

"TRIPLE LIFE"

Original Teleplay by: Charles Wiedman

Pilot: "Choices"

Inspired by the book  
"Trafficking The Good Life"  
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"TRIPLE LIFE"

TEASER

FADE IN

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

TIGHT ON: A WHITE MOTH flirting with a DUSTY STREET LAMP - its wings beat against cracked, dirty glass.

OPEN TO: 'ZONA CENTRO' - Tijuana, Mexico - sometime after midnight. The distant strains of Narcos Corridos echo through these dry, dusty streets. We find a beautiful young man, 18, Mexican, perched on the bed of a pickup truck like a sexy hawk under the light of a buzzing street lamp and a cloud of moths drawn to that irresistible light. His dark, piercing eyes easily cover his domain. His fingers deftly roll a big, fat, gorgeous joint. Everything about him is gorgeous, and dangerous - from the intricate tattoos on his fingers, hands and forearms, to his slick, black shiney hair, to the GUN in his belt. Orange flames from his zippo IGNITE the end of the joint. The potent weed crackles with heat - as HEADLIGHTS APPROACH.

Thick curls of smoke escape his nostrils when his eyes lock onto a 1992 CHEVY SUBURBAN. Without fanfare, he simply dials a number into his phone as it slowly rolls by.

INT. CHEVY - NIGHT

Behind the wheel we find "MANUEL "MANNY" CASTENEGA" - male, hispanic, 30's, heavysset, strong - who clocks the obvious LOOK-OUT in the mirror. In the PASSENGER SEAT sits "WENDY CHASE" - white, female, 24 - a beautiful, squeaky-clean ex-cheerleader from Ohio with blonde hair, dressed in a pearl-white designer pantsuit wearing a black blindfold.

EXT. CARTEL WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

A chain-linked gate topped with concertina wire opens. The Chevy rolls through, passing SEVERAL ARMED GUARDS wearing tightly-brimmed cowboy hats and pointy-toed boots typically worn by cartel members who radio ahead. The Chevy approaches a large warehouse, and stops.

INT. CHEVY - NIGHT

Manny shifts into PARK, and gently says ...

MANUEL

We're here.

Wendy doesn't move a muscle except to take a deep breath and settle her nerves. When she's ready, she slowly removes her blindfold to reveal her big beautiful, blinking eyes. As she takes in the warehouse and the task ahead, she admits ...

WENDY

I need to pee.

MANNY

You can pee inside.

Manny checks her. She's nervous. He asks ...

MANNY

Good?

She nods, gathers her purse, and they exit the Chevy. Manny leads her up to a door, and a BAD LOOKIN' DUDE who clearly respects Manny. He opens the door. They enter the maze.

INT. CARTEL WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Moving along a hallway, Manny stops at a dirty door and nods - 'in here'. Wendy stops short. This 'restroom' has been used by wild, wild men and it shows.

WENDY

Oh. ... Seriously?

MANNY

You might want to 'hover'.

WENDY

Hover? I don't think I can hover that high.

Manny grins. She enters with trepidation.

The door locks as he stands guard. UP THE HALL: "GREGARIO" - male, hispanic, 40s, clean cut - appears, and bellows ...

GREGARIO

El Hombre! ¿Cómo estás, hermano?!

Gregario is all smiles and open arms - warm and upbeat with an interest in the trip and how punctual Manny has always been. All spoken in spanish outside the bathroom door. And, as it is with these guys, he's a killer too. It's in his eyes - the gravity around him. This is something he has in common with Manny.

INT. CARTEL WAREHOUSE BATHROOM - NIGHT

The toilet flushes, and we join Wendy at the dirty sink to wash in front of a blurry mirror. With CRUDE and GRAPHIC GRAFFITI on the walls all around her, she begins ...

WENDY

You can do this.

Nervous, on the verge of tears, a young girl neck-deep in a man's world - digs in her purse. She finds, and applies lip gloss, then stops at the sight of herself, and asks ...

WENDY

What are you doing here, Wendy?

There's no answer in her filthy reflection - just a flash of disappointment in herself before she straightens her spine to do what she was told to do.

BACK IN THE HALLWAY: The door opens, and she's face to face with Gregario - the man she hopes will take her seriously in this transaction.

WENDY

Hiii!

The most awkward 'hi' in history just blurted across her OVERLY-GLOSSED LIPS. Gregario responds with a polite grin, and ... slight tilt of the head.

Wendy glances at Manny who glances at her mouth which makes her self-conscious, so she finds a tissue in her purse as they're led up the hall, and fixes her ridiculous lips.

INT. CARTEL WAREHOUSE/INSPECTION ROOM - NIGHT

She's led into a room. Gregario motions for her to stand on the opposite side of a table. Manny waits against a wall. HER GAZE wanders up to 3 DEAD MOTHS trapped in the lights overhead, then SNAPS to a passage directly across from her as the strips of a rubber curtain part, and a BIG GUY pushes through holding a LARGE PACKAGE about the size of a bale of hay tightly wrapped in BROWN CRAFT PAPER. The bale is heaved onto the table, and SLICED OPEN to reveal a compressed mass of MEXICAN MARIJUANA. Everyone looks for her reaction ...

WENDY

Could I ... get a glass of water?

Gregario steps around the table to her side, gauging her. Who is this 'bolilla' they sent to do a man's job? A joke?

GREGARIO

Glass of water? ...  
We don't drink water here.  
Only tequila.

Gregario grins. Her eyes remain focused straight ahead as a man's voice is heard inside her head ...

DANE VO

*He might test you.*

CUT TO

FLASHBACK:

EXT. SANTA MONICA COFFEE SHOP - DAY

*Seated at a table outside a quaint coffee shop on a leaf-strewn promenade we find "DANE KROPOV" - male, Russian, 30s, attractive, friendly, sophisticated, - instructing Wendy sitting across from him ...*

DANE

*If he does, be strong, but  
be polite. Remember, it's  
about respect.*

CUT BACK TO

INT. CARTEL WAREHOUSE/INSPECTION ROOM - NIGHT

Wendy shifts her eyes over to Gregario and with the sweetest most harmless smile says ...

WENDY (lilting)

I prefer water if you have it.

Gregario pauses a moment, chuckles, then ... looks to the Big Guy, and nods. The Big Guy exits. He turns his attention back to Wendy ...

GREGARIO

Let's begin. Okay. This one.

Wendy looks down at the bale in front of her ...

CUT TO

FLASHBACK

EXT. SANTA MONICA COFFEE SHOP - DAY

*As before: Wendy laments ...*

WENDY

*I don't do pot, Dane. Seriously.  
I've never even touched the stuff.  
I wouldn't know what to look for.*

DANE

*No problem. Bottom line is:  
red veins, sticky to the touch.  
You can do this. I trust you.*

CUT BACK TO

INT. CARTEL WAREHOUSE/INSPECTION ROOM - NIGHT

Wendy leans in for a closer look, then lightly touches the compressed weed ... she decides ...

WENDY

No.

GREGARIO

No? Are you sure? This is ...

WENDY (smiles)

May I see another one please?

The Big Guy has reappeared with a BOTTLE OF WATER and sets it on the table near Wendy. Gregario nods for another bale which is brought in and opened as before. She takes her time but ...

WENDY

May I see another please?

Is this a test? Did he start with ditch weed? He frowns then motions for another bale which is brought in and opened as before. She touches it. Are those red veins? Is it sticky enough? This is tough. She's not sure. Gregario whispers ...

GREGARIO

Choices. Choices. Life is nothing  
if not choices. ... Verdad? ...  
That's the good stuff. My best.

After more examination, she replies ...

WENDY

Agreed. ... May I see another?

She uncaps the water bottle, takes a sip and steals a glance at Manny who grins. She's doing it. He settles in as a long SERIES OF BALES are brought before her to choose 'yes' or 'no'. This goes on for HOURS.

Bale after bale is brought out and taken back or set aside.

Gregario's respect for her grows. Occasionally they consult together on the selection. He's warming up to her - taken in by her sweet, girlish charm. Out of four hundred bales, three hundred are selected.

TRANSITION TO

EXT. CARTEL WAREHOUSE - PREDAWN

The warehouse door opens to a sky that's just begun to brighten in the dawn. Gregario leads Manny and Wendy out to the Chevy, and a row of THREE FARMERS flanked by TWO CARTEL MEMBERS. He turns to Manny with a stern eye ...

GREGARIO

We understand each other?

There's a threat in there somewhere. Manny nods.

GREGARIO (satisfied)

Bueno. Via con dios, hermano.

TIGHT ON: One of the Farmers - "ANDY MENDOZA" - male, 30s, rugged. HIS EYES are trained on WENDY as Gregario turns to her now, easily takes her hand, and with sincere warmth, and hypnotic spanish sex-appeal begins ...

GREGARIO

Chiquita bonita. It's been a pleasure. I want to personally apologize for the less than desireable product. I can assure you, it will never happen again. I hope to see you soon. ...  
Very soon. Con permisso.

He kisses the top of her hand. She has absolutely no idea what to do with that. All she can think to say is ...

WENDY (odd)

Me too.

Oh my god. Awkward. He tilts his head. They part ways. She cannot get to the Chevy fast enough. Andy's eyes follow her.



INT. CHEVY - DAWN

Once they pile inside, she's vibrating with energy but Manny clocks what's about to happen. He hands her the blindfold.

MANNY

Put it on.

Her mid-west upbringing compels her to wave goodbye to Gregario. Again, awkward. He raises his hand in reply.

WENDY

That was ...

MANNY

Put it on.

Manny quickly starts the Chevy and cranks the radio. She complies as he jams it into gear and BACKS AWAY. THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD: We see Gregario with his back to the 3 farmers who've started to drop to their knees under the threat of raised guns. ... EXCEPT FOR ANDY.

BACKING AWAY: We see Andy KICK THE SHIT out of one Cartel Member, and ATTACK the next one. Gregario turns to the action, draws his own GUN and SHOOTS Andy - sending him into the dirt - GUNSHOTS follow - drowned out by LOUD MUSIC.

Manny wheels the Chevy around, and calmly drives away - eyes in the rearview mirror. Wendy asks ...

WENDY (polite)

Can we turn it down a little?

BACK AT THE WAREHOUSE: TIGHT ON GREGARIO: He looks down to Andy struggling at his feet. He steps closer, and SHOOTS HIM DEAD - point blank range. Gregario looks back over his shoulder at the Chevy - hard and merciless.

END TEASER

MAIN TITLE: "TRIPLE LIFE"

TRANSITION TO

ACT ONEEXT. A FIVE STAR HOTEL - SUNSET

SAN DIEGO, CA - The glittering tower of a hotel glows with the reflection of the sun setting over the Pacific Ocean. The sound of a steaming hot shower can be heard ...

CUT TO

INT. PENTHOUSE/BATHROOM - SUNSET

The opulence of this spacious, STEAM-FILLED, bathroom feels like heaven after what she just went through.

INT. PENTHOUSE/BATHROOM/SHOWER - SUNSET

She rests under a luxurious spread of soft warm water that feels more like rain than a shower - washing away emotions as they come up - relief, anger at Dane, homesickness. As she CRIES ...

*WENDY VO (phone voice)*

*Yes, mom. I'm eating.*

*IVY CHASE (rapid phone voice)*

*You know, Chicken thighs were on sale so I bought two packs. There's twelve in a pack so I put one in the freezer of course, and just threw the rest in that crockpot you gave us for Christmas with potatoes and cauliflower and greenbeans with some cream of onion soup, and I'm telling you.*

*WENDY VO (phone voice)*

*Delicious?*

*IVY CHASE (phone voice)*

*Delicious. We'll get six meals out of that so that's only about 2 dollars a meal. That's pretty good.*

CUT TO

INT. PENTHOUSE/BEDROOM AREA - SUNSET

The open area of this hotel room exudes luxury and comfort in every way. Wendy lays out EXPENSIVE CLOTHES and JEWELRY. The phone call continues with mom back home, on the farm ...

WENDY

Where's dad?

*IVY CHASE (phone voice)*

*Oh, out in the field. I told you we had to turn it under this year. So did the Mulhaney's. Bless their hearts. Agnes had to go to the hospital again. She might lose more toes.*

WENDY

That's horrible.

As Wendy gets dressed and does her makeup, Mom continues ...

*IVY CHASE (phone voice)*

*What's going on in San Diego?*

WENDY

Visiting friends.

*IVY CHASE (phone voice)*

*Well that's nice. If you can afford to do something like that, I guess. I can't imagine what a plane ticket costs these days.*

Just then, DANE enters easily - dressed in a suit. He points to his watch. Wendy nods back. He emphasises urgency.

*IVY CHASE (phone voice)*

*You're still dancing I hope. You have a show coming up don't you? I was telling Janet all about what you're doing with the school in Chicago, and the show, and she was just so impressed.*

As Wendy adds the final touches, she stops to say ...