

IT'S MY PARTY!

A short play

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1057 Elm Road
Baltimore, MD 21227
410 536 1956

Synopsis:

Suburban drug addict Connie Silks and prostitute Crystal Brown want to be released from jail. Both have attitudes. While they wait, they fight over a pair of Jimmy Choos and reveal their vulnerabilities.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Connie Silks, 30, suburban drug addict, white
Crystal Brown, 28, mother and prostitute, black
Megan Callahan, 30, lawyer, any race

Time: the present. 4 p.m. on a Friday.

Place: the intake center of a city jail.

Setting: a table and a couple of chairs. A phone is on one table. Enter Connie, wearing designer jeans and jacket, spike heeled shoes and fancy earrings. She looks like she's been in a paddy wagon. During her monologue the stage is dark except for a spotlight. She is on the phone. Offstage you can hear women crying, laughing, the occasional scream and fit of rage.

CONNIE

Sis, I need your help bad. The cops picked me up on possession. I'm in jail. (Pause) Could you and Hank, would you post bail? I wouldn't ask except.... (Pause) Five thousand. Yeah. It is a big number. Last time I ask you for money. I promise. What do you mean you can't? The smell is worse than Aunt Ida's nursing home. One woman's already propositioned me. I know I've messed up before, but there's no one else. Do you know what today is? Eileen. Eileen.

(She hangs up, sits down at the table and starts crying.)

Enter Crystal, who dresses like a prostitute in flip flops, and is chewing gum. She eyes Connie's outfit from head to toe and points to the phone.)

CRYSTAL

You done, honey?

CONNIE

All yours.

(Moves to the next table. Crystal picks up the phone and dials.)

CRYSTAL

Reg, get me out of here. I'm in the downtown lockup. Make it fast. My Mama has to work in an hour.

(Hangs up, pops bubbles)

Don't let them catch you crying or it's all over. First time?

(Connie nods.)

Your mascara's running.

(Fishes in her pockets and hands her a Kleenex.)

CRYSTAL (contd)

Here. This one's clean. My son always has a runny nose.

CONNIE

Thanks. (Pause) Fingerprints. Mug shot. My parents would die if they weren't already--.

CRYSTAL

Drugs or shoplifting?

CONNIE

It's like the police knew I would be on a particular corner. Talk about entrapment. One cop frisked me and touched my breast. My lawyer will hear about this.

CRYSTAL

Frisk? Uh huh. Drugs. (Pause) Nice shoes. Ferragamo or Jimmy Choo?

CONNIE

So stupid of me to change the routine. Couldn't wait for Arty. Stupid snitch set me up and he goes free. (Pause) What did you say?

CRYSTAL

Your shoes. Always wanted a pair. We're about the same size. Let's --.

CONNIE

Maybe if I didn't haggle over the price, I'd be home now instead of in this dungeon. Is that a cockroach?

(Crystal steps on the bug.)

CRYSTAL

Keep your chin up, hon. Been here more times than I can count.

CONNIE

I don't belong here. I have a real job. I pay taxes.

CRYSTAL

And use drugs. You think you're better'n me just cause you live in the 'burbs and wear fancy clothes? By the time the cops finish with you, you'll be on the street like me.

CONNIE

Not if I can help it. I need to work.

CRYSTAL

So do I. Me and my son like to eat. (Pause) What's your credit score?

CONNIE

I am so cold. Where is that lawyer?

CRYSTAL

Mine's seven hundred. Pay my bills on time. And you?

CONNIE

Wearing someone else's shoes is unsanitary.

CRYSTAL

Washed my feet this morning after my last customer. Don't want no toenail fungus like my Mamma got on her big toe. Customers would make me give 'em a discount. You got athlete's foot?

CONNIE

What do you take me for?

CRYSTAL

Goodwill sells all kinds of secondhand shoes. OK with them, ok with –

CONNIE

I only buy new.

CRYSTAL

Liar. Stuck up. This place will bring you down a peg or two. Or three or four.

CONNIE

Where's that lawyer? This place is driving me... At work I'm in charge. Here—

CRYSTAL

Like to be in control? Johns think they are, but they ain't. (Pause) Let me try the Jimmy Choos. Give you a stick of my gum.

CONNIE

They won't fit you. I have a narrow foot. Size nine.

CRYSTAL

Will too. Like a glove. (Pause) Come on, girlfriend. Makes a good story to tell your grandchildren.

CONNIE

I don't have kids.

CRYSTAL
Your friends then.

CONNIE
My friends couldn't imagine my being here.

CRYSTAL
So don't tell them. Won't hurt nothin' if you let me wear your Jimmy's.

CONNIE
And walk on this filthy floor in my bare feet?

CRYSTAL
You can wear mine's.

CONNIE
I hate flip flops. No support. So flat.

CRYSTAL
Didn't your Mama teach you to do a good deed now and again?

CONNIE
Leave my Mother out of this.

CRYSTAL
Come on. Just be a minute. Manager's on his way over. Let's swap.

CONNIE
(Reluctantly she takes off her shoes.)

For a minute. Don't scuff them.
(Crystal puts on the shoes and struts around the room.)

CRYSTAL
Sex and the City. Here I come. (Pause) Somebody bailing you out?

CONNIE
Not likely.

CRYSTAL
No husband? Sugar daddy?

My boyfriend's out of work.

CONNIE

Family?

CRYSTAL

Out of town.

CONNIE

Fed up, you mean? How long you been using?

CRYSTAL

What's it to you?

CONNIE

Been walking in your shoes. Feels rocky.

CRYSTAL

Long time.

CONNIE

Without getting caught?

CRYSTAL

Been lucky.

CONNIE

Well, you behind the eight ball now. (Pause) Here mad **is** better. Otherwise, you get stepped on like a bug.

CRYSTAL

(The noise offstage gets louder.)

Is it always this noisy? Feel a migraine coming on.

CONNIE

Tell your boyfriend to bring ear plugs.

CRYSTAL

What's it like inside?

CONNIE

Can't do nothing with your hair. Cheap shampoo. No gel or conditioner. Everybody wearing the same clothes. Forget about style. And when that door slams, still gives me the chills.

CRYSTAL

(Looks at her watch.)

Where is that man? Got to pick up my son.

CONNIE

How big are the cells? I don't like feeling closed in.

CRYSTAL

Size of a couple of closets. The Sheraton or Best Western it ain't. Cells are dark, cold and boring.

(Walks around Connie)

The drugs haven't hurt your looks all that much. ...except for your teeth. But in the dark, Johns won't know the difference. (Pause) Make you an offer. I'll talk to my manager about posting bail in exchange for the shoes and a loan. You won't get them back anyway. Somebody inside will steal them. Reggie wants to expand. Seniors. Retirement communities. Those guys have money. How old you say you are?

CONNIE

Not my line of work.

CRYSTAL

You may not have a choice.

CONNIE

I'll take my shoes back now.

CRYSTAL

I'll say they're mine. Guard won't know the difference.

CONNIE

Give them to me.

CRYSTAL

You think my advice comes free? This here's payment.

(Connie tackles Crystal, then sits on top of Crystal and pulls off her shoes.)

CONNIE

I saved for six months to buy these shoes. You think I'm gonna let you walk off with them just cause you gave me a Kleenex?

CRYSTAL

Tougher than you let on.

CONNIE

I have three older brothers.

CRYSTAL

With your attitude, you'll do just fine inside. (Pause) Not too late to change your mind though. You could work part time. All us girls get a discount on that fine white powder.

CONNIE

My boyfriend wouldn't understand.

CRYSTAL

I'll be on the street in a minute and you'll still be in this steel cage. Sweating. Imagining the worst.

CONNIE

You have a son. If I had a son—

CRYSTAL

You think kin make a difference? Must get your stories from the library.

CONNIE

Someday your son will ask you to quit.

CRYSTAL

My Mama prays for that every night. Can't.

CONNIE

Neither can I. (Pause) Sorry I knocked you down. You all right?

CRYSTAL

Those earrings are sweet. Could I try 'em?

WOMAN'S VOICE

(Offstage)

Cystal Brown? Step this way.

CRYSTAL

See you, girlfriend. My bail's here.

(Crystal exits. Connie shivers, pulls her jacket closer, looks around, then sings softly.)

CONNIE

Happy birthday to me, happy birthday to me, --

(Enter lawyer Megan Callahan. She carries an attaché case and is stylishly dressed.)

MEGAN

Miss Silks? Megan Callahan from the Public Defender's Office. I'll be representing you.

(She sits and takes out a folder.)

CONNIE

Thank God. (Pause). You're the first person I've met here who looks like me.

MEGAN

And there the similarity ends. You're in serious trouble, Ms. Silks.

CONNIE

You've got to get me out of here. The whole thing's a mistake.

MEGAN

The police have the transaction on camera.

CONNIE

I was there on business.

MEGAN

On one of the most dangerous streets in East Baltimore? At least my inner-city clients admit it when they break the law. The courts are full of users like you who drive in from the county and expect to walk. Those days are over.

CONNIE

If I stay here, I'll lose my mind.

MEGAN

You should have thought of that before you—

CONNIE

Lectures I don't need. What can you do to help me?

MEGAN

Record shows no prior arrests. The judge might take that into account and suspend your sentence to six months to a year.

CONNIE

Over a 20 dollar bag? Today's my birthday. Can't you give me a break?

MEGAN

You committed a felony.

CONNIE

What about community service? I'll try anything.

MEGAN

You have one option besides jail. Enter a 30-day treatment program and agree to supervised probation for two years. If you complete the program, the arrest won't appear on your record. Otherwise, you're going to jail.

CONNIE

Tried rehab twice. Flunked.

MEGAN

This isn't school. You get another chance.

CONNIE

It's too hard.

MEGAN

Even harder to find a job with a criminal record. You're still young. How will you support yourself?

(Connie looks at the door where Crystal has just exited.)

CONNIE

Like her. She said I'd be on the street like her. She's a –I can't ...

MEGAN

So don't. Picture yourself a year from now at a new job. You look healthy, maybe a few pounds heavier, but you're clean.

CONNIE

What if I flunk again?

MEGAN

This time you'll have help. Regular check-ins with a probation officer. A sponsor from Narcotics Anonymous. There'll be people who want to see you succeed.

CONNIE

Anything's better than being the first person in my family to go to jail.

MEGAN

Good. I'll start the paperwork.

(She starts packing up.)

CONNIE

Wait. I don't want to spend the night in –

MEGAN

It's Friday. Almost five o'clock. You'll have to stay the weekend. You made the right decision.

CONNIE

Here? With all these bugs? I can't—

MEGAN

A weekend is better than six months. Make the best of it. See you Monday.

CONNIE

What could possibly be worse than this hell hole?

(Megan sees a bug, steps on it, and exits.)
(Enter Crystal.)

CRYSTAL

Reg couldn't post bail. Cops have him on a warrant.

CONNIE

What about your mother?

CRYSTAL

No money.

CONNIE

Friends?

CRYSTAL

Like me.

CONNIE

Favorite customer?

CRYSTAL

And tell some John my real name? Got brains in your shoes? I hate this place. The noise, the smell, the shame. (Pause) No telling how long I'll be here. Last time six months.

CONNIE

Don't let them catch you cryin' or it's all over, girlfriend.

CRYSTAL

My son will be so upset when I'm not home to read him a story before he goes to bed. It's the one thing I do that tells me I'm a good mother.

CONNIE

My name's Connie. Do you have a picture of your son?

(Crystal shakes her head no and keeps on crying.)

(Connie sits down next to Crystal and removes her earrings, then hands them to Crystal.)

CONNIE

Go ahead, Crystal. Try 'em. Just your style.

END OF PLAY