

L A D Y B U G

An Original Screenplay

Paul Salvi

FADE IN:

EXT. PAWN SHOP - SUNSET - ESTABLISHING

The city/county border. BALTIMORE WELCOMES YOU is written vertically on a sign in view of the shop.

From inside, the sound of BREAKING GLASS.

CUT TO:

INT. PAWN SHOP - CONTINUOUS

The SHOP OWNER on his knees behind the counter. KEON, one of THREE ROBBERS, smashes display cases with a 9mm.

ROBBER TWO lugs a flatscreen TV to the entrance and hands it off to the lookout, ROBBER THREE. Three loads it into a white van. Two heads back for more loot.

CRUNCH. THUNK. Two and Keon look to the door.

KEON

Yo Warren, you good?

No answer. Three is gone.

KEON (CONT'D)

(to Robber Two)

Man, see what that is.

Two ventures back to the door -- freezes when he sees BLOOD SPATTER on the van. And bolts for the rear exit.

Hits the brakes again.

A YOUNG WOMAN leans in the doorway, casual, friendly. Dressed in black, bare legs and feet, an odd combination of gymnast, kickboxer, and superhero. She's basically all three. She's LADYBUG.

LADYBUG/CONNIE

Hey there.

Silence.

CONNIE

I'm gonna need you guys to put down your guns and line up over there, okay?

They look her over. Keon turns the gun on her.

CONNIE (CONT'D)

You think I look stupid, and also that I'm crazy. But also you're wondering if I couldn't possibly be trouble, since I'm standing here completely not afraid of you, even though you're like mean and you have a gun and everything. Now your friend, he's thinkin' "Damn, girl got some big ol' feet."

Keon glances at her feet. A mistake, because that's when she unfolds her arms, snaps out a COLLAPSIBLE BATON and knocks the gun out of his hand.

Two charges and gets an elbow in the face. Drops.

Keon lunges for the gun. Connie trips him with the baton, uses her long leg and grippy toes to swipe the nine from under his falling body. He lands hard.

He rolls over, sees Connie pointing the gun at his face.

CONNIE (CONT'D)

Empty your pockets, please.

CUT TO:

INT. HOMICIDE BUREAU - NIGHT

A CELL PHONE BUZZES. NEW MESSAGE. From JANE.

DETECTIVE SARAH PERELLO, mid-thirties, checks the phone, close by on her desk. It says RESPONDED TO ALARM. THANKS. ALL CLEAR.

Perello looks around, shifty, then types a response.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Connie's phone, an identical piece of shit, goes off. She checks it.

SENDING CARS. TAKE CARE.

She sits in a bus enclosure, more or less incognito now with her mask and goggles stowed in her backpack, jean shorts and a hoodie over the hero suit.

She makes a call.

CUT TO:

INT. CHARLIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

CHARLIE, her older brother, hits the speaker phone on his desk, stationed at a computer in the living room of an unimpressive apartment. We hear FILHY PORNO SOUNDS.

CHARLIE

Done already?

INTERCUT CONNIE/CHARLIE

CONNIE

Yeah, I'd say I did enough good today.

CHARLIE

How'd you do?

CONNIE

Sixty bucks. And this guy let me have some DVDs, I beat up the guys who were robbin' him.

An MTA BUS approaches. Connie wiggles her toes into flip-flops, leaves the enclosure and stands closer to the building behind it.

CHARLIE

Were they black?

CONNIE

What? What do you think?

CHARLIE

Listen, you really need to start beating up the occasional white dude. The black AM station is like a hotbed of anti-Ladybug sentiment right now. A hotbed, Connie.

She sniffs the contents of a metal pill container.

CONNIE

Whatever. I confiscated what appears to be, uh, not-great marijuana as well.

CHARLIE

Sweet.

CONNIE

Which is mine and will remain mine until you dust. You said you would dust and you could be dusting now. It's not like you can't look at porn and listen to whackjob radio all day tomorrow.

CHARLIE

Yeah yeah. I'd like some food please?

CONNIE

Sure thing, buddy.

The bus arrives, stops to let people off.

CHARLIE

White guys. I mean it.

CONNIE

Bye.

CHARLIE

They have coke. Y'know? Vicodin.

CONNIE

Bye.

Connie waits. When no eyes are on her, she vaults up onto the enclosure, then hops to the roof of the bus.

She stretches out, invisible from the street. Uses her backpack as a pillow. Seems used to this.

As the bus heads Countyward, HOLD on the distinct dome structures of the Back River Waste Treatment Facility, floodlit, like the eyes of a giant fly.

CUT TO:

INT. BUS / EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT

The bus pulls up to a modular suburban apartment complex. A lone PASSENGER debarks and heads down the sidewalk.

Through the window we see Connie leap down from the roof and head to the apartments. The BUS DRIVER only half-sees it, does a double-take, then shakes his head. Nah.

CUT TO:

INT. CHARLIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Connie enters, not via the front door like a normal person, but through the glass balcony door.

Charlie's still at the computer. She leaves a Taco Bell bag on his desk on her way to the bathroom.

CHARLIE

Did you beat down any white or non-black criminals?

CONNIE

Negative.

CHARLIE

Well then you are racially insensitive.

CONNIE

I'll just toss that on my pile of problems, thanks.

CUT TO:

INT. CHARLIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Connie watches TV in her PJs, hair damp from a shower. She eats Ramen noodles from a pot. It's a one-bedroom apartment; the sofa is her bed.

CHARLIE

Okay listen. I got it. This is it, okay? Ready?

CONNIE

Lay it on me.

CHARLIE

Two words: foot fetish.

CONNIE

Pass. Already I want no part of it. Gotta be a record.

CHARLIE

Hear me out now. Our friend Ladybug, she has quite a following in the female feet enthusiast community.

CONNIE

Well, ugh.

CHARLIE

What do you expect? You got your feet all out all the time, you're grabbin' guns with your toes -- this was so inevitable. Now I say, let's monetize those things. Why not exploit this freaky subsection of the pervert underground?

CONNIE

No.

CHARLIE

We do our own website, right? Not porn, not even close. Just you, an anonymous Ladybug lookalike, doing some completely harmless and silly feet-related stuff.

CONNIE

No.

(can't help it)

Like?

CHARLIE

You know, stuff you'd do anyway. Paint your nails, lotion, scrunch and unscrunch. Nothin' too crazy. You might step in a pie, maybe lick off some of the pie. Playful.

CONNIE

Go away. God, I don't know what's more sickening, message boards about my feet or my brother trying to pimp them out.

CHARLIE

Tastefully. Tell me you aren't sick of Dollar Menu and ten-cent noodle bags.

CONNIE

They're seven cents.

CHARLIE

Connie, you're a superhero. You deserve to not be poor.

CONNIE

I deserve a not-crazy brother too.

Connie's PHONE BUZZES. She checks it. CHANNEL 11.

Connie looks around, sees the remote on the coffee table. She toes it to the edge, swats it with her foot and flips it into her hand. Takes a split second.

CHARLIE

See? Stuff like that.

THE NEWS. Live footage of those GIANT BUG EYES we saw before.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)

-- hostage situation at an area waste treatment facility. Reports indicate that an assailant has barricaded the doors --

CONNIE

Oh, great.

Connie hauls herself out of bed, reaches under the sofa for her hero gear. She gives the bodysuit a investigative sniff, reacts like it doesn't smell great.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHARLIE'S APARTMENT - BALCONY - NIGHT

Suited up, Connie steps outside and checks the street below. The top-floor apartment overlooks the street.

A delivery truck is headed this way. Perfect.

NEWS REPORTER (V.O.)

-- at least two people at gunpoint, inaccessible to rescue personnel.

Connie does a human-slinky kind of move to drop from her balcony to the one below, and so on down to the ground.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)

And has the hostage taker made any demands?

NEWS REPORTER (V.O.)

Not as yet. This is a very unusual situation.

She bounds up the hill, across the street, then shimmies up and across a light pole, just in time to drop off of it to the top of the truck.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)
Well, obviously we hope and pray that
this can be ended peacefully.

The truck speeds off, back toward the city.

CUT TO:

EXT. WASTE TREATMENT FACILITY - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING

A POLICE HELICOPTER overhead, its intense spotlight on
the proceedings. SQUAD CARS guard the entryway in the
perimeter fence.

CUT TO:

EXT. WASTE TREATMENT FACILITY - MAIN BUILDING -
NIGHT

In a far, dark corner of the parking lot, Perello leans
on her car and watches from the sidelines. SWAT OFFICERS
and BRASS confer near the main entrance.

She hears a barely-there SOUND, a twig maybe.

PERELLO
'Bout time. I think it's time to look
into like a jetpack or a Bugmobile,
something.

Connie eases down from overhead branches to the roof of
the car.

CONNIE
Okay. Can I borrow several million
dollars?

PERELLO
I could lend you enough for a used
bicycle.

CONNIE
I'd take it.

PERELLO
Jesus, aren't you cold?

CONNIE
I feel the cold, but I don't feel cold,
exactly.

PERELLO

Okay.

CONNIE

I'm a freak, remember? What can you tell me here?

PERELLO

There's two hostages in that bridge thing between the domes. The night guard and a female employee. Plus our perpetrator. She used the employee to get in.

CONNIE

"She"?

PERELLO

Our bad guy's a girl, who instructed the employee to alert us before smashing her cell phone. We were told any attempt to force the doors will result in a big damn explosion.

CONNIE

I'm not liking what this sounds like.

PERELLO

Yeah, bombs? A crazy woman holed up somewhere only you can get to? Sounds familiar, doesn't it. Gets better. They use chlorine in there, and I'm told that a cloud of exploded chlorine is something you really don't want anywhere near a populated area.

The scene cuts to a NIGHT VISION POV. Someone is watching them from the trees.

CONNIE

Noted.

Connie plants a naked foot on the windshield and steps down off the car.

PERELLO

Be careful.

CONNIE

I probably won't, actually? But thanks.

