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
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.
(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 ADMURES 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 dised '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 HOBBLES 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