

THE MIDDLEMAN

Pilot Episode
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WGAw Reg.

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THE MIDDLEMAN

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. INDUSTRIAL PARK - ESTABLISHING - DAY

A really impressive glass and steel monolith. A sign reads "A.N.D. LABORATORIES: RESCRAMBLING YOUR DNA." Over the shot, the repeated metallic SNAP-KLANG of someone fidgeting with a Zippo lighter.

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

YOUNG FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

Geez, mom...what do you mean what am I doing in a science lab?

INT. A.N.D. LABORATORIES - DAY

A RECEPTION DESK before a glass wall. Beyond the glass, a group of SCIENTIFIC-LOOKING PEOPLE rush around scientific-looking equipment, doing scientific things. Because of the thick glass, no sound can be heard from the lab.

At the desk, wearing a headset, sits WINNIE WATSON: twentysomething and barely corporate: jet black hair, deep blue eyes, alabaster skin. The look of boredom behind Winnie's oval tortoiseshells is a façade for what would normally be a faraway look of yearning.

IN WINNIE'S HAND

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

WINNIE (V.O.)

I happen to be working with the top scientific minds in the country, Mom, doing all sorts of top secret scientific mind things...hold on...

Winnie presses a button and changes into an official voice:

WINNIE (cont'd)

...thank you for calling A.N.D. Laboratories, rescrambling your DNA, how can I connect your call?

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

(CONTINUED)

WINNIE (cont'd)
(click, tone change)
...this is a really important job
mom...as a matter of fact yes, a lot
of art majors get scientist jobs...oh,
hang on...

IN THE LAB

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

WINNIE (cont'd)
Thank you for calling A.N.D.
Laboratories, rescrambling your DNA,
how can I direct your call?
(click)
Yes, mom, I'm still dating "that guy,"
and his name happens to be Jay no,
he's not gay, he's in film school.

IN THE LAB

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

WINNIE (cont'd)
...hold on mom...
(click, tone change)
Thank you for calling A.N.D...

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

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

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

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

IN THE LAB:

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

IN THE RECEPTION AREA

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

(CONTINUED)

WINNIE (cont'd)
Gentlemen, do you have an appointment?

CRASH!

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

THE MOST GROTESQUE CREATURE YOU HAVE EVER SEEN:

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

WINNIE (cont'd)
Sweet mother of Gandhi!

THE HAZ-MAT MEN FIRE THEIR CANNON

But their explosive load is absorbed into the monster like a baby-birth home movie played backwards. The monstrosity opens its enormous, and, frankly, rectal, maw and:

BARF!

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

Winnie turns to run. A horrible tendril shoots out of one of the monsters many orifices and wraps around her waist. The Zippo falls to the ground.

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

BANG!

- a SHOTGUN BLAST rips tendril from beast! Winnie falls. The Monster SHRIEKS and turns at the same time as Winnie to see:

THE MIDDLEMAN

A rugged, but slightly dorky guy in his late twenties (think Jonny Quest with a five o' clock shadow). Standing on a coffee table, smokin' shotgun in hand, The Middleman wears an Eisenhower jacket over black pants, boots and a white shirt with a skinny tie.

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

(CONTINUED)

THE MIDDLEMAN

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

WINNIE AND THE MONSTER

Both cock their heads as if asking "me?"

THE MIDDLEMAN (cont'd)

The human.

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

SPLAT!

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

THWOCK! THWOCK!

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

THE MIDDLEMAN

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

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

THE MIDDLEMAN (cont'd)

Heck of a mess, huh?

WINNIE

Excuse me?

THE MIDDLEMAN

I said "heck of a mess, huh?"

KA-BLOOEY!

The monster erupts in a stinking shockwave of entrails.

WINNIE

What do I care? I'm a temp.

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

WINNIE

Uh...thanks?

THE MIDDLEMAN

Just doing my job, ma'am.

In the background: the sound of sirens.

THE MIDDLEMAN (cont'd)

Sounds like the heat. If anyone asks, this was a gas main explosion, I was never here and this conversation never took place.

WINNIE

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

THE MIDDLEMAN

Tell the truth if you want, but if you do, I'm going to have to track you down and kill you. Sorry.

(looking at his watch)

Now, are you going to keep the secret or do I have to kill you?

WINNIE

Twist my arm.

THE MIDDLEMAN

Yes or no?

WINNIE

Yes. Duh!

CLOSE ON THE MIDDLEMAN'S WATCH

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

THE MIDDLEMAN

Outstanding.

(beat, a smile)

You're pretty good under pressure.

WINNIE

Is that a line?

THE MIDDLEMAN

An observation.

WINNIE

Nutjob. Party of one.

(CONTINUED)

"The Middleman"
CONTINUED: (5)

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THE MIDDLEMAN

No, ma'am. I'm just The Middleman.

The big noise of FIREFIGHTERS AND COPS entering through the front door turns Winnie around:

FIREFIGHTER

Are you all right?

WINNIE

Uh...yes...I --

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

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. *IL COGLIONE GRANDISSIMO* - ESTABLISHING - NIGHT

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

INT. *IL COGLIONE GRANDISSIMO* - NIGHT

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

COLFARI

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

TAZIO

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

COLFARI

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

TADZIO

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

COLFARI

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

(CONTINUED)

TADZIO

So maybe we oughta find who it was -

COLFARI

So they don't come and whack us.

TADZIO

Exactly!

(to himself)

It's like playing mad-libs with guns.

COLFARI

What?

BUDDA-BUDDA-BUDDA!

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

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

ANGLE ON THE BOTTOM OF THE FRONT DOOR

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

THE BIG BOSS'S VOICE

Louie, make sure we plugged 'em all.

LOUIE

Sure thing, boss.

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

INT. AMALGAMATED TEMPORARY EMPLOYMENT INC. -- DAY

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

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

WILLIAMS

The police said the explosion was caused by a lighter...a polished silver Zippo lighter.

(CONTINUED)

WINNIE

My dad's lucky lighter?

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

WILLIAMS

So you know something about it.

WINNIE

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

(off Williams's stare)

All right, look, I have three Master Cards about to pop. My mother's on me 24-7 to quit painting, move back to Iowa, meet a good man, eat steak and swell up like a tick...do we understand each other?

WILLIAMS

Until we can be certain that one of our temps didn't burn down her last place of employment while playing with fire, there's nothing I can do. And on a personal note, I suggest you go and have a long talk with the police and fire departments.

WINNIE

A. That was my father's lucky lighter, I would never lose that lighter, which leads straight to B. I did NOT cause that explosion!

WILLIAMS

Can you prove that?

Winnie thinks for a moment, then EXPLODES:

WINNIE

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

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

(CONTINUED)

"The Middleman"
CONTINUED: (2)

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THE MIDDLEMAN

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

THE MIDDLEMAN
Sorry Ma'am, but I warned you.

BANG! SPLAT!

END DREAM SEQUENCE - RESUME ON WINNIE

Startled and alive. No Middleman to be seen.

WILLIAMS
Winnie?

WINNIE
(getting up to go)
I understand. Thank you.

**MONTAGE (SET TO THE LATEST SARAH MACLACHLAN SINGLE AND
PRESENTED AS A SERIES OF BLACK AND WHITE STILLS):**

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Winnie buys a newspaper. The front page reads MOB WAR ON THE STREETS: HEADS OF MAJOR CRIME FAMILIES EXECUTED. As Winnie turns to the employment section:

INT. A LESS UPSCALE TEMP AGENCY - DAY

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

EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY

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

EXT. CHEESY, SMALL TIME TEMP AGENCY - DAY

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

CLOSE UP ON WINNIE'S NEWSPAPER

All of the employment agencies have been crossed out.

EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY

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

END MONTAGE (AND SARAH MACLACHLAN) RETURN TO COLOR FILM:

INT. LOFT CORRIDOR - NIGHT

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

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

WINNIE

Hey Noser.

NOSER

Hey Winnie Watson. Who's the man?

Winnie keeps walking, wearily.

WINNIE

Shaft.

NOSER

What kind of man?

WINNIE

(unlocking her door)

A complicated man.

NOSER

And who understands him?

WINNIE

Only his woman.

NOSER

Dig it.

INT. LOFT - CONTINUOUS

CHYRON: The illegal sublet Winnie shares with another young, photogenic artist. 7:03 P.M.

(CONTINUED)

Canvasses and paint everywhere. Winnie's roommate, LACEY sits on a couch before a TV, playing a videogame. A phone hangs on the wall by the door. Winnie enters, tearing off her professional duds.

LACEY
Yo, dub-dub.

WINNIE
You breaking my PlayStation?

ON THE GAME

A seriously chesty CGI woman double fisting humongous hand cannons blasts zombies into pixel oblivion.

RESUME ON LACEY

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

WINNIE
Therapy for a dull uneventful life.

Winnie walks in front of Lacey and flips a switch on the TV. The game is briefly replaced by a NEWSCASTER:

LACEY
I was gonna shoot the Mutant Zombies!

ON THE T.V.

Footage of the murders at *Il Coglione Grandissimo*: a picture of Tadzio appears in a box.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)
Police are searching for Tadzio Fontenegro, the only survivor of the escalating mob slaughter.

WINNIE
Can you lay off the visual heroin and tell me if anyone called?

LACEY
Your mother called to ask if you're a lesbian, then told me not to tell you.

Great. Winnie steps aside. Lacey reaches forward and starts the video game over again.

ON THE GAME

More mutants suffer once more at the hands of the large-breasted heroine.

LACEY (cont'd)
You think those are real? :

WINNIE
Anyone else call?

LACEY
Jay called, he wants to come later.
He has a surprise for you.

Winnie steps behind a partition, changes her clothes.

WINNIE
Were diamonds mentioned at any point
in the discussion?

LACEY
We talking about the same Jay?

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

LACEY
And you got a call from a temp agency.

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

WINNIE
The Jolly Fats Wehawkin Temp Agency?

LACEY
They want to see you immediately.

WINNIE
Right now immediately?

LACEY
Ayup.

WINNIE
(lacing up her Keds)
Wish me luck then.

LACEY
You going like that?

WINNIE

I've kissed enough corporate bootie
for one day. If they want me, they're
shopping at the as is department.

INT. JOLLY FATS WEHAWKIN EMPLOYMENT AGENCY - NIGHT

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

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

IDA

Winnie Watson?

WINNIE

What kind of a temp agency is this?

IDA

The kind that was very impressed with
your application.

WINNIE

But I didn't apply here.

IDA

Before I can place you in a high-
paying job, you're going to have to
take some tests. Are you ready to
enter the wonderful and satisfying
world of temporary employment?

MONTAGE

A CLOSE UP of a computer screen - words are being rapidly
typed onto the screen.

WIDER TO REVEAL

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

Winnie puts different shaped wooden pegs in their
corresponding holes. Ida times her with a stopwatch.

CROSSEFADE: With a close up of the stopwatch - it doesn't
have any numbers, just a collection of blinking
multicolored lights...

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

(CONTINUED)

CROSSEFADE: with a computer display of her vital signs.

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

CROSSEFADE: With a polygraph, spitting out its readings.

Winnie watches a movie like the test in *The Parallax View* while hooked up to a *Clockwork Orange* headpiece. Winnie double-takes from the screen to Ida, who stands behind her, stone-faced.

INT. JOLLY FATS WEHAWKIN EMPLOYMENT AGENCY - LATER

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

WINNIE

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

IDA

(unamused)

Winnie Watson. Meet your new boss.

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

THE MIDDLEMAN

Evening, ma'am.

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

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. JOLLY FATS WEHAWKIN EMPLOYMENT AGENCY - NIGHT

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

WINNIE

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

THE MIDDLEMAN

My, what a mouth. Lights.

A series of industrial lamps CRASH on to REVEAL:

INT. MIDDLEMAN'S HEADQUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

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

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

THE MIDDLEMAN

I'm The Middleman. You've met Ida.

(beat)

This temp agency is a recruitment front for our organization.

WINNIE

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

Ida takes a seat behind a RECEPTION DESK.

IDA

I told you she'd be no good.

WINNIE

Can it, Yoda. We're talking here.

THE MIDDLEMAN

Authority's not the right word. I'm more like an independent contractor.

(CONTINUED)

WINNIE

What, you're a hit-man?

THE MIDDLEMAN

I solve exotic problems.

WINNIE

Define exotic.

THE MIDDLEMAN

You ever read comic books?

WINNIE

Yeah, I think Archie's a real hoot.

The Middleman glares at Winnie. Her tone turns deadly:

WINNIE (cont'd)

Danger Girl, Scud the Disposable
Assassin, Nexus, Sandman, Astro City,
Cerebus, and Superman.

THE MIDDLEMAN

Before or after he died?

WINNIE

Do you want me to leave?

THE MIDDLEMAN

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

WINNIE

In comic books? Sure.

THE MIDDLEMAN

Well, it's all true.

WINNIE

Get out.

THE MIDDLEMAN

You saw the monster.

WINNIE

And you're the superhero?

THE MIDDLEMAN

I never wear tights.

WINNIE

I'm crushed. Can I ask a question?
(off his nod)
Was it you or me that took the stupid
pills this morning?

THE MIDDLEMAN

Now that's just rude.

WINNIE

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

IDA

You're wasting your time, she's a
slacker!

WINNIE

(turning toward Ida)
Can I help you?

THE MIDDLEMAN

Don't mind her. She's had her
skivvies in a bunch since her neural
emulators got stuck on "domineering
schoolmarm, version 2.0."

WINNIE

English?

THE MIDDLEMAN

Show her, Ida.

Ida turns toward The Middleman and Winnie, her back to the camera. Ida's face opens Tim Burton-style into a mass of circuits and servos that look like something R2D2 would throw up. Ida's face closes up.

RESUME ON WINNIE

WINNIE

(deadpan)
That's trippy.

THE MIDDLEMAN

Dagnabit, that's why you're here!
(off Winnie's look)
You witnessed something completely out
of the parameters of reality and
didn't even flinch. Observe:

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

(CONTINUED)

WINNIE

How'd you film that?

THE MIDDLEMAN

(pointing to his watch)

Real time holo-recording, of course.

WINNIE

Well...duh.

THE MIDDLEMAN (cont'd)

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

ON THE HOLOGRAM

The monster grabs Winnie and she defends herself:

WINNIE

Grab a letter opener and stab it.

THE MIDDLEMAN

Exactly. Now, 90% of the population
would have dumped their cargo and
screamed madly before becoming lunch.
The other 9.5% would have keeled dead
of a heart attack. But not you. You
accepted the reality of the monster,
took the necessary steps to survive,
and through it all, your stress levels
remained normal.

IDA

That's cause she's a slacker. Ten
bucks says she's smoking reefer.

The Middleman glares at Ida as The Hologram vanishes.

WINNIE

Does Rosie have an off switch?

THE MIDDLEMAN

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

(beat)

Can you handle a firearm?

WINNIE

I happen to be a pacifist.

IDA

She's definitely smoking reefer!

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

THE MIDDLEMAN

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

(beat)

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

WINNIE

Nonexistent.

THE MIDDLEMAN

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

(to Winnie)

The flight from Wu-Han makes him real
surly.

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

WINNIE

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

THE MIDDLEMAN

Gosh. Don't you want to fight evil?

WINNIE

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

THE MIDDLEMAN

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

WINNIE

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

The Middleman smiles, thinking he has some leverage:

(CONTINUED)

THE MIDDLEMAN

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

WINNIE

You gave the cops the Zippo?

IDA

Sensei Ping's on his way, first class.

WINNIE

You framed me...you made it look like I caused that explosion!

THE MIDDLEMAN

I needed to make sure you'd come here.

IDA LOOKS UP FROM HER COMPUTER DISPLAY

IDA

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

RESUME ON WINNIE

WINNIE

(justifiably pissed)
I loved that lighter.

THE MIDDLEMAN

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

WINNIE

Go to hell.

Winnie storms past The Middleman and to the door.

IDA

(to The Middleman)
Told you so. You owe me a dollar.

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

INT. LOFT CORRIDOR - NIGHT

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

NOSER

What was everybody doin' Winnie?

(CONTINUED)

WINNIE

Everybody was kung-fu fighting.

NOSER

How were their kicks?

WINNIE

Fast as lightning.

NOSER

And how was it?

WINNIE

(opening her door)

A little bit frightening.

INT. LOFT - CONTINUOUS

Lacey hasn't moved from the videogame.

LACEY

Yo, dub-dub.

WINNIE

You'd better hand over the joystick,
Lacey, I have some serious aggression
I gotta work out.

LACEY

Speaking of joysticks. Jay's here.

WINNIE

(brightening)

Jay! Cool!

Winnie rushes up the stairs, maybe tonight can be saved:

INT. UPSTAIRS LOFT - CONTINUOUS

Winnie finds JAY, an art-school type dressed in a floppy
sweater, cargo pants, sensitive hair and thick rimmed
glasses. Winnie throws her arms around him:

WINNIE

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

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

(CONTINUED)

WINNIE (cont'd)

Hey buddy.

(another kiss)

Buddy?

(off Jay's silence)

This is when you usually kiss me back.

Jay shrugs sheepishly. Winnie looks down and notices that he is carrying a digital Hi-8 camera.

WINNIE (cont'd)

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

JAY

I guess you could say that.

Winnie undoes a button on her overalls, revealing part of her bra-less tank top. It's off the Richter sexy:

WINNIE

Ooh, baby...

(biting his neck)

Should I fire up the Barry White?

JAY

You are making this so hard...

(disengaging)

It's not it's not like that, see my friend Matt came along.

Winnie turns to see an equally sensitive-looking art type, MATT. Winnie redoes the button on her overalls:

WINNIE

Whoa. Hideous kinky.

(to Matt)

Hi Matt.

(back to Jay)

Jay, what's going on?

JAY

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

WINNIE

The class you're flunking?

JAY

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

Winnie is still trying to have fun with this weirdness:

(CONTINUED)

WINNIE

I could punch you.

JAY

(lifting his camera)
No...no...it's not that kinky...Fire
it up, Matt.

Matt lifts a boom-mike.

JAY (cont'd)

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

**FROM THIS MOMENT ON, THE SCENE IS FILMED IN HI-8 FROM THE
CAMERA'S PERSPECTIVE:**

WINNIE

This is a joke, right?

Winnie turns. Matt, holding the boom, shakes his head.

WINNIE (cont'd)

You're breaking up with me?

JAY

How does that make you feel?

WINNIE

We've been dating a whole year. You
used the "L" word!

JAY

I was drunk. I swear.

(beat)

Does that hurt? Tell the camera,
right now.

Winnie's face wavers between absolute sadness and rage.

JAY (cont'd)

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

WINNIE

You are in pain?

JAY

Look, my dad's a lawyer, we have
money. I've never worked for
anything...there's no pain in my life.
The Prof stood me in front of the
class and said that.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JAY (cont'd)

You have any idea how that feels? To know that you don't have any hurt...on the inside.

WINNIE

And you want me to show you? Okay. I think I can show you.

Winnie snatches the camera and starts hitting him with it. Jay cowers. Winnie is relentless. The camera jerks up and down as Winnie makes him pay with extreme prejudice.

WINNIE (cont'd)

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

The camera wavers madly, Matt drops the boom and runs away. The camera then spins back toward Jay and hits him again!

JAY

Hey! That's a digital camera!

WINNIE

I think you need some more!

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

JAY

You're crazy!

As Winnie hits Jay with the camera for a last time -

INT. DOWNSTAIRS LOFT - CONTINUOUS - IN FILM

Jay and Matt run out. An indifferent Lacey keeps plugging away at the Playstation. Jay's camera crashes down from upstairs, followed by the boom and mike.

INT. WINNIE'S STUDIO SPACE - NIGHT

Winnie hits a paint-stained boom box - Lou Reed BLASTS - she squeezes paint on a palette and attacks a huge canvas with brushes, a trowel, a rag - anything to express how she feels - it's violent - it's intense - it's like Nick Nolte in *New York Stories*: only thinner and with breasts.

END MONTAGE TO REVEAL

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

(CONTINUED)

ON WINNIE

Panting, content with her explosive burst of creativity. As Winnie regards the canvas, considering the inspiration that brought her to this place...

INT. IL COGLIONE GRANDISSIMO - NIGHT

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

Boarded up. Inside it's blood-stains, crime-scene tape, and chalk outlines. A single UNIFORM can be seen through an unboarded opening.

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

THE MIDDLEMAN
FBI. Nightshift.

UNIFORM
You wanna donut?

THE MIDDLEMAN
(entering)
No sir, that would ruin my appetite.

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

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

UNIFORM (O.S.)
There's a kid here to see you.

The Middleman discreetly pockets his scanner and turns to see Winnie, still in overalls, behind the Uniform.

THE MIDDLEMAN
Agent Watson. Slacking off the dress code, I see.

WINNIE
I don't do dress code after sundown.

THE MIDDLEMAN
Don't tease me, Agent.
(to the Uniform)
It's OK, she's on the job.

(CONTINUED)

Winnie enters. The Uniform closes the door behind her.

THE MIDDLEMAN (cont'd)

Ida mentioned this place when you were
in the office. Photographic memory?

WINNIE

I have many talents.

THE MIDDLEMAN

So I've noticed.

(taking out the scanner)

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

WINNIE

I have an exotic problem.

THE MIDDLEMAN

Define exotic.

WINNIE

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

THE MIDDLEMAN

Well, shoot. That is an exotic
problem.

WINNIE

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

THE MIDDLEMAN

You got the wrong guy. I don't do
cover-up.

WINNIE

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

THE MIDDLEMAN

I was testing your honesty.

WINNIE

Really?

THE MIDDLEMAN

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

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

THE MIDDLEMAN (cont'd)

(off her look)

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

WINNIE

So who do you work for?

The scanner BEEPS. The Middleman bends down:

THE MIDDLEMAN

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

(beat)

I'm just the Middleman.

The Middleman stands, holding up a banana peel:

THE MIDDLEMAN (cont'd)

Doggone cops, always miss the big clues.

WINNIE

A banana peel?

THE MIDDLEMAN

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

WINNIE

Define sinister.

THE MIDDLEMAN

You want to know, you gotta sign up.

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

FREEZE FRAME:

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

THE FRAME SHATTERS LIKE A PANE OF GLASS INTO:

A SERIES OF RAMBO-LIKE CLOSE-UPS

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

WIDER TO REVEAL

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

The two meet and shake hands at the center:

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

MONTAGE OF COMIC BOOK IMAGES

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

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

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

THE MIDDLEMAN

Fighting Evil, So You Don't Have To

As the letters BREAK APART and fly toward the screen:

RESUME ON WINNIE AND THE MIDDLEMAN IN THE RESTAURANT:

WINNIE

I'll do it.

(CONTINUED)

THE MIDDLEMAN
(a knowing smile)
Had that superhero dream, didn't you?

Off Winnie's grin of acknowledgement:

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

A black car crosses the frame.

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

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

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

FACOTTI
(to Tadzio)
I heard you saw the killer.

TADZIO
You'll never believe what I saw.

FACOTTI
You wanna tell?

TADZIO
It was...it was...

But Tadzio stops as a banana peel falls before him -

FOLLOW THE PEEL

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

RESUME ON TADZIO

Horrified. His head snaps up toward the rooftops:

TADZIO (cont'd)
NOOOOOO!

ON THE ROOFTOP

A shadowy group of mobsters pull out machine guns.

"The Middleman"
CONTINUED:

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BUDDA-BUDDA-BUDDA!

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

Off the surreal sight...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN

INT. MIDDLEMAN'S HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

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

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

REVEAL IDA

Her eyes are the source of the beam of light illuminating the banana! As Winnie (dressed as seen in the montage) walks to The Middleman REVEAL a thick cable, plugged to the back of Ida's head and into:

THE CEILING-MOUNTED HOLOGRAPHIC PROJECTOR

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

WINNIE

Whoa, freaky.

THE MIDDLEMAN

What, that Ida doubles as a scanning electron microscope?

WINNIE

No, that you hired me to be a superhero and I'm sitting here staring at a computer.

THE MIDDLEMAN

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

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

THE MIDDLEMAN (cont'd)

Jiminy! That's it!

WINNIE

Jiminy? What?

IDA

Genetically engineered monkey spit.

WINNIE

On the banana peel?

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

(CONTINUED)

WINNIE (cont'd)

Don't point that at me. I don't want
my babies to come out with flippers.

Before Ida can retort:

THE MIDDLEMAN

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

(beat)

Come on! Let's do some good!

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

IDA

Hey! Anyone want to unplug me?

(beat)

Morons.

EXT. SIMIONICS LTD - ESTABLISHING - DAY

The Big Bad Voodoo Cadillac zooms across the frame -

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

- to REVEAL a sign which reads "SIMIONICS LTD - Building
The Perfect Ape."

INT. SIMIONICS LTD - DAY

Where a CHIMP plays speed Chess against a LABTECH.

WIDER TO REVEAL

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

DR. GIBBS

(reading the badge)

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

THE MIDDLEMAN

That's why they call them surprise
inspections, Dr. Gibbs.

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

(CONTINUED)

MONKEY (FILTERED)

Man has climbed Mount Everest.
Travelled to the bottom of the ocean.
Fired rockets to the moon. Split the
atom. Achieved miracles, in every
field of human endeavor...

WINNIE

It's Lancelot Link, Secret Chimp.

DR. GIBBS

(a real snot)

Hardly. These apes are genetically
engineered. Their higher brain
functions are controlled by one of the
most complex computers in the world.

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

DR. GIBBS (CONT'D)

Next to my monkeys, most people have
the I.Q. of an oyster.

WINNIE

Wow, this one's good.

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

DR. GIBBS

(proudly)

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

WINNIE

What about this one?

Winnie points to an empty enclosure in a corner.

DR. GIBBS

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

THE MIDDLEMAN

(to Winnie)

Wanna squeeze in?

WINNIE

(opening the door)

I bet you say that to all the girls.

(CONTINUED)

DR. GIBBS
Hey, you can't go in there.

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

THE MIDDLEMAN
See anything weird?

WINNIE
Define weird.

THE MIDDLEMAN
Why don't you do it?

WINNIE
See that spot, where the paint doesn't quite match?

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

DR. GIBBS
(entering the cell)
What the..?

WINNIE
(crawling in)
Are you coming or not?

INT. SPANKY'S SECRET CHAMBER- CONTINUOUS

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

VITO CORLEONE (ON TV)
...what did I do to be treated with such disrespect?

THE MIDDLEMAN
Well...dag diggety.

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

DR. GIBBS
I had no idea!

WINNIE

What the heck were you teaching
Spanky?

DR. GIBBS

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

THE MIDDLEMAN

So how does a science experiment get
"Scarface," "Goodfellas..." "Casino?"

DR. GIBBS

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

THE MIDDLEMAN

Swell. Where's Spanky now?

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

SUPERIMPOSE/DOUBLE EXPOSE

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

DR. GIBBS

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

END SUPERIMPOSE

DR. GIBBS (cont'd)

It was a tragic loss.

WINNIE

(to The Middleman)

Does that mean he sleeps with the
fishes?

INT. THE MIDDLEMAN'S BIG BAD VOODOO CADILLAC -- DAY

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

(CONTINUED)

THE MIDDLEMAN

Spanky must have found a way to break mainframe control and escape from Simionics.

WINNIE

But Gibbs said he died in re-entry.

THE MIDDLEMAN

That was no accident. It was an escape. We have to find Spanky, lickedy-split.

WINNIE

Why not let him keep killing mobsters? Isn't he like doing society a favor?

THE MIDDLEMAN

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

WINNIE

If you put it that way.

The Middleman turns to look at Winnie, gravely serious.

THE MIDDLEMAN

There's something I have to know.

WINNIE

Yeah?

THE MIDDLEMAN

You like country?

He hits the Blaupunkt: Johnny Cash's "I Walk The Line" BLARES. As Winnie's eyes roll:

EXT. ANDOLINI SOCIAL CLUB - DAY

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

WINNIE

What is this place?

(CONTINUED)

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

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

WINNIE
Do you have a death wish?
(off his look)
Then cut out the music, Gomer.

The Middleman cuts off the music and steps out.

THE MIDDLEMAN
Keep it warm. I'll handle this.

WINNIE
You're just going to waltz in and ask them to give up The Big Boss?

THE MIDDLEMAN
After I slide up to the bar and order a glass of warm milk, yes. Oh, I almost forgot, there's some things I need you to hold on to.

The Middleman pulls out his retractable shotgun and drops it on the driver's seat, then his taser, a series of stainless steel bombs, a laser tube, a large bore gyrojet grenade launcher, and something that looks like a Bowie knife handle without a blade.

WINNIE
You're going there unarmed?

THE MIDDLEMAN
Wouldn't be fair otherwise. I never told why I got this job, did I?

Winnie shakes her head. The Middleman points to the knife handle.

THE MIDDLEMAN (cont'd)
Just be careful with that.

Winnie apprehensively watches him step up to the club. Fidgeting nervously with the knife handle, she presses a button and -

FWOOMP!

- a light saber beam emerges from the knife handle. A startled Winnie quickly shuts the knife off, and takes a deep breath. After a moment:

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

GUNFIRE from the social club! Winnie shoots up, desperately tries to figure out what to do. More GUNFIRE. BREAKING GLASS. SCREAMS OF HUMAN AGONY.

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

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

K-CHING!

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

THE DOOR TO THE CLUB BURSTS OPEN

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

THE MIDDLEMAN

Hi Winnie. Milk?

WINNIE

Uh...no. Thanks?

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

THE MIDDLEMAN

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

(to Tino)

Say hi to Winnie.

TINO

(in excruciating pain)

Hi Winnie.

THE MIDDLEMAN

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

TINO

I'm not opening a mouth!

THE MIDDLEMAN

I think I'll have me some milk.

Lifting Tino by the collar, The Middleman reaches for the glass and "accidentally" BANGS Tino's head on the side of car. Over Tino's SCREAMS of pain, The Middleman takes a drink and hands Winnie the glass.

THE MIDDLEMAN (cont'd)

You want to put that back for me?

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

THE MIDDLEMAN (cont'd)

Thanks. What were we talking about
when I left?

WINNIE

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

THE MIDDLEMAN

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

TINO

I want a lawyer! I got rights!

THE MIDDLEMAN

That was some good milk. I think I'll
have me some more.

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

TINO

Son of a bitch!

THE MIDDLEMAN

(taking a drink)

So anyway, my team got stuck in a
hairy furball back in the Gulf, and
this jerk C.O. radios for me to bug
out and leave my men behind.

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

THE MIDDLEMAN (cont'd)

So I did what any self-respecting soldier would do. I saved every one of my men, got back to base and kicked the crud out of my commanding officer. Pardon my French.

(to Tino)

You ready to talk?

TINO

Go to Hell!

THE MIDDLEMAN

I am parched. I think I could use a refreshing drink of milk.

Tino's head SLAMS against sheet metal.

TINO

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

THE MIDDLEMAN

No it isn't. After we're done, I'm driving you to the FBI and you're gonna rat out every wise guy and scam you're aware of, *capisch*?

TINO

You're crazy!

THE MIDDLEMAN

Winnie, why don't you keep Tino company while I go inside to get myself a refill?

TINO

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

The Middleman drops the blubbering Tino.

WINNIE

You hit your commanding officer?

THE MIDDLEMAN

I have a problem with authority.

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

A palatial mansion. A large fountain featuring many naked marble women decorates the circular driveway.

INT. THE BIG BOSS'S GILDED OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

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

THE BIG BOSS (O.S.)

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

ON THE MONITOR

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

THE BIG BOSS (O.S.)

Hey Louie...we're getting sloppy.

REVERSE

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

LOUIE

Those are new monitors.

ON THE MONITORS

Another screen fritzes, then another and another...

THE BIG BOSS (O.S.)

You check it out.

As Louie looks up, REVEAL:

THE BIG BOSS

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

(CONTINUED)

THE BIG BOSS (cont'd)
And Louie...get me a banana.

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

THE MIDDLEMAN
It's over, Spanky.

The Big Boss's nostrils flare dramatically:

THE BIG BOSS
Say hello to my little friend!

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

THE GRAPPLING HOOK

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

RESUME ON THE MIDDLEMAN

THE MIDDLEMAN
Tino's turned states evidence. Right now he's with the Federales and singing like Patsy Cline.

(beat)

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

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

Winnie enters as The Middleman tosses the gun aside.

WINNIE
It's nothing personal, monkeyboy.

THE MIDDLEMAN
Just business.

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

THE BIG BOSS
You'll never take me alive!

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

EXT. A GARDEN SEVERAL STORIES BELOW - CONTINUOUS

The Big Boss tears off his clothes and runs toward the wall .
of shrubbery that delineates his property.

INT. THE BIG BOSS'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The Middleman FIRES his grappling hook -

EXT. A GARDEN SEVERAL STORIES BELOW - MOMENTS LATER

- the Middleman and Winnie descend from the window.

THE MIDDLEMAN

Aw, jeepers!

REVERSE

To see The Big Boss, going through the shrubbery.

THE MIDDLEMAN AND WINNIE

Give chase:

WINNIE (cont'd)

Can I ask a question?

THE MIDDLEMAN

Okay, shoot.

WINNIE

How can a Navy SEAL not cuss?

(off his look)

You're all "darn" and "jeepers" and
"criminy" what's up with that?

THE MIDDLEMAN

I don't like profanity. So what?

WINNIE

I dunno. Every once in a while you
could let out a [BLEEP!] or [BLEEP!].

As The Middleman disappears into the shrubs:

THE MIDDLEMAN

You kiss your mother with that mouth?
Garbage mouth.

(off her look)

Yes you.

(CONTINUED)

"The Middleman."
CONTINUED:

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Winnie follows through the shrubbery and finds:

THE MIDDLEMAN

THE MIDDLEMAN (cont'd)
Oh... [BLEEP].

WINNIE
What?

The Middleman points to the area where the Chyron normally appears. Winnie looks down and reads:

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

EXT. CITY ZOO - CONTINUOUS

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

WINNIE
This isn't a problem.
(looking around)
We can still find The Big Boss because
he's got one of those -

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

THE MIDDLEMAN
Strap-on electronic voice boxes?

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

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

EXT. LOFT - NIGHT

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

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

THE MIDDLEMAN

Sleep with one eye open, Winnie. That Monkey's still at large.

WINNIE

I'm not talking to you.

THE MIDDLEMAN

Hey. Chimps throw feces. It's a fact of life.

WINNIE

Next time we search a Monkey House... you go first.

Winnie slams the Big Bad Voodoo Cadillac's door.

INT. LOFT CORRIDOR - LATER

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

NOSER

Yo, Winnie Watson.

(beat)

What is that mighty mighty girl?

WINNIE

A brick house.

NOSER

And what is she doing?

WINNIE

Letting it all hang...out.

Winnie pauses, something's caught her attention:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ON THE FLOOR, JUST AHEAD OF WINNIE:

Is a banana peel. Winnie looks up. Her door is ajar, a pair of feet can be seen between door and floor. She reaches for her Middleman watch, pushing a button.

ON THE WATCH

A series of distress lights come on.

WINNIE (cont'd)

You have a gun on you, Noser?

NOSER

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

WINNIE

Whatever.

Winnie grabs the guitar, approaches the door and -

WINNIE (cont'd)

YAAAH!

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

JAY

Winnie!

WINNIE

Jay? Are you mental?

Stepping into frame, Noser looks at the now-expired guitar in Winnie's hand.

NOSER

Aw, man...my axe. Beat.

Winnie hands back the guitar, nonchalantly:

WINNIE

Sorry.

Trying not to make eye contact with the totally bummed-out Noser, Winnie leads Jay into:

INT. LOFT - CONTINUOUS

Winnie closes the door on the still-stunned Noser, then turns to look at Jay.

JAY

Is it me, or does it smell like monkey poop?

WINNIE

What do you want, Jay?

JAY

I just, you know, wanted to say I'm sorry, you know, about that whole movie thing.

Winnie gives Jay a look that would freeze Night Train.

JAY (cont'd)

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

WINNIE

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

Winnie lets a smile slip, Jay shares the moment.

JAY

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

WINNIE

A rip in the fabric of time.

JAY

I have a shot there, don't I?

The front door BURSTS open. The Middleman flies in, knees Jay in the stomach and squashes him against the wall.

JAY (cont'd)

Ow! You're breaking my arm!

Lacey enters, dressed in flannel pajamas.

(CONTINUED)

LACEY

Hey now! Violence!

WINNIE

Let him go, he's okay!

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

THE MIDDLEMAN

You sounded the alarm.

WINNIE

Not because of him!

(looking down)

Are you okay, Jay?

THE MIDDLEMAN

Jay the video camera guy?

(beat)

I oughta crack your skull for that
alone, you beatnik.

JAY

Where'd you dig up this jarhead?

LACEY

Who's your boyfriend, dub-dub?

WINNIE

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

Taking in Winnie's statement, Lacey steps between her and
The Middleman, taking his hand.

LACEY

Really. Lacey Thornfield. Charmed.

The Middleman turns to Lacey. Instant chemistry.

THE MIDDLEMAN

Delighted, Ma'am.

LACEY

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

THE MIDDLEMAN

Some have said that about me too.

WINNIE

Lacey, upstairs, before I have to hose
you down.

(to the men)

Jay and...you, take this outside!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Winnie leads the two men out the door and into the corridor. Lacey closes the door - then:

BANG! BANG! BUDDA-BUDDA-BUDDA!

Bullet indentations appear on the heavy steel door behind the startled Lacey! The door SLAMS open and The Middleman tosses Winnie and a majorly-freaking Jay back inside.

JAY

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

Winnie belts Jay across the face.

WINNIE

Get a hold of yourself, man!

(as Jay settles)

Now what's easier to believe? A monkey with a gun, or a really short guy doing a drive by?

JAY

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

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

THE MIDDLEMAN

You could have mentioned the hostile presence!

WINNIE

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

JAY

I'm still your boyfriend?

THE MIDDLEMAN

Zip it, lover-boy.

(to Winnie)

I'll deal with the...short, bearded guy. When the gunfire stops, meet me at the car.

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

(CONTINUED)

LACEY

I hope to god you are getting more
than five an hour.

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

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

THE MIDDLEMAN

I'm not gonna ask nicely again.

THE BIG BOSS

Never ask me about my business!

The Middleman rips off The Big Boss' voice box, turns to
Winnie.

THE MIDDLEMAN

See anything weird?

WINNIE

You smashed his last voice box.

ON THE VOICE BOX

Is a stamped metal logo: *SIMIONICS LTD.*

WINNIE (cont'd)

So where did he get himself a brand
new one with the lab's trademark
stamped on the side?

THE MIDDLEMAN

He must have gone back to the lab,
which means...

WINNIE

...either he stole a new voice box -

THE MIDDLEMAN

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

WINNIE

We could probably find that out from
their mainframe.

THE MIDDLEMAN

I guess I'd better go down there.

(CONTINUED)

WINNIE

You're going down there?

THE MIDDLEMAN

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

Winnie climbs into the car as she speaks.

WINNIE

Oh, puh-leeze. Two ground rules. One: you never, ever give the "a man's gotta do what a man's gotta do" speech before you strap on your six-guns and leave me in the office making tea with Ida the Pruneface Android. Two: you stay out of my personal life. You don't crack my boyfriend's skull and you don't date my room mate. Got it?

THE MIDDLEMAN

(climbing in)

I'm single...I'm eligible...what?

WINNIE

Just drive.

THE MIDDLEMAN

(starting the engine)

You ashamed of me?

EXT. SIMIONICS LTD - ESTABLISHING - DAY

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

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

INT. SIMIONICS LTD - NIGHT

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

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

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

THE MIDDLEMAN

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

WINNIE

You feel that?

(off his look)

Kind of a strange, tugging feeling.

The two look up to see...

A PAIR OF MONKEY HANDS

Cutting Winnie's cable with an electric saw!

RESUME ON THE MIDDLEMAN AND WINNIE

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

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

WINNIE

Get your filthy paws offa me you darned dirty apes!

THE MIDDLEMAN

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

DR. GIBBS (O.S.)

I knew you weren't from the Department of Sanitation.

WINNIE

Looks up over the monkeys holding her to see:

WINNIE

Gibbs! It was you!

YES, DR. GIBBS

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

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

DR. GIBBS

(looks to The Middleman)

A chimpanzee is five times stronger
than the average human...lower
yourself or they rip her to bits.

WINNIE

You've been controlling The Big Boss.

DR. GIBBS

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

(to The Middleman)

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

But The Middleman keeps Gibbs talking while...

THE MIDDLEMAN

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

ON THE MIDDLEMAN'S HAND

A silver grenade slides from his sleeve into his palm.

DR. GIBBS

Money. Fast, tax-free cash money.

(beat)

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

THE MIDDLEMAN

What dream?

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

DR. GIBBS

To build an army of genetically
engineered apes and take over the
world!

The Middleman mouths "take over the world" with Gibbs -
he's heard it all before - then holds up his grenade.

THE MIDDLEMAN
Zip it, Goldfinger. Let 'er go, or
this whole lab's a grease stain.

WINNIE

Looks up, what is The Middleman going to pull?

DR. GIBBS
Don't be stupid.

THE MIDDLEMAN

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

THE MIDDLEMAN
Never insult a man with a plasma
grenade.

Gibbs turns to The Big Boss.

DR. GIBBS
Ventilate him.

THE BIG BOSS

Squeezes the trigger on his Tommy Gun.

THE MIDDLEMAN

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

AS THE MIDDLEMAN DROPS OUT OF FRAME

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

THE MAINFRAME

EXPLODES in a shower of sparks!

THE MIDDLEMAN

Falls on top of Dr. Gibbs, who is knocked out cold.

THE MONKEYS HOLDING WINNIE

Let go and run from the explosion.

THE BIG BOSS

Drops his gun and reverts to scared chimpanzee behavior.

(CONTINUED)

WINNIE

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

THE MIDDLEMAN

I told you...

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

THE MIDDLEMAN (cont'd)

...always someone trying to take over the world.

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

As the two hightail it out of there:

EXT. WINNIE'S LOFT - NIGHT

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

THE MIDDLEMAN

Hey, kid. Not bad for a first day.

WINNIE

You ever read comic books?

THE MIDDLEMAN

Three words. "Make Mine Marvel."

WINNIE

But you are aware of Batman, and his sidekick, right?

THE MIDDLEMAN

That would be Robin, the Boy Wonder.

WINNIE

Well, The Joker had a nickname for him: Robin the Boy Hostage.

(beat)

That's what I felt like tonight.

THE MIDDLEMAN

Don't sweat it, kid. Three months with Sensei Ping, you'll be kicking tush and taking numbers.

(CONTINUED)

WINNIE

(not buying it)

You have a lot of faith in that guy.

THE MIDDLEMAN

I'm a good judge of character. Here.
For luck.

The Middleman puts something in Winnie's hand. Winnie looks at the object. Her father's lighter. Winnie smiles and starts to fidget...snap-klang...snap-klang...

WINNIE

Can I ask you a question?

THE MIDDLEMAN

Shoot.

WINNIE

What's your name?

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

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

INT. WINNIE'S UPSTAIRS LOFT - DAY

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

WINNIE

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

REVEAL

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

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

END OF ACT FOUR