

WORDGIRL

"DUCK! SOUP!"

Randy Astle

Randy Astle
randyastle@yahoo.com
801-368-1007 cell
347-726-7699 home
4841 Broadway #3
New York, NY 10034

WORDGIRL

"DUCK! SOUP!"

TITLE

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Hey, kids, listen for the words
"original" and "generous."

INT. CHUCK'S BASEMENT - DAY

CHUCK THE EVIL SANDWICH MAKING GUY sits on his couch, watching the television.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
It was a sunny afternoon, but Chuck the Evil Sandwich Making Guy was deep inside his lair, hatching up an evil plan.

Chuck looks up.

CHUCK
Actually, I'm just watching some TV. It's my favorite program, *Supreme Sandwich Cook-off*.

ON THE TELEVISION, two CHEFS furiously slap ingredients on slices of bread, a clock timing down: it DINGS, and one chef throws his arms in the air.

CHEF
Yes!

ON CHUCK.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
I see. Well, you are the villain for this episode, aren't you?

CHUCK
As far as I know. Let's just wait and see what happens.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Okay.

They pause. Chuck glances around, looking self-conscious.

CHUCK'S MOTHER (O.S.)
Chuck! Time for lunch!

CHUCK

Coming, Ma!

(to the Narrator)

See? I knew something would happen.

He goes upstairs.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Thank goodness.

INT. CHUCK'S KITCHEN - DAY

Chuck sits down at the table, with CHUCK'S MOTHER's torso in the foreground.

CHUCK

What kind of sandwich did you make today, Ma? Chicken cordon bleu? An Italian muffuletta? A panini?

CHUCK'S MOTHER

I thought we'd try something original. How about a bowl of chicken noodle soup?

She sets a bowl of soup in front of Chuck. He blanches.

CHUCK

Soup? Ma, you made soup?

CHUCK'S MOTHER

That's right, sweetums. Chicken noodle.

His indignation rises.

CHUCK

Ma, you know that I only eat sandwiches. I don't eat soup!

CHUCK'S MOTHER

Fiddlesticks. Try it and you just may like it.

She walks away, leaving Chuck to fester over his bowl. He pokes the soup with his spoon.

CHUCK

Soup. Soup. Who does she think she's dealing with?

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Uh, Chuck?

CHUCK
Yes, Mr. Announcer Narrator Guy?

NARRATOR (V.O.)
You know, you'll never know if you
like it unless you try it.

CHUCK
But just look at those noodles, like
little wiggling floating things in
there.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
(sternly)
Chuck...

CHUCK
All right, all right. I'll try it.

Slowly, tentatively, he raises the spoon to his lips and
SLURPS.

CHUCK (CONT'D)
(surprised)
HMMMMM.

He takes another spoonful, then another, talking between
mouthfuls.

CHUCK (CONT'D)
Hey, not bad. You don't have to
chew it, really, and it's all new
kinds of flavors.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Told you so.

Chuck furrows his brows evilly.

CHUCK
I want more.

He drops his spoon and dashes out the door.

INT. GROCERY STORE DAIRY AISLE - DAY

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Meanwhile in the grocery store...

MRS. BOTSFORD is shopping with an excited TJ, a bored BECKY,
and a hungry BOB, who grabs for everything they pass. Becky
automatically takes each item back and puts it on the shelf.
Their cart is nearly full.

MRS. BOTSFORD

I can't believe it's already time
for this month's "Monthly Botsford
Family Soup Night at Home." Aren't
you guys excited?

TJ

You betcha!

BOB

(excited)
Eeee eeee!

BECKY

(bored)
Ecstatic.

Mrs. Botsford checks the list.

MRS. BOTSFORD

Good. Let's see...all we have left
is some onions, chicken broth, and
colored marshmallows. Becky, can
you go get us three cans of broth?

BECKY

Sure, Mom.

She walks away, but Bob is about to put a huge cheese wheel
in his mouth. She grabs his arm and pulls him away.

BECKY (CONT'D)

Come on.

BOB

Eeee!

INT. GROCERY STORE SOUP AISLE - DAY

Becky trudges along, searching the shelves and pulling a
distracted Bob behind her.

BECKY

Chicken broth, chicken broth...

