

ellen

ELLEN

"Felonious Culottes"

written by

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(ADAM PLOPS DOWN NEXT TO ELLEN AND GRABS THE CHEETOS)

ELLEN

You know Adam, the first step to recovery is admitting you have a problem.

ADAM

I can stop any time I want to.

ELLEN

Oh really?

ADAM

Yes. It just so happens that for the moment, I'm blissfully happy living in denial.

ELLEN

At least we're not as bad as those spectators who actually show up at the courtroom.

ADAM

Really. What kind of losers can just sit around all day watching a trial?

(ELLEN AND ADAM EXCHANGE A QUICK EMBARRASSING GLANCE. PAIGE ENTERS)

PAIGE

Get off that couch. We're going to Ted's place. He's paying me five hundred dollars to house-sit for the weekend.

ADAM

Can't. Judge Ito's about to call the jury back in.

PAIGE

Come on, we've got the whole place to ourselves. Pool, Jacuzzi, tanning bed...?

ELLEN

I burn easy. Besides, they're introducing a new character today.

PAIGE

I think you mean "witness", Ellen.

ADAM

I wonder if the network will pick them up for another season...?

PAIGE

You two are pathetic. I'm turning this off.

ELLEN

Touch that remote, and you leave this apartment in a body bag.

PAIGE

If you guys want to let life just pass you by, that's fine with me.

ADAM

Paige, you haven't even given it
a chance. It's just like
"Melrose Place."

ELLEN

With better actors.

PAIGE

I haven't watched a minute of
this three-ring circus and I'm
not about to start now.

(PAIGE GLANCES AT TV)

PAIGE (CONT'D)

Hey, cute bailiff. Move over.

(PAIGE PLOPS HERSELF NEXT TO ELLEN)

ELLEN

Cheeto...?

PAIGE

Mmm...

(PAIGE GRABS A HANDFUL WITHOUT TAKING HER EYES
OFF THE TV SET AS WE)

DISSOLVE TO:

SCENE 1INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

(Ellen, Adam, Paige, Salesman #1, Salesman #2)

(ELLEN'S BROWSING THROUGH A RACK OF CLOTHES.
PAIGE WATCHES HER, TOTALLY BORED)

PAIGE

Ellen, we've been in this mall
for an hour and a half. I want
to go. Now.

ELLEN

I still can't decide what we
should get Audrey for her
birthday.

PAIGE

Face it. She's gonna hate
anything we buy, so just pick
something.

(ELLEN TAKES A PINK ITEM OFF A RACK MARKED
"CLEARANCE")

ELLEN

What about these?

PAIGE

Those are culottes.

ELLEN

So? I heard they're making a
comeback.

PAIGE

Where? In Latvia?

(A SMARMY SALESMAN APPROACHES)

SALESMAN

Hi, I'm Barry. Your sales
associate. May I help you?

PAIGE

Yes.

(PAIGE HOLDS THE CULOTTES UP NEXT TO HER
CHEST)

PAIGE (CONT'D)

What do you think of these?

(THE SALESMAN STARES AT PAIGE'S CHEST)

SALESMAN

They're beautiful.

ELLEN

Well, now that we've got the
thumbs-up on Paige's breasts,
what do you think of the
culottes?

SALESMAN

(OGLING PAIGE) They'd look
really great on you.

ELLEN

Gee, I never really thought of
myself as a "culottes gal", but
thank you.

SALESMAN

I meant your friend.

(PAIGE FORCES AN UNCOMFORTABLE SMILE. THE
SALESMAN WINKS, THEN SLIMES AWAY)

PAIGE

What a creep. I hate flirty
salesmen.

ELLEN

It's even worse coming from a
"sales associate".

(ADAM ENTERS WITH A SHOPPING BAG)

ADAM

Do I look like some crazed guest
from "The Jenny Jones Show"?
Everyone here is avoiding me.

(ELLEN AND PAIGE SNIFF THE AIR. THEY'RE
REPULSED)

PAIGE

Adam, what is that smell?

ADAM

The squirt-girl sprayed me with a
new cologne. It's called "Real
Man".

ELLEN

Smells more like "caveman".

PAIGE

Don't tell me you actually bought
some.

ADAM

I had to do something to get her
to talk to me. I think we hit it
off pretty well.

PAIGE

News flash, Adam. Squirt-girl
only wanted to get into your
wallet.

ADAM

Hey, it's a start. And look.
For just forty-five dollars, I
got a half-ounce bottle and a
free "Real Man" tote-bag.

ELLEN

Which will come in handy so we
can tote it to the nearest bio-
hazard lab.

(ADAM SEES THE CULOTTES)

ADAM

Culottes? I remember culottes!
I had a crush on a girl in eighth
grade who wore culottes. Meryl
Feingold. The love of my life.
First girl I asked out on a date.

ELLEN

See, Paige? Culottes hold fond
memories for lots of people.
They were responsible for a young
Adam Green's sexual awakening.

ADAM

Vicious girl turned me down and
went out with my best friend
instead.

(ADAM GRABS THE CULOTTES AND BUNCHES THEM UP
INTO A TIGHT BALL)

ADAM (CONT'D)

God she hurt me!

