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NBC CASTING

FORMER FAT GIRL

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JANUARY 14, 2014

TRUE JACK PRODUCTIONS
12233 W. OLYMPIC BLVD, SUITE 380
LOS ANGELES, CA 90064

ACT ONE

INT. OFFICE BULLPEN. DAY.

ELLEN's POV: We float through a nondescript office, passing ordinary looking people milling around their cubicles.

ELLEN (V.O.)
My whole life I've been invisible. I can float through crowds of people without having any of them see me. Sometimes it's kinda fun.

She turns into a COPY ROOM - finds a COUPLE secretly making out. They glance up at her, then go back to making out.

ELLEN (V.O.)
Sometimes not.

A GROSS GUY scratches his butt right in front of her. He looks right at her, and just keeps on going.

ELLEN (V.O.)
But every now and then I remember I'm *not* invisible. Far from it.

REVERSE to reveal ELLEN (32) sweet, naive and obese, squeezing into a crowded elevator. People in the elevator shift to make room.

FAT ELLEN
Whoo. Tight squeeze. Whoever's boob that is, I'm very sorry.
(people grumble)
Ok. How 'bout I grab the next one.

But she's stuck now, unable to extract herself.

FAT ELLEN (CONT'D)
Well. Seems like I'm in it to win it. Okay. Down we go.

The doors don't close. We hear a small TOOT. Ellen's humiliation intensifies. Still she keeps smiling.

FAT ELLEN (CONT'D)
Okay, that was me. We all know that was me. Can anyone reach the "door close" button?

The doors start to close, then jam. A VOICE comes over the speaker -

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ELEVATOR VOICE
You have exceeded the weight limit. Please remove the excess weight.

FAT ELLEN
Hey, Elevator - you're channeling my mother! Heh heh. Okay, you all have fun. Off you go!

Ellen extracts herself and waves at the people inside as the door closes. Alone, Ellen finally allows her smile to fade.

ELLEN (V.O.)
There comes a moment when you can't take it anymore. And it doesn't happen when your doctor lectures you on diabetes. It happens when you get angry.

INT. AUDITORIUM. GREEN MOUNTAIN WEIGHT LOSS CENTER. DAY.

Ellen (still overweight) addresses other overweight people.

ELLEN
Me, I got angry. But I'm not here to dwell on what happened. Nelda says "dwelling" is a fast track back to fat track pants.
(then)
You gotta work on that, Nelda - that is a real mouthful.

ANGLE on camp counselor NELDA (indeterminate age, stocky, stern). She gives Ellen a business-like thumbs up.

ELLEN (CONT'D)
I'm here because I don't want to be a ghost anymore. I want to be a part of the game. So here goes: in the next nine months, I am going to get thin. I am going to become Thin Ellen. And everything -- <u>everything</u> -- is going to change!

OVER SHOTS OF ELLEN: working out, sweating, dieting, etc.

ELLEN (V.O.)
Thin Ellen will wear jaunty hats, and wink and wave. Thin Ellen will shimmy, whether or not there's any music playing. Thin Ellen will say things like "ooh la la" and it won't be weird... Thin Ellen will be <u>different</u>.

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INT. OFFICE BULLPEN. DAY.

The ELEVATOR DOOR OPENS. Ellen emerges -- 100 pounds thinner but still a work in progress. Think Bridget Jones. Wearing a jaunty hat and a slim black dress, she saunters down the hall with a newfound confidence. Ellen winks and waves --

ELLEN
(quietly to herself)
Wink. Wave.

-- and does a sexy shimmy as she makes her way down the hall.

ELLEN (CONT'D)
Annnnd a shimmy!

She flirts with a passing MAIL CLERK -

ELLEN (CONT'D)
Ooh la la!

The Clerk glances at her strangely. Ellen arrives at her desk. Basks in the attention as her CO-WORKERS, like moths to a flame, move to her cubicle.

ELLEN (CONT'D)
(brimming with confidence)
Hello, everyone. I'm back. I look different, n'est-ce pas? Well, if you must know, I lost 100 pounds!

All of Ellen's Co-Workers cluster around her desk, taking her in. She starts to crumble, unused to this kind of attention.

ELLEN (CONT'D)
Why is everyone looking at me? It's the hat, right? You hate the hat. Forget it. Forget it happened. Everyone stop looking at me!
(quietly toots again)
Oh boy.

SMASH TO MAIN TITLES

INT. ACCOUNTING FIRM. LATER.

All of Ellen's CO-WORKERS stare at her with frozen smiles. She stares back with the same frozen smile.

ELLEN (V.O.)
They prepared us for this at fat camp. When you're newly thin, people project a lot of their own weird stuff on you.

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JUMP CUT. ON MELISSA (late 30s, suspicious and insecure).

MELISSA
(deadpan)
I'm happy for you. I mean, I used to be the only hot one in the office. But now there's two of us.
(beat)
Yay.

JUMP CUT. ON CRAIG (30s, too clueless to be mean).

CRAIG
You know that people used to call you James Gandolfini? I feel like I can tell you that now.

ELLEN (V.O.)
We work in the Billing department of an accounting firm. You don't get this job because you're socially graceful.

JUMP CUT. NICHOLAS (late 20s, hipster glasses, scarf, weird sneakers) talks to Ellen -

NICHOLAS
(intense, beside himself)
We're just prisoners of other people's perceptions - I mean, you get that now, right?

