

THE BACKROOM

"Pilot"

Written by

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**COLD OPEN**

**EXT. MAPLE BRAN DEPOT - DAY**

OPEN ON ELIZA MILBURN (40) who's seated in her 1989 Geo Metro. She stares intently at a large garage door through her windshield, tapping her fingers expectantly on the steering wheel.

After a moment, a large group of bread delivery trucks drive past her, and the camera pulls out to reveal she's parked outside a giant bread depot in Utah County: MAPLE BRAN.

One by one, as if perfectly choreographed, the trucks pull into each garage to dock for the day.

Eliza ecstatically hops out of her car, drops her keys, flounders to pick them up, then Indiana Joneses under the last open garage before it closes.

**INT. MAPLE BRAN DEPOT - LOADING DOCKS - CONTINUOUS**

Eliza tries to make small talk with the ROUTE DRIVERS as they exit their trucks.

ELIZA

Dale! How's it going, my dude?  
You're looking fit! That new  
workout routine is paying off!

(beat)

Lance, is that a new hat? As a self-  
certified hat guru, I can  
confidently say that's a great hat.

(another beat)

Jeff, I didn't notice the new  
tattoo before. Is that for your  
mom?

(realizing, awkward)

Or... of your mom? I'm sure she'll  
appreciate the thought.

None of the drivers respond to Eliza's desperate attempt for conversation. They either ignore her or walk away.

DON, one of the route drivers, approaches her.

DON

Hey Eliza! Happy as usual I see.

Eliza smiles widely.

ELIZA

How can I *not* be happy? Every day,  
I get to come to my favorite place  
and do my favorite thing with my  
favorite people!

She gestures towards the route drivers, but they've all  
cleared the area.

DON

Yeah, job's not bad. We could be  
doing worse things for a living.

ELIZA

So tell me, what'd you see out  
there today?

DON

A lot of the usual. Nothing much to  
report.

ELIZA

But you know I live for your  
reports, Don. Please?

DON

(sighing)

Some kids vandalized a couple of  
the hot dog displays with pictures  
of wieners.

ELIZA

Dogs?

DON

No...

ELIZA

Oh.

(beat, still excited)

Wow. You're really living the  
dream. Maybe one day I'll get my  
shot at route driver.

DON

(chuckling)

If you really want it, your time  
will come. For now, keep up the  
good work as a merchandiser. We  
really need you out there.

Eliza salutes Don before heading toward the depot's backroom.

**INT. MAPLE BRAN DEPOT - BACKROOM - CONTINUOUS**

In the backroom, most of the route drivers (about 7 guys) sit side-by-side at a large makeshift desk. Each is entering in bread orders into handheld computers.

Eliza enters and tries to make more small talk with DALE.

ELIZA

Hey, Dale! Not sure if you heard me out there, but your workout routine is, well, really working out!

DALE

(short)

Yeah, I heard, just didn't care to respond.

ELIZA

(accepting)

Yeah, that makes sense. Sometimes I think it also might be my voice, you know?

(yells)

Like I might not be projecting enough!

Dale covers his ears.

DALE

Eliza, stop! I can hear you just fine!

ELIZA

That's great because I wanted to let you know the Honey Wheat loaves are flying off the shelves. Isn't that awesome?

DALE

So?

ELIZA

Sooo... maybe you could order more, that way you'll sell more.

DALE

(dryly)

Thanks for the hot tip. I'll try to remember that.

Eliza stares at the handheld computer in Dale's hand.

ELIZA

You could... do it right now. I see the order open on your screen.

CLOSE UP on the screen with the order open.

Dale stares at the screen, doing nothing. Eliza anxiously clasps her hands together, but after a beat, decides it's a lost cause.

ELIZA (CONT'D)

Well, nice talking to you, Dale, but the life of a merchandiser is never dull. See ya!

She exits, and Dale looks at the driver, KENT, next to him.

DALE

(mocking Eliza)

"Hey, can you order more of this bread so I can marry it?"

Dale exits out of the order screen.

**INT. MAPLE BRAN DEPOT - OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

Eliza heads into the boss' office. SCOTT sits at his desk, not looking up from his phone as he texts furiously.

ELIZA

Scott, sir! Just wanted to swing by, let you know I'm starting my shift.

Scott doesn't glance up.

SCOTT

(bored)

That sounds good.

ELIZA

Still no open route driver positions, I gather? If there were, I'd be the first to know, right?

Scott is clearly not listening as he continues to text.

SCOTT

(same inflection as before)

That sounds good.

ELIZA

(beat)

Okay, I can see you're very busy.  
I'll get out of your hair. Have a  
great day, Scott!

SCOTT

That sounds good.

**INT. ELIZA'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER**

She gets into her car and immediately blasts the radio. We hear Christian Heavy Metal music pour out of the speakers as she pulls out of the parking lot.

**EXT. SPANISH FORK STREETS - CONTINUOUS**

She drives down the main drag of Spanish Fork, Utah, where small shops and homes line the street. She headbangs for no more than 30 seconds until--

**EXT. CASEY'S GROCERY STORE - CONTINUOUS**

--she pulls into a large grocery store parking lot.