PAIGE

See, Ellen? Everybody hates
culottes.

ELLEN

Too bad, cause I'm going with the
culottes. And I'm very
comfortable with my decision.

PAIGE

Culottes are a big mistake.
Trust me.

ADAM

Could you please stop saying
"culottes"? I'm having
flashbacks.

(ELLEN HEADS FOR CASH REGISTER. ADAM AND
PAIGE FOLLOW. SALESMAN #2, A VERY SWEET AND
GENTLE GUY, IS BEHIND COUNTER)

SALESMAN #2

All set?

ELLEN

Yup. Mind's made up. No turning
back. The bridge has been hacked
off behind me.

(SALESMAN RINGS UP PURCHASE)

PAIGE

You know, while we're here, I really could use a new bikini to wear up at Ted's pool.

SALESMAN #2

Did you know we're having a sale on swimwear? I could help you pick something out.

ELLEN

(SCOLDING) Hey, hey, hey. Back off buddy-boy.

SALESMAN #2

Excuse me?

ELLEN

Isn't there some kind of rule against employees hitting on the customers?

SALESMAN #2

Me? I wasn't hitting on her, I was just...

ELLEN

Oh, I know what you were "just". I have a good mind to report you to management.

SALESMAN #2

Report me? No, please! This is only my first day here!

PAIGE

She's not going to report you.
Ellen, he's not hitting on me.
He's just being helpful. The
other guy's the creep.

ELLEN

(EMBARRASSED) Oh. Sorry. Got a
little carried away. Just call
me the "Pervert Police". Officer
Morgan, at your service. I'm
actually turning in my badge
today. Not that I didn't enjoy
my time on the force. Who
wouldn't? Smart uniforms. Paid
vacations. And the pension plan?
Don't even get me started.

SALESMAN #2

(FRIGHTENED) Your total, with
tax, is thirty-four ninety-five.

ELLEN

Can you break a fifty?

SALESMAN #2

(SHAKING) Sh... Sh... Sh...
Sure.

(SALESMAN MAKES CHANGE)

ELLEN

I'm sorry, but I think you've
given me the wrong change.

SALESMAN

(NERVOUSLY) Really...?

ELLEN

I gave you a fifty, and you gave me two hundreds back.

ADAM

Ellen, look how you've traumatized him. He's giving wrong change.

SALESMAN #2

(PETRIFIED) Please don't report this, either. I really need this job! Don't get me fired!

ELLEN

Fired? On the contrary. In fact, I'm writing to the president of this company and demand you be named "Employee of the Month".

SALESMAN #2

No, that won't be necessary.

ELLEN

Make that of "the year." Heck, the century, even!

(SALESMAN HASTILY SHOVES CULOTTES INTO SHOPPING BAG)

SALESMAN #2

Would you please leave now?

(ADAM AND PAIGE DRAG ELLEN AWAY, LEAVING THE
SALESMAN A TREMBLING, QUAKING MASS)

ELLEN

Ever consider an upper management
position--?

DISSOLVE TO:

SCENE 2INT. ELLEN'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

(Ellen, Adam, Paige, Audrey)

(ELLEN, ADAM AND PAIGE ENTER WITH SHOPPING BAGS)

ADAM

Come on, guys. I don't smell
that bad.

ELLEN

Adam, when the bag-lady on the
corner holds her nose, it's time
to take the hint.

ADAM

But it smells so good in the
bottle. Here. Sniff.

(ADAM HANDS THE BOTTLE TO ELLEN AND PAIGE.
THEY HESITANTLY TAKE A WHIFF)

ELLEN

Hey, that's pretty nice.

PAIGE

Mmmm... Sexy.

ADAM

So why do I smell like day-old
garbage?

ELLEN

It's a chemical thing, Adam.
Cologne never smells the same on
any two people. It's probably
irritating your skin.

PAIGE

Just think of it as "Audrey-in-a-Bottle".

ELLEN

Speaking of Audrey, her birthday party is a surprise. We can't let her find out about it.

PAIGE

Why are you going to all this trouble for someone you loathe?

ELLEN

Come on, Paige. You remember what happened last year when I forgot her birthday. The tears, the insomnia, the weeks of depression.

ADAM

Yeah. Audrey didn't take it too well, either.

ELLEN

She made my life a living hell. That's why I want this birthday to be perfect. I've got to make it up to her.

PAIGE

So who's coming to this shindig?

ELLEN

All of Audrey's friends...

ADAM

And that would be...?

ELLEN

Well, there's you. Me. Adam.

And don't forget Joe, of course.

PAIGE

Your basic mercy party.

ELLEN

The guest list is irrelevant.

What's important is I remembered.

(ELLEN OPENS THE BAG AND REMOVES THE CULOTTES.
THE STORE ALARM SENSOR IS STILL ATTACHED TO
THEM)

ELLEN

Oh, great. Our sales associate
didn't remove the alarm sensor.

PAIGE

Is it any wonder, Ellen? You
made him a nervous wreck.

ADAM

Poor guy was shaking so much, I
almost went and stood underneath
a doorway.

ELLEN

I really should send him flowers.

