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ELLEN, MORE OR LESS
(working title)

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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 -

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 -- everything -- 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 different.

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.

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.

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 any 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.

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.

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.

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.

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 --

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

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!

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.

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.

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 **DOWNNS 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?

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.

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.

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.

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 is 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.

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 diabeteeeeeeeez!

(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.

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.

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 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 poriky sometimes - if the role calls for it--

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

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?

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)

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 -

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.

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.

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?

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