

NICKI ESQ. - PILOT

"CLOUDY DAZE"

Written by

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NICKI AND DERRICK
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WHITE REV
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ACT ONE

1

INT. NICKI HOWELL'S OFFICE - MORNING - DAY 1

1

NICKI, A 26-YEAR-OLD BLACK FEMALE LAWYER IS PACING BACK AND FORTH ON HER CELL PHONE. HER OFFICE IS A MESS, PAPERS AND FOLDERS EVERYWHERE. NICKI IS USUALLY WELL PUT TOGETHER BUT THIS MORNING'S EVENTS HAVE TAKEN IT'S TOLL, AND SHE LOOKS DISHEVELED. EVEN HER HAIR GAME IS OFF.

NICKI
(on the phone)
What?!...Your husband left
you?!...What happened?...A chick on
the side, how original...Well get
this, Shane and I just broke up this
morning...

SHE ZOOMS IN ON A PICTURE OF HER AND SHANE AND ABRUPTLY PLACES THE PICTURE FACE DOWN.

NICKI (CONT'D)
There should be some kind of vaccine
to prevent breakups...

AS NICKI PACES WITH ONE HAND IN HER JACKET POCKET SHE MAKES AN UNEXPECTED DISCOVERY AND HOLDS IT UP FOR INSPECTION.

NICKI (CONT'D)
Is that a fruit loop?
(to herself)
Jasmine.
(beat)
...men, you can't live with em and you
can't live with em...I know what I
said.

NICKI'S OFFICE PHONE LIGHTS UP AND "MR. LAYTON", HER BOSS'S NAME IS DISPLAYED. SHE WAITS FOR HER ASSISTANT TO ANSWER, BUT THE PHONE KEEPS RINGING.

NICKI (CONT'D)
Ooh I gotta go. Listen its gonna be
alright, I'll see you for your
birthday.

SHE HANGS UP ABRUPTLY AND WALKS OUT OF HER OFFICE ANNOYED.

NICKI (CONT'D)
Gladys!

GLADYS, NICKI'S 60 SOMETHING YEAR OLD GREY HAIRED GRANDMA TYPE ASSISTANT IS DOZING. GLADYS AWAKENS SUDDENLY.

GLADYS
Nicki Powell's office!!

NICKI
That's HOWELL. I'll be in Mr. Layton's office.

NICKI RUSHES TO SEE MR. LAYTON.

2

INT. MR. LAYTON'S OFFICE - DAY 1

2

MR. LAYTON, 50'S, WHITE MALE, DRESSED IN A WELL TAILORED BUSINESS SUIT, IS SEATED BEHIND HIS DESK PREOCCUPIED WITH HIS CELL PHONE. NICKI KNOCKS.

MR. LAYTON
(without looking up)
Whoo, I freed all the bears in candy crush.

NICKI
Mr. Layton you wanted to see me?

HE LOOKS UP AND IS SOMEWHAT STARTLED BY HER APPEARANCE. NICKI NOTICES HIS REACTION AND ADJUSTS HER HAIR AS IF THAT'S THE SOLE SOLUTION TO HER SLOVENLY LOOK.

MR. LAYTON
Looks like somebodies been burning the candle at both ends...I like that.

NICKI
Well the ends finally met this morning.

MR. LAYTON
I was hoping I could persuade you to step in and take the lead on a new high profile case.

NICKI
Mr. Layton I have the Kaneko case and the Allied case, I don't think I can handle any more.

MR. LAYTON
Ms. Howell as one of our brightest summer associates a few years back you showed great promise. I want our partners to see exactly what you are made of.
This case is a huge priority for Layton Ross and I think you've got just want it takes for it.
(beat)

MR. LAYTON (CONT'D)
I'd hate to give this case to Edelson it would mark his fourth big one.

NICKI
Didn't Edelson lose his last two cases?

MR. LAYTON
The firm will certainly take your decision into consideration at "year end" bonus time.

NICKI
Case closed, I'm in!

HE PASSES NICKI A FOLDER.

MR. LAYTON
It's Cloudy Daze.

NICKI
Oh but it was sunny when I left the house this morning.

MR. LAYTON
No Ms. Howell. That's our new client CLOUDY DAZE.

NICKI
(mouth open)
You mean the porn star?

MR. LAYTON
She prefers entertainer Ms. Howell. She's being sued by Tetson Oil for breach of contract.

NICKI
Oh this IS juicy...what's that smell?
Oh it must be my year end bonus.

NICKI GETS UP TO LEAVE AND THEN TURNS AND STOPS IN MR. LAYTON'S DOORWAY SHE CAN SEE ACROSS THE OPEN OFFICE SPACE INTO THE AREA WHERE GLADYS IS NODDING OFF AGAIN. NICKI QUICKLY TURNS AROUND TO MR. LAYTON WITH A PAINED LOOK.

MR. LAYTON
Was there something else Ms. Howell?

NICKI
Well as one of your brightest former summer associates I too want to show the partners what Nicki Howell has to offer. I need a better assistant. You know someone whose days aren't numbered, literally.

MR. LAYTON
Oh yes, we'll look into getting you someone new.

NICKI
(ecstatic)
I'll show Edelson!

3

INT. NICKI'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING - DAY 1

3

NICKI'S MODEST BUT TASTEFULLY DECORATED LIVING ROOM IS A TAD CLUTTERED WITH BOOKS AND PAPERS AND THE SIGNS OF HER 7 YEAR OLD DAUGHTER INCLUDING A GIANT STUFFED PANDA. TANYA A BEAUTIFUL, 20 SOMETHING YEAR OLD BLACK FEMALE ENTERS.

TANYA

Never fear Ms. Tanya is here!...Ooh I just love what you've done with the place.

NICKI

You should, you picked out everything.

TANYA

I know.

TANYA APPROACHES NICKI AND PUTS HER ARM AROUND NICKI'S SHOULDER.

TANYA (CONT'D)

How you feeling about Shane?

NICKI

Can you believe he said I was too controlling, too suffocating, too bossy...

SHE SUDDENLY FOCUSES ON TANYA'S SHOES.

NICKI (CONT'D)

Wait are those my Manolo's?! Take em off please. Now I need you to watch Jasmine Wednesday night.

