

THE PURSE

By Jerry Rabushka

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PROPS:

Purse

Sign with “Homeless, Please Give From The Heart” written on it

A few index cards with phone numbers written on them

Some dirty Kleenexes

CAST: SHELBY, CHET, and KOLBY

AT RISE: CHET and SHELBY are speaking to the audience, as if they are speaking into a camera. They are filming a documentary on crime.

SHELBY: I thought this was a safe neighborhood. I assumed it was a place where a woman could walk to the store, pick up a few things, enjoy her day, and not have to fear for her personal safety. I grew up in this neighborhood. It used to be where you could go walking at three in the morning without fear that someone was going to take advantage.

CHET: I'd like to know what kinda respectable woman goes walking around at three in the morning!

SHELBY: That's my husband, Chet. Don't listen to him. He thinks a woman's place is in the home, but he's the one who sits around in the home all day like a stale loaf of bread. He doesn't know how it feels to be – violated – by a common, low-life street criminal. That young hooligan helped himself to my purse like it was a shrimp and chicken eggroll on a Chinese buffet. Then he knocked me down and left me on the sidewalk to call for help.

CHET: Not that anybody would help. They just stepped over Shelby like she was a piece of roadkill.

SHELBY: I've lost my credit cards, my drivers license – my whole identity was in that purse. I don't know if I can ever feel safe in my neighborhood again.

CHET: Shelby's right. We used to feel safe here. We didn't have to worry about any punk kids taking money from a defenseless old woman. We...

SHELBY: Who are you calling a defenseless old woman!

CHET: Well...you! You couldn't keep him from taking your purse!

SHELBY: **(annoyed)** I'll show you defenseless when we get home.

CHET: **(digging in)** I bet you'll show me old, too. **(to audience)** I love my wife. I really do. And when something like this happens to her, I want to make sure someone pays for it.

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SHELBY: It's true. I want to return to the days when I could walk down the street in peace and go to the store without having to worry that he will come back and – molest me.

KOLBY: (**enters, holding the stolen purse**) My name is Kolby Dillon. If you can't tell by looking, I have some problems. But I've had a hard life. I'm lucky I don't have more problems. And yes, I took her purse. It wasn't the money I wanted. I wanted that purse. I wanted to give my mother that purse for a birthday present. (**pause**) Okay, you're right. I'm lying. It was for me.

CHET: Pervert!

KOLBY: It matched my outfit. (**pause**) Relax...I'm joking. I did want the money. But only because I needed it...for my mother.

CHET: Don't try to defend yourself. You're a disgusting slimeball who deserves to be put away – for life! (**to audience**) He's the kind of man who would kill someone over seventy-five cents. Like he's worth more than twenty-five himself. Well, twenty-seven with tax, I'll give him that much.

KOLBY: I don't know how she could carry that thing! It must weigh forty-seven pounds! I'll bet she hasn't cleaned it out since the Nixon presidency. I put my hand in there right into a stack of Kleenex that must have been used forty times. With lipstick, and—you know! (**pulls out dirty Kleenex**) And I'm like, eeeewwwwwwwww!

CHET: That's my wife's purse! Her life is in there.!

SHELBY: You deserved dirty Kleenex, scalywagging around in someone's personal property like that!

KOLBY: Personal property? I wouldn't even borrow that stuff for a Halloween party. And then...she has credit cards for J.C. Penny's and K-Mart – like I even shop there!

CHET: The electric chair! Kids these days deserve the chair!

KOLBY: Oh, I have a surprise for you, Chet Jones. After I disinfected myself from all that – tissue – you can imagine my astonishment at finding – these!

CHET: Give me those! (**looks at them**) Shelby!?! These are phone numbers for every man on our block! What were these doing in your purse?!

KOLBY: I was horrified.

SHELBY: You always told me you'd feel better if I had a man next to me rather than going out alone.

CHET: That's not what I meant. I meant me! Does this prove what I think it proves?

SHELBY: It proves that you don't trust me, that's what it proves to me. It certainly doesn't prove that I've been seeing every other man on the block. Get over your paranoia. Geesh!

CHET: I wondered why it took you two hours to pick up a jar of mayonnaise last Tuesday. (**to KOLBY**) You can't trust a woman these days, can you? My wife of twenty years!

KOLBY: And there's more. Look...what...else!

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