ellen

ELLEN

"Felonious Culottes"

written by

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AGENT: Writers & Artists
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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 1

INT. 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 biohazard 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 2

INT. 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.

(Doors open 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 3

INT. 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)


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 4
INT. 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, maître 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 5

INT. 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?

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 #1
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 TWO

SCENE 1

INT. 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 2

INT. 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 3

EXT. 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 SAFECRACKER, 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 SHOULDHER, BUT HE WON'T STOP BEATING THE MACHINE)

ELLEN (CONT'D)

Um, Joe...?
SCENE 4

INT. 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 5

INT. 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

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
(CONCEDED) 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:
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.
TAG

INT. 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