

Silent Lyric By Chris Lieber

FADE IN:

INT. CONCERT HALL -- NIGHT

Thousands of fans scream and yell in the darkness.

Music blares.

The fans near the stage sweat heavily. The human mass sways and pushes people around like rag dolls.

Security saves a few people in the front from being crushed to death.

Women throw their undergarments onto the stage and bare all.

The crowd lifts a fan in a red flannel shirt above them. He has short bleached hair, horizontally surfs the crowd, and rolls around like a log in the river.

One crazy fan runs past a guard to climb onto the stage. Security personnel make a move for him, but he turns around.

He stares at the crowd below then dives onto them.

The crowd slam dances near the stage.

INT. CAR -- NIGHT

A knock on the window wakes up RANDALL SPARKS.

Randall, a tall guy in his early 20's with short bleached hair, looks like the crowd surfing fan.

He wears a familiar red flannel shirt and has three earrings in his left ear, two studs and a loop.

GORDON WIGGINS taps on the window again. Gordon has straight long hair tied back in a ponytail and an earring in each ear.

GORDON

Up and Adam.

Randall wakes up, rolls down the window, then looks at his watch, which shows 8:25.

RANDALL

What we do for fame and fortune.

GORDON

You seen Will? You know it's the last night to work on the new material.

RANDALL

He'll be here. Isn't he always?

Gordon laughs to himself.

GORDON

Hurry up, we're already late.

Gordon moves toward the commercial business tract where band members unload and load music equipment.

Randall grabs a half empty bottle of beer and guzzles it. He shakes his head in an attempt to wake up.

Randall grabs his guitar, pops some gum into his mouth, and exits.

INT. PRACTICE STUDIO

Randall takes off his flannel shirt, which reveals a tattoo on his right arm, a ballisk, or lizard that turns creatures to stone with its gaze.

He sets up a mixing board and amplifier in the dingy room.

Dirty carpet lines the walls and floor. A few ashtrays overflow with old cigarette butts and other drug paraphernalia.

The room looks like the inside of a frat house after Homecoming weekend.

Gordon and WILLIE RUSSELL enter with some PA speakers.

Willie, in his mid 30's, has shaggy, curly, blond hair and glazed eyes. A teal bandanna helps control his unruly golden locks.

Gordon and Willie put the speakers down, then Gordon eyes Randall's guitar case.

GORDON

Why the hell did you bring that?

RANDALL

Got some new chords I want to play on Dreamin'.

GORDON

We've got a show coming up. We don't need extra confusion.

RANDALL

It's not confusion, it's depth.

GORDON

We don't need that kind of depth.

Randall stares down Gordon and chomps his gum.

Randall rearranges the speakers and tests out the PA system.

LATER

ZANE CAUSWELL, the stocky drummer, bangs away with his eyes closed. He hides his hair underneath a baseball cap.

Zane maniacally slams the cymbals.

Gordon stands barefoot on a large, rectangular piece of soiled carpet and plays a guitar riff.

Randall sings while Willie fills out the band on bass guitar.

Gordon stops and glares back at Zane.

GORDON

Come on Zane! Keep the time dammit!
It's getting too much momentum.

ZANE

I know. It needed a little boost.

GORDON

Less is more. Dynamics, remember?
Like Chad Gracey of Live.

ZANE

Got it.

GORDON

Okay. Dreamin' from the last change
on four.

WILLIE

Which change?

GORDON

You know. D, F, C, A. D, F, C, A.

Willie smiles to himself.

Gordon shakes his head in frustration and points at Zane. He clicks his sticks together and brings the band in.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PRACTICE STUDIO

The band plays and the amps blare. The music sounds out of sync. The song continues, but Gordon stops again and looks around in disgust.

GORDON

Come on everyone! We have a show coming up and we can't go out there looking like a bunch of assholes.

WILLIE

Sounded good to me.

GORDON

You missed the change. Again. We've been doing this song forever. I don't see what the hell is so difficult about it.

ZANE

Easy Gordon.

Gordon turns around and fixates on his guitar.

RANDALL

Let's just run through the set list. We need to be able to play through the mistakes.

Randall looks at Willie.

RANDALL

Try and keep an eye on Gordon.

ZANE

Let's do it.

EXT. PRACTICE STUDIO

Randall, Zane, and Gordon stand by the entrance.

GORDON

Rent's due?

Zane hands Gordon some money. Gordon looks at Randall who hands him some bills.

GORDON

Where's Willie?

RANDALL

Told me he had to roll. Said he'd see us at the show.

GORDON

He blew out of here early because he didn't have the money. Again.

Zane shakes his head and paces.

RANDALL

Easy. I'm sure it just slipped his mind.

GORDON

Tell that to Johnny. He wants the money like yesterday.

RANDALL

Let's not make this more than it is. It's not the end of the world.

Gordon stares at the ground then looks inside the practice facility. Randall digs into his wallet.

RANDALL

Here! This should cover his share. Now take a laxative.

GORDON

Your money.

INT. NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS -- EVENING

Randall slouches in a folding metal chair and chews gum. He gazes out at the fellow drug addicts formed in a semicircle then spaces out.

JASMINE, a heavy set woman in her mid 30's, sits in a chair and heads the meeting.

JASMINE

Thank you everyone for sharing your feelings with us tonight. Now let's celebrate this month's anniversaries.

Jasmine grabs a sheet of paper from under her chair.

JASMINE

Marty, 4 years.

The group claps.

JASMINE

Patch, 3 years.

The group claps again.

JASMINE

Adriane, Betty, Douglas, Edwin, Kirk, and Zeke, one year. Congratulations everyone these milestones of sobriety.

The group claps and participates in a cheer, then group hug. Randall appears uninterested and solicits a few strange stares from his fellow group mates.

He stares at what looks like a red poker chip.

INT. EL BURRO LOCO -- EVENING

A half full pitcher of beer sits on the table along with a few empty shot glasses. Randall drinks from his glass.

He examines a round red sobriety chip.

CLOSE ON CHIP

120 DAYS OF SOBRIETY

Randall tosses it onto a nearby table then sips his beer.

SASHA, Randall's girlfriend, approaches the table with purpose. Emotions on her sleeve, her assertive and no nonsense nature sets the tone for any interaction.

She scans the bar for a moment, takes her ugly 70's style glasses off, and puts them in her back pocket.

RANDALL

Hi honey.

SASHA

You seen Lewis?

RANDALL

Yeah. He's in the bathroom.

Sasha squints at Randall and he hands her a glass of red wine.

SASHA

They condone drinking?

RANDALL

I got it under control.

Sasha shakes her head and scans the bar.

RANDALL

Thanks for stopping by. I can't believe that my schedule's been so hectic lately.

Randall hugs her while she sips her wine quietly.

LEWIS, a white collar worker in his late 20's, returns with a few shots of tequila. He has short brown hair and looks like a junior executive in his blue suit and power tie.

Sasha eyes the hearty supply of alcohol and sighs.

RANDALL

Bottom's up.

The two friends slam the shots then follow them with chasers.

Lewis gives Sasha a hug then a kiss on the cheek.

SASHA

Hey cuz, it good to see you!

LEWIS

You too! Did you RSVP for the family reunion?

Sasha sips from her glass.

LEWIS

Don't worry. My brother's not going to be able to make it.

SASHA

That's a relief.

Sasha sits down and forgets about her glasses that crunch in her back pocket.

LEWIS

What was that?

SASHA

Uh, nothing.

Lewis gives her a strange look.

SASHA

Oh. I spoke with gram today. She says congratulations on the promotion.

LEWIS

You told her?

Sasha winks at him, while Randall looks on with confusion.

SASHA

He made Brand Manager.

LEWIS

Well anyway. Do you need any hors d'oeuvres? Nachos? Buffalo wings?

SASHA

No. I'm fine thank you.

LEWIS

Are you positive? They really are scrumptious. You must engage in a few.

Sasha shakes her head.

LEWIS

What do you say Randall? My treat to you.

RANDALL

Sounds good. If it's for free, it's for me.

INT. RESTAURANT -- NIGHT

The remains of nachos litter the table, along with some empty shot glasses.

SASHA

Don't you think we ought to get going?

RANDALL

Oh, I'm sorry. Lewis is going to drop me off.

The waitress delivers another pitcher.

Sasha has an irritated look on her face.

LEWIS

And I thought my associates from work drank too much.

RANDALL

It's not every day that one make's Brand Manager you know.

SASHA

I gotta run.

Sasha moves towards the exit and examines her broken glasses.

RANDALL

Hey! Let me walk you out.

Randall throws some gum in his mouth then chases her down.

RANDALL

What's up?

She hides her glasses and turns back toward Randall.

SASHA

I've got to get up early tomorrow, that's all.

Confused, Randall leans over and gives her a kiss. Sasha pulls away after a moment and moves toward the door. Randall has a puzzled expression on his face.

RANDALL

I love you.

Sasha gives him a crooked smile.

RANDALL

See you later?

SASHA

Better not. Like I said. Tough day tomorrow. Call me around 11 a.m. and we'll see about lunch.

INT. COFFEE SHOP -- DAY

Sasha and Randall snuggle in the corner of a booth in the back of the greasy spoon.

SASHA

I was wondering. Now that you're going to be a big star, I don't want you to get too crazy.

RANDALL

Crazy?

SASHA

Yeah. I heard that success changes a person.

RANDALL

I'm hardly successful. Besides, I'm not going to change. You don't have to worry about that.

Sasha fixates on her coffee cup and searches for answers.

SASHA

There's gonna be girls you know.

Randall blushes.

RANDALL

Girls? What do you mean girls?

Randall puts some gum in his mouth then looks away.

SASHA

You know what I'm talking about. I don't want to be getting any weird diseases from you, if you know what I mean.

RANDALL

You think I'd cheat on you?

SASHA

There'll be a lot of women trying to get backstage you know.

RANDALL

Aww come on.

SASHA

I've seen VH1's *Behind the Music*. I know what happens.

RANDALL

Don't get worked up over nothing. I won't be getting any weird diseases.

Sasha squints her eyes then opens and closes then in rapid succession. She wipes away the tears.

RANDALL

Are you all right?

SASHA

Sure. My contacts are just a little dry.

RANDALL

Why don't you just wear your glasses? It's better than having your contacts hurt all of the time.

Sasha ignores him and stares toward a married couple who feed their infant formula.

SASHA

I haven't said anything in awhile.

RANDALL

Huh?

SASHA

You know.

RANDALL

It's not a good time right now.

SASHA

It's never going to be.

She gazes at the infant again then closes her eyes for a moment and buries her face in her coffee.

SASHA

I'm making your favorite meal tonight. Meatloaf and mashed potatoes.

Randall reaches over and holds her hand.

RANDALL

But I can't make it. Got a gig.

Sasha slides away from Randall.

RANDALL

I thought you knew.

SASHA

I guess I'm not that important.

RANDALL

I'll stop by before I head out. No problem. Okay?

Randall moves over and strokes Sasha's hand, but she pulls away.

INT. APARTMENT -- MORNING

Willie irons a shirt while CAYLA, a short woman in her mid 30's, cooks. His new wife has long brown hair and wears a shorts and sandals. She looks like the typical housewife, a model of responsibility.

CAYLA

Willie honey? Can you please take out the trash? You promised and now it's really overflowing.

WILLIE

Shoot. Yeah, yeah, no problem.

Will sets the iron down and walks into the kitchen. He grabs the trash can and carries it for a moment.

CAYLA

Thanks. By the way, what time do you think you'll be back tonight?

Willie sets down the trash, turns to his wife, and puts his arms around her.

WILLIE

Shouldn't be too late.

Cayla stops cooking for a moment and caresses his arms. Willie kisses her head then walks away.

Cayla turns off the burner and sees the trash can in the middle of the kitchen. She moves into the living room and sees Willie getting ready to leave.

CAYLA

Willie! The trash! Remember?

WILLIE

Oh, yeah. Sorry.

Willie runs over to the kitchen and grabs the can. Cayla looks over and sees the steaming iron.

CAYLA
Are you ironing something?

WILLIE
Oh yeah. Shoot.

Willie puts down the trash and turns the iron off. He walks for the door.

CAYLA
The trash!

Willie turns off the iron, grabs the trash and heads out the door.

Cayla shakes her head, sits down at the coffee table, and picks up a medical book.

INT. NIGHTCLUB -- NIGHT

Randall, Zane, and Gordon sit at the bar and drink pints of beer in the half empty dive.

GORDON
Anyone see Will?

RANDALL
Nope.

Zane shakes his head.

GORDON
He'd better not be late again. He knows when to be here so there shouldn't be any excuses.

Barflies drink beer and play pool. Others watch the band.

The singer's voice can't be heard over the caustic guitar and bass lines. He screams into the microphone and mouths the words.

RANDALL
What up with the sound in this place?

GORDON
What sound?

Zane slams down his beer and orders another one.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CLUB

The hole in the wall has emptied somewhat. About 20 people sit near the stage while Randall, Gordon, Zane, and Willie set up their equipment.

Gordon stands on his carpet barefoot and tunes his guitar. He looks around at the band.

GORDON

You guys ready to do this?

They all nod. Randall spits out his gum.

RANDALL

Evening everyone, thanks for coming out. In case you don't know, we're Sherman. And how about a round of applause for Donkey Show?

The crowd applauds. Randall nods at Gordon.

GORDON

On four. One, two, three, four.

The band plays.

Lewis sits up front with CLAUDIA, a woman in her mid 20's.

Claudia, Gordon's girl, has shoulder length hair and wears a pair of shorts and a Sherman shirt.

She looks like the consummate band girlfriend. She films Sherman with exuberance.

Lewis loosens up his tie and drinks his beer.

LATER

Sherman plays to about 10 people who remain in the scummy nightclub.

The bartender washes some pint glasses and cleans up.

The girl groupies near the stage sing along with Randall.

A drumstick flies through the air and almost hits Gordon. Zane grabs another one and only misses a beat or two.

Gordon gives him a concerned stare, but Zane just smiles. Zane scans the crowd, but no one notices his blunder.

The band plays on.

Toward the end of the tune, the crowd hears a blank void in the song.

Zane, Gordon, and Randall all look at each other, then at Willie. The drums, guitar, and vocals continue.

Willie looks like a deer stuck in headlights.

Everyone but Willie plays. Gordon screams at Willie.

GORDON

D, F, C, A! D, F, C, A! D, F, C,
A! D, F, C, A!

The band plays a few more measures, but Willie remains silent. Gordon gives Randall and Zane a frantic stare. They both nod at him.

RANDALL

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. That's the way
it is.

Randall jumps into the air and when he lands, the three band members end Dreamin' with a bang.

The girls in the front row all look at each other in horror. Claudia shares a troubled glance with Gordon. Gordon huddles the band together.

GORDON

What the hell happened?

WILLIE

I don't know man. I just don't know.
I spaced out I guess.

GORDON

We can't be spacing out. We're going
to look like a bunch of amateurs.

RANDALL

Too late--

ZANE

Let's just move on. There's no sense
in worrying about this now. Let's
run through the rest of our set and
get the hell outta here.

GORDON

Yeah. Whatever.

Zane takes a huge gulp of his beer and finishes it off.

INT. CLUB -- LATE NIGHT

Randall chews his gum and waits at the bar.

WILLIE

Hey man, I'm really sorry about
blowing it tonight. I feel really
bad.

RANDALL

Don't worry about it.

Randall stares off into the distance. He throws another piece of gum in his mouth.

WILLIE

Hey, I was wondering. Do you happen to have a couple of bucks I could borrow? If you don't I totally understand.

RANDALL

What about the money I lent you for the practice studio?

WILLIE

Yeah, yeah. Then maybe a few bucks from tonight's take?

RANDALL

We need to save that for the studio fund.

WILLIE

What? Oh yeah, okay. No problem.

Randall shakes his head and reaches into his pocket. He gives Willie a few bills.

RANDALL

Just hook me back up at practice.

WILLIE

Thanks man. You always come through for me.

Willie pats him on the back.

