

THE WOMEN IN THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR WORKSHOP  
MAIN SCENE PREP NOTES

<b>DIRECTOR:</b>	Karen X. Tulchinsky
<b>MAIN SCENE TITLE:</b>	Morning News
<b>AS OF DATE:</b>	January 4, 2013
<b>SCENE DESCRIPTION:</b>	
<p>Mel and Lyla, a lesbian couple who've been trying to have a child, wake up on Sunday morning to conduct a home pregnancy test. When Lyla tests positive, the couple attempts to celebrate, only to be interrupted by Mel's obnoxious sister, Barbie, who has news of her own.</p>	
<b>LOCATION WITHIN THE NARRATIVE:</b> (what happens just <b>before</b> and just <b>after</b> this scene)	
<p>The night before, Lyla set out the box of pregnancy pee sticks on her bedside table. A week ago they artificially inseminated. This morning, it's time to conduct their first home pregnancy test.</p> <p>The night before, Saturday night, they were planning to have a romantic evening together, when Mel's parents and her younger sister, Barbie unexpectedly dropped by for a visit.</p> <p>Mel's family is very involved in her life. Her parents and her sister are constantly phoning her and dropping by. Just last night, she had an argument with Barbie, instructing her to never call or drop by on Sunday mornings. She wants Sunday mornings alone with Lyla. Especially today.</p> <p>Right after this scene, Barbie is going to ask Mel to be a Bridesmaid at her wedding, a role which would require Mel to wear a puffy bridesmaid dress. For Mel to wear a dress and play such a feminine role in a wedding party is to deny her own identity.</p> <p>Lyla knows this, and advises Mel to say no to Barbie's request, but Mel is incapable of saying no to her baby sister. Barbie's wedding plans, (as with just about everything Barbie does) will cause conflict in Mel and Lyla's relationship and cause them to almost break up.</p>	
<b>CHARACTER BIOS</b>	
<b>Character #1 Name:</b>	MEL (Melanie) KATZ, (30) is an attractive, boyish lesbian. A talented, though struggling singer/songwriter, she's frustrated to still be working at a chain electronics store. She would rather be composing and performing music. She plays at benefit concerts and small pubs, while saving money to pay for studio time to
<b>MEL KATZ</b>	

	<p>produce her first CD.</p> <p>Raised by progressive, Jewish, “hippie” parents who support her relationship and her artistic pursuits—though they wish she had a “fall back” plan, such as going to grad school so she could teach. Mel’s relationship with her sister Barbie is complicated. Mel loves her sister, but the relationship is one-sided.</p>
<p><b>Character #2 Name:</b> <b>LYLA YAMAZAKI</b></p>	<p>Japanese Canadian, lipstick lesbian, Lyla (32) is feminine, beautiful and graceful. An elementary school teacher, she’s devoted to her job and in love with Mel.</p> <p>Determined, confident and strong, she’s politically involved with her union and does volunteer work in the community. She has a difficult relationship with her mother and two brothers. Her family in Vancouver is small. Her parents immigrated from Japan when they were young, leaving all of their family behind.</p> <p>Lyla has always wanted to have kids, so a few months ago, she began artificial insemination.</p>
<p>If applicable <b>Character #3 Name:</b> <b>BARBIE KATZ</b></p>	<p>Jewish American Princess, stylish haircut, heavy makeup, expensive outfits, Barbie(26), Mel’s sister, means well, but is superficial, too focused on appearances and not the sharpest tack in the box. A real estate agent, her focus is on being financially successful, marrying the “perfect” man and being popular.</p> <p>The youngest of three kids, Barbie likes to be the centre of attention and will do just about anything to get it. She has no idea how annoying she is. And she has a big heart, so it’s hard to stay mad at her.</p>

**MOOD and TONE:**

Comedy.  
The comedy is through dialogue *and* physical comedy.  
Highly stylized, exaggerated.  
Use of lighting, camera angles and shots, wardrobe and props will be stylized.  
My inspiration is the work of Woody Allen, The Wachowski Brothers (Bound), Norman Jewison (Moonstruck) and Wes Anderson (The Royal Tenenbaums).

**LOCATION /SETTING:**

A modest bedroom in a low-rise apartment building in east Vancouver.  
Mismatched furniture, though tasteful and neat and full of love.  
A guitar on a stand in the corner.  
Bookshelves stuffed with books, with some piled up on the floor.  
  
Double (or queen sized) bed, with nightstand on each side.  
Clock radio on nightstand.  
A cell phone on each nightstand.  
A box labeled "Home Pregnancy test" on one nightstand.  
  
Earth tones, accented with baby blue and pink, with hints of yellow.

**SEASON / WEATHER / TIME OF DAY:**

Sunday morning, a beautiful, sunny, summer day.

**VISUAL STYLES / IMAGES:**

Highly stylized, exaggerated.  
When we see Barbie in Mel's dream, she is in bright gaudy lighting, like in a shopping mall.  
Outside of the dream, Mel and Lyla's apartment is earth tones, accented with baby blue and pink, with a hint of yellow.  
Costumes are simple, but stylized.

Lighting and camera angles/shots will be stylized and exaggerated for comedy, though there will also be use of wide shots to let actors play out the comedy.

Mel's dream will be stylized—exaggerated acting, stylized shots.

### **SOUND / MUSIC INSPIRATIONS:**

Mel is a struggling folk/rock/indie singer/songwriter. I have original music, composed by a Vancouver composer, for the score, and the ringtone on Mel's cell will be an original song.

### **OTHER NOTES (props, wardrobe, special effects, etc.):**

The set is a bedroom with a window to the backyard. When Barbie tries to interrupt Mel and Lyla, she's in the backyard, looking in on them through the window. In the studio, there will be a false wall with a window for her to look in. Lighting will be for a sunny, summer day outside.

#### **Sound effects**

Sound of a heavy table being dragged across pavement from outside.

2 different cell phone ring tones.

An apartment intercom buzzer.

#### **Wardrobe**

**Mel:** White t-shirt, baby blue boxer shorts (men's).

**Lyla:** Lavender, lacy, silk nightgown (sexy).

**Barbie:** Tight, red dress, low cut to expose her cleavage, heavy makeup, perfect hair, high heels, lots of jewelry.

#### **Props**

Clock radio

Box labeled: ***Home Pregnancy Test***

Pregnancy pee stick

Crimson dress on a hanger

Chartreuse dress on a hanger

Several other dresses hanging in a closet

2 cell phones

Teddy bear with yellow bow

Bottle of champagne

**Special Effects**

I have some dolly shots in mind to convey Mel's state of mind when she wakes from her nightmare.

Window to "backyard", (as above.)