TANYA

But I...

NICKI INTERRUPTS.

NICKI

And don't forget I'm planning a girls trip weekend.

TANYA

But I...

NICKI INTERRUPTS AGAIN.

NICKI

I'll send you all the details.

TANYA

I can't imagine anyone thinking you are too bossy OR too controlling.

NICKI

Wait didn't you have an audition today?

TANYA LOOKS AT NICKI AS IF SHE'S LOOKING INTO THE CAMERA.

TANYA
Sensous...every woman should be
SINN...SUOUS

SHE POUTS TO THE CAMERA AND PRETENDS TO SPRAY PERFUME ON HER
WRISTS AND RUBS THEM TOGETHER.

NICKI
You didn't get the part did you?

TANYA LAUGHS AT HERSELF.

NICKI'S 7 YEAR OLD DAUGHTER, JASMINE ENTERS, CARRYING HER
BLACK RAG DOLL.

JASMINE
Mommy, Kelly isn't feeling well.

NICKI PUTS HER HAND ON THE DOLLS FOREHEAD TO CHECK HER
TEMPERATURE.

NICKI
Let me see if she has a fever.

JASMINE

JASMINE BELTS OUT A LINE FROM PEGGY LEE'S "CLASSIC"

JASMINE (CONT'D)
She got a fever...FEVER!!

JASMINE CONTINUES TO SING DRAMATICALLY AND TANYA IS TAKEN
ABACK AT JASMINE'S SUDDEN SONG. NICKI SHAKES HER HEAD.

TANYA
Jas, you can really "sang sang"!

JASMINE
Yep. Young, gifted AND black.

NICKI
I gotta get her on American Voice or
Ex Idol or one of them shows, they all
the same.

TANYA
Jas, you better make sure your doll is
feeling better for Uncle Derrick's
visit.

A LOOK OF PURE JOY FILLS JASMINE'S FACE.

JASMINE
YAY! Uncle D. is coming!!

NICKI PUTS ON A BRAVE FACE.

NICKI
Uncle Derrick is just what I need to
keep my mind off Shane.

TANYA
In the meantime you can keep me
company on the single side.

NICKI
Uh, I prefer the boo'd up side.

TANYA
Well to get back there you must first
walk through the valley of dumb dates
which leads to the lake of momma's
boys and finally to the land of no
commitment...hallejuah!

NICKI
Oh I've been there.

TANYA
Well, welcome back sweetie.

TANYA GIVE NICKI A BIG HUG.

NICKI
My shoes!

CUT TO:

4

INT. RECEPTION AREA - MORNING - DAY 2

4

NICKI ENTERS WITH HER MORNING COFFEE AND IS SURPRISED TO SEE
GLADYS FIGHTING TO KEEP HER EYES OPEN. NICKI TAPS ON THE
DESK.

NICKI
Good morning.

GLADYS OPENS HER EYES.

GLADYS
Why good morning Ms. Powell.

NICKI
That's HOWELL !!!

NICKI ROLLS HER EYES AND WALKS AWAY TO ENTER HER OFFICE.

CUT TO:

5

INT. NICKI'S OFFICE - MORNING - DAY 2

5

JESSICA, NICKI'S CHIC, DIVA, OVER THE TOP, CO-WORKER, A LATE
20'S WHITE FEMALE, ENTERS WEARING A HIGH END POWER SUIT AND
SUNGLASSES. SHE WALKS FROM THE OFFICE HALLWAY AND NOTICES
GLADYS HAS CLOSED HER EYES. SHE PEERS OVER HER SUNGLASSES TO
GET A BETTER LOOK AND CONTINUES INTO NICKI'S OFFICE.

NICKI
I take it the paparazzis are still
after you?!

JESSICA
Enchante darling, is it bring an old
person to work day?

JESSICA NODS AT GLADYS.

NICKI
Don't get me started.

JESSICA
Well I'd definitely check her vitals
if I were you.

NICKI
I make my rounds every hour.
(pause)
Just call me Nurse Nicki.

JESSICA
Well Nurse Nicki I need a caffeine IV?

NICKI
Not sleeping well?

JESSICA
I can sleep when I'm dead darling. I
was out very late with James Van Der
(beat)
something. Wealthy, charming
investment banker.

NICKI
All that money and you don't know his
last name. Girl you slipping.

JESSICA
Unless his name is Chanel I could care
less as he won't be seeing "this"
company again.

SHE POINTS TO HERSELF.

JESSICA (CONT'D)
After many rounds of libations, James
went on and on about his company
Allied being repped by Layton Ross's
newest hot shot attorney, who he can't
wait to meet if only she'd return his
calls.

NICKI
Calls? He left messages?

THEY BOTH DIRECT THEIR ATTENTION TO A SLEEPING GLADYS.

JESSICA REMOVES HER SHADES AND TOSSES ONE HAND IN THE AIR.

JESSICA

He then went on to say how he'd heard rumblings they might be seeking other legal representation.

NICKI

Well there goes my once promising law career.

JESSICA

Oh by the way Layton wants me to help you with the Cloudy Daze case.

(beat)

Now remember I'm in by 11:00 and usually gone by 3:30, oh and I have a standing mani appointment every Tuesday at noon.

NICKI

You better play that privileged white lady card.

JESSICA

Membership has it's privileges.

NICKI CALLS GLADYS ON THE PHONE.

NICKI

Can you bring me the new documents on the Allied case?

THROUGH THE GLASS WALL THEY WATCH GLADYS GET INTO HER MOTORIZED SCOOTER WHICH HAS BEEN POSITIONED NEXT TO HER DESK. THE SCOOTER STARTS AND STOPS, STARTS AND STOPS. THEY WATCH IN AMAZEMENT AT THE ODYSSEY. SHE FINALLY ARRIVES.

GLADYS

Darn it, I forgot a page.

NICKI AND JESSICA BOTH JUMP TO THEIR FEET.

NICKI

Don't worry, I'll get it.