ERRIK OSBORNE, the club manager moves toward Randall. Osborne, dyed black hair, tattoos, earrings, and other body piercing plays the part of the hardnosed club promoter with ease.

Osborne hands Randall a small stack of ratty looking ones.

RANDALL

Same time next week?

OSBORNE

Afraid not.

Randall gives him a confused, almost irritated look.

OSBORNE

You guys just aren't getting enough people in here. That's why I had Donkey Show headline.

RANDALL

We can draw. We really can. Next week. We'll pack the place.

OSBORNE

Maybe some other time. I'll be keeping an eye on the scene.

Confused, Randall sulks away and kicks the door on the way out.

INT. SASHA'S APARTMENT -- BEDROOM

Randall slips into bed and snuggles next to Sasha.

SASHA

How it go?

RANDALL

Knucklehead forgot his lines. Again.

Sasha moves closer to Randall and he kisses her on the side of her face.

SASHA

It'll be all right. You'll make it through.

RANDALL

Yeah well, we'll see.

He kisses her again.

SASHA

You always figure it out. That's what I love about you.

RANDALL

You know me.

Randall lay awake and stares at the ceiling.

INT. APARTMENT

Willie lumbers inside and pushes his speaker cabinet and bass guitar into the living room. He drinks from a brown paper bag.

INT. APARTMENT -- MORNING

Cayla sits on the couch and reorganizes her tin box of coupons.

CAYLA

What happened? You said you'd be home early last night. I waited up until almost one in the morning.

WILLIE

We ended up going last because of a mix up down at the club.

CAYLA

Ever hear of a phone?

Cayla slams the tin box down next to a stack of do-it-yourself and home finance books. She turns off a cooking television program.

Cayla hands Willie a pair of patched up jeans.

WILLIE

Thanks honey. They look like new.

Willie puts on the pants while Cayla leafs through a stack of bills and late notices.

CAYLA

Did you get your paycheck yet?

WILLIE

I'll get it next week, why?

Cayla tosses the bills down on the table and goes into the kitchen. Willie stares at the pile of bills.

Cayla reenters the living room holding a book.

CAYLA

I'm at my breaking point, Will. I can't deal with them turning off the power again. This has got to change. Now!

WILLIE

It'll be all right. I'll call Harry and see if he can advance me part of my paycheck again this week.

CAYLA

You don't understand, we can't keep doing this. It's over.

She slumps down on the couch. She opens the book to a marked page.

WILLIE

I'm sorry honey. Let me see what I can do, okay?

CAYLA

Willie?

Willie approaches the couch.

CAYLA

I read something in here about
Attention Deficit Disorder. Are you
familiar with it?

Willie turns from her and walks to the window.

CAYLA

It says here that there might be a
reason for what's going on with your
memory lapses. Some medicine you
could take.

WILLIE

It's no big deal. There's no evidence
that medicine even works.

CAYLA

So you have heard something about
it?

Willie stares out the window and shakes his head.

CAYLA

Why haven't you said anything? I'm
your wife you know.

WILLIE

I said it's no big deal.

CAYLA

I'm calling Doctor Cook up right now
and setting something up for this
afternoon.

WILLIE

Gotta work and pay bills, remember?

CAYLA

Call in sick.

INT. FUNERAL HOME -- DAY

Gordon stands over a dead body that lay on a table. The
body wears a stylish three piece suit. Gordon combs the
deceased man's hair. Gordon wears jeans and a Sherman shirt
that contrasts the corpse.

ARCHIE REED, Gordon's anorexically thin supervisor enters
the parlor. Archie needs to see the light of day based on
his pale complexion.

ARCHIE

Make sure he's nice and neat this
time.

(MORE)

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

We don't want the family to think about how he died, we want them to remember him for what he was. Don't you forget that.

GORDON

David Navarro never had to put up with this shit.

Archie turns around.

ARCHIE

Huh?

Gordon shakes his head.

INT. STUDIO APARTMENT -- EVENING

Randall wears a greasy shirt and a chicken hat. He turns on the light to his tiny, cluttered, rat trap.

Cockroaches scurry for cover.

He throws his fast-food chicken hat on the futon next to his guitar case.

The remains of a lunch lay on the cluttered floor and coffee table. A lime green shirt with ruffled stripes sits on an ironing board in the middle of the room.

A weathered Sex Pistols poster hangs on the wall.

Randall goes into the bathroom and turns on the shower.

LATER

Randall walks into the living room, grabs the green shirt with tab collar off of the ironing board, and puts it on. He throws on some Dickies, his black boots, then leaves.

EXT. APARTMENT

Randall stands outside the rundown apartment complex when a BMW 525i pulls up and stops.

INT. CAR

Lewis leaves the building in the dust.

LEWIS

What time are they scheduled to perform?

RANDALL

Gum?

LEWIS

No thank you.

Randall puts some gum in his mouth and pockets the trash.

RANDALL

They're headlining, so probably around ten-ish.

LEWIS

So do you know any of the performers?

RANDALL

I know everyone, but a bro of mine, Isiah, is filling in on bass tonight.

LEWIS

Isn't that difficult?

RANDALL

Not if you kick ass. Right now he's between projects so it's no big deal. Besides, it's not uncommon for musicians to be in more than one band.

Lewis soaks in the information and nods his head accordingly.

RANDALL

I've done it before, but it's kind of tough. Especially if both projects are in full swing.

LEWIS

Being in a band seems fascinating. In an animalistic sort of way.

RANDALL

Anyone can do it. But you gotta make it happen. Follow the dream. That's my philosophy.

Lewis pulls up to a parking lot outside the club where people line up in droves.

LEWIS

Where's the valet?

Randall gives him a strange look and points to the parking lot behind the club.

Lewis parks in the back away from all of the other cars.

RANDALL

Just follow my lead and try to fit in, okay?

Randall and Lewis approach the bouncer who waves them inside ahead of everyone. Lewis stares at Randall in amazement.

INT. CLUB

Lewis and Randall sit at a small round table, drink beer, and listen to the deafening sound of the band.

They occasionally yell to one another. Lewis taps Randall on the shoulder and gives him a thumbs up.

Randall nods his head in agreement.

The song ends and the crowd applauds.

DARIUS, the lead singer, quiets the crowd. He sports a tank top and ripped jeans. He gets a lot of mileage from his charismatic style and the women near the stage verify this.

DARIUS

Thank you. We're Donkey Show and we'll be right back.

Darius grabs a woman near the stage and kisses her passionately, then grabs her friend and does the same.

The sound man plays some hard rock music over the sound system.

LEWIS

Wow. Your friend Isiah plays superbly.

RANDALL

I sometimes think that he was born with a bass guitar in his hand.

Lewis stares into Randall's eyes and waits.

RANDALL

I mean we all know he sleeps with the damn thing, but seriously. He does do major damage with it.

LEWIS

Yes. Major damage.

Randall gives Lewis an annoyed look.

RANDALL

He's not like those confused people who weren't good enough to play guitar so they played bass instead. I mean he seriously digs the bass and it shows.

LEWIS

He's much better than the musician
you currently have.

Randall pauses and thinks.

ISIAH, a short, stocky kid in his mid 20's, walks up to the two friends. He throws his ratty, long, brown hair out of his eyes. He wears a shirt with shorts and has earrings in each ear and tattoos on his arms and legs.

He grabs the extra glass of beer from the table.

RANDALL

You were kicking major ass up there
tonight.

LEWIS

Great work. You were fabulous.

Isiah gives Lewis an annoyed look, then turns back to Randall. Randall shakes his head nervously and gives Lewis a concerned stare.

RANDALL

Isiah. This is my friend Lewis,
Sasha's cousin. Lewis, this is Isiah.

LEWIS

Nice to meet you.

ISIAH

We still on for next week?

RANDALL

You know it.

Isiah nods his head at Randall, then drinks down his beer. A couple of ladies approach Isiah.

ISIAH

Well, I'd love to sit and chick chat
with you boys, but duty calls.

Isiah grabs the pitcher of beer from the table and fills his glass to the rim.

Isiah leaves the two men to stare at his conquest.

ISIAH (O.S.)

Hello ladies.

LEWIS

Did you see those women. They're
really beautiful.

RANDALL

I believe the word is hot.

Randall shakes his head at Lewis.

RANDALL

Listen.

Randall stares into Lewis' eyes.

RANDALL

If you're going to hang with me, you
have to try and not cramp my style.
You know. Try and be a little more
hip.

LEWIS

Uh, okay bro, show me the way.

Randall gives him yet another annoyed look.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO -- AFTERNOON

Randall and the rest of the band wear headsets and record music. Microphones litter the room, especially around the drum set.

Gordon strums his guitar to the melody and digs his bare feet into the carpet.

The engineer records the demo on digital TASCAM equipment from a small room separated by a window.

The band finishes up their song and remains quiet.

GORDON

All right. Let's start mixing it
down.

RANDALL

Finally. I thought we'd never get
it right.

ZANE

Easy there Randall.

Randall shrugs off Zane, throws some gum in his mouth, and approaches the engineer. Willie stares at him.

INT. PRACTICE STUDIO -- EVENING

Gordon, Randall, and Zane set up their equipment.

GORDON

Where's Willie?

RANDALL

No worries.

ZANE

They're charging us by the hour, you know.

RANDALL

I'm concerned about where we're going as a band.

GORDON

And?

RANDALL

I just think that every great band has to constantly reevaluate itself and make sure that it's doing everything that it can to be successful.

ZANE

Will you get to the point already?

RANDALL

I think we have a lot of talent, but Willie isn't making it very easy on us.

ZANE

Hey man, he's just as much a part of this as any of us.

GORDON

Yeah. And he's the one that started the band in the first place--

RANDALL

I don't know why you're defending him. You're the one who keeps complaining about having to teach him the music over and over again. You should be thanking me for at least bringing this up.

Randall stares down Gordon. Their eyes lock for a moment, then Gordon gazes down at the floor.

ZANE

He also got us that gig over at the Scorpion's Nest, among other places.

RANDALL

That's fine and dandy, but if he keeps fucking up in the middle of songs then something's gotta give.

GORDON

So. What do you want us to do?

RANDALL

I don't know. Maybe we should look at some other options. We owe it to ourselves.

GORDON

And?

RANDALL

Listen. I have a friend who rips on bass. Let's give him a shot. If he works out, that's great. If not, then, well, we did what we could.

Zane and Gordon share an uneasy glance.

ZANE

I guess we could try him out. We can't make any promises, though. When can he do it?

RANDALL

Right now if you want.

GORDON

What about Will?

RANDALL

Don't worry about him. He doesn't know about practice.

ZANE

That's messed up man!

RANDALL

It really doesn't matter now. Let's try out my friend and go from there. We'll run through the demo first.

Randall leaves the room for a moment then enters with Isiah who pushes his amp and bass inside. Isiah hands Randall a tape.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PRACTICE STUDIO

Isiah plays without any instruction from Gordon. Sherman finishes up the final song and Gordon appears ecstatic.

Randall and Isiah share a confident look.

RANDALL

Isiah. You want to go grab a smoke?

Isiah gives him a head nod then leaves.

RANDALL

So?

GORDON

I gotta admit. He rips just like you said. He picked up on most of our stuff and even added some things.

ZANE

He has a good sense of timing and improvisation.

RANDALL

Well?

GORDON

I like him but--

RANDALL

Don't worry. I'll meet up with Will and see what happens.

Randall leaves the two band members to ponder his next move.

INT. BAR -- EVENING

Randall drinks from his pint then scans the bar with anxious abandon. He gets the waitress' attention then points at his drink.

He slams the rest of the beer then fumbles into his wallet and grabs some bills.

Willie approaches the table with a pint, then sits down.

WILLIE

I'm glad you called.

RANDALL

Yeah?

WILLIE

Yeah well, I've got a lot going on these days.

Randall glances away from Willie and scans the bar again. He gets up, peers around for a moment, then sits down without looking up at Willie.

RANDALL

Where the hell's that damn waitress?

Randall searches some more.

RANDALL

Probably out back taking a fucking
smoke break or some shit.

Willie gives Randall a strange look.

WILLIE

Like I was saying.

Randall breaks his trance and stares at his friend.

WILLIE

I'm glad you wanted to come down
here and--

RANDALL

We gotta talk.

Randall peers away from Willie again, then waves at the
waitress, who does not see him.

RANDALL

Shit!

Randall counts out the four bills a few times.

WILLIE

I wanted to let you know about some
things I've been thinking about.

Willie sips his beer.

WILLIE

You know. Like the band.

RANDALL

Same here.

Randall takes the money and counts it out again.

WILLIE

I know the whole grind has been tough
on everyone.

RANDALL

That goes without saying.

Randall wads up the bills.

The waitress arrives with his beer and Randall tosses her
the crumpled money, shakes his head, then waves her off.

WILLIE

What I'm trying to tell you is that
I don't think I can swing being in a
band and still make ends meet.

Willie pauses for a moment then drinks from his beer.

RANDALL

Huh? What are you talking about?

WILLIE

It's not something I want to do, but Cayla's right. My family has to come first.

RANDALL

Are you talking about quitting the band? That's crazy.

WILLIE

Yeah. I think I am.

Randall drinks from his beer, pauses, and takes in the situation.

Willie thinks for a moment then stares at Randall.

WILLIE

You wanted to tell me something too. About the band.

Randall looks away and drinks some more.

WILLIE

Were you going to try and kick me out of my own band?

Randall finishes off his beer and points to the waitress again.

WILLIE

You know I wish you had the balls to follow through on anything you set out to do. I wish you were man enough to admit you were gonna try and kick me out.

RANDALL

Fuck you man. I never set out to do that. I wanted to have a heart to heart talk. No more, no less.

WILLIE

Yeah right.

Willie slams down his beer and tosses some money at Randall.

WILLIE

There's your money. Don't spend it all in one place.

RANDALL
Just keep the money...

Willie storms out.

RANDALL
Where the fuck is that bitch with my
beer.

Randall scans the bar one more time, then pockets the money.

INT. SASHA'S APARTMENT

Sasha and Randall relax together on the luxurious couch and drink. The two lovers snuggle and occasionally sip from their beverages.

Sasha's clean apartment contrasts the filthiness of Randall's. Her refurbished eyeglasses sit next to a picture on the end table that shows Sasha and Randall. Others display Sasha and her family and friends, including Lewis.

Some lithographic pictures hang on the wall. A large assortment of books line several bookcases along with other odds and ends.

RANDALL
I felt like I should have told him,
but I just couldn't bring myself to.
It would have just made things worse.

SASHA
From what you've said, it sounds
like he already knows.

RANDALL
Maybe.

SASHA
Just try and do the right thing.

Randall leans over and kisses Sasha.

INT. APARTMENT -- EVENING

Willie picks at his bass in a daze.

A prescription bottle made out to William A. Russell sits on the end table.

CAYLA (O.S.)
Willie? Dinner's ready

Willie spaces out.

CAYLA
Willie?

WILLIE

Oh, sorry. I was just playing a new tune I wrote.

CAYLA

That's nice. Time to eat.

Willie takes a pill from the bottle and pops it into his mouth.

WILLIE

I'm not hungry.

CAYLA

You better hurry up. Don't you have practice?

WILLIE

I won't have to worry about that you'll be glad to know.

CAYLA

Okay. Now I'm totally lost.

Cayla gives him a concerned look.

WILLIE

I quit the band.

Cayla rushes over and comforts Willie.

INT. CLUB -- DAY

Randall sees LARRY, a short, bald, and quite overweight man behind the bar. Randall approaches him.

Larry washes dishes and stocks beer. He wears a white apron that accentuates his gigantic pot belly.

LARRY

What do you want?

RANDALL

My name is Randall Sparks. I sing for a band called--

LARRY

We're not looking for any new acts right now.

RANDALL

I know, but you have to listen to this demo we did. It'll blow you away.

LARRY

I'm not looking for anything.

Randall stares at Larry and remains silent.

RANDALL

I can leave a tape so you can see what you think. Either way, I won't take offense.