PAIGE

I don't get it. How'd we manage
to get out of the store without
setting the alarm off?

ADAM

Faulty equipment, probably.

ELLEN

That, or this is the Stealth
Bomber of alarmed culottes.

PAIGE

Adam, use those plier things to
cut it off.

ADAM

No way. There's ink inside.
It'll leak all over.

PAIGE

So? Maybe Audrey likes tie-dye.

ELLEN

No, Adam's right. Only the store
can remove it. We've got to take
it back.

ADAM

"We"? I'm not going back there
again.

PAIGE

Yeah. We're supposed to be
lounging at Ted's house.

ELLEN

It's on the way. Besides, I
refuse to shoulder the burden of
Audrey's unhappiness two years in
a row.

(DOOR OPENS AND AUDREY ENTERS. ELLEN STUFFS
THE CULOTTES BACK IN THE SHOPPING BAG)

AUDREY

Hi, Ellen. Hi, Paige. Hello,
Adam. Just stopped by to drop
off my rent check.

(AUDREY SKIPS OVER TO ADAM)

AUDREY (CONT'D)

Here you go, handsome.

(AUDREY SNIFFS THE AIR)

AUDREY (CONT'D)

Mmmm... You smell good!

ELLEN

You actually like that... that...

PAIGE

Odor.

AUDREY

It's so manly. So "Adam."

(ADAM TAKES THE BOTTLE OF COLOGNE AND DROPS IT
INTO THE TOTE BAG)

ADAM

Let's bury this on the way to the
mall.

AUDREY

You're going to the mall? I love
shopping. Can I come?

ELLEN

Actually, I'm just returning a
pair of new jeans that don't fit.

AUDREY

Doesn't surprise me, Ellen. You
are getting a bit "hippy".

PAIGE

See, Ellen? This is the thanks
you get.

(AUDREY HEADS FOR THE DOOR)

AUDREY

Hope they have a good return
policy. Where'd you buy them?

ELLEN

Barrington's.

AUDREY

Really? I hate that store. They
have awful clothes. Bye!

(AUDREY SKIPS OUT. ADAM AND PAIGE SMIRK AT
ELLEN)

ELLEN

Nobody say a word.

DISSOLVE TO:

SCENE 3INT. MALL - DAY

(Ellen, Adam, Paige, Security Guard, Mall Extras)

(ELLEN, ADAM AND PAIGE AT STORE ENTRANCE)

PAIGE

Why don't you wait here, Ellen?

ELLEN

But I want to make it up to our
sales associate. Take him to
lunch. Is Spago open now?

ADAM

The best thing you can do is keep
away from the employees.

(PAIGE HEADS FOR THE ENTRANCE WITH THE
SHOPPING BAG. ADAM FOLLOWS)

PAIGE

Adam, stay with Ellen. You're
smelling a little gamy and I'm
starting to get looks.

(PAIGE ENTERS STORE AND A VERY LOUD, HIGH-
PITCHED BEEP GOES OFF. PAIGE JUMPS)

PAIGE (CONT'D)

I don't suppose this means I'm
the one-millionth customer?

ELLEN

Paige, you just set off the store
alarm!

PAIGE

Adam, I thought you said this
stupid thing was broken!

ADAM

What do I know? I'm a
photographer, not MacGuyver.

(A NO-NONSENSE SECURITY GUARD APPROACHES THEM)

ELLEN

I bet you hear this all the time,
but that was a false alarm!

GUARD

May I see your bag, ma'am?

(PAIGE HANDS GUARD THE BAG. HE LOOKS INSIDE
AND PULLS OUT THE CULOTTES)

GUARD (CONT'D)

Do you have the receipt for
these?

PAIGE

Of course.

(PAIGE RUMMAGES THROUGH THE BAG. SHE CAN'T
FIND IT)

PAIGE

Actually, I don't. Thanks to
Ellen, the salesman forgot to
give it to me.

ELLEN

Paige, they so much prefer "sales
associate".

GUARD

You'll have to come with me,
then.

ADAM

But Paige wasn't stealing!

ELLEN

Yeah. If she was, she'd be walking out of the store, not in. And she was clearly walking in. See the difference? It's very simple. A moron could grasp the concept. Not that you're a moron.

(THE GUARD FOLDS HIS ARMS AND GLARES AT ELLEN)

ELLEN (CONT'D)

It takes smarts to be in your position. Even if you are just a rent-a-cop. Not that renting is a bad thing. Hell, I rent. Not a cop. An apartment actually. A lovely one-bedroom on Sweetzer. Charming. Spacious. Rent-controlled. Utilities included. There's a vacancy downstairs. You should check it out.

ADAM

Ellen...? That apartment was rented yesterday.

ELLEN

Well, whada ya know? Don't send out those change-of-address cards just yet!

DISSOLVE TO:

SCENE 4INT. SECURITY OFFICE - DAY

(Ellen, Adam, Paige, Store Detective)

(ELLEN, ADAM, AND PAIGE NERVOUSLY SIT IN FRONT
OF THE STORE DETECTIVE'S DESK)

DETECTIVE

Let's review the facts, Miss
Clark. You set off the store
alarm and have no receipt to show
proof-of-purchase. How does that
look to you?