CUT TO:

6

INT. GLADY'S OFFICE DESK AREA

6

GLADYS IS LOOKING AT THE FRONT PAGE OF THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS WHICH FEATURES A LARGE PICTURE OF AN EXOTIC DANCER NAMED CLOUDY DAZE WITH THE BOLD CAPTION CLOUDY DAYS AHEAD FOR TETSON OIL. CLOUDY IS A KEY PIECE IN A SCANDALOUS STORY INVOLVING TETSON OIL. THE COMPANY IS TRYING TO SILENCE CLOUDY, A VOLUPTUOUS, 35 YEAR OLD BLOND, TRANS FEMALE BEAUTY. CLOUDY APPROACHES GLADYS'S DESK. SHE MAKES A SLIGHT COUGHING SOUND TO GET GLADYS'S ATTENTION. GLADYS DOESN'T HEAR HER AND IS ENTHRALLED BY THE NEWSPAPER AND CLOUDY'S PICTURE. WHEN CLOUDY IS FINALLY SEEN BY GLADYS SHE LOOKS UP SILENTLY IN AMAZEMENT. IS SHE HALLUCINATING AGAIN? HER MEDICINE HAS BEEN KNOWN TO HAVE THAT EFFECT ON HER. SHE SHAKES HER HEAD AND LOOKS BACK DOWN AT THE NEWSPAPER.

CLOUDY
Is Ms. Howell in?

GLADYS
(Jumping in her seat)
Oh Lord!!

CLOUDY
Are you alright?!

GLADYS
Did I take more than one blue pill
this morning?
(she ponders)
Maybe it's my blood sugar, I need a
peppermint.

**SHE QUICKLY REACHES FOR HER PURSE AND TURNS IT UPSIDE DOWN
RELEASING A TON OF PEPPERMINT CANDIES.**

GLADYS (CONT'D)
Why don't you go on in.

CUT TO:

7 **INT. NICKI'S OFFICE**

7

**NICKI IS SEATED WITH HER BACK TO THE DOOR, HOLDING HER PHONE
UP LOOKING AT PICTURES OF CLOUDY DAZE ONLINE. CLOUDY ENTERS
AND SEES A PICTURE OF HERSELF ON NICKI'S PHONE. CLOUDY
STARTLES NICKI.**

CLOUDY
Those pictures don't do me justice.

NICKI SWINGS AROUND IN HER CHAIR.

CLOUDY (CONT'D)
Get it?...Justice?

**NICKI DROPS HER PHONE. GLADYS IN HER SCOOTER HAS FOLLOWED
CLOUDY WITH A COUPLE OF NOTICEABLE STARTS AND STOPS.**

GLADYS
Ms. Howell this is Cloudy Daze.

NICKI
Yes Gladys, I can see.

NICKI GETS UP TO GREET CLOUDY.

CLOUDY
You can call me Amy...Amy Little is my
real name.

**NICKI LOOKS HER UP AND DOWN AND IS MESMERIZED. SHE THEN LOOKS
DOWN AT HER OWN CHEST AND DEFLATES.**

NICKI
Would you like some coffee?

CLOUDY
That would be nice.

NICKI
Gladys get Cloudy, I mean Amy some
coffee please.

CLOUDY
Sugar please.

GLADYS IN HER SCOOTER BEGINS HER JOURNEY TO THE KITCHEN. WITH A START AND A STOP AND SEVERAL MORE INTERRUPTIONS. NICKI AND CLOUDY LOOK ON IN DISBELIEF KNOWING ITS PROBABLY GONNA TAKE YEARS TO GET THE COFFEE.

NICKI STANDS BEHIND HER DESK. CLOUDY SITS IN FRONT OF IT.

CLOUDY (CONT'D)
It's safe to assume you know why I'm
here?
(beat)
This is not about money.

CLOUDY NOTICES A PICTURE OF NICKI AND HER YOUNG DAUGHTER ON NICKI'S DESK.

CLOUDY (CONT'D)
Is that your daughter?

NICKI
That's my little Jasmine.

CLOUDY PULLS UP A PICTURE OF HER DAUGHTER ON HER CELL PHONE.

CLOUDY
This is my Chloe. She just turned six.
(beat)
The future is their's, let's talk
mother to mother. I want Chloe to
understand that no man should be
allowed to make you feel less than who
you are.

NICKI WALKS FROM BEHIND THE DESK.

NICKI
Amy, my young daughter Jasmine is my
everything.

NICKI TAKES BOTH HER HANDS.

NICKI (CONT'D)
Remember how David slayed Goliath, ooh
how Ms. Arya Stark destroyed the
Knight King in Game of Thrones...

NICKI MAKES A SLIT YOUR THROAT GESTURE.

NICKI (CONT'D)
Ooh ooh how the...

CLOUDY INTERRUPTS.

CLOUDY
I get it Nicki. Game of Thrones,
really?

NICKI
The Layton Ross team has all cylinders
firing on this one.

**GLADYS SUDDENLY DRIVES IN WITH A CUP IN ONE HAND AND THE
OTHER HAND STEERING THE SCOOTER.**

CLOUDY
Are you sure SHE has all HER
cylinders?

GLADYS
(Laughing)
Aww Lawd, I forgot the sugar.

GLADYS PUTS THE SCOOTER IN REVERSE TO MAKE HER EXIT.

CUT TO:

8

INT. OFFICE ELEVATOR - AFTERNOON - DAY 2

8

**NICKI AND MR. LAYTON ARE ON THE ELEVATOR. NICKI IS CARRYING A
WHITE CARDBOARD BOX FILLED WITH DOCUMENTS, IT'S CLEARLY HEAVY
AS SHE KEEPS ADJUSTING HER STANCE. SHE IS FRUSTRATED.**

**MR. LAYTON HAS BEEN OBLIVIOUS TO HER STRUGGLE. HE'S ENGROSSED
IN HIS CELL PHONE.**

MR. LAYTON
I just love this game...I dropped off
a folder on the Allied case and some
very important documents on Cloudy
DaZe.
(chuckles)
Sorry, I just love saying that name.

NICKI GIVES HIM A LOOK.

NICKI
(nicki mumbles under her
breath)
You must be exhausted from dropping
off those papers.

MR. LAYTON
I told Gladys to make sure you receive
them.
(Unaware of the
understatement)
I hope she heard my request. She
seemed to be drifting in and out of
consciousness.

NICKI
Her blood sugar is low, she's got 900
pieces of hard candy in her purse,
she'll be fine.