JUMP CUT. ABBY (30s, intense, Tracy Flick type).

ABBY
How was the spa? No, I know it was a wellness center. But when I was staying late, doing all your work, it was fun to imagine you at the spa. How was the masseuse? Did she use the right pressure?

BACK TO CRAIG.

CRAIG
Then James Gandolfini died. What a blow. People didn't feel right calling you that anymore. So they started calling you John Goodman. God, I hope he doesn't die too.

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ELLEN (V.O.)
I've worked here for 7 years, so I know this is their way of showing love.

CRAIG
(sees something)
Guys. He's here.

INT. OFFICE. 12TH FLOOR. ELEVATOR AREA. MOMENTS LATER.

Craig, Melissa, Abby and Nicholas head to the elevator where BRIAN (30s, solid and sane, the undisputed leader/mayor of the 12th floor) is emerging. They trail him as he walks.

CRAIG
Brian, my thumb's twitching. What does that mean? Here, watch.
(holds up his thumb)
Of course it's not going to do it now. Come on, thumb!

BRIAN
Craig, you're fine. Your thumb's fine. Do not under <u>any</u> circumstances Google "twitching thumb".

ABBY
Brian, I have bad news. We have lost the war on drugs.

BRIAN
Abby, sometimes the mailroom guys smoke up in the copy room. It's fine--

Then Brian sees Ellen. He reacts - stunned.

BRIAN (CONT'D)
Wow. Hey. Wow.
(hugs her)
You're um...

ELLEN
Way less fat?

BRIAN
You look good.

They share an awkward hug. As Brian pulls back, he feels Craig right next to him.

NBC CASTING

CRAIG
I Googled “twitching thumb” and it said I have “Nybort Syndrome”. It’s fatal.

BRIAN
Guys, I need a minute. Ellen, inside?

INT. 12TH FLOOR. BRIAN’S OFFICE. CONTINUOUS.

Ellen follows Brian into his tiny shoebox office.

BRIAN
Well, you missed nothing while you were gone. Except I did perfect the game we made up--

ELLEN
“How can you kill yourself using only the items on your desk?”

BRIAN
Finally I have the answer.

ELLEN
I know. You drunk-texted me at camp and told me about your highlighter.

Brian takes a deep drag off an orange highlighter.

BRIAN
(smiling)
I don’t know what they put in this thing, but it’s gonna take me down. Anyway, if I sounded miserable in my emails, it’s only because you put me in charge of all of your weird office traditions.

ELLEN
I prefer the term “morale booster” and they’re crucial to how we do business.

BRIAN
Crucial?

POP TO:

FLASHBACK. INT. OFFICE.

Craig stands at the copier, fighting a jammed piece of paper. FAT ELLEN pops up behind him.

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FAT ELLEN
Y'all, we got ourselves a paper jam. You know what that means!

Everyone gets up as Ellen leads them in a synchronized rap/dance.

FAT ELLEN/EVERYBODY
(to "Pump Up the Jam")
Pa- paper jam. Paper jam...Get the paper out of the tray tonight, make my day...

BACK TO PRESENT.

ELLEN
That was my main cardio back then.

BRIAN
I did keep up Movie Night. Every Thursday. In fact, tomorrow is a special edition to welcome you back. Oh, that reminds me -- I have something for you.

He guides Ellen through the bullpen to a closed door. He opens it to reveal a tiny closet with a desk in it.

BRIAN (CONT'D)
You've been here 7 years, felt like it was time you had an office.

ELLEN
Isn't this where the janitor keeps the mops?

BRIAN
It is. And I walked in on him once doing some pretty weird stuff in here. I still see it in my dreams.

ELLEN
Brian, this is amazing. And smell that ammonia!
(then)
But I have to tell you - I'm not going to be here long.

BRIAN
But...you just got back.

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ELLEN
I did a lot of visualization when I was at Green Mountain. And I realized I want more than this.

BRIAN
Look, I get that your office still has a bucket in it.
(checks)
And that the bucket has a dead mouse in it, but it's an improvement.

ELLEN
No no. I mean, I want to break out of Billing. You know? Go rub elbows with the big dogs. Maybe make partner someday.

BRIAN
(stifles a laugh)
Partner? Ellen, you work in Billing.

ELLEN
I know it sounds crazy. But I have a plan. How to rise up in the company. First stop: the 14th floor.

BRIAN
(incredulous)
Client Relations?

ELLEN (V.O.)
(dreamily)
Client Relations...

DREAM SEQUENCE. INT. 14TH FLOOR. DAY.

The coolest, most retro party you've ever been to. Mad Men meets Paris. LUCY (late 30s, gorgeous) and her partner JERRY (late 30s, impossibly handsome and charming) entertain clients in a speakeasy type atmosphere.

ELLEN (V.O.)
They're the coolest people in the firm. They're smart and sophisticated and they drink bourbon in the middle of the day...

STING and MALCOLM GLADWELL drift into frame.

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STING
That's why I love your writing, Malcolm Gladwell.

MALCOLM GLADWELL
I feel the same way about your lute-playing, Sting.

END DREAM SEQUENCE.

Brian looks at Ellen, confused.

ELLEN
Okay, I've never actually been on 14, so that might not be accurate. But I bet I'm close.

BRIAN
Is this about Jerry? Because I don't even think he's that great.

POP TO:

FLASHBACK. INT. OFFICE HALLWAY.