**END OF COLD OPEN**

ACT ONE**INT. CASEY'S GROCERY STORE - DAY**

Eliza walks through the grocery store's front doors and passes by a COUPLE debating over what baked goods to take home.

MAN

Honey, you *know* I hate banana bread. Why can't we get a bread that I like?

WOMAN

Banana bread is my lifeblood, Jim. Stop being selfish and eat it.

ELIZA

Hello there! I couldn't help but overhear your little bread debate. Did you know that Maple Bran bread offers a variety of bread types, none of which include bananas?

MAN

Oh really? That's a great selling point. You have my attention.

Eliza points toward the bread aisle where Maple Bran product neatly rests along the shelves.

ELIZA

We've got white bread, whole wheat, multi grain, raisin, French toast, and our most popular, honey wheat--

WOMAN

(interrupting)

I think we're okay with the banana bread, thank you.

(to husband)

If you didn't argue with me every time we bought banana bread, we wouldn't have strangers eavesdropping on us.

MAN

(to wife)

I don't know, that raisin bread sounded pretty good.

WOMAN

Better than banana? Get real.

The man relents, and the couple pushes their cart away from Eliza. She waves goodbye.

ELIZA  
Have a nice day!

BRETT, the strict store manager, approaches Eliza.

ELIZA (CONT'D)  
Good afternoon, Brett! The store  
looks amazing, as always.

BRETT  
Why are you socializing with  
customers? You have a job to do.  
Can't you see bread is flying off  
the shelves?

CUT TO a wide shot of the bread shelf. A lone CUSTOMER picks  
up a loaf, sniffs it, then sets it back on the shelf,  
backwards.

ELIZA  
(horrificed)  
You're right! What was I thinking?  
I was so distracted trying to sell  
Maple Bran that I forgot to SELL  
Maple Bran. It won't happen again.

As Eliza heads for the backroom, Brett pulls out a handheld  
recorder.

BRETT  
(speaking into it)  
Bread woman is psychotic. Avoid her  
at all costs.  
(beat)  
Drop by the department store later  
to ask for mannequin pricing.

Reveal that Brett mistakenly grabbed the PA intercom instead.  
Confused customers look toward the ceiling to make sense of  
the "announcement."

#### **INT. CASEY'S GROCERY STORE - BACKROOM - CONTINUOUS**

In the backroom, Eliza navigates the maze of vendor product,  
stepping over, under, and through other store merchandise to  
reach the hidden Maple Bran bread stack.

ELIZA  
(to the bread stack)  
There you are! Did you miss me?



The stack towers over her at 6'. She grabs both sides of the stack and tries to move it. Nothing.

A STORE EMPLOYEE driving a forklift approaches.

ELIZA (CONT'D)  
Oh, excuse me? Hi there! I'm Eliza  
from Maple Bran. Do you think you  
could move some of these pallets so  
I can roll this stack out?

She gestures to some of the scattered pallets responsible for the backroom maze. The store employee looks her up and down.

STORE EMPLOYEE #1  
Do I look like I work for you,  
lady? Just go around it. You'll be  
okay.

He drives off.

ELIZA  
(seriously, reflective)  
It was quite rude of me to ask.

Eliza tugs at the stack again, but it won't budge. She realizes a stray piece of wood is responsible for the wheel jam. She tosses it aside.

ELIZA (CONT'D)  
(positive)  
One road block down, 17 more to go!

She slowly and expertly navigates the bread stack around every rogue pallet in her way until she exits the backroom.

A beat later, the store employee zooms through the backroom on the forklift when he suddenly runs over the wooden piece.

STORE EMPLOYEE #1  
Ahhhhh!

The forklift spins out of control, slamming into a large shelf that collapses. Both the employee and the forklift are buried in product.

STORE EMPLOYEE #1 (CONT'D)  
I am NOT okay.

**INT. CASEY'S GROCERY STORE - BREAD AISLE - CONTINUOUS**

Out on the floor, Eliza refills the missing bread, tucking in the tails of each bread loaf she puts out.

Brett spies on her from behind a display of baked goods. Eliza, unaware of his agenda, tries to make conversation.

ELIZA

Brett, on a level of 1 to 10, how thrilled are you when you come into work?

Brett doesn't respond.

ELIZA (CONT'D)

I'm like a 37, which completely breaks the scale. To be honest, I don't even need a scale. My love for this job is un-scaleable!

A CUSTOMER comes up to take a loaf of bread from the shelf, but Eliza offers her a loaf from the stack instead.

ELIZA (CONT'D)

Here, take this one instead. It's fresh and fluffy.

CUSTOMER #1

Oh, that's very kind. Thank you.

After the customer walks away, Brett immediately rushes toward Eliza, breathing down her neck. Eliza continues to work.

ELIZA

Brett, would you like some of the French toast for the family?

BRETT

No! Why are you having customers take bread from the stack before taking it from the shelf?

ELIZA

Oh, I thought the customer would appreciate the tip and feel seen.

BRETT

I have a tip for you: sell the old bread first and keep the shelf restocked. AKA... do your job!