THE ELEVATOR DOOR OPENS. MR. LAYTON EXITS.

MR. LAYTON
Ooh a coconut wheel!

**JESSICA ENTERS THE ELEVATOR HOLDING AN ACCORDION FOLDER
FILLED WITH BRIEFS. SHE LEANS AGAINST THE BACK WALL. SHE TOO
IS OBLIVIOUS TO NICKI'S STRUGGLE WITH THE HEAVY BOX.**

JESSICA
Ugh! What a day darling...I had the
most dreadful substitute in spin
class...Oh I almost forgot, this is
for you.

**SHE PLACES HER FOLDER ON TOP OF NICKI'S BOX. NICKI DROPS THE
BOX AND PAPERS SCATTER EVERYWHERE.**

CUT TO:

9

INT. RECEPTION AREA - MIDDAY - DAY 2

9

**NICKI RUNS IN A BIT WINDED STILL CARRYING THE WHITE BOX ONLY
TO FIND GLADYS SHREDDING DOCUMENTS.**

NICKI
What are you doing?

GLADYS
I'm just following instructions, I can
read. See here, "Destroy after
reading". I read it and now I'm
destroying it.

**GLADYS IS CLOGGING THE SHREDDER WITH DOCUMENTS AND SHREDDED
PAPER IS GOING EVERYWHERE. NICKI PUTS DOWN THE BOX AND HITS
THE SHREDDER "OFF" SWITCH.**

NICKI
Did you read the part that said NICKI
HOWELL?

GLADYS
No.

NICKI
Exactly, so I'm gonna destroy YOU
after I finish reading. Got that!

GLADYS
So is this a bad time to say the
Allied people called? And they found
other representation.

NICKI
Congrats, you finally delivered a
message correctly.

**NICKI GRABS TWO HANDFULS OF SHREDDED PAPER AND HER FACE IS
FULL OF DEFEAT.**

NICKI (CONT'D)
I'm sorry Gladys but I'm going to need
your last job here to be leaving.
(Trying to help)
I think attorney Edelson may need some
help on the 10th floor.

**AN ANNOYED GLADYS GETS UP, SITS ON THE SCOOTER, GRABS HER
PURSE AND STARTS TO LEAVE.**

GLADYS
Ms. HOWELL.

NICKI
Yes Gladys!

GLADYS
Just so you know I've been at this
firm longer than you've been on this
earth. For your information I was
married to Mr. Layton's uncle Harry
for 30 years.

NICKI IS STUNNED.

GLADYS (CONT'D)
Hmph. Oh and I like Edelson better
anyway!

NICKI EXHALES.

GLADYS (CONT'D)
Ooh, you need a peppermint!

GLADYS STICKS OUT HER TONGUE THEN STARTS HER SCOOTER. THE
SCOOTERS STARTS, THEN STOPS, THEN STARTS AGAIN.

CUT TO:

10

INT. NICKI'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON - DAY 2

10

**NICKI IS AT HER DESK, HER HEAD NESTLED BETWEEN HER HANDS,
SHE'S MISERABLE THE DAY COULDN'T GET ANY WORSE. SHE BEGINS TO
TALK/SING BRANDY'S "SITTING ON TOP OF THE WORLD".**

NICKI
I'm just trying to be me doing what I
gotta do, some people think that
I'm...

DERRICK, NICKI'S UNCLE, LATE 40'S/EARLY 50'S WITH AN ENERGY THAT MAKES HIM SEEM YOUNGER, APPEARS AT THE DOOR WITH A PIECE OF FASHIONABLE LUGGAGE, HE COMPLETES THE REST OF THE SONG MUCH TO NICKI'S SURPRISE.

DERRICK
Just sitting on top of the world.

NICKI RAISES HER HEAD AND THEY SING IN UNISON.

DERRICK/NICKI
(they sing in unison)
Sitting, sitting, sitting on top of
the world!

NICKI RUNS TO HUG HIM.

NICKI
Uncle D, I thought you weren't coming
until Thursday?

DERRICK
It is Thursday.

NICKI
I can't keep my days straight.

DERRICK
Must we use that word "straight"?

NICKI
Sorry Uncle Derrick I don't know where
the time goes.

DERRICK
It ran off like my husband Bart!
(beat)
(whispering)
And with a woman.

NICKI
(whispering too)
Does whispering make it less painful?
Then I gotta try that.

DERRICK
I couldn't take another minute being
in the same city with him. So I spent
my last few coins and brought a one
way ticket to Dallas. What happens
next is anybody's guess.

DERRICK SPOTS GLADYS.

DERRICK (CONT'D)
Whose the old lady with the shredded
paper all over her?

NICKI
You mean mother time? Don't get me
started.

(MORE)

NICKI (CONT'D)

(beat)
I lost my man, I just lost a major client and because the mad shredder can't read I'm probably going to lose my job.

DERRICK
Wow my life ain't so bad after all.

NICKI
Cloudy Daze is the case I need to prove my worth around here.

DERRICK
Cloudy Daze!!! She's all over the news. Tetson Oil is trying to discredit her because of some non-disclosure crap. Oil men are so slippery.

NICKI IS PLEASANTLY SURPRISED AT DERRICK'S FAMILIARITY WITH THE CASE.

NICKI
Wow you know this case.

DERRICK
I've dated a lot of slippery men.

NICKI
Uncle D you don't really fit the profile of somebody really down on their luck.

DERRICK
I said broke, not broke down.
(beat)
But speaking of broke, you got \$20 I can borrow.

NICKI LAUGHS AND STARTS TO EXIT QUICKLY.

11 **INT. ASSISTANT'S DESK AREA - AFTERNOON - DAY**

11

DERRICK APPROACHES THE RINGING PHONE. HE HESITATES AT FIRST AND ON THE 3RD RING HE PICKS IT UP.

DERRICK
Nicki Howell's office...
(listening intently)
She stepped out, can I take a message?.... I'll let her know you called.

DERRICK HANGS UP THE PHONE AND THEN PONDERES FOR A MOMENT AND THEN HIS LIGHT BULB MOMENT OCCURS. HE DIALS A NUMBER ON HIS CELL PHONE.

DERRICK (CONT'D)

Hey Oliver...it's Derrick...what do you mean Derrick who... Bart and I aren't together anymore...sure I'll hold on while you do a back flip...

(pause)

Listen you've been at Tetson Oil forever...I'm hoping you can help me out.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

12

INT. ASSISTANT'S DESK AREA - LATE AFTERNOON

12

NICKI RETURNS FROM HER MEETING AND CATCHES UP WITH DERRICK OUTSIDE HER OFFICE.

NICKI
It's just not my day.

DERRICK HANDS NICKI AN ENVELOPE.

NICKI (CONT'D)
What's this?

DERRICK
The documents that grandma destroyed.
You can thank me later.

NICKI
You never cease to amaze me.

DERRICK
That's what all the boys say.

NICKI KISSES DERRICK ON THE CHEEK. WALKS INTO HER OFFICE.

NICKI
Wrong office.

SHE TURNS AROUND TO DERRICK AND REALIZES IT MUST BE HERS.

NICKI (CONT'D)
But....

DERRICK
Did you ever get to name the hurricane
that hit that office?

NICKI WALKS INTO HER OFFICE. MR. LAYTON CAUTIOUSLY APPROACHES DERRICK, HE APPEARS CONFUSED AT DERRICK'S PRESENCE.

MR. LAYTON
Is Ms. Howell in?

DERRICK
She certainly is Mr. Layton.

NICKI COMES RUNNING OUT UNBEKNOWNST TO MR. LAYTON'S PRESENCE.

NICKI
I can't believe Allied has found new..

MR. LAYTON
New what?!

DERRICK
Office space. The found new offices on
the north side.
(pause)
Mr. Layton how are the wife and kids?

MR. LAYTON
How did you know about my...

DERRICK INTERRUPTS.

DERRICK
I know everything.

NICKI
(nervously)
Mr. Layton did you meet...

MR. LAYTON INTERRUPTS.

MR. LAYTON
Your new assistant?

JESSICA ARRIVES.

JESSICA
Well the assistants are getting
younger I see. And more handsome.

MR. LAYTON
(to Nicki)
We cannot afford to lose the Allied
case Ms. Howell.

MR. LAYTON EXITS.

JESSICA
Darling did I ever tell you about a
charming middle eastern Prince Selami
Akbar.

NICKI
Jessica what does that have to do with
anything?

JESSICA
Can't a girl simply reminisce. Geesh!

CUT TO:

NICKI
Bed time young lady.

NICKI APPROACHES THE BED AND ADJUSTS THE COVERS.

JASMINE
Mommy, why didn't Uncle Bart come?

THE QUESTIONS CATCHES NICKI OFF GUARD.

NICKI
Baby, sometimes people realize that they don't love each other like they once did.

JASMINE
Like you and daddy?

JASMINES WORDS JOLT NICKI.

NICKI
So wise to be so young.
(pause)
I still love your daddy and we both love you.

JASMINE
Are you sure Uncle D is gay?

NICKI
Yes, I'm sure. Why?

JASMINE
Cuz he acts exactly like Daddy acts. How can you tell?

NICKI
Sweetie, I don't know who that says more about.
(beat)
You can't always tell if a man is gay by the way he acts. You can only tell by who they choose to love.

JASMINE BREAKS OUT INTO SONG AGAIN WITH WHITNEY HOUSTON'S "GREATEST LOVE OF ALL"

JASMINE
Because the greatest love of all, is happening to me...

NICKI
Easy Ms. Whitney, save some of that for your first album. Now go to sleep.

NICKI KISSES JASMINE ON THE FOREHEAD.

CUT TO:

14

INT. NICKI'S KITCHEN - MORNING - DAY 3

14

NICKI ENTERS DRESSED FOR WORK

NICKI
How'd you sleep Uncle D?

DERRICK
Well I realized at 3am I had a special visitor.

HE HOLDS UP THE DOLL.

DERRICK (CONT'D)
First time I've been in bed with a female in years.

NICKI
Did Bart call?

DERRICK
I didn't answer. Can't believe there was no awful morning breath to wake me up.
(beat)
Did Shane call?

NICKI
I didn't answer either. No two inch toe nails ripping up my sheets.

DERRICK
No snores.

NICKI
No farts.

SHE CHUCKLES LIGHTLY.

NICKI (CONT'D)
Nope don't miss it.

DERRICK
Me neither.

THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER BOTH KNOWING THEY MISS IT ALL.

NICKI
You've been there for so many of my heartaches and heartbreaks.

DERRICK
That's what Uncles are for. Besides I've got no life now so I can just tend to yours.

JASMINE ENTERS THE ROOM DRESSED FOR SCHOOL.

JASMINE
Good morning everyone.

SOUNDING OLDER THAN HER YEARS, SHE IMMEDIATELY GOES TO GIVE DERRICK A BIG HUG.

JASMINE (CONT'D)
I'm so happy you're here.

DERRICK
Awww, but you know I certainly don't wanna over stay my welcome.

NICKI
You know good and well when it comes to you there is no such thing as overstaying.

JASMINE
Plus we can use some help around here. Have you seen Momma's room?
(pause)
Whew!!!

NICKI
Ok it's definitely time for you to go to school.

THEY ALL LAUGH.

CUT TO:

15

INT. OFFICE BREAK AREA - MORNING

15

NICKI IS MAKING A COFFEE.

JESSICA ARRIVES IN HER USUAL GRAND STYLE.

JESSICA
Darling there you are. There's a gentleman with green hair outside your office. Is it Halloween already?

NICKI
Yes HR plucked another soul off the island of misfit assistants.

JESSICA HANDS NICKI A FOLDER.

JESSICA
Well some good news. I salvaged the Allied case. They are staying.

NICKI IS BEYOND ELATED.

NICKI
But how?

JESSICA
Let's just say it involved lots of Champagne and three belly dancers.

NICKI
I can't wait to read your
autobiography.

JESSICA
Neither can I darling, neither can I.

