

**THE MIDDLEMAN**

"The Pilot Episode Sanction"

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**THE MIDDLEMAN**

**ACT ONE**

**FADE IN**

**EXT. INDUSTRIAL PARK - ESTABLISHING - DAY**

A really impressive glass and steel monolith. A sign reads "A.N.D. LABORATORIES: RESCRAMBLING YOUR DNA."

Over the shot, the repeated metallic SNAP-KLANG of someone fidgeting with a Zippo lighter.

**CHYRON:** A.N.D. Laboratories. Present Day. 12:15 P.M.

YOUNG FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)  
Geez, mom...what do you mean what am I  
doing in a science lab?

**INT. A.N.D. LABORATORIES - DAY**

A RECEPTION DESK before a glass wall. Beyond the glass, a group of SCIENTIFIC PEOPLE rush around scientific equipment, doing scientific things. No sound comes through from the lab.

At the reception desk, wearing a headset, sits WENDY WATSON: twenty and barely corporate. The indolent glare behind Wendy's oval tortoiseshells is a façade for what would normally be a faraway look of yearning.

**IN WENDY'S HAND**

A silver-plated Zippo engraved with a DC-3 airplane:

WENDY (V.O.)  
I happen to be working with the top  
scientific minds in the country, Mom,  
doing all sorts of top secret  
scientific mind things...

Wendy's second line RINGS:

WENDY (cont'd)  
...hold on...

Wendy presses a button and changes into an official voice:

WENDY (cont'd)  
(eyes rolling)  
...thank you for calling A.N.D.  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WENDY (cont'd)  
Laboratories, rescrambling your DNA,  
how may I direct your call?

As she speaks, something bad happens in the lab. Machines fritz out, some burst into flame, others erupt in smoke.

WENDY (cont'd)  
(click, tone change)  
...this is a really important job  
mom...as a matter of fact yes, a lot  
of art school graduates get scientist  
jobs...oh, hang on...  
(click)  
Thank you for calling A.N.D.  
Laboratories, rescrambling your DNA,  
how may I direct your call?

As Wendy clicks back to her mother...

**IN THE LAB**

...red lights blaze. The explosions (unheard by Wendy) get bigger. The scientific-looking people panic. Some scream, others try to extinguish the fires.

WENDY (cont'd)  
Yes, mother, I'm still dating "that  
guy," and his name's Ben. No, he's  
not a "homosexual," he's in film  
school.

**RACK TO FAVOR WENDY**

A cloud of billowing smoke obscures the lab. A blood-stained scientific-looking MAN rushes through the smoke, pounding desperately on the glass, unheard by Wendy.

Wendy (cont'd)  
...hold on...  
(click)  
Thank you for calling A.N.D...

Three MEN IN HAZ-MAT SUITS run in front of the reception desk, carrying futuristic-looking rifles.

Wendy (cont'd)  
I'm connecting your call and -

Wendy watches the Haz-Mat men as they run to a corridor.

Wendy (cont'd)  
- rescrambling your DNA. Thanks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

**IN THE LAB**

The bloodstained scientific-looking man is grabbed by a gnarled tentacle and dragged back into the smoke.

**IN THE RECEPTION AREA**

Three more MEN IN HAZ-MAT SUITS rush in, wheeling in a large, futuristic-looking cannon.

WENDY (cont'd)  
Excuse me. Do you have an appointment?

**CRASH!**

The glass wall SHATTERS, flooding the reception area with smoke. Wendy leaps over the desk, turning to see:

**THE MOST GROTESQUE CREATURE YOU HAVE EVER SEEN**

A gigantic amalgamation of body parts scrambled in the most horrendous way imaginable - ten arms for legs, a massive torso made of intestines, ears, fingers and heads, two twisted masses of muscle, noses and ears for arms, and a lumbering, gluteal head festooned with eyes and teeth.

Wendy looks up at the creature...

WENDY (cont'd)  
(into the phone)  
...please hold.

...and hangs up the phone.

HAZ-MAT CHIEF  
(to Wendy)  
Duck! Out of the way!  
(to his men)  
FIRE!

**THE HAZ-MAT MEN FIRE THEIR CANNON**

But their explosive load is absorbed into the monster like a baby-birth home movie played backwards.

The monstrosity opens its enormous and, frankly, rectal, maw and:

**BARF!**

A revolting slop shoots from the monster's toothy sphincter mouth, melting the Haz-Mat men!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Wendy turns to run. A horrible tendril shoots out of one of the monsters many orifices and wraps around her waist.

The Zippo falls to the ground.

Wendy grabs a letter opener and stabs wildly at the tentacle drawing her to the beast's alimentary orifice -

**BANG!**

- a SHOTGUN BLAST rips tendril from beast! Wendy falls. The Monster SHRIEKS and turns with Wendy to see:

**THE MIDDLEMAN**

A rugged but slightly dorky guy in his late twenties (think Jonny Quest with a five o' clock shadow), standing on a coffee table, smokin' shotgun in hand.

The Middleman wears an olive Eisenhower jacket over black pants, boots and a white shirt with a skinny tie.

With a flick of the Middleman's wrist, the shotgun's barrel retracts. The weapon vanishes into a pocket.

THE MIDDLEMAN

Excuse me, ma'am, but I am going to have to ask you to step aside.

**WENDY AND THE MONSTER**

Both cock their heads as if asking "me?"

THE MIDDLEMAN (cont'd)

Uh...the human.  
(off their look)  
The one to my right!

Wendy drops. The Middleman produces an exotic weapon from his jacket. The Monster BARFS another river of dreadful and corrosive bodily fluid in the Middleman's direction.

**SPLAT!**

The monster's megaton chunk-blow hits the wall, but the Middleman is nowhere to be seen! The Monster puckers its maw in confusion.

**THWOCK! THWOCK!**

Two barbed darts bury into the monster's back, both cabled to the turbocharged Taser gun held by:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

**THE MIDDLEMAN**

Who pushes a red button on his weapon. Twin streams of deadly electricity course into the snarling beast.

The beast CRIES and shakes in that spastic way that living things do when someone runs 1,000,000 volts through them.

The Middleman casually addresses Wendy as the beast writhes behind them.

THE MIDDLEMAN (cont'd)

Heck of a mess, huh?

WENDY

Excuse me?

**KA-BLOOEY!**

Wendy and The Middleman duck out of frame as the monster erupts in a stinking shockwave of entrails.

The two come back up into frame.

THE MIDDLEMAN

I said "heck of a mess, huh?"

WENDY

Whatever. I'm a temp.

The Middleman's darts and electrical wire recoil into his weapon with a ZZZZIP!

In the background: the sound of sirens.

THE MIDDLEMAN

Hey now. The Heat's on its way.

(beat)

OK, cowgirl, here's your marching orders. Anyone asks, this was a gas main explosion. I was never here. This conversation never took place.

WENDY

Marching orders? What about that big nasty butt cheek that just tried to melt us with nuclear vomit?

THE MIDDLEMAN

Tell the truth if you want, but if you do, I'm going to have to root you like a hog and kill you.

(beat)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

THE MIDDLEMAN (cont'd)

Sorry.

(looking at his watch)

So what's it gonna be. Keep the secret or death?

WENDY

What do you think?

THE MIDDLEMAN

Ma'am, specificity is the soul of all good communication.

WENDY

Yes. Duh!

**CLOSE ON THE MIDDLEMAN'S WATCH**

A display reads "VOICE STRESS ANALYSIS -- 99% CONFIDENCE."

THE MIDDLEMAN

Outstanding.

(beat, a smile)

You're good under pressure.

WENDY

Are you hitting on me?

THE MIDDLEMAN

I'm making an observation.

WENDY

Hello! Nutjob. Party of one.

THE MIDDLEMAN

No, ma'am.

(a grin)

I'm just The Middleman.

The big noise of FIREFIGHTERS AND COPS entering turns Wendy around. A FIREFIGHTER approaches her:

FIREFIGHTER

Are you all right?

WENDY

Uh...yes...I --

As a confused Wendy notices that The Middleman is gone...

**DISSOLVE TO**

**EXT. IL COGLIONE GRANDISSIMO - ESTABLISHING - NIGHT**

CHYRON: *Il Coglione Grandissimo* Italian Restaurant. 1:00 A.M.

**INT. IL COGLIONE GRANDISSIMO - NIGHT**

Standard mob hangout (set designer handbook, page 137).  
Two ARMED SOLDIERS stand over DOMENICO COLFARI, an addled, mumbling Don who talks with TADZIO, his *Consiglieri*.

COLFARI

What you're saying is somebody whacked the entire Spaldoni Organization?

TADZIO

(been here a while)  
Just like I said an hour ago. Huge bloodbath. Gonna be front page tomorrow morning.

