

Hard Time

Setting: a female holding cell

Cast:

Rose: Bitter lady of the evening

Lisa: Housewife out on the town and a wee bit tipsy

Carol: Friend of Lisa. Also tipsy.

Jailer: A bland employee of the jail.

Scene begins with Rose sitting on a chair.

Rose: Back in jail again. There's gotta be a better way to make a few bucks than in this "lady of the evening" shtick. Lady of the evening, Yeah, right. In this biz you better be available twenty four seven to please the clientele with all the competition on the streets. You have to make hay when the sun shines, right? I'd go into something easier, like politics but I have my pride. Oh great. A cell mate. I hope she doesn't stink like the last one.

Lisa: Stop it! This is nuts! I am the victim here! Why are you putting me in here? This is harassment, I tell you! (The jailer pushes her into the cell and mimes closing the door.)

Jailer: Sorry, Rose.. We've got a live one for you.

Lisa: A live one? You get dead ones here?! (Pause to expressively react to the thought of dead people in the cell.) Oh my goodness this is the worst thing to ever happen to me!

Rose: If this is the worst thing to happen to you, sweetie, you're doing pretty damn good in life. You need to relax and lower the volume. This is a place of peace, of calm, of introspection. You need to find your quiet centre. You need to discover serenity. You need to shut the hell up. (She makes a circle with her hands.)
Oooohhmmm... ooooohhhhhmm... I am one...

Lisa: Well I'm not one so just cut it out. I'm not like you. I don't belong here. I know my rights. They won't silence me. I am the secretary-treasurer of the PTA.

Rose: Forgive me. I had no idea I was in the presence of such an illustrious personage! Should I bow or go all the way and prostrate myself before you in abject supplication? And what makes you think I belong here anymore than you do?

Lisa: Well it's obvious why you're in here. You're all bosomy and dressed to attract a man's eye. A weak, disgusting man, anyway.

Rose: Now hang onto your judge's robes, oh fellow incarceration enthusiast. At least I never struck a man down and injured him with violence. Any time I injured a fellow, he enjoyed it.

Lisa: Ewww! Thanks for the mental image.

Rose: So what's a PTA secretary-treasurer doing in the slammer, anyway? Did you add a little something extra to the bake sale brownies?

Lisa: I was just defending myself! I swear! This guy behind me at the bar grabbed my butt so I turned around and slapped him in the face. That's what principled women do when being subjected to unwanted contact. Not like you would know.

Rose: What do you mean by that, Miss Goody Too Full Of Herself?

Lisa: Well, your principles obviously include physical contact as part of your job. Ewww... I can't imagine letting strangers touch me like that. The only other trades, besides yours, where touching people happens are like hairdressers, masseuses and the medical community. That lets me out of any of those jobs.

Rose: You don't like touching people, don't like to be touched or both? In any case, I'd hate to be your husband. What's his name? Maybe I know him.

Lisa: You leave my husband out of this. He's not like the other guys.

Rose: Oh no, none of them are. That's how I stay in business. But never mind. So then what happened? You thought someone grabbed your butt so you slapped him. What's the big deal? Happens every day without charges being laid.

Lisa: Well, after I hit the creeper, who had it coming, I might add, he fell and hit his head on the ATM machine. No one saw him grab me, just the part where I was smashing this guy in the face with my fist.

Rose: I thought you said you slapped him.

Lisa: I thought slapping sounded more lady-like than punching him in the eye socket .

Jailer: I have some company for you ladies. Try and get along.

Lisa: Carol! Oh my gosh! What are you doing here?

Rose: Is she part of your gang?

Lisa: I'm not in a gang! Oh, thank heavens Carol. You're here to bail me out, right?

Carol: I wish, Lisa. I'm here because after the bouncer grabbed you and hauled you off, I got into a scrap with your victim's girlfriend.

Lisa: Victim?! He had it coming! Whose side are you on?

Rose: It looks like she's leaning towards Carol's side. Smart girl.

Carol: Maybe that guy didn't grab your butt. What if you are wrong?

Lisa: I should know whether someone grabbed my butt or not!

Rose: I always know, too. I kind of like it though.

Lisa: You stay out of this. We don't want to hear about your depraved tales of disgusting, wanton lust.

Carol: Jeepers, Lisa, lets not be hasty... Joking! I was joking! Man you need to lighten up!

Lisa: I'm in the big house for assault and you're making jokes?

Rose: This is hardly the big house, honey. This is just a holding cell. If you like this place, though, you'll love actual prison.