Suddenly all of the shelves are empty. She stops.

BECKY (CONT'D)

Hey, what gives?

BOB

(upset)
Eeee!

Becky looks up and sees Chuck loading the last of the canned soup into his grocery cart, which is completely overloaded. He is CHUCKLING evilly.

BECKY
Chuck the Evil Sandwich Making Guy!
What's he doing here?

CHUCK
(to himself)
...And split pea, the last one.

A LITTLE BOY with his MOTHER points at the last can of split pea soup in Chuck's cart and starts to sniffle.

BOY'S MOTHER
Excuse me, sir, but could you spare
one can of soup? It's his favorite.

CHUCK
No! What do I look like to you,
some kind of Sharing Person Sharer?

He walks off in a huff--the boy bursts into SOBS.

BECKY
Chuck's taking all the soup! That's
original--I wonder what he wants
with soup. I know how to find out,
though. Word up!

She touches her chest and flies away, leaving Bob browsing through the spaghetti sauces. She flies back and grabs him.

WORDGIRL
Come on.

BOB
(innocently)
Eeee?

INT. GROCERY STORE CHECK-OUT COUNTERS - DAY

Chuck's patiently unloads his cart as the teenage male CASHIER, covered with zits with a cracking voice to match, rings him out.

CASHIER
That's a lot of soup, sir.

CHUCK
Well, yeah, I mean, it's really good.
Geeze, I feel like I've been eating
sandwiches my whole life.

CASHIER

I know what you mean, sir.

WordGirl and Captain Huggy Face fly up to the counter.

WORDGIRL

Hold it right there, Chuck!

CHUCK

WordGirl!

WORDGIRL

Just what do you think you're doing?

He shrugs.

CHUCK

I'm getting soup.

WORDGIRL

We won't let you get away with it!
I know it's for some kind of evil
sandwich-related plan.

CHUCK

No, actually I decided I like soup.

WordGirl is flummoxed.

WORDGIRL

You're going to EAT it? Well that's
original.

CHUCK

Why is that original?

WORDGIRL

It's original because it's something
that's new, different, or unexpected,
like how Captain Huggy Face has some
very original dance moves.

In her arms, Huggy tries to demonstrate.

WORDGIRL (CONT'D)

That's enough.

CHUCK

Oh, I suppose so. I know I've always
liked sandwiches, but I tried some
soup today and it was really good.

CASHIER

That'll be \$135, please.

Chuck fishes in his wallet.

CHUCK
Hold on. Here you go.

WORDGIRL
Wait, you're paying for it? That really *is* unexpected.

HUGGY FACE
(agreeing)
Eee eee!

CHUCK
Well you can't always judge a soup by its label. Now if you'll excuse me, I have an appointment with my stove top.

He starts to wheel his cart away but she blocks him.

WORDGIRL
Not so fast!

CHUCK
Now what?

WORDGIRL
Well, even if you are paying for it, couldn't you be a little more generous? I don't see what you can do with *all* of that soup and that little boy back there wanted some.

CHUCK
I don't care. I want it all.

WORDGIRL
Come on, Chuck, you have about five hundred cans...

CASHIER
Four-hundred thirty-seven, miss.

WORDGIRL
Close enough.

CHUCK
Outta my way, WordGirl.

He pushes past her and goes out the door.

MRS. BOTSFORD (O.S.)
Becky! Did you find the chicken broth?

The cashier stares at WordGirl and Huggy. She looks nervous.

WORDGIRL
Uh, what's that, Huggy?

He shrugs.

WORDGIRL (CONT'D)
Clean up on aisle seven? I'm on it.

They zip over the cashier's head.

CASHIER
Great. There goes my employee of the month award.

INT. GROCERY STORE SOUP AISLE - DAY

Mrs. Botsford and TJ are looking around when Becky and Bob walk up.

BECKY
Hi, Mom.

MRS. BOTSFORD
Oh, there you are, sweetie. Did you get the broth?

BECKY
No, they were all out.

TJ
What?

MRS. BOTSFORD
Oh no!

BECKY
I know. It's a real travesty. Can we go now?

TJ
Mom, does this mean we won't be able to have our Soup Night after all?