JERRY saunters down the hall, like Superman meets Tom Cruise, when his ASSISTANT rushes up to him--

ASSISTANT
The Montrose deal is about to fall through--

JERRY
(picture of calm)
Get Roger on the phone.

The Assistant dials a cell as Jerry, not breaking stride, passes a MAN frustratedly pushing the ELEVATOR BUTTON, which isn't lighting up -- he casually pushes it once and the ELEVATOR OPENS INSTANTLY, and he walks on as the man smiles at him and his assistant hands him the phone--

JERRY (CONT'D)
Roger, why is my deal falling through?

He walks past a woman trying to CALM her crying baby.

WOMAN
Shhh! Shhh!

Jerry gestures -- may I? She hands him the baby. He lays it on a COUCH and RE-SWADDLES IT --

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JERRY
(super calm)
Roger, there's no need to blow everything up. What if we lower our commission by a point and a half?

He's done re-swaddling, and the baby is perfectly calm. Jerry hands it back to the mother and keeps walking--

JERRY (CONT'D)
Great. Glad to hear it. Let's play golf tomorrow.

He tosses the phone back to his assistant and swivels to a nearby CHOKING MAN (DOUG), casually performing the Heimlich on him. Doug spits out his food, saved.

JERRY (CONT'D)
Bite off more than you can chew there, Doug?

Doug laughs. Jerry winks and walks off. Everyone (including Fat Ellen) looks after him in awe.

BACK TO PRESENT.

BRIAN
While you were gone, he pulled a family out of a burning car on the highway, and everyone made this big deal out of it.

ELLEN
Well, I never really bought into the Jerry hype.

Brian looks at Ellen incredulously.

FLASHBACK. INT. OFFICE. A YEAR AGO.

FAT ELLEN plays guitar as she leads a bunch of other ladies (including Melissa) in song. They all wear shirts with Jerry's face on them.

FAT ELLEN
(singing)
He's so great / He's so cute / I love him / The Jerry song!

END FLASHBACK.

ELLEN
That was the old me. I'm cool now. I'm like a Pink Lady.

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BRIAN
If you were cool, you wouldn't be referencing a 35 year old musical.

ELLEN
I want to be Jerry's colleague now. Talk to him about eCommerce, and Syria, and Richard Branson. I'm not "James Gandolfini" anymore.

BRIAN
I thought people called you "old school Al Roker."

ELLEN
It's really always a dude, isn't it?

BRIAN
Look Ellen, you don't want the office, that's fine. I gotta go work.

Brian walks off, clearly feeling rejected. Ellen feels bad.

ELLEN
(calling after him)
You know the mop is still in here!

INT. 12TH FLOOR. COPY ROOM. DAY.

Melissa shows Ellen pictures on her phone.

MELISSA
Oh, and here's a little photo essay I did. I call it: "Jerry's Parking Spot: Dawn."

ELLEN
So you're still just as into Jerry?

In gossip mode, Ellen grabs for a nearby bag of CHIPS. Then, remembering herself, she hands the bag to Melissa.

ELLEN (CONT'D)
Take these, please. Because when you told me you hooked up with Craig -

Melissa dumps the chips in a nearby garbage can.

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MELISSA
I was very emotional that night. I'd had three glasses of wine, I was feeling very pessimistic about Jennifer Aniston's wedding and anyway, I made a mistake. And I know when I start dating Jerry, he's gonna find out and it'll be a whole thing--

Ellen goes to the garbage can, takes the chips out.

ELLEN
Maybe you should just date Craig.

MELISSA
Ellen. What are you doing?

REVEAL Ellen whole arm is in the garbage can as she digs around, looking for a bag of chips.

ELLEN
You can't just throw away the chips. You have to destroy them. Like do you have a lighter or a small bomb?

Melissa rolls her eyes, takes the chips and puts them in her purse.

MELISSA
I know that technically, Jerry doesn't know I exist. But we've had eye contact that was intense enough to be foreplay.

Nicholas enters, approaches Ellen.

NICHOLAS
So Brian says you want something fun and celebratory for Movie Night. So if I may make a suggestion...

He hands Ellen a DVD. She looks at it.

ELLEN
"City of Sadness" by Hsiao-hsien Hou.

Melissa takes the DVD and reads off the back.

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MELISSA
"A devastating portrait of Tibet during the crushing White Reign".

NICHOLAS
See, that makes it sound less funny than it is.

ELLEN
It doesn't sound funny at all.

NICHOLAS
If I know you, you'll giggle. It's like "Airplane", except you're learning something, and you're less stupid at the end of it, and you appreciate art. So. Think about it. And then pick it. But think about it.

Nicholas walks out. Ellen turns to Melissa.

ELLEN
Don't think I've forgotten about those chips. I know they're in your purse and I am not scared to mug you.

INT. 12TH FLOOR. BREAK ROOM. DAY.

Abby holds a ziploc baggie of evidence as she talks to Brian.

BRIAN
Abby, I'm not calling the DA because you found an old joint in the copy room. In fact, I'm starting to think you should smoke this yourself.

ABBY
HA HA!... Ha? Is that an order? Because you are my supervisor--

Brian shakes his head and tries to exit, crossing with Ellen. He's relieved to see the only other normal person he knows -

BRIAN
So glad you're home.

Brian walks out of the room. Ellen looks after him, smiles.

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INT. ELLEN'S HOUSE. LATER.

