(BECKY is struggling to get into CAROL-ANN's disaster.)

My inspiration was color. And it's glorious. How do you feel about rabies? As a concept?

VANESSA

For my clothes?

LUKE

It's not about clothes, honey. It's about life. And diseases.

(BECKY has the dress on, as best she can.)

BECKY

Okay. Um…

CAROL-ANN

It's upside-down. That's all right. We'll work with it. This is a concept piece and the concept is –

(The lights go out.)

AW COME ON!

PRESIDENT

WHAT IS IT THIS TIME?

CAROL-ANN

YOU KNOW THE DRILL PEOPLE! NOBODY MOVE!

(everybody moves)

I HEAR YOU! I HEAR YOU MOVING! STOP IT!

LUKE

I'M TOO PRETTY TO DIE!

VANESSA

Is something wrong?

IFEZ

NOPE! JUST A LITTLE PANIC!

(WHUMP! Someone hits the ground.)

CAROL-ANN

That didn't sound good. Did someone just get killed? It sounds like someone got killed!

BECKY

SOMEONE GOT KILLED?!

CAROL-ANN

It's not you obviously, don't worry about it. Everybody FREEZE!

(More movement.)

(Lights up.)

(Everyone is hiding under their tables except CAROL-ANN.)

ANNIE

Is everyone all right?

CAROL-ANN

I'm pretty sure someone's dead.

(One by one, they all come up from behind their desks.)

IFEZ

Oop! It's this one.

(IFEZ drags VANESSA's body out from behind CAROL-ANN's desk.)

BECKY

Vanessa?!

PRESIDENT

Oh that's her name. I was trying to remember it.

SHIVA

Vanessa's dead?! Dang it!

(everyone looks at SHIVA.)

I mean, what a senseless tragedy. Because the killer was obviously trying to kill someone else.

CAROL-ANN

Everyone stand back! She could still be dangerous.

(CAROL-ANN investigates.)

BECKY

This is awful! I didn't know her well, but we were talking backstage and getting to know each other! She had a beautiful soul, I could tell that right away.

CAROL-ANN

Her beautiful soul's all over the floor. Smashed in the head with a blunt object. Like a sewing machine.

PRESIDENT

She was at your station! She's behind your desk!

CAROL-ANN
Well I didn't do it! I don't even know how to use a sewing machine!

LUKE
You picked it up and you bashed her over the head with it!

CAROL-ANN
You're delusional. Someone snuck over here in the dark, picked up the sewing machine… they were trying to kill me. Someone was trying to kill me!

PRESIDENT
Honey, if someone was trying to kill you, it would be to prevent you from completing your work. The world has enough pain.

BECKY
I can't believe Vanessa's dead. She was telling me about her dreams - how was she was in love with a guy but wasn't sure he wanted to commit because -

PRESIDENT
Let's put her in the other closet.

IFEZ
Right.
(IFEZ drags her towards a closet.)

BECKY
What are you doing?

IFEZ
It's a standard procedure. When someone gets killed, we hide the body. Don't ask me, I'm not responsible!

BECKY
What! Call the police! This is a crime scene!

SHIVA
It's kind of been a crime scene already.

BECKY
But this is crazy! Someone died and you kept working!?

PRESIDENT
Success is 10% inspiration and 90% perspiration. At least I've heard that. I don't sweat because of a laser procedure I had a while back, though.

BECKY

That doesn't have anything to do with this!

PRESIDENT

Helps me stay fragrant. Totally worth it.

BECKY

She's dead! And someone else is dead! And the killer is right here!

LUKE

Maybe you're the killer.

BECKY

What?! Why would I be the killer?

LUKE

Usually the person who protests the most is the killer.

CAROL-ANN

Maybe I can put this in perspective. You know about World War 2, right? Fighting the Nazis?

BECKY

Yes?

CAROL-ANN

Okay, so it's D-Day. We're storming the beach at Normandy. Somebody next to you gets shot. Do you stop and go "oh no, someone killed Private Johnson! Let's figure out who killed him?" or do you buckle down and keep going up that hill?