ELIZA

(jazzed)

Understood. Let's sell some old bread!

Some passing CUSTOMERS hear Eliza's exclamation and wince.

CUSTOMER #2

Did that lady just say old bread? I don't want to buy old bread.

CUSTOMER #3

Why did you drag me to this stale shop in the first place?

Brett overhears this conversation and turns to Eliza, flames in his eyes.

BRETT

Look what you've done! The customers are outraged by what you've said and are leaving in droves.

CUT TO another wide shot of the bread aisle. Customers are going about their business, completely unaware of Brett and Eliza.

BRETT (CONT'D)

Finish and be on your way!

ELIZA

Yes, sir.

Eliza wheels the bread stack toward the backroom when suddenly a SMALL CHILD walks beside her.

SMALL CHILD

What are you doing?

ELIZA

I'm putting this stack in the back. Ooh, nice little rhyme there.

(beat)

Do you like bread? You look like a bread man.

SMALL CHILD

Not really.

ELIZA

What? Don't you know bread is good for you? Moses ate bread, and it gave him the power to talk to God.

SMALL CHILD

Really?

ELIZA

Probably. Pick up a Bible and a breadstick and find out for yourself!

SMALL CHILD

Okay!

The kid suddenly darts across the front of the bread stack toward his mother, but he doesn't clear it in time. The stack gently runs over his little foot.

SMALL CHILD (CONT'D)

Ow, you ran over my foot.

ELIZA

Are you okay?

The child nods.

SMALL CHILD

It only hurt a little.

ELIZA

That's just Mr. Stack's friendly way of saying hello!

The kid smiles. His MOTHER, who witnessed the "accident" from further down an aisle, storms toward Eliza.

MOTHER

Just where do you get off on hitting children?!

ELIZA

What? No, ma'am, it was an accide--

The Mother begins to grab loaves from Eliza's bread stack and throw them directly at her.

MOTHER

How do you like it, huh? You like being struck by bread?

ELIZA

Please stop! You're hurting the loaves!

Customers and store employees watch as the Mother continues to pelt Eliza with bread until Brett rounds the corner, running at full speed.

BRETT  
(recorder in hand)  
Get her, get her, get herrrrr!

Eliza picks up a damaged loaf off the floor as bread loaves continue to pelt her.

ELIZA  
(tearing up)  
It wasn't your time. You had your whole loaf ahead of you.

CUT TO:

**INT. MAPLE BRAN DEPOT - OFFICE - LATER**

Eliza sits in front of Scott, who once again is furiously texting on his phone.

ELIZA  
I can't begin to say how sorry I am for what happened. I take full responsibility for not predicting a child would run in front of my stack and that his mother would damage company property due to motherly rage.

Scott says nothing, only texts.

ELIZA (CONT'D)  
I went ahead and made a list of all the ways I could have avoided this tragedy.

She places a handwritten list on Scott's desk. He doesn't look at it.

SCOTT  
(sighing)  
You've got to have better control, Eliza. Those things are like weapons, and in the wrong hands, they can kill.

ELIZA  
Of course, sir. I don't know what I was thinking, having a pleasant conversation with that child.

She picks up her handwritten list and scribbles a new line, then places it back on Scott's desk.

SCOTT

(annoyed)

Now I've got to send Dale back out there because that looney store manager doesn't want to ever see you again.

ELIZA

I... understand and accept full punishment.

She holds out her hands as if anticipating handcuffs. Scott puts his phone down.

SCOTT

You're not in trouble, Eliza. At least not with me. Why don't you go home, take the afternoon off?

ELIZA

Go home... now? When there's so much bread left to be refilled?

Scott returns to his phone.

SCOTT

Your stores are covered for today. We don't need you.

Eliza nods and awkwardly stands to leave.

**EXT. ELIZA'S HOUSE - LATER**

Eliza parks her car in front of a tiny, yellow one-story home on a quaint neighborhood street.

CUT TO:

**INT. ELIZA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER**

Her daughter APPLE ("ANDREA", 16) is in the kitchen, eating a snack. Eliza walks in through the front door.

ELIZA

Apple! I didn't know you were home or else I would have called.

ANDREA

Mom, I've told you a thousand times. It's Andrea now.

ELIZA

Right. Andrea. But you know you're  
the apple of my eye!

ANDREA

Gag me.

(beat)

Why are you home so early?

ELIZA

There was a... how shall I put this  
delicately? A fatal catastrophe.

ANDREA

Were you fired? You know I've  
expressed mild interest in going to  
college at some point in the very  
distant future.

ELIZA

Of course I wasn't fired! It'd take  
a nuclear threat on top of an  
apocalyptic explosion to separate  
me from Maple Bran.

(beat)

And you, my apple pie.

Andrea glares at her mom.

ELIZA (CONT'D)

(correcting)

Andrea... my Andrea.

Andrea rolls her eyes and heads toward the garage door.

ELIZA (CONT'D)

Are you leaving? I thought maybe we  
could order food and watch  
something on TLC. I rarely see you  
nowadays.