Lisa: Prison? ACK! ACK! We can't go to prison! What about our families? What about our reputations? What about the PTA? They will drum us out of the corps.

Carol: Calm down, Lisa! Breathe...

Rose: That's always good advice.

Lisa: You want some advice? Mind your own beeswax! None of this concerns you.

Rose: Man, I haven't heard the beeswax line since grade eight. Maybe I should just leave, right? I agree!

Carol: Lisa, never mind her. I... I have to tell you something but you must promise not to breathe a word of it to anyone.

Rose: Ooo! Sounds juicy!

Lisa: Wait! Rose, here might be a jail cell informant. I've seen that on Law and Order!

Rose: I'm no snitch. I hate snitches. I tell you what... since I don't really care about your miserable Stepford wife problems, I will plug my ears and make noises so you can tell Lisa your little secret. (She plugs her ears and starts saying "lalalalalalalala". Carol leans over and whispers in Lisa's ear.)

Lisa: What?

Carol: I SAID I WAS THE ONE THAT GRABBED YOUR BUTT!

Rose: Holy cow! HAHAHAHA! The plot thickens!

Lisa: Shut up, Rose. Good heavens, Carol. Why would you do such a thing? You're... you're not one of THEM, are are you?

Rose: One of them? You make them sound like alien extraterrestrials.

Carol: What? Them? Oh! No, I swear, Lisa! I'd just had a few too many wine spritzers and your butt was just there and I couldn't help myself! It was like a joke kind of. I knew I shouldn't have had that tequila shot!

Lisa: Oh my gosh, Carol! I slapped that guy because I thought it was him! Why didn't you say anything?

Carol: They led you off before I could tell anyone what really happened! Then the paramedics came and that poor guy's woman come after me like a wildcat. Thank heavens the cops came and broke it up. I think she is in a different cell.

Rose: You really run with a rough crowd!

Lisa: What are we going to do? What if that man dies from his injuries?

Carol: There was a lot of blood...

Rose: That's typical of head wounds.

Lisa: You're not helping!

Rose: Don't worry. It's not like you murdered the guy in cold blood. At worst they will get you for criminal negligence causing death. You'll be out in no time. Five years, max.

Lisa: Carol, we must stick with the story about that guy or we will be on death row for sure!

Carol: You want me to lie for you? On the stand? That's like perjury or something. That's a pretty big ask, Lisa.

Rose: This is no time to discuss the size of her butt.

Lisa: She said "ask" and you know it. Look, Carol, this is all your fault. If you hadn't grabbed my butt, none of this would have happened.

Carol: I didn't think you'd freak out and smash the closest guy to you in the eyeball.

Rose: You know, besides criminal charges, you also have to consider civil charges. This guy is going to take you to the cleaners.

Lisa: I could just curl up and die right now. (She sits and starts to cry.)

Rose: I'd lend you my belt so could hang yourself but I just bought it. Looks like you will have to face reality, sweetie. You are in big trouble and will have to put on those big girl panties. Tears won't get you anywhere in prison.

Carol: They work on juries, though, Lisa. There's always that. So have you used your phone call yet?

Lisa: Yeah. I left a message for Steve. He's terrible about getting messages, though. How about you? Did you get hold of Jim?

Carol: Jim's out of town. What's he going to do? I didn't dare call any of the kids or the PTA ladies.

Rose: Especially the PTA ladies.

Lisa: So who did you call?

Carol: Nobody. I haven't used the call yet, though I was considering ordering pizza. I'm starving.

Rose: The female convict and the pizza boy. I think I starred in a movie like that.

Carol: Look, Lisa, no matter what happens, I want you to know I will do anything for you, even if it means lying for you if I have to. You're my friend and we are in this together.

Rose: (Visibly moved.) Wow. I have waited my whole life for someone to go to bat for me like that. You know, Lisa, you may not realize it right now but you are one lucky woman.

Jailer: Okay, you two. Come with me. Apparently, the fellow in the altercation is a big Mixed Martial Arts star and doesn't want people to find out he was laid out by some housewife. If you two sign some forms, you'll both be able to go home.

(The jailer "opens the door" at releases Lisa and Carol.)

Rose: Bye! Nice meeting you... Come back soon... (She stands and stares after them and heaves a big sigh. She stands silent looking sad for a long time.)

Jailer: It's your lucky day, Rose. Those two women just made bail for you.

Rose: Oh my God, they went to bat for me... I guess there a first for everything. (She puts her hands to her face.)

Curtain.