LARRY

No offense, but the shit that some people come up with these days drives the people outta here quicker than you can say bankruptcy.

Larry washes a few more glasses and puts them on the counter.

RANDALL

I understand what you're saying all the way. I still want to give you a copy of our tape. There's no cost to you. If you like it, great. Otherwise, we'll just part friends.

LARRY

What are you, stupid? I told you we don't need any bands. Period. Are you all on dope or something?

Randall stares at the man, shocked.

LARRY

I tried to be nice, but you just keep pushing and pushing--

RANDALL

I'm not trying to push anyone believe--

LARRY

And you're rude too. Interrupting me! Can't even respect his elders. Get the hell out of here before I really get nasty.

Larry displays a baseball bat and taps his hand with the end of it. Randall makes for the door and Larry laughs.

LARRY

Fucking yellowbelly.

INT. APARTMENT -- EVENING

Willie plods inside, takes off his tool belt, and takes out his prescription bottle and sets it on the table. Cayla tends to Rebecca, then moves over and gives Willie a kiss.

CAYLA

How was work honey?

WILLIE

Fine, fine. Nothing I can't handle.

CAYLA

Dinner's ready.

Willie grins at Cayla, then gives her a kiss. He walks over, picks up Rebecca, and cuddles her.

CAYLA

Willie?

He looks up.

CAYLA

I've been thinking. I want to say how glad I am that you are working that other job.

WILLIE

It's no big deal.

CAYLA

It's eating away at you. I'm sorry.

Willie gets up with Rebecca in his arms and walks over to Cayla.

CAYLA

For what it's worth, I want you to be happy. That's all. I can't stand to see you like this.

Cayla hugs her two loved ones.

A SERIES OF SHOTS:

PRACTICE STUDIO - Sherman plays through some new material. Gordon explains the dynamics, pitch, and key of the song to Isiah and Zane.

CLUB - Randall drops off a demo tape with a bartender.

PRACTICE STUDIO - Willie, along with CURTIS the drummer, and KEITH the guitar player, audition lead singers who come and go.

Curtis, a scrawny looking kid, has a flattop and wears glasses with black frames and orange lenses.

Keith looks mild-mannered, except for his long sideburns and sixty's ensemble that consists of a blue bowling shirt, bleached jeans, and black low-top Doc Martins.

APARTMENT - Gordon puts a demo tape in a padded envelope and seals it. He drops it on the couch next to dozens of other envelopes.

CLUB - Willie drops off a demo tape with Osborne.

APARTMENT - Isiah meets up with Darius. He drops a demo tape on the coffee table and the two exit.

CLUB - A sign shows: LOCAL MUSIC TOY DRIVE. Patrons drop unwrapped toys into a large cardboard box next to the entrance.

Sherman plays to a medium sized crowd of about 150 people. Randall wears a red and white Santa hat.

A photographer takes some photos.

Darius and the other members of Donkey Show sit in the audience along with different band members and patrons including Sasha and Lewis who sit in the front row.

INT. APARTMENT -- EVENING

Willie and Keith sit at a large table cluttered with a computer and other recording equipment.

WILLIE

So what next?

KEITH

We upload the demo in MP3 format,
then promote it like hell.

WILLIE

Is anyone going to be able to find
it with all of these other bands?

KEITH

It's tough, but now we have a cheap
medium to get our name out there.
I'm going to email this site to our
entire mailing list and anyone else
who can get the word out.

WILLIE

Like radio stations and people like
that?

Keith nods his head in agreement, then composes his email.

INT. COFFEE HOUSE -- EVENING

Zane and TRESSA, his conservative girlfriend, sip some drinks when a song on the overhead speakers ends and the D.J. begins his annoying discourse.

D.J. (V.O.)

That was a cut from Devil Child's
new EP called...

INT. SASHA'S APARTMENT

Randall lays on the couch with his eyes closed.

D.J. (V.O.)
 ...The Sabbath. And now we continue
 on a Tuesday evening. This next...

INT. CAR

Gordon drives up to his apartment complex. His car stereo
 blares.

D.J. (V.O.)
 ...song is from an up and coming
 band called Sherman.

His eyes light up.

INT. APARTMENT

Willie and Cayla snuggle on the couch with Rebecca.

D.J. (V.O.)
 It's called Dreamin'.

The two share a strange glance. Willie gets up, turns up
 the radio.

CAYLA
 Honey--

WILLIE
 It's all right. I've moved on.

The couple embraces.

INT. SASHA'S APARTMENT

Randall rushes over to the radio.

Sasha enters, takes her glasses off, and puts her keys and
 glasses on the table by the door.

SASHA
 Hi honey.

RANDALL
 We're on the radio. Listen!

Sasha goes over to Randall who can't hold his excitement
 back. She gives him a kiss.

SASHA
 That's great. You guys sound awesome!

RANDALL

This is great. I have a good feeling about this. This is just the beginning

INT. APARTMENT -- AFTERNOON

Randall lays on his bean bag when the phone rings.

RANDALL

Hello? Yeah this is Randall.

Randall listens to the phone, tensely.

RANDALL

Of course we can make it. What time? 5:30? We'll see you there. Thanks again.

Randall hangs up the phone and screams out in pure unadulterated joy.

RANDALL

Now we're talking!

INT. RESTAURANT -- EVENING

Randall, Gordon, and Zane drink beers at the table. STANLEY ROBINSON, a sleazy mid-level record executive in his late 50's, sips his martini.

Paperwork lay on the table.

ROBINSON

Okay guys, here's what we propose. You'll get one hundred grand as an advance to get new equipment and cut a record. We'll then have to promote the CD and get some concerts lined up. I'll also give each one of you one grand a month as a stipend for the first year.

RANDALL

Where do we sign?

ZANE

I have a question.

Randall and Gordon give Zane a harsh look.

ZANE

Don't get me wrong. This is all really cool, but why would we want to take this deal when we could get one with a larger company?

RANDALL

What? He didn't mean that.

ROBINSON

No Randall. It's an honest question. And a darn good one too. There's a simple answer to that. One I'd love to give you.

Gordon looks at Zane who stares at Robinson.

ROBINSON

The difference between our company and let's say, Atlantic Records, is two words. Customer Service.

ZANE

Customer Service?

ROBINSON

Customer Service is everything in today's business world. To them you're just a number. To us, you're our client.

ZANE

And?

Randall guzzles his beer.

ROBINSON

Let's put it this way. Over there you'd be a small fish in a big pond. With us, you're our big fish. Well all of our clients are, actually. Zane. We'll work for you and promote you. We don't abandon our clients like the competition.

RANDALL

Exactly.

ROBINSON

Let me ask you something. How much do you know about the record industry?

ZANE

A little.

ROBINSON

Well, I have been around a long time so let me tell you. At the bigger labels, they sign a ton of acts. More than they can realistically promote, I might add.

Robinson sips his martini and waits for the maximum effect.

ROBINSON

Then they throw them all at the wall like mud. Whoever sticks, doesn't get fired.

RANDALL

Yeah Zane. You don't know shit. Let's sign this deal and get on with it.

ROBINSON

Easy there Randall. It's a common question. There's no hard feelings on my part.

ZANE

What about the other details? How do we know the deal is fair?

RANDALL

I had a lawyer check it out earlier today. It's a standard contract.

ROBINSON

Well guys. I'll leave you all to think about it. I know it's a big step, but I'm sure you all will be fine. After all, you made it this far didn't you? I look forward to working with you all in the near future.

Robinson gets up and tosses some twenty dollar bills on the table.

ROBINSON

Evening.

Zane eyes the money and smiles.

INT. RESTAURANT -- DUSK

Randall and Sasha sit at a secluded table that overlooks the ocean. Waves lap the shore. They eat a decadent steak and lobster dinner and drink from a bottle of wine.

CLOSE ON WINE LABEL

1990 OPUS ONE CABERNET SAUVIGNON

SASHA

This wine is excellent!

RANDALL

Yeah. I'm not much of a wine expert, but at over two hundred dollars a bottle, it better be good.

SASHA

So now you're going to be a rock star, huh?

RANDALL

That's what I'm working on. I can't believe after all of this work, that we finally got a record deal.

SASHA

I'm so proud of you. You deserve it for all of the time and effort you've put into this whole thing.

Sasha sighs in relief.

RANDALL

All of those nights in those hot and smelly practice rooms finally paid off.

The two lovers enjoy the sunset and drink their wine.

SASHA

I want to toast to Sherman, and us.

RANDALL

To us.

They toast their glasses and drink.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. RESTAURANT

Randall picks at the remains of his baked potato. A busboy approaches the table and points at the plates. Randall and Sasha nod in approval.

The busboy fills their water glasses, clears the plates, then leaves.

Randall gets up from his chair.

RANDALL

I'm going to use the restroom. I'll be right back.

The waiter returns with a crumber, cleans the table, refolds Randall's napkin, then leaves Sasha to her thoughts.

She puts her glasses on and watches the seagulls land and dolphins swim.

Randall returns with a full pint of pale ale then sits down.

SASHA
You stopped by the bar?

RANDALL
Yeah well. Man can't survive on
wine alone.

Sasha stares out at the ocean.

SASHA
So you have to promise that you won't
cheat on me. If you do, it's over.
I don't care how famous you are.

The waiter approaches with two deserts.

RANDALL
I think everything will explain itself
soon enough.

SASHA
I need to hear you say it.

RANDALL
Please. Just a second.

Randall nods to the waiter.

The waiter puts one of the desserts in front of Randall and
the other one in front of Sasha. A busboy grabs the tray and
hands the waiter a camera.

Sasha looks down at her dessert and her face lights up.

A camera flash catches her expression.

SASHA
Oh my God Randall. It's beautiful!

A one carat diamond engagement ring sits on the tray next to
the chocolate cheese cake.

Randall remains quiet. He lets Sasha enjoy the moment.

Sasha gently takes the ring and puts it on.

RANDALL
I hope you like it.

Sasha stares at Randall then leans over and gives him a big
kiss and a bear hug.

She looks up and sees the waiter with the camera. She puts
her glasses away and he takes another picture of them.

Her dessert sits on the table, untouched.

Sasha calmly strokes the diamond on her finger.

EXT. BEACH -- NIGHT

Randall and Sasha walk hand in hand along the sand.

INT. PRACTICE STUDIO -- EVENING

The band packs up their equipment. Randall shuts off the light and locks the door.

GORDON

I hear that there's a killer party
over off Melrose and Flores.

RANDALL

Oh yeah? When are you heading out?
We'll meet you over at your place.

GORDON

I'd say around nine or ten-ish

ISIAH

Sounds good.

GORDON

What about you?

ZANE

I gotta work early in the morning
for a little while.

GORDON

Work? You mean you didn't quit
already? What the hell's your deal?

RANDALL

We're rock stars now. Ditch the
nine to five. We need to concentrate
on making music.

ISIAH

Let's make some ladies at the party
first. Oh, wait, you're married
now.

RANDALL

There's no law against looking.

INT. APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Willie puts down his toolbelt.

CAYLA

Dinner's on the stove.

Willie leans over and kisses Cayla, then goes into the kitchen.

WILLIE

Thanks hon, but we got practice tonight. Gotta get ready for some shows this weekend.

Rebecca cries and Cayla picks her up cares for her.

WILLIE

I'll make some time. Sunday night, we'll get a sitter and it'll be just the two of us. What do you say?

Cayla rocks the baby. Willie picks at some of the food and takes a pill from a prescription bottle. He grabs the trash then puts it by the door.

CAYLA

Thanks.

Willie smiles at her, kisses his wife and baby, then leaves.

INT. RECORD COMPANY RECORDING STUDIO -- DAY

Gordon enters the lavish studio and pushes a brand new speaker cabinet, which holds his guitar case.

Zane sets up his drums and Randall tests out the PA equipment.

ISIAH

Whatcha' got?

GORDON

Feast your eyes on this.

Gordon opens the case and shows everyone his new guitar.

A brand new, American Standard Fender guitar, backed up with a Marshall Amp.

ISIAH

Bad.

ZANE

Holy shit! That must have cost a fortune.

GORDON

Money is no object.

RANDALL

It is for some. Check out Zane. He's still playing the same piece of shit drum set.

ZANE

Just because you bought a brand new PA system with Shure mikes, doesn't mean that you know how to sing.

RANDALL

Okay. Whatever you say there, miser boy.

ZANE

I don't need a new kit to let everyone know that I rip. It's the player, not the equipment. If I bought a Sonor set, you'd still suck at playing it.

RANDALL

Yeah, but I'd be the best sounding suck ass drummer around.

ZANE

Yeah! Okay buddy.

INT. STUDIO SOUND STAGE -- AFTERNOON

Sherman hangs around the set and waits.

Their manager, SHOCK DAVIS, approaches them. He wears a stylish suit and tie. The 25 year old looks like a fish out of water in this high profile video shoot.

SHOCK

We've got to talk.

RANDALL

We're sort of in the middle of the shoot right now.

SHOCK

That's what I need to talk about.

ISIAH

You see all of this pussy walking around? Man. This is better than an Aerosmith video.

ZANE

Wasn't that Clueless chick in one of those videos?

SHOCK

Guys. That pussy is costing some serious coin.

ZANE

Silverstone? Yeah. She was in a few of them. Liv Tyler too.

ISIAH

Now that's a chick that I'd like to seriously poke.

GORDON

Which one?

SHOCK

Guys, simmer down! This video is going way over budget!

Randall pats Shock on the back.

RANDALL

Chill out there buddy. Your check's aren't bouncing are they?

SHOCK

We only have so much money to produce this thing. Otherwise it's going to take away from the advance.

GORDON

Pussy sells baby. When we're done with this video, we'll all be going to the bank. Even you!

The four laugh at Gordon's joke then head over to the sound stage and finish the video shoot.

JARRED LEE, a teen-idol type singer who has highlighted short hair, wears pastel colored clothing and watches the shoot.

BUTCH CALASKY, Lee's long-time friend and business partner, contrasts Lee in all of the critical areas. Looks, demeanor, and attitude.

BUTCH

These guys are a pretty decent up and coming band.

LEE

Yeah? How many records they sell?

BUTCH

You still don't get it. It doesn't matter if you sell 10 million records. It won't erase the stigma of being in a boy band. If you call it a band.

LEE

Screw you!

Lee pushes Butch.

BUTCH

I call it how I see it my friend. I know you want to be respected as a musician, but you have to be in a real band. One that plays instruments, if you know what I mean.

Lee stares back at the shoot.

LEE

Just shut up and get me their CD.

INT. STUDIO SOUND STAGE -- EVENING

Shock enters with an armful of paperwork while Zane puts some drums in their cases.

SHOCK

Where the hell is everyone?

ZANE

Off to celebrate.

SHOCK

Fuck!

Zane moves over to Shock and pats him on the back.

ZANE

You need to take it easy. You're too young to be getting an ulcer.

SHOCK

You've got to talk some sense into those guys. Look at these invoices!

Shock shuffles through some paperwork, but some of it falls to the floor. The two kneel down to pick it up.

ZANE

Let me see what we have here. Who signed off on all of this?

Shock flips through the paperwork.

SHOCK

Randall on some. Gordon on the others.

Shock shows Zane some of the invoices.

SHOCK

If we don't cut back on the spending, and quick, you guys are going to be up a creek big time.

ZANE

In English.

SHOCK

You guys act like this is one big expense account. It's not. If this album doesn't take off, and soon, you can kiss your asses goodbye, along with any royalties you thought you might get. Robinson is going to own your asses. They can even take money from the next album, if there is one.

ZANE

What's this one here, for a new drum set? I never ordered this.

Shock smiles at Zane.

ZANE

Tell me what you need me to do.

INT. NIGHTCLUB -- NIGHT

Randall, Isiah, Lewis, and Gordon hang around the bar, drink beers, and carry on.

RANDALL

Barkeep. A round of drinks for the house. On me.

APRIL, another groupie with a horrendous make up job, joins the band with her friend.

APRIL

What the fuck's going on?

Randall smirks at Gordon behind her back.

The bartender finishes with one of his customers and joins the band members.

Randall tosses a few hundred dollar bills at the bartender while Isiah makes a move for April.

ISIAH

So what would you like to drink there darlin'?

APRIL

I believe I'll have a Sex on the Beach.

ISIAH

My favorite.

The bartender brings back the drinks and everyone partakes in the festivities.

Lewis sips his martini and looks on.

Isiah puts his hands around April and her friend and the three walk to a secluded booth.

RANDALL

So I buy the drinks and he gets the pussy? What's up with that?

GORDON

If we were single then it'd be a different story. Besides, you're engaged.

Randall nods his head in agreement.

Zane approaches them.

RANDALL

Zane, got you a beer right here.

ZANE

We gotta talk man.

GORDON

You're looking a little too serious for someone who just wrapped on their first music video.

RANDALL

Smile man!

ZANE

That's the thing. We're outta control on the money situation.

GORDON

Not this again. Get yourself some drums and shut up for Christ's sake. On me.

RANDALL

Wait, you already did.

Gordon tosses him a twenty. Randall and him laugh with gusto.

ZANE

If we don't cut back on the spending, we're going to owe the record company so much money we're going to need a dozen hit albums just to break even.

RANDALL

Fuck that shit. You gotta stop listening to Shock, have a drink, and keep cool.

ZANE

I saw the invoices--

RANDALL

It's too late. The record's cut and the video's off to sound and editing. Let's keep it real and move on.

Zane snatches his beer and shuffles over to the bartender.

ZANE

Jack and Coke, and make it a double.

Zane slams his beer then pushes the glass toward the bartender.

INT. NIGHTCLUB -- LATER

Zane wobbles around on his stool and Randall catches him right before he falls.

RANDALL

Easy there buddy. You've had a little too much too drink.

ZANE

Why the fuck do you think I did that?

RANDALL

Uh, well. Because you're an alchy? Bartender, one water please. And make it a large.

ZANE

No that's not it. I'm out.

RANDALL

Huh?

ZANE

Out. I can't take it. I quit. I quit the band. I'm making it official. You hear me?

Zane screams out loud.

ZANE

I quit!

Randall gives him a strange look then laughs.

RANDALL

Okay. Whatever you say. We'll talk in the morning.

ZANE

Out. You hear me. I can't take all of this out of control spending. We're going down and going down hard.

Zane's stool tips and he spills into Randall who catches him. The bartender slides the water over toward Randall and shakes his head at Zane.

RANDALL

We'll talk in the morning. You know you can't quit. We're riding this one out. It's going to be one hell of wave.

INT. LUXURY APARTMENT -- EVENING

Randall sits on a black leather couch and plays Road Rash on his video game system. The radio plays in the background on a high-tech sound system.

The weathered Sex Pistols poster hangs above the couch.

The larger than life motorcycle game dominates the big screen television. A computer contestant takes out his cycle.

RANDALL

Shit!

The song on the radio ends and an obnoxious D.J. fills the void.

D.J. (V.O.)

That was Water Rats off of their self-titled EP. And we continue our Local Music Spotlight with a track from Fourth Street Paradise's new demo. This one's titled Blind Turn.

The music begins. The band has an alternative hard rock sound similar to Sherman's. Randall pauses the game and cranks up the song. He listens to it intently.

The phone rings and he turns down the music.

GORDON (V.O.)

Whaasssuupp?

RANDALL

Whaasssuupp?

Randall pushes a button on the phone then hangs up. He cranks the music back up.

Moments later Gordon walks in.

GORDON
This new Fourth Street?

RANDALL
Sounds pretty good, huh.

GORDON
Yeah. I'm impressed. Sounds a little flat, though.

RANDALL
I told you he'd land on his feet.

GORDON
Keep telling yourself that.

RANDALL
Hear anything about the CD?

Gordon shakes his head.

Randall turns the radio off with one remote. Gordon eyes the video game, still on pause.

GORDON
Awesome game.

RANDALL
I just got my ass kicked.

Randall turns the game off and switches to the satellite. He punches in a channel and MTV plays a video.

GORDON
They're actually playing videos.
That's new.

RANDALL
Don't I know it.

GORDON
You seen our video lately?

RANDALL
Not really. Don't know what's going on. Thought we'd get more play.

GORDON
For the amount of money it cost.

A Jarred Lee boy band video begins.

RANDALL

Check out this fucking queer looking singer. They play this guy like he's going out of style.

GORDON

That's Jarred Lee. All of the teenage girls dig him. He's pretty cool you know.

Randall gives Gordon a disgruntled look.

GORDON

Hey. You can't underestimate the strength of girl power.

RANDALL

Okay Stupid Spice.

GORDON

Look at *Titanic*. Those little girls spent big money to see Leo.

RANDALL

It just goes to show that if you're popular enough, it doesn't matter one bit that you're a talent-less fuck. Not that Leo is talentless at all.

GORDON

But what about *The Beach*?

Randall laughs.

GORDON

I know what you're sayin'. It's all about making money. It doesn't matter if you know what you're doing. It matters if you have a good producer or publicist. You're only as good as your last album.

RANDALL

Okay, so who produced this guy?

Gordon gives Randall a serious look.

GORDON

Daniel Stevens. His last five CD's went gold. He produces all kinds of these musicians.

RANDALL

Musicians? Yeah. Nice electronic drum kit with disco beat.

Randall blasts the volume.

RANDALL
Maybe we could get some beats like
that and ditch Zane!

GORDON
Yeah and maybe we could highlight
our hair and wear spandex.

RANDALL
Get the fuck outta here!

Gordon gives Randall a playful smack to the side of his head
then puts him in a headlock.

GORDON
He's actually pretty good. He kind
of grows on me.

Gordon lets Randall go.

GORDON
Hey. We should have him replace
you.

Randall jumps Gordon or a moment then shoves him aside.

RANDALL
I'm gonna talk with Shock about this
video business. We really need to
get on the power rotation.

GORDON
Any rotation would be good.

INT. RESTAURANT -- EVENING

Zane and Tressa eat their dinner in silence. Tressa picks
at her salad while Zane slams his Jack Daniels and Coke.

ZANE
Don't worry. We'll be back before
you know it.

Tressa stares uneasily at her boyfriend.

ZANE
We have to tour. It's in our
contract. It's the only way that we
can get out from under the soft record
sales.

TRESSA
I just don't understand it all.

ZANE

The record company gets money from the tour to help them break-even on the costs of signing us.

TRESSA

What?

ZANE

You know. The costs of marketing, the video, the recording studio. It all gets charged back to the band. Even the promotional CD's we give away. We have to sell records to offset those costs.

TRESSA

I thought that you made money once you were signed. Forget it. Okay! This doesn't make any sense to me.

ZANE

You're not alone. Don't worry. I'll be back soon enough. By then we'll be stars.

The waiter passes the table, but Zane stops him and points at his glass.

TRESSA

Don't you think you've had enough?

Zane shrugs it off.

Tressa sighs and stares off in a daze.

The waiter returns with Zane's drink and takes away his empty glass.

INT. SASHA'S APARTMENT

Randall and Sasha sit on the couch. Randall drinks from a bottle of Rolling Rock beer while Sasha sips her soda.

SASHA

So how long is the tour?

RANDALL

Right now it's just ten cities, but depending on the turnout, they might add shows along the way.

SASHA

This is going to be really hard.

RANDALL

Don't worry. I'll be calling you every day.

SASHA

It's not the same thing.

RANDALL

It's something we have to do to make a name for ourselves. You know that just as well as I do. Besides, you're the one that says I need to follow my dreams.

SASHA

I know, I know. But that was before we were engaged.

Sasha shakes her head and rubs her eyes with concern.

SASHA

It's hard to know what it'll be like until it actually happens, that's all.

RANDALL

Everything will be all right. I promise.

The couple embraces.

SASHA

What about the date? My mom wants to know.

RANDALL

Don't know yet, but we can discuss better after this tour. I'll know more then.

Sasha stares into her soda and thinks.

INT. PRACTICE STUDIO -- NIGHT

Randall enters the practice studio. The other band members stop when he staggers into the studio. He looks like hell.

GORDON

Where the hell have you been?

Randall grabs the microphone.

RANDALL

Let's do it.

Zane takes a swig of his beer, then brings in the band.

INT. TOUR BUS -- DAY

The band members lounge around in oversized bus seats.

BUD, their bus driver, commands the wheel. He has short hair, an earring, a leather face, and several tattoos. He looks like he's spent a few too many days on the road.

Randall and Gordon play cards while Isiah and Zane lay back and listen to CD's.

EXT. HOTEL -- EVENING

The hotel bellmen grab their luggage.

BART, one of Sherman's fast talking tour reps, approaches them with a smile on his face a mile wide. He wears designer jeans, a Guess shirt, and gold chains.

BART

Welcome to Cincinnati boys!

INT. CONCERT HALL -- BACK STAGE -- NIGHT

Sherman and the opening band sweat from performing under the hot stage lights. They drink some beers and party with different guys and girls.

Randall, beer in hand, stumbles over to the bathroom and walks in on several women who snort cocaine.

They look up, giggle, then wave him over. Randall hesitates for a moment, but several of the women cajole him over to the mirror lined with coke.

One of the women does a line then hands him the straw. She rubs her nose, sniffs, then kisses him with passion. The other women put their arms around him while he gazes down at the drugs.

A SERIES OF SHOTS:

HOTEL - The Sherman tour bus arrives at a hotel and a man greets the band. The band arrives at another hotel. A different representative greets the band.

CONCERT HALL - Sherman stands on stage and plays to a packed crowd of about two to three thousand people.

TOUR BUS - The band sleeps while city lights approach and fade like the ebb and flow of the tide.

Randall lies awake and stares out the window.

HOTEL ROOM - Randall calls Sasha, Gordon calls Claudia, and Zane calls Tressa from their cell phones. Isiah has sex with different girls after every show.

CONCERT HALL - A good sized crowd enjoys the show. Sherman parties backstage.

BACK TO SCENE

INT. HOTEL -- EVENING

Randall grabs his cell phone and dials a number from memory.

RANDALL

How are you?

INT. SASHA'S APARTMENT

Sasha lay on her bed, a book in her lap. She takes off her reading glasses and closes the book.

SASHA

It's good to hear your voice.

INTERCUT AS NEEDED

Randall grabs a beer from his bedside table and takes a swig.

RANDALL

How's everything?

SASHA

Work's good. Wish you were here.

RANDALL

Me too. This touring is a grind. Traveling. Performing. It wears you down.

SASHA

I'm sure you have a whole new appreciation for it now.

Randall takes another drink.

SASHA

How's everything else?

RANDALL

Decent. The shows are going well. We're getting some pretty good sized crowds.

SASHA

That's what you wanted.

RANDALL

Yeah. We have to do a radio interview in a little while.

SASHA
Okay. Well, I'll let you run.

RANDALL
I just wanted to call and let you
know I'm still alive.

SASHA
I love you.

RANDALL
I love you too. Talk to you soon.

SASHA
Bye.

Randall hangs up and sits on the bed for a moment with a gloomy look on his face.

Sasha puts the phone back down on her bedside table and fights back the tears.

A tear rolls down Randall's cheek and he wipes it away. He downs his beer and opens the drawer to the bedside table.

Isiah enters the room with a few groupie women.

A bag of white powder lay in the bottom of the drawer next to the yellow pages and a Holy Bible.

He grabs the bag of cocaine and empties some of it on the mirror. The groupies approach Randall and the mirror.

END INTERCUT

INT. HOTEL -- MORNING

Zane rolls out of the rack in his boxers while Gordon sleeps next to him. He stumbles over to the bathroom, splashes water in his face, and shakes like a wet dog.

Beers and melted ice fill the sink. A mostly empty bottle of Jack Daniels sits on the counter next to his overnight medicine bag.

Zane digs into the bag and grabs a few Advil. He pops them into his mouth like candy, cups some water from the sink in both hands, then washes them down.

He grabs a glass from the sink and fills it to the top with the whiskey. He gulps down some it, tops off the glass, then goes back to his bed with the glass.

INT. HOTEL

Randall sleeps in the neighboring hotel room. A few unused condoms lay on the bedside table next to a mirror with white powder on it. Beer bottles lay strewn everywhere.

Isiah and some groupies sleep in the next bed.

The room looks similar to Zane and Gordon's in appearance and quantity of empty beer bottles.

Randall awakens, sits up, then looks around. He appears surprised to see a groupie passed out on his bed.

He eyes some cocaine on the table and finishes it off.

INT. CONCERT HALL -- NIGHT

Sherman stands by the stage.

CROWD
Sherman! Sherman!

The crowd repeats the band name a few more times then cheers when the M.C. saunters onto the stage.

Security helps some fans from being crushed.

M.C. (O.S.)
How's everyone doing out there tonight!

GORDON
Where the hell is he?

ZANE
Said he'd be right back. Had a quick errand to do.

M.C. (O.S.)
Are you ready for Sherman?

The crowd cheers.

M.C. (O.S.)
All right.

Zane throws down some beer then goes over to the refrigerator to get another one.

GORDON
Errand? When we're supposed to be on stage? Hey, lighten up on the beers. You have a hard enough time keeping time as it is.

ZANE

Yeah right. At least it's not like playing a ballad or some shit like that. It really needs to move.

Randall staggers backstage.

GORDON

Where the hell have you been? In case you didn't know we have a concert to do and we're a little late.

RANDALL

A few more minutes won't kill 'em.

Isiah makes out with some groupies.

GORDON

Isiah. Ditch the broads. We're on.

Gordon goes over to his guitar case.

GORDON

Fucking A. This is like babysitting a bunch of teenagers.

Randall reaches into his pocket and grabs a bag of cocaine. He cuts some of it on a mirror that he pulls from his pocket.

Gordon looks around for a moment then turns back to his bandmates.

GORDON

Where the hell is my carpet?

Randall snorts a line or two.

GORDON

What the fuck! Is that where you went?

RANDALL

You my mother now?

GORDON

That shit is fucking up your head. You need to get some help before it affects this band anymore.

Randall ignores Gordon and puts the bag and mirror away.

GORDON

Where's my carpet?

ZANE

Haven't seen it. Isiah, you seen it?

Isiah shrugs.

ZANE

Randall, you seen it?

RANDALL

Can't say I have. You know where I've been.

GORDON

You guys are too funny. I want it right now. I'm going to take a piss and it better be here when I get back.

Gordon disappears into the restroom.

Randall, Isiah, and Zane rush over to what looks like a piece of plywood. They carry it over to Gordon's guitar case and set it down. It lands with a thud.

Gordon exits the restroom and zips up his pants. He approaches his guitar case then pauses in shock.

GORDON

What the fuck?

RANDALL

What?

Gordon reaches down and touches the piece of carpet turned plywood.

GORDON

Holy shit! Someone's gonna pay for this one. What the fuck did you put on this? Glue?

Gordon picks up the carpet on its side. The three other members bust out and laugh at Gordon.

Gordon kicks the piece of carpet, which cracks into a few pieces. He grabs his guitar case and storms off.

ISIAH

I think he's a little pissed.

RANDALL

I hope he doesn't come too unglued!

ZANE

Yeah, that would really be a sticky situation.

INT. CONCERT HALL

Sherman plays to the maniacal crowd. Randall woos them with his charisma, while Gordon and Isiah play in tandem toward the side of the stage.

A crazy fan squeezes up onto the stage with security in hot pursuit. The fan runs up to Randall and hugs him in triumph.

Between verses, Randall cold cocks the fan to the ground. Security drags the hapless fan offstage.

The insane crowd cheers in approval, then rocks to the rhythmic beat of Sherman.

Gordon and Isiah look at each other in amazement, then laugh.

INT. HOTEL -- DAY

Randall lays on the bed with the television on when his cell phone rings.

RANDALL

Yeah.

SHOCK (V.O.)

Randall my man. Do I have good news. Just got word from Ralph Fishbein, the tour manager for Jake's Basement. Their opening act has to drop off of the tour for a few weeks. Guess who they want to fill in on the southern swing of their tour?

RANDALL

Us? That's awesome. What about our other shows?

SHOCK (V.O.)

Already taken care of it. They're postponed. I have you booked on the afternoon flight to Dallas. Get your shit together. This is the big time.

Randall hangs up the phone and cuts some lines.

RANDALL

Hallelujah!

INT. CONCERT HALL -- BACK STAGE -- EVENING

Randall stands by the edge of the stage and watches Jake's Basement play to a sold out crowd. The band really rocks and the crowd feeds off of the band's energy.

Randall bobs his head to the beat of the drums and lip syncs.

Gordon joins Randall and gives him a beer.

GORDON
This is awesome, huh?

RANDALL
Fuck yeah! I can't believe I'm back stage at a Jake's Basement concert!

GORDON
Tour! And we're opening! Can you fucking believe it?

RANDALL
Ain't life great!

Randall and Gordon toast then turn back to the concert.

GORDON
And to makes things even better, I get to watch and learn from the legendary Joey Gibrion. I can't believe he's backing up on guitar for this tour. Wait, check out this solo right here.

INT. CONCERT HALL -- BACK STAGE -- NIGHT

Sherman hangs out with friends and groupies. People drink beer and do drugs. Some women look like call girls.

A security guard stands by the entrance for crowd control.

It looks like Mardi Gras.

Women stop at nothing to get backstage. Some pull up their tops while others seduce the security guards.

A security guard walks out of the bathroom with a woman behind him. She wipes her chin then joins the crowd and mills around.

The guard zips up his pants then takes the other guard's place by the gate. Another woman follows the second guard into the bathroom.

Randall and DEXTER, his dealer, stand by a back door. The black man with his out of date 70's afro, earrings, and several visible tattoos has a "don't fuck with me" aura about him.

DEXTER
That will be three large.

RANDALL
I'd swear I'm being raped.

DEXTER

Every 400 years the tides turn.

RANDALL

Enough of that five percent revolution
crap. Where's the stuff?

Randall breaks out a wad of cash. Dexter counts it, which annoys Randall.

DEXTER

Well. Nice doing business with ya'
fella'.

Dexter pulls out the bag of white powder. Randall opens the bag and tastes some of it.

RANDALL

You know where the exit is.

Randall pockets the drugs and walks off.

INT. HOTEL SUITE

A major party rages. Some suits mingle with the band members and groupies. Members of Jake's Basement cruise the party and hook up with different women.

Several kegs of beer rest in buckets of ice on the balcony.

GORDON

Pretty sweet party, eh Isiah?

ISIAH

You got that right.

Isiah nods at a pair of women who stare at them.

GORDON

There's a lot of suits here from the
industry. I'm going to mingle.

ISIAH

Well. We all mingle with different
people.

Isiah moves over to a pair of women in the far corner.

Zane slams some of his beer and looks around in a daze.

GORDON

Dude. You'd better slow down on the
drinking.

ZANE

It's under control.

Zane slurs his words and stumbles backwards into a lady.

Her scowl turns into a smile when she see who he is.

Gordon grabs Zane's shoulder and gets his attention. Gordon takes the beer from Zane.

GORDON

Enough for you already.

Gordon grabs Zane and drags him to an empty couch.

GORDON

Stay here! I'll be right back.

Gordon leaves Zane on the couch. Zane eyes a half full warm beer on the table, grabs it, and drinks it down.

The lady he bumped into earlier, MONIQUE, and her friend EMMANUELLE, sit down and surround him.

Monique has medium length blond hair and wears a skin tight black dress with two inch spiked black pumps. Emmanuelle has short brown hair and wears tight designer jeans.

ZANE

Hello ladies.

MONIQUE

Hi Zane. My name's Monique. With an emphasis on moan, if you know what I'm saying.

Zane gawks at the two nymphs.

EMMANUELLE

And my name's Emmanuelle. You might have seen some of my movies.

MONIQUE

We were voted inseparables in our high school yearbook, if you know what I mean.

Monique and Emmanuelle kiss each other then get fresh with Zane. The two women take turns making out with the drummer, then each other.

INT. ROOM

CONSTANCE, a young female sits on the floor by herself. The skinny girl with a pale face snorts cocaine.

Randall wanders into the room and sees her. He wipes his nose and sniffs like he has a cold.

RANDALL

What do you say?

Constance looks up at the singer.

RANDALL

Mind if I join you?

She hands Randall the mirror.

INT. HOTEL SUITE

Gordon walks back into the living room and sees Zane with the two groupies who go at it without regard for anyone.

GORDON

What the hell's going on?

They stop making out and gaze up at Gordon who looks pale.

EMMANUELLE

There's more room on the couch. Sit down next to me.

Emmanuelle pats the cushion beside her.

MONIQUE

No. Sit by me. Come over here big boy.

Gordon moves toward Monique and drags her off of the couch.

MONIQUE

What the hell are you doing?

Zane looks up with glazed eyes.

GORDON

Go make out with someone else. He's taken.

Zane's eyes close for a moment, then blink open a few times.

MONIQUE

I didn't know you guys were like that.

Emmanuelle gets off the couch and joins her friend. Monique moves toward Gordon and hangs all over him.

MONIQUE

How about you, big boy? Will Zane mind?

Emmanuelle hangs on the other side of Gordon. Monique kisses Gordon's neck and Emmanuelle follows suit.

GORDON
Get off me! I told you. We're taken.

MONIQUE
If that's the way you want it.

GORDON
Fucking A.

The two ladies move over and flirt with some other males.
Gordon sits next to Zane.

ZANE
Hey buddy.

GORDON
What the fuck do you think you're
doing?

Gordon gets up from the couch and looks back at Zane.

GORDON
Stay here! I need to go get Randall.
This whole situation is getting way
out of hand.

Gordon goes over to Isiah who flirts with a different pair
of women.

GORDON
Isiah. Where's Randall?

ISIAH
You try the head?

Gordon leaves Isiah to his business.

Zane gets off of the couch and staggers onto the back porch
where a few people stand by the beer. Zane grabs a cup,
fills it, then falls into one of the chairs.

INT. ROOM

Randall and Constance lay on the floor in front of the bed,
glassy eyed and smiling. They stare at each other and laugh.

Constance rolls over and kisses Randall. Randall resists
for a split second, then gives in to his urges.

The two really get into it. They grind on each other.
Constance pulls at Randall's pants in a drug induced craze.

EXT. HOTEL SUITE - PATIO

Monique and Emmanelle make their way toward the beer and eye
Zane in the chair.

EMMANUELLE

Where's your boyfriend?

They laugh then seduce him again. He drops his beer onto the patio.

INT. HOTEL SUITE

Claudia, Tressa, and Sasha enter and see wall to wall partiers. Sasha blinks her eyes a few times then squints into the crowd.

SASHA

Man look at this mess.

Sasha stumbles inside with Tressa and Claudia in pursuit.

INTERCUT AS NEEDED:

Sasha searches the party for Randall.

Tressa talks to a guy who points to the back patio.

Sasha moves toward the back room.

Tressa and Claudia walk out onto the patio.

Randall and Constance go at it on the bed.

Claudia and Tressa see Zane with Monique and Emmanuelle.

Randall and Constance snort some coke.

Sasha enters the back room and sees Randall and Constance with the cocaine.

Randall, in a drug induced stupor, gazes up at Sasha with glazed eyes.

Shocked, Sasha storms out of the room.

Emmanuelle, who gives Zane head, pauses and looks up at Tressa and Claudia, then goes back to work.

Sasha bumps into Claudia and Tressa.

The three ladies rush over to Gordon who stands near Isiah and his women for the night.

Claudia and Gordon argue for a moment.

The three ladies leave. Gordon follows them to the door, then turns back and enters the back room.

Constance and Randall start going at it again on the bed.

Constance and Gordon make eye contact.

Gordon leaves.

END INTERCUT

INT. ROOM

Constance jumps off the bed and leaves.

EXT. HOTEL

Claudia, Tressa, and Sasha stand outside. Claudia hails a cab while the other two comfort each other.

EXT. SASHA'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

A crazed looking Randall fiddles with his key chain, but can't get the door open. He pounds on the door in frustration.

A weary Sasha opens the door a smidgen.

RANDALL

We need to talk.

SASHA

We went over this. You need help. That incident the other night is just the tip of the iceberg.

RANDALL

It's under control.

Sasha glares at him.

SASHA

That's what you said before. You're getting into something you can't control.

RANDALL

It's no biggie. I was just messing around. Playing the part.

SASHA

I can't be with you if you're going to be like this. I will support you, but you need to tell me that you'll get help. Otherwise you can just take this back.

Sasha rubs the engagement ring on her finger.

RANDALL

It will never happen again. I promise. Okay?

Sasha looks into his eyes then stares down at the floor.

RANDALL

Never.

SASHA

Get help.

Sasha closes the door.

EXT. PARK -- DAY

Willie and Cayla sit on a blanket. Willie takes his medicine then plays his acoustic guitar while Cayla feeds Rebecca her formula.

CAYLA

It's so nice to get out of the house
and breathe some fresh air.

WILLIE

Definitely. What did the sitter
say?

CAYLA

Can't make it.

Willie winces in disappointment.

CAYLA

I'm sorry if I'm going to miss your
show next week, but having a child
is--

WILLIE

A big responsibility. I know. Shoot.
Well hopefully we can get a video
tape of it.

Willie eats some food then plays the guitar.

EXT. MOTEL -- AFTERNOON

The tour bus pulls up and parks.

SAMMY OPPENHEIMER, their tour rep greets the exhausted band. Sammy, a small and weaselly looking man, wears glasses and a cheap wrinkled suit. His scuffed shoes look like he ran a marathon in them.

SAMMY

Hey guys. How was the trip?

RANDALL

I'm dead tired. Have the bellmen
grab my stuff and put it in the room.

GORDON

What the hell is this place? Dumps
'R Us?

SAMMY

Actually it's not that bad once you
get inside.

RANDALL

Yeah. If I leave the lights off.

GORDON

I think Robinson's fucking us.

ISIAH

Don't doubt it.

RANDALL

We need to see some of the rough
cuts of our new video. Where's your
recording equipment?

SAMMY

Well. Hmm. Let's see.

RANDALL

Well?

SAMMY

We don't have any.

ZANE

What are you, budget rep or something?

Zane takes a drink from his bottle of beer.

SAMMY

I don't know if you would call me
that, but I've been assigned to you
guys. I'll be following you for the
remainder of the tour.

GORDON

What a joke.

Sammy appears on the verge of tears.

RANDALL

Something weird's going on. One
rep. We got Sammy here following us
around in a freakin rental car like
a shadow?

ZANE

This is seriously a bunch of bullshit
if you ask me.

Zane downs the rest of his beer and heaves the bottle at the motel where it shatters.

Startled, Sammy jumps.

EXT. ZEKE'S LOUNGE -- DAY

The band members hang outside the rundown club. Trash and empty beer bottles litter the parking lot.

Posters line the club wall. One poster advertising a band called Forgotten Dreams dominates the wall.

RANDALL
Where the hell's ours?

GORDON
Got me?

RANDALL
The fricken opening act has posters
and we don't. This is bullshit!

GORDON
Could be a mix up.

RANDALL
Yeah. Maybe you're right.

INT. RADIO STATION -- AFTERNOON

The band members approach the front desk with a purpose. ADRIAN, a petite woman in her late 30's, wears a phone headset and answers and transfers calls.

ADRIAN
W.R.O.K. can I help you? One moment
please.

Adrian transfers a few more calls.

ADRIAN
Yes. May I help you?

RANDALL
We're Sherman. We're here for an
interview with Mani the Mook.

ADRIAN
Let me see here. Sherman?

RANDALL
That's right. We're doing a show
over at Zeke's Lounge tonight.

ADRIAN
Hmm. What's your name?

RANDALL

Randall. The band name is Sherman.

ADRIAN

That's weird. I don't see anything.
Can you please hold on for a moment?

The band members share uneasy glances. Adrian gets on the switchboard.

ADRIAN

Yeah Mani? I have Sherman in the lobby. They say they're here for an interview. Yes I know they're not on the schedule. There must be a mix up of some sort. Yeah. Okay.

Adrian looks up at Randall.

ADRIAN

Yeah. Just wait there. We'll have to make some room for you.

RANDALL

Okay. Thank you very much.

EXT. CITY STREET

The tour bus idles behind Sammy's rental car. Sammy fumbles with a few maps in the front seat.

INT. TOUR BUS

Randall looks over at Gordon. The two share a frustrated glance.

RANDALL

What the fuck is that moron doing?

GORDON

Beats me. Guess he doesn't know where the store is.

RANDALL

And he's supposed to be our guide? He couldn't find his ass if he was sitting on it.

ISIAH

Exactly.

EXT. CITY STREET

Bud exits the bus and goes up to Sammy's window. The two talk for a moment, then Bud returns. Sammy starts up and the bus follows.

INT. RECORD STORE

Randall and the rest of Sherman enter. Randall walks over to the front counter while the others browse around.

Gordon and Zane enter the Rock/R & B section of the store. Gordon flips through the S's.

GORDON
That's strange.

ZANE
What's that?

GORDON
I can't find our CD in here anywhere.

ZANE
You've got to be kidding.

Zane pushes in toward the CD's.

ZANE
Here we are.

GORDON
Cool.

ZANE
Out of stock.

GORDON
Motherfucker!

CHET, a poster boy for bad oral hygiene, stocks CD's when Gordon taps him on the shoulder.

GORDON
Hey, buddy. Where're all the Sherman CD's?

CHET
Could be on backorder.

GORDON
How the hell can you sell the CD if it's not in stock? Tell me that.

CHET
Could be sold out. That's good.

GORDON
Good for who? They have to be on the shelf in order for people to buy them.

CHET

I can order one for you if that's the problem.

Gordon becomes livid.

GORDON

Buy one? Buy one? Do you know who I am?

CHET

Uh. No.

Gordon gets up in Chet's face.

GORDON

I'm in the fucking band! We're supposed to be here signing CD's only you don't have any fucking CD's to sign now do you?

CHET

You don't have to get smart with me. I'm only doing my job.

GORDON

Where's your manager?

EMPLOYEE

Oh. Uh. He's talking to that gentleman over there.

Chet points over to a man who stands with Randall.

GORDON

Fucking typical.

Gordon storms off and Zane follows.

INT. HOTEL

Randall sits on his bed and grabs his cell phone.

RANDALL

Yeah. Kathy please.

VOICE (V.O.)

Who?

RANDALL

Kathy Macelli, A&R.

VOICE (V.O.)

Hmm. Oh okay. Just a moment please.

Randall waits with a puzzled look on his face. KATHY, his contact on the other side, picks up.

KATHY (V.O.)

This is Kathy.

RANDALL

Yeah, Kathy. Randall. What's going on?

KATHY (V.O.)

It's pretty crazy right now. People come and go so quick I can't keep up.

RANDALL

I meant with our tour?

KATHY (V.O.)

What's wrong?

RANDALL

You don't know? The whole tour's a mess. It's been one fuck up after another ever since we got back from Phoenix.

KATHY (V.O.)

Really? I thought everything was going according to plan. At least that's what Robinson said.

RANDALL

If your plan includes not having any promotions whatsoever, then yeah, everything's just fucking peachy.

KATHY (V.O.)

I don't understand. I'll call you right back.

Randall cuts a few lines.

INT. COFFEE HOUSE

Sherman sits at a large coffee table while a comedian practices his weak lines for the uninterested crowd.

RANDALL

She says that she doesn't know what's going on with the tour.

ISIAH

And you believe her?

RANDALL

She's a good gal. I think that something's going on and no one's saying anything.

ZANE

How else can you explain the lack of funds on the tour recently?

Randall and Gordon give Zane a funny look.

RANDALL

I'm telling you right now I don't need this shit. The last thing I want is to have Sammy boy tagging along in the bus. Now that's some bush league shit right there.

GORDON

If that doesn't tell you something, nothing will.

ZANE

Let's go straight to Robinson and lay some law.

RANDALL

Don't think that I wouldn't if I knew we would be able to get a hold of him. Believe me.

ISIAH

Fucking coward.

INT. HOTEL -- EVENING

Shock watches cartoons when the phone rings. BILLY, Shock's idol, breathes heavily on the other end of the line.

BILLY (V.O.)

Shock, Billy here.

SHOCK

What'cha got?

BILLY (V.O.)

You're not going to believe this, but Caustic Rhythms wants Sherman to tour with them.

SHOCK

Unbelievable!

INT. CLUB -- NIGHT

Sherman huddles around Shock who sits at the bar. The band members look on with anticipation.

RANDALL

So what kind of details do you have?

SHOCK

They heard you guys when you were touring with Jake's Basement and they think that you'll be a great fit.

GORDON

Awesome. See Zane, I knew it would work out. Time to get a real drum set.

ZANE

You know what I always say.

Gordon shakes his head.

INT. SASHA'S APARTMENT

Sasha and Gordon sit on the couch and drink some sodas.

GORDON

Thank's for letting me come by and talk.

SASHA

No problem. What is it? You sounded concerned on the phone.

GORDON

This is hard for me to say. I should have said something earlier, but I was so wrapped up in the tour and all of the crap that goes along with it.

SASHA

That's understandable. There's a lot of pressure on you guys.

GORDON

Then there's the upcoming tour. But anyway, that's no excuse. I normally would have done something about it, but I didn't want the band to fall apart. I should have done the right thing. I mean we're talking about our friend here.

SASHA

What is it?

GORDON

It's Randall. His using has gotten way out of hand.

SASHA

Using? He said he was getting help.

GORDON

I don't know what he said, but he's been under a lot of stress. All of the stuff about the signing. Touring. Being away from you. I guess there's really nothing that can prepare you for that kind of pressure.

Gordon takes a deep swig from his soda and almost coughs it up on his shirt.

SASHA

Are you all right?

Sasha pats him on the back. Gordon nods his head.

GORDON

Anyway. He was using pretty hard while we were touring. You know. Before the incident and all.

SASHA

But he stopped after that, right?

Gordon shakes his head.

SASHA

Shit. That liar.

Sasha gets up and paces like a mountain lion.

GORDON

He says he's in complete control. That he can stop anytime. But addicts are constantly in denial. He doesn't know he's addicted.

SASHA

Bullshit! That's just bullshit. He knows exactly what he's doing. He lied to me.

Sasha shakes her head in pain then heads into the kitchen. She opens the freezer and grabs a half gallon container of ice cream and eats directly from it.

GORDON

He needs to get help. Otherwise I think that the band is in jeopardy.

SASHA

Fuck the band! You guys deserve all the shit that you get! You brought it all on yourselves! I should have followed Tressa out that door and never looked back.

GORDON

I came here to talk about something serious and you're making a mockery of it.

SASHA

Listen here. Don't come into my apartment and start giving me shit. I told him to get help before and he said that he stopped using. Then you say that you let it go on because you were afraid it would ruin your fame and fortune. You're the mockery! You should be ashamed of yourself. All of you guys. Acting like a bunch of star struck teenagers.

Gordon approaches Sasha and puts his hand on her shoulder. She slaps it away then opens the door. Gordon gets the hint and leaves. Sasha slams the door shut then sobs into her ice cream container.

EXT. SASHA'S APARTMENT -- EARLY MORNING

Randall opens the door, but a chain holds it at bay.

RANDALL

What the hell? Open up.

Sasha appears just inside the door.

RANDALL

Oh hey. What's the deal with all of this security? It's just me.

SASHA

Exactly.

RANDALL

Why didn't you pick up? I've been calling all morning.

Sasha ignores him for a moment.

SASHA

I've been doing a little thinking about your little non-drug problem.

RANDALL

Drug problem? That's ridiculous.

SASHA

Quiet! I know all about it.

RANDALL

What?

SASHA

You're in denial, which I understand.
No one can make you rehab but
yourself.

RANDALL

Rehab? Everything's under control.
I don't need rehab.

SASHA

You have to choose. The drugs or
me.

RANDALL

I choose you, of course baby.

SASHA

You need to get help and you need to
get it now.

RANDALL

No problem. Whatever you say. I'm
there, right after we finish this
little tour we got. Did you hear?
We're touring with Caustic Rhythms.
Can you fucking believe it! The
Caustic Rhythms!

SASHA

Screw the tour! You need to think
about your health for once.

RANDALL

Screw the tour? I can't do that,
but I promise, right after these
shows I will be a changed person. I
really mean it.

SASHA

I hope so, for your sake.

Sasha closes the door on Randall.

Randall stares at the door for a moment, looks down the hall,
then heads back to the door.

Randall moves to knock on the door again, but stops himself.
He walks away, then turns back toward the door. He slams
his hand into the wall.

INT. ROBINSON'S OFFICE -- DAY

NOELLE SCHNEIDER, Robinson's consummate secretary enters.
Robinson looks up.

NOELLE

Here are the latest revenue numbers.

Robinson scans the report then shakes his head in disgust.

NOELLE

They don't look so hot.

ROBINSON

Yes, I can see that.

Robinson lays the report in front of a framed photo.

CLOSE ON PHOTO

ROBINSON AND AN OLDER MAN STAND NEXT TO A PODIUM AND HOLD OUT A GOLD RECORD

Noelle lingers and Robinson looks back up.

NOELLE

Earnhardt would like to see you. He has a visitor.

Robinson jumps up and moves toward the door. He peers over at Earnhardt's visitor and steps back in shock.

Jarred Lee stands just inside the office. Robinson sighs and moves toward the megastar.

WALLACE EARNHARDT, an old school entertainment mogul, peeks his head out the door and waves in Robinson. Earnhardt looks like the man from the photo, but a few years older.

INT. APARTMENT -- EVENING

Willie enters then sets his tools inside the door.

WILLIE

Cayla? I'm home!

CAYLA (O.S.)

In here.

Willie enters the back room.

CAYLA

I'm glad you made it. Something's wrong with Becca.

WILLIE

Oh my God.

CAYLA

She has a pretty high temperature. Maybe a fever.

WILLIE

Let me grab my jacket.

Cayla bundles up Rebecca and heads for the door.

INT. HOSPITAL -- NIGHT

Cayla and Willie sit in the waiting room and leaf through magazines.

CAYLA

I am so sorry you missed your big show tonight.

Willie reaches over and hugs his wife.

WILLIE

Don't even think about it.

Willie doesn't let go.

WILLIE

Don't even think about it.

Willie kisses Cayla.

INT. TOUR BUS -- MORNING

The band loads up and gets ready. Bud warms up the bus while Sherman fidgets around.

BUD

Where the hell's Shock? We've gotta move if we're going to make it there on time.

Shock enters with a dejected look on his face. The band members cheer his arrival.

RANDALL

All right. Let's get the fuck outta here.

Zane notices Shock's face.

ZANE

What's up?

SHOCK

Kill the engine.

BUD

What?

SHOCK

Just do it, dammit!

Bud kills the engine and the band remains silent.

SHOCK

You guys are not going to believe this.

RANDALL

What?

SHOCK

I don't believe it myself. It just doesn't make any sense.

RANDALL

Enough already! What the fuck is going on?

SHOCK

He won't support it. Robinson won't support the tour. Says it's too risky.

GORDON

What the hell? What's too risky about touring with Caustic Rhythms? They're the hottest thing going!

SHOCK

He just said that the label couldn't afford a big budget tour based on our current record sales.

RANDALL

Fuck that bottom feeding cocksucker. We're one of the few bands that he signed lately that's doing well and he wants to pull the plug? That's ridiculous.

GORDON

That suit's digging his own grave.

Randall paces the aisle.

RANDALL

Fuck him!

Randall spikes a can of beer and kicks it emphatically.

Beer sprays everywhere.

RANDALL

Bud. Start the engines. We're getting the fuck outta here. That motherfucker! Fuck that bastard!

BUD

Where to?

RANDALL

You know where. Suckramento. We got a tour to do.

GORDON

What about Robinson? The money?

RANDALL

Fuck all that shit. I've come too far to let some desk jockey pack up my tour.

BUD

And who's gonna pay me?

RANDALL

Don't worry. You'll get your money. Just drive.

Bud shakes his head and drives the bus.

ZANE

Yeah. What about the financing?

RANDALL

I'll think of something.

INT. CONCERT HALL -- NIGHT

Randall stands next to a table lined up with Sherman shirts of all types and sizes. A few posters line the back wall.

INT. CONCERT HALL -- BACK STAGE

Randall counts money at a table. Gordon approaches him.

GORDON

How much we make?

RANDALL

We kicked ass that's for sure. At this rate we might just scrape by after all. It's going to be close, though. We're going to have to cut back on all non-essentials. Maybe even crank the credit cards into overdrive.

GORDON

What are we going to tell Robinson? He's going to find out that we're touring.

RANDALL

Why should he care? It's not costing him anything.

(MORE)

RANDALL (CONT'D)

We also sold out of all our CD's.
We're going to need more of those
too. That should make him happy.
Or at least the accountants.

GORDON

When are we going to get more shirts
made? We have that show over in
Oakland in less than three days.

RANDALL

My cousin is making more as we speak.
They should be there in time.

GORDON

Awesome.

INT. ROBINSON'S OFFICE -- DAY

Robinson hits the intercom button on his telephone.

ROBINSON

Noelle!

She clicks over.

NOELLE (V.O.)

Yes sir.

ROBINSON

I want all of the details of those
shirt sales, on the double. That
band's yesterdays news as far as I'm
concerned! You don't fuck with Stan
Robinson and get away with it. Oh.
And tell Ms. Macelli to pack her
bags!

NOELLE (V.O.)

But Mr. Robinson, they're one of the
few bands we have right now that are
selling. It doesn't make any sense
to cut them off at the knees.

ROBINSON

That will be all.

Robinson clicks the phone off.

INT. CONCERT HALL -- BACK STAGE -- EVENING

Gordon rushes up to Zane who is slamming shots.

GORDON

Where the fuck is he?

ZANE

Who?

GORDON

Randall! Who the fuck?

ZANE

Said he had an errand to run.

GORDON

Fuck! You let him leave?

Zane shrugs and slams some more Jack Daniels.

GORDON

He said it was over! Shit.

Gordon's cell phone rings.

GORDON

Yeah?

RANDALL (V.O.)

It's me.

GORDON

Where the fuck are you? We're late!

EXT. JAIL -- MORNING

Gordon and Randall walk back to the rental car. Gordon gets in then unlocks the passenger side door.

INT. CAR

Gordon starts the engine and merges with traffic.

RANDALL

Sorry about last night. What'd Shock say?

GORDON

What could he say? They went on without us, and they are fucking pissed!

RANDALL

I am so fucking sorry man.

GORDON

Sorry? You said that you were getting help, then you pull this shit?

RANDALL

I am. It was just a last fling.

(MORE)

RANDALL (CONT'D)

Like the bachelor party before the wedding. You know what I mean, don't you? Strippers and sex and partying and all that good shit?

GORDON

No I don't know. All's I know is that the lead singer of my band is about to fuck up my best chance at making it because he's an addict and he got caught trying to buy from a damn cop. What the fuck were you thinking? I mean what am I saying, you weren't thinking, now were you?

RANDALL

Whatever you do, don't say anything to Sasha. She'll call off the wedding.

GORDON

Say anything? She probably already knows. This type of shit travels fast around here. Jeez.

Gordon tosses an opened newspaper at Randall.

CLOSE ON NEWS ARTICLE

RANDALL SPARKS, THE TROUBLED LEAD SINGER OF SHERMAN, ARRESTED ATTEMPTING TO BUY COCAINE FROM AN UNDERCOVER POLICE OFFICER

Randall runs his fingers through his hair and closes his eyes, lost in thought.

INT. COFFEE HOUSE -- AFTERNOON

The members of Sherman sit at a rugged looking coffee table. Randall joins them. He looks at the dejected group of friends.

RANDALL

So what's up? Why all of the hush, hush?

The band members remain silent.

RANDALL

Well? Oh, I know. Don't worry, everything's all right. I already said I was going to get treatment.

GORDON

That's not it. We're glad about that. It's just--

RANDALL

Just what!

GORDON

I'm sorry. We can't keep doing this.
We have to move on.

RANDALL

I'm there. After the tour I'm there.
Don't worry.

Gordon reaches over and grabs Randall's shoulder.

GORDON

It's just business. Sorry.

RANDALL

Fuck!

Randall gets up and circles the table.

He breaks out into crazy laughter. The band members look up at him with concern.

RANDALL

Shit, I should talk. I would do the
same thing. It's the right thing to
do.

Randall looks into each band members eyes then glances down at the floor for a moment. He looks up.

RANDALL

It sure was a hell of a lot of fun,
huh guys?

ISIAH

It sure was buddy.

Isiah hugs Randall. Randall hugs him back. Isiah pats his friend on the back.

Randall looks up at Gordon.

RANDALL

Man I still can't get over the look
on your face when you saw your pet
piece of carpet a la papier-mâché.
I thought you were going to die right
there.

GORDON

I was seriously pissed, that's for
sure.

The band members share their first laugh in a long time.

RANDALL

What about the tour? I mean, how the hell are you going to tour without a singer? That makes no sense.

GORDON

Gotta postpone and see what happens.

EXT. SASHA'S APARTMENT EVENING

Randall knocks on the door.

SASHA (O.S.)

Go away!

RANDALL

Open up it's me.

SASHA (O.S.)

You heard me!

RANDALL

We have to--

Sasha opens the door and frowns at him. She takes a tissue and wipes her red eyes.

RANDALL

--talk.

Sasha hands him the engagement ring.

RANDALL

But--

Sasha closes the door and locks the deadbolt.

Randall grips the ring, then stares at it. Tears run down his face.

He pockets the ring.

INT. LUXURY APARTMENT

Randall enters through the open door and kicks a piece of paper. He reaches down and picks it up.

CLOSE ON

EVICTIION NOTICE

Randall crumples up the paper and throws it into the half empty apartment.

Two well built movers without necks enter and make their way into the living room with a handtruck. They lift the big screen television onto it and roll it toward the door.

RANDALL

This place is getting empty in a hurry.

Randall enters the kitchen. A pile of bills and late notices lay near the telephone.

INT. LUXURY APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Randall sits Indian style near the window. He stares into his bedroom when he hears tires peeling out. He looks outside and sees his car being driven off.

RANDALL

Not the car.

SUPER

Yep' the car.

RANDALL

What are you doing in here?

The SUPER moves over toward Randall who stares blankly out the window.

SUPER

The keys?

RANDALL

Huh? Oh yeah.

Randall hands the Super the keys without looking up. The Super walks away then stops.

SUPER

Look on the bright side.

Randall makes eye contact with his former landlord.

SUPER

At least you don't have to worry about moving anything.

RANDALL

And I could have such a problem.

The Super leaves.

The Sex Pistols still poster hangs in the barren apartment.

Randall reaches into his pocket and pulls out Sasha's ring.

Dexter enters the apartment.

DEXTER

Well, well, well. Haven't we fallen on hard times. Mister rock star.

Dexter laughs. Randall looks up for a moment, then turns his head.

DEXTER
You got my money?

RANDALL
You have to ask?

DEXTER
Don't fuck with me! I've been floating you cause you've been a good customer. But no more. Where's the cash?

Dexter slinks over to Randall.

RANDALL
Like I was trying to tell you--

DEXTER
You know the alternatives. I don't think I need to remind you.

RANDALL
No, of course not. I'm just in a little transitional period right now--

DEXTER
Talk to someone who gives a shit.

RANDALL
I need more time--

DEXTER
Time's up.

Randall gets up, looks at Dexter in fear, then caresses the diamond without looking away from his adversary.

Dexter eyes the ring and snatches at it, but Randall pulls it away.

Dexter clutches Randall's arm, but Randall grips the ring with all of this might.

DEXTER
Time to pay up!

Randall twists away from Dexter and makes a move for the kitchen.

Dexter pulls on Randall's shirt, which slows him down. Dexter spins Randall toward him and punches him in the gut twice then once in the face.

Randall keeps the diamond in his clutches and takes a swing at Dexter. He connects with a jab, but Dexter counters with a right cross.

Randall falls backward. The ring flies out of his hand and slides across the hardwood floor.

Dexter kicks Randall in the face one time then saunters over to the diamond.

DEXTER

Don't know what the big deal is.
It's not worth losing your life over.

RANDALL

Give it back!

DEXTER

Looks like I have a little collateral
now don't I. Or some ice for one of
my bitches.

RANDALL

I'll come up with the money, just
please, give me back the ring.

DEXTER

You come up with four g's by the end
of the week and I cough up the rock.
Otherwise, well...

Dexter walks over to Randall and gives him one more smack for good measure.

INT. RECORD STORE -- DAY

Randall pulls a baseball cap down over his head and browses.

He holds the rolled up Sex Pistols poster.

JENIECE, a manipulative little tramp, stares over at Randall with interest.

JENIECE

Hey. Aren't you in Sherman?

RANDALL

No.

Jeniece grabs the cap and pulls it up then looks him in the face. His shiner shows in the florescent lighting.

JENIECE

Yeah. I know you!

Randall yanks the cap back down and trudges away.

JENIECE (O.S.)

Hey. What happened to your eye?

He moves over to the bargain basket and flips through them.

CLOSE ON

SHERMAN CD WITH STICKER: \$1.99.

Randall grips the CD, which cracks the jewel case.

Randall heaves the case like a Frisbee. It just misses the cashier's head and shatters behind the counter. The cashier stares over at Randall in amazement.

Randall takes the bin and flips it over.

The CD's spill onto the floor and scatter everywhere. Jeniece turns around, then slips and falls onto the CD's.

The cashier rushes Randall, but Randall clocks him with an uppercut. The poor record salesman tumbles onto the CD's next to Jeniece.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. RECORD STORE

Randall grips the Sherman CD, stares at it, then slams it back in the bargain bin.

He turns then exits the store. The cashier stares at him in a familiar manner.

INT. ROBINSON'S OFFICE -- AFTERNOON

Robinson circles the room while Gordon, Isiah, and Zane sit in front of his desk.

ROBINSON

That's really too bad about Randy.
It really is.

Robinson stares at each band member for a moment.

ROBINSON

And I know you're committed to finding a new singer, but don't worry. I've found your man and rejuvenated my career at the same time. No one's going to doubt my abilities now.

ZANE

Huh--

GORDON

No offense Mr. Robinson, but that's not how we work--

ROBINSON

That's how I work and that's all that matters.

GORDON

Excuse me?

ROBINSON

You want to tour with Caustic Rhythms or rot in your practice studio? I own you guys and don't forget that.

Robinson hits the intercom button on the phone.

ROBINSON

Noelle, is he here yet?

NOELLE (V.O.)

He's walking up now.

ROBINSON

Send him in.

NOELLE

No prob--

Robinson clicks off.

GORDON

Do mind telling us what's going on?

Robinson waves off the guitar player and watches the door.

Jarred Lee walks inside and their jaws drop. Robinson smiles from ear to ear.

ROBINSON

I believe you all know each other.

Isiah gets up, throws his chair aside, and leaves. Zane follows in hot pursuit.

ROBINSON

Don't worry about him. He'll be back.

Zane returns to his seat.

ROBINSON

Any questions?

Robinson glares at Gordon's pale face. Lee takes a seat on his desk.

INSERT TITLE CARD: ONE YEAR LATER

INT. NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS -- EVENING

Randall leads a meeting. His hair has grown out to its normal sandy brown color.

A group of people sit in a semicircle.

RANDALL

My name is Randall and I'm a drug addict.

GROUP

Hi Randall.

RANDALL

I had it all. A great gal, a promising career as a musician, great friends, a loving family. I threw it all away for drugs. I fell off the wagon and didn't even realize it. I didn't think it was a big deal to drink and mess around. I wanted to play the part of the rock star so badly I could taste it.

Randall looks around at the group then at the floor for a moment.

RANDALL

I believed that I could control my usage.

Tears well up in his eyes. He sniffles then clears his throat.

RANDALL

I was wrong. I blew it with my fiancée. My band. My career. Myself.

Randall looks up with renewed energy.

RANDALL

But I feel fortunate to have support groups like this one along with my family. Without that, I would be dead. Some people don't have this kind of support and I feel badly for them.

Randall sits down.

JASMINE

Thank you Randall. That was very inspiring.

INT. RANDALL'S STUDIO -- LATE AFTERNOON

Randall sits on a futon when he hears a KNOCK at the door.

Lewis walks inside styling in his suit from the day's grind on executive row.

LEWIS
So what've you doing? Watching Jerry
Springer or what?

RANDALL
Shit. Hardly.

Randall collapses on the futon.

LEWIS
Let's get out of here and do something
for once. This place is drab as
well as disenchanting.

RANDALL
No cash man. I gotta wait for my
check to come in.

LEWIS
Don't fret. I'm buying.

RANDALL
You know I'm not into that charity
shit.

Lewis heads for the door.

INT. COFFEE HOUSE

Randall and Lewis enter the half-crowded coffee house. The manager sets up a PA system. A sign on the door shows:

OPEN MIKE NIGHT

Lewis pulls a crumpled flyer out of his pocket.

It shows JAVA JAKE'S OPEN MIKE NIGHT: Fourth Street Paradise.

The two friends go up to the counter and order.

Lewis picks up the tab and Randall sits down indiscriminately in the back. Lewis follows suit.

Curtis carries drums inside while Keith pushes a speaker cabinet and guitar.

Moments later, Randall notices a familiar face walk into the coffee house with a bass guitar and speaker cabinet.

Willie from Sherman.

The band sets up, but the house music still plays over the loud speakers.

KEITH
Hey Randall. What do you say?

RANDALL
Nothing much. When you guys going on?

KEITH
Johnny got in a car accident.

LEWIS
I hope he's all right.

KEITH
This was supposed to be a warm up for some shows we're doing later on this month.

RANDALL
I know how that is.

Keith pauses for a moment and gets a twinkle in his eye. He stares at Randall. Randall looks away for a moment

KEITH
I just had a thought. Since the day's already kind of messed up. How about you stepping in for Johnny Boy?

RANDALL
That would not be good.

KEITH
Come on. It'll be fun.

Keith makes a motion to grab Randall out of the chair. Randall pulls away.

KEITH
Okay.

Keith shakes his head and walks on stage.

KEITH
We just got word that Johnny's in the hospital and can't make it tonight.

The crowd murmurs among themselves.

KEITH
Don't worry. Doctor said he'd be all right.

Keith feels out the crowd for a moment.

KEITH

I did want to take a minute to point
out a celebrity in our midst.

Randall stares at Keith then gets up and makes for the door.

Lewis chases after him.

KEITH

Randy Sparks, the local celeb from
Sherman, is well. Is leaving the
building.

The audience looks toward the back of the coffee house.

EXT. COFFEE HOUSE

Lewis grabs Randall and spins him around.

LEWIS

What the heck are you doing? This
is your chance to get back into the
limelight.

RANDALL

I don't think so.

LEWIS

Man I wish that I had your voice.
I'd be up there in a hot second.

RANDALL

Then get up there.

Lewis glares at Randall and stares him down.

LEWIS

Fucking pussy.

Randall gives Lewis a "what'd you say?" Scowl.

RANDALL

Holy shit, the aristocrat cursed. I
can't fucking believe it! Jeez.

Randall laughs.

INT. COFFEE HOUSE

Lewis pushes Randall back inside.

KEITH

Anyone who wants our friend Randy to
step in for Johnny Boy and play a
few songs, make some noise.

The crowd roars and cajoles Randall.

Some of the audience members tug at Randall in a friendly manner.

KEITH
He's back. Well Randall, the crowd
awaits.

Randall steps onto the stage and grabs the microphone.

RANDALL
Yeah okay. You got me. But only
for one song.

Randall turns around and walks over towards Keith. They share a few words. Randall turns around and looks at Willie. They share an uneasy glance.

KEITH
Okay. Do you know any of our stuff.

RANDALL
Yeah. Let me see your set list.

Keith hands it to him and Randall examines it for a moment.

RANDALL
I know these three.

KEITH
Okay. We'll go with Ricochet, Mercy
Killing, and Blind Turn.

RANDALL
Do you have any lyric sheets? Just
in case?

Keith goes over to his guitar case, pulls out some ratty pieces of paper, then hands them to him.

KEITH
Curtis. Bring us in.

Curtis taps his drums sticks four times and the band begins.

The familiar voice of Randy Sparks carries the tune and the audience cheers in satisfaction.

The clerk gets on the phone and makes some calls.

LATER

The band grooves to the music and even Willie looks happy. They finish up Blind Turn then Keith grabs the mike from Randall.

KEITH

Now let's give a big hand for our special guest.

The audience cheers. The members of Fourth Street Paradise smile at Randall. Even Willie.

KEITH

What do we do? Do you know any of our other stuff?

RANDALL

I'm afraid not. I only know the songs from the demo that you guys cut.

The three stand there and think for a moment.

RANDALL

Wait a minute. Willie. You still remember Dreamin'?

WILLIE

Yeah. How could I forget.

KEITH

Okay. I know this one. Curtis, we're going to try Dreamin'.

Curtis nods his head.

KEITH

Okay everyone. We're going to try and scrounge up some more material for you this evening. This is one you've heard before. It's a cover of a local band.

Curtis brings in the band and the crowd reacts to the song. Randall sings with passion and purpose. The crowd senses his feeling and he feeds off of their enthusiasm and energy.

The song sounds just like the video. Even Willie looks happy. The bass lines really kick ass now. Some of the crowd members sing along.

The song ends and the crowd goes wild. People line up to get inside.

KEITH

What else?

RANDALL

Whatever Sherman songs you know, I can hang with.

INT. COFFEE HOUSE -- LATER

The band finishes up. The packed crowd cheers.

RANDALL

Thank you everyone. You've made
this a pleasant night for me.

The audience gives Fourth Street Paradise one last applause.

A standing ovation.

Randall bows to the crowd and turns to Keith, Curtis, and Will, blushing.

RANDALL

Well. I've gotta go. It sure was
fun. Thanks guys.

The four shake hands then Randall and Willie share a quick hug.

Randall and Lewis leave the packed coffee house. Randall shakes people's hands all while they pat him on the back.

A woman in the crowd even pats Lewis on the back. He gawks at her and she gives him a bright smile.

INT. RANDALL'S STUDIO -- MORNING

Randall lay in his futon when the telephone rings.

RANDALL

Hello? Yeah this is Randall. Oh
hey Keith. What's up?

INT. APARTMENT -- EVENING

Willie enters and Cayla hands him a piece of paper.

CAYLA

What's he doing calling here?

WILLIE

Oh. Bumped into him over at Jake's.

CAYLA

And?

WILLIE

Well, you heard about Johnny, right?

CAYLA

You guys didn't.

WILLIE

I have to admit, I was against it at first. Really against it. But, I tried to put my emotions aside and it was like poetry in motion.

CAYLA

That guy's nothing but trouble.

WILLIE

It will be all right. He's a changed man. We all are.

Cayla shakes her head and leaves Willie to his thoughts.

A SERIES OF SHOTS

PRACTICE STUDIO - Fourth Street Paradise practices with Randall at the helm.

CLUB - The band plays a show. Lewis cheers them on.

RECORDING STUDIO - Randall stands in the mixing room while Donkey Show records a demo. He works with the engineer and group on the sound, style, and engineering.

RANDALL'S STUDIO APARTMENT - Randall practices guitar.

HOSPITAL - Three band members visit JOHNNY. He leaves on crutches.

The lead singer of Fourth Street Paradise, in his late 20's, looks tired and weathered. His dyed orange hair has grown out significantly, which shows his natural blond head.

COMMERCIAL BUILDING - Randall attends Narcotics Anonymous meetings. Seated participants form a semicircle around their counselor.

CLUB - Randall plays rhythm guitar. Johnny and Lewis sit in the front row. Lewis cheers them on. Johnny remains stoic and silent.

BACK TO SCENE

Curtis and Keith drink a beer at the bar.

CURTIS

Looks like Johnny Boy's going to be back up and running pretty quick here.

KEITH

Yeah. Looks like.

CURTIS

So what next?

Keith takes a large swallow from the pint glass then shakes his head.

Randall approaches the two band members with a smile a mile wide.

RANDALL
What a show, eh guys?

KEITH
Yeah. It was pretty good out there tonight. You did a great job.

RANDALL
Thanks.

Keith gets up and joins Will.

RANDALL
What's up with him?

Curtis shakes his head.

INT. COFFEE HOUSE -- EVENING

The original members of Fourth Street Paradise sit at a table drinking coffee.

WILLIE
What do you think Johnny?

JOHNNY
It's a tough call. I don't think I should say anything. I might be a little biased, if you know what I mean.

WILLIE
Everyone has a say in it, biased or not. That's the point.

CURTIS
Let's work through the positives and negatives then go from there.

JOHNNY
Okay. Let's start with the negatives. We only need one singer.

WILLIE
Okay then, what about the positives.

JOHNNY
You got me.

Keith shakes his head in affirmation.

WILLIE

I got one.

The members look up at him with surprise.

WILLIE

Okay. We can't very well get rid of you, Johnny, but I have to admit that Randall has brought a lot to the table since he's been here.

Johnny gives Willie a crazy look.

WILLIE

Hey. We've written some really good material with him singing and it might not be the same without him. Additionally, he has a lot of connections in the industry.

JOHNNY

Had.

WILLIE

He's also been producing other bands. Someone like that's difficult to find. Besides, who says that we only need one singer? We can do whatever the hell we want. It's our band. We could have him sing backup on some of our older stuff and lead on some of the new material. Or just help produce.

Johnny shakes his head and stares outside.

WILLIE

I really feel that our sound was missing something. At first I couldn't put my finger on it, but now I'm positive what it is.

CURTIS

And?

WILLIE

Fullness. Depth. Harmony. Melody. All of the above.

JOHNNY

What are you talking about? Our sound kicks ass.

WILLIE

We'll see.

INT. CLUB -- NIGHT

Willie and his band exit the stage after their last song and head back stage. Some women already loiter there. Lewis pushes his way toward security.

LEWIS

Randall!

Randall turns around and motions the guard to let him through.

LEWIS

Hey Randall, great show out there tonight. You guys sound so much better as a five piece.

RANDALL

Thanks man.

LEWIS

Based on some of the research I've been doing this past year, I think you guys are really going to be able to get a jump start on something special if you keep up what you're doing.

RANDALL

Huh? What are you now, music producer extraordinaire?

LEWIS

I might surprise you.

Lewis smiles at Randall then chuckles to himself.

LEWIS

But more importantly, have you seen the way the girls are checking you out tonight? Maybe you could introduce me to a few.

RANDALL

You can have 'em if you want. Who needs the tramps?

LEWIS

What's up? You have to move on. Get on with life. Live it to the fullest!

RANDALL

I don't have to do anything. If you'll excuse me I need to get something to drink.

Randall grabs a soda. A few women join him but he shoos them away.

Lewis looks on with confusion, then joins Randall.

LEWIS

You've got the women crawling all over you and you're just throwing it away.

RANDALL

I told you that you can have them.

LEWIS

So you said. What's the deal? You're back in the scene, women like you. I don't understand.

RANDALL

Exactly. Let me spell it out. I'm not going to go for every groupie that walks through that door.

Lewis looks confused.

RANDALL

I'll leave that to Isiah. These sluts aren't half the woman that Sasha is.

LEWIS

It's over between you two. You've got to move on.

Lewis consoles Randall, but he shakes off Lewis' hand and heaves the soda across the room.

LEWIS

I'm really sorry man.

A few random people wander around with Fourth Street shirts on.

Jeniece walks up to Randall who has his back turned away from the action.

JENIECE

The festival is really awesome! There hasn't been something like this in quite a while.

Randall turns around and nods in affirmation. Jeniece wraps her arms around his waist.

JENIECE

I was wondering when you guys were going to put out a new CD.

Randall pushes her away.

RANDALL

Yeah a CD. We have something in the works right now on that. If you want, you can download some MP3 files from our website.

Jeniece moves in for the kill. She hugs Randall.

JENIECE

Great.

Randall spins away and clutches her arm.

RANDALL

Yeah well, check it out if you want.

Randall shoves her.

JENIECE

See you.

Jeniece raises her eyebrows at Randall then leaves and rushes over to her friends. They give her an ecstatic hug and look off toward Randall who stares blankly at them.

Jeniece pulls a bag of coke out of her small black backpack and cuts a few lines. Randall moves back toward the group of ladies.

Lewis looks on with renewed interest.

JENIECE

Hey Randy. Darling. Join us for a little toot-toot?

Randall approaches the bimbos and sits down in front of the lines of White Lady. Lewis moves toward the table then stops.

Randall grabs the metal straw from Jeniece and gets ready to make a plunge off the wagon. She looks at him with excited eyes.

JENIECE

It's premium stuff if that's what you're worried about.

Randall pauses for what seems like an hour.

Lewis looks on with anticipation of the inevitable. He inches a little closer.

Randall puts the straw to his nose and makes his approach to the white lines.

Lewis moves closer then stops himself.

Randall pulls away from the drugs, throws the straw down in disgust.

JENIECE

You a prude now? Don't worry, I won't tell your girlfriend.

Randall knocks the mirror into the air. Coke flies everywhere.

RANDALL

Not doing this makes me a prude? Huh?

Randall makes a motion to slug her, but Lewis springs forward and grabs his arm. The two struggle, but Lewis gets the better of him.

Lewis drags Randall into the corner. Randall stares at the obnoxious harpy.

INT. COFFEE HOUSE -- AFTERNOON

Lewis and Sasha order then sit down on a nearby couch. Sasha wears a pair of prescription glasses with designer frames.

SASHA

So how are things?

LEWIS

Good. Good. And you?

SASHA

Fine thanks. Work's good?

LEWIS

Yeah you know. It could be better but it is work, you know.

SASHA

Work is work. That's why it's called work you know.

The two share an uneasy moment.

LEWIS

He still thinks about you.

Lewis takes a sip of his beverage. Sasha follows suit.

SASHA

How do you know?

LEWIS

I just do.

SASHA

It's over and we all know it. It just will not work. Not here, not now. I've changed as a person.

LEWIS

He's a changed person too.

SASHA

I've moved on.

Sasha avoids his glance and drinks her tea.

LEWIS

That's what I was thinking.

Lewis shakes his head in dismay. He finishes off his espresso and scans the room for answers.

INT. ROBINSON'S OFFICE -- AFTERNOON

Randall and Willie barge in with Noelle in hot pursuit.

NOELLE

I said you need an appointment.

RANDALL

Don't worry about us, we're old friends, right Stanley?

Robinson looks up from the paperwork on his desk.

ROBINSON

It's all right Noelle, they won't be here long.

Noelle looks at her boss with dismay, then leaves.

ROBINSON

You have a lot of nerve coming here.

RANDALL

We have some business to attend to. It won't take long.

ROBINSON

I have no business that I wish to conduct with you.

WILLIE

But Mr. Robinson. It will only take a moment.

ROBINSON

Do I know you?

WILLIE
Willie Russell sir.

ROBINSON
As I was saying.

Randall drops a tape on his desk.

RANDALL
Just listen to that, then we'll talk.

CLOSE ON TAPE

4TH ST. PARADISE. FOR BOOKING INFORMATION PLEASE CALL WILLIE
RUSSELL AT 213-555-1492

RANDALL
You know we're good. If you don't
act on this, the next time you hear
about us, it'll be in a bidding war.

ROBINSON
You're as cocky as ever.

RANDALL
So are you. With your track record
lately, I'm surprised you still have
a job. Sign anyone good lately?

Randall stares at Robinson while Willie catches flies in his
mouth.

RANDALL
Listen to the tape.

ROBINSON
Good day.

The two band members leave.

INT. COFFEE HOUSE -- EVENING

The members of Fourth Street, save Randall, huddle around
the coffee table. They look distressed.

KEITH
It seems like it's becoming common
place having to come here and make
tough decisions.

INT. ROBINSON'S OFFICE -- MORNING

Willie sits across from Robinson with an eager look on his
face.

ROBINSON

I love it! Best stuff I've heard in
a long time.

WILLIE

Now we're talking.

INT. RANDALL'S STUDIO -- AFTERNOON

Randall sits on the futon and plays his guitar when the
doorbell rings. He answers it and sees Willie outside.

RANDALL

Hey Will. What's up? We still on
for practice tomorrow?

WILLIE

Sure thing.

RANDALL

Come on in. I was just messing around
on the guitar a little. Want to
hear?

The two friends head over the futon and sit down.

WILLIE

Spoke with Robinson.

RANDALL

You did? That's awesome. I knew
he'd come to his senses. What'd he
say?

WILLIE

Well. He gave the tape a thumbs up
if that's what you were wondering
about.

RANDALL

And?

INT. ROBINSON'S OFFICE -- MORNING

Will gets out of the chair and paces for a moment.

ROBINSON

It's not that difficult of a decision.
Ditch the drug addict and I have a
contract right here with your name
on it. It's already been approved.

WILLIE

He's back on track. We aren't going
to ditch him to get a deal done.
It's not right and doesn't makes any
sense at all.

ROBINSON

It's just business. There's no loyalty in this business. Integrity doesn't mean shit to me. One day you're the darling of the firm. The next you're selling your Bel Air estate and your wife's taking you to the cleaners. It's dog eat dog. That's my motto. If you can't handle it, go cry a river.

INT. RANDALL'S STUDIO -- AFTERNOON

Randall gets up from the futon and looks down at Willie.

RANDALL

You gotta do what he says. But I do think there are some things that you should be careful about when you sign the deal. These record companies know how to stick it to you the first time around.

WILLIE

But Randall, you don't understand--

RANDALL

I understand perfectly. You need to beware of those hidden clauses in the contract. That's why you need to work the royalty rate as high as you can get it. They have damage clauses of ten percent and they only give three quarter royalties on CD's.

INT. ROBINSON'S OFFICE -- MORNING

Will approaches Robinson's desk and grabs the demo tape.

WILLIE

I guess we'll just have to shop this tape around.

Willie showcases the tape in front of Robinson.

ROBINSON

You're pitiful. Throwing away a golden opportunity like this. When your band finds out about this--

WILLIE

Sir, there are no guarantees in life, but I know in my heart what's right and what's not. What's the point of getting signed if we aren't the best band we can be?

ROBINSON

What an inspiring soliloquy.

WILLIE

We have the talent. Like Randall said. The next time you hear about us, it'll be in a bidding war. Then where will you be? Packing your box of shitty office nick nacks on the way out of here while your wife's dropping you off at the cleaners. That's where. Good day.

INT. RANDALL'S STUDIO -- AFTERNOON

Randall returns from the kitchen with some soft drinks.

RANDALL

What? That's crazy. This is your once in a lifetime chance at fame and fortune.

WILLIE

You don't understand. We wouldn't be where we are now if it wasn't for you. Even in some sick way it was good Sherman didn't work out for me. It forced me to become a better musician as well as come to grips with other issues in my life. Now I have my break and I don't want it screwed up because we went in as less than the band that we really are.

RANDALL

Less than you are?

WILLIE

If we go into the studio without you on vocals and guitar, we'll be as good as we were, not as good as we are.

RANDALL

What do the others say?

WILLIE

We decided to try and get another label to sign us.

RANDALL

And?

WILLIE

We have talent and that's all that matters. We'll make it happen.

RANDALL

You make your own breaks in life.

INT. APARTMENT -- EVENING

Willie sits on the couch and Cayla paces.

CAYLA

I can't believe you did that!

WILLIE

It's all going to work out. I promise.

CAYLA

I don't know why you bothered with him to begin with. After all of the sacrifices we've made, I've made, you throw the best opportunity you have at success out the window.

Rebecca cries, almost seemingly at Cayla's raised voice. Cayla heads for the back room.

WILLIE

We'll still make it, don't worry. I've got it all under control.

INT. APARTMENT -- EVENING

Lewis and Randall sit in front of the television.

LEWIS

What is Robinson's problem?

RANDALL

Who the hell knows.

Lewis goes to the kitchen, grabs some beverages, then returns.

RANDALL

We need to scrape up more money from these shows. Then we could cut our own CD and make it happen without Robinson or anyone else.

Randall shakes his head in disappointment.

RANDALL

People are literally begging to buy our CD and we got jack. Talk about your missed opportunities.

LEWIS

You're getting good hits the website, right?

RANDALL

A pretty fair number.

LEWIS

I got something. Sometimes it's just right under your nose. Think about those bands that are selling CD's out of the trunks of their cars.

RANDALL

Takes money to make money. You don't think I know about Roger Clyne and the others who have done stuff like that? We have to get the CD cut in order to do some of that stuff, but where the hell are we going to get ten grand?

LEWIS

Do I have to think of everything? I guess that's why I'm in business and you're the artist.

RANDALL

You're all over the map. What the hell are you talking about.

LEWIS

Listen to yourself. Is this the same person that always preaches about following your dreams?

RANDALL

Sometimes I just don't know. We take two steps forward, then four steps backward.

LEWIS

I have an idea.

INT. NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS -- NIGHT

Randall grabs some coffee when Wallace Earnhardt approaches him.

EARNHARDT

Randall? Randall Sparks?

RANDALL

Yes?

EARNHARDT

Wally Earnhardt. Good to meet you.

RANDALL

The Wally Earnhardt?

EARNHARDT

In the flesh.

RANDALL

So what are you doing here? Oh sorry,
I know what you're doing here, but--

EARNHARDT

It's all right. I'm here the same
as anyone else. We're all human,
right?

RANDALL

Of course.

Earnhardt grabs some coffee and sips from it.

EARNHARDT

I want to say that what you've done
with some of the local talent is
really innovative. You have a great
feel for the music scene. A hand on
the pulse so to speak. That's a
rare trait to have in my business.

RANDALL

Thank you for the compliment.

EARNHARDT

The whole festival you put together
is, what do I say? Is what the kids
want. You understand where I'm coming
from I'm sure.

RANDALL

Of course.

EARNHARDT

Here's my card. Give me a call early
next week. I'd like to talk with
you a little more about some things
I'm looking to do.

RANDALL

That would be just great.

Randall extends his hand.

RANDALL

Thank you.

INT. CLUB -- NIGHT

Members of Fourth Street Paradise and Donkey Show sit at
tables and signs CD's.

LEWIS (V.O.)

I'm going to pay for the CD and you produce it. Then we sell them at shows and on the website until you guys make a real name for yourselves. You know. Marketing.

RANDALL (V.O.)

Awesome.

LEWIS (V.O.)

Just tired of using my marketing expertise for selling widgets.

Lewis works the room and revels in his new role.

RANDALL (V.O.)

Are you sure?

LEWIS (V.O.)

Pay me back through the sales.

RANDALL (V.O.)

All right.

Sasha and PAIGE, her friend, enter. Paige gives Sasha a light shove. The two ladies move toward Randall.

SASHA

You have a CD I could have signed?

RANDALL

Sasha! Oh my God!

SASHA

My friend Paige here is a really big fan, right Paige?

Sasha looks over at Paige and smiles.

PAIGE

Oh yeah. Huge.

Lewis eyes the two ex-lovers and maintains his distance.

RANDALL

New glasses?

SASHA

Yeah.

RANDALL

They look good on you.

Sasha smiles at him.

RANDALL

What are you doing later?

SASHA

Oh, you know. This and that.

RANDALL

Can I come by?

Sasha writes a phone number on his hand.

Randall grabs two CD's from Willie, signs them, then hands one to Paige and the other to Sasha.

Lewis looks over at Sasha and they smile at each other.

INT. COFFEE HOUSE -- AFTERNOON

Sasha and Randall sit on a couch and listen to the acoustic guitar player.

SASHA

So it's been over a year, huh?

RANDALL

Going on two actually.

SASHA

That's so great.

RANDALL

I'm glad you decided to come by the show.

SASHA

Well, Lewis has been telling me what's been going on and I had to see for myself.

RANDALL

I'm a changed man.

SASHA

Yeah well, that's good to hear. You look great.

RANDALL

I know this is a little forward given all of the crap that's happened, but how about we start over. From the beginning. Before you answer, think about it. You don't have to let me know now.

SASHA

Let's just take it slow. Wounds heal slowly.

RANDALL

I can live with that.

Randall rubs her on the shoulder, then takes some gum out and throws it in his mouth.

RANDALL

I can definitely live with that.

INT. ROBINSON'S OFFICE -- DAY

Robinson enters with a clear sandwich container then sits down. He looks up and notices Randall who leaves Earnhardt's office.

Randall walks toward him.

ROBINSON

Noelle! Come here!

NOELLE

Yes?

ROBINSON

What is he doing here?

NOELLE

Had an appointment with Mr. Earnhardt.
No one knows what about.

Noelle's phone rings and she attends to it.

Randall enters Robinson's office.

ROBINSON

What the hell are you doing here?
Get out before I call security.

RANDALL

You're a dinosaur in this business
Robinson. It always happens. Just
like clockwork. Out with the old,
in with the new.

ROBINSON

Did you hear me--

RANDALL

No longer at the top of your game,
or even the middle of it.

ROBINSON

Noelle! Call security!

Noelle stands next to Randall.

NOELLE

What do you want me to do sir?

ROBINSON

You heard me you ditz! Call security!

Noelle stands pat and stares at Randall.

RANDALL

It's all right Noelle. We'll give him time to say his goodbye's. It's the least we can do for someone who has put so much into this label.

ROBINSON

What are you talking about?

Earnhardt enters and stands behind Randall.

RANDALL

Robinson, this is difficult, but I'm gonna have to let you go.

ROBINSON

What--

RANDALL

We need new blood in here.

ROBINSON

Wallace, is this some kind of joke--

RANDALL

People who have a knack for finding the pulse of today's youth and capitalizing on it.

Robinson stares at Earnhardt who remains silent.

RANDALL

I'm sorry.

EXT. CLUB -- NIGHT

Randall saunters past a group of restless fans who line up out front. The bouncer unhooks the rope and allows Randall to step inside.

INT. CLUB

Randall reads from a ratty piece of paper.

RANDALL

Dirk! Get your ass over here!

DIRK, a snotty nosed lead singer with short hair and tattoos makes his way over to Randall.

RANDALL

I told you to rearrange this set list.

DIRK

I did.

Randall shakes his head and tosses the set list away.

DIRK

Hey--

RANDALL

You don't start the set with a ballad.
How many times have I said that?

Dirk ignores Randall and chews his gum. Sasha approaches the two singers and remains silent.

RANDALL

Stop chewing that fucking gum and listen to me for a minute!

DIRK

What the hell do you know about set lists and clubbing old timer?

Dirk spits out his gum and walks off.

RANDALL

Stubborn little shit.

SASHA

He reminds me a lot of someone I know.

Sasha hugs Randall. Randall laughs then kisses her.

SASHA

So what did Gordon say when he found he needs to come to you for tour support?

Randall chuckles a little more and smiles.

INT. CLUB

Dirk runs out on stage and the crowd goes wild inside the small venue. Randall looks on from backstage while the band begins its set.

The band begins with a ballad, which drains the excitement from the crowd. The band continues, but the fans remain languid.

Randall shakes his head.

The drummer glances backstage. Randall makes eye contact and gives him a head nod.

The drummer speeds up the tempo and the band members feel this new energy. The guitar player looks over at Dirk then eyes the set list.

The band makes a clean transition into another, more upbeat, song. The fans respond and start a slam dance pit.

Randall looks on with renewed intensity.

FADE OUT: