

TANTRA — Pilot Beat Sheet & Season One

Working architecture for greenlight. Grounded in the site bible and the clean prestige pilot spine.

Doctrine: Not a show about porn. A show about inheritance. Industry = engine. Grief + secret = point.

1. PILOT PREMISE (ONE LINE)

In the 48 hours after her father dies, Penelope discovers he left her a hidden adult studio — and, on day one, must decide whether to flinch or take one real action inside a world she was never allowed to see.

2. PILOT DRAMATIC QUESTION

Will Penelope look — really look — at what he built, or will she do what he did: protect herself with a cleaner story?

3. EMOTIONAL SPINE (NOT THE PLOT)

- **Want (surface):** keep her life graded and intact (McGill, competence, control).
- **Need (deep):** grieve a father she only half-knew without turning the secret into pure betrayal or pure romance.
- **Lie she believes:** if she is perfect enough, love is safe and knowable.
- **Truth of the hour:** love can be real and still be a lie about the facts.
- **End state:** she has not “become CEO.” She has refused to not-look. Series engine on.

4. CAST IN THE PILOT (WHO EARNS SCREEN TIME)

- **MUST:** Penelope, Fabian (alive briefly + afterimage), Cody, Beatrice, Walt, Barnabé, Renata (or equivalent performer), Zoe/Leo light.
- **SUPPORT ONE BEAT EACH:** Denise, Marguerite (or Walt carries legal if page count tight).
- **CUT FROM PILOT LOAD:** prop-room set pieces, multi-performer union seminars, brand decks, PE flippers, audio-tape finales, kayak lore as mythology.

PILOT BEAT SHEET

Target: 28–32 min. Working title options: “Pilot” / “The Software Company”. Tone: Hacks/Minx — wry under pressure, not essay comedy.

A. COLD OPEN (~4–5 MIN) — LOVE, THEN THE OTHER LIFE

A1. Kitchen — Fabian & Penelope

Morning. Eggs that need fewer pans. She studies; he feeds her anyway. Specific affection (mother echo, “I know you”). Software company line lands half a beat too fast. Kiss on head. Door almost-confession: “Nothing. Go get your A.” She clocked the tone; she doesn’t chase it.

Function: Make us love him and feel the unfinished sentence. Plant software lie without winking.

Avoid: Long philosophical dialogue; death foreshadow speeches; to-camera yet.

A2. Cody button

Cody steals toast. Solitaire joke. Sister-as-worse-than-mom. Pure family rhythm.

Function: Cody is who she protects; comedy from character not topic.

Avoid: Making Cody the show’s joke machine.

A3. Smash — Tantra exterior + hallway

Unmarked building. Fabian puts on the other face. Hallway of real production stills (tasteful, dated→new). Walt: subscriptions, AI thing. Fabian: AI not happening. Quiet: “Thirty years I’ve been getting away with it” = not telling them. Door closes. Hold Walt.

Function: Show the double life as workplace, not carnival. Plant AI as unfinished business.

Avoid: Full sex-shoot tour; “if I die leave it to Penelope” speech; condom-bowl comedy parade.

B. ACT ONE (~7–8 MIN) — HER LIFE, THEN IT ENDS**B1. McGill — competence**

Committee. One clean answer. She’s the best; she doesn’t get to enjoy it. Tasha under-breath. One second of private win.

Function: Establish armor: excellence is how she survives.

Avoid: Biology TED talk; long academic scenes.

B2. Hallway — Zoe / Leo + missed call

“Fine.” Zoe reads her. Leo coffee bit short. Phone: WALT VOSS — silence. Buzz again; we hold, she doesn’t.

Function: Dramatic irony: the call that would change everything is treated as spam.

Avoid: Penelope explaining who Walt might be.

B3. Cody’s room — rocket / mom

She sits on the floor. Fixes without shrinking him. Mom question — honest answer. Best love in the episode.

Function: Raise stakes of loss before the sentence lands.

Avoid: Turning this into a monologue about grief theory.

B4. Kitchen — Beatrice / death

Beatrice still, phone, no performance. “Your father collapsed... sit down.” Stay on Penelope. Cody on landing. She goes to him first. Beatrice outside the circle.

Function: Death as silence, not a line of dialogue we cut away from.

