

Rambling Pants is an unproduced TV pilot written by Charlie Kaufman in the '90s, before he found fame with the film *Being John Malkovich*.

The note on the front page is a handwritten evaluation from a producer who read the script.

Unfortunately the first two pages of this copy are missing, but it isn't hard to pick up what you miss: Pants is the name of a poet (a bad poet) who has walked out on his wife, Wanda, "on a quest to discover America, then capture it in poem."

If you happen to have the first two pages, please visit www.beingcharliekaufman.com and drop me a line.

Cheers,
Mick
www.beingcharliekaufman.com

either very
very funny or
completely insane

RAMBLING PANTS

A PILOT

by

Charlie Kaufman

TIFFANY JO

It's a poem. (READING) I found
a girl with ankle broken/Blue
of eye and soft of spoken/Her
life I saved, yes this is
true/But did you know she
saved mine too/America, I love
you. (A TEAR TRICKLES DOWN HER
FACE) Good-bye, Pants.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

PANTS, IN THE FRONT PASSENGER SEAT, LOOKS OUT THE REAR WINDOW AS THE CAR PULLS AWAY. A TEAR TRICKLES DOWN HIS FACE. SUDDENLY HE TURNS FORWARD AND BEGINS FIDDLING WITH THE RADIO DIAL LIKE A TEENAGE GIRL. MIKE, A BIG BURLY MAN, DRIVES THE CAR.

MIKE

I'm going as far as Ohio, then
stopping. Because that's
where I live. Care to join me
on my quest?

PANTS

If you don't mind the noise.
I tend to snore, so they tell
me.

MIKE

(HAPPILY) I don't mind. In
fact, I don't mind at all!

PANTS

I myself am on a quest to
discover America, then capture
it in poem like Walt Whitman
before me.

MIKE

Walt Whitman is dead.

PANTS

Don't remind me of this sad
fact.

MIKE

(LAUGHS HEARTILY, HOLDS OUT
HIS HAND) They call me Mike.

PANTS

(SHAKING MIKE'S HAND) They
call me Pants.

MIKE

Pants? Interesting moniker.
Care to elaborate?

PANTS

I once wore a pair of girl's
pants to school by mistake.

MIKE

Why didn't they call you
"Girl's Pants"? That would've
been more to the point.

PANTS

Kids are cruel. But they're not that cruel. It's a fine line.

MIKE

They call me Mike because I once killed a man.

PANTS

Explain.

MIKE

You know...*Mike*. Short for "Mike who once killed a man."

PANTS

Oh, now I get it. (BEAT) Say, Mike? If I may be so bold, why'd you kill this fellow, anyway?

MIKE

Boy, you don't beat around the bush, do you? If you must know, why I killed him is a secret.

PANTS

Well, then, so is why I wore girl's pants. I lied before when I said it was a mistake.

MIKE

Ask me if I care.

THE TWO DRIVE IN SILENCE. SWEET, FOLKSY GUITAR MUSIC BEGINS. PANTS LOOKS OUT THE WINDOW.

WOMAN FOLKSINGER (V.O.)

Sooner or later you have to
leave home/Experience life
then express it in poem/And
when you do, there are people
left behind/Oh, but don't they
know, girl/That it's you you
have to find!

CHORUS

Good-bye, Wanda/I have to
wander/I love you but I have
to go/Good-bye Wanda/You know
I'm fond of/you, but baby I
just can't come home.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DRY CLEANER - DAY

WANDA, 30, STANDS BEHIND THE COUNTER. MR. PETERS, AN OLDER GENTLEMAN, ENTERS AND PUTS SOME CLOTHES ON THE COUNTER.

MR. PETERS

Hello, Wanda.

WANDA

Hello, Mr. Peters. (SIFTING THROUGH CLOTHES) Let's see, that's two shirts, one pair of pants. Pants. (BEGINS TO WEEP)

MR. PETERS

Still no word from your husband, eh?

WANDA

No, Mr. Peters. Why'd he do this to me?

MR. PETERS

There's a handkerchief in the pant, uh, trousers pocket.

WANDA FINDS THE HANDKERCHIEF IN MR. PETERS' LAUNDRY, BLOWS HER NOSE.

WANDA

Why, Mr. Peters? Why? Why?

MR. PETERS

Can't say for sure, Wanda. Sometimes a fella just hears the open road calling and he has to pick up and answer the call. No matter how many lives he destroys in the process.

WANDA

(SNIFFLING) Did you ever
answer the call, Mr. Peters?