Ellen eats dinner, as JOANNA (Ellen's mom, 50s, way too invested in Ellen's newfound attractiveness) sits with her face three inches away, heart in her mouth.

JOANNA
(like landing a plane)
Steady now. All good. You got this. It's just food. It's not love.

ELLEN
Mom. One of the reasons I got thin was so that you and I could stop talking about food.

JOANNA
I don't remember it being that big an issue...

FLASHBACK. INT. ELLEN'S HOUSE.

Joanna wrestles on the floor with Fat Ellen, holding a taco out of her reach.

JOANNA
I spit in the taco!

FAT ELLEN
It still looks good!

END FLASHBACK.

ELLEN
Look, this isn't like the other times I tried to diet, when I'd last three days and then destroy an entire sheet cake. I am a fundamentally different person. Although I am thinking about making out with you because you have a little guacamole on your lip.

JOANNA
One day at a time, honey. I'm proud of you.

Ellen opens the fridge -- and a DEAFENING ALARM goes off. Ellen stares at her mom, annoyed.

JOANNA (CONT'D)
I will have the alarm removed.

INT. ACCOUNTING FIRM. LOBBY. DAY.

Ellen walks in the doors, heads to the elevators.

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ELLEN (V.O.)
Nelda told me this would happen. People wouldn't be able to accept that I'm actually confident now. That nothing fazes me--

As she steps in the elevator:

JERRY (O.S.)
What floor?

Ellen sees she's ALONE WITH JERRY. It's too much to take.

ELLEN
(horror movie scream)
Arrgh!

JERRY
Are you okay?

ELLEN
I'm fine. I was just... attacked by bees. Which I know seems unlikely because there are no bees in here. Sorry. I'm on 12.

He presses the button.

JERRY
Are you nervous? I've never seen a human pant like a dog.

Reveal Ellen is doing exactly that. She gets hold of herself.

ELLEN
Yes, I'm nervous. But not because I'm in the elevator with you. I just took my SATs. God. That makes no sense. I'm 32. I aced them. What?

JERRY
Let me guess - it's your first day.

ELLEN
Yes. It's my first day. First day jitters! What is this place?

JERRY
I have a few minutes. Want me to show you around?

He flashes her his trademark Jerry grin. Ellen melts.

NBC CASTING

INT. OFFICE BULLPEN. 12TH FLOOR. DAY.

Brian is being cornered by Craig.

BRIAN
Look, Melissa is not going to sleep with you again. She told me the night was “a huge disappointment” and “an embarrassment for everyone.”

CRAIG
I’m gonna stay positive until I know something definitive -

Melissa rushes up, breathless -

MELISSA
Jerry is on our floor. He’s on our goddamn floor.

INT. OFFICE. ELSEWHERE. MOMENTS LATER.

They all walk over to see Ellen walking the halls with Jerry.

MELISSA
I knew it. I woke up this morning, and I was like, either someone is going to die, or Jerry is going to come to Billing.

NICHOLAS
This is so ridiculous. Oh, Jerry’s here! Let’s all swoon like a bunch of dummies!
(then)
Actually, I wonder where he got those pants.

On Jerry and Ellen, as they walk the hall. Ellen looks around as if seeing it all for the first time.

ELLEN
Wow. It’s incredible. Now what is this?

JERRY
That is a chair.

ELLEN
Good. What I thought. Every place has their own culture, you know?

They arrive where Brian and the gang are standing.

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JERRY
Hey everyone -- I'm Jerry. Work up on 14. Just wanted to pop down and say great work.... on whatever it is you do down here. Anyway, this is Ellen. It's her first day here, so make sure she feels right at home. Okay?

Jerry smiles awkwardly at Brian and the rest of the gang. They stare back at him, open-mouthed.

JERRY (CONT'D)
...Great. Good luck, Ellen.

Jerry walks away. Ellen stands for a moment, motionless. Brian comes up to her.

BRIAN
You nailed that, Pink Lady.

Remembering herself, Ellen chases after Jerry.

ELLEN
I want to be in Client Relations!
(Jerry turns around)
It's my dream. In fact, I wrote a short limerick about it: "There once was a girl on 12/ Who knew exactly what would ring her bell/ Ve-"

JERRY
Ellen, it's been great meeting you, but I really need to get upstairs--

ELLEN
You guys are chasing Keys Lumber, right? I know how you close the deal. That warehouse they just bought? I drive by it every day. We spin it off as it's own business and have them rent the space from themselves. Write the whole thing off.
(then)
I realize now that should have been the limerick.

Jerry stares at Ellen a moment, his interest piqued.

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JERRY
Hmm. Interesting thought. Okay, look - we're taking out their chief officers tonight. You should come, pitch your idea. My assistant will forward you the info. And there's no need to salute.

We see that Ellen is SALUTING HIM for some reason. Jerry exits. Ellen stands, exhilarated. She turns to Brian.

ELLEN
See, Brian? All you have to do is visualize your future--
(then, remembering)
Oh my God. Movie Night!

BRIAN
It's fine. It's Movie Night. Who cares?

ELLEN
But you said you were going to do something special--

BRIAN
Not really. We were gonna be like, "you're back!" And then put the movie on. So no big deal. Can everyone get back to work?

Brian walks off. Ellen feels terrible. She then looks up to see Melissa standing over her.

MELISSA
You're going out with Jerry?
(before Ellen can protest)
Right under my nose. I feel like Maria Shriver when she found out about Arnold.

