

The Peking Duck

an original script
by Dan Fiorella

contact: Dan Fiorella
daf118@aol.com
www.danfiorella.com

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FADE IN:

EXT. BIG CITY -- DAY

Looking out over one of those large metropolitan areas you're always seeing on the news.

NARRATOR WENDY (V.O.)

My town. It's big. A lotta people,
a lotta noise and a lotta trouble.
But I didn't know from trouble.

INT. BUS -- DAY

Crowded, crowded rush hour bus. WENDY MEADOWS, a pert, yet introverted, pretty, yet unassertive woman is listening to a self-help podcast on her iPod. It is called "How to be Aggressive and Get What You Want." She looks hassled and harried from her morning commute. An ANNOYED MAN is glaring at her.

ANNOYED MAN

Turn that crap down.

WENDY

Yes, sir.

She turns it off. The bus arrives. Doors open.

EXT. BUS STOP -- CONTINUOUS

In the back there is movement.

WENDY

(polite, meek)
Excuse me, getting off, excuse me.

No one is excusing her but she finally battles her way to the doors, just in time to stop them with half her body. She forces them open and escapes.

EXT. CON-GLOB INDUSTRIES, INC. -- DAY

Ultra-sleek corporate digs. Wendy enters.

INT. CON-GLOB LOBBY -- DAY

The elevator arrives at Wendy's floor. She must struggle again to get off the crowded elevator.

The doughnut wagon is there, TWO WORKERS in line. Wendy gets on the line and looks into her pocketbook for money. Line moves up one and she doesn't notice.

THIRD WORKER comes up and cuts in front of Wendy. She looks like she's about to say something, but winds up shrugging it off.

INT. CON-GLOB OFFICES -- DAY

She follows the aisle to her desk, exchanging greetings with the other SECRETARIES (including JANE and MELISSA, as well as the slightly older and blowzy RUTH).

She reaches her station in front of Jeb Reilly's office: she is in fact, Jeb Reilly's secretary. She busies herself setting up and preparing for the day at hand. She puts her iPod away into a drawer filled with self-help assertiveness tapes, books and discs.

Her co-worker, the sexy, wise-cracking DEBBIE approaches. She leans in close as the other secretaries watch.

WENDY

Hey, Deb.

DEBBIE

Look, Wend, here's the deal: the girls are throwing you a wedding shower...no, don't look...I'm supposed to ask you out to lunch. But, frankly, I'm not in the mood to tap dance and worry about you saying no, so, I'll ask, you agree and when it happens, you act surprised.

WENDY

Debbie, how could you---?

DEBBIE

(aloud)

So, Wendy, wanna go to lunch today? I heard about this new place.

WENDY

(placating her)

Sure. I would love to go to lunch today.

DEBBIE

Twelve-thirty.

WENDY

Okay.

Debbie winks, Wendy gives her the thumbs up and Debbie moves on.

A few moments later, JEB REILLY, handsome, self-aware, mid-level executive on the rise, enters, carrying his stylish attaché case.

JEB
'Morning, Wendy.

WENDY
Good morning, Mr. Reilly.

JEB
Would you step into my office, please?

WENDY
Certainly, sir.

INT. JEB'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

Slick, sleek office with all the trappings of the young jr. executive on the climb. He puts his attaché on the desk, turns and embraces and kisses Wendy, who drops her pad. They come up for air.

WENDY
Really, Jeb.

JEB
Oh, Wendy, please, we're engaged. Anyway, how much longer can we do things like this? Once we're married, you'll be re-assigned.

WENDY
I know, but still, it isn't very business-like.

JEB
Well, if you want business and then let's get busy.

WENDY
Oh, Jeb. I love you so. I was such a timid little thing. And you noticed me and loved me. You brought me out of my shell.

JEB
And I'm very proud of the way you've matured. You're going to make a fine, fine wife. So, how's about lunch?

WENDY
I'm sorry, I can't. The girls are throwing me a surprise wedding shower. I should be there.

JEB
It seems they're doing a lousy job of keeping it secret.

(MORE)

JEB (CONT'D)

Oh, well, I'll just have to fend for myself then.

WENDY

Sorry.

JEB

Don't be. I'll be fine. You go, have fun. You have to go. Otherwise where will we get our fondue pots from?

WENDY

Oh, Jeb.

JEB

Okay, time for work. Let's start with the Rawlins file.

WENDY

Right away.

Wendy leaves. Jeb waits a beat and dials the phone.

INT. RESTAURANT -- DAY

Lunch time. Wendy, Debbie and the girls (including Jane, Melissa and Ruth) are at table surrounded by the remains of their showered lunch.

JANE

---So I thought it was a compliment until I looked up the word. "Rubenesque." It means fat. This artist Rubens painted a lot of fat women in these poses. Rolls of fat. Rolls and rolls.

DEBBIE

Stop with the rolling, you're making me seasick.

JANE

Apparently, chubby was in then.

MELISSA

Times change.

JANE

I'm only allowed a total of one thousand calories a day on my new high-zinc diet.

WENDY

What happened to your all-banana diet?

JANE

My skin started to peel.

DEBBIE

Is all this dieting worth it? God, I remember when I went on the all liquid diet just as I started to retain water. I damn near burst.

JANE

I'm thinking liposuction.

RUTH

Yeah, let some crazed surgeon come at you with a Hoover. Get real.

DEBBIE

You know, I was thinking of just going out into the sun and get a sunburn, then peel, go out and get sunburned again and peel again and keep doing that until I got thinner.

MELISSA

I saw this ad for a clinic where they hypnotize you into being anorexic until you lose the weight you want then snap you out of it.

DEBBIE

A friend of mine was diagnosed as having dyslexia anorexia. She would keep throwing up before she ate.

WENDY

Who?

DEBBIE

You don't know her.

JANE

Well, I know I'll be down to a size five by Thursday, no problem. Well, maybe for the wedding, then.

MELISSA

Who would think our little Wendy would capture that strapping hunk Reilly's heart?

RUTH

Not me, that's for sure. How? Tell me how. It's not like you're dishing it out for him, is it?

DEBBIE

Ruth!

MELISSA

Others tried to snare him. But our quiet, unassuming Wendella finally got him to notice just by being there.

RUTH

Like a deer caught in the headlights.

JANE

Maybe it's like those old stories about the unicorn. Only a virgin could catch it. She sat in the woods and the unicorn would come to her and rest its head in her lap. 'Cause it could sense her chastity, and offer itself to her.

RUTH

Must be why you never see unicorns no more.

MELISSA

I don't know if Jeb is a unicorn, but he is sure horny for Wendy.

DEBBIE

Have any of the office romances gone the distance?

MELISSA

A couple but it's hard.

RUTH

It should be. It's unnatural to fall in love with a co-worker. Or worse, a boss.

WENDY

No, that's not true.

RUTH

It's trouble, plain and simple.

DEBBIE

That's just you, dearie. Not everyone gets jilted for the new secretary.

RUTH

He found one there, he'll find another. There's plenty of fish in the secretarial pool.

DEBBIE

Some would say we were being less than supportive.

JANE

Right. Right you are. We'll show more support. I will, I promise.

She pulls out a black lace bra and hands it to Wendy, who blushes. Everyone else laughs.

JANE (CONT'D)

Cross your heart.

RUTH

And hope to die.

MELISSA

You're a real wet blanket, Ruth.

WENDY

Well, just a few more weeks and I'll prove her wrong, you'll see.

RUTH

I'll see.

DEBBIE

No more punch for her, thank you.

WENDY

Thank you, everyone. You've all been such great friends since I've been here. I hope my transfer doesn't mess it up.

JANE

Oh, you're only going downstairs. It's not like they're banishing you.

WENDY

I know, but you know how I am about change. I don't adapt too well.

MELISSA

Everything's fine.

DEBBIE

Well, merry-makers and maidens, it is time for the fun to stop and to return to work.

General hissing and booing but they gather up their items and head out.

INT. CON-GLOB OFFICES -- DAY

Wendy sits at her desk, wearing her bow-hat and trying to stack her presents. Her intercom buzzes. She clicks it and goes to respond but instead hears:

BARBARA (O.S.)
So, you're taking yourself out of
the game, eh?

JEB (O.S.)
Not out of the game, onto the fast
track.

BARBARA (O.S.)
How so?

JEB (O.S.)
The old fogies who run this place
still put a lot of stock in that
family values nonsense.

BARBARA (O.S.)
So?

JEB (O.S.)
So, if I'm gonna make any headway in
this firm, I have to show I'm a stable
family man.

BARBARA (O.S.)
That's why you're getting married?

JEB (O.S.)
That and the home-cooked meals.

BARBARA (O.S.)
Why that little door mouse? Why not
me?

JEB (O.S.)
Oh, doll, you wouldn't look good on
my resume.

BARBARA (O.S.)
And she would?

JEB (O.S.)
She's got potential. She's an
unshaped mound of clay. I'll be
able to mold her into the perfect
corporate wife. I'll be racking up
the points when the boss sees us.
And she adores me. So I can pretty
much do what I have to.

Wendy starts biting her thumb.

BARBARA (O.S.)
So this is good-bye?

JEB (O.S.)
 Oh, baby, I'm not going to let
 marriage cut into my dating.

Wendy, stunned, goes into Jeb's office.

WENDY (O.S.)
 Jeb!

INT. JEB'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

Jeb and a sexy BARBARA are in mid-flirt. Barbara is sitting on the desk, her behind against the intercom. Jeb is seated, his arms resting on her legs.

JEB
 Wendy? What are you doing here?

WENDY
 What am I doing here? What is she
 doing here?

BARBARA
 Hey, don't drag me into your little
 tiff.

WENDY
 I'm so sorry our wedding is going to
 mess up your social life!

BARBARA
 Don't blame me if you can't control
 your man.

WENDY
 I thought you loved me! We're going
 to be married!

JEB
 Sure, of course. This is nothing!
 It doesn't have to affect the rest
 of our lives.

WENDY
 The rest of my life as what? Your
 lump of clay?

JEB
 No, Wendy, you're misquoting me.
 You heard that?

Debbie comes in the door carrying a toaster-oven as Wendy bolts the room in a sobbing manner. Barbara kisses Jeb good-bye.

BARBARA

Sorry, lover. Call me when you get everything ironed out.

She leaves.

DEBBIE

Well, I knew you were a moron but I never realized how big of one 'til now. Where's she going?

JEB

I guess back to her office.

DEBBIE

No, you boob, Wendy! Where's Wendy going?

JEB

I don't know! I hope she doesn't do something stupid or cause trouble.

DEBBIE

Trouble? What kind of trouble could she possibly cause after catching you diddling with the boss' daughter-in-law?

JEB

She wouldn't---

DEBBIE

If she doesn't, I will.

She flings the toaster oven at Jeb but misses.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

Congratulations!

Debbie rushes out. Jeb picks up the phone.

JEB

Security?

EXT. CON-GLOB INDUSTRIES, INC. -- DAY

Wendy exits the building and runs down the street.

Debbie exits the building as AL THE SECURITY GUY points off where Wendy went.

EXT. PARK -- DAY

Debbie finds her at the ice cream VENDOR, buying several Dove bars.

DEBBIE

Wendy, where are you going? What are you doing?

They go to a bench and sit, eating the ice cream.

WENDY

What is wrong with me, Debbie? I thought he loved me. What is wrong with me? You're my friend, you'll tell me, right?

DEBBIE

Wendy, get a grip! You're a wonderful person just as you are.

WENDY

Jeb called me a lump of clay!

DEBBIE

Who cares what Jeb thinks?

WENDY

I do! He's my fiancé! I have to!

DEBBIE

Girl, you fell in love with your boss, it happens. Unfortunately, your boss is some jerk who led you on for whatever reason.

WENDY

What are you saying? He doesn't love me?

DEBBIE

I'm sure he does, in his own selfish, manipulative, self-serving, control-freakish way but he's the one who has to change, not you.

WENDY

Oh, Debbie, Ruth was right. How could I be so blind?

DEBBIE

Love is blind.

WENDY

This blind?

DEBBIE

Blind enough. You ever see some of the guys Helen Keller dated? Now come on, maybe we can salvage this.

They walk off.

INT. CON-GLOB INDUSTRIES, INC. -- DAY

Wendy and Debbie are greeted by Al the Security Guy. He carries a cardboard box filled with Wendy's personal effects and tapes & discs.

AL

Ms. Meadows, I'm sorry. You can't come on the premises.

WENDY

What? What do you mean, Al?

AL

We've been informed that you've been, er, fired and you are not allowed in the building.

WENDY

Fired? I don't understand.

AL

That's all I know, ma'am. Your desk has been cleaned out.

He hands her the box.

DEBBIE

I'll get to the bottom of this.

Al stops her.

AL

I've been informed that you were terminated as well.

DEBBIE

What? That rat! I was going to try and help that worm! What was I thinking? Well, I guess that shows me.

WENDY

Oh, Debbie, I'm so sorry. It's all my fault.

DEBBIE

No, it isn't. It's all Jeb's fault.
(to Al)
So, where are my personal effects?

Al plus out a thong from his pocket and hands it to her.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

Well, then, I guess that's that. Come along, Wendy, don't tarry with the hired help.

They exit.

INT. WENDY'S APARTMENT -- DAY

Small loft apartment. Crowded but hers. Wendy is reading Craig's List ads on a laptop.

INT. OFFICE FOYER -- DAY

Wendy, checking a newspaper want ad, enters a building.

INT. OFFICE FOYER -- LATER

Wendy exits, crossing off the ad.

EXT. MIDTOWN -- DAY

She walks passed a giant electric sign displaying the national debt.

INT. PERSONNEL OFFICE -- DAY

Wendy fills out an application.

NARRATOR WENDY (V.O.)

You think this town is cold, you should see it when you're down on your luck, hat in hand. Not only does it kick you when you're down, it'll sell tickets to watch.

She hands the application to the PERSONNEL DIRECTOR who takes it with a smile. Wendy leaves and the Director drops the application into the trash.

INT. SUPERMARKET -- DAY

Wendy is at the checkout with groceries. She's looking in her pocket book and realizing she doesn't have enough money, starts handing things to the CASHIER to deduct.

INT. MEADOW'S APARTMENT -- DAY

Nice, middle-class digs. Wendy's MOM, stout, solid homemaker in her 60s, opens the door. Wendy is there with all her stuff. Her DAD, sensible, blue-collar type, is helping her carry boxes.

Wendy is both happy and disappointed to be moving back home.

Mom takes her off to her old room while Dad follows with the boxes.

INT. WENDY'S ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Mom opens the door and it's just as Wendy left it; stuffed dolls, teen idol posters and frilly curtains.

And a stack of Mom is beaming, Wendy, brave. Boxes marked "winter clothes."

NARRATOR WENDY (V.O.)

I was low. Lower than a snake's belt buckle. Lower than something that's really very low. I certainly wasn't in a position to be choosy.

EXT. MEAN STREET -- DAY

Wendy looks at a long print-out of crossed out want ads. Finally, the last position is circled. It is for a secretarial position at Dunby & McCaine.

She checks the address and sees she's in a very run down part of town.

She enters an old building, biting her thumb.

INT. DUNBY & MCCAINE RECEPTION AREA -- DAY

It's a shabby P.I. agency, looking very film noir, only noir-ier. Obviously, the place as seen better times. Just not recently.

The reception area and desk are empty. The inter-office door is closed. It reads "O. Dunby, L. McCaine, Private" on the beveled glass pane. She takes a seat. Voices can be heard.

RUMBELBI (O.S.)

What am I to make of this? I am going to murder her to death, I am! Mr. Dunby, you have opened my eyes for certain, that is for sure! That woman is an, an adulterer! I am a cuckolded man, I am!

Wendy nervously starts for the exit. Suddenly, Dunby's door blasts open and RUMBELBI exits. He is a little, nerdy-looking guy of overseas origin who is quite angry.

Wendy is startled back into her seat. Rumbelbi speaks back to Dunby.

RUMBELBI (CONT'D)

Oh, yes, thank you for your help.

He sees Wendy and nods. He likes what he sees.

RUMBELBI (CONT'D)

Good day.

He leaves. Wendy is stunned. OTIS DUNBY, a road-weary and professional cynic steps out. He's rumbled: tie loosened and suspenders off.

DUNBY
 Another satisfied customer.
 (sees Wendy)
 And what can I do for you?

WENDY
 I just came to apply for the secretary
 job. It was in the paper. But I
 don't want to interrupt anything.

DUNBY
 Oh, right, the ad. Come in.

WENDY
 Oh, gosh, I don't think---

DUNBY
 Come on, move it. I haven't got all
 day.

Wendy edges her way into the office as Dunby opens the door
 for her.

INT. DUNBY'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

She enters as Dunby plops in his place. The other desk is
 empty and seemingly deserted. His desk is a disorganized
 mess of papers, take-out orders and scotch bottles.

DUNBY
 Take a seat.

She sits, and starts biting her nail again.

WENDY
 Thank you.

DUNBY
 Nervous?

She realizes she's biting her thumb and quickly stops.

WENDY
 Sorry. Are you Mr. Dunby or Mr.
 McCaine?

DUNBY
 McCaine's been dead these seven years.

WENDY
 Oh, I'm sorry.

DUNBY
 Don't be. He was a bum. Now then,
 you want to be my secretary?

WENDY

Oh, my. Yes, about your ad---

DUNBY

What's your background?

WENDY

Well, business school, four years a legal secretary.

DUNBY

Good, I wouldn't want to hire an illegal secretary. Ever been shot?

WENDY

Er, no.

Dunby makes a note.

DUNBY

Why'd you get fired from your last job?

WENDY

Personal reasons. Wait, how did you know I was fired?

DUNBY

Nobody would quit in this job market. Weapons training?

WENDY

You know, thank your for seeing me, but I think perhaps this was a mistake. There must be someone better qualified for you.

DUNBY

Hey, hey, sit, sit. It's going fine. I'm not much of an organization man and frankly, you're the first one that's bothered replying to the ad.

WENDY

I got the job?

DUNBY

You want the job, you got the job. When can you start?

WENDY

When do you need me?

DUNBY

I need you now.

WENDY
I can start now.

DUNBY
Okay, so get started.

WENDY
Thank you, Mr. Dunby.

DUNBY
Get yourself settled. I'll be out
to show you the duties.

She heads to the reception area.

WENDY
May I ask you a question?

DUNBY
What?

WENDY
Why did your secretary leave? Was
she unhappy?

DUNBY
I won't know until they allow her
visitors.

Unsure how to take this, she continues to the reception area.

INT. DUNBY & MCCAINE RECEPTION AREA -- DAY

MONTAGE:

Wendy busies herself at the desk.

NARRATOR WENDY (V.O.)
Actually, the next few weeks went
quite well.

Dunby shows her the files and filing system.

Wendy greets SHADY CHARACTERS at her desk.

The POSTMAN drops off the mail and she sorts it.

She opens a file drawer but before she can file the folder,
she has to remove many empty scotch bottles.

Mr. Rumbelbi enters. He carries flowers and presents them
to Wendy, who awkwardly accepts them. Rumbelbi bows and
goes into Dunby's office.

Wendy looks around, pulls out a whiskey bottle out of the
trash and puts the flowers in it.

NARRATOR WENDY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Then she entered the office. Little did we realize how much my upside-down world was about to go topsy-turvy.

INT. DUNBY & MCCAIN RECEPTION AREA -- EVENING

It's dusk-time and Wendy is finishing up some invoices, stamping bills "Third Notice." Then she writes in "sorry." She has her pocket book and a PBS tote bag leaning against the side of her desk. The door opens. In strolls AMANDA DUBOIS, a saucy, sensual dame who looks like she knows everyone and has done everyone.

DUBOIS

Is Mr. Dunby or Mr. McCain in?

WENDY

Mr. Dunby is in. May I ask who is calling?

DUBOIS

You may.

A pause ensues.

WENDY

Who is calling?

DUBOIS

DuBois. Amanda DuBois.

WENDY

And this is in reference to---?

DUBOIS

A marital problem.

WENDY

If you would take a seat, please.

She does, in memorable fashion. Wendy is momentarily amazed by the action, then goes into Dunby's office.

INT. DUNBY'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

He's playing a video game on his cell.

WENDY

Mr. Dunby, we have a, er, client.

DUNBY

Damn, this is hard. What is it, doll?

WENDY

Sir, I really don't like when you call me "doll." Some would say it's demeaning.

DUNBY

Sorry, babe. Now, what's on line?

WENDY

A Ms. DuBois. Looks to be an infidelity case from what I can see.

DUNBY

Well, let's see if you're right, kitten. Send her in.

She goes to door.

WENDY

Mr. Dunby will see you now.

DuBois saunters in as Wendy leaves the two alone.

INT. DUNBY & MCCAINE RECEPTION AREA -- LATER

DuBois exits the office with Dunby in tow. He carries a photo.

DUBOIS

I'm so grateful for your help.

DUNBY

I hope you're as grateful when you get my bill.

(to Wendy)

Sweetheart, make up a file. Mrs. DuBois is a client.

(to Dubois)

Now I'll get on the case and call you if we hear anything.

Dunby escorts DuBois to the door and sends her on her way.

WENDY

What's up, sir?

DUNBY

Husband ran off. Took some property of hers and she wants it back.

He hands Wendy an audio cassette. Wendy doesn't know what to make of it. She holds it up to her ear.

DUNBY (CONT'D)

Here's the tape. Transcribe that please and add it to the file.

(MORE)

DUNBY (CONT'D)

After we find him and it, she wants to divorce the jerk. Can't understand someone running off from her.

WENDY

Perhaps they were incompatible. Perhaps he felt unfulfilled.

DUNBY

Yeah. Right.

WENDY

Looks aren't everything, sir.

DUNBY

I know, I know. But they're a fine, fine starting point.

He hands the photo to Wendy. It is a burly, dangerous-looking man, this "Mr. DuBois."

DUNBY (CONT'D)

And here is the errant Manny DuBois. Make a copy of this, sweetcakes, for the file.

WENDY

Please don't call me sweetcakes, Mr. Dunby.

DUNBY

Sorry, sugar. I'll need the original.

WENDY

He's very scary looking.

DUNBY

Yeah, that's something else that doesn't figure; what's a classy dish like her linking up with a mug like this?

She scans the photo and sends it to the printer while he pulls out a slip of paper and hands it to her.

DUNBY (CONT'D)

Then you'll want to run these. She had copies of Manny's credit cards. Let's find out if he left a paper trail.

WENDY

Anything else?

DUNBY

No, that should keep you busy enough. I'm going to check out some of his haunts. Wife had a pretty long list of them. Then we'll compare notes tomorrow. See you later.

WENDY

Be careful.

DUNBY

You bet, cupcake.

He leaves. Wendy gets on the phone. She puts the file on her desk.

WENDY

Hello, Bill? It's Wendy at Dunby and McCaine. I need a credit history---

Mr. Rumbelbi enters with flowers. Wendy is politely dismayed. Meanwhile, the file slips off into her PBS tote bag.

INT. BUS -- DAY

Next morning. Wendy and Debbie are riding together. Both are dressed for work but wearing sneakers and carrying their tote bags.

WENDY

Oh, Debbie, it's so, so unreal.

DEBBIE

What? Living at home?

WENDY

Yeah, that, too. But mostly it's my job. It's really too much.

DEBBIE

Just be thankful you're working. This temping is horrible. No benefits, no security and poor self-image. And you never know what kind of wacko you'll be working for on any given day. You've got it good.

WENDY

Sure, at least I know what kind of wacko I'll be working for everyday. The people he deals with are so, so sleazy. People who want to spy on wives and husbands. People who just walk out of their lives. People who are totally anti-social. I miss Jeb.

DEBBIE

You just think you do.

WENDY

This guy Dunby will take any case for a dollar.

DEBBIE

Sure, nothing like our bosses back at Con-Glob Industries.

WENDY

It's different.

DEBBIE

Nah, not really. You're just closer to the source. Look how their lawyers froze us out with no chance of a lawsuit and we didn't see a thing. Your job is steady. It's interesting. I have to hope that maybe someone will keep me on full time.

WENDY

I should just quit.

DEBBIE

Will you for once see something through? So learn everything you can about it. Make it school. Then when you're ready, make a move. Then at least it'll be a move up. But most of all, make it a life experience. You can never get too many of those.

Wendy rings for her stop.

WENDY

We'll see. Later.

DEBBIE

Buck up, Wendy. Better days are coming.

Bus stops and Wendy gets off.

NARRATOR WENDY (V.O.)

Ever notice that when you think you've hit rock bottom, somebody shows you the cellar door? I usually like my disasters to wait until after I've had my coffee.

INT. DUNBY & MCCAINE RECEPTION AREA -- DAY

Wendy unlocks the door and enters. She now has a box of doughnuts.

The room has been ransacked. Wendy drops her packages in shock.

INT. DUNBY & MCCAINE RECEPTION AREA -- LATER

The POLICE are finishing up and are now headed out the door. The grumpy-looking LT. MULDOON is in charge.

MULDOON

So, Dunby's not around?

WENDY

No. I don't know where he is. He was working on a case.

MULDOON

What kind of case?

WENDY

I don't think I'm allowed to say.

MULDOON

Well, as soon as Otis shows up, have him call me.

WENDY

Certainly.

MULDOON

Let's go, boys.

They leave. Wendy begins a feeble attempt to clean up.

CHU LO FAT, a refined Chinese gentleman, cool, suave, cultured, enters.

LO FAT

Excuse me.

WENDY

I'm sorry, the office is temporarily closed due to technical difficulties.

LO FAT

I am looking for Mr. Otis Dunby.

WENDY

He's not here right now.

LO FAT

Perhaps you can help me.

WENDY

I guess.

LO FAT

I am trying to locate a Miss Amanda DuBois.

This gets Wendy's attention.

WENDY

Amanda DuBois? What for?

LO FAT

I am Chu Lo Fat, I work for the Chinese Department of Cultural Antiquities. I was told she had come here.

WENDY

Well, she was here. She's not now. No one is. I shouldn't even be here. I should be home in bed, or working for a real company.

LO FAT

She has been with Mr. Dunby?

WENDY

She's a client and it's not really up to me to answer any further questions. There's client privilege or something that applies.

LO FAT

I understand.
(presents his card)
When he returns, I would be most grateful if he might phone me. I am staying at the Chinese embassy. Thank you for your time.

WENDY

Sure.

Lo Fat leaves. Wendy finds some Scotch tape and tapes the card to Dunby's office door.

EXT. STREET -- CONTINUOUS

Lo Fat enters a waiting limousine.