CUT TO:

EXT. WASTE TREATMENT FACILITY - WOODED AREA -
CONTINUOUS

The OBSERVER, in a black stealth suit and mask, lowers his NVGs. No features visible thanks to dark-lensed goggles and an incorporated rebreather-looking device.

He draws a SOUND-SUPPRESSED BERETTA and moves without a sound toward the action.

CUT TO:

EXT. WASTE TREATMENT FACILITY - DOME STRUCTURE -
NIGHT

At a dizzying height, Connie uses minute finger- and toeholds to inch her way up one of the bug-eye domes.

CUT TO:

INT. WASTE TREATMENT FACILITY - CONTROL TOWER -
NIGHT

Between the domes is a central operations area, control panels, office space, etc.

THE HOSTAGE-TAKER, not fully seen yet, thunks an empty bottle of Bacardi Hurricane down onto a desk, and then does her best to fumble open another with gun in hand.

The TWO HOSTAGES are on the floor, tied up, gagged, confused and terrified. The woman whimpers.

HOSTAGE-TAKER/SERAPHINE

(drunk)

Shut your fat face. You should pay attention so you remember things when you tell you tell your dumb fuck friends about this, you stupid pig. I'm sure you have a lotta friends. People from church. All the other bloated retards that you're exactly like.

She wanders to the window, gulps down some of the blue liquor, squints as the aerial spotlight strafes her. We see her now, the picture of instability, blonde hair all hacked to shit, weird mismatched clothes.

CONNIE (O.C.)

Seraphine Miasma.

She turns around. Her eyes loop woozily around the room.

SERAPHINE
I just wanna talk, okay?

CONNIE (O.C.)
No, this really isn't okay.

SERAPHINE
It's all right, look.

Seraphine puts her gun down, lifts her hands.

CONNIE
Kick it over here.

Connie startles her, having appeared from nowhere, but Seraphine looks relieved to see her.

She kicks the gun across the floor. Connie catches it with her toes and, without looking, foot-flings it into a distant wastebasket.

SERAPHINE
Hi.

CONNIE
What is this?

SERAPHINE
I, uh ... okay. Um. I have been thinking a lot about things. About you, mostly. About this. About us.

CONNIE
Us.

SERAPHINE
I want things to be different. I made promises to myself and I get to be my word. I get to by me word.

CONNIE
Okay.

SERAPHINE
And I've been getting assistance, and I'm responding really well to treatment.

CONNIE
Clearly.

SERAPHINE

Uhhhh.

CONNIE

Look. Jesus. Can I just haul you in already? This is weird.

SERAPHINE

I'm sorry. I mean really sorry, for all of it. I'm sorry I tried to kill you all those times, which, I mean, how could I kill you anyway? And that stuff, and all the damage I caused, that isn't who I wanna be anymore.

CONNIE

Well who are you?

THE FEMALE HOSTAGE goes crazy, tries to scream a warning -- Connie spots THE OBSERVER at the window, just roped in from above, about to shoot.

CONNIE (CONT'D)

DOWN!

Seraphine drops as the WINDOW EXPLODES. Connie launches herself straight up, smashes through a drop ceiling tile, disappears into the darkness above.

CUT TO:

EXT. WASTE TREATMENT FACILITY - MAIN BUILDING -
CONTINUOUS

Perello sidles up to the action. NORRIS, one of the uniforms, is glad to see her.

NORRIS

What brings you out here, Detective?

PERELLO

You, sweetie. When we're done here you're gonna treat me to a greasy diner breakfast.

NORRIS

Well then. Hell with the O.T., I pray for a speedy resolution.

They hear the GLASS BREAKING ABOVE.

CAPTAIN DESANTIS, senior officer present, calls out to HOWARD, the head SWAT guy, who approaches with a POLICE BOMB-SNIFFING DOG.

DESANTIS
Whaddaya got?

HOWARD
From what we can tell, no explosives present. I'm prepared to breach.

DESANTIS
Stand by.

He activates his walkie-talkie.

DESANTIS (CONT'D)
Air One, this is DeSantis. Do you have anything?

CUT TO:

INT. / EXT. POLICE HELICOPTER - CONTINUOUS

A SHARPSHOOTER looks at the tower through his scope.

SCOPE POV: Too dark in there to make anyone out.

SHARPSHOOTER
Negative. No shot. It's pitch black in there.

CUT TO:

INT. WASTE TREATMENT FACILITY - CONTROL TOWER - CONTINUOUS

The Observer draws another weapon, takes aim at the hostages -- THUNK! THUNK! Tranquilizer darts.

He switches back to the Beretta and covers the ceiling.

Seraphine, under a nearby desk, kicks an office chair at him and breaks for her discarded gun.

He stumbles but recovers in an instant, has her in his sights when --

THE OVERHEAD LIGHTS SWITCH ON. The intense brightness wipes out his vision, and he fires blind.

Bullets slam into the desk Seraphine throws herself behind, shatter her discarded bottle.

CUT TO:

INT. / EXT. POLICE HELICOPTER - CONTINUOUS

The sharpshooter sees the tower light up.

SCOPE POV: The hostages look dead.

He jabs his mic.

SHARPSHOOTER

Captain!

CUT TO:

INT. WASTE TREATMENT FACILITY - CONTROL TOWER - CONTINUOUS

The Observer snaps his aim toward the light switch, spots Connie as she flips the lights off again.

He FIRES LOW, goes for her legs. She hand-springs out of sight, inhumanly fast.

He's lost her. Looks around.

Connie locks her arm around the Observer from behind. He snaps his head backward into her nose.

As they fight Seraphine grabs for a wastebasket. It's empty. She looks around. Every desk has a wastebasket next to it. Which did the gun land in?

Fuck.

Connie and the Observer duke it out. The better fighter, he slams her face-first through a desk. Retreats.

Seraphine finds her gun and moves to shoot him, but he closes the distance, takes it from her a dazzling commando move, and knocks her aside.

CUT TO:

INT. WASTE TREATMENT FACILITY - CONTROL TOWER
STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

The stairway winds around the inner wall of the tower.

The SWAT cops work their way up toward the control room
with cautious cover-and-advance moves.

The Observer avoids them easily, escapes.

CUT TO:

INT. WASTE TREATMENT FACILITY - CONTROL TOWER -
CONTINUOUS

Connie and Seraphine struggle to recover. Connie tries
to do something with her broken Ladybug goggles.

SERAPHINE

You don't need those.

Connie gives her a questioning look.

SERAPHINE (CONT'D)

I've known all along, Connie. Did you
really think I wouldn't recognize you?

The look goes sour. She hops to her feet.

As they moves toward the hostages, past the broken
window, Seraphine sees the sharpshooter, tackles Connie
just in time. THE BULLET WHIZZES OVER THEM, BLOWS UP A
COMPUTER.

For a moment they just look at each other, stunned,
Seraphine atop her, breathing hard.

Connie's PHONE BUZZES. She checks it.

SERAPHINE (CONT'D)

What's it say?

CONNIE

SWAT team's comin' up, so we gotta go
down.

SERAPHINE

Right. Aaand how do we do that and not
get shot?

CONNIE

Crawl.

They belly-crawl back out of sight.

CUT TO:

EXT. WASTE TREATMENT FACILITY - REAR ENTRANCE -
NIGHT

Norris smokes, off by himself. The door swings open and
Norris comes face to face with the Observer.

Goes for his gun. Too late.

The Observer, with Seraphine's gun, shoots Norris dead,
and disappears into the night.

CUT TO:

INT. WASTE TREATMENT FACILITY - CONTROL TOWER -
NIGHT

The SWAT cops are now on the stairs just outside the
control room.

CUT TO:

INT. WASTE TREATMENT FACILITY - ABOVE DROP CEILING -
CONTINUOUS

Connie and Seraphine are hidden above the ceiling tiles.
Striving for absolute quiet, Connie lifts one of the
tiles out.

CUT TO:

INT. WASTE TREATMENT FACILITY - CONTROL TOWER -
CONTINUOUS

The tile in question is directly above the stairwell,
where the SWAT cops are gathering, the cement floor of
the tower visible far, far below.

CUT TO:

INT. WASTE TREATMENT FACILITY - ABOVE DROP CEILING -
CONTINUOUS

Connie looks at Seraphine, uses pantomime to silently convey the following: I'M GONNA JUMP. WAIT FIVE SECONDS, THEN YOU JUMP.

Seraphine conveys back: ARE YOU FUCKING CRAZY?

Connie shrugs, drops through the hole.

CUT TO:

INT. WASTE TREATMENT FACILITY - CONTROL TOWER -
CONTINUOUS

The SWAT cops see Connie flash by and react, not sure whether to shoot.

Connie snags a railing a few floors below, then jumps across the open space to another railing a few more floors down. In seconds, she's on the ground.

CONNIE

NOW!

Seraphine huffs and puffs, clamps her eyes shut, and jumps.

Down below, Connie plants her powerful legs and springs twenty feet upward, cushioning the impact as she catches her.

She lands nimbly, Seraphine safe in her arms. Joyous, Seraphine kisses her on the mouth.

CONNIE (CONT'D)

Glmph!

HOWARD (O.C.)

STOP OR WE WILL OPEN FIRE!

They run, as bullets tear up the floor behind them. Seraphine heads for an exit door, but Connie stops her.

CONNIE

Not that way. They're out there.

SERAPHINE

Then where?

Good question. Connie sees a random door, kicks it open. Metal stairs lead down into blackness.

CUT TO:

INT. WASTE TREATMENT FACILITY - PIPE ROOM - NIGHT

The bowels of the place. The girls look around, but no exit is apparent. Just brick walls, massive metal pipes.

HOWARD (O.C.)

This way! They went down!

Howard at the door. Fuck.

SERAPHINE

Now what?

CONNIE

Got any open cuts?

SERAPHINE

I don't think so. Why?

The SWAT cops creep closer.

Connie vaults up onto the largest pipe, a pipe big enough to squeeze through. A pipe that leads out of here.

She tries to turn the wheel on a submarine-style entry port. Won't budge. She strains.

It gives. And blows open. AND SPEWS EXCREMENT ALL OVER THEM.