COLFARI

But I did not give the order to wipe out the Spaldoni family...that is an order that I did not give.

TADZIO

Okay, Don Colfari, if you didn't give the order...then what does that mean?

COLFARI

That would mean someone had to give the order...someone that was not me.

TADZIO

So maybe we oughta find who it was -

COLFARI

So they don't come and whack us.

TADZIO

Exactly!  
(then)  
It's like playing mad-libs with guns.

**BUDDA-BUDDA-BUDDA!**

Bullets rip trough the front window. Don Colfari's chest erupts. SOLDIERS 1 & 2 fall in the hail of gunfire.

Framed photos fall. Chairs become sawdust. Tadzio dives behind the bar and crawls into a cabinet, sliding the door shut as the onslaught comes to an end.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

**ON THE BOTTOM OF THE FRONT DOOR**

Opening to reveal a pair of feet, Italian (duh) shoes, overcoat, smoking machine gun barrel, and the raspy voice of a character we will come to know as THE BIG BOSS.

THE BIG BOSS'S VOICE

Louie. Make sure we plugged 'em all.

HENCHMAN (LOUIE'S) VOICE

Sure thing, boss.

Several more feet follow. The killer drops something on the floor...a banana peel.

**INT. AMALGAMATED TEMPORARY EMPLOYMENT INC. - DAY**

CHYRON: Amalgamated Temporary Employment Incorporated.  
10:25 A.M.

A professional Wendy (she's even wearing a tie) sits before KIM WILLIAMS (40, black) her employment agent.

WILLIAMS

The police said the explosion was caused by a lighter...a polished silver Zippo lighter with a DC-3 airplane engraving.

WENDY

My dad's lucky lighter?

Williams gives her that stern, patrician look that tells Wendy she just incriminated herself.

WILLIAMS

So you know something about it.

WENDY

You don't think that...oh come on...I was just fidgeting with the lighter. It's like an OCD thing...only different.

(off Williams's stare)

OK, look. I have three Master Cards about to pop at the seams and my mother's on me 24-7 to quit painting, move back to Iowa, meet a good man, eat steak, swell up like a tick and start squeezing out calves like Elsie mainlining fertility drugs... do we understand each other?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLIAMS

Until we can be certain that one of our temps didn't burn down her last place of employment while "playing with fire," there's nothing I can do.

WENDY

A. When my father's DC-3 tragically crashed under as of yet unexplained and mysterious circumstances I swore that I would never lose the only memento he left behind - which leads straight to B. I did NOT cause that explosion.

Williams reaches into her bag and pulls out a cigarette. Wendy pauses, a sheepish expression plays across her face:

WILLIAMS

Can't find your lighter?

Wendy thinks for a moment, then EXPLODES:

WENDY

You want the truth? Those idiots were working on some whacked out genetic experiment that went completely bonkers and this monster made out of body parts attacked me and this Middleman guy showed up and told me he'd kill me.

The CRASH of SHATTERING GLASS...a RUSH of wind. Williams' eyes widen. Wendy turns to see:

**THE MIDDLEMAN**

Holding a shotgun the size of Ohio at Wendy's head:

THE MIDDLEMAN

Sorry Ma'am, I warned you.

**BANG! SPLAT!**

**END DREAM SEQUENCE**

**RESUME ON WENDY**

Startled and alive. No Middleman...just Wendy, out of excuses.

(CONTINUED)

WENDY  
(getting up)  
I get it. Thank you.

**MONTAGE**

Set to the latest Vanessa Carlton ballad and presented as a series of BLACK AND WHITE STILLS.

**EXT. CITY STREET - DAY**

Wendy buys a newspaper. The front page reads:

**MOB WAR ON THE STREETS: HEADS OF CRIME FAMILIES EXECUTED**

As Wendy turns to the employment section:

**INT. A LESS UPSCALE TEMP AGENCY - DAY**

Wendy talks to an agent. It's not going well. As Wendy shakes hands and gets up to leave...

**EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY**

Wendy looks at the employment section of her paper, checks her watch and stops in front of...

**EXT. CHEESY, SMALL TIME TEMP AGENCY - DAY**

Wendy can be seen through the front window, talking to an agent, it's not going well. As Wendy stands...

**CLOSE UP ON WENDY'S NEWSPAPER**

All of the employment agencies have been crossed out.

**EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY**

Wendy walks the park, dejected...as she throws her paper into a garbage can and rips off her necktie...

**END MONTAGE (AND VANESSA CARLTON) - RESUME COLOR FILM**

**INT. LOFT CORRIDOR - NIGHT**

CHYRON: Corridor to the illegal sublet Wendy shares with another young, photogenic artist. 7:00 P.M.

Wendy emerges from the elevator. The corridor is dark - lit intermittently by flickering fluorescent lights. A handsome, guitar-playing dreadlocked white-boy by the name of NOSER (21) sits by the open door to his loft.

(CONTINUED)

NOSER

Yo Wendy Watson.

WENDY

Hey Noser.

NOSER

Who's the man?

Wendy keeps walking, wearily.

WENDY

That would be Shaft, Noser.

NOSER

What kinda man?

WENDY

(unlocking her door)  
A complicated man.

NOSER

And who understands him?

WENDY

No one but his woman.

NOSER

Right on.

**INT. LOFT - CONTINUOUS**

CHYRON: The illegal sublet Wendy shares with another young, photogenic artist. 7:02 P.M.

Canvasses and paint everywhere. Wendy's roommate, LACEY sits on a couch before a TV, playing a videogame. A phone hangs on the wall by the door.

Wendy enters, tearing off her professional duds.

LACEY

Yo, dub-dub.

WENDY

You breaking my X-Box?

**ON THE GAME**

A SERIOUSLY CHESTY VIDEOGAME HEROINE double fists humongous hand cannons and blasts zombies into pixel oblivion.

(CONTINUED)

LACEY  
(mesmerized)  
I don't get how you can play these  
games. They're so testosteroney.

WENDY  
Therapy for a dull and uneventful  
life, any calls?  
(off Lacey's silence)  
Can you lay off the visual heroin and  
tell me if anyone called?

No answer. Wendy steps in front of Lacey:

LACEY  
Hey! Outta the way!

Wendy picks up a videogame control gun and spins around.

**ON THE T.V.**

BANG! BANG! BANG! And the seriously chesty heroine now  
stands amidst a mangled heap of virtual mutant carnage.

**WENDY**

Pretends to blow smoke off the videogame gun barrel.

**ON THE T.V.**

The seriously chesty videogame heroine does the same.

**RESUME ON LACEY AND WENDY**

LACEY (cont'd)  
I've been trying to beat that level  
all day.  
(re: the videogame  
heroine)  
Think she had a boob job?

WENDY  
(handing over the  
control)  
All X-Box chicks have boob jobs. It's  
the law. Did the phone ring today?

LACEY  
Your mother called to ask if you're a  
lesbian...

Shaking her head, Wendy steps behind a partition and  
changes as Lacey flips the videogame on again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LACEY (cont'd)

... and Ben called, he wants to come later. Has a surprise for you.

Wendy emerges in paint-stained cut-offs and a T-shirt. She steps to a shelf and stuffs paint brushes and tubes of paint in her pockets.

WENDY

Did he say anything about world travel, champagne or diamonds?

LACEY

What's it like being someone's beard?

WENDY

He's in film school.

LACEY

Oh - this weird temp agency called.

Wendy tears the message off a pad by the phone, reads:

WENDY

"The Jolly Fats Wehawkin Temp Agency?"  
Never heard of them.

LACEY

They want to see you immediately.

WENDY

Right now immediately?

LACEY

Ayup.

WENDY

(lacing up her Chuck T's)  
Wish me luck then.

LACEY

You going like that?

WENDY

I'm way over my daily recommended allowance for corporate booty kissing. They want me now, they're shopping at the As Is department.

**INT. JOLLY FATS WEHAWKIN EMPLOYMENT AGENCY - NIGHT**

CHYRON: Jolly Fats Wehawkin Employment Agency. 8:15 P.M.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Wendy enters to see a single desk under a spotlight. An old woman - IDA - sits at the desk.

IDA  
Wendy Watson?

WENDY  
Who wants to know?

IDA  
Don't get fresh with me, missy, I'll split your lip.

WENDY  
What kind of temp agency is this?

IDA  
(standing)  
The kind that wants to put you in the satisfying and high-paying world of temporary employment. You wouldn't mind taking some tests first, right?

WENDY  
Tests?

IDA  
What are you - paralyzed from the neck up? Move it.

**MONTAGE**

Rapidly typed words resolve on a computer screen.