16

INT. RECEPTION AREA - NOON

16

CEDRIC, A TALL, WHITE 25 YEAR OLD MALE, WITH GREEN HAIR AND PAINTED BLACK FINGER NAILS IS SEATED AT THE ASSISTANT'S DESK. HE IS MOVING AT THE SPEED OF SOUND TYPING ON HIS KEYBOARD LIKE A MANIAC THAT HAS HAD SIX CUPS OF ESPRESSO. NICKI COMES OUT OF HER OFFICE CARRYING A FOLDER AT THE EXACT TIME DERRICK ARRIVES.

NICKI
(surprised to see him)
Uncle D?!

DERRICK
There was a support group for gay
uncles whose husbands have cheated on
them meeting around the
corner...standing room only.

NICKI
This is my new assistant Cedric. The
temp agency sent him.

CEDRIC
Nice to meet you.

NICKI
Cedric, put these with the rest of the
Cloudy documents and there's a letter
I need drafted immediately.

CEDRIC
Yes Ms. Howell.

HE CONTINUES TO TYPE FRANTICALLY AND TALK FAST.

CEDRIC (CONT'D)
I'm excited to have the opportunity to
work at a law firm like Layton & Ross.
I'm really a hard worker so whatever
you need me to do, please don't
hesitate to ask. I hope you don't
think my hair color is too
distracting. I'm just really all about
self-expression.

DERRICK
You're about to blow a fuse. What's
this?

HE PICKS UP THE COFFEE CUP ON CEDRIC'S DESK.

CEDRIC
Espresso.

NICKI
How many of these have you had?

CEDRIC
I stopped counting after 5.

DERRICK
That explains why the keyboard is
upside down.

**HE HELPS RETURN THE KEYBOARD TO THE RIGHT POSITION. DERRICK
FOLLOWS NICKI INTO HER OFFICE.**

CUT TO:

17 **INT. NICKI'S OFFICE - NOON**

17

**NICKI TAKES A SEAT BEHIND HER DESK AND DERRICK REMAINS
STANDING.**

NICKI
I have a big meeting with Mr Layton,
I've had both Grandma Moses and the
caffeine junkie as assistants, is it
that hard to find a good assistant?

DERRICK
Stop being dramatic.

NICKI
Uh, do you see the train wreck taking
place right outside my office?

DERRICK
You wanna talk train wrecks? My man
done left me, I'm sleeping on my
niece's couch and I got no job.

NICKI
Wanna trade lives?

DERRICK
What?! And deal with that train wreck
outside your office? I got a great
idea. You can treat your uncle to a
birthday lunch.

NICKI
Oh my goodness between Cloudy, Gladys,
Jasmine and Shane, I completely
forgot. Of course! That'll give the
energizer bunny time to adjust to a
comfortable caffeine altitude.

**THEY EXIT AND PASS BY CEDRIC WHO HAS COLLAPSED ONTO HIS
KEYBOARD.**

DERRICK
I knew he was gonna crash and burn.

18 INT. CEDRIC'S DESK AREA - ONE HOUR LATER 18

CEDRIC IS STILL KNOCKED OUT IN A SLEEP SO DEEP HE HAS ACTUALLY CHANGED POSITIONS. HE HAS PULLED HIS JACKET OVER HIS HEAD LIKE A BLANKET. NICKI AND DERRICK RETURN FROM LUNCH AND NOTICE CEDRIC. NICKI SHAKES HER HEAD AND DERRICK PULLS OUT HIS CELL PHONE TO SNAP A PICTURE.

NICKI
Uncle D...no!!

DERRICK
I'll put a nice filter on it before I post it, don't worry.

THEY BOTH WALK INTO NICKI'S OFFICE.

CUT TO:

19 INT. NICKI'S OFFICE 19

NICKI GOES BEHIND HER DESK AND SETS HER PURSE DOWN.

DERRICK
Well thanks for a wonderful lunch. If you need me I'll be on your sofa watching the real housewives of "Pick a City". It helps me feel better about my life.

CLOUDY ARRIVES HOLDING A FOLDED EDITION OF THE LATEST DALLAS MORNING NEWS.

CLOUDY
Knock, knock.
(beat)
I see you work your assistants to death.

CLOUDY NODS IN CEDRIC'S DIRECTION.

NICKI
Hey Amy.

DERRICK
Wow!

NICKI
Amy this is my Uncle Derrick.

CLOUDY EXTENDS HER HAND.

CLOUDY
Nice to meet you.

DERRICK
Wow.

NICKI
You're gay remember.

DERRICK
I'm gay not blind.

CLOUDY PLACES THE NEWSPAPER DOWN ON NICKI'S DESK WITH THE PAGE TURNED TO A NEW STORY ON CLOUDY.

NICKI
What's this?

NICKI PICKS UP THE PAPER AND READS THE FIRST LINE OF THE STORY.

NICKI (CONT'D)
Old arrest records come back to haunt Cloudy Daze. Drug possession, petty larceny and assault.

NICKI SUDDENLY STOPS.

DERRICK
Isn't the newspaper owned by the same dude that owns Tetson Oil?

NICKI
That's right! Jeff Sizemore. Now it all makes sense. They're playing dirty.

CLOUDY
But that was all in the past.

DERRICK
What would Perry Mason do?

CLOUDY/NICKI
Who?

DERRICK
You young kids...google it.

NICKI GRABS HER CLOUDY FOLDERS. CLOUDY AND NICKI EXIT.

CUT TO:

20

INT. LAW OFFICE CONFERENCE ROOM - AFTERNOON - DAY 3

20

ON ONE SIDE OF THE TABLE CLOUDY IS SEATED BETWEEN NICKI AND MR. LAYTON. ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE CONFERENCE ROOM TABLE ARE TWO LAWYERS REPRESENTING TETSON OIL. ATTORNEY #1 IS A 40 YEAR OLD WHITE MALE AND ATTORNEY #2 IS A 35 YEAR OLD WHITE FEMALE.

MR. LAYTON
Proceed, Ms. Howell.

NICKI

Certainly, we are hoping today that we can reach a settlement and prevent this from playing out in court and in public. I can assure you it's not the kind of press Tetson Oil wants. So we are proposing...

ATTORNEY #1 INTERRUPTS NICKI

ATTORNEY #1

You do realize that your client here breached a signed, legal document. The non-disclosure clearly states that anything that occurred on the dates of July 15th and 16th, 2017, between Ms Daze and board chairman Alexander...