MR. PETERS

Oh, sure. I left a wife and
three kids in Baltimore eleven
years ago. Haven't seen 'em
since. But my situation was a
little different. You see, I
wasn't answering a call,
simply bored.

WANDA

(WAILING) Pants was bored!

MR. PETERS

But if I might be so bold,
allow me to offer a solution.

WANDA

Please.

MR. PETERS

Come live with me. Forget
Pants. I will treat you as
the queen you are. You see,
(BEAT) I love you very much,
Wanda.

WANDA

Well, that's sweet of you, Mr.
Peters...

MR. PETERS

Please, call me Uncle Peters.

WANDA

...Uncle Peters, but I'm still
in love with Pants.

MR. PETERS

Very well. Then allow me to
offer another solution.
You've always expressed an
interest in being a female
comedian, if I'm not mistaken.

WANDA

That's correct, Uncle Peters.

MR. PETERS

And I myself think you are
very funny indeed. So why not
give up your job, and travel
the country as a quote-unquote
female comedian.

WANDA

I don't know.

MR. PETERS

Virtually every one-horse town has a comedy club now. I know, because I used to be a professional comedian myself. Of course, that was at a time when if you weren't a black or a Jew, forget *you*, buddy.

WANDA

But I am neither black nor Jew.

MR. PETERS

The point being that *female* comedy is fashionable right now. I guess that leaves me out in the damn cold again. But you, you could make jokes about menstruation, and cramps, and being fat, and how men won't make a commitment.

WANDA

(STARTING TO CRY) Pants wouldn't make a commitment!

MR. PETERS

Here's one for you. A
freebie. Men today don't want
to make a commitment. I'll
tell you where they should be
committed -- to a mental
institution!

WANDA STOPS CRYING, LAUGHS.

WANDA

Hey, that's funny.

MR. PETERS

You can have that. Freebie.
And while you travel the
country from comedy club to
comedy club, you can search
for Pants.

WANDA

You've given this a lot of
thought.

MR. PETERS

No, not really. It just
popped into my head. I saw
Punchline last night.

WANDA

(WITH RESOLVE) All right.
I'll do it!

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TRAIN - DAY

WANDA IS DRESSED IN TRAVELING CLOTHES, INCLUDING A VEILED HAT. SHE STARES OUT THE WINDOW AT THE PASSING SCENERY. FOLKSY MUSIC STARTS IN.

WOMAN SINGER (V.O.)

Sooner or later you have to
stand tall/Before you can
dance, you must learn how to
fall/So tell some jokes, girl/
You gotta take your chance/And
in your spare time/You can
look around for Pants.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HOBO JUNGLE - NIGHT

PANTS SITS ON A CRATE IN FRONT OF A CAMPFIRE. HE IS EATING BEANS FROM A CAN. OTHER HOBOS SIT AROUND THE FIRE.

PANTS

(SINGING) Oh, the hobo's
life/Is the life for me/Gone
is the strife/No more yearning
to be free/Those ties that
bind/Well I cut them with a
knife/That's why I love/The
hobo's life.

HOBO #1

You gots a beautiful voice,
stranger.

PANTS

Inherited it from my mama.

HOBO #1

God bless mamas.

A FRANTIC HOBO RUNS TO THE CAMPFIRE.

FRANTIC HOBO

Boys, come quick! Some
stringbean swiped Can Opener
Ed Hamm's can opener! Looks
like trouble!

HOBO #1

Holy -- Can Opener Ed ain't
nothin' without his can
opener!

THE HOBOS GET UP AND RUN TO ANOTHER PART OF THE CAMP,
WHERE CAN OPENER ED HAMM AND RANDY, A LANKY YOUNG
UPSTART, ARE SQUARING OFF TO FIGHT.

CAN OPENER ED

Gimme back my can opener, boy,
an' there'll be no trouble.

RANDY

(LAUGHING WILDLY) 'Thout this
can opener, you ain't no
different than the rest of us,
Can Opener. Fact, I think
I'll take to callin' myself
Can Opener Randy Babcock.

HOBO #1

Holy --

CAN OPENER ED LUNGES AT RANDY. THEY WRESTLE ON THE GROUND AS THE CIRCLE OF HOBOS SINGS.

HOBOS

There was a man named Edward
Hamm/And he came from San
Jose/Some folks say he was on
the lam/Some say he was born
that way.

ED PINS RANDY, GRABS THE CAN OPENER, AND IS ABOUT TO SLIT RANDY'S THROAT WITH IT.

PANTS

Wait!

ED LOOKS UP.

PANTS (CONT'D)

Please, Can Opener Ed, I
beseech you. Do not kill the
young man.

ED

This young *man* tried to steal
my identity, the one thing in
this world that makes me me.

PANTS

Oh, but don't you see, Can
Opener, it is only his
overwhelming admiration of
you that led him to this
despicable act of unlawful
acquisition.

ED

Explain.

PANTS

He just wants to be like the
famous Can Opener Ed Hamm.

ED

(TO RANDY) That true?

RANDY

(BLUFFING) Yessir, C.O.

That's all I wanted.

ED STUDIES RANDY FOR A MOMENT, THEN WEEPS AND EMBRACES
HIM.

ED

You's the son I never had.

HOBOS

(SINGING) Randy Babcock wanted
to be/Just like Ed Hamm, oh
don't you see?/So he stole the
opener from Ed's pack/And then
an identity he did not lack.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CAMPFIRE - A BIT LATER

PANTS PLAYS THE HARMONICA. RANDY APPROACHES.

RANDY

Thanks, buddy.

PANTS

Next time be smart enough not
to try and steal a man's name.

RANDY

Learned my lesson.

PANTS

They call me Pants.

RANDY

Hoo-boy, I'll be sure not to
steal your name. Haw haw haw.

PANTS

Haw haw haw.

RANDY

(SUDDENLY CONTEMPLATIVE)

What's it all about, Pants?

PANTS

It's a big ol' world out
there, Randy. I'm guessing
it's about a lot of things.
Myself? I'm just looking for
America. Plain and simple.

RANDY

Did you check in the glove
compartment? Haw haw haw.

PANTS

Haw haw haw. That's a good
one, Randy. You're sharp as a
tack.

RANDY

Better not put me on the
teacher's chair. Haw haw haw.

PANTS

Haw. How about you, Randy,
what are you looking for?

RANDY PULLS OUT A LABEL FROM A CAN OF PEAS. A BEAUTIFUL
YOUNG WOMAN HOLDING A BASKET OF PEAS IS FEATURED ON THE
LABEL.

RANDY

Her. The pea maiden from the
Pea Maiden pea label.

PANTS

You're looking for her?

RANDY

Yessir.

PANTS

(CONCERNED) But she's a
drawing, Randy. She's not
real.

RANDY

Let me tell you something,
Pants. I used to be a
newspaper reporter. I covered
murders, rapes, human misery.
All very real things. One day
I woke up and I just couldn't
take it anymore. I saw the
pea maiden on a can and I
thought, this may not be real,
but then, hoo-boy, reality is
overrated. And from that day
I've been searching far and
wide for the beautiful,
elusive pea maiden.

PANTS

I just hate to see you hurt,
Randy, chasing rainbows.

RANDY

I wrote a song about her.
Would you like to hear it?

PANTS

Of course.

RANDY PICKS UP A GUITAR AND STARTS STRUMMING.

RANDY

(SINGING) In this world of
sorrow/World of bleak
tomorrows/I search for the
lady/On my favorite can of
peas/Beg or steal or
borrow/Plane or train or
car/Oh, I will search
forever/Till my lady I do see.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FIELD - DAY

RANDY AND THE PEA MAIDEN DANCE IN A BEAUTIFUL FIELD OF
WILD FLOWERS.

WOMAN FOLK SINGER (V.O.)

She will understand me/We will
hand in hand be/When I meet
the lady/With the hair of
golden light/She will call me
Randy/I will call her Canned
Pea/And we'll be together/Till
the day becomes the night.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HOBO JUNGLE - NIGHT

RANDY PUTS DOWN THE GUITAR.

PANTS

(GENTLY) You're a fine young fellow, Randy Babcock. I hope you find what you're looking for.

RANDY

Let's travel together, Pants. Just you and me.

PANTS

I travel alone, Randy. It's my nature.

RANDY

Aw, I don't make much noise. You and me are seekers. And seekers got to stick together.

PANTS

I left my wife because I couldn't stand to be tied down, Randy. I need to fly, fly like a giant bird with wings of pale gold.

RANDY

I won't stop ya. In fact, I'll fly with you, right by your side. Two crazy birds.

PANTS

Good-bye, Randy.

PANTS WANDERS OFF. RANDY WATCHES FOR A MOMENT, THEN FOLLOWS.

CUT TO:

EXT. SMALL TOWN STREET - DAY

WANDA, WITH SUITCASE IN HAND, WANDERS AIMLESSLY. SHE STOPS IN FRONT OF A BAKERY AND EYES SOME BEAUTIFUL PASTRIES. SHE CHECKS IN HER PURSE AND SEES THAT SHE HAS NO MONEY. SHE SIGHS AND SLUMPS DOWN ON THE CURB, LOST IN THOUGHT. PROTESTERS CHANTING CAN BE HEARD IN THE DISTANCE. WANDA GETS UP TO INVESTIGATE. OUTSIDE A COMEDY CLUB CALLED "O'LAUGHERS" A GROUP OF WOMEN ARE CARRYING PLACARDS AND CHANTING.

WOMEN

Ho ho hee hee

We want women's comedy

C'mon Jensen, Don't be a 'fraidy

O'Laugher's needs a funny lady!

JENSEN, A BURLY, SORROWFUL MAN, STEPS THROUGH THE CROWD.

JENSEN

Ladies, ladies, please. I want to meet your demands, but what you ask is just not do-able. Sure, maybe in a thousand years, but I just can't find a funny lady in this, the last decade of the 20th century.

WANDA

(TIMIDLY) I'm a funny lady.

JENSEN

(TURNING) Huh? Wha...?

WANDA

(STILL TIMID) I'm a funny
lady.

PROTESTOR #1

What do you say to that,
Jensen, you burly, sorrowful
Swede?

JENSEN

(TO WANDA) Are you a so-called
female comedian?

WANDA

(MORE CONFIDENT) Yes, Mister.
So-called.

JENSEN

(STUDIES WANDA) All right.
Sure. I'll give you a shot.
Ten dollars a day. There's a
cot in the back, and you eat
with the kitchen staff. Deal?

WANDA

(ABOUT TO FAINT) Can I eat
first?

JENSEN

Yeah. Sure.

WANDA

(HOLDS OUT HER HAND) Deal.

JENSEN SHAKES WANDA'S HAND. THE WOMEN CHEER AND BREAK INTO SONG.

WOMEN

(SINGING) When you have a need
to chuckle/Call on someone who
can suckle/An itty-bitty baby
at her lovely breast/When you
think you need some
giggles/You will find the sex
that wiggles/Stands heads and
dainty shoulders 'bove the
slimy rest.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROCKY RIDGE - DAY

PANTS WANDERS UP THE RIDGE AND ADMIRES THE VIEW. RANDY,
UNBEKNOWNST TO PANTS, FOLLOWS CLOSELY.

PANTS

(A SIGH) My country, my
country. (RECITING) The
unspoiled vistas/Beckon misses
and misters/To gaze out upon
her glory/With big rocks and
little/And some in the
middle/America's geological
story.

RANDY

(BEAT) That was very
beautiful.

PANTS TURNED, STARTLED.

PANTS

(ANGRY) I thought I told you
not to follow me.

RANDY

Teach me to see as you see.
To hear as you hear. To smell
as you smell. Scratch the
last one. Haw haw haw.

PANTS

Let me tell you something,
Randy. I used to be a
teacher, professor of poems at
one of the finest universities
in the country.

RANDY

Teach me, Pants. Teach me.

PANTS

The point I'm making is that students equal baggage. They left me no time for my own work. So I left them. And my lovely wife Wanda, in order to take care of me. It's my turn, Randy. I can't take care of some delusional nutcase. (BEAT) I'm sorry, I didn't mean that.

RANDY

(BEAT) I see. Yeah, well, I won't bother you anymore. Just one thing: In the town where I grew up there was this guy, a poet. And he helped folks, helped 'em all the time. He taught me how to ride a bike with no hands because my own pa was too damn busy. (BEAT) Oh, by the way, that poet's name was Allen Ginsberg.

PANTS

Ginsberg. Good man. Saved me
from a burning building once.

RANDY

Well, so long.

TAD (O.S.)

Help! Help!

PANTS

Quick!

PANTS LEADS RANDY UP THE RIDGE. THEY COME TO A HOLE
BETWEEN TWO ROCKS. PANTS PEERS DOWN INTO IT.

TAD (O.S.)

Mister, help, I think my
ankle's broke.

PANTS

Just relax, son. We'll get
you out of there. (QUIETLY, TO
RANDY) We've got to hurry.
He's fallen on top of a puff
adder nest. And the angry
mother is heading right
towards him.

RANDY

(GASPS) A puff adder killed my
brother.

RANDY WEEPS.

PANTS

Pull yourself together, man.

We have work to do.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. O'LAUGHERS COMEDY CLUB - NIGHT

JENSEN, ON STAGE, ADDRESSES THE PACKED HOUSE.

JENSEN

Ladies and gentlemen, it gives
me great pleasure to introduce
the feminine comedy stylings
of Miss Wanda Bankhead!

THERE IS A SMATTERING OF APPLAUSE AS WANDA ENTERS TENTATIVELY. JENSEN EXITS. WANDA GRABS THE MIC.

WANDA

Uh, hello. You know, I came here today on a bus. Boy, buses are funny? How come you always have to sit next to a fat person? I guess if they didn't spend so much on food, they could afford to fly!

WANDA WAITS FOR THE LAUGH, BUT THERE IS ONLY SILENCE.

WANDA (CONT'D)

Seriously though, why do they call it Greyhound? It's so slow, it's more like Bassett Hound!

NO LAUGH.

MALE HECKLER

Sit down! Women ain't funny!

WANDA BITES HER LIP. HER BROW IS BEADED WITH PERSPIRATION.

WANDA

And how about those uncomfortable bus seats. Personally, I'd rather sit on a rock!

SILENCE.

MALE HECKLER

You should be sitting on a
nest, lady, 'cause you're
laying an egg!

THE AUDIENCE LAUGHS FOR THE FIRST TIME.

WANDA

(SUMMONING COURAGE) At least I
can lay an egg -- because I'm
a woman!

THE WOMEN IN THE AUDIENCE BURST INTO THUNDEROUS
APPLAUSE. THE MALE HECKLER, HUMBLED, SLINKS DOWN IN HIS
SEAT.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROCKY RIDGE - NIGHT

PANTS HOLDS A MAKESHIFT ROPE DOWN THE HOLE. RANDY
WATCHES.

PANTS

It's no use. He's too weak to
hold on to this makeshift
rope. And that snake is
getting closer.

RANDY

I'm going down.

PANTS

You can't. It's too dangerous. If this makeshift rope gives, you'll plunge to almost certain death. Not to mention that snake.

RANDY

I don't care.

RANDY SHIMMIES DOWN THE ROPE AND DISAPPEARS INTO THE HOLE.

RANDY (CONT'D) (O.S.)

Hold tight, Tad. I'm coming!

TAD (O.S.)

Watch out for that snake, mister!

RANDY (O.S.)

This is what I think of that snake!

THERE IS THE SOUND OF A STRUGGLE.

PANTS

Don't wrestle that snake, Randy. You can't win.

RANDY (O.S.)

Oh yeah?

TAD (O.S.)

Look out, there's more of
them! Possibly hundreds! And
they're heading right towards
you!

RANDY (O.S.)

A snake killed my brother.
Now they all gotta pay.

PANTS

Behind you, Randy!

A TERRIFIC STRUGGLE CAN BE HEARD.

TAD (O.S.)

I've never seen so many live
snakes in my life, and I used
to mop up at Kingdom O' Snakes
off Highway 10 in Birchmont.

RANDY (O.S.)

Now they're dead snakes, Tad.
Here, grab my hand.

PANTS WATCHES, IMPRESSED AND MOVED.

PANTS

(QUIETLY) Oh, Randy.

RANDY PULLS HIMSELF, THEN THE TEENAGED TAD OUT OF THE
HOLE.

PANTS (CONT'D)

You okay, Tad?

TAD

'Cept for this broke ankle.
Thanks, Randy. (GAZING INTO
PANTS' EYES) Thanks, Pants.

PANTS

Don't thank me, kid. Randy's
the hero.

TAD

If it wasn't for all them
poems you recited while I was
down there, you think I'd a
had the will to go on?

PANTS

(IMMENSELY PLEASED) C'mon,
kiddo, let's get you home.

PANTS LIFTS TAD UP ONTO HIS SHOULDERS, AND THE THREE
MOVE SLOWLY THROUGH THE DARKENED LANDSCAPE.

CUT TO:

INT. O'LAUGHERS BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

JENSEN WATCHES WANDA FROM THE WINGS. WE HEAR HER
MUFFLED VOICE DELIVERING LINES AND THE MUFFLED LAUGHTER
AND APPLAUSE OF THE AUDIENCE.

JENSEN (V.O.)

So beautiful. Delicate. Must
express feelings. But how?
Afraid. Rejection bad.
Hurtful. Safe to be alone.
Can't get hurt in my emotional
fortress. Safe. Oh, but so
very lonely.

CUT TO:

INT. O'LAUGHERS STAGE - CONTINUOUS

THE AUDIENCE IS APPLAUDING, LAUGHING WILDLY. WE SEE
CLOSE-UPS OF SEVERAL FACES GROTESQUELY CONTORTED IN
LAUGHTER.

WANDA

And what is it about men and
commitment? I'll tell you
where they should be committed
-- to the mental institution!

THE AUDIENCE MEMBERS GUFFAW VIOLENTLY.

WANDA (CONT'D)

Take my husband -- please!
His name is Pants. It wasn't
till our wedding night that I
realized he was
inappropriately named -- He
should've been called "Short
Pants."

THE AUDIENCE HOWLS, APPLAUDS.

WANDA (CONT'D)

But seriously... (HOLDS UP A
PHOTO OF PANTS) Has anyone
seen him? (BREAKS INTO TEARS)
I miss him so.

THE AUDIENCE FALLS SILENT. TIFFANY JO, THE TEENAGE GIRL
THAT PANTS SAVED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE EPISODE, SITS
IN THE AUDIENCE. SHE CLUTCHES THE ROLLED UP POEM IN HER
HAND. A TEAR TRICKLES DOWN HER FACE.

CUT TO:

EXT. MANSION - NIGHT

PANTS CARRIES TAD ON HIS SHOULDERS. RANDY TRAILS.

TAD

This is where I live, fellas.

PANTS

Not too shabby, Tad. We'd
better come in and tell your
folks what happened.

TAD

No! I mean, they're prob'ly
asleep. Just leave me here.
I'll be fine.

RANDY

Say, you little brat, if you
think you're gonna weasel out
of that reward money...

PANTS

(CALM AND KNOWING) Tad, let me tell you a story in the form of a poem: There once was a boy/Ashamed of his parents/Bring friends to meet them?/Oh no, he daren't/But one day they died/And he realized he missed 'em/Oh no, he cried/I'm sorry I dissed 'em. (BEAT) This is a poem I wrote for a young man I met in one of America's many urban ghettos. Incorporating the language of the street, I made my point in a contemporary and accessible manner. Do you understand the message of this poem, Tad?

TAD

(GRUDGINGLY) Yes, Pants. I should be proud of my folks.

PANTS

Really? No, not at all.

(THINKING) But I guess I can see how you might get that. That's the marvelous thing about poetry. No, it's actually about the importance of personal hygiene.

TAD

Do you fellas want to meet my parents?

PANTS

Are they, uh, clean?

TAD

Yeah, sure.

PANTS

(LIFTING TAD UP ON HIS SHOULDERS) Let's go meet us some parents.

CUT TO:

EXT. O'LAUGHERS - NIGHT

THE PLACE IS DARK. THE STREET EMPTY. WANDA SITS ON THE CURB. SHE SMOKES A CIGARETTE. TIFFANY JO HOBBLER ON HER CRUTCHES OVER TO WANDA.

TIFFANY JO

I thought you were very funny in there.

WANDA

A word of advice, little girl:
Don't ever fall in love with a
man named Pants.

TIFFANY JO

I'm afraid it's a little late
for that advice.

WANDA LOOKS UP. TIFFANY JO HANDS HER THE ROLLED UP
POEM. WANDA STUDIES IT.

TIFFANY JO (CONT'D)

He saved my life three days
ago.

WANDA

Left you too, huh? He's real
good at leaving people.

TIFFANY JO

I had no claim on him.

WANDA

Yeah, well, it wouldn't a made
any difference.

TIFFANY JO

The way I see it, Pants is
like some big beautiful bird -
- no good to anyone if he
can't spread his wings an'
fly.

WANDA

Why, you little philosophical
tramp! He was my husband.

TIFFANY JO

Perhaps she loves Pants most,
who does not try to cage him.

WANDA LUNGES AT TIFFANY JO. THEY WRESTLE ON THE GROUND.

WANDA

You broke-legged, two-bit
hick!

TIFFANY JO

You over-the-hill, joke-
hurling dry cleaner!

WE SEE JENSEN WATCHING FROM THE DARKENED DOORWAY OF
O'LAUGHERS. HE LIGHTS HIS CIGAR. THE FLAME ILLUMINATES
HIS FACE FROM BELOW.

JENSEN (V.O.)

Look at her. Spitfire.
Fights like a guy. But
delicate like a jungle flower.
Must keep my distance. He who
does not love, cannot lose.

JENSEN TURNS AND HEADS BACK INTO THE CLUB.

CUT TO:

INT. O'LAUGHERS - CONTINUOUS

THE ROOM IS DIMLY LIT. JENSEN STUDIES HIMSELF IN THE
TARNISHED BAR MIRROR. THE MUFFLED SOUNDS OF TIFFANY JO
AND WANDA FIGHTING CAN BE HEARD.

JENSEN (V.O.)

Look at yourself, Jensen.
Fat, Swedish, fifty-two,
managing two-bit comedy club
in yahoo-land. Coulda been
someone, Jensen. Comedy star.
Had to fall in love with a
broad named booze, didn't ya?
Settled down, had some kids:
Cirrhosis, Korsakoff's
Disease, Delirium Tremens.
Suddenly someone new on the
scene. See in her something
you lost: sparkle in eye,
perhaps? Too late for you,
Jensen, but owe it to Wanda to
make her star you could've
been. (SINGING) Hello,
Wanda/If you want to/I'd like
to teach you all I know/Hello,
Wanda/Climb in my Honda/I'll
drive you to the Tonight Show.

WANDA, BRUISED AND DIRTY, STANDS IN THE DOORWAY.

WANDA

That was quite a speech.

JENSEN TURNS.

JENSEN

What happened to the gimp?

WANDA

Ah, she hobbled off into the night, vowing that, if it's the last thing she does, she'll keep me from imprisoning her adorable Pants.

JENSEN

Sounds serious.

WANDA

(BEAT) You know, I'd love for you to escort me to the Tonight Show.

JENSEN

(SMILING, THEN STERNLY) By way of the Ha Ha Club, Joke-a-rama, and the Tee-Hee Tavern. You got a lot to learn, baby.

WANDA

Teach me what you know, Alf Jensen. I think you're quite a guy.

JENSEN

Now don't go turning into a
woman on me. We have work to
do.

WANDA

Aye aye, Cap'n!

WANDA SALUTES. THEY LAUGH AND EMBRACE.

JENSEN (V.O.)

Must pull away.

CUT TO:

EXT. RAMSHACKLE HOUSE - MORNING

PANTS AND RANDY EXIT THE HOUSE, FOLLOWED BY TAD'S
PARENTS, A VERY INBRED, OBESE, UGLY COUPLE.

PANTS

Thanks for everything.

FATHER

Thank you, Pants. Randy.

MOTHER

You saved our boy's life. And
you taught him not to be
ashamed of us.

PANTS

Think nothing of it, sir, or,
uh, madam, is it?

MOTHER

(INTO HOUSE) Tad, ain't you
gonna come out and say good-
bye to Pants and Randy?

TAD, NOW IN A LEG CAST AND ON CRUTCHES, LIMPS OUT THE
FRONT DOOR.

TAD

Please don't go, Pants. (BEAT)
I love you.

PANTS KNEELS IN FRONT OF TAD.

PANTS

Tad, lots of boys your age
have same-sex crushes. I
don't want you to think
there's anything abnormal
about it. It could mean
you're what they call a
homosexual -- which is fine --
or it might simply mean that
you're a very confused
heterosexual -- which is also
fine. In any event, I love
you too, Tad, although not in
the way you might or might not
be hoping.

TAD

Please don't go, Pants. I've never met a man as wise as you.

PANTS

I'm afraid I have to go, kiddo. As long as there is a road before me, I must traverse it. (BEAT) Here, I want you to have this.

PANTS HANDS TAD A ROLLED UP SHEET OF PAPER, AND HE AND RANDY HURRY OFF. TAD UNROLLS THE SCROLL.

MOTHER

What's it say, son?

TAD

It's a poem. (READING) I found a boy with ankle twisted/Brown of eye and limp of wristed/I saved his life, yes, this is true/But did you know, he saved mine too?/America, I love you. (A TEAR TRICKLES DOWN HIS FACE) Good-bye, Pants.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY MOTEL - DAY

CUT TO:

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

IT'S A DIVE. WANDA SITS ON ONE OF THE BEDS. JENSEN PACES AND NIPS FROM HIS FLASK.

JENSEN

Now the fundamental thing you gotta know about stand up is, comedy is like surgery: You go in, extract the comedy tumor, then leave 'em... in stitches. In and out.

WANDA

In and out.

JENSEN TAKES A SWIG FROM HIS FLASK.

JENSEN

Another thing, all comedy has a grain of truth.

WANDA

Say, what does a lady have to do to get a drink around here?

JENSEN HANDS THE FLASK TO WANDA.

JENSEN

Just a taste. You got a show tonight.

WANDA

Aye aye, Cap'n.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD - DAY

PANTS AND RANDY WALK ALONG.

PANTS

I've been doing some thinking,
Randy.

RANDY

So that's why smoke's been
coming out of your ears. Haw
haw haw.

PANTS

Haw haw haw. You know, I
could use some company on my
journey, and...

RANDY

You're gonna let me fly like a
bird with you? Oh, boy,
that's great!

PANTS

Well, I was quite impressed
with your handling of the Tad
case, and...

RANDY

Oh boy! Will you teach me how
to write poems?

PANTS

I'll do my *best*. (CHUCKLING)
If you're not a *pest*.

RANDY

(IMPRESSED) Wow, that was something. If I could ever be one tenth that good!

THEY STAND AT A CROSSROADS.

PANTS

Which way now, partner?

THEY BOTH LOOK AROUND. A GREYHOUND BUS DRIVES BY. SITTING IN ONE OF THE WINDOWS IS A WOMAN WHO LOOKS VERY MUCH LIKE THE PEA MAIDEN.

RANDY

(POINTING IN THE DIRECTION OF THE BUS) This way.

PANTS

This way it is, my romantic friend.

THEY EXTEND THEIR THUMBS AND WAIT.

CUT TO:

INT. COMEDY CLUB - NIGHT

WANDA STANDS ON STAGE, DRUNK AND HOSTILE.

WANDA

So the bastard left me. Now
he travels around like some
damn hippy. The bastard
thinks this is gonna make him
a great poet. What the hell
does he know about poetry?
Poetry is an embrace, not an
escape. Son of a bitch!

WANDA LOOKS OUT INTO THE HOUSE. THE AUDIENCE WATCHES
HER IN STUNNED SILENCE. CLOSE-UPS OF FACES CONTORTED IN
CONFUSED AGONY.

WANDA (CONT'D)

(TRYING TO RECOVER) So, uh,
men are afraid of commitment,
but I think they should all be
committed -- yeah, to a mental
institution!

THE AUDIENCE HOWLS WITH DELIGHT.

CUT TO:

INT. THEATER WINGS - NIGHT

JENSEN WATCHES WHILE SLUMPED IN A CHAIR. HE IS ALSO
DRUNK. THE CLUB OWNER COMES UP BEHIND JENSEN, PUT HIS
HAND ON JENSEN'S SHOULDER.

CLUB OWNER

She's sensational, Alf. Good
as any man, but different.
Softer somehow. A jungle
flower. Pure and untouched.

THE CLUB OWNER MOVES AWAY.

JENSEN (V.O.)

(SINGING SOFTLY) Good-bye,
Wanda/I have to go/I wanted to
teach you all that I know/But
what was I thinking?/I'm
teaching you drinking/'Cause
truth be told, Wanda/That's
all that I know.

JENSEN EXITS. WANDA HURRIES OFF STAGE TO THUNDEROUS
APPLAUSE.

WANDA

Cap'n, they loved me! In and
out. Just like you said!

WANDA SEES JENSEN'S EMPTY CHAIR. SHE LOOKS UP AND SEES
THE STAGE DOOR SWINGING.

WANDA (CONT'D)

Oh, Alf. Not you too.

WANDA SITS SADLY IN JENSEN'S CHAIR, PULLS A PINT BOTTLE
FROM HER BACK POCKET AND TAKES A SWIG.

CUT TO:

INT. PICK UP TRUCK - NIGHT

TIFFANY JO DRIVES ALONG. SHE WEARS A BIG BANDAGE ON HER
FOREHEAD. A HATCHET SITS ON THE SEAT NEXT TO HER. HER
HEADLIGHTS ILLUMINATE A HITCHHIKER. AS SHE GETS CLOSER,
WE SEE THAT IT IS TAD ON CRUTCHES. TIFFANY JO STOPS.

TIFFANY JO

Throw your crutches in the
back with mine.

TAD THROWS HIS CRUTCHES IN THE BACK, CLIMBS IN THE CAB.

TIFFANY JO (CONT'D)

Where you headed?

TAD

Don't know exactly. Searching
for a lost love. How about
you?

TIFFANY JO

Yeah, I guess I'm looking for
a lost love too. But first I
got to kill me a comedienne.

TIFFANY JO FINGERS THE HATCHET.

TAD

Carol Burnett?

TIFFANY JO

Even better.

FADE OUT.

END