

BEING MARY JANE

"Don't Call It A Comeback"

Episode #306

Written by

Melora Rivera

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BEING MARY JANE
Episode #306
"Don't Call It A Comeback"
Final Revised 4/19/15

CAST LIST

MARY JANE PAUL.....GABRIELLE UNION

LOVE

CUTTY BUDDY.....THOMAS Q. JONES
GORGEOUS GUY.....JAMES LEE TAYLOR

FRIENDS

NICHELLE NICHOLAS.....BRELY EVANS
ROBIN.....KELLY ROWLAND
CARMEN.....TANIKA RAY
DIANE.....NINA PARKER

WORK

KARA LYNCH.....LISA VIDAL
MARK BRADLEY.....AARON D. SPEARS
GREG ROBERTS.....MICHAEL H. COLE
LANCE.....RYAN HOMCHICK
MARISOL ESPARZA.....DANIELLA ALONSO
STAGE MANAGER.....JENNIFER MALONE
JACOB.....CLIFTON GUTERMAN

MISCELLANEOUS

ANTONIO CASALES.....CARLOS GOMEZ
JASON BOLDEN.....HIMSELF
GOLDIE TAYLOR.....HERSELF
BARTENDER.....DIOR CHOI

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SET LIST

INTERIORS

MARY JANE'S HOUSE

BATHROOM

BEDROOM

CLOSET

ENTRY WAY

KITCHEN

LIVING ROOM

SNC OFFICES

BULLPEN

GREG'S OFFICE

KARA'S CUBICLE

MARK'S OFFICE

MARY JANE'S OFFICE

SNC STUDIOS

NEWS DESK

SET/WINGS

CLUB LUSH

BAR

LOUNGE AREA

MAIN ENTRANCE

MAIN ROOM

VIP ROOM

EXTERIORS

CLUB LUSH

VALET - NIGHT

ACT ONE

1 INT. CLUB LUSH - LOUNGE AREA - NIGHT (N1) 1

MARY JANE is surrounded by a bevy of her girlfriend colleagues -- ROBIN, CARMEN, DIANE and NICHELLE. They are tipsy and talking shit.

ROBIN

Girl, he would pretend like he was my assistant and pick up my cleaning. But all he wanted to do was pee on my underwear and leave them at my front door.

MARY JANE

Girl, that's worse than him kidnapping you and hitting you upside the head.

ROBIN

I know, right?

DIANE

Whoa, stalkers. A hazard of the business. We've all had them.

MARY JANE

He was white, wasn't he?

ROBIN

Yep.

MARY JANE

That's the only way they would have let him pick up your dry cleaning.

CARMEN

Plus, all the black stalkers like to talk about how you remind them of their Mama.

They all laugh.

1A *FLASH TO ROBIN REPORTING ABOUT ANOTHER TERRORIST ATTACK IN AFRICA.* 1A

CUT BACK TO:

2 INT. CLUB LUSH - LOUNGE AREA - LATER - NIGHT (N1) 2

The ladies are still at it.

MARY JANE

Girl, you know he's skinny. And they say those skinny brothers be packing.

ROBIN

Well, he does love the sisters, because when I interviewed him, I caught him looking.

DIANE

You did not. Don't lie on him.

NICHELLE

I will say I love his smoker lips and his walk. He walks more gangster than Putin.

They laugh and high-five.

MARY JANE

Yeah, as much as I would want to, I don't allow myself to even dream about it, because I love Michelle. That's our girl.

CARMEN

Well, let me go on record: if he puts me on Air Force One, I will have to slip on my Air Force Ones to make sure I got a good grip to handle all that good turbulence.

Everybody falls out laughing.

2A *FLASH TO CARMEN REPORTING ON HOW THE CURRENT DEMOCRATIC NOMINEE REALLY NEEDS TO EMBRACE PRESIDENT OBAMA. SHE REVIEWS HIS REPORT CARD AND HE'S GETTING AN "A."* 2A

CUT BACK TO:

3 INT. CLUB LUSH - LOUNGE AREA - LATER - NIGHT - (N1) 3

The ladies are now onto the topic of relationships.

CARMEN

No, no. Absolutely not. I'm not offering my side piece a pre-nup in order to just be married.

NICHELLE

Why not? Instead of chasing "pre-nups" perhaps we successful sisters need to be handing them out. We need to rethink how we've been going about this.

MARY JANE

Damn, are we here already -- doling out pre-nups in exchange for love? Can't a sister still want a man to fall in love with her and marry her for that?

NICHELLE

The institution of marriage is in constant flux -- we need to redefine it. That's all I'm saying.

ROBIN

I'm coming around to what she's saying.

MARY JANE

Cause you're drunk.

ROBIN

No, I'm not. I've been drinking my water.

Nichelle notices Mary Jane is distracted and looking around the club.

NICHELLE

Who are you looking for?

MARY JANE

I'm just looking, hall monitor. Robin, you were about to say something crazy.

ROBIN

Seriously though Mary Jane, even you said that you and your Cutty Buddy have a great relationship, very open and honest -- some of your best communication.

DIANE
(laughing)
That's because she doesn't want
him. It's real easy to be open and
honest and fun-loving when all you
want is that itch scratched.

Diane and Mary Jane high-five.

3A *FLASH TO DIANE REPORTING ON CONGRESS, THE STATE OF* 3A
EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES AND HOW WE ARE FAILING OUR
CHILDREN.