NICKI INTERRUPTS.

NICKI

But can we just...

ATTORNEY #1 INTERRUPTS AGAIN.

ATTORNEY #1

I'm not done yet! Cannot be conveyed to anyone personally or professionally, as all actions occurred on privately owned property, licensed and sanctioned by Tetson Oil with the full consent of and cooperation of Ms. Daze.

NICKI

I know what a non-disclosure is...and it was my understanding that the NDA covered only the I-NI-TIAL visit.

ATTORNEY #2

There were other visits?

CLOUDY

(snarky)
Were there?

DERRICK UNEXPECTEDLY ENTERS THE CONFERENCE ROOM, WALKS DIRECTLY OVER TO NICKI AND HANDS HER SEVERAL SMALL SHEETS OF PAPER AND THEN LEANS OVER AND WHISPERS IN HER EAR. NICKI GOES INTO A COUGHING FIT AT THE NEWS DERRICK HAS DELIVERED. NICKI NOTICES EVERYONE'S STARTLED EXPRESSION AT DERRICK'S PRESENCE.

MR. LAYTON

This is highly unprofessional. Ms Howell please ask your assistant to leave at once!

NICKI

My assistant??!! Oh yes my assistant.

NICKI SNAPS HER FINGER AT DERRICK

NICKI (CONT'D)
Assistant please leave.

DERRICK
Oh, I'm leaving.

DERRICK MAKES A QUICK EXIT. NICKI LOOKS BACK AT CLOUDY ONE MORE TIME.

NICKI
We know about Cloudy Daze but I'm assuming you have no clue about the other costly rendezvous'.
(beat)
It's only a matter of time before the press really sinks there teeth into this story.

ATTORNEY #1
What other costly rendezvous?

EACH PAGE IN NICKI'S HAND CONTAINS A DIFFERENT PORN STAR/ENTERTAINER NAME.

NICKI
Gina Rivera, \$34,000.

SHE PLACES THE PAGE DOWN AND READS THE NEXT PAGE.

NICKI (CONT'D)
Paula Rhone, \$41,000.

SHE PLACES THE PAGE DOWN AND READS THE NEXT PAGE.

NICKI (CONT'D)
There's more.

THE ATTORNEYS ARE CLEARLY RATTLED.

ATTORNEY #1
What does your client want Ms. Howell?

NICKI CONFERS WITH CLOUDY AND THEN LEANS FURTHER IN TO CONFER WITH MR. LAYTON.

CLOUDY
A public apology!

NICKI
And \$1.4 Million.

ATTORNEY #1
\$1.4 Million?!

NICKI
The total amount of all the women plus a few zeros!

NICKI THEN PUTS DOWN SEVERAL MORE PIECES OF YELLOW PAPER AS IF SHE'S ABOUT TO WIN AT SPADES. THE TWO OPPOSING ATTORNEY'S CONFER FOR A SECOND.

ATTORNEY #2
Who should we make the check out to?

NICKI
(quickly)
Amy Little.

CLOUDY LEANS OVER TO WHISPER IN NICKI'S EAR. NICKI THEN DOES A DOUBLE TAKE AT CLOUDY.

NICKI (CONT'D)
Actually make it out to Barry Dunhill.

ATTORNEY #2
And who is Barry Dunhill?

CLOUDY
I was.

NICKI IS COMPLETELY SHOCKED BUT REMAINS COMPOSED.

ATTORNEY #2
Damn.

ATTORNEY #2 REALIZES HER SUDDEN OUTBURST AND QUICKLY REGAINS HER COMPOSURE.

NICKI
(under her breathe)
I gotta step my game up.

CLOUDY
I took a lot of crap as a man but I'll be damned if I take any crap as a woman.

ATTORNEY #2 GIVES HER A "YOU GO GIRL KIND OF LOOK" WHICH COMPLETELY ANNOYS ATTORNEY #1. NICKI GIVES THE OTHER ATTORNEY'S A "YOU HEARD THE WOMAN" LOOK.

CUT TO:

21

INT. RECEPTION AREA - AFTERNOON

21

DERRICK AND NICKI ARE ALL SMILES AFTER NICKI HAS CLEARLY INFORMED DERRICK OF WHAT TRANSPIRED AFTER HE LEFT THE CONFERENCE ROOM. CEDRIC IS STILL COMPLETELY KNOCKED OUT AT HIS DESK. JESSICA MAKES A GRAND ENTRANCE STILL IN SUNGLASSES.

JESSICA
So how did it go?

NICKI
Like I knew it would!
(beat)
Except for one little surprise.

NICKI MAKES A "TINY" GESTURE WITH HER THUMB AND INDEX FINGER.

JESSICA
What?

NICKI
Cloudy aka Amy was once aka Barry.

JESSICE
I knew it! Hell she's prettier than me. And that never happens.

JESSICA SUDDENLY NOTICES CEDRIC.

JESSICA
Darling, should we call the coroner?

JESSICA NODS AT CEDRIC'S LIFELESS BODY.

DERRICK
Well congratulations Ms. Daze. I remember Barry but I like Cloudy much better.

NICKI
Wait. You knew all along too.

DERRICK
You know I know everything.

MR. LAYTON ENTERS.

MR. LAYTON
Well well well. The dynamic duo. That was some entrance you made. Very savvy. I'm sure your wife and kids will be very proud.

DERRICKS
Wife?! I just separated from my husband.

NICKI
Mr. Layton, Derrick is my uncle and THAT'S my assistant!

NICKI NODS TO CEDRIC. MR. LAYTON LOOKS UPWARD TO PONDER THE MOMENT.

MR. LAYTON
Oh well, uh...

DERRICK NOTICES MR. LAYTON IS HOLDING A PAIR OF DALLAS COWBOY TICKETS.

DERRICK
Are those Cowboy tickets?

MR. LAYTON
Yes, I'm taking a client to the game tonight.

DERRICK
Dallas is on fire. Dak Prescott their quarterback is outstanding.

THEN CLOUDY INTERRUPTS.

CLOUDY
But it's their defense I'm really impressed with. Dan Thompson had three sacks in the game against the Eagles. Did you see it? They'll definitely be in the playoffs.

MR. LAYTON IS TAKEN A BACK BY DERRICK AND CLOUDY'S FOOTBALL KNOWLEDGE.

MR. LAYTON
(to Cloudy)
Wait wait, aren't you?

CLOUDY
A football fanatic?

MR. LAYTON
(to Derrick)
And you're?

DERRICK
A gay football fanatic?

MR. LAYTON
But you understand the sport of football so well. How?

DERRICK
They think its some kind of genetic mutation.

MR. LAYTON
Your love of sports or you being gay?

DERRICK
I could rearrange these flowers if it would make you feel more comfortable.

MR. LAYTON
You are really something Derrick. Listen, I know I told you to leave in the conference room. But the truth is I'd actually love it if you stayed at the firm.

CEDRIC SUDDENLY WAKES UP WITH A MORNING STRETCH AND A YAWN. HE NOTICES EVERYBODY AROUND HIS DESK.

CEDRIC
Good morning everybody.

JESSICA
Sweetie, it's 5:30 in the afternoon.

CEDRIC
Then I better skedaddle on home.

HE GRABS HIS JACKET. HE THEN TAKES A PIECE OF PAPER FROM HIS DESK AND HANDS IT TO NICKI. DERRICK SITS DOWN IN THE ASSISTANT'S CHAIR AND TAKES IT ALL IN AND FOR THE THIRD TIME TURNS THE KEYBOARD RIGHT SIDE UP.

CEDRIC (CONT'D)
Here's the letter you asked me to draft. Oh yeah, and this.

HE HANDS HER THE LETTER AND A FOLDER OF PAPERS THEN HEADS FOR THE EXIT. NICKI LOOKS AT THE LETTER IN DISBELIEF AND SHAKES HER HEAD.

DERRICK
What's wrong?

NICKI
This letter is absolutely perfect.

MR. LAYTON
What's in the folder Nicki?

NICKI
The compensation reports for the last three years from the Kaneko case and a copy of the deposition I asked Gladys for. OMG, we have to keep him. Thank you temp agency!

MR. LAYTON
And he was only your assistant for a day...tomorrow he goes up to Edelson!

NICKI
Edelson!!!

CUT TO:

22

INT. NICKI'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING - DAY 3

22

DERRICK IS PREPARING A SALAD IN THE KITCHEN, NICKI IS AT THE COUNTER OPENING MAIL. THE DOORBELL RINGS AND SHE GOES TO ANSWER IT. TANYA ENTERS.

NICKI
Hey girl.

TANYA
Hey...Hey Uncle D.

DERRICK
That's Uncle D otherwise known as Nicki Howell's new assistant to you.

TANYA
Say what?!

NICKI
Won't he do it!

TANYA
But what about Bart?

NICKI GIVES TANYA A "PLEASE DON'T MENTION BART" LOOK.

DERRICK
It's over, we're separating.

TANYA
Ok there's essentially no hope for me.

NICKI
You could have broken up sooner you know, it would have saved me a lot of time and energy at work.

DERRICK
You really haven't quite grasped the "compassion thing" have you? Tanya, I heard you had an audition today.

TANYA IMMEDIATELY GOES INTO ACTRESS MODE AND FACES THE PRETEND CAMERA. JASMINE COMES RUNNING OUT OF HER ROOM TO WATCH. TANYA PRETENDS TO RETRIEVE HER LIPSTICK AND APPLY IT TO HER LIPS.

TANYA
(sexy voice)
CRUSHED LIP...Dressing these lips for Day..
(beat)
And night.

JASMINEDS/DERRICK/NICKI
You didn't get the job did ya?

TANYA GIVES A DEADPAN LOOK. THE DOORBELL RINGS AND JASMINE IS EXCITED TO GET IT.

JASMINE
Let me get it. Who is it?

BART (O.C.)
Bart.

EVERYBODY RUNS TO THE DOOR EXCEPT DERRICK. JASMINE OPENS THE DOOR AND WE SEE BART'S VIEW OF JASMINE, TANYA, AND NICKI. BART IS A 50-SOMETHING BLACK MALE BUT WE ONLY SEE HIM FROM BEHIND HOLDING FLOWERS IN HIS RIGHT HAND.

BART (CONT'D)
Hi, is Derrick here?

IN UNISON, THEY ALL MUMBLE VARIATIONS OF "NOT SURE", "HAVEN'T SEEN HIM", "HAS ANYBODY SEEN HIM", "I HAVE NO IDEA". DERRICK APPEARS BEHIND THEM.

BART(CONT'D)
Hello Derrick.

JASMINE
Uncle D, Where did you come from?

DERRICK
Excuse me you all.

DERRICK STEPS OUTSIDE AND CLOSSES THE DOOR.

NICKI
Whelp I'm sure HR will have another brilliant underachiever sitting outside my office in no time.

TANYA
Why you say that?

NICKI
I'm pretty sure Derrick is gonna want to get back together.

TANYA
Well, the heart wants what the heart wants.

NICKI
I wish the heart wanted me to have a qualified assistant.

JASMINE
Tanya, can you help me with my schoolwork?

JASMINE APPROACHES TANYA WITH HER BOOK. SHE OPENS THE BOOK TO SHOW TANYA BUT TANYA IS CONCENTRATING ALL HER ATTENTION ON THE FRONT DOOR IN ANTICIPATION OF DERRICK'S DECISION.

JASMINE (CONT'D)
This is the part I need help with.

TANYA
Yeah, yeah, yeah, that sounds right to me.

JASMINE
Big help YOU are.

DERRICK RE-ENTERS THE ROOM CARRYING THE FLOWERS AND THEY ALL STARE.

DERRICK
(takes a deep breath)
Well we're done.

NICKI JUMPS FOR JOY.

NICKI
I mean, I'm so sorry.

JASMINE
Does that mean you're going to stay?

NICKI
Wait a minute.

NICKI GOES TO THE KITCHEN.

NICKI (CONT'D)
Happy Birthday Uncle D!!!

THEY ALL START SINGING STEVIE WONDER'S *HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YA*.

NICKI (CONT'D)
You can stay as long as you like.

DERRICK
Can I get that in writing.

THEY CONTINUE SINGING.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO - END OF PILOT EPISODE