**WIDER TO REVEAL**

Wendy at a desk under a spotlight, taking a typing test. Ida times her with a stopwatch.

**CUT TO:**

Wendy putting different shaped wooden pegs in their corresponding holes. Ida times her with a stopwatch.

**CROSSFADE**

With a close up of Ida's stopwatch - it doesn't have any numbers, just blinking multicolored lights...

**CUT TO:**

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Wendy sitting across a table from Ida, who administers a test with Zehner Cards (the kind they use to measure ESP ability). By now Wendy is getting a little befuddled.

CROSSFADE: with a computer display of her vital signs.

**CUT TO:**

Wendy jogging on a treadmill, electrodes hooked up to her head and arms. Wendy looks at Ida, quizzically. Ida just keeps timing her, saying nothing.

CROSSFADE: With a polygraph, spitting out its readings.

**CUT TO:**

Wendy watching a movie that looks like the test film in *The Parallax View* while hooked up to a *Clockwork Orange* headpiece.

Wendy double-takes from the screen to Ida, who stands behind her, stone-faced.

**INT. JOLLY FATS WEHAWKIN EMPLOYMENT AGENCY - LATER**

Wendy sits on a stool under a spotlight. Ida enters the room, clipboard in hand.

WENDY

So...what's next? Target practice?  
Obstacle course? Cavity search?

IDA

Don't let your pie-hole talk you out  
of a job, young lady.

(then)

Wendy Watson. Meet your new boss.

Ida points to a pair of steel doors. The doors part to reveal THE MIDDLEMAN.

THE MIDDLEMAN

Evening, ma'am.

As Wendy takes in this rather surprising turn of events...

**FADE OUT:**

**END OF ACT ONE**



**ACT TWO**

**FADE IN:**

**INT. JOLLY FATS WEHAWKIN EMPLOYMENT AGENCY - NIGHT**

CHYRON: Jolly Fats Wehawkin Employment Agency, exactly 3 minutes, 30 seconds later.

WENDY

Is this the part when I ask who the hell you are and what the hell you do?

THE MIDDLEMAN

My, we've got our skivvies in a bunch.  
(beat)  
Lights.

A series of industrial lamps CRASH on to REVEAL:

**INT. MIDDLEMAN'S HEADQUARTERS - CONTINUOUS**

High-ceilinged. Wood-and-brick. High-tech blends with old-fashioned: bankers lamps live in harmony with flat screen displays, library shelves hold antiquarian artifacts, as well as high end video equipment, data storage, exotic weapons and other superscience too far-out to describe.

The writing on a glass paned door leading into an office reads "The Middleman."

THE MIDDLEMAN

I'm The Middleman. You've met Ida.  
(beat)  
This temp agency is a recruitment front for our organization.

WENDY

Didn't your tests tell you I have issues with authority?

Ida takes a seat behind a RECEPTION DESK.

IDA

I told you she'd be no good.

WENDY

Can it, Yoda. We're talking.

THE MIDDLEMAN

I wouldn't go so far as to refer to myself as an authority figure. I'm more like an independent contractor.

(CONTINUED)

WENDY

What's that mean? You build strip malls? Kill people? What?

THE MIDDLEMAN

I'd never build strip malls.

(beat)

I solve exotic problems.

WENDY

Define exotic.

THE MIDDLEMAN

Ever read comic books?

WENDY

Yeah, I think Jughead's a real hoot.

The Middleman glares at Wendy. Her tone turns deadly:

WENDY (cont'd)

Danger Girl, Scud the Disposable Assassin, Nexus, Shockrockets, Astro City, Powers, and Superman.

THE MIDDLEMAN

Before or after he died?

WENDY

Do you want me to leave?

THE MIDDLEMAN

You know how there's all kinds of mad scientists, and aliens, and androids, and monsters, and all of them want to either destroy or take over the world?

WENDY

In comic books? Sure.

THE MIDDLEMAN

It's all true.

WENDY

Get out.

THE MIDDLEMAN

You already forgot what you saw this morning?

WENDY

And you're the superhero?

THE MIDDLEMAN

I never wear tights.

WENDY

I'm crushed. Can I ask a question?

(off his nod)

Was it you or me that took the stupid pills this morning?

THE MIDDLEMAN

Now that's just rude.

WENDY

And dragging me down here so I could answer the brown courtesy phone isn't?

IDA

This is a waste. She's a slacker.

WENDY

(turning to Ida)

Have you been helped?

THE MIDDLEMAN

Don't mind her. She's had the crankies something awful ever since her appearance processor got stuck on "domineering schoolmarm, v.2.0."

WENDY

English?

THE MIDDLEMAN

Ida.

Ida turns toward The Middleman and Wendy, her back to the camera.

Ida's face opens Tim Burton-style into a mass of circuits and servos that look like something R2D2 would throw up. Ida's face closes up.

**RESUME ON WENDY**

WENDY

(deadpan)

Trippy.

THE MIDDLEMAN

Dagnabit, that's why you're here!

(off Wendy's look)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

THE MIDDLEMAN (cont'd)

You witnessed something completely out of the parameters of reality and didn't even flinch. Observe:

The Middleman hits a button on his watch. A hologram projector descends and plays the monster attack on Wendy:

WENDY

How'd you film that?

THE MIDDLEMAN

(pointing to his watch)  
Real time holo-recording.

WENDY

Why of course.

THE MIDDLEMAN

Look, right there...that slimy tendril grabs you, and what do you do...

**ON THE HOLOGRAM**

The monster grabs Wendy and she defends herself:

WENDY

Grab a letter opener and stab it.

THE MIDDLEMAN

Exactly. 90% of the population would have dumped their cargo and screamed madly before becoming lunch. The other 9.5% would have keeled dead of a heart attack.

(then)

But not you. You accepted the reality of the monster, incredible though it was, took the necessary steps to survive, and through it all, your stress levels remained normal.

IDA

Ten bucks says she's smoking reefer.

The Middleman glares at Ida as The Hologram vanishes.

WENDY

Does Rosie have an off switch?

THE MIDDLEMAN

A high threshold for the unexplainable and the reflex to fight off an extra-normal danger makes you a perfect candidate for our organization.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

THE MIDDLEMAN (cont'd)

(beat)

Can you handle a firearm?

WENDY

I happen to be a pacifist.

IDA

I'm telling you, she's a hophead.

Ignoring Ida, The Middleman holds up Wendy's hand:

THE MIDDLEMAN

Callouses on the thumb and index finger. X-Box? Judging by the distribution, I'm guessing "Raging Carnage," "Primal Combat," and "Gut Wrencher 3" are your favorites.

(beat)

You probably have better hand-eye than a bush sniper. How are your martial arts skills?

WENDY

Nonexistent.

THE MIDDLEMAN

Ida, schedule her a three month intensive for her with Sensei Ping - and buy him first class airfare this time.

(to Wendy)

The flight from Wu-Han makes him real surly.

Ida puts on a headset and dials. In the background, she speaks in flawless *Chinese*.

WENDY

I don't want a three month intensive with Sensei Ping. I'm an artist. I only want to temp so I can paint.

THE MIDDLEMAN

Gosh. Don't you want to fight evil?

WENDY

Not if I have to join the paramilitary version of Amway.

THE MIDDLEMAN

But this is a tremendous opportunity for someone with your skills.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

WENDY

Skills? I avoided a giant rectum and got rejected by every temp agency in town 'cause the cops think my Dad's lucky Zippo caused an explosion.

The Middleman smiles, thinking he has some leverage:

THE MIDDLEMAN

I'm sorry about the Zippo. That was just a recruitment tactic.

WENDY

You gave the cops the Zippo?

IDA

Sensei Ping's on his way, first class.

WENDY

You framed me.

THE MIDDLEMAN

I needed to make sure you'd come here.

Ida looks up from her computer display.

IDA

By the way, the money just cleared for that Italian restaurant job on Arthur Avenue. They want you on the double.

WENDY

I loved that lighter.

THE MIDDLEMAN

If you join up, I won't frame you for anything else again. Scout's honor.

WENDY

Go to hell.

Wendy storms past The Middleman and to the door.

IDA

(to The Middleman)

You owe me a dollar.

On her way out, Wendy pulls a tube of acrylic paint from her pocket and squeezes it onto Ida's desktop.

**INT. LOFT CORRIDOR - NIGHT**

Wendy straggles out the elevator. Noser hasn't moved.

(CONTINUED)

NOSER

Yo Wendy Watson. What was everybody doin'?

WENDY

Everybody was kung-fu fighting, Noser.

NOSER

How were their kicks?

WENDY

Fast as lightning.

NOSER

And how was it?

WENDY

(opening her door)

A little bit frightening. In fact.

**INT. LOFT - CONTINUOUS**

Lacey hasn't moved from the videogame.

LACEY

Yo, Dub-Dub.

WENDY

Hand over the joystick, Lacey, I have some serious aggression to work out.

LACEY

Speaking of joysticks. Ben's here.

WENDY

(brightening)

Ben! Cool!

Wendy rushes up the stairs, maybe this night can be saved:

**INT. UPSTAIRS LOFT - CONTINUOUS**

Wendy finds BEN, an art-school type dressed in a floppy sweater, cargo pants, sensitive hair and thick rimmed glasses.

Wendy throws her arms around him:

WENDY

God am I happy to see you, if my day sucked any harder I'd be inside out.

CONTINUED:

Wendy plants a huge one on his lips. You can tell by the way she kisses that she's crazy about this guy.

WENDY (cont'd)

Hey buddy.

(another kiss)

Buddy?

(off Ben's silence)

This is when you usually kiss me back.

Ben shrugs sheepishly. Wendy looks down and notices that he is carrying a Mini DV camera.

Wendy (cont'd)

What's with the camera? Are we making a movie?

BEN

I guess you could say that.

Wendy slips her bare foot from her sneaker, slides it up Ben's leg. It's off the Richter sexy:

WENDY

Ooh, kinky...

(biting his neck)

Should I fire up the Barry White?

BEN

You are making this so hard...

(disengaging)

...it's not it's not like that. See my friend Matt came along.

Wendy turns to see an equally sensitive-looking art type, EDDIE.

WENDY

Whoa. Hideous kinky.

(to Eddie)

Hi Eddie.

BEN

Eddie's taking Professor Howard's cinema vérité class with me.

WENDY

The class you're flunking?

BEN

Yeah. The Prof says it's 'cause I don't have any pain in my life.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (2)

Wendy is still trying to have fun with this weirdness:

WENDY

I could punch you.

BEN

(lifting his camera)

No...no...it's not that kinky...Fire  
it up, Eddie.

Eddie lifts a boom-mike.

BEN (cont'd)

I just think that you and I  
should...you know...be just friends.

**FROM THIS MOMENT ON, THE SCENE IS FILMED FROM THE MINI DV  
CAMERA'S P.O.V.**

WENDY

You're breaking up with me for a class  
project.

Eddie shakes his head as he holds up the boom.

BEN

How does that make you feel?

WENDY

We've been dating a year. You used  
the "L" word that one time!

BEN

I was drunk.

(off her look)

Does that hurt? Tell the camera.

(beat)

Look this is painful for me too, you  
know. I'm the victim here.

Wendy's face wavers between rage and confusion.

BEN (cont'd)

My dad's a lawyer, we have money.  
I've never worked for anything... no  
pain in my life. The Prof stood me in  
front of the class and said that. You  
have any idea how that stings? To  
know that you have no hurt...on the  
inside.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

WENDY

You want to know what it feels like to  
have pain in your life.

(beat)

Fair enough.

Wendy snatches the camera and hits Ben with it.

Ben cowers. Wendy is relentless. The camera jerks up and  
down as Wendy makes him pay with extreme prejudice.

WENDY (cont'd)

Does that hurt? Are you learning a  
little bit about the meaning of pain,  
or do you need some more?

A squealing Ben ducks out of the camera eye. Wendy turns  
toward Eddie.

WENDY (cont'd)

What about you?

Eddie drops the boom and runs away.

BEN (O.S.)

That's a digital camera!

The camera spins back to Ben and hits him again! Ben  
shrieks in pain.

WENDY

You still don't get it, do you?

Ben's eyes widen. Barely avoiding the onslaught, he runs  
out after Eddie, looking back at the camera.

BEN

You're psychotic!

As Wendy hits Ben with the camera for a last time -

**RETURN TO OBJECTIVE P.O.V./FILM**

**INT. DOWNSTAIRS LOFT - CONTINUOUS - IN FILM**

Screaming, Ben and Eddie beat it. An indifferent Lacey  
keeps plugging away at the X-Box. Ben's camera crashes  
down from upstairs, followed by the boom and mike.

(CONTINUED)

**INT. UPSTAIRS LOFT - CONTINUOUS**

Wendy watches them go, pissed off and hurt by all of this.

**DISSOLVE TO**

**INT. WENDY'S STUDIO SPACE - NIGHT**

Wendy sits alone, staring at a blank canvas, pure despondency on her face. Her expression changes. She processes her feelings... stares at the canvas... the canvas, much like the abyss, stares back, then:

Wendy shoots to her feet, SMACKING a paint-stained boom box. Lou Reed's "Busload of Faith" BLASTS.

She squeezes paint on a palette and *attacks* the canvas with brushes, a trowel, a rag - anything to express how she feels - it's violent - it's intense - it's like Nick Nolte in *New York Stories*, only thinner, cuter and with breasts.

**END MONTAGE TO REVEAL**

A huge scale, scary-as-all-get-out expressionistic rendition of the monster from the lab.

**ON WENDY**

Panting, spent from her explosive burst of creativity.

As Wendy regards the canvas, considering the inspiration that brought her to this place...

**INT. IL COGLIONE GRANDISSIMO - NIGHT**

CHYRON: *Il Coglione Grandissimo* Italian Restaurant. 2:45 A.M.

Boarded up. Inside it's blood-stains, crime-scene tape, and chalk outlines. A single UNIFORM mills about.

A Big, Bad, Convertible Black Voodoo Cadillac pulls up. The Middleman steps out, brandishing a badge.

THE MIDDLEMAN  
FBI. Nightshift.

UNIFORM  
Wanna donut?

THE MIDDLEMAN  
(entering)  
That would ruin my appetite, officer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Once the Uniform has closed the door behind him, The Middleman pulls out a tricorder-like scanner.

A cone of laser light spires from an emitter on top of the scanner. The Middleman circles the place, studying an LCD display on the scanner.

UNIFORM (O.S.)

Excuse me...

The Middleman discreetly pockets the scanner and turns to see Wendy, still in shorts and a tee, behind the Uniform.

UNIFORM (cont'd)

This kid says she's with you.

THE MIDDLEMAN

Special Agent Watson. Slacking off the dress code, I see.

WENDY

I don't do dress code after sundown.

THE MIDDLEMAN

It's bad apples like you that put Mr. Hoover in a dress.

(to the Uniform)

Yeah, she's on the job.

Wendy enters. The Uniform closes the door behind her.

THE MIDDLEMAN (cont'd)

Ida had this address on her computer. Photographic memory?

WENDY

Abstract expressionist.

THE MIDDLEMAN

Swell.

(then)

Last time we talked you weren't exactly nice. Why the attitude adjustment?

WENDY

I heard you take care of exotic problems.

THE MIDDLEMAN

Define exotic.

(CONTINUED)

WENDY

No money. No job. No sense of reality now that I know that comic book evil roams the world.

THE MIDDLEMAN

Shoot. That is an exotic problem.

WENDY

I heard that when comic book evil strikes, you're there to cover it up.

THE MIDDLEMAN

I don't do cover-up.

WENDY

Oh come on, you said you'd shoot me if I told anyone about the monster I saw.

THE MIDDLEMAN

Test of honesty.

WENDY

How?

THE MIDDLEMAN

What makes more sense? That a monster trashed a science lab or that a gas main exploded?

(off her look)

If I hadn't planted your Zippo, some pink-skinned normal would have still come up with a "rational" explanation. People want to believe that reality's normal. The ones who don't are freaks and no one believes them anyway.

WENDY

Who do you work for?

The scanner BEEPS. The Middleman bends down:

THE MIDDLEMAN

I got recruited the exact same way you did. When the last Middleman hired me, he never said and I never asked. Ida was already there, so were all the weapons and gadgets and things. Sometimes a box comes in with more weapons and gadgets and things. I don't know where they come from, they just do.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

THE MIDDLEMAN (cont'd)  
Maybe Ida runs the show, maybe it's  
"the conspiracy," maybe it's God.  
(beat)  
I'm just the Middleman.

The Middleman stands, holding up a banana peel:

THE MIDDLEMAN (cont'd)  
Doggone cops. Always miss the big  
clues.

WENDY  
A banana peel?

THE MIDDLEMAN  
Someone's eliminating mobsters in an  
algorithmic way. The pattern suggests  
an advanced intelligence. Something  
far more sinister than wise guys.

WENDY  
Define sinister.

THE MIDDLEMAN  
You want to know, you gotta sign up.

