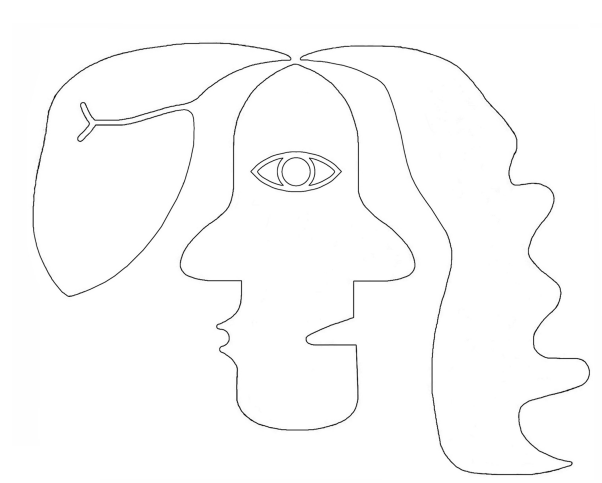


JUST LIKE YOU



Genre: Drama

Logline: After a suicide attempt hospitalizes her, a young poet discovers her doctor uses patients to test black market drugs.

Tag Line: If the mind fits, shrink it?

Brian Spellman
bspellmaniac@gmail.com

EXT. THE LONG RESIDENCE - NIGHT

WANDA LONG, 23, dons a bathrobe, sits on curb of her parent's lit house. Her '56 Karmann Ghia, a rusted jalopy parks on an American Flag sidewalk. The driver's side door drips blood.

Wanda singes her slit wrists with a cigarette. Blood pulsates from wrist to face each time she takes another drag. Pensive deliberation, she taps 9-1-1 on her iPhone. One Mississippi.

9-1-1 OPERATOR

9-1-1. Emergency. State your location.

WANDA

Twenty-eight West Street, L-A.

9-1-1 OPERATOR

Is that Los Angeles?

WANDA

Yes, Los Angeles.

9-1-1 OPERATOR

Please state a number to call if we're disconnected.

WANDA

2-1-3-4-5-6-4-2-8-9

9-1-1 OPERATOR

What is the problem?

WANDA

You better send an ambulance. I cut myself.

9-1-1 OPERATOR

You cut yourself? When?

WANDA

Now. Now!

9-1-1 OPERATOR

How did you do that?

WANDA

Shaving my legs. Does it matter? I'm bleeding to death in front of my parents' house.

9-1-1 OPERATOR
Are you alone?

WANDA
I'm always alone -- about to faint.

9-1-1 OPERATOR
What is your name?

Wanda sets her iPhone down, butts cigarette in wrist, winces, flops back. 9-1-1 repeats her last question each time louder!

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM, HOSPITABLE HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Chief of Ward Psychiatry, DR. ALBERT STODDARD, 55, enters a post-surgery waiting room. He eyes his Rolex Submariner and dons a black/gold trimmed Boris vicuna coat, matching scarf.

Wanda rests on a gurney, a SUICIDE WATCH tag. Shiny red and violet bruises accent derailments of train track stitches.

Stoddard caresses Wanda's ratty hair, cues NURSE BUFFY, 40.

DR. STODDARD
She looks familiar. Do we have a dossier on a Wanda Long?

NURSE BUFFY
We do Dr. Stoddard. From Dr. Baker.

DR. STODDARD
Release straps when she wakes up as goodwill. I'll invest in her welfare via my customized plan. For tonight give her 2mg of Lorazepam for sleep.

NURSE BUFFY
Dr. Stoddard, L-A-P-D left us Champagne. She's in isolation.

DR. STODDARD
(irritated by vexing news)
Again? Have three orderlies with Haldol on call before I see her.

NURSE BUFFY
We'll have both of their paperwork ready tomorrow morning.

DR. STODDARD
Eight A-M Nurse Buffy. Wanda matters.

INT. DR. STODDARD'S OFFICE - DAY

AMBULATORY PATIENTS like Wanda wear hospital underwear, a tan pair of slippers with white rubber treads, clashing with her teal/white striped sleeveless gown, snaps in back, no sash.

HOLD PATIENTS also wear BLUE RUBBER BANDS on both wrists.

Stoddard stands behind a desk. He sports a tight, pinstripe, three-piece Brioni suit. Wanda ambles, makes him wait. She inspects a grid of Ivy League diplomas and many California Board commendations and photos. She snaps the robe to neck.

WANDA

Some ego museum you got Stoddard. But this Escher fish/dove, nylon Berber carpet has to go. Tacky you.

DR. STODDARD

Sit Ms. Long. May I call you Wanda?

WANDA

You may not.

Stoddard sits, Wanda does not. She semicircles his desk back and forth to spite. Stoddard studies Wanda's thick dossier.

DR. STODDARD

It says here you overcame substance addiction, as a teen no less? Yes?

WANDA

I couldn't stop so I quit.

DR. STODDARD

I can't find your diagnosis.

WANDA

Upset.

DR. STODDARD

(self-assured)

That won't do. 51-50 three-day hold plus 52-50 fourteen-day hold. You'll stay sixteen more days while we look.

Wanda stops, clasps hands on the front of Stoddard's desk.

WANDA

Then I want a fucking Certification Review Hearing! A-S-A-P mister!

DR. STODDARD
Of course. Upset. Anxious?

WANDA
I'm in here. What do you think?

DR. STODDARD
No, before here, had you unreasonable worries about work, school, relationships, or health?

WANDA
All my worries are reasonable.

DR. STODDARD
Are you troubled by an inability to control the worry?

WANDA
I worry others trouble to control me.

DR. STODDARD
More days than not do you feel sad, disinterested, guilty, or worthless?

WANDA
I feel check-listed. Ask of not at me.

DR. STODDARD
Concerning your suicide attempt, what was your trigger?

WANDA
Healers use gun metaphors on patients?

Stoddard looks away first, fidgets, stands, his desk rests on a raised floor, writes in Wanda's chart pronouncing --

DR. STODDARD
Panic disorder. P-D.

WANDA
Disorder?

DR. STODDARD
We needn't specify. We can add a med.

WANDA
I've done Flintstones dope since ten.
Pills stink like Wilma's suppository.

Stoddard walks around to a wall-mounted Yale commencement address photo and feather dusts it. He thumbs his suspenders.

DR. STODDARD
Have you been perceptively diagnosed
with a panic disorder before?

WANDA
No.

DR. STODDARD
My point.

WANDA
Do you sample these pills?

DR. STODDARD
I'm not mentally ill.

WANDA
If only mentally ill people take them,
then maybe the pills are to blame?

DR. STODDARD
We address the complexities of
feelings. We prefer not to blame.

WANDA
I don't feel.

DR. STODDARD
Then panic disorder, atypical, P-D-A.

WANDA
(whispers reflectively)
I start another typical atypical stay?

INT. DR. STODDARD'S OFFICE - DAY

Stoddard speaks over ornate Vertu Signature Cobra smartphone.

DR. STODDARD
Perfect. Long is lewd, unsound of
judgment, not mind. Cuts as well.

DR. STODDARD
She has a whisker on her chin mole,
otherwise cute. We do have a problem.
Long with Champagne remains dangerous.

DR. STODDARD
I cannot discharge Champagne without
provoking suspicion. The first
prerogative is to reassign roommates.

DR. STODDARD
I'll coax Wanda to the pill after I
idle her parents, as an olive branch.

INT. NURSES WINDOW - DAY

NURSE HO, petite Chinese, 25, checks in CHAMPAGNE, African
American, 70, shouting. Wanda talks with NURSE FRANCIS, 40.
Champagne glares at Wanda, looks back. Nurse Ho holds chart.

CHAMPAGNE (BACKGROUND)
Ain't no cell phone neither? This is
prison!

NURSE HO (BACKGROUND)
And we have to keep your purse.

CHAMPAGNE (BACKGROUND)
Then count my currency here, where I
can see if I can count on you.

Sings and swings a fist from side to side.

CHAMPAGNE (BACKGROUND)
"One bottle of pills on the wall, one
bottle of pills --"

Wanda peeks in to see the woman behind the voice.

NURSE FRANCIS
(double-take to Wanda)
See someone ask something?

CHAMPAGNE
"-- Yuh take it down and pass it
around, no bottles of pills."

WANDA
(to Francis)
Just watching the time.

CHAMPAGNE
You gonna commit me for my perty
voice? I don't need no white witch
doctors. I get cured at my black-only
church. We Rectumry Catholics!

NURSE FRANCIS
Back so soon Champagne? Here to see
Dr. Stoddard again?

Champagne hears "Dr. Stoddard" that strangely disarms her.
Everyone stares briefly at her arrested sense of silence.

CHAMPAGNE
(hypnotized and stoic)
Kindness knows no kind. My friend Dr.
Stoddard says so. I remember.

Wanda looks puzzled as Champagne stares, slows phonetics.

NURSE FRANCIS
(to Wanda)
We should all take a page from Dr.
Stoddard's bestselling Magnum Opus,
"Personable Neurology To Live By."

INT/EXT. PERIMETER WINDOW, L.A. SKYLINE - NIGHT

Wanda eyes her cuts then stares out over Metropolitan LA.

WANDA
I'm sick of mental illness. Pie
charts, complex/compound terms,
queries, checklists, Jane Doe X-rays.
Defined by experts. Defined by others.

DAN, 23, nears, lifts his dungarees. He eyes Wanda's cuts.

DAN
On the plus side, life doesn't add up?

WANDA
Too mucking futch! Love it. Voluntary?

DAN
Yes. You?

VOLUNTARIES wear their own clothes, less belts or shoelaces.

WANDA
Are you nuts Myopia Man? Committed.
Cut long gives surgeons fits. Aspirin
speeds blood.

DAN
Five in the left, one in the right.
You're right-handed. Why?

WANDA
Private indiscretions publicized.
Raunchy romance stuff. You?

DAN
Impulsive?

Wanda flips palms up and raises/lowers to indicate a scale.

WANDA
No, considered, and conflicted.

DAN
Multiple personalities?

WANDA
Fragile but one. A broken shoelace can
strangle me.

Dan surveys his missing laces, tips palms up, Wanda smiles.

DAN
I've been asked to look out for you.

Wanda turns, cocks an eyebrow at Dan, laughs at the mention.

WANDA
It started at Sanguine Psych among
women cutters. Our sewing circle, I-Ds
by pin stabs. I went by Mrs. Prick.

DAN
Suicide, installment style. I'm Dan.

WANDA
Wanda -- cuts lengthwise -- Long.

INT. PSYCHIATRISTS CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

The ward psychiatrists include both women and men, continue a meeting. A life-size Freudian VIENNA CIRCLE photo hangs. Doctors hold digital clipboards next to thick stacked paper dossiers that block one another's view during a conversation.

DR. DUNN
Al, how's the divorce going?

DR. STODDARD
Costly. The wife brought in a feisty
she-devil lawyer.

DR. SALLY GOLD
I hate chauvinist objectifying. "The wife." Sounds like the pipe wrench.

DR. STODDARD
Okay Ms. Gold, I own. My pipe wrench.

DR. SALLY GOLD
It's Dr. Gold. California divorce is tough on men. Then again, deserved.

DR. DUNN
Let's turn to a happier business.
Trade you McCabe for Long?

DR. STODDARD
Keeping P-D-A Long but will swap H-M-O O'Brien and P-P-O Page from I-C-U if you see me with uninsured Samson, raise one Champagne, and add a trust funder to be named later?

DR. DUNN
Samson's mine? Dispatch her to County.

Stoddard leans forward, past stacked dossiers to see Dunn.

DR. STODDARD
Her teeth have fallen out. She's a gummer, not a biter. So?

DR.DUNN
You bank on chameleons. Keep her and Champagne. How you tame betters me.

DR. STODDARD
Custom Care, my motto.

DR.DUNN
Throw in any orphans and I'll toast to your Champagne.

DR. STODDARD
To Champagne.

The two men shuffle through folders and make the switch.

DR. BAKER
How to close men. There's hope for us after all.

INT. WANDA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Wanda ignores a gentle hum for rise and shine.

NAMELESS NOISEMAKER (O.S.)
 Pills fill bills. Will still ill.
 Pills fill bills. Will still ill.
 Pills fill bills. Will still ill.

WANDA
 Who's the dick head?

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Wanda stomps into the hallway, passes walls that adorn in messy pastel art. She stops upon NAMELESS NOISEMAKER, 45, who lies sideways, extends his anxious hand. Wanda first extends, then retracts hers -- extends -- retracts -- extends and on.

ORDERLY TY, 40, pushes a mop over Peter Max DISCOVERY tiles.

WANDA
 (to Ty)
 Can't you muzzle or drug him shut?

NAMELESS NOISEMAKER
 (simultaneous)
 Pills fill bills. Will still ill.

Dan enters, scolds a puss to the Noisemaker who ignores him.

ORDERLY TY
 We use meds with precise diagnoses.

WANDA
 We? You's an Orderly. Where's Doc --

ORDERLY TY
 Doctor Stoddard reserves his custom menu for our most recalcitrant cases.

WANDA
 (in a servile black dialect)
 Why Ty, did you look that uppity?

ORDERLY TY
 Long, I have a long memory.

WANDA (V.O.)
 I hate feeling hate. Feeling nothing feels worse. I want to feel affection.

SUPER: TEN YEARS EARLIER

EXT. OUR EPIPHANY MIDDLE SCHOOL, ASPHALT RUNNING TRACK - DAY

Catholic eighth-grade girls sit and face a microphone stand podium. In bleacher seats, behind sit parents with faculty.

The graduates adorn plaid skirts, white button-down dickies, neckerchiefs, Kelly green berets, and black, polished shoes. Dour nuns in tunics perch atop thrones and face the audience.

PRINCIPAL SISTER KATE

Today's Commencement Address Reader
will be Class Essayist Wanda Long.

Lackluster applause amid darkening clouds. Mists cast a pall. Wanda, 13, pushes through to the stage as she kicks aside a podium and sneers at the throng. She barnstorms cadenced phrases into the microphone amps and jettisons an index finger to provoke parochial classmates and rally up support.

WANDA

(shouts and points)

I dream special to awake unique - just
like you. Just like you I hate dress
code, widget homework. Just like you I
hate Catechism, kneeling and Bibles!
Just like you I hate Teacher's Pets on
student councils - false power to
train future phonies. Just like you I
hate fake hall monitor finks, spies of
Truant Officers whom to you I despise!