CUT BACK TO:

4 INT./EXT. CLUB LUSH - MAIN ENTRANCE - NIGHT (N1) 4
The ladies are walking out the club, their shoe game is nuts.

CARMEN
(to Mary Jane)
I like this place. You'll have to
help me get a membership.

MARY JANE
No problem. It's sexy, right?

ROBIN
It's a little low on melanin, but
hey.

DIANE
Speak for yourself.

ROBIN
I was.

They disappear into the crowd.

5 EXT. CLUB LUSH - VALET - A LITTLE LATER - NIGHT (N1) 5
The ladies wait for their respective cars and Ubers. Carmen,
already in hers and waving to her girls, drives off in her
whip. The ladies still waiting, wave back.

ROBIN
No, you shouldn't be paying for
that. What are you doing?

MARY JANE

Well, I didn't know to ask.

DIANE

My agent had to negotiate my hair.
They don't cover it all but I do
get an allowance.

ROBIN

Uh uh. You want this black girl to
look good on your air, you have to
pay for her hair to be sewn in,
curled up and smoothed out around
the edges. They choke every
quarter off that \$5000 invoice.

Robin's car pulls up.

ROBIN

That's me.

They ad-lib good byes as Diane and Robin load in her fly car.
As Mary Jane waits with Nichelle, the GORGEOUS GUY (from Ep.
305) pulls up to the valet booth.

NICHELLE

That was fun. I'm glad we got out.
(to Mary Jane)
Oh, don't forget, I have a stylist
coming over tomorrow. Great
connections with a lot of key
brands.

Mary Jane perks up at the Gorgeous Guy's devilish grin.
Nichelle doesn't see the exchange because she's fishing for
tip money out of her purse.

MARY JANE

Oh shoot, I forgot my coat.

NICHELLE

You didn't come in with a coat.

MARY JANE

Yes, I did.

NICHELLE

No, you didn't.

MARY JANE

No I mean, I left it last time,
they're holding it for me.

NICHELLE

Oh, I'll come back in with you.

MARY JANE

No, I'm good. You go. My Uber says he's five minutes away anyway.

NICHELLE

Well text me, let me know you got in safe.

MARY JANE

I'll be fine.

NICHELLE

Girl, text me and stop arguing.

6 INT. CLUB LUSH - MAIN ROOM - NIGHT (N1) 6

Mary Jane re-enters the club. She looks around and spots the Gorgeous Guy. He smiles, she coyly smiles back and walks toward the corner booths.

7 INT. CLUB LUSH - VIP ROOM - NIGHT (N1) 7

We find Mary Jane and the Gorgeous Guy kissing passionately... caught up in the lust, he slips his hand in her cleavage, releasing her breast from her wrap dress. Mary Jane instinctively covers herself, he gently removes her hand and lets her hang there for a minute, further turning her on... and he discreetly or not so discreetly nurses her right there... Mary Jane throws her head back in ecstasy.

We pan down to the table to see Mary Jane's phone light up, further illuminating them in the dark club. It's NICHELLE:
GIRL, YOU MAKE IT IN YET?

TO BLACK:

OVER BLACK, we read:

"Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving." - Albert Einstein

FADE IN:

8 INT. CLUB LUSH - VIP ROOM - NIGHT (N1) 8

Mary Jane and the Gorgeous Guy are sharing a small bite and finishing up a drink.

GORGEOUS GUY
You're beautiful.

MARY JANE
You tell me that a lot.

GORGEOUS GUY
Is that a problem?

MARY JANE
No.

GORGEOUS GUY
I want to come home with you.
(she gives him a look)
Or you could come home with me.

MARY JANE
I like what we do here.

He smiles at the cat and mouse.

GORGEOUS GUY
Well, when is the next time you
will be here?

His hands drop below the table and Mary Jane lurches forward.
She takes a while to answer, then finally:

MARY JANE
I don't know.

GORGEOUS GUY
At least tell me your name.

Delight registers on Mary Jane's face as she realizes the
Gorgeous Guy doesn't know who she is. She pulls his hand
back down below the table.

MARY JANE
Stop talking.

And as her hands slip below the table too, we...

Mary Jane enters and heads straight to her Nespresso. She
starts the machine. As she waits for her coffee to brew, she
giggles at the memory of last night.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

10 INT. MARY JANE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY (D2) 10

The doorbell rings. MARY JANE, in sweats, answers the door. JASON BOLDEN, an "I'm always over it" personal stylist, stands there with his ASSISTANT and a garment bag of clothes.

JASON BOLDEN

Good morning Ms. Paul, are you ready to shop?

Mary Jane brightens to a big smile.

MARY JANE

Like a pigeon likes to poop.

AZEALIA BANKS' "ICE PRINCESS" hits and underscores the serious damage Mary Jane is about to do.

11 INT. MARY JANE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY (D2) 11

We find Mary Jane looking at a garment bag of dresses, pulling out a few of her favorites. Jason directs his Assistant to organize row after row of form-fitting sheath dresses. Varying only vaguely in pattern or material.

JASON BOLDEN

We'll need to get you fitted through the end of the month.

Jason starts bringing dresses toward Mary Jane, hanging them next to her body for consideration.

JASON BOLDEN

Nicole Miller wants to see ten more looks. J. Crew owns Thursday nights and Milly is sponsoring three shows during sweeps. We'll fill the rest with DVF, RTW. You ready to get started?

MARY JANE

(playful)

You have to stop asking me stupid questions.