ANDREA

(nearly laughing)

Of course I'm leaving. You're here.  
Be back whenever I feel like it.

Eliza follows her to the doorway and waves as Andrea gets  
into her blue Kia Optima and backs out of the garage.

ELIZA

Be safe! Remember who you are!  
Mommy loves you!

Andrea avoids looking at her mom as she drives away, but that doesn't stop Eliza from waving.

**EXT. MAPLE BRAN DEPOT - DAY**

The next day, as Eliza exits her car, Scott's car comes screaming into the parking lot.

He parks across three spots and runs towards the depot door.

ELIZA

Hi, Scott! I'm--

SCOTT

Not now, Eliza. Help me gather everyone for a meeting.

ELIZA

Oh, I LOVE meetings!

CUT TO:

**INT. MAPLE BRAN DEPOT - LOADING DOCKS - MOMENTS LATER**

Out on the loading docks, the drivers and merchandisers gather round as Scott breaks the news.

SCOTT

As some of you may already know, Seth is out of commission indefinitely, starting today. He broke his arm during his route and was rushed to the hospital.

They guys talk to each other in hushed whispers.

DON

What happened?

SCOTT

(awkward)

The... details aren't important.

LANCE

Why don't we get to know? Thought we were all family here!

The other guys begin to get riled up. Scott reluctantly gives in.



SCOTT

Alright, but you didn't hear it from me.

(beat)

He broke his arm trying to fish a chip bag out of a store baler.

It's quiet, then everyone (minus Eliza and Scott) burst out laughing.

LANCE

When I told Seth to lay off the pounds, I didn't mean literally.

KENT

Which one of you told him to break an arm instead of a leg this morning?

Scott calms everyone down.

SCOTT

(annoyed)

Ha ha, yeah, real funny, but now it means I'll be running his route until he recovers.

Eliza jumps up and down until Scott acknowledges her.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Eliza, what?

ELIZA

I can do it. I can run Seth's route for you.

SCOTT

(laughs)

I'm sorry, but it has to be an experienced driver. It also has to be someone who doesn't attack kids with bread stacks.

Eliza momentarily cringes, then recovers.

ELIZA

Scott, if you let me go on the route with you just once, I promise I can step in for Seth until he returns.

Scott momentarily ponders this.

SCOTT

You really think all you need is a day?

ELIZA

(eager)

I could run the route right now, but I think you'd feel more comfortable if you walked me through it first.

Scott looks down at his phone, longingly, then back at Eliza.

SCOTT

(sighing)

I'm probably going to regret this... but sure, what the hell. You can come on the route with me tomorrow.

ELIZA

(squealing)

Oh thank you, thank you! I promise you won't be disappointed!

Scott stares her straight in the eye, completely serious.

SCOTT

Just know... if you can't keep up, your future at Maple Bran is on the line.

**END OF ACT ONE**

**ACT TWO****INT. ELIZA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT**

The clock strikes 1AM, and Eliza's alarm begins to blare. She shuts it off after the first ring.

She whips the bed covers back to reveal she's fully dressed and ready for work.

**INT. ELIZA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER**

Eliza meanders around the kitchen, grabbing a 2 liter bottle of Mountain Dew from the fridge, then heads toward the front door.

**EXT. ELIZA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS**

Her poor little Geo's windshield is drenched in early morning dew. She works the windshield wipers, but they struggle against the droplets.

After the window is mostly clear, she starts the car, but it sputters a few times.

ELIZA

C'mon, girl. Do it for me.

After a few more false starts the engine roars to life, and Eliza speeds off down the street towards work.

**EXT. MAPLE BRAN DEPOT - LATER**

Upon her arrival, the parking lot is completely empty. She parks in the closest spot to the depot door.

**INT. MAPLE BRAN DEPOT - LOADING DOCKS - CONTINUOUS**

Inside, Eliza walks the loading docks, taking in the sight, the smell, and the sound (or lack thereof) of an early morning depot.

ELIZA

It's even better than I could have imagined.

Her eyes fixate on Seth's truck, and she can't resist the temptation. Since the trucks are door-less, she slides right into the driver's seat.

ELIZA (CONT'D)

Ohhh.

She slides her hands along the steering wheel. The feeling is electric.

### **ELIZA'S FANTASY**

Suddenly, she's driving down Main Street, Spanish Fork where a non-existent bread parade is taking place. Her truck is the star attraction as she gleefully waves out the window at onlookers.

ELIZA (CONT'D)

Hello! Thank you for coming! Have some bread!

On the roof of the truck, Scott is in a jester's uniform, dancing and throwing loaves with Eliza's face on them into the crowd.

SCOTT

Eliza?

ELIZA

(in a sing songy voice)  
Yes, Scott?

SCOTT

Why are you waving?

ELIZA

Our audience demands a show, sweet Jester. Keep dancing and feeding them loaves!

### **BACK TO REALITY**

Scott stares at Eliza in the truck. Her eyes are closed as she continues to wave at no one.

SCOTT

Eliza, get out of the truck.

Her eyes snap open, and she sees Scott angrily waiting for her.

ELIZA

I'm so sorry. But I'm not embarrassed.

She quickly climbs out of the truck. Scott takes a deep breath.

SCOTT

You know, I thought sleeping on this idea would make me feel better, but now that we're here, I feel even worse.

ELIZA

(not realizing)

Are you sick? Maybe you need to take the day off? I can go ahead and just run the route right now...

SCOTT

No, that's not gonna happen. You won't be running anything today. You're following me and doing what I do. Got it?

Eliza's already loading the truck with bread.

ELIZA

Follow whatever you do! Got it!

SCOTT

Eliza, I didn't say to load the truck yet! You don't even know what to load it with.

Eliza approaches Scott with a list of all the stores and their product orders for the day.

ELIZA

I printed Seth's paperwork yesterday and then proceeded to memorize his route in my sleep.

(off Scott's

speechlessness)

But please, if there's anything else I need to know, I am but your humble servant today.

Scott is perplexed by the entire situation but relents if it means less work for him.

SCOTT

Well, if you already know what you're doing...

He pulls out his phone and proceeds to text as Eliza continues to load the truck all by herself.

**INT. MAPLE BRAN DEPOT - LOADING DOCKS - LATER**

Some of the route drivers arrive for the day. Lance claps Scott on the back.

LANCE  
You ready to re-join the rodeo, big boy?

SCOTT  
Ha, I guess. Haven't ran a route in ages it feels like.

LANCE  
Careful with that one.

Lance gestures towards Eliza, still loading the truck.

LANCE (CONT'D)  
She might go after your job too if you're not careful.

Scott laughs, although his expression quickly turns uncomfortable and suspicious.

ELIZA  
Okay, all done!

SCOTT  
(incredulous)  
Done? Everything's loaded?

ELIZA  
Yep!

SCOTT  
(suspicious)  
Right. Well, okay. Let's get this show on the road then.

**INT. DELIVERY TRUCK - CONTINUOUS**

Scott heads towards the driver's side of the truck, but Eliza's beat him to it, sitting in the seat.

SCOTT  
No.

ELIZA  
But--

SCOTT  
NO. Move it.

Eliza holds up her CDL Class B license like a police badge.

ELIZA  
I'm all licenced up!

SCOTT  
Why would you even get that?

ELIZA  
(slightly disappointed)  
I was going to surprise you for  
your birthday, but now you've  
twisted my arm and ruined it for  
the both of us.

SCOTT  
Move over. I'm driving.

Scott's smile turns devious.

SCOTT (CONT'D)  
Don't worry. You get to take the  
copilot chair.

Reveal a small fold out seat attached to the truck. The space  
is just big enough for a small six-year-old child.

Eliza brightens up slightly upon seeing it.

ELIZA  
You know, I've always wanted to try  
this seat.  
(sitting down)  
Ooh, it's actually roomier than it  
looks, can you believe that?

Eliza is practically spilling out of the seat.

SCOTT  
Promise me you'll sit still for the  
entire ride, Eliza. I can't have  
you trying to drive this truck at  
any point while I'm operating it.

ELIZA  
(mock offended)  
I wouldn't dream of it!

The garage door slowly opens. Eliza starts bouncing in her  
seat out of pure excitement. Scott does his best to ignore  
her and pulls out of the garage.

**EXT. SPANISH FORK GROCERY STORE - ESTABLISHING**

An establishing shot of their first stop, a quaint local grocery store.

**INT. DELIVERY TRUCK - CONTINUOUS**

Scott expertly backs the truck toward the loading dock.

SCOTT

Once we get in, start unloading the truck, and I'll take care of sign in.

Eliza is speechless, taking in her surroundings in pure awe. Scott snaps his fingers in front of her face.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Eliza, stay with me. Can you start unloading the truck?

ELIZA

(coming to)

Yes. Yes! Yes, I can.

CUT TO:

**INT. SPANISH FORK GROCERY STORE - BACKROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

As Eliza furiously unloads the truck, the store receiver, ALLEN, gives Scott a fist bump.

ALLEN

Heeyyy, Scott! Long time, no see! How you doing, man?

SCOTT

Allen! It's great to see you. How's SF been treating you?

ALLEN

What can I say? A job's a job, and I'm always grateful for the paycheck.

SCOTT

Don't I know the feeling.

Allen notices Eliza.

ALLEN

New driver?



Scott pulls Allen in close, dropping his voice down to a whisper.

SCOTT  
No. Definitely not. She's one of  
our merchandisers and she's--

ELIZA  
(shouting out)  
Do you want the bread color coded  
or flavor coded?

Scott gestures towards Eliza.

SCOTT  
--a little different.

Allen nods seriously.

ALLEN  
How long are you gonna let this  
play out?

SCOTT  
Just for today. I'll let her have  
her day in the sun.

**INT. SPANISH FORK GROCERY STORE - BREAD AISLE - LATER**

Scott and Eliza are out on the floor, stocking bread. Scott once again has his nose stuck in his phone while Eliza does all the work.

ELIZA  
Scott?

SCOTT  
Yeah?

ELIZA  
Would you say this shelf is route  
driver worthy?

She stands back to admire a perfectly straight, fully stocked section of the bread aisle.

SCOTT  
(not looking)  
Yeah, sure.

ELIZA

Did you look at it? Are you sure it meets the high standards set at Maple Bran?

She moves to stand right in front of him, her nose dipping down in front of his phone screen.

ELIZA (CONT'D)

Sir, can you review my work and provide feedback?

He finally puts his phone down and looks at what she's done. The work is perfect.

SCOTT

Eliza, if you really want feedback...

ELIZA

Yes?

She eagerly nods her head, pulling out a pen and notepad from her shirt's pocket protector.

SCOTT

Chill out. Seriously. You come off a little strong sometimes. Your obsession with bread... it's creepy.

ELIZA

(slightly hurt)  
Creepy?

SCOTT

I've never seen anyone excited about this job before. Do you see anyone else here bouncing with joy?

The store is suddenly eerily silent. No one's in sight.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

No, because it isn't normal.

ELIZA

What are you saying?

SCOTT

I'm saying you're the only one who sees bread like it's Disneyland. It isn't. It's boring old bread.

Eliza looks at the bread aisle longingly.

ELIZA  
I... don't know what to say.

SCOTT  
Say nothing, please. Lord knows  
you've said enough for both of us  
today.  
(beat)  
C'mon, let's go. Please try to keep  
your head down the rest of the day  
and don't embarrass me.

Eliza somberly follows Scott, head bowed in shame.

**EXT. GROCERY STORE - LATER**

As Scott and Eliza approach the truck, he notices her mood  
has soured from his scolding.

SCOTT  
(sighing)  
You want to drive?

She perks up a bit but immediately restrains herself.

ELIZA  
I don't have to drive. It's just a  
truck.

SCOTT  
You apparently have a license now,  
so go ahead. Get behind the wheel.

Eliza slowly accepts the keys from Scott.

ELIZA  
Is this a test? Am I failing?

SCOTT  
No, I'm serious. You can drive.

**INT. DELIVERY TRUCK - CONTINUOUS**

Eliza slips behind the wheel. It's clear she's waited for  
this moment for a very long time, but she tries to keep  
herself steady.

Scott sits on the fold out seat next to her, cramped and  
uncomfortable.

SCOTT  
How did you sit here before?

She doesn't respond. She's mesmerized by the steering wheel.

SCOTT (CONT'D)  
Well? Are you gonna start the truck?

Eliza inserts the keys into the ignition, and the truck's engine purrs to life.

She looks at Scott, tears forming in her eyes.

SCOTT (CONT'D)  
Are you crying?

ELIZA  
I'm sorry. I'm just SO happy right now.

SCOTT  
God, Eliza... please just drive.

ELIZA  
Yes, sir, I'm sorry, sir. I will try to show no emotion.

She wipes her eyes on her arm and recomposes herself.

As she puts her foot to the gas pedal, she accidentally revs the truck, and it lurches out onto the street.

SCOTT  
Eliza!

Scott grips onto anything that might keep him stable as Eliza tears down the road.

#### **WORK MONTAGE**

Set to Christian Heavy Metal music, we see Scott and Eliza drive to various grocery stores, restaurants, and gas stations to deliver Maple Bran product.

- At a grocery store, Eliza chats with a small, enthused crowd of STORE EMPLOYEES as she effortlessly stocks bread. She even performs "tricks" with the bread (i.e. tossing a loaf into the air and catching it, etc.). The employees applaud her skills while Scott sits off to the side, nose in his phone, clearly annoyed at Eliza's antics.

- At a restaurant, Eliza carries in trays stacked upon trays, demonstrating her incredible muscle. She spins the trays and has them expertly land on a large back counter for the STORE MANAGER to count, perfectly stacked.

Scott sits propped up against a large sack of flour as he texts on his phone, actively ignoring Eliza.

- At a gas station, Eliza stocks the bread aisle when an ARMED GUNMAN comes in and threatens the CASHIER. Eliza offers him a loaf of Maple Bran, and the gunman accepts, sparing everyone's lives. Scott is tied up next to the cashier, phone in hand, doing his best to remain staunchly ignorant of the situation as Eliza unties him.

At the end of the montage, the duo pulls up to the very last store: a large and intimidating Walmart-type superstore called RANCHIES.

**INT. RANCHIES - BACKROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Scott and Eliza enter the backroom and are met by TRISHA, the store receiver.

TRISHA

You guys are l-a-t-e. Y'all better hurry and stock that shelf. Rita's here today, and you know how she gets.

SCOTT

That's today? Crap.

Trisha just shrugs and leaves.

ELIZA

Who's Rita? She sounds fun.

SCOTT

Rita is the regional district manager, which means she punishes vendors for absolutely no reason.

(afterthought)

And she's a total bitch.

ELIZA

Scott?

SCOTT

What?

ELIZA

That very angry-looking woman behind you... that wouldn't happen to be Rita, would it?

RITA is standing directly behind him, arms folded and brows furrowed. She has two prominent moles on her face where dimples would be.