ELLEN
Wait. I'm the housekeeper with the son? Melissa, nothing happened. We walked down a hall.

MELISSA
Deceit is deceit. "I'll be back". Schwarzenegger impression. Seemed fun. I'm still mad.

Melissa walks away. Ellen stands alone.

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ELLEN
(to herself)
Ooh la la?

The same Mail Clerk from before passes by.

MAIL CLERK
You gotta quit it with that.

END OF ACT ONE

NBC CASTING

ACT TWO

INT. ELLEN'S HOUSE. EVENING.

Joanna sits reading a magazine as Ellen goes to the door.

JOANNA
Honey? You're dressed like Carrie Bradshaw.

Joanna looks to see Ellen wearing a tank top and white tutu.

ELLEN
(defensive)
I know that, Mom.

JOANNA
Are you going to a party where the theme is late nineties?

ELLEN
No. Look. I spent my twenties watching "Sex and the City" and wishing *I* could have sex in a city, and now I'm thin and maybe I will, so this is what I'm wearing and that's the end of it.

JOANNA
You're having sex tonight?

ELLEN
Mom, it's a work thing. In fact, it's my first real party with cool people and I want to make sure I look right. So I'll see you later.

JOANNA
Ellen, are you sure you're ready for this? I mean, what if it goes badly? You'll be out there, vulnerable, around taco trucks -

ELLEN
Mom, I'm not going to get tacos.

JOANNA
I just want you to know, in case it goes badly - I kept your old jeans.

ELLEN
Stop saying "in case it goes badly!" And throw out the jeans!

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JOANNA
We stitched together 3 regular jeans to make those jeans - it was not easy *or* cheap--
(off Ellen's glare)
Fine. I'll toss 'em.

INT. BAR. NIGHT.

Crowded with cool, young people. Ellen wades through the crowd until she finds Jerry.

JERRY
Hey. You made it.
(re: her outfit)
Did you just come from a dance class?

Ellen looks to see everyone else in jeans, T shirts, etc.

ELLEN
No. Or kind of. I actually danced here. Saves money on parking.
(then)
So do you want to see my visual aids? One of them requires 3-D glasses and I need it in writing that you're not prone to seizures.

Jerry takes Ellen in, a little confused, but charmed by her.

JERRY
What's your bag? I mean, I've just never been around this energy before.

ELLEN
I just want to do everything I can to help you land this client. And my bag is from Ross.

JERRY
Ok, well the client's named Mark. He's over there with his people. Kind of a party guy, just FYI.

ELLEN
Aye aye, sir.
(salutes)
Sorry. I promise to cool it with the salutes.

Ellen walks off. Lucy walks up to Jerry, watches Ellen go.

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LUCY
You know who she looks like? A thin version of the fat girl from the 12th floor. You know? Chris Christie?

JERRY
No, she's new. Might be from outer space.

LUCY
Oh great. Let's let an alien from outer space pitch our client and just see what happens.

JERRY
Look, we haven't been able to close this deal for months. Maybe it's because you and I have been doing this so long, we seem bored. Her? She doesn't seem bored.

Lucy looks over to see Ellen doing a deep bow in front of the client as though he were the Emperor of Japan.

LUCY
No. She does not seem bored.

INT BAR. SAME TIME.

Ellen finishes bowing in front of MARK (40s, frat dude).

ELLEN
I'm Ellen Peters, with Aronson and Company. I wanted to talk to you about potentially spinning your new warehouse into a separate business.

MARK
Wow. Hadn't thought of that. Now one question - are you a stripper?

ELLEN
I am not.

MARK
Do you know any strippers?

ELLEN
No, but I could get you some sweet potato fries. I think there's a stand outside -

LUCY approaches. She motions for Ellen to follow.

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LUCY
Hi, you're Ellen, right? Lucy. Jerry's partner. Look, I know you're new to the company, so here's a little helpful advice: if you want to sell the client - you have to walk away from them. Away.

She marches Ellen many paces away from where she's standing. Ellen looks around to see she's in a coat closet.

ELLEN
I think I'm in the coat check.

LUCY
This is where the magic happens.

ELLEN
I just want to be sure I'm helping -

LUCY
Ellen. Have a drink. Enjoy yourself.

Lucy hands Ellen her full glass of wine.

ELLEN
Oh no -- a glass of wine's 180 calories. And they're *empty* calories--
(as Lucy walks off)
K, bye!

Ellen looks at the wine and then, unable to resist, takes a sip. A beat. It tastes great. She DOWNS THE WHOLE THING.

INT. BRIAN'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

Brian stands around with Craig, Nicholas, Melissa and Abby.

CRAIG
I feel like we should postpone. This night is obviously for Ellen.

Craig looks up at a "Welcome Home!" banner that's strung up. Brian rips it down.

BRIAN
Oh, that's not for Ellen. Sometimes I like to welcome myself home from work. Anyway. Should we start the movie?

NBC CASTING

A "Welcome Home!" balloon drifts into frame. Brian punches it with way too much force.

NICHOLAS
Well, since Ellen didn't show up, I took it upon myself to pick tonight's film. And since Melissa is obviously in a downward spiral about Jerry -

Reveal Melissa a few feet away, crying and scrolling through pictures. Craig rubs her back sympathetically.

MELISSA
Here's one of him eating an apple. He always did love his fruits.

NICHOLAS
Anyway, I hope you all enjoy "City of Sadness". I have a feeling we're all gonna be quoting this one around the office.