As she starts to disrobe and Jason helps to prepare her for the first dress, Mary Jane gets a text. It's from CUTTY BUDDY. It reads: **"I need some Mary Jane. She's my main thang."**

JASON BOLDEN
He is thirsty.

MARY JANE
You are nosy.

JASON BOLDEN
Well you got it on "grandma print."
Everybody can see your business.

She types: **"What? You need to talk?"**

JASON BOLDEN
Don't do that. This is clearly a
booty-call, who you being polite
for?

MARY JANE
You're right, don't send mixed
messages.

JASON BOLDEN
The only thing we're mixing this
season is stripes because I called
that. Otherwise, tell him to come
over when it's late enough that
you're not obligated to feed him,
but not too late that you're
yawning... because don't nobody
leave their house for a lazy lay.

Mary Jane holds her hand up and Jason taps it. Then Mary
Jane erases her first text and re-types: **"Come over at 11."**

In the background we find Mary Jane finishing the telecast
with a feel-good fluff piece.

MARY JANE
And while the local shelter has not
yet said whether the animal will be
put up for adoption, there is
already a Facebook account set up
for interested families. The dog
worked his way into many Americans'
hearts after we first reported the
story of this unlikely hero.

(MORE)

MARY JANE (CONT'D)

Though no one in the community recalls seeing the dog before, the popular pup's getting a lot of love now after saving a young boy from drowning. He was even given an honorary medal for his courage.

(ad-lib)

Something tells me with credits like that, he won't have any trouble finding a loving home now. Thank you for watching, and I hope to see you tomorrow. For SNC, I'm Mary Jane Paul. Good night.

As the stage clears out, Mary Jane steps down from the newsdesk. She smiles in GREG'S direction, who has been watching from the wings. He barely manages a nod back before turning to leave. Kara catches up with Mary Jane.

KARA

Excellent show tonight. That dress might be my favorite this week.

MARY JANE

Oh, not the dog stories?

KARA

It's cute, what can I say? Even I have a dog. Trust me, it's a demo.

(then)

Hey, want to stay and go over some upcoming shows?

Mary Jane gives her the smile you give when you don't want to flat out say no.

KARA

Come on.

MARY JANE

I like where you're going with the show.

KARA

What about your voice?

MARY JANE

They hear it every night.

KARA

Are you copping out?

MARY JANE

I didn't write the dog story.

KARA

Oh wow.

(then)

I told you the network got some new sponsors. Look --

MARY JANE

No, you look. I'm just staying in my lane. Enjoying the fact that we don't fight anymore. Enjoying the perks when you go with the flow. Yeah, I get a clothing allowance, but now that I play nice, all of a sudden SNC pays for a stylist.

Mary Jane focuses on her cell phone.

KARA

Where are you going? Please tell me nowhere fun. I saw pictures on Gawker of you and the anchor-ettes out the other night. Guess you forgot to call me.

MARY JANE

Maybe because I kind of know the answer.

KARA

Where did my life go?

MARY JANE

To Prime Time.

(chuckles)

I'm sure the stories are fine. Go home.

KARA

Yeah...

MARY JANE

See you tomorrow.

OFF Kara, left staring at Mary Jane's back.

13 INT. SNC OFFICES - KARA'S CUBICLE - NIGHT (N2) 13

Kara is one of the only people still working at this hour. Alone at her desk, she stares at the rundown for the following night's show when suddenly, out of nowhere she SCREAMS. A gut wrenching scream of frustration. The CLEANING STAFF don't bother to react as they move around her.

14 INT. MARY JANE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT (N2) 14

Her scream cross fades with Mary Jane's. QUICK CUTS as Mary Jane and CUTTY BUDDY are engaged in some hot and heavy, life-distracting sex. Cutty Buddy's hands on her, and hers on him. Her closed eyes reveal how close she is, as she mutters...

MARY JANE
YES. Almost... Almos --

SWEAT gleans off his chest as his breathing gets HEAVY and then FASTER until they both FLOP onto the bed in ecstasy. Mary Jane laughs as Cutty Buddy tries to catch his breath.

MARY JANE
You okay over there?

CUTTY BUDDY
Just get me a towel... Please.

Mary Jane smirks to herself at a job well done as she crosses off to the...

15 BATHROOM 15

She grabs a hand towel and runs the water until it's warm.

MARY JANE
You had some things to work out.
Do you need to talk? I have thirty
minutes to listen...

She laughs as she gives herself the once over in the mirror before crossing back into the...

16 BEDROOM 16

Mary Jane turns the corner, pleased with herself, hot towel in hand.

MARY JANE
I'm just playing. Seriously, you
seem stressed so if you need to --

Approaching the bed, Mary Jane finally looks up. HORRIFIED,
she finds Cutty Buddy CONVULSING uncontrollably atop the bed.
Initially panicked, she FREEZES.

MARY JANE
Brandon? BRANDON?!!!

When he doesn't respond, she moves closer. She tries to meet
his eyes but they roll back, unfocused. Jumping into action,
she cradles his head in her lap, trying to stabilize him.
Concern growing, she thinks quickly, remembering something
she once read. She forces a nearby BOOK into his mouth and
prays that he doesn't choke, or worse.

JUMP CUT TO:

MARY JANE (PRELAP)
If it wasn't so scary, I'd be proud
of myself. I mean, I basically
screwed a seizure out of him.