RITA

You're late. Do you have a reason to give this "bitch"?

SCOTT

Ah! Rita, it's so good to see you!

He goes in for a handshake but she ignores the gesture.

RITA

Don't care. Why is my shelf empty?

Scott nervously rubs the back of his neck.

SCOTT

Well, it's kind of a long story. The short version is that--

RITA

Also don't care. Fill the shelf immediately and get out.

Scott looks to Eliza.

SCOTT

(gruffly)

You heard her. Start unloading.

Eliza scurries off to unload the truck while Scott awkwardly stands next to Rita.

RITA

Why aren't you helping? Do your hands not work?

Scott looks down at his hands.

SCOTT

They... yes, ma'am.

He follows after Eliza.

#### **INT. RANCHIES - BREAD AISLE - CONTINUOUS**

Out on the floor, Scott and Eliza quickly stock the shelves. Scott's work is sloppy but VERY quick, while Eliza's quality takes time and diligence.

SCOTT

Eliza, you've got to work faster.  
You don't know what that woman can  
do... or what she's already done.

Scott throws some loaves onto the shelves.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

See what I'm doing? No one cares if  
it's a little squishy. It's bread.  
It's meant to squish. Get it on the  
shelf as fast as you can, and let's  
get out of here.

Eliza looks at his work on the shelf. Her face falls.

ELIZA

But it isn't stacked neatly. Or  
ordered by date. And this loaf is  
half empty.

She holds up a torn loaf bag with missing pieces of bread.

SCOTT

This is how it has to be to get the  
job done. Do you understand me?

ELIZA

(hesitant)

Okay. I'll try my best.

Eliza picks up a loaf and tries to toss it onto the shelf  
like Scott. Her hands begin to tremble, and she starts to  
sniffle.

Scott notices her struggle and impatiently pries the loaf out  
of her hands.

SCOTT

Like this!

He throws the loaf onto the shelf. Like a bowling ball, it  
knocks bread loaves out of the way as it spins to a stop.

Eliza wordlessly watches as Scott finishes the last few  
loaves himself.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Okay, it's whatever, but it's good  
enough. Grab that empty stack, and  
let's wheel them to the back  
pronto.

As they each wheel an empty stack to the backroom, Rita appears, blocking their path.

CUT TO a wide shot of the sloppy-ass shelf in context of the otherwise neat and orderly store.

RITA

This work. What am I looking at?  
It's horrible.

SCOTT

Ah, well, you see--

RITA

This I can no longer handle. You  
send men into my store that do poor  
work, and today is no different.

SCOTT

Rita, if you let me explain--

RITA

Ranchies will no longer conduct  
business with Maple Bran.

SCOTT

What?!

RITA

I expect you'll hear from your boss  
soon enough.

Rita begins to walk away.

SCOTT

No, wait! Please, Rita, let's talk  
about this.

RITA

There is nothing to discuss.

ELIZA

(whispering to Scott  
loudly)

You'd think someone with large mole  
dimples would be a little nicer.

RITA

(enraged)  
Leave at once!

**END OF ACT TWO**



ACT THREE**INT. DELIVERY TRUCK - LATER**

Scott sits in the truck with his head against the wheel.

SCOTT

That's it. My life is over.

Eliza sits next to him in the fold out chair.

ELIZA

Maybe Rita was bluffing. How could Ranchies NOT carry Maple Bran bread? Everyone loves Maple Bran!

SCOTT

(not listening)

I will be remembered as the guy who single-handedly lost the biggest store in the entire county. How can I possibly come back from this?

ELIZA

(encouraging)

You didn't do it single-handedly. I was there too.

SCOTT

(turning on her)

That's right. You were there. Why didn't you tell me Rita was standing right behind me when I called her a bitch?

ELIZA

I tried.

SCOTT

Why didn't you tell me to sort the bread shelf properly?

ELIZA

I tried.

SCOTT

Why didn't you--? Oh, what's the point. I didn't want to listen.

ELIZA

(soft)

Hey. Let's not lose hope.

(MORE)

ELIZA (CONT'D)

Maybe we can talk to Rita and explain the situation. Let's go back in and tell her we care about the store as much as she does.

SCOTT

The problem is... I *don't* care. I don't do this job because I enjoy it. I do it because it funds the things I do enjoy.

ELIZA

(teary)

What do you mean?

Scott shakes his head as he starts the truck.

SCOTT

I'm not like you, Eliza.

They pull out of the loading dock and make their drive back to the depot in abject silence.

**INT. MAPLE BRAN DEPOT - LOADING DOCKS - LATER**

Once Scott pulls the truck into the depot, his phone rings.

SCOTT

Crap, I have to take this in my office. Don't do anything until I come back, you understand?

ELIZA

But Scott--

SCOTT

Stay put, Eliza. I mean it.

He exits the truck, rushing toward his office. Don approaches Eliza.

DON

Hey! How was your first day, driver-in-training?

ELIZA

(slightly glum)

Not good, Don.

DON

Really? I thought you'd be bouncing off the walls once you got back.

ELIZA

It's over. Maple Bran is dead.