Nicholas switches on the movie. We hear the sounds of someone sobbing and speaking Taiwanese.

INT. BAR. NIGHT.

Ellen approaches Lucy and Jerry, tipsy and feeling good.

ELLEN
I'm outta the coats! Fun place to have a glass of wine though. Tried on a lot of hats. Full disclosure, it was my first drink in 9 months - and I think my brain's on fire - in a good way! I am really ready to pitch the client. Wish me luck!

Ellen walks off. Lucy turns to Jerry.

LUCY
We need to stop her. We don't even know who she is - sorry, I mean, I know she's "your friend from the elevator -"

JERRY
Look, she's weird. But I'm kind of into it. And I think the client is too.

Lucy looks over to see that Mark is wasted - and nodding along, totally on the same drunk page as Ellen.

NBC CASTING

ELLEN
Your name's Mark. Mark. Everyone's name is so weird if you say it a bunch of times. Mark mark mark.

Lucy and Jerry approach, find Mark and Ellen.

ELLEN (CONT'D)
Mark mark mark mark mark.

MARK
Mark mark mark mark mark.

LUCY
Mark, anything we can do for you? Jerry and I are here-

ELLEN
(drunkenly too intense)
Mark and I want to sing Bon Jovi.

MARK
....Isss like an emergency.

ELLEN
We're going to karaoke and you guys have to come because I decided something. It's the best night of my life!

Mark follows Ellen out the door. Lucy turns to Jerry.

LUCY
Guess we're going to karaoke.

INT. BRIAN'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

The movie is on. Craig sits next to Brian.

CRAIG
I'm starting to feel like Melissa is not into me.

BRIAN
That's because Melissa is not into you. It's over. Move on.

CRAIG
I think if you and I put our minds to it, we can fix this.

BRIAN
(exasperated)
No, Craig, we can't. She doesn't see you that way. You gotta get over it.

NBC CASTING

CRAIG
I know what this is about. It's Ellen. You're mad because she's out of your league now. Well no worries, bro. She's gonna gain it back. Hold out for the holidays.

Abby sidles up. She whispers to Brian.

ABBY
(points to the crudite)
I don't want to tell tales outside of school, but those carrots are talking crap about you.

Brian looks at her a moment. Abby smiles crazily.

BRIAN
Are you stoned? Oh my God, Abby - I didn't mean you should actually smoke that stuff--

NICHOLAS
Did anyone see that? Look at that crane shot!

BRIAN
You know what? I'm done with this. Go. Go home.

The group stares at him, stunned. After a beat, they gather their things and leave.

BRIAN (CONT'D)
Hold on, guys. I didn't mean it -

ABBY
(as she exits)
Just so you know, your salad forks think you're a real a-hole.

INT. KARAOKE BAR. NIGHT.

Lucy and Jerry sit with Mark and his associates.

LUCY
(whispers to Jerry)
When did this become a variety show she's hosting?

REVEAL Ellen on the stage, holding the mic, in emcee mode.

NBC CASTING

ELLEN
Hi, and welcome back to the best night of my life. I am once again, Ellen Peters, saying *thank you* for being you. I love all of you.
(getting weepy)
I love Accounting. I love Client Relations.

"White Lines" starts. Ellen banters as the music plays.

LUCY
(to Jerry)
Really? You're going to let this just happen?

MARK
(from the couch)
I love you too, Ellen!

Jerry gives Lucy a shrug - it's working for the client...

ELLEN
Am I happy? Yes! Is my life perfect? No way. I forgot to wear deodorant tonight and I smell like a pile of garbage. Truly had no idea my body could make an odor like this. But I'm a rookie, gang. In fact, true story - I'm from Billing. You know what my job is? First I put the invoices in a folder - oh my God, I can't even talk about it!

MARK
Please don't talk about it!

ELLEN
Point is, I'm happy to be here. I worked *hard* to be here. I lost 180 pounds to be here!

On Lucy and Jerry, confused. Then it dawns on them-

LUCY
Jerry, it <u>is</u> the fat girl from 12.

ELLEN
I ate nothing. I worked out a ton. I'll be honest, I had regular sex dreams about the elliptical.

NBC CASTING

Mark and his associates love Ellen even more for this revelation. They cheer as Ellen continues -

ELLEN (CONT'D)
Why'd I do it, you ask? Fair question! I did it for my heart!
(cheers from the crowd)
I did it 'cause of Type 2 diabeteeeeeeez!
(more cheers)
I did it for self-respect. Dignity. Life span. And I did it because one night I had sex with a guy I met in a bar and I assumed he was my boyfriend and the next day he told me it was just on his bucket list to bang a fat girl!

The crowd looks at her, stricken. Ellen realizes she's made a terrible mistake. She tries to recover.

ELLEN (CONT'D)
Oh. Whoops. I went dark. The crowd is not feeling the dark stuff - cool, let's rewind. What's the deal with W-4s?
(to crying lady)
Oh. Please don't cry. I'm fine with it. Look at me now! If you could see my old jeans, you'd be happy for me. These jeans were enormous. I actually had a cat that got lost in them and suffocated to death.
(more sobbing)
Dammit, I went dark again. Sorry. "Summer Lovin'"? Did I miss my window? Is it over? I think it's over. Sorry everyone.

LUCY
I *knew* that was Gerard Depardieu.

INT. LADIES ROOM. MOMENTS LATER.