17 INT. SNC OFFICES - KARA'S CUBICLE - DAY (D3) 17

A fresh-faced Mary Jane is mid-self realization, sitting on
the edge of Kara's desk.

MARY JANE
That's the downside to having a
powerful nana, I guess.

KARA
Maybe he's epileptic, MJ.

Mary Jane looks around and then leans in.

MARY JANE
Shhh -- don't say that in a room
full of reporters. He's still
trying to make an NFL team.

KARA
Are you getting rid of him or
protecting your man? I'm unclear.

MARY JANE
He's not my man. I can't take on
his issues. I mean I have a mom...
Look, I just... I'm not...

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17 CONTINUED: 17

In the background an energy begins to spread across the newsroom and Mary Jane's phone lights up with an alert. Seconds later, Kara's does as well. Clicking into a link, Mary Jane gasps as Kara too, checks her Blackberry.

MARY JANE

Oh no!

KARA

Is that Mark?!

Off a look of panic, Mary Jane rushes through the bullpen past the growing whispers of her COLLEAGUES.

18 INT. SNC OFFICES - MARK'S OFFICE - DAY (D3) 18

(PLEASE NOTE THAT DIALOGUE FROM THE OMITTED SCENE 19 HAS BEEN MOVED INTO THIS SCENE).

We're close on a LAPTOP, revealing the attention-grabbing headline and accompanying photo that are quickly spreading all over the Internet: **"MARK BRADLEY'S DOMESTIC AFFAIR: CAUGHT WITH BOY-TOY."**

MARY JANE

Oh my God -- are you okay?

We now see MARK. He's pale and sick from his living horror.

MARK

No. My blurred-out penis is breaking the internet.

A beat of awkwardness, then:

MARY JANE

Is he really a *boy*, Mark?

Mark shoots her a look.

MARY JANE

What? I have to ask.

MARK

We had the conversation about twinkles remember? He's of age. I'm obviously stupid but I'm not crazy.

MARY JANE

I thought you said the club was a safe place.

MARK

It is. I was the sloppy one.
Kissing in the parking lot like a
school girl.

MARY JANE

(scanning her phone)
Uhh, this one suggests a little bit
more.

MARK

Oh my God, I can't believe this is
happening!

A beat, then:

MARY JANE

Can I bring up the bright side?

He cuts her a look. She presses on anyway.

MARY JANE

You're well endowed and will be
forgiven for your transgressions.

(then)

Come on, it's not that bad, Mark.
Tumblr, the internet and Marv
Albert has conditioned us to
everything and far worse.

MARK

Worse than this?

Mark turns his computer screen to reveal that a simple GOOGLE
SEARCH of his name now results in a collection of salacious
photos and headlines.

MARY JANE

Maybe it will just blow over.
Passing gossip. I mean, just look
at Laverne Cox!

MARK

What the hell does she have to do
with me? Laverne Cox is a
transgender actress.

MARY JANE

Yes. And she's helped to normalize
it.

MARK

Excuse me?

MARY JANE

I just mean, she's been on the View and the cover of Time Magazine, Ebony... Gay's the new Black. Why not just embrace it?

MARK

I don't know what's the most offensive part of what you just said. Thinking Laverne Cox is comparative to me in any way, or that gayness is trendy.

MARY JANE

But it kind of is! I'm merely suggesting that it's not as big of a deal anymore. Hell, it may give you more of an edge. I'm just saying everyone knows someone. So you shouldn't be embarrassed or ashamed... Hey, so what, it's blog news not real news.

MARK

Gossip and public opinion is more powerful than the truth nowadays. Come on Mary Jane, even we check TMZ and Twitter before the New York Times. Every morning.

Mary Jane opens her mouth to rebut, then realizes she has nothing and shuts it again. A knock on the door saves her. LANCE pops his head in.

LANCE

Hey Mark, Greg's asking for you.

Mary Jane and Mark share a look of concern. On this, we:

19 OMITTED 19

20 INT. SNC OFFICES - GREG'S OFFICE - DAY (D3) 20

Mark sits across from Greg and JACOB, the VP of Marketing; awkwardness palpable. Finally, Greg sighs then speaks --

GREG

Mark, we respect you for keeping your private life from ever interfering with your work.

(MORE)

GREG (CONT'D)

And our understanding is that these photographs were published without your approval so our legal team is doing everything we can to get the images removed. It doesn't appear that you've done anything wrong, but you should know the information's already out there and it will be hard to fight that. The good news is the public seems to be responding with support and sympathy for you. And we want to offer you more of the same.

Mark is shocked.

MARK

Well, umm... Thank you?

GREG

We're thinking this could be a great opportunity. We can help each other through this. Win-win. Tell him Jacob.

Jacob, ever the ladder-climber, jumps in.

JACOB

Mr. Bradley, Jacob, VP of Marketing. We've been looking at the data and if support stays this strong through the end of the day we're thinking a three-day promotional campaign for your official comments and on-air coming out. This will put you in a great position to start next week strong. From there we'll introduce the audience to a new segment within your show where we'll hand pick lifestyle pieces that bridge LGBTG issues and foreign policy.

MARK

You want to build a bridge?

Jacob throws Greg a look, unsure if he should continue.

GREG

We want you to win, Mark. With gay-marriage still such a hot button issue, we can use you more during the election coverage.

(MORE)

GREG (CONT'D)

Broaden your audience, the scope of
your newscast, your salary...

Frustration builds as Greg goes on with their plans. Mark goes numb, blocking out the sound of Greg's voice. Having heard enough of their ideas he finally jumps in.

MARK

I cover foreign policy. I'm not interested in becoming the FACE of gay politics. I just want to do my international series as planned and my show.

Tension lingers as Jacob turns to Greg for guidance.

GREG

You must know that with this news coming out, we can't risk sending you overseas.

MARK

What are you talking about? We have an approved series that requires me to be on the ground in Syria and Nigeria -- I've been preparing for weeks.

GREG

They're kidnapping and killing journalists left and right, Mark. The last thing we need to do is send a recently outted reporter into the middle of hostile territory.

Stunned, Mark tries to plead his case.

MARK

So I'll get a body guard. I'll pay for it. Hell, I'll pay for additional insurance for myself, the crew and our equi --

GREG

Mark, this isn't a debate. Sending you under these new conditions is not an option. It's off the table. SNC's call.

Mark takes a moment before finding his gumption.

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20 CONTINUED: 20

MARK

Unless we have a meaningful
discussion about my international
coverage and expansion within this
company, then I quit. My call.

Off their stunned faces, Mark turns to exit. As he rounds
the corner his pride quickly shifts to worry, but he keeps
walking and doesn't dare look back.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

21 INT. SNC STUDIOS - NEWSDESK - NIGHT (N3)

21

Picture-perfect in another SNC-approved sheath dress, Mary Jane cruises through her Prime Time interview with ANTONIO CASALES (Ep #302), reading straight from the teleprompter. GOLDIE TAYLOR, journalist and commentator, is there as well and clearly miffed about something.

MARY JANE

And you say that policies like Bill AB60 and Immigration Reform have caused those estimates to rise even further?

ANTONIO

Yes exactly, well, indirectly. California now joins nine other states, Puerto Rico, and D.C. in opening the application process to any resident, regardless of legal status. The facts are that a driver's license or new legal status for immigrants won't make them eligible to vote overnight, but the logic follows that it can win over support. Over 24 million Hispanics are eligible to vote in this country, and with large populations in Florida, Texas and California, initiatives like this could be a big factor, particularly in swing states. In Florida alone we've seen the majority of Hispanics swing from being registered Republicans to Democrats in under a decade.

GOLDIE TAYLOR

But let's be careful not to overstate it. Providing driver's licenses to immigrants may protect them from a few roadway fines but it's not a valid form of federal identification. We need to be honest in our assessment of how much good this really does anyone other than the government, busy raking in fees for processing and renewals and insurance...

(MORE)

GOLDIE TAYLOR (CONT'D)

It's more a distraction from the real issues than anything. Can we talk about redistricting? Or about how even if you have the proper ID, states have found ways to target lower and middle class voters. Like North Carolina, who reduced their early voting days from 17 to 10. You can't convince me that these laws are about reducing voter fraud.

MARY JANE

But I want to go back to what Antonio was saying, because flaws and all, the GOP hasn't given up in trying to win over part of the Hispanic contingency, right?

ANTONIO

Oh, not at all. Former Puerto Rican Governor Luis G. Fortuno is a member of the Republican National Committee and he's been leading the charge in steering the conversation away from immigration reform. Instead, he encourages candidates to focus on job creation and smaller government, issues that matter to Hispanic-American voters.

GOLDIE TAYLOR

(chuckles to herself)

Trading one distraction for another.

ANTONIO

Well, yes maybe. It will take some time for the Latino voters to harness the power of their numbers, but there's power there nevertheless.

GOLDIE TAYLOR

Just like the Black vote, it will first be used as a political football before being able to wield any significant power. You present the choice as having them fight over you or ignore you, but neither is going to bring about change.

MARY JANE
Bueno. Fair enough.
(back to camera)
My thanks to Antonio Casales,
Goldie Taylor, and to you, the
viewers. Don't forget to register
to vote, the deadline is quickly
approaching. I hope to see you
again tomorrow. From SNC, I'm Mary
Jane Paul. Good night.

STAGE MANAGER
And... we're clear. Thanks
everyone, great show.

Mary Jane pulls her ear piece out and shakes Antonio's hand.

GOLDIE TAYLOR
What happened? I thought we were
going to get into it, like we used
to on TalkBACK.

MARY JANE
Welcome to Prime Time, Goldie.

GOLDIE TAYLOR
(aware others are around)
I get you, sis. But we still need
you, sis.

All the unspoken is spoken.

22 INT. SNC OFFICES - BULLPEN/MARY JANE'S OFFICE - NIGHT (N3) 22

Mary Jane walks and texts as she steps into her... OFFICE.

Mark: "Can we meet at your house?"

Mary Jane: "Packing up... see you soon."

Greg enters as Mary Jane begins to pack her things. He looks exhausted and takes a seat even before being asked.

GREG
Mark quit. Did you hear?

Mary Jane, blind-sided by the news, absorbs that punch in the gut but covers for her friend in case he was tripping.

MARY JANE
I'm sure he just said that in the
heat of the moment.
(MORE)

MARY JANE (CONT'D)

He loves this Network, and I know
he loves his job.

GREG

Well, he certainly gave me a
different impression in our
meeting. Look, I just want to help
him. Help me, help him.

MARY JANE

I haven't talked to Mark yet. I
didn't know.

GREG

But you will, and when you do will
you please make sure he knows how
much SNC wants him. Needs him.
Seriously, we can't afford to lose
him. With you moving from
TalkBACK, he's the strongest
daytime show we have.

MARY JANE

Wow. You're really fighting for
him.

GREG

Not as hard as I fought for you.

Mary Jane swallows her pride, realizing this is her
opportunity.

MARY JANE

Maybe I misjudged the situation.
Honestly, I didn't know you had my
back. You're not exactly warm and
fuzzy, Greg.

GREG

Is this supposed to be an apology?

MARY JANE

Isn't that what I said?
(off Greg, not amused)
Okay, okay. Point taken.

Mary Jane stands, crossing to close the door.

MARY JANE

I'm sorry, Greg.

GREG

Thank you.

Long beat, almost uncomfortable, then Greg laughs.

GREG
That took a lot out of you.

It makes Mary Jane laugh a little.

MARY JANE
I was wrong to assume you were
my...

Greg waves her off to stop searching for the right word.
Mary Jane is relieved.

GREG
Baby steps. Look, you're a tough
woman Mary Jane and I never
underestimate that. I count on you
to win and don't expect you to need
a pat on the back every step of the
way. I have enough hand-holding to
do around here. You're the face of
the Network now, with all the good
and pressure that comes with it.
Embrace it.

Having both said their peace, Greg turns to exit. Mary Jane
stops him with a sincere...

MARY JANE
Thank you.

GREG
(smiles)
See, white guys aren't so bad after
all.

She laughs at the irony of that. He exits. She grabs the
rest of her things and exits to...

Very few people are in the office. We spot Kara taking her
Ramen Noodles out of the microwave. She exits the break room
with her noodles. She carefully walks and blows on the hot
noodles she can't wait to eat as she heads back to her desk.

As she passes through the Bullpen area, she notices MARISOL
at her desk. It's that awkward moment where you know if you
don't say anything, you're rude. And just as Kara keeps
walking and we think she's going to be rude, she asks --

KARA

What are you still doing here?
Kind of late for you isn't it?

MARISOL

Following up on some story leads.
They haven't found a place for me
yet so I'm just making sure they
see my effort. Stay in the mix,
you know? Be seen.

KARA

Go home. No brownie points here
when there is nothing for you to
do.

MARISOL

You're still here.

KARA

Because I'm needed.

MARISOL

What do you have against me? I've
done nothing to you.

KARA

No, but you hurt us all coming
through your quota program.

Marisol reacts shocked as Kara mimics her.

KARA

Yeah, I heard Antonio begged for
you to get the job. That's not a
win -- that sets us back.

MARISOL

How?

KARA

You and Antonio -- you see he made
sure he got some air time, too.
Yeah, well, you're both there
because of a threat. Not because
you were qualified.

MARISOL

Perhaps we are qualified, we just
don't get the opportunities. Are
you sure you didn't get your job
because of a quota?

(giving Kara pause)

(MORE)

MARISOL (CONT'D)

Because the word on the street
about you -- is that you're...

(air quotes her)

"successful" because you're the
"pretty decent" producer they get
for cheap. Is that progress? You
working like a dog -- up here for
fourteen plus hours a day for sixty-
five percent of the pay?

That truth hurts Kara like a motherfucker, but she can't show
it. In fact, when attacked, she fights harder.

KARA

Oh, you mean work like a Mexican?
No, I was raised not to sell
myself so cheap.

Kara drops her proverbial knife and walks back to her desk,
slurping on her Ramen noodles, leaving Marisol to fume.

24 INT. MARY JANE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (N3) 24

Mid-conversation, Mary Jane tries to convince Mark to take a
step back as he stress eats a tray of healthy snacks. An
empty bottle of wine rests on the coffee table.

MARY JANE

You're trying to win, but you don't
win anything by quitting. You're
just reacting and that's exactly
what they want you to do.
Overreact.

MARK

They don't want to send me overseas
anymore. Instead they want to
revamp my show. Again.

Having eaten all the crackers, Mark crosses to the kitchen.

MARK (O.S.)

Only this time we'll make it more
gay. Whatever the hell that means.

MARY JANE

I think you have to consider it. I
did the whole Black agenda thing
and it helped me. It was a means
to an end at least.

With a new stack of crackers, Mark returns, mouth full.

MARK

But that's not even what they're offering me, MJ. I would love to do the whole all-Black thing, but race and sexuality are not the same thing. You can see I'm Black before I say a word, but the moment I start talking about all the gay stories and gay issues then no one's listening to me anymore. They're just thinking about my ass.

MARY JANE

You wish!

She laughs all by herself. When her eyes meet his, she faces a serious stare.

MARK

I'm baring my soul to you -- telling you how the career I carefully designed for myself has now been squandered because I was caught kissing another man -- and you make a joke? My sexuality being exposed is now a punch line?

MARY JANE

Okay I hear you, but why do you have to go over there right now? You're talking about going to a notoriously homophobic part of the world on the heels of coming out.

MARK

No, on the heels of being outed.

Mark crosses off again... this time returning with the whole damn box.

MARY JANE

I'm just worried about your safety.

MARK

I'm not safe in a hoodie walking down the streets or college campus in AnyTown, USA.

MARY JANE

That's true... but even brothers ain't messing around with Boko Haram.

(MORE)

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24 CONTINUED: 24

MARY JANE (CONT'D)
So don't just break out your
helicopter and flak jacket just
yet, ok?

The two share a laugh.

MARY JANE
Just go talk to Greg. Ok?

MARK
Ok.

On these two friends toasting to that, we:

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

25-26 OMITTED 25-26

27 INT. MARY JANE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT (N3) 27

Mary Jane is passed out, unmoved as *The Godfather Part II* credits roll across her TV in the distance. Her buzzing cell phone stirs her awake. It's a text from Cutty Buddy. Again: **"Morning rendezvous?"**

Mary Jane rolls over in frustration and accidentally types a few random characters. She deletes them, but it's too late. Cutty Buddy texts her again: **"I saw that. Stop ignoring me."** Caught, Mary Jane gives in. Trying to seem casual, she texts back: **"I've got a ton to do before work, how about after?"** Once Cutty agrees, Mary Jane rolls back over, content to snooze as *The Godfather Part III* begins.

28 INT. MARY JANE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT (N3) 28

CU of Mary Jane on a TV SCREEN. In the corner we see the words *PREVIOUSLY RECORDED* as her muted face delivers the night's news.

We pull back to find Mary Jane and Cutty Buddy awkwardly trying to find the heat.

He kisses her neck and she tries her best to enjoy it. But his touch is only a reminder of before.

MARY JANE

Umm... Yeah, no. I can't. I'm sorry.

The two of them sit up and just sit there. The heat is gone.

MARY JANE (V.O.)

Look, we have to talk about the elephant in the room.

CUTTY BUDDY (V.O.)

I was hoping we could just pretend that didn't happen.

He gets dressed. She watches him, never stopping him.

MARY JANE (V.O.)

You can't play around with seizures, Brandon.

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28 CONTINUED: 28

CUTTY BUDDY (V.O.)
All I have is football.

29 INT. MARY JANE'S HOUSE - ENTRY WAY - NIGHT (N3) 29

Mary Jane walks him to the door.

MARY JANE (V.O.)
You can always go back to school.

CUTTY BUDDY (V.O.)
That's what people say who have
never played professionally.

Before she closes the door.

MARY JANE
Text me when you get home. Let me
know you made it.

CUTTY BUDDY
Cool.

And with a kiss to her forehead, like their future, he
disappears into the night.

MARY JANE (PRELAP)
I can't be with him anymore. What
if he dies on me next time?

30 INT. MARY JANE'S HOUSE - CLOSET - NIGHT (N4) 30

Nichelle is there inspecting the outfits that Jason pulled
together for Mary Jane. Nichelle is impressed. Mary Jane
eats snacks.

MARY JANE
I mean, I like him but I'm not that
invested. I don't want to bury
anyone else... it's time to live.
I can't take on his issues, his
life...

NICHELLE
(re: looks)
Jason did good work.

MARY JANE
Yeah. I like him. And it's nice
to get some perks.

They high-five.

NICHELLE
(back to Cutty-Buddy)
Look, if you're looking for
permission to dump him, you have
it.

MARY JANE
(more to herself than
Nichelle)
It's like I know too much about him
now. The mystery is GONE.

NICHELLE (PRELAP)
Then move on! And you don't have
to get dramatic to make excuses for
why you want to keep having sex
with that white boy you found in
the club.

31 INT. MARY JANE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (N4) 31

They are now chilling, further discussing some girl things.

MARY JANE
(laughing)
It's not that I'm embarrassed by
him, it's just different.

NICHELLE
It's 2016, Mary Jane.

MARY JANE
Okay, well it's still new for me.
Have you ever had a white boy?

NICHELLE
Yes.

MARY JANE
When?!

NICHELLE
It was during an experimental
phase, okay? I never had reason to
venture back.

MARY JANE
Okay.
(sips tea)
(MORE)

MARY JANE (CONT'D)

For the record I haven't had sex with him yet. I just let him feel me up.

NICHELLE

Girl, why not?

MARY JANE

Because I already had sex with Cutty this week and if I let this other one do more than feel me up, that would make me a ho.

NICHELLE

Not at all.

MARY JANE

Okay, so what's the "ho threshold?" Tell me, how much sex, blow jobs and feel me ups until I'm officially a ho?

NICHELLE

That's the thing everyone's math is different because our judgements are different.

MARY JANE

Be queen for a day and make an international ho law.

NICHELLE

Well... if your partner count is still in the single digits, you're practically a virgin.

MARY JANE

Okay, so I'm definitely not a virgin... Continue.

They both laugh.

NICHELLE

Hmmm, and I would think that about three sucks equals one smash.

MARY JANE

So a woman who gives head to twelve guys is no more a whore than the woman who sleeps with four different men?

NICHELLE

More or less.

MARY JANE

Well, I'm very judicious about who gets it all, but I've given my fair share of blow jobs. I like them.

NICHELLE

Then claim it! Proudly.

MARY JANE

I just did -- to you. I'm not going to Instagram it.

NICHELLE

But you should certainly live it -- if that's what you want to do and you're good at it! You're not married, so why not? Hell, the longer we stay single and we want to have sex, someone's calling us a ho anyway.

They both break out into a chuckle.

MARY JANE

I do like sex.

NICHELLE

Me too! That's why you called me over here, so I can validate all your ratchetness.

MARY JANE

Guilty.

(then)

Yeah, you're right -- single can be tricky sometimes. You give it a try, you date him, you like him, and finally after debating if you've waited long enough, you have sex with him and then "ehhh."

NICHELLE

Or like me, you skip the over-thinking, go straight to having sex with him, he blows your mind, you think that's a sign and try to turn it to love but then he treats you like "ehhh."

They laugh again, then:

MARY JANE

Hey, I just thought about something
-- shouldn't we get to reset our ho
button if we hit 35 and haven't
been married yet?

NICHELLE

I like where you're going with
that, even the playing field.
Because I know so many hos out
there who got to hit the reset
button after someone publicly
claimed their butt. They pop out a
baby and act like they've been born-
again.

MARY JANE

So Queen of International Ho Law,
if you got to reset at 35 would you
still be a ho?

NICHELLE

(does the math)
Completely!

They crack up laughing. It's nice to see Mary Jane having
some fun in her life.

MARY JANE (V.O.)

I missed you. Thanks for coming to
check on me.

NICHELLE (V.O.)

Just take advantage of the fact
that everyone thinks black women
can't do anything right, so I say
just be wrong.

On these two friends having the last laugh, we:

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

32 INT. SNC STUDIOS - NEWS DESK - DAY (D5)

32

Mark sits on set. He looks lonely even though there are two crew folks wrapping up the day. They wave good bye -- he offers a genuine wave to a good day of work.

MARK (V.O.)

We're in the middle of a very dangerous and powerful moment. The mounting intolerance towards Muslims only perpetuates radicalism. And this rhetoric about the Islamization of the West is what we agreed needed a fresh voice. From ISIS to ISIL, Boko Haram and Al Qaeda, people don't know the difference. For most folk, they're all just Islamic extremists. We're supposed to be dedicated to informing the public and this series is a key part of doing that.

GREG (V.O.)

Mark, I can't.

MARK (V.O.)

If I get killed over there it will be good for ratings, right?

MARY JANE (PRELAP)

Don't say those things. It's bad energy.

33 INT. MARY JANE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT (N5)

33

Mary Jane is cooking spaghetti as Mark works his way around her kitchen. Mark is there drinking wine.

MARK

Point is, he said no. Plain and simple. They're not willing to take on the liability.

MARY JANE

There wasn't even a counter?

MARK

Well, they offered to send me to Cleveland for the Republican National Convention instead.

MARY JANE

I don't think there are very many Muslims or terrorists in Cleveland.

MARK

You never know, but my dignity costs more than they can afford. I'm not a ratings ploy. I used to be excited to go to work, finding a way to inform an audience on the world issues no one else covers. Getting kids excited about maps.

MARY JANE

No one gets excited about maps.

MARK

(chuckles; then)
I'm going to hire my own crew and do it. There are plenty of journalists over there doing things independently --

MARY JANE

Whoa-whoa, what are you saying?

MARK

I'm saying, I'm going to hire my own crew and fly to Nigeria. We'll probably start in Lagos and then move inland from there.

MARY JANE

Wait a minute. So you're just going to leave? For Africa?

MARK

I have nothing tying me down here.
(beat, then)
Yo, high-five me. Encourage me.

MARY JANE

I'm not so sure trying to save the world is worth it anymore. Isn't it time for us to live a little and stop fighting so much, leave it to the next crop of journalists?

MARK

Come on, MJ. What's up with you? A few weeks ago, you'd have been ready to riot with me. Don't tell me they got to you already? I know you're Prime Time now, but you know better than anyone they're not letting us be real journalists. We're puppets, Mary Jane.

MARY JANE

Well paid puppets.

MARK

We're talking heads delivering whatever message they've got sponsored for the week. We're interchangeable based on popularity. For God's sake we're more mid-level celebs than respected journalists.

MARY JANE

So what if I am!? I may be a B-list celebrity, but I love it! I do. I'm tired okay?! People don't want to hear the truth anymore so what does it even matter? I worked so hard on TalkBACK and for what? The audience is half-asleep and I'm exhausted. Why fight a losing battle? Since I moved to Prime Time, I stress less and I sleep more. I'm ready to enjoy the perks, the accolades and people catering to ME for once. God, don't we deserve it by now?

MARK

Not at the cost of maps.

MARY JANE

I may have sold out, but I'm finally getting what I want, Mark.

Beat.

MARK

Well, Mary Jane, maybe that's the difference between you and me. I'm not willing to sell out or give up.

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33 CONTINUED: 33

OFF the two of them, finding themselves at a crossroads.

MARY JANE (PRELAP)
I think I'll have this glass of
wine somewhere else.

34 INT. CLUB LUSH - BAR - NIGHT (N5) 34

Mary Jane sits at the bar. The BARTENDER approaches.

BARTENDER
Welcome back.

MARY JANE
I'll have a medium body Pinot Noir.
Whatever you suggest.

BARTENDER
Of course. Your membership card
please. And as a reminder, there
is no use of cell phones or
photography.

MARY JANE
Of course.

She hands it over and as she does, she sees the GORGEOUS GUY.
They smile at each other. He walks over, sits next to her,
lays out his membership card for the Bartender to take.
Bartender hands her card back to her.

GORGEOUS GUY
Great show last night.

Her smile falls as she rolls her eyes and shakes her head.

GORGEOUS GUY
What?

MARY JANE
Why did you do that?

GORGEOUS GUY
I wanted to know.

MARY JANE
Well you ruined it.

GORGEOUS GUY
Maybe. We'll see.

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34 CONTINUED: 34

Mary Jane looks at the Gorgeous Guy as he looks away confidently. He just added mystery back in. He looks at her and flashes a devilish smile. It's as if they are meeting for the first time. And on this, we...

FADE TO BLACK:

END OF SHOW

*

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