Avoid: Music sting; Beatrice villain monologue; multi-location chaos.

C. ACT TWO (~8–9 MIN) — FUNERAL, LETTER, THRESHOLD**C1. Funeral — short**

Visual grief: P+Cody close, Beatrice apart. Walt eulogy plain and short: Fabian built things that took care of people; tools/calendar joke — no full confession of the porn secret from the podium.

Function: Honor him without spoiling the letter reveal. Slight crack that he was bigger than she knew.

Avoid: Eulogy that explains the entire series theme and double life.

C2. Beatrice aside

Will: think carefully. Lawyer already. Timing is the character. Penelope: exhausted “noted,” not a speech war.

Function: Plant antagonist without hijacking grief.

Avoid: Full succession legal battle in the pilot.

C3. Envelope

Walt: when you’re ready. She takes it absently — looking for Cody.

Function: Object of destiny treated like mail.

Avoid: Walt explaining contents in the cemetery.

C4. Letter — private

Room. Letter + transfer. We get essentials only on page/screen: software was never software; company is Tantra / adult entertainment; left to her; love + sorry for the lie. Her face does the rest. “What did you do” or equivalent — not a five-paragraph moral essay.

Function: Betrayal and love in the same object. Theme shown, not footnoted.

Avoid: Voiceover that teaches the audience how to feel; multi-page letter recitation.

C5. Outside the building

Zoe/Leo flank. Leo can't say the word; she can or she cuts him off. Zoe: are you okay? She doesn't answer. Walks in.

Function: Threshold. Choice is feet, not dialogue.

Avoid: Group pep talk about feminism and capitalism.

D. ACT TWO/THREE BRIDGE (~6–7 MIN) — WORLD + FIRE**D1. Lobby — human first**

Denise: you have his eyes. Tenderness she can't hold. Walt meets her.

Function: World has people who loved him; not only a concept.

Avoid: Signage comedy essay.

D2. Hallway — short tour

Stills wall. Legal/accounting doors. Ordinary Tuesday stress. One Leo/Zoe line (fog machines / it's a business). Penelope: he hid this. Walt: that was the point. Why me? Walt: he trusted you to run something — one sentence, not a character bible.

Function: Orient us. Trust Walt. Don't exhaust the setting.

Avoid: Loading dock brand pitch; props library; multi-room set piece marathon.

D3. Barnabé — the fire

Interrupts: AI deepfake of a performer (Renata). She wasn't there; she didn't consent; she may sue. Barnabé is specific and stressed — craft + panic — not a clown car.

Function: Case-of-week engine starts. Contemporary stakes without seminar.

Avoid: Explaining how generative AI works to the audience.

D4. Legal — one obstacle

Standard takedown won't satisfy; it's happened before; Fabian delayed. Penelope asks what “ahead” looks like — gets a real policy, not a lecture. “Draft a start. I'll take Renata.”

Function: She chooses action over delay — first difference from Fabian.

Avoid: Anatomy vocabulary masterclass; four prior cases as a subplot dump.

E. ACT THREE (~5–6 MIN) — ONE ACTION, THEN HOME**E1. Renata — negotiation not speech**

Renata: face stolen; “wait and see” is violence by delay. Walt starts soft. She wants someone new. Penelope: not our answer. Walt: not your area. Penelope bridges with her language (consent / chain of custody) — short. Concrete asks: notices, contracts, tonight. Renata: your father said something like that — word for word, annoying then too. Small ache. Policy with teeth; six-month accountability. Renata leaves unconvinced but willing to test.

Function: Competence becomes useful once. Echo of Fabian without sainting him. Relationship seed.

Avoid: Parking-lot philosophy; dissolving-the-company monologue; TED Talk energy.

E2. Office night — breath

His desk. Photo. She feels it one full beat. Zoe optional: short, human — he left what he built; unprepared is the grief. No campaign pitch.

Function: Sit with inheritance as object and absence.

Avoid: Brand deck; four-hour contract montages.

E3. Home — Beatrice + Cody seed

Beatrice: you went to the office. Penelope: someone had to / he didn't leave it to you. Beatrice slips once — raw — then ice. Not triumph. Cody: school rumor. Penelope: we'll talk properly, not tonight. Deal. He holds her to it.