Ellen is locked inside a stall. She makes a call.

ELLEN
(cheerful sobbing)
Hi! How was Movie Night?

INTERCUT with Brian, drinking a beer.

NBC CASTING

BRIAN
So... not the best night of your life?

ELLEN
(breaking down)
I made a fool of myself with the whole Client Relations team, and now I can't even drive home because I got wasted off a glass and a half of wine.
(sob)
And I ate a chicken wing out of the garbage. It was just sitting right on top! But that's still gross!

BRIAN
(sighs, then)
Text me your address. I'll come get you.

ELLEN
Okay. But I can't face those people, so you're going to need to smuggle me out "Argo" style. I'll be the cinematographer, you be the director - Brian?

She realizes he's hung up.

EXT. KARAOKE PLACE. CURB. NIGHT.

Ellen sits on the curb. Brian pulls up. Gets out and puts an arm around her. Leads her into the car.

ELLEN
If at some point on the ride home, I ask you to get me tacos, do not get me tacos.

BRIAN
Okay.

ELLEN
Can we get tacos?

BRIAN
We're going home.

INT. ELLEN'S HOUSE. LATER.

Brian helps Ellen into the house. Joanna comes up.

NBC CASTING

ELLEN
Hi, Mom. Night went great!

JOANNA
Oh God. I knew it. I knew you weren't ready. I'll go get your old fat pants out of the garage.

Brian helps Ellen to her bed. He takes off her shoes.

ELLEN
Brian? You're a good friend.

BRIAN
Uh huh. Get some sleep, Ellen.

ELLEN
Are we in a fight? Maybe we should have tacos and talk about it -

Brian turns around, unleashes -

BRIAN
Ellen. I'm glad you're thin now. I I know you worked really hard. But I don't want to be the guy you call when you need a ride home from the cool kids party.

ELLEN
You're not. You're my friend.

BRIAN
Don't patronize me. Here's the thing. I know you think Billing is filled with nerds. And you're right. But those nerds were the only people in the whole company who called you by your name and not Phillip Seymour Hoffman.

ELLEN
Brian, I was just trying to have the kind of night I always dreamed of having when I was fat. I mean, who knows how long this'll last? I am literally one Twinkie away from being 250 pounds again. I'm just trying to live it up while I can. And can I say I'm not even that offended by the Philip Seymour Hoffman thing. I feel like he's only porky sometimes - if the role calls for it--

NBC CASTING

BRIAN
Also. You need an accounting license to become partner. It doesn't just happen because you lose weight.

ELLEN
I know. Although I got a cute diploma on the last day of fat camp. That must count for something!

He exits. She stumbles to the door (too late) and sees a box full of her fat clothes. Her ENORMOUS JEANS are on top. She grabs them, takes them to bed, affectionately.

ELLEN (CONT'D)
Hi, guys. I missed you.

Ellen slips her whole body into one leg of the jeans. Comfortable now, she goes to sleep.

END OF ACT TWO

NBC CASTING

ACT THREE

INT. ACCOUNTING FIRM. 12TH FLOOR. MORNING.

Ellen enters with insane hair, holding an Egg McMuffin. Her energy is manic and homeless. She carries a McDonald's bag, passes a random co-worker.

ELLEN
(mouth full)
Morning.
(off his look)
What? You got a problem? Here, have an Egg McMuffin. I got 27 in this bag, I can spare one.

Ellen arrives at her desk. Melissa, Craig, Nicholas and Abby can't make eye contact with her.

ELLEN (CONT'D)
You're all mad at me. I get it. And I'm sorry. If it makes you feel better, my night was a disaster.

MELISSA
That's too bad. But it does make me feel better.

NICHOLAS
Yep. Everyone's talking about it. Lotta different versions going around. It's already kind of an urban myth.

CRAIG
The version I heard had the Loch Ness monster in it.

ELLEN
Oh my God, you guys. I'm so embarrassed. I just want to hide from the world.

Ellen slinks down and hides under the desk in her cubicle.

ELLEN (CONT'D)
(momentarily pleased)
Hey, I fit in here!

Nicholas, Abby, Craig and Melissa huddle away from Ellen.

NICHOLAS
What do we do?

NBC CASTING

ABBY
Okay, I've seen every episode of "The Biggest Loser". We just shout at her a lot. But we do it with love.

The four of them pull her out from under the desk. Ellen now lays splayed on the floor.

ABBY (CONT'D)
(insane drill sergeant)
GET OFF THE FLOOR!

Everyone's startled. Then, getting the hang of it--

CRAIG
YOU DID NOT KICK YOUR OWN ASS FOR 9 MONTHS IN FAT CAMP SO YOU COULD HIDE UNDER YOUR DESK!

MELISSA
(turned on, to Craig)
Nice.
(then to Ellen)
I WANT TO BE MAD AT YOU BUT YOU'RE TOO PATHETIC! GO TO JERRY'S OFFICE! APOLOGIZE!

NICHOLAS
SHE'S RIGHT! YOU GOTTA GET AHEAD OF THIS! IT'S LIKE WITH ANY POLITICAL SCANDAL --
(regular voice)
Sorry - not really a screamer - anyway, you get ahead of this.

ELLEN
You're right. I have to deal with this. Here I go.

She tries to grab the Egg McMuffin bag.

NICHOLAS
Leave the bag.

INT. ELEVATOR. DAY.

Ellen goes inside. She looks at the number panel. Tentatively, she presses 14.