(short pause)

BECKY

I'm not sure what World War 2 has to do with –

CAROL-ANN

Greatest generation, all right? They did things. Even though people were getting killed left and right. They didn't have seat belts or food labeling or common sense. But they did it. Just like we're making clothes and filming this reality show.

BECKY

She's not making any sense. Right? She's not making any sense, is she?

IFEZ

Is she?

SHIVA

All truth is relative.

BECKY

This is crazy!

CAROL-ANN

The terrorists win if we stop. This is America. We keep going, even when it doesn't make any sense to do so.

LUKE

Hell yeah!*

BECKY

I'm sorry I can't do this! We have to stop the show! I'm telling the producers!

(They move to stop her)

PRESIDENT

Honey. Honey. This is reality television. It's more important than the lives of people who aren't famous.

BECKY

Get away from me!

ANNIE

Seriously, you get to wear all the clothes.

BECKY

No! No! No!

(She grabs the hot glue gun off IFEZ's station.)

Stay back! You guys are like zombies! We're getting the police in here and we're figuring this out! Before anyone else gets killed!

LUKE

You might not want to hold on to that –

BECKY

What?

(She looks at the hot glue in her hands.)

Ohhhhh...

(She passes out.)

(Everyone stares at her.)

(Pause.)

SHIVA

Well she wasn't even murdered.

IFEZ

Other closet?

PRESIDENT

Yep.

(IFEZ and LUKE drag her body to the other closet.)

ANNIE

Y'all mind if I do a confessional?

LUKE

Go for it.

(ANNIE steps out)

ANNIE

So with both of our models dead I needed to think fast. I'll have to adjust the sizing on my dress to fit myself, which shouldn't be too difficult. On the plus side, this puts us all on equal footing again. I'm feeling pretty good about my design.

(She steps back.)

(Everyone looks at her.)

We're going back to work, aren't we?

(everyone rushes back to their station and starts working again.)

(Lights change.)

LUKE

We made the decision to use ourselves as runway models. Since we don't have any left. And there's a big difference between designing for a man and designing for a woman. Luckily, my model was super manly, so it didn't change my design much. I think she was on steroids. Seriously.

(CAROL-ANN does a confessional.)

CAROL-ANN

I decided not to use the sewing machine. I'm going for more of a rustic look. I also discovered duct tape. And I can use that stuff on anything. It's a real industrial-type thing, and I'm just gonna tape this sucker all over my body. Also,

(she takes a moment and takes out her phone)

I am working very hard on the case and I've almost got it solved. Just about. Just so you know I have done nothing wrong.

(PRESIDENT steps forward.)

PRESIDENT

The last hour is always the worst. People are running around like maniacs. It smells like sweat and hot glue and failure.

CAROL-ANN *(in the background, working frantically)*

Aaah! Aaaaah! Aaaah!

PRESIDENT *(continuous)*
Especially near me because I'm between Annie and Ifez, and that is like the Bermuda triangle of failed designers. I look over at Annie and it is a disaster. It is like some kind of Fidel Castro religious prophet thing – And then Ifez… he's like a little animal that's been killed and eaten by a larger animal. You feel bad, but then like… that's nature, right? He exists so that he may be eaten by other creatures. And then –
(LUKE puts his dress up to his body and models it.)
(It is exactly the same as PRESIDENT's.)
(PRESIDENT steps back into the scene.)
What is that?

LUKE
My dress.

PRESIDENT
Are you sure? Cause it looks like my dress.
(PRESIDENT gets his own dress, which is identical.)
MAYBE MY EYES ARE DECEIVING ME! BUT THESE LOOK SIMILAR!

LUKE
They're not the same dress.

PRESIDENT
THEY ARE THE SAME DRESS!

LUKE
MINE HAS A PATCH! SEE? SEE?! Do you see the patch?!

PRESIDENT
That's a patch –

LUKE
That's my style! That's my signature style!

PRESIDENT
Give that to me!

LUKE
No!

PRESIDENT
Give it to me!

LUKE
Nooo!
(PRESIDENT chases after LUKE to take his dress.)

(LUKE tries to throw a mannequin at PRESIDENT, but PRESIDENT gets the dress.)
Aaaaah!

PRESIDENT

Ha!
(PRESIDENT rips off the patch.)
Now it's my dress!
(LUKE loses it, clutching his head with both hands.)

LUKE

AIEEEEE!

IFEZ

Whoah.
(LUKE grabs IFEZ's dress.)

LUKE

Now this one's mine!

IFEZ

Hey! Give that back!

LUKE

I HAVE BEEN AWAKE FOR TWENTY-THREE HOURS AND I HAVE HAD SEVENTEEN CUPS OF COFFEE AND THERE ARE THREE DEAD BODIES IN THE CLOSET AND I AM NO LONGER THINKING RATIONALLY! GIVE IT BACK TO ME OR I WILL KILL THIS DRESS!

IFEZ

Whoah!
(IFEZ grab's SHIVA's dress.)
Then I'm killing this one!

SHIVA

Give it back now or I will kill you.

IFEZ

Okay.
(He gives it back and grabs ANNIE's)
Then I'm taking Annie's!
(He grabs ANNIE's)

ANNIE

Then I'm taking this one!
(She grabs SHIVA's dress.)

SHIVA

I'll kill you!

ANNIE

I HAVE THREE KIDS I'M NOT SCARED OF DEATH!

SHIVA

Fine! Then I'm taking…
(she looks at what CAROL-ANN has made.)
Um…

CAROL-ANN

You can take mine, I don't care.

SHIVA

It's just… Um…

CAROL-ANN

Mine's way outside the box.

SHIVA

Yeah. Um…
(she snatches PRESIDENT's original dress.)

PRESIDENT

Ah!

IFEZ

Let's everyone calm down!

LUKE

I want my dress back or I'm adding shoulder pads to this!

IFEZ

You monster!
(LUKE runs to grab stuffing.)
No! Fine this one gets a plunging neckline!
(he runs to grab his scissors)

ANNIE

Ah! Then I'm putting see through panels in this one!

SHIVA

And I'm adding stupid patches to this one!

PRESIDENT

Then I'm drawing an unironic smiley face on this!
(Everyone is ready to strike.)

CAROL-ANN
And I'm… I'm doing… Seriously no one wants to hold my dress hostage? Really?
(she holds it up)

(The lights go out.)

CAROL-ANN
REALLY? ALL RIGHT NOBODY – WHATEVER – EVERYONE RUN AROUND THEN!
(BOOM! SMASH!)
(A struggle.)

IFEZ
Someone touched me inappropriately!

CAROL-ANN
Whoops!

PRESIDENT *(overlapping)*
I HAVE IMMUNITY! REMEMBER I HAVE IMMUNITY!

SHIVA *(overlapping)*
Wait! Aah!

LUKE
Stay away from me I'm a black belt in Zumba!

PRESIDENT
Give me that dress!

LUKE
No!

SHIVA
AAAAAARGGH!
(Lights up.)

(SHIVA has a sewing needle stuck in her shoulder.)

IFEZ
AAAAAAAH! She's dead!

SHIVA
I'm standing up moron!

ANNIE

What happened to you?

SHIVA

What do you think?! Someone stabbed me with a sewing needle!

PRESIDENT

I'll help pull it out.

SHIVA

No.

IFEZ

I think you should leave it in there. If you take it out, blood'll just spurt all over the place. Gross.

LUKE

You could incorporate it into your outfit.

PRESIDENT

Ooh. Love it.

SHIVA

Arrrhghg… I'm not incorporating it into my outfit!

LUKE

If you had one in the other side it would work better -

PRESIDENT

I'd put the second needle on the same side, just slightly lower.

SHIVA

No one's putting any more needles in me!

PRESIDENT

All right, but it would be totally hardcore.

SHIVA

Someone just tried to kill me!

CAROL-ANN

They failed though. That fits the pattern. That's their fifth attempt.

PRESIDENT

Whatever you want to say about the killer, I admire their tenacity.

ANNIE

Definitely. So hard these days. Sometimes people just give up.

SHIVA

I am in pain!

PRESIDENT

Use it!

SHIVA

Aarrrrghg!

PRESIDENT

Good!

(CAROL-ANN grabs the needle.)

CAROL-ANN

Here!

(she pulls on it, it doesn't come out.)

SHIVA

Aarrgh!

CAROL-ANN

Let me try again.

(she pulls again)

SHIVA

Arrghggh!

CAROL-ANN

Whoops. Here get down.

(CAROL-ANN pushes SHIVA onto the ground. She grabs the needle with both hands, and puts one foot on SHIVA's head.)

(ALIANA enters.)

ALIANA

Good Morning Des-

(CAROL-ANN yanks the needle free)

CAROL-ANN

Gotcha! A ha!

(She holds the bloody needle aloft and turns to see ALIANA behind her.)

He-ey.

ALIANA

-iners. I trust you had a productive night.

ANNIE *(overlapping)*

Definitely.

IFEZ *(overlapping)*

Sure.

SHIVA *(overlapping)*

Arrgh.

CAROL-ANN

Well, to be honest with you, there've been a couple of murders. But not to worry because –

LUKE *(interrupting)*

I'VE FIGURED IT OUT!

CAROL-ANN *(interrupting, a little late)*

I've figured it out!

CAROL-ANN

Actually – hold on a second –
(LUKE gets in front of her.)

LUKE

I've been lying to you all. My name isn't Luke Burbank. It's Jackson Collins, N.Y.P.D.
(He shows his badge. Gasps from everyone.)
I've been deep undercover on this show to –

CAROL-ANN

Oh come on, what!

LUKE

It was just like Miss Congeniality. My assignment was to go undercover and find out the killer. But what I didn't count on, was falling in love.

ALIANA

I love it.

CAROL-ANN

Time out.

LUKE

Annie, I wanted to let you know that –

ANNIE

I'm not interested.

LUKE

Shiva, I wanted to let you know that –

SHIVA

I'm emotionally unavailable.

LUKE

Jezebel, I wanted to let you know that I have feelings for you. Which is why it's so hard for me to say this: You're the killer.

(gasps from everyone)

PRESIDENT

I knew it!

ANNIE

And I trusted you!

CAROL-ANN

Whoah. Pause. Time out. Game over. First off, Jackass* –

*(*This may be replaced with "Loser" "Jackoff" or "Donkey")*

LUKE

Jackson.

CAROL-ANN

Whatever. *I* am the police officer. *I'm* the one who's undercover. And I'm the Sandra Bullock character! You don't even look like Sandra Bullock! You'd look ridiculous in a dress! Plus, I'm the one falling in love with the killer, which is easy for me, since I swing in all directions*!

*(*This line may be cut)*

LUKE

Where's your badge?

CAROL-ANN

It's um…

(she searches herself for her badge)

I uh… I have it in my hotel room.

LUKE

And if you're a police officer, then why didn't you stop things before three people got killed?

ALIANA

Three people were murdered?

PRESIDENT
Give or take. Honestly, we're not sure if the last girl is dead or not, we just put her in the closet.

CAROL-ANN
Because I'm not very good at my job, all right? I'm a loose cannon! I don't play by the rules! Except for the rules to this show, which I followed, and you'll find my design is awesome. Also, when these go down the runway, you're gonna blur out the nudity, right? Because mine is really obscene.

ALIANA
I'm not sure what –

CAROL-ANN
I'm digressing. Listen, No-Action Jackson, I have been studying the situation for a good thirty hours now, and I know who exactly who the killer is!

End of Excerpt.
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