Wendy's smiles a crooked little smile as she realizes that  
she can't resist becoming part of the adventure -

**FREEZE FRAME:**

- over a grand, larger-than-life, "Avengers" like FANFARE -

**THE FRAME SHATTERS LIKE A PANE OF GLASS INTO:**

**A SERIES OF RAMBO-LIKE CLOSE-UPS**

- of Wendy zipping up a black, high heeled boot -
- putting on a watch identical to The Middleman's -
- slipping on an Eisenhower Jacket -

**WIDER TO REVEAL**

Wendy - in the black vinyl pants/crushed velour jacket  
ultra-sexy version of the uniform, walking toward The  
Middleman on what looks like a giant comic book image.

The two meet and shake hands at the center:

CONTINUED: (4)

The Music PICKS UP into A JAZZY, BONGO/BIG-BAND/TWANG GUITAR "MAN OF ACTION" THEME (think the *Jonny Quest* theme as re-interpreted by the bastard child of Xavier Cougat and The Reverend Horton Heat) -

**MONTAGE OF COMIC BOOK IMAGES**

All drawn in classic Jack Kirby comic book style...

- Wendy and The Middleman, lasering an army of androids -
- fighting a giant squid under freezing water -
- fleeing an exploding mothership in a space shuttle -
- being pursued by a giant insane clown monster -

And so on, until the images reach a pace so rapid that they blur into an EXPLOSION that resolves into the words:

**THE MIDDLEMAN**

**IN**

**THE PILOT EPISODE SANCTION**

As the letters BREAK APART and fly toward the screen:

**RESUME ON WENDY AND THE MIDDLEMAN IN THE RESTAURANT:**

WENDY

Yeah...why not?

The Middleman offers a handshake and a knowing smile. As Wendy takes his hand...

**EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT**

A black car crosses the frame.

CHYRON: Lincoln Town Car, M.S.R.P. U\$ 53,000.

The town car's lights hit Tadzio: the Consiglieri from Act One, his suit tattered and bloodstained. Tadzio shrinks and snivels, shielding his face from the light.

The Town Car stops. The doors burst like a sausage casing, letting out a mess of MOB SOLDIERS. The soldiers frisk Tadzio as DON LUIGI FACOTTI emerges from the car.

FACOTTI

(to Tadzio)

I heard you saw the killer.

(CONTINUED)

TADZIO  
You'll never believe what I saw.

FACOTTI  
You wanna tell?

TADZIO  
It was...it was...

But Tadzio stops as a banana peel falls before him -

**FOLLOW THE PEEL**

- in SLO-MO, as it hits the ground.

**RESUME ON TADZIO**

Horrified. His head snaps up toward the rooftops:

TADZIO (cont'd)  
NOOOOOO!

**ON THE ROOFTOP**

A shadowy group of mobsters pull out machine guns.

**BUDDA-BUDDA-BUDDA!**

Facotti and his soldiers fall in a rain of hot lead.  
Tadzio drops: his hand falls...next to it, a banana peel.

Off the surreal sight...

**FADE OUT:**

**END OF ACT TWO**



**ACT THREE**

**FADE IN**

**INT. MIDDLEMAN'S HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT**

A banana peel sits on a platform lit by a beam of light.

**CHYRON:** Middleman's Headqua -- whoa! Freaky!

**REVEAL IDA**

Her eyes are the source of the beam of light illuminating the banana peel! Wendy (dressed her Middleman uniform) walks to The Middleman, following a thick cable plugged to the back of Ida's head and into:

**THE CEILING-MOUNTED HOLOGRAPHIC PROJECTOR**

Displaying a rotating, 3-D rendering of the banana.

WENDY

Whoa, freaky.

THE MIDDLEMAN

That Ida doubles as a scanning electron microscope?

WENDY

That you hired me to be a superhero and I'm staring at a computer.

THE MIDDLEMAN

That's how most crimes get solved, don't you watch T.V.?

(beat)

Jiminy! That's it!

A BEEP: the words "DNA MATCH" float inside the holo.

WENDY

Jiminy what?

Ida looks at Wendy, the light still beaming from her eyes.

IDA

Genetically engineered monkey spit.

WENDY

Don't point that at me. I don't want to have a flipper baby.

Before Ida can retort -

(CONTINUED)

THE MIDDLEMAN

There's only one place in town it  
could have come from.

(to Wendy)

Let's kick the tires and light the  
fires!

The Middleman rushes to his Big Bad Voodoo Cadillac: parked  
on a rotating platform in the background. Wendy follows.

IDA

Hey! Anyone want to unplug me?

(beat)

Morons.

**EXT. SIMIONICS LTD - ESTABLISHING - DAY**

The Big Bad Voodoo Cadillac zooms across the frame to  
**REVEAL** a sign which reads "SIMIONICS LTD - Building The  
Perfect Ape."

CHYRON: Simionics Animal Research Laboratories. 10:45 A.M.

**INT. SIMIONICS LTD - DAY**

A vast lab where a CHIMP simultaneously plays 29 speed  
Chess games against several LABTECHS.

**WIDER TO REVEAL**

Glass-walled cells, each housing different CHIMPS. The  
Middleman flashes a badge at DR. GIBBS: she's played by a  
young Louise Fletcher.

DR. GIBBS

(reading the badge)

...we don't get many visits from the  
Department of Sanitation.

THE MIDDLEMAN

That's why they call them surprise  
inspections, Dr. Gibbs. My associate  
and I are going to have a look around.

The three pass another chimp, this one has an electronic  
voice box strapped to his throat and is reciting text  
pointed to on a chart by a LABTECH.

MONKEY (FILTERED)

Man has climbed Mount Everest.  
Travelled to the bottom of the ocean.  
Fired rockets to the moon.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MONKEY (FILTERED) (cont'd)  
Split the atom. Achieved miracles, in  
every field of human endeavor...

WENDY  
It's Lancelot Link, Secret Chimp.

Dr. Gibbs points out a towering computer assembly that  
blinks, beeps and does all those other things that  
computers do on TV but not in reality.

DR. GIBBS  
Hardly. These apes are genetically  
engineered. Their higher brain  
functions are controlled by one of the  
most complex computers in the world.  
Next to my little babies, most people  
have the I.Q. of an oyster.

WENDY  
Check this out.

**REVEAL** another CHIMP: painting a large-canvas classical  
realist landscape.

DR. GIBBS  
Yes, that's, Zippy. We had to boost  
his IQ three times to stop him from  
painting those damn soup cans.

WENDY  
(re: the painting)  
Not bad... for a classical realist.

DR. GIBBS  
Art snob.

THE MIDDLEMAN  
What happened to this one?

The Middleman points to an empty cell in a corner.

DR. GIBBS  
Spanky was one of our failures. We  
don't like to talk about him.

THE MIDDLEMAN  
(to Wendy)  
Wanna squeeze in?

WENDY  
(opening the door)  
I bet you say that to all the girls.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DR. GIBBS

Hey, you can't go in there.

Simultaneously, The Middleman and Wendy shoot Gibbs a dismissive glance and enter. As they look around:

THE MIDDLEMAN

See anything hinky?

WENDY

Define hinky.

THE MIDDLEMAN

You define hinky.

WENDY

Oh-kay...see that spot there, where the paint doesn't quite match?

Wendy pushes a spot on the wall. A piece of plaster large enough to crawl through separates from the wall!

DR. GIBBS

(entering)

What the..?

WENDY

(crawling in)

Are you coming or not?

**INT. SPANKY'S SECRET CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS**

A television plays *The Godfather*. The Middleman crawls in, followed by an astonished Dr. Gibbs.

VITO CORLEONE (ON TV)

*...what did I do to be treated with such disrespect?*

THE MIDDLEMAN

Well...dag diggety.

Posters of Joe Pesci, Robert DeNiro and Al Pacino share wallspace with shelves of books: "The Godfather," "The Last Don," "Underboss: The Life of Sammy 'The Bull' Gravano," in short: a shrine to guns and provolone.

DR. GIBBS

I had no idea!

WENDY

What in heck were you teaching Spanky?

(CONTINUED)

DR. GIBBS

How to pilot Space Shuttles. I've never even seen this place!

THE MIDDLEMAN

How does a monkey science experiment get "Scarface," "Goodfellas," "The Sopranos?"

DR. GIBBS

All of our monkeys have internet and mail order privileges. But we should have seen this. Spanky's mind is controlled by the mainframe, like all the other monkeys.

THE MIDDLEMAN

Swell. Where's Spanky now?

Dr. Gibbs gets a faraway look on her face. As she speaks:

**SUPERIMPOSE/DOUBLE EXPOSE**

STOCK FOOTAGE of a crash landing: just like the beginning of *The Six Million Dollar Man*, playing over the face of Dr. Gibbs as she recalls Spanky's tragic demise.

DR. GIBBS

Spanky never did learn how to control the re-entry simulator. The pod tore through the lab ceiling and crash-landed miles away.

**END SUPERIMPOSE**

DR. GIBBS (CONT'D)

It was a tragic loss.

WENDY

(to The Middleman)

He sleeps with the fishes.

**INT. THE MIDDLEMAN'S BIG BAD VODOO CADILLAC - DAY**

CHYRON: The Middleman's Convertible Big Black Voodoo Cadillac. 11:00 A.M.

THE MIDDLEMAN

Spanky must have found a way to break free from that mind control computer and escape from Simionics.

(CONTINUED)

WENDY

But Gibbs said he died in re-entry.

THE MIDDLEMAN

Maybe Spanky crashed that pod to make his escape. We have to find him lickedy-split.

WENDY

How about we just let Spanky keep killing wise guys? Isn't he like, doing the world a solid?

THE MIDDLEMAN

Who would you rather have earning millions of dollars from all the rackets in this city? A lunkhead goombah who's going to blow it on showgirls, shiny suits and greek-revival marble nudie statues, or a genetically engineered supergenius chimpanzee with knowledge of advanced computer systems and astroscience?

WENDY

Put it that way.

The Middleman turns to look at Wendy, gravely serious.

THE MIDDLEMAN

Listen up. It's all been fun and games up 'til now, but there's something about you I must know. Now.

WENDY

Yeah?

THE MIDDLEMAN

You like country?

He hits the Blaupunkt before she can reply: Johnny Cash's "I Walk The Line" BLARES. As Wendy's eyes roll:

**EXT. ANDOLINI SOCIAL CLUB - DAY**

Johnny cash still BLARES as the Big Bad Voodoo Cadillac pulls up to the plain, dark storefront.

WENDY

What is this place?

CHYRON: Andolini Social Club. The city's most notorious den of wise guys.

(CONTINUED)

THE MIDDLEMAN  
Andolini Social Club. The City's most  
notorious den of wiseguys.

WENDY  
Do you have a death wish?  
(off his look)  
Cut out the twang, Gomer.

The Middleman cuts off the music and steps out.

THE MIDDLEMAN  
Okay. Mount up.

WENDY  
You're not just going to waltz in and  
ask them to rat out The Big Boss?

THE MIDDLEMAN  
Yes ma'am. Right after I slide up to  
the bar and order me a glass of warm  
milk.

WENDY  
Did you skinny dip in the stupidity  
pond? I'm not going in there.

THE MIDDLEMAN  
(turning to go)  
I didn't ask you to. The path I walk  
I walk alone. Keep it warm, Dubbie.

WENDY  
Dubbie?

THE MIDDLEMAN  
Oh, I almost forgot, there's some  
things I need you to hold on to.

The Middleman pulls out his retractable shotgun and drops  
it on the driver's seat...

...then his Taser, a series of stainless steel bombs, a  
laser tube, a large bore gyrojet grenade launcher, and  
something that looks like a Bowie knife handle without a  
blade.

WENDY  
You're going unarmed?

THE MIDDLEMAN  
Didn't I tell you how I got this job?

CONTINUED: (2)

Wendy shakes her head. The Middleman points to the knife handle gizmo.

THE MIDDLEMAN (cont'd)

Oh well. Just be careful with that.

Wendy apprehensively watches him go. Fidgeting nervously with the knife handle, she presses a button and -

**FWOOMP!**

- a light saber beam emerges from the knife handle.

A startled Wendy nervously shuts it off and takes a deep breath. After a moment:

**BANG! BANG! BUDDA-BUDDA-BUDDA! BANG!**

GUNFIRE from inside. Wendy shoots up, desperately tries to figure out what to do. More GUNFIRE. BREAKING GLASS. SCREAMS OF HUMAN AGONY.

Wendy springs out of the car...then double-backs and picks up the raygun: no, too big...the gyrojet grenade launcher? How the hell do you..? Never mind. How about some of the shiny bombs? Can't even figure out what they do...

Finally, Wendy grabs the retractable shotgun...she presses a red button on the side of the weapon -

**K-CHING!**

- the barrel extends! Wendy marshals all her confidence to enter the club when:

**THE DOOR TO THE CLUB BURSTS OPEN**

BLUDGEONED MOBSTERS run SCREAMING. The Middleman follows, unscathed. With one hand, The Middleman drags two hundred pounds of brown-in-the-pants Goombah named TINO. In his other hand, The Middleman holds a glass of milk.

THE MIDDLEMAN (CONT'D) (cont'd)

Hi there. Milk?

WENDY

Uh...no.

The Middleman drops Tino, who GRUNTS as his face hits blacktop, then rests the glass on the hood of the car.

(CONTINUED)



THE MIDDLEMAN

Too bad. Good for the bones. This is our new friend Tino.

(to Tino)

Say hello, Tino.

TINO

(in excruciating pain)

How you doin'?

THE MIDDLEMAN

Tino runs all the rackets in town. The only way he's still alive is if he's in good with the new boss, right?

TINO

I'm not opening a mouth!

THE MIDDLEMAN

I think I'll have me some milk.

Lifting Tino by the collar, The Middleman reaches for the glass and "accidentally" BANGS Tino's head on the side of car.

Over Tino's SCREAMS of pain, The Middleman takes a drink and hands Wendy the glass.

THE MIDDLEMAN (cont'd)

You want to put that back for me?

Wendy puts the glass back on the hood of the car.

THE MIDDLEMAN (cont'd)

Thanks. What were we talking about when I left?

WENDY

You were going to tell me why you got this job.

THE MIDDLEMAN

Right. See, I was a Navy SEAL. You know they teach us over four hundred and fifty-six ways of causing pain?

TINO

I want a lawyer! I got rights!

THE MIDDLEMAN

Know what? That was some darn fine cow squirt.

CONTINUED: (4)

The Middleman goes for the glass SMASHING Tino's head against the side of the car again. It hurts. A lot.

TINO

Son of a bitch!

THE MIDDLEMAN

(taking a drink)

Anyway, my team got stuck in a mongolian goat screw back in the Gulf, and this jerk C.O. radios for me to bug out and leave my men behind.

The Middleman hands Wendy the milk. She puts it back.

THE MIDDLEMAN (cont'd)

So I did what any self-respecting squid would do. I saved my men, got back to base and kicked the crud out the little weasel. Pardon my French.

(to Tino)

Wanna talk?

TINO

Go to Hell!

THE MIDDLEMAN

I am parched. I could use another cool, refreshing drink of milk.

Tino's head SLAMS against sheet metal.

TINO

All right! I'll talk! The Big Boss has a spread over the bridge, but no one's ever laid eyes on the guy. That's all I'm saying! I have rights!

THE MIDDLEMAN

Oh, you got rights. After we're finished, I'm driving you to the FBI and you're gonna rat out every wise-guy and scam you're aware of, *capisch*?

TINO

And get myself plugged? No way!

THE MIDDLEMAN

(to Wendy)

Why don't you keep Tino company while I get myself a refill?

TINO

Oh God! I'll do it! I'll do it!

The Middleman drops the blubbering Tino.

WENDY

You hit your Commanding Officer?

THE MIDDLEMAN

I have issues with authority.

**EXT. THE BIG BOSS'S HOUSE - ESTABLISHING - DAY**

A palatial mansion. A large fountain featuring greek revival marble statues of naked women decorates the circular driveway.

**INT. THE BIG BOSS'S GILDED OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

To a security monitor showing the fountain: one of a series showing different locations in and around the house.

THE BIG BOSS (O.S.)

Tell the Senator that he can have my answer now. My offer is this: nothing. Not even the fee for the gaming license, which I would appreciate if he put up personally.

**ON THE MONITOR**

The Middleman's Big Bad Voodoo Cadillac pulls up to the fountain. A couple of GOONS intercept, but are knocked out Bruce Lee-style by The Middleman, who lifts a weapon toward the camera and fires. The screen goes to static.

THE BIG BOSS (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
(cont'd)

Hey Louie...we're getting sloppy.

**REVERSE**

On the Big Boss's right hand, LOUIE: played by a young Benicio Del Toro. The Big Boss sits in a high-backed chair - all that is seen is a cigar-holding hand.

LOUIE

Those are new monitors.

**ON THE MONITORS**

Another screen fritzes, then another and another...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE BIG BOSS (O.S.)

You check it out.

As Louie looks up, REVEAL:

**THE BIG BOSS**

A cigar chomping CHIMP in a shiny grey suit threaded in black, and a black tie over a white silk shirt. A Simionics voice box is strapped to his throat.

THE BIG BOSS (cont'd)

And Louie...get me a banana.

Louie turns to the door - but is immediately dropped by an explosive head-smack, courtesy of the entering Middleman.

THE MIDDLEMAN

The jig is up, Spanky.

The Big Boss's nostrils flare dramatically:

THE BIG BOSS

Say hello to my little friend!

The Big Boss pulls out an UZI submachinegun.

A mini grappling hook on a cable flies out of an aluminum tube strapped to The Middleman's wrist.

**THE GRAPPLING HOOK**

Wraps around The Big Boss's gun, which flies out of his hand as the cable retracts.

**RESUME ON THE MIDDLEMAN**

THE MIDDLEMAN

Tino's turned states evidence. Right now he's with the *Federales* and warblin' like Patsy Cline.

(beat)

And you are going back to the science lab where you belong.

THE BIG BOSS

Just when I thought I was out...they pull me back in.

Wendy enters as The Middleman tosses the gun aside.

WENDY

Nothing personal, monkeyboy.

(CONTINUED)

THE MIDDLEMAN  
Just business.

A look of resignation takes The Big Boss's face, then -

THE BIG BOSS  
I'm never going back to prison!

- The Big Boss pushes off. His chair slides into the window behind the desk. The shutters SLAM open. The chair tilts, flinging the little guy out to the patio.

**EXT. A GARDEN SEVERAL STORIES BELOW - CONTINUOUS**

The Big Boss runs toward the wall of shrubbery that delineates his property.

**INT. THE BIG BOSS'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS**

The Middleman FIRES his grappling hook -

**EXT. A GARDEN SEVERAL STORIES BELOW - MOMENTS LATER**

- the Middleman and Wendy descend from the window.

THE MIDDLEMAN  
Aw, jeepers!

As The Middleman and Wendy run -

**SPLIT SCREEN:**

- with the Big Boss, tearing off his mobster suit as he rushes for the shrubbery.

WENDY  
I gotta ask something.  
(off his look)  
How can a Navy SEAL not cuss? You're all "darn" and "jeepers" and "criminy" what's up with that?

THE MIDDLEMAN  
Profanity cheapens the soul and weakens the mind.

WENDY  
Maybe, but every once in a while you could let out a [BLEEP!] or [BLEEP!].

As the Big Boss disappears into the shrubs:

CONTINUED:

**END SPLIT SCREEN**

The Middleman and Wendy arrive at the shrubbery. Before The Middleman goes through:

THE MIDDLEMAN

You kiss your mother with that mouth?

Garbage mouth.

(off her look)

Yes you.

The Middleman enters. Wendy shakes her head, then follows through the shrubbery to find:

**THE MIDDLEMAN, LOOKING PERPLEXED**

THE MIDDLEMAN (cont'd)

Oh...[BLEEP].

WENDY

What?

CHYRON: New Jersey Zoo and Wild Animal Park. 2:47 P.M.

**WIDER TO REVEAL**

**EXT. CITY ZOO - CONTINUOUS**

The Middleman points toward a sunken pen populated by dozens of CHIMPS. The Big Boss is indistinguishable!

WENDY

This isn't a problem.

(looking around)

We can still find The Big Boss because he's got one of those -

The Middleman holds up The Big Boss's voice box.

THE MIDDLEMAN

Strap-on electronic voice boxes?

The two exchange frustrated looks. The Middleman drops the voice box, then SMASHES it with his boot:

**FADE OUT:**

**END OF ACT THREE**

**ACT FOUR**

**FADE IN:**

**EXT. LOFT - NIGHT**

"Delia's Gone" by Johnny Cash plays through the speakers as Wendy steps out of the Big Bad Voodoo Cadillac.

CHYRON: Wendy's loft, exactly 2.45 minutes before the *Animal House* joke, and 5.30 minutes before the *Planet of the Apes* joke.

THE MIDDLEMAN

Sleep with one eye open. That gun totin' ape's still at large.

WENDY

I'm still not talking to you.

THE MIDDLEMAN

Chimps throw feces, Dubbie. It's a fact of life.

WENDY

Quit calling me [BLEEPING] "Dubbie."

Wendy SLAMS the Big Bad Voodoo Cadillac's door.

**INT. LOFT CORRIDOR - LATER**

The frustration from the Act Out still on her face, Wendy enters the corridor. Noser has not moved.

NOSER

Yo, Wendy Watson. What is that mighty mighty girl?

WENDY

A brick house.

NOSER

And what is she doing?

WENDY

Letting it all hang...out.

Wendy pauses, something's caught her attention:

**ON THE FLOOR, JUST AHEAD OF WENDY:**

Is a banana peel. Wendy looks up. Her door is ajar, and she can see a pair of feet between door and floor.

(CONTINUED)

She reaches for her Middleman watch, pushing a button.

**ON THE WATCH**

A series of distress lights come on.

WENDY (cont'd)  
You have a gun on you, Noser?

NOSER  
War is not the answer, Wendy, only  
love can conquer hate.

WENDY  
(to herself)  
What is going on...?

Wendy abruptly grabs Noser's guitar...rushes the door and -

WENDY (cont'd)  
YAAAHH!

- Wendy pulls the door open and swings Noser's guitar. The still unseen stranger ducks. The guitar SMASHES above the stranger, who looks up and reveals himself as Ben.

BEN  
Ow! You hit me on the head!

WENDY  
Are you mental?

Stepping into frame, Noser looks at the shattered guitar.

NOSER  
Man...my axe.

WENDY  
Sorry.

Wendy hands back the guitar, Belushi-style and ushers Ben into the Loft.

**INT. LOFT - CONTINUOUS**

Wendy closes the door on the still-stunned Noser, then turns to look at Ben.

BEN  
Why does it smell like monkey poop here?

Wendy gives Ben a look that would freeze Night Train.

(CONTINUED)



WENDY

What do you want?

BEN

I just, you know, wanted to say I'm sorry about that whole movie thing. I'm such a dolt. I thought it'd be art...it seemed like a good idea at the time.

WENDY

So did the Carter administration.

BEN

I looked at the tape and watching you throwing things reminded me of when we accidentally overturned that chestnut roaster on Madison Ave...and the vendor was screaming in Spanish...

WENDY

And he started throwing stuff at us and we had a chestnut war.

Wendy lets a smile slip. Ben shares the moment.

BEN

It made me miss you. So I wanted to say I'm sorry...and to ask what it would take for you to take me back.

WENDY

A rip in the fabric of time.

The front door BURSTS open. The Middleman flies in, knees Ben in the stomach, puts him in a lock and squashes him against the wall.

BEN

Ow! You're breaking my arm!

Lacey enters, dressed in flannel pajamas.

LACEY

Hey now! Violence!

WENDY

Let him go, he's okay!

The Middleman drops Ben, who hits the deck with a GRUNT.

THE MIDDLEMAN

You sounded the alarm.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

WENDY

Not 'cause of him! Are you okay, Ben?

THE MIDDLEMAN

Ben the video camera guy?

(beat)

I oughta crack your skull for that  
alone you stringy-haired coffee-house  
beatnik.

BEN

Where'd you dig up this jarhead?

LACEY

Hey Dub-Dub. Who's your boyfriend?

WENDY

He's not my boyfriend. He's my boss.

Lacey steps between her and The Middleman, taking his hand.

LACEY

Really? Lacey Thornfield. Charmed.

The Middleman turns to Lacey. She melts.

THE MIDDLEMAN

Delighted, ma'am.

LACEY

You know...I'm a conceptual artist.

THE MIDDLEMAN

Some have said that about me too.

WENDY

(to Lacey)

Do I have to hose you down?

(to the men)

And you two hormone jockeys. Outside

Wendy pulls the men out the door and into the corridor.  
Lacey closes the loft door. Then:

**BANG! BANG! BUDDA-BUDDA-BUDDA!**

Bullet indentations appear on the heavy steel door behind  
the startled Lacey!

The door SLAMS open. The Middleman tosses Wendy and a  
majorly-freaking Ben back inside.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BEN

Holy [BLEEP!] A monkey! I swear it was a monkey - holding a gun!

Wendy belts Ben across the face.

WENDY

Get a hold of yourself, man!  
(as Ben settles)  
Now what's easier to believe? A monkey with a gun, or a really short, hairy...guy doing a drive by?

BEN

The short guy...a short hairy guy...yeah.

More GUNFIRE strafes the door. The Middleman takes out his retractable shotgun.

THE MIDDLEMAN

You could have mentioned the hostile.

WENDY

I would have if you hadn't barged in and started hitting on my room mate and beating up my boyfriend.

BEN

I'm still your boyfriend?

THE MIDDLEMAN

(to Ben)  
What do you think?  
(to Wendy)  
I'll deal with the short hairy guy.

The Middleman rushes out, shutting the door. More GUNFIRE is heard outside. Lacey turns to Wendy.

LACEY

You're getting more than five an hour for this job, right?

**EXT. THE MIDDLEMAN'S BIG BAD VODOO CADILLAC - NIGHT**

Wendy runs out of the building. The Middleman is tying The Big Boss to the trunk.

THE MIDDLEMAN

I'm not gonna ask nicely again.

(CONTINUED)

THE BIG BOSS  
Never ask me about my business!

The Middleman rips off The Big Boss' voice box.

THE MIDDLEMAN  
See anything weird?

A logo is stamped on the voice box: *SIMIONICS LTD.*

WENDY  
You smashed his voice box. So where'd he get a brand-new one with the lab's trademark stamped on the side?

THE MIDDLEMAN  
Which means either he snuck back into the lab and stole a new voice box or -

WENDY  
- he never escaped from the lab at all, and Dr. Gibbs lied to us.

THE MIDDLEMAN  
I bet all the secrets are locked up in that mind control computer of hers. I'd better mosey on down there.

WENDY  
What about me?

THE MIDDLEMAN  
You've seen more harm's way than an untrained operative should be have to.

WENDY  
Hold it right there, Tex. I've been shot at, I've been pelted with ape dung...you practically killed my boyfriend...

THE MIDDLEMAN  
He's a doorknob.

WENDY  
...and now you're leaving me behind?

THE MIDDLEMAN  
This is re-gosh-darn-diculous. You weren't exactly dying to go into that mob hangout. Am I right?

As Wendy speaks, the "rules" appear onscreen in a Chyron.

CONTINUED: (2)

WENDY

Yeah, but I had a choice in that...so rule number one: never, ever give the "a man's gotta do what a man's gotta do" speech before you strap on your six-guns and leave me at the ranch making tea with Ida the Pruneface android. Two: you don't crack my boyfriend's skull. And Three: you don't date my room mate. Got it?

THE MIDDLEMAN

(climbing into the car)  
Now that's just mean. I'm single. I'm eligible.

WENDY

(getting in)  
Just drive.

THE MIDDLEMAN

Are you ashamed of me?

**EXT. SIMIONICS LTD - ESTABLISHING - DAY**

The Big Bad Voodoo Cadillac screams into frame and past the now brightly lit Simionics sign.

CHYRON: They said they were coming here already, do I have to spell it out for you? I'm sick of this crap!

**INT. SIMIONICS LTD - NIGHT**

The place is dark. Monkeys sleep peacefully in their glass-walled cages. Not a creature is stirring, only the basso profundo of the lab's two-story tall, pulsating mainframe.

The Middleman and Wendy ZZZZZZIP! down from the ceiling, *Mission: Impossible* style: held by a thick cable attached to them via harness.

The two stop, suspended before an input/output port on the middle section of the computer tower.

THE MIDDLEMAN

We should be able to access the Mainframe through this I.O. port.

WENDY

You feel that?  
(off his look)  
Kind of a strange, tugging feeling.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The two look up to see...

**A PAIR OF MONKEY HANDS**

Cutting Wendy's cable with an electric saw!

**RESUME ON THE MIDDLEMAN AND WENDY**

Wendy's eyes widen. The cable snaps and she falls to the floor, landing a few feet away from the computer array.

Stunned, Wendy comes to...and finds herself surrounded by very angry CHIMPS. Before she can scramble to her feet, every one of her limbs is grabbed.

WENDY (CONT'D) (cont'd)  
Get your filthy paws offa me you  
damned dirty apes!

**THE MIDDLEMAN**

Breaks out his retractable shotgun and aims at the apes: but a voice stops him before he can start the carnival of simian bootie-whip.

DR. GIBBS (O.S.)  
I knew you weren't from the Department  
of Sanitation.

**WENDY**

Looks up over the monkeys holding her to see:

WENDY  
Gibbs! It was you!

**YES, DR. GIBBS**

Who walks through the lab toward the mainframe, stopping before the monkeys holding Wendy down.

The Big Boss escorts the Doctor: brandishing a Tommy Gun.

DR. GIBBS  
(looks to The Middleman)  
Chimps are five times stronger than  
the average human. Lower yourself or  
they turn her into scrapple.

WENDY  
You've been controlling The Big Boss.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DR. GIBBS

Of course I have. These apes don't have a single thought that I don't control through this computer.

(to The Middleman)

Come down...before your associate learns what a banana feels like.

But The Middleman keeps Gibbs talking while...

THE MIDDLEMAN

I don't get it...why the Mob?

**ON THE MIDDLEMAN'S HAND**

A silver grenade slides from his sleeve into his palm.

DR. GIBBS

Money. Fast, tax-free cash money. This is a federally funded lab. Every year the government is less and less interested in making smarter chimps, and every year they slash my budget. Without money, I will never fulfill my dream.

THE MIDDLEMAN

What dream?

Gibbs moves past the apes holding Wendy and beneath The Middleman to make her grand declaration of purpose:

DR. GIBBS

To build an army of genetically engineered super-primates -

THE MIDDLEMAN

(yeah, yeah, yeah)

- and take over the world!

DR. GIBBS

- and take over the world!

Yep, The Middleman's heard it all before. He holds up his grenade.

THE MIDDLEMAN

Let 'er go, Blofeld, or your secret lair's a grease stain.

**WENDY**

Looks up, what is The Middleman going to pull?

DR. GIBBS

Don't be stupid.

(CONTINUED)

**THE MIDDLEMAN**

Presses a button, a red blinkie lights up on the grenade.

**THE MIDDLEMAN**

Never push a man with a high energy  
plasma detonator.

Gibbs turns to The Big Boss.

**DR. GIBBS**

Ventilate him.

**THE BIG BOSS**

Squeezes the trigger on his Tommy Gun.

**THE MIDDLEMAN**

Pulls a ripcord on his chest. The wire holding him up  
disengages from his harness. The Middleman falls!

**AS THE MIDDLEMAN DROPS OUT OF FRAME**

Bullets fly through the space The Middleman used to occupy  
and rip right into the mainframe!

**THE MAINFRAME**

EXPLODES in a shower of sparks!

**THE MIDDLEMAN**

Falls on top of Dr. Gibbs, knocking her out cold.

**THE MONKEYS HOLDING WENDY**

Let go and run from the explosion.

**THE BIG BOSS**

Drops his gun and reverts to scared chimpanzee behavior.

**WENDY**

Rolls away from the exploding mainframe, just in time to  
take The Middleman's hand. He helps her get up.

Wendy and The Middleman look around as the smoke clears:  
the monkeys are now playing and grooming each other,  
behaving like the cute animals that they are.



THE MIDDLEMAN

(mutter)

Some knucklehead's always trying to  
take over the world...

In the Background, the sound of POLICE SIRENS fills the  
air. The Middleman and Wendy exchange knowing glances.

As the two hightail it out of there:

**EXT. WENDY'S LOFT - NIGHT**

The Middleman pulls the Big Bad Voodoo Cadillac up to the  
building. A taciturn Wendy steps out.

THE MIDDLEMAN

Why the long face? We just saved the  
world as we know it.

WENDY

Ever read comics?

THE MIDDLEMAN

As a matter of fact, Wendy, I think  
Jughead is a real hoot.

WENDY

Ever read Batman?

(off The Middleman's  
look)

See, the Joker had a nickname for  
Batman's sidekick: "Robin the Boy  
Hostage."

(then)

That's what I felt like tonight.

THE MIDDLEMAN

Maybe the next time I want to handle  
something by myself you'll listen.

WENDY

I wouldn't count on it.

THE MIDDLEMAN

Then I'll just tie you to the car.

(off her look)

Oh yes. I would.

(beat)

And one more thing, Dubbie.

The Middleman tosses something over and Wendy catches it.  
Wendy looks at the object.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

**HER FATHER'S LIGHTER**

Wendy smiles and starts to fidget...snap-klang...snap-klang...

WENDY

You aren't gonna stop calling me  
"Dubbie" are you?

THE MIDDLEMAN

Not a gosh-darn chace in heck.

The Middleman smiles and steps on the accelerator. The Big Bad Voodoo Cadillac vanishes into the night.

Off the rhythmic sound of the lighter opening and closing in Wendy's hand...

**INT. WENDY'S UPSTAIRS LOFT - DAY**

A phone in one hand, a paintbrush in the other Wendy talks while she paints.

WENDY

...as a matter of fact, mom, I do have a brand new job...no, it's more of a freelance thing...I get plenty of time to paint and a great workout...my boss? You'd like him, he's into guns...just like dad...

**REVEAL**

Wendy's canvas, a frightening, yet strangely beautiful expressionistic depiction of CHIMPANZEES.

As Wendy talks to her mother...and adds the final touches to her work...

**END OF ACT FOUR**