ELLEN (V.O.)
My first time on 14, Nelda. The maiden voyage. Now I know how Christopher Columbus felt when-
(MORE)

NBC CASTING

ELLEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
(elevator ding)
Oh. Quick trip.

INT. 14TH FLOOR. DAY.

Ellen exits the elevator. Momentarily distracted, she looks around.

ELLEN
Whoa.

ELLEN (V.O.)
It smells exactly like I thought it would. Success. Self-esteem. And like someone ordered Indian food.

Ellen remembers her mission. She charges down the hall, arriving at Jerry's office. She strides past Jerry's assistant and into -

INT. JERRY'S OFFICE. DAY.

Jerry sits behind his desk, startled as Ellen enters.

JERRY
Ellen -

ELLEN
I know people don't just march into each other's offices and give them speeches. And believe me, if this was a year ago, I would just stuff my face with hamburgers until I didn't feel anything anymore. But I'm trying not to do that anymore. I'm trying to learn how to face my problems.
(deep breath)
I'm sorry about last night, Jerry. I'm sorry I pretended I was new - it seemed easier than explaining that I've worked here for 7 years, only that whole time you never saw me, because people like you didn't see people like me. It's not your fault. It's just the way it is.

JERRY
Ellen, I have to tell you -

NBC CASTING

ELLEN
(barreling on)
We had a conversation in 2007 about how they stopped serving baby corn at the salad bar. You were like "what happened to the baby corn?" And I was like, "I know, right?" I journaled about that exchange for many months. And the whole time, I thought it would be easy. I thought if I lost weight I would suddenly know how to conduct myself at a party. I don't. I have no idea how to be in the world. I just hope I didn't drag the company down with me.

MARK (O.S.)
(on speakerphone)
Hey, Ellen.

Ellen's face falls.

JERRY
I tried to tell you - client's on speakerphone.

MARK (O.S.)
Hey, did you ever get those tacos? You were really jonesing for 'em last night.

ELLEN
Oh. Hi, Mark. Um. I gotta go.

Ellen backs out the door, struggling to hold her head high.

JERRY
Ellen.
(Ellen turns)
I had scoliosis when I was 15. It was horrible.
(then)
Then it cleared up by itself. Didn't even need a brace. Doctors were mystified - guess I'm just lucky that way. Anyway, everyone has their stuff. Only difference between you and me is I knew to hit the mute button before telling you that story. You'll get there.
(presses button on phone)
Mark? I'm back.

NBC CASTING

MARK
(on speakerphone)
So walk me through this idea of renting out the warehouse...

JERRY
(whispers to Ellen)
Think he's into your idea. Good work.

Ellen gives Jerry a small smile as she exits.

INT. 12TH FLOOR. BRIAN'S OFFICE. LATER.

Brian's at his desk. He looks up to see Craig and Melissa and Abby and Nicholas in his doorway.

CRAIG
Hey man, can we talk to you?

NICHOLAS
We're retiring Movie Night. We know we've gotten really annoying.

ABBY
And I want you to know that last night's... "deviance" was for research purposes only. I remain committed to the force.

BRIAN
Guys, I'm sorry I snapped at you last night. I didn't mean it.

Brian hears a noise. They walk out...

INT. JANITOR'S OFFICE - ELLEN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS.

...and into Ellen's office, where she's setting up her stuff.

BRIAN
What are you doing?

ELLEN
Decorating my office. I was thinking about getting an ammonia scented candle just to go with the space.

BRIAN
I thought you didn't want this office.

NBC CASTING

ELLEN
I was being stupid. Look, I'm lucky to be in Billing. You guys sent me care packages when I was at fat camp. And you - you tried to throw me a Welcome Home party. And you never once called me Ruben Studdard.
(beat)
I was called that, right?

BRIAN
Once or twice.

ELLEN
I'm sorry I got these dumb ideas in my head about rising up in the company. Not that it explains it, but I never went to prom.
(then)
Someday I'll tell you what I did on my prom night. Involves an Arby's. Super gross.

Craig pops his head in.

CRAIG
Ellen? Payroll meeting in the conference room.

Ellen puts down her stuff, goes to follow Craig. As she exits, to Brian -

ELLEN
Thanks for last night.

She walks past him and into the conference room where the rest of the billing team is assembled. Brian thinks for a second.

INT. 12TH FLOOR. CONFERENCE ROOM. MOMENTS LATER.

Ellen and the rest of the team are surrounded by a mountain of paperwork.

BRIAN
Ellen?

She nods and walks out to talk to him.

BRIAN (CONT'D)
You good to work late tonight?

NBC CASTING

ELLEN
Course.

BRIAN
Project on your desk.

Ellen walks over to her desk. A CPA STUDY GUIDE is on it. She looks up at Brian, confused.

BRIAN (CONT'D)
You want to be partner someday, you're gonna have to get an accounting degree.

Ellen stares at him, speechless.

BRIAN (CONT'D)
You're getting out of here.

Ellen stares at him, holding back tears.

ELLEN
Thank you.
(small, hopeful)
Celebrate with tacos?

BRIAN
Study.

Brian goes to his office. Ellen stares at her book, her eyes starry.

ELLEN (V.O.)
Nelda, you were wrong. It didn't happen when I lost the weight. But I am on my way, Nelda. *I am on my way*.

Ellen gives a small shimmy and sits down to study.

END OF EPISODE

NBC CASTING