Mist becomes rain. Umbrellas pop. Chairs stomp the wet track. Faculty moves to disrupt her. Other students block them. Ten selected pupils point back to Wanda, join in a rowdy chorus.

STUDENTS AND WANDA CHANT

(simultaneous)

Just like you WE hate Cap'n Crunch!
Ads for every vice! Just like you WE
hate adults who call us kids! Just
like you WE hate shrink thinks pink
pills! WE pledge allegiance to the
flag of - THE UNITED STATES OF
COMPULSORY FREE SPEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEECH!

Wanda hurls pills/lefty salutes. Students toss berets like Frisbees into a thunderstorm. Everyone scatters for cover.

INT. NURSE'S WINDOW FOR MEDICATIONS - NIGHT

Each patient answers alphabetical roll call and receives meds and a sedative in a white cup with a clear cup of water.

Patients form a straight line. WAIT HERE marks the floor. A crayon mocks on linoleum: KEEP YOUR DISTANCE, Gavin Newsom!!!

NURSE BUFFY

(automates to each patient)

Here. A good night's sleep counts
healthy sheep. Long. Wanda Long.

Wanda looks both ways. Nurse Buffy crimps head to hurry up.

NURSE BUFFY

Long With Dr. Stoddard and With luck
you have him. With luck we have him.
Long's food tray has red dots. Here. A
good night's sleep counts healthy
sheep. With/With/With. Mandich.

WANDA

Not Stoddard, with or without, lady!

BILL MANDICH, 20, lumbers to the window/prims a clip tie.

NURSE BUFFY

(Ignores Wanda)

Here. A good night's sleep counts
healthy sheep. McCabe.

LINDA McCABE, 20, walks to the window, pokes Bill's ass.

NURSE BUFFY

Here. A good night's sleep counts
healthy sheep. Nelson.

DAWN NELSON, 27, approaches. Consecrates her chest.

INT. TELEVISION ROOM - NIGHT

Wanda finds an ERRANT golf pencil left by staff on floor. She presses the sharp point to her throat and then stares at it. Instead, she picks the trash for a scrap of paper and writes. Behind her sit patients under the spell of a television.

WANDA (V.O.)

Hollywood: you of great persona-ality.

WANDA (V.O.)

(writes)

Psych ward Holds are death on life
row. We clodhopper to gentle pill
concussions and arise spastic as lab
rats on Etch-A-Sketch. Anxious time
tattlers nudge like droll calendars.
Staff schemes like reCAPTCHA robots,
ignoring our allergy to itineraries.
Art imitates life, life imitates art,
imitation imitates imitation.

Spacey faces gape at KEEPING UP WITH THE CAITLYNS? reruns.

WANDA

Now I lay me down to sweeps, my
Nielsen ratings sold to keep. If I
should die before I wake, display my
wake at station break.

LINDA

Shut the flying fuck up schLong!

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Wanda and Dan walk the hallway. They look straight ahead.

DAN

Have you ever been happy?

WANDA

I smile, avoiding happiness advice.

DAN

Nothing makes misery like advice.

WANDA

Good tip.

A woman mutely banter into an imaginary cell phone.

DAN

Hope they put me on a designer pill.

WANDA

I was cast out by a mean aunt with a
pus leaking walleye. Pills don't work.

DAN

Haven't doesn't mean don't.

WANDA
Misery loves company, miserable Dan.

DAN
Miserly loves companies, poor Wanda.

WANDA
I should be paid to indulge you.

The two glance sideways at each other. Both smirk.

EXT/INT. WINDOW GRILL TO FENCED IN BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

Wanda, Bill, and Champagne align six blue band wrists, grip grill, watch from above. Voluntary Dan shoots 2-handed layup, loses pants, bares ass. From his office Stoddard spies first at Dan, then Wanda. She sees his smile and returns stoicism.

DR. STODDARD
Nurse Buffy, take Wanda off Lorazepam.
Customization must isolate a mild med.

NURSE BUFFY
I'll switch to the over-the-counter
Melatonin and amino acid L-tryptophan.

DR. STODDARD
I want her lucid before Dr. Marvelle.

INT. ART THERAPY ROOM - DAY

Patients cut magazines with round tip safety scissors to paste together collage art. The scene begins silently except for AMPLIFIED sounds as scissors carefully cut paper.

DAWN
What are you?

LINDA
Schizoid something. You?

DAWN
Bipolar two.

WANDA
Trade you one pistachio nuthouse for
two bipolar twos?

LINDA
Shuddup, schLong!

DAWN
Yeah, Long. Some of us want to get better.

WANDA
So do I!

LINDA
Then follow the program.

Talk stops, leaves fast sounds as scissors FIERCELY cut.

INT. WANDA AND CHAMPAGNE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Wanda lying on her back looks at her wounds. With no closed doors in either bedrooms or toilets, a light dimly enters.

Wanda vainly tries to polish a glare off the metallic mirror.

WANDA
My life is so bad that it's worse than it really is, or something like that.

Champagne on her bed, grimaces, then faces Wanda.

CHAMPAGNE
Turn your life over to God. He'll forgive even you. Even for cuts.

WANDA
I did.

CHAMPAGNE
Then what the Hell happened?

Wanda rolls to her side, faces Champagne, appears earnest.

WANDA
He told me why religion is so popular in psych wards.

CHAMPAGNE
Why?

WANDA
Spare the rod and spoil the rotisserie.

CHAMPAGNE
That doesn't make sense.

WANDA
Neither does religion.

CHAMPAGNE
Good night!

Champagne angrily pulls covers and rolls to her other side.

WANDA
(stares at ceiling triumphantly)
Amen.

Wanda turns to shut the light out.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

A steel rack holds variegated, heated food trays. Patients select assigned colors. Wanda and Dan sit together, alone.

Nurse Francis oversees tray selection, checks off retention.

NURSE FRANCIS
No Gomez, plain red, r-e-d.

MARIA GOMEZ releases Wanda's red dots tray, finds plain red.

Wanda shrugs her shoulders to look off Nurse Francis.

WANDA
Why can't they name the food trays?
Why prove lucid to eat? Sadists. Want
my Clorox cod?

DAN
Some ugly ogling from Bill and Gwen.

Wanda twirls a fork to damage the cod.

WANDA
Porn for preemies?

DAN
You're turning me on.

WANDA
Stoddard, what a creep.

DAN
He's just doing a job.

WANDA
Do I seem disordered to you? Atypical?

DAN
We must be disordered in order to be
treated. Atypical lends flexibility.
Atypical is ill, unique is healthy.

WANDA
What if we're right in a wrong world?

DAN
Cross your fingers that they keep you.

WANDA
(whispers)
The secular prayer.

DAN
What?

WANDA
Keep me? I want out!

DAN
We're misfits beyond magic. Wanna be
like Pills Fill Bills?

Dan crosses his eyes. Wanda forces a smile.

WANDA
He does protest pill authority.

DAN
Go the meds route. Millions do.

WANDA
What if millions are wrong?

DAN
Contrarian. What if that's why you're
here? Zig, don't zag.

INT. WANDA AND CHAMPAGNE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Wanda goes to the hazy metal mirror. She makes faces, one
giddy, then gloomy. With an index finger, she picks at her
chin mole. She punches her image, then her face.

WANDA
You can hardly see yourself.

CHAMPAGNE

As it should be. Your secrets are safe from you.

WANDA

I'm demanding room reassignment.

Champagne piles clothes and toiletries in her bag.

CHAMPAGNE

Beat you. My friend Dr. Stoddard moved me. I didn't have to ask. Should we wish each other luck?

WANDA

No, I want to nurse our grudge. Wishing luck is always bad luck.

CHAMPAGNE

Great, then good luck, asshole.

INT. DR STODDARD'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Dr. Stoddard opens, studies inscription to a pill bottle: DANGER: NOT APPROVED FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION! Unknown efficacy for early animal trials. Experimental clinical treatment for libido arousal stimulus UNNAMED. (Keep away from children.)

Stoddard opens a locked desk drawer and places pills in it.

INT. DR. STODDARD'S OFFICE - DAY

Dr. Stoddard mediates a visit to Wanda from parents Ronald and Dorothy. Stoddard greets them with a rare warm smile.

Ronald sports a Brooks Brothers suit, raising Stoddard's eyebrows. The suit means Dad means business, not therapy.

RONALD LONG

We've had it, Dr. Stoddard. She's straining our marriage. We want a divorce -- from our daughter!

WANDA

Ya volt pa-Pah! I mean Mr. Pig.

RONALD LONG

Sarcasm arrived in her teens. She designs T-shirt quips. Mocks her USA.

WANDA

The first casualty of war is casual wear.

RONALD LONG

See that? I don't know where this drivel came from. We came from good -- Tell her to tell the goddamn truth!

WANDA

Dad gets mad when I lie to him. No, Dad gets mad then I lie to him.

DR. STODDARD

Make up your mind Mr. Long? Whose advice do you want, mine or yours? Your daughter is traumatized.

Ronald frowns and bites his lip to swallow the reproach.

WANDA

Yeah Daddio, are you nuts?

DR. STODDARD

Wanda, recall any good times?

WANDA

We went fishing once. I was eight and Dad was old.

DR. STODDARD

Mr. Long, what is so bad about a daughter who's different than you?

RONALD

It's disrespectful.

WANDA

Threatening.

DR. STODDARD

Mrs. Long, does Wanda threaten you? Care to comment in any other way? I love your Gucci Guilty scent.

Dorothy dresses in a demure, scallop hibiscus dress. She shyly laughs. Wanda rolls her eyes.

WANDA

Mom's without baking supplies so won't know how to cope. Dad orders us

around. Mom bakes around us.

DOROTHY

I don't know why --

WANDA

Mom, where are my clothes? I'm stuck wearing hospital rags. And money for the payphone?

Tongue-tied, Dorothy smiles awkwardly, rubs at wedding ring.

DOROTHY

Why's our daughter so hard on herself?

RONALD

Herself? I told you she does this to get back at us. She doesn't care about herself.

Wanda grabs a tulip off Stoddard's plastic desk vase and throws it stem first like a dart at Dad, poking his eye.

WANDA

Dad, that's another selfish thing mismouthed. Don't you think before doing? Have a Dewar's -- Mr. Doer!

RONALD

See Dr. Stoddard, she hates me.

DR. STODDARD

Mr. Long, address Wanda, by name.

RONALD

Wanda, why do you hate me?

WANDA

I hate how you treat me. I'm not a Yes Man, your royal fetcher highness.

RONALD

(begins to raise voice)
Kiddo, that's enough --

WANDA

Dad, I'm not finished.

RONALD

(shouts)
Oh yes you are --

WANDA
(shouts louder)
No! I'm grown up. Stop bossing me
around or I'll fire you from my love!

Silence.

Stoddard stands and walks over to Wanda, placing a palm on her shoulder. He draws from his lapel a clean handkerchief.

DR. STODDARD
Wanda has a steady moral compass. She
needs to leave home. Drugs no, meds
yes. We can stabilize your life Wanda.

INT/EXT. WINDOW OVERLOOKING L.A. SKYLINE - DAY

Patients lounge during free time. Heads turn upon a word.

LINDA
She hoarded and stopped taking meds a
month before her suicide.

DAWN
That's why they say to stay on meds.

Wanda sits upright quickly and grabs Dawn's shoulder blade.

WANDA
Bunk! How do you know the order?

LINDA
What do you mean, order?

WANDA
Maybe she discovered pills stopped
working then stopped taking them.

LINDA
How would she know they weren't
working?

WANDA
She was taking them and miserable.

BILL
Then stopped. If serene, she would
have continued taking them.

WANDA
Right.

DAWN

Part of meds magic is in believing.

WANDA

Part? You just said a bottle full.

BILL

A bottle full of bull, Placebo Jo!

DAWN

So far, so good. I feel great.

CHAMPAGNE

I said that once upon a hope ago.

LINDA

Ignore these killjoys, Dawn.

WANDA

The Pharmaceutical Industrial Complex.

INT. GYM ROOM - DAY

Patients join in Kundalini yoga. YOGI BHAMA sits, faces a circle of cynics. She wears spandex, exudes warmth by calm smiles in the surly ward. Wanda and Dan sit side by side.

YOGI BHAMA

Now healthy, happy, holy spirits, form your ringlets and compress.

DAN

(whispers to Wanda)

Dr. Baker diagnosed me as a hypochondriac. I said, "Okay, can you prescribe me a placebo?"

Wanda opens an eye and leans closer to hear Dan.

YOGI BHAMA

Maintain deep slow breaths.

DAN

(whispers)

He said, "Not for type two hypochondriacs. Your types would just fake faking."

YOGI BHAMA

Now I'll slowly count us down.

DAN
(whispers)
"Then we'd have a real problem."

Wanda erupts with laughter. Yogi Bhama frowns at Dan.
Everybody else opens their eyes and scowl at Wanda.

YOGI BHAMA
(pauses for silence)
Ten, nine, eight, seven --

INT. WANDA'S BATHROOM - DAY

WANDA (O.S.)
Six, five, four, three, two, one,
aurrguh.

"Splash," Wanda, constipated, defecates.

WANDA (O.S.)
Ahhh, even a bad life has moments.

Wanda puts pencil and notes in her underwear and lifts pants.

INT. STODDARD'S OFFICE - DAY

DR. STODDARD
Nurse Buffy, what was Wanda Long
prescribed when last here?

NURSE BUFFY
Long was given Dr. Baker's cocktail of
-- let's see -- anticonvulsant med
Divalproex, five hundred milligrams,
anti-psychotic Quetiapine, two hundred
milligrams, and seventy-two milligrams
of Linzess for incontinence.

DR. STODDARD
Let's cheer her up. On Friday noon,
three milligrams of antidepressant
Norpramin. Dr. Marvelle gets here
then. Wanda's acting a tad sober.

NURSE BUFFY
And suspicious I might add.

DR. STODDARD
Granted. I'll have a friendly word
with her about your concern.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Wanda ducks around the spastic arms of JUBILANT DRUNK, 50, as he garbles a pitch. Dr. Stoddard beckons Wanda to approach.

JUBILANT DRUNK

Always knew -- always knew -- I --

WANDA

(slurs)

Scuze me, sir I'm not fluent in Drunk.

JUBILANT DRUNK

Did y'all hear that wily damzel in distrezz? Muzz be English. English Muffin girl.

Ty escorts the Jubilant Drunk to lie on a sofa. The man picks his whiskers as Ty turns away from the bad breath.

DR. STODDARD

Wanda, I'm going to try you on a new med. It will promote sleep.

WANDA

My bed at home will do that.

DR. STODDARD

This should work here. It's for anxiety. I praise your bravery.

WANDA

Bravery? What is it, cyanide?

DR. STODDARD

Panic disorder, anti-anxiety med.

WANDA

You make me sound like a simpleton.

DR. STODDARD

Nowadays meds are so sophisticated chemists can't pronounce them.

WANDA

I'm not a Petri dish, I'm a person.

DR. STODDARD

Of course, you are.

WANDA

This pill has some time to make up.

DR. STODDARD

Atypical condition, atypical med. For sophisticated patients.

WANDA

With a steady moral compass. Right!

DR. STODDARD

Time to titrate health with scruples.
You live in fanciful times Wanda Long.

Wanda chases the pill with a clear cup of water. She fakes a convulsive response. Dr. Stoddard grins. Wanda salutes him.

Wanda does a Tour Jete pirouettes singing to a radio playing The Beastie Boys 'Fight For Your Right' ("to paaaaaaaaaaty").

INT. WANDA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Wanda smells her clothes and winces. She brushes her teeth with a rinsed-off index finger. Drowsy, she lies back.

WANDA (V.O.)

(slurs)

The more clinical the diagnoses, the less telling the stories.

INT. DR. STODDARD'S OFFICE - DAY

DR. STODDARD

Nurse Francis what is the schedule for the remainder of today in our classrooms?

NURSE FRANCIS

Let's see. There's Chaplin Shanley doing unleavened bread for --

DR. STODDARD

Never mind. Wanda Long is not to be awoken. Let her sleep past schedule.

NURSE FRANCIS

Dr. Stoddard we don't like patients --

DR. STODDARD

Oblige me. Put Dawn Nelson with her.

NURSE FRANCIS
How will we give Norpramin on Friday?

DR. STODDARD
We won't. She needs rest.

NURSE FRANCIS
Dr. Stoddard, what is the
customization for Wanda Long?

DR. STODDARD
Urgent care -- Panic Disorder
Atypical, First Prerogative.

INT. WANDA'S NIGHTMARE: NIGHT

Dr. Stoddard dresses in a white medical coat, stethoscope and ten-gallon hat with cowboy boot spurs, stands on a table and calls cattle auction to patients in a classroom.

A Let's Make A Deal rerun splices focus on a downer-elixir.

DR. STODDARD
I have one Fiddlesticks Disorder, who
now going five, do I hear five, hey
will ya gimme five, gimme gimme gimme
five, five from the man in the gold
Izod spiffy trim hospital gown, now
ten, fitty ten, do I hear ten, once,
um, ah, ohm, going twice, SOLD to the
now mentally ill Little Red Riding
Whore [Wanda, frowns] slumped in her
seat beneath Door Number One, The
Handsome Dan Syndrome Man [Dan,
beams]. The winning couple, F-D with
'H--**D-S-M**.' Collect your pill prizes
at Nurse Francis-ezzz windo000000w!

Stoddard leers at Wanda who seeks safety in the arms of Dan.

INT. END NIGHTMARE: NIGHT

INT. GROUP THERAPY CLASSROOM - DAY

Wanda is absent from group. A clock TICK-TOCKS amid silence.
STEVE, 45, and Bill confront table taps during a staredown.

BILL
What are you looking at?

STEVE
No one much.

BILL
I ain't nothin or no one.

STEVE
Again, your name? I was
psychoanalyzing your face.

BILL
Last warning, McFuckhead.

CHAMPAGNE
This ain't no bathhouse! Respect the
ladies. We demand class in this here
den of inequity.

Champagne walks over to Bill and taps the back of his head
with the backhand of her knuckles.

INT. WANDA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Wanda wakes and does a long stretch and yawns. She moves her
mouth around to build up saliva and sees Dawn, her new
roommate, who sits on a bed. Wanda squints, blinks, focuses.

WANDA
How'd I get here?

DAWN
Other way. I was switched last night.

Wanda nods.

WANDA
What day is it?

DAWN
Friday.

WANDA
Oh shit it's Friday. Always Friday. I
can't tell one day from another.

DAWN
I overheard that you slept past a
Certification Review --

WANDA
Hearing. Stoddard!

DAWN

Wanda, keep cool. Here, authorities play by their own rules, California code, not ours.

WANDA

You just said another bottle full. Now let me MAN up for myself!

INT. DR. STODDARD'S OFFICE - DAY

Wanda storms into Stoddard's office without knocking. Stoddard buzzes Security on his Vertu Signature Cobra.

WANDA

Stoddard, what was in that pill?

DR. STODDARD

What pill?

WANDA

What pill! Yesterday's pill.

DR. STODDARD

Yesterday? You chose to sleep in yesterday. You forfeited therapy.

Confused and dizzy, Wanda pauses to reset herself.

WANDA

(curious)

You gave it to me. What was it?

DR. STODDARD

Wanda, protocol requires medicine dispensary is the nurse's window.

WANDA

Bullshit! No fucking fair.

Wanda watches Stoddard maintain eyes with her and reach back, pluck a thick hardback then flip it to a bookmark.

DR. STODDARD

Yale Law School opens with a quote. I'll read you another bedtime story.

(reads and looks up to Wanda)

"If life was fair, one-third of the people would comprise of judges and lawyers, one-third of police and prison guards, and one-third of

legislators -- and one-third more to make the other three-thirds make any sense at all. Thank goodness for no fair. By Anonymous."

Wanda stomps from Stoddard's office. Orderlies step aside.

DR. STODDARD

Okay, gents. No trouble today.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Wanda waves her arms to chase down Dan. She breathes heavy, hysterical, stumbles, dizzy from her unconscious downtime.

WANDA

Dan. Dan.

DAN

What? Where were you?

WANDA

Stoddard gave me a date rape drug.

DAN

He raped you?

WANDA

No -- I don't think.

DAN

Then get a hold. You sliced your arms to confetti days ago. Classic P-T-S-D.

WANDA

What's with the acronym? You too?

DAN

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

WANDA

You don't believe me.

DAN

You lack silkiness, diplomacy.

WANDA

I was dope ambushed into a two-day stupor, having erotic nightmares. SILK? Try Straw Dogs, Mr. Ambassador!

DAN
Bedroom doors are kept wide open.

WANDA
I'm a victim of malpractice.

DAN
You're a patient of distortion. Can't describe yet know it when you seem it.

WANDA
What? Talk straight.

DAN
I'm skeptical of conspiracies.

WANDA
I only accused Stoddard.

DAN
He's your doctor. Say it.

WANDA
Cut the shit, Dan.

DAN
For me.

WANDA
Doctor, doctor, doctor -- DOCTOR!

DAN
Now feel better. You deserve to.

INT. NURSES WINDOW - NIGHT

NURSE BUFFY
Long.

WANDA
I have cottonmouth.

NURSE BUFFY
Tell Dr. Stoddard in the morning. A good night's sleep --

WANDA
Fuck Stoddard the mad fuck doctor.

Ty glares at Wanda.

TY
And foul mouth.

WANDA
What's the clinical name for that?

TY
F-ingtitus.

Buffy points to the next in line.

NURSE BUFFY
Mandich. Mandich! At attention.

INT. GROUP THERAPY CLASSROOM - DAY

Psychologist MS. MARVELLE, 35, dons a peacock plume top hat, T-shirt baring 60's counterculture psychiatrist R.D.LAING.

She pages through a roster of photos to memorize first names and address patients, personable as casework allows.

The class eyes one another, jousts hostile expressions.

MS. MARVELLE
Today something new. Instead of names and diagnoses, we'll identify as our favorite candy bar.

LINDA
Why not like other support groups?

MS. MARVELLE
Because Linda, we want to get out of our comfort zones.

LINDA
What's bad about comfort. Isn't therapy supposed to comfort?

MS. MARVELLE
Only after it's earned by taking risks. Me first. I'm Mounds Bar because of my breast augmentation.

A few muted noses blow.

MS. MARVELLE
Okay Wanda, let's start with you and go left.

Wanda, betrayed by Stoddard and patronized by Dan, scowls.

WANDA

I'm Bar Stool so you can all eat my
shit and die.

Male hoots and whistles fill the room.

LINDA

How disgusting.

CHAMPAGNE

Why can't you be more positive?

LINDA

Time and a place potty tart.

MS. MARVELLE

Wanda, I'm going to allow that. I had
in mind brand names but your explicit
wisecrack has us talking.

WANDA

Did you hear that people? I'm the
class intellectual.

CHAMPAGNE

Class? I didn't hear no class.

MS. MARVELLE

Let's keep time so everyone wraps
their tastiest bar. In good taste.

LINDA

I'm Chia Bar.

CHAMPAGNE

A what?

LINDA

It's granola, by Health Warrior.

CHAMPAGNE

Well, ain't you the teacher's pet? Or
Chia Pet?

Laughter.

MS. MARVELLE

It's your turn, Dawn.

DAWN
I'm a Type-2 Diabetic so I pass.

MS. MARVELLE
What do you think? Should Dawn get off with that?

BILL
Get her off the candy bar and get her on a treadmill.

Whistles and jeers.

MS. MARVELLE
Stop. No judgment. That can earn you a trip out of here.

BILL
I'm on a Hold from Dr. Does Little. Maybe I should keep it up?

MS. MARVELLE
Don't push it. You could be transferred to County. This is quaint next to that.

WANDA
No judgment is for zombies!

A middle finger provokes a brawl. Two young men grapple at the far side of the room. Three "P-ICT-ACKS" echo against faces. An orderly jumps over tables to tackle the pair.

Marvelle squeezes a handheld alarm. Ty, a third orderly, and a BLUE-suited cop appear and handcuff both pugilists.

Orderlies and officers push and pull apart squeaky tables to make a pathway, drag off the scufflers like a rugby scrum. Ten seconds resets bystanders, who gasp with stress.

Dawn blinks, her cat-eye glasses slant from the scuffle.

DAWN
I didn't sign up for this. I just came for a rest.

Hilarity.

MS. MARVELLE
Are you with us, Dan?

DAN
Yes, pardon my staring. I'll be Almond
Joy. Nipples on Mounds.

MS. MARVELLE
Are you getting fresh?

DAN
Yes.

Both genders chuckle.

MS. MARVELLE
Next, is it Steve?

STEVE
No, it's FILTH Avenue Bar so I can
relive Manhattan she-hes eating me out
when I had a young hard-on.

MS. MARVELLE
Objections? Hands? Comments?

Six women including Wanda, raise hands. Wanda grips herself.

WANDA
(stammers)
I was a teenage meth strawberry, blow-
jobbing punks named Sport, Scoop, and
Backseat behind 7-11 dumpsters. I've
never shared my shame so I cut to
feel. Old regrets stay numb.

Nobody laughs as Wanda breaks into shoulder shrugs and tears.
Others watch in silence. The exercise resumes.

MS. MARVELLE
Now it's no longer numb. Thank you,
Wanda, for sharing causes and not
hiding behind diagnoses and pill
wishes. Those only address symptoms,
and harmful at that.

WANDA
Hospitable Hospital runs a Guinea pig
test farm for design doping us! I know
something fishy goes on here.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Group files out. Wanda wipes her eyes, notates the catharsis

on Kleenex. Ms. Marvelle feigns, ignores Wanda's pencil use.

WANDA

(writes)

I feel again, relief, not hate. Ms. Marvelle reinvents roll call. Candy over illness acronyms. Milk Dud and Zag-nut score the men's menu as the reticent women clique with Kit Kat, amuse to Sweet Tart, confectionery affections of Awww. This silly task of hope actually begins my healing.

Wanda rubs her thumb over the pencil tip and then pockets it.

Wanda approaches Ms. Marvelle. Wanda's watery-eyed hope marks the first alliance with staff. She smiles.

WANDA

I'm Wanda M&M's

MS. MARVELLE

Why Wanda Bar Stool, now M&M's. I reached somebody after all. Oscar Wilde said, "Man is least himself when he talks in his own person. Give him a mask, and he will tell you the truth." Look how far women have come? Well?

WANDA

Why is outsourced help so serene?

MS. MARVELLE

We see therapists too. Our therapists' therapists? They're angelic.

WANDA

Am I mentally ill?

MS. MARVELLE

Well, are you? Fate may favor you.

INT. HALLWAY SOFA - NIGHT

Champagne and Wanda, both feisty ward returnees, meet eyes at first in a glare, after that inquisitive. Wanda stands.

Wanda slowly advances toward Champagne who sits alone on the hallway sofa. Wanda sits next to Champagne who makes room.

WANDA

How does one turn a new leaf that's crumbled and brown? Do you remember your first time on meds?

CHAMPAGNE

Thought I'd feel great forever.

WANDA

Same. My doctor checked me off as his success. I was discharged with a referral and prescription.

CHAMPAGNE

Then you stopped feeling great.

WANDA

You bitch and they say that you can't tell but meds still work.

CHAMPAGNE

You nag then they try a new pill.

WANDA

Claims to do this or not do that.

CHAMPAGNE

The money meter cashes us out.

WANDA

We wind up here again.

CHAMPAGNE

You don't believe in no psychiatry neither?

WANDA

Right, and they hate to hear me. They treat my doubt as dishonesty.

CHAMPAGNE

(stands to leave)

Been nice telling lies with you.

WANDA

(stands as well)

You meet such gracious bullshitters in these weigh stations.

CHAMPAGNE

Why thank you.

Both women go to their separate rooms to sleep.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Dr. Stoddard as Chief Psychiatrist hires help. He raises a hand to halt the flamboyant Ms. Marvelle, his underling.

Stoddard overdresses in pricey three-piece business suits, consistent with his formal and rigid control of the ward.

DR. STODDARD
Dr. Marvelle, a word.

MS. MARVELLE
Yes, Dr. Stoddard?

DR. STODDARD
In a word, what's our objective?

MS. MARVELLE
(pauses)
Health.

DR. STODDARD
Wrong. Stability.

MS. MARVELLE
You don't see promise in patients?

DR. STODDARD
I save lives.

MS. MARVELLE
I give lives meaning.

DR. STODDARD
To these people? As to what?

MS. MARVELLE
A healer.

DR. STODDARD
Stability also applies to job
stability. I hire unity of policy.

MS. MARVELLE
I trust patients, offering variety.

Stoddard eyebrows Ms. Marvelle's nerve and nods her to pass.

Ms. Marvelle glances at the Nameless Noisemaker and then

looks away. She looks back to see that Stoddard glares her.

INT. HALLWAY SOFA - NIGHT

Nameless Noisemaker wears Hospitable's robe, slouches on a sofa. Wanda watches him scrutinize messy pastel wall art. Wanda palms her mouth and makes a fart noise to provoke him.

Nameless Noisemaker right index fingers a check in the air.

NAMELESS NOISEMAKER
Can psychotropics buy happiness?

WANDA
What? Wait a minute. What?
(squints into his eyes)
You're not nuts. Just strange.

NAMELESS NOISEMAKER
Well?

WANDA
(reflective)
The only drugs that changed me hurt
me. Most meds don't even do that.

NAMELESS NOISEMAKER
Meds fund a denial industry. Side
effects aside, most meds become
impotent drugs, but still drugs.

WANDA
Then why do we take them?

NAMELESS NOISEMAKER
People say meds continue to work
because they need them to work.

WANDA
Doctors? Patients? Parents? Are they
all in denial?

NAMELESS NOISEMAKER
Yes.

Wanda studies him.

WANDA
Who are you?

NAMELESS NOISEMAKER
Ken Marvelle.

WANDA
Marvelle? The same Marvelle?

WANDA (V.O.)
I fell in love with the dick head.

KEN
My wife replaces disorder jargon. I'm
a mole, disputing drug policy.

WANDA
What does that chant of yours mean?

KEN
Pills fill bills, the money grab of
pharmaceuticals -- Will still ill, its
futility to energize willpower.

WANDA
Why the cover? Why Ms. Marvelle's
metaphors? Why does the mental health
food chain top with shrinks?

Ken tosses hands to juggle Wanda's litany of concerns.

KEN
Wanda, we're up against industrial
pill zealots. Natural remedies don't
indulge in corporate greed so easily.

WANDA
I'm tempted to turn down meds. I've
been on them since twelve.

KEN
Kids get mixed messages. Imagine a
society that forbids some drugs and
forbids abstinence from others? Then
slogans, "It's a free country!"

Wanda, in conflict, pulls at both sides of her hair. She
hyperventilates twice and pauses. Ken lets Wanda resume.

WANDA
No wonder I fucked up growing up.

KEN
Today you're free to abstain all, but

not to sample some. Clean or not, half
your body is free to you.

WANDA
You make an odd drug counselor.

KEN
Tell no one about me.

WANDA
Stoddard fed me an aphrodisiac.

KEN
Up on greens, down on reds, drive on
cocktail sideways dead. Beware.

INT. NURSES WINDOW - NIGHT

Nurse Buffy dispenses medications, and to each a sedative.

NURSE BUFFY
(grouchy)
Long. Long! A good night's sleep
counts healthy sheep. Can't hear?
Here.

WANDA
Pass.

NURSE BUFFY
Pardon?

WANDA
Pills fill bills. Will still ill. I
refuse meds.

NURSE BUFFY
Did you consult Dr. Stoddard?

WANDA
I don't have to. You're speaking to
the boss of my body.

NURSE BUFFY
You want to be special?

WANDA
I am special, unique, just like you.

NURSE BUFFY
Young lady, we want you to fit in.

WANDA

Then stop treating me for illness and
start treating me for health!

NURSE BUFFY

Dr. Stoddard foresaw this, has cleared
you to abstain meds. Mistake, I think.
I'll mention your hot temper tomorrow.

WANDA

You do that.

INT. DR. STODDARD'S OFFICE - DAY

DR. STODDARD

Wanda, come in.

Stoddard putts a golf ball across his Escher rug into a plug-
in tin cup that catches and expels it back towards him.

Wanda steps on the moving golf ball to interrupt Stoddard.

WANDA

What now?

DR. STODDARD

I don't condone passing up meds.

WANDA

Drugs.

DR. STODDARD

Don't dramatize. Meds heal disorders.
Drugs ruin lives.

WANDA

Do you end my tests and then me?

DR. STODDARD

Nobody plans to end you. Still, you're
not helping treatment ideals.

WANDA

Mistreatment! My boycott will agitate
you. I'll take your pills to calm you
down if you release me?

Stoddard dips specs, glares at Wanda's sarcastic bargain.

DR. STODDARD

We'll test run your abstinence. I

can't promise progress or health with this risk.

WANDA
OR? They're dissimilar? A threat?

DR. STODDARD
Why, are you going to threaten yourself OR others? OR me?

INT. WANDA'S BATHROOM - DAY

Wanda has Nurse Francis supervise the use of a GLASS makeup mirror, MANICURE SCISSORS to clip mole hair. Wanda eyes through scissor loops at MIRROR, then to Francis' face.

NURSE FRANCIS
I'm against this. I think you're inappropriate, a safety risk to all.

Wanda studies her own face then looks to Francis at the precise moment she clips the hair. She flips the scissors fast from tips to loops and then deftly hands them back.

INT. TELEVISION ROOM - DAY

Several patients, among them Wanda and Dan kill time to TV.

DAN
I dig Nick at Night during the day.

WANDA
Who do you like more, Morocco Mole or Secret Squirrel?

DAN
Definitely Secret Squirrel.

Dan mimics a flying squirrel.

WANDA
Definitely? Why?

DAN
Feed a squirrel and he'll leave you alone every day.

WANDA
Nut. That has nothing to do with it.

DAN
Nut eh? Crazy has nothing to do with
squirrel food.

WANDA
Nut? Crazy? Squirrel food? Don't
change subjects.

DAN
Morocco Mole has nothing to do with
your chin.

Dan mimics a rodent mole. His hand projects from the mouth.

WANDA
It's a beauty mark. What do you think
of my thoughts about Stoddard?

DAN
He's warm gravy, no lumps. You
overrate him.

Dan wraps arm over face, shoots out a claw to mimic a spy.

WANDA
Why do I have a thing for you?

DAN
We must have good chemistry.

WANDA
Hmm. Or chemicals.

INT. WANDA AND DAWN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Wanda sits on the open door toilet. She groans constipation during tender dialog with Dawn who watches from a bed.

WANDA (O.S.)
Dawn, what do you miss from home?

DAWN
Definitely my iPhone 12.

WANDA (O.S.)
It used to be cigarettes. Today, phone
cravings.

DAWN
What do you miss most?

WANDA (O.S.)
I miss childhood. Adults say stuff to
kids and mean it. When I turned ten my
world nuanced into lies.

DAWN
Ha! We all regret ten. And memories of
telecommunications before we became
pill receptacles.

WANDA (O.S.)
Ever seen Stoddard's cell? Encrusted
in jewelry and gold-cased. Everything
about him is mercenary and stylized.

DAWN
He's renting a room in your head.
Evict him, Wanda.

WANDA (O.S.)
Bad boys took my mind off good grades.
Bad drugs took my mind off bad boys.

DAWN
Now good meds to take our minds off
bad drugs? Onto good boys.

WANDA (O.S.)
Meds and drugs are synonyms. It's all
shrink semantics, mind control. At
least people like your company.

DAWN
That's a problem. Everyone likes me.
Except me.

WANDA (O.S.)
Why?

DAWN
To avoid blowups I stuff stuff, the
patient patient. I'm Silly Putty.

WANDA (O.S.)
Too many hate me.

DAWN
I don't hate you. I envy you.

Wanda wipes and flushes and then leaves the stall, stares at
the wall to Dawn's Mother Mary pastel [titled and signed].

WANDA

Aging is a Polaroid pulled through the slot too early and smeared, an old lady without a girl's story.

DAWN

Hey, that's my Virgin Mary!

WANDA

To her, I toast my Bloody Mary.

DAWN

Dr. Gold may fix brains but my soul belongs to Jesus. Notice how many mental health doctors are Jews?

WANDA

So?

DAWN

Ever seem rigged, unfair?

WANDA

What would you like them to do, voluntarily fail to fulfill an equality quota?

DAWN

I don't like them in my head.

WANDA

Then stop praying to one. You Christians serve a King of Jews. Sow inferiority, reap resentment.

DAWN

Ouch! It's not that simple. Enough about me. How the Hell do you replace faith?

WANDA

Think as an individual. I spite and praise with a clear conscience, whatever others' affiliation.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

After-effects from Stoddard's rogue pill increase. Wanda pulls her crotch. Dan's gapes and laughs encouragement.

WANDA
Dan, why don't you have a roommate?

DAN
There's a vacancy. Wanna fill it?

WANDA
I have a vacancy. Wanna fill me?

DAN
Fill you? Why you eclair.

WANDA
Just to give us a test run.

DAN
This is a test of The Emergency
Broadcast System. This is only a test.

WANDA
If it were an actual emergency --

INT. DAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

In the bathroom, Dan and Wanda drop bottoms, legs straddle the toilet. Wanda jerks fiercely against Dan, who stands, back to the wall during a quickie. Dan spurns Wanda's kiss.

DAN
Tell me what you think.

WANDA
Never been so horny before. Never.

DAN
How so? Describe your first fuck.

WANDA
(pants heavy)
I fucked Dad's trusted law partner --
Preston J. Blythe -- The Third --
geezer potbelly -- hairy back.

DAN
No shit? Teen sludge?

WANDA
I wanna -- talk dirty in tongues.

DAN
Pentecostal whore.

WANDA
Fuck healer.

Dan cups Wanda's mouth and nose as she comes. He does not climax. Wanda retires. She fidgets nightly with Eros.

INT. WANDA AND DAWN'S BEDROOM - DAY

The morning hum wakes the patients. Nurse Francis enters.

NURSE FRANCIS
Long, you smell of lady spirit. Wear these. Next time speak up.

WANDA
I don't run the asylum, just obey.

NURSE FRANCIS
You're trouble off medication.

WANDA
I'm not off medication. My body is under siege. I can feel it!

NURSE FRANCIS
Tell Dr. Stoddard. Your mind plays tricks on your body. I'll tell him.

WANDA
Tell him nothing.

NURSE FRANCIS
What?

WANDA
Everything's inappropriate this, inappropriate that. You count our shits and fucks like Toastmasters marks off ums, ahs and yuh knows.

NURSE FRANCIS
Women unfit to reenter society talk like sailors, not ladies.

WANDA
Then I'll watch my fucking mouth.

NURSE FRANCIS
You're privileged to abstain from meds. You're on a short leash.

WANDA
Privileged? Try right. Try without a leash. I'm not a dog.

NURSE FRANCIS
Abstaining is a right for voluntary patients. For cutters, Dr. Stoddard can veto if he deems you dangerous.

WANDA
What constitutes "dangerous?"

Wanda expresses a look of concern.

INT. STODDARD'S OFFICE - DAY

Stoddard does a three-way call on his Vertu phone.

DR. STODDARD
No, overwhelmed, then restored. --
Let's ask him? Well sir? -- There you go. She'll never know. A coerced joy?

DR. STODDARD
(palpitates his chin)
In the end men -- maybe a day will come when our customers are women?

INT. SOFA - DAY

WANDA (V.O.)
The early worm gets bird shit. What else can go wrong?

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Wanda walks from morning meds toward the TV news. She stops upon a huddle of hugs, sees toothless CINDY SAMSON, 40. Samson undergoes transfer to County Psych. She sobs and then clings to female patients as male orderlies pry her away.

CINDY
(pleads)
I didn't bite anyone. I promised to behave. I've no insurance but Dr. Stoddard said I could stay if I took his special meds.

WANDA
Special? Samson, he made a deal?

ORDERLY TY

Long, back off and mind your p's and q's or we'll put you in isolation.

CINDY

Now he goes against his word.

LINDA

Stay strong in County, Cindy. Don't let them break you.

CINDY

(cries out)

I wanna stay here. I wanna stay here.
I don't wanna go, oh no.

Three orderlies lift, remove Cindy who kicks, gums away.

Wanda puzzles, studies Champagne's TRANCE gape at Samson.

WANDA

You alright? Champagne? -- Kindness
knows no kind? Remember?

CHAMPAGNE

(pauses then blanks)

What? Whatever.

Patients sit in lounge chairs. They face, skew and sit back to back. All gaze at the ceiling and speak.

LINDA

Big deal, I'm schizoaffective. I don't see her point.

DAWN

Dr. Gold doesn't say to me "You are bipolar," but rather "you suffer from bipolar disorder."

WANDA

Ms. Marvelle differs both ways.
Neither am I a disorder as identity
nor do I have a disorder. Language can
empower or harm.

DAN

Ain't no verb to be nor not to be for
me, mais oui, Cham-pag-nee?

CHAMPAGNE

Don't you take nothin serious, white boy?

WANDA

She's right. Drop Shakespeare's rap in French. We return to shittiness soon. I need a new place, a plan.

LINDA

Yeah, shuddup. I wouldn't be here if not suffering from something.

BILL

Bad wiring. Nothing fixes a bad brain.

WANDA

I'm not sure about that anymore.

INT. BILL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A fire alarm loudly beeps, awakes patients. One by one, wearing home clothes or hospital robes they enter the hallway, yawn, stretch and look for an explanation.

CHAMPAGNE

Who snuck in the cigarettes? If you're gonna steal a drag, pass the pack.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

A pack of Marlboro's slide from Bill's room over linoleum. Wanda lights up, passes to Dan who passes to Linda who passes to Dawn who passes to Champagne. All puff protests. Daylights go on, Ty yells over laughter and haze of smoke.

ORDERLY TY

This is a hospital, not a humidor. Put those butts in this can and get your asses in bed right now!

Smokers play keep-away from Ty's metal bedpan, toss lit smokes, inhale away. Wanda blows smoke rings. Dan pierces one with a stream exhale like a fuck as patients laugh.

Help arrives. Ceiling sprinklers rain upon hallway smoke.

BILL

(Southern drawl)

Anyone packin chewin tobacco?

Laughter.

INT. RECREATION ROOM - DAY

Patients Bill and Steve play ping-pong. Each holds a paddle in one hand, pants up with the other.

On opposite sides of the net sit Wanda and Ms. Marvelle who ignore the game during a fun stare down.

BILL
Fifteen all.

Bill serves. A torrid rally ensues. As the ball passes back and forth neither Wanda nor Marvelle blink. Ball hits net.

STEVE
Point. Sixteen fifteen.

Wanda fakes a yawn, pats her mouth. Ms. Marvelle bears teeth. The next rally begins. It ends, ties the score.

STEVE
Jesus Christ All-fucking-mighty, I
can't keep a lead.

Ms. Marvelle hears Steve's profanity, glances sideways.

When Ms. Marvelle looks back to resume the fun stare down, Wanda blinks rapidly, grins victoriously to signal an end. The women walk around the net and sit together.

MS. MARVELLE
Uncle.

WANDA
I'm not satisfied it's safe here.

MS. MARVELLE
Skepticism is good. I don't think
psych wards are safe for speaking.

WANDA
This place models church, school, girl
scouts, and the bossy job market.

MS. MARVELLE
How so?

WANDA
Schedules, rules, tight-ass staff.

MS. MARVELLE
You feel burdened.

WANDA
Trapped.

MS. MARVELLE
Ken and I decided to make a small mark
on a big problem and saw promising
patients stuck in bad --

WANDA
Places like Hospitable Hospital?

MS. MARVELLE
Yes.

WANDA
Am I right in the wrong world?

MS. MARVELLE
The ward shuns individualism.

WANDA
So does the world. That world.

Wanda points to the perimeter window.

MS. MARVELLE
Wanda, select your quarrels with care.
Engage when able to keep calm.
Rehearse composure, alone.

WANDA
Stoddard was right tho, living at home
is no place to assert either.

MS. MARVELLE
Deal with changes here first.

WANDA
Next week during my Certification
Review Hearing I'll have my say.

MS. MARVELLE
What will you tell them?

WANDA
That Stoddard gave me a date rape drug
for anxiety.

MS. MARVELLE
What did he call it?

WANDA
He didn't.

MS. MARVELLE
Dr. Stoddard must name meds when
explaining them to you. It's the Law
of Informed Consent and would apply to
your level of competence.

Wanda places a hand on Ms. Marvelle's shoulder, points to
Stoddard's office door.

WANDA
I was knocked out so hard I don't
remember exactly what he said.

MS. MARVELLE
We'll talk about personal options
tomorrow. New I-Ds, new options.

Ms. Marvelle smuggles a small, thick notepad to Wanda.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Wanda finds her red dots tray from the rack. Scotch tape
secures a paper menu and crayon. Nurse Francis approaches.

NURSE FRANCIS
Long, we promoted you. Choose among
menu options. Next meal, eat your
choices.

WANDA
Why do choices state as commands?

NURSE FRANCIS
You ask too many pesky questions.

WANDA
I've been coerced into free will.

Francis shakes her head and watches patient tray selections.
Champagne carries her green speckled tray, sits with Wanda.

Wanda looks down, fills out her dinner menu during lunch.
Wanda peels her crayon like a banana.

CHAMPAGNE
How many holds have you had?

WANDA
Six.

CHAMPAGNE
For your age, that's too many.

WANDA
Like boyfriends, the next helps me
forget the last. How about you? Holds?

CHAMPAGNE
I lost count. Not enough? Make it too
many. They never get it right.

Wanda looks up. The women roll eyes over their futility.

WANDA
Quick, switch your red for my green
crayon.

The women switch, continue to fill menus. Wanda completes
hers, hands to Francis, who sees the two-tone crayons.

WANDA
We memorize trays, your menus. Tell
Stoddard turnabout is no fair play.

Champagne briefly locks into a STARE from Wanda's remark.

NURSE FRANCIS
Dr. Stoddard won't see the humor.

WANDA
No, you won't. He'll read two-tone
Crayola as multiple personality and
drug me for that. It takes little.

Francis marks a demerit for Wanda in her book.

NURSE FRANCIS
Long -- disobedient, menu protocol.

Wanda turns away without a blink. She faces Champagne.

WANDA
Who brought you in. Stoddard?

CHAMPAGNE

I was wrongly accused of stealing from the church treasury. I got disrespected, then mad, then here. Dr. Stoddard will fix everything.

WANDA

I dropped out of Catholic school. Public was bad too, but not as bad. No hag-faced nuns. Fewer rules.

CHAMPAGNE

Why'd you totally leave religion?

Wanda looks with sincerity, puts a hand on Champagne's arm.

WANDA

Faith was like a boss in my head run by real people. Heaven was a thundercloud reunion with my earth bosses, forever ruling as spirits.

CHAMPAGNE

Maybe you think too much?

WANDA

Don't we all? Stoddard, trust him?

CHAMPAGNE

I suppose. -- Oh, here comes my nuisance white grandson. See ya.

Champagne gets up with her tray and sits at another table.

WANDA

I was having a holy chat. Then you showed up.

DAN

What can I say, I'm a stillborn again nihilist.

WANDA

A real stand-up stud. Comedian.

DAN

Any news of pending release?

WANDA

Not yet. After I slept through my Certification Review Hearing, they

said I'd have to wait another week.

DAN

You get my vote to rotate back home.

WANDA

I hate authority yet I'm here.

DAN

Daddy's girl on house arrest.

WANDA

Exactly. Aside from being a pest, there's nothing wrong with you. What's your foible, Mr. Voluntary?

DAN

Panic attacks. Dr. Baker says he can make them go away. I need to be chemically balanced.

WANDA

Panic disorder? You're not like me. This place provokes panic, then pills it into safe stupor. How's Dr. Baker?

DAN

Indecisive, a doctor or a baker, can't make up his mind what to feed me.

WANDA

Lucky you don't have Stoddard.

DAN

In another life. He's likely nuanced, not nefarious as you feature him.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Ms. Marvelle arrives with hair that stacks in braids to make a bun. She wears a pink T-shirt with a black powder image to mimic a sneeze. Beneath it underscores, "Gesundheit!"

MS. MARVELLE

Welcome new faces. Last time we had fun crafting health identities. Today we match affirmations with plans to counter societal norms.

DAWN

I was told go along to get along.

MS. MARVELLE

That goes with blunted sensitivity goals. Conventional wisdom fails those worthy of keener aspirations.

BILL

I'm born with bad brain chemistry.

MS. MARVELLE

You're here not because you have bad brains but because you have good ones stilted by harsh circumstances.

Wanda looks to Dan for agreement. He rolls doubtful eyes.

BILL

That's not what Dr. Dunn says.

Ms. Marvelle holds up a copy of Stoddard's book in one hand.

MS. MARVELLE

Psychiatry sees most mental illnesses as inborn. I disagree with illness jargon, diagnostics, and doping patients for lifestyle challenges.

DAWN

Then why are you here?

MS. MARVELLE

To counter societal norms. What degrades from authority?

LINDA

Sayings like "because I said so?"

WANDA

(slurs)

Because I zed zo to zedative zlow.

Wanda looks to see if Dan smirks. He does.

MS. MARVELLE

Silliness can surprise, disarm the advance of blunt authority. Name some other oppressive sayings.

DAN

Kid, boy, or for that matter, girl.

MS. MARVELLE

You're adults and should not accept these labels by anyone of any age.

CHAMPAGNE

Now, now. There, there. Or else. You better. Church-type shaming.

WANDA

I never expected that from you. I thought you look up to the church.

CHAMPAGNE

I do. It's not the Lord but the flock that does bird droppings.

Wanda and Dan laugh, clap with approval. Champagne smiles.

MS. MARVELLE

Four great examples of patronage, ultimatums, and subtle threats. With a proverb for good measure. How might one counter such remarks?

LINDA

With all due respect, respect that I'm also a grownup.

MS. MARVELLE

Perfect. Notice that Linda didn't insult but did challenge the remark as inappropriate towards an adult.

WANDA

McCabe sets aside insults for me.

LINDA

Shuddup Long.

Laughter.

MS. MARVELLE

Linda Chia Bar, are you picking on Wanda M&Ms? Make peace here. We're a team. Adversaries wait outside this room. Our safe room.

WANDA

You said outside this room, not outside this hospital.

MS. MARVELLE

Both. It's come to me that criminal malpractice exists at this hospital. Do report ANYTHING relevant to me.

INT. SOFA - DAY

Wanda and Champagne converse. Dan pries between them.

DAN

Mind a frisky gent sitting with a pair of pretty ladies?

CHAMPAGNE

I'm old enough to be your grandma.

Champagne gets up and goes to her room.

DAN

Wanda M&M's? Candy acronym?

WANDA

So candy's fattening. Corny too. Beats pills. I'm off meds. Drugs.

DAN

You zagged, not zigged. Mistake.

WANDA

Right or wrong I'm going my own way. There must be health from defiance. Especially here.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Ms. Marvelle stands among appreciative grown women and men patients. Dr. Stoddard walks with purpose, his tan Saks wingtips click linoleum as he approaches the small assembly.

Wanda and others notice Stoddard and make a pathway between the two clinicians, within earshot to await an encounter.

DR. STODDARD

Dr. Marvelle, I'd like another word with you about the curriculum.

MS. MARVELLE

My curriculum?

DR. STODDARD

No, ours. Hospitable's.

MS. MARVELLE
I'm subcontracted by Hospitable.

DR. STODDARD
This hospital adheres to a policy of
proven D-S-M V diagnostics and
matching psychotropic medications.

MS. MARVELLE
Your Diagnostic and Statistical Manual
of Mental Disorders doesn't clarify
the changing pseudoscience name games
or hit and miss drugs.

DR. STODDARD
Let's continue in my office. Now.

INT/EXT. DR. STODDARD'S OFFICE/HALLWAY - DAY

Dr. Stoddard paces ahead of Ms. Marvelle towards his office.
Riveted patients follow to eavesdrop at the slammed door.

DR. STODDARD
Time for a pow-wow summit Ma'am.

MS. MARVELLE
Shoot!

DR. STODDARD
(unable to lower voice)
Do you even bother to memorize D-S-M
diagnoses and med categories?

MS. MARVELLE
I dispute the policy in principle. Do
you memorize?

Dr. Stoddard hands the thick D.S.M. manual to Ms. Marvelle.

DR. STODDARD
Go ahead, ask.

Ms. Marvelle doesn't open the manual.

MS. MARVELLE
What is an Axis IV Disorder?

DR. STODDARD
Psycho-social and environmental
factors contributing to the disorder.

MS. MARVELLE
Contributing?

DR. STODDARD
Using your lingo, nature with life
events. Disorders are complex.

MS. MARVELLE
For psychiatry, also convenient.

Dr. Stoddard walks over to his framed Yale Degree and stands in front of it. To his other side is an LA Times article of him posing with his book, "Personable Neurology To Live By."

DR. STODDARD
Fixing broken lives is the hardest
calling. Your escapades for them might
propose something simpler, like
Hawking Worm-holing.

Marvelle opens the D.S.M. randomly. Patients ear the door.

MS. MARVELLE
Are meds and drugs synonyms? Yes? No?

DR. STODDARD
Meds are code for drugs. Doctors
finesse patients -- ADDICTS, so yes!

MS. MARVELLE
Swap drugs for drugs? Spike libidos?

DR. STODDARD
Dare you accuse, woman? I better them.

MS. MARVELLE
By whose agenda buster!

DR. STODDARD
HOSPITABLE'S! Not some very sick
girl's.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Ms. Marvelle barges out the door, bumping snoop heads.

Wanda stares 'told you so' at Linda and Dawn, now skeptics.

WANDA
Never trust a man wearing wingtips.
They're for Establishment pushers. Ms.

Marvelle wears moccasins, hippie fashion, only today drug-free. Now 'The shoe is on the other foot.'

Onlookers guffaw. Wanda smiles with self-satisfaction.

INT. WANDA AND DAWN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Wanda studies the worn tip of her golf pencil and frowns.

She tries to file down the tip with a fingernail to no avail.

WANDA (V.O.)

(writes)

These notes are for you, my Patient Advocate. Stoddard's Mickey Finn horny pill continues after effects, now three days later, even after sex with patient Dan. Stoddard chose me and earlier Cindy Samson for some kind of experiment. Why us? Why here?

Wanda hears SQUEAKY SNEAKERS.

WANDA (V.O.)

Nurse Francis!

Wanda pockets the pencil, stuffs writing in her underwear. Nurse Francis passes the room just after Champagne enters.

CHAMPAGNE

What you writing? You got a pencil?

WANDA

A long story of a short hold by a short pencil with a shorter lead.

CHAMPAGNE

Long answer. Who's the golfer?

WANDA

Stoddard.

Wanda reads from the pencil's inscription.

WANDA

Plays Trump National Golf Club, Los Angeles. What's your handicap?

CHAMPAGNE

Disability?

WANDA
No, golf score.

CHAMPAGNE
I don't play the white man's game.
What's yours?

WANDA
Ask Stoddard. Disorder, illness,
diagnosis, disease, the sick menu.

CHAMPAGNE
I like Dr. Stoddard. I don't know why.
I just do.

WANDA
I don't know why either. Ms. Marvelle
promotes health, alien to shrinks.

CHAMPAGNE
I hope they let me out when my
fourteen days are up.

WANDA
They never keep us past fourteen.

CHAMPAGNE
Untrue. They can reissue a hold.

ORDERLY TY
Time to break up the Tupperware party.
Only roommates in rooms.

Champagne leaves as Wanda reflects with concern.

INT. DR. STODDARD'S OFFICE - DAY

Wanda fingernail taps Dr. Stoddard's hollow wood door.

Stoddard lifts his Christian Dior eyeglasses.

DR. STODDARD
Is someone there? Come in?

Wanda carefully opens and closes the door behind her. She
peace symbols Stoddard who smiles.

DR. STODDARD
How gentle? How polite? You must want
something.

WANDA

I do. Champagne told me that you can reissue a Hold? Is it true?

DR. STODDARD

Champagne? Shouldn't you befriend patients closer to your own age?

WANDA

Champagne sez, "ain't no social club!"

DR. STODDARD

I know Wanda, but I don't want your youthful exuberance to incite her. As for holds, thirty days, then more. Based on any number of factors.

WANDA

Name some -- please.

DR. STODDARD

General threats of harm to self or others, disobedience to protocol, fraternizing with staff, outbursts of temper, food fights, smoking.

WANDA

Everyone smoked. How about fucking?

DR. STODDARD

Oh really? Feature yourself a leader?

WANDA

What? No.

DR. STODDARD

Some are more culpable than others.

WANDA

Are you going to hold me for good?

DR. STODDARD

I never neglect unstable patients. I intend to honor my oath as your doctor. I hope you comply with us.

Wanda steadies Stoddard's flower vase. He grins exultantly.

DR. STODDARD

And Wanda, that means Champagne too. Her pathology is not your business.

INT. WANDA AND DAWN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Dawn reads People Magazine. Pages slide out from the spine.

WANDA
Your magazine is falling apart.

DAWN
I know. The ward removes staples.

WANDA
Are you kidding? Security is more extreme than at an airport.

DAWN
I suppose if one were desperate, one could swallow and choke on them -- or one of them.

WANDA
Or convert one to an earring.

DAWN
Don't laugh. I had to take mine out when admitted. Check my piercings.

Wanda looks at Dawn's ear, nose, and mouth piercings.

WANDA
Dare I ask, body piercings?

DAWN
Full strip search.

WANDA
Sheesh, Dawn. They really thought you'd go for it.

DAWN
Not really. They take everyones.

WANDA
I cut but don't pierce. Go figure.

DAWN
I binge but don't purge. Diabetic.

WANDA
Trade ya?

INT. PERIMETER WINDOW, LA SKYLINE - NIGHT

Wanda slants up against the convex window watching minute pedestrians below.

She extracts the pad left by Ms. Marvelle from her robe.

With no Staff around, she writes.

WANDA(V.O.)

(writes)

More notes to you, my Patient
Advocate: Do I just get released or
accuse Stoddard despite his ornate
credentials? What's my risk of crying
malpractice? Ms. Marvelle didn't
witness doping. Unmindful nurses are
shifty. Cindy Samson's now at Olive
View. Dan fucks but doubts --

DAN

Hallmarks from Hades?

Wanda flinches, arches shoulders and neck.

WANDA

Shit! When I hear heels click, doctor,
sneakers squeak, nurse, keys jingle,
orderly. You're silent.

DAN

You have a future here.

WANDA

Do I?

DAN

In ward acoustics. Hide that pencil.

WANDA

I don't want any future here.

DAN

That's not a suicide remark or
(points to a paper)
that a suicide letter, is it?

WANDA

Neither but I want to get out. I worry
that Stoddard might keep me.

DAN
Why? You're nothing but trouble.

WANDA
How do voluntaries gain admittance?

DAN
We warn suicide, you try it.

WANDA
Discharge for me needs The Library Of
Congress -- or The Rubik's Cube?

DAN
Writ of Habeas Corpus, Ms. Paranoia.

Wanda grits teeth and glares at Dan for his psychobabble.

WANDA
Don't ever call me that.

DAN
You can drive yourself nuts, reading
everything as literal R-o-t-e Wanda?

WANDA
Ms. Marvelle's right, WORDS C-O-U-N-T!

INT. DR. STODDARD'S OFFICE - DAY

Stoddard locks his door and calls someone on his Vertu
Signature Cobra, an extravagant Bentley Automobile affiliate.

DR. STODDARD
You're being paid rather handsomely I
should remind you. Discretion is an
integral part of that bargain sir?

DR. STODDARD
I will not allow myself to become
folly of one Wanda Long! This study
will empower men again.

DR. STODDARD
'Long and the short end?' Spare me
your prurient quips. We cannot
continue these chats over this line
until she's out.

DR. STODDARD
She must be diverted. I'll subdue her

recall in my own way. No more foils!

INT. NURSES OFFICE - DAY

A Hospitable Hospital SURGEON, 40, female visits the ward to remove Wanda's stitches. The surgeon nods to Wanda.

WANDA

Is this going to hurt or tickle?

SURGEON

Tickle.

WANDA

I need your help.

SURGEON

Dr. Stoddard said that you'd say so.

WANDA

He did? Ignore him dammit!

SURGEON

He briefs all who enter. This is his specialty, his turf, not mine.

WANDA

What are you talking about? I'm not ill, I'm under the ploy of a madman.

SURGEON

Hold still so I can do my job. If I must, I'll have you restrained.

WANDA

You said tickle. You hurt like Hell!

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Wanda looks to the payphone for help. The receiver's ripped off. Flustered, she shakes head, wonders, worries, walks on.

INT. HALLWAY SOFA - DAY

Dr. Sally Gold, dressed in a white blouse, black jacket, and a long, hounds-tooth skirt sits aside Dawn, who sits aside Wanda. Dr. Gold shows a computer tablet to Dawn who stares.

DR. SALLY GOLD

Dawn, your Permanent Total Disability allocation, P-T-D from L-A-D-W-P Meter

Reading expires in two days. Your money is good here, insurance is not.

DAWN
It's not? I haven't been here long.

DR. SALLY GOLD
Doesn't matter. Records show a stay at Sanguine Psych. Dawn Nelson, you are in arrears with Hospitable Hospital.

DAWN
Oh.

DR. SALLY GOLD
To me, you appear stable. Are you stable?

DAWN
Okay.

Wanda's mystified. She puts index finger, thumb to chin.

DR. SALLY GOLD
Would you say it, please?

Wanda crimps her forehead in anger at the overt coaching.

DAWN
I'm stable.

DR. SALLY GOLD
Are you suicidal?

DAWN
I suppose not.

DR. SALLY GOLD
Not what?

DAWN
Not suicidal.

WANDA
Can't you tell she doesn't mean it?

DR. SALLY GOLD
Miss, this is a private conference.

DAWN
It's okay Wanda.

WANDA
No, it's not!

DR. SALLY GOLD
Wanda is it? Need I call security?

Wanda folds arms in silent frustration, mopes surly faces.

DR. SALLY GOLD
(to Dawn)
Have you made an appointment from our
list of outpatient therapists?

DAWN
Yes.

DR. SALLY GOLD
Who with? May I see?

DAWN
I haven't.

DR. SALLY GOLD
Do so now so I can discharge you.

DAWN
Now?

INT. WANDA AND DAWN'S BEDROOM - DAY

WANDA
Dawn, once again we envy each other.

DAWN
Meaning?

WANDA
I'd kill to leave and you'd die to
stay in this shitty place.

DAWN
For now. Seems the only people who get
their way are doctors.

WANDA
Take two doctors and call me in the
morning.

Wanda looks to Dawn for a humorous pulse. Dawn deadpans.

DAWN
Life is short unless agony is long.

INT. PERIMETER WINDOW, LA SKYLINE - DAY

Wanda celebrates her Marvelle bonds by doing a cartwheel.

WANDA
Dan, come over here.

DAN
What?

WANDA
Closer, a big secret is killing me.

DAN
Something about my dick?

WANDA
Bigger. I'm serious.

DAN
Okay, give.

WANDA
Don't speak to him but Pills Fill
Bills isn't crazy. He's Ms. Marvelle's
husband.

DAN
Stop it.

WANDA
He's a chivalrous mole, a psych ward
Robin Hood.

Dan index fingers Wanda's chin mole. She stays still.

DAN
Why?

WANDA
Ken guides trustworthy patients to
refuse meds. The Marvelle's don't
approve of illness labels and meds.
Psychiatrists do.

DAN
Why did he trust you and not me?

WANDA
He knew I could keep a secret. I knew
that you could.

EXT/INT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Ms. Marvelle stands aside rose bouquet Harley Panhead, next to Stoddard's Bentley. In TEAL and WHITE STRIPED leathers, she tucks hair under a rose half helmet, Owsley LSD marked.

Ken and Wanda watch Ms. Marvelle's throaty throttle off.

KEN
Although Generation X by age, she's
hippie generous by style. Commune
cues. I lucked out with this one.

WANDA
Did she luck out?

KEN
I'd like to think so. Compatible by
careers, we believe in our cause.

WANDA
How did you meet?

KEN
At a psychiatry convention. Talk about
insecurity, body fidgeting, face
ticks. Nobody trusts anybody.

WANDA
What was Ms. Marvelle doing there?

KEN
Grilling keynote speakers. I spied
from a balcony. She saw through us.

WANDA
Huh?

KEN
I was once a psychiatrist. I spotted
illnesses by hunch and prescribed them
like a Pez Dispenser.

WANDA
She changed you?

KEN

I lost faith in sickness psychology
and the futility of drugs. I fell in
love as a bonus.

WANDA

They haven't caught on to you?

Ken looks towards the nurse's station.

KEN

I travel throughout California, not
just this ward. I consider it life-
affirming for public health and
enjoyable personal penance for me.

WANDA

Quiet, here comes Dr. Baker.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Dr. Baker beckons Ken with an index finger the way a stern
schoolmaster might prepare to scold a small child.

DR. BAKER

Excuse me, yes you, our inscrutable
John Doe. A word, please.

INT. DR. BAKER'S OFFICE - DAY

Dr. Baker's walls display only a few certifications. The rest
picture his family in festive holiday clothes. The photos
allay Baker's insecurity. His eye TICKS nervously.

DR. BAKER

I've observed you for the past seven
days. You meet eyes when spoken to.
You enunciate short lucid scripts.

Ken walks over to Baker's family portrait. Baker, his wife,
and two toddlers display. Ken grabs the framed photo with a
hand, taps his fingernails against the GLASS to threaten.

KEN

(challenges)

Pills fill bills. Will still ill.

DR. BAKER

Don't turn tables on me. I'm in charge
of evaluations. Put that picture back
on my desk.

KEN
(accuses loudly)
Pills fill bills! Will still ill!

DR. BAKER
Are you threatening my family? You'll
stay until you cooperate.

Ken cracks the photo glass on Baker's desk edge. Ken picks a
sliver out, holds it like a KNIFE between index and thumb.

Baker and Ken engage a staredown. Ken drops the sliver and
shakes glass shards into trash, puts photo on Baker's desk.

DR. BAKER
You're in for it now mister. I'm
writing an endangerment report. And
Dr. Stoddard reassigned you. You're
moving to room ten. Now.

Ken bows, and leaves the office. Baker holds his photo.

INT. DAN AND KEN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Stoddard makes Ken Dan's roommate. Wanda snoops outside.

DAN
Settle down ole timer. So what's the
dope on the dope around here?

Ken puzzles at Dan but remains silent. He turns away.

DAN
I'd love to know the nuthouse resume
for a rogue like you. Rogue. Pills
Fill Bills? Maybe.

Wanda tilts her head/makes a face of shock at Dan's zeal.

DAN
What are we doing in this deposit box?
With losers sniveling hemorrhages from
the miseries of our world?

Dan picks three-day whiskers, plots his next line.

DAN
Are all men created equal? Are we all
equal as patients?

Dan puts on his shoe. Wanda winces to Dan's interrogation.

DAN
Should have worn loafers.

Dan gets in the face of Ken.

DAN
If you dare expound upon that F-D-A
pitch, I'm a good listener.

WANDA (V.O.)
What's Dan doing speaking to Ken? Why
did their psychiatrist, Dr. Baker,
pair them as roommates?

INT. HALLWAY SOFA - DAY

Wanda sits alone, gazes the skyline, back to the hallway.

She hums as an airplane takes off from faraway LAX.

WANDA
Talking to myself is okay. Answering
back is risky. Sez Ms. Marvelle,
"rehearse composure."

DAN
What are you doing?

WANDA
Dan! Don't sneak up on me like that.

DAN
Pins and needles.

WANDA
Weirdos are everywhere.

DAN
Did you pass the other night's test?

WANDA
I needed more than wanted it.

DAN
Great, you passed.

WANDA
Passed?

DAN
Passed a stone. Just talking shit.

WANDA
You mean piss.

Wanda walks to her room.

INT. HALLWAY SOFA - NIGHT

Wanda seeks to check in again with Ken Marvelle. Sedatives dispense and patients retire for the night.

Night staff watches from nurse's window, can't see the sofa.

WANDA
Off both meds and seds, I'm alert.

KEN
Good. Trust lucidity. Trust yourself.
What about the aphrodisiac?

WANDA
Tapering off. Still hormone Hell.

KEN
Hell? I thought you'd say, Heaven?

WANDA
Hardly. Women need to control these things. I fucked Dan.

KEN
Really? Do you like him?

WANDA
I don't trust my actions with him.

KEN
Why?

WANDA
I don't know. Trust is complex.

KEN
(smiles)
Honest, I'm a liar. Believe me?

WANDA
You scare me.

KEN
Trust.

WANDA
I'm more confused now than ever.

KEN
Untrue. Do you want to die?

WANDA
Definitely no.

KEN
Then you're getting better. Trust me
that you can trust you.

INT. DR. STODDARD'S OFFICE - DAY

Stoddard, Chief of ward psychiatry, puts an arm on Baker's shoulder. Stoddard stands tall, secure, Baker short, timid.

Stoddard tosses a golf ball up and Baker catches it.

DR. BAKER
Al, I tell you he was pointing at my
kids in the photo when saying a stupid
chant. He smashed them in the photo.

DR. STODDARD
He's harmless. Just figure he doesn't
want your kids on meds when they're
older.

DR. BAKER
Meds? You mean drugs.

DR. STODDARD
Either. Or same. Skip that. Glass
photos make for weaponry. You know
better. Use plastic.

DR. BAKER
So you want me to discharge him?

DR. STODDARD
He's a nuisance, not a criminal. Make
room for need. We work a conveyor belt
here, get rid of him.

INT. HALLWAY SOFA - NIGHT

Wanda and Champagne sit on the sofa. Black and white uniform
nurses and orderlies patrol night watch.

CHAMPAGNE
Look what the black cat dragged in.

WANDA
Panther woman. We cross paths again.

CHAMPAGNE
Who'd think we'd click.

WANDA
From Yale to jail, only the best wind
up here.

CHAMPAGNE
Yale? -- No fair.

WANDA
What?

CHAMPAGNE
No fair. No fair something.

WANDA
If life was fair --

CHAMPAGNE
(pensive)
-- one third more -- to make the other
three thirds --

WANDA
Make any sense at all.

CHAMPAGNE
Thank goodness for no fair.

WANDA
Champagne, what do you remember about
your last time here?

CHAMPAGNE
Almost nothing. I trusted him. At some
point I did. I'm unsure now.

WANDA
Eighty percent of life is fifty
percent indecisive. The rest is
confusing.

CHAMPAGNE
I love you, white weirdo.

ORDERLY TY
Shuteye time. Orderly's orders.

INT. WANDA AND DAWN'S BEDROOM - DAY

The morning hum alarm sounds. Wanda gets out of bed and walks to her dresser. She searches for the golf pencil.

WANDA
Dawn, you get discharged today. Better
get up and go if you want to get out
and go. -- Dawn?

Wanda looks to Dawn. Bed sheets cover the body and head.
Wanda pulls back the covers.

Dawn lies dead in coagulated throat blood. Ocher pus beads
Criss-Cross jugular. Wanda cradles a rigor mortis fist that
grips the pencil, worn lead intact, flat end used to rip.

WANDA
(tranquil)
Shit. Oh, Dawn. You wonderful fool.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

A gurney supports a zipped-up body bag. Orderlies wheel it
from Wanda's room down the hallway past somber patients.

On the hallway sofa, Nurse Francis debriefs Wanda. Linda and
Dan stand. Two cops and two orderlies block Wanda's door.

NURSE FRANCIS
Long, I'm sorry for you. Roommates
often become close. As a hospital, we
must fill out a police report.

WANDA
Police?

NURSE FRANCIS
It's a formality. Do you have any
information as to where Nelson got
hold of that pencil?

WANDA
I didn't see it until this morning. I
didn't know that she had one.

NURSE FRANCIS
Police say we need to know that to

confirm suicide. Otherwise an open case, undetermined cause of death.

WANDA

Wish I could be more helpful.

Nurse Francis holds Wanda's hands but then inspects her nails. She holds the golf pencil to compare graphite marks.

NURSE FRANCIS

Odd, the pencil was worn from writing before it was a weapon. Did you see Nelson writing?

WANDA

No. Why would she dull the tip then slice herself with the butt?

NURSE FRANCIS

That's my question. Any ideas?

WANDA

None. Any more questions?

NURSE FRANCIS

For now, no. Stick around. Your room is taped off as a crime scene.

WANDA

Crime!

Wanda turns to a blue suit cop who tapes yellow DO NOT ENTER across her doorway. Wanda intercepts a bead of face sweat.

WANDA

I can't get in?

NURSE FRANCIS

No. You get room six, to yourself.

INT. ROOM SIX, WANDA'S NEW BEDROOM - DAY

Wanda breathes heavy, runs across her new room to the toilet. She pulls writing papers from her underwear and rips pages.

She flushes pieces. A paper CLOG in pee water panics Wanda, who reaches in as bowl water spills onto the floor. The clog goes down. She sighs, then hears a knock at the door.

WANDA

Just a minute.

Wanda nervously sweats as she goes toward the hallway door.

WANDA

Oh, you.

DAN

The pencil is mightier than the sword?

WANDA

That's awful. Dawn was my friend.

Wanda shoves Dan hard. She punches him on the arm.

DAN

I overheard your interview. Your secrets are good with me Wanda.

WANDA

What would you have said?

DAN

I'd admit the pencil was mine. You falsified a police report. A small transgression now implies homicide.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Ms. Marvelle wears a paisley vest, a black, silk scarf tied in a knot to her long hair. A silent classroom looks around.

Some face her for reassurance.

MS. MARVELLE

Dawn Nelson was twenty-seven. A single mother, she worked two jobs to pay for art school tuition.

BILL

Always art, never science.

CHAMPAGNE

Always who least deserves to die.

LINDA

Deserves? Playing God Champagne?

CHAMPAGNE

No, but I do get angry with God.

LINDA

Long was right, God doesn't interfere.

If He watches, He has a mean streak.

MS. MARVELLE

How do we grieve with sadness instead of anger? Wanda?

WANDA

I grew up furious. This feels new. I'm empty and don't feel much like blaming. Some things just suck.

DAN

Tough break, Dr. Gold cleared her. She was about to leave this pigpen.

CHAMPAGNE

But return to what led her here.

WANDA

Everyone liked Dawn, except Dawn.

MS. MARVELLE

People universally liked make many concessions to secure that result.

WANDA

Name some.

MS. MARVELLE

Swallowing objections, falsely praising bullies, waiting for help rather than asking for it.

WANDA

I'd have helped if she asked.

MS. MARVELLE

Is anyone angry with Dawn?

Wanda turns with mild surprise toward Ms. Marvelle.

BILL

Her parents will be. Her siblings and when older her children too.

LINDA

I'm not. I get angry when some say that suicide is a selfish act. Intolerance comes from those who've never surpassed their own limit.

MS. MARVELLE
Individualism is not absolute. Do
consider when forming personal
philosophies. You make pacts with us
for release. Make honest ones.

Ms. Marvelle allows patients to pause, stare and reflect.

Wanda glances toward Dan, who winks of their pencil secret.

MS. MARVELLE
Last time we noted institutional
coercion. We're in an institution.
Anyone care to discuss procedures?

CHAMPAGNE
When we want to leave, they want to
keep us. When we want to stay, The
Powers That Be want to rid us away.

WANDA
Dawn wasn't ready to leave.

MS. MARVELLE
There's a topic.

DAN
As soon as Dr. Baker fixes my meds,
I'm leaving this place permanently.

MS. MARVELLE
What are your plans?

DAN
To signup for paid studies. Free
housing, free meds, and steady income.

BILL
Do you mean to say that your job will
be to live as a paid lab rat?

DAN
(winks to Wanda)
Placebo recipient, focus groups,
surveys, research volunteer --
malpractice mole, yada yada...

WANDA
Professional patient -- you'll have it
over on them then. Brilliant!

INT. RECREATION ROOM - DAY

Dan hands Wanda a paddle. He takes the other. They start a ping-pong rally synchronized back and forth to dialog. One hits, says "ping", the other talks until hits, says "pong."

DAN
Wanda, during your acute. Ping.

WANDA
Pong.

DAN
P-T-S-D. Ping.

WANDA
Wrong, Pong! I was drugged.

DAN
We're all drugged. Ping.

WANDA
Mine caused nightmares. Pong.

DAN
But you slept. Ping.

WANDA
Pong.

DAN
Then you fainted? Ping.

WANDA
I can't remember. Pong.

DAN
Were you in heat? Ping.

Wanda catches the ball with her left, nonpaddle hand.

WANDA
Yes. Why?

DAN
You said date rape, yet no rape.

WANDA
Game over. Statement gave. You're colder than a VICE cop.

Wanda crushes the ball and flings it at Dan.

DAN

What?

Wanda walks off and goes to her room.

INT. NURSES WINDOW - DAY

Wanda looks for Ken but can't find him anywhere. She paces the floor to Dan and Ken's room. Ken's belongings are gone.

NURSE FRANCIS

Long, you can't go barefoot here. Put on your tan tread slippers so you don't have another fall.

WANDA

Francis.

NURSE FRANCIS

We're not pals. I've a working title.

WANDA

Nurse Francis. Have you seen Pills Fill Bills, you know, the chanter?

NURSE FRANCIS

Discharged.

WANDA

Why?

NURSE FRANCIS

I don't decide. Usual reasons, not a threat to himself or others.

WANDA

So he's alright?

NURSE FRANCIS

I didn't say that. I said he was discharged from our care. He'll turn up elsewhere. They always do.

Wanda pauses to rethink something she said to Dan earlier.

WANDA (V.O.)

"He knew I could keep a secret. I knew that you could."

Wanda turns towards the nurse's station, then pivots towards Stoddard's Office, then on the same pivot foot retreats backward. She turns around and slowly walks towards Dan's.

She watches the Nurse's window as she slips into Dan's room.

INT. DAN'S ROOM - DAY

Wanda checks the hall as voluntaries play outside. She sneaks in and fondles a New Yorker carry-on bag. She opens a dresser - a Vertu Signature Cobra inscribed DANIEL. She looks up.

Wanda touches Google Photos. An image of Dan and Stoddard in arm-and-arm selfies. Wanda's eyes and mouth open in horror.

DAN

Spying?

WANDA

Look who's talking?

DAN

Why it's Morocco Mole.

WANDA

You're not a patient.

DAN

No?

WANDA

You're in with Stoddard. You've been quizzing me all along about that pill. Why I've been horny.

DAN

I warned you about P-T-S-D.

WANDA

Why me?

DAN

Cutters go wild to the sedative aphrodisiac. Other subjects for other traits completed the survey.

WANDA

Another date rape drug?

DAN

First-time-release clit arousal.

Market studies say rapists want pliant women, not necrophilia. Nuanced rape!

WANDA

You raped me here at Hospitable Hospital. You wet piece of shit!

DAN

Nut wards teem with far-fetched tales. Who'll believe yours? 'CREDIBILITY DUNGEONS' open 24-7. Bars close.

WANDA

Why you?

DAN

A Stoddard mole pays better than a Marvelle mole. Mole unearths mole. You commit conspiracy to insurance fraud, I join a rogue ring. You're a crook.

WANDA

I'm a patient.

DAN

You're both. And your fingerprints are on that pencil. Murder weapon?

WANDA

You know that's ridiculous.

DAN

Is it? Rat me out and I'll make up a worse story about you. Wanna go from hold to holding cell? Quoting Linda McCabe, "Shuddup Long."

Wanda ogles Dan's hazy metal mirror, touches her image.

WANDA

I wanted to reform psychiatry. Me!

DAN

I agree that shrinks are iffy with good intentions. Bad ones go an extra step -- like Stoddard.

WANDA

All this for that?

DAN
Your problem isn't cynicism, it's
idealism. You want healthcare.

WANDA
What next? Time to arrange my broken
shoelace strangulation?

DAN
Murder? Hardly. Next is a future pill.
Return to a man's world.

WANDA
I meant nothing to you?

DAN
Long, it's not a beauty mark. It's
just a mole.

Dan smirks. Wanda's eyes tear, she charges Dan, scratches his
face, and spits before he subdues her to the floor.

WANDA
(pauses for breath)
Fucking cur. Satan is God on your
Mom's boob strychnine. I'll kill you!

Wanda lunges at and grabs Dan's throat.

DAN
Ty! Nurse Francis! Help! Wanda Long is
having fits, is attacking me in here.

Orderlies pin Wanda to Dan's floor, apply hand/leg cuffs.

WANDA
I've been raped! I've been poisoned!
You must listen!

Two lift lengthwise and cart Wanda off to isolation.

INT. CLASSROOM - NEXT DAY

Patients crowd in for group therapy. Wanda sits in the back,
faces the leader's space for Ms. Marvelle.

Stoddard enters, stands there. His expression holds stoic,
posture rigid. He carries a long, wooden pointer stick.

Stoddard smacks the wooden stick on a table in front of him.

LINDA
Where's Ms. Marvelle?

DR. STODDARD
Replaced. Today I lead the group.

Stoddard looks around to sunken faces. Wanda, woozy from isolation sedatives stares the floor at her feet and broods.

DR. STODDARD
Time to restore order. Many of you have been refusing free medication. This hospital does not condone our subjects neglecting meds hygiene --

BILL
Hygiene?

LINDA
Our? Subjects?

DR. STODDARD
Silence! Identities are not games. We spot mental disorders. Accept your diagnoses as a duty to conquer social stigma. Become our agents.

BILL
Sickness Identity Politics?

DR. STODDARD
If you prefer.

BILL
Ms. Marvelle says disorder I-D's get us thinking we're sick. If we think ill, we'll always be ill.

DR. STODDARD
You will always be ill, no matter what you think. Now, last names like at the nurses' window, then your diagnoses. From left, you, go --

Patients go out of order. Dan surveys the protest. Others glare suspiciously at him. He shrugs back to them.

CHAMPAGNE
Wanda M&M's. Upchuck a butt pill.

Laughter.

LINDA
Wanda M&M's by Linda cheeseburger.

Hilarity.

DR. STODDARD
Enough. Start over.

SUSAN
Wanda M&M's courtesy of Lazy Susan,
Bipolar Bear Two --

More rowdiness. Louder.

BILL
Wanda M&M's by Dollar Bill Mandich.

Stoddard glares across to Wanda who glares right back.

CHAMPAGNE
Wanda M&M's by Godiva Chocolate
Goddess.

KATHY
Wanda M&M by Korean Kathy with a K.

MINDY
Wanda M&M's by Mindy Minnie Mouse.

GWEN
Wanda M&M's by Betty Crocker Moist!

A single tear wets Wanda's cheek from the validation.

INT. CAFETERIA - NIGHT

Wanda sits quiet, glum with Champagne. Wanda warms her ear on steam from the dinner tray. She turns her head to warm her other ear, sees Stoddard watch at door. She opens the tray.

The dessert cup holds a bag of MELTED M&MS.

Wanda glances back to Stoddard who casts a snide smile. She opens the bag of melted candy and throws them at Stoddard. A food fight ensues. Champagne also pelts Stoddard with M&M's shrapnel, thus ends her tranquility trance with the doctor.

INT. DR. STODDARD'S OFFICE - DAY

Stoddard palpitates ten fingers together like he's holding a ball. He waves an index finger side to side in admonishment.

WANDA
Scolding Therapy? How does that work?

DR. STODDARD
Wanda, could you straighten my
diplomas?

WANDA
Which ones?

Stoddard points to two that appear upright and straight.

DR. STODDARD
Those two. My Yale P-H-D in Neurology.
California Board Certified Psychiatry.

Wanda looks close as Stoddard intends.

WANDA
(sarcastic)
Are you getting nervous, Pusher Man?

Wanda uses index/thumbs to align one, elbows next to tilt.

Stoddard palpitates fingers together, then thumbs pensively.

DR. STODDARD
(stares, pauses, begins)
Fraternizing with Dr. Marvelle,
tobacco ringleader, one violent act,
food fight provocateur. Off meds? Not
a graduate's resume.

WANDA
My Certification Review comes up.

DR. STODDARD
Early release is unlikely. A neutral
arbiter will see shiny scars and deny
your petition.

WANDA
Not when I detail your malpractice.

DR. STODDARD
I forgot, conspiracy theorist. In non-
D-S-M nomenclature, you suffer from
superfluous imagination.

WANDA
What's the translation?

DR. STODDARD
Take friendly advice, your Patient Advocate will be Dr. Aileen Hughes. If you don't trust me, trust her.

WANDA
What do you know about her?

DR. STODDARD
Competent. Professional. I've worked with her before.

WANDA
With? She's supposed to work against.

DR. STODDARD
Adversarial deals do not undo mutual investment in patient welfare, dear.

WANDA
Is she on my side or yours?

DR. STODDARD
What matters to both of us is that you're on your side.

INT. PSYCHIATRISTS CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Seven doctors, unaware of the rogue ring, laugh at a joke.

DR. DUNN
Al, I told you to take my trade offer, McCabe for Long.

DR. STODDARD
You'd fare no better. Long's wild.

DR. BAKER
Before she was like a dishrag.