Seraphine gags. Connie steels herself and shoves Seraphine into the pipe, then drops in herself.

The SWAT cops arrive, they fire, bullets sparking off the metal.

They're too late.

CUT TO:

EXT. WASTE TREATMENT FACILITY - MAIN BUILDING - NIGHT

Perello and DeSantis react when they hear

UNIFORM COP (O.C.)
OFFICER DOWN! 10-13! 10-13! OFFICER
DOWN!

Perello draws her weapon and races toward the voice.

She turns the corner, sees the UNIFORM COP over Norris,
and way too much blood.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEARBY STREET - NIGHT

We're outside the perimeter fence, the glow of dome
lights and cop activity visible through fence and trees.

A heavy manhole cover flips up into the air, punched by
Connie.

She peeks out, checks for cars, then springs up through
the manhole and lifts Seraphine out. Both are shivery,
covered in shit.

CONNIE
You got any cash on you?

SERAPHINE
Just a couple thousand.

Connie gives her a look. You bitch.

CUT TO:

A BILL ACCEPTER

as Connie slides a crisp fifty into it.

CUT TO:

EXT. SELF-SERVE CAR WASH - NIGHT

Connie hoses down a nude Seraphine with a power washer.
Seraphine hops around, freezing.

CUT TO:

A TRASH CAN

Their soiled clothes are piled in a metal trash can, the Ladybug suit on top. A match falls onto the Ladybug insignia. The clothes ignite.

CUT TO:

EXT. THRIFT STORE - NIGHT

Dead of night. The girls make their way across a parking lot to the rear of a local Goodwill, naked and sneaky.

As she forces the door, Connie notices that Seraphine is smiling, breathless, exhilarated.

CONNIE

Stop having fun.

CUT TO:

INT. MTA BUS - NIGHT

The girls board in odd thrift store ensembles. Clueless, Seraphine slides a fifty into the fare slot.

The only passengers, they sit against the rear wall.

CONNIE

So.

SERAPHINE

Hi.

CONNIE

I guess you have no idea who that guy trying to kill us was.

SERAPHINE

Nope. Wasn't a cop, I guess?

CONNIE

No, that was no cop.

SERAPHINE

Are we going to your house?

CONNIE

I don't have a house, and no.

SERAPHINE

I thought we were cool.

CONNIE

You can't really be this crazy.

SERAPHINE

I'm trying to get better. And you could help me, which, excuse me, is your job, to help people. I need healthy outlets. I need to not be alone so much. That isn't good for you, y'know?

CONNIE

Yeah, I know.

Connie ponders those words, stares blankly at her unusual feet.

CUT TO:

THE SAME FEET, a decade or so earlier.

CUT TO:

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL - MAIN OFFICE - DAY

YOUNG CONNIE mopes, alone in the main office, all the OTHER KIDS outside at recess. She wears a Catholic school uniform, her barefootedness inexplicable.

PRINCIPAL (O.C.)

It's an obvious ploy for attention. I've never heard of a student randomly misplacing her shoes and socks, multiple times.

CUT TO:

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Connie's mother, RIA, listens politely to the PRINCIPAL, a miserable dried-up old nun. Ria is youthful, a lovely but tired-seeming woman.

PRINCIPAL

Now in my opinion she spends too much time alone. Connie's a sturdy girl, she should at least attempt to do sports. She'd interact more with the other students. Build confidence.

RIA
Well, that's definitely something she and
I will talk about, Sister.

PRINCIPAL
I hope so.

CUT TO:

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL OFFICE - DAY

The principal shows Ria out.

RIA
Have a good day, Sister.

The principal gives Connie a stern look, goes back into her office. Behind her back, Ria fans her hand back and forth and pulls a face like the nun stinks.

Connie stifles a laugh.

CUT TO:

INT. CONNIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Tiny basement kitchen.

Connie and Ria, at the table, are at work on a huge pile of peapods, tearing them open and dropping the peas into a bowl.

CONNIE'S GRANDMOTHER, a Sicilian workhorse, putters around the stove, the oven and every burner in use.

GRANDMOTHER
How do you lose a pair of shoes? You
know what nice shoes cost?

RIA
They barely fit anyway, ma. She's
getting big.

GRANDMOTHER
Her feet are getting big. Who has feet
like that?

RIA
They're beautiful feet.

GRANDMOTHER
Sure, beautiful.

YOUNG CHARLIE enters, also in Catholic school wear, and proudly holds up a pair of pristine saddle shoes.

CHARLIE
Found 'em.

Connie looks confused, Ria suspicious.

CUT TO:

INT. CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Charlie plays a 90s video game. Connie wanders in.

CONNIE
Where'd you get those shoes?

CHARLIE
I found 'em.

CONNIE
Where?

CHARLIE
At the mall.

CONNIE
You stole them.

CHARLIE
What are you, crazy? I gave Pablo Suarez some pills and got him to steal them.

CONNIE
Pills?

CHARLIE
Yeah, I modified some aspirin, told him it was Ecstasy.

CONNIE
Thank you.

CHARLIE
Will you tell me now what keeps happenin' to your shoes?

She debates.

CONNIE

They broke.

He pauses the game.

CHARLIE

What, they just fell apart on you?

CONNIE

It's not the shoes, Charlie, it's my feet. It's me.

CHARLIE

What about you?

CUT TO:

EXT. CONNIE'S BACK YARD - DAY

Row house, lower middle class. Paved alley. Connie's house has the one garden, the one tree.

Connie is about to perform. Charlie, the jaded audience, waits on a weathered picnic bench.

Laundry hangs from a clothesline between two metal posts. Connie takes hold of a cross bar, lifts herself with a gymnast's ease and perches on it, balancing on her toes.

She looks at Charlie. Unimpressed.

Then Connie turns around, grips the bar with her toes, and falls backward.

And hangs there upside down. By her toes.

Her look says Well? And his says Holy Shit.

Then, hanging by just one foot now, she grips the bar with her toes and bends it.

Charlie boggles, mind fully blown.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE

Charlie throws stuff at her. Balanced on her hands, she catches every projectile unflinchingly. Rocks. Nerf arrows. She catches an apple and takes a bite.

She bounds from table to shed to balcony to the roof of the house. In seconds.

At a playground now. She crosses monkey bars.

Charlie finds all this awesome.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - NEXT DAY

Connie and Charlie lug backpacks to their bus stop. Connie lags behind, stepping very carefully to preserve her new shoes.

CHARLIE

-- figure out which sport you would make the most money at, and then you do that, but then you retire from that and you do another sport for more money than you would have gotten if you'd done that to begin with, y'know?

With her eyes on the ground, she doesn't see an ENORMOUS BLACK TEENAGER block Charlie's path, grab him by the shirt.

TEENAGER

Gimme a dollar.

CHARLIE

What? I don't --

TEENAGER

You gonna gimme a dollar.

Instinct takes over: Connie unslings her heavy backpack and swings it into the kid full force. The kid stumbles backward. Recovers.

Tries to backhand her, but she ducks it, swings around a lamppost and kicks him through a wooden fence.

He leaps back up, crazed, but Connie moves around so quickly he can't grab her.

She ducks another swing, then leaps up at him, takes him by the head and yanks it downward, meeting his face with her knee.

The kid drops like a onion sack. Charlie comes over, gets one half-hearted little kick in.

Connie checks her shoes. They're already shredded.

Fuck this. She kicks them off, tears off her socks, her uniform skirt (she has gym shorts underneath). She dumps everything in the garbage and heads home.

CHARLIE

Where you goin'? You'll be late.

CONNIE

I'm not going. I'm done.

CHARLIE

You gotta go to school --

CONNIE

Did you see me kick that guy's ass? I don't have to do shit.

She leaves. Charlie makes sure the kid is still out, then goes through his pockets.

SERAPHINE (V.O.)

You have to let me stay with you!

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET NEAR APARTMENTS - NIGHT

Connie and Seraphine walk, maybe a half-mile from Connie's apartment. Connie's frustrated, trying to ditch her.

CONNIE

If you knew who I was, why start all this? Why not just come find me?

SERAPHINE

I didn't want you to know I knew.

CONNIE

Why?

SERAPHINE

I thought -- I figured if I could get you to tell me on your own, that would be -- it would be a big step for us.

CONNIE

THERE IS NO US! There will never be an us. Ever.

SERAPHINE

There used to be.

CONNIE

We were kids.

SERAPHINE

We were us, and we're still us, and don't try to tell me you are not incredibly gay. Look at your shoulders, for Christ sake.

CONNIE

If you don't go away I will haul you in. You can't buy your way outta this stuff forever.

SERAPHINE

Sure I can. And you need me right now. That commando guy'll be back. I can help.

CONNIE

No thanks.

SERAPHINE

Also, if you actually live anywhere near here, I can probably fix that too.

Connie has to think about that one.

CUT TO:

INT. CHARLIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Connie and Seraphine come inside.

CONNIE

I need a real shower.

SERAPHINE

Me too.

Seraphine tries to follow her. Hold up there.

CONNIE

Right.

SERAPHINE

You're gonna use up all the hot water. And what am I supposed to do out here? You want me out here alone, snooping

(MORE)

SERAPHINE (CONT'D)

around? You want my tainted poopie butt
on your sofa?

CONNIE

You're sick. You're just sick.

SERAPHINE

No, I'm dirty.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

An open trash bag on the floor.

Inside we see the Goodwill clothes, wet paper towels, and many soap, bodywash and shampoo containers. They've emptied out Connie's entire supply, dish soap, hand soap, rubbing alcohol, for the ultimate Silkwood Shower.

Connie chucks another soap box into the bag. She and Seraphine are seated in the empty tub, lathered all over. Seraphine shampoos furiously.

CONNIE

Okay, ready to rinse again?

SERAPHINE

Hang on.

Charlie pokes his head in, half-asleep, confused. They look at him. He looks at them. He blink-blinks.

He starts to talk, then shakes his head and leaves.

CUT TO:

INT. CHARLIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Almost morning.

Connie and Seraphine are on the sofa, where Seraphine reapplies the black nail polish on Connie's toes. Connie's half asleep.

SERAPHINE

Feels like a slumber party, doesn't it.

CONNIE

How would I know?

SERAPHINE

Can we finish this later?

CONNIE

No.

SERAPHINE

All right, let's assume you'll have to leap into action in the next few hours, and someone notices that your toes aren't done. Who cares?

CONNIE

Me. And internet weirdos. It's part of the uniform. Ladybug is me, but better, and she's always, uh -- look, eroding standards are what's wrong with America.

SERAPHINE

Yeah. How are your feet so not-messed-up? I mean, they're softer than mine and I wear shoes.

CONNIE

Well that's one of my kickass super powers, my monkey feet stay extra nice no matter what.

SERAPHINE

I have so many questions. We've never really talked about ... anything. How do those goggles stay on your face?

CONNIE

Magnets.

SERAPHINE

What's your costume made of?

CONNIE

It was made of matte lamé.

SERAPHINE

Huh. And when you're outside in it --

CONNIE

I feel the cold, but I don't feel cold.

SERAPHINE

Why the pads? It's not like you can get hurt, right?

CONNIE

They're not for me, they're for you and anyone else I hit. I care about not hurting people.

SERAPHINE

How did this happen?

CONNIE

What do you mean?

SERAPHINE

How did you get the powers? Radiation?

CONNIE

I don't know. One day I just realized they were there.

Pause.

SERAPHINE

Wait, did you say "internet weirdos"?

CUT TO:

EXT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - DAY - ESTABLISHING

CUT TO:

INT. DESANTIS' OFFICE - DAY

Seated, half-paying attention to Captain DeSantis, Perello taps a text message into her phone. PLEASE CONTACT ME.

She hits send. SENDING FAILURE. RETRY?

DESANTIS

What I'm led to believe, Detective -- and this is completely off the record -- is that if someone in this department wanted to know more about this individual, he could do worse than to come to you.

PERELLO

She was there for me once. She saved my life.

DESANTIS

Well last night she was there for a cop killer.

PERELLO
That's how it looks.

DESANTIS
Do you see it another way?

PERELLO
I don't know, sir. I really don't know anything more than you do. But Seraphine Miasma's always craved attention, primarily. As thick as her record is, there's nothing worse in there than ransom-motivated kidnappings. It's mostly vandalism, albeit on a massive scale. She's crazy, but she's never actually killed anyone.

DESANTIS
That we know of.

PERELLO
That we know of.

DESANTIS
The other one. Can you find her?

PERELLO
Be a good idea to up patrols in the Southeastern, she's most active there. But right now I'm hoping she'll find me.

CUT TO:

INT. CHARLIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Charlie and Seraphine at the computer. Seraphine smokes the weed connie found from an improvised soda can pipe.

SERAPHINE
So you're saying every time a woman shows her feet in a movie or something --

CHARLIE
Or TV. The news. Anywhere. Not any woman, though, women of hotness.

SERAPHINE
People take a video of that and put it on this message board.

Charlie clicks around.

CHARLIE

And screen captures. See, a lot of times they'll have literally every frame on here. And there's another section where they have feet from magazines. They don't miss anything.

SERAPHINE

(winces)

That's --

CHARLIE

Dedication. The thread on Connie, look at this, it's like twenty pages. She has a fan base.

SERAPHINE

How are there pictures of her feet?

Seraphine takes over.

CHARLIE

Surveillance cameras, stuff from the paper. But it's all blurry, blocky terrible stuff. These guys deserve better. They deserve to be able to pay for better.

SERAPHINE

Looks like they are. Have you seen the last page?

CHARLIE

Not since the other day. Why?

SERAPHINE

Look at this link.

A new tab has opens onto a site called LIVEGRLZ.COM. Specifically, a profile page for someone named LOVEBUGG. A message where the camera feed would be reads THIS PERFORMER IS CURRENTLY OFFLINE.

The profile picture shows a GIRL in a makeshift Ladybug costume with her foot a few inches from her face, her tongue extended provocatively towards it. The shot is poor quality, but this girl could be Connie's twin.

CHARLIE

That's Connie. I mean, it's Photoshop or something.

SERAPHINE

What if she has a secret life? Another one?

CHARLIE

How? She barely goes anywhere except to do the hero stuff.

SERAPHINE

Yeah, well, she's a fuckin' giraffe with size eleven feet -- not a great candidate for a secret identity. Although maybe they're less rare than you'd think.

CHARLIE

Also, pains me to say it, but I can't see my sister ever suckin' her own toes for rent money.

SERAPHINE

Yeah, we need to see more.

CHARLIE

Maybe you do.

Charlie leaves. Seraphine starts typin' and clickin' like crazy.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET NEAR APARTMENTS - DAY

Shopping bags in hand, Connie walks past a newspaper vending machine, reacts when she sees

THE PAPER

A Seraphine mug shot. A laughable "artist's conception" of Ladybug. The words COP KILLERS.

CONNIE

drops the bags -- one contains black and red fabric, makings of a new Ladybug suit.

She digs through her pockets for change. Fuck it -- she looks both ways and just breaks the machine open.

CUT TO:

INT. CHARLIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

THIS PERFORMER IS CURRENTLY OFFLINE. Still. Seraphine at the desk, droop-eyed, refreshes the page every few seconds. Charlie is stretched out on the sofa.

Connie barrels in, slams down the paper.

CONNIE

What did you do? What in the hell did you do?

Seraphine looks at the headline. Not all that bothered.

SERAPHINE

Does that say I shot a cop?

CONNIE

No, darling, it says you shot a cop and I helped you escape.

SERAPHINE

Oh. That was G.I. Joe. He took my gun. I didn't do that shit, you know I didn't.

CONNIE

And what am I supposed to do with that? Explain to the cops that some mysterious stranger no one else saw showed up and did all the really bad stuff?

SERAPHINE

No. You show them. You know he's gonna find us. We stop him, you haul his ass in. Until then --

She offers Connie the weed.

SERAPHINE (CONT'D)

-- settle down.

Connie looks at her Ladybug stuff. She's fucked.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. POP CULTURE MUSEUM - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING

Seen from an adjacent, higher rooftop.

Ladybug, in costume, back to us, looks down at the floodlit museum.

CUT TO:

INT. POP CULTURE MUSEUM - NIGHT

A KINDLY NIGHT WATCHMAN makes his rounds, checks doors, etc.

He walks under a skylight. We see Ladybug high above, in silhouette, looking down through it. Eerie.

CUT TO:

INT. POP CULTURE MUSEUM - LATER

The guard is now seated behind the main reception desk, surrounded by classic movie posters, comics art. He adjusts the antenna on a small TV.

THE POWER GOES OUT.

Somewhere, GLASS BREAKS. The guard snatches up the phone. Dead. Panic now. He's already in over his head.

He moves out from behind the desk to the main corridor. Sees Ladybug, a black shape against the broken windows at the end of the hall that strides toward him, shows no fear.

He draws his billy club, stands his ground. She ignores him, walks right by into a room devoted to AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY.

A wall display full of toys and memorabilia. She kicks her bare foot through the glass. Zeroes in on an unimpressive little figurine, a tuxedo-clad Sambo character. Takes it.

Leaves the way she came. The guard gives her a good whack between the shoulder blades. It's like hitting a redwood. Doesn't do shit.

She looks at him. Lashes out with a vicious backhand.

The guard whirls around, spews blood and teeth as he's launched through a glass case. He lands badly, impaled by the glass.

Ladybug takes that in, her face obscured by darkness, but her body language is impassive. She turns and leaves, and her feet crunch bloody broken glass with no ill effects.

CUT TO:

VIDEO CAMERA FOOTAGE - CONTINUOUS

The entire scene in snowy monochrome as Ladybug moves to the window and jumps outside. The TAPE REWINDS, plays again.

CUT TO:

INT. HOMICIDE BUREAU - NIGHT

Perello scrutinizes the image, her face inches from the screen. Another detective, BOBERT RIDGE, watches her watch. Ridge: 40s, stuck fashion-wise in the 70s, with an overworked moustache and hairdo.

RIDGE

We could send it to DC for enhancement, but I don't see the need. That's her, right?

PERELLO

Looks like her. Moves like her, too. If it weren't for the robbery and murder part I would never question it.

RIDGE

What, you're questionin' now?

A pause. Apparently, she is.

PERELLO

She stepped in that blood. Did ECU get shots of the footprints?

RIDGE

Oh, I made ding-dangin' sure a dat. Take a look.

Hands her a folder. The long-toed footprints are very Connie. Perello visibly saddens.

RIDGE (CONT'D)

I guess we can match based on the size, when the time comes, but if we could get a sample we knew was her --

PERELLO

We have one.

RIDGE

Say what? How?

PERELLO

The other night, at the waste plant, she stepped on my windshield. It hasn't rained. We can print-match with that.

RIDGE

You're somethin' else, kid.

PERELLO

You love me, Bob?

RIDGE

(senses trouble)

Here we go.

PERELLO

I need you to sit on it. Even if it matches. It probably will. But I need you to drag ass until I talk to her.

RIDGE

Why'd you even tell me, dang it?

PERELLO

Because I trust you, Bobert. Do you trust me?

CUT TO:

INT. CHARLIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Connie on the sofa, bored, depressed, cooped up in here way too long.

Seraphine is firmly entrenched at the computer, in Connie's sleepwear, very much at home now. Still checking the cam site obsessively. Charlie wanders over.

CHARLIE

Come on, let me on for a while.

SERAPHINE

Go away, they're still downloading.

CHARLIE

I can just open another window --

SERAPHINE

I DON'T WANT IT TO CRASH!

She punches him in the arm. Ouch. He retreats.

CHARLIE

Jesus.

CONNIE

Downloading what?

SERAPHINE

Footage of you. Her. The other one. I made contact with a young man who captured some of the performances for, y'know, later usage.

CONNIE

Oh, great. Well, as long as we're doing something.

SERAPHINE

We are.

CONNIE

Yeah, waiting for a dude to come kill us? While you diddle yourself to some internet whore.

SERAPHINE

Hey, watch what you say about the future Mrs. Miasma.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEARBY STREET - DAY

Parked moving van.

CONNIE (V.O.)

You're gross. You're just sick.

CUT TO:

INT. SURVEILLANCE VAN - CONTINUOUS

The Observer, hunched over an antiquated surveillance setup, listens to their conversation. His mask rests nearby. We don't see his face.

A computer monitor mirrors what's happening on Seraphine's.

SERAPHINE

And you need to man up and accept who you are, Connie.

CUT TO:

INT. CHARLIE'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Connie looks at her new goggles on the coffee table. Ladybug's eyes stare back.

CONNIE

Yeah? Well who am I? What am I?

SERAPHINE

First and foremost, you're a a person in desperate need of intensified sexing.

CUT TO:

INT. DESANTIS' OFFICE - DAY

Perello enters the office, about to speak -- but stops short when she sees MARCUS TAINÉ, mid-thirties, an athlete, a capable man.

DESANTIS

Come in, Detective. Shut the door, please.

She does. Taine offers a hand, a winning smile.

TAINÉ

Marc Taine.

PERELLO

Agent Taine, I bet.

TAINÉ

Marc's fine.

DESANTIS

Marc's people have taken an interest in some of the local wildlife.

PERELLO

Ah. Our oversized insect population.

TAINÉ

I sense some concern here, and I can understand your having a soft spot for this woman, wanting to give her the benefit of the doubt. I'm not up here to interfere with your investigation, I just want to help it along.

PERELLO

Why?

TAINÉ

Well, if "Ladybug" has gone rogue, and is now in league with a known terrorist, that's something we would have to react to. That is a national security concern, at least until her intentions and the full extent of her capabilities can be ascertained.

PERELLO

Oh. And how will you be assisting us exactly?

Taine hands her a file folder. Perello opens it, finds a photo of the stolen figurine.

TAINÉ

I suppose we're all wondering what on earth anyone would want with that, let alone consider it worth killing for.

DESANTIS

The museum people say it's worthless. You can shed some light on that?

TAINÉ

Not exactly, but look at the next picture.

She does. A second figurine, this one a female version in a maid's uniform.

TAINE (CONT'D)

That figurine was made at the same time and place as the one taken from the museum. They're a set.

PERELLO

Where is it?

TAINE

The main branch of the public library. It's on loan from the museum collection for a Black History Month display there. We're keeping tabs on it, in a subtle way, and it's been treated with a special dye that'll let us track it via satellite if necessary.

PERELLO

Gosh. Who's "we" again?

TAINE

My people.

PERELLO

Who are ... ?

TAINE

Concerned.

CUT TO:

INT. CHARLIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Seraphine and Charlie stare at the computer monitor, mouths agape, identical stunned expressions. We hear the odd whimper, spit clicks, other weirdness.

SERAPHINE

I can't believe this.

CHARLIE

This looks exactly like you, Connie. It's you.

SERAPHINE

I meant that a person can bend like that, but yeah, that too.

CHARLIE

Oh my god, this is gross.

SERAPHINE

Does this piece of shit burn DVDs?

She rifles shit in search of one. Connie emerges from the bedroom in full hero gear, adjusts a padded glove.

CHARLIE

Where you goin'?

CONNIE

Errands.

(to Seraphine)

You. Stay here.

(to Charlie)

You. Go out. Somewhere crowded. You're not safe here alone, and you're definitely not safe with her.

SERAPHINE

What, you don't trust me?

CONNIE

No. And I do trust G.I. Joe. Take precautions.

She heads for the balcony.

CUT TO:

INT. HOMICIDE BUREAU - LADIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Perello enters, smiles hello at a departing UNIFORMED POLICEWOMAN, heads for a stall when:

CONNIE (O.C.)

Finally.

Perello is startled, whips her head around.

CONNIE (O.C.) (CONT'D)

Up here.

Perello looks up, sees Ladybug crouched above the drop ceiling.

CONNIE (CONT'D)

You've had at least sixty ounces of coffee tonight. How've I been up here so long?

PERELLO

Look, meet me on the roof, okay?

CONNIE
We can't talk here?

PERELLO
Sixty ounces.

CONNIE
Oh. Right.

Connie starts to replace the ceiling tile.

PERELLO
You're under arrest, by the way.

CONNIE
Gotcha. Take your time.

CUT TO:

EXT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Perello looks out at the city, while Connie stands on a ledge ten or so feet below her. Perello drops down a new cell phone.

PERELLO
I set up the contacts already. And there's no Lo-Jack in there or anything, don't worry.

CONNIE
If I didn't trust you, I wouldn't be here.

PERELLO
But you're gonna need to explain some things. This footprint matches yours exactly. You were in that museum. Not your twin, not a clone, you.

CONNIE
But I also wasn't. Here.

Connie hands up a DVD-R.

CONNIE (CONT'D)
I've been doing sex shows on the internet, apparently. But not. Another head-scratcher. You probably won't want to watch any more of those videos than is strictly necessary.

PERELLO

No worries.

CONNIE

That has all the relevant links on it, dates and times, everything I could think of.

PERELLO

I'll look into it. Meanwhile, that was you aiding and abetting Seraphine Miasma the other night.

CONNIE

She didn't shoot anyone. She was with me the whole time, helpin' me deal with this dude who was trying to kill us.

PERELLO

What dude?

CONNIE

Sort of a black ops type, I guess.

PERELLO

Describe him.

CONNIE

Tall. Commando gear. Couldn't see his face. The hostages didn't mention him?

PERELLO

The hostages barely remember last week, let alone that night. That tranquilizer was pretty kickass.

CONNIE

Sounds expensive.

PERELLO

I noticed that. Maybe you couldn't afford it, but she could. Maybe you stole it, since you do that now.

Pause.

CONNIE

So what now?

PERELLO
Well, you're expected at the local
library.

CUT TO:

EXT. PUBLIC LIBRARY - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING

A stone fortress.

CUT TO:

INT. PUBLIC LIBRARY - NIGHT

The Mammy figurine from Taine's dossier, inappropriately
adorable, stands among other questionable depictions of
African-Americans in the display case.

The library is empty.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE SURVEILLANCE VAN - CONTINUOUS

Perello and TWO DETECTIVES monitor the library via hidden-
camera feeds of the display case and footage from
standard security cameras. The detectives look bored.

DETECTIVE 1
I hear you've seen her.

PERELLO
Lotta people have.

DETECTIVE 1
I mean up close. Look, she's not
bulletproof, right? That's what I'm
getting at.

PERELLO
No.

DETECTIVE 1
Good.

CONNIE (V.O.)
You should lie. Tell them I cannot be
killed, so they shouldn't even try. Tell
them I spit acid.

We see now that Perello is wearing a BLUETOOTH EARPIECE.

CUT TO:

EXT. PUBLIC LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

Connie, on her own stakeout, scopes out the scene from a storm drain across the street. Her phone is open nearby, the speaker feeding her sound from the van.

A VAGRANT pushes a shopping cart full of assorted junk past the library.

CONNIE

It occurs to me that if I were in this situation -- and I guess in a way I am -- and I wanted that statue bad enough, I might just say to hell with bein' sneaky and --

THE OTHER LADYBUG pops out of the junk cart, rockets toward the library entrance and power-dives right through the glass.

Connie zips out of sight.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. POLICE SURVEILLANCE VAN - CONTINUOUS

The cops go for the door, but

OUTSIDE, the van doors have been fastened shut with a rugged magnetic device.

THE VAGRANT -- now seen to be the Observer -- lights a Molotov and drops it under the van. WHOOSH.

In the van, Perello and the detectives realize what happened and go into frantic escape mode.

CUT TO:

INT. PUBLIC LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

Other-Ladybug reaches into the display and snatches the statue, ignoring the glass like it isn't even there, never slowing from a full run.

But she does when Connie's legs shoot out from a doorway and drop-kick her viciously through the opposite door.

She loses her grip on the statue, lands in a heap among filing cabinets.

Connie lands in the hall and smoothly catches the statue.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. POLICE SURVEILLANCE VAN - CONTINUOUS

The van is an oven now, people gathered around outside, unable to help. Coughing, Perello gets her phone out and jabs out a text.

CUT TO:

INT. PUBLIC LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

Connie takes a moment to examines the statue, curious. A STAPLER hits her full in the face.

CONNIE

OW!

She ducks a phone flung from the same place, the office where Other-Ladybug landed, then looks up just in time to see Other-Ladybug charging, about to club her with a fire extinguisher.

Connie throws the statue at her and OTHER-LADYBUG CATCHES IT WITH HER FOOT.

Connie reacts. Who *is* this person?

She ducks the extinguisher, but has trouble with ensuing punches and kicks -- Other-Ladybug is a superior, desperate fighter.

Connie pulls something unexpected, dives through her legs and with a punch, ruptures the fire extinguisher. The exploding foam blinds Other-Ladybug.

Connie rips an American flag off a nearby pole and twirls it like a huge wet towel, snapping it with terrifying effect into Other-Ladybug's face.

The flag makes a good makeshift rope. Connie uses it to bind her.

CONNIE (CONT'D)

Who are you?

Connie pulls off Other-Ladybug's goggles, and finds her own face underneath. But the eyes are harder, angrier.

Connie picks her up. THREE GUNSHOTS TEAR INTO OTHER-LADYBUG, and Connie instinctively back-flips into the office.

The two lock eyes for a moment as Other-Ladybug lies out there, bleeding. Now her eyes are sad. She dies.

Connie's PHONE BUZZES. Message from Perello. HELP NOW VAN FIRE.

In the hallway, the Observer, gun steady, glides toward the slain Ladybug, the office, the discarded statue.

Connie's leg, quick as a cobra, shoots out of the office, toe-grips the statue and disappears.

The Observer runs for the office now.

He sees a split-second flash of Connie dropping out the window.

Too late. He lowers the gun, unreadable.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. POLICE SURVEILLANCE VAN - CONTINUOUS

Connie, in an overcoat now minus Ladybug headgear, rushes through the library entrance and hands an emergency firehose to a MALE BYSTANDER.

Unseen by the others, she gives the slackened hose a super-powered yank and

CUT TO:

INT. PUBLIC LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

the valve inside, wrapped in hose by Connie, is pulled open.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. POLICE SURVEILLANCE VAN - CONTINUOUS

The hose spews. The bystander douses the flames. Connie sees the fire defeated, and gets the hell outta there with the Mammy tucked under an arm.

CUT TO:

INT. PUBLIC LIBRARY - NIGHT

Major police presence now, coroner personnel, etc.

Perello barrels in, finds the two detectives from the van and MORE COPS gathered around Other-Ladybug. A PHOTOGRAPHER takes shots of the body.

DETECTIVE 1

Well, you were right.

Perello sees the corpse. Connie. Dead.

PERELLO

Who shot her?

TAINÉ (O.C.)

I did.

Perello turns and sees the Observer standing in a shadowed doorway. He steps forward, now maskless, an overcoat over his commando gear. The Observer is Marcus Taine.

TAINÉ (CONT'D)

I told her to halt. I warned her. She kept coming. There just wasn't any other option, Detective. You'd have done the same.

Bullshit.

PERELLO

Yeah. Where's the statue?

Taine holds up another Mammy statue.

PERELLO (CONT'D)

Worth killing for, Agent Taine?

TAINÉ

Certainly not worth dying for.

Perello's PHONE BUZZES. She checks it. YOU OKAY?

Connie. Thank god. Perello moves away. Taine eyes her. Sees her texting with that odd urgency. Wheels turn.

CUT TO:

INT. MTA BUS - NIGHT

Mammy, the real one, rides in her own seat.

Connie gets a reply. FINE YOU?

She drops the phone on the seat and puts her head in her hands, emotions catching up with her. Not fine.

CUT TO:

INT. CHARLIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Connie enters from the balcony. Seraphine is still obsessively refreshing the cam site. Click. Click.

CONNIE

Don't bother.

SERAPHINE

You look terrible.

CONNIE

You should see the other guy.

SERAPHINE

Huh?

CONNIE

She's dead. G.I. Joe.

SERAPHINE

Well.

(genuine sadness)

Yeah. I'm pretty sure I'm gonna kill him.

CONNIE

Pretty sure I'd be okay with that.

Connie shifts Mammy around in her hands, looking for something unusual. Nothing. Decides fuck it, breaks the figurine open on the counter. Nothing inside.

Seraphine stares longingly at the computer. Reaches for the mouse. Gives it one last mournful click.

The page reloads. SHE'S THERE. Lovebuggg. YET ANOTHER CONNIE.

SERAPHINE

You're here! Connie! She's here!

Connie vaults over the sofa, looks at the monitor.

CONNIE

No. This can't be live.

SERAPHINE

We can test her.

(as she types)

Hey baby ... show me those ... sexy ... monkey feet.

CONNIE

Nice.

She smacks the Enter key.

Lovebuggg reads her screen. Then she complies. Wiggles her long Connie-like toes for the camera.

SERAPHINE

She does that a lot, though. Could be coincidence.

CONNIE

Ask her if she can type with 'em.

SERAPHINE

Goodness.

CONNIE

(grow up)

Because no one can do that. No one normal. Get it?

SERAPHINE

Oh. Yeah. I thought for a second you might be, y'know, fun.

CONNIE

Just type.

She does. The third Connie grins naughtily, and types, with her toes, LIKE THIS?

The girls react. This is for real. Three Connies.

CONNIE (CONT'D)

Ask her where she is.

SERAPHINE

I need a credit card. Right now.

CONNIE

Why?

SERAPHINE

So we can go private.

CONNIE

Do what?

SERAPHINE

So we can buy one-on-one time. If someone else does that first, we lose her.

CONNIE

I don't have any credit cards. Don't you?

SERAPHINE

I'm a supervillain, hon, it's mostly a cash business.

CONNIE

Just get whatever you can out of her. We need to find --

THE POWER GOES OUT, A POLICE HELICOPTER RUMBLES OVERHEAD, AND TWO TEAR GAS CANISTERS SMASH THROUGH THE WINDOW.

TAINÉ KICKS DOWN THE DOOR.

Connie, back in full Ladybug mode, is ready for him this time, kicks the gun from his hand.

They fight. She ducks an elbow and flips Taine over her back. He smashes down through the TV.

Seraphine, crazed and screaming, charges in with the MICROWAVE OVEN held aloft and clubs him with it.

She's about to stab him with a butcher knife, but Connie yanks her out of the apartment.

CUT TO:

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT

SWAT COPS, same ones from the Waste Plant, creep toward a service entrance.

The door explodes outward and Connie sails out feet first, brutally knocking one cop aside.

She drop-kicks the next nearest cop and toe-grabs the submachine gun from his hands, tosses it with a backward somersault behind her, through the door.

Seraphine catches it, chambers a round with practiced ease and FIRES at the feet of the other cops, who retreat back around a corner.

Connie grips a huge Dumpster, drags it out of its alcove to create some cover. Seraphine FIRES a couple warning shots from behind it.

Howard, the lead SWAT cop, gestures silently, and the team approach the Dumpster with caution.

He peeks around the corner. The girls are gone.

CUT TO:

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX GROUNDS - NIGHT

The girls run. The helicopter spotlight strafes their path. They just barely avoid it, make for a boundary fence.

Connie hops it easily. Seraphine looks at her through the fence. She needs help, and isn't sure she'll get it.

Connie huffs, grips the fence, and tears enough of it up out of the ground for Seraphine to shimmy underneath.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEARBY STREET - NIGHT

They walk briskly. Connie has stowed her hero headgear. They're both trying to play it cool, failing, and not at all sure where to go.

A POLICE CRUISER zips out of an alley, blocks their path. PANIC. Then they see, through the open window, Perello. Whew.

PERELLO

Get in!

They start to. And then hear SCREECHING RUBBER. A nondescript car roars up and RAMS THE CRUISER.

In this car: Charlie. His idea of a rescue.

CHARLIE

COME ON COME ON! JESUS!

They stare at him in disbelief. Shithead.

CUT TO:

INT. CHARLIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Taine, maskless again, gathers up the pieces of the broken Mammy statue in a plastic bag.

A UNIFORM COP enters as Taine strides out with the bag hidden from view.

TAINÉ

Secure the apartment, then find out who lives here. Let's give Ladybug a name.

CUT TO:

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT

The SWAT cops are gathered behind the building. Taine approaches.

HOWARD

She was here.

TAINÉ

Miasma.

HOWARD

No, the other one. We heard you took her out earlier.

TAINÉ

Did you report in?

HOWARD

No, our comms have been fucked since we got here.

TAINÉ

Yeah, that was me.

Howard has no time to respond. Taine pulls his tranquilizer pistol and drops all the SWAT cops before they realize what's happening.

CUT TO:

INT. NONDESCRIPT SEDAN - NIGHT

Perello drives the stolen car, Connie in front, Charlie and Seraphine in back.

CONNIE

(to Charlie)

So the news didn't mention me?

CHARLIE

Just that suspected-accomplice stuff, not your name, nothing about you being dead.

PERELLO

Yet.

SERAPHINE

And I was supposedly located how?

CHARLIE

Anonymous tip, they said.

SERAPHINE

That's bullshit. I haven't left the apartment.

CHARLIE

I tried calling.

Perello holds up her own cell phone, throws it aside.

PERELLO

So did I. Taine pulled some spook shit and fried all our phones.

CONNIE

Who and what is this guy? CIA?

PERELLO

Good question. Another one is why's he still after you, when he has a dead copy and an easy-pickins Internet ho to work with. Him wanting to dissect you was the

(MORE)

PERELLO (CONT'D)

only thing that made sense, and now it doesn't.

SERAPHINE

(to Perello)

What's your story? Why are you risking everything to help out a vigilante, a cop killer and a car thief?

PERELLO

Well, when you put it like that.

CHARLIE

I didn't steal this by the way. I went to NTB, I stood there, and a guy handed me the keys, y'know?

SERAPHINE

Christ, only you could make crime dorky.

CONNIE

(to Perello)

Where we going?

PERELLO

Bus station.

Perello hands Connie an envelope.

PERELLO (CONT'D)

Webcam You is probably in Los Angeles. The porn site is based there, and based on when the videos were made, the visible daylight or lack thereof is consistent with the time zone. Everything I could find out is in there.

CONNIE

Thank you.

PERELLO

My advice is that you burn it and go somewhere else, somewhere nowhere near here or California, and forget your entire life up to this point, because Taine wants you. He's planned out and initiated everything that's happened, even the words coming out of my mouth right now. He wants you alive while the world thinks you're dead, and he wants you to go where he wants you to be, and that's California.

SERAPHINE

Then let's go there and kill him, and save the other Connie.

CHARLIE

(indicates Perello)

Whoa, no names.

SERAPHINE

Are you retarded? Stop talking.

CONNIE

Assuming the other me isn't part of this. Her appearances have been pretty convenient. Don't get your hopes up.

SERAPHINE

So what if she's evil? So'm I. You wanna embrace old-maidhood, that's your business.

PERELLO

Did I miss something?

CUT TO:

EXT. BUS DEPOT - NIGHT

Charlie and Seraphine are off at the ticket booth, Connie and Perello with the car, about to say goodbyes.

PERELLO

So. Sunny California?

CONNIE

'Fraid so.

PERELLO

Be careful.

CONNIE

Probably not, but thanks. I guess we have to assume he knows about us. What're you gonna do?

PERELLO

I'll manage. He'll be on your ass soon enough, and he wouldn't kill me without Miasma here to frame for it.

CONNIE

You hope.

Connie holds out her hand. Perello shakes it.

CONNIE (CONT'D)
Pleased to meet you. My name's Connie.

PERELLO
Not anymore.

CUT TO:

EXT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - DAY - ESTABLISHING
Somber. White sky.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY
Press conference. LOUD. Packed. SRO.

DESANTIS
She was pronounced dead upon arrival at
Good Samaritan Hospital. Federal agents
took possession of the body and will be
handling that end of the investigation.

REPORTER
Has Ladybug's brother been located?

DESANTIS
No.

REPORTER
Will he be charged with harboring
fugitives?

DESANTIS
That hasn't been determined.

REPORTERS shout more questions about Connie.

DESANTIS (CONT'D)
(louder)
All inquiries regarding the woman in
question will need to be addressed by the
appropriate federal authorities. Our
primary focus now is apprehending
Seraphine Miasma, who has been charged
with the murder of Patrolman Brian Norris
(MORE)

DESANTIS (CONT'D)
and the assault and attempted murder of
several other police officers.

REPORTER TWO
What about the museum guard?

DESANTIS
We consider her to be a person of
interest in that case as well,
definitely.

ANOTHER REPORTER
Can you speak at all about possible
motives here, and address specifically
what was actually taken from the crime
scenes?

DESANTIS
Not at this time.

ONE MORE REPORTER
Do you feel that these crimes were
racially motivated, and are you aware of
the widespread allegations of that nature
within the black community.

DESANTIS
Every avenue will be fully explored.

Perello, watching from the back and visibly disgusted,
heads out of the room.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

In the corridor, she bumps into the solid wall of muscle
that is Marcus Taine. She looks up at a friendly smile.

TAINÉ
Detective.

PERELLO
Marc.

TAINÉ
How 'bout lunch?

Unbelievable.

PERELLO
Seraphine Miasma's a high priority, I
should really get to work.

TAINÉ
Of course. You're like me, Sarah, you
hate loose ends.

She does her best to smile in agreement. Taine looks at
his watch. She notices.

TAINÉ (CONT'D)
Another time.

He continues on. She grabs his arm.

PERELLO
You know, I think I could go for some
lunch after all.

Taine makes a face. Shit.

PERELLO (CONT'D)
Unless you're in a hurry.

Taine recovers. Smiles more.

TAINÉ
Not at all. Where to?

She goes ditzy.

PERELLO
Well, [restaurant name] is good, but
there's always a wait ...

Taine dims. Fuck.

CUT TO:

EXT. INTERSTATE HIGHWAY - DAY

Bus moves westward.

CUT TO:

INT. INTERCITY BUS - DAY

Charlie and Seraphine snooze, both in silly makeshift
disguises. Connie stares out the window, troubled.

CUT TO:

INT. MIDWEST MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Connie emerges from the steamy bathroom in a towel, finds Seraphine seated Indian-style on the bed, a new laptop computer in front of her.

CONNIE

We can't afford that.

SERAPHINE

Yeah, like I paid for it.

CONNIE

Anything?

SERAPHINE

No sign of Mrs. Miasma. I think your cop friend left you a message on the foot forum. New user, feels like code.

CONNIE

I'll check it.

SERAPHINE

Got you some clothes and stuff.

She tosses her a Target bag. Connie reaches in, pulls out a black thong. Not amused.

CONNIE

Really?

SERAPHINE

They didn't have black and red or I'd have stuck with your stupid Power Ranger dress codeb. Sorry.

Connie takes other stuff out, new pajama pants, then finds BLACK NAIL POLISH. Looks at it a moment.

CONNIE

(a little moved)

Thank you.

She sits on the edge of the bed, exhausted.

CONNIE (CONT'D)

I thought things had reached the maximum possible insanity level but now I'm actually sort of not-pissed at you.

Seraphine moves next to her.

SERAPHINE

Oh, well then you can't be the real
Connie.

CONNIE

Maybe I'm not. Maybe we all think we're
the real one. This is just -- I have a
brother, I had a mom and dad --

(realizes)

Oh my god, all the family pictures --
everything's gone.

Connie starts to cry. Seraphine holds her close.

Seraphine moves in slow for a kiss, and Connie lets her
keep coming, loses herself for a few moments.

Seraphine guides her down onto the bed -- but Connie
snaps out of it and springs to her feet, busies herself
with clothes.

SERAPHINE

You liked that.

CONNIE

No.

SERAPHINE

You're allowed to like stuff. Why can't
you accept that? Is it the Catholic
thing, the superhero thing ... ?

CONNIE

Just -- you sleep now. I'll keep watch.

Connie hurries into the bathroom to change, shuts the
door.

SERAPHINE

I love you.

In the bathroom, Connie just stands there, shell-shocked.

CUT TO:

EXT. SECLUDED PAYPHONE - NIGHT

Seedy outskirts, maybe near a titty bar.

Perello waits, seated on the hood of her car near a
dilapidated phone booth. The PHONE RINGS.

PERELLO

Yeah.

CUT TO:

EXT. PAYPHONE NEAR MOTEL - NIGHT

Connie glances around, wary. And she blows on her fingernails, freshly re-blackened.

INTERCUT CONNIE / PERELLO

CONNIE

Hey. Got your message.

PERELLO

Everything all right?

CONNIE

Sort of. So far.

PERELLO

I have an address for you. Home base for the porno site. State law says they need to have contact info for your girl on file.

Connie scribbles it.

CONNIE

Got it.

PERELLO

I would expect a fake address or a real trap. Taine left town. I stalled him as long as I could.

CONNIE

Really?

PERELLO

We had a leisurely dinner. I did, anyway. Couldn't get shit out of him, though.

CONNIE

Thanks.

Pause.

CONNIE (CONT'D)

Hey, uh ... I miss you.

Perello makes a weirded-out face. Recovers well.

PERELLO
Oh. Yeah. You too.

Awkward pause. Connie is vaguely disappointed, embarrassed.

PERELLO (CONT'D)
Watch it, okay? By now he's waiting for you.

CONNIE
Yeah. He'll be dying to meet me.

CUT TO:

INT. DIFFERENT MOTEL - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING

Further west, more of a dust bowl locale.

CUT TO:

INT. DIFFERENT MOTEL - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Seraphine leaves the steam-filled bathroom. Surprised to find Connie here, on the bed in the darkened room.

SERAPHINE
Thought you were asleep.

Connie just watches her.

SERAPHINE (CONT'D)
(sly)
Can you throw me something to wear?

Connie looks over at the night table, picks out a ring from Seraphine's gathered jewelry, throws that over.

Seraphine crawls across the bed, onto Connie. They kiss. Connie's into it now -- her hands glide over Seraphine's body.

Seraphine notices THE POLISH ON HER FINGERS AND TOES. It's chipped.

She pulls away. She knows.

SERAPHINE (CONT'D)
You're her.

Tiny smile.

SERAPHINE (CONT'D)

What do you want?

"Connie" shoves her backward, but the sudden violence gives way to renewed, intense lovemaking.

CUT TO:

EXT. LOS ANGELES SKYLINE - DAY - ESTABLISHING

CUT TO:

EXT. OFFICE PARK - DAY

Nondescript.

CUT TO:

INT. PORN SITE OFFICE - DAY

Beyond the glass entrance door, PORN SITE GUY parks his sports car. Not what you'd expect, looks like a typical douchebaggy college kid.

He BLEEPs the car shut, enters, and finds his SECRETARY bound to her chair, gagged, horrified.

He tries to run back out, but Seraphine is in the doorway, gun aimed at his face. She tilts her head at the office. Move it.

P.S.G. backs into the office, sees familiar bare feet on his desk. Ladybug. She sizes him up, unconcerned.

CONNIE

Hey there. Listen, no need to be alarmed -- odds are my friend and I will be leaving here very soon. I would like for that for that to be the case. How 'bout you?

P.S.G.

Sure. Yeah.

CONNIE

Yeah. I just need a little information from you, and then I can head out and let you get back to work.

P.S.G.

Hey, whatever you need.

CONNIE

Good. So you know who I am and just how easy it would be for me to, say, break your arms and legs, or your collarbones, which I know can be really really painful. So just give me the name and address of the whore you pay to impersonate me, and I'll be on my way, and my pissed-offedness about the situation will be dealt with somewhere other than here, with people other than you. Okay, sweetie?

P.S.G.

Absolutely.

CONNIE

All right. Hurry the fuck up.

He hops-to.

CUT TO:

EXT. L.A. SURBURB - DAY

KIDS, some Mexican, ride bikes in a pleasant-enough neighborhood, weathered seventies houses, uncut grass, broken fences.

They pass the rental car where Connie, Charlie, and Seraphine are staked out.

CUT TO:

INT. / EXT. RENTAL CAR - CONTINUOUS

They eye a particular, especially-ominous house.

CHARLIE

So do we wait for someone? Should we have food delivered so she comes to the door?

SERAPHINE

(fucking with him)

Perfect. Better yet, we could disguise you as a Chinese delivery boy. All we need's a little Scotch tape.

He looks around for some, clueless.

CHARLIE

Shit, I don't think we have any.

Connie looks at the house. Makes a decision.

CONNIE

Wait here.

Connie gets out of the car, headgear in hand. She ignores their questions and protests, resolute. It's time to end this.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Connie kicks open the door, enters in full Ladybug gear. Looks around. Just a house.

She goes into the living room.

Marcus Taine is here. Unarmed, on the sofa, with a newspaper. Smiles.

TAINÉ

Make yourself at home.

CONNIE

You have ten seconds --

TAINÉ

-- to convince you you shouldn't attack me. All right. Simple.

He sets down the paper, moves closer.

TAINÉ (CONT'D)

You didn't come all this way to fight, Connie. You came for answers. You need answers. I have them.

CONNIE

You planned this all perfectly, I guess. Taken everything into account.

TAINÉ

That's kinda what I do, yeah.

CONNIE

Huh.

VICIOUS UPPERCUT. Taine goes flying, slams into the wall, then falls back onto the couch.

CONNIE (CONT'D)

You take that into account?

Taine looks up at her, as amused as he is angry, steady flow of blood from his nose.

CONNIE (CONT'D)

I try to do what I feel is right, Mr. Taine. I try to help people. To whom much is given, much is expected. Be the change you wish to see. I take stuff like that seriously. It guess that sounds silly, but look at me. I'm a silly person.

She squats down, gets in his face.

CONNIE (CONT'D)

You ended my old life. I'd like to know why, but I should really get started on my new one. And I'm not a killer, Mr. Taine, but I need to be damn sure you won't be a problem for me and my brother anymore. So. Don't put off until tomorrow what you can do today, right? That's how I was brought up. If you can't get out of it, get into it. So I think I'm gonna just finish this now.

SERAPHINE (O.C.)

Stop.

Connie turns. Seraphine and Charlie are in the doorway. Seraphine has a gun to his head.

CONNIE

What are you doing?

SERAPHINE

Trading up.

TAINÉ STABS A SYRINGE INTO CONNIE'S NECK, fills her full of tranquilizer. She falls to the floor.

CONNIE'S POV

Fading fast, Connie sees Webcam Ladybug looming over her.

FADE TO BLACK.

CUT TO:

INT. UNDERGROUND LABORATORY - HOSPITAL ROOM

Connie snaps awake. Reacts to an odd sight, the cute little Mammy and Sambo figurines on the night table.

Connie is strapped to a hospital bed, not with ordinary restraints but straps of thick industrial nylon, the kind that secure truck loads.

She tries to break them. Really strains. Can't do it.

She takes in the surroundings. Seventies-era furnishings. A bunker. Feels very Cold War.

TAINE (O.C.)
See anything familiar?

Taine steps closer.

TAINE (CONT'D)
You were born here. You all were.

Connie glares at him.

TAINE (CONT'D)
Should I keep going? Still prefer to stay in the dark?

CONNIE
What do you want from me?

TAINE
That's the thing. I want you to be you, and to keep doing do what you do. I just want you to do it for me, in a structured environment, subject to accountability. I'm going to provide guidance, and incentives and disincentives, like any boss.

CONNIE
I'd like to see my brother, please.

TAINE
Sure. How about your sisters?

Guh?

CUT TO:

INT. UNDERGROUND LABORATORY - CLASSROOM

Connie and Taine enter what appears to be a kindergarten classroom, and approach an adult woman hunched over one of the little tables.

Connie realizes this person is ANOTHER HER.

The girl at the table looks up at her, doesn't register surprise, just gives her and Taine a pissy look and goes back to her drawing.

 CONNIE
How many are left?

 TAINÉ
Six. Plus you.

 CONNIE
Jesus.

 TAINÉ
She doesn't speak. Most of them can't.
Or won't. I'm hoping working with you
will help.

 CONNIE
Where are we? What is this place?

 TAINÉ
Towards the end of the Cold War the
people I work for got wind of some
Russian cloning experiments.

CUT TO:

INT. UNDERGROUND LABORATORY - CORRIDOR

Taine and Connie walk and talk down a rock-hewn corridor.

 TAINÉ
But this was better than cloning, it was
a process by which an exact duplicate of
a person could be created. Better than a
clone, an exact copy, identical right
down to DNA, fingerprints ... but
controllable.

Connie stops at a doorway, looks into a bedroom where TWO MORE CONNIES, seated on a bed, play checkers. Taine joins her.

TAINE (CONT'D)

You could replace a world leader, a captain of industry, anyone, anyone close to anyone -- no one the wiser. If it had worked.

He moves on. She follows.

CUT TO:

INT. UNDERGROUND LABORATORY - OBSERVATION ROOM

Seen through a TWO-WAY MIRROR, Charlie and TWO MORE CONNIES watch cartoons in a lounge area.

Connie and Taine enter.

TAINE

My people put a stop to the Russian experiments, then tried to run with what they learned from them. Ultimately they weren't successful. The results were deemed ... defective in various ways. Just about all of them were destroyed. By they time they started to make any headway, the Cold War ended, funds were reallocated, and that would have been that -- except that one of our scientists had an attack of the warm and fuzzies and decided to smuggle a few specimens out into the world.

CONNIE

And you took it upon yourself to round them up.

TAINE

Sure. After I figured out who and what this Ladybug person was, saw the potential of those "defects" -- skills like that could provide immeasurable benefit to my organization. Unfortunately, the others just don't seem suited to the work. You're the cream of the crop, Connie. I suspect that's why you were hidden the best, with the family furthest from here. They even look like you. Without the superhero thing to give

(MORE)

TAINE (CONT'D)

you away, I might never have found you. Well, no -- I would have. Just not so fast.

CONNIE

My mother would have told me if I was adopted.

TAINE

My guess is you replaced a stillborn baby. A dead one, anyway. She never knew.

CONNIE

So what now?

TAINE

Now the work begins. You train and become a deniable asset for this organization. Your appearance of course will need to be altered permanently, but our people do very good work. In between covert missions, you work with the other girls.

CONNIE

Sure, try to turn them into killing machines like me.

TAINE

It's a living. And it beats the alternative.

CONNIE

Which is?

TAINE

I kill you all.
(indicates the other Connies)
You run away? I kill them.

CONNIE

How about if I kill you?

Taine decides to be reasonable.

TAINE

You said yourself you need to start a new life. Why not this one? The work you do will be hard. It will be, at times, reprehensible. And it will make you feel like shit. But it will also be necessary. And it will be right. And a lot of good people will be better off

(MORE)

TAINÉ (CONT'D)
because of it. Including these people.
This is the right thing.

CONNIE
Tell me something. When you took this
job, did you have a choice?

Little smile.

CUT TO:

INT. UNDERGROUND LABORATORY - CORRIDOR

Taine and Connie exit, head elsewhere. Classroom Connie
is hidden nearby. She heard them.

CUT TO:

INT. UNDERGROUND LABORATORY - CORRIDOR / HOLDING CELL

Taine leads Connie to a high-tech fortified door.

TAINÉ
Mission One.

He punches in a code. The door slides open, revealing
Seraphine Miasma strapped to an upright interrogation
table. She's been roughed-up some.

SERAPHINE
It didn't work out.

Webcam Connie joins them. She hands Connie Seraphine's
gun from the waste plant.

TAINÉ
Suicide, I think. Makes sense given her
instability. Perfect capper to a life
defined by piss-poor decision making.
Our people can plant the body back east
before it gets cold.

Connie looks at the gun.

CONNIE
I don't know how to do this.

Taine racks the slide, thumbs the safety off and hands it
back.

Connie holds the gun to Seraphine's head. Seraphine looks at her with defiant eyes. Connie, in her Ladybug goggles, is unreadable. Webcam Connie watches.

TAINÉ

She betrayed you, Connie. You have a family to think about now.

Another tense beat.

CLASSROOM CONNIE LEAPS AT TAINÉ, screaming as she flies through the door.

Connie swats a foot at the restraint controls, whips her gun hand at Webcam Connie's face -- but Webcam ducks, disarms her. Tough, this one.

She judo-throws Connie out the door, but Connie rolls and springs into a ready position. She stares Webcam Connie down ... and tears off her padded gloves. Uh-oh.

Webcam Connie charges.

As they fight, Taine subdues Classroom Connie and looks for the fallen gun. IT ISN'T THERE.

He looks up. Seraphine, free, is pointing it at his face. He slowly lifts his hands.

SERAPHINE

You're a jerk.

She BLOWS HIS BRAINS OUT.

The other Connie stands there, stunned. Seraphine looks her up and down.

SERAPHINE (CONT'D)

How you doin', sweetie?

CUT TO:

INT. UNDERGROUND LABORATORY - CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

The two Connies fight. Seraphine and the other Connie approach, but Seraphine can't tell which one to shoot.

Charlie and the three other Connies wander out.

Connie and Webcam Connie eventually become aware of all these people staring at them, feel stupid, and stop.

CUT TO:

INT. UNDERGROUND LABORATORY - ENTRANCE

Connie and Webcam Connie manipulate Taine's corpse, with a sheet wrapped around its head, and use the hand to open the blast door entrance.

Seraphine joins them, Mammy and Sambo figurines in hand. Connie gives her a look.

SERAPHINE

What? They're cute.

CUT TO:

EXT. UNDERGROUND LABORATORY - HIDDEN ENTRANCE

The desert. The Connies and Seraphine come out. They see the sunset.

DISSOLVE TO:

A SUNRISE

CUT TO:

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY - ESTABLISHING - CONTINUOUS

Secluded. Picturesque.

CUT TO:

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

The TV room Connies work on a bag of peapods. Our Connie, at the stove, helps a Bedroom Connie with a middle school math problem.

CUT TO:

EXT. FARMHOSE - PORCH - DAY

Seraphine, seated on the steps with Classroom Connie, watches her try on the Ladybug goggles. They laugh. They're seated close. Palpable intimacy.

Connie walks past them.

CONNIE
Stop having fun.

SERAPHINE
Jealous.

CUT TO:

EXT. FARMHOUSE - BARN - DAY

Makeshift gym equipment. Webcam Connie and the other Bedroom Connie are sparring, both in Ladybug outfits. Charlie watches.

CHARLIE
I bet you're thinking how much good you could do if there were three of you.

CONNIE
Yeah. Or four. You're thinking how much could we make.

CHARLIE
Yeah. How long you think we'll be stuck out here?

WEBCAM LADYBUG (O.C.)
Not much longer.

They look over at her.

WEBCAM LADYBUG (CONT'D)
I'm gonna have a talk with the President.

They look at each other. Whuh?

CUT TO:

INT. UNDERGROUND BASE

OSAMA BIN LADEN, at a chalkboard, lectures to assembled TERRORISTS. Diagrams on the board include a flaming White House, nuclear symbols, assorted badness.

Bin Laden wraps up with a humorous remark. The room laughs, and with a scuffle of chairs and feet, the meeting breaks up.

CUT TO:

INT. UNDERGROUND BASE - MAKESHIFT OFFICE

Bin Laden enters, reacts to an odd site: A WOMAN'S BARE FEET ON HIS DESK. Black nail polish.

LADYBUG

Hey there.

He turns to sound an alarm, but a SECOND LADYBUG appears from nowhere to PUNCH HIS LIGHTS OUT. On the impact we

CUT TO BLACK.

E N D