

SCENE 2

MY SON IS ADDICTED TO GARIBALDIS AND I'VE HAD ENOUGH

CURTAINS OPEN

TIMOTHY My next guest today, Wendy, says that her 17 year old son is out of control. She claims that her son Sean refuses to get a job and spends his days sleeping or stealing to feed his addiction. Recently, though it has got a whole lot worse, because Wendy claims her son has now become a dealer. A dealer in one of the latest so-called legal highs, Garibaldi biscuits. Wendy insists today that unless he sorts himself out, she will walk away from him for good.

She's really brave, she's very nervous. Wendy's on the show guys.

WENDY comes on with her head down sobbing.

TIMOTHY You ok? Oh bless you. Tell us the story sweetheart, how old is he?

WENDY 17. He'll be 18 in August.

TIMOTHY You came here today to confront him about his behaviour?

WENDY Yeah!

TIMOTHY He's 17 years of age, erm he doesn't go to college?

WENDY No, he don't anything. He won't even look for a job.

TIMOTHY He won't work, stays in bed, gets up...

WENDY I've got to get him out of bed at 12 o'clock during the day, he won't get out of bed. I've got 2 other children and they're copying him as well.

TIMOTHY He's stolen from you?

WENDY He stole £500. And I'm a single Mum.

TIMOTHY It was your Christmas money?

WENDY I'd been saving it up but I kept on forgetting to put it in the bank. Then one day I went to get the money... *(sob)* and it was gone.

TIMOTHY Are you tough on him or what?

WENDY I try to be, but he walks all over me. I dread waking him up every day. All the names he calls me. All the verbal abuse.

TIMOTHY What does he call you? (*WENDY starts to get upset and tries to hold herself together, TIMOTHY puts a reassuring hand on her shoulder*). It's all right, it's all right, you don't have to tell us...unless you want to...Go on, what does he call you?

WENDY (*pause*) Fishface.

TIMOTHY shakes his head in disgust.

TIMOTHY And what's he like when he doesn't get his fix?

WENDY Horrible. He treats me like a doormat. He throws things at me, he pushes me around.

TIMOTHY Does he hit you?

WENDY Sometimes.

TIMOTHY Has he ever been violent with anyone else?... You told my researchers that he's been cruel to animals?

WENDY (*sighs*) Jackie, my sister has a pet terrapin and we were looking after it once while she was on holiday. Anyway, Sean was particularly annoyed about something one day; his job seekers hadn't come through on time or something, so he took it out on the terrapin.

TIMOTHY What did he do?

WENDY He punched it.

TIMOTHY He punched the terrapin?

WENDY Yeah! In the eye!

TIMOTHY shakes his head.

TIMOTHY Why do you still put up with him in the house?

WENDY Because I'm soft. I'm soft.

I bought him a TV last year for his birthday, but he went out and sold it, swapped it for some biscuits...(*bursting into tears*) I can't take it anymore.

TIMOTHY How did you find out Sean had an addiction in the first place?

WENDY I had my suspicions that he was up to something, but I wasn't sure what it was. So I went scouting through his room one day, when he was out. And I found a tin in his bedside cabinet with receipts and empty packets... and crumbs... There were lots of crumbs.

Assistant brings on a box of tissues

TIMOTHY And did you confront him?

WENDY Yeah! When he came home I asked him straight out. He went mental 'cause I'd been through his stuff. He denied knowing anything about the empty packets at first, but eventually he told me the whole story. How he'd experimented with his friends, first with plain biscuits, then moving on to fancier ones like malted milk, you know, those biscuits with the little cows on them?

TIMOTHY Oh! Yeah!

WENDY But course it didn't stop there. They kept wanting a bigger and bigger rush. So they moved on to custard creams, bourbons. Hobnobs and eventually and inevitably one day he snorted his first Garibaldi. Why he couldn't just dunk it in his coffee like everyone else I'll never know.

TIMOTHY Is today the day you get tough with Sean?

WENDY It's got to be.

TIMOTHY So he lives in your house, eats your food, doesn't work, steals from you, insults you...

WENDY He also goes to my Mum's and steals from my Mum, and her disabled budgie.

TIMOTHY What's he stolen from the budgie?!

WENDY Some cuttle-fish and a small mirror.

(TIMOTHY shakes his head).

TIMOTHY And to top it all, you now think that Sean's started dealing?

WENDY Yes. He keeps getting phone calls from someone who calls himself Diablo. He sounds Welsh or from Mexico I'm not very good with accents. I think Sean is acting as a middle-man between his friends and this Diablo.

TIMOTHY Shall we get Sean out?

WENDY Yeah!

TIMOTHY This is Sean ladies and gentlemen.

(SEAN comes on, a bit subdued, everyone boos).

TIMOTHY How do you feel about this?

SEAN Ashamed.

TIMOTHY Really? Ashamed that you steal from her?

SEAN Yes!

TIMOTHY *(Shouting)* You've stolen from your grandmother and her disabled budgie. How do you feel about that you nasty little piece of work. Come on answer me, you've stolen from your mother. She has to get you up at 12?! What planet do you come from? How old are you?

SEAN 17.

TIMOTHY There are people your age fighting for this country and dying and you're laid in your pit. LOOK AT ME! She should have kicked you out years ago the way you treat her, the way you treat others, the way you treat animals.