MRS. BOTSFORD
(choking up)
Of course not, honey. We'll think of something... We'll think of something...

INT. CHUCK'S BASEMENT - DAY

An immense Warhol-esque tableau of soup cans.

CHUCK (O.S.)
 There. That's "original" if anything
 is.

He stands back, admiring the soup cans.

CHUCK (CONT'D)
 Now let's see what we got...

He reads the labels closely.

CHUCK (CONT'D)
 "Tomato, beef broth, celery and cream,
 cream and celery, tomato and celery
 in creamy broth, lentil." What's
 lentil? Where's WordGirl when you
 actually need her?

He stands back and reflects.

CHUCK (CONT'D)
 This is good, but it's not enough.
 I need more!

He goes to his closet and starts rummaging.

CHUCK (CONT'D)
 In fact, I think I'll create a new
 secret identity. I am no longer
 simply Chuck the Evil Sandwich Making
 Guy. I am now also...

He emerges wearing an old top hat and cape.

CHUCK (CONT'D)
 ...Chuck the Evil Soup Enjoying Guy!
 Ha ha ha! Ha ha ha! Ha!

INT. BOTSFORDS' HOUSE - DAY

MR. BOTSFORD, Mrs. Botsford, TJ, and Bob all sit on the
 couch, depressed. Becky bounces through, HUMMING, which
 just makes the others more irate.

TJ
 (tattling)
 Dad, Becky's happy!

MR. BOTSFORD
 It's okay, son. We all...must face
 our soupless evening...in our own
 way.

Bob breaks down in MONKEY SOBS. Becky pokes her head back
 in.

BECKY

You guys, what's wrong?

MRS. BOTSFORD

Oh, you know, honey. It's just that our monthly "Monthly Botsford Family Soup Night at Home" is kind of a tradition.

BECKY

I know, but isn't it okay to do something different for a change, something original?

MR. BOTSFORD

My onion and marshmallow soup was going to be original.

BECKY

I suppose so. But every month we make some strange new soup and every month we wind up feeling sick afterwards!

Bob folds his arms defensively.

BECKY (CONT'D)

Okay, I end up feeling sick.

TJ

I bet if WordGirl were here she'd know what to do.

BECKY

I bet WordGirl would just go to one of the soup stands downtown and bring home five cups of chicken noodle!

They all light up.

EXT. SOUP CART - DAY

The Botsford family stands in line at a sidewalk soup cart. Becky is cross.

BECKY

There are so many other things I'd rather be doing right now.

MR. BOTSFORD

I know it's not the same, honey, but we'll put the marshmallows in at home.

BECKY

Ohhh.

As they wait, they hear something behind them.

CHUCK (O.S.)

Outta my way. Make way.

BECKY

Again?

Chuck pushes past, forcing his way to the front of the line.

CHUCK

Move it or lose it. Soup guy comin' through.

TJ

Hey, that guy just cut in line!

BECKY

Yeah. Hey Dad, I just realized that I left my, um, Soup Day hat in the car.

Bob covers his face, embarrassed.

MR. BOTSFORD

Cool! Soup Day hats!

BECKY

Yeah. Come on, Bob.

She rushes off.

BECKY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Word up!

At the FRONT OF THE LINE, Chuck is badgering the STAND OWNER.

CHUCK

So just give me all of the soup in your cart and everything will be okay.

WordGirl flies up, floating in air.

WORDGIRL

Ah-ha! So now you're finally stealing the soup, is that it, Chuck?

CHUCK

Oh, you again. Look, I'm gonna pay.

He pulls out some dollar bills, which the owner snatches, handing him the tubs of soup.

CHUCK (CONT'D)

Thanks.

WORDGIRL

Oh, well you're still being selfish.
You cut in front of all those people.

CHUCK

That's what they get for dealing
with Chuck the Evil Soup Enjoying
Guy! Bwah hah ha-ha!

WordGirl and Huggy look at each other.

WORDGIRL

Chuck the Evil "Soup Enjoying" Guy?

CHUCK

Look, I don't have time for this.
You want some soup, you can have it.

He pulls out his condiment gun and shoots.

WORDGIRL

Huggy, look out!

Instead of mustard a stream of noodles and broth flies through the air, drenching WordGirl and Huggy and knocking them to the ground. They lie there, tangled in a mess of noodles.

CHUCK

Ha ha! Take that, WordGirl! You've
been noodle-ized!

WORDGIRL

(to Huggy)
Does he mean "neutralized"?

Huggy shakes his head no.

CHUCK

Until next time, WordGirl!

The stand owner hands him some coins.

STAND OWNER

Your change.

CHUCK

Gee, thanks.

Chuck takes the money then walks off laughing.

STAND OWNER

Sorry, folks, we're all out for today.

The crowd MOANS. WordGirl struggles to free herself from the noodles. Huggy gets a noodle in his mouth, SLURPS, and quickly sucks them all up, freeing himself and WordGirl.

WORDGIRL

Good work, Huggy.

People from the crowd, still upset, stand around.

MR. BOTSFORD

Now what are we supposed to do? You can't have soup night without soup!

MAN FROM CROWD

You said it, brother.

Becky and Bob walk up next to her family.

BECKY

Heh heh. I must have left my hat at home. What'd I miss?

MR. BOTSFORD

The soup is all gone.

Becky, excited, pumps her fist.

BECKY

Yes! I mean, darn.

Suddenly the SCREAMING MAN runs up.

SCREAMING MAN

HELP! There's a new restaurant called the Soup Palace just down the street and the food is really good!

BECKY

I don't think that actually qualifies as an emergency.

SCREAMING MAN

It doesn't?

But the excited crowd tramples right over him in a rush. Only Becky and Bob remain as he struggles to get up from the ground.

BECKY
I stand corrected. Come on, Bob, if there's a new soup restaurant in town, I think we'll find you-know-who there.

BOB
(confused)
Eee eee?

BECKY
Chuck!

BOB
(understanding)
Eeeee!

EXT. STREET - DAY

The Botsfords' car drives down a city street.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
And so the Botsfords decided to make their "Monthly Botsford Family Soup Night at Home" a "Monthly Botsford Family Soup Night at a Soup Restaurant" instead. Pretty original if you ask me.

EXT. RESTAURANT - DAY

A flashing sign says "The Soup Palace."

The car pulls into the restaurant parking lot, but it is absolutely full.

INT. CAR - DAY

BECKY
Oh no! The parking lot's full.
We'll never get in there like this.

MRS. BOTSFORD
Have a little patience, Becky.

MR. BOTSFORD
That's right. I am right in my element.

He grips the wheel and looks around for empty spaces as though he were in combat.

BECKY
<SIGH>

EXT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Suddenly a CROWD of people rushes out of the restaurant, SCREAMING and waving their arms. They dash into their cars and zip out of the parking lot, leaving it empty.

INT. CAR - DAY

MR. BOTSFORD

See?

EXT. RESTAURANT - DAY

He meticulously maneuvers the car into a spot in the middle of the lot, backing up once to straighten it out.

BECKY (O.S.)

Come on, Dad! Let's go, let's go!

INT. CAR - DAY

Mr. Botsford turns off the car.

MR. BOTSFORD

Well I'm glad to see you've gotten into the spirit of this evening.

EXT. RESTAURANT - DAY

The Botsfords walk up to the restaurant door where a French chef, PHILLIPE CUILLERE, stands despondent.

PHILLIPE

My customers! My customers!

MR. BOTSFORD

Yes, pleased to meet you.

BECKY

I don't think he's talking about us.

PHILLIPE

No. Zee little girl eez right. I, zee great chef Phillipe Cuillere, am referring to all of my customers who just ran away.

BECKY

Why did they run away?

PHILLIPE

I do not know. My soup eez so delicious, and I am so generous with my little crackers. ...But it could be because zee restaurant eez haunted.

BECKY

Ah-ha!

Everyone looks at her.

BECKY (CONT'D)

I mean, very interesting.

TJ

Can we go in? Can we? I've never been in a haunted restaurant before.

MR. BOTSFORD

I don't see why not.

PHILLIPE

But beware. For zee phantom could be anywhere...

He wiggles his fingers and tries to look menacing, but the Botsfords walk right past.

BECKY

Don't worry. We'll keep an eye out for him.

She and Bob exchange winks and thumbs up.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Inside, the dim lights reveal deserted tables, upended chairs, and a salad bar with a flickering light. Phillipe, timid, follows the Botsfords, who show no trepidation at all. Mr. Botsford spies the darkest, farthest corner.

MR. BOTSFORD

Very nice decor. Why don't we sit over there?

PHILLIPE

There? That eez Box Table #5--zee phantom's favorite.

MR. BOTSFORD

Oh goody.

They start to walk that way, Becky and Bob in front.

MR. BOTSFORD (CONT'D)

Tell me, Phillipe, do you ever combine onions and marshmallows?

PHILLIPE

Why would I do that?

Becky looks up and sees a blast of soup flying at her.

BECKY

Duck! Soup!

She and Bob spring out of the way.

MR. BOTSFORD

Not duck, Becky, marshmallows.

The soup hits him and Phillipe, soaking them. Phillipe licks his sleeve.

PHILLIPE

Just as I feared: the Punjab curry.

CHUCK (O.S.)

Ha ha! That's for trying to sit in my favorite table! Now take this!

A piece of paper floats down out of the darkness.

BECKY

A note?

PHILLIPE

Yes. Zee ghost, he keeps ordering different kinds of soup. I leave them out there and he eats them.

(reads)

See, now he wants a minestrone.

BECKY

And you keep doing it?

PHILLIPE

What else can I do? If I do not then he says he will hang all of zee salad bar stuff way up high where we cannot reach it.

A terrified WAITER dashes by.

WAITER

And zee silverware!

PHILLIPE

Oui. Zee silverware as well. But he does tip nicely.

Becky turns to Bob, who is already munching on a bread stick.

BECKY

That's it. I think it's time we
paid this "ghost" a little visit.

(to the others)

I think I remember where my soup hat
is now. Be right back!

She runs off.

BECKY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Word up!

MR. BOTSFORD

Well at least she could have got me
some napkins first.

WordGirl and Captain Huggy Face fly up with napkins.

WORDGIRL

Need some napkins?

MR. BOTSFORD

Why thank you.

He starts drying himself off.

WORDGIRL

Mr. Cuillere, I hear you've got an
unwelcome visitor. I say it's time
we smoke him out. Come on, Huggy!

She zips off.

PHILLIPE

Oh, thank you... Who eez that?

TJ

That's WordGirl.

Phillipe nods knowingly.

PHILLIPE

Oh. Of course. "WordGirl." I like
these town.

In the DARKNESS, WordGirl and Huggy systematically move along, communicating with hand signals: WordGirl points for Huggy to circle around the back of a table. He agrees, pointing and adding a few disco moves to boot. WordGirl shakes her head.

They both start moving when rapid footsteps CLOMP overhead. WordGirl looks up and sees Chuck's caped silhouette running along a beam. She signals for Huggy to climb up then flies up herself.

WORDGIRL

Come on out, Chuck. We've got you covered.

CHUCK (O.S.)

Oh really? What are you going to do, take me to jail for eating soup?

WORDGIRL

Well, uh...

The waiter, holding a wad of money, walks up again at WordGirl's feet.

WAITER

He does tip very nicely.

WORDGIRL

Argh! Look, it's not about whether you're paying for your soup, it's that you're hogging it all for yourself! You're not thinking about what anyone else wants!

CHUCK (O.S.)

Yeah, so?

WORDGIRL

So? You shouldn't be so selfish-- you should be generous.

CHUCK (O.S.)

Generous?

WORDGIRL

Yeah, you know, kind, sharing, willing to give to other people or think about what they want.

Chuck, in his corner, is thinking.

CHUCK

Well, I am getting kind of full. ...But I don't need to be generous, because I am Chuck, the Evil Soup Enjoying Guy! No one enjoys a good soup like I do!

WORDGIRL

Sure they do, Chuck! Just look at that family over there.

(MORE)

WORDGIRL (CONT'D)

(indicating the
Botsfords)

It's their monthly family soup night,
and they've been trying to get some
soup all day. It's a tradition, and
anyone who would want to stop that
just so they can do what they want
isn't being very generous at...all...

(realizing what she's
saying)

Oh.

On his beam, Huggy folds his arms and scowls at her.

