

# **Rifleracks**

a country-western musical  
by Steven Ackley

Act I - scene i

*The action begins inside a bar in some nameless city in the south. As the action begins, THE BAND, along with the members of the chorus, are on stage as part of the scene. The play opens with the band playing a bouncy instrumental number. As the band plays, waitresses (teasing and getting teased) deliver drinks, country boys crack jokes, folks who are lonely sit hunched over.*

*JOHNNY RIFLERACKS McCLOUD, a brawny man in his late thirties, enters. He has tattoos up the sides of his arms, and has mutton-chop style side burns, his pants hang low on his skinny waist. He walks forlornly and takes a seat downstage. A waitress shuttles over to him and takes his order. As the music stops, the lights come down on the people in the background. The band begins to play the intro to SOUTHERN WOMEN. The waitress brings Rifleracks his whiskey. He motions for her to leave the bottle. When the waitress has left, Rifleracks begins to sing. Throughout the song, Rifleracks drinks. By the end of the song, the bottle is empty.*

SONG: SOUTHERN WOMEN

Rifleracks sings:

I am just a southern man,  
sippin' my whiskey in a honky tonk cafe.  
Watchin' the women shakin' their asses,  
then watchin' the women walk away.

Ain't got nothin' keepin' me here  
'cause I left my baby today.  
So I'll just finish this bottle up,  
then be on my way.

Chorus (2x)  
Oh those southern women,  
why don't they let me be?  
Without those southern women,  
I'm as lonely as a southern man can be.

Maybe I'll catch a train out west,  
way out there, out to Frisco bay.  
I'll see an old friend who left long ago,  
but I'm doubtful if I'll stay.

You see I am a southern man,  
and it's where I got to be.  
I'll find myself another,  
and this is where she'll be.

Chorus (2x)

*Enter MUTTONCHOP SIDEBURNS, Riflerack's right-hand man and foreman on his construction crew. Muttonchops is a pudgy little man with huge over-exaggerated sideburns.*

MUTTONCHOPS: You still goin' on about that Cuban girl you left up thar in Tallahassee?

RIFLERACKS: Oh, Muttonchop Sideburns, I jus' don't know what I's a gonna do. Why I'm so lonely ...and about as horny as a swampmoss flea. Why, I gotta find myself another piece of poontang right quick or I thinks I's a gonna die.

MUTTONCHOPS: Well, this oughtta cheer ya up ...we jus' got the contract to build another Pizza Paradise restaurant goin' up in Miami.

RIFLERACKS: (still depressed) Well, that's good ...that's good. (pause) But I needs myself a woooo-man.

MUTTONCHOPS: Didn't ya hear what I said? Miami! Miami - the land of purdy young girls in them thar thong BAH-kinis. Why, don't ya remember the last time we went through there?

RIFLERACKS: Last time? (cheering up) Oh, yeah!

MUTTONCHOPS: ...How you was knockin' round with all them cocktail waitresses an' showgirls an' all them young tourist gals on the beach?

RIFLERACKS: Oh yeah!

MUTTONCHOPS: Why, you was just a ol' stud horse out to pasture. You was havin' a good ol' time.

RIFLERACKS: That's right, I remember now ...Miami Beach!

MUTTONCHOPS: Well, let's go to her, boss. You don't need to be settin' 'round here frettin' 'bout no span-yard woman whose time ran out.

RIFLERACKS: Who?

MUTTONCHOPS: That's the spirit! That's the Rifleracks I knows - love 'em and leave 'em; bang 'em and hang 'em. Park her down some ol' side street when her engine blowed up.

RIFLERACKS: Muttonchops!

MUTTONCHOPS: Yes sir, boss.

RIFLERACKS: Load up the stepside! Get Boozer and the boys! We's got ourselves a job to do out thar in Miami town!

Act I - scene ii

SONG: RIFLERACKS

*As the song begins, the men in the bar become the members of Riflerack's crew. (They may also serve as stagehands.) A backdrop with a Miami beach street scene is lowered. The men then dance around with 2x4s and hammers, smacking them together in rhythm with the music, sort of like flamenco dancers with castanets. Beautiful women walk by in bikinis. Muttonchops and Rifleracks hoot and holler.*

Rifleracks sings:

My name is Rifleracks McCloud  
And I'm long and lean and loud

I've got a woman in just about every town  
My name is Johnny, Johnny Rifleracks McCloud

I drive a nineteen sixty-seven stepside  
And I'm a headin' for your bedside  
I wear condoms that are made out of snakehide  
My name is Johnny, Johnny Rifleracks McCloud

Chorus:

Well, I had a girl in Dallas that was horny as a swampmoss flea  
But she didn't have the brains to tie her shoes  
And I had a girl in Houston town, she was a real highbrow hefer  
But that hefer belonged in a hefer zoo

I drink a sixpack of Lone Star Beer at lunchtime  
And I smoke three packs of Lucky Strikes a day  
And I keep movin' so I ain't got too much time  
So let's get our encounter underway.

*At the end of the song, the crew gets to work. Rifleracks and Muttonchops take in the view.*

RIFLERACKS: Well, here we are in Miami!

MUTTONCHOPS: Sure are boss (a girl walks by) ...and would ya just look at the scenery!

RIFLERACKS: Whooo-ie!

MUTTONCHOPS: I can see you're feelin' better already.

*Enter JIMMY, a young man around 20.*

JIMMY: Excuse me, sir. Are either of you in charge here?

RIFLERACKS: I'm in charge here, boy. What can I do for ya?

JIMMY: Well, I'm looking for a job and I'm just wondering whether you're doing any hiring?

RIFLERACKS: Well now, that depends ...ya got any s'perience?

JIMMY: Huh?

RIFLERACKS: S'perience, s'perience!

MUTTONCHOPS: He means d'ya know how to work. You ain't one of them fairy boys, is ya?

JIMMY: No! ...I know how to work.

RIFLERACKS: Well, d'ya know how to hammer an' pour crete an' put up beams?

JIMMY: (Hesitates) Sure, there's nothing to it.

RIFLERACKS: OK, we'll give ya a try. Put her there.

*Rifleracks grabs Jimmy's hand and just about crushes it. Jimmy's jaw drops open as he winces in pain. Rifleracks lets go of his hand and goes back to work.*

MUTTONCHOPS: Well, c'mon then. I wanna see ya hammer. Let's see ya sink a stud into that thar beam.

*Muttonchops leads Jimmy over to where the façade of the building is being erected. Jimmy takes a hammer and begins to hammer away. Muttonchops immediately stops him.*

MUTTONCHOPS: What the hell d'ya think you're doin'? Don'to ya even know how to hammer?

JIMMY: It's pretty straightforward, isn't it? Aren't you supposed to use this metal end to try and put the nail into the...

MUTTONCHOPS: No, no, no! Don't ya know anything! Thar's a whole methology involved.

JIMMY: Methology?

MUTTONCHOPS: Methology, methology! You know ...how ya do things.

JIMMY: Oh, you mean me-tho-dol-o-gy.

MUTTONCHOPS: Now, don't you get smart with me, boy. Why, I believe ya are one of them fairy boys. Wha d'ya do, go to college or somethin'?

JIMMY: Well, yeah, I...

MUTTONCHOPS: Ya did? Ya went to college, huh? (shouts) Hey, boss! Check it out! We got ourselves a college boy.

*Rifleracks saunters over.*

RIFLERACKS: A college boy? On my crew?

JIMMY: Yeah, I just graduated from the university. That's why I need the work. I got to start paying off those loans.

RIFLERACKS: Well, keep it quiet. If folks find out I gotta college boy on my crew, they're gonna start expectin' me to wear clean drawers every day.

*Rifleracks goes back to work.*

MUTTONCHOP: My goodness. (pause) So did ya get yourself a whole lot a poontang when ya was at that thar college ya went to?

JIMMY: Poontang?

MUTTONCHOPS: Sure. Y'all knows what poontang is, don't ya?

JIMMY: Well, no, I...

MUTTONCHOPS: Hey boys, Jimmy don't know what poontang is!

*Rifleracks and the boys react with shock and enthusiasm. They come over and surround Jimmy.*

JIMMY: Well, what is it?

MUTTONCHOPS: Poooooooo-say!!!

*Jimmy, with a confused look, mouths the word "pooosay." He finally realizes what Muttonchops is saying.*

JIMMY: Oh, I see.

RIFLERACKS: Well, ya ever had any?

JIMMY: Any what?

RIFLERACKS: Any poontang?

JIMMY: Yeah, well, I almost got engaged once and...

RIFLERACKS: ENGAGED? Why, don't ya ever say such a word in my presence. That thar's a swear word in my vocabulary. (pause) What you need is a sleazy and easy woman to take care of that question mark beneath ya jeans.

JIMMY: I do?

RIFLERACKS: Well, if ya's gonna work on my crew ya do. (pause) And I knows just the place. Jimmy, t'night we's a goin' to the bowlin' alley to see an ol' friend of mine: Desiree!

JIMMY: Now, just wait a second ...I never agreed to...

*One of the workers comes rushing in, carrying a dead bloodhound in his arms. It is Riflerack's dead dog, Boozer, who has just been run over.*

WORKER: Boss, Boss ...Boozer's been hit.

RIFLERACKS: (seeing Boozer) Oh no!!!

*He takes Boozer in his arms.*

RIFLERACKS: It's Boozer. Boozer's dead!

MUTTONCHOPS: How did it happen?

WORKER: He was runnin' across the street.

RIFLERACKS: Oh no!

WORKER: And then a car hit him.

RIFLERACKS: Jus' awful ...such a waste.

WORKER: He was tryin' to get across the street to do up some old lady's French poodle.

RIFLERACKS: Well, heh, that's my Boozer. He died a tryin'.

MUTTONCHOPS: Like father, like son.

RIFLERACKS: Yeah ...Ya know, I think I need to do somethin' to commemorate ol' boozer.

WORKER: Why don't ya get him stuffed, boss?

RIFLERACKS: Say, that's not a bad idea. Sorta like the moosehead at my uncle's huntin' lodge. (pause) But just how d'ya go about doing the stuffin'?

JIMMY: You need a taxidermist.

RIFLERACKS & MUTTONCHOPS: A WHAT?

JIMMY: A taxidermist ...someone who stuffs dead animals.

RIFLERACKS: That's a fancy word thar, Jimmy. Maybe you'll come in handy after all. Come on!

JIMMY: Where we going?

RIFLERACKS: I need you to go help me read through the yeller pages.

*Jimmy and Rifleracks exit. BLACK OUT.*

Act I - scene iii

*Another backdrop is lowered to depict MATILDA NEWTON's taxidermy lab. The studio is crammed with stuffed animals. Included among the animals are a chimp, a pitbull, a cat, and a beagle. Matilda, an attractive yet butch-looking woman in her mid-thirties, stands center stage, hunched over her table, working on a small yellow, feathery object.*

MATILDA: Dammit! Why can't these little old ladies have pet flamingoes or Macaws? (sarcastically) Why is it always canaries or parakeets, or those damn little finches?

*Enter Mercedes Reias, Matilda's assistant. She carries a dead poodle.*

MERCEDES: (with a heavy Hispanic accent) Here's another one, Dr. Newton. (Mercedes pulls out a slip of paper and reads.) A Mrs. Tibbets over at the Babbling Surf Retirement Villiage just brought him in.

*Mercedes sets the poodle down on the table.*

MATILDA: No, not another poodle! I'm so sick of these damn poodles - A TOY NO LESS! Why can't someone bring in something big like a mastiff or a great dane.

MERCEDES: (noticing the stuffed beagle) Oooo, I see you finished Mrs. Dunn's beagle.

MATILDA: Oh yeah, check it out. Remember she said he used to crank his head around when the tea pot went off? Well, watch...

*Matilda puts a whistle to her lips and blows. At this, the dog's head slowly turns to one side.*

MERCEDES: (laughing) That's great! What else does it do?

MATILDA: Oh, you're not going to believe this ...she asked me to make it play dead.

MERCEDES: (laughs) You're kidding.

MATILDA: Nope ...watch. (pause) PLAY DEAD!

*The dog falls over on its side - THUD.*

MATILDA: I'm still perfecting that one. Ah, but one day, Mercedes ...one day.

Matilda goes over to the computer and gives it a pat.

MATILDA: When I finish my personality impression software, we'll be able to make these little turds behave EXACTLY the way they used to.

MERCEDES: Explain to me again how it's going to work?

MATILDA: When the animals are still alive, we take a personality impression. We actually turn their behavior into a software program. Then, when the animal dies, we install the program into their stuffed body. It's going to make us millionaires, Mercedes. (pause, looks at the poodle) So what does Mrs. Tibbets want done with this thing?

MERCEDES: She said it used to bark at the TV.

MATILDA: Well, that ought to be easy enough.

*Matilda picks up a miniature version of a television receiving disk off her desk. She holds it up.*

MATILDA: We'll just fix him up with one of these.

Matilda picks up the poodle to examine it more closely. She then drops it back on the table. She begins to weep and Mercedes rushes forward.

MERCEDES: What is it? What's wrong?

MATILDA: Oh Mercedes ...what the hell am I doing?

MERCEDES: What do you mean?

MATILDA: I mean stuffing dead animals for a living - this is crazy. (pause) I stuff dead things for senile little old ladies, putting little motors in their bodies so that they'll reenact these stupid idiosyncrasies they had when they were alive. (pause) Sometimes I really hate myself.

MERCEDES: Don't be ridiculous, You're doing a great service for mankind.

MATILDA: (depressed) That's the problem.

MERCEDES: What?

MATILDA: MAN-kind.

MERCEDES: Ah, so the doctor gets lonely too.

MATILDA: Aw, Mercedes, I've been cooped up in laboratories all my life. First at the university, then vet school ...the closest thing to a man I've ever been with is an ape cadaver (she turns to the stuffed chimp) ...no offense, Brutis.

MERCEDES: So what's the problem? Why don't you jus' go out and...

MATILDA: You don't understand, Mercedes. I could never give any man what he wants. I've been so independent ...so headstrong. I've always insisted on pursuing my career. I'm just not the Tupperware type.

MERCEDES: Now wait a second. This doesn't sound like the Dr. Newton I know. How could you even think that way? This is the 21st century. Men don't expect that kind of behavior anymore ...well, at least most men don't.

MATILDA: But that's just it ...the type of men I like DO expect that kind of behavior.

MERCEDES: Oh? And what kind of men do you like?

MATILDA: (looking off, envisioning) I like big tall rednecks ...especially ones who drive trucks and can't articulate very well.

*LOOKING FOR THE PERFECT MAN music begins.*

*Matilda begins moving around the lab, looking to her animals in order to describe the perfect man.*

MATILDA: I want a man that has arms like an ape - like Brutis here. A man that has a big strong jaw, like a pitbull. (She motions to the stuffed pitbull.)

SONG: LOOKING FOR THE PERFECT MAN.

Matilda sings...

He's gotta have jaws like a pitbull and arms like a chimpanzee  
Thighs like a rhino and a chest like a trunk of a tree  
He's gotta move like the Dallas Cowboys; he's gotta sing like Jerry Lee  
And if he's gotta t-shirt tan, he'll be the perfect man for me

I like big tatoos and fingernails filled with dirt  
I like the smell of sweat and yellow stains underneath his shirt  
He's gotta have a redneck disposition; he can't pronounce his final 'T's  
And if he chews tobacco from the can, he'll be the perfect man for me

Chorus:

I don't care for Warren Beatty  
I don't want to dance with Fred Astaire  
European lovers turn my stomach  
Give me the man with the greasy hair

His breath smells like Luckys and his hands, they smell like gas  
He wears his pants down low so you can see the crack of his ass

He takes his lunch break in an outhouse; he reads Hustler magazine  
And if his teeth are brown, he'll be the perfect man for me

*At the end of the song, a knock is heard at the door.*

MATILDA: Go see who that is, will ya? I've got to get this stupid canary finished.

*Mercedes exits and Matilda continues to work. Mercedes then comes back with Rifleracks who carries his dead dog Boozer. He carries him in the supine position. His legs, stiff with rigor mortus, stick straight up in the air.*

MATILDA: Mercedes, we're almost out of stuffing. Will you please order some more when you get the chance?

*She sees Rifleracks. She is smitten.*

MERCEDES: Dr. Newton, this is Mr. McCloud. And this is ...er ...was his dog Boozer.

MATILDA: How can I ...help you?

RIFLERACKS: My dog Boozer's dead. I ...I miss him so bad. What d'ya think you can do for him ...to make him like he was?

MATILDA: Well, exactly how was Boozer? I mean, what did he do?

RIFLERACKS: Well ...well, heh, whenever he use to see a little female bitch dog that was bein' walked around by some young woman, he use to go about to a sniffin'. Then I'd mosey on up and ask the gal if it give her any ideas. (pause) Use to work every time. (he chuckles)

MERCEDES: That's terrible!

*Mercedes exits in a huff.*

RIFLERACKS: What's she so pee-owed about?

MATILDA: I guess your story was a bit too graphic for her.

RIFLERACKS: Yeah, I 'spect I shouldn't a gone and said none a that 'round no ladies.

MATILDA: Ladies, huh?

RIFLERACKS: Well, yeah. Y'are a lady, ain't ya? 'Cept I could hardly tell, with your hair so short n all. (pause) You ain't one a them thar dyke gals, is ya?

MATILDA: (upset) No! (pause) Besides, what if I was? It's none of your business.

RIFLERACKS: Well, it jus' seems like it'd be an awful waste of a purdy good whooo-man.

MATILDA: I'm not a "dyke" as you call it. (she sighs) I'm not anything at all ...I ...I wear my hair short because of the heat ...it's cool, you see.

*Matilda stares at Rifleracks. Rifleracks moves closer. He shifts Boozer under one arm. He begins to stroke her hair with the other.*

RIFLERACKS: (sweetly) Yeah, I guess I can see your point.

MATILDA: (frightened, trying to distract his attention) Well, uh, what about your dog here ...what's his name?

RIFLERACKS: Boozer ...but he can wait. I'm more interested in you right now. (pause) What d'ya say you and I go out for a beer?

MATILDA: (she pulls back) Oh! Uh, no I don't think so ...I can't. I don't even know you.

RIFLERACKS: Aw, sure ya can. Why, I bet ya ain't been outta this hole for months.

MATILDA: (quietly, to herself) Years.

RIFLERACKS: What?

MATILDA: Nothing ...nothing. Thanks for the offer, but I really can't. (pause) Now about your dong, I mean dog...

*She moves back towards Rifleracks, looking at the dog.*

RIFLERACKS: He's dead meat. (He drops Boozer who lands on the floor with a THUD.) But I ain't. (He grabs her and pulls her close.) I knows you like me. I could tell the way you looked at me when I came in.

*He reaches beneath her chin, lifts her head, and stares into her eyes.*

MATILDA: No, I...

*He kisses her passionately. BLACK OUT.*

Act I - scene iv

*Jimmy, Rifleracks, Muttonchops and the rest of the crew are sitting at a table at the bowling alley cocktail lounge. The sound of bowling pins being knocked down can be heard in the background. Everyone except Jimmy (who looks bored) is drinking it up and having fun.*

RIFLERACKS: Haw! Haw! Haw! ...and then I just told the girl, I said, "Why don't ya let me take care of them long unattended need a yours?"

MUTTONCHOPS: Naw, you said THAT?

RIFLERACKS: Yep. And she became puddy in my hands.

*He looks at his hands and laughs.*

MUTTONCHOPS: And this all happened this afternoon?

RIFLERACKS: Yep.

CREWMAN #1: So, ya gonna see her again, boss?

RIFLERACKS: Sure am. Despite her inexperience, she was one of the best pieces of poontang I ever had.

*They all laugh.*

RIFLERACKS: But first we gots to take care of Jimmy here. We gotta enter him into the rites of manhood.

MUTTONCHOPS: That's right, Jimmy. We got to take care of you right. We're gonna line you up with one of these purdy cocktail waitresses.

*Muttonchops looks around, admiring.*

MUTTONCHOPS: Loose and lusty - that's how I like 'em!

JIMMY: (to Rifleracks) So this is going to make a man out of me, huh? Sending me off for the night with some slut?

RIFLERACKS: Now you jus' wait a second thar, Jimmy. We're not talking about any ol' slut. I got somethin' very special in mind for ya.

*One of the waitresses walks by. Rifleracks stops her.*

RIFLERACKS: Excuse me, honey, but does Desiree (pronounced with a long ee) still work here?

WAITRESS: Sure does. In fact, here she comes now.

SONG: BOWLING ALLEY QUEEN

*Desiree enters. She has very large breasts and reveals a lot of cleavage. Her hair is done up in a big beehive with a couple of pencils sticking out of it. She carries a tray of drinks in her hand. As she sings, she sets down drinks.*

Welcome to the bowling alley my name is Desiree  
 All I have to do is jiggle and jump and they all come running to me  
 I've seen 'em sweat and I've seen 'em beg, but nothin' is bought for free  
 And another little innocent southern boy loses his virginity

My name is Desiree  
 And I'm the bowling alley queen  
 My name is Desiree  
 And I'm the bowling alley queen

*There is a guitar solo here during which Desiree, having dispensed of all her drinks, tucks the tray under arms and goes around taking orders.*

All ya gotta do is call me over and I'll come and shake my ass  
 I'll taunt you and I'll tease you and your heart will break like glass  
 The good ol' boys line up outside and who do they come to see  
 You can bet your nuts in a gunny sack that it's little ol' Desiree

My name is Desiree  
 And I'm the bowling alley queen  
 My name is Desiree

And I'm the bowling alley queen

*After the song is over, the crowd goes wild. Desiree makes her way over to Rifleracks and the boys. She flirts with them ruffling their hair, etc.*

DESIREE: Why Rifleracks McCloud. What the hell are you doin' in this neck of the woods?

RIFLERACKS: Oh, just passin' through. You know, the construct business n all. The boys here need to wet their whistle.

DESIREE: Hey boys.

ALL: Hey there, Desiree!

DESIREE: What'll ya have?

*Rifleracks grabs her ass.*

RIFLERACKS: I'll have some of THAT.

*Desiree giggles and skirts away from Rifleracks.*

RIFLERACKS: C'mon, boys. This round's on me. What'll ya have?

ALL: Whiskey

JIMMY: Coke.

*They all turn and stare at Jimmy.*

JIMMY: Coke with whiskey.

*Desiree writes down the order.*

RIFLERACKS: Uh, Desiree, I'd like ya to meet a friend of mine. This here's Jimmy. He's had his eyes on ya all night. He's been hankerin' to meet ya.

DESIREE: Is that right?

RIFLERACKS: Yep.

*Jimmy is embarrassed and won't look up. Desiree comes over to him and runs her fingers through his hair. Muttonchops and the boys laugh.*

DESIREE: What's a matter, boys, y'all jealous?

MUTTONCHOPS: It ain't THAT we're laughin' at. Ya see, Jimmy here ain't never had no...

JIMMY: (angrily) Shut up!

BOYS: Ooooo!

MUTTONCHOPS: Now you hold on there, boy!

RIFLERACKS: Hey now! I won't have no fightin' 'mongst the crew. Just settle down. (pause) Ya see now, Desiree. Jimmy's in need of a little education.

DESIREE: Is that right? (She ruffles Jimmy's hair more seductively.) Well, I get off around 2:00, if ya wanna come and see me then, Jimmy.

JIMMY: Well, I don't know...

DESIREE: Well, you think about it. I'll go fetch y'all somethin' to drink.

*Desiree exits.*

*MUSIC: BOWLING ALLEY QUEEN VAMP BLACK OUT*

Act I - scene v

*The lights come up slowly. It's after closing time and Jimmy now sits alone at the same table, waiting for Desiree. She enters with her purse and sweater, ready to leave.*

DESIREE: Hey there, I hope I didn't keep ya waitin' too long.

*Jimmy gets up.*

JIMMY: Oh no, not at all.

DESIREE: Well, where d'ya wanna go? Do ya wanna go out for a night cap? (pause, she smiles) Or maybe we could just go over to my place and ...kinda relax.

JIMMY: (nervous) Well, why don't we just talk for now.

DESIREE: TAWK! What d'ya wanna tawk about?

JIMMY: I don't know. Can't you just sit down for a while?

DESIREE: Well alright. (She sits.) So what d'ya wanna tawk about?

JIMMY: I just think we ought to get to know eachother before we go running off into the night.

DESIREE: Boy, you are inexperienced, ain't ya? Why, you're jus' blowing' through town anyway? I don't see why we have to tell eachother out whole life stories. (She advances on Jimmy.) Why don't we jus' slip away and...

JIMMY: No wait! (pause) I mean, are you sure you want to do this? I don't want to take advantage of you. Perhaps you have a boyfriend.

DESIREE: You act like I gotta desease or somethin'.

JIMMY: Well, it had occurred to me.

DESIREE: I don't have a disease! (pause) I can see ol' Racks was right - you are a virgin. How old are you anyway?

JIMMY: Twenty-three.

DESIREE: Twenty-three! Well, it's high time ya took care of that, wouldn't you say?

JIMMY: Perhaps ...but not like this. There should be love! (pause) Don't you think?

DESIREE: (more quietly) Yeah, well, it's too late for that kinda thinkin' on my part. But if you really do feel that way, I guess I'll leave ya then.

*She begins to go.*

JIMMY: No, I don't want you to leave. (pause) I like you. I just think we need some time, that's all.

DESIREE: Time? Look, Jimmy ...it is Jimmy, right?

*Jimmy nods.*

DESIREE: Well, look, Jimmy ...I'm not the kinda girl that I think you're looking for.

JIMMY: Why not?

DESIREE: Because ...because I'm a bowling alley floosie! Look at me ...look around you. This is what I am. (pause) Why, I slept around with...

JIMMY: But you're still able to love.

DESIREE: Oh, come on now, Jimmy. Don't even go down that road.

JIMMY: Everyone's able to love.

DESIREE: I don't know ...I don't know anymore, Jimmy.

JIMMY: I just want to be able to trust you and I want you to be able to trust me.

DESIREE: Boy, you are from another planet, ain't ya? (pause) I wish I could trust you. I wish I could believe in you. You talk about love and commitment ...(sighs) if only. If only I could really believe you.

JIMMY: Perhaps I'm too idealistic, but if that's true then maybe I have enough idealism for both of us.

DESIREE: And maybe you could take me back to a time before any of this began.

JIMMY: Maybe.

DESIREE: And maybe you could gimme back the little girl I used to be.

JIMMY: Yes!

DESIREE: Oh, if only...

SONG: GIMME BACK THE LITTLE GIRL

(Desiree sings)

It's been a long, long time  
 Since I lost me virginity  
 But if you'll be my boyfriend  
 You can gimme back the little girl I used to be

It was when I was just sixteen  
 Down by the ol' mill stream  
 He drove a 1957 Buick  
 And he took away the little girl I used to be

Chorus:  
 Won't ya gimme back the little girl I used to be  
 Won't ya take away my Cinderella clothes  
 Won't ya treat me like a princess in a fairytale  
 So that everybody knows

That I have found again  
 Just like a long lost friend  
 Those days of innocence  
 When I used to be the little girl I used to be

(Jimmy sings - counter melody)

Let me take away the years  
 Let me bring you back your youth  
 Make your sorrow dissappear  
 Let me pull your aching tooth

Let me cut your bondage cords  
 And assault the dragon's lair  
 I'll entertain you when you're bored  
 I'll be the stallion, you be the mare

(then together)

(Desiree) Now I have found again  
 (Jimmy) Let me take away the years

(D) Just like a long, lost friend  
 (J) Let me bring you back your youth

(D) Those days of innocence  
 (J) Make your sorrow disappear

(D) When I use to be the little girl I use to be  
 (J) Let me pull your aching tooth

(D) Now that I've lost these chains  
 (J) Let me cut your bondage cords

(D) And solved this mystery  
 (J) Ans assault the dragon's lair

(D) I have regained my lost innocence  
 (J) I'll give you back your lost innocence

(D) You gave me back the little girl I used to be  
 (J) I'll give you back the little girl you used to be

*The embrace and kiss.*

*LIGHTS OUT - End of Act I*

ACT II - scene i

*Rifleracks and the boys are hard at work on the new Pizza Paradise restaurant. Jimmy comes in carrying a couple of pieces of lumber. He stumbles over a coffee can full of nails, spilling them all over the ground. He begins to pick them up.*

RIFLERACKS: What the hell ya doin' thar, Jimmy? Watch your step, will ya? We ain't got all day to be pickin' up nails.

JIMMY: Sorry, boss. I guess I'm not with it today. It's like I'm in a daze ...I just can't stop thinkin' about Desiree.

RIFLERACKS: You better get your mind off that piece a 'tang and get back to thinkin' about puttin' up them thar beams.

JIMMY: Oh, boss, I think I'm in love.

RIFLERACKS: What! Why, don't ya ever say such a thing in front of me. Why, it's downright blasphemy.

JIMMY: I don't understand. You're the one who introduced me to her.

RIFLERACKS: But you got it all wrong thar, Jimmy. Why, women like Desiree is what we call R and R ...just a diversion ...like watchin' cartoons on TV. Ya ain't supposed to be fallin' in love. (pause) Now ya take that gal that I's been foolin' around with. Why, I got her danglin' like a thread. She's just a waitin' on me to come by an' fill up her tank. Now, if I's to go 'round sayin' that I loved her ...why, she'd a knowed she had me. (pause) See what I mean? Ya gotta leave 'em guessin'. Ya gotta treat 'em like dawgs, so they'll be loyal like dawgs. Otherwise, your ass is blown.

JIMMY: I see.

RIFLERACKS: Why, I ain't been over to her place for a couple a nights now. Ain't called her or nothin'. Ya see, I gots myself another gal I've been visitin' up Ft. Lauderdale way. (pause) But I might just go over and see ol' Mah-till-der t'night. (smiles) She oughtta be nice-n-ripe-n-ready after a couple of days coolin'. Ya gots to learn to think like me, boy. Now, move them boards!

JIMMY: Yes, sir.

*Rifleracks and Jimmy go back to work. Muttonchop Sideburns come to the forefront.*

MUTTONCHOPS: Say, Jimmy.

JIMMY: Yes?

MUTTONCHOPS: I heard ya tawkin' there and the boss is right. Ya got to take advantage of your situation.

JIMMY: Yeah, and how do you know so much?

MUTTONCHOPS: Well, I had me some powerful heaps of women in my time. There's ol' Fat Dora in New Orleans and Skinny Winnie in Nacadoches. Why, I got 'em lined up throughout Dixie, jus' like the boss here.

JIMMY: I'd like to get a look at the women who line up for YOU.

MUTTONCHOPS: Don't matter what they look like. A piece a pinoche is a piece a pinoche. And when the lights is out, it's all the same. (pause) What I'm sayin' is this: Now that ya got this here Desiree gal on the line, ya gotta string her along. That way you'll always have her.

RIFLERACKS: And then ya start goin' after others.

MUTTONCHOPS: And then ya string them along too, just like beads on a necklace.

JIMMY: But what about love? What about commitment?

RIFLERACKS: Why, I'm committed. I'm committed to every gal I ever had. (pause) By this time, I figure I'm up to about 942. That's 942 commitments. Why, I'm an awfully committed guy.

JIMMY: And so you told Matilda all this? You told her about the other 941?

RIFLERACKS: Why, hell no. I just told her I was committin'. I didn't tell her how many times I committed myself already.

JIMMY: But that's not right.

RIFLERACKS: Why, I just told 'em what they wanted to hear. 'T ain't nothin' wrong with that.

MUTTONCHOPS: That's right there, Jimmy. The boss is right. Ya gots to tell 'em what they wanna hear.

SONG: TELL 'EM WHAT THEY WANNA HEAR

Muttonchops sings

Treat 'em like dirt, then tell 'em what they wanna hear  
Scream like a coot, then whisper in their ear

Ya gotta set up all your prospects, like crows on a power line  
Then send out a charge and let the kilowatts unwind

SONG ENDS...

JIMMY: I guess I see what you mean. You got to feed 'em a line or they'll never take the bait.

MUTTONCHOPS: Now you're gettin' it.

JIMMY: But what about...

RIFLERACKS: But nothin'. That's all there is to it. Ya take that Desiree gal your so hungry for. Why, she's had her ticket punched time and time again. Ain't it only fair that you get your chance?

JIMMY: Yeah, I guess.

RIFLERACKS: Guess nothin'! You knows I'm right. You's got to learn to sit tall and ride 'em high, just like me. And when ya's all finished, ya hitch 'em up to the post, or put 'em out in the barn for a spell. (pause) Now, let's put up them beams!

*BLACK OUT*

Act II - Scene-ii: Matilda's Lab

*Matilda is lying on her lab table, propped up on one arm. She wears only her lab coat. She drinks wine from a beaker (the bottle next to her) and smokes a cigarette. Rifleracks is in the forefront, buttoning his shirt.*

MATILDA: Oh Racks, you've set me free. Why, I haven't seen you for a whole two days. Oh baby, I've missed you ...if you ever leave me like that again, I think I'll just die.

RIFLERACKS: (chuckles) Well, Matilda honey, That's the con-struct business for ya. Puttin' in them long, hard hours just about dries a man up.

*She gets up off the table, comes up behind him, and begins rubbing his shoulders.*

MATILDA: Can't you get some of those other boys to do all the work? After all, you are the boss. Why, you're the brains of the outfit. You shouldn't have to be swinging a hammer.

RIFLERACKS: Yeah, I suppose ya gotta point. But, to tell ya the truth, there's been somthin' else that's been a keepin' me away. Thar's somethin' that's a buggin' me.

*She stops rubbing.*

MATILDA: Oh? Something about me? Some other reason you haven't been coming over?

RIFLERACKS: Yeah. (pause) Ya see, I like my women to be ...well, womanny. Yeah, womanny!

*She starts rubbing again. Harder.*

MATILDA: Aren't I womanny enough for ya?

RIFLERACKS: Well, in some ways ya are (gives a dirty chuckle), but in some ways ya ain't.

*She stops rubbing.*

MATILDA: In what ways?

RIFLERACKS: Well, like the way ya dress ...always trapsin' around in that white coat of yours.

*She takes her hands off his shoulders.*

MATILDA: But, honey, that's what I wear to keep all the blood and guts from all the animals and all the chemicals off my ...(sexy) my BODY.

RIFLERACKS: And that's another thing. Why, when's the last time ya put a dab a perfume behind your ear to cover up the smell a that ...a that ...

MATILDA: Formaldihide?

RIFLERACKS: (slowly) For-mal-duh-hide. (pause) And when's the last time your shaved them legs a yours, or them armpits?

MATILDA: Oh Racks, I'll try to change if it's possible. It's just been so long. I'm just so used to being independent. I forgot all about being ...womanny. I guess I've just been an independent woman too long.

*INDEPENDENT WOMAN Music starts*

RIFLERACKS: Aw, honey ...I didn't mean to hurt ya. I believe ya can change, if ya wanna. Why jus' let me make a few suggestions.

SONG: INDEPENDENT WOMAN

Rifleracks sings

Independent woman, won't ya shave your legs for me?  
 Make 'em smooth and silky and set my fancy free  
 Put on some stockins' put an end to my blues  
 Trade in them sandals for some Gucci shoes  
 Independent woman, won't ya shave your legs for me?

Independent woman won't ya fix your hair up nice?  
 Take some Head-n-Shoulders and wash 'way all them lice  
 I know them bugs is as natural's can be  
 But won't you cut your split ends for me?  
 Independent woman, won't ya shave your legs for me?

Independant woman won't you put on a Halston dress?  
 Them over-sized Kakhis make you look like a mess  
 I know you love your Goodwill clothes  
 But won't you pluck your brows and paint your toes?  
 Independent woman, won't ya shave your legs for me?

Independant woman put a bra underneath them tits  
 Take some soap and water and wash them hairy pits  
 Well the odor of the body is organic it's true  
 But I feel like I'm makin' love at the zoo  
 Independent woman, won't ya shave your legs for me?

RIFLERACKS: Thar, That's what I'm driving at. Why, you do all that I just told ya, and you'll be as womanny as hell.

MATILDA: Don't you think you're being a little too demanding to throw all of that at me at once?

RIFLERACKS: Well now, don't you worry. You just try your best to please ol' Rifleracks and he'll understand. Whoever said that I weren't understandin'. You just take it a step at a time and I'll let ya know if you're slippin'. (pause) Now I best be gettin' on. (chuckles) I gotta ol' drinkin' buddy I gotta see up thar Ft. Lauderdale way.

MATILDA: Well, OK. But kiss me good-bye first.

*They kiss.*

RIFLERACKS: Ooooo-ie! (sniffs) Onrey!

*Rifleracks exits. Matilda sits and stares off.*

*Enter Mercedes. She holds a sheet of paper in her hand.*

MERCEDES: Es he gone?

MATILDA: Yeah, he's gone. (pause) He wants me to change my ways, Mercedes. He wants me to shave my armpits ...to become "wommany." I don't know if I can do it. I'd like to tell him to get lost, but everytime I look into those baby blue eyes and smell the chewing tobacco on his breath, I'm ...overwhelmed. I know he's a jerk, but I think I love him.

MERCEDES: Well maybe this will change you mind!

*She holds the paper in front of Matilda's face.*

MATILDA: What's that?

MERCEDES: I've got me a little sister, Juanita, who lives up in Tallahassee and she wrote me this letter.

MATILDA: Yeah?

MERCEDES: Yeah! You better listen: She say that a man named Rifleracks McCloud come through town a month ago and he come onto her. He charmed her into believing that he gonna stay and marry her. She said he's a big man with tatoos. 'Said that he sweep her off her feet. But when the job es finished, he's gone.

*Matilda gets up.*

MATILDA: It just can't be!

MERCEDES: She checked around and found out that he was fooling around with two other women at the same time. He uooooosed her!

MATILDA: (angry) Just like he's using me. Mercedes!

MERCEDES: Yes?

*Matilda walks to the computer. She begins typing madly.*

MATILDA: I think it's time we try out my new software. We'll see to it that Mr. McCloud never uses anyone again. Now, here's the plan.

*Mercedes walks over, stands behind Matilda, and watches her type. LIGHTS FADE.*

ACT II - scene ii: Bowling Alley Cocktail Lounge

*Desiree is cleaning the tables. Jimmy enters, seeming nervous and fidgety. Desiree smiles at Jimmy.*

DESIREE: Why, Jimmy! I been waitin' all night for ya.

*She runs up to him and kisses him.*

DESIREE: Why, you ol' dung bunny. Where ya been all night?

JIMMY: (speaking in a lower, more Rifleracks-like, voice) Uh, well, Desiree ...I've been out ...I've been out comtemplating things.

DESIREE: What kinda things?

JIMMY: Well...

DESIREE: Yeah?

JIMMY: Well, I've been thinking about my long range plans, and...

DESIREE: Oh, Jimmy!

JIMMY: What?

DESIREE: Oh, Jimmy. Why I do believe you're askin' me to marry ya.

JIMMY: Huh?

DESIREE: Yes. And I think I might just up and say yes. But first I want ya to promise me that you'll quit this here Rifleracks fella right now.

JIMMY: Now, wait a minute...

DESIREE: He's nothin' but trouble for ya, Jimmy. He'll...

JIMMY: But...

DESIREE: He'll jerk ya around the countryside. Why, I'll never get to see ya but twice a month or so.

JIMMY: Desiree!

DESIREE: What?

JIMMY: That's not what I was gettin' at at all.

DESIREE: No?

JIMMY: No. (pause) What I was gonna say was that I think we should see other people while I'm away ...out on the road.

DESIREE: Ahhh! I knew it! You're just like the rest. You're usin' me, Jimmy. You were usin' me all the time.

JIMMY: (panics) No, honey. It's not like that at all.

DESIREE: Don't give me none a that honey shit! I've been listenin' to that honey shit all my life. (pause) I know what's been goin' on. I know ...you been talkin' to that Rifleracks McCloud character and he's buffaloed ya into thinkin' just like him ...into being a dirty ol' fool, just like him. Ain't that right?

JIMMY: No!

DESIREE: Why, sure it is! (pause) And that's just what's gonna happen to you, Jimmy. You're gonna lose yourself to the likes of that ol' redneck. You're gonna end up an old leathery turd, just like your boss.

JIMMY: Desiree.

DESIREE: (snaps) What?

JIMMY: I don't want to leave ya ...but don't ya understand? I gotta be my own man. (stronger) I was born to roam just like a billygoat on the hillside. I'm still a young buck - full of fire!

DESIREE: BULL-shit! Them ain't your words, Jimmy, and you know it. (pause, then softer) But maybe I know what's botherin' ya.

JIMMY: Nothing is bothering me.

DESIREE: Maybe it's because of me.

*Jimmy loosens up a bit. Listens with interest.*

DESIREE: Maybe it's because I've been around more than you and you feel like you need to do some catchin' up.

JIMMY: (quietly, looking away) No, it's not like that. It's like...

DESIREE: Like maybe you feel it ain't fair for me to have gotten my fill all these years and you're just startin' out. And you're thinkin' ya need to even things up before ya go around makin' any commitments.

JIMMY: It's not like that.

DESIREE: I see. Well, whatever. I won't stop ya from takin' off. I shoulda knowed we was too different to ever be ...to ever be ...

*She begins to cry.*

JIMMY: Aw, Desiree, don't cry. It's not like that at all. (pause) I ...I love you.

DESIREE: (looks up, sniffs) Yeah?

JIMMY: Yeah. And I wasn't thinking anything about your past.

DESIREE: No?

JIMMY: No, not really. (pause) I was thinking about mine.

DESIREE: What past?

JIMMY: That's just it - what past? Why, what kind of lover could I ever be to you? I haven't had any experience. I won't be able to romance you and woo you the way you're used to. I don't have any money or fancy car to ride you around in.

DESIREE: Oh Jimmy, none a that matters...

DESIREE & JIMMY: Don't ya see.

*They smile at eachother and laugh. They kiss.*

JIMMY: I might not know how to treat you like you're used to, Desiree, but I sure am going to try.

DESIREE: Oh, Jimmy, it don't matter. It don't matter as long as you love me.

*Music for I CAN SING begins. It is bossa nova music. Three men in Cuban salsa outfits, with big puffy ruffled sleeves, come out shaking maracas. A woman dressed a la Carmen Miranda with fruit on her head accompanies them.*

JIMMY: Who are those people?

DESIREE: Oh... them's the hoochie coochie boys an' the fruit lady. They come out whenever I falls in love.

JIMMY: I love you too, Desiree.

*They kiss again.*

JIMMY: Oh honey, I'm so happy! I feel like singing!

SONG: I CAN SING

Jimmy sings

I may not be as experienced as all your other lovers  
I may not be quite so much fun underneath the covers  
I may not be as handsome as the stars up on the screen  
But there's one thing I can do, and that is I can sing

I can sing about my troubles to help me ease my pain  
And I can sing way up high without any strain  
I can sing so soft, you'll have to bend an ear  
And I can sing so sad, it'll make you shed a tear

Desiree sings

There are times I like to sing with class

Then there are times I like to hear the brass  
 But when I thought that I was losing you  
 I sat right down and sang myself the blues

*Desiree scats a solo*

Jimmy and Desiree sing out chorus together

I can sing about my troubles to help me ease my pain  
 And I can sing way up high without any strain  
 I can sing so soft, you'll have to bend an ear  
 And I can sing so sad, it'll make you shed a tear

Act II - scene iv: The construction site

*The job is done. Rifleracks is packing up some equipment. The stuffed Boozer is in the scene, standing stiff near Rifleracks.*

JIMMY: Hi, boss. Where is everybody?

RIFLERACKS: 'Gave 'em the day off ...figured they each needed to go out and get their bumpers shined. Where you been all mornin'? Ya know, loadin' up is as much a part of the job as puttin' up beams.

JIMMY: Yeah, well that's partly what I came to talk to you about.

RIFLERACKS: Puttin' up beams?

JIMMY: No, I...

RIFLERACKS: Hand me that cord over there, will ya?

*Jimmy picks up an electrical cord and hands it to Rifleracks.*

RIFLERACKS: Well Jimmy, we're gettin' outta here. We jus' landed a big job up in Charleston. Gonna be headin' up there tomorrow. (pause) I'm gonna be sorry to say good-bye to ol' Miami. It's been a good time, this time 'round. But there's plenty of good times ahead.

JIMMY: I'm not going.

RIFLERACKS: What?

JIMMY: That's what I came here to talk with you about. Desiree and I got married last night. I'm staying here in Miami.

RIFLERACKS: No! Tell me in ain't true! Didn't I strighten ya out on that already. Why, she was just a doormat I meant for ya to wipe your feet on. And now ya up and married her? Holy cowpies, Jimmy! What d'ya go and do that for?

JIMMY: Desiree's past is behind her. She's now my wife. And I would prefer it if you would exercise a little courtesy when you speak about her.

RIFLERACKS: (panicked) Oh golly! I hate to hear ya talk that way. There must be somethin' we can do to get ya outta this mess.

JIMMY: I don't want "outta this mess." I love Desiree.

*Rifleracks howls like cyote.*

RIFLERACKS: Oh, don't say it. When a man says he loves a woman, I can hear the dirt clods a fallen on his coffin. (pause) Why, it's only 'cause it's your first time that ya feel this way. You need to get out and explore a little. Pretty soon you'll realize women are just like jobs - ya go to one town, ya do her, and ya leave. Ya ain't s'posed to be fallen in love. Why, look at me. I've had my dipstick in more crankcases than any other man I knowed. I never once said I loved nobody. Don't ya see?

JIMMY: I see that there isn't a great deal of difference between you and your dead dog Boozer. Your brain is in your pecker, McCloud.

*Jimmy exits.*

RIFLERACKS: Now you hold on there, Jimmy! You wait! (pause) You ungrateful... (pause, then to himself) Well, if my brain is in my pecker, by the size a things I guess that damn near makes me a genius. (chuckles) Say, with all this talkin' about brains an' all ...I guess it couldn't hurt if I paid ol' Dr. Newton one last call. (pause) Yeah, I think I'll go over there right now for a little fairwell party. I'll spin her a yarn or two 'bout how committed I am and all.

*Exit Rifleracks. LIGHTS OUT*

Act II - scene V: Matilda's Lab

*Matilda is hard at work preparing something.*

RIFLERACKS: Hey there, baby! How's things?

MATILDA: (rushes to him) Oh Racks, you big lusty boy. I've been waiting for you. I heard you might be leaving town ...I was afraid I'd seen the last of you.

RIFLERACKS: Why, not in your life. How could I ever leave such a sweet thing like you?

MATILDA: Oh come on. I bet you got women all over the place.

RIFLERACKS: Well, heh, that may have been true up to a point. But when I met you, I knowed I come to my rainbow's end.

MATILDA: Mmmm ...that's nice. But you're still going to be leaving sooner or later. Isn't that the nature of the construction trade?

RIFLERACKS: Well now, I's a been thinkin' 'bout that. Ya know, seems there's an awful lotta work right here in Miami. Maybe it's time for the ol' boy to settle down. And if I's gonna be settlin' down, I's gonna need a good woman by my side.

MATILDA: (aside) Oh, if only I could believe it were true. (to Rifleracks) A good woman? You mean me? Are you sure I'll be womanny enough for you?

RIFLERACKS: Why, you're lookin' womannier an' womannier by the moment. C'mon thar, Matilda. Let's get ourselves onto the ol' operatin' table.

*He lunges for her. She sidesteps him.*

MATILDA: You mean we could go out to dinner together and take in a show, just like a couple of married people?

RIFLERACKS: Why sure, now why don't we...

*He moves in again.*

MATILDA: Wait! I have a surprise for you.

*She takes off her coat under which she's wearing a sleeveless shirt. She lifts up her arms.*

MATILDA: Look! I shaved my armpits for you.

RIFLERACKS: For me?

MATILDA: Yes. Now come here, you big brawn of a man. Give me a kiss.

*Rifleracks comes over to where Matilda is standing in front of her table. The two embrace and kiss passionately. Matilda reaches behind Rifleracks and lifts up an oversized hypodermic needle. She jabs it into his butt. Rifleracks is stunned. He gazes off into space. He collapses into Matilda's arms. She staggers under his weight and then drops him on the floor.*

MATILDA: There! You'll definitely be true to your words this time, Mr. McCloud. "A good woman at your side." HA! Yes, I'll be sticking to you like glue.

*She laughs.*

Act II - scene vi: The street (formerly the construction site)

*Jimmy and Desiree are walking along hand-in-hand in front of the new Pizza Paradise restaurant. Muttonchops runs up to them, out of breath.*

MUTTONCHOPS: Jimmy! Why, I been lookin' all over for you. Have you seen the boss?

JIMMY: No. I thought you would all be long gone by now.

MUTTONCHOPS: We would be ...but I can't find the boss. (pause) Say, you ain't seen that woman he's been a sniffin' around, have ya?

JIMMY: You mean Matilda? Why no. Poor girl, just another notch on Rifleracks skillsaw. (pause) Now that I think of it, I bet he's left town already ...trying to get out of here before he has to clean up another broken heart.

MUTTONCHOPS: Yeah, I s'pose you're right. What a guy, that boss of mine - what a guy.

*Muttonchops turns and begins to leave. He then sees something in the distance.*

MUTTONCHOPS: Wait a second, there's the boss right now! And he's with that woman! Oh no, has the boss finally been hooked? The world will never be the same.

*Rifleracks and Matilda enter. Rifleracks is by her side like a ventriloquist's dummy. He has a smile frozen across his face.*

DESIREE: Well I don't know about the world, but HE sure doesn't look the same. He looks ...happy.

MATILDA: Well hello, everybody. You'll have to excuse us. No time to chat. We're late for the movies.

MUTTONCHOPS: Howdy, boss. We were worried about ya.

*Riflerack's hand pops up in a ridgid salute.*

MUTTONCHOPS: Well, are ya gonna be ready to leave town pretty soon?

MATILDA: He's not going anywhere. He's decided to settle down with me.

MUTTONCHOPS: Wht I don't believe it. 'S that true, boss? Are you fixin' to settle down?

*Riflerack's head mechanically shakes up and down. At this, Jimmy drops back and skeptically examines Rifleracks, scratching his chin, etc.*

MUTTONCHOPS: Oh no, what about the business? What about Charleston?

MATILDA: What ABOUT Charleston?

MUTTONCHOPS: We had a big job lined up in Charleston. We's s'posed to start there next week.

MATILDA: Oh yeah? Well, Rifleracks McCloud won't be going to Charleston or anywhere ...except to the movies with me. Now, if you'll excuse us...

JIMMY: Wait a second!

MATILDA: What?

JIMMY: What movie are you going to see, Rifleracks?

MATILDA: We're going to see...

JIMMY: I asked Rifleracks. What are you going to see?

*When Rifleracks doesn't respond, Jimmy comes over and shakes him by the shoulders. He pulls Rifleracks from Matilda's side and turns his back towards the audience. This reveals a control panel between his shoulders. He falls to the ground in a heap.*

DESIREE: He's dead!

MUTTONCHOPS: Oh no, boss!

*He kneels by Riflerack's side.*

*Music for the song DEAD BODY begins.*

MATILDA: Yes, and he's mine forever ...to have and to hold ...to go out with ...to go to the movies with.

SONG: DEAD BODY

*A women's trio is in costume as a chimp, a pitbull, and a cat. They sing the Dead Body vamp.*

Dead body: Oooo

Dead body: Ooo- oo- ooo

Dead body: Oooo

Dead body: Oooo- oo- ooo

*Matilda sings as animals continue*

When you're going to the movies, take a dead body  
They won't complain if the popcorn's no good

If you're lookin' for a gentleman, get a dead body  
He'll behave just like he should

And if you like muscles, get dead body  
Rigor mortus as hard as a rock

If you're feeling angry, hit a dead body  
They're so easy to sock, sock, sock

First there was Ramses of Egypt  
Then there was Lenin in his tomb  
And now there's Rifleracks  
I'm the bride and he's the groom

*She shouts over the dead body vamp.*

Come see me!  
Taxidermy!  
I'll sell ya one!  
Oh yeah!

*Matilda pulls out a remote control box and manipulates Rifleracks. He does the Dead Body Dance.*

*After the Daed Body song there is a blackout.*

Act II - scene vii: Matilda's lab

As the lights come up, we see that Riflerack's body is being kept in some sort of large glass case. (Possibly a dummy Rifleracks.)

*Desiree, Muttonchops, and Jimmy quietly enter. They are sneaking in.*

MUTTONHOPS: (whispering) Now, yer sure she ain't here.

DESIREE: Yes. I saw her leave.

JIMMY: (noticing Rifleracks) My God, there he is!

*Muttonchops rushes forward.*

MUTTONCHOPS: Boss! Oh Boss. Jus' look what that evil woman done to ya. We're here to rescue ya. (He bangs on the case. He begins to cry.) We're gonna get ya outta there, Boss.

JIMMY: (pulling Muttonchops away) Stop! Get away from the glass! This is some kind of statsius container. If you break the hermetic seal, you might cause some damage to him.

MUTTONCHOPS: What?

JIMMY: I think Rifleracks might still be alive. That's why she has to keep him in here.

DESIREE: Look. He's breathing.

MUTTONCHOPS: By God, you're right. You're right. The boss is alive!

*Muttonchops slams his hand down on the table where the computer is. The screen flickers, then lights up. Riflerack's voice is heard.*

RIFLERACKS: (off-stage) 'S that you, Muttonchop Sideburns?

*Muttonchops' eyes dart around.*

MUTTONCHOPS: Boss?

*He walks towards the body.*

MUTTONCHOPS: Boss!

RIFLERACKS: I'm over here, inside this here computer.

*All three turn to the computer.*

RIFLERACKS: Matilda done downloaded my essence onto her harddrive.

JIMMY: I don't believe it. This is amazing. She was actaully able to take a personality impression.

MUTTONCHOPS: A what?

JIMMY: A personality impression. It's something I've only heard of in theory. It's where a computer program is able to copy all of someone's personality engrams.

DESIREE: Yes. I think I saw that in Star Trek once.

JIMMY: Ingenious.

RIFLERACKS: What's they saying, Muttonchops? Is there a way to get me back into my body?

MUTTONCHOPS: Sure, Boss. We's gonna fix ya all up. (turns to Jimmy) Ya gotta help the boss, Jimmy. Ya gotta get 'em back the way he was.

JIMMY: Well, like I said I only know how this works in theory, but what I think we need to do is scramble his molecules and reintegrate his personality as they reassemble.

DESIREE: Like the transporter in Star Trek.

JIMMY: Well, yeah. We need to rebuild him atom by atom, cell by cell. Like cloning.

MUTTONCHOPS & RIFLERACKS: Clonin'!

JIMMY: Then as his body is reassembled his personality is reintegrated at the same time.

RIFLERACKS: Uh ...Muttonchop Sideburns?

MUTTONCHOPS: Yeah, Boss?

*Muttonchops leans over to the computer. He listens as Rifleracks whispers in his ear. (The computer screen flickers, but there is no voice.)*

*Muttonchops turns to the others.*

MUTTONCHOPS: Uh, the boss was wonderin' whether, when you reassemble him ...uh, whether you could make his dick bigger.

*Desiree covers her mouth and sniggers.*

JIMMY: No, we haven't the time. Plus, if we do anything different. If we introduce any other element into the equation, there could be serious repercussions.

MUTTONCHOPS: Sorry boss.

DESIREE: Let's get going. We have to hurry before Dr. Newton gets back.

*Jimmy goes to the computer.*

JIMMY: OK.

*CLONING MUSIC BEGINS*

*He begins typing madly. As he does, the color inside the chamber changes. Then THE LIGHTS GO OUT (possibly affording the real Rifleracks to take the place of the dummy).*

MUTTONCHOPS: The lights went out.

JIMMY: Power drain.

DESIREE: Like in Star Trek!

*Jimmy keeps typing. The lights come back up. The chamber is now filled with smoke. More lighting changes. SUDDENLY Matilda enters.*

MATILDA: (screaming) What are you doing? No!

*She runs to the chamber. She opens it and gets in. THERE IS AN EXPLOSION! The lights go black again. The music stops.*

*When the lights come back up. Desiree, Jimmy, and Muttonchops stand in shock looking at the chamber, still filled with smoke. The sides of the chamber then start to fall away, one at a time, slamming against the floor. As the smoke clears, we see Rifleracks. He now has a Matilda-style wig on and has HUGE BREASTS HANGING FROM HIS CHEST.*

RIFLERACKS: Muttonchop Sideburns ...Jimmy ...Desiree. What happened? (He begins to notice his breasts.) Oh no, Muttonchops! I think somethin' went wrong with the clonin! I's ...I's been turned into a whooo-man. (He handles his breasts. He squeezes them.) Oh no, I ...I (looks up, smiles) I Like 'em!!!

SONG: RIFLERACKS REPRISE

Rifleracks sings

My name is Rifleracks McCloud  
I'm a woman and I proud

Muttonchops sings

Well the boss sure is well endowed

Rifleracks sings

My name is Johnny, Johnny Rifleracks McCloud

END

BOWS AND EXIT