

"WENDY'S WONDERLAND"

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FADE IN:

EXT. EAST 7TH STREET TRIPLEX - DAY

This is a proud-looking, three-story, ragtime-era, blue-paneled townhouse with white trim in South Boston.

SUPER: BOSTON, MA, 5-4-1957

INT. EAST 7TH TRIPLEX - GIACOMARROS' LIVING ROOM - DAY

This average-sized space is furnished to the point of coziness...right down to a drum set and a 1910s upright player piano that both take up one side of the room.

PATRICIA MAE BARNES "PAT" GIACOMARRO (37, brash, playful) and daughter GUINEVERE MARIE "WENDY" GIACOMARRO (11, savvy, precocious, street-smart) watch TV from a sofa.

It's Saturday morning..."Mighty Mouse Playhouse" WRAPS UP.

Pat sneaks a glance at Wendy.

WENDY

Don't worry, Ma...all the dishes
and pots and pans are clean.

PAT

I believe you.
(hugs Wendy)
I was there...drying the dishes
after you washed them.

Wendy shows her mom a huge smile.

PAT (CONT'D)

Good job.

WENDY

Thanks.

Pat breaks the hug.

PAT

Just for that...you get to pick out
the next show.

WENDY

Okay...it's almost eleven.

Wendy jumps up to change the channel.

WENDY (CONT'D)

Time to watch "Fury!"

Pat watches Wendy reach for the channel knob...but the latter's mouth flies open at what she sees.

ON TV: SUSAN HEINKEL (12) introducing herself.

Wendy backs her way back to the sofa.

SUSAN (V.O.)
Hi! My name is Susan!

Wendy and Pat watch the opening credits roll.

Daughter and mother come to realize something called "Susan's Show" is on the air.

WENDY
Holy cow! When'd this start coming on?

Pat bolts out of her seat to grab today's "Boston Globe" from a lounge chair.

She opens the paper on her way back to the sofa.

PAT
(eyeballs TV page)
It's a brand-new show.

Wendy's mom folds the paper back up...

PAT (CONT'D)
I guess people had had enough of hanging around Winky Dink.

...and sits back down on the sofa.

Wendy pays close attention to "Susan's Show."

She's hooked.

WENDY
(pointing to TV set)
A flying chair!
(points to Pat)
That's the end!

PAT
Wendy...you really like that show, don't you?

Wendy's is a strong nod.

WENDY

Get a load of what Susan says when she wants to take off:

(tries to mimic Susan)

"I wish there were a land of play.
I wish that I could fly away."

Pat beams...

WENDY (CONT'D)

Think we can make this sofa fly?

...then tosses the newspaper aside.

EXT. CUNIBERTIS' HOUSE - DAY

A picturesque-looking, Depression-era, white-painted house in Boston's Jamaica Plain area.

INT. CUNIBERTIS' LIVING ROOM - DAY

ART CUNIBERTI (79, dogged) and wife ROSA LEE CUNIBERTI (75, reserved) sit in his-and-hers lounge chairs in this modestly-furnished space.

The TV's ON...and tuned to "Susan's Show!"

Art looks captivated.

Rosa looks at Art.

ROSA

Art, honey...shouldn't you be watching Channel 56?

Art shoots a crooked smile at his wife.

ROSA (CONT'D)

You're the general manager over there.

(wags finger at Art)

You need to support your very own television station.

ART

Rosa, Rosa, Rosa.

(points at TV set)

This is what our station needs.

Rosa watches "Susan's Show" unfold.

She glares at her husband.

ROSA
 What are you doing watching a
 children's show?

Art turns to Rosa while he points to his head.

ROSA (CONT'D)
 Would you like me to put something
 in that hand of yours?

A grinning Art shakes his head "no."

INT. EAST 7TH TRIPLEX - GIACOMARROS' LIVING ROOM - DAY

Pat and a radiant Wendy continue to enjoy "Susan's Show."

WENDY
 A talking table...get a load of
 that. And it's got a name.

PAT
 Mr. Pegasus.
 (shrugging)
 I thought Pegasus was the name of a
 winged horse.

WENDY
 Think they'll let Mr. Pegasus fly?

Wendy catches her mom's grin.

PAT
 I don't know...maybe next week.

"Susan's Show" COMES TO AN END.

PAT (CONT'D)
 Maybe they thought one flying piece
 of furniture was enough.

Pat watches her daughter rise to shut the TV OFF.

WENDY
 Ma...I think I can do this. Whatcha
 think?

PAT
 (rises from sofa)
 Do what?

WENDY
 Get my own TV show.

Pat strokes her own chin.

MAIN TITLES APPEAR OVER ACTION.

PAT

Well, Wendy...you've got a whole lot of talent.

Wendy tries to stifle her own grin.

PAT (CONT'D)

You were the hit of last fall's fourth-grade production.

WENDY

I couldn't've done it without you.

PAT

And I really love the way you play the piano.

Wendy's grin becomes a huge smile.

WENDY

I had a really great teacher.

Now Wendy points to Pat.

PAT

All I did was teach you what I knew...you did all the rest.

Pat reaches for Wendy...

PAT (CONT'D)

I know your pa's smiling down at you...and saying: "Magnifico!"

...and both embrace in the warmest of hugs.

EXT. WTAO-TV STUDIOS - DAY

This station shares the same entrance as...the chapel in Beantown's South Station.

A canopy that says "CHAPEL" graces the entrance.

INT. WTAO-TV CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Station owner HOWARD CALDWELL (62, neurotic) sits at the head of a medium-sized table in an almost-cramped space.

Howard eyes, one by one, Art and THREE OTHER STATION BIGWIGS...leaders who watch Art light up a big cigar.

Art's fellow underlings squirm in their seats.

HOWARD
Gentlemen...

A grimacing GRACE KENNEDY (31, unpredictable) waves her arms at Howard.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
Gentlemen...and lady...

GRACE
That's more like it!

HOWARD
As all five of us in here know...last year, we purchased this station from Middlesex Broadcasting Company...and we agreed to turn Channel 56 around in two years.

DAN STANTON (40) and JOE MCARTHUR (35) reach for a cup of coffee apiece.

DAN
Or put the station up for sale.

HOWARD
Correct.

Joe and Dan take sips.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
This is the week we fill up our 1957-58 season. And we must finalize it by Friday.

Art shakes his head "yes."

HOWARD (CONT'D)
Now...who's got any bright ideas on how to get more viewers to...

Joe sets his cup down and lights up a cigarette.

Howard's eyes go wide when he notices Joe's pack (or box).

HOWARD (CONT'D)
 Joe...the next time I see you
 smoking a Filter Spud, you're
 fired.

JOE
 Hey, now, wait a minute, Howie!

HOWARD
 (wags finger at Joe)
 You remember who sponsors your
 sports telecasts here on WTAO-TV?

Joe takes a deep drag...then:

JOE
 Hit Parade.

HOWARD
 What's Hit Parade's slogan?

Eight eyes stare Joe down as he hesitates.

ART
 It's all right, Joe.

JOE
 All right!
 (another puff)
 "Your taste can't tell the filter's
 there."

HOWARD
 Remember that: Station loyalty.

Joe's is a listless nod.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
 Speaking of station loyalty...let's
 hear your ideas on how we're gonna
 turn this station around.

Executives eyeball each other for a few seconds.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
 Come on, damn it!

ART
 Last Saturday, my Rosa and I were
 watching "Susan's Show."

Dan looks mortified.

HOWARD

Whose show?

ART

"Susan's Show." It's a kiddie show out of Chicago.

JOE

No.

ART

I did some research on it earlier today...and I found out it started coming on as a Chicago show in September 1956.

Grace's eyes light up.

ART (CONT'D)

It was such a big hit in the Windy City that CBS decided to pick it up and break it national.

DAN

That's Chicago. This is Boston.

ART

But I got to thinking: "Why not bring out a Back Bay version of 'Susan's Show' and let the kids around here get a taste of Susan Heinkel's magic...but delivered by a local girl?"

Howard gulps down his coffee.

HOWARD

Art...how old's this Susan?

A huge grin decorates Art's face.

ART

(takes a puff)

Twelve.

Art's colleagues gasp.

ART (CONT'D)

And she's really talented.

DAN

You've got to be out of your mind.

ART
Dan, I don't think so.

Grace stares Dan down.

ART (CONT'D)
Dan...we gotta do something to get people around here to buy UHF sets so they can watch Channel 56. Why not a kiddie show?

DAN
You can't build a TV station around a children's TV show!

GRACE
(wags finger at Dan)
Our viewers aren't in love with our evening movies, that's for sure.

DAN
But, Grace--

GRACE
Even with you and Joe as lead-ins.

Joe jumps out of his seat.

JOE
Hey, wait a minute, Gracie!

Grace bolts out of her chair.

GRACE
It's true and you know it!

Art waves his hands.

ART
Come on, you two. Sit down.

Grace and Joe stay erect. They turn to Howard.

HOWARD
What in Hell are you two looking at me for? I'm not pitching a kiddie show!

GRACE
Howard Caldwell...do you run this station or not?

HOWARD
SIT DOWN!

Joe and Grace sit down...in anger.

ART
Anyway, we've tried everything
else. It's time we had our own
Saturday morning kiddie show.

Dan and Joe grimace...Grace's nod is brisk.

ART (CONT'D)
What's more...since "Susan's Show"
has a twelve-year-old girl as its
emcee, why don't we make an eleven-
year-old girl our show's emcee?

Dead silence...for a few seconds.

Art looks out at four stricken faces.

DAN
Art...listen...an eleven-year-old
girl isn't strong enough to lead a
show like this.

ART
You don't know that.

JOE
You must really like robbin' the
cradle.

Art strolls over to Joe, who stubs out his cigarette.

ART
I guess you never seen a Shirley
Temple movie in your life.

Joe points to himself in defeat.

HOWARD
(grinning at Art)
Guess what? I like animal crackers
in my soup!

Grace applauds Howard's remark.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
Art, you old codger, you go ahead
and put that kiddie show together!

ART
Thank you! I will!

Howard joins Grace in the kudos.

GRACE
At least I get to do my specialty!

ART
Hate to tell you this, Grace...but
"Susan's Show" doesn't use any
organ music.

And Grace shrugs.

EXT. WTAO-TV STUDIOS - DAY

Already a hot one on this last Saturday in June.

Wendy and FIVE OTHER PRETEEN GIRLS (one lugs a trumpet case and wears a Mary Hartline-inspired costume) stand in line outside the chapel-TV station entrance.

So do Pat, FIVE OTHER MOMS, and THREE OR FOUR DADS.

In fact, Pat and Wendy gab with GWENDOLYN TATUM (11, Black) and her parents WILLIAM and JACQUELYN TATUM (both 40s).

Children and parents alike try to brave the foul Boston air.

WENDY
(shakes Gwendolyn's hand)
So...you're a Wendy, too.

GWENDOLYN
Yeah. But my real name is
Gwendolyn.

WENDY
My real name is Guinevere.

Jacquelyn, Pat, and William listen in.

Gwendolyn and Wendy break their handshake.

GWENDOLYN
That's really charming.

PAT
(to Gwendolyn)
Chalk it up to her pa and
me...especially her pa. He really
liked those King Arthur tales.

Wendy shakes her head up and down.

WILLIAM

Speaking of King...ever since Nat King Cole got his fifteen-minute variety show on Monday nights, our Gwendolyn's wanted to copy him.

It's Pat's turn to nod.

JACQUELYN

Matter of fact, when she found out Channel 56 was holding auditions for a new children's show, she begged us and begged us to let her try out.

PAT

I understand, Mr. and Mrs. Tatum.
(gestures toward Wendy)
My daughter couldn't get here fast enough.

The door opens...and reveals a security guard named SHAMUS DOOLITTLE (50s).

Shamus holds his nose.

SHAMUS

Step forward for auditions!

Parents and children rush toward the door while Shamus holds it open with his free hand.

SHAMUS (CONT'D)

They gotta do something about that Calf Pasture pumping station.

MARY MCCLANAHAN (11; the girl with the trumpet case) hears Shamus' complaint.

MARY

And they oughta clean up the Deer Island plant, too.

Shamus looks surprised.

INT. WTAO-TV STUDIO 3 - DAY

Art and Howard chit chat with JON O'HANLEY (45, bashful) and GEORGE MATEY (55, blunt) when the six little girls and their parents stroll into this large, almost-bare space.

Several rows of folding chairs provide seating...an eager Grace sits at a 1940-57 spinet piano nearby.

Five other chairs rest alongside a table.

ART

So, Jon, not only will you be the show's announcer...you'll be its director, too.

A bewildered Jon watches the parents and hopefuls take seats at the folding chairs.

JON

Uh...I don't know...

George drapes a shoulder around Jon.

GEORGE

You'll be great! Just like your work on the morning show here on Channel 56.

JON

But, George, that's different.

GEORGE

With your voice, I know you'll help us sell plenty of our Boston creme-filled cupcakes.

Howard and George catch Jon's still-terrified look.

HOWARD

Just remember, Jon: Station loyalty. Station loyalty.

Jon takes a deep breath.

He runs toward Gwendolyn, Jacquelyn, and William as the threesome take seats next to Wendy and Pat.

George follows...and he's steamed.

GEORGE

(to the Three Tatums)

We're sorry...but we must ask you to leave.

Gwendolyn looks crestfallen...her folks seethe.

WILLIAM

Why?

JACQUELYN
What did we do?

GWENDOLYN
But I wanna audition!

JON
Have you three looked in the mirror
lately?

Pat and Wendy listen in.

WILLIAM
(pointing to Jon)
Haven't you ever watched "The Nat
King Cole Show?"

JON
It's on another station!

JACQUELYN
(to George)
Have you?

GEORGE
Hell, no!

JON
Look, kid.

Jon puts a hand on Gwendolyn's shoulder.

JON (CONT'D)
If you win the audition, and we
give you the show...we're gonna
lose what little viewers we've got!

George nods at Jon.

Gwendolyn winces out of her seat to walk away...Jacquelyn and
William follow.

So do Pat and Wendy.

WENDY
(to Jon)
It's not fair!

Art, George, Grace, Howard, and Jon watch the hopefuls and
their folks file out of the studio.

Art casts a glum look.

HOWARD

Where in Hell do you people think
you're going?

Mary and mom FIONNUALA MCCLANAHAN (40s) stop short of the
door to eyeball Howard.

FIONNUALA

Mr. Caldwell...we heard it all.

MARY

(with a nod)

And if you're not gonna let
Gwendolyn audition, then the rest
of us ain't gonna audition.

Mary earns cheers from the other kids...and from Pat and
Fionnuala, too.

PAT

Maybe it's time to change the words
to "The Star-Spangled Banner."

Art gestures Howard, George, and Jon into a huddle...Grace
jumps off the piano bench to join the huddle.