INT. LIMOUSINE -- CONTINUOUS

Lo Fat sits. The divider glass drops, revealing his aides; CHIN and CHIN. They speak Chinese as subtitles translate:

LO FAT
<Chin.>

CHIN 1
<Yes?>

LO FAT
<Not you, Chin. I meant Chin.>

CHIN 2
<Yes?>

LO FAT
<Something is wrong. Someone else
has been there.>

CHIN 1
<Did he have it?>

LO FAT
<I do not know. You work on it,
Chin.>

CHIN 1
<Yes, sir.>

LO FAT
<Chin, you go with him.>

CHIN 2
<As you wish.>

INT. DUNBY & MCCAINE RECEPTION AREA -- EVENING

Wendy has the office back to a semblance of order. She's on the phone.

WENDY
No, Mom, I don't know what time I'll
be home. Things are...up in the
air, right now. Not exactly busy,
no---

A second line starts blinking.

WENDY (CONT'D)
Hold on, Mom.
(picks up the 2nd
line)
Dunby and McCaine.

INTERCUT:

EXT. STREET -- CONTINUOUS

Dunby is on his cell phone, facing the building wall, trying to hear.

DUNBY

Hey, sweetcakes, it's Dunby.

WENDY

Mr. Dunby! We've been robbed!
Someone broke into the office! The
police have been here! Where are
you? Please don't call me sweet-
cakes.

DUNBY

I've been trying to get a line on
this Manny character. Seems he's
got a lot of friends, the unfriendly
kind. And that seems to include
that DuBois dame.

WENDY

Dame isn't a very politically correct
term, sir---

PETE, a thug, along with a HELPER THUG, approach Dunby from
behind. The Helper pulls out a black jack.

INT. DUNBY & MCCAINE RECEPTION AREA -- DAY

WENDY

What do you mean?

A thud and a moan are heard.

WENDY (CONT'D)

Hello? Mr. Dunby? Mr. Dunby?

EXT. STREET -- CONTINUOUS

The phone is on the ground and the thugs carry the unconscious
Dunby off.

INT. DUNBY & MCCAINE RECEPTION AREA -- CONTINUOUS

WENDY

Mr. Dunby! Please answer me! Mr.
Dunby!

She is gnawing away on her thumb now.

A knock at the open door. She turns. It's LUTHER JOHNSON,
a wealthy eccentric of advanced years, at the door knocking
with his walking stick. With him is a squirrely-looking guy
named MANSON wearing an ill-fitting butler suit.

JOHNSON

Excuse me, is Mr. Dunby not in?

WENDY

(hanging up)

Yes, he is not. May I help you?

JOHNSON

It is my understanding that Mr. Dunby is in the employ of a Mrs. DuBois, Amanda DuBois.

Johnson picks some lint off his cuff. He then hands it to Manson, who pockets it.

NARRATOR WENDY (V.O.)

These people must have stock in the phone company the way they get they word around. Now it was my turn to get some information.

Wendy attempts to compose herself.

WENDY

Yes, she is a client.

JOHNSON

Have they been in tandem for any length of time?

WENDY

Why do you ask?

He nods to Manson, who pulls a gun. Wendy starts biting her thumb anew.

JOHNSON

Miss---

WENDY

Meadows, Wendy Meadows, 118 East 91st Street, Bayside, 10057.

JOHNSON

Pardon the firearms but I find it speeds things along. Now then, where is it?

WENDY

Where is what?

JOHNSON

The duck, my good woman. Where is the duck?

WENDY

Honestly, sir, I don't know what you're talking about. Really.

(MORE)

WENDY (CONT'D)

Because if I did, I would tell you, because the gun thing really makes me nervous and I'm liable to say anything and everything when I'm nervous and I would tell, probably. But, you know, sometimes I tend to babble on a bit when unsettled, so---

JOHNSON

You haven't see the Peking Duck?

WENDY

What's it look like? Maybe---

JOHNSON

I believe you haven't. But I'm sure your employer has. Now then, I would like to leave a message for your boss.

Wendy picks up a steno pad.

WENDY

Let me get a pen---

JOHNSON

No need.

He signals Manson who fires a volley of shots into the wall. Wendy, startled, flings everything.

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

You are to tell your boss that I want the duck. I am willing to kill for it. So, I expect your boss, or Ms. DuBois, to turn it over to me. If I am in an amiable mood, there might even be a finder's fee. If I don't have it in the next, oh, let's say 48 hours, your boss, Ms. DuBois and yourself will be in extreme danger. Please don't allow this to happen. Come along, Manson. Good day.

They leave. Wendy is still shaking. Mr. Rumbelbi comes in with flowers. Wendy punches up the phone line still on hold.

WENDY

That's it, Mom, I'm coming home.

INT. BATHROOM -- EVENING

Wendy is soaking in a hot bubble bath, reading want ads and crossing items out.

MOM (O.S.)
Wendy!

WENDY
Yeah, Mom?

MOM (O.S.)
Telephone! It's Debbie!

WENDY
Can you bring it in, Mom?

Mom comes in with the cordless phone and hands it over.

MOM
Are you going to be in here long?

WENDY
As long as it takes, Mom.

Mom leaves, tsk-tsk-tsking all the while.

WENDY (CONT'D)
Hi, Deb.

INTERCUT:

INT. DEBBIE'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

Debbie is at a run-down desk, piled high with paper.

A pile of work is dropped in her "in" basket.

DEBBIE
What happened to you? You're not at work.

WENDY
I quit.

DEBBIE
You can't quit. You won't be able to collect unemployment then. Why'd you quit? I hope you have something else lined up.

More work is dumped in her basket. She gives the unseen dumper a look that would curdle paint.

WENDY
Mr. Dunby is involved with some very shady characters who have and use firearms. And now Mr. Dunby's gone and I quit.

DEBBIE

Did you even give him two weeks notice? How do you expect to get a decent reference if you quit without notice? What are you going to do?

WENDY

I am going to take a long hot bath. And if I'm very lucky, when I step out of the tub, the rest of the world will be gone. Present company excluded.

DEBBIE

Let me get back to work here. Happy soaking. I'll call ya tonight. Bye.

Debbie slides some of the pile off the desk and into the recycling pail.

INT. BATHROOM -- CONTINUOUS

As Wendy clicks off, the phone rings.

WENDY

(yelling)
I got it!
(to phone)
Hello?

INTERCUT:

INT. LIMOUSINE -- CONTINUOUS

Chu Lo Fat on his car phone. The Chins are seated across from him.

LO FAT

(in Chinese)
<Miss Meadows, this is Chu Lo Fat.
I was wondering--->

WENDY

Hello? Who is this?

LO FAT

Excuse me. Miss Meadows, this is Chu Lo Fat. I was wondering if you've heard from Mr. Dunby as of yet?

WENDY

Oh, Mr. Lo Fat, well, no, actually, I haven't and I don't expect to.

LO FAT

Why is that?

WENDY

I quit.

LO FAT

Oh, have you.

Signaling to Chin 1, he makes a "slit throat" signal. Wendy's "call waiting" signal beeps.

WENDY

Excuse me, sir, I have another call.

She clicks the phone.

WENDY (CONT'D)

Hello?

INTERCUT:

INT. PRIVATE LIBRARY -- CONTINUOUS

A dark-wood, musty, pretentious book vault. It's Johnson on his decoy duck phone.

JOHNSON

Hello, Ms Meadows, this is Mr. Johnson, we spoke earlier today.

WENDY

No, sir, I haven't heard a word and I resigned my position. So you'll have to deal with Mr. Dunby or my replacement, if any.

She clicks the phone back on Chu.

WENDY (CONT'D)

And that goes for you, too.

She disconnects the call.

Johnson looks surprised, then signals Manson, who approaches with a brandy snifter.

INT. BATHROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Wendy sinks into the tub. The phone rings again. She answers.

WENDY

Hello!

INTERCUT:

INT. PICOSA'S WAREHOUSE -- NIGHT

It's MEL PICOSA, a mobster-type. The warehouse is the dark, dank setting preferred by 4 out of 5 underworld figures.

PICOSA
Hello. Miss Meadows, please.

WENDY
This is she. Who's calling?

PICOSA
That's not important. What is important is that your boss is being uncooperative.

WENDY
Mr. Dunby? Is he there? Where is he? Who is this?

PICOSA
Look, little girl, your boss has the package. We want the package. But your silly boss won't give us the package. Now, I figure you like your boss, so you want to see him well. So be a sweetheart and bring us the package.

WENDY
What's this about a package?

PICOSA
The duck! We want the duck! You got it?

WENDY
But---

PICOSA
Bring it to us, or your employer sleeps with the squid.

WENDY
What? Squid?

PICOSA
No, not squid...you know, that animal what lives in the ocean?

WENDY
Fish?

PICOSA
Yeah, yeah, sleeps with the fish. That's it, he sleeps with the fish. I'll give you, oh, 36 hours.

WENDY

Thirty six hours? That isn't much time.

PICOSA

So take a shorter lunch hour! I got expenses here! Just get it! And no cops, missy, if you want to see him returned in his original packaging.

Picosas hangs up the phone. And there's Otis, bound and gagged to a chair.

PICOSA (CONT'D)

There, Mr. Dunby, you won't hand it over but your secretary there won't have a problem turning it over. She likes you.

Dunby rolls his eye and shakes his head no.

PICOSA (CONT'D)

So you see, soon everything will be in place and I'll be on top of the globe.

DUNBY

(muffled)
Globe?

PICOSA

No, no, not globe. The earth, the word for earth.

DUNBY

(muffled)
World?

PICOSA

Yeah, yeah, world. I'll be on top of the world.

INT. BATHROOM -- DAY

Wendy looks scared and angry. She throws the phone.

WENDY

All I wanted to do was take a nice hot bath! Is that too much to ask?

The phone hits her tote bag, sitting on the toilet seat. It falls over and the DuBois file slides out. She gets out, grabs a robe and picks up the file. She considers it a moment.

She sees the address and then dials 411 to get the number.

OPERATOR (O.S.)

That number is no longer in service.

Wendy looks panicked. Then she makes a decision and exits the bathroom.

WENDY

Mom, I'm finished! I gotta go out!

MOM (O.S.)

Honey, the bathroom's free!

DAD (O.S.)

Jeez, about time!

EXT. STREET -- NIGHT

Wendy, now dressed, is walking down the block. She turns a corner. We then notice Chin 1 is following her.

EXT. AVENUE -- CONTINUOUS

Long, dark residential block line with parked cars. Wendy walks along.

She hears footsteps and turns only to see nothing. She continues on and the footsteps resume. She picks up the pace. So does Chin 1. Now he appears and catches up.

Wendy turns and sees him. She hurries but he's gaining. Finally, she flat-out runs. She stumbles and falls against a parked car. This sets off the car alarm.

Wendy gets up and Chin 1 has frozen in his tracks.

Lights go on in one of the apartment windows. Wendy looks and gets an idea.

She goes to the next car and bounces on the bumper, setting off that alarm. More apartment lights go on. Wendy climbs up on the next car, runs across the top and jumps on the next, going down the whole line of parked cars and setting off all the alarms.

She jumps onto the next car, a convertible and falls through the roof.

Chin 1 retreats. People shout out their windows.

PEOPLE

What's going on? Hey, who's that?
Turn that damn thing off!

Wendy climbs out of the convertible and hurries off.

EXT. FLEABAG HOTEL -- NIGHT

It's a run-down, seedy SRO hotel. Wendy double checks the address and is mystified to see it's correct.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY -- NIGHT

Wendy makes her way to the room number. Finding it, she readies to knock on the door when suddenly DuBois opens the door, suitcase in hand.

WENDY

Ms. DuBois?

DUBOIS

Yes. And you are?

WENDY

Wendy Meadows. Mr. Dunby's secretary.

DUBOIS

Ah, yes. And how is dear Mr. Dunby? Quite a character.

WENDY

He's missing, ma'am. I think he's been kidnapped.

DUBOIS

Oh, my. What makes you think he's been kidnapped?

WENDY

The kidnapers told me. Ms. DuBois, what do you know about a duck?

DUBOIS

Donald or Daffy?

WENDY

Are you going somewhere, ma'am?

DUBOIS

Well, actually...my room is being upgraded.

WENDY

Ms. DuBois, please, you've got to help me! My boss is gone. My office was ransacked. I've been threatened and shot at. None of this was in the job description! And everybody keeps asking for you!

DUBOIS

Me?

WENDY

Well, everyone except the police.

DUBOIS

The police are involved?

WENDY

Of course. Our office was broken in to! I called the police. But there's not much they can do, not 'til Mr. Dunby talks to them and now he's missing!

DUBOIS

Extraordinary.

WENDY

And just who are these people who keep showing up? I don't know them. There was this man Lo Fat and this other guy Johnson.

DUBOIS

Luther Johnson?

WENDY

Yes. You know him?

DUBOIS

No.

WENDY

But he knows you! What is this duck they keep asking about?

DUBOIS

I'm sure I don't know. But my husband, Manny, ran with a very tough crowd. That must be it.

WENDY

What did he do? What did you get Mr. Dunby involved in? You have to tell me, I'm new on the job. I can't lose my boss now! I can't face that job market again!

DUBOIS

Calm down, dear. We'll get to the bottom of this. Come along.

DuBois walks Wendy out.

EXT. FLEABAG HOTEL -- NIGHT

They come out a fire exit into the alley and head for the street, passing a Man reading a newspaper.

They hail a cab and leave.

The man lowers the paper and it's Manson.

EXT. MEAN STREET -- NIGHT

The cab comes up to Dunby's block.

INT. CAB -- NIGHT

Wendy and DuBois see the Chins staking out the office so they tell the CABBY to keep going.

DUBOIS
Can't go there.

WENDY
You know those men?

DUBOIS
No. It might be best if we go to
your residence.

WENDY
I guess.

EXT. MEADOW'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Wendy exits the cab. DuBois gets out and enters building. Wendy shrugs and has to pay the Cabby and get the bag.

INT. MEADOW'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

DuBois and Wendy enter.

WENDY
Mom! You here?

Mom enters from the kitchen.

MOM
Hi, dear. Oh, hello.

WENDY
Mom, this is my, er, friend from
work, Amanda. Amanda, my mom.

DUBOIS
Delighted to meet you, Mrs.---

WENDY
(sotto)
Meadows.

DUBOIS
Meadows. A pleasure.

MOM

Nice to meet you, too. Wendy, your father and I are going over to the Bennetts' for coffee and cake. It's their anniversary.

WENDY

Say hi for me.

Dad enters, ready to go.

DAD

We ready?

MOM

Ready. This is Amanda, Wendy's friend.

DAD

Hi, how are you? Don't chain the door, Wendy. We shouldn't be late. We just stocked the fridge, so help yourself.

Mom and Dad leave.

DUBOIS

They're adorable.

WENDY

They are.

DUBOIS

My, I am parched. Do you have some wine or a beverage? It might calm you down, too.

INT. KITCHEN -- CONTINUOUS

Neat, older functional kitchen. The refrigerator is filled with magnet-held notes. They search out the wine and glasses.

DUBOIS

So, as I said, Manny was very charming and swept me off my feet. I didn't see the true side of him until after the wedding. It's so obvious now he only wanted me for my money. And then he runs off!

WENDY

What did he take?

DUBOIS

Some family heirlooms. Who knows where they are by now.

Phone rings. Wendy answers it.

WENDY

Hello.

BILL (O.S.)

Wendy, it's Bill. Did you get that credit check you wanted?

WENDY

No, Bill, I didn't. The office was broken into and I was out and the phones were screwed up...let me get it from you now. Hang on.

She pulls out a steno pad from the DuBois file and a pencil from her tote bag. DuBois is doing a poor job of acting unconcerned.

WENDY (CONT'D)

Okay, shoot.

She begins writing in stenography.

WENDY (CONT'D)

Really? Up there? Great. It's a start. Thanks. Bye, Bill.

She hangs up.

WENDY (CONT'D)

Well, at least we have a lead on your husband.

DUBOIS

You do? Where is he?

WENDY

Well, I can't tell you just now.

DUBOIS

You must tell me! That's what I'm paying you for!

WENDY

Actually, you're paying Mr. Dunby and he pays me. And you are paying him to get the information, so I really think he should be the first to see this, otherwise, why should you bother paying him and if you don't pay him, he might fire me. Unless, of course, he never comes back, then I might have to quit again. But probably we should run all this over to the police.

DUBOIS

(humoring her)

You're right, dear. Leave this to the professionals. Come, dear, you've had a busy day. Have some wine.

As she gets the glass, she flips her ring open and powder drops into the glass. Wendy takes the glass and drinks.

WENDY

I'm really not a wine drinker. But I am wound pretty tight. I'm not use to this kind of pressure. Before I worked for Mr. Dunby, the biggest crisis I faced was the copy machine running low on toner. My biggest decision was whether to ship using Fed-Ex or UPS.

As the drug takes affect, Wendy gets drowsy. She shakes her head to stay alert.

WENDY (CONT'D)

You have to understand that once, the fax machine went down and I started hyperventilating. Wow, this stuff is stronger than I thought. No wonder I don't drink. Excuse me, I'm just going to splash some water on my face.

She gets up, knocks into DuBois' purse on the table, spilling all the contents, including a folded photo, all over the floor.

Wendy then walks into a wall and drops, landing on top of the photo.

DuBois gets up, grabs the bag and stuff, then takes the steno pad and exits.

Out the window we notice Pete the Thug and his Helper Thug spying on Wendy's apartment.

INT. KITCHEN -- LATER

Wendy's still out on the floor. Slowly, she comes to. Still in a stupor, she gets up.

WENDY

Oh, my word. What vintage was that, I wonder, Ms. DuBois? Ms. DuBois?
(snapping to)
Ms. DuBois!

She looks around.

WENDY (CONT'D)

Oh no! I've lost someone else!

She sees the folded photo on the floor and unfolds it. It is a photograph of a golden duck, incrustated with jewels. On the back of the photo is a label, "Museum of Natural History." She goes over to her phone to check the pad.

WENDY (CONT'D)

Where's the pad? Oh, she took it. She's going to find her husband and kill him! How could I let her? I have to stop her! Where's she headed? What did Bill say? I forget. What was in that drink? Oh, Mr. Dunby isn't going to like this, not one bit. Unless, of course, he's dead. No, don't like that. What kind of letter of recommendation could you possibly get if he's dead? It'll come to me, just think. I should have quit.

Mom and Dad return home.

DAD

--But Bob can be such a jerk sometimes. I mean, really, who does something like that? "Air-dry" his hands. Use a hand towel for Pete's sake!

MOM

It didn't kill you to shake his hand. Hi, honey.

DAD

Your friend leave?

WENDY

Yeah, a while ago.

Mom looks at the fridge and suddenly remembers.

MOM

Oh, I forgot, Wendy, I'm sorry.

She takes a note off the fridge.

WENDY

Sorry about what, Mom?

MOM

A Bill something from work called. He gave me some information he said you needed. He sounds cute.

(MORE)

MOM (CONT'D)

Did he call back? He said he'd call back. So, is he married?

WENDY

Er, yeah, Mom, happily. Thanks. Mom, you just saved my life. Thanks.

She kisses her and leaves.

DAD

See? What are you talking about? She loves you.

INT. WENDY'S ROOM -- NIGHT

She get her phone.

WENDY

Now I have to find him before she does! I wish Mr. Dunby were here.

She makes the call.

WENDY (CONT'D)

Hello, Debbie, it's me. You working tomorrow?

INTERCUT:

INT. DEBBIE'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Bright, trendy dwellings. Debbie's in bed, watching TV and doing her nails.

DEBBIE

No, not really. The company asked me never to return again. Ingrates. The agency hasn't come up with anything yet. Why?

WENDY

I need a temp.

DEBBIE

You need a temp? For what? I thought you quit.

WENDY

I un-quitte. But I need someone to office sit. Oh, Debbie, I can't explain everything but I have to stop a possible murder.

DEBBIE

Isn't that Dunby's job?

WENDY

Dunby's missing and I don't know what to do. Will you do it, please? Mr. Dunby is missing, how much work can it be?

DEBBIE

Shouldn't the police handle it?

WENDY

Handle what? A maybe possible murder upstate? Besides, getting the police involved could cost Mr. Dunby his license. Or his life. It's all my fault.

DEBBIE

Okay, okay, you need my help, you got my help.

WENDY

Oh, thank you.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY -- NIGHT

A two-star hotel trying hard. DuBois is at the front desk checking in with luggage and her handbag containing the steno pad. Picoso's henchman, Pete, enters the lobby. He signals BELLBOY who gathers up DuBois' effects and pinches the note pad.

INT. PICOSA'S WAREHOUSE -- NIGHT

Dunby is tied to a chair under a hanging light. Picoso is filing his nails. Pete arrives with the steno pad.

PETE

Hey, boss, wait'll ya hear. So we're watching that secretary like you said and who comes out but DuBois.

PICOSA

DuBois?

(to Dunby)

So just some client, uh? Looks like you ain't been Fred with me.

PETE

Fred?

PICOSA

No, no, not Fred. The other guy's name; starts with "F."

PETE

Philip?

DUNBY
 (muffled)
 Frank?

PICOSA
 Yeah, looks like you ain't been frank
 with me.

PETE
 So, we follow DuBois and whattya
 think we see? She got her file! So
 one of the boys pinches it and here
 you go.

He hands Picoso the pad.

PICOSA
 What's it say?

PETE
 I didn't even open it.

Picoso opens it.

PICOSA
 What is this? It's squiggles!

He looks at Dunby and rips the gag off.

PICOSA (CONT'D)
 What is this, a joke? What's the
 matter, English ain't good enough
 for you?

DUNBY
 It's stenography. It's a secretary
 thing.

PICOSA
 Read it.

DUNBY
 Do I look like a secretary?

Picoso slaps the gag back on.

PETE
 You think DuBois can read it?

PICOSA
 Get real. It's too much like work.
 We're going to have to bring in the
 girl.

PETE
 Gee, boss, I dunno. Do we gotta?

PICOSA

Well, unless the gumshoe here decides to tell us.

Dunby shakes his head.

PICOSA (CONT'D)

Yeah, we gotta. If DuBois is trying to pull a fast one, and she got to the girl...bring her in, Petey.

PETE

Okay, boss.

Pete and Thug leave.

EXT. MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY -- MORNING

It's a bright morning as Wendy approaches the museum holding the photo of the duck.

NARRATOR WENDY (O.S.)

Not knowing the jargon of the business, I didn't realize I had a clue, especially when I didn't have a clue. But as the old adage goes, if it looks like a duck and quacks like a duck---

INT. ASIAN SECTION -- DAY

Wendy approaches LEE YOUNG, a young, bespectacled, studious Asian-American employee of the museum who is concentrating on setting up a delicate display of Asian crockery. He is wearing a work smock and an I.D. badge. Wendy silently comes up from behind.

WENDY

Excuse me, sir---

Lee is startled and almost knocks over the vase.

LEE

Look at what you almost made me do! What are you doing here? This section is closed to the public.

WENDY

I'm not the public. I'm a private.

LEE

What?

WENDY

Private eye. I'm Wendy Meadows, I'm with Dunby and McCaine Investigations and I'm, er, investigating a case.

LEE

When do you get to the part I care about?

WENDY

Well, in the course of our...investigation, we came upon this and I was wondering what you can tell me about it.

She hands the photo to him. He takes it, still annoyed. Suddenly, he becomes interested.

LEE

Where did you get this?

WENDY

I can't say.

LEE

No, really, you must tell me.

WENDY

I can't say. I don't know where I got it. I just woke up and there it was.

LEE

Are you one of the agency's top investigators?

WENDY

Look, Mr. Young, I really can't stay long. I have a murder to prevent but this seemed to be a big deal and I thought I should check it out.

LEE

You bet this is a big deal. This is the Peking Duck.

WENDY

Peking Duck? Isn't that the dinner you have to order a day in advance at a Chinese restaurant?

LEE

No. It's a jewel incrustated golden statue of a duck made to honor the emperor in ancient China during the year of the duck.

WENDY

Really?

LEE

No, I made that up. It's really a Pez dispenser. Of course, "really!" It was lost during World War Two when the Japanese occupied the country. It's a treasure. Come, come.

He leads her to a store room.

INT. STORE ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Piles of boxes and freight. Lee looks around, finds what he's after and opens up a box, revealing a golden statute of a duck incrustated with jewels.

WENDY

You have it!

LEE

I wish. This is a forgery. Some people tried to sell it to the museum about 30 years ago. But this is it, basically.

WENDY

Is it valuable? Valuable enough to kill for?

LEE

Are you kidding? Six guys died for this and it's only a forgery. Do you know where it is?

WENDY

No, just lots of people think I do. Well, thanks for your help. At least I know what everyone's threatening me about now.

LEE

No, you can't leave. I have to come with you.

WENDY

I can't let you come, it's...it's against the rules.

LEE

What rules?

WENDY

The private eye rules. They're strictly enforced.

LEE

My job is to procure objects for the museum. If you're after the duck, well, that gets into the museum rules. Also strictly enforced.

WENDY

Look, this isn't some little dig I'm going on, it's murder and mayhem. It's danger and more mayhem...and, and...I don't want to go.

LEE

Are you okay, Miss---?

WENDY

Meadows. I'm a secretary. My boss is kidnapped! Some lady is going to murder her husband. And I think maybe he has the duck, which is why everyone is after me! I don't know what to do. I can't prove anything that hasn't happened yet, anyway.

LEE

Where were you headed?

WENDY

(pulls out Mom's note)
North to Adelesquan.

LEE

That's lumber country. And quite a ride. We'd better get going.

WENDY

You don't care?

LEE

I care about the duck. I'm getting a chance to make museum history. Come on, let's go. You got a car? No? We'll take mine. You can pay for gas.

WENDY

Excuse me but I am a legal secretary and I do know one thing.

LEE

Which is?

WENDY

You're going to have to sign a waiver if you're going with me. I'm not going to be responsible if anything happens to you.

LEE

Fine, fine.

WENDY

I probably should get Debbie to sign one, too.

LEE

Who's Debbie?

WENDY

A friend. She's covering for me.

INT. PICOSA'S WAREHOUSE -- DAY

Picosa and the still-bound Dunby converse.

PICOSA

So, have you been working with DuBois for any length of time?

DUNBY

That depends.

PICOSA

On what?

DUNBY

On the time. My watch stopped.

Pete and Thug come in carrying a person in a sack.

PETE

We got her, boss! We got her!

Picosa grabs the pad.

PICOSA

Okay, dearie, calm down. We got your boss here and we don't wanna hurt no one. All you got to do is read your notes here and we're done.

DUNBY

Just do it, babe.

Pete puts her down and they lift the sack revealing Debbie bound and gagged.

DUNBY (CONT'D)

Who the hell are you?

PICOSA

This isn't your girl?

DUNBY

No!

PICOSA

Who are you?

Debbie tries to say something. Picoso signals Pete to ungag her.

PICOSA (CONT'D)

Now, who are you?

DEBBIE

I'm the temp. One very angry temp.

PICOSA

Temp? What's a temp?

DEBBIE

A temporary secretary, you clown!
Now, who the hell are you people?

PICOSA

Wait, you're still a secretary, right?
All you secretaries know stenography,
right?

DEBBIE

Are you Dunby?

Dunby nods.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

Wendy is worried sick about you!
Where have you been?

Dunby shrugs, noting bonds and surroundings.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

Oh, right, sorry.

PICOSA

Read this.

He hands her the pad. She looks to Dunby, who nods. She studies the pad a moment.

DEBBIE

I can't read this. This is Pittman.

PICOSA

What's that mean?

DEBBIE

There's two kinds of stenography,
Pittman and Gregory. This is Pittman.
I know Gregory.

PETE

Boss, you want us to get this Pittman
guy?

PICOSA

How did I ever get into this cucumber?

Debbie and Dunby don't understand.

PETE

He means pickle.

EXT. GAS STATION -- DAY

Lee is filling up. Wendy is on her cell, over by the
convenience store entrance.

WENDY

Mom, it's me. I have to...work late.

INTERCUT:

INT. KITCHEN -- DAY

Mom's washing dishes as Dad is reading the paper on the
kitchen table.

MOM

Are you okay?

WENDY

I have to run some errands, Mom.
I'm going upstate.

MOM

How? By yourself?

WENDY

No, Mom. I'm with a...friend.

MOM

Oh. Amanda?

WENDY

No, it's another friend.

Lee is in car now, beeping.

MOM

Do I know her?

WENDY

No, you don't. I just---
(covers phone)
I'm coming!

(MORE)

WENDY (CONT'D)
 (back on phone)
 Gotta go, Mom, he's beeping me.
 Bye. I love you.

She hangs up and gets in the car.

MOM
 "He's" beeping her?

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD -- DAY

Lee's car motors along.

INT. CAR -- CONTINUOUS

Lee is at the wheel. Wendy has her cell phone out and is pointing it around.

WENDY
 That was pretty rude. I was on the phone. Still no signal.

LEE
 Oh, please. This is important. We have no time to waste.

WENDY
 Talking to my mom is no waste of time. As a rule. Cellular is so overrated.

(she puts phone away)
 I should have never let you come.

LEE
 You can get out, then and walk the rest of the way. If you're staying then just stay out of my way.

WENDY
 Out of your way? It'll be easy. If you stay out of my way.

LEE
 Now then, who's this guy we're looking for?

Wendy pulls out Manny's photo.

WENDY
 I'm looking for Manny DuBois. Supposed husband of Amanda. He ran off from her. She came looking for him.

LEE
 So where is he now?

WENDY

Let me see what my Mom wrote.

She takes out the note. Lee rolls his eyes.

WENDY (CONT'D)

He rented a car on his card and headed north to Adelesquan and rented a room at the Arleth Inn. He and Amanda must have had the duck and he flew the coup with it. She wanted Mr. Dunby to locate him and it but without telling us about it. But someone else doesn't want her to get it. But nobody knows that I know where Manny is. Except Amanda, who took the message pad but that's in steno and she didn't strike me as the sten type. No, I think we got the drop on everybody.

LEE

Of course you realize I have no idea what you're babbling about.

She's miffed.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD -- DAY

As she's explaining all this, they drive on and we realize that a few moments behind is a car driven by Manson.

They all pass a sign announcing "You are now entering Adelesquan." Underneath someone has scrawled "so what?"

EXT. ARLETH INN -- DAY

Wendy and Lee drive pass, park down the street and walk in.

INT. INN LOBBY -- CONTINUOUS

They check in using Lee's credit card. They show the CLERK the photo. He indicates he hasn't seen him. Lee slips him a twenty. No effect. He signals Wendy to give him another twenty. She counts out fives and singles and give them to Lee. He resignedly passes them on. Clerk points upstairs.

NARRATOR WENDY (V.O.)

Manny was there. It took us some time to track him. Money talks, but these days it stammers a little.

INT. ROOM -- DAY

Wendy and Lee enter. Standard issue hotel room with a rustic flair.

LEE

Nice room.

WENDY

I can't believe I let you check us into the same room as a couple. I can't.

LEE

Oh, lighten up. We'll only be here a couple of hours.

WENDY

Oh, and how proud my folks would be if they could have been here as you explained that to the clerk.

LEE

Hey, the hourly rate is cheaper. I'm not paying for a full night.

She sits, realizes he's on the bed and quickly stands up.

LEE (CONT'D)

Oh, please, get real. Don't worry, no one will find out about your deep, dark secret.

WENDY

Trust me, no one I know would ever believe I did this. Even with receipts.

LEE

Why, is there something wrong with you?

She has to consider this a split second too long.

WENDY

No.

LEE

Oh. I thought maybe something was wrong with you.

WENDY

(royally miffed)
Let's just find this Manny guy and just get out of here, okay?

They leave the room.

INT. HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

Wendy and Lee approach Manny's room. Wendy knocks. Lee then knocks. Wendy knocks again, harder.

The door swings open.

INT. MANNY'S ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

They walk in to see a figure slipping out the window. It is CLAUDE, a big guy with a beard, wearing a flannel shirt.

His dungaree pants catch on a nail and a piece tears off but he escapes.

Furniture is overturned and Manny is on the floor, dead, an ax, the murder weapon.

WENDY

Oh no! We're too late!

They run over to the body.

WENDY (CONT'D)

Oh my word, is he hurt?

LEE

I'm not an expert in these things, but I think he's pretty dead. Is he the guy?

WENDY

(checks photo)

Yeah, that's him.

Lee goes to the window.

LEE

I don't think it was your lady friend that did this. Damn, I think we interrupted him doing something.

Wendy joins him.

WENDY

You see him?

LEE

Gone.

Wendy sees the torn cloth and takes it.

WENDY

Hey, a clue!

LEE

Clue? Leave it. We have to call the police.

WENDY

You're right.

She goes to the phone and picks it up.

LEE

Though, if the duck's still here---

Lee pushes the receiver down.

WENDY

The police have to know.

She raises the receiver again.

LEE

Yeah, but I should find the duck now before the police come, or they might hold it as evidence.

He pushes her hand down again.

WENDY

You can't do that.

She picks up the phone again but is intrigued by Lee's actions now.

LEE

Well, say, for instance, we got here and were afraid the murderer was still here.

Lee goes to a door and jerks it open then rummages around.

LEE (CONT'D)

I mean, if we were looking for a murderer, or any survivors.

He goes to a steamer trunk and opens it and goes through it.

LEE (CONT'D)

Or to make sure the coast is clear and we just happened to stumble upon the duck.

He checks some drawers.

LEE (CONT'D)

You couldn't fault us for that, could you?

WENDY

I don't think this is right. We have to call the police.

She readies to dial. Lee comes over and pushes down the cradle.

LEE

Okay, then how about this: what if the murderer has the duck? If the police come into the picture and they catch this clown, they'll wind up with the duck, you won't and you may never see it again. Or your boss.

WENDY

Nuts, you're right.

She hangs up.

WENDY (CONT'D)

We have to go after the murderer.

LEE

Huh? No, that wasn't the concept here.

WENDY

Sure, we'll ask around. He's probably a lumberjack. Everyone up here is. Yeah, that's what we'll do. Come on.

She takes a room key from the dresser and leaves. Lee shrugs and follows.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

Lee exits the room. Wendy closes the door, locks it and puts out the "Do Not Disturb" sign.

LEE

We can't be long. We'll have to go to the camp. But they won't like strangers coming in asking questions.

WENDY

I'll go undercover. Come on!

EXT. LUMBER CAMP -- DAY

A bustling place, a Disneyland for beavers. Wendy and Lee enter the camp. Wendy wears an ill-fitting lumber jacket and cap with her hair tucked under. Lee also wears the lumberjack get-up. They head right for the mess hall.

INT. MESS HALL -- CONTINUOUS

Mess/recreation center for all the busy beavers. Wendy and Lee enter.

WENDY

This'll be a snap. We can go right in and pick him out. We both got a good look at him.

LEE

Yup. Big, burly, black beard, flannel shirt.

Every LUMBERJACK fits that description.

WENDY & LEE

Oh-oh.

WENDY

Who would have ever thought that would be the "in" look? It's like grunge on steroids.

LEE

Now what, Sherlock?

WENDY

If we only had a distinguishing feature---

(suddenly)

I have a plan.

LEE

Tell me.

She pulls out the torn cloth.

WENDY

We match this cloth with whoever is wearing ripped pants and that's our man!

LEE

That's a plan?

WENDY

Yeah. How's that for thinking on my feet?

LEE

I think you should sit down.

Wendy attempts to stride through the hall, checking the Lumberjacks' backsides. Lee stay a few step behind.

Suddenly, TWO FIGHTING LUMBERJACKS crash onto a table, just missing Wendy. One is knocked out, face up.

Wendy goes over to the fallen Lumberjack as if concerned. She flips him over, then checks his pants' seat.

Disappointed, she moves on, to an area where a group of Lumberjacks sit and watch television, a football game in progress.

WENDY
 (pointing to floor)
 Hey, who dropped a ten dollar bill?

All the lumberjacks get up to look at the floor. Wendy quickly scans the cloth swatch against the forest of butts and moves on.

Lee just stands there, shaking his head.

She goes to the chow line. She uses a pair of serving tongs to lift the coat tail of the Lumberjack in front of her and check his backside. The COOK sees this.

COOK
 Who are you?

WENDY
 (in a gruff voice)
 I just dog-sleded into town and boy,
 are my dogs tired.

COOK
 What do you want, eh?

WENDY
 I'm looking for a man.

COOK
 Take ya pick.

WENDY
 No, I'm looking for a certain man.

COOK
 Can you afford to be that fussy? It
 gets lonely up here, but not that
 lonely.

She moves down the line. She reaches the Jell-O section and takes a full tray of lime Jell-O cubes.

She follows another Lumberjack to his seat. As the Lumberjack sits, Wendy slips a Jell-O cube on the seat under him. He sits, then gets up in disgust. Wendy tries to get a look but he catches her.

Wendy moves to another table. She sits next to another Lumberjack.

WENDY
 Pass the ketchup, please.

As the Lumberjack leans off the bench reaching for the ketchup, Wendy slips a Jell-O cube under him. The Lumberjack sits, then springs up. Wendy checks his rear against the cloth.

Next Wendy sees a jukebox and waves Lee over. She gives Lee some change and sends him over to the jukebox to play a selection. Lee punches up "the Star Spangle Banner."

Wendy stands, putting her hand over her heart. The other Lumberjacks see her, then reluctantly follow suit. Wendy goes down the row, checking their pants.

As the song ends, Wendy winds up by the "dart" game. Where the dart board is, a group of Lumberjacks stand around taking turns throwing hand axes at it. The song ends.

WENDY (CONT'D)

Play ball!

Lumberjack with Ax stops her.

LUMBERJACK WITH AX

Eh, you wanna play?

WENDY

Sorry, I left my ax home.

LUMBERJACK WITH AX

You don't need one.

WENDY

Look, Mr. Lumberjack...may I call you Jack? It's just that---

All the Lumberjacks now glare at her, gripping their axes.

WENDY (CONT'D)

Who's turn is it?

Wendy goes to stand at the throwing end. Lumberjack with Ax directs her to stand in front of the target.

LUMBERJACK WITH AX

Whoever gets it the closest without drawing blood, wins.

They all start laughing. Apparently, they find this amusing.

WENDY

I just remembered some urgent business
I must attend to---

Lumberjack with the Ax throws his ax. It goes by Wendy's arm.

WENDY (CONT'D)
I'm a bleeder, did I mention that?

Next Lumberjack lets loose. It goes near her head.

WENDY (CONT'D)
Anyone for lawn darts?

LUMBERJACK WITH AX
C'mon, Claude, it's almost your shot.

As Another Lumberjack lines up his shot, we see Lee on the other side of the hall placing Jell-O cubes on all the empty benches. Just as he reaches a man, the man, CLAUDE, gets up and walks over to the ax game.

Lee sees the patch on Claude's pants and realizes he's their man. Lee follows.

Meanwhile, the Other Lumberjack goes. Wendy winces, closing her eyes. The ax strikes on the other side of her head.

WENDY
Lee!

LUMBERJACK WITH AX
Where you been, you hoser?

CLAUDE
Out checking my traps, what do you think?

Wendy opens her eyes and Claude is getting ready to be the next ax thrower.

LEE
Wendy! He's the one from the hotel!

CLAUDE
Sacre bleu! How did you know---

WENDY
I have some question for you, buster!

Claude throws the ax. Wendy ducks as the ax nails her hat to the board. Claude flees, post haste. Wendy and Lee chase after him.

EXT. LUMBER CAMP -- CONTINUOUS

They chase him across the compound.

WENDY
Stop in the name of the law!

LEE
We're not the law!

WENDY

I am a legal secretary, you know.

Claude runs into a wooden tool shed and closes the door.
Wendy and Lee reach the door.

WENDY (CONT'D)

All right, Claude, we have you surrounded! And I'm in no rush, 'cause I get paid by the hour! Turn yourself in and we'll go easy on you.

LEE

What now?

WENDY

We wait.

A moment later, they hear a chain saw motor rev up. Claude cuts the door away with it.

LEE

Hey, no rush, big guy!

Wendy and Lee turn and run. Claude, wielding the chain saw in a reckless and unfriendly fashion, gives chase. They head for the forest.

EXT. FOREST -- CONTINUOUS

Wendy and Lee head deeper into the woods.

Claude follows, hacking away at the underbrush.

Wendy and Lee come to the log flume. They're trapped. A log comes down the flume.

WENDY

Come on!

LEE

What? Are you nuts?

WENDY

Jeez, you're no Indiana Jones, are you?

LEE

Oh, and you're Sam Spade all of the sudden?

Claude gets closer.

WENDY

Would you rather be sushi?

Wendy jumps on the passing log. Lee reluctantly follows.

EXT. LOG FLUME -- CONTINUOUS

They ride the flume. Then they realize the end is approaching; the flume ends high over the river.

They ride the log into the river.

INT. PICOSA'S WAREHOUSE -- DAY

Picosa is fretting. Dunby and Debbie are bound to chairs, back to back. They are ungagged.

PICOSA

Look you two, I really don't wanna kill you. If I can get this DuBois character clean, great. I don't wanna mess it up with a lot of felonies. But I'm stuck between a rock and a dense place.

DEBBIE

Dense place?

PICOSA

No, no, not dense. Solid. Tough.

DUNBY

Hard?

PICOSA

Yeah, that's it. A hard place. Between a rock and a hard place, that's me. I got nothing against you, personal-like, just tell me where it is.

DUNBY

Look, palie, that DuBois dame played me for a sap, okay? I don't know where she is. I certainly don't know where he is, you saw to that. I don't know where the file is, that's my secretary's job. And I certainly don't know where she is, again, thanks to you gorillas. So there you are. Pretty, eh?

DEBBIE

And I don't even know that much. She just said she had to stop a possible murder.

DUNBY

She said that? What's that supposed to mean?

DEBBIE

I don't know! She just said it.
She said it was all her fault.

Dunby turns to the side, better to speak to Debbie.

DUNBY

I hope she doesn't do anything
foolish.

Debbie turns toward Dunby. Their cheeks touch.

DEBBIE

I hope you have a good medical plan.

There's a definite spark here.

EXT. RIVER BANK -- DAY

Wendy and Lee both surface down river by the river's edge
and make their way to the bank.

EXT. FOREST -- DAY

Claude the lumberjack is waiting in a clearing, overlooking
a cliff. Soon, the two Chins meet him.

CLAUDE

'Bout time you got here.

CHIN 1

Where is he?

CLAUDE

He's dead.

CHIN 2

Do you have it?

CLAUDE

I started to look around but I didn't
see no statue of no bird.

CHIN 1

You didn't find it?

CLAUDE

Couldn't. I got interrupted. Some
lady came in with a guy and I had to
clear out. Then they followed me to
the lumber camp.

CHIN 1

So you failed.

CHIN 2

And you were seen.

CLAUDE
 If you want to get technical. But I
 chased them off. I can go back to
 the hotel if you want.

CHIN 2
 No, I believe you've done enough
 damage for one day.

CLAUDE
 So, I get paid then?

CHIN 2
 Take care of the man, Chin.

Chin 2 walks away. Claude turns to face Chin 1, who goes
 into a spinning, flying kick, which knocks Claude backward
 off that cliff.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY -- DAY

Wendy and Lee, still sopping wet, go back into Manny's room.

INT. MANNY'S ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

The body is gone.

LEE
 Hey! The body's gone! You know
 what that means?

WENDY
 There's a maid here who can't read a
 "Do Not Disturb" sign.

LEE
 Someone else is after the duck.

WENDY
 Excuse me, but everyone else is
 looking for this stupid duck. Don't
 you listen to me?

LEE
 Sorry, I didn't know you had a
 monopoly on deductive reasoning.

WENDY
 Let's look around.

LEE
 What for?

WENDY
 Clues.

LEE

Why should I?

WENDY

Hey, I'm the one playing detective here! Look, museum-boy, you didn't have to come but you're here so you might as well do as I say, even if I don't know what I'm doing. Even if I'm in way over my head. Even if I'm certain there's no way the company's going to reimburse me for these expenses.

She starts sobbing. Lee, reluctantly, uneasily, tries to comfort her. He starts to soften up.

LEE

I'm sorry, Meadows. I'm just focused on the duck. I want to help. We're both winging it, I know. I didn't mean to come down on you. There, there. We'll look, come on, let's look. I'm sure this place is chock-full of clues.

WENDY

Stop patronizing me. We should have just called the police when I said to. You wouldn't let me. Now we don't even have a body to show them

LEE

It'll turn up. Bodies always do. Why we have a section back at the museum full of old bodies.

WENDY

I don't think Manny is museum quality.

LEE

The point is the body must be around. It's not like it walked off by itself now, is it?

WENDY

No, that would be a different genre.
(suddenly)
What's that?

By the door is Manny's wallet.

LEE

Is it a match book cover? It's usually a match book cover.

They examine the wallet. Lee pulls out a pawn ticket.

WENDY

A pawn ticket. I haven't seen one of those lately. It's dated the date Manny disappeared. What's this scrawled on the back? "See Fibber Jones."

LEE

Don't tell me he pawned a priceless ancient artifact. Why not just put it on Ebay?

WENDY

Sure, it makes sense! You double cross some people and want to drop out of sight, so you leave the duck in a safe place where you can get back to it and pick up some traveling money.

LEE

Five hundred dollars? He pawned it for 500 dollars? It's a priceless statue!

WENDY

Maybe priceless statues aren't worth as much these days.

LEE

Then why did he come up here? What was he doing?

WENDY

I thought he was fleeing. I bet he was hiding.

LEE

All right, then. Let's go home and claim our prize. Better now? You done good.

They leave.

INT. AUCTION HOUSE -- EVENING

Johnson is at an auction, bidding. His cell phone rings. He answers it while continuing to bid.

INTERCUT:

INT. MANSON'S HOTEL ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Manson is on the phone by the window. The disheveled body of Manny is on the bed.

MANSON

Boss, I searched the room. I checked the body. Nothing there. Somebody beat us to it.

JOHNSON

That is distressing. Any thoughts on the matter?

MANSON

Huh? Oh, oh, I seen Dunby's Girl Friday nosing around. And she's picked up a playmate.

JOHNSON

Then it behooves us to maintain our surveillance of her. She is keeping secrets, our Miss Meadows.

Manson looks out the window and sees Wendy and Lee exit the hotel.

MANSON

Forget that, they're moving. I better foll-y them.

JOHNSON

Yes, you do that, son.

Manson hangs up and leaves.

INT. AUCTION HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

A BIDDER in front of Johnson keeps overbidding Johnson. Finally, Johnson gives him a Vulcan nerve pinch and the Bidder slumps in his chair, unconscious. Johnson wins the item.

EXT. INN -- NIGHT

Night is falling. As Wendy and Lee exit the hotel, the HOTEL MANAGER hurries after them.

MANAGER

Excuse me, Mr. Lee, I'm sorry but your credit card is rejecting, sir.

LEE

What? That's ridiculous. I'm a member in good standing. Heck, they keep raising my limit. They love me being in debt to them.

MANAGER

I'm sorry but if you could just come in and let us run your card again.

Lee tosses Wendy the keys and follows the Manager back in.

LEE

I'll meet you at the car.

WENDY

Well, call me if they make you stay
and wash the dishes.

LEE

Of course. Who do you think is going
to dry?

He's gone. Wendy turns and head for the car.

Chin 1 steps out, blocking her way to the car. She turns
only to see Chin 2 standing in front of the Inn. She moves
away, turning a corner. Chin 1 starts after her.

EXT. MAIN STREET -- NIGHT

The main drag and the stores and shops are closed and the
street is deserted. Wendy stops a line of parked vehicles
and gets an idea.

She goes to a car and starts rocking on the fender, waiting
for the car alarm to go off. It doesn't. She goes to the
next vehicle, an old pick up truck, and rocks on the fender.
The front bumper falls off. Then the fender. She hurries
off.

EXT. BANK -- CONTINUOUS

Wendy see the bank with a 24 hour ATM station. She goes to
it and, fumbling, gets out her bank card and inserts it.
The buzzer sounds and she goes in.

INT. ATM STATION -- CONTINUOUS

She quickly shuts the door.

Chin 1 comes to the door. He tries the door and sees it's
locked. He begins banging on the door.

Wendy pulls out her phone, but still no service. Looking
around, Wendy spots the bank courtesy phone. She grabs it.

VOICE (O.S.)

All our representatives are presently
busy helping other customers. You're
call is very important to us, please
remain on the line. There are 73
calls ahead of you.

She slams the phone down. She sees the deposit envelopes.
She grabs one and a deposit slip. She grabs the bank pen
but it doesn't write.

She fishes one out of her pocketbook and fills out the bank slip. She puts the pawn ticket into the envelope and goes to the ATM. She accesses her account and deposits the envelope. The machine happily accepts it.

She seems a little more relieved until Chin 2 joins Chin 1. They discuss the situation and Chin 2 pulls out his bank card.

WENDY

Nuts. They'll give those cards to anyone!

Chin 2 inserts the card as Wendy goes through her pocketbook again. She pulls out a spray perfume atomizer. Chin 2 enters and Wendy squirts him in the eyes. He's blinded and screams in pain.

Chin 1 pushes his way in the circles Wendy menacingly, readying to do a karate thing to her. Wendy positions herself in front of the ATM, which is still activated with her card. She presses the withdraw button and amount. The door of the withdrawal slot opens.

Chin 1 lunges at Wendy, his arm thrust out before him. Wendy dodges the arm and Chin's hand enters the money compartment. The door closes, trapping Chin 1's hand. Wendy spritzes him, hits a button and withdraws her card. Wendy then hustles out.

EXT. MAIN STREET -- NIGHT

Wendy tries to get her bearings.

EXT. ARLETH INN -- CONTINUOUS

Lee comes out, crosses to the car and doesn't see Wendy ('cause she ain't there). He goes off to search.

EXT. STREET -- CONTINUOUS

Wendy turns a corner. At the far end of the street is Manson, walking toward her. Wendy looks around and ducks in the first building with its lights on, a dance hall.

INT. DANCE HALL -- CONTINUOUS

It's the Adelesquan League of Square Dancers having a party. CLYDE, the league's titular head, steps up on stage to address the crowd, checking his watch.

CLYDE

Okay, everyone, settle down. Before we begin, I'd like to welcome you all to our fourteenth annual Hoe-Down.

(MORE)

CLYDE (CONT'D)
 I hope you're all enjoying yourself.
 We expect our caller to arrive at
 any moment to begin the dance---

As if on cue, Wendy enters.

WENDY
 That was a close call!

WOMAN
 Oh, here she is now!

People start applauding as Wendy is escorted to the stage.
 Wendy is befuddled. She tries to pull away, then sees Manson
 pass outside the door, so she starts pulling the Escort up
 to the stage.

Clyde greets her.

CLYDE
 Howdy. We were afraid you wouldn't
 make it.

WENDY
 Are you kidding? I wouldn't miss it
 for the world. Where am I?

CLYDE
 The crowd's itching to square dance,
 so call the best dang dance you ever
 did call.

Clyde joins dancers.

WENDY
 Square dance?

Wendy goes to the microphone. She smiles at the crowd.
 They smile back.

WENDY (CONT'D)
 (meekly)
 Howdy.

CROWD
 (loudly)
 Howdy!

The intensity of their response startles Wendy. She goes to
 the CD player, pulls out a CD and starts it. A mean country
 tune begins.

WENDY
 (still sedately)
 Howdy, again.

CROWD

Howdy!

Again, she's startled.

WENDY

Places all.
 Bow to your corner. Bow to you own.
 Hands all up and round you go.
 Break it up with a do-se-do.
 Chicken in the bread pan picking out
 dough,
 Skip to my Lou, my darling.
 The ladies out, those pretty little
 things,
 Star to the right in the ring.
 Big foot up and little foot down.
 Make that big foot jar the ground.
 Ladies back and gents all in.
 Back you go and forward again.
 Step right up with an elbow swing.
 Skip to my Lou, my darling.
 Places all.
 Corner folks to the middle.
 Flapjacks cookin' on the griddle.
 Bow some more, then do-se-do.
 Whoop it up, put on a show!
 And home you go, then promenade.
 (getting cocky)
 Gingham, ribbon, plow and hoe.
 Now it's time to do-se-do.
 Can't think of a word to rhyme,
 So do-se-do one more time.
 Woman go left, men go right,
 Hand over hand, they don't bite!

Chin 2 and Manson pass entrance. They peek in and do a take,
 then enter.

Wendy's eyes bug out when she sees them. Chin 2 and Manson
 start to cut through the dancers.

WENDY (CONT'D)

Swing your partner!

The dancers swing around, also grabbing Chin 2 and Manson.

WENDY (CONT'D)

Back to start. Trouble brewing.
 Can't get out.
 Clasp hands. Circle about.

Manson and Chin 2 each wind up in the middle of a circle of
 dancers.

WENDY (CONT'D)

Gotta keep up the tune.
Gonna deal now with these goons.
Dancers rush into the middle.
Slam dancing, just a little.
Back again.

Chin 2 and Manson are each caught in the crush of dancers as they collide in the middle. From here on in, the dancers follow the instructions to beat up the thugs.

WENDY (CONT'D)

Gotta move fast, gotta move quicker.
Gonna deal with these city slickers.
Grab the strangers, one and all.
By the legs, watch 'em fall!
Having fun, free of care,
When you're dancing in a square.
Hoist them up into the air.
Skip to my Lou, my darling.
Throw 'em up and watch 'em fly.
It's okay, they're just bad guys.
Let them drop to the ground.
Down, down on the ground.
Leave 'em there, like a bone.
Promenade all about, use 'em like a
stepping stone.
Places, please.
Lift 'em up by the hair, box their
ears, smack their face.
Beat 'em up all over the place.
Swing your partner!

Chin 2 and Manson are knocked out.

WENDY (CONT'D)

Pigs in mud, turkey in straw.
Coming to the final draw.
Alaman left with the old left hand.
Follow through with a right-left
grand.
Meet your honey with a great big
smile.
Promenade, Indian style.
Now your dancing with your own.
Promenade to your home.
Bow to your partner.
Bow to the gent 'cross the hall.
And that's all.

Song ends. Crowd whoops it up and burst into applause.
Wendy takes her bows, then flees.

EXT. DANCE HALL -- NIGHT

Wendy comes out, running into Lee.

WENDY

Ah, my public. How they adore me!

LEE

Where the devil have you been?

WENDY

I'll explain on the way out of town!
Let's evacuate!

INT. CAR -- NIGHT

Lee's driving. Wendy is getting comfy in the passenger seat as they head home.

LEE

So where'd you learn to call square dances?

WENDY

I was president of the high school square dance club. Go ahead, let me have it.

LEE

Have what?

WENDY

Square Dance club. Yeah, me and all the other nerds. I couldn't help it. I really enjoyed it. That's pretty much my life's bane.

LEE

What?

WENDY

I've always been out of step with my times. It's not that I try to be "out-of-it." I just gravitate to things out of the mainstream. I do them because I enjoy them but I realize that somehow I'm abnormal and cutting myself off from the popular stuff. It's hard to explain. I'm a prisoner of my quirks. And naive enough to believe it doesn't matter. You wouldn't understand.

LEE

Oh no? I work with old pottery. I was your basic 97 pound nerd in school, too. Kids took expensive vacations with all the lunch money they extorted from me. Until that one fateful day.

WENDY

What happened?

LEE

They mopped the playground with me. So after that I spent lunches in the library. Even there one big jerk, *the* big jerk, came in and was all set to wallop me. I grabbed the first thing I could to defend myself. This really big, thick book. Clocked him upside the head with it. Then I saw what kind of book it was. "Ancient Mesopotamia." I figured I owed my life to that book, so I thought I should read it. That's when I got turned on to ancient cultures. And boy, nothing cuts you off from the mainstream like learning a couple of dead languages. Try dropping some Latin into the cocktail party chatter. Not exactly a boffo ice breaker, but I love it. It's like I can feel it, feel connected to the past. It's very compelling. Learning about the people who came before us. What they knew and did and what we can learn from them. And really to see how little humanity has changed over the eons---

Wendy has drifted off to sleep on Lee's shoulder. Lee realizes this, smiles and drives on.

LEE (CONT'D)

Sleep tight, gumshoe.

EXT. MEADOW'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Lee's car is parked. Wendy exits the car.

LEE

Okay, we'll go to your bank tomorrow and see about withdrawing that pawn ticket. That was pretty slick, I must say. Keeps it nice and safe for a while.

WENDY

Thanks. 'Night, Lee. Be careful.

LEE

You be careful.

Wendy enters the building. Lee drives off. A parked car turns on its lights and follows.

INT. MEADOW'S APARTMENT -- MOMENTS LATER

Wendy enters the apartment and turns on the light. Amanda DuBois is sitting there.

DUBOIS

Hello, dear.

WENDY

You! What are you doing here? Where are my parents?

DUBOIS

They're sleeping. Your mother said I could wait. They are really nice people. And she bakes a fabulous chocolate cake.

WENDY

Yes, she does. She uses...wait a second, what do you want?

DUBOIS

I had to talk to you. Have you heard from Manny?

WENDY

Not a peep.

DUBOIS

I have reason to believe he's in great danger.

WENDY

You bet.

DUBOIS

Some men are after him.

WENDY

I counted four.

DUBOIS

Will I ever hear from him again?

WENDY

You own a Ouija Board?

DUBOIS

What does that mean?

WENDY

So, Mrs. DuBois, the items that Manny took from you...any water fowl included?

DUBOIS

What ever are you talking about?

WENDY

The duck, ma'am, the Peking Duck...though now I guess you'd have to call it the Bejing Duck...but that's not the point, he had the duck, didn't he?

DUBOIS

Peking Duck? Don't be absurd! I've never heard of such a thing!

WENDY

Okay.

DUBOIS

He didn't have it with him, did he?

WENDY

Then you do know about it.

DUBOIS

It's an old family heirloom.

WENDY

If it's an old family heirloom, why are there all these people willing to kill for it?

DUBOIS

Our family doesn't get along.

WENDY

Look, Ms. DuBois, Manny's dead. His body is gone. Mr. Dunby is gone and I don't know what shape he's in. Who are you? I have to know!

DUBOIS

Manny's dead? Are you sure? How do you know this? Did he have the duck?

WENDY

No duck to be found. Why did he run from you? What was he up to?

DUBOIS

I don't know. I had been after the duck for years, crisscrossing Asia. I met Manny in Hong Kong. It was a mad house then. Manny was in one of those 'stans, fighting, he said, close to the Chinese border. Yeah, he heard of the duck.

(MORE)

DUBOIS (CONT'D)

Said he knew where it was, too. I bankrolled him and he..."obtained" it.

WENDY

He stole it?

DUBOIS

No, he obtained it.

WENDY

What's the difference?

DUBOIS

What am I, a dictionary? He obtained it. First he didn't have it, then he did.

WENDY

(muttering)

Sure sounds like he stole it.

DUBOIS

Look, I didn't ask questions. We decided to come to the states to make our fortune with it. But being back in America was too much for him. Before I could stop him, he got into some serious debt with the local bookies who worked for this guy named Picoso. Real strong arm type. That's when he took off. I don't know if he planned to sell it or what. We were pretty sloppy about the whole thing to boot. We tried to put out feelers for a buyer but it escalated too fast. Soon we had all the piranhas in the water.

WENDY

That would be Luther Johnson.

DUBOIS

Yes. They said they would buy it but I think they just wanted to "obtain" it from us. Manny got it in his head to sell it to the Chinese, figuring a government would pay nicely and not try anything untoward to get back its historical cultural relic.

WENDY

Chalk up another mistake.

DUBOIS

Lo Fat.

WENDY
And his assistants.

DUBOIS
The double Chins. What did they want with you?

WENDY
Everyone thinks I'm some kind of duck source. What do you know about a Fibber Jones?

DUBOIS
Jones? He runs the pawnshop Manny was hocking everything to, trying to pay off the bookies until we unloaded the duck. Why? What about Jones?

WENDY
Nothing. Just some papers we found in his room.

DUBOIS
So the duck is lost forever.

WENDY
I'm working on it.

DUBOIS
I would love to hold it again. It sparkles, you know, like a new morn sun off a clear lake. If we got it, we could make quite a profit, we two. If you're into profit, that is.

WENDY
If I get it, it's going to be used to get Mr. Dunby back. I have no interest in anything but.

DUBOIS
You fool! You just can't give it away!

WENDY
It's all your fault he was kidnapped in the first place.

DUBOIS
All right, all right, calm yourself.

WENDY
All right. Tomorrow, we'll meet at Mr. Dunby's office.

DUBOIS

Truth be known, dear, I was hoping I might stay overnight with you. My cash flow is, well, not flowing at the moment.

WENDY

Fine, fine. Take the couch.

DUBOIS

Oh, thank you, darling, and I would too, if it wasn't for this pesky back spasm I get. It really is necessary to sleep on the proper mattress. Do you have extra firm?

WENDY

Medium firm.

DUBOIS

That will have to do.

She strides briskly into the bedroom. Wendy shakes her head as she prepares to camp out on the couch.

Mom, sleepy and in her robe, enters.

MOM

It's well passed your curfew, young lady.

INT. MEADOW'S APARTMENT -- MORNING

Wendy, looking the worst for her night on the couch, gets up. Mom is up and making breakfast. Wendy heads to her bedroom.

INT. WENDY'S ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

DuBois and her stuff are gone.

MOM

Oh, your friend had to leave early. She said you'd understand. I didn't know girls your age still had sleep-overs.

WENDY

(to herself)

I don't believe it, she did it again!

(to Mom)

Huh? Oh, it was just too late to get a cab or something.

MOM

So, are you still working, or did you quit again?

WENDY

No, no, I'm still on the case, Mom.

Wendy sees her purse has been dumped.

WENDY (CONT'D)

Oh no! She's on the prowl!

INT. PICOSA'S WAREHOUSE -- DAY

Picosa is on the phone, listening to the rings. Pete and Thug are weary and playing "Odd/Even." Debbie and Dungy are well into a conversation.

DEBBIE

---So, I dumped him. I mean, who needs the aggravation, right?

DUNBY

He was a jerk if he couldn't appreciate what he had.

DEBBIE

Why, thank you. So, is there anyone you're involved with?

DUNBY

Women and me don't mix. I'm a handful. And frankly, I don't think I'm worth it.

DEBBIE

Whoever said that?

DUNBY

No one had to say it. I'm a detective, I figured it out.

PICOSA

So, why don't she pick up? What does she got, banker's hours?

PETE

You called her house?

PICOSA

I keep getting her mother. And she keeps grilling me. I think she wants to hook me up with her daughter.

(to Dunby & Debbie)

Maybe I should have her talk to you two. Get you all matched up.

DEBBIE

Excuse me?

PICOSA

Oh, stop. I see you making goo-goo eyes at each other. If you two get out of this alive, you should go out or something.

INT. DUNBY & MCCAIN RECEPTION AREA -- DAY

Wendy unlocks the door. It's been ransacked again. Phone is ringing.

WENDY

Debbie? Debbie? Oh, no, I'm not cleaning this up again.

She gets the phone.

WENDY (CONT'D)

Hello, Dunby and McCain.

INTERCUT:

INT. PICOSA'S WAREHOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

PICOSA

It's about time! Look, lady, I wish you'd stay put! I'm tired of running around trying to keep tabs on you! I need this like I need a hole in my abdomen.

WENDY

Abdomen?

PICOSA

No, no, not abdomen. Higher than that.

WENDY

Head?

PICOSA

Yeah, like a hole in my head.

WENDY

Is Mr. Dunby okay?

PICOSA

Yeah, he's still fine. So's the dame.

WENDY

Dame? What dame? Debbie? Is Debbie there? She'd better be okay, you!

PICOSA

Yeah, yeah, she's okay, too. They're having a swell time of it, too. But it's getting crowded here. Now, you gonna give me the goods or do I hurt your friends?

WENDY

Okay, okay, we have to talk.

PICOSA

You got it.

WENDY

Aah, no. But I think I know where it is now.

PICOSA

Can you get it?

WENDY

Yeah, I'll get it and call you when I have it. What's your number?

PICOSA

Oh, okay...

(reading phone)

It's 555-8...Wait a second! Oh, no you don't. We'll meet after you get it tonight.

WENDY

But I'm not completely sure I'll have it.

PICOSA

Well, then, I'm not completely sure your friends will be okay.

WENDY

Okay, okay. But I pick the spot.

PICOSA

Fine. Where?

WENDY

(considering)

Hmmm. You know the Museum of Natural History?

INT. LEE'S OFFICE -- DAY

Over-crowded assorted of artifacts and files that seem to date back to the Stone age.. Lee is trying to sort it out. The phone rings. He gets it.

INT. BANK -- CONTINUOUS

Wendy is talking to a MANAGER who is nodding. He pulls out an overnight delivery envelope and hands it to her. She leaves.

EXT. JONES' PAWN SHOP -- DAY

Wendy checks the address on the ticket and enters.

INT. JONES' PAWN SHOP -- CONTINUOUS

Musty, cluttered collection of "Road Show" rejects. JAKE, a young assistant, is working the counter. Wendy approaches him.

WENDY

Hello, I'm looking for a Mr. Fibber Jones.

JAKE

He's in back. You have to talk to him?

WENDY

Yes. I'm from Dunby and McCaine Investigations. I do have to speak with him.

JAKE

You know him?

WENDY

No.

JAKE

I gotta warn you, Fibber's been in the business a long time. All those years of haggling have taken a toll on his mind. He can't not haggle. I'll get him.

Jakes goes into the back room.

WENDY

Can't "not haggle?"

The crusty old FIBBER JONES enters.

WENDY (CONT'D)

You're Fibber Jones?

FIBBER

No.

WENDY
No? But that man just said he was
sending out Mr. Jones.

FIBBER
There's no one here. You're mistaken.

WENDY
Oh, I get it. You're Fibber. You
can't tell the truth.

FIBBER
That's a lie.

WENDY
All right, Mr. Fibber, what do you
know about the murder of Manny DuBois?

FIBBER
Never heard of the guy.

WENDY
Your pawn ticket was at the scene of
the crime.

She flashes the ticket.

FIBBER
That's not my ticket.

WENDY
This is the address. This is Jones'
Pawn Shop and you are Fibber Jones.

FIBBER
No, I'm not.

WENDY
Then why are you behind the counter?

FIBBER
I'm not here. I'm someplace else.

WENDY
You are here. I'm talking to you.

FIBBER
Not me.

WENDY
Yes, I am!

FIBBER
You're not.

WENDY
That's a lie!

FIBBER
No, it's not.

WENDY
It is!

FIBBER
It isn't!

Wendy steps back to regroup. Jake enters from the back with a box.

JAKE
Where do you want these clocks, Mr. Jones?

FIBBER
Over there.

Jake puts the clocks over there.

WENDY
Ah-ha! You are Fibber and you are here!

FIBBER
No I'm not.

WENDY
You just answered Jake.

