

I'M NOT HERE RIGHT NOW

"Pilot"

Written by

Shea Stanley

10/15/21

SCENE 1

SFX: PHONE RING OF AN OUTGOING CALL

SFX: MUFFLED NOISES OF SOMEONE FUMBLING WITH THEIR PHONE

KRISTIN

(voicemail message)

Hi, you've reached Kristin Lewis, I'm not here right now. Please leave a detailed *voice message* and please *don't* just hang up and text me because I have no idea where my glasses are. Ella, if you're listening to this I need you to come home from college and help me find them. I'm not kidding.

SFX: BEEP.

ELLA

(into phone)

Hey mama. Headed to Doggy Style. Don't get mad at me, that's the restaurant with the brussels sprout hot dog you love, yes it's always been called that. No I don't think it's very appropriate. Anyway, just wanted to say hi because I miss you. I love you.

SFX: HANG UP CLICK

SCENE 2A INT. DOGGY STYLE RESTAURANT - LATE NIGHT

SFX: FORKS CLINKING, LAUGHTER, RESTAURANT CONVERSATION, IMAGINE DRAGONS-ESQUE MUSIC

It's the middle of the night at Doggy Style, a disgusting hot dog restaurant. The place is packed with college students drunkenly eating frozen margaritas and tater tots covered in cheese.

SONJA (29) stands behind the counter. ELLA (23) sits in a booth typing on her laptop.

SFX: TYPING ON A LAPTOP

Ella calls to Sonja.

ELLA

Very rude of you to have actual customers.

2.

SONJA
School's back baby! One sec.

SONJA (CONT'D)
(genuine)
I'm Sonja, welcome in to Doggy
Style. What can I get you?

DRUNK COLLEGE STUDENT
(slurring)
Can we get the hot dog tots?

SONJA
The – do you want a hot dog with a
side of tots or do you want me to
cut up a hot dog on top of tots.

DRUNK COLLEGE STUDENT
(slurring)
Thank you.

SFX: FOOTSTEPS as he walks away

SFX: FOOTSTEPS as Sonja walks to Ella's table.

SFX: SONJA WALKING

SONJA
Okay what do you need girlie girl

ELLA
Can I ask you if this sounds stupid
or is Mr. Manager still here?

SONJA
(loudly)
YES I WILL DEFINITELY GET YOU
ANOTHER ORDER OF TOTS ANYTHING ELSE

Ella turns her computer towards Sonja who starts reading.

SFX: COMPUTER SLIDING ACROSS TABLE

ELLA
(whispers)
Just this page right here.

SONJA
(quietly)
Okay reading...reading

3.

ELLA

(loudly)

Oh yes may I please have the tots
with extra cheese and no bacon and
a frozen marg with extra marg and
throw in four of your best hot dogs
without the dog-

Sonja stops reading.

SONJA

(quietly)

Okay, wow I'm so proud. You're so
amazing for even applying to this
and you're literally a genius and I
have absolutely no notes.

ELLA

Okay, great.

SONJA

Except delete this, move this to
the last paragraph, and change this
line to "I hope to use these skills
to facilitate your newspaper's
mission."

ELLA

Oh hell yeah that's so
professional.

DRUNK COLLEGE STUDENT

(calling over)

Wait do y'all have hot dogs?

SONJA

Gotta jet.

SFX: SONJA WALKING

SCENE 2B

SFX: Ella keeps typing.

ELLA

Okay, okay! I'm qualified for this
job! I can be a journalist. I have
a degree! I AM a journalist!

REGULAR CARL, 70s, calls from over at the bar.

REGULAR CARL

I'm a journalist.

4.

ELLA
Really?

REGULAR CARL
No.

ELLA
Nice to see you here again, Carl.

Beat.

SCENE 2C

SFX: BELL OF A DOOR OPENING

SFX: PEOPLE ENTERING

A whirl as more drunk kids enter the restaurant. MJ, tall with extremely long hair, enters with Michael.

MJ
OK wait watch this

MICHAEL
Oh she's cartwheeling again

She cartwheels into the room.

MJ
Bing, bang, boom, baby

Michael CHEERS.

SFX: COMMOTION

SFX: RANDOM PATRONS GIVE A SLOW CLAP

MJ (CONT'D)
(slurring)
I haven't done that since the day
my dad died.

SFX: THE RESTAURANT GOES QUIET

SFX: SMALL COUGH

MJ (CONT'D)
Just kidding he's alive!! I wish
that bitch was dead.

SFX: Everyone LAUGHS and goes back to normal conversation

Michael sits a table.

5.

MICHAEL

MJ get me a Missionary Marg! And you get a Slurp It Up Swirl and I'll take a sip. And cheesy tots extra Doggy Doo!

SFX: FOOTSTEPS

MJ calls out while walking away

MJ

Oh sorry I think they only have water & celery now.

MICHAEL

BOOOO!!!

SCENE 2D

MJ walks up to the counter to order from Sonja.

SFX: MJ WALKING

MJ

Hey how's it goin can I get-

SONJA

It's going okay. I'm really happy to be making more money again now that the students are back, but it's really reminding me how physically demanding this job can be.

A customer calls from their table.

DRUNK COLLEGE STUDENT

Excuse me missus?

SONJA

Oh sorry one second.

Her voice trails off as she walks away.

SFX: Sonja walking away

SFX: MJ starts TYPING on her phone but then it dies.

SFX: Typing stops

MJ

Shit.

6.

REGULAR CARL
Loooooow battery huh?

MJ
Oh, yeah I need to get a new phone
before my parents kick me off my
phone plan.

REGULAR CARL
I can get you a new phone.

MJ
Oh, um, really?

REGULAR CARL
No.

Beat.

MJ
I'm just gonna...go....over there

SFX: MJ walking away

SCENE 2E

SFX: typing

MJ wanders away. She sees Ella typing on her laptop. She
starts reading over her shoulder.

MJ (CONT'D)
Wow you're typing real good.

ELLA
Oh you scared me.

MJ
I can't type like that when I'm
drunk. Last week I sent in a paper
that said no one at Stonewall knows
who threw the first Brock.

ELLA
I've thrown around a few Brocks.

MJ
Oh and you're a funny drunk!

ELLA
I'm bravely not drunk.

7.

MJ
I didn't know sober people came
here.

ELLA
I do my best work on a sticky
table.

MJ
What class is this for?

SFX: MJ sits down.

ELLA
It's a job application.

MJ
Oh I'm a senior too!

ELLA
I graduated in May.

MJ
Wow it's even more embarrassing
that you're here.

They laugh.

SCENE 2F

SFX: Sonja walks by again.

MJ (CONT'D)
Oh excuse me can I get--

SONJA
You've got such a nice presence,
you know that? Whenever I look over
at you, I'm like, that girl's got a
good spirit!

MJ
Thanks! Do you mind if I get--

DRUNK COLLEGE STUDENT
(calling from across the
bar)
Missus lady!!

SONJA
Oh shoot they asked for a Pegging
Platter, one sec

Her voice trails off again as she walks away.

8.

SFX: Sonja walks away

SCENE 2G

ELLA

Nooooo

MJ

I just need tots! Can I eat your
tots?

MJ reaches for her basket.

SFX: Basket sliding across the table

ELLA

Do we know each other?

MJ

Wait you got a hot dog?

ELLA

Yeah that's their whole thing.

MJ

I didn't know people actually got
their hot dogs.

ELLA

I can't just eat tots for dinner.

MJ

Wait this is your *dinner*?? It's 1
AM.

ELLA

Only legally.

MJ

What was it like?

ELLA

You can have a bite.

MJ

Oh no I haven't had a hot dog since
the day my dad died.

9.

ELLA
He's not dead.

MJ
He's not dead.

They laugh.

MJ (CONT'D)
But I am a vegetarian. And I *am*
flirting with you.

ELLA
I've done a lot of drunk flirting
before but I've never been on the
other side of it. And sober.

MJ
Can I get your instagram?

ELLA
My instagram? Are you 16?

MJ
Wow you're *ancient* aren't you.

ELLA
Can you message me on LinkedIn? All
the professors in the journalism
school say it's the hot new thing.

MJ
I receive many messages on LinkedIn
I'm very in demand.

ELLA
I bet you are.

MJ
She finally flirts back!

A beat.

SCENE 2H

Michael calls from his booth across the bar.

MICHAEL
MJ!! We gotta go Nate wants us to
meet him at Doggy Style.

MJ
We're at Doggy Style.

10.

MICHAEL

Right.

SCENE 2I

MJ turns back to talking to Ella

MJ

Continue flirting.

ELLA

You have beautiful shoulders.

MJ bursts out laughing.

MJ

Aaaaand the flirting ends.

ELLA

Shoulders are the most sensual part
of the body!