Function: Antagonist human + series time bomb (Cody).

Avoid: Full truth dump to Cody in pilot; Beatrice pure Cruella.

E4. Button

Outside building or car. Walt: first day. She'd be proud / he'd be proud — she doesn't accept easy comfort. Cody text seed on phone optional. She starts the car. Tag: Cody search bar hover — doesn't click yet.

Function: Open doors, don't close themes. Series continues.

Avoid: Tape from beyond; "how hard can porn be"; mission-statement button.

5. PILOT DO / DON'T (CRAFT)

- **DO** cut any line that tells the theme if a reaction can carry it.
- **DO** let sex-industry texture appear as behavior and set dressing, not as a guided museum tour.
- **DO** one crisis only (likeness/AI). Residuals, PE, rebrand = later episodes.
- **DON'T** have Fabian narrate his own moral failure while alive.
- **DON'T** resolve Beatrice, Cody, or modernization in Episode 1.
- **DON'T** make Penelope likable by making her correct about everything — make her useful once under pressure.

6. APPROXIMATE RUNTIME MAP

Cold open 4–5 · Act I to death 7–8 · Act II funeral→threshold 8–9 · Building+fire 6–7 · Renata+home+tag 5–6 · = ~30–32

SEASON ONE — EPISODE-BY-EPISODE

Season thesis: Penelope starts believing Tantra is a humiliating secret. She ends understanding the danger is people who want the money without responsibility — and she publicly owns what he hid.

Structure: each episode = one industry/business fire (A) + family/company serial (B). Penelope's competence armor cracks and reforms into authority.

Season question: Modernize, sell, or hold the line — and who gets to decide?

Block 1 — The Inheritance (Eps 1–3)

She enters the room and learns the room can hurt her. Ends with a clock on her power.

EP 1 — Pilot ("The Software Company")

- **A:** Death → letter → building → AI/likeness crisis → first real action with Renata.
- **B:** Beatrice plants will war; Cody seed; Walt as bridge.
- **Turn:** She looks. She doesn't finish becoming boss — she refuses delay.
- **Button:** Car / Cody search hover. Series on.

Theme: Love and the lie can share a kitchen.

EP 2 — Back Catalog

- **A:** Veteran performer (Celeste-type) claims unpaid residuals after streaming relicense. Contracts messy; Fabian “meant to.”
- **B:** Beatrice starts quiet valuation. Penelope must choose principle vs. opening a floodgate.
- **Turn:** She pays what’s owed and starts a process (not a blank check speech). Walt reveals how Fabian avoided paper.
- **Comedy:** edit-bay education (she has to watch); Barnabé craft irritation; Leo discomfort.
- **Avoid:** making residuals a full forensic accounting procedural.

Theme: The past doesn't stream free; delay was his kindness and his crime.

EP 3 — Stewardship / The Board

- **A:** Beatrice pushes emergency “professional management” / family vote pressure.
- **B:** Zoe oversteps with rebrand energy; staff loyalty is the real vote; Leo reads the room once.
- **Turn:** Vote tabled or blunted — ninety-day (or similar) clock on Penelope.
- **Emotional:** Beatrice’s grief as entitlement becomes clear without cartooning her.
- **Avoid:** PE villain from LA as primary face of evil; keep Beatrice the knife.

Theme: Power isn't entering the building — it's still being there when lawyers leave.

Block 2 — Modernization Pressure (Eps 4–7)

Industry fights back. Her ethics cost money. Family secret approaches Cody.

EP 4 — Consent Form

- **A:** AI scrape expands beyond Renata. Policy draft collides with production calendar / platform takedown speed.
- **B:** Barnabé fears freezing craft; Marguerite wants teeth; old contracts look ancient.
- **Turn:** Penelope chooses people over ship date — first expensive moral win. Beatrice documents “instability.”

Theme: Policy vs. personality (Fabian meant well; meaning well isn't a system).

EP 5 — Talent

- **A:** Flagship production loses lead (boundary / injury / better offer). Old fix: cast fast, soft consent.
- **B:** Penelope insists slower, safer, costlier. Everyone hates the cost.
- **Turn:** Expensive process avoids a liability that would have sunk them — competence proven in process design, not speeches.
- **Comedy:** chemistry reads that are hot and bureaucratic.

Theme: Safety is a budget line; so is exploitation.

EP 6 — Cody

- **A:** School / internet / full truth pressure. Midseason emotional peak.
- **B:** Penelope almost lies “to protect him” — Fabian’s move in a new font. Cody forces accuracy.
- **Turn:** She tells a version that is true enough to not own him as a secret. Relationship cost with Beatrice/Zoe optional.
- **Avoid:** sitcom “kid discovers porn” gag episode; this is the protectiveness crisis.

Theme: Protective lying is still lying; inheritance includes habits.

EP 7 — Brand Damage

- **A:** Zoe's modernization/campaign is good — and triggers moral-panic press / talent pushback (performer refuses mascot status).
- **B:** Penelope furious because Zoe is right and early. Beatrice surfaces soft PE interest.
- **Turn:** They keep a version of the campaign that doesn't erase the work or the workers; PE door creaks open.

Theme: Desire with a paper trail vs. desire as scandal content — dialectic, not slogan episode.

Block 3 — The Takeover (Eps 8–10)

Loyalty, history, public ownership. Season lands.

EP 8 — Poach

- **A:** Creator platform raids top talent with equity language Tantra can't match overnight.
- **B:** Penelope learns loyalty is earned in royalties and respect, not nostalgia for Fabian.
- **Turn:** Key talent stays conditionally; Leo's aptitude (rooms/people/set) becomes useful for real.

Theme: Found family must be paid like family or it leaves.

EP 9 — Fabian's Clause

- **A/B merged:** Walt reveals a piece of Fabian's past / will structure that complicates grief and Beatrice's claim.
- **Turn:** Penelope sees she was trusted and used as a shield against consequences. Beatrice gets one human scene without winning.
- **Setup:** architecture of the finale vote / sale.

Theme: Inheritance is not only assets — it's unfinished moral debt.

EP 10 — Public

- **A:** Sale/control comes to a head. Beatrice's plan peaks.
- **B:** Penelope wins only by publicly owning Tantra — the thing she avoided all season.
- **Cost:** privacy, McGill clean identity, family rupture.
- **Gain:** authority, staff, a company that might deserve to survive.
- **Tag** → **S2:** press frames her as accidental face of "ethical" adult content — she hates the headline and needs it.

Theme: Looking becomes saying; saying becomes being responsible.

7. SEASON CHARACTER ARCS (END OF S1)

- **Penelope:** reactive overachiever → authority with scars; still grieving.
- **Beatrice:** pure threat → humanized danger; not redeemed, not cartoon.
- **Cody:** half-knowing → knowing; moral compass.
- **Zoe:** brand brain → real power player with friction vs Penelope.
- **Leo:** soft accessory → voice/aptitude seed blooms.
- **Walt:** keeper of secret → partner, not babysitter; history still buried.
- **Barnabé:** panic craft → respects her; private life seeded for S2.
- **Renata/Celeste-types:** not props — ongoing conscience of labor.

8. SEASON DO / DON'T

- **DO** let each episode teach one new rule of the industry through conflict, not briefing.

- **DO** keep Fabian present via memory/behavior of others — sparse flashback only when it changes a choice now.
- **DO** let Beatrice be right about money sometimes.
- **DON'T** solve AI, residuals, PE, and Cody in the pilot.
- **DON'T** write Penelope as the only moral adult in every room.
- **DON'T** confuse explicit texture with story progress.

9. S2 LAUNCH (ONE PARAGRAPH)

Penelope rebuilds around performer ownership and AI protection — making Tantra a public target and a business risk. Beatrice escalates or evolves. Cody is older trouble. Zoe's brand may outgrow the studio. Barnabé faces a mainstream offer. Question is no longer "will she run it?" but "what is she willing to become to keep it good?"

10. NEXT WRITING MOVE (RECOMMENDED)

Rewrite the pilot from this beat sheet using the prestige redraft's restraint: shorter letter, shorter tour, one fire, Renata as negotiation, Cody as seed, no thesis monologues. Then Ep 2 only when Ep 1's emotional math is clean.

END OF DOCUMENT — Tan Dhingra · TANTRA · Story architecture for redevelopment