PAIGE

Bad...?

DETECTIVE

Real bad.

ELLEN

And in any other case I'd suggest
a life term with no chance of
parole, but Paige is innocent.

ADAM

Yeah. Just ask our salesman-
associate.

PAIGE

That's right! He's my alibi.

DETECTIVE

Which department?

ELLEN

Petites. He was the Petite sales associate. Not that he was petite. He just worked in that department. If we were going strictly by body size, he'd be more of what you'd call "stocky".

(DETECTIVE PICKS UP PHONE AND DIALS)

DETECTIVE

This is store-detective Reese.

Let me speak to the salesman working the cash register.

(BEAT) I see. Thanks. (HANGS UP) Unfortunately, he left early for the day. Complaining of severe chest pains.

PAIGE

Way to go, Ellen. You've turned my star witness into a vegetable.

DETECTIVE

This store's policy is not to arrest anyone who doesn't have prior offenses. If this is your first offense, you'll walk.

PAIGE

Thank God!

ELLEN

This is definitely Paige's first offense. Actually, that's not true. Paige has offended lots of people. Waiters, valets, maitre d's. Hell, just this morning she offended my choice of culottes.

DETECTIVE

Criminal offense.

ELLEN

Oh. Duh! In that case, Paige is totally inoffensive. Offenseless. This girl is without offense.

DETECTIVE

I'm gonna run a standard check through the police department. If you're clean, you're free to go with just a slap on the wrist.

ELLEN

Hey, slap away. In fact, slap as hard as you want. There's no video cameras here to record police brutality. Promise I'll never claim you planted the culottes at the scene of the crime. Not that there is a crime

(MORE)

ELLEN (CONT'D)

scene to plant them at. Not that
you would ever plant them. Hell,
you probably can't even garden.
Me? I don't have a green thumb.
Never did.

(DETECTIVE PICKS UP PHONE AND DIALS)

DETECTIVE

Yeah. This is Reese over at the
Beverly Center. Run a check on a
Paige Clark.

(ELLEN, ADAM AND PAIGE WAIT WITH BAITED
BREATH)

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

Okay. Thanks.

ELLEN

So. Can we skedattle? Vamoose?
Hit the road Jack? Don't you
come back no more, no more, no
more, no more?

DETECTIVE

You're free to go, Miss Morgan,
Mr. Green.

PAIGE

Hey! What about me?!

DETECTIVE

You'll have to wait for the
police to arrive, Miss Clark.

PAIGE

Why?!

DETECTIVE

There's a warrant out for your
arrest.

PAIGE

Warrant?! For what?

DETECTIVE

Twelve unpaid parking tickets.

ELLEN

Paige...?

PAIGE

Whoops.

DISSOLVE TO:

SCENE 5INT. TED'S HOUSE - DAY

(Ellen, Adam, Cop #1, Cop #2)

(ELLEN AND ADAM RUSH UP TO THE FRONT DOOR OF A LAUREL CANYON HOME)

ELLEN

Paige said Ted left her money in
an envelope on his desk.

ADAM

Can you believe this? Five
hundred dollars for unpaid
parking tickets? That's highway
robbery!

ELLEN

Yeah. Can you imagine how high
the bail would be for highway
robbery?

(ELLEN APPROACHES THE ALARM PANEL. SHE'S
OVERWHELMED)

ELLEN (CONT'D)

Adam, this alarm looks kind of
complicated.

ADAM

Piece of cake. What's the code?

ELLEN

(TRYING TO RECALL) Let's see...

ADAM

Didn't Paige write it down for
you?

ELLEN

Adam, since when do they let
prisoners have access to sharp
objects? (BEAT) I think it's
67392. No, wait. That's the
number for my video store
membership. I know! It's 82495!

ADAM

You sure that's it?

ELLEN

Absolutely. I'd never be able to
rent a movie with it.

(ELLEN ENTERS THE CODE. THERE'S A BEEP)

ADAM

See how easy? Any idiot could do
it!

(ELLEN UNLOCKS THE DOOR AND OPENS IT. THE
ALARM GOES OFF. ELLEN AND ADAM JUMP)

ELLEN

Apparently not this idiot.

ADAM

What do we do?

ELLEN

Grab the cash and get out of
here!

INT. TED'S HOUSE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

(ELLEN AND ADAM RUSH INSIDE. PHONE RINGS.
ELLEN HESITATES, THEN ANSWERS IT)

ELLEN

Hello? (TO ADAM) It's the alarm company! (TO PHONE) Who am I?
Ha! Who are you? Just kidding.
I'm a big kidder. Actually, I'm a friend of Ted's. A one-night stand. We met at a bar. Not a pick-up bar. A salad bar. I'm a vegetarian. Do you wear fur?
(BEAT) Well you shouldn't. Shame on you. (BEAT) The password? I'm not good at guessing games. But Scrabble? That's another story completely.

ADAM

(COUNTING) One, two, three, four, five hundred dollars. All here.

ELLEN

Well, we found the money. Gotta go. I'm free for Bingo Friday night. Bu-bye now.

(ELLEN HANGS UP PHONE. ALARM STOPS. ALL IS QUIET)

ELLEN (CONT'D)

Close call, huh?

(THEN WE HEAR HELICOPTERS BUZZING OVERHEAD AND POLICE SIRENS IN THE DISTANCE)

ADAM

Ellen, what's that?

ELLEN

I could be wrong, but they're either filming a Steven Segal movie next door, or we're under siege.

(PHONE RINGS AGAIN)

ELLEN

Good news! Alarm is off! (BEAT)
Paige?! (TO ADAM) It's Paige.
She's making her "one phone call." (TO PHONE) What? I didn't say "alarm is off". No, you see, I have a piece of hard candy in my mouth. What I said was, "Ellem", which of course sounded like "alarm", when in fact I was saying "Ellen. Ellen is off... from work!" Meaning I'm not at the bookstore. I'm "off" from the bookstore.
Getting your bail money.

(THE HELICOPTERS GET NOISIER)

ELLEN

Helicopters? Oh! Adam found a cassette of "Apocalypse Now." And right now were enjoying the visual mastery of Francis Ford Coppola. But for my money, you

(MORE)

ELLEN (CONT'D)

can't beat the "Godfather"
trilogy.

(ADAM LOOKS OUT WINDOW)

ADAM

Ellen, there are cops coming up
the driveway!

ELLEN

Paige, we have your bail. We're
on our way. And Paige?! Don't
sit on the toilets!

(ELLEN HANGS UP)

ADAM

Hide!

(ADAM STRUGGLES WITH A CLOSET DOOR. ELLEN
GETS IN THE TANNING BED AND CLOSES LID. TWO
COPS ENTER BRANDISHING GUNS)

COP #!

Freeze!

(ADAM PUTS HIS HANDS UP IN THE AIR, CLUTCHING
THE MONEY)

ADAM

Frozen. Cold as ice, sir.

COP #1

All right. Step outside.

(ADAM EXITS. THE COPS FOLLOW. ELLEN'S
SANDWICHED INTO THE TANNING BED AND CAN'T
GET OUT)

ELLEN

Hello...? Adam? Help. Please.
Somebody get me out of here.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWOSCENE 1INT. JAIL - DAY

(Ellen, Adam, Paige, Guard)

(PAIGE IS IN A CELL. A GUARD ESCORTS ADAM
DOWN THE HALL)

ADAM

Hi, Paige.

PAIGE

Adam, thank God! Post my bail so
we can get out of here.

ADAM

I can't. The money's being held
as evidence.

PAIGE

For what?

ADAM

Burglary. The police think I was
robbing Ted's house.

(GUARD PUTS ADAM INTO THE ADJOINING CELL)

PAIGE

The police were at Ted's house?
Do you realize how majorly
screwed I am? He's going to find
out I had people up there!

ADAM

You think I'm thrilled having a police record? Hell, I never even got detention in grammar school.

PAIGE

Oh, stop complaining. You don't know humiliation till you've posed for a mug shot with a zit the size of Madagascar.

(ELLEN RUSHES IN. HER FACE IS COMPLETELY RED FROM THE TANNING BED)

ELLEN

Adam. Paige. I got here as quick as I could. The cops spent an hour dusting Ted's place for fingerprints. The house is immaculate. His cleaning woman can take a month off.

ADAM

What happened to your face?

ELLEN

Would you believe embarrassment? Yeah. I get all red and flustered when I'm embarrassed. I'm so embarrassed by what's happened, that I can't stop blushing.

PAIGE

Ellen, you've got to get us out of here!

ADAM

And fast! I know what happens in
prison showers!

PAIGE

We need the bail money.

ELLEN

I know. I know. I'm going to
the bank.

PAIGE

It's Sunday. Banks are closed.

ELLEN

So I'll use the automatic teller
machine.

ADAM

Ellen, they only dispense three
hundred bucks a day. Our
combined bail is a thousand
dollars.

ELLEN

Well then, I'll just borrow it
from the bookstore. Also known
as "The Bank of Ellen." Where
the tellers are cheerful, helpful
and always greet customers with a
smile.

(ELLEN FLASHES A CHEERY, PLASTIC SMILE)

ELLEN (CONT'D)

See...?

PAIGE

(SCREAMING) Get the money,
Ellen!

ELLEN

Okay. Okay.

(ELLEN HEADS FOR THE EXIT)

ADAM

Ellen? One more thing. See if
I'm entitled to conjugal visits.

DISSOLVE TO:

SCENE 2INT. BUY THE BOOK - DAY

(Ellen, Joe, Customer)

(JOE WALKS THE LAST CUSTOMER OUT THE DOOR)

JOE

Thanks for shopping Buy the Book.

(JOE'S ABOUT TO LOCK UP WHEN ELLEN BARGES IN
AND RUNS OVER TO THE CASH REGISTER. SHE
FRANTICALLY PULLS OUT MONEY)

JOE

Stealing the company funds,
Ellen?

ELLEN

Not now Joe, I'm in a big hurry.

JOE

I'm sure. Gotta make that last
flight out to South America.

ELLEN

I'm just taking a small loan.