MJ

Oh you want to be sensual towards
me?

ELLA

What did you have for dinner?

MJ

You move from shoulders to dinner?

ELLA

Shoulders, body, body, food.

MJ

A peach and burrata salad.

ELLA

What the fuck did you just say to
me?

MJ

It was so good. I make it all the
time.

ELLA

You *made* it?

MJ

They were on sale at the grocery
store.

11.

ELLA

Hm grocery stores... maybe I should try that...When I was your age I ran on dining hall pizza.

MJ

Was that before or after you got back from 'Nam?

SCENE 2J

Sonja walks by again.

SFX: shuffling by

MJ (CONT'D)

Oh there she is. Excuse me can I get-

SONJA

Ella there's good vibes on your friend here! Oh shoot I forgot his Railed Relish.

She walks away

SFX: Sonja walking away

ELLA

Pathetic.

MJ

I just need my cheesy tots or I'm going to wither away.

ELLA

Let me show you how it's done.

Ella makes a BIRD CALL.

SFX: WHOOSH as Sonja suddenly appears.

SONJA

What can I get you?

MJ

Oh, wow where did you- um, a missionary marg, a slurp it up swirl, cheesy tots extra doggy doo, and a whiskey neat.

Sonja walks away.

SFX: FOOTSTEPS

12.

SCENE 2K

MJ (CONT'D)
(to Ella)
How did you do that?

ELLA
Sonja and I go waaaaaay back.

MJ
You come here a lot.

ELLA
I come here a lot. You drink a
whiskey neat?

MJ
That's for you.

ELLA
Because I'm old.

MJ
And that's what old men drink, yes.

ELLA
I will say this is the first time
I've been here with students and I
do feel one million years old.

MJ
Not a million! Just 65.

ELLA
Thank you.

MJ
I can't wait to graduate. What's
your job?

ELLA
What do you mean?

MJ
Like what do you do for work?

ELLA
What do you mean?

MJ
Got it.

ELLA
In many ways, I am unemployed.

13.

MJ
And in other ways?

ELLA
I am unemployed.

MJ
I thought everyone that left the
journalism school had a job offer?

ELLA
I did.

MJ
What happened?

ELLA
What are you doing post-grad?

MJ
Okay she has a mysterious recent
past, I'll mark that down in my
book. I'm moving to Charleston to
teach at a sustainable farming
program for high schoolers.

ELLA
Oh god I didn't expect you to
actually have an answer. It's only
August!

MJ laughs.

MJ
I interned with them this summer.

ELLA
Oh god and I bet it changed your
life.

MJ
It totally changed my life.

Ella groans.

SCENE 2L

Michael calls from across the bar.

MICHAEL
Okay, MJ, Nate wants us to meet him
at Good Times.
(genuinely asking)
Which is not where we are?

14.

MJ

Correct.

ELLA

Well, Brock, it was nice to meet you.

MJ

You should come with us, Brock.

ELLA

I should finish this application.

MJ

I'm sure it's not due at 1 in the morning.

ELLA

Maybe it's a job in Japan. It's the end of the work day.

MJ

It's not in Japan.

ELLA

It's not in Japan.

MICHAEL

MJ come onnn I want to have some good times.

MJ

Can I see you again?

ELLA

I'd say yes but you're not even going to remember this tomorrow.

MJ

Clearly you don't support drunk rights.

ELLA

Find me on instagram.

MJ

What do I even search? 65 year olds? Brock?

ELLA

Have fun on your fun young college night, I'll be here slowly aging.

15.

MJ
I guess I have time to come back
then.

She walks away.

SFX: FOOTSTEPS

MICHAEL
(to MJ)
Where are our tots?

MJ
You already ate them.

MICHAEL
Really?

They walk out of the bar.

SFX: BELL OF DOOR OPENING AND CLOSING AS THEY EXIT

SCENE 2M

Sonja arrives at Ella's table and drops off all the food MJ
ordered.

SFX: SONJA'S FOOTSTEPS

SONJA
Delivery!

SFX: PLATES PLACED ON TABLE

ELLA
Did you see that??

SONJA
She was *hot*.

ELLA
Hottest person I've ever seen.

SONJA
Did you make a move?

ELLA
She's wasted

SONJA
She won't be tomorrow! You could
have at least gotten her number!

16.

ELLA
And what? Date a 22 year old?

SONJA
You're 23.

ELLA
And one month.

SONJA
Anyway. Guess you're paying for all
this food.