CHUCK

You can share your dinner all you
want--I'm eating mine! Take that!

He fires his soup gun, hitting WordGirl square on and knocking
her to the floor. He turns and shoots Huggy as well.

CHUCK (CONT'D)

You too, fur ball!

Sitting in a puddle by the Botsfords, WordGirl gets up while
Huggy licks his face off.

MR. BOTSFORD

Napkin?

The waiter comes out with a large bowl of soup.

WAITER

I have zee minestrone.

PHILLIPE

Merci. Put it over there.

WORDGIRL

Wait. I have a better idea. Mr.
Cuillere, do you have a foot-long
bun, ham, pastrami, American and
Swiss cheese, lettuce, tomato,
pickles, and mustard, with a dash of
salt and pepper?

PHILLIPE

Why yes of course.

He reaches under his apron and pulls out a tray with all of
those things.

WORDGIRL

Wow. I didn't see that coming.

PHILLIPE
Mademoiselle, I am a professional.

WORDGIRL
Thanks. Captain Huggy Face, let's
make ourselves a sandwich.

Huggy's eyes light up. WordGirl carries the tray over to the nearest table, on the edge of the darkness, where they start assembling a subway sandwich.

WORDGIRL (CONT'D)
(very loudly)
So what should we use, Huggy, the
ham or the pastrami?

HUGGY FACE
Eeee eee!

WORDGIRL
Good choice. Both. Let's use both
cheeses too.

CHUCK (O.S.)
Ham? Pastrami? Cheese? Hey, what
are you guys doing?

WORDGIRL
We couldn't get any soup here, so
we're making a sandwich, okay? Now
let's put on the lettuce.

Huggy is excited.

HUGGY FACE
Eee eee!

CHUCK (O.S.)
You gotta put the tomatoes on first!
Otherwise they flatten the lettuce!
Not many people know that.

WORDGIRL
Aren't you Chuck the Evil Soup
Enjoying Guy? This is a *sandwich*.
Huggy, salt and pepper!

Chuck jumps off his beam and comes running up.

CHUCK
Wait! You didn't do the mustard
yet! The salt and pepper won't stick!
Gimme that!

WordGirl holds the mustard tube at bay.

WORDGIRL

No way, Chuck. Not until you promise to stop taking all the soup from people!

CHUCK

What?

WORDGIRL

You've got to promise to be generous and let other people eat their dinner the way you would want to eat yours.

CHUCK

Okay, okay! Just gimme the mustard.

WORDGIRL

Deal.

She hands it to him. He seizes it, squirts frantically at the bun, and relaxes. The sandwich looks immaculate.

CHUCK

And *that*, WordGirl, is how a master does it.

Phillipe approaches.

PHILLIPE

Sacre bleu! Zeese is very original work. How would you like to make all zee sandwiches for my restaurant?

CHUCK

Sandwiches? But I thought this was the Soup Palace.

PHILLIPE

Zee sandwiches and zee soup--they go together! From now on, these will be the Soup and Sandwich Palace! And all zee sandwiches, they will be your very own creations, original...Whoever You Are Sandwiches!

CHUCK

That's very generous! When do we start?

PHILLIPE

We start now, mon ami!

His face becomes deadly serious and he thrusts forward a mop and bucket.

PHILLIPE (CONT'D)

And you can start by cleaning up all
your mess.

CHUCK

Oh-h.

INT. RESTAURANT - LATER

The Botsfords, Phillipe, and the waiter are all gathered
around a well lit table, feasting on soups and sandwiches.
Chuck, frowning in an apron, mops the floor nearby.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

And so the Botsfords got to enjoy
their monthly "Monthly Botsford Family
Soup Night at Home" in a restaurant,
and Chuck learned about being
generous...

Chuck rolls his eyes.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Speaking of which, that's a pretty
generous helping of cheese, Bob.

Bob has about forty slices on his sandwich. He beams.

BECKY

Bob...

Sadly, he takes off thirty-nine slices.

MR. BOTSFORD

So is anyone game for some
marshmallows?

ALL

No-ooo!

NARRATOR (V.O.)

That's all for now, but tune in next
time for another generous helping of
WordGirl!

FADE OUT

THE END