JOE

You in some kind of trouble?

ELLEN

It's Paige and Adam actually.
I've got to bail them out of
jail.

JOE

Whoa, whoa, whoa. Go back two
steps. How did they end up
there?

ELLEN

Culottes. It's a long story.

JOE

Gee, I knew wearing culottes was a fashion crime, but I had no idea it could land you in The Big House.

ELLEN

Between the two of them, they're facing charges of shoplifting, burglary, breaking & entering, not to mention a fortune in unpaid parking tickets.

JOE

And to think, only this morning you were complaining what a boring weekend it's been.

ELLEN

The point is, I'm totally responsible for this mess. If I don't spring them from jail, they'll hate me forever.

(ELLEN TAKES MONEY OUT OF REGISTER AND COUNTS IT)

ELLEN (CONT'D)

Oh, no. I'm still short three hundred dollars.

(ELLEN GRABS THE TIP-JAR OFF OF JOE'S COUNTER)

ELLEN (CONT'D)

Here, let's roll pennies.

JOE

Ellen, calm down. Your face is extremely flushed. I'll be happy to lend you the money.

ELLEN

Really?

JOE

Of course. I'll give you a cash advance on my credit card.

ELLEN

That is so nice, Joe.

JOE

You bet. Of course, I will be forced to add a surcharge equal to the compounded daily interest.

ELLEN

A small price to pay for freedom.

JOE

And then there's the matter of the new cappuccino maker...

ELLEN

What new cappuccino maker?

JOE

The one you've been too cheap to splurge for.

ELLEN

Joe, we have a perfectly good
cappuccino maker, that dispenses
piping-hot cappuccino to the
delight of many a satisfied
return customer.

JOE

Could be even better, flowing
from the spout of a state-of-the-
art model.

ELLEN

This is blackmail, Joe. I will
not be coerced.

JOE

Good luck explaining that to Adam
and Paige when they're denied
parole in six months.

ELLEN

Okay, it's yours. Anything else?

JOE

That's it for now. We'll talk
about my raise tomorrow.

DISSOLVE TO:

SCENE 3EXT. BANK - DAY

(Ellen, Joe, Cop)

(ELLEN AND JOE AT ATM)

JOE

Hey, this is new. We have not
two, but four language options.
English, Spanish, Japanese and
Farsi.

ELLEN

I'll go with "English" for three
hundred, Alex.

JOE

Did I ever tell you that I
studied Farsi in college? Let's
see if I still remember any of
it.

ELLEN

There's no time, Joe. Adam and
Paige are rotting away in a dank,
dark cell.

JOE

Indulge me.

(JOE INSERTS HIS BANK CARD INTO THE MACHINE.
HE CRACKS HIS KNUCKLES LIKE A SAFE CRACKER,
THEN ENTERS A CODE. MACHINE BEEPS)

JOE

Impossible!

ELLEN

What?

JOE

I know my Farsi's a little rusty,
but that either says I entered
the wrong PIN number, or "I am
the fairest maiden in the land".

ELLEN

Well you're not, so just try it
again.

(JOE RE-ENTERS HIS CODE. MACHINE BEEPS)

JOE

I don't understand this.

ELLEN

What? More insults?

JOE

Same one.

ELLEN

Try it in English Joe! English!

JOE

Not so fast. There's no way I'm
gonna let this machine beat me.

(JOE ENTERS HIS CODE ONCE MORE. THE MACHINE
MAKES A WEIRD GRINDING NOISE)

JOE (CONT'D)

Damn! This thing just ate my
card!

ELLEN

Ate? What do you mean ate? Get
it back. Induce vomiting! I
need that money!

(JOE PRESSES MORE BUTTONS. NOTHING. HE
STARTS POUNDING ON THE MACHINE)

JOE

Give it back! Give it back!

(JOE KICKS THE MACHINE)

JOE (CONT'D)

Mechanical glutton! Give it back

I say!

ELLEN

Maybe you should try yelling at

it in Farsi.

(JOE CONTINUES POUNDING ON MACHINE. A COP
WALKS BY AND NOTICES. ELLEN TURNS AND SEES
THE COP. SHE TAPS JOE ON THE SHOULDER, BUT HE
WON'T STOP BEATING THE MACHINE)

ELLEN (CONT'D)

Um, Joe...?

CUT TO:

SCENE 4INT. JAIL - DAY

(Ellen, Adam, Paige, Joe, Guard)

(THE GUARD PUTS JOE INTO ADAM'S CELL)

ADAM

My God, is that woman cursed?

PAIGE

What's your crime, Joe? Selling
day-old scone?

JOE

Try "attacking a federally-
insured financial institution"
while attempting to get your bail
money.

ADAM

Joe, you scofflaw!

(ELLEN ENTERS TENTATIVELY)

ELLEN

I'm sure you guys really hate me
and would love nothing more than
to beat the crap out of me, but I
think it's best you don't, cause
they'd probably throw you in the
slammer. But hey, you're already
here, so go ahead. Whale on me.
I deserve to be whaled upon. I
am your whale-eee.

PAIGE

What about our bail money Ellen?

ELLEN

Well, it does seem, for the time
being, that I don't have it.