ELLA
Oh, fuck, um.

SONJA
I'm just kidding, manager's are out
smoking anyway. I know you're
broke. Do you want me to wrap it up
for you?

ELLA
Yeah, thanks Sonja.

Sonja starts to grab the stuff.

SFX: Dishes clanking

ELLA (CONT'D)
Leave the whiskey.

Ella takes a sip, satisfied.

SFX: Sip, glass on table

SCENE 4

SFX: VOICEMAIL BEEP

KRISTIN
Hi Ella Bella it's your mama, just
calling to check in on you. I'm
headed out for a drink with James.
We just had dinner. I told him I'd
cook him my famous meatloaf but I
forgot to hide the Cracker Barrel
take out boxes in time and he
caught me. I told him it's good for
him to know what he's getting
himself into.

SFX: Hang up click.

SCENE 5A

INT. DOGGY STYLE - THAT NIGHT

SFX: Late night restaurant conversation, dishes clanking, more imagine dragons type music

DRUNK COLLEGE STUDENT
I thought it would be a dollar.
It's dollar hot dog night.

SONJA
One hot dog is a dollar. Your four
hot dogs are four dollars. Six
margaritas would be thirty six
dollars and a penny saved is a
penny earned.

DRUNK COLLEGE STUDENT
Guys our meal is only a penny!

Sonja sighs and walks away.

SFX: FOOTSTEPS

SCENE 5B

Ella enters.

SFX: BELL OF DOOR OPENING, ELLA ENTERING

SONJA
Hey girlie girl we only have bar
seating.

ELLA
That's fine. At least Carl's not
here.

She takes a seat at the bar and takes out her laptop and starts typing.

SONJA
You want your usual, two hot dogs
and tots?

ELLA
Yes please. This application's due
in an hour I just gotta do the
finishing touches.

18.

SONJA

They're gonna say "please oh PLEASE
Ella come write for us! We're dying
to have you!"

ELLA

Thanks.

SONJA

And if they don't say that, they're
idiots, but at least you can spend
your days here with me.

ELLA

Right.

Sonja walks away.

SFX: FOOTSTEPS

SCENE 5C

Ella sighs.

ELLA

(talking to herself)

Okay. "I would love to bring my
skills in organization,
communication, and" blah de blah de
fucking nonsense who gives a shit.
This is terrible.

SFX: MOUSE CLICK as she deletes everything on the page.

CARL

I can retrieve that document for
you.

Ella jumps.

ELLA

Carl, I didn't see you there, I
swear you weren't there like, two
seconds ago.

CARL

That document you just deleted, I
can retrieve it for you. I used to
work in IT.

ELLA

Really?

19.

CARL
Yeah, actually.

A beat.

CARL
No.

ELLA
It's okay. I don't want it back.

She closes her laptop.

SFX: LAPTOP CLOSING

SCENE 5D

Sonja approaches.

SONJA
Headed out?

ELLA
You know I can't stay past 1 or
Carl starts sniffing me.

SONJA
Hold on a sec let me wrap up your
food.

ELLA
Oh here take my card

SONJA
I'll ring it up as my shift meal

ELLA
I don't want you to get in trouble

SFX: FOOD SCRAPED OFF A PLATE INTO BOX

SONJA
What are they going to do? Fire me?

ELLA
...yes?

SONJA
Well then I'd be unemployed and
we'd have even more in common.

20.

ELLA

You're sweet. A complete freak, but sweet.

SFX: BOX SLIDING

SONJA

Here's your food, and also I got you these

ELLA

Flowers??? They're beautiful! Are you wooing me?

SONJA

I know today's her birthday and I know that can be hard.

ELLA

(uncomfortable)

How did you know that?

SONJA

I saw it on a Facebook, somebody tagged you in a post about her. I "love" reacted.

ELLA

Well. Thanks.

SONJA

I bet she's up there celebrating with Princess Diana right now.

ELLA

Moms do love Princess Diana.

They laugh.

ELLA

I'll see ya Sonja.

SCENE 5E

SFX: BELL OF DOOR OPENING, DOOR CLOSING as Ella walks out of the restaurant.

SFX: She dumps the flowers in a trash can

She sighs and dials on her phone

SFX: Phone dialing

21.

SFX: Phone ringing.

ELLA

(voicemail)

Hey mama, happy birthday. I wish I could talk to you for real but I guess that won't happen anytime soon. Tell Princess Di I say hi. I love you.

BLACKOUT