LATER

JAYNE HOUSER (11) stands on a makeshift stage...where she
bangs her gloved hands together as youngsters, parents, WTAO-
TV personnel, and George watch.

Jayne's gloves are actually hand puppets.

Art, George, Howard, and Jon sit at the table. They take
notes, too.

JAYNE

(to her hands)

Adlai! Dwight! Stop this fighting!
Right now!

Most of the adults look stunned.

LATER

A RECORD plays (maybe a march) as JUDY ANN KENDIS (11) twirls
a baton.

Yep...Judy Ann drops the baton.

JUDY ANN
(retrieving the baton)
Oops...

She flips the baton into the air.

Grace frets at the piano.

LATER

LAUREY HERYFORD (11) stands onstage in an effort to imitate Susan Heinkel.

LAUREY
Hi! My name is Laurey!

But then...Laurey freezes.

She buries her face in her hands...and bursts into tears.

LATER

Mary works with a different kind of baton: She conducts Grace, who bangs out a march on that spinet.

About twelve bars later, Mary tosses the baton aside, pulls out her trumpet, and...toots out wrong notes galore.

Grace shudders...George seethes...Howard bangs his fists on the table...Jon looks mortified.

And Art shrugs.

LATER

Gwendolyn stands onstage...only to receive Grace's evil eye.

GRACE
Just remember one thing: I don't
play any of that...uh, jive...or
whatever you call it.

GWENDOLYN
I can sing a cappella.

Grace nods...Gwendolyn claps out a medium beat in preparation for LaVern Baker's "Jim Dandy."

Wendy, Mary, Jayne, Judy Ann, and a now-chipper Laurey add their own handclaps.

GWENDOLYN (CONT'D)
 (adding her own vocals)
*Jim Dandy to the rescue./Jim Dandy
 to the rescue./Jim Dandy to the
 rescue./Go, Jim Dandy!/Go, Jim
 Dandy!*

A smiling Art gives his Channel 56 colleagues and George an I-told-you-so look.

LATER

Gwendolyn rips into a tall tale.

GWENDOLYN (CONT'D)
 Now...about those spring floods up
 in Vermont...they're mighty fierce.
 There was this young farmer
 named...Paul. And he got trapped
 one year when the river started
 rising near his place...

Children and adults alike perk up.

Jacquelyn and William look some kind of delighted.

LATER

Grace tickles the ivories while Wendy sings "The Green Door," by Jim Lowe.

WENDY
*Saw an eyeball peeping/Through a
 smoky cloud behind the green door.*

Wendy wanders closer to Grace while still warbling.

WENDY (CONT'D)
*When I said, "Joe sent me,"/Someone
 laughed out loud behind the green
 door.*

Pat's daughter gestures Grace off the piano bench...

WENDY (CONT'D)
*All I wanna do/Is join the happy
 crowd behind the green door.*

...and pounds out the remainder of the tune.

Pat glows with pride during Wendy's rinky-tinky twelve-bar piano solo.

LATER

Wendy and a surprised Jon sit in chairs onstage.

WENDY (CONT'D)
 Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen...welcome to..."The Wendy Giacomarro Interview."

Mary and Pat look gleeful...Howard looks nervous.

WENDY (CONT'D)
 Our guest this afternoon...Jonathan O'Hanley, the staff announcer at WTOA-TV here in Boston.

Jon points to himself.

JON
 Please...call me Jon.

Some in the throng laugh.

WENDY
 Very well, Jon...the first question our viewers want an answer to is this: Why did WTOA-TV leave its Cambridge studios to set up here at the South Station here in Boston?

Jon shows that deer-in-the-headlights look.

JON
 HELP ME, HOWARD! PLEASE!!

Art, Fionnuala, Grace, Jacquelyn, Pat, William, and Wendy's competitors laugh away.

LATER

Competitors and their parents sit in those rows of folding chairs as George, Jon, Howard, Grace, and Art stand onstage.

ART
 (pointing to each girl)
 Gwendolyn, Jayne, Judy Ann, Laurey, Mary, and Wendy...thank you for auditioning for our new Saturday morning children's TV show.

GRACE
 And for bringing your parents, too.

Laughter fills the room.

HOWARD
We'll call you in three days.

Cheers replace the laughs.

GEORGE
Before we wrap up...does anybody
have any questions?

Nobody reacts...for a few seconds.

Then Mary raises her hand.

JON
Uh...yes, Mary?

MARY
(rises from her seat)
Would it help if I told you I can
also play the harmonica?

Grace grimaces.

INT. EAST 7TH TRIPLEX - GIACOMARROS' LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Pat and Wendy sit on the sofa; with TV trays in front of
them, the twosome eat TV dinners.

"People Are Funny" PLAYS on the family TV.

PAT
So...how do you think you did this
afternoon, Wendy?

Wendy finishes her bite before she answers.

WENDY
Well...uh...any one of us six could
be chosen the winner.

Pat's is a slow nod.

PAT
Good answer.
(taking a bite)
It's a good thing they gave Laurey
and Mary and Judy Ann another
chance.

WENDY
Yeah.

Wendy takes a swig of milk/pop/tea/water.

WENDY (CONT'D)
I remember when I first got up
onstage...back in kindergarten.

Pat perks up.

WENDY (CONT'D)
I wasn't just a bundle of nerves. I
was a bushel basket of nerves.

PAT
I remember that.

WENDY
But you and Pa made me feel good.

PAT
And you went on to play the best
tree in the history of kindergarten
at Oliver Hazard Perry School.

WENDY
Thanks.

Wendy and Pat click their glasses.

WENDY (CONT'D)
I can't wait for Channel 56 to
call.

They set their glasses down...

PAT
Same here!

...only to click them again.

EXT. CUNIBERTIS' HOUSE - NIGHT

A pickup truck tools along.

INT. ART'S AND ROSA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

In this well-furnished, homey bedroom, Rosa reclines in the
bed while Art prays at the foot of the bed.

Both Cunibertis wear pajamas.

ART

And, oh Lord, I need Your help so I can make the right decision about who to hire to star in our TV station's new children's show.

Rosa looks a bit amused.

ART (CONT'D)

Gwendolyn sings like an angel...and boy, she loves to tell tall tales. The other kids like her...but the other adults at Channel 56 don't...I wish they did.

She folds her hands while he continues to pray.

ART (CONT'D)

Then there's Wendy. I love her singing, too...and she can play a piano like David could play a harp.

Now Rosa looks confused.

ART (CONT'D)

Okay, Lord...nobody could top David on the harp. You know that.

Art's wife nods.

ART (CONT'D)

And everybody loved Wendy's interview with Jon. Even Jon himself...still, Wendy has the smarts of a twenty-one-year-old. And she's only eleven. Same age as Gwendolyn.

Rosa glares at her husband.

ART (CONT'D)

Anyway...just as long as You can help me, I'll be fine. Thank You for listening. Amen.

He makes the sign of the cross.

ROSA

Art, honey...will you please go to bed? Right now tonight?

Art nods...

ROSA (CONT'D)
You don't have to make the decision
'til Tuesday, anyway.

ART
You know me...I just wanted to get
a head start.

...then climbs into the bed.

INT. WTAO-TV CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Howard (in his usual spot), Grace, Joe, Jon, and Dan sit at
the medium-sized table on this first Tuesday in July.

Art strolls around the table.

DAN
Art, it's Tuesday. The big day.

GRACE
You made the choice, didn't you?

ART
Yes, I did.

HOWARD
Then go back to your office and
make the call.

ART
(still pacing)
I'm an old man. I need the
exercise.

Joe pulls out a pack of cigarettes (a brand other than Spud
or Hit Parade).

Howard glares at Joe...who glares at Art.

JOE
Make sure you call the winner.

Art nods...and continues to pace the floor.

JON
(to Art)
Please...pretty please?

Howard seethes.

HOWARD
Newports?

JOE
 (grinning at Howard)
 Yeah...they just came out a coupla
 months ago. Thought I'd try 'em.

The boss wags a finger at the sports director.

HOWARD
 Not in here, you don't!

Joe stuffs the pack back in his shirt pocket.

Art's stroll continues.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
 Art, will you make the damn call?

Howard's underlings stare him down.

Art's pacing ends.

JON
 Howard...we're talking about a
 children's show!

A shrugging Art leaves the conference room.

HOWARD
 I'm past "darn" and way past
 "doggone!"

INT. EAST 7TH TRIPLEX - GIACOMARROS' LIVING ROOM - DAY

The TV's ON...Pat and Wendy watch "Art Linkletter's House
 Party" on the sofa.

The phone RINGS...Wendy and Pat run to it.

When Pat lifts the receiver, Wendy shrugs.

PAT
 (into phone)
 Hello?

INT. ART'S OFFICE - DAY

His phone's receiver to his ear, Art sits at his desk in a
 space whose walls teem with photos of celebrities from stage,
 screen, radio, and television.

ART
 Hi, Mrs. Giacomarro. This is Art
 Cuniberti from WTAO-TV.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

PAT
It's nice to hear from you, Mr.
Cuniberti. What can I do for you?

A giddy Wendy turns the sound DOWN on the TV.

ART
Make way for Boston's newest TV
star...your daughter!

PAT
WHAT?

ART
It's the truth! Wendy won the
audition last Saturday.

PAT
That's great news! I'll tell her!

Wendy saunters from the TV to her mother's side.

ART
Can you both come down to the
station tomorrow morning?

PAT
Is Ike in the White House?

A chuckling Art almost drops his phone.

EXT. WTAO-TV STUDIOS - DAY

Pat and her daughter almost skip their way toward the
place...despite each making a face due to Beantown's bad air.

PAT
Wendy...now that you're gonna be on
TV, promise me one thing: Keep your
grades up.

Wendy shakes her head "yes."

PAT (CONT'D)
You promise?

WENDY
Can Ted Williams hit a baseball?

PAT
Good answer!

The twosome approach the chapel-TV station entrance.

Wendy rings the doorbell.

After several seconds, the door opens...and reveals Shamus.

SHAMUS
Greetings, Miss and Mrs.
Giacomarro!

WENDY
Hi, Shamus!

Shamus and Wendy shake hands...

SHAMUS
Welcome to WTAO-TV, Channel 56!

...then Pat and Shamus press the flesh.

SHAMUS (CONT'D)
Come on in, you two!

PAT
Will do!

INT. ART'S OFFICE - DAY

Wendy and Pat sit across the desk from Art; Howard, George, Grace, and Jon (all erect) surround the trio.

Both Giacomarros sneak peeks at this impressive office when not reading the contract in front of them.

GEORGE
Wendy, we at the Boston Baking Company are so delighted that you'll be the hostess for WTAO-TV's new Saturday morning children's show.

Wendy looks up at George.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
And you'll be helping us sell our famed Boston creme-filled cupcakes.

Jon points to himself.

WENDY
Uh...I thought Hostess was the competition.

Art's nod is slow.

Pat flashes a huge smile.

WENDY (CONT'D)
 You know...Twinkies...Sno-
 Balls...creme-filled cupcakes...

George and Howard trade looks of embarrassment.

JON
 George...what about me? Will I get
 to do some commercials on "Wendy's
 Wonderland," too?

GEORGE
 Of course.

Jon breathes relief.

HOWARD
 Now, Wendy, since you don't wanna
 call yourself a hostess, what do
 you wanna call yourself?

A large smile invades Wendy's face.

WENDY
 "Emcee" works for me.

The six grown-ups stare each other down while Wendy finishes reading the contract.

GRACE
 Can't argue with that.

Pat finishes reading the same pact.

ART
 Looks like you two are ready.

With a nod apiece, Wendy and Pat sign their names to the contract. Art follows suit.

Now Howard puts his name on the pact.

Applause breaks out all over the room.

Art shakes hands with Wendy, then with Pat.

Howard, Pat, and Wendy engage in handshakes when Art reaches into a cigar box to pull out a Churchill-size stogie.

He offers the stogie to Wendy!

ART (CONT'D)
Welcome to Channel 56...have a
cigar.

Wendy looks alarmed.

WENDY
Wait a minute! I'm only eleven!

PAT
Don't mind if I do.

Pat accepts the cigar from Art.

She breaks out a lighter, fires up the cigar, and...triggers
blank looks from Howard, Grace, and George.

Art looks pleasantly surprised.

WENDY
Ma...

PAT
(takes a puff)
We've got a gas stove in our house.
Remember?

Wendy slaps her own forehead.

INT. WTAO-TV STUDIO 3 - DAY

This space now looks fit for a kidvid show...right down to a
set of bleachers a la "Howdy Doody's" Peanut Gallery.

Wendy, Pat, Howard, George, and Art stroll around the set.

Pat continues to smoke that cigar.

HOWARD
Due to us being a UHF station with
low viewership, we can't afford a
whole crew of people that can make
a chair fly or a table talk.

Several heads nod at Howard.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
And forget about a whole bunch of
life-size puppets.

WENDY
Got it, Mr. Caldwell.

ART
But then, Wendy...we've decided to
give you a sidekick.

WENDY
Uh...okay.

PAT
(to Art)
Wendy and I have watched "Boom..."
I hope it's all right to say it.

ART
Yeah. Me and the rest of the staff
were thinking "Boomtown." With Rex
Trailer and his sidekick Pablo.

GEORGE
They've only been on a year, but
they own Saturday mornings around
here...and Sunday mornings.

Art nods...Howard cringes.

ANN SURKONT (46, painstaking, restless; tall) wrestles her
apron off while she strolls onto the set.

WENDY
Mr. Cuniberti, will this sidekick
be my age?

ART
Well...no.

WENDY
Will this sidekick be like Ma?

PAT
(gesturing)
No, no, no! You don't want that.

Art, George, Howard, Pat, and Wendy continue to stroll...Ann
hurries over to the quintet.

WENDY
How about Pa?

Quintet members gaze up (or down) at Ann, who folds her
apron, then tucks it inside her dress.

ANN
I see you've fixed up Studio 3.

HOWARD
(still eyeballing Ann)
That's right...we couldn't waste
time. "Wendy's Wonderland"
premieres September twenty-first.

ANN
You're kidding...who's Wendy?

Wendy raises her hand.

The stroll comes to a halt.

ART
Wendy Giacomarro, meet Ann Surkont.

Ann and Wendy shake hands.

HOWARD
Ann does our weekday cooking show,
"Cooking with Ann."

Pat wags a friendly finger at Ann.

ART
And now...Ann's gonna double up on
Saturday mornings to play the
sidekick on "Wendy's Wonderland."

Wendy and Ann break the handshake.

ANN
You've got to be kidding me.

ART
You'll be our answer to Channel 4's
Pablo on "Boomtown."

ANN
You mean to tell me I'm going to
give up two hours and fifteen
minutes every Satur--

HOWARD
Relax, Ann. Wendy's show's only
half an hour long.

Ann and Wendy shake hands again.

GEORGE
Miss Surkont, how do you like our
Boston creme-filled cupcakes?

Pat's mouth flies open.

And Ann stares George down.

INT. WTAO-TV STUDIO 3 - DAY

Wendy and Ann (each wields a script) eye each other in nervousness...Jon buries his head in his hands.

Result: Art and Pat gather Ann, Jon, and Wendy into a huddle.

INT. WTAO-TV CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Wendy, Jon, and Ann sit opposite Pat and Art...all five do breathing exercises.

EXT. FILENE'S - DAY

Ann struts toward an iconic eight-story ragtime-era structure in the Downtown Crossing area.

INT. FILENE'S FOURTH FLOOR - DAY

Success! Ann finds a dress that emphasizes a floral motif.

EXT. FORMAL WEAR SHOP - DAY

Wendy and a surprised Pat saunter into a Back Bay shop.

INT. FORMAL WEAR SHOP SALESFLOOR - DAY

Pat beams when Wendy tries on a tuxedo. The latter tops off the look with a top hat.

Now Wendy smacks her own forehead...and zips her pants up.

INT. WTAO-TV STUDIO 3 - DAY

Wendy (in her tux and top hat) and Ann (in her floral dress and flower-laden hat) pose for a promotional photo.

CLICK!

INT. WTAO-TV CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Under George's hopeful eyes, Ann, Jon, and Wendy eat George's company's creme-filled cupcakes.

Wendy loves 'em...Jon nods...Ann makes a face.

George throws his hands up.

EXT. OLIVER HAZARD PERRY SCHOOL - DAY

It's early September...STUDENTS stroll (or run) toward a three-story South Boston building.

INT. OLIVER HAZARD PERRY SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Wendy tacks a flyer to a bulletin board.

The flyer says: "NEW SHOW...'WENDY'S WONDERLAND!'" In smaller letters: "JOIN WENDY AND DAFFODIL FOR A HALF-HOUR OF FUN!" In even smaller letters: "PREMIERES SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 10:30 AM, WTAO-TV, CHANNEL 56."

EXT. FENWAY PARK - DAY

Pat and Wendy join OTHER BOSTON RED SOX FANS on their way to a mid-September doubleheader.

INT. FENWAY PARK BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

Before the first game, A FILM CREW catches Wendy's interview with A GROUNDSKEEPER as RED SOX PLAYERS warm up.

INT. FENWAY PARK THIRD-BASE STANDS - DAY

Wendy, Pat, and film crewmembers (to say nothing of other Boston fans at Fenway) cringe when they realize THE DETROIT TIGERS dominate the Red Sox.

INT. FENWAY PARK PRESS BOX - DAY

Between games...the same film crew crowds into the press box, where Wendy chats with JOHN KILEY (44, a bit heavysset), the Bosox' organist.

John turns around and shows Wendy how to play that Hammond.

INT. FENWAY PARK THIRD-BASE STANDS - DAY

Second game...the crowd cheers when a two-run homer in the seventh inning pulls the Bosox to within a run of the Tigers.

LATER

Bottom of the ninth...the Red Sox go down in order and lose to the Tigers, four to three.

Result: Pat, Wendy, and the fans around them show long faces.

INT. WTAO-TV STUDIO 3 - DAY

Wendy and Ann click together during a rehearsal...Art, George, Howard, and Jon look relieved.

EXT. WTAO-TV STUDIOS - DAY

CHILDREN AND THEIR PARENTS line up in front of the chapel-TV station entrance on September's third Saturday.

Some hold their noses due to the city's filthy air.

Still...the place is buzzing!

INT. WTAO-TV GREEN ROOM - DAY

A pair of sofas and two lounge chairs surround a table in this ample space where a TV rests in a corner.

Ann, Art, George, Howard, Jon, Pat, and Wendy rise from their seats to huddle around the table. (Wendy and Ann wear their "Wonderland" duds.)

The station owner looks concerned.

HOWARD

Thirty minutes before "Wendy's Wonderland" goes live.

Howard's colleagues nod.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

Any questions?

No takers.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

Good! Just remember, people: Fifty-seven UHF stations have died since television began...we don't wanna be Number Fifty Eight.

ART

We stick together, we won't be Number Fifty Eight.

Six people cheer.

Howard doesn't...he still looks nervous.

GEORGE

Wendy...Jonathan...Ann...I can't say this enough: Please sell the heck out of our Boston creme-filled cupcakes.

WENDY

We will, Mr. Matey! Don't worry!

Ann's is a slow, slow nod.

JON

(almost to himself)
Please...call me Jon.

GEORGE

And remember, you three, the slogan is: "Try Boston creme-filled cupcakes...they're better than the ones Mother makes."

WENDY

Got it!

JON

Me, too.

George receives Ann's withering look.

GEORGE

Ann, are you on board or not?

PAT

George...you're talking to a professional cook.

Now Ann's all teeth.

INT. WTAO-TV STUDIO 3 - DAY

The bleachers teem with the same youngsters from outside the building...CAMERA OPERATORS make adjustments...Jon stands by at a mike on its stand.

Offstage, Wendy and Ann shake hands before Pat and Wendy hug.

Now it's 10:30 AM...A RECORDING of a midtempo, small-combo version of "Winter Wonderland" plays over the loudspeakers.

(MORE)

JON

(into mike)

JON(CONT'D)

And now, live from the WTAO-TV
studios in South Boston,
it's..."Wendy's Wonderland!"

INT. WTAO-TV STUDIO 3 CONTROL BOOTH - DAY

Art, George, Grace, and Howard congratulate each other.

INT. WTAO-TV STUDIO 3 - DAY

Jon continues his intro.

JON

Brought to you by...the Boston
Baking Company...makers of Boston
creme-filled cupcakes...they're
better than the ones Mother makes.

A smile fills Jon's face.

JON (CONT'D)

And now, boys and girls...say "hi"
to...Wendy!

To audience applause, Wendy (shotgun mike in hands) strolls
onto the stage.

When she hits her mark, the music CUTS OFF.

STUDIO AUDIENCE #1

HI, WENDY!!

Wendy waves to the young crowd...

WENDY

(into mike)

Thank you, boys and girls in the
studio audience.

...then looks toward the cameras.

WENDY (CONT'D)

And thank you, those of you tuning
in at home. Welcome to "Wendy's
Wonderland!"

The young in-studio audience cheers again.

WENDY (CONT'D)

This is our very first time
together...and are you ready for a
half-hour of fun?

More cheering from the bleacher kids.

Ann wheels a kitchen cart onstage.

On the cart: A mixing bowl, a hand mixer, a pitcher of water, a measuring cup, a wooden spoon, and a box of cake mix.

Wendy's eyes go wide.

INT. WTAO-TV STUDIO 3 CONTROL BOOTH - DAY

So do George's.

INT. WTAO-TV STUDIO 3 - DAY

Wendy (shotgun mike and all) trots over to Ann.

WENDY

Uh...Daffodil...whatcha doing?

The young host points the mike toward her sidekick.

NOTE: To play Daffodil, Ann uses a rural, down-home New England accent.

ANN

(into shotgun mike)

Y'know, Wendy, I've been thinkin' 'bout this all mornin'...and I wanna take Boston Bakery up on their claim.

WENDY

Claim?

ANN

Yeah...that their cream-filled cupcakes are better than the ones Mother makes.

WENDY

You sure you got time? It's only a half-hour show.

INT. WTAO-TV STUDIO 3 CONTROL BOOTH - DAY

George seethes at Art, Grace, Howard, and new booth attendee Pat while O.S. AUDIENCE LAUGHTER ERUPTS.

GEORGE

Thank God!

LATER

Jon joins Pat, Howard, Grace, George, and Art.

The six watch Wendy and Ann banter with the young audience.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Whose idea was it to put Wendy in a tuxedo instead of a cute dress?

PAT

George...it was hers.

A few heads nod.

PAT (CONT'D)

She watched Bronson Scott wear one on "The Mickey Mouse Club." And Wendy decided she wanted to dress up in a tux, too.

GRACE

Pat, isn't Bronson a boy?

Pat shakes her head sideways.

ART

Nope. Bronson is a little girl.

HOWARD

I understand she's not a Mouseketeer anymore.

Jon looks up from the monitors.

JON

Speaking of Mouseketeers...how would Annette look in a tuxedo?

George tries to reach for Jon's neck...Art foils George.

INT. WTAO-TV STUDIO 3 - DAY

Wendy and Ann wrap up their audience banter.

ANN

Wendy, we got time for one more kid.

The twosome spot a boy named WALLY (7; dressed like a cowboy). He sits in the front row.

WENDY

(into mike)

Hi! May I ask your name?

Wendy points the shotgun mike toward Wally.

WALLY

Wally. I'm seven.

WENDY

Wally, what would you like to ask?

WALLY

Are you really a girl?

A smiling Wendy takes off her top hat with her free hand.

LATER

Ann and Wendy stand behind the same kitchen cart...now stacked with packages of Boston creme-filled cupcakes.

Wendy holds up a package, unwraps it, and...

WENDY

So remember: Next time you and your folks are at your favorite food store, ask 'em to pick up some Boston creme-filled cupcakes.

...removes a cupcake from the pack.

Wendy eats the cupcake...and comes away all smiles.

WENDY (CONT'D)

They're the end!

INT. WTAO-TV STUDIO 3 CONTROL BOOTH - DAY

Grace looks shocked...Pat shrugs...Jon buries his head in his hands...Howard runs out of the booth.

George stares daggers at (and points to) Art.

GEORGE

You hired a damn beatnik!

ART

(nodding)

I understand she wants to take up the bongos.

EXT. EAST 7TH STREET TRIPLEX - DAY

Pat and Wendy (in their Sunday best) stroll toward the place.

WENDY

Ma, I just feel like I let everybody down yesterday.

PAT
It was just the first show.

Mother hugs daughter...the twosome stop in their tracks.

PAT (CONT'D)
As long as all of us work together,
it'll all get better.

DICK and JANE KEARNS (both 40s) come out of the triplex; they stand outside the front door.

PAT (CONT'D)
You don't have to carry all the
blame on your shoulders.

WENDY
Thanks, Ma.

Wendy and Pat continue their walk.

WENDY (CONT'D)
Even though Mr. Matey looked at me
like I was a card-carrying,
American-born Communist.

The front door opens again...and reveals ANA MARIA and ANGELO MASTRANGELO (both 60s).

Jane and Dick move out of Angelo's and Ana Maria's way.

All four form a line to block Pat and Wendy.

WENDY (CONT'D)
And then...right after Mass this
morning, the priest had me say ten
Hail Marys.

Dick moves to the front, where he holds his arms out.

WENDY (CONT'D)
In front of all the other parish--

Daughter and mother stop in their tracks.

DICK
Where do you two think you're
goin'?

PAT
Dick...Wendy and I live here.

JANE
 (wags finger at Pat)
 We saw your daughter's show
 yesterday morning.

Wendy blows an imaginary bubble.

Dick puts his arms down as Ana Maria and Angelo move in front
 of him.

ANA MARIA
 Channel 56 shoulda put up a test
 pattern and left it there...for the
 whole half-hour.

Jane and Dick chuckle.

JANE
 Good one, Ana Maria!

Angelo puts his hands on Wendy's shoulders.

ANGELO
 Face it, kid.

The young TV host grimaces.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
 Your new TV show stinks!

Wendy jerks herself away from Angelo and heads toward the
 house...Pat strides over to Angelo's side.

PAT
 Angelo Mastrangelo, don't ever put
 your hands on my daughter again!

Pat moves toward the place...but stops short to eye Angelo.

PAT (CONT'D)
 UNLESS IT'S A WARM, GENTLE HUG!

Angelo mocks Pat as the Two Giacomarros go inside.

EXT. OLIVER HAZARD PERRY SCHOOL - DAY

Wendy and TEDDY MCLAUGHLIN (11; strong Boston accent) saunter
 their way to school.

TEDDY
 Saw ya show Saturday.

Wendy's eyes light up.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

It needs work.

WENDY

Don't worry, Teddy. We'll fix it.

TEDDY

First of all...that little film ya showed toward th' end.

WENDY

Well...that was fun.

Teddy shakes his head "no."

TEDDY

Ya went to Fenway Park...and ya didn't even interview Ted Williams?

WENDY

He was busy.

TEDDY

Don't gimme that!

WENDY

Pinky Higgins rested him for that doubleheader we went to.

Teddy nods.

WENDY (CONT'D)

And besides...you don't disturb a genius.

TEDDY

Coulda interviewed Jackie Jensen.
Or Dick Gernert.

WENDY

They were busy.

Teddy and Wendy arrive at the front entrance.

TEDDY

So ya interviewed th'
groundskeeper? And th' organist?

Wendy opens the front door...A FEW STUDENTS rush in ahead of her and Teddy.

WENDY
John Kiley let me play the organ
over there at Fenway.

Teddy grumbles.

INT. OLIVER HAZARD PERRY SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

Teddy and Wendy tiptoe into the room.

TEDDY
At least ya showed a Bugs Bunny cat-
toon. Can't go wrong there.

The two classmates take seats...but THE OTHER THIRTY (OR SO)
FIFTH-GRADE STUDENTS toss paper balls at Wendy.

GLEENDA FITZSIMONS (45), the teacher, nods her approval.

GLEENDA
Wendy Giacomarro...come up here.

A shrugging Wendy moves up to the front of the class.

WENDY
At least those paper balls don't
have razor blades in 'em.

Most of Wendy's classmates laugh.

A few others cast impish looks.

Glenda grabs a piece of chalk from the blackboard.

GLEENDA
I want you to write something.

Glenda hands the chalk to Wendy.

WENDY
(accepts piece of chalk)
Uh, whatcha want me to write, Mrs.
Fitzsimons?

GLEENDA
I want you to write: "I will strive
to be a better TV emcee."

Wendy's mouth drops open.

GLEENDA (CONT'D)
And write it one hundred times.

And Wendy gravitates to the chalkboard to scribble away...as another paper ball comes her way.

EXT. SOUTH BOSTON HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

A sprawling, iconic, three-story structure from the turn of the Twentieth Century.

INT. SOUTH BOSTON HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

Pat stands behind a table at the front of the room; she addresses TWENTY SOPHOMORES...all squirm in their seats.

A dissected cat dominates the table.

PAT

Come on up, everybody...I want you to see what a cat looks like from the inside.

Nobody moves.

PAT (CONT'D)

Come on.

A few students shake their heads back and forth.

PAT (CONT'D)

If you don't pass this biology class, you can't graduate.

Pat's students stay seated.

PAT (CONT'D)

The Class of 1960 won't be the same without you.

Some classmates gesture their disapproval.

PAT (CONT'D)

Is it the dead cat up here? Is that why you won't come up?

GRETCHEN HEISE (16) raises her hand.

PAT (CONT'D)

Uh...yes...Gretchen?

GRETCHEN

(lowers hand)

It's not the dead cat, Mrs. Giacomarro.

PAT
Then please...come up.

Gretchen doesn't move.

COSMO SCUDERO (15) tosses his hand up.

COSMO
(pulls his hand down)
With all due respect, Mrs. Gia--

PAT
Cosmo, I didn't call on you. Put
your hand back up.

Cosmo raises his hand again.

PAT (CONT'D)
Now you've got the floor.

COSMO
(lowers hand again)
With all due respect, Mrs.
Giacomarro...it's your daughter's
dead TV show.

Student laughter fills the room.

Pat looks stunned.

COSMO (CONT'D)
My little sister watched "Wendy's
Wonderland" last Saturday.

GRETCHEN
So did mine!
(slaps her own face)
Actually...she tried to.

PAT
What happened?

GRETCHEN
She heard the theme song and fell
asleep...and went back to bed.

Pat grimaces while her students' laughter increases.

INT. SOUTH BOSTON HIGH SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

Pat (with a sack lunch) sits by herself at a table in the
faculty section when fellow teacher KENT POST (39, eager)
brings his full tray to the table.

PAT
All right, Kent, are you gonna
laugh at me, too?

Kent sets his tray down.

KENT
(taking a seat)
Hey...I just thought you might like
some company.

Each teacher takes a bite.

KENT (CONT'D)
Pat, I've been thinking about you
these last couple of days.

Pat shakes her head "no."

KENT (CONT'D)
To tell the truth, I've been
thinking about you these last
fourteen months.

PAT
You're a year late and sixty-four-
thousand dollars short.

Kent manages a chuckle.

PAT (CONT'D)
My daughter and I are holding our
own. We'll be fine.

KENT
But your daughter needs a father.

PAT
(between bites)
She had one.

Pat watches Kent sip his coffee.

KENT
He was a good man, too.
(taking a bite)
If it weren't for that bullet he
took on the Fourth of July last
year...uh...

Kent observes Pat's slow nod.

PAT
 Tony did the best he could. And
 that's all he and I asked...of each
 other. Wendy'll tell you that, too.

KENT
 One thing's for sure: She doesn't
 need that TV show she's on.

Pat grits her teeth.

PAT
 Have you watched it?

Kent goes back to his food.

PAT (CONT'D)
 Kent...have you watched "Wendy's
 Wonderland?"

He keeps right on eating.

PAT (CONT'D)
 (wags finger at Kent)
 Yes or no?

Kent looks up from his tray...and gives Pat a puzzled look.

INT. EAST 7TH TRIPLEX - GIACOMARROS' LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Wendy sits at the piano, where she scribbles notes onto sheet
 music...when not trying out chords.

Pat comes out of her bedroom to watch Wendy.

PAT
 Honey...it's almost seven thirty.
 "I Love Lucy's" coming on.

WENDY
 Ma, it's all right.

Wendy tests some more chords...

WENDY (CONT'D)
 It's a rerun.

...and writes them down.

WENDY (CONT'D)
 They stopped making new episodes.

Pat strolls to the piano.

PAT

Are you gonna be okay?

WENDY

Well...I got to thinking about what you said at dinner...about one of your students...the one whose little sister fell asleep trying to watch "Wendy's Wonderland."

A touched Pat sits next to her daughter on the piano bench.

WENDY (CONT'D)

You remember "The Crazy Otto?"

PAT

Whose version? Johnny Maddox's or the Crazy Otto's original version?

WENDY

Both. I like 'em both.

Wendy writes additional notes down.

WENDY (CONT'D)

But I figured: "If 'Wendy's Wonderland' had a livelier theme song, nobody would fall asleep."

PAT

I love how you think.

The Two Giacomarros hug each other.

LATER

Wendy continues to sit at the old upright...but now, Pat sits at the family drum set.

WENDY

Ma...anytime you're ready, just gimme a fast beat.

Pat provides a fast, driving beat; four bars later, Wendy bangs out a rinky-tinky, sixteen-bar first strain of a rag that resembles "The Crazy Otto."

The next sixteen bars sound more like the second strain of Charles L. Johnson's "Dill Pickles."

Pat and Wendy eyeball each other in jubilation.

The TV host and her mom reprise the first strain...despite A KNOCK on the front door.

SOME MORE KNOCKS on the door stop the music.

Pat runs from the drum set...

PAT
I've got it. It's okay.

...and opens the door.

Dick and Jane stand on the other side.

PAT (CONT'D)
Dick! Jane! Come on in!

Both Kearnses look furious. They don't move an inch.

DICK
We're tryin' to watch "Wagon
Train!" Can't you two keep it down?

Wendy joins Pat, Jane, and Dick at the door.

JANE
Just what are you two trying to do,
anyway?

WENDY
Well, Mr. and Mrs. Kearns...Ma and
I are trying to get this new TV
show I'm on to the point where it
doesn't stink anymore.

A grinning Pat nods.

EXT. OLD SOUTH CHURCH - NIGHT

This is a striking Venetian Gothic landmark from the Reconstruction era.

INT. OLD SOUTH CHURCH GUILD ROOM - NIGHT

A large, stately, elegant, dark-paneled space.

Fionnuala (on banjo), Mary (on trumpet), Pat (on drums), and Wendy (on a tinny-sounding 1900-29 upright piano whose hammers stand exposed) form the core of a band that puts over a lively version of Wendy's rag.

No sour notes from Mary tonight!

OLLIE (40s) on clarinet, LENNY (50s) on bass fiddle, and FREIDA (40s) on trombone round out the band.

TWO OR THREE TECHNICIANS use a reel-to-reel tape recorder and other equipment to capture the sound.

The rag comes to an end...the musicians whoop it up.

FIONNUALA

Freida, Lenny, and Ollie...thank you for sitting in tonight.

FREIDA

You're welcome, Fionnuala.

Lenny and Ollie nod.

WENDY

(to Mary)

You sounded great on that trumpet.

MARY

Thanks...you'd be surprised how much you can learn in three months.

Mary removes a derby from a hat rack...

PAT

(points to Fionnuala)

How'd you arrange to get Old South Church for this recording session?

...and sticks the hat atop Wendy's head.

FIONNUALA

Well, Pat, a friend of ours in the AFM remembered how the Five Satins recorded "In the Still of the Nite" in a church basement last year.

OLLIE

And no lightning bolts came down from Heaven!

Most of the musicians laugh.

FIONNUALA

And he thought since a rhythm-and-blues song could come out of a church basement...maybe a church would be a great place to record a honky-tonk number.

Wendy plays a glissando.

Lenny sets his bass down to stroll over to her.

LENNY

Since your own show's theme song's gonna be on Side One, whatcha gonna put on Side Two?

WENDY

Thought you'd never ask!

Wendy offers up "Fur Elise."

Nine bars later:

OLLIE

Not on that thing!

WENDY

Wait! I'm just getting started!

And Wendy gives "Fur Elise" a shuffling, syncopated, soft-shoe beat...that perks up her colleagues' ears.

Pat nods her approval.

INT. WTAO-TV GREEN ROOM - DAY

On this first October Saturday, Howard, Art, Wendy, Grace, Jon, and Ann occupy the two sofas and two lounge chairs. (Ann and Wendy wear their "Wonderland" clothes.)

The seated occupants look concerned.

A smiling George stands toward the closed door.

GRACE

So, Wendy...you like going on an hour later than you did before?

WENDY

As long as Ann and Jon like it, then I like it, too.

Ann and Jon nod their approval.

Howard stares daggers at Wendy.

HOWARD

Don't forget..the Boston cupcake slogan is: "They're better than the ones Mother makes."

Wendy shakes her head "yes."

HOWARD (CONT'D)
As if yesterday's news wasn't
enough to deal with--

GEORGE
Howard...we're not using that
slogan anymore.

All eyes turn to George.

JON
My mother baked a mean cupcake.

GEORGE
Grocery stores in the area have
reported a fifty percent increase
in sales of our Boston creme-filled
cupcakes since "Wendy's Wonderland"
debuted two weeks ago.

Wendy, Jon, Grace, and Ann whoop it up.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Customers love it when Wendy says
those cupcakes are the end!

Howard looks relieved...Art looks stunned.

ART
George...you held out on us.

The door opens...Pat comes into the room.

GEORGE
I just wanted to save the good news
for last.

George moves to a spot near the TV set.

ANN
Pat, you're a science teacher. Did
you read the paper this morning?

PAT
(with a strong nod)
Sure did...I read where the
Teamsters elected a new
president...some guy named Hoffa.

Ann cringes.

INT. WTAO-TV STUDIO 3 - DAY

A DIFFERENT AUDIENCE OF CHILDREN than at the show's debut fills the bleachers.

They watch Ann sit at a table...where she tries to tape a long strip of paper to a beach ball.

A puzzled Wendy stands near the table.

WENDY

Hey, Daffodil, whatcha doing?

ANN

Well, Wendy, I'm tryin' to make my own satellite...my own Spotnik...or Spootnik...or whatever in th' world they call it.

WENDY

I believe you mean Sputnik.

ANN

I just wanna get th' last laugh on them Russians.

Some bleacher kids murmur.

WENDY

Here. Let me help you.

Ann nods while Wendy picks up a second long strip of paper.

Wendy tapes this long strip to the beach ball so that the new strip's on the opposite side of the first one.

ANN

Ya got two more t' go.

WENDY

(lifts beach ball)

Daffodil...I'm afraid this won't work as a satellite.

Some audience members groan.

ANN

But th' fella on TV said Sputnik was th' size of a beach ball.

WENDY

It is...but we need a sphere that's got some density to it.

A hopeful Ann nods.

WENDY (CONT'D)
And stronger rods, too.

LATER

Wendy and Ann bend four clothes hangers straight...then glue the resulting rods to a basketball.

Ann tries to pick up the new creation...the rods slide off.

ANN
Oops.

WENDY
Let's let the glue harden first.

ANN
Wendy, we've only got half an hour.

Laughter erupts from the bleachers.

LATER

Ann wears a welder's helmet while she solders a clothes hanger-cum-metal rod onto a bowling ball.

Wendy (in a similar helmet) holds the former hanger in place.

WENDY
(facing TV cameras)
While Daffodil and I are working with this bowling ball...you in the studio and you at home get to watch this Bugs Bunny cartoon.

The bleachers erupt in cheers.

ANN
Wish I could watch.

LATER

The three balls rest off to the side onstage.

Ann and Wendy flank Jayne, who holds a ventriloquist's figure in each hand: OZZIE and HARRIET.

All three occupy chairs midstage...and all three wear neckworn mikes.

WENDY

So, Jayne, you got interested in ventriloquism after watching Paul Winchell and Edgar Bergen on TV.

JAYNE

That's right.
 (voicing Ozzie)
 Hey, Jayne! Don't forget about Jerry Mahoney!
 (in her real voice)
 You're right, Ozzie.

ANN

That's impressive!

JAYNE

Well, thank you, Daffodil.

ANN

Ya welcome!

JAYNE

(voicing Harriet)
 Jayne...you gotta credit one other person. Now you know that.
 (using her real voice)
 Now who might that be, Harriet?
 (in her Harriet voice)
 You gotta stop forgettin' about good ol' Charlie McCarthy.

Jayne nods at Harriet.

The loudspeakers BLAST OUT "Wendy's Wonderland's" new theme song...a la the Old South Church recording session.

WENDY

Well...that's it. We had a ball this morning, didn't we?

The youngsters in the bleachers whoop it up.

WENDY (CONT'D)

Let's hear it for Daffodil and this morning's guest, Jayne Houser!

Applause rings out from the audience.

A smiling Jayne sets Harriet and Ozzie down.

WENDY (CONT'D)
 Thanks for watching! See you next
 week! Bye, everybody!

STUDIO AUDIENCE #2
 BYE, WENDY!

Jayne waves at the cameras.

Ann yanks her flowery hat off and waves it at the cameras.

Wendy doffs her top hat and waves it at the cameras.

INT. WTAO-TV STUDIO 3 CONTROL BOOTH - DAY

Art, George, Grace, Howard, and Pat look ecstatic.

GRACE
 That's it! I'll never write another
 song again!

George and Art top it off with a handshake.

EXT. EAST 7TH STREET TRIPLEX - DAY

Pat and Wendy stroll homeward in their Sunday clothes...duds
 that include light jackets due to the cool weather.

The Two Giacomarros look a bit nervous as they watch the Two
 Mastrangelos and the Two Kearnses come out of the triplex.

Jane gathers Dick (he holds a tambourine), Angelo, and Ana
 Maria (she wields maracas) into a huddle on the sidewalk.

All four wear light jackets, too.

JANE
 They're coming.

Jane's colleagues nod in agreement.

JANE (CONT'D)
 Dick, do you remember the chant?

DICK
 Course I do, Jane!

JANE
 Ana Maria?

Ana Maria points to her own forehead.

ANA MARIA

Yeah!

JANE

How about you, Angelo?

ANGELO

Did Samuel Adams brew beer?

Jane and Ana Maria laugh.

As Wendy and Pat approach the front door, their four neighbors stand in front of it.

Pat and her daughter come to a halt.

ANA MARIA, ANGELO, DICK, JANE
HIP HIP! HOORAY! HIP HIP! HOORAY!
HIP HIP! HOORAY! HIP HIP! HOORAY!

Ana Maria and Dick shake their instruments during the chant.

Wendy's and Pat's jaws drop as the foursome applaud.

DICK

Wendy, we saw your show yesterday!
And we are impressed!

ANA MARIA

And we loved that little
ventriloquist you had on there.

WENDY

Jayne Houser!

JANE

We hope you have her on again.

WENDY

If things work out between her, her
folks, and Channel 56, she'll be
back on our show.

Angelo extends his hand to Wendy...

ANGELO

Keep up the good work.

...then looks to Pat for approval.

PAT

It's all right!

Wendy and Angelo shake hands...and turn the handshake into a nice, warm hug.

Dick and Ana Maria shake their instruments again; the twosome, Jane, and Pat cheer themselves hoarse.

INT. OLIVER HAZARD PERRY SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

Teddy and thirty (or so) other classmates sit in quiet before classes begin.

Glenda sits at her desk.

Wendy hurries into the room...and sets off a cheer-filled standing ovation.

WENDY

Well...I'll be...a...

Wendy remains erect...the cheering dies.

GLEENDA

Guinevere Marie Giacomarro, you done good!

TEDDY

Yeah! Ya done good!

WENDY

Well...uh...thanks.

(taking her seat)

I had lots and lots and lots of help, I'll tell you that.

Wendy's classmates and Glenda sit down.

Classmate VIOLET POWERS (10) eyeballs the young star.

VIOLET

We wanna go to Channel 56 and see your show in person.

Wendy's eyes light up.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

We wanna see you eat a Boston creme-filled cupcake on TV. While we're in the studio audience.

Some students AD LIB their agreement with Violet.

TEDDY

Yeah, Wendy! Can ya get us some tickets?

WENDY

Just name the Saturday.

A few students look confused.

WENDY (CONT'D)

Okay...just number the Saturday.

Cheers break out again!

EXT. SOUTH BOSTON HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

A cool, drizzly October Tuesday morning in Beantown.

A 1952 Ford two-door sedan settles into a space in a small, circular parking lot in front of the east facade.

Pat (the driver) jumps out of the car...light jacket and all. She slings her purse over her shoulder.

Along the way to school, she opens her umbrella.

INT. SOUTH BOSTON HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS' LOUNGE - DAY

Pat (umbrella closed) strolls into a functional, no-frills, utilitarian space.

Result: Cheers from Kent and FOUR OR FIVE OTHER TEACHERS...all of whom raise their coffee cups in salute.

PAT

Wait just a minute...what'd I do?

IRENE BEARDEN (50s) points to Pat.

IRENE

You're raising a very talented daughter, that's what!

PAT

Uh...thanks, Irene. That's nice of you to say that.

KENT

All of us watched "Wendy's Wonderland" last Saturday.

Pat grabs a mug and fills it with coffee.

IRENE

For the first time, at that!

CHARLES LEPCIO (40s) nods while he sips. (He almost spills his coffee.)

CHARLES

We liked Wendy and Daffodil's opening skit.

PAT

The one about Sputnik.

KENT

That's right, Charles.

Charles sets his coffee cup down on a table.

CHARLES

I liked how they made Sputnik look not so scary--

A glum-looking ALBEN CAUDILL (60s) rushes into the room.

ALBEN

Do you people realize what those Russians did over the weekend?

Alben's fellow instructors nod.

ALBEN (CONT'D)

Well, then, why aren't you mad? Especially you, Patricia! You're a science teacher, for pity's sake!

PAT

Alben...we watched "Wendy's Wonderland" last Saturday.

ALBEN

What's that?

IRENE

It's a new children's show on Channel 56.

ALBEN

You're watching a children's show?

PAT

I watched it at the studio...I'm also a co-executive producer.

Irene looks impressed.

Charles points to Pat, yet eyeballs Alben.

CHARLES
Pat's daughter's the
host...hostess...emcee...the star.

Pat takes a sip.

KENT
That's the truth.

Kent saunters over to Pat for a kiss...but she holds her free hand up to block him.

INT. SOUTH BOSTON HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

Pat and her students look fired up now!

PAT
Okay, students...open your "Modern
Biology" textbooks.

Cosmo, Gretchen, and their fellow students do just that.

PAT (CONT'D)
Now...turn to Chapter Four.

Classmembers turn pages.

PAT (CONT'D)
We're going to learn about the
structural basis of life.

Cosmo raises his hand.

PAT (CONT'D)
Uh...yes, Cosmo?

COSMO
(puts hand down)
Speaking of life, Mrs.
Giacomarro...my little sister and I
like how they breathed new life
into "Wendy's Wonderland."

Some students titter.

Others laugh out loud.

Pat shows an impish grin.

Gretchen raises her hand.

PAT
Gretchen, you've got the floor.

GRETCHEN
(lowers hand)
I've gotta agree with Cosmo.

Gretchen and Cosmo exchange smiles.

GRETCHEN (CONT'D)
My little sister liked the new
theme song so much I can't get her
to stop humming it.

PAT
It's out on a record now.

GRETCHEN
Soon as my sister and I get home
from our classes, I'm gonna...

Now Gretchen shows an impish look.

GRETCHEN (CONT'D)
I'd better keep it a secret.

The whole class and its teacher bust out in laughter.

INT. WTAO-TV CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Howard sits at the head of the table in this afterschool session...Ann, Art, Dan, George, Grace, Jon, Pat, and Wendy sit around the table (or someplace else in the room).

The station owner shuts the door...

HOWARD
I told Joe to get back here as soon
as possible.

...and sits back down.

DAN
He's interviewing Bob Cousy.
Remember, Howard?

Howard groans.

HOWARD
Why should it take that long?

WENDY

Well, Mr. Caldwell...after scoring nine thousand, four hundred eighty points in four hundred eighty-five regular-season games...Bob Cousy's got a lot to talk about.

Art chuckles...Pat looks proud.

WENDY (CONT'D)

Especially after being fitted for a championship ring, too.

Dan stares daggers at Wendy.

DAN

You're the one.

WENDY

Huh?

DAN

I caught a glimpse of "Wendy's Wonderland" last Saturday...where they showed a film of you at the state capitol building.

Wendy shakes her head "yes."

DAN (CONT'D)

You even interviewed our governor, Foster Furcolo.

Pat and Art light up cigars.

WENDY

Yes, I did, Mr. Stanton.

DAN

And you got him to answer the question about the State of Massachusetts adopting a broad-based sales tax.

Grace, Pat, and Art applaud.

DAN (CONT'D)

I've spent the last nine months trying to get an answer out of him about that issue.

PAT
 Dan, you've got to admit: Wendy's a
 good interviewer.

JON
 That's for sure!

Dan stands up.

DAN
 (pointing to Wendy)
 Are you trying for my job?

Wendy shakes her head sideways.

GRACE
 Dan, sit down.

DAN
 Grace, you're not my boss!

HOWARD
 DAN, SIT THE HELL DOWN!

A seething Dan takes his seat.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
 Now...let's talk some more about
 "Wendy's Wonderland."

Art's, Pat's, and Wendy's eyes light up.

ART
 Howard, things are looking up.

George beams.

Ann holds up a paper sack.

ART (CONT'D)
 This show's getting more and more
 popular.

ANN
 Just look at this...

Wendy's TV sidekick dumps the sack's contents on the
 table...fan letter after fan letter.

ANN (CONT'D)
 Some people tell me they like the
 show's spontaneity.

Some people nod...a few pick up some fan letters.

JON

Turns out making guest stars out of the girls who failed the audition was a great idea.

(picks up a letter)

One down and four to go.

Pat, Art, and Wendy smile...George grimaces.

JON (CONT'D)

Four guests to go...not three.

ART

Wait 'til the ARB ratings come in.

Howard and George nod in anticipation.

JON

And we'll get a better picture of how the show's doing.

ART

(takes a puff)

And George tells me the stores can't keep enough Boston creme-filled cupcakes stocked.

Cheers ring the room.

GEORGE

Art isn't lying!

Pat takes a contented puff.

ART

Anybody got any ideas on how we can keep it going?

HOWARD

Especially with a new station signing on around here on November twenty-sixth.

Seven people stare Howard down.

Art doesn't.

The door opens...Joe bursts in.

His mouth flies open when he realizes all the chairs have bodies in them.

GEORGE

Joe...you can have my seat.

JOE

Nah. That's okay. I'll stand.

Howard stares in anger at Joe, who lights up a cigarette.

WENDY

The NBA starts its new season tonight...the Celtics will be in St. Louis to play the Hawks.

Joe's nod is slow.

JOE

It was a lengthy interview with Bob Cousy...very lengthy.

HOWARD

And a very expensive long-distance telephone call.

JOE

I was lucky Bob was in his hotel room in St. Louis.

Jon and Pat chuckle.

GRACE

Joe, we're talking about possible future "Wendy's Wonderland" shows.

JOE

(taking a puff)

Oh...kay.

WENDY

Wouldn't it be great to have Bill Russell come on the show one Saturday morning when the Celts are in town?

Seven people stare Wendy down in disbelief.

Pat (the exception) shows a slight grin.

George grits his teeth.

JOE

Wendy...what's wrong with Bill Sharman? Tom Heinsohn? What about Bob Cousy?

Wendy puts on a grin...

WENDY

Well...I thought the Celtics
wouldn't've won it all last season
if Russell hadn't joined 'em...

...as Pat's grin becomes a smile.

PAT

Wendy's right.

George and Joe stare Pat down.

Howard leaves his seat to stride toward Joe.

HOWARD

What are you smoking this time?
They'd better be Hit Parades!

Joe shows Howard the offending pack (or box).

It's not Hit Parade.

JOE

At least they're not Newports or
Filter Spuds.

A few people chuckle.

JOE (CONT'D)

If these Kents are good enough for
Bob Cousy...they're good enough for
me, too.

Howard shrugs his way back to his seat.

JOE (CONT'D)

At least they've got the same white
filter as Hit Parade.

A livid Howard throws up his hands.

INT. WTAO-TV GREEN ROOM - DAY

An hour before showtime...the door's closed.

Ann (back in her floral dress and flower-laden hat) sits on a
sofa...where she reads the sports section of today's "Boston
Globe" and smokes a big cigar.

ANN
 Bill Sharman...Tom Heinsohn...Bob
 Cousy...Bill Russell...

She sets the paper down and takes a puff.

ANN (CONT'D)
 This had better work.

The door opens...a fired-up Wendy (back in her tuxedo and top hat) steps in.

WENDY
 It's gonna be a great...

Her eyes go wide.

WENDY (CONT'D)
 Miss Surkont?

ANN
 Wendy...my house has a gas stove,
 too.

INT. WTAO-TV STUDIO 3 - DAY

The set boasts extra seating today.

It needs it: Wendy's classmates and Glenda are the studio audience.

Glenda, Teddy, and Violet look the most excited.

Ann and Wendy (both hold shotgun mikes) stand before the cameras.

WENDY
 (into her mike)
 We'd like to thank Mrs. Glenda
 Fitzsimons' fifth-grade class from
 Oliver Hazard Perry School for
 joining us in the studio audience
 this morning.

The studio audience applauds.

Ann turns to the show's host.

ANN
 (into her own mike)
 That's ya class, ain't it?

WENDY
That's right, Daffodil! Best
friends I've ever had!

Ann looks deflated.

Wendy puts her free arm around her TV sidekick.

WENDY (CONT'D)
Along with you, too! And Ma!

ANN
Aw, shucks!

Glenda and the rest of her class cheer.

WENDY
Studio audience...viewers at
home...are you ready for today's
"Wendy's Wonderland" guest?

The bleachers erupt in pandemonium.

INT. WTAO-TV STUDIO 3 CONTROL BOOTH - DAY

A seated Jon directs...Grace and an excited Pat hold hands.

Howard takes heavy breaths.

A grim George tries to pace the floor...Art catches the look.

ART
George, relax. It's only a test
balloon.

GEORGE
I need a pin right now!

INT. WTAO-TV STUDIO 3 - DAY

Wendy and Ann hold hands...and their shotgun mikes, too.

WENDY
Boys and girls...and men and
women...say "hello" to our guest
today...Gwendolyn Tatum!

Gwendolyn strides onto the stage and triggers young applause.
A second or so later, Glenda adds her claps.

Ann and Wendy separate so that they flank Gwendolyn.

WENDY (CONT'D)
 Hi, Gwendolyn! Welcome to "Wendy's
 Wonderland!" Glad you're here!

Wendy points her mike toward Gwendolyn.

GWENDOLYN
 Hey, Wendy and Daffodil, it's a
 pleasure to be here.

ANN
 Gwendolyn, we've heard so much
 about ya. Tell us somethin' 'bout
 ya'self.

Gwendolyn nods.

INT. WTAO-TV STUDIO 3 CONTROL BOOTH - DAY

George joins Howard in heavy breathing.

Grace bites her lip while she still holds hands with Pat.

HOWARD
 You don't see Rex Trailer doing
 that on his show.

ART
 And he's got ten times more
 opportunities than Wendy does.

Howard counts on his fingers.

INT. WTAO-TV STUDIO 3 - DAY

Wendy and Ann continue to flank their guest...and continue to
 hold mikes.

ANN
 (to Gwendolyn)
 Me and Wendy are gonna get outa the
 way so you can do ya specialty.

Ann gives her shotgun mike to Gwendolyn.

GWENDOLYN
 (accepts mike)
 Thanks, Daffodil.

WENDY
 And now, to give you folks a taste
 of her singing magic, here's
 Gwendolyn Tatum!

The studio audience breaks out in applause as Ann and Wendy move aside.

The kudos fade...Gwendolyn holds the mike in one hand and snaps the fingers of her other hand.

After a few beats, Wendy joins in with rhythmic handclapping. Some classmates clap along, too.

Now Gwendolyn launches Nat King Cole's "Send for Me."

GWENDOLYN
(singing into mike)
*When you want/A true lover,/Send
for me./Send for me./You'll never
want/Any other./Send for me./Send
for me.*

INT. WTAO-TV STUDIO 3 CONTROL BOOTH - DAY

Pat and Grace no longer hold hands.

In fact, Pat snaps her fingers...and receives an icy stare from Grace.

INT. WTAO-TV STUDIO 3 - DAY

The studio audience is abuzz.

Wendy eyeballs her classmates and the teacher as Gwendolyn and Ann stand midstage.

WENDY
(into her mike)
All right, studio audience! Who's
got some questions for Gwendolyn?

An enthusiastic Violet raises her hand.

WENDY (CONT'D)
Stand up, Violet! I'm coming over!

Violet bolts up...Wendy hurries over to her.

Violet puts her hand down.

WENDY (CONT'D)
(points mike at Violet)
Violet, what's your question for
our guest?

VIOLET
 (into mike)
 Gwendolyn, I hear you're famous for
 telling tall tales.

Gwendolyn's is an enthusiastic nod.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
 What's your favorite one?

Today's guest flashes a huge smile.

GWENDOLYN
 (into her mike)
 How'd you like to hear about Pecos
 Bill?

Glenda and the kids applaud.

TEDDY
 Now ya talkin'!

Glenda shoots Teddy a look...he covers his mouth.

The applause dies down...Gwendolyn strolls the stage as she
 becomes a storyteller.

GWENDOLYN
 Now...you know Pecos Bill was born
 the same way you and I were born.

Some children nod.

GWENDOLYN (CONT'D)
 His dad was a cowboy and his mom
 was a cowgirl. Anyway...they were
 traveling out West with their
 eighteen children when Pecos Bill
 was born.

INT. WTAO-TV STUDIO 3 CONTROL BOOTH - DAY

Jon and his colleagues listen with all their might.

GEORGE
 That kid better not be lying.

ART
 George...would you feel better if I
 told you I was there when Pecos
 Bill was born?

Jon chuckles.

George strides to Jon and stares him down.

EXT. SOUTH BOSTON HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

STUDENTS (some in costume) stream out of the building on this warmer-than-usual Halloween.

Pat strolls toward her Ford sedan when Kent hurries over to her side.

KENT
Great show last Saturday!

Pat turns around to spot Kent.

PAT
Well...thank you, Kent!

The twosome stop short of her 1952 car.

KENT
Really liked Gwendolyn Tatum.

A huge smile forms on Pat's face.

KENT (CONT'D)
(trying to sing)
*When you want/A true lover,/Send
for me./Send for me./You'll never
want/Any other./Send--*

Pat clears her throat.

KENT (CONT'D)
You know...I really want to see
you.

PAT
Well...you're seeing me right now.

KENT
No...I mean somewhere other than
South Boston High School.

A FEW OTHER TEACHERS make their way toward the parking lot.

PAT
Wendy and I are fine.

KENT
At least let me take you out to
dinner one night.

Pat opens the Ford's left-side door.

Kent looks hopeful as she turns to him.

PAT
Fine...but on one condition.

His eyes light up.

KENT
Uh...what's the condition?

PAT
Wendy comes along with us.

A deflated Kent saunters away...but:

PAT (CONT'D)
Kent...if you liked Wendy on TV,
wait 'til you see her in person.

He stops in his tracks and stares into space.

EXT. WTAO-TV STUDIOS - DAY

Third Saturday in November...a cool, misty day.

Wendy (in her tux, top hat, and overcoat) and Pat (light jacket over her dress) escort BILL RUSSELL (23, basketball tall, Black) toward the chapel-TV station entrance.

Bill wears a lion costume!

All three try to brave the filthy Boston air.

BILL
Wendy, I've heard a lot about your
show...don't worry. It's all good.

WENDY
Thanks, Mr. Russell. Really means a
lot hearing it from you.

PAT
And thank you so very much for
being the guest today on "Wendy's
Wonderland."

BILL
Pat, the pleasure's all mine.

The threesome make the entrance. Wendy rings the doorbell.

After a few seconds, Shamus opens the door...

SHAMUS
Good morning, Wendy, Pat, and...

...and looks staggered when he notices Bill in that lion costume.

WENDY
Mr. Doolittle, say "hello" to our mystery guest.

Pat nods.

Bill waves at Shamus.

INT. WTAO-TV STUDIO 3 - DAY

THE BLEACHERS TEEM WITH CHILDREN!

It's a different crowd than before...a happy, excited group.

Ann and Wendy (both in their TV outfits) hold shotgun mikes and eyeball the studio audience.

ANN
(into her mike)
Boys 'n' girls in th' studio audience...ya ready for t'day's mystery guest?

STUDIO AUDIENCE #4
YEAH!!

Wendy turns to the cameras.

WENDY
(into own mike)
You viewers at home, get ready for today's guest, too!

Ann looks toward the cameras.

ANN
Maybe ya saw our guest at th' Franklin Park Zoo.

A buzz takes over the bleachers.

INT. WTAO-TV STUDIO 3 CONTROL BOOTH - DAY

Howard, Grace, and George look antsy.

Director Jon tries to hide a grin.

Art and Pat smile.

INT. WTAO-TV STUDIO 3 - DAY

Wendy moves a bit closer to the cameras.

WENDY

Let's give a nice Beantown welcome
to...the world's tallest
lion...Felton the Famous Lion!

The kids applaud as Bill (still in his lion outfit) strides onto the stage.

Bill tries a roar.

The clapping dies down...Wendy and Ann approach (and eventually flank) Bill.

WENDY (CONT'D)

Felton, welcome to "Wendy's
Wonderland." So glad you're here.

Wendy holds her mike toward Bill, who tries another roar.

ANN

Wendy...don't lions crawl around on
all fours?

WENDY

Well, Daffodil, you don't ask the
world's tallest lion to crawl
around on all fours.

The bleacher youngsters bust out in laughter.

WENDY (CONT'D)

You just move outa the way.

Ann and Wendy move aside.

Bill oh-so-slowly takes his costume off.

The more he takes off, the more astonished the kids look.

And when the children see Bill (mustache and all) in his street clothes, they cheer themselves hoarse.

Wendy moves to Bill's side.

WENDY (CONT'D)

Let's give a nice "Wendy's
Wonderland" welcome to our mystery
guest...the star center for the
defending NBA champion Boston
Celtics...Bill Russell!

Pandemonium reigns in the studio!

Ann comes over to Bill's side...and looks straight up.

He shakes hands with the host and her sidekick.

INT. WTAO-TV STUDIO 3 CONTROL BOOTH - DAY

Jon looks amused...Art and Pat shake hands.

Grace looks dumbfounded.

Howard slaps his hands on his forehead.

George seethes.

GEORGE

You're gonna have to find another
sponsor!

George heads out of the room.

Art reaches out to stop George...to no avail.

EXT. EAST 7TH STREET TRIPLEX - DAY

Light rain moves through Boston.

INT. EAST 7TH TRIPLEX - GIACOMARROS' BATHROOM - DAY

Early in the morning...a pajama-clad Wendy finishes brushing
her teeth, then picks up a laxative bottle.

She holds up the bottle and pretends the mirror in front of
her is a TV camera.

WENDY

Next time you feel irregular, try
Haley's M.O., the laxative that
makes you...rock around the clock.

Wendy sets the laxative bottle down, then picks up a can of
shave cream.

She pumps some cream out of the can...and applies the lather
to her face!

INT. EAST 7TH TRIPLEX - GIACOMARROS' KITCHEN - DAY

Pat (in her work clothes) hovers over her stove to cook breakfast in this modest kitchen when Wendy comes in...face still lathered up.

Mother's eyes go wide.

PAT

What in the world are you doing
with that lather on your face?

Daughter flashes a huge smile.

WENDY

Well, Ma...I got to thinking:
"Maybe Gillette might wanna become
our show's next sponsor."

EXT. OLIVER HAZARD PERRY SCHOOL - DAY

Teddy and Wendy (both bundled up to fight the light rain) stroll toward the building.

TEDDY

I still don't believe it.

WENDY

Teddy...it happened.

TEDDY

Wendy...let me get this
straight...ya went and had Bill
Russell on ya show?

WENDY

You saw it. You said so.

A still-confounded Teddy nods.

TEDDY

Ya snuck him into th' buildin' in a
lion's costume?

WENDY

Yep...sure did.

TEDDY

Don't ya realize you were takin' ya
life into ya little hands?

WENDY

It was worth it!

The two fifth-graders reach the front entrance.

TEDDY

But...

WENDY

You liked Gwendolyn, didn't you?

TEDDY

Yeah...but she ain't six feet, nine-and-a-half inches tall.

One student opens the door for the other.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

And doesn't wear a mustache!

INT. ART'S OFFICE - DAY

Art sits at his desk; Howard and Jon stand on the other side.

ART

Have a seat, you two.

Jon takes a seat across from Art...Howard stays erect.

HOWARD

You know, Art, you're damn lucky George has committed to the next two "Wonderland" shows.

Art shakes his head "yes."

HOWARD (CONT'D)

After that, he's out.

ART

That's why I'm trying to line up another sponsor.

Howard leans on Art's desk.

HOWARD

We wouldn't be in this mess if you hadn't let Wendy and Patricia sneak Bill Russell onto the set.

ART

(wags finger at Howard)
Now just wait a minute--

HOWARD

Nobody...especially our precious viewers...was ready for that.

JON

Howard...Howard...you've got to admit...that was a great stunt.

HOWARD

But George ended up cussing from the time he left the control booth to the time Shamus let him out of the building.

ART

That's George's tough luck.

Howard bangs a fist on Art's desk.

ART (CONT'D)

It's a new day, Howard.

HOWARD

He's trying to sell cupcakes!

ART

Yeah...and everybody likes cupcakes. Especially people in North Boston, East Boston, here in Southie, and Roxbury, too.

A seething Howard strides around the office.

JON

He's right, Howard.

HOWARD

Button it up, Jonathan!

Jon shakes his head sideways.

ART

It's a new day, Howard...especially with nine students integrating Central High School in Little Rock--

HOWARD

Let Dan worry about that!

ART

Nobody minds when Amanda Randolph plays a maid on "The Danny Thomas Show."

Howard stops at Art's desk...

ART (CONT'D)
And nobody minds when Eddie
Anderson plays Jack Benny's valet.

...and bangs his fist on it again.

JON
I thought his name was Rochester.

ART
But we can't have Bill Russell be a
guest on a Saturday morning
children's TV show.
(standing up)
He gave the Celtics all they needed
to win the NBA title...and Wendy
wanted to celebrate that.

Art and Jon watch Howard seethe.

ART (CONT'D)
It's true.
(sits back down)
One thing about kids: They don't
worry about someone else's color.

Now Howard takes a seat.

ART (CONT'D)
Unless us adults teach 'em how.

The boss grits his teeth.

HOWARD
You better find us another sponsor
for Wendy's show by
Thanksgiving...or Channel 56 will
be the next deceased UHF station!

ART
(pointing to Howard)
I was working on that when you
barged in...I mean came in.

The station owner rests his chin on his fists.

JON
As long as the new sponsor's slogan
doesn't involve mothers cooking or
baking anything, I'm on board.

Art smiles at Jon.

INT. OLIVER HAZARD PERRY SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

Thanksgiving decorations adorn Glenda's classroom on this late Tuesday afternoon.

Glenda wheels a large kitchen cart into the classroom.

On the cart: A large sack and a large picnic cooler.

GLEENDA

Children...since you've been such a great class these last two months...

Wendy, Violet, Teddy, and Co. look attentive.

GLEENDA (CONT'D)

I say we mark Thanksgiving break with something special!

Glenda's students cheer from their seats.

The cheers grow louder when the teacher oh-so-carefully empties the sack onto her desk.

The loot: Thirty-three (or so) packages of Boston creme-filled cupcakes.

Fifth-graders jump out of their seats to grab treats.

GLEENDA (CONT'D)

One package per student.

TEDDY

No problem, Mrs. Fitzsimons!

Glenda opens the cooler...which houses thirty-three (or so) pint cartons of milk...all on ice.

GLEENDA

And one carton of milk per student.

Some students nod as they grab a carton each.

GLEENDA (CONT'D)

Now...take your treats back to your desk...and enjoy.

Glenda grabs a carton of milk for herself...as well as a package of cupcakes.

Teacher and students alike chow down at their desks.

VIOLET
 (taking a bite)
 Wendy, you were absolutely right.
 These are the end!

WENDY
 Thanks, Violet.

A grinning Glenda eyeballs Wendy.

GLEENDA
 (taking a swig of milk)
 I think you've started something.

Wendy shrugs.

EXT. EAST 7TH STREET TRIPLEX - DAY

A breezy, windy Thanksgiving Day in Beantown.

INT. EAST 7TH TRIPLEX - GIACOMARROS' LIVING ROOM - DAY

Pat and Wendy bang out a duet on the old upright when A KNOCK on the door interrupts the music.

PAT
 (running to the door)
 It's all right! I've got it!

Wendy leaves the piano and meets Pat at the door.

The door opens...and reveals Angelo and Ana Maria.

PAT (CONT'D)
 Mr. and Mrs. Mastrangelo...come
 right on in!

Ana Maria and Angelo shake their heads "no."

ANGELO
 Actually...Mrs. and Miss
 Giacomarro, we're inviting you to
 come upstairs to our place.

ANA MARIA
 And indulge in our big Thanksgiving
 dinner.

Wendy and Pat eyeball each other, then Ana Maria and Angelo.

ANGELO

Mr. and Mrs. Kearns are already in our apartment.

ANA MARIA

And they've brought something to our big feast.

Pat's is a slow nod.

ANGELO

We'd love to have you.

ANA MARIA

It's a break from TV dinners.

PAT

Invitation accepted!

The foursome break out in smiles.

WENDY

Mr. and Mrs. Mastrangelo...how do you feel about me and Ma bringing some Boston cupcakes to the feast?

ANA MARIA

That would be...the end!

Angelo, Pat, and Wendy laugh.

INT. EAST 7TH TRIPLEX - MASTRANGELOS' LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ana Maria, Angelo, Dick, Jane, Pat, and Wendy feast away at a leaf-enlarged table in the middle of this cozy, well-furnished room.

Angelo eyes Wendy.

ANGELO

You know...the way you do commercials reminds me of the way Arthur Godfrey and Garry Moore do commercials.

ANA MARIA

They don't like to stick to the script, that's for sure.

WENDY

Well, I'm just having fun...with the whole show.

Some heads nod.

DICK
 (between bites)
 Speakin' of show, Wendy...how did
 ya get Bill Russell to c'mon there?

WENDY
 It was his idea.

PAT
 (with a nod or two)
 That's the truth. He'd watched
 "Wendy's Wonderland," liked it, and
 called WTAO-TV about being a guest.

JANE
 That took a lot of guts.

WENDY
 That's right, Mrs. Kearns.
 (takes a swig)
 He even decided to call Mr.
 Cuniberti instead of Mr. Caldwell.

PAT
 What's more, Jane...Bill himself
 was the one who thought of wearing
 a disguise to get in.

Ana Maria rises from her seat.

ANA MARIA
 Hey, everybody, don't be shy about
 helping yourselves to seconds.

She grabs her plate and heads for the kitchen while some
 guests AD LIB their agreement.

ANGELO
 Or thirds.

Dick and Jane laugh.

PAT
 I left Raleigh, North Carolina to
 get away from stuff like
 that...some people having to go to
 great lengths to hide their...

DICK

Pat...if you're from North
Carolina, where's ya Southern
drawl?

PAT

Soon as I hit the Jackson College
campus at Tufts University, I
decided to work hard to stop
sounding like a hillbilly.

Ana Maria comes back with a plate full of vittles.

PAT (CONT'D)

Kinda like what Patricia Neal did.

Dick grins.

PAT (CONT'D)

My folks and I are still at odds
because they don't want to believe
George Washington Carver was
actually a chemist and a botanist.

A nodding Wendy takes a bite...Ana Maria sits back down.

WENDY

No wonder I don't get to see my
North Carolina grandparents.
(another bite)
I wonder what they'd do if they
ever saw Bill Russell on TV.

INT. WTAO-TV CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Howard (in his usual spot), Pat, Jon, Ann, Art, Grace, and
Wendy try to sit around the table with RALPH SCHEINBLUM (38).

HOWARD

Ladies and gentlemen, we dodged a
huge bullet according to last
month's local ARB ratings.

Wendy, Pat, Jon, Art, and Ann cheer.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

Our November sixteenth installment
of "Wendy's Wonderland," where Bill
Russell was the mystery guest, led
the way.

The cheers increase.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
 WTAO-TV gained one-and-a-half
 ratings points over October 1957.

Those around Art congratulate him.

Wendy receives kudos from people who flank her.

Pat and her daughter shake hands.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
 Let's keep up the
 momentum...especially since WHDH-TV
 signed on a week ago today and is
 the new full-time ABC station here
 in Greater Boston.

ANN
 So...that means WNAC-TV has gone
 full CBS.

PAT
 And that means they'll be better
 equipped to fight WBZ-TV and their
 NBC shows.

Jon nods...Howard gulps.

HOWARD
 So...Art and Wendy and Pat...keep
 right on bringing mystery guests to
 your show.

ART
 We will, Howard.

WENDY
 And if they can come in costume,
 that'll be even better.

The conference room busts out in applause.

HOWARD
 Now...who's got other ideas on how
 to keep the "Wendy's Wonderland"
 momentum up?

Nobody else speaks out for a few seconds...until:

ANN
 Will this be with or without a
 sponsor?

GRACE

Jeez, Ann...whaddya think?

Ralph shows a big smile.

GRACE (CONT'D)

You know "The Nat King Cole Show's"
on life support...'cause it still
doesn't have a sponsor.

Some people nod.

GRACE (CONT'D)

And NBC extended his show to half
an hour.

HOWARD

But "Wendy's Wonderland" has a new
sponsor.

(stands up)

Ladies and gentlemen, meet Ralph
Scheinblum...the marketing director
for the Clicquot Club Company.

All eyes turn to Ralph.

Howard sits back down...Ralph waves.

JON

Clicquot Club...as in ginger ale?

GRACE

No, Jon. That's Clicquot Club...as
in witches' brew.

Some of Grace's colleagues laugh.

RALPH

But, actually, we do make ginger
ale...and have since 1885, when we
were founded in Millis.

Art and Howard look contented.

RALPH (CONT'D)

And we're proud to take over
sponsorship of "Wendy's Wonderland"
from the Boston Baking Company.

WENDY

Don't worry, Mr. Scheinblum. I like
ginger ale as much as any kid.

A smiling Pat nods and nods.

RALPH
That's great to hear, Wendy!

HOWARD
Now, Ralph...I understand you've got some ideas for making "Wendy's Wonderland" even more successful.

Ralph's smile grows bigger.

ART
Okay, Ralph. Let 'er rip.

The marketing director jumps up from his seat.

RALPH
Now...ladies and gentlemen, we at Clicquot Club are impressed with "Wonderland's" spontaneity.

Wendy and her mother beam.

RALPH (CONT'D)
Our executives watched several kinescopes over the past week.

ANN
See that, Grace?

Grace's nod is listless.

RALPH
With that in mind...a few changes will steer the show into an even higher trajectory.

HOWARD
More UHF TVs in the market will turn the trick, too.

Some participants chuckle.

RALPH
Art...Pat...and, of course, Wendy...this is what we've come up with to improve the show and get it on great footing.

PAT
Okay.

RALPH
First of all...Wendy, we need you
to ditch the tux.

Wendy looks flabbergasted.

RALPH (CONT'D)
You're a little girl. Not a little
boy.

ART
Ralph, just hold on. That tuxedo is
part of Wendy's identity.

PAT
(wags finger at Ralph)
That's the sober truth.

WENDY
And besides...I liked how Bronson
Scott looked wearing a tux on "The
Mickey Mouse Club."

RALPH
Bronson Scott isn't on "The Mickey
Mouse Club" anymore.

Wendy grits her teeth.

JON
Tell me something, Ralph: How do
you feel about Milton Berle
dressing up in a gown on TV?

RALPH
That's different.

ART
No, it ain't.

Art stares daggers at Ralph.

ART (CONT'D)
Ever seen any of Shirley Temple's
movies? Like the one she did with
Jack Oakie and Charlotte Greenwood?

Ralph shakes his head "no."

GRACE
It's gonna be our Saturday night
movie this coming Saturday night.

RALPH

Okay.

ANN

Mr. Scheinblum, let's hear some more of your ideas.

RALPH

Gladly.

Ralph looks around the room.

RALPH (CONT'D)

No more Gwendolyns...no more Bills.

A chill falls over the space.

RALPH (CONT'D)

Too controversial. That's what our studies say.

WENDY

Ma, that's just not right!

Pat bolts from her seat to stare Ralph down.

PAT

Sir, let me ask you something.

RALPH

Go ahead.

PAT

Do you really, really believe the Pledge of Allegiance?

Ralph casts that deer-in-the-headlights look.

EXT. FANEUIL HALL - DAY

Wendy, Pat, Ann, and the film crew from the Fenway Park shoot gather on the east side of this three-story icon...one of Boston's choicest landmarks.

Everyone wears heavy duds on this first December Wednesday.

Pat gestures her cohorts into a huddle.

PAT

You know how close we came to not having a sponsor?

Camera operator CLEM ACKERMAN (40s) grits his teeth.

CLEM

How close, Mrs. Giaco...Pat?

PAT

If Clicquot Club hadn't jumped in, Art was gonna call up that cigar store he likes on Park Square and offer them sponsorship of the show.

CLEM

Boy, that's desperation.

The cold climate doesn't hide the city's dirty air...as PEDESTRIANS hold their noses or grimace.

WENDY

At least they're still letting us do this.

Some Channel 56 heads nod.

ANN

Ralph did like your "little girl on the street" interviews.

The Channel 56 huddle breaks.

A SOUNDPERSON hands Wendy a shotgun mike as Clem adjusts his camera.

Ann tries to get OTHER PEDESTRIANS to come the crew's way...to no avail.

PAT

Clem, are you ready?

CLEM

Uh...I don't really know.
(grinning)
I've got a better idea...and it's better than bein' in this foul air.

Wendy hands the mike back to the soundperson.

INT. FANEUIL HALL GREAT HALL - DAY

An impressive second-floor space featuring a large overhead painting at the front.

Pat and Ann sit in the front row, where they watch the film crew catch Wendy's interview with AN ELDERLY MAN.

WENDY
 (into mike)
 Hi! I'm Wendy Giacomarro, from
 "Wendy's Wonderland" on Channel 56.
 WTOA-TV.

ELDERLY MAN
 What's that?

WENDY
 It's a show that comes on Saturday
 mornings at eleven thirty.

ELDERLY MAN
 I don't have a TV.

WENDY
 It's all right. I just wanna ask
 you a question, if that's okay.

ELDERLY MAN
 Why?

WENDY
 One of our show's segments is
 what's called "the little girl on
 the street" interview...sorta like
 "the man on the street."

ELDERLY MAN
 What's your question?

WENDY
 What does freedom mean to you?

Wendy points the mike toward the elderly man.

ELDERLY MAN
 You mean you don't know?

Wendy can't hide her chuckles.

INT. WTOA-TV STUDIO 3 - DAY

Ann's back in her Daffodil outfit...but this time, Wendy
 wears a cute dress.

The twosome stand alongside Mary, who holds her trumpet on a
 stage where five other instruments rest off to the side.

MARY
 Wendy...what in blue blazes
 happened to your tuxedo?

WENDY
It's in the cleaners.

Laughs come from A NEW AUDIENCE OF YOUNG'UNS.

WENDY (CONT'D)
(into her shotgun mike)
Mary, why don't you tell everybody
how you got interested in being a
multiinstrumentalist?

Ann points her own shotgun mike at Mary.

MARY
Well...last year, I was watching
"Ted Mack and the Original Amateur
Hour," and they had a contestant
named Georgetta Hartman.

INT. WTAO-TV STUDIO 3 CONTROL BOOTH - DAY

A seated Jon directs...Grace, Pat, and Ralph look concerned.

PAT
(to her colleagues)
Art's missing something good.

INT. WTAO-TV STUDIO 3 - DAY

Wendy and Ann grow attentive.

MARY
Georgetta came outa Bryan, Ohio.
She was nine years old last year,
and...get this...she played nine
different instruments the night I
saw her.

WENDY
Wow!

ANN
I can't even play one.

Some bleacher kids laugh.

MARY
So I told my mom: "Mom, I'd like to
play all those instruments like
that Georgetta on TV."

Wendy nods in understanding.

MARY (CONT'D)
And...the rest is history.

Ann points her mike to herself...

ANN
Mary, why don'tcha tell all th'
folks whatcha wanna play while ya
here on th' show?

...then directs the mike toward Mary again.

MARY
Well...since today marks sixteen
years since the attack on Pearl
Harbor...I'd like to play..."The
Stars and Stripes Forever."

The studio audience looks excited.

INT. WTAO-TV STUDIO 3 CONTROL BOOTH - DAY

Art enters the booth.

Ralph, Pat, Jon, and Grace breathe relief.

INT. WTAO-TV STUDIO 3 - DAY

A RECORDING of "The Stars and Stripes Forever" blares out of
the loudspeakers.

A three-bar intro leads to Mary playing her trumpet for the
next sixteen bars...the first strain.

She repeats the first strain...on flute this time.

Wendy and an equally-impressed Ann eye each other.

Mary toots an alto sax during the second strain...a sixteen-
bar affair.

Now the march changes keys...and Mary handles the next thirty-
two bars on trombone.

INT. WTAO-TV STUDIO 3 CONTROL BOOTH - DAY

Pat and Art show pride...Ralph and Grace show disbelief.

Jon jumps up to march in place!

INT. WTAO-TV STUDIO 3 - DAY

The next twelve bars (a transition) find Mary playing "eeny, meeny, miney, mo" between a tuba and a chromatic harmonica.

She plays the tune's final thirty-two bars on harmonica.

Mary bows to grateful applause.

She puts her mouth harp down as Wendy and Ann return to her side.

WENDY

Let's hear it one more time for
Mary McClanahan!

Once kudos erupt one more time, today's guest waves to the camera, then to the studio audience.

The applause dies...Mary hoists her tuba to blow a few notes.

If necessary, Wendy and Ann help Mary lift that tuba.

INT. WTAO-TV STUDIO 3 CONTROL BOOTH - DAY

Art, Grace, Jon, Pat, and Ralph watch Ann and Wendy congratulate Mary as the show wraps up.

Howard comes in.

GRACE

Howard, you missed it.

PAT

Mary McClanahan tore up the place.

The station owner nods.

HOWARD

I just got back from my office. I had to help take phone calls. The switchboard wouldn't stop!

Art turns to Ralph.

ART

He's right.

RALPH

How did the callers feel about all the changes?

HOWARD

Ralph...they weren't too happy!

Ralph catches Jon's I-told-you-so look.

EXT. FILENE'S - DAY

Christmas 1957 is seven days away.

Today: Cold, windy, and overcast...the air remains funky.

Ann, Pat, and Wendy stroll alongside Clem and his film crew toward this iconic store.

All wear heavy clothes.

WENDY

I'm still thinking about our December seventh show...when Mary rescued us.

CLEM

Ya got that right, Wendy.

ANN

Those interviews at Faneuil Hall could've worked out better.

Wendy nods at Ann.

PAT

But still, Ann, you never know what you'll really get with that kind of a format.

ANN

True...but I just about died when that little boy Wendy interviewed told her:

(tries to mimic a boy)

"I think freedom means you don't hafta drink your milk anymore!"

SOME PEDESTRIANS hurry by Wendy and Co.

ANN (CONT'D)

(in her real voice)

Ralph got a kick out of it, though.

Wendy and the TV entourage reach the store's front entrance.

Clem sets his equipment aside; Ann grabs it.

CLEM
Wendy, we can't keep takin' these
walkin' tours!

Clem opens the door for his cohorts...

CLEM (CONT'D)
We're takin' our lives into our
hands!

...as A MAN DISGUISED AS SANTA snatches a purse from A WOMAN
at the front entrance.

INT. FILENE'S THIRD FLOOR - DAY

The film crew shoots footage of Wendy browsing Filene's well-
stocked, festive-looking toy section.

Pat and Ann look enthused.

Wendy doesn't.

The "Wonderland" host inspects doll after doll after doll
alongside OTHER YOUNG CUSTOMERS and THEIR PARENTS before she
turns to the adults in the group.

WENDY
Sorry...couldn't find anything that
sends me.

Clem grits his teeth.

WENDY (CONT'D)
I'm not really a doll kinda girl.

Pat nods at Clem.

INT. WTAO-TV STUDIO 3 CONTROL BOOTH - DAY

Howard, Art, Pat, Grace, Ralph, and a seated Jon watch film
of Wendy's visit to Filene's on a monitor.

Jon takes deep breaths...Ralph and Grace look horrified.

Howard seethes.

RALPH
Four days before Christmas.

GRACE
Yeah...if Filene's doesn't have it,
then it isn't made.

Pat turns to the others.

PAT
What can I say? That's my daughter.

Art nods in understanding.

INT. WTAO-TV STUDIO 3 - DAY

ANOTHER NEW GROUP OF CHILDREN watches the same film from another monitor.

Wendy and Ann (back in their TV dresses and neckworn mikes) shrug from midstage before the film ends.

Then:

WENDY
(to the cameras)
I learned a big lesson this week.

ANN
Whatcha learn, Wendy?

WENDY
Sometimes...you don't always know what you want.

Some bleacher kids sigh.

ANN
Yeah...ya right.

Ann and Wendy hold hands for the cameras.

WENDY
Daffodil and I will come right back with a Bugs Bunny cartoon.

ANN
But first...get a load o' this message from Click-Quote Club...

Wendy shakes her head "no."

ANN (CONT'D)
I mean Clicquot Club ginger ale.

The studio audience cheers...Ann breathes relief.

LATER

Wendy and her sidekick now use shotgun mikes.

The twosome flank today's guests: Laurey (who holds a guitar) and Judy Ann (with an accordion against her chest).

WENDY
 (into her mike)
 Laurey and Judy Ann, welcome to
 "Wendy's Wonderland."

ANN
 (into her own mike)
 We're so very glad ya here.

Ann points her mike at Laurey.

LAUREY
 The pleasure's all ours.

A smiling Judy Ann nods.

WENDY
 How did you two get together?

Wendy points her own mike toward Judy Ann.

JUDY ANN
 Laurey and I became friends after
 trying out for "Wendy's
 Wonderland." I found out she loves
 acting...and loves playing guitar.

Laurey blushes.

LAUREY
 And I found out Judy Ann's been
 taking accordion lessons.

Judy Ann shakes her head up and down.

JUDY ANN
 I watched "The Miss America
 Pageant" this year and saw Miss
 California play the accordion.

WENDY
 Lorna Anderson!

LAUREY
 That's right!

JUDY ANN
 Anyway...I gave up baton twirling
 and decided to try music.

JUDY ANN(CONT'D)

And I wanted to play an instrument
I couldn't fumble.

Some bleacher kids laugh.

ANN

Good one, Judy Ann!

WENDY

Well...Daffodil and I are gonna
step aside and let you two
entertain the kids here in the
studio and the viewers at home.

Wendy watches Ann nod.

ANN

And now, everybody...here are
Laurey Heryford and Judy Ann
Kendis!

The two TV stars step aside to crowd applause.

When the clapping ends, Judy Ann and Laurey play "Young
Love..." the Sonny James way.

After a two-bar intro:

LAUREY

(singing)

*They say for every boy and
girl,/There's just one love in this
whole world./And I know I've found
mine.*

JUDY ANN

(adds her own vocals)

*The heavenly touch of your
embrace/Tells me no one could take
your place/Ever in my heart.*

LAUREY

Young love!

JUDY ANN

Young love!

INT. WTAO-TV STUDIO 3 CONTROL BOOTH - DAY

Pat, Grace, Ralph, Howard, Art, and a seated Jon study Laurey
and Judy Ann.

Art and Pat look impressed...Ralph looks skeptical.

HOWARD

I remember them from the audition.

GRACE

Yeah...one broke down and cried,
and the other dropped her baton.

HOWARD

And the baton wasn't even on fire!

Jon eyeballs Howard and Grace.

JON

You wanna leave those two alone?

Grace and Howard trade grins.

INT. EAST 7TH TRIPLEX - GIACOMARROS' LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Wendy and Pat sit on the sofa while they watch "Meet the Press" when they hear A KNOCK on the door.

Daughter turns the TV DOWN...mother gets the door.

Pat's eyes go wide when she sees Kent on the other side.

KENT

Happy first Sunday of 1958!

PAT

Uh...come on in, Kent!

Kent does just that; Wendy meets him and Pat at the door.

KENT

Pat...I'd still like to take you
out to dinner.

PAT

Okay...but, just as I said, on one
condition: Wendy comes along with
us.

Kent's is a slow nod.

WENDY

I know just the place.

Four eyeballs stare at Wendy, who shuts the door.

EXT. FILENE'S - NIGHT

A FEW PEOPLE hurry into the building.

INT. FILENE'S EIGHTH FLOOR - MAIN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

CUSTOMERS take up half the spacious seating in this stylish eatery known for its high ceiling.

Kent, Pat, and Wendy dine at a middle table.

KENT

Wendy, I've got to hand it to you:
You sure know how to pick 'em.

WENDY

(taking a bite)
Thanks, Mr. Post.

KENT

The chicken pot pie was a great
idea.

(takes a bite)
Sallie would've been proud.

Pat lifts her coffee cup...only to set it back down.

PAT

Kent...who's Sallie?

Kent looks around the room...then at Wendy...then around the room again.

PAT (CONT'D)

It's all right. You don't have--

KENT

She was my late wife...and she
loved shopping here at Filene's.
Loved working here, too.

The threesome push their plates aside.

KENT (CONT'D)

A car that had bad tires hit her
while she was coming home from work
during that nor'easter on March
eighteenth, 1956.

PAT

I'm sorry it happened.

WENDY

I'm sorry, too.

KENT

Me, too.

WENDY

I remember being teased by a coupla classmates when Pa died...in a police chase on the Fourth of July that year.

Wendy rests her chin on her fists.

WENDY (CONT'D)

I mean...cops are supposed to win all the chases...all the shootouts.

PAT

At least the classmates who teased you are gone.

WENDY

Yeah...those two shouldn't've tried to swim the Charles River.

Wendy grabs her plate again to chow down.

WENDY (CONT'D)

They banned swimming in it back in '55.

KENT

Pat...you and Wendy have worked hard to bring yourselves closer together after Tony died.

PAT

It hasn't been easy...but we've tried to incorporate a little of Tony in ourselves.

WENDY

Make him proud.

Kent shakes his head "yes."

KENT

I see your point...I wanna make Sallie proud, too...the same way she made me proud.

PAT

Kent...whaddya say you and Wendy and I be friends...at least for right now? See how it goes?

Kent and Pat move their plates closer to themselves.

PAT (CONT'D)
 And if it works out between us two
 adults, we can be lovers.

Kent takes a swig of coffee, then looks around the place.

KENT
 Fair enough.

The threesome hold hands.

KENT (CONT'D)
 Now...Wendy...I wish they'd let you
 wear a tuxedo on TV again.

Wendy's is an enthusiastic nod.

INT. WTAO-TV CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Howard (in his usual spot), Ann, Art, Grace, Jon, Pat, Ralph,
 and Wendy crowd around the table.

Fan letters and a full folder dominate the table.

HOWARD
 The ARBs have come out.

Ralph looks excited...the others show high concern.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
 Our station's ratings have stalled.
 Same for those of our pet project.

Wendy grits her teeth...Art, Ann, and Jon give heavy nods.

Grace blows an imaginary bubble.

And Pat shrugs.

RALPH
 I know this is April Fools Day,
 Howard...and I hope you're April
 fooling.

HOWARD
 I'm not fooling.

Howard slides the folder Ralph's way.

GRACE
 (to Ralph)
 Exhibit A.

Ralph peruses the folder's contents.

He winces while Wendy opens a fan letter.

Wendy hands the letter to Ann.

WENDY

Maybe you'd better read this.

ANN

(recites letter)

"Dear Daffodil, you look awful familiar. Don't you have a cooking show every weekday morning right there on Channel 56?"

Ann nods...Jon opens a letter, but hands it to Wendy.

JON

This one's pretty colorful.

Wendy checks the letter out...and grins.

ANN

(resumes reading)

"My mother tried making one of your casseroles one day. She and Father and I and my brother got sick."

Fourteen eyes stare Ann down. She slams the letter down.

ANN (CONT'D)

I told the viewers to use fresh ingredients!

PAT

Ann...maybe the mother went to the bathroom when you said that.

Laughter fills the conference room.

ART

Wendy, why don'tcha read your letter?

WENDY

Okay, Mr. Cuniberti!

(recites away)

"Dear Wendy: Please, please, PLEASE put your tuxedo back on! PS: And your top hat, too!"

Wendy holds the letter aloft for all to see.

Ralph freezes.

WENDY (CONT'D)

This letter was written by a thirty-five-year-old man...who used all sixty-four colors in that large box of Crayolas to write this letter.

Wendy sets the letter on the table...Howard bangs the table.

WENDY (CONT'D)

It's five days until Easter Sunday.

GRACE

So...

WENDY

I think it's time I made like Pontius Pilate instead of Jesus.

Art's mouth hangs open.

PAT

And give the viewers what they want instead of the advertisers.

Pat observes Wendy's nod.

ART

Wait 'til I tell my Rosa.

Howard grits his teeth...Ralph rests his chin on his fists.

RALPH

Ann...you got any sour wine in that kitchen of yours? And a sponge?

ANN

Wouldn't you prefer ginger ale?

INT. WTAO-TV STUDIO 3 - DAY

A 1935-58 electric organ stands at midstage...where Ann (in her TV duds) gazes at Wendy, who wears a large raincoat.

ANN

Hey, Wendy, I know ya like to be prepared...but it ain't gonna rain 'til t'morrow.

WENDY

That's true, Daffodil. I'm just modeling this one so that I'm ready for tomorrow.

YET ANOTHER DIFFERENT GROUP OF KIDS watches from the bleachers. This one's more diverse than prior audiences.

ANN

It's two sizes too big!

Most of the bleacher children laugh.

WENDY

Okay...you win...I'll take it off.

Wendy yanks her raincoat off...and reveals...her tuxedo!

The studio audience goes wild.

INT. WTAO-TV STUDIO 3 CONTROL BOOTH - DAY

Art and Pat cheer...Grace and Howard nod...Jon applauds.

And Ralph throws up his hands.

INT. WTAO-TV STUDIO 3 - DAY

Wendy adds her top hat to her look while she addresses the studio audience.

Both she and Ann use shotgun mikes.

WENDY

Boys and girls in the audience...you boys and girls at home, too...are you ready to meet someone who plays for the Red Sox, the Celtics, and the Bruins?

STUDIO AUDIENCE #7

YEAH!

ANN

He must be one heck of an athlete.

WENDY

He's a heck of a player, all right.

A few audience members laugh.

WENDY (CONT'D)

He's here in person this time...so
let's give a great big "Wendy's
Wonderland" welcome to...none other
than...John Kiley!

Under hearty applause, John comes onstage...in a Red Sox
baseball cap, a Bruins hockey sweater, Celtics warmup pants,
and sneakers.

He tips his cap to the kids when Ann and Wendy flank him.

ANN

John, welcome t' "Wendy's
Wonderland." Glad ya here.

Wendy points her mike toward John.

JOHN

I'm glad to be here, too. And it's
a pleasure to--

Grace bursts from the control room and onto the stage.

GRACE

(wags finger at John)
YOU!

JOHN

Wait a minute--

Ann sets her mike down.

GRACE

You're the one!

Grace lunges toward John...Ann grabs her from behind.

Some bleacher kids look flabbergasted...others look delighted
as Grace strains to free herself from Ann.

ANN

Grace, put ya six-shooter away!

GRACE

John Kiley, if it wasn't for you, I
could've gotten the Red Sox'
organist job five years ago!

JOHN

Grace...I had nothing to do with
that. It was the team's decision.

GRACE
DON'T YOU DARE GIVE ME THAT!

Wendy and John move toward the organ...Ann wrestles Grace back toward the control booth.

WENDY
Believe it or not, Grace is our station's musical director.

John and Wendy take seats at the organ, where she sets her mike aside.

JOHN
(with a nod)
Let's do that song you played for me at Fenway Park.

Wendy nods before she and John kick into an organ duet.

INT. ART'S OFFICE - DAY

Ann, Art, Dan, Grace, Howard, Joe, Jon, Pat, and Wendy stand around Art's desk in a closed-door get-together.

A chill dominates the room.

Howard finds a wall to bang on it.

Jon gravitates to Art, who dabs his own moist eyes.

ART
We tried...we really did.

JON
Yes, we did...WHDH-TV signing on at Channel 5 was too much for us.

ART
Not only is "Wendy's Wonderland" canceled...WTAO-TV is canceled. For good.

JON
I hope Wendy herself stays on TV.

Howard continues to eye the wall.

HOWARD
We're Number Fifty Eight!

The boss buries his head in his hands at the same wall.

Dan and Joe eyeball each other.

DAN
Now that Howard's going to sell
Channel 56, I don't know if I've
got a future here in Boston.

JOE
I know one thing, Danny...

Joe catches Dan's withering look.

JOE (CONT'D)
I mean Dan...I'm gonna see if I can
catch on at WMEX.

DAN
You've got to be kidding.

JOE
I've been listenin' to that Arnie
"Woo Woo" Ginsburg. Great
DJ...wanna jump on his night train.
And I get to smoke what I wanna.

Wendy, Pat, Grace, and Ann try to huddle up.

WENDY
I'm sorry I let you down.

Ann and Pat look floored.

GRACE
No, you didn't! I let you down! I
let this whole station down!

Wendy shakes her head "no."

ANN
Wendy...Wendy...listen.

Ann holds hands with Wendy.

ANN (CONT'D)
You're a real professional. I had a
ball working alongside you. You've
got nothing to be ashamed of...and
if you need a reference, I'll be
proud to be your reference.

Wendy's jaw drops.

PAT
 You're telling the truth, Ann.
 (to Wendy)
 Ann's right...in fact, I'm very
 proud of you. All of us in this
 room are so doggone proud of you.

A KNOCK on the door takes place.

GRACE
 You've got a future here, Wendy. A
 big, big future. Don't let a sunken
 ship let you down.

WENDY
 Thank you...Miss Surkont...Miss
 Kennedy...thank you, Ma.

Pat, Ann, Grace, and Wendy make it a group hug.

Closest person to the door opens it...RUSS MERCER (40s) worms
 his way in, briefcase and all.

RUSS
 Is Wendy Giacomarro in here?

The hug breaks...Wendy jumps up and down.

RUSS (CONT'D)
 There you are! Stay right there!

WENDY
 Okay!

Russ finds Wendy.

RUSS
 I'm Russ Mercer. I'm the general
 manager at WNAC-TV, Channel 7. And
 I've got an offer for you.

Wendy looks floored.

RUSS (CONT'D)
 We took note of "Wonderland" at
 Channel 7 and realized it was a
 kidvid show adults even watched and
 appreciated...so...

The others crowd around Wendy and Russ.

RUSS (CONT'D)

Wendy...we'd like to offer you your own Sunday afternoon interview show. One o'clock...you get forty-five minutes to yourself.

HOWARD

I'll be a...

Wendy looks around the room.

RUSS

Arlene Francis made it out of here.
Mike Wallace made it out of here.
And with your tremendous talent,
you'll make it out of here, too.

Pat, Art, and Ann AD LIB their encouragement.

WENDY

I'll do it!

The room breaks out in cheers.

LATER

Pat and Wendy sit across the desk from Art; Grace, Howard, Russ, Jon, Joe, Ann, and Dan crowd around the desk.

JON

Wendy...take me with you.

Wendy, Russ, and Pat sign a contract when Art reaches into his cigar box for a Churchill-size stogie.

He offers the cigar to Wendy!

ART

Good luck to you at Channel
7...have a cigar.

WENDY

Wait a minute! I'm only twelve!

Laughter takes over among Wendy's cohorts.

PAT

Don't mind if I do.

Pat accepts Art's cigar.

They all watch her fire up that stogie and take a puff.

WENDY
(to those behind her)
Ma's still got a gas stove.

A laughing Ann shakes her head "yes."

INT. WNAC-TV STUDIO 1 - DAY

A CAPACITY CROWD fills theater-type seating in this almost-cavernous space.

Rosa and Pat sit next to each other in the front row.

Wendy and Art sit in plush chairs across from the audience. Both wear neckworn mikes.

The twosome shake hands.

ART
You're gonna do fine.

Wendy flashes a huge smile.

Art and Wendy wave at Rosa and Pat, who both wave back.

Wendy waits for the O.S. SIGNAL, then:

WENDY
It's Sunday, September seventh,
1958, and welcome to..."The Wendy
Giacomarro Show."

A RECORDING of something a la David Rose's "Holiday for Strings" plays over the PA system while the crowd applauds.

WENDY (CONT'D)
Good afternoon, everybody. Glad you
could join us. This is our very
first show...and today's guest is
one of the biggest reasons I'm in
this business.

Wendy and Art smile at each other.

WENDY (CONT'D)
He was a veteran of newspapers,
radio, and television...and he
spent fifty-five years in
communications.

Art nods.

WENDY (CONT'D)
Ladies and gentlemen...say "hello"
to the former general manager at
the now-defunct WTAO-TV, Channel
56...Art Cuniberti.

Applause breaks out again.

WENDY (CONT'D)
Mr. Cuniberti, thanks for coming on
the show.

ART
Pleasure's all mine, Miss
Giacomarro.

WENDY
Now that you're here, why don't you
tell us how you got started in the
communications industry?

Art strokes his chin.

ART
I've gotta condense fifty-five
years into forty-five minutes.
(slaps his cheek)
Make that forty-two minutes...I
forgot about the commercials.

FREEZE FRAME as Wendy wags a friendly finger at Art.

FADE OUT.

THE END