ADAM

Well borrow it from somebody!

PAIGE

Yeah. Ask your parents.

ELLEN

Paige, my mother always said
you'd end up in jail. Do we
really want to give her that
satisfaction?

(PAIGE SHUTS UP)

JOE

What about Audrey?

ADAM

Yeah! She'd spring us in a
second. (BEAT) Well, me anyway.

ELLEN

I'm afraid that's completely out
of the question.

PAIGE

Excuse me?

ELLEN

If I ask Audrey, then I'll have
to explain the entire story and
it would ruin her surprise party.

ADAM

Ellen, there's not going to be a party. All of her guests are behind bars!

ELLEN

Well, the good news is that I made some phone calls -- right after they threw Joe into the paddy wagon -- and I've gathered evidence that will set you free.

JOE

So we can leave?

ELLEN

Not yet. The bad news is that the evidence won't be faxed to the judge until morning.

PAIGE

You mean we have to spend the entire night here?

ELLEN

Come on, Paige. Make the most of your incarceration. You've always talked about getting a vanity license plate. I think they make those here.

ADAM

And me?

ELLEN

Adam, you've always dreamt of getting a tattoo to impress the ladies. I'm sure one of the more artistic inmates could oblige you.

JOE

And what am I supposed to get out of this "life experience"?

ELLEN

Joe, I think this would be a wonderful opportunity for you to brush-up on your Farsi.

PAIGE

Ellen, I really don't want to stay here overnight.

(THE GUARD APPROACHES. ELLEN'S GUILT-RIDDEN)

GUARD

Visiting hours are over, miss.

ELLEN

Oh, just a few more minutes.

GUARD

Sorry. Time to go.

ELLEN

But I can't leave them here all alone!

GUARD

Those are the rules.

(ADAM, PAIGE AND JOE LOOK ABSOLUTELY PATHETIC.
ELLEN IS TORN, THEN:)

ELLEN

Hey, look! O.J.'s making a break
for it!

(THE GUARD LOOKS DOWN THE HALL. ELLEN SWIPES
THE HANDCUFFS FROM GUARD'S BELT, SLAPS THEM ON
HER WRIST, THEN ONTO THE CELL BARS)

GUARD

What do you think you're doing?

ELLEN

I'm not about to leave my best
friends in this horrible place!

(GUARD UNLOCKS THE CUFFS, UNLOCKS PAIGE'S CELL
AND PUTS ELLEN INSIDE)

GUARD

You want to spend time with your
friends? Well now you've got all
night.

(GUARD EXITS)

PAIGE

Ellen, that was so sweet.

ADAM

Yeah. I take back every horrible
thing I said about you while I
was being fingerprinted.

JOE

I don't. Okay, I do. Except for
my diatribe during the frisking.

ELLEN

Hey! This is kind of fun! Like
a big sleep-over. (BEAT) Paige,
can I have the top bunk?

SCENE 5INT. COURTROOM - DAY

(Ellen, Adam, Paige, Joe, Judge, Courtroom Extras)

(ELLEN, ADAM, PAIGE AND JOE ARE SEATED TO THE SIDE IN THE HOLDING TANK. JUDGE IS SEATED AT THE BENCH)

JUDGE

Next matter is People vs. Paige
Clark. Will the defendant please
rise?

(PAIGE GETS UP AND STANDS BEFORE THE JUDGE.
ELLEN JOINS HER)

JUDGE (CONT'D)

You've been charged with
shoplifting. How do you plead?

PAIGE

Not guilty.

JUDGE

Hearing is set for one week from
today. (SNIFFS) What's that
nasty smell? Bailiff, please
check the air vents for dead
rodents.

(ADAM COVERS HIS FACE IN SHAME)

ELLEN

Excuse me, your Honor?

JUDGE

Yes?

ELLEN

A hearing won't be necessary.
You see, there's been a huge
misunderstanding.

JUDGE

This is not a trial. It's an
arraignment.

ELLEN

Yes, and I realize this isn't the
time or the place. Well
actually, it is the place since
we're in a courtroom.

JUDGE

And you are...?

ELLEN

Ellen Morgan.

JUDGE

Counsel for the defense?

ELLEN

Nope. Just plain old Ellen.
Citizen. Tax Payer. "Joan Q.
Public".

JUDGE

You're not an attorney?

ELLEN

No, but I never missed an episode
of "LA Law". Was that Harry
Hamlin the cat's meow, or what?

JUDGE

Miss Morgan, I've got a very heavy case load--

ELLEN

And I'm prepared to make it much lighter. Your honor, may I have a sidebar?

JUDGE

Very well. Approach.

(ELLEN APPROACHES THE BENCH)

ELLEN

Not only can I clear up People vs. Paige Clark, but also People vs. Adam Green and People vs. Joseph Farrel.

JUDGE

This is a highly irregular request, Miss Morgan.

ELLEN

But if you'll just hear me out, I can save the city of Los Angeles thousands of valuable tax dollars. And let's face it. After the Simpson trial, there's what? Maybe twenty bucks left in the kitty?

JUDGE

(CONCEDING) You have a point. Proceed.