DON

Jeez, Eliza. Whatever happened out there couldn't have been THAT bad.

ELIZA

Ranchies won't be doing business with Maple Bran anymore.

DON

Well... that's a much bigger setback than I anticipated, but it's not the end of the world.

ELIZA

It might not be the end of the world, but it's the end of mine.

Eliza looks down at her lap, helpless.

DON

Come on, Eliza. I've never seen you down before, even when the odds are stacked against you. If anything, you're usually bursting with optimism. Nothing can keep you down!

Eliza slowly lifts her head.

ELIZA

I have an idea, but... it might be a little eccentric.

DON

I don't know an Eliza that isn't eccentric. That's what makes you you. Follow your gut.

ELIZA

Thanks, Don.

Eliza looks over at the ignition, where Scott left the keys. She hops into the driver's seat and starts the truck.

DON

Good luck!

As she pulls out of the depot, she yells out the truck window.

ELIZA  
I care about bread!

**EXT. RANCHIES - LATER**

Eliza arrives back at Ranchies, but this time, she parks the truck on the side of the massive building, completely crooked.

**INT. RANCHIES - CONTINUOUS**

She power walks through the front doors, heading directly to the bread aisle. Once there, she pulls all the Maple Bran product off the shelves and onto the floor.

STORE EMPLOYEE #2  
Excuse me, ma'am? You can't do that.

ELIZA  
I AM Maple Bran. You can't stop this.

STORE EMPLOYEE #2  
(awkward)  
Oh, uh. No, I guess you're fine then. Carry on.

Grocery store customers and employees begin to gather round as Eliza slowly stacks bread loaf on top of bread loaf to form... a giant bread loaf.

An ELDERLY COUPLE approaches Eliza.

ELDERLY MAN  
What's the special occasion, young lady?

ELIZA  
Bread, good sir. Bread is always a special occasion. As a nutritious part of our lives, it deserves to be celebrated as much as it's grain-filled goodness celebrates us.

The Elderly Woman pulls out a tissue to wipe away budding tears.

ELDERLY WOMAN  
You could be in a commercial. That was beautiful.

She reaches out for a loaf from the bread monument and drops it into her cart. Slowly, other customers approach and take loaves from the bread monument.

The high activity in the bread aisle eventually captures Rita's attention. She charges toward Eliza.

RITA

What is the meaning of this? I told you to leave the store!

ELIZA

I know, and I'm very sorry for what happened earlier, but I had to return. Please reconsider doing business with Maple Bran. Even though Scott doesn't show it, he cares as much as I do.

(beat, rethinking)

Well, he cares, but I still care a lot more.

RITA

How does he care? The shelf was atrocious. My eyes were trying to bleed inside my head.

ELIZA

He doesn't show it in big ways but through small actions instead. Like giving me this job. Taking me on this route. Letting me drive the truck. These small ways--

She gestures to the giant loaf.

ELIZA (CONT'D)

--eventually add up, and once people notice, they flock to it.

Rita watches as customers are pushing carts filled with Maple Bran bread away.

ELIZA (CONT'D)

I'm also sorry for what I said earlier. I think your mole dimples are amazing. I bet if you smiled more, you'd light up an entire room!

In that moment, Rita can't help but smile, even if she's confused and a little weirded out by Eliza.

RITA

You are a strange one, yet I  
somehow like you. Still, you must  
leave now. I have calls to make.

CUT TO:

**INT. MAPLE BRAN DEPOT - LOADING DOCKS - LATER**

Eliza returns to the depot, pulling the truck into the garage. Scott stands waiting for her, rage reading loud and clear in his face.

SCOTT

What in the hell were you thinking,  
Eliza?!

Eliza is silent as she exits the truck. The other route drivers and merchandisers look on.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

I told you to stay in the truck,  
and what do you do? You drive to  
Ranchies behind my back?

ELIZA

I'm sorry, Scott, but I had to. I  
care about you and the store and  
Maple Bran!

Scott's face suddenly softens.

SCOTT

I have never, in my 20 years of  
working bread, met someone quite  
like you. You are your own brand of  
insanity.

He holds up his phone.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

I just got off the phone with  
corporate. You know what they said?  
Business with Ranchies will  
continue, completely uninterrupted.

ELIZA

Really?!

Scott exhales, relieved.

SCOTT

Whatever you did... it worked.

(beat)

I'm sorry I told you to stop caring. Your passion for this company has saved us all.

Don steps forward and starts to clap.

DON

Way to go, Eliza! I knew you could do it!

The other route drivers and merchandisers begin to clap as well.

ELIZA

(embarrassed)

Aw, guys. You know you would have done the same.

ROUTE DRIVERS

No. / Definitely not. / I hate this job more than my wife.

SCOTT

Unfortunately, you still violated company rules, which means... I have to temporarily suspend you.

ELIZA

Suspend me? But Scott, sir, how can I stock bread if I'm suspended?

He smiles and winks at her.

SCOTT

Don't worry, this'll all be here when you get back. And who knows... maybe a new route driver position will be here too.

Off Eliza's comprehending smile...

**END OF EPISODE**