

Petty Cash

Excerpt: Pages 1-11

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FADE IN:

EXT. MADISON AVENUE - DAY

It is the middle of a busy shopping day. Lined with designer boutiques, the Avenue is bustling with BUSINESSMEN in dark suits and FANCY LADIES in giant sunglasses...

QUICK CUTS OF:

STOREFRONTS: Calvin Klein, Emanuel Ungaro, Givenchy, Baccarat, Hermes...STOP!

PULL IN ON:

EXT. HERMES BOUTIQUE WINDOW - CONTINUOUS

Through the shop window we see: AMY DANIELS, 28, attractive, and struggling, her arms laden with clothes, bags and accessories.

INT. HERMES BOUTIQUE - SAME

Amy follows SERENA BOND, 30, blond and stunningly gorgeous as she angrily picks at the racks of designer clothes.

SERENA

Now I'll have to wait a whole other month. Fucker!

AMY

Actually, I read the box and you have 48 hours before... to do it. It seems like five o'clock could still be okay.

SERENA

That's not the FUCKING point!

In a fit of rage, Serena chucks a sweater at Amy, hitting her square in the face.

FREEZE FRAME:

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PETER HAMILTON'S OFFICE - MORNING

Insert card: TWO DAYS EARLIER

World class art adorns the walls. CLASSICAL MUSIC plays lightly over the calming purr of the air-conditioning. Amy sits on a leather club chair. Across from her sit TWO SECRETARIES at adjoining, built-in, mahogany desks. A third desk sits empty. They face a large window through which we can see (but not hear), their boss, billionaire MORTON DIAMOND, 55, short, balding and impeccably dressed, animatedly speaking to his LAWYER, arms flailing... The senior secretary pushes a pen and a slew of papers at Amy.

AMY
I'm sorry, what is this?

SENIOR SECRETARY
Confidentiality papers.

Amy looks up with a smile.

AMY
Do I have the job?

SENIOR SECRETARY
No. Sign here.

Amy signs her name to the top page and pushes it back.

SENIOR SECRETARY (CONT'D)
Here, too.

Amy signs.

SENIOR SECRETARY (CONT'D)
And here.

AMY
But --

SENIOR SECRETARY
You can't interface with Morton Diamond until you sign them. He conducts very important business in his office to which you might be privy.

SFX: TOILET FLUSHING

CUT TO:

INT. MORTON DIAMOND'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

MORTON

Sightings: Morton Diamond, looking refreshed and younger than ever...

MORTON DIAMOND enters from the bathroom, reading "Page Six" of *The New York Post*. He absentmindedly touches the mezuzah on the door jam and kisses his fingertips. He continues to read aloud:

MORTON (CONT'D)

...his gorgeous new bride, Serena Bond... just back from their honeymoon... blah, blah... (then) It's good.

He hands the paper to his lawyer, PETER HAMILTON, early 40's, suit/tie and so white, he almost looks pink.

PETER

Great photo. You do look refreshed.

MORTON

Refreshed. My word. Invigorates the image without making me look soft.

The intercom BUZZES and we hear the SECRETARY'S VOICE:

SENIOR SECRETARY

Adam Kaller on line 1.

Morton grabs the phone.

MORTON

Is it done? Great! Nice work, Kaller. Now, go pimp the rest of it.

He hangs up the phone.

MORTON (CONT'D)

8CS! Ha! Nobody wanted it! Nobody! Like a little lost lamb. But I sell off one leg and I'm already in the black. Break out the mint jelly!

SFX: The intercom BUZZER RINGS again.

SENIOR SECRETARY
Mrs. Diamond, line 1.

Morton SIGHS.

MORTON
How many calls is that this
morning? Ten?

PETER
Something like that.

Morton knocks on the window. The junior secretary anxiously looks over to the senior secretary who receives his message telepathically and picks up the phone.

BACK TO:

INT. MORTON DIAMOND'S OFFICE WAITING AREA - CONTINUOUS

SENIOR SECRETARY
...Yes, Mrs. Diamond. I'm sorry,
Ms. Bond.

Without missing a beat, she lifts the page for Amy to put her signature down yet again.

SENIOR SECRETARY (CONT'D)
Mr. Diamond's on a conference
call... of course. Of course. Yes.
I will tell him. (then) I
promise...

INT. MORTON DIAMOND'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

MORTON
She's supposed to be busy with the
Foundation. It was her idea for
Christ's sake! Didn't you hire
somebody to help her?

PETER
She fired him.

MORTON
So hire the next one.

Morton puts his arm around Peter.

MORTON (CONT'D)

Peter, please. I'm good to you, aren't I? I pay you well, I give you benefits, perks, the yacht for your honeymoon...

PETER

Very generous --

MORTON

Then do your job. Make sure she's happy. And busy!

PETER

Of course. She will be.

MORTON

What's next?

PETER

An interview for a new assistant.

MORTON

Do I need a new assistant?

PETER

Yes. You let Stacy go on Friday.

MORTON

Who the fuck is Stacy?

PETER

She was here for three months. The woman with the red hair.

MORTON

Uccch. Red hair and white eyelashes. Disgusting.

Through the glass window, Peter snaps his fingers at Amy.

Amy JUMPS.

INT. MORTON'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Amy sits in a chair across from Morton.

PETER

This is Amy Daniels.

Amy extends her hand, but Morton doesn't take it. Germphobe.

AMY

It's a pleasure to meet you.

MORTON

What makes you qualified to work for me?

AMY

Well, I'm resourceful, I'm a hard worker and I've had a lot of life experience.

MORTON

What kind of experience?

Peter hands Morton her resume. He doesn't look at it.

The intercom BUZZES and we hear the SECRETARY'S VOICE:

SENIOR SECRETARY

Mr. Buffet on line 1.

Morton picks up the phone.

MORTON

Warren!... What'd you find out?... I knew it. That guy's a total putz. Yeah, I'm in. Right. 6:30 am. More later.

Morton hangs up. He looks pleased.

MORTON (CONT'D)

Love that guy.

He focuses back on Amy. And waits.

AMY

So, uh...I was saying, I just got back from living abroad for the past five years. I worked consistently..

THE CAMERA PULLS IN CLOSE ON AMY'S FACE...

DISSOLVE TO:

Amy, pushing a baby stroller, watches the miniature white poodle she's walking, struggle to push out a turd along the Champs-Elysees.

QUICK CUT: A tanned and sexy Amy leads FAT, SUNBURNED, EUROPEAN TOURISTS in a rousing rendition of "Hands Up, Baby, Hands Up," at Club Med Corfu.

QUICK CUT: Amy sits across from a MIDDLE AGED ITALIAN GENTLEMAN in a cafe in Florence and teaches him English.

AMY
...you are, he is, they are...

ITALIAN GENTLEMAN
Bella...

Before Amy knows what's happening, he impulsively pulls her towards him and grabs her boob. She gives him a swift slap.

BACK TO SCENE:

AMY
I've been temping a lot.

Morton studies her, expressionless. Then picks up the phone.

MORTON
(into phone)
Get me Wentworth.

PETER
Thank you very much for your time.

Startled by the abruptness of the dismissal, Amy gets up.

AMY
Oh, OK.

But before she's out the door, Amy spins around:

AMY (CONT'D)
Oh! I graduated from Columbia!

Morton, waiting on the phone, looks at her.

MORTON
Columbia? Or Barnard?

AMY
Columbia.

MORTON
So?

This is the moment of truth and Amy steps up:

AMY

So, you went to Columbia and I thought... look, I know my resume isn't as stellar as it could be, but I am sure I can do this job. I speak French, Spanish, Italian and I can get by in Hebrew. I worked on a kibbutz in Israel -- I know how to harvest soybeans. I can drive a tractor, assemble an uzi in the dark and identify an active land mine. I've got a sharp learning curve and most people think I'm pleasant to be around.

She gives Morton and Peter a brave grin.

AMY (CONT'D)

And normally, I'm not this confrontational.

Morton hangs up the phone.

MORTON

(in Hebrew)

M'aifo at?

AMY

Florida.

Morton's eyebrows go up into his bald head. He's impressed. Suddenly, Serena Bond ENTERS, interrupting the meeting.

SERENA

Morton? Are you off your conference call?

Morton gets up from his desk and embraces Serena, giving her a wet kiss. Serena is easily five inches taller than Morton.

MORTON

Serena! My gorgeous, beautiful bride!

SERENA

Morton, I need help. I just can't do it all by myself.

MORTON

I wouldn't want you to.

Morton gives Peter stink eye over her shoulder.

SERENA
Starting a charity foundation is hard!

MORTON
I know, beauty. What was wrong with the guy Peter got to help you?

SERENA
He was terrible! Bossy and stupid and he kept trying to push his ideas on me. He just didn't understand my vision. Honey, I need you to be more involved.

MORTON
I am involved. I MAKE the money that you give away.

SERENA
Then I need a better assistant.

MORTON
Which is why I'm interviewing, at this very moment, a new assistant.

Serena notices Amy for the first time.

SERENA
Is she for me?

MORTON
All yours.

Amy looks around, alarmed.

SERENA
Is she smart?

MORTON
Columbia grad.

SERENA
Thank you, Morton.

Serena gives Morton a deep kiss. Then,

SERENA (CONT'D)
Wait! Does she have any charity experience?

PETER
She worked at The Ford Foundation.

AMY

As a temp.

MORTON

The Ford Foundation! Perfect.

Serena opens the door and smiles pleasantly at Amy.

SERENA

Come on, we've got a lot of work to do. Thanks, Morty!

Stunned, Amy follows Serena out the door.

EXT. SERENA'S BALCONY - LATER

The balcony looks out onto the Diamond's sunken garden oasis. It's the kind of serenity that makes you feel like you're in Connecticut, rather than NYC. Serena smokes a long brown cigarette and studies Amy, who looks very uncomfortable.

AMY

Your garden is beautiful.

SERENA

Uccchhh. It needs a total overhaul. Morton will not move and the entire place just reeks of her. The ex-wife. A bitch with bad taste. Not a great combination.

Serena makes a face and Amy smiles politely. This is weird.

SERENA (CONT'D)

Your hair is just too gorgeous! So thick. Can I touch it?

AMY

Uh. Sure.

Serena caresses Amy's beautiful hair.

SERENA

Why can't I have hair like this? Natural curl, right?

AMY

Yes.

SERENA

So lucky.

AMY
So you're starting a founda--

SERENA
If Morton caught me smoking, he'd
kill me!

Serena smiles like Amy just told a great joke.

AMY
So, what do you need --

SERENA
I'm the President of the Diamond
Foundation.

Long pause and another drag on the cig.

SERENA (CONT'D)
I want this foundation to be
different from anything anyone has
ever seen. I have such big plans --
there is so much to do. Where can
you start? Hmmm...

CUT TO:

INT. SERENA'S OUTER OFFICE - SAME

Amy is on the phone, take-out menu in hand, ordering.

AMY
... and a fresh squeezed orange
juice... Hold on... (to Serena)
Small, medium or --

We hear Serena YELL from her adjoining office.

SERENA (O.C)
Just get the large!

QUICK CUT: Serena walks in with a Victoria's Secret catalog.

SERENA (CONT'D)
Could you please order all of the
items I've selected?

Serena exits and Amy flips through the catalog: it's flagged
full of yellow post-its: it looks like The Yellow Pages.

QUICK CUT: The DELIVERY GUY waits with a gorgeously wrapped
box from Zabar's.

DELIVERY GUY

I was told you'd be paying cash.

AMY

Just a minute, please.

Amy pokes her head into Serena's office.

AMY (CONT'D)

The Zabar's guy said we're paying cash?

Serena attaches Post-Its to a new catalog.

SERENA

The drawer...in your desk.

Amy opens the drawer to find a large manila envelope. She opens it and pulls out a handful of \$100 bills.

AMY

Oh. My. God.