SEAN What d'you mean?

TIMOTHY *(still shouting)* You punched a terrapin in the eye!

SEAN It wasn't in the eye.

TIMOTHY Where was it then?

SEAN Just above the eye.

TIMOTHY Oh! Well that's all right. The abuse you give your mother's appalling. What do you call her?

SEAN *(quietly)* Fishface.

TIMOTHY What was that?

SEAN *(louder)* Fishface!

TIMOTHY Why would you say something like that about your own mother?

SEAN Well look at her; she's got a face like a fish!

TIMOTHY Do you get any money from the government?

SEAN Yeah! Job Seekers allowance.

TIMOTHY You shouldn't get anything. You shouldn't get any help from anybody.

SEAN I'm doing my best to get a job.

TIMOTHY Doing your best? How?

SEAN Lookin'.

TIMOTHY Oh! Right! What, after 12 or before 12? Why don't you get up at 8 eh? Come on! Why did you come here today?

SEAN So I can change.

TIMOTHY Change yourself. Grow up, mature. You don't get things in life unless you start helping yourself.

SEAN I am; I've been clean for 2 weeks now.

TIMOTHY Really? What's that around your nose?

SEAN What (*wiping his face*).

TIMOTHY They're crumbs aren't they?

SEAN No!

TIMOTHY That's funny, because the producer said he saw you before the show in the toilet, with some fresh biscuits and a mirror; probably a budgie's mirror. You've been snorting Garibaldis today haven't you? Come on, be honest for once. What's that under your finger nails?

SEAN (*reluctantly*) Bits of currant.

TIMOTHY (*shaking his head*) Yes, we can help you. Yes, we can get you some of the best counselling in the country, but you need to be honest with us. You need to be honest with yourself. Don't you understand what these biscuits are doing to your body?

SEAN I dunno.

TIMOTHY Well yesterday, ladies and gentlemen, we got our resident doctor, Sarah Garner to examine Sean and today she's coming in to give the results. Can we have a round of applause, Doctor Sarah's on the show guys.

Enter DOCTOR SARAH

TIMOTHY Good to see you Doctor Sarah, you're looking very well.

DOCTOR Thank you, Timothy. And how are you? How are the anal warts?

TIMOTHY Erm! Not now...Ok erm. A lot of people talk about Garibaldi's as if they are harmless, is this really the case.

DOCTOR Well Timothy, Garibaldi's, also called the caviar of legal highs, are often seen as a relatively safe alternative to harder Class A drugs such as cocaine and heroin. And it's true, taken in moderation and dunked in say tea or coffee Garibaldi consumption does not usually lead to long term problems. However, increasing numbers of people, particularly young adults are turning to a highly concentrated form of the Garibaldi biscuit. And smoking or snorting the powder to achieve a sense of euphoria.

TIMOTHY And what are the damaging effects on the body of snorting this concentrated powder?

DOCTOR You see, the particular mixture of refined sugars found in a Garibaldi, produce the powerful high by acting on the brain. But as these chemicals travel through the blood, it affects the whole body. Garibaldi's are bad for the heart, increasing blood pressure and heart rate. They can also cause sudden overwhelming kidney failure, type 2 diabetes and respiratory problems.

TIMOTHY So what did Sean's test results show?

DOCTOR Well to be honest, initially I thought Sean had got away with it; his blood pressure and ECG were normal, his kidney function was fine and his blood sugar levels were within normal limits. But, then I looked up his nose.

TIMOTHY And what did you find?

DOCTOR Not good news I'm afraid. Like cocaine, regular snorting of Garibaldi powder can cause nasal perforation. And when I examined Sean's nose it revealed that his nasal septum is literally rotting away.

TIMOTHY So if he doesn't stop this, biscuit abuse, what will happen?

DOCTOR His nose will simply collapse on his face and he will be permanently disfigured.

TIMOTHY So he will end up having a face rather, like a fish? - Is that what you're saying?

DOCTOR That is exactly what I'm saying. Fishface Sean, they'll call him.

TIMOTHY Thank you Doctor Sarah.

Well Sean, Quite a sobering thought - I'm sure you'll agree?
So what do you have to say to that?

SEAN *(SEAN starts sobbing and begs)* Ohhhh! Please help me Timothy, please. *(Bawling)* I don't want to look like my mother.

TIMOTHY Ok. All right son. Let's draw a line in the sand here. We'll help you, we'll do what we can. *(Putting a reassuring arm around Sean's shoulder)* ...Doctor Sarah, can you take him back stage.

Doctor Sarah and Sean leave.

TIMOTHY I know it's been tough for you today Wendy. And Sean has a long road to recovery ahead of him. It's not going to be easy for any of you, but who knows Sean might surprise us all. He's in good hands now. We'll get him the best rehab money can buy.

WENDY Thank you, thank you so much.

TIMOTHY You're very welcome.

WENDY I do have one question though Timothy?...

TIMOTHY Yes, what's that?

WENDY Do you think I've got a face like a fish?

TIMOTHY *(long pause, then turns to face the audience)* Don't go away guys, we'll be back after the break.

WENDY bursts into tears.

CURTAINS CLOSE