FIBBER
No, I didn't.

WENDY
But I just heard you.

FIBBER
Maybe you're hearing things.

WENDY
I'm not! Look, fella, a man was killed and this ticket was found at the scene. You could be in lots of trouble.

JAKE
When did he die?

WENDY
Yesterday.

JAKE
Me and Mr. Jones were here taking inventory all day. Lots of people were in the shop and saw him here.

WENDY
So, you were here.

FIBBER
No, I wasn't.

WENDY
You've got an alibi.

FIBBER
No, I don't.

WENDY
Yes, you do!

FIBBER
Sorry, I don't.

WENDY
You have an alibi! You had nothing
to do with the murder!

FIBBER
Prove it.

WENDY
Can I just claim this please?

Jake takes the ticket.

JAKE
This is the same thing that other
lady wanted.

WENDY
What other lady?

JAKE
A good-looking lady. She was here
waiting for us to open. Started
asking about Manny. She wanted the
package.

WENDY
And?

FIBBER
No ticket, no service.

JAKE
She offered to buy it but didn't
have any money.

Jakes goes in back and comes out with a bundle. Wendy hands
him the cash and takes the package.

WENDY

Thank you.

She leaves.

JAKE

I'm gonna take lunch now, Mr. Jones.

FIBBER

Enjoy.

JAKE

See you later.

FIBBER

No, you won't.

JAKE

Right.

EXT. STREET -- DAY

Wendy is at a bus stop with the bundle, waiting for the bus. She's excited. She pulls out her compact to check herself. As she does, she suddenly looks troubled and snaps the compact shut.

She closes her eyes and slowly opens the compact again. In the mirror she sees Manson standing in a doorway behind her.

Nonchalantly, Wendy tries to scope an escape. Across the street she sees a Speedy Pizza van parked in front of a Speedy Pizzeria. The van logo states, "Your pizza in 30 minutes or it's on us!"

She pulls out her cell phone and dials.

WENDY

Hello? I'd like to order a large pie, half pepperoni, half mushroom.

She pulls out the folded duck photo.

WENDY (CONT'D)

Five-twenty-nine Washington Blvd. thirty minutes, right? I've got my stopwatch going.

She hangs up. She waits a few moments, then crosses the street to the pizzeria. Manson crosses up the block from her.

EXT. PIZZERIA -- CONTINUOUS

Wendy opens the door, holding it open to let the pizza-laden DELIVERY BOY out.

Then, using the Delivery Boy as cover, she walks to the van and stands on the street side of the rear as the Boy loads the pies in back.

When he goes up front, Wendy slips in the back. The delivery van peels out.

Manson reaches the pizzeria and peeks in. He doesn't see her. He looks all around but she's gone.

INT. ASIAN SECTION -- DAY

Wendy enters with the pizza meeting Lee, as he adjusts a display.

WENDY
Hungry?

LEE
Great! Where'd you get the pie?

WENDY
My carpool.

They go to the workroom

INT. STORE ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Lee unwraps the bundle. It is a porcelain duck covered with black enamel. In the background is the fake duck.

WENDY
That's it?

LEE
Could be.

He gets some solvent and wipes away the enamel to reveal a shining, bejeweled statute.

LEE (CONT'D)
Somebody said the secret word.

WENDY
It's a duck!

LEE
I can't believe we've actually acquired the duck.

WENDY
Acquiring, is that anything like "obtaining?"

Lee begins cleaning the duck in earnest.

INT. ASIAN SECTION -- MOMENTS LATER

Lee and Wendy exit the workroom, they give each other a high-five. Wendy holds the cleaned-up duck.

LEE

So, what time are your kidnappers supposed to show up?

Picosa and his thugs step out with Dunby and Debbie in tow. Guns are in sight.

PICOSA

About now, I believe.

WENDY

Debbie! Mr. Dunby! Are you all right?

DUNBY

Yeah, we're fine, muffin.

WENDY

I'm very glad to hear that, sir, but I still wish you wouldn't call me muffin.

DEBBIE

Oh, he don't mean anything by it, Wend.

WENDY

I know, it's just---

PICOSA

Look, people, you can all have your little reunion after I get what I came for.

DUNBY

So, that's what all the fuss is about?

PICOSA

It's a butte, ain't it. She'll knock your tongue out.

WENDY

Tongue?

PICOSA

No, no, not tongue, that other organ, not taste---

WENDY

Eyes?

PICOSA

Yeah, yeah, eyes. Knock your eyes out.

Luther and Manson step out with gun drawn.

MANSON

All right, everyone, drop 'em.

The thugs drop their weapons. Wendy drops the duck, but Lee catches it.

LEE

Not you!

JOHNSON

Ah, thank you, lad, bless you. That would have been a disaster of unmitigated proportions.

PICOSA

Hey, you talk real good. Who are you?

JOHNSON

A collector, sir. A collector of fine objects. I'll take that then.

PICOSA

Hey, wait a second, you can't take that! DuBois owed me a lot of money. That there is the payoff.

JOHNSON

I don't wish to come between you and your debt, however, it was not within DuBois' rights to give it away. He was not the rightful owner.

DEBBIE

So, who does own it?

JOHNSON

Let's just say it's public domain.

Lo Fat and the two Chins walks out, guns drawn. Manson drops his gun.

LO FAT

That's not strictly true, Mr. Johnson, as I've explained to you before. The duck is the property of the People's Republic of China.

JOHNSON

Ah, Mr. Lo Fat and the Chinny-Chin Chin boys. I suppose I shouldn't be surprised.

PICOSA

Excuse me, people, but I got a business to run here.

LO FAT

I'll take that, please.

DEBBIE

Who is he?

WENDY

Chu Lo Fat.

DEBBIE

I bet you got a lot of ribbing with that name.

LO FAT

(dangerously)

Never.

DEBBIE

I didn't think so.

JOHNSON

Really, Chu, as a representative of a government which has repudiated its empiric past, how can you possibly lay claim to this artifact of said past?

LO FAT

Our history, our heritage.

JOHNSON

But it is a time your people are told to forget. I'd think you would well be rid of it.

DuBois steps out with a gun.

DUBOIS

A fine idea all around. And I'll be happy to relieve you all of it.

WENDY

Well, I guess we all should have seen that one coming.

DUBOIS

Now, please, the duck.

Lee hands it to DuBois.

DUBOIS (CONT'D)

Thank you. Now, of course, I'll have to kill you all.

WENDY

I don't believe you! You would actually kill for this inanimate, soulless, bejeweled artifact?

JOHNSON

Of course.

PICOSA

Sure.

LO FAT

Naturally.

WENDY

Maybe it's just me then, but that's plain wrong.

DUBOIS

It must be done. I don't want to spend the rest of my days looking over my shoulder for one of you to show up. That should tie up all the loose ends.

Wendy raises her hand to pose a question.

WENDY

Excuse me.

LEE

Wendy---

WENDY

Please, I'd like to know, who had Manny killed?

DUBOIS

Anyone?

There is a game show-like pause as everyone examines the other, then finally Chin and Chin raise their hands.

DUBOIS (CONT'D)

Anything else?

WENDY

Yes, actually, one more thing.

(to Dunby)

Mr. Dunby, I'm going to have to have a raise.

DUBOIS

Not necessary.

Lee has slowly edged over to the light switch. He douses the lights. Chaos is heard. Shots are fired.

INT. GEOLOGY HALL -- CONTINUOUS

Lee and Wendy come out. Wendy has the duck. Dunby and Debbie follow, holding hands. They all stop.

WENDY

We have to call the police!

Lee pushes a display case containing gems over. An alarm is triggered.

LEE

Done. Let's go.

They hustle up a staircase.

The bad guys all rush out. They're armed again. They go up the stairs.

INT. STAIRWELL -- CONTINUOUS

At the landing, they split up, each group heading into a different wing.

INT. EGYPTIAN HALL -- CONTINUOUS

Luther and Manson hustle past some sarcophaguses. After they pass, the coffins open and Wendy, Lee, Dunby and Debbie climb out and double back.

INT. MEDIEVAL HALL -- CONTINUOUS

The group enters the world of the Middle Ages, weapons, armor and such on display.

DUNBY

All right, girls, I'll hold them off here. Where's that room lead?

LEE

The dinosaur display.

DUNBY

Go in there and stay until help arrives.

LEE

I'll stay with you.

DUNBY

I'd be a fool to turn down help.
Move, girls.

WENDY

Mr. Dunby, I have been working this case from the start and I don't have to be coddled like this.

DUNBY

Move it or lose it, doll.

LEE

Please, Wendy, go. I don't want anything happening to you.

WENDY

I don't want anything to happen to you either, you know.

Debbie gets hold of Wendy's arm.

DEBBIE

Excuse me, but I don't want anything to happen to me, can we go, Wendy?

DUNBY

(all flirt)

Nothing will happen to you, babe. Unless you want it to.

LEE

I'll be careful.

WENDY

I should stay with you. I want to stay with you!

LEE

You have to protect the duck. Keep it away from them. You must!

WENDY

I will!

There is some false starting and stopping on Wendy's part. She finally grabs Lee and kisses him. Debbie finally pulls her off and out.

DUNBY

Okay, lover-boy, what do we defend ourselves with?

Lee goes over to a case of medieval weaponry and crossbows. Dunby smiles.

DUNBY (CONT'D)

I like it.

INT. DINOSAUR ATRIUM -- CONTINUOUS

Debbie and Wendy come out to a promenade overlooking the Apontasuarrus skeleton, whose neck reaches up to their level. Just above it, suspended from the ceiling, is a life-like model of a pterodactyl.

DEBBIE

Ain't that Otis something?

WENDY

Yeah, he's something...Otis? You call him Otis?

DEBBIE

Hey, you get close to a guy when you're bound and gagged to him for a couple of days.

WENDY

Give me a break.

DEBBIE

Be nice or I won't invite you to the wedding.

Manson and the Chin boys enter from opposite sides of the promenade.

Wendy heads to the railing, stuffing the duck inside her jacket. She's at the head of the apontasaurus.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

WENDY

I'm making a break for it!

DEBBIE

You're gonna break your neck.

As they approach, Wendy jumps and grabs hold of the skeleton's jaw. It's wobbly. Manson reaches the spot first and goes to shoot. Debbie grabs a dinosaur egg from a nearby display and smacks him on the head, knocking him out. He drops the gun.

The Chin boys rush up and shove Debbie aside. She grabs a leg bone and knocks Chin 1 out.

Meanwhile, Wendy is climbing up on the skull of the dinosaur. Chin 2 kicks Debbie back. He climbs the railing as Debbie tries clutching at his belt. Chin eyes Wendy. Wendy realizes she's in reach of the pterodactyl.

Chin kicks Debbie back again. He leaps to the skull, lands and the skeleton collapses. Wendy grabs the pterodactyl and manages to climb up on its back.

Suddenly, the guide wires snap. The reptile comes loose and Wendy glides through the museum, headed back for the Asian Hall and the workshop.

INT. ASIAN SECTION -- CONTINUOUS

The pterodactyl skids into the workshop door, crashing it open and throwing Wendy into the room.

Wendy staggers out a moment later, clutching a duck.

Lo Fat arrives, bearing a gun.

LO FAT
So much bother to delay the
inevitable. Please, Ms Meadows, the
duck.

She hands it over. Police arrive, led by Muldoon. Lo Fat pockets the gun and pulls out a pouch and stuffs the duck into it.

MULDOON
What's going on here?

Debbie, Dunby and Lee enter with Luther, Manson, the Chins, Picoso, his thugs and DuBois at crossbow point.

DUNBY
Hi, Muldoon. Look at the cast of
characters we have for you.

MULDOON
Dunby? And when did you pop back
into the scene? I shoulda guessed
you'd be involved in this.

LEE
Officer, I'm Lee Young. I'm a curator
here. All these people are
trespassing and assaulting and robbing
and kidnapping. You should book
them.

MULDOON
Looks like a trip downtown is in
order.

Lo Fat pulls out his credentials.

LO FAT
 Officer, I am Chu Lo Fat, a diplomat
 in the service of the People's
 Republic of China. I have diplomatic
 immunity.

WENDY
 But you're one of the bad guys!

Muldoon looks at the papers and waves him off.

MULDOON
 Sorry, miss, he's outta my
 jurisdiction.

DEBBIE
 In his pouch, the duck! It doesn't
 belong to him! Tell 'em, Wendy!

LO FAT
 This is an official diplomatic pouch
 and may not be searched or seized.
 And now, if we are finished.
 (to the Chins)
 Call me when you can.

MULDOON
 Go on, get out of here.

Lo Fat leaves, smirking.

DUNBY
 There's a man who puts the "dip"
 back into "diplomat."

Muldoon and the officers round up the others and leave.

LEE
 This is horrible! My boss it gonna
 have a cow!

DEBBIE
 (to Wendy)
 How could you let him just leave
 like that?

Out of her jacket, Wendy pulls out the real duck.

WENDY
 This is how.

LEE
 You're brilliant.

WENDY
 Yeah, turns out I am.

Hugging and kissing ensue.

NARRATOR WENDY (V.O.)
Lee and I are still dating. Very serious. Mr. Dunby and Debbie are off on their honeymoon. I give it forty years, max.

INT. DUNBY & MCCAINE RECEPTION AREA -- DAY

Window now reads "Dunby & Meadows."

NARRATOR WENDY (V.O.)
Which means I'm left to mind the store. First thing I have to do is hire a secretary. Hope I can find one as good as me.

Wendy is at the desk with feet up, looking pleased with herself, buffing her nails.

The end