ELLEN

You see, it all started with my friend Audrey. You haven't met her yet, but you'll love her. Actually you'll hate her. We all do. We love-hate our friend Audrey. She's really irritating, and yet I'm throwing her a surprise birthday party. Go figure.

JUDGE

Continue, Miss Morgan.

ELLEN

Anyway, Paige and I tried to return the culottes we bought as Audrey's gift.

JUDGE

Culottes? It's 1995, Miss Morgan. Who wears culottes?

(PAIGE GIVES ELLEN AN "I TOLD YOU SO" LOOK)

ELLEN

You'd be surprised. Throw on a Gap-T, cinch it with a belt and you're good-to-go.

JUDGE

Madame reporter, how's your paper? This may be a long one.

(COURT REPORTER GIVES JUDGE THE THUMBS UP)

DISSOLVE TO:

(AN HOUR LATER. THE JUDGE IS COMPLETELY BORED)

ELLEN

And so, these signed affidavits from our sales associate, Paige's boss, along with the photocopy of Joe's mangled bank-card, will prove, beyond a reasonable doubt, that all three are innocent of the charges brought against them.

JUDGE

Are you done now?

ELLEN

Yes. Except to say that you're invited to Audrey's birthday party. And Madame Reporter, too. And please, bring "Mrs. Honor."
(BEAT) Not that you're married. Could be gay. In which case you'd want to bring your "Significant Honor."

JUDGE

After listening to Miss Morgan's powerful, albeit tedious argument, the court finds Miss Clark, Mr. Green and Mr. Farrel innocent and dismisses the charges against them.

(ELLEN, ADAM, PAIGE AND JOE ALL HUG)

JUDGE (CONT'D)

The culottes are remanded to the custody of Miss Morgan. The five hundred dollars in question is hereby forfeited as payment for Miss Clark's traffic offenses.

(ELLEN, ADAM, PAIGE AND JOE HEAD FOR THE EXIT)

JUDGE (CONT'D)

Just a minute, Miss Morgan. There's still the matter of your little handcuff stunt.

ELLEN

That was pretty nutty, huh?

JUDGE

It was interfering with an officer in the line of duty. Therefore, I sentence you to two hundred hours of community service.

ELLEN

Hey, I love the community! And I love service! Put 'em together and I'm the happiest gal in town.

JUDGE

Please don't let me see you in my courtroom again. This court is adjourned.

ELLEN

I really hate those culottes.

TAGINT. ELLEN'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

(Ellen, Adam, Paige, Joe, Audrey)

(A "HAPPY BIRTHDAY" BANNER HANGS. BALLOONS ARE EVERYWHERE. THERE'S A KNOCK AT THE DOOR)

ELLEN

That's Audrey. Everyone hide.

(ADAM, PAIGE AND JOE JUST STAND THERE. ELLEN FLICKS OFF LIGHTS. DOOR OPENS AND AUDREY SKIPS IN)

AUDREY

Ellen, did you forget to pay the electricity bill again?

(ELLEN FLICKS ON LIGHTS)

ALL

Surprise!!!!!!!!!!

AUDREY

(THRILLED) Oh my God! A party!
Good thing I got dressed up.

ELLEN

Come on in, Audrey.

AUDREY

Ooooh. Nasty burn Ellen. You really ought to use a sun-block. The damage from the ozone will make you look even older than you do already.

(AUDREY SITS ON THE COUCH)

AUDREY

So. Whose birthday is it?

ELLEN

Ha, ha. Very funny Audrey. You thought I forgot again, didn't you?

(ELLEN HANDS AUDREY A PLASTIC BAG)

ELLEN (CONT'D)

It's from the group. We didn't have time to wrap it. Happy Birthday, Audrey

ADAM/PAIGE/JOE

(INSINCERELY) Happy Birthday.

AUDREY

Ellen, you silly. My birthday is next month.

(ADAM, PAIGE AND JOE GLARE AT ELLEN)

ELLEN

It can't be. You sure? Cause if it is, then they should change it.

AUDREY

I think I know my own birthday, Ellen.

ELLEN

Well then, think of this as an early gift.

AUDREY

Or a very late one from last year. Which means you still have

(MORE)

AUDREY (CONT'D)

a month to get me something for
this year.

(AUDREY HOLDS UP THE PLASTIC BAG. IT'S MARKED
"EVIDENCE")

AUDREY

"Evidence"? I don't know this
store. Is it new?

ELLEN

Yup. Right next to the Criminal
Courts Building. Everything
there is practically a steal.

(AUDREY OPENS BAG AND REMOVES THE CULOTTES)

AUDREY

Culottes!? I love culottes.

They're perfect, Ellen!

(ELLEN SMILES AT ADAM, PAIGE AND JOE. SHE'S
VINDICATED)

AUDREY (CONT'D)

Except for one small problem.

ELLEN

What's that?

AUDREY

The store alarm is still attached
to it. Would you mind taking
them back so they can remove it?

(ADAM, PAIGE AND JOE RUN OUT OF THE APARTMENT.
ELLEN PICKS UP A PARTY HORN AND BLOWS INTO IT)

FADE OUT.

THE END