DR. STODDARD
Cutters are nasty. They'd eviscerate you sure as their own kid.

DR. SALLY GOLD
May I offer a women's intuition?

DR. STODDARD

Please.

DR. SALLY GOLD

If she's too wild for discharge, up dosages of her downers until she complies. Then set her loose.

Psychiatrists exchange looks. Then looks aim at Dr. Gold.

DR. BAKER

Sally! This is a psych ward, not a lion's cage. We don't erase brains here. We didn't hear that.

Stoddard notes irony, glances away from Dr. Gold's look.

DR. STODDARD

(finishes with a smirk)

Speaking of deterioration, we can't help Champagne. Police dropped her off to avoid a bust. She doesn't belong here either. 'Nor neither.'

DR. BAKER

Why don't you call a social worker?

DR. STODDARD

I plan to.

INT/EXT. PERIMETER WINDOW, LA SKYLINE - NIGHT

Champagne casts a shadow over Wanda who views the sunset.

Wanda flips her head backward to look at Champagne.

CHAMPAGNE

Stoddard found a social worker who found an assisted living home for poor folk with low insurance.

WANDA

The rumor is true. You're leaving.

CHAMPAGNE

Tomorrow morning.

WANDA

I'll be out of friends.

CHAMPAGNE

Me too.

WANDA

So Stoddard let you out early.

CHAMPAGNE

If any help I now remember fights with him last time. I don't recall leaving or liking him. Odd.

WANDA

Did you notice Dan always sat to interrupt us?

CHAMPAGNE

What a pest. Ty broke us up too.

WANDA

Just a ward cop, license to bully.

CHAMPAGNE

Maybe. Both were pests once we got over our dislike as roommates.

WANDA

Who came to who, you, or Stoddard?

CHAMPAGNE

I told you, he moved me to a new room. I didn't have to ask.

WANDA

Your memory of this stay is sharp.

CHAMPAGNE

But the last one, still in pieces. Cindy Samson mentioned special meds, refreshes something sinful.

WANDA

(incredulous)

You gotta be shitting me? You too? We were never meant to meet.

CHAMPAGNE

Glad we did you, white weirdo.

WANDA

Ladies of crass want to be appreciated, not understood.

CHAMPAGNE

(laughs)

We have our difference in common. You
mind that tongue.

INT. HALLWAY ADJACENT AUDITORIUM - DAY

Wanda meets her Patient Rights Advocate five minutes before
the hearing. It's the first time that they've met.

Wanda wears an old teal and white striped hospital gown.

DR. AILEEN HUGHES

Wanda, I bear bad news. Early release
is rare for suicides.

WANDA

Attempts. When do I get to issue a
Writ of Habeas Corpus?

DR. AILEEN HUGHES

Later if necessary. See what the
Hearing Referee says first.

WANDA

Get me out of this rat maze. Whatever
the cost.

DR. AILEEN HUGHES

Where are your own clothes?

WANDA

Home. There's no place like --

DR. AILEEN HUGHES

Anyway, I saw your past dossier and
current progress report. Are you
suicidal?

WANDA

No.

DR. AILEEN HUGHES

This progress report is extensive, red-
marked with demerits as if Dr.
Stoddard planned to keep you?

WANDA

I've been scammed as a Guinea pig in
his rogue aphrodisiac drug ring --

DR. AILEEN HUGHES
 Ms. Long, Ms. Long, Ms. Long. Dr.
 Albert Stoddard is a consummate pro by
 any semblance of objectivity.

WANDA
 He's a vile, contemptible pig shit!

DR. AILEEN HUGHES
 Don't open your mouth during this
 hearing! Let me speak for you.

WANDA
 Don't don't me Ma'am! Better do.

DR. AILEEN HUGHES
 I'll do my best -- by the numbers.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

Four in Wanda's Hearing talk. For 'Quality Assurance' twenty
 medical students in residency witness from balcony seats that
 engulf the audience below. Wanda icily stares at them all.

She gapes as unprepared to see Dr. Dunn in a regal robe.

WANDA
 I protest this cronyism!

Dr. Dunn eyes Dr. Stoddard and then glances at Dr. Hughes.

DR. DUNN
 Ms. Wanda Long, I am Mental Health
 Hearing Referee, Dr. James Dunn, here
 to preside in accordance with The
 Lanterman-Petris-Short Act. The County
 Judge Dr. Dolby had an emergency so I
 volunteered to fill in for him today.

Wanda punches her fist into an open palm, points at Dunn.

DR. DUNN
 I shall rule in this; a Probable Cause
 Hearing for WIC5250. Your Patient
 Rights Advocate, Dr. Aileen Hughes is
 here to assist in your motion for
 early release from this: a fourteen-
 day hold. Dr. Hughes is licensed as a
 psychiatrist in California. The
 Hospital Presenter is Dr. Albert
 Stoddard, seated to oppose the early

release, now at nine days with five remaining. Do you understand what I as Referee have explained to you?

WANDA

Yes -- Your Honor, not mine.

DR.DUNN

Dr.Hughes, present Ms. Long's case.

DR. AILEEN HUGHES

The patient exhibits no noticeable dysphoria. The patient exhibits no appreciable affect dysregulation.

WANDA

Is this about me?

DR. AILEEN HUGHES

The patient exhibits no extrapyramidal symptoms.

WANDA

The patient would like a word.

DR. AILEEN HUGHES

The patient exhibits no Clang associations or related distortions.

WANDA

Clang? No Long. May I?

DR. AILEEN HUGHES

The patient exhibits no coprolalia or other inappropriate responses.

WANDA

What the flying fuck is coprolalia?

DR. AILEEN HUGHES

The patient --

WANDA

Stop!

DR. DUNN

Ms. Long, let your Patient Rights Advocate advocate for you.

WANDA

The shortest distance between two

points is a word in edgewise!

The four participants become silent. The students in residency stare captivated. One of the students opens a can of soda. The sound draws stares from all but Wanda.

DR. DUNN

Dr. Stoddard, would you care to?

DR. STODDARD

Wanda shows a hostile attitude towards diagnostic evaluation.

WANDA

Answer A is true.

DR. STODDARD

Wanda declines medication.

WANDA

Answer B is also true. You, go! --

DR. STODDARD

More time is needed to stabilize within our controlled environment.

WANDA

E: None of these. Truly false!

DR. DUNN

The patient will complete the 5250.

WANDA

OBJECTION!

INT. DR. STODDARD'S OFFICE - DAY

Wanda stands in front of Stoddard's door. He hears breathing.

DR. STODDARD

Wanda, come in.

Wary, Wanda steps onto the Escher carpet and surprises when three male orderlies follow close behind, closing the door.

TY

You'z may not zlip on my wet floor
Mizzus Wanda but you'z in trou-ble.

DR. STODDARD

Your panic disorder has made you a

danger to yourself and threatens the stability of all patients.

WANDA
Including Dan?

DR. STODDARD
Your abstinence from meds and denial of mental illness is responsible. Your experiment is over.

WANDA
My experiment or your experiment?

DR. STODDARD
You're going back on meds until release.

WANDA
Like H-e-double toothpicks I am.

Stoddard nods and the orderlies restrain Wanda.

WANDA
You sick fucking phone phony!

Stoddard presses the syringe into Wanda's buttocks and she shakes so violently that the needle breaks off. Stoddard pulls out a hankie and squirts the syringe into it, covers Wanda's nose until she inhales and passes out.

INT. HALLWAY/CLASSROOM - DAY

Days have passed and patients known by Wanda have gone, vacancies replenished with newly traumatized arrivals. A replacement for Ms. Marvelle conducts by regimentation.

Wanda stares straight past voices to Stoddard's Office.

MORETTI
Moretti, A-D-H-D.

PEREZ
Perez, O-C-D.

RAHMAN
Rahman, S-A-D.

SHORT
Sad?

RAHMAN
Seasonal affective disorder.

SHORT
My name is Short. My long illness
acronym? re-C-A-P-T-C-H-A. I am not a
robot. Neither are you. I am a human
fucking being!

Wanda crimps lips, then her Mona Lisa emerges.

INT. DR. STODDARD'S OFFICE - DAY

Wanda appears listless, compliant. She pretends the zombie.

DR. STODDARD
Wanda, please come in. We need to
touch upon a few points about your
recent therapy.

WANDA
Yes, Dr. Stoddard.

DR. STODDARD
Are you mentally ill?

WANDA
Yes.

DR. STODDARD
I am -- say it.

WANDA
I am mentally ill.

DR. STODDARD
And what's your proper diagnosis?

WANDA
Panic disorder.

DR. STODDARD
A?

Wanda hesitates, feigns memory loss.

WANDA
Atypical.

DR. STODDARD
That's right. Are you panic-stricken?

WANDA
No Dr. Stoddard.

DR. STODDARD
And why not?

WANDA
Because I'm taking your meds.

DR. STODDARD
Not my meds, but whose meds?

WANDA
My meds.

DR. STODDARD
Good. What would make me panic?

WANDA
Not taking my meds.

DR. STODDARD
Yes Wanda, so when you take your meds,
you calm both of us down. What does
that make you?

WANDA
(unsmiling)
Happy.

EXT. OUTSIDE HOSPITABLE FRONT DOORS - DAY

Wanda sports these: Blue baggy denim, belted with a brown extension cord; a scuffed Greek fisherman's hat, a Hanes Red Dirt Hawaii T-shirt, sleek horned rimmed eyeglasses.

From her pocket, she throws away a bottle of Stoddard's Oxycontin. She hails a cab and cuts in front of a couple in matching Pennington Security Armed Guards in uniforms.

CAB DRIVER
Where to ma'am?

WANDA
L-A-P-D headquarters. I want to report
a crime. Crimes!

CAB DRIVER
You don't look so good. Sure you don't
want to get checked out at Hospitable?
It's affiliated with the acting County

Ombudsman, Stoddard's his name?

WANDA

No chance. If you knew. Drive on sir.

The cab drives off as Wanda looks through its rear window at Hospitable Hospital's black and gold wrought iron entrance.

She sees Stoddard's monogrammed license plate "CUSTOM CARE."

INT DR. STODDARD'S OFFICE DOOR - NIGHT

A phalanx of blue-suited cops, accompany Ms. Marvel and Wanda who knocks at Stoddard's door. He walks up and opens it.

Wanda pulls her long braid of hair past mouth and bites down.

DR. STODDARD

Hello, come in.

Wanda opens the door, leads a posse into Stoddard's office.

WANDA

Remember me? I remember you.

DR. STODDARD

I see. I mean, of course, Wanda. How have you been doing dear?

WANDA

Take it from your favorite cutter. I was always cut out to be on the outside looking in at confinement!

DR. STODDARD

Never a sharper wit -- Wanda. Still, you must explain the legal attentions accompanying you at my humble office.

WANDA

Someone cut a deal. You know him.

Dan walks in wearing handcuffs and an orange jumpsuit. He watches OFFICER GAVIN pose his Vertu Signature Cobra and picture of Stoddard/him in the embrace Wanda saw earlier.

DAN

Stoddard, they told me that I'd be out in five years if I plead guilty to aggravated assault and testify against you and the date drug ring.

OFFICER GAVIN

Dr. Albert Stoddard, you're Under Arrest for a host of charges that we'll delineate downtown.

MS. MARVELLE

Officer, the phone?

OFFICER GAVIN

Dr. Stoddard, we have search and seizure forms from LA District Criminal Court to secure a Vertu Signature Cobra cell phone, serial number 105986 into state's evidence.

WANDA

Stoddard, Dan asked me when I first met him, "Why did you do it?" I couldn't give him a straight reply. Why did you do it? You had it all -- career, prestige, money.

Stoddard presses his ten fingers into a parapet and sighs.

DR. STODDARD

Wanda, power is the last aphrodisiac for desirous men -- last addiction. I became champion of the frail man.

WANDA

If the Statute Of Limitations on a grudge was an apology, I would defend my right to misery forever. I forgive you Dr. Stoddard.

EXT. THE LONG RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Wanda sits aside her '56 Karma Ghia with her Dad, who wipes the car door handle and smiles.

RONALD LONG

Kiddo, you diddo alright tonight.

WANDA

Dad, I want to be my own woman in a world of power plays. Do advise?

RONALD LONG

I shared that when you were a little girl. What's the meaning of lice?

WANDA
To scratch your head for a reason!

SUPER: SIX MONTHS LATER

INT. RADIO STATION K-CLEAN - NIGHT

Ms. Marvelle hosts her own talk therapy show, one that also airs on local TV. Ken works controls in the background. Champagne, Linda, Susan, Kathy, Bill, and Steve stand-by. Wanda dons a Calvin Klein business skirt and blazer. Her lapel secures 2 teal-white buttons, "5250 GRAD!" and "DAWN."

MS. MARVELLE
Good evening all, with special kudos to those of utmost courage struggling with issues of mental health. We have one such person, a former patient I befriended while staffed at Hospitable Hospital here in Los Angeles. Welcome, Wanda Long to Radio K-Clean.

WANDA
Thank you.

MS. MARVELLE
Wanda, a harrowing saga compounding personal toils to rogue drug ring malpractice in psychiatry.

WANDA
Correct.

MS. MARVELLE
You testified at trial that put away illicit drug architect and fabled physician Dr. Albert Stoddard. Is it fair to extrapolate all psych wards as a modern dystopia?

WANDA
Mine is anecdotal/unscientific but involves numerous stays of varying duration. Stoddard and his rogue operation were clearly criminal.

MS. MARVELLE
Still, you penned a scorching take on psychiatry, from a patient's slant, New York Times bestseller --

WANDA
 "If The Mind Fits' Shrink It?"

MS. MARVELLE
 Snarky title. What's it about?

WANDA
 Better to confront issues as they
 arise rather than obscure them behind
 illness labels and drugs.

MS. MARVELLE
 Contemporary therapy favors talk with
 pharmaceuticals.

WANDA
 I think adults should be allowed to
 put whatever they want into their
 bodies without the war on personal
 liberties. Still, I propose better
 prospects through talk communion and
 not chemicals.

MS. MARVELLE
 Are you still sore towards Hospitable
 Hospital and psych ward treatment
 overall?

WANDA
 I say this to protect and serve me.
 Don't hold grudges, life's too Long.

MS. MARVELLE
 Just like you, Wanda Long! We need to
 take a break with a message from our
 sponsor, Sugar-Free M&M's. We'